



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

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Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the building, shown above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Local news items from 68 years ago

Noted below are news items about the Downingtown area, which were originally published in local newspapers in October 1946.

Committee chairmen of the **Mothers Club of the East Ward School**, Downingtown, were: Mrs. Thomas Brookover, hostess; Mrs. Victor Amway and Mrs. Lloyd Trego, hospitality; Mrs. Thomas Lee, publicity; Mrs. John Miller, program; and Mrs. Tyler Egolf, membership.

Kahler's Pharmacy in Marshallton announced to farmers that it carried veterinary supplies such as Naylor's teat dilators, calves cordial, milking tubes and udder balm.

Officers of the choir at **St. Paul's Reformed (UCC) Church**, Lionville, were Mrs. George Harting, director; Mrs. James Messner, librarian; Mrs. William Whitely, president; Mrs. William Peterman, vice president; Mrs. Harry Dewees, secretary; and Everett Wilson, treasurer.

Members of the **Upper Uwchlan Home and School League** elected the following officers: Mrs. Fred Moore, president; Stephen Moore, vice president; Lena Frame, secretary; Mrs. Elsie Finger, treasurer; and Mrs. Guy Mercer, pianist.

Elected as officers of **Girl Scout Troop 55, Marshallton**, were Florence Johnson, president; Mary Wickersham, vice president; and Doris McCarty, secretary/treasurer.

Students from **Wallace Township** enrolled at Downingtown Junior-Senior High School included: Joanne Barclay, Josephine Flynn, Marjorie Good, Merle, Harold and Charlotte Hannum, William and Esther Irely, Stanley Russell, Ronald Souden, Thomas and Virginia Bare, Henry Beam, Netha Beumer, William Chalfant, Peter Edgar, John Good, Ray Griffith, Eleanor Keiser, Robert and Paul Ray, Betty, John and Ruth Sensenig, Charles Trego, Robert Adams, Rogers Bender, Harry Evans, Loretta Kaempfer, Dorothy Ortlip, James Hague, Betty Simmers, Janice Shingle, Joseph Young, Shirley Gabriel, John and Harry Muller, and Ray Guzman.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Clinton Anderson had to stay in Washington and continue working on a nationwide meat shortage, and was unable to come to Downingtown's Alert fire hall to address 300 local farmers on conservation.

Players on the Downingtown team, which won the **Chester County Baseball League** championship, were honored at a dinner at Palumbo's Restaurant in Philadelphia. The dinner was sponsored by Morris Steifel, Sam and Chester Charles, Bill Mahood, Arthur Petrella, Charles Grimes, Dr. George Bousum, Ernie Rittenhouse, Robert McCaughey, Nick Zaferes and Anthony DiLuigi.

The sixth annual banquet and dance was held at the Alert fire hall for the 400 employees of the **Collins-Aikman Co.**, Bondsville. Members of the company's cooperative council who planned the affair were Clarence Spece, Fred Simpson, Mary Harple, Esther Frame, Russell Gilkin, Isabell Hall, Frank Flynn, Robert Rock and Clara Shirley.

Foxley Farms, located on the south side of Route 30, just west of Downingtown in Caln, was sold to Paul Nelms. The 150-acre property, which included a stone mansion, a caretaker's house, a garage with a chauffer's quarters and a lake, had been owned by the Richard Fox family for several generations. Nelms said he planned to make the farm an Aberdeen Angus cattle breeding operation. The property had been listed for \$50,000.

Five girls from **Brownie Troop 83**, Downingtown, who became members of Girl Scout Troop 94 in a fly-up ceremony at Kerr Park were: Fay Bousum, Betty Hayes, Dorothy Kipp, Marlene Gordon and Patricia Brown.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 52, Marshallton**, who received badges during a Court of Awards, were Donald and Jimmy Liney, Raymond Feuerbaum, and Freddy Martin. And Robert Bunting was the first member of the troop to earn the Silver Star rank.

Pomanto's Restaurant, 143 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, was offering various types of pasta and seafood prepared by "famous chef" Dolly Trieste.

Coach Don White's **DHS football squad** edged Eddystone 7-6, as 190-pound fullback Dick Dague bulled his way into the end zone in the fourth quarter. However, the Whippets lost its first game of the season, by a 6-2 score, in a defensive struggle against Phoenixville, the following week. The Papertowners got back in the win column with a 14-0 victory over West Chester, as Tom DiOttavio scored on a 35-yard reverse, and Dick Dague intercepted a pass and ran 65 yards for another TD. Also, Downingtown racked up a 21-13 win over Bridgeport, as Dague scored all the points (3 TDs and 3 extra points) for the Blue and Gold.

Schnure ends iconic career as girls' basketball coach

When Bob Schnure applied to be the head girls' basketball coach at DHS for the first time, after serving as Jean Schiffer's assistant for three seasons, he didn't get the job. Ray DiSerafino, the principal at the time, believed that the coach should be a woman. So, Schnure hung in there as the jayvee coach for the 1977-78 season. And after the female head coach lasted only one year, Schnure finally got the varsity coaching job. Then, in his first game as head coach, the Whippets got clobbered 72-13, by Unionville.

Not exactly an auspicious beginning for a guy who would become an icon among Pennsylvania high school girls' basketball coaches.

Despite that initial hiccup, however, the Downingtown girls' teams (including DHS East for the past 10 season) went on to win 769 games, with Schnure at the helm, before he announced his retirement from coaching last week. And many of those victories were huge, including 20 Ches-Mont League or division championships, 11 District I crowns and five state titles in eight trips to Hershey.

