

THE ARBOR

Newsletter of the Awbury Arboretum Association

Spring | 2011

Spring Volunteer Day - Many Hands at Work!

AWBURY – Sunday, April 4, 2011 – More than a hundred volunteers gathered at Awbury Arboretum on a bright and breezy day to participate in a Spring Volunteer Clean-up.

In conjunction with the Mayor's Philly Spring Clean-up and the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields 2011 conference, this event brought together conference attendees and members of the community to beautify and clean up all corners of Awbury Arboretum. Efforts included pruning and weeding to improve the main Chew Avenue gateway to Awbury, removal of invasive plants from the storm-water management area along Washington Lane, and clean-up at the Awbury Community Garden.

We are grateful to partners from the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Weavers Way Farm for their help. As Director Karen Anderson said, "they made light work of a daunting task." The volunteer event caught the attention of multiple press outlets including the Philadelphia Inquirer, WHYY's Newsworks, and KYW Newsradio, and has been commended as a model project exemplifying the power of community collaboration.



Volunteers clear debris from the wetland area

Awbury Staff

Awbury Arboretum Association

Chris Van de Velde - Interim Executive Director

Nikia Hill - Administrator

Beth Miner - Manager of Outreach and Community Engagement

Awbury Landscape Services

Steve Pascavitch - Manager and Arborist

Ernie Martin - Foreman

Fané Duren - Crew Leader

Gene Redmon - Crew Member

Tim Fisher - Crew Member

Ralph Francis - Crew Member

Would YOU like to be involved future volunteer events?

Plans for the future include more inter-organizational partnerships, as well as the establishment of a regular corps of volunteers to help with the Arboretum's ongoing improvements. Beth Miner, Awbury's Manager of Outreach and Community Engagement says:

"Volunteers are an integral part of all we do here at Awbury. Every volunteer makes an impact and helps determine who we are and what we can accomplish together."

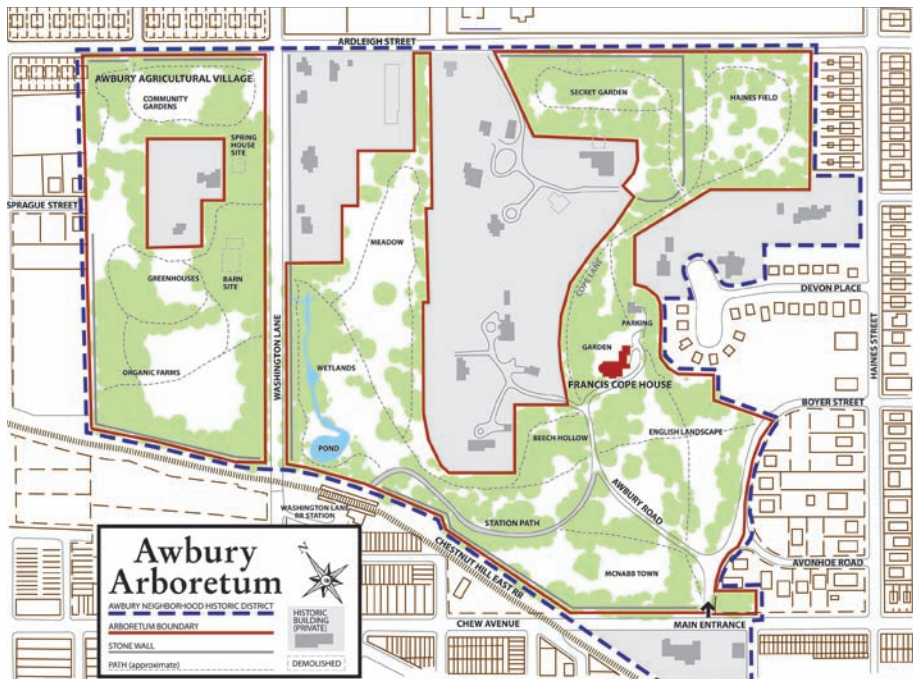
If you are interested in volunteering with Awbury, please contact Beth at 215-849-2855, ext. 25 or bminer@awbury.org.

