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# Yardley News

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## William Penn gets a new outlook; project gives statue a facelift

By **Petra Chesner Schlatter**  
 STAFF EDITOR

The statue of William Penn, which has stood watch over the Pennwood Middle School on Makefield Road for more than 50 years, is getting a long anticipated facelift.

With a little help from his crew, Scott Kreilick, a conservator and metallurgist from Oreland, began the slow, but careful process of restoring the statue of the famous Quaker to its earlier form last week.

When the two-week \$25,000 project is completed sometime this week, Penn will again boast his original warm brown-colored coat — some-

thing not seen in a long time — and appear almost as good as he did on the day he arrived in front of the school which once served as the high school.

According to Kreilick, president and CEO of Kreilick Conservation in Oreland, the Penn project is moving along smoothly.

The project actually entails more than just the statue itself. The basic schedule of restoration, Kreilick said, involves repointing the flagstone terrace and the limestone pedestals and wing benches. Additional cleaning of the limestone around the pedestal itself will reduce the dark and cupric

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YARDLEY NEWS / Jeff Werner

Conservator Scott Kreilick inspects the William Penn statue.



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# "Billy" gets a new lease on life

## Conservation effort preserves Pennwood statue

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staining. Working with Kreilick on the project are John Klinkose and Anne Marie DiLucia, who are assisting with the bronze work; John Phillips, a welder who is recreating the statue's missing ax; and masons Pablo Diaz and Don Yates.

Scaffolding was scheduled to be erected by midday on Monday. "The next step is washing the sculpture with low pressure water and a non-ionic detergent. That will remove any soiling or debris that might be on the sculpture."

Then, it's on to the "air abrasive blasting using crushed walnut shell media," Kreilick said. "That reduces the active corrosion products on the bronze surface. We don't want to return it to a bare metal, but to a patina that's formed over the years because what we're doing is conservation rather than restoration. We're not trying to restore an original surface. We're trying to conserve as much original material as possible."

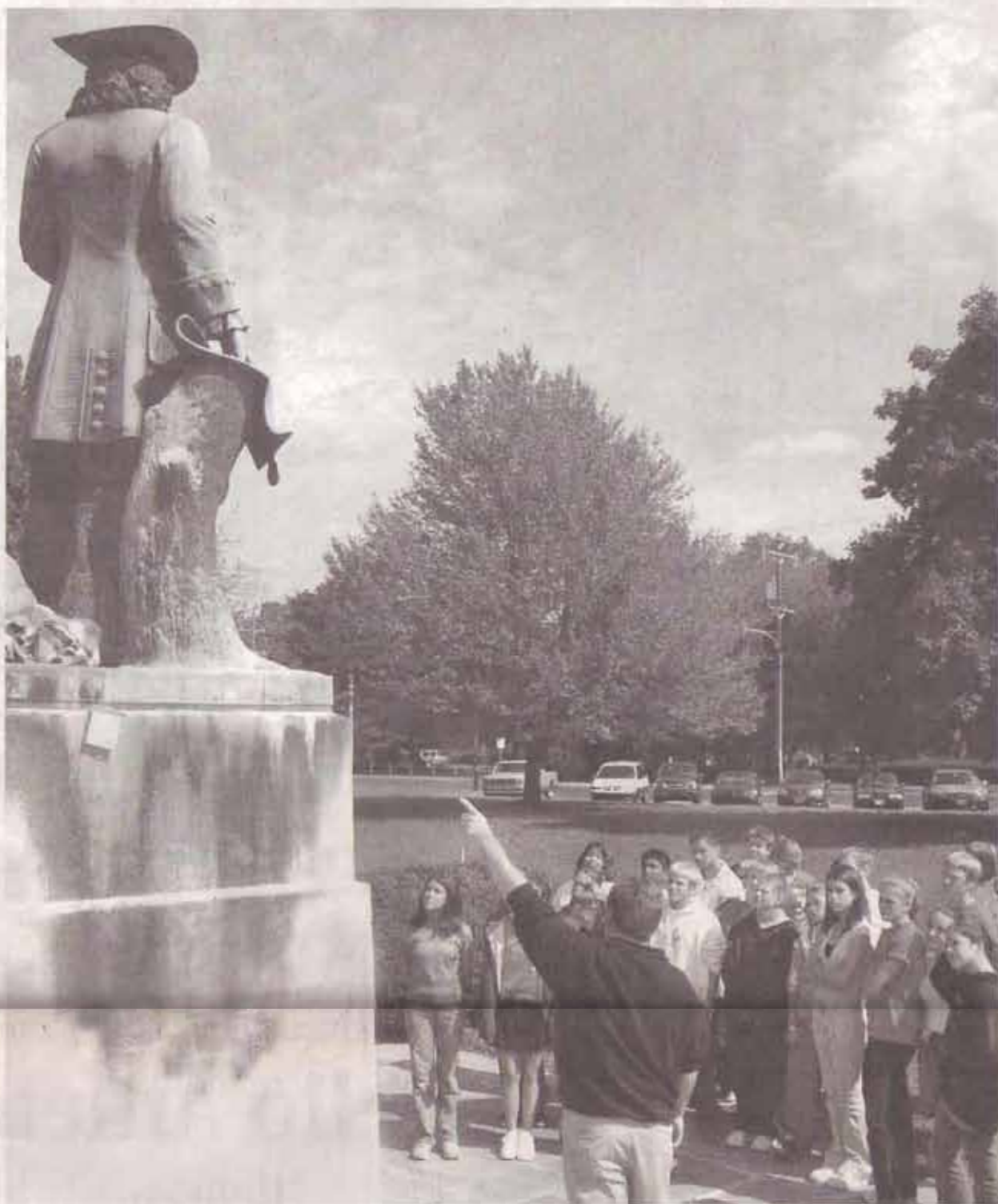
"The next step is to apply a microcrystalline wax to the surface," Kreilick continued. And that soaks into the surface of the bronze and provides a protective coating that will have to be renewed every few years. That will actually yield a color that's a warm brown with green highlights.

