



THE LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Friends of Old Annville
P.O. Box 99, Annville, PA 17003

'A Tough Act To Follow': Changing of the Guard at Annville's Historic Allen Theater

President's Message, by Michael Schroeder

In a well-worn tale of local lore, in 1992 Mary Jane Hicks of Hershey, PA, won the lottery. She gave a good portion of her winnings to her son Skip, husband of Martha, both schoolteachers in Hershey. Skip's dream was to buy and restore the derelict Astor Theater at 36 E. Main St. in downtown Annville. Over the next three years, Skip & Martha poured tens of thousands of dollars and rivers of sweat into the gutted, seatless, graffiti-scarred 1920s-era building, renamed the Allen Theater in honor of Skip's father. Since its opening in 1995, the Allen has served as a cultural beacon and economic anchor for the downtown, while Skip & Martha have earned reputations as pillars of the local community.

This past June, nearly a quarter-century after its 1995 opening, another local couple, also schoolteachers, bought the Allen from Skip & Martha, who for some years have hoped to retire. To honor the Hicks's many years of service to the larger community, the Friends of Old Annville submitted a draft resolution to the Annville Township Board of Commissioners thanking the Hicks and asking that Sunday, August 19, 2018 be designated "Skip & Martha Hicks Day" in Annville. The full text of the resolution, passed unanimously by Township Commissioners at their July 3 meeting, is reproduced on the next page.

We hope you can join us in the Allen Theater's **Backstage Café** (formerly MJ's Coffee House) at **3:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 19** for a short but lively program honoring Skip & Martha for their many generous contributions to our town.

To get a better sense of what prompted them to buy the Allen and of their vision for the theater's future, I sat down to talk with its new owners, Ed & Sue Felty, who live a few miles away in North Cornwall Township.

A fit, energetic couple with two grown sons, Ed & Sue taught for many years in the local schools. Ed graduated from Cedar Crest High School in 1982; taught math to students in grades 7-12 at Annville-Cleona Secondary



Sue & Ed Felty outside the Allen.

School for 15 years; served as an administrator at ELCO High School for 12 years; and is now in his fifth year as Assistant Principal at Cedar Crest. He hopes to retire next year. Sue, the daughter of Julie and Allan Wolfe of Annville, graduated from Annville-Cleona in 1986, where she's taught math for the past 25 years. She's hoping to retire in the next five years or so.

Both have considerable retail and business experience, having run a summertime concession stand at the

Annville-Cleona Community Pool through most of the 1990s. Ed's business and retail experience runs even deeper, with his parents Richard and Clara Felty owning and operating Felty's Sandwich Shop on 6th & Walnut Streets in Lebanon through the 1970s.

So how's business been in your first month?, I asked, as their sons Nick, 19, and Tyler, 21, attended to the growing line of customers queuing up at the café counter. "The town's been so welcoming to us, it's really heartening," Sue responded. "So many people want to see us succeed." "The first couple of weeks were very strong," Ed chimed in. "It slowed down a bit over the 4th of July holiday, but so far things are going great."

Asked about how they envisioned the theater's future, Ed began by noting the dramatic changes in how people consume entertainment. "There are so many ways for people to entertain themselves these days. The movie industry is very competitive, so we want to run mostly first-run movies, with some arts films and modern classics, like *Jaws* and *Grease*, sprinkled in. We want to bring the kids back, but also appeal to a wider audience; we want to know what kinds of films the community wants to see."

They also envision using the theater for live musical and comedic performances with broad appeal. "We're hoping to get the local school district involved, maybe

with an *a capello* singing contest, or maybe host an ongoing talent contest, something like 'Annville's Got Talent!' We've got lots of ideas, though we've both still got our irons in the fire in education, so it'll take some time to make the transition."

The live performance schedule kicks off with an Elvis Presley Tribute Concert by Jay Allan on Saturday, August 18 from 8-10 p.m.

"We've got nothing but respect for Skip & Martha," Ed emphasized. "Running a theater like this for something like 25 years — they've done an amazing job, and we both know it's a tough act to follow. For us it's a new chapter in our lives, a new adventure, and we're looking forward to jumping in with both feet!"

For our part, the Friends of Old Annville is delighted that our own vision for the Allen's future is now realized: that this historic theater would continue to be run as one of South Central PA's few remaining single-screen movie houses, owned and operated by a civic-minded family with roots in the area, as both a profitable business and in service to the larger community.

Here's to the continuing success of the Allen Theater under the stewardship of Ed & Sue Felty. And here's to Skip & Martha Hicks, for a quarter-century of generous service to our town and community.

