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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2012

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## Architectural wonder healed the sick

By Leslie Ruse

DenvilleRockaway This Week

Whenever Lisa Recchia of Parsippany drives past the buildings and structures of the Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital complex, she feels heartsick to see how neglected they've become.

"I live close to Greystone and it just breaks my heart to see how it's already deteriorated. No home did what that building did. It saved lives."

Treasurer of Preserve Greystone, Recchia and other members of the all-volunteer, nonprofit group, who want to see the site preserved for future generations.

"Part could be a museum, part could be a general resource to pay for it. If you see pictures, you realize just how wonderful it is," Recchia said.

Last month, the Morristown & Morris Township Library hosted "Holidays at Greystone: A Celebration of Humanity," a panel discussion sponsored by Greystone. The program focused on the dedicated professionals who tried to "celebrate the humanity" of the many pa-

tients who lived there.

"Most of Greystone's been taken down," said Arline Dodge of Morristown, who worked as a nurse at Greystone for a short period of time. "My father was a State Trooper, and when they were ill they went there to be treated. People went there for all kinds of things, not just psychiatric problems. Woody Guthrie used to bum cigarettes off my sister who worked there as a secretary."

"It's a really over-the-top building. It went on and on and on. It was huge. I'd really like to see something done with it."

Adam McGovern of Mt. Tabor, secretary of Preserve Greystone, said: "My girlfriend has lived in the area and had a love for Greystone and the hidden treasure that it is. They thought the sprawling green grounds would help the patients. People could be uplifted and cured by the area."

Moderator John Huebner of Denville presided over a panel that included the Rev. Peggy Mesinger, Sue Shutte and Grover Kemble, who told of their connections to



The sale of these items will be used for the work of Preserve Greystone, which aims to rehabilitate the former psychiatric hospital that was closed in 2000. The display was part of a presentation at the Morristown and Morris Township Library last month. PHOTO BY WARREN WESTURA

Greystone.

"They spared no expense here. Like a cathedral, it

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## WONDER

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was built to stand the tide of centuries. This was one of the last, the biggest and certainly the best," Huebner said.

Shutte, a scholar specializing in 19th-century American asylums, is the resident historian for Ringwood State Park: "The buildings were designed to reflect the home and ornamentation to show how humanely the patients could be treated.

Many times the families lived right inside the asylum. The patients were treated as family. A complete change from earlier in the century.

"Let's face it. There's never going to be something built like this again. You can see the love put into the details of the buildings."

Mesinger was director of pastoral services at Greystone Park from 1975 until 2000 when Gov. Christine Todd Whitman ordered Greystone closed: "Anybody who worked there has such emotional feelings for Greystone. It was incredible to do my work there when I was called. People's care in the community was something very fine and very beautiful."

"Someone suggested putting strip malls on the Greystone property. The idea of trading this beautiful heirloom for cheap consumer goods is so upsetting. There are a lot of ideas of what to do with it. Our purpose is to get people involved about a solution. This is public property so the public needs to tell what should be done with it. We'd love to get public input," Shutte said. "It took a community to get Greystone built, it'll take a community to get Greystone fixed."

For information about Preserve Greystone, email [info@preservegreystone.org](mailto:info@preservegreystone.org) or visit [www.preservegreystone.org](http://www.preservegreystone.org).