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The Mt. Gretna Newsletter

Mt. Gretna, PA "Not a place, but a spirit." - Marlin Seiders (1927-2008)

No. 160

May 2015



A scene from the Campmeeting, captured on a day in late April three years ago by Mt. Gretna photographer Madelaine Gray.

How to account for the annual miracle of Mt. Gretna?

Tracing the evolution of Mt. Gretna's volunteers. . . seemingly not made but minted

The formula defies scientific analysis: How does an amalgam of seven distinct neighborhoods clustered on two square miles of a Pennsylvania hillside bring together 1,500 full-time residents who volunteer creative talents and energies that attract 180,000 visitors every summer? Especially in tiny Mt. Gretna, unlikely ever to qualify for a Starbucks of its own.

Combined, these volunteers produce a dozen festivals, art exhibits, concerts of classical music and jazz. Plus straw hat productions with a stellar legacy over more than 85 years, a bustling nascent art school now overloaded with applicants, a major Bible festival and ecumenical outdoor worship services. Add to that book reviews and lectures, crafts programs and a unique summertime attraction known as the Mt. Gretna University for a Day. All of it presented mostly by people who don't get paid but who love it for... well, simply the joy of satisfying their spirits.

While no graduate school anywhere in America ever would devise such a "business plan," the business of Mt. Gretna runs smoothly on uncommon talent, rugged determination and an unstoppable reservoir of people who thrive on doing good things for others. A flame deep within somehow burns inside them.

Those who started it were people



Another Madelaine Gray photo, one of her favorites, April 29, 2012

smart enough to know that a tiny spot in the remote Furnace Hills of Lancaster and Lebanon counties was too small to yield a proper return on their investments. Yet start it they did. They built railroads and cottages, inns and hotels and other buildings made of wood yet with a degree of craftsmanship that enabled them to last for generations. Surprisingly, many of the homes hauled to Mt. Gretna on a horse-drawn wagon still survive. You find them in places like the Campmeeting and the

Chautauqua, where hopes, dreams and possibilities began more than a century ago.

Later generations followed in their footsteps:

People like Gretna Music founder Dr. Carl Ellenberger (to be named this month to the Lebanon County Musicians Hall of Fame), the late Thomas Ebright and others invested their time, talents and money in ventures that never would yield a profit.

Yet payoffs come in unexpected ways, like seeds that remain dormant for years, awaiting the right time and circumstances to blossom.

A *New York Times* [article](#) last month cited older Americans who are now making irreplaceable contributions at the twilight of their lives.

As older Americans, they may sometimes have difficulty with their short-term memories, but they excel in the arena of empathy for their fellow man. Seniors with inventive talents often have a special eye for seeing and solving the special problems of an aging population.

The specialty of today's older population in Mt. Gretna may well echo the same cultural, educational, religious and recreational aims of the Chautauqua and Campmeeting's founders a century ago.

It's a spirit that still sends out a beacon, and we who live here as well as those who make it their summertime home respond to the light.

So maybe therein lies one answer to the annual miracle of Mt. Gretna, "not a place but a spirit" as the late Rev. Marlin Seiders put it, where nearly everybody who lives here pitches in.

Mt. Gretna could never have been created without the generosity of those who gave more than they ever expected to reap. Others now continue to raise their hands; their voices echo, "I'll do it," and the volunteer spirit endures.

-- Roger Groce

2015 Volunteer Opportunities

Making the difference that counts

What it takes to produce the annual Mt. Gretna Outdoor Art Show (Aug. 15-16):

The No. 1 need again this year is **Booth Sitters**, says Art Show Director Linda Bell (tel. 964-3270 or MtGretnaArt@comcast.net). Penny Jones and her husband are coordinating this huge assignment from their home on Temple Avenue. If you'd like to help out this summer, please give them a call at 717-330-8635.



Other volunteer coordinators include, at Saturday admission gates: Sam Bonacci 964-3111. Sunday admission gates: Joe Shay, 964-2209; Office staff: Doug Leiby, 272-8871. Kids' Art Show: Stacey Pennington,

stacey@resourceisland.com. Exhibitor traffic: Barney Myer, 964-2384. Soldier's Field and Philhaven area Parking: Bob Dowd, 964-1106.

The Mt. Gretna Bible Festival

Long a tradition in Mt. Gretna, the Bible Festival seems to have plenty of volunteers this year, but if you'd like to review the programs they will present this summer, a PDF attachment to this newsletter is handy reference.

This year's festival includes the **Tabernacle Ecumenical Fridays in June at 7 pm Worship Series** among more than 20 programs of religious music and speakers from June 5 through Aug. 22. [Click here](#) to view the entire summer-long series.

The Mt. Gretna Bird Club



Ichabod, a wayward sandhill crane, once was spotted here.

More than meets the untrained eye, you'll discover. You won't believe the different varieties of birds you'll suddenly see under the expert guidance of Sid Hostetter and Evelyn Koppel, 964-3412 (mtgretnabirdclub@hotmail.com).

The group meets Fridays at 9:00 am at the Chautauqua parking lot, weather permitting. It's usually a two-hour walk to observe birds, flora and fauna -- often topped off by a late morning breakfast at Le Sorelle cafe.

The club sometimes has projects for its members who find it's an enjoyable way to meet others and learn more about nature. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Buzzard Busters (November through March)

"The few, the proud, the Buzzard Busters," says Max Hunsicker, who organized this group nearly 20 years ago with results other communities often envy. Volunteers safely encourage the migrating turkey vultures to choose roosts elsewhere, rather than in Mt. Gretna's treetops. He asks volunteers to keep noise to a minimum, using aerial explosives only when necessary and only just as dusk is settling in (before the vultures do). One thing is certain, he says: "If we stop, they'll be back." The migratory patterns of the past quarter

century prove that he's right. Contact: mhunsicker@comcast.net.

The Campmeeting Playground



Volunteers are invited to help with the **Children's Carnival** Saturday, June 27 (paint faces, pop popcorn, serve hot dogs, help with games and pony rides); call Robin May, 964-1372.

