



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

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

Vol. 7, No. 7

February 18, 2016

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.

What locals were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are more items originally published in local newspapers in January 1964:

- Downingtown Mayor Creston Shoemaker **vetoed an ordinance to fluoridate the borough's water supply**, after Borough Council had approved the bill by a 4-2 margin. Shoemaker characterized fluoride as a "poison."

- A Downingtown Joint High School Board member **severely criticized the preliminary plans and cost estimates** for a \$1.2 million addition to the high school. And the inclusion of a planetarium in the plans was “sharply rapped by the entire board.” Wallace Township’s Roger Irely took issue with many of the extras slated for the 23-classroom structure, including an “overly expensive” auxiliary gymnasium and an expanded cafeteria. However, school director Richard Franklin noted that the board had approved the plans, by a 25-8 margin, in December 1963.

- **Uwchlan’s supervisors** were assured by the Chester County Commissioners that the township would receive a \$4,000 county grant, to be used to pay for the \$5,050 installation of two overhead, ultrasonically-controlled traffic signals at the intersection of Routes 100 and 113. The intersection was characterized as the “Death Corner” because it was where three fatal accidents had occurred in the past year.

- William Wilmot, of the Minquas Fire Co., and John McAlpine, of the Alert Fire Co., were named Firemen of the Year at the **Downingtown Fire Department’s** annual banquet. It was the third time Wilmot received the award.

- Elected as officers of the **Glen Moore Fire Co.** were: Thomas Reber, fire chief; Edwin Evens, president; Ray MacDougal, vice president; Thomas Trego, secretary; Thomas Miller, recording secretary; William Payne, treasurer; John Trego, trustee; and Rev. Leonard Bjorkman, chaplain. The fire company had recently purchased a new truck—with a General Motors cab and a 750-gallon Hale pumper—which was assembled and built at the Hahn Co. in Hamburg. The company also bought a two-way radio.

- DHS seniors, who received a white sweater with a musical letter for participating in the **DHS marching and concert bands** for three years, were Susan Abel, James Helms, Mary Ellen Crosby, Mary Ann and Marlene Harple, Sherry Massimini, Kenneth Matthews, Michael Dorsey, Donald Myers, Ralph Carson, William Anderson, Barbara Yohn, John McGuckin and Judy Olson. And participants in the **Musical Review at the Junior High** included: piano soloists Alan Novak, Philip Hash, Michael Norris and Susan Myers; a flute trio comprised of Mary Ann Hipple, Nancy Gerbron and Lauren Tweed; a clarinet trio comprised of Will Marion, Donna Forrester and Terry Davis; and a trumpet quartet, which included David Corry, David Robbins, David Seal and Philip Barlow. And Downingtown’s version of Peter, Paul and Mary—Steve Hendry, Buddy Pearson and Cathy Rogers—sang “Where Have All the Flowers Gone.”

- After sponsoring a horse show for two years, the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** decided to discontinue the fundraiser. Named to Chamber committees were: Raymond Baugher, education; Ray Sheeler and Chandler Cushman, industrial; and Dick Baker, membership.

- Members of the **DHS jayvee field hockey team** who earned letters were: Lynne Dowlin, Martha and Miriam Alexander, Patricia and Sharon Fennelly, Robin Mattison, Carol Patrizio, Bonnie Ker, Eunice Boggs, Sandy Horsey and Doreen Davis. And members of Coach Bob Boyer’s **DHS cross-country team** who earned letters included: Lloyd Asparagus, Dave Downing, James Schofield, Robert Ferguson, Leslie Stine, John Caldwell and George Ciarlone.

- Elected to lead the **Downingtown Opti-Mrs. Club** were Mrs. Clifton Walton, president; Mrs. Donald Collier, vice president; Mrs. Clair Langham, secretary; and Mrs. Albert Burkhart, treasurer.

- Dave Williams tossed in 14 points, as **Beaver Creek Elementary School** defeated Church Farm School 36-19. However, Caln Elementary School’s 13-12 victory over **Beaver Creek School**, ending the Beavers’ 13-game winning streak in elementary school competition.

- DHS students who had featured roles in the Junior Class production of “**Connecticut Yankee**” included Kris Yeaworth, Sally Jo Pyle, Janet Strawsnyder, Edwin Conner, Linda Pyle, Robert Bruton, James Sanders, Gene Martin, William Uhler, Sally Campbell, Shirley Robinson, Ruth Travaglini, Sandra Irwin, Steve Meacham, Terry Knox, Steve Mascherino, Carol French and Margaret Woodland.

