CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

ACTIVITIES AT HISTORIC RITTENHOUSE TOWN
Historic Rittenhouse Town (HRT) offers the following events for individuals and families to learn about the craft of hand papermaking and other aspects of colonial life at the original Rittenhouse Family Homestead. HRT is located on Lurice Drive with an entrance of Mission Avenue. For information, call 215-491-7671, visit www.rittenhousetown.org, or visit www.fow.org/hrt.html.

MARCH

STERLING PARKING WORKSHOP—MONDAY, MARCH 25, 7-8 PM—HRT volunteers will provide a workshop on how to make paper and design your own unique way to say “I love you” with instruction by experienced papermakers in HRT’s studio. Free. HRT members: $10/adults, 5/$8, children. Reservations required.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11
Annual Sheep and Partnered Run, 10:30 - 11 AM—Annual Sheep Run, bring the kids and search for special properly-marked eggs at this National Historic Landmark District. Take pictures with the Easter Bunny and enjoy the first sights of Spring within this beautiful landscape. Stay from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. to make your own piece of paper. Both events this day are free; no reservations required.

ACTIVITIES AT THE WISSAHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
The Wissahickon Environmental Center (WEC) at Ardona Natural Area offers the following activities to teach individuals about the natural world. Pre-registration is required for all events (except Maple Sugar Day) and must be confirmed by the staff. Space is limited and may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free, within Pennsylvania (888) 754-0999.

FEBRUARY

STAR GAZING AT THE TREE HOUSE—FRI. FEBRUARY 8, 7-8 PM
Have you ever wondered what stars you're seeing overhead in the night sky? Join us for an indoor introduction and then a hike to the roofers to see what can be seen in the sky above Philadelphia. Ages 8 & up.

MAP AND COMPASS SKILLS—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 10 AM
Learn the basics of reading a map and using a compass. Then practice your skills outdoors with an orienteering course through the Ardona Natural Area. Ages 8 & up.

MAPLE SUGAR DAY—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 11AM-3PM
Join us on Rittenhouse Mile (near Northwester Avenue) between 11am and 3pm! There will be ongoing maple sugaring demonstrations, pancakes served with real maple syrup, a taste test of many different pancake toppings, as well as freshly made maple candy to taste. Pennsylvania maple syrup products will be available for purchase. This event is FREE. All ages.

FEBRUARY:

PRE-SCHOOL MAPLE SUGARING—WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 1-3PM
Spend the morning with your young children discovering how maple syrup is made. Taste the fresh sap as it drips from the tree, and warm up near a fire as the sap is boiled into maple syrup. Top off the morning by enjoying our homemade-syrup pancakes. Ages 3-5, 12.00/person.

HIBERNATION FITNESS HIKE—SATURDAY, MARCH 15 1:00PM
Do you feel like a bear coming out of hibernation? Get out, stretch those legs, and wake up your brain while learning a few things about the forest around you. We'll hike at a quick pace while stopping occasionally to look for the very first signs of spring. All ages.

SPRING BREAK CAMP FOR CHILDREN AGES 8-12 $50/CAMPS—LOOKING FOR SOMETHING FOR YOUR KIDS TO DO OVER SPRING VACATION? JOIN US FOR ONE OF THE FOLLOWS:

USABLE PLANTS—MARCH 17 repeated on MARCH 24 1-3PM
Explore ways plants are used by people. Look for plants used for rope, food, and natural dyes. Then sample garlic mustard pesto, sautéed spring nettle, and spicy beet root!

FISHING—MARCH 18 repeated on MARCH 25 1-3PM
Learn about local fish and the baits used to catch them. Learn how to cast and fly and release fish in the Wissahickon creek.

BIKING IN THE WISSAHICKON
MARCH 19 repeated on MARCH 26 1-3PM
Bring your own bike (or bike rentals available) for a guided 2-hour ride along Forbidden Drive through the beautiful Wissahickon Valley.

ORIENTEERING AND GEOCACHING—MARCH 20 repeated on MARCH 27 1-3PM
Learn how to find your way using a map, compass, and hand held GPS. Test out your skills by making your way through our orienteering and geocaching courses.

Future calendar listings for the newsletter may be placed by contacting the Friends of the Wissahickon at 215-247-0417 or office@fow.org.

The Calendar of Events in the Wissahickon may also be viewed on FOW’s website www.fow.org, which contains updates on our events, including cancellations.

Friends of the Wissahickon Membership Form

☐ YES, I/We want to help preserve and protect the Wissahickon.

Membership Level

☐ $20 Limited Income/Students
☐ $45 Basic
☐ $100 Contributing*
☐ $250 Certified Member*
☐ $500 Patron*
☐ New Member
☐ Renewal

*Choice of:
☐ Hat
☐ Video of the Wissahickon
☐ Please keep the premium and use the entire membership fee for the Park.

DIAMOND (level of support)

☐ T-Shirt (circle size)
Children: S M L
Red Bird: Women S M • Adult L XL
Warbler & Map: Adult M L XL XXL

$75 New Family Membership—Receive 2 children’s t-shirts, map, invitation to annual Ice cream Social, AND discounts to family events in the park.

Method of Payment

☐ Check Enclosed (payable to the Friends of the Wissahickon)
☐ Charge my
☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard

Card Number

Expiration Date

Signature

*All members receive FOW’s quarterly newsletter. Basic and above members ($45 or more) renewing their membership receive a membership card with discount privileges. First-time basic and above members also receive a map of the Wissahickon Valley. Contributing members and above ($100 or more) receive all of the above and their choice of a premium: t-shirt, hat, or video.

Contributions to the Friends are tax deductible as permitted by current laws.
President’s Message

The Friends of the Wissahickon is an organization I truly enjoy being a part of, and I am happy to address you for the first time as President of its Board of Directors. It is an honor to serve as President, and I look forward to partnering with all of you who enjoy and care for Wissahickon Valley Park, as well as those who find creative inspiration in its beauty.

Creating partnerships has been, and continues to be, vital to FOW’s ability to preserve and protect the park. Our partnering starts with each of you when you commit to preserving the Wissahickon by becoming a member of the Friends, picking up litter on your hikes, volunteering for workdays, or creating a lasting work of art that awakens a love for the park in others. Members have also helped the Friends of the Wissahickon establish meaningful partnerships with municipal agencies, other non-profits, community organizations, and user groups.

Our very first and most important institutional partner, the Fairmount Park Commission, regularly lends its staff, equipment, and expertise to FOW’s programs. By sharing resources rather than competing for them, we are able to make efficient progress and eliminate duplication of efforts to preserve and protect the park.

Another municipal agency, the Philadelphia Water Department, has partnered with us most recently on the Protect Our Watershed (POW) program. Together we educate park neighbors on how to mitigate stormwater runoff by redesigning their landscape. With the Audubon Society, another partner in the POW program, we offer backyard audits. In addition, we work with the Chestnut Hill Historical Society to protect open space in the Wissahickon watershed through conservation easements. As the POW program has developed over the last year, our list of partners has grown to include the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, Wissahickon Garden Club, Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, and the Cecilian Center, all of which co-sponsored public events with FOW this autumn.

Our ability to create partnerships is increasingly necessary as we look forward to the implementation of the Sustainable Trails Initiative. Our municipal partners will be joined by park user organizations, including hiking groups, equestrian councils, biking associations, and running clubs, to name just a few. Many of these organizational partnerships were initiated by FOW members who also held memberships in a park user club, agency, foundation, or community group.

We are grateful to those who have joined in the effort to protect and improve the Wissahickon Valley Park and encourage all of you who use and care for the park to introduce the Friends of the Wissahickon to other possible partners. As partners, we share our abilities and resources. Together we will not only preserve the park, but improve the habitat and trails for future park users.

CORRECTION

In early November, the Friends of the Wissahickon publicized in local newspapers that the Chestnut Hill Garden Club donated $15,000 to the construction of the rain garden at Valley Green Inn. This was an error. The generous gift to the rain garden was donated by the Wissahickon Garden Club. We apologize for this error and wish to clarify that we are very grateful for the support we have received from the Wissahickon Garden Club and proud of our long-standing partnership with them.

