



Noel news from Newtown Borough

Yardley News

THREE SECTIONS — 68 PAGES

56th YEAR, NUMBER 47

www.yardleynews.com

November 27, 2003

Look for AllaroundPhilly Super Jobs Section in this week's MarketPlace or visit www.allaroundphilly.com "Weekly Newspapers"

INDEX

Calendar	18-19
Fire	26
Food	4
Legals	30-31
Obituaries	30
Opinion	10-11
Our Town	2
Religion	12
School Bulletin	14
Sports	27-29



At Pennwood Middle School...

William Penn gets his ax back

By Petra Chesner Schlatter
STAFF EDITOR

The 109-year-old statue of William Penn, standing guard in front of the Pennwood Middle School on Makefield Road, is once again complete.

An ax, which has been missing for years, is back — replaced by a new one made of polyester resin, said conservator Scott Kreilick, who recently orchestrated the restoration of the statue.

Kreilick, who installed the new ax last week, said no one really knows what happened to the original bronze ax. It could have been missing since the 1950s when the statue was first installed at Pennwood, which originally

served as the high school.

Kreilick laughs when the question is asked, "Where is the original?"

"It's long gone I believe," said Kreilick from his Oreland home. "It's hard to say where that ax ended up."

There are stories floating around about the ax's whereabouts. Some say the ax was put in the school basement. "That's just a story," Kreilick said. "I don't know what the veracity of that story is — why it was in the basement. The original could have been damaged or put there for safekeeping and then forgotten."

"We can guess that it was bro-

(Continued on page 30)



YARDLEY NEWS/Scott Kreilick

The statue of William Penn once again bears its familiar ax.

William Penn given a new ax

But fate of original remains a mystery

(Continued from page 1)

ken by vandals," Kreilick continued.

"If you look at the 'Pennsman' yearbooks," Kreilick said, "it's evident from the photographs that the student body used the sculpture as a backdrop for many class and club photos. It's very possible that it was inadvertently damaged. There are pictures of people climbing up on him and around the pedestal."

John Phillips, a sculptor, welder and master lecturer at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, created the new ax for the Penn statue. Kreilick said he used the historic photos from the Pennsman yearbooks to recreate the missing piece.

"The best image came from the 1960 yearbook," Kreilick recalled. "There was a picture of the Penn statue with the ax leaning up against the log. When I tried to take the same perspective, there was no smoke stack in the old image. It was obscured by the vertical stump of the sculpture."

"The other thing that was curious in another picture was that the ax looks bright and shiny next to the statue itself," said Kreilick. "The reflective surface of the ax makes it appear brighter and shinier than the rest of the sculpture. Recreated, it looks very much like the 'Penns-

man' yearbook of 1960."

To come up with a model for the ax, Kreilick said designs of historic axes were researched. "I looked at a couple of sources for that and we found both photographic and schematic images to chose from which we compared to the original photos that we had," he said. "We found something we liked and proceeded to model and fabricate the new ax. What we found was a similar design."

Included was a curved handle which had to be enlarged to match the sculpture itself. Modeling clay was used to enlarge the head of the ax. "We cut the ax handle and increased the length by four inches which gave us the appropriate scaled up version of the ax. Then, Phillips made a plaster mold of the ax and then he cast a new ax in polyester resin. The new ax has some stainless steel reinforcement inside to help give it some additional structural strength."

Kreilick speculated the sculptor of the statue, Henry Manger, also probably made the original ax.

The final missing piece of the project are the four plaques that had once surrounded the four sides of the bronze base. Only the front plaque is pictured in any images Kreilick has seen.

"We've given the school district informa-



The restoration of the William Penn statue, in front of the Pennwood Middle School on Makefield Road, is now complete with the addition of an ax (seen at right).

tion about what it would take to replicate the plaque," Kreilick said. On the bronze base, one can see ghost shadows of the plaques. "We know what the front plaque said but not the ones on the sides."

Now that the statue restoration is complete, Kreilick emphasized that "it's important to make sure the sculpture is maintained because if it's not, it will start to deteriorate again. It's important for the folks in the community to recognize this is their sculpture. The school district is the caretaker, but the sculpture belongs to the community. Hopefully, they will look out for it from here. There's still the potential for vandalism."

Kreilick said the feedback from the project "has all been positive. The staff, teachers and students who came by as we were working on it all seemed to like what we had done."

Looking back, Kreilick has a good feeling about the project.

"First and foremost, persistence is a wonderful attribute to their credit," he said about the school district. "The couple of people I worked with, Dave Long and John Hahn, really got the funding together to make this project happen."

Kreilick said he made his original assessment of the project three years ago on November 17.