

Sheffield Historical Society

June 2004 Newsletter

"Pieces of History," Saturday, July 10, Silent Auction & Tag Sale,— Quality AND Quantity

What do you need? What would you like? What are you giving your niece for Christmas? What would look nice over the fireplace or on the dining room table? What would sell well in your antique shop?

Come to the **Giant Silent Auction & Fantabulous Tag Sale** on Saturday, July 10, at the Sheffield American Legion Hall from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., to find the perfect items.

Titled "Pieces of History," the sale will benefit the educational programs of the Sheffield Historical Society. Items from around the world have been donated: a 10-day stay in a private home on a Greek Island, a watercolor of a French village (c. 1930) by David Humphreys, an Royal Crown Derby Imari 10" bowl, an enormous antique coffee tin, Staffordshire, Italian glass, French yarn, and more from Venice, Japan, England, Burma, Mexico, and Germany. From the United States come household items such as furniture, linens, silver and glass, dish sets, and kitchen ware. Also in the silent Auction will be items of local interest such as a vintage beige cutwork dress (with provenance), private historical research and tours, and art work.

And it is not too late to donate items. Co-chairs Rene Wood (229-2875) and Jim Miller (229-8668) are still accepting 'fine' goods and 'good' goods to be sold at this one-day sale. Call them or the Historical Society (229-2694) to arrange pickup.



Wray Gunn (229-2668) and his committee have collected certificates for meals and services, wine selections, travel and vacation arrangements, movie tickets, evaluations, car wash, liquor, and more.

THE SILENT AUCTION. Come at 9 a.m. to place your first bid. Check in during the day to see how your bid is faring. Return at mid-afternoon to place your final bid; last bidding takes place at 3 p.m.

While you aim for that special auction item, peruse the fabulous Tag Sale at the same time.

THE TAG SALE. Not quite special enough for the silent auction, but fabulous none-the-less, zillions of items will be available to take home right away. If you don't have that competitive spirit and just want to take your booty and go home, this is your part of the event.

SPECIAL EARLY BIRD BONUS SHOPPING will be held from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. for a donation of \$10.

LUNCH under the auspices of Chef Harry Conklin will be available from 11:30 a.m.—2 p.m.

PICK-UP DETAILS. Items will be available for pick-up from 6-8 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday and thereafter at the Sheffield Historical Society office.

DONORS: All items given to The Sheffield Historical Society for this sale are tax deductible. Please request a "Donor Contribution Form" when your goods are picked up.



Annual Reports

Collections Committee

Committee Members: Betty Chapin, Connie Logan, Dorothy Marosy, Carl Proper, and Doreen Atwood

This past year, Director Joanne Hurlbut, applied for the National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant to assist the Society with the proper care of the collection. The grant, valued at \$5,000, was awarded to the Society in December. This is a continuation from the CAP and the previous PAC reports. Information from the survey Gwen Spicer produced under the PAC is now being implemented. Under the grant, new shelving, acid-free boxes, and muslin have been purchased for storage preservation. The textile collection will be rehoused over the next several months. Many thanks to Anne Riou for her help in setting up the shelving system.

Several exhibits at the Stone Store have involved items from the collection. Those exhibits included items from Sheffield Inns for the summer exhibit, ice cutting materials for the winter exhibit, and redware and kitchen items for the recent collaborative exhibit with the Bidwell House of Monterey and the Col. John Ashley House of Ashley Falls. An exhibit of historic hats and associated materials has been on going in the exhibit room of the Dan Raymond House. Three large glass cases were purchased from Bradford's Auction House to be used for displaying valued pieces of the collection when on exhibit at the Stone Store.

Doreen Atwood,
Chairman, Collections Committee

Mark Dewey Research Center

The Center, staffed by volunteers, has

helped over two hundred people this year.

We have put up two picture displays at the library, one on the Sheffield quarries and the other on school groups dating from the 1890s.

We were given a great used computer and we purchased a color printer which produces fine quality prints. Also, we purchased a book of the published sermons of the Rev. Ephraim Judson, the third minister at Old Parish Church from 1791-1813, and an autograph of George F. Root.

Two very interesting diaries of Emily Hulett Sheldon from the early 1930's about farm life on Hewins St. have been given to the Center. We have also received two scrapbooks which belonged to Mildred Roys, and a copy of the diary of Dr. Elisha Cleaveland, a native of Lakeville, CT., which starts in 1852.

