



WYCK GrapeVine

Fall 2009

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Upcoming Events

October 15
**"Chasing Chairs"
Workshop and
Lecture**

October 22
**Wyck-Strickland
Award Dinner**

October 24
**Historic Foodways
Lecture and
Workshop**

October 31
**Garlic Planting
Demonstration
&
Seed Saving
Workshop**

November 7
**Beer Brewing Talk
& Demonstration**

December 4, 5, & 6
**Holiday Greens
Workshops and
Open House**

January 9, 2010
New Year's Tea

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Letter From the Executive Director

It was a busy and exciting summer here at Wyck. In addition to our regular summer activities, we spent much of our time planning and reflecting on many aspects of our work, from the stories we tell and interpret to conservation of the house and outbuildings to our education programs.

We began a major project to develop a written plan for interpreting Wyck's rich, but complex, history and site. With generous funding from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, through the Heritage Philadelphia Program, Wyck embarked on this project by completing a survey of best practices in the field of historic house museums and other historic sites. In total, our consultants Rosalind Remer and Page Talbott, and our staff visited 12 sites, from New York to Virginia. It was a busy summer, indeed! These visits shed a lot of light on the challenges facing historic houses everywhere as well as exposed us to the newest ideas, techniques, and technologies being explored and implemented to interpret historic houses and gardens. We gathered information on both successful and not-so-successful visitor experiences. All of these visits allowed us to contextualize and evaluate the interpretation of Wyck. In addition to working with Ros and Page, we have a team of 12 advisors bringing very unique perspectives to the project, who will help ensure that we take full advantage of this opportunity for Wyck to explore and unearth many more of the stories we have to share about our 300-plus years of history.

In July, we hired a new Education Program Coordinator, Lori Litchman. Lori comes to us from Arcadia University's Qui Vive! writing program, where she coordinated the program and taught an intergenerational creative writing workshop focused on nature here at Wyck. Lori hit the ground running at Wyck, reviewing our educational offerings and the needs of the students and teachers participating in our education programs. You can read more about what she's been working on later in this newsletter.

History, by its very nature, affords us an opportunity to look back. This summer, we have looked back not only on the history of the Wistars and Haineses who lived here, but on what we do as the organization responsible for preserving and interpreting that history for the public. Every glance backward demands a hard look into the future so that we can proceed appropriately and effectively in the present.

Home Farm Expands; Haha Revealed

As autumn approaches we are embarking on an expansion of the Home Farm with the goals of increasing its productive area and improving the visibility of two historic structures. In new and separate beds we have already established a healthy black raspberry crop and we will be making room for brand new red raspberry canes in the spring. And with our first taste of Wyck asparagus this year, we cannot resist adding several more crowns to the other side of the greenhouse. But the major change will be in the size of the main vegetable garden. We are going to push out its borders in all directions, increasing its overall area by 50%. The individual beds are also going to be expanded so that they are a full four feet wide. With this extra room we will be able to grow more of our customers' favorite vegetables and cultivate new crops that would have seemed unwieldy in our narrow beds before.

To make room for this garden expansion we have dismantled the perennial border that ran along what is called the haha wall. The haha is a short stone wall which creates the illusion of a continuous field from the lawn above while maintaining a physical barrier from the lower Home Farm area. This barrier originally kept grazing animals on the back end of the property and away from the front yard. By removing the perennial border around the haha, we will restore this clever illusion from above and expose the stone work from below. There is also a cistern that runs all the way from the house under the haha wall and into the Home Farm area. As the Home Farm was once pasture land, this was a practical means to provide water to the farm animals. By exposing these structures we hope that visitors will better understand the long agricultural tradition at Wyck. We hope that you can visit soon and enjoy the renewed scenery and fruitfulness of the Wyck Home Farm.

Wyck's Education Curriculum

Lori Litchman, Wyck's new Education Program Coordinator, is expanding, formalizing, and strengthening our education curriculum. The curriculum will soon be all standards-based, so the lessons will match all of the standards set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education with regard to Environment and Ecology, History, and Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. The new structure will have three separate sections: Urban Agriculture, History, and Stories and Senses. The importance of drawing on the standards is three-fold. First, having standardized lessons will give our program more consistency and credibility. Second, teachers will likely have an easier time gaining permission from the school administrators to come to Wyck for field trips. Finally, standards-based lessons will help prepare children for the rigors of standardized testing, which have become an integral part of public education.

