

## Notes & Comments

### Contractor Uncovers Historic Cistern at Valley Forge

In November a contractor narrowly escaped injury when the vehicle he was driving broke through into a septic cistern next to the Bake House / Ironmaster's House in the Washington's Headquarters area of Valley Forge National Historical Park. The cistern is 20 feet deep and 6 feet in diameter and is stone lined.

It probably was in use when the Bake House operated as the Washington Inn in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The contractor was working on an extension of the Joseph Plumb Martin trail that will connect the spur from the loop trail with the trails over Mounts Joy and Misery. The Park will probably fill in the cistern. The Washington's Headquarters area is closed for renovation work until the spring.



Photographs: Mike Bertram, 2008.

At right, historic postcard of the Washington Inn.



### New Developments with the American Revolution Center

The American Revolution Center recently announced that President and CEO Thomas Daly will be stepping down in January, to be replaced by Dr. Bruce Cole, current Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. While this change in leadership has raised hopes for a reconciliation between the ARC and project critics, obstacles seem to be increasing instead. On December 1, the National Parks Conservation Association and several Lower Providence residents filed suit in federal court, in an effort to overturn the recently approved zoning ordinance granted by Lower Providence Township. An independent study commissioned by the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau

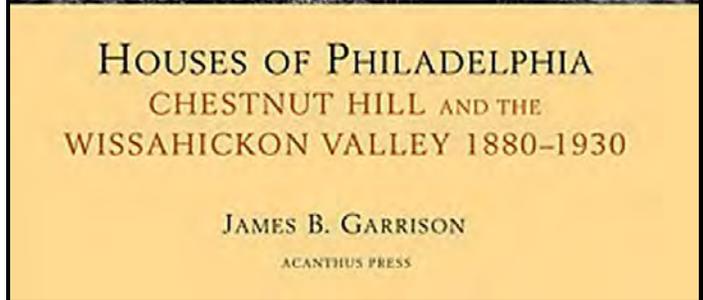
has also recommended against locating the museum at its proposed site. While there is general agreement that the ARC museum concept is worthwhile, the conflict regarding the more commercial aspects of the project will provide a major test of Dr. Cole's leadership skills in the coming year.

### **Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust Welcomes Architectural Historian James B. Garrison for Lecture and Book Signing**

On November 13, Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust President, Pattye Benson welcomed audience members to historic Duportail House in Chesterbrook for their Fall Lecture Series. Ms. Benson announced the partnership of the Trust with the Duportail House Board of Directors for the Spring and Fall Lecture Series. As guest lecturer for the evening, architectural historian James B. Garrison presented an enlightening talk, including a slide presentation, of his newly released book *Houses of Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill and Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930* (Acanthus Press, 2008). Over 60 guests attended the reception and lecture followed by a book signing by the author.

Mr. Garrison's book documents an outstanding group of houses, illustrating the scope of development in the Wissahickon Valley and the talented architects who worked there. From Henry Houston's much-altered Drum Moir home to Edward Stotesbury's extraordinary Whitemarsh Hall, the book examines 40 properties in detail with over 300 photographs and floor plans. The marvelous landscape that attracted early travelers and settlers became the setting for glorious estates that celebrated the connection between the natural and the built environment. From the mid-19th through the mid-20th century, three generations of prominent regional and national architects designed houses that have endured as magnificent examples of their own time, and remain eminently livable homes.

Mr. Garrison is an architect at RMJM Hillier in Philadelphia and a dedicated architectural historian with over 20 years of experience in historic preservation. The author of *Mastering Tradition: the Residential Architecture of John Russell Pope* (Acanthus Press, 2004), the author writes and lectures extensively on the history and architecture of southeastern Pennsylvania. He lives on the Main Line and serves on the Tredyffrin Historical Architectural Review Board.



For information about Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust, visit web site, [www.tredyffrinhistory.org](http://www.tredyffrinhistory.org) or call Trust President, Pattye Benson at 610.644.6759.