



Vol. 2, No. 40

November 4, 2011

Thank you, thank you, thank you.....

.....For being so patient, as we slowly resolved the challenges of linking up with iContact, the very reputable bulk email system, so we could send our free Hist-O-Grams to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society.

One of the challenges was that the federal government requires authorized bulk emailers like iContact to request Hist-O-Gram recipients to confirm that they want to continue receiving our electronic newsletter every week. And don't forget, iContact doesn't dare to use any e-mail addresses for any purpose, other than to serve customers like us. Otherwise, the Feds will put them out of business.

Linking up with iContact took so long, frankly, because I had to learn a bunch of stuff I had been avoiding for many years. Still no whiz-bang when it comes to computers, but the education process demonstrated that my brain isn't totally addled with dementia.

Also, only 6 of the 1,300 recipients responded negatively when they were asked if they wanted to continue getting Hist-O-Grams. However, several hundred people apparently were flummoxed by the confirmation process. We hope to get most of them back on board in the coming months.

Thank you for your continued support.

Paranormal investigators to present Haunted History

The Chester County Paranormal Investigators will offer an evening of Haunted History at the Ashbridge House, home of the Downingtown Historical Society on East Lancaster Ave. (next to the Chick-Fil-A Restaurant) in Downingtown at 7:30 PM Monday, November 14.

Members of the Paranormal group will share the "evidence" they gathered during an overnight stay at the building and grounds. Those who attend the program will be able to see photographs containing unexplained anomalies, hear ghostly voices captured on recorders, and hear about personal encounters with the spirits visiting and residing at Ashbridge House. And they will be introduced to methods of investigation, both the scientific and the gentler side of ghost hunting, and have a chance to ask questions at the conclusion of the program.

Light refreshments will be served. There is no charge, but visitors can make a free-will offering.

To make a reservation, please call Parry Desmond, president of the Downingtown Historical Society, at [610-269-8037](tel:610-269-8037). Seating is limited; so sign up now. You won't want to miss this "haunting" good time!

Recollections of Jim Croce's years in Lyndell

It's hard to believe that more than 35 years have passed since Jim Croce died in a plane crash on September 20, 1973. Sadly, Croce never realized that many of the sacrifices and struggles during his Lyndell years (1970-73) did not begin to bear fruit, on a national stage, until after he died. For it was in Lyndell, where Croce wrote most of the songs on three albums that went gold. Those albums, are: *You Don't Mess Around With Jim*, *Life and Times*, *I Got a Name*, and *Photographs and Memories: Greatest Hits*.

To gain a perspective on Croce's life while he and his wife, Ingrid, lived in Lyndell, in East Brandywine Township, we talked to people knowledgeable about his life in that period. Here are their recollections:

- Patience Kaltenbach DiBerardinis remembers Croce as an "upbeat, charismatic" man, with a "great sense of humor." Patience's now-deceased parents, John and Ruth Kaltenbach, owned the three-apartment building on Highspire Road where the Croces lived in Lyndell. Now a teacher at Friendship School in the Coatesville District, she says Croce often brought his guitar to her family's nearby home and played Irish ballads. And on one visit to the Kaltenbach home, Croce brought iconic singer-song writer James Taylor along. Patience also revealed that the Croces, had a son, Adrian, when, they moved from their \$100-per-month apartment in Lyndell to another rental property in West Brandywine Township, shortly before Croce's death.
- Carole Leporeti, a tenant in one of the other two adjoining apartments at the time, recalls that she was part of a group of friends who often got together at the Croces' and were asked to pass judgment on the lyrics of many of Croce's future hits. "We'd say 'yea' or 'nay.'" Although he had to work in construction during the day, he often stayed up all night writing those songs, said Leporeti, a former communications and theatre professor at Delaware County Community College at the time. Today, she's a semi-retired resident of Cushing, ME. Croce's career was just beginning to take off when he lived in Lyndell, remembers Leporeti. On weekends, for example, "he opened for Randy Newman at the Main Point in Bryn Mawr, and for Woody Allen at the Valley Forge Music Fair," said Leporeti, who added that many soon-to-be famous musicians were constant visitors at the Croce's apartment. She also noted that both Jim and Ingrid were "great cooks." Ingrid's kitchen talents were put to good use after her husband's death, when she opened the highly regarded Croce's Restaurant and Jazz Bar in San Diego's Gaslight District in 1985.
- Arlene Rosato, a West Chester resident who was Croce's first cousin, often visited Ingrid in Lyndell when Jim was on the road doing concerts. Arlene said Jim often played the accordion at the close-knit family's get-togethers, when he was a

youngster, growing up in Upper Darby. She has every one of Jim's records, including the album that Ingrid and Jim made when they were starting their professional careers in New York City; it sold only five copies, says Arlene.

- Downingtown borough councilman Bob Smith says Croce often stopped in at Bob's Kwik Kook on West Lancaster in Downingtown, where Smith was a teenage, part-time employee. He says Croce usually spent time there talking about music with the owner, now-deceased Bob Chisolm. Smith remembers that Croce gave Chisolm an autographed copy of his first big album, *You Don't Mess Around with Jim*. Chisolm's widow gave the album to Smith, and he treasures it.
- Several people claimed singer/songwriter Arlo Guthrie visited the Croces in Lyndell, while others insisted that wasn't true.

55th Reunion of DHS Class of 1956



The DHS Class of 1956 celebrated its 55th class reunion on Saturday September 17 at the Whitford Country Club. The class also had a brunch Sunday morning at Ruffini's Restaurant in Thorndale. Pictured, left to right, back row, are: Sam Matthews, Fred Whitely, John Carmichael, Patty Hilton O'Reilly, John Bousum, Jack Dawson. Middle row: Ginny Law Pierce, Jerry Stinson, Jim Wells, Geddy Manzi, Joe Francella, Tony Price, Ralph Hall, Philomena DiBerardinis Kanouse, Tom Lee, Connie Osborne Henry. Front row: Joan Miley Stanford, Esther Zittle Dusenberre, Florence Smith McKeever, Shirley Baum Whiteman, Elsie Sinex Tarr and Martha Dunlap Trumbower.

Downingtown area news items in October 1976

DHS students recognized as Commended by the National Merit Scholarship Foundation were: Jeanette Hanson, Kathy Kipp, Sandy Smith, Sue Berry, Nick DiFonzo, Scott Harrop, Noel Hubler, Sally Wallace, Tim Hawes, David Heit, Rich Uhlman and Scott Long.

Officers of the Home and School Assn. for Uwchlan Hills School were: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shrum, co-presidents; Mrs. John Gillooly, vice president; Mrs. Edward Kirkbride, secretary; Mrs. John Bousum, treasurer.

Leaders of the Future Business Leaders Club at DHS were: Terry Norris, president; Lisa VonHacht, vice president; Davine White, secretary; Patti Gabriel, treasurer; and Mike Anthony, parliamentarian.

Officers of the Baptist Youth Fellowship at First Baptist Church, Downingtown, were: Junior High Group: Song Hagel, president; Bonnie Oberteuffer, vice president; Steve Hipp, secretary; Norman Windle, treasurer. Senior High officers were: Teal Burns, president; Cindy Rimes, vice president; Debbie Hipp, secretary; Sandy Burns, treasurer.

Members of Messiah Lutheran Church who entertained patients at Embreeville State Hospital were: Darryll and Kathy Kuhns, Joan Donaldson, Karen and Tammy Shirk, Martha Miller, Wanda and Len Snyder, Sherri Leonard, and Jane, Joan and Carole Leffler.

Property transfers included: Uwchlan, 411 Crump Rd., \$51,000; W. Bradford, 1504 Eagle Ridge Rd., \$52,000; Downingtown, 27 Prospect Ave., \$38,900; E. Brandywine, 5 Lenora Lane, \$51,743; Wallace, Denton Drive, \$63,000.

Honored for perfect attendance at Windsor Baptist Church were: Stan Miller, Carl and Nancy McCardell, David Simpson, and Deb and Dean Hegarty.