We did the research for the fall cemetery walk, and James Miller took 20 students for a cemetery walk at Center Cemetery.

Bernard A. Drew has started to research the history of Blacks in Berkshire County as the result of a grant. We held a reception for him when his book "Spend a Summer in Sheffield & Environs" was published.

The Center has received \$827.50 in donations.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Chapin, Director

Committee: Doreen Atwood, David Prouty, and James Miller, Archivist.

Stone Store

The Gift Shop in the Stone Store continues to flourish. Shopping at the trade show twice a year enables us to offer a variety of tasteful items. The acquisition of three display cabinets allows us to showcase the work of local artisans, and we now have lovely bags in which to place customers' purchases. Thank you for your support, encouragement, and comments.

Respectfully submitted,
Doreen Atwood and Dorothy Marosy

Treasurer's Comments

The annual report of the treasurer will be available after the close of the fiscal year on June 30 and the completion of the audit in August. Preliminary results are reasonably positive. While the Society will end the year with a deficit, it should not be as great as projected as fundraising revenue has increased. In addition, the investment portfolio which is about half of what it was four and a half years ago, principally due to market conditions, has begun to rebound. With prudent management and good stewardship this trend should continue and provide some income from earnings over the years.

Catherine B. Miller

Outreach Committee

The Committee was pleased with the variety of programs at our monthly meetings this year. In September, Joanne and Steve Catsos' presented Black Ash to Basket, a program showing the complete process from the harvesting of the tree to the award-winning baskets produced.

This local couple gave us information on the true American art of weaving baskets.

Ed and Libby Klekowski of UMass gave a video/lecture on "Under the Connecticut". This film, later shown on PBS, gave us a look at the life in the Connecticut River now as well as the signs of the earlier life in the Connecticut Valley.

Chris Coenen, past president of the Society, had prepared a video of the 250th celebration of Sheffield in 1983. His film showed the huge parade, as well as activities of the Society in that period. It brought many fond memories to residents who attended.

The Madrigal Singers of Mt. Everett High School sang winter solstice music for our December meeting. Their fine costumes matched the fine quality of their music.

In January, the popular "What's It?" night featured Milt Barnum, past president, leading us in a learning experience about items brought to the meeting. This program always is a winner - no matter the winter weather.

George Emmons talk on the Indian Burial Cairnes in the area was very well received. Residents of North County as well as many from South County came to hear him.

"The Battle of Bennington and the German Prisoners" talk by Lion Miles was fascinating. Most of the audience was not familiar with the fact that German prisoners from the Revolutionary War were hired out to farmers as workers, including to the Ashley family of Sheffield.

In April, Tom Zetterstrom, founder of

Elm Watch, spoke about the history of the great planting of elms in Sheffield and the newer, disease-resistant elms being planted now. His slide presentation showed early Main Street with the canopy of elms as well as pictures and locations of the great elms still standing.

In May, James Miller spoke about the Sheffield tombstone carvers. On the following Saturday morning, Jim led a tour of two cemeteries to see some of the stones today.

The June meeting was a presentation by our director, Joanne Hurlbut, about our present collection. Emphasis was on the on-going preservation of our textile collection. A recent grant, secured by Ms. Hurlbut, of \$5000 will allow more of the collection to be cared for in the proper storage containers and atmosphere. For the second year, a professional conservator was on site to train volunteers on proper handling and storage of artifacts. The June meeting was held on the grounds of the Dan Raymond House. Those present then visited the space dedicated to the proper storage.

Respectfully submitted, Marion Whiteman, Chr.

Members: Wray Gunn, Rene Wood, Sandra Preston, Joanne Hurlbut.

The President's Report

I believe that we have just survived a critical period in the existence of the Society. We have all pulled together through financial challenges that in the long run will leave us in a strong position for the future.

During the year, we initiated several exciting yearly events that should

bring in higher revenues with each new presentation. Specifically, John-Arthur Miller began his Winter Concert series with the Edison phonograph as the focal point. The Fund Raising Committee began the Pigge Roast dinners with Marcia Brolli guiding the leadership. Beginning this July, Rene Wood and Jim Miller will spearhead the Silent Auction & Tag Sale. These 3 projects should net the organization at least \$10,000.

