



## 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).

## Local news items from early January 1979

Noted below are snippets of news originally published in the East Branch Citizen 36 years ago.

Data provided by the Chester County Intermediate Unit showed that the **Downingtown School District** spent \$1,662 per pupil in the 1977-78 school year, while the county average for that period was \$1,940. Overall, Downingtown ranked 10<sup>th</sup> among the county's 12 school districts that school year. And the budget data for the 1978-79 school year, showed that Downingtown planned to spend \$1,771 per pupil, while the county average was \$2,107. And Downingtown continued to rank 10<sup>th</sup> among the county's 12 school districts for that school year.

New members of **Lionville Community Methodist Church** were Ed and “Cookie” Butts, Laura and Joseph Brown, Pat Cohen, Dorothy Devaney, Earle Fegley, Coney and Juanita Galbraith, Frank and Carole Galbraith, Romeo LaMarch, Ted and Pat Rowland, and Tony and Debbie Harley.

Nominated for four positions on **Messiah Lutheran Church’s** council were Mary King Autry, Maj-Brit Gabel, Jo McAdoo and Dan Rothas. Also, Dixie Shirk and Michael Petrillo were appointed to fill unexpired terms on council.

And nominees for the council of **St. Paul’s Lutheran Church**, Lionville, were Eric Bittmann, Arthur Freas, John Green, Kenneth Service, Nancy Hurst and Joyce Wood.

Leaders of the Live Wire Class of **Downingtown United Methodist Church** were Mabel Davis, chairman; Frances Hilden, co-chairman; Florence McGuckin; Marie Showalter; Dorothy Weiss; Mae Thompson; and Sue McFalls,

The DHS **wrestling team** opened its Ches-Mont campaign with a 36-12 win over Pottstown. Dave Blye turned the match around for Downingtown, when he got a pin with only 33 seconds left in the third period.

Students of art teacher Donna Usher, who created a **sculpture in the courtyard of DHS**, were Alan Lasoff, Vince Talucci, Gregg Mehrhoff, Joan Haase, Steve Ziobro, Joe DeMucci, Erin Conaghan, Dina DiSantis, Brian Smith, Dave Kucera and Jeanne Minahan.

**Disco classes** and dances for adults and teenagers were being offered by Gussie Irons at the Village Square in Guthriesville.

The **DHS Ecology Club**, founded and still supervised by biology teacher Edith Hille, was established on Earth Day in April 1970. Members of the club accepted paper and glass on a Saturday morning each month. The paper was taken to the Sonoco paper mill in Downingtown, and the glass was sold to firm in Springfield. Proceeds from the sales were used to provide a bike rack at DHS, care for trees and provide benches at the high school; and dues for the club’s memberships in several conservation organizations. Over the years, the club also sponsored an American Indian child; painted the Downingtown train station, maintained a trail at the Charlestown Nature Center, and helped maintain the Lakes Project in Downingtown.

The board of **Historic Yellow Springs** announced plans to open a restaurant at their site in West Pikeland.

A **McDonald’s Restaurant** was opened at Green Street and East Lancaster Avenue in the borough, on the former site of the Bicking Paper Mill. A bakery was opened at the **Ingleside Diner** on Route 30 in Thorndale. And **PJ’s Family Restaurant**, Route 113, Uwchlan, was featuring take-out boxes of chicken. Also, the **Bakery Outlet**, located in Four J’s Mini Mall on East Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, was offering fruit tarts, strawberry pies, and Italian pastries and breads.

Elected to lead **Boy Scout Troop 79**, Glen Moore, were Tom Reber, senior patrol leader; Bill Golding, Tim Land, and Jay Rutherford, patrol leaders; Doug Comstock, Charles Zeiders Dave Lewis and Steve Lewis, assistant patrol leaders.

Members of **St. Paul’s UCC Church**, Lionville, who went caroling about 10 days before Christmas were Curtis and Barbara Wright, Rev. and Mrs. Paul Marmon, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Faddis, Alice Behrndt, Linda and Bill Davis, Cindy Shultz, Bonnie Grubb and Larry Delpino.

The two **DHS basketball teams** won consolation games in holiday tournament games played at the high school. Jeff Robertson scored 21 points, and Bob Melvin had 15, as the boys' team defeated Chichester 57-42. The Whippets narrowly lost their opening round to Conestoga 62-60. With Lauri Carcella scoring 20 points and Jen Ward canning 13, the girls' team beat Octorara 63-33. However, they were clobbered 64-46 by Conestoga in the opening game.

