



Photos taken by Fred Otto early October show the Harris home in mid-restoration. This is standing in the front hall looking from the 1st to the 2nd floor.

Achieving home ownership was the end of one long and difficult journey, and it was the beginning of another – repairing the home of Rotary’s founder so it could be used by future Rotarians. Repairs are now halted while we compile and issue this report to our fellowship members regarding the severity of the struggle to repair, furnish, and maintain *Comely Bank*.

This fellowship, and the *Harris Home Foundation* that we established, acquired the home of Paul & Jean Harris known as *Comely Bank* in time to host a wonderful series of Centennial events including a ribbon cutting by RI’s Centennial President. Resuming our founder’s custom, commemorative trees were added beside those Paul had planted. *(continued next page)*

For a small group of past, present, and

future leaders of Chicago-area Rotary Clubs and Districts, the *Comely Bank* project is intensely personal. On February 17, 2004 with the signing of the real estate contract, with the May 16, 2005 real estate closing, getting ready for the ribbon cutting ceremony on June 24, 2005 required a lot of back breaking work painting the outside of the house, cutting down dead trees and cutting back the overgrowth; a Japanese lantern which had been given to Paul and Jean in 1935 by the Japanese/Korean/Manchurian district was



Looking down from the third floor to the second floor.

moved back to the house where a permanent foundation was poured for it. In addition to overseeing City of Chicago permit inspections for the ADA ramp and ADA bathroom, and supervising contractors, these Rotarians now spend many hours moving the project forward; in addition to the fundraising effort which is an ongoing task.

It is a pleasure to hear from Harris Home donors and other Rotarians; of-



Paul is seated by the fireplace at left.



Rotary Foundation Chairman Jonathan Majiyagbe talked with Past RHHIF Chair Jack Mayo about bringing Foundation Trustees to *Comely Bank* in April.

ten they ask for a tour of the home. Our goal is for *Comely Bank* to look like it did when Paul & Jean welcomed Rotarians into their home. Our goal includes having *Comely Bank* available for small events like those Paul & Jean personally hosted. *Harris Home Foundation* goals include small museum quality displays and exhibits of significant Rotary memorabilia. These goals cannot be achieved without increased money and manpower.

Harris Home interior snapshots taken a few days ago appear on this page and on page 5. As you can see, we cannot host any tours or events this month. We find ourselves managing a major reconstruction effort to bring the home up to modern standards and for safety reasons. We started to remove dining room cabinets that had been added after the Harris family sold the house. They hid two thirds of the bay window on the North side of the house. In doing this we discovered that someone had put sheetrock on top of lathe and plaster. The danger was that over time sheetrock will pull the plaster from the lathe. Professional home inspectors told us that over time the plaster, lath and sheetrock might cause the ceilings to cave in under the combined weight. As long as we were fixing this we decided that we would do electrical rewiring, new HVAC duct work for better heating and eventually putting in air conditioning, and put fiberglass installation in the walls and attic.

We knew when we bought the house that we needed to fix wooden beams sitting on bricks in the clay basement floor, and fix the basement floor, which was heaving. The basement floor was only a half-inch thick where it was



Living room fireplace with the lath and plaster removed.

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