

The Concord School Bell



Newsletter of The Concord School House and Upper Burying Ground of Germantown Spring-Summer 2012
Vol. 3, no. 1

The Community Spirit— Thanks to Visitors and Donors



The Concord School House and Upper Burying Ground of Germantown

6309 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19144

<http://www.concordschoolhouse.org>

2012-13 Officers

John Pollack
President

David Young
Vice President

Michael Schweisheimer
Treasurer

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In March 1775, residents of upper Germantown assembled to build a new school. With donations large and small, the building was completed by October. It was members of the *community* who amassed the energy and the funding to construct the Concord School House.

In 2012, it is still community that sustains us. Hundreds of visitors, of all ages, come and spend time with us. We are extremely grateful to the many **individual donors** who help us maintain our site and support our work.



This year, we have received two particularly generous grants. The **Knorr Family Foundation** has presented us with a gift of \$2500. Jacob Knorr was the builder of the Concord School House in 1775; he also founded a joiner's shop next door that later became the Kirk & Nice funeral home. Jacob Knorr and twenty-two Knorr family members lie at rest in the Upper Burying Ground. Thank you to the Knorr family for reconnecting with us and supporting our work!



For the sixth year in a row, we have received an operating grant from the **Philadelphia Cultural Fund**. This year's grant is for \$4134. This city program has been vital in sustaining the work of small sites like ours over the years, and we are grateful to the Mayor and City Council for continuing to fund the program.

Our sincere thanks also to the **Mt. Airy Business Improvement District** (Ken Weinstein, Chair), **The Northwest Fund** (Cindy Bass, Honorary Chair), and **John Siemiarowski** of Electrical Wizardry, Inc. for a grant and work to install new security lighting on the schoolhouse in 2011.

Citibank is sponsoring the celebrations held by multiple sites on Juneteenth, July 4, and October 6, the Revolutionary Germantown Festival. Our thanks to Historic Germantown for working with Citibank for this first-ever grant.



Another Busy Summer Season



Flowers in bloom
Mount Airy Day 2012

After the season's first opening on **Mount Airy Day**, the school and burying ground opened on **Memorial Day**, for the first year in recent memory. Memorial Day coincided in 2012 with the annual **Whit Monday** public Board meeting. Over forty visitors attended for guided tours and a bell-ringing.

Juneteenth enlivened the 6300 Block of Germantown Avenue with performances and activities. On **July 4**, our annual ceremony and bell-ringing will be followed at the Johnson House by 'Oney Judge,' reenacting her life as one of George Washington's enslaved Africans and her escape to freedom.

On **August 18**, Concord again hosts "Back-to-school at the Old Schoolhouse": a charity event to donate school supplies to neighborhood children in need.



Also continuing through October are our **Second Saturday public openings**, noon-4pm.

Grumblethorpe Youth Volunteers Join In



Adding to Memorial Day festivities was the first-time presence of the youth team from Grumblethorpe, cheerfully serving hot dogs and dishing up hand-churned ice cream. They'll be with us again on July 4!

New Board Takes Office

The Concord School House and Upper Burying Ground are managed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, elected annually. New and returning board members for 2012-2013 took office on May 28, 2012.

Jennifer Kanthor, Board secretary since 2005 and devoted volunteer at many events, has stepped off the Board for the coming year. Jennifer will continue to serve as a volunteer. Also stepping off the Board this year was Sandra Chaff. We are extremely grateful for all of Jennifer's and Sandy's assistance in helping to revive interest in our site.

We welcome a new Board member this year, Laura Beardsley. Laura has extensive knowledge of Germantown and Philadelphia history: she is former Executive Director of the Germantown Historical Society and is the

author, most recently, of *The Philadelphia Citizen's Almanac: Daily Readings on the City of Brotherly Love*.

Continuing as members of the board for this year are Jason Allen, Emily Cooperman, Dorothy Krotzer, Claudia Levy, John Pollack, Connie Ragsdale, Michael Schweisheimer, and David Young.



