



## 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*

Vol. 6, No. 16

April 16, 2015

## 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 response to: [Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

## Happenings in the Downingtown area 52 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local papers in the early part of April 1963.

Dan Tabas petitioned Downingtown Borough Council to have the Downingtown Motor Inn, the Farmer's Market, and the remainder of his holdings in East Caln Township—a total of 250 acres—to be incorporated in the borough in order to take advantage of the Downingtown water and sewer systems.

The new **Lakeview Swim Club**, located in the Cornog section of Glenmoore, was offering yearly family memberships for \$50 and \$20 for individuals. The club had a 500-foot X 80-foot lake, as well as bathhouses, a sun deck, a picnic area and a refreshment stand. The club also offered early morning skin diving and ice skating during the winter.

**Schanely's Jewelry Store**, at 130 E. Lancaster Ave. in the borough, announced its Going Out of Business. All of the store's merchandise was being sold at one-half prices.

Members of the cast in the **DHS production** of "The Guy from Venus" included Mary Ann Smedley, Jack Hines, Steve Charles, Robert Crane, Barbara Warren, Susan Schofield, Jim Helms, James Williamson, Pam Backenstose and Bill Ash.

Members of **Cub Pack 2** who earned awards included Lewis Capriotti, Norman Sendler, Kenny Harmon, Bill Dorman, David Hemberger, Edward Campbell, Gordon Patrizio, Michael Miller, Danny Snyder, Arthur Harrison and Billy Woodruff. Leaders of the pack, which met in Downingtown's Borough Hall, were Clifford Ratcliffe and Roger Patrizio.

New members of the **Caln Township** planning commission were Victor Sarkissian, Charles Drasher, Edgar Buchanan and Louis Seltzer. They joined planning director Robert Dougherty on the five-member board.

Elected as officers of the **Downingtown branch of the Chester County Hospital** were Mrs. Ralph Ralston, president; Mrs. Allison Hallowell, vice president; Mrs. Charles Huber, recording secretary; Mrs. Stanley Senneff, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Weldon Bicking, treasurer.

Students who participated in a **Junior High talent show** were singer Susan Myers, trombonists Dale Moore, Christine Harrison and Debbie Harrison, ukulele player John Johnson, guitarist Terry Davis, saxophonists Irwin Williamson and pianists Jane Jarvie and Alan Novak.

The board of the **Downingtown Library** voted to join the Chester County Library system.

Newly elected officers of the WSCS group at **Romansville Methodist Church** were Ruth Wertz, president; Carlene Huyard, vice president; May Osborn, secretary; Dorothy Mattson, treasurer; Gladys Beale, flower fund chair; Catherine Duncan, spiritual life secretary; and Erma Collins, secretary of literature.

Sandy Koppenhaver and Randy Reeve were recognized as the two outstanding seniors at the **DHS Alumni Association's** annual banquet. Edwin Baldwin won the association's Distinguished Service Award.

Elected to lead the **Downingtown branch of the Memorial Hospital Auxiliary** were Mrs. Larue Frain, president; Beth deBordenave, vice president; Mrs. Charles Bruton, treasurer; Mrs. George Nixdorf, recording secretary; and Mrs. Clifton Walton, corresponding secretary.

The third annual Community **Easter Sunrise Service** was held at the Exton Drive-In Theatre on Route 100. The 6:30 AM service was sponsored by the Extron Community Baptist Church.

Members of the **Marshallton School girls' tumbling team**, who demonstrated their skills at a PTA meeting, included Molly Anderson, Linda Bateman, Joanne Carey, Gayle Clark, Patricia Collins, Helen Freyberger, Charlotte Griggs, Cheryl Harper, Linda Hurley, Joan Keeler, Deborah Lawn, Patrice McLear, Kathleen Newman, Nancy Russell, Elaine Siter and Cheryl Warner.

The Whippets took a first in every running event, as the **DHS boys' track team** defeated Kennett Square 75-43. Those fleet-footed winners included Clark Bartell, Andy Hardin, Clarence Wilkerson and Sam Smith. Firsts also were tallied by Jack Darby, discus, and Edgar Donnon, pole vault.

## **Charlie Way to be inducted into Alumni Hall of Fame**

Charlie Way, Class of 1916, is one of the six DHS graduates who will be inducted into the Alumni Association's Hall of Fame at the organization's 131<sup>st</sup> annual banquet at the Downingtown Country Club on Saturday evening, April 25. Details about the banquet and reservations for it can be made by accessing: [www.downingtowntalumni.org/banquet.html](http://www.downingtowntalumni.org/banquet.html).

