

Solebury Chronicle



A newsletter of the Solebury Township Historical Society

Your Historical Society Embraces the 21st Century!

New Computer

When Dick Carlson hears of something that needs to be done, he doesn't hesitate. Dick is a Society member and faithful volunteer. Earlier this year the Society's librarian, Joan Fitting, mentioned to Dick that the Board felt the we needed a new computer. Without hesitation, Dick said that he would pay for it. He wrote a check and the Board went into action, with Beth Carrick taking on the challenge of finding the perfect system for the best price.

The computer that was in use in the Schoolhouse was donated to the Society some years ago. It worked for word processing, but its operating system was too old to be able to get an internet connection or to support modern scanning equipment. In late May a new computer, wide-screen monitor, and all-in-one printer were set up in the Schoolhouse.

While researching the computer, Beth discovered a web site that sells computer software at a discount to non-profit organizations. The Society has completed the requirements needed to buy from the site, and the software for the computer is being ordered. This includes Microsoft Office, Photoshop, Contribute to help edit our new web site, and a program to keep better track of our membership records. Still needed is the internet hookup to make the system complete.

If you have historic documents or old family photos that depict rural life in Solebury Township that we could scan, send an e-mail to soleburyhistory@comcast.net and arrangements will be made to scan them. We would like to build a library of such photos and documents and will be happy to supply you with a copy of the digital files.

Next time you see Dick Carlson, remember to tell him thanks.

Website

We have a website! www.soleburyhistory.org. Check out our upcoming events, look at past newsletters, read about the history of Solebury and its villages, learn what resources we have in our library, see what items we have for sale and put in your order. Soon to come will be photos – of events and historical photographs and postcards. Let us know if you have any photos or postcards that you think should be on the website. We can borrow and scan them.

Elaine Crooks worked with Mikula Web Design of Doylestown to create the website. We pledge to keep it up-to-date, so add it to your "favorites" and check it often. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email soleburyhistory@comcast.net.

Phone

Watch for announcement of Society's new phone number.

Save These Dates

Annual Summer Picnic

Sunday, August 30, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Rolling Green Farm

Another beautiful historic location has been offered for our annual members' picnic, so be sure to mark your calendars! The Society provides beverages, hot dogs and hamburgers (with the trimmings) and we ask that you bring a dish to share: salad, vegetable, chips, dessert, and BYOB if you wish. Musical entertainment, great food, lovely setting and wonderful people – don't miss it!

Fall Walk

Saturday, October 3, 9 - 11 a.m.

Mills along Mechanics Street

New Hope

Details to follow

Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 15, 5-8 p.m.

Program: Linda Kenyon will portray "Julia (Child)" in a one-person show.

For those of you who remember Linda portraying Eleanor Roosevelt for us a few years back, you know how real and exciting Linda's acting is. You are asked to bring a dish to share – if you have a favorite Julia Child recipe, try that just for fun!

Join us for a pot luck supper (location to be announced), a brief but necessary business meeting, some fun and games, and a performance you won't forget.

Members will receive invitations to all of these events. Free to members, \$5 for guests.

Presidents Message

If you have heard that "America runs on Dunkin" — don't believe it!

America runs on volunteers, and this historic society is fortunate to have so many of them.

It would be near to impossible to do Ned Harrington's "old house research" without Pat Petrie, Wendy Kale and Irish Harrison. They work on this project two days a week, and this has been going on for almost 9 years.

When Joan Fitting asked for help with organizing the archives so many folks came forward. Dick Carlson, Donna Trechard and Beth Carrick just to name a few. People have volunteered their property for our annual picnic, and local business have donated food and wine. We are so grateful to all who have checked "volunteer" on the membership form.

Even though our name might suggest to some that we are part of our township government, we are not. We are a private, non-profit organization that depends on the support of our devoted members who renew their membership each year. Some folks have generously given an additional donation to the Ned Harrington Scholarship Fund (\$355 so far this year). Each year the Society helps out a talented senior from both the Solebury School and the New Hope Solebury High School with a \$500 scholarship each.

We are growing and will need more volunteers. So, if you have a special talent that you'd like to donate, please contact us.

