

# The Graeme Park Gazette

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2010

# Ghosts &

# Ghouls at

# Graeme

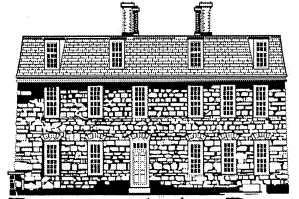
# Park

Long rumored to be haunted by Elizabeth's ghost, and constantly a subject of interest by various paranormal groups, Graeme Park has recently partnered with National Pennsylvania Paranormal Investigators (NPPI) to conduct a series of "ghost hunts" with the public. The five hour investigations include a tour of the house with an overview of some of the "ghostly activity" that has been experienced and reported over the years, a review of what past investigations have found, and time spent on the grounds and in the buildings taking photos and making recordings. Investigations were held on August 31 and September 18 and



are scheduled for October 15, 23, and 30. If you're interested in participating, the cost is \$40/person and the investigation runs from 7 p.m. to midnight. Please call us at 215-343-0965 for information or to make your reservation.

If you'd rather not meet the ghosts in person, but would like to hear about the mysterious experiences people have had in the house and learn some of the history, then the Haunted Moonlight Tours might be more to your liking. These one hour tours feature costumed actors in each room depicting scenes from the lives of the former residents of Graeme Park and a tour guide will fill you in on some of the more mysterious happenings that have been reported over the centuries, and that have been seen, smelled, and heard by our volunteers and visitors more recently. These tours are \$12/person, which includes light refreshments, and also must be reserved in advance. Contact us at 215-343-0965 for more information or to make reserva-



**Befriend the Past**  
The Friends of Graeme Park

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15, 23, 30  
*Paranormal Investigations*

October 22, 29  
*Haunted Moonlight Tours*

November 10  
*Homeschool Day*



## GRAEME PARK



Graeme Park is the site of the Keith House, an 18th-century historic house, the only remaining home of a governor of colonial Pennsylvania. It is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and is supported by the Friends of Graeme Park, a 501c3 volunteer organization that raises funds and promotes the site. Individuals who need special assistance or accommodation to visit Graeme Park should call (215) 343-0965 in advance to discuss their needs. Pennsylvania TDD relay service is available at (800)654-5984.

### TOUR HOURS

Friday - Saturday  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday Noon - 4 p.m.

Last tour starts at 3 p.m.

### THE STAFF AT GRAEME PARK

Museum Assistant Carla A. Loughlin

### THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Edward G. Rendell  
*Governor*

Barbara Franco  
*Executive Director*

Wayne Spilove  
*Chairman*

*From the President of the Friends*

As we begin the last quarter of 2010 and another year is drawing to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given of themselves to help keep Graeme Park's legacy alive. Your generosity, whether it has been in the form of a financial donation, giving of your time and expertise to volunteer or visiting an event, directly impacts the site and assures its continued success.

We have had a busy third quarter, with a calendar chock-full of events. The Celtic Heritage Festival, Shakespeare in the Park, Colonial Adventure Camp, Yellow Fever Presentation, Swing Kings Concert, Dog Faire and Paranormal Investigations have offered something for everyone. Again, many thanks go out to everyone who helped to make these events successful and fun for all.

Now that fall has arrived, we will see a new season of school tours, along with our Moonlight Tours and more Paranormal Investigations.

The long, hot summer is behind us and the cooler days of autumn are heralding in the true colors of nature. The reds, yellows, golds and oranges will soon be at their peak, surrounding us in breathtaking beauty. I invite you to visit Graeme Park to take in the scenery and enjoy the beauty of the site. While you are there, look around at this historical treasure and take comfort in the fact that this special place continues to thrive thanks to you.

*- Beth MacCausland*

## Homeschool Day at Graeme Park

On November 10 from 10-2 homeschooling families are invited to Graeme Park for a day of fun and activities on an 18th century plantation. The Keith House at Graeme Park is a National Historic Landmark built c. 1722 as the summer home of Sir William Keith, then Governor of Pennsylvania. The Georgian style mansion was later owned and updated by Dr. Thomas Graeme and, during the Revolution, the writer Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson called the estate home.

Activities will include:

- ◆ Quill Writing
- ◆ Colonial Games
- ◆ Hearth Cooking
- ◆ Tin Punching
- ◆ Militia Drill
- ◆ Meet Dr. Benjamin Rush
- ◆ Tours of the Keith House
- ◆ Sheep and Wool Processing



Cost is \$6/person and children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.



