



CHESTER COUNTY  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
NETWORK

# CHESTER COUNTY LEDGER

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

Volume 17, Number 4

## CCHPN Annual Volunteer Celebration

### At The Downingtown Country Club

Join Us June 22!



**DOWNINGTOWN INN and GOLF CLUB**  
PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH AMISHLAND'S FOREMOST YEAR 'ROUND RESORT

*The mission of the CCHPN is to connect local governments, organizations, and individuals in their efforts to protect, preserve, and promote the historic resources and cultural landscapes of Chester County through communication and education.*

The Downingtown Country Club on the south side of Route 30 in East Caln Township began as the Downingtown Motor Inn. Built on the former Ashbridge Farm by Tabas Enterprises in the late 1950's, the inn opened in November 1961. A 100-acre resort complex, the inn included convention and banquet facilities, two swimming pools, outdoor patios, ballrooms, stage facilities and the 1869 Restaurant and cocktail lounge. The Motor Inn's owners were Samuel Tabas, founder; Charles Tabas, chairman; and Daniel Tabas, president. The Inn was promoted as a destination resort and a local radio advertisement told visitors to "count the New York license plates".

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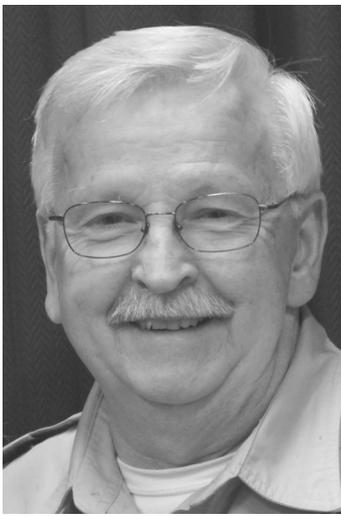
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John Miller, President

## CCHPN President's Letter

Recently, a member of the CCHPN sent me a copy of an editorial from *Preservation Magazine*. The editorial posed the question, "Are you a preservationist?". I felt this was a strange question to ask someone who would be a subscriber to a preservation magazine, but as I pondered the question further, I realized it was interesting to ask of those who are active in the area of preservation.

Are you a preservationist? If you go by definition, preservationists are those who work to preserve historic buildings, artifacts, historic landscapes and cultural resources. If you are involved in those areas, I think that you can consider yourself to be a preservationist.

Is this the entire picture though? I present the view that the definition above is only *part* of what a preservationist should be. The whole picture should, and often does, include education. It is not enough that we work to preserve historic places. It is important that we develop the next generation of preservationists and supporters of preservation. We can only do this through education.

I don't mean through a formal or workshop setting (although those are great mechanisms themselves). Take the love that you have for your community, its historic resources and history and share it with your neighbors and community at large. Don't forget to share it with the young people in your community; after all, they are the future of preservation.

### A preservationist is an educator!

### Chester County Ledger

*Published by the Chester County  
Historic Preservation Network*

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# 2016 Volunteer Recognition Celebration

**June 22, 2016, Wednesday**

At the  
Downingtown Country Club  
93 Country Club Road  
Downingtown PA 19335  
**All are welcome!**

Everyone is invited to come out to our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration, honoring the accomplishments of Chester County's Historical Commissions and HARBs and other volunteer preservationists! We hope every Historical Commission and HARB will be represented!

- ◆ Come see and hear about mid-century Downingtown, the Farmers' Market, and the Tabas Resort.
- ◆ Participate in the Roll Call of the Successes and Challenges of our Historical Commissions and HARBs!
- ◆ Join us as we celebrate the achievements of our award winners!

**Evening's Schedule**

- 5:15 Registration
- 5:30 Presentation—The Tabas Resort
- 6:15 Welcome and Awards
- 6:45 Buffet Dinner and Dessert
- 7:30 Recognitions & Roll Call
- 8:15 Closing Comments

**Attire is Business Casual. We will be indoors for this dinner**

Celebration Registration Form

(PLEASE PRINT)

Register By *June 13, 2016*

(Registrations can not be accepted after this date)

Municipality/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Day Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* \$35 per guest \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Attendee Name) (Day Phone) (Email) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to include membership dues, please check:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality/Organization (\$85) DUES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **CCHPN** (No refunds after June 15)

**Mail completed form and check to:**

VRC Dinner CCHPN,  
PO Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381

# CCHPN Award Recipients

The Chester County Historic Preservation Board of Directors is proud to announce the 2016 Awards for Excellence in the field of Historic Preservation! All recipients will be honored at the 2016 Annual Volunteer Dinner Celebration on June 22, 2016 at the Downingtown Country Club. Invitation and announcements included in LEDGER. We would also like to honor 300 Years of Iron and Steel Heritage, 50 Years of the National Historic Preservation Act, and 100 Years of the National Park Service.

