

Solebury Chronicle



A newsletter of the Solebury Township Historical Society

Society presents scholarships to local students

Each year the Solebury Township Historical Society presents the Ned Harrington Scholarship to one deserving student from each of New Hope Solebury High School and Solebury School. We thank our members who generously support these scholarships along with their membership dues.

This year it was our pleasure to present the scholarships to the following young people:

Nicole Garafola, a graduate of New Hope-Solebury High School, is an excellent student whose interests include Science, Math and Dancing. She earned excellent grades in Social Studies and her teachers noted that Nicole “has a deep passion for knowledge ...she truly wants to understand the day’s lesson and materials.” She is a member of the National Honor Society. Her community involvement includes working with Trenton’s homeless shelter, PA youth election polls clerk, ALS fundraising, National Thespian Society membership, and several community theaters. Nicole will attend Gettysberg college this fall.

Rebecca Brady is a junior at Solebury School and a Solebury Township resident. This scholarship will help pay her tuition for her senior year. Rebecca gained top honors in AP history classes. Her community involvement is full engagement with a new non-profit organization: Teach2Serve. Solebury School is one of two pilot schools taking part in the Teach2Serve programs, a networks of schools nationwide. The program will consist of workshops, evening classes, summer reading, community service, internships, and the development and execution of a service project. The underlining idea is to foster student commitment to social change in their community via public service.



Robert McEwan, STHS Education Chair, presents the Ned Harrington Scholarship to New Hope Solebury senior Nicole Garafola.



(l-r) Scott Eckstein, Solebury School Director of Admission; Donnet Crane, STHS president; scholarship winner Rebecca Brady; Robert McEwan, STHS Education Chair.

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History Quiz

Why are there a number of Mulberry Trees in Solebury? They are not native.



Answer on page 6

Presidents Message

Hello members,

Our “breaking news” for this edition is that the STHS is about to acquire ownership of the Solebury Schoolhouse. We are very excited, elated and basically overjoyed. We owe many thanks for this wonderful opportunity. I’ll begin by thanking **Dr. Raymond Boccuti**, Superintendent of Schools, for expediting the entire process. Thanks to **Amanda Elefante**, President of the School Board; the School Board members; **Greg Hogg**, Business Administrator/School Board Secretary; **Alison Kingsley**, Chair of the Facilities Committee and School Board member, the Facilities Committee members and **Dave Hansel**, Director of Operations. Thanks also to our fellow non-profits who took the time to write support letters including the New Hope Historical Society, the Historic Carversville Society, Bucks County Audubon Society, Friends of the Delaware Canal, Phillips’ Mill Community Association, Primrose Creek Watershed Association and Aquetong Watershed Association. Thanks to our members and non-members who wrote, emailed or “liked” us on Facebook. All your support helped tremendously. Thanks to **Robin Mancuso**, owner, **Sheryl Larsen**, **Manager** and the team at Cross Keys Abstract and Assurance for preparing all the necessary legal paperwork and coordinating with the school district. Thanks to **Brian Keyes** for helping us with legal details. We truly appreciate your time and expertise, Brian. Thanks to **Sally Jagoe** who started this ball rolling. Thanks especially to my fellow Board members for their tireless work in seeing this to fruition. You are all so great.

Special thanks also to **Vic Lance**, owner of Lance Landscape, for his more than generous donation of grounds maintenance at the schoolhouse.

As many of you know, this year we started a Business Membership Program. It brings revenue for the Society while providing good exposure, publicity, as well as tax write-offs to our business members.

Excitement aside, it now time for us to get to work. Ownership opens the opportunity for us to apply for grants, so we will be looking for someone with grant writing experience to help us. If you have experience or know someone who does, please email us at soleburyhistory@verizon.net.

As always, in good times and bad, we could not do this without our members’ loyal support. The largest “**THANK YOU**” is for you.

Donneta Crane



Solebury Township Historical Society
Drawer 525
Solebury, Pennsylvania 18963
215-297-5091
www.soleburyhistory.org

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Mary Jackson Powell

It is with a great sense of loss that we mourn the passing of Mary Jackson Powell. Mary was a dear friend and dedicated member of the STHS. She served on the board for six years and did a beautiful job writing personal notes as corresponding secretary. Mary was also dedicated to the mission of our fellow non-profit Bucks County Audubon Society. A warm, kind-hearted and generous lady, she will be sorely missed.

Do You Know?



These are the graves of the Pidcock family, the original settlers who owned the first grist mill along Pidcock Creek. The graves are located near Bowman’s Hill Tower. Photo by Beth Carrick.

The Mills of Solebury /New Hope

Once upon a time Solebury Township (and what was to become New Hope Borough in 1837) was an industrial dynamo. It was the manufacturing heartland of Bucks County — home to inventors, innovators, entrepreneurs, and a huge influx of immigrants. We had more mills and factories than Bristol, Doylestown, and Quakertown combined.

That was long ago in the period of roughly 1750 to 1850, when America was emerging from English colonial domination, when we fought two wars for freedom, when we recognized that we could build our way to a new life with comforts we could never have dreamed of in prior history.

New Hope and the township of Solebury had at least forty mills — sawing lumber, carving mouldings for doors, sash and blinds, creating prefabricated doors and windows, carding and cleaning the wool of Merino sheep, spinning cotton, cultivating silk worms to make yarn and fabric, growing wheat and grinding enough flour to supply our residents and ship the surplus to Philadelphia and overseas, in addition to producing paper by the sheet and later by the roll. Our finest old homes were built on the profits of this trade.

It is all gone now. Most mills are in ruins. A few of the lucky ones have been remodeled into residences. All those mills that were driven by natural streams — Pidcock, Aquetong, Cuttalossa, Paunacussing and smaller creeks — became obsolete with the introduction of steam power generated by anthracite coal brought down from the Poconos on the Delaware Canal that opened in 1832. Our manufacturing all moved away — to the cities and beyond.

Now there are only faded memories of our former industrial might and a few relics that I have been exploring. That world may seem as distant as the dinosaurs, but there are still traces of our past greatness . . . which I hope to put together in a book later this year.

Will Rivinus

Photos from the Mill Walk on May 5



The area's most famous Mill - now the Bucks County Playhouse



The walk began at the Ferry Landing in New Hope



Two historians led the group on the Mill Walk: Will Rivinus (above) and Roy Ziegler (center left)



One of the few mills still standing has been converted to a residence



The walk concluded at the Springdale mansion, where the group enjoyed light refreshments

Solebury History Museum Exhibit

The Solebury Township Historical Society is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Bucks County SPCA (BCSPCA), which opened its doors in Solebury Township in 1912. The exhibit in the Solebury History Museum, located in the entrance hall of the Solebury Township Building, includes various statuettes of the types of animals that are helped by the BCSPCA, children's artwork, historical documents and more.

The grand opening took place on Sunday, March 25. Anne Irwin and Beth Kittrell of the BCSPCA spoke to the group about the history and the future of the growing organization. Refreshments were served and special doggie treats given out.

The exhibit is open weekdays, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Sally Jagoe organized the museum exhibit and baked hundreds of dog biscuits which were beautifully wrapped and handed out to guests.



The BCSPCA exhibit includes hand carved animals, children's artwork and more



Anne Irwin, Executive Director of the BCSPCA, spoke to the group about the organization.



Guests enjoyed fine food and wine.

STHS Teaching Teachers

April 23 saw the school house in use, once again, as a School House. Sally Jagoe organized a community learning day for the Social Studies teachers of NHS High School. This satisfies a requirement that teachers spend a day annually learning more about their community. For a number of years, STHS has cooperated with the School District in presenting topics of interest for the teachers using local historians and experts to lead the studies. At the teachers' request this year the topic was Solebury Township in the Industrial Age. Will Rivinus applied his wealth of information to a lively review and discussion of the many mills and industries in the township from its early days to the mid 1800's.

Of keen interest to the teachers was why business started, why they eventually failed, what science, geography and human forces drove the changes. The teachers involved were struck by many of the family names which drove the growth in Solebury and how many of those same family names are numbered among their current students. We take this for granted, but as these teachers have moved to this school from far and wide, the permanence of these families underscores the deep commitment township residents feel for Solebury.

On May 23 we held a second education day for the teachers. The topic was *Dump the Pump*, and Abbie Hoffman's involvement. Participating in this discussion were Val Sigstedt and Yvonne Waldron, two folks who were very involved in the 1980s fight to try to stop the pumping of water from the Delaware River to cool the Limerick nuclear power plant.



Val Sigstedt

The teachers had fine comments about both programs, and we wholeheartedly thank Sally Jagoe for continuing this important program. It is hoped that the participating teachers will pass some of this information onto their students.

The School Board and their new Community Engagement Committee are quite pleased with this activity. STHS is now pursuing a similar teach-in for Science teachers in the 2012/2013 school year. We are seeking topics and local speakers who will be willing to do a bit of homework and spend a few engaging hours one afternoon with a group of teachers. Please VOLUNTEER by e-mailing your ideas to soleburyhistory@verizon.net.



NHS Social Studies teachers Jon Gonsiewski, Dept. head and Fred Achenbach, two of the five teachers who attended the workshops.

Business Membership Drive

For the first time, STHS has initiated a local Business Membership Campaign. We have had a very nice response so far.

We greatly appreciate the generous support of the following businesses and urge you to support them whenever you can:

Steward

Holly Hedge Estates/1740 House
Joe & Amy Lucarro

Protector

Black Bass Hotel, Lumberville
Tinsman Brothers Inc., Lumberville

Guardian

Augenblick & Co. PC
Delray Plus True Value
Eagle Diner
First Federal of Bucks County
First National Bank & Trust Company of Newtown
Mancuso Show Management
Nakashima Woodworkers
New Hope Crushed Stone

Accepting Nominations for Honored Citizens of Solebury

We encourage you to nominate past or current residents. Call or email for a nomination form.

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Distinctive Events

Genealogy – Tracing Your Family History

On May 23 and 30, the Solebury Township Historical Society joined with the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury to host a two-part presentation on genealogy. The sessions were held at the NH-S High School library as part of the school board's community engagement efforts.

In the first session, STHS vice-president Beth Carrick explained how to begin tracing your family history. She advised the audience to write down everything they know about family before going to see relatives and then eventually moving to trips to ancestral homes and internet searches. Beth also made suggestions about filing information, either on paper or on a computer, and what types of documents to collect in the search. She also explained the meaning of some terms used in genealogy, like Ahnentafel, pedigree chart, and third cousin twice removed.

In the second session Beth covered the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and their emphasis on family and the afterlife, hence their interest in genealogy. She also explained about the United States census records and their importance in family research. The evening concluded with hints and tips Beth gathered during her 25 years of working on her family history.

What happens when a relative says you should not search because you might find a "horse thief" in your family tree. Since every family has one of those in some form—Beth's was a deserter from the US Navy—that should not be a reason to avoid searching. And, just one "ah ha" moment when you find something great and do your happy dance will be enough to hook you for life.



Donneta Crane
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Stories from the Archivist

Last August we received a phone call from a gentleman in Spain inquiring about a property in Solebury where his aunt and uncle, the Osterlenks, used to live. He had fond memories of visiting there when he was a little boy. He described the house in great detail remembering that it dated back to the seventeenth hundreds and was at the end of a long driveway off of Phillips Mill Road. As he and his family were coming to a wedding in New Jersey in a few weeks, he was hoping to revisit it if the present owners wouldn't mind. Could we please locate the property and put him in touch with the owner

We tried asking various residents of Phillips Mill Road if they remembered the Osterlenks who lived there in the 40s. Finally, success, A lady did remember them as friends of her parents. What's more she knew who the present owner was and even had his E-mail address. He too was in Europe. The house was being rented but she did not know the tenants last name nor where the house was located. I immediately sent off this information to Spain and after receiving a gracious thank you, heard no more.

Eight months later we received a request from a young man, a local realtor, who had just bought an old house on Phillips Mill Road and was asking if we had any research material on it. He provided us with the tax map number – the only way we can check our files. Sure enough, Ned Harrington, a local historian now deceased, had done a great job and provided us with a large file complete with photos. As I browsed through the pages, I came across the list of past owners of the property Lo and behold – there were the Osterlenks! We now not only know where they lived, but we have this wealth of information about the property. The new owner was delighted to purchase a copy.

Of course I emailed the gentleman from Spain right away. He told me he had been able to visit the house in August and would be glad to send the new owners some photos taken there when he was a boy if they would like them.

So, a happy ending all around – the best part being that the house will now have a new lease on life with owners who are eager to restore it to its former glory.

Joan S. Fitting

Archivists Gwen Davis and Joan Fitting are on hand each Wednesday afternoon to assist visitors in their research. And we have a new volunteer, Judy Clarke, a retired educator who will be a great asset in organizing our growing library resources. Additional volunteers who help on occasion include Dick Carlson and Rayna Polsky. We are working towards being open more hours, but need to find and train additional volunteers. If you're interested please leave a message at 215-297-5091 or email soleburyhistory@verizon.net. It seems there are surprises each day; it's lots of fun!

History Quiz answer:

Mulberry trees were planted in Solebury Township in the 18th century to provide food for the silk worms. Silk worms were needed to make silk in some of our mills.

With Gratitude . . .

Members are the backbone of our organization. We are deeply appreciative of the support of the residents listed below who have renewed their membership or joined the Society since the last newsletter.

Alice and Harold Betts
Paul and Marianne Bogen
Margo & Harold Busund
Bob Carr
Richard and Elizabeth Carrick
Thomas and Jenny Carroll
Elizabeth Chardon
Frank Chicarelli
Judith Clarke
Anna Burbank & David Cramer
Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Crane, Jr.
Forrest Crooks
Ruth Curley
Jessica Kimmel & Jesse Darlington
Marne Kies Dietterich
Jack and Claire Donohue
Robert Orrill and Dorothy Downie
Ruth Campbell and Joseph Duffy
John & Susan Eichert
Ernest B. and Barbara H. Feldgus
Maria Fell
Joan and Don Fitting
Eugene Fluehr
Carolyn Fox
Phyllis Gagner
Sorkow Gail
Arthur Gerold
Wendy and Eugene Gladston
Lewis Baratz and Guy Glass
Joseph Gross
Robert and Sally Huxley
Ronald Dabney and Lawrence Jahns
Mary Johnson
Susan Kane
Linda Kenyon
Brian and Lisa Gladden Keyes
Richard & Nancy Kimmel
Joseph Kubiak
Michael and Donna Lacey
Paul and Marilyn Lanctot

David Linehan
Bromley and Suzanne Lowe
Joseph and Amy Luccaro
Bill and Jane MacDowell
Stanley A. Marcus
Phyllis and Robert Mathieu
Robert and Maria McEwan
Bob & Bobbie Melby
Linda Metcalf
Suzanne Meyers
Douglas and Renee Morsbach
Deborah Palmer
Dr. and Mrs. Jay R. Petrie
Candace Jones and Stephen Phillips
Chris Potts and Kristin Orlieb-Potts
Rhoda Smith & Daryl Renschler
Joyce & David Rivas
Gayle Goodman and Jim Searing
Naudain Sellers
Beth and Bill Short
Phil Getty and Barbara Simmons
Faith and Gurney P. Sloan
Janice Spurr
Anne Stephano
David and Marilou Stewart
Tim Hartman and Ron Swidor
Rev. Rick and Ellen Vinson
Patricia Whitman
Charles and Pat Worth
Robert Beck and Doreen Wright
George A. Yarnall
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Yarnall
George and Judy Yerkes

Every effort has been made to publish a complete and accurate list of memberships received since the last newsletter (February) and up to about June 15, 2012. We regret if there are any omissions.

Many Thanks . . .

The generosity of so many folks help the Society throughout the year. We greatly appreciate the support of our friends and neighbors:

Solebury Schoolhouse

(Please see President's Letter on page 2)

Genealogy Program

Charlie Huchet and the **New Hope Solebury Library** for co-sponsoring the program

Beth Carrick for leading the session

Teachers In-Service Program

Sally Jagoe for organizing the events

Will Rivinus, Val Sigstedt & Yvonne Waldron for sharing their experiences and expertise with the teachers.

Museum Exhibit

Beth Kittrell and **Anne Irwin** of the Bucks County SPCA for participating in the exhibit and for speaking at the event.

Sally Jagoe for organizing the exhibit.

Marne Dieterrich, Diane Johnston and **Paul & Marilyn Lanctot** for volunteering on the day of the exhibit opening.

Mill Walk

Will Rivinus and **Roy Ziegler** for leading the walk, **New Hope Historical Society** for co-sponsoring the walk and **New Hope Police** for escorting the group.

Vic Lance, owner of Lance Landscape, for schoolhouse grounds maintenance.

The **advertisers** in the *Solebury Chronicle* help offset the cost of producing the newsletter. These are local businesses, and we urge your patronage.

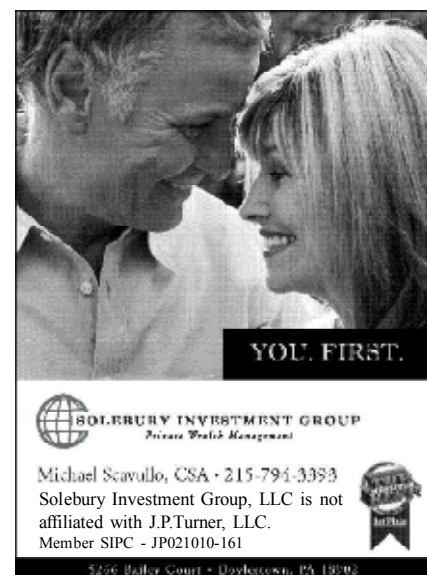
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**Solebury Township Historical Society
Drawer 525
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Do You Know?

Upcoming Events

- August 26** **Annual Summer Picnic**
 Details and location to follow
- Fall** **History Walk**
 Details to follow
- November 18** **Annual Meeting/Pot Luck Supper**

STHS members will receive invitations to all events.



Do you what and where this is in the area?

*Call 215-297-5091 or email your answer to
soleburyhistory@verizon.net. You may win a prize!*