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—TABLE OF CONTENTS—



10

GIVING BACK

When Dick Patterson completed his first marathon in under three hours, a running crusader was born. Many, with their feet and hearts, would follow.



12 **COLLECTING**

Carversville collectors Kathy Hausman and Jim Hill's priceless collection of historical instruments will anchor the Mercer Museum's *Magnificent Measures!* exhibit, opening on May 23.

6 **DO THIS**

This spring is all about getting out and enjoying nature's glorious gardens.

16 **AT WORK**

Perkasie's Treasure Trove is filled with something more priceless than thousands of pretty things and one-of-a-kind collectibles: an unbreakable friendship and business partnership.

24 **SECOND ACTS**

Abstract artist MaryEllen Bornak and photographer Yoma Ullman have found fulfillment and success in their creative pursuits.

26 **HEALTH**

When it comes to walking, form counts—a lot. Personal trainer Kendra Thatcher shares her tips.

28 **THE DISCOUNT DETECTIVE**

He's gone undercover to snag those deals. Our discount detective makes his debut.

30 **WEALTH MANAGEMENT**

Local financial gurus share their answers to our burning questions about an insurance plan for retirees that seems too good to be true. (It's not.)

32 **SMART LIVING**

To shred or not to shred? We went to the source.

34 **PERSONAL ESSAY**

Guest columnist Laurie Schutt on life as the Covid clouds begin to clear.

36 **MOMENT IN TIME**

We look back at a popular, four-acre resort that once thrived in the heart of Doylestown.



20 **COVER STORY**

Kay Rock, proud granddaughter of a United Mine Workers leader, spent much of 2020 researching and preserving her family history for future generations.

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Glorious Gardens



COURTESY OF THE ANDALUSIA FOUNDATION

Andalusia Historic House, Gardens and Arboretum in Andalusia, Pa. offers a colorful haven with magnificent views of the Delaware River.

This spring is all about getting out and enjoying nature's colors.

BY MELINDA RIZZO

Spring is a time for simple – and sublime delights.

From the first pristine snowdrops shaking off a coating of late “onion snow” to Hellebores’ early bloom, few things say spring like a leisurely stroll in a thoughtful, well-appointed garden.

In Bucks County you’ll find naturalized settings and historic, grand legacy properties. Formal gardens provide structural context, while naturalized native plant settings offer a glimpse into the impact of terrain, micro-climates and the elements – important considerations for the successful landscape. Plant diversity, personal

approach and decorative styles provide inspiration to the novice, life-long gardening enthusiast, and everyone in-between.

Along the banks of the Tohickon Creek in Point Pleasant, The Gardens at Mill Fleurs surround an 18th-century grist and saw mill. Mill Fleurs owner and designer, Barbara Tiffany, created paradise on this “impossible” site where she offers personal walking tours.

“I didn’t set out to make a collection garden, and we populated the landscape with strange and unusual things,” Tiffany said.

Visitors won’t find manicured lawns or formal plantings, but rather a native and naturalized immersion experience wrought by Tiffany’s hands.

“There is always something interesting to see, and people have a hunger for un-

usual things. Every season I'm living something new," Tiffany said.

Don't miss five different varieties of blooming corylus, or "hazel" shrubs, bounded by hundreds of daffodils. Native ephemerals enjoy a brief and glorious bloom cycle now.

Different ephemeral plants will bloom at different times.

"Plants have stories to tell," Tiffany said. Refreshments may be served before or after the tour at the "ice house," and the entire tour takes about two hours. Visits are by appointment, check the website for details.

At Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve in Solebury Township some spring ephemerals at the 134-acre wildflower sanctuary will only bloom for a week or two, before disappearing until next spring.

"It's a small window," said Jen Ventresca, Bowman's Hill business manager. Among the ephemerals, discover hepatica, bloodroot, bluebells, trout lily, Dutchman's breeches, Jacob's ladder and trillium, and others.

Native plants attract a broad variety of birds from woodpeckers to Carolina wrens and hawk species, providing a pleasurable setting for the bird watcher.

At Bowman's Hill about 800 native species indigenous to Pennsylvania—some of which are threat-

ened or endangered—are part of the collection.

Founded in 1934 by a University of Pennsylvania botanist and professor, Bowman's continuing mission is the preservation of plants found in Bucks County before European settlement.

"I think sometimes as Americans we tend to think American Revolution and onward, but we [at Bowman's Hill] think about before that, about prior to it being settled by Europeans," Ventresca said.

Bowman's annual native plant sale is now open to the public and continues through October.

Paxson Hill Farm in Solebury Township offers a jubilant wonderland for the gardener's exploration. Resident sheep and peacocks amble about. Koi ponds, decorative bridges and a J.R.R. Tolkien inspired "Hobbit" house with a swamp, rope bridge and gardens create a haven for visitors.

Visitors can enjoy early spring bulbs – including a riot of daffodils, along with the last of the wintering flowering shrubs.

Among the many tree species are fragrant "flowering snowbell trees" just breaking bloom. "It's an uncommon tree, and we have it here," said Gary Spock, Paxson nursery manager.

In May and June flowers will light up the landscape with brilliant color. Coneflowers, black-eyed Susans and Russian sage are among the perennials



COURTESY OF PAXSON HILL FARM

Paxson Hill Farm exhibits a jubilant wonderland for the gardener's exploration.

More Garden Splendor

After a pause in 2020, the **26th Bucks Beautiful Annual Garden Tour** is back. Visit gardens – from cottage charm to estate grandeur.

Bucks Beautiful will showcase Doylestown area private gardens from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 13. Tickets are \$30 and reservations are required.

Open to the public from May 1, **Hortulus Farm Garden and Nursery** is set on about 100-acres in Wrightstown, featuring buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries. An original William Penn Land grant, the Isaiah Warner house anchors the property, built between 1793 and 1830. Hortulus is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Pennsbury Manor in Morrisville was the country home of Pennsylvania founder William Penn. A National Register of Historic Places site, the property will reopen to the public on April 30. Penn's "country estate" features historic buildings and gardens with the Delaware River as a backdrop.

Looking for provençal summer luxury? Don't miss **Peace Valley Lavender Farm**. With more than 3,000 lavender plants thriving on its New Britain Township hillside slopes, peak bloom times are the last two weeks of June and into July, the Peace Valley Farm website said. Leashed, well-behaved dogs welcome. Group tours are available and must be booked in advance. The farm is open year round.





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also available for sale at the onsite retail nursery, along with wool and house-grown vegetables in season.

Wool from rescued sheep on the property is spun into yarn for sale at the Paxson retail shop.

With plenty of space to remain socially distant, Spock said visitors should check the calendar for weddings and events prior to making the trip.

