



## 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. 12

March 19, 2015

## Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the location of the building in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to:

[Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

## What area residents were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are tidbits of news retrieved from local papers in the early part of March 1963.

The **Downingtown School Board** decided to pay new teachers \$4,500 a year, effective September 1963. The increased salary was established to “meet the competition” of neighboring school districts. The beginning salary had been \$4,100.

Named to the recently established planning commission in **West Bradford Township** were Harrison Wetherill, Douglas Turpin, Charles Reilly, Ernest Martin and John Griggs.

Elected as officers of the **Downingtown Rotary Club** were Guy Kline, president; Earl Radcliffe, first vice president; Steve MacNeil, second vice president; Ernest Smedley, secretary; and Lloyd Swarner, treasurer. Directors elected were Bill Balderson, William Bender, Andy Kissh and Cheston Hall.

Winners of best-in-show awards in their grade divisions at the Downingtown Joint Schools Science Fair were Harry Simms, senior high division; Lois Carson, junior high division; and Jeff Kohlhas, elementary schools division.

Former presidents of the Holy Name Society, honored at **St. Joseph’s Catholic Church**, Downingtown, were Frank Nurthen, John Morris, Ben Valocchi, Joseph Massucci and Victor Sarkissian.

Members of the Teener Class at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, included Linda Crosson, Joy Emery, Judy Ralston, Diane Shirk, Thomas Haas, Gilbert Cox Jr. and Jay Rambo.

The **West Bradford** Republican Committee announced its endorsement of these candidates in the May primary: Harry Cattell, road supervisor; Stanley Schofield, auditor; and school directors Edward Stouff and Jack Hines. Candidates on the Democratic ticket in an open election in West Bradford were: Mike Caffey and Dennis O’Donnell, supervisor; Marshall Busby and Parke Book, auditor; and Mrs. James Hamilton and Frank Bates, school director.

Mrs. Raymond Miller of Downingtown received an autographed memorial citation from President Kennedy, in recognition of her devoted service to members of the military service.

Members of the **Junior High boys’ basketball team** who won letters were Leonard Collier, Daniel Phipps, Patrick Murphy, Wesley Snyder, John Barton, Charles Stone, Glenn Archie, Edwin Berry, William Kline and manager Richard Stine.

David Seel was the winner and James Wunch was the runner-up in the oratorical contest sponsored the **Downingtown Optimist Club**. Other participants were David Corry, Wayne Kofke, Alan Novak and Eugene Dennis.

Members of **Cub Pack 2** who earned awards at the Blue and Gold Banquet, held at St. Joseph’s School cafeteria, were Charles Menas, Edward Campbell, William Dorman, Joseph Miller, Michael Brown, Stephen Massimini, Stuart Pollock and David Hemberger.

Members of the choir at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Eagle, were Linda Dewees, Christine and Raymond Warner, Mike Roberts, Karen Gottier, Mary and Martha Sorenson, Gail Hinton, Donna and Susan Garvine and Patty Wheatley. Vinton Ash was the director.

Members of Cub Pack 79, sponsored by **Fairview Presbyterian Church**, who were inducted into the Glenmoore Boy Scout Troop were Ricky Harter, Louis Waldmann, David Funk, Harold Earnshaw, Raymond Chilcote, and Jeffrey and Gregory Hannum.

Third graders who participated in a Japanese assembly program at **East Ward School** in Downingtown included Kathy Jones, Joyce Beam, Richard Forbes, Francis Collins, Eartha Flowers, Nancy Boyd, Sharon Trego and Vicki Freas, who recited original Japanese poems. Also, Jennie Powell, Denise Holden, Michael Miller and Glenn Phillips sang a Japanese song.

## It's the receiving vault at Hopewell Cemetery



Matt McCausland is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the building in the above photo as the Harrison C. Rea receiving vault in Hopewell Cemetery in East Brandywine Township.

In addition to being a memorial gateway to the cemetery, the vault was used to store corpses during the winter when the ground was frozen, preventing new graves from being dug.

Harrison Rea was an immensely wealthy Philadelphia building contractor who apparently was related to several members of the Rea family buried at Hopewell, and when he died in 1922, he bequeathed \$8,000 (about \$100,000 in today's money) to the cemetery in order to build the vault. Although the church was founded in 1783, and the earliest tombstone dates back to 1799, there are no records of cemetery lot owners prior to 1883.

