

The Mt. Gretna Newsletter

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

No. 164

November 2015

From across the highway, a vista that Mt. Gretnans who live there never tire of



No matter how many times you've seen it, and this year especially so, fall's descent onto the hillsides of Mt. Gretna is breathtaking. Few residents are able to appreciate that more than those who watch the sun rise over the mountain from their homes in Timber Hills, Timber Bridge and Conewago Hill. Or glimpse the crowning touches of sunsets, which sometimes soar to the spectacular in October's final days.



Even though they make up only about a quarter of the 1,500 inhabitants that number among the year-round population, they are among Mt. Gretna's most earnest cheerleaders.



Their enthusiasm for all things Gretna manifests itself not only in terms of volunteers and ticket purchasers at the Playhouse but also in their financial support, which helps underwrite Mt. Gretna's cultural, educational and recreational offerings.

In part, that support may be due to the surprising number of people who first sampled Chautauqua and Campmeeting life in cottages and now have made their permanent homes on the other side of the highway. Several former residents of Mt. Gretna Heights and Stoberdale have done the same. A few have even lived on both sides of the highway, sometimes moving back and forth from one to another of the seven distinct communities that make up the bits and pieces of three townships and a borough that collectively represent "Mt. Gretna."

If all that leaves newcomers slightly confused, they are not alone. Some who have lived

here for decades cannot say exactly where boundary lines start and stop. No matter, what counts is that wherever they live, they are all Mt. Gretnans.

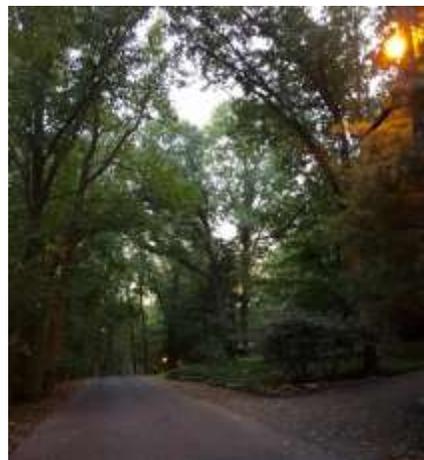
What unites them is a shared appreciation that reaches its peak in the summer and reverberates with equal intensity into the fall, a recognition that the qualities that account for Mt. Gretna's enduring appeal span more than a century. The allure is more than a unique mixture of ice cream jiggers, presentations at the Playhouse and quiet walks in the Chautauqua or Sunday devotions in the Tabernacle. "Not a place, but a spirit," the late Rev. Marlin Seiders said.

These scenes from the grounds that first gave rise to Mt. Gretna more than a century ago -- fields where soldiers trained for battle even before the Chautauqua was founded -- stir echoes of its military heritage. Indeed, before they moved from Mt. Gretna to Fort Indiantown Gap in the 1930s, soldiers prepared here for three wars, including the Spanish-American War. A plaque atop a monument on Conewago Hill (*inset*, left), cast in bronze recovered from the USS Maine, hangs above another plaque bearing names of those who trained on these grounds for the war for the independence of Cuba in 1898.



Only a few yards away is the site of the former Hotel Conewago, built in 1909 with the unaccustomed luxury of telephones in private rooms. The largest structure ever built in Mt. Gretna, its success was ultimately eclipsed by Henry Ford's Model T automobile, which changed

the way people spent their vacations as the nation headed into the Roaring '20s. Instead of taking train trips for long stays at distant resort hotels, travelers began packing up their cars and driving where they pleased. That shift in consumer preferences, together with the army's decision to move its 10,000 summertime troops to the Gap, foreshadowed the hotel's fate as the Depression took hold. Yet the hotel did not burn down, as many mistakenly believe. Before he died in 2008 at the age of 91, Mt. Gretna historian Jack Bitner often recalled working in the early 1940s on a crew that finally dismantled the once-grand hotel with its tennis and croquet courts that extended down toward the lake and the narrow-gauge train track built by Mt. Gretna founder Robert Coleman. It was, in a sense, the end of a dream.



