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Globe West

Photo contest blends history, fund-raising

By Jennifer Fenn Lefferts
Globe Correspondent

With more new faces moving into the Natick area every day, Tod Dimmick fears that residents won't appreciate the area's rich history.

So in an effort to highlight the area's past and help out local nonprofit organizations, Dimmick is organizing a photography contest and exhibition.

Dimmick is asking people to submit photos taken in South Natick and parts of Dover, Sherborn, and Wellesley. It's a 3-mile stretch along the Charles River and Route 16 made famous in the book "Oldtown Folks," written by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869.

He's calling it the *Oldtown Photo Calendar Contest* and he hopes to create a calendar of the winning photographs that can be sold by nonprofit groups to raise money.

"There are a lot of people relatively new to the area who aren't aware of the history," said Dimmick, who grew up in

Natick and now lives just over the town line in Dover.

"It turned into how do you get people to learn about that, and get them to feel part of something that has deep roots? How do you get people interested in where they live?"

"The exhibition would be an opportunity for people to get a little perspective of where they live."

Dimmick is also involved in many groups in town, such as the Bacon Free Library, which are always looking for new ways to

raise money. He hopes the contest and calendar can accomplish both his goals.

Dimmick, a photography enthusiast himself, said there are many places in the Old Town area that are perfect for photographs.

South Natick is home to several historic

buildings, including the Eliot Church of South Natick. The church stands on one of the oldest church sites in America. The original building on the site was built in the mid-17th century by a band of native Massachusetts tribes under the guidance of the Rev. John Eliot.

There's also the popular park at the dam in South Natick that is named Old Town Park, after Stowe's novel.

The area is also home to Belkin Family Lookout Farm in Natick. Established in 1651 on nearly 200 acres of land, the farm is one of the country's oldest



continuously working farms.

Other areas of interest include:

- The Elm Bank Reservation in Wellesley. The reservation has miles of riverfront and woodland carriage trails, open meadows, and playing fields.
- The Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which has a center on the grounds of the Elm Bank Reservation.
- The Charles River.
- The Massachusetts Audubon Society's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick. The sanctuary has miles of trails and a nature center.

The Eliot Church of South Natick stands on one of the oldest church sites in America.

Diane Wallace, director of the Bacon Free Library, is excited about the project and the potential for a new fund-raiser. "We're always open to new ideas and getting new people involved," she said.

Wallace said the library will consider using the calendar and said it's also possible the library will put the winning photographs on display.

Other local groups interested in using the calendar as part of their fund-raising efforts can contact Dimmick as well.

Dimmick is encouraging both professionals and amateurs to submit their work. They can e-mail him for an entry form at oldtowncalendar@verizon.net. The deadline is Oct. 14. The contest and exhibition of entries will be held as part of the Oldtown Community Fall Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21.

The Oldtown Calendar

A fundraiser for local nonprofit organizations, including the Bacon Free Library, Mass Audubon's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary, The Eliot Church, The Morse Institute Library, The Eliot Montessori School, The Center for Arts in Natick, The Natick Community Organic Farm, The Natick Historical Society, and the West Virginia Work Camp.

**The Oldtown Fair & Photo Calendar Competition
October 18, 2009 11AM to 3PM at the Oldtown Fair**

John Eliot Memorial Hall
40 Eliot Street (Route 16)
South Natick, MA

Information & Inquiries:

oldtowncalendar@verizon.net
www.oldtowncalendar.org