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.
The northwest part of Philadelphia is virtually bisected by the Wissahickon Gorge, a scenic valley that is part of the city’s vast Fairmount Park.

On one side lay Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Chestnut Hill; on the other side was Roxborough, Manayunk, and Andorra. The main stretch of this parkland extends uninterrupted for almost four miles, an oasis of creeks and trails incongruously located within the city limits. At the center of the gorge is the Wissahickon Creek and, running along side of it, Forbidden Drive, a gravel thoroughfare that has been car-free since cars were new.

Usually, it was one of Madison’s favorite parts of the city. At that moment, however, it meant that while Laurie Simon’s house was barely a mile or two away, it would be at least a twenty minute drive.

She started up the car but sat in her parking spot for several minutes, paralyzed by the equidistance of the two routes available. A couple miles east, she could take the Walnut Lane Bridge, which arched over the treetops from Roxborough into Germantown. A couple miles west, she could take Bells Mills Road, which went down through the park, descending from Andorra and climbing up into Chestnut Hill.

She decided that in lieu of a computer navigational system, she would flip a coin.

Heads: Bells Mill won.
Fairmount Park Commission

Rules and Regulations for Trail Use

1) Seven (7) miles per hour is the fastest you are allowed to go on park trails. Please do not drive any faster.

2) Joggers - pedestrians have the right-of-way except during sanctioned and/or organized running races.

3) Bicyclists - all other trail users have the right-of-way, except during sanctioned bicycle races.

4) Bicycling is allowed on all roads within the park, except as posted on Kelly Drive and Martin Luther King Drive (West River Drive).

Permits and Forms

Permits are required for a number of activities throughout the park. All users of park trails over the age of 16, except those on foot, are required to have a permit. To download a permit application, go to www.fairmountpark.org/forms.asp. If you have any questions about the Rules and Regulations, please call 215-683-0200 or visit www.fairmountpark.org.
Friends of the Wissahickon has more than 650 new "friends," thanks to its new profile on myspace.com. Launched in 2005, the social networking website grew very quickly and boasts over 200 million registered users today. The majority of visitors to this third most popular website in the United States are under 30. They use it as a tool to keep in touch with friends, meet new people, listen to music, and participate in groups with like-minded individuals.

How it Works
A user signs up with their e-mail address and password. They create a profile, a web page created from simple forms, to talk about themselves. Sections vary from the general "About Me," to the more specific, such as favorite books, movies, and television programs. Users may also upload photos and add other media to their profiles, like songs, videos, and graphics.

Once a user signs up, they can then search for friends who may also have profiles on myspace. One may search by name, e-mail address, or simply browse by various criteria such as location, age, gender, and so forth. When one user wants to associate with another, they send what is called a "Friend Request." If the other user accepts it, the pair is now considered friends on the site.

The process of making friends on myspace creates an online social network. The site makes it easy to keep in touch with one's network through an online bulletin board system. A user can post a message all of the "friends" can view at the same time.

Making Friends
As you can imagine, this becomes a very powerful marketing tool for those targeting young people. Bands and musicians have their own special profiles where they can post songs for the world to hear. They make thousands of friends and are able to reach all of them at once. This makes self-promotion very easy and free.

Eventually, groups other than bands realized the opportunity afforded by myspace, and now it appears everyone has a myspace profile. Most of the 2008 presidential candidates do, along with countless organizations. Locally, these include several of the 2007 mayoral candidates, organizations like WXPN, the Atwater-Kent Museum, The Fleisher Art Memorial, and now, Friends of the Wissahickon.

FOW set up a myspace profile at the beginning of 2007. Responses to the profile have all been very positive, and a few politicians even got into the game, sending along friend requests around primary election time. FOW’s profile continues to be a valuable tool for reaching out to young people. With a few keystrokes, over 650 friends learn about volunteer opportunities, events, and general park news.

If you or anyone you know is a myspace member, please send us a friend request. All are more than welcome to check out FOW’s profile at http://www.myspace.com/friendsofthewissahickon.

A special thanks to Jen Kardux for creating and updating FOW's profile on myspace.

The Friends of the Wissahickon Watershed Partnership has developed an exciting new brochure and map of the Wissahickon Creek entitled, “Discover the Wonders of our Wissahickon Watershed.” This beautifully illustrated brochure and map provides information about the entire Wissahickon watershed, from the headwaters in Montgomery County to the mouth of the creek at the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.

by Debbie Carr, Director of Environmental Education, Fairmount Park

Did you know that:
• the Wissahickon watershed has over 4,103 acres of preserved open space?
• the creek flows for approximately 27 miles and originates at the Montgomeryville Mall?
• the Lenape called it “Wisamickan,” meaning catfish creek?

These are just a few of the fascinating gems of information found in the brochure’s history, geology, wildlife, and flora sections.

The main objectives of this free brochure are to teach residents and park users about the importance of healthy watersheds (“everything we do on land impacts the water quality of our streams”) and to engage citizens in helping protect our fragile riparian and stream ecosystems. Although Wissahickon Valley Park is an urban wilderness, with its steep river gorge and majestic sycamore trees, there are considerable pressures on the stream from stormwater runoff, erosion, garden fertilizers, and increased residential development. Everyone—from park users to corporations—can help make a difference.

Fairmount Park’s environmental education staff worked with key members of the Watershed partnership to develop the brochure and map. Free copies of the brochure are available at the Wissahickon Environmental Center or by emailing the Friends of the Wissahickon office at office@fow.org.

The Wissahickon Watershed Partnership, formed in November 2005, is comprised of numerous municipalities and organizations within the Wissahickon watershed and includes Montgomery County Conservation District, Whitpain Township, Whitemarsh Township, Upper Dublin Township, The PA Department of Environmental Protection, Fairmount Park, the Philadelphia Water Department, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, Friends of the Wissahickon, and Morris Arboretum. The ultimate goal of the partnership, which is sponsored by the Philadelphia Water Department and facilitated by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, is to develop a comprehensive approach to urban watershed planning, resulting in management of stormwater flows through smart land use, reduction of sanitary sewer leaks and overflows, better water quality during dry weather, management of pollutants from stormwater discharges, restoration of stream and riparian habitat, community stewardship, and stakeholder and public education activities.
Fall 2007 saw a lot of beautiful weather and a lot of work completed in the Wissahickon. FOW helped plan and organize five successful work days in September and October. A variety of projects were undertaken, from tree plantings and trail restoration to trash pick-up and invasive weed removal. Each work day was a unique collaborative effort among a number of supporting organizations and volunteers. Thanks to the more than 150 volunteers who donated 650 hours to these efforts, this work could not have been done without you!

---

**October 20:**

**Habitat Restoration in Fort Washington State Park**

FOW teamed up with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WWWA) to plant native trees and shrubs along the banks of the Wissahickon Creek in Fort Washington State Park. Over 30 volunteers planted 80 trees in less than an hour. These trees replaced the invasive Japanese hops—which had been removed by WWWA—and will help stabilize the creek banks from further erosion. Trash and recyclables were also collected and removed.

---

**October 28:**

**Clean-Up Day at Northwestern Stables**

Northwestern Stables held a work day on their grounds on a beautiful fall morning. FOW provided support for the day with tools, volunteers, and added leadership. Volunteers performed a variety of tasks such as removing leaves between the stables and Northwestern Avenue, digging up fence posts that were no longer needed, cleaning gutters, and pruning back tree branches throughout the grounds. At the end of the morning the place was looking a lot tidier.

---

**November 10:**

**Trail Re-Route and Restoration at Livezey Lane**

Another big day with PMBA! As is the case with many trails throughout the park, the White Trail by Livezey Lane was a steep conduit for stormwater, continually being eroded into a deep rocky gully. Thirty-five volunteers took on a number of projects in reworking 320 feet of trail. A large section was closed and re-routed to the side slope and given a sustainable grade. Further down the trail the side-slope was de-bermed, the trail re-graded, and attractive rock steps were constructed. Throughout, volunteers built rolling dips and placed rocks to better define the edges of the trail.