Yet the story of Mt. Gretna's transition through turbulent times may offer a reassuring model for its future. Just as changes from season to season bring new ways to appreciate Mt. Gretna, so too does the steady drumbeat of disruptive technologies and continuous flow of new residents, drawn here by a pattern of natural and cultural attractions that make it special. Those who remain now have the challenge to ensure that the qualities which make it so are preserved.

Mt. Gretna gains yet another spot on the National Register of Historic Places

It arrived in an ordinary envelope in August almost without notice, an unheralded delivery

that belied its contents' intrinsic value, akin to the final realization of a long-sought goal.

Crowning three years of painstaking research, photography, writing, travel and consultations with state and federal committees and relentless fact-checking by a team headed by Earl Lennington, 68, who leaned heavily on the talents of others, notably the research and writing skills of Tom Meredith, 93, a former Timber Hills resident. For Mr. Meredith, it was familiar territory. He had shepherded the Campmeeting's seven-year quest for similar honors. At the end of that long trail, the envelope contained a formal notice that the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Historic District had finally achieved its distinction as an official listing on the National Historic Register.

The latest designation goes to a district that encompasses over 200 homes and other structures -- including the Playhouse, Jigger Shop and Hall of Philosophy -- located between Rte. 117 to the north and Lancaster Avenue to the south, and bounded by Pinch Road and the State Gamelands.

Working with Lennington and Meredith were Mt. Gretnans Bill Barlow, an architect who offered commentary on the architectural styles; Fred Buch, founder of the Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society; photographer Madelaine Gray, who photographed each of the homes and buildings listed in the 20-page submission; former Mt. Gretna children's author Kerry Royer; and attorney David Miller, son of summer resident Betty Miller and her late husband Barry.

Mr. Lennington, who recently retired after a 44-year career in the restaurant business, says he learned a lot in the process. "If I'd known then what I know now, we could probably have finished this study in about half the time," he says. A big hurdle lay in the timing of submissions, since approving agencies at the state and federal level require long lead times and hold only about three meetings a year.

He expects formal observances will take place next spring and summer to honor the achievement, perhaps with plaques that owners within the designated district can attach to their properties.

The National Park Service National Register of Historic Places lists 90,000 sites it deems worthy of preservation across the United States, an article in the [Lancaster newspapers noted](#). The Campmeeting was added to that roster in 2012. Additional details appear at www.pachautauqua.org.



On display at the Chautauqua kiosk, an honor long sought.

Who owns the South Londonderry bridge (that appears to be falling down)?

For an idea of just how wide was the gap, we asked Winston (inset, left), our investigative authority on all things under ten inches in height, to stand in for a sense of scale on this photograph of a more than 100-year-



Slipping away, inch by inch

-old structure that is slowly pulling away from its moorings.

Sure enough, gaps of three inches or more are widening between the bridge and the roadway leading toward

Timber Hills.

The bridge spans a section of Mt. Gretna that some believe falls under the jurisdiction of South Londonderry Township. Rocks used in the bridge's construction in the days before horseless carriages are now, one by one, tumbling into the Conewago Creek.

Several observers fear that the bridge won't stand up to another winter like the last one.

At the township supervisor's recent semiannual meeting at the Timbers, a resident brought the situation to the attention of officials, including the newly appointed township manager Shawn Arbaugh and others who promptly looked into the matter.

By late October, however, they were attempting to determine whether responsibility for the bridge belongs to the township or is shared with Mt. Gretna borough. If shared, township officials would ask the borough to divide the costs.

Residents hope that whatever solution they reach will include plans to restore and preserve the historic old bridge, rather than turn the matter over to state highway officials. A few years ago, faced with another deteriorating bridge along Rte. 117 west of Mt. Gretna, state officials replaced it with one using anodized metal strips, making it undistinguished from every other PennDOT-built bridge in the state.



