

# Wentz Post

A periodic publication of The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society in conjunction with The Farmstead Staff featuring news, views and activities.....

## Abigail Adams to speak at the Annual Fall Meeting

By Chris L'Ecuyer

Please join the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society in welcoming Abigail Adams to our Annual Fall Meeting on Wednesday October 15<sup>th</sup> at the Central Schwenkfelder Church, Valley Forge Road, Worcester, Pa. The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm with the traditional covered dish dinner followed by a short business meeting. Mrs. Adams' presentation will begin at 7:30 pm.

Although Abigail and John Adams spent most of the years during the War for Independence apart, their letters kept this remarkable couple in constant communication. Abigail's letters stand as a testimony to the power of a self educated woman in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Her advocacy of American independence included strong arguments for equality for all Americans and abolition of slavery as well as being a strong advocate for women's education. While Abigail's primary role was that of a wife and mother, she was a successful farmer, realtor, accountant and merchant.

Mrs. Adams will be portrayed by Kim Hanley of the American Historical Theatre. Her presentation will conclude with a question and answer session. Please plan on attending this informative, entertaining evening.

Abigail Adams  
Portrayed by  
Kim Hanley



## Proud to Announce PWF'S Own Eagle Scout

By Dianne Cram

Russell Dorand, who joined our Apprentice program in 2000 and continued to volunteer through his junior and senior high school years, has just achieved the highest rank of scouting. On July 20<sup>th</sup> Russell was honored by his fellow scouts and leaders of Troop 152, as well as his family and friends during an impressive Eagle Court of Honor ceremony.

(Continued on page 5)

**Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Board of Directors Officers**

President - Sally Graybill  
 Vice President - Christine L'Ecuyer  
 Treasurer - Lee Kirk  
 Recording Sec. - Carol Berardelli  
 Financial Sec. - Anne Condon

**Directors**

Carol V. Allen  
 Richard Clauser  
 Ruth Guimond  
 Richard L'Ecuyer  
 Francis X. Luther  
 Janice Muller

**PWFS Committees**

Executive Committee: Anne Condon, Ruth Guimond, Christine L'Ecuyer

Development.....Janice Muller  
 Finance.....Anne Condon  
 Garden.....Janet Riemer  
 IT.....Jim Karcher  
 Membership.....Donna Armstrong  
 Museum Shop.....Phyllis Yergey  
 Charlotte Herman  
 New Structures.....Dick Clauser  
 Nominating.....Ruth Guimond  
 Scholarship.....Christine L'Ecuyer  
 Trip Planning.....Frank Luther  
 Wentz Post.....Dick Anderl  
 Albert Fritz  
 Richard L'Ecuyer

**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 Hours of Operation**

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM  
 Sunday 1:00-4:00 PM  
 Last Tour 3:30 PM

Closed Mondays and holidays.

New Year's Eve  
 New Year's Day  
 President's Day  
 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
 Good Friday  
 Easter Sunday  
 Memorial Day  
 Flag Day  
 Fourth of July  
 Labor Day  
 Columbus Day  
 Election Day  
 Veteran's Day  
 Thanksgiving Day  
 Christmas Eve  
 Christmas

Reservations required for group tours.  
 Admission: FREE!

The Farmstead is located on Shearer Road in Worcester, PA, near the intersection of Routes 73 and 363 in Montgomery County.

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**Wentz Post**

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**COME ONE, COME ALL**  
**TO**  
**LAERENSWAERT**  
**2008**

*Saturday, October 18*  
*(Rain or shine)*  
*10:00 am to 3:30 pm*

*A hands-on Colonial Crafts Fair with demonstrations on early American domestic and agricultural skills. Activities for all ages.*



Butter making exhibition by Volunteer Sara Robbins and Apprentices during Laerenswaert 2007.

## The President's Letter

By Sally Graybill

The Society Picnic took place on July 16, a perfect mid-summer evening. Approximately fifty Society members attended the event at the Old Mill House in Central Perkiomen Valley Park. Director Carol Allen, assisted by Directors Chris and Rich L'Ecuyer, Dini Vigliano, and Bill Condon provided a delicious meal of grilled chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs and all the trimmings along with cupcakes and ice cream for dessert. Pleasant chatter and a myriad of games, with prizes for the winners, topped off the evening.

