Founded In 1949

THE PROFESSIONAL LOCKSMITH

The Official Publication of the
Greater Philadelphia Locksmiths Association

WWW.GPLA.ORG

Officers

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Paul Kline, RL

VICE PRESIDENT
Mike Nimmo

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CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Jim Handschuh Sr., CIL

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John D. DePew

SERGEANT AT ARMS
Barry Wilensky, CRL

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Chairman
Sven K. Hellwig Sr., CRL

Directors
Anthony Buenaflor
Kevin Donaghy
Steven Kaufman
John Williams, CRL
Ken Kramer

Newsletter Editor
John D. DePew

Please join us for our next meeting at our new venue! (see Page 4)

In-person or via Zoom (see Page 20)

Date: Monday, November 16, 2026
Meeting Time: 7:45 PM (No cost to attend)
Location: **Lehmans' Tavern**
400 Wanamaker Ave.
Essington, PA 19029
Dinner: Arrive at 6:30 PM for dinner
Cost: $5.00 per member / $25.00 per non-member
Program: None

IMPORTANT NOTICE – GPLA ELECTIONS

GPLA Officer and Board Member Elections
Monday, November 16, 2026 – General Membership Meeting

GPLA is at a critical crossroads in its 77-year history. With differing views on whether the Association should rebuild or bring its history to a close, this election will play a significant role in determining GPLA's future. **This is one of the most important elections in GPLA history, and EVERY VOTE MATTERS!** We strongly encourage all members to attend and make their voices heard.

IMPORTANT VOTING REQUIREMENTS

- **In Person:** Members should review, complete, and print their ballots in advance and bring them to the meeting.
- **Via Zoom:** Members may submit ballots by text or email, but your votes will only be counted if they attend the Zoom meeting and their identity is verified. (text to 610-357-0282 or email paul@lightninglock.com)

Only ballots from members attending in person or via Zoom will be counted. Your vote matters. Please attend and help shape GPLA's future!

President's Message

With the end of my presidency approaching, I would like to thank the current Board of Directors and Row Officers for their continued dedication, hard work, and personal time in keeping GPLA one of the best, longest standing, and most active locksmith associations.

The Board has only the best intentions for the continued future of GPLA. With this month's elections, we will be voting on the next chapter in GPLA's history.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the **Purpose outlined in our Bylaws and our Code of Ethics** as a reminder to all members of the principles upon which our Association was founded.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

SECTION A

To inspire public confidence and reliance upon the locksmith craft by educating the public and public officials in security improvement and enhancement.

SECTION B

To exchange technical information and data with other members of the ASSOCIATION.

SECTION C

To render to its members reasonable assistance in order to improve service to and the security of the public.

Source: GPLA Bylaws, Article II, Sections A–C, Page 1.

These principles, along with our commitment to advancing the locksmithing industry through the exchange of knowledge, experience, and professional cooperation, have guided GPLA for generations.

As we approach this important election, I encourage every member to reflect on these values, participate in the election, and help shape the future of our Association.

Thank you all for your continued support, dedication, and commitment to GPLA.

Paul J. Kline
GPLA President

Membership Benefits

We're excited to share that the following vendors have generously extended an exclusive offer to all GPLA members. Members will receive an **additional 5% discount** on top of the vendors' already competitive pricing. To take advantage of this benefit, simply provide your **GPLA member number** when placing your order.

IDN-Hardware Philadelphia

https://www.idn-inc.com/locations/idn-philadelphia

Independent Hardware Inc.

https://independenthardware.com/

FBI – Fried Brothers, Inc.

https://fbisecurity.com/

GPLA is excited to expand one of our most popular member benefits!

Members can now bring their spouse or partner and enjoy a pre-meeting dinner together.

Make it a night out, **dinner for two for just $10 total ($5 each),** while connecting with fellow professionals at the GPLA membership meeting.

We can't promise romance; we can only promise food.



GPLA Meeting - New Venue – Lehmans' Tavern



Lehmans' Tavern and Restaurant
www.lehmansrestaurant.com
Lehmans' has had a tradition of fine foods and gracious hospitality in Delaware County PA for over 70 years.

Located in Essington, Pennsylvania right off I-95 just south of the Philadelphia International Airport. Close to Routes 420, 291, and I-476.