Additionally, a major project was undertaken to remedy an area along the trail where drainage from an up-hill spring had caused a muddy mess. The water was re-routed to join a nearby creek. The muddy area was dug out and filled with rocks so that trail users can now pass the area with ease.

---

**September 8:**

**Devil’s Pool Clean-Up**

The state of Devil’s Pool this summer became completely unacceptable, so FOW led a volunteer day to pick up trash in the area. By noon, 32 volunteers had collected about 12 bags of trash and 20 bags of recyclable bottles—not to mention an empty keg and a rusty old metal chair frame. In the afternoon, volunteers removed a large patch of knotweed at the mouth of Creshem Creek and tested out graffiti removal equipment. FOW continues to search for best practices to remove the graffiti in the area.

---

**September 22:**

**Trail Re-Route and Restoration by Kitchen’s Lane**

The Philadelphia Mountain Biking Association (PMBA) led one of our biggest work days to date. Forty-five volunteers worked together to improve a section of the White Trail near the Kitchen’s Lane parking lot and Monastery Stables. The trail had became a gulpy that was a conduit for water runoff and continual erosion. One section of trail was closed and re-routed on a more sustainable line, and the new line was properly graded to keep water off the trail. Rolling dips were constructed above and below the re-route for better water management. An unexpected downpour didn’t stop us from getting the work done!

---

**October 13:**

**Invasive Weed Removal on the Orange Trail below Bell’s Mill Road**

As part of our Sustainable Trails Initiative, FOW has planned a comprehensive restoration along the Orange Trail corridor from Bell’s Mill Road to the Red Covered Bridge (a.k.a.: the Early Implementation Trail). Most of this project will take place in 2008, but the prep work has already started. Invasive weed removal is the first step in that process and was the focus of this work day. Twenty volunteers wielded loppers and pruners and vigorously removed privet, winged euonymus, and multi-flora rose along the trail from Bell’s Mill Road to where it intersects with the Lavender Trail.

---

Volunteers at Northwestern Stables. Photo by Denise Christensen.
We are pleased to welcome the following new members, who joined the Friends of the Wissahickon from May through November 2007.

Ms. Jennifer Ahearn  
Ms. Minnie Alexander  
Ms. Abbie Andrews  
Ms. Martha Arkens  
Ms. and Mrs. Ed Arian  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Armistead  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Armstrong  
Mr. and Mrs. Eric H. Auerbach  
Mr. Jeffrey Baird  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher J. Beale  
Mr. Bryce Beamer  
Ms. Susan Benschouk  
Ms. Betsy Berger  
Mr. William Beverley  
Mr. Edward Biester and Ms. Carol L. Press  
Ms. Gina Bittner  
Mr. Paul T. Bockenhauser  
Ms. Chelli Boone  
Ms. Peg Bradley  
Dr. Scott Breneman, M.D.  
Mr. and Mrs. David Brubaker  
Ms. Jeanette Brugger  
Mr. Joel Bryan  
Mr. and Mrs. R. Thayer Bullitt  
Mr. and Mrs. George Bustard  
Mr. Fred Butler  
Sheelah Byrne and Linda Johnson  
Mr. and Mrs. Campetti  
Mr. Albert Carter  
Ms. Charisse Champion  
Ms. Julia Cheston  
Mr. and Ms. Joseph Chielli  
Mr. Jerome Cloud  
Ms. Kelly Coley  
Mr. Evan Collison  
Mr. Jason Combs  
Ms. Alda Conti  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Conwell  
Ms. and Mrs. Preston Cumbo  
Mr. Michael Cunningham  
Dr. Patricia Danzon  
Ms. Patty Davis  
Mr. Douglas DeFulvio  
Ms. Louise DiGiacomo and Ms. Margo Campbell  
Mr. Jordan Dillard  
Mr. Jeffrey Doerzbacher and Mrs. Paula Riley  
Mr. Andrew Doherty  
Mr. Edmund Doubleday  
Ms. Lorna Doucet  
Ms. Ayana Dutily  
Mr. Peter D. Dailey and Ms. Kimberly Eberach  
Mr. James Edwards  
Mr. Andrew Egger  
The Eisensteins  
Ms. Stephanie Epstein  
Mr. Nancy Epstein  
Mr. Franco Fabricic Mo. Elizabeth Wright  
Ms. Emily Fargione  
Mr. David F. Fine  
Mr. Ricardo Forrest  
Ms. Dionne Forrest  
Ulla Forsen  
Ms. Jennifer French  
Mr. Michael Garner  
Mr. Ernst Giese  
Mr. William Giesen  
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Ginly  
Mr. and Mrs. James Gleason  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Glendinning  
Ms. Melinda Gonzales  
Mr. Nate Gordon  
Mr. Duane Gordon  
Mr. Yefim Greymann  
Mr. Robert Groves  
Marion Whitaker and Susan Guggenheim  
Mr. and Ms. Neil Gutenkunst  
Ms. Kristen Harknett and Mr. Hugh W. Louch  
Joan Cary and Alex Harris  
Ms. Alia Harris  
Mr. Alan Hartell  
The Hagedorn-Haug Family  
Haverford Trust Co.  
Mr. Archibald Hewes  
Achelle Hinds  
Ms. Stacey Hirsch  
Avai and Fran Hirsch  
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Humenuk  
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Humphries  
Ms. Mary Anne Hunter  
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Johnson  
Mr. Charles Karl  
Ms. Elena Khlobystova  
Ms. Catherine Kidd  
Francis Kilson  
Mr. and Mrs. Steven H. Korman  
Mr. and Mrs. Rog Kyle  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lamkin  
Ms. Susan Lawrence  
Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Lee  
Mr. and Mrs. Morton Levitt  
Mr. William Levy  
Ms. Janet Lippincott  
Chunsheng Lu  
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Mandeloff  
Ms. Dorothy Marple  
Mr. Donald J. Mason  
Mr. Charles Mather III  
Mr. Dean Kaplan and Ms. Barbara Mattleman  
Ms. Leilani F. McCall  
Ms. Grace McCullum  
Ms. Cheryl McFadden  
Sister Joan McMenamin, SSJ  
Ms. Patricia McMenamin  
Mr. Lou Metzger  
Mr. Justin Miller  
Fred and Joan Miller  
Mr. Victor Morozov  
Alexander Moyer  
Mr. Michele Murphy  
Stephen and Alina Muther  
Mr. and Mrs. Zindy Nalez  
Ms. Alysa Nelson  
Mr. and Mrs. John Nordolf  
Mr. David O’Keeffe  
Ms. Judith O’Keerike  
Mr. Nick Rodilla and Mr. Jeff Darcy  
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Patterson  
Ms. Sandra Paugh  
Varley S. Paul and Jeremiah Goldstein  
Mr. William Paull  
Ms. Rana Phillips  
Mr. Dan Pickens and Ms. Ina Lipman  
James and Mary Jo Pittenger  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Plizzano  
Ms. Suzanne Woodroofe  
Michael and Sue Young  
Lavern Polk  
Ms. Nancy Pontone  
Mr. Kevin Porter and Mr. Ronald Simelaro  
Positive Life Properties LLC  
Ms. Susan Price  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Quick  
Ms. Susanna Randall and Mr. Mark Low  
Ms. Roxanne Rawson  
Mr. Theodore Reed  
Ms. Anna K. Reimann  
Mr. Daniel Rendine Jr.  
Ms. Aisha Rhodes  
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Riban Jr.  
Ms. Ellen Riccobene and Mr. Eric Reinert  
Mr. Peter Rose  
Mr. Daniel Rose  
Mr. John Rowe  
Ms. Michelle Russo  
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Sacks  
Ms. Kathleen Santanasto  
G. C. Schelter  
Melissa Schiffman  
Mr. Robert Schiller  
Mrs. Veronica Selar  
Mr. Jason Seville  
Mr. Jason Seville  
Jesse R. Shafer  
Ms. Kate Shapero  
Mr. Francis H. Sharp  
Mr. Zack Shechtman  
Mrs. John Sigmund  
Mr. Alan Silverman  
Mr. Jerome Singerman and Ms. Liliane Weissberg  
Ms. Susan Smith  
Dr. Christina Smith  
Ms. Elizabeth Sokolski  
Dr. and Mrs. David Soll  
Ms and Mr Meredith Sonderskov  
Mr. and Mrs. Spence  
Mr. Daniel Spicer  
Ms. Elaine Stewart  
Mr. and Mrs. George Stolzer  
Ms. Julia Stone  
Ms. Stefani Stoyanov  
Mr. and Mrs. Claude Summatt  
Mr. Carl Lannemann and Mrs. Sabina Lannemann  
Mr. Phillip Timon  
Ms. Anna Cox Toepood  
Ms. Karen Tourian  
Ms. Karen M. Tripolsi  
Ms. Kathy Van Cleve  
Mr. Alvin Vaughn  
Mr. Brad Vesper  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Vincent  
Nancy Wagner  
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Watkins  
Kenneth Weinstein  
Mrs. Charlotte Weiss  
Ms. and Mrs. Richard T. Welsh  
Ms. Lori Wernersbach and Mr. Bruce Labaw  
Mr. Nathan Wesner  
Ms. Connie Wiley  
Ms. Wendy Willard  
The Woehler family  
Ms. Majorie Wolman  
Ms. Suzanne Woodroofe  
Michael and Sue Young
Kevin Groves, Volunteer Coordinator

