



Guest view: Party in the (Rutger) Park

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Two years ago, in June 2008, the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica embarked on a new and yet unprecedented commitment to historic preservation in Utica, when we purchased Nos. 1 and 3 Rutger Park and the land between them.

While the premiere local and regional advocate for preservation since 1974, Landmarks had never before been able to commit itself to actually purchasing, owning, maintaining and restoring historic properties prior to this. This was accomplished via grant funds through the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, and a loan from The Preservation League of New York State and others. This purchase has certainly been a challenge, but has proven to be a uniquely rewarding opportunity for the society and for the greater Utica community even more.

Many know about the Miller-Conkling-Kernan Mansion at No. 3 Rutger Park. Less is known about its more mysterious neighbor, No. 1 Rutger Park, the Munn Castle.

Built for prominent banker John Munn and his southern wife by nationally noted architect A.J. Davis, it also was the home of Samuel Remington when his company manufactured pistols in Utica for the Civil War, and of Walter Jerome Green Sr. and later Jr., both renowned businessmen in their own rites, as well as other prominent individuals. It then became, and many remember it as, the Dowling Nursing Home. As Landmarks took possession of this diamond in the rough, it has been and continues to be a labor of love and a work in progress.

To help celebrate the second year of ownership, Landmarks will be having An Afternoon in the Park II on Saturday, June 12, at No. 1 Rutger Park. There will live music, fancy hors d'oeuvres, partial tours and a cash bar. Weather-permitting, the event will take place both inside and out.

It's our major fundraiser for the year to sustain ongoing operations and maintenance of these most historic structures. Please join us for a rare opportunity to see this historical gem as we slowly and carefully peel back the layers of time.

Michael J. Bosak is president of The Landmarks Society of Greater Utica.

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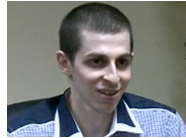
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