



The Governor's Gossip

February 2026
v. 44, no. 1

**Newsletter of the Governor Wolf Historical Society,
Owner of the Wolf Academy Historic Site, East Allen Township**

Double Your Shopping Pleasure! One Weekend -- Two Antique Shows

By Carol Bear

The Governor Wolf Historical Society celebrates its 17th Antiques Show on March 7 and 8, and the Chestnut Street Antiques Show its 11th year on March 7. These two shows are only one and a half miles apart in Bath, eastern Pennsylvania. The dealers tell it all: Bill Fretz says "Love the historic buildings!" Look for "dealer spotlights" on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Ralston-McKeen Room Settings

One of the unique features about the Governor Wolf Show is the period room settings that the dealers create in the restored 1795 Ralston-McKeen House. A cut-stone, center hall home, the Ralston McKeen House, with six corner fireplaces, is the perfect backdrop for 18th and 19th century antiques.

Hearth Cooking

An added bonus is the hearth cooking demonstrations in the tavern room. Favorites are potato pie and rosemary cake. Cooking is done with antique hearth cooking implements by GWHS members in the large walk-in fireplace. The ladies have also compiled and sell a small booklet of their favorite colonial recipes. Dealers Jeff and Linda Rubens sum it up with "hearth cooking adds a sense of history and authenticity."

Two More Historic Buildings

On the GWHS site there are two other historic buildings that will be filled with antiques dealers – the 1785 Wolf Academy, birthplace of public education for all boys and girls in Pennsylvania, and the Monocacy Schoolhouse which also contains the society's museum highlighting the accomplishments of the seventh governor of Pennsylvania, George Wolf.

Monocacy Cafe

In the Monocacy Schoolhouse, lunch and snacks, including homemade soups, sandwiches, fresh baked goods, beverages and more, will be available at our Café.

Chestnut Street Show

Just one and a half miles to the north is the Chestnut Street Antiques Show. The show is located in one of the earliest churches in Historic Bath, Christ Church, built in 1876. The main room of the show is Fellowship Hall which has a tall, arched wooden ceiling. Homemade food and fresh baked goodies will be offered by the ladies of the church in the Garden of Feedin' Café. Located in the heart of the "Bath Crossroads" National Register of Historic Places, there are four other antique shops within walking distance.

Hearth Cooking Talk on Sunday

On Sunday the GWHS show will feature a talk, "Hearth Cooking and Its Implements." Kathy Wilhelm, our resident hearth cooking demonstrator, will give a talk at 1 p.m. about hearth cooking techniques and the antique wrought iron implements used in hearth cooking.

Admission Details

The hours of the GWHS show are Saturday, March 7, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, March 8, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost of admission is \$7 (\$6 with an ad, a card, or a printout of one from www.govwolf.org or Facebook or a stamp from the Chestnut Street Show). Admission is valid for both days. Parking is free. For additional information email ckbh@ptd.net or call 610-390-0555.

The Chestnut Street Antiques Show is SATURDAY ONLY March 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. With this being a one-day

show and the dealers setting up Saturday morning, you will be sure to find bargains here! Cost of admission is \$6 (\$5 with a card, or a printout of one from Facebook, or a wrist band from the Governor Wolf Show). Parking is free. For additional information email ddh1@ptd.net or call 610-390-3276.

Don't miss out on this historic weekend of antique excitement!



Katie Hallenborg's stand
Photo by Katie Hallenborg.

