

This is your chance to solve a murder mystery!
Put on your Sherlock Holmes deerstalking hat and come out to our General Meeting on October 19 to find out "Who dunnit?"



MERA Hometown News

And Calendar of Events
Items of interest to MERA Members
October 2026

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

MERA Calendar of Events

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

- **MERA General Meeting October 19**, 1:00 at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Rd, Reading, Pa. 19605. **Who dunnit?** October's meeting will feature a murder mystery program where we have to solve the crime! Light lunch will be served.
- **Happy Hour, October 28**. 4pm at Golden Oaks Bogey's Pub, 10 Stonehedge Rd, Fleetwood
- **MERA General Meeting November 16**, 1:00 at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Rd, Reading, Pa. Get the latest on frauds, scams and AI from Dave Shallcross from the Attorney General's office. Light lunch will be served.
- **Happy Hour, November 18**. 4pm at Klinger's at the Airport, 2385 Bernville Rd., Reading. NOTE change of date due to Thanksgiving.
- **No Happy Hour in December: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**
- **New York City Bus Trip, December 3**. New York City ~ Christmas Do As You Please! Take a bite out of the Big Apple with our Do-As-You-Please tour in New York City this Christmas season. Take in a show, shop 'til you drop or immerse yourself in the splendor of everything that makes New York City so magical at Christmas. Drop off and pick-up will take place at the Winter Garden Theatre in Midtown New York City. Meals will be on your own and there are plenty of options in the city that never sleeps! The cost is \$104 per person and covers the cost of motor coach transportation. Registration and payment deadline is November 4, 2026. More details in the flyer included in this month's newsletter. For questions contact: Barb Seidel at 484-794-0857 or baseidel3523@gmail.com.
- **MERA Annual Christmas Luncheon, December 10**, 11:00 – 2:00 at The Warehouse of Hamburg. Buffet selections include prime rib carving station, crab cake, chicken cordon bleu, salad, vegetables, assorted desserts and beverages. Cost: \$30 per person (each MERA member can bring 1 guest for the same price). Deadline for reservation is December 1. See flyer enclosed in this month's newsletter for more details. If you have any questions contact Gary Pleiss, 610-927-7590.

2027 Membership Renewal Dues are Due!

Unbelievably, it is time to discuss MERA's 2027 Membership Renewal Drive. Last year, MERA introduced the option for members to pay their \$5 annual dues for three years. This pay-ahead option proved very popular with members. So, for many of you this year's renewal push is a non-issue. We will only be sending dues payment reminders to those who have not already paid their 2027 dues.

There is one unintended consequence. Our membership team would update members' contact information based on the information provided by the member on the annual membership renewal form. So, *please note*: if your email address, physical address or phone number changes, please notify Karen Baxter at kbaxter@ptd.net. We would hate to lose contact with you!

MEMBER PROFILE Felix Rivera

Felix Rivera began working for FirstEnergy/Met-Ed as a contractor in 1992 and after 4 years the company brought him on as a regular employee. He worked in facilities management until his retirement in 2018. The biggest perk of the job was meeting his future wife, Jenn, at a fire drill. They always say you should never ignore a fire drill. Who knows what fate awaits you!

Felix appreciated the variety of work in the facilities department from redesigning and rearranging department office layouts to problem solving infrastructure issues. "At one time I catalogued and managed the building plans for all FE buildings."

Felix enjoyed his role as hazard dispatcher during storm outages; one time even returning early from a Florida vacation to help out. "It felt good to do my part to help restore service to customers."

He grew up in Berks County and attended Muhlenberg High School. He completed a 2-year drafting course at Lincoln Tech. Following graduation, he worked as an electrical designer for Entech Engineering and it was during this time he began his work with Met-Ed. Felix's parents taught him the value of hard work. "I didn't take Saturdays off until I met Jenn!" says Felix with his trademark grin. Felix and Jenn married in 1999 and have a son, Jose'.

Felix loves working on old cars, especially his pet 1976 Corvette. He also loves working on projects around the house and listening to audio books. He loses track of time when he plays his guitar. He has challenged himself to learn new songs, recently conquering "Hotel California" and "Amazing Grace."

