

Wentz Post

A Publication of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society

Volume XXXIV, No. 2

WENTZ POST Summer 2017

PETER WENTZ FARMSTEAD SOCIETY CELEBRATES 40 YEARS



Eleanor H. Bittle, the "Tape Lady" and first President of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society. See page four for Eleanor's many contributions to the Society and her biography written by Jim Hern. SEE PAGE SIX FOR A COPY OF THE FIRST **WENTZ POST** FROM SPRING 1980 WITH ELEANOR'S PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathy Yost

Greetings and welcome to the Society's 40th anniversary edition of the Wentz Post. As you can see, it is clearly a two cup of coffee issue! We honor the history of the Society through pictures and clips of the past and present. We acknowledge the massive contributions made to the Farmstead through labor, time, financial support, thoughtfulness and a great deal of partnership.

This is a 'small but mighty' organization that clearly has the interest of the Farmstead in its sights. Over the years our financial support has been well in excess of \$200,000.00. These funds were used appropriately for collection acquisitions and restoration, building maintenance, designs for the proposed Visitor's Center, programs for Society members and community and a host of other miscellaneous needs such as new tents. While the members of the Society Board change from time to time we always enjoy the strength that comes with di-

(Continued on page 2.)

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

by Dianne Cram

CONGRATULATIONS TO PETER WENTZ FARMSTEAD SOCIETY!

One year after the Farmstead opened as a "new" Montgomery County historic site, a group of volunteers pulled together to form the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society. Their intent was to provide support for historic preservation, interpretive programs, research study, and acquisitions for the museum collections. And a great job they have done over the years!! We congratulate and thank all the Society members for FORTY years of constant support –what a difference you have made! The Society's contribution is huge providing for: Funding of educational programs; the purchase of the original General Washington letter and the Regina Schultz sampler; reconstruction of the ice house and other buildings on site; and the list goes on – the Society has done all this and much more.

(Continued on page 2)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, *(continued from page 1)*

versity of backgrounds and skills but a very clear vision of our responsibilities and our roles. We are always looking for additional Board members and this month we welcome Andrew Rothenberger. Andy's background and skills and his knowledge of the site will be an immense help to all of us. We have added this computer guru to our ranks—thank goodness. I am still trying to find my 'on' button and my cursor is nowhere to be found.

This issue is a great reflection of the diverse talents and interests exhibited by the Society.

We honor our first President and our very own 'Tape Lady' Eleanor Bittle. You will find Jim Hern's interview with her really interesting.

You will read how our very own tape looms are making their way across the world-literally.

Our scholarship recipient Matthew Skic contributes a fascinating article on the new American Revolution Museum development and collection. A great example of why these scholarships are so important!

We hear from the Farmstead staff as Site Manager Di-
anne Cram brings us both a Farmstead report and a Schultz/Wentz family review, Ted Edgar introduces us to our upcoming October event which celebrates the 240th anniversary of General Washington's actual stay at the Farmstead, and Kimberly Boice reminds us of the important role the Questors have played in helping the Farmstead fulfill their mission.

History is not dull! There is a lot going on and we are always learning. We are proud to support the Farmstead and are extremely proud of our accomplishments and successes over the years. Here's to us!



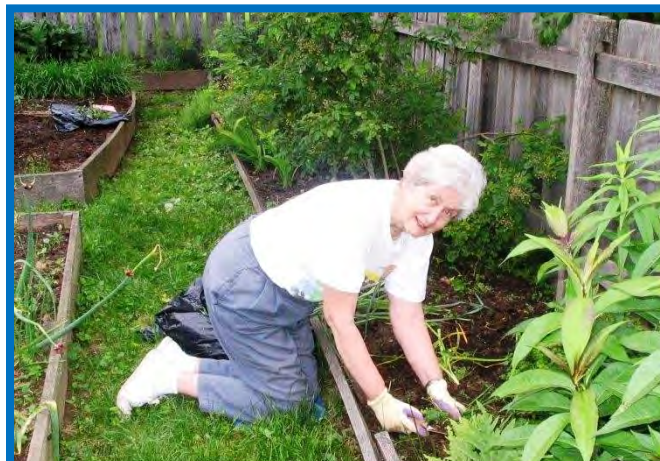
FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR, *(continued from page 1)*

This is the year to celebrate anniversaries and we are also commemorating 240 years since General Washington came our way in 1777. A special array of programming is planned for the October 14 annual fall event: *Home and Headquarters: War Comes to Worcester*, focusing on how the Wentz family coped with both a busy harvest season and the General and his staff in their home.

The seasons and the years roll by quickly and each year adds more to our history. Thank you to our Society volunteers and members for enhancing our efforts to interpret this farm's story.

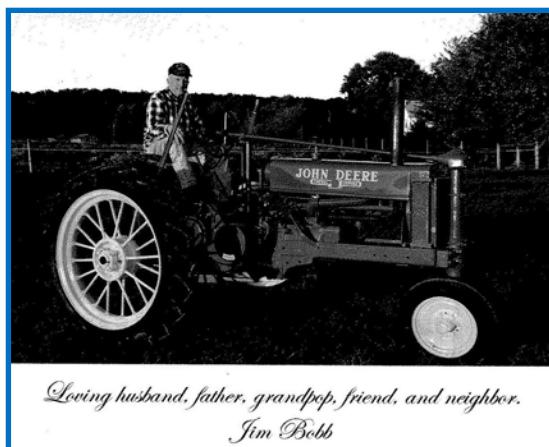


The Society made several contributions to the purchase of farm animals at the Farmstead.



IN MEMORIUM – JANET REIMER

Our long-time friend and volunteer, Janet Reimer, passed away in February. Janet began volunteering forty years ago when the Farmstead first opened to the public. She enjoyed history and passing her knowledge on as a docent, giving house tours to countless visitors. She was an active member of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society from its beginning in 1977. But Janet's love was really the Wentz garden that she worked so hard to develop. For many years she presided over the kitchen garden researching historic Pennsylvania German gardens and the heirloom plants appropriate for the 18th century. Janet led the way for the Wentz Weeders who still maintain our renowned garden. Janet's dedication to the Farmstead never lagged over the years, her dedication has made a remarkable difference.