The Finance Committee continues to give us guidance for the use of the Endowment. We have been advised by that committee of the maximum amount the Society should consider withdrawing from the endowment yearly without terrible consequences. They advised us to pay down the mortgage on the Stone Store because of the higher interest rate and to pay that same monthly amount back each month to the Society's Endowment.

The STONE STORE is our main attraction on the Village Green. The duo of Doreen Atwood and Dorothy Marosy have given time and effort to gathering appealing and salable items for the STORE. During this year, we have had better sales. With the increase in inventory and more varied products, there is an expectancy of greater revenues for next year.

I believe that it was unfortunate that the Society had to reduce the position of the Director from full-time to part-time. However, it was necessary in order to maintain the stability of the Society. The Society is fortunate, however, that Joanne, the present Director, has agreed to stay on and work with the us for the

Historical Society Recipient of Matching Grant

A challenge matching grant to retire the mortgage on the Old Stone Store has been offered to the Sheffield Historical Society by an anonymous Sheffield couple. If successful, the dollar-for-dollar challenge will yield \$24,000, a sum sufficient to retire the indebtedness on the historic structure.

The Old Stone Store was purchased by the Society for the express purpose of preserving it and making it available for a range of community and Society activities and services which have come to include children's educational programs, revolving exhibits, meeting space, and information center. It has seen use extensively by local organizations and the Society for these activities.

Most of the renovation cost of approximately \$250,000 has been raised, leaving a balance of \$24,000 on the mortgage. "This is a very generous gift and we hope people in the community will help the Society achieve the match," said Wray Gunn, president of the Society.

People interested in supporting the effort are invited to send gifts to the Sheffield Historical Society, Box 747, Sheffield, MA 01257, with a notation "Old Stone Store mortgage."

President's Report continued

coming year to test the new arrangement. I believe that once the kinks are ironed out, it will work.

Already, we are looking at a better 2004 - 2005 year. The Society has been offered a matching grant of \$12,000 against any and all donations to the STONE STORE mortgage. I think that this is an excellent incentive for the Society to pull together in promoting fund raising projects and developing new educational programs.

Director's Report

Reading through the pages of this newsletter, it is obvious that the Sheffield Historical Society continues to be a highly active organization. In addition to the many activities already mentioned, I would like to add my thanks for all of those who once again helped with the youth-related programming. Our fall was filled with 5th graders at-

tending programs in Center Cemetery. The February school vacation workshop was filled, making it our most heavily attended workshop to date. Springtime saw a full slate of school groups from several Berkshire County schools.

Our collaborative activities continued apace with programs such as Family Day and the Revolutionary Period tours presented by SHS and The Trustees of Reservations. The Spirit of Freedom in Sheffield, a Martin Luther King Day program, presented by SHS and the Bushnell-Sage Library was both moving and our best attended holiday event to date.

The annual October cemetery program saw a large turnout and some mighty fine acting as well. The spirits were with us on all levels, including the good weather spirit.

Exhibits in the Stone Store provided members and the community with much to think about and appreciate. The topics ranged from Summer to

Winter Memories to the Festival of Tress to Gardening through the Years. The Kiwanis created an anniversary exhibit and local artists have rented the space twice for their own gallery showings. A number of community members have loaned their objects for SHS based exhibits. You have until to June 27 to stop in and see Claire Height's Floral Frogs. SHS was also joined by other historical sites for its Redware exhibition. THANK YOU to all those who have worked with SHS to create these varied, informative, and well-received exhibits.

The upcoming year looks to be a busy one as well. I am hopeful of the continuation of that excellent community support that has made my five years here so enjoyable. My thanks go out to all those other volunteers who perform the many other necessary tasks such as those who help with newsletters, press materials, and sitting the Stone Store.

Look for the July opening of the exhibit *Life Along the River*. See also housatonicriversummer.org for information on other related activities.

THANK YOU!

