

Victorian News

Newsletter of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Victorian Society In America

Fall 2007

FALL 2007
Events

**Mark your
Calendars!**

Sept 23, 2007

Tour of Fort Washington
Heights

Oct 14, 2007

Annual Chapter Meeting at
the Drexel University
Gallery

Nov 3, 2007

The Bond Mansion at
Gwynedd-Mercy College

Dec 2007

No event scheduled for
December

Jan 6, 2008

Annual Twelfth Night Tea at
the Swain House in Chestnut
Street, Philadelphia

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September Event

Sunday, Sept 23rd

Lew Keen, chapter Vice President and his wife will lead a neighborhood tour. Several houses will be visited, including the 1903 Bodenstern Mansion. Refreshments and a social gathering after the walking tour will be held at the Keen's home, a finely detailed Victorian home, which was featured in a 2006 Victorian Homes magazine article discussing their home's external paint scheme and color selections.

Event Contact: Lew Keen
phone @ 215-540-8065 or
email: tk1876@earthlink.net

October Event

Sunday, October 14th

We will begin our event with our Annual Philadelphia Chapter business meeting. Following the meeting Jacqueline DeGroff, gallery curator, will offer a lecture and slide show covering the history of the Drexel family and the early beginnings of Drexel University. High Tea will be served at the conclusion of the lecture. During our social gathering participants will be able to view the many fine paintings and artworks housed in

beautifully restored Drexel Gallery.

Event Contact: Lew Keen
phone @ 215-540-8065 or
email: tk1876@earthlink.net

November Event

Saturday, November 3rd

This event will feature a visit to the first floor of the 1907 mansion, "Willow Brook" which was designed by Horace Trumbauer for Francis Bond. The house,



located on the campus of Gwynedd Mercy College serves its administrative staff. Our event host will be Marion Rosenbaum, college archivist and author for "Gwynedd-Mercy College" published in 2006 by Arcadia Press. Marion will share with us the history of the family, the estate and the college and will guide us on our visit.

Event Contact: Lew Keen
phone @ 215-540-8065 or
email: tk1876@earthlink.net

January event

Sunday, January 6th, 2008

ANNUAL Twelfth night celebration

Our Annual Twelfth Night Celebration will be held at the Swain House, currently the Ronald McDonald house. The Swain House was built for William J. Swain at 3925 Chestnut Street in the late 1890's. Mr. Swain was a lawyer, editor, and founder of the **Public Record** newspaper. The architect, Will Decker, designed the house in Romanesque style. The house became the Ronald McDonald House in 1982.

We will begin our Twelfth Night party with a brief discussion with Doug Metcalfe, the Director of the Ronald McDonald House.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience a fine adaptive reuse of a former prominent Victorian home and enjoy a fabulous catered Victorian tea with friends and members of the Philadelphia Chapter of VSA.

This annual event is always popular and is a great way to begin the New Year.

Event contact: Alex Humes @ (215) 248-1839

National VSA News

Dear National VSA member,

We have some exciting news to tell you. The Victorian Society in America is moving!
Effective September 1, 2007 our new address and phone/fax information will be as follows:

**The Victorian Society in America
1634 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Phone:**215-636-9872**
(easy to remember as 215-636-9VSA)

Fax:.....**215-636-9873**

Neither our E-mail address nor our website will change. Forgive our suggesting the obvious, but please make sure to change your address book entries for us!

Our new location will be office space in the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, 11th oldest Baptist Church in the US (founded in 1698). The building itself dates to 1899, and was designed by Edgar V. Seeler, the architect of several noted buildings in and around Philadelphia, among them the Curtis Center (still home to the stunningly beautiful Louis Comfort Tiffany mosaic "The Dream Garden"). The church sanctuary is an impressive blending of the Romanesque and Byzantine styles, and is worth a visit of its own when in town. Our office will be accessed via the side entrance on Sansom Street (and note the unusual spelling is not Samson).

Thanks for your continued support!

Ken Olin

Business Manager

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

www.victoriansociety.org

President's Message

Dear Fellow Victorians,

I thought I would begin with the definition of an Organization. An Organization is **“A group of people working together in some concerted or coordinated effort to attain objectives”**. This leads to the next logical question: **“What are the Philadelphia Chapter's objectives?”** Per our By Laws our Purpose is stated as:

- a. To support and encourage the national organization, The Victorian Society in America.
- b. To provide local activities and programs of interest to members of the society.
- c. To interest and educate the general public in the values and preservation of Victorian culture.

