

Nobody has ever
measured, not even
poets, how much the
heart can hold.
– Zelda Fitzgerald

Happy
Valentines
Day!



MERA HOMETOWN NEWS

AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Items of interest to MERA Members
February 2025

Want to know more?
Check us out at
merasite.org

MERA Calendar of Events

You won't want to miss any of these great MERA events!

- **February General Membership Meeting, Monday February 17 at 1 p.m. at Muhlenberg Rec Center.** Live Music! Welcome crowd favorite Steven Barth on guitar.
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, February 26** Our plan was to go to Middle Creek to see the snow geese, but that won't be possible now, as the trail to the lake is closed due to the concerns over the avian flu. Therefore, the February Hike is *canceled* **BUT Happy Hour is STILL on. Meet at 4 p.m. at the K-ville Tavern**, 2647 Heidelberg Ave, Kleinfeltersville.
- **March General Membership Meeting Monday, March 17 at 1 p.m. at the Muhlenberg Rec Center.** Sue Moyer, Associate Professor of Nursing, Millersville University; Self-care for physical and mental health.
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, March 26 2 p.m. Hike on Muhlenberg Rail Trail.** Join us as well for our **4 p.m. Happy Hour at Joe's Place**, 5 Spring Valley Road, Laureldale.
- **Trip to Toby's Dinner Theatre Wednesday, April 16.** Enjoy the great All-American musical, "The Music Man!" performed in the round at Toby's Dinner Theatre Columbia, MD. The trip includes motor coach transportation, live show and buffet lunch inclusive of taxes and gratuity. Cost is \$166 per person. **Deadline for registration is February 20.** For questions, reach out to **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or bseidel3523@comcast.net.
- **Anniversary Luncheon Thursday, April 24 at 11:00 a.m.** Victor Emmanuel 311 Hazel St. Reading. Hot buffet and good fun. Just \$15 per person. Bring a dessert to share! **Deadline for reservations is April 17.** Send reservations and payment to **Gary Pleiss**, 41 Fieldstone Lane, Fleetwood, PA 19522 or call (610) 927-7590 with any questions.
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, April 30 2 p.m. Hike at Union Meadows East Park, Birdsboro**, 100 Campbell Ford Rd, Douglassville. Join us for this pleasant walk in a beautiful setting as well as at our **4pm Happy Hour at Island Pizza** 3060 Limekiln Rd.

Bits & Pieces

Special Valentines Day Edition!

Kathy & Lin Seyler were both working at Met-Ed and met at a volunteer activity painting outdoor bathrooms at Camp Adahi. **Tim & Donna Goughnour** met at the Laurel Run Gun Club in New Germany, PA shooting trap. All the men at Bethlehem Steel, where Donna worked, said that's where the good guys hang out. **Gary & Lisa Pleiss** met on a blind date - dinner in Wilmington, DE. **Jim & Joyce Zeiber** met at Bowl-a-Rama. Jim was in a league and Joyce came in with family members to bowl a few games. **Cindy & Jeff Thomas** met at a wedding: he was the best man and she was the bride's best friend. **Ralph Paparella** was studying at Drexel and **Bonnie** at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. They met at a "mixer" at a Drexel frat house. **Bruce & Maria Balthaser** met at a wedding. He was the groom's cousin and Maria was a bridesmaid. **Marty and Sandy Christman** both worked at Met-Ed. They met when he delivered mail to her office. A short time later Marty was drafted. After three years in the Navy, he returned to Met-Ed and began working in the Line Department. They started dating and were married a year later. **Earl Suchomelly** was stationed in Washington D.C. and was home for the weekend. He met his future wife **Theresa** at Bowl-O-Rama and gave her a ride to a party. The party was at a home across from Lorane substation. That was in October of 1962. She wrote her telephone number in the dust of Earl's car and they've been together ever since, married in April of 1964. **Lori Lobb** and **Sue Perez** met on an online dating app. They were both very frustrated with online dating and were just about ready to give up when the magic hit. Their first date was an outdoor date at Green Lane Park in Perkiomenville. **Nelson Moeller** was in the US Air Force, attending an advanced helicopter maintenance school in Texas. When **Betty** walked into the NCO club, it was love at first sight for Nelson. A couple of weeks later, Nelson finished the class and was shipped out to Thailand in support of the Vietnam war. The couple had already made promises to each other. Six months into his tour he took leave for a month, flew back to Texas, and they were married.

A Bits & Piece of special note: Kudos to **Vivian Faust** who founded a social group for people over 90 living in her retirement home. Over 35 residents are eligible to join the group which Vivian has named 90 Memory Lane.