- Suzy Martin canned 10 points, as the **DHS girls’ basketball squad** defeated Great Valley 35-16. And Mike Pollock scored 16 points as the **DHS boys’ basketball team** upset Great Valley 53-45, in its Ches-Mont League second half opener.

Vintage ad of the Week

**F.H.A. . . . LOW DOWN PAYMENTS
AT**

Sunnybrook



OPEN HOUSE SAT. & SUN 1-6 P.M.
California Rancher — Large Foyer

Excellent Floor Plan **\$15,800**
Also Traditional Two-Story \$16,900

Borough Water & Sewer—All Improvements in Place
Just 1/4 mi. N. of Rt. 30 on Rt. 113 (Uwchlan Ave.)
in Suburban Downingtown—Open Sun. & Daily 1-6 P.M.

 **Cochrane
& Pasfield** **269-2323**
builders of American Homes

This ad appeared in the January 25, 1964 edition of the *Daily Local News*.

News originally published 68 years ago

Noted below are items retrieved from local newspapers published in August 1948:

- The **Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission** announced that it would house engineering and drafting departments, while working on the Chester County section of the turnpike, in a Quonset hut-style office to be built on the property of James McGowan, at Green Street and Jefferson Avenue in the borough.
- **Enrollment** in Downingtown's secondary schools totaled 616, while 540 youngsters attended the elementary schools.
- Midshipman **Edwin Carpenter**, of Downingtown, was one of the Navy personnel from the cruiser USS Macon, who had an audience with Pope Pius XII at the Vatican.
- About 200 Downingtown boys travelled by bus to Philadelphia to see the Athletics play a baseball game at Shibe Park, as guests of the local **VFW Post**.
- Marshallton's **Bob Ludwick**, a pitcher for Nashua (NH) Dodgers, was married at a ceremony conducted the first and second games of a doubleheader in the minor league team's Holman Stadium. The bride was Dorothy Bickings of Embreeville.
- Nine-year-old Marcia Chambers, of Downingtown, won the "**jalopy**" (**better known as a soapbox derby**) race, sponsored by the Downingtown Lions Club. Chambers was the only girl who participated in the race; the other 19 were boys. There would have been 21 entrants, but Paul Detterline broke his left arm in a crackup while practicing on the race course on the downhill section of Chestnut Street in the borough. And the Lions Club was so confident that a boy would win, they had purchased a boy's bicycle, to be the first prize for the winning driver. Marcia said she preferred a boy's bike. Second prize, a radio, was won by Charles Love, and James DiSante won a camera for coming in third. A parade of the cars formed before the race at Kerr Park, and then travelled east on Lancaster Avenue and up Chestnut Street to the starting line. John Shoemaker won the best-appearing car, and Carl Klunder came in second.
- A **donkey baseball game**, between members of the Downingtown Lions Club and the local VFW Post, was played on the diamond behind the West Ward School on West Lancaster Avenue. The event also included a Lady Godiva contest, wherein three competitors mounted a donkey at first base while carrying a suitcase full of women's apparel. When they reached second base, they had to dismount and put on the ladies' clothing, including "unmentionables," and return to first base. The VFW's Gerald Whiteman won the competition.
- Prizes awarded at the **Veterans' Fair**, conducted on the Legionnaires' property at Pennsylvania and Wallace Avenues over three weekends in July by the local American Legion and VFW Posts, included a three-piece living room suite won by James Duca and a freezer won by Margaret Worth.
- Initiation ceremonies for members of **Girl Scout Troop 10** in Marshallton included the girls, wearing aprons and bandannas, to sweep all the pavements in the village, and then ask each household what "good deed" they could do. As a result, the girls mopped floors, washed windows, mowed lawns and ran errands.
- Fifteen youngsters had signed up for the **Downingtown Sportsmen's Club's** fishing contest, which was to end on September 1. So far, the biggest fish caught were a 33-inch eel caught in the Brandywine by Anthony Mento and a 16-inch sucker caught in Beaver Creek by Fred Bagshaw.

It's the first Alert Fire Co., on Downing Avenue



Donna Kneisly is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first of many people who correctly identified the site in the photo above as the original Alert Fire Co. station, located at 17 Downing Avenue in the borough. That fire house, dedicated in 1891, also was where Downingtown's Council conducted meetings for many years, until the Borough Hall was opened on Lancaster Avenue in 1926. After \$45,000 was spent to build the larger station at 122 W. Pennsylvania Ave. in 1941, and the old station was sold to the Downingtown Masonic Home Association for \$5,000, the original station on Downing Avenue was converted into an apartment house. The bell, shown in the photo above, now is located in front of the West Pennsylvania Avenue fire station. Sometime after the new station was constructed, the bell from the Downing Avenue fire house was sold to First Baptist Church in Downingtown. According to legend, however, the bell was soon returned to the fire company because it was "too loud."