## **Jane L.S. Davidson Historic Preservation Award: E. Spencer Claypoole**

*This annual award is for an individual whose contributions demonstrate significant achievements and leadership in historic preservation in Chester County through increased public awareness, appreciation and support.* It is only fitting that Spencer Claypoole is selected to receive the highest award given by the network. He writes: "In 1969, I married Joan Laschenski and was blessed with three children. I have been volunteering all my life—people volunteered in the small community where I grew up". In the early 1990's, he joined the North Coventry Historical Commission and became its chair in 2000, the same year that he joined the Open Space Board and participated in the purchase of Coventry Woods, an open space totaling 1,310 acres of land. Spencer co-chairs the yearly festival at Coventry Woods, served as President of the Council of Government and serves as a Eucharistic Minister at his parish, St. Thomas More. He served on the CCHPN Board from 2007-2009, and helped further communications among Historical Commissions in northern Chester County. In 2009, he became a Supervisor where he could continue to encourage others to volunteer in local government and help lead the Township to maintain its strategic edge it enjoys as a picturesque and historic area for residents to enjoy recreation, learning and the enjoyment of nature. As Township Historian, Spencer writes historic articles for the newsletter and responds to correspondence concerning North Coventry's important history.

Author of the Following books:

"Ancestors of the Bryan family of Philadelphia PA and Burlington Co., N.J" - 1992

"Wiegand a family history" - 1992

"Claypoole: Descendants of James Claypoole, immigrant of Philadelphia, and son, Nathaniel, of Chester County" - 1997

## **Municipal Historic Preservation Award: French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (Pam Brown & Bob Willson), Warwick Township (Charles Jacob) and East Nantmeal Township (Jim Jenkins)**

*This award is presented annually to a Chester County municipality that has demonstrated significant achievements in historic preservation.* This year, the award is dedicated to a public/private partnership led by the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust in partnership with Warwick and East Nantmeal Townships to preserve Warwick Furnace Farm. In 2015, this partnership resulted in the preservation of the 553-acre Warwick Furnace Farm on the South Branch of French Creek. The six million dollar price tag was raised through a loan from The Conservation Fund, grants from the Open Space Institute, the PSADCNR, Chester County, Warwick and East Nantmeal Townships and individual donations. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Washington brought his exhausted army through here in September, 1777 and the heating stove invented by Benjamin Franklin was probably first cast here in 1742. In addition to being a critically important historic resource, the landscape is home to a state-designated exceptional value waterway and many native plant and animal species.

French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust worked with existing landowners, a private foundation, two townships, Chester County, national organizations, and conservation-minded residents to protect this historic and environmentally sensitive property from development.

(Continued on Page 6)

## Spring Workshop 2016 Recap: Public Relations and Preservation<sup>50</sup>

As we celebrate 50 years since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, the CCHPN Spring workshop highlighted ways that local municipalities and organizations could honor their local legacy of preservation heritage. Sixty-two individuals representing 25 municipalities attended the workshop on April 16 held in the newly renovated meeting room at the Brandywine River Museum. The workshop's speakers included a diverse cast of local professionals throughout our community. The morning began with an overview of the county's Preservation Plan by Brian O'Leary, the Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission. Our President John Miller spoke to the importance of sharing our message of history with the youth in our communities. Karen Marshall talked briefly about matters pertaining to Historical Commissions and Bruce Mowday, longtime news reporter for the Daily Local News and award-winning author, shared his insider knowledge on how to capture the attention of the local press. The importance of harnessing social media and the proper etiquette for its use was covered in a presentation by Heidi Karpa. Rosanne Taylor shared strategies for organizations to create effective websites. Our own Board member, Kathryn Yahraes, wrapped up the morning with her message about honoring preservation stewardship in your local community. Attendees were treated to a self-guided tour of the Brandywine River Museum galleries and grounds following the workshop.

The CCHPN would like to thank our wonderful speakers for sharing their valuable advice, the Brandywine River Museum for providing a beautiful space for our workshop, and also the tireless work of the Education and Planning Committee for creating a fantastic event.



