

der

The Weathervane

Wetterhahn



Volume XII, Issue I The Newsletter of Renfrew Museum & Park

Winter 2001

SPRING PREVIEW

An Inside Look at Renfrew Museum & Park



PARK CLEAN-UP DAY
Saturday, March 31st
8:30 am to mid-afternoon



Mark your calendars now! Renfrew needs your help on Saturday, March 31st for our annual Spring Clean-up Day. Last year, almost 40 volunteers gave up part of their Saturday to help us get Renfrew in shape for our Spring activities. We are hoping for an even larger turn-out in 2001. Please help us by spreading the word and making

plans to join us. With your help, we'll have the park in tip-top shape.

Park Clean-up Day is very informal and everyone is welcome. We begin about 8:30 am and work through mid-afternoon. Workers can come for the entire day or any part that fits their schedule.

Typical duties for the day include such things as cleaning and raking the museum and picnic grounds, and removing stones and debris left by the Spring floods. This year, we will also have several tons of crushed stone on hand for distribution along our service drive and lower parking lot.

Renfrew has a supply of hand tools, but you might want to bring your own shovel and rake. Refreshments will be provided. The amount of work we can get done depends on you, so keep the 31st free for Renfrew. Thanks in advance for your help!

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An early March snow covers Renfrew Museum and the Milk House. Please note the support braces holding-up the smaller front porch on the museum house. Restoration of this porch is currently underway at Renfrew. Project completion is set for April of 2001. When finished, it will complement the main porch, which was restored last year. Both restorations were undertaken by Steward Chambers and his firm, Millennium House Works.



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Curator's Report - Renfrew's Next 25 Years -

Renfrew recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary as a public institution. Having been the site's curator for the last 2 1/2 of those 25 years, I still feel like the new kid on the block. I've been here long enough to know what's going on, but I still have more to learn, and a lot of potential for professional growth. The latter is also true for Renfrew Museum and Park.

While this institution has certainly evolved from Mrs. Nicodemus' private home into a premier historical site and public park attracting tens of thousands of visitors each year, there is still a lot of room for growth. Renfrew remains full of untold promise; it is just waiting for the right people to help set things in motion. In that spirit, I would like to take a moment to tell you about some of our plans for the future.

Back in 1984, Renfrew received a grant to participate in something called the Museum Assessment Program (MAP1). This program, which is funded by the American Association of Museums, brings an independent museum professional to the host site to survey their operation and prepare a written report that can serve as a guideline for self improvement. A typical site visit takes one to two days; the surveyor tours the entire institution and meets with members of the staff, board of directors and members of the general public.

Renfrew's initial MAP survey proved to be a useful tool for institutional change. Looking back on this 17 year old document, it is easy to identify the issues that gave birth to the Renfrew Institute for Cultural and Environmental Studies in 1990, and the formation of Renfrew Committee, Incorporated, Renfrew's managing board, in 1996. The establishment of many curriculum-based educational programs, development and restoration of the historical farmstead, and a dramatic increase in site visitation are just a few of the many positive changes which highlight Renfrew's history since the 1984 survey.

However, all of us at Renfrew see even greater untapped potential. A long range planning committee was formed in early 2000 to begin investigating plans for our future. The need for a long range, strategic plan soon became a prime objective. As part of our planning process, Renfrew has applied for a second MAP 1 grant.

We hope to host another museum surveyor sometime this fall. In the meantime, our long range planning committee, boards of directors and staff, are busy creating a draft of a long range plan. We plan to present this document to our surveyor prior to his or her arrival at Renfrew. We are

Curator's Report - Continued Calendar of Events

anxious for a fresh professional perspective on our plans. We also look forward to sharing them with you, the Friends of Renfrew, as soon as they are closer to completion.

We are investigating new and exciting ways to tap into Renfrew's undeveloped potential. Some of our thoughts include greater cooperative programming with our teaching arm, Renfrew Institute, and the expanded use of the Fahnestock complex and its farmstead possibilities. Once our plans are more concrete, they will be presented in this forum as well as through other public avenues.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this long overdue Winter issue of *der Wetterhahn*. We have had a busy off season at Renfrew, and we have some interesting programs in store for you in 2001. For example, the Museum's opening will take place on Sunday, April 22nd when we combine our Spring Gardening Symposium with Renfrew Institute's Earth Day Celebration. These two programs seem like they naturally belong together - we hope you agree. Plans are also in the works for a second Pennsylvania Humanities Council speaker's series on Pennsylvania German Culture, and our second offering for the Bell Society membership will soon be unveiled.

Thank you for making a commitment to the Museum and Park through your membership in the Friends of Renfrew. I look forward to sharing our progress with you both in person and through future issues of *der Wetterhahn*.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Bliemeister, Curator

Upcoming Events at Renfrew

- * Renfrew Spring Clean-up Day - Saturday, March 31st
- * Living With Water Series "Vernal Ponds", Thursday, April 5th
- * Renfrew Fun Fly - Saturday, April 7th
- * Earth Day Celebration/Gardening Symposium/
Museum Opening - Sunday, April 22nd
- * Bird Walks at Renfrew - Saturdays in April & May



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Renfrew Personnel Changes Shirley Baker Leaves Museum

After 16 years of service, Shirley M. Baker, *Supervisor of Visitor Services*, has left the staff of Renfrew Museum and Park to pursue other opportunities. Ms. Baker submitted her resignation to the Board of Directors of Renfrew Committee, Incorporated in November of 2000.