A bridge jointly owned? If so, the costs to repair will be shared.

Meals made in your home by a personal chef? It's affordable -- and taking off here

One of the fastest-growing businesses in America has just taken off in Mt. Gretna. Imagine having two weeks of dinners, complete with an entree and two side dishes for the next two weeks prepared in a single afternoon right in your own kitchen. Your personal chef does the shopping, cooking and clean-up -- all for a price that's less than you would spend at a restaurant.



First you approve the menu, then she shops, cooks and cleans up your kitchen at a price clients are eager to pay.

No wonder it's a service that appeals to ordinary folks who can't or don't want to cook for themselves anymore, older people who want to remain in their own home rather than move to a retirement facility, and busy young working couples with children who are short on time but love having dinners at home with their family.

That's the magnetic appeal of Kathy's Cuisine, a new business venture that's satisfying in a different way than her former career as an adjunct college professor. It's also more profitable, and it allows her to care for three adults in her own family who are now in their eighties.

Kathy Snavely loves that regulations require all meals to be prepared in her clients' homes. That means she can quickly get to know the personal

preferences of those she serves. They approve her menu plan and shopping list in advance. Then she goes to the store, returns with groceries, rolls up her sleeves and goes to work. "It takes four to five hours for me to make five entrees of four servings each," she says, "cooked, wrapped and ready to go whenever they're ready to eat." Full kitchen clean-ups are included. Her first clients were delighted to find they could have everything done for them at a cost of about \$12 a meal, she says. For details, click

<http://www.kathyscuisine.com/>

Sightings

It may have been the last day for flowers this fall, but there seemed to be a spring chicken under the tent at Mary Hernley's flower stand along Route 117.



Keeping track of the grandchildren, but not the years.

Yes, that's Mary herself in the picture, looking as fresh and youthful as the flowers she was selling as the late October season drew to a close.

This was her 48th season, maybe 49th (she's not sure which) in Mt. Gretna, an icon at least as durable as the Playhouse or Tabernacle and the source of more than flowers for generations of Mt. Gretnans. Sticky buns, eggs, tomatoes and other vegetables often can be found at her stand -- one she occupies every weekend starting in early spring.

Neither rain nor cold nor windy days can keep her away. Nobody knows just how many flowers she's sold over the years, but one thing you can be sure of: The money she makes winds up in good places -- for orphans and medical outposts overseas mostly-- wherever she's called by her church and her heart.

This month she will take time out briefly from her usual hours with seed catalogs and planning next year's crop to attend yet another wedding in New

England. Grandson Andrew in Maine is getting married.

How many Hernley offspring in all? Mary stopped for a moment to count: "Six children, 19 grandchildren, and then the great-grandchildren: four living, two on the way and one in Heaven," she said.

Keep your eye on Xen Donten. The only kid in Chautauqua to board the school bus each morning is going places.



When the bus stops at the Chautauqua, only Xen climbs aboard

Trend-spotter Xen noticed a few visiting youngsters riding a scooter this summer in the playground. With a birthday coming up in September, he coaxed his mom Carol into a trip to the heart of Amish country in Leola where they discovered Groffdale Machine Company's thriving business, making and shipping truckloads of durable cast iron "kick scooters."

Theirs is a popular item among the Amish in Pennsylvania and Ohio, where boys ride scooters and girls ride

bikes. Carol, a Mt. Gretna architect, says there were scooters in every imaginable color at the factory that employs about 15 young Amish workers. Xen chose a model in what the enterprising Amish firm calls "Martha Stewart colors." The sparkly handlebar grips appealed to the discerning Xen, who, regular readers of this newsletter will recall, was making pirate sounds ("Arrrrl!") when we last caught up with him two years ago.

For his bespoke version, Xen asked if they could add shark designs. A young Amish salesman replied in matter-of-fact tones, "Well, we could, but it would *cost* you."

