

## KENNETT UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CENTER

P. O. Box 202, 505 South Broad St., Kennett Square, PA 19348  
www.undergroundrr.kennett.net 610-347-2237

### 2005 Newsletter and Annual Appeal

Dear friends,

2005 has been a year of accomplishments for KURC. Early in the year we were thrilled to receive the first copies of the paperback of **R. C. Smedley's History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania**, republished after over 120 years by Stackpole Books, at KURC's suggestion. This edition, which has been extremely popular, includes a new introduction by **Christopher Densmore, curator of the Friends Historical Library** at Swarthmore College. Available at The History Station, Chester County Historical Society, and local bookstores, it would be a super Christmas present!

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in May, about 300 people from near and far celebrated the **150th Anniversary of Longwood Progressive Meeting**. Our good friend **Christopher Densmore** spoke on the history and message of Longwood, the **Kennett Community Choir** sang, and **Elinor Brosius Thomforde** served as emcee. KURC co-sponsored this event with Longwood Gardens, Chester County Convention & Visitors Bureau (who occupy the old meeting-house now), Friends Historical Association, and Western Quarterly Meeting.

If you were so unfortunate as to miss this special event, don't despair: you may order a DVD of the entire program from **Martin Reber**. He and daughter **Meg** videotaped it for us. See our website for details and some snapshots of participants. Also on the website is Chris Densmore's informative, inspiring talk, which may be printed out.

**KURC's website** has continued to be a valuable link with all sorts of people and groups. This past year we've had about 700 visitors, many of whom found us on-line. These included tourists from Canada, England, Germany, and farflung parts of our country, school groups (even a busload of high schoolers from northern New Jersey!), home schoolers, cub scouts, a family reunion, a delightful group of teenagers from **The Garage**, Kennett's youth center, and riders on our Heritage Tour bus.

Speaking of **Heritage Tours**, watch our website and the local papers for an announcement of these, which will run one Sunday afternoon a month from late spring through the Mushroom Festival. Our Heritage Tour was featured in a **Philadelphia Inquirer Neighbors** article in July. **The Kennett Paper**, too, regularly informs readers about KURC's events and projects.

Check our website also to see snapshots from this year's **Mushroom Festival**, where our booth featured **Henry "Box" Brown's harrowing 26-hour journey** from Richmond to Philadelphia in a crate. The photos show young visitors and "engineer" **Mary Anderson**.

Last spring we sponsored reenactors at local schools: **Willis Phelps** at Patton M.S. and **Oni Lasana** at Greenwood Elementary and Avon-Grove Charter School.

A milestone: we are now part of the National Park Service's **Network to Freedom**, which means we're officially recognized as a worthwhile part of the nationwide Underground Railroad commemoration.

## GIFTS AND DONATIONS

In last year's Appeal we asked for a mannequin, and **Dot Ortaldo** kindly gave us one. The mannequin now lives in our period room, where you may meet her, dressed in a silk brocade dress from **Anne Hicks**. (Not a very Quakerly garment, true, but some Longwood people rebelled against the dress rules.) Behind her is a fine old wall clock donated by **Don and Joan Silknitter**. **Charles Woodward** presented us with two original Longwood Meeting benches, which really put us in awe of those old Longwood members as they're very uncomfortable!

**Chester County Community Foundation** once again gave us welcome financial support, as did many donors and visitors. We are most grateful for all the support and interest from so many.

## THE HISTORY STATION

*This November and December we'll be open **Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m.**  
(except Dec. 24 and 25 and Jan. 1) and by appointment.*

*There's an added incentive to stop in: besides our **Underground Railroad Museum**,  
you can enjoy **Jim Jacoby's Kennett Model Train Room**,  
an amazing display Jim has created with great artistry and enthusiasm.*

When you visit, be sure to notice our new bigger and better **Kennett URR wall map**, done for us by **Mike Sharan** of **Impact Signs**. It's expandable, so we'll be able to add more stations and sites easily.

Here's a suggestion for a unique social event: **wine and cheese at The History Station**. In October six or seven couples brought refreshments to our museum for an early evening get-together, and then they all went off to dinner afterwards. It was their ingenious idea, not ours, but

we think it's a great way to socialize while learning a bit of local history. Snapshots and information on our website.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

Watch for a diagram of the North Star and "drinking gourd" on our deck. **Marjorie Kaskey** and **astronomer Roger Taylor** are working on it.

Another project will be research into the history of the area comprising **HELP, the Historic East Linden Project**, which was an abolitionist neighborhood in the mid-19th century. If you have information, such as family stories or papers, about this important section of Kennett, please let us know.

Mary Larkin Dugan, president

Board of Directors: Mary Anderson, Carol Berzon, Susan Darrel, Martin Greene, Linda and Earl Jones, Marjorie Kaskey, Louis Mandich, John O'Neal, Treasurer