



Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

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S P R I N G 2 0 1 3

Trust Plans Muster Day Event



The Trust has scheduled its major spring event for **Saturday, May 18, 2013** (Armed Forces Day) from **10:00 am to 4:00 pm**, rain or shine. The enclosed flyer provides further details. The day's activities will include an authentic Revolutionary War Muster re-enactment group; a Fife & Drum Corps playing martial pieces and other period music; an 18th-century beer making demonstration; archaeology presentations; narrated tours of historic early buildings; an interpretive display, sale merchandise, and restoration plan discussion in the Amity Store attached to the George Douglass mansion; and a continuous open-hearth cooking demonstration in the Mouns Jones House.

Lunch selections will include "Field Rations" with authentic ingredients authorized by the Continental Congress in 1775—but much more appetizing than the salted meat, dried beans, and hard bread provided to the colonial soldiers!

Other lunch choices include Mouns Jones hearty vegetable soup, a vegetarian option, a children's menu, home-made desserts, and a variety of beverages served by Oley Boy Scout Troop 569. Proceeds from the event will benefit Boy Scout troop 569, Wounded Warriors of Pennsylvania, and The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County.

For information, location and site maps, admission passes, lunch menus and tickets, volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, and other details, please phone the Trust at 610-385-4762 or email us at info@historicpreservationtrust.org

Trust Mourns Harold "Butch" Boyer, Jr.

On Sunday, February 3, 2013, several members of The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County attended the memorial service for Harold "Butch" Boyer, Jr. (1940-2013) held at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Amityville. The church was packed by citizens who remembered Butch's legacy of serving the Oley Valley, including his many years at his family owned store in Amityville center. For many years Butch served on the Board of Directors of the Historic Preservation Trust. He was a preservationist who gave his time and talents to his community and whose admirable citizenship, love of country, and noble character touched many. Jim Elliot, a high school classmate of Butch's and former Trust President spoke of Butch Boyer's many admirable qualities.

Always a gentleman, Butch was also a businessman with the confidence to achieve any project; his most recent contributions to the Trust include serving as a liaison between the Trust and Amity Township in order to realize our new parking lot. For many years Butch provided hoagies for Trust Board meetings, and also supplied stoves, a refrigerated truck and other food producing equipment to Morlatton Village for Trust events. Butch handled any unforeseen food service issues swiftly and effortlessly.

Butch will be missed by his friends at the Trust. We send deepest condolences to Harriet, his wife, and to all members of his family.

From the President

I have a lot to report since the last Newsletter. I am saddened to report that Butch Boyer died on Monday, January 28, 2013. He was a good friend and supporter of the Trust. He will be greatly missed. We all mourn his passing.

The Annual Christmas Tea, held in Oley this year, was a major success, both publically and financially. It was an enjoyable time for all in a beautiful old house. Thanks to the Sukenick family for lending us their home for the day.

Mark your Calendars: the Trust is planning a Muster Day for May 18, 2013. It will be a re-enactment of an American Revolutionary War Period Muster. Musters during that period were used to train the local militia and also to recruit volunteers. Musters were actually held at the White Horse Inn during the colonial period, including the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. The Muster Day Committee has been actively developing this event. They are looking for volunteers. If you know anyone who might like to help with the event, please call and leave a message with us.

The Trust board held a retreat on January 12, 2013. New Trust member Lynette Wells lead the retreat and offered many team building and brainstorming technologies to bring us together as a Board. An important outcome of the retreat was a new-found sense of clarity around the Trust's central mission to preserve and maintain the historic buildings we hold. Much progress was made towards developing a three year vision for the organization with appropriate priorities. It was a day well spent.

A significant development for us is that on February 1, 2013, *The Reading Eagle* reported that the Berks County Commissioners have agreed to work out the terms of an agreement that would allow members of the Trust to work as volunteers with the county planning commission on preserving historic properties and providing assistance to municipalities with their preservation efforts. The paper also acknowledged that the Trust "played a small role in the preservation law that Maxatawny Township adopted after the historic Zimmerman property was demolished." As far as I am concerned, we played a major role in focusing Maxatawny Township on this problem and getting them to act, even if too late for the Zimmerman house. Thus, the Trust is getting acceptance as the preservation advocate of Berks County.

I am sorry to report that the Trust's Treasurer, Fran Hughes, resigned her position as of mid-January to take a new position in western Pennsylvania. We wish her success in her new venture. The financial functioning of the Trust has been taken over by several volunteers, but that can only be on a stop gap basis. The Trust desperately needs a new Treasurer. Any leads on filling the position would be greatly appreciated. We are looking for a volunteer.

We look forward to seeing you all at Muster Day!

John Hilodman

Annual Christmas Tea Success



The Sukenick home in Oley

The Trust's annual Christmas Tea was held on December 5, 2012, at the 19th-century home of Marc and Nita Sukenick of Oley. The Sukenick property was the former site of a gristmill, which was renovated in the 1940s, and became the veterinary practice of the late Dr. Bernard Zackon. Dr. Zakon used the stones from the mill to build a wing on the original house. The grinding stone is still visible at the house's entrance. About two dozen Trust volunteers helped on what turned out to be a cold windy day.

