



Downingtown Area Historical Society

Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

Vol. 5, No. 12

March 20, 2014

Where and What Is This?



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

Interesting local news 52 year ago

The following news items were originally published by local newspapers in the early part of April 1962.

South Philadelphia's **Bobby Rydell**, who recorded 34 Top 40 hits in the 1960s, appeared at the Exton Roller Rink.

Downingtown Borough Council unanimously appointed the following men to the **Planning Commission**: Fred Pollock, Lewis Snyder, Elmer Hemberger, Robert Mitman and Vincent DiEuliis. The old Planning Commission had resigned en masse in January, following the appointment of Leon Gabel to replace George Snyder on Borough Council. Warren Strawsnyder, chairman at the time, claimed that "since pressure was brought to bear about Gabel's appointment, we felt the time to get out was now. Since Council is apparently susceptible to

pressure, we thought it better to resign now, rather than in the middle of some dispute over planning.”

Typing Progress certificates were awarded, for making no more than five errors while typing 30-39 words per minute in a 10 minute test, to these DHS students: James Pillagalli, Stephen Wilson, Nancy Mercer, Alvin Wells, Kathy Forbes and Elizabeth Kelly.,

Susan Patrizio, won the **Spelling Bee** involving fourth, fifth and sixth graders at Beaver Creek and East Ward Schools. Jack Leonard was the runner-up.

The following committee appointments were made at **Central Presbyterian Church**: Christian Education—George Nordblom, Edith Stauffer, Charles Seibert and Adelaide Moore; and Stewardship and Promotion—Elton Weikel, Edward Towson, and John Pannebaker.

W. I. Pollock and Reber Horne, of the Downingtown School Board, recommended that **hot lunches** should be prepared at Beaver Creek School and transported to Marshallton and East Ward Schools. The estimated cost of equipment needed at those two schools—not counting more trays, silver, staff and a truck to transport the food—was \$2,612.

The following infants were baptized at **St. Joseph Catholic Church**: Joseph Francis Cipollini, Darin Michael DiLuigi, Michael Saello, Joseph Anthony Conahan, Karl Lester Troupe, Laurie Jean Zinn, Theresa Lynn Marcocci, Toni Ann Graveno and Cheryl Lynn Ann Stanford.

Members of the **DHS yearbook** staff who attended a conference at Eastern Baptist College were Katherine Kahler, Nancy Heugh and Patricia Dague.

Glenmoore **Cub Scouts** who visited the Cloisters in Ephrata included David Funk, David Taylor, Gregory Hannum, John Pizii, Ray Chilcote, Pat Corry, Harold Earnshaw and Louis Waldmann.

Students from the Junior-Senior High School, whose exhibits were accepted for the Delaware Valley Regional **Science Fair** at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, were Robert Bruton, a ninth grader, and Harry Simms, a sophomore.

Newly elected officers of the Afternoon Club of **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Mrs. Charles Barron, president; Mrs. Mary Getman, vice president; Mrs. Florence McGuckin, secretary; and Mrs. John Haas, treasurer.

Mrs. Mark Bareford was elected president of the **Downingtown Junior Woman’s Club**. Other officers were Mrs. Frederick Seibert, first vice president; Theresa Sciarretta, second vice president; Mrs. Edward Foreman, recording secretary; Mrs. Irving Geschwindt, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Ray Kipp, treasurer.

Officers of the **Chester County Hospital Auxiliary’s** Downingtown branch were Mrs. Allen Powell, president; Mrs. Ralph Ralston, vice president; Mrs. Allison Hallowell, recording secretary; Mrs. Edwin Johnson, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Weldon Bicking, treasurer.

Glenmoore **Girl Scouts** from Intermediate Troop 314, who brought a doll to the Doll Derby in Philadelphia, were Carol Baker, Ann Chalfant, Edith deRussy, Nancy Gerbron, Susan Hadfield, Debbie Greenfield, Jean Reeve, Karen Slater, Linda and Bertha Bentley, Maria Louise Pease and Betty Saathoff.

Clarence Wilkerson won the 880 and one-mile races, and Bill Pollock came in first in the 180 low hurdles, as the **DHS track team** opened its season with a victory over O.J. Roberts.

Downingtown **Cub Scouts** from Pack 2 who earned awards were Bob Ifert, Dan Massimini, David Hemberger, Gary Burkey, Mike Bilka, Jimmy Fennelly and Michael Norris.

First car in Downingtown was steam-powered

Joseph Hoopes was the first Downingtown resident to buy and drive a car, in September 1901. But Hoopes soon switched from steam to a gasoline-powered motor, according to the August 30, 1929 edition of the *Daily Local News*. And that same year, Dr. Edward Kerr, whom the borough park was named after, bought an Oldsmobile.

Back in 1901, local drivers usually had their vehicles serviced at the Downingtown Garage and Repair Co., located on Armor Alley, a connection between East Lancaster Ave. and Mill Alley, until it was closed as part of the Downing Center Urban Renewal project in the 1970s. Now the Armor Alley Walkway is located next to the Downingtown Country Gifts store.

The Downingtown Garage and Repair Co., evolved in 1906 into the Downingtown Motor Co., located at 206 E. Lancaster Ave. In 1925, E. Hallan Usher established the Brandywine Nash Motor Co. there, and nine years later, he started operating an Oldsmobile franchise at the location, according to Jane Davidson's *A History of Downingtown*. Today, Colonial Electric Supply Co. is located at the site.

