



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

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

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

*The past is never done. It is not even past-William Faulkner*

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## Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to: [Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

## It's a scene in the Downingtown Diner in "The Blob"



Trauti Stevens is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo (provided by Phil Dague) as a scene in the Downingtown Diner in the 1958 film classic, "The Blob." And if you check out the diner's wall in the background, you can see a poster for "St. Joseph's Church Festival." Back in the summer of 1957, when this film was made, did St. Joe's in Downingtown have a festival?

One of the local teenagers who watched the filming of the diner scene in Downingtown was Bob Stevens, a teenager who lived around the corner from the diner at that time. "With all of the activity taking place at the corner of Lancaster and Downing, I spent most nights watching a movie being made. What excitement in our small town.

"At one point, an announcement was made that anyone who wished to be in the movie, would need to sign a paper. I jumped at the idea. They explained that we would be in a street scene and running down Lancaster Ave. I wish I still had a copy of the letter, but I do not recall if we received a copy of it. I must admit that I have never seen myself in any of the scenes, so I am sure that scene was on the cutting room floor."

Stevens also noted that an Alert Fire Co. fire truck was in the movie and the fire chief, Earl Stern, was to say a few lines in the movie. Stern tried many times, but could not get the lines out

correctly. So, claims Stevens, he was replaced by Rev. Tom Ogden, pastor of the Downingtown Methodist Church at the time.

## Rev. Tom Ogden as Fire Chief in “The Blob”



Rev. Tom Ogden, right, pastor of Downingtown Methodist Church, in a scene as the Fire Chief of the Downingtown Fire Department in “The Blob.” That’s Steve McQueen on the left. Photo provided by Larry Meredith.

## More info about “The Blob”

Basically, the movie is about a mysterious creature from another planet, resembling a giant blob of jelly, which lands on earth. The people of a nearby small town refuse to listen to some teenagers who have witnessed the blob's destructive power. In the meantime, the blob just keeps on getting bigger.

Shown in the photo above, Steve McQueen (playing in his first starring role) and his girlfriend, plus a waitress and the diner owner are trapped in the diner. And the Blob—now a ginormous red mass from the people it already consumed—was about to engulf the diner. However, the film’s main characters sneaked down into the diner’s cellar so they couldn’t be harmed.

Meanwhile, after Steve’s teenage friends retrieve 20 fire extinguishers from the nearby high school (actually the old Spring City HS), they use the fire extinguishers to freeze the Blob before it is ultimately flown to the Artic in an Air Force cargo plane.

As many of you know, Phoenixville’s annual Blobfest has capitalized on the film’s “running out” scene connection from the Colonial Theatre. However, critical parts of the campy horror movie were filmed in Downingtown.

## Some facts about “The Blob”

- McQueen once said of his role: "The main acting challenge in this one consisted of running around bug-eyed and shouting, 'Hey, everybody, look out for the Blob!' "

- Much of the movie was filmed at Director Irvin Yeaworth's Good News Productions studio in Chester Springs. The film company had previously had limited its efforts to educational, inspirational and religious movies. The six-week shooting schedule called for the cast and crew to work up to 20 hours a day, six days a week.
- The film only cost less than \$200,000 to produce, but it grossed \$4 million. McQueen was only paid \$3,000; he turned down a 10% of the profits option because he didn't think the movie would make any money.
- The film's title song, entitled "Beware of The Blob," was written by Burt Bacharach and Mack David, and became a nationwide hit.
- The Blob was made of silicone, with increasing amounts of red vegetable dye added as it "absorbed" people.

## **A royal meal served at the Beaver Creek Tavern**

Here's another restaurant write-up by Karen and Ron Meacham, who won the grand prize—meals at 12 Downingtown area restaurants—in the "A Taste of Chester County," the first annual restaurant raffle, conducted by the Historical Society last fall.

*The Village of Fisherville saw the King's Highway Inn reopen as The Beaver Creek Tavern in 2010. As the center of local commerce during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the village and the inn sat in close proximity to The Beaver Creek, former site of several mills producing items such as blue jeans and ground flour. Fisherville later became a residential community, and the new Beaver Creek Tavern provides a wide menu of Chester County cuisine and seasonal specials in a casual, Early American atmosphere.*

*Our meal started with a variety of well-prepared and tasty appetizers, including a bountiful portion of Beaver Creek Tri-colored Tacos and toppings, Beer-Battered Mushrooms with Wasabi sauce and Duck Dumplings with Mandarin/Ginger sauce. The night's menu featured Prime Rib, a large, hearty entrée. Pasta favorites included Shrimp and Scallops Savoy in Red Sauce made with White Wine and Tarragon and Pasta Sostanza, a nice mixture of Rotini, Mushrooms, Artichokes and Spinach. Other fish and meat entrée's looked enticing as well.*

*We capped off the meal with a scrumptious Pumpkin Cake with Cream Cheese Icing. The Tavern Bar serves a wide variety of beers, including local breweries on tap, wine and liquor. Service was efficient, informative and lots of fun, thanks to longtime server Carol.*

*This is a royal gem of a restaurant. If you are looking for a local eatery, excellent food and service at reasonable prices, travel up the Old Kings Highway (Rt. 340) to The Beaver Creek Tavern. Reservations are suggested for the weekends.*

*We want to thank The Beaver Creek Tavern for their gracious donation to the Downingtown Area Historical Society's annual "A Taste of Chester County" fundraiser.*

## **Clip joint will be open this Sunday**

The Historical Society's Clip Joint will be open from 1-4 PM on Sunday, September 7 at Ashbridge House, our 305-year-old headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Square 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 convenience.

