



**Downingtown Area Historical Society**  
**Hist-O-Gram**

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org)

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## Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site of this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your identification entries to:

[Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org).

## Downingtown area news in March 1977

The Downingtown School Board approved plans to build **eight-room additions** to the high school and at Lionville Junior High. Both additions were projected to cost \$400,000.

And school director Jonathan Kulp said there was a possible need to build a **second high school** in the district. However, Dr. Charles Micken, superintendent, noted that the district's \$1.2 million debt, which was being paid off by taxpayers, was the largest debt obligation among all the school districts in the county because Downingtown had experienced the highest growth rate over the past 15 years.

About 100 people attended **Boy Scout Troop 79's** annual dinner, celebrating the unit's 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary. The troop was chartered by Glen Moore Methodist Church.

Members of **Downingtown Methodist Church's** Administrative Board included: Eleanor Algier, chairperson; Mindy Shaeffer, secretary; and Emily Lewis, Elizabeth Brookover, Shirley Shaeffer, Robert Moyer, Shirley Moyer, Helen Wagner and Lambert McGuckin.

Mike Johnson, a Lionville Junior High student, won the ninth annual **foul shooting contest**, sponsored by the Downingtown-Uwchlan Recreation Commission. Other winners were Jimmy Lownes, elementary boys; Patty Welch, elementary girls; Lisa Zittle, junior high girls; Mark Keller, senior high boys; Debbie Hannum, senior high girls. John Francella was the adult division winner.

Recent **property transfers** included: 412 Concord Rd., Uwchlan, \$50,000; 8 Overlook Dr., W. Bradford, \$53,000; 123 Ridgewood Cir., E. Brandywine, \$65,500; 408 Sunset Dr., Downingtown, \$42,000; and 33 Christiana Dr., Upper Uwchlan, \$59,562.

Trustees recently elected at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Eagle, were David Simpson, chairman; Ralph Mertz, vice chairman; John Nagle, secretary; and Elmer Murdoch, treasurer.

The **Uwchlan Ambulance Corps** bought a second unit, and Ms. Sam Hart and Chester Hershey joined the staff.

The **DHS Concert Band** traveled to Ossining NY (home of Sing Sing prison) to participate in a band exchange program with the local high school there. And the DHS band hosted the Ossining High School band in April.

Members of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, voted to renovate the barn on its Village Avenue property, and to build a new nave.

Jack Hines received the firefighter's horn in recognition of his three years service as chief, at the **West Bradford Fire Co.'s** annual dinner dance. Pete Supplee was named Firefighter of the Year.

Bill Mason, who chaired the borough's Bicentennial Committee in 1976, received the Distinguished Civic Award at the **Greater Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's** annual dinner dance. The special group award was presented to the Hilltoppers of Hopewell United Methodist Church, who had been presenting the Passion Play for 14 years.

## **Mystery about the shed in Marinelli Park almost completely solved**

Diane DiMartin appears to have solved much of the mystery about how the shed, which was installed in Marinelli Park in recent years, was used during the WW II era.

Diane's grandfather, Donato Menna, who built the house on West Pennsylvania Ave., was one of the volunteers who used the shed to spot enemy planes, based on information provided by her now-deceased mother, Julia Menna DiMartin.

The shed was used to store garden equipment and tools in the yard of 428 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, by at least three owners over several decades following WW II, according to Diane.

Now we have to figure out where the shed had been located when it was used for plane spotting. We know it wasn't the plane spotting shed on the Hannum farm on Uwchlan Avenue (Route 113) in Downingtown, because Ginny Pierce has informed us that a large section of that shed was constructed of wire screening.

And based on info provided by Sandy Snyder Brannan, there was a plane spotting site in Wallace Township during WW II. Sandy, who is the township Historic Commission's archivist, tells us that when she was a youngster, she accompanied her mother, a volunteer plane spotter, to the observation post in Glenmoore. We hope to have details on that spotting site in next week's edition.

In fact, we suspect there were more spotting posts in other parts of the Downingtown area, and we hope to hear from people who know anything about those sites.