A big thank you to the following donors contributing to the Picnic's success: Allen's Country Store, Any Thyme Caterers, Bergey's Lincoln Mercury, Bravo Pizza, Fuzion Restaurant, Harleysville National Bank, Mermaid Lake, Merrymead Farm, O&F Farm, Robert E. Little, Inc., Dini Vigliano, and Zacharias Creek Side Café.

The frakturs, donated to the Society by Dr. Robert Godshall, have been returned from the conservators and look very nice. Many thanks to the Hope Lodge Questers who helped cover the conservation costs. We hope to have the frakturs on display at the Fall Meeting.

Looking forward to upcoming events; mark your calendars for the Fall Meeting to be held October 15<sup>th</sup> and followed closely by Laernswert on October 18<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!

### PWFS UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>September 17, 2008</b>	<b>7pm</b>	<b>Board of Directors Meeting (Central Schwenkfelder Church)</b>
<b>October 15, 2008</b>	<b>6pm</b>	<b>Annual Fall Meeting/Dinner Featuring Abigail Adams (Central Schwenkfelder Church)</b>
<b>November 19, 2008</b>	<b>7pm</b>	<b>Board of Directors Meeting Election of 2009 Officers/Directors (Central Schwenkfelder Church)</b>
<b>December 2, 2008</b>	<b>8:00am</b>	<b>Holiday Trip to Lancaster (American Music Theater)</b>

## WENTZ WEEDERS UPDATE

By Janet Riemer

We started to work in the garden the first Wednesday in May, weeded the outer beds, then spread 20 bags of top soil. The center beds were roto-tilled and planted with tomatoes, peppers and basil. We planted flower and vegetable seeds, not knowing we were headed for a draught. This was the first year we had such bad luck with seeds – only 2 or 3 plants of each seed pack germinated except the Blue Lake green beans which did very well. We needed rain and it seemed to only rain on Wednesdays. The only thing that grew very well was Purslane, a weed. It took us a couple of weeks to get rid of it so we could plant more vegetables. At least the chickens were fed the Purslane that was pulled up!

Our faithful five volunteer workers are disappointed in the garden but we are doing our best to make it a good year.



(Continued from page 1)

Eagle Scout is a hard earned honor, and Russell chose as his Eagle project to work on the development of the nature trail at the Farmstead. He recruited scouts from his troop to work with him to put trail markers in place, improve drainage, clean up trash from the Zacharias Creek, erect the information kiosk, put up bluebird boxes and plant trees to help protect the watershed area. The results of his efforts are that the Farmstead now has a trail that will be enjoyed by many visitors.

In addition to the Eagle Scout project, Russell also chose the Farmstead to complete his Gifted Mentorship Program through North Penn High School. Russell spent a great deal of his senior year volunteering his time and effort to help the staff with a wide variety of tasks from baling hay to historical interpretation. A great effort was put into researching and completing his thesis on "An Early Pennsylvania Farmer's Life".

Russell graduated with the Class of 2008 and is now in his freshman year at University of New Hampshire. He brought to the Farmstead a great deal of dedication and hard work along with a wonderful sense of fun! The staff will miss Russell while he is away at college, but we hope he will take fond memories of the Farmstead with him and return often.



A proud Russell Durand with his Eagle Scout plaque

## ?? INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW ??

**QUESTION:** What is the origin of the term "Pennsylvania Dutch"?

**ANSWER:** According to the Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, the phrase is defined as follows: "The descendants of the original German settlers in Pennsylvania." And while the German heritage is not in doubt, the exact origin of the "Dutch" portion of the phrase is unknown. A number of theories have been postulated such as:

- In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the English used the term "Dutch" to refer to all peoples of Germanic heritage.
- The German word for German is "Deutsch". Over time, English speaking people corrupted Pennsylvania "Deutschman" to Pennsylvania "Dutchman".
- The Dutch predominantly settled in New York while the Germans predominantly settled in southeastern Pennsylvania. To the untrained ear both languages sound familiar. English speaking people called Pennsylvania Germans "Pennsylvania Dutch" to distinguish them from New York Dutch.
- Most German immigrants to America sailed from Dutch ports leading people to conclude that everyone aboard those ships were Dutch
- Early German Reformed congregations received spiritual and financial support from Dutch Reformed congregations confusing outsiders as to the true heritage of early German settlers.

