



February 2015

Robert E. Cook Receives Elverson Borough Cane

Jody Phillips

Robert E. (Bob) Cook received the Elverson Borough Cane at a brief ceremony held in the Twin Valley Fire Department's meeting room on Sunday, January 11, 2015. Elverson Historical Commission member Jody Phillips made the presentation.

In awarding the cane, Jody explained that the Elverson Cane tradition was established in June of 2013, in the spirit of the New England Boston Post Cane, to honor the borough's oldest, long-time resident. Noting that Bob was born in the borough and has lived there all of his life, she stated that he is a perfect candidate to receive this honor – especially since he has served the community so extensively, even in his retirement. With his wife Ruth by his side, Bob was visibly moved when he thanked everyone for sharing this special occasion with him.



All of the 25-30 family members and friends in attendance received a full-color handout detailing the history of both the Boston Post and Elverson Borough Cane and a synopsis of Bob's very active life to date. After the presentation, everyone enjoyed refreshments featuring beautiful iced cookies made in the form of cardinals and blue jays, to honor Bob's life-long love of birds, and canes to recognize the occasion.



Information on the background of the canes may be found on the Elverson Borough Website, www.elversonborough.org, under Historical Commission.



Bob Cook's family—Left to right, Back row: Cooper Cioffi, Joe Cioffi, Bob Cook, William Cook, David Cook, Jeff Cook, Connie Byler—Middle row: Dorothy Trate, Kelli Cioffi, Casey Hartshorne, Nancy Cook, Carol Gross, Alyce McEwen, Peggy Cook—Front row: Bob Cook, Ruth Cook

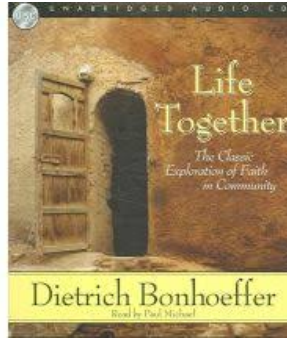
MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS PRESENT (TO DATE)

Merle Stoltzfus

There are a variety of factors determining the value of a gift. I recall Curtis Hoke dropping off the absolute best Christmas present to KC. The Bovine femur was worthless to the rest of the family but our dog enjoyed that bone for days, yes weeks. She always remembered Uncle Curt as her very favorite Christmas relative. The value of his gift wasn't in the cost as much as knowledge of the receiver. And, many times the value of a gift is multiplied by uncontrolled circumstances. When significant and immediate benefit is realized by the receiving person, yes perfect timing makes the gift's value soar.

This was the case for my \$10 favorite 2014 Christmas present (to date). I still haven't used my new stainless grill. "Life Together" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been a timely and personally relevant book for me. Executed by the Gestapo near the end of World War II for his part in a plot to assassinate Hitler, Bonhoeffer left a legacy of writings that has become prized around the world. "Life Together" is practical advice on how human life together should be perceived and attained. Even though his writings focus on Christian community, the principles are true toward the building of any healthy community of people. And often times my thoughts about community turn toward Elverson, the greatest square mile.

As we enter 2015, Elverson has significant challenges before us. The funds needed for the increasing state and federal mandates take an ever increasing percentage of our available budget. The maintenance and necessary improvement of our local roads, limited infrastructure and buildings require imminent attention or the costs will increase geometrically. And the updating of our Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances has been delayed for 5 years. All these challenges are opportunities to figure out how to live life together.



In fact, if Bonhoeffer is right (and I suggest he is), life together only becomes what it should be when we have conceded that real life consists of challenges. True community is only realized when we dismiss our "wish dreams" of what we think life should be and learn to face the known and unexpected challenges before us in a unified effort. Selfless sacrifice toward the benefit of each other is the essence of true community. Bonhoeffer says, "He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial." This could be said of any community, yes Elverson. A grasp and understanding of this truth could work wonders in Washington

DC (read that quote again).

So, as we enter 2015, let's embrace our significant challenges as the very ingredient we need to continue to be a great community. The ones we have identified are only part of the challenges before us; maybe even a small fraction of them. Providence will bring the exact challenges that will best serve this greatest square mile. Only when we concede our proud and pretentious wish dreams and together accept the realistic, yes ugly aspects of life's challenges, do we begin to be able to realize what community is meant to be. Together then as true community we will begin to enjoy real life together. So, in a healthy community, a life and place with significant challenges is better for us. Let's embrace what we have and live life together.



Elverson Youth Baseball is accepting registrations until March 2nd for kids ages 5 - 15 (birth date as of 5/1). For more information and registration form please visit: www.leaguelineup.com/elversonyouthbaseball Questions, email: ElversonYouthBaseball@gmail.com

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DISCOVERING THE BLUE ROCK BEAR

Cookie Onushko

On September 7, 2014, I was invited to Judy Williams next door for a get-together for Charlotte O'Neill, who was soon moving into a care facility—Mifflin Court in Shillington. Her house on North Twin Valley Road was going to be auctioned off in November along with her things. When Judy took Charlotte home, Pat Beaton and I followed along. Charlotte had lots of collections and I was able to buy a few things. That's when I found out about the "Elverson Bear". Charlotte had hers in a glass display case along with a sheet of information about the "Blue Rock Bear". I offered to buy it because I love Elverson memorabilia, but she was taking it with her. She wasn't sure what she paid for it, so later I called Mary Kurtz, who would have been one of Methodist ladies making the bears. Mary called Mary Ellen Hartman to check and they both thought not more than \$20—25.

Tuesday, January 13th I was able to visit Charlotte at Mifflin Court and got a copy of the bear information sheet. I also took a picture of Charlotte with her bear. It was #148.



Sunday, January 11th, Bob Cook received the Elverson Cane at Twin Valley Fire Station. Thankfully because of a phone call from Darrell Gible I was reminded of the event. I went and took pictures and Monday afternoon was able to take a small album of pictures to Bob and Ruth Cook. While visiting with them I asked Ruth if she knew about the Elverson bear. She led me to the living room where she got a bear off a chair and sure enough it had a blue wooden heart with "Blue Rock Bear" on one side and #20 on the other side. Ruth didn't know it was numbered.



Knowing my interest in the bear, Mary called me a few days later and said she had two of them and would like to give me one. I was thrilled. The bear has a blue wooden heart with "Blue Rock Bear" on one side and #206 on the other.

So now we know that at least 206 bears were made and Ruth Cook has one of the earliest ones. *We'd love to know who else has one. Do you? Let us know. I'd love to take your picture with it.*



THE BLUE ROCK BEAR

Founded in 1790, Elverson was originally named Blue Rock for the peculiar outcropping on the approaches to the town. The "Blue Rocks" resemble a river of rocks...a splashing, dashing, tumultuous river one hundred and fifty feet wide.

While originally thought to be a glacial deposit, they are now believed to be the exposed erosion of the Blue Mountain range lying some thirty miles north of this small Chester County town. In pre-historic times this range was as high as the Himalayas are today.

On February 21, 1989, a group of six ladies from the Elverson United Methodist Church formed a non-profit craft group and named themselves "The Blue Rock Crafters". Their primary product is the Blue Rock Bear which they have been industriously making since they first started. Love your BLUE ROCK BEAR as they have loved creating him/her, and share in the good works these Elverson ladies are accomplishing.

LOCAL EARNED INCOME TAX RETURN IS DUE APRIL 15

It's that time of year again. Your 2014 local earned income tax return is due on April 15.

Did you know the quickest way to get your refund is to file online? If you live and work in Pennsylvania, you can e-file on our tax administrator's secure website, which is available 24/7 at www.KeystoneCollects.com.

Keystone Collections Group's e-file is the easy, fast and secure way to file your 2014 tax return. It lets you file your tax return when it is most convenient for you. You will need your W-2, your Social Security Number and any other income documents that may apply (such as a PA-UE or a Schedule C).

Please note that the forms changed this year. If you will be claiming an out-of-state tax credit or if you work in Philadelphia, you may be eligible for a local earned income tax credit up to the amount you owe to your resident municipality. The worksheet on the back of the form will help you calculate your out-of-state tax credit (attach a copy of your out-of-state filing).

If you have questions regarding local tax filing, call Keystone's **Taxpayer Helpline** at 1-888-328-0565 to speak with a local, knowledgeable Taxpayer Service Agent. You can also email your questions to "Taxpayer Support" at www.KeystoneCollects.com.

Taxpayers with earned income in 2014 are required to file a tax return by Wednesday, April 15.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ELVERSON BOROUGH?

Jody Phillips

Two Elverson residents correctly identified the location of the sign I photographed for my January 2015 column during the three-day period after the Elverson Borough Newsletter was delivered – Linda Godschall and Becca Walker. Congratulations to these two observant ladies! I put the names of both ladies in a hat and my husband drew Becca's name as the winner of a free dessert at the Elverson Deli. Linda will enjoy a free beverage (no refills) at the Deli. I will make sure that Bob has your names. Apparently, no one else ventured out in the cold to look for it.

The sign hangs in front of the spacious white clapboard building at 19 Park Avenue that houses Chester County Hearth and Home, a fairly new Elverson business which markets accessories and services for wood and coal burning stoves. This building is over 100 years old and was originally owned by Henry S. Zook. It has been remodeled several times and four different businesses have thrived at this location.

Bob Patry explored the history of this building in "The History of Our Community – Elverson, Pennsylvania." I cannot add to or improve on his report so shall paraphrase and quote from it.

Henry S. Zook sold horse-drawn carriages and other farm machinery from this location in the late 19th century, even before Park Avenue was a road. He ran a thriving business for many years until the early 1900's, when "the hottest items on the technological scene were the horseless carriages that amazingly ran by themselves and thus were called automobiles."

In the 1920's Henry sold his now expanded business to Harvey T. Witwer, who partnered with his son Stanley and gradually shifted the bulk of their inventory from carriages to automobiles. Their company was originally named H. T. Witwer, but was renamed H. S. Witwer Motors. Stanley's son Harvey eventually joined the business, which thrived until around 1970, when the company closed, not being able to compete with much bigger establishments that offered a larger selection of vehicles.

The building was boarded up and remained vacant for over thirty years until 2003, when Dwayne Allgyer and his father Will bought it and opened a discount grocery store there called D. and W. Discount Foods. Dwayne changed the name of the business in 2006 to BB's Grocery Outlet, a name currently familiar to most Elversonians. BB's outgrew the building on Park Avenue and moved to much larger quarters in MOM Mall in Morgantown and the historic white clapboard building on

Park Avenue once again changed hands.

In 2010, Bob Smith took over the building and extensively remodeled it for his business, Chester County Hearth and Home. If you've never been inside this cozy showroom, now is a good time to pay your first visit. It's warm inside and Bob carries some attractive items to highlight your fireplace or stoves.

I was surprised that so few people called me to identify last month's picture as I really thought the sign would be easy to spot. I had chosen a really hard one for February but decided to test your knowledge by photographing something that would be fairly easy to find to encourage competition. Please tell me the location of the object in the photo. You can spot it from the road.



When you have identified the picture, contact me at jodysfritz@gmail.com or call me at 610-286-8913. Those who know the answer within three full days after newsletters are placed in residents' mailboxes will

be eligible (by random drawing) to win the grand prize of a free homemade dessert from the Elverson Deli. Everyone who knows the identity of the picture will win a free beverage at the Elverson Deli. If no one gives me the correct answer during the three-day period after newsletters are delivered, the first one to answer correctly will win the grand prize. The deadline for entering the contest is February 16.

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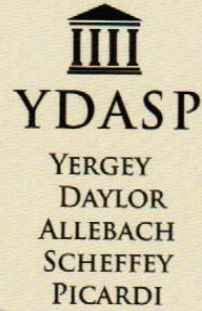


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Snow Day by the Feeder



Left to right, then down: *White-throated Sparrow*, *Downy Woodpecker*, *Carolina Wren*, *White-breasted Nuthatch* (Photos compliments of Seawolf)

Send your Elverson news and stories to our editor at brenda@stoltzfus.com by February 15 or call her at 610.286.5115. Newsletters can be found on www.elversonboro.org.