The Forbidden is Always More Fun!

Coverage of FOW's Forbidden 10K on p. 13

Photo by Charles Uniatowski • www.charlesuniatowski.com
A MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

In 2012, FOW’s park survey revealed that Wissahickon Valley Park receives over 1 million visitors every year. Fifty-eight percent of these visits occur during the summer. That is 664,000 visits in three months. It is one of the reasons FOW needs your help and support more than ever this summer to care for and preserve the park. It is also the reason we always promote safety and adherence to park rules and regulations at this time of year.

While more visitors to the park make all users safer from theft and predators, it does leave park users and the Wissahickon habitat more vulnerable to dogs off leash, speeding cyclists, swimmers, and hikers off-trail, not to mention more litter and graffiti.

FOW promotes using the park responsibly to protect the park’s ecosystem and to ensure that everyone gets the most out of their park experience, whether you run, hike, ride, fish, or photograph. The Wissahickon is for everyone. For that to work, everyone needs to be mindful of the park rules, which exist to protect the park habitat, wildlife, infrastructure, and visitors. (See safety guidelines on p. 15)

Educating the public on the park—its history, artistic inspiration, wildlife, plants, and more—is part of FOW’s mission “to stimulate public interest therein.” It is also key to broadening our constituency and scope, one of the three objectives in our Five-Year Strategic Plan.

FOW kicked off our 90th Anniversary Celebration in May with two exciting events that brought together park users for two very different activities—bird watching and running. While they enjoyed the park in distinct ways, the people who attended our Birding Hike with Ruth Pfeffer and the first Forbidden 10K share something essential to the survival of the Wissahickon—a love of the park.

In this issue (p. 8) we share with you the history of FOW’s efforts to cultivate that appreciation for the Wissahickon. In the past we led nature hikes and bird walks, hosted lectures, and offered carriage rides. We still lead hikes and bird walks, but today our education programs and outreach also include Valley Talks, Trail Ambassador Walks and Talks, a Speakers Bureau, and family events such as the Ice Cream Social and Whispers Along the Wissahickon. (The 90th Anniversary Celebration Gala will take the place of Whispers this year.) Through our Volunteer University and workdays, we also teach the public about the ecosystem and watershed that is the Wissahickon.

Educating the public on the park—its history, artistic inspiration, wildlife, plants, and more—is part of FOW’s mission “to stimulate public interest therein.” It is also key to broadening our constituency and scope, one of the three objectives in our Five-Year Strategic Plan. We know that fostering personal relationships with the park will lead community members to care for the park, so education and outreach remains one of the most critical tools at FOW’s disposal to pursue its mission and objectives.

We invite you to our upcoming 90th Anniversary Celebration events. Spend an afternoon enjoying all the park has to offer at our Family Picnic on July 12, or join us on the evening of October 25 for the 90th Anniversary Celebration Gala and connect with the history of the park at Valley Green Inn. We also encourage you to join us this summer at one of our workdays (pp. 12 & 16), a Trail Ambassador Walk (p. 11), or our annual Ice Cream Social on August 20 (p. 3). Get to know the Wissahickon with us!

Cover Photo: (left to right) Kathleen Haskens, Tyler Haskens, Steven Carey, Peter Lubowitz, Max Lubowitz.
Photo by Charles Uniatsowski, www.charlesuniatsowski.com

United Way Donations
The Friends of the Wissahickon can receive membership/donations through the United Way. Our United Way number is 9882. If this is the most convenient way for you to give, please do so. Visit our website (www.fow.org) to learn about the benefits of membership in the Friends of the Wissahickon.
FOW Staff Attends PTBA Conference

FOW Project Manager Henry Stroud and Eric Falk, FOW Volunteer Coordinator, attended the Professional Trail Builders Association conference held at Stonewall Jackson State Park in West Virginia in April. The conference included workshops on stone work, trail alignment, machine training, and grip hoist skills. A multitude of informative seminars featured noted speakers and associated professional trail builders from all over the globe. Topics discussed included: the current state of the trail building industry, risk management, climbing turns, volunteer/contractor hybrid projects, and building trails in a World Heritage site.
—Eric Falk, Volunteer Coordinator

Valley Talks Explore Waterways and Native Plants

As a city develops and expands, the way that water moves through it changes as well. Streams get buried and creeks get moved. Grassland changes to shrubland and back again. On April 23 at Valley Green Inn, David Hewitt, Ph.D., provided a broad overview of the hydrological changes Philadelphia has undergone since its founding, and discussed ways in which the city is likely to change in the years to come. On May 21, University of Delaware Professor Doug Tallamy explained how plants evolved in concert with local animals, why specialized food relationships determine the stability and complexity of the local food webs, why it is important to restore biodiversity to our residential properties, and more. Both presentations were part of the popular lecture series Valley Talks, sponsored by Valley Green Bank.


Bird Watchers Celebrate FOW’s 90th

Local bird expert Ruth Pfeffer led a Birding Hike in the Wissahickon on May 10 to kickoff FOW’s year-long 90th Anniversary Celebration. These bird lovers spotted 56 birds, including an Eastern Phoebe, Scarlet Tanager, Spotted Sandpiper, and an Indigo Bunting. Ruth Pfeffer is an expert birder, photographer, and owner of Birding with Ruth. She has been leading birding expeditions in the U.S. and abroad since the 1990s. For a complete list of all the birds spotted during the hike, visit www.fow.org/about-park/activities/bird-watching.

Compost Toilet at Kitchen’s Lane is Open

The Kitchen’s Lane composting toilet is open for use by park visitors. According to FOW Project Manager Henry Stroud, the work required to make the composting toilet operational included: replacing the blower motor; repairing the electrical system; cleaning out the composting unit; and replacing the interior/exterior lights. “The new motor is slightly louder than the old one, and it is noticeably audible when you are inside the toilet,” says Stroud. “We are working to deaden the sound.” The Rex Avenue composting toilet is still closed for repairs.

