

No General Meetings in
July and August.

Have a great summer
and we'll see you in
September!



MERA HOMETOWN NEWS

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

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

A Note from MERA's President

Well, we survived our session of Be-Boop Bingo even with the winds at Dietrich Park. Everyone enjoyed the fun! Next is our annual picnic on June 19 at Dietrich's. A new feature is the ice cream sundae bar...sounds good! Come and enjoy the day and chat with your fellow retirees. One more activity planned to wrap up before the summer. Our Chicken Bake is scheduled for September; watch for details.

Jim

MERA Calendar of Events

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

- **MERA Annual Picnic in the Park, Thursday June 19 11:00-1:00 at Jim Dietrich Park.** Enjoy a delicious picnic lunch followed by ice cream sundaes! Price is just \$12 per person. **Deadline for reservations is June 10.** 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 June 25. Meet at 2pm at the Reading Public Museum Arboretum** for a guided walk among the gardens, led by Master Gardener Donna Goughnour. We will then relax at **4pm** with some brews and chews at **Sly Fox Wyomissing Tap House** at the Knitting Mills, 820 Knitting Mills Way, Wyomissing.
- **Hike and Happy Hour Wednesday July 30. Take a walk at 2:30pm (NOTE TIME CHANGE) at the Berks County Agricultural Center**, 1238 County Welfare Rd, Leesport. Master Gardener Becky Wingenroth will guide us through ten or more differently themed gardens created and cared for by the Master Gardeners of Berks County. We will then relocate to cool off and refresh at **4pm at Tobias Frogg Restaurant**, 2613 Hampden Blvd, Reading
- **Trip to Ashland, PA Wednesday August 6, 2025.** Gather with friends and go back in time. Take a trip in an open mine car at the Pioneer Tunnel Coal Mine. Next, climb aboard the vintage narrow gauge steam locomotive and learn about strip mining. Lunch will be at Main Street Moonshine where we will have a tour and make our own moonshine to take home with us! Final stop of the day is Hope Hill Lavender Farm. Included: transportation, lunch admissions, gratuities and snacks. Cost is \$175 per person. **Registration is closed.** For questions contact: **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or bseidel3523@comcast.net
- **Happy Hour Wednesday August 27.** No Hike is planned for August. Let's just escape the heat at **4pm for Happy Hour at Beverly Hills Tavern**, 710 Old Fritztown Rd, Sinking Spring.

- **Happy Hour Wednesday September 17 (NOTE DATE CHANGE DUE TO MERA BUS TRIP ON SEPTEMBER 24).** No hike planned at this time. **Happy Hour at 4pm at Liberty Taproom,** 237 N. Prospect St, Mt Penn.
- **MERA Annual Chicken Bake Thursday September 18 at Dietrich Park.** Always a favorite date on the MERA calendar. Lunch will be catered by Kauffmans. Cost TBD. Contact **Gary Pleiss** at (610) 927-7590 with any questions.
- **Mystery Trip Wednesday September 24.** Come join us for a fun-filled day on an exciting Mystery Trip. This tour will keep you guessing from start to finish which is exactly the point. It's so much fun to enjoy the scenery and the comfortable ride going from one place to another, just letting all the secrets of this day pleasantly unfold. We can't tell you where we're going, but you can be sure you'll have a great time! We promise you it will be delicious, fun, and interesting. Cost is \$155 per person and includes: lunch inclusive of taxes and gratuity; admissions; driver gratuities; motorcoach transportation; all applicable taxes; snacks and more. For questions contact: **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or bseidel3523@comcast.net

Save the date: MERA Annual Christmas Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, December 11!

Trip Survey

The Met-Ed Retirees Association has long sponsored bus trips to fun and interesting places near and far. Larry Lenhart organized the trips for years and has recently passed the baton to Barb Seidel. The journey – with joke telling and abundant snack food – is nearly as much fun as the destination. Barb recently surveyed members who attended the anniversary luncheon to see what members thought. Thirty-five people responded. Many members loved the trips and suggested adding some that are lower cost and shorter (more local). Suggestions for destinations ranged from New York City to The Poconos to Philadelphia and more. The Reading Phillies was popular idea and so was The Jim Thorpe Train Ride, the Roots Market and theater events. If you have questions or ideas about MERA Bus Trips, reach out to **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or bseidel3523@comcast.net.

MERA Member Profile Roy Gehris

Roy Gehris joined the Met-Ed Transmission Engineering team in 1965, fresh out of the Marines and Vietnam. The new job entailed trekking across the wilds of Pennsylvania, cutting through vegetation while surveying for the construction of the 500kV line. "I once had such a bad case of poison ivy I was in the hospital overnight," remembers Roy. "That job got old pretty quick." So, he moved on to the line shop leaving the department after 16 years when an on-the-job accident while strapped to a utility pole damaged his back and knee. Next stop: dispatch where he worked for 26 years, handling customer calls and assisting with storm response. "In the early days, dispatchers dealt with after-hour customer calls...like people who had had their service disconnected for not paying their bill." Roy's very first midnight shift was eventful, to put it mildly. "I received the call from TMI-1 that they were having problems!" It turned out to be a busy night indeed as he fielded calls from the media and informed Met-Ed officials of the incident. Still, working dispatch was Roy's favorite time at Met-Ed. He retired in 2004.

Roy grew up in Lyons and joined the Marine Corps two weeks after graduating high school. Roy married Barbara, now a retired nurse, in 1968. They have two children and three grandkids. Their daughter is a nurse as well. The Corps tradition runs deep in the family as Roy's father and brother served and now his son and grandson are also Marines.