400 Wanamaker Avenue, Essington, PA 19029
Phone: 610-521-1822 or 610-521-1696

Directions:
Take I-95 towards Phila Int. Airport. Exit at 9A – Rt. 420 Essington. On Rt. 420 (Wanamaker Ave.) south, cross over Rt. 291 and continue straight. Lehmans' Tavern is on the left. Parking is available on site.





GPLA Officer and Board of Directors Nominees

In previous newsletters, I encouraged all members running for an Officer or Board of Directors position to submit a brief letter of introduction for publication in the November GPLA newsletter.

The following pages include introductions submitted by some of the candidates, along with the names of all other nominees running in this year's election.

Please Note: Several candidates appear on both the Officer and Board of Directors nominee lists. Candidates elected to an Officer position will be removed from the Board of Directors ballot. Those not elected to their desired Officer position will remain eligible for election to the Board of Directors, allowing them another opportunity to serve the Association.

Candidates for President

Mike Nimmo

Candidate for President

Hi . . . I'm Mike Nimmo. And, I am running for GPLA President.

Many of you know me as a safe and vault technician at Diebold. But, did you know, I have a very fancy title of Certified Master Vaultsmith? Yep. Sounds fancy. It just means I travel all over the World (literally) and do really hard stuff. Drillings, retrofits, rebuilds and upgrades on equipment even older than Marty Arnold! But did you know, I started as an ATM technician in 1993? I only lasted a year; I hated it. Software back then was a big stack of floppy disks and took hours to load. My happiest day was when I was volun-told to be become a vault tech. I just wish I had some training; education; something on the safe & vault business before I got sent out into the World.



I will never forget my first lesson in locksmithing was from a GPLA member who found me trying to cut safe deposit keys in a Wawa parking lot. I was given this shiny brand-new key machine one week into my new role and I couldn't figure out how to adjust the jaws and replace the cutter. This very nice man walked over to me and asked, 'you having trouble there?' Yes, I was. He jumped right in, not knowing me but could see I needed help. Took him minutes to get me going. I was in that parking lot struggling for at least an hour. I bet he was watching me the whole time, laughing at what must have looked like a monkey trying to . . . well, you know how it goes.



He gave me his card and said, 'if you ever need anything, stop in.' Did you know that man's name was Cliff Shafer? Yup, that's HOW our friendship began, how he recruited me to join the GPLA and eventually become the Newsletter Editor, that he so desperately wanted to pawn off on somebody; anybody! Always teaching and educating fellow colleagues. That's what Cliff did and by in large, the GPLA has done for 77 years!

Over the years, I have held the Vice-Presidency twice, Corresponding Secretary once and Recording Secretary twice. I was even the 2012 recipient of the Hermann C. Henssler, Jr. Memorial Award. I have been an Assistant Instructor in many of Cliff's safe & lock servicing classes and am a registered CEU instructor of those classes. Giving back; educating fellow colleagues is a legacy I wish to continue in Cliff's name. Helping others succeed and be proud of their profession is why I want to be the next President of the GPLA! Pay It Forward.

I'm Mike Nimmo. I'm running for GPLA President. And, I approved this message.

James Sundstrond

Candidate for President

Candidates for Vice President

Barry Wilensky

Candidate for Vice President

Let me introduce myself for those new members who may not know me. I'm Barry Wilensky and I'm running for Vice President of GPLA. I am a current Board of Directors member and have held every office on the board. My father was a charter member, #6, back in 1949. Of course, our organization has changed and evolved since then.

The past 2 years have been tough ones for the Board of Directors. We gave up our headquarters. We had perhaps our last convention and awards banquet. Fortunately, we have had new members step up to take on new roles and responsibilities. This has been a learning curve, for instance, we have started Zoom meetings and purchased the necessary equipment. We have reached out and recruited new members from a larger geographic area.

Why? Because there is an interest in being part of the oldest ongoing locksmith association in the country.

Why? Because we need to change with the times.

Why? Because we need to continue our education in both classes and programs.

Why? Because we need to stay current.

Why? Because our charter was founded on cooperation and education.

There are members of our organization who have given up and want to quit. **WHY?**

If you are running for an office or the board the reason should be to build not to tear down.

Steven Kaufman

Candidate for Vice President

Candidates for Sergeant-at-Arms

Paul Kline

Candidate for Sergeant-at-Arms

My involvement with the Greater Philadelphia Locksmith Association (GPLA) goes back to the 1980s, when I began attending meetings with my father, Orvis Kline. GPLA has been a part of my life for over 40 years, and I have made many friendships along the way.