Way, who is being recognized for his achievements in athletics, probably was the first DHS graduate to receive national recognition. He was a consensus, first-team All-American football player for Penn State in 1920.

As a DHS senior, Way scored 32 of 33 touchdowns the DHS football squad scored during the 1915 football campaign. He left Penn State at the beginning of his junior year to serve in the Army during World War I. He returned after the war and led the Penn State football team to an undefeated 1920 season. Way began his professional career in the National Football League (NFL); first with the Canton Bulldogs in 1921, and became an All-Pro as a member of the Frankford Yellow Jackets in 1924. He also played for the 1926 American Football League champion, the Philadelphia Quakers. Later, Way coached football at the University of Dayton and Virginia Tech. He earned a degree in finance from Penn State in 1921 and had a long career with the Internal Revenue Service following his playing days. He lived in Thorndale until his death, at age 90, in 1988.

To learn more about Way's illustrious football career, see: [www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/November%2014%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/November%2014%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf) and [www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/November%2021%202013%20Hist-O-Gram](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/November%2021%202013%20Hist-O-Gram).

## **Lincoln's funeral train stopped in Downingtown 150 years ago**

Following his assassination on April 15, 1865, President Lincoln's body was transported by rail back to Springfield, IL for burial. And one of the stops the funeral train made was in Downingtown, on April 22, 1865.

That wasn't the first time Downingtown area citizens had a personal connection with Lincoln. When he was traveling from Springfield to Washington for his inauguration, the train stopped in Downingtown on February 21, 1861 and the President-elect said a few words to a large crowd while the train was refueled with wood and water.

Jim Sundman, a Downingtown resident who is a railroad historian, wrote an interesting account of those two special moments in Downingtown history in the February 14, 2013 Hist-O-Gram. You can access Jim's article via:

[www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/Feb%2014%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/Feb%2014%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf).

## **Senior Center is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

The Downingtown Area Senior Center was established in 1974 as an extension of the Meals Together program in the borough. Back then, the Meals Together program in the Downingtown area only involved four seniors, who met weekly in the original Downingtown United Methodist Church on Brandywine Avenue, for a noon meal and social time. As the popularity of the program grew, the need for a senior center to serve residents of Downingtown and 14 surrounding communities, was realized. Thus, spearheaded by Amina Valocchi, the Downingtown Senior Center was formed.

The center's home continued to be Downingtown United Methodist for more than two decades, including the years after a new Methodist church was built on East Lancaster Avenue. Subsequently, after temporary stays at St. James Episcopal Church and the St. James Place Apartments in Downingtown and the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Exton, the center was relocated in 2002 to its current site in the Ashbridge Commons complex on Route 30 in East Caln Township. The 5,000-square-foot facility, which includes several offices, a multi-purpose office, a large program area, a kitchen and restrooms, cost \$500,000 to build.

The center received national recognition in 2012 from the National Council on Aging for its Food for Thought program, which educated seniors on health-related issues.

Then in 2013, the center had to find temporary quarters when mold problems were discovered on two occasions. So, the center had to move to the Thorndale United Methodist Church until the environmental issues were recently resolved by Ashbridge Commons' owners, and the center's permanent home could be re-opened.

Obviously, coping with those environmental issues made it impossible for the center to celebrate its anniversary in 2014. But since the center is operating out of its permanent home once again, and members are returning to the Senior Center to have lunch and participate in programs and events, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary is being observed now.

Part of the celebration will be the Spring Fling, to be held at the Lexus of Chester Springs dealership on 400 Pottstown Pike, from 7-11 PM on Saturday, April 25. The fundraiser will include a dinner cabaret, which begins at 9 PM. Cost is \$75 per person. For more details or to purchase tickets, contact Sue McIntyre, associate director, at 610-269-3939, or access: [http://downingtownseniors.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=40:spring-fling&catid=27:spring-fling&Itemid=22](http://downingtownseniors.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=40:spring-fling&catid=27:spring-fling&Itemid=22).

## **DMYA members also staged a play in 1947**

You may have noticed in previous Hist-O-Grams that the Downingtown Young Men's Association (DMYA) ran the early Good Neighbor Day celebrations on the Fourth of July in Downingtown's Kerr Park for several years after World War II. And the DYMA sponsored an invitational track meet for several years back then, as well.

Several months after the DMYA was formed in 1947, the organization put on a production of "Tomorrow Never Comes," a three-act comedy, which was performed in the auditorium of the Junior-Senior High School in November 1947. The play written and directed by Charles "Pud" Ax, who many oldtimers remember as an English teacher at DHS. Pud also wrote and directed the Passion Play, produced for decades by members of Hopewell United Methodist Church.