Baptized at Central Presbyterian Church were: Janet Lynne Booker, Jonathan Paul Carter, Shannon Elizabeth Givler and Matthew David Schelkopf.

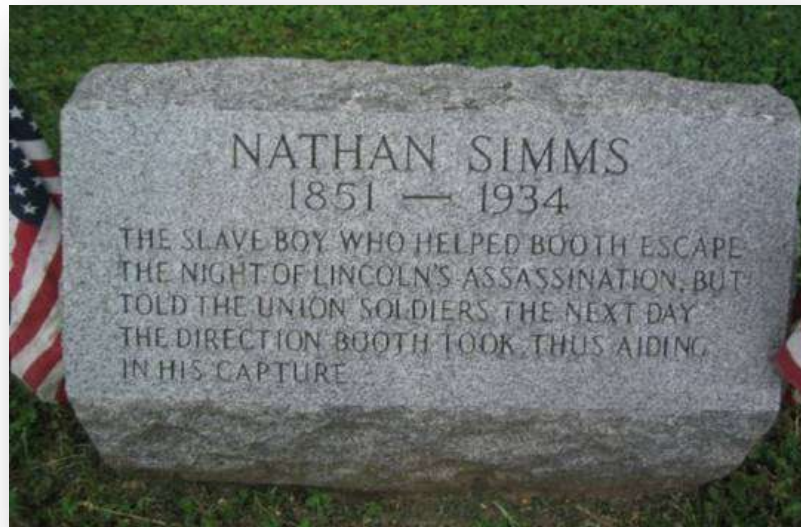
New officers of the Brandywine Lodge, International Order of Odd Fellows were: John McCausland, noble grand; Hervey Painter, vice grand; Gilbert Cox, secretary; Horace Wilson, treasurer; Creston Shoemaker, warden.

Richard Keers, Alert Fire Co., and James Ayers, Minquas Fire Co., were recognized as Outstanding Firefighters at a Downingtown Rotary Club meeting.

Linda Mattioni was DHS Homecoming Queen. Her court included: Ingrid Nielson, Kimberly Ann Brown, Andrea Deufel, Lori Gregor, Hope McClean, Donna Russel, Kelii Stephenson, Roxanne Stonewall and Terry Norris.

Members of the DHS field hockey team, which won the Ches-Mont title, included: Cindy Brown, Leslie Ward, Reese Sweeney, Sandy Bireley, Anne Kennedy, Cathy Treer, Jan Westenberger, Linda Mattioni, Sharon Watson, Barb Blye, Barb Dunwoody, Kathy Herion, Colleen Murtaugh, Ronnie Della Motta, Heidi Bittmann and Janet Reed.

Nathan Simms' tombstone



In Jack Hines' trivia quiz about West Bradford Township history in our Sept. 21, 2011 Hist-O-Gram, he noted that Marshallton resident Nathan Simms had been the slave boy who helped John Wilkes Booth escape after Booth assassinated President Lincoln. Dan Lindley, Chester County gravesite historian, sent us this photo of Simms' tombstone in Bradford Cemetery in Marshallton.

Here's how to become a member of the Historical Society.

Current members: It's time to renew your membership.

One year ago, we started emailing Hist-O-Grams to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. We want to thank you for your continued support of the Hist-O-Gram system, which offers recollections of local historical events and personalities. Better yet, Hist-O-Grams have evolved into a valuable communication tool, which helps make the Downingtown area a Good Neighbor community. That's why we have begun to include, in every edition, free announcements of public events and activities sponsored by local non-profit organizations.

In recognition of our efforts to make Hist-O-Grams part of the glue that holds our community together, we are asking readers like you to strengthen your connection with the Historical Society by becoming a member.

Also, we have cut expenses by sending members just one newsletter a year because printing and postage costs have increased so much. Now, Hist-O-Grams are our primary means of communication with our membership.

Those are some of the reasons why we're asking you Hist-O-Gram readers to help us by either joining the Historical Society or renewing your current membership. We have not solicited membership renewals in more than 12 months.

Please complete the membership form below. Your support and continued interest in the Historical Society is most appreciated.

Parry Desmond, President

PS: We will continue to send free Hist-O-Grams to ALL of you, every week.

Please complete this Membership Form to join the Historical Society, or renew your membership

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email address* _____

* We can't send you Hist-O-Grams unless you include your email address. We promise not to give your email address to any business or organization.

Individual \$20_____ Sr. Citizen (over 60) \$15_____ Family \$30_____

Business \$50_____ Sponsoring \$50 _____ Supporting \$100 _____

I wish to add a \$_____ donation, which is critical to the Historical Society's survival because less than 12% of its income comes from dues. Membership dues and donations are tax-deductible, since we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

Historic sites open in Uwchlan Township

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission administers two sites owned by the Township. Each will be open 2 – 4 PM Sunday, Nov. 6. Admission is free.

The John Cadwalader House is the headquarters of the Commission. It is an 18th, 19th and 21st century built, originally one of the oldest homes in the township. A display of antiques or memorabilia is featured. The Frances D. Matthews Research Library is housed in the building. Tours are conducted by Commission members.

Edith P. Moore Schoolhouse is a 19th century structure, which had been a one-room school, a township office, and now is furnished as a school looked like years ago. A hand pump still stands outside the school. Children can try their hand at using the pump, ringing the old school bell, and trying on clothing such as worn by the farm children who went to school here years ago. Two structures replicate old outhouses in the back yard.

Further information can be obtained by calling [610-280-9522](tel:610-280-9522).

Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

The Downingtown Lions Club will hold its annual William Woodruff Memorial Pancake Breakfast Saturday, Nov. 19. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 11:30 AM at Central Presbyterian Church, 100 West Uwchlan Ave., Downingtown.

Tickets are: \$6 for adults, \$4 for children 4 to 12 years old and they're free for children 3 years and under.

Tickets will be sold at the door. For advance tickets and more info, call [610-269-3650](tel:610-269-3650). Proceeds from this event will benefit the Downingtown Lions Club's local charities and to fund eye care for disadvantaged children in the Downingtown Area School District.

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Candle Light Dinner for Four at Downingtown Log House

Sponsored by Downingtown Lions Club. Catered by Luigi and Giovanni Ristorante.

Only 100 raffle tickets are being sold @ \$25. For tickets, call Lion Don Greenleaf, [610-363-2297](tel:610-363-2297). Drawing will take place on Saturday, Nov. 19 at Lions Club's Annual Pancake Breakfast. Dinner can be between Jan. 2 and March 31.

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 7:30 PM 2nd & 4th Tues. 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](tel:610-873-7117).

Leave Message. Leader: Cheryl Spaulding,

Email: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to make a comment, add your email address to our list, or have your email address deleted from the list, send an email to:

info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org. We won't share or sell email addresses.



Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 2, No. 41

November 10, 2011

Ghostbusters to present Haunted History Nov. 14

The Chester County Paranormal Investigators will offer an evening of Haunted History at the Ashbridge House, home of the Downingtown Historical Society on East Lancaster Ave. (next to the Chick-Fil-A Restaurant) in Downingtown at 7:30 PM Monday, November 14.

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Light refreshments will be served. There is no charge, but visitors can make a free-will offering.

To make a reservation, please call Parry Desmond, president of the Downingtown Historical Society, at 610-269-8037. Seating is limited; so sign up now. You won't want to miss this "haunting" good time!

Hot news in the Downingtown area 60 years ago

Some of the things going on during October and November 1951, according to the *Downingtown Archive*, were:

Raymond McBride, who lived in Byers, was elected national president of the Patriotic Sons of America.

Tap dancers who performed in the Downingtown Junior Woman's Club minstrel included: Gerry Deets, Susie Norris, Judy Henry, Mary Ann Hamilton, Jean Charles, Gail Lammey, Eileen Higgins, Connie and Barbara Osborne, Wanda Farra, Jean and Joan Carson, and Janet Hallowell.

