

# Wyeth's World: A Granddaughter's Memories

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Victoria Browning Wyeth, Center City resident and only grandchild of the artist Andrew Wyeth, presented her perspective on her famous grandfather and his artwork to a rapt audience at the Free Library's Philadelphia City Institute branch on Rittenhouse Square on December 4.

Intent on setting the record straight, correcting art historians, and adding personality to the paintings, Ms. Wyeth lectures around the U.S. and abroad on her favorite subject, her grandfather "Andy." She doesn't mind shocking her audience a bit and telling some insider family stories, but most of all she bubbles over with enthusiasm about her love for her grandfather, what he taught her, and the wonderful relationship she shared with him.

The Wyeths spent winters in Chadds Ford, PA, and summers in Maine. As a child, Ms. Wyeth would wake up in the morning and see her grandfather outside, painting, and she thought that was what all grandfathers did. In later years, when the President would call her grandfather every year with birthday greetings, she did not think that was unusual.

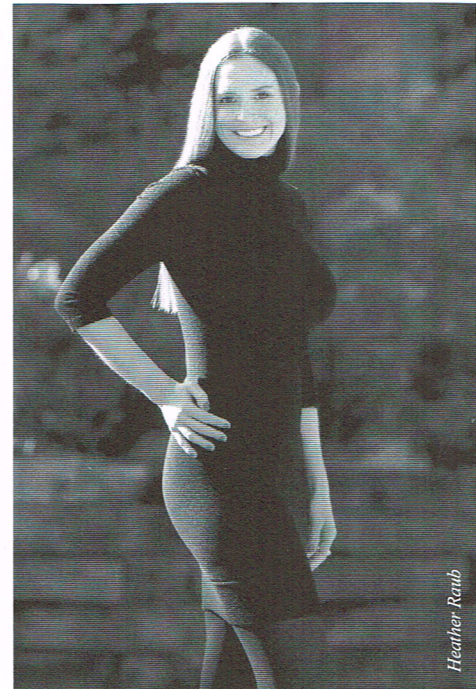
Her grandfather did not make a big deal out of being rich and famous. He delighted in the black L.L. Bean turtle-necks she bought him for his birthday, carved pumpkins with her at Halloween, and didn't mind her nickname for him, "Old Bones," derived from a self-portrait in

which he depicted himself as a skeleton.

With no training as an artist or art historian, Ms. Wyeth believes one should value what the artist says about his own work. In her presentation, she pointed out her favorite parts of each painting and told what she knew about Wyeth's inspiration and technique. His jovial personality attracted people and they enjoyed modeling for him.

Andrew Wyeth did between ten and 150 studies of a subject before creating a painting. He painted people and landscapes that interested him, never used photographs, and did not believe in symbolism. He did his first painting when he was six years old and had no art-school training. The Wyeth family purchased many of his paintings at auction and built a private family museum on an island in Maine.

At 16 years old, Ms. Wyeth gave her first talks about Wyeth at the Farnsworth Art Museum in Maine. She earned a B.A. in American Cultural Studies in 2001 from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and during her senior year curated her first museum exhibition on Wyeth's painting "Her Room." She studied the history of psychology at Harvard University and earned a Master of Arts in Psychology from Wesleyan University. From 2004 to 2011, she conducted gallery talks at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford. Her photographs were included in the 2006



Victoria Wyeth, the artist's granddaughter.

Wyeth retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and other Wyeth shows. She worked as a therapist at a Pennsylvania state psychiatric hospital and now works there as a research assistant.

Andrew Wyeth died five years ago, and Victoria Wyeth, his only grandchild, still mourns the loss. "He taught me to see the world in a different way."

For more information go to [www.victoriawyeth.com](http://www.victoriawyeth.com).

## CCRA Seeking New Board Members

CCRA is looking for Nominees to serve on our Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2014. We are seeking energetic individuals who have a passion for Center City living and are interested in issues of quality of life and community service.

The CCRA Board is a working Board whose Members share a pride and a vision for excellence in our neighborhood, and are willing to volunteer time (at least four hours each month, not including attending, and preparing for, monthly Board meetings) to turn that pride and enthusiasm into meaningful activity. Board Members are energetic and diverse in our interests, but unified by what Center City brings to our lives. Board Members serve on at least one of the following

committees -- Streets, Government Relations, Zoning, Membership, Newsletter, Education and Family -- and a number of others.

Board Members must live in the area between JFK Boulevard and South Street and Broad Street to the Schuylkill River. To be a part of one of Philadelphia's oldest, largest, and most respected civic organizations, please forward a resume or a summary of your qualifications before March 28th to: Nominating Committee Chair, Center City Residents' Association, 1600 Market Street, Suite 2500, Philadelphia, PA 19103 or by email to: [centercity@centercityresidents.org](mailto:centercity@centercityresidents.org) with "Board Candidate" in the subject line.