

WVHS, Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002

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Thanks to everyone who shared time, energy, artifacts, knowledge, enthusiasm, and funds with the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society this past year.

It has been an amazing year - with improvements in both the 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville School buildings, new displays and organization in our museum and library, and expanded outreach to the community.

Both buildings will celebrate Open House on Sunday, July 16 from

1 to 4

Stop by.



Membership renewal forms will be mailed in late summer.

## Anything but Quiet in our Library



The library and museum at the 1895 Schoolhouse has undergone some updating and reorganization.

At left, Barry Johnson photographs a map from our collection so that it can be shared on-line through our website - [www.wvalleyhs.org](http://www.wvalleyhs.org).

Thanks to Bob Duxbury for scanning hundreds of photos from Whitpain schools and Wissahickon School District so that they, too, can be shared on the web-site.

### Notes from the WVHS librarian Joan Duxbury:

\*J.E. Marsden Glass Works - We are currently

working on a display of Marsden Glass and are looking for a Marsden Glass “catalog”. The glass was manufactured in Lower Gwynedd Township in the 1920s. The site is now more closely associated with Amchem Products and is the current site of Ambler Yards.

\* Wissahickon School District - If you have memorabilia from attending a school within the Wissahickon School District, please consider donating the items to the WVHS when you no longer need them. (We can also make copies of items so that you can keep the originals.)

\* Photographs - Do you have photographs or postcards of our local architecture that you don't need any longer? Could we scan photos or postcards that you would like to keep? If you do, please consider adding them to our collection.

\* WWII Newsletters Written by the Women's Circle called Kings Daughters from the First Presbyterian Church of Ambler - The WWII Newsletters are a recent discovery in our library. The first Newsletter was issued on September 30, 1942 and the last one on May 22, 1946. The monthly Newsletters were initially sent to 34 service men and women and grew to a circulation of 310. The Newsletter represent a snapshot in time of what was going on in Ambler, when our local service men and women were home on leave, promoted, became engaged or married, along with the sports scores and top ten songs. The monthly Newsletter started with 6 pages and grew to about 20 pages (a total of 725 pages) - quite a labor of love for our local soldiers. WVHS and Fort Washington Historical Society are working together to present this information to the public. If you are able to send a contribution to the historical societies for the development of the WWII Newsletters Program, please send it to:

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## Update on our Fossil Foot Print

Thanks to Bob Myers for the fabrication of a wonderful case for the fossil dinosaur footprint from the Huber quarry at the corner of Skippack Pike and Whitehall Road. It was donated to the WVHS by the Snowden family. John Simon has arranged for Whitpain Township to move the 300 pound rock into the basement of the 1895 Schoolhouse. It has been in the garage and visited by numerous interested people - including children - to date. In the basement, it will be located near the outside entrance off the parking lot. The plan is to make a display area corridor next to that entrance for the footprint and other appropriate large items. We hope all will be ready for viewing at the September meeting and future open houses.

## Agnes Baker Jefferson Collection

Earlier this year, Bob Whittock donated to the WVHS two boxes of primary materials that belonged to Agnes Baker Jefferson. Materials include information used to write articles for *Whitpain Township - a Tricentennial Reflection - 1701-2001* and a chapter about Whitpain for *Montgomery County - the Second Hundred Years (1983)*. Agnes graduated from Whitpain High School in 1932. After graduating from Ursinus College, she came back to teach in Whitpain schools. The materials are being accessioned by Emmy Simon and will be housed in our library/museum as the Agnes Baker Jefferson Collection and available to the public.

## Historical Society Picnic Report

Thanks to Pat Plumb for hosting WVHS's annual picnic on June 12. A small but enthusiastic group enjoyed delicious food and lively conversation.

Russ Bellavance acted as auctioneer for the corn auction. (top right). Some fun and some elegant items provided entertainment and profits for the society.

Thanks to Joan Duxbury for photos of the picnic.



## From the President's Desk

As we end our very successful program year, there are two things on my mind. The first is the great loss caused by the passing of Bob Whittock. Bob was rightly honored by Whitpain Township recently for his long history of contributions to the community. One of Bob's contribution has been his participation on the WVHS' board.

