

Mount Penn Preserve Newsletter

It takes five: County and municipal partners sign Mount Penn Preserve pact

By Donna Reed

The evening of Wednesday, July 25, 2018 was a historic one as representatives of the County of Berks, the City of Reading, the Borough of Mount Penn, and the townships of Alsace and Lower Alsace formally signed the document officially creating the Mount Penn Preserve Council of Governments, or the MP3 Council of Governments.

"This is a monumental victory for everyone in Berks County," said Berks County Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt. "Everyone in Berks County should take notice and be proud of this."

The initiative has been under way since the spring of 2016 to create this municipal partnership designed to coordinate plans to make Mount Penn a recreational and entertainment destination. The preserve will be governed by a council of governments – or a COG – comprised of representatives from the four municipalities and the county.

Barnhardt and Lee C. Olsen, AIA, a member of the Berks County Planning Commission and immediate past chair of the Pagoda Foundation, are the two principals behind the Mount Penn Preserve (or MP3) initiative.

"The MP3 COG is a testament to the cooperative spirit that's alive and well in Berks County," said Barnhardt. "Bringing five government entities and the greater community together to preserve and enhance the

Mount Penn Preserve is remarkable."

Committee chairs were appointed to oversee the four target areas and monitor the vitality of the preserve. Those committee issues include spotted lanternfly infestation, drag racing on Skyline Drive, late-night partying at the Pagoda, and off-trail bicycling on the mountain.

Terry Styer, Lower Alsace Township manager, said the municipalities could consider mutual ordinances or an inter-municipal agreement that would set rules, hours and govern policing in the preserve. She also suggested they develop a uniform event permit for activities on the mountain.

"A lot of blood, sweat and tears went into this," Barnhardt said, thanking the council and committee members. "We really focused on this area for the greater good. I am impressed with what we accomplished."

Olsen recalled how the first stirrings of the initiative came about.

"Just two-plus years ago Commissioner Barnhardt and I were sitting at breakfast and I turned over my placemats and drew the mountain and started to locate the assets that exist," said Olsen. "These were not just the public icons like the Pagoda and the Fire Tower, but existing places of business and recreational venues and destination."

Interest was strong from the start, he said. The duo invited input from the community at large regarding establishing an



MP3 COG Officials with Committee Chairs and Organizers
Sitting (L-R): Kim Mallatratt (Treasurer), Kevin S. Barnhardt (Chair), Lee C. Olsen, AIA (Vice-Chair), Linda Kelleher (Secretary), Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz
Standing (L-R): Phil Kline, Mike Frankhouser, Christeena Hauck, Terry Styer, Todd Weikel, Corrie Crupi, Mike Reinert, David Barth, Shannon Rossman, Beth Burkovich

entity to work collectively on Mount Penn issues. Close to 60 supportive individuals attended a first exploratory meeting. The duo then visited with officials of the four municipalities and the county, with each agreeing to invest \$1,000 in the initiative.

Following that, the Reading Berks Association of Realtors, through its national foundation, sponsored a grant for \$15,000 to create a master plan. From that plan, an executive committee was formed to consider aspects of the plan. The committee structure formulated a marketing plan, a governance structure, an environmental assessment, and a public safety procedure to successfully monitor the health and vitality of the mountain. Representatives from the five government entities have been involved throughout the process.

The COG ordinance is the

cumulative, official outcome of this collaboration.

"I am so proud to be a part of a viable and dedicated movement created out of identifying a need and capitalizing on our natural resource and treasure to enhance the quality of life in our community," said Olsen.

"Our responsibility is to leave a legacy for future generations so they can continue to enjoy the beauty and history of this gem," Barnhardt added.

(This article includes some information from the Reading Eagle coverage of the signing event.)

Donna Reed is a member of Reading City Council as well as The Foundation for the Reading Pagoda. ♦

Oh, Hinnershitz!

It's a dam good part of local history

By Phil and Mary Lou Kline

Guder daag!

Are you one of the current or former Alsace Township residents who remembers taking picnics to the meadow at the Hinnershitz Mill Dam and splashing in the "mud catchers" there? Are you one of the local kids who packed a lunch and rode your bike down to the "mud catchers" to swim and fish the whole day long? As a youngster, did you camp in the grove of trees nearby? Were you a member of the local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops who enjoyed outdoor activities at this great township location?