A number of weeks had passed since Kevin Groves applied for the Volunteer Coordinator position at the Friends of the Wissahickon, and he still hadn’t heard anything. On a walk in the Wissahickon one morning, he met David Dannenberg clearing a log off the trail. During their conversation Groves learned that Dannenberg served on FOW’s board and Dannenberg learned that Groves had applied for the position. He suggested that Groves contact FOW’s director again. Before long, Groves was hired, and he enthusiastically plunged into the job.

"I’m working with people in the community," he says, “and I’m spending time outdoors in a beautiful place doing work that matters and makes a difference. You can actually see what is being done—how things are changing from the work we do."

Groves has been making a difference wherever he goes for most of his life. He grew up in Springfield Township playing basketball, going to school, walking in the Wissahickon, and participating in programs at the Andorra Tree House. After graduating from Springfield High School, he attended George Washington University, where he earned a B.A. in Anthropology. His study of cultural anthropology in particular awakened his interest in the environment.

“Cultural anthropology focuses on humans and how we interact with the environment—how a certain environment will shape the group’s culture, and how humans shape the environment."

Upon graduating, he took a position with the Cadmus Group, an environmental consulting firm. He worked as a senior analyst for three years supporting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) programs such as Energy Star, which helps school districts around the country improve their energy efficiency. Groves also volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Americorps VISTA.

Cadmus offered a worthwhile experience, but Kevin wanted to work outdoors. This urge led him to the Frank Church/River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho, where he joined the U.S. Forest Service. As a Conservation Associate and Wilderness Technician, he worked in the forest and mountains searching for, identifying, and mapping invasive weed infestations.

After eight months out west, Groves was ready to return to Philadelphia. He was looking for a balance between wilderness and urban culture. “I wanted to work in a beautiful place and also be in the city. The west was beautiful, but I really missed the culture in east coast cities.” Before landing the job at FOW Groves worked at REI in Conshohocken (a generous supporter of the Friends) and the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education.

As FOW’s Volunteer Coordinator, Groves is building the Friends’ volunteer base by working with individuals and other organizations, such as the Fairmount Park Commission and Philadelphia Mountain Biking Association. "My role is to become expert in trail building and knowledgeable about the environmental aspects of the park and get others excited about trail building, removing invasive weeds, and other conservation issues of the Wissahickon."

What started off as a part-time position in June became full-time on December 1. The highly energetic Groves is working on better organizing FOW’s outdoor workdays, which he oversees, and recruiting new volunteers. He is developing the new Trail Ambassadors program which is expected to start in the spring and has created an exciting e-mail volunteer newsletter that is sent monthly to all our volunteers. On December 15, FOW will host its First Annual Volunteer Recognition Night, which Groves is organizing.

“I want to build a community,” he says. “Connect volunteers to each other so they enjoy the work more and have a meaningful experience.”

Groves admits he could have performed a similar job somewhere else, but he prefers the Friends of the Wissahickon. “It’s a great organization doing great things,” he says. “It has close ties with the community and well-defined goals. And I love the Wissahickon. It’s awesome to be working here.”

If you had the power to order all Philadelphian’s to visit the Wissahickon at least once, what section would you suggest they visit?

To Devil’s Pool, to raise awareness of how a beautiful place can be damaged by all of the influences here. It is a place where so many of the impacts on the park are easily seen—from human-caused impacts such as litter and graffiti, to erosion caused by water runoff, to the prevalence of invasive weeds.

If you could choose an artist to paint the Wissahickon, who would you select?

My friend, David Cox. We grew up together and would go on adventures in the Wissahickon as teenagers. He was always a very talented artist. Currently, he lives in Chestnut Hill and paints beautiful oil paintings, mostly still-lifes.
Bikers and Horses Get Up Close and Personal

M ountain bikers and equestrians got better acquainted at Courtesy Stables in Roxborough on October 7. Six mountain bikers rode their bikes into the riding arena at the stable for a “wheels on/hoofs on” interactive session. The event was organized by Jon Pearce, Philadelphia Mountain Biking Association (PMBA) board member, and Cynthia Turecki, President of Boarders & Stewards of Courtesy Stables. Their objective: to build relationships between the mountain bikers and equestrians through participation in a joint exercise. Mountain bikers participating in the workshop included Tom Coyne, Dmitri Zorine, and his son Dmitri, Matt Trostle, Heidi Grunwald, and Nancy Smith, all members of PMBA. Equestrians at the event were Brigette Poigente, Walt Sasse, Sandra Stocks, and Cynthia Turecki from Courtesy Stables, and Carmella Clark and Diane Garvey from Monastery Stables.

The exercise was designed with two ideas in mind: (1) to acquaint horses with the sights, sounds, and presence of mountain bikes, facilitating positive interactions when horses meet up with bikes; and (2) to give bikers a closer look at horses, and orient them to how horses think and act when dealing with potentially unfamiliar circumstances. The session also gave both groups a chance to test the guidelines that the organizers are currently developing.

Initially, the bikes were left outside of the ring while the bikers surrounded several of the horses with riders, and Walt Sasse gave an orientation on how horses see, hear, and react to stimuli. Then one biker entered the ring and rode slowly around while the horses watched and listened. Gradually, the biker approached the horses, and several were led around the ring following the bike.

Additional bikers joined the group, and Sasse orchestrated several exercises involving the bikers passing or riding close to the horses. Bikers and horses rode around the ring in the same, and then opposite, directions and across the middle of the trail crossing paths in the center. The bikers helped accustom the horses to the sounds bikers sometimes make, such as shifting gears, clicking shoes in and out of pedals, and ringing bells.

Once the ring exercises were completed, the group moved to a trail area for some real-world, on-trail experience. Several times the equestrians rode a circle around a small trail area while the bikers rode in the opposite direction. Different protocols were tried and modified as necessary to create smooth interactions.

While development of more detailed guidelines is still in progress, both groups agreed that the key to smooth interactions between bikers and equestrians is communication. When meeting on trails and traveling in opposite directions, each group should alert the other at first sighting. Thereafter, the bikers should stop alongside the trail and wait for instructions from the rider, who should be explicit in directing where the horses should stand and whether the bikes should pass the horses or vice versa. When bikers overtake horses on trails, they should announce their presence by telling the rider the number of bikers approaching and then ask to pass. The riders should move to the side of the trail when possible, directing the bikers around the horses.

