

Solebury Chronicle



A newsletter of the Solebury Township Historical Society

Honored Citizens of Solebury awards presented at New Year's Brunch

Each year the Solebury Township Historical Society recognizes residents, past and present, who have significantly contributed to the township. The following individuals were chosen as the 2011 Honored Citizens of Solebury:

Edward Willis Redfield was one of the most acclaimed of the Pennsylvania Impressionists and is considered a leader of the New Hope group of landscape painters. After studying in Philadelphia and Paris, he and his wife settled in Centre Bridge in 1900. He painted in the Solebury area for some 20 years. Perhaps his most well known painting in Bucks County is that of the burning of the Centre Bridge. His grandson Edward Redfield is here today to accept the award.

Robert Heath is a long-time resident of Solebury Township. Most of us are familiar with Heath's Service Center in Lambertville, which his father started in 1930. Now retired, Bob will still show up promptly with the tow truck for auto emergencies. Bob volunteered in the prison system for 40 years, leading Bible study groups. He was also a Boy Scout leader here in Solebury. (*see story p.2*)

Gwen Davis has a very long history with the Solebury Township Historical Society. When the Society was formed in 1981 she served as the Executive Director for some 7 years. During her tenure she was instrumental in securing National Historic District status for several villages including Centre Bridge, Lumberville and Phillips Mill, as well as many other duties. When the Society became active again in 1999, she joined as a Board member and has been serving and guiding us for many years. Still actively employed, Gwen always finds time to provide transportation to neighbors and friends who can no longer drive. She is also a member of the Trinity Church Choir.



Edward Redfield accepted the award from Donmeta Crane on behalf of his grandfather.



Robert Heath proudly accepts his Honored Citizen of Solebury plaque.



The Board was able to surprise Gwen Davis with the award (not an easy feat as Gwen is chair of the Honored Citizens of Solebury program!).

Do you know someone who you feel should be honored with this award? We accept nominations throughout the year, with a deadline of November 15. Contact the Society for a nomination form.

President's Message

Well, 2011 has arrived, and so begins a new year for the Solebury Township Historical Society. We are looking forward to being able to present new programs, continue and/or enhance old programs and expand our membership. I am delighted to have been elected president and hope to be able to live up to my predecessor's outstanding contributions.

We have many programs planned for the upcoming year. We plan to develop and expand our volunteer lists to make better use of the services offered to us by some of our wonderful members, with the help of new Board member Rayna Polsky. Don't be surprised if you receive a call from us.

Our Junior Historian program will be continuing this year, and we are very excited to be able to work with the New Hope-Solebury High School and Principal Dr. Stephen Young. It will be very interesting to see where this year's Junior Historian's interests take us. The program will be guided by Linda Metcalf, one of our new Board members.

Our plaque program will continue into 2011 through the efforts of the committee led by Joe Thomas and assisted by Linda Metcalf, Wendy Kale and Dick Carlson. Remember, your house needn't be "old" to have a plaque. Members have put dates such as "1975" on their home, or have used their street number for their special plaque. We are very proud of this program and delighted with the community's response and support. If you haven't ordered your plaque yet, send us an email at soleburyhistory@verizon.net.

John Rees will carry forward the Oral History program. This will be an invaluable resource for future generations to hear from some of our older, respected citizens, about their lives and times.

Sally Jagoe will continue her wonderful programs at the Solebury Township Historical Museum. Her latest effort, an exhibition of American Goldscheider ceramics generously loaned to us by Kathryn Hausman of Lumberville, will debut on February 27. As always, the programs are free.

We look forward to having all of you visit us at the school-house to meet our newest board members this spring on May 1 at our open house ... assuming the snow EVER leaves.

Donneta Crane



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2011 Board of Directors

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Board News

We are pleased to welcome two new and energetic members to our Board of Directors.

Rayna Polsky was born and raised in New Britain Borough, in a little house across the street from the New Britain Baptist Church. She now lives in Carversville.

Rayna is the staff librarian at The Intelligencer newspaper in Doylestown. She created and maintains a website on Bucks County history: www.BucksCountyHistory.org. In addition to her obsession with local history, Rayna has an illustration degree and has participated in many group and solo exhibitions, including the annual Phillips' Mill Art Exhibition.

Rayna is the Chair of the STHS Membership Committee and writes articles for the Chronicle.