"I thought retirement would be easy, but it was a big change," says Felix. "I quickly realized I needed to provide structure to my day and consciously make an effort to stay engaged with people." Felix goes to the gym 3-4 times a week. If you are looking for a friendly place to work out, he recommends Retro Fitness in the Kenhorst Plaza. "My best advice to fellow retirees...don't sit around!"

FirstEnergy Foundation Grants Expected to Help Provide 3.6 Million Meals Across Pennsylvania

The FirstEnergy Foundation is making its largest investment in hunger relief to date, awarding \$1.2 million to 37 Pennsylvania food banks and pantries during Hunger Action Month.

John Hawkins, President, FirstEnergy Pennsylvania: “Food insecurity remains a significant challenge in many of the communities we serve. Too many individuals and families across FirstEnergy Pennsylvania’s service territory continue to face challenges putting food on the table. Through the FirstEnergy Foundation, we are proud to support 37 community partners working every day to help our neighbors. Their dedication and support reminds us of the good we can accomplish when communities come together to help those in need and care for one another.”

Many MERA members as well as current FirstEnergy employees volunteer at local food banks. In our area the following foodbanks are receiving FirstEnergy Foundation grants:

- Boyertown Area Multi-Service (Boyertown, Berks County)
- Bushkill Outreach Program (Bushkill, Pike County; first-time recipient)
- Ecumenical Food Pantry of Pike County (Milford, Pike County; first-time recipient)
- Helping Harvest (Reading, Berks County)
- Lebanon County Christian Ministries (Lebanon, Lebanon County)
- New Hope Ministries (Dillsburg, York County)
- New Journey Community Outreach (Reading, Berks County)
- Salvation Army East Stroudsburg (East Stroudsburg, Monroe County; first-time recipient)
- Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Northeast PA (Nazareth, Northampton County)
- York County Food Bank (York, York County)

It's October. Think Pink.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which was co-created by the American Cancer Society (ACS) in 1985. According to ACS's [Cancer Facts & Figures 2025](#), about 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in their lifetime, and about 1 in 43 women will die from it. There has been steady progress since Breast Cancer Awareness Month started in 1985. Currently, there are more than 4 million people living with breast cancer in the U.S. and the number is growing. Statistics also show 3 in 4 women are now up to date on screening, which is the greatest reason mortality has reduced. If you, or someone you love, happen to be the “1 in 4” who have not had a recent screening, Breast Cancer Awareness month is a great time to make that appointment.

Bits & Pieces

Should we call this Transmission Engineering South? **Bill Strause** left The Villages in Central Florida, picked up **Tom Edelman** in Leesburg, and traveled to Longwood, Florida to have lunch with Bob Kelchner. If they can coordinate schedules, they plan to do so again next month!

The Sunshine Report

Member **Walter Frith** recently passed away. We extend our sympathy to the Frith family and most especially to Walter's wife, Julia.

MERA's own Sunshine Chair, **Cindy Doaty**, sends cards and notes to members who need a kind word. If you know of a MERA member who needs some sunshine, please let Karen Baxter know at kbaxter@ptd.net.

MERA Member Milestones Happy October Anniversary!

Maria & Bruce Balthaser
Bob & Charlene Benner
John & Karen Bigelow
Linda & Tino Imbesi
Richard & Sarah Johnson
Jeff and Lori Kunkel

Roger & Karen Levesque
Brian & Sandy Lowe
Marie & Jeffrey Nye
Rich & Cynthia Piergrossi
Steve & Linda Rathman

Henry & Philomena
Robidoux
Jennifer & George Shoop
Jon & Kelly Storch
Richard & Suzanne Zitrick

Happy October Milestone* Birthday!

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

Ellen Azrael
Eugene Carter
Susan D'Angelo
Steven Kerns
Kimberly Lutz
Ronald Reddy
Peggy Sutton

*Why can't you hear a
pterodactyl go to the
bathroom?
Because the "P" is silent.*