Those who performed in Pud's DYMA's play included: Mylin Plank, Richard Warren, James Mahan, Robert Romig, Robert Mitman, Alex Bareford, William W.E. Ash, Vinton Smedley, Peg Fisher, Hathaway Frain, Gertrude Hickey, Peter Short, George Ciarlone and Marguerite Murray.

The production staff included; Dr. Anthony Ricci, production manager; James Diffenderfer, publicity; Horace Miller, stage manager; Francis Sommers, scenery; Robert Romig, sound; Morris Stevens, lighting; and Ross Dague, tickets.

DMYA officers at the time were Gerald Lyons, president; Francis Sommers, vice president; Dr. Ricci, treasurer; and Mark Bareford, secretary. The organization's directors included John Donofrio, Aubrey Goudie, Frank Bishop, Allan Hughes, A.F. Travaglini and Ross Dague.

## **It's the Bradford Friends Meetinghouse in Marshallton**



John Carbo is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the Bradford Meetinghouse in Marshallton, which was built in 1765. In addition to being the final resting place for three Civil War veterans, also buried in the meetinghouse's graveyard was Nathan Simms, who allegedly assisted John Wilkes Booth escape after he mortally wounded President Lincoln in Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC. Simms, who died in the Chester County Poorhouse in Embreeville in 1934, reportedly had lived in Marshallton during the early 1930s.

However, as noted in Catherine Quillman's *Between the Brandywines: A History of West Bradford*, stories about Simms' association with Booth "have become a bit overblown in decades of storytelling." In one newspaper account, Simms said that, on April 14, 1865--the date Lincoln was shot--he was working as an indentured servant on the Maryland farm of Mary Suratt who was later hanged for her part in the assassination. And he only knew Booth because the actor had

visited Suratt's farm several times. Although Simms was taken back to Washington for questioning, he was never charged with aiding Booth.

## **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, Phil Dague and Rahn Brackin.*

## **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.net](mailto:vance_usher@netzero.net), 610-329-1056, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

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

### ***Program on Dowlin Forge***

Susannah Brody will present a local history program on Dowlin Forge as part of the East Brandywine Historical Commission's lecture series at 3:30 PM on Sunday, April 19, at the East Brandywine Township building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike (Route 322 near Hopewell Road). A storyteller and historian, Brody will talk about and show slides of John Dowlin's properties, which straddled the Brandywine. Her presentation will help you envision just how important his forge was in the development of the area. No reservations required. Admission is free. All are welcome. For more information contact Carol Schmidt via [carolsinex@gmail.com](mailto:carolsinex@gmail.com) or 484 237-8071.

### ***Baked ziti dinner***

A baked ziti dinner will be held at Marshallton United Methodist Church from 4:30-7:30 PM on Saturday, April 18. There will be continuous seating. Menu includes ziti, bread, salad, drinks and dessert. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child. Proceeds to benefit the MUMC Youth who will be traveling to Bonafil, Mexico this summer on a mission project.

### ***Annual Chamber dinner***

The Downingtown-Thorndale Regional Chamber of Commerce will have its 70<sup>th</sup> annual dinner at 5 PM on Thursday, April 30 at the Downingtown Country Club. Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year Awards will be presented at the dinner.

See [www.dtrcc.com/Documents/2015%20Chamber%20Annual%20Dinner%20-%20Invitation.pdf](http://www.dtrcc.com/Documents/2015%20Chamber%20Annual%20Dinner%20-%20Invitation.pdf) for ticket information.

### ***Old Caln Historical Society events***

The Old Caln Historical Society is sponsoring these events:

A program on the Underground Railroad in Chester County will be given at 2 PM on Sunday, April 19 at the Caln Township Municipal Building. Christopher Desmond, director of the Friends Historical Library at both Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges, and well known writer and speaker on the Underground Railroad, will present the program. The program is free and parking is available. Please use the back door of the meeting room. For information call 610-384-8153.

Also, table space is available for the Historical Society's Craft/Antique/Flea Market to be held on Saturday, May 9, from 9 AM-2 PM on the grounds of the Caln Township Municipal Building, Municipal Drive, Thorndale. For information please call 610-384-9496 or 610-384-8153.

### ***Senior Center's Spring Fling***

The Downingtown Area Senior Center will have a Spring Fling at the Lexus of Chester Springs dealership on 400 Pottstown Pike, from 7-11 PM on Saturday, April 25. The fundraiser will include a dinner cabaret, which begins at 9 PM. Cost is \$75 per person. For more details or to purchase tickets, please call Sue McIntyre, associate director, at 610-269-3939, or access:

[http://downingtownseniors.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=40:spring-fling&catid=27:spring-fling&Itemid=22](http://downingtownseniors.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=40:spring-fling&catid=27:spring-fling&Itemid=22).