One thing we know, MERA members are busy people. This column is all about keeping us connected by reporting quick snapshots of MERA member activities. [We'd love to hear from you. Submit your items by emailing meraberks@gmail.com.](#)

NERA Member Profile

One of the first things you notice about **Georgine McCool** is what a great last name she has. But what you remember about Georgine is her great laugh and open friendliness.

Georgine is a Berks County native, born in Reading and raised in the Milmont section. She attended Holy Name High School, got her undergraduate at Alvernia and her master's degree at St. Joes and LaSalle. She is the only child of Italian immigrants. Her mother was born in Italy in 1915 and came through Ellis Island. Georgine researched her mother's journey and found the manifest of the actual ship her mother traveled on to the U.S.

She married her husband, Joe (the source of the seriously cool last name) in 1985 and they have two children and five grandchildren.

Georgine worked at Maier's Bakery until the company was sold and then started her career in the IT group at FirstEnergy in 1998. It took a while to get used to working for a large company – all the

people and different operating systems. She accepted the challenge and enjoyed conquering new IT frontiers! Before long, she made a home at FE and stayed in the IT group until her retirement in 2018. Her favorite part of the work was application development – finding ways to better support the business and especially the call center. “I worked with a lot of really smart people,” says Georgine.

Georgine wasn't really ready to retire. She's not crazy about change but she's come to terms with it. She babysits her grandchildren a couple days a week and is an avid vegetable gardener. “I've started canning, taking a page from my Mother's book. I put up pureed tomatoes and I pickle peppers, cucumbers and zucchini.”

She also serves as a race director for the Pagoda Pacers Athletic Group.. The group stages 5 and 10k runs starting at Dietrich Park. While her husband is a former runner Georgine coordinates the events that can attract upwards of 250 athletes.

Georgine's creative side emerges as a volunteer for the Holy Rosary Church where she braids and weaves palms into elaborate and incredibly lovely works of art. This is a traditional craft originating in Europe. The final pieces are used to decorate churches or homes and as commemorative pieces for graves. She also played the organ in the same church for nearly 30 years.

“What surprised me most about retirement? I had a hard time getting used to the idea that I no longer needed to have a schedule or that I wasn't expected to be productive! I've relaxed into it now,” Georgine admits with a smile.

“You don't know what tomorrow will bring,” she reminds us. “Enjoy every minute.” Georgine is taking her own advice; she's soon leaving on a trip to Disney with the grandkids.

Electric Utility Scams and Fraud

As electric utility retirees, we are often considered by friends, family members and neighbors to be experts when it comes to issues related to the electric company. You can help people in your community to battle scams and frauds connected to electric bills by providing these important reminders:

- Met-Ed customers who are behind on their accounts receive written notices of a possible disconnection and how to prevent it. Company representatives will not call or email to demand immediate payment to avoid a same-day shutoff.
- Scammers often use Caller ID spoofing software to misrepresent the source of a phone call to further mislead and confuse their targets. Call-back numbers provided by these criminals often use greetings and hold messages that mimic legitimate businesses. If someone has any doubts about the status of their electric service, they should call Met-Ed using the customer service phone number on the website or on their bill to ask about their account.
- While Met-Ed representatives oftentimes make courtesy calls to customers to remind them about an outstanding balance, they would explain how a payment can be made using the established payment options. The company would never require someone to purchase a pre-paid money card as the only acceptable means of payment.
- Do not allow anyone claiming to be a utility employee into your home unless you scheduled an appointment and the employee has provided proper identification.
- Met-Ed employees always carry photo identification.
- Met-Ed offers a wide array of approved billing and payment options. Only send payments to Met-Ed and never use a payment account provided by an unknown individual.

Senior Discounts

Did you know? The State of Pennsylvania offers a number of discounts to its senior residents. (Note: some of the discounts are based on income.) You may be eligible for discounts on:

- Prescriptions (PACE)
- Motor Vehicle Registration
- Dog Licenses
- Hunting & Fishing Licenses
- Camping in State Parks
- Entrance to State Museums and Historical Sites.

Check the websites of relevant agencies or reach out to the Berks County Area Agency on Aging 610-478-6500 for more information.

NERA Member Milestones Happy February Anniversary!

Cindy & Daniel Bausher
Bill & Dianne Day
Willard & Doris Flowers
Tom & Lily Lee
Mark & MaryBeth Mancias
Timothy & Barbara Nuhfer

Kathy & Lin Seyler
Virginia & Warren Snyder
Jennifer & Mike Stewart
Ken & Pat Templin
James & Susan Thomas
John & Leslee Wlodyka

Happy February Milestone* Birthday!

**A milestone birthday is one that ends in "0" or "5."*

Frankie Beierschmitt
Estelle Fehr
Joyce Morse
Jane Renner
Warren Snyder
Jean Walter

