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## Homespun history: Homespun history: Lansdale Historical Society holds Holiday History Tour

By DAVID HARE

Staff Writer

LANSDALE — There are two Bowen homes in Oak Park: one is at 113 Oak Blvd., while the other sits down the road on Forrest Avenue. Pam Bowen grew up in the modified Dutch Colonial home on Oak Boulevard, where her mother still lives. But it's the bungalow on Forrest Avenue she's called home for the last 18 years.

On Saturday, both homes were open to the public for the 2007 Holiday History Tour. Proceeds from the ticket sales are to benefit the Lansdale Historical Society's Jenkins Homestead Restoration Fund.

"When we were asked to do this we thought it was a good idea," Bowen said while standing in her kitchen. She lives on Forrest Avenue with her husband. After moving in 1989, the Bowens became the sixth family to live in the house.

Shirley Bowen, Pam's mother, lives in the home on Oak Boulevard with her husband, Hank. The home has been in the family for more than 90 years, she said. Designed by her uncle, Walter Slifer, the two-story house was built by her grandfather, James Slifer, around 1916.

"I raised six children in this house," she said, adding that Pam is her fifth born.

One interesting feature of this house is that there are clocks in every room. The late Roy Beaver, Shirley's former husband, collected clocks as a young man.

Incidentally, Hank Bowen, Shirley's second husband, is also Pam's father-in-law. Both Hank and Shirley are widows. They found each other through their respective son and daughter. The couple have been married for about 10 years.

"Oh, so you've heard the story," Shirley Bowen said when asked about her second marriage. She laughed before continuing her story of the house her grandfather built.

Ken Jones, meanwhile, is close to selling the home in Oak Park where he lived with his wife Rose, who died about four years ago. During Saturday's tour, Jones was showing off the cozy dining room he and his fiancée had used to host Thanksgiving.

"It's a very liveable home," he said of the house he's inhabited since 1995. "It's perfect for entertaining."

Built by Harry Richardson in 1923-24, the Jones Home includes an oval recessed ceiling in the living room, three open fireplaces, and molding over every window and doorway in the house.

Jones said he expects to close on the house in February. From there he plans to move to Hammonton, N.J, at which point, he himself will be making history.

"I'll be the first man to move out of this house alive," he said. "The other men who lived here did so until they died. I expected to do the same, but things changed."



Tour guide Grace Walz welcomes Marianne Hild and her daughter Marianne Ziegler to the living room of a home on Ridge Street in Lansdale that was built in 1832, the oldest of the homes on the Lansdale Historical Society's fourth annual Holiday History Tour. Steve Frederick plays piano at left and at right is tour guide Brian Flannery.

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