

# HERMITS GLEN GAZETTE

Official Newsletter of The Kelpius Society

Volume 7, No. 1 Fall 2011

## A Message From the President

Dear Kelpius Society Members,

The Kelpius Society is at an important turning point in its history. Our founding members Dorothy Pinkett, Lucy Carroll, and Al Holm provided the vision and the energy to set the Kelpius Society on a very strong foundation. Over a period of years, they achieved a remarkable number of accomplishments in the areas of research and publications, original programming, and public outreach. They also established TKS as a federally recognized nonprofit organization. Now, we are striving to build upon their work in ways that will help us situate the Kelpius Society within the contemporary array of historical and cultural discourses.

Following the path established by our founders, we recently updated our bylaws, and have begun work on a strategic plan, which will guide our efforts over the next several years by identifying priorities, setting timelines, and parceling out tasks and responsibilities to TKS members. Plans are also afoot to produce at least one new publication in coming months (see article to the right), while also providing original public programming in the Fall of 2011. We'll also proceed with work at the Kelpius site on Wissahickon Creek in Fairmount Park, as we aspire to bring Al Holm's splendid vision for the site to tangible and enduring form.



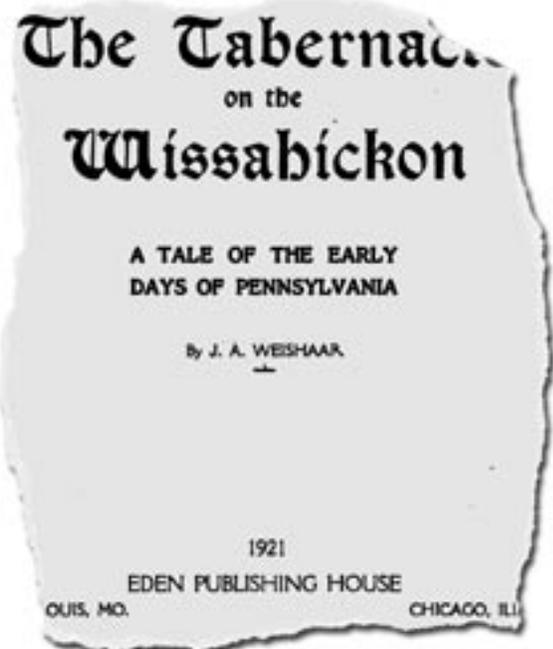
*"Ancient Rock Along the Wissahickon" from the painting by Jonathan D. Scott*

Meanwhile, we continue to attract new members at a slow but I think steady pace, partly due to our fine website, <http://www.kelpius.org>, which was developed and is expertly managed by

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Kelpius Society To Revive a 90-Year Old Tale of Love and Intrigue

The *Tabernacle on the Wissahickon: A Tale of the Early Days of Pennsylvania* was published in 1921 by Eden Publishing House. Eden Publishing was an agency of the Denomination of the German Evangelical Movement of North America, headquartered in St. Louis, with another branch in Chicago. The publishing house no longer exists and, like many historic complexes in urban centers, its striking office and press buildings have since been converted to loft condos.



Not much is known either about the intentions of the book's editors or its author, although another book Johann Adam Weishaar wrote and published, *The German Element in Maryland – Up to the year 1700*, can be read online.

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(A Message From the President continued)*

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Meanwhile, we continue to attract new members at a slow but I think steady pace, partly due to our fine website, <http://www.kelpius.org>, which was developed and is expertly managed by Jacque Brough. As we build membership, and continue to develop the website, we must also expand our outreach efforts, to establish a network of interested or affiliated individuals and organizations who would appreciate and support our work. With that in mind, we attended meetings of the Historic Germantown consortium earlier this year, a collective comprising a number of historic sites in the Germantown area. We also participated in an event sponsored by the consortium, held at Vernon Park on Germantown Avenue this past Spring. We set up an information table, handed out TKS literature, and talked with visitors to the event.

As you know, Johannes Kelpius and his followers established themselves on the Wissahickon Creek in what is now the Roxborough section of Philadelphia, in the late 17th century. Though technically in Roxborough, members of the original Kelpius community were strongly oriented toward the fledgling Germantown community of that day. Accordingly, we at TKS want to explore our historical

## Forthcoming Publication

*(continued from page 1)*

The original edition of Weishaar's *Tabernacle* book can also be read in its entirety online. New readers who go this route will find a fictional gothic novel written in a puzzling vernacular and garnished with equally perplexing punctuation.

When The Kelpius Society decided to reprint the book we knew we wanted to correct egregious misspellings and edit out some of the excessive punctuation, but we did not want to do a formal edit that would change the quaint character of the book.

