



PO Box 564  
 Flourtown, PA 19031  
 215-233-4600  
 www.springfieldhistory.org

# The Challenge

**PRESERVATION • RESEARCH • EDUCATION**

## SESQUI!

### ***Greed, Graft, and the Forgotten World's Fair of 1926***

**Presented by Mr. Tom Keels**

**Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.**

**First Presbyterian Church**

*Bethlehem Pike & East Mill Road in Flourtown, PA*

#### OCTOBER 2015

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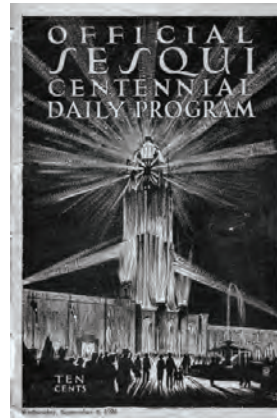
It was meant to be the greatest international exposition the world had ever seen.

It became known as the “*Flop Heard ‘Round the World.*”

What went wrong with Philadelphia’s second world’s fair, staged fifty years after its tremendous success with the 1876 Centennial?

In 1916, department store magnate John Wanamaker launched plans for a Sesqui Centennial International Exposition in 1926, a world’s fair to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Wanamaker believed that the “Sesqui” would restore its beloved but corrupt hometown to its rightful position as the birthplace of American liberty. Centered around the new Fairmount Parkway (today’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway), the fair would turn sooty, industrial Philadelphia into a Beau-Arts City Beautiful.

On May 31, 1926, the Sesqui-Centennial opened in the remote, muddy swamps of South Philadelphia. Mayor W. Freeland Kendrick welcomed the world to an unfinished fair of shabbily built, mostly empty structures. When the Sesqui closed six months later, “Kendrick’s Carnival” had attracted fewer than five



*Founders Court Looking Toward Bell*



million paying customers, less than half the number who saw the Centennial fifty years earlier. It had lost millions of dollars and made Philadelphia a national scandal, a city so corrupt that one political boss could kidnap an entire world’s fair.

The Springfield Township Historical Society welcomes back Mr. Tom Keels, author or co-author of six published books on Philadelphia history: *Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love*; *Forgotten Philadelphia: Lost Architecture of the Quaker City*; *Chestnut Hill*; *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*; *Philadelphia’s Rittenhouse Square*; and the recently released *Philadelphia’s Golden Age of Retail* (with Lawrence M. Arrigale).

Please join us on October 15<sup>th</sup>, as Mr. Tom Keels talks about the subject of his forthcoming book *Sesqui! Greed, Graft, and the*

*Forgotten World’s Fair of 1926*. Filled with unforgettable characters, *Sesqui!* tells the compelling story of a world’s fair that crashed and burned, set against the backdrop of a changing, conflicted city and country during the Roaring Twenties. The public is invited to attend, and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments will be served.

**For more information call 215-233-4600**

#### PLEASE NOTE:

*Attendees to the October program are encouraged to bring a canned food item to donate to the First Presbyterian Church’s neighborhood food pantry. Please help us to support this important cause.*

## Notice of Elections, October 15, 2015

Elections will be held at our Annual Meeting on October 15, 2015. The Slate, prepared by the Nominating Committee, follows. Additional nominations may be made by any Friend of the Springfield Township Historical Society, in writing signed by 10 additional Friends, and filed with the Nominating Committee at least 15 days prior to the Annual Meeting (by October 1, 2015). No nominations will be accepted from the floor. Address nominating petitions to the Nominating Committee, Springfield Township Historical Society, PO Box 564, Flourtown PA 19031.

### SLATE Directors also Serving as Officers – 4 year Terms

**President** ..... T. Scott Kreilick ..... 2014-2017  
**Vice President** ..... Anna Coxo Toogood ..... 2014-2017  
**Treasurer, nominee for election**.....W. Scott Armington ..... 2016-2019

### DIRECTORS Terms take effect on January 1, 2016

#### Board Members for Re-Election

W. Scott Armington ..... 2016-2019  
 Dorothy J. Cutler ..... 2016-2019  
 Katharine Haight ..... 2016-2019  
 Amanda Helwig ..... 2016-2019  
 Dolores Jordan Cannon ..... 2016-2019  
 Catherine Worrall ..... 2016-2019

#### Board Member Candidates for Election

Robert Brock ..... 2016-2019  
 Bud Henkels ..... 2016-2019  
 Brian Quinn ..... 2016-2019  
 Robert Wilmot ..... 2016-2019

#### Board Members Serving 4-Year Terms (elected November 14, 2013)

Barbara Coleman ..... 2014-2017  
 Albert M. Comly, Jr. .... 2014-2017  
 Cynthia Rose Hamilton ..... 2014-2017  
 Dr. Mickey Harris ..... 2014-2017  
 Jack Yeakel ..... 2014-2017

## Become a Friend of STHS

FOR DETAILS PLEASE VISIT:  
[www.springfieldhistory.org](http://www.springfieldhistory.org)



## Annie Brong Wins STHS History Award

The Springfield Township Historical Society Scholarship Award was presented to Annie Brong, daughter of Joyce Collier, of Flourtown, and Bert Brong, of Wyndmoor, at Springfield Township High School's Senior Awards Assembly in June. The award

is given to a senior who will pursue an undergraduate degree in history, political science or related fields.

