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# FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOORESTOWN



## View From the Porch

Our 2023-2024 season has kicked off with a bang with the launch of our newest exhibit and the completion of our most successful Ghost Tours event since we began conducting the tours over fifteen years ago.

On September 29<sup>th</sup> we held a launch party for our latest exhibit “Malcolm Wells: One Man’s Crusade to Save the Environment Through Architecture.” The event was well attended and brought in many local architects, in addition to the local history buffs that regularly attend our events. Since that night hundreds of people have visited the exhibit and the reviews have been excellent. To accommodate the tremendous interest that people have shown in the exhibit we have opened Smith-Cadbury on Wednesday nights from 6-8 until the end of the year.

In the Sunday edition of the Philadelphia Inquirer on November 5<sup>th</sup>, the paper ran a full-page article about the Historical Society’s Wells exhibit and we saw an additional uptick in traffic as a result.

Congratulations to the exhibit’s curator Linda Vizi and the entire exhibit committee which included: David Sullivan, Jill Weiss, Stephanie Herz, Nancy Chumney, and John Watson.

Our annual Ghost Tours kicked off on Friday night October 13<sup>th</sup>. Despite the fact that the tour was going up against a Phillies playoff game, we still had a great crowd on the opening Friday night. Heavy rains washed out the Saturday tour of the first weekend, however we more than made up for it on the following two weekends where the turnout exceeded anything that we have ever seen before. We needed to add an additional tour, for each of

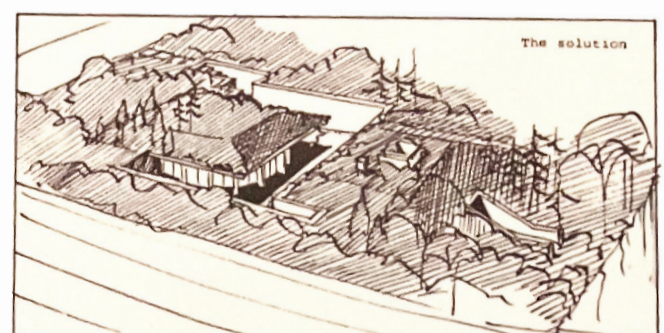
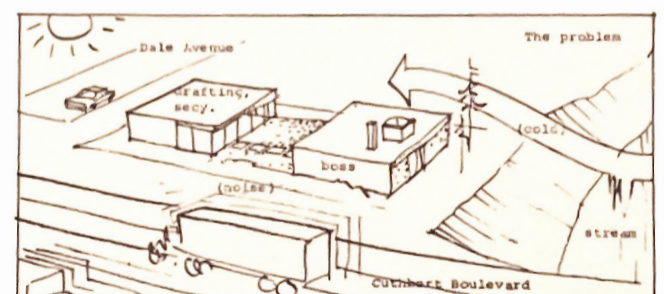
the remaining nights, to accommodate the overflow crowds.

Thanks to the Ghost Tour chairs Gary Ell and Julie Maravich for putting together another smashing success. Our thanks also go out to all of the volunteers who helped as actors portraying ghosts from Moorestown’s history.

Our New Jersey History Speaks Lecture Series for this season also launched in September with a talk by local historian David Boulden on his quest to investigate the actual route taken by the British through New Jersey when they evacuated Philadelphia in 1778. The meeting space in the Moorestown Library was full to capacity as David described his effort which involved metal detecting his way across Camden and Burlington Counties.

In October, our speaker was Architect Dan Nichols of the Ragan Design Group who spoke about the life and work of Malcolm Wells. Once again, the library meeting room was completely full as Dan shared his recollections of Wells. It was a perfect companion piece to our current exhibit.

**Lenny Wagner, President**  
([Lwagner559@comcast.net](mailto:Lwagner559@comcast.net))



**From our Malcolm Wells Exhibit:** Wells is looking for a solution to building along a noisy highway (see the drawing). He writes: “That’s when the surprises began. The first one was that the open courtyard was actually quiet in spite of the truck traffic only 20 feet away.”