A history buff, Roy enjoys genealogy research preserving family history for future generations. He has identified a relative wounded in the Revolutionary War as well as one that fought at Gettysburg in the Civil War. "For anyone interested in genealogy, there are amazing resources locally that can help you in your search." He cites the Genealogy Society of Berks County Library, the Kutztown Library, the Mormon Lending Library (Berks County's branch of the main library in Utah). "Services like Ancestry.com are okay if you have the money and don't like doing the legwork." (I get the feeling Roy likes the legwork.)

For anyone wanting to see a bit of Gehris history for themselves, the original Gehris farmstead – on Ruth Road east of Weaver's Hardware Store on the Fleetwood-Lyons Road - is still a working dairy farm.

In addition to researching his family's roots, Roy spent a lot of his retired time golfing. "I used to go three times a week and I was pretty good...until my back started to complain." Roy started caddying at the age of 14. He and buddy, Ray Fulton, founded the Met-Ed Golf League out at Flying Hills.

Roy is active with the American Legion in Topton and serves on the Honor Guard paying tribute to veterans during funeral services.

Roy counsels his fellow retirees to "STAY BUSY! Find something you like and explore it."

Reading Public Museum Arboretum - Taking A Stroll

By Volunteer Donna Goughnour

It's spring, and thoughts turn to being outside in the garden, maybe even digging in and getting your hands a little dirty. Or, maybe not! Regardless of your position on the joys of gardening, everyone can enjoy the beautiful Reading Public Museum Arboretum. Below, Master Gardener Donna Goughnour, MERA Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator for Reading Public Museum Arboretum, takes us on a tour of these lovely grounds.

Take a break and enjoy a nice walk through the arboretum at the Reading Museum. The grounds are "lovingly" maintained by a group of volunteers who meet every Wednesday from April to October. We weed, we rake, we mulch, we plant. But frankly we do a lot of weeding. 4594 hours by the volunteers in 2024! Let me introduce you to some of the focal points:

At the front, right of the museum entrance, take notice of the fenced tree, which is an Artemis Generation Moon Tree, an American Sycamore. As a seedling, this tree flew around the moon on NASA's Artemis 1 mission in 2022. Only 50 have been awarded across the US so far.

At the front, left of the museum, we have a work in progress. Members of our group have relocated many vintage irises in a dedicated garden. Many of these elaborate blooms were donated/planted by nurseryman Bertrand Farr in the late 1920's! Labeling is our next project!

Continue your walk toward Museum Road, cross the bridge and reenter the arboretum. Take notice of many dedicated benches and trees which the public has purchased to honor or memorialize their loved ones. Next up to your right is the Hosta garden! So many different cultivars and colors; this shady garden is striking! The pollinator slope is the next area with focused plantings of native plants for the butterflies and bees. If only we could keep the groundhog out of here!

Many sculptures occupy the grounds and signage offers a brief description. Walk past the huge old sycamore (oh what stories he could tell) and you come upon the perennial flower beds very meticulously maintained by the Reading Garden Club. Truly a gardening inspiration!

As our walk continues a large meadow is in front of you with many dedicated trees. This is a low area and when the creek rises, which it has and does, this area floods. The bridge takes you over to Trudy's Garden to the left. This charming garden was donated by Trudy's brother to honor his big sister. Walk the back paths to see all the plantings. Our newest garden on the right is the Robert Ciferri Sensory Garden which was recently donated and dedicated. A peaceful lovely place to just "sit!"

Our walk would not be complete without a spotting of "Big Blue," our resident blue heron. Of course, the mallards and trout always hang out too.

Wrap up your day with a visit to the Museum gift shop where you'll find a fine selection of unique wares from local artists!

Note: Want more? MERA's Hike & Happy Hour on June 25 will be at the Museum's Arboretum. Donna will lead a guided walk among the gardens.

Hometown News would like to hear more about your volunteer activities! Reach out to Karen Baxter, kbaxter@ptd.net.

MEMA Member Milestones

Happy June Anniversary!

Mario & Norma Andrie
Kathy & Dean Baim
Ron & Janet Bortz
Denis & Kathy Dorward
Thomas & Gail Edelman
David & Judy Fair
Ralph & Estelle Fehr
Ron & Patti Furman
Robert & Charlotte Galgon

Guy & Patricia Gockley
Ron & Sharon Hrabak
Fred & Mary Janosky
Roxann Luckenbill & Jeff Sterner
Don & Lynn Miller
Sandi & Bill Myskowski
Ralph & Bonnie Paparella
Rory & Josephine Pfeifer

Patricia & Michael Phile
Jane & Verlin Renner
Ralph & Marva Rhode
Ron & Joy Sands
William & Linda Schlegel
Bruce & Maria Stempo
Dick & Pat Tracy
Ray & Faye Warmkessel
Kevin & Terri Wickman

Happy June Milestone* Birthday!

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

Peter Culshaw
Alma Felix
Michelle Frey
Charlotte Galgon
Clayton Heiser

Peggy Hunter
Mark Livingston
Glenn Speicher
Cindy Thomas

Did you know?
June 19 is Juneteenth
On this day in 1865, Union General
Gordon Granger read the
Emancipation Proclamation aloud
in Galveston, Texas, effectively
liberating enslaved people in the
state, which had thus far been
beyond control of the Union Army.