Governor Wolf Historical Society

6600 Jacksonville Road
East Allen Township
Mail address: P.O. Box 134
Bath, PA 18014
Phone: 610-837-9015
Email: gwhs1958@gmail.com
Website: www.govwolf.org

OFFICERS

President: Robert Bysher
Vice-President: Abby Spencer
Recording Secretary: Abby Spencer
Treasurer: Kathy Wilhelm
Corresponding Secretary: Annette Vliet

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carol Bear Sharon Fournier
Pat Grillo Darrin Heckman
Lucienne Hosford Stephen Killea
John Kortz Linda Kortz
Annette Lare Wayne Lopresti
Trish Mowen Jeannette Mullarkey
Melina Nye Robert Reichert
Kathy Silfies Robert Swan
Barbara Wiemann

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Ann Power

EDITOR

Barbara Wiemann
610-262-6977
blwiemann@gmail.com

This newsletter is published four times a year (February, May, August and November) as a service to our members and the public by the Society. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the editor before the first day of the publication month. However the Society reserves the right to select and edit all content.

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is an all volunteer organization dedicated to preserving local history. If you are not a member, we invite you to become a member and support our activities. You can join online at www.govwolf.org or use this form. Make checks payable to Governor Wolf Historical Society. For a family membership, please include all names. Mail to: Governor Wolf Historical Society, P.O. Box 134, Bath PA 18014. Membership is by the calendar year.

Membership categories: Individual \$25.00.
Family \$40.00. Student \$10.00.
Restoration \$75.00. Monocacy \$100.00.
Governor's Guild \$200.00.
Individual Lifetime \$500.00.
Senior Lifetime (62+years) \$250.00

Monthly Meetings

The Society holds monthly meetings at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Monocacy School, located at our historic site, 6600 Jacksonville Road, Bath, PA 18014. All members and interested individuals are invited to attend.

We Want Your Email Address!

Updates about our events and activities are emailed between newsletters. To be added to our email distribution list, please send your email address to Kathy Wilhelm at gwhs1958@gmail.com. If you supplied the Society with your email, and you are not getting emails about upcoming activities and events, contact Kathy at the same email.

Historic Site Rentals

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is fully open and ready to rent out our buildings and 3 1/2 acre grounds to host your next birthday party, baby shower, meeting, or even a small wedding. We currently rent out the historic Wolf Academy and Monocacy School and the beautiful surrounding gardens. There is plenty of parking in the adjacent grassy meadow. For more information about rental opportunities, please contact Abby Spencer at spencerabby@yahoo.com or 610-428-3975.

Governor Wolf Needs YOU!

By Linda Kortz

We are getting 2026 off to a roaring start with so many festivals, fun activities, informative programs and restoration projects. YOU can play a very important part! Great volunteers are the reason that we have succeeded for over 68 years! The opportunities are so varied and change by season. Bored? TV is depressing? Cabin fever? We are the escape where you will be appreciated, and fed! (Nothing happens in Pennsylvania without food!)

Meet new friends, make your day interesting. Share your knowledge or skills or learn a new one. There have never been any paid positions in GWHS. This is a historic site of volunteers! All ages, working or retired, guys and gals looking to meet you!

Learn so many new things - and there is no charge! We teach you with no fees! Bring a spice, spouse or friend - they can learn for free, too! How to hammer, turn a screw driver, how a paint brush works? Join the historic garden weed experts! Run a vacuum in the historic buildings - the old ghosts are so happy. Help with visitors at an event. Can you run a simple craft table? Do you have an interest in antiques or old tools? Do you like to bake? Would you be able to help run/plan events?

Helping, even for only one event or project, would be fun! All you need to furnish is a smile, a "what can I do" attitude, and a desire to keep a very important state site beautiful and productive.

More info, questions? Send a text to 610-905-0007 (Linda Kortz) and leave you full name and number clearly!

Become A Member

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____



From Our President

Hello everyone!

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is **Bob Bysher**, and I am honored to be serving as president of the Governor Wolf Historical Society. I've had a passion for historic homes and antiques since I was a child. Growing up in an old home in Easton gave me a deep appreciation for the craftsmanship and quality that went into these beautiful structures. My own home in Northampton has been on the GWHS Christmas Tour twice and, like many historic homes, is always a work in progress.

