

AMERA is hosting  
TEN events  
between March and June.  
How many will you  
attend?  
See the "Upcoming  
Events Calendar" in this  
issue so you don't miss a  
thing!



# AMERA HOMETOWN NEWS

Items of interest to MERA Members  
March 2024

Want to know more?  
Check us out at  
[merasite.org](http://merasite.org)

## A Note from MERA President

Two winter months are over. One to go! We are looking forward to outdoor activities. Be sure to use sunscreen whenever you are in the sun! We will be back at Jim Dietrich Park in May. Baseball is drawing near. Enjoy all you can and be safe!

Jim

## Upcoming events: Get Out Your Calendar and Take Note! Everything you need to know about upcoming MERA events & adventures.

### MARCH 18, 1 pm: General Meeting at Muhlenberg Rec Center

Scammed! Let the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General show you how to avoid being a victim of fraud and scammers.

### MARCH 27, 2 & 4 pm: Jim Dietrich Park Hike and Clean-up and Pourhouse Happy Hour

2pm hike at Jim Dietrich Park 4899 Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Road. Both gravel and natural pathways, mostly level. Dogs on the lease are welcome. We also will help clean up the pathways of fallen branches etc., to help out Muhlenberg Township. (Plus, it is a little extra exercise for us!) 4pm Happy Hour at the Pourhouse 3341 Pricetown Road at the intersection of Route 73. Contact Bonnie Paparella at [bonniepaparella@yahoo.com](mailto:bonniepaparella@yahoo.com) or 610-207-0258.

### APRIL 4: Springtime in Washington, DC Daytrip

Includes: motorcoach transportation, Washington National Cathedral, lunch at Tony & Joe's, and tram tour of Arlington National Cemetery including a stop at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Price: \$169/person. Inquiries & registration: contact Larry Lenhart at 610-582-5212 or 610-207-3026 (cell phone) or email [wisserl@aol.com](mailto:wisserl@aol.com). Registration deadline is March 1, 2024.

### APRIL 24, 2 & 4 pm: Hike & Happy Hour, Exeter River Trail & Island Pizza

2pm Hike Exeter River Trail, meet at parking area off Gibraltar Road. Flat gravel path along the Schuylkill River. Dogs on the leash are welcome. 4pm Happy Hour at Island Pizza, 3060 Limekiln Road.

### **APRIL 25, 11-2 pm: 44th Annual Anniversary Luncheon**

Back by popular demand! The luncheon will once again be held at Victor Emmanuel, 311 Hazel Street in Reading. Same price as last year, just \$20 per person for buffet including salad, pizza, baked ziti, meatballs and sausage along with soft drinks and coffee. Cash bar available (no credit cards). Feel like being sweet? Bring a dessert to share! Inquiries and registration, contact Gary Pleiss 610-927-7590. Deadline is Friday April 19.

### **MAY 20, 11:30 am: General Meeting at Jim Dietrich Park**

*Live music* by Steve Barth. Steve has been an entertainer for many years. He will play the guitar and sing some of your favorite tunes from the past. Be ready to sing along (no judgement here) and have fun! And, of course, refreshments will be served by our president Jim and his able and devoted staff. Remember to bring a jacket in case it's chilly.

### **MAY 29, 2 & 4pm: Blue Marsh Lake Hike & Blue Marsh Italian Restaurant Happy Hour**

Hike at Blue Marsh Lake Border Trail, mostly level natural path, meet at 2pm at Sheidy Boat Ramp parking lot, walking up to two miles to Robeson Road and back. Happy Hour at 4pm at Blue Marsh Italian Restaurant, 5027 Bernville Rd/Rt 183. Contact Bonnie at [bonniepaparella@yahoo.com](mailto:bonniepaparella@yahoo.com) or 610-207-0258.

### **JUNE 19, 2 & 4: Reading Arboretum Leisurely Walk & Sly Fox Taphouse Happy Hour**

Leisurely walk at Reading Arboretum at the Reading Public Museum to enjoy the blooming gardens, and perhaps farther along the gravel pathways. 4pm Happy Hour at Sly Fox Taphouse, 820 Knitting Mill Way, Wyomissing. Contact Bonnie at [bonniepaparella@yahoo.com](mailto:bonniepaparella@yahoo.com) or 610-207-0258.

