

Jenkins Journal

LANSDALE, PA

FEBRUARY, 2013

1963: An unforgettable year

February 12 show focuses on events of 50 years ago

Fifty years have passed since 1963. Has it been that long?

Yes it has. High school grads of that year are about 68 now. The North Penn area was running out of water because the population was booming. New housing developments were replacing local farmland. Shopping centers and new schools were being built to meet increasing demands.

It was a year of incredible accomplishment overshadowed by the unimaginable grief caused by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in what has become *the* defining event for an entire generation of Americans.

The Lansdale Historical Society will travel back to those times when it presents *Rewind 1963*, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building.

President Dick Shearer and Vice President Steve Moyer will narrate a video presentation highlighting the major events



Peggy March in Bulletin's Sunday Magazine

of 1963 from civil rights unrest in the South and jet plane crashes with links close to home, to the brewing war in Vietnam.

It was also a watershed year for the growth of Merck & Co.'s facilities in West Point. Lansdale launched a

massive downtown urban renewal project while the North Penn School District planned for the future by selecting the site for a massive, new high school.

Rewind 1963 will also include local and national advertising from 1963, births, deaths, and a rundown of the top movies, TV shows and records. Among the top pop records of 1963 was Lansdale's own Peggy March singing her teen favorite, "I Will Follow Him".

The parks and recreation building is located at 7th St. and Lansdale Ave. There is no admission fee but donations are appreciated.

Please note that a second LHS community program dealing exclusively with the Kennedy assassination will be held Tuesday, Oct. 8.

As part of this show, audience members will be invited to describe what they were doing when they heard the President had been shot. Those first-person accounts will be videotaped for preservation in the society's archives.

In March: Remembering Willow Grove Park

Back in the days before television and air conditioning when summer nights could be steamy and oppressive, people flocked to amusement parks as a way to entertain themselves and beat the heat.

For 80 years beginning in 1896, Willow Grove Park was *the* place to go to for Philadelphians and suburbanites alike. Whether for food or fun, music or a chance to impress your best girl, Willow Grove was the best and biggest venue around.

The society will revisit that earlier

time at our Tuesday, March 12 community program entitled, *Life Was a Lark at Willow Grove Park*. As usual the show will be held at the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Steve Moyer will host this video presentation of a true American landmark that spanned the period from the Victorian Age to the frantic 1970s.

Like so many other ventures of the era, Willow Grove Park was built first and

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IN BRIEF: Elections coming at February show

The society's slate of officers and board members for 2013 is unchanged from 2012.

Those nominated are:

President: Richard Shearer

First Vice President: Clarence Kinsey

Second Vice President: Steve Moyer

Third Vice President: Larry O'Malley

Secretary: Janice Bennett

Treasurer: Anne Scheuring

Trustees: Marti Drumheller, Frank Krimm, Ruth

Madison, Pat Rieker, Richard Stricker, Raymond

Walton.

Additional nominations will be accepted prior to a vote by society members at

our February 12 community program.

Those elected will begin their one-year terms immediately.

Postponements, etc.

In the event of inclement weather, announcement of closings or program postponements will be made on WNPV 1440 Radio. Similar notice will be posted on our website,

www.lansdalehistory.org.

Phone books sought

The society is seeking are telephone directories published prior to 1960 to aid in various research projects. To donate, please call Clarence Kinsey at (215) 855-1872.

Banquet set for April 9

Mark your calendars for the society's annual ban-

quet on Tuesday, April 9 at William Penn Inn, Gwynedd. A reservation form and more information will be provided in that newsletter and on our website.

Recognizing our donors

We want to acknowledge a number of significant donations that were made to the society during December.

Nancy and Robert Kulp,

Pauline and Ray Walton, the Kenneth Kratz Family Charitable Foundation, Charles Wheeler and Dwight Bennett all made lump sum donations of \$500 or more to assist in LHS's future work.

The officers and board of directors extend their thanks for these generous gifts which will be put to good use during the coming year.

Interesting 'finds'? Remember us

The cold, gray winter months are often the time to clean out closets and long-neglected drawers. Please keep the society in mind if you come across vintage photographs or other memorabilia that might be of interest to us.

We are always looking for new additions to our collection. Because of space considerations, any offerings must have a recognizable local connection, i.e. photos of mom and dad's vacation in Florida won't pass muster.

Please contact Dick Shearer, Clarence Kinsey or Pat Rieker at (215) 855-1872 if you uncover some interesting "finds".