IN MEMORIUM - JAMES ALBERT BOBB: THE LAST SCHULTZ FARMER

We were greatly saddened to hear of the recent passing of James Albert Bobb, the last Schultz family descendant who farmed this land known as the Peter Wentz Farmstead.

(Continued on page 4.)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society is to preserve and interpret the 18th century Pennsylvania German farmstead established by the Wentz and Schultz families, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places. The Society's goal is to stimulate public interest and support the site's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on the architecture, crafts, customs, and furnishings of the period.

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Board of Directors

OFFICERS:

President-Kathrina DeWitt Yost
Vice President-Carol Allen
Treasurer-Lee Kirk
Asst. Treasurer-Jim Hern
Rec. Secretary-Phyllis Yergey
Corr. Secretary-Carol Berardelli

BOARD MEMBERS:

David Carhart
Anne Condon
Wayne "Duffy" Grove
Terri Gentile
Patricia O'Donnell
Andrew Rothenberger
Nadine Vigliano

PWFS COMMITTEES

By-Laws-Duffy Grove
Development-Carol Allen, Anne Condon,
Dave Carhart
Finance-Lee Kirk
Garden-Donna Armstrong
IT-Jim Karcher
Membership-Carol Berardelli
Museum Shop-Susan Bishop
New Structures-All Members
Nominating-Jim Hern
Scholarships-Terri Gentile
WENTZ POST-Frank Luther

Peter Wentz Farmstead

Hours of Operation
Tuesday-Saturday: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Sunday: 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Last Tour: 3:00 PM

Closed Mondays and Holidays

Reservations required for group tours.

WENTZ POST

Volume XXXIV, No. 2

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in the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society.

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Photography: Jay Ryan, B Grove, Sarah Biehl,
Jack Armstrong, Donna Armstrong,
Jim Hern, John Haerberle

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Fax: 610-584-6860

E-mail: mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org

SOCIETY 'WANT ADS'

Are you interested in being more involved with the Society? Have some extra time and want to feel useful? Do you have an interest in sharing your skills and thoughts with a very dedicated group of people? The Society is looking for potential additions to join us on the Board and for specific projects we are working on. Are you creative? Do you have computer skills? Have an interest in helping in the Museum Shop? I invite those interested to give Kathy a call at 610-405-1516 to find out more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PWFS Picnic—September 9

Home and Harvest Event—
October 14

Fall Meeting—October 19

November Bus Trip—November 11

JAMES ALBERT BOBB, *(continued from page 2)*

Jim Bobb passed away suddenly on February 6 at his home and farm in central Pennsylvania. He and his wife Sue and children relocated there after the County purchased this farm with the intent to restore it as a public historic site. Born on February 26, 1940, Jim was the son of Albert and Marian Schultz Bobb. His mother Marian was the daughter of Isaac Schultz and direct descendant of Melchior Schultz who purchased the farm in 1794.

Jim grew up on the farm, and as an adult, continued to live with his grandparents, parents, wife and children---four generations of the Schultz family living and working together. As a young man, Jim took over much of the operation of their dairy farm with approximately sixty to seventy head of cattle, including milking cows and young stock. He was also active in the local fire companies, volunteering at both West Point and Worcester, where he also served as Fire Chief. When the County purchased the Schultz farm in 1969, Jim and his wife moved to Middleburg, Snyder County, where he continued farming.

In June 2016, the Bobb family had the opportunity to return for a visit. The Farmstead staff was delighted to meet with Jim and Sue and to hear first-hand their recollections of living and farming here. Jim was so gracious and allowed us to pepper him with questions as we gained insights to their family history and life on the farm. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Bobb family.

**ELEANOR BITTLE – OUR TAPE LADY AND FIRST SOCIETY PRESIDENT**

by Jim Hern

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Society's establishment, we look back to our first President Eleanor Bittle (also known as the Tape Lady). She was born in 1923 as Eleanor Harley at her family farm in Northern Chester County. She was the youngest of three sisters with Gertrude the oldest and Mabel (whom she called May-Belle) the middle sister. They were the children of Mae and John Edgar Harley whose ancestors came from Germany in the 1700's and founded the town of Harleysville, Pennsylvania.

In the mid 1930's the family moved from their farm to Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Eleanor met her late husband Bob in 1938 at an indoor skating party in a place in Pottsgrove called Ringing

Rocks. Her Girl Scout group from Pottstown, Transfiguration Lutheran Church, organized a fund raiser but didn't have enough girls to go. So, they invited the Transfiguration Boy Scout group to join them and Bob was a scout in that troop. The next year these two high school seniors saw each other until World War II came in 1941. Bob joined the Army Air Corps and became a coordinator on air transport planes in charge of weight distribution. Eleanor and Bob corresponded frequently when he was in the service. She was then working at Doehler Jarvis in Pottstown helping with the war effort in the payroll department.

In 1944, with special permission from her defense oriented employer, Eleanor joined the U.S. Navy WAVES as a seaman. Eleanor did her boot camp at Hunter College in New York City and storekeeper training in Milledgeville, Georgia ending up as a petty officer, 2nd class of the payroll department in Brooklyn, New York until her discharge in 1946. As a side note, WAVES were not allowed on Navy vessels until after the war. She and Bob got back together for a serious romance in 1946. They were married in 1947 and moved to Gilbertsville in 1950. She has lived in this fine home until this day. Three of the rooms in this house contain her extensive collection of tape looms. For many years, this collection numbered over one hundred but has been reduced somewhat. Some are now on display at Winterthur and a few have been obtained by other museums.

Eleanor began her tape escapades in 1977 while she was in her first year as Society President. Her close friend Bettie Gamon showed her an article about linen tape looms that the early settlers used. Eleanor then asked Bob to make her a tape loom but he needed to see an example. She borrowed one from Jack Armstrong (husband of Donna Armstrong-our current Wentz Weeder Leader). Bob then made the first box tape loom which Eleanor used for many years. She has helped hundreds of others make looms and has shown hundreds how to use them. She is still volunteering several times a year and was teaching taping at our Spring Sheep Shearing event on April 22. She is still known all around our area as the Tape Lady. And she is proud of it! When the Farmstead began its renovated existence in 1976 under Al Gamon's Directorship, Eleanor made her first visit to the site. She was duly impressed, as we all are, and asked if she might be trained as an interpreter.

