

Hillary House Ball promises An Affair to Remember



By Brock Weir

For over 80 years, the Empire State Building has been a landmark for generations of romantics, often fuelled by the on-screen romance of film icons Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr.

While the internationally-renowned landmark achieved cinematic immortality in their classic romance, *An Affair to Remember*, it is very much a building with an Aurora connection and the Aurora Historical Society is aiming to recreate some of the romance and magic created by Grant and Kerr next week at the fifth annual Hillary House Ball.

Volunteers are hard at work transforming King Valley Golf Club into the gauzy atmosphere of the 1957 tearjerker ahead of this year's ball, which takes place next Saturday evening, October 29, with proceeds benefiting continued restoration work at Hillary House, Aurora's only national historic site.

"We have been working with our volunteers and our team to have that combination of the 1950s Hollywood romance with the soft, elegant feel with the fact the majority of the movie takes place on a ship going between Provence and New York," says AHS Curator Erika Mazanik. "You will see as soon as you walk into the ballroom that it will have that feel of going between the two places." While the film focuses on the star-crossed shipboard romance of the two leads, all good things come to an end and, at the end of their cruise, they are back to the realities of life in New York and the romances left behind. If, in a year's time, they still felt the same way about each other, they agreed to meet at the top of the Empire State Building. Fate, however, intervenes as the clock runs down. Construction on the Empire State Building began in 1930 and, once complete, it was the tallest building in the world for the next four decades. Supervising the building project was superintendent of construction was Aurora's own John Bowser, who is buried in Aurora Cemetery under a small stone replica of the famous building.

Next weekend's Ball will feature entertainment from the After Hours Big Band, an event favourite, as well as famed pianist Ellen Meyer who will play as guests arrive and during dinner. Once the Big Band starts up, however, be prepared to get on your feet as dance instructor Derek Krzyszkowski joins guests on the floor.

"I am really excited about how we have really played the theme into it," says Ms. Mazanik. "We haven't done this in past years and I am really excited to see how it is all going to play out and feel. This is about the House, it is about the Historical Society, it's about having a fun evening of dinner, dancing, great conversation, and great people."

Tickets to the Hillary House Ball are \$150 per person. Doors open at 6 p.m., with dinner served at 7 p.m. For more information, call 905-727-8991 or email community@aurorahs.com.