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**FREE**

ISSUE #5

# TARENTUM MAGAZINE

**FEATURING:**

**Major Long Distance  
Bike Trail Coming Through  
Tarentum**

**Altany Insurance  
Celebrating 100 Years**

**New Businesses &  
New Faces In Tarentum**

**and ...**

**Software Engineer  
Breathes New Life Into  
Former St. Clements Church**



## TARENTUM BOROUGH OFFICES

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*Manager Dwight Boddorf*  
manager@tarentumboro.com

*Mayor Bob Lang*  
blang@tarentumboro.com

---

## MEMBERS OF TARENTUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Scott Dadowski** President Ward: 2nd  
sdadowski@tarentumboro.com

**Lou Ann Homa** Vice President Ward: 1st  
lhoma@tarentumboro.com

**Carrie Fox** Council At Large  
cfox@tarentumboro.com

**Ray Kerr** Ward: 1st  
rkerr@tarentumboro.com

**Kevin Bertocki** Ward: 2nd  
kbertocki@tarentumboro.com

**Brian Nolan** Ward: 3rd  
bnolan@tarentumboro.com

**Brian Snyder** Ward: 3rd  
bsnyder@tarentumboro.com

## ADVERTISING POLICY

Tarentum Borough Magazine was created for the Tarentum Borough and the Crossroads of the Allegheny Valley. The Tarentum Recreation Board and Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertising that goes against our standards. Advertisement is meant for all businesses, fundraising and etc. not for political or religious issues.

Our magazine is distributed but not limited to: all advertisers in this magazine. Thank you to all the advertisers and readers that support the Tarentum Magazine - Crossroads of the Allegheny Valley

## MISSION

Tarentum Borough Magazine was created for Tarentum Borough residents and surrounding communities to enjoy and engage in the good works and pleasures of others. Tarentum Borough Magazine is available online and in print. The magazine promotes community values that make Tarentum Borough an asset to all.

**Managed & Edited by: Hugh & Carrie Fox – The Tarentum Recreation Board**

**Published by: Word Association Publishers, Tarentum, PA**



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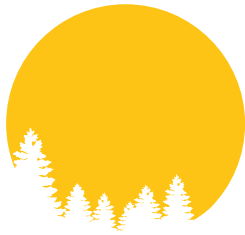
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*\*Shhh! Front Cover Santa is Former Arnold Mayor John Campbell.*



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Tarentum Recreation Board Events

**NOV. 17, 2022** 5:00pm - 8:00pm  
Market Night – Tarentum Lights Up

**NOV. 19, 2022** 1:00pm  
Tarentum Brackenridge Christmas Parade

**DEC. 17, 2022**  
Lighting Contest, Residential & Business

**APR. 18, 2023**  
Egg Hunt 9:00am

**MAY 11, 2023**  
Spring Senior Bingo



**Sponsored by: Tarentum Recreation Board**

For more info visit [facebook.com/TarentumRecreationBoard/](https://facebook.com/TarentumRecreationBoard/) or contact Carrie Fox at 724-448-1470

## Other Tarentum Events

**TARENTUM NIGHT MARKET** For *INFO GO TO:* [facebook.com/TarentumNightMarket](https://facebook.com/TarentumNightMarket)

**TARENTUM FARMER'S MARKET** Jun. 8 - Oct. 26, Weds 9AM - 1PM Corner of Lock and 10th

# WE WANT YOUR INPUT!

Thank you for reading TARENTUM MAGAZINE!  
We invite the whole community to contribute.  
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1941: *The Tarentum Book Club's 40th Anniversary*, *The Valley Daily News*

# ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF *THE TARENTUM BOOK CLUB*

by Cindy Homburg

**I**HAVE RESEARCHED BOOK CLUBS and we are not the oldest in the United States, but we might be the second oldest in the state of Pennsylvania.

It would be nice to say that the Tarentum Book Club was first in the nation or first in the commonwealth, but the enduring history of this group of women, which was so firmly established on February 5th of 1901 and their consistent determination to read and discuss relevant literary works, is in itself a living tribute.

At the first meeting, held in the home Mary Alice Dunn of Ross Street, Tarentum, the name Tarentum Book Club was chosen and it was decided that the club would confine the books read to works of fiction. The second meeting was at the East 10th Avenue home of Mrs. Anna (A.W."Daddy") Walker, where the ladies adopted the club's constitution and by-laws and elected permanent officers. President was Mrs. Allison, Vice President Mrs. Brinley, Secretary, Mrs. Harrison, Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Vogeley, Librarian, Mrs. Boyd, Assistant Librarian, Mrs. Camp, and

Treasurer, Mrs. Anderson. Their mission would be to procure the latest works of fiction for the use of members to increase their knowledge of the latest authors and interest in all literary subjects for the social enjoyment of the members.

The Tarentum Book Club was in its second decade when the members decided to raise money to gift a decorative fountain to the community. Hebe, a Greek goddess, daughter of Zeus, known as the goddess of youth, was chosen. Hebe was to have water spilling from her cup to symbolize water flowing forever.

On June 6, 1912, while the Keystone Marching Band played, a large gathering of residents joined the Tarentum Mayor, the water plant manager and members of the Tarentum Book Club at the triangle of Ross Street, East Seventh Avenue and Mill Street to dedicate the beautiful statue. But Hebe didn't fair well in the busy triangle. Some time in the 1920s, she was struck by a horse-drawn buggy and badly damaged. Several years later, Tarentum Borough purchased a second Hebe and placed her in Tarentum's Riverview Memorial Park, where she stands today. The original, newly-repaired,

Hebe was eventually placed back in the triangle where she stood for almost one hundred years.

In the end, the original statue of Hebe was destroyed when struck by an unidentified driver. The Tarentum Book Club and the Tarentum History and Landmarks Foundation put their funds together to purchase a replacement. Once more, a group of community notables gathered to celebrate the return of Hebe. To the delight of the crowd, then Mayor Carl Magnetta proclaimed, "Hebe, we are glad to have you back in town."