Linda Metcalf is a native Midwesterner who moved to the New Hope area in 1998 to take a new job. She has a 40 year career in pharmaceutical drug development supplemented with a BS from the University of Michigan and a MS from Northwestern University. Once making the move to Solebury, she felt welcomed by the natural beauty and historical presence of the area.

Although Linda has been a member of the STHS for several years, she became more involved in 2010 by personally supporting the historical home Plaque Committee, the Junior Historian initiative with NHSHS, and the Brunch Committee.

Linda is Chairperson of the Development Committee and is looking forward to promoting awareness and appreciation for Solebury Township history and culture through effective public relations, fund-raising, and communications with the residents and businesses of Solebury and surrounding communities.

Highlighting Solebury's Historic Inns

The Carversville Inn

by Rayna Polsky

Sometimes, on nights I can't sleep, I stare up at the ceiling and think about all the things that have happened right here. Did someone lie here, thinking the same thoughts, occupying the very same space, on this night 100 years ago?

Who were they? What did they think about? What could they hear?

Small towns are always described as being slow, peaceful, quiet. When you think about it, though, they were anything but. Imagine: The din of barking dogs, the noisy drunks at the Inn, the crowing roosters, all hours of the night. What a ceaseless racket there must have been in Carversville.

The part of the Inn that I live in is an addition — albeit an older one — added in about 1860 by a fellow named Isaac Stover. The rear wing and third floor Isaac was adding were expanding a building that was, in his day, a little less than 50 years old.

Interestingly, this building was designed to be an inn and has remained a public house, in one form or another, ever since. In 1813 a different fellow named Isaac, this time a Mister Pickering, bought a couple acres of land in Carversville (though back then it was known as "Milton;" thank goodness we eventually lucked out of that name, eh?) and began construction of a public house so that passers-through would have somewhere to stop, partake of a meal or a drink, and rest until morning.

This was probably a relief for Milton's residents, who, to cite Pickering's Petition for License, were "often obliged to accommodate travelers, to their great inconvenience." By 1819, the tavern was known as The Bird-in-Hand — a moniker it held for another 25 years.

The original part of the Inn — you can see the larger cornerstones if you look closely at the wall that faces the General Store today — was two stories tall (as opposed to today's three) and about 40 feet wide by 30 deep. It had porches on the same two sides it does now, and myriad outbuildings: an ice house, a barn (almost as large as the Inn itself), and two sheds.

It sat that way, witness to countless long, late, loquacious nights, for half a century until, in about 1860, Isaac Stover got hold of it and added his rear wing and third floor.

After that, the external part of the Inn remained pretty much the same. There's an extra bit out back now, to house the modern kitchen where meals are cooked, and during the 1940s the ice house was expanded and turned into a small cottage. In the early 1970s the upstairs lodgers' rooms, long a residence for proprietors and servants, were renovated into three separate apartments.



A view of the Carversville Inn circa 1945. The sign on the right reads, "Carversville Inn / Under New Management / Draught Beer Wines Liquor / Restaurant Service / Harry (Hurry Back) Bothwell, Prop."

Harold D. Bothwell (1894 - 1971) ran the bar from 1945 to 1951. He kept a line of miniature doghouses in the bar room referred to as "Dog House Row" — a system that allowed locals to know which village residents were in or out of the dog house at home. After leaving the Carversville Inn, Harry opened his own place, Harry's Inn, in Lumberville. He's buried in the Carversville Cemetery.

Today, the building I call home is almost 200 years old. It makes mysterious noises and has a scary attic and an even scarier basement. I find ancient, lost things behind its radiators and under its floorboards. Its walls and door frames and closets are full of secrets.

Maybe it's all those stories that keep me up at night.

Do You Know?

Several members guessed correctly the location of the photo in the Fall newsletter. It was one of the fireplaces at the Carversville Inn.



“Schickelgruber is getting the worst licking everywhere.”

A Lumberville Artist's Letter to a Soldier, 1943

by John U. Rees

Last year a box of miscellaneous items was discovered in the Township Building and turned over to Solebury Historical Society. Among the contents was a letter that, upon an initial reading, seemed like correspondence between a young woman and her friend or love interest serving in the military. Following a recent second look, some rudimentary research, and a phone call or two, it turns out that the letter's author, Lilian Amy Montague, was actually seventy-five years old in 1943. Ms. Montague was also a skilled painter whose work was regularly shown locally and is still occasionally seen in gallery auctions.

