



## *From the president*

# We proudly stand with Ukraine and salute our county's Ukrainian heritage

By J.R. Zane

The Society appreciates the contributions that our area's Ukrainian settlers have made.

Several parts of our county, including Cass Township, Gilberton, St. Clair, Frackville and McAdoo, have significant concentrations of people with Ukrainian ancestry.

A historical marker proclaims that in 1884, Ukrainian immigrants formed St. Michael's Church in Shenandoah, the first Eastern Rite Catholic parish in the United States.

The Ukrainian immigrants arrived with ethnic and cultural traditions that make our county richer and more interesting -- the familiar "onion domes" that grace their churches, icons, folk art, dance, jewelry, embroidery, cuisine and, of course, the beloved pysanky Easter egg (rightfully claimed to be the world's most beautiful ornament for the holiday).

Our Society has been holding annual pysanky classes with renowned folk artist Georgine Postupak-Borchick so that future generations can learn this unique Old World art form.

We have also been in the forefront of promoting Miners-



Photos from a pysanky egg-decorating class with Georgine Postupak-Borchick.

ville area resident Nicholas Bervinchak, one of the county's most celebrated artists.

At the yearly Ukrainian Seminary Day picnic held in late July at the St. Nicholas picnic grove and hall in Primrose, the arts and crafts are on display for all to enjoy.

Now, in Ukraine's time of need, the Society encourages its members to be charitable with reputable Ukrainian relief efforts now underway to ease the suffering Ukrainians are experiencing through the horrors of war. It's a way to say "thank you" for the arts, crafts, cuisine and friendship that the



Ukrainian immigrants contributed to our ethnic mosaic called Schuylkill County.

We have donated proceeds from the pysanky egg classes to the relief effort. It was our "D'yakuyu" (thanks).

## Schuykill County Historical Society

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### Society Hours

Wednesday-Friday 10-4

Saturdays 10-2 (except January  
and February)

*Our purpose is to discover,  
procure and preserve the  
historical records, data and  
other relevant materials of  
Schuykill County.*

# New windows coming, more volunteers sought

By Diana Prosymchak

Executive Director

It's been a busy couple of months for the Society, and we have some great news to share.

Our long-awaited window replacement is about to start, thanks to a \$150,000 grant that state Sen. Dave Argall got for us from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

And we are equally grateful to all of the donors who have responded to our call for help with this crucial project over the past year and a half.

We will all be thrilled to get rid of the plywood that we had to use to cover our windows.

The new windows will allow us to save money on heating and air-conditioning costs and will help us protect our beautiful historic building.

We have a fantastic group of people who have given freely of their time and talents, but we can use more hands on our ever-expanding deck.

There is a wide variety of things to do here. We can use volunteers in our gift shop and museum. If you think giving tours would be fun, we'll be happy to train you. And if you're a creative person or know your way around an office, we'd love to put your skills to use here.

For more information, contact me or Steve Young at the Society. We're looking forward to hearing from you.



## Help the Society with a 'Smile' and stay up to date on Facebook



If you shop on Amazon, you could donate to us by buying on Amazon Smile. Just log onto [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and designate the Historical Society of Schuykill County as your charity of choice. We'll receive 0.05% of your purchase price. And don't forget to like our Facebook page so we can keep you informed about our news and upcoming events!

# NFL glitch lists Maroons as the 1925 champs, puts Society in the spotlight

Society Executive Director Diana Prosymchak found herself doing two TV interviews on April 21 after it appeared that the National Football League had decided to give the Pottsville Maroons the credit most Schuylkill Countians believe the team deserves.

Diana appeared on evening newscasts for WNEP of Scranton and WFMZ of Allentown after the NFL's website showed the Maroons in first place over the Chicago Cardinals for 1925.

Although the Maroons won more games than the Cardinals, they were stripped of the championship title because of a technicality, a move that local fans say was unfair.



But the NFL discovered the glitch a short time later.

"It was pretty funny, and it did make us feel good for a little bit," Diana told WNEP.

With the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary

of that championship game approaching, the Society is working on special events to commemorate it.

And many of us still hope the Maroons will get their due.

