

SCIENCE AND NATURE DAY AT PRIESTLEY HOUSE

Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts Gather for a Special Event



Ron Blatchley sharing science experiments with Scouts.

Thanks to Mother Nature, Science and Nature Day on the grounds of Priestley House became Science and Nature Day in the basement of St. John's Lutheran Church, Northumberland.

In spite of the rain on September 23rd, however, 36 Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts participated in a science demonstration by Dr. Priestley (docent Ron Blatchley), a nature talk by Jack Fisher (involving animal furs and skulls), and a presentation on carbonation by Philip Brogdon.



Take Home Project

The day also involved a variety of hands-on activities, including the creation of suncatchers, using dried flowers, and the construction of tongue depressor catapults.

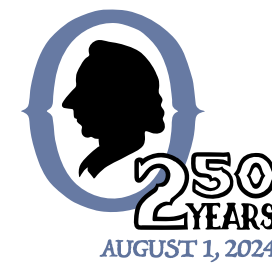
Of course, any event with a lesson on carbonation would have to include root beer floats, a staple of Priestley House Summer History Camps for many years. And Lisa Mertz (Friends



Jack Fisher provided the nature portion of the day's activities

Board Member and museum volunteer) made sure each of the children who attended Science and Nature Day went home with a free book, compliments of the museum's Free Book Program.

What didn't transfer to the new site was a tour of the Priestley House Museum, including an extended visit to the Children's Room, so, as compensation, each participant received a coupon, which would allow the holder to take a free tour of the museum at a later date.



Postings From Priestley House

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE

Number 81, Winter 2024

www.joseph-priestley-house.org

570-473-9474

SPECIAL DATES

2024 SEASON

250th Anniversary of the Discovery of Oxygen

February 4
PRIESTLEY TEA
Fundraiser
Front Street Station

March 10
SEASON OPENING EVENT
FREE ADMISSION

Happy Birthday, Pennsylvania!
On March 12, 1681
King Charles II granted
William Penn the Charter
to create Pennsylvania.
Happy Birthday, Dr. Priestley!
On March 13, 1733
Joseph Priestley
was born near Leeds in England

April 20
EARTH DAY EVENT
1~3 pm

MAY 18
2ND ANNUAL PLANT
& HERB FAIRE
9 am ~ 4 pm

JUNE 10, 11 & 12
HISTORY CAMP
From 9am-Noon
Joseph Priestley: A Man of Science
Open to children in
1st-6th Grade

Check local papers, Facebook,
or joseph-priestley-house.org
for additional details as
event days draw closer.



In addition to our webpage you can Like us on Facebook (Joseph Priestley House Museum) to keep abreast of special Joseph Priestley House Museum events or follow us on Instagram (jphmuseum). Also, you can donate to the Priestley House via Amazon Smile! Go to www.smile.amazon.com and select "Friends of Joseph Priestley" as your charity. Everytime you shop at Amazon Smile, a portion of the purchase will be donated to the Priestley House!

COMMEMORATING THE DISCOVERY OF OXYGEN

The 250th Anniversary of Priestley's Groundbreaking Discovery

The year was 1774. The place was Bowood House in Calne, Wiltshire, in England, and the date was August 1. Joseph Priestley did not know that he was making history that day. What he did know was that the unidentified gas released in that day's experiment caused a candle flame to burn brighter.

Thus begins Priestley's part in the discovery of Oxygen. Priestley was not performing a new experiment that day. In fact, he was performing an experiment similar to one he had performed in 1771, but with the addition of an ordinary candle.

As Priestley described his experiences that day, he wrote that it was "the observation of events

rising from unknown causes" that was of the most significance. A gas that behaved like nitrous air (nitric oxide) was released by mercury calx, the ash formed when mercury is burned in air. But, mercury shouldn't produce nitrous air, which left Priestley puzzled and eager to continue experimenting with what he called "dephlogisticated air."

A true man of the Enlightenment -- a natural philosopher, a separatist theologian, an educator, a political theorist, and a chemist -- it was his discovery of Oxygen that cemented Priestley's place in history, which would no doubt surprise Priestley were he alive today.

