



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler  
Lower Gwynedd  
Whitpain

[www.wvalleyhs.org](http://www.wvalleyhs.org)

215-646-6541

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Wissahickon Valley Historical Society  
on-the-road  
April 16, 1 p.m.

at the Roth Farm - for Sustainable Agriculture  
part of the Delaware Valley University

The Roth Farm site is owned by Delaware Valley University and was listed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1999. The three-story house was built by 1832 by Andrew Layman. The barn is a typical Pennsylvania bank barn. The property also includes a root cellar.



The site is located along Route 202. The pictured buildings are at the corner of 202 and Hancock Rd. Hancock crosses 202 between Gwynedd Friends' Meeting House and Rhodes Garden Store. Parking is in a lot at the end of a driveway off of Hancock just behind the house and near the barn.



The barn is filled with antiques farm implements. Our own Gary Fuess will provide some explanations of the collection.

The farm is a model for sustainable agriculture and provided produce for several local food banks including Hope of the Harvest.

## From the President's Desk by Russ Bellavance

As a Society, we have been making an increased effort at reaching out beyond our existing membership. Marie Goldkamp, Dottie MacDermott, Ethel Hutchinson, Peg Johnston, and I have made presentations to the Normandy Farms Quester and have worked with the Wissahickon School District elementary school libraries and the Wissahickon Valley Public Library to present programs and set up displays.

I have been writing a series of articles for a new monthly magazine called *Blue Bell's Finest*, which is distributed to residents of the Blue Bell Country Club. I have also been presenting programs to other outside groups and arranged more programs for next fall with the Audubon Women's Club and the Blue Bell Country Club Residents' Association.

I think we could improve the way that we make these efforts, and the availability of programs, known to the general public through our web-site. John Simon maintains the web-site, but he also wears many other hats. I would love to see someone take on the task of working with our website to include access to my articles and to create a link to programs and speakers that we offer. Do we have someone who might be able to do that?

I would also like to tell you about two other outside programs that may be of interest to members. The first is a lecture that will be presented at my church, Pleasantville United Church of Christ, on Saturday, April 23 starting at 7 p.m. Pleasantville is located at 3424 Limekiln Pike in Chalfont. The speaker will be Eric Troutman, who has been president of more historical societies than I can count. He will present a program on *The Pennsylvania German and Their Involvement in the Revolutionary War*. The lecture is open to all and is free of charge. It even includes light refreshments.

The second program is also at Pleasantville UCC and is also free of charge. It will be held at 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, May 2. The program description is as follows: *Public Service Part II: Mr. Bellavance Goes to Harrisburg*. Last fall, I strained my audience's credulity with tales of being appointed to a federal financial SWAT and being elected to a school board. Come join me as I strain it even further with a claim that I had a high appointed office in the administration of Governor Tom Ridge. Hear tales of political life in that Sodom on the Susquehanna that serves as Pennsylvania's capital city. Remember, comments and questions are welcome, but not placards and catcalls.



## Volunteers Always Welcome!

On a recent Thursday morning, Gianna Fedeli, a sophomore at Perkiomen Valley High School, helped with the annual assessment of our textile collection. This is a time consuming but fun job that should be done at least once a year. Gianna is a high school honor society member and niece of members Joan Duxbury and Sally Zeller.

In photo at left, Gianna checks the condition of shoes that are part of a wedding outfit from the 1890s. Thanks, Gianna. There are lots of one time jobs to be done any Thursday mornings - 9 to noon. Call Peg at 215-542-7753



## Plans for a Special Open House

Sunday, April 17th will be great day to tour three local historic sites. Evans-Mumbower Mill (part of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed), the Franklinville School, and the 1895 Schoolhouse will all be open from 1 to 4 p.m.

Each site will have special activities for children. At the Franklinville School, children can model 1850's period clothing and try period games. At the 1895 Schoolhouse, "students" can make their own "Certificate of Merit" and take part in lessons of the 1890s. Visitors can also tour the new museum exhibits.

(Volunteers welcome.)

At the Evans-Mumbower Mill families can watch a DVD program about the history of milling the Wissahickon Creek. A costumed guide will lead tours of the mill in operation. Visitors can then browse the museum and see artifacts from the archaeological dig carried out at the site.

These three local historical sites are within easy driving distance of each other and would make a fun family outing.



## Featured Item from our Collection

by Marie Goldkamp

The Centre Square Fire Company was formed in Feb. 1913 by a group of local residents. In 1949 the Saturday Evening Post came to Centre Square. The May 14, 1949 cover of the Post depicted volunteer firemen answering a call across the street from Reed's Department Store. The painter was Stevan Dohanos (1907-1994), an artist and illustrator from the social realism school, was best known for his Saturday Evening Post covers. He created over 125 covers for the Post. He has been compared to Norman Rockwell. Dohanos was founder of the Famous Artists School in Westport, CN. He worked in fine art as well as commercial art. He painted several post office murals and designed several U.S. stamps. His paintings are in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of Art, and the Penn. Academy of Fine Art. Dohanos, along with Rockwell, came to represent the quintessence of American magazine art.

The man running across the street in his pajamas has been identified as John Henryman, fire company secretary, in 1949.





## Mark Your Calendar

**April 9, Saturday** - Sheep Shearing Day, Peter Wentz Farmstead, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

**April 12, Tuesday** - Fort Washington Historical Society meeting, 7:30 p.m. - Program: *Lincoln at Gettysburg* - presented by Michael Jesberger

**April 16, Saturday** - WVHS April "meeting" at Roth Farm (see page 1 for details)

**April 17, Sunday** - Open House - 1895 Schoolhouse, Franklinville School, Evans Mumbower Mill - 1 to 4 p.m.

**April 26, Tuesday** - Primary Election

**May 7, Saturday** - WVHS Market Day at the 1895 Schoolhouse,

**May 9, Monday** - WVHS monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m. Program: *Lenapehocking - Land of the Lenape Indians* - presented by Jim Tufano

## Market Day News

There are still spots available for vendors for WVHS' Market Day on May 7. If you know someone that has items to sell or if you are cleaning house, please consider a table at Market Day. Details are on our web-site - [www.wvalleyhs.org](http://www.wvalleyhs.org) - or by calling 215-646-6541.

There will be plants from Lakeside School - for the garden and for Mother's Day (May 8) - for sale again this year. This was a very successful part of our Market Day last year. Perfect timing and quality plants! Thanks to Jon and Meredith Klinger for their work with young people and for sharing their products.

We will be having a book sale on the porch, and book donations can be left on the porch. Volunteers are at the school on Thursday mornings from 9 to noon if that is a convenient time to drop things off.

Joan Duxbury has volunteered to reopen the "Frank and Marie Russo cafeteria." Plan on stopping by for lunch on the 7th. Russ and Jean will be managing the bake sale table so you can plan on taking home treats for Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Donations of baked goods are, of course, welcome.

Several members have mentioned having items to donate to a WVHS sales table. Please price your items and indicated whether you would like them back or donated to Impact. We'll have a WVHS table.