Despite attempts by Pennsylvania German societies to counter the widespread public misconception of the region's true heritage, the tourist industry continues to promote "Pennsylvania Dutch" and "Pennsylvania Dutch Country".

*Do you have a question about the Farmstead or some aspect of local Pennsylvania German history? If so, send an email to [mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org](mailto:mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org) and we'll put the experts to work!*

## Two Enjoyable Weeks of Wonderful Children

By Kimberly Boice

Each year in late December, I begin to plan the two summer camps offered at the Farmstead. I enjoy contacting craftspeople and volunteers who are key parts of the camp programs. After months of planning, the campers arrive eager to see what new activities are in store for them.

*Colonial Camp* was a bit different this year, I brought in a few new craftspeople that presented topics including medicine, watercolors, laundry, horse & cart, and lucets. Of course, some of the more popular favorites were included, such as counted cross stitch, open-hearth cooking, redware, and marionettes, just to name a few. No one got stung by Jim Bobb's bees or banged their thumb with the hammer while working on their miniature chests. If you know someone who attended the camp, ask them to show you some of

the wonderful items they created this year and I am sure you will be as impressed as I am by the creativity and skill level of the campers. This year the weather was perfectly pleasant and it only got a bit heated during the bidding wars of the vendue on the last day.

*Wentz Wonder Kids Camp*, a half-day camp program geared towards four and five year olds, enjoyed its second year of success, thanks in part to the co-director, Linda McMillan. We had another wonderful group of kids attend this year and may opt to offer the camp twice next year due to the increased interest in the program. This year's highlights included a sensory tour of the kitchen garden, complete with smelly and tasty things, a nature walk along the trail, a dress-up session, and multiple visits with the animals on-site.

With so many fun and interesting things to do and see, the camp came and went in a flash.

As always, the task of putting together and implementing the summer camps, and other programs offered at the Farmstead, could not occur without the wonderful and endless assistance of the volunteers, Apprentices, and craftspeople. I am always amazed at how much time and energy all of you are willing to give to us and we will remain forever thankful. Here's to another summer of wonderful camps... HUZZAH!



The *Wentz Wonder Kids Campers* posed in their period clothing after learning what people wore during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

# TRIP PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Frank Luther

Overall, the day trips that the committee has been planning have been successful. Our spring trip to Clinton, New Jersey and the Trenton Barracks was popular.

Our June 23 trip to the Daniel Boone Homestead/Oley Valley was very well received. Everyone who was on this trip provided positive feedback. Jim Lewars, director of the Daniel Boone Homestead did a marvelous job of familiarizing the participants with the Homestead and the history and geography of the Oley Valley. The motor coach tour through the valley was very enlightening. To sit in the more than 200 year old Exeter Meeting House made history come alive.

On the other hand, Sally Graybill, who was coordinating the trip to the Hudson Valley in September, reported that only sixteen people signed up for this three-day trip. The committee agreed that the trip would be cancelled and that no multi-day trips will be planned for the future. Instead, the committee agreed that we should plan four one-day trips in the future.

Our Holiday Trip is scheduled for Tuesday, December 2. We will attend a 3:00 matinee at the American Music Theater for the Holiday Show and then travel to Miller's Smorgasbord for our evening meal. This will

be a wonderful way to welcome the holidays with members and friends! The cost of the trip will be \$95.00 for members and \$100.00 for non-members. Look for the mailing to be sent out in early September. Reservations will be expected by October 20.

Trips for 2009 are currently being planned. Janice Muller is working on the Underground Railroad Program in Lancaster County for April; Frank Luther will coordinate the trip to the Pennsylvania Heritage Center in Kutztown and to the Kutztown Folk Festival on June 30; Bill Ditter is organizing a Gettysburg trip in October with a visit to the new Visitors' Center; and Margaret Schweitzer will finalize plans for a visit to Bryn Athyn/Glencairn in December. Sandra Biddle will continue to be responsible for the mailings of all of our announcements about future trips.

