



Hellertown Historical Society

150 W. Walnut Street - Hellertown, PA 18055 - 610-838-1770
www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org



FINALLY...SOFTWARE TO TRACK THE MANY AND VARIED FACETS OF YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For over 30 years we have been cataloging and documenting mementoes donated by current and former Hellertown residents for preservation, research, and display. In the early days of the society...in fact up until about 7 years ago...documentation, tracking, and general information about donated items was all recorded in long-hand in dedicated journals. Long-term volunteers, with extensive knowledge of Hellertown and the various archived items, would assist researchers, hobbyists, and the general public to seek and find the information they requested.

Beginning in 2009 a complete index of all donated items was transcribed into the computer spreadsheet program EXCEL. While this was a step-up from long hand entries, the spread sheets were not the answer to complete and accurate documentation. To further compound the situation, many of the long-term volunteers who had painstakingly kept the intricate records, began to retire from volunteerism for various reasons...primarily age and health related issues.

Knowing all-there-is-to-know about archived treasures is as important as ever in support of our mission as a society is to "preserve Hellertown's heritage." Something had to be done to organize and categorize donated items using 21st century hardware and software.

The Board of directors recognized the problem and directed President Stacie Torkos to explore software prepared for Historical Societies that would address and solve all of the archival issues in addition to tracking of membership, preparation of correspondence, merging of mail documents, etc.

During a Board Meeting in mid-2014, President Torkos recommended the purchase of PastPerfect

Museum Software. Because the software costs a minimum of \$1,500 to fully implement, the society began soliciting requests for donations to enable acquisition of this diverse software. Through The Morning Call's "Be an Angel" newspaper campaign, and restricted donations by various society members and supporters, the acquisition of PastPerfect Software for Historical Societies is about to become reality!

Here is a brief description of Past Perfect Software: Created in 1996, Past Perfect Software provides affordable collection management software for Historical Societies, Museums, Libraries, etc. It has six main components: Accessions (records of donated items), Objects Catalog, Archives Catalog, Library Catalog, Photographic Catalog, and People Biographies. The program can track loaned items, exhibits, volunteers, society members, and donations. These features provide researchers, patrons, etc., with aids *to drill down into the catalog to find the information they are seeking.*

The society is in the process of purchasing the hardware to run the program, and has welcomed a new volunteer, Joni Messenlehner, to set up and manage this very important section of the society. She (along with dedicated volunteers) will be responsible for cataloging all new donations in addition to converting all EXCEL and hand-written records into the PastPerfect system.

While a definite target for complete conversion has not been established, according to President Stacie Torkos, "we are confident conversion to this new and sophisticated system can be accomplished in a timely manner with a minimum of glitches and problems. Our goal is to provide a level of service to our patrons and supporters that exceeds their expectations."

OFFICERS

President - Stacie Torkos
 Vice-President - Joseph Sofka
 Treasurer - Gilbert Stauffer
 Secretary - Gloria Michael

EMERITUS

Marcella Dimmick
 Stella Pasternak

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Fiegel
 Earl Hill
 Tina Krasnansky
 Donald Mills
 Gilbert Stauffer
 Stacie Torkos
 Richard Fluck
 James Hill
 Gloria Michael
 Joseph Sofka
 Pearl Stork

MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Miller's House. Meetings are open to the public. For more information call 610-838-1770.

Contact us at: Hellertown Historical Society
 150 W. Walnut Street
 Hellertown, PA 18055

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 610-838-1770 (Please leave a message)
 Email: info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

It's Time to Renew!

Our 2014 membership goal was not only to sustain membership, but also to see a total increase in membership of at least 30%.

While we did not hit the 30% mark, we came close! Your response was absolutely overwhelming with more people renewing, joining, or re-joining than ever before. Thank You!

Can we do it again? Can these upwardly mobile membership numbers continue in 2015? We are confident that it can continue. And, our confidence begins with you.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a membership form. Please take a few minutes to complete the form and mail it along with your check in the enclosed envelope.

Remember...membership is the foundation on which an organization is built. Keep our foundation strong by supporting the society's ongoing efforts to preserve Hellertown's heritage – your heritage – both now and in the future!

Stacie Torkos, President

Business Memberships

Last year we introduced a new category of membership...a business membership. It was the first time the society actively promoted this form of membership. The response was exciting, and has prompted us to make "business membership" a permanent part of our montage of relationships with the community.

For 2015, as a business owner, Silver level business membership (\$100) brings you these benefits:

- Your business listing in a special section of the Society's website
- First option to sponsor various Society Events, Displays, and Functions
- 10% Off three Tavern Room bookings for your business per year

For an additional \$50, The Gold level business membership (\$150) allows your business logo to be displayed on the society's website along with a link to your business website. Business membership information will be mailed separately and will also be available on our website.

