A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Throughout my four years as President of the Neville House Associates, I have had the opportunity to use this newsletter to address our members with good news about the site, to implore our friends to help the site and to occasionally pass along distressing information. It is with great sadness that I lament the loss of long-time NHA board member, past president and, most importantly, my good friend, Hazel Peters.

Hazel's passing came suddenly on April 28, shortly after she returned from an extended vacation in which she spent time enjoying her three favorite activities: spending time with her husband Ron, visiting her grandchildren in Myrtle Beach and touring 18th century historical sites. One of the longest serving members of the NHA, she joined the organization in the early 1980s and quickly became an instrumental leader and member of the Board of Directors. From 1988 to 1993, Hazel served as president and oversaw the finishing touches of the initial restoration to the house. In 1993, health problems forced her to temporarily step back from her activities at the site, but within a year she was back in action working closely with local garden clubs to begin the initial restoration of the historic kitchen garden. It was this work that became the foundation on which the present day demonstration yard and gardens were based. From 1999 to 2007, she served as one of the NHA representatives to the Woodville Operating Committee, which oversaw the operations at the site. In recent years, Hazel continued her efforts as a behind the scenes leader, serving as the head of the Nominating Committee. In 2008 and 2009, Hazel's experience with the first restoration proved to be invaluable. She worked closely with the Decorative Arts Committee when they began their historic reassessment of the house and restoration of the Cowan Bedroom and visitor reception area (now nearly finished).

Ultimately, the job for which she will most fondly be remembered is that of docent. Hazel truly enjoyed leading groups of visitors

(Continued on Page 2)
through the house, often becoming so enthused that she treated the house as if she lived there. She was always stirred by new information being learned about the site and was quick to incorporate it into her tours. Additionally, she was one of the most photographed docents at the site, appearing in at least twenty news stories during my tenure with the NHA. This was truly the area in which Hazel excelled and where the organization will miss her the most.

On a personal note, Hazel’s passing has been one the most difficult events I have had to face since joining the Woodville team. In addition to being a fellow docent at the site, Hazel was a good friend. From my very first days at the site, she was always there with a smile and a pat on the back, encouraging my ideas and providing wise advice. My earliest days as an interpreter at the house were spent following Hazel as she led visitors through Woodville. It was during these days I learned that I was not the only docent who had trouble abbreviating the tour. It was also during this time that her love for the site, the house and the job of presenting 18th century history really impressed me. Even more impressive was that over fifteen years later, I still could see that same energy and excitement in her eyes as she presented the newly restored Cowan Bedroom, new archaeological evidence and even the new chickens. I was also a neighbor to Hazel, living less than a half mile away. In recent years, we would ride home together following meetings. While Hazel may not have realized it at the time, it was during these fifteen minute drives that she had a most significant impact on both myself and the NHA. Frequently I would use this time to present new ideas to her. In many cases, Hazel’s gentle but concise advice would lead me to a more thorough and thoughtful rethinking of my potential proposals. It is this invaluable guidance that I, as President, will miss the most.

Ultimately, my heart goes out to her husband Ron, who would dutifully bring Hazel to the site, help to open the shutters and doors and always be ready with a cheerful story or two. I will miss the reassuring sight of Ron sitting patiently on the wooden bench near the parking lot - a heartening sight that meant my dear friend, colleague and fellow historian would be waiting inside the main house at Woodville. I will miss you Hazel. We will miss you Hazel. God bless you.

Rob Windhorst
President, Neville House Associates

NEW NHA MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Neville House Associates. Huzzah and thank you for joining! Please add the following new names to your NHA Membership Directory:

Sam & Pattie Zyroll

The following NHA members have changed their contact information. Please make the following revisions to your NHA Membership Directory:

Susan F. O’Toole M/M Edward V. Randall, Jr. Sarah Steinmark

Steven McClelland Anita Betschart John R. Pattison
Step back in time at Woodville Plantation, the home of John and Presley Neville, and visit Western Pennsylvania’s principal link to the late 18th century. See how Pittsburgh’s wealthiest citizens lived during the period of 1780-1820, The Era of the New Republic. Admission to the site is $5.00 for adults and $10.00 for families. The grounds are open year round for self-guided tours on Wednesday through Saturday, from 10 am-6 pm. The house is open year round for guided tours on Sunday, from 1 pm-4 pm. Special tours can be arranged for groups of fifteen or more by contacting the site. For additional information please visit www.WoodvillePlantation.org.

