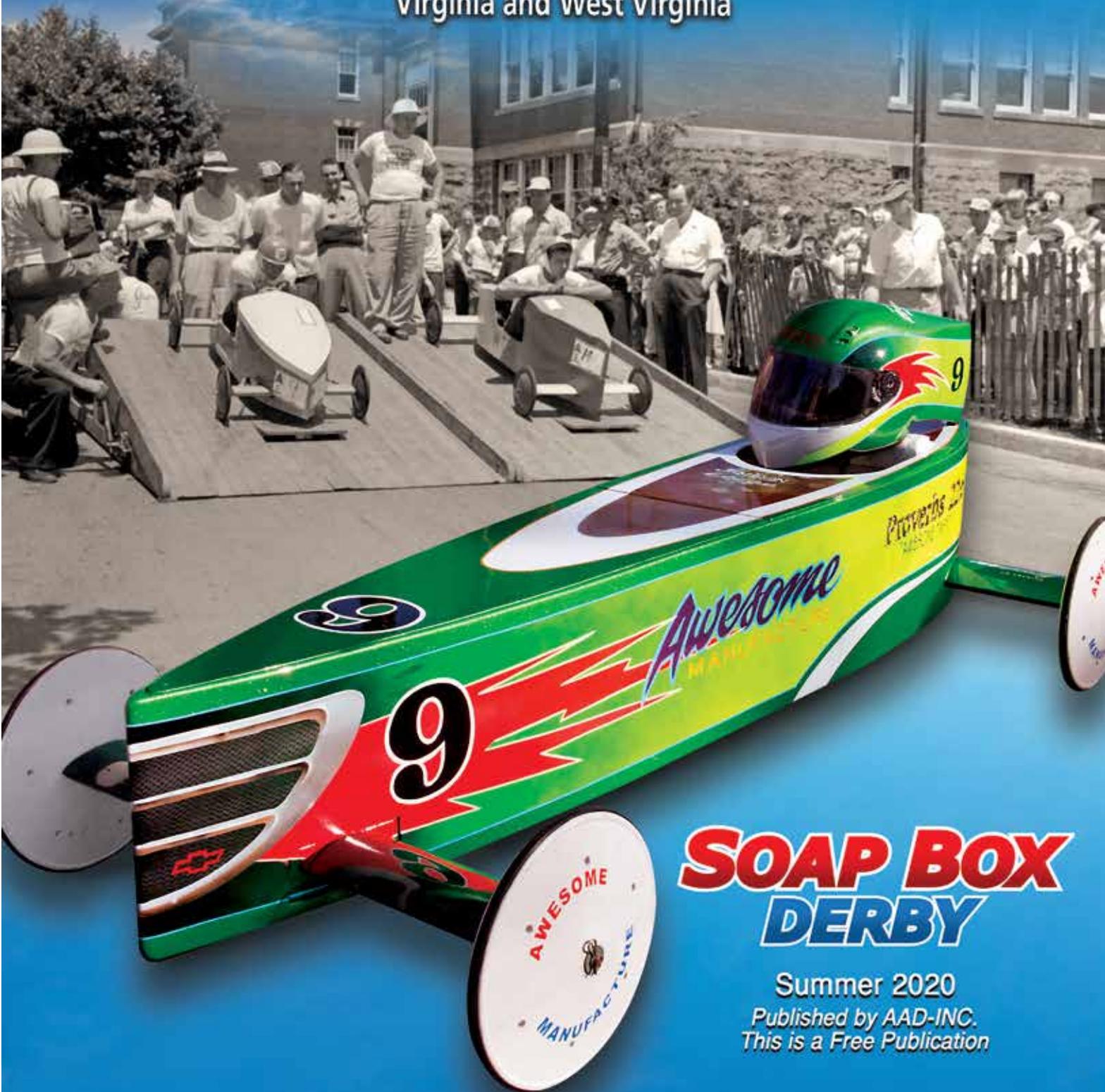


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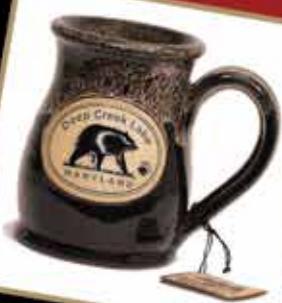
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ON THE COVER

A combination photo showing the first race of 1953 in South Cumberland, Maryland and a modern 2020-style Soap Box Derby car.

See the history of Soap Box Derby racing in Cumberland and Frostburg on page 18.



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The Salk Family at Deep Creek Lake

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**

Photographic images of Jonas Salk used with permission of the Jonas Salk family.

Dr. Jonas Salk, who developed the first safe and effective vaccine for polio, vacationed with his family at Deep Creek Lake for six years, from 1957-1962.



Above: Jonas Salk, circa 1954-1955.

**Left: Jonas Salk with lab technicians, Ethel Bailey and Elsie Ward (background).
Circa 1954-1955.**

Both photos courtesy University of Pittsburgh

When asked what activities he and his two brothers enjoyed during summers at Deep Creek Lake, Peter Salk mentions comic books and card games, but, he declares, “The best was water skiing.”

After seven years of spending summer vacations at Lake Erie, Jonas Salk did what Peter describes as a “wonderful thing” for his family. He bought a cottage at Deep Creek Lake, just two hours from their home in Pittsburgh. It’s likely that the Salks were introduced to Deep Creek Lake by their friends the Wishiks, who owned a place across the lake. The Wishiks had been influenced in their choice by Dr. Benjamin Spock, the renowned pediatrician, a Pittsburgh neighbor and professional colleague, who used to camp on the lot next to the one they purchased.

In front of the one-story Salk cottage, a broad lawn sloped to the water; the family spent a great deal of time in or on the lake. Their first outboard motor was too small to be ideal for pulling skiers, so they sometimes enjoyed the generosity of their neighbors, who had a powerful inboard motorboat. Eventually, the Salks outfitted their boat with a larger engine. Before skis, they used an aquaplane. For the fun of it, Peter made a smaller and much less stable version of an aquaplane using an old ironing board. He remembers once putting on a raincoat, taking a broom, and aquaplaning on his ironing board, pretending to sweep up the lake. When the family graduated to water skies, they enthusiastically embraced the sport, trying slalom skiing and even buying special trick skis that enabled them to turn around, and to ski both sideways and backwards.

The Salks had two other vessels: a small sailboat, and a dinghy rowboat they put together as a family project. Peter remembers the rowboat for an occasion of special significance to him as a sixteen-year-old. One day when he was bored, his mother gave him a challenge to row across the inlet and back in five minutes. While approaching the other side, he spotted a small group of Girl Scouts at the water's edge. After completing the challenge by returning to his side of the lake, he rowed back to meet the girls and "took a fancy" to one of them, Margie Nally. They became friends, and the friendship blossomed into a summer romance, which greatly added to Peter's enjoyment of his vacation.

For Peter's father, Deep Creek Lake was a refuge. His favorite way to relax was to take their small sailboat out onto the water and spend time there in solitude.

As the doctor who led the University of Pittsburgh team that developed the first effective polio vaccine in the 1950s, Dr. Salk was catapulted into instant fame. Peter recalls that his father got a lot of attention in 1953, when the polio vaccine he and his team were working on hit the news. Peter and his brothers and mother received injections of the experimental vaccine in their own kitchen, after his father sterilized the syringes and needles he had brought home from the lab in boiling water on the stove. Two weeks later, a second round of injections, administered to his wife and children by Dr. Salk in a more formal setting, were photographed by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, the organization that funded the vaccine development program, to demonstrate Dr. Salk's confidence in the safety of the still-experimental vaccine. Dr. Salk also was photographed receiving the vaccine from another doctor.

In April 1955, when the results of a nationwide field trial indicated that the vaccine was effective and ready for widespread use, Peter says that "all hell broke loose." The phone at their home rang constantly with requests from the media, forcing the family to use an answering service. Peter recalls that having the last name of Salk made it



Peter Salk receiving the polio vaccine from his father, Jonas Salk, while Mom, Donna, lends support (1953). Salk also injected his wife, and his two other sons. The vaccine was still experimental at this point.

Courtesy March of Dimes, Inc.



April 1955, Greater Pittsburgh Airport – Jonathan Salk places a flower in his father's lapel while the rest of his family looks on. The photo was taken shortly after the family returned from the University of Michigan, where the polio vaccine's effectiveness was announced.

Courtesy University of Pittsburgh

difficult to be a normal kid, and it was embarrassing for everyone that friends had to go through the answering service before being connected to one of the family members.

Interviews and articles of the era reveal what his celebrity meant to Jonas Salk. He was recognized and acknowledged with applause on plane flights, and he was routinely upgraded to penthouse suites when he checked into hotels. He received awards and frequent requests to speak or to be interviewed. Though he enjoyed the opportunities to share his ideas with the public, he often found the extent of the attention he received to be a burden. He would have preferred to continue his work as a scientist without distraction.

Poliomyelitis caused tremendous fear and devastation in the first half of the twentieth century. Thousands of people of all ages contracted polio, and though some recovered with little lasting impact, many cases resulted in serious disability or death. Salk's earlier experience included helping develop the first successful influenza vaccine, which was introduced to the armed forces at the end of World War II.

He felt he could apply similar techniques to find a way to immunize people against the dreaded polio virus. The documentary film *The Shot Felt 'Round the World* describes Jonas Salk and his team working sixteen hours a day, seven days a week at Municipal Hospital in Pittsburgh. In 1954, 38,000 new cases of polio, most in children under ten, were reported in the U.S.



Top: Peter, Jonathan, and Jonas Salk sailing on Deep Creek Lake.

Bottom: Donna and Jonas Salk launching their newly-built rowboat at their dock at Deep Creek Lake.

All color photos courtesy of the Jonas Salk Family

In this atmosphere, when the polio vaccine was finally available, parents lined up eagerly to have their children inoculated. The immediate effect was almost miraculous. New cases of poliomyelitis in the U.S. declined sharply. By 1961, seven summers after the vaccine was introduced, the number of cases had fallen by 97%. As the result of an ongoing international effort, with both the original vaccine and a second vaccine introduced later, polio has now nearly been eradicated throughout the world.

During these years that were somewhat turbulent for the family, the Salks spent six summers at Deep Creek Lake enjoying peace and quiet and a respite from the pressures of public attention. The family's last summer at the lake was in 1962. The next year, the Salk family moved to La Jolla, California, where the Salk Institute was under construction. Some of the final planning for the Institute was done at the lake during a visit by Louis Kahn, the noted architect responsible for the design of this award-winning building.

Debbie Martin McCombs, a child of the family who spent summers in the cottage next door to the Salks, has vivid memories of the years when the Salk boys, whose ages were similar to the age span of the four Martin children, spent much of their time at the Martin place. Debbie's father had built their cottage in 1952, and when the Salks bought the neighboring cottage, the children became frequent companions.

Debbie remembers (and has home movies of) many of their exploits. She describes Peter climbing her family's flagpole to re-string it, Darrell's being able to "hula hoop" on his legs as well as his waist, and the children having marathon sessions of playing cards. She remembers Dr. Salk asking her father to put his Citroën back together when parts fell off, and she, like Peter, noted the hours that Dr. Salk spent

Top: The three Salk sons; Peter, Jonathan and Darrell, enjoy spending time with Grandmother Dora, at their summer home at Deep Creek Lake.

Middle: Enjoying their quiet, peaceful time at Deep Creek Lake, Jonas teases wife, Donna, prior to the launch of their new rowboat.

