



NERA HOMETOWN NEWS

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

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

A Note from MERA's President

The end of 2025 is fast approaching.....but so much more to enjoy with family and friends: HALLOWEEN, THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS AND THE MYSTERIES OF 2026. Keep MERA as part of your plans too. Our team has planned some great events for 2026. Remember your \$5 membership gives you access to these fun times. If you have retiree friends bring them along for a look!

Jim

NERA Calendar of Events

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

- **NERA General Membership Meeting Nov. 17, 2025, 1:00 at the Muhlenberg Rec Center**
Cookie Baking Contest. Bring in your best and favorite cookies for the group to judge...we know it's a burden to have to taste Christmas cookies but we're sure you'll handle it! Prizes for winners! Light lunch will be served. Our program will be presented by Bridget Schasteen, Insurance Director with Willoughby & Associates Insurance Services. The deadline to make changes to your insurance is approaching. Bridget's program will discuss Medicare changes, supplemental plans, Advantage plans and prescription plans. Join us for a well-informed discussion. If you have any questions you want addressed at the meeting please send them to Donna at tstingrayg@comcast.net.
- **Happy Hour Wednesday November 19, 4pm** (NOTE DATE CHANGE DUE TO Thanksgiving holiday) Coastal Grill, 2713 Meridian Blvd., Wyomissing.
- **Bethlehem Christmas Trip, December 4.** We begin our day with free time to explore Main Street, Bethlehem, where sparkling white lights adorn trees in the Historic Moravian District to get you into the Christmas Spirit! Lunch will be on your own, while enjoying the town. Next, we make our way to Christkindlmarkt, a one-of-a-kind family event that celebrates the spirit of the season in Bethlehem. This heart-warming holiday event features handmade works by some of the nation's finest artisans, the ring-ting-tingling sounds of live Christmas music and jolly, old St. Nick's hearty laughter. You can shop for handmade ornaments, nutcrackers, collectibles from Germany, and much more. Then we board our coach and take a one-hour guided tour of the area with decorated trees, holiday lights, and the Star of Bethlehem. Cost of Trip \$94. **Reservations are closed.** For questions contact: **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or bseidel3523@comcast.net
- **NERA Annual Christmas Luncheon** – a member favorite - is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 11:00 – 2:00pm. The event returns to The Warehouse, 215 Pine Street, Hamburg, PA, where we've had good food and a good deal! This year they promise an extra

special dessert! The price remains just \$25 per person. Because of FirstEnergy's generous matching grant, MERA can provide this lovely holiday lunch for much less than the actual cost. For more details see the flyer enclosed in this mailing. **Deadline to register is November 26.** Contact Gary Pleiss at (610) 927-7590.

- **Happy Hour Wednesday December 17, 4pm** (NOTE DATE CHANGE DUE TO Christmas holiday) Ozgood's, 319 E. Penn Ave, Robesonia.

AMERA Membership Renewal

It's time to be thankful for MERA and renew your membership! The 2026 renewal form is enclosed in this month's MERA mailing. The deadline is December 31, 2025.

- Our annual dues remain at *just* \$5 – a good deal by any calculation!
- DID YOU KNOW? FirstEnergy matches each \$5 dues payment with \$10 which subsidizes our costs.
- NEW this year! If you hate writing a check for just \$5 each year *and* paying the postage, there's a new option. You can renew your membership for *three years*. Write one check for \$15 and your MERA membership is good through 2028. Please note, these payments are NOT REFUNDABLE...and by that we mean: *not refundable*. Doesn't matter if Taylor Swift moves back to Berks County or the MERA Board opens a casino, you aren't getting your \$15 back. On the other hand, you'll have three whole years where you can ignore our pleas to write a check to renew your membership.

Met-Ed Retirees Mystery Trip – September 24, 2025

By Denis Dorward

Our annual mystery trip is a day of multiple unknown destinations. An itinerary was handed out, as we entered the bus, listing only the arrival and departure times of each destination. So, we knew our day consisted of a morning destination, buffet lunch, an afternoon destination and a stop for ice cream on the ride home.

The World of Little League Museum, in South Williamsport, was the site of our morning destination. The museum contained interactive exhibits and unique artifacts, including a uniform of the great Babe Ruth. Little League was founded in 1939 by Carl Stotz in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The first Little League World Series was held in Williamsport in 1947. Over time, Little League evolved to allow girls in 1974 to participate, expanded to more than 80 countries, and now offers various programs beyond the original 8- to 12-year-old division, including a softball division. The stadium complex is located on-site and is where the 8 teams from the U.S. and 8 international teams play all their games to determine the Little League world champion.

Buffet lunch was served at the Genetti Hotel in downtown Williamsport. The Genetti Hotel, originally named the Lycoming Hotel, was built in 1921. The Genetti Hotel's elegant atmosphere has attracted many notable guests and hundreds of celebrity visitors and overnight guests including Gene Kelly, Rita Hayworth, Bob Dylan, Jay Leno and dozens of politicians including Robert Kennedy, Gerald Ford and Tom Ridge. Photographs of these guests are in the hotel hallways. After lunch we boarded the bus and a tour guide provided insight on the city of Williamsport. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Williamsport was a major lumber hub, flourished by the large Susquehanna log boom, leading to immense wealth for its residents. At one point in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it had more millionaires per capita than any other place in the world. We drove down West Fourth Street, also

known as Millionaires Row and it's view of the historic homes and splendid Victorian architecture.

