

# *The* GRANGE NEWSLETTER



December 2009

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## *Nutcrackers Usher in Holiday at the Grange*

The traditional Victorian charm of our holiday decorations will be highlighted this year by a distinctive display of Nutcrackers. Our volunteers have created another imaginative decorating scheme to make this year special. We will, of course, have the different themed trees in each room of the Mansion and unique treatments for the many fireplace mantels throughout the home. You won't want to miss seeing the festive decorations.

Nutcrackers have a long history in Europe coming from a tradition of woodcarving. They accomplished the practical task of cracking open nuts which were a common holiday offering. According to German folklore, which

Friends of the Grange has adopted, Nutcrackers are protectors of the Mansion and messengers of good luck and goodwill.

Holiday tours will be offered Saturdays and Sundays, December 6 through 27 from 1pm to 4 pm. There is a \$5 fee for adults and \$1 for children. The model train display in the Carriage House presents a new layout. It is free of charge. And don't forget to stop into the Gift Shoppe for a great selection of very reasonably priced handmade crafts and Christmas decorations appropriate for gift giving.



If you want to be among the first to see the Mansion in all its finery, come to the Christmas Preview Champagne Celebration on Saturday, December 5 from 4 pm to 6 pm. We'll have the William Penn Choir for live music, tasty hors d'oeuvres, and champagne punch for toasting. Admission with advance reservations is \$12 / \$15 at the door. Please call the office at 610-446-4958.

To conclude the holidays, vocalist Andrea Broido will return to perform selections from Broadway, opera, and holiday favorites. Don't miss this lyrical soprano in the intimate setting of the Grange Mansion drawing room. Last year was sold out, so reserva-

tions are a must. Reservations are \$12 if received by December 21, \$15 subsequently.

To tour the Mansion and other local homes of interest, you may wish to consider the Haverford Township Historical Society Holiday House Tour. Five other beautiful and historic homes in addition to the Grange and Nitre Hall will be on the tour. Tickets are \$20 for FOG and HTHS members and \$25 for non-members.

## *A Message from the President*

Bill Penn here.

In the spirit of the season, I invite everyone to come visit the Grange Estate for the holidays. Our volunteers have really been working hard to decorate the mansion in all its Victorian finest. And don't forget to stroll over to the Carriage House to view the fantastic model train layout—it's always a "must see."

I would personally like to thank all of our volunteers for all of their hard work over the past year. There are always lots of things to take care of at the Grange. If you enjoy gardening, we have lots of garden space to work with. For those who like to fix things and work with power tools, bring your tools and we can find something that needs attention. If parties are your thing, we have events that need planning. If you are a history buff, we have projects that will help us tell our story in greater depth. We can always use more folks to take part in the efforts at the Grange to make it a better place for everyone in the community to experience.

And I would like to take this opportunity to mention my mission to save the Upper Spring House. It is the one structure on the property that has not had any restoration

work since the Grange Estate was acquired by Haverford Township. Ten years ago there was a study done on the building and the conclusion was it needed immediate attention. Now is the time.

So I am starting a campaign in 2010 to see that this important outbuilding is preserved. After all, it likely was the presence of a fresh water spring which caused the homestead to be sited where it is, and that is the origin of our current Grange Estate. The Grange Estate property derives much of its historical value from the existence of all the outbuildings surrounding the mansion that demonstrate how such a property could function successfully. Join us in the new year to make more history and make something beautiful.

Happy holidays to all,

*William P. Penn*

William P. Penn  
President

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## Recognition for work well done

Friends of the Grange held its annual volunteer lunch to offer a token of our gratitude to all the volunteers who contributed to the functioning of the organization over the past year.

This year Carole Ulrich was presented with a certificate of appreciation in special recognition for all the work she had put into the success of FOG in past years. The award was presented on behalf of FOG by former president Frank Schaffer, who stood in for William Penn while he convalesced from dental surgery.

Carole was a very knowledgeable and dedicated tour guide who was truly able to convey a sense of the history of the mansion, its inhabitants, and the property to those who visited. For many years Carole also acted as the principal FOG liaison and rental agent with the wedding couples and caterers. She began volunteering at the Grange by assisting in the gardens. She has also has been a volunteer at the Swedish Cabin, so she knows her local history. Carole has been a valuable resource and true Friend of the Grange.

At the luncheon our office secretary, Elizabeth Mellon, premiered a video essay on the Grange Estate. Elizabeth assembled a blend of historical and contemporary photos to create an evocative visual statement which captured the essence of the Grange to entice the uninitiated to come see

and learn more.

It was a treat to assemble a group of our volunteers, many of whom don't get a chance to meet with one another often, as their schedules and activities are so divergent. Thanks to one and all, including those who could not attend, for moving the organization forward this past year.



*Carole Ulrich receives a special Certificate of Appreciation from former FOG president Frank Schaffer during ceremonies at the volunteer luncheon.*

## From the Beekeeper



### Honey at Last!

After two years of no honey, we were finally able to have the annual honey extraction. Three of the four Grange hives had enough honey to remove so we were a "go" on Saturday, August 29.