For the second year now, the Society has conducted an Annual Appeal. Last year's drive ended on a high note, exceeding our expectations. This year's drive is off to a great start! Contributors include:

Ginger Alexander
 John and Emily Alexander
 Sebastian Anselmi
 Walter and Doreen Atwood
 Fred and Betty Bangs
 Ann Barrett
 Trumbull Barrett
 Anne Barstow and
 Tom Driver
 Betty D. Batacchi
 Edward and Linda Bazinet
 Paul Benjou and P. J. Birriel
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bennett
 Richard Bernstein and
 Elisabeth Cary
 in honor of Virginia Drury
 Robin Berthet
 Jean W. Blackmur
 Douglas and Honor Blume
 Lois E. Bradford
 Jim Brandy
 Marcia Brolli
 Richard and Joan Brooks
 Mr. and Mrs. S. Brady Brown
 William and Penny Browne
 Tanya Buckner
 Elizabeth M. Chapin
 Neil and Kathleen Chrisman
 Walter and Ursula Cliff
 Constance E. Cooper
 Mary and James Cooper
 Dorothy Crockett
 Mrs. Jean E. Curtiss
 Dwight and Nancy Dellert
 Barbara E. Delmolino
 Margaret Dessau and
 Robert Wheeler, Jr.
 Mr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Dibrita
 Kerry and Anne Douglas
 John and Audrey Downie
 L. Robert Duffy

Norma J. Edsall and
 Alice R. Corbin
 Bart and Janet Reich Elsbach
 Peter and Patricia Elsbach
 Nancy Emery
 Marcia Fowle
 Jack and Sandy French
 Warner Friedman
 Natalie Funk
 Phil and Betsy Garcia
 Frank and Helen Bray-Garretson
 Rene Gibson
 Ruth A. Gillette
 John and Elsie Gilligan
 Joel Goldstein
 Richard L. Goodwin
 in honor of Mike McGuire
 Leonard Graziano and William Grief
 Martha Greene
 Stephen Greenspan
 Luis Guerrero
 Lovina E. Gulotta
 Wray Gunn and Cora Portnoff
 Nancy M. Hahn
 Joyce and Ross Hawkins
 Claire K. Height
 Gillian and Norman Hettinger
 Dr. James and Donna Hurley
 Keith Hyatt
 Mary and Charles H. Jock, Jr.
 Felecie and Kevin Joyce
 Tom and Bev Kradel
 Thaddeus B. and Maria G. Kubis
 Allison G. Lassoe
 Marc Lavietes and Rose Rosal
 Susan and Philip Lebowitz
 Susan and Robert Ledlie
 Susan B. Levin
 Ann-Marie Light
 Candida Logan
 Susan Lushing
 Ms. Sue Mac Veety
 Toni and Marian Malnati
 Dorothy Marosy
 Barbara Martin
 Dawn and Henry Massini
 Bette and Charlie McNamara
 James and Catherine Miller
 Dan and Anne Moulton
 Patrice Mullin
 C. Twiggs Myers

in memory of Arthur R. Chase
 Katherine Ness and John James
 Paul and Mary Ellen O'Brien
 Kathy Orlando
 Thomas Orlando
 John and Charlotte Owens
 David and Marsha Pottle
 Joseph H. and Carol F. Reich Fund
 Ann M. Riou
 Jessica Roseman
 Susan Rothschild and Don Freedman
 Kate and George W. Rowe
 Peter and Ellen Rowntree
 Michael J. Saxton
 Beala and Stephen Schiffman
 Becky and K.C. Schopp & Family
 Gary Schumer
 Dennis Sears and Rene Wood
 Robert and Ann Shanks
 Myron and Marcie Sheinberg
 Shiels Builders
 Susan Silver
 George T. Smith
 Nikki and Sig Spiegel
 Peter and Tjasa Sprague
 John and Katherine E. Stookey
 Noreene Storrie and
 Wesley G. McCain
 Howard Justus and Hope Swanson
 Thomas and Kathleen Tetro
 Robert M. Thomas, Jr.
 Ronald and Judith Timm
 Irene and John Toffey
 Peter Traub
 Mr. and Mrs. Albert Trocchi
 in memory of Millie Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Uffner
 Merle and Karen Varney
 Loet and Edith Velmans
 Diana and Henry Vollmer
 Stacey and Jeffrey Weber
 Jonathan Weinress
 Mary Alice and James Welch
 David and Barbara West
 Elsie D. West
 Roberta Wheeler
 Marion Whitman
 Marilyn and John Wightman
 Evelyn L. and Oliver C. Willcox
 Ruth and William Wuori
 R. Zimmerman and E. Williams

Historical Society receives several grants for special projects.