Andalusia Historic House Gardens and Arboretum is the ancestral home of the Nicholas Biddle family, a prominent early American financier, poet and 19th century banker. He was influential during the early Colonial and American Revolution periods.

The Andalusia Foundation was formed in 1980 to preserve the property for the public and for generations to come.

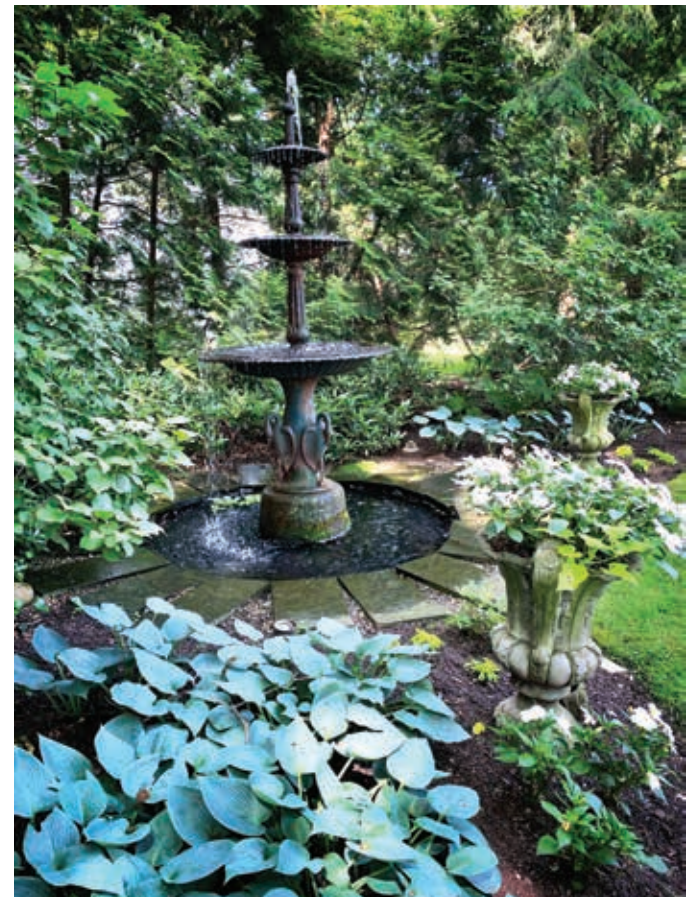
From daffodils to blooming magnolia and cherry trees, the garden wall, heavy in April with blooming wisteria defines a hybrid tea rose garden.

“If you’re a local there is multi-season interest and it’s a great place to come and return to, season after season,” said Amelia Burnett, horticulturist at Andalusia.

Andalusia offers magnificent views of the Delaware River, gardens and arboretum. On select Saturdays, sip champagne on the mansion’s stately porch and enjoy a garden tour with Biddle family member Kristen Biddle. Also on select Saturdays, visitors may bring a picnic spread to relish on the grounds. Select Saturdays are May 8, June 5 and September 18, 2021. Tickets are required for the champagne tour.

Gardeners are generous souls. It’s not unusual for a gardener to think of the landscape as a stewardship. Strike up a conversation, learn something new and consider how ideas gleaned from visiting public gardens can be adapted to create possibilities for your own outdoor paradise. □

Melinda Rizzo is a regular contributor to the Bucks County Herald.



COURTESY OF BUCKS BEAUTIFUL

Visitors can explore private gardens at Bucks Beautiful’s Garden Tour on June 13.



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RUNNING **for Good**

Dick Patterson leads Doylestown's running community with passion and purpose.

BY LIZ JOHNSON • PHOTOS BY LAURA PEDRICK

When Dick Patterson retired from his job as vice president of an aerospace company in the early 1990s, he made a list of goals he wanted to accomplish in retirement. Chief among them was to get people off the couch and exercising.

"That's how I developed my passion," said Patterson of Doylestown Borough.

It didn't take long for the Bucks 5K Series, which organizes a half-dozen 5k races from March through June as fundraisers for local nonprofits, to find Patterson and put him to work.

"Some time around 2000 I was asked to become president of the organization," Patterson recalled. "I've been leading it ever since."

In that time, the Bucks 5K Series has raised \$1.7 million thanks to the faithful support of between 2,000 and 5,000 runners who participate annually.

"It's been a great success," he said.

Study after study has shown that having a purpose in life, particularly as one ages, leads to better health, fewer hospitalizations, greater happiness and longevity. "Purpose in life is strongly associated with better physical and mental health outcomes among older adults," a study by the AARP concluded.

That may explain why at 83, Patterson is still running although "not as much," he conceded. "Age is catching up to me."

"Dick has brought runners together who would otherwise not be

Patterson, 83, has been running for over 40 years.



Patterson, a fixture in the local running community, takes a moment at the Central Bucks West High School track to chat with a group of avid runners who run in races he organizes.

together,” said Gert Freas, a runner and ultramarathoner who lives in North Wales. “Everybody is included and he makes you feel like you belong together. He really has created a running community within a community.”

Freas started running the Bucks 5K Series about 20 years ago. Today, her daughters and granddaughters also join her.

“It’s now a family inside this running family,” she said.

Patterson said he first got into running at age 40 after breaking an Achilles tendon while playing tennis.

“I said to myself, ‘I don’t want this to happen again. I need to get in better condition,’” he said. He took up running “and developed an incredible passion for it.”

His first marathon he ran in less than three hours. With that, he was hooked.

Last year, the Bucks 5K Series celebrated its 25th year amidst the turmoil of the pandemic. “Everything got turned upside down,” said Patterson.

Even this year has been “quite a challenge,” he said. “We have six races, four are live and two are virtual only, although every one of the races has a virtual component.”

It’s cut down on the number of runners who participate, but it hasn’t hampered fundraising where donations have made up for registration fees.

“We’re thrilled from the revenue side we’re doing real well,” he said. “The board of directors really stepped up and have gone above and beyond to make this a big success. I’m thankful to those folks,” he said.

Last year when the races were cancelled, runners who had signed up were given a chance to donate their registration fee, defer it until this year or get a refund.

“Less than 30 percent asked for their money back. That’s how committed the runners are,” he said.

Patterson’s retirement goals have led to several other opportunities. He serves on the Central Bucks board of trustees of the YMCA of Bucks County, the County Theater in Doylestown and the Bike Hike Committee whose aim is to develop a series of trails throughout Doylestown.

“The Bike Hike Committee has really taken off during the time he’s served on the

committee,” said Doylestown Mayor Ron Strouse who has worked with Patterson on several fronts, including the County Theater. “Doylestown was the recipient of an award for being a bike friendly community and that’s a reflection of Dick’s work.”

Zane Moore, president and CEO of the YMCA of Bucks County, said Patterson’s leadership skills have been invaluable to the organization.