Al's wife Betty was the Farmstead's second Director and in 1989 hired Eleanor as her Education Coordinator. Her role was to teach interns as interpreters, school groups, and visitors in the ways of the early German farmers and the history and content of the Farmhouse. She always accomplished this with great energy and enthusiasm.

In the late 1980's Bettie Gamon initiated the Peter Wentz Trip Committee and ran trips all over the East, Southeast and Midwest. These trips could last from one day to three to four weeks. Eleanor took her first trip with Bettie to Kentucky in 1988. The trip was so organized and reasonably priced so that she was immediately 'hooked' and went on all of these trips. The writer's first trip at Eleanor's suggestion was to Western Massachusetts for about two weeks. It was just outstanding with interesting visits to iconic homes and museums including the Norman Rockwell home and Museum and the Shaker Village. We had good lodging and excellent dining.

The trips continued successfully for many years under Bettie's direction and later by Frank Luther. They ceased in 2012 as many older members lost interest in trips that lasted more than a few hours. Even so, they hold fond memories for many of us. (EDITOR'S NOTE: See the flyer in this edition for our next trip scheduled for early November!)

When we speak to Eleanor of the Society or of tape weaving, she always brightens and smiles as she shares stories, and we are reminded of her tireless efforts in educating hundreds of children and adults about tape weaving and the Farmstead. Last year she weaved and donated beautiful tape badges for the Society Board members as mementos of appreciation. We take our hats off to Eleanor Bittle — scout leader, Navy WAVE, educator, interpreter, Society President, trip coordinator, and our famous Tape Lady.

WELL DONE, ELEANOR!



An example of Eleanor's tape work.



One of the tape badges made by Eleanor for the Board Members.



SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS --- 2001 – 2017

Revised 1-23-2017

Our collection now numbers approximately nine hundred items which vary greatly from animal to mineral! To give you a glimpse Lee Kirk has researched and reported the Society's contributions to the Farmstead over the past sixteen years. This report demonstrates the commitment that the Society has made to the Farmstead.

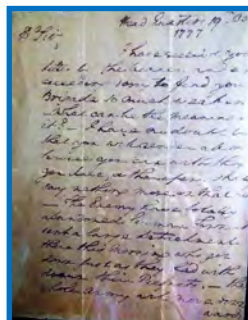
- ANIMALS: calves, heifer, other farm animals, two heifer calves --- \$1,372.33;
- CAMP: supplies, presenters, food --- \$4,809.13;
- COMMUNITY: donation for Post Prom Party --- \$65.00;
- FURNITURE: miscellaneous furnishings including chairs and Windsor chairs;
- MISCELLANEOUS: Millbrook Ground Penetrating Study, glass showcases, three spinning wheels, faux fruits, two tents, TV, mount and DVD, stipend to intern Courtney Stewart, Flag pole ceremony, washing machine, wash tubs, Schwenkfelder sampler --- \$29,528.68;
- PROGRAMS: individual presentations and later one annual lump sum amount for Peter Wentz Farmstead programs -- \$17,470.00
- RESTORATION: Settee (twice), sampler, fraktur, pump -- \$6,357.00;
- SCHOLARSHIPS: --- 64,050.00;
- TREES: trees for farmstead orchards and trees for Memorial Tree Program --- \$4,672.93.
- MARKETING AND ADVERTISING: --- \$2,730.00.

Some expensive items that were purchased prior to 2001 included items that are jointly owned by the Society and the county:

- Wardrobe: Total cost was \$26,000 -The Society paid \$1,000 and the county \$25,000;
- Punchbowl: Total cost was \$15,500 -The Society paid \$12,750 and the county \$2,750;
- Tall case clock: Total cost was \$14,000 - The Society paid \$7,600, the county \$3,500 and the remainder came from donations that visitors gave for a total of \$2,900. The total cost for the Society was \$21,350.

Several other important items are owned by the Society: Highboy: Cost \$15,500; Washington Letter; \$8,000; Rattle/Teether: \$1,450.

TOTAL: \$180,255.07



Pictured at the far left is the Punchbowl bought by the Society and the County. On the left is the Washington letter that is owned by the Society. Look throughout this issue for photos of other contributions mentioned in this article.

AS PROMISED, THE VERY FIRST WENTZ POST COVER—

Vol. I, No. 1

SPRING 1970



A New Venture

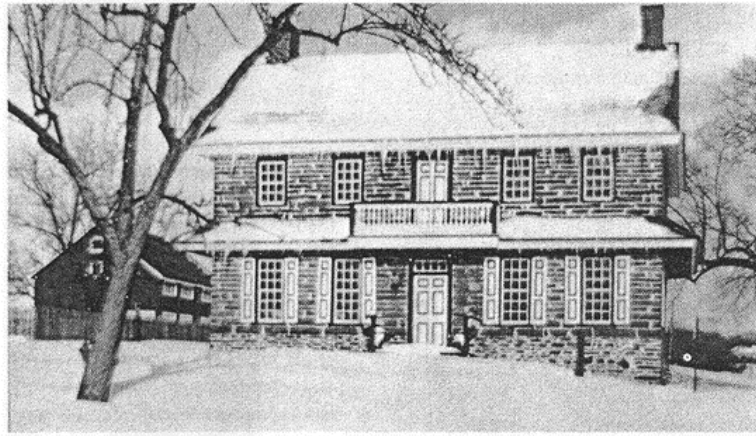
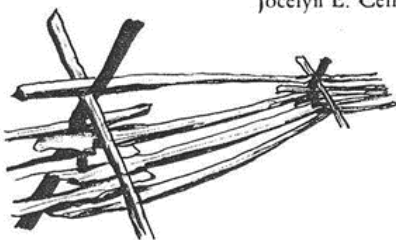
This is the initial issue of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society newsletter. It will be published quarterly and will be mailed to all the members of the society as a benefit of membership. This newsletter is designed to be a means of communication so that the work being done by our society can be better known and appreciated by all of its members. Columns such as the President's Message, From the Director's Desk, Committee Reports, and Coming Events will aid in the accomplishment of this purpose and will appear in each issue. Special articles will also be included in each issue; these will be articles on topics that are relevant and timely in respect to our society's doings, accomplishments, and goals.