Scholars in Residence Grant

The Sheffield Historical Society and The Trustees of Reservations have been awarded a collaborative Scholars in Residence grant, a joint award made by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Bay State Historical League. Bernard Drew, the scholar for this project, will pursue the topic

ORIGINS OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IN SHEFFIELD AND ENVIRONS

SHS and The Trustees will open their archival collections in order to glean information about the African-Americans who lived in Southern Berkshire County. From the stories of Sheffield's Elizabeth Freeman (Mumbet), to Great Barrington's Tom Burghardt and W. E. B. Du Bois, to Stockbridge's Agrippa Hull, the lives of local African-Americans are increasingly coming to the foreground of national studies. Drew will continue the research into these individuals as he seeks to place them in the wider historical context. In addition, he will explore the lives of the many other African-Americans who lived here in the 18th and 19th centuries, but whose stories remain untold. By analyzing the financial, legal, and family records, the everyday lives of this nearly invisible group will be revealed. Areas for study include the issue of sub-cultures and the development of free versus slave sections of the Black community. The study will analyze these groups through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and through the movement from an agrarian to an industrial economy.

The majority of the \$2,500 grant will be given as compensation to the

scholar for his weeks of research and writing. Drew will present his findings to the public through a talk. He is already hard at work on the project, which has a completion deadline of November. The research findings will also be printed in pamphlet form. Look in future newsletters for additional information. (Take note—This grant was one of only three awarded across the State.)

Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

The Society continues its success with Federal grants with its third collections grant award in late 2003. Of the 376 applications submitted from across the country, the NEH selected only 39% as grant recipients. For additional details on the SHS grant see the Collections and Outreach committee annual reports.

Under this year's award of \$5,000, the Society installed modern collections-appropriate metal shelving units in the room on the first floor of the Dan Raymond House that was formerly the shop and before that the borning room exhibit. On Monday, June 14, the Society was again visited by textile conservator Gwen Spicer, who worked with members interested in textile preservation. New systems for storing hats, quilts, and objects such as gloves were put into place. Over the course of the next several months, the hat exhibit will be fully dismantled, catalogued, and stored. Other objects will be

moved from the upstairs rooms into the new textile storage. The upstairs rooms are the hottest rooms in the entire house and the new area will offer a better climate and greater accessibility. Anyone interested in working on any phase of this project should call the office.

Grant awarded for Press Materials from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Inc.

The Society is creating its first four-color rack card, which will be distributed throughout the county. The card will feature the Society grounds and all its buildings, focusing on touring the Dan Raymond House and shopping in the old Stone Store. It will also include information on all the services offered by the Society.

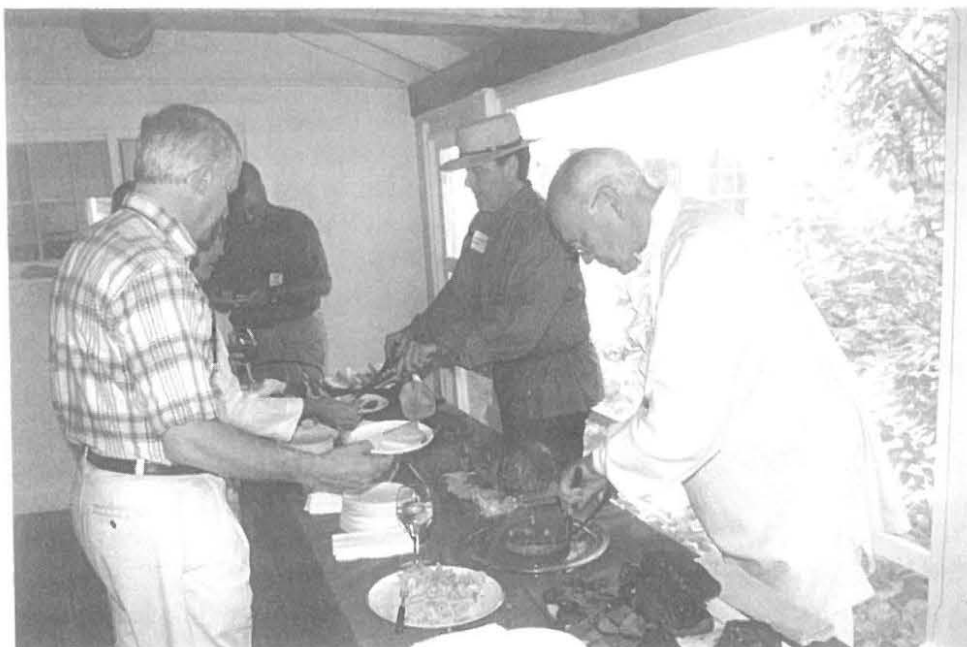
The grant award is for \$1,000, and it was through this same process that the Society obtained its new digital camera. The combination of the camera imagery and the rack card will significantly raise the profile of SHS in the community. Many digital images taken from the camera have already appeared in the local press. Updates will be made to the Society's web page and the camera will figure prominently in documenting our collection.