Join the interpreters at Woodville Plantation throughout 2009 as they present ‘Necessary Domestic Duties: a Thousand Little Occurrences Never Foreseen.’ Each month, our interpreters will present the common everyday activities necessary to maintain and operate an 18th century plantation. Learn how these activities compare to our modern chores such as laundry, cooking, gardening and sewing. In addition, visitors will learn about some very different jobs such as raising chickens and cutting and hauling wood. In some cases, guests may participate in these interactive programs.

July 18 & 19 - Whiskey Rebellion Weekend  
July 18 - History Walk From Bower Hill  
Woodville and the Scott Township Conservancy team up to present a walking lecture titled “The Events of July ’94.” Join the soldiers of Wayne’s Fourth Sub-Legion as they return to Bower Hill for the first time since the Whiskey Rebellion to discuss the fateful events of July 1794 and the Neville family. This unique event will begin at 11 am at the historical marker on Bower Hill and will last approximately two hours. The walk will end at Old St. Luke’s Church, covering approximately one mile along the newly restored woodland trails of Bower Hill. Topics covered will include the Battle of Bower Hill, the soldiers that participated in the battle and the Whiskey Rebellion. The walk will end with a tour of the Fourth Sub-Legion’s encampment at Woodville. For additional details and to register please visit www.scottconservancy.org or contact Woodville Plantation.  
July 19 - Whiskey Rebellion Day  
Meet the soldiers of Anthony Wayne's Fourth Sub-Legion of the United States, the defenders of Neville's Bower Hill house during the Whiskey Rebellion. Visitors will experience camp life in 1794 as the soldiers drill, fire muskets and discuss what it’s like to be a member of Wayne’s army. Visitors will also learn about 18th century cooking techniques as the Woodville cooks prepare dinner for the encamped troops. The site will be open from noon-5 pm. Special admission for this day will be $3.00 per person.

August 2 - Above the Stairs: Behind the Scenes Tour  
Visitors will experience a rarely seen side of Woodville, above the stairs in the main house. Tour the private rooms of the Neville and Cowan families and see the original painted checkerboard floor (circa 1790). Don’t miss this rare opportunity for a look at the private lives of Woodville’s residents.

August 30 - Harvest Day  
Join the gardeners of Woodville Plantation as they harvest heirloom vegetables grown at the site throughout the summer. Meet the head gardener and learn about 18th century crops, growing techniques and tools.

September 20 - Games of the New Republic  
Join the interpreters at Woodville Plantation as they enjoy a day of recreation following the harvest. Learn about games played during the Federal Period (1780-1820) and take part in 18th century diversions such as quoits, nine man morris and log tossing. The day will conclude with a game of stool ball. All are welcome to participate and join in the fun.

October 4 - Necessary Duties: Laundry  
Join Woodville’s laundress as she presents the unique and interesting practices required for washing and ironing the clothing and linens of a late 18th century plantation.

October 25 - Necessary Duties: Woodcutting  
Join the overseer of the Neville farms as he explains the ever-present necessity of maintaining the fires used for heating and cooking in the Woodville house and the methods of cutting, stacking and use.
November 1 - Wayne's Fourth Sub-Legion Encampment
Meet the soldiers of Anthony Wayne's Fourth Sub-Legion of the United States, the defenders of Neville's Bower Hill house during the Whiskey Rebellion. Visitors will experience camp life in 1794 as the soldiers drill, fire muskets and discuss what it's like to be a member of Wayne's army. Visitors will also learn about 18th century cooking techniques as the Woodville cooks prepare dinner for the encamped troops.