Ms. Montague is not a well-known member of the Bucks County impressionist community, as evidenced by absence of any mention of her or her work in several volumes I first consulted on Bucks County artists and Solebury history. Brian H. Peterson's work, *Pennsylvania Impressionism* finally provided a basic biography:

“Lilian Amy Montague was born on November 27, 1868, in London, England. From 1906 until 1907 she attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, studying with Thomas Anshutz, Hugh Breckinridge, and Daniel Garber. In the 1920s she moved to Lumberville, Bucks County. She was noted for her landscape paintings of her adopted home, which she exhibited at the Phillips Mill Community Association in New Hope. Montague also became known for handcrafted weavings, which were also accepted for exhibition. She died in 1954.”

I eventually learned that Ms. Montague was a friend of the Tinsman family and lived for some years in the old Mill (located in the lower lumberyard) that currently houses Deborah Tinsman's ceramic studio. My informant, Sue Tinsman, also told me the artist actually died on 19 November 1946 and is buried in Solebury Friends Meeting cemetery. Of the numerous paintings produced by Lilian Montague a good number must have been painted in her adopted village. One work titled “Reflection” has a typewritten card on the back inscribed “Upton Studios [sic], Lumberville, Pa.” Ms. Montague called her residence “Upton Studio,” so whether the label is a typographical error or purposely written by her is unknown. Among the other works attributed to her, found in books or online auction listings, are “Polperro Harbor at Sunset” (a site on the Cornish coast of England), “Grand Canal, Venice,” “Lehigh Canal” (circa 1925), “Road by Church, Solbury” (1925), and “New Hope Bridge” (1930).

Lilian Montague's letter to her young friend Maurice “Bud” Ely, typed on personal stationary, is chatty and a nice mixture of description, news, gossip, and advice. The note was Addressed to “Pvt. Maurice W. Ely. Hq.Sq. A.A.F. Bolling Field, Washington, D.C.”:

Lilian A. Montague
Upton Studio
Lumberville, Pennsylvania

[Sunday] March 7th 1943.

My dear old Bud,

I thought of you a week ago, and the awful journey you must have had going back to Washington. This past Saturday we had another blizzard, and then it rained and rained [in Philadelphia 1.8 inches of snow and 1.47 inches of rain], so taking my courage in my hands at last ventured out at 5 p.m. to get the paper and mail. I was soaked by the time I got back, and so cold.

Well, here is hoping we have seen the last of the snow. I am quite well again, and working like a beaver. Went to Lambertville on Friday to do my marketing, had a visit with you[r] Grandmother on my way back, went a step further, saw Mrs. Halston, and her sisters, who gave me tea. I feel quite guilty at taking tea nowadays, but let us hope this war will not last forever. Dear Mrs. Greist has to pay Arthur Bye \$952.00 for the old master, that is one time she did not take advantage of the other fellow. She had to pay two years back interest included in that tidy little sum. So many of us have had the dirty deal handed out to us, that for once she got what was coming to her. I imagine she is tearing mad.

I received your last letter, and had intended writing before this, but what with the cold, and my fingers being so sore from the hard water, and disagreeable chores one has to do, did not feel like pounding the machine.

Well, the Allies are doing well, and Schickelgruber {a.k.a. Adolf Hitler} is getting the worst licking everywhere. I do wish you had something definite to do, as it would make the time go far faster.

Instead of standing on your feet, why don't they try and teach you to stand on your head. Well, old boy, any job that comes is better than cooling your heels all day. Personally, I hate to be idle.

I have rather a nice time up here nowadays, as there are really some nice people in the village, and it helps break the monotony. I wish I had more to do with, as orders will become increasingly scarce, I am afraid.

Yes, they talk of lifting the pleasure driving ban, but if we are to have another gallon [of gasoline] deducted, which makes two a week, I do not see that they need make a ban on pleasure driving, for where can one go on that quantity, except to market and back. I hear the big guns in W[ashington]. get all they want.

Well, if [General Douglas] Mc A[rthur]. keeps blowing up the Jap ships, and bringing down their airplanes, that dirty little country will not last long. Germany is getting all and far more than she gave to poor old England. I do think that some of the working classes are in the direst ignorance over geography, the ignorance over this war is simply stupendous. One woman, I am sure thinks England is as large as this country, it is too stupid to even contradict. She thinks it a shame that any food should be sent across. Wonder how the soldiers over there would get fed.