"The best we can tell, there's no documentation or physical evidence that this sculpture was intended to be green," Kreilick said, of the statue's aqua-green appearance. "(Sculptor) Henry Manger's other known works also have this warm brown coloring."

After applying the wax, then horsehair is used to buff the surface which will help to seal the wax, Kreilick said.

Observing the entire process are eighth graders from the Pennwood Middle School who, from time to time, visit Kreilick and his crew as they work their conservation magic.

From a scientific vantage-point, the conservation project offers a lot, accord-



Conservator Scott Kreilick speaks to a captive audience of eighth graders at Pennwood Middle School where the 109-year-old statue of William Penn is being conserved. The students are studying Colonial history and the Pennwood statue fits right in to the social studies curriculum. The statue was created in 1894 by Henry Manger.

YARDLEY NEWS/Jeff Werner

ing to Joyce Bigley, eighth grade science teacher. The students are learning about conservation and preserving something that is old; and the history behind it.

Bigley stressed the importance of the project during a special assembly organized for the Liberty Team last Wednesday when 136 students heard first-hand

about the conservation process. "They asked questions about why they're doing it," Bigley said.

The students learned that the statue is "pretty crusty from the corrosion. For 50 years it's been here. It's been corroding."

Students were amazed to hear that the statue would be blasted with walnut shells,

Bigley said. "They'll wax it to keep it nice. I'm taking my students out to watch the waxing."

Bigley expects quite a reaction from her students when they see the restored statue of William Penn, which should be ready by the end of this week.

The social studies and science classes will plant daf-

fodil bulbs and mums around its base, Bigley said. Each of the 136 students will plant a bulb Friday morning during a special ceremony between 8:45 to 9:15 a.m.

Kreilick, 44, said he can especially relate to Pennwood's eighth graders. He and his wife, Cynthia, have an eighth grader and a 10th

grader. He often takes them with him on conservation jobs. They take notes and keep track of things for Kreilick.

Pennwood eighth graders asked good questions, Kreilick said. "They were particularly interested in the ax that is missing from the statue," he said.

The fate of the ax, which once adorned the statue, remains a mystery.

Even without the ax, Kreilick said the community is lucky to have the statue. "There are very few bronze sculptures in Bucks County. There are only two images of William Penn — one as a young man of 22 in a suit of armor and one of him when he was an older man. This image doesn't seem to recreate either image of William Penn. It gives us an alternate view. It's important for the community to appreciate that they have a very unique piece in our area. It's something they can be very proud of and it needs to be maintained."

In Philadelphia, however, there are more than 700 outdoor sculptures. "That's more than any other in the country, second only to Paris (in the world)."

