



Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

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Autumn 2010

WE ARE IN THE HOME STRETCH

in our planning of the Olde Morlatton Village Country Fair!

I am overwhelmed with the response by our Board Members in planning this event. Everyone involved has jumped in with both feet so to speak and taken over the individual categories and tasks at hand. As we all know, the more volunteers we have, the easier we can accomplish our goal of creating a most wonderful fun-filled two days. As I'm sure most of you are aware, the Trust has struggled in the past with educating the public as to whom, what, and where we are. Often times when I explain to people about the Trust, they will say something like. "Oh, you're the Historical Society" which is most frustrating, and therefore needs further explanation.

This year we are going to have group tours of the buildings for a \$5 donation. It should be fun and well-attended. The 5K run that will begin at 9:00 on Sunday morning is an enormous undertaking. We are hoping it will be well attended and bring people in from all over.

Other new events this year will be:

Children's Games

The Psychic, George Withers (Advisor to the Stars)

Juice Bar

Wine Tastings

A Roving Fiddler

Silent Auction of donated crafts

Clothesline art show



And of course, we couldn't have a fabulous Fair without our traditions:

Luncheon at the White Horse Inn from 12- 2 on Saturday

The Amityville Colonial Dancers performing in the Inn at 1 and 3.

Baked goods

Food

Flowers

Artisans

Antique Dealers

White Elephant Booth



We hope that each and every one of you will attend the fair and have lots of fun!

Enjoy being in the most historical and beautiful area in Berks County!

See you there!

-Anne Coldren

Dedicated to maintaining and preserving historically and architecturally significant properties

FROM THE PRESIDENT

For those of you who may not have seen it, I had a letter to the editor in the Reading Eagle regarding the Extreme Makeover (EM) project in Hamburg. I had a devil of a time reducing my concerns to the 200 word limit imposed by their policy. I plan to ask the Eagle for the opportunity to expand/expound on the issues with the Trust submitting a “guest editorial” or “viewpoint” as occasionally run in the paper.

Doing so will raise the Trust’s profile, feature our projects and generally advance the concept of historic preservation. If you have specific points you feel we should address, drop me a line at matt@historicpreservationtrust.org. We are beginning a \$50,000 stabilization project on what many may consider to be the least significant of our buildings, the Bridge Keepers House. We have deemed it worthy because it is a “contributing structure” in Morlatton Village. Were it not there, we would lose the sense of the early community.

But, as meaningful as the context, I believe, is the history of the entire community and all of the people, nationalities and cultures that came together at that time in that place. We have researched the principals, i.e. Jones, Douglass, etc. In the process we have learned about others working in the area and I am pleased that we now know the name of the first Bridge Keeper, Fulp. I hope our researchers can learn more about that family.

I have always believed that the least “significant” structures (and generations who lived in them) warrant consideration. I spoke with the National Trust and the PA Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) about the demolition in Hamburg. The National Trust indicated they had addressed the “wipe-out” mentality of EM before and would do so again.

The PHMC, on the other hand, took a rather distressing position. I was told that, “just because it’s old doesn’t mean it’s historic.” They declined to take a position or make a statement. Since the log house was no longer there they could not assess its worth, its “significance.”

I submit that any mid to late 18th century log house is important simply by virtue of its age. Sure, it matters who lived there and what happened there, but if all we can know is the surviving workmanship of long dead craftsmen, it deserves more respect than an off-hand assessment that it’s “beyond repair”.

My Letter to the Editor read as follows (the Eagle x’d out the comment about Lancaster. & Chester Cos.) :

Because of the restoration work I have done and I volunteer with a local historic non-profit, I was invited to the Extreme Make-over site before work began. I found the house to be very different than has been described in press reports. It needed work but to demolish it was, in my opinion, wasteful and disrespectful.

I expressed my opinion to the producers and declined their invitation to appear on camera. I also described a strategy for them to utilize the 200+ year old house as part of the make-over but because of the “hurry up” gimmick of the show, the die had been cast.