2026 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the Society, and what better way to shake off the winter chill than by joining us for our **17th Annual Antiques Show** on the GWHS campus — **Saturday, March 7th, from 9 a.m.–4 p.m.** and **Sunday, March 8th, from 10 a.m.–3 p.m.**

If that doesn't warm you up enough, we invite you to our **Afternoon Tea – Scots-Irish Celebration** on **Sunday, March 22nd, from 2–4 p.m.** Please call Linda at **610-905-0007** to reserve your spot for Afternoon Tea and make sure to bring your favorite tea cup!

I'm looking forward to another wonderful year with the Society and to seeing all of you in person.

Bob Bysher

Bysher Elected Next President Four Added to Board

The Gov. Wolf Historical Society elected officers and board members during our annual elections. Robert Bysher will be our 2026-2027 president and Abby Spencer will serve as vice-president. Re-elected to one year terms are Recording Secretary Abby Spencer, Corresponding Secretary Annette Vliet, and Treasurer Kathy Wilhelm. On the Board of Directors, 17 board members were re-elected (see the names on page 2), and they will be joined by newly elected Darrin Heckman, Stephen Killea, Jeannette Mullarkey, and Melina Nye.

Bysher has been vice president for the past two years. He is no stranger to House Tour attendees, who will remember that his home has been on our tour twice. As an avid collector, he has authored newsletter articles about interesting antiques.

The Society is very pleased that newcomers Killea and Mullarkey have joined the Board, and look forward to their new perspectives and contributions. Heckman and Nye are rejoining the Board after time away, and we welcome them back.

The Society thanks past president Kathy Wilhelm for her many contributions. During the past 20 years, she has served six years as president, four years as vice president, and seven years as treasurer, a position she will retain this year.

Craft Social Open to All On 1st & 3rd Thursdays

By Carol Bear

Do you like to draw, paint or sew? Do you have an unfinished craft project at home? Then Craft Social is for you! All interested persons are welcome to join like minded individuals every first and third Thursday in the GWHS meeting room from 10 a.m. til noon. The turnout is usually three to eight people who bring a project to work on while we chat about all sorts of topics. On occasion this is followed by lunch at a local eatery. Everyone is welcome! A \$5 donation to GWHS is appreciated to help defray heating costs. Craft Socials are cancelled if the weather is bad. Call Carol at 610-390-0555 for more information or to see if it is cancelled.

Gov. Wolf Historical Society Awarded Grow NORCO Grant

By Abby Spencer

The Gov. Wolf Historical Society is thankful to be a recipient of a 2025 Grow NORCO Grant for the repaving and macadam project for our parking lots. Our parking lots are in dire need of attention and have become a safety hazard during our events and meetings. Re-grading of the pavement will also help us with water abatement for our historic buildings.



This grant requires a 50% match in funds. We were approved for funding for \$14,400 from Northampton County for this project and our society will fund the remain-

ing \$14,400.

Grow NORCO is Northampton County's competitive grant program designed to help municipalities and organizations move critical projects forward, strengthen local capacity, and support smart growth throughout the county.

Look for this project to be completed in early 2026 by Richard Diehl Paving!

Free Historic Site Tours April 18 and May 16 — 1 to 3 p.m.

The Society offers free tours of our three historic buildings, grounds, and new museum on the third Saturday of each month, April through November, from 1-3 p.m. No reservations are needed.

Knowledgeable guides will discuss the history of each building, Gov. George Wolf, and provide details about items in the museum.

Request A Tour

The Society is always willing to provide tours to individuals, families, school classes, youth groups, and social organizations at other times. To schedule a tour, call 610-837-9015 or email gwhs1958@gmail.com

Successful 2025 Holiday Events

43rd Annual House Tour

The 2025 Christmas House Tour was a huge success! The homes were spectacular and the floral displays were dazzling. We already have homes and florists pledged for next year, as well as organizers and volunteers. So mark your calendars for the 44th tour on December 5, 2026. Call Carol at 610-390-0555 for more information.



