

Winter 2014 Issue

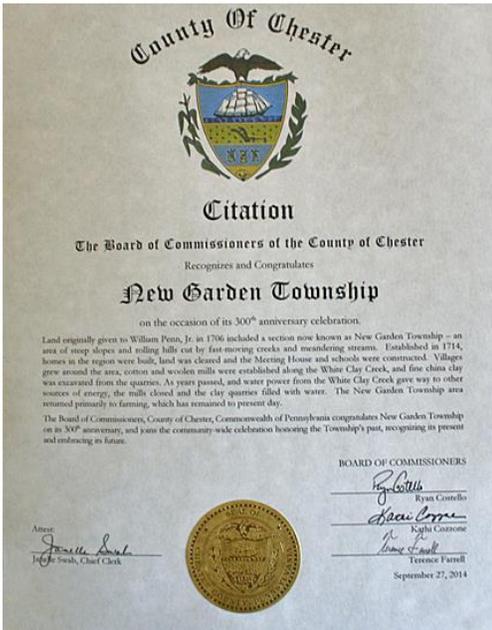
New Garden Township Tricentennial Celebration

On the beautiful early autumn afternoon of September 27th over 250 residents and friends of New Garden Township gathered in the Park to celebrate the Township's 300th anniversary. Organized by the New Garden Historical Commission and the Park and Recreation Department the event brought together dignitaries, speeches, posters, games, food, music and other festive activities to commemorate the event. And, William Penn also attended!



The three hour event commenced with a ceremony conducted by Mary Sproat of the Historical Commission. After welcoming the audience Mary introduced New Garden Township Board of Supervisor Chairperson, Betty Gordon, who introduced the event's special guests: Fellow Board of Supervisor members, Patrick Little, Stephen Allaband, Richard Ayotte and Randy Geouque, State Senator Andrew Dinniman, State Representative, Chris Ross, County Commissioner Terrence Farrell and Dr. Peg Jones, "the face of the New Garden's Historical Commission".

Senator Dinniman spoke of the importance to preserve history. He said: "There was hate and love in the 1700s and there is today. There was honor and betrayal in the 1700s and there is today. There is good government and bad government and there was in the 1700s and there is today. So when we go back to preserve the past we not only preserve the buildings and we not only understand our roots. In essence we understand ourselves. We understand the totality of human emotion and feeling." He concluded by giving "special homage to the Historical Commission, and to Peg Jones and to all who have served both formerly and your chairman [Ted Christie] who have preserved this history".



Chester County Citation of Township's 300th Anniversary celebration.

Representative Chris Ross put the Township's 300th birthday event in perspective of US history when he stated that "the occasion today.....strikes me that when the United States were actually finally getting formed into a single coherent government unit that you were getting ready to celebrate your 75th anniversary already! So, it's the kind of self-government and traditions that you all had here in New Garden and other places like it in Chester County and elsewhere that have caused the creation of the United States. So, you have a lot to be proud for. And to think you have been able to continue to follow through on that kind of government in an uninterrupted fashion for 300 years is something to be proud of."

Betty Gordon took the opportunity to recognize former BOS member and guest Chip Smedley and his wife Julie. She also recognized Spence Andress saying he "has been a friend of New Garden Township for many years and the interim manager for about three years. The Supervisors would like him to stay forever but we have been unable to convince him of that." Surprise guest William Penn was asked by Betty if he had prepared to say anything. He humbly replied "Thank you for having me back. It is good to return after 300 years." Betty concluded encouraging everyone in the Park have a wonderful time celebrating the anniversary party in the Park and then was followed by historian Dr. Peg Jones to talk about New Garden's 300 year story.

County Commissioner Terrence Farrell started his speech addressing both the English and Spanish audience: "Buenas tardes mis amigos. Mi nombre es Terrence Farrell, y yo soy su Comisionado del Condado. Good afternoon my friends. My name is Terrence Farrell, and I am your County Commissioner." On behalf of the Board colleagues, Ryan Costello and Kathi Cozzone Farrell presented a citation recognizing and congratulating the Township on the occasion of its 300th anniversary celebration.

