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## Paint the Town Red — or Blue

[Features](#) — By [shannon](#) on October 5, 2010 at 3:45 pm

Jenkintown Borough celebrates tradition.

By *Maryanna S. Phinn*

If you grew up in Jenkintown, chances are your favorite color is either red or blue.

Generations of families in this tiny Montgomery County borough of about 4,500 residents have a cherished tradition called “Color Day,” a community fair that combines spirit with a healthy dose of competition.

“From the time you enter kindergarten until you’re an adult, you are either part of a ‘red family’ or a ‘blue family,’” explains Linda Kligman, Executive Director of Jenkintown Community Alliance. Jenkintown has the smallest school district in Pennsylvania. “It’s not just a school field day, but the whole town gets involved. Stores decorate their front windows. People take off from work to attend. Everyone wears red and blue t-shirts. It is community spirit unlike any other town,” says Kligman, who lives in the borough

with her family. After a day of games and competition, either the red or blue families win and earn bragging rights for the next year. The winner's "trophy" is a bell at the local elementary school which is painted red or blue to signify victory.

According to historic records, Jenkintown derives its name from William Jenkins, a Welsh settler and member of the Abington Friends Meeting who came to the area in the late 17th century. Over the years, the Jenkins family built a village that served as a stopover for travelers on the stagecoach line from Philadelphia to Doylestown. It was incorporated as a borough in 1874 and is slightly more than one-half square mile.

Today, Jenkintown is bisected by busy Route 611 and several large suburban townships with many shopping centers and chain stores. But the borough maintains true to its original identity and community spirit. Events like red and blue day, or other projects such as saving an old time movie theatre or creating a town square, give pride, ownership and a sense of commitment to locals and business owners.

"We're a walkable town and a lot of people appreciate that we have independently-owned stores and restaurants, where the owners greet you personally," says Kligman. "Jenkintown is not a place to hurry through. You can talk to people while you're looking around for a perfect gift. We don't try to directly compete with big box stores or malls. Our storefronts are designed for pedestrians and we constantly evaluate how to make it convenient for people to visit," she adds.

#### A Farmer's Market at the Town Square

Like many older suburban Philadelphia towns, Jenkintown looked for ways to stay local yet keep current. About 10 years ago, the borough worked on a revitalization plan to address two very different needs. "Our business owners wanted more parking spaces and our residents wanted more green and open space," says Kligman. As a result of a collaborative effort, the Jenkintown Town Square was born in the heart of the borough on Leedom Street and Greenwood Avenue. Town Square is complete with a gazebo, landscaping, benches and additional parking spaces. Today, it serves as a popular gathering place for local events and a new resource for revenue, including the new Jenkintown Farmer's Market.

Kate Pettit, a fourth-generation Jenkintown (red family) resident and owner-operator of Rhinoceros, a toy store across from Town Square, successfully brought the farmer's market to the borough this year. "When I was growing up we used to walk to the grocery store. But a lot of mom-and-pop stores are gone. I wanted my kids to have the same experience of being able to buy fresh fruit, and vegetables," says Pettit, who has five children ages five to 22 and notes that sometimes families are divided between red and blue.

Pettit consulted with an associate in nearby Glenside to get the market started. The Jenkintown Farmer's Market opened for business on Wednesday afternoons in early May and runs through the day before Thanksgiving. Shoppers can stop by every week for fresh produce, organic meats, cheeses and dairy, bakery items, organic dog and pet treats, apple cider, coffee and tea. "On the last Wednesday of every month, we allow local crafters at the market. We've had a great response, everything is fresh and delicious and it's nice to bring kids for an outside activity," adds Pettit.

#### For the Love of Jenkintown

Trish Breslin Miller, owner of This Little Gallery, grew up in Jenkintown. Her shop, established in 1989, carries contemporary North American made crafts, art and jewelry that long-time customers frequently customize for weddings and other important occasions. Miller carries photographic pendants of the Jenkintown Bell – in either red or blue, of course – designed by an artist and photographer in nearby Elkins Park.

"Our downtown is fun, friendly and a laid back neighborhood," says Miller. "Most businesses are owner-operated and they are great for shopping around the holidays, especially if you want to give a memorable, special gift." This Little Gallery also carries pendants and rings of Philadelphia's LOVE Park and mini-maps of the city and Jenkintown Borough.

Locals agree that Jenkintown is a place to leisurely stop for lunch or dinner, buy a few gifts, see a movie or chat about everybody's favorite team, the "red (hot) and blue" Philadelphia Phillies. Locals love Jenkintown — whether they are red or blue — and you will too.

To learn more about Jenkintown, visit [www.jenkintown.net](http://www.jenkintown.net) or call Jenkintown Community Alliance at (215) 517-5507.