“He has seen us through much change over the years and has been a steady influence during facility expansions, mergers with other Ys, and the reopening of our branches following our closure due to the pandemic,” said Moore.

For Patterson, though, the work is just beginning.

“My goal is to make it bigger and bigger, raise more money and get more people involved,” he said. “It gives me a great sense of accomplishment and I really enjoy it.”

□

Liz Johnson, a freelance writer, has written features for Flemington Life and River Towns Magazine.



The Central Bucks West High School track is among Patterson’s top places to enjoy a run.

MAGNIFICENT MEASUREMENTS

Jim Hill and Kathy Hausman's priceless collection of historical measuring instruments will have its Mercer Museum debut this spring.

BY FREDA R. SAVANA

It's a rare passion that flourished into an extensive and elaborate collection of historical measuring instruments from the beginnings of America.

Next month, this truly unique private collection of Jim Hill and Kathy Hausman will take center stage as part of "Measurement Rules," a new major exhibit at the Mercer Museum in Doylestown.

"Magnificent Measures! The Hausman-Hill Collection of Calculating Instruments," represents a lifetime of collecting for Hill, who said he was inspired by his father, a surveyor in Montana. "I started in my teens and it's been a passion ever since," said the Lumberville man. "Objects aren't just instruments, they are a connection to American history."

Throughout his professional career as a machinist, metalsmith, woodworker and custom manufacturer, Hill was long intrigued by mechanical artifacts and their intrinsic and important role in the creation of the nation.

His and Hausman's collection, said Hill, "is about saving things that would have been lost to history."

While the Hausman-Hill exhibit, which opens May 23 and runs through September 6, represents a fraction of the couple's entire collection, it includes many of the finest examples of measuring tools in the country.

"Many of these early measuring tools and complex instruments on display embody the sophisticated scientific principles that helped map, measure, and build early America," said Cory Amsler, the Mercer Museum's vice president of collections and interpretation. The exhibit will be the first time the public has seen the collection.

Among the numerous treasures in the show is the instrument used to determine the boundary be-



Collectors Jim Hill and Kathy Hausman outside the log house at the Mercer Museum.



Portable or Pocket Balance Scale c. 1888.

tween Canada and the United States, from the Land of Lakes to the Heights of the Rocky Mountains, in 1870, explained Hill.

Other objects include the patented protractor that allowed the measuring of arms, legs, waists and fingers for tailoring clothes and accessories. The Chapin Rule Company of Connecticut, which manufactured rulers, along with notable 18th- and 19th-century early makers such as Anthony Lamb, Rufus Porter and Justus Rose will also be on display.

Two men used Chapin's rulers as engagement gifts, engraving them for their brides-to-be, noted the remarkable collector.

"Jim has been a collector his whole life," said Kathy Hausman. "He's so intelligent and has a great, discerning eye. I'm his support system." Herself a respected collector of Art Deco objects, particularly "the beauty of Art Deco women," Hausman said, "we are both obsessed with our collections – just from different centuries – we share a passion for it."

When they met at a collector's event, Hausman said, "It was magic. We love each other and honor each other's collecting."



Surveyor's Compass Wood, Ca. 1735.

Mercer is "doing an excellent job" with the exhibit, she noted. "We're so excited to be there."

"The exhibit is very relevant...it will be fascinating to every age," added Hausman. "Everything he has represents the founding of this country. With ever-changing American values, it is imperative that we remember and acknowledge these magnificent historic instruments and their brilliant makers."

Hill is quick to credit Amsler for bringing the historic collection to the public. "I'm honored and humbled," said Hill. "It's about Cory, the Mercer Museum and the Bucks County Historical Society and their generosity."

The feeling of gratitude and respect is mutual.

"The Mercer Museum is thrilled to present this stunning assemblage of early and often rare measuring tools from a local Bucks County collection," said Amsler.

"Jim Hill and Kathy Hausman follow in the footsteps of Henry Mercer in appreciating the workmanship, scientific complexity and artistry involved in the manufacture of these remarkable pre-industrial instruments." □

Freda Savana is a regular contributor to the Bucks County Herald. Photos of instruments are courtesy of the Hausman-Hill Collection.



Theodolite or Geodetic Transit #71, ca. 1870. - an instrument used for land surveys.

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Perkasie's Timeless

High school classmates Bonnie Gehman and Eileen Hockman reflect on their remarkable partnership that survived a raging inferno fire and global pandemic.

BY JOE FERRY

It's a cool overcast Saturday afternoon in April as a few customers wander into the Treasure Trove, an antiques and collectibles consignment store on 7th Street in Perkasie, to browse the narrow aisles crammed with everything from post-cards and vintage textiles to crockery, quilts, furniture, glassware, and prints. It's the kind of place where you keep your arms in tight so you don't knock over a display.

Standing behind the glass counter that holds the lifeblood of their business—estate jewelry—and next to half a dozen binders that serve as their inventory system for hundreds of thousands of items, co-owners Bonnie Gehman and Eileen Hockman reflect on their enduring partnership and friendship that has lasted for more than 35 years and is still going strong.

"It's a lot like being married," says Gehman with a laugh. "A lot of compromise."

Hockman doesn't miss a beat. It is a pattern that becomes quite familiar when the two are together. One offers a comment, the other completes the



Bonnie Gehman, right, opened the Treasure Trove in 1980. Eileen Hockman, left, joined her five years later.

Treasure Trove



Bonnie Gehman, left, and Eileen Hockman, right, are celebrating the Treasure Trove's 35th anniversary this year.

PHOTO BY JOE FERRY

“I want to have a purpose and this store is one of my purposes. It’s a part of my heart.”

Bonnie Gehman

thought. Their frequent laughter comes naturally and easily. It’s the sign of a deep friendship, a rare commodity among business partners.

“You negotiate and you delegate,” she says.

An avid collector, Gehman opened the Treasure Trove in March 1980. Five years later, she asked Hockman to join the business when Gehman’s first partner decided she needed to spend more time with her family.

“I did not want to continue by myself,” says Gehman.

To fill the gap, she turned to Hockman, with whom she had a passing friendship while they were classmates at Pennridge High School. Later, Hockman married one of Gehman’s relatives, so the two moved in the same social circles. They shared a passion for antiques.

“I knew Eileen was very knowledgeable,” says Gehman. “And I knew she was very honest. They were the two most important criteria to me. You really have to have that in a business partner.”

Hockman says she told Gehman she would

give the partnership five years to work.

“And I’m still here,” she says, shooting a glance at her partner.

“She’s been leaving every year since she came here,” chimes in Gehman. “But she always stays.”

It almost didn’t happen in 1988, when a raging inferno destroyed much of Perkasio’s downtown business district. The Treasure Trove lost 70 percent of its inventory and would have to temporarily operate out of a different location. That was the closest Hockman came to leaving.

“I didn’t think I could do it,” she recalls.