November 22 - Holidays at the House
Come celebrate the holidays in “a different light” with candlelit tours of Woodville Plantation. Learn about holiday customs that differ from today's celebrations such as Twelfth Night, Boxing Day and the firing of Christmas guns.

December 6 - Necessary Duties: Spinning and Knitting
Join the wool spinstress to learn how wool was spun into thread and then knitted into the many items needed for warmth in the cold winter months at Woodville Plantation.

December 13 - Above the Stairs: Behind the Scenes Tour
Visitors will experience a rarely seen side of Woodville, above the stairs in the main house. Tour the private rooms of the Neville and Cowan families and see the original painted checkerboard floor (circa 1790). Don't miss this rare opportunity for a look at the private lives of Woodville's residents.

Woodville Plantation will be closed from December 14, 2009, through January 2, 2010.
Woodville will re-open for tours on January 3, 2010.

THE NEW VISITOR RECEPTION AREA NEEDS YOUR HELP
In April, construction, or rather deconstruction, began on the only un-restored room on the first floor of Woodville - the modern kitchen. This is the small room located at the rear of the house, near the garden. This is a modern room that most members and visitors have never seen, and until recently, was used by docents as a support area for programs. As the deconstruction evolved, a completely intact painted room was revealed. Also revealed was a set of rotten floor joists, a completely deteriorated foundation and a crumbling porch floor.

The resulting unexpected repairs have caused the project to run significantly over budget. As a result, Woodville needs you help. Please consider a donation to help us offset these necessary renovations. One way to double your donation is to check with your employer to see if your company offers matching contributions to non-profits. Some local companies that participate are Heinz, PPG, PNC and Bank of New York Mellon. Your human resource department will give you all of the papers necessary for the NHA to receive matching funds. Please mail the forms to Woodville - Attention Treasurer.

The new visitor reception room is scheduled to open in November.
The Scott Conservancy and Woodville Plantation team up to present

A UNIQUE WALKING LECTURE:

THE WHISKEY REBELLION

Saturday, July 18, 2009 - 11 am to 1 pm

JOIN THE SOLDIERS OF THE FOURTH SUB-LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES AS THEY RETURN TO BOWER HILL FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1794. This special event will verbally and visually recreate the momentous events that occurred on Bower Hill in July of 1794. The walk will be lead by reenactors portraying the soldiers sent from Fort Fayette (Pittsburgh) to defend Bower Hill and the Neville family from local insurgents. These uniformed historians will discuss the dramatic events that culminated in the burning of one of the largest and well furnished homes in Western PA at the time.

Lasting approximately 1 mile, the walk will begin at 11 am at the Bower Hill state historical marker located on the peak of Bower Hill, near the parking lot between Our Lady of Grace Church and Kane Regional Nursing Center on Kane Blvd. The walk will continue along the Scott Conservancy trail adjacent to the Jewish Community Center, follow the Neville trail to the Whiskey Point trailhead and conclude at Old St. Luke's Church. Topics covered include the Bower Hill plantation, Neville family, soldiers of Wayne's Legion, whiskey rebels and the rebellion itself. The walk is free of charge, but donations can be made to the Scott Conservancy.

Following the walk, please join the soldiers of Wayne's Legion at Woodville Plantation to experience camp life as it was lived by the U.S. Army in 1794. The camp will be open to the public on Saturday, July 18, from 1 pm to 5 pm. and on Sunday, July 19, from noon to 5 pm. Special admission price for the encampment and house tours is $3.00.

For more info, please contact Woodville Plantation at 412.221.034 / www.WoodvillePlantation.org or Don McGuirk of the Scott Conservancy at donedrum@yahoo.com.
A LETTER FROM RICHARD WRENSHALL - NOVEMBER 10, 1856

Woodville Monday night
Nov tenth 1856

Dear Mary,

I ride and drive the goats every day, until I smell so strong that Uncle Dick
swears at me and Pa drives me out of the "Snuggery" with a big stick. We
have got a new ice house built and cry but it is warm and nice. I have to
work so hard now Mary, but I haven’t to feed the pigs any more as Pa
doesn’t feed them. Pa makes me turn the grind stone until my back is most
broke, and then I have to feed the horses - Old Colonel never leaves the store
door open but stays there waitin’ for ears of corn - you ought to see his tail
there are more nor ten thousand burs in it and he cant wag it at all.

