



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

www.wvhs.org

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

215-646-6541

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Sunday, Dec. 7
2 p.m.
Annual Holiday Party
at Russ and Jean Bellavance's
148 S. Bethlehem Pike, Ambler

Please r.s.v.p. to Jean at
215-643-5048



Roast turkey and honey ham provided.
Share a dish (salad, vegetable, dessert)
\$5 per person

Sites of Local Interest

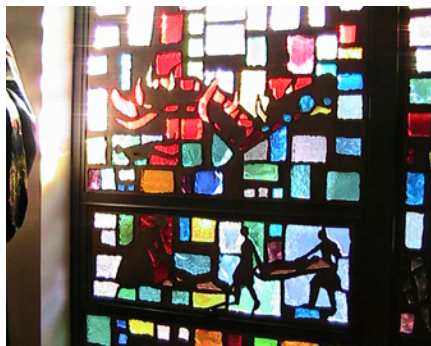
Last month's "mystery site" is located on Mt. Pleasant Avenue in Whitpain. The wall/bridge is shared by Whitpain Township and the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association and was in disrepair. Raija Lynne Suomal volunteered to rebuild the stone wall along the road and spent numerous days at the task. It looks great!

Across the street is the American Legion Post at 351 West Maple Street, West Ambler. Post 769, chartered in 1946, is named for **Daniel W. Dowling** (1889-1928), the first African American drafted from Ambler for WWI and later a post office worker. (*Whitpain Township - A Tricentennial Reflection 1701-2001, compiled and edited by Wayne A. Huss*).



December's "mystery site" is indoors. It is a

stained glass panel showing the train crash and rescue that made **Mary Ambler** a hero and gave Ambler its name. Where is the window?



The train crash took place on July 17, 1856 south east of Ambler (then called Wissahickon.) **Mary Johnson Ambler**, wife of a local mill owner and operator, brought medical and emotional relief to the victims. She died in 1868. The next year the station name was changed from Wissahickon to Ambler, and in 1888, when the town was incorporated, it was named Ambler.

Troop 7009 Visits 1895 Schoolhouse

Scouts from Troop 7009 filled the school desks at the 1895 Schoolhouse on November 23. They learned what school was like a hundred years ago, museum manners, local history, and tried a period craft - making certificates of merit. They all sang patriotic songs with Robert Battice on the keyboard. The second graders had lots of excellent questions and observations. They were invited to return with their parents. Thanks to **Dottie MacDermott, Peg Johnston, and Robert Battice** for hosting the group.



Lindenwold Estate News Not Good

In November the Upper Dublin Township Commissioners voted to allow rezoning of the Lindenwold Estate. The Planning Commission had advised against approving the rezoning due to the density and questions about alternative uses and the ability to control development. Citizens need to continue to monitor and question development as it proceeds. **MaryLou McFarland** is our resident expert on the project.



WVHS and HSW Merger Celebrated

Members of the WVHS and the HSW and members of the community - including several public officials - celebrated the merger of the two organizations on November 16 at the 1895 Schoolhouse.

At left Presidents **Russ Bellavance** and **Marie Goldkamp** sign the merger document. WVHS member **Mark Ashton** helped draw up the official

documents.

At right, **Carolyn Wurzer** is presented with a collage of photos of the rescue and rehabbing of the Franklinville School on Morris Road. As a result of her efforts and the efforts of other members of the HSW, the Franklinville School was recently approved by the state of



Pennsylvania for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Buildings. The 1895 Schoolhouse was named to the National Registry in 2006. At left, **Mary Lou McFarland** chats with **Dave Kimmerly** of Mid-Atlantic Historic Preservation

Services, LLC, who managed the application for state recognition for Franklinville School.



Also celebrated on November 16 was the official reopening of the **Henry Conard** library at the 1895 Schoolhouse. Below left, President **Russ Bellavance** recognizes the efforts of **Walker Smith**. He organized a work day to clean the library, constructed several bookcases, painted window frames, installed blinds, and designed and assembled a display of Conard tools. The project earned Walker his Eagle Scout rank.



At right, **Russ** presents a certificate to **Ginny Sinn of the SpringHouse Questers** who supported the renovation of the library - part of their long term support of the WVHS.



Mark Your Calendar

December 6 - Wentz Farmstead - Candlelight Tours - 2 to 9 p.m.

December 7 - WVHS Holiday Party - 2 p.m. - at the Bellavance home

January 12 - WVHS Monthly Meeting - at the Wissahickon Valley Public Library, Blue Bell - 7:30 p.m. - Program: A Quilting Bee

The History of Quilts

Looking ahead to our January program, the following is a short history of quilts: Though the earliest suggestion of quilting is found on a 3400 BC Egyptian ivory figure and quilts have been made for their practical uses for centuries, the modern interest in quilts as folk art began in the early 1800s. Before that time, quilts were valued for their strength and warmth. Colors came from at least 40 species of dye plants - including black walnut and onions. Fabrics were hand woven though often fabrics were recycled from other uses.

In the late 18th and 19th centuries textile factories made large pieces of fabric easier and cheaper to obtain. Eli Whitney's cotton gin was introduced in 1794 and greatly increased the amount of cotton that could be grown and woven. In the 1850's the first cold-tar dyes were discovered and allowed for a greater range of fabric colors.

It was not until 1924 with the opening of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that decorative arts were given a major display space in any museum. Today the self-taught, experimental folk art quality in American decorative arts is highly prized and studied.

The Philadelphia Art Museum and Wintertur are local museums with excellent quilt collections. Quilt shows are held regularly and often feature cutting edge designs as well as traditional patterns.

Join us in January to find out about the quilts in our collection. If you have a quilt at home, please consider bringing it and sharing its story.



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