Dr. Peg Jones delivered a fascinating narration of New Garden's rich history. Her engaging chronology started with the 17th century Native Americans followed by the arrival at the turn of the 18th century of persecuted Irish Quakers to William Penn's land and how they settled and established a Quaker Meeting House, cut roads and cleared fields that ultimately created a civic entity named New Garden Township. She spoke of the successive generations who farmed the



Dr. Peg Jones.

flat woodlands area, specialized in carpentry, brickmaking, clock and cabinet craftsmanship, and in the 19th century built saw mills, grist mills, and flour mills on the White Clay creek flowing through the hilly southern land. Dr. Peg Jones described the rise and fall of the kaolin clay industry and creamery industries during the late 18th and early 19th centuries and how both thrived exporting their product on the now extinct railroads passing through the mill town of Landenberg. Residents in the 20th century witnessed farmers and greenhouse growers experimenting and developing mushroom culture that gave rise to the current mushroom industry coupled with a late-century transformation of a the once rural landscape to one of residential developments. “As we look forward to the 21st century”, she observed, “this is the face of our Township. Many changes have occurred over the years but this remains our home.”

[\[Click here to read Dr. Jones’s complete article about the Township’s history.\]](#)

Dr. Jones ended the story of New Garden Township with “a bit of political history.” She said, “We have as an introduction of some of our elected officials. But it’s been 50 years since New Garden Township sent one of its own to the General Assembly in Harrisburg. Benjamin J. Reynolds was elected in 1968. With this election cycle we again have one of our own running for a seat in the Pennsylvania legislature. I am proud to introduce New Garden residents Susan Rzcudlo, candidate for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. I hope you all take an opportunity to speak to Susan.”



Police Chief Jerry Simpson and former Supervisor Robert Perrotti.

Lifelong resident Robert Perrotti was given a Township Proclamation recognizing his service on various selected appointed and volunteer capacities, for serving as a member of the BOS, for his continued service as a member of the Park and Recreation Committee, and for his leadership to acquire and relocate the Lyceum House to the Township Park and thereby preserving a very important and valuable piece of the Township’s history.



History Posters displayed on the 1st floor of the newly renovated Lamborn House. Kitchen located through the door on the left.

There were many activities during the celebration. Three local music bands performed for the crowd: Scott Gantt and Friends, The New Garden Revival Band, and The Berdog Music Club. History posters were displayed in the first floor of the Lamborn House. For this celebration the Township Historical Commission supervised and volunteered major repairs to this house: a new kitchen roof, stabilizing its brick walls, replace the stucco on the kitchen end and installing new windows throughout the house. Between the Lamborn

House and the Lyceum House Dr. Peg Jones told “Tales of Old New Garden.” Guests placed items in a 2014 time capsule to be opened in the year 2064. William Penn Senior, impersonated by New Garden resident James Anderson, circulated through the crowd, and noting how things have changed since he was last here in 1682. Antique tractors were on display. Local organizations setup tables and tents to share information about the Red Clay and White Clay Watershed organizations, Bayard Taylor Library, New Garden Police Department, Tree Tops Animal Rescue, to name a few. There were activities for children such as moon bounce, scarecrow making, pumpkin painting and story time. And of course there was lots of free food for everyone at fire pit area and free ice cream from the nearby Woodside Creamery. Mary Sproat invited everyone to take photographs of the event and post them on instagram at “#NG300”. (Click [here](#) to view the photo gallery.) Several organizations contributed to the success of our party today. They were: Giant Foods, Herr Foods, Chester Water Authority, Hill Top Restaurant and Tojo Mushrooms. Boy Scout Troop 53 was recognized for their indispensable help assisting the Historical Commission setting up the ceremony. And, the crowd gave a special applause for the Township Public Works Department.

To commemorate the 300th anniversary guest were invited to help Mark Huf of Oxford Nursery plant an eighteen foot “Penn Oak tree”. Situated on the west side of the Lamborn House, William Penn supervised the planting asking everyone to help him by throwing a handful of soil onto the base of the tree.

[Click here to view photographs](#) of the New Garden Township 300th Anniversary celebration.



Guest assisting William Penn planting the Penn Oak tree located west of the Lamborn House (background).