

# Building

FROM PAGE A1

Street side of the building is unparalleled in its beauty. A large colored milk glass plate with a crest and school initials "SHS" on it is situated directly above the foyer.

For many, the centerpiece of the entire building is the 1,000-seat auditorium with its curved balcony, ornate trimwork and unique 8-panel stained glass ceiling that was originally a skylight. A roof was later constructed over top in order to preserve it from significant weather deterioration.

## School days

The first building used in Shamokin as a high school was built in 1852 by the Lutherans for their academy, but was later purchased by the school district after the building site was voted down as the future location of an institution of higher learning in favor of another in Selinsgrove, which today is Susquehanna University.

The next high school, known as the "Academy Building," was completed and ready for use by 1894. It was a four-story building with no auditorium or gymnasium.

In 1915, construction of the new Shamokin High School was completed on the site of the former Lutheran Academy. The academy building remained alongside it for several decades and served as a secondary classroom for the school district.

In 1956, the Annex building was completed. Located at Seventh and Arch streets, the Annex had a much larger gymnasium and was used primarily for gym, music and vocational classes. High school and later middle school students had to walk back and forth between the Annex and their primary building at the top of Arch Street.

When the current high school was opened in 1975 in Coal Township, the SHS and Academy, along with

the Annex, were used for junior high grades until 1994.

## Memories recounted

Northumberland County Commissioner Sam Schiccatano, Shamokin alumnus and former teacher Bill Korbich, Shamokin Area alumnus Bob Mattis and former Shamokin Area head football coach, teacher and principal Ed Binkoski, each recounted their memories of the former Shamokin High School building.

A recent walk through the building brought back many fond memories for Schiccatano, a Shamokin Area alumnus and former teacher.

For example, he pointed out that the four-story high school used to have a basement, first, second and third floors. Today as the NCCAC, it has a first, second, third and fourth floor with the art classroom and gallery being located on the first floor where the kitchen, cafeteria and, many years ago, a gymnasium used to be.

"On the first floor, directly across from the main entrance to the auditorium on either side of the marble foyer, were the principal's office, guidance counselors and nurse's station and the guidance area was more open than it is today," he recalled.

Standing in the marble foyer, Schiccatano spoke of his vivid memories of that part of the building.

"Only the faculty and administrators were permitted to use this entrance," said Schiccatano. "Students entered the building from the sides, and you can still read the names 'BOYS' and 'GIRLS' etched in the granite stone above the former Eighth Street and Grant Street entrances to the building. The two main stairwells, originally for the boys and girls, were later marked with the words UP and DOWN with arrows on them and the students had to move in the proper direction."

Then there's the story

behind the basement, which only those who attended school at Shamokin High prior to the late 1950s would be familiar with — the former gymnasium. That area of the building, the upper half of which would later become the school cafeteria following the construction of the Annex and its gymnasium, is today the NCCAC art gallery.

The original SHS gym was used for sporting events such as basketball and wrestling for many decades and the lower half of the gym is still down there. It is currently used for storage, and the hardwood floor, which has warped over time, is also still down there along with "S" markings near the stairwell.

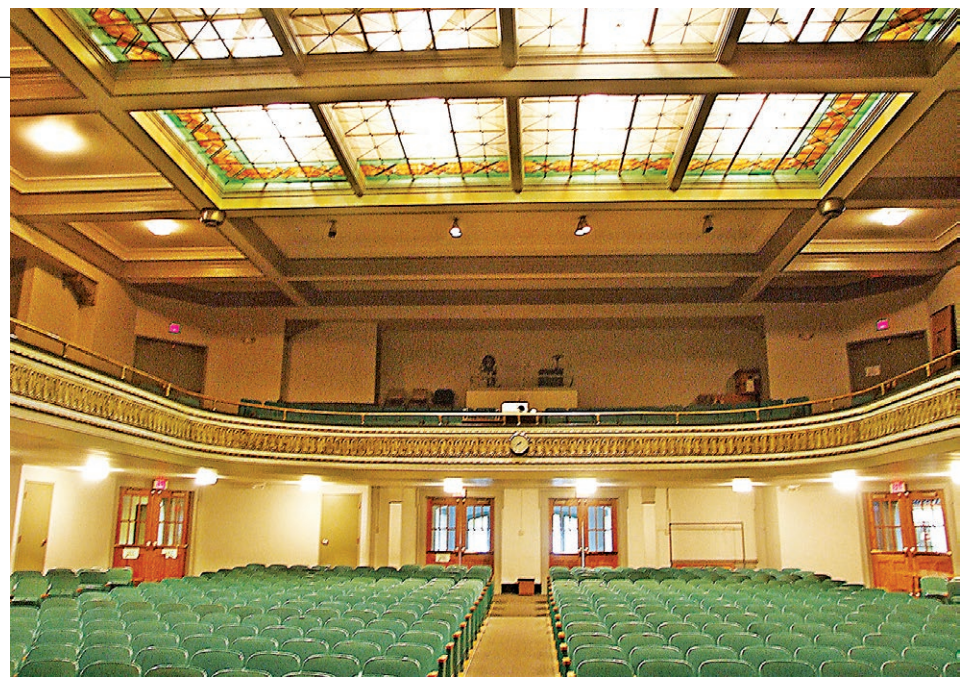
Korbich, SHS Class of 1954, played basketball for Shamokin High and recalled the small gym.