As the Tarentum Book Club continued through the years, maintaining their dedication to reading literary works of fiction as well as their traditions, the ladies added the Custom of the Spoon which



President Pat Henry poses with the club's spoon in front of Hebe (Photo by Hugh Fox)

is a charming ritual that harkens back to Mrs. Alice Dunn—the lady who hosted the first gathering of the book club.

When Mrs. Dunn passed away in 1917, she left a

beautiful spoon to the mother of Sally Esler Walters. Since that time, the spoon, which dates back to the late 1860s and is engraved on one side with the name Dunn, has been passed on by the outgoing club president, to the new president.

The spoon is now in the hands of the current president, Pat Henry.

As for the Tarentum Book Club, new generations have continued reading and discussing contemporary works of fiction and meeting in the homes of members. Each year, they still choose a new theme for the books that members read. This year the theme is Women of Substance.

Membership in the Tarentum Book Club is by invitation only.

### THE 2022/23 READING LIST

**SEPT:** *The Personal Librarian*, **OCT:** *The Giver of Stars*,  
**NOV:** *What I Know for Sure*, **FEB:** *Notorious RBG*  
**MAR:** *Catherine the Great*, **MAY:** *Carnegie's Maid*

### CURRENT TARENTUM BOOK CLUB OFFICERS:

Pres: **Pat Henry**, 1<sup>st</sup> VP: **Mary Jane Jacques**,  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP: **Debbie Fugate**, Recording Sec: **Dawn Conroy**,  
Corresponding Sec: **Kathy Brooke**, Treas: **Margo Masarik**,  
Asst. Treas: **Janice Demharter**

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[Mail or Email Your Remembrance Information](#)

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# THERE'S *ALWAYS* SOMETHING GOING ON IN TARENTUM



## Boo Festival



## Night Market



## Christmas Parade



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# ALTANY LOYND & LINDQUIST LLC

## CELEBRATING ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SERVICE

***“What’s more impressive than our longevity has been our ability to maintain modest growth over the past 100 years.”***

No, we did not get that quote wrong! What company President David R. Gusmar means is that over the decades Altany Loynd & Lindquist LLC intentionally placed greater value and emphasis on providing highest quality service to current clients than on pursuing prospective

clients. And, he believes, this has insured the company’s enduring stability and professional reputation.

As for Altany Loynd & Lindquist’s controlled growth, Gusmar explains that while it has been modest, it has also been consistent. “We currently have more than ten-thousand clients in five separate offices, servicing four counties.” And they represent over sixty carriers.



*David. R. Gusmar,  
president and CEO  
and father  
Vic Gusmar.*

David Gusmar joined the agency in 2004 and became president and CEO in 2008. In addition to his uncle and father working in the agency, David has had several family members in the insurance industry with a combined 175+ years of industry knowledge. His predecessors include many former partners: Glenn Lindquist, Ron Altany, Jack Loynd, Bob Leonard and Fred Kavov, along with his father Vic and mentor Dale Blaha.

“These were good people who took care of their employees. They stood by them through troubles and bad circumstances. They were generous people and this is the tradition I inherited and would like to believe I am continuing.”

The charming building that currently houses Altany, Loynd and Lindquist on Corbet Street in Tarentum was built by Zampogna Construction, Inc. It was the signing of a long-term lease by the agency that provided the financial guarantee for the Zampogna family to proceed with the project. That commitment kicked-off the revitalization and beautification of the Tarentum business district in the early 2000s.

Gusmar says that the challenging work put in by then Mayor Carl Magnetta and Borough Manager Bill Rossey launched the overall project which, after twelve years, is coming to fruition today thanks to Mike

Nestico, as well as the past and current council members, and current Mayor Bob Lang.

Gusmar says their efforts to have one last but pivotal building demolished will finalize plans to open up the entire area and have a dramatic impact on the entire business district.

“I would like to personally thank Tarentum Borough’s past and present staff, council members, and current Mayor Bob Lang, borough managers and the Zampogna family for their patience, diligence, and tenacity in seeing this project through to the end. Some of the people have passed away, retired, or moved on. It is highly unusual to see so many good people cooperating and executing over a twelve-year period! I think it is a real testament to their character and to the character of the Valley as a whole.”

## 100 Years of IMPRESSIVE STATS

<b>CLIENTS:</b>	<b>100,000+</b>
<b>PREMIUMS WRITTEN:</b>	<b>\$500,000,000+</b>
<b>CLAIMS PAID:</b>	<b>\$150,000,000+</b>
<b>EMPLOYEES:</b>	<b>500+</b>