Gehman persuaded her to stick it out.

“I told her at the end of the year if you want to leave then you can leave but you can’t leave me now with all of the mess,” she says.

By the end of the year, however, Treasure Trove was back in business in a temporary location and Hockman decided to stay.

The pandemic was the latest challenge to the store’s existence. While getting through the pandemic was difficult, Gehman and Hockman



Gehman and Hockman maintain thousands of items in their inventory.

say they’ve exceeded their expectations over the last few months.

“People tell us it’s like a walk down memory lane,” says Gehman.

“We sell nostalgia,” says Hockman.

As for the future, Gehman says she hopes to keep the store open until she’s 80 in about 2 ½ years. After that, she’d like to put her knowledge of collectibles to good use volunteering at a local thrift shop. Retirement is not an option, she says.

“If I did that I’d be sitting home waiting to die and I don’t want to do that” says Gehman. “I want to have a purpose and this store is one of my purposes. It’s a part of my heart.”

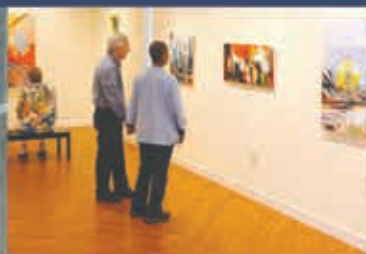
Hockman, an avid gardener with an interest in travel, says she’s good with that time frame. Unlike Gehman, she still likes to go shopping “for the thrill of the hunt.”

“I think I can make it,” she says. □

Joe Ferry is a regular contributor to the Bucks County Herald.



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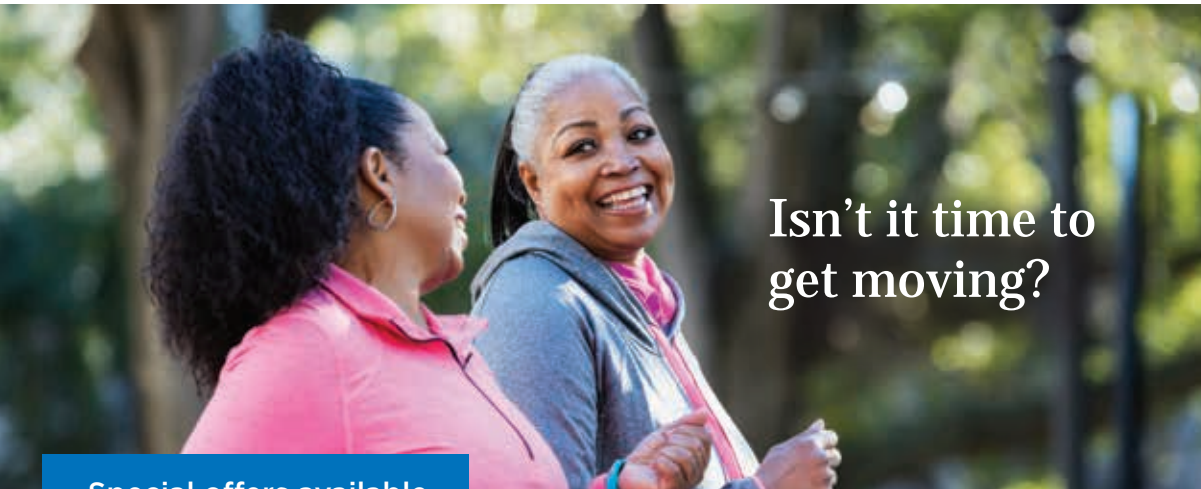
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Living life and looking ahead

The Memory Keeper

Doylestown resident Kay Rock set out on a journey to preserve her family's legacy.



PHOTO BY LAURA PEDRICK

Kay Rock with her husband, Steve, who served as her editor to "Legacy Volume I: The Donaldsons," a chronicle that weaves the story of her maternal grandparents.

BY JOE FERRY

Two years ago, prompted by repeated questions from curious grandkids about a large rectangular black and white photo prominently displayed in her home, Doylestown resident Kay Rock decided it was time to preserve her family's rich history for future generations to appreciate.

And then, after contemplating the enormous amount of time and effort it would take to sort through several boxes stuffed with old papers and photos passed down from her mother, as well as to explore other research avenues, Rock found every reason not to get started.

"I was overwhelmed by it," says Rock.

The isolation-induced pandemic of 2020, however, provided Rock with a no-excuses opportunity to pour through the reams of memorabilia. Like a detective hunting clues, she painstakingly connected the scattered dots of 150 years of history to piece together "Legacy Volume I: The Donaldsons," a chronicle that weaves the story of her maternal grandparents along with world events and their role in the rough and tumble rise and fall of "King Coal" in Western Pennsylvania. It includes family photos, postcards, handwritten letters, and newspaper clippings along with Rock's own commentary that pulls everything together in a compelling narrative. It was a labor of love for the author of "Over the Hill and Gaining Speed: Reflections in Retirement," a collection of essays, after she retired as vice president of

sales for an international consulting company.

Rock presented copies of the hardback 80-page book to appreciative family members this past Christmas. Three more volumes are in the works. Volume II will focus on her paternal grandparents—Joseph and Melinda Steinkirchner. Volume III will focus on her parents and siblings, and Volume IV on her sons and their children. The goal is to reveal and preserve family history for present and future generations, says Rock.

“It’s terrific because otherwise this history would get lost,” says her husband, Steve, a retired chemist and former executive director of The Conservatory in Doylestown who served as her editor for the project. “The descendants really wouldn’t have the knowledge and appreciation for everything that their ancestors accomplished.”

In Clarence and Minnie Donaldson’s case, that was quite a lot, way more than Kay fully realized while spending summers with them as a youngster. She came to know her grandfather as a tall, broad-shouldered, barrel-chested man who commanded a room with his booming voice and presence. He passed away in 1973 at age 85 from Black Lung disease, a common affliction for bituminous coal miners.

“He was a wonderful, generous man,” says Rock. “Among other things he supported my education and travel goals. One of his favorite sayings was, ‘There are no pockets in shrouds,’” recalled Rock.

She knew he was an important figure in the labor movement but didn’t fully appreciate his impact. “I regret that I didn’t get more of his story from him directly,” she says. Extensive online research, yellowed newspaper clippings, and coal



Rock's grandfather, Clarence Donaldson, rose from coal miner to District Vice President of the United Mine Workers of America.

mining history books helped fill in the gaps to help Rock gain a better understanding.