If you have already renewed your business membership for 2015...thank you! You will automatically be listed on the website. Should you wish to upgrade and have your logo displayed on our website, along with the link to your business, please call us at 610-838-1770, and we'll make all the arrangements!

Become a Life Member of the Hellertown Historical Society

Why not consider a Life Membership? As a Life Member, your \$250 membership will provide critical funding to ensure Hellertown Historical Society continues to preserve Hellertown's heritage both now and in the future.

In addition to ongoing membership, your status as a Life Member provides you with:

- 10% Off Gift Shop Items
- 25% Off one Tavern Room booking per year
- Invitation to member-only events
- Recognition on the Life Membership Plaque that will be displayed in the Grist Mill*

See the enclosed membership form to enroll as a Life Member.

Note: *The Life Membership Plaque is in the planning stages with goal of being completed and installed in time for the Holiday Open House in December 2015.

Tina (Weiss) Krasnansky

Joins Hellertown Historical Society

Board of Directors

During the February Board of Directors Meeting the Directors unanimously voted to welcome Tina Krasnansky as the newest member of the Board.

A lifelong resident of Lower Saucon Township, Tina has been the Finance Manager for the Borough of Hellertown for the past twelve years. She is a 1978 graduate of Saucon Valley and 1981 graduate of Churchman's Business School. She served as an elected Councilperson on Lower Saucon Township Council from 1994 to 2002.

Tina is very active with her church including singing with the church choir. She also enjoys traveling with her husband in their recreational vehicle and belongs to three camping clubs. She has five more states to reach her goal of camping in every state in the continental United States.

Her love of history stems from her family's connection to the Saucon Valley area. Her grandfather and great grandfather appear on the cover of Images of America – Lower Saucon Township edition. The picture was taken at their peach orchard in Leithsville. Her great, great grandmother was Maria Heller.

She is married to her husband Andy, for thirty-one years, and they have one son, Andrew.

**HHS Friends who receive our newsletter via email will receive membership information sent separately by US Postal Mail. Membership information is also available on our website.

Childhood Memories from the 1940's

by Andrea Danner

There was an innocence and charm to being a child growing up in Hellertown during the 1940s. WW II impacted Hellertown and the nation. Cars, jobs, butter, television sets and disposable income were hard to come by, but imagination and ingenuity weren't. Childhood thrived in these times and memories abound. Thanks to Grumpy Ward and George Werkheiser for sitting down to share their memories with Harry and Jeanette Boos and several other members of the HHS so that we could share them with our newsletter readers.

Back in the day, Grumpy and George lived in the area of New and Main Streets. The neighborhood children played together and called themselves a gang. Some of the games they played no longer are politically correct or safe by today's standards; but they survived and when they recount their stories, they laugh like the devilish little boys they once were.

There were no organized sports teams in the forties, so children created their teams and games and sports "implements." For example, a football was a sock filled with leaves. The Hellertown Union Cemetery was a perfect location for many adventures. A birch tree on cemetery grounds was a fighter plane flying over Germany with plenty of room for the pilot and gunners defending the USA. Of course, if you were in the tree when a funeral party entered the cemetery, you froze and remained quiet. One time when this happened, the mourners threw money onto the casket at the end of the service. Needless to say that when the funeral party left, there were several boys a few dollars richer!

Members of the neighborhood gang included: Gene Reiss, Eddie Rohrbach, Gordy Pfeiffer, Dick Rauscher, Tommy Forrest, Kenny Fritchman and Cary Dull. Reinhard Elementary was the neighborhood school; and the boys quickly learned that marbles could be played on the way there. The dirt alleys were a great place to set up an impromptu circle in the dirt, although behind George Soto's garage was the favorite place to play.

School was something to get through. The neighborhood alarm clocks were Mary and Clara Hess, of the Hess Lumber family. Each morning, promptly at 6:30 a.m., one of them would bang on a cast iron skillet with a spoon to scare away birds so they wouldn't dirty the sidewalks below. The boys wore knickers and the girls wore dresses to school. Miss Jacobs, later to become Mrs. Hines,

taught first grade and music. A highlight of her class was being rewarded with a Necco wafer for properly singing your scales! Miss Benner taught cursive in fourth grade and Mrs. Strock taught sixth grade. Lunch time at school meant heading home to eat. A note from home was required if you had to stay at school to eat a bagged lunch. Normally mom would have soup and a sandwich ready to eat. Alas, you always had to go back to school.