Sally Grant-Jago



Solebury Township Historical Society
Drawer 525
Solebury, Pennsylvania 18963
215-862-5033
soleburyhistory@comcast.net

Board of Directors

Sally Grant-Jago, *President*
Beth Carrick, *Vice-President*
Elaine Crooks, *Treasurer*
Donneta Crane, *Secretary*
Mary Jackson Powell, *Corresponding Secretary*
Joan Fitting
Gwen Davis
Don Harris
Martha Harris
Patricia Petrie
Rhoda Renschler
Donna Trenchard
Franca Warden



Coverlets for Sale

The Society has new coverlets for sale depicting many of the historic gems of the township. High quality 100% cotton, size 4' x 6'. Choice of dark blue and white or dark red and white. \$50. Perfect for your home and for gifts! Call 215-297-5033 or email soleburyhistory@comcast.net to arrange purchase.



JOE LUCCARO
Owner
6987 Upper York Road
New Hope, PA 18938
215.862.4136 p
215.862.0960 f
awalding@hollyhedge.com
www.hollyhedge.com

Distinctive Events

TINSMAN BROS., INC.
Founded 1785



Building Materials
Cypress Boards
Cedar & Fir Timbers
Masonry Supplies - Windows
Restoration Hardware
Old Carversville Rd. Lumberville
Hrs: Mon-Fri 7:30-5:00
Sat 7:30-Noon
215-297-5100

Historic Inns of Solebury

Solebury Township is home to a number of historic inns, some of which are still operating today. The next series of articles will focus on these inns and taverns.

Black Bass Hotel

Few hotels in America can trace their heritage back more than two hundred and sixty years, but Lumberville has one. Originally built in 1745 as a place of friendly refuge for tired travelers, the Black Bass (then called Wall's Saw Mill or Wall's Tavern – the village was called Wall's Landing until 1835, when a post office was established and the village name was changed to Lumberville) offered food, drink and shelter to colonists braving the hostile countryside. Hunters, fishermen and traders were most of the tavern's original clientele in the isolated wilderness. According to the Inn's records, Grover Cleveland visited the Inn on his trips to fish the Delaware River.

In 1830—nearly a hundred years after the Black Bass was built—the village still consisted of only the tavern, two stores, a grist mill and a dozen houses. The settlement was so small that the tavern doubled as a post office.

Business picked up when the Delaware Canal opened in 1832, particularly as Lumberville became a convenient halfway stop on the two-day run from Easton to Bristol. The Canal brought commerce to the small community. When the docks closed each evening, bargemen headed to the tavern for hot, spiced ale and revelry.

On Saturday, January 17, 1833 there was a particularly lively party at the hotel, attended by river boatmen, canal engineers, and locals. They had such a good time that they set the building on fire, cheerfully oblivious of the fact that large quantities of blasting powder were stored in the basement. The framework and the merry-makers were saved from being blown up by the bravery of the proprietor, Major Anthony Fry, who, at the risk of his own life, broke open the cellar door and carried out the powder. The following year the tavern was rebuilt and christened the Black Bass, in tribute to the excellent fishing offered by the Delaware River.

The famous tavern has had many lives. In chronological order, it was the Temple Bar, established by William Closson about 1745. For a while it was called the Lumberville Inn and Lumberville House; then the Rising Sun in the 1820s and 1830s. During Prohibition, around 1910, it again became the Lumberville Hotel, but in 1933 it was back to being called the Black Bass.

In the late nineteenth century the Black Bass fell into decline and passed through several owners until it was purchased in 1949 by Herbert Ward. He rescued the business, renovated the building, improved the menu to cater to tourists from New York and Philadelphia, and maintained a high level of operation until his death, some fifty-four years later. 'Herbie' Ward was interested in history and was a devoted Anglophile. The old dining room on the left as you enter the inn is of Medieval design with a collection of punched tin lanterns hanging overhead and a large open fireplace.

The attractive dining patio with a panoramic view of the river has been supported by major stone reconstruction of the wall leading down to the canal. When the old wall began to disintegrate a few years back, the Black Bass won an out-of-court



The busy Black Bass Hotel in the early 1900s.

settlement with the State in 1991 by claiming that the Inn, built about 1745, preceded the Delaware Canal, built in 1832. It was claimed by the Inn that the canal waters were slowly eroding the wall and threatening the future safety of the Inn. The State Park rebuilt the wall soundly enough that it withstood the devastating flood waters of recent years.