IT'S A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

March 10th Priestley House will be hosting a Party!

Regular museum hours on Saturdays and Sundays from 1pm – 4pm resume on March 10th, and to kick-off the new season, Priestley House is having a birthday party. The state of Pennsylvania will be 343 years old on March 12th, commemorating the date in 1681 when King Charles II granted William Penn a charter to create Pennsylvania. Even more exciting for the staff and volunteers at Priestley House is that March 13th (Julian Calendar) marks the 291st anniversary of Joseph Priestley's birth in Birstall, Yorkshire, England.

Since 2024 also marks the 250th Anniversary of Priestley's Discovery of Oxygen, it seems appropriate to celebrate his birthday to open the season. The museum will be open to the public free of charge with special science demonstrations by the museum's own Dr. Priestley (Ron Blatchley) conducted in the Pond Building at 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Tickets for the demonstrations will be available in the Visitors Center beginning at 1 pm or may be reserved in advance by calling (570) 473-9474.

Come and wish Dr. Priestley a happy birthday, eat a piece of birthday cake, take a self-guided tour of the Priestley House, and learn about Joseph Priestley and his working relationship with Lord Shelburne, Priestley's employer in 1774.



JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE
P.O. Box 226
NORTHUMBERLAND, PA. 17857



Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Josh Shapiro, Governor ~ Hayley Haldeman, Chair ~ Andrea Lowery, Executive Director

CELEBRATING PRIESTLEY ACROSS THE POND IN 2024

Incorporating a visit to England into the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of Priestley's Discovery of Oxygen seemed important, since Priestley's career defining discovery occurred at Bowood House (Calne, Wiltshire). Through the efforts of Friends Board Member Harry Lewis, Priestley enthusiasts will be able to participate in an England based Priestley Tour (July 18 - August 2), which will culminate with a 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Discovery of Oxygen at Bowood House on August 1.

Participants will also have an opportunity to stay at Bowood House's private 43-room hotel on its multi-acre resort estate. 38 rooms currently remain available on a first-come first-served basis at the Bowood House Resort for the nights of July 29-August 1. Tour participants are asked to make reservations as early as possible and separate from the group tour by calling Bowood House Resort reservations directly at (phone) +44-1249-822-228 and then notify Harry Lewis (hlewis@quickjustice.law), so he can track the remaining room availability. If there is an overflow, i.e. all of the Bowood House Resort rooms are booked, tour participants may stay in Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<https://www.bathworldheritage.org.uk>), a separate accommodation near Bowood House.

For more details check the Priestley House website (joseph-priestley-house.org) or contact Harry Lewis at hlewis@quickjustice.law.

YOUNG ARTISTS & POETS CELEBRATE PRIESTLEY AND OXYGEN

As part of the 2024 Celebration of Priestley's 250th Anniversary of the Discovery of Oxygen, the Friends of Joseph Priestley are inviting writers and artists grades K-12 to participate in a Special Creative Arts Event sponsored by the Priestley House Museum.

The Special Creative Arts Event will begin in February and run through the end of July. During that time young artists are invited to draw and submit a caricature of Joseph Priestley. Aspiring young poets are asked to write a poem about Joseph Priestley and his Discovery of Oxygen.

Application forms will be available at Priestley House Visitors Center and at joseph-priestley-house.org beginning in February.

Submissions will be judged monthly, with prizes being awarded in four age groups: grades K-2 (Primary), grades 3-5 (Intermediate), grades 6-8 (Middle School), and 9-12 (High School). Prize winners will have their creations on display at the Joseph Priestley House Museum during the Great Gala Celebration Weekend August 2-4.

FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE

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OPERATIONS MANAGER

Murrie Zlotziver
jphopsmanager@gmail.com

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Jo Ann Long

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Deborah Bernhisel
jphpostings@gmail.com

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE
473 PRIESTLEY AVENUE
NORTHUMBERLAND, PA 17857

Walk-in Visitors or visitors with reservations are welcome during museum hours. For tour reservations go to our web site <https://joseph-priestley-house.org>

The reservations link is available on both the home page and tour page. Reservations will be confirmed by e-mail.