THE JENKINS HOMESTEAD

Jenkins Homestead and Historical Research Center

• 137 Jenkins Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446.

• **Hours:** Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon. (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. by appointment).

• **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.



Assessor's office dedicated to Kulp

The Jenkins assessor's office was dedicated to Nancy and Robert Kulp, seen at left with President Dick Shearer, at the society's December 1 holiday open house.

The open house featured two historic character actors playing the roles of Sarah and John Jenkins. Pat Jordan is seen with Treasurer Anne Scheuring, at lower left. Below, Bob Gleason talks to guests in the assessor's office.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: Ongoing projects

By **DICK SHEARER**

My wife would agree that I'm a world class procrastinator. A perfect example was a resolution I made in 2007 to include a few columns each year in the *Jenkins Journal* that would advise members of ongoing issues and projects.

So here we go. Better late than never:

*** Community Programs:** We distributed a questionnaire to those who attended our January community

program in an effort to improve our monthly shows. With a few exceptions, attendance has declined about 20 per cent over the past two years so we're ripe for fresh ideas.

The survey included five questions:

- (1) What time should we begin our programs?
- (2) Are seven programs a year too many, too few or just fine?
- (3) Can you suggestion some topics for future programs?
- (4) Should we schedule more shows featuring outside speakers and/or

character actors?

(5) Are you satisfied with the Lansdale Parks and Recreation Building as a meeting site?

More than 70 attendees filled out the questionnaire, giving us one perspective on the issue. But we'd also like to hear from people who don't regularly come to our shows. If you are one of them,

I invite you to share your views by sending me an e-mail at

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Have you sent your dues yet? Now's the time

The deadline for paying 2013 dues has come. Members who have not submitted payment are encouraged to do so now.

Basic dues are \$20 for individuals, \$25 for couples but we strongly urge members to re-up at one of our higher levels of giving - \$40 for Patrons or \$55 for Sustaining members.

Business memberships of \$100 as well as Lifetime memberships of \$300 (individual) or \$500 (couple) are also

available.

We encourage renewals at one of the higher levels because it allows us to direct more of your donation to our preservation and restoration efforts. This is especially important during these times when grant funds are difficult to obtain. We request that your dues and the renewal form below be returned by no later than February 15 so that our records can be updated.

Lansdale Historical Society **Membership Application** **Year** _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone: _____ **E-Mail:** _____

PLEASE CHECK

INDIVIDUAL: Single \$20 _____ **Couple \$25** _____ **Patron \$40** _____

Sustaining \$55 _____ **Business \$100** _____

LIFETIME: 55 or older (Single) \$300 _____ **(Couple) \$500** _____

Additional Donation \$ _____

Don't Mail Newsletter _____

Make checks payable to: Lansdale Historical Society, 137 Jenkins Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446

Borough, society addressing security problems

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info@lansdalehistory.org.

*** Homestead Security:** A very troubling issue – vandalism – has become a major concern for our board of trustees.

The problem has been building over the years in part because the neighborhood around the Jenkins Complex has changed and many of the present residents are unaware of the importance of the homestead and the work we do.

Fortunately, most of the vandalism has been minor but some goes beyond that: the springhouse roof and shrubs have been damaged, the fieldstone walls have been torn apart and walkways have been scarred by skateboarders. In short, the complex has become a neighborhood playground.

The issue was discussed with Borough of Lansdale officials who

have responded with increased police patrols. Just recently security cameras have been installed that will be monitored at the police station.

This is a problem that the society's charter members never envisioned but sadly we are faced with it today.

*** Homestead Windows:** Another issue the society will need to address in the near future is repair or replacement of some second floor windows in the homestead. During the restoration of the

Jenkins assessor's office last year it became apparent that the windows in that room are rotted and not weather-tight.

We believe these windows are original to the house and may date back to the 1770s and they contain a number of panes of wavy glass. Because of the homestead's age and historic importance every attempt will be made to restore rather than replace the windows, which likely will be a costly expense. We'll keep you informed as this project proceeds.

In March: Life was a lark at Willow Grove Park

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foremost to be a money-maker, in this case for Philadelphia's trolley lines which used it as an inducement to get city folks to ride their trolleys to a leisure-time destination on weekends. Train and trolley connections brought people from this area.

Among the biggest attractions was the music pavilion which featured the bands of John Philip Sousa and Victor Herbert for many years.

Willow Grove Park evolved into Six Gun Territory until it closed at the end of the 1975 season, a victim of changing times and theme parks.

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



The Jenkins Historic Complex