



Wissahickon Valley

historical society

Ambler
Lower Gwynedd
Whitpain

May 2013

www.wvalleyhs.org

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Volume 14, Issue 10

215-646-6541

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society's May Meeting

The Martino Art Legacy

speaker: Nina F. Martino

The program complements the current exhibit of the Martino family memorabilia at the Wissahickon Valley Public Library in Blue Bell.

by Nina F. Martino



Nina (who grew up in Blue Bell) is part of large family of Montgomery County artists including her father Giovanni, mother Eva, sister Babette, and uncle Antonio. Nina studied art at Moore, PAFA, and in Italy and Mexico.

May 13, 2013

7:30 p.m.

at the Wissahickon Valley Public Library
in Blue Bell, Skippack Pike

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
Serving Lower Gwynedd, Ambler, and Whitpain
Volume 14, Issue 10

Living History - Schoolhouse Class for Kids

The Wissahickon Valley Library - Blue Bell hosted a program for children entitled Living History - Schoolhouse Class for Kids on April 14.



WVHS members Jean Bellavance and Peg Johnston and Historical Society of Whitpain members Dot MacDermott and Carolyn Wurzer lead students and family members through a typical school day - as it would have been in the late 1800s.

Participants learned about the flag and pledge and tried typical lessons and lunch and recess activities. Students practiced their penmanship and painted their own certificate of merit as well as got to try on period clothing.

This was another excellent joint effort of the two groups.



Programs for Ambler Senior Center

The WVHS has been asked to present several lunch time programs for the Senior Center in Ambler. This will be a great out-reach to the community as well as a chance to tap into potential sources of information for our archives.

Ideas for programs include sharing period clothing from our collections, showing a video program of old photos, and simulating a school day from 100 years ago.

Anyone interested in participating, please call 215-542-7753.

From the President - Russ Bellavance

For our April meeting, on Saturday, April 13 we visited the Lansdale Historical Society. As a special treat, our guide was their dynamic President, Dick Shearer, former managing editor of the North Penn Reporter. The UHS has two buildings, one of which is the Jenkins Homestead, which is the oldest building in Lansdale. It was the longtime home of the Jenkins family, who were instrumental in the development of Lansdale from its very earliest years. The earliest parts of the Jenkins Homestead date back to 1770. It replaced a log cabin which had been built in 1743. The house was expanded over the years and remained in the Jenkins family until the late 19th century. The house was turned into apartments, and all the original furniture was lost. The house fell into serious disrepair in the middle of the 20th century and was threatened with condemnation and demolition. As part of the Lansdale Centennial (as a separate borough) in 1972, a group of concerned citizens (hurray for them!) formed the Lansdale Historical Society. They convinced the Borough to take ownership and took possession, beginning the process

of saving the building. The restored building has many period pieces in it, as well as some reproductions, with the focus being the periods that the Jenkins family lived there.

We toured the Jenkins Homestead, but that was not the end of our visit. We also toured the LHS' Research Center next door. This is another old structure that the LHS has preserved and operates. It houses most of their very extensive library of old North Penn Reporters. Perhaps more importantly, it houses the



facilities in which the Society's many volunteers have created searchable collections - including the North Penn Reporter as well as many other sources of information about the Lansdale area. The Society fields numerous inquiries about people, events, and places and - for a small fee - answers those inquiries, most of which come over the Internet. They also permit some outside researchers to use their facilities.

It was also fascinating to see what the Society does by way of programs. Compared with us, the LHS has fewer programs, but the ones they do have are larger in scope and attendance and are more focused on Lansdale history. Examples include Lansdale's Grand Old Movie Houses, Eating Out in Lansdale, and Lansdale's Industrial Revolution. The programs are captured by video and turned into edited DVDs which they sell at their Research Center and over the Internet. Their next program, entitled Faith of Our Fathers: the History of Lansdale's Earliest Churches, will be held on Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building, Seventh Street and Lansdale Avenue.

This visit offered a lot of food for thought for your own Society. We are beginning to develop next year's programs, and we would like to hear from our members as to what sort of programs you would like. Should we try to make them more like those of the LHS? Would any of you be interested in developing a program that was similarly focused on our service areas? Let me know what you think. You can drop me an e-mail at rcbellavance7@gmail.com

Part of Stone Wall Removed

You may have noticed that a portion of the stone wall along School Road has been removed and sod put in its place. The wall had been hit by a car several years ago, and it was deemed dangerous by the Whitpain Township officials.

Our concern now is the stone work on the front walkway from Skippack Pike. Though it is well documented and historic, it is currently unsightly and could be dangerous. It needs to be repaired. Whitpain Township Director of Public Works Ron Cione has expressed interest in helping with repairs. If you live in Whitpain, please support his efforts.

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, May 3 - Ambler's First Friday - starts at 6 p.m. along Butler Pike.

Thursday, May 9 - Wissahickon Valley Public Library, Blue Bell - Michael Jesberger program on military uniforms - 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 11 - Attic Sale - HSWhitpain - Boxwood - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Monday, May 13 - WVHS monthly meeting at the Wissahickon Valley Public Library - Blue Bell. See first page for details of program.

Saturday, May 18 - Centre Square Fire Department parade - celebrating their 100th anniversary. The parade will leave Shady Grove School at 11 a.m. - rain or shine - and travel to the Centre Square Fire station. The Schoolhouse front yard will be a prime spectator site. Great for kids - with lots of fire trucks!

Tuesday, May 21 - Historical Society of Whitpain meeting at Boxwood, 7:30 p.m. - Program: Presidential Leadership - Does It Matter? by Dr. James Hilty

Saturday, May 25 - Morgan Log House, Kulpsville will host a military encampment of the 18th, 19th, and 20th century wars - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 12 (Raindate - Oct. 14) - WVHS sponsored Flea Market and Bake Sale at the 1895 Schoolhouse. Please share date with possible dealers.

Volunteer Opportunities

The WVHS library is set for remodeling - as part of an Eagle Scout project. This will be a great opportunity to organize and catalogue recent donations. We are trying to focus on books of local interest. Anyone wanting to sort and catalogue materials or read and write reviews for the newsletter would be very welcome.

Docents for third-Sunday-of-the-month-Open-Houses are always welcome. New docents can match up with an experienced docent for coming Open Houses.

Next Month's Newsletter - We are working on an article - "Local buildings in danger, gone, and in process of change" Please share suggestions with 215-542-7753.



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