Awbury's New Website and Thriving Online Community

Awbury is working on a new web site! The new site will go live at **www.awbury.org** in mid June, and will offer members, neighbors, and friends of Awbury new ways to connect and learn. The new site will allow visitors to share stories and media, and access historical photos and documents. The site will also offer volunteer and event registration and an email newsletter sign-up. Awbury's online community is already thriving, with over 400 Facebook and Twitter followers and more joining daily! Find us online and join the conversation!



New Recognition of Awbury's Historic Significance



Map showing the boundaries of the Awbury Historic District (visit our website, www.awbury.org to view a large version of the map). Created by Emily Johnson.

Ten years ago, in 2001, Awbury Arboretum received the distinction of a National Historic designation from the U.S. Department of the Interior. As of May 14, 2010, Awbury has also been designated an historic district by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, protecting the landscape features which are the setting for the historic houses at the Arboretum. In both cases, Awbury has been judged significant because of the architecture of the buildings, its connection to significant figures in Philadelphia history, and the features of its Victorian landscape. These include lawns and planned open vistas, copses (groves of trees), meadows, a pond and other features, all of which have been inventoried and photographed by the Historical Commission. Many of the homes within the Awbury District were already individually listed with the Historical Commission, which resulted in a patchwork neighborhood of

designated and undesignated properties. As the Awbury Historic District, uniform rules for all neighbors will protect Awbury from further development or insensitive changes to the historic architecture or landscape.

The recognition Awbury has received both locally and nationally through the creation of the Awbury Historic District will help to secure additional funding for improving both Awbury and the surrounding neighborhoods. Typically, historic districts improve property values and have the effect of stabilizing neighborhoods. We hope historic district status will be a source of neighborhood pride and recognition that Awbury is a unique community asset. The nomination will advance the mission of the Awbury Arboretum Association to connect the community, not only with the natural and cultivated environment, but also with Awbury's unique history.

In the know...

- Awbury is working with Nicole Juday, Landscape Curator at Wyck Historic House and Garden to develop a combined tour of Germantown's historic Quaker gardens. A collaborative tour is in the works through Morris Arboretum's education program and will spotlight the rich history of gardening and horticultural interest among prominent Quaker families of Northwest Philadelphia, such as the Haines family at Wyck and the Cope family at Awbury.
- Awbury is working with Penn State Cooperative Extension and the W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences to install a pollinator garden to provide ecosystem services to our partners at the Awbury Agricultural Village. See page 3 for more information on the Awbury Agricultural Village.

Staff News

After ten busy years as Awbury's Executive Director, Gerry Kaufman retired in early 2010. During his tenure, Gerry helped greatly to increase awareness of Awbury in the Philadelphia area by developing cooperative relationships with a range of organizations, neighborhood groups, schools and city officials. Assistant Director Karen Anderson transferred into the role of Executive Director, but has chosen not to continue. Awbury is grateful for the careful and innovative consideration she has given to the Arboretum's future needs. Chris Van de Velde, former manager of Whitemarsh Township, has been asked by the Board of Directors to serve as Interim Executive Director while the Board conducts a search.

Awbury Arboretum is a not-for-profit organization that relies on donations from individuals and groups for its operating support.

Please consider becoming a member today, or renewing your annual membership. Your donation supports the continued preservation of the Arboretum and its programs and services. Check or cash donations may be mailed to The Francis Cope House, One Awbury Rd, Philadelphia, PA. Make checks payable to Awbury Arboretum. If you would like to receive newsletters electronically, please provide an email address with your donation. Donations may also be made through our website www.awbury.org. Click the "Donate" button on the bottom of the home page screen and show your support today!

