

LAUREL HILL MANSION NEWS



**Meet
Kara Christiansen**

**The 2024
Laurel Hill Mansion
Tour Guide**



**We've asked Kara to
tell you a bit about
herself so read on.**

A Message From The President

I hope everyone is staying cool as the summer really heats up. I'm happy to report that we now have a guide to conduct tours of the mansion. Kara Christiansen began working at the beginning of June and is taking her job really seriously, learning the history of Laurel Hill Mansion and even wearing a colonial dress for visitors. Welcome to Kara.

On Saturday and Sunday, June 22 and 23 we participated in WAWA Welcome America Free Museum Days. On Sunday, June 23 we had over 100 visitors tour the mansion, and visitors were able to make a whirligig or try their hand at tin punching. It was great talking to our visitors and hopefully some will return for other events.

Our summer concert series is up and running. The concert on June 16, Principally Harps!, was a wonderful Sunday afternoon. Our volunteers once again got many compliments from attendees about our hospitality and refreshments. We look forward to our next 2 concerts, The Wister Quartet on July 21st and Allen Krantz on August 25th. Volunteers are always welcome to supply refreshments or help hostess. Please contact Christine Smith, c.smith@wfgp.org, if you would like to help.

I would also like to wish Sylvia Myers "Happy 100th Birthday"! Several of us were able to attend her joyous party at Cathedral Village. She is truly a "dear heart".

Barbara Frankl, President, WFGP



I'm the New Historic House Educator at Laurel Hill Mansion for the City of Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation. I hail from Dorado, Puerto Rico and have lived in Philadelphia since 2006. Previous historic site experience includes Eastern State Penitentiary, Dickens Village, Franklin Square, and walking tours in Old City. I have spent 16 years working at various haunted attractions as an actor and manager most recently won actress of the year at Pennhurst Asylum in Spring City, PA. Costumes, history and art are my favorite things. Looking forward to a great season at the mansion.

Kara Christiansen

Welcome to all those who became new members of Women for Greater Philadelphia in 2024

Kory Aversa

Anna Boothe

Barbara Coleman

Mira Gohel

Hilary Jay

Loretta Kostyk

Kathleen Krattenmaker

Jenny Lynn

Dorene Martin

Cheryl Pace

Christina Paul

Florence Paul

Louise Quattrone

Nancy Rabik

Mary Jeanne Smith

Jaclyn Synnamon

Happy 100th Birthday



Sylvia Myers

Member of Women for Greater Philadelphia since 1976

Photographed at her joyous party at Cathedral Village on June 22nd by fellow member Christine Mifsud.

We Say Goodbye to Bette Young June 26, 1934 - June 28, 2024



Bette opening the 2015 Constitution Day Program at Holy Cross School

After joining Women for Greater Philadelphia in 1976, Bette became an active participant in the organization's activities. She eventually became a member of the Board of Directors. Her interest in education and history led her to assume the office of Vice President for Education.

Bette, from her reading and research, also created multiple tours of Laurel Hill Mansion to appeal to those with different interests and in different age groups. The histories she put together in the early 2000s inform the current Laurel Hill Mansion history website page.

In 2010, Bette developed the WFGP Constitution Day Program, a SYMPOSIUM ON THE CONSTITUTION, and oversaw its annual implementation. This involved coordinating the efforts of the three collaborating partners, law firm Rawle and Henderson, Holy Cross School and WFGP's Education Committee. What made the program work was that it was a partnership with the 7th and 8th grade students from Holy Cross School. As participants the students prepared questions regarding the Constitution, its amendments and one of the trial cases they had studied in class for the lawyers to answer and to have as a base for the analytical dialog between the themselves and the lawyers. Structuring the program this way kept students engaged.

In 2014, Bette put together a history of Women for Greater Philadelphia that helps us remember our past and is leading us into the future as we plan activities for 2026, America 250.

