



June 2016

THE END OF AN ERA— *Jody Phillips*

When the Elverson Borough branch of the National Penn Bank at 83 West Main Street closes its doors at 2 pm on Friday, July 15, the era of having a community bank in Elverson Borough will come to a close. For over 100 years, most Borough residents have been able to do their banking close to their homes, often without having to get into their cars. Now, with the merger of National Penn Bank with BB&T (Branch Banking and Trust Company), Elversonians will have to drive to Morgantown Crossings in Berks County to continue banking locally. National Penn has already notified their customers of the changeover and the transition promises to be smooth and effortless.

The original Elverson National Bank opened for business on October 2, 1915 at 22 Park Avenue. The 30 x 30 black granite building was constructed at a cost of \$3,682.65 – a significant sum in the early 20th century. According to “The History of Our Community – Elverson, Pennsylvania,” written by Bob Patry, the lintels, window bases and belts were made of marble and the green glazed Spanish tile roof was considered a “daring statement” for a commercial building in the early 20th century. The most unique feature of the building was the Terrazzo tiled flooring. Inside, the bank boasted mahogany counters with Tennessee marble fronts and mahogany furniture, a double vault, and community and meeting rooms. Sixteen days after the bank opened, its assets were over \$1.5 million.

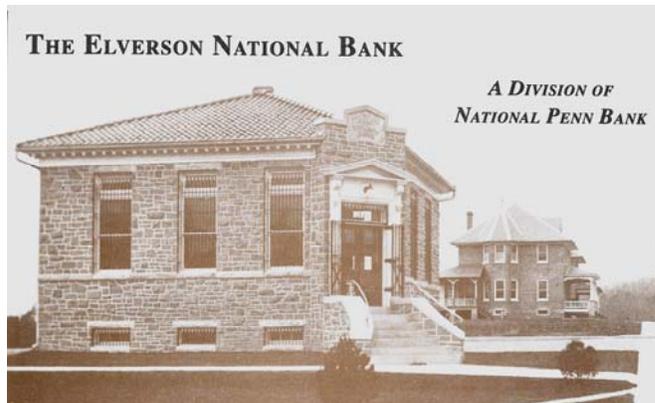
The employees of the Elverson Bank were caring, civic-minded and fair. Bob relates several examples in his history book. My favorite is one about Earl K. Witmer, who often stayed at the bank late into the night or arrived at the bank early in the morning. On one occasion a newcomer to Elverson arrived early to find a man mowing the lawn. Earl came over to the newcomer, explained that the bank did not open for half an hour, and proceeded to chat with him about the

Borough. Then he unlocked the bank doors, went behind a desk and spoke to the newcomer about a mortgage.

By 1980, the old Elverson Bank had outgrown its building on Park Avenue and moved to a brand new facility at 83 West Main Street. The Elverson Bank flourished in its new location until July 1998, when National Penn Shares announced that it would acquire Elverson National Bank. A stock swap was accomplished, valued at 97.6 million dollars, and the 83-year-old Elverson National Bank, now with \$300 million in assets and nine branches in three counties, ceased to be. But at least Elverson residents could still bank in the Borough.

Those 18 years were not kind to the old Elverson

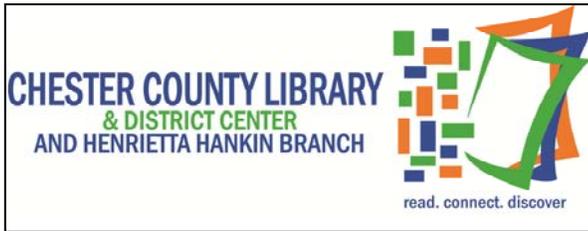
National Bank building on Park Avenue. As it deteriorated further both inside and out, it became unsafe and the once beautiful windows were boarded up. Between 1998 and 2014, the building fell into more serious disrepair and was finally listed for sale. Fortunately, another newcomer to



Elverson has purchased the old building and is in the process of fixing it up and remodeling it as a private residence. This part of our Borough's history will hopefully be preserved for a long time.