Thank you to The Sheffield Pottery, which made a \$500 contribution to help underwrite the purchase of the new exhibit/shop glass cases.

LIGHT FARE & FRIVOLITY

Members and friends of the Society spent a leisurely afternoon on May 22 at the home of John and Appy Stookey on the Egremont Road. Their residence, which served as an early 18th century tavern and inn, was the venue for the third annual spring party which this year focused on the role of that institution in the social and cultural life of Sheffield. The event was co-chaired by Barbara Delmolino and Catherine Miller.

Period fare included wild venison sausage and roast supplied and prepared by Barbara, pheasant provided by Doreen and Bud Atwood, plus local turkey, ham, fine breads, ice cream with rhubarb sauce, beer and wine. These fine victuals were enjoyed by about 100 guests as they listened to rousing fiddlin' music by Anson Olds and his guitar accompanist, while they toured the grounds and house.



About 15 Society members helped with preparation, serving and cleanup with Carl Proper, John-Arthur Miller, Bud Atwood, Harry Conklin, Wray Gunn, Dennis Sears and host John Stookey appearing in period costume. They were augmented by help from Dorothy Marosy, Doreen Atwood, Marcia Brolli, Annie Ryder, Joanne Hurlbut along with co-chairs, Barbara and Catherine.



The weather cooperated to make it an unhurried and memorable community event, with people lingering in conversation, amusement and mirth.



159 Main Street
PO Box 747
Sheffield, MA 01257

Phone: 413-229-2694
Email: shs@sheffieldhistory.org

Tours of the 1774 Dan Raymond House are available
Thursday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mark Dewey Research Center open Monday and
Friday afternoons, 1:30 to 4 p.m., and by
appointment.

Stone Store hours are Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and
Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

James & Catherine Miller
PO Box 7
Sheffield, MA 01257

WE'RE ON THE WEB
SHEFFIELDHISTORY.ORG

Board of Directors 2004-2005

Wray Gunn, *President*

John-Arthur Miller, *Vice-
President*

H. Dennis Sears, *Treasurer*

James R. Miller, *Clerk*

Trustees:

Marcia Brolli

Harry E. Conklin

Barbara Delmolino

Leonard Graziano

Allison G. Lasso

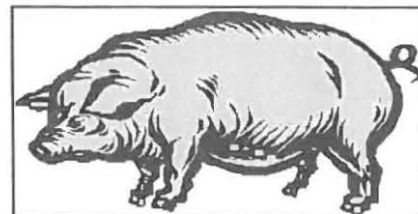
Joanne Hurlbut, *Director*

Pigge Roast Reprise

Scott Ryan and the Pigge Roast are coming to Sheffield on August 28, 2004. The Second annual Pigge Roast will be held at the Sheffield Legion Hall at the corner of Cook Road and Route 7 in Sheffield from 3 - 6 p.m.

At 3 again this year Marion Whitman and friends will hold a blueberry pie taste-off to find the best pie-baker in the area. At 3:45 serving will begin. On the menu are pork or fried turkey and all the fixings, baked beans, salads, corn-on-the-cob, and blueberry pie.

Adults \$15, children \$8, children under 8 free. Adult take-outs available.



CRAFTS: Barbara Delmolino has brought together a group of crafts people who will be exhibiting and selling all day on the grounds of the Legion Hall.

Come early to shop at the crafts booths and stay for the fun of the pie contest and then eat a delicious meal.

Save these dates:

July 3—River Exhibit Opens

July 10—Silent Auction and
Tag Sale

August 28—Pigge Roast