



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 5, No. 13

March 27, 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@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

More local news originally published 52 years ago

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

The **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** opposed establishment of a wage tax to create another revenue source for the Downingtown School System. The Chamber claimed the new tax would stifle industries from moving into the area.

W. Perry Tyson, Class of 1912, received the Distinguished Service Award at the **DHS Alumni Association** banquet, which was attended by 325 persons. DHS seniors Lynn Barron and Robert Shank received awards for outstanding leadership and scholarship. New Alumni Association officers were William Mitman, president; Joseph Travaglini, first vice president; and George Dowlin, second vice president. Serving for another term were Elma Miller, financial secretary, and Margaret Stern, recording secretary. Members of the Distinguished Service Award committee were Hazel Miller, Stella Balentine, Gladys Brookover, Joseph Miller, Charles Ax and Richard Willard. And the banquet committee was comprised of Louise Wilmot, Roland Brinton, James Burns, Diane Coy, Ruth Brookover and Barbara Skiles.

Re-elected to lead the Ladies Philathea Sunshine Bible Class at **East Brandywine Baptist Church** were: Grace Zynn, president; Alice Esworthy, vice president; Jean Drayton, treasurer; and Elizabeth Heisey, secretary. And children dedicated by Rev. Harry Sink were Stephany and Stanley Lee Leszkowicz, Susan Elizabeth Brown, Brenda Lee Roberts and Scott Canale.

Mrs. Theodore Rogers was elected president of the **Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan**. Other officers, installed by retiring president Mrs. Frederick Heuer, were Mrs. G. L. Hughes, first vice president; Dr. Anna Biddle, second vice president; Grace Gordon, recording secretary; Jeanette Stiteler, corresponding secretary; and Helen Biddle, treasurer.

Pupils from **East Brandywine-Wallace School**, who participated in a radio program about Thomas Buchanan Read on WCOJ, were Carl Shrader, Linda Kemp, Diane Howe, Larry Dilworth, James Herrington, Bundy Von Hacht, Karen Stanford, Denny Davidson, Tim Harriman and Nancy Gerbron. Also, elected to lead the school's PTA were William Wilson, Mrs. Edwin Johnson, secretary; Gerald Whiteman, vice president; and Shirley Fetters, treasurer.

Split-level houses, on a minimum of 1/4 acre landscaped lots, in the **Marshallton Farms** development on Strasburg Road were being offered at \$14,990. The houses included three bedrooms, a finished recreation room, and hot water baseboard heat.

Leaders elected at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Upper Uwchlan, were Evans Downing, president; Karl Simmers, vice president; Raymond Barry, general secretary; Helen Simmers, corresponding secretary; Carolyn Supplee, treasurer; Rev. William Stephens, pastor-councilor; Ruth Downing, publicity; Hilda Hertzler, missionary superintendent; Charles Popjoy, audio-visual superintendent; Richard Wheatley, social action superintendent; and Edgar Lockart, music superintendent. And members of the newly formed orchestra at Windsor included William Bath, director, Jack Trego, Ralph Emery, Linda Peterson, Barbara and Dale Moore, Frances and Jack Williamson, David Rodgers and Warren Emery.

An investigation by the **Downingtown Joint High School Board's** Curriculum Committee determined that many of the Junior-Senior High School students surveyed weren't participating in extra-curricular programs, primarily because of a "lack of interest" by students as well as by faculty sponsors. The board also tentatively adopted a \$942,269 budget for the 1962-63 school year, which was \$113,585 higher than the budget for the current school year. One of the reasons for the hike was a new salary schedule for teachers, whereby more than half of the 71 faculty members would earn at least \$6,600. "We've finally gotten our salary standards to a respectable scale," said George Nixdorf, budget committee chairman. The high school's enrollment was projected to reach 586, and the junior high's was expected to be 734, in the 1962-63 school term.