Bottom: Darrell and Jonathan looking for their next photography subject.



on the water, relaxing in his small rowboat and his green and white Beetle Cat sailboat. Naturally, she also remembers the waterskiing, a recreation that occupied quite a lot of their time and attention.

The Martin family as well as other summer vacationers and local residents were aware of Jonas Salk's fame, but they respected his privacy.

In the summer when he met Margie, Peter worked with a local farmer who was building an additional house on his property. This was a great experience for Peter, in which he learned a lot about both farming and construction. His last summer at the lake came at the end of his first year of college.

When the boys were old enough, their mother resumed her work as a clinical social worker, and remained active in that profession until her death at age 85. Peter and his brothers continued their education and explored their outside interests. Peter enjoyed music, languages, and writing poetry. Darrell, an accomplished actor, was offered a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. Jonathan is a talented musician and writer; he co-authored *World Population and Human Values: A New Reality* (1981) with his father, and has recently released an updated edition of the book.

All three brothers earned medical degrees. Jonathan became a psychiatrist. Peter and Darrell both spent some years working with their father, who had continued with research in the field of immunology—Darrell on further studies related to polio and influenza vaccination, and Peter on cancer and autoimmune disease laboratory research. Jonas Salk's final working years were spent in an attempt to develop an HIV-AIDS vaccine. He died in 1995, at the age of 80, having firmly established his place in medical history.

Debbie McCombs says the whole Martin family missed the Salks after their departure from Deep Creek Lake, but

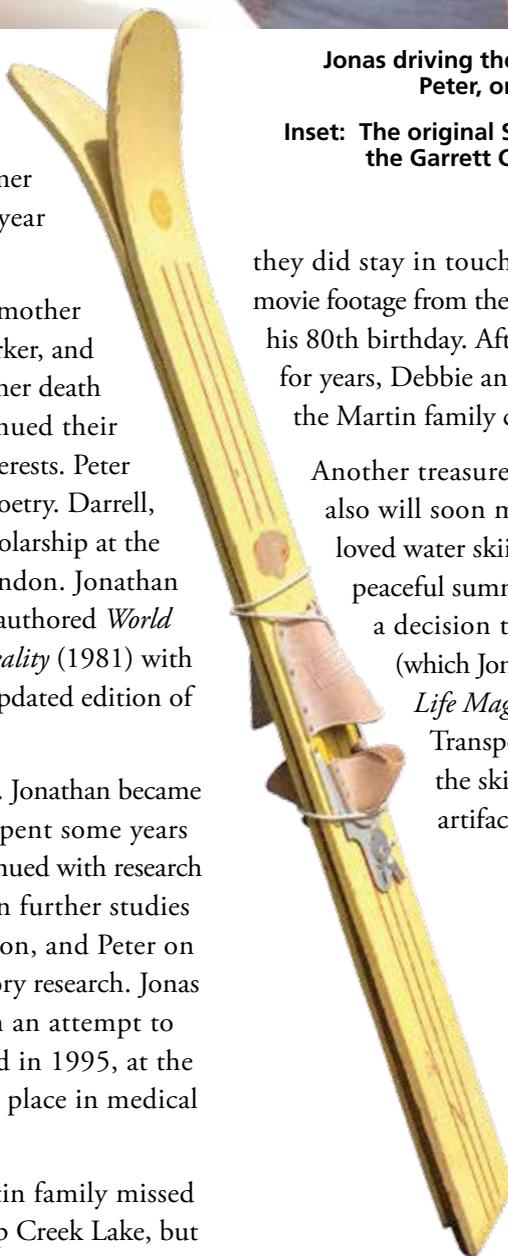


Jonas driving their outboard motorboat towing son, Peter, on the water skis at Deep Creek Lake.

Inset: The original Salk water skis are being donated to the Garrett County Museum of Transportation in Oakland, MD.

they did stay in touch. She put together a collection of movie footage from their summers as a gift for Jonas Salk on his 80th birthday. After living and working in Delaware for years, Debbie and her husband have moved back to the Martin family cottage at Deep Creek Lake.

Another treasured feature of those days at the lake also will soon make a return. The three boys who loved water skiing and who fondly remember the peaceful summers at Deep Creek Lake have made a decision to donate their family's water skis (which Jonas Salk is pictured wearing in a 1963 *Life Magazine* article) to the Museum of Transportation in Oakland, MD. There the skis will be exhibited along with other artifacts of bygone days on the lake.



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The Maryland Theatre Takes Center Stage in Hagerstown



Hagerstown, Maryland has long been known as the “Hub City,” where multiple railroad lines converge like the spokes of a wagon wheel. Since their arrival in the mid-1800s, the Western Maryland, Baltimore & Ohio, and Chesapeake & Ohio railroads have served as engines of the local economy in the tristate region of Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Today Hagerstown continues to serve as a commercial and industrial “Hub City” at the crossroads of I-70 and I-81. The region is among the fastest growing in the United States.

Written by: **Sara Mullins**

Photography provided by The Maryland Theatre

“Hagerstown is the hub of all things – culture, business, government, arts, entertainment, education and recreation,” says Jessica Green, executive director of the Maryland Theatre, which is centrally located downtown at 21 South Potomac Street. The Theatre serves as the anchor of Hagerstown’s Arts & Entertainment district, as well as the home of the Washington County Arts Council, Maryland Symphony Orchestra, City Ballet School, Miss Maryland Scholarship Pageant and the Barbara Ingram School of the Arts. Since 2009, the Ingram School has served as the first magnet high school for the visual and performing arts in Washington County and Western Maryland.



Above: The beautiful grand staircase leading to the Cocktail Lounge and theatre balcony.

Right: At the Maryland Theatre, five multi-use spaces are available for rent, such as the 2nd floor Cocktail Lounge. This 2020 Washington County Chamber of Commerce Business Awards event included all four floors of food and drink prior to awards in the auditorium.



“The Theatre is an historic landmark that celebrates the arts,” Jessica says. “It makes the Hagerstown community a place you’d want to live in. There’s something for everyone.” An estimated 100,000 people, plus 12,000 local students, visit the Theater annually to enjoy concerts featuring music of every genre, comedians, recitals, plays and children’s shows. Comfortable seating for 1,300 includes accommodations for seven wheelchairs. Big names who have appeared include BB King, George Carlin, The Temptations, Diamond Rio, Billy Rae Cyrus and Jay Leno. The Theatre also welcomes private events ranging from business-related events to educational offerings to family celebrations.

The Maryland Theatre Association, Inc., an independent non-profit organization, supports the Theatre as an historic property that provides quality educational and cultural programming to the Hagerstown community and beyond. About 5,000 volunteers provide additional support and staff the Concession Area.

Originally a Vaudeville House, the Maryland Theatre was built in 1915 for about \$200,000. That’s about \$5.1 million in 2020 dollars. Its design was a collaborative effort between Hagerstown’s Harry E. Yessler and New York City’s Thomas W. Lamb, renowned for his work on Madison Square Garden,

the Hippodrome and theaters in England, Egypt, India and South Africa. Those fortunate enough to attend the first, sold-out performance on May 10, 1915, enjoyed live orchestra music and a five-reel film entitled, “The Commuters.” General admission was 10 cents and box seats were 35 cents. When sound became available in 1927, the Theatre installed new seating and began showing movies that often attracted around 1,000 patrons on weekends and 600-700 on weekdays. Admission rose to 40 cents. From 1930 – 1969, the Theatre was owned by Warner Brothers and related

companies. In 1974, a fire destroyed the front of the Theatre, where the lobby is now located, and apartments above. Fortunately the historic auditorium escaped unscathed. But the Theatre gradually deteriorated until Gerald N. Minnich, a local funeral director, purchased it in 1976 just before it was to be sold to a contractor interested in its one million bricks. “Citizens to Save The Maryland Theatre,” a community group led by local businessman Jack Garrott, came to the rescue by coordinating donations of supplies, services and funds that resulted in a grand re-opening in 1978. The Theatre celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2015 with a major restoration that included upgraded seating, flooring, HVAC system, plaster repairs, fire protection and updates to the backstage.

Meanwhile, in 2011, Hagerstown officials and business leaders collaborated to create a Smart Growth community revitalization plan for the city’s urban core, in recognition of Hagerstown’s role as the region’s economic, institutional and cultural center. After approval by the State of Maryland and input from the community, the Community City Center Plan evolved as a 10-year roadmap for the implementation of eight projects to serve as catalysts for development in the area.

In recognition of the Maryland Theatre’s significance and contributions to the Hagerstown and surrounding communities, the Maryland Theatre Expansion Project was designated as the Plan’s Catalyst Project #2. Its primary goal: to expand the draw of downtown’s largest attraction by increasing performance days from 150 to 225, and attracting 60,000 or more patrons per year.

Executing such an ambitious plan involved the implementation of detailed, annual steps. The resulting transformation of the Theatre has been comprehensive. Enhancements include a new entrance, additional performance space, improved seating within the theatre, better backstage accessibility and conditions, box office space, a conference room, and new offices for local partner organizations. A spacious rehearsal area on the third floor replicates the auditorium stage, complete with changing facilities, and serves as an area for rehearsals or classes with connectivity to the Washington County Public School System. Five multi-use spaces are available for rent. On the fourth floor, the Dr. George and Connie Manger Ballroom overlooks Potomac Street and offers a rare view of the mountains beyond Hagerstown.

“This expansion is a drastic change for the audience,” Jessica says. “Improvements include four entrances – or five, if you count the VIP suite – and 17 restrooms. Overall, it



Top: The Historic Auditorium with stage view from the balcony.

Above: The Grand Lobby during the 2020 Chamber of Commerce event.

provides audiences with a better experience. It has been a long time in the works. The timing worked out well, with support from local government, donors and the community.” On October 11, 2019, an official ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of the Maryland Theatre Expansion Project.

The Maryland Theatre is on the map. “We can compete with DC and Baltimore, with the benefit of convenience for local patrons,” Jessica says. “Our guests come from Washington, Frederick, Allegany, and Mineral Counties, as well as nearby Pennsylvania counties. There’s something for everyone.”

Meanwhile, the Theatre continues to fulfill its commitment to its core audience, the residents of Hagerstown and surrounding area. Jessica says, “We’re right here, in your community, in an iconic building that celebrates the arts. We want to make the community a place where people want to live. The future of the Theatre is bright. We’ll celebrate our 105th this year.”