A trip to Charming Forge has been put on hold until we are able to get further information about how they might accommodate us.

Sally Graybill will be stepping down from the Trip Planning Committee and we thank her for her help and guidance during the past several years.

A call goes out once again to

members of the Society who might want to join us on the Trip Planning Committee. And, again, the committee looks forward to receiving your ideas and suggestions about possible future trips.

Please consider our future trips and see if they can fit into your schedule. With the energy situation being what it is, a trip using a motor coach makes a lot of sense.

## The Welcome Mat

By Donna Armstrong

The Farmstead Society extends a warm welcome to our newest members

Rachael Groat  
The Lorraine Kelly family  
Ron and Donna Cordek family  
Thomas Croke  
Laura Rockemann

## *Please Help Us Save Paper and Postage*

Farmstead Society members wishing to receive future editions of the Wentz Post via email may do so by sending an email to [mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org](mailto:mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org)

As an added bonus, email recipients of the newsletter see the newsletter in color. The paper version is reproduced in black and white for reasons of economy.

## Gaudy Dutch and Toleware

By Morgan McMillan

Pennsylvania Germans enjoyed a certain cultural affinity for bright colors. Like the painted walls in the Wentz house, decorated objects produced and used by the Pennsylvania Germans often displayed a rainbow of reds, yellows, and blues. Both Gaudy Dutch ceramics and painted toleware with their brilliant decorative motifs have become particularly identified with the Pennsylvania German culture.

The ceramics now known as Gaudy Dutch were made not in Germany, but in British factories. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, potteries in Staffordshire, England were producing soft paste imitations of the highly prized porcelain exported from China and Japan in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although the brighter multi-colored wares did not catch on in England, they became popular among the

Pennsylvania Dutch (thus the name Gaudy Dutch). The British produced these ceramics for a German-American market from about 1800-1820. Made from soft-paste porcelain, they chip and break easily, thus surviving examples in excellent condition are difficult to find.

The bright surface designs of toleware became popular in Pennsylvania throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Toleware was made and used in Europe as well as New England and Pennsylvania. Thin sheets of iron coated with tin were shaped into useful household containers such as coffee pots, tea caddies, and trays. The surface of the piece was japanned, or varnished, and then painted with floral or fruit motifs. Decorations on toleware show some similarities to Asian

ceramic designs, but also mimic patterns used for *fraktur* and theorem paintings. These items tended to be made and decorated by craftsmen and women rather than produced by factories.

Thanks to a generous donation from Dr. Richard Godshall, the Peter Wentz Farmstead has recently acquired several pieces of Gaudy Dutch and toleware. We greatly appreciate Dr. Godshall's contributions to our collection of Pennsylvania German decorative arts. We look forward to displaying these newly acquired objects in future exhibits.



Gaudy Dutch cup and saucer and toleware lidded pitcher and cup, donated by Dr. Richard Godshall.



# LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

By Dianne M. Cram

Volunteers! Where would we be without them! While watching some of the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games I heard the commentator say that there were hundreds of thousands of volunteers working throughout all the events. Wow! I don't think I would want the job coordinating that many volunteers, but what a job they pulled off.

I am no less awed by the spirit of volunteerism that we have right here at the Farmstead. We have volunteers who have been here nearly 30 years, and some who have just started, We have volunteers ranging in age from 91 to 10 years old. **AND THEY ARE ALL AMAZING!**

Do we have room for more? YES! Have you ever considered volunteering, but weren't sure of what you would do, or how you could fit into the picture here? There are tasks and activities to fit a wide variety of interests. Some of the areas in which we can use your help are; giving guided tours, working with children, library and archival jobs, office tasks, working with the PWF Society who work to support the site, historical research, helping out with the farm chores, caring for the animals, gardening...and, the list goes on. Come to the Farmstead and talk with me or anyone on the staff to find out what would suit you best. But don't hesitate, we do need your help.

THANKS TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO.  
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITH OUT YOU!!