Another purpose is to use this newsletter as a promotional tool to gain new members for our society. It will, hopefully, give prospective members an understanding of what our society is, how it operates, what its goals are, and how they can become active participants in it.

We of the publishing staff welcome your comments and your contribution of articles for publication as well as your constructive criticism. We need your enthusiastic support and your willingness to participate in order to make this newsletter a success. Any correspondence should be sent to the following address: WENTZ POST, Peter Wentz Farmstead, P. O. Box 240, Worcester, Pa. 19490.

This is *your* newsletter; let us all work together to make it a *great* newsletter.

Jocelyn E. Celli



Christmas Card Contest

The 1980 Christmas Card Design Contest was a great success with sixteen wonderful entries. Winners were announced at a reception at the Farmstead Sunday, March 9. First place, and also winner in the photographic division, is Ron Ungvarsky of Columbia Avenue, Lansdale, Pa. Winner in the art work division is Rose Ranieri Kirkpatrick, Skippack Village, Pa.

Ron's entry shows the front of the house in the snow at late evening. He is 24 years old, a student at Temple University Law School, was graduated from Lansdale Catholic High School, and photography is his hobby.

The committee would like to thank all who submitted such fine entries, the judges, who must have had a very difficult time selecting a winner, and all who made our first endeavor so successful. We intend to repeat the contest next year and hope everyone will get busy so we will have even more entries.

President's Message

The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society was founded to aid and assist with the continued growth of the Farmstead through exhibits, educational programs, publications, and workshops and conferences designed to increase the public involvement in the Farmstead. The society has long felt that its members should be properly informed as to the society's involvement in the preservation of the early 18th century way of life at the Farmstead, about the workings of the society, and also about the many varied and interesting activities of the Farmstead.

Thus I welcome the opportunity to introduce to you this first issue of the WENTZ POST. I would like to dedicate it to all of our friends who have helped the Peter Wentz Farmstead reach a position of prestige within the historic community.

I, on behalf of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society, wish to extend my appreciation and say a sincere thank you to all of the people who have given of their time and talent in order to get this project underway. The society plans to publish four issues a year with the next issue due in the summer of 1980. The society welcomes your response to our WENTZ POST Spring 1980 issue.

Eleanor H. Bittle

WENTZ FAMILY – 40 / SCHULTZ FAMILY – 175*by Dianne M. Cram*

No, that is not some bizarre score of a sporting contest between families! It is the number of years each family resided at this Farmstead. Our story begins with Peter Wentz, Jr. and his wife Rosanna who began developing this land as their farm in 1744, eventually completing a fine house by 1758 and raising their children here. But, in 1784, Peter decided to sell the farm, this seemingly odd that he did not choose to pass it on to one of his sons. Devault Bieber, a distant Wentz relation, purchased the farm from Peter and held it for a brief ten years until he sold in 1794 to Melchior and Salome Schultz. From there, the Schultz family "dynasty" continued for 175 years until 1969 when Montgomery County purchased the farm from their great-great granddaughter Marian Bobb and her husband Albert Bobb.

Montgomery County chose to publicly use the Wentz name for the Farmstead as it reflected the earliest history and especially the Revolutionary War era when the farm served as headquarters to General Washington, but the impact of the Schultz family is immense and not to be overlooked. From one generation to the next, they continued to preserve both the land and its history. Thanks to Melchior, we have the all-important documentation of which room Washington occupied. Melchior's will, that conveys the farm and house to his son Frederick, specified that Salome be given "the stove room and the Washington room above" for her continued use. The family revered this room and left it virtually unchanged, likewise many other original architectural features of the house remained unaltered. The oral history stories, perhaps originating from the Wentz years, were remembered and passed on as Frederick turned the farm over to his son Joseph who passed it on to Isaac who then left it to his daughter Marian Bobb. Marian's son James continued farming here until 1969.

The Schultz family's story is woven tightly into the history of this land far surpassing Wentz involvement by many years. To them we give credit for their stewardship and a deep connection to their family's heritage. In retrospect, perhaps the name attached to this historic site should have been "The Wentz-Schultz Farmstead". We can't amend that now, but we can continue to tell the Schultz story; the history of this site certainly did not end when the Wentz family departed.



The Society contributed to the restoration of the settee.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW SKIC

(After he purchased General Washington's tent in 1909, Reverend W. Herbert Burk set it up in the snow at Valley Forge. This photograph dates to about 1911. The tent is on exhibit as a result of the combined efforts of textile conservators, engineers, historical tent experts, and museum staff at the Museum of the American Revolution. To protect the integrity of the tent for long-term display, a custom-made, umbrella-like aluminum frame and sub-tent support the weight of the historic textile and reduce the stress on the linen.)

Matthew Skic is a great example of the success of our Society Scholarship Program. Matthew was a recipient of the Gamon Scholarship two years ago. He has graduated from the Winterthur Program and is currently part of the curatorial team at the new Museum of the American Revolution (M*AR).

This article was originally published in the Summer 2017 issue of *Antiques & Fine Art* magazine and is reprinted in this issue of the WENTZ POST with Matthew's permission. This is not only a great article, but it also demonstrates how smart we were to choose him!

With the avid interest in commemorating the anniversary of Washington's actual stay at the Farmstead, what better time to learn about the dynamics of this new local historic collection.

**PHILADELPHIA'S NEWEST GEM – THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MUSEUM**

by Matthew Skic, assistant curator at the Museum of the American Revolution and a 2016 graduate of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture.

(Editor's Note: With space limitations, the figures referred to in the article are not included in this reprint.)

Philadelphia is recognized as a city replete with cultural institutions—the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Philadelphia History Museum, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts among them. This year, a new museum joins the fold, expanding the city's long tradition as an arts and culture mecca.