Over the past several decades, I have served in various Officer and Board of Directors positions and currently serve as President of GPLA. I am also the owner of Lightning Locksmith LLC.

I have seen many changes in both the locksmith industry and GPLA over the years. While our association has faced challenges, I believe strongly in its future and the importance of preserving its history, traditions, and commitment to education and cooperation.

I am committed to seeing GPLA not only continue but to thrive. **We need to build on what past generations have established, welcome new members and ideas, and ensure that GPLA remains a strong and active association for generations to come.**

Bill Neff

Candidate for Sergeant-at-Arms

Candidate for Secretary

John D. DePew

Candidate for Secretary

I am running for the newly combined position of Secretary (Recording and Corresponding).

I have spent the past year and a half simultaneously serving as Recording Secretary, Newsletter Editor, coordinating our Zoom meetings, and website. I have taken on these responsibilities because I believe in GPLA and want to see our association succeed.

As Secretary, I intend to continue providing the best possible service to GPLA and its members. I also hope to help re-establish GPLA as one of the leading educational resources for the locksmithing and security industries.

Our industry continues to evolve, with electronics, computers, access control, and advanced security technologies becoming increasingly important. GPLA must adapt, welcome new ideas, and provide educational opportunities for both experienced locksmiths and those just entering the trade.

I strongly believe GPLA has a future worth fighting for. While our association faces challenges, I do not believe closing or dissolving it is the answer. We should instead work together to rebuild, strengthen our membership, and preserve the traditions of education and cooperation upon which GPLA was founded.

My commitment goes beyond serving as Secretary. I want to help GPLA continue, improve, and thrive for generations to come. **Our responsibility is to build upon what those before us created, not to be the generation that brings it to an end.**

Candidates for the Board of Directors

- **Sven Hellwig Sr.**
- **DJ Dabenigno**
- **Paul Kline**
- **Mike Nimmo**
- **Barry Wilensky**
- **Paul Bilker**
- **Marty Arnold**
- **Nelson Dayton**
- **Ed Fitzgerald**
- **Ron Marankowski**
- **James Handschuh Sr.**
- **James Handschuh Jr.**

Please Note: Several candidates appear on both the Officer and Board of Directors nominee lists. Candidates elected to an Officer position will be removed from the Board of Directors ballot. Those not elected to their desired Officer position will remain eligible for election to the Board of Directors, allowing them another opportunity to serve the Association.



GPLA Membership Meeting Minutes – October 2026

Meeting Information

- Location: Lehman's Tavern, Essington, Pennsylvania
- Format: In person and Zoom
- Call to order: 8:10 p.m. | Adjournment: approximately 9:34 p.m.
- Presiding officer: President Paul Kline
- Recording Secretary: John D. DePew.
- Attendance:
    - In-Person: 17 + 1 Shop Member
    - In-Person Guest: 5
    - On-Line: 6
- Quorum was declared present.

Call to Order and Opening

- The meeting was called to order, and the Sergeant-at-Arms led the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests were welcomed.

Educational Program

- Jesse Lesje and Kevin Keever of IDN presented fire-door repair kits, fire-door inspections and field labeling, replacement doors, and IDN's wood-door manufacturing capabilities.
- The presentation was followed by questions from members.

Approval of Previous Minutes

- The September 2026 General Membership Meeting minutes, previously distributed in the October newsletter.
- A motion to approve the minutes as distributed was made and seconded.

Treasurer's Report

- The Treasurer reported that the prior month's report had been reviewed and accepted by the Board of Directors.
- A motion to accept the report as distributed was made.

Officer and Committee Reports

- President: Members discussed the meeting venue.
    - The presiding officer indicated that the venue would be booked again for the next meeting, with a different food selection.
- Chairman of the Board: The Board reported on its meeting, election nominations, distribution of proposed bylaw amendments, and the need for a regular Board meeting location.
- Membership: Several applications were received and were being reviewed, including an application received that evening.
    - Nominations from the floor were opened and subsequently closed.
- Correspondence: Five inquiries from prospective locksmiths were received.
    - Information about GPLA membership and ALOA training was sent.
- Health and Welfare: The passing of Ed Caprari on October 20, 2026, was reported.
    - Updates were also provided concerning Maurice and Randy Carpenter.
- Newsletter: The recent newsletter and subsequent formatting corrections were reported.
- Legislation: Jack McGee's appointment with a New Jersey advisory committee was reported.
    - No Pennsylvania legislative update was presented.
- Programs: No November program was planned because of Thanksgiving and scheduling conflicts.