Lifelong Lower Makefield resident Dave Long, a 1986 Pennsbury High School graduate and a former Pennwood student, said he is happy to see the conservation project come to fruition.

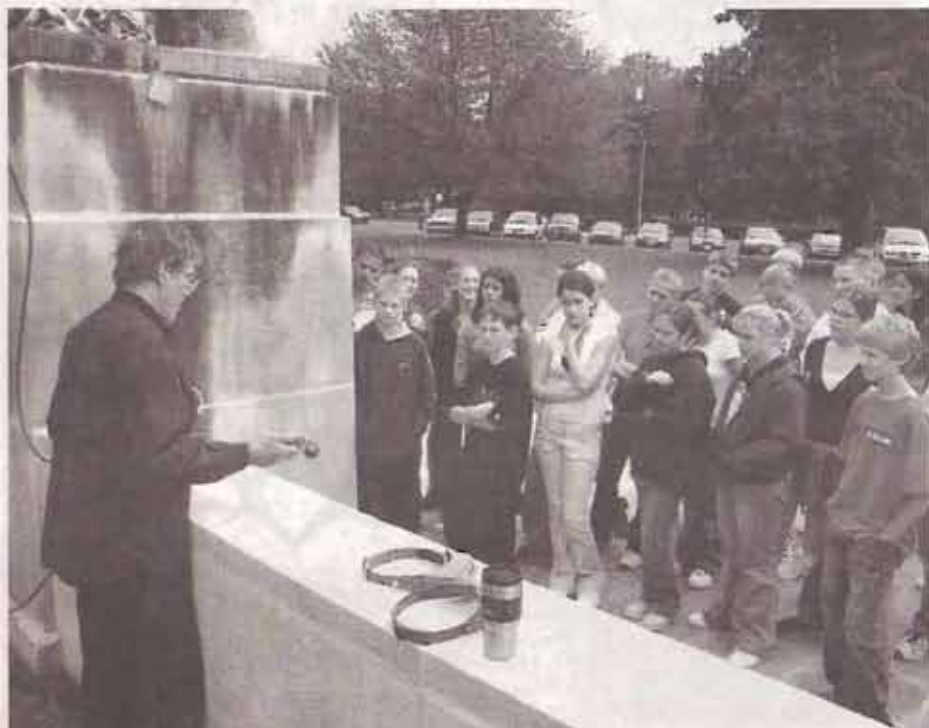
Concerned about the statue's condition, Long first brought the project to the attention of the school district about three years ago.

It was John Hahn, Pennsbury's grounds supervisor, who met with Long. Hahn agreed and started working on ways to secure grant money for the project.

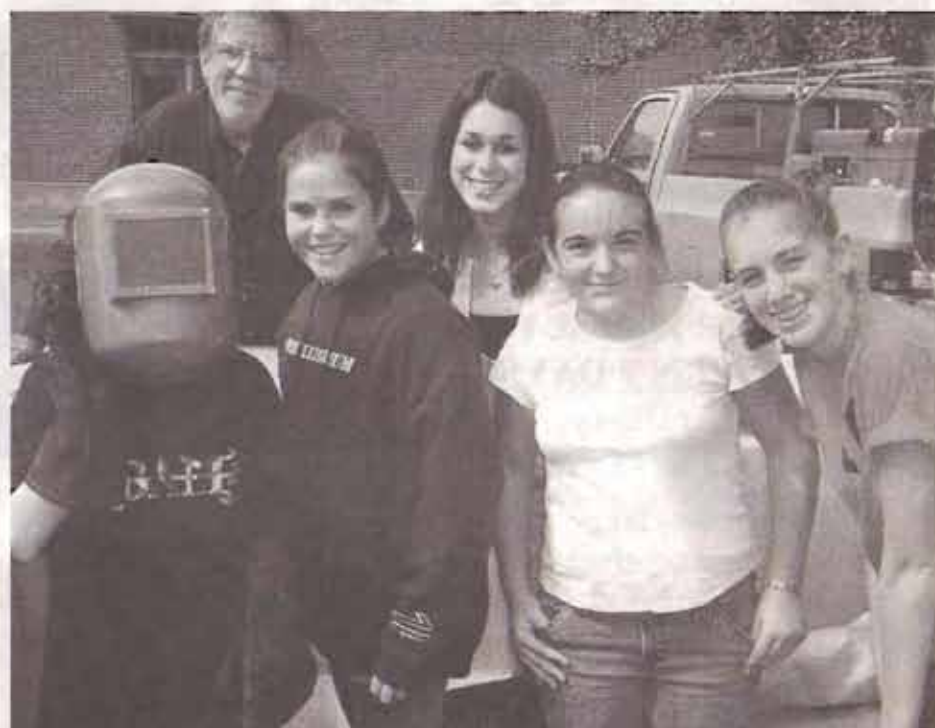
A small grant was secured from SOS (Save Outdoor Sculpture) to do an assessment. Long had previously been involved with SOS, an organization that works to preserve and conserve outdoor sculpture throughout the nation.