I must end now, as to-morrow, I want to put in a good days work, as when it is finished, I hope to get some cold cash for it. Keep well, and don't get bored. Lots of love,

From your old friend,
Lilian A. Montague”

(continued)



A view of Tinsman's Mill, built circa 1785 and refurbished or rebuilt after the 1903 flood. Called "Upton Studio" by Lilian Montague, this was her home for at least part of her stay in her adopted village of Lumberville. The mill ceased to be habitable following the inundation of 1955.

In light of our recent experience with cold temperatures and heavy snow, I thought it would be interesting to learn what was happening on 7 March 1943. The Franklin Institute's historic weather data notes that in Philadelphia on that day there was no precipitation, the high temperature was 37 degrees, and the low 24. Snowfall had been minimal following the turn of the new year, with only five inches since 27 January.

Several references in the letter merit comment. Ms. Montague mentions Arthur Bye. Arthur Edwin Bye (1885-1969), the father of Ranulph Bye, was a painter and author as well as a college professor and museum curator. Ranulph's brief biography of his father, written for the Bucks County Artists Database project, notes that Arthur "opened an art gallery in Philadelphia, 1828 Rittenhouse Square. [He was a] Dealer in old master paintings principally Dutch, Flemish and English Schools. Commenced the restoration of old paintings and continued to do so until his death in 1969." "Mrs. Griest" has not been identified, but seems to have been the terror of the local art market. The war references are interesting, too. The year 1943 was a time when the tide was still slowly turning in favor of the Allies, and many local young men were away from home on duty with the military or performing alternate service. The Battle of Stalingrad had ended only a month before Ms. Montague typed out this note, hard-fought actions in the Pacific were still ahead, and the invasion of Europe was over a year away.

One final note; I contacted Anne Ely to see if she knew Lilian Montague; she did not, but did tell me that Bud Ely, cousin to her husband Calvin, served during the war with the U.S. Army Air Force, stationed in Washington, D.C. It is interesting to note that Calvin and Maurice "Bud" Ely were both Quakers; while Bud remained stateside, Calvin became a staff sergeant and a tail gunner aboard a B-17 "Flying Fortress" four-engine bomber.

Note: Anyone with more information on Lilian Montague, Maurice "Bud" Ely, or any other people, places, or events mentioned in this letter, please contact me at (215) 862-2348 or ju_rees@msn.com . Photographs of Ms. Montague or Mr. Ely are also wanted.

My thanks to Birgitta Bond, Michener Art Museum, Anne Ely, and Sue Tinsman for their help and advice. Special thanks to Sally Jagoe for giving me Lilian Montague's letter.

Sources

- Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerdt, Sylvia Yount, *Pennsylvania Impressionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 294.
- www.AskART.com
- Lonnie Pierson Dunbier, ed., *The Artists Bluebook* (Scottsdale, Az.: 2005) 34,000 North American Artists to March 2005
- Peter Hastings Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art, 1564-1975*, 3 volumes (Madison, Ct.: Soundview Press, 1999)
- Charlotte Ball, ed., *Who's Who in American Art - 1940* (Washington, D.C.: American Federation of the Arts, 1940)
- Arthur E. Bye, Non-Fiction Writer, Painter, Michener Art Museum (World Wide Web) <http://www.michenermuseum.org/bucksartists/artist.php?artist=41>
- Franklin Institute, Philadelphia Weather Data Online, <http://www.fi.edu/weather/data2/index.html>
- See also information on Lilian Montague via www.artnet.com and www.AskART.com

A Message from our Junior Historian


NOTE: The Junior Historian is a new program of STHS to involve local young people in the history of our township. It also fulfills a high school requirement.

My time working with the Solebury Township Historical Society during my High School Culminating Project has been interesting and incredibly satisfying. I was introduced to the historical society by Linda Metcalf, who has been my mentor during this project. She explained the society's plaque project and I originally spent much of my time attending Wednesday meetings at the Schoolhouse and working with the other volunteers to find information on when houses were built.

This project was completed over the summer and thus me and my mentor switched gears and began working on recording oral histories of locals; this would be a great opportunity to relate some of their memories of the town and their personal experiences growing up here. The two residents (and members of STHS) we interviewed were Malcolm Crooks and Donald Fitting. Both of the interviews conducted provided insight into living and working in the largely agricultural Solebury of the early 20th century.

I feel that these interviews, and all my experience at the Historical Society, have increased my knowledge and bettered my perspective of the past. I am thankful to Board of the Society who have welcomed me and given me this opportunity. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to other students as a culminating project.