Yankee Convention Report

- Members reported on GPLA's participation in the Yankee convention, including the lock-picking booth and escape-room activities.
- GPLA was recognized as a convention sponsor.

Proposed Bylaw Amendments — Ballot Results

- The ballot-counting committee reported 17 ballots and announced adoption for items receiving at least 11 affirmative votes.
- The announced results are recorded below, subject to verification of the required two-thirds threshold and the original tally sheets.

Amendments Announced as Adopted

- Add an introductory membership class
- Revise membership qualifications
- Update terminology to “physical and electronic security”
- Replace “newsletter” with “written electronic communication”
- Set membership quorum at 20% of voting membership
- Combine the two secretary offices into one
- Permit additional officer duties as assigned by policy
- Allow officers two consecutive two-year terms
- Reduce officer count from five to four
- Correct “alternatives” to “alternates”
- Permit directors’ additional duties assigned by policy
- Establish permanent ineligibility following specified disciplinary removal or resignation during proceedings
- Establish permanent ineligibility after expulsion
- Include treasurer in vacancy-filling provisions; fill vacancies within one month
- Exclude completion of an unexpired term from consecutive-term limits
- Destroy election ballots after results are documented
- Set officer assumption of office at the end of the meeting
- Reference the most current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order
- Separate standing rules from bylaws as a Board-controlled document
- Revise dissolution distribution to qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations

Amendments Announced as Defeated

- Add online voting
- Change the number of meetings an applicant must attend
- Change a two-thirds affirmative vote requirement to a simple majority
- Limit nonmember guest attendance to four meetings without applying
- Change Board quorum from six to a majority of the Board
- Provide for attendance through electronic communication equipment
- Change Board composition to five officers, four to eight directors, an appointed treasurer, and up to two alternates
- Require two communications of proposed bylaw changes at least 60 days before voting

Members discussed whether Pennsylvania law affects electronic participation and voting. No definitive legal determination was made during the meeting.

Nominations and Election Procedures

- The nominations reported for row offices were:
  - President — Mike Nimmo and James Sunstrom
  - Vice President — Steve Kaufman and Barry Wilensky
  - Sergeant-at-Arms — Bill Neff and Paul Kline
  - Secretary — John D. DePew.
    - The proposed Corresponding Secretary nomination for Ed Fitzgerald was transferred to the director's slate after the secretary's offices were consolidated.
- Director nominees identified in the summary included:
  - Sven Hellwig Sr., Paul Bilker, Ed Fitzgerald, Nelson Dayton, Ron Marzankowski, DJ Dabenigno, John D. DePew, James Handschuh Sr., James Handschuh Jr., Paul Kline, Mike Nimmo, Barry Wilensky, and Marty Arnold.
- The membership discussed separate ballots for officers and directors, the treatment of unsuccessful candidates on the director's slate, and eligibility and submission requirements.
- Candidate statements for newsletter publication were requested by November 9, 2026.

Good of the Association and Raffle

- Members discussed the annual door-hardware maintenance service concept.
- The 50/50 raffle awarded $45; additional prizes were distributed.

Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion was adopted, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John D. DePew, Recording Secretary

--- END OF MEETING MINUTES ---

Fellow Locksmith Associations

South Jersey Locksmiths Association:

https://sjla-inc.org/

Next Meeting: November 24th, 2026
Seven Star Diner
1890 Hurffville Road, Deptford, NJ 08080
Dining @ 6PM – Meeting @7PM

New York Masters Locksmiths Association

http://www.nymla.org/
https://www.clearstar.com/

ALOA Security Professionals Association, Inc.
https://www.aloa.org/
2027 ALOA Convention & Security Expo
July 11-17, 2027
Rosemont, Illinois

Yankee Security Convention Inc.