Carol returned a few days later, in time for Xen's eighth birthday, to pick up the scooter, minus the sharks, but with dual brakes, flashing lights, a basket and a kick stand painted to match.

Scooting around Mt. Gretna, Xen says the biggest question he now receives -- from both youngsters and adults -- is, "Where can I get one of these?"



He picked the Martha Stewart paint job, but sharks were extra.



Discovering the Golden Rule early

Even though she is only in the fourth grade, Sadie Kosoff has already learned much about what it means to help others.

Hospitalized at the Hershey Medical Center for Children recently after being diagnosed with Lyme meningitis, she got a taste of the kindness of those who had donated toys, books and snacks brought in to young patients.

She so appreciated those daily visits from the nearby Ronald McDonald House that following her own recovery she wanted to do something to help others.

The goal is to collect items for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. She has set up a collection receptacle outside the Rte. 117 realty office where her mother, Jess Kosoff, works.

Collections will be accepted Nov 2-20. Suggested items include canned tuna, cereal, macaroni and cheese, canned meats and stews, packaged meals, pasta and rice and other non-perishables.

Shrieks, sirens and sprites materialized again this year in the only Halloween parade in America where costumed marchers outnumber the spectators 20 to 1.

Straight down the center of Mt. Gretna's main thoroughfare they went, turning out *en masse* on the last Friday of October.

Biggest question of the night: How can a town that sends only a handful of kids to school each day on a nearly empty bus muster so many young

participants in the parade every year? Soon after they reached the Fire Hall, they quickly devoured 320 hot dogs, which may have set a new record.

Some astonished onlookers, witnessing the parade for the first time, opined that the goblins must have been imported. In fact, it was a testament to the growing power of grand parenthood in an aging community where the parade has been an annual event for more than half a century. Yet all who came, regardless of age, made the most of this once-a-year opportunity for their 15 minutes of stardom under the light of a nearly full moon.



Only in Mt. Gretna: Few on the school bus, hordes in the parade.

Stacey's Place: Where a bright beacon will shine for children

She had made the Chautauqua Playground a children's wonderland every August. The Children's Art Show, enclosed within a world of basketball hoops, slides and merry-go-rounds, became a place where children indulged in fantasies of their own, creating art that took its place alongside the booths and corridors where adult artists vied for attention.



Yet in their world, never was there much notice paid to adults and their grownup art. If the world revolves around making mud pies that one is eager to show their peers, the children's art show at Mt. Gretna was a perfect answer. At least, after Stacey



Seldomridge Pennington came to town. transformed the designed to instincts in such impulses gushed to Children's Art Show Saturdays only to two full games, music and young made things happen.



Her influence traditional shows encourage artistic children. Suddenly overflowing. The blossomed from days of exhibits, celebrations. Stacey



To honor the the Pennsylvania spring at the Stacey's Place, a says Chautauqua President Karl Gettle. A fund for special educational and recreational programs for children will be created under 501(c)3 regulations, making gifts tax deductible. The funds will go toward programs that foster joyful experiences for youngsters and their families. A fitting way, it was thought, to curb the influence of domestic violence, put the emphasis back on building strong families, and establish a goal honoring the memory of Ms. Pennington.

Gifts may be made to The Friends of Stacey Fund, c/o The Pennsylvania Chautauqua Foundation, P. O. Box 637, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

Recent Obituaries

The full text of these obituaries appears as an attachment to this edition. Click [here](#) to read them in their entirety.



Robert L. Wechter, 86, (Oct. 11) The former Chief Executive Officer of Old Guard Mutual Insurance company, he had been coming to Mt. Gretna with his family since he was five years old. A veteran of the Korean conflict, he had also served as president of the Akron Lions Club. He and his wife Mary Jane also owned and enjoyed a cottage for many years on Second Street in the Campmeeting where they entertained friends and family members, walked to the Tabernacle for Bible Conferences and Sunday church services and took their

grandchildren down to the miniature golf course.