The Grange kitchen was transformed into an extraction room. With the threat of rain for Saturday, the supers (boxes) were removed on Friday in advance. Saturday turned out to be a perfect day! The children were all put to work taking part in each step of the process. The bees seal the frames of honey with a layer of wax known as caps. These must be removed to expose the honey. Children were guided through this procedure of capping the frames with a hot knife.

The frames were then placed, two at a time, into the extractor. This is a large, metal trash-type can. Inside a mesh basket spins around like the old ice cream makers. The children took turns standing on a bench and turning the handle. We all loved watching as the shiny honey spun out onto the inside of the extractor. As the honey settled to the bottom of the extractor, a child sat as the "gatekeeper" to open the gate and let the honey drain through a strainer into a large pan. The next step was to pour this honey through a cheese cloth into the settling tank.

After the honey settled for a few hours, it was bottled and sold to the anxious visitors who returned to buy this special golden sweetener. In all, 120 pounds was collected and was completely sold out in a matter of days.

It was fun to watch the interest and excitement among all who participated. We had 95 guests, ranging in age from 4 to 64, who shared knowledge, Grange caretaker Kathleen Goldman's cookies, and, of course, the honey. All in all, it was a very productive and educational day!

The beekeepers, Bev Rorer, Roz Benton, and Hazel Delikatny, wish to thank the Grange Board members and the public who made the "Honey Day" a great culmination to a successful season.

## Haunted Walk Provides Special Spooky Tour

### Run! A zombie!

No, wait. Ahh, that's just Amy's dad volunteering for the Girl Scout's Haunted Walk at the Grange Estate.

After searching for a suitable site for a frightful yet fun night of entertainment, Girl Scout Troop 5106/51211 and their leaders descended on the grounds of the Grange like bats to a cave. The grounds and winding trails at night are dark, shadowy, and mysterious and have a large gothic revival mansion looming over any visitors. What more appropriate setting could there be?

Activity began early Saturday morning with a team "setting the stage" with all kinds of great Halloween decorations. Bins and bins of haunted artifacts, tombstones, coffins, and skeletons were assembled by these masters of the macabre. We didn't dare ask how they obtained them all. Unfortunately, heavy rain postponed the night of mayhem until Sunday, October 25.

But that evening we meet at the Carriage House. A ghoul guides us down the path. Watch out! Something is behind the tree! Lots of scary makeup has brought some creepy characters to death or, perhaps, I mean life. As we cross the driveway to head deep into the woodlands, strobe lights distract us from certain danger. Mist rises from the brush obscuring our vision as spooky sounds fill the cool night air. When we cross the bridge I swear I see a head in the creek! And it has an axe through it! Now's not the time to be screamish!

I've blocked the rest of the walk from my mind to save my soul. But once back at the Carriage House, we caught our breath and calmed our nerves and found we were really impressed with the show put on by the girls and all their volunteers as coordinated by Troop Leader Pam Brigandi. The Grange is pleased to make this venue available to raise money for the Girl Scouts. Everyone had so much fun that we expect the zombies will be back again next October. We hope to see you here!

## Speaking of spooky. . .

Ever Wonder if the Grange is Truly Haunted?? We certainly did and we were curious. On Friday, October 23, Nancy Daversa, a well-known ghost photographer, lecturer, educator, and TV film producer, gave a very interesting and enjoyable presentation on "Friendly Ghosts at the Grange Estate." Nancy demonstrated that all it takes to embark on this adventure is just the right combination of curiosity, imagination, enthusiasm and a camera.

This is particularly true in a perfect setting like the Grange Estate, with its old buildings and venerable past residents and visitors.

There will be more investigation to come, as a Photography Night is being planned for late October 2010.

It may be an opportunity to capture on film an image of these elusive past or current occupants of the Grange.

The Grange Estate is owned by the Township of Haverford and managed by volunteers of The Friends of the Grange, Inc, since 1974.

Preview Party &  
Champagne Celebration  
Saturday, December 5  
4 pm — 6 pm  
Holiday Tours &  
Model Train Display  
Saturdays & Sundays  
December 6 thru 27  
1 pm — 4 pm  
Vocal Concert  
by Andrea Broido  
Sunday, December 27  
4 pm — 5:30 pm

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## Perspectives on International and Local Art Theft

The Haverford Township Historical Society held a special meeting in the Grange mansion to highlight the topic of "International Art Theft" as presented by retired FBI Special Agent Robert Wittman. Special Agent Wittman recounted many fascinating cases of thievery and intrigue. As it turns out, 90% of stolen art or cultural artifacts are internal thefts taken by people with some access to the objects. Cultural property thefts represent the fourth largest category of international crime, according to Wittman.

SA Wittman had direct experience in many cases of stolen high-end art and cultural artifacts. He recounted several sting operations and his involvement in investigative and undercover work around the world. It is estimated that he recovered property

valued at over \$225 million.

In the local area, SA Wittman discussed cases at Pennsbury Manor and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania which were notable. SA Wittman was also instrumental in the recovery of Amos Strunk's gold watch, which was returned to the Haverford Township Historical Society after being missing for 30 years.

SA Wittman cited two particular factors in the susceptibility of house museums to theft as a lack of inventory control, which is improving in recent times with more computerization and digital photography, and the chronic understaffing frequently found in such institutions. It is a federal crime to steal from a museum, including house museums such as Nitre Hall or the Grange Estate.