Chautauqua Summer Programs

"We're happy to welcome volunteers who'll serve as hosts and hostesses for those who attend these programs," says coordinator Kathy Snively (Tel. 964-2191 or info@lightkeeper.net).

The more than 150 programs offered in this series appear in the Arts Council's 2015 Summer Calendar and in the Summer Programs brochure online (at www.pachautauqua.org) and in a printed flyer usually available by early June at the Hall of Philosophy and Visitor's Center.

Cicada Festival

Rhoda Long coordinates usher assignments, 304-0248 or RhodaJLong@Gmail.com. Details of the current season appear online: <http://www.cicadafestival.com/>

Concession Stand at Playhouse

A haven for visitors attending plays, concerts and other attractions at the Playhouse, this spot offers a chance to greet audiences, meet performers and neighbors who join you in this summertime role. Gary Shrawder coordinates volunteer activities at the stand. Contact: 272-2284 or gshrawder@gmail.com.

Gardening

Who makes the grounds surrounding Mt. Gretna reverberate with color each summer? A small army of folks. Only a few are paid; most are volunteers. To join those in your neighborhood, contact any of the people mentioned in this article.

Chances are they'll tell you it's the best of all assignments: where you make friends, make a difference, and maybe even change your life in the process.

In the Campmeeting, Deborah Hurst (mtgretnalibrary@aol.com) coordinates the large garden in the Campmeeting (located at the corner



of Boehm Ave. and 8th St.). Paula Richards, Ann Daubert and Karrie Hontz also have spots in that garden, and their expert and loving touches clearly show.

Yet other volunteers are clearly needed. The Butterfly Garden begun in the late 1990s by former resident Edie Miller has for years flourished under the guiding hands of Jane Zellers

and Deb Barnhart, now unable to take part in its care.

Who'll replace them? Volunteers are always being sought, says Campmeeting supervisor Merv Lentz, now in his mid-80s. His indomitable spirit not only sets a standard, it inspires many in their 60s and 70s to get up and get going, a spirit quintessentially Mt. Gretna.

Around the Playhouse, summertime resident Betty Miller has faithfully tended to the gardens for more years than even she can count. It is a labor of love that extends past the growing season and continues until the last leaf has fallen.

Tending to plants around the Post Office are Borough staffers Bill Care and Linda Bell. Shirley Miller nurtures flower boxes at the Information Center. Carol Morgan maintains the perennial children's favorite Fairy Garden, located between the Jigger Shop and Playhouse.

In Mt. Gretna Heights, volunteers interested in gardening projects should contact the Heights Community Association or newsletter editor Michelle Shay, mshay@cbsp.com. Across the highway, the individual gardening efforts of homeowners and well-managed enterprises such as Mt. Gretna Lake and Beach, Timber Hills Apartments and the Timbers Dinner Theatre are on display for all to see. . . and enjoy .

Even with Mt. Gretna's natural beauty -- its trees, hills and comforting aura -- flowers, gardens and shrubs tended by loving hands make a difference that reverberates in the soul.

Angels, they say, walk amongst us. You'll find them at work in the gardens of Mt. Gretna.

Grand Illuminations

Throughout the country, perhaps 30 Chautauqua and Campmeeting associations hold annual Grand Illumination events.

Mt. Gretna, in fact, holds two.

The first takes place July 3-4. It will celebrate Independence Day throughout Mt. Gretna -- from Timber Bridge and Timber Hills to the Heights, Campmeeting and the Chautauqua.



Madelaine Gray photo

Barb Kleinfelter and Linda Gettle will have samples of string lights, luminaries and Chinese lanterns for orders at their booth outside the Mt. Gretna Post Office on the first two Saturdays of June. They will also display them during the community-wide porch sale Saturday, May 23. (*See story below, this issue.*)

The second Grand Illumination is a quiet and respectful observance that takes place only in the Campmeeting, Saturday, Aug. 15. It honors a long-established tradition that traces to the 1950s. Youngsters who had finished church camp strolled through the historic grounds singing hymns. Campmeeting residents listened from their porches, accented with lights and lanterns for the occasion. The Campmeeting Association invites everyone throughout Mt. Gretna to walk through the grounds and enjoy the lights starting around 9 pm.

How to volunteer for this event? Decorate your home or cottage with illuminated displays and designs of your choice. Honor the nation's birthday in

July or the Campmeeting's venerable tradition in August.

More than merely annual events, these occasions reflect the traditions, heritage and unique sensibilities of those who have chosen to make Mt. Gretna their summer or year-round home.

Gretna Music

Musicians are coming from all over the country to be part of Music at Gretna's 40th celebration season. This includes about 15 musicians who will perform Sunday, Aug. 2 and Saturday, Aug. 8 in the Gretna Festival Chamber Orchestras. Hosts are needed for these weekends and other dates from July-September.

"A virtuoso violinist practicing on your porch? How cool is that?" says co-director of Gretna Music Suzanne Stewart. "Some bonds become so strong the hosts consider the musicians their second set of kids," she says. If you want to host a musician this summer, call 361-1508 or email kanec@etown.edu Also needed: office help, house tour volunteers, and ushers.

Gretna Theatre

The best way to help Gretna Theatre this year is to open a bedroom in your home to actors. Hotel costs are among the biggest line items in their budget. A week or two stay could reduce those costs and add a big plus sign to their season. (To participate, you don't have to feed, entertain or transport actors.)

Needed are homes with shared kitchens but private bedrooms and baths (for equity actors) as well as homes offering private bedrooms but shared baths and kitchens (for non-equity actors). Among them may be future Bernadette Peters or Charlton Hestons, both legendary alumni from Gretna Theatre's hall of fame.



HDR photo by David Adams

New Board Members Chic Rhoads and Marcia Shivoder again will assist with the task of finding housing this summer. The Theatre will host a **dessert social** Wednesday May 6 from 6:30 to 8 PM in its offices on the second floor above LaCigale French Linen store and Mt. Gretna Art Gallery (beside the miniature golf course).

