

January 2010

Dear Friends of the Institute,

A very Happy New Year and a perfect time to bring you all up to date on the Women's Interfaith Institute in Seneca Falls. As many of you know we suffered a devastating fire in March of 2009 three days after renovations were complete. Dealing with the fire's aftermath has been both daunting and time consuming. At this time, with a New Year and a new decade before us I thought it fitting to introduce myself and bring you up to date on the status of our building.

As Founding Director Allison Stokes had written in her detailed report last summer I have assumed Executive Directorship of the Institute. It was a much thought out decision on both my husband and my part to assume responsibility for our building and organization. Many of you know that I had been president for the past two years. With the boards' and Allison's blessings I assumed Executive Directorship in August committed to continuing our mission - Bringing Peace to Life and committed to the daunting task of restoring the building to its original grandeur and jewel of Seneca Falls.

I'm sure all of you can imagine restoring an 1870's church is a monumental task requiring exorbitant dollars. The roof has been stabilized utilizing Seneca Falls Main Street monies, a Federal and State grant initiative we were awarded a few years ago. We had to match the amount, which depleted our insurance monies from the fire. Looking on the bright side we were able to complete \$70,000.00 worth of roof repairs. The roof was so unstable from fire damage that if it collapsed due to snow load we would have been unable to salvage the building. In September we submitted an Environmental Protection Fund Heritage Area Grant for \$360,000.00. If awarded, this grant will allow us to continue with other emergency exterior renovation. The grant will also require us to raise matching funds totaling \$90,000.00.

You may have noticed I have mentioned nothing of interior renovation. You can see by the pictures on our website, the interior was completely destroyed in the fire due to water damage. Therefore we are also looking at a total interior restoration. We estimate the complete interior renovation to cost between \$300-500,000.00. Once renovations are complete we anticipate operating a commercial kitchen, hosting healthy eating/vegetable based cooking classes, seminars and retreats centered around healthy living, sustainable agriculture and organic farming, and as is our mission, we will continue to offer a space to promote interfaith dialogue, cooperation and peace.

As the Executive Director I am asking for your help. Any donation in any amount will help us tremendously. You may download a donation form from our website at www.womensinterfaithinstitute.org and mail your donation to PO Box 131 Seneca Falls, N.Y. 13148. All donations are tax deductible. Please feel free to contact me at [sstrobel@womensinterfaithinstitute.org](mailto:ssstrobel@womensinterfaithinstitute.org) or 315-719-5380 if you have any questions. Without donations we will not be able to restore this important historical structure nor continue our mission –

Bringing Peace to Life. Thank you for your support.



Peace and blessings,

Sylvia Strobel, Executive Director
Women's Interfaith Institute of the Finger Lakes

Inspired by the spiritual and religious diversity of our foremothers, who gathered together around the table to nourish body, soul and mind, we invoke our Seneca Falls heritage to move us forward together in promoting interfaith dialogue, cooperation and peace. Tapestry by Alice Gant, a gift to the Women's Interfaith Institute. Abolitionists, women's rights activists, runaway slaves, friends and family gathered at the Mott's table.