But at the end of the school day there was time for more play, at least until the 5 o'clock whistle blew. This was the town wide kid signal to head home for dinner promptly. After dinner and homework, especially in the warmer months, there was time for the now politically incorrect cowboys and Indians. That game was a big favorite with the boys who made bows out of branches and a stiff weed was transformed into an arrow. Wooden clothes pins, stolen from mom's laundry basket, turned into guns. Tag and Hide and Seek were wonderful evening games and there was never a shortage of kids to play.

Both Tag and Hide and Seek included all neighborhood children, even the girls. There was no television to sit and watch after school; however, kids did gather around the radio to hear a favorite show. Monday through Friday was the *Jack Armstrong and the All American Boys* show. Much like Ralphie in the classic *Little Orphan Annie* Decoder Ring story in the movie *A Christmas Story*, Grumpy and George drank their share of Ovaltine to get their decoder rings. George clearly remembers his brother stealing his ring and says jokingly that he hasn't spoken to him since. Other favorite radio programs included *The Shadow*, *Jack Benny*, *George Burns and Gracie Allen*, *Fiber Magee and Molly*, *The Green Hornet* and *Walter Winchell* on Sunday nights.

Mumbley-peg was a favorite game of the boys. For the uninitiated, a pocket knife was the main requirement for this game of skill and daring. Two knife blades would be open and various body parts, such as a finger or elbow, would be used to flip the pocket knife successfully. Each boy had a turn to flip the knife. The game ended when the player who flipped the best would use his face or teeth to dig a peg out of the dirt, which the losers made sure was in the ground very solidly. I'm told this was good, safe fun?

Speaking of good safe fun, every boy had a slingshot that you could use to shoot at glass bottles or tin cans. Gordy Pfeffer had a Red Ryder BB gun, made so famous in *A Christmas Story*. The boys also loved their funny books. They would buy them at Prosser's Drug Store.

Another popular game was Nipsy. Mom's old broom handle became the bat. You had to flip the wooden, pointy Nipsy up with your stick and hit it with the bat and run to the bases, much like baseball. This game could be played in the middle of the dirt street with a pole or a stone for a base.

The middle of the street was also used for winter play. Spruce and Northampton Streets were sleigh riding streets.

Adults would ice down the street in the evening and put coal ashes at the bottom of the road so sleigh riding children would not slide into Main Street. I-78 traffic was not a concern in the 1940s.

In our next newsletter we will continue Grumpy and George's summer memories and Halloween exploits! If you have wonderful stories to share, we would love to hear from you either by email or in person. Tuesday mornings are a great time to come and have a cup of coffee and shoot the breeze with others who share your hometown Hellertown memories. Consider yourself cordially invited.

Calendar of Events

April 18 & 19 – Visit HHS at Neighbors Home & Garden Center's Spring Open House

Hello Spring, goodbye Winter! Stop by to chat. Hot dogs, turkey BBQ, beverages.

April 26 – Shopping at the Mill

Noon-4PM, Tavern Room. Shop for unique gift items from various vendors. Don't forget something for Mom!

- ALSO -

April 26 – Model A Ford Day

Model A Ford display & history Swap meet. Food. Also Grist Mill tours.

May 2 – 8th Annual Saucon Valley History Day

Tours. Live Music. Food. Kids activities. Hellertown 17th Airborne WWII Speaker Series. And more!

June 7 – Visit HHS at the Saucon Valley Farmer's Market

Stop by to chat. Sale of gift shop items, hot dogs, beverages.

Aug 22 – Visit HHS at Hellertown-Lower Saucon Community Day at Dimmick Park

Stop by to chat. Sale of gift shop items, hot dogs, beverages. Free raffle

Sept 13 – Visit HHS at the Saucon Valley Farmer's Market

Stop by to chat. Sale of gift shop items, hot dogs, beverages.

September Speaker's Series TBD

December 4 & 6 – Annual Holiday Open House

7PM, Tavern Room, Tours, Refreshments, Live Entertainment, Trains Display.

Sundays, Dec. 6 to Dec. 20 – Trains Display

Noon-4PM, Basement level of the Miller's House.

December 13 – Photos with Santa

Noon-4PM, Tavern Room. Santa visits the mill or photos with kids of all ages (Santa loves pets too!) Train display. Refreshments. \$2 fee per photo.

- ALSO -

December 13 – Christmas Shopping At The Mill

Noon-4PM, Tavern Room. Shop for last minute gift items from various vendors.



****WANTED****

WWII servicemen from Hellertown who are willing to talk and share their war experiences with us.

We want to document these memories as historical archives for future generations and also hope to create a speaker series event where we can share these recollections with the public. We are also interested in sharing any relevant memorabilia.

Help us spread the word to your friends and family in the community who may be interested. Contact us at

610-838-1770 or 610-997-3635. Also at

info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org.

