

The Mt. Gretna Newsletter

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

No. 163

October 2015

Now begins a season that many in Mt. Gretna acclaim the best



Even on a still morning in late September, the now silent Playhouse nevertheless makes its statement: A new season awaits.

Mt. Gretna slips quietly into the coming season. For those who remain here, the onset of fall ushers in wisps of memories that generations have treasured. Under its influence, many feel, some of Mt. Gretna's most precious gifts begin to unfold, often taking the form of long walks in crisp morning air as the leaves begin their descent.

Fall thus often emerges as the best of times, even in a community where "bests" regularly are surpassed by new achievements and the arrival of fresh talents and inspirations.

For those who have long made their homes here it may be difficult to imagine a Mt. Gretna better than ever. But those who come -- for a day, a week or a lifetime -- often bring the capacity to enhance ever-renewing qualities that have long been a part of its makeup.

Something almost magical draws people to Mt. Gretna. And it is fair to say that those who are drawn here stay here because they *belong* here. Everyone who stays has something to give. Sustaining them is a nurturing ambiance, one that coaxes from them their best. Maybe quietly at first, like a hesitant ballerina guardedly eyeing her audience from behind the curtain, they soon adjust to their role, the reason they are here. Soon enough, their gifts begin to emerge, and something altogether new gets added to the mix. Something that finds a home in its new setting and then blossoms.

Thus the enduring grandeur of Mt. Gretna is never really in doubt. Its immutable

essence stands as a legacy that future generations will find reassuring.

History teaches that even traumatic events hold for those who endure them a power to energize, a key to unlock a better vision of the future, a vision with renewed strength and purpose.

Against even the backdrop of sometimes terrible sadness emerges a gift that nurtures, a restorative flame that burns brightly.

Thus we turn to a new chapter as the fall season unfolds, a season to celebrate our legacy of hope. It is what our surroundings are made of. It echoes who we are and what *we* are made of. It is an integral part of that which sustains and guides us.

-- Roger Groce



At the Playhouse this year, a surprising turnaround

No one is saying so yet, but could it be that 2015 was the summer Americans finally got bored with TV and came out to watch open-air theater performances once again?

No one is saying so, but how else to explain Gretna Theatre's 67% leap in attendance this year?



Maybe it's not a miracle, but neither is it a mirage. Credit aggressive marketing campaigns, cooler temperatures and maybe even the installation last spring of those saucily-branded **Big Ass Fans** (*inset, left*) which made a difference in the un-airconditioned venue.

But *something* drew bigger crowds this summer than the Mt. Gretna Playhouse has seen in years.

Start with great show choices. *Murder on the Nile* became the most popular non-musical in 25 years, *Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash* became the second highest-attended musical and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, which opened July 7 for a two-week run, became the highest grossing show in Playhouse history.

Average attendance at each of the theatre's five mainstage shows this year jumped from 267 to 442 per performance, with record sales even at the concession stand.

Gretna Music launched its season July 1 with legendary pianist Leon Fleisher (*inset, right*), who drew a huge midweek audience, helping to build momentum for the series' classical, jazz, blues and special offerings that followed into early September. Audiences averaged about 300 per performance, a notable achievement for this small music festival, ranked "one of the best."



And the always popular Cicada Music Festival -- with its highly prized \$14 tickets -- again set records, filling every one of the 708 Playhouse seats at all six of its shows.

Although the upsurge in box office revenues is a welcome boost to help cover expenses, presenting groups at the Playhouse still will have to depend heavily on donors and sponsors. Ticket sales yield only about half of the funds it needs.

Gretna Theatre will again turn to their 31st Annual Gala, [coming up Oct. 10 at the Hotel Hershey](#). Larry Frenock, the theatre's producing artistic director, says over 200 silent and live auction items have been donated. With "only a few tickets remaining," he says, the swishy affair will include entertainment by Broadway's Timothy Shew, Jane Brockman and Caleb Damschroder.

Gretna Music's season continues at Elizabethtown College this winter with [Classy Brass, a three-concert series](#) to "prove that great brass players can do infinitely more than just play glorious fanfares," says artistic director Carl Kane. The series starts Sunday, Nov. 1 with New York Philharmonic principal trombone Joseph Alessi and continues Thursday, Dec. 10 with a pre-holiday concert by the Canadian Brass.

Cicada official Ceylon Leitzel says the best way to see your favorites among the music festival's shows next year is buy season tickets when they go on sale April 15. The 6-ticket package assures you'll get to see the performances you want to see, and tickets you don't use will make welcome gifts for friends. To add your name to the mailing list, email CicadaFestival@gmail.com or write to Cicada Festival, Box 637, Mt. Gretna PA 17064.