For guidelines from the Montgomery County Equine Council, visit http://www.fow.org/documents/bikers-trailprotocol.pdf. For more information on biking and horseback riding in the Wissahickon, visit www.fow.org.

Erdenheim Farm

Angus Tract: These 98 acres are adjacent to “The Hill at Whitemarsh,” a retirement community.

Sheep Tract: This large tract of 109 acres remains under the control of the Dixon estate.

Equestrian Tract: This 101 acre tract is bordered by Stenton Avenue and features handsome horse barns and a riding track. It remains in private ownership by Dixon’s daughter, Ellen Dixon Miller. She is not interested in selling or developing this tract.

Natural Lands Trust Parcel: Dixon’s uncle, George Widener, left land along the Wissahickon to the Natural Lands Trust. These 113 acres came under their control at the time of Dixon’s death.

Home/Office Parcel: Dixon’s widow, Edith, continues to live in the main house on these 23 acres adjacent to the Natural Lands Trust acreage.

Preserving Erdenheim Farm as Open Space

T ravel northwest from the city on Stenton Avenue into Whitemarsh Township, and you pass through the vast open space of Erdenheim Farm. Turn left on Flourtown Road, where you see on both sides of the road scenes of pastoral loneliness. On your left where the land slopes down toward Wissahickon Creek, animals graze, and on the right you see an old-world group of Normandy-style farm buildings.

Until his death in August, 2006, F Eugene Dixon was the careful steward of Erdenheim Farm, a 450 acre estate left to him by his uncle, George H. Widener, in 1971. Long-serving President of the Fairmount Park Commission, Dixon spent large sums of money maintaining the farm, using it to breed prize-winning Black Angus cattle, Cheviot sheep, and thoroughbred horses.

by Jon Pearce, PMBA and Cynthia Turecki, Courtesy Stables

Not a single acre of this valuable land was sold until 2000, when Dixon agreed to the purchase of 54 acres by Whitemarsh Retirement Partners, LLC, in order to build the retirement community “The Hill at Whitemarsh.” At the completion of this real estate transaction, conservationists, owners of “The Hill,” and residents of Whitemarsh Township became concerned that Erdenheim Farm might be subdivided by McMansion developers upon Dixon’s death. An agreement was brokered between the Dixon estate and a group that includes owners of “The Hill at Whitemarsh,” Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, the Whitemarsh Township Residents Association, and Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community Association. The agreement gives the group the option to purchase 98 acres adjacent to the retirement community, known as the Angus Tract.

A non-profit fund-raising organization created by the agreement, The Whitemarsh Foundation, has the responsibility for raising the $14.5 million needed to purchase the Angus Tract. Originally, the tract option had to be fulfilled within one year of Dixon’s death, which occurred in August, 2006. The option has been extended to the end of 2007. Earlier this year, Montgomery County officials pledged four million for Erdenheim Farm open space preservation, $2 million for the Angus Tract, and $2 million for the Sheep Tract (see map) should the opportunity to preserve it arise.

As of this October, The Whitemarsh Foundation has requested and received a pledge of $1.9 million of ACT 153 open space funding from Whitemarsh Township. The Foundation has approximately $4.5 million from Tax Increment Funding (TIF), which is generated from taxes that, if unused for open space, would go directly to the Colonial School District, Montgomery County, and Whitemarsh Township. Other funds have come from private and foundation sources.

Last July, The Whitemarsh Foundation received a grant of one million from the Keystone ‘93 Fund, administered by the state of Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Key ‘93, funded by 15% of the realty-transfer tax, provides $86 million annually in grants, mostly for land acquisition and maintaining park infrastructure, but 35% goes to libraries, museums, and higher education projects.

Kim Sheppard, executive director of The Whitemarsh Foundation, said that with the Key ‘93 grant, they are two-thirds of the way to reaching the campaign goal for the Angus Tract, and she is confident they will have the rest of the funds by year’s end. Eventually, the Foundation hopes to preserve the Sheep Tract, where the Normandy-style farm buildings are located, as well. Should the efforts of the Whitemarsh Foundation to preserve the Angus Tract and the Sheep Tract succeed, Erdenheim Farms, together with Morris Arboretum and Militia Hill Park, will remain a great green buffer between the city and suburban sprawl.

For more information, visit www.whitemarshfoundation.org.
The number of people visiting Carpenter’s Woods has increased dramatically over the past 25 years. Concurrently, park maintenance has been reduced by draconian cuts in funding for Fairmount Park (75% during the past 35 years). This simultaneous increase in use and decrease in maintenance has damaged the environmental quality of Carpenter’s Woods.

by David Dannenberg, Board Member

The Woods also face the same three menaces as the rest of Wissahickon Valley Park: invasive species, erosion caused by the combined forces of poor stormwater management and poor trail design; and over-browsing by whitetail deer. These forces combine to drive out the native species that form the basis of the ecosystem that supports the variety of birdlife—the very reason Carpenter’s Woods was incorporated into Fairmount Park. The Woods are an excellent place to find birds, especially migratory songbirds. Oak trees and native shrubs and smaller herbaceous plants support insects and small vertebrates that, in turn, serve as food for these birds. When native plant species disappear, they are replaced by an invasion of non-native plant species, which alters the natural biodiversity of Carpenter’s Woods.

In September 2007, over 50 concerned neighbors attended a meeting hosted by the Friends of Carpenter’s Woods (FoCW), the Friends of the Wissahickon, and West Mt. Airy Neighbors to discuss possible solutions to the many challenges facing the Woods. Keith Russell, Ornithologist and Outreach Coordinator for the Audubon Society, suggested visitors remain on the trails and clean up dog waste. He discouraged dogs being allowed to run through underbrush, which disturbs habitat and destroys undergrowth. Dumping yard and other waste into the woods should be avoided as this introduces non-native plant species to the area.

A comprehensive plan for Carpenter’s Woods is being considered, which will include the large-scale removal of invasive species. In the meantime, invasive species are being removed in piecemeal fashion. Erosion is currently mitigated by the Philadelphia Water Department’s improvements to the stormwater outfalls. Eventually, it will be fully resolved by rebuilding the entire trail system in Carpenter’s Woods as part of FOW’s Sustainable Trails Initiative. In the meantime, maintenance of existing trails and outfalls continues on an ad hoc basis.

For more information about Friends of Carpenter’s Woods contact Nancy Goldenberg at ngoldenberg@centercityphila.org.

Owls at the Highpoint Café

Linda Fry Goschke likes raptors. Not the dinosaurs of the Cretaceous period, but hawks, falcons, vultures, and owls. Especially owls.

“I find raptors engaging,” says Goschke. “They are very interesting in their habits—how they move and look. They are generally less fearful birds and very observant of their world, and seem almost as fascinated with me as I am with them.”

Goschke had the opportunity to share her fascination with owls in early October, when her photographs of screech owls in Carpenter’s Woods were displayed at Highpoint Café in Mt. Airy. She photographs other birds as well, but finds them more difficult to capture on film. Owls, however, stay still longer and allow Goschke time to think and compose a compelling image.

by Denise Larabee, Editor

In addition to the screech owls, Goschke has also photographed the barred owl that lived in Carpenter’s Woods for a couple of years, disappearing within the last year. One photograph of this owl was featured in the exhibition at Highpoint. Because they have no predators except other barred owls, they can move around during the day and are easier to photograph. Barred owls are also social and make a lot of noise. “The barred owl in Carpenter’s Woods was extremely social,” says Goschke. “He would follow my husband around the woods and sit in trees outside people’s houses and talk to them when they came out. It was like he was running for mayor of Carpenter’s Woods.”

An award-winning artist who also works in graphic design production, Goschke lives in Germantown. She began her career over thirty years ago and graduated with an MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2002. Her work has been shown throughout the northeastern U.S. and as far away as China; it can also be found in various publications, including the Best of America: Photography Artists & Artisans (2007).