She is attending the St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., where she will enroll in the "Great Books Curriculum." Annie credits her interest in history to her teacher Peggy Zehner, who told stories and talked about people rather than asking students to memorize facts. In high school, she was a yearbook editor and enjoyed art.

Annie was involved in a model convention in Harrisburg organized by the YMCA; the local chapter/delegation that prepares for the model convention is at Springfield Township High School and is run by Zehner. All the students convened in Harrisburg where they conducted a model government with a governor, state house and senate. Annie served as Speaker of the House. She attended the national Youth and Government conference this past summer.

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13TH**

LOURTOWN COUNTRY CLUB

**1920's MURDER MYSTERY**

WITHOUT A CUE THEATER PRODUCTIONS

[WWW.HISTORYINMOTION3 . EVENTBRITE.COM](http://WWW.HISTORYINMOTION3.EVENTBRITE.COM)

## JOIN STHS FOR OUR 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Springfield Township Historical Society will celebrate its 30th anniversary at its third annual *History in Motion* on Friday, November 13, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at the Flourtown Country Club, 150 McCloskey Road, Flourtown.

Guests are encouraged to dress in their best 1920s ensembles for the festive evening, which will be in a Roaring 20s atmosphere with a full hour of complimentary wine from Chaddsford Winery and a seasonal beer tasting by Flourtown Beverage. Tickets include a sit-down dinner theater featuring 1920s murder mystery troop, Without A Cue Productions. Without a Cue Productions produces murder mystery dinner theaters in the region, including at Peddler's Village in Lahaska and at Fisher's Tudor House in Bensalem.

The evening will also feature a silent auction of 40 items, ranging from jewelry and art work to bronze pieces and small rugs by America's Best Auction. ABA is a licensed auctioneer of select art, home decoratives, antique furnishings, jewelry, and international estates based in Orange, Connecticut. For History in Motion, STHS will be given any of the profit over the minimum bid. ABA will move the auction to the Highlands, 7001 Sheaff Lane, Fort Washington for a live auction on Saturday and Sunday, November 14 and 15. STHS will receive three percent on items that sell at The Highlands auction.

The historical society has received generous sponsorships for the third annual History in Motion from Kreilick Conservation, LLC, Dan Helwig, Inc.-REALTORS®, Chaddsford Winery, and Flourtown Beverage. The Historical Society welcomes additional sponsors.

Tickets will be \$75 leading up to the event, and include a one-hour Wine & Seasonal Beer Bar with appetizer accompaniment. After that hour, it becomes a cash bar. Dinner will be a chicken entrée followed by dessert, coffee and tea. Please notify the STHS if you require a vegetarian meal.

Founded in 1985, the historical society researches, collects and preserves materials pertaining to the township's history. This history includes historically significant buildings, individuals, businesses, institutions and other entities of value.

To order tickets and learn more, visit [www.historyinmotion3.eventbrite.com](http://www.historyinmotion3.eventbrite.com), or call the historical society at 215-233-4600. For information about sponsorship, please see the adjacent form or contact STHS events committee chairperson Amanda Helwig at [MandyHelwig@aol.com](mailto:MandyHelwig@aol.com).

**Like Us on Facebook**

The Historical Society is on Facebook; find us at [Springfield Township Historical Society](https://www.facebook.com/SpringfieldTownshipHistoricalSociety).

**The Archives are OPEN to the Public**

TUESDAYS 7pm – 9pm  
 WEDNESDAYS 1pm – 5pm  
 SATURDAYS 9am – 12noon

For more information, call **215-233-4600**



# Springfield's Historic Businesses:

Sixth in a series of articles highlighting historic businesses in Springfield Township.

SPOTLIGHT ON

## B&W AUTO SERVICE

8155 Flourtown Avenue, Wyndmoor

In May of this year B&W Auto Service reached a major milestone for a business in any industry – they celebrated their 50-year anniversary at the same Wyndmoor location where the business first opened its doors to customers in 1965. For almost all of that time, the car shop at 8155 Flourtown Avenue has been owned and operated by members of the Waters family. Nevin F. (Nick) Waters, Jr., founded the firm along with a partner in the current building that has had quite a history itself—it served as a private garage, a repair shop for lawn mowers and bicycles and even a manufacturing plant for airplane parts during World War II. “I

in new technology and by putting some of their specialized know-how into fixing and racing cars that compete at Maple Grove in Mohnton, Pa and Atco Raceway in Atco, New Jersey.

They credit their success to a very loyal customer base and staying on top of new industry trends. Larry believes that a willingness to continue education and pursue further training are essential for anyone who wants to succeed in the business. In addition to a Mechanical Engineering Degree from Temple University, he has received accreditation from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) which requires that he take coursework for recertification every five years.

safety movement of the 1970s, which brought in seat belts and car seats for children while regulating removal of any car dash parts that could cause injury,” he adds.