A series of floods in the twenty-first century and a deep recession contributed once again to the demise of the Black Bass Inn. It was closed for several years and the community mourned its loss. To the rescue came Jack Thompson, proprietor of a number of car dealerships in nearby Doylestown. He purchased the Inn and the General Store (which had also closed), and the renovations began, thoughtfully overseen by Inn Manager Grant Ross. Great care was taken to retain the historic qualities of both properties, and today the Inn and the Store are once again jewels of the village of Lumberville.

Excerpted from *Lumberville* by Will Rivinus, *History of Solebury* by Ned Harrington, and the website of the Black Bass Hotel.



The "Do you Know" photo in the last issue stumped everyone! It is the original doorway to the Black Bass Inn, when the road was located where the Canal is today. Some historians claim George Washington once entered the Inn through this door. Look for it as you go down the inside steps from the main dining room to the downstairs tavern.

Open House at the Schoolhouse

About 40 people joined us for our 2009 Open House. The old schoolhouse was spruced up for the occasion, and our historic house records were up to date. Many were interested in seeing the research on their properties. Frank Cosner, Sr., loaned us his wonderful exhibit of old postcards of the area which everyone enjoyed. George Eastburn brought along some very old photo albums of the Eastburn family as well as a family bible.

Guests enjoyed a variety of food and beverages while sharing stories of days gone by.

Thanks to Donnetta Crane for chairing this event and to all who attended. This will be an annual event, so if you missed it this year, just wait till next April.

And remember that the schoolhouse is open every Wednesday afternoon from 3 to 5 p.m. Folks are welcome to just come and look or examine our research files, school records, and library.



George Eastburn tells the visitors about the Eastburn family; his distant relative, Samuel Eastburn, donated the land on which the schoolhouse was built in 1755.



Sally talks to the group; historic house researchers Pat Petrie and Ned Harrington in front and Wendy Kale at left.



Guest Irene Hale, her poodle in lap, reminisces with Don Fitting about their classes in the schoolhouse.

Great numbers enjoy the Lumberville Walk

Saturday, June 6, dawned with few clouds and no rain – an unusual occurrence this spring. And more than 80 people took advantage of that to join us for our spring walk in Lumberville. The crowd took up nearly half the walking bridge as Will Rivinus, projecting his voice as best as possible with a bullhorn, gave an overview of the rich history of the riverside village.

Then came a highlight of the walk – a private tour of the “new” **Black Bass Hotel**. Because of the size of the crowd, we first split into two groups. One group went off with Dave Benner to learn about some of the extraordinary large trees in Lumberville. The second group was split again into 3 groups of not more than 15. Hotel manager Grant Ross solicited the help of two other employees and the groups were personally guided through the entire hotel.

Grant explained that when Jack Thompson took over the Inn, the structural report indicated “imminent threat of injury or loss of life.” They sure had their work cut out for them! But nearly a year later, they have not only secured the structure of the historic building, but have lovingly restored the Inn with great care to retain as much as possible of the historic quality.

Eight beautiful redesigned sleeping rooms all boast modern bathrooms and lovely views. In many cases the original antique furnishings have been restored and reused. One large wooden poster bed, it was explained to us, had been cut in two and wood carefully added to the head and foot boards to enlarge it from a double to a queen size bed.

The new well-equipped kitchen is now ample for serving large groups. They have added handicap accessibility as well as an outside entrance to the downstairs, often used for wedding receptions and parties. The tavern room to the left of the main River Road entrance will once again boast the antique lanterns, which have been carefully refinished. The murals in the entrance hall and stairway have been restored to the original beauty.

A visit to the newly-opened Lumberville General Store concluded the outing with yummy refreshments.

