



PDG Fred Otto (D-6450 2000-01) is Secretary of the Paul & Jean Harris Home Foundation, and Chairman Nominee of the Rotary Heritage and History International Fellowship of Rotarians.

Headed for Salt Lake City? Meet your RHHIF friends at 5 pm in Room 251C, Salt Palace Convention Center for discussion of opportunities to preserve Rotary's heritage and history.



Fred Otto's Comely Bank update

We recently found out that the famous landscape architect Mr. Jen Jensen and Paul and Jean Harris were all members of the Prairie Club of Chicago at the same time. We learned when the Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects held a *charette* at the Harris Home on Saturday, April 14, 2007 as we were planning the landscaping design for the landscaping of the house. (A *charette* is a gathering of people who have an interest in an architectural project and then brainstorming the possibilities of a site and its purpose and function.) We hope to re-establish the curving limestone walls and paths in front of the house, which Paul and Jean Harris had established in their "Friendship Garden", which will allow visitors to walk down into the ravine in front of the house, which drops off gently about twenty feet from the house to the front street in a distance of about 200 feet.

We have taken basement walls down to the bare limestone outer walls because the limestone had effervesced a white powder over the years as it got wet, and this was trapped between the paperboard material which formed the inside walls and the limestone outer walls. We put in drainage tile, a sump pump and a new basement floor. New venting for air conditioning and heating have been put in through out the house. We will put in a new furnace, hot water heater and air conditioner when money becomes available. New electrical panel for 200-amp service (upgraded from the old 100 amp. service) has been completed. New steel I-beam support and five steel columns have been put in replacing one of two old wood beams and wooden posts that lacked footings to support them. Several cracked or broken floor joists have been repaired and re-supported. All of this has allowed us to jack up the first floor as much as 1 to 1 and 2 inches in spots and has resolved a problem at the foot of the stairway leading to the third floor, which had developed a raised area, which we had originally thought was from the chimney settling. It now appears that the support of the first floor having partially collapsed caused the joists on the second floor to cause the floor to buckle. Thus, the house

will be much safer and sturdier when we are all done.

A new ADA bathroom has been installed on the first floor. Cabinets, cupboards, and soffits in the dining room have been removed to open up the blocked bay window on the north of the dining room. (We have been told that Mr. Huck added cabinets, cupboards and soffits in the dining room for an office; Mr. Huck was the immediate next owner of the house after the Harris.) Now one can see all three windows of the bay window on the north side of the dining room, where before only the center window was visible inside the dining room. Extensive reconstruction of the plaster is in the works through out the house.

Closets that had been added in several of the upstairs bedrooms have been removed, which makes those rooms larger, and will now accommodate amours instead of closets. Hopefully, most of the inside construction will be resolved in the next several months provided the fund raiser which is getting started can generate the necessary funds.

Construction is costing about \$200,000.00, but will make the house much better by eliminating water issues in the basement, opening up rooms to look more like they did when the Harris lived in the house, correcting three cracked floor joists. Putting in the new I-beam and posts has resolved some of the structural issues which in the long run could have caused many additional problems with the house. We put in an "L" shape stairway into the basement from the first floor, which will make it much safer for Rotarians and their guests to navigate the stairs getting into the basement, which will make the basement more usable as a meeting room once again as it was used by Paul Harris.

We filed papers in March, for the Paul and Jean Harris Home Foundation to be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. IRS has assigned a person in Cleveland to review the file. If members of the Rotary Heritage and History Fellowship want to make a contribution, the Rotary District 6300 Foundation is a 501(c)(3) and it is still collecting funds for the house project. Please go to Paulharrishome.com for more information.