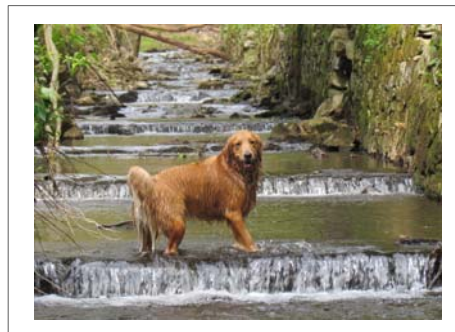
Recently, at a meeting of the fledgling Alsace Community Heritage Society (ACHS), members reminisced about these activities. Consequently, we set about to capture some of the history of this unique, by-gone feature of our township.

Our beautiful mountains in eastern Pennsylvania were formed about a billion years ago, resulting in an area later named the Reading Prong which includes Antietam Lake and Antietam Creek, formerly named Araminta (Ohlinger's) Creek.

In the 1830s, there were as many as 18 mills along the Antietam Creek. One of them, the Hinnershitz Mill Dam, included a grist mill and a saw mill operated by Harrison S. Hinnershitz. Photographs and maps establish the saw mill and grist mill at the corner of Antietam Road and Seidel Road.

Circa 1884, the City of Reading acquired 5.43 square miles of private property to form a watershed. We surmise that the Hinnershitz property was part of that acquisition.

About 1888, the Hinnershitz mill dam was "rebuilt into the



A Golden Retriever playing in the walled-channel below Hinnershitz Dam prior to its removal

Hinnershitz Settling Basin." We believe that that was when the "mud catchers," as the locals call these steps that spilled from the dam, were built. For many years, this unique water feature provided much fun and entertainment in this bucolic setting in Alsace Township.

If you wax nostalgic and wish to visit this area again, be aware that these "steps" are no longer available for kid-type fun, but if

you stand on Seidel Road and face north, you can view the stone wall where these water barriers once helped control water flow. Enjoy your exploration!

Phil and Mary Lou Kline, who consider themselves Alsacetonians, compiled this information from local residents, as well as RAWA and George M. Meiser IX, Passing Scene, volume unidentified. ♦

Our Mission Statement

*To protect, promote
and enhance the
natural beauty,
heritage and
attractions of the
Mount Penn Preserve.*

Willkommen!

Get ready for some Oktoberfest fun on the mountain

By Terry Styer

The Reading Liederkrantz hosts the oldest and largest authentic Oktoberfest in Pennsylvania, recently rated fourth best in the world behind Munich, Germany.

The event, open to the public, is set for Wednesday through Sunday, Oct. 3 through 7, at the Liederkrantz grounds off Spook Lane. Parking is limited but there are satellite lots with shuttles to transport the public back and forth to the grounds.

At the Reading Liederkrantz Oktoberfest on Mount Penn, you get to celebrate all things German with the traditional food and fanfare you'd expect of this time-honored festival. A

Biergarten and food vendor booths cook up typical fare, while live music, a roving ventriloquist, and magic shows provide more family-friendly entertainment.

The Reading Liederkrantz was founded by a group of friends who gathered for a birthday party, singing songs and reminiscing about their native Germany. On 23 July 1885 they officially formed the club, and it grew quickly, serving the growing German immigrant population of the late 19th Century. The location of the club moved a few times

in the greater Reading area. Today, 133 years later, the club serves not only Germans, but indeed all of Berks County, as it has evolved into one of the area's premier cultural and festival destinations.

Terry Styer is the Lower Alsace Township manager. ♦



Reading Liederkrantz Oktoberfest 2017
Photo Courtesy of Reading Liederkrantz

Angora Fruit Farm– the heartbeat of Antietam

By Jennifer Brooks

Antietam Lake Park is Berks County's newer parkland acquisition.

At 643 acres, Antietam Lake Park doubled the acreage of the park system and expanded opportunities for enjoyment of the scenic resources of the county.

Hundreds of acres of meandering streams, mature forest, and wetland areas make Antietam Lake Park a perfect setting for passive recreation, outdoor class use, and demonstration areas.

The Angora Fruit Farm is located in the center of Antietam Lake Park. In December of 2013, the Berks County Commissioners agreed to purchase the farm in Lower Alsace Township not realizing how popular it would become.

A hidden natural treasure, it contains spring-fed ponds, access to Antietam Creek, naturalized meadows, and demonstration gardens. Educational

programs on ponds, streams, field programs and more are available at this site. The farm has been well on its way to becoming the most creative outdoor classroom space in the county, spanning roughly 22 acres.