To have known Bette was a delight, she was warm, friendly, gracious, engaged, interesting and interested, knowledgeable and willing to share. A lover of travel she and her husband Bill visited over seventy countries. A lover of community, she gave her time generously. Bette was dedicated to family, her husband William (Bill), her children, and extended family members. All of us who knew Bette will miss her and are thankful to have known her and thankful for all she did.

Relatives and friends are invited to call on Monday, July 8, 2024 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and again on Tuesday, July 9th after 10:00 AM at the Anton B. Urban Funeral Home, 1111 S. Bethlehem Pike, Ambler, PA where her Celebration of Life Service will begin at 11:00 AM with Rev. Kevin L. Porter officiating.

Read the wonderful article about Bette Young in the Summer 2021 WFGP / LHM Newsletter at this link.

Coming Back to Laurel Hill

It was an honor to have Principally Harps! invited back to the beautiful Laurel Hill Mansion for their long-running Candlelight concert series. Our recent June 16th concert kicked off the summer series to a sold-out crowd. My harp duo partner Janet Witman and I have been an ensemble for about a dozen years. We played previously for Laurel Hill summer concerts in 2015 and 2017.



We were scheduled to return in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced concert goers to stay home and postponed concerts over and over again. Like every musician, the pandemic kept us from sharing our music with audiences, but that didn't stop us from creating and collaborating. During this time, both Janet and I arranged new pieces, were inspired by YouTube, and strengthened our program. Our favorites are a jazzy version of Pure Imagination, the song from the 1971 movie, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and Sidewalk Café, a light-hearted waltz by William Gillock, reminiscent of a Parisian bistro.

Lately, we have been tailoring our program according to the venue, so at one concert site, we will play our Little Mermaid medley and at another, we'll choose to play our "Let There Be Peace on Earth" arrangement. We know that some seasoned Laurel Hill concert goers are expecting grand concert pieces such as "The Polovtsian Dances" by Alexander Borodin, or gorgeous arpeggiated pieces like "En Bateau" by Claude Debussy. We love to vary our program and show what harps are capable of.

For two stringed instrumentalists we love playing at Laurel Hill Mansion because the intimate concert setting and acoustics are ideal. Harps are parlor instruments, after all. Janet and I can play a true pianissimo and be heard from the last row. The audience is enthusiastic and asks insightful questions. We can introduce pieces without a microphone and feel like we are chatting with friends. The music concludes with a delicious back porch reception. For the performer, the experience is satisfying and we are in our element.

For more about Principally Harps!, you can find our recordings on YouTube and information on each of our websites: harpbyrequest.com and harpexcellence.com.



By
Mindy Cutcher, harpist

Sunday, July 21, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Join us for the second concert of the 2024 season at
Laurel Hill Mansion
The Wister Quartet

Nancy Bean, violin Pamela Fay, viola Meichen Liao-Barnes, violin Derek Barnes, cello

PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 1 in E \flat Major Maddalena Lombardini-Syrmén
 Op. 3, No. 1 (1735-1818)

Andante ma con un poco di moto
 Allegretto

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5 Joseph Haydn
 ("The Lark") (1732-1809)

Allegro moderato
 Adagio: Cantabile
 Menuet: Allegretto
 Finale: Vivace

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 2 in D Major Alexander Borodin
 Allegro moderato (1833-1887)

Scherzo: Allegro
 Notturmo: Andante
 Finale: Andante - Vivace

Tickets available at www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/concerts.html

Sunday, August 25, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Women for Greater Philadelphia Present
Renowned Classical Guitarist
Allen Krantz

The Seeds of Change

When we think back to our understanding of colonial era gardening or farming, images of wholesome, chemical free food generally come to mind. Washington grew beets, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, onions, spinach, leeks, turnips and parsnips. Jefferson added cucumber, Irish potatoes, beans, peas, peanuts and even tomatoes.

Tomatoes most likely originated in Peru, then spread to Mexico. Salsa-like sauces were served atop of fish. Arriving in Europe in the 1500s, the tomato got off to a rocky start. This was during the “witch craze” when mostly women, not men were executed for consorting with the devil. A concoction witches reportedly smeared on their broomstick to enable them to fly or turn themselves into werewolves included nightshade. Tomatoes are a nightshade fruit. No woman in her right mind would grow tomatoes in her garden!