REMINDER: No plastic bags, trash, or other non-compostable items should be put into the composting toilet. This includes plastic bags with dog-waste.
After many years at the Tree House, I thought I knew all the trees in the area. Until one year, when I ventured off the trail searching for a quiet place to have a picnic dinner, I discovered a tree unknown to me. Its bark looked as smooth and silvery as a beech tree, but its branching and leaves were completely different. Compound leaves, opposite branching, and clustered flowers, I knew it wasn’t a native tree. Using my new phone app, leafsnap, I narrowed down the possibilities. Korean Evodia (Tetradium daniellii) also known as the Bee-Bee Tree, seemed like the best bet. A remnant of the Andorra Nurseries, the largest specimen here is probably 35 feet tall, 14 inches in diameter, and found along the newly constructed Red Trail overlooking Forbidden Drive.

A somewhat small tree, it has been promoted as a nice summer flowering tree, with clusters of white flowers similar to Elderberry. But it is most prized by beekeepers. Flowering in July and August, the tree provides nectar for bees when other sources are scarce. According to beekeeper sources, the tree provides a fruity tasting honey. It is in the same family as citrus trees (perhaps why honey from hives in our area tastes so good), and its leaves smell citrusy when lightly crushed. Beekeeping websites suggest that beekeepers plant Bee-Bee seeds and within seven years the tree will produce the prized flowers. In the fall, the seed pods are reddish to purple and contain small shiny black seeds that are eaten and spread by birds. There are dozens of small trees that have come up from seed in the Andorra area, which explains why the tree is on the invasive plant “watch list” in Pennsylvania. Search for the tree this summer and look up. Perhaps you will see some of our area’s finest honeybees enjoying the nectar of summer!

Trish Fries is an Environmental Education Program Specialist at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

Up at the Tree House . . .

What’s a Bee-Bee Tree?

by Trish Fries, Wissahickon Environmental Center

WISSAHICKON DAY

This year’s Wissahickon Day celebration on April 27 included a new Fancy Hat competition along with the traditional equestrian events at Northwestern Stables and the parade down Forbidden Drive. Categories were: Fancy, Clever, and Funny. Pictured here are Lynette and Jim Gazzio of Perkasie; she was the winner of the Fancy Hat category. Photo by John R. Gross. For more information visit www.wissahickonday.com
One Man’s Trash
An Update from Bradley Maule

I knew when I started my year-long litter project that Devil’s Pool is a perennial problem spot for trash. (That’s why there are at least three outdoor trash cans at the site.) I’ve also seen the area under the Henry Avenue Bridge in the aftermath of a party. But I didn’t expect to find tires far removed from any road, one near Climbers Rock (also known Livezey Rock) and another in the Cresheim Valley well below McCallum Street. And I marveled at the effort it must have taken to cover so large an area of Houston Meadow in trash after all the snow melted.

This is the sort of thing you learn when you’ve devoted yourself to picking up trash in the Wissahickon for a full year. Well, this and to keep a hard eye out for poison ivy. For heaven’s sake, mind the poison ivy—even in the winter.

Four full months into my twelve-month project, One Man’s Trash has been equally predictable and surprising. I fully expected to come across loads and loads of plastic, and I have. I’ve filled two heavy duty garbage bags with plastic bottles alone, with two more bins of things like McDonald’s straws and potato chip bags. Lots of anticipated cheap beer cans too. The pregnancy test, though—that was a surprise. (It was negative.) And you don’t encounter Lockheed Martin cloth frisbees too frequently, either.

Brand-wise, Budweiser appears to be in the lead, with Wawa, Gatorade, and Pabst all vying for the crown too. In the categories of materials, plastic leads by an insurmountable margin. There’s one piece of plastic for every one piece of every other type of trash combined. But there’s plenty of everything else, too: styrofoam, metal, glass, paper/cardboard, sports equipment, clothes, and the fun wild card every week–miscellaneous.

Bradley Maule is the founder and editor of Philly Skyline and is a co-editor of HiddenCityPhila.org. He lives in Mt. Airy and is training to be an FOW Trail Ambassador. Visit phillyskyline.com/onemanstrash to follow him as he collects litter in the Wissahickon throughout 2014. You can view the miscellaneous items, follow the Wissahickon’s litter in numbers, and see photos and maps from every corner of the park.

Celebrate
FOW’s 90th
and
Support STI

Light a candle on our birthday cake! Then join us at our 90th Anniversary events. (See p. 3.) Each $100 donation lights a new candle on our 90th birthday cake. As of March 4, 48 FOW supporters have lit candles.

Special Thanks
to the Sponsors of our 2014 Calendar

Presented by

Additional Support from

Sponsorship opportunities are available for our 2015 calendar. Contact Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x109.
Annual Creek Clean Up

Wissahickon East Project Celebrates 25 Years of Community Activism

By Antje Mattheus, Wissahickon East Project

On April 26, 2014, with a Creek Clean Up and ribbon-cutting ceremony, the Wissahickon East Project (WEP) at Anderson Street and Woodbrook Lane in Upper East Mount Airy celebrated 25 years of neighborhood activism that led to the formation of a six-acre walk-to park. WEP thanked private citizens and public officials who over the years helped save the land from developers, increased public safety, and started to restore land and creek. One hundred ten people came out to work, thank each other, and celebrate community. The work event, which yielded massive amounts of trash, was organized by Friends of the Wissahickon, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), and WEP, and was conducted in partnership with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association’s Annual Creek Clean Up.

What became a park started as an informal initiative to deal with trash dumping and criminal activities. In 1989 neighbors removed piles of trash (including four old cars), built a fence, and asked for and received regular police patrols and Streets Department trash pick-ups.

In 1995 housing development plans for the land became public. Neighbors’ legal intervention stopped the development. Defeating a 2003 development plan was more difficult because 23 homes, to be located on top of Cresheim Creek, already had approval from several city agencies. Hundreds of neighbors attended meetings.

WEP became a formal organization during the process of fighting the development plan and built a coalition of neighbors, park and civic groups, and sympathetic public officials and agencies. The group successfully convinced the developers to accept a no-building easement (held by the Chestnut Hill Historical Society). After an extensive search for an agency to purchase the land, City Council hearings, petition drives, and WEP-sponsored work events, the neglected six acres found a new home under Mayor Nutter’s and PPR’s initiative to add new land to City parks.

The new park has many benefits. A loop trail, built by 65 volunteers during a work day in December 2013, offers walkers a peaceful destination, improves human, plant, and animal life, and brings neighbors, many of whom were unacquainted, closer together.

