

LAUREL HILL MANSION NEWS

LHM SPRING TEA
SUNDAY, 2 pm
30 APRIL 2023

**Join WFGP for our annual
Spring Tea Fundraiser
at Laurel Hill Mansion**

**Enjoy tea, savories, sweets,
good company & conversation**
**Boxed lunches by
Jack Francis Caterers**

\$30 DONATION VIA PAY PAL:
[WWW.LAURELHILLMANSION.ORG/
PAGES/SPRING_TEA.HTML](http://WWW.LAURELHILLMANSION.ORG/PAGES/SPRING_TEA.HTML)



Honey and Fresh Herbs for Sale
Butterfly & Bee Raffle Basket

FREE PARKING

www.laurelhillmansion.org



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another season opening at Laurel Hill Mansion is about to begin. Once again we will be sharing the rich history of our lovely summer villa with our visitors. We still have much to do; looking at improving the interior décor, planning new events, and inviting visitors to tea and indoor concerts for the first time in 3 years. I hope that all members will join in to make this a successful year by volunteering ideas and "woman"power.

Barbara Frankl, President, WFGP

HOUSE NEWS



Laurel Hill Mansion is reopening Thursdays to Sundays, 10 am-4 pm beginning April 14. Guided tours will be given by new House Guide Karen Phinney, past WFGP President Admission: Adults-\$8; kids-free Reservations: 215-235-1776 or email

visit@laurelhillmansion.org

Laurel Hill Mansion
3487 Edgley Drive
Philadelphia, PA. 19121
Free Parking

www.laurelhillmansion.org

[https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009621556713)

[id=100009621556713](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009621556713)

LHM is a **BLUE STAR MUSEUM** offering free admission to active military members and their families from Memorial Day - Labor Day



OUTDOOR CHESS RETURNS to Laurel Hill Mansion
Visit our **CHESS PAGE** for dates & times:

<https://www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/chess.html>

WOMEN for GREATER PHILADELPHIA Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting for all current members will be held in May 2023, with the date TBA Voting for officers and board members will occur All WFGP members are encouraged to attend

Thank you for supporting LHM and paying your 2023 WFGP dues, still only \$30 per year:

<https://www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/pages/membership.html>

WFGP warmly welcomes new member JESSICA PERRONE

CANDLELIGHT CONCERTS at LAUREL HILL MANSION

return Summer 2023
all concerts start at 2 pm
followed by an outdoor reception

30 July 2023-THE WISTER QUARTET
Nancy Bean, violin; David Booth, violin;
Pamela Fay, viola;
Lloyd Smith, cello

6 August 2023-DANIEL ADAM MALTZ
forte piano

20 August 2023-ALLEN KRANTZ
classical guitar

Information: www.laurelhillmansion.org/events

Questions/comments:
concerts@laurelhillmansion.org

HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS OF LAUREL HILL MANSION

by Nancy Werner, Laurel Hill Mansion Board Member

Being new to the Women of Greater Philadelphia, I was wondering how the upcoming Holiday Season would unfold. Well, I found out how “magical” the Laurel Hill Mansion becomes to all who enter the front door. As much as our Laurel Hill Mansion has an interesting story, so do all our visitors. Working in the festive Christmas Shop gave me that opportunity to talk with everyone. I was surprised how many of our visitors were Philadelphia residents who just never got around to travel to Fairmount Park. They heard about the “Treasured Mansions” but never took the time to visit. I was glad to learn how some used the social media to read about the mansions and come. We had a mother and daughter who were hiking the whole day to all four houses. They were determined to learn all about each of them. But all were glad that they had taken the time to come and learn about our Laurel Hill Mansion. Right in their hometown.

We had visitors who traveled many miles to come to see Philadelphia whether to see relatives or friends or who just thought Philadelphia would be a nice place to visit. We had one gentleman who shared he was from Massachusetts. He dared me to guess his location called Spencer. I shared that it is NE of Sturbridge. He nearly fell on the floor. I did not dare tell him my son and family live in Sturbridge. But he came for the history to see how it compared to his Massachusetts. Then we had a gentleman who shared he was only an hour from Montreal, Canada. Oh, I shared you must be from the Plattsburgh, NY area. Again, BINGO. Now he came to look at the architecture of our mansion. Shh, my best friends from 50 plus years live in Plattsburgh and teach. We had a woman from Detroit, MI visit as she was visiting family in northern Lehigh County called New Tripoli. Oh my, this is my home territory and when she shared that her maiden name was Bachman, well, we are related. WOW! That was amazing. On the last day of the tours, a limo bus arrived with visitors from Buckingham in Bucks County. One man again was fascinated with our architecture and he pulled out a photo of his very own colonial home. I surprised him when I shared, “why that is the house that is featured on “Historical Homes” by Jeff Marshall, noted house and barn researcher.” I had just met Jeff in October on his book tour. Never know whom you will meet