**AWL&L 2022 STAFF PICNIC**



# congrats!

2022

## HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL GRADS

- |                            |                                     |                              |                             |                           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Adams, Blake               | Everhart, John Henry                | Klingensmith, Sarah          | Palermo, Kaden              | Snyder, Alyssa Marie      |
| Allias, Gionna Brielle     | Fabregas, Maria N                   | Kolodziejski, Anthony Joseph | Parker, Christian           | Sobotka, Jaylynn Jean     |
| Ankney, Michale Peter      | Fick, Tristin                       | Korb, Aaron                  | Pavshak, Taylor             | Solomon, Shyanna Dolores  |
| Arner, Jacob               | Flatt, Gage Micheal                 | Kubla, Nya Marie             | Peters, Jake Thomas         | Stanonis, Andrew Paul     |
| Babinsack, Daniel          | Flatt, Hannah N                     | Lammert, Kalle               | Pesanski, Angel             | Stewart, Jeffrey          |
| Baker, Cameron Michael     | Flatt, Jason                        | Lampasi, Joel Anthony        | Pfaff, Jacob S              | Strader, Cyler            |
| Balog, Zachary Thomas      | Fountain, Ashley                    | Laser, Kristofer William     | Poindexter, Jocelyn Nicole  | Such, Jayleigh Marie      |
| Barch, Noah Daniel         | Gamble, Lily                        | Lehew, Nathan James          | Price, Kaleb M              | Svitek, Kirstyn           |
| Barry, Parker              | Godfrey, Payton Michelle            | Leri, Carter                 | Primer, Dyamond             | Szitas, Tyler             |
| Best, Conner               | Gonzales, Kevin M                   | Long, Caliel Lemar           | Randolph, Bryan Bonerhes    | Thimons, Daniel G         |
| Blythe, Hannah             | Gorney, Seth Edward                 | Loughner, David James        | Ratliff, Richard Dean       | Thompson, Tyler D         |
| Bonnett, Olivia Catherine  | Graham, Timothy John                | Love, Allison                | Ratliff, Ronald Dylan       | Tweed, Katelynn           |
| Bowser, Blake Austin       | Guthrie, Danielle                   | Lutz, Emma Jean              | Reid, Laina                 | Verner, Arden Holland     |
| Burford, Jake Lee          | Haidze, Jaycee Grace                | Maioli, Chiara               | Reynolds, Cody              | Vicariotto, Francesco     |
| Burk, McKenna Lauraly      | Hare, Ethan Dean                    | Majocha, Erika Michelle      | Richards, Mychael Jo        | Vivirito, Xander J        |
| Burns, Brandon Hunter Paul | Hayden, Aaron Jeffrey               | Mann, Allyson Elizabeth      | Ripple, Edward Lawrence     | Ward, Hannah Grace        |
| Callen, Lucas              | Headen-Ward, Nevaeh Renee<br>Michon | Mann, Brennin David          | Roberts, Ethan Alan         | Ware, Lami K              |
| Callender, Abigale Grace   | Helgert, Seth David                 | Marciniak, Trent             | Roenigk, Joseph A           | Washington, Ishailiah Lee |
| Callender, Alison Rebecca  | Hewitt, Ethan Richard               | Martone, Zachary             | Rose, Joshua Edward         | Watts, Abigail            |
| Carnahan, Cammy S          | Hitrik, Kylie Jensen                | McCorkle, Julie E            | Runski, Jeremy Thomas       | White, Brock Daniel       |
| Cekada, Jessica            | Jaouadi, Mohamed Amine              | Mogk, Anjolie                | Runyan, Logan Thomas        | White, Isabela            |
| Chybrzynski, Savannah Skye | Jochim, Dominic Rc                  | Mohney, Christian David      | Sales, Nayla Jay'na Sariyah | Williams, Maera Margaret  |
| Collins, Hadley Anne       | Johnson, Lillian Fox                | Moreno Fernandez, Elba       | Sant, Courtney              | Wilson, Luke              |
| Conley, Isabella Rose      | Johnston, Hunter David              | Negley, Gage Andrew          | Santos, Dorien Matthew      | Wolfe, Daniel             |
| Conrad, Matthew            | Jonczak, Landen Joseph              | Neilen, Mikayla Marie        | Schreckengost, Destini      | Wright, Gabrielle J       |
| Criner, Kiel William       | Jones, Anthony Wallace              | Nguyen, Catherine            | Rachelle                    | Young, Rebekah Ann        |
| Crouthamel, Mikayla Emma   | Kane, Madison                       | Norris, Ethan                | Schrifer, Raymond Edward    | Young, Skylar Isis        |
| Deiseroth, Jason           | Kelley, Julia                       | Nulph, Tanner Kenneth        | Scolaro, Joseph             | Ziatyk, Zackary Richard   |
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# NO SODA FOUNTAIN, NO LUNCH COUNTER

***BLACKBURN'S...From Corner Pharmacy to Independent Regional Provider!***

***Part Two opens in difficult times for Tarentum's corner pharmacy, proudly known as the valley's first truly professional pharmacy (no soda fountain, no lunch counter).***

The summer of 1960 turned out to be pivotal, not only for our pharmacy, but for me. I had just graduated from Allegheny College in its Pre-Med program with a degree in Biology. K-Mart opened across the Allegheny River and Tarentum physicians were migrating to the Heights Plaza Medical Center. Businesses in Tarentum were closing and our pharmacy was barely profitable.

But an ambitious, young professional from West Tarentum who had recently earned his MD, returned home to set up a medical practice. Doctor John Pacek hit the town running. Along with his training in medicine, he also had a clear understanding of the healthcare business. Over time, he

***BY CHARLES R. BLACKBURN, RP***

recruited physicians and specialists to Tarentum and built several office buildings which were quickly filled with doctors and other healthcare specialists. It appeared that things were changing for the beleaguered Tarentum business district but it would still be an uphill battle.

I decided to delay medical school and signed up for a graduate course in Immunology at the University of Pittsburgh, taking my lab classes in



***Blackburn's Administration building, former Pacek Group Medical offices.***

the morning and helping my father in the pharmacy afternoons and evenings. One morning Dean McCoy called me into his office. As I entered, he was reading my transcript and asked. "Your father has a pharmacy? You belong in Pharmacy School."

"You don't understand, our pharmacy is near bankruptcy."

"You mean to tell me you spent four years in college, and you cannot find a way to fix that?"

I was shocked, humiliated, and fearful. Was I about to be fired from Grad school? Dean McCoy picked up the phone, called the Pharmacy School, hung up the phone and announced, "You register for Pharmacy next Thursday." This serendipitous exchange with Dean McCoy would change my life plan forever.

**"YOU REGISTER FOR PHARMACY NEXT THURSDAY."**

While I was attending Pitt for three additional years to obtain my Pharmacy Degree, the health-care delivery system was changing. Patients could no longer stay in the hospital until recovered. It was called *utilization* and it meant the early discharge of patients from hospitals to increase profitability.



*Georgie Blackburn, industry advocate, discusses deficiencies of Medicare healthcare policy with the legendary U.S. Congressman John Lewis.*

Homecare nursing services blossomed, and our phone rang off the hook for things like hospital beds, wheelchairs, walkers, and medical supplies and I found that my background in Pre Med gave me tools to understand science and medicine.

