

PETERSBURG — Battersea, Inc. has its new captain.

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PETERSBURG — Battersea, Inc. has its new captain.

Tempy Barbru is joining the nonprofit in its effort to make the historic Revolutionary War era estate a "focal point" for the Tri-Cities.

Barbru's involvement with the cleanup following a 1991 tornado in Petersburg left an impression.

"There were a number of us that were on the teams that cleaned up the playgrounds," she said. When a job came open at Battersea, Barbru threw her hat in the ring.

"I like the vibrancy of Petersburg. I like to serve on something that becomes a catalyst for something greater," she said.

Barbru started on the position Aug. 1, and hopes to push the five-part Palladian-style 1767 home into a more prominent place in the region's culture.

"We want to shore up and preserve the Battersea building. That's our primary goal right now, to make sure the building is architecturally sound and can host lots of people," she said.

The group estimates that \$500,000 is needed to repair and maintain the building.

Next, Barbru will work on making it a focal point for the history and culture of the Tri-Cities area.

"There's such excitement about all the potentials for Battersea," she said. "It's also going to serve, we hope, for a catalyst for many things. It will have an educational focus as well."

The city owns 37 acres of land and the home, which the nonprofit will work to preserve. It was recently protected in perpetuity by a state historical easement.

Barbru and an assistant are Battersea's only paid staff, who are supported by Battersea's 23-member board, a technical advisory panel and volunteers.

"We have wonderful volunteers and we're always looking for more. We've got a role for you," she said.

The Williamsburg resident comes from a long background of non-profit work, including two stints at WRHO, the Hampton Roads PBS affiliate.

Their next public event is an antiques appraisal fair Saturday, Sept. 27.

"You can bring your own memorabilia, antiques and a team of experts will appraise your items," Barbru said. They also will give a written analysis of the antiques.

Suggested donations are \$8 per person for one's first antique appraisal.

The antiques fair runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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