



Hellertown Historical Society

Dedicated to Preserving the History and Heritage of Hellertown and its People

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Feedback is essential for any publication to improve and grow. We welcome readers to provide their opinions, suggestions and comments about the content featured in our newsletter. Please send your feedback to the Editor at the email address below.

Newsletter Email Contacts

Managing Editor – Donald Mills

editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

General Information

info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

Hellertown Historical Society

150 W.Walnut Street

Hellertown PA 18055

610.838.1770

www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org



HHS Holiday Open House 2016

Each year, on the first Friday of December, the Hellertown Historical Society invites – and welcomes – members, neighbors, and friends to enjoy the many and varied amenities of the Grist Mill. We call it “Open House,” and the name really described this year’s holiday event.

Without a doubt, more guests enjoyed the 2016 Open House than any similar event in the history of the society!



“Hellertown” Blue and Grey Stoneware for Sale

Even though entertainment started at 7:00 p.m., visitors were in the Mill’s Tavern Room as early as 5:30p.m. to claim their seats. By show time, it was standing room only! The entertainers, celebrating their ninth year at our Open House, were Norris and James and the Lehigh Valley Idols. And, they didn’t disappoint. The audience loved their variety of Christmas music and interesting stories. The MC was Faith Gabriel, daughter of Norris and James, who was only nine years old when she first entertained at this event almost ten years ago. How time flies!



Faith Gabriel Leads the Entertainment



Entertainers Norris and James

The Open House is a community event, and area businesses come together each year to help make it a success. Springtown Hotel donated Pulled Pork Sliders, a vegetable tray, and a beautiful sheet cake topped with

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Submit Articles or Stories

Hellertown Historical Society

Newsletter seeks any stories or news articles pertaining to Hellertown’s History and its people. Anyone is encouraged to submit articles, stories or news to the

newsletter Managing Editor for consideration in upcoming editions. Submissions may be edited for content and/or space requirements. Please use the contact information on this page to submit your entry.



President’s Message:

Dear Members and Friends,

This is the time of year when we remind you, our members and friends, to join or renew your membership with the Society. As you may know, the Society is comprised only of volunteers and your dues and support keep this organization’s doors open for students, researchers, and the public. We cannot do this without you, and your support is appreciated.

Dues and dedicated, wonderful PEOPLE keep our Society plugging away. We are looking for a few good men and women to plug away with us. If you have computer skills, like planning events, or just want to have some fun while making an impact – we want to know you! Please email me at info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org if you are interested in learning

more about helping us.

I look forward to seeing you again this year as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Heller-Wagner Grist Mill (Circa 1767). Make sure that you follow us on Facebook and check back on our website for upcoming events and fundraising efforts. As we close the door on 2016, I wish you and yours a very happy New Year and, as always, thank you for supporting your Historical Society!

Stacie Torkos, President

Holiday Open House...

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berries and whipped cream icing. Saylor’s provided three different varieties of ring bologna, and Diana’s Café donated Bourbon Meatballs. As always, members and friends cooked and baked, too, providing such goodies as dips, cookies, tarts, pumpkin rolls, and even beautifully presented single servings of popcorn. At the end of the evening, all that remained were crumbs, which testifies to the success of the Open House!



Many attendees also took advantage of touring the Grist Mill’s museum, and visiting the expansive

operating train display in the Miller’s House.



HHS Engineers Run the Trains to the Delight of the Younger Guests



Mark the first Friday of December 2017 on your calendar. The Hellertown Historical Society’s annual Open House is truly a Holiday Event you won’t want to miss!



2017 Hellertown Jail Fundraising

By Stacie Torkos

During 2017, the Society’s major initiative will be the restoration of Hellertown’s First Jail. This building, which is badly deteriorated, will need repairs of approximately \$12,000 in materials and labor to restore the structure.

The Society applied for a grant in early 2016 that would have provided funding as well as labor assistance for this project. However, we were not awarded the grant and as a result, the Society will have to fund the project entirely. While some donations have been received toward this goal, we still have far to go in raising the necessary funds for the restoration.

In December, a very generous member of the Hellertown Historical Society pledged a \$6,000 matching grant to move this project along. Our challenge is to raise \$6,000 in matching funds...and to meet the challenge we need your help! The Society is accepting and appreciates direct monetary donations that will be placed in restricted funds for the restoration. Also keep watch for upcoming fundraising events and efforts to help

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Hellertown Jail Fundraising...

(Continued from Page 2)

support this initiative. You can stay connected by following us on Facebook and checking the events page on the Society's website.

Thank you for supporting the Society's ongoing efforts to preserve Hellertown's heritage.

Hellertown's First Jail (below), built in 1872, is located just off Penn Street along Silver Creek



This View Shows Severe Deterioration



Interior View



Heller Family Announcement

The following letter was received by the Newsletter Editor to share with our Readers...