The exterior (and interior) of the Erdo and Daugherty home was resplendent in lights, greens and candles. Photo by Carol Bear.

Candlelight Concert



A sold out crowd enjoyed the holiday music and sing along with Piper's Request, and the overflowing dessert tables. Photo by Kathy Wilhelm.

Allen Township *(Continued from page 5)*

as one of the county delegates to the Pennsylvania Provincial Convention beginning June 18 in Philadelphia. In August, Lattimore was appointed to the Standing Committee. When new township elections were held in November, Lattimore and Beisel represented the township on the Committee. In an unusual move, both men were selected for the Standing Committee.

The Committee As Judge and Jury

After the collapse of the colonial government following the Declaration of Independence, the Committee assumed the role of judge and jury, settling disputes and issuing punishments. One such case in-

Holiday History Fest



Two enthusiastic visitors show off their completed craft projects. Free crafts included bird feeders, dried herbal wreaths, tin pinched ornaments, and German candy filled cones. Attendees interacted with demonstrators and perused juried crafts. Photo by Barb Wiemann.

Wreath Workshops



Participants are all smiles as they finish their unique creations. Photo by Linda Kortz.

volved Allen resident George Faas. In April, 1777, Stephen Thomas brought a case against Faas. Thomas stated that when he entered military service, he left a chest of clothes with Faas. After serving 20 months, he returned and Faas refused to return his chest. Faas claimed that Thomas was ill when he returned, that he nursed Thomas back to health, and he was keeping the clothes as payment. The Committee ordered Faas to produce the clothes. At a following meeting, when Faas refused to produce the clothes, the Committee sentenced him to the Gaol (county jail in Easton). The next day, after reflecting on his sentence, Faas agreed to return Thomas' clothes and paid 13 pounds to Thomas for missing and damaged items.

Historical Object -- Shipherd Pencil Sharpening Device

By Robert Bysher

Initial Encounter and Curiosity

My first impression of the Shipherd Pencil Sharpening Device was one of indifference. Seeing it online, I promptly dismissed it because it lacked the integrated crank-driven mechanisms that I have come to appreciate in antique pencil sharpeners. Despite this, my curiosity soon took over. I found myself compelled to look deeper and conduct more research to uncover information about this unique little item. I reminded myself that every tool carries its own story, and I realized this device deserved attention and a closer look.

The Back Story

The Shipherd Pencil Sharpening Device was patented on November 7, 1893, by William C. Shipherd of Cleveland, Ohio. It is an obscure design compared to the sharpeners of the era and represents one of the transitional designs in the evolution of pencil sharpeners during the late 19th century, when inventors were experimenting with ways to move beyond simple knife-based whittling. At the time, pencils were increasingly common in offices, schools, and homes, but sharpening remained a tedious task often done with pocketknives, leading to inconsistent points and frequent breakage. Shipherd's device functions primarily as a pencil holder or jig. It secures the pencil in a fixed position, allowing a separate knife or blade to shave away the wood and graphite evenly.

History of William Chester Shipherd

William Chester Shipherd, born on January 8, 1829 in Ballston, New York, was a prolific inventor known for his contributions to vari-

ous fields, including mechanical engineering. His notable inventions include Thill-Coupling and the Ratchet Wrench and Drill, both of which were patented between 1876 and 1883.

The Device

Shipherd's Device measures 3.75 inches in length by 2 5/8 inches in width. The swing out Bull's head was utilized as a support that hooks under a table or desk to prevent the device from moving while sharpening a pencil. A spring-rest keeps the pencil from shifting during the shaving process. It was most likely produced in one of the many Cleveland workshops. The base of the device is made of brass with either a nickel plating or copper wash. The top portion is made of polished steel. The patent date stamped on the extension arm reads "PAT. NOV 7.93"



Conclusion

There is no evidence of widespread manufacturing or advertising beyond the basic patent notices. Unlike contemporaries like the Gem Pencil Sharpener (patented 1886) which was produced in the thousands, or the Perfect Pencil Pointer (marketed 1890-1913), Shipherd's device appears to have been a prototype or limited-batched product. It never achieved school board contracts or the catalog ubiquity of its rivals, possibly due to its reliance on a separate knife, which limited appeal compared to all-in-one models.

