

Brandon to celebrate 250 birthday

By Lucia Suarez

STAFF WRITER - Published: June 16, 2011

BRANDON — Civil War re-enactments, a historic house tour and birthday cake are on the bill at the 250th anniversary celebration of the town of Brandon on Saturday.

“The weekend has a few activities surrounded around celebrating the town’s 250th birthday,” said Janet Mondlak of the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce.

Starting at 10 a.m., the Champlain Valley Historic Re-enactors will be camped out on Brandon’s central park. They will be offering various re-enactments and demonstrations from the Civil War era.

“They will be doing some enlistment activities for children, like if a child or young man would be enlisting and going off to war,” Mondlak said. “The Civil War started in 1861 and our Town Hall was built in 1861. The first use was for Civil War enlistment. We have a lot of history in Brandon.”

To honor the town’s history during the Civil War era, a tour of five houses built before or during the war will kick off at 11 a.m., Mondlak said. The tour will also include Brandon’s Marsh House.

“It’s a beautiful house,” she said. “People have said ‘Oh I love that house, I wish I could see the inside,’ and now they can.”

Tickets for the historic house tour are \$10 and can be found at the Stephen A. Douglas Birthplace located on 4 Grove St. The ticket price includes entry to the history presentations at the Brandon Town Hall.

The presentations will include author and historian Howard Coffin, and Dr. Kevin Thornton, history professor at the University of Vermont. Coffin and Thornton’s presentations will begin at 2 p.m.

Brandon’s birthday celebration will begin at 4:15 p.m. with a special performance by Gene Childers and the Brandon 250 Singers in front of the Congregational Church. They will sing “Ballad for Brandon” penned by Childers for the celebration.

“He (Childers) tried to get 250 singers, but couldn’t,” Mondlak said.

Following the performance, a Brandon birthday cake will be cut at the park.

A special screening of the 1926 Buster Keaton silent film “The General” will be screened at the Brandon Town Hall at 7 p.m. Jeff Rapsis, a piano player, will accompany the film.

Mondlak said the day will be educational and because it is the town's 250th anniversary of their charter, the town wanted to do something to celebrate.

"I think it's going to be fun," she said. "It has a little bit for everyone."

Tickets for the historic house tours and the presentations in the Town Hall can be purchased at the Stephen A. Douglas Birthplace or online at www.brandon.org. For more information on the event, contact the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce at (802) 247-6401 or email info@brandon.org.