



# MERA HOMETOWN NEWS

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

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[merasite.org](http://merasite.org)

## A Note from MERA's President

Hard to believe that another month has flown by. The Anniversary Luncheon was attended by 90 members & guests. Everyone had great time and the dessert table was fabulous. Check out the pictures on the website. With summer approaching our meetings will be held at Dietrich's Park starting in May. Check out the entertainment; it will be lots of fun. Another time to get together with your friends will be at the Picnic on Thursday, June. There is a new feature an ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR! Come and join us! Jim

## MERA Calendar of Events

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

- **May General Membership Meeting Monday May 19 at 1 p.m. outside at beautiful Jim Dietrich Park.** Musical Bingo with Rich Weilacher of TGE Entertainment. Prizes and snacks! Test your knowledge of the golden oldies (or if you don't know anything about music – try your luck!).
- **Hike & Happy Hour, Wednesday May 28. Meet at 2pm to Hike at Berks Leisure Area,** 1901 Tulpehocken Rd, Wyomissing. We will walk along the Union Canal Trail towards Grings Mill, and back again. (Sorry, no pets allowed in Berks County Parks). We will then retire at **4pm to PJ Whelihan's Restaurant**, 1101 Rocky Dr, West Lawn for Happy Hour.
- **Trip to Wonders of Wilmington Wednesday, June 4, 2025.** Join us as we travel to Wilmington, Delaware, for a wonderful day of exploring two of Delaware's gems! First, we visit Winterthur, a stunning mansion surrounded by a world-class naturalistic garden set within 1000 acres of rolling hills, streams, meadows, and forests. Lunch is at Buckley's Tavern, built in 1817 as a private residence and a stagecoach stop. Then, we visit the Brandywine Zoo. Last stop, Maggie Moo's Creamery, the perfect way to end your day! Package includes everything: Transportation, admission to attractions, lunch, ice cream, taxes, fees and driver gratuity. Cost is \$153 per person. **Registration closed May 1.** For questions contact: **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or [bseidel3523@comcast.net](mailto:bseidel3523@comcast.net)
- **MERA Annual Picnic in the Park, Thursday June 19 11:00-1:00 at Jim Deitrich 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. Tentatively scheduled walk at 2pm 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. **Deadline for registration is May 23.** For questions contact: **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or [bseidel3523@comcast.net](mailto:bseidel3523@comcast.net)
- **Happy Hour Wednesday August 27.** No Hike is planned for August, unless the July walk at the Ag Center is moved to this date. Let's just escape the heat at **4pm for Happy Hour at Beverly Hills Tavern**, 710 Old Fritztown Rd, Sinking Spring.

## **MERA Meets The Music Man** **Bus Trip to Toby's Dinner Theater** by Barb Seidel

The group of 25 traveled by bus to Toby's Dinner Theater in Maryland to watch the show *The Music Man*. Upon arrival, we were seated to enjoy a lunch buffet. The food was great and we all got enough to eat! The show commenced at 12:30. *The Music Man* is Meredith Willson's six-time Tony Award-winning musical comedy that follows Harold Hill, a fast-talking traveling salesman. He deceives the residents of River City, Iowa, into purchasing instruments and uniforms for a boys' band that he promises to organize – despite his lack of knowledge about musical instruments. His plans to skip town with the cash are foiled when he falls for Marian, the librarian. This show was funny, warm, romantic and touching. Songs we all recognized included *76 Trombones*, *The Wells Fargo Wagon*, *Trouble*, *Goodnight My Someone*, and *Till There Was You*.

We returned to the bus at approximately 3:30. During the trip home Anna Wingert & Bonnie Paparella entertained us with jokes. We returned to Boscov's East Parking Lot at approx. 6:30 PM  
Side Note: on the way to the theater Larry Lenhart thought we were going to see the "Sound of Music" – that made the group laugh!

## **MERA Member Profile** **Doug Myers**

**Doug Myers**, a man as modest as he is tall, worked for FirstEnergy and its affiliated companies for 35 years. And, his connections with the company go way beyond that, if you can believe it.

He grew up in Clearfield where his father, who sadly died when Doug was quite young, had been the District Manager for the Penelec office there. "At age 14, he seemed like a very big man to me. And,

in fact, he was. President of Clearfield Rotary. Head of the Economic Development organization. President of the Chamber of Commerce. A real community leader.”

Doug is a Penn Stater, graduating in 1976 with a degree in Agricultural Mechanization. “I never worked in agriculture, but the program gave me a solid background in business and engineering.”

After working in retail for a while, Doug started as an assistant cashier in Penelec’s Clearfield office in 1983 – back in the day when you could walk up to a window and pay your electric bill in cash. “There were no security measures, not even glass,” he remembers. “It was just a counter.” (It all sounds very quaint now!)

Doug soon left the cashier job and, working out of Penelec’s headquarters in Johnstown, began the next step in his career in Conservation Load Management – convincing customers to reduce load and pay attention to time-of-day pricing. He moved on to Sales & Marketing promoting commercial and residential heat pumps. In DuBois, Pennsylvania, he became a Residential Rep encouraging the construction of “The Good Cents Home,” which is defined as an all-electric home with energy efficient design and significant energy savings.

Along the way, Doug met Gail Landis, manager of procurement for Penelec and an avid skier. Doug joined the local ski club where Gail was a member. And the rest is history! They married in 2009.