Matt's grandfather, Ed McCausland, who passed away in 1992, took Matt on many a tour through the graveyard when he was a boy," recalls Matt. In fact, according to an article in the April 12, 1979 edition of the *East Branch Citizen*, Ed McCausland started helping out at the cemetery when he was still in high school. And by 1934, he was doing a lot of the bookwork, and many other tasks involved in managing the cemetery for more than 45 years. Early on, his annual salary was \$25 per year salary, but he soon started turning over the paycheck to the church.

Ed recalled in the newspaper story how difficult that job was during the Great Depression. In 1934, he said, the Chester County Trust Co. in West Chester failed, and all the cemetery's money was in that bank when it closed.

Back then, it cost \$12 to open a grave for a simple, wooden-box burial, and occasionally Ed helped with the digging. Sometimes, when a grave site was located in a rocky area of the cemetery, a dynamite specialist from the Cornog Quarry had to be brought in. And running the cemetery during World War II was particularly challenging, because he had to find part-time grave diggers since so many men were in the military. In those days, he'd help dig for an hour or two because he found it "relaxing."



The photo above is of the vault's interior, which includes a stained glass window. Both photos were provided by Dan Lindley, who is responsible for the Find A Grave in Chester County website, which includes an incredible amount of data on local burial sites. That data can be found at: [www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CScnty=2255](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CScnty=2255).

## **Huge celebration when new Route 100 was opened**

In 1923, some 5,000 people attended an ox roast at the Eagle Tavern in Upper Uwchlan to celebrate the opening of the concrete, two-lane highway (part of Route 100) between Pottstown and West Chester. Two huge oxen were cooked over charcoal pits, and 3,000 loaves of bread were consumed at the party, according to Meg Daly Twaddell's *Inns, Tales and Taverns of Chester County* (1984). Back then, Village Avenue in Lionville was part of Route 100.

## **Maria DiBernardi to be inducted in DHS Hall of Fame**

Maria DiBernardi, Class of 1970, 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: <http://www.downingtowntownalumni.org/banquet.html>.

DiBernardi, who was selected for her Achievements in Coaching, is one of the winningest softball coaches in NCAA history. As head coach of the Villanova University Wildcats, she has recorded 762 wins in her 30 years at the helm, more than any coach of any sport in Villanova's history. During her time at Villanova, she has led the Wildcats to 12 Big East Tournaments and three 40-plus win seasons, in 1999, 2001 and 2002. She has also served as the president of the Big East Conference Softball Committee, and is active in numerous camps and clinics in the Philadelphia area. DiBernardi has also coached at the Keystone State Games, winning two gold medals and two silver medals in the over-18 fast pitch division. DiBernardi stresses excellence on and off of the field for her players. Her teams have produced 64 Big East All Conference Players, and 189 Big East Academic All Stars. As a player in the Norristown Amateur League, DiBernardi was named co-player of the 20th Century, and was selected as an All-American on 1990 ASA team. She is a graduate of Immaculata College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing.

Information on each of the other inductees will be published in the next four Hist-O-Grams.

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

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# **Free ads for Non-Profits**

## ***Flute choir concert***

The Pennsylvania Flute Choir will perform a free concert at Forks of the Brandywine Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 1648 Horseshoe Pike, Glenmoore, PA, at 7:30 PM on Saturday, March 28. The public is invited.

## ***First Ladies of the United States***

The Old Caln Historical Society will sponsor a program on the First Ladies of the United States, at 2 PM Sunday, March 22, at the Caln Township Municipal Building, Municipal Drive, Thorndale. The program will be presented by Barbara Felini, a retired West Chester School teacher of 42 years, who also presents programs for Learning in Retirement, OLLI, and retirement communities. The program is free and the public is invited. Parking is available. Please use the backdoor of the township building. For more information call, 610-383-4891.

## ***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).

## ***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)

## ***5K race for Downingtown Library***

The Readers on the Run 5K race and a 1 Mile walk, plus a Kids Dash will be held on Green Street in Downingtown on Saturday morning, April 11. The races will benefit the Downingtown Library. For details and to register on line, go to: <http://library5k.secondwindtiming.com> or you can pick up a registration form at the new Downingtown Library on Wallace Avenue.

## ***Point-to-Point Race***

The 73<sup>rd</sup> running of the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point race will be held on Sunday, April 5 at the Brandywine Valley Association's Myrick Conservation Center, on Route 842, between Unionville and West Chester. Gates open at 10 AM. First race: 11:30 AM. General admission is \$20 per carload. For more info, see: [www.brandywinewatershed.org/pointtopoint](http://www.brandywinewatershed.org/pointtopoint).

### ***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).