Mrs. H. LaRue Frain was elected president of the **Downingtown Woman's Club**. Also elected to two-year terms were Mrs. Fred Wooten, first vice president; Mrs. Arthur Anderson, second vice president; Mrs. Gilbert Hamm, recording secretary; Mrs. Morris Jackson, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. W. I. Pollock, treasurer.

Downingtown National Bank officials expected some 2,000 persons to come to the open house at its remodeled headquarters at Center Square in the borough. When it was established in 1861, the bank was opened at the Odd Fellows Hall on West Lancaster Avenue. A year later, it was moved to East Lancaster Avenue, across from St. James Episcopal Church. The bank (now the main branch) was moved to center Square in April 1901. The bank's officers in 1962 were Joseph Miller, president; Richard Warren, executive vice president; Jay Lammey, cashier; and Raymond Schollenberger and Mary Thompson, assistant cashiers.

Barbara Flinn, Barbara Rothas, Katherine Kahler and Sharon Donaghy, members of the **DHS student newspaper**, *The Blue and Gold*, participated in the Temple University Press

Tournament. And DHS students Jill King, Joan Klase and Faye McBride attended a conference at Penn State's College of Home Economics.

The eight infants baptized by Rev. Howard Adams at **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Sandra Lynn Bareford, Richard Guy and Robert Carl Hipple, David James Lary, Gregg Scott Nelms, Tracy Lee Stum and Patricia Ann Thomas.

Although Gordie Flowers got a first in the 100-yard dash, Jeff Smith won the 440, and Mark Jones was the top pole vaulter, the **DHS track team** lost to Boyertown, 82 1/3 to 34 2/3.

However, the **Whippet baseball team** beat West Chester 6-5 in a thriller, when pinch hitter Ellis Brown rapped a single to bring Cliff Jackson home in the final inning.

Steve DiLuigi tells about his “Pop-Pop” and founding of St. Anthony’s Lodge

Steve DiLuigi sent us this interesting biography of his grandfather, Antonio DiLuigi, who was one of the founders of the *Societa D.M.S. Saint Antonio Di Padova*, which we know as St. Anthony's Lodge in Downingtown.

Antonio, the son of Domenico DiLuigi and Grazia Capolli, was born in January 1892 in Campli, Province of Teramo, Abruzzo, Italy. When not in school, he spent his early years working with his parents and siblings on the family farm and gristmill in Compli. On January 14, 1909, at the age of 16, he arrived at Ellis Island, New York, along with his parents, his brother and two sisters. Traveling by train, they arrived in Downingtown and settled in with relatives in the “Johnsontown” section of the borough. With the help of other Italian immigrants, his father found work on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Antonio went to work at the Davey Paper Co. in town. Hard working and ambitious, he rose quickly through the ranks and was promoted to mill superintendent, overseeing operations at Davy’s mill, in Downingtown and in Jersey City, N.J.

In 1929, at the age of 37, he suffered a horrific accident at the Jersey City plant. While helping to repair a machine, his sleeve caught in the rollers, mangling his lower right arm, which required an amputation above the elbow. He returned to work in a short time and continued as superintendent at Davey until he retired.

Early in the 20th Century, America’s population, as immigrants from all over Europe settled together in small communities. With language barriers and prejudice rampant, they were totally dependent on one another for support. It was that way in Johnsontown. Intelligent and well respected throughout the community, Antonio was instrumental in helping many Italian families immigrate and settle in Downingtown. He provided lodging, secured employment opportunities and even lent financial support to many. One of the first and few to own a car, he provided transportation for many in times of need.

Around 1916, a small group of men began discussing a means of support that would benefit the families in their Johnsontown neighborhood in times of need. Hosting meetings in his home on Bradford Avenue, Antonio was instrumental in laying the foundation of a grass roots organization, St. Anthony’s Lodge. As their numbers grew, they rented space for their meetings uptown in a building at the corner of Stuart and Lancaster Avenues, which still stands today. And in November 1919, the founders were granted a charter from the State of Pennsylvania for “The Societa D.M.S. Saint Antonio DiPadova”.

