IN MEMORIAM—PRIESTLEY DESCENDENTS

Dr. Randall F. Hipple, born March 18, 1934, passed away at age 76. He was an active member of the Friends of Joseph Priestley House, serving on the Board of Directors. As a physician in the Williamsport area, he served the community in many capacities; as a member of the City Council, the Williamsport Community Arts Council, and the Lycoming County Historical Society and Museum. He also served on many fundraising campaigns for a great number of community-based organizations. Dr. Hipple was honored for his strong commitment to historic preservation in 2005 when the “Dr. Randall F. Hipple Historic District” was designated in recognition of his efforts.

Virginia Lyon Johnson, born June 14, 1911, passed away last summer at the age of 98. She was the daughter of Dr. Edward and Florence Slate Lyon, both of Williamsport. She was quite proud of her ancestry and particularly that of Dr. Joseph Priestley. Through the years, several of her grandchildren and great grandchildren were given Priestley family names. While in her late teens, she attended a celebration held at the Priestley House. Also in attendance during the festivities was her father, Dr. Edward Lyon; her brothers, Edward and George; and her sister Florence. She volunteered her time with a variety of community organizations and was devoted to all in her extended family.

Both Dr. Randall F. Hipple and Virginia Lyon Johnson were direct descendants of Dr. Joseph Priestley. We are honored to acknowledge their contributions to their communities and families. On behalf of the Friends of Joseph Priestley House, we wish to express our condolences to their families and friends.

FRIENDS OF
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE

P.O. Box 346
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Penn State chemistry students place roses at Priestley’s grave in Riverview Cemetery

POSTINGS FROM PRIESTLEY HOUSE

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GEOGE POND BUILDING REDDEDICATED

The Pond Building rededication ceremony at Joseph Priestley House in Northumberland, PA took place on Sunday November 7, 2010. The building is named for George Gilbert Pond, one-time head of Department of Chemistry at Penn State who in 1919 purchased the Priestley Mansion at auction in order to save it as a museum. The newly refurbished Pond building was built in 1926 to serve as a fireproof museum for the papers and equipment of Joseph Priestley apart from the house. It will be used for presentations, displays and meetings.

Speaking at the rededication ceremony was Roy Olofson, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Penn State, and chair of the committee that raised funds for the renovation of the building. He reviewed the history of the involvement of Penn State and chemists with Priestley House dating back to the 1874 commemoration of the one-hundredth year anniversary of Priestley’s discovery of oxygen. Olofson narrated a silent film of the 1926 dedication of the Pond Building that showed visiting chemists from all over the world arriving at the train station in Northumberland. His comments were followed by chemistry demonstrations performed by Joseph Priestley re-enactor, Ron Blatchley. Among the fifty people attending the event were a Cub Scout pack from Kreamer, PA and undergraduate chemistry students from Penn State, Abington. After the rededication ceremony, the chemistry students continued a long tradition of chemists visiting Northumberland by placing red roses on the grave of Joseph Priestley in Riverview Cemetery.

2011 Membership letter & return envelope are enclosed

Joseph Priestley House
is a National Historic Landmark and a National Historic Chemical Landmark

Owned and maintained by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and administered by the Friends of Joseph Priestley House, a registered Charitable organization whose official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.
Since October 2009, when the PHMC entrusted the Friends of Joseph Priestley House to reopen the Priestley House, our days have been quite interesting. The house is open to the public every weekend from Charter Day in March until the end of November with tours at 1, 2, and 3 o’clock. With advance notice, we are able to give weekday tours for school groups, scout troops, and visitors from out of the area. Special programs in November, January, and March utilize docents in costume with our own Dr. Priestley interpreter (Mr. Ronald Blatchley). We have had many visitors from across the U.S. and foreign countries (i.e. England, Japan, and Costa Rica) who have shared their knowledge of Dr. Priestley with us. During 2010, we have had more than 900 visitors to the Priestley House. Our volunteers have given of their time and talents to enable the Friends group to keep the Priestley House open. Some of the jobs our volunteers handle are: tour guides, desk receptionists in the Visitor’s Center and gift shop, housekeepers doing cleaning chores inside the house, as well as gardeners keeping the grounds looking great. We had a very successful History Camp in July for children from Kindergarten through third grade. Our current volunteer list includes 20 people who are instrumental in keeping Dr. Priestley’s memory and contributions alive and well in Northumberland. Thanks to our volunteers for their enthusiasm and dedication in bringing history to life. If you would like to help keep Dr. Priestley’s memory and accomplishments alive in our area, please contact the Priestley House and join our dedicated group of volunteers.

Our newly elected Tom Bresenhan increasingly difficult to function in As Priestley developed a rational presentation about Joseph Priestley’s work, saying Priestley’s views on the nature of the earth and the atmosphere were not well known. At the hotel where he was staying, he had to flee for his life after being attacked by a mob of people angry about his views. The mob was not able to catch him, and he was able to escape to safety. As Priestley developed a rational presentation about Joseph Priestley’s work, he was often met with opposition from those who disagreed with his views. He was eventually forced to leave England and travel to America, where he continued to develop his theories about the nature of the earth and the atmosphere. He eventually settled in Pennsylvania, where he lived for the rest of his life. In 1801, he moved to the town of New Harmony, Indiana, where he continued to write and give lectures on his theories. Priestley is remembered as a pioneer in many fields, including chemistry, geology, and meteorology. His work continues to be studied and admired to this day.