Marcia, Chic and others who have temporarily "adopted" actors will regale you with wonderful success stories! Photos and resumes of all who'll need temporary housing will be on display! Find out more as you share coffee and dessert.

Other ways can you help? Name your talent and coordinator Renee Krizan has a need for it: ushers, seamstresses, carpenters, box office staffers, painters. "Any skill you have, we can use," she says. Contact her at 964-3322 or reenekrizan@gretnatheatre.com.

Governor Dick Park



Outdoors or indoors, the [park](#) welcomes volunteers.

In 2014 the park's volunteers logged 544 hours of service to help keep it beautiful. "Every minute of their time is appreciated," says naturalist Audrey Wells.

If your tastes lean toward outdoor activities, the trails need continuing maintenance. The numbers of hikers and nature enthusiasts increase every year, and the park needs people to help with painting, garden care, trash pickup, and other tasks. Indoors, an office "naturalist" is needed to be in the building while staff is leading a walk. If you have a desire to lead a program in your area of interest or want to help in other ways, contact Ms. Wells at 964-3808 or email Governordick@hotmail.com.

Heritage Festival

There's lots of excitement about the festival this year, says coordinator Robin May (964-1372), and there's always a need for volunteers. All programs are held in the Campmeeting Tabernacle.

This year's lineup:

June 7 - **Red Rose Scottish Country Dance Society** New to the Heritage Festival, this group performs Scottish country dancing and invites audience participation. 2 pm.

July 11 - **Larry McKenna** performs songs from The Greatest Guy Groups of the 60's. 7 pm.

July 18 - **Shuey Brothers** Comedy and toe-tapping bluegrass. 7 pm.

July 25 - **Lebanon Big Swing Band**, an 18-piece band plays popular tunes from the 30's to the 60's. 7 pm.

Aug. 8 **Robin Work Quartet** Blues, jazz, and Christian music with vocals by Ms. Work. 7 pm.

Aug. 22 **Dave Kline and the Mountain Folk** Singer and song writer Kline has performed with Roy Clark, Minnie Pearl, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. Bluegrass, traditional folk music, alpine music with audience participation. 7 pm.

Mt. Gretna Library

It's a summertime library Mt. Gretna calls its own, filled not only by books and periodicals but also a lively **Mondays at 7 pm lecture series** June 1- Aug. 31. Deborah Hurst is in charge of the library and welcomes help from volunteers. Contact her at mtgretnalibrary@aol.com.

Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society

The Museum needs volunteer docents who can be available on a Saturday or Sunday from 1:00-4:00 once a month during the summer. Docents greet visitors and answer questions about the displays (with instruction provided before you begin). Perfect for those who enjoy talking with people.

Volunteer coordinator Pat Pinsler also welcomes those who can help with maintenance duties or work in the library/research room Saturdays 10 am to noon. Contact her at 964-3858 or patpinsler@yahoo.com.



The Society's book sale will be held this year on the porch of the Mt. Gretna Library Saturday, May 23 from 8 to 11 am. Available will be Jack Bitner's *Mt. Gretna: A Coleman Legacy* as well as the Mt. Gretna Postcard Book, pamphlets on the Mt. Gretna Prison and Narrow Gauge Railroad, and the Jim Seltzer and Jack Bitner DVD "The Military at Mt. Gretna." Fred Buch is chairman of the Society: 717-466-6433, email: info@buchorgan.com

Mt. Gretna Fire Company

Topping the list again this year is a need for fire police volunteers. In addition to firefighters, of course, is also a special request for folks who can help tend the fire company's garden -- watering, weeding and filling bird feeders. (All it takes is an hour or two, except for those hot, dry spells when extra watering is called for.)

Where to sign up? Joe Shay, 964-1106 or joseph@mtgretna.com, and Karen Lynch, 964-3505 or klynch@cornwelldoor.com

Mt. Gretna Tour of Homes (Aug. 1)

Annually recommended by *The New York Times* as one of the top tours in the Northeast, the Mt. Gretna Tour of Homes is coordinated by Emi Snavely, emi@brownstone.com. Over more than a quarter century it has become the signature fundraising event for Music at Gretna, one of the nation's premiere music festivals. Suzanne Stewart, 361-1510, needs volunteers to help greet visitors, distribute maps and answer questions in morning or afternoon shifts on Saturday, Aug. 1, from 10 am to 5 pm.

Homes chosen for the Tour of Homes annually receive a plaque honoring their selection. Over the past 20 years, more than 125 homeowners have participated in this event. Not only is it one of the community's chief fundraisers, the Tour also has attracted a number of residents (including artists, musicians and writers) who first discovered Mt. Gretna as a good place to live and subsequently invested in summer or year-round homes here.

Organ Recitals

This Thursdays-in-July series begins July 2 at the Hewitt-

McAnney residence opposite the Post Office with a sparkling lineup. All recitals begin at 7 pm.

Rhoda Long, 304-0248 or RhodaJLong@Gmail.com, coordinates refreshments provided by volunteers. Contributions appreciated.

Rails-to-Trails



Attracting thousands of hikers, cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts, the rail-trail runs through Mt. Gretna and when finished will stretch nearly 33 miles from one end of Lebanon County to the other.

Coordinators of this well-conceived recreational attraction need volunteer help throughout the year. Mike Dissinger, 949-2367, schedules trail clean-up days; John Wengert (jbweng@comcast.net) posts e-mail bulletins for other volunteer tasks -- including public relations, fundraising, trail development, and help with the LVRT Website.

Also needed are volunteers to staff the Root Beer Barrel in Cornwall on weekends May to October.

Lebanon Valley Rails-to-Trails meets first Wednesdays of the month, Cornwall Borough Hall, 7 pm.