Creative outdoor outlets for children include a natural play area. A favorite component of the play area is a mud kitchen that will be fed with water sourced through pipes, powered by solar, from a rain barrel offers children a place to conjure up "mud-pies" and other messy concoctions.

Demonstration areas also exist for adults and families. A 12-by-24-foot seasonal butterfly house, which is connected by two native plant gardens offers visitors an opportunity to learn about Pennsylvania native plants. Naturalized meadows will be installed in the next several seasons and will be mowed into maze-like patterns, spanning across two acres, incorporating milkweed, ironweed, little blue stem, goldenrod, blue false indigo, aster, Virginia wild rye and rudbeckia.



Angora Fruit Farm
Photo Courtesy of Berks County Parks and Rec.

Whether you meander through the meadows, explore the play area, enjoy a picnic lunch alongside an organic vegetable garden, or participate in the many year-round Environmental Education programs offered for families, schools, and other groups, the Angora Fruit Farm is certain to delight the outdoor enthusiast in all!

For more information please contact, Jennifer Brooks, Environmental Education Program Manager for the Berks County Parks and Recreation Department, at: jbrooks@countyofberks.com or 484.509.2267. ♦



A Mount Penn History

Mystery

Which landmark has more steps, the Pagoda or the William Penn Memorial Fire Tower?

<Answer on Page 4>

The Foundation for the Reading Pagoda: Preserving a Berks County Icon

By Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz

The Reading Pagoda, for over 110 years, has served as a unique icon and touchstone for Berks County residents.

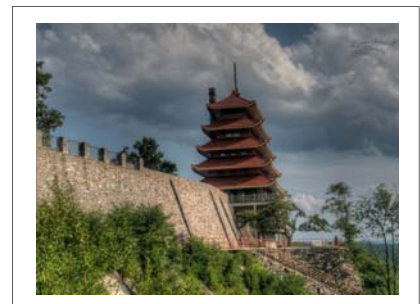
While originally envisioned by its builder, William Abbott Witman Sr., as a mountaintop resort, the Pagoda owned and operated by the City of Reading since 1911, has experienced a variety of uses from a Chinese restaurant to the home of the Berks Arts Council.

In 2007, following extensive renovations, it became clear that a new vision was needed for the operations of the Pagoda.

In 2008, the City of Reading endorsed the formation of the Foundation of the Reading Pagoda, a non-profit organization dedicated to the operation and sustainability of the Pagoda as a historic landmark. The 15-member Foundation Board is comprised of volunteers who are committed to preserving this priceless icon for future generations.

Embracing the Pagoda as one of the key destinations of the Mount Penn Preserve, the Foundation Board has expanded activities to include family-friendly events, the Pagoda Café, offering snacks and coffee, and a gift shop, in collaboration with Pagoda Skyline Inc. The Pagoda is also available for rentals – a perfect location for weddings, birthdays, and other special occasions. Future plans of the Pagoda include the establishment of heritage/history displays and the expansion of activities that take advantage of the breath-taking views and peaceful location on the mountain.

Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, a member of Reading City Council, is the Chair of the Foundation for the Reading Pagoda. ♦



The Reading Pagoda
Photo Courtesy of David Gottshall

Mount Penn Preserve COG**Kevin S. Barnhardt**

Chair, Berks County

Lee C. Olsen, AIA

Vice Chair, Berks County

Kim Mallatratt

Treasurer, Alsace Township

Linda Kelleher

Secretary, City of Reading

David Barth

Alsace Township

Todd Weikel

Lower Alsace Township

Terry Styer

Lower Alsace Township

Christeena Hauck

Mount Penn Borough

Claudia Hurwitz

Mount Penn Borough

Marcia Goodman-Hinershitz

City of Reading

www.mtpennpreserve.orgwww.facebook.com/mountpennpreservemountpennpreserve@gmail.com

A Mount Penn History Mystery Answer

<Question on Page 3>

ANSWER: The Pagoda has 87 steps to the top, and interesting things to see on the way, but the Tower has 168 steps. That's all the Tower has – just steps. But you are treated to a spectacular view of a part of Penn's Woods at the top!

History Mystery provided by Mike Reinert of WFMZ's "Berks Time Train"

The ups and downs of Duryea's drive

By Linda Kelleher

Duryea Drive, a switch-back road that takes travelers from the overpass connecting North 13th and Clymer street to the summit where the iconic Pagoda and Skyline Drive sit, was dedicated by the city in May 1951.