### House Tours and Gift Shop Hours:

2nd & 4th Sunday 1-3 PM  
Tuesdays 1-4 PM

### Research Library Hours:

Tuesday 1-4 PM  
Second Sunday of each Month 1-3 PM

### Address

Historical Society of Moorestown  
Smith-Cadbury Mansion  
12 High St.  
P.O. Box 477  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

### Phone

856-235-0353

### Web Site

[moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org)

### E-mail

[moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

### Facebook

[facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown](https://facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown)

### Instagram

[www.instagram.com/moorestownhistory/](https://www.instagram.com/moorestownhistory/)

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**December 2023**

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WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

The New Jersey History Speaks Lecture Series, hosted by the Historical Society of Moorestown and the Moorestown Public Library continues in 2023/2024. All lectures that are part of the New Jersey History Speaks series are free and open to the general public.

**If you plan to attend one or all of the events, please contact the Moorestown Public Library at (856) 234-0333 to register.**

Those who are not registered will be admitted to the event as space allows.

## The Historical Society of Moorestown

### Officers

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*Linda Vizi*

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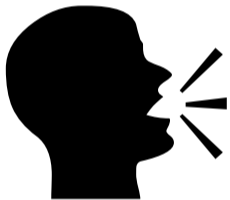
*Student Trustee:*  
*Sarah Dowling-Ell*

### Newsletter Editor

*Lisa Knell*

### Library

*Stephanie Herz*



## NEW JERSEY HISTORY SPEAKS LECTURE SERIES

**DECEMBER:** The Historical Society of Moorestown's New Jersey History Speaks Lecture Series continues its 2023/2034 season on Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at the Moorestown Library

(7:00 PM). Professor Melissa Ziobro will speak about "The Gilded Age in New Jersey".

Fans of the popular HBO series, "The Gilded Age" will not want to miss this event! Ms. Melissa Ziobro, Specialist Professor of Public History at Monmouth University, will discuss the privileged lifestyle of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the period Mark Twain labeled "The Gilded Age".

Americans who achieved great wealth celebrated it as never before! In New York the opera, the theatre, and lavish parties consumed the ruling class's leisure hours, but how did the Gilded Age manifest itself in New Jersey?

Professor Ziobro will discuss tycoons like James B. Duke who carved out a 2,000 acre estate, Duke Farms, in 1899, leaving it to his daughter Doris, age 13. Jay Gould needed a retreat in Lakewood for his polo ponies and balls. Millionaires Row (below) at Long Branch drew those who loved the shore for summer homes.

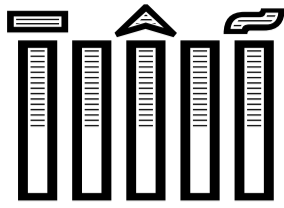
Ladies' fashions had to be numerous, fine and fancy. Who were the powerful and influential families in the Garden State in the Gilded Age? "Old money" versus "new money?" Where are they now?

[Photo: "MILLIONAIRES ROW OCEAN AVE LONG BRANCH N.J." Monmouth University; [https://guides.monmouth.edu/ld.php?content\\_id=41676254](https://guides.monmouth.edu/ld.php?content_id=41676254)]



MILLIONAIRES ROW, OCEAN AVE, LONG BRANCH, N.J.



