

www.wvalleyhs.org

P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

215-646-6541

info@wvalleyhs.org

Vol. 18, Issue 12

Sept. 2016

September 14th WVHS meeting at the 1895 Schoolhouse 7:30 p.m.

Meet and Greet

Member Share

Program includes a short tour of the building.
Light refreshment and good conversation to follow.
See the new World War I exhibit.

September 18 - Sunday Whitpain Community Open House

Numerous religious and civic groups will be open from
1 to 5 p.m.

See insert for details and ways members can participate.



Mark Your Calendar

September 10 - Wing N' Wheels at Wings Field in Blue Bell - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

September 12 - WVHS Monthly meeting - 1895 Schoolhouse, 7:30 p.m. Member share and social hour. Please consider bring an item of interest to share.

September 15 - Mont. Co. Historical Society, Norristown, 5 p.m. social gathering, 5:30 p.m. program: Alexander Hamilton, Architect of the American Financial System.

September 17 - Lower Gwynedd Township Pike Fest - Bethlehem Pike - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bethlehem Pike will be closed, but there is free parking at Gwynedd Mercy Academy off of Norristown Rd.

September 18 - Whitpain Community Open House - 1 to 5 p.m. - Twelve Whitpain institutions will be open - including 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville School. Map and booklet available at each stop.

Every Saturday in September - Ambler's Farmers Market - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wissahickon School District to Celebrate 50th

Fifty years ago the communities of Whitpain, Ambler, and Lower Gwynedd officially joined together to form the Wissahickon School District. We have been approached to share expertise and materials to complement the celebration. If you would be interested in helping with this effort, please contact Russ Bellavance. We will be going through all of our school related materials and gathering remembrances and stories. This will be a good opportunity to put together a small display that can travel to the four elementary schools.

Work Continues on Both Schoolhouses

The 1895 Schoolhouse has new doors off the fire escape and basement with new locks - thanks to Whitpain Township. Neal Bradley mounted the children's school desks on runners that makes them sturdier and easier to move. The "schoolroom" is now on the second floor of the building. Thanks to Neal and to Whitpain Township and their employees for their continued support.

Kannan Ramanathan (see right with Marie Goldkamp) finished off his Eagle Scout project at the Franklinville School with the installation of a second wooden bench on its front porch. In addition, he organized his fellow scouts to scrape and repaint the rear entrance of the building, to relay the brick patio, and to weed the perennial flower bed in front of the school. Kannan left for Penn State last week, but he will be invited to a WVHS meeting later in the year. Thanks, Kannan.



Display Case Installed at Lower Gwynedd Township Building

Last month a display case of Ambler history was installed at the Ambler Borough building. This month a second case was set up in the Lower Gwynedd Township Building. Displays will be changed every couple of months. Thanks to both locations for sharing their space with us. Anyone interested in helping with displays, please call 215-542-7753.

Thanks to Borough Managers, Elizabeth Russell, John Mastromatto, and Steve Smallberger for their help with the Ambler Borough arrangements and delivery.

Thanks to Lower Gwynedd Board of Supervisors, Carole Culbreth, Mike DeStefano, Rich Miles, and Nick Finore for facilitating the Lower Gwynedd exhibit.

Recent Donation -

A Puzzling Footprint by Jim Johnston

We may never think about it, but we walk on the same land that was once the home of dinosaurs and their progenitors. Earlier this summer, Mr. Ollie Snowden, son of long-time resident of Carthcart Rd., Mike Snowden and friend of Bob Whittcock, asked the Society if we would like his dinosaur footprint fossil. Mike Snowden was a friend of the owner of the Huber quarry located off Skippack Pike and Whitehall Rd. In the 1950s Mr Huber had given Mrs. Snowden a 300 lb. slab of rock from his quarry that contained a dinosaur footprint.



This was not the first fossil from the quarry. In fact, the quarry is well known for the “Blue Bell” dinosaur, a rare fossil jawbone now located in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. The jawbone is from a *Clepsysaurus phytosaur*, not a dinosaur, but an early progenitor crocodile predating the dinosaurs - dating some 250 million years ago.

Our new fossil footprint is definitely not *Clepsysaurus* but a large three-toes animal. (see enhanced photo above) It and two other footprints were recovered from the quarry; one of the others is in the Academy.

A local amateur paleontologist, Wilhelem Bock, was very active in and around Montgomery County in the 1940s and 1950s and is responsible for identifying and naming many of the fossils collected in this area.

The Academy’s footprint was named *Chirotherium huberi* in Mr. Boch’s honor. If anyone remembers Mr. Boch, we would love to know more about him. He began his collecting in the area as a child exploring around his home.

For now the footprint from the Snowdens is being stored on our site while we how best to display it. As we learn more about this footprint and dinosaurs in our backyard, we’ll continue the saga in this newsletter.

Lower Gwynedd’s Haywood Mansion/Artman Home

This fall Artman Home, located on Bethlehem Pike, will celebrate its organization’s 100 anniversary. It was first located in Sellersville, but moved to the former Haywood mansion in 1924.

The mansion itself has an eventful history. The Haywood family, owners of The Ambler Gazette for more than half century, acquired the property in 1868 and built the mansion and barn in the 1880s. The house and seven acres was sold to Dr. Richard Mattison in 1920. He disassembled the barn and moved it closer to his home in Ambler.

Mattison had thoughts of using the mansion as a home for WWI veterans, but then he leased it to two physicians who established the Haywood Manor Sanatorium. One of their patients was John Philip Sousa who they treated for an ear condition.

In 1924 Dr. Mattison sold the property to the trustees of the Artman Home for Lutherans for “one dollar and other monetary considerations”. Artman Home has flourished and is an important part of our community.

WHITPAIN COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE



YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

COME VISIT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS ON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016 FROM 1:00 TO 5:00 P.M.

START ANYWHERE – BOOKLETS AND MAPS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ALL LOCATIONS

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

BOEHM'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CENTRE SQUARE FIRE STATION
DANIEL W. DOWLING AMERICAN
LEGION POST #769
FRANKLINVILLE SCHOOL
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLUE BELL
ST. DUNSTAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SAINT HELENA CATHOLIC CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
SECOND ALARMER'S WHITPAIN EMS STATION
TIFERET BET ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE
WHITPAIN POLICE STATION
1895 WHITPAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL

SPONSORED BY THE **WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
WWW.WVALLEYHS.ORG

Docents are needed at both the 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville School. Volunteers will have time to visit other sites. This could be an excellent family outing.

