



Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

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FROM PRESIDENT MATT BARNHART

With the annual membership meeting coming up I have been reflecting on the current state of the Trust. Every organization has both material and personnel assets. Given our holdings, the state of our buildings is an objective measure of our material position. The personnel side of the equation is more subjective. On balance, I must advise you that our position is mixed.

The Douglass Mansion has recently been re-roofed and the stabilization is complete. It had been occupied by the former owner since it was acquired by the Trust and is now vacant. We have removed a great deal of debris and are able to show the second floor as well as the appurtenant structures. Interior restoration is now possible.

The White Horse Inn has an even newer roof and some modifications have been made to the heating and electric systems to allow for the creation of a second office adjacent to the main office. That houses a computer system primarily being used for input of archival material which will ultimately be accessible on-line. The archive is underwritten by the Shelley Pennsylvania German Heritage Fund. The Shelley Fund has also published a folio sized Atlas of Architectural Drawings of our buildings which has been well received.

The Keim Homestead needs *relatively* minor

attention and could be developed into wonderful display and event space over time. The Hottenstein Mansion is well cared for by our resident curator.

As I said, however, our position is mixed. The Bridge Keeper's House has sustained significant structural failure. The DeTurk House is also threatened by structural deficiencies. Both are now being assessed, options and expenses discussed.

When considering the human resources at our disposal, we have had some setbacks as well, but I am still encouraged by and grateful for the interest and effort our board and member volunteers invest in the Trust.

We invested in a staff position shortly before the 2008 annual meeting. Unfortunately, as of this year's meeting, we are once again an all volunteer organization. For personal reasons, our Executive Director left but not before completing a great deal. We achieved a higher profile, collaborated with several community history groups, consulted with township and county governments regarding historic assets. We made strides toward membership recruitment and fund raising campaigns. In the current economic climate, it is uncertain if we can hire any staff.

Several of our stalwart board members have recently left. Susan Yoder kept us organized

Dedicated to maintaining and preserving historically and architecturally significant properties

(From President Matt Barnhart) and on track, Laura Schmale was our liaison to the membership. We have a diverse, committed and talented board and they contribute a great deal. Two new board members will be announced at the annual meeting and I am sure they will become major assets.

A number of events have been planned and conducted by volunteers who have raised funds as well as awareness of the Trust. The Spring Luncheon, the wine tasting at Keim, among others have been successful by any measure. Planning is under way for this year's country fair. Our buildings are being featured on several tours conducted by other local non-profits, are part of the river sojourn, hosted the Museum Council and are going to be the settings for weddings and birthdays in the next weeks and months.

The cottage (#8) has been rented and minor repairs were handled by a volunteer. An effort has been made...by volunteers...to stabilize the Bridge Keeper's House. All of the activity at our sites has been organized, you guessed it, by volunteers.

We are looking for more ideas for programs and events and we are looking for more members AND VOLUNTEERS. We have opportunities as office manager, archive input, interior decorators, sign painter, computer support, gardener, just about anything you can think of. Give it some thought and mention the Trust to your friends and neighbors as well. Your enthusiasm may become infectious.

FILMING AT MOUNS JONES

During mid March, actors and all the paraphernalia for shooting a film descended on the Mouns Jones House. This was the exciting project of Daniel Speers, a student at Temple University, for his Media Arts II class, a precursor to more advanced film classes.



"Dirtying" the costumes to look more realistic

Daniel wrote and created the film himself and had a few close friends help with dialogue and structure.

The film, entitled "Divided",

received the award for Best First Film at Temple University's Diamond Screen Film Festival on May 13.

The story is set around 1760 in Pennsylvania on a farm on the outskirts of town. The main characters, James and Elizabeth, are Baptists and therefore do not believe in infant baptism. When their young baby, Jonathan, becomes gravely ill, tension builds between them. James is firm in his convictions, but Elizabeth finds that she is not at peace with the thought of her son dying unbaptized. This tension between them and Elizabeth's internal struggle are the means of exploring differences between



Preparing the carriage

Christian denominations that cause division between people of the same faith.