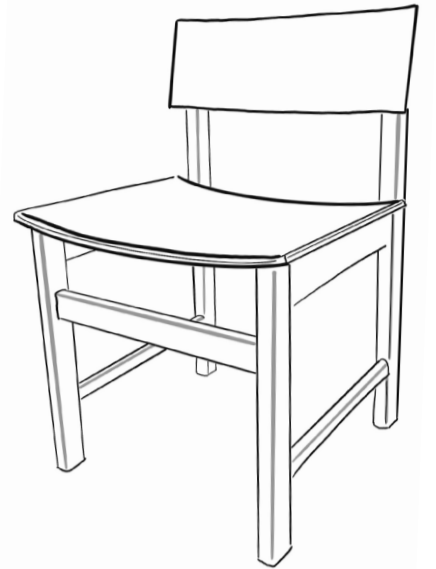


## MALCOLM WELLS EXHIBIT

**Malcolm Wells: One Man's Crusade to Save the Environment Through Architecture**

A FEW OF THE THINGS YOU'LL SEE AND LEARN ABOUT WHEN YOU VISIT THE EXHIBIT

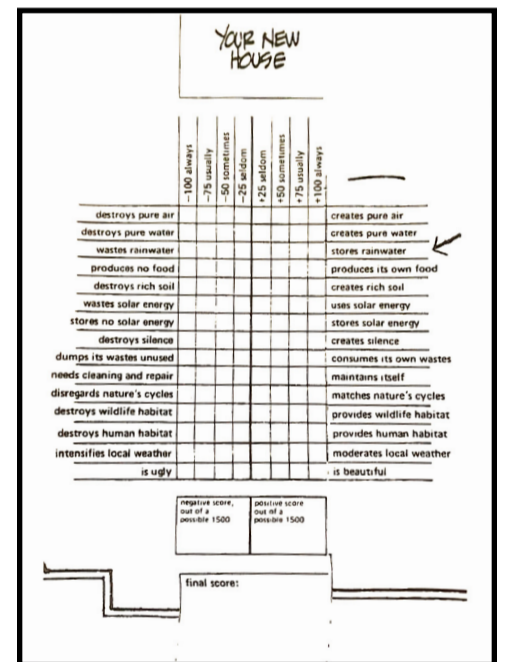
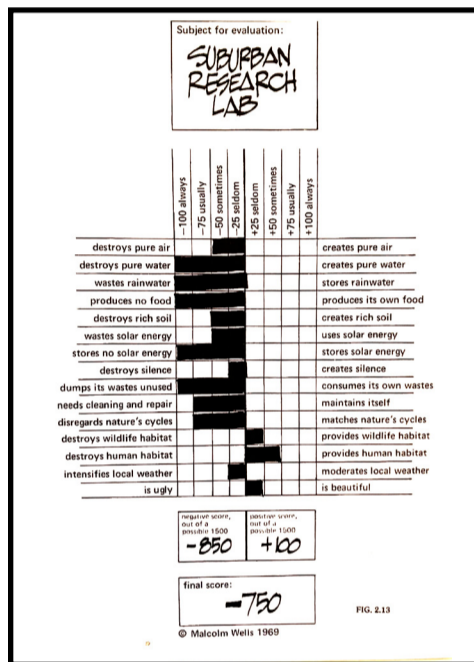
◆ A chair once used in the Cherry Hill Library that was designed by Wells



◆ Wells designed worksheets to help evaluate the impact of a building on its environment. How does a building impact the air? rainwater? soil? wildlife? weather? Each variable can be evaluated (as a "plus" or "minus") to calculate and visually show the impact.

See the solid black lines in a copy of the "Suburban Research Lab" below; this house had a final score of -750.

Pick up a copy of the "Your New House" worksheet at the exhibit to evaluate your own home (see below).



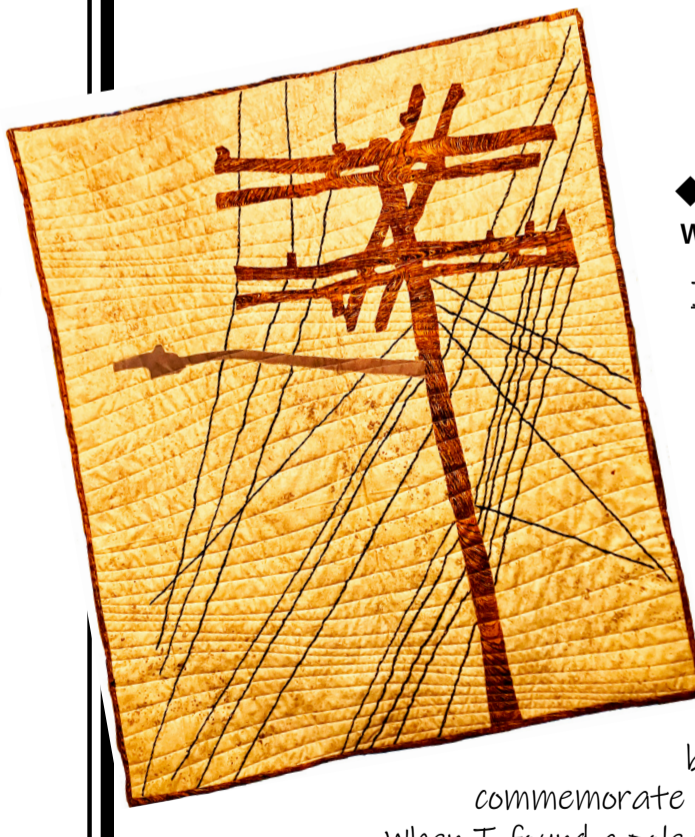
Opening night at our Malcolm Wells exhibit. Kate and John Shields live in a house in Moorestown that Wells designed (pictured with Kate's parents).