Dean McCoy's words stayed with me. I subscribed to the New England Journal of Medicine to keep up with medical procedures. A local surgeon suggested I take a course in Wound & Ostomy Care offered at Harrisburg General Hospital. (An ostomy is a surgery that creates an opening in the abdomen, changing the way that waste exits the body.) I was one of only twenty-four people in the country, who had this training and I assisted surgeons at all local and regional hospitals by seeing patients prior to ostomy surgery and after care. A new clientele for ostomy products and skin care was developing and soon we no longer were just filling prescriptions.

I reached out to major corporations to become a distributor of medical products required for patient care. But we were considered a small business, so most inquires were ignored. But I pestered the C.R. Bard Company so many times that their sales rep came into the store one day to tell me in person that his company only sold through hospital suppliers and did not sell to drug stores. He, however, take notice of the contacts I had made in home nursing and the number of orders coming in, so he offered a plan. He put me in touch with Abe Glasser, the owner of Stuart's Surgical in Greensburg. When we met,

Abe offered to sell me the products to get the medical supply business started, unconcerned that we would be competitors. He sold to hospitals, and I provided directly to patients at home. It was the beginning of our expansion!

After several years of purchasing from Stuart's Surgical, I had amassed a volume of invoices to prove to manufactures to open distribution directly to BLACKBURN'S Physicians Surgical Supply, the new corporate name we established. By 1975, the business had grown just as my father's health caused him to retire. I needed a partner, and Ron





*The old Berkey building comes down to build office space and a shipping area.*

Rukas joined in 1976. Ron ran the pharmacy as I looked for new avenues in business.

We expanded our pharmacy, specialty medical products and medical equipment business significantly. Over the next fifteen years, divisions were created in complex rehab technology (CRT) and customized anatomical positioning systems for spinal cord injured, head trauma patients and birth anomaly adults and children; enteral nutrition for those with gastric diseases; bariatric wheelchairs, and beds for patients up to 1200 lbs; power wheelchairs with sophisticated hand and head drive systems; and oxygen, C-Pap and ventilators.

Growth came fast as we became a sought-after provider within the healthcare system. We acquired the Caplan and Berkey buildings to expand offices within the Corbet Street location. The old A&P building was purchased to provide a three-story warehouse for inventory. The old Phillips Gas Building became our Wheelchair Repair Department. In 2006, the original Krynicki Funeral Home became our Administration Building, housing Human Resources, Accounts Receivable and Compliance Departments.

Over the years, we became a proactive company. We helped to design the first bariatric hospital bed with a weight capacity of 1200 lbs. In 1999, we established one of the first Corporate Compliance Programs in our industry and were lauded for its excellence by Medicare Medical Directors. In 2006, BLACKBURN'S was named the best Complex Rehab Technology company in the USA. Always looking for new products to help patients, a few years ago, we began providing the Trac-Fab Wheelchair, a rugged outdoor power chair that takes the driver

fishing, shooting, up hills and over rocks for total independence.

We have advocated for improved healthcare policy, testifying before congressional committees. Our industry awarded Georgie Blackburn the *2018 Woman of Year Award* for her efforts educating legislators regarding policy disparities. In 2019, we received the Corporate Citizenship Award for our work with *Variety-the Children's Charity* and *My Bike Program* that provides children with disabilities adaptive bikes and strollers to enhance independence.

Our staff of five in 1960 has expanded to 180 today! We now service all Western PA, Western NY, and Northern WV. We recently expanded into Central PA and established *Rehab Specialties by BLACKBURN'S*, a separate corporation, located in Erie PA. We acquired Har-Kel, a Bridgeville company to expand our medical products business. Licensed pharmacists, nurses, licensed respiratory



*Loading dock completed, staff poses prior to beginning daily deliveries.*

therapists and credentialed rehab assistive technology specialists cement our experienced and caring customer service staff. Our staff is central to patient satisfaction and our company's success.

The next phase is in full swing. My son, Tom Blackburn, RP, VP, and stockholder and Ron's sons, Jeff Rukas, MBA, VP of Sales and Marketing, and Joseph Rukas, MBA and soon-to-be VP of Finance, are taking BLACKBURN'S further into the ever-changing healthcare arena, recruiting seasoned leadership personnel for the company's future.

This past June we celebrated our 86<sup>th</sup> anniversary and continue to live by our mission statement, "*Helping people live life better.*"

# A LONG DISTANCE BICYCLING TRAIL COULD MAKE TARENTUM A TOURIST DESTINATION

**Tarentum and surrounding communities are preparing to become part of a recreational trail system that could bring countless outdoor cycling and hiking enthusiasts to our community.**

While the borough has long been a part of a non-motorized trail system, with signs marking the route in Tarentum's downtown, this new initiative will result in the completion of the roughly 270 miles of recreational trails connecting Pittsburgh's Point State Park and Dobbin's Landing, a popular tourist area at the edge of Presque Isle Bay in Erie.

This Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail, as it is called, will be linked to a series of shorter segments known as the Three Rivers Heritage Trail that runs through East Deer Township and Tarentum Borough to connect with other ongoing projects in the Allegheny Valley.

The organization, *Friends of the Riverfront*, is working with Alle-Kiski Valley communities on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail projects that will help grow recreational opportunities and promote community connections as well as significant economic development—think restaurants, camp

*Cyclists from all over will enjoy Tarentum's beautiful Riverview Memorial Park.*



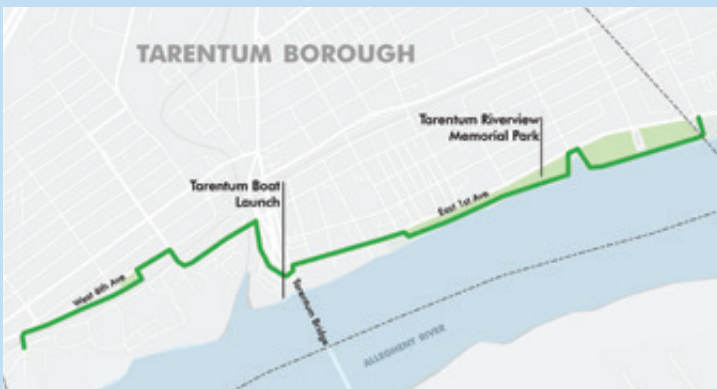


grounds, bed and breakfast establishments, gift shops and who knows what else.

