

Don't miss MERA's Annual Picnic
June 20, 11am @ Jim Dietrich Park
Good Fun! Good Food! AND ICE CREAM.
Just \$15
Call
610-683-8342 or
484-256-7168



MERA HOMETOWN NEWS

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

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

A Note from MERA President

It's almost summer, finally! Don't forget our Annual Picnic on June 20. Have a great summer. Hope we all meet again in September!

Jim

MERA Calendar of Events

TIP: Don't miss out on any of these great activities! Print this page and put it on your bulletin board or put the dates in your calendar now (while you're thinking about it!).

JUNE 19, 2pm: Walk at Reading Museum Arboretum

Let's take a stroll through the gardens at the Reading Museum to see what's in bloom, and perhaps farther along the creek as time allows. Then we will gather again at **4pm at Sly Fox Wyomissing Tap House**, 820 Knitting Mill Way for refreshment and fellowship.

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! 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 if 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. Registration is closed.

JULY 31, 2:30pm (note time change): Let's meet in the parking lot at the **Berks County Agricultural Center**, 1238 County Welfare Rd, Leesport, for another garden tour. **Becky Wingenroth** will guide us as we explore 10 or more differently themed gardens cared for by the Master Gardeners of Berks County. We will see flowers in bloom as well as vegetable and herb plots. The tour will take about 30 to 45 minutes. Following our walk, we will regroup to cool off and refresh during our **Happy**

Hour beginning at 4pm at Jimmy G's Railroad House, 152 Woodrow Avenue, Sinking Spring. Hope you can join us for either or both!

No General Meetings in July or August

Have a great summer!

AUGUST 28, 4pm: Happy Hour at CRAFT 2700 @ FREYMOYER's
2700 Kutztown Rd.

Fall Preview:

- September 12 Mystery Trip
- September 19 Annual Chicken Bake at Jim Dietrich Park
- September 25 Hike & Happy Hour

MERA Member Bits & Pieces

Ralph and Bonnie Paparella are planning a trip to the Finger Lakes. Any suggestions? **Carol and Scott Lied** just got back from Bethany Beach, Delaware. **Stu Degler** just took an architectural walking tour of Lancaster City. "It's really a beautiful old city. One owner of an historic home spontaneously invited our group inside to see the interior details!" **Walt and Maryellen LaSota** are just back from their annual RV Spring Fling. This year's itinerary included stops at the Natural Bridge State Park, Virginia; Swannanoa, North Carolina where they toured the Biltmore Palace and the Black Mountain; and the final stop was Pigeon Forge, Tennessee where they visited Dollywood, Great Smokey Mountain, Clingmans Dome and Cades Cove. (You might want to Google a few of those places!) **Sandy Myskowski** reports that husband **Bill** has bagged their Thanksgiving turkey. At 81 years young, Bill called in a big, beautiful turkey, gobbling and strutting, weighing in at a whopping 22.6 pounds with a 10 1/4 inch beard! Congratulations, Bill! You're going to need a lot of stuffing!

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.

MERA Member Profile

On January 17, 1980, two momentous things happened to Cindy Thomas. One, she was hired by GPU's IT department and two, she found out she was pregnant. Two gifts that just kept on giving!

Cindy stayed with the IT department her entire career retiring as a supervisor in 2018. Her favorite part of the job was problem solving. "And there was always plenty of that to do!" She worked with a wide variety of departments and traveled throughout the FE system to coordinate IT projects.

She grew up in the Reading area. Cindy graduated from Wilson High and Albright College with a degree in Math. "That was before IT was a major!"

During those carefree summers while she was a college student, Cindy was a chambermaid at the Windrift Hotel in Avalon, New Jersey. (Did anyone stay at the Windrift in the late 70s? Maybe Cindy changed your sheets!) Cindy says she might have stayed there fulltime after graduation if she hadn't met her husband, Jeff, at a friend's wedding. "He was a friend of the groom and I was a friend of the bride." They married in 1978 and had two sons. And, now, two grandsons.

The couple love to travel. "It helps that my younger son is in the military and has been stationed around the world." They've popped in for visits all over Europe and the U.S. (including Hawaii). "Next stop, Italy."

The whole family loves soccer...playing it, watching other people play it, cheering on family members while they play it. You get the idea.

Cindy enjoys gardening. She volunteers to help keep the Reading Public Museum's Arboretum and Garden looking spiffy. She also loves to read. She has some gardening advice and an author recommendation for fellow MERA members:

For the gardener: "Instead of using the toxic weedkiller, Roundup, try this." Mix 1 gallon of white vinegar, 1 cup of salt and 1 tablespoon of Dawn dish detergent. Just spray and watch the weeds shrivel without any nasty chemicals.

For the book lover: Author Kristin Hannah is always a great read. A particular favorite is *The Nightingale*, about two French women fighting the Nazis in World War II.

And a final note from Cindy: Come out to the MERA Hikes & Happy Hours! They provide two things so critical for our health as we age: exercise and socialization.

FirstEnergy Names New Head of PA Companies

On May 21, FirstEnergy announced the appointment of a new executive to oversee the company's Pennsylvania operations. John Hawkins will be President of PA operations effective June 2.

John Hawkins Biography:

Hawkins joined FirstEnergy in 2022 as Vice President, Operations Support & Distribution Engineering, overseeing numerous departments that support distribution, transmission and customer experience functions. Prior to FirstEnergy, he served in a variety of leadership roles in operations at Entergy Louisiana, including Vice President of Reliability, where he was the incident commander for major restoration events following hurricanes Laura and Ida. He also has held operational and engineering positions of increasing responsibility in transmission and distribution with NextEra/Florida Power & Light, Lone Star Transmission and Duke Energy.

Hawkins earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering technology from Purdue University and a Master of Business Administration from Indiana University. He is a licensed professional engineer in Ohio and Texas.

For the complete news release including other executive appointments, go to https://firstenergycorp.com/newsroom/news_articles/firstenergy-names-executives-to-lead-state-electric-companies-and-transmission-business.html

Welcome New Members!

A very warm MERA welcome to new members: **Mary Lozada, Jeff Antolic, Guy Gockley, Greg Paulson and Shari Koonce**. 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!

Sunshine Activity

A sympathy card was sent to the family of member **Clarence Trupe** who passed away last month.

June MERA Member Milestones Happy June Anniversary!

Mario & Norma Andrie
Kathy & Dean Baim
Ronald & Janet Bortz
Eugene & Dolores Carter
Denis & Kathy Dorward
Thomas & Gail Edelman
Dave & Judy Fair
Ralph & Estelle Fehr
Ronald & Patti Furman
Robert & Charlotte Galgon
Ronald & Sharon Hrabak
Fred & Mary Janosky
Roxann Luckenbill & Jeff Sterner

Don & Lynn Miller
Sandy & Bill Myskowski
Ralph & Bonnie Paparella
Rory & Josephine Pfeifer
Patricia & Michael Phile
Verlin & Jane 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!

Catherine Beierschmitt
Marlene Bender
Edna Blatt
Susan Thomas
Carrie Whitmoyer

"My dad adopted a dog from the local blacksmith. As soon as he got him home, he made a bolt for the door."

This joke brought to you by
Father's Day 2024.