Also, we still haven't determined who was guarding the Pennsylvania Railroad's Trestle bridge during WW I.

So, why are we making such a big deal out of the shed and Trestle Bridge mysteries? It's just one example of how much fun local history can be, especially if you approach it as a mystery story. And it demonstrates that everyone who lives through a major event, like WW II, becomes a part of local history because almost everyone in the Downingtown area had a role to play. That's why we think you'll enjoy reading further excerpts as these shed stories continue to unravel in the coming weeks.

By the way, you can access a copy of the program for the dedication of Marinelli Park in November 2004 at:

[http://webapps.chesco.org/heroes/marinelli\\_park/Marinelli%20Park%20DedicationRev1.pdf](http://webapps.chesco.org/heroes/marinelli_park/Marinelli%20Park%20DedicationRev1.pdf).

## **Minquas shakes into new firehouse**

Members of the Minquas Fire Co. recently moved from their historic firehouse on East Lancaster Avenue to their new quarters at 141 Wallace Avenue in the borough. The former firehouse, built in 1909, will soon become a Molly Maguires Restaurant. Check out [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMrxL3NaMRE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMrxL3NaMRE) to see how the firefighters did the Harlem Shake as they moved Station 46's equipment into the new facility.

## Another DHS grad wins an Oscar

Scott Vosbury, who graduated from DHS in 2000, recently won an Oscar for Best Visual Effects. Vosbury is a supervisor for Rhythm and Huse Studio of El Segundo, CA, which won an Academy Award for the special effects it developed for the movie *Life of Pi*.

Vosbury has done special effects work on: *X-Men: First Class*; *The A-Team*; *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*, and *The Golden Compass*.

Following his graduation from DHS, Vosbury earned a degree in film and animation at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Another DHS alumnus who was an Oscar winner was Mark Lasoff, Class of 1981, who was part of the team that won an Academy Award in 1988 for Visual Effects in the blockbuster movie *Titanic*.

Besides *Titanic*, Lasoff worked on other Academy Award-winning or nominated films, including *Apollo 13*, *The Hollow Man*, *True Lies* and *Total Recall*. He also received an Emmy as animation supervisor on NBC's 1992 Summer Olympics broadcast opening.

## It's the Lindley Hill Cemetery in East Caln



Robert Faller was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this photo, taken by Mike Dunn, as the Lindley Hill Cemetery, located in the woods, off Winding Way and near the Woodmont Apartments in East Caln. Established in 1851, the cemetery is one of the oldest African-American cemeteries in Chester County. There had been a modest, stone church on the property, but it burned down in the 1930s.

Currently, the cemetery is owned by the Bethel A.M.E Church, Prospect Avenue, Downingtown. The cemetery is casually maintained by caring neighbors.

Today, American flags mark the graves of Anderson, Berry, Brown, Clark, Cole, Hill, Hilton, Johnson, Miller, Molson, Smith, Solomon, Stephenson, Thompson, Thomas, Washington, and Wilson, who all fought in the Civil War. And Cole and Smith had served in the 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was one of the first official African-American units to be part of the Union Army during the Civil War. The movie *Glory*, with Denzel Washington, was based on the 54th Regiment, which was also known as the United States Colored Troops

Much of the available information about the cemetery was retrieved by Dan Lindley, the county's pre-eminent cemetery historian, who initially was intrigued by its name.

Lindley began his research on the cemetery in 2005, when he photographed grave sites with tombstones. (See [www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=2273722&CScnty=2255&CSsr=121](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=2273722&CScnty=2255&CSsr=121)) All surnames found on tombstones were researched in the Chester County Historical Society's clippings files, to identify other members of a family that may be buried in Lindley Hill, based on obituaries in the Daily Local News, and file cards from documents kept at Chester County's Office of Veteran's Affairs, or an accompanying article.

Other surnames were researched, based on the legend of the cemetery's geographical survey, [www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lhlegend.pdf](http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lhlegend.pdf), in 1992 by Robert Lowe.