Another restoration contractor I met that day agreed that the dove tailed corners were intact, the massive timbers beneath the house were solid. It was apparent to us both that the house had always had a good roof. My colleague was surprised to learn that Berks County’s cavalier attitude was so different from Lancaster’s and Chester’s.

I can only wish the designers and producers of EMHE had been more creative and taken the opportunity to demonstrate to a national audience that preservation can be cost effective, comfortable and stylish, that the greenest house is an existing house, and that Berks County values its unique historic resources.

Matt Barnhart

Come to the Fair!

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County Proudly Presents
the

Older Morlatton Village Country Fair

Saturday, September 25 10 to 4

Sunday, September 26 11 to 4

5K Run Sunday, September 26 9am

Traditional crafts 🍁 Antiques 🍁 Children's Games

Food Court 🍁 Fall Flowers 🍁 Clothesline Art Show

Wine Tasting 🍁 White Elephant 🍁 Psychic George Withers
And Native American Darius Puff

Village Tours available both days at 11, 1, 2, and 3

Harvest Luncheon at the White Horse Inn - Saturday, Noon to 2

First Annual 5K Run - Sunday, 9am, starting at the White Horse Inn



31 Old Philadelphia Pike, Douglassville,
Off River Bridge Road, just south of Route 422

Admission \$2 (under 16 free)

Free On-site Parking

All proceeds benefit the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County
www.historicpreservationtrust.org

IN PRESERVATION WE TRUST

First we must thank Larry Ward and Steve Kindig for their unrelenting supervision and commitment in rectifying the drainage problem at the DeTurk Cabin. They have worked all summer designing and supervising the installation of the drain system around the building. Without this system, there is no way this structure could stand the test of time.



Before. View of shortened and rotted cellar door. Grade built up almost two feet because of flooding and high water table.



After. From inside cellar door showing stone staircase to the replaced full height cellar door. The split stone sill at the bottom of photo show original 1767 level.



Before. Rotted kitchen window frame and blacktop pavement butting against building covering most of the root cellar vent opening.



After. Completed stone paved spillway, channel drains, and retaining walls with planting beds. Spillway grade close to 1767 level.

We are moving along on the restoration of the Bridge Keepers House after months of due diligence. In our last update I informed you that we had employed the services of John Bowie, historical consultant for the World Trade Tower site, to do a comprehensive analysis to diagnose what ails the Bridge Keepers House. We have also contracted with Rick Ortega, a nationally known Historic Structures Engineer. Incidentally, Rick was previously charged by the National Park Service to move the Historic Valley Forge Inn (one of George Washington’s headquarters) that sat between east and west-bound Route 202 down by the King of Prussia Mall. You may remember that highly publicized “victory for history”! After months of searching for and meeting with many contractors qualified for the job, we have selected one. Joe Forrest is his name. He has 60 years of masonry experience. That is not a cumulative tab of those he employs, either. He comes with a recommendation from the National Park Service and has recently completed work on Washington’s Headquarters at Valley Forge.

We truly have a Historical Dream Team on this job. We have had an extensive soil analysis done around the Bridge Keepers House to determine the foundation’s stability and to help identify which approach was best. The foundation was found to be sitting on firm substrate and showed just how bad the drainage was around the building, causing the deterioration. A drainage plan is part of the fix and long-term stabilization.

Work will likely commence prior to the fair so I apologize in advance for the construction fence. It will be a true sign that work is moving forward. Next year at this time I expect most of the work will be completed. By now you are thinking “where is all the money coming from?”. Private grants and donations, just like the \$78,000 we received for the DeTurk House last year. (I still can hardly believe it. It is extremely humbling to know that even in this economy people care, and this place matters. Hit the new website to watch the progress and donate to this worthy cause.)

We also are working on hiring a Historical Carpenter to repair the woodwork on the Mounce Jones House. We have interviewed several craftsmen and work will commence over the next year to take the “oldest documented structure in Berks” to its next level of restoration!

