

Jenkins Journal

LANSDALE, PA

SUMMER, 2009

Society to host Walking Tour

Oct. 4 event to replace Holiday History Tour

Downtown Lansdale was the commercial center of the North Penn Valley for more than a century.

On Sunday, Oct. 4, area residents will have the opportunity to relive the days when folks came from miles around to Main and Broad streets to shop, eat, visit a doctor, catch a movie or conduct other business of the day.

The society will host a walking tour – *Re-visiting Historic Downtown Lansdale: A Sunday Stroll Back to an Earlier Time* - from noon until 4 p.m. The rain date is Oct. 11.

This will be a self-guiding tour starting at the Lansdale Center for the Performing Arts (Madison Parking Lot side). Participants will first be shown a 15-minute video presentation that describes Lansdale's early history and how the town grew to be a commercial and transportation center.

The video shows will be presented three times an hour from 11:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., so participants may show up at any time during that time frame. The walk to take approximately a 90 minutes to complete, including time to view the video.

Following the video, participants will be able to walk the route at their own pace west on Main Street to Towamencin Avenue then back on the south side of Main to Railroad Avenue, down Railroad to South Broad Street, north on Broad to Third Street, west on Third to Walnut Street to the SEPTA rail station and back to the Madison Parking Lot via Railroad Plaza Park.

The cost of the tour is \$15 per person,

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WEST MAIN STREET AT RAILROAD AVENUE ,CIRCA 1918.

Many volunteers needed to make walk a success

Hosting the walking tour of downtown Lansdale will require the help of some very special people:

YOU!

Like the Holiday History Tour that preceded it, the walking tour will require plenty of volunteers. In fact, we'll need more help than ever.

At least 40 volunteers will be needed from the society's ranks. Here are some of the likely assignments:

- Tour guides along the route.
- Ticket sellers and people to organize the participants at the cultural arts center.
- Video show coordinators.
- Crossing guards.
- Audio assistants at Railroad Plaza Park.
- And plenty of go-fers.

There are only a few times during

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMS RESUME SEPT. 8

Details on Page 3

In search of more 'Regulars'

Volunteer team is needed now to organize items donated to the society

By DICK SHEARER

During my years as president of this society, I've sometimes found it necessary to appeal to our membership for help with specific projects. This is one of those times.

Support for our organization remains strong. Despite the nation's economic climate, both our membership rolls and our financial picture have remained stable at a time when many other non-profits have been forced to curtail programs, reduce hours and eliminate services.

Our needs are a bit different. We are experiencing a shortage of "regular" volunteers, people who can donate time to the society on a weekly basis.

Why is this important? The easy answer is that running a two-building facility that in-

cludes a research center and a National Register-classified homestead requires more personnel than an organization that meets once a month and holds a handful of events during the year.

We have a corps of loyal volunteers who qualify as "regulars". Collectively, they do great things for the society and the community. Individually, they bring to us talent and experience that could never be recorded by a time clock.

But we must pause for a reality check. Several vitally-important projects that we've talked about for several years have been put on hold because the current volunteer staff can't take on more work.

The most important of these projects involves organizing, repacking and databasing the many items – big and small –

that have been donated to the society over the years.

By my best guess, we need a team of three people – one leader and two assistants – working as a group at least a half day a week for about a year to accomplish this. The group would also be responsible for developing displays for our museum room.

Once the project is complete, it's hoped that the leader of this group would stay on as curator of acquisitions. The others would be matched up with new jobs.

At least one member of the group must have computer skills and at least one must be physically able to handle medium-weight lifting. It is also hoped that all have some knowledge of and a keen interest in local history.

This project is not a "want" that can be put off to some future date. We have an urgent need to tackle this work now.

If you've thought about donating time to the society, now is the time to do it.

I'm certain you have questions, so if you have an interest and are willing to make the commitment, please give me a call as soon as possible.

Step up and help us address this need.

And a final thought...

This appeal does not preclude the need for additional volunteers to handle other duties, including filing, handling research requests from the public, maintenance, and groundskeeping.

Everyone's volunteer time is greatly appreciated, whether it be every week, once a month or for those special events when we put out a call.



THE JENKINS HOMESTEAD

Jenkins Homestead and Historical Research Center

• 137 Jenkins Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446.

• **Hours:** Wednesdays, Noon to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, Noon to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

• **Telephone:** (215) 855-1872; (215) 393-8919 (fax).

• **E-mail:**
info@lansdalehistory.org

• Please send mail correspondence to 137 Jenkins Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446.

• **Website:**
www.lansdalehistory.org

In Brief:

Homestead floor work to begin

The \$10,000 state grant earmarked for repairs to the Jenkins Homestead's keeping room floor and staircase is now in hand.

The work will be undertaken later this summer by Colonial Builders of Fairview Village, the same company that handled other renovations at the homestead.

Newspaper copying project to begin

After numerous fits and starts, the newspaper copying project will finally be launched in August.

