



THOMAS JEFFERSON'S *Poplar Forest*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Let the love of our country soar above all minor passions...”

**Celebrate a Patriotic July 4th
at Poplar Forest, Thomas Jefferson’s Retreat**

Music begins at 1:00 p.m.

Reading of the Declaration of Independence at 1:30 p.m.

Forest, VA – “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The author of American independence, Jefferson was only 33-years old when he penned these words, inspiring a nation with the stroke of his hand and altering forever the course of human events. Jefferson firmly believed in celebrating America’s birthday— the birth of “my countries liberties.”

Bring the entire family to hear the Jefferson’s *Declaration of Independence* come alive on July 4th at Poplar Forest! The celebration will begin at **1:00 p.m.** with a musical performance by the Itinerant Band and will culminate at **1:30 p.m.** with a patriotic and stirring reading of the Declaration of Independence from the porch of Jefferson’s retreat.

The Itinerant Band, a talented group of musicians will perform traditional musical selections from Thomas Jefferson’s day at 1 p.m. Music will continue following the reading of the *Declaration of Independence*.

Also on the grounds will be *The Spirit of Thomas Jefferson* – a reproduction of a Jefferson-era batteau traveling the James River. The crew of this batteau built her using traditional methods and sailed her in the recent James River Batteau Festival in June. The vessel is sponsored by the Friends of New London, Virginia, Inc.

In the Museum Shop, visiting artist Gene Villiva of Eugenio, LLC will feature signed copies from the “Thomas Jefferson, Architect” series of medallions. The series depicts Poplar Forest, Monticello, the Rotunda, the Virginia State Capitol, and the newly released Jefferson Memorial. Each medallion is custom designed and executed in metal by master engravers in Germany.

Two hundred years ago, during his final term as President, Thomas Jefferson continued to direct construction on his unique retreat in Bedford County, his personal “pursuit of Happiness.” Jefferson sojourned to Poplar Forest in his retirement to find rest and leisure, rekindle his creativity and spend time with his grandchildren. The octagonal house at Poplar Forest is currently undergoing award-winning restoration and is today considered by scholars to be the culmination of Jefferson’s mature skills as an architect. Archaeology is underway, uncovering more clues about Jefferson’s landscape design, his farming operation, and the people who made up Poplar Forest’s plantation community. Restoration craftsmen and archaeologists will be working on-site throughout the day.

Admission to the grounds on July 4th is **FREE**. Regular admission will be charged for house tours. Picnics are welcome and encouraged.

About Poplar Forest

Poplar Forest is Thomas Jefferson’s secluded plantation and retreat home, now a National Historic Landmark. Undergoing award-winning restoration and archaeology, Poplar Forest offers tours and special events. Poplar Forest is open April through November, Wednesday through Monday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call (434) 525-1806 or visit www.poplarforest.org for additional information.

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NOTE: Although traditionally, the July 4th event has included additional living history performers and vendors, in 2008 Poplar Forest will host a condensed Independence Day celebration. Prudence in an uncertain economy makes it necessary to narrow our focus more tightly. It is our goal to find support to expand July 4th activities in 2009, which will mark the 200th anniversary year of Jefferson's retirement and first extended stay at Poplar Forest.