
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society ~ Volume 3, Number 12

The Valley Crier 

August 2024

WVHS Fundraiser to Celebrate Gwynedd Hall's 200th Anniversary:

A committee of 12 members have been meeting to plan a weekend of activities at this grand old house in North Wales, listed on the NRHP. Plan to attend a cocktail party on Friday, October 4, 4-7 PM or a Sunday open house, October 6, 1-4 PM. Guided history tours will offer a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the interior of this lovely residence and its gardens. Details about reservations/ticket sales will be available soon.

New Whitpain Twp Manager Will Attend Sept Meeting: Eric Traub will begin the 2024-2025 Society Year with brief remarks at our first meeting of the season, September 9, at 7 PM at the 1895 School; then WVHS will pay him our one-dollar rent, a revived ceremony. Traub will arrive early for a tour of the building, which is owned by the township. The speaker for the night is Jim Rubillo, vice president of the Old York Road Historical Society, well known for his fantastic talks about local history. A great way to start our speakers' series for the new Society Year!

Projects Continue at the Franklinville School: Board member Barry Johnson has been busy, as usual, taking care of our two museums. At the Franklinville School, in addition to mopping the floor and catching mice, he painted the two benches that usually stand on the little school's front porch. They are a dark red color to coordinate with the school's shutters and the other buildings at nearby Normandy Farm. The school desperately needs to be waterproofed and painted, but until funds can be found, Barry is doing temporary fixes, such as his piece of aluminum on a leaky windowsill. His work is much appreciated!



Barry Johnson had dark red paint left over after restoring the Franklinville School's sign (see the June Valley Crier), so he used it to paint the benches, which usually sit on the front porch.



A little aluminum siding provides a temporary fix to water damage at the school

Philadelphia Magazine Highlights Ambler's Restaurants: The July issue noted that a “seven-block stretch of Butler Avenue extending from the train station offers live theater, movies, concerts, art festivals, and a slew of globe-trotting restaurants.” It also points out that many residents can walk to town.

“Freight House Chocolate Bars” are available now! Find them at the Ambler Movie Theater, Pie & Plate Café (43 N Main), and Studio Ambler (16 E Butler)! For a \$10 or more donation, we are offering a chocolate bar made by Lore's chocolates of Philadelphia as a thank you! Proceeds will benefit the future of the Ambler Train Station's Freight House.



Chocolate Bar Sales to Save the Freight House

Wissahickon High School Sends Note of Appreciation for WVHS Scholarship: “Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our students at Wissahickon High School.... This year, we were able to award approximately \$372,277 in scholarships, a testament to your invaluable support. | am happy to inform you that your scholarship recipient, Hagan Werner, will be attending George Washington University in the fall. Your investment in this student's education will undoubtedly shape their future and contribute to our community....” The WVHS Scholarship funds were donated by a generous WVHS member.

PA Funding for Historic Structures: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has awarded \$2.18 million in Keystone Historic Preservation Grants to help historical and heritage organizations, museums, and local governments in 22 counties. In Montgomery County: Hiway Theatre Inc. - \$36,400; Merion Friends Meeting - \$100,000; St. Thomas Church - \$93,700.

Item Found at GOODWILL Belonged to George Washington: The piece of cloth had a note pinned to it, claiming it belonged to George Washington. Read the full story from PBS: <https://whyy.org/articles/goodwill-cloth-george-washington-war-tent-american-revolution-museum/>



George Washington item found at Goodwill

Archaeologists Find the “Shot Heard Round the World”: On April 19, 1775, at Concord’s North Bridge, colonial militia for the first time fired on the British Redcoats. Last month, archaeologists reported that they had unexpectedly found five musket balls, fired by the Patriots at the bridge! The dig was underway on behalf of the National Park Service. See its website for details: <https://www.nps.gov/mima/learn/news/nps-discovers-nearly-250-year-old-musket-balls-from-shot-heard-round-the-world.htm>

WVHS needs docents: If you would like to learn more about the 1895 School and its Collection, please let us know. For new members or docent training, WVHS will schedule a time convenient for you: info@WValleyHS.org

The 1895 School and Franklinville School Are Open By Appointment: Please feel free to contact WVHS to take a private tour of our two museums. If you have visitors over the summer months who would enjoy a tour, please feel free to contact WVHS: info@WValleyHS.org

From the American Association of State and Local History, *America 250 and Beyond* (printed July 2024): The key to strengthening American

democracy on the eve of its 250th anniversary [is]...engagement with history—not just with stories about history, but with the objects, archives, and spaces that make it come alive...[They] can “bind us together in these sometimes-fractious times with a sense of common purpose.” Amid budget cuts and censorship in schools, museums, and other places where people engage with our history, ...educators, museum professionals, and all Americans must rededicate ourselves to this effort on the eve of the 250th. “One can tell a great deal about a country not just by what it remembers, but by what it chooses to forget,” they argue. “We must resist efforts to smooth the rough edges of our history and instead listen to the advice of the founders and perfect our union—by proudly remembering the richness of the past.”

WVHS appreciates your contributions: Please make your check payable to "WVHS" and mail to WVHS, P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002. Or you can donate using *PayPal*-- At <https://www.wvalleyhs.org/>, click “Donate” and follow the prompts.

From the Board of Directors’ July Meeting:

- The WVHS Bylaws are being reviewed to bring them up to date.
- Additions will be made to the WVHS website’s “Join Us.”
- Lower Gwynedd Township’s Historical Advisory Committee will continue to install historic markers.

Calendar of Events for 2024-2025

- September 9 (Monday), 7 PM, at the 1895 School—Introduction of new Whitpain Twp Manager + Speaker, Jim Rubillo, a retired educator and Vice President of Old York Road Historical Society, on “Little Known Revolutionary War Naval Encounters: Philadelphia to Cape May”
- **October 4 and 6—Gwynedd Hall 200th Anniversary Celebration. Friday, 4-7 PM; Sunday, 1-4 PM**
- October 14 (Monday), at 7 PM—Dana Dorsey, Executive Director of the Highlands Garden and Mansion on the mansion’s history and its current role
- October 20 (Sunday) 1-3 PM, 1895 School, Fall Open House, “The 1960s”
- November 11, 7 PM TBA
- December--Holiday Party, Pot-luck
- January—no meeting
- February—Show n Tell—Members tell about a favorite item
- March, April, May--TBA
- June—Pot-luck Picnic
- Sept 14, **2025**, 1-4 PM, William Penn Inn, WVHS 50th Anniversary Celebration (Save the Date)

We are a member-driven, all-volunteer, non-profit organization.

Although receiving funds from occasional grants, WVHS depends on our generous donors. No amount is too small.

Please support us!

Many people like to include a gift to charity in their will or estate plan to support causes that are important in their life. Please consider including a gift to WVHS to benefit the promotion and preservation of our local history for future generations.