If you were not able to attend the annual meeting where the film was shown you can see a teaser at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihxA4QPU51Y>

IN PRESERVATION WE TRUST

There is power in the charm of an old building that is hard to escape by those affected. Maybe infected is the right word. Is it the unspoken lure of a lifestyle lived long ago against our current backdrop of Walmarts, SuperFresh, and strip malls? Is it the struggle with the microcosms of our current employment, daily modern “hardships”, and longing for a simpler life?



Bridge Keeper's House

Our old buildings form a nucleus of what our organization is about. They stand silent for most days until someone visits them and they are alive again, at least for the moment. They are monuments to the strife and determination of those that came before us. In the moment that we visit, soaking up the character while our souls are being massaged, our eyes do not focus particularly on a crack in a wall or paint that is peeling. It is all those aging characteristics that create that symphony of elements we call charm.

Charm. A magically deceptive word. It is the counterbalance to another word. Deterioration.

One of our buildings is in immediate distress. It has passed the fine line from charm toward deterioration and neglect. Our Bridge Keeper's House is in serious trouble. For the last couple

of years the foundation has been collapsing into the basement at an increasing rate due to drainage issues in the area surrounding the building. Solutions are currently being explored to shore up the building and perform the emergency work needed. We currently have John Bowie Associates to structurally evaluate the building's immediate needs and to propose immediate remedial recommendations as well as long term requirements for funding. It is going to cost big bucks. We have a donor that will match our share but the Trust will need to contribute considerably.

John Bowie is well respected as a historical consultant. He comes highly recommended. He has done work at the Daniel Boone Homestead and at historic sites across the country. He is also on the team of consultants for the World Trade Tower site interpreting the history in consideration of the future use of the site post 9/11.

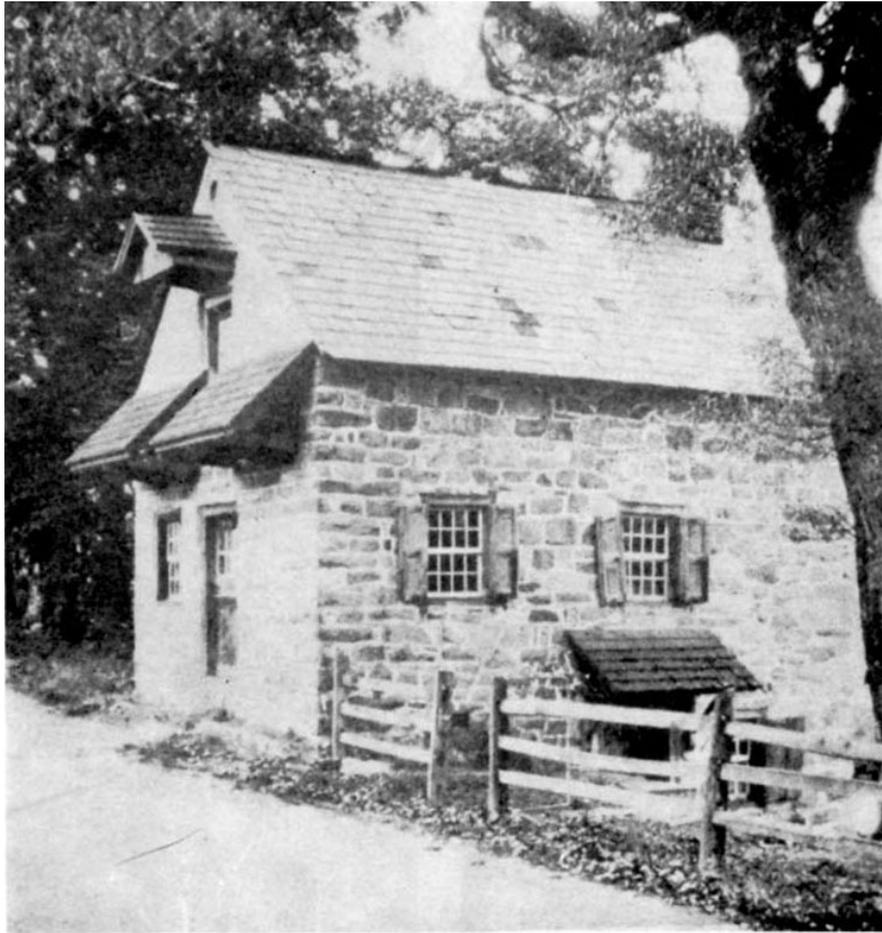
I would encourage all of you to spend more time at our sites. They will be open on the fourth Sunday in June, July and August. You will see some detail you didn't see before. Restoration is second to preservation. I would be willing to give anyone a firsthand look at the Bridge Keeper's House foundation; just call me at 610-582-5918. Have you seen it?