In 1999, the Johnstown District labor force was reduced and many of the positions and people were shifted to Reading. Doug came to Berks County and began working in Economic Development, which is where he stayed until his retirement in 2018. The job changed a lot over the years. “When I started, the internet was new. The information needed by developers and companies looking to expand or relocate was not as readily available as it is now. I would spend a lot of time working with community and government partners putting together the information needed to help companies find the right building sites.” Doug enjoyed working with many different departments inside the company and serving as a facilitator for organizations looking to bring significant new load to Met-Ed and JCP&L’s territories. “It was very satisfying when you brought all the puzzle pieces together and everything fell into place!”

Talking about falling... Doug’s favorite sport can involve a lot of falling. But, unusual for someone who didn’t take up the sport until his 30s, Doug is an accomplished skier taking on the toughest slopes locally, in New England and out west. He also likes to fish, both surf fishing and fly fishing. Muskie, bass, trout, salmon. All fair game in Doug’s book.

He is an active volunteer. Doug has raised funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters for years and also served on their board for 15 years.. He spends one day a week literally getting his hands dirty in The Reading Public Museum’s arboretum. He helps distribute food at a couple food banks. He also is very active in the West Reading-Wyomissing Rotary Club working on projects like highway cleanups, painting bus stops, serving food at the Hope Rescue Mission...just for a few examples. Later this year Doug will become President of the West Reading-Wyomissing Rotary Club, a move his father would surely approve.

Since retirement, Doug has taken up a new hobby: cooking. Ask him for his no-fail Hamburger Soup recipe. And, he and Gail have been traveling. Both domestically (Hilton Head, Chincoteague, Florida, etc.) and internationally on river cruises to Norway, Germany and France. Later this summer, they will be off to the Mediterranean. The couple also like to walk the trails in the area. “I find getting out in nature is really important to me, especially since I retired. There are wonderful trails all over this area.” Doug recommends checking out the Greater Reading Trails website for trail maps.

<https://greaterreadingtrails.com/all-trails-3/>

He advises his fellow retirees to “look for ways to volunteer – there are hundreds of opportunities in our community!” Develop new hobbies and skills. Meet new people. In short, he says, cultivate your curiosity.

## Lineworkers Appreciated Every Day

*For those of you who remember working a storm, either in the field or in the storm room, this will bring back some memories. One of the best things about being retired from FE is not worrying about the weather anymore!*

FirstEnergy joined electric companies around the country to honor the men and women who work 24/7/365 to keep power flowing on Lineworker Appreciation Day, celebrated nationally each year on April 18.

Wade Smith, President of FirstEnergy Utilities: "Lineworkers face hazards every day when they go up in their buckets, climb poles or work on underground power lines, but they don't hesitate to show up in some of the toughest conditions imaginable to safely get the lights back on for homes and businesses throughout our country. On behalf of all employees at FirstEnergy, we say a loud and proud 'thank you' to our men and women for their commitment and resiliency."

National Lineman Appreciation Day was established in 2013 by congressional resolution to recognize the tireless work of frontline electric crews in restoring power after Hurricane Sandy.

Over the past year, FirstEnergy's nearly 2,500 line workers responded to several large-scale outage events in their home territories and provided mutual assistance to fellow electric companies in other parts of the country following national disasters, including Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

On Aug. 6, 2024, one of the most impactful storms to hit FirstEnergy's northeast Ohio service territory since 1993 spawned five tornadoes, a microburst with straight-line winds of 70-90 miles per hour and heavy rains and thunderstorms that brought wind gusts of up to 80 miles per hour. More than 627,700 FirstEnergy customers lost power as the system continued across Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey. Within days, FirstEnergy lineworkers replaced nearly 500 poles, 231 transformers and 75 miles of wire, restoring power to 94% of the affected customers by Aug. 11.

Just over a month later, FirstEnergy crews hit the road to assist in restoration efforts in the Carolinas, Florida, Georgia and Virginia after Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Approximately 645 lineworkers logged more than 150,000 personnel-hours to help restore power to local homes and businesses in the wake of the storms.

Thanks to the efforts of these hardworking crews, FirstEnergy was recognized with the Emergency Recovery Award and Emergency Assistance Award from the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) in February of this year.

## NERA Member Milestones

### Happy May Anniversary!

Mike & Marianne Benioff  
Joseph & Lesley Bruce  
MaryBeth & Dan Clark

Linda & Mark Coutts  
Gerry & Keith Day  
Pankaj & Pragna Doshi

Dale & Sheila Faust  
Karen & Ron Fisher  
Dave & Chris Forrer

Brian & Suzette Frantz  
Julia & Walter Frith  
Donna & Tim Goughnour  
David & Nola Henry  
Dean & Monie Hollenbacher  
Rob & Corie Kehr  
James & Robin Kelly

Walt & Maryellen LaSota  
Sharon & William Marshall-  
Davis  
Dave & Sharon Murphy  
Jeff & Marlene Rathman  
Ronda & David Reed  
Jack & Judy Seidel

Rob & Lois Stilwell  
Robert & Beth Stout  
Harold & SueAnn Webber  
George & Martha Weida  
Ann & Douglas White  
Daniel & Doris Wurster  
Clarence & Luccill Yenser

## Happy May Milestone\* Birthday!

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

Ronald Bortz  
Roger Levesque  
Sharon Murphy

Patricia Phile  
Mario Scaffidi  
James Wilhelm

What do you call a magic dog?  
A labracadabrador