Chase Asplundh

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Solebury rings in the New Year

10th Annual New Year's Brunch



The Heaths: Jean, Robert and Robert, Jr.



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Bill and Susan Tinsman



David Griffiths, Bill MacDowell, Wendy Kale



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Tuckamony Farm
Anna Williams
Zoubi

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.

News Members

Bonnie Berkmeier
Kevin MacDonald
Don Wilson

Members who have renewed

Penny and John Armagost
Marianne Bender
David Benner
Steven Cohen and Pamela Blake
Dale & Ruth Broderick
James D. and Rhea Brown
Margo & Harold Busund
John Cannon
John and Carol Carpenter
Mrs. M. Curtis Chianese
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Don and Martha Harris
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Richard Gold and John Hollyday
Sally & Harvey Jagoe
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Janice Spurr
John & Irene Szykowski
Melody Hunt and William E. Tinsman
Michael Prediger and John Touhey
Curt Wary
Elaine Whitman
Patricia Witlicki
George A. Yarnall
Ted and Charlotte Zanidakis

Every effort has been made to publish a complete and accurate list of memberships received since the last newsletter (September 2010) from October, 2010 through January, 2011. 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:

Annual Meeting: Marne Dierrich and the Board for set up.

House Plaque Event: Richard Carlson, for hosting the event at Rolling Green Farm; Jeffrey Marshall for being the speaker.

New Year's Brunch:

Supporting Sponsors: Addison Wolfe Real Estate, Jonathan and Diane Downs and First National Bank & Trust of Newtown; Friend Sponsors: Tinsman Bros., Inc. and Uninvest Corporation.

Auction Donors: Dot Bunn, Richard Carlson and Nakashima Woodworkers.

Raffle Donors (see list on p. 7)

Centerpieces: Giant Food Store, Angel's Halmark Store, Marne Dierrich and Tuckamony Farm.

Co-Chairs: Beth Carrick and Donneta Crane

Check-in and Sales: Joe Thomas and Gwen Davis

STHS Museum: Jim Hill and Kathy Hausman for loaning items for the museum.

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 215-297-5091 or email soleburyhistory@verizon.net to reach the Solebury community with your ad in the next *Solebury Chronicle*.)

Mr. Heath goes to Prison?

(an ordinary man who does extraordinary things)

A few years back on a beautiful spring day I pulled into Heath's gas station. John was on duty, and I asked him to fill it up. Bobby Heath soon appeared to say hello and report that he would not be able to attend the NH/S school board meeting that night because he had more pressing business to attend to. "Not to worry," I said ... "just send your father." Bobby thought for a moment and said ... "He can't attend because today is Monday and he goes PRISON." I was shocked! "Prison? Mr. Heath is in Prison!" It was hard for me to get my mind around such news. "What on earth has happened," I said while holding my hand over my heart. Seeing the blood drain from my face Bobby quickly reassured me that I was not to worry because Mr. Heath goes to prison every Monday to lead Bible study. "How long has this been going on?," I asked. "Oh, about 40 years" Bobby said. "What prison does he go to?" I questioned. "I believe it is Annandale Prison in Clinton, NJ," Bobby reported. We both agreed that was not a very nice place (an understatement to say the least).

By this time the gas tank was full and our conversation had ended. While driving away I realized that there are ordinary folks who do extraordinary things — our unsung heroes. The Honored Citizen committee is always looking for such people. So, if you know of an *ordinary person who does extraordinary things...* please contact us for a nomination form. We would love to hear from you.

Sally Jagoe



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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars

Sunday, February 27 2 to 4 p.m.
Solebury Township Historical Museum,
Township Building
Opening reception of an exhibition of
American GOLDSCHIEDER ceramics

Sunday, May 1 1 to 4 p.m.
Open House at the Schoolhouse

Tuesday, May 10 7 to 9 p.m.
*The Molly Polly Chunker Expedition -A Romantic
Excursion Along the Delaware and Lehigh Canals in
1886* - photos by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Presented by
the Friends of the Delaware Canal. Speaker Willis Rivinus.
Location: Audubon Visitor Center, 2877 Creamery Road,
New Hope



Do You Know?



Do you know what this is a photo of? Extra points for knowing where it was used.

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

Members will receive personal invitations to all STHS events. Visit www.soleburyhistory.org for updates.