The story of saving this land and building a park is a model for how to address problems, turn them into opportunities, and create positive change. WEP members and friends will continue to improve the park and creek and help inspire and support the next generation of community and environmental activists.

For more photos from the Creek Clean Up, visit http://www.fow.org/news-events

What did we find?

HUNDREDS OF WINDFALL TREE LIMBS
8 TIRES
CAR
REFRIGERATOR
WATER HEATER
SCRAP METAL
CINDER BLOCKS, BOARDS, BUCKETS, AND ASSORTED DEBRIS
100 BRICKS
SHOPPING CART
16 BAGS OF PAPER AND PLASTIC TRASH
12 BUCKETS OF MIXED RECYCLING

Mark Focht, First Deputy Commissioner at PPR, cuts the ribbon and makes the Wissahickon East parcel an official part of the Philadelphia Park System. (left to right) Howard Coale and Antje Mattheus of Wissahickon East Project (WEP), FoW Executive Director Maura McCarthy, PPR’s Mark Focht, Kim David of David Brothers Landscaping, State Representative LeAnna Washington, Deputy Mayor Mike DiBerardinis, Councilwoman Cindy Bass, Dr. Arlene Bennett, City of Philadelphia Senior Attorney Lawrence Copeland, and Bruce O’Neill of WEP.

Photo by Nick Keslish

(top) Alicia Brown.
(bottom) Bernie and Jean-Claire Fitschen with Alexander Kelsh.
Gorgas Run Bridge Collapses

by David Dannenberg, FOW Board Member

On the morning of May 3, 2014, an old stone arch bridge beneath Forbidden Drive collapsed. The bridge, which carries a 24” sanitary sewer line along its west side, is a few hundred yards north of Allens Lane and crosses Gorgas Run, a tributary of the Wissahickon Creek. The collapse of the bridge left a sunken area across 3/4 of Forbidden Drive and a deep hole, 6’ x 15’ wide, near its center.

The failure of this bridge is the result of intensified “natural” forces and deferred maintenance. The legs of the arch of the bridge rest on large longitudinal stone piers that originally sat adjacent to and penetrated below the level of the Gorgas Run invert (streambed). Stormwater carried by local creeks has increased in volume and intensity due to more frequent and severe storms over the past two decades and an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces (roofs, streets, driveways, parking lots, etc.) in the Wissahickon Watershed beginning 60-70 years ago. The increased stormwater loads in Gorgas Run caused erosion that lowered the level of the invert and undercut the supports of the arch.

The impending failure of this bridge was noted in 2013 by personnel from Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD), and the Friends of the Wissahickon. They observed a large crack in the facing stones on the east (Wissahickon Creek) side of the bridge. At that time PWD, which must maintain its sewer infrastructure, began designing an emergency repair plan, which was ready to be bid on by contractors when this more extensive collapse occurred.

Currently the repair plan is being revised, as the collapse has increased the scope of necessary work. The general plan is for the bridge and the invert of Gorgas Run to be reinforced from below Forbidden Drive, so as to preserve the historic and esthetically valuable elements of the bridge that are visible from above.

The project is expected to take several months. The exact timeline awaits final design, bidding, and selection of a contractor. The west side of the bridge that carries the sewer interceptor remains stable and solid. It is therefore anticipated that Forbidden Drive will remain partially open throughout the construction process unless the work poses a threat to public health and safety.

PWD Begins Construction on Bell’s Mill Run Stream

by Laura E. Copeland, Philadelphia Water Department

During the week of June 2, Water Department crews began construction to make stormwater management improvements to the stream bank at Bell’s Mill Run. These stormwater management improvements are necessary to reduce streambank erosion. During construction, portions of the parking lot along Bell’s Mill Road near Forbidden Drive will be inaccessible and there may be brief traffic disruptions, during which vehicles will be directed around the work area.

Construction crews will work between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and it is anticipated that this project will be completed in early August, 2014. While the construction is taking place, fencing and heavy machinery and equipment will be on site and visible to the public. For safety purposes, areas where this equipment is held should be avoided.

This project, like all of PWD’s restoration efforts, is designed to improve the whole stream ecosystem by rebuilding banks, removing invasive vegetation, and replanting with native species. PWD is committed to monitoring its projects to ensure that our work protects the native environment and provides the greatest benefit to our customers. If you have any questions about this project, contact PWD at 215-865-6300 or questions@phillywatersheds.org.

While the construction is taking place, fencing and heavy machinery and equipment will be on site and visible to the public. For safety purposes, areas where this equipment is held should be avoided.
On May 10th, local bird expert Ruth Pfeffer led a hike in celebration of FOW’s 90th Anniversary. Some might think this is an unusual way to celebrate an anniversary. But not Pfeffer, who has lectured and led bird walks for the Friends for years. And certainly not FOW.

From its start in 1924, the Friends sought to educate the public not only on the need for environmental conservation and the challenges facing the park, but on the Wissahickon Valley itself: its complex history, its flora and fauna, and its geology. It is imbedded in FOW’s mission: “To preserve the natural beauty and wildness of the Wissahickon Valley and stimulate public interest therein.”

“FOW’s founders recognized the need to reinforce and strengthen people’s connection to the park in order for them to become its stewards,” says Executive Director Maura McCarthy. “They understood that they needed the whole community to know the Wissahickon and understand its importance if they were going to preserve the Wissahickon. So they produced publications, led hikes, offered carriage rides, held radio broadcasts, and hosted lectures.

FOW continues to educate with a view toward action, and has built an extensive outreach program that has developed as its professional staff has grown; the timeline clearly illustrates this connection. The Five-Year Strategic Plan calls for broadening FOW’s constituency and scope, and outreach programs are essential to meeting this objective. Today, FOW’s outreach includes Valley Talks, sponsored by Valley Green Bank, Trail Ambassador Walks and Talks, a Speakers Bureau, public meetings, the quarterly newsletter and other publications, a website, and even volunteer workdays.

FOW staff not only lead volunteers in planting and trail work, but instruct them in the challenges the Wissahickon faces and how their efforts are maintaining the health of the forest and improving the water quality of the creek. While the Friends believe in education for its own sake and have programs for that purpose, they see education as an instrument of preservation. People will learn more from their volunteer experience, perform their tasks better, become stewards of the park, and take that message into the community if they are better informed about conservation issues and how they apply to the Wissahickon.