[All Photos and images this page: HSM]

### "The Architect" Tote Bag printed with a drawing by Malcolm Wells

At the exhibit you can read Wells' story behind his drawing "The Architect" (it starts out: From there on, the day went SOUR... ).

purchase a tote bag for \$20



### ◆ There's even a QUILT!

Wells wrote this in March of 1995:

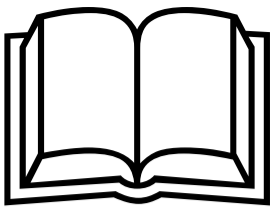
#### If Quilts Could Talk:

I've often thought of the messages moving through the nation's telephone wires. Triumphs, tragedies, gossip, business, lovers' talk, news ... every aspect of the human condition is racing along up there. I've also thought about the day when America's familiar overhead wires will have gone the way of the horse and buggy, so I designed a quilt to

commemorate both the messages and the wires.

When I found a pole with the right proportions I created this simplified version of it and had it pieced by a gifted quilter names Susan Godwin.

— MALCOLM WELLS



## LIBRARY NEWS

The staff at the HSM library is usually pretty good at figuring out what donated items are.

But every once in a while, even we are stumped.

This object (see two views, at right) was found in our collection with no identification except for the name of the donor. It is made of tin and is about 7 inches long and about 4 inches wide. See if you can guess what it was used for. (The answer can be found on page 6.)

— Stephanie Herz



(Photos: Stephanie Herz)

## ARMYDIS SORDON PARK DEDICATION

Nearly 100 people attended a ceremony for the official dedication of *Armydis Sordon Park* (formerly Beech Street Park) that included a performance by the Choir of the Second Baptist Church of Moorestown (see photo below; choir is at the right; for some historic photos of the Choir practicing in 1983, see page 7; the church is located across the street from the park, on Mill Street).

The park is named in honor of Private Armydis Sordon, an African American soldier who lost his life in France during World War I. Sordon and his family lived on Beech Street in Moorestown at the site of the park.

Historical Society Trustees (pictured at top, right) Stephanie Herz, Lenny Wagner, Julie Maravich, and

Nancy Chumney were in attendance on November 11th at the Veterans Day ceremony. The Historical Society was singled out during the ceremony for the assistance it provided in researching Sordon's story.

[Photos: HSM]



## BUSINESS CORNER

### BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Local businesses play an important role when they support the preservation of Moorestown's history. We welcome and thank our business members and we ask our members to patronize them!!

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Your generous support helps to sustain the Society's commitment to preserving Moorestown's heritage for generations to come.

*Again, thank you!*

New Business memberships are always welcome! We'll feature your company's name on our website and in our award winning quarterly newsletter.

For details, visit us at <http://moorestownhistory.org/membership/become-a-business-partner/>

The Historical Society is a registered 501(c)(3)

# LIVING HISTORY & GHOST TOURS 2023



(Photos: HSM)

In October, the Historical Society staged six entertaining, enlightening, and educational nights of Living History & Ghost Tours that continued the expansion of the Moorestown Ghost Tours that we have been conducting for many years



**WE ARE SO THANKFUL** for the generous support of our volunteers, performers and supporters, including: Trinity Episcopal Church, Weichert Realtors, Pie Lady Cafe, Moorestown Theatre Company, Moorestown Music Collective, Moorestown High School, Moorestown Friends School, Laura Dishong Music, John Woolman Memorial Association, and Peachfield (a historic site located in Westhampton, NJ).



## SMITH-CADBURY OPEN FOR CANDLELIGHT NIGHT

HSM Trustees greet guests at Smith-Cadbury during Moorestown's traditional Main Street Candlelight Stroll on November 4th. Pictured at left are: Gary Ell, Linda Vizi, Lenny Wagner, Jill Weiss, Mary Berardi, Nancy Chumney, and Julie Maravich.