Sightings



After a 31-year military career that included flying helicopters into some of the world's hottest trouble-spots, CWo4 Tim Wolshire, who has lived in Timber Hills for the past 10 years, last month brought his Blackhawk UH-60 in for a final landing and a champagne shower by his fellow pilots at Ft. Indiantown Gap.

He will soon be leaving for a post-retirement assignment, likely as a civilian contractor in Saudi Arabia, before he returns to Kentucky and a real retirement in a couple of years.

On hand to greet him at the flightline were Mt. Gretna neighbors Valdemar (Val) and Eleanor Sarabia (who took these pictures) with their friend and frequent Mt. Gretna visitor Mimi Swayze.

Tim had married and shared a home on Village Lane with Julie Shearer before she succumbed to cancer two years ago. He is now helping his adopted daughter, Jennifer Shearer, through her college career.



About three years after they got married in 1994, Mario and Teresa Ceresini looked for a good place to raise a family. They settled on a rancher along Timber Road in Mt. Gretna.

A few years after daughter Monica came along, daughter Tea followed. Monica is now enrolled at Temple University after finishing her first two years at Harrisburg Area Community College. Sister Tea is a freshman at Palmyra Area High School, having achieved top honors last spring as the outstanding middle school 8th grader. The award brought a \$500 prize.

Just as the Ceresinis had hoped, Mt. Gretna turns out to be a good spot for families. Both girls have made the most of their proximity to the Jigger Shop, first as customers and now as ice cream servers, adding to their college funds.



Years after starting out on a career in banking, she had a change of heart. Something led her to abruptly switch from her successful climb up the corporate ladder as a commercial loan officer for a major bank in Central Pennsylvania to a lifetime of service in the ministry.

That is where her focus has been now for more than two decades. Residents here may know her only as the associate pastor of the Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. That, however, is merely an additional duty, one of several

she bears as a minister, an administrator and as a wife caring for her husband, now afflicted with a debilitating illness.

But her main calling throughout most of her life has been in the field of prison ministry, helping those who have traveled along the hardest route of all. Initially, she specialized in helping women in prison. Six years ago, her duties at the Lebanon County Correctional facility broadened to include pastoral supervision of all inmates with the charge "to rebuild, restore and renew lives."

Last month, she was awarded the highest honor that her profession in Pennsylvania can give. The Rev. Marilyn A. Nolte, Jubilee Ministries' Chaplain Manager, was honored by the Pennsylvania Prison Chaplain's Association as County Correctional Chaplain of the Year.

Recent Obituaries

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



Arline F. Althouse, 89 (Aug. 25) She and her late husband Cliff once owned a cottage in the Chautauqua. She was known for her ability each Lenten season to turn out delicious fastnachts, stirring them in a pan of hot, bubbling fat with a giant hat pin that seemed to onlookers at least 12 inches long.

E. Richard "Dick" Herr, 85 (Aug. 15) A man who loved hanging out with friends such as the late John Hambright and playing tennis on the courts of the former Mt. Gretna Men's Club. He and wife Jeri owned a cottage on Lancaster Avenue in the Chautauqua.

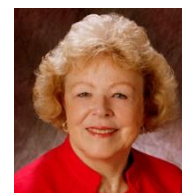


Stacey L. Pennington, 46 (Sept. 7) One of the most gifted and beloved women ever to make her mark on Mt. Gretna. Her service as proprietor of the Gretna Emporium gift shop included a special touch for spreading joy to all who came here.



Arne M. Reistad Sr., 92 (Sept. 21) A native of Sweden who had served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and retired as a tool and dye maker.

Delroy S. Seldomridge, 66 (July 7) Known as "Skeet," he was a Vietnam veteran who retired from the Navy Supply Depot in Mechanicsburg and operated an accounting firm with his wife Stephanie. They owned a summer cottage in the Campmeeting and had two daughters and three grandchildren.



Kathleen C. Wall, 66 (Sept. 1). She built a distinguished professional career working in positions that called for helping older adults. She and her husband Larry Bowman, whom she married in 1977, owned a cottage in the Campmeeting.

Calendar Updates

Friday, October 2:

First Friday Oktoberfest at La Cigale Gallery. Grilled bratwurst served by the Mt. Gretna fire company. Live music with Liz Fulmer on the porch. Inside, guest artists Teri Traner, mixed media, and Sephi Itzhaki, metal sculpture, showing new artwork together with visiting artist Christine Goldbeck, photography. The gallery's resident artists will also have their

work on display. 5 - 8 PM.