The afternoon destination consisted of a paddleboat ride 30 minutes down and back on the Susquehanna River. The weather was perfect, and we all enjoyed the view from the outside top deck. Of course, the trip home included a stop for ice cream at Becky's Soft Serve Ice Cream in Milton, PA.

AMERA Members Giving Back:

Met-Ed Retirees Fall Cleanup

As a thank you to Muhlenberg Township for giving us the use of their facilities for no charge, on October 6 MERA members invested time and cleaning supplies to clean the Muhlenberg Township Recreation facility on River Road (where we hold our general meetings for part of the year). This is the second year that MERA members have volunteered to spruce up the building. All the ceiling light fixture lenses were removed and cleaned. All the windows were polished until they sparkled. All the kitchen surfaces were scrubbed and the refrigerator looks like new! The restrooms were tackled as well. Floors were swept and mopped. In short, MERA members accomplished a lot! They went home tired but satisfied knowing that it was a job well done! Muhlenberg Township Parks & Recreation department wrote "A HUGE thank you to the Met-Ed Retirees who came to our recreation building and cleaned it up. One person said it was "refreshing," and we can't agree more. We have the best volunteers! They work hard, pay attention to details, and love what they do." For more comments and pictures, check out the Muhlenberg Township Parks & Recreation page on Facebook.

Volunteers Needed to "Ring the Bell"

AMERA is again volunteering to help the Salvation Army by "ringing the bell" during their Christmas Red Kettle Campaign. MERA has 8 one-hour time slots available on Tuesday, December 16 from 10:00am to 6:00pm. We will be located inside the Berkshire Mall at the entrance to Boscov's. Please consider helping with this worthwhile cause! Contact **Kathy Seyler** by email (kseyler67@gmail.com) or by phone (610-921-2921). This is a "feel good/give back" opportunity, and it only takes one hour of your time in a nice, warm environment. Thanks for everyone's support!

*Hometown News would like to hear more about YOUR volunteer activities! Reach out to **Karen Baxter**, kbaxter@ptd.net, with information about the organization where you give your time.*

Bits & Pieces

As a high school graduation gift to her granddaughter, Adalia, **Melanie Hart** took her on a trip to Italy staying in Sorrento for several days touring the Amalfi Coast, and then onto Rome. Highlights included food tours and a golf cart tour around Rome. Adalia is now enjoying her first year (of 6) as a Pharmacy Major at Pitt. **Art Salyards** hosted his annual Apple Pie Baking Party. Retirees **Doug Myers, Karen Baxter, Tim Goughnour and Donna Goughnour** brought their pie plates and aprons and stepped up to the assembly line. The group made 12 pies and 20 dumplings. YUM! **Ralph and Bonnie Paparella** spent Columbus Day Weekend in Cape May for a family wedding. The event was at the historic Chalfonte Hotel--a wonderful old building with no elevators. Sadly, for Bonnie who is recovering from knee replacement surgery, they had a third-floor room! Nevertheless, they enjoyed the shops and the shore and reconnecting with family. Sunday morning brought in the Nor-Easter,

and so they left for home early, amid high winds and rain. Fortunately, as they drove west through the Pine Barrens, they left the storm behind. But something unknown (could it have been the Jersey Devil?) snapped the antenna off our roof, and it dangled and banged around until they stopped to discover what was causing the commotion. They were able to fasten it down and they continued on without mishap. Bonnie and Ralph stopped at the Pretzel Hut on rt 501 just north of Brickerville for ice cream on the way home. Overall, they claim they had a great weekend!

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.

Sunshine Remembrances

MERA sent condolences to the family of **Jim Wertley** and to **Del Somerville** on the passing of his mother-in-law. MERA extends our sympathy to the grieving families.

MERA Member Milestones

Happy November Anniversary!

Robert & Jeanne Ann Arthur
Peter & Judy Culshaw
Richard & Susan D'Angelo
Brian & Christine Gasser
Greg & Kris Gillotti
Andy & Peggie Hunter
Michael & Judy Krepps
Kim & Jim Krotulski

Scott & Darlene Moyer
Barry & Geri Seidel
Glenn & Judy Sillhart
James & Teresa Strock
Sam & Bonnie Thomas
Bernie & Carrie Whitmoyer
James & Helen Wilhelm

Happy November Milestone* Birthday!

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

Kathy Dorward
Robert Houlihan
Judy Krepps
Cynthia Rowits
Harold Webber

November's full moon is called the Beaver Moon. Why? In the colonial era, this was the time to set beaver traps before the swamps froze and the beavers retreated to their lodges thus ensuring a supply of warm winter furs. November's full moon occurs on the 5th.