My favorite was Sunday, December 18 when a young mother and daughter arrived. Dressed in black coats, red tulle skirts and patent leather boots, they were curious to look at our many shop items. When I asked the young mother where she might be from, she quickly responded. Her family had just arrived from Russia to America. She spoke excellent English but her mother who was taking nonstop photos did not contribute as she spoke no English. Elaina, the Russian woman, shared that with the unrest in her homeland, it was good that they should leave as her father was a professor of journalism. But why did she come to our LHM? She came to learn about “our” history. She was ready to work in America and learn all that she could about her new country. Meeting her family and her was a moment that I will always remember. Made me stop and think how troubled our country seems to be, but that we have others who still wish to come to America for their freedom and become our citizens.

My work in the Christmas Gift Shop was indeed “magical.” It was a delight to see all the items that had been donated to the shop and what our visitors were discovering. One last story, there was a set of grandparents, and a granddaughter who came to the shop. The young girl was mesmerized by the red garland beads. She looked at her grandparents as to ask with her eyes that they might purchase. They looked at other items, but this young girl kept returning to the red garland beads. I was filled with joy when granddad shared, “yes, to the red garland beads.” As they allowed me to bag these beads for their granddaughter, she was beaming. Her comment, “I shall never forget coming to your lovely house. They are going on my tree at home today. Thank you.” She also thanked her granddad.

Hope that my sharing these little stories will encourage all of us to take some time and help volunteer at the Mansion no matter what event or season. I loved hearing that the Gift Shop did well in sales. But I made sure to I ask all our visitors to come back and return with friends. We have more events that are featured during the year. So glad we have a web site to share with our guests. The story of the Laurel Hill Mansion will never grow “old.” Never, ever.



Nancy Werner with
sister Bobbi George

Women for Greater Philadelphia spotlights PAT JORDAN



In the spirit of the 2023 Women's History Theme, "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories," Women for Greater Philadelphia honors our own long time Board Member and Historian, Pat Jordan. Ms. Jordan is an interpreter of famous American women, professional singer, actor, narrator, writer, and director. Pat has graced many programs at Laurel Hill Mansion portraying aviator Amelia Earhart and suffragist leader Carrie Chapman Catt, among others.

Pat Jordan's latest character is Montgomery County's Anna Morris Holstein, whose fund-raising efforts helped to save Mount Vernon. Anna Holstein was an outstanding Civil War hospital matron in Gettysburg, and in great part was responsible for the purchase of General Washington's Headquarters and for Valley Forge becoming a memorial park, which led to its status as a State and National Park. Recently the township was honored with a Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) blue road marker placed outside her home in King of Prussia (see photo below).

Pat Jordan's plays for young audiences have been published by Players' Press; other writing includes introductions to new releases of classic plays; a commissioned musical based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; one-woman plays; and a historical screenplay, *If Walls Could Talk: The Story of Laurel Hill Mansion* which aired on Ovation via Comcast Cable.

Several years ago, Pat was a winner in the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre's *Show Us Your Love Sonnet Competition* and her entry was given a reading before a special performance of *Romeo & Juliet*. Additionally, Pat has credits as a narrator, spokesperson and host/co-host in numerous broadcast productions.

Pat studied at H-B Studio in New York and the Juilliard Opera Workshop. She holds a BA degree in Theatre and Communication Arts from Villanova University. Pat has served as a Public Scholar for the NJ Council for the Humanities, is a director, taught drama for many years, and was program director at Chester Youth Drama Outreach.

Pat Jordan may be contacted at patjordan@gmail.com



Pat Jordan as
Anna Morris Holstein

**WFGP Women’s History Month
Event: “Celebrating Women Who
Tell Our Stories,” with
AMANDA OWEN**



Women for Greater Philadelphia recognized 2023 Women’s History Month on March 12th with a free online event featuring guest

speaker Amanda Owen. Ms. Owen is an author and independent scholar of women’s history, specializing in the Women’s Suffrage Movement. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Justice Bell Foundation, founded in 2016 with a mission to reclaim women’s history and promote voter participation.

Ms. Owen’s talk was titled “Pennsylvania Suffragists and Their Fight for Voting Rights.” She featured brave Pennsylvania suffragists, including Elizabeth McShane and Katherine Heffelfinger, who were imprisoned and tortured for picketing for voting rights, and Daisy Lampkin and Etha Carroll Cowles Armstrong, who faced racism and discrimination but still persevered.

