REPAIRS TO PRIESTLEY HOUSE UPDATE
Repairs to the structure of Priestley House are nearly complete. In the near future PHMC crews will install a new entrance ramp to the Priestley Avenue door and prime the repair work already completed for painting in the spring. There are also future plans to replace the fence and to paint the outbuilding and fence to match the house.

HERITAGE ALLIANCE PASSPORT PROGRAM WINNER
The Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau, the Susquehanna River Valley Heritage Alliance, and PPL Electric Utilities announced Robert Long (age 8) of Northumberland, PA as the grand prizewinner of the 2016 Heritage Alliance Passport Program. The grand prize includes four complimentary tickets to the Gettysburg Civil War Museum and the Cyclorama along with a $500 prepaid credit card for an overnight stay in Gettysburg at the Gettysburg Hotel and related travel expenses. “PPL Electric Utilities is pleased to support this project. Introducing young people to our wonderful historic assets is an important and commendable initiative of the Susquehanna Valley River Heritage Alliance,” said Teri MacBride of PPL Electric Utilities.
A PPL Electric Utilities grant award helped to underwrite the 2016 Passport Program, which included Priestley House as one of the heritage sites.

FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE
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Lewisburg, PA 17837

GUNPOWDER JOE COMES TO LIFE AT BTE
Science takes to the stage at the Alvina Krause Theatre in Downtown Bloomsburg, beginning January 19 and continuing through February 5. Directed by Laurie McCants, breathes life into Joseph Priestley and post-Revolution America. Written by Anthony Clarvoe, the work itself is a collaboration between the playwright, the professionals of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Friends of the Priestley House, and Bucknell University. Gunpowder Joe focuses on Joseph Priestley, an innovative scientist, a religious dissenter, and a friend of America’s Founders, and is staged with “live music, exciting scientific demonstrations, and enthralling visual design.”

This World Premiere has local ties, since Priestley settled in Northumberland when he and his wife were forced from their home in England because of Priestley’s religious and political opinions, which he expressed with “vigor and fearless” (Lester Kieft).
January 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. are “Pay What You Wish” nights. January 21 at 7:30 p.m., Opening Night, is “Pay What You Want”. Contact the BTE Box Office (570-784-8181) for ticket prices for the remaining performances. All Thursday, Friday, and Saturday performances are at 7:30 p.m. Sunday performances are at 3 p.m.
RESEARCH IN ENGLAND AND GUNPOWDER JOE

To make sure it’s authentic, go to the source, and that is exactly what Laurie did as part of her research for the play Gunpowder Joe. She visited several sites in England associated with the life of Joseph Priestley, including Birstall, Priestley’s boyhood home, and Heckmondwike, his birthplace, and Heckmondwike, his boyhood home.

At the Warrington Museum the curators allowed her to look through Priestley letters written during his time in America to his brother-in-law John Wilkinson. At Priestley College Laurie spoke to two drama groups about Priestley College the most as well as her career in theater, and in Leeds Laurie and Tom Bresenhan visited Mill Hall graveyard where Priestley served as a minister. While there they spoke with current minister, Reverend James, about dissenting congregations in Priestley’s time and visited the Leeds Library where Priestley served as the first secretary. Laurie was also able to review minutes from early library meetings, thanks to the kindness of the current librarians at the library.

In addition to Tom, Fiona Powell, formerly from the United Kingdom, accompanied Laurie on this trip and served as their driver throughout the visit.

their drama group of her experiences in theater and participated in a workshop with students researching Priestley’s character traits.

Dr. Johnson’s interest in Joseph Priestley is directly related to his line of research, namely photosynthesis, and brings this scientific expertise to his tenure on the Board. Dr. Johnson is currently studying a photosynthetic component that acts in concert with the oxygen generating machinery in plants.

The blessing before the meal at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Friends of Joseph Priestley House was the Unitarian Universalist hymn “Oh We Give Thanks” sung by Dee Casteel and Harriet Bresenhan. During the business meeting after the meal, Jo Ann Long, Volunteer Coordinator for the Friends, described special tours given during the year to school groups and families. She also paid tribute to Cheryl Snyder, volunteer and newsletter editor, who passed away in August.

The program for the evening featured Laurie McCants, a founding member of the Bloomburg Theater Ensemble (BTE), who discussed the motivations and origins of the world premiere play on Joseph Priestley, Gunpowder Joe by Anthony Clarvoe. The play was commissioned by BTE, a commission supported by the Friends of Joseph Priestley House. Gunpowder Joe, an historical drama about Priestley’s arrival in Northumberland during the tense days of early American politics, will premier at BTE in January. Attendees at the Annual Meeting were given a preview of some of the music and delights awaiting BTE audiences during the stage performance of the play.