



August 2015

LIFE IN TWIN VALLEY: 55 YEARS OF A WORLDLY FIGHT

Chris Cameron

The March 14, 1960 issue of Life magazine features a young smiling Princess Margaret and Tony at Windsor Lodge on its cover, announcing the couple's engagement, but buried deep within the magazine, sandwiched between articles about Nikita's "naughty Can-Can film that shocked Khrushchev" and a story about Elvis leaving Priscilla to return to the U.S.A., is a tiny article that hits closer to home 55 years later.

That story titled, "Unworldly Pupils in Worldly Fight" focuses on school children and their parents of Amish and Mennonite sects whose education changed when the Twin Valley School opened in the fall of 1959, moving students who had been enrolled at Honey Brook Elementary School through eighth grade to the new school.

The lead picture features a Mennonite girl in a long dress standing between four other teens dressed in shorts and the article mentions that she is "forbidden by her parents to wear shorts to gym class." Amish fathers denounced the atmosphere of the new school as "too worldly" and started once-a-week farmhouse classes for their children through eighth grade. The article goes on to say that the Amish "stubbornly keep their children on farms" and would rather move out of the county than have their children attend the new school.

The Twin Valley School Board feared that Amish truancy would spread to others and brought the Amish fathers to court, fining them \$2 and a succession of fines until their children appeared at school. The article doesn't say what the outcome of this battle was, but I think we know. We see it around us when we drive on back roads today.

Conflict over the education of Amish and other religious minorities beyond eighth grade made it to

the U.S. Supreme Court in its Landmark Decision *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* (1972). The Court granted Amish and other religious minorities the right to remove their children from schools after eighth grade for religious reasons.

It's certain that when people around the country read the Life article they scratched their heads and wondered about the unusual ways of Pennsylvania Dutch communities. Today reality shows like the

Amish Mafia fill the heads of "The English" with misinformation about these religious sects.

The Life article pondered whether or not Amish and Mennonite sects in and around our community would be able to thrive and keep their "strict traditions" in a modern world. The answer is yes.

Would the writers be shocked to learn that religious traditions and educational norms haven't really changed drastically 55 years later? Twin Valley school children still ride school busses to and from school. They still attend the brick and mortar building overlooking Route 23's rolling farmland, but have the addition of a

scenic shopping complex. The Amish and Mennonites still live among us and we share the roads with those that drive horse and carriages. I can't say that the Amish that I know are "unworldly," many who I have met seem to have done more travelling and are more up-to-date on current events than my "English" friends.

Over half a century later the Twin Valley community still thrives, much as it once did in 1960. I can't say the same for Life magazine, which issued its final regular edition in 2002.

We'd like to hear from you. *If you or someone you know attended Twin Valley School in 1959 when it opened, share your memories or pictures.* You can email chriscameron@yahoo.com.



OUR ELVERSON DELI

Housed in the historic Blue Rock Hotel, circa 1850, the Elverson Deli has served customers for many years. Prior to the deli, the occupied space provided spirits and home cooked meals to travelers and locals alike.

Many a story has been passed down about that period. One in particular highlights the longevity of food service. In early days, the cupola served as the lookout station for a young employee to watch for travelers and wagons. Horses would be watered and people fed. What exactly was served has been lost to history, but we would like to thank you for your patronage that allows us to carry on the local legacy of the Blue Rock!



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Grant Award Announcement

Municipal Authority of the Borough of Elverson

The Municipal Authority is happy to announce that the Chester County Community Revitalization Program has awarded \$590,000 to the Municipal Authority towards closure of the two remaining Lagoons located on the Waste Water Treatment property. Our perseverance paid off as this award was in response to the third application for funding submitted for this project. This money will offset greatly the cost of closing the lagoons. The lagoons no longer serve a purpose in the wastewater treatment process and therefore we are required by the DEP to close them by 2018. The project will be completed entirely on the Treatment Plant property. Preliminary work on the project is underway and we look forward to updating you as this project moves forward. The County has been great to work with on previous grant projects and we look forward to working with them again to improve the Borough.

Repair work to several of the sanitary sewer man-holes in the Borough was completed on July 22nd. Man-holes were cleaned and internal cracks were sealed. These repairs will keep storm water from entering the sanitary sewer and should generally improve the flow process. This work is part of a 3 year cleaning and televising project of all the sewers in the Borough.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ELVERSON BOROUGH?

Jody Phillips

The photo appearing in this column in the July issue of the Elverson Borough Newsletter depicts the Veteran's Memorial located just inside the gates of the Methodist Church cemetery. The plaque at the base of the flagpole, which displays a large American flag, reads, "In memory and honor of our veterans of past & future wars & conflicts." Encircling the flagpole are eight smaller plaques holding small American flags. These plaques represent eight major world conflicts – the Revolutionary War, Spanish-American War, War of 1812, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf conflict. Each has a different emblem depicting that war.

Congratulations to John Mohl, who called me with the correct answer the day after the newsletter was published. He wins a beverage of his choice from the cooler at the Elverson Fitness Club.

August's photo depicts a unique upper story house window, which caught my eye and hopefully will catch yours. Please identify the address of the house. If you are familiar with its history, please let me know, as not much information is available on this structure. Contact me by emailing me at jodysfritz@gmail.com or by calling me at 610-286-8913. Email is preferable.

This month everyone who identifies the photo correctly by August 15 will win an Elverson Day tee shirt. The shirts are available in sizes small through extra-large in royal blue and in sizes medium and large in both yellow and orange. Those who know the location of this house after August 15 will win a free beverage from the Elverson Fitness Club. Please pick up your prize promptly.





**Dr. Leo McCormick
Dr. Darryl Hajduczek
Dr. Leslie Freeman**

92 Kemp Road
Pottstown, PA 19465
(p) 610-705-0201
(f) 610-705-0180

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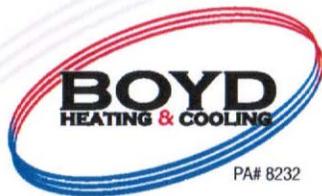
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Originator ID# 640646

Morgantown Branch | 3697 Main St. | Morgantown, PA 19543
p 610.286.8228 | f 610.286.8275

Elverson Branch | 83 West Main St., Suite 1 | Elverson, PA 19520
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Rob Fischer Sr. and Rob Fischer Jr.

OUR THANKS TO THE BUSINESSES WHO SUPPORT THIS NEWSLETTER.

If you would like your business included, please contact Esther Prosser, esther@stoltzfus.con, 484.269.7153.

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EFC'S FIRST ANNUAL FARM AND FOOD FEST— AUGUST 8

This August 8th marks Elverson Fitness Club's one year anniversary! Grab your friends, family and pets and join in the celebration by attending the EFC 1st Anniversary Farm and Food Fest. The festivities will start at the Fitness Club at 51 South Pine Street, Elverson with our Community Open House where we will be giving tours as well as offering membership specials, raffles and door prizes. A farmer's market complete with food trucks will take place from 10am-3pm in the field adjacent to the Fitness Club.

The market will be full of fabulous local, fresh, homemade and home produced goods. We believe that a trip to a farmer's market is one of the best ways to connect with where your food comes from. Meeting and talking to farmers and artisans is a great opportunity to learn more about how and where your food is produced. It also opens the door for the opportunity to learn about the people who work hard to bring you the most delicious and nutritious food.

Elverson Fitness Club is committed to helping local residents improve their health through fun and engaging fitness. We want to thank our members for an amazing first year; we would not be here without your support. *We'll see you on Saturday, August 8th!*



Send your Elverson news and stories to our editor at brenda@stoltzfus.com by August 20 or call her at 610.286.5115. Newsletters can be found on www.elversonboro.org.