So far, the Downingtown Friendly Committee survey shows that there are more Roman Catholics in the borough than any other religious sect. Methodists are the second largest sect.

Betty Jo Hammons was selected Harvest Queen at DHS. Her court included: Patsy Piersol, Barbara Seibert, Joan Pollock and Mary Jane Bird.

Bruce Lane scored three touchdowns as DHS beat West Chester 31-13.

Teachers still alive in 1951, who had taught at Glen Dale School, which was open for 65 years in Wallace Township, were: Mrs. Mary Shingle Miller, Mrs. Mary Supplee Forrest, Mrs. Rose Lammey Smedley, and Mrs. Bessie Foreman Smedley.

New officers of the Odd Fellows in Lionville were: Everett Wilson, past grand; Russell Allison, noble grand; and Schuyler Rennard, secretary.

Margaret Johnson was the star of the Downingtown Horse Show, sponsored by the American Legion and the Visiting Nurses Association.

New members of the Downingtown Woman's Club were Mrs. Thomas Peazzoni, Mrs. Frank Berry and Mrs. Jason Dreibelbis.

Among the students who participated in an amateur show at East Ward School were Sue Swarner, piano; Dotty Lee Chambers, dance; Rusty Craig, magic; John Yanshack, accordion; Robert Fidler, singer; and Jackie Hoffman, trumpet.

Twelve armed men beat through the woods between Hopewell School and Rte. 282, East Brandywine, looking for a rabid fox that was wounded twice but managed to escape. The fox was initially shot by John Himmelright, but the fox leaped up and bit him. Page Brown fired the second shot to hit the fox,

Mrs. Penrose Davis was reelected president of the Downingtown Christmas Committee. Other officers were Huston Mattson, treasurer and Jane McIlvaine, secretary.

Leads in the American Legion's production of "Crazy Daze" were: Francis Summers, Dr. and Mrs. Paul Fidler, Mrs. Howard Fitzgerald, Mrs. Fred Brookover, George Gregory, George Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Bareford, and Bill Wharry.

More info on Wallace Township's early schools

When Sandy Brannan saw the article on the Wallace Seminary School in 1840 in our Sept. 7 Hist-O-Gram, she pored over the files of the Wallace Township Historic Commission, where she's archivist, and found these tidbits on several of the township's schools:

- In 1810, when Wallace Township was still part of West Nantmeal Township, local families contributed \$364.64, building materials and labor to build a log schoolhouse, known as Indiantown School. A white-washed, one-story fieldstone replaced the log schoolhouse in 1859. The second story wasn't constructed until after the Civil War ended in 1865. Originally, there were eight grades on the first floor. As enrollment increased, upper grades, including a high school for a while, were on the second floor. There were outhouses and a hand pump outside. Girls and boys played in separate areas outside during recess. The school was closed in 1961. Used for many years as a township headquarters, the building on Fairview Road is being renovated. Former students have held reunions every September for decades.

- Two so-called one-room schoolhouses, closed for four years due to consolidation of the Downingtown School District, were sold at auction in 1965. Wallace Seminary School was sold for \$10,500 to Albert Greenfield, owner of the neighboring farm. The school was built by subscription in 1830 on land that had been part of the farm owned by Edward Hunter, who allowed Mormon converts to use the school for services. And Lincoln School was sold to a Mrs. Tatum for \$8,500. Township school board members at the auction included: Roger Irej Jr., president; Robert Mason, secretary; and Robert Gabriel, treasurer.

How friends and family can become Hist-O-Gram subscribers

Tell your friends and family members that they can become subscribers to our free, weekly Hist-O-Grams by going to our web site: www.downingtowntownareahistoricalsociety.org, and registering their email address on the home page. They will receive a response, requesting them to confirm that they wish to receive Hist-O-Grams every week. We will not share email addresses with any companies or organizations.

Clip joint will be open on Sunday afternoon

We didn't have our monthly newspaper clipping & pasting last Sunday because of two special functions at Ashbridge House. However, we will be catching up on clipping & pasting this Sunday afternoon, Nov. 13 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue,

in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays.

Don't forget your scissors. We hope things won't get too rowdy, since cider, as well as root beer, will be served with spice cookies.

How to join the Historical Society, or renew your membership

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Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

Holiday Bazaar

St. Paul's UCC Church, Rte. 100 and Worthington Rd., Exton will hold its eighth annual community Holiday Bazaar from 9 AM to 3 PM Saturday, Nov. 19. In addition to holiday crafts by local vendors and baked goods, it will include a silent auction, and a white elephant room. Also Santa Claus will be available to have his photo taken with kids and adults.

Flea Market

The Downingtown Library, 330 E. Lancaster Ave., will hold a flea market from 3-8 PM Friday, Nov. 18 and from 9 AM to 4 PM Saturday, Nov. 19. Treasures and Christmas items will be sold in the two upstairs rooms.

Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

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300-Year History of Uwchlan Township

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission announces its latest publication, *Uwchlan Township, 300 Years Above the Valley*, by Susannah W. Brody. The volume is a hard bound history, tracing the development of the township since 1712, to celebrate the upcoming Tricentennial in 2012.

For those who would like to pre-order, there is a form that can be downloaded from the township website link (www.Uwchlan.com) at a special price of \$25. Books ordered after the book signing party on December 4, will be priced at \$30 per copy. The publication features over 190 pages of maps, cemetery and genealogical lists, old photos and text covering subjects of early Indian trails, development of education, early churches, businesses and the history of township organizations. For more info, call UTHC headquarters at 610-280-9522.

The book will be available after December 5 at the Uwchlan Township Administration Building. Give the "Gift of History" this season.

Christmas Parade & Donner Dash

The Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade will take place on Saturday, December 10. The Donner Dash, a 1 Mile Run along the Parade route, will take place prior to the Parade. More information about the Parade and the Race can be found at www.dtownchristmas.com.

Joseph's People, Downingtown Chapter

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November 17, 2011

St James' 1843 charter turned over to Historical Society

Members of St. James Episcopal Church, Downingtown, recently turned over the parish's 1843 charter to the Historical Society. The transfer is a major addition to the Society's archival collection.



This photo of St. James Episcopal Church was taken in 1947.

The church's history began in 1842, when the Rev. Gregory Bedell, then rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity in West Chester, conducted a worship service in the home of Dr. Andrew Wills for a group of Episcopalians living in Downingtown.

In 1843, the cornerstone of St. James' Episcopal Church was laid in a plot on East Lancaster Avenue, next to the old Masonic Hall. That same year, the Downingtown Episcopalians invited the Rev. William Augustus White of Boston to come to Downingtown as rector of the new Episcopal church.

Plans for the building of a church were drawn up, and on June 20, 1843, the cornerstone of the church building was laid on a plot on East Lancaster Avenue. The building was completed in just four months, and was consecrated on October 26, 1843 by Bishop Onderdonk of Pennsylvania. The total cost, including the land, was just under \$2,000.

The original building was of classical design, with no steeple and no stained glass windows. In 1874, the graves in the cemetery behind the church were removed to Northwood Cemetery in compliance with a new Downingtown ordinance, decreeing that the burying of the dead within borough limits was forbidden.

In 1863, the church was enlarged, the wings, sanctuary and steeple were built, various memorial stained glass windows were installed, and the building took on the appearance which it has today.

Over time, an office wing and a parish hall were added. A community Nursery School (today's St. James' Pre-School) came into being, while the Rev. Richard Bartholomew was rector from 1962 until 1992.

He also presided over the building of St. James' Place, a housing facility for low-income elderly, which was opened in 1979. Since then, its forty apartments have always been filled.

St. James' is a Gospel-centered community, part of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. Its members are committed to enhancing the life of the Downingtown community. Its outreach activities include the parish's Thrift Shop, pre-school and involvement with the Lord's Pantry, which was originally housed at St. James', and participation in Downingtown's Christmas parade.