During the past six months the Board, along with the help of others in our membership (organization) held some interesting events which met our “programs of interest objective”. These events have been diverse and included the Fire Museum of Philadelphia in February, a tour of the Wagner Free Institute of Science in May and a June bus tour of Morristown, NJ and the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms. The most notable event of the season was our partnership with historic Cairnwood in the celebration of our annual Queen's Birthday Party and their open house event entitled *“Get Carried Away with Cairnwood”* held on April 29th. This event offered the public some unique exposure to the Victorian Era. We were honored by the presence of the Queen and the Prince and other members of the Chapter dressed in authentic Victorian attire. It was truly a wonderful opportunity to “educate the general public in the values and preservation of Victorian culture”.



We have supported the national organization with our continued financial support to the Scholarship fund. Also, I had the privilege of attending and participating in the Fall meeting of the National Organization held in Philadelphia.

With the membership's support and sharing of ideas, suggestions and hands-on support, I believe we can continue to meet our organizational objectives.

I conclude this message with a **“thank you”** and a challenge for you. First the thank you - Carole and Bill McMenamin have had to end their participation as Board members. Please join me in thanking them for their time and support as Board members. Now for the challenge - as members of our **“organization”**, I challenge you to make a conscience effort to introduce others to our Victorian Culture. Invite a friend or acquaintance to the next event, post a copy of this newsletter at your place of employment or at your church. Help our organization grow in membership which will assure our place in the future to be able to continue to accomplish our Charter's objectives. As always, feel free to contact me or any member of the Board with your ideas and suggestions for events.

Best Regards,

David Ewaniuk

President of the Philadelphia Chapter of VSA
phone: 215-538-112 or e-mail at dewaniuk@comcast.net

 Preservation news
2007 Preservation Awards

The Philadelphia Chapter was well represented when it came to the 2007 Preservation Awards given at this year's annual meeting in Mobile, Alabama. We won two out of six awards given.

The State Capitol Building in Harrisburg, constructed between 1902 and 1906, is a Beaux-Arts masterpiece that was intended by its architect, Joseph Huston, to be a "palace of art". It was awarded "**For the complete and painstaking restoration over a 25 year period of this 1906 Beaux Arts National Historic Landmark designed by Joseph Huston, including the cleaning of its elaborate murals, and for implementing an ongoing maintenance program to ensure the structure's future preservation.**" It is hoped this restoration will serve as a model for other states.

The Union League of Philadelphia was awarded "**For the careful exterior restoration of this imposing 1865 Second Empire club and its 1910 Beaux Arts extension, designed respectively by architects John**

Fraser and Horace Trumbauer and still in continuous use for its original purpose". Of

particular note was the reconstruction of the missing cupola on the corner tower of the 1865 building. Most remarkable is that the League has remained at the same site and is still in use for its original purpose as a private club, since 1865, while other private clubs like the Rittenhouse Club, have had to close its doors, and some are being torn down for the construction of a new condominium towers. Only the 1900 Beaux-Arts facade of the Rittenhouse Club will be left standing on the Rittenhouse Square.

Award Presentation to the President of the Union League

From left to right: Ken Olin, Business Manager of National VSA; John Simonelli, Executive Vice President of National VSA; Fred Haab, President of the Union League; Bob Skaler, Philadelphia Chapter Preservation Officer and Carl Doebely, Project Architect from DPK Architects

Bob Skaler

Preservation Officer Philadelphia Chapter VSA

forensicarch@comcast.net

Opinions presented are the author's and are not necessarily agreed to by the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Chapter of VSA

A note from our membership chair

Thanks to everyone who so promptly renewed their membership this past season. Your timely attention to your society dues is greatly appreciated. If your mailing label indicates your dues expire in 2007, you do not need to renew until January 2008. However, early dues payments are always appreciated! Membership in the chapter makes a great gift for family and friends. Welcome to our newest members listed below. We hope to meet you at an event this fall.

Glenn Carter
Liz and Andrew Jarvis
Jennifer and John Ochman
Alfred Prime
Elizabeth Shevlin
Jeanne Solensky

Lew Keen

Membership Chair of the Philadelphia Chapter of VSA

Cairnwood April 29, 2007



The QUEEN and her Victorian Friends

From left to right: Richard and Jacqueline Kunin, Barbara Kotzin, Bill McMenamain and his wife Carole Covert