The photo that raised her grandchildren’s curiosity and sparked Rock’s research and writing project was taken in January 1940 during a convention celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Mine Workers of America. In the center of dozens of stern-faced men and women in the middle of the photo is a scowling, scary-looking John L. Lewis, the legendary union president. To his right is Rock’s grandfather, Clarence Donaldson, who started working in Pennsylvania’s Broadtop Coal Fields when he was 14. As Rock found out through her research, Donaldson spent 50 years climbing the union ranks to eventually become District 2 Vice President, often accompanying Lewis to testify before Congress and negotiating contracts with mining companies for fair wages and improved working conditions. Her grandfather had a strong sense of social justice forged during his time in the unforgiving mines, says Rock.

“It didn’t matter to him what country you came from or the color of your skin,” she says. “Everybody was a brother because everybody was pulling their weight and everybody was in this dangerous situation together—all day every day.”

One of the most poignant treasures Rock uncovered during her research was a passbook from Lippmann Brothers Jewelers in Altoona. It shows monthly layaway payments, ranging from \$6 to \$20, for buying a diamond and sapphire ring for \$82.50. Clarence paid it off early in October 1929—one year before their 20th wedding anniversary. It was his way of acknowledging Minnie’s support and sacrifice so that Clarence could carry out his sometimes, dangerous union duties, says Rock.



The photo that sparked Kay Rock's research: the 1940, 50th anniversary of the United Mine Workers of America Convention. The legendary union president, John L. Lewis, is the in the front row, centered. Rock's grandfather stood in the 2nd row, seventh from left. Her mother also attended (circled above).

In addition to Clarence and Minnie Donaldson's fascinating role in American labor history, Rock also uncovered some interesting tidbits about their earlier ancestors.

Clarence, for example, was the first-born of Lydia Fleck Donaldson (1865-1894), a year later, she gave birth to a girl. In quick succession, however, Lydia gave birth to five more children—all of whom died in infancy. "Lydia passed away of a broken heart and broken body," says Rock. "She was 29 years old."

Rock also learned that Amos Donaldson, Clarence's grandfather, was a private in the 67th regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers during the Civil War. His last engagement was April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House, the same day Lee formally surrendered to Grant.

In addition to the family legacy project, Rock has been trying to find a perpetual repository for Clarence and Minnie's artifacts. The Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh and Penn State Museums are interested in the UMWA materials, but Rock is pursuing interest from the Philadelphia-based Historical Society of Pennsylvania because they are interested in both the genealogical materials and the UMWA documents.

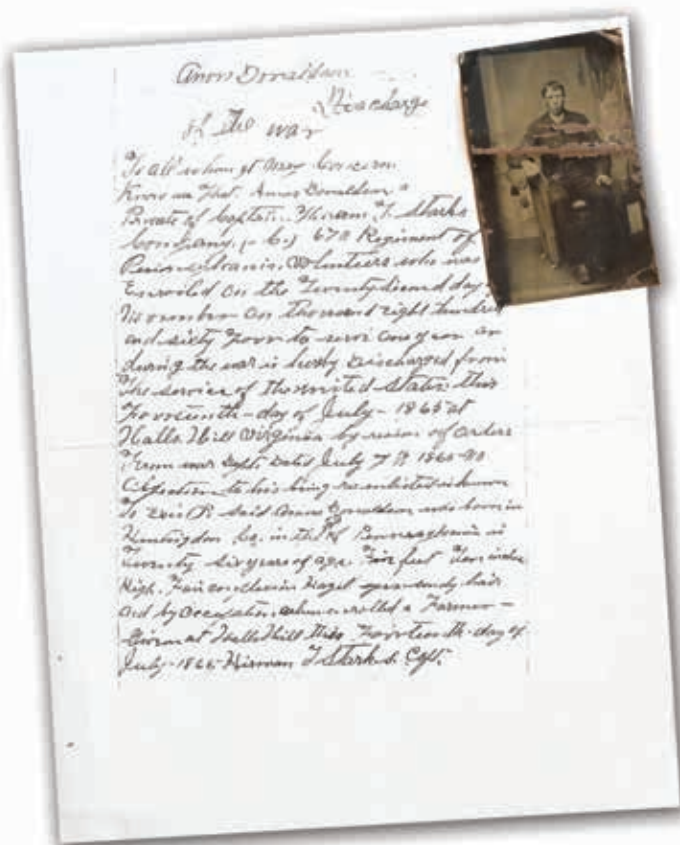
Learning more about her grandparents has given Rock a new appreciation for why people spend so much time delving into family history.

"Whether you showed up in the history books as my grandfather did or not, everyone has a story to tell," she says. "It's important for future generations to understand where they came from. I think it has to give them inspiration." □

Joe Ferry wrote a profile of John Hollenbach in the winter issue of *Senior Living*.



A passbook from Lippmann Brothers Jewelers in Altoona that shows Clarence Donaldson's monthly layaway payments for Rock's grandmother's engagement ring.



Civil War discharge papers for Amos Donaldson, Rock's great great grandfather.



PHOTO BY LAURA PEDRICK

Rock has three more volumes of her legacy project in the works. Her next volume will focus on her paternal grandparents, Joseph and Melinda Steinkirchner.

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Yoma Ullman expresses her creativity through photographs.

COURTESY OF PENNSWOOD VILLAGE

Yoma Ullman and MaryEllen Bornak found that creative pursuits gave their lives new meaning.

BY LIZ JOHNSON

Yoma Ullman started taking pictures of her children to send home to her parents in England while a young mother living in Massachusetts. When they grew up, she found a new passion taking photos of gardens in Washington, D.C. where she lived and worked with her husband.

At 75 and widowed, she moved to Pennswood Village in Middletown Township. Her shutterbug ways led to a late-in-life romance with her second husband Warren White, a fellow photographer at Pennswood.

“We had joint shows in various places,” she said. “Then, two years later he died.”

She pauses for a moment to gain composure.

“I went on taking photographs,” she said.

Now 84, Ullman helps curate art shows at Pennswood Village and has a loyal following through a Google Group called Nature Notes where she submits the nature photos she takes several times a week outside her Pennswood home.

Writer, editor and teacher MaryEllen Bornak found herself drawn to painting in retirement.

“It was a totally different arena,” said Bornak of Lower Makefield. “Something in me wanted to jump out in a different way.”

Bornak gave up her literal, work-life for retirement and abstract art, where she found her passion.

“I want it not to be a picture of something but the feeling of it. That’s more

my forte,” she said.

Both women started by taking classes; Ullman at the Smithsonian Institute when she lived in Washington and Bornak at Lower Makefield’s AOY Art Center at the former Patterson Farm just off Route 332.

“You don’t come out of the gate with a visual voice,” said Bornak, 78.

Ullman said she’s found that in expressing her creativity, others have found a way to express theirs. For example, her bird photos have led other Pennswood residents to study birding, information they share in the Google Group.

“As a result, I am learning and that’s one of the greatest things about it,” said Ullman.

Bornak said her painting has taught her to live in the moment. “The appreciation of the now is absolutely amazing. It’s a gift,” she said. “It’s a value you can share with someone in any state.”