### **JUNE 20, 11:00: MERA Annual Picnic at Jim Dietrich Park**

Feast on typical summer fare: cold cuts, salads, baked beans and hamburger barbecue, a winning combination! And don't forget the ICE CREAM! This year we are using a new caterer, Station House Catering in Tuckerton, because of the permanent closing of Wegmans Deli in Stonersville. Please take note that we are able to slightly reduce the price to \$15 per person. Hurrah! Arrive early starting at 11:00 a.m. to get your preferred seats. Bring a few bucks along and take a chance on the money raffle. There will be 4 prizes since the total collected will be in excess of \$100. First prize gets 40% of the total. Inquiries & registration: contact Clair or Edna Kramer at 610-683-8342 or 484-256-7168 cell.

### **JUNE 26: Sails & Rails! Daytrip.**

Includes: Motorcoach transportation, lunch cruise on the "Proud Mary Showboat" at Raystown Lake and trolley ride at the Rock Hill Trolley, and an ice cream treat! Price is \$185 per person. Inquiries & registration: contact Larry Lenhart at 610-582-5212 or 610-207-3026 (cell phone) or email [wisserl@aol.com](mailto:wisserl@aol.com). Registration deadline is May 21.

## MERA Member Bits & Pieces

**Cindy and Bruce Rowits** were in Florida recently. Cindy says "Feeling like kids! It's been almost 30 years since our last visit to Epcot!" **Bob & Manice Peace** just welcomed their 18<sup>th</sup> great grandchild. The baby is a girl and lives in Hawaii. Sounds like she's off to an enviable start! The Peaces have 18 *great* grandchildren. The score: boys – 10; girls – 8. **Erma Miller** just got back from a downhill skiing trip to Quebec. She says they had good snow and perfect weather: sunny and no wind! The **Zeibers, Jim and Joyce**, will be cruising through the Panama Canal when this newsletter hits your mailbox. Jim will celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on board! Happy Birthday, MERA President! A delegation of MERA members cruised around Iceland: **Kathy & Denis Dorward, Steve & Linda Rathman, Dave & Chris Forrer and Roger & Karen Levesque**. Volcanoes erupted just before they arrived but by the time they touched ground the lava had stopped flowing. (Whew!) Kathy & Denis loved the experience of being in a tunnel under a glacier. While there were no Northern Lights (wrong time of year) the group still managed to have a colorful trip enjoying the Golden Circle Tour and the Blue Lagoon.

*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](mailto:meraberks@gmail.com).*

## Superbowl Results

It's over! Put away the nachos, chicken wings and the spinach-artichoke dip. At least until the *next* second Sunday in February. MERA has our own Super Bowl Champions. This year's winners of the MERA Super Bowl Pick 'em Contest are **Terry Norman** and **Denis Dorward**, each got 12 of the 21 questions correct! Their reward is a \$25 Sheetz Gift Card. Runners up **Walt LaSota, Joyce Zeiber, Carol Chew and George Moll** will each receive a \$10 gift card. Congratulations! Word is still out if Taylor Swift will be presenting the gift cards to the winners.

## MERA Member Profile

**Stan Miller** retired from Met-Ed's Distribution Design Group in 2015. Over his long career, it was his favorite job. The variety of the tasks and the balance of fieldwork and computer work suited him plus he had a terrific boss and great co-workers. However, he was assigned a project where the customer had crazy expectations coupled with changing goals and it triggered his retirement. Additionally, storm duty was wearing thin. "I despised everything about storm duty except bird dogging for crews from out of town. It was very satisfying to have a hand in restoring power and see customers' gratitude."