This stretch of roadway was named for Charles Duryea, an automaker in the early 1900s, who used the road to test drive and improve all the vehicles he manufactured in Reading.

Charles Duryea founded Duryea Motor Wagon Company with his brother Frank in Springfield, Mass., in 1893 where they built a one-cylinder four-horsepower car, which is considered the first successful gas-engine vehicle built in the U.S. The brothers began commercial production in 1895-96 and their first 10 cars sold were the first cars sold domestically.

After the brothers went their separate ways, Charles was drawn to Reading in 1900 by ironmaster Herbert Sternberg who promised to provide finan-



Duryea Automobile, 1895– J. Frank Duryea (Driver) and Arthur W. White (Passenger)

Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

cial backing for an auto manufacturing facility here in Reading – the Duryea Power Company for the manufacture of iron, steel, bath, including automobiles. By 1905-06, the Duryea Power Company was manufacturing 60 vehicles per year, including the four-wheel Phaeton vehicles.

By 1907 Duryea incorporated a new automobile with significant design innovations – the two-seater, two-cylinder, air-cooled engine named the Buggyaut featuring a simple body design to keep it at the affordable price of \$700. Unfortunately, the Buggyaut did not achieve the success Charles envisioned

and due to some discord between the Duryea Power Company partners the company folded. However, Charles continued on his own until 1914 when he closed shop in Reading.

Most of us recognize the Duryea name due to its attachment to the Duryea Hillclimb, a time trial event for up to 100 vehicles held each August by the BMR SCCA – Blue

Mountain Region Sports Car Club of America.

The Duryea Hillclimb has been in operation under various organizations since 1951. The 13 turns, 800-foot-plus elevation change, and 140 mile-per-hour top speeds make the Duryea Hillclimb one of the favorite courses on the Hillclimb circuit in North America. Famous drivers over the years have included Roger Penske and Mark Donahue.

Linda Kelleher is the long-time city clerk for the City of Reading. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

To see a full list of events and details in the Mount Penn Preserve, go to:

www.mtpennpreserve.org
www.facebook.com/mountpennpreserve

Add your event to our Website and Facebook Page

Contact: mountpennpreserve@gmail.com

Reading Pagoda, Gift Shop and Café Hours: Every Saturday and Sunday 12pm to 5pm

Intel's Community Flea and Craft Market: Saturday, September 22nd (7am)

Intel's Pennside Drive In Car Cruise: Sunday, September 23rd (2pm)

Antietam Lake Park History Hike by Berks County Parks and Rec: Monday, September 24th (6:30pm)

Intel's Community Flea and Craft Market: Saturday, September 29th (7am)

Ghouls and Fools 10k Nighttime Trail Run by Pretzel City Sports: Saturday, September 29th

Bixlers Lodge Hosts Something Shiny Band: Saturday, September 29th (9:30pm)

Reading Liederkrantz Oktoberfest: Wednesday, October 3rd through Sunday, October 7th

BAMBA's Take a Kid Mountain Biking in the Mount Penn Preserve Trails: Saturday, October 6th (1pm)

Roots To Wings- Rockin' Reptiles for Kids by Berks County Parks and Rec: Thursday, October 11th (10am)

Monoprintin Madness by Berks County Parks and Rec: Saturday, October 13th (10am)

Carsonia Beer and Wine Amusement: Saturday, October 13th

Reading Hospital Road Run: Sunday, October 14th

Angora Fruit Farm Pumpkins and Pizza by Berks County Parks and Rec: Thursday, October 18th (5pm)

Mount Penn Area Community Business Association's Block Party: Saturday, October 20th (12pm-4pm)

Angora Fruit Farm Halloween Night Hike and Hayride by Berks County Parks and Rec: Saturday, October 20th

Antietam Lake Park Paws on the Path by Berks County Parks and Rec: Sunday, October 21st (10am)

History Hike at Angora Fruit Farm by Berks County Parks and Rec: Wednesday, October 24th (5:30pm)

Mount Penn Preserve Partnership COG Executive Meeting: Wednesday, October 24th (7pm)

Fall Leaf Peeper Hike at Angora Fruit Farm by Berks County Parks and Rec: Saturday, October 27th (10am)

Ringgold Band 2018 Dinner Concert at Stokesay Castle: Sunday, November 4th (5pm)