The Mt. Gretna Triathlon

Coming up May 16, the 12th annual Got the Nerve? Triathlon hosted by the IM ABLE Foundation www.imablefoundation.org needs volunteers to help in all aspects of the race Friday, May 15 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (for pre-race set ups) and Saturday, May 16 from 6:00 am to noon (for race activities). To register as a volunteer go to <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b49afab29a2f85-got>

Visitor Information Center

Looking for excuses to relax in a rocker on a shaded porch this summer? Love to talk about how wonderful Mt. Gretna is? Here's your opportunity to greet folks at the Visitors Center and answer questions that sometimes call for imaginative responses: "Do people really live in these houses?" and "I must have taken a wrong turn. How the heck did I get here?"

Busiest days are weekends, with most inquiring minds arriving in the early afternoon. Volunteers are especially needed on Mondays and Tuesdays (the intern's days off). Contact Kathy Snavelly (964-2191 or info@lightkeeper.net) to volunteer or get more information.

Getting set for a Grand Illumination

New ideas to decorate your home for the patriotic holidays this year

Linda Gettle and Barb Kleinfelter have some new ideas for celebrating the Grand Illumination over t



Red, white and blue clothespins add a festive touch to the wreaths Mt. Gretnans will make for this year's Grand Illumination. Next month at the Hall of Philosophy, Linda Gettle and Barb Kleinfelter will have everything you need at the Hall of Philosophy

his year's Fourth of July holiday.

They will be passing them along to Mt. Gretnans throughout the weeks leading up to the Independence Day celebrations.

Stop in at the Hall of Philosophy on Tuesday afternoons (1 to 5 pm, June 23 and 30) for everything you'll need to put your wreath together, for a donation of \$10 with proceeds going to the Mt. Gretna Fire Company. You'll be able to add your creative touches to hang on your door, gateway or lamp post to make this year's Grand Illumination more sparkling than ever.

Everybody in Mt. Gretna is invited to join in this annual celebration, an outgrowth of Chautauqua and Campmeeting movements throughout the nation's history. The event this year takes place July 3 and 4, with band

concerts in the Playhouse and a candlelit observance in Chautauqua Park.

Mt Gretna's Grand Illumination isn't the nation's biggest. (The largest one takes place in Martha's Vineyard.) But ours is one of two that unfold here every year. On the Saturday night of the Art Show, the Campmeeting revives its traditional Grand Illumination as well, harkening to the days when young campers had finished their Bible studies.

Proposed Forest District Zoning Change Prompts Communitywide Concerns

Groups say change could double housing density in W. Cornwall Twp. forest district

Organizers of the newly formed Greater Mt. Gretna Area Committee have asked residents to add their names to an email database designed to keep everyone informed of developments that affect all Mt. Gretna neighborhoods.

"Our goal is to also offer a place where all Mt. Gretna residents, regardless of the municipalities where they live, can voice their concerns about developments affecting us all," says Evelyn Koppel.

Among the group's current concerns is a proposal last month to redefine acreage requirements for the number of homes that could be built in certain areas of West Cornwall Township defined as a Forest District. That change would apply to tracts where public sewer and water are available, the *Lebanon Daily News* [reported](#).

Marla Pitt, president of Preserve Mt. Gretna, says the change could have major implications for forest lands surrounding Mt. Gretna.

Last month, the West Cornwall Township Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend a change in Forest District Zoning to allow 2.5 acres per home instead of the 5 acres required under current laws.

Township supervisors will vote on that recommendation at their meeting scheduled for June 8. Since the date and details for that meeting could change, Ms. Pitt advises residents to log onto [PMG's Facebook page](#) for updates and other advisories.

"We're asking everyone to tell the West Cornwall supervisors to "uphold the integrity of the zoning ordinance already in place," she says. "Write letters and attend meetings, even though you may not be recognized to speak."

Township supervisor Glen Yanos thinks the groups' apprehensions are misplaced. He says the proposed changes would affect less than 10% of the township's Forest District lands and points out they were unanimously approved by Lebanon County planners as well as the township's planning commission. "At this time," he said, "only four lots would be affected. That would mean, at most, maybe 8 or 9 houses where four are today."

The remainder of the township's Forest-zoned areas are made up of Governor Dick Park and the church-owned lands of Gretna Glen. "I don't see them changing anytime in the next 40 years," he said.

The Greater Mt. Gretna Committee, which has also expressed concern over the proposed change, seeks a volunteer to organize and maintain its database. For now, however, Ms. Koppel is handling those duties herself. She invites residents to email their names, home and email addresses to her at: koppelonpencoyd@yahoo.com. "We will 'blind copy' our notices so that everyone's email will not be available to others," she says.

Music, memories and century-long traditions propel the Chautauqua Sunday Services

Nancy Besch's spiritual journey was inspired by the Chautauqua's earliest beginnings

Now in her 27th year as Chancellor of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Sunday Worship Services, Nancy Besch acknowledges that decidedly unique experience has "definitely influenced my spiritual life."

The services' roots trace back to the founding of the 123-year-old Mt. Gretna Chautauqua, a movement that itself traces its founding to the Mother Chautauqua in New York in 1874. Both here and in New York, its unwavering mission has been to promote Education, Religion, Culture and Social Opportunities.

Despite shifting social trends and revolutionary changes in communications, that mission has remained the same. Religion has always remained a centerpiece. Indeed in Mt. Gretna, religious services are conducted on Sundays under the open air Tabernacle and Playhouse, as well as in the town's only church.

For the Chautauqua movement, the first Pennsylvania Chancellor was chosen in 1892. Many have since filled that position. Mrs. Besch doesn't know if any previous chancellor has served in the position longer, but it's likely that none have enjoyed that responsibility more.

"I would have to research that (from) the boxes of stuff which I hope to get to one of these days," she says. But one thing she can be sure of: the time and energies she has



invested have been more than adequately returned, particularly during the summers when she and her late husband Earl gathered with their family at their Harvard Avenue cottage, which has been in her family for several generations.

Over the years she has found time in a busy schedule that included service as a county commissioner and director on dozens of boards to come up with an interesting assembly of clergy men and women from varied denominations. They have included Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Church of the Brethren, United Church of Christ, Moravians, Catholic priests and Rabbis, with a broad spectrum of instrumentalists and vocalists as well.