## Remember these '70s restaurants?

Match these restaurants, which were serving Mother's Day meals 50 years ago, with their locations. **The answers to the quiz are on page 8.**

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Sand's Restaurant      | A) Route 61 Pottsville-Cressona |
| 2) Brady's Seafood        | B) New Ringgold                 |
| 3) Scrafford's Restaurant | C) Route 61 Deer Lake           |
| 4) Village Inn            | D) Route 61 Orwigsburg          |
| 5) Dusselink              | E) McKeansburg                  |
| 6) Wedgewood              | F) Mahanoy City                 |
| 7) Melnic's               | G) Minersville                  |
| 8) Lame Goose             | H) Hometown                     |
| 9) Con-Ja-Ka Inn          | I) Shenandoah                   |
| 10) Smith's Country Inn   | J) St. Clair                    |

**MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL!**

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# Don't miss our exciting June programs

We have two terrific After Hours programs on tap for June, plus we're hosting the next two meetings of T102's Local Reads book club.

## Looking Back at Hurricane Agnes 5 p.m. June 15 at the Majestic Theater 209 N. Center St. Pottsville



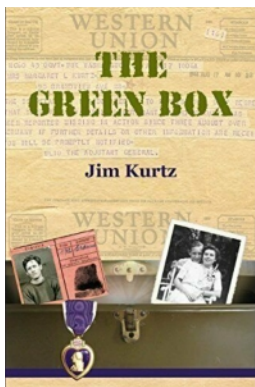
In June it will be 50 years since this powerful storm blew into Schuylkill County. Anyone who lives in the sections that it hit will never forget the devastation it caused.

This special After Hours program will feature Reading Deputy Fire Chief and local historian **Michael Glore**, who will share his perspective on what happened here.

We're excited to have Mike present another major program for us. He drew a crowd at the Majestic in September when he gave a talk on the challenges Schuylkill County firefighters have faced in battling blazes in frame row homes.

Admission is free to Society members and \$5 for the general public.

## Local Reads: *The Green Box* 6 p.m. June 1 at the Society



Author **Jim Kurtz** will discuss his memoir/biography, which chronicles his decades-long search for information about his father, a World War II pilot who survived a Nazi prison camp and forced march but died when Jim was still a toddler.

The book has a local angle because Pottsville native Joe

Spontak plays an important role as Jim's father's navigator.

Jim will sign copies of his book and show a PowerPoint presentation.

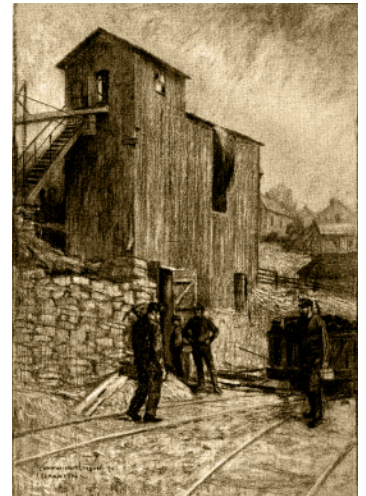
## In the Depths of the Mines 6:30 p.m. June 22 at the Society

Stephen Crane is best known for *The Red Badge of Courage*, but did you know that he once wrote about his two-day visit to a Scranton coal mine and had it published in a national magazine?

For this After Hours program, local historian and author **Stu Richards** will let

us know what Crane reported in his 1894 *McClure's Magazine* article called "In the Depths of a Coal Mine."

Admission is free to Society members and \$5 for the general public.

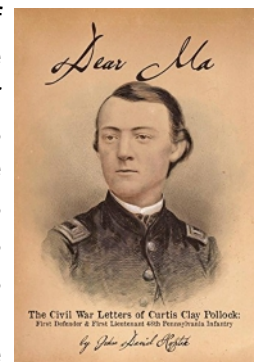


## Local Reads: *Dear Ma* 6 p.m. June 29 at the Society

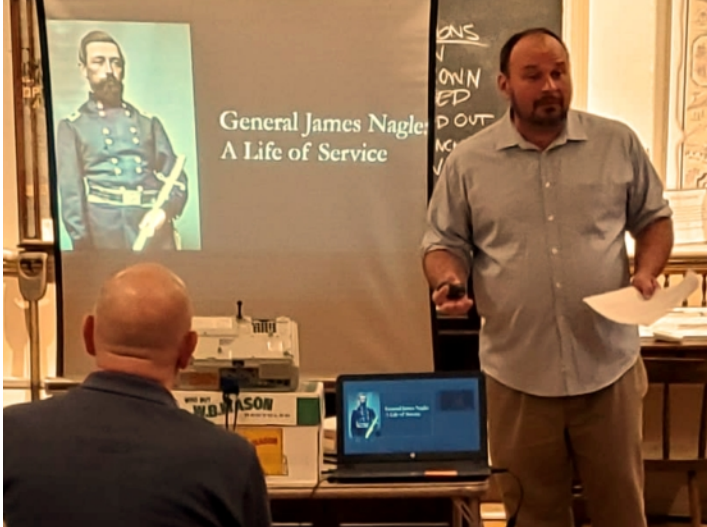
Curtis Clay Pollock of Pottsville served bravely in the Union Army in many Civil War campaigns until he was mortally wounded in the Battle of Petersburg in 1864. He was also one of the first volunteers to answer President Lincoln's first call-to-arms in April 1861.