Asparagus on the other hand, was one of Jefferson's favored vegetables. By the 1740s it was found growing wild in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. It pops out of the ground very suggestively in early spring. Ancient Romans used it as an aphrodisiac. Louis XV's mistress Madame de Pompadour was said to share a libido-boosting dish of asparagus in butter sauce, egg yolk, nutmeg and lemon with the king. The asparagus she favored was white Dutch asparagus with violet tips. (Soil mounted around the spears blocks sunlight therefore blocking the production of green chlorophyll.) Rumor had it that Madame de Pompadour's underwear were color coordinated to the blanched asparagus.

Potatoes which were introduced to Europe by the Spaniards were grotesque; everyone agreed they were lumpy when cooked and possibly devilish. A French naturalist Raoul Combes, who authored *The School of the Kitchen Garden* in 1749 called potatoes the worst of all vegetables. It was considered eminently tasteless and only a protection against famine. For most of the 18th century, Americans thought of potatoes only as something to be eaten when there wasn't an alternative. Consumption increased during the lean years of the Revolution. In 1774, John Adams wrote to Abigail, “Let us eat potatoes and drink water.” This was preferred to submitting to English domination. By the end of the 1700s positive things were noted about the potato. It was now a vegetable noted for universal use, profit and easy acquirement. There was even a dessert recipe for mashed potato pie!

Peas probably date back to the stone ages. Known as field peas, they were tough, pithy balls of starch. Remember Hans Christian Anderson's “The Princess and the Pea” (1835)? The princess proved her pedigree when she awoke black and blue after sleeping on a layered featherbed, stacked atop a stoney pea.

Even the healthiest cuisine items can have a bad reputation, but we gardeners know a good thing when we taste it!

Happy Gardening!

Christine Mifsud

Board Member

Women for Greater Philadelphia

816 Children Charged Where Were You?

Picture it: an early autumn day in September 1976 at Independence Mall. Over a thousand people gathered to the bright sounds of the PAL Drum & Bugle Corps in anticipation of the sealing of the Time Capsule prepared by the Women of the Bicentennial (now Women for Greater Philadelphia). Along with the music and food, then Governor Milton Shapp and City Officials celebrated the event and our country's 200th Anniversary. It was a hopeful, happy time as we reflected on American achievements since the Founding of America – an unprecedented creation of a country based on freedom. An ideal which has continued to be enhanced.

Within the Capsule are 816 names of children who participated in that historic day. These youngsters were charged with the 'privilege and responsibility' of carrying forward the Spirit of '76. Each was given a signed certificate and asked to participate in the 250th anniversary of the Founding of America.

Were you 10 years of age or younger in 1976? Do you have any recollection of being there that historic day? Have you found the Certificate among family memorabilia?

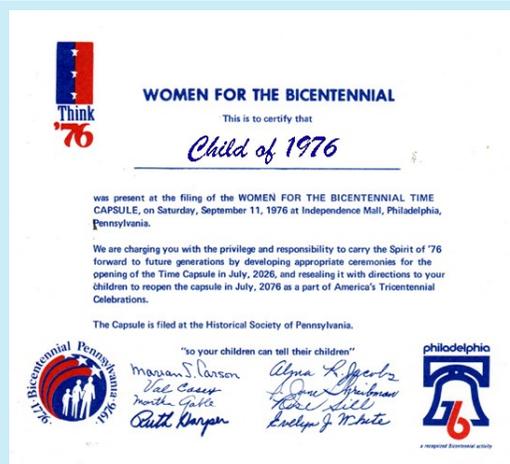
**We have the 816 names and can confirm your role in that historic event. It would be our pleasure to include you (if so desired) and young members of your family/friends in the upcoming 250th Anniversary celebrations. We are also preparing a 2026 update for the Time Capsule that will be revealed at its next opening during the Tricentennial, 2076. Do you wish to suggest the name of a child that will be 10 or under in 2026 to be included? Please contact WFGP at:
www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/time_capsule.html**

Become a part of history.

