

May 2018

# Hellertown Historical Society

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

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#### Upcoming 2018 Events

Saucon Valley Community Day – August 18 Keep Watch for Additional Events



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.

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# Hellertown Heritage Day Held

By Don Mills

Hellertown Historical Society held Hellertown Heritage Day, formerly Hellertown History Day, on April 28. Despite some early clouds and chilly temperature, skies eventually cleared and the sun warmed the crowd of enthusiasts who gathered for a variety of activities.

Planned activities included tours of the various historical buildings, displays and grounds on the Society's Walnut Street site, bake sale and shopping inside and outside the Tavern Room, a farming and agricultural display in the Society's barn building, a classic car show, a Bluegrass Band, a kid's fishing clinic, our Society Engineers operated the train display and plenty of other activities. The Licensed 2 Grill Food Truck prepared some awesome dishes for the guests and our good friends from the Lost Tavern Brewery brought some great beers for those who developed an adult thirst with so many things to do. A few tables and chairs brought outdoors were set-up near the music and the pond to create a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy food, drink and discussion with friends.

Perhaps the most anticipated and popular activity was the trolley tours of Hellertown. A trolley bus transported guests to see various historic buildings and sites around Hellertown. Along the route, visitors saw the first school at Main and Pine Streets now Pondelek's Florists, the first Dewey Fire Company building on Saucon Street, Detwiller Plaza, Borough Hall and other sites. The trolley made two stops along the way, one at the recently restored Jail House and one at the current Dewey Fire Company. Both offered guests the opportunity to visit these places in greater detail. The Jail was the first jail for the Borough and features an interior cell. Paperwork inside the jail displayed recorded data for some of the unlucky few who were sentenced to spend time due to their crimes. Although many were minor offenses, it was still interesting to read the written records from the early 1900's. At Dewey Fire Company, visitors were treated to a museum of the Fire Company's history with artifacts and other memorabilia.

Many thanks for the support and assistance of all involved with making this event a huge success. The Society looks forward to next year's Heritage Day!

(See Photos From Heritage Day on Page 10)

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.

The Hellertown Historical Society (HHS) Newsletter is published by the Hellertown Historical Society, 150 W.Walnut Street, Hellertown, PA 18055. Statements and opinions expressed in the HHS Newsletter articles and editorials do not necessarily represent the policies or opinions of the Hellertown Historical Society.

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# President's Message:

Dear Members and Friends,

Spring is such a wonderful time of year. It is exciting to get out and about and explore after Winter has passed.

We welcomed Spring on April 28<sup>th</sup> at our Heritage Day event. The day was filled with all sorts of activities at the Grist Mill in celebration of Hellertown's heritage. We also offered historical trolley tours of Hellertown, which were so popular that I couldn't find an empty seat until the very last tour of the day! The event represents what HHS is all about. We are pleased with the attendance and thank everyone who celebrated with us in support of our mission. We cannot wait for next year's Heritage Day.

As always, I continue to be overjoyed by the people who have embraced HHS and support us in our dedicated efforts preserving and sharing Hellertown's Heritage- *your heritage*. Happy Spring!

Stacie Torkos, President

#### Losing One Of Our Own

By Gloria Michael Sadly we have lost one of our own. On Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Robert (Bob) Zitto age 85, passed away peacefully at the home of his niece Bonnie.

Bob was born and worked in New Jersey. He served our country bravely in the Korean War. Bob loved fishing and hunting at his "Up Country" home in the Catskills. He moved to the Lehigh Valley to live closer to his twin brother, Hobart and his family.

Bob started to volunteer at the Historical Society almost 20 years Bob would show up every ago. Tuesday and Thursday when he was in town. He was a dedicated volunteer and would perform any job that was assigned to him. Bob particularly loved to work in the flower beds scattered around our grounds. Every spring he would donate, plant, nurture and dead head the flowers in our flower beds. As you can see in the attached photo, Bob loved doing this.

Bob had a dry sense of humor and was always ready with a joke or some rhyme that made us all chuckle. He even entertained us in other languages. His personality was as soft and gentle as the petals on those flowers that he planted.

A "Time for Remembrance" was held in the Tavern Room on

Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> and attended by many of his family and friends. Ironic that it was the first day of Spring.

We lost him much too soon but his memories will remain with us for a long time. As Andrea Bocelli sings in one of his songs, "Time to Say Goodbye" to our Dear Friend, Bob Zitto.



**Bob at The Miller House** 



**Bob Planting Flowers at HHS** 

Need info about us? We have an email address for that... info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

#### HHS Cryptogram

By Dolores Di Paolo See if you can solve this "Hellertown Historical Society" Cryptogram. The answer will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter. If you cannot wait for the answer to be published, send your answer to the Editor at the email address below for confirmation...

editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

ZLGA IHCERY JY LHKKHCARZY GKVREA GKZGWE XEHU ALH ILCGEH "DRVH CJQLA URZY" ? UC. ZGKAHC TJKJIHP (Hint : Y=N)

The last cryptogram appears below along with the answer. Congratulations to all who submitted the correct answer to the Editor.

ALZ EPDA KUWIKZ THE MOST UNIQUE FAAOFVAWPU WU PKO APYU ATTRACTION IN OUR TOWN WD XPDA OWSZO VFSZOU IS LOST RIVER CAVERN. (Hint : Z=E)

# Follow-Up To The Airport Story...

By Dolores Stauffer Di Paolo

The article from the last edition of our newsletter ended with this paragraph...

On July 2, 1937, they were 7,000 miles from completing their trip. Earhart's next scheduled stop was at Howland Island in the South Pacific...she and Noonan never made it. Pieces of glass bottles and a finger bone were found. What happened to them is still a mystery for us to ponder. Did she live happily ever after with Noonan? Did they crash and die on another small island and these items washed up on shore? Maybe these items found have nothing at all to do with them?

#### Further information has been provided...

Bones found on the remote Pacific island years ago were determined, in 1940, by a scientist to be that of a man and not Amelia Earhart.

This year, the bones were reexamined using modern forensics. They used a picture of Amelia Earhart holding a can (it looked like a gas can). They measured the can and then using those measurements determined the length of the arm bone (radius) and the leg bone (humerus). These bones were then determined to be that of a woman and more than likely, Amelia Earhart. Also found were a sextant, made by an American company, and a woman's shoe on the island.

So, did she crash and her body wash up on the island, or did she survive and die alone on the Island? Whatever happened to Fred Noonan, her navigator? The outcome may never be known.

#### Hellertown's War Bond Reward

By Bill Frey

During World War II, civic groups, towns and cities across the Nation participated in the buying of millions of dollars in war bonds for the raising of funds for the purchase of equipment, Liberty Ships and aircraft. The Government rewarded many of these groups by naming ships and planes in their honor. The Borough of Hellertown was rewarded after a successful war bond drive by having a fighter plane named "The Borough of Hellertown, PA". The P-47 Thunderbolt, manufactured by Republic Aviation Corporation in Farmingdale, Long Island, NY, carried tail number "28301" (serial number 42-8301) and delivered to the US Army on May 14, 1943 at a cost of \$76,562.00.

On July 27, 1943 the plane was assigned to Cross City, FL on the Orlando Satellite Field. During the same month, while serving at the Orlando Airbase, Francis Gollinger wrote home that he saw the aircraft with the name "The Borough of Hellertown, PA". Francis drove a Lehigh Valley Dairy truck delivering milk to Hellertown before the war.

The life of the plane remains incomplete, but Government files seem to suggest that it was assigned to Camp Springs Army Airfield, MD which is now Andrews Air Force Base, to serve as a training aircraft. Military records show that the plane was scrapped February 17, 1945.



### Did You Know? - AWS

By Bill Frey

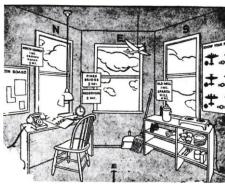
The Aircraft Warning System (AWS) was a civilian service operating during World War II, started by the US Army to keep watch for enemy aircraft. With new long range bombers that could penetrate American airspace, the Bethlehem Steel Company could have been a prime bombing target.

Located at Constitution Avenue and Juniper Road in the East End Field, now Dimmick Park, there was a small wooden shack. This shack was occupied 24/7 for the observation and identification of all planes flying over the area.

This observation post was under the direction of Miss Mary Hess of Hellertown who was a local school teacher. Miss Hess completed a six week extensive training course in Philadelphia given by the US Army. All planes flying over the area were identified by type, altitude and direction which was then immediately reported to a special Army Aircraft Warning Service located in New York City. Many Hellertown citizens spent countless hours with 'eyes to the skies' watching for enemy aircraft.



An AWS Member I.D. Card



A Typical AWS Observation Post

HHS Word Scramble

Clue - A favorite place for kids to go after school with their pennies.

Unscramble the above words. Use the letters above the arrow points to unscramble for the answer to the clue. Answers will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

#### A Special Thank You

Hellertown Historical Society would like to thank Saucon Valley High School football, basketball and baseball standout and 2005 graduate, Erik Gough for volunteering to mow our lawn around our facility this past Summer. Erik is currently teaching in the Bethlehem Area School District.



Thanks Erik...

#### Did You Know? -Winter Galley Arrival

By Bill Frey During the 1730's, crossing of the Atlantic Ocean to start a new life in what is now America was a very dangerous trip. In the year 1738, approximately 1600 people perished during their 30-90 day crossing on 15 ships.



Early in the Summer of 1738, a fleet of five ships left Rotterdam, Holland for a required stop in Deal, England to register cargo.

On September 5<sup>th</sup> of that year, the first ship of that fleet arrived in Philadelphia with 360 passengers of which 252 were men. Women and children under the age of 16 were not listed on passenger manifests. This ship was named the 'Winter Galley' and sailed under the command of Captain Edward Paynter. Listed on the 'Winter Galley's' manifest are members of two families that eventually came to this area and help settle the Hellertown area, the Heller Family and the Wagner Family.



Please Visit Our Website www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org Nearly 30,000 Visitors Can't Be Wrong!

#### HHS Volunteer Spotlight: Gloria Michael and Joe Sofka

Gloria was born in Quakertown Hospital and was raised in Hellertown, on Kiernan Ave. She Graduated from Hellertown Lower Saucon High School in 1959.

Gloria worked for Bethlehem Steel for 24 years until being laid off in 1985. She then worked for Miller Memorial Blood Center for 13 years and is now enjoying retirement.

Gloria has been a volunteer at HHS since 2011. She currently holds the Office of Secretary at the Society. Her other duty at HHS is to chair two annual Shopping at The Mill events since their inception in 2012. She said "I love being a part of this great team of volunteers at HHS because we work hard and play hard."



Joe was born in Bethlehem and was raised on the family farm in Lower Saucon Township. He graduated from Bethlehem Vocational School in 1955. He then worked for Bethlehem Steel for 30 years until his department closed down. He then worked for Winfield Business Forms for 10 years until retirement.

Joe has been a water color artist for over 45 years. He is the inhouse artist for the Historical Society.

Joe started to volunteer for the Society in 2011 and is involved in many of the projects that are being done including his passion: restoring Hellertown's First Jail. Joe loves to fish and hunt deer in his spare time. He also owns the sweetest Llasa Apso named Mattie who is often seen with him at the Society's facility.

Being a volunteer at HHS has brought him many new friendships. Joe and Gloria are both widowed and their involvement as volunteers brought them together again after almost 50 years. Their romance blossomed and the rest is history. So you can see that there are some great perks in being a volunteer.

#### HHS Sponsors 2018 Saucon Valley Easter Egg Hunt

By Don Mills

For the second year, Hellertown Historical Society, along with members of the former Saucon Valley Ambucs and Relay for Life volunteers, organized the Saucon Valley Easter Egg Hunt held March 31. Despite having a significant snowstorm only a week before, the weather cooperated during that previous week to rid Dimmick Park of the snow so that the various fields could be "littered" with plastic eggs filled with candy treats and several types of 'prizes'.

Eager youngsters and their families gathered along the edges of their age-appropriate fields before the prompt 10AM start. Children holding their baskets, bags or any other 'egg-carrying' parcel waited patiently for the siren to sound that would signal the mad dash to scoop up eggs and prizes.

While the anxiety was building, several Dewey Fire Company Fire Trucks arrived to bring the guest of honor, the Easter Bunny.

At 10AM sharp, the siren sounded and it was utter chaos erupting through the entire Park while children 'ransacked' every square inch of each field to scoop up their prizes. It was all over in a matter of 30 seconds and most every child had a huge smile proudly showing their parents their basket or bag full of eggs and prizes.



An enormous line then formed snaking its way in the field adjacent to the park pavilion as children and their families readied themselves to visit briefly with the Easter Bunny for pictures. Prize eggs were turned into the volunteers at the pavilion in exchange for chocolate treats and other goodies.



Special thanks to the many volunteers from the Saucon Valley Ambucs, Relay for Life and our own Hellertown Historical Society who came out to help prepare the bags of eggs and distribute them around the park as well as helping to clean-up afterward. Also, a great big thank you to Hellertown Police Department and the Borough Parks Service for providing order and a beautiful location to hold such a nice family event. And special thanks to Dewey Fire Company and Ron Smith for bringing their fire trucks for all to enjoy as well as chauffeuring the Easter Bunny for this special engagement.

We are already looking forward to next year's event, but hope it will be warmer and drier on April 20, 2019!!

(See More Photos On Page 9)

# HHS - May 2018 Word Search

Find the words from the list in the puzzle. The words may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and even reversed in those same directions. Once each word is found, mark it in the puzzle and cross the word off the list until you find them all. Each word represents some historical significance to Hellertown and is explained below the puzzle.

|  | - |   |   |   |   |                            | 20  |   |   | - | 255 | - |   |  | - |   |   | - |   |  |
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| X  | М | С | N | w | R | G                          | G   | М | V | Η | E   | v | K | Z  | Α | U | L | Α | G |  |
| D  | н | М | A | A | Ι | E                          | Q   | Y | R | 0 | Т   | S | Ι | н  | x | L | М | R | v |  |
| Y  | U | L | М | G | F | N                          | F   | D | K | С | I   | M | М | I  | D | 0 | Ι | Р | 0 |  |
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| v  | М | L | Q | Z | R | G                          | S   | Е | М | Т | G   | Р | U | R  | Т | Т | L | Р | S |  |
| I  | C | 0 | Α | Р | 0 | N                          | Y   | в | R | Ι | D   | G | E | M  | Ι | R | R | S | Р |  |
| С  | Y | V | L | Ι | Ζ | E                          | Q   | v | T | G | Z   | D | Ι | Н  | x | I | A | Р | в |  |
| L  | Р | R | R | L | N | Z                          | Р   | Н | A | F | A   | L | S | Y  | Q | v | С | Y | J |  |
| K  | K | U | E | H | R | N                          | A   | М | v | R | L   | L | Y | Н  | В | E | Е | A | v |  |
| М  | v | С | М | Т | E | I                          | Е   | D | E | w | Е   | Е | L | U  | Z | R | Е | W | S |  |
| Н  | Е | Н | Ι | U | E | L                          | F   | T | R | v | A   | I | М | Е  | G | С | S | Н | A |  |
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| Х  | I | Ι | н | R | L | Z                          | E   | Е | E | E | A   | I | N | н  | Т | v | Е | I | С |  |
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| М  | R | Т | Т | s | D | L                          | S   | S | N | v | 0   | Е | в | х  | R | R | D | S | N |  |
| D  | U | U | N | S | X | Q                          | Т   | I | K | 0 | E   | Z | в | Α  | R | N | D | G | I |  |
| х  | Т | N | E | Е | R | E                          | K   | M | E | W | I   | J | U | х  | C | S | v | N | A |  |
| D  | D | Ι | R | R | R | U                          | М   | Т | D | W | В   | N | Е | R  | Q | Н | I | Ι | J |  |
| A  | к | 0 | Е | N | N | A                          | М   | R | E | K | С   | Α | U | v  | U | Т | Р | K | E |  |
| K  | 0 | N | S | D | Е | Т                          | w   | Ι | L | L | Е   | R | Т | K  | С | E | В | K | Р |  |
| ACKERMAN<br>DETWILLER<br>HELLER<br>KINGSHIGHWAY<br>MILLRACE<br>PROSSER<br>SAUCONIA |   |   |   |   |   | D<br>H<br>L<br>M<br>R<br>S | CENTENNIAL<br>DIMMICK<br>HESS<br>LAUBACH<br>MOLLRIFLE<br>REINHARD<br>STERNS |   |   |   |     |   |   | CHRISTUNION<br>GRISTMILL<br>HISTORY<br>LOSTRIVERCAVERNS<br>PONYBRIDGE<br>RENTZHEIMER<br>TAVERN |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| TURBINE<br>WEISEL  |   |   |   |   |   |                            | UNIONCEMETERY<br>WINTERGALLEY   |   |   |   |     |   |   | WAGNER<br>ZIMPFER  |   |   |   |   |   |  |

#### Word Search Puzzle Words Explained

By Don Mills The words appearing in the puzzle on the previous page have historic significance to Hellertown.

For example, "**Ackerman**" is the surname of Edward H. Ackerman, the first Hellertonian to lose his life during WW1; the American Legion Post 397 on Main Street is named in his honor.

"Detwiller" is the surname of Dr. William F. Detwiller, who practiced medicine in Hellertown. Detwiller Plaza is named after him when his nephew, Dr. Albert K. Detwiller bequeathed the area to the Borough for public use. The now famous Clock Tower is the prized landmark on the Plaza.

"Heller" is the surname of Christopher Heller whose family settled in the area. Hellertown is named after him.

**"Kings Highway**" was the original name of what is now Main Street – PA412 through the Borough. It was the main route from Philadelphia to Bethlehem in the 1700's.

"Mill Race" is merely the name of the re-routed waterway of the Saucon Creek to power the water wheel that was originally used to power the "Grist Mill" "Turbine". Did you notice two more puzzle words in the previous sentence?

"**Prosser**" was the surname and name of a family-operated pharmacy on Main Street which is now Advanced Optics.

"Sauconia" was the name of the movie theater on Main Street, now Saucon Dental Group. The theater operated from the 1940's through the mid 1960's, then reopened for a few more years under the name "The Movies".

"Weisel" was the surname of the owner of a harness and saddle shop operated by Edward Weisel adjacent to what is now Detwiller Plaza and Hellertown Borough Hall, near the intersection of Easton Road and Main Street.

"**Centennial**" as in the Borough of Hellertown celebrated their centennial in the year 1972 after incorporating in March of 1872.

"**Dimmick**" is the surname of Morris Dimmick for whom Dimmick Park is named. Mr. Dimmick served as Mayor of Hellertown from 1926-1946.

"Hess" is the surname of Howard Hess, a prominent Hellertown citizen who once served as Mayor 1946-1949.

"Laubach" is the surname of Thomas Laubach who was the Borough's first Burgess, 1872-1873. He also erected the Borough's first jailhouse on his property, now owned by HHS.

The "**Moll Rifle**" was a firearm, among others, produced by Peter and David Moll in Hellertown in the 1820's.

"Reinhard" is the surname of Mr. A.I. Reinhard who was credited with the organization of the first Hellertown High School. Mr. Reinhard gave twenty-one years of faithful service to the Borough Schools. An elementary school, which no longer exists, was named in his honor.

"Sterns" was the surname of a popular Borough grocer who operated a store at the corner of Main and Water Streets where Attorney Brad Wagner's office now operates.

"Union Cemetery" is the name of the Borough's cemetery located at SE corner of Main and Walnut Streets.

"Winter Galley" is the name of the ship the brought the Heller Family to Philadelphia from Rotterdam in 1738, and a new life.

"**Christ Union**" is the name of the church that was struck by lightning and burned completely in 189. This was the catalyst that began the formation of an organized fire department, Dewey Fire Company.

"**History**"...well let's face it, if it were not for history, we would know nothing of our past.

"Lost River Caverns" is perhaps Hellertown's most important natural landmark. Located on Durham Street just East of Dimmick Park. The 'Cave' as it has been called by locals, has been in continuous operation by the Gilman Family since 1930 offering tours and an onsite store with jewels and other minerals.

"Pony Bridge" is the name given to the old iron truss bridge that once spanned the Saucon Creek on Walnut Street adjacent to HHS Headquarters. Determined to be of historic value, it was removed from service and restored. It was then erected adjacent to the original crossing now serving as a pedestrian bridge over a Saucon Creek race.

"Rentzheimer" is the surname of Tobias Rentzheimer who in 1832, built one of Hellertown's earliest homes at the intersection of Durham Street and Tobais Drive. This building now serves as the offices for Hellertown Borough Authority.

"Tavern" what would a 19<sup>th</sup> century town be like without a tavern for locals to enjoy food and drink? While several are known to have existed, HHS operates their own in the lower level of the Heller-Wagner Grist Mill on Walnut Street. The tavern with its authentic period decor may be rented for special events and parties.

"Wagner" is the surname of Stoffel Wagner, who built the current Grist Mill on West Walnut Street in 1767.

"Zimpfer" is the surname of Charles Zimpfer, a faithful Hellertonian who not only served as Fire Chief for Dewey Fire Company, but also as Chief of Police for the Borough of Hellertown.

### Pony Bridge Refurbishment 20 Years Later

By Don Mills

In 1970, the Walnut Street Bridge spanning the Saucon Creek was removed from service due to structural and functional deficiencies. Thanks to the work of some forward-thinking individuals, the bridge was set in a holding area nearby its original location until refurbishment could be accomplished. Why refurbish it? Because the bridge is a single-span, single-lane through Pratt truss style. It was built around 1860 by the Beckel Iron Foundry and Machine Shop formerly in Bethlehem. The bridge designed by Francis Lowthorp was constructed using wrought and cast iron members and is the only truss-style bridge built by Beckel that still exists.

A group of Lehigh University graduate students and the Hellertown Historical Society teamed together to begin the refurbishment after 25 years from its removal. The Lehigh team created a working plan to rehabilitate the bridge across the current mill race adjacent to its original location. Between 1994 and 1998, disassembly, documentation, inspections, evaluations, repairs and replacements of the bridge members took place. A new abutment and walls were constructed and finally the pieces were reassembled at its new location. Re-decking, painting and stone work were done as the final touches to finish the project.

The bridge formally reopened to pedestrian traffic in June 2000 serving the Community as a foot bridge and important part of local Hellertown history. The bridge is now part of the National Parks Service Historic American Engineering Record Collection cataloged as PA-206.



Walnut Street Bridge, 1970



Walnut Street Bridge, 2000

(Information for this article provided by Perry S. Green, PhD, PE, Bechtel Power Corporation)

# WANTED Administrative Assistant

#### The perfect volunteer opportunity for a restless retired person

Hellertown Historical Society has an immediate opening for a volunteer with administrative and clerical skills. This new volunteer position will be responsible for organizing the society's various administrative office functions to include: Fielding telephone calls and voice mail messages, typing written and electronic correspondence, clerical duties in support of President, Treasurer, Archivist and others as needed. Experience using Microsoft Word a must. Experience with Excel helpful.

Most important...volunteer hours are very flexible! Contact Stacie Torkos (President) at <u>stacietorkos@gmail.com</u> or Gil Stauffer (Treasurer) at <u>gilstauffer@rcn.com</u>.



# 2018 Hellertown Heritage Day