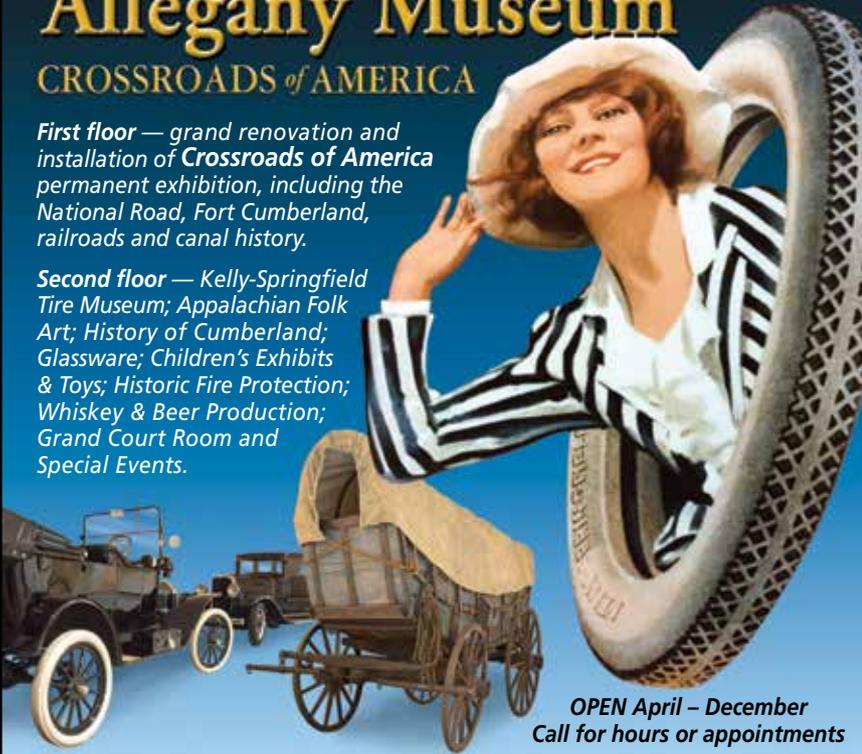
For more information, visit The Maryland Theatre web site at www.mdtheatre.org or call 301-790-2000.

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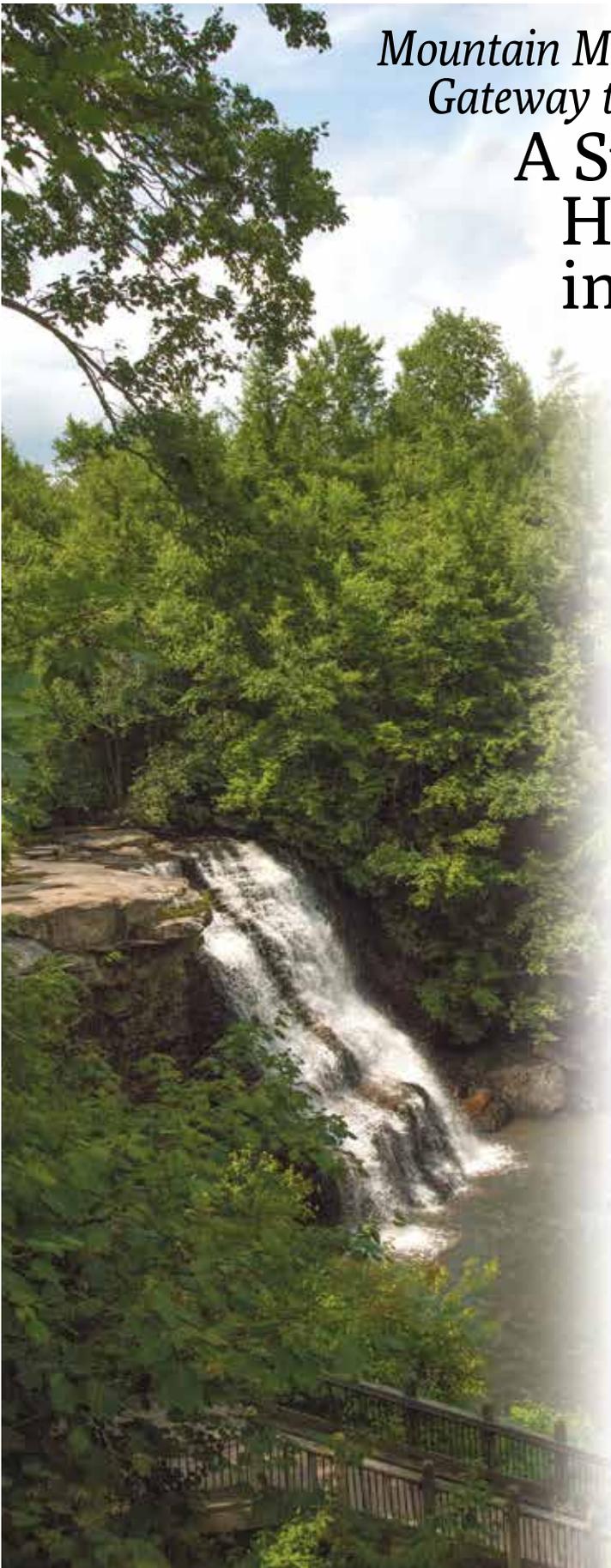
Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West A Story of History and Heritage in Western Maryland



Written by: **Kim Folk**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Garrett County is one of 13 certified Heritage Areas in Maryland. What is a Heritage Area you ask? Well, Heritage Areas are regions where historic structures, landscapes, cultural traditions, and other resources (such as parks and museums) work together to tell patterns of history unique to the location. The Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West tells Garrett County's story of historic transportation, recreation, cultural uniqueness and the natural wonders that represent the people and landscapes of our beautiful county.

Garrett County, not unlike other areas, has a rich history to tell. In the early 1800s, the western most portion of Maryland, Garrett County became a popular destination for folks who wanted to escape the heat of our surrounding counties. They quickly found out that the fresh mountain air of Western Maryland was much cooler and crisper than those to our east. Many travelers made the commute to Western Maryland by train. The completely restored B&O Train Station in Oakland still hosts visitors today but, instead of stopping by to catch a train, they are most likely stopping by to stroll through the museum or take photos of the 1920 Baldwin Steam Engine on display just outside the station. In 1811 the historic National Road, the first federally funded highway in the country, provided a relatively quick and easy route to travel frequently to the mountains. The Casselman River Bridge which was completed in 1815 was at one time the longest single-span stone arch bridge in the United States. It is still as beautiful and magnificent today as it was back then! This area, once known as Little Crossings, is now Casselman River Bridge State Park. Thousands of people stop each year to walk across the bridge, take photos, have a picnic and just relax while passing through. It is these stories and structures that make historic transportation one of our heritage themes.



**Top to bottom: Casselman River Bridge State Park;
Oakland B&O Train Station; Amish horse and buggy;
and kayakers on Deep Creek Lake.**

**Facing Page: Muddy Creek Falls at Swallow Falls
State Park.**

Historic recreation has long been a calling card for Garrett County. With such a rich history of outdoor recreation throughout our county, you do not have to look far to see how important recreation was and still is to our local economy and everyday life of the locals and visitors to our area. Being home to so many waterways, fishing, boating and all types of watersports are and have always been a driving force of outdoor recreation. As home to the mighty Youghiogheny and Savage Rivers, kayakers and whitewater enthusiasts from all over the country travel to this region to experience these challenging waters, while boaters love to spend a day on Deep Creek Lake, Maryland's largest manmade lake. The Deep Creek Lake area sees 1.2 million visitors each year who come to Western Maryland to get away from the "city life" for a bit. Hiking our beautiful scenic trails is a popular pastime for locals and visitors. Swallow Falls State Park, where you will see Maryland's tallest free-falling waterfall was once a popular vacation spot for Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. And Wisp Resort, the only ski resort in Maryland, has grown from a few trails in 1955 to over 30 trails, 8 chairlifts, 2 terrain parks, and a tubing park along with a full array of summer activities. Recreation in this area is still inspiring people to get outside and unplug in a world that is often too connected.

It goes without saying that Garrett County is unique in so many ways. Our Heritage Area celebrates our uniqueness in the stories and people that make us so special. From our tour of over 40 barn quilts, that you can drive our scenic byways to visit, to the Amish influences throughout our county. Don't be surprised if instead of parking beside a car you are parking beside a horse and buggy at the local "bent and dent." If you don't know what that is, ask a local. They are sure to explain and tell you where to find one. With over 8 museums celebrating our history and heritage and the numerous historic trails and markers throughout the county you are sure to find your connection in Garrett County even if that connection is just finding a reason to relax. For more heritage related stories, resources and information visit www.GarrettHeritage.com.





Allegany County, Maryland **SOAP BOX** **DERBY RACING**

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

Summertime during the 1950s included outdoor activities that created fun for hundreds of kids in Allegany County. Swimming pools, fireworks displays, fishing expeditions, scouting trips, and baseball games kept youngsters busy during the long school recess. While those activities remain popular, one highly publicized event nearly faded from the local scene after it was abruptly canceled more than six decades ago. What spectacle prompted spectators to crowd local streets hoping to catch a glimpse of a family member or neighborhood celebrity? Soap box derby racing, a phenomenon that swept across the United States and Tri-State region in the postwar era! The derby races proved to be popular attractions that brought together families, civic

groups, businesses, and city officials—a noble achievement. A look at how the races began shines a spotlight on a different era while also highlighting the successful derby program held in the city of Frostburg that has kept the sport vibrant.

In the past local boys constructed primitive soap box racers, referred to as “jitneys,” during the summer months and the results proved to be creative and impressive. Working alone or with a few friends, axles and wheels were salvaged from wagons, baby carriages, lawn mowers, and training wheel sets. The axles were typically fastened to wooden 2x4s and then attached to a framed sheet of plywood about 4 or 5 feet in length. The front axle assembly required

a bolt fastened at the middle, so the wheels would turn. By placing both feet on the steering assembly and pushing to the left or right, jitneys could be steered.

Braking systems proved to be an afterthought and usually amounted to dragging a pair of Chuck Taylor Converse shoes on the road surface. More sophisticated brakes involved attaching a short 2x4 timber to the vehicle's side. By pulling on the wooden handle, contact was made with the road surface. Another braking contraption featured a small board attached to a spring loaded hinge on the plywood floor. Depressing the board created contact with the road surface. None of the systems made much of a difference in slowing the jitneys and accidents proved to be common. And while the homemade racers could not be called sophisticated, each was unique and the result of creative engineering skills. Building and racing the vehicles always caused dad's tools to be shared among friends, but typically occurred without adult supervision.

A more sophisticated and safer approach to the building of homemade racing vehicles arrived in Cumberland soon after the close of World War II when civic clubs and business organizations decided to host soap box derby racing events under the auspices of a national organization called the "All American Soap Box Derby." The national organization formed in 1934



Facing page: First race of 1953 on Pennsylvania Avenue in South Cumberland. Pennsylvania Avenue School is in the background.

Top: Derby contestants getting ready for their races on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Bottom: Crowds line the street near the finish line on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Inset: Racer (unknown) posing with his car, early 1950s.

and subsequently hosted a series of races featuring unpowered cars called soap box derby racers, a name derived from the wooden soap boxes from which the racers were originally created. And like Allegany County jitneys, the cars relied on gravity for motion.

The formal soap box derby competition, while coexisting with the informal neighborhood races, offered interested boys a chance to refine their skills and compete on a higher level. Steering wheels, safety helmets, an improved braking system, and ball bearing wheels became standard equipment for all racers in the organized events, thereby increasing both safety and speeds. Although the vehicles were more robust, participants still assembled sections of their cars using humble materials such as plywood, corrugated metal, and discarded signs.

In 1947, the Cumberland Optimist Club introduced soap box derby racing to Cumberland when it held a race on Holland Street in North End. From newspaper reports, it seems the first race was influenced by All American Soap Box Derby rules, but not formally included in the process. Thirty-one boys from the Tri-State area divided into divisions between ages 11-15, and competed on the Holland Street course that was marked into racing lanes between Trost and Sylvan Avenues. A Keyser participant, sponsored by LaRosa Confectionary, won the championship race that was well attended.

Encouraged by the Optimist Club's inaugural event, local groups decided to make formal application to the All American Soap Box Derby. Chevrolet sponsored the races on a national level, while Eiler Chevrolet (located on North Mechanic Street) consistently promoted and sponsored the local competition. A second major sponsor was the Cumberland *Times-News* where J. Suter Kegg, sports

writer, featured articles about participants as a build up to the races. Mr. Kegg also served as a lead race official for a number of years.

