

Don't miss the free
fasnachts at the
February General
Meeting
2/16 at 1:00
Muhlenberg Rec
Center



MERA

HOMETOWN NEWS

AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Items of interest to MERA Members
February 2026

Want to know more?
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merasite.org

MERA Calendar of Events

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

- **MERA General Meeting February 16, 1:00** at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Road, Reading, Pa. 19605. Our speaker is Rebeka Birch, Reading Public Museum Arboretum and Education Program Manager. Rebeka will provide a presentation about Punxsutawney Phil and Other Animal Prognosticators. Join us for a lively and enthusiastic presentation by Rebeka. Attendees will enjoy a Berks County favorite of fastnachts with a light lunch. Hope you will join us!
- **Happy Hour Wednesday February 25, 4:00 pm** at Pour House 3341 Pricetown Rd, Fleetwood. **NOTE:** No hike planned unless the snow geese arrive at Middle Creek this month in which case Happy Hour will change to K-Ville Tavern
- **Happy Hour and Hike March ??** Hike 2pm at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area to see the migrating snow geese. This date will be a last minute decision, depending on when the lake thaws. Happy Hour at 4pm K-Ville Tavern, 2647 Heidelberg Ave., Kleinfeltersville. Watch your email and the website for last minute updates.
- **MERA General Meeting March 16, 1:00** at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Rd, Reading, Pa. 19605. Our program will be presented by Brant Portner, Environmental Education Specialist from Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. The program will be informative regarding the snow geese migration through our area. A light lunch is provided!
- **Anniversary Luncheon, April 16*, 11:00 am** at Victor Emmanuel, 311 Hazel Street. Buffet includes salad, pizza, chicken parmesan, pasta, and beverages. Bring a dessert to share! Price:\$15. Deadline for reservations is April 7. Call **Gary Pleiss** at 610-927-7590. ***NOTE date change.**
- **Happy Hour and Hike, April 29.** Hike 2pm on the Exeter River Trail. 4pm Happy Hour at Island Pizza, 3060 Limekiln Road, Birdsboro
- **MERA Bus Trip. Longwood Gardens, May 8.** Includes: motor coach transportation, lunch at Buckley's Tavern, and admission to Longwood Gardens, including a one hour guided tour and plenty of free time to enjoy the gardens and fountains! Details to follow!
- **Happy Hour and Hike, May 27.** Hike at 2pm at Shiloh Hills 303 Sage Drive, Sinking Spring. Happy Hour at 4pm at Paolo's, 2480 Lancaster Pike, Reading

Christmas Luncheon 2025

Summary and review by Sandy Myskowski

What a wonderful gathering on December 11, 2025 for our MERA Christmas luncheon! Greeted by **Gary and Lisa Pleiss** along with the always beautiful **Carol Lied**, collecting either \$5 a year or \$15 for three years for MERA membership. Did you remember to send in your membership dues, still only \$5? The room was full of old friends and new friends talking and laughing and having fun together. And new MERA members!

A warm Christmas greeting from our President **Jim Zeiber** welcomed everyone. Jim, always the jokester, wore an outrageous green shirt with red eyes, as he announced, in his joking manner, that he was the \$1,000 winner of the ugly T-shirt contest. After Jim led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Moment of Silence, Jim announced that **Kathy Seyler** and MERA volunteers had filled the Ringing of the Bell for the Salvation Army on December 16th. In addition, MERA members brought nonperishable foods for a donation to Helping Harvest. **Carol Lied**, for **Karen Baxter**, spoke about our membership growth and also our Sunshine cards that **Cindy Doaty** sends with caring words. Our MERA cares about our Members and our Community.

Everyone continued their social time with so many smiling faces, **Ralph and Estelle Fehr** along with **Walt and Maryellen Lasota**. **Mark Robinson**, a prior Penelec buddy, smiles along with **Dave 'Ducky' and Nola Henry** and new friend Kevin and his lovely wife.