On April 19, 2017, the Museum of the American Revolution (Fig. 1) opens its doors to the public in the heart of historic Philadelphia, steps away from Independence Hall. That day marks the two hundred and forty-second anniversary of what Ralph Waldo Emerson called the “shot heard round the world”: the beginning of the Revolutionary War at the battles of Lexington and Concord. The Museum of the American Revolution commemorates that and other significant events and brings the founding of the United States of America to life.

Visitors to the museum will quickly realize that there is more to the American Revolution than the war. Winning independence was only the “first act” of a larger experiment. The American Revolution is the on-going effort to fulfill the truths stated in the Declaration of Independence: that all people are “created equal” and are born with “inalienable rights.” The revolutionary words of 1776 serve as the guiding principles of the Museum of the American Revolution.

The museum’s main exhibit tells the story of the dramatic beginning of the American Revolution. Following a chronological path from the 1760s to the 1790s, visitors can explore the roots of the colonial conflict with Great Britain, the eight years of war, the creation of the Federal Constitution, and the lasting legacy of the Declaration of Independence.

Anecdotes are interwoven throughout the experience to personalize the era. For example, Phillis Wheatley’s poetry about liberty and slavery turned heads in the 1770s. Wheatley showed white colonists that enslaved African Americans like herself had souls and minds equal to anyone, and therefore deserved liberty. Visitors can see a rare first edition printing of Phillis Wheatley’s poetry, signed by Wheatley herself, in the museum’s main exhibit (Fig. 2).

Of the over four hundred historical objects on display, approximately half come from the museum’s own collection of three thousand artifacts. Highlights of the collection include William B. T. Trego’s iconic painting of the Continental Army’s arrival at Valley Forge (Fig. 3); a linen hunting shirt (one of only four known to survive from the Revolutionary era), a pewter communion flagon used by Reverend George Whitefield, the charismatic Anglican preacher of the first “Great Awakening”; and a drum made by Robert Crosman, famous for his decorative painting on the iconic “Taunton” chests of Massachusetts in the 1720s–1740s (Fig. 4). Also on display are a few of the first printings of the revolutionary state constitutions, some the earliest written republican constitutions in the history of the world. Those constitutions codified republican governments for the new states when the Continental Congress declared the independence of the United States of America.

Other objects on display are pieces loaned from fellow institutions and private collections. The museum’s partners include the Philadelphia History Museum, Historic Deerfield, the Concord Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, the Winterthur Museum, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the New-York Historical Society. These institutions have helped bring together some of the most significant material culture from the era ever assembled for public view under one roof. Generous private collectors also provided rare items for exhibition, many for the first time.

Using the museum’s collection and loaned pieces, the main exhibit addresses the symbolism of material culture. As their political ambitions changed from calls for the restoration of “British Liberties” to independence (Fig. 5), Revolutionary Americans replaced images of King George III with George Washington, and the royal coat of arms with the “Chain of States.” Many American soldiers used objects to help define themselves. They wore their politics on their sleeves. Virginia rifleman William Waller carried a powder horn engraved “Liberty or Death” to display his commitment to the fight for American liberty in 1776 (Fig. 6).

Several of General Washington’s silver camp cups are on display (Fig. 7). Edmund Milne, a Philadelphia silversmith, made the set of twelve cups in 1777. Also on exhibit are the epaulettes worn by Sergeant James Davenport of the Continental Army (Fig. 8). Davenport served in General Lafayette’s Corps of Light Infantry at the 1781 Siege of Yorktown and lived to tell the tale. The epaulettes, which Lafayette himself may have given to Davenport, are two of the rarest surviving emblems of an American enlisted soldier from the Revolutionary War. They came into the collection in 2015 from a Davenport descendant.

The nucleus of the museum’s growing collection originated at Valley Forge. Inspired by the 1777–1778 winter encampment of the American Army, Reverend W. Herbert Burk founded the Valley Forge Museum of American History and the Washington Memorial Chapel in the early 1900s. Burk amassed a collection of objects to educate future generations of Americans. As his centerpiece, he purchased one of General Washington’s military commissioned illustrations, as well as cutting-edge technology, to dramatize their stories.

Washington used the marquee tent as his sleeping quarters and office space while he served as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. After the war, Martha Washington’s descendants inherited the tent, and it was relocated to Arlington House (part of present-day Arlington National Cemetery), built by George Washington Parke Custis to house the treasury of Washington relics he received. Robert E. Lee married Custis’ daughter and lived at the family’s mansion. When Union soldiers occupied the Confederate general’s home at the start of the Civil War, Selina Gray, an African-American woman enslaved to the Custis-Lee family, helped to protect the tent from relic-hunting troops. Seeking to raise money to support Confederate widows in Richmond, Virginia, Mary Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee’s oldest daughter, sold the tent to Reverend Burk. In 2003, Burk’s collection was transferred to the American Revolution Center, now the Museum of the American Revolution. The tent is on public display for the first time in decades.

The museum’s curatorial and education teams have worked hand-in-glove to write the exhibit narrative and object labels using visitor-friendly language to explain complex themes and stories. Touchscreen and tactile interactives are included throughout the main exhibit, but they do not overwhelm the experience. In one touchscreen interactive, visitors can explore real stories of five African-American men and women, four of them enslaved and one free man, who chose different routes to freedom in 1781 Virginia. The interactive draws from new scholarly research and uses newly commissioned il-

illustrations, as well as cutting-edge technology, to dramatize their stories.

The museum will contribute to a greater understanding of Philadelphia's long history and national significance. Archaeological discoveries made on the site of the museum foreshadow this contribution. One discovery during excavation was a tin glazed earthenware punch bowl, made in England (Fig. 10). The punch bowl is decorated with a ship and the words "Success to the Triphena." The *Triphena*, a merchant ship, sailed between Liverpool, England, and Philadelphia in the 1760s. In November 1765, it carried a notice from Philadelphia merchants asking their British counterparts to support the repeal of the hated Stamp Act. The bowl summons up images of the people who drank in the taverns that once operated on the site of the museum, and of the discussions they had in the early days of the American Revolution. Finding the bowl was a remarkable discovery for the museum and for the history of Philadelphia.

The American Revolution does not have a single conclusion. Rather, it is an on-going experiment in self-government. The Museum of the American Revolution invites visitors to discover the diversity of the founding of the United States and the nation's material inheritance.