Shirley M. Baker, former Supervisor of Visitor Services, instructs school children in the making of "Black Toothpaste" on the porch of Renfrew Museum, circa 1998. Ms. Baker left the staff of Renfrew this past November.

Ms. Baker began her tenure at Renfrew Museum in the early 1980s as a volunteer under the direction of former Curator, James Koenig. She became a member of the paid staff in 1984 and advanced through several different positions before becoming the Supervisor of Visitor Services. In her last role, Ms. Baker was responsible for the membership activities of the Friends of Renfrew and certain programming, such as the Yuletide Holiday Open House. She was also our leader of volunteer recruitment and coordinated the volunteer docent program.

Shirley left her mark on Renfrew in many different ways. She will long be remembered for her skills as an open hearth cook, and the host of our annual Thanksgiving Open Hearth Program. Her flair for creating temporary exhibitions for our changing gallery helped bring Renfrew to life for our visitors. In addition, her enthusiasm and commitment to organizing our annual volunteer and Friends of Renfrew bus trip will be missed by those who participated in her past ventures.

All of us at Renfrew Museum and Park wish Ms. Baker the best in her future endeavors.

Renfrew Personnel Changes Matthew Hurley Joins The Board

We are pleased to announce that Matthew Hurley, Proprietor of the Matthew S. Hurley Auction Company of Waynesboro, has been appointed as a member of the Renfrew Executive Committee. Matt began his board tenure with the REC's February meeting.

In addition to his auction company, Mr. Hurley is very involved in his church, the Rotary Club of Waynesboro and many other community activities. Matt has served as a volunteer appraiser at all three of Renfrew's Antique Appraisal Day programs.

Thank you, Matt, for adding Renfrew to your already full schedule. We appreciate your dedication to the Museum and Park.

JACQUELINE BARLUP Steps Down From The REC

Matthew Hurley has accepted the Renfrew Executive Committee seat formerly held by **Jacqueline Barlup**. Mrs. Barlup joined the REC at its formation in 1997. In addition to being an active regular committee member, she also served as the body's secretary.

Renfrew's staff and boards of directors are unanimous in thanking Jackie for her years of dedicated service. Her enthusiasm, creative ideas and work ethic will be missed by everyone at Renfrew.

STEREO VIEWER RAFFLE UPDATE

In the Fall issue of *der Wetterhahn*, we promoted the raffle of an antique stereo viewer and limited edition Renfrew cards as a holiday fund raiser. This prize package was awarded after the conclusion of our holiday open house this past December.

Thank you to everyone who purchased or sold tickets for this project. Your help is certainly appreciated.



Museum Curator, Jeff Bliemeister, presents the stereo viewer and slides to raffle winner, Debbie Heninker of Cascade, Maryland. Congratulations, Debbie!



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☆ In The Spotlight ☆
Edmajoda Trail Reopened

Renfrew Museum and Park is pleased to announce the Edmajoda Trail has been reopened for public use after many years of inactivity. This trail, which was damaged in the tornado that hit the park in 1994, was recently restored by park volunteer Donald Biesecker of Waynesboro.

Don spent many hours working by himself to reopen this trail. He would arrive at Renfrew in the afternoon, after putting in a full shift at work, and spend the remaining daylight hours clearing the pathways at the back of Renfrew's property. Additional weekend hours were also contributed to complete the project.

Don did more than simply reopen the trail for public use; he also improved it! Using hand tools, he cut-out steps along the steepest sections of the trail and reinforced his work to minimize future erosion. Large trees that had previously blocked the trail were sectioned with a chainsaw and now serve as seating for tired hikers.

Don is no stranger to Renfrew. For many years, he has served as the coordinator for our annual Civil War Encampment, an event that brings hundreds of re-enactors and visitors to the Park each August. He is also the newest member of Renfrew's Park Committee, a group that serves to assist and advise the Board of Directors on matters pertaining to Renfrew Park.

When asked why he volunteered to clear this trail, Mr. Biesecker simply stated: "why not, it needed to be done." We thank Don for all of his help and invite you to walk the trail this Spring. All of us at Renfrew think you will enjoy the experience.

At right, Donald Biesecker works to remove a section of log from the walkway on the Edmajoda Trail. Mr. Biesecker spent several weeks clearing this trail, completing the project just before Thanksgiving 2000. All of us at Renfrew are grateful for Don's enthusiasm and dedication to the Park.

☆ In The Spotlight ☆
Calling All Tour Guides

The staff and boards of directors of Renfrew Museum are extremely grateful to all of the volunteers who give so generously of their time and talent. Renfrew relies on volunteer help for all of its major programs. Without volunteers, Renfrew would be a very different (and much diminished) institution.