https://yankeesecurity.org/

Yankee Security Convention 2027

Dates: October 19-23, 2027
Location: Marlborough, Massachusetts

For more information visit: https://yankeesecurity.org/

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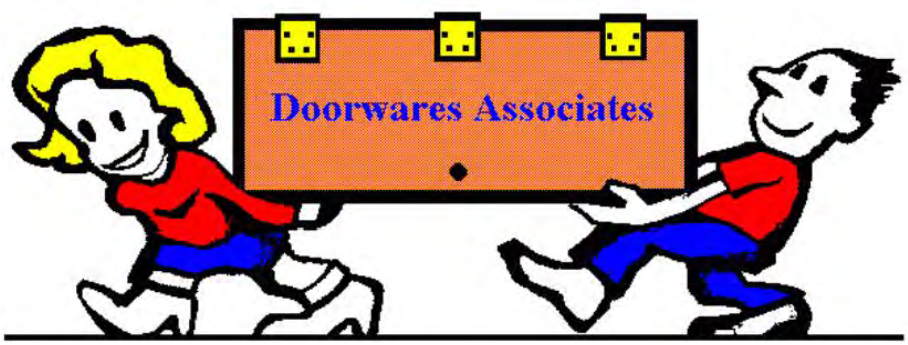


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Become a GPLA Website Sponsor

At GPLA, we are committed to providing exceptional value to our members. Thanks to the generous support of our Web Advertisers and Convention Sponsors, we can continue offering meaningful programs, resources, and opportunities to our community.

We would be honored to include your company as a valued GPLA supporter by becoming a Web Advertiser on our professionally managed website, GPLA.org. Your advertisement will be prominently displayed and linked directly to your company's website, giving you increased visibility among our engaged and growing audience.

In addition to appearing on our website, your advertisement will also be featured in our monthly GPLA newsletter, further expanding your reach within the locksmith and security professional community.

The annual cost for this advertising opportunity is $300.00.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the benefits of becoming a sponsor, please contact John at: newsletter.gpla@gmail.com

How to Apply

To become a GPLA Web Advertiser, please provide the following information along with a high-quality company logo or advertisement image:

- Company Name:
- Contact Person:
- Phone:
- Email:
- Web URL:

Please send your completed request to:
John D. DePew, Newsletter Editor
newsletter.gpla@gmail.com

Why Join GPLA Meetings on Zoom?

Although we always enjoy seeing members in person, we understand that it isn't always practical.

That's why joining the meeting via Zoom is a great option—it lets you stay involved without the drive, traffic, or scheduling stress.

Joining GPLA meetings via Zoom allows you to participate from your shop, home, or anywhere using a computer, tablet, or smartphone. You're still counted for attendance and can ask questions, join discussions, and vote when required—just as if you were in the room.

Zoom makes meetings more convenient and comfortable. No rushing, no late-night drives, and no missing important updates. It's free, easy to use, and you don't even need a Zoom account—just click the link or scan the QR code to join.

Most importantly, Zoom ensures your voice remains part of the conversation, so you don't miss out when decisions are made or topics affecting your association are discussed.

To make things even easier, we've created the **GPLA Zoom Meeting Access & Participation Guide**, which is emailed to members along with the GPLA Newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you—whether in person or on Zoom—at the next meeting.

If you have any questions or comments about Zoom participation, please email meeting.gpla@gmail.com.

Calling All GPLA Members: Your Voice Belongs in the Newsletter!

The GPLA newsletter is more than a monthly publication—it's a reflection of our community, our craft, and the collective knowledge of locksmiths who take pride in their work. Each issue becomes stronger, more informative, and more enjoyable when members like you share your experience, creativity, and insight.

We're inviting all GPLA members to contribute content for upcoming editions. Whether you've been in the trade for decades or you're just starting out, your perspective adds value.

What You Can Contribute

- Industry News & Updates
- Articles & How-To Pieces
  - A unique job you completed
  - A tool you rely on
  - A technique you've perfected
  - A lesson learned the hard way
  - Even if you only have an idea, send it along. We can help shape it into a full article.
- Locksmithing Tips & Tricks
- Industry Trends & Insights
- Humor, Jokes & Lighthearted Content

Why Your Contribution Matters

- It strengthens the knowledge base of the entire GPLA community
- It highlights the professionalism and expertise of our members
- It preserves the history and culture of our trade
- It helps newer locksmiths learn from seasoned professionals
- It keeps the newsletter vibrant, diverse, and worth reading

Your voice helps shape the identity of GPLA. Even a short submission can have a big impact.

Ready to Contribute?

Simply email your content—or your ideas—to the newsletter editor at **newsletter.gpla@gmail.com**

If something doesn't fit this month's issue, it will be saved for a future edition.

Let's continue building a newsletter that reflects the skill, humor, and dedication of the GPLA membership. Your contribution is not just welcome, it's appreciated.