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**If you enjoy history, antiques, historic houses and people –  
We need you!**

**The Farmstead is recruiting any and all interested in becoming historic house  
guides – no prior experience necessary.**

**We will train you!**

**We have morning and afternoon time slots, both weekdays and weekends avail-  
able for anyone who wants to help with guiding our visitors  
through the Farmstead.**

**Choose the time that best suits you.**

**Please contact Dianne or Kim at 610-584-5104**

**This is an opportunity for you to learn and enjoy  
while helping others appreciate the specialness of the Farmstead.**

## IN MEMORY FRANCES DORRANCE Volunteer Guide

We deeply regret hearing of the recent death of Mrs. Frances Dorrance who served as a guide/interpreter at the Farmstead for many years. Frances will be remembered as a lovely and gracious lady who truly enjoyed guiding our visitors and passing along her enthusiasm. Frances was volunteering on a regular basis through the 1980s and into 1990s. Even after “retiring” from volunteer service, she often brought her family and friends back to visit the Farmstead and continued to attend our programs. Frances’ daughter wrote to tell us that her mother “loved and treasured her time volunteering at Peter Wentz Farmstead”. We were honored to have had the time she gave to us.

## Summer Concerts

Visitors enjoy two lovely summer evenings of “Music in the Barnyard”. The Peter Wentz barn served as the stage with the setting sun spotlighting entertainers Liz Masterson and Keith Brintzenhoff. A foot stomping, sing-a-long, fun time was had!



Traditional Western music performed by Liz Masterson accompanied by Rick and Wendi Bourne.



Keith Brintzenhoff entertains with songs and stories of the Pennsylvania Germans.

**Peter Wentz Farmstead 2008 Calendar*****Laerenswaert*****Saturday, October 18th 10am-3:30pm**

A hands-on colonial crafts fair with demonstrations of early American domestic and agricultural skills “worth learning.” Also includes house tours by costumed interpreters, military camp life, and open-hearth cooking.

***Architecture of the Oley Valley Region (Berks County, PA)***

Guest Speaker: James Lewars

**Wednesday, November 12th 7pm**

Explore the diverse architectural heritage of the English, German, Swiss, French Huguenot, and Welsh Quakers who settled in the Oley Valley during the 18th century. Lewars, Site Administrator of the Daniel Boone Homestead, has been researching the surviving structures of the valley for nearly twenty years and will share some of his findings during this presentation.

Program held at the Farmers' Union Hall of the Worcester Township Historical Society on Rt.363 (Valley Forge Rd.).

***Apple & Scrapple Day*****Saturday, November 8th 10am-3pm**

Visit the site to learn about seasonal foodways common during the colonial period. Highlights include using the smokehouse, preserving meats in the form of mincemeat and enjoying fall fruits & vegetables.

***Candlelight Tour*****Saturday, December 6th 2-8pm**

The Farmstead will be all aglow and offer the experience of a traditional Pennsylvania German seasonal celebration, including a visit from *Belsnickel*, St. Nicholas in furs.

## Native American Stone Tools Exhibit



A display of stone artifacts from the pre-history of Pennsylvania will be in the Visitor's Center at the Peter Wentz Farmstead from now until the end of October.

# Membership in the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society

Our Society continues to grow, and if you are not already a member, please join us. There are two meetings a year which feature speakers and/or slides and movies on subjects of historical interest. Your membership fee entitles you to discounts on our day trips to historical sites, discounts on selected museum shop purchases, and a subscription to our newsletter. Join us in the worthwhile project of preserving the 18th century way of life at the Farmstead. The PWFS is registered as a 501(c)(3), not for profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

**Please Print:**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

(Company, if applicable)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

(Street)

(Town and State)

(Zip)

Check if:  Wentz descendant  Schultz descendant

Check one:  New member  Please renew my membership

Check one:

- Student ..... \$10.00
- Individual ..... \$20.00
- Senior Family (both over 65) . \$25.00
- Family Membership ..... \$30.00
- Life Member..... \$500.00
- Business Sponsorship.....Contact us for details

Additional donation:..... \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed:..... \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me concerning volunteer activities

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

610-584-5104

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