I drove Uncle Dick and Charley all the way to Chest-- Hill a few days
ago, and then drove home by myself. My oh but old Tarriff is thin. You
ought to see the Snuggery now Mary, there is such an elegant pile of oats on
one corner to play in and so many tools and pipes and all sorts of things
and Pa sits there and smokes his pipe so hard. I

Uncle Dick walked out this evening and brought Bessie a bundle of candy
and Willie and me some walnut candy as big as pieces of ginger bread -
Mother some books and Pa some smoking tobacco. Willie and I have it our
own and Bessie is eating here and we want some so bad and she won’t give
us any but into those munching it and laughing at us while Uncle Dick
and Pa are settin’ at side of the fire smoking their pipes. And Mother
she sits at the table eating candy and reading. The Methodist preacher Mr.
McMahon was here on Saturday nigh and staid all Sunday - We have
letters from John and he is well. Willie and I had to go to church on
Sunday so we --. The creek is frozen nearly over and the moon is shinin’
so bright tonight. Uncle Dick brought out a fiddle string with him and we
are going to play directly in the kitchen.

I am now going to draw you a picture of the back yard and Uncle Dick is
going to help me. Pont’s house is now in the front yard beside the garden
yard and --- has straw and is mighty comfortable I can tell you.

Give my regards to Walter and the other gentlemen.

Yours Respectfully,

Richard Wrenshall

(Continued on Page 8)
Most historians agree that while researching history, it is often much more exciting to explore the furthest reaches of antiquity than to examine recent times, which may be more similar to our own.

At Woodville, we spend much of our energy researching the Neville family and all of its connections to the wealthy and powerful of late 18th century Pittsburgh. Occasionally, one has the opportunity to obtain a clearer view of history, in this case the history of Woodville, through the eyes of a child. Recently, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie House, antique dealers from Prospect, Kentucky, kindly donated a letter written by Richard Wrenshall dated “Woodville Monday night Nov Tenth 1856.” This rather simplistic and inauspicious document has opened up the world of mid-19th century Woodville, through the eyes of an eleven year-old boy.

Richard Wrenshall was the seventh of eight children born to Mary Ann and John Wrenshall, a grandson of Christopher Cowan and the first male Wrenshall to be born in the Woodville mansion. Born in 1845, Richard “Dick” Cowan Wrenshall was a prolific artist, frequently utilizing the country side in the vicinity of Woodville as a subject for his very detailed watercolors. Some examples of his work are copied for the public to view at Woodville. In later years, his medium for expressing his artistry changed to photography, and he became just as prolific at photographing both the landscape and the denizens of the farm.

His artistic influences seem to have been fostered by another early resident, Richard Cowan, the namesake of our young author and artist, who helped him to illustrate and write the letter. His abilities already appear to be well defined in the detailed drawing of the yard at the rear of the house. This drawing shows the still house and the small barn with a small latticed shed to one side, possibly the “Snuggery,” which is referred to several times in the text. Additionally, he illustrates many of the animals, including a detail of “Colonel’s tail” with all of its burrs, Pont the dog, Pan the cat, a very thin “Old Tarriff,” “our new ducks,” shanghai chickens, a goat, a self portrait and portrait of his Uncle Dick.

The letter is fascinating and incredibly detailed. It appears that it was written to his cousin Mary who lived in Kentucky. In the first paragraph there are several clues about the architecture of Woodville, as Richard talks about two buildings which, to date, have not been located at the site - the ice house and the “Snuggery.” The ice house may have been located near the mill race or pond, a common location for these structures since it would require less effort to cut and transport the ice. Generally these buildings would be relatively small, but dug up to twenty feet below ground. The walls would be stone and lined with straw in summer months to insulate the blocks of ice and inhibit melting.

