



FLEMING CASTLE MUSEUM

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Small House that is a Big Mystery

January 2009

5 BONNELL STREET FLEMINGTON, NJ 08822

www.flemingcastle.com

A word from the Board of Trustees...

Welcome! We are pleased to share Fleming Castle Museum's first-ever newsletter with you, our most treasured members and friends.

As we plan for the coming year, severe budget cuts and a difficult economic climate are two immediate challenges we must address. With plans to expand our educational outreach, embark on an ambitious landscaping project and enhance our service to the community (watch for our "Second Sunday" open house programs), our dedicated Trustees and volunteers will have to work even harder to identify and develop new sources of revenue.

One proposed area of growth is to promote the Castle and garden as a rental facility for meetings, small events, and social gatherings. Another is membership – *how wonderful would it be to count every Borough resident as a member of the Castle?* We also will continue our efforts to attract support from a variety of sources, including government, corporate and foundation grants, and we will be sure to let you know how you can help.

To find out about volunteer opportunities - - another important way to support Fleming Castle Museum - - please call (908) 782-8235.

We are proud of the progress made to date (see 2008 Key Achievements) and look forward to seeing you soon at the Castle!

Warm regards,

Carmen L. Grimes
President, Board of Trustees

MARK YOUR CALENDAR - FEBRUARY

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP MONTH

15 "Second Sunday" Open House 1 PM to 4 PM at the Castle

20 Member and Friend Appreciation Event
5:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Castle
RSVP requested (908) 782-8235

2008 Key Achievements

Highlights of our progress are as follows:

MAINTENANCE

- ❖ Essential foundation repairs were completed, with new French drains installed to conduct water away from the west elevation of the structure;
- ❖ UV-blocking window blinds were installed in major rooms;
- ❖ The storm/screen door for the kitchen was replaced;
- ❖ An unsightly, awkwardly placed cast iron radiator in the 1800's room was removed and replaced with electric baseboard heating;
- ❖ Motion sensor lights and two electrical outlets were installed at the back of the house; and,
- ❖ The back of the house was scraped and re-painted.

GROUNDS

- ❖ A beautiful new directory, featuring a roofline that matches the Castle's, was erected in the side yard. The brick walkway leading to it is handicap accessible. Photos and descriptions of the interior are displayed on one large board and information that is continually updated occupies the other side of the directory. With plans to develop a boxwood garden near the directory, several specimens have been planted in that area. Special thanks to Les Hoffman for volunteering and donating many of the boxwoods.
- ❖ The sloping backyard was terraced to create two grass-covered patio areas, defined by brick walkways and retaining walls. We were pleased to employ the services of Days Eye Landscaping for this project, as well as the foundation repairs. A grant from the Hunterdon County Open Space Trust Fund Program covered these expenses.
- ❖ Garden Associates Landscape Architecture, based in Somerville, prepared a rendering of the gardens and is proposing a partnership that would greatly benefit the Castle with donations of plants, trees and shrubs. Garden Associates recently won an award for excellence from the N.J. Landscape Contractors Association.

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PRIDE IN THE PAST • PRESERVATION FOR THE FUTURE

EDUCATION

- ❖ An important part of our educational outreach is the “traveling trunk” program. History comes alive for second-graders when a costumed representative of the Castle visits their classrooms. Through the use of a trunk full of historical objects, family life in colonial times is graphically described. Interest in this program frequently results in students bringing their parents to the Castle for an open house tour.
- ❖ In addition to the traveling trunk program and standard building tours, docents and volunteers welcomed 5th grade students from Reading-Fleming Intermediate School during a week-long series of tours from May 19 – 23. Students prepared for the tour with advance classroom instruction.

OPEN HOUSES, SPECIAL EVENTS & TOURS

- ❖ Second Saturday programs included a variety of offerings, from a calligrapher to a master gardener, silhouette artist and colonial craft projects, in an attempt to appeal to a wide spectrum of the population.
- ❖ Dorothy Calkin, an Art Teacher and recognized thespian, was retained to coordinate the Castle’s docent training, open houses and community events. Ms. Calkin, an accomplished seamstress, made new period-appropriate costumes for all docents.
- ❖ A second-floor room now is designated for presentations to visitors, prospective donors and other key constituents. The “Friends” purchased a laptop computer and projection screen for Power Point presentations; folding chairs accommodate at least 20 guests. As we develop a strategy to generate revenue by renting the Castle for small events and meetings, this will be an attractive feature to promote.
- ❖ “Meet & Eat @ the Museum” was held on May 10 to thank members for their important support. Local merchants, including Shop-Rite, 55 Main, Capo Ristorante and The Union Hotel generously donated food and beverages.
- ❖ The first annual Chief Tuccamirgan Day was held on October 11, featuring keynote remarks by Beverly Friend, protégé of James Lone Bear Revey, American Indian Council of New Jersey, as well as many children’s activities. Our guests were among the first to enjoy the newly terraced backyard, and included a charming couple from England who happened to be visiting family on Bonnell Street. Fleming Castle Museum partnered with the Flemington Borough Shade Tree Commission to plant a ceremonial tree in Tuccamirgan Park. Trustee Bill Wachter crafted a sign to mark the weeping copper beech. Shop-Rite and Matt’s Red Rooster generously donated food and beverages for the event.
- ❖ The Hunterdon Garden Guild “decked the halls” with winter greens and festive plants in December. We extend heartfelt thanks to the Guild members for sharing their expertise and creativity to once again enhance the Castle’s holiday décor. We welcome the Guild twice a year as part of our ongoing beautification program.
- ❖ Docents welcomed many private groups for tours, including Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops; church groups; families hosting reunions; and, a chapter of the Red Hat Society.

FLEMING CASTLE MUSEUM

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HERITAGE TOURISM & OUR COMMUNITY

All of the activities undertaken by the Board of Trustees and Friends of Fleming Castle are coordinated and connected to another important goal - to develop heritage tourism, a much-needed economic boost for the Borough. The Trustees of Fleming Castle Museum have provided leadership support of this effort. Close to 30 community leaders gathered at The Union Hotel on May 20 to welcome Nancy Byrne, Executive Director of the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism, for a very special meeting regarding this important and timely topic. Organized by the Trustees of Fleming Castle Museum, the discussion continues as residents, business owners and merchants explore new ways to attract visitors to historic Flemington.

Fleming Castle Museum is a valuable part of that history, worthy of preservation and community attention. Standing still is not an option, despite the current economic climate - - ongoing, increased support from a variety of sources is essential to the growth of the Castle as a treasured local landmark.

Call (908) 782-8235 to learn about membership opportunities.

The Castle is for the Community, and we hope the community is for the Castle!

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