

Merriest of  
Christmases  
and  
Happy Holidays!



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# MERA

## HOMETOWN NEWS

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

### Note from MERA President

Thanksgiving is here and Christmas is not far behind! Enjoy this time of year with friends and family. We look forward to a New Year with great hope and expectations.  
Merry Christmas to all!

Jim

### MERA Calendar of Events

Don't miss any of these great MERA events.

**NOTE: MERA's 2025 calendar is part of this e-newsletter. Print or save a copy so you can refer to it throughout the year! You don't want to miss any of the fun!**

- **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. *Reservations closed. Deadline was 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.
- **January General Membership Meeting, Monday, January 20 at 1 p.m. at Muhlenberg Rec Center.** Musical Bingo with Rich Weilacher of TGE Entertainment
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, January 29, 2 p.m. Hike on Angelica Creek Trail.** Park at the Berks Nature Center parking lot, 575 St. Bernardine St, off of Morgantown Road. We will walk around the Nature Center gardens, then on toward the Ken Grille pool, about one mile each way. Then we will head back at **4 p.m. to Trooper Thorns**, 451 Morgantown Rd for our Happy Hour.

- **February General Membership Meeting, Monday February 17 at 1 p.m. at Muhlenberg Rec Center.** Brent Erb, Director, Nolde Forest Education
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, February 26 (date tentative for Snow Goose migration)** Let's try to catch the snow goose migration at its peak this year. The date may be a last minute decision, hopefully around the end of February. We will meet at **2 p.m. to hike to Willow Point, Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.** The path is flat gravel, about one-half mile each way. We will spend our time enjoying the snow geese and tundra swans, if they agree to stick around for us. Then we will reconvene to warm up and refresh at our **Happy Hour 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 topic for physical and mental health
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday, March 26 2 p.m. Hike at either Bernhart Dam park or on Muhlenberg Rail Trail.** Stay tuned for the final word. Join us as well for our **4 p.m. Happy Hour at Joe's Place, 5 Spring Valley Road, Laureldale.**
- **Trip: Toby's Dinner Theatre Wednesday, April 16.** Details TBD
- **Anniversary Luncheon Thursday, April 24 at 11:00 a.m.** Location TBD
- **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 either Island Pizza 3060 Limekiln Rd, or Fork and Ale, 1281 E. Main St, Douglassville.** Stay tuned for the final word.

## **MERA Member Profile**

**written by guest columnist Larry Lenhart**

**Mike Krepps** joined a number of other Met-Ed employees who elected early retirement in 2002. Mike retired as Supervisor of Human Resources Field Services and had responsibility for all 3 Operating Companies: Jersey Central, Met-Ed and Penelec. But let's go back to 1969, when Mike graduated from Penn State, York campus with an associate's degree in liberal arts. Later that same year he was hired by Met-Ed, working in his hometown of York.. His first position was Consumer Services Representative. By 1982 he graduated from Alvernia University night school with a BS degree in Business Management and began working in Lebanon as Supervisor of Human Resources, followed by Supervisor of HR for the Generation Division. In 1993 he transferred to the

Central Division in Reading as Regional Administration Manager and continued in various manager positions until his retirement in 2002.

Mike did have a 2-year break in his Met-Ed service when he enlisted for active duty in the US Navy to serve his country. This occurred in the 1970-1972 timeframe, during the Vietnam War. He served as Mechanist Mate Second Class on the USS William V. Pratt, a destroyer which protected US assets in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean. The Pratt was the first US Navy ship to visit Cherbourg France in Normandy since WW2.

After retirement from Met-Ed Mike started his own HR consulting firm which kept him busy for the next 20 years. Today he is still consulting with clients but on a very limited basis.

Speaking of York where Mike grew up, that is where he met his future wife, Judy. They met in June of 1968 while working summer jobs at the McCrory distribution warehouse. For their first date, he took her to a friend's party that got a little rowdy and apparently made a mess in the process. Judy volunteered to wash dishes and help clean up the house...YES, before the parents got home!!

In summer of 1968 they vacationed in Wildwood Crest, NJ and fell in love there. Mike worked as a breakfast short-order cook, which gave them the rest of the afternoons and evenings to enjoy the beach. It's no wonder that they ended up buying a house in Ocean City, MD. which they visit year-round..

Mike and Judy have been married for 55 years now. They have 3 daughters and 4 grandchildren. In addition to spending quality time with his family, Mike volunteers with Susquehanna Fly Fishers which takes veterans and special needs children on fishing trips. His other interests include golf, gardening, running and hunting. He never misses out on going to hunting camp in Perry County with his friends. It's now 50 years of hunting turkey and deer. He did not mention anything about drinking beer...

Like many other retirees say, given their current schedule... how did I ever have time to work?!? Mike's advice to other retirees: keep active both mentally and physically, get involved and stay positive! Mike has made it an important part of his weekly routine to take care of himself by exercising, including running, and watching his diet. According to him, he is the oldest and healthiest of his 7 brothers and sisters.

As I was wrapping up the interview, we talked about the divisiveness in our country right now. Mike feels strongly about respecting the opinions of others who think differently than you. What he suggests is making sure that you listen to a number of different news sources, which will hopefully temper your opinion! Thank you Mike!

## **FirstEnergy Earns Multiple Military Friendly® Company Awards**

For the ninth time in the past 10 years, FirstEnergy Corp. (NYSE: FE) has been designated a Military Friendly® Company by Military Friendly, a national organization supporting the U.S. military and its veterans. The recognition is one of four awards FirstEnergy earned this year from Military Friendly, which were announced on Veteran's Day.

April Marx, Acting Vice President, Human Resources at FirstEnergy: "We are honored to have earned this recognition once again from Military Friendly, as it reflects our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment and support of those who serve our country. The courage and integrity demonstrated in military duty, along with the focus on safety, teamwork and problem-solving that our servicemen and women obtain, are behaviors we seek and value."

In Military Friendly's survey for its 2025 recognitions, published annually by *G.I. Jobs* magazine, FirstEnergy received four awards:

- Silver Award as a Military Friendly® Employer
- Designation as a Military Friendly® Company
- Designation as a Military Friendly® Spouse Employer
- Designation as a Military Friendly® Supplier Diversity Program

In addition to the company's support of its veterans through recruitment, hiring, development and comprehensive benefits packages, including active-duty benefits, FirstEnergy's employees have established a companywide Veterans and Allies Employee Business Resource Group (EBRG) with several local chapters within its five-state footprint to positively influence veterans both inside and outside the company. Since its inception in 2016, FirstEnergy's Veterans and Allies EBRG has:

- Raised more than \$100,000 for organizations that support active military and veterans.
- Organized donation events for active military members overseas and veterans at local veterans' hospitals.
- Volunteered with many organizations that directly and indirectly impact veterans.

## Sunshine Report

MERA Sunshine sympathy cards were sent to **Patrecia Christ** on the passing of her husband **Richard Christ** (member) and to **Cheryl Haring**, widow of **Paul Haring**, whose daughter Jan Bertolet recently passed.

## MERA Member Milestones Happy December Anniversary!

Tassy & Joe DeAngelo  
Craig & Robin Fries  
Clayton & Alice Heiser

Donald & Patricia McKinney  
Bill & Cheryl Zewe

## Happy December Milestone\* Birthday!

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

Lori Endy  
Kathy Seyler  
Michael Thomas

What do you call an elf that  
runs away from Santa's  
Workshop?  
A rebel without a Clause.