The “Snuggery,” appears to be a small room of sorts, possibly the lattice enclosed area shown on the east side of what appears to be the barn. This barn appears in several photos and in some of Richard Wrenshall’s watercolors. It would have been located near the present-day parking lot, just south of the walnut grove at the center of the property.

Additionally, we gain insight into the winter months at this rural estate. Wrenshall gives us a glimpse of the extreme cold of this particular winter with his observation that by the beginning of November, “the creek is frozen nearly over.” This

(Continued on Page 8)
observation is even more interesting in the context that the winter of 1856-1857 was the second coldest in recorded Pennsylvania history and the coldest winter of the 19th century.

This weather trivia also puts into context the statement about the ice house “my but it is warm and nice.” (I believe that a comma is missing from the original letter following the word “my” and that Richard’s intent was an exclamation about the temperature and not a comment about his backside.) With the average temperature that winter being 22 degrees, the comparatively moderate temperature of the below-ground ice house would have been 30-35 degrees and would have felt “warm” to young Richard. It should also be noted that the dog, Pont, is even given extra straw in his house “beside the garden yard” and “he is mighty comfortable.” One final note of interest is that Richard never appears to be complaining about the cold.

This letter, quite simply, is destined to be one of the gems of Woodville’s archives. The simplicity of everyday life, as seen through the eyes of this young boy’s letter, illuminates the differences between life in the first half of the 19th century and that of our present existence. It is also a wonderful example of how even the most mundane items, something that most people would never consider as an item of historical research, can unlock a verbal and visual doorway into a bygone era. The letter is currently being conserved and should be on display at Woodville later this year.

**DOCENTS ARE NEEDED**

To borrow a phrase from the U.S. military, Woodville is looking for a few good men... and women. In recent months, the Woodville docent corps has lost over half of its regular interpreters and we desperately need some energetic, enthusiastic and historically minded people to replace them.

If you think that you might want to try it, but you’re not sure what is involved, all that we ask is that you give us a minimum of six to ten Sundays throughout the year. Duties include opening the site at 12:30 pm, leading tours of the house from 1-4 pm and closing up (usually around 4:30 pm). If you want to do more, we have special events occasionally that require more than one docent. We can use your help on those days as well.

You say that you’re not sure about “dressing” in period clothing, no problem. Our tour guides are divided into two groups - interpreters who dress in period clothes and demonstrate a particular 18th century skill and docents who wear 21st century clothing. In either case, we will provide attire for you.

Interested? If so, there will be a docent training class on Sunday, July 26, 2009, at 4:30 pm, following the last tour of the day. If you have questions or are interested in attending, please contact us at 412.221.0348.
ORDER FORM for
COMB BACK WINDSOR CHAIRS

Thank you for your contribution to the Windsor Chair Reproduction Program at Woodville Plantation, the home of John and Presley Neville. The Comb Back Windsor Chair, or “stick chair,” that will be built for Woodville by local artisan Dave Burke is a style that was commonly found throughout America from 1790 to 1820. Fittingly named because of the resemblance of the back to a rooster’s comb, these functional chairs would have been used for both formal occasions inside, as well as for more casual affairs on the verandah and in the garden.

Our reproductions are made using woods, such as oak, maple and pine, that would have been found near the site during the turn of the 19th century. The seats are formed from a single piece of white pine that will be contoured by hand. Spindles, legs and turnings will be created from hand-shaved maple or oak. The finished chair will be painted in an authentic verdant green color using a historic paint receipt. Mixed by hand, the paint looks just as it would have in 1790. Each chair will take an individual craftsman approximately one month to complete. Finally, each hand-assembled chair will be affixed with an engraved brass plate recording an inscription of the donors choice.

The Windsor Chair will be used exclusively at the site for events, general seating and re-enactments. Woodville Plantation and the Neville House Association Board of Directors thank you for your donation and for supporting our living history programs. We look forward to seeing you enjoy a respite on the verandah of the Woodville estate, on an authentic reproduction that you sponsored.