Scott Stepp, Property Committee Chair



Deterioration of foundation walls

HELP SAVE THE OLEY VALLEY'S HISTORIC DeTURK HOUSE



DeTurk, House, Oley Valley

The Johan DeTurk House has stood proudly on the banks of the Manatawny Creek in the Oley Valley for nearly two-and-a-half centuries. Recognized over fifty years ago by the U.S. government as an important architectural survivor from the American colonial period, this modest yet elegant dwelling (or multi-purpose “ancillary” building) is documented in the Library of Congress by photographs, drawings and text data sheets within the Historic American Buildings Survey archives. Its thick stone walls, pent roof, doorway hood, one-room floor plan, massive summer beam, vaulted cellar, paint decoration, and other surviving (and some lost) structural features and decorative details are characteristic of the Germanic, Moravian, and Huguenot cultural influences and skills of Oley’s earliest European settlers, and reflect the inherited medieval craft traditions employed by them. Despite the enduring quality of the construction materials and methods used by its builders, this prime example of Pennsylvania rural domestic architecture is now endangered.





As the photos show, decades of intrusion of surface runoff and flood water have eroded the foundation mortar and its arched vault supports, and have caused widening cracks and threatening shifts in critical areas of the walls. This erosion, gravity, and other natural forces and stresses have seriously impaired the capacity of the foundation masonry and structural timbers to carry the wall, floor, framing, and roof loads.

The long-term stabilization of this important architectural rarity now depends on a major effort to restore its structural integrity. With the permission of the Gotwals family (as owners), the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County (as custodian under a lease), is committed to the ongoing restoration and preservation of the DeTurk House. The construction materials and methods, temporary shoring, and historic masonry practices necessary to restore its durability will retain the authentic historic form, character, and architectural details of this important early “cabin.”

The Trust and its consultants have developed a comprehensive program to divert the surface water away from the building by re-grading the abutting ground areas and constructing a retaining wall to deflect the runoff to the creek bank over the natural drainage course. Flood damage mitigation will also be given significant emphasis in the remediation plan. The structural remedy includes re-setting displaced foundation stones and vault segments, and applying traditionally formulated bed mortar and tooled weather-pointing to secure and protect the historic stone walls.



The set of measures designed to preserve for future generations one of the earliest masonry homes in the Oley Valley will require a budget of many thousands of dollars. Funding this campaign will be a difficult but achievable mission despite today’s challenging economic climate. Through the generosity of a dedicated benefactor in our Berks County community, every donation to this cause will be **double-matched**, resulting in a **tripling** of the impact of each dollar contributed.

While your financial support is crucial to preserve this irreplaceable component of our historic architectural legacy, we also ask you to please *pass the word* about this urgent cause.

Donations should be made payable to: The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, P.O. Box 245, Douglassville PA, 19518, noting your fully tax-deductible contribution as for the “DeTurk Project.” For inquiries and information, please call 610-372-0642.