What was happening in the Downingtown area 35 years ago

The following news items were originally published in the *East Branch Citizen*, a Downingtown area weekly, in November 1976

New members of the Greater Downingtown Chamber of Commerce were Dr. Edward Kelly of Downingtown, and the Eagle Deli in Upper Uwchlan.

Thousands of area adults came to DHS for their swine flu shots.

DHS students who sang in the District Chorus were Charles Thompson, Jesse Shutt, Ellen Barker, Chris Daghir, Pam Loomis, Matthew Styles, Scott Harrop, and Jan Westenberger.

West Bradford Home and School Association members Barbara and Bob Campbell; Marge Rodgers, Dorothy, Ray, Bud and Linda Rennard; and Larry Shearer, erected three balance beams on the school playground.

Newly invested in Brownie Troop 1209 at Pickering Valley School were: Robin Faux, Amy Harple, Michelle Kevis, Leanne Lalich, Dawn Miller, Angie Rivera, Heidi Rosato, and Marie Rulon. Pam Hage and Linda Miller are leaders of the troop.

Members of the Downingtown Optimist Club who worked on the Downingtown Halloween parade were Anthony Viscichini, Tom Schneider, Lou Capriotti, parade chairman Jules Carpenter, Irv Geschwindt and Jack Henry.

Members of the Church School faculty at Marshallton Methodist were Nancy Giancola, Barb Spirko, Mildred Gerringer, Susie Hall, Hazel Busby, Linda Reiter, Pat Tuting, Sonja Marshall, Eileen Fetterman, Brenda McFarland, Caroline Collier, Bob and Ginny Hicks, and Mern Bedsworth.

Baptized at Hopewell Methodist Church were Scott Mull, Frank Garfield Swarner III, Sara Catherine Rissel, Richard Strother Nelliuss, and Even Lawrence Carpenter.

Recent property transfers included: 65 N. Woodmont Dr., Uwchlan, 73,000; 125 Brandywine Ave., Downingtown, \$25,000; 3 Highland Ct., E. Brandywine, \$43,900; 1111 Yankee Dr., W. Bradford, \$51,000; 6 Tally Ho Ln., W. Pikeland, \$80,000; 25 Gunning Ln., E. Caln, \$45,500.

DHS pupils selected to attend Lukens Steel's Student Management Conference were Jeff McIntyre, Jodi Ferrington, Steve Waldron and Cindi Griggs.

Coatesville Hospital, which plans to build a new facility in Caln Township, was concerned about plans for a new Downingtown Hospital near St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

New members of Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Brubaker, Mr. and Mrs. David Herman, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Huston, Mrs. Judy Krug, Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Pulsifer, and Mr. and Mrs. George Jacobs.

Members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville, who planned a bazaar, were Sandy Service, Eleanor Kennedy, Eleanor Parker, Karen Lammey, Joanne Cantwell, and Donna Dunn.

Don Wix was elected president of the LYA, and former president Paul Seymour was the new chairman. Elected to the board were John Brookover, Harry D'Donato, Jay Kimball, John Nagle, Dave Miller, Tom Girard and Fred Costello.

Members of the DHS soccer team who made the All-Ches-Mont team were Mike Bryant, Dave Helhake, Ken Porter, Wes Gabriel, J.C. Obendorfer and Kevin O'Brien.

Mount Raymond UAME Church, Downingtown, celebrated its 100th anniversary,

How did Rock Raymond Road get its name?

Don Greenleaf, Downingtown's retired Borough Manager, was able to answer part of a question Jenn Wagner sent to us: How did Rock Raymond Road get its name? The road runs through East Brandywine and Caln Townships, as well as the borough.

According to Don, it was named Rock Raymond because of the quarry that used to be (early 20th Century) just west of the Road, near the top of the hill above Manor Avenue. The "Dinky Railroad," which carried rock and sand from the quarry, crossed Rock Raymond, just above the tree line, and ran along the ridge to the former Florey Brick Yard.

Don also noted that old maps show Rock Raymond continued south through the borough, across Manor Avenue to Lancaster Avenue, and then further south along St. Joseph's Cemetery to Glenside Ave. where the Seeds farm was, in West Bradford. That's why a little piece of Rock Raymond Road still exists between Lancaster Avenue and Highland Avenue in the west end of the borough.

However, Don doesn't know where the "Raymond" part of the road's name came from. Can anyone help us with that?

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Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

Holiday Bazaar

St. Paul's UCC Church, Rte. 100 and Worthington Rd., Exton will hold its eighth annual community Holiday Bazaar from 9 AM to 3 PM Saturday, Nov. 19. In addition to holiday crafts by local vendors and baked goods, it will include a silent auction, and a white elephant room. Also Santa Claus will be available to have his photo taken with kids and adults.

Flea Market

The Downingtown Library, 330 E. Lancaster Ave., will hold a flea market from 3-8 PM Friday, Nov. 18 and from 9 AM to 4 PM Saturday, Nov. 19. Treasures and Christmas items will be sold in the two upstairs rooms.

Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

The Downingtown Lions Club will hold its annual William Woodruff Memorial Pancake Breakfast Saturday, Nov. 19. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 11:30 AM at Central Presbyterian Church, 100 West Uwchlan Ave., Downingtown. Tickets are: \$6 for adults, \$4 for children 4 to 12 years old and they're free for children 3 years and under. Tickets will be sold at the door. For advance tickets and more info, call 610-269-3650. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Downingtown Lions Club's local charities and to fund eye care for disadvantaged children in the Downingtown Area School District.

Candle Light Dinner for Four at Downingtown Log House

Sponsored by Downingtown Lions Club. Catered by Luigi and Giovanni Ristorante. Only 100 raffle tickets are being sold @ \$25. For tickets, call Lion Don Greenleaf, 610-363-2297. Drawing will take place on Saturday, Nov. 19 at Lions Club's Annual Pancake Breakfast. Dinner can be between Jan. 2 and March 31.

300-Year History of Uwchlan Township

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission announces its latest publication, *Uwchlan Township, 300 Years Above the Valley*, by Susannah W. Brody. The hard-bound volume traces the township's development since 1712, to celebrate the upcoming Tricentennial in 2012. For those who would like to pre-order, there is a form that can be downloaded from the township website link (www.Uwchlan.com) at a special price of \$25. Books ordered after the book signing party from 2-4 PM on Sunday, December 4 at the John Cadwalader House, 21 North Village Ave., Lionville, will be priced at \$30 per copy. The publication features over 190 pages of maps, cemetery and genealogical lists, old photos and text covering subjects such as Indian trails, development of education, early churches, businesses and the history of township organizations. For more info, call UTHC headquarters at 610-280-9522. The book will be available after December 5 at the Uwchlan Township Administration Building. Give the "Gift of History" this season.

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Parish Meeting Room behind the school, 460 Manor Ave., Downingtown. Call 610 873-7117.
Leave Message. Leader: Cheryl Spaulding,
Email: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

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Vol. 2, No. 43

November 24, 2011

White mushroom industry spawned in East Caln

Many people believe southern Chester County is the home of the mushroom industry in the United States. However, East Caln's Lewis R. Downing, was recognized as "the pioneer grower of white mushrooms in the United States," according to an article in *Reader's Digest*.

Downing had lived a full life, when he died at age 87 in 1962. He had served as Chester County's Prothonotary for one term, and was a Justice of the Peace for 18 years. More important, he owned and operated an East Caln farm, which had been by six generations of his family for nearly 200 years. Sadly, he lost the 444-acre farm in 1935, during the height of the Depression era.

Downing's most noteworthy accomplishment occurred on that farm, where he grew mushrooms in the 1920s. One day in 1926, while inspecting his mushrooms in the stone barn, which had served as a hospital for Washington's troops during the winter of Valley Forge, Downing discovered a cluster of snowy white buttons in one mushroom bed, according to an article published in the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1957.

And when the white buttons were picked, more white ones grew. "At the time, all cultivated mushrooms were of a creamy, light brown color," explained the article.