**Please visit: www.justicebell.org
www.ourhistoryproject.org**

En Plein Air Painting at LHM

En Plein Air (in the open air) painting is taking place at Laurel Hill Mansion. En Plein Air is free at the Mansion and the 2023 schedule for Plein Air on the grounds of Laurel Hill will be published in April. Please visit our website at https://www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/plein_air.html for additional information concerning en plein air events and/or workshops, or contact events@laurelhillmansion.org

EN PLEIN AIR PAINTING WORKSHOPS

Additionally, we are pleased to announce that Joe Sweeney, professional landscape painter and member of the Cerulean Arts Collective, will give two Plein Air Painting Workshops at Laurel Hill Mansion:

**Friday, MAY 5, 2023
10 am-3 pm;
And OCTOBER 6 and 7,
The May 5 workshop is \$95. Register by April 28.**

Sign up with a friend and receive 10% off both registrations. Use discount code SP23Class4 at checkout. This workshop is in collaboration with Cerulean Arts.

Register: <https://ceruleanarts.com/products/plein-air-painting-at-laurel-hill-mansion-with-joseph-sweeney>



The Illegal Confiscation of Laurel Hill Mansion

When you enter Laurel Hill Mansion you see a picture of Joseph Reed who was President of the Pennsylvania Assembly during the American Revolution and who confiscated Laurel Hill from Rebecca and Sam Shoemaker after Sam was marked as a traitor to the colonial cause. You have probably already heard this story about the transition of the house but were you aware the confiscation of Laurel Hill was not legal?

Sam Shoemaker was the mayor of Philadelphia from 1769–70 and served two terms in the Pennsylvania Assembly. Also, as a dry goods merchant, he supported the colonies' grievances against England's import-export policies. In the spring of 1775, Shoemaker petitioned Congress for permission to ship his products to Newfoundland, and thus violated the Nonimportation Agreements. This petition publicly marked Shoemaker as a loyalist sympathizer, and the Pennsylvania Assembly declared him guilty of treason on March 6, 1778, meaning his property would be forfeited to the state. Sam fled with his 19 year old stepson, William Rawle, to New York on June 17, 1778.

After Shoemaker was exiled, his wife Rebecca (Rawle) and her daughters hoped that they would be allowed to keep the family properties, particularly the house Laurel Hill that had belonged to Rebecca's first and deceased husband, Frances Rawle. Under the law, Sam was only a "tenant by the courtesy" at Laurel Hill, not the owner, which meant Laurel Hill should have been immune from seizure.

Historian and Rawle descendent William Brooke Rawle (1845–1915) relays the events: "In his patriotic zeal, Joseph Reed, acting as Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, disregarded the principle of law that the sale of such a life estate had no other effect then to free a wife's house and land from all of her husband's estate when he had been attained for high treason, and to vest the title in her to as full an effect as if he had died." Not minding the law, Reed ordered all Shoemaker properties, including that which Rebecca had inherited from her former husband, Laurel Hill, sold on April 12, 1779. Reed then moved his family into Laurel Hill because his wife Esther desired it as a lovely summer home for their family.

Rebecca Shoemaker remained in Philadelphia until March 1780 when the Supreme Executive Council intercepted one of her letter/journals and claimed she was helping loyalists pass from Philadelphia into New York. Rebecca was then ordered to join her husband in exile. The Rawle daughters, Anna and Peggy, remained in Philadelphia living with their maternal grandmother in her house on Mulberry (now High) Street.

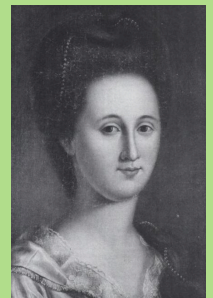
Esther DeBert Reed (1746–1780) was very supportive of the Revolution and became a major fund raiser (over \$300,000) for the cause, running her operation from Laurel Hill. Esther Reed died at Laurel Hill from unknown causes at the young age of 34 years. After Reed passed, Anna Rawle wrote the following in her journal about her tormenter: *"She can never spend another summer at Laurel Hill. She is dead, and of a disorder that made some people whisper...that she ate too many of Mr S's (code for Shoemaker) peaches."*

Did Esther Reed receive her due after encouraging her husband to take Laurel Hill illegally? Was she poisoned by the fruits of the Laurel Hill orchards? Was it just fate?

Sources: Kacy Tillman, *Stripped and Script*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2019, Boston, MA.

Anna Rawle to Rebecca Shoemaker, "Letters and Diaries of a Loyalist Family," 1780, HSP.

William Brooke Rawle, "Laurel Hill and Some Colonial Dames Who Once Lived There," 1911, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.



Esther Reed