Creativity puts the reality of aging in a new light, both women say.

“How can we convey that it’s another opportunity?” asked Ullman. “That can be hard to do when you’re moving to a place like Pennswood Village that you know you won’t leave alive. And yet you can change and develop a new mindset with the right opportunity and encouragement.”

“Aging isn’t all great,” added Bornak. “The body breaks down, all kinds of things happen. But it’s something you can do gracefully if you find your voice.”

“If you succumb to life molding you and just bumping along, that’s kind of defeating,” she said. “Retirement is an adjustment. But it gives you air space to let your mind sort through your life. You’re no longer fulfilling other people’s goals. So what’s your life really about?”

Most importantly, their creative pursuits have helped them find their tribe.

“Pennswood is a place that gives you the opportunity to change and grow. It would have been much

harder not having a supportive community,” said Ullman.

Bornak found AOY Art Center in Yardley “a wonderful place where I’ve had shows and taken workshops and lessons. I found it to be collaborative and supportive as I worked my way to find my voice,” she said.

They agree that it’s easier to explore and develop a new passion early in retirement.

“I would say very emphatically try it when you still have energy. You’ll be very surprised about how you change as well as what your interests will morph into,” said Ullman.

“What do you have in you that needs to come out a little more? What can you add to the world now? There’s a reason why you’re here. As you get older, that’s the magic,” said Bornak. □

Liz Johnson, a freelance writer, has written features for Fleming Life and River Towns Magazine.



COURTESY OF MARY ELLEN BORNAK

Mary Ellen Bornak found her passion in abstract art.

WALK THIS WAY



We know walking is good for us. But walking the right way makes it even better.

BY KENDRA LEE THATCHER

It is estimated that the average person will walk an estimated 65,000 miles in their lifetime - roughly three times around the surface of the earth. Though walking may come naturally and without much thought for most of us, understanding and practicing the proper way to walk becomes vital as we age.

According to the CDC, nearly 54 million adults in the United States suffer from arthritis and joint discomfort. For many cases, arthritis is a side effect often associated with other comorbidities such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity all of which can be linked to a sedentary lifestyle. While consulting your doctor before commencing any physical program is always advised, walking (the right way) may just be the antidote needed to reverse many of these common health issues.

The benefits of a walk done right far exceed the risk. The National Health Institute, along with other reputable national health organizations cite that

Keep your head lifted with your chin parallel to the ground.

walking at a brisk pace for an average of 30 minutes per day increases bone density and muscle strength leading to better balance, increased lung capacity and stamina, increased blood flow, and greatly decreased cortisol levels and the risk of comorbidities which reduce stress on and in the body. Whether you opt for a stroll on the beautiful side streets of Doylestown or a bucolic trail around Tinicum Park, lace up your sneakers, fill your water bottle, and get ready to put your best foot forward.

Before you begin, stretching helps reduce the risk of injury. Practice forward lunges to stretch your calves, hip flexors, and ankles. Keep your hips squared forward, your chest lifted, and gently ease into the movement, avoiding bouncing.

Next, focus on form and be present while on your walk. So often we look down in fear of tripping or being distracted by texting on our phone. Instead, keep your head lifted with your chin parallel to the ground. Engage your abdomen and elongate your spine to stand with your utmost posture. Your breath is essential for maintaining a consistent pace when moving through intervals and various elevations. Breathing deeply through your nose helps to reduce breathlessness and also invites you to more deeply experience the blooming flora

around you. As you move, maintain a neutral pelvis which is squared forward - do not tuck your tailbone or arch your back. Glide lightly through your legs and with each step allow your foot to roll from heel to toe, and your arms will have a natural swing with a slight bend at the elbow.

Incorporating walking into our daily routine can be a healthful, fun, and free way to connect with nature, catch up with friends, and clear our minds. Happy walking! ☐

Kendra Thatcher, owner of BalanceOfBliss, is a registered dietetic technician, certified Pilates instructor, and lifestyle wellness ambassador.



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For the Foodies

Did you know that visitors 65 and over to Peddlers Village in Lahaska can score a 10% discount on food and services at Buttonwood Grill, Cock 'n Bull Restaurant, Earl's New American, Giggleberry Fair, Golden Plough Inn, and Hart's Tavern?

The discount is valid Monday through Thursday only and cannot be used during festivals, Murder Mystery events, on holidays, or for group sales or be combined with any other promotions or discounts, and does not include alcohol. Only one discount can be applied per check. You must show ID to receive the offer. Other restrictions may apply.

Staying in Shape

Silver Sneakers is a free in-person and online fitness program offered through many Medicare Advantage programs. It gives members access to more than 17,000 locations nationwide, including all the YMCA facilities in Bucks County. You can use the workout equipment, pools, and gymnasium, and take classes specifically designed for older adults of all fitness levels, including cardio workouts, strength training, and yoga. You also get access to Y Wellness 24/7, a virtual wellness platform providing hundreds of live and on-demand classes and activities. Check with your Medicare provider for more information about Silver Sneakers.

Keep Your Mind Sharp

Pennsylvania State University's Go-60 program offers tuition free enrollment at several campuses to Pennsylvania residents aged 60 and older who meet specific criteria. While there is no tuition, other costs may apply, such as required textbooks or other course materials. For more information go to Abington.psu.edu/go-60.

Save on Your Taxes

Some public school districts offer an annual rebate on your property taxes. In Pennridge, for example, homeowners can get back up to \$162.50.



To qualify, applicants must be homeowners 65 or older with an annual income at or below \$35,000. You can also qualify if you are a widow or widower age 50 or older. Check with the school district where you live to see if a rebate is available. If not, the state of Pennsylvania offers a similar program that includes renters. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975. Property Tax/Rent Rebate application assistance is available at no cost from the Department of Revenue district offices, local Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers and state legislators' offices.

Take a Ride

SEPTA offers seniors (65 or older) free rides on all its services, including Regional Rail. You'll need to show a valid driver's license, non-driver identification card, or SEPTA Key Senior Photo ID, which you can get at SEPTA's headquarters in Philadelphia, Suburban Station, or at some state legislators' offices. For more information, visit Septa.org.

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(If you come across a great senior discount, please share it with the Discount Detective at discountdetective@gmail.com.)

