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MERA HOMETOWN NEWS

AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Items of interest to MERA Members
November 2024

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A Note from MERA President

Elections are almost over, thank god. Fall is here and cool weather is on the way. Sign up for the December 12 Christmas Luncheon. November general meeting features nationally known singer and pianist Karl Hausman. Try to attend! Enjoy the fall!

Jim

MERA Calendar of Events

Don't miss any of the great MERA events scheduled for the rest of this year!

**November General Meeting @ Muhlenberg Rec Center, 3025 River Road
Monday, November 18 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Program: Karl Hausman, pianist and singer

Hike & Happy Hour Wed, Nov. 20 Hike at 2 p.m. Wernersville State Hospital Park

We will revisit this pleasant park area to walk the paths again. Turn onto Sportsman Road from Rt 422 between Wernersville and Robesonia. Take the first left into the Hospital property, at the softball field and a sign that says Berks Encore. Go past the first parking area, over the little bridge, and into the lot to the left. We will meet at the pavilion. Dogs on the leash are welcome. After the walk we will gather for our **Happy Hour at 4 p.m. just up the road at Ozgood's Restaurant in Robesonia**, 319 E. Penn Ave.

Annual Christmas Luncheon, Thursday, December 12 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The Warehouse – Hamburg, PA. Live entertainment provided by Maria Damore
Cost: \$25/person. *Reservation deadline: November 27.*

Please contact **Gary Pleiss** if you have any questions at (610) 927-7590.

Hike & Happy Hour Wed, Dec.18 Hike at 2 p.m. Union Canal Towpath, Gring's Mill

Barring inclement weather (as usually happens when we want to walk at Gring's Mill) we will meet at the bridge that crosses the creek at the dam. The holiday lights will probably not be illuminated when we are there, but the decorations will still give a festive air. Sorry, no dogs allowed in Berks County Parks/Trails. Following the hike, we will regroup at **4 p.m. for our Happy Hour at Smokey Bones**, 2723 N. Meridian Blvd, Spring Ridge for some holiday cheer.

MERA Member Profile

written by guest columnist Larry Lenhart

Dean Hollenbacher has served as Treasurer of the Met-Ed Retirees Association for the past 3 years, replacing Barry Rentschler. Previous to that, he was our Internal Auditor for 11 years, replacing Dick Dickenson.

It goes without saying that his dedication to our organization is much appreciated and he has done an outstanding job! Most recently he was instrumental in researching and securing IRS authorization for MERA to become a 501(c)(7) company. This authorization was required by FirstEnergy in order for them to resume making annual financial contributions to MERA. Earlier this year we received about \$8800, which will allow us to significantly reduce prices charged to our members to attend picnics and luncheons.

Dean was hired by Met-Ed on July 1, 1971 and started his career in Internal Audit, supervised by Gene Ennis. Dean had been applying with public accounting firms, when he received a recommendation from one of his professors from Albright College (Dean's alma mater) that Met-Ed was looking for accountants. This professor happened to be a consultant to Ray Werts who was the Met-Ed Comptroller at the time.

Dean loved his job because it gave him the opportunity to visit all the company offices, meet numerous employees and learn about their functions. Hurricane Agnes in 1972 presented an interesting challenge to determine just how much company material was destroyed or washed away!

After spending 20 years in Internal Audit, Dean joined the Operations Analysis Department, working for Randy Blatt for the next 10 years. After that, he spent time in other accounting-oriented departments and retired from the Budget Department in May of 2003, at the age of 55 years old.

SO, what did Dean decide to do with his free time after retirement? Well, he and his wife Monie, have been blessed with 2 children and 3 grandsons. They spend a lot of time "following them around" for sporting events, for one thing. Dean also loves bowling and has participated in various leagues over the years. One of the highlights was the Manager's League at the Iris Club. In addition, Dean is the auditor for his church and also serves as a greeter and usher.