RESOLUTION NO. 20180703-1. A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ANNVILLE TOWNSHIP, LEBANON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, EXTENDING RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION TO SKIP AND MARTHA HICKS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANNVILLE COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, Skip and Martha Hicks have generously contributed to the Annville community in invaluable ways as the owners and operators of the Allen Theater for the past 23 years, renovating a key historic structure in Annville, restoring it beautifully and in keeping with its original and intended purpose; and

WHEREAS, Skip and Martha Hicks built and ran a unique business that attracted large numbers of visitors to Annville, indirectly supporting many other local businesses, enhancing the reputation and visibility of Annville, and helping to provide our town with a cultural identity and significance that has been recognized well beyond Lebanon County; and

WHEREAS, the community spirit of Skip and Martha Hicks in hosting community events and offering use of the Allen Theatre for untold numbers of benefit events, without ever requesting or accepting any special recognition or financial compensation, has substantially enhanced community life in Annville; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Annville Township Board of Commissioners, in tandem with the Friends of Old Annville, Inc., offers its sincere and lasting gratitude to Skip and Martha Hicks for their invaluable contributions to enhancing community life in the Township; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Annville Township Board of Commissioners designates August 19, 2018 as Skip & Martha Hicks Day in Annville.

ADOPTED this third day of July, 2018. Rex A. Moore, President. Nicholas T. Yingst, Secretary. [seal]

Community Tradition Continues with 30th Annual Historic Old Annville Day

By Doug Nyce, FOOA Vice President and HOAD Vendor Coordinator & Committee Chair

On Saturday, June 9, FOOA was pleased to present the 30th Annual Historic Old Annville Day (HOAD). West Main Street was closed for eight blocks to create the festive street fair of 150 vendors, a dazzling variety of food, and three stages of musical performances. Some \$5,000 was raised for the support of FOOA's Façade Grant Program.

Thousands of local residents enjoyed visiting with their neighbors, former residents who returned for the event, and visitors from nearby communities. Free bus tours of the Millard Quarries returned this year, thanks to Pennsy Supply. Thanks to the Pennsy staff who made this possible!

New this year was a historic house tour of 148 West Main Street, the Gruber House, one of the immense limestone structures built in Annville in the late 18th century. In front of the house, a historical reenactor & blacksmith demonstrated some of the processes involved in creating the building's iron work. Self-guided and guided tours of the western end of the National Historic District were also available.

This year's free musical offerings included 11 different acts and a variety of musical styles from various Annville immigrant groups – including German, Scots-Irish, English, Italian and Latin American – at three different locations. Quittie Creek Morris, a traditional English dance troupe, performed on the festival grounds. Thank you to all the participants.

A very special thank you to the Annville Township Commissioners, staff, and Public Works Department; all of our generous donors; and the volunteers who made the event possible: Leo Brush, Historic Home Tour Coordinator; Laura Charelian, Fundraising; Liz Lingle, Tour Guide; Rachel Noll, FOOA Store & Information Booth; Michael Schroeder, Township & Traffic; Lee Smedley, Music; Jill Palanzo, Tucker Hull, General Assistance; Brian Nornhold, Treasurer; and Owen Moe, Administrative Support. Well done, team!



Historic Annville Train Station Committee Call for Volunteers

Maintenance & caretaking of the historic Annville Train Station at 155 N. Moyer St. is the focus of a committee forming now. Please contact Doug Nyce (at 717-480-1584 or DouglasLNyce@gmail.com) if you'd like to join in this exciting opportunity to serve your community and help preserve an important part of Annville history!

SAVE THE DATES!

- **Sunday, August 19, 3:30 p.m.** Celebration of Skip & Martha Hicks Day at the Backstage Café (formerly MJ's Coffee House) next to the Allen Theater at 36 East Main Street.
- **Saturday, November 10, 6:00 p.m.** FOOA Annual Dinner at the American Legion, 35 S. Manheim St., Annville.



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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please note that your MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE can be found on the mailing label of this issue of *The Landmark*. Please send your dues and address change to Rachel Noll, 1673 Louser Road, Annville, PA, 17003-8856. Questions? Call Rachel at (717) 867-2137.

Individual & Student \$ 5.00 Family (2+ persons) \$ 10.00 Business \$ 25.00 Friend of FOOA \$ 50.00 ★
Benefactor \$ 100.00 § Founder \$ 250 ❖

RENEWALS

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M/M Howard Bixler
Virginia T. Bowman
Marty & Patti Brandt ★
M/M Dwayne Brown & Family
Constance Bryant
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M/M William Christ ❖
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Thomas & Gwenn Embich §
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Gene & Janice Fortna
Mr. Carl S. Fry
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NEW MEMBERS

Matt & Megan Ball
Francis & Adrienne Glynn
James & Bernadette Huey