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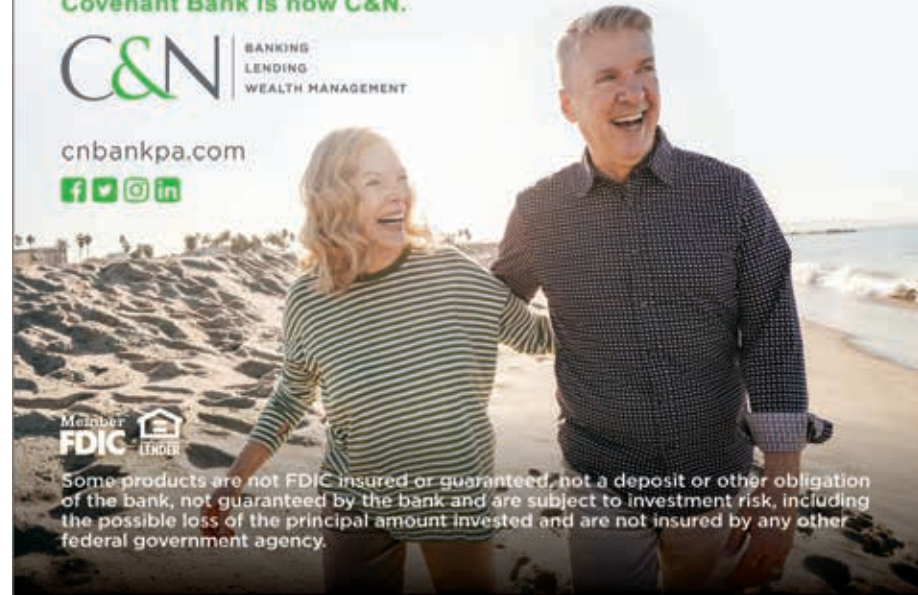
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Life Insurance Retirement Plans: Are They Too Good to Be True?

We asked the experts.



There are some creative, little known ways to maximize retirement savings, minimize taxes and preserve legacy wealth. One of them is called a Life Insurance Retirement Plan, or LIRP. At first blush, the benefits of an LIRP seem almost too good to be true. That's why we asked local experts Phil Lorenzon (P.L.), Michael Neft (M.N.) and Lou Aaron (L.A.) of Secure Retirement Strategies in Buckingham for the lowdown. Here's what we learned.

Q. What is a Life Insurance Retirement Plan, or LIRP?

M.N.: *An LIRP uses life insurance to create tax-free benefits in retirement including tax-free income, tax-free long-term care and a tax-free legacy to your heirs.*

Q. How long have they been around, and why are we hearing more about them now?

M.N.: *LIRPs were originally developed during the Reagan Administration. Their popularity is driven by the looming threat of higher taxes in the near future, because benefits from LIRPs are completely tax-free.*

Q. Is this something for high net worth individuals? Who can get them?

L.A.: *LIRPs can play a tremendous role in your financial retirement plan, regardless of your net worth. Properly structured based on your goals, anyone who wants to reduce potential tax increases, and exposure to them, should consider a LIRP.*

Q. What are the top 3 reasons for getting an LIRP?

L.A.: *Tax-free income, tax-free long-term care and a tax-free legacy to heirs.*

Q. How is this better than a 401K or IRA?

P.L.: *Money held in a 401(k) or an IRA is tax-deferred-*

-eventually taxes must be paid on them. If taxes go up in the future, you'll be paying more in taxes on that money than you would now. All benefits you receive from a LIRP are 100% tax-free.

Q. Tax avoidance sounds too good to be true. Is this completely legal?

P.L.: *Section 7702 of the IRS tax code clearly defines the legal application of this structure in a life insurance policy.*

Q. What are the risks of an LIRP? For instance, can they be affected by the stock market?

L.A.: *LIRP interest credited is usually based on the S&P 500. Interest grows in the same amount as the S&P, on an annual basis up to 13.5%. If the S&P is*

down, the policy is guaranteed to lose nothing.

Q. Can I bequeath my LIRP? Will there be a death tax for my heirs?

M.N.: *The death benefit is 100% tax free for any life insurance policy, including an LIRP. They will not be responsible for paying LIRP taxes.*

Q. Where do I go to get an LIRP? What should I be looking for?

P.L.: *An LIRP must be structured within the confines of the tax code. Your team should have expertise with these products with your LIRP customized to meet your retirement goals. □*

-Melinda Rizzo is a regular contributor to Senior Living

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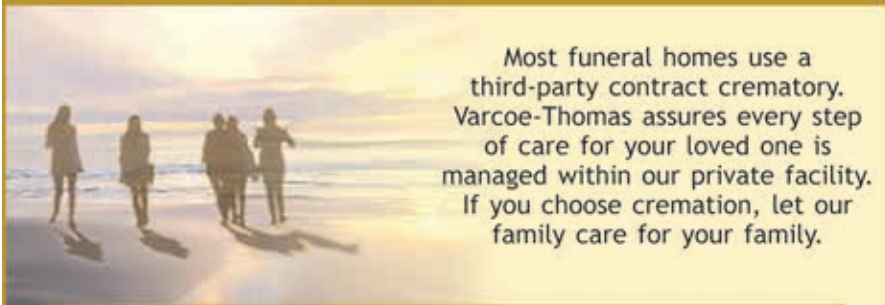


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To Shred or Not To Shred?

That is the question.
An attorney with the FTC provides some answers.

BY LISA WEINTRAUB SCHIFFERLE
Attorney, Federal Trade Commission

As you start spring cleaning, are you wondering what to keep and what to shred? We've looked at experts' advice and compiled this summary of how long they recommend keeping certain documents. Put our handy graphic near your shredder as a guide.

Save forever

Keep documents related to major life events – birth, marriage, divorce, and death. Lock securely:

- Birth certificates or adoption papers
- Social Security cards
- Citizenship papers or passports
- Marriage or divorce decrees
- Death certificates of family members

Also, keep auto titles and home deeds stored safely for as long as you own the property.

Tax records

This time of year, the big question is: what tax records can you shred, and when can you shred them?

- **Tax returns** – Our conservative advice? It's best to keep these forever.
- **Pay stubs** – Shred 'em after checking them against your W-2.

When should I shred it?

Immediately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales receipts ATM receipts Paid credit card statements Paid utility bills Credit offers Cancelled checks (that are not tax-related) Expired warranties
Up to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay stubs Bank statements Paid, undisputed medical bills
After 7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax-related receipts Tax-related cancelled checks W-2s Records for tax deductions taken
It depends...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auto titles Keep as long as you own the vehicle Home deeds Keep as long as you own the property Disputed medical bills Keep until the issue is resolved Home improvement receipts Keep until you sell your home and pay any capital gains taxes
Keep Forever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth certificates Social Security cards Marriage or divorce decrees Citizenship papers Adoption papers Death certificates Tax returns

- **Home improvement receipts** – Keep these receipts until you sell your home, since certain expenses may reduce your capital gains tax.
- **Other tax records – like tax-related receipts and cancelled checks** – Wait seven years before shredding. Why? While the IRS usually has three years to audit you, it has up to seven years under certain circumstances. (If you file a fraudulent return, then the IRS can audit at any time – but for the average honest taxpayer, seven years works.)
If you're unsure what tax records to keep, consult an accountant or call IRS Taxpayer Assistance at 800-829-1040.