Submitted by

MonaLisa Fiorentini

250 Committee Member/ WFGP Board Member





Hanging discreetly in a corner of the music room at Laurel Hill Mansion is a framed antique sampler. It is English, created by a young schoolgirl named Elizabeth in 1785.

As samplers go, it is quite rare and a tour de force! It is a map of the British Isles. Silk on silk and skillfully done. Produced in an era when young girls often did not attend formal schools, but were educated at home by governesses or tutors. This child's education wasn't limited to the three Rs. She learned geography and probably history and science as well. As did Rebecca Rawle Shoemaker's daughters who were among the first to attend Anthony Benezet's Quaker school for girls in Philadelphia (1).

How did this unique artifact from the 18th century make its way to Laurel Hill Mansion?

It was a gift from Woman for Greater Philadelphia member, Joan Dessureau.

A former Olney High School teacher, Joan was also a noted dealer in the antiques field, participating in many regional shows with her collection of American and European art pottery. She also loved antique samplers. This was a favorite of hers and she gifted it to Laurel Hill Mansion some years before her death in 2016.

While little is known about the young girl who created this embroidered map, research indicates that other map samplers from Britain can be linked to specific boarding schools or female academies. The more enduring ones in Britain were founded by Quakers. (2)

Submitted by **Anita McKelvey**

Long-time guide and site historian at Laurel Hill and Lemon Hill Mansions

(1) "Anthony Benezet," Quakers in the World.
<https://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/60/Anthony-Benezet>

(2) "Stitching the World: Embroidered Maps and Women's Geographical Education." Judith A. Tyner, Ashgate. 2015
<https://cartographicperspectives.org/index.php/journal/article/view/cp82-trifonoff/1447>



Joan Dessureau pictured with her daughter at Laurel Hill Mansion during a holiday tour



**En Plein Air
at Laurel Hill Mansion**

Artists and the creatively inclined are invited to spend select days painting, drawing, sketching, photographing, making art en plein air on the grounds of Laurel Hill Mansion.

July 2024

August 2024

September 2024

Thursday, July 11th
 Saturday, July 20th
 Sunday, July 28th

Friday, August 9th
 Thursday, August 15th
 Friday, August 30th

Saturday, September 7th
 Thursday, September 19th
 Saturday, September 28th

Please join us between 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM on any or all of these days and be inspired by Laurel Hill Mansion and its environs.

More information can be found at www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/plein_air.html

Play Chess? We invite you to play on the grounds of Laurel Hill Mansion.

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned player come and enjoy a friendly game of chess outdoors in picturesque surroundings. Should there be inclement weather we will setup inside the house. Please bring a board and pieces as we have none to provide.

Saturday, July 13, 2024, 12:30 PM
 Saturday, July 27, 2024, 12:30 PM
 Saturday, August 10, 2024, 12:30 PM
 Saturday, August 24, 2024, 12:30 PM
 Saturday, September 14, 2024, 12:30 PM
 Sunday, September 29, 2024, 12:30 PM

For more information and to register visit www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/chess.html



On Sunday May 19th, Women for Greater Philadelphia Hosted the Annual Laurel Hill Mansion Spring Tea

The sold out tea which welcomed old friends and new featured a portrayal of Rosie the Riveter by actress and WFGP member Pat Jordan.



Pat Jordan portrays Rosie the Riveter



WFGP Advisory Council member Barbara Jean Maresca with WFGP Board President Barbara Frankl



This year's Spring Tea Committee Chair Tish deTuro with past WFGP President and Tea Committee Chair Karen Phinney



WFGP Membership Committee Co-Chair Kathryn Holden with WFGP Advisory Council member Darren Fava



Old friends and new enjoyed sweets and savories from Jack Francis Caterers



WFGP Vice President Christine Fisher Smith with guests



Guests brought their own teacup/saucer and shared a story or memory about their teacup with others at their table

Women for Greater Philadelphia, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of volunteers