[Photo: Rita Bulk, Publisher; Haddonfield Living, Moorestown Living]

# HELP WANTED:

**Tired of cleaning your own house?**

**Come de-clutter ours!**



**Activities/Events:** Help plan, organize and execute events.

**Docent Training:** Become a Museum and special exhibit guide.

**Exhibits:** Help create interesting displays of historical artifacts.

**Fund Raising:** Help plan and hold income-generating events.

**Oral History:** Conduct oral histories.

**Photography:** Attend events and take digital photos for our archives and publicity.

**Speaker Series:** Help select speakers, coordinates meetings.

**Publicity/News/Web:** Help get Society information to the members and public.

If you'd like to help us (and have fun doing it!) contact us at 856-235-0353 Tuesdays 1-4, or at other times, leave a message. Email us (a better option) at [moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

**Hope to see you soon!**



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hello Members!

I hope you were able to join us for the wonderful events we had this past fall season. All of us here at the house look forward to sharing history with you in the coming year!

If you're in a nostalgic mood as we end 2023 and begin 2024, note that our newsletters going back to 2014 are available online at our website ([moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org)). You'll find color versions of our black & white print edition and if you have never read a color version, I highly recommend it!

A warm welcome to our newest members:

• Kevin Kramarski • Deanna Dariano • Courtney Killion • Terri Uehlein & Ted Olsen • Danyell Peter • Thomas Fischer • Melissa Vance •

*Jill Weiss, Membership Chair*  
[moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

## HSM WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEES

**At its November meeting, the HSM Board of Trustees voted to add three new members to the board:**

*Anne Matlack* has business experience in non-profits, a passion for history, and is an active member of the Religious Society of Friends (and a descendant of early European settlers in Moorestown).

*Josh Bernstein* is a Journalist, Historian, and local history book author.

*Hunter Betz* is a Software Engineer with IT, computer networking, and software engineering experience.



**Answer to the Library News "mystery":**  
an antique revolving doughnut cutter.



# HELP WANTED:

**Would you like to volunteer in a historic house museum surrounded by beautiful objects?**

**We need someone to manage the HSM Smith-Cadbury Gift Shop (and our Online Store!)**

*(See above for contact information)*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2023/2024

### BASIC MEMBERSHIP:

- Student (\$10)     Individual/Family (\$35)

### DONOR LEVELS:

- Town Crier Fund (\$50)  
 Pathway to History 2.0 Engraved Brick (\$125)  
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# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

## DECEMBER 2023

**EXHIBIT:** *Malcolm Wells: One Man's Crusade to Save the Environment Through Architecture*

- 5 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 6 *Smith-Cadbury special hours, tours & gift shop, 6-8*
- 10 *Smith-Cadbury tours, gift shop, & research library, 1-3*
- 11 **NJ History Speaks Lecture** Melissa Ziobro on *The Gilded Age in New Jersey*, 7:00 PM at the Moorestown Library
- 12 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury special hours, tours & gift shop, 6-8*
- 19 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 20 *Smith-Cadbury special hours, tours & gift shop, 6-8*
- 21 *Closed for holiday break until January 2, 2024. Happy Holidays and New Year!*

## JANUARY 2024

**EXHIBIT:** *Malcolm Wells: One Man's Crusade to Save the Environment Through Architecture*

- 2 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 9 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 14 *Smith-Cadbury tours, gift shop, & research library, 1-3*
- 16 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 23 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 28 *Smith-Cadbury tours & gift shop, 1-3*
- 30 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*