But even as the work was beginning last week on the two-week project, Hahn

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John Phillips, sculptor, welder and master lecturer at the University of the Arts, demonstrates the welding tools he used to close joins at the base of the William Penn statue.



Playing welder for the day is Liam McAllister, left. With him, from left, are Lindsey McNeill, Alex Dienes and Stephanie Morrison. Standing behind is John Phillips.

# William Penn gets new lease on life

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said his job is not yet done.

While the state Department of Community and Economic Development has kicked in \$8,000 for the conservation project, the school district is still applying for additional grant money to fund the \$25,000 job.

Looking for the funding has become a pet project of his. Motivating him is William Penn's character.

"Everything about William Penn — his whole history — just ties in with this school district. The values. His dedication. He helped preserve this area and build this area up," said Hahn.

From the moment he first talked with Long, "I knew something had to be done, but I wanted to go about it the right way. It wasn't just something anyone could do."

Hahn said he is especially happy the students are benefiting from project educationally. Hahn and his wife, Pamela, have a seventh grader.

"William Penn stood for a lot of good causes," Hahn said. That's why it's important to the school district. He's standing out in front of our school. You just don't go anywhere and see a statue like that standing outside your school."

Hahn said the plantings around the statue will be improved, including the removal of some old shrubs.

"I've never been involved

in a project like this before," he said. "It's been enjoyable and a learning experience. I would never have known this much about sculpture if it hadn't been for this. Now, when I walk by a sculpture, I will just view it in a different way now. I know them now."

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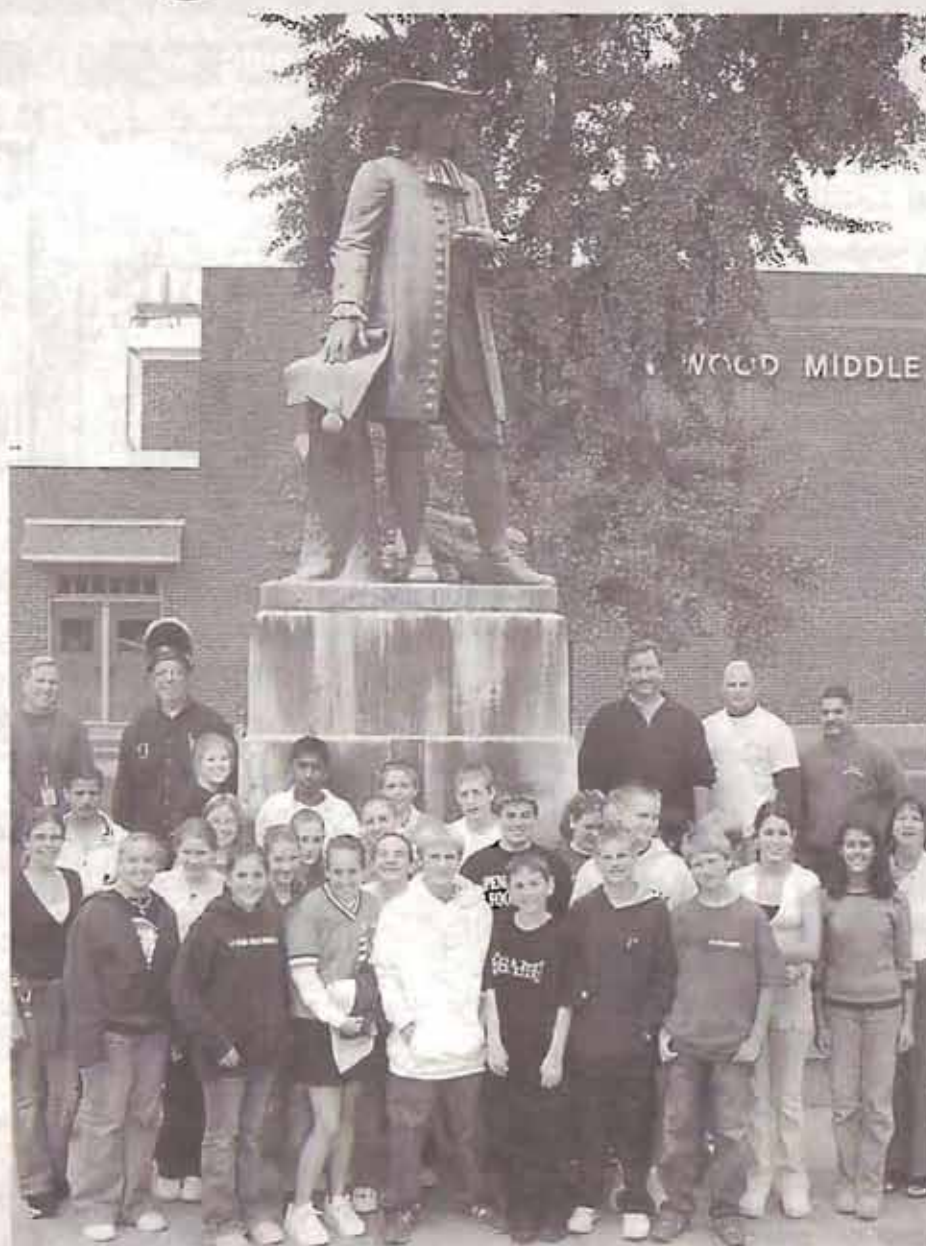
The sculptor of the Penn statue was Henry Manger who hailed from Germany. He completed the Penn statue in 1894. Manger's name is inscribed at the base of the bronze statue.