Goschke is best known for her still life prints, which she creates by arranging objects she finds in nature (flowers, leaves, feathers) on a scanner, creating images that she then manipulates on the computer. She finds some of these natural objects in the Wissahickon.

“I use the scanner like a camera,” she says. “I scan the objects, re-compose them, scan again, re-compose, until I get exactly what I want. Then I manipulate that image until it prints the way I want.”

Goschke began photographing birds five to ten years ago, work she considers more “documentary and journalistic.” Although she has only shown these photographs occasionally, they sell more. Goschke attributes this to the fact that owls are engaging and people don’t usually think of them as predators. Instead, we associate them with wisdom and intelligence, characteristics that have nothing to do with owls. “Owls are popular because people can relate more immediately to them,” says the artist, “and there is no discounting the cuteness factor.”
**Nature of Change: the Creation of Grove**

Louise Barteau Chodoff

Wednesday, February 27  
(snow date March 5)  
7:00 p.m.  
Lovett Memorial Library  
6945 Germantown Avenue

Louise Barteau Chodoff is an artist living in Mt. Airy. She grew up in Taiwan, Singapore, and Germany, returning to the United States to attend high school in Boston. She holds degrees from Harvard University in Government, Massachusetts College of Art in printmaking, and the Milton Avery Graduate School at Bard in sculpture. Her most recent art installations include *String Theory* (2004), *Bubblerupture* (2005), and *Grove* (2007) [see p. 8].

---

**Gems of the Wissahickon: Geology in the Rocky Gorge**

Sarah West

Thursday, April 10  
7:30 p.m.  
Cathedral Village  
600 East Cathedral Road  
Houston Commons, Classroom 2

A walk supplementing the talk will take place on Saturday, April 12, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Rain date: April 13, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.) Meet at Valley Green Inn.

Sarah West, retired science teacher from Germantown Friends School and former board member of the Friends of the Wissahickon, has been a student of Wissahickon history and geology for the past 20 years. She is the author of *Rediscovering the Wissahickon: A Guide to its Science and History*. Her pamphlet *Gems of the Wissahickon*, which discusses the geology and gemstones in the gorge, will be available for $3.00.

---

**Monitoring Change in the Wissahickon: The Plant Stewardship Index**

Leslie Jones Sauer

Tuesday, April 22  
7:00 p.m.  
Tuttleman Auditorium, Philadelphia University  
School House and Henry Avenues

Leslie Sauer, a founder emeritus of Andropogon Associates, is a pioneer in the field of restoring and managing native landscapes. With her partner, Carol Franklin, she coordinated the first restoration effort in the Wissahickon as a student project at the University of Pennsylvania. She has also developed a trails plan with the Fairmount Park Commission and sustainable management and monitoring strategies for the Park. Sauer was a key player in many large-scale landscape projects and park projects in New York City as well as National Parks. She served on the board of the Society for Ecological Restoration, International, and was an adjunct associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the landscape architecture Masters program. Her book, *The Once and Future Forest* (Island Press) is a guidebook for restoring and managing forest systems. [see page 10]

---

A second edition of *The Plants of Pennsylvania* by Morris Arboretum botanists Ann Fowler Rhoads and Timothy A. Block has been published. Beautifully illustrated by Anna Anisko, the book identifies the nearly 3,400 species of trees, wildflowers, ferns, grasses, sedges, aquatic plants and weeds native to or naturalized in Pennsylvania.

Described by the publication *Pennsylvania Forests* as “accurate and complete as possible in every detail,” this 1061 page authoritative guide to the state’s plant life will be valuable to professionals and amateur gardeners alike. The book is available at Morris Arboretum and the Penn Bookstore.

---

A large crowd of new and old friends stopped by FOW’s offices on Germantown Avenue on August 29th for our First Annual Ice Cream Social. Valley Green Bank was the lead sponsor of this family event celebrating FOW’s family memberships with free ice cream for all and environmental activities for children led by the Wissahickon Environmental Center staff. Pictured here is James Bradley of Mt. Airy.
The PSI Database: A Tool for Landowners

Although a lot of time and money are spent documenting the plants around us, there is little cumulative information to show for it. Every development project entails a vegetation study that is simply buried in a file. Government agencies have not completed detailed vegetation maps except where timber is available or plants are already endangered. Landscape managers and individual landowners often rely on recommended species lists that are incomplete, or worse, from somewhere else.

But what if you could go online to inquire what plants are native to your site, type in your zip code, and receive real information on the native plants as well as exotic species that are likely to be of greatest concern to you? Imagine incrementally building a database of local vegetation with every project you do, tracking the changes in your landscape online over time, and sharing that data with others.

The PSI Database is an incremental and cumulative record of the native plants of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, indexed by zip code, and maintained on the Bowman’s Hill website (www.bhwp.org/db). With every data entry made, the information about our regional flora increases. The PSI Database includes all plants that occur locally and is a vital complement to the Natural Heritage Index that tracks rare, threatened, and endangered species. In addition to recording the presence of plants, the Index is weighted, and ranks plants based on their conservatism, that is, the extent to which they are dependent on intact ecosystems to survive. Those plants with exacting habitat requirements score highest. These are the plants of greatest concern because we are losing them as the forest is fragmented and developed. Weeds and invasive species score the lowest. Plants happy to coexist on farms and in suburbs score somewhat higher, and late successional forest species higher yet. Once all the plants present on a given site are recorded, the online calculator computes several measures of naturalness and disturbance that can be used to track the sites progress over time. The use of an index of conservatism to rank species has been used in a dozen other states and has been demonstrated to correlate well with wildlife and other natural values.

The PSI Database is also an excellent place for recording historic data. Many plant societies and other botanical organizations made plant lists in the past that can be entered into the database, providing an important historic comparison. Even old data in municipal files could be added to provide a rich picture of the rate of change in the landscape.

This is a tool that municipalities and other regulatory bodies need badly to guide their priorities during this time of rapid habitat decline.

You can join the efforts of these citizens and scientists to monitor the natural landscapes of the region. Ask your municipality to use this tool by including a PSI survey as the format for plant lists that are required by most municipal checklists and ordinances. There is no cost to the community, and the developer must submit this information anyway. Ask your local conservancy to use this tool to assess their stewardship and identify special habitats. Give the gift of a PSI survey to your local park or land trust, and consider a PSI for your home landscape.

FOW and the Wissahickon Environmental Center (WEC) sponsored a walk to the rain garden near Valley Green Inn on November 3. The rain garden is part of FOW’s Valley Green Environmental Restoration Program. The event was part of FOW’s Protect Our Watershed (FOW) program, which seeks to proactively address stormwater runoff in the lower Wissahickon watershed and to protect the area’s significant remaining open space parcels of land. Pictured here is Trish Fries of the WEC describing how a rain garden works.
visions of the Wissahickon Valley can be found all over Philadelphia, if you know where to look. Visitors to the lobby of the Marriott Convention Center Hotel, for example, are surrounded by a magnificent mural depicting the Wissahickon. The artist, Diane Burko, a renowned American painter and photographer of landscapes, calls her work Wissahickon Reflections.

By Dena Sher, Associate Editor and Board Member

One panel of the mural, 11.5 feet by 32 feet set at eye level, conveys a deep, still image of the Wissahickon Creek with reflections of clouds and tree branches. Above this panel, reaching to the ceiling is a longer frieze panel (7 by 85 feet) that carries the eye to depictions of tree tops and sky. A second frieze panel of similar dimensions reflects foliage in water but with a lighter more delicate aspect than the eye-level panel. Overall, the three-panel work projects a serene level panel. Overall, the three-panel work projects a serene water but with a lighter more delicate aspect than the eye-level panel. One such work, an oil painting from 1826, hangs and 1869. Works of art depicting the park date back to the paintings of the Wissahickon were displayed between 1811 and 1869. Works of art depicting the park date back to the nineteenth century, the Wissahickon was a very popular subject for painters and printmakers. At the Pennsylvania Museum of Fine Art in Philadelphia, 49 paintings of the Wissahickon were displayed between 1811 and 1869. Works of art depicting the park date back to the early 1800s. One such work, an oil painting from 1826, hangs in the oak bar room of the Valley Green Inn. A road along the Wissahickon Creek, the old Wissahickon Turnpike, is depicted on one side of the painting. Cows grazing on the bank of the creek are depicted on the other. Currier and Ives did a very popular print of the Wissahickon in 1850 which sold hundreds of copies at the low price of 20 cents.

