

## *The Abigails Provide a Valuable Service to the Community*

by Carol Moore Hasselback

Columnist

As most of us already know, East Aurora is rich with history and filled with citizens who cherish it. The Abigails is a group comprised of such citizens. They have been in existence for over four decades. Their mission statement is to support the Aurora Historical Society's goal of preserving our past for the enlightenment and enrichment of future generations and in particular to raise funds for the support of the Millard Fillmore Museum. The Historical Society bought the Millard Fillmore home in 1975 and began fundraising and restoration. Soon after, Ruth and Bob Charles and Melba and Frank Smith began an activity group to raise funds for the restoration. This group later evolved into the Abigails. It was named Abigails for the wife of Millard Fillmore, who was a very gifted seamstress. It's definitely worth a tour of the museum to visit her handiwork as evidenced by the hand stitched quilt on the bed which had one time been located in the White House.

Presently, the Abigails are a small but dedicated group. Members meet twice monthly throughout the year to make items which will be sold at their annual Millard Fillmore Christmas sale. Meetings are held at Baker Memorial Methodist Church on Main and Center Streets in East Aurora on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 9:30 a.m. Members, who are unable to come to the meetings, also work from home to contribute to the sale. Many different items are available at the sale including hand knit items, garlands, ornaments, baked goods, vintage linens and jewelry, hand painted items, handmade pillows and aprons, and a wide variety of seasonal treasures. Also at this very popular Christmas sale, held the first Saturday in December, live green arrangements are provided by the East Aurora Garden Club. In the old days, men would provide carvings and stain glass items, and today, men still provide an important service by helping set up and making various handmade wooden decorative items. This annual event is a major fund raiser and provides thousands of additional dollars for maintenance of the Millard Fillmore Museum.

The dedicated members of The Abigails are filled with a passion for the work they do. The Millard Fillmore Museum is extremely important to them. Through this organization they have made many close friendships through the years and had a lot of fun doing it. They enjoy sharing their talents with each other and are constantly surprised at what items become popular during the sale. This is been a constant social outlet for young members, as well as those in their 90s. They love to work on their projects together. At times they remind themselves of an old fashion quilting circle. They share interests and love getting together to socialize.

Currently, their goal is to invite interested members of the community to join this circle of friendship and service. The Abigails are interested in the expansion of their club membership. Any person who wants to give back to their community in an important way, and enjoys making craft items is always welcome to join them, whether it be at the by-monthly meetings, or just by their support of contributions to the Christmas sale. The Abigails feel that they maintain an important function in the community and would encourage others to do so. For further information about this worthwhile endeavor, contact Sue Pagliaccio at 652-1621. This is a group that makes a difference in our community.