## Members\* of the Friends of Graeme Park

*Thank you for your continued support.*

### Governor

Sharon Holloway

### Doctor

Susan Babinsky  
Kim Keiser  
Shawn McLaughlin  
Robert Tafel

### Poet

Margaret Choate  
Theresa Cio  
Deedie Gustavson  
Janet Klein  
Rodney Mader  
Jim Miller  
Lee Miller  
Holly Neimeyer  
Douglas Oberreit  
Hannah Snyder  
Susan Tafel  
Pam Tucky

### Household

Vince and Bernadette  
Creedon  
Joe and Lori Danko  
Steve and Jennifer  
Glaize  
Paula Gidjunis and  
John Shiro  
Celia Humeston  
Steve and Christine  
Hoffman  
Larry and Connie  
Keith  
James King  
Kathleen and John  
Lyon  
Beth and Mike  
MacCausland  
Mary Jo McLane  
Theresa and Mike  
McSpadden  
Martin and Sandra  
Mikelberg

Douglas and Andrée  
Miller  
Joseph Penrose  
James Price and  
Shelley Haas  
John and Janice Schultz  
Terri and Peter Shaftel  
Douglas and Raynor  
Sherlock  
Richard Taylor  
Bill Walker  
Jack and Mary  
Washington  
Nick and Adele  
Weremeychik  
Ed and Maryann  
Wilkowski

### Individual

Gary Albright  
Carol Brunner  
John Brunner  
Keaton Bryan

Sandy Bulleri  
Maureen Checchia  
Pete Choate  
Marie Clark  
Marcy Connolly  
Cecile Drach  
Barbara Field  
Jackie Finley  
Marion Heckler  
Hilary Heckman  
Carol Henkle  
Alice Hoey  
Charlotte Holmes  
Leigh Irvin  
John Joscelyne  
Clarinda Koenig  
Toni Kistner  
Carl Klase  
Virginia Mader  
Mary Mahal  
William McHugh  
Jean Meyers  
Lillian Maurone

Shirley Moore  
Sandra Morris  
Lynn Murray  
Nancy Oberreit  
Allen Poland  
Bruce Rader  
Jeffrey Ratcliffe  
Lorraine Reikow  
Laura Schmerfeld  
Judith Snyder  
Joan Stelmach  
Mary Ann  
Sweriduk  
Marie Watson  
Andrew  
Zellers-Frederick

*\* As of 10/1/2010*

## NEWSBRIEFS

### Keith Genealogy

Progress has been made in tracking the Keith family through Sir William's daughter, Jane, who moved to Jamaica and married William Yeeles in 1724. Jane and William are known to have had seven children, including Deborah Senior, with whom Elizabeth Graeme corresponded, and Elizabeth Williams. Both of these granddaughters have descendents reaching into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Interestingly, although the surnames changed to reflect the patriarchs of the various branches of the family, the Keith name was continued and frequently used as a middle name, for both the males and females, for many generations going forward. The information, most of which is unverified at this point and includes 247 names, has been entered into the MyHeritage website and is available for review at [http://www.myheritage.com/person-1000001\\_125669071\\_125669071/william-keith](http://www.myheritage.com/person-1000001_125669071_125669071/william-keith). This is a work in progress and will be updated as more information comes to light and can be verified. See additional reading material on the Seniors on page 4 and a partial family tree on page 7.

### Prudential Donates \$1,000 to Graeme Park

Prudential has made a Prudential Cares Volunteer Grant to Graeme Park in recognition of Margaret Lotter's service to the Friends of Graeme Park. Margaret has devoted many hours to helping with special events, chaired the Father's Day Lunch, facilitated the purchasing and construction of the shed as part of our school tour grant, and was in fact named Volunteer of the Year for 2009. Thank you Margaret for all you do.

### Wachovia Grant for Education

The Friends of Graeme Park was chosen as a Wells Fargo/Wachovia Community Corporate Partner. The Wachovia Oxford Valley Branch will award the Friends \$1,000 on October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Community Partner Recognition Breakfast at Bucks County Community College. The Friends will reach out to school districts local to the Oxford Valley Branch, which includes Neshaminy School District, to promote and sponsor educational tours at Graeme Park. Graeme Park's Educational Committee will provide the tours to the school children.