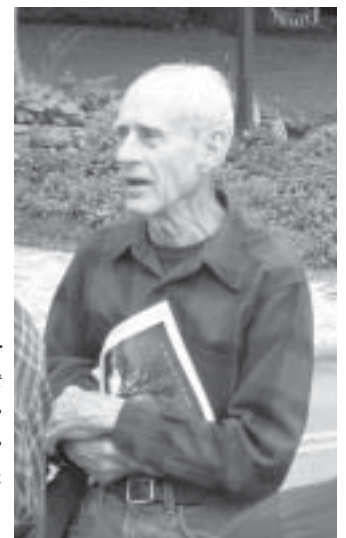
In appreciation of welcoming our group to the Black Bass, Elaine Crooks presented Grant with one of our new coverlets, which we hope will have a place of honor in the Hotel.



Walk leader Will Rivinus talks to the group on the Lumberville walking bridge.



Hotel manager Grant Ross speaks to our group before touring the Black Bass.



Dave Benner told us about some remarkable trees in Lumberville.

Mystery solved!

Have you ever noticed that some maps of our Township list Stoney Hill Rd as Huffnagel Rd? Dr. Charles Huffnagel lived in the large house where Sugan and Stoney Hill fork in the mid nineteenth century. The Huffnagel Mansion, as it is known, has a large ball-room where the family held many social events.

The answer came during a recent visit with Mrs. George (Elizabeth Scott) LaRue. The LaRues owned the LaRue Bottling Works at the corner of Aquetong and Huffnagel Road. All was well for many years. George LaRue, Sr. bottled soda and delivered it by horse and wagon. His son George joined him after serving in WWII. In the late 1940s Rachel Black and her husband bought land on the east side of Huffnagel Road at Reeder Road and started a Christmas tree farm. Mrs. Black was a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and had a very full social life. However, she was a poor speller and became frustrated with the need of spelling Huffnagel over and over again. One day she decided to simply change the name of the road.

She petitioned the Penn. Dept. of Transportation, filled out the necessary forms, and her wish was granted (no public hearing required). The LaRue's were up in arms! All their business stationery had Huffnagel Road, and it would be a large expense to have all that printing re-done. Mrs. LaRue said that George even had to speak to Mr. Tinsman about this but Mr. Tinsman said there was nothing he could do!

It is a fact that Rachel's poor spelling legacy remains. For you may notice that Stoney Hill Road at Aquetong Road has an "e," and it is correctly omitted at Stony Hill and Street roads.



Sprucing up the Schoolhouse grounds



In between this spring's nearly constant rain, a hearty crew planted scads of pachasandra and myrtle in front of the schoolhouse. The pachasandra was donated by the Heath family and the myrtle came out of the local woods. Pictured (l-r) are Dick Wallace, Donneta Crane, Bob Melby, and in front, Don Fitting. And behind the camera is Elaine Crooks. All that rain helped the groundcovers to flourish!

Sally Jagoe introduces the

Shady Lady's Potting Shed

- Plants for the Shade Garden
- Unique Bird Houses
- Bloomin' Greeting Cards
- Deer Scam®
- Antique Plant Containers
- Display Gardens

Gardening in Harmony with Nature



6184 Stoney Hill Road, New Hope, PA 18938

215-862-5033 • sallygj@verizon.net

Proceeds benefit the Solebury Township Historical Society's Legacy Fund.

Donneta Crane

Realtor®

Addison Wolfe Real Estate

100-A Union Square, New Hope PA 18938

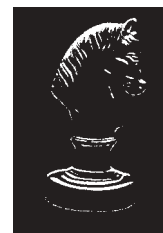
t 215.862.5500

c 215.589.3681

f 215.862.4290

donneta@AddisonWolfe.com

www.AddisonWolfe.com



Addison Wolfe Real Estate

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.

New Members

Ray & Mary Augustin
Robert & Virginia Duffy
Deborah Lang
Chris & Kristin Potts
Richard & Elizabeth Rutan
Patricia Whitman