The nineteenth-century American landscape painter Thomas Moran (1837-1926) painted the Wissahickon in the 1860s before he moved west to paint his more famous renditions of Yellowstone. During this time, he and his brother Edward, also an artist, explored the forests surrounding Philadelphia making sketches for paintings, such as Moran’s The Autumnal Woods (1865). Moran used the same palette of golds, deep oranges, and reds for both the Wissahickon and Yellowstone paintings. Their brother John Moran, a photographer, often joined them. One of these trips resulted in his photograph The Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia (ca. 1865), which depicts an artist (possibly Thomas) painting near the creek.

The Wissahickon as a destination for artists working in diverse media continues today. Currently, paintings of the Wissahickon by Faad Ghorashi (www.ghorashi.com) are hanging at Mt. Airy Family Practice on Carpenter Lane. Philadelphia artist Henry Martin has painted several landscapes of the Wissahickon, including a stunning work of the red covered bridge which can be seen on his website, www.henrymartin.com. Photographer Linda Goschke recently displayed her photographs of owls in Carpenter Woods at Highpoint Café in Mt. Airy (see p. 6) and Merián Soto, a dancer/choreographer is performing regularly in the Wissahickon as part of her Wissahickon Park Project (see this page). Louise Bartheau Chodoff’s installation, entitled Grove, is bringing art inspired by the Wissahickon into the 21st century by adding an ecological twist. (see p. 8)

During the nineteenth century, the Wissahickon was a very popular subject for painters and printmakers. At the Pennsylvania Museum of Fine Art in Philadelphia, 49 paintings of the Wissahickon were displayed between 1811 and 1869. Works of art depicting the park date back to the early 1800s. One such work, an oil painting from 1826, hangs in the oak bar room of the Valley Green Inn. A road along the Wissahickon Creek, the old Wissahickon Turnpike, is depicted on one side of the painting. Cows grazing on the

by Dena Sher, founder of the Whitemarsh Art Center, presents a slide-illustrated talk through FOW’s Speaker’s Bureau that includes the history of the Wissahickon Valley as background to the art it inspires. Visit www.fow.org/speakersbureau.php for more information on her talk and others.

In 2005, Soto began conducting solo branch dance performances in the park as part of an investigation of somatic performance. “The park served as my ‘studio’ in creative research on gravity and performance,” said Soto. For the most part, these performances were “spontaneous” and “unannounced.” The Wissahickon Park Project is a more formal exposition of the work, she says. “It has evolved from a personal to a community experience.”

It is also collaborative: percussion and music are performed by Toshi Makihara, and Soto’s fellow dancers include Danielle Kinne, Shawun Norris, Jumatau Poe, Olve Prince, and Noemi Segarra. “Working with other dancers on this project has expanded the sense of connection and finding harmony of nature and self,” says Soto.

The Wissahickon Park Project is part of Soto’s Branch Dance Series, which also includes dances for the stage. “The Branch Dances investigate correspondence between movement, the elements, physical experience, alignment, balance, consciousness, and performance,” Soto writes on her website. “The work involves the practice of moving into stillness, the investigation of gravity as an essential force; the detailed sequencing of movement through inner pathways; and dynamic shifting into balance and alignment. Working with attention to connecting somatic, energetic, and mental processes the dances with branches are centered on consciousness in action, in performance, and in practice.”

The next performance is scheduled for January 27, 2008, at 10:30 a.m., rain or shine. Although observers are free to come and go during the performances, they generally last 45 minutes. The exact location in the park will be posted on Soto’s website: www.meriantsoto.blogspot.com.

In 2005, Soto began conducting solo branch dance performances in the park as part of an investigation of somatic performance. “The park served as my ‘studio’ in creative research on gravity and performance,” said Soto. For the most part, these performances were “spontaneous” and “unannounced.” The Wissahickon Park Project is a more formal exposition of the work, she says. “It has evolved from a personal to a community experience.”

It is also collaborative: percussion and music are performed by Toshi Makihara, and Soto’s fellow dancers include Danielle Kinne, Shawun Norris, Jumatau Poe, Olve Prince, and Noemi Segarra. “Working with other dancers on this project has expanded the sense of connection and finding harmony of nature and self,” says Soto.

The Wissahickon Park Project is part of Soto’s Branch Dance Series, which also includes dances for the stage. “The Branch Dances investigate correspondence between movement, the elements, physical experience, alignment, balance, consciousness, and performance,” Soto writes on her website. “The work involves the practice of moving into stillness, the investigation of gravity as an essential force; the detailed sequencing of movement through inner pathways; and dynamic shifting into balance and alignment. Working with attention to connecting somatic, energetic, and mental processes the dances with branches are centered on consciousness in action, in performance, and in practice.”

The next performance is scheduled for January 27, 2008, at 10:30 a.m., rain or shine. Although observers are free to come and go during the performances, they generally last 45 minutes. The exact location in the park will be posted on Soto’s website: www.meriantsoto.blogspot.com.
The Artist

The daughter of educators, Louise Barteau Chodoff grew up in Taiwan, Singapore, and Germany, returning to the United States to attend high school in Boston. She has an eclectic list of past jobs that includes sailing instructor, insurance adjustor, truck driver, animal caretaker, Audubon farm assistant, mule-team driver, homeless shelter assistant, elementary art teacher (at Chestnut Hill Academy), and yoga instructor at a nursing home. In between jobs, she earned degrees from Harvard University in government, Massachusetts College of Art in printmaking, and the Milton Avery Graduate School at Bard in sculpture. Her most recent art installations include *String Theory* (2004) and *Bubblewrapture* (2005).

Seeing the Forest for the Trees

Like many park users, Chodoff finds walks in the woods therapeutic when dealing with life’s challenges. On her sojourns in Carpenter’s Woods in the spring of 2006, she became fascinated with the play of light on the tree trunks and started videotaping what she observed, attempting to capture the passage of time over a day. “Light is what engaged me more and more on my walks,” says Chodoff. “I was drawn to that particular moment when everything changes—when the light changes very quickly.”

Chodoff’s original idea was to buy cardboard tubes and make an abstract forest. The more she thought about it, the more she gravitated to paper, a natural material she had not used for ten years, while she explored the possibilities of what she calls “twentieth-century materials.”

What followed was an eight-month period of trial and error, thought and reflection. Chodoff visited Carriage House Paper in Brooklyn with a laundry list of questions, attended a video class at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, took a treetenders course at the Horticultural Society, and joined a walk in Carpenter’s Woods led by Dr. Ann Rhoads from the Morris Arboretum, during which she learned about native vs. invasive plants.

Since she also wanted to make light intrinsic to the piece, Chodoff began videotaping light changes in Carpenter’s Woods and other parts of the Wissahickon. “I didn’t know what I was doing at all,” she says, “so I ended up with a lot of material that was unusable. But, I kept filming and spending a lot of time in the woods.”

At first, it appears to be all about the trees. But *Grove*, Louise Barteau Chodoff’s art installation in Carpenter’s Woods, is really all about light—how it reflects on tree trunks, alters the color and texture of trees, moves and reshapes itself, and how all these changes occur in an instant. “Light had always been an important part of my work,” says Chodoff, “but I didn’t know the form in which it would all take place.”
After the trees were “planted” on November 11, I dedicated Grove to my husband Bill. By the next day all of the paper trees had fallen. That evening, Bill collapsed and died two weeks later after a three-year struggle with merkel cell carcinoma. I was unable to return to Grove until the day after he died. When I was finally able to return I found the remnants of the trees were gentle mounds of paper and dirt gently covered with fallen leaves that spoke eloquently to me of death and sorrow. Even though I had expected the trees to stand longer, just as we had hoped that Bill would be able to, in the end everything was perfect just as it was.