Inclusion in the racing circuit brought strict rules for derby construction, and an official rule book was published which every boy was required to follow. A major purpose in the building phase was to bring families together in a collaborative effort. Fathers could assist, as could neighbors, friends, and relatives. Each participant also secured a formal sponsor



Neil Jones' soap box derby car, sponsored by Ort's Bakery, and memorabilia has been donated to the Allegany Museum in Cumberland, MD.

The drawing of Neil Jones, Cumberland's 1949 Derby Champ, appeared in the Cumberland *Times-News*.

who typically purchased the wheels and axles for the driver. To subsidize local racers, Eiler Chevrolet announced that mandatory materials could be purchased from the dealership "at cost." Additional supplies for each car could not exceed six dollars in value, although that amount was raised in later years.

During race week, cars underwent inspections where officials checked for total weight (car and driver could not exceed 250 pounds), and total length. The ball bearing equipped soap box wheels could not extend beyond the nose of the racer. An important inspection point also



Winner of the Pennsylvania Avenue 1955 Soap Box Derby was Roger Taylor. Oscar Lashley, President of the Jaycees is presenting the 1st place trophy.

involved the steering assembly that now included cables and pulleys attached to a steering wheel, a major improvement over the improvised jitney systems.

The outer appearance of cars varied greatly because different materials were salvaged for use, including oilcloth, cans, and corrugated metal. Allen Haines, a multiyear participant and well known street rod enthusiast, used a discarded Coca Cola sign found in the weeds near a neighborhood store. “I actually built the car myself. It wasn’t pretty, but it was successful,” recalled Mr. Haines. Carney’s auto parts store in Cumberland sponsored Allen each year that he participated. Restaurants, service stations, clubs, and individuals from the Tri-State area pitched in to assist the youngsters.

The Cumberland *Times-News* built excitement by featuring stories about drivers, sponsors, and deadlines in the lead up to the first All American Soap Box Derby event.

One major change in the early racing series was the venue. Race officials apparently decided the Holland Street course was too steep, so a decision was made to hold the 1948 race on Greene Street. Photographs show the starting line to be in the vicinity of Smallwood Street and the finish line near Johnson Street. Photographs also show hundreds of spectators gathered along Greene Street and near the park at Washington’s Headquarters. Dickie Burns, a 13 year-old from Keyser, defeated Carl Slemmer of LaVale for the first official championship to be held in Cumberland. The winner received a large trophy and four day trip to the national championship in Akron, Ohio.

In addition to the winner’s prizes, additional awards were presented for Best Upholstered, Best Sportsman, and Best Constructed.

The 1949 race proved to be the most exciting of all the local events. Two competitors in the championship race, Allen Haines of Potomac Park, and Neil Jones of Midland, recalled the pre-race build up and championship competition more than five decades later.

Neil initially did not want to participate in Cumberland because he thought, “it would be too much work.” After changing his mind, Neil decided to start work on a car sponsored by Ort’s Bakery. “My mother, father, brothers, and most of the kids in Midland helped me build the car,” stated Neil.

When the big day came, fans crowded the sidewalks of Greene Street hoping to catch a glimpse of the multiple heats. As the races progressed, both Allen and Neil won their heats and were matched in the championship run. The flag dropped and the boys sped forward. As Neil remembered, “I threw my weight forward” hoping to gain an initial advantage. Both boys remained deadlocked down the 800 foot course nearing speeds of 35 miles per hour, and both reported it was a close duel. The race proved to be so close that neither boy knew who won when crossing the finish line.

Allen reported that race officials huddled briefly to discuss the close finish. At the end of the conference, it was decided that Neil Jones had won a narrow victory in a time of 31.5 seconds. A trophy, a three-layer cake, and an

expense paid trip to Derby Downs in Akron were Neil's reward. Allen carried home a baseball glove, a watch, and the opportunity to compete the following year. In later years, both men enjoyed reminiscing about the duel on Greene Street.

In 1950, race officials once again changed the race venue because of traffic congestion in the Greene Street area caused by the Cumberland flood control project. McMullen Highway, at a location just south of the Circle Inn, was approved by the Maryland State Roads Commission. Today the location would be best described as near the entrance to the Industrial Park near Bowling Green. Another first for the 1950 event was a starting ramp that provided the racers with an initial burst of speed. Nearly 50 entries once again confirmed the popularity of the series.

In 1951, Pennsylvania Avenue in South Cumberland was selected as the location for all remaining official soap box derby races. The course was reported to be 1,000 feet long with a finish line near Fourth Street. By that time the annual event had grown to be more than a soap box derby race, as parades, proclamations of "Soap Box Derby Week," and food vendors, created a festive atmosphere that drew more than 5,000 visitors to South End, a number equal to 25% of today's city population. Civic clubs, parents, businesses, and city officials all cooperated to put on first class races. Officials added an additional attraction in 1955 when well known high school coaches Norm Getz, Bobby Cavanaugh, Bob Pence, and Bill Hahn, raced in "gasless buggies," larger soap box vehicles constructed

especially for the event. The 1955 derby proved to be the biggest in the seven year series. Unfortunately, the good times did not last.

In March 1956 John J. McMullen, publisher of the newspaper and race sponsor, received unexpected news when the All American Soap Box Derby informed him that the agreement between the newspaper and race organization would be ended. Although the Cumberland races initially exceeded the minimum of 50 entries, disqualifications and withdrawals dropped the final number per race to below the required specification. Officials in Hagerstown and Frederick were also notified they would no longer be authorized to host races, thereby leaving Baltimore as the only state venue. The loss of certification brought an end to Cumberland racing. Midland, Lonaconing, and Frostburg intermittently held unofficial races that drew spectators and participants, but without major sponsors the sport eventually faded from the county.

CUMBERLAND SOAP BOX DERBY WINNERS 1948 – 1955

1948	Greene Street	Dicky Burns
1949	Greene Street	Neil Jones
1950	McMullen Highway	Ernesto Mellon
1951	Pennsylvania Avenue	Ricardo Mellon
1952	Pennsylvania Avenue	Robert Gero
1953	Pennsylvania Avenue	George Day
1954	Pennsylvania Avenue	Jimmy Mellon
1955	Pennsylvania Avenue	Roger Taylor



Fourteen year old Deidre Waites was the first Frostburg Derby Days winner in 1977, topping 23 contestants (22 boys and 1 other girl).

After nearly two decades without soap box derby competition, Frostburg Elks Lodge 470 revived the sport when it decided to organize races for the July 4th weekend, as part of the nation's bicentennial celebration. According to Dale Iman, Elks member and current co-chair of the derby event, "The lodge wanted to provide the city of Frostburg with a bicentennial gift. We did not have the event in 1976, but were able to stage it the following year."

In the spring of 1977, T. William Preston formally announced the inaugural Soap Box Derby Days during a city council meeting and requested a 100 dollar donation from members. Mr. Preston explained the donation was on behalf of the local Elks Lodge 470, coordinator of the event. Arrangements included participation from Potomac Valley Television Cable Channel 8, which regularly covered local stories.

Officials for the first event included Al Via, Herk Humbertson, Don Peck, Vernon Wolodkin, Rick Rando, Coy Chaney, Joe Paletta, Ken James, and Bob Kamauff. Mr. Via, chairman, commented that Frostburg racing events would not be affiliated with the All American Derby due to excessive rules and because "professionalism had crept in." In fact, the All American event had been targeted for criticism after a number of cheating scandals, including one where a



Above: Diedre Waites receiving her winning trophy from Al Via at the first Frostburg Elks Derby Day races (1977).



Left: Deidre Waites and grandson, Kycin Waites (third generation Derby Day racer).

Bottom left: Travis Waites (Deidre's son) racing in 1994.

Photo courtesy Phil Beeman

Bottom right: Kycin Waites (Travis's son) racing the Jenkins Collision Center car.

Photo courtesy Phil Beeman



sophisticated arrangement of hidden magnets in the front end of a derby car gave one competitor an unfair advantage. Mr. Via explained, “(Our event) is practically the same as the official soap box derby...but our rules are not as strict. This derby is designed as a fun thing.”

Frostburg service organizations and veterans’ clubs provided resources to ensure drivers would meet the published standards. The Frostburg rules stated that no driver could weigh more than 120 pounds, and that sponsors must pay for all the materials going into the construction of vehicles. Age limits were listed as 10-14.

When race day arrived, spectators lined both sides of Main Street to watch the heats and finals.

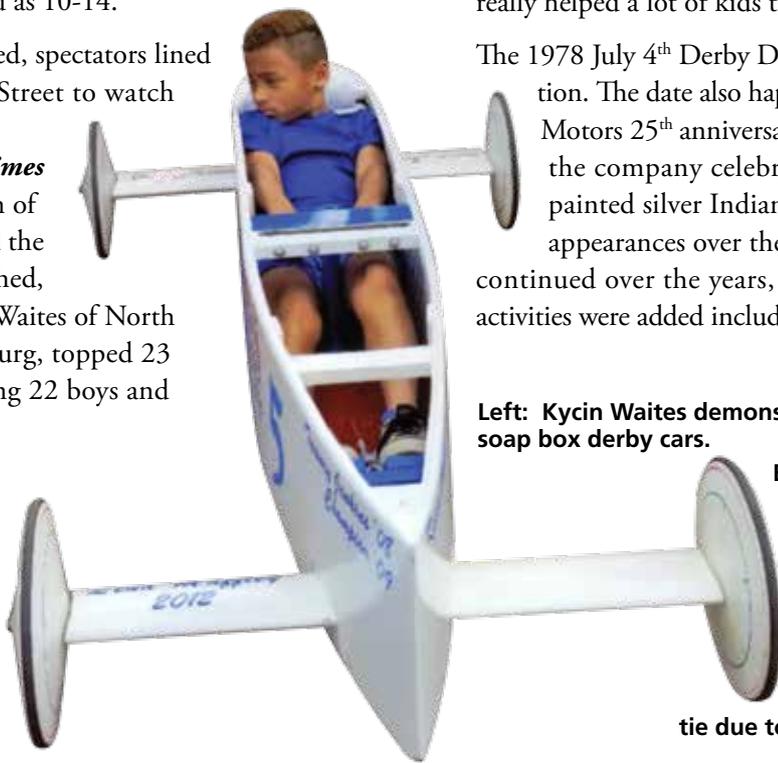
The *Cumberland Times* captured the reaction of many who witnessed the event when it published, “It’s a Girl.” Deidre Waites of North Water Street, Frostburg, topped 23 contestants, including 22 boys and one other girl.

Four decades later Deidre recalled the exciting day. “We didn’t have brakes on the car—we had to hit hay bales at the bottom of

Main Street to stop. On race day I kept winning, so I had to keep hitting the hay bales. Eventually, the front part of my car sprung up and we had to tape it down. I was so happy that I won!”

Deidre’s family has continued the soap box derby tradition through Travis and Kycin, her son and grandson. The family ties to racing became even more special when Kycin drove the same car as his father. Deidre explained, “Sometimes individuals donate the soap box racers to the Elks, so they can be modified and raced again. The Elks have really helped a lot of kids this way.

The 1978 July 4th Derby Days enjoyed increased participation. The date also happened to coincide with General Motors 25th anniversary of Corvette production, and the company celebrated by providing a specially painted silver Indianapolis 500 pace car that made appearances over the weekend. As the racing series continued over the years, additional special events and activities were added including concerts and food vendors.