Just this past year, *Friends of the Riverfront* assisted Tarentum borough and East Deer Township in securing funds to complete planning for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail Connection between our two communities. Currently, *Friends* and the communities are working with Environmental Planning and Design on the beginning stages of the Tarentum and East Deer segments of the trail. This process includes meeting with local landowners to assess the current topography for the route of the trail, which will connect the East Deer Recreational Facility, the Pittsburgh Brewing Company, the Tarentum Boat Launch, and the Tarentum Riverview Memorial Park.

This new trail addition from East Deer to Tarentum will also connect to other ongoing projects in the Allegheny Valley. For example, *Upriver Friends*, which partnered with Harrison Township, has recently, opened a new 100 foot segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail along River Road to connect Natrona Community Park to the Natrona Riverfront Park.

Studies show that recreational assets of the magnitude of the Erie to Pittsburgh trail system attract visitors from across the country and around the world so buckle-up, Tarentum and enjoy the ride.



*The bike trail through Tarentum will offer beautiful views of the river.*

## Local bicycling enthusiast, Wayne Decroo says...

a major trail coming through Tarentum can definitely mean a need for campgrounds, cabins, even hotels. The retired Lower Burrell dentist who has a lot of experience participating in long distance team charity rides, says the majority of bicyclists traveling more than 200 miles, as they will be able to do on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, will not only need a place to sleep but will be interested in a hot meal, a cool drink, and exploring the shopping or other amenities a town has to offer. And, he says, it's important that cyclists are able to store their bicycles in a secure, indoor place as bike racks won't do for an overnight stop-over.

Decroo believes that more and more people are choosing to ride trails due to the danger of riding on roads and highways and he says that while bike trails are literally everywhere, western Pennsylvania, with its lush, green river valleys, scenic hills and bridges, will only continue to grow in popularity with the addition of the beautiful Erie to Pittsburgh Trail..



*Experienced long distance cyclist, Dr. Wayne Decroo.*



# Dear Santa Claus *by George Donnell Stuart*

**F**rom the 1920's through the early 1970's, George Donnell Stuart, was one of the leading men in Tarentum and the AK Valley. He was a veteran of two World Wars, rising to the rank of Major. He was Editor-In-Chief for the Valley Daily News Dispatch from 1921 to 1971. He served as the Justice of the Peace for Brackenridge and in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for three terms, helping to pass a major education bill. The massive bridge that spans the Allegheny, connecting Tarentum and New Kensington, bears the name of George D. Stuart because he was instrumental in getting it built.

Stuart belonged to many service organizations, including one dedicated to cleaning up the Allegheny River. He taught Sunday School in Tarentum, helped to found Calvary Baptist Church on Brackenridge Heights, and once ran into a burning house in an attempt to save the occupants. George and his wife, Mary Edna Tench Stuart, were never blessed with children. As a result, as his great nephew, I was the recipient of a great deal of love, attention and learning from my aunt and uncle.

George Stuart's letter to Santa that was published in the Valley Daily News many decades ago, reflects his dedication to a strong faith, to integrity, public service, good citizenship, and pride in community. —**Robert Cameron Malcolm IV** (Author of *The Divine Christmas Ghost Story* book series)



**Dear Santa Claus** —The public is gullible. People are swayed by every wind of *ism* and doubt that blows. Poison pen writers would dismantle our customs and traditions. Soapbox orators would sweep into oblivion those things which have come down to us from our forefathers and which are dearest to us as a people. They would turn the world topsy-turvy. They would take from us our faith.

But, Santa Claus, we have analyzed and assayed their arguments. We have found them wanting. We have found that the theories and beliefs of our fathers have stood the test of time.

We know that Santa Claus stands for the very best things in the world. We know that without Santa Claus we would lead a drab existence. Old as we are, our faith is just as abiding and stalwart as it ever was. So we are asking you for things that we need, useful gifts—gifts that will make our people better and happier, our community a better place to live in, a better place to rear a family and a place to which we can point with pride and call “our home.”

We need civic pride—community spirit. So Santa Claus, when you make your rounds tonight, leave in the community, great stores of civic pride. Then our people will see their duty clearly. They will have a burning desire to make their community the best community in the whole wide world. They will strive in their own efforts to keep its record clean. They will teach civic pride to others.

Leave every one tonight a clearer concept of good citizenship.

The world has been advanced by co-operation and understanding. Neither team in a tug of war gets very far unless one crowd is mightily outweighed. All the while the rope suffers. It must bear the strain of the opposition of the contending parties. The same is true of the world. How much each side has suffered through stubborn and persistent failure to grasp the truth. Santa Claus, we know we have a wonderful community. We are proud of it. We want it to be better and we want to do our part to make it better. So one special gift leave upon the community Christmas tree, the remedy to overcome antagonism—and it is understanding. We need the quality of understanding: to see the other fellow's side, to meet with him, talk it over and arrange matters with a desire to give the other fellow a square deal.

When faith and confidence is lost in our fellow humans, all that ever knit together the human race is lost and man must go back to his original state, the state of Barbarity. The cave man lived in constant terror, he spent much of his time preparing a defense against his enemies, because he had not the faith that man holds in his fellow being today. So Santa, we want two bright stars, the stars of faith and confidence. They will light the way over which the other agencies which we have sought, may work. We need an abiding faith, a confidence which will allow us to look our fellow human in the eyes, never doubting his sincerity because we ourselves possess the faith and confidence which we believe is his.