Antonio was named the first president, and held the title for about 12 years. In 1927, St. Anthony’s leaders purchased a half-double house at 231 Church Street, which became their first official clubhouse. Two years later, St. Anthony’s Lodge was constructed on the lot at 259

Church Street. Antonio drew up the plans for the building and oversaw its construction. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Antonio's younger brother, Guido "Willy" DiLuigi, also a founder of St. Anthony's, hosted the first "Frog Party" in the back yard of his home, at 288 Church Street.

In 1947, Antonio's daughter, Filomenia "Mena" Williams, helped organize and was named the first president of The Ladies Auxiliary of Saint Anthony's. Also following in his father's footsteps, Antonio's youngest son, "Buddy," went on to be president of the Lodge for many years. Antonio DiLuigi died at the age of 63, in 1956.

Information on Curt Schroder, DHS Hall of Fame inductee

This is another article on a DHS graduate who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame, which was 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.downingtownalumni.org/Documents/DAHSAA_BanquetReservation%202014.pdf.

Noted below are details on Curt Schroder, Class of 1979, Achievement in Politics and Government. According to the nomination form, submitted by State Rep. Becky Corbin, Schroder's accomplishments included:

- Served nine terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and for two years as Chester County's Prothonotary. While a state legislator, Curt led the fight to lower medical malpractice insurance, sponsored legislation that ensures access to life-saving trauma care, and championed the law requiring insurers to allow a 48-hour hospital stay after a delivery for mothers and newborns.
- Played a vital role in the Borough of Downingtown's revitalizations efforts, such as obtaining a \$1.7 million grant for the demolition and redevelopment of the O'Brien property.
- Named, by the Exton Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Advocate of the Year in 2010 and the Sen. Robert Thompson Public Service Award in 2007. Also named: Matthew Ryan Legislator of the Year by the Chester County Chamber Foundation in 2004, Legislator of the Year by the TriCounty Chamber of Commerce in 2002, and Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce in 1998.

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By the way, you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at:

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

It was the nightclub at the Downingtown Motor Inn



Carol Nelms is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first of many people who correctly identified the site in the photo above as the Downingtown Motor Inn's nightclub. The Motor Inn was located on Route 30, East Caln, on the current site of the Brandywine Square shopping Center. We believe the singer in the photo is Robert Goulet, one of the popular entertainers who appeared there. Others included: Phyllis Diller, Vic Damone, Billy Eckstine, Henny Youngman, Jackie Mason and Al Martino.

The Downingtown Motor Inn, opened in November 1961, was a 100-acre resort complex. It included convention and banquet facilities that could accommodate as many as 2,500 guests, two swimming pools, and the 1896 Restaurant and cocktail lounge. Its owners were Samuel Tabas, founder; Charles Tabas, chairman; and Daniel Tabas, president. After an 18-hole golf course was built, it was known as the Downingtown Inn and Golf Club. In 1983, the Tabas family sold its holdings in the Inn to the Ramada Corp. in exchange for stock. The Inn was demolished in 1994, and a year later the Brandywine Square shopping center was opened on the site.

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

Program on Watergate

The Old Caln Historical Society will host a program on Watergate, presented by Ross Kershey, former Coatesville Area High School history teacher, on Sunday, April 6, at the Caln Township

Building, on Municipal Drive in Thorndale. The free program, which open to the public, will begin at 2 PM. Please use the rear entrance.

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.

Lecture on Bondsville Mill

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.

Kentucky Derby Nite at the Races

The Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Committee, sponsors of the Halloween and Christmas parades, will have a "Kentucky Derby Nite at the Races" on Saturday, May 3 at St. Anthony's Lodge, 259 Church St., Downingtown. Doors will open at 5:30 PM. Buffet begins at 6 PM. Horse racing will begin immediately following the actual Kentucky Derby. For more details, see: www.dtownchristmas.com.

Soccer 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 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: 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