IT NEVER GROWS OLD

by Kathy Yost

If you are involved with the Peter Wentz Farmstead, you are most likely familiar with a tool called a 'tape loom' used for domestic purposes. It is not an easy skill; it is an exacting one. Just ask Eleanor Bittle, our resident "Expert Tape Lady".

Although part of the normal skills required of a woman in the 1700's, its use was not confined to the United States. With its roots in Europe, it is easy to see how it made the trip across the ocean to serve as an important tool here. The Society sells these looms both of wood and cardboard in our Museum Shop. The wooden ones (far sturdier) are reasonably priced at \$130.00.

I would like to introduce you to Ilka Sieler, a resident of Leipzig, Germany. Ilka did her internet research and found the Peter Wentz Museum Shop. She inquired about the availability of a loom and thus began quite the pen pal relationship with me. After much discussion the loom was shipped to Germany. Once she notified me that it arrived safely, I asked her about her intended use and here is her response.

"Hi Katharina,
Wow, what a success!!!! We are reenactors and very interested in old handcrafts and technics for clothing, and so for loom weaving. I posted on Facebook that I found you and probably my friends would like to weave too... :-)

I'm really looking forward to our next event in Bückeberg in a castle, half residence of the prince of Schaumburg-Lippe, half museum for his castle, and we spend there the whole week-end weaving, embroidering, and sewing...and there I'd like to present and to use your loom!!! "

I was intrigued and frankly thinking of Eleanor Bittle. I asked that she send us a picture of her using it so we could share with you all. She quickly agreed, but we would have to wait a little longer for the picture. When I asked why, her response was:

"Anyhow, I'm so lucky that I got it!!!! Thank you very much. But I still have to wait to test it, 'cause the very next project is a ten-day-hike, accompanied by horses and carriages, in clothing and equipment from 1810, starting the first of June, and I'm still missing a lot of clothes...But I send you a proving photo from looming on my sofa...".

Let's think about it --- ten days...horse and buggy... setting up crafts in a palace yard...period costumes... make your own...re-enactors... And we get upset when it snows on Sheep Shearing Day! My friends, meet Elke and her loom!!!



(Tape Loom)



(View more photos from Ilka Sieler on page 12.)



WAR COMES TO WORCESTER

by Theodore T. Edgar, PWF Museum Assistant

The citizens of Worcester Township were awoken on October 2, 1777 to see over 10,000 Continental soldiers marching down several roads from "Pennybacker's" Mills (sic) (Schwenksville) to take position on the Methacton hills. Most-likely they settled on the ridge lines on Berks & Bethel Roads, running westward towards Germantown Road near East Norriton. The artillery park was in the valley near present day O & F farms. Their orders were to fortify the hill and dig entrenchments as a distraction.

As noted in the general orders in The Papers of George Washington, the first day of the march began at 10 a.m. on 9/29/77 from Schwenksville down Skippack Road approximately 4 - 5 miles and took 3 hours. Strangely, the Army did not move at all from 9/30/77 through 10/01/77. Perhaps this slow pace was to allow for mounted troops to reconnoiter the British defenses in Germantown and to not alert the British to their approach? Advanced parties would be in Worcester securing lodging for officers and laying out the next camp. The next march began at 9 a.m. on 10/2/77 towards Berks and Bethel Roads about 6 miles down the Skippack Road which took about 3 hours. It is interesting to note that the slow pace of the march and length of the army, I believe that the first soldiers marching were arriving at the exact time the last row of soldiers began the march. It would have looked like a giant snake with its head at the new camp while its tail still was at the last one.

Loosely marching behind 300 baggage wagons were hundreds of wives and children of the soldiers, "camp followers" or "Women of the Camp", some walking without shoes while carrying all their worldly goods upon their backs and the hands of their children. Soon to follow would be small units of militia from Delaware, New Jersey and other Pennsylvania counties. The roads too would be jammed with herds of cattle, pigs and flocks of fowl. Many wagons and carts would arrive filled with artificers, craftsmen, sutlers to keep this army functional.

What did this movement of a large army look like and how did it affect local farming families? Unfortunately, I have not found many original writing to describe this exact march. So I have included others describing the same Army and close to our timeframe.

AN ARMY ON THE MOVE

Description by Thomas Paine; which is about this march:

On the 29th Sept. (1777) I sett off for Camp without well knowing where to find it, every day occasioning some movement. I kept pretty high up the Country, and being unwilling to ask Questions not knowing what Company I might be in I was three days before I fell in with it. The Army had moved about three Miles lower down that Morning. The next day they made a movement about the same distance, to the 21 Mile Stone, on the Skippack Road. Head Quarters at John Winces. (P. Wentz) On the 3d October in the Morning they began to fortify the Camp, as a deception, and about 9 at Night marched for German Town. The Number of Continental Troops was between 8 and 9000, besides Militia, the rest remaining as Guards for the Security of Camp. Genl. Greene whose Quarters I was at, desired me to remain there till Morning.

A description by John Adams of a smaller portion of the army marching through Philadelphia on 8/24/77, which was just 5 weeks before:

Four regiments of light horse, Bland's, Baylor's, Sheldon's, and Moylan's. Four grand divisions of the army, and the artillery with the matrosses. They marched twelve deep, and yet took up above two hours in passing by. General Washington and the other general officers with their aids (sic) on horseback. The Colonels and other field officers on horseback... (2)

This is a description by Major General Nathaniel Greene as the army moved into another nearby village three weeks before coming to Worcester:

Here are some of the most distressing scenes imaginable. The Inhabitants generally desert their houses, furniture moveing, Cattle driving and women and children traveling off on foot. The country all resounds with the cries of the people. The Enemy plunder most amazingly. The militia of this country are not like the Jersey militia; fighting is a new thing with these, and many seems to have but a poor stomach for the business. (3)

A description of what a marching army does to a farming community by Washington:

September 10, 1777: It being with much concern that the General hears the frequent complaints of the farmers, on account of the destruction of their fences

&c. by which means their fields of grain and grass are exposed to devastation and ruin—He wishes, that officers of every rank, for the sake of Justice and reputation of the American Arms, would exert themselves, to correct this species of abuse: And this he is persuaded they will do, when it is considered, that no stronger proof can be given, of inattention or want of authority, than to suffer such practices to prevail in a country, abounding with wood, and by men with hatchets in their hands—Besides this, the injustice which individuals, or the public must sustain, by such practices, when there is no kind of necessity for them, ought to strike every body in the most forcible manner. (4)

Description of Camp Followers in the General Orders on the march:

In the present marching state of the army, every incumbrance proves greatly prejudicial to the service; the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement—The Commander in Chief therefore earnestly recommends it, to the officers commanding brigades and corps, to use every reasonable method in their power, to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary; and the admission or continuance of any, who shall, or may have come to the army since its arrival in Pennsylvania, is positively forbidden; to which point the officers will give particular attention. (5)

What was going through the minds of Peter, Rosanna, Matthias, Lydia, Jonathan, Rosinna and all the other residents in this sleepy village?