The education program will build on our existing Outdoor Education Program with its focus on agriculture, given the incredible resource Wyck has in its Home Farm. These lessons will focus on where food comes from, as well as the added components of nutrition education, healthy food choices, biodiversity, and integrated pest management.

The second element of the program will focus on history, with an increased emphasis on the interpretation of primary documents and artifacts. These lessons will draw on Wyck's expansive collection of documents and artifacts. We will continue to offer house tours to our school population and will again participate in the History Hunters program through the Historic Germantown consortium.

The third component of the curriculum will focus on a variety of different activities incorporating stories and senses. For example, one lesson will teach children how to use their five senses to observe the natural world around them. We will also offer a collection of storybooks with environmental themes that connect to our property and our lessons, and provide nature-based writing activities. Craft-based activities will engage the tactile sensibilities of our learners as will a number of seasonal activities, such as apple cider-making using our cider press.

Overall, we want to continue to ensure that our youngest community members see Wyck as a place where they come to learn and have fun. We hope that our programming will foster in these youth a sense of stewardship and engagement that will make them not only lasting friends of Wyck, but lifelong learners.



Lori (on right) leads an Autistic Support class from Germantown High School.

John Lee Visits Wyck "Wyck changed the way we work on masonry forever." —Architectural Conservator John Lee

On July 7, John Greenwalt Lee, Materials Conservator and Artisan from Annapolis, Maryland "re-visited" Wyck. John spent the day with Board and staff reviewing the major Getty-funded architectural conservation project completed at Wyck in the 1990s, for which John served as Historic Wood Specialist and Project Manager. John believes that the lessons learned from conserving Wyck as an architectural artifact have set the stage for all building conservation work since. Prior to the Wyck Project, architects worked to *restore* historic buildings imposing design sensibility to the process, whereas the Wyck project was pivotal in a field-wide change to *conserve* historic building fabric, allowing the buildings to speak for themselves and offer information about old building materials and craft practices that can be reinstated to preserve buildings for the long term. John is helping Wyck to develop priorities for the coming months and years for necessary maintenance and preservation. His involvement will keep our building preservation goals in focus and on target.

2009 Wyck-Strickland Award Dinner - October 22

The 2009 Wyck-Strickland Award will be presented to internationally recognized, award-winning architects Stephen Kieran and James Timberlake on Thursday, October 22 at the Down Town Club in Philadelphia. Award Chair Barry Bergdoll, Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, will introduce the architects who, as founding partners of KieranTimberlake, have been committed advocates for sustainable design, research, and technological innovation. Kieran and Timberlake are both recipients of the American Academy in Rome Prize, the Latrobe Research Fellowship, and their firm received the 2008 Architecture Firm Award, the highest honor bestowed by the American Institute of Architects. The Wyck-Strickland Award is inspired by the balance of tradition and innovation created when the Philadelphia architect William Strickland remodeled the Wyck house in 1824. It acknowledges progress and modernity with a sensitive understanding of the past, and honors individuals who have significantly contributed to the cultural life of Philadelphia. For ticket information for the Award Dinner, please email boverholser@wyck.org or call 215-848-1690.

Wyck's Chickens Are A-Laying in Their Spiffy New Coop

The chickens have started laying! Our golden buff hens are producing several delicious dozens every week. Their eggs have thick shells, firm whites, and neon orange yolks. These eggs are a testament to their robust diet and luxurious abode. In addition to purchased feed, our chickens dine on a mix of home grown sunflower seeds, corn cobs, table scraps, weeds, unsaleable vegetables from the Home Farm, and of course, all of the bugs and critters that they scratch up. Despite, or maybe because of this smorgasbord, you can expect our chickens to come running up to every Wyck visitor with their beaks agape.

The spacious coop and run is another key to our healthy chickens and tasty eggs. After surveying a number of nearby chicken coops, Wyck Board member Jim Bishop and neighbor Luke Russell designed and built a veritable chicken castle. The neatly shingled structure rests under the evergreen trees on the southern edge of our site. A window allows visitors to peak in and see the chickens without disturbing them, and a hinged door on the back makes it easy to collect eggs from the nesting boxes. Most important, the coop's large side door and slick linoleum floor makes it easy to clean out. The chickens spend most of their days out in the run, a large fenced in area directly in front of the coop.