**Tours will begin at
1pm, 2pm, 3pm.**

**Admission prices are listed
on the tour page.**

Special Assistance

Individuals who need special assistance or accommodation to visit The Joseph Priestley House should contact us in advance to discuss their needs.

To join the Friends of Priestley House call 570-473-9497 or visit www.joseph-priestley-house.org

CELEBRATING & HONORING PRIESTLEY HOUSE VOLUNTEERS

Annual Friends Dinner at Front Street Station

Approximately 40 Volunteers and Friends Members gathered at Front Street Station on September 20, 2023, to enjoy a delicious dinner, listen to reports and updates relevant to Priestley House, and learn about the discovery of the Sanbourne Drawing of the Joseph Priestley House. It was this drawing that allowed the museum's staff to accurately identify the use of each of the rooms in the house and set up appropriate room displays, thus more accurately communicating



Dr. Marianne Nardone, Michael Knecht (Guest Speaker) & Barbara Knecht during the Volunteer and Members Dinner presentation on the Sanbourne Drawing

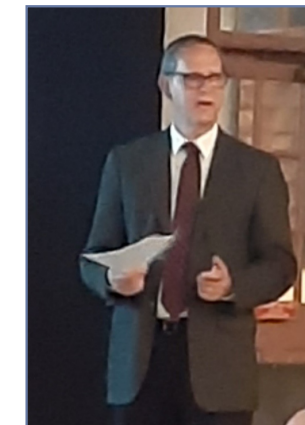
the Priestley family's life in Northumberland. Friends President Colleen Epler-Ruths conducted the business portion of the evening's agenda. Among the evening's business was the annual Friends Board Election. The newly elected Board members are George Godlewski, who previously served as a board member and the organization's treasurer, and Harry Lewis and Steve Klinger, both of whom were elected to a second term. Laurie McCants completed her final term on the board and will be leaving at the conclusion of 2023. Colleen also introduced a series of special awards designed to recognize the efforts of the museum's volunteers, who are the life-blood of the organization. The special awards, presented by Murrie Zlotziver, the museum's Operations Manager, with the assistance of Jo Ann Long, included: Rookie of the Year (Steve Klinger), Friend of the Joseph Priestley House Museum (Ginger Aurand and her Girl Scout Troop), the Preservation and Restoration Award (Grace Benfer), the Tom Brensenham Outstanding Service Award



2023 Volunteer Award Recipients: Carl Weller, Ginger Aurand, Steve Klinger, Colleen Epler-Ruths, Jo Ann Long, and Mike McWilliams. Not pictured: Grace Benfer.

(Mike McWilliams), the Joseph Priestley Spirit Award (Colleen Epler-Ruths), the Volunteers' Volunteer Award (Jo Ann Long), and the Business Sponsor Award (Carl Weller of Quality Printing). Before concluding the business of the evening, Colleen also recognized the longest serving volunteers present at the dinner: Ron Blatchley, the museum's resident Dr. Priestley, and his wife Fran, who have served the museum as volunteers for 41 years.

The evening's guest speaker Michael Knecht, currently the Site Administrator at the Drake Well Museum, shared the story of the 1983 discovery of a copy of the Sanbourne Drawing, which now hangs in the entry hallway of the Priestley House. Also in attendance with Michael and participants in the presentation were Michael's wife Barbara Knecht and Dr. Marianne Nardone.



Michael Knecht, Guest Speaker

In 1983 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission was planning a major exhibit for Priestley House. In preparation for that event, Marianne Betz arranged a research trip to England. Michael was an intern at PHMC at the time and was invited to participate. It was purely happenstance that brought about the uncovering of the drawing at the Royal Society of London, one of the sites where the group was conducting research. It is believed that Mrs. Sarah Priestley Wainwright, a grandchild of Dr. Joseph Priestley, may have had the drawing in her possession and gifted it to the Royal Society with other Priestley family artifacts. Although there currently is no concrete corroboration, the original Sanbourne Drawing may be in the Oxford Library Archives.