

**By Jennifer Meschinelli**

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PLATTSBURGH — Fourteen years after his initial idea, Clinton Community's Dean of Development and Alumni Affairs, Steve Frederick is finally seeing his dream of a campus Alumni House coming to fruition.

In time to coincide with the College's 40th anniversary year, one of the original Hotel Champlain cottages that is located on the campus property, will be renovated into an Alumni House. The idea is that it would become a place for the community.

"For 40 years the college has given students to the community—and this is our gift to the community," Frederick said.

"We would like to give the community a mini Valcour Conference Center," said Craig Squier, the co-chair of the project. Squier said the cottage will be ideal for holding one day retreat, small receptions, and hosting guests to the cottage.

In addition to moving Frederick's Alumni Office to the cottage, there will also be space for meetings, intimate receptions and small gatherings. Moving the Alumni Office will also free up more office space in the main building of the college.

The cottage is being restored to its original character - as it would have looked in the 1890s, when it was built. While the ornate woodwork has survived over the years, the interior walls had been taken down. Frederick has been researching what types of items were popular at the time and decor styles.

The catch is that there is no

funding available for the project and Frederick is hoping to complete it using 100% donated time and materials to make it happen. The goal for the completed project's ribbon cutting is this year on Dec. 22.

So far the project has sparked community interest and the donations have started to come in. The lead gift for the project was from Aird Dorrance, which has pledged the materials for heating, plumbing and the fixtures.

"Clinton Community is really an important piece of the fabric of the community," said Frank Dorrance of Aird Dorrance Inc. "We (Aird Dorrance) believe in supporting where we live."

In addition to the donations of materials, the project is also receiving support from skilled trade unions that plan to donate their time and labor for the project. Dorrance also said the project has a wish list and anyone interested in assisting with the project should contact Frederick to see what is still needed.

"It's a great opportunity to support the college and the community," Dorrance said. "The college is an intricate part of the community, they do a great job training a work force that stays in the community."

"I think it's a neat opportunity for a local business to donate supplies and services to the project," Squier said. "I enjoy a rush from seeing how many people we can get on board."

Squier has been involved on the committee for the last year and a half and he is excited about the project moving forward.

"My interest in this project is due to the fact I have always been

awestruck by the drive up the bluff," Squier said. "I was equally intrigued by the historical background of the cottages.

Frederick is especially adamant about the project because since the original hotel had burned in 1910, the cottages are the only reminder of the original hotel architecture. From pictures of the original hotel, Frederick has seen many similarities in the decor, and plans to have the cottage as authentic as possible.

"The cottages are all that's left of the original Hotel Champlain, it would be a shame to let them deteriorate," Squier said.

Frederick said that community members have some of the original Hotel Champlain memorabilia that was given away before the college took over—especially the china and silverware. It is his hope that they would be willing to donate it back to the college so that it may be preserved.

"It would be ideal to get back some of the original furniture and items from the Hotel Champlain back home where it belongs," Frederick said. "We would like the cottage to be a step back in time."

In addition to renovating the inside of the cottage, next spring a retired horticulturist will begin planting gardens surrounding the cottage.

Anyone who is interested in making donations or helping with the project can contact Frederick at 562-4195 or [steven.frederick@clinton.edu](mailto:steven.frederick@clinton.edu).