Robert H. Gingrich, Jr. 62, (Oct. 2). He became best-known, perhaps, as Mt. Gretna's assistant postmaster. But that was only his third career, having served as an employee at the Lebanon County Prison and with the Coca-Cola Company. Yet everyone in Mt. Gretna also knew him as the smiling tennis buff seen on the courts, sometimes with a full beard and always with a broad smile.



David M. Garber 81, (Sept. 28) A Mt. Joy farmer who loved spending as much time as he could over 25 summers with his family at their Campmeeting cottage on Boehm Avenue. With his wife Edna he enjoyed going to watch performances at the Playhouse, attend events at the Tabernacle, and share his inviting front porch with friends and neighbors.

Calendar Updates



Sunday, November 1

Music on the Porch 1 to 4 p.m. at Gov. Dick Nature Center. Will move inside in the event of chilly or wet weather.

Tennis courts close today, 1 pm. Volunteers needed to take down the nets and rake leaves.

Gretna Music concert at Elizabethtown

College Leffler Center, originally scheduled for 7:30 pm tonight, has been postponed due to a medical condition of trombonist Joseph Alessi. Gretna Music will announce a date for the concert when it can be rescheduled.

Tuesday, November 3

Election Day; polls open 7 am to 8 pm at Lawn Fire Company for residents of South Londonderry Twp. including Timber Hills, Timber Bridge and Conewago Hill in Mt. Gretna; at the Boardroom adjacent to the Mt. Gretna Post Office for residents of Chautauqua and the Borough of Mt. Gretna; and at the Quentin Fire Company Social Hall, South Lebanon St. and Cherry Lane, Quentin for Campmeeting, Mt. Gretna Heights and other Mt. Gretna area residents east of Pinch Road.

Tips: Best after-voting selection of raisin, apple, pumpkin and raspberry pies; chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies; and cheesecake? The Lawn Fire Co., with ham-and-bean, vegetable beef and chicken corn soups in take-home paks. Spaghetti sauce, too, and hot dogs with sauerkraut. Come early if you want a whole pumpkin pie.

Friday, November 6

First Fridays continue at the Timbers: Featured fine artists are Mt. Gretna potter Ryan Fretz and jewelry designer Kate Dolan. Also on display: works by Lancaster photographer Tammy Stine, inspired by natural beauty, harmony and tranquility over a 20-year career. Music by Central PA Friends of Jazz favorites, pianist and vocalist Trixie Greiner with drummer Dave



Can anyone think of a better way to spend a fall afternoon?

Santana, and guitarist Mark Ryan, downstairs by the fireside, 6 to 9 pm. *Tip: Also at this month's Timbers First Friday: an energy drink tasting of "Neon," said to be "a tasty, energy drink with no crash."*

Note: La Cigale Gallery, open all weekend for the Lebanon Valley Art Studio Tour (see below), will not be open this evening. Their exhibiting artists will have works on display in the gallery on Saturday and Sunday, with light refreshments offered. Tour brochures are available throughout the tri-county area, including the Mt. Gretna post office, pizzeria, Timbers Restaurant and other locations.

Morning Bird Walk every Friday (weather permitting) with Sid Hostetter; meets at Chautauqua parking lot 9 to 11 am (followed by lunch, usually at Le Sorelle).

Bring binoculars and, especially at this time of year, an orange hat or vest.

Sid's wife Evelyn responded to our recent question: "What are some of your unusual sightings so far this year?" Forty-seven broad wing hawks a few weeks ago, six wood ducks and a pied billed grebe on Mt. Gretna Lake, a brown creeper and yellow bellied sapsucker," she said for openers. But the year's biggest sighting may have been a pair of red shouldered hawks nesting 80 feet above the ground with four babies in the nest, clearly visible from the Chautauqua tennis courts. Add to that the lure of hiking through the woods and enjoying the sights of nature with a dozen or so like-minded people, topped by brunches that follow at Le Sorelle, and suddenly you understand why they gather at the parking lot on most Friday mornings.



