

The Clifton



House News

The Historical Society of Fort Washington Newsletter

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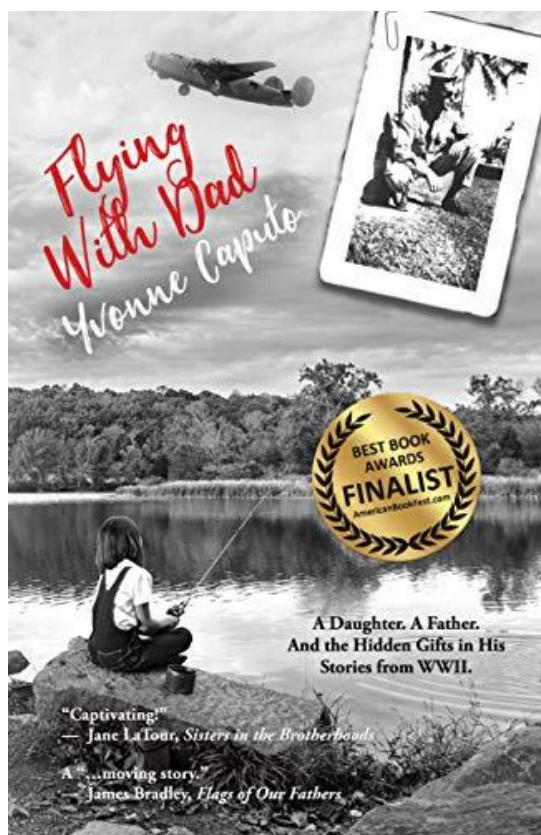
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Presentation via Zoom

Tuesday 20 April 2021; 7:30 pm



Our "virtual program" over Zoom, a presentation by **Yvonne Caputo** of her recently published book, *Flying with Dad*. Ms. Caputo charts her journey to her father through the re-telling of why he went from repairing planes to being a B-24 navigator in WWII. It is a heart-warming story of a daughter striving to understand her father and his opening up about the experiences that shapes so many soldiers. There will be an opportunity for questions after the presentation.

Please email your RSVP to robinc1209@gmail.com and a link will be sent to you before the presentation. ❖

PLEASE STAY SAFE AND STAY WELL!

**CLIFTON HOUSE,
SADLY, IS
STILL CLOSED**

CLIFTON THE SNOWMAN

PHOTO BY ANDY KEENAN



The Sad Passing of Kathy Domenic

Kathy served as the *Society's* membership chairman for several years in addition to being very active in the *Society* happenings before her battle of Parkinson's took over.

Kathy grew up in Fox Chase and graduated from NE High. She was active member of *St Peter's Episcopal Church* in Glenside.

Kathy was also an advocate of ecology, being an early owner of a hybrid automobile. She worked for the Upper Dublin School District and then as an executive secretary at Prudential.

In 1990, Kathy lost her husband Thomas and on her own raised and devoted herself to her two sons, Thomas M. Jr. of Ambler and Carl C. of Oahu, Hawaii.

In 1998, Kathy met and became the cherished mate of Dr. H. Roy Thompson who is an active member in the *Society* wearing many hats, including past President and current Trustee. In addition Kathy is survived by daughters-in law, Rachel and Roseanne, five grandchildren, extended family and last but not least, her vocal cat, Scampie.

A *Celebration of Life* will be scheduled in the future due to Covid-19. ❖

Did Weather Change History?

By Norm D. Bloom

February 22, 2021; The Farmers Almanac

IF IT HADN'T BEEN SO COLD IN 1604...

New Englanders might speak French. French explorers under the Sieur de Monts were the first to establish a colony on the North Atlantic coast, on an island in the St. Croix River in 1604. But the winter was so "cold and dreadful" that the little group decided to move to a more sheltered spot in Nova Scotia. The first English settlement, near the mouth of the Kennebec River in Maine, was also abandoned after the fierce winter of 1607-08.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN SO WARM IN 1620...

The **Pilgrims** might not have survived their first winter in Massachusetts. That winter of 1620-21 was described as "a calm winter such as never seen here since," with mild temperatures and only one substantial snowstorm. Even so, only 50 of the 102 settlers lived until spring.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN SO FOGGY ON AUGUST 29, 1776...