Downing sent some of the white mushrooms to the laboratory of L.F. Lambert, a Chester County breeder of mushroom spawn. And Lambert developed the spawn from which white mushrooms are grown today. As a result, 98 per cent of all American cultivated mushrooms are descendants of Downing's mutant, which had originally grown in his barn.

Did they have cows at DHS in the early 1960s?

Pete Petty, retired DHS social studies teacher, recently noted that the published floor plans for the high school, when it opened in 1960, included an area in the Industrial Arts area for cattle.

DHS still taught Agriculture in those days and Harold Klinger was the Ag teacher. Pete adds, "There were NO cattle in the designated area when I started there in September 1964. Some of your members may know if there were any cows at DHS from 1960 to 1964."

Is that a female ghost holding a cat?



One of the interesting discoveries the Chester County Paranormal Investigators revealed to the 40 people who attended the Haunted History program on Nov. 14 program was this photo. The investigators based their revelations on a night they spent several months ago at Ashbridge House, the Historical Society's 18th Century headquarters.

The photo was taken by Michael Fulton, one of the investigators, with a "full spectrum" camera. All the light filters were removed, so the camera takes in a wider range of the light spectrum than a normal camera.

"Although most folks don't want their family photos to come out red, paranormal investigators hope to "see" into the ultra-violet range through the camera's eye and hope to capture anything that might not be visible to our eyes, but can be recorded on a camera that does not have the UV filter any longer," explained Deb Estep, leader of the Paranormal Investigative group.

Apparently, the female ghost in the photo, who appears to be holding the "cat" with her right arm, had just arrived in the doorway of the main room on the first floor of Ashbridge House when Fulton snapped the picture. Throughout that night, several of the investigators remarked that they felt a "cat" brushing past their legs or winding around their ankles, recalled Estep.

"Of course, no cat was present in the house during our investigation," she added. However, the investigators made note of the remarks about the appearance of the "cat" in their report, and therefore were not surprised that a "cat" appeared in the photograph.

"There are lots of superstitions involving cats, continued Estep, "but I don't think any of them apply in this case. It would be more logical to assume that cats were part of the households of many of the folks who lived at Ashbridge House over the years. Perhaps one of the animals took their responsibility as a four-legged mousetrap very seriously and is still on duty. I'm sure a nice cuddle is an appropriate reward for any cat still taking care of things," she concluded.

Block captains needed for Luminaria project

Good Neighbors in the Downingtown area who want to make the Christmas holidays brighter this year are being asked to participate in the Downingtown Area Historical Society's Luminaria project.

The tradition of displaying as many as 15,000 lighted Luminaria candle sets along the sidewalks and driveways of homes in Downingtown and the surrounding townships has been a local Christmas Eve tradition for more than 30 years.

The Historical Society is looking for volunteers who will serve as block captains, to help make the Luminaria project a success by taking orders from neighbors, friends and family for Luminaria sets. The sets are comprised of a candle positioned in a plastic base which is placed in a wax-coated paper bag.

The Luminaria project is a major source of funding for the Historical Society. Proceeds from the project are used for the continued restoration and maintenance of Ashbridge House, the Historical Society's headquarters, and to preserve its archival collection of documents, photos and artifacts. The 302-year-old Ashbridge House is located on Route 30 in East Caln.

For additional information, call Carol Grigson at 610-269-1167.

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Leave Message. Leader: Cheryl Spaulding,

Email: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

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Vol. 2, No. 44

December 1, 2011

Miniature golf boomed here in the early 1930s

What did Downingtown area folks do for fun during the Depression era, when few people had much spending money?

Many of them played miniature golf.

Some local players competed on the franchised Tom Thumb outdoor course on Brandywine Avenue, built on the lawn at the rear of the Swan Hotel in August 1930.

A tournament was held there in October 1930, with no entrance fee. The competition was segmented into three divisions, men, women and girls, and boys, with prizes awarded to the top players.

The Tom Thumb franchise chain became the McDonalds and Pepsi of the early 1930s. Of the some 25,000 courses in the U.S. at the time, nearly 25 percent of them were patented Tom Thumb designs.

In fact, Wanamaker's Department Store featured Tom Thumb Fashions. Tom Thumb jackets with berets, priced at \$19.50, were sold to participants in the miniature golf craze.

Another local course was located near the Minquas fire hall on East Lancaster Avenue. It was characterized as "one of the show places of Downingtown" in the Oct. 30, 1930 edition of the *Downingtown News*, a weekly. Golfers paid just 25 cents to play the 18-hole course. And those who mastered the course's "tricky hazards" could win "useful, not ornamental, prizes" every week. In one tourney there, according to the Nov. 6, 1930 issue of the *Downingtown News*, Jack Parke won a sweater when he shot a 42, which was par for the course. The "pleasure emporium," owned by Newlin D. Arment, was drawing large crowds, perhaps because the 7,500 square foot facility also offered reading, lounge and smoking rooms.

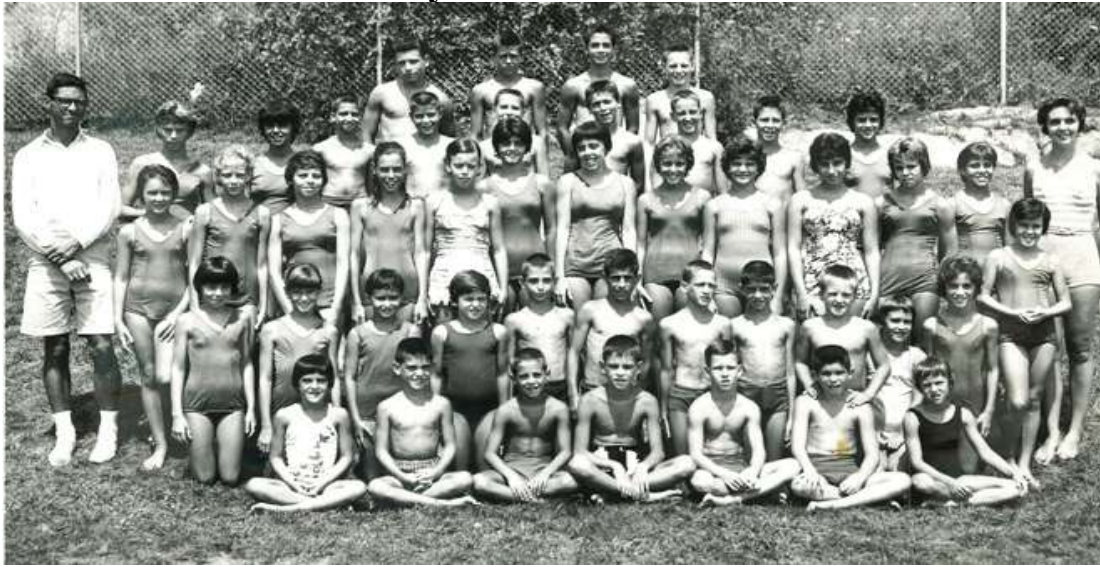
And an indoor course was built in the W. N. Howe Garage, 114 Washington Ave., in October 1930. The garage had been "redecorated in a very clever way, representing outdoors," reported the *Downingtown News*,

The miniature golf courses weren't unique to Downingtown in the 1930s. There were some 50,000 miniature golf courses in the U.S., and an estimated 4 million Americans enjoyed the sport at that time.

Both indoor and outdoor courses strove to simulate a country club atmosphere to create the illusion of "the good life," after the 1929 crash of the economy.

Although we have no data on how long the sport thrived in Downingtown, the miniature golf boom soon fizzled across the country, and most of the courses had closed by the late 1930s. The sport had a resurgence during the 1950s.

