

Mason Jar Jamboree at Carnes County Park Sept. 12

By Alexa Zoellner Union staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, September 1, 2015 9:39 am

JEFFERSON — The fourth annual Mason Jar Jamboree is coming up fast, with attendees getting to see something new — the fully restored log house.

The two-story log home was first unearthed in 2004 by Jefferson County Parks Department employees as they began to dismantle an old farmhouse located on Dorothy Carnes County Park land west of Fort Atkinson.

“The jamboree was started in 2012 to help us raise money to restore the log home,” Jeff Mason, a direct descendant of the original homesteaders, said. “It’s continued annually since then. It’s a fun, laid-back day just meant for people to come out and enjoy the park, the company of people that you know, music and some food.”

Slated for Saturday, Sept. 12, the jamboree will kick off with a prairie walk guided by Tom Belzer.

“They’ll be doing the trails out here, looking for birds and plants, answering questions as they walk around,” Kevin Wiesmann, Jefferson County Parks Department operations supervisor, said.

“We’ve got a couple of utility task vehicles and you can put three people in the front seat and we’ll have some staff driving folks around.”

Last year, the tours were called Ranger Rides and they allowed visitors to view parts of the park they otherwise would not have been able to see.

“People loved the nature walk,” Mason said. “They did it last year and got great reviews.”

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., there will be activities for children and family led by Stuart Hellwig, Craig Roost and George Clokey.



ON THE HOUSE

ON THE HOUSE — In 1850, a log house was built by the Mason family on property that is now part of Dorothy Carnes County Park in the Town of Jefferson, shown above left. The Masons’ descendants still reside in Fort Atkinson. Restoration of the house began in 2012, as did the Mason Jar Jamboree. Recently, the Mason farm was declared a historical site and members of the Mason family were presented with a certificate.

“Hellwig has a miniature log home; it’s a pretty good size,” Mason said. “It’s a kids’ activity, with adults, and they can take the cabin apart and rebuild it. Craig Roost will be demonstrating timber-construction techniques and George Clokey is going to do casting of animal tracks.”

Acoustic/bluegrass music from Bill Camplin, the Merry Horde, Tricia Alexander and Alpha Stewart Jr. will take place from noon to 3:30 p.m.

“In between the music will be a couple of presentations by Julia Ince,” Mason said. “Ince is a park historian at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and has done a lot of historical research on the Mason home.”

A pie and log home memorabilia sale will take place from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

“Selling pies has become kind of a tradition,” Mason explained. “People are encouraged to donate and bring out homemade pies, as well as come out and buy homemade pies.”

In addition to pie, hotdogs, heart-healthy wraps, chips and beverages will be available for purchase.

“People may not know this, but you can bring into the county park beer, wine and other beverages that you want — just bring in a cooler,” Mason said. “People are also welcome to bring their own picnic items.”

In past years, proceeds from the jamboree were used to restore the log house — a project that cost around \$70,000 and took four years to complete.

“The first year, we had the siding stripped off and there was rubble behind it,” Wiesmann said. “The second year, the whole building was gone and there was just the foundation, and then last year, we had the building up as kind of a shell. Now it’s pretty close to done so people will be able to go through.”

The completion of the log-house restoration means proceeds from the 2015 Mason Jar Jamboree will be going toward a different project.

“Now that we have the log home restored and up, the continuation of this project will be able to turn the barn into a public space,” Mason said. “It’s going to take a lot of money to do that, but ideally that’s one thing we would like to see happen — for that to be a public space for events, classes or whatever use.”

Attending the jamboree is free, but donations are welcome.

“Those donations will be for the further development of the park,” Mason said. “That includes a big project with the barn, but also there’s a master plan that includes orchards, parking, expanding community gardens.”

To attend the Mason Jar Jamboree, enter in Dorothy Carnes Park's east entrance at W6509 Jones Lane, Fort Atkinson. Take Banker Road a mile or so north from Fort Atkinson; the entrance will be on the left.

For more information on the Mason home or jamboree, contact the Jefferson County Parks Department at (920) 674-7260.