"It had bleachers on all four sides and windows at the end, toward where the rear of the art gallery is today. The spectators sat above the court, which had a wall with railings surrounding it. The players had to walk up and down a long series of steps to get on and off the court to a concourse above and then into their locker rooms. Student athletes from the bigger schools weren't used to playing in a gym like that and we used it to our advantage," said Korbich. "It was small but very loud."

Korbich also recalled that prior to the construction of the Annex, SHS students would often hold gym classes at local church gymnasiums if their gym was too crowded.

"Our high school gymnasium was so small that whenever it was being used by one class, other students would have to go to the Lincoln Street UMC gym just down the hill across from City Hall or the First Presbyterian gym on Sunbury Street for their gym classes," he remembered.

Mattis and his fellow



CHRIS J. GREGO/STAFF PHOTO

Stage view of the Northumberland County Career and Arts Center (former Shamokin High School) auditorium with ceiling lights lit. The 12-panel, ornate stained glass ceiling was originally constructed as a skylight before a protective roof with floodlights was eventually built over top of it.

SAHS 1968 classmates recently toured their former high school building as part of their 50-year reunion.

Another unique memory of the gymnasium was recounted by Mattis, who said that during his school years he was shown a coal vein behind a small door in that area of the building.

"I remember someone who used to work there showing me a small door with a coal vein right behind it when I was in school," he said, although he couldn't recall the exact year or location inside the gymnasium.

Former Coal Township alumnus Ed Binkoski was employed by the Shamokin Area School District for 25 years following the 1965 jointure between Shamokin and Coal Township High Schools. He was the first head football coach of Shamokin Area High School (SAHS) and taught American History in 1966 at the old Academy Building, which was located adjacent to the high school. Later he would serve as assistant principal of the high school from 1978 to 1984 and then as junior high school principal from 1984 to 1990.

Binkoski recounted his former days working at the

old Shamokin High School.

"It's a beautiful building and it's wonderful to see how the county not only acquired the building but has renovated it well and put it to good use," he said.

"The auditorium is amazingly beautiful. To me, it's the highlight of the entire building and the best place to watch a live performance," said Binkoski. "I recall we had 344 students in our first SAHS graduating class of 1966 following the jointure, who were sitting in that auditorium."

Binkoski also shared a story during his tenure about how the school district would reach out to the community when his junior high students attended classes back at the former high school building from the late 1970s through the 1990s.

"The Annex building, located a few blocks down hill on Arch and Seventh streets, was used by the district for vocational, gym, art and music classes. Our students would walk back and forth between the two buildings and we were concerned that all the activity and sound might cause a disturbance. As a result, we would invite the neighbors over to the school for lunch twice a year, at Christmas

time and again in late spring. They really enjoyed it and it helped us develop a good rapport with our local residents," he said.

## NCCAC era

Following its closure by Shamokin Area School District in 1996, the building's future was in doubt until Northumberland County made a decision to subsequently purchase it. Following its renovation, the building reopened in 1999 as a career and arts center. Today the NCCAC is used as a multi-purpose educational and arts facility. It houses multiple tenants including the Luzerne County Community College (LCCC), Northumberland County Council for the Arts and Humanities as an art gallery, studio and performing arts center; Central Susquehanna Opportunities Inc. for job seekers, Magisterial District Court 08-3-03 and VNA Caring Center.

Ironically, the NCCAC building, which today sits on the same plot of land that in 1852 was intended to be used as part of an institution of higher learning has, in part, achieved its purpose through the presence of LCCC.