Left: Kycin Waites demonstrates the “tight fit” inside the soap box derby cars.

Below left: Hayden Heslop with the Armstrong Insurance car — the #1 car has been sponsored by Armstrong Insurance since the Elks Derby race inception.

Photo courtesy Phil Beeman

Below right: Hannah Wharton was one of the 2019 winners which resulted in a ten-way tie due to inclement weather conditions.

Photo courtesy Phil Beeman





Top: Staging area and starting ramps at the Frostburg Elks Derby Day races. Since 1977 the Frostburg Elks races have been held each year on July 4th.

Bottom: The finish line is at the Elks Lodge on Frostburg's Main Street; since 2012, a laser (see arrow) became the official judge for each heat.

The Frostburg racing series captures all the benefits of the All American Soap Box Derby series that was held decades ago, but also offers improvements. Dale Iman noted some of the changes, including one-time use of racing wheels. “As part of the construction, practice wheels are installed on the cars. The drivers may practice with those wheels, have their cars inspected for weight (200 pounds for car and driver), and then regulation wheels are given out the morning of the race. We keep the regulation wheels for use the following year.”

Another difference is the emphasis on vehicles exteriors. Mr. Iman stated, “We give them the primary regulations for building, but the exterior surface is up to them. Cars will range from the old box styles to sleek custom painted ones. Sometimes “wraps” with specialized art work are used. We do not place a money limit on the exterior.”

Perhaps the most obvious improvement in the racing series is the welcoming of girls—the older racing series focused exclusively on boys.

The Elks and city of Frostburg continue to enjoy the success they started more than four decades ago. Races typically draw 35 to 40 entries from the Tri-State

FROSTBURG DERBY DAY WINNERS 1977 – 2019

- 1977 Deidre Waites
- 1978 Brian Finn
- 1979 Randy Eichhorn
- 1980 Mark Wolodkin
- 1981 Bucky Tyler
- 1982 Will Vogtman
- 1983 Michael Warne
- 1984 Michael Whitehead
- 1985 Todd Vogtman
- 1986 Carrie Ann Clise
- 1987 Heidi Reamer
- 1988 Carson Rinehart
- 1989 Steve Cook
- 1990 Seth Wharton
- 1991 Josh Cook
- 1992 Amanda Yonkers
- 1993 Mary Beth Kennell
- 1994 Mary Beth Kennell
- 1995 Tara Emerick
- 1996 Michael Klepitch
- 1997 Brittany Morgan
- 1998 Andrew Farrell
- 1999 Jackie Ayers
- 2000 Jeremiah Recker
- 2001 Cassidy Emerick
- 2002 Justin Smith
- 2003 Jordon Wilson
- 2004 Ryan Kennell
- 2005 Evan Shircliffe
- 2006 Evan Shircliffe
- 2007 Ryan Kennell
- 2008 Zach Hager
- 2009 Tawney Jenkins
- 2010 Zachary Judd
- 2011 Luke Vinci
- 2012 Cross Ritchie
- 2013 Damon Scheid
- 2014 Ryan Kelly
- 2015 Garrett Williams
- 2016 Eli Sibley
- 2017 Isaiah Wharton
- 2018 Avery Mathews

2019

(Races cancelled, mid event due to inclement weather — 10 way tie)

- Cole Trenum
- Hannah Wharton
- Taylor Penick
- Kycin Waites
- Mariah Hershberger
- Isaiah Kozikowski
- Jakob Fullerton
- Brylee Lough
- Kyle Huff
- Carter Neilson

region, and more than one thousand spectators now line Main Street to enjoy the competition and festivities.

Mr. Iman notes the soap box derby event is primarily for kids and that many sponsors graciously assist. “We appreciate the sponsors and volunteers who mentor our children. This is a family event intended to bring children together with parents by having them work on a fun project.” The Elks national organization recognized the tremendous success of the program when it awarded Frostburg Lodge 470 its Best Community Service Project award; quite an honor considering the thousands of lodges across the country.

“Armstrong Insurance has sponsored a car in the Elks Derby Day race since its inception, and of course we love having Car Number One,” says Barb Armstrong. “What better way to give back to the community than supporting the event that has provided 4th of July Frostburg fun for many, many years. Even more fun than watching the cars run is watching the Derby Day morning unfold. Families set their pop-up tents early so that they can get their pictures taken, cars weighed, racing tires on, and food and coolers ready for the day. They polish, tighten, and adjust the cars—take family pictures, dole out advice, and cheer their drivers onward to victory. It’s small town red, white, and blue Frostburg at its best.”

No one is sure when the old style jitneys of the 1950s and 1960s lost favor. Perhaps parental concerns about safety were a major cause of their demise. Perhaps kids lost interest and no longer want to bang around with hand tools anymore. Or perhaps the times passed by jitneys just as Teslas silently streak by Chevy Impalas today. The end just happened and no one thought much about it.

There is much to be said for the organized racing events. Even the All American Soap Box Derby has evolved into Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs and categories for young adults. Yes, 20 year old kids may race in sanctioned soap box derby events. Fortunately, Allegany County residents may combine the legacy of jitneys with the excitement and festive atmosphere of the Frostburg Elks Derby Days—the best of both worlds.

The Frostburg Derby Days event has been cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19 Virus — returning July 4, 2021!

Author’s Note: Neil Jones graciously provided information on his soap box derby experiences during interviews in 2004 and 2015. Allen Haines, Cumberland Maryland resident, generously provided his time and memories to Historical Research Methods students at Allegany High School for their volume on the 1950s, “Primetime.”

Glen Shaffer puts his heart and soul into building Soap Box Derby cars!

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

“Building soap box derby cars is a passion with me.”

Glen Shaffer’s thirty four years of dedication to building soap box derby cars for youngsters is an ongoing story that continues to excite drivers and spectators at the Elks Derby Day in Frostburg, MD, where his cars are prominently displayed. While Glen’s introduction to the hobby was by chance, there has been nothing random about Glen’s dedication and passion to building cars over the decades.

As Glen remembers, “Around 1986, I was riding my motorcycle and stopped at the Frostburg 7-Eleven store to watch the soap box derby races. A friend’s son was competing and I wanted to see him. I began to look at the cars and decided that I could build better ones. Until that time I never had any association with soap box derby races or cars.”

As promised Glen and his friend, Ed Strickler, set out to build a car for Ed’s son, Matthew. The car building process intrigued young Matthew and he frequently visited Glen’s shop as the second car was being built. “As Ed and I built the car, Matthew would stop by to take photographs. He would always remark, ‘This car is awesome.’ Matthew’s “awesome” comments became the manufacturing name associated with all cars built by Glen.

Awesome #15 arrived with the assistance of Jim Stemple, Frostburg resident and friend, who wanted a car for his daughter. According to Glen, “We worked every Wednesday night for three or four months. Jim took notes, and then edited the notations into a manual that is available for others interested in building a soap box derby racer.”

Glen also created a safety inspection check list that officials use to monitor entries prior to race day. Instructions and lists presented in the binder are not affiliated with the All American Soap Box Derby, but do present similar rules.

An estimated time for building a car is three months, although the time depends on particular requests and circumstances. Using ¾ inch plywood for a base and ¼ inch lauan paneling for the covering, each car is hand crafted. The unique features incorporated into the cars, like the steering mechanism and braking assembly, were derived from inspiration. “I never had formal training. Building cars is God’s way of allowing me to be helpful,” explains Glen.



Glen Shaffer in his Cresaptown workshop with his most recent soapbox derby car, Awesome #20.

Below: Glen with last minute instructions, encouragement and advice to young driver, Kycin Waites.

The craftsmanship displayed in Glen's Cresaptown shop does not include the use of plastics, fiberglass, or purchased kits. Sometimes he does partner with local experts for painting — Jenkin's Collision Center, Eric Broadwater's Autobody Repair, and Murray Signs have completed the decorative phases of cars over the years. Growden's Upholstery in Bedford also contributed by making custom interiors in recent years.

The goodwill and legacy created by the vehicles make them even more valuable as time passes.

Diedre Waites, first winner of the Frostburg Elks Derby in 1977, mentored her son and grandson. In 1997 Travis raced in Awesome 14, as did his son, Kycin, in more recent years.

The 1988 Awesome car, built for Allegany County resident Seth Wharton, became a legacy vehicle after it was raced by both his son and daughter, making it a three-time Wharton entry. Seth won the championship in 1990, while his son, Isaiah, followed with a championship in the 2017 derby.

One of Glen's more emotional stories occurred when Jim Stemple's daughter, Melissa, graciously allowed a cousin to race her car. "It was quite a sacrifice for Melissa to make and it showed great compassion," recalls Glen.

While not the only local builder, Glen's cars are particularly well known and respected. Evidence of his success



can be found in the nineteen first place finishes Awesome cars have enjoyed in the Elk's racing series between 1989-2019.

It is possible that Glen will no longer build soap box derby cars, but he intends to maintain and improve the cars if requested. "God has given me the skills, so the cars are my gift to the drivers. When I pass, people will remember me for the soap box derby cars. 'He used to build soap box derby racers,' is what people will say. I really do put my heart and soul into each car."

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May 30, 2020
Wisp Resort 7:30PM



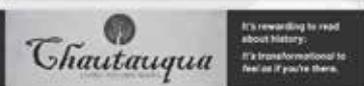
June 6, 2020 **FREE CONCERT**
Wisp Resort • 6:00PM



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July 11, 2020
Wisp Resort 6:00PM

July 5-7, 2020 **FREE EVENT**
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BETHLEHEM HALL

August 2, 2020
Wisp Resort 6:00PM



CHERRY HILL JUNCTION

October 23, 2020
Garrett College Auditorium 7:30PM

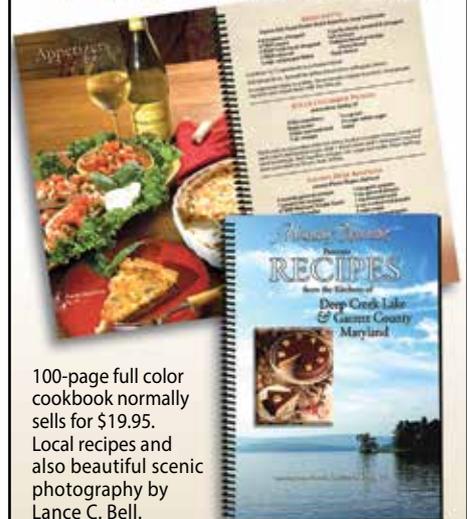
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Celebrating Deep Creek Lake's 95th Anniversary



Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

Deep Creek is Maryland's largest freshwater lake and Western Maryland's premier recreational destination site, as each year thousands of vacationers enjoy the four-season activities the lake offers. The increasing popularity of Deep Creek Lake has caused many changes over the years, especially in the development of lakefront property. As Deep Creek Lake approaches its 95th year, let us take a trip down memory lane to an earlier time when the region remained a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered by vacationers.

Ground was broken for Deep Creek Lake on November 1, 1923. Its name was derived from a stream located between Roman Nose Ridge and Marsh Hill Ridge, and its purpose

was to provide hydroelectric power for the Pennsylvania Electric Power Corporation of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Approximately 8,000 acres of land were purchased to begin the project, including 140 farms. An ambitious undertaking, a new rail connection from the B&O Railroad in Oakland, Maryland, became necessary to transport heavy equipment and materials to the excavation site. A quarry for stone crushing provided raw materials for the dam work, while steel bridges were erected to accommodate rising waters and vehicle traffic around the water. After months of planning and construction, the hydroelectric plant went on line in May, 1925.