In addition, a community of citizens with a solid understanding of the Wissahickon and its environmental needs and challenges will be better advocates for the park when the need arises. “You don’t want to have to educate everybody when an issue comes up,” says McCarthy. “You want them to already have that love and reverence for the space. And you can’t have that until you understand the Wissahickon’s history and complexity--its social and economic uniqueness.”

Strengthening the emotional connection park users have with the Wissahickon is equally important to securing its future. The Friends’ efforts to restore iconic structures in the park, such as Valley Green Inn and the Covered Bridge, as well as historical infrastructure such as stone walls and the WPA shelters, help park users realize that the Wissahickon is their own.

FOW also creates opportunities for people to come together in the park and let the magic happen. The Fall celebration Whispers Along the Wissahickon, when grown-ups and children enjoy the wonder of the park at night, has become an annual tradition for many families. Winter in the Wissahickon at Valley Green Inn, where families and friends make holiday wreaths and memories, is equally popular.

Founded in 1924 with mission “To preserve the natural beauty and wildness of the Wissahickon Valley and stimulate public interest therein.” Holds three radio broadcasts informing the public of its activities and offers carriage rides in the park.

Merges with the Wissahickon Bird Club and offers bird lectures and walks. Revives Wissahickon Day—now hosted by the Wissahickon Valley Riding & Driving Association.

Works to have Wissahickon designated a National Historic Landmark (now National Natural Landmark) by National Park Service. First of seven areas in the country to be so designated.

1920s

Becomes lease holder of Valley Green Inn, the central gathering place for park users. Works with government agencies to build restroom at Valley Green, repair stone walls, improve bridle paths, & restore the covered bridge.

1930s

Conducts tree plantings with local schools and youth groups in conjunction with Fairmount Park Commission.

1940s

Focuses on trail building, the restoration of Valley Green Inn, and promoting the Wissahickon’s assets. Publishes first Map of the Wissahickon Valley. Wissahickon Park trail system named a National Recreation Trail.

1950s

1960s

1970s
Ensuring that park users have a positive experience in the park is key to strengthening their relationship with the Wissahickon. Programs such as FOW’s Trail Ambassadors, who patrol the park as well as lead hikes and give lectures, were developed to ensure that park users are safe and understand and appreciate the environment around them. The Sustainable Trails Initiative is not only making the 50+ miles of trail in the Wissahickon environmentally sustainable, but socially sustainable for the benefit of all park users. Sustainable trails have better sight lines and reduce conflicts between different park user groups, while new signage and wayfinding will greatly improve user safety and enjoyment of the park. (See p. 12 for an update on the signage plan.)

There is a full calendar of events throughout the remainder of this year, but only two more events dedicated to celebrating FOW’s 90th Anniversary. FOW hopes that the Family Picnic on July 12 at Pachella Field will give families who don’t frequent this part of the park a chance to become acquainted with it. And the Gala on October 25 at Valley Green Inn will give everyone the opportunity to connect with the history of the park and see their role in it. “Ninety years ago, FOW developed its mission,” says McCarthy. “We look forward to another 90 years, doing the work of engaging a grass roots population in the preservation of the park.”

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<td>Secures new proprietor for Valley Green Inn after 1987 fire closes it. Inn is restored and reopen in 1989. Hosts three–day Ecology Symposium with WEC and WWWA.</td>
<td>Establishes Wildlife Committee which organizes public lectures and hikes. Launches quarterly newsletter, Biennial Photo Contest, Winter Lecture Series, and website. Develops and conducts park user count and opinion survey.</td>
<td>2002 Awarded $280,000 “Capacity Building” grant from William Penn Foundation. Allows FOW to hire full-time professional staff.</td>
<td>2010 Awarded a grant of $440,000 from William Penn Foundation to improve community engagement and outreach in connection with STI.</td>
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<td>2004 Hosts Asleep at the Wheel Benefit and first annual Whispers Along the Wissahickon. Launches Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI), which includes wayfinding and signage guidelines. (More on signage on p. 12.)</td>
<td>2011 Conducts My Park Counts, the most comprehensive park survey of the Wissahickon Valley ever undertaken. Launches new lecture series: Valley Talks, sponsored by Valley Green Bank.</td>
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<td>2009 Hosts first holiday wreath making workshop, Winter in the Wissahickon. Celebrates 85th Anniversary with a day of activities with park users, including equestrians, runners, bird watchers, hikers, and dog owners.</td>
<td>2010 Awarded a grant of $440,000 from William Penn Foundation to improve community engagement and stewardship initiatives, and $250,000 from PA DCED for park-wide trail signage program.</td>
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<td>2014 90th Anniversary Celebration: first professional marketing effort with numerous outreach events for all park users.</td>
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Looking Back with David Pope

Dr. David Pope, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, has served on FOW’s Board of Directors since 1990. As Board President from 1992 to 1998, he was invaluable in establishing the deer management program and policies and spearheaded a massive investigation into park use and habitat decline that informed the development of the Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI). Dr. Pope has served on numerous FOW committees and led FOW in its development into a professional organization undertaking capital projects. Below are highlights from a conversation he had recently with the Editor.

The Early Days

It was a very different organization. No telephone number, no office, no staff. If you wanted to join FOW, you had to poke around and find a telephone number which turned out to be Koey’s telephone number. And he would give you something to do. It was a totally different milieu.

The board would meet roughly twice a year at a time chosen by Koey and since we had no office, we would meet in Ed Stainton’s living room. The finances of FOW totally came from membership dues. We had a few hundred members and the dues were quite small. Every once in a while we would get a grant from somebody and the first years I was president, I remember doing the budget in tabular form in Microsoft Word and the total budget was under $35,000.

The entire records of the FOW were in a little green file box that held 3x5 cards, the records of the membership. That was it. And somebody, usually Anne Rivinus, would keep minutes of the board meetings in a spiral notebook.

