



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002
September 2013

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Welcome Back!

September 9 meeting
7:30 p.m. at the 1895 Schoolhouse

Program: The Declaration of Independence
Presenter: Russ Bellavance

The Declaration of Independence is perhaps the single most important political document in the English language. Join WVHS President **Russ Bellavance** in an exploration of the Declaration of Independence. Who were the intended audiences? What were the Declaration's purposes? Where did the ideas come from? How was it structured? What did the language mean? Audience participation and questions will be encouraged.

Meeting followed by light refreshment
and good conversation.

Yard Sale/Flea Market/Craft Sale

Vendors are still wanted for the Saturday, October 12th event at the Schoolhouse. It starts at 8 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. Outside spaces are \$25; inside spaces, \$30. Contact Audrey at 215-421-5019.

The Society will be selling food and books (lots of books!) on the inside and on the porch. Members can help set up during the week before the 12th and/or work on the day of the sale. We will be offering tours of the museum from a membership table.

Baked goods are, of course, welcome for the always popular bake sale booth.

This year there will be a rain date - Sunday, October 13th.

Senior Center Program

“Back to School” will be the topic of a lunch time presentation at the Senior Center in Ambler on Monday, September 9. We’ll be taking artifacts from our collection and talking about what school was like in 1895. We’ll also be listening to stories from the audience - many of whom attended local schools in the 1940s, ‘50s, and ‘60s.

If you’d like to help with “Back to School”, please call Peg at 215-542-7753

“Unofficial News” about St. Mary’s Villa

Though it isn’t within the Wissahickon School District, Dr. Mattison’s estate, Lindenwold, is of great significance to Ambler’s history. It is located along Bethlehem Pike. Dr. Mattison sold the estate to the Catholic Church who operated it as a home for children who needed temporary care. About 15 years ago a portion of the estate was sold for housing - providing much needed funds for the order of nuns who managed the home. They leased/sold the property about 5 years ago to a private provider.

In a recent Upper Dublin Ward 2 Report it was noted that “In the past year, the Villa was sold by the private provider. We expect improved management. Further, it is known *unofficially* that the new owner is considering closing St. Mary’s and developing the property into homes.” The Society should certainly keep informed about these developments.

Recent Donations

2 knitted afghans - both knit by Marguerite (Mrs. Floyd) Schneider. These came with stories of how Mrs. Schneider and many Ambler women knit gloves, scarves, and other items needed by soldiers during WWII and the Korean War. Donated by her son, **Joe Schneider**.



Condolences

Deepest sympathy to **Jean and Russ Bellavance** on the passing of Russ’ father Walter Bellavance.

Watch for Membership Notices

Watch your mail for your membership renewal notice in the mail. Membership dues are important in helping the society pay its bills; members are important in lending support to the Society's important mission.

From **Emmy Simon**: We have been successful in helping individuals seeking information on their ancestors who were from the area we cover. Also, in forwarding articles, from our inventory to appropriate Historical Societies in other towns or counties.

From **Frank Russo**: WVHS has done a fine job in the area of preservation. I am proud that we have been able to take a stand for historic preservation, example: Forest Pines. We were not successful, but we did make a formidable stand. Also we do a fine job of presenting local history to the public through programs and our amazing museum.

From **Peg Johnston**: I am pleased that WVHS has been able to provide educational programs about local history to neighborhood schools, the library, and the Ambler senior center.

From **Joe Schneider**: I am happy that the society keeps the history that I grew up with alive and preserve it for the future generations and allow me to contribute items and written history to the Society.

Lending a Hand

Our library will be remodeled and renovated this fall thanks to **Walker Smith** as he works on his Eagle Scout rank. Many of the bookcases will be replaced with metal ones with wide shelves to accommodate binders and larger books. This involves moving all the books out of and back into the library. Wooden blinds will be installed to better control light in the library. The arched windows will also be re-grouted and painted. (We are still seeking a librarian - or librarians - for the collection.)

Thanks also to **Amanda Carro**, a senior at Chadds Ford High School, who has typed new, uniform labels for our displays.

And to **Erin Annunciato**, Upper Dublin graduate, gathered from original sources, interviews, and research the history of Penllyn.

And to **Robert Battice**, who graduated from Methaton High School in June, for scraping and painting the fire escape.

We have "registered" with the guidance department at WHS and hope that we will have additional seniors who chose to work at the Schoolhouse in the future.

Board Considers High School Scholarship

At the August board meeting, members discussed funding a scholarship for a Wissahickon High School senior. Society membership input is sought on this issue since it would be a new budget item. The board discussed having a special fund drive for a scholarship. The scholarship would be presented by a Society representative at the spring awards' program at the high school. Please share your ideas and opinions with a board member.

Stone Wall Repaired

Whitpain Township Public Utilities employees recently repaired the original stone wall in front of the 1895 Schoolhouse. Not only was the crumbled wall an eyesore, but it was also dangerous. The original stone was rebuilt and pointed by Steve Bono, Michael Monastero, and Aldo Casalnuovo.

Thanks to Whitpain
Township.



Mark Your Calendar

September 9 - WVHS Meeting - at the 1895 Schoolhouse - 7:30 p.m. Program: The Declaration of Independence

October 12 - Market Day at the 1895 Schoolhouse - 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

October 20 - Open House at the 1895 Schoolhouse, the 1916 Schoolhouse (both on Skippack Pik), Franklinville School (on Morris Road), and Evan Mumbower Mill (off Township Line Road in Upper Gwynedd) - 1 to 4 p.m. Museum tours and light refreshment.



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