Professionally, Bob was a tool and die man. If you have not worked in a factory, this may not mean much to you, but I have always been in awe of skilled tool and die workers. They are the one who can take an idea - either theirs or someone else's - and turn it into a physical reality. Bob was like that on our board, and often the ideas were his as well. Bob was persistent and very much based in the world of facts and physical realities. Last year, Bob had a vision for Whitpain Community Open House day, and he found a way to make it happen. Bob also had a vision for our use of the 1895 Schoolhouse, including making use of the basement space for more than storage. We will miss Bob and hope to continue to implement elements of his vision.

The second thing on my mind is something that all members can help with. The board wants to modernize our Society's by-laws and make sure that the bylaws reflect the way that we want to conduct ourselves in the future. We intend to reconsider the issues that any small non-profit organization must face, and we ask for any input you may have. Specifically, some of those issues are: 1) how large should the board be and how should they be chosen, 2) should there be term limits, 3) what officers should we have and how should they be chosen, 4) what should constitute a quorum for Society decisions, and 5) should there be standing committees, and what should they be.

Small non-profits such as the WVHS need to find a balance between recognizing that there is a limited pool of members willing to serve on a board/officer position and recognizing that any organization needs new blood in leadership roles. Please help us find that balance by e-mailing me - [rebellavance67@gmail.com](mailto:rebellavance67@gmail.com) with your thoughts. Thanks.

## Off-Site Displays

If you stop by the Ambler Borough building, the Lower Gwynedd Township building, or the Whitpain Township building, please note the WVHS exhibits on local history. The displays are changed every couple of months. Currently, Lower Gwynedd's exhibit features Amchem history. Historic stores and restaurants of Ambler are celebrated at the Borough hall. The 1895 Schoolhouse building's history is explained in Whitpain Township building.

Displays are also being prepared for local schools and for the BlueBell library.

## Check out Throwback Thursday - Whitpain

The June 8th Whitpain Wire e-mail site announced the debut of Throwback Thursday appearing on Whitpain Township's website and its Twitter account. The WVHS, in conjunction with Whitpain Township, will share images of Whitpain's early years with short captions on Twitter#Throwback Thursday account. Thanks to Joan Duxbury for the following directions:

To receive the Whitpain Wire e-mail, access the township's website at [www.whitpaintownship.net](http://www.whitpaintownship.net) and at the bottom of the page you will see "Subscribe to the Wire, enter your e-mail address and click on "subscribe". Follow a few prompts and acknowledge the test e-mail. The Whitpain Wire is sent on Thursdays.

The Whitpain Township Twitter account may be accessed from the township's website [www.whitpaintownship.net](http://www.whitpaintownship.net). Scroll down on the left side and you will see the Twitter logo. Click on the logo and the township tweets will appear. The June 29th #Throwback Thursday was the interior and exterior photos of the Yost Log Cabin. You may also sign up to receive the township's tweets automatically by following the "sign up" prompts at the top of the page.

We hope to make similar connections with Ambler Borough and Lower Gwynedd Township.

## Mark Your Calendar

July 4 - 4th of July parade in Philadelphia - watch for Barry Johnson in the Saving Hallowed Ground contingent - carrying a giant American flag.

July 7 - Fireworks Display at Wissahickon High School/Middle School - ~ 9 p.m.

July 11 - "Cruising in Montgomery and Bucks Counties" - Historical Society of Montgomery County, 1654 DeKalb Pike, Norristown - 5:30 p.m.

July 16 - Open House at 1895 Schoolhouse and Franklinville School - 1 to 4 p.m.

## Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Budget

As part of Pennsylvania's budget negotiations, funding for Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission has been raised slightly from first proposals but less than last year's amount. Melanie Hays, president of Friends of Hope Lodge, has been involved in contacting legislators. Check out Friends of Hope Lodge web-site.

July 19 - Wednesday - Hope Lodge - tours of barn and mansion - 6:30 p.m.



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