Partnership with CHHS

When I became president, I thought we were capable of much more. My logic was that the new religion was environmentalism and we could raise big bucks to do these projects. The problem was, in order to do that, we needed a structure. We needed an office. So I started casting around. Louise Strawbridge was the president of the Historical Society, so I had coffee with her one day and said, “You know, why don’t we form an alliance? Why don’t we move in with you? We’ll share cost and space and get an executive director.” She agreed to that. Then I went back to the FOW board and asked them, “What do you think of this?” Much to my surprise they unanimously said, “Sure.” Howard Kittell became the executive director, and we shared the cost with the Historical Society. We paid 1/3 and they paid 2/3. We were the junior partner, and there were just two paid people, Howard and the staff person. That was the start of a very successful collaboration.

Origins of STI

The trail bike issue was tied up with the trails issue because many people, myself included, honestly believed that the erosion and deterioration of the trails was the result of this influx of trail bikes. It seems so ridiculous now because how could eight feet of erosion be caused in such a short time by bicycles? But we really believed that.

There is a park in Wisconsin where I grew up called Kettle Moraine, and I learned that it was the first place to accept mountain bikers, and then they were the first to throw them out. Then they were the first to invite them back. I thought there must be something to learn there. So I took a trip to Kettle Moraine, and I went to this park in Chicago that circles the city [Cook County Forest Preserve]. I met this fellow [Alan Bjorkman] who did his Ph.D. dissertation on trails maintenance in Kettle Moraine, and I learned that the cyclists really have nothing to do with the deterioration of the trails. The trails were deteriorating because they were planned to go straight down the fall line, and there was no consideration for [the effects of] water.

More highlights from this conversation can be found at http://www.fow.org/news-events/newsletter

Keep In Mind

Become a Trail Ambassador

Join FOW and become a Trail Ambassador. FOW is offering training for this popular volunteer program starting in August. The application deadline is Friday, August 15, 2014.

Trail Ambassadors are park volunteers who assist and educate people in the park with everything from directions to safety needs to park history, flora, and fauna. Ambassadors perform their service in the park and participate in ongoing education. They become experts in the Wissahickon and have the opportunity to delve deeply into their particular topics of interest while providing a valuable public service. Trail Ambassadors share their knowledge by:

• interacting with and providing assistance to park users while walking the trails;
• staffing information tables at FOW volunteer days and community events;
• leading walks in the Wissahickon Valley; and
• conducting surveys of park users and wildlife.

Training will be held one evening a week for nine weeks, beginning the last week in August. There will also be one Saturday First Aid training session (date to be determined.) Every applicant accepted into the program is required to pay a $100 registration fee, sign a one-time volunteer release form, and obtain a criminal background check and child-abuse clearance.

Ambassadors must be FOW members or willing to join the organization. The number of open positions is limited. For more information, program requirements, and an application form visit www.fow.org/volunteering/trail-ambassadors. Contact FOW Outreach Manager Sarah Marley with questions and to schedule an interview at marley@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x109.

Pictured here are Trail Ambassadors Bruce Wagner and Valerie Flitter on patrol.
Welcome Summer by Exploring the Woods and Meadow with Kimberly Quinn  
Saturday, July 26 • 9 am
Welcome the first day of summer with a hike to the Andorra Natural Area behind Cedars House and the Wissahickon Environmental Center. Bring binoculars, cameras, and water! Children 8+ years old welcome with responsible adult. Duration: 2 hours. Level: moderate. Meet at Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. & Forbidden Drive.

Lower Forbidden Drive with Sarah West  
Saturday, July 19 • 3 pm
This hike is along lower Forbidden Drive on level ground. We will see historical sites connected to the Revolutionary War era and discuss the history of the Wissahickon Tumpkie, Forbidden Drive, and the construction of the Walnut Lane Bridge (1906-08). Duration: 1.75 hours. Distance: 1 mile. Meet at the small parking lot where Forbidden Drive meets Lincoln Drive, a short distance downstream from Rittenhouse Town.

Cresheim Valley: The Other Gorge with Scott Quilet  
Thursday, July 24 • 6 pm
Did you know that the Wissahickon Gorge is not the only gorge in town? The Cresheim Creek, one of the major tributaries of the Wissahickon, has carved quite a valley over the millennia in its path to join the Wissahickon. Get to know one of the Wissahickon’s largest tributaries. Meet at intersection of Cresheim Street & Emlyn Street/ Cresheim Valley Drive.

Bird Walk with Mary Phalan  
Saturday, June 28 • 9 am
Walk through Houston Meadow listening and looking for nesting meadow birds. In the past, common yellow throats, blue grosbeaks, indigo buntings have been seen. Maybe we will be lucky again this year, but no guarantees. Rain cancels. Duration: 2 hours. Meet at Cathedral Rd. by Courtesy Stable.

A Picnic Walk along the Wissahickon with Bruce Wagner  
Sunday, July 27 • 10:30 am
A picnic in the park is always a special outing. We will walk to the picnic pavilion at Bell’s Mill. Bring your own picnic lunch and at least a quart of water. After lunch we will return via Forbidden Drive. Distance: 6 miles over fairly flat terrain, but the trail on the east side of the creek is rocky, so good shoes or boots are necessary. Duration: 3.5 hours. Children accompanied by responsible adult are welcome. Meet at the horse shelter at Valley Green Inn.

Cresheim Valley: The Other Gorge with Scott Quilet  
Thursday, August 7 • 6 pm
Starting from our meeting spot, at the base of the valley, we will head up the forested gorge to Houston Meadow, discover where a suspension bridge from Roxborough across the gorge to Chestnut Hill was planned but never built, visit a schist barren, upon which Tedyucung peers across the gorge, and pass a bubbling cascade that looks like a mountain stream. Meet at Forbidden Drive and Bell’s Mill Road.

Battle of Germantown in the Lower Wissahickon with Jack Coleman  
Saturday, August 9 • 3 pm
Rain date: Sunday, August 10
Suitable for children 10 and over with a responsible adult. Duration: 2 hours. Level: moderately difficult. Meet at Washington’s Rock, where Forbidden Drive meets Lincoln Drive.

Kid-Friendly Hike to Prominent Wissahickon Sites with Mary Schwartz  
Saturday, August 16 • 1 pm
This family-friendly hike will take in many of the most interesting Wissahickon sites. We will hike along Forbidden Drive, visit the Livezey Dam, Gorgas Creek cave, Devil’s Pool, and Pee Wee Rock. Hiking shoes or sneakers are required for this hike. Level: moderate difficulty on some rocky trails. Duration: 2 hours. Meet at the Valley Green Inn.

