



Essex Heritage's premier partnership event . . .

www.trailsandsails.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRAILS & SAILS WEEKEND 2008

Unique Adventures Abound as Participants GO! Experience Essex Heritage!

October 2, 2008 (Salem, MA) . . . All was not a washout for Essex Heritage's seventh annual TRAILS & SAILS 2008: *A Weekend to GO! Experience Essex Heritage*, which was held September 26 – 28, 2008. While the weather dealt a 1-2 punch with a very wet combination of nor'easter and tropical storm Kyle, throughout the 500 square miles of the Essex National Heritage Area, TRAILS & SAILS attendees gained a totally unique perspective on Essex Heritage. For many the inclement weather meant gaining entrance to events that usually sell out, for others it meant getting a private tour of one of our historic treasures. For all who were willing to brave the elements, it brought a renewed sense of discovery and opportunity to learn more about all the wonderful historic, cultural and natural resources right here in our own back yard, Essex County, MA.

A "Taste of TRAILS & SAILS" event kicked off the weekend on Thursday, September 25, and students in colonial dress from Gordon College's "History Alive" program greeted over 100 guests at the Willowdale Estate in Topsfield. As visitors milled around the enchanting Willowdale grounds, they savored the "best of" the Heritage Area's specialty foods and beverages provided by Valley View Farms, Sasquatch Smokehouse, Woodman's of Essex, Red Oak Winery, Jewell Towne Vineyards and Mercury Brewing Co. True to the party's theme, guests also enjoyed a sampling of TRAILS & SAILS events including interpretative talks, demonstrations and theatrical skits, and were entertained by a St. John's Prep jazz combo, Gordon Conwell piano player, Josh Harper, and lively sea chanteys from "Three Sheets to the Wind," among others.

On to a busy weekend . . . This year, in an effort to both build on its long standing partnerships and foster new ones, Essex Heritage coordinated TRAILS & SAILS 2008 via a series of regional cluster groups designed to bring more collaboration among event hosts and involvement at the community level. With

the dedicated efforts of Susan Yeames (Town of Amesbury) and Stephanie McCowan (Amesbury Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation), the northern gateway of our Heritage Area planned a wide range of Upper Merrimack TRAILS & SAILS activities from historical bike rides through the Amesbury Treasures to exploring the art of boat building at Lowell's Boat shop (the oldest continuously operated boat building operation in this country) and other family-friendly maritime adventures. First-time event hosts Rob and Kate Yeomans (EricaLeeBoatcamp.org) entertained their guests on the Erica Lee with a taste of their innovative summer Boatcamp program, and undeterred by the weather, offered an adventurous trip to the mouth of the Merrimack to get a glimpse of a variety of birds and seals. A foggy mist gave Ghlee Woodworth's excellent tour of Oak Hill Cemetery in Newburyport an appropriate backdrop, as she regaled all with the history of the cemetery and local, as well as famous, personalities interred there ... one in a rum barrel!

Through the teamwork of Jim Beauchesne (Lawrence Heritage State Park), Barbara Brown (Lawrence History Center), Deborah Carey (ArtsFest Merrimack Valley) and Karen Kline, the Lower Merrimack Valley's events expressed the creative voice of this region. One of the more popular events that stemmed from a TRAILS & SAILS partnership with ArtsFest Merrimack Valley was the sneak preview of a staged scene from Lorre Fritchey's upcoming film MILLIES (www.MilliesMovie.com). Performed by the Acting Out Theater Company in a historic mill, MILLIES follows three ghosts guiding a mill owner whose present-day actions affect the 1912 Bread & Roses Strike, which was followed by a walking tour sponsored by Lawrence Heritage State Park highlighting this same historical period. As a TRAILS & SAILS event coordinator, Lorre Fritchey really took her assignment to heart, and created a truly unique and imaginative event, including eight live performances (six followed by walking tours) over the three-day weekend. For all, linking the MILLIES play and Bread & Roses walking tour really made an important piece of Lawrence's history come alive.