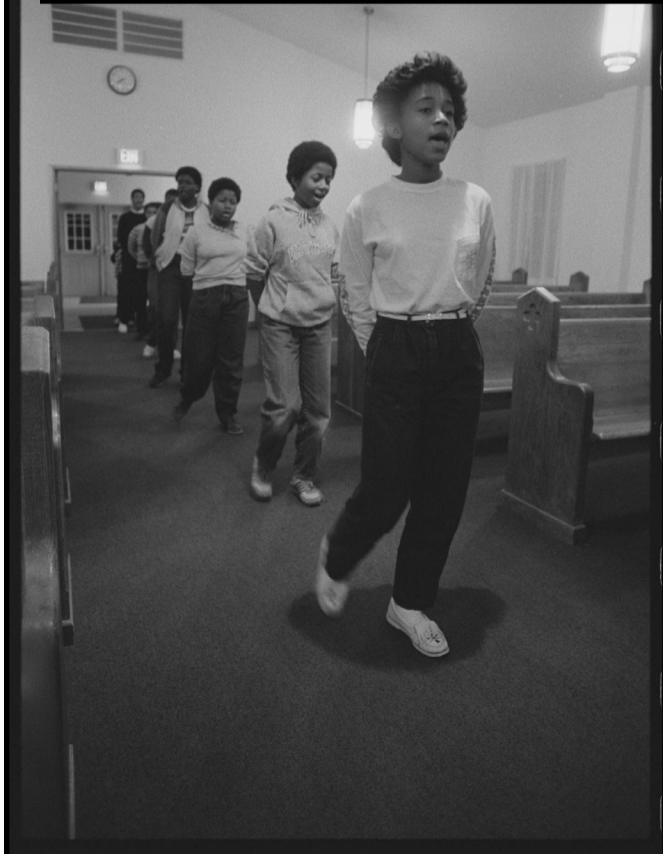
## FEBRUARY 2024

**EXHIBIT:** *Malcolm Wells: One Man's Crusade to Save the Environment Through Architecture*

- 6 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 11 *Smith-Cadbury tours, gift shop, & research library, 1-3*
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 20 *Smith-Cadbury library, gift shop & tours, 1-4*
- 25 *Smith-Cadbury tours & gift shop, 1-3*



*The Town Crier Fund honors & acknowledges Bill Archer's tireless and enthusiastic dedication to the Historical Society. Donations are accepted by check and thru PayPal on our website (<https://moorestownhistory.org/the-town-crier-fund/>).*



### **October 1983: "Saturday night choir rehearsal at Second Baptist Church"**

Forty years ago photographer Carl Fleischhauer captured the Choir at the

Second Baptist Church in Moorestown (founded in 1893) rehearsing on a Saturday evening. The church is across the street from the newly-dedicated Armydis Sordon Park (see page 4). According to the Library of Congress site, the photos show: "Mrs. Lawson leads practice of the Gospel Chorus" (top, left), "Gospel Chorus practicing processional" (at left); "Mrs. Lawson with her son, demonstrating putting on cummerbund" (top, right).

[Photos : Hufford, M., Hunn, E. S. & Fleischhauer, C. (1983) *Saturday night choir rehearsal at Second Baptist Church, Moorestown, New Jersey*. United States New Jersey Moorestown, 1983. Moorestown, New Jersey, October 7, - October 8. (Photograph) Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1991023\\_216448\\_01/](https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1991023_216448_01/).]

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Moorestown**

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• Historical Society of Moorestown Membership Year  
April 30, 2023—May 1, 2024 / Time Travelers Member •

**DECEMBER 2023**

*"Malcolm Wells:  
One Man's Crusade to  
Save the Environment  
Through Architecture"*  
is currently on display  
at the Smith-Cadbury  
Mansion. Check the  
Calendar on page 7 to  
see when we are open.

*Malcolm Wells used his creativity and enthusiasm to advocate  
for earth-covered building designs.  
He celebrated, what he called,  
Underground America Day and offered  
eye-catching artwork along with  
suggestions on how to mark the day.*

"... If you say something, and then I say something, and then someone else says something about underground's advantages very little will happen. We've all got to say it together, that it's only quiet, and warm in winter, but cool in summertime and beautiful as well. ... I've very carefully chosen a day, May 14th, on which a great number of us, all over American, can publicize the celebrate underground architecture in whatever way seems appropriate..."

"... What you do, and how you do it, of course, are strictly up to you. You know far better than I what will be most effective where you live. ... All I ask is that they all be done on a particular day. Dig a hole, spread mulch on a roof, plant a tree, visit a cave... who knows?"

*Wells also offered this disclaimer:* \*Underground architecture doesn't work everywhere, of course, any more than skyscrapers or houseboats do, but where it's right -- and that's probably where you are -- watch out!