## **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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org), and type their email address into the sign-up box on the home page. We won't share or sell any email addresses. And you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: [www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html).

*Officers of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are: Parry Desmond, president; Ernie Jameson, vice president; Carol Grigson, treasurer and archivist; Marion Piccolomini, recording secretary. The board of directors includes: Harry Helms, Mike Dunn, Francine Dague and Phil Dague.*

## **Paid ads for businesses**

### ***Vance Usher, registered representative***

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## **Free ads for Non-Profits**

### ***Teri's Run & Walk***

13<sup>th</sup> annual Teri's Run and Twilight Walk for Scleroderma will be held on Friday, September 5. The evening's events include: 6:30 PM – Kids Run, 7 PM – 5K Run & 1 Mile Walk, 8 PM – Awards Ceremony. Chip-Timed Walk and Run on fast, flat, spectator-friendly course that starts on Green Street in Downingtown. The run is dedicated to the memory of Teri Valocchi and all those who have lost their battle to Scleroderma. Register Online at [www.terisrun.org](http://www.terisrun.org)

### ***Alumni Association***

The DHS Alumni Association's monthly meeting will be held at 7 PM Wednesday, Sept. 10, at DHS West, 445 Manor Avenue, Downingtown - Room 135. Please enter from the rear of the building (Door 3-7).

### ***Fall Fun Festival***

In addition to a bake sale and lunch, other attractions at the festival, from 8 AM to 2 PM Saturday, September 13, at Marshallton Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Road, will be a flea market. Vendors' fees are \$22.50 per space and \$5 per table if needed.

### ***Golf tournament***

Downingtown-Thorndale Rotary Club will have a golf tournament on Wednesday, October 15 at Downingtown Country Club. Registration is at 2:30 PM., and the shot-gun start is at 3 PM. Corporate Package (\$425) includes foursome for 9 holes (scramble play), cart, name on one tee box or green on course and at reception, prizes, cocktail reception with appetizers and one hour open bar. Individual Golf (\$85) includes 9 holes, cart, prizes, cocktail reception with appetizers and one hour open bar. Hole Sponsor (\$100) includes name on one tee box or green on course. Cocktail Reception (\$30) includes appetizers and one hour open bar 5 PM to 7 PM. Register via Chamber website: [www.dtrcc.com](http://www.dtrcc.com).

### ***Class of 1954 reunion***

The DHS Class of 1954 will have its 60th reunion at Whitford Country Club on Friday, September 5, beginning at noon with a social hour, followed by a dinner at 1 PM. For more info, please contact [frank.manetta620@comcast.net](mailto:frank.manetta620@comcast.net). Send reservations to Frank Manetta, 620 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

### ***Log House Art & Craft Show***

The Borough of Downingtown is looking for vendors for its annual Log House Art & Craft Show, to be held Sunday, September 21, from noon - 4 PM at Kerr Park. Vendor spaces are available for \$25. Handmade art, crafts and photography only. Those interested in learning more or applying to participate can visit the website: [www.downingtown.org](http://www.downingtown.org) or call 610-269-0344.

### ***2 winners will get a playhouse***

The Homebuilders of Chester and Delaware Counties are sponsoring a fundraiser in which two winners will win a backyard playhouse. The playhouses are 8 feet wide, 8 feet long and 8 feet tall. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go to Kenzie's Kure, whose mission is to cure Type 1 Diabetes. Tickets are \$25 each. The winning tickets will be drawn at the Fall Into Fabulous event at the Downingtown Country Club on October 2. For more details and buy tickets, click on: [www2.jdrf.org/fallintofabulous](http://www2.jdrf.org/fallintofabulous).

### ***Log House Dinner Raffle***

Winner of the raffle will win a dinner for four at the Downingtown Log House on Lancaster Avenue. The dinner will be catered by St. Anthony's Restaurant. To purchase raffle tickets—\$50 each—call Ginny Pierce, 610-269-2750. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Downingtown Area Senior Center. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Senior Center's Harvest Hop on November 8.

### ***Farmers Market***

The Downingtown Farmers Market is now held in Kerr Park, by the gazebo area of Kerr Park on Pennsylvania Avenue in the borough, on Saturdays, from 9 AM to 1 PM.

### ***Brochure on DARC classes & activities***

You can gain access to the latest DARC brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: [www.darcinfo.com](http://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.

### ***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 at 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday 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).