Other records

Most experts suggest that you can shred many other documents sooner than seven years. After paying credit card or utility bills, shred them immediately. Also, shred sales receipts, unless related to warranties, taxes, or insurance. After one year, shred bank statements, pay stubs, and medical bills (unless you have an unresolved insurance dispute). For those who are thinking, maybe I should keep everything, just in case. . . remember that identity thieves can't find documents you have destroyed. Destroying documents with your personal information reduces the likelihood of becoming an identity theft victim. Shredding is just one way to reduce the risk of identity theft. For other tips on preventing identity theft, visit ftc.gov/idtheft. ☐

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Surviving Covid Times

BY LAURIE LIVESAY SCHUTT

What a year this has been, and certainly not what any of us wished for or expected! Who would have guessed that all I wanted for my March birthday this year was a coronavirus vaccine? While I didn't receive it on my actual birthday, I was able to schedule my first dose for the following week. And recently I received my second dose. Hooray! Having dearly missed time and hugs with my children/grandchildren, and friends, getting the vaccine feels like a major step toward returning perhaps to normalcy. And, not getting tested for Covid every time I'm feeling under the weather is a big relief.

Even when vaccinated, I have seen a lot of caution, especially on the part of those of us "of a certain age." From my research and observations, I think it will be a while before any of us feel truly free again and ready to get together without our masks and social distancing.

My husband Bill and I had such high expectations when we moved into our new home in Doylestown Borough in September of 2019. Personally, I was looking forward to walking around town for my exercise and to visiting with new friends and old. In the fall and early spring I was busy taking art classes at the Michener Art Museum and planning for a trip in April to the British Virgin Islands.

Then March 2020 arrived, bringing Covid-19 and a mandatory lockdown. Everything changed, everywhere. Museums closed, our trip was cancelled. No one knew how long this would last and to some degree, we still don't. I was concerned about my new neighbors, especially the seniors, and how they might be coping with the isolation of lockdown. Since I couldn't really get out and check on them myself, and as a former journalist and marketing consultant, putting together a newsletter seemed like a way to do something

positive and creative with my time.

This led to the launch of COVID TIMES, a newsletter created to help maintain connections with one another while providing useful tips and information related to the pandemic. With input from others, initially we shared tips for staying safe and well; listed information about the Covid-related policies of local grocers, and provided resources for those having trouble getting sufficient food and supplies – think toilet paper and cleaning wipes!

COVID TIMES has energized me and given me a focus throughout the pandemic. It's proven to be therapeutic in so many ways. Not only have I gotten to know and appreciate neighbors whom I have profiled in the newsletter, but I have learned a lot about Doylestown and its fascinating history. In the course of researching Doylestown of the past, I discovered that there is little in the Bucks County Historical Society archives specifically addressing the 1918 pandemic and its impact on the county. This prompted me to start working on a book comparing the 1918 Pandemic in Bucks County with what we are experiencing today with Covid. The ongoing project has made me feel a part of the community. A recent article on the Village Improvement Association (VIA) was so interesting to research and write that I have formally joined this organization of amazing women.

In the future, I look forward to continuing to interview neighbors and find ways for us to build a stronger and more supportive community. ▣

Laurie Livesay Schutt, a Doylestown resident featured in the winter issue of Senior Living, is the author of Covid Times, a newsletter dedicated to bringing people together and informed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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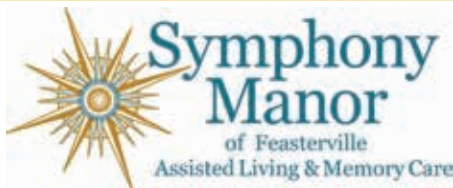
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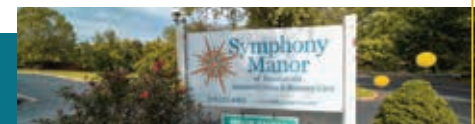
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DESTINATION DOYLESTOWN: 1926



Postcard featuring *All States Cottages Complex*, circa 1940.

The start of the summer has always included excited travelers, itching to start their season off with a memorable Memorial Day vacation. From 1926 until the early 1950s, a slew of visitors vacationing on the “Lackawanna Trail” (US RT 611) flocked to a motel complex called the “All States Cottages,” located at 300 South Main Street, in the heart of Doylestown. Visitors from Philadelphia, New York and other places were enamored with the area’s beauty, and All States Cottages provided a great basecamp.

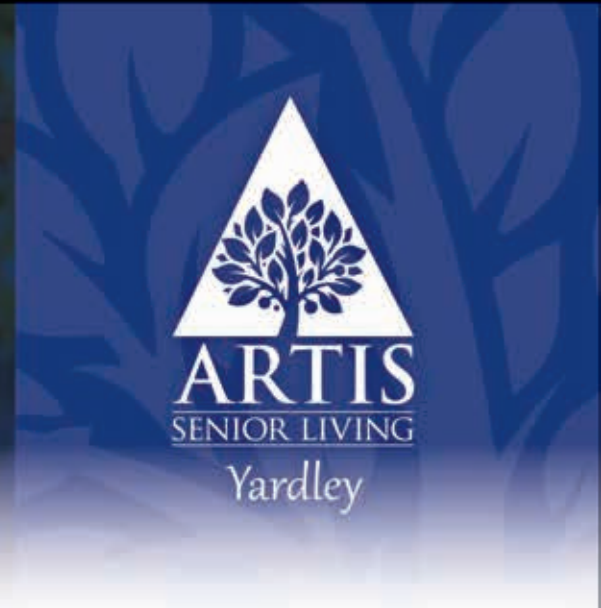
The site spanned four acres and was just one block from the railroad station. The motel grounds were accessed at Hart Avenue with an entrance near the Burpee’s Warden Farm. With 18 cottages, the double cabins were 24 feet by 12 feet, and were named for states: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Iowa, Texas, California, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, Maryland, Vermont, Virginia, and Ohio. Each individual room provided heat and running

water, with a separate cottage providing community showers and baths. There was a popular restaurant and swimming pool on the premises.

The first owners, Frank and Anna Lewis, managed the cottages and provided meals for their guests. In 1930, the local paper announced that the restaurant had a new manager, Viennese chef Ferdinand Hirt. By 1952, the motel was owned by Marie Rubin and her children. The restaurant, called the “Hustle Inn” advertised “a soda fountain and light lunches.”

After almost three decades of serving thousands of visitors to Doylestown, the All States Cottages’ run came to an end. In 1952 zoning requests from the owners challenged cottage usage, leading to the end of an era. Today, the original site is occupied by Trans Shop Auto Repair, the Penn’s Court office buildings, and the Doylestown Hunt development. □

- *Doylestown Historical Society*



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