## THE FRIENDS OF GRAEME PARK

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Friends of Graeme Park is to provide on-going support to the staff of Graeme Park and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in their efforts to preserve, maintain, develop, interpret, and promote appreciation of Graeme Park.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Beth MacCausland
Vice President	Bruce Rader
Secretary	Jim Miller
Treasurer	Vacant
Member at Large	Deedie Gustavson
Member at Large	Kim Keiser
Member at Large	Holly Niemeyer
Member at Large	Maryann Sweriduk
Member at Large	Jack Washington

### STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Education	Carol Brunner John Brunner
Finance	Bruce Rader
Fundraising	Vacant
Governance	Jack Washington
Grants	Vacant
Hospitality	Maureen Checchia
Insurance	Kim Keiser
Legal	Kim Keiser
Membership	Vacant
Museum Shop	Deedie Gustavson
Newsletter/Publicity	Carla Loughlin
Programs/Events	Beth MacCausland
Volunteers	Beth MacCausland
Website	Joan Stelmach

### THE GRAEME PARK GAZETTE

is published quarterly by The Friends of Graeme Park in cooperation with the PA Historical and Museum Commission

Editor: Carla A. Loughlin



### Reading List:

## Two Books Shed Light on the Life and Lifestyle of Keith's Descendents in Jamaica

In researching Keith's descendents (see *News and Notes*) I came upon two books, *In Miserable Slavery, Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-1786* (Douglas Hall), and *A Narrative of Events since the First of August, 1834 by Thomas Williams an Apprenticed Labourer in Jamaica*, (Diana Paton) which provide insight into the Senior family set against the backdrop of plantation life in 18th century Jamaica and the 19th century abolitionist movement.

In 1754 Christopher Senior (husband of Keith's granddaughter, Deborah), three of his young sons - Gilbert Senior, William Dorrill Senior, and Thomas Keith Yeeles Senior - and his cousin Mary Williams and her husband Joseph, inherited Salt River Estate, one of three Jamaican sugar plantations owned by Christopher and Mary's uncle, William Dorrill. The inheritance included over 1,000 acres of land, the livestock and slaves who lived and worked on the plantation, and the plantation house that Dorrill had lived in.

Thomas Thistlewood served as the overseer at Egypt, one of Dorrill's other plantations, and, luckily for those of us interested in such things, kept a 37-volume, 10,000-plus page diary of his experiences which was used as the source material for *In Miserable Slavery*. Before Dorrill's death the three plantations frequently shared resources, supplies, and slaves and we learn some of the names of slaves living and working at Salt River as well as the workings of a typical 18th century Jamaican sugar plantation.

It is likely that there is other information directly pertinent to Keith's family, who remained prominent in Jamaica for many generations, contained within the original volumes of Thistlewood's journals. Even with only limited references to the Seniors and their kin, the published excerpts from the diaries, which make up about half of *In Miserable Slavery* and include 75 references to Salt River Estate, and the accompanying commentary by the author/editor Douglas Hall, provide a fascinating glimpse into the life and lifestyle of the plantation owners, their white employees, and the slaves.

*In Miserable Slavery* was published in 1999 by University Press of the West Indies and can be purchased at online booksellers. A preview is available on [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com).

*A Narrative of Events* profiles the next generation of the Seniors - Gilbert's son Gilbert William Senior and his daughter Sarah Jane Keith Senior. These never married siblings inherited Peshurst, a 200-acre "pimento" (allspice) plantation worked by nearly 60 slaves, from their uncle Christopher, a younger son of Deborah and Christopher Senior who had not yet been born when his father and brothers inherited Salt River. Christopher, who never married, had nine children by Nanny Bain, a free quadroon (1/4 black) woman, but chose to leave his property to his all-white niece and nephew rather than his own issue.

Jamaica abolished slavery and on "the first of August, 1834" began an apprentice system under which former slaves served an additional four to six years in what amounted to an indenture. At the end of their term, or sooner if they could afford to buy their freedom, they were freed. Thomas Williams, the author of the narrative, was a slave/apprentice at Peshurst until 1837 when he purchased his freedom with help from the abolitionist group who sponsored the writing of the *Narrative*. His story was originally published in 1837 and used by the abolitionist movement in Europe to make their case that the apprentice system resulted in harsher conditions than when masters expected a lifetime of work from their property. A Commission of Enquiry was formed to hear testimony about the claims made in the *Narrative* and the book appends an edited version of some of the testimony, affidavits from Keith's great-great grandchildren, and letters written by them that were published in the *Jamaican Despatch*.