Trails Less Traveled I with Gerry Schweiger  
Sunday, June 29 • 1 pm
Did you know that there is a trail along the Monoshone Creek? Or that there are trails leading up to the Yellow Trail from the Lincoln Drive bike trail? We will hike over several of these little-used trails. Cover legs & arms due to poison ivy. Children 10+ years old with responsible adult welcome. Duration: 2 hours. Meet at Lincoln Drive & Johnson St., which is one way from Wissahickon Ave. to Lincoln Drive. Park on Johnson St. as close to Lincoln Drive as possible.

Kid-Friendly Hike to Prominent Wissahickon Sites with Mary Schwartz  
Saturday, August 24 • 3 pm
We will walk along Forbidden Drive from Northwestern Ave. to Bell’s Mill Rd. and a short distance along the Orange Trail. We will visit an 18th century quarry and several other interesting rock exposures, and discuss the likely formation of Wissahickon rocks as the result of plate tectonics. This hike is suitable for children 10+ with responsible adult. Duration: 1.75 hours. Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. & Forbidden Drive.

To the Top of Both Ridges with Bruce Wagner  
Saturday, September 6 • 9:30 am
We will visit both ridge tops and enjoy how different the terrain is and how different Wissahickon Creek looks from either side. Wear sturdy boots or shoes. Bring at least one liter of water. Children accompanied by responsible adult welcome. Level: gradual trails at leisurely pace. Duration: 3 hours. Distance: 3.5 miles. Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. & Forbidden Drive.

TRAIL AMBASSADOR WALKS

Registration is recommended for all hikes (required if indicated) so that participants can be informed of weather or other emergency cancellations. Unless otherwise specified, Trail Ambassador Walks may be on rocky, rugged trails that may be wet and slippery. Wear sturdy shoes or boots with socks. Long pants are recommended for protection against occasional poison ivy and possible ticks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children over six are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Walks are cancelled in heavy rain or icy conditions. For more information or to register, contact Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org. Visit www.fow.org for updates.

Philadelphia Equine Council built new steps.

The beginning of the work at Trail Segment 41 (a small access route from Blue Bell Hill down to Forbidden Drive) was started with the Pennsylvania Equine Council Philadelphia Chapter. An admirable showing of enthusiastic trail riders showed up to move heavy rocks and build new steps and structures to enhance the original trail corridor. We will have another day with the Council in June. I encourage everyone to come join us and get to know some of the happy equestrians who ride in the park.

SCA Crew Leaders improved drainage at Blue Bell.

Kevin Maskol and a group of 14 future Crew Leaders for the Student Conservation Association (SCA) worked for two days on the 303 trail at Blue Bell over a balmy March weekend as part of their training. With the assistance of Boy Scouts from Troop 25, the SCA crew and FOW staff excavated a section of trail that has been a problem in the past with consistent moisture. They repacked the tread with a mix of large and small stones, then compacted it to allow for proper drainage of the seep (small spring) on the hillside.

Six Crew Leaders completed basic machines training.

Six new Crew Leaders completed basic machines training this spring: Noelle Egan, Daniel Collins, Jared Bundra, Zach Suralik, Ben Thorp, and Joshua Meyer attended the all-day event taught by “Machines Wizard” Valerie Naylor. The Crew Leaders were trained on safety and operation of the small and large Cany Coms (used to haul material), the SK 500 mini skid steer, and the Gator. All six participants passed the final exam and are ready to safely operate FOW’s machines in the park.

We Left No Trace After the Race!

FOW partnered with Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, Clear Channel, and Radio 104.5 to clean up after the Forbidden 10K on May 18. Fifty-six volunteers collected 26 bags of trash and were rewarded with a drawing for Jack Johnson tickets at the Mann Center.

FOW Awards Two Contracts for Trail Signage

FOW is continuing to make progress on the Upper Trails Wayfinding and Signage Initiative. On May 5, 2014, we awarded two contracts for the programming and fabrication of the new signage system.

The trailhead kiosks will be designed and built by Tahawus Trails LLC, a professional trail building company headquartered in Accord, New York. Tahawus has a broad portfolio, including the design and construction of trails at Fallingwater, Niagara Falls, and right here in the Wissahickon.

Their approach to the signage project is thoughtful and informed. According to Eddie Walsh, Manager at Tahawus, “the vernacular of the Wissahickon is embodied by its historic traditions combined with the strong spirit of volunteerism. These kiosks, which will in many ways be the first physical impression visitors will have of the Wissahickon, should harmonize with the solid, organic forms already in the park. We propose to achieve this with heavy timbers, well-crafted joinery, and a slightly rustic, yet unembellished design.” You can see more recent work by Tahawus at www.tahawustrails.com.

A local firm, A.D. Marble & Company, will oversee the final design and fabrication of the kiosk information panels and trail markers. A.D. Marble Communications has six office locations throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, including one in Conshohocken, and many of their employees are active users of the Wissahickon. They are a multi-disciplinary organization with professionals from numerous fields working together under one roof. A.D. Marble partnered with FOW and the International Mountain Bicycling Association on the first two stages of the Sustainable Trails Initiative at Bell’s Mill and Devil’s Pool. Xavier Riva, A.D. Marble’s project team leader, has said that he hopes the new signage system will be “a ‘first impression’ that can garner longstanding support for the park’s ecological sustainability.”

Installation of the new system is expected to be complete by the summer of 2015.

Support the Wayfinding and Signage Initiative

FOW is currently raising funds from individuals and private foundations to provide the balance of matching funds needed for the Wayfinding and Signage Initiative. The project has an expected total budget of $500,000. A grant of $250,000 from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development has leveraged an additional $100,000 in private support, but FOW still needs $150,000 to complete the project. For more information on how you can support the Wayfinding and Signage Initiative, contact Development Director Ruffian Tittmann at 215-247-0417 x102 or ttittmann@fow.org.
The Forbidden is Always More Fun!