The Society holds the letters that he wrote to his family, and **John David Hoptak** has compiled them in the book *Dear Ma*. (On the next page, you can read about John's recent presentation at the Society about General James Nagle.)

Check our Facebook page and T102's for more details about this event.



# Society hosts discussions about coal mining, Gen. Nagle and John O'Hara



The Society recently held three successful programs on very different aspects of our county's history.

We observed the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Civil War hero General James Nagle's birth on April 6 with a presentation by John David Hoptak, a park ranger and educator at Gettysburg National Military Park (photo above).

Nagle's brigade is credited with playing a key role in securing Burnside Bridge in the bloody Battle of Antietam. But he also served in the Mexican-American War.

He spent most of his life in Pottsville, where he worked as a sign painter and wallpaper hanger, as well as serving as county sheriff, borough council president and a member of the school board. When he died in 1866 at age 44, his funeral was one of the largest in the town's history.

We also hosted two meetings of radio station T102's Local Reads book club.

On March 30, author John Fitzgerald (upper right photo) discussed his book, *Dirty Mines: Coal Mining in Pennsylvania*. The historical novel about the last generation of an anthracite mining family is based on stories he heard when he decided to "shine a light" on what life was like in these communities.



It's "an industry no one would love but that we all benefited from," he said, since "it's the reason many of us are here."

On April 27, Lisa Von Ahn gave a talk on *The Doctor's Son*, a novella by John O'Hara based on his observations of Pottsville, Minersville and the surrounding areas during the 1918 flu epidemic.

Lisa gave historical context on that pandemic, which killed more Schuylkill Countians than World War I.

The people in the audience shared their knowledge of life in our area during O'Hara's time and compared the COVID and flu pandemics.

## Find out which critically acclaimed book is dedicated to a Turkey Run native/WWII nurse

By J.R. Zane  
President

*Appointment in Samarra* by Pottsville native John O'Hara ranks 22nd on Modern Library's list of the top 100 novels of the 20th century. Curiously, No. 18 was written by an Indiana author who dedicated it to a Schuylkill County nurse.

Mary Theresa Hoffman was born near Shenandoah in the mining village of Turkey Run in 1923. Her father, Fred Hoffman, was a shovel operator at nearby strip mines, and her maternal grandfather, Robert McAlee, died in a mine at age 36 when Mary's mother was an infant.

Mary Hoffman grew up keenly aware of the dangers posed by mining. After graduating from Shenandoah Catholic High School in 1941, she became a registered nurse, working at St. Joseph's Hospital in Reading.

Her brother was on active military duty in the Pacific Front, and her schoolmate and future husband, Bernie O'Hare, was declared missing in action during the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944. On Feb. 1, 1945, Mary joined the Army Nursing Corps as nurses were needed.

After her induction at Fort Meade, Mary was stationed at McGuire Hospital in Richmond, Virginia. By mid-March, she learned that Bernie was a prisoner of war.

With mixed emotions she tended to sick, wounded and maimed soldiers. Eventually, she completed 13 months of active duty in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, Bernie escaped captivity just as the Red Army advanced towards the ruins of Dresden, where he had been held. The war ended successfully on both fronts, and their romance blossomed in Shenandoah, culminating in their 1950 wedding at St. Joseph's Church in Frackville.

After receiving his law degree, Bernie joined his father and uncle's practice in Shenandoah, but in 1951, he decided to strike out on his own and move to Hellertown. Eventually he was elected district attorney of Northampton County, but he and Mary returned often to visit friends



Mary Hoffman O'Hare  
with her parents and  
brother in 1945.

and relatives in Schuylkill County.

In 1965, a fellow prisoner of war who was writing a book visited the O'Hares. As he and Bernie smoked, drank and reminisced, Mary became increasingly irritated.