The only reference I could find on the internet was from the Early Office Museum. No other auction houses have ever listed one that I could find. Given its historical footnote status, I would consider this device to be extremely rare.

Allen Township During the Revolutionary Era

250 years ago, there were no newspapers in Northampton County to chronicle county events during the Revolutionary decade. One primary source that documents township happenings is the Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection for Northampton County. Committees, variously called Committees of Safety, Correspondence, Observation, Inspection (or some combination of these titles), were organized in communities throughout the thirteen American colonies to share information about political developments. The Northampton County group for which we have minutes was organized in December 1774. It held 57 sessions in Easton before disbanding in August 1777.

Committee Organization

Although the Committee had no legal authority when it was organized, the group considered itself representatives of the people. Each of the 26 townships in the county selected one or two representatives to the Committee. However, due to the large size of the county (present day Northampton, Lehigh, Monroe, Pike, Wayne, Carbon and a slice of Schuylkill Counties) and the difficulty of travel, almost all Committee sessions were conducted by a Standing Committee of five or six members.

Allen Township Members

On Dec. 21, 1774, the new Committee met for the first time. Casper Doll and George Taylor represented Allen Township, and Taylor

was selected to the six member Standing Committee. In January 1775, Taylor was appointed as one of five men to represent Northampton County at the Provisional Convention in Philadelphia.

Forming the Associators

In May 1775, in response to the events at Lexington and Concord, the Committee directed each township to associate and form militia companies. Anyone not associating would be considered the enemy and Associators were forbidden to have any dealing with them. 120 men enrolled as Associators in Allen and elected Neigel Gray as Captain, John Lickpet as Lieutenant, and Conrad Kryder as Ensign. At this time, John Hays, Jr. was appointed the Committeeman for Allen Township.

In July, the Allen Associators elected new officers: Captain Abraham Mill, 1st Lt. Charles Craig, 2nd Lt. William Kramer, and 3rd Lt. Samuel Craig. In October, in township elections, Neigel Gray was selected as the representative to the Committee. The Committee organized the 26 township militias into 4 battalions. Allen, Lehigh, Moore, Towamensing (present Carbon County) and Chestnuthill (present Monroe County) Townships formed the 3rd battalion under Col. Yost Dreisbach.

Allen Committeemen

In May 1776 Allen sent three representatives to the Committee: Neigel Gray, Arthur Lattimore, and Peter Beisel. Gray was selected

(Continued on page 4)

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Events!!

*17th Annual Antiques Show -- March 7 & 8
see page 1*

*Crafts Social -- 1st & 3rd Thursdays
see page 3*

Annual Dinner and Lecture - May (date to be determined)

*Scots-Irish Spring Tea -- March 22
see below*

*Open House Tours -- April 18 & May 16
see page 3*



Bt Linda Kortz

Gather your friends and their teacups! The annual Spring Tea will be held on Sunday, March 22, from 2 to 4 p.m. in our historic 1785 Wolf Academy. Celebrate your friendships by wearing green or plaid! Prizes, music, some hijinks, and fun await attendees!

Doors will open at 1.45 p.m. Early arrivals may tour our museum. Bring your favorite teacup. After you are served tea and tea sandwiches, everyone is invited to visit our famous 16 foot long pastry and dessert table.

Cost is \$35 per person. Reservations are required. Please call or text Linda at 610-905-0007 with the number of people in your group, your full name, contact number, and if it is someone's birthday, etc. Reservations are confirmed when payment is received. As always, a "Thank you long-stem rose" is presented to the person who gathers your group together for the afternoon! We sell out quickly, so please call ASAP!



Pastry and dessert table at Fall 2025 tea.