All have been part of the inspirational aura that characterizes these services in the open air Playhouse, offering residents and visitors the chance to sample uplifting messages and music from diverse sources throughout the summer, beginning on Sundays in July at 10 am. This year's series concludes after Labor Day, with a worship service that features a uniquely Mt. Gretna tradition, the "jazz reverend" and the New Black Eagles Jazz Band in a parasol-pumping New Orleans-style parade around the 710-seat auditorium. An occasion rarely duplicated and a memory not to be missed.

The Chautauqua Sunday Services for 2015:

- July 5 Dr. A. Herbert Smith, Professor of Religious Studies,
McPherson College, Kansas
The Susquehanna Chorale Quartet
- July 12 Rev. William F. Murphey, Retired. Episcopal Minister
Harrisburg, PA
The Eaken Trio: John Eaken, violin; Andrew Rammon, cello;
Gary Boerckel, piano
- July 19 Martha Harris, Senior Warden, St. James Episcopal Church,
Lancaster, PA
Ann, Cris, and Colin Dinsmore, vocalists, Elizabethtown, PA
- July 26 Rev. Dr. Stanley Imboden, Episcopal Minister, Retired
Lana Walmer, soloist, Market Square Presbyterian Church,
Harrisburg, PA
- August 2 Rev. Dr. J. Stewart Hardy, retired, Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill
Christyan Seay, soloist, Harrisburg, PA
- August 9 Rev. Dr. D. Darrell Woomer, retired, United Methodist Church
Dr. Carroll Ditzler, piano; Janelle Ditzler McLeod, flute,
McKinzie and Carley McLeod, instrumentalists
- August 16 Rev. Fred Opalinski, Retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Joseph Sobel, soloist, Salem United Church of Christ, Harrisburg, PA
- August 23 Community Service at The Tabernacle
- August 30 Rev. Richard Gardner, Retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Carl Iba, violin, Harrisburg, PA
Salem Lutheran Church Choir, Mark Dimick, Director, Lebanon, PA

September 6 Jazz Worship Service- Music at Gretna
The New Black Eagle Jazz Band 11:00 am

A former kindergarten teacher with some lessons on how to run a business

Gretna Emporium: Built on memories, inspired toys and an irrepressible spirit of fun

If they asked a team of Harvard Business School graduates how to make a business thrive in 800-sq. ft. of a 120-year-old building without air-conditioning that opens every summer only for 13 or 14 weeks, they probably couldn't come up with a better plan than a former elementary education major who gave up teaching and made it a smashing success.



A detailed business plan? No, call it more a sudden inspiration, born on the porch of her parent's Campmeeting cottage one summer afternoon nearly eight years ago under the influence of the Mt. Gretna air and a bottle of wine.

Stacey Pennington is not one to hesitate when she sees a good opportunity. It's the very quality that spawned her first business success 20 years ago in Cleona. Then still teaching, she got the idea that what was needed was a place where teachers could go to pick out their own teaching materials. She started Resource Island, a center of inspired learning tools, and has never looked back.

"I think I was maybe cut out more for business than teaching elementary school," says the Lebanon Valley College graduate and mother of two teenagers who often help her keep up with a busy household and two businesses.

At its core, Gretna Emporium is a dream built on memories, innovative toys and games for kids, and propelled by a spirit of fun.

The tiny store has four separate "departments:" a front room with nostalgia items and Mt. Gretna mementos



Mt. Gretna glasses don't sweat even with icy drinks.

, a back room filled with games that grandparents (overloaded with too much stuff themselves) find almost irresistible on the way home to grandchildren, two sides of a wraparound porch (each side offering its share of some 500 different items the shop offers for sale), plus a garden filled with outdoor displays where each year customers discover enticing new items to place in their lawns.

Tee shirts and sweatshirts printed with Mt. Gretna designs? It's a best-seller that even Stacey missed in her first year of business. "I'd never had any experience with tee shirts," she says.

"How was I to know they'd be one of the most popular items I'd sell?" She fixed that mistake in year two, and ever since has

offered Mt. Gretna tee shirts in at least three variations -- some for those who just want to say they've been to Mt. Gretna, others with clever sayings for people who want something fun, and another category that appeals to those who just like something different.

If there's a key to her success, says Stacey, "it's listening to customers. I may have had many ideas I thought were good, but it was my customers who steered me in the right direction."

Where are your tee shirts? asked many of her first customers. "By the 20th time someone asked that same question, I decided I'd missed the boat." She's been paying close attention ever since not to what she likes but what her customers like.



Perfect for a grandchild's fairy garden.



Nothing's better than a fairy garden, as Mt. Gretna has proved for 20 years.

This year's new items -- there are *always* new items -- include Mt. Gretna necklaces, a first-run Mt. Gretna puzzle and a Mt. Gretna tumbler that keeps liquids warm and cool without the need for a coaster. Even if it did, however, Stacey would have the coasters to sell, complete with a Mt. Gretna image.

"Reminders of their good times is what people like to take back with them," she says. "Primarily because there's no other place in the world quite like Mt. Gretna."

At some point in the future, she hopes to offer a Mt. Gretna game. That's a challenge, however. Custom-made game suppliers usually require orders of 300 or more. This year's first-ever Mt. Gretna puzzle, an \$11.95 image of the Playhouse, required an order of only 72.

Stacey doesn't like to bring back items from storage the following year if she can help it. So prospects who want a puzzle this year had better grab it, or what will likely become a collector's item will have disappeared forever.

There will also be items for children's fairy gardens, reminiscent of the popularity of Mt.

Gretna's own, started by former gift shop operators who preceded Stacey, the now-retired Valley Road residents Joe and Reenie Macsisak.

Stacey runs her business with the help of eight or nine staffers who also work at the Resource Island store in Cleona. Duties at the Mt. Gretna Emporium rotate among maybe five of those staffers. "They all love Mt. Gretna and fight to get their share of days here," says Stacey, who includes herself in that lineup.