Members of St. Anthony's swim team in the mid-1960s



As the temperatures drop and your fuel bill keeps rising, have no fear. In about six months, many of you will be swimming like these youngsters did about 45 years ago. Front Row: Teri Valocchi, Jeff Valocchi, Scott Diberardinis, Jim Perella, Fred Reutter, Val DiEuliis, Judy Reutter; Second Row: Mary Jo Valocchi, Kathy Pomento, Nancy Massucci, Mary Ann Girafalco, John Marino, Pete DiBerardinis, Mike Caporale, Greg Valocchi, Rhys Williams, Besty Robbins, Frannie Visichini, Cindy Talucci, Third Row: Sharon Ewing, Christine Mento, Arlene Cozzone, Shirley Pomento, Carol Reutter, Cheryl Valocchi, Ameila Pizzi, Donna Capriotti, Barb Steidler, Carol Bartelmo, Bonita Capriotti, Rhonda Patton; Fourth Row: Michelle Plank, Judy Mento, Andrew Caporale, Stevie Talucci, Dave Robbins, Bobby Mento, Dave Caporale, Andy Eppolito, Joanne Mento. Fifth Row: Dave Gringer, Ethan Berry, Richard Feini, Steve DiLuigi. The coaches were Eric Snyder and Gwen Habecker.

Clip joint will be open on Sunday afternoon

You're all welcome to help us catchi up on clipping & pasting this Sunday afternoon, Dec. 4, at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays.

Items on local history make great gifts

Stymied on what to give friends and family for Christmas? How about an inexpensive gift that's connected with local history and will give many hours of pleasure?

Noted below are gift items you can purchase from the Downingtown Area Historical Society. You can place an order by calling Parry Desmond at 610-269-8037 or by email to: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

- **Downingtown's Greatest Generation.** This booklet is chock full of authentic stories about Downingtown High School alumni, who grew up during the Depression and

then fought in World War II, while family and friends back home contributed to the war effort as well.

Reprinted in the booklet are the 10 issues of the Alumni News, which were 8-page newsletters put out by the DHS Alumni Association. They were sent free to local GIs serving in the military between Aug. 1, 1943 and Nov. 1, 1945. Besides articles about classmates who were killed or wounded in action, the newsletters included many stories about DHS reunions, Whippet sports victories, and tales about goings-on around town.

The booklet, a cooperative project of the Downingtown Area Historical Society and the Downingtown Area High School Alumni Association, costs \$10. If the booklet must be mailed, add \$3.38, per copy, for postage.

- A pictorial **History of Downingtown** book for only \$20, which has nearly 200 old photos from the Historical Society's archives. The book's 128 pages also include information about life in the Downingtown area many years ago. If the book must be mailed, add \$3.38, per copy, for postage.
- A one-year **Gift Membership** costs just \$20 for a regular membership, \$15 for senior citizens (Over 60), and \$30 for a family membership. Checks for gift memberships should be made out to DAHS and mailed to: DAHS, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335. We will mail a card notifying each person receiving a gift membership.

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Vol. 2, No. 45

December 8, 2011

Revered former teacher celebrates 105th birthday; school library named in Miss Ezra's honor

It all began in September 1928, when Elizabeth Ezra signed a contract to teach in the Downingtown School District. Her annual salary was \$900, and the contract noted that she'd be terminated if she married before the end of the school year. And she wouldn't be paid if the school were closed because of a contagious disease in the community or "any other urgent reasons."



Miss Elizabeth Ezra, age 105, who taught at East Ward School for 41 years.

Despite that daunting start, Miss Ezra, a fresh graduate of West Chester State Teachers College (now West Chester University), began a 41-year teaching career at East Ward School on East Lancaster Avenue in the borough.

Miss Ezra was finally recognized as the gem of a teacher she was for some 1,000 students, primarily third graders, when the East Ward library was named in her honor. Many former students came to the dedication ceremony at the school on Monday, followed by a luncheon attended by school district officials, as well.

Many ex-students also came to her 105th birthday party, held in November at the Simpson Meadows retirement community in Downingtown, where she has lived for 11 years. Despite her advanced years, she only takes one pill a day, to control her blood pressure. And although time has taken a toll on her hearing and eyesight, Miss Ezra is in relatively good health.



Former students who came to Elizabeth Ezra's recent 105th birthday party included, front row, Brian Boggs and Barbara Zittle Harkins and Miss Ezra; standing, left to right: Peg Zittle Smith, Bud Bruton, Dorothy Zittle Mest, Mary Ann Phillips Curtiss, Pat Zittle Peterson, Gayle Miller Davis, Bumper Dague and Mike Castaldi. Miss Ezra taught all nine of the Zittle siblings; eight of whom attended the East Ward School library dedication.

This past summer, a group of admirer's petitioned the Downingtown Area School Board to change East Ward's name to the M. (Margaret) Elizabeth Ezra Elementary School. Ultimately, the School Board decided to dedicate the school library in her name.

One of the inspiring letters presented to the School Board was written by Laura Chandler Ericson. Mrs. Ericson offered a unique perspective because, in addition to being taught by Miss Ezra in the early 1940s, her former teacher had inspired Mrs. Ericson to pursue a teaching career.

As an example of how Miss Ezra “was truly ahead of her time,” Mrs. Ericson noted in her letter, that her third grade teacher had a mockup of a grocery store with cans, bags, etc. in the classroom. That real world environment enabled pupils to take turns portraying a grocer, store clerk and shopper. A similar scenario was set up for a banking situation, providing pupils with an opportunity to learn about writing checks, making deposits and other money skills, as well as lessons in accuracy and honesty.

In addition to teaching academics necessary for third graders, Miss Ezra made the learning processes “fun, exciting and interesting at the same time,” added Mrs. Ericson. “She really knew each student well and their needs, attended to each in her own special way.

“I remember thinking ‘I do not want to work in a bank, nor a store’,” recalled Mrs. Ericson. “However, when we all took our turn teaching something to the class and becoming the teacher, this I loved.” Thus, she earned a degree in education at Penn State and became a teacher at East Ward in 1957.

“Miss Ezra has been a role model for me,” concluded Mrs. Ericson. “She has walked through life with quiet grace, dignity and the love of God, as she has, year after year, walked the streets of Downingtown (she never drove a car) for all her needs and has requested nothing in return. I think it is time Downingtown expresses their gratitude to Miss Ezra by honoring her while she is with us, and will understand the love and appreciation her life in Downingtown has meant to so many people.”

Luminaria displays can help brighten your Christmas

Downingtown area residents can help make the Christmas holidays brighter this year by participating in the Downingtown Area Historical Society’s Luminaria project.

The Good Neighbor Community’s tradition of displaying as many as 15,000 lighted Luminaria candle sets along the sidewalks and driveways of homes and businesses in Downingtown and surrounding townships has been a local Christmas Eve legacy for more than 30 years.

Luminaria sets are comprised of a candle positioned in a re-useable plastic base, which is placed in a wax-coated paper bag. Each base and each candle and bag set cost 75 cents.

Those who wish to place an order for Luminaria sets or want more information on the project should contact Carol Grigson at 610-269-5413.

The Luminaria project is a major source of funding for the Downingtown Area Historical Society, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that receives no government funding. Proceeds from the project are used for the continued restoration of the 302-year-old Ashbridge House, the Historical Society’s headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln, and to preserve its archival collection of documents, photos and artifacts.

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- A pictorial **History of Downingtown** book for only \$20, which has nearly 200 old photos from the Historical Society's archives. The book's 128 pages also include information about life in the Downingtown area many years ago. If the book must be mailed, add \$3.38, per copy, for postage.
- A one-year **Gift Membership** costs just \$20 for a regular membership, \$15 for senior citizens (Over 60), and \$30 for a family membership. Checks for gift memberships should be made out to DAHS and mailed to: DAHS, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335. We will mail a card notifying each person receiving a gift membership.

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Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

Christmas Parade & Donner Dash

The Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade will take place on Saturday, December 10. The Donner Dash, a 1 Mile Run along the Parade route, will take place prior to the Parade. More information about the Parade and the Race can be found at www.dtownchristmas.com.

Joseph's People, Downingtown Chapter

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Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

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Vol. 2, No. 46

December 15, 2011

Book offers intriguing insights on Uwchlan's past

The Uwchlan Township's Historical Commission recently released Susannah W. Brody's *300 Year Above the Valley*. The book traces the township's development since 1712, to celebrate its upcoming tricentennial in 2012. It features over 190 pages of maps, cemetery and genealogical lists, old photos and text covering subjects such as Indian trails, development of education, early churches, businesses and the history of township organizations.

