

Educational landmark saved

Stone School will be opened for tour

By **STEPHANIE L. ARNOLD**
Staff reporter

The Claymont Stone School, once a candidate to be demolished, will open its doors Friday to show off a complete restoration.

The school, built on Philadelphia Pike around 1805, will look the way it did nearly 100 years ago. The exterior is complete and the inside is nearly finished, said Carolyn Burlew, executive director of the Friends of Claymont Stone School, Inc.

"Right now, we have to put in a new floor on top of the old and we're putting the exact type of floor that was there when the school was built," Burlew said.

The school was marked to be razed by the Brandy-

wine School District.

Little was left before restoration began more than two years ago, just four stone walls, deteriorating floors and roof.

But now? "Oh, it's beautiful, just beautiful," said Jim Nelson, an architect who donated his services.

The restored school will serve as a banquet hall and meeting place. It also will house Riva F. Brown's show that teaches about schools that existed in the 1800s.

"It's going to be really nice," Brown said. "Now, I take my show on the road and visit students at schools, but soon, they will be able to come and visit me."

The school - said to have been the state's first integrated school - was built on land given by John Dickinson. Its size was doubled in 1905.

The building served as a school, library and meeting



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Kostas Trikaliotis paints the windows at Claymont Stone School, which will show off a restoration project Friday.

place until it closed in the 1980s.

The Friends of the Claymont Stone School have raised more than \$500,000 for renovations. They must raise an additional \$75,000 to complete the kitchen and bathroom work.

The Claymont Anglers & Sportsmans Association has held benefit dinners. Other fund-raisers in-

cluded T-shirt sales, an art show, auction and concerts.

The exterior was done with about \$150,000 in state 21st Century Fund money and a total of about \$95,000 was foundation grants.

The state allocated about \$150,000, Burlew said. The rest came from private donations and grants.

"It's amazing how this

building has progressed Nelson said. "It used to be situation where you couldn't go in there, and now it's beautiful inside."

A tour will be offered from 7 to 8 p.m. May 17 at the school at 3611 Philadelphia Pike.

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