George Washington and most of the **Continental Army** might have been annihilated at the *Battle of Long Island*. After British troops won a smashing victory on August 27, 1776, the Americans were trapped at the western end of Long Island. Washington managed to save his army by crossing the East River to Manhattan Island under cover of a thick fog on August 29-30. Though he had suffered a defeat, Washington had reserved his army as a fighting force.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN SO STORMY ON OCTOBER 16, 1781...

British commander **Lord Cornwallis** might have escaped from Yorktown to prolong the *Revolutionary War*. On the night of October 16-17, 1781, **Cornwallis** proposed to evacuate his trapped army across the York River estuary on flatboats, then fight his way north to join British forces in New York. But in the middle of the crossing, a violent thunderstorm dispersed the flatboats, pushing some of them five miles downriver where they were captured by the French. The crossing had to be abandoned, and "thus expired the last hope of the British army," according to one of its officers. **Cornwallis** surrendered on October 19, assuring **American Independence**.

IF IT HADN'T RAINED ON JULY 4, 1863...

General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army might have suffered worse losses, or even been destroyed, in the aftermath of Gettysburg. The great battle took place July 1-3, 1863, and on the last day, **Pickett's Charge**, the Confederates' final assault on the Union lines was repulsed with enormous losses. **Lee** expected **Union General George Meade** to counterattack, but

Meade hesitated. Rain began to fall on the night of the third and continued throughout July 4. Under cover of the rain and darkness that night, Lee began his retreat to Virginia. Despite President Lincoln's frantic urgings, Meade was slow to pursue the battered rebels, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia escaped intact to fight on for another 21 months.

IF IT HAD SNOWED HARDER ON NOVEMBER 7, 1916...

President Woodrow Wilson might have lost his reelection bid in 1916. In one of the closest elections in history, Democratic incumbent Wilson defeated Republican Charles Evans Hughes and went on to take the United States into **World War I** in 1917. Wilson won the state of California by less than 2,000 votes on a day when heavy snow kept Democratic turnout low in mountain counties. Had the storm been worse, Hughes would have won the state and the national election. America probably would have entered the war anyway; Wilson had been regarded as the peace candidate. But as historian Paul F. Boller Jr. said, Wilson "made world pacification...the primary objective of American foreign policy," a position that has shaped our history and the world's—ever since.

IF THERE WAS NO FREEZE ON JANUARY 28, 1986...

The *Challenger* disaster might have been avoided. The space shuttle exploded shortly after takeoff from Cape Canaveral, Florida, killing seven astronauts, including Concord, N.H. schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe. Investigation showed that a sudden temperature drop the night before the launch had caused rings sealing the joints between segments of the solid-fuel booster rockets to become brittle and fail. The disaster forced a temporary halt in the U.S. space program, which has since been dogged by technical troubles and doubts about its cost and benefits.

IF IT RAINED LONGER IN DALLAS ON NOV. 22, 1963...

by Bryce Walat

John F. Kennedy might have survived. President Kennedy's limousine was equipped with a removable Plexiglass "bubble top" that was designed to protect the President from rain and snow while allowing crowds to see him.

The top was removed when rain clouds cleared in Dallas.

Contrary to popular belief, this bubble top was not bulletproof.

However, it would be harder for an assassin to get a clear view, or said assassin may have decided not to attempt it, thinking the top was bulletproof. In addition, a bullet might be deflected, or the shattering top might have warned the President to duck. ♦

Inauguration Day History & Facts continued

The Old Farmer's Almanac 01/11/21

Thomas Jefferson was the first president to take his oath at the Capitol, in 1801. Before this, the oath had been taken in New York City and in Philadelphia. Each city was, at the time, the nation's capital.

Most inaugurations take place outside; **James Monroe** became the first president to take the oath outdoors, in front of the *Old Brick Capitol*.

Lyndon B. Johnson was the first and only president to take the oath of office on an airplane, after **John F. Kennedy** was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963.