Dr. Bill King recalls his early life in the Downingtown area

DHS grad Bill King stopped practicing dentistry 15 years ago, and has settled down in a retirement community in northern Arkansas. But according to an email Bill recently sent us, he was a peripatetic soul in his youth.

Bill, his brother, Emerson, and their Mom moved from Delaware County in 1944 to an 86-acre farm at the intersection of Route 322 and Springton and Little Washington Roads in West Brandywine. Although it wasn't a working farm at that time, the property included a barn and an old stone house. The monthly rent for the house was \$86 per month, and they heated the house with wood cut in the woods along Springton Road.

The house, where the Kings lived two years, was pictured in the "What and Where Is This?" photo in the Dec. 26, 2013 Hist-O-Gram:

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/Dec%2026%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf).

"At the time we lived there, we were on a 22-party line phone service with a crank phone" recalls Bill. And around 4 AM every morning, he would be awakened by the 30-minute-long cycle of wake-up calls to the homes of many women in the area, who worked at the Sun Ship yard in Chester, Delaware County.

But being awakened at 4 AM by a ringing phone wasn't so bad in the summer of 1945, says Bill, because he was employed then by the Susquehanna Pipeline Co., and the start of his work day began at 5 AM. He got \$35 a week for tramping 18 miles through the countryside from Malvern to Icedale and from Birdsboro to Icedale, for three days each over a six-day period, in search of pipeline leaks.

Although Bill had been the Class of 1946's secretary, he joined the Navy several months before he was slated to graduate in June. However, he passed the GED test while in the Navy, and returned to Downingtown to pick up his diploma at the 1947 commencement.

"I feel that, for all my own teen problems of the time that the people of DHS were very generous in their attitude to us. That's why Downingtown is always a fond memory for me."

After he completed several hitches in the Navy, Bill graduated from Tennessee University's College of Dentistry in 1957, and practiced dentistry, primarily in the South, until he retired at age 70.

No one guessed What and Where This Is



We suspect that many of our subscribers believe someone always correctly guesses the “What and Where” mystery photo immediately after each week’s Hist-O-Gram is released. Well, that myth has been dispelled once again, because no one provided the correct info about the house in the photo above, which was taken by Mike Dunn. Even more surprising, it’s a historic site, which has been written about in an earlier Hist-O-Gram. We’ll run it again, sometime.

Info on Bonnie MacDougal Kistler, DHS Hall of Fame inductee

We will provide excerpts in this and subsequent Hist-O-Grams, on the DHS graduates who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame, recently established by the Downingtown Area School District and the Downingtown Area High School Alumni Association. The information is based on data noted on the nominations forms submitted to the selection committee.

The honorees will be inducted at the Alumni Association’s 130th annual banquet at St. Anthony’s Lodge, 259 W. Church St., Downingtown, on Saturday evening, April 26. More information about the banquet can be provided by calling Caryn Menna at (610) 883-3917. Tickets can be purchased via

www.downingtowndistrict.org/Documents/DAHSAA_BanquetReservation%202014.pdf.

Noted below are details on Bonnie MacDougal Kistler, Class of 1971, Achievement in Business and Community Service.

According to the nomination form, submitted by Donna Kneisly, Ms. Kistler:

- Received her undergraduate degree from Bryn Mawr College, *magna cum laude* with honors in English literature, and her law degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She spent the next 20 years practicing with major law firms in Anchorage, Alaska, Little Rock, Arkansas; and then back to Philadelphia.

- Has written or co-authored four novels—*Angle of Impact*, *Breach of Trust*, *Out of Order*, *Common Pleas* and *Natural Suspect*—which used her experiences in complex civil and criminal cases involving issues such as securities fraud, product liability and trademark infringement.

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Free ads for Non-Profits

Library programs

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.

Chicken Cordon Bleu dinner

The Marshallton United Methodist Church will host a Chicken Cordon Bleu dinner on Saturday, March 22. Seating is continuous from 4:30 until 6 PM. Menu includes Chicken Cordon Bleu, mashed potatoes, green beans, cole slaw, apple sauce, rolls, dessert and beverage. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child (aged 5 to 12 years). Eat-In or Take-Out. The church is located at 1282 West Strasburg Road, West Chester, PA. Contact the church office at [\(610\) 696-5247](tel:6106965247) or via office@marshalltonchurch.org with any questions.

Lecture series

The East Brandywine Township Historical Commission will present a lecture on the Bondsville Mill at 3:30 PM Sunday, March 30 at the township building on Route 322, Guthriesville. The third lecture, about the history of East Brandywine Baptist Church, will be held at the church at 3:30 PM on Sunday, April 27.

Alert Fire Co. golf outing

The Alert Fire Co. will hold a golf outing on Monday, May 5, at the Downingtown Country Club. Entry fee for each golfer is \$100, which includes greens fee, cart, lunch, beverages on the course, awards dinner and five competitions. See www.alertgolfouting.org for registration and contest details.

Soccer program for players with special needs

The Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association's High 5 soccer program will be held at Fellowship Fields, 275 Fellowship Road, Chester Springs, from 3-4 PM on Saturdays, beginning on April 12. The free program is for players, between 5 and 19 years of age, who have special needs. For more info, go to: www.geyasoccer.org.

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 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