COMB BACK WINDSOR CHAIRS

Name: 

Address: 

City: State: Zip: 

Phone: Email: 

Amount Enclosed (Chairs are $450.00 each =): $

Inscription to Read: 

Make checks payable to: Neville House Associates
Woodville Plantation Windsor Chair Program
1375 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017
The NHA says goodbye...
to longtime board member and docent, Dorothy Plank, who has retired due to health reasons. Dorothy joined the NHA in the late 1980s and has served over twenty years in numerous capacities. She was the Director of Education for over a decade, and was responsible for coordinating the APEX program with Chartiers Valley High School. Dorothy’s knowledge of 18th century life is unsurpassed, and she will be especially missed by her fellow docents. Good luck in the future.

Also, goodbye...
to the Vice President of the NHA Board of Directors, Suzanne Fagan. Suzanne joined the NHA board in 2005 and will continue working with the organization in a supporting role. Thank you for all of your efforts.

Congratulations...
to junior docent Matt Boyas. Matt was chosen as one of six finalists out of 68 applicants to receive a book/tuition scholarship from PHLF. Matt has worked with Woodville for six years, serving as “head junior docent” for the past several years. He graduated from Upper St. Clair High School and will be attending Dartmouth College in the fall. Good luck, Matt.

Thanks...
to Mardi Jackley for her efforts at coordinating the Woodville volunteers during “Collier Cleanup Day” on April 18. The day was a success, with volunteers cleaning up Route 50 and Thoms Run Road around the historic property. Thank you to the NHA volunteers, Dick Smith, Paul Day, Mardi Jackley, Erin Calik and Rob Windhorst for all of their hard work.

Also, thank you...
to Chartiers Valley graduate, Brian Duncan. Brian organized and coordinated “Rock for History II,” a concert held at Scott Township park this spring. Through his efforts, Brian was able to raise over $600 for the NHA. He will be attending the Coast Guard Academy in 2009.

Thank you...
to Mr. and Mrs. Eddie House of Prospect, KY for their generous donation of Richard Wrenshall’s letter written in 1856.
Please take time to renew your 2009 membership. Renewing will help the Neville House Associates staff with programming and activities, as well as with newsletter and postage costs. Woodville is one of only 2,500 National Historic Landmarks in the United States. Your gift will help to support the continuing preservation, restoration and interpretation of this historic site.

**DONATION LEVELS**

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All memberships include free family admission to Woodville Plantation for the regular hours of operation, gift shop discounts, invitation to “members only” events and a NHA newsletter. Your gift is tax deductible.

Many companies also match their employee’s donations to organizations such as Woodville Plantation. If your employer provides matching donations, please let them know about your contribution. This is an easy way to double your donation. Thank you for your support!

**2009 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name: __________________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________ Zip: ___________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: _________________________

*Amount Enclosed $ ___________________________*

*Make checks payable to:* Neville House Associates, Inc.
1375 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017
Attn: Julianna Haag, Membership
NEEDED, a FEW ABLE MEN

The soldiers of Wayne's Fourth Sub-Legion have returned to Woodville Plantation and they are looking for recruits. The unit will recreate the twelve soldiers who bravely defended Neville's Bower Hill mansion in 1794. Exhibition camps will be set up in 2009 on May 9 & 10, July 18 & 19 and November 1. The men will march and demonstrate the military drills of 1794 (based on Von Steuben’s “Blue Book” from 1777), along with recreating various activities of camp life.

Requirements are that you be at least sixteen years of age (fourteen if you are interested in becoming a fifer or drummer), able to attend at least one drill session per month at the Woodville site, able to attend the soldier programs at the site and are interested and committed to historical accuracy.

Woodville will provide you with a loaned uniform and all accoutrements, instruction and training on drill and history of the unit, and occasionally meals prepared by the Woodville cooks during our major events. 18th century civilian dress will be provided during the training period and a custom outfitted uniform will be provided following the successful completion of training. Soldiers will also have the opportunity to muster with other units of Wayne's Legion in the local area for off-site activities.

Window on Woodville

Neville House Associates
1375 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED