



# Hellertown Historical Society

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

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## Upcoming Events

- Election Day Bake Sale – May 16 9AM-4PM
- Dine In Dimmick – June 3 2-6PM
- Community Day – August 19 10AM-3PM



*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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## Walnut Street "Pony" Bridge One Step Away from Historical Recognition

On February 8, Hellertown Historical Society received confirmation that the Walnut Street "Pony" Bridge was unanimously approved for nomination to the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP). The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Historic Preservation Board of Directors reviewed materials and data provided with our application and recognized the historic significance of the structure and feel it deserves this prestigious recognition.

The next step to finalize the placement on the NRHP is for the National Park Service to review this nomination and render their decision. Although there is no set schedule for this to occur, it is believed it may happen around June or July this year.

While we await this final step to occur, we feel confident in a positive outcome. The fact that the PHMC has rendered their decision unanimously says much about the historic significance and value the bridge offers. That alone is a prestigious honor!

Should the National Park Service meet and approve our nomination for inclusion on the NRHP, there will be much planning for the Society to begin in order to celebrate the honor.

None of this would have occurred if not for the ambition and steadfast enthusiasm of HHS volunteer, Chip Wagner. Chip spearheaded this project by gathering all the information required to submit the application. He also maintained contact with the various agencies to ensure a smooth path toward the final goal. HHS generously thanks Chip for his hard work and tireless sacrifices to ensure this project reaches a positive conclusion. We should note that Chip Wagner is a direct descendant of the Christopher Wagner family who owned and operated the grist mill in the later 1700's. We are very proud of this great honor Chip has provided the Historical Society.



Walnut Street Bridge, 1970



Walnut Street Bridge, 2000

## 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 Hellertown Enthusiasts:

Welcome to the latest newsletter edition by the Hellertown Historical Society. As always, it is packed with good memories of our Community's heritage, with an eye to the future before us.

This issue is dedicated to the many volunteers at HHS that give their time for our benefit. Volunteerism is a sign of a healthy community. It is not as common as it used to be, so it deserves recognition.

Chip Wagner is one of those amazing volunteers. Thanks to his initiative and drive, we dare to hope that our Wagner-Walnut Pony Bridge will be placed on the National Historic

Registry by the National Park Service very soon. Stay tuned for more news on that. Thank you, Chip!

I would be remiss if I did not mention Stacie Torkos, who has served tirelessly as President of HHS for over a decade. Fortunately, when she passed the gavel to me in April, she agreed to serve as Vice President, so we will continue to benefit from her energy and ideas. Thank you, Stacie!

We have more volunteers who deserve special recognition. None go unnoticed. If you would like to be part of our efforts to support our Community, give us a call or stop by for a visit. There is more work to be done in the future to preserve our past!

*Warm Regards,  
Larry Sutton, President*

## HHS Says Goodbye to a Dedicated Colleague

*By Don Mills*

Hellertown Historical Society lost a dear friend and colleague earlier this year. Gilbert "Gil" Stauffer, Treasurer for the Society, passed away in January. Gil will be missed among our volunteers. At the same time, we celebrate his life, one of sincere generosity, dedication and profound respect.

Gil Stauffer joined Hellertown Historical Society in 2012. From that point forward, he offered his full support and steadfast passion to help the organization flourish. Later, he was elected Treasurer. It was his financial experience and foresight that proved the most successful for the Society. Gil diligently prepared financial reports every month as well as annual budget reports for the Board of Directors. His use of common language explanations helped all of us to understand how our funding was arranged and organized. His foresight was genuinely advantageous when suggesting financial policies to be considered by the Board. All of this proved extremely successful for Hellertown Historical Society.

Gil Stauffer was a citizen of Hellertown for many years, raising three children along with his wife who predeceased him. Gil Stauffer was also a Borough of Hellertown Council Member and serving as the Vice-President of Council until recently resigning his position.



**Gil Stauffer**

Gil was a loving family man, good neighbor, excellent Borough representative and a wonderful addition to Hellertown Historical Society. His devotion for all these has been inspiring and appreciated. He will be missed but we are all better people for having his life touch ours.

## HHS Elections Held

The March Board of Directors meeting featured election for Board seats that were expired as well as an expansion of seats to the fifteen-maximum permitted per the By-Laws.

**William "Bill" Frey, Larry Sutton** and **Stacie Torkos** were re-elected to serve new 3-year terms.

**Matthew Brady** (1-Year Term), **Vivian Demko** (3-Year Term), **Tyler Gordon** (2-Year Term), **Robert Kempf** (1-Year Term) and **Dennis Scholl** (3-Year Term) were elected to fill the expanded seats.

At the April Board of Directors meeting, elections of Officers were held for the positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary, each of which are 1-Year Terms.

Successful candidates for these positions are listed below:

**President – Larry Sutton**  
**Vice-President – Stacie Torkos**  
**Treasurer – Gregory Stauffer**  
**Recording Secretary – Tina Krasnansky**

Congratulations to all the successful candidates and best wishes for the future of Hellertown Historical Society!

## Replica ‘Pony’ Bridge in Halloween Parade

If you watched the Hellertown Halloween Parade this past October, you saw the Walnut Street “Pony” Bridge travel along the route. Well, a replica of it anyway.

In anticipation of obtaining the prestigious recognition of inclusion of the historic Walnut Street “Pony” Bridge in the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP), HHS volunteers at the Society built the replica bridge on a trailer bed. It was entered as a float in the Borough parade which featured the theme “Cherishing Our Past...Embracing Our Future”. Our replica bridge entry featured the motto, “Bridging the Past to the Present” to coincide with the parade’s theme.



Several HHS volunteers walked and rode along with the float handing out candy to eagerly awaiting children. The community response to our float was overwhelmingly positive.

Thank you to all the volunteers who spent many hours working to craft this masterpiece and join with us during the parade. Should the Society receive the news of acceptance to the NRHP, you will likely see this float again!



## The Hellertown Post Office Turns 200!

On Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Hellertown Post Office celebrated 200 years of service in Hellertown. Among the festivities were several local, state and federal dignitaries providing congratulations and presenting Postmaster, Joe DiRusso with citations to mark the milestone achievement.



Among the many presentations, was a bronze plaque prepared by local businessman Robert Moll recognizing the commitment and distinguished service of all the Hellertown PO personnel over these 200 years.

Hellertown Historical Society was at the event offering handouts and info to visitors describing the Society’s mission and activities. The replica Walnut Street-Pony Bridge was also there to promote support for the possible inclusion on the Nation Registry of Historic Places which we hope will be confirmed very soon. One of the handouts is a fact sheet about the actual bridge which once spanned the Saucon Creek on Walnut Street but now is in service as a pedestrian bridge across the grist mill raceway.

Another handout HHS offered was a historical timeline of every Hellertown Post Office location from April 1823 through present time. The booklet featured photos of those past structures, where possible, and how they appear today. The booklet also lists every Postmaster who served in Hellertown from April 1823 – present. As an example of the Society’s purpose, the information for this booklet was obtained through research of our historic database. Additional copies of the booklet may be obtained by sending a request via email to us or call our office and leave a message. The booklets are free.



## Postmaster Joe DiRusso Displays the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake

## Hellertown's Distinct and Historic Buildings - #7

A series featuring distinctive and historic homes in Hellertown – Answer to this home location will appear in the next issue

Look at the building on left side circa 1938-1945 and see if you recognize the same building at its current site and condition...



## Hellertown's Distinct and Historic Buildings - #6 Answer

A series featuring distinctive and historic homes in Hellertown

This was the home of Dr. Henry D. Heller, 631 Main Street.



## HHS Again Hosts Saucon Valley Easter Egg Hunt

The Annual Saucon Valley Easter Egg Hunt welcomed crowds of children arriving to view the fields scattered with eggs and other prizes. The Easter Bunny arrived via fire truck thanks to Ron Smith, who has now transported the Easter Bunny to this event for 21 consecutive years. On hand to meet and greet the crowd were officers from both Hellertown and Lower Saucon Township Police Departments.

As children lined the edges of the fields awaiting the start of the hunt, many could be seen eyeing some special prize they were going to race to get first. The siren then pierced the air in Dimmick Park and they were off in all directions gathering any eggs and other prizes they could reach. In about 30 seconds it was over and not a single item was left.

Many started to open their eggs to see what might be found inside – candy, a coupon, or maybe a prize ticket! Those who were lucky to find a prize ticket reported to the pavilion to trade it for their treasure.

There was a long line of eager children and their parents to visit the Easter Bunny and get some photos. Some gathered around the firetrucks and police vehicles to see the equipment and talk with the crews up close and personal.

This was truly a successful fun family event which has a long tradition in Saucon Valley Area. Hellertown Historical Society is pleased to continue this tradition. We are grateful for the overwhelming support of local sponsors to make this a wonderful success! See a few photos from the Egg Hunt on the following page. Thank you to everyone who came out for this fun day!!

# A Photo Collage from the 2023 Saucon Valley Easter Egg Hunt



## Ceresota Flour Boy Painting

By Bill Frey

One of Hellertown Historical Society's more interesting historical artifacts is the early advertising painting of the Ceresota Flour Boy.



The boy with his knife cutting bread was painted on a shed just North of the railroad tracks which now serve as the SV Rail-Trail. The sign was strategically placed for advertising to passing trains.

There was a railroad siding and weigh station located there to weigh coal which was another product sold at the Heller-Wagner Grist Mill.



The Ceresota Flour Boy originated at the Consolidated Milling Company based in Minneapolis, MN

in the late 1880's. The boy is named after the Roman Goddess of Agriculture, Ceres.

Grains being ground into flour ceased around 1900 at the Heller-Wagner Mill; from that time forward the Mill produced animal feed. With electricity and rolling mill technology, mills could grind as much as a million pounds of grain each day.



Barn Along Limeport Pike with Ceresota Flour Artwork

## T.M.Ruch's Store

After the death of his mother when he was just 16 days old, Titus Ruch was raised by his uncle, Edward Knauss, a farmer. He taught Titus how to farm and also sent him to school.

However, Titus wanted to be in business and began his career working as a clerk in the E. & D. Moll general store in Hellertown. After two years, he went to work for Hess Brothers who dealt in coal and lumber. He worked for an undertaker for one year as well as working at the Bethlehem Steel Company.

In 1901, he took over the millinery and furnishing store formerly operated by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Reihman. Mrs. Reihman acquired the store through her father, Peter Moll, who built the store in 1832. Titus renamed the store, T. M. and M. W. Ruch Store, using his and wife Mary's initials.

The location of the Ruch Store was 610 Main Street in Hellertown.



Front of Ruch's Store (Undated)  
L-R Titus Ruch, Mary Ruch, Lottie Ruch Trumbower

Ruch's Store was one of several locations for the Hellertown Post Office, being located there sometime between 1905-1910 through 1914 when it re-located to 403 Main Street.

Today the building looks much different and houses an insurance business.

## July 1, 1939...

**YOU Are Invited**

to enjoy the thrill of a swim in "water fit to drink"  
in your Hellertown

**Municipal Swimming Pool**

<small>SINGLE ADMISSION</small>	<small>MONTHLY RATES</small>
ADULTS ..... 25c	ADULTS ..... \$1.50
CHILDREN ..... 10c	CHILDREN ..... 50c

Single Admissions and Monthly Rates Available to General Public

MUNICIPAL POOL

Here, in Hellertown, we have what has been adjudged one of the finest municipal pools in the State of Pennsylvania. Inspect the pool and its equipment at your earliest convenience.

PARK AND PLAYGROUND

The park-playground presents a most complete recreational center for everyone; male or female, youth or adult. Games and pastimes of many kinds may be enjoyed under most comfortable conditions at a minimum of expense.

HELLERTOWN  
PARK and SHADE TREE  
COMMISSION

HOWARD ECKERT, President  
TITUS RUCH, Vice-President  
WARREN ECKERT, Treasurer  
ASHER C. DIMMICK, Secretary  
ADOLPH KLINGNER, Member  
ARTHUR OPLINGER, Park Manager