She doesn't disclose her sales volume or profits. "Let's just say they've been sufficient to keep me going for the past seven years. If things continue the way they are, I'd like to stay here another 20."

Although she gets some of her ideas for new items from the big Gift Shows in New York and Philadelphia, she depends heavily on the eyes and ears of about 10 seasoned sales reps who know the kind of items that sell best in Mt. Gretna.

"They see more of what's out there than I do," she says. When they come in with ideas they think I would like, I listen, sometimes spending half a day with them."

One of the ideas she has liked best was a sign she saw and purchased for resale several years ago. "The message was simple, the premise almost juvenile," she says. "But it summed up for me the feeling about Mt. Gretna: 'THIS IS MY HAPPY PLACE.'"

It is, in fact, where she hopes to someday move here herself.



Obituary Notices

Joanne M. Tucker (April 5, 2015)

Joanne M. Tucker, 65, of Elizabethtown, PA died April 5 after a long struggle with ovarian cancer. She was the loving wife of Victor J. Massad and mother of two children William and Caleb Tucker of Fort Worth, TX.

Together, she and her husband owned the "Valentine Cottage" on Glossbrenner Avenue in the Campmeeting.

As a story in this newsletter recounted several years ago, it was not until after they had given the cottage its name that they discovered its previous owner, a woman who had lived there for years and died in her 80s, had been born on Valentine's Day.

Dr. Tucker worked for the past 15 years as an Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management at Shippensburg University until her retirement in 2014. Prior to that she was a Lecturer in Management Science at the University of Texas at Arlington. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of North Texas and will be remembered as a patient teacher and prolific scholar who authored numerous research articles related to business management. She also loved gardening, vigorous exercise, golf and her native Texas.

She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. She was buried in a private service in Fort Worth. A memorial service for her Pennsylvania friends and associates will be held on Sunday, May 10, 2015 at 2 pm at the Mt. Gretna Tabernacle.

Dr. Tucker's family has requested that in lieu of flowers and other remembrances, please send your donations to: Scholars Program Endowment (Fund 83000), John L. Grove School of Business, Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA 17257

Patrick O. Bowman (1913 - 2015)



Patrick Bowman, 101, formerly of Mt. Gretna, passed away April 25 at Elmcroft of Lebanon. He was the husband of Dorothy E. Reinthaler Bowman, whom he married April 17, 1937. Born in Hershey on September 1, 1913, he was the son of the late George C., Sr. and Mamie Meyer Bowman.

A 1932 graduate of Cornwall High School, he studied Military Science at Washington & Lee College. He was an US Army Veteran of WW II as a member of the 5th Armored Division, participated in D Day landing on Utah Beach and was involved in numerous campaigns including "The Battle of the Bulge". After the war he remained in the Army helping to rebuild Germany. He left the Army after seven years service with the rank of major. He received numerous citations and medals including the Bronze Star and Citation, American Theatre Ribbon, WWII Victory Medal, Army Commendation Ribbon, EAME Campaign Medal, Army of Occupation with Germany clasp, American Defense Medal and the American Campaign Medal.

Upon returning from Army service, Pat, worked in management for Woolworth Co. for six years and later served for 36 years as sales manager of the Lebanon Ball Company. Pat always believed in community service and was a member of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Cornwall, Quentin Riding Club, Life member of NRA, Reserve Officers Association, Central PA Sports Hall of Fame, Lebanon Fred Fuhrman VFW Post 23, Veterans of Battle of the Bulge, US Constabulary 5th Armored Division Assoc., and 21st Engineers. He was a Charter Member of the Rotary Club of Southern Lebanon County (Mt. Gretna) where he was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow and a member of the Mt. Gretna Fire Company. Pat was an accomplished marksman, shooting competitively with both rifle and pistol.

In addition to his wife he is survived by children, Gail M. wife of Joseph J. Lombardo, Lancaster, Scott W. Bowman, M.D., Oregon, Ann M., wife of Joseph Bering, Jr., Montoursville, John P., husband of Sharon Bowman, Akron, Kathleen M., wife of Richard Wyerman, Doylestown, grandchildren, Joseph, Patrick, Theresa Bering, Kathryn Murray, Christina Bowman, Max and Ian Wyerman, great grandchild, Elizabeth Murray, sisters, Grace, wife of Wilmer Hirschbock, Cleona, Jean Henry, Watsontown and brother James Bowman, Lebanon. Pat was preceded in death by sisters, Alverta Shimp, Beatrice Houtz, Martha Ebersole, Mary Reber, Helen Miller, brothers, Earl Bowman, Herbert Bowman and George Bowman.

The family is extremely grateful for the care provided by Dr. Batra, Dr. Chados, Dr. Bering, Hospice for All Seasons and especially Elmcroft of Lebanon.

Family and friends are respectfully invited to attend Pat's Mass of Christian Burial on Monday, May 4, 2015 at 10:00 AM from Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Cornwall. A viewing will be held Sunday, May 3, 2015 from 4 to 6 PM at Porterfield-Scheid Funeral Directors & Cremation Services, Ltd., 890 Isabel Dr., Lebanon, PA 17042 (next to Quentin Circle).

Interment will be made in Holy Savior Cemetery, Cornwall. In lieu of flowers memorial remembrances in Pat's memory may be made to Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cornwall, PA 17016 or Mt. Gretna Fire Co., Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.



This month's Calendar of Events

A voice that captivates for a cause she believes in



A captivating, inspiring, yet witty and entertaining singer, recording artist, [Frances Drost](#) appears at the Tabernacle this month in a fundraiser for [Cancer Companions](#), led by its Pennsylvania Regional Representative Diana Focht.

Ms. Focht, who's been coming to and loving Mt. Gretna even before her brother Mark and sister-in-law (also named Diana, adding to the family merriment) fell in love and were married here over 10 years ago.