(Continued from page 4)

## Grace Under Fire Recognition - Coatesville Historical Commission & the Barclay Ground Preservation Alliance

*Awarded to a municipality or organization for unusual determination related to preservation projects.*

**Coatesville Historical Commission (Jeff Deacon, Chair).** The Coatesville Historical Commission was established when the Coatesville National Register Historic District was established. Throughout the years, there have been attempts to develop a commission that meets regularly. In 2011, several people got together and were successful in petitioning the City Council to recognize an active commission in the City. Since 2014, the current members have developed an active calendar of events and have been working with the City Council to preserve and recognize historic structures in Coatesville. Members of the Historical Commission were involved in 2014 and 2015 with Coatesville Centennial Celebration Planning Committee. In 2015 they sought landmark status for the Lipkin Building and created the Coatesville Century exhibit (local memorabilia & vintage clothing). They have also developed a pop-up museum at Lincoln University and developed a regular research schedule.

**Barclay Ground Preservation Alliance (John Cottage, Chair)** The Barclay Grounds property was previously known as the Joshua Hartshorne Estate and is the only one of West Chester's 19th century estates remaining intact. The entire block is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which states that the "park-like grounds" are home to "one of the finest collections of specimen trees in West Chester". Early in 2013, a proposal was made to create four residential building lots by a new property owner. Residents of the Borough of West Chester and the surrounding region formed the Barclay Grounds Preservation Alliance (BGPA) to raise public awareness of the potential loss of this important site in the community and to raise funds for the property purchase. A petition was launched which generated over 2,100 signatures calling on West Chester Borough Council to save the Barclay Grounds. As a result of this broad public support, the Borough Council voted on December 30th, 2013 to purchase the Barclay Grounds to make it a public park dependent on receiving the funds to cover the purchase price by December 2015.

## Special Recognition - Mae McGuigan - Sadsbury Historical Society, Founder and President

In 1982, Mae McGuigan served on the Committee for '300 Years of Chester County'. Inspired by her work on the project and her love of Chester County history, Mae encouraged her like-minded friends to consider an organization to celebrate the area's history. The Sadsbury Township Historical Society had its beginning in the Spring of 1990 at a meeting in the old Township Building. Over the years, the Society has had a tradition of great programs with great speakers. They had a Christmas Tour two years after their founding and other tours since then have included very old homes, businesses, churches and the area's disappearing farms. They have had a "Heritage Day" in the W. Bert Reel Park. Their motto is: "The latch string is always out for you. Come visit". Sadsbury Township was organized as a township in 1717. The township will celebrate 300 years of rich history in 2017 and although Mae will be stepping down as President of the Sadsbury Historical Society, you can be sure that she will be actively involved.

## Congratulations to All the Award Recipients - Thank You for Your Service to Chester County!



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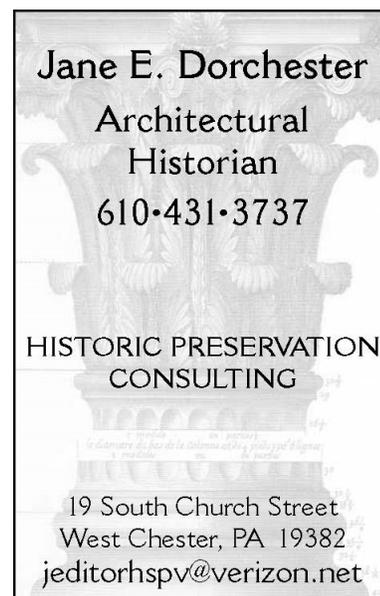
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For years, motorists on Route 30 passed a billboard of child star, Mickey Rooney, wearing a green hat and flashing his exuberant trademark grin. The ad urged passersby to visit Mickey Rooney's Tabas Hotel and Theater, located near Downingtown. "Mickey Rooney slept here" was a comment heard often because Dan Tabas formed a strong friendship with Rooney while touring Europe as part of the USO entertaining troops during the war. After building the Downingtown Motor Inn, Dan Tabas enlisted Rooney to help attract visitors and his entertainment friends, such as Frank Gorshin and Robert Goulet. Many believed that Rooney owned the resort, but he was just a figurehead who owned a few shares of the venture.