Overall, our volunteer corps is strong and growing. We have a great group of people willing to help us with special events such as the Pumpkin Festival and Antique Appraisal Day. However, it is plain to everyone at Renfrew that we are in desperate need of tour guides. Unfortunately, we have lost several of our most dedicated docents over the last few years, and our recruitment efforts have not been able to correct the problem.

This is an open appeal to our membership for help. If you are a current Renfrew Guide, we appreciate your help and hope you will return for the 2001 season. If you have been a guide in the past, we ask that you please consider rejoining our group; your experience is needed. If you are a Friend of Renfrew with an interest in sharing our history with the public, please let us know.

Becoming a volunteer guide is easy. All you need is an interest in history, the desire to meet new people, and a few hours of free time each month. We provide the training and work around your schedule.



Volunteers...a key part of our success



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Membership Update

Renewals are "In The Mail!"

Over the last month, the staff and volunteers of Renfrew Museum have reorganized all of our membership files. In the process, we discovered that many of our members may not have received a timely renewal notice during this past year. We are doing our best to correct this problem. Individuals whose memberships have expired recently and over the last few years, should have received an invitation to rejoin the Friends prior to the publication of this newsletter. Please rest assured that if you have been missed by Renfrew, you will remain on our mailing list and given the opportunity to renew your membership.

If you have any questions about your membership status, please give the Museum a call at 762-4723. If you have not yet received your renewal letter, you may clip the form below and mail it directly to Renfrew.

The staff of Renfrew Museum would like to acknowledge and thank **Dorothy Bollinger, Louise Kyser** and **Alice McCleaf** for their volunteer assistance with this project. These women have graciously given of their time to search financial records, complete membership cards and sort, fold and mail renewal materials. They also assisted with the mailing of this Spring issue of *der Wetterhahn!* Thank you Dorothy, Louise and Alice, for your dedication to this project.

Bell Society Update

Renfrew is currently at work on the second offering of the Bell Society, its special membership level introduced in 1999. This two year membership included a special

Acknowledgements

(New Donations and Thank Yous)

The Museum staff would like to to publicly thank **Nancy Savage** and **Louise Kyser** for serving as volunteer chairpersons for Renfrew's annual Christmas Open House in 2000. Anyone who attended the event knows that we had a high quality program centering on the theme of Renfrew's 25th or Silver Anniversary. Much of our success may be attributed directly to Nancy and Louise, whose tireless efforts helped organize our volunteer decorators, secured many musicians, helped with promotion and even arranged for our refreshments. Thank you very much to Nancy, Louise and all the other volunteers who contributed to the success of this program.

We are also grateful to **Undine Warner** for her recent contribution of antique kitchen items. We were pleased to receive a brass dipper, cast iron spider, wooden ladle, iron griddle, iron trivet and hanging corn dryer for display at Renfrew Museum. These items will certainly help us with our interpretive programming.

reproduction Bell pottery piece made by master potter Lester Briening of Robeson, PA. We are still working on the details of our Bell Society offering for 2001. We hope to unveil the program in the next issue of this newsletter. Any current Bell Society member or other Friend of Renfrew who renews their membership in 2001 may elect to "upgrade" their membership later in the year. Any dues paid will be credited toward the Bell Society level. Many thanks to all who have participated in this program or expressed interest in our future offerings.



Renfrew Museum and Park

1010 East Main Street, Waynesboro PA 17268 (717) 762-4723

FRIENDS OF RENFREW - Application for Annual Membership



Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

State and Zip Code _____

Optional Information:

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Membership Categories

Life \$1,000 _____

Bell Society* _____

Curator's Associates* _____

Sustaining \$125 _____

Family \$50 _____

Donor \$25 _____

Individual \$15 _____

Student (ages 6-15) _____

Endowment Fund _____

(Endowment Fund Donations help to build Renfrew's future. They are invested for long-term growth, not incorporated into our operating budget). Bell Society and Curator's Associates are categories with unique benefits and characteristics. Please call for more information.

_____ Please send me
 _____ information on
 _____ volunteer
 _____ opportunities
 _____ at Renfrew:



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RENFREW SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY

Renfrew's annual Spring Clean-up Day is set for **Saturday, March 31st, 2001**. Please make plans now to join us for this very important day of renewal for Renfrew Park. Volunteers will gather at 8:30 am at the Visitors Center. We will work until mid-afternoon. You may come for the entire day or just an hour or two. We can accommodate your schedule! Workers are encouraged to bring their own rakes and shovels. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, please call the Museum at 762-4723. We look forward to seeing you on the 31st!

PAVILION RESERVATIONS

Renfrew is now taking pavilion reservations for the 2001 season. Our pavilion is the perfect place to hold a family reunion, church event, wedding reception or community program. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to call now while summer space is still available.



Renfrew Museum and Park's Picnic Pavilion sits under a blanket of snow. This structure, erected by the Lions Club of Waynesboro, serves as the location for many educational programs, company picnics and family reunions. It may be reserved by calling the Museum at 762-4723.

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