



Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission Chronicle

July 2011

County Library launches cultural tours

Aiming to expand the horizons of the area's youth and adults, the Cumberland County Library has launched a series of trips that give visitors a first-hand taste of global and regional culture and history.

The short, day-long trips are in keeping with the library's summer reading theme, "One World: Many Stories," explains Library Director Jean Edwards.

She was surprised that though the program was originally intended primarily for children, the first trip, to the "Celtic Fling" at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire grounds in June, attracted more adults than children.

The next trip, set for Monday, July 18, will take place at the Cape May Lighthouse, museum and Cape May Point State Park. She expects more children for this excursion.



Scottish bagpipers perform at the Celtic Fling, the first in a series of cultural trips offered by the Cumberland County Library.

The Celtic Fling, says the director, enabled local visitors to step inside a time machine filled with musicians, dancers and craftsmen from another era. Some of the features included traditional Irish step dancers, sheep shearing, glass blowing and a rousing performance of bagpipers.

"The Celtic Fling was in full swing, celebrating contemporary and traditional arts, crafts, music, dance and recreation associated with Irish, Scottish, Cornish and Gaelic heritage," says Edwards. In addition, several Celtic bands provided non-stop entertainment on eight stages.

The trip to the **Cape May Lighthouse** will feature a tour of the 199-step lighthouse where visitors can enjoy spectacular views of the surrounding area. "For those who choose not to climb, the Oil House contains a fully-accessible visitors' orientation center and a Museum Shop stocked with maritime accessories and memorabilia," says Edwards. "Visitors can also revel in the constantly changing shoreline, dunes, freshwater coastal marsh and trails."

The cost is \$7 for adults, \$3 for children ages 3-12, with children under 3 admitted free. The cost includes admission to the

(Continued on page 2)

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CCCHC
790 E. Commerce St.
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
856-453-2177
www.ccculturalheritage.org

Tours give residents taste of other cultures

(Continued from page 1)

lighthouse, museum and park, and transportation from the library to the Cape May Lighthouse and back. The bus leaves the library at 9:15 a.m. and returns to the library at 5 p.m.

Participants should come to the library, 800 E. Commerce St., Bridgeton, to register. Payment in cash is due at the time of registration. Tour goers should bring their own lunches, snacks and beverages. Call 856-453-2210, ext. 101, for more information.



Girl in Irish dress, seen at the recent "Celtic Fling."

One more trip in the series is planned, to take place in the fall, says Edwards. She has not yet decided between the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in Manheim, Pa., or the Noyes Museum of Art in Oceanville, Atlantic County.

Funding is provided in part by the N.J. State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cumberland County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the Cultural & Heritage Commission.

Obon Dance Festival celebrates Japanese and Buddhist traditions

Traditional Japanese folk dancing and taiko drumming will be featured at the Seabrook Buddhist Temple's 66th annual Obon Memorial Folk Dance Festival on Saturday, July 16.

The *Obon Odori* is a "dance of joy" honoring those who have died and the sacrifices they made for the betterment of the community.

The events begin at 5 p.m. with ethnic food booths and craft tables. Taiko drumming performed by the temple's Dharma School taiko group and hoh daiko

drummers, with a special guest appearance by the Soh Daiko Drummers of the New York Buddhist Church and the Nen Daiko Drummers of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, is scheduled for 5:30 to 6 p.m. and 8 to 8:45 p.m.

A mini lecture and Q & A on Buddhism will be given from 6 to 6:30 in the Temple. The folk dancing, with audience participation encouraged, will be performed from 7 to 8 p.m. and at 8:45 p.m. until closing. Dancers are from throughout the Delaware Valley region.

The temple is located

on Northville Road off State Highway 77 in Seabrook. Folding or lawn chairs are recommended.

The Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center, in the Upper Deerfield Municipal Building, will be open from 2 to 4 p.m.

On Saturday, July 23, the temple will observe an Obon memorial service, to which the public is invited.

About 500 families of Japanese descent relocated to Seabrook after World War II. Seabrook is considered to be the largest Japanese resettlement after the war.