Several recent graduates from Germantown Friends School volunteered at Wyck and built the run. They worked hard to predator-proof the run and coop, burying the fence 6" deep around the entire area. We owe a special thanks to Jim, Luke, and the Germantown Friends graduates.



Wyck's chickens hanging around the coop.



Summer camper works on his landscape design.

Summer Camp at Wyck - Fairy Houses and Homemade Jam

More than 50 children, ages 8 through 13, enjoyed summer camp at Wyck in July and August, exploring, playing, learning, and constructing. Camp directors Maryanne Yoshida and Heather Zimmerman created three weeks of outdoor fun, encouraging the kids to stretch their bodies and their imaginations. Using recipes from Wyck's collections, campers made homemade jams, butters, and dried treats. Campers constructed everything from cornhusk dolls to fairy houses, using only natural materials. In between projects, campers balanced on stilts, played dodgeball and kickball, and played imaginary games. Look for 2010 camp information next spring.

Morris Arboretum Donates Greenhouse Mist System to Wyck to Support Rose Propagation

As far back as the early 1900s the garden at Wyck has been held in high regard as an important rare rose collection. While Wyck is proud to have rare roses in our collection, there is risk in being the only repository for any one variety. In the past few years several important historic rose collections have been damaged by rose rosette disease, a dangerous and contagious plant virus for which there is no treatment. Spurred by this development, Wyck has undertaken an effort to propagate more of our rarest roses and to make plants available to a range of public and private gardens.

In August the Morris Arboretum donated a greenhouse mist system to Wyck. Once the system is installed, the propagation success rate for rose cuttings will increase exponentially. Special thanks go to Morris propagator Shelley Dillard, and to Ken Stringer, Morris's maintenance mechanic who dismantled the system so it could be moved.

Considering that ninety percent of old rose varieties are extinct, we have a responsibility to protect every old variety that still exists. It is hoped that by next summer many more of Wyck's important plants will have found homes in other collections. This dispersal will permanently safeguard their survival, as well as allow more people to enjoy the beautiful flowers that visitors to Wyck know and love so well.

Wyck Thanks its Garden and Home Farm Volunteers for
Their Help in Keeping Our Gardens Looking
So Good This Summer

**Suzanne Conway, Nancy Lanham,
Margaret Nolen, and Lindsey Shapiro**

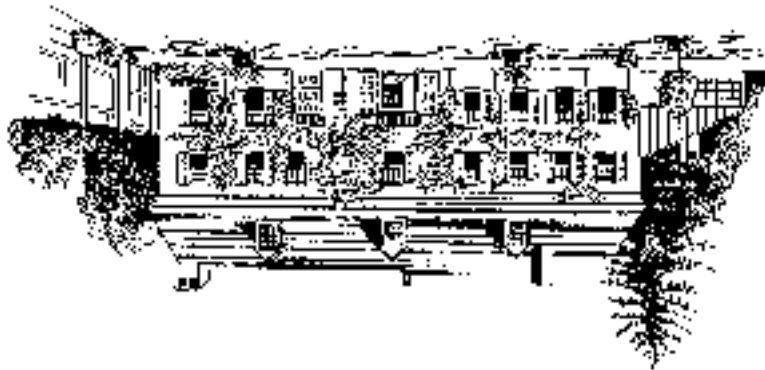
Germantown Works!

Germantown Works is a year-long collaborative program of
the Historic Germantown consortium interpreting the theme:

**"Hard Work: An Industrious People,
Creating Commerce and Culture."**

Please check our website frequently for updates on Wyck's
Germantown Works programming. For all Germantown Works
programming, visit www.freedomsbackyard.com.

The Wyck Association tells the story of Wyck, the quietly elegant home,
historic gardens, farm buildings, and collection of objects and papers
that reflect the everyday life of one Philadelphia family over three
hundred years. Programs at Wyck draw on this family's passion for
education, its Quaker simplicity, and its love of natural history and
horticulture. Through the preservation and interpretation of this rare
resource, the Wyck Association works to enrich and strengthen
community life.



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Proud Member of:

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