Awake in the Wild: Cultivating Curiosity, 10 a.m. at Gov. Dick Park. A walk led by Vicki Kensinger will encourage you to look closely and let your sense of wonder come alive.

Saturday, November 7

Lebanon Valley Art Studio Tour, 10 am to 5 pm (Saturday) features five Mt. Gretna area artists at La Cigale Gallery (Luise Christensen-Howell, David Adams, Mary Kopala, Doris Jean Silva and Margaret Seidenberg-Ellis) and the private studios of Betsy Stutzman, Bob Chaundy, Carol Snyder and Fred Swarr (*inset, left*). Resident artists of the gallery will set up demonstrations of their work through the weekend and display their latest works. Light refreshments will be served. Former Mt. Gretnans Barb Fishman and Gerry Boltz will also be on the tour. Details: www.lvartstour.com.

Sunday, November 8

Fire company buffet breakfast. A gourmand's delight where the suggested donation is \$11 a person, but many patrons drop \$20, \$50 and even \$100 bills into the fireman's boot at the entrance to boost this fundraiser's totals. What you get is more than scrambled eggs, sausages and bacon. Even more than baked oatmeal, fruit cups and beverages. The best parts are the people you meet and the fire fighters you support; 8 am to noon.

Lebanon Valley Art Studio Tour, Noon to 5 pm. See above or click [here](#) for details.

Silent Auction at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church runs all month to raise money for the Youth for Christ breakfast fund (for disadvantaged Lebanon area students before school) and the United Methodist Committee

on Relief (to help South Carolina flood victims).
Pastor Mike Remel invites everyone to stop by any morning from now until the end of November to place their bids. (*Tip: Look for handmade items, gift baskets and cards, and other items collected from Nov. 2 and added as they arrive. Come often to see what's new.*)

Monday, November 9

Leaf collections: In the Chautauqua, leaf collections (which began last month)

will resume Nov.9. Brush collections begin Nov. 30 and will resume Dec. 14.

Campmeeting residents may set their leaves out at any time. In the Heights, leaf collection normally continues until Dec. 1. No leaf pickups yet available for residents in Timber Hills, Timber Bridge and Conewago Hills, the outlying sectors of South Londonderry Township.



Evelyn Koppel photo 2015

West Cornwall Twp. Supervisors Meeting

Normally held on the fourth Monday of each month; tonight's session (in a time period usually reserved for special topics) will be a budget workshop rather than a regular meeting.

The township follows a practice of publishing all meeting times for a full year to save on advertising costs. Typically, fourth Mondays are reserved for regular sessions, second Mondays for "something out of the ordinary," says supervisor Glen Yanos. Meetings are normally held at the township offices on South Zinns Mill Rd. in Lebanon at 6:30 pm.

Tuesday, November 10

Supervisors Meeting South Londonderry Twp., 20 W. Market St., Palmyra, 7 pm

Fort Indiantown Gap, a lecture in the Friends of Cornwall Iron Furnace series, by Sgt. Major Warren P. Parks, Ret., Freeman Hall, Cornwall Manor, 7 pm. The fort traces its history to 1755 and the Indian Wars. Today it serves the oldest division-sized unit in America and is headquarters for 22 Pennsylvania Army National Guard units.

Friday, November 13

Toddlers in Tow, 10 a.m. Gov. Dick Park. For children ages 2 to 5.

Saturday, November 14

Vendor and Craft Show and sub sale. Vendors usually include such participants as Tastefully Simple, Thirty-One and Keep Collective, says organizer Samantha Sutcliffe. At the Mt. Gretna Fire Company, which

benefits from proceeds. 10 am - 2 pm. For advance sub orders, see any fire company member or call 964-3511.

Sunday, November 15

Fitness Hike, 9 a.m. at Gov. Dick Park. Fast-paced, 4 to 6 miles.