Other sculptures by Manger are of Goethe and Schiller, both of which are located at the Horticulture Center in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. Manger also did a large sculpture of Bismark in 1876 for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

The Penn statue was a gift to the Pennsbury School District from U.S. Steel and was dedicated in 1952. It is not known where the statue was stored between 1894 and when U.S. Steel acquired it. Reportedly, U.S. Steel offered the Penn statue to the local Religious Society of Friends, but the Friends declined because they are a simple group that did not want a statue for religious reasons.

### Students observe conservation process

Pennwood eighth grade students from the Liberty Team are involved in learning about the conservation process through their social



*Eighth graders in Karen Haugh's social studies class have been observing the conservation project of the William Penn statue at Pennwood Middle School. Joyce Bigley, eighth grade science teacher, is showing her class about the chemistry involved in the project.*

studies and science curriculums.

Karen Hough (Social Studies) and Joyce Bigley (Science) have taken their classes numerous times to the conservation site where the 13-year-olds can learn first-hand about the restoration.

Not only are the youths learning about the scientific aspects of the project, but their colonial history

education is being reinforced by learning more about Penn, founder of the Pennsylvania colony.

Hough said the conservation project is important because "it's a statue that's been part of our school...The children pass the statue every day. It's tied to something historic that we've had here at Pennsbury for more than 50 years."

"What does William Penn mean to you?" Hough asked her students. She described their responses as "terrific. I am thrilled with this team."

**Khaliah Darden:** "William Penn said to the Native Americans, 'May we always live together as neighbors and friends.' To me, he stands for goodness and equality for all."

**Kisha Lowenthal:** "When I think of William Penn, I think of a Quaker who wanted everybody to get along and to live peacefully. He wanted religious groups to follow their own beliefs without other people trying to persuade them to change. William Penn also wanted to make men and women equal. Penn also raised his voice to go against slavery."

**Kevin McDade:** "To me, William Penn is just another name for hero. He governed the colony that I am living in right now! I respect him as much as he respected Native Americans."

**Kyle Noyes:** "William Penn was a very nice and generous person to anyone. That is probably why his colony lived so long because he made friends to the Indians. I'm happy that the statue is being restored because he means so much to the history of Pennsylvania."

**Evan Walbridge:** "A man of great ethics and morals who believed all should be equal. Everyone should live in peace and harmony. Saying the words, 'May we always live together as neighbors and friends' is welcoming to all."

**Tracy Peapus:** "William Penn was a very brave soul. He became a Quaker even though his father was disappointed in him. He did what he thought was right which was to treat the Native Americans fairly because they shared farming tips and traded amongst themselves."