At the Timbers: Featured artists C. Scott Campbell of Camp Hill with music by Tony Miceli, Philadelphia vibraphonist and Timbers Trio: Dave Lazorcik, drums; Andy Roberts, piano; Andy Alonso, bass. 6 - 9 PM.

At Penn Realty: Featured is Mt. Gretna artist Barb Kleinfelter, whose works in addition to folk art also include floor cloths and furniture.

Saturday, October 3:

Webelos Forrester workshop, pack lunch, dress for the weather. \$5 per scout. Gov. Dick Park. 10 AM to 1 PM.

Sunday, October 4:

Music on the porch. Gov. Dick Park. 1 PM to 4 PM

Friday, October 9:

Toddlers in tow. Age 2 to 5. Gov. Dick Park, 10 AM

Saturday, October 10:

Block Shoot, Mt. Gretna Fire Company, noon to 5 PM. Everything you could wish for, including ham and bean soup from Alice's secret recipe.

Volunteer workday. Gov. Dick Park, 12 noon to 3 PM

31st annual Gretna Theatre Gala, Hotel Hershey. Cocktails and silent auction 5:30 PM, dinner, live auction and entertainment 7 PM. Details: <http://www.gretnatheatre.com/annual-gala>

Sunday, October 11:

Fitness hike, Gov. Dick Park, 9 AM

Wednesday, October 14:

Supervisors Meeting at the Timbers Restaurant, South Londonderry Township. 7 pm.

Sunday, October 18:

Naturalist foray: learn your trees. Gov. Dick Park. 2 PM

Thursday, October 29:

Trick or Treat Night 6 PM to 8 PM. Treats and a restroom stop offered in the Campmeeting at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. (Lebanon County officials have designated Nov. 5 as the rain date.)

Friday, October 30:

Awake in the wild: falling in love with the wild. Gov. Dick Park 10 AM

Halloween Parade. Forms at the Jigger Shop, 6 PM and proceeds from there to the Mt. Gretna Fire Hall where hot dogs and a cake walk for the

children awaits.

Saturday, October 31:

Closing of Mt. Gretna Tennis Club courts. 9 AM

Sunday, Nov. 1:

Music on the Porch (or by the fire). 1-4 pm, Gov. Dick Park

Gretna Music at Elizabethtown College. New York Philharmonic principal trombone Joseph Alessi joins guitarist Allen Krantz and pianist Gilya Hodos in a concert that includes Mr. Krantz's Passacaglia, a memorial tribute to Mr. Alessi's former teacher. 7:30 PM.

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](#).

A note from the publisher:

This issue, one of many in a long string of such pleasurable pursuits over nearly 15 years, is shortened because so, too, nowadays is the time we have to devote to such hobbies.

It's what you might call a post-cardiac edition, the first since our ambulance ride last month to the emergency room at Lancaster General Hospital. Everything turned out all right in the end, but that adventure into the miracles of balloon angioplasty helped us to also discover new insights about several other things.

The first came from a Lancaster nurse who had been only once before to Mt. Gretna, on the back of her boy friend's motorcycle. "It's a nice place," she said, "but it's out in the middle of nowhere."

Hmmm. We thought that might make an interesting essay for this newsletter sometime. Are we really "out in the middle of nowhere?"

We also discovered that at least some of the hours devoted to writing will now be soaked up by trips to doctor's offices, cardiac rehab sessions, and therapeutic afternoon walks with Winston -- the frolicsome 8-year-old Cavalier spaniel whose fun we won't spoil by reminding him that he's now 58 in dog years and next year will be 65.

And we discovered that males are great at shrugging off chest pain. They have nearly perfected the art of denying symptoms that women -- mothers especially -- pick up by sheer instinct.

Yet another is that numbers like 70 and 75 are not merely speed limits on the Interstate, they are also candles that illuminated birthday cakes that have passed by lately. Reality dawns: It takes more time to do even simple things, like put on shoes and socks and get going in the morning. All of which leaves less and less time for writing.

Even so, we'll do our best to keep up with the interesting information you send our way, but we can't corral *all* the news. We'll leave that to things like daily newspapers and Facebook, which can help everyone keep up with what's going on in Mt. Gretna. Former Mt. Gretnan Sheryl Mellor, for instance, from her New Caledonia home out in the Pacific, just posted on Facebook a great collection of old time pictures, some of them from Mt. Gretna and surrounding areas we've never seen before.

And if that doesn't fill the bill, just stop in for a chat with folks like Damien Orea and Rose Bair at the pizzeria or Steve Strickler and Bob Gingrich at the post office. All are in fine fettle these days, and at both spots you can find out what's really going on in Mt. Gretna.

[Forward email](#)