### Guide to Jenkintown

Jenkintown Borough is 10 miles north of Philadelphia between Abington and Cheltenham Townships off of Old York Road, Route 611. SEPTA buses and regional rail provide frequent service to Jenkintown.

#### Shopping & Gifts

- This Little Gallery, 617 West Avenue, [www.thislittlegallery.com](http://www.thislittlegallery.com), offers an exceptional selection of contemporary, custom-designed crafts made in the United States and Canada. Niche Magazine ranked the gallery in its top 100 in the United States in 2001. The shop carries specialty items such as Sticks furniture, accessories and art of Des Moines, Iowa and Sherry Tinsman Metalsmith jewelry, handcrafted in Bucks County.
- Rhinoceros, 301 Leedom Street, [www.rhinoceros toys.com](http://www.rhinoceros toys.com), (215) 886-TOYS, a fun and friendly toy store that offers a game club, puzzle club and Lego club for kids of all ages. Club members pay annual dues to check out (and return intact) games and toys for two weeks – just like library books.
- Chickie's daughter, Jenkintown Commons, York and Wyncote Roads, (215) 885-9077, a third generation upscale, contemporary boutique for women run by a mother-daughter team. Boutique is not just a local store, but a destination place. Extensive lines of hot, new and edgy designers, including cocktail and casual attire, jeans, accessories, shoes, boots, jewelry, handbags.

#### Dining

- Rosey's BBQ, 505 Old York Road, [www.roseysbbq.com](http://www.roseysbbq.com), Memphis meets Jenkintown with Southern taste, Up North! Bring your appetite. Huge portions of authentic barbecue ribs, chicken, pork, sausage, brisket and turkey. Delicious macaroni & cheese, coleslaw, baked beans, gumbo, cornbread and homemade southern desserts.
- The Drake Tavern, 304 York Road, [www.draketavern.com](http://www.draketavern.com), popular pub for locals and the after work crowd. Outdoor patio, happy hour and full menu. Catch the Eagles, Flyers or Penn State games.
- Mirna's Café, 417 Old York Road, [www.mirnascafe.com](http://www.mirnascafe.com), since 1992, an exceptional eclectic Mediterranean BYOB for lunch and dinner. Also in Blue Bell.
- West Avenue Grille, 718 West Avenue, [www.westavegrille.com](http://www.westavegrille.com), award-winning casual bistro serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, with outside seating and full bar. Also in Dresher.

#### Entertainment, Arts & Music

- Hiway Theatre, 212 York Road, [www.hiwaytheatre.org](http://www.hiwaytheatre.org), (215) 886-9800, a community, non-profit theatre built in 1913. A unique one-screen movie house featuring first-run films and special programming. Coming soon – Wall Street – Money Never Sleeps, playing through October 14, the sequel to 1987's Wall Street starring Michael Douglas. Special programs and events include Best of the Burbs October Film Discussion; Children's Matinee Series, family movies on school holidays and winter break throughout the year; Sensory Friendly Cinema, for children with sensory issues; Sing-Along at the Hiway Theatre, fun for the whole family on President's Weekend February 2011.
- Abington Art Center and Sculpture Park, 515 Meetinghouse Road, [www.abingtonartcenter.org](http://www.abingtonartcenter.org), situated on 27-acres on the former Alverthorpe Manor estate of Lessing Rosenwald, a Jenkintown resident, rare book and fine art collector and partial heir to Sears & Roebuck Co. The center provides classes and educational programs, galleries and changing exhibitions and a gift shop. Classes available for all ages and skill levels in painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, jewelry, printmaking, dance and photography. Sculpture blends with nature along art trails and walking paths in Sculpture Park. Also features a restored 1836 Quaker Meetinghouse.