Steve Moyer will supervise the training of volunteers who expressed interest in working on this project. Those who would like to participate are asked to leave a message for Steve at (215) 855-1872.

The Hatfields program DVD on sale

The society's May program, *The Hatfields*, is now available on DVD. The price is \$18 at the research center or \$21 by mail. Buy any four of our collection of 19 DVDs for the discounted price of \$55, or \$65 by mail.

Needed: Slide trays and file cabinets

Clarence Kinsey, our tireless photo archivist, has plenty of slides and no place to put them. He asks that we put out a call to our members for any spare Carousel (circular) slide trays that are functional and still work in a projector.

He is also in need of several two-drawer filing cabinets that are in good shape. We would prefer white, putty or light gray cabinets, if possible.

If you can donate any of these items, please leave a message at (215) 855-1872.

SEPT. 8: Look at all we're missing!

The society resumes its Community Program series Tuesday, Sept. 8 with *Going, Going, Gone*, a retrospective of things that have disappeared from our lives over the past century.

The show will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building, Seventh St. and Lansdale Ave. It is being produced by Vice President Steve Moyer, who will serve as narrator.

Going, Going, Gone is based on the premise that many things we once took for granted have simply faded away, in some cases so slowly that we didn't notice their demise.

For example, remember the days when the pretzel man and the bakery van went up and down the street at least once a week? Or how about the insurance man who traveled door-to-door to collect monthly premiums?

Remember those trips to the bank with mom and pop so we could make weekly deposits in our student savings accounts. Millinery stores, green stamps, in-home funerals, the newspa-



THE MOM AND POP STORE: Once a staple, it is now a rarity.

per boy: Where have they all gone?

Others are fast disappearing. Consider the likely fate of the shoe repair shop or the telephone booth. Will they go the route of

the doctor who makes house calls?

As usual, there will be no admission charge for the show but donations are greatly appreciated.

Community Program Schedule

TUESDAY, SEPT. 8: GOING, GOING, GONE!

Paperboys, shoe shine stands, telephone booths, home delivery of milk—a look at some once-common items and services that have disappeared over the years.

TUESDAY, OCT. 13: 1976: That Centennial Year.

A retrospective of Lansdale's Centennial celebration, a time that was packed with parades, plays, dances, tours and plenty of chin whiskers.

TUESDAY, NOV. 10: STAYING POWER: Businesses that Stood the Test of Time. Through good economic times and bad, some local businesses served generations of area residents.

TUESDAY, JAN. 12: AMUSEMENT PARKS. Big or small, these entertainment meccas provided a lifetime of memories.

TUESDAY, FEB. 9: FIREFIGHTERS: Volunteers Who Answered the Call. The history of fire protection in the North Penn Valley.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9: THEN YOU SAW IT, NOW YOU DON'T IV.

The fourth edition of this popular series includes still more views of the changing North Penn landscape.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13: THE ANNUAL BANQUET at William Penn Inn highlighted by the presentation of the Sixth Annual Edwin G. Holl Historic Achievement Award.

TUESDAY, MAY 11: MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP: Community Crossroads. The third in our annual series featuring the municipalities that surround Lansdale.

ALL PROGRAMS will be held at the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building, Seventh St. and Lansdale Ave. at 7:30 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, an announcement will be made on WNPV Radio (1440) by 4 p.m.

Walking Tour a new venture for society

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which includes a descriptive tour booklet, the video presentation and a guide map. A special rate will allow up to three additional family members to take the tour for \$5 a person (one booklet per family).

A dozen or more society members will be dispatched to key spots along the tour route to provide additional in-

formation about these locations and to answer questions.

The tour committee may also provide an opportunity for long-time residents to record their recollections of growing up in Lansdale. These reminiscences would be added to the society's archives.

The goal of the tour is two-fold:
-To rekindle memories about the important role Lansdale's downtown business

community played in the development of the North Penn region.

-To describe to residents who moved here in recent years the stores, hotels, theaters, industries and the people who helped put Lansdale on the map.

The walking tour replaces the Holiday History Tour, which will not be held this year. Proceeds will benefit the society's Jenkins Homestead Restoration Fund.

Your help needed to make tour a success

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the year when we appeal to our membership for help at special events. A strong volunteer response is especially important for this tour because it is a first-time event. We can't predict the turnout or any problems that may arise during the course of the day.

Those who volunteer are asked to be

available from 11 a.m. until about 4:30 p.m. We will do everything possible to provide breaks during the afternoon.

There will be an organizational meeting for all volunteers on Saturday morning, Sept. 26 at a place and time to be determined

What we need now is your commitment to help. We would like to have our corps

of volunteers in place by no later than Sept. 1. Please call (215) 855-1872 as soon as possible to sign up.

Anyone with questions is invited to leave a message for Dick Shearer or Clarence Kinsey at the society, or to call Dick at home (215) 368-0279).

Remember, we want **YOU!**

Lansdale Historical Society 137 Jenkins Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446



The Jenkins Historic Complex