Here's how YOU can receive a Hist-O-Gram every week

If you occasionally receive a pass-along copy of our Hist-O-Gram from a subscriber, you can receive a copy of our FREE Hist-O-Grams every week by accessing our website: www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org, and typing your 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.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html.

Group Photo of the Week:



Sixth graders who attended **St. Joseph's Catholic School** in Downingtown in 1967-68 included: top row: Cindy Chicosky, John Driscoll, Mary Beth Dague, Robbie Harrison, Michelle Moschitta, Henry Cook; second row: Chuck Daylor, Steven Moran, Denise Mattioni, Jim Deputy, Patty Powell, Carlen Davis; third row: Kathleen Capriotti, Nick Chilla, Mary Sieracki, Maryann Beam, Unknown, Maureen Cain; fourth row; Joe Butler, Ann DiOttavio, Diane DiMartin, Brian Dougherty, Donna Valente, Janine Taylor, John Stamps, AnnMarie Viscichini, Kevin Dougherty, Gary DiBerardinis, Debbie Fedastian; fifth row: Judy Hawthorn, Webster Hilton, Gary Bogush, Regina DiAntonio, Janice Mattioni, MaryJo Panichelli, Sandy Abbott, John McNeill, Janet Gazzero, Cynthia Madrigale, Robert Smith; sixth row: Sandy Ippolito, Mary Jessel, John Cooney, Agatha Formica, Joe Massucci, Donna Marcocci, Victor Taraschi, Joe Lang, Debbie Pacinelli. *In addition to Judy Hawthorn, who sent us the photo and provided many of the names, others who provided kids' identities were Kathy Capriotti, Donna Valente and Diane DiMartin.*

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

Our Wish List

The items listed below in our Wish List notes the materials with a Downingtown connection the Historical Society especially needs to reach its archival goals.

- Vintage uniforms worn by members of the DHS or Junior High sports teams or marching bands, and those worn by members of local fire departments in parades.
- Any yearbooks or newspapers published by DHS, or by Downingtown and Lionville Junior High Schools.
- Any printed materials related to: the Downingtown Young Whippets, Downingtown Little League, Downingtown Babe Ruth League or the Downingtown American Legion Baseball teams, and the Downingtown Girls' Softball League, the Lionville Youth Association, the West Bradford Youth Association, or the East Brandywine Youth Athletics.

If you need more info about any of these requests, please send an email to:

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

Replica of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

An informational/organizational meeting will be held at the East Brandywine Township municipal building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike, at 7 PM on Thursday, Feb. 25, to outline plans for the exhibit of a 250-foot, half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, which is coming to East Brandywine this summer. Hopewell United Methodist Church and East Brandywine Township will host the replicated memorial wall and an accompanying mobile education center display, the only Chester County venue on a national tour. The exhibition will be available for viewing throughout the day and night from July 28 to Aug. 1 at East Brandywine Township Community Park, 440 Dilworth Road. For more info, send an email to Linda Mento at ocitylinda@aol.com.

Night at the Oscars

You can watch clips from films nominated for an Oscars and guess the Oscar winners when the Downingtown Library, 122 Wallace Avenue, offers a Night at the Oscars at 6:30 PM Friday, February 26. The person who makes the most correct guesses of Oscar winners will receive prize. You can register via: www.downingtowntownlibrary.org.

Blood Drive

The Borough of Downingtown will host a Red Cross Blood Drive from 1-6 PM on Friday, February 26 in the Borough Hall Annex Building. To sign up to make a donation, please use the link on the borough's website - www.downingtowntown.org.

Farmers Community Market of Downingtown

The Community Farmers Market, at the Dane Décor Warehouse parking lot, 216 Washington Ave., Downingtown, will be open from 10 AM until noon on the first and third Saturdays, through March: Feb. 20, March 5 and 19. For more info, call 724-454-3674; or contact gaukerfarms@gmail.com; or via Community Market of Downingtown on Facebook.

Oldies Dance Party

The Downingtown Area Senior Center will have an Oldies Dance Party fundraiser, featuring Philadelphia disc jockey Jerry Blavat, also known as "The Geator with The Heater" and "the Boss with the Hot Sauce." You're encouraged to join the fun, from 9-11 on Saturday, April 9 at the Covered Bridge Room in Kimberton. Tickets are \$75 each and that includes food, beer, wine and raffles. Contact the center at 610-269-3939 to reserve your tickets.

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.

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 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 , 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.