Of the 215 runners who participated in FOW's Forbidden 10K on May 18, the First Place Overall winner was 25-year-old Michael Deasey, of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, with a winning time of 36:28. First Place winner in the women's division was Christine Weisshaar, 31, with a time of 46:31.

Three hundred people registered for the race, and FOW made 230 new friends—people the organization has never had contact with before. The Forbidden 10K was part of FOW's 90th Anniversary Celebration, which will take place throughout the year. (See p. 4) Funds raised from all 90th Anniversary events will assist in the continued restoration and preservation of Valley Green Inn and Wissahickon Valley Park.

Special Thanks to Chuck Uniatowski for spectacular photography of the race and to all our Forbidden 10K volunteers! The race went off without a hitch, thanks to all their hard work.

MORE PHOTOS at www.fow.org/news-events

Everyone in the Wissahickon was safe on race day with these Superheroes on hand!

First Place winner Michael Deasey crossing the finish line in 36:28. He was the last to start the race, leaving a full ten seconds after everyone else.

Christine Weisshaar, First Place winner female, made it in 46:31 with a smile on her face.

Congratulations to the Winners!

**Women's Division Winners**
1—Christine Weisshaar (31) 46:31
2—Katelyn Kotulka (29) 46:49
3—Brittany Shannon (25) 47:05

**Men's Division Winners**
1—Michael Deasey (25) 36:28
2—Desmond O'Donovan (16) 37:13
3—Michael Cavanaugh (26) 37:18

**Age Group Winners (Female and Male)**

**Ages 1-19**
- Anya Silbert (13) 57:35
- Matthew Vegari (19) 50:05

**Ages 20-29**
- Kate Young (26) 48:15
- Kevin Dunbar (26) 38:23

**Ages 30-39**
- Jennifer Grier (31) 48:48
- Matthew Pearsall (38) 39:38

**Ages 40-49**
- Liz Diamondstein (45) 53:20
- Pascal Prigent (46) 40:12

**Ages 50-59**
- Ellen Grady (53) 50:23
- Kevin O'Donovan (55) 48:43

**Ages 60-99**
- Susan Bentley (69) 1:27:32
- Jon Cohen (61) 42:49

Chip Timing for the race done by Bryn Mawr Racing Co. For race results, visit www.brynmawrracing.com/race-results.

Broad Street Run Winner Trained in Wissahickon

Mourad Marofit, winner of the Broad Street Run on May 4, says he fell in love with Wissahickon Valley Park while training there for two weeks prior to the race. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, “He fell in love with the park’s scenery and tree-lined paths almost immediately.” Marofit won the ten-mile race in 47 minutes, 7 seconds.

READ MORE: www.fow.org/news-events/park-news

Thanks to Our Sponsors

Friends of the Wissahickon • Summer 2014
Dr. Kenneth David Kopple (1931-2013)

Dr. Kenneth Kopple, a peptide chemist and dedicated FOW member, left a legacy in the Wissahickon that can be seen along the trails on which he worked during countless workdays in the park. The Friends were surprised and grateful to learn recently that he had added to his legacy with a bequest to FOW in the amount of $100,000.

Throughout his life, Dr. Kopple counted the outdoors and hiking in wilderness areas as two of his many interests, which led him to become an active member of FOW. According to Dan Mercer, former FOW Volunteer Coordinator, other volunteers hoped they would be as active as Ken when they retired. “I worked with Ken on many work days,” he said. “Ken was a great volunteer and a pleasure to work with. He had a wry sense of humor and was often bemused by the occasional, but endless discussions other volunteers would have about how to fix or build something.”

Dr. Kopple grew up in the Philadelphia area, graduating from Cheltenham High School in 1947. He earned a B.S. in chemical engineering in 1951 and a doctorate in chemistry in 1954, both from MIT. From 1954 to 1962 he taught at the University of Chicago. There he met his future wife, Frances Hopkins Kopple, and they were married in 1960. Frances predeceased her husband in 2007.

In 1962, Dr. Kopple joined the research staff of the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York, where he received a Guggenheim Foundation Grant for a year of studies at the University of California at Berkeley. From 1965 to 1985, he served on the faculty of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Dr. Kopple became Director of Biophysical and Physical Technologies at SmithKline & French Laboratories, now GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in 1985. Throughout his career, Dr. Kopple co-authored several books on peptides and amino acids. He retired from GSK in 2000.

“Ken was someone we all loved working with on a day-to-day basis,” said Executive Director Maura McCarthy. “His work in the park and his attendance at events and meetings encouraged others to engage in that same work. We are all very deeply appreciative of his foresight, his time, and his kindness in thinking of us.”

The 1924 Society is a group of committed individuals who have included FOW in their will or have named the FOW as the owner or beneficiary of a life insurance policy, IRA, or other retirement plan. Members of the 1924 Society are recognized for their gifts. They receive a membership memento, invitations to special events, and information about FOW programs and projects.

For more information about the 1924 Society, or to let us know that you have already included FOW in your will, please contact Development Director Rufian Tittmann at 215-247-0417 x102 or tittmann@fow.org.

Bird Spotting with Sibley
by Erin Mooney, Publicist

On a chilly Sunday morning in March, world-renowned ornithologist and author David Sibley led a small group of birders on a short walk along the Wissahickon Creek. Sibley was in Philadelphia to promote the newly-published second edition of his popular book, *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (Knopf, 2014) and took a group of FOW supporters on a short walk. Joining Sibley was local birding expert Ruth Pfeffer who provided local birding information and tips to the group.

Sibley began the walk at Valley Green Inn, where the resident Canadian geese were honking loudly and chasing other geese in protest. He explained that the birds were simply voicing their territorial claims to other birds. Though geese now appear common, it wasn’t always so. “For over 100 years, Canadian geese used to be extinct,” he said. Today, he maintains, their presence on the East Coast and in other parts of the U.S. has vastly increased and geese are year-round residents in many American cities and suburbs. As a pair of wood ducks swam by, Sibley pointed out the difference between the flashy-colored male and the toned-down brown female.

Walking along Forbidden Drive, we spotted a hawk, perching upright, high up in a leafless tree. Looking at the white streaks on the bird’s breast and the shape of its tail, Sibley quickly identified it as a Cooper’s hawk. Asked about the distinction between a Cooper’s hawk and a sharp-shinned hawk, the smallest hawk in North America, he explained that sharp-shinned hawks have long tails and short, rounded wings.