(To be continued in future editions of the WENTZ POST.)

Footnotes:

(1) <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-26-02-0421>.

Paine says the headquarters he stayed at was at mile marker 22 which is just a mile and a half south on Skippack from the Wentz House.

(2).<https://archive.org/stream/familiarletterso00adamuoft#page/298/mode/1up>

note: a regiment of horse consisted of 60 mounted horsemen, a division of Infantry is made up of 2 brigades and had approximately 2,000 soldiers in all, an artillery company was assigned to each battalion and consist of 2 to 4 cannon each. Each gun crew had about 12 -18 men.

(3) Major General Nathaniel Greene to his wife, THE PAPERS OF NATHANIEL GREENE, vol. II, p.156.

(4).<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-11-02-0182>

(5).<https://founders.archives.gov/?q=%22September%22%20%20%221777%22&s=1111311111&sa=&r=364&sr>

QUESTER GRANTS AWARDED TO FARMSTEAD

by Kimberley Boice



(Carol Berardelli/Militia Hill Questers #5, Alicia Peale/Hope Lodge Questers #1394, & Anita Lamond/Gaudy Dutch Questers #270 and Kimberly Boice pose in the Summer Kitchen with the flatware.)

The Farmstead was generously awarded grant monies through four local Questers chapters and the Pennsylvania State Questers to complete two separate projects – the production of a set of flatware and a suite of bedding. All of these items will help us to better interpret the daily lives of the Wentz family members during the 1770's. So, when you're next in the area, stop by and we'll show them to you. You can also view an album of pictures on both projects on the Peter Wentz Farmstead Facebook page.

The Gaudy Dutch Questers Chapter #270, Hope Lodge Questers Chapter #1394, Militia Hill Questers Chapter #5, and Pennsylvania State Questers grant monies afforded us the opportunity to purchase six reproduction pistol-grip knives and six reproduction pistol-grip forks made by Eric Schatzel of Schatzel Forgeworks.

Eric made the flatware with a pistol-grip, similar to what was popular on tables in the 1770's, based on items in his own collection and on the research he had done. At his forge, he used the old techniques to flatten the iron and steel into the appropriate shape and added handles made of horn. The flatware will be showcased in the historic Wentz house and during hands-on programs to interpret seasonal food preparation and consumption as may have been used by a family like the Wentzes.

The Fairwold Questers Chapter #1416 and the Pennsylvania State Questers grant monies allowed us to purchase the materials to reproduce bedding typical of the Pennsylvania German families that lived at the site during the mid to late 1700's. This included a straw mattress, feather tick (called a duvet today), two pillows, and a bolster.

Curator Mark and Educator Kimberly researched the appropriate cloth, product sizes, and construction techniques before purchasing yardage of appropriate fabric and then contacted some site volunteers about their interest in helping us to hand sew the bedding. We then scheduled a Study Day with the interested volun-

QUESTER GRANTS, *continued*

teers about their interest in helping us to hand sew the bedding. We then scheduled a Study Day with the interested volunteers in September 2016 to analyze some of these same items found in the collection of the Farmstead. After creating collections study sheets and sharing all of our research with everyone involved with the project, Kimberly scheduled a series of sewing days at the Farmstead and we got busy!

From January through mid-March 2017, various members of the sewing group met for a few hours each week to hand sew the seams and reinforce the open ends of the various pieces using linen thread and lots of back stitches. Once the sewing was done, we stuffed the feather tick, two pillows, and bolster pillow with a 50/50 mix of goose feathers before sewing the open end of each item closed. It was a messy, but very fun part of the project.



(Cozy, Karen, Ruth, and Linda working hard to sew the straw Mattress. Not pictured: Barbara and Christina, who also worked on the project).



(Some of the Fairwold Questers admiring the finished items, now on display in the loft of the historic house.)

A RESPONSE FROM ILKA

(Continued from page nine.)

Hello Katharina,

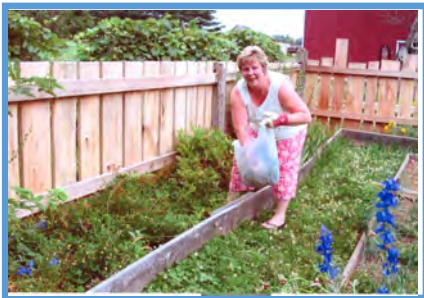
I'm back from the trek, and it was really a trip into a time machine, and to return was quite a hard thing... because it was the biggest effect of time travelling that I had in my life. The illusion was nearly perfect... complete other things to do during the day than in our normal lives, all the people in clothes of the time, everyone was involved and had his place. It was a nice group of thirty-five persons trekking fifteen km nine miles) each day. Sometimes, there were really moving moments and landscapes; the horses risked to fail or to let fall the carriages, the ways and paths were not always in the pretended condition, but none of us was blessed or had had an accident, everything was fine.

I am attaching some photos, hoping to give you some impressions of that. And I keep my promise for the first event of the loom tape, which will take place in September.

Ilka Sieler
Max-Beckmann Str. 22
04109 Leipzig



A glimpse at the history...



...of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society.

