



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

P. O Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

June 2015



Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
Annual Picnic

Please join us for our annual picnic on

Monday, June 8, 2015 at 5:30 PM

Pat Plumb's garden

910 Valley Rd.

Blue Bell, PA 19422

The society will provide baked ham and soft drinks.

Please bring a side dish or a dessert that is easy to serve.

We will also hold a "corn auction".

Please bring a wrapped item of value (?)

or interest to be auctioned.

The fun is in seeing what you get.

RSVP to Jeannie Bellavance by June 5 so we can
best plan for the number of guests.

215-643-5048

We hope to see you there!



Eva Martino Painting Donated to WVHS

Nina Martino recently donated a painting of the 1895 and 1916 Schoolhouses done by her mother Eva Martino. Emmy Simon, a neighbor of the the Martino family, remembers seeing Eva in a car parked along Skippack Pike across from School Road sketching for the painting. The painting is on display on the first floor of the Schoolhouse.

Eva Martino studied with her husband Giovanni Martino and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and had her works shared in many shows.

Thank you, Nina.



Recent Donations

Robert Parkin of Dresher recently stopped by the 1895 Schoolhouse and donated an announcement for the Whitpain High School Commencement for 1928 and notebooks with handwritten notes that were kept by his mother Anna Widetsky who attended and graduated from Whitpain High School.

The 1928 commencement was held at the Fireman's Auditorium in Centre Square. The notebooks give an idea of what was studied by a high school student in 1928 (Latin, English, history, art) as well as references to the teachers of various subjects.

Thanks to Mr. Parkin for these informative items.



Rain Gardens Tour

A tour of seven Ambler rain gardens is scheduled for June 7 from 2 to 4 p.m. The tour begins at 331 Mattison Avenue - with registration in a driveway on North Street between Mattison and Euclid Avenues. Sponsored by Ambler EAC and the Borough of Ambler, the tour will highlight an effective way of managing rain and run-off. When Ambler was built, two creeks (Rose Valley and Tannery Run) were buried under the streets and properties. With development and more impervious surfaces, runoff after rain is a problem for Ambler as well as for the Wissahickon Creek into which the local creeks flow.

A recent open meeting held at Germantown Friends highlighted how the historic development of the area is one cause of the deterioration of water quality in the Wissahickon. Rain gardens is one strategy to help manage this problem as well as protect Ambler from flooding.

Please pre-register at amblereac@gmail.com.

Annual Strawberry Day at SpringHouse Estates

The annual Strawberry Day will be held at SpringHouse Estates, 728 Norristown Road on Thursday, June 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Strawberry Day includes a petting zoo, flea market, and strolling entertainment. A delicious barbecue lunch and strawberry treats will also be available at very reasonable prices.

Several WVHS members live are residents of SpringHouse Estates and the Quester group there has supported several projects at the 1895 Schoolhouse. (Sounds like a win-win.)

Mystery Site Returns

This month's mystery site is there all year long, but its chestnut trees are spectacular in the month of May. Already one can hear the crack of the bat as local teams start practicing. The official season starts with a parade that ends in this park.

A hundred years ago, this was the site of a local race track!



From the President's desk:

Marie Russo

We lost one of our founding members this week, with the passing of our good friend Marie Russo on Thursday. Marie was everyone's Italian mother/grandmother – always looking to serve the needs of others. If something needed doing, even if only by her own high standards, Marie would just pitch in and get it done. Marie loved family most of all, and we were part of that family. Thanks, Marie for all you have done and for just being you.

Condolences to Marie's family.

Joseph A. Schneider

Ambler lost one of its most involved citizens and active historians when Joe Schneider passed away recently. Joe graduated from Ambler High School and Temple University. He knew and eagerly shared the history of Lower Gwynedd and Ambler. A few of the items that Joe and family donated to the WVHS are the stained glass panel from Lindenwold, the air-raid siren used during WWII in Ambler, tax records from Lower Gwynedd, Ambler High School memorabilia, and, most recently, an R5 SEPTA sign. Best of all, each item came with a good story.

Condolences to Joe's family.

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society www.wvalleyhs.org info@wvalleyhs.org

Serving Lower Gwynedd, Ambler, and Whitpain

Volume 16, Issue 10

Historian Bob Whittock Completes Booklet on Boehm's Church

The latest publication by our historian Bob Whittock is off the press. The History of Boehm's United Church of Christ celebrates the 275th anniversary of the church at 571 Penllyn-Blue Bell. Bob compiled the booklet using historical records, diaries, newspaper articles, sermons, and books. (Bob, himself, has written three other booklets about Boehm's - about its stained glass windows and about those interred in Boehm's Cemetery.)

The booklet is a rich source of information about people and events from the early days of Whitpain area through present day. (For example, in July Boehm's will be celebrating Christmas in July as part of their 275th anniversary - with classic German Christmas carols and German Christmas cookies.)

One section of the book outlines preparation for defense of community during WWII. It describes the troop movements along DeKalb Pike - as soldiers were moved to New York on their way to Europe. It also describes how a group of woman would meet once a week at the 1895 Schoolhouse to sew quilts and items for the Red Cross. Bob also records that in June 1942 blackouts were ordered in all of eastern Pennsylvania. The Centre Square Fire siren would sound at 10:30 p.m. Air Raid Wardens would patrol, sometimes on horseback, and if they saw any light at all at a window, they knocked on the door and made sure the lights were turned out. During school time air raids, the children would go to the basement at the 1895 Schoolhouse.

Thanks to Bob for another fact filled and interesting record about our local community history.



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