At **Barack Obama's** first Inauguration Day, in 2009, **Chief Justice John Roberts** stumbled over the wording, and the two men decided to do it over again the next day in the White House.

The *Oath of Office* is usually administered by the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. (This has been the practice since 1797.)

Calvin Coolidge's second oath was administered by the only chief justice who was a former president, **William Howard Taft**.

In 1805, **Thomas Jefferson's** second inauguration hosted the first inaugural parade.

In 1866, **Lincoln's** second inauguration was the first time that African-Americans marched in an inaugural parade.

In 1917, **Woodrow Wilson's** second term, women were part of the inaugural parade!

In 1977, President **Jimmy Carter** became the first to walk for more than a mile to the White House. This has become a tradition that many presidents have followed since.

The first official Inaugural Ball took place in 1809 at Long's Hotel in Washington, after the first inauguration of **James Madison**. *First Lady Dolley Madison* was the hostess, and tickets cost \$4 (about \$85 - today).

Since then, there have always been balls, with one exception: **Woodrow Wilson** did not like to dance, so his inauguration had no ball.

In 1953, **Dwight D. Eisenhower** replaced the Top Hat with a homburg.

In 1961, **Kennedy** brought back the top hat one last time—but it has faded away ever since! ♦



Membership Dues

Robin Costa

215.283.7176

RobinC1209@gmail.com

If you have not as yet renewed or are able to consider an additional donation towards some building capital improvements i.e. First Floor Bathroom, Clifton House maintenance, etc. Please send contributions c/o Treasurer. Thank you for your continued support of the *Historical Society of Fort Washington*. The *Historical Society* is a 501(c) (3) and your membership and/or any donations to the Society are tax deductible. ♦

Nicholas Karabots

Nicholas Karabots, who with his wife Athena founded Karamoor Estate Vineyard and Winery in Fort Washington, has died at the age of 86.

Karamoor Estate has evolved into not only one of the state's top producers but one of the better ones to be operating on the East Coast. Located in a building on the fenced-in 250-acre *Karamoor Farm*, the longtime home of the couple, the winery has been in business for 10 years without having an easily accessible tasting room. That was supposed to be rectified with the restoration of a building offsite, but the multiyear project was halted by a fire just before Thanksgiving.

Nicholas and Athena are a classic rags-to-riches saga: Greek immigrant-rooted, up from the South Bronx streets, hardworking and eventually highly successful in publishing and printing (including puzzle mags and TV Guide in its glory days), real estate, recreational sports and, more recently, a well-received winery in, of all places, Fort Washington.

The Karabots are well-known for their philanthropic work in the Philadelphia area, including their role as lead donors for the Franklin Institute's addition. The Karabots *Junior Fellows Program*, based at the **College of Physicians of Philadelphia**, has prepped dozens of needy, high-achieving high-schoolers for careers in health care. Major Karabots gifts have garnered facility namings at **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Pediatric Care Centers**, in West Philadelphia and Norristown, and for the **MRI Center of Montgomery Hospital, Einstein Medical Center Montgomery**. The Karabots also lend support to youth education programs at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**. ♦

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SOCIETY IMPORTANT INFO

MYLES PETTENGILL, PRESIDENT

215.783.6912 ARCHWAYMYLES@COMCAST.NET

VICE PRESIDENT, JOAN AMEY

215.646.0858 JOANAMEY@AOL.COM

JIM ADAMS, RECORDING SECRETARY

215.628.3023 ADAMS401@VERIZON.NET

GWEN MEYER, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

215.885.3324

ROBIN COSTA, TREASURER

215.283.7176 ROBINC1209@GMAIL.COM

TRUSTEE, H. ROY THOMPSON

215.517.8149 HROY15@AOL.COM

TRUSTEE, DOMINIC COSTA

215.283.7176 ORELAND416@GMAIL.COM

TRUSTEE, RENEE WEBB

215.643.4169 RENEEWEBB999@GMAIL.COM

TRUSTEE/CURATOR, MARIANNE MATT

267.439.5872 MYSTYKATSYNGER@COMCAST.NET

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Editor's Note: If you have anything to contribute or know of an event that would interest our members, please email

Renee Webb ReneeWebb999@gmail.com