### ***Trout Rodeo***

The Brandywine Trout and Conservation Club will have a free Kids Only (15 and younger) Trout Rodeo at Kerr Park in Downingtown on Saturday, April 18. Registration begins at 8 AM and the Rodeo will be from 9 AM to 2 PM.

### ***Bike the Brandywine***

Family event presented by the Downingtown Borough Parks & Rec Commission at Kerr Park, from 9 AM to noon Saturday, May 16. Activities include: bike consignment sale at 9 AM; bike safety tips and info from Downingtown Police Dept. at 10 AM; ride from Kerr Park to Johnsontown Park and back; 11 AM, music at the gazebo in Kerr Park. For more info, access:

[www.downingtown.org/images/BikettheBrandywine%202015.jpg](http://www.downingtown.org/images/BikettheBrandywine%202015.jpg)

### ***Basket Bingo for scholarship.***

Sponsored by the Downingtown-Thorndale Regional Chamber of Commerce and benefiting the Chamber's Amina C. Valocchi Scholarship Fund, the Longaberger/Vera Bradley Basket Bingo will be held Sunday, April 19 at St. Anthony's Lodge, 259 Church St., Downingtown. Doors open at noon. Bingo begins at 1 PM. Tickets are \$20 (includes 20 regular games). Prizes are filled Longaberger Baskets & Longaberger Pottery and Vera Bradley items. Raffle and door prizes; (4) special games of Bingo; food available for purchase. For tickets or info, call Rochelle at 610-383-1114 or via [Dimatteo003@yahoo.com](mailto:Dimatteo003@yahoo.com)

### ***Nite at the Races***

A Kentucky Derby Nite at the Races will be offered on Saturday, May 2 at St. Anthony's Lodge, 259 Church Street, Downingtown. Doors open at 6 PM. Races start after a viewing of the actual Kentucky Derby on TV. Cost: \$25 per person; limited number of tickets available for \$30 at the door. Includes beef and beer & soda. Cash bar. Adults over 21 only. Benefits Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Committee. To order tickets go to: [www.dtownchristmas.com/Documents/NATR2015/TICKETS-HORSES%20FORM.pdf](http://www.dtownchristmas.com/Documents/NATR2015/TICKETS-HORSES%20FORM.pdf). For more info, see: [www.dtownchristmas.com/](http://www.dtownchristmas.com/).

### ***Golf outing***

The Alert Fire Co. of Downingtown will be host its second annual Golf Outing at the Downingtown Country Club on Monday, May 4. Golfer Registration Deadline is Saturday, April 26. Entry fee for each golfer is \$100. The Outing includes lunch starting at 11:30 AM, shotgun start at 1 PM, greens fee, cart, beverages on the course, awards dinner and various contests and door prizes. For more information and on-line registration, access: [www.alertgolfouting.org](http://www.alertgolfouting.org).

### ***Bus trip to Washington, DC***

Phil Dague and the 97th PVI Civil War reenacting group are hosting a "Washington, DC on your own" bus trip on Sunday May 17, and the public is invited. Guests will meet at the Downingtown Library at 122 Wallace Ave. in Downingtown at 5:30 AM where they will board a Krapf luxury coach bus. Upon arrival in our nation's capital at 8 AM, you will be free to explore D.C. on your own. Washington will be bustling with activity on that spring day, including "The Grand Review 150<sup>th</sup>," a parade commemorating a parade that happened 150 years ago, marking the end of the Civil War. At 4:30 PM, we will start our return trip back to Downingtown, with a stop along the way for dinner (not included), arriving back home at 8:30 PM. It's a long day, but you can nap on the bus! The cost is \$40 per person. If you are interested, please e-mail Phil at [PRD1961@gmail.com](mailto:PRD1961@gmail.com), or call (610)873-7059.

### ***Registration for soccer players with special needs***

The Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association's HIGH 5 soccer program will be held at Fellowship Field #1, 241 Fellowship Road, Chester Springs, from 3-4 PM on Saturdays, from April 11 to May 30. This free program is for players between 5 and 19 years of age who have special needs. We need teens and adults to volunteer as "buddies" to work one-on-one with players. No soccer experience necessary -- just enthusiasm! For more info and to register, go to: [www.geyasoccer.org](http://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](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 unemployed or underemployed people. The group is entirely conducted by volunteers, and has been at St. Joseph's since 1995. Meets at 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays 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).