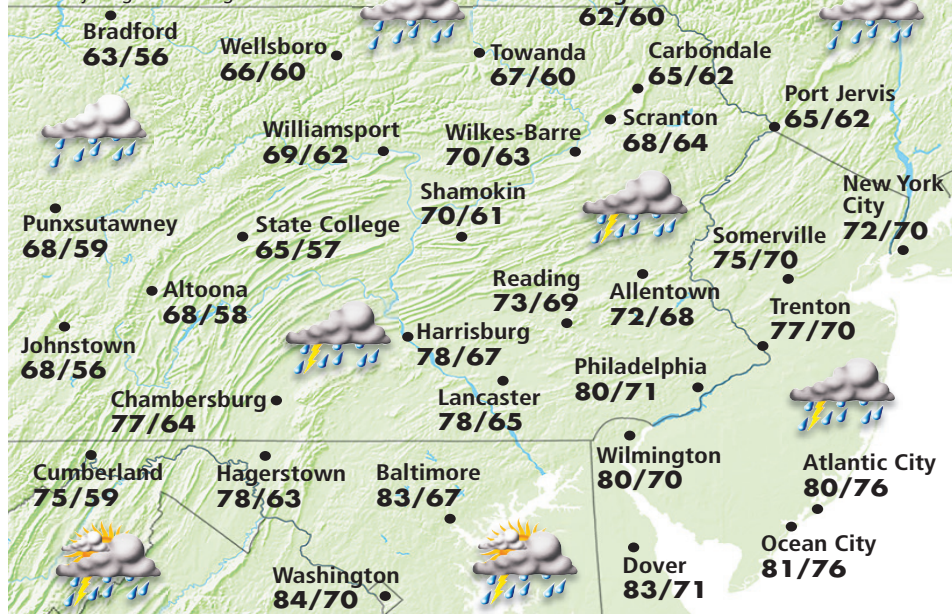
## FIVE-DAY FORECAST

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TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Heavy t-storms; warmer	Mostly cloudy and warmer	Clouds and sun, a t-storm	A couple of showers	Humid with low clouds
70° 61° RF: 70°/62°	76° 61° RF: 81°/61°	80° 66° RF: 88°/67°	81° 67° RF: 88°/67°	80° 59° RF: 84°/63°

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Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



## ALMANAC

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### TEMPERATURE\*

High/low	57°/52°
Normal high	77°
Normal low	55°
Last year high	68°
Last year low	45°
Record high	95° (2002)
Record low	39° (1956)

### PRECIPITATION\*

24 hours through 5 p.m.	1.22"
Month to date	1.31"
Normal month to date	1.17"
Year to date	38.29"
Normal year to date	29.08"

\*Through 5 p.m. yesterday at Selinsgrove

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### RIVER STAGES

Susquehanna	Flood Stage	Stage	24-hr chg
Bloomsville	19	2.79	+0.19
Danville	20	4.24	+0.15
Sunbury	24	8.09	+0.11

### West Branch Susquehanna

Lewisburg	18	2.74	+0.10
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### UV INDEX TODAY

0	1	1	1	1	0
8 a.m.	10 a.m.	Noon	2 p.m.	4 p.m.	6 p.m.

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection. 0-2 Low; 3-5 Moderate; 6-7 High; 8-10 Very High; 11+ Extreme.

### SUN AND MOON

Sunrise/sunset	6:42 a.m. / 7:24 p.m.
Moonrise/moonset	7:29 a.m. / 8:19 p.m.
First	9/16
Full	9/24
Last	10/2
New	10/8

## CITY FORECASTS

State cities	Today	Tue.	Wed.	National cities	Today	Tue.	Wed.
Allentown	72/68/r	81/67/t	83/69/t	Atlanta	87/70/t	88/73/t	88/73/t
Altoona	68/58/r	72/59/c	77/65/t	Baltimore	83/67/c	79/66/c	84/71/t
Bedford	69/60/t	74/61/c	80/68/pc	Boston	68/65/r	84/69/c	76/66/t
Chambersburg	77/64/r	78/63/c	82/69/pc	Buffalo	69/59/r	70/56/pc	76/62/pc
DuBois	65/55/r	69/57/c	74/63/pc	Chicago	73/56/s	78/60/s	81/60/s
Erie	72/62/sh	70/61/pc	77/66/pc	Cleveland	70/59/sh	72/59/pc	77/65/pc
Harrisburg	78/67/t	80/67/c	84/71/t	Dallas	82/68/pc	82/68/pc	85/70/pc
Huntingdon	68/60/r	75/61/c	80/67/t	Denver	89/59/pc	92/60/s	92/58/s
Johnstown	68/56/t	68/57/c	74/65/pc	Detroit	67/56/r	75/57/pc	78/61/s



FROM THE COLLECTION OF LARRY DEKLINSKI/DALADO PHOTOGRAPHY

Shown in this photo from 1913, men pose for a photo during construction of the Shamokin High School at Eighth and Arch streets. The building was dedicated in 1915 and used as a high school until 1975 when a new high school opened in the Edgewood section of Coal Township.

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