Following our delicious luncheon, including chicken, crab and prime rib and scrumptious cheesecake and chocolate cake, everyone continued their smiles and conversations including **Cindy and Jeff Thomas**, **Roxanne and Jeff Sterner** and **Tim and Donna Goughnor** who is planning interesting programs with a luncheon for our monthly meetings.

Many handsome gentlemen continued their conversation including hubby **Bill Myskowski** along with **Nelson Moeller**, **Stu Degler**, **Ray Warmkessel**, **Terry Norman**, **Dean Hollenbacher**, **Ken Speicher** and **Larry Lenhart**. And the loveliest ladies including **Barbara Seidel** who plans fun trips for us, **Maxi Shirey**, **Janice Grove**, **Fran Kopala** and **Joyce Zeiber** flashed their beautiful smiles.

Just a sampling of the wonderful people attending this great event organized by **Gary and Lisa Pleiss** and support from MERA board members.

As we left the Warehouse in Hamburg, people were given best wishes as donations to Helping Harvest were loaded up to deliver to the food bank.

What a joyous way to celebrate the glorious Christmas season, old friends and new friends having fun together.

Merry Christmas (belated) and Happy New Year! ❤️

With Love,
Sandy Myskowski

FirstEnergy's Ongoing Support for Fill a Glass with Hope®

Marking a decade of support for Feeding Pennsylvania's Fill a Glass with Hope® program, the FirstEnergy Foundation awarded a \$25,000 grant during the initiative's 2026 kickoff at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg in January. This contribution brings the Foundation's total

investment in the program to \$250,000 since 2016 and demonstrates its commitment to strengthening communities and addressing food insecurity. The company's effort dovetails nicely with the volunteer efforts of many MERA members showcased in the September 2025 Hometown News who donate time to food banks throughout the area.

As the nation's first statewide charitable fresh milk program, Fill a Glass with Hope® has helped Pennsylvania food banks provide families in need with more than 41 million servings of milk – which is enough to provide three glasses of milk to every Pennsylvania resident. The program is a collaboration between Feeding Pennsylvania, the American Dairy Association Northeast and the Pennsylvania Dairywomen's Association.

Milk is one of the most requested items at food banks, yet it's rarely donated because it's perishable. This program bridges the gap and delivers fresh, nutritious milk to families in the Commonwealth, particularly children. According to Feeding Pennsylvania, every \$1 donated provides eight glasses of milk to local food banks.

This contribution follows the Foundation's recent distribution of \$750,000 in grants to 37 food banks and pantries across Pennsylvania during Hunger Action Month in September 2025. In total, the initiative provided \$2.5 million to 104 hunger-relief organizations across the six states served by FirstEnergy and its companies, marking the Foundation's largest hunger-relief investment to date.

To learn more about the Fill a Glass with Hope program or provide support, visit <http://www.feedingpa.org>.

AMERA Member Milestones Happy February Anniversary!

Cindy & Daniel Bausher
Bill & Dianne Day
Willard & Doris Flowers
Tom & Lily Lee

Mark & Mary Beth Mancias
Tim & Barbara Nuhfer
Kathy & Lin Seyler
Virginia & Warren Snyder

Jennifer & Michael Stewart
Ken & Pat Templin
James & Susan Thomas
John & Leslee Wlodyka

Happy February Milestone* Birthday!

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

Michelle Collins Ron Horn
Patricia Gockley Kim Scaffidi
Alice Heiser Mike Stewart

2026 marks the 100th anniversary of federal recognition for Black Americans. Black History Month started as "Negro History Week" in 1926. The second week of February was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The celebration expanded to a month in 1976, during the US Bicentennial when President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month.



Attention! Hometown News is looking for nonprofits to profile – specifically nonprofits where MERA members volunteer. If you donate your time to a local organization – and would like to give them some publicity, please contact Karen Baxter at kbaxter@ptd.net. THANK YOU!