

Smithfield Community Association

PO Box 42 Peterboro NY 13134

Newsletter for 2004

Greetings from historic Peterboro! Have you noticed how much publicity Peterboro has been getting in the local newspapers? We have a very special person that's responsible for most of the activity. And keep your eyes open, because we've got some big things in the works. But we need help!! We are in desperate need of some additional members on the SCA board. If you would like to help out in a more direct way, please consider joining the SCA board.

Building Updates

• **Community Center**

- After a couple of years working on the interior, the building is looking great inside. But the outside paint has begun to weather again, so this summer the S.C.A. will be getting the exterior of the building painted.
- Our group purchased a new refrigerator for the kitchen, to replace the one that died.
- If you are interested in renting the building for any occasion, please contact Mary Benedict, Town Clerk at 684-9293.
- The Town of Smithfield had the Peterboro Area Museum painted last summer; there were some additional costs of \$250 that the S.C.A. covered.

• **Land Office**

- Our big project this year was getting the plaster restored. The hard part was finding a plasterer who was able to restore this historic building. Maybe some of you had a chance to see it during the Civil War Weekend. We are waiting on the baseboards, then some more plaster work and then to finish painting.

Community Activity

The big news around Peterboro is the creation of an **Abolition Hall of Fame**; it was announced publicly for the first time by Assemblyman Bill Magee at the opening ceremonies of the 12th annual Civil War. The New York State Antislavery Society held its inaugural Meeting in Peterboro, October 22, 1835. From that event until his death in 1874, wealthy landowner Gerrit Smith was devoted to freedom for the slaves. In those forty years of anti-slavery activities, an honor roll of abolitionists of national prominence came to the Town of Smithfield to speak at the Free Church of Peterboro and to stay in Smith's mansion. In 2001 the United States Department of Interior designated the Gerrit Smith Estate as a National Historic Landmark because it "was found to possess national significance in the history of the United States." Therefore, it is fitting that an Abolition Hall of Fame be created in Peterboro that honors abolitionists, provides the public the opportunity to understand these people and the times in which they worked, and to study models of reform that address human rights issues for this century. The goal of the Abolition Hall of Fame will be to annually induct one person from the 19th, 20th, and 21st century that demonstrated (or demonstrates) commitment to abolition.

On June 19, 2004 Governor George Pataki signed into legislation a new Underground Railroad Heritage Trail. There were two sites in Madison County and they were both in Peterboro, the Gerrit Smith Estate and the Smithfield Community Center. Pataki released a statement saying, "New York has always been a trailblazer in ensuring civil rights and freedom, and its communities played a role in a struggle for human liberty in American history- the fight for the end of slavery." Inclusion on the historic trail makes Peterboro eligible for State and Federal grant money.

Civil War Weekend

- The 12th annual Civil War Weekend was a great success! Our thanks go out to the members of the Civil War committees and all the dedicated volunteers who help in many ways to support the event. What a wonderful community effort for a good cause.

Upcoming Events

- July 18, Hometown Days**, Peterboro, the S.C.A. will have a booth on the green
- July 18, Putt-Putt Soccer 12-4 Peterboro Area Green**, a lawn game, with facsimiles of Smithfield structures and played similar to miniature golf, will provide historical and dexterity challenges for participants of all ages.
- July 18, Peterboro Area Museum** will be open; come and see the new school exhibit.
- July 20, Peterboro Friendship Quilt, 7:30 pm Smithfield Community Center**. Guest speakers from Saranac Lake will share the discovery and history of a 19th century Friendship Quilt with 40 stitched signatures of families from Peterboro.
- July 22, Smithfield Community Association Annual Meeting**, Smithfield Community .Center 7:00 pm.
- September 26, Elizabeth Smith Miller's Birthday, Peterboro Area Museum, 2pm**
- Elizabeth Smith Miller, designer of bloomers, was born on September 20, 1822. We will once again celebrate her birthday with a program on 19th century women reformers who visited Peterboro and wore bloomers.
- October 3, 12-4, Madison County Fall Festival History Weekend- Peterboro Area Museum**
- Abolition Hall of Fame, Saturday, October 16, 7 pm Morrisville High School**
- The initiation of the Abolition Hall of Fame will be celebrated with a concert by *Magpie*, a folk duo that will present ballads on John Brown and other abolitionists.

Items for Sale

- Snipet's*, pieces of Peterboro area history written by Donna Dorrance Burdick, our town historian. Vol. #1-8 is available. The *Snipet's* are available for \$1 each, plus 50 cents for shipping.
- We also have Land Office and Mansion mugs. The mugs and t-shirts are available by calling Beth Spokowsky at 684-9022.

Special Donations

- There are spaces available on our second memorial plaque to remember a loved one with a donation of \$25. The plaques are located in the foyer of the Community Center.

For additional information on anything in the letter, call Beth Spokowsky 684-9022 or Linda and Steve Joeckel 684-9428 or e-mail us at sca_peterboro@yahoo.com.

To help us continue our restoration work, in the nationally recognized hamlet of Peterboro, please remember to send in your membership contribution. All donations are tax-deductible.

On behalf of the Smithfield Community Association, ***Thank You!*** ...and enjoy the rest of your summer.

Sincerely,

Steve Joeckel
President, Smithfield Community Association