Yes, his team was nationally ranked for several years and, for a while, the Lady Whippets' roster included two girls—Tina Nicholson (Penn State) and Tina Suber (Virginia)—who became college All-Americans and were selected in the WNBA's first draft. But Schnure seemed to get just as much pleasure from coaching girls who weren't attracting recruiters from Division I colleges.

And this wasn't Schnure's first retirement. He bowed out of the History Department at DHS West (where his wife, Fran Baliotti, also retired, had been his boss) several years ago.

We don't know what's next on Schnure's to-do list. But since he was renowned for thoroughly preparing his teams for every opponent, we suspect he's working hard on a plan for his next challenge.

Clip joint will be open on Sunday

The Historical Society's Clip Joint will be open from 1-4 PM on Sunday, March 2, when scads of volunteers will walk across our freshly shoveled walk so they can participate in our monthly newspaper clipping and pasting session at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available in the lot at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. You're welcome to arrive and leave at your leisure.

It's at 313 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown



Gregg Nelms is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the location of the building in the photo above as 313 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. For more info on that house, see: www.zillow.com/homedetails/313-W-Lancaster-Ave-Downingtown-PA-19335/9141086_zpid/.

Your friends and family can be Hist-O-Gram subscribers

Tired of forwarding copies of each week's Hist-O-Gram to friends and family? If you want any of them to become a subscriber to our FREE Hist-O-Grams, tell them to go to our website: www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org, and type their email address into the sign-up box on the home page. We won't share or sell any email addresses. Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, contact us at: Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org. By the way, you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html.

Recollections of how the school district dealt with past snow problems

Although most people are tired of the stuff, snow has been a big part of our conversations recently. And since we focus on local history, here are some recollections of how some folks dealt with snow in the past, and how current technology probably would have mitigated some of the problems

- Local school kids and their parents tuned into WCOJ, the radio station that carried news about school closings due to heavy snowfalls. To avoid pranksters who attempted to mimic a school district administrator who called the station and claimed there was no school that day, WCHE assigned a code word to each school district. "Milltown" was the code word for the Downingtown School District. Somehow, several DHS students discovered the code word in the early 1960s, and one of them used it successfully, when he notified WCHE in an authoritative tone of voice, that there would be no school that day. Apparently, it worked just once, and the kid who made the call wasn't caught. Obviously, this was long before there was "Caller ID."
- Back in the 1970s, Dr. Charles Micken was superintendent of the Downingtown School District. And although Micken always received updates on projected, big snow storms, he was the kind of guy who wanted to make sure the forecasts were accurate. So, he would get up at some ungodly hour and drive around the Downingtown-Exton area to personally determine if the road conditions would be a problem for car and school bus drivers, following a heavy snowfall. According to a school board member back then, Micken discovered, the hard way, that the roads were very slippery when he drove his car into a ditch in a rural part of the school district. We don't know how Micken got home that morning, but you can bet he didn't use a cell phone to call someone to come and pick him up.

Paid ads for businesses

Vance Usher, Registered Representative

Providing a courtesy financial advisory service whose objective is to create a portfolio of:

- 1) Investment Grade Bonds - To achieve preservation of principal, and a stream of monthly income, to meet your budgeted living expenses.
- 2) Equities - To achieve market growth, and increase financial wealth, by exceeding the rate of inflation. Contact: vance_usher@netzero.com, 610-329-1056, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

Free ads for Non-Profits

Food Fight

The Thorndale Rotary Club has challenged the Coatesville Rotary Club to a food fight. The clubs are competing to collect the most non-perishable food goods through March 1. All donations can be delivered to the West Bradford Township Building, 1385 Campus Drive, during normal business hours, 7 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

All items collected will be delivered to the Chester County Food Bank, to benefit families in need throughout our local communities.

The Cupboard's food supply runs low every March. Your generosity will help feed hundreds of hungry families during this critical time of year.

These high-priority items that are always in short supply: canned tuna, macaroni and cheese, canned pasta, canned beef stew, chili and soups, canned fruits & vegetables, and cold and hot breakfast cereals. Please consider adding an extra item or two to your weekly shopping list.

Book Sale & Library Programs

The Downingtown Library's *Spring Book Sale* will be held from 6-7:30 PM Friday, March 7, and from 9 AM to 4 PM Saturday, March 8. Book donations still being accepted until the sale begins.

Creating a Pollinator Garden: 6:30 PM Tuesday, March 1--Learn how to create a garden that attracts birds, butterflies and bees.

Holistic Weight Loss: 6:30 PM Monday, March 10--Learn healthy ways to make lifestyle changes to help keep weight off.

Meditation for Creativity: 6:30 PM Monday, April 28--Program focuses on drawing inspiration from meditation.

For more info on any of these activities, call the library at 610-269-2741.

Lecture series

The East Brandywine Township Historical Commission will present a lecture on the Bondsville Mill on March 30. It's part of a series of lectures, plus a discussion, on Sundays, at 3:30 PM, at the township building on Route 322, Guthriesville. The third lecture, on East Brandywine Baptist Church, will be held at the church on April 27.

Brochure on DARC classes & activities

You can gain access to the latest DARC brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: www.darcinfo.com. For more info, call 610-269-9260, or stop by the DARC Office (8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Monday thru Friday), 114 Bell Tavern Road Downingtown.

Downingtown Farmers' Market

The Downingtown Farmers' Market will be open over the winter months on the following Thursdays: March 6 and 20, and April 3 and 17, at the Williamson Masonic Hall; 210 Manor Ave., Downingtown, from 4 - 6 PM. All of the farmers and food artisans at the market must grow, raise or make what they sell – meriting its classification as a "producer only" market. Consistent with the market's social mission, food drives will be held periodically to benefit the Lord's Pantry and other organizations in need of food donations. Additionally, market space will be made available to non-profit groups if their mission is similar to that of the market.

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 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