Scott Stepp

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County Presents:

1st Annual 5K Run

LOCATION: OLD MORLATTON VILLAGE, 31 OLD PHILADELPHIA PIKE; DOUGLASSVILLE, PA 19518

From Reading, take 422 E, make a right at River Bridge Road, make a right on Old Philadelphia Pike, and follow the signs to Old Morlatton Village. From Pottstown, take 422 W, make a left at River Bridge Road, make a right on Old Philadelphia Pike, and follow the signs to Old Morlatton Village.

COURSE: Very flat, wheel measured course. First half of the race is on a scenic back road, the second half will be on the Schuylkill River Trail. Professional timing will be performed by the Chester County Running Store.

ENTRY: \$20 if postmarked by September 15, 2010, after that date and on race day, \$25. Official running shirts given to the first 100 race entrants. Awards will be presented to the 1st and 2nd place male and female finishers of the 5K race in various age categories at a post race ceremony. Refreshments and restrooms at the race start and finish. No refunds or mailing of awards.

For more information, contact Becky Gottschall at 610-327-4933 or email beckyjo321@gmail.com.

Proceeds benefit the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, an organization dedicated to preserving and maintaining historic sites and structures in Berks County. Please visit www.historicpreservationtrust.org for more information.

Please print all information. Complete one form per individual entry. Forward entry form and check payable to the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County at PO Box 245; Douglassville, PA 19518. Pre-registration deadline is September 15, 2010.

Last Name: _____ First: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____

Age: _____ Gender: Male / Female **Circle Shirt size :** Adult: S M L XL

Waiver and Release: I recognize that participation in this activity may involve certain hazards. I understand that I should not participate unless medically able. I assume the risks associated with involvement in this activity, including, but not limited to falls, contact with participants, effects of weather and road traffic conditions, these risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this Waiver Release and considering the acceptance of my application, I for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf waive and release the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, all race directors, trust members, race volunteers, all sponsors and hosts and their representatives and successors, from any claim of liability arising from my involvement in this activity. I am physically fit and sufficiently trained to participate in this event. Signature of Entrant (Parent if under 18 years of age)

Sign _____

Date _____

THE MORLATTON VILLAGE IS THREATENED BY DEVELOPMENT!

NO KIDDING!

Can you imagine what it would be like to have the little country lane down to the Mounce Jones House turn into an access road for development? How about an access road for a campground or other high traffic use?

This is precisely what is happening. A land owner next to the Historic Preservation Trust property is now petitioning the court system to use the lane to the Mounce Jones House as their main access road!

We have invested almost \$20,000 in grant money and three years, along with township input from Union and Amity, to have a professional planner form the comprehensive "Morlatton Village Plan". This plan is a vision for what the village could become, as a result of fifty years of previous preservation work.

I would like everyone to weigh in on this issue as I feel that it will unquestionably change the character of our property and the Morlatton Village Plan. We already have a sewer plant on one side of the Trust Property.

The Mounce Jones House is one of the most historically significant structures in the county! It is the cornerstone of our organization and an icon in Berks County history.

Tell a Trust Board member how you feel. Call the Berks County Commissioners and Amity Township Supervisors and tell them to influence this county-level "taking". Tell them to follow the first route granted to the developer for access. This has the least impact for all parties and the future of the Morlatton Village.

Scott Stepp

Trust Office: 610-385-4762

E-mail: info@historicpreservationtrust.org

OLD MORLATTON VILLAGE FAIR INFORMATION:

Donations are needed for the White Elephant stand. Please leave items at the kitchen (side) door of the White Horse for three days prior to the fair.

We are still accepting artisans and dealers

Volunteers needed for Saturday and Sunday

We would appreciate donations of baked goods

E-MAIL

Would you like to receive your newsletter via e-mail? Doing this will help reduce our printing and mailing expenses **and** the pictures will be in color! Every little bit helps. Please send the information to Priscilla Walsky at walskyinvest@verizon.net or call 610-372-3807. Thank you.

FROM THE EDITOR

As of December 31, 2010 your newsletter editor will be retiring after 18 years. If you would be interested in taking over or know of someone who might be interested, please call Priscilla Walsky at 610-372-3807 or e-mail walskyinvest@verizon.net

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