

The Mount Airy Museum of Regional History will host the popular Easter Egg Workshop on Saturday, from 1 to 4 p.m. A second class will be held on April 5 from 1 to 4 p.m.

The classes filled up quickly last year, so Matthew Edwards, museum director, encouraged everyone to sign up as soon as possible. Call to reserve a spot in the workshop by Friday for this Saturday's class, or by April 4 for the April 5 class. The workshop is for age 12 through adults, and will be held in the museum's second floor classroom. Class size is limited to 15 participants. The cost is \$10 for museum members and \$15 for non-members, which will include supplies. Also, \$20 take-home kits are available for participants; kits must be ordered at the time of registration.

The Ukrainian tradition of decorating eggs with wax is called pysanky, and dates back to 1300 BC. The ancient practice uses traditional motifs that date back even further, to 3000 BC, and many examples were provided for the students in last year's workshops by the class instructor, Maria Skaskiw. Skaskiw told last year's workshop participants that she learned the art of decorating the eggs as a child, growing up in a Ukrainian community in New York.

"I was fascinated by it and the history — it goes back thousands of years. There are variations on the motifs, endless variations. I also love the legends behind the art form. My favorite legend says that as long as people keep writing the Easter eggs, evil will not triumph in this world," said Skaskiw. The students used a kistka, which is the tool used to "paint" the beeswax onto the surface of the eggs. The tool is heated by a candle flame, then dipped in beeswax. The wax is mixed with black soot, so those painting the eggs can see the designs easily on the eggshell.

Skaskiw guided the students through the process, and encouraged them with a reminder that they must “keep a long, steady stroke” when applying the wax, so it will not pool or drip. “The trick is keeping the kistka hot and going straight to the egg when you dip it in the wax.” After the egg was painted with beeswax, it was dipped into the first dye. Then, the beeswax is applied on top, preserving the color for later. This process is repeated over and over, until the design is complete. Skaskiw told the students they could make the designs as complicated or as simple as they wanted.

“In the end, the wax may be covering the egg, making it black in color, but then you remove the wax and it is like, ahhhh, it looks beautiful!”