Readers of the republished edition will find a book that's much easier to read. Some notes about editing the book:

- Virtually every word of the original published text is intact. In a very few spots, a word or phrase was added or changed, but only to clarify meaning. Some of the archaic spellings were also corrected; for instance, "alto" was changed to "although," but quoted speech by characters in the story was not.
- Formal rules of punctuation were not rigidly followed; doing so could have required a rewrite of the original sentence structure.
- English translations of Latin and German words or phrases have also been added where appropriate and are distinguished by placement within parentheses. While attempting these translations, it soon became apparent that many of the non-English phrases were as archaic as the rest of the novel.
- The editors have included a short list of footnotes of unfamiliar words or objects or titles that would be unfamiliar to a modern-day reader, as well as a list of geographical sites mentioned in the book.

A modern edition of the classic gothic novel, "The *Tabernacle on the Wissahickon*," will be published before the end of this year by The Kelpius Society. A beautiful custom color cover for the book is being created by Nik Stamps, a gifted filmmaker and TKS member.

Advance orders for both the print and eBook versions of the new edition will soon be available. ☼

—Anita McKelvey



*“Einweihung des Gedenkstein für Johannes Kelpius anlässlich des ersten Heimattreffens in Cleveland/Ohio 1963”*

## *Kelpius Honored in 1963 as a Transylvanian Saint*

In 1963, a group of Transylvanian Saxons (German: *Siebenbürger Sachsen*; Hungarian: *Erdélyi szászok*; Romanian: *SaDi*) installed a stone memorial to Kelpius at the “*Sachsenacker*” near Cleveland, Ohio. These are ethnic Germans who settled in Transylvania (now in Romania) in the Middle Ages. They are not the original Saxons, which was one of the tribes that colonized England. The Transylvanian “Saxons” came from western Germany, while the original Saxon homeland is in northern Germany.

Only a small number of Transylvanian Saxons are left in Romania. The end of World War II brought hard times for ethnic Germans. Most emigrated to Germany, but some came to the US.

The group in the photograph wanted to honor Kelpius as the first of their number of record to immigrate to the US. Four of the men appear to be wearing traditional costumes. The article in which the picture appeared also claims that Kelpius was the only saint that the Transylvanian Germans ever produced!

A second Saxon theologian, Lucas Rauss of Kronstadt, came to Pennsylvania in 1749. He settled in Philadelphia and then in Yorktown, where he served as pastor until his death in 1788. One wonders if Pastor Rauss knew of Kelpius.

Has anyone in our Society seen the memorial? Is it still there? Does anyone have connections to this group? They would surely be interested in the Kelpius Society.”

Here is the English of the caption for the photo, which I translated: *“Dedication of the memorial for Johannes Kelpius on the occasion of the first homeland gathering in Cleveland, Ohio, 1963”*

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Historical Society of Pennsylvania to Include Kelpius Community on New Web Site*

Historian David Ahern, in conjunction with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is conducting research on the Kelpius Community as a contribution to the Historical Society’s community based web site, [www.PhilaPlace.org](http://www.PhilaPlace.org). The site will be a story-driven multimedia project that typically features a subject as a written story and related pictures. Each story is linked to a location that is displayed on the website’s interactive map, which allows users to easily learn more about their own neighborhoods. The temporal settings of stories range from colonization to the present day, and visitors will be encouraged to contribute. Ahern said, “The project was created with the intention that anecdotes by users would have a large presence.”

Ahern plans to write a self-standing article on Kelpius and his time in Philadelphia for the web site. “The goal of [PhilaPlace.org](http://PhilaPlace.org) is to help users understand their historic communities and the influences that people, places, and events have had on their lives. Most likely, the story will revolve around the Community as an entity, with certain individuals like Kelpius and Koster being given focus where appropriate,” Ahern said.

Although referred to as a “story,” Ahern’s article will be an entirely factual account. The site that Ahern plans to use for the story is the cave of Kelpius itself. Having read about the cave in Julius Sachse’s book, *The 17th Century Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania*, and how the site came to be in its current state, Ahern says he’s inclined to think that it may be authentic to the Kelpius Community and not simply an 18th century springhouse. The fact that the cave was constructed to face exactly due south lends credence to the idea that it was constructed by people with an astronomical or scientific inclination.

The Historical Society’s web site is expected to be live in the fall of 2011. ☞

## The Kelpius Society Membership Donation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to The Kelpius Society. Send to:  
The Kelpius Society P.O. Box 15775 Philadelphia, PA 19103

Basic Annual Membership: \$15.

Additional donations:

Research and Publications \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Site Archeology and Development \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Public Programs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Wissahickon Oral History Project \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Kelpius Archives \$ \_\_\_\_\_

General Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Your donation is what sustains the  
work of The Kelpius Society.*



## Transylvanian Saint

*(continued from page 3)*

The photo and accompanying article was found on <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/kultur/8452-vor-300-jahren-gestorben-johannes.html>

The following information was found on the web site regarding the organization:

“The Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons (Cleveland, Ohio) is a fraternal and insurance organization. Founded in 1902, the Alliance is open to Americans of Transylvanian Saxon descent. It has forty-three branches and approximately 10,000 members. Its weekly publication is the *Volksblatt*.”

—Kirby Richards, Ph.D. ✉