"Dear Editor,

My name is Jeff Heller, I am a 10th generation Heller. I want to wish you and your readers a Merry Christmas and give you an update on the expansion of our Heller family this year. I also wanted to thank you and your members for all you do and tell you that we appreciate all that you and the historical society are doing to preserve the history of Hellertown. I very much enjoy reading about what is going on in the newsletters. In that light, I wanted to tell you about the newest member of the Heller family and was hoping to have it put into the newsletter. Franklin Michael Heller was born on July 10th at 9:51PM weighing 7lb 7 ounces. His parents are my brother Jason Heller and his wife Krista. They are thrilled to celebrate the birth of their firstborn child. Jason is a computer network engineer in Raleigh, North Carolina while Krista is an outpatient therapist that specialized in children. My wife Erin and I also live in Raleigh where we are both registered nurses. Our other brother Jon Heller has two boys Elliott and Oliver. I have attached a photo of Jason & Krista, and Franklin as well as a picture from their wedding a few years ago with my other brother and my parents. Pictured from left to right is Jeff Heller, Jon Heller, Krista Heller, Jason Heller, Dawn Heller and Allen Heller. Thanks again and Merry Christmas!!"



Jason, Krista and Franklin Heller

L-R Jeff, Jon, Krista, Jason, Dawn and Allen Heller



Please Visit Our Website
www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org
Over 20,000 Visitors Can't Be Wrong!

Those Were The Days : Part 3

By Dolores Di Paolo

PLEASE LET IT SNOW!!!

Picture it... the time of year, winter, the day... sometime in the 1950s.

We are 5 years old. We get up in the morning. We look out the window. And there it is...SNOW!

Oh boy! We eat breakfast and beg our mother to let us go out in the snow. Being a wonderful Mother, she gets our snow gear and starts getting us dressed...with warm socks, leggings, boots, coat, scarf, mitten and a hat that covers the ears. With a big struggle getting the boots on over our shoes (the only kind they made then) we are ready to go. AhAhAhAhAh..... Mommy, "I have to go to the bathroom". With a big sigh, Mom says" why didn't you tell me before you got dressed?" " But...I didn't have to go then." So, off come the leggings, the coat and the scarf. We can pull the leggings down and let them drag on the floor so we don't have to struggle with the boots.

So...after a half hour of getting dressed, out we go. The snow is too deep for our little legs so the first thing we do is fall in the snow. The cold stuff gets between the top of our gloves and the sleeve of the coat. MOMMY! She gets us dry gloves and back we go, this time, more carefully. We stayed out another 20 minutes and get cold and bored and call, "Mommy I'm ready to come in." Then we get all toasty warm and if we were lucky got some hot chocolate to warm our tummies.

As we got older, we dressed ourselves...waxed the runners of the sled...and headed out to the nearest hill which was usually at Dimmick Park.

The park had two good hills to sled on: one in left field at the little league field on Constitution

Avenue, or the really steep bank at the big league field (the field with the baseball stands).

At 10 yrs. old we always went to the hill at the little league field. The lower end was not too steep, but the upper end was very steep and scary. Until we got our nerve up, we started sledding at the lower end. Then someone would float a dare...and we had to go down the steep bank. First we went down sitting up and then on our stomachs. (Going down the big hill on your stomach was very scary! In fact, you always felt like you were going to crash...or fly off the sled).

Night time sledding was the most fun! And, the best place for night time sledding was Willow Road (in Mountainview). In the late 1950s there were very few cars and sleds would fly like the wind down the road.

The kids in Durham Terrace had it the best! Tobias Drive and/or Rentzheimer Drive were closed to thru traffic by the police so kids could sleigh ride.

Even as teenagers we didn't outgrow the thrill of sleigh riding! In fact, as bigger kids we tried to experience bigger and better rides!

The big hurrah was the golf course! Actually, we were probably trespassing on Bethlehem Steel Company property, but we never got caught.

Our favorite hill in the golf course was the one we called "dead man's drop". It was sooooo much fun going down! But then...we had to climb back up! Until we got to the top we were exhausted, but ready for another thrill.

The best thrill I ever had on that hill was using my friend's aluminum saucer. That thing just spun all the way down the hill and I prayed that I landed in one piece. We were often sledding on dead man's drop for hours. We came home wet, cold, and hungry. If we were lucky,

Mom had hot chocolate waiting for us to warm our tummies.

Do you remember the ice skating at the Grist Mill? It is my understanding the field along Walnut Street was flooded by the fire company, and the weather in January and February was cold enough to freeze it solid. The rink was very popular and was crowded each evening as long as the weather cooperated. I can vaguely remember hot chocolate being sold by one of the local service organizations.

Back in the day, when we were kids, there seems to me there were more snow storms than today. And, deeper snow storms! I even remember a snow storm with thunder! Do you remember Ice Storms? I don't remember as many as there are today, but I do remember the time we got almost a ½ inch of ice. Nobody was going anywhere that day.

I also don't remember weather forecasters predicting snow storms, how much the snow would accumulate, and when the snow would stop. It was always a surprise.

Did You Know?

By Bill Frey, Jr.

In 1872, the first year of Hellertown's incorporation as a Borough, it held its first election for Burgess and Town Council.

The first Hellertown election was held at the Pennsylvania Hotel, (now Tavern House) at Main and Penn Streets, owned by Francis Berger, on April 12, 1872.

After the excitement of the election and the ballots were counted, Thomas R. Laubach became Hellertown's first Burgess defeating Peter Harris by one vote (60-59), proving the theory that every vote does count.

(Info from Hellertown's Centennial Book)

Need info about us?

We have an email address for that...

info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

Financial Stability at Hellertown Historical Society

By Gil Stauffer

There has been, and continues to be, publicity both locally and around the country concerning treasurers of non-profits who are charged and convicted of unlawfully taking funds from their organizations. In fact, there are at least two cases involving Hellertown organizations that have received extensive media coverage over the past few years.

The purpose of this article is to assure you – the members and friends who support the Hellertown Historical Society – that the funds you've donated to the society are safe and every cent is being used to preserve Hellertown's heritage.

Here is a recap of the procedures and processes that were implemented over the past ten years – under past presidents Earl Hill and Dianne Borovies, and current president Stacie Torkos, to ensure and insure that Hellertown Historical Society is around for many, many years to come:

- An accounting system has been established that tracks the source and allocation of every dollar received in income, and the purpose of every check that is written. There is no petty cash fund, and bills/invoices are required for every disbursement.
- All bills/invoices of \$250 or more require signatures of two society officers before a check is cut for payment.
- An annual budget is prepared based on past income/expenses and anticipated income/expenses. The budget is approved by the Board of Directors prior to the start of each fiscal year. All disbursements must adhere to budget guidelines.
- The treasurer's records are examined annually by an audit committee appointed by the society president and approved by the Board of Directors. The committee is composed of both Board members and non-board members. An extensive report, with recommendations, is submitted to the board by the audit committee.
- The treasurer is bonded to an amount recommended by the board of Directors. This amount is reviewed annually by both the Board and the insurance company and continues to be raised as the organization grows. The insurance company issuing the bond coverage thoroughly vets the society's treasurer before initial coverage is granted.

To further secure the Society and its assets, former president Borovies established a panel of Trustees who are charged with periodic review of the Society's insurance coverage, investment strategies, and financial stability. The Trustees are non-Board members and are not day-to-day active volunteers and are financial experts in their fields. This committee has made many valuable recommendations since it was established over five years ago.

The financial stability of your organization is very important, and every decision made by the Board of Directors is rendered with that responsibility in mind. As a result, the only media coverage you'll see or hear about the Hellertown Historical Society will be the many steps your society is taking to preserve Hellertown's heritage.

Editor's Note : Gil Stauffer is the current Treasurer of Hellertown Historical Society and has been for many years. His expertise with financial software and extensive financial background make him an important key player in guiding the Board of Directors to maintain the fiscal responsibility of the organization.

Corporal Edward H. Ackerman

The following is from the Hellertown Centennial Book:

Corporal Edward Henry Ackerman was the first Hellertonian to lose his life in World War I. Therefore, in his honor, the local Post of the American Legion is named. Cpl. Ackerman was born in Bethlehem on July 12, 1896, moved to town in 1914 and was employed at Hess Lumber and Coal before entering the service. He was killed October 8, 1918 when a piece of shrapnel from a German shell struck his head. On October 16, 1921 the Edward H. Ackerman Post conducted the military funeral of their Post's name-bearer with interment in Hellertown Union Cemetery.



Corporal Edward H Ackerman

Ask The Grump

By Grumpy Ward

This is an introduction of a new Q & A article series that will provide readers with interactive access to some of Hellertown’s historical past. Our resident “historian” Grumpy Ward, was born and raised in Hellertown and has a ton of memories and facts to share. He would love to hear from you. His Dad named him Grumpy because he would wake up in the morning complaining about everything. There will be more about Grumpy in the next issue.

Readers are invited to submit questions to the Editor via the email address on the first page, or by sending a letter to the Hellertown Historical Society at 150 W.Walnut Street, Hellertown PA 18055. Answers to your questions will appear in future issues.

Here are the first questions...

Q : Was there a Civil Defense Center in Hellertown?

A : Yes, it was located under the old band stage in Dimmick Park, adjacent to the pavilion. The new band shell now

resides on this spot. There will be an article about this period of Hellertown history in a future newsletter issue.

Q : I heard there was a bowling alley in Hellertown before PMP Bowling Lanes. What was it called and where was it located?

A : Yes, there was another bowling alley in Hellertown. It was located above the old Rauscher’s Hardware Store on Main Street at the corner of Main and Hampton. This building is now the home of The Lost Tavern Brewery. There was an outside stairway that led to the second floor alleys. There were 8 lanes for bowling and one lane of duck pins. The alleys needed “pin boys” to set the pins by hand. This was probably a dangerous job because of flying pins and fast-rolling bowling balls.

Now it’s your turn to submit questions to this resident legend and learn some of Hellertown’s historical past.

More Holiday Open House Photos Courtesy Saucon Source and Photographer Atom Kallen