Dean really enjoyed taking the entire family to Disney World some years ago and also enjoys the beaches, primarily in New Jersey.

Speaking of Monie, this year they are celebrating 50 years of marriage. They were initially introduced by family and spent their first official date at the Met-Ed Fall Dance which was held at the Kenhorst Fire Company in October 1972. Two years later they "tied the knot."

As many retirees, including Dean, say on a regular basis, "I can't believe how busy I am!" Most of us will agree that is a GOOD thing!

NERA MYSTERY TRIP September 12

Written by Denis Dorward

The mystery trip remains one of the most popular trips run by the Retiree Association. A full bus of 52 passengers departed, trying to guess where our driver was taking us. This trip included two destinations in the morning, followed by lunch and another two destinations in the afternoon.

The primary location this year was Harrisburg, PA. The first destination was the Pennsylvania State Capitol in downtown Harrisburg. It is a must-see for all Pennsylvania residents, a true architectural and artistic treasure. The guided tour started in the Rotunda, which was covered by over 400 Moravian mosaic floor tiles depicting PA German folk art. We proceeded to the second floor, where the Senate Chamber, the House Chamber, and the Supreme Court is located. The fifty state Senators sit in their assigned desk, the original desks from the 1906 opening, made of rare Belize mahogany. Looking down at the Senate chamber, it is filled with significant artisanship and artifacts. The original paintings, green marble walls, gold floor light standards, and stained-glass windows form an impressive sight. The House chamber, containing 203 members' desks, also contained magnificent art, murals, stained-glass windows, and 6 huge two-to-four-ton crystal chandeliers. The highlight of the Supreme Court chamber was the elaborate stained-glass dome in the center of the room.

At the end of the guided tour, a special guest spoke to us and answered questions: Senator from Berks County Judy Schwank. She heard we were touring and took time to meet with us. Several of the group finished with a self-guided tour of the Capitol. An interesting display in the House Archives wing was a collection of photos and news items from the TMI nuclear accident occurring in March, 1979.

Our second stop was close-by: The State Museum of PA - 300 North Street. This self-guided tour detailed much of the history and involvement Pennsylvania had with the Native Americans, the Civil War, industry, civil rights, and many other significant events on the three floors of displays.

Lunch was provided at Dukes Bar and Grille overlooking the Susquehanna River. The delicious buffet included sliced ham and turkey along with all the trimmings.

After lunch we headed to another museum - The National Civil War Museum, in Reservoir Park in Harrisburg. The self-guided tour of the museum displayed how the country became divided, went through all the battlefields and hardship by both sides and then reunited under Abraham Lincoln to again become the United States of America.

The final stop was, yes you guessed it, an ice cream parlor. A sandwich shop called Stuff'D Steaks and Hoagies on West Chocolate Ave. in Hershey served us a two-scoop dish of delicious Hershey Ice Cream.

Associated Websites:

Pennsylvania Capitol: <http://www.pacapitol.com>

Sate Museum of Pennsylvania: <https://statemuseumpa.org>

National Civil War Museum: <https://www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org>

Volunteers Needed to “Ring the Bell”

MERA is again volunteering to help the Salvation Army by "ringing the bell" during their Christmas Red Kettle Campaign. MERA has 12 one-hour time slots available on Thursday, December 5 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Tuesday, December 10, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. 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!

Sunshine Report

A MERA Sunshine sympathy card was sent to member **Eugene Carter** on the passing of his wife, Dolores.

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
Clair & Edna Kramer
Michael & Judy Krepps

Kim & Jim Krotulski
D. 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 Baim
Kip Barto
Rick Heffner
Greg Hilbert
Kim Krotulski
Louise Lutz
Suellen Maurer
Jane Rogers
Linda Schlegel

Major hostilities of World War I formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Known originally as Armistice Day, the federal holiday was changed to Veterans Day in 1954. It is a day set aside for honoring military veterans of the United States Armed Forces. **To all MERA veterans: Thank you for your service.**