Soon, we heard the distinct sound of a pileated woodpecker, deep in the woods, indiscernible to the eye. Sibley explained that the bird sends the familiar drumbeat call to signal other woodpeckers. A nearby tree, covered with large, almost perfect circular holes, confirmed that the pileated woodpecker had been spending a good deal of time in this particular area.

A member of the group asked Sibley which mobile app he liked best for listening to bird calls and identifying birds. Somewhat sheepishly, he replied that there was a companion app to the new edition of his book that provided comprehensive photos, sounds, and information on every bird species. (It is available for both Android and iPhones.)

Continuing along the creek, we saw Eastern phoebes, and Sibley said the phoebe was typically the first songbird to return from wintering in other locations. The birds flitted about streamside, filling up on small mayflies that were hatching that morning. Asked if birds would be impacted by the long, cold winter, Sibley said, “This winter was close enough to the twenty-year-average that we don’t need to be worried,” he said.

The hour-long walk with David Sibley was an extraordinary opportunity to observe and listen to the birdlife in the Wissahickon. Within a short time, we were able to identify more than a half-dozen bird species and learn details about bird behavior and habitat from one of the world’s leading bird experts.

Currents, and other hazards. Swimming in Philadelphia creeks due to risks of drowning, injury from submerged objects, strong and report any problems they encounter to Park Rangers.

Public Pools Near the Park
Swimming at Devil's Pool and in any of Philadelphia's rivers and streams is illegal and dangerous. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health states that swimming and wading is not permitted due to risks of drowning, injury from submerged objects, strong currents, and other hazards. Swimming in Philadelphia creeks and rivers is also a serious health hazard because of bacterial contamination and pollution in the water. FOW encourages park users to use local pools this summer.

Guidelines
- Exercise with a partner; if exercising alone, avoid using the park during off-peak times.
- Be alert! Go headphone free! Headphones leave you vulnerable to physical injury and crime.
- Vary your routine. Go at different times and start from different locations.
- Trust your instincts. If you sense trouble because of a person or a place, leave.
- When parking your car, lock doors, carry keys with you, and do not leave valuables in plain sight in the car.
- Call 911 if your car is broken into. Use parking lot number to report the location of car. Stay until the police arrive.
- Visit www.fow.org frequently. FOW posts crime alerts as necessary.
- Report suspicious activity by calling 911.
- To reach Philadelphia Park System Rangers, call 215-685-2172.
- Report by calling 911.
- If you are unable to call 911 or the Rangers, find an FOW Trail Ambassador (TA) for help.
- TAs provide information to park visitors about the Wissahickon

Hillside Recreation Facility
201 Fountain Street
Philadelphia, PA 19128
215-685-2595

Kendrick Recreation Facility
5822-24 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19128
215-685-2584

Pleasant Recreation Facility
6720 Boyer Street
Philadelphia, PA 19119
215-685-2230

We appreciate Valley Green Bank reinvesting in our community and in the Wissahickon Valley!

Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter
www.amcdv.org

Mondays
Wissahicot Gorge Wandering: Brick-paced hike; distance is dependent on the conditions and speed of the group. Meet at 6:30 pm by Valley Green Inn. Bring water and a flashlight or headlamp. Write an option for dinner following the hike. Meet at the park border of Germantown and Northwestern Aves., at 6:30 pm. Rain cancels. Leaders: Christina Lawless (215-530-3383 or finalistw@hotmail.com); Mike Lawless (215-836-2275); Steven Dinstein (215-508-5915 or dstein0857@yahoo.com); and March 12-Jan. 6, 2015.

Tuesdays
Tuesday Nights in the Wissahickon. Casual social hike through hills of Wissahickon Gorge. Bring water and a flashlight or headlamp. Pick your own option for dinner following the hike. Meet at the park border of Germantown and Northwestern Aves., at 6:30 pm. Rain cancels. Leaders: Christina Lawless (215-530-3383 or finalistw@hotmail.com); Mike Lawless (215-836-2275); and Steven Dinstein (215-508-5915 or dstein0857@yahoo.com). June 16-Aug. 25.

Philaventures
www.philaventures.org

Last Sunday of Month
Wissahickon Hike. An opportunity to walk at a moderate pace with a talkative group of LGBT folks who like fresh air and exercise! Some ups and downs and uneven paths are found along the way, so wear proper footwear and be ready to hike. This group meets at 2 pm at Cosimo's Pizza, 6624 Germantown Ave. at Beethoven Pike (the top of Chestnut Hill). RSVPs are required to the hike leader, Andy B. at AB921@newmail.com.
Friends of the Wissahickon Membership Form

**Membership Level**

- **$20 Limited Income/Students**
- **$45 Basic**
- **$75 Family**
- **$100 Contributing***
- **$250 Sponsor***
- **$500 Patron***
- **$1000 or above**

*Choice of:
- Hat
- T-Shirt (circle size):
  - Children: S M L
  - Red Bird: Women S M
  - Adult L XL
  - Warbler & Map: Adult L XL
- **$5000**
- **$10,000 or above**

Please keep the premium and use the entire membership fee for the Park.

Name ________________________________
Street _____________________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State __________ Zip Code ___________
Phone (Home) ___________________ (Work) ___________________ E-mail __________________

Method of Payment

- Check Enclosed (payable to the Friends of the Wissahickon)
- Credit Card
  - VISA
  - Mastercard
  - AmX
  - Discover

Card Number ____________________________
Expiration Date __________________________
Signature ______________________________

All new members receive a map of the Wissahickon Valley. Limited Income/Student members receive invitations to all events and our quarterly newsletter. Basic members receive invitations to all events; our quarterly newsletter, and membership card with discounts for meals at Valley Green Inn (in the park) and FOW merchandise. Family members receive all benefits of basic membership plus choice of two kids tees (S-6-8, M-10-12, L-14-16). Contributing members and above ($100 or more) receive all benefits of basic membership plus choice of hat or T-Shirt (M, L, XL).

Please return to: 8708 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19118 • tel 215-247-0417 • office@fow.org • www.fow.org

The official registration and financial information may be obtained by the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll free, within Pennsylvania (800) 732-0999.