Ms. Focht hopes to someday join them as a Mt. Gretna resident. In the meantime, she chose the Tabernacle as the perfect setting for this inspiring artist, widely acclaimed by audiences ([audio sample, click here](#)).

The performance begins Saturday, May 16 at 6:30 pm and is open to the public with no admission

charge; a freewill donation will be taken.

Friday, May 1

First Friday Can't believe tiny Mt. Gretna opens its own cavalcade of shops, art galleries and good places to eat on First Fridays? Come tonight and you won't believe your eyes as the summertime festival gets started.

The Timbers restaurant features music by the [Meashey Family](#) (vocalist Kelly Meashey, Bob Meashey on trumpet and Steve Meashey on acoustic bass) with pianist Andy Roberts, one of the best in Central Pennsylvania. Plus painting and collage displays by Mt. Gretna artists Issa Dixon and Tina Clarkson and custom jewelry by designer Kate Dolan (who will also be showing her new spring bird houses and hand-crafted cards).

The Gallery at La Cigale welcomes [Christine Goldbeck](#) at a First Friday reception

from 5 to 8 pm. An art photographer, painter and writer, Ms. Goldbeck captures motion through natural means such as wind and moving water. Her paintings combine responses to what she sees, principally through interpretative landscapes and florals.

Penn Realty opens its offices to hobbyist photographer to [J. Reed Whitmoyer](#) who will display his works, which began with an interest in



J. Reed Whitmoyer photography

sports car racing nearly 40 years ago. Since 2004 he has "picked up my camera more seriously," concentrating on nature and scenic views. "If it looks like a picture, why not make it a picture?" he says. In shooting that which he observes, Mr. Whitmoyer works primarily with natural light scenes, using flash only occasionally.



Christine Goldbeck paintings

Other spots likely to be open for First Fridays browsing later this summer include the offices-turned-gallery occupied by Hickey Architects, Le Sorelle Cafe (which houses the year-round Mt. Gretna Art Gallery), and the Jigger Shop where on occasion music and paintings mix with ice cream specialties including the world famous "Jigger" with its top-secret jigger nuts. All in a spirit both festive and relaxing, where walking amid century-old cottages and talking with their residents becomes a principal ingredient of the fun.

Toad and Frog Foray. Naturalist Tom Powers tells about the life cycle of these amphibians. After the indoor session at Gov. Dick Nature Center, a carpool will head to the "Frog Pond" to find real frogs and toads. Wear boots, bring flashlight. 7 pm.

Saturday, May 2

Blooms and More Festival at Cornwall Manor: This annual [event](#) combines spring flowers and plants with breakfast and lunch, homemade candy and baked goods, silent auction and crafts plus antique appraisals, kids games and a 5K Run/Walk in a fundraiser for the Cornwall Manor Society. 9 am to 2 pm.

Earth Day Celebration sponsored by the [Conewago Creek Association](#) (with its origin headwaters in Mt. Gretna). Aberdeen Mills Farm, Elizabethtown, Noon to 4 pm

Birds and Wildflowers Walk at Gov. Dick. Casual pace takes visitors into the woods to enjoy spring birds and wildflowers. Bring binoculars and field guides. 10 am.

Kentucky Derby Party at the Hideaway to [benefit](#) the Lebanon Humane Society, says Mt. Gretnan Annie Roach who posted on Facebook that best-selling "Spring Chicken" author Bill Gifford and at least 25 of her other friends will be there. 4 pm.

Sunday, May 3

Music on the Porch at Gov. Dick Park. Due to another indoor program, music will be on the porch. Dress for the outdoors. Bring chairs. 1 to 4 pm.

Wednesday, May 6

Hands on Nature Nature immersion for children ages 2 to 6 at Gov. Dick. \$5 per child. 10 to 11:30 am.

Dessert Social Gretna Theatre hosts this event for prospective hosts who will provide housing for actors this summer. Chic Rhoads and Marcia Shivoder and others who have temporarily adopted actors will share their wonderful success stories. Photos and resumes of all who will need housing will be on display. Find out more as you share coffee and dessert at the Theatre's new offices on the second floor above La Cigale French Linen store and the Mt. Gretna Art Gallery (beside the miniature golf course), 6:30 to 8 pm.

Friday May 8

Toddlers in Tow "Let's Look Under." Hike for children ages 2 to 5, Gov. Dick Park. 10 am.

Saturday, May 9



Soup like Alice's

Block Shoot at the Fire Hall. Even non-shooters have fun. Prizes, raffles, lunch (including Alice's homemade Ham and Bean Soup) with friends and neighbors, plus sumptuous meat trays. \$5 admission. No need to be present to win. Noon to 5 pm.

Saturday Work Day for volunteers at Gov. Dick Park. 9 am to 2 pm.

Backpacking 101: Trail Cooking. Ultralight expert Bob Ardner will share some easy recipes for trail-side suppers. Gov. Dick Park, 1 pm.

Sunday, May 10

Mother's Day Buffet at the Timbers with music by pianist Andy Roberts and guest vocalist Nicole Roberts. Offerings include Oven Roasted Turkey, Baked Ham, Hot Roast Beef * Gravy * Breaded Veal * Tomato Sauce * Three Hot Vegetables * Potato Filling * Candied Sweet Potatoes * Cranberry Relish * Homemade Soup * Salad Bar with trimmings * Crudités * Fruits * Salads * Hot Rolls * Desserts * Pies & Cakes * Hot Coffee or Hot Tea.

Fitness hike Gov. Dick Park. Fast-paced, 4 to 6 miles. 9 am

Tuesday, May 12

Industrialization in the South a presentation by Bode Morin, Ph D, former curator of the Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham, AL. Sponsored by Friends of Cornwall Iron Furnace at the Cornwall Manor Retirement Campus. 7 pm, Freeman Hall. Open to the public without charge; freewill donation will be taken.

Saturday, May 16

Bird Watching Basics Learn to find and identify birds by their songs and by their field

marks. Gov. Dick Park. 9 am.