Some of the intriguing elements of historical information found in the book include:

- Although only 200 white males and 35 Black men over the age of 16 lived in Uwchlan in 1860 and many of them were Quakers, some 150 local men including from Upper Uwchlan and several nearby communities—who fought in the Civil War. Eight were African Americans, and five of them died during the war. Also, the 53rd Infantry was known as the Downingtown Guards.
- Uwchlan's population dropped from 810 in 1860 to 459 in 1920, because many of the township's small businesses—e.g. saw mills and grist mills—failed. They were victims of competition from more modern industrial sites. By 1960, the population had rebounded to just 995 souls.
- Lionville was the commercial and social center of the township. The largest early enterprise in the village was Thomas Furry's carriage factory, which opened in 1879. It included a blacksmith shop, a repair facility, a wheelwright and a paint shop. The factory was torn down in 1926, a victim of the horseless carriage.
- The first telephone arrived in Lionville in 1909, and electricity was brought to the village in 1922. And Route 100, which passed through the village then, was paved for the first time in 1923.
- Although Uwchlan was primarily a quiet, conservative farm community, some residents were progressively unique. For example, sisters Isabel and Mary Alice Gunn both attended Lionville High School, a two-year school operated in the Uwchlan Friends Meetinghouse from 1904 until 1931. Isabel, who had been a student at the Downingtown Business School, was the first woman in the township to own a car. She needed the car to drive back and forth from her job as a secretary/bookkeeper in Byers. According to 1920 entries in Mary Alice's diary, she attended horse races (almost every community had them back then), went to the movies in Downingtown, spent \$1.73 for gas and oil, and 20 cents for cigarettes.
- In the 19th Century, local farmers transported their milk via horse-drawn wagons, to stations in Byers, Anselma and Chester Springs, which were operated by a

Philadelphia milk processing firm. And by 1900, they were shipping milk by train to commercial dairies.

- Uwchlan residents bought \$18,450 (about \$200K in today's dollars) worth of Liberty Bonds after the United States entered World War I in 1917.
- An Honor Roll, honoring the 52 Uwchlan residents serving in the military during World War II, was unveiled in 1944. And Mrs. John Chevalier received a certificate from the Marine Corps for giving them "Christy," a three-year-old police dog which went through training at Camp Lejeune.
- The 1950 opening of the Downingtown interchange of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, although it was located in Uwchlan, had a major impact on the township, especially the farmers. Between 1970 and 1980, Uwchlan's population "increased to more than five thousand, as one farm after another was sold and subdivided for residential housing."

Copies of the hardcover book can be purchased for \$30 at the Uwchlan Township office, 715 North Ship Road, Exton, 610-363-9450. Or they can be ordered by accessing the township website, www.Uwchlan.com, and clicking on the Historical Commission and then scrolling down to the order form at the bottom of the page.

Downingtown's Donner Dash winners



Runners get set for the 1-mile race on Lancaster Avenue. Photo courtesy of Downingtown Does

A 1-mile race was added to the Borough's holiday festivities last Saturday, when 117 runners dashed down Lancaster Avenue. A huge crowd watched the race before the start of the annual Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade.

Edward Buck, 4:32, and Marina Nuncan, 4:52, were the overall male and female winners, respectively.

Female winners in the various age divisions were: Ellie Lofgren, 1-9; Keelin Hayes, 10-14; Julie Young, 15-19; Laura Onderko, 20-29; Larissa Binkley, 30-39; Sharon Sundin, 40-49; Lorraine Jasper, 50-59.

Male winners in the various age divisions were: Tyler Rodriguez, 1-9; Mark Matthews, 10-14; Lucas Watson, 15-19; Sean McKinney, 20-29; Mike Padilla, 30-39; Mike Sanderca, 40-49; Larry Rechtin, 50-59; Peter Sullivan, 60-69.

All race results can be found at www.runtheday.com/newresults/raceresults.php.

Luminaria displays can help brighten your Christmas

Downingtown area residents can help make the Christmas holidays brighter this year by participating in the Downingtown Area Historical Society's Luminaria project.

The Good Neighbor Community's tradition of displaying as many as 15,000 lighted Luminaria candle sets along the sidewalks and driveways of homes and businesses in Downingtown and surrounding townships has been a local Christmas Eve legacy for more than 30 years.

Luminaria sets are comprised of a candle positioned in a re-useable plastic base, which is placed in a wax-coated paper bag. Each base and each candle and bag set cost 75 cents.

Those who wish to place an order for Luminaria sets or want more information on the project should contact Carol Grigson at 610-269-5413.

The Luminaria project is a major source of funding for the Downingtown Area Historical Society, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that receives no government funding. Proceeds from the project are used for the continued restoration of the 302-year-old Ashbridge House, the Historical Society's headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln, and to preserve its archival collection of documents, photos and artifacts.

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Vol. 2, No. 47

December 22, 2011

Two local events got widespread attention 35 years ago

Two events in the Downingtown area received attention from TV networks and newspapers across the nation in December 1976.

A fire at the Downingtown Farmer's Market caused about \$2.5 million worth of damage on Dec. 6, and put 95 merchants out of business. More than 200 firefighters from 16 companies fought the fire, according to Tom Lee, chief of the Downingtown Fire Dept. The 125,000-square-foot structure had been opened by Charles and Daniel Tabas in January 1952. The Tabases claimed they would build a "bigger and better facility."

And the quiet night of December 26 was suddenly disrupted when a five-car Amtrak train, traveling from Philadelphia to Chicago, derailed at Viaduct Avenue in Downingtown.

About 150 firefighters and other first responders from all over the county swarmed to the borough. Luckily, there were no fatalities or life threatening injuries among the 27 people taken to local hospitals. Most of the some 100 crash victims were transported in school buses to DHS. Nine members of the high school's cafeteria staff prepared and served coffee, tea and hot chocolate, and hot soup supplied by the Red Cross. And there was enough bologna in the refrigerator to make about 150 sandwiches.

Calmer events and activities in December 1976

Student Council officers at Downingtown Junior High were Georgia Newlin, president; Rick Smith, vice president; Robert Hunter, secretary; and Terri Swisher, treasurer.

DHS students who won scholarships included Debbie Woods, who won the Presidential Classroom Scholarship, which includes a one-week seminar in Washington, DC. And Chris Bryan received the Campbell Scholarship, named in honor of the recently deceased football coach.

Winners in Cub Pack 23's Pinewood Derby were Mike Busch, first; Brian Flaherty, second; and Doyle Siever, third.

Girl Scouts from Cadette Troop 1242 who put on a Christmas party for children at the United Cerebral Palsy unit at Embreeville State Hospital included: Barbara Whiteman, Lois Thompson, Kelley Dempsey, Amy McClure, Kathy Whiteman, Leslie Tompkins and Amy Bozarth.

Those responsible for the Downingtown Junior Woman's Club's Christmas Bazaar were Shirley Pinola, Kathy Doyle, Lee Durnell and Barbara Klunk.

Honored by the West Bradford Township Historical Commission were: Fred Hoopes, 91, oldest resident; Clarence Moore, member of the family that had lived in the same house for the longest time, 131 years; and Dorothy Gray Perdue, descendent of the township's oldest family, the Embrees, who settled in West Bradford in 1791.

New members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville, were: Mr. and Mrs. Warren Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Nimtz, and Mr. and Mrs. Billy Randolph.

New officers of the United Methodist Women at Hopewell Methodist included: Sherry Lucas, president; Joyce Bower, vice president; Jackie Buller, secretary; and Edie Thompson, treasurer.

Old East Ward students who made the "A" Honor Roll were Marianne Frame, Gloria Hamilton, Krista Lang, Patti Molusky and Kim Ryan.