# A Chance Drive North On 28 And **A BELOVED TARENTUM CHURCH BECOMES AN ELEGANT EVENTS VENUE,** A Home For Small Businesses And Much More



**Phillip Rhodes, who is a software engineer, decided to drive up to Tarentum from his Highland Park home out of mere curiosity for the auction process—but somehow the property became the thing.**

*When I went to the property auction for Saint Clement's Roman Catholic Church and school, I had no intention of buying. I had never been to a property auction before and my interest was to observe and see what a property auction looks like.*

When the auctioneer stood on the front steps of the church and announced an opening bid, nobody accepted. The auctioneer repeated the opening bid, and I looked around at the small crowd, and again—no takers. At this point, I thought, Why Not? The price is reasonable. I had done a walk-through of the immense property and thought it was well worth it.

The auction closed with my single winning bid. About an hour after the auction, a man dressed in a black suit and top hat approached me. He looked just like the guy in the Monopoly Game. He told me that he was a property developer and he was caught in some bad traffic leaving Pittsburgh and had hoped to attend the auction. I was never so happy to hear about a traffic jam.



Software engineer  
**Philip Rhodes** learned  
building restoration on  
the job.



**...a man dressed in a black suit and top hat approached me. He looked just like the guy in the Monopoly Game... he was caught in some bad traffic... and had hoped to attend the auction.**

*My initial plan was to get a large bank loan and redevelop the entire property. But after crunching the numbers, I realized that it wouldn't work. In the end, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation gave me a construction loan. Thanks to Rob at PHLF, they saw the promise in what I was trying to achieve. With the construction loan and some of my own funds, I was able to upgrade the electrical systems and install a new steam boiler*

for the school. The boiler was bought on eBay from a ravioli manufacturer in New Jersey.

In the course of the renovation, I have poured concrete, pointed brick, replaced slate and flashings, replaced steam pipes, vents, tile floors, and the list goes on and on.

While I am always renovating, I'm also warmed by the incredible people I've met in the Tarentum neighborhood where The Clement is located.

One woman, who apparently saw me working on the exterior of the building, realized I had been out there all day and noticing it was nearing supper time, she invited me—a total stranger—into her kitchen for a delicious homemade meatloaf dinner. Another time when I had been digging in the parking lot, using a mere wheelbarrow, a man I had never met, who lived nearby, showed up with a dump

trailer and graciously invited me to use it to complete the job.

Owning The Clement, has also given me the opportunity to meet many more wonderful people who book events such as showers, weddings and other celebrations and gatherings here. And because there is also office space available at The Clement, there are the tenants who run small businesses and non-profits in the facility. Currently The Clement has 13 offices occupied by a variety of enterprises.

And then there are the children from Allegheny Intermediate Unit Head Start, which is housed at The Clement. I'm always deeply touched when I see a line of pre-schoolers in single file on their way upstairs to play in the auditorium when not so long ago the building was vacant and in ruin.

What does our future hold? Phillip Rhodes says that more renovations are definitely planned. *I'm particularly excited about the commercial kitchen in the rear of the church. The plan is to get it licensed by Allegheny County so we can host fish fries and perhaps a community kitchen so that our wonderful neighborhood can come together to cook, eat and enjoy good fellowship.*



## **BUSINESSES & NON-PROFITS WHO CALL THE CLEMENT HOME**

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-Denise Sloan



## NEW FACES



**DWIGHT BODDORF** is the new Borough Manager for Tarentum Borough, located in Allegheny County. He joined Tarentum Borough on September 1st, 2022, after working for Stowe Township as their Administrator, overseeing the daily functions of the majority of the Township. A resident of Bellevue, Pennsylvania, Dwight comes to Tarentum with various experiences in government and education, including as Chief Veterans Affairs Officer for Allegheny County, the Public Affairs/Veterans Experience Officer for VA Butler Healthcare, and Director of Veterans Services for the Community College of Allegheny County.

Dwight holds a Bachelor of Elementary Education from Pennsylvania State University and a master's degree in Public Policy and Management from the University of Pittsburgh. He is also a graduate of Pittsburgh's Community Leadership for Veterans Program and serves on various boards relating to military and veterans affairs both locally and nationally. Additionally, he has been involved in drafting state legislation related to veterans and is frequently a featured speaker nationally and locally on veterans policies and programs. Dwight is a medically retired United States Marine who served with 2<sup>nd</sup> LAR based out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.



**ROBERT VINCENT FRANK** is the new Executive Director at the Allegheny Valley North Council of Governments (AVNCOG), Prior to that he worked at Allegheny County Economic Development for 10 years in the Municipal Division, where he worked as a project manager and also a COG Representative for several Council of Governments including AVNCOG. Prior to working for the County, he served as Development Director for Community Living and Support Services and Breachmenders.

Robert is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and was the first person in his family to attend college, His hobbies include history, volunteering, traveling and model trains. It is ironic that the AVNCOG is now located in the Murphy Building located just a block from Tarentum Train Station. Robert is a resident of Bellevue.

The first thing I noticed about the people of Tarentum was how everyone was very friendly. "I would like to thank everyone for their warm welcome and I look forward to working with the residents and community leaders in AVNCOG, If you need anything from the COG or would just like to stop in and see the new office, please contact myself or AVNCOG Administrative Assistant Sue Kephart at 412 826-5170, or email Robert.frank@gmail.com."



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**AHN ALLEGHENY VALLEY**

# Tarentum's TREASURE

by James Thomas

*President, Alle-Kiski Valley Historical Society*

THINK OF IT AS A BIG ART DECO TIME CAPSULE, where you can go back more than hundred years and see the things your great grandparents may have used in their home or made on their job right here in Tarentum.

Built in 1931 as American Legion Post 85, the building on East Seventh Avenue has been owned and maintained as a local history museum by the all-volunteer Allegheny-Kiski Valley Historical Society for the past fifty-five years. It is supported by membership dues, donations, grants and the Flea-Tique events held six times a year, at the Tour-Ed Mine.