The EPA changes probably had the most impact on our business, he explains. “In order for us to do emissions testing, we had to build an addition and buy expensive machines. If you didn’t do it, you would have to outsource the testing and it could have hurt our business.”

But the business has thrived thanks to the many loyal customers who see Wyndmoor B&W as their trusted auto repair shop. They not only come back, but their children and their children’s children come back. The shop does some advertising, but relies mostly on repeat business and on word-of-mouth referrals. “Almost all of our business comes from referrals,” Larry says.

The family are proud members of our community and sponsor the Bees, one of Oreland Wyndmoor’s little league baseball teams and support Wyndmoor’s Annual Memorial Day Parade. “Springfield Township is a very tight knit community where residents support the local businesses,” concludes Larry. “It has great schools and it’s a wonderful place for kids to grow up.

“My wife and I are empty nesters now – we raised our four children here and our grandchildren love the park across the street just like our kids did. We plan on staying... we’ve planted our roots here.”

Written by Dorothy C. Nickelson



remember hearing that during that time, the windows had to have black drapes at night so the war effort work could go on,” recalls Nick’s son Larry, who along with his brother Matt, now runs the business.

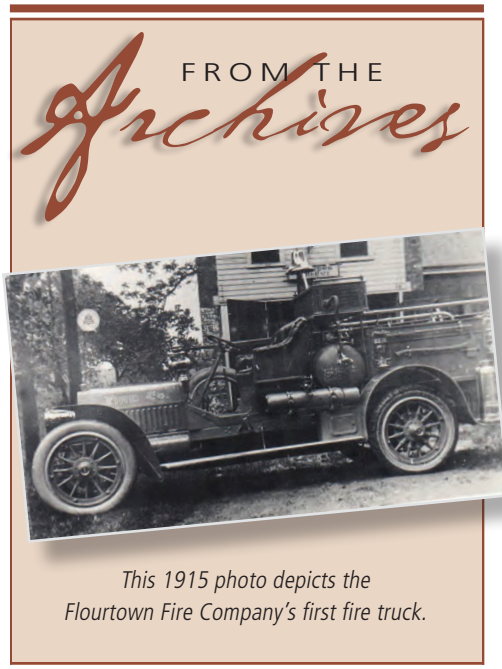
While B&W Auto Service has grown and expanded into a full service repair shop over the five decades, it still adheres to the culture Nick established back then—one that is very customer-service oriented with strong family values. “For me,” explains Larry, “working here has been a career, not just a job. Customer satisfaction is key and so is taking pride in your work. I didn’t just want to do car repairs; I wanted to develop long term relationships with customers and strive to get better at what I do.”

Moreover, he views the family business as “an adventure;” one where the challenge of growing the business and keeping up with the technology and new industry standards keeps life interesting. The adventure has taken the family business from a focus on basic car repair work to one that can handle all makes and models of cars, including high-performance vehicles. Many of those manufacturers require specialized computer diagnostics and highly complex training. The owners have embraced those pre-requisites to handling this business by investing

Finding good mentors is also crucial. “My Dad was my first mentor who challenged me to learn more about

how engines are built. At age 14, he allowed me to build an engine, giving me the freedom to do it on my own. He had the faith and confidence in me that I could do it and I did.” He also credits Don Owens, a high school teacher, for encouraging him to learn all he could about engines in standard and sub-specialty vehicles.

All of this industry knowledge and technical expertise has come in handy for facing new regulations that have affected the business over the past few decades. “Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards and the growing consumer safety movement have had a significant impact on the industry,” explains Larry. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the EPA mandated catalytic converters and eliminated lead from gasoline. In the 1980’s, the EPA set new inspection standards stating that vehicles must be certified to meet emission requirements, and warning systems that monitor emissions had to be functional. “Consumers and insurance companies were largely behind the car



This 1915 photo depicts the Flourtown Fire Company’s first fire truck.

# Archives UPDATE

Readers are encouraged to visit the new **Flourtown Farmers Market** on Bethlehem Pike to see photographs of various views of Bethlehem Pike from our Collection.

Our volunteers remain busy assisting in cataloging our collection. Ed Zwicker III is photographing and cataloging the Enfield Tile Collection. Dulie Gray is continuing efforts to catalog the Deming Collection photographs; Ray Smith is continuing work on scanning the Marie Kitto slide collection. We are grateful for the support of our volunteers who work under the direction of our archivist, Alessandra Cartelli.

*We are pleased to report that we have recently received the following donations:*

- A Flourtown cookbook entitled *Good Eatin'* compiled by the Woman's Club of Flourtown was donated to the archives by Judith Smith.
- Three wrought-iron garden chairs from Lanes End in Wyndmoor, later known as the Wharton-Sinkler Estate, were delivered to the archives.

*We are in need of additional volunteers to help in the archives and anyone interested in assisting is encouraged to call STHS at 215-233-4600.*

Reserve  
the Date

**Thurs., Oct. 15, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.**

**SESQUI! Greed, Graft, and the  
Forgotten World's Fair of 1926**

A Presentation by  
Mr. Tom Keels



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