Deep Creek Lake with Glendale Bridge in the foreground.

PHOTO BY LANCE BELL

Not all of the original hydroelectric plans came to be realized, while new ones surfaced. The first plan to be eliminated called for building additional impoundments near Swallow Falls. New plans to install flashboards on the Deep Creek Dam, which would have raised the level of the lake four vertical feet, were proposed. Flashboards would have put lake water within a minimal distance of being able to empty into the Potomac River watershed as opposed to flowing westward into the Ohio River. Nothing ever came of the plan, but it explains a quirk of Deep Creek Lake. The level of the lake today, at maximum spillway level, is 2,462 feet elevation.

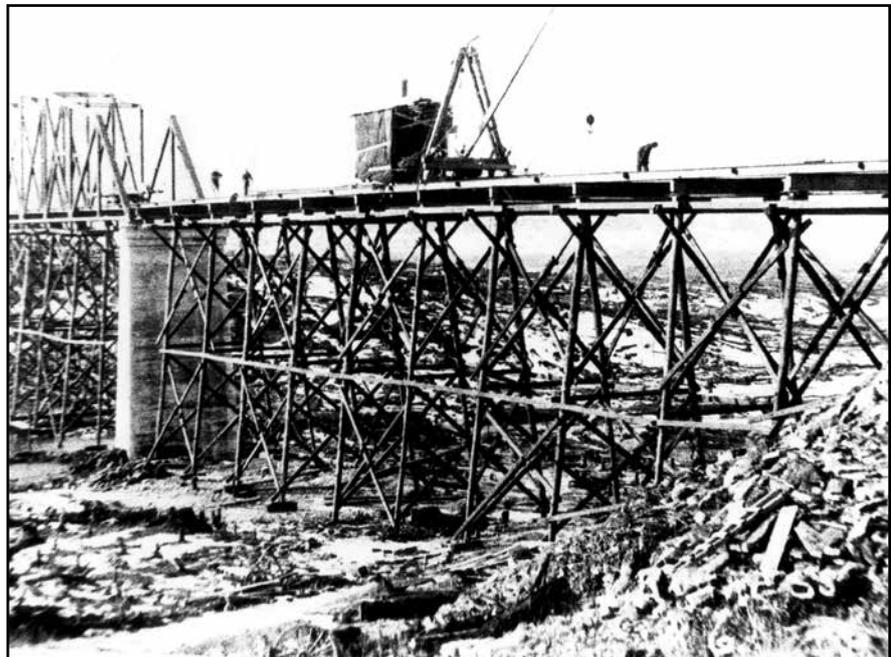
Pennsylvania Power Company, commonly referred to as Penelec, owned the land at least as far back as a line established at elevation 2,466, plus 25 lineal feet. That explains the actual difference between spillway level and the four additional feet from the flashboards that were never added to the dam. Penelec, therefore, owned the water and land as far back as four vertical feet. In some cases, that was a considerable distance.

In February 1942, the Youghiogheny Hydro-Electric Corporation conveyed to Pennsylvania Electric Corporation the property at Deep Creek Lake, with the exception of some excess property, which was retained by Eastern Land Corporation but managed by Pennsylvania Electric.

The extra land was conveyed from Eastern Land Corporation to the Smith family who acquired numerous parcels around the lake including Thousand Acres, Blakeslee, Pergin Farm, Marsh Mountain and Stumpy Point. There later came a time when the state of Maryland acquired property for a public park, but that was unrelated to the original construction of Deep Creek Lake.

The lake provided electrical service to distant customers but offered few activities to residents during the years prior to World War II. Organized events were hardly necessary as the only population center was McHenry, a village settled in the 19th Century. Local folks recall the early days of Deep Creek when only three stores offered goods in McHenry: C.M. Railey's, Glotfelty's, and Hubert Bowman's. They were general merchandisers, while Bowman's also served as a Post Office. The only boats observed on the lake were small fishing vessels, while other forms of recreation were limited to swimming and ice-skating. As the 1920s ended and the Great Depression wore on, money stayed scarce, the lake area remained sparsely populated, and visitors were infrequent.

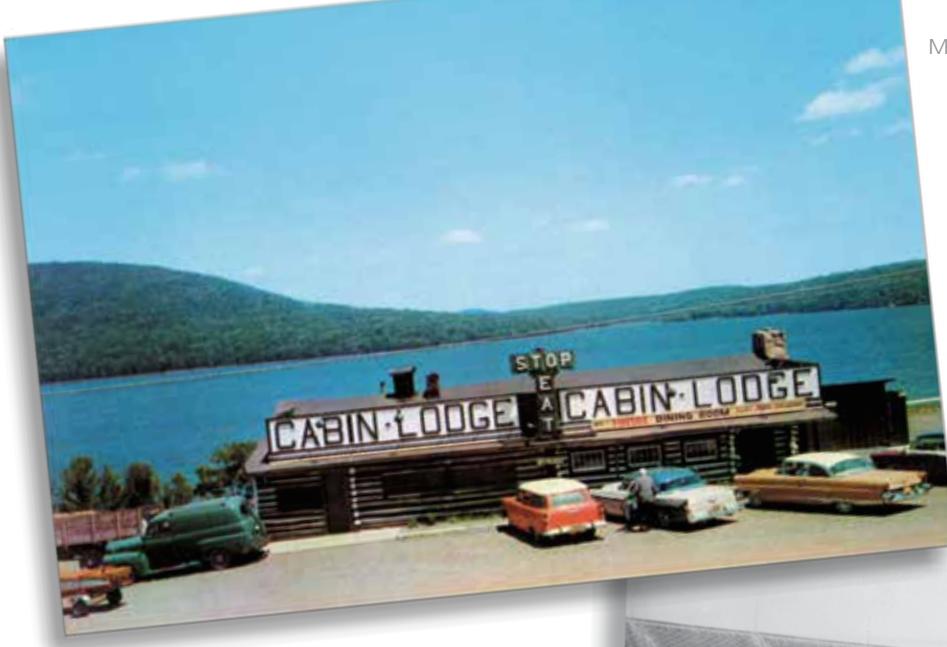
While housing did not significantly increase during the lake's first two decades, a modest start to nightlife began when C.M. Railey built Stone Tavern near McHenry, one of the first local establishments to serve alcoholic beverages after prohibition was repealed. It was also a hot-spot for square dancing on weekends, as residents would pack the dance floor to enjoy the entertainment provided by live bands. The tavern, a local landmark, was razed when the new Deep Creek Bridge was constructed. Rainbow Inn, located at the present day location of Arrowhead Resort, was one of the prominent commercial



Top: Yough Hydro-Electric Corporation Power House Foundation, July 1, 1924.

Middle: Construction of the Glendale Bridge, 1924.

Bottom: Yough Hydro-Electric Corporation Spillway Wall, May 2, 1925.



Left: Cabin Lodge, one of the busiest nightlife spots at Deep Creek Lake, was operated by Eddie and Louise Fry.

Below: Thayer's Barn, on the banks of Deep Creek Lake, was converted into an entertainment spot popular in the 1930s and 40s.

establishments outside of McHenry, at the lake during the late 1930s. The busiest nightlife spot was Cabin Lodge, appropriately named, as it was constructed of logs in the early 1930s; Eddie and Louise Fry operated the business. Adjacent to Cabin Lodge was Thayer's Barn; a typical agricultural structure that was built before the lake was created but later converted to a restaurant and a "roadhouse." Several other barns around Deep Creek were converted to entertainment spots including Arden's Boat Club in McHenry, McComa's Beach on Red Run, and Blue Barn on Beckman's Peninsula, where a summer theatre operated for a number of years.

Johnny's Bait House, located along Route 219, south of McHenry, became a rite of summer for many vacationers. Scarce is the fisherman who did not stop to consult with Johnny about water conditions and "what the fish were hitting." One promotion that attracted customers to his store was "Johnny's Bait House Fishing Contest," a joint effort of John Marple and the former Garrett County Promotion Council. The largest fish of the week would earn a silver dollar from the Bait House, with the angler's name relayed to the council where they would have it printed in the newspaper.

Bowman's Marina was another popular stop for boating enthusiasts. The marina's owner, Charles H. "Skeeter" Bowman grew up in McHenry on the family farm, now the site of Garrett County Fairgrounds. Charles Bowman purchased a few wooden fishing boats in the mid 1930s and continued to offer them for rental until the start of



World War II. In 1952, it was decided that a marina in McHenry offered business opportunities, so Bowman's Marina was born. It offered a full line of boats and a spectrum of boating supplies including Johnson Outboard Motors and Chris-Craft wooden boats. In those days, boats were constructed from wood, a labor-intensive boating material.

Long time visitors also recall Matt Storey's Marina, located along Route 219 in McHenry. Mr. Storey not only sold and rented boats, but he learned to build them as well. Following service in the Coast Guard, Mr. Storey decided to locate a business at Deep Creek and put his carpentry skills to the test. Boats in those days were made from oak and plywood, and special precautions had to be taken for swelling and shrinkage caused by water. Mr. Storey saw a potential market for boat sales on the lake because the product was not plentiful before WWII, but a revitalized national economy after the conflict promised economic growth and more affluent consumers.

In the same area where turkeys and cows once enjoyed freedom to move about is Wisp Ski Resort, a well-known

winter vacation destination, established by Helmuth “Ace” and Evelyn Heise, in 1955. Having purchased Will O’ the Wisp Motel in 1953, from his father, Gustav Heise, they soon realized winter activities needed to be established at Deep Creek Lake to augment the summer tourist trade. Following up on their idea, the Heises were able to secure a lease in 1955, from Webster Breneman, on land located in McHenry. Their new enterprise was called Marsh Mountain Ski Area. A change in business partners by 1956 prompted the Heises’, and a few associates, to rename the enterprise “Wisp,” because it was associated with Will O’ the Wisp they already owned.

The first year of the ski resort saw a small shack with a potbellied stove serving as a “lodge,” and cows were there, while people were skiing down the slope. The Heises’ entrepreneurial instincts proved to be reliable, and skiers trekked in increasing numbers to the resort, including those on a B&O train that traveled from Maryland metropolitan areas to Oakland. Wisp continued to grow over the decades, and facilities were enlarged several times to meet the expanding winter tourist and ski trade. The resort remained under Heises’ ownership until 2001, when it was sold to DC Development Corporation. In 2012 Pacific Group Resorts, Inc. purchased Wisp and continues to expand the enterprise.

Ace and Evelyn Heise had to balance winter business at the Wisp with year round operations of Will O’ the Wisp Resort. As the hotel grew, the couple found a need for more dining options for their lodgers and in November 1961, The Four Seasons Dining Room at Will O’ the Wisp was opened.



Top: The original small shack, serving as the “lodge,” warmed skiers with a potbellied stove at Wisp Ski Resort.