Finally, she expressed her consternation. "As an army nurse, I have seen the damage caused by war...", she said. "I have no interest in seeing Frank Sinatra or John Wayne play the roles of you two ... *real soldiers* are only but children!"

Mary worried out loud that her guest would create propaganda to entice young boys into believing that war is an attractive adventure. She pointed upstairs where her children were sleeping and said: "Future wars will again be fought by babies ....a *children's crusade!*"

At first the writer was taken aback, but after some soul-searching and further discussion, he said he would start over again and not glorify war. He also promised to use "children's crusade" in the title and dedicate the book to her.

She smiled and from that moment, she became good friends with Kurt Vonnegut, whose book, *Slaughterhouse Five or The Children's Crusade* was published in 1969. About 1 million copies have been sold in the United States.

Mary died on May 29, 1998, and she remains a footnote in American literary history. The Society salutes her and all military nurses this month.

# Locust Lake Park celebrates its 50th



Above: A view of the park today. Right: an ad from 1959.

By Patrick McKinney  
Board member

Locust Lake State Park, Schuylkill County's No. 1 tourist attraction, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on June 10.

Nestled on the side of Locust Mountain about 7 miles north of Pottsville and 8 miles west of Tamaqua, the park has a history as colorful as the scenery on its 1,772 acres.

The Lenni Lenape claimed the land. Later it was seized by the Susquehannocks and then by the New York Iroquois League of Five Nations.

When settlers discovered anthracite coal in Schuylkill County, immigrants sought mining jobs, reaching the Locust Valley in the mid-1800s. It was not economically feasible to mine coal there, but the area did not escape the American Industrial Revolution.

The forests fell to the logger's ax as sawmills turned the trees into lumber, shingles, tool handles, and other products. Tanneries crushed hemlock

and white pine bark for tanning leather. Colliers burned chestnuts and oaks into charcoal. Strong timbers supported the roofs of mines.

The forests were gone by the early 1900s, replaced by shrubby land prone to seasonal floods and forest fires. Some farmers tilled the cleared land.

The site was purchased by the Marchalonis brothers, whose father, Anthony, was a Lithuanian immigrant coal miner from Mahanoy City. They called their "for fee" fishing hole Locust Lake and stocked it regularly with big fish.

Their Locust Lake clubhouse, often known as "Marchalonis Grove," was the scene of many group picnics.

In 1960, the Marchalonises made it a "members only" recreation area. People could join for an annual fee that included fishing, hunting, and other recreational rights.

When dredging the lake, the brothers found a dam, boards, and the hub of a waterwheel.

The remains of an old logging mill and dam were buried under silt from flooding and runoff caused by the removal of all of the trees during the logging era.

Under Governor William Scranton, Pennsylvania acquired the land by eminent domain in July 1966 to establish a state park. Having received just compensation, many Marchalonis family members remained active at the park.

Park Manager Nicholas Sulzer said the park was designed in the late Sixties around the campground, which included pilot sites for camper trailers, a first in Pennsylvania.

"It quickly became a prominent recreation destination in Schuylkill County for locals and travelers alike," he said. "It remains a cherished vacation spot for many of our visitors."

Camping is just one activity to enjoy at this park. You can hike in its beautiful forests, fish or boat in the 52-acre lake between the two campgrounds, or just enjoy a picnic.

## 10 Questions/ 10 Answers



In this issue, volunteer and former board member **Deb Shuman Reed**, who explores and writes about cemeteries, answers the 10 questions.

### Q. Where and when did you grow up?

A. I was born and raised in the Yorkville section of Pottsville from 1955 until I graduated from Pottsville High in 1973. Most of my friends lived in row homes with small yards. All of us kids played outside on the sidewalks, rode our bikes on the streets, and everyone knew everyone!

### Q. What was the most significant world or national event during your childhood?

A. I would name two events:  
1) The Cuban Missile Crisis and  
2) The civil rights movement.

### Q. Who inspired your interest in local history?

A. My grandmother, Elizabeth Shuman, and my dad, Bob Shuman. My grandmother told me stories about our family and showed me old photos. My dad was always reading books about historical events, and he encouraged me to read them when he was finished.

### Q. Tell us about an interesting ancestor.

A. It's hard to choose one person, but I guess it would be my second great-grandfather, Daniel Donne. He was a soldier in the Pennsylvania 48th regiment during the Civil War. After the war, he was very active in his Palo Alto community and served as an officer in the Gowen GAR post.