Wednesday, November 18

Gathering Place normally held on third Wednesdays at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church in Fellowship Hall, has been postponed this month. The date shifts to the first Wednesday in December to combine the November-December gatherings on Dec. 2 at noon.

Friday, November 20

Extraordinary Give, a 24-hour online giving opportunity for local non-profit groups, including Gretna Music and Gretna Theatre and a way to stretch donor contributions. <https://www.extragive.org/#leaderboard>

Saturday, November 21



Soup Cookoff. Maybe it doesn't rise to the elegance of Gretna Theatre's annual gala at the Hotel Hershey, but it comes close in terms of good food, good friends, and good fun. It's the 10th Annual Mt Gretna Soup Cookoff, now in its 12th or 13th year (promoter Thatcher Bornman lost count, so it's always "the 10th annual"). Up to 14 contestants will be on hand with their steaming crock pots; \$10 admission benefits the Mt. Gretna firefighters whose good works we depend on. Taste tests of the tantalizing soups are a bonus. Noon to 2 pm. Note: To enter the contest, call 228-7506; space is limited to the first 14 applicants. *Tip: Get there early. Sample all the soups. And cast your ballot for the top three soups.*

Bouldering Competition, 8 a.m. at Gov. Dick Park. \$20 registration; prizes for all experience levels in this 5th annual event. Rain date: Sunday, November 22.

Sunday, November 22

Thanksgiving Breakfast at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. Note, "It's a breakfast, not dinner," says Pastor Mike Remel. Begins at 9:30 am in Fellowship Hall.

Thursday, November 26.

Thanksgiving Holiday Buffet, always a popular event at the Timbers restaurant, with 11:30 am and 2pm seatings; \$19.50 plus tax and gratuity. Music by pianist Andy Roberts.



Susan Wood 2015 photo

Friday, November 27.

Green Friday Stay away from the crowded stores and come to Gov. Dick Park instead for a 7-mile hike around the park. 10 am.

Special Music at the Timbers, 6 to 9 pm: Third Stream, featuring Tom Strohmman on woodwinds and Greg Strohmman, Jim Miller, Jim Easton and John Peiffer filling out this popular five-piece local band. *(Tom is a founding member of Third Stream since 1974; they have performed in concerts with Spyro Gyra, Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock, Eumir Deodato, Livingston Taylor, Phil Wilson and Stanley Turrentine and have five albums to date.)*

Looking ahead. . .

Saturday, Dec. 5: 20th Annual Christmas at Cornwall House Tour to benefit Cornwall Iron Furnace. Details, [click here](#).

Saturday, Dec. 5: Christmas Tree Lighting and carol singing at the home of Peter Hewitt and Walter McAnney (opposite the post office). A traditional gathering where all are invited to attend and bring finger foods (coordinated by Rhoda Long, tel. 304-0248, or [email her](#) for what-to-bring suggestions). 5:30 - 7:30 pm.

Thursday, Dec. 17 The Belsnickel of Mt. Gretna returns to the Timbers for a night of fun and reading of Chet Williamson's *Pennsylvania Dutch Night Before Christmas* with Tom "Levi" Baum and his sidekick, Max Hunsicker. Surrounded by friends, family and a host of well-wishers, they make for an evening that's always a sell-out, so the advice is to place reservations early: 717-964-3601.

Special Note to all Mt. Gretna snowbirds in Florida this winter:

Just back from France, photographer Madelaine Gray, who moved to Sarasota a year ago, checked in late last month to invite all who can make it to her home for the 2nd Mt. Gretna-Sarasota Reunion Party, Saturday evening, Jan. 23, 2016. RSVP to her email address: madelainegray@earthlink.net

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Summer, winter, spring or fall, the best roads lead to Mt. Gretna

For additional information, see the Mt. Gretna Arts Council's calendars in both print (summer) and online (year-round) versions. Also available by email during the summer is *This Week in Mt. Gretna.*