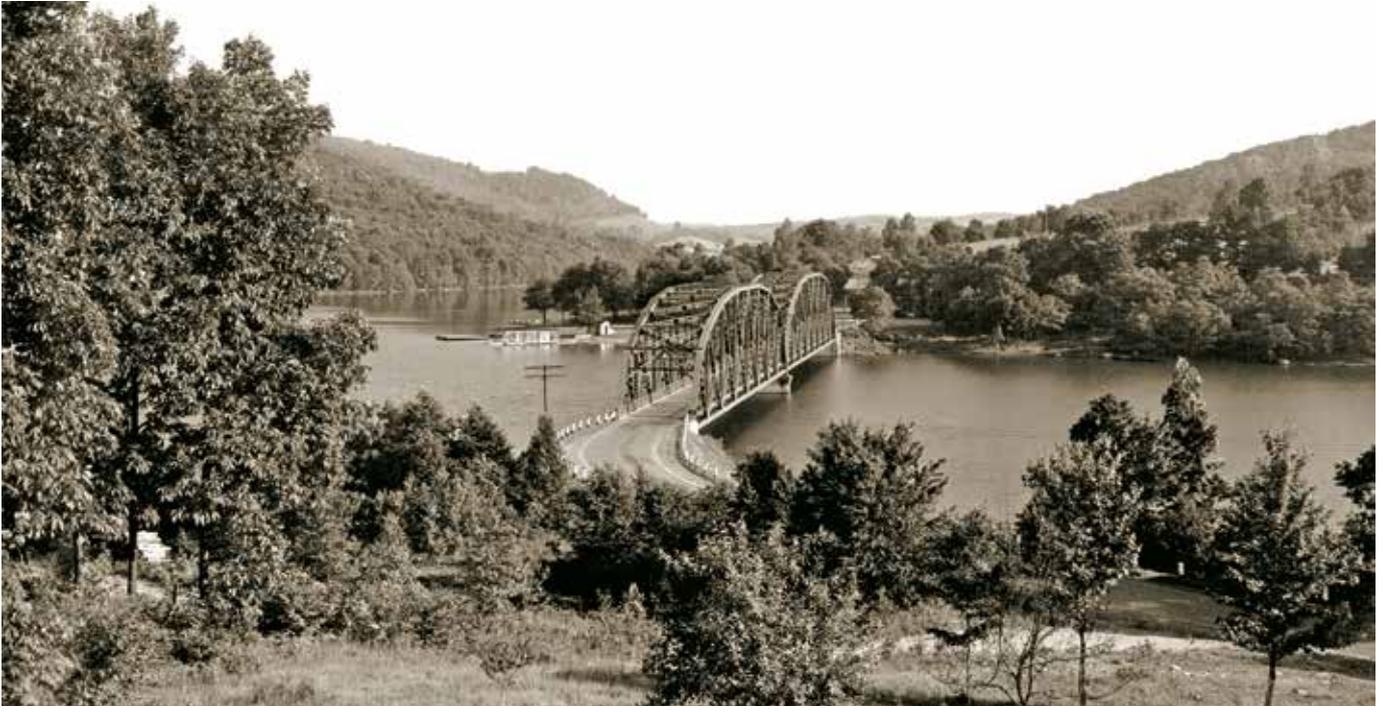
Bottom: View of Wisp resort ski slopes in the 1950s.

Operated by the couple, along with their son Martin, the restaurant instantly became popular for its gorgeous lake views and delicious cuisine. In 1973, the existing condominiums at Will O’ the Wisp were completed, and the restaurant continued as one of the area’s most popular dining and special event destinations for fifty years. Ace passed away in 2009 and with Evelyn in declining health, Martin decided to close the business in 2012, after half a century of service.

Martin’s wife Brenda McDonnell couldn’t bear the thought of the place

so loved by her father-in-law sitting empty. She envisioned a different, more contemporary and casual approach and Ace’s Run Restaurant & Bar became a reality. The dining room and bar area were remodeled to maximize the stunning lake views and the menu updated to accommodate the tastes of both locals and visitors to the lake area.

Matthew “Matt” Storey, Sr. established one of Deep Creek Lake’s first restaurants in 1935. Originally from Brownsville, Pennsylvania, he started the business after purchasing 14 acres of



Early photo of the old Deep Creek Bridge (top) and the current Deep Creek Bridge – Rt. 219 (bottom).

property near McHenry along Route 219. The building was a small, one story structure with “Lunch” painted on a front window. Sandwiches and beer were staple items with local customers. Beer cost 15 cents a bottle, two for 25 cents, or seven for \$1.00 to go. Sunday’s menu was special because it featured a half chicken, two vegetables

and a drink, for 49 cents. Pie was ten cents extra. Residents provided Storey’s with a customer base, and any tourists were a plus for the business.

The Harvey name has been associated with Deep Creek Lake since the early 1920s when Earl K. Harvey purchased farmland from Charlie O’Brien, in the North Glade area

of Deep Creek. The family raised a variety of crops including potatoes, corn, and peas that were canned at Mt. Lake Park. Raising chickens, sheep, hogs, and cattle were also priorities on the farm. While not a formal store, summer residents from the peninsula would purchase fresh food.



Above: An early view of McHenry with Marsh Hill Mountain in the background.

Right: Aerial postcard of a very unpopulated McHenry, Maryland. Left foreground is current location of the Garrett County Fairgrounds.



Creation of Deep Creek Lake took approximately 25 acres of Harvey farmland. Pennsylvania Electric Power Company later offered to sell unused land, and Mr. Harvey purchased 44 acres, thus adding to his farm after the lake was filled. Earl Harvey worked the farm until his death in 1975 when two sons, who both lived

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on the property, continued to operate it. In recent years the Harvey farm-land was purchased by Real Estate developers, while the farmhouse sold at a later date and became a bed and breakfast establishment. If one looks at the structures on the North Glade property, they can only imagine the rolling potato fields that once were the Harvey farm.

Another interesting and little known part of Deep Creek Lake history originated in 1948 when Green Glade Airways was born on Lower Green Glade Road, near its entrance to Route 495. The airway began under the sponsorship of Bill Duncan who constructed a runway to accommodate single engine aircraft. Mr. Duncan established the airway after he purchased a cabin on the property following World War II. Local air service served a dual purpose: to provide sightseeing rides over Deep Creek Lake on weekends, and to provide fresh seafood to restaurants during weekdays. The venture ended about 1951.

There are many memories of the Deep Creek Lake area that help us to create a picture of what life was like during a different era; a time when community was defined not only by place but also by friendships built over long periods of time. Change occurred slowly during the first three decades at the lake, but accelerated quickly thereafter as Deep Creek Lake continues its ever-increasing tempo of development. And if history is to be our guide, we can be certain that changes, improvements and expansion will be realized in the future.



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The Race Is On!

Slot Car Racing is Alive and Well in Ridgeley, WV



Written by: **Mary Reisinger**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Club member's cars lined up ready to start the race.

Bob Maiers began his love affair with “big and little cars” at age five when his parents gave him a quarter midget race car. He went on to become a full-fledged race car driver and then, working with his father, a restorer of race cars. Over the years, he has amassed a huge collection of carefully restored race cars and related memorabilia. However, his major contribution to local racing fans has been to keep the hobby of slot car racing alive and well in the Cumberland area.

The initial heyday of slot car racing was in the 1960s, when nearly every neighborhood had slot car racing. It was common in both cities and small towns, often in bowling alleys, and was provided for soldiers at many military bases. Ten or more slot car race tracks were open for business in the Cumberland area alone.

The decline started in about 1969 for several reasons: the Vietnam War took many young men away from home;

model cars started being sold by department stores cheaper than the tracks could sell them; bowling alleys began to remove slot car racing because it was distracting customers from bowling; and television and other entertainment took more and more of people's recreational time and interest. There was a minor resurgence in the 1990s, but this was curtailed by computers, computer gaming, and the Internet.

Bob bucked the trend. He decided to set up a slot car race track in the early 80s. He figured the area could only support one, so he tracked down and bought all the remaining (disused) tracks he could find. He sold some of the tracks he located, keeping two. One is in his home museum; the other he set up for the public. As he tells it, he paid \$350 for the track and accessories and committed to \$200 in rent for a spot at the Cumberland Mall. He figured he could “make a fool of himself” for \$550.



Members of the Slot Car Club (left to right): Steve Lutz, Bob Maiers, Leroy Smith, Dave Beal, and Don Norris with the model slot cars they've made, ready to race.



Left: This photo gives an idea of the size of the track; 136 running feet of vintage track that dips and curves around the room.

Above: A close race at the finish line.

The track began operation in the mall hallway. When it attracted big enough crowds, it was moved into a room. When this grew too expensive, he built a room for it in Ridgeley, West Virginia, right over the state line from Cumberland. The business flourished for years, with the track open six nights a week. Today, it operates as a club and generally is only open one or two nights a week.

On a recent Monday night, members of the club gathered with the models they've made to run races. These small cars run on over 136 running feet of vintage, expertly-

maintained track that dips and curves around the room. Drivers enthusiastically build and modify model cars, but Bob lends newcomers cars and encourages them to see if they like slot car racing before they invest too much money. Bob says slot car racing is the only thing he does all week that enables him to forget everything else. Club members concur. Win or lose, it is fun all the way.

New members are always welcome. Contact Bob Maiers at 814-356-3730 to learn more.

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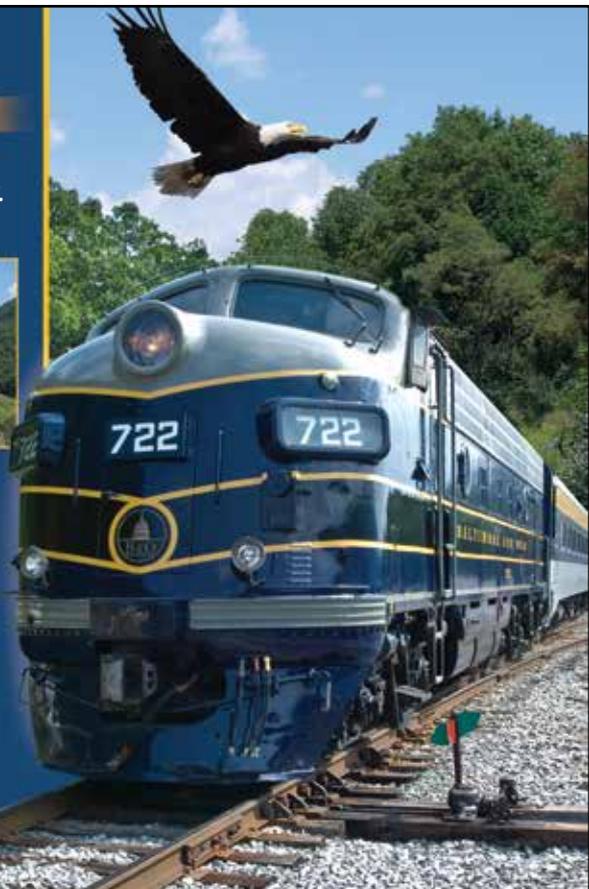
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Youghiogheny River Towns Submerged

Written by: **Mary Reisinger**



Today, homeowners are “underwater” when they owe more on the mortgage than the market value of the house, but in the 1940’s, in the mountains of Pennsylvania and Maryland, a dam was built that literally put a cluster of town sites under water. Places with fascinating histories—Somersfield, Thomasdale, Jockey Hollow, Watsondale, Guard Mill Run, Geise, Kempton, Sloan’s Ford, and part of Selbysport—were demolished and flooded by the construction of the Youghiogheny Reservoir.

These communities, which ranged from tiny hamlets to thriving towns, had developed near the Youghiogheny River. The name Youghiogheny, meaning “the river that flows in a contrary direction,” has had many variations of spelling and pronunciation over the years. Today, “Youghiogheny,” often shortened to “Yough,” is pronounced “Yock-uh-GAIN-ee.”