The museum is open to visitors Wednesdays and Saturdays from noon to 3pm for self-guided or docent tours. A \$5 per person donation is suggested. Reservations are required for group tours for other private events.

Approximately ten public programs are scheduled per year, featuring local experts on various aspects of the history of our area.

The beautiful Ballroom seats more than one hundred guests. It has 20-foot-high walls of mirror blue Carrara glass, produced by PPG, Ford City and installed to welcome home WWII veterans. The walls are inscribed with the battles of the Second World War, and the military exhibits in



**Above Left:** Uniform of Doctor Chester Wood who served on a hospital ship during WWI. Dr. Wood died of a respiratory disease while serving and was buried at sea.

**Above Right:** Architect's model of PPG Place

the room commemorate local veterans from the Civil War through the Vietnam War and Desert Storm. Check Facebook or our website AKVHS.org for events and dates.

Industrial exhibits in the Ballroom commemorate the innovation and strength of the industries of A-K Valley in war and peace: glass, steel, chemicals, coal.



**Downstairs,**  
*"The Village" exhibits are set as they might have been, years ago. Below are four examples: Grandma's Kitchen, Dr. Bruno's Dentist Office, the Local Corner Store, Eureka Hose & Fire Co.*

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

The Allegheny-Kiski Valley Historical Society is a non-profit, permanent institution whose primary mission is interpreting, preserving, and celebrating our cultural, industrial, and ethnic heritage of the Allegheny and Kiskiminetas river valleys in southwestern Pennsylvania, a region embracing the surrounding areas from Harmar Township north to Freeport, and east to Apollo. The Society is committed to accomplishing this mission through the following objectives:

1. Acquiring, preserving, and professionally exhibiting historically relevant material that illustrates the history of the region;
2. Developing and facilitating cooperative partnerships among organizations with a similar mission;
3. Providing educational and outreach opportunities for the public;
4. Serving as a catalyst for the private and public preservation, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of historic sites.

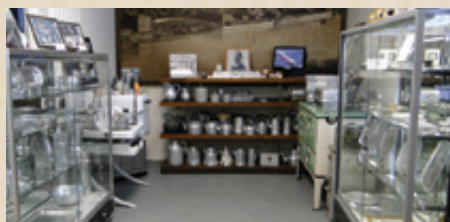
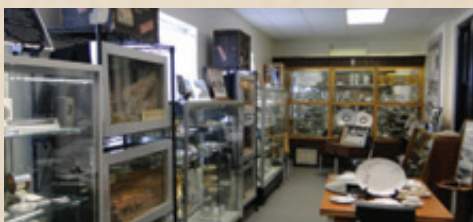
## WANT TO HELP?

If you have some spare time and an interest in local history, you may enjoy working on one of the current projects: setting up and taking down displays, scanning photos, scanning special papers, giving guided tours of the building, making identification labels for the items on exhibit, routine cleaning and maintenance, preparing items for sale at the Flea-Tique, developing a program for public presentation, updating the website and social media.

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Student .....	\$5	Friend .....	\$75
Individual .....	\$25	Patron .....	\$150
Family .....	\$35	Benefactor .....	\$1000

Allegheny-Kiski Valley Historical Society  
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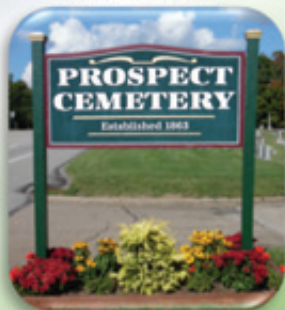
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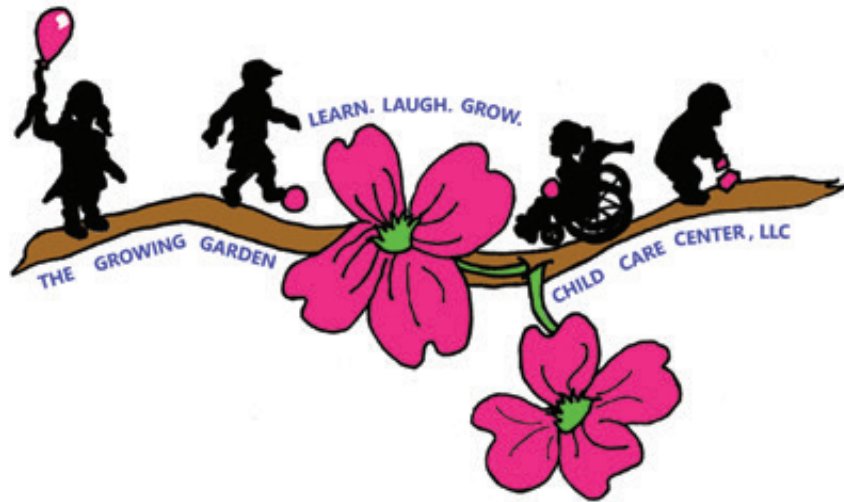


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# BIRD FEEDING 101

*Best Practices for Feeding  
our Feathered Friends*

**BY JIM BONNER**

*Executive Director of the  
Audubon Society of Western PA*



*Top: Jim Bonner's Tarentum backyard reflects his passion for and knowledge of successful bird feeding.  
(Bottom and pg. 29 photos courtesy of Hugh Fox)*

## **FOR ME, FEEDING BIRDS IS NOT A HOBBY**

– it's a passion! And through my work at Audubon Society of Western PA, I have access to all the latest research, new products, and the best bird foods. While I feed birds all year round, I know that some people only put out their feeders when it gets cold. With the fall and winter bird feeding season upon us, I thought now would be a good time to answer some questions about bird feeding and to help you to brush up on proper cleaning and feeding protocols. Here are some of the most frequent questions that I get about feeding our feathered friends:

### **WHY FEED BIRDS?**

Feeding birds is a personal choice, and one that's been studied extensively. Some research indicates that in all but the worst conditions, birds are well-adapted to survive without human help—getting only 10 – 20% of their caloric needs from feeders. But other studies show real benefits to bird feeding—especially during very cold temperatures.

