

**MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW FOR
MAY 3 ARTIST'S COTTAGE OPEN HOUSE**

What nicer way to melt into spring than enjoying the first Sunday afternoon in May exploring the home and grounds of Debby and John Topliff, at the next event in our sixth year of "Dine Around The Village Table" home-tour dinner or cocktail party fundraisers.

Located at 730 North Maple Street, the Topliff property is an array of visual treats as well as a bit of an intellectual excursion. Set in five acres on a steep wooded bluff overlooking Goshorn Creek and Peterson Nature Preserve, the original 1970s house has been completely reworked into a contemporary home that "feels like a glass box", bringing the outdoors inside.

This rambling main house, the Topliff's family home since 2002, features a lovely courtyard entrance and is beautifully appointed with family antiques and collections of art. Not to be missed are a number of the owner's paintings -- large and colorful biblical narratives -- in the outlying studio connected to the garage.

Along a short pathway beyond the house, the property includes a charming 1940s cabin of vertical log exterior and pine plank interior. The structure, which the Topliffs saved from demolition in 2007, was one of several factory-built "kit" houses constructed alongside nearby Goshorn Lake just after WWII. It was methodically dismantled, packed up and moved to the Topliff property, keeping its general layout and adding interesting bits of cottage furniture and antiques. Reassembled here, it very nicely whispers "cottage," including a sleeping loft and an outdoor shower.

Beyond the cabin, Debby created a meditation labyrinth based on an ancient 7-fold pattern. After the labyrinth the path leads through the woods to a large raised-bed garden. Behind the house a set of stairs leads down into the ravine where a corduroy path winds over the wetlands to the shallow creek. (Bring your mucky boots if you want to explore further.)

Debby is an artist, writer and teacher with a passion for finding creative ways to express her faith. She recently published *And the World Became Color. Exploring the Bible with Paper, Pen, and Paint (2015)*. Along with her biblical teaching, she offers classes on essential oils and a dance form of tai chi. John, who has a Doctor of Ministry degree, is newly retired from his career in publishing. In 2012-2013 the couple spent a "gap" year in St. Andrews, Scotland where Debby studied at the University and John worked via Skype and enjoyed the famous links. They make their cabin available for personal and small-group days away and lead-guided retreats.

The date is May 3, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.; wine and cheese will be served. With all food and beverages donated, this event's guest charge of \$20 per person will fully support the Historical Society's volunteer-based programs and activities, including exhibitions at its Pump House Museum in Saugatuck, Old School House History Center and "Back-In-Time Garden Pathway" in Douglas. For reservations, phone 269.857.5751 or e-mail info@sdhistoricalsociety.org.



Young flowering hydrangea tree at the Topliff's front door greets visitors approaching along a walkway around the garage/studio in background.