Williams' *Narrative* was republished in full, along with editorial by Diana Paton and reprints of some of the letters and testimony referenced above, by Duke University Press in 2001. It is available for preview and purchase from online booksellers.

- Carla Loughlin

# 2010 Colonial Living Camp



The week of August 9-13 elementary age children were treated to a fun-filled week of colonial activities at Graeme Park's annual Colonial Living Camp. This year's camp was organized and run by Ginger and Erin Agnew with help from some of our other dedicated volunteers. Kids toured the Keith House, cooked in the summer kitchen, did Colonial chores, played Colonial games, learned about the militia and Colonial clothing, wrote with quill pens, did Colonial dancing, and so much more. Thanks to all for a great week the kids are sure to remember for years to come.





# A Busy Summer at Graeme Park

It's been a whirlwind of activity here at Graeme Park over the last few months. From our Celtic Festival on July 17 through the Dog Faire on September 25 it seems we've had something going on nearly every other week.

Celtic was in the mid-90s, but the Hooligans, the Martin Family Band, Carl Peterson, the Purcells, and three pipe bands – Bucks Caledonian, MacGregor, and MacKay – entertained nearly 900 people with a variety of different styles of Celtic music and dance. Visitors had the opportunity to shop with 20 different vendors offering t-shirts, jewelry, Celtic foods, pottery, knitwear and

other items; tour the historic Keith House, once home to the Scottish Keith, Graeme and Ferguson families; and stop by the various family clan and non-profit booths to explore their heritage and Celtic culture.

On July 25 Theatre Horizon of Norristown presented Shakespeare in the Rain (err, Park) in the forebay of the barn. While it rained buckets most of the day, it did clear up shortly before the actors took the makeshift stage and nearly 40 people came out to enjoy the performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

On August 22 we reprised the popular Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 Living History presentation. Ninety-two visitors, yes, in the rain, came out to learn about the epidemic which swept through Philadelphia in 1793 and the impact it had on life at Graeme Park. Our costumed interpreters entertained visitors with information on why country homes were important at this time, the work Elizabeth's friend Dr. Rush was doing, and the direct impact the fever had on Elizabeth and her living situation.