The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Fall Meeting Presents
 George and Martha Washington: "In Perfect Felicity"

As interpreted by Carol Spacht and John Lopes

October 19, 2017 at 6:30

The Central Schwenkfelder Church

2111 Valley Forge Road

Lansdale, Pa 19446

What makes a good marriage? Washington's own advice on love and marriage echoes through the words of our First Couple as they share the story of their courtship, former loves, trials during the war for independence, and the tribulation of the Presidency upon their forty-year marriage.



(Tall case clock: Total cost was \$14,000 - The Society paid \$7,600, the county \$3,500 and the remainder came from donations that visitors gave for a total of \$2,900. The total cost for the Society was \$21,350.)



(The Schwenkfelder sampler contributed to the Farmstead by the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society.)

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE FARMSTEAD**SATURDAY, JULY 8TH AT 4:30PM**

Kids for King or Congress
Program for kids ages 5-100 to learn about the activities that took place in Philadelphia during the summer of 1776 and the real facts behind the Declaration.

BEGINNING AT 5PM ON JULY 8

Reading of the Declaration
Come huzzah with your fellow Americans as if it were 1776! Listen to a stirring reading of the Declaration of Independence.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 10TH-14TH FROM 9:30AM-1:30PM

Mitte Camp 2017
Students entering 1st through 3rd grade in fall 2017 will learn about life during the 1700s at this hands-on camp. Pre-registration required.
Fee: \$125 per child. Includes a one-year family membership with the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 24TH-28TH FROM 9:30-11:30AM

Wentz Wonder Kids Camp 2017
Kids ages 4-5 years old will enjoy a half-day camp with hands-on activities related to the historic Farmstead. Snacks provided. Pre-registration required.
Fee: \$60 per child.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13TH AT 2PM

Laerenswaert Series: Patriot Tails: Pets in Colonial America
Dogs, cats, & birds have won space in our hearts and homes through the ages. Learn about these and the other types of animals kept by some of our forefathers.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD AT 2PM

Muffin Man, King's Horsemen & Old Women: Fairytales, Nursery Rhymes, and Their Times
We have all heard and told them, but what do they mean? Why was there a darker side to them? Come and listen to the tales behind the tales.
Some of the tales may not be suitable for younger children.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH AT 10AM & 1PM

Child's Play Series: Farm Day
Preschoolers will experience some of the work that people working on a farm did during the 1700's— sweeping, fetching water, cleaning, feeding the chickens and more.
Pre-registration required. Ages: 3 & up and accompanied by an adult; fee: \$5 per child.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14TH FROM 10AM-3PM

Home & Headquarters: War Comes to Worcester
Learn how in October 1777 the Wentz family coped with General Washington and his staff using the house as a military headquarters during the busy harvest season. Experience camp life of an officer & soldier, visit with General Washington, and assist with autumn farm activities throughout the day.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19TH AT 5:30PM

PWFS Annual Fall Meeting
What makes a good marriage? Washington's own advice on love and marriage echoes through the words of our First Couple as they share the story of their courtship, former loves, the trials during the War for Independence, and the tribulations of the Presidency upon their 40-year marriage.

Join the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society (PWFS), the friends group that helps support the Farmstead for a pot-luck supper followed by George and Martha Washington: "In Perfect Felicity," a performance by Carol Spacht & John Lopes. Program to be held at The Central Schwenkfelder Church. Call to RSVP.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST AT 10AM & 1PM

Child's Play Series: Soldiers- Then & Now
Your child will enjoy learning about the lives of soldiers during the American Revolution before we write a thank you note to current service members.
Pre-registration required. Ages: 3 & up and accompanied by an adult; fee: \$5 per child.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD- TOURS BEGIN AT 7:30PM

Night Life
What happened at the Wentz House after the sun went down? Come to explore night time in the 1700's and what it meant for residents of a home like the Wentz family's.
Tours offered at 7:30 / 7:50 / 8:10 / 8:30 / 8:50; Preregistration required. Ages: 12 & up.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND FROM 3-9PM

Candlelight Tours
The soft glow of candles will guide you throughout the Farmstead for tours showcasing colonial music, seasonal entertaining, and a visit from Belsnickel, a Pennsylvania German St. Nicholas in furs. (Last tour begins at 8:30PM)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH AT 10AM & 1PM

Child's Play Series: Holidays
Preschoolers will learn about historic holiday traditions and make a craft to take home.
Pre-registration required. Ages: 3 & up and accompanied by an adult; fee: \$5 per child.

For more information about events at the Farmstead, please contact Kimberly Boice, Museum Educator, PETER WENTZ FARMSTEAD.



Peter Wentz Farmstead Society invites you to join us for

The Museum of the American Revolution (M*AR) Tour Saturday, November 11, 2017

The M*AR discusses the story of the American Revolution through a variety of interpretive presentations such as Revolutionary-era weapons, personal items, documents, works of art, galleries, theater experiences and recreated historical experiences. Your ticket includes:

- A presentation of the creation and mission of the M*AR by Mark Turdo, M*AR curator during our trip to the museum and a Q&A session during our return trip.
- Admission and self-guided 2-hour tour of the M*AR.
- Free time to enjoy lunch on your own after the tour.

The motor coach will leave the Peter Wentz Farmstead parking lot at 2030 Shearer Rd, Lansdale, Pa. **promptly at 8:30 a.m. Please board the bus NLT 2:30 p.m. for our return trip home at about 3:30 p.m.** The cost of the trip is \$50 for adults and \$45 for children 18 and younger. This includes motor coach, driver gratuity, curator presentation and entrance fee. Checks should be made out to PWFS and sent to the below address. Visa, Master Card, American Express and Discover credit cards are also excepted.

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society
P. O. Box 679
Worcester, Pa. 19490-0679

Reservations must be received by **October 26, 2017**. There will be no refunds after this date unless the space can be filled by another person.

Please contact Lee Kirk with any questions concerning the trip at 215-855-4942 or owlinpa@verizon.net. **On the day of the trip only, contact Lee at 215-260-2168.**

M*AR Trip on November 11, 2017

Adult ticket \$50; child 18 and under \$45

Names(s) _____

Total Number of adults _____ Children 6-18 _____ Children under 6 _____

Address _____

Phone _____

If using a credit card: Type of card: _____ Card number: _____

Card expiration date _____ Card 3-digit security code _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please let us know if you have any special needs.