Thank You

SPRING LUNCHEON AND PLANT SALE



Dessert Buffet

On May 9, 2009 members and friends of the Trust were treated to a delightful luncheon at the Stone House in Wyomissing. The menu consisted of shrimp remoulade, perfection

salad, and dessert buffet. Music was provided by Barbara Lanya, violinist. A plant sale took place outside on the porch where Dr. Susan Munch, botanist from Albright College, answered questions and gave valuable advice. Thanks to Anne Coldren for organizing this successful event.



Sandy and Walter Bender

THIS OLD WASTEFUL HOUSE

Never before has America had so many compelling reasons to preserve the homes in its older residential neighborhoods. We need to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. We want to create jobs, and revitalize the neighborhoods where millions of Americans live. All of this could be accomplished by making older homes more energy-efficient.

The first step is an energy audit by a local utility. Home owners are likely to discover that much energy loss comes down to a lack of insulation in attics and basements. Sealing other air leaks also helps. This can be done by installing dryer vent seals that open only when the dryer is in use, as well as fireplace draft stoppers and attic door covers.

Experience has shown that virtually any older or historic house can become more energy-efficient

without losing its character. Restoring the original features of older homes-like porches, awnings and shutters-can maximize shade and insulation. Older wooden windows can perform very well when properly weatherized and assisted by the addition of good storm windows. Weatherizing in most cases is cheaper than installing replacements.

My organization is working with the National Resources Defense Council and members of Congress on legislation to help cover the costs of making all older homes more energy-efficient.

Before demolishing an old building to make way for a new one, consider the amount of energy required to manufacture, transport and assemble pieces of that building. With the destruction of the building, all that energy is utterly wasted. Then think about the additional energy required for the demolition itself, not to mention for new construction. Preserving a building is the ultimate act of recycling.



Taken from an op-ed piece in the New York Times of April 6, 2009 by Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

E-MAIL

Become a better informed member of the Trust by sharing your e-mail address with us. Doing this not only will keep you current on the latest happenings it will also help us reduce our printing and mailing expenses. Every little bit helps. Please send the information to Priscilla Walsky at walskyinvest@verizon.net or call 610-372-3807. Thank you, and thank you to all who have already responded.

WISH LIST

VOLUNTEERS	Lap top	
Refrigerator	Projector	
Freezer	DVD player	
Cooking utensils old or reproductions		
Antique hardware		
Mouns Jones House		
Gutters	\$1000	
Fix doors and correct hardware	\$1000	
Bridge Keeper's House		
Fix door, correct hardware	\$1000	
Correct foundation collapse	\$10,000	
George Douglass House		
Rain gutters	\$2000	
White Horse Inn		
Attic windows, attic staircase, exterior repairs	\$1500	
Heating system changes	\$5000	
DeTurk House		
Paint building	\$2000	
Fix tiles, front woodwork	\$1000	
Gutters	\$1000	
Reconstruct lower hood over door	\$3000	
Structural repairs to foundation	\$25,000	



Do you know which property this is and where it is located?

Please Note

If you have not mailed your membership dues for 2009 please do so as soon as possible, and if you can, please consider an increase. As you can read in the two articles about our houses and see in the wish list, your support is of greatest importance to the Trust. We thank you for your past contributions and depend on your continuing help.

In the words of David McCullough, historian and National Trust Trustee, "Landmark buildings are parts of our life; they are not just buildings. They are aids to navigation through daily life. They are where and who we are in time."

Membership categories:

Individual \$25	Family \$35
Supporting \$50	Sustaining \$75
Contributing \$100	Patron \$250
Corporate \$500	My special gift

Dates to Remember

4th Sunday of June, July, August , noon-4 Open houses at Old Morlatton

September 26, 10 am –4 pm Mouns Jones Country Fair and Heritage Festival
Volunteers and ideas are needed. Please call Linda Hughes (610 -779-5564) or Priscilla Walsky (610-372-3807) if you can help in either category.

December –Annual Christmas Tea, date and place to be announced

Answer:

Keim Homestead, Boyer Road, Lobachsville

Editor: Priscilla Walsky

Contributors: Matt Barnhart, Scott Stepp, Erin McKemey, Betsy Ward