DHS grads Lex Ziobro and Felicia Ficca were members of the West Chester State College team that won field hockey national championships.

Recent property transfers included: West Bradford, 1304 Sherwood Dr., \$41,940; East Brandywine, 3 W. Merion Cir., \$53,850; Uwchlan, 233 Biddle Dr., \$55,000; Upper Uwchlan, 2 Revere Rd. \$62,000; Downingtown, 436 Chesterfield Dr., \$42,000.

Members of the DHS football team, named to the All Ches-Mont team were: Joel Ashinhurst, running back, honorable mention; Jesse Hamilton, tackle, honorable mention; Steve Gotberg, defensive back, first team; Mike Madrigale, middle guard, first team; Anthony Celii, center, first team; Ken Borland, defensive end, honorable mention; Joe Martin, running back, first team; Al Scofield, linebacker, second team; Dave Green, placekicker, second team. Chic Chiccino was named Coach of the Year.

Officers of the re-chartered Downingtown Jaycee chapter were: Don Herrington, chairman; Doug Rambo, president; Bob Noble, internal vice president; Ed Moore, secretary; Joe Darlington, treasurer; and Bob Menna, chaplain.

New officers of the Uwchlan Civic Assn. were Susanne Donaldson, president; Gerry Gallagher, vice president; Bobbie Heatherington, treasurer; and Marilyn Fuhrmeister, secretary.

New officers of St. Paul's UCC Church, Lionville, were: Bessie Rogers and Daniel Shoop, elders; Susan Smith and Donald Bortz, deacons; Louis Cracas and Joseph Moroney, trustees; Mary Shoop, treasurer; and Deanna Page, financial secretary.

Members of the committee overseeing construction of a new sanctuary at Windsor Baptist Church, Eagle, were: Carolyn Miller, Walter Styer Jr., Dean Seese, Rev. Dean Hagerty, Rachel Nagy, Don Anthony, Tom Jeffery and Jim Runyen.

Baptized at Downingtown Methodist Church were: Mr. and Mrs. John Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. Terry Fleming, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Moyer, Carol Cochran, Anna Moyers, William Duffy, and Robert Moyers.

Anthony Gambale was hired as Downingtown borough's director of finance, and Barbara Radcliff was named head librarian at the Downingtown Library.

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Vol. 2, No. 48

December 29, 2011

Alert photographers shot pictures in December 1976

Those are two of the photos which were sent by Jeff Stevens of the Alert Fire Co. in response to the article in the Dec. 22 Hist-O-Gram, about major events that occurred in December 1976. The one directly below was taken at the site when an Amtrak passenger train derailed in the Borough on Dec. 26. And at the end of this article is a shot of the fire that destroyed the Downingtown Farmers' Market in East Caln on Dec. 6.



Firefighters rescue victims on snow-covered hillside above Viaduct Avenue after an Amtrak passenger train derailed in Downingtown on December 26, 1976.

Jeff also sent us this recollection of the train derailling on Dec. 26, 1976:

He and the rest of his family were driving on a Christmas visit to the home of his Aunt and Uncle who lived on Stuart Avenue in the Borough, when they stopped for a traffic signal at the intersection of West Lancaster and Viaduct Avenues.

“I was sitting in the backseat and just happened to be looking down Viaduct Avenue at the train going by, when all of a sudden a large boom sounded, and the sky lit-up bright white. All four of us in the car were in shock, and we just looked at each other as we saw the passenger cars sliding down the embankment!!!

“My father, Bob, made the right-turn onto Downing Avenue to make the one block trip to the Alert Fire Co. No. 1 on Pennsylvania Avenue. All of the power was out in the area. The whole family helped push the large engine room door up. He (Bob) then started to blow the sirens on the trucks to alert the volunteers that there was an emergency.

“And, most of the volunteers, who heard the loud boom and the sirens, responded to the firehouse and then they went to the scene of the accident with the rescue and fire trucks.

“Needless to say, we never made it to that Christmas visit, that night.” concluded Jeff.



The Downingtown Farmers' Market was destroyed by a fire on Dec. 6, 1976.

Photos of many more Downingtown area events that the Alert Fire Co. responded to over the years are accessible at:

http://alertfire.org/gallery.php?album_id=2770&mode=child_Gallery

Downingtown area news in December 1951

Here's what was going on 60 years ago, according to the *Downingtown Archive*.

- Members of the DHS football squad, which was undefeated and won the league championship, named to the All-Ches-Mont team, included: first team: Johnny Talierco, Joe Rodri, Jay Walton, Buddy Supplee; second team, Larry Geedy, George Ciarlone, Bruce Lane, honorable mention, Walt Styer and Robert "Juicy" Miller. Rodri, a tackle, also was named to the All-State third team.
- Supervising principal Charles Emery told the school board that the Junior-Senior High School's enrollment would increase to 1,000 pupils in two years (1953), and that there would be about 1,200 students in grades 9-12 in 1956.
- Nominees for offices at the Alert Fire Co. were Atlee Ney, president; George Nixdorf, vice president; Elmer Schrumpf, secretary; Leland Wilson, treasurer; Arthur Glauner, financial secretary.
- Markward Men's Shop and Katherine's Kiddies Korner, both located on West Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, obtained exclusive franchises to operate the Pennsylvania Plan, which allows customers to accumulate cash with a merchant towards a future purchase.
- Richard Ruth, 17, of Lionville, shot a fox which was believed to have bitten Eugene, Marlene and Barbara Ulrich.
And the East Brandywine Mothers Club had a fence installed around the Hopewell School, to preclude a student from being bitten by one of the rabid foxes that plagued the area. Those who helped erect the fence were George Bowman, Ray Shank, Hayes Carr Jr., Lloyd Swarner, Hayes Carr Sr., Clarence Cook, James Heugh, Richard Deets, William Shaw (who donated the fence), Howard Wilson, and Charles Ezrah. Clifford Orr donated the use of a truck, and Joseph Kahler made the gate.
- Barbara Jean Black and Landis Hyde were elected Queen and King of Mother Goose Land, one of the features at the American Legion benefit show.
- Ross Ney won the \$25 first prize in the fire prevention contest sponsored by the Downingtown Fire Department.
- Four Downingtown Motor Co. employees, who received engraved watches from President Ed Baldwin for long service, were: Park Alexander, 38 years; Harry Alexander, 33 years; Clair Skiles and Walt McKinney, both 31 years.
- Barrels in which shoppers donated food products were distributed to local food stores by the Downingtown Christmas Committee. Members of the committee who decorated the barrels were Fred Hite, Carroll Lewis, John Massimini, John Marple, John DeLuca, Al Chandler and Harry Dunlop.
- Members of the newly formed safety patrol at West Ward School, Downingtown, included: Park Plank, Gerald Williams, Judy Manning, Todd Stong, Kathryn Smedley, Fay Manzi, Charles Henry, Bobby Broschard, Richard Ciarlone, Mary Ann Hamilton, Amelia Duppel and Betty D'Attilio.

Thanks for your help with Luminaria project

The Historical Society is most grateful for all the block captains who solicited sales from their neighbors and the hundreds of people who bought Luminaria candle sets this year. In addition to brightening many blocks in the Downingtown area on Christmas Eve, proceeds from the project will enable the Historical Society to continue to preserve Ashbridge House, our headquarters, and be a repository for thousands of local artifacts and photos and printed materials.

Clip joint re-opens on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 8

Volunteers who usually clip and paste hundreds of newspaper clippings at Ashbridge House on the first Sunday of each month, will have the day off on New Years Day, which falls on Jan. 1.

Instead, you're all invited to clip and paste your little hearts out from 1-4 PM on Sunday, Jan. 8 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays.

And although many of you have promised not to eat another cookie for many months, we are authorized to sweeten our offer by issuing special waivers to those who help us clip and paste.

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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 610-269-9352 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 7:30 PM 2nd & 4th Tues. 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.

Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to make a comment, add your email address to the sign-up box on the home page of our website. We won't share or sell any email addresses.

Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, send an email to:

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.