The offices of the National Penn Bank on West Main Street will be remodeled into office space as now, only 18 years after the National Penn Bank assimilated our National Elverson Bank, it too will disappear - under the management of BB&T. We will no longer have the convenience of banking in Elverson.

Yes, in a way, this is the end of an era. It is sad to see Elverson Borough lose its bank. But the Borough has lost many other businesses over the years – grocery store, car dealership, dairy and others - and yet it still seems to retain its unique small town atmosphere. This may be because, no matter what happens to its buildings or businesses, the Borough is still home to caring, respectful, honest people. It is still a place where neighbors help neighbors and work together to preserve the qualities of life that the founders of the original Elverson Bank valued and lived by. The era of Elverson as a wonderful place to live will never end.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ELVERSON BOROUGH?

Jody Phillips

As the school year ends, everyone is looking for a change of pace. I hope you'll consider signing your children, or yourself, up for one of our Summer Reading Clubs. Children are encouraged to read throughout the summer to keep up their skills. In August, depending on the number of days they've read, they will receive a Bronze (20 or more days), Silver (40 or more days), or Gold (60 or more days) medal and other prizes. Special programs will be offered for them. Young adults are encouraged to read 5 books and attend programs to earn chances to win prizes. Adults will be given an opportunity to read a variety of books and also attend programs to earn chances for great prizes. Details can be found on our website – www.chescolibraries.org.

Just a reminder that the library is closed on Sundays starting Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.

Hope to see you soon,
Beverly Lawler, Manager
Henrietta Hankin Branch Library
215 Windgate Drive Chester Springs, PA
blawler@ccls.org

Warwick Village Tour on Thursday, June 23

Sponsor: Warwick Township & Historical Commission

Tour Information: Warwick, once known as St. Mary's, has been a village in northern Chester County since 1717, when settlers arrived to work the local iron ore mines. Eighteenth and nineteenth century houses line both sides of the narrow road that ambles through the village. Typical of the times, many of the houses served as more than residences. They became general stores, a seed shop, a blacksmith shop, a parsonage, a tavern, a funeral parlor and a school. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, in the center of the village, was founded by Levi Bull in 1805. It is believed to be the first church built in PA after the American Revolution.

Parking and Information: Tours begin at 5:30 pm, last tour leaves at 7 pm. Parking will be along Warwick and Morningside roads.



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Thank you to the two people who guessed the location of the shutter and shutterdog on the stone house pictured in the last issue of the Elverson Borough Newsletter. Unfortunately, you both guessed incorrectly. You did find a stone house with reddish brown shutters but the shutters were not secured by shutterdogs. The picture of the shutter and shutter dog (a new term for me) is located on the front façade of a two and a half story home located at 20 North Chestnut Street. Built about 1800, it is the first house (from Main Street) on the left and was one of the earliest houses on this street. Known as the Ammon/Beaton/Mathews House, its early owners included Silas Fox, Elijah Bull and John Milns.

In the early part of the twentieth century, Emma Ammon lived here. She and her two daughters, Grace and Mary, were telephone operators, operating the third of Elverson's telephone exchanges in their home. In 1925, Bell Telephone moved the exchange to Morgantown, which is probably why most Elverson residences have Morgantown exchanges of 286 and 913 and most of their phone numbers are listed in Berks County phone books even though Elverson is in Chester County.

According to "The History of Our Community - Elverson, Pennsylvania," which was published in 2011 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Elverson's incorporation as a borough, after the Ammons family left the house, it was occupied by Webster and Geraldine Fox, who raised four children there – Skip, Dennis, Barry and Audrey. In the early 1990s, Michael and Diane Beaton bought the house and moved in with their young daughters, Mikki and Meredith. They did extensive renovations, adding an entire wing on the west side of the home that beautifully matched the historic architecture and appearance of the original dwelling. Adam Mathews, a craftsman of early American furniture, currently owns this historic Elverson house.



This month's photo should be very easy to identify. Please tell me the location of the building and its main use and email me at jodysfritz@gmail.com (preferred) or call me at 610-286-8913 if you know and you will win an Elverson Day tee shirt. At this point, sizes are limited to Smalls and Mediums. Mediums are available in all colors (orange, yellow and blue). Small shirts are available in yellow and blue. Good luck! You may also purchase a tee shirt for \$5.