In frigid weather, some hungry birds that might succumb to the elements are able to keep going thanks to bird feeders. The most challenging time for our wintering birds is when we have freezing rain. Ice can coat plants and seeds, making it impossible for birds to get at the food they



need. A half a day or so is not a problem, but no food for more than a couple of days can be fatal for some birds.

But there's another reason to feed birds. They bring joy, beauty, and music to our lives. Connecting with nature is good for peoples' physical and emotional health. A recent study that involved people from across the world found that participants' average mental wellbeing scores increased when they saw or heard birds, including among individuals who disclosed they'd been diagnosed with depression.

### **I'VE PUT MY FEEDERS OUT; WHY ARE THERE NO BIRDS?**

Birds are creatures of habit. Some birds have territories and stay within them unless forced out. They could also be hanging out at your neighbor's feeder. But birds do roam and forage for food even when they have access to a full feeder. It may take them a while, but they will find your feeder. They also keep an eye out for what other birds are doing. Once one bird starts to visit your feeder, more are sure to follow.

### **I HAD BIRDS AT MY FEEDER, BUT THEY HAVE ALL DISAPPEARED. WHAT HAPPENED?**

The most common reason for this is that there is a predator in the area and the birds are trying to stay safe. Those predators can come from below (usually cats) or from above (Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, and other hawks).

Outdoor cats (which include both feral ones and indoor ones left out for part of the day) kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds a year in the Unites States. Keeping your cat indoors, and encouraging your neighbors to do the same, will help keep feeders busy and birds safe.

Hawks are attracted to bird feeders, not for the seed but to prey on the other birds that are there. If you see hawks in your yard and you want them to move on, the best thing to do is to take down your feeder for a week or so. The hawks will then move on to find better hunting grounds. Luckily, the birds that use your feeders will look for food elsewhere after you take your feeder down—but once you put it back up, they will be attracted (once again) to your yard.

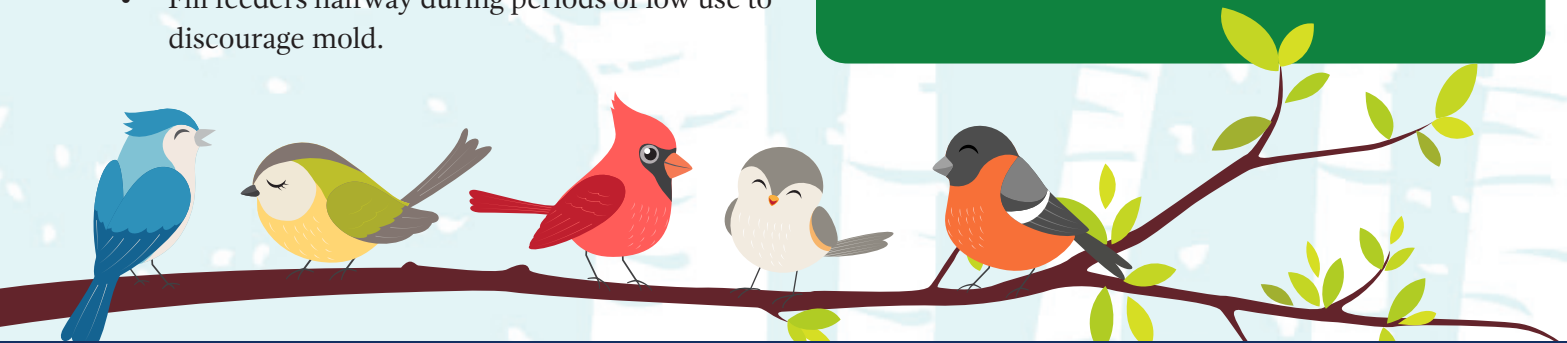
## HOW CAN I KEEP MY FEEDERS CLEAN?

One of the most important things you can do for your feathered guests is to keep your feeders and the area around them clean. Much like it is with people in winter, if you get a large bunch of birds together, there's a chance that one of them will be sick. But keeping birds safe isn't hard at all. It just takes a little bit of time, hot water, and a small amount of bleach or other disinfectant.

- Make sure you clean your feeders twice a month, especially in wet weather or with heavy use.
- Take the feeder apart and wash with soap and water, then let them soak in a weak bleach solution for 5-10 minutes. Just 1/3 of a cup of bleach per gallon of water is all you need.
- A cleaning brush can be very helpful in getting tough to reach places in tube feeders. Make sure your rinse thoroughly and air dry before refilling.
- Make sure the ground below the feeders is clean and to remove any buildup of old seed hulls. This, and other uneaten seeds and waste, can accumulate and harbor deadly bacteria like salmonella.
- Fill feeders halfway during periods of low use to discourage mold.

## WHAT FOOD SHOULD YOU OFFER TO THE BIRDS?

- If you have only one bird feeder, you will want to get a high-quality seed mix. Look for ones that include a large percentage of sunflower seed and include peanuts. Avoid ones with cracked corn and milo. Milo is a filler used in some feeds and most birds will not eat it.
- If you want to attract Cardinals and Mourning Doves, consider putting out Safflower seed. Both of these species of birds need larger perching areas, so a platform-style feeder works best for them.
- To attract woodpeckers, use a nut mix or raw peanuts in a feeder made of wire mesh. The birds will cling to the feeder and pull the nuts through the mesh.
- Consider putting out suet. Suet blocks come both plain or with a variety of fruits and nuts embedded in them. They provide the high amounts of fats needed by birds in winter.



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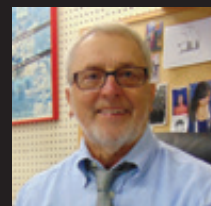


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***Happy Holidays @ The History Center***

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**Deer Lakes HS Chamber Choir Performance**

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**Valley HS Jazz Band Performance**

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