Recent **property transfers** included: 321 Stuart Ave., Downingtown, \$40,500; 3 Marshall Circle, Thorndale, 58,000; 7 Skyline Drive, West Pikeland, \$39,000; 122 Lori Circle, Uwchlan, \$73,900; 104 Hilltop Drive, East Brandywine, \$95,900; 426 Longwood Drive, West Whiteland, \$84,100; 2212 Persimmon Drive, West Bradford, \$57,660; 15 Carriage Drive, Upper Uwchlan, \$71,625; and 126 Woodland Circle, East Caln, \$85,000.

**Bentley-Harris Manufacturing Co.**, Lionville, presented a \$1,000 check to the Coatesville-Downingtown Junior Achievement Center, where students could participate in a learn-by-doing education program.

Although many of them live within one mile of Lionville Elementary and Lionville Junior High, parents of students who live in the Marchwood development in Uwchlan asked the **Downingtown School Board** to waive the one-mile restriction, and allow their kids to travel by school bus to their respective schools because the sidewalks were hazardous during the winter. The parents also claimed their children's health was at risk, if they continued to be required to walk to school while it was raining, snowing and in frigid weather. Under a recently established policy, the School Board said elementary students should walk up to one and one-half miles to school, while secondary level pupils were expected to walk up to two miles.

A group of **West Pikeland** residents protested against the establishment of a heliport on the 3.1-acre tract of Haig Kurkjian on Newcomen Road, between Route 113 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. And township supervisors declined to send a consent form to the state's Bureau of Aviation because the plan didn't comply with zoning regulations and wasn't in the best interests of the township.

## What local residents were talking about 68 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local newspapers in July of 1947.

An estimated crowd of 5,000 people turned out for **Good Neighbor Day**, sponsored by the Downingtown Young Men's Association, at Kerr Park in Downingtown on July Fourth. William Harrison was chairman of the program. Events included a track meet, baseball games and a tennis tournament. Local winners included Anthony Mento Jr. in the track competition and Anthony Mento Sr. in the plug casting contest. Two "name bands" played in the afternoon. Other competitions included: rolling pin throwing, cake and pie baking, quoits, archery, child calling, and a tug-o-war.

New-elected officers of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** included Mrs. Penrose Moore, president; Leta Tweed, vice president; Mrs. Donald White, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Carl Engle, recording secretary; Mrs. Leon Williams, treasurer; and Mrs. Raymond Greenleaf, senior advisor.

Eddie Popjoy, Shirley Garvine, Dodie Hoffman, Mildred Sorensen and Mary Henley were rewarded for their outstanding work while attending **Windsor Baptist Church's** Vacation Bible School, which had an enrollment of 65 youngsters.

Installed as officers of the **Downingtown Women of the Moose** Chapter were Helen Babb, senior regent; Nellie Donovan junior regent; Dorothy McClure, junior graduate regent; Mary Burnett, argus; Dorothy Bruno, sentinel; Jessie Taylor, pianist; Margaret Dowlin, guide; Mary Algiers, recorder; and Carrie Francella, treasurer.

A 1947 Oldsmobile sedan was the grand prize at the carnival, co-sponsored by the **Downingtown American Legion** and **VFW**, which was held for nine nights on the lot at Stuart and Manor Avenues in the borough.

Thirty-three members of the **Auxiliary of the Alert Fire Co.**, Downingtown, who had worked at least 60 percent of banquets and dinner held at the fire hall, went on a three-day trip to Niagara Falls and Buffalo, NY. The train trip, paid for with tips paid by diners at the fire hall the past year, was arranged by Elizabeth Whiteman, Blanche Summers, Mrs. George Williams, Gerald Lyons and Elmer Schrupf, a representative of the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., who lived in Downingtown.

## **Glen Moore Fire Co. is 100 years old**

Fire protection for the Glen Moore area was first considered in 1912 by members of the Glen Moore Improvement Society, according to the website of the Glen Moore Fire Co. And proceeds from a festival, held at that time in Glen Moore Park, were used to buy four hand-held fire extinguishers. Two of the extinguishers were put in the Glen Moore Post Office, and the other two were placed in Elmer Dunwoody's store on Creek Road (Route 282).

