



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

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Wings Field

**In the Forefront of
General Aviation History**

Join us at the
Schoolhouse on
Monday, Nov. 12
at 7:30 p.m.

**Program: Wings
Field: In the
Forefront of
General Aviation
History**

- presented by Bob
Meuller and Dennis Daly.

Home of over 100 operations a day, Wings Field is one of the oldest private aviation facilities in the world. Opened in 1930, it covers almost 220 acres of Whitpain Township. The program includes video clips, slides, and stories of early flights.

Program followed by light refreshments.

Mark Your Calendar

November 12 - Veterans Day - Thanks to our veterans.

November 18 - Open House - 1 to 4 p.m.

December 9 - Holiday Party - 2 to 5 p.m. See details on page 4.

Meet Our Local Artists - Fred Kreitchet

by Peg Johnston

Last spring Jim and I followed the Norristown Art League's Art Trail and found ourselves on School Road and visiting WVHS member and local sculptor Fred Kreitchet.

About a half a mile from the 1895 Schoolhouse, Fred works on 3-dimensional projects in the studio behind his house. The two story studio is filled with neatly organized materials and tools and projects in various stages.

After completing his Master's degree at Penn in 1975, Fred needed to find a way to earn a living as an artist. Over the years, he has focused on 3-dimensional pieces - often working with clients to design site specific sculptures.

When Fred and Carol Kreitchet moved to their historic home on School Lane, they joined the WVHS. After a fire in the barn, they rebuilt it as a complementary studio for Fred's work.

One of his biggest projects was for the Philadelphia Zoo. The Tree House was built in the 1980s from fiberglass and involved a crew of 15. It still hosts zoo visitors.



Fred works with bronze, fiberglass, wood, and welding steel. He often creates rubber and plastic moulds for his projects and then fills them with fiberglass and other materials. The moulds are then removed and can be used again. In addition to commissions, he has created medallions, figurines, and frames for local organizations including Valley Forge National Park.

Always interested in how things are made, Fred is inspired by Michelangelo's marble work, Ukrainian Alexander Munenko's work in steel, and Maurice Lowe (a sculptor who co-founded the UPenn Graduate School of Fine Art).

Fred spent part of his youth in Germany and remembers several early influences. He enjoyed art classes, and his father was a carpenter and his mother, a knitter. He has always been interested in process - how to get from here to there.

In addition to his own creative work, Fred teaches at MCCC where he enjoys working with students. His classes focus on 3-dimensional design. His students' work decorate the hallways of MCCC's new arts building.

A show featuring Fred's and his daughter Heidi's works will open in January at MCCC. Heidi, who lives in California, works in ceramics.

It is always fun to discover artists in our midst. We can recommend the Norristown Art Trail which has been held the past couple of springs. You never know who you'll meet.

Recent Accessions

Aerial photo of south Ambler area - Keasbey-Mattison operation - taken on May 21, 1952 by Ray L. Albright- donated by his son Gary Albright.

Aerial photos of Foulke Mansion, Penllyn - home of, among others, the Foulke family (and Sally Wister) in the 1700s, the cousin of Gen. Pershing in the early 1900s, and the Gast family. The house was demolished in the 1980s. **Copy of Sally Wister's Journal** - 1905 edition - donated by Vivian Gast.

Wanamaker's hat box - donated by Gloria and Bob Myers.

The Strassburger Family and Allied Families of PA - book. Donated by Doris Heritage, Normandy Estates

Hand-crafted tea cosy in shape of 1895 Schoolhouse - donated by Herb Levy - Herb thinks that Floss got the tea cosy at one of the Society's holiday parties. Further details would be appreciated.

Sewing items (thread, needles, snaps, braids) and linen towel of Ambler's Centennial - donated by Grace Renz

Thanks for these meaningful additions to our collection.

Schoolhouse Hosts Blue Bell 3rd Graders



The 1895 Schoolhouse hosted three 3rd grade classes from Blue Bell Elementary School in October. They are studying local history with a focus on the Lenni Lenape who lived in this area. Peg Johnston and Emmy Simon presented a lesson about the Lenni Lenape as it would have been presented to students in 1895. Similarities (foods that all enjoyed, plants and animals of the area, and the use of back-packs) as well as differences (trying to stay warm without electricity and the lack of electronic equipment) were discussed. Emmy shared her expertise in plant dyes when we talked about the petroglyphs and art work of the Lenni Lenape.

The students also visited the museum. An item that always fascinates them is the type writer. They can see the connection with the computer, but have lots of questions about how the typewriter works and laugh when they hear about using an eraser and carbon paper.

They also enjoy the photos of classes from the

early 1900s with special interest in the clothes and hair styles of the children and teacher. Students are encouraged to bring their families for the visit to the Schoolhouse.

Market Day Results

Thanks to all the members who helped with Market Day - by baking; working before, on, and after the day; donating items; and shopping for bargains. Special thanks to the Brunners for set up and take down. of tables, etc. When books were balanced, the Society netted about \$850. This is down from last year's high of \$1500. At the October board meeting, it was decided to host a Market Day next year with the Society serving food but not having its own Flea Market. Ways of attracting additional vendors were discussed. Ideas and volunteers for next year are welcome.

Docents and Hosts Needed

There are still openings for hosts for meetings in 2013. Docents are also needed for our monthly Open Houses and special visitors. There is an excellent training booklet for docents, and new docents are scheduled with experience docents. It is a great way to learn about the building. Contact Jean Bellavance for details. Many thanks to the Maquires (Maquire's Market) for the refreshments the October meeting.

Spreading the Word

Society President Russ Bellavance will speak about the 1895 Schoolhouse at the Nov. 6 meeting of the Blue Bell Rotary. He is willing to share the program at other venues. If you know a group that is looking for an interesting program, please contact Russ.

Holiday Party - Dec. 9

The Holiday Party is scheduled for Sunday, December 9 from 2 to 5 p.m. at Russ and Jean Bellavance's home. Last year we switched the party from Monday evening to Sunday afternoon to allow for easier winter-time driving. The Holiday party is pot-luck with the main meat dish provided. There is a nominal charge per person.

The Bellavance's Victorian home is always decorated for the season, and it is a good time to catch with friends and welcome new members.

Please put December 9 on your calendar.



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