The region was occupied for thousands of years by prehistoric indigenous groups dubbed the Monogahela People by Dr. Mary Butler. These inhabitants of the land along the river practiced agriculture in villages surrounded by stockades. From about 1740, members of the Shawnee, Seneca, Delaware, and Erie tribes camped and hunted there. Archeologists, at a dig near Somersfield in the 1930s, found evidence of the ancient Monogahela dwellings below more recent Native American villages. Potsherds found at the site show that the local deposits of clay supplied Native American potters, just as, in the 1800s, the same clay supplied the Black family potteries.

Early inhabitants frequently traveled on the Youghiogheny River. In *Indian Blood*, author Evelyn Guard Olsen tells an anecdote about the Friend family of Friendsville, Maryland, who traveled downstream to visit a relative at

Town of Thomasdale, PA,
early 1940s.



Youghiogheny River Lake with the current Route 40 bridge.
The area is a popular location for outdoor recreation such as boating, water sports, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, picnicking, and more. PHOTO BY LANCE BELL

Turkeyfoot. They paddled canoes or rafts in the summer and skied or skated in winter. During the Revolutionary War, a young man of the family skated down the river alone to visit his uncle. On his return trip, he was shot at by Native Americans, but he was able to escape on his skates.

In addition to the river, many traveled on foot or horseback through the wilderness. The local Native American trail called the Buffalo Trail or the Nemaocolin Trail developed from footpath to paved road. George Washington travelled over this trail with his frontier guide Christopher Gist in 1753 to negotiate with the French military at Fort LeBoeuf. Washington returned with a party of soldiers in 1754. He searched by canoe for a water route, but decided the river

was “too swift and dangerous,” so the group continued west by land. In 1755, General Edward Braddock’s forces camped at the same spot on the way to oust the French from Fort Duquesne. This campsite on the banks of the river came to be called Great Crossings and the trail, widened by the military convoy, was renamed Braddock Road.

In 1816, the National Highway was constructed over much of this trail, opening easier access to the West. Uriah Brown, school teacher and surveyor, had high praise for the new road. In his journal, he speculated that “the goodness of God” must have inspired Congress to order the building of this “good,” “handsome,” and “elegant” road free of toll. This road, now generally known as Route 40, is still well-traveled today.

As Uriah foresaw, the National Highway greatly expanded opportunity in the region where Washington and Braddock had camped. Jacob Speers was the first permanent settler. In fact, it is claimed that George Washington spent the night at his cabin. Philip Smyth bought the Speers property about 1816 and opened and operated a tavern, calling the town Smythfield. Uriah stayed at the tavern and characterized Smyth as a “proud, empty, ignorant, rich Dutchman.”

The building firm of Kincaid, Beck, and Evans completed an impressive triple arch stone bridge at Great Crossings, using native sandstone. It was opened with fanfare on July 4, 1818. President James Madison and members of his cabinet attended, along with veterans of the Revolutionary War and crowds of citizens from the region.

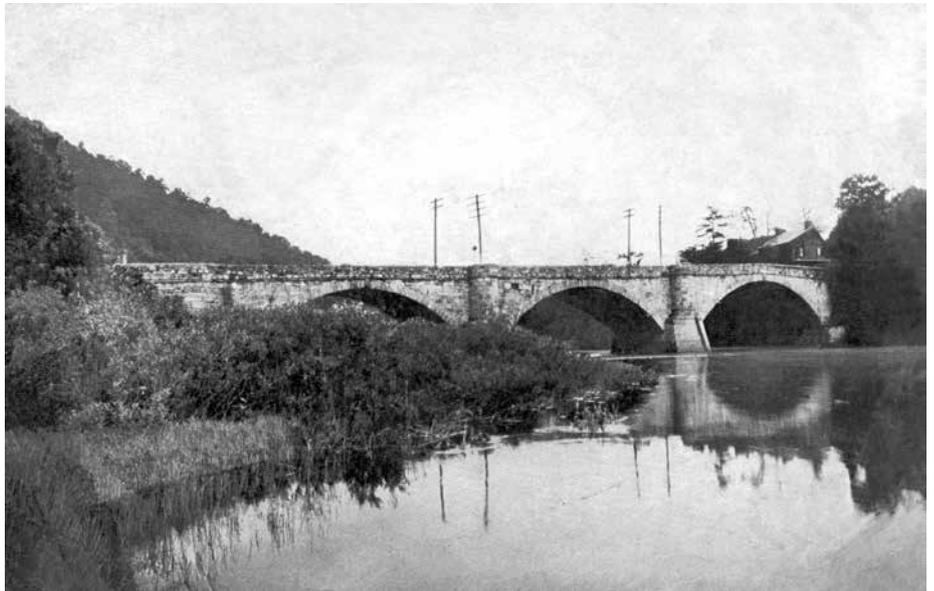


Dam site. Across this valley will be thrown the massive rock and earth filled dam. Almost completed is a diversion tunnel cutting through the hill on right. The river will be diverted through the tunnel while the dam is being built and afterwards the tunnel will serve as an outlet. In the distance is the town of Confluence which is enjoying a minor boom through the 250 jobs provided by the dam.

Photo and caption from The Pittsburgh Press, November 9, 1941.

**Somerfield Bridge, early 1940s,
before the dam was built.**

Photo provided by Virginia Clister



By 1830, an application for a post office had revealed that there was already a Smithfield in the Commonwealth, so the new name Somerfield, in honor of a minister of that name, was adopted. Somerfield was on one side of the Great Crossings Bridge and the smaller village of Thomasdale on the other. Jockey Hollow, named for the horse racing held there, was also nearby. The area depended on travel and trade. Somerfield and Thomasdale provided services for those who traveled or shipped products by stagecoach, train, and car. The towns were home to inns, liverys, blacksmith shops, mills, drugstores, general stores, banks, doctors' offices, schools, churches, and many other establishments.

The advent of automobiles made Somerfield a popular tourist attraction. The town became a favorite spot for activities as disparate as high stakes card games, sales of "white lightning," church group meetings, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps. Several U.S. Presidents visited, including Zachary Taylor and Herbert Hoover. President William McKinley spent six weeks in Somerfield each

summer, staying at the Youghiogheny Hotel, because he had relatives nearby. His niece Mabel McKinley was playing in the hotel with the son of the owner when she threw a ball that went through a window above the door.

The prosperity of the town ebbed and flowed over the years, but many families lived there for generations. One prominent family was the Endsleys, early residents and owners of the Endsley House, where President McKinley stayed. A later member of the family, James William Endsley represented the town as its first Burgess and served in the State's General Assembly in 1904 and 1906. He ran the Listonburg Coal Mine Company and directed the Somerset County National Bank of Somerset.

The Springer family took over the Endsley House in 1904, renaming it the Youghiogheny House. The Cornish family purchased it in 1938 and called it the Cornish Arms. This



The old Somerfield Bridge became visible in October 1991 when the water level was its lowest in 25 years. In the above photo, vehicles and people are seen on the bridge.

Inset: Arches of the bridge, which are typically underwater, remain sturdy but the side blocks and roadway have deteriorated.

Photos provided by Virginia Clister



establishment was famed for its Sunday dinners. Frank Wright Springer remembers being responsible for cleaning 50 chickens each weekend in preparation for the Sunday crowds who came from miles around for chicken and waffles with pure maple syrup. When the building was due to be demolished, Jack Cornish kept the window that had been broken by Mabel McKinley.

Elsie Spurgeon, who grew up in the area, and taught for 48 years in Somerset County, described Moses Ross Thomas, member of the family for whom Thomasdale was named. Each year M.R. Thomas decorated a beautiful sleigh, dressed up a horse with antlers and treated the children of Jockey Hollow, Thomasdale, and Somerfield to a visit from Santa Claus and his reindeer. He also appeared as Santa Claus in Elsie's classroom when she became a teacher.

By the 1930s these towns saw a significant downturn in prosperity. Roads that had been gravel were paved, enabling people to travel faster and further to other vacation destinations. Soon, the plan to construct a dam as part of a flood control project spelled the end of several area towns, including Somerfield and its neighbors, much to the dismay of the people who lived there. When Mrs. J.W. Endsley was interviewed by a newspaper reporter, she said that being forced to leave her long-time home would be the death of her, and, sadly, she did die while preparing to move.

Another town in the flood area was Selbysport, but only part of the town was flooded. This first settlement in what is now Garrett County, Maryland, was named Shelby's Port for Captain Evan Shelby, who made the first land purchase there. After a stint of fighting in the French and

Indian War with Washington and Braddock, Shelby arranged for the 1772 survey of 149 acres near the mouth of Buffalo Run. His “patent” was originally in Frederick County, but the area became part of Washington County (1776), then Alleghany County (1789), and finally Garrett County in 1872. Shelbysport (later modified to Selbysport) was built on the site of a Native American village; with good access to water and trails, it grew rapidly. By 1800, 54 families lived there. Shelby later sold the property to a family named Frazee and moved to Tennessee. His son, General Isaac Shelby, served as the first governor of Kentucky.

This town figured in the life of Meshach Browning, the famous hunter of Garrett County. During the War of 1812, Browning, a federalist, was attacked at Selbysport by a group of Democrats. With the help of his wife’s brothers and the local miller, he survived and wrote about this incident in his memoir.

A wooden bridge spanned the Youghiogheny at Selbysport as early as 1807. It was replaced with a new covered wooden bridge in 1869 at the cost of \$3000. Twenty years later, this bridge was replaced by a new metal bridge. Selbysport, called the “big town,” remained Garrett County’s largest town until after the Civil War. A log cabin school was built in 1824. The town also boasted a post office, a grist mill, shoemakers, tanners, stores, and a doctor who split his time between Somerfield and Selbysport. The octagonal “Carpenter Gothic” church building called Mercy Chapel, built near Selbysport in 1874, still holds worship services today.

These communities continued to adjust to changing conditions. The neighboring section of Virginia became West Virginia. Transportation, housing, and businesses modernized, and World War I was fought, but the greatest change came with the decision to build the Youghiogheny River Reservoir. Families scattered. Buildings to be flooded were bought by the government and demolished. The dam at Confluence was begun in 1939. Despite being slowed by World War II, it was complete by 1944, and the valley filled with water.



Virginia Woods Clister



Elaine Jenkins Imber

Now, nearly eighty years later, not many people remain who remember these places, but two local women, Virginia Woods Clister, 94, and Elaine Jenkins Imber, 88, vividly recall their days in Somerfield, Thomasdale, and Selbysport.

The Woods family moved to Thomasdale when Virginia was 9 or 10. Her father worked in road construction and coal mining. Her mother waited tables at the Cornish Arms Hotel. Virginia, as the oldest, was responsible for seeing that her three younger sisters were safe and home by dark. Children swam and roller skated in the summer. They “ice-skated,” skidding around on their boots without blades, in the winter. Children from Thomasdale and Jockey Hollow went to a school midway between the two villages. Virginia and her sisters went to Sunday School at the Somerfield Methodist Church, which had beautiful stained glass windows. Locals said that Tiffany himself had had a hand in making these windows.

Virginia recalls a family who came in the summer and lived on a nearby island accessible only by swinging bridge; the children sometimes explored this island when the family was not in residence. She remembers the area around Somerfield and Thomasdale as a wonderful place in

which to grow up. When the news came that their homes would be demolished, everyone grieved. Virginia felt it was “mean” to force these people, many of whom had lived here all their lives, out of their community. Her family moved to the other side of Uniontown in 1941. Her mother made