### Q. Can you name a teacher who made a positive impact?

A. My seventh-grade science teacher, Audrey Lantz, always encouraged my efforts in school. Thomas Malloy, my junior high social studies teacher, inspired me to become a social studies teacher.

### Q. Why do you find cemeteries so interesting?

A. Cemeteries are fascinating on so many levels: natural settings, monument design, and the stories of the people. Cemeteries are an important reminder of our history.

### Q. What county event or business do you miss?

A. I miss the hustle and bustle of downtown Pottsville from 60 years ago. There were so many stores and people waiting to cross the streets. I loved looking at the Christmas displays in Pomeroy's window. My grandmother would take me for school clothing at Sears.

### Q. What is your favorite coal region food?

A. Scrapple with syrup, homemade pierogies, halupki, halushki and Lebanon bologna/ "summer sausage."

### Q. What is your earliest memory of participating in a local historical event?

A. Back in the early Sixties, Pottsville's elementary students would bring flowers from their gardens to school on Memorial Day. We would then walk to the local cemetery and be told to "find a flag." A bugler would play "Taps." I thought it was amazing.

### Q. Why is the Historical Society relevant and important?

A. The Historical Society is important because it preserves artifacts and stories from our past. It also serves as a vital educational resource for all kinds of researchers and ordinary citizens. It is extremely relevant because it highlights the richness and importance of our local heritage.

Answers to the quiz on page 3: 1, I; 2, E; 3, H; 4, F; 5, A; 6, D; 7, J; 8, G; 9, C; 10, B



# We are grateful for these donations

**Dawn Dipple** - Photo of Sweet Arrow Lake, PP & L, June 22, 1929.

**Becky Davis** - Book: *Reformed Church in the United States*.

**David Steranko** - Doutrich's coupon coin, two Pottsville Park and Shop free parking stamps, anthracite carving of a breaker.

**Kerry A. Barket.** - Packet of information on Mahanoy City.

**John Kantner** - Books: *The German Immigration into Pennsylvania* and *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration*.

**Joan Harris** - Newspaper articles on the King's Highway and on trees as markers.

**Linda Dietrich** - Pin and ribbon from Pennsylvania Elks Convention, Pottsville, August 24-28, 1941.

**Gary Scharadin** - Photo of the Scharadin Diner.

**John and Lynda Lawrence** - Yearbooks from local schools.

**Susan** - Photos of Army 4th Platoon and photo of women from H. D. Bob Company, Tremont, 1929.

**Christina Herring** - 27 John O'Hara paperbacks.

**Edward Donahue** - 1870 map of Schuylkill County, Miner's



This coal carving of a breaker was donated by David Steranko.

National Bank coin books, Schuylkill County historical plates, and assorted Schuylkill County memorabilia.

**Barbara Mullins** - Five photos of Elmer Johnson.

**Rev. William A. Sherman** - 1810-1811 Brown/Braun family census, 1790 Emerich family census and 1709 Brown/Braun family tree.

**Deborah Davidson Orłowsky** - Large collection of Pottsville Area High School yearbooks.

**Vivian Lane** - Schuylkill County videos, railroad timetables, books, and records.

## In memory of John E. Dougherty



John E. Dougherty, the husband of the former Jacqueline Joulwan and brother-in-law of General George Joulwan, died on February 7.

He grew up in Pottsville and graduated from Pottsville High School and Lehigh University.

While in Pottsville, he operated his own accounting firm, which had offices in Allentown, York and Maryland.

In 1985, he and Jackie moved to Florida, where he continued to practice accounting for 30 more years.

Besides Jackie, he is survived by five daughters: Anne, Patricia, Jacqueline,Carolynn and Eileen.

We extend our condolences to his family and thank everyone who donated to the Society in his name:

**Mrs. Carol Pothering  
VADM & Mrs. William A.  
Dougherty**

**Ms. Linda Haberstoh**

**Mr. & Mrs. Edward Guers**

**Ms. Veida R. Bartholomew**

**S. Evan & Gwen Weiner**

## Welcome to our new members

Charles Zigner  
Colin Shadel  
Michele Stapleton  
Megan Shake  
Robert Mestishen  
Marisa Sophy

Francis Caruano  
Timothy Daugherty  
Rick Herring  
Amber Fowler  
Mark Lawler  
Tom Lawler

Quentin R. Gilbert Jr.  
Ana Younger  
Margaret Jancewicz  
Maryann Carroll  
Kerry Cahill  
John Piet

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**OR CURRENT RESIDENT**



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