Stan's career had nine lives. (Good thing he likes roller coasters.) He graduated from Wyomissing High School in 1971. Vo-Tech was brand new and Stan found a home there. He studied architectural drawing and met his favorite teacher. "Mr. Davis was the

best teacher I ever had. He prepared us to succeed in the workforce and focused on practical skills.” He started at Gilbert Associates, an engineering firm, right out of high school for 30 cents over minimum wage. Despite being laid off and contracts going bust, Stan was with Gilbert Associates for over 18 years. When the TMI accident happened, the need for nuclear engineers and services dried up and Stan’s job was eliminated. “TMI rocked our world. Half of the Gilbert workforce was laid off in one day.” But never fear! Stan signed on as contractor with TMI. Eventually the commute from Reading got to be too much. He came on board with GPU in 1993 as an EEL tester and then mapper. But, when FE bought GPU – you guessed it – Stan’s job went away...and then it *came back* at the corporate level. Finally, after passing the requisite coursework, Stan became a distribution designer.

Stan has lived in the same place for 50 years. “The area keeps getting nicer. So, I’ve stayed!” He has a number of pursuits that keep him busy. Stan loves yardwork and gardening. He adds new perennials every year and finds it rewarding to see the flowers and shrubs come back year after year. Stan helps out at his church, assisting with the flower garden and at the day care center. He’s been an avid coin collector since his father got him hooked when he was six years old. Stan is also a passionate golfer boasting a 6 handicap and a couple holes in one. Additionally, he walks about four miles a day!

Anything else? “Well,” says Stan, “I’ve owned 24 cars since 1973. I just love cars.” On average, he keeps a car for about two years. His least favorite car was a 1982 Cadillac Cimarron which he sold after just three months. His favorite, a SAAB which sadly they don’t even make anymore. Right now, Stan is really enjoying the German engineering of his Audi.

Stan recommends his fellow retirees check out the Reading Fairgrounds Market. He is a regular and has gotten to know the vendors and other patrons. His favorite restaurant there is Jambalaya Jays. “Get their Po’boy.” Stan advises to exercise regularly and build some structure into your day. Plus take advantage of the activities and companionship offered by the many senior groups (like MERA) in the area.

## 2023 Christmas Luncheon - Survey Summary

Thanks to everyone who completed the survey as a follow up to our 2023 Christmas Luncheon at the Warehouse. Your input is appreciated and will be used to help shape future luncheons. Following is a brief summary of the comments. We asked for a rating from 1-5 with 5 being the highest.

- The Warehouse Facility overall – generally received a 4. The venue was rated well for the most part. Some of the issues raised included parking availability and the acoustics.
- Food – Generally, the food service received a solid 4. There were many compliments on the quality however most of the concerns related to the slowness of the table service which resulted in some of the entrees being cold.

- Bar Service – generally received a mediocre rating. Issues were raised concerning the slowness of service, lack of choices and running out of certain selections.
- Entertainment – The Hamburg High School Choir received very high ratings with almost all 4s and 5s.

A couple of final comments: the speaker system was poor and needs to be addressed. 73% of the participants would be willing to return to the Warehouse for future gatherings with the caveat that the concerns raised be addressed. 100% of the responders indicated they would be fine with moving toward a buffet style luncheon rather than a served meal.

## Welcome New Members!

A very warm MERA welcome to new member: **Darlene Heffner**. We hope to see you at a MERA event soon!

Remember, anyone who brings a new member to MERA during the year will be eligible to win a gift card drawing held during the annual Christmas luncheon. Help us grow by bringing new members to the fold!

## March MERA Member Milestones Happy March Anniversary!

Walter & Wilfriede Axsmith  
Forrest & Edna Blatt  
Thomas & Deborah Fegley  
Lowell & Catherine Kessler  
Tom & Shirley Krick  
Shirley & Bill McClure

David & Debra Rutter  
Ted & Cindy Seaman  
Barry & Elaine Sensenig  
Rick & Bonnie Shiner  
Delbert & Laurie Somerville

## Happy March Milestone Birthday!

Richard Britigan  
Robin Fries  
Rosemary Ludwig  
Larry Moyer  
Judy Sillhart  
James Zeiber

Do you have any comments or recommendations for MERA? A program? Newsletter article? Please email MERA at [meraberks@gmail.com](mailto:meraberks@gmail.com).

"Aging is an extraordinary process where you become the person you always should have been."  
David Bowie