*Maryanna S. Phinn is a freelance writer from Washington Crossing, PA.*

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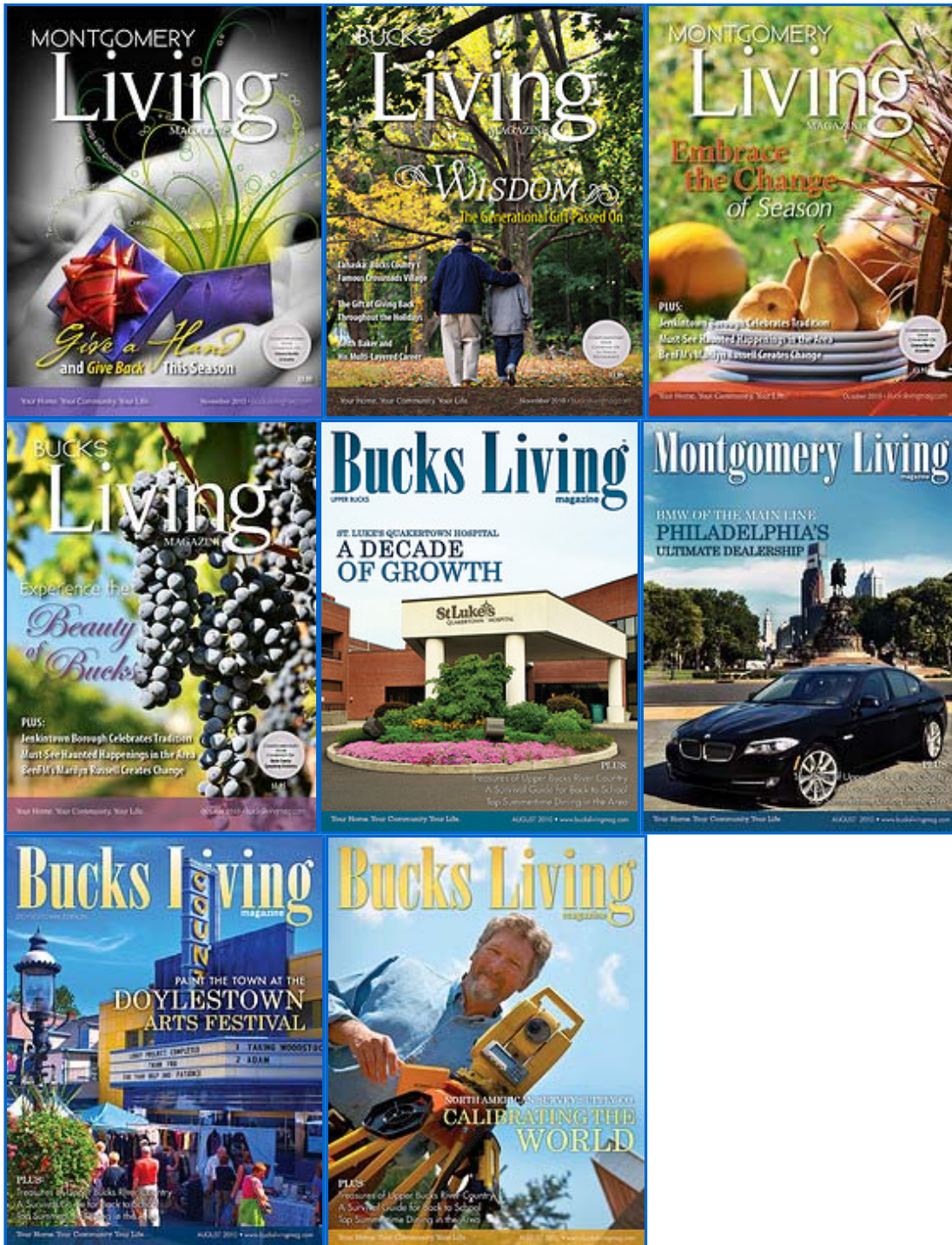
Precision Watches, a third-generation business based in the Buck Hotel Shopping Center, offers watches that you won't find anywhere else in the county, perhaps even further. Precision Watches also specializes in high-end watch repair and is operated by Roman Murat, who works alongside his grandfather, Michael, and father, Gary. Precision Watches is located at 1201 Buck Rd, Suite 1 in Feasterville Trevoese, PA. For more information, call (215) 355-6403, visit [www.precisionwatches.com](http://www.precisionwatches.com) or go to Precision Watches on Facebook for more information.

- **Serenity Day Spa & Wellness Center**

Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, Serenity Day Spa & Wellness Center has successfully found its niche in Doylestown by promoting all aspects of health and wellness for the body, mind and soul by embracing worldly techniques and holistic measures in their preventative approach. Serenity Day Spa & Wellness Center has created one of the most varied and exciting menus incorporating ancient and modern techniques from around the world. Serenity Day Spa & Wellness Center is located at 64 E. Swamp Road in Doylestown. For more information, call (215) 230-3487 or visit [www.serenity-dayspa.com](http://www.serenity-dayspa.com).

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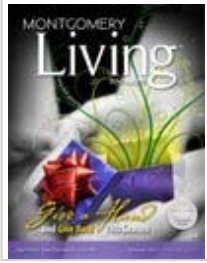
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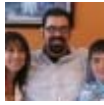
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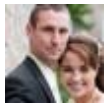
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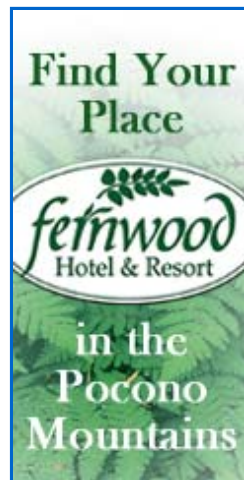
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