Repairing, Restoring . . .

Thanks to the efforts of caretaker David Mitchell, the schoolhouse door has been carefully examined, restored, and repainted. The door is unusual in its design and may date to the very earliest years of the school. Shutters and windows along the front side of the school have also been stripped and painted.



Also soon to get underway are repairs to the front basement doors and the surrounding masonry.



*Leonard Dozier as
Richard Allen, July 4, 2011*

Kirk & Nice Celebrates 250 Years

2011 marked the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Kirk & Nice Funeral Home, considered the oldest funeral home in America. Jacob Knorr, the builder of Concord School House, established the business as a joiner's shop in 1761, on the corner of what is now Germantown Avenue and Washington Lane. Knorr is believed to have supplied coffins to bury those soldiers killed during the Battle of Germantown (October 4, 1777). Kirk and Nice, Inc. is now located in Plymouth Meeting.

To mark the occasion, Kirk & Nice produced a brief video documentary, partially filmed at our site and available on youtube. In addition, see Eva Brothers's useful article, "Preserving the Art of Preservation: Kirk and Nice at 250," in the Fall 2011 issue of *The Germantown Crier*, published by the Germantown Historical Society.

Recognize this place--?



This photograph represents the Upper Burying Ground in a different era, 1895. It has hung for many years in the schoolhouse but was recently taken down and removed from its acidic mat and damaged frame, for preservation.

A local photographer named Lee Sowden may have taken the photo. It is one of the few pieces of evidence we have for the nineteenth-century appearance of the Upper Burying Ground.

There is more
on our website

Visit our website to learn more about the history of the schoolhouse and burying ground and for updated news and events:

<http://www.concordschoolhouse.org>

Follow us on Facebook



Proud member of:



<http://www.freedomsbackyard.com>

*The following is a List of the Contributors with
their Contributions annexed to their names Respectively*

Concord School House minute book, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Become a Subscriber

Since the eighteenth century, the Upper Burying Ground and the Concord School House have relied upon the support of the community for their survival. Our site is a non-profit organization, and your donations are tax-deductible.



A Bell in Danger

To Ring Out Freedom in Historic Germantown—

Our Bell Needs Repairs !

In July 2012, we learned that the Concord School bell and bell tower will need significant repairs if they are to continue to function. Essentially, the framework holding the bell is coming apart, endangering both it and the building's roof. **Without urgent work, we cannot continue to ring the bell!**

Please don't let this Germantown treasure fall silent. *Donations in any amount are welcome.* Send checks for the "Bell Fund" and other vital restoration projects to the address at left. Make your check out to Concord School House.

Thank you!



Battle Day Ceremony, October

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2012 Events and Public Openings

[check website for updated times, details, and additional events]

Saturday, May 5, noon-4pm
Mount Airy Day

Saturday, May 12, noon-4pm:
"Second Saturday" opening

Monday, May 28, noon-3pm
Memorial Day opening, annual Public Board meeting and bell ringing
Guided tours: 1:30pm, 2:30pm

Saturday, June 9, noon-4pm
Second Saturday opening

Saturday, June 16, 11am-4pm
Juneteenth celebration,
6300 block Germantown Ave.

Wednesday, July 4, noon-4pm:
Ring Out Freedom and Independence in
Germantown:
Bell-ringing ceremony, 2pm
Guided tours: 12:30pm, 1:30pm

Saturday, July 14, noon-4pm
Second Saturday opening

Saturday, August 11, noon-4pm
Second Saturday opening

Saturday August 18, 10am-2pm
"Back to School at the Old Schoolhouse"
An event to donate school supplies to
children in need.
6300 Block Alliance, Germantown Ave.

Saturday, September 8, noon-4pm
Second Saturday opening

Saturday, October 6, 11am-6pm
Revolutionary Germantown Festival
Burial Ground Ceremony, 2pm

Saturday, October 13, noon-4pm
Second Saturday opening