The Go Fish Guys are more passionate than ever about putting the Bible Back into Vacation Bible School!

In a world that is always searching for the “next big thing” some things will never change and can never be improved upon. God, His Promises, His Word, and the Gospel are unchangeable, which is why the Go Fish Guys invite you to KICK IT OLD SCHOOL!

Your kids will travel through the Old Testament as well as the New Testament to learn about several attributes of God. From Adam and Eve to the Passover to the building of the tabernacle to Jesus on the cross, your kids will learn how God’s holiness and separation from sin have never changed. “*Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” Hebrews 13:8

To register, go on-line to cefcelverson.org and click on the VBS link or call **Paul Fulbright at (610) 286-6790.**

Children ages 4 thru 6th grade completed
July 11th – 15th
6:15 PM – 8:45 PM
at
Community Evangelical Free Church
52 S. Brick Lane, Elverson

CAN A SMALL TREE PROVIDE SHADE?

Herb Hamilton

My previous home had a deck with a wicked western exposure. Hades had nothing on this locale. My poor girls were doomed to be toasted tots. I needed shade; I needed a tree but the tree would be close to the house. How big did I want it to grow? More importantly, how big does a tree need to grow to provide shade?

Most professionals use 45’ as the threshold height to determine when a tree enters the shade tree category. There are exceptions, most notably *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* commonly known as Katsura. I only say most notably because Katsura is one of my all time favorite trees. (I had 4 planted at my last home.) For a tree to be 45’ or taller next to a home though can be quite intimidating. Again, how big a tree did I need to provide shade?

Most ornamental trees average in size from 20-35’. That height works near homes. For me I wanted shade at the end of the day so my family could enjoy the deck. I didn’t need a 45’ tall tree where a

25’ tall tree would give me the shade my daughters wanted and I would get to be a cool dad.

But let’s be realistic. I wanted shade sooner rather than later. Here’s the good news. Most ornamental trees in the 20-35’ range are medium to quick growing in youth then slowing down with age. An ornamental tree 8-10’ tall at planting will be 15’ in 5 years. Properly sited that will cool down a deck or patio in the early evening. (Of course patience factors into this.) Flowering cherries, Japanese snowbells and birches are a few examples of quick growing medium size trees that are well suited for use near a home. By the way, I chose a Japanese snowbell.



Examine your site and determine your needs. Use a pole or stake as a stand in to help you decide placement. Decide how big you want the tree to grow and remember that a small tree can provide an ample amount of shade when properly sited.

ZONING UPDATE PUBLIC MEETING

Merle Stoltzfus

Elverson Borough Council thanks Hopewell Manor for again hosting a public meeting in their spacious gathering room on Tuesday, May 24th. The Ordinance Update Committee and Borough Council joined the Chester County Planning Consultants to present the most recent updated Zoning Ordinance and maps. Questions were answered and handouts provided.

Pennsylvania is a one of only four Commonwealth States in the United States; the other three being (Kentucky, Massachusetts & Virginia). There is no legal differences between commonwealths and other US states. Contrary to some opinions, Pennsylvania's commonwealth status does not affect the way land use is legislated.

As governed through the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), land use in Pennsylvania is regulated by local governments through Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances (SALDO). In 2014 Elverson adopted our new Comprehensive Plan. We currently are finishing up the updating of our Zoning Ordinance while also working on our SALDO.

Municipalities aim to update these ordinances every 10-15 years. Our current zoning or since was adopted in 1998. The past 18 years have brought about many new uses like cell towers and/or digital signs among other things. Terminology has changed as well creating a need to update how we word our regulations.

Planning for the future is never an absolute, thorough or complete success. No human or committee has the ability to know the future. It therefore becomes important to write flexibility into our ordinances. But with land use plans, flexibility opens the door for those wishing to serve selfish purposes. So, there is a fine balance to be found in a land use planning.