Based on all that research, Lindley created a chart, which notes extensive information of persons buried in the cemetery. The chart can be accessed at [www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lindleyhill.pdf](http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lindleyhill.pdf).

If you have additional information about the cemetery, please contact Lindley via: [Danoh19344@hotmail.com](mailto:Danoh19344@hotmail.com).

## **Coming events & activities in Downingtown area**

### ***GEYA registration***

Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association offers recreational soccer programs for kids from Pre-K through 12th grade, with no residency restrictions. Late registration is open until March 15. Go to [www.geyasoccer.org](http://www.geyasoccer.org) to register.

GEYA also offers the HIGH 5 Soccer Program for young athletes (5-19) with special needs. The program is designed to improve the overall fitness, self-esteem and social skills of each child. Registration is always open for HIGH 5 Soccer and there is no cost to participants. You can register now for the spring season, which begins in April, at [www.geyasoccer.org](http://www.geyasoccer.org).

GEYA is always looking for high school students to help out as "buddies" for the HIGH 5 soccer program. This service can count towards a high school graduation project.

Contact Bill LaTorre at [BillL@geyasoccer.org](mailto:BillL@geyasoccer.org) for more information.

### ***DHS Alumni Assn. banquet***

The banquet will be held from 5-10 PM Saturday, April 20 at Whitford Country Club. The honored guest is Ron Ditzler, former choir director from 1969 to 1977. More information can be found on the website: [www.downingtowndalumni.org](http://www.downingtowndalumni.org).

## **DHS West Post Prom Party**

The 10th annual DHS West Post Prom Party will be held at the Lionville YMCA. All seniors are invited, and they don't have to go to the Prom to come to the party. This year's theme is "Passport to the World." The YMCA will be transformed into a night filled with fun and activities, including the indoor pool, using exciting places to tour throughout the world, while providing a safe and fun environment for all. Last year's event drew over 250 seniors and their guests.

The event is coordinated and funded by parents and members of the community. All funds that are raised will be used for the event and are utilized in securing activities, games, food and prizes.

Volunteers are needed for all committees, and parents of students in all grade levels are encouraged to get involved. Please do not wait until your child is a senior to get involved. Those who wish to help are invited to join us at 7 PM at meetings being held in Room 139 at DHS West on March 19, April 16 and May 14.

Please check out the P3 website: [www.dwestpostprom.com](http://www.dwestpostprom.com) for more details and to sign up as a volunteer.

## **Savings opportunities available at DARC**

*Discount Movie Tickets:* \$7.50, cash only. Honored at all Regal Entertainment Group locations (Regal Cinemas, United Artists Theatres, and Edwards Theatres). Valid for all show times. There may be a \$2.50 surcharge for the first 12 days of select films or a \$2.50 surcharge for IMAX Giant Screen Theatres.

For more info/complete price list on these opportunities and upcoming programs, go to the DARC website [www.darcinfo.com](http://www.darcinfo.com), or call 610-269-9260, or stop by the DARC Office (8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Monday thru Friday), 114 Bell Tavern Road Downingtown.

## **Banquet Room for Rent**

The Downingtown (Williamson) Masonic Lodge, a non-profit organization located at 210 Manor Ave. has a Banquet Room for rent. The area is perfect for parties of up to 80 people and has a full kitchen. Rental fees are very reasonable. Call 610-269-3555 for more information.

## **Joseph's People, Downingtown Chapter**

An ecumenical support mission to help un/underemployed people; run entirely by volunteers. We have been at St. Joseph's since 1995. Meets 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tues. of the month. All are welcome. Visit web page, [www.josephspeople.org](http://www.josephspeople.org) or just come to a meeting at St. Joseph's Parish Meeting Room behind the school, 460 Manor Ave., Downingtown. Call 610 873-7117. Leave Message. Leader: Cheryl Spaulding, Email: [JPCheryl@verizon.net](mailto:JPCheryl@verizon.net).

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**Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to make a comment, add your email address to the sign-up box on the home page of our website. We won't share or sell any email addresses. Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, send an email to:**

**[Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org).**