And the possibility of establishing the Glen Moore Fire Co. was first discussed in a series of meetings held in Burton Foreman's in May 1915, and it was decided to form the fire company at a meeting held on June 1, 1915.

The first officers were: Barton Foreman, president; Wilmer Dickinson, vice president; Earl Wagonseller, secretary; Elmer Dunwoody, treasurer; William Fleming, William Peck and James Davis, trustees; Walter Davis, chemical man; Silas Irey, George Keeley, George Welsh and William McEwen, assistant chemical men; Jerry Harple, chemical pipeman; Harry Benner, Granville Lewis, Clyde David and William Fleming, assistant chemical pipemen; Mark Trego, fire chief; John McClure, first assistant fire chief; and William Irey, second assistant fire chief.

Although there were many financial challenges in the early years, the fire company's treasury grew with proceeds from festivals, dues and donations. And two (\$125 and \$250) bank certificates and three \$50 Liberty War Bonds were purchased.

Meanwhile, the ladies of Glen Moore started doing Red Cross work, such as knitting and making supplies for the soldiers during World War I. When the war was over, several of those women decided to form an auxiliary in June 1919 that would benefit the fledgling fire company. The auxiliary's first officers were Alice Dickinson, president; Mrs. William Montgomery, vice president; Amy Bailey, secretary; and Adda McClure, treasurer. In a short period, the auxiliary

grew to 100 members, and they raised \$3,000 via bake sales, suppers in members' homes, street carnivals, dances and card parties.

By 1919, plans to build a fire hall on Fairview Road were resolved, and construction began in 1923. Much of the work was done by volunteers, who often used equipment, teams and wagons provided by local families. The hall included an auditorium and stage, a basement with a kitchen and dining rooms, a meeting room and "two large, hungry, coal-devouring furnaces," which cost about \$20,000.

While working on the fire hall, a group of fire company members also were soliciting money for the apparatus fund. In 1925, a Hahn unit with an open air cab and a power pump was purchased for \$5,250. The Hahn was sold in 1947, so a new Chevrolet chassis could be bought.

A proposal to construct a second building on the fire company property was approved in 1957, and part of the new engine house was rented to the Glen Moore Post Office that year as well. And more equipment was bought in 1963, with the major contributions by the Auxiliary.

There was a gala affair in 1964, including a parade with 30 pieces of equipment from neighboring fire companies, to celebrate the burning of the mortgage and the housing of two pieces of apparatus. And the company's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with a parade and two block parties in June 1965.

Current officers of the fire company are: Richard King, president; Scott Welker, vice president; Len Morley, treasurer; Desiree Seese, secretary; and Jason Trego, Fred Clark and Joe Lewis, trustees; Michael King, fire chief; Jeff Seese, deputy chief; Steve Miller, assistant chief; Anthony Bocchicchio, lieutenant and Centennial Committee chairman; Joe Crawford, EMS Captain; and Keith Blevins, chief engineer.

For more info on the 100 years of Glen Moore Fire Co. history, see:

[www.glenmoorefire.org/content/history/](http://www.glenmoorefire.org/content/history/).

## **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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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.*

## **Loading books on wagon train for the trip to the new library**



Pictured above are supporters of the Downingtown Library who used their little wagons on a frigid Saturday, January 3 to transport about 1,200 boxes of books some six blocks, from the 100-year-old library at 330 E. Lancaster Ave. to the new facility on Wallace Avenue. The wagon train project had been inspired and coordinated by the Thorndale-Downingtown Rotary Club's Jack Hines. The new, 7,000-square-foot library, which opened last Wednesday, is located next to Kerr Park. Many of the 45 wagons involved in the historic event were brightly decorated. Carol Nelms is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first of many subscribers to correctly identify where this photo was taken and what was going on when the photo was taken.

## **Paid ads for businesses**

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

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

### ***Blood Drive***

The Borough of Downingtown will hold a Red Cross Blood Drive from 1-6 PM on Friday, February 13 in the Annex Building of Downingtown Borough Hall, at 4 W. Lancaster Ave. For more info, see: [www.downingtown.org](http://www.downingtown.org).

### ***Program on Golda Meir***

Ann Atkins, author and historian, will talk about Golda Meir's early years, before she was Israel's prime minister, at the West Caln Historical Society's meeting at 7 PM on Tuesday, January 20, at the West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. The public is welcome.

### ***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).