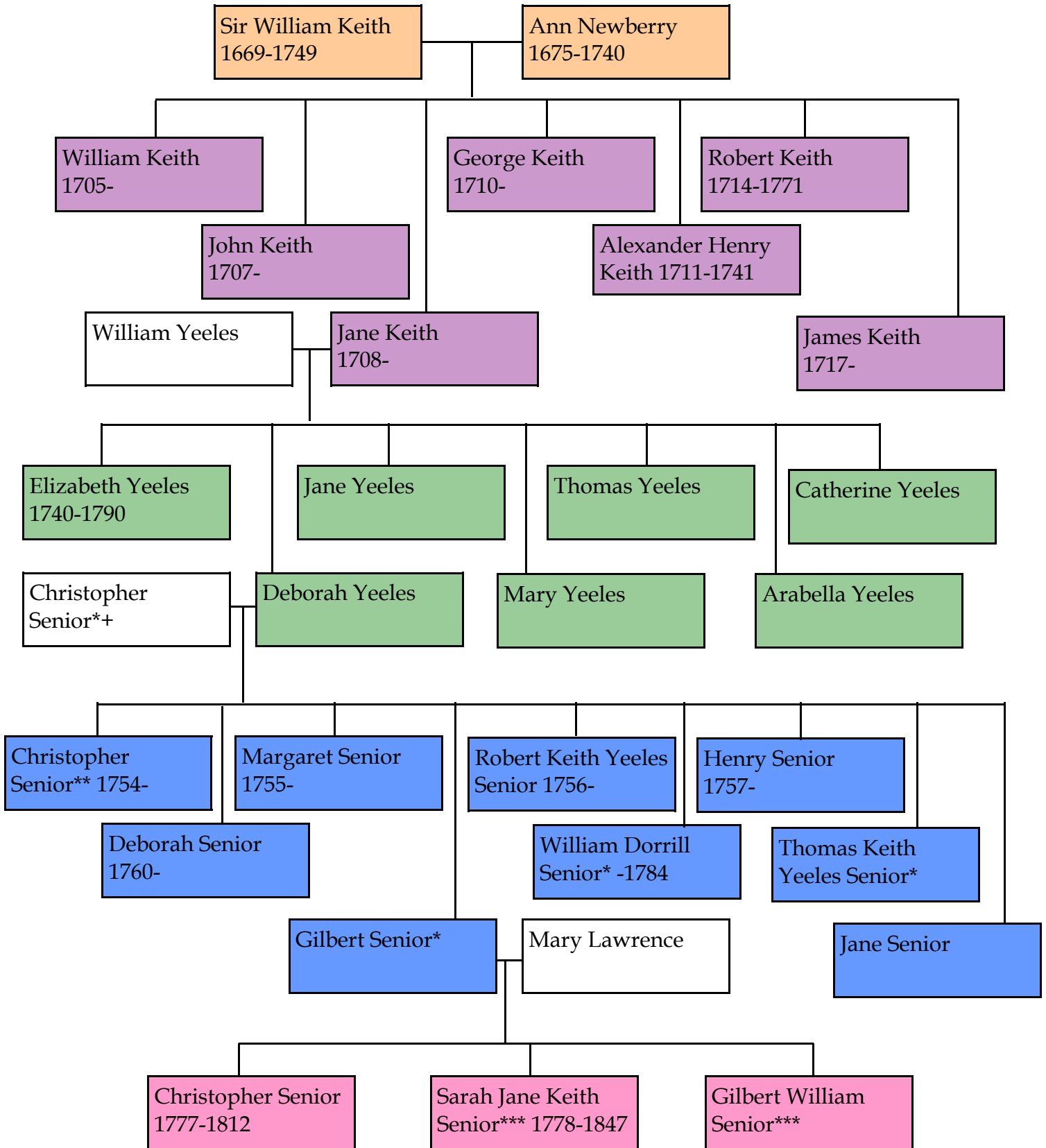
On September 11 the West Chester Swing Kings took the stage for their second visit to Graeme Park and entertained a crowd



of 120 with popular tunes from the golden era of the 1940s through today.

The quarter's activities wrapped up with the 4th Annual Dog Faire on September 25. Fourteen vendors, rescues and non-profits set up booths with great merchandise for dogs and dog lovers, and brought their dogs out for a day of meet and greet with the 275 visitors who came with their dogs. Entertainment included agility demonstrations by Y2K9s and search and rescue demonstrations by Keystone K9 Search and Rescue and an "every dog" pet show where dogs competed in categories like best trick, best costume, biggest dog, smallest dog, and looks most like owner.

# Partial Keith-Senior Genealogy through Five Generations



\* Inherited Salt River Estate, in Westmoreland, Jamaica in 1754. +Some sources list Deborah Yeeles' husband as William Senior. \*\* Left Penshurst Plantation, in St. Ann, Jamaica to his niece and nephew. \*\*\* Inherited Penshurst Plantation.



**Befriend the Past**  
The Friends of Graeme Park

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Horsham, PA 19044  
(215) 343-0965  
[www.ushistory.org/graeme](http://www.ushistory.org/graeme)

Address Service Requested

**Moonlight Tours - October 22, 29**

**Paranormal Investigations - October 15, 23, 30**

**Homeschool Day - November 10**

## Gardener's of the Crooked Billet win "Community Greening Award" from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

The Gardener's of the Crooked Billet were recently awarded a 2010 PHS Community Greening Award for Becci's Herb Garden at Graeme Park. The award recognizes greening and beautification efforts that benefit communities and acknowledges the efforts of those who improve their main streets, parks, train stations, and other public spaces. Over 80 entries were judged based on plant variety, design, use of space and horticultural practices.

The herb garden was pioneered by Becci Brechbiel in 1980. She researched the herbs, drew up the plans and negotiated with the PHMC to get approval for the garden, which was completed and dedicated in 1983. Shortly after the dedication of the garden, Becci and her husband were killed in a car accident and the Gardener's of the Crooked Billet named it "Becci's Herb Garden" in her honor. The Gardener's have maintained the garden since it's inception.



(L-R) Marge Dempski, Maria Bongarzone, and Lois Keil (Gardeners of Crooked Billet's Herb Garden Committee) welcome Carol Peoples (right) from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.