—Louise Barteau Chodoff
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

JANUARY 9
Urban Landscapes: Opportunities for Ecological Restoration. Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Society for Ecological Restoration, International Conference at Philadelphia University, 5th Floor, Performance Space, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm. Registration required. Contact: the Schuylkill Center at 215-929-7999, ext. 110.

1ST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Sierra Club monthly trail work party from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. followed by lunch at a local eatery. Information: Sidney Galusha at 215-247-4139 or sgalusha@aol.com, or visit the event page on the Wissahickon website (http://wissahickon.org) at least one week prior to the event. For information and RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330 x 2101 or wrvinfo@wrvt.com.

1ST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers (WRV) will lead a service project from 10 a.m. to noon as part of their ongoing stewardship activities. Details and directions to the worksite posted on the WRV website (http://wissahickon.org) at least one week prior to the event. For information and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330 x 2101 or wrvinfo@wrvt.com.

2ND SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Friends of the Wissahickon lead a day of field work at various locations throughout the Park from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Projects include sustainable trail restoration, invasive weed removal and trash clean-up. For more information, contact Kevin Graves at 215-247-0417 or groves@bowc.com, or visit the volunteer page on the FOW website (www.fow.org).

3RD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers (WRV) will lead a service project from 10 a.m. to noon as part of their on-going stewardship activities. Details and directions to the worksite posted on the WRV website (http://wissahickon.org) at least one week prior to the event. For information and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330 x 2101 or wrvinfo@wrvt.com.

4TH SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Philadelphia Mountain Biking Association works a work day sponsored by Friends of the Wissahickon. This work day focuses on sustainable trail restoration at various locations throughout the Park.为9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information visit www.phillymtb.com, or contact Kevin Graves at 215-247-0417 or groves@bowc.com.

EVERY WEDNESDAY (SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY)
Wissahickon Service Projects. 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Join Chestnut Hill Academy and Friends of the Wissahickon and Fairmount Park Commission. Call David Bower at 215-685-2189 for information.

EVERY THURSDAY
Friends of the Wissahickon volunteers repair and build structures in the Wissahickon from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you are handy with tools and like to build, call Ed Stanton at 215-247-4135.

RUNNING CLUBS
EVERY THURSDAY
Wissahickon Wanderers Trail Run. 4-5 miles. Starts 6:30 p.m. at Valley Green. For details call 215-951-0330 or visit www.wissahickon.org.

Wissahickon Wanderers Fun Run AND Shawmont Running Club Run. Starts 8 a.m. at the end of Forbidden Drive/Northwestern Avenue. Distances are at the discretion of the runners. All levels, Emphasis is on fun! Information: www.wandrunners.org or www.shawmontrunningclub.com.

ACTIVITIES AT HISTORIC RITTENHOUSE TOWN

JANUARY 9
FRIENDS MONTHLY EVENT: "MAKING MAPLE SYRUP - HIBERNATION FITNESS HIKE" - SATURDAY, MARCH 15 - 1:00PM

The Wissahickon Environmental Center (WEC) at Andora Natural Area offers the following activities to teach individuals about the natural world. Pre-registration is required for all programs (except Maple Sugar Day), and must be confirmed by the staff. Space is limited, so register early! Unless otherwise noted, all programs are free and begin at the Tree House. For information and registration, phone 215-482-7300, ext. 110, or email patricia.fries@phila.gov.

NEW PROGRAM:
"STORY AND STROLL" WINTER SERIES
Parents, bring your preschoolers for an afternoon story and discovery walk. We'll read an age-appropriate nature book and take a walk outdoors bringing the story to life. Ages 3-5.

STRANGER IN THE WOODS (A SNOWMAN STORY)
Ages 3-5.

WHOSE TRACKS ARE THESE?
Ages 3-5.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16 - 1-2 PM
Activities at the Wissahickon Environmental Center

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13 - 1-2 PM
WHOSE TRACKS ARE THESE?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 - 1-2 PM
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 - 1-2 PM
GRANDPARENTS SUGAR BUSH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 - 1-2 PM

JANUARY:
CLEANING NATURALLY - SUNDAY, JANUARY 6 - 2:00PM
Join us for this hands-on program where you’ll learn how to make your own household cleaners and pest repellants that are easy on you and the environment. Adults.

AFTER THE STORMS - SATURDAY, JANUARY 12 - 1-2PM
Follow the path of water through a portion of the Wissahickon watershed. Learn the basics about watershed and our role in protecting the quality of the water in our creeks and rivers. This program in partnership with FOW Protect Our Watershed Education Series. Adults.

FULL MOON HIKE (ADULTS) - TUESDAY, JANUARY 22 - 7:00PM
Explore the forest with snow reflecting the light of the full moon. Without a flashlight, we’ll walk the trails of the Andora Natural Area to look at shadows and tracks, listen for owls and other night animals, and finally warm up by the campfire. Adults. 22.00/person.

FEBRUARY:
STAR GAZING AT THE TREE HOUSE - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8 - 7:00PM
Have you ever wondered what’s in the sky in the light of the night sky? Join us for an intro to the stars and then a tour to see what you can see in the sky above Philadelphia. Ages 6 & up.

MAP AND COMPASS SKILLS - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9 - 1:00PM
Learn the basics of reading a map and using a compass. Then practice your skills outdoors by following an orienteering course through the Andora Natural Area. Ages 7 & up.

MAPLE SUGAR DAY - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 - 11:00AM - 3:00PM
Join us on Andora Drive (near Northwestern Avenue) for our annual MAPLE SUGAR DAY. There will be ongoing maple sugaring demonstrations, pancakes served with real maple syrup, a taste test of many different pancake toppings, as well as freshly made maple candy to taste. Pennsylvania maple syrup products will be available for purchase. This event is FREE. All ages.

MARCH:

PRESCHOOL MAPLE SUGARING - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 - 10:00 - 11:00AM
Spend the morning with your young child discovering how maple syrup is made. Taste the fresh sap as it drips from the tree, and warm up near a fire as the sap is boiled into maple syrup. Top off the morning by enjoying our home-made syrups on pancakes. Ages 3-5. $2.00/person.

HIBERNATION FITNESS HIKE - SATURDAY, MARCH 15 - 1:00PM
Do you feel like a bear coming out of hibernation? Get out, stretch those legs, and base your brain while learning a few things about the forest around you. We’ll hike at a quick pace while stopping occasionally to look for the very first signs of spring. All ages.

SPRING BREAK CAMP FOR CHILDREN AGES 6-12 - $5/CAMP
Looking for something for your kids to do over spring vacation? Join us for any of the following programs:

USABLE PLANTS - MARCH 17 repeated on MARCH 24 - 1-3PM
Explore ways plants are used by people. Look for plants used for rope, food, and natural dyes. Then sample garlic mustard pests, sautéed stringing nettles, and spiced bead tea.

FISHING - MARCH 18 repeated on MARCH 25 - 1-3PM
Learn about local fish and the bait used to catch them. Learn how to cast and try to catch and release fish in the Wissahickon creek.

BIKING IN THE WISSAHICKON:
MARCH 19 repeated on MARCH 26 - 1-3PM
Bring your own bike and helmet for a guided 2-hour ride along Forbidden Drive through the beautiful Wissahickon Valley.

ORIENTEERING AND GEOCACHING:
MARCH 20 repeated on MARCH 27 - 1-3PM
Learn how to find your way using a map, compass, and hand held GPS. Test out your skills by making your way through our orienteering and geocaching courses.

Future calendar listings for the newsletter may be placed by contacting the Friends of the Wissahickon at 215-247-0417 or office@fow.org. The Calendar of Events in the Wissahickon may also be viewed on FOW’s website www.fow.org, which contains updates on our events, including cancellations.