Food preparation for the tea began in November when Trust members met to bake 16 varieties of cookies. Over 1800 sandwiches were prepared at the Calvary United Christian Church in Reading.

Rose Ertz and Barbara Kreiser sold craft and raffle items including the replica of an early 19th-century sampler, stitched by former Trust treasurer Becky Gottschall. Other prizes included a Morlatton Village coverlet, a quilt in a pillow, made by Priscilla Walsky and a redware plate of the Fulp House (formerly known as

The Bridge Keepers House). Special thanks go to the Sukenicks; B.J and Charlie Geiger, who helped with the decorations; neighbors Barrie and Gail Williamson, who graciously allowed Trust volunteers to park their cars on their property; Lori Schaeffer; Judith Murphy; Donna Carpenter; Stephanie Kindig; Eleanor Shaner and Laura Schmale. Finally, thanks to the over 130 guests and those who donated but did not attend. The Trust was able to see a profit of over \$3,000, a welcome amount to help continue our work.

Sites & Structures Updates

The Trust played a small role in Maxatawny Township adopting an historic preservation ordinance. After the hurried demolition of the 1816 Zimmerman house, residents and neighbors of the township voiced their concerns that the township was powerless to protect its historic treasures. A number of representatives of the Trust, who were also in attendance, were granted the opportunity to speak and did so eloquently. The resident curator of the Trust's Hottenstein Mansion, Dr. Rob Reynolds, will serve on a township commission. Dr. Reynolds and the other members will identify Maxatawny's remaining historic resources and review permit requests.

The Trust endorses these and other ways to preserve and protect Berks County's architectural heritage. We have proposed to the County Commissioners that they formally recognize the Trust as a volunteer supplement to the County Planning Commission. The Planning Commission does not have a designated staff person to focus on historic preservation even though their planning documents call for consideration of these resources in plan review by both the local municipalities and the county. We hope, through our membership, to encourage townships and boroughs to enact protective ordinances as Maxatawny has done.

The Trust has undertaken a joint venture with the YMCA to develop an adaptive re-use plan and compatible user(s) for a significant property the YMCA owns on 422 between Sinking Spring and Wernersville. We marshaled volunteers in western Berks to clean up the property after years of neglect and vandalism. Several township supervisors rolled up their sleeves, brought their families and rallied others to remove debris and inappropriate additions. An Eagle Scout candidate, Mitch Boyer of Troop 459, Wernersville, recruited and organized volunteers who spent a total of 182 person-hours removing overgrown trees, shrubs and vines. In addition, Mitch researched the history, with his parents and his sister, at the library of the Historical Society, consulting with local historians and the Trust's Sue Speros and Michelle Lynch, interviewing former occupants and owners of the house. The Boyers presented the Trust with a copy of the information they gathered. We can now begin to market the property to shop keepers, artists and craftspeople as professional offices or perhaps a hair salon or restaurant.



The former Zimmerman House, in Maxatawny Township

Insurance Match Extended into 2013

A local benefactor has again offered to fully match "Insurance" donations to the Trust. Many of you responded generously to last year's request for insurance donations, which helped us meet our responsibility to insure all of our buildings against flood, fire, and other casualties. The cost of insurance remains one of our largest expenses. We are extremely grateful that "Insurance Fund" donations will again be matched 100% in 2013. Please consider helping the Trust fulfill this part of its mission by contributing to that fund.

Trust Seeks A Treasurer

The Trust is in need of a Treasurer to maintain all of its financial records. Responsibilities include depositing receipts, disbursing funds, and providing monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors. This is a volunteer position which would require membership in the Trust. Knowledge of QuickBooks would be helpful. If you (or someone you know) have accounting or bookkeeping experience, and are interested in volunteering, please contact the Trust office for more information (610-395-4762 or info@historicpreservationtrust.org).

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PHMC Staffer Visits Trust Board Meeting

Cory R. Kegerise of The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) attended the November 14, 2012 meeting of the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County. He serves as the Community Preservation Coordinator for the Eastern Region, which includes Berks County. A native of Berks County and a seventh generation descendant of David Hottenstein, Cory has an extensive background in preservation planning in local communities. Mr. Kegerise is hoping to assist the Trust in building an advocacy presence for historic preservation issues in Berks County.

He noted that there is currently no coordinated training or public education program in Berks for individuals and organizations interested in historic preservation issues.

In the past, there were concerted efforts to survey and document historic resources in the county, such as the work done by the Berks County Conservancy. Much of this work was funded by the State, and there is now no funding for these types of projects.

Perhaps Berks County could take some guidance from other nearby counties that seem to be more involved in historic preservation, such as Chester, Bucks, and Montgomery. Chester County, for example, incorporates historic preservation into the planning process, and many of the county's municipalities have their own historic preservation boards or commissions. In Berks, while preservation is mentioned in the county's Comprehensive Plan, the plan is rather weak on actual recommendations, initiatives, and support for municipalities facing preservation issues. Historic preservation in local municipal plans is generally thin or non-existent. The Trust hopes to further its aim to support historic preservation in the county.