The events in the heart of our Essex National Heritage were masterminded by cluster leaders Carolyn Nenart (Wenham Museum) and Denise Deschamps (Lynch Park Advisory Committee), and provided the most diversity. TRAILS & SAILS transportation buffs had the opportunity to "Take the Train to the Trains" and marveled at both the model trains at the Wenham Museum and the Walker Transportation Collection at the Beverly Historical Society & Museum which encompasses thousands of photos of trains, cars, buses other appealing artifacts. The city of Beverly was also the scene for tours through the historic Carriage House at Lynch Park and Hospital Point Lighthouse.

While most of Cape Ann's outdoor events had to move in off the water, there were many other activities to select under the cluster leadership Mary Kay Taylor (Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center). TRAILS & SAILS attendees enjoyed a twilight tour of the historic Beauport Mansion, the Talking Walls of Gloucester featuring vibrant WPA murals, and an interesting display of Folly Cove Designs at the Cape

Ann Museum. As another first-time event, the Acorn Press Printing Demo at the Sarah Elizabeth Shop highlighted the Folly Cove Design tradition, delighting many and saving attendees from an otherwise soggy afternoon.

With the special efforts of Jennifer Bell (Salem Main Streets), the TRAILS & SAILS events in the southern gateway of the Essex Heritage Area went off without a hitch. Jim McAllister guided his umbrella'ed crew through historic Salem neighborhoods, while parents steered their kids into the new Family Polar Adventure at the Peabody Essex Museum. The Salem Maritime National Historic Site Visitor's Center hosted an information kiosk and as well as sponsored two events, "Salem Military History" and "Pirates vs. Privateers."

"Our cluster leaders played a key role in the success of this year's program," reported Barbara McGowan, TRAILS & SAILS event manager. "There was no way we could otherwise organize 200 FREE! events spread out over 140 locations, involving a comprehensive network of non-profit and community organizations. Our sincere thanks go out to each one of them!"

Essex Heritage Explorers, members of the Essex Heritage organization were out in good number over the weekend, both as volunteers and participants taking in the wide range of events. The Essex Heritage Explorers program provides opportunities to go behind-the-scenes at many of the ENHA's historic, cultural and natural resource sites year round. Explorers attend exclusive events free-of-charge, receive a quarterly newsletter, "The Explorers Guide," which is filled with information about unique heritage destinations throughout the Heritage Area. Special discounted membership rates are now available to TRAILS & SAILS attendees. Find out how you can join today at: www.essexheritage.org/explorers

TRAILS & SAILS: A Weekend to GO! Experience Essex Heritage was still a significant annual celebration of all the historic, cultural and natural treasures in the Essex National Heritage Area despite the rain. Organized by the Essex National Heritage Commission, this event is an integral part of the Essex Heritage mission, which is to raise regional awareness of the Area's unique treasures and promote their preservation. TRAILS & SAILS 2008 was presented by TD Banknorth, with additional financial support from Eastern Bank, Beverly Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital.



About TRAILS & SAILS 2008

TRAILS & SAILS: A Weekend to Go! Experience Essex Heritage is the premier partnership event of the Essex National Heritage Commission celebrating the historic, cultural and natural treasures of the Essex National Heritage Area. Coordinated by Essex Heritage as an integral part of our mission, TRAILS & SAILS raises regional awareness of the Area's unique history and promotes the preservation of its heritage sites. Learn more at: trailsandsails.org

About Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage Commission

The Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County and designated by US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and the significant heritage sites still extant in the region. Essex Heritage is the non-profit management entity for the Area, working in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, experience Essex Heritage at essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.

About ArtsFest Merrimack Valley

ArtsFest Merrimack Valley is organized by the Merrimack Valley Creative Economy Project, a collaborative effort of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council, the University of Massachusetts Lowell and the Cultural Organization of Lowell, with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The goal of ArtsFest is to showcase the magnitude and diversity of art and culture of the Merrimack Valley . . . 24 diverse communities forming a "creative corridor" along the Merrimack River and I 495. For more info: merrimackvalley.info/artsfest.htm

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