After an 18-hole golf course was built, it was known as the Downingtown Inn and Golf Club. In 1983, the Tabas family sold its holding to the Ramada Corp. in exchange for stock and continued to operate as a Ramada hotel resort until 1993. The Inn was demolished in 1994, and a year later the present 750,000 square foot Brandywine Square shopping center opened on the site. Today, the former golf course flourishes as The Downingtown Country Club. The golf course was designed by George Fazio between 1965-67, who was runner-up to Ben Hogan in the 1950 U.S. Open at Merion Golf Club, and the touring professional out of Pine Valley Golf Club for a number of years. He's also the Uncle of modern course architect, Tom Fazio. The Ashbridge Farmhouse is now the ProShop.

In addition to the original Downingtown Motor Inn, the Tabas family also owned the large property on the north side of Route 30, containing the Downingtown Farmer's Market. Following the sale of the original Motor Inn and Golf Club to Ramada in 1993, the Tabas family built a new Mickey Rooney Tabas Hotel and the still-active Bowling Palace on the north side of Route 30 adjacent to the Farmer's Market. The hotel building remains but has been converted to senior housing.

In September 2000, the final auction of the Mickey Rooney Tabas Hotel took place. Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Jonathan Gelb wrote, *"The now-defunct hotel, to which the actor Rooney lent his name and which bitterly divided the prominent family that owned it, is auctioning everything... Gone too is the Downingtown Farmer's Market which was located where the current Home Depot stands on Route 30 next to where the hotel stood."*

Aileen Soper wrote about the historic market in 1998 for the Philadelphia Inquirer....

### **Seeds of Change Are Sown At An Old Farmers Market—Chester County's Quirky Fixture May Close**

*"If plans for a 366,000 square-foot shopping center are approved, it could be the end for the wrestling matches, antique sales, car shows, motorcycle swap meets and bridal expos that have attracted thousands to the Chester County spot on weekends for 45 years. The market would become a casualty of changes in this region's landscape and buyer appetites. Some developers, real-estate agents and banks are betting that area newcomers would rather shop at new strip malls than hunt through dusty bins for bargains on second-hand goods. Still, change could be months away. And for now, the market is buzzing. The shops along the zig-zag strip— open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays—are one-of-a-kinds. There's Cupid's Closet, teasing passerby with lacy green underthings dangling in the window. And JD Discount, with a yellow sign screaming "BUY SELL TRADE". Outside, golfers chip balls on a driving range. Inside, a woman walks her Rottweiler; 50 chain smokers gamble at the bingo table; a store advertises X-rated videos starting at \$9.99, near a Christian book store; and an arcade reverberates with the sounds of laser fire and screams of electronic victims. Piped-in country music plays over the buzz of a tattooing needle. People haggle for Barney lunchboxes and unauthorized biographies of Dolly Parton. Elvis, on a velour afghan, hangs over a cash register. The customers are die-hards."*

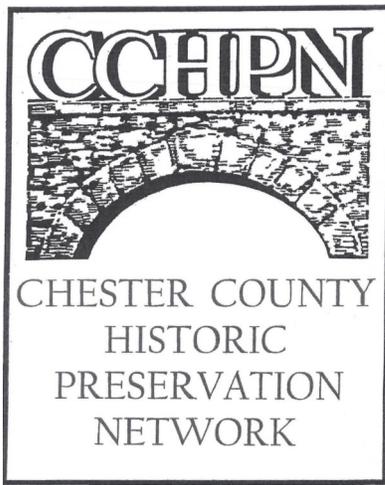
Today at the sites of the former Downingtown Farmer's Market and Downingtown Motor Inn, two large modern retail shopping centers face off against each other from the north and south sides of Route 30 - the old Lincoln Highway. This is still a very busy and vibrant commercial area, and will continue to make Chester County history for the next 50 years.



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# Chester County Ledger

*The Newsletter of the*

*Chester County Historic Preservation Network*

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*Please come and*

*join us for our*

## **2016 Volunteer Recognition Celebration**

**Wednesday June 22, 2016**

**5:00PM to 8:15PM**

**Downingtown Country Club**

Details on Page 3 inside!

Please bring a memory to share about the

Downingtown Farmer's Market

If you would like to get more involved with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, please contact a board member through the website, [www.cchpn.org](http://www.cchpn.org), or at one of our events.

We are always looking for more volunteers!

## **2016 Town Tours and Village Walks Schedule available at:**

<http://chesco.org/Planning/TownTours>

Email: [kmarshall@chesco.org](mailto:kmarshall@chesco.org) for brochures