William Penn Funds Development of Awbury Agricultural Village

Awbury has received a two year \$330,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation for community engagement centered on a collaborative demonstration project called the "Awbury Agricultural Village". Located on Awbury's "Northwest Tract" - a 16-acre plot of land separated from the rest of the Arboretum by Washington Lane - the Awbury Agricultural Village hosts a vibrant mix of institutional and private partners including the Awbury Garden Club, KJK Associates, Weaver's Way Farm, Weaver's Way Community Programs, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Penn State Cooperative Extension. The Northwest Tract has a long history of agricultural use. It was an 18th century farm, and remained in active agriculture until the early 20th century, including production of fruits, vegetables, milk, poultry and eggs. Intensive use was abandoned around 1930, although during World War II the first

community gardens on the property were established as Victory Gardens. As the 20th century grew to a close, the property - separated from the rest of the Arboretum - struggled to find its purpose and became dormant and overgrown. Over the last decade, the rise of the urban agriculture movement has brought renewed interest to this neglected parcel. Awbury's first modern "pioneer" tenant on the Northwest Tract cleared an open space to store nursery inventory. A small garden was later established by a local food coop. Both of these enterprises continue today in greatly enlarged form, and have been joined by a number of other partners linked by a shared infrastructure which includes teaching areas, greenhouses, roadways, and water service. Today, in recognition of its many residents and special community quality, the site has been renamed the "Awbury Agricultural Village". The development of the Agricultural Village is intended

to coordinate the many projects and activities which have developed organically on the property over the past several years. The William Penn grant provides the means for Awbury to harmonize all of the activities occurring at the Agricultural Village, including funding for a business plan and a site management plan. The grant anticipates that the assessment, restoration, and management of the landscape surrounding the production areas will support and further the activities which our partners are presently conducting. Awbury is in the early stages of its work under this grant, but there have already been significant changes to the landscape. Members of Awbury Arboretum are encouraged to stop by and walk through the Agricultural Village to see what's growing in the beds and gardens, and view the greenhouses.

Awbury Welcomes Roots to Reentry



Roots to Reentry participants celebrate Arbor Day by planting a redbud with Steve Pascavitch, Manager of Awbury Landscape Services.

This year, Awbury Arboretum has been selected to join Bartram's Garden as one of two main training sites for "Roots to Reentry", a program organized and run by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Roots to Reentry provides inmates of the Philadelphia Prison System with the opportunity to develop new skills and gain hands-on landscaping and horticultural experience which will help them pursue meaningful employment upon their release. As they learn, participants in the Roots to Reentry program help to maintain and improve the arboretum, keeping it attractive and safe for the more than 10,000 people who visit Awbury's historic landscape each year. Awbury is proud to continue its long history of partnerships with service learning and service employment organizations, and even prouder to welcome back Brenda Allen, a 2008 graduate of Awbury's own

Apprentice Training Program, as Site Leader for the Roots to Reentry Program. Allen, now a full-time employee of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society says: *"I'm all for this. I have five brothers - most have been in and out of jail. If they'd had an opportunity like this, who knows where they would be. I was giddy the day the first class graduated, I was smiling from ear to ear, telling everyone on my block - I was ecstatic."*

Nikia Hill, Awbury Arboretum Administrator says: *"Brenda's knowledge and previous experience here is a great asset. The care and hard work that the participants of the Roots to Reentry program have shown in their day to day work at Awbury has been a great help to us this spring. We are happy to be a part of a program that equips the graduates with opportunities for empowerment and tools for success in this field."*

Awbury Arboretum Association

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The Awbury Arboretum
Association

The mission of Awbury Arboretum is to preserve and interpret Awbury's historic house and landscape, thereby connecting an urban community with nature and history.

Awbury Arboretum relies on the generous support of members, friends, partners and neighbors to carry out its mission.

Please enjoy the newsletter - we hope you will consider supporting Awbury today!



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**HISTORIC
GERMANTOWN**

Freedom's Backyard

freedombackyard.com

Awbury Arboretum a proud member of Historic Germantown! Through partnership and collaboration, members of Historic Germantown strive to foster an appreciation of the diverse character and meaning of Germantown's cultural heritage in order to preserve and revitalize our community.



Signs of Spring at Awbury... First graders from Wissahickon Charter School explore the pond on a sunny May morning, Red-winged Blackbirds and other migrants fill the air with color and song, and spring-blooming trees like the Eastern Redbud burst into bloom.