Members who renewed

Violet & Jack Ahern
Penny and John Armagost, Jr.
Monique Gaumont and John Atkin
Ray & Mary Augustin
Bob Carr
Richard & Elizabeth Carrick
Thomas & Jenny Carroll
Elizabeth Chardon
Frank Chicarelli
Tim and Millena Coffey
Georgiana S. Coles
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Crane, Jr.
Ruth Curley
Jack and Claire Donohue
Robert Orrill and Dorothy Downie
Dave and Rene Dubnanski
Robert & Virginia Duffy
Ruth Campbell and Joseph Duffy
John & Susan Eichert
James Higgins and Adam Esser
Joan & Don Fitting
Eugene Fluehr
Jill Fonte
Carolyn Fox
Phyllis Gagner
Lois Carbone and Charles Garefino
Arthur Gerold
Mr. and Mr. Joseph Giuffre, Jr.
Wendy and Eugene Gladston
Lewis Baratz and Guy Glass
Diane Grabowski
Diane, Ian & Eric Johnston
Susan Kane
Brian & Lisa Gladden Keyes
Joseph Kubiak
Paul and Marilyn Lanctot
Lisa Leydon
Ann & Yanek Liebgold
Linda & Bill Low
Richard & Jeannette Lynch
Bill & Jane MacDowell
David and Carole Martin
Robert J. Mathieu

Robert A. & Maria McEwan
Wendy E. McGarry
Katherine McLeod
John J. Merana
Linda E. Metcalf
Suzanne Meyers
Charles and Pearl Mintzer
Carol & Harvey Mirsky
Louis & Renee Morsbach
Mehmet Unsal Calis and Scott O'Connor
Janice Parry
Peddlers Village Partnership
Jay & Pat Petrie
Kurt & Laverne Petrie
Michael and Amy Petrosini
Ms. Mary Powell & William Winters
Dr. Gerhard and Barbara Raabe
Brenda Redfield
John V. Rees
Rhoda Smith & Daryl Renschler
Catherine & John Risch
Joyce & David Rivas
Will Rivinus & Dickie Ann Boal
Margery Rutbell
Dorothy and Joe Schillinger
Michael J. & Elizabeth Schmidt
Gayle Goodman & Jim Searing
Naudain Sellers
Mr. & Mrs. Gurney P. Sloan
Solebury School
Anne M. Soriero
David & Marilou Stewart
Bob & Barbara Straton
Robert & Susan Sturgis
Tim Hartman & Ron Swidor
Col. Joseph and Betsy Thomas
Robert & Lorraine Topolin
August and Donna Turturro
Joe & Tori Uhler
Genevieve Wahlgren
Grey, Lisa & Gabriella Warner
Ann Warren
Charles & Pat Worth
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Yarnall
Edward Zekus

Every effort has been made to publish a complete and accurate list of memberships received since the last newsletter (January 2009) and up to June 30, 2009. We regret if there are any omissions.

Many Thanks . . .

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

Lumberville Road Walk: **Will Rivinus** and **Dave Benner**, leaders; **Grant Ross**, **Laura Krein** and **Dora Gillner**, employees of the Black Bass, for leading tours through the Hotel.

Bucks County Historical Society for donating a copy of *Bucks County: An Illustrated History* by Terry McNealy for our library.

Dick Carlson for paying for our new computer equipment.

Dick Wallace, **Donneta Crane**, **Bob Melby**, **Don Fitting** and **Elaine Crooks** for planting groundcover at the schoolhouse and the **Heath family** for donating the pachasandra.

Open House refreshments: **Just Food**, **Rhoda Renschler**, **Franca Warden**, and **Donna Trenchard Frank Cosner, Jr.** for loaning his postcard collection.

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

(Call 215-297-0885 or email soleburyhistory@comcast.net to reach the Solebury community with your ad in the next *Solebury Chronicle*.)



Help secure the future of your historical society

The Solebury Legacy Fund is an endowment fund established recently to help insure the continued success of the Solebury Township Historical Society. Please consider making a gift to the fund now, and remember the Society in your estate planning. Our future depends on you.



Solebury Township Historical Society
Drawer 525
Solebury, PA 18963

Annual Picnic August 30



Calendar at a Glance

Mark your calendars for a fun-filled upcoming events.

Sunday, August 30 Rolling Green Farm	Annual Picnic
Saturday, October 3 Mills along Mechanics Street, New Hope	Fall Walk -
Sunday, November 15 "Julia Child"	Annual Meeting
Friday, January 1, 2010 Holly Hedge Estate	New Year's Brunch



The early partially covered bridge in Lumberville, from our collection of old postcards.

Do You Know?



Do you know inside what public place in Solebury Township this sign hangs?

Call 215-862-5033 or email soleburyhistory@comcast.net with your answer. Be the first to guess right and win a prize!