The Ordinance Committee thanks all the Borough residents who took the time to join us and be part of this planning process. We won't get it perfect, but with your help we want to get the land use ordinances of this greatest square mile as right as possible.

Elverson Sidewalk Flowers Reappear Again

Donna Mountz

Our May this year was one of uncharacteristic cool temperatures and a lot of wetness. It was a challenge to coax plants and flowers into vigorous growth, as spring seemed to be stalled due to the conditions. Regardless, our borough's team of flower volunteers set about to fill the town pots and wait patiently for better weather. At least nothing froze! Well, better conditions arrived at the end of the month, and everyone rejoiced in the sunny and delightfully warm days. And now that June is here, our town's twenty sidewalk flower pots are already starting to fill out and grow upwards.

Many are to be thanked for their part in this beautification project that is entering its 9th year. First we are grateful to our Elverson Borough Council for underwriting the cost of four, new, brown planters, potting soil and some plants for them. Also, Lowes of Elverson donated flowers for some of our pots and Elverson Supply generously contributed for mulch and gravel. But this year a majority of our flower pots were "adopted" by town residents, meaning those folks not only agreed to be caretakers of one or more pots for the season, but they also bought all the flowers. The flower committee is delighted with this kind of help, as well as the efforts of the faithful volunteers who have agreed year after year to water and nurture one or more pots. And where would we be without the strong arms and willing hearts of a few young men who trans-

port these heavy planters, delivering in May and gathering up in October? So, when you meet your neighbors listed below who are part of this work, give them a high five and a sincere thank you. Now let's all enjoy the flowers!

Caretakers: Jen & Matt Dunlap, the staff at the Elverson Deli, Gail Hegarty, Joyce Gondy, Donna Mountz, Betty Walsh, and the staff at Giovanni's.

Adopters: Derek Altman, Jeff Cole (2), Ginny Foltz (2), Duke Fries, Charlotte Gehman (2), Joan Godwin (4), Barbara Stoltzfus (2), and Mary Wickerham at the Elverson train station.



Kevin Meyers (CCPC planner) addressing the Borough residents





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

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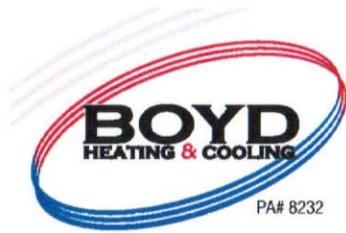
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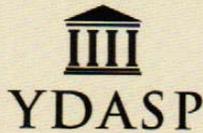
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Send your Elverson news and stories to our editor at brenda@stoltzfus.com by June 20 or call her at 610.286.5115. Newsletters can be found on elversonboro.org.

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ELVERSON DAY AT THE PARK—JUNE 25

It's hard to believe that spring has come and nearly gone! With summer already upon us, Elverson Day at the Park on June 25th is quickly approaching. The planning committee has been hard at work tying up months of ideas into final details, and have been sure to include highlights that appeal to all ages and tastes.

Speaking of tastes, be sure to come hungry to Livingood Park that Saturday at 5 pm and enjoy a meal at the food truck festival, featuring a menu that ranges from burgers and fries to farm-to-fork specials to artisan cupcakes. You can work your dinner off with a game of knockerball, or, if you'd prefer something a bit more relaxed than suiting up in a giant inflatable sphere, feel free to shop our several local vendors. (Don't miss the historical commission's table, with books on our small town's big heritage!) . Whether you're enjoying ice cream from your lawn chair or appre-



ciating an aerial view of Elverson from the hot air balloon, our roster of talented local musicians will provide a fantastic soundtrack to your evening.

Children will love the long line up of free activities planned for them: Past favorites like pony rides, face painting, a moon bounce and an exotic animal petting zoo will re-



turn, joined by a host of new features as well. Between decorating t-shirts, traversing the park in a barrel train and exploring a fleet of trucks and machines, the kids will be occupied until dark when the fireworks are set to begin.

Thanks to our generous local sponsors, we'll once more enjoy a display that's pretty spectacular – especially for a small town! But then again, who would expect anything less from the Greatest Square Mile? We look forward to seeing you there!