

Owning a "home to share"

By Nancy Kline

There is a majestic Victorian manor that sits on the banks of the Maumee River in Grand Rapids, Ohio. Listed on the National Register of historical places, The Housley House is considered an architectural masterpiece in design. It is also a place two Putnam County natives call home. Don "Stumpy" Williams II and Teresa Marie "Lily" are the proprietors.

Don, a former Glandorf native, and Teresa, a former Pandora native, both feel their new residence, now a bed and breakfast, is a dream come true. "Don and I liked to sit on a swing near the property and look at the river," Teresa said. "Don would always say, sometime when he retired, he was going to live there." Then one day Teresa passed the property and noticed it was up for sale. She called Don, and they decided to look at the house. "We just wanted to say we had been inside," Teresa said. The owner of the property was Larry Dillin with Dillin Corporation, developer of sites such as Levis Commons in Perrysburg. "We didn't know what to expect when we met him," Teresa admitted. "But he was the gentlest spirited man we had met. He told us about his passion about taking something old and bringing it back to life. He loved the vision we had for the property." Teresa said because of this shared vision, Dillin made it so Don and she could purchase the property and develop it into a bed and breakfast.

Teresa said it was a candelabra that helped her accept the purchase and move was meant to be. She owns a brass candelabrum that has traveled with her for many years. She had never seen a match to it. Before arriving at the Housley House, Dillin told them he had left them something special. On the table was a candelabrum that was the exact match to the candelabra owned by Teresa. Don and Teresa moved into the property in December and opened it for business.

The Housley House has been restored back to the 1800s when it was built, including imported wallpaper from Europe and an original marble fireplace. The Housley House offers a variety of guestrooms with private baths. Each room is accented with woodwork and marble pieces set in 19th-century Victorian and Colonial style. Three rooms have comfy queen-size Victorian beds with luxurious bedding that adds to the romantic feel of the Victorian age.

Teresa said serving as the proprietor of a bed and breakfast is a natural step for her. She grew up cooking and has cooked for various businesses. "I love serving people," she said. "That is what it is all about." Teresa also has a photography business known as Teresa Marie Photography. "So it blends right in," she said.

Since the Housley House Bed and Breakfast has opened, Teresa said the business has continued to grow. "We've mainly had our name spread by word of mouth," she explained. Groups that have booked rooms to stay at The Housley Inn include Red Hat ladies, scrapbooking clubs, ladies' tour buses and class reunions. "Once you walk into the house and see the Dillin Room, overlooking the Maumee River, you realize how relaxing the setting is here," Teresa said. Nearby shops and restaurants in Grand Rapids make the stay an enjoyable one.