Benefit Concert with recording star Frances Drost (www.francesdrost.com) to benefit Cancer Companions, a national organization. Concert-goers describe Ms. Drost's performance as "beautiful, with an undeniable spirituality." Open to the public without charge; donations requested. At the Tabernacle, 6:30 pm.

Sunday, May 17

Birds and Wildflowers Walk Gov. Dick Park. Casual pace to enjoy spring birds and wildflowers. Bring binoculars and field guides. 2 pm.

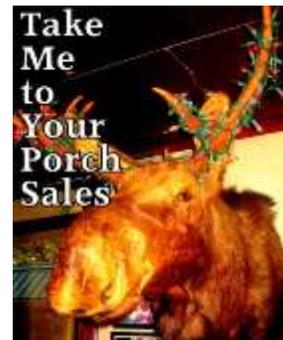
Wednesday, May 20

Hands on Nature Nature immersion for children ages 2 to 6, Gov. Dick Park. \$5 per child. 10 am.

Saturday, May 23

Porch Sales throughout the Campmeeting and Chautauqua (including the Historical Society headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue where Mt. Gretna memorabilia will be on sale). Maps showing participating cottages will be at the Post Office on the morning of the sale. 8 am to 2 pm.

Heavenly Hot Dogs and Devilish Drinks (maybe some Blessed *Bräts*, too) at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. Also check the "yard sale" in the newly renovated Sunday School Room, just off the parking lot. 8 am to Noon.



Pancake and Sausage Breakfast at the Mt. Gretna Fire Company. With juice, coffee, plus taste-tempting sausage and pancakes, the only cost is your generous donation. 8 to 10 am.

The Mt. Gretna Summer Premiere One of Mt. Gretna's grandest events, a celebratory opener of the 2015 season with [music, auctions, wine and taste-tempting treats galore.](#)

Click [here](#) for an online preview of

this year's auction items.

It's *the* place to be for everyone who loves being in Mt. Gretna. Proceeds go to the Mt. Gretna Arts Council, primarily to pay for the coveted Summer Calendar, that can't-be-without reference booklet cataloging nearly 200 different cultural, recreational, social and religious events that take place here each summer, distributed to visitors and residents alike. At the Hall of Philosophy starting at 4 pm.

Unplug! Leave phones and iPads behind for this wildflower identification foray at Gov. Dick Park, 3 pm.

Wednesday, May 27

The Gathering Place A community event and everyone's invited: fellowship with friends, neighbors, new and former Mt. Gretna residents. Lunch provided (freewill offering) at the Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. Noon. *(This will be the last meeting until Sept. 23.)*

Friday, May 29

Potluck Supper Hall of Philosophy, 6 pm, to launch the Opening of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Season (with beverages and paper goods provided) followed at 7:30 pm by a discussion "Challenges of Diversity in Public Education" presented by the Lebanon School District.

Saturday, May 30

Antique Appraisals sponsored by the Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society. Appraiser Terry Breidenstine, whose firm specializes in coins and costume jewelry, toys, furniture, sports memorabilia, artwork, advertising items, instruments and glassware will be on hand to evaluate your treasures. \$5 per item, with proceeds benefiting the historical society. 9 am to noon, at the Mt. Gretna Fire Hall. For details, [click here](#).

Vendor and Craft Show With vendors including Thirty-One, Tastefully Simple, Silpada Designs, jewelry and more. Plus a bake sale and hamburgers, hot dogs and fries. At the Mt. Gretna Fire Hall, 10 am to 1 pm.

Webelos Naturalist Badge Workshop \$5 per scout. Registration required. Gov. Dick Park, 10 am to 1 pm.

Newsmakers

Volunteer of the Year Award

Mt. Gretna has been named Volunteer of Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Road resident who moved here several founder (with wife Evelyn Koppel) of the

A retired earth and environmental science teacher, Sid is a volunteer for the Section of Archaeology and the Section of Paleontology and Geology, as well as the Education Section of the museum. In the past several years, he has given presentations to the public and helped run a successful exhibit that showed the public how fossils are prepared and brought dinosaurs and other extinct animals alive in the eyes of the museum's visitors.



Sidney M. Hostetter of the Year by the Commission. The Valley years ago is the co-Mt. Gretna Bird Club.

Actress who loves Mt. Gretna now with the International Touring Company of "Sister Act"

If you're traveling to Hong Kong or other major Southeast Asian ports of call this year there's a chance you might run into one of Mt. Gretna's biggest fans. Megan Opalinski (*inset*) loved coming here as a youngster with her sister and parents, Fred and Jan Opalinski. They recently purchased the "airplane cottage" on Third Street in the Campmeeting. Now spruced-up and remodeled, it will be on the Tour of Homes this summer. Meanwhile Megan is touring the world with the international company of "Sister Act."



Fred Opalinski, a retired Lutheran pastor, will be one of the speakers at this summer's Chautauqua Worship Series (*see article, above*). Jan is a retired special education teacher in Reading, where they maintain their year-round home.



Report from the Fountain of Youth

A former Mt. Gretnan traveling through China last month passed along a photo (*inset*) to the roly-poly proprietor of this not-for-profit newsletter. A message for Dad, perhaps?

The traveler was none other than his daughter, Vanessa Groce, a fashion advertising writer in New York City.

The lady pictured is a tai chi instructor in Beijing.

She's 71 years old. Now a tai chi "master," she began doing the exercises as a hobby upon retirement at age 50 (when women in China usually retire). Vanessa told her through a translator that she's "the living embodiment of The Fountain of Youth."

Nearly everyone in China practices tai chi regularly. "Retirees meet at parks throughout the country and have classes with dozens of people at 6 am," she says.

The tea-pot-shaped editor of this newsletter is 74 and walks his 7-year-old spaniel through Mt. Gretna around 9 am with what looks like a cane but is really, harrumph, a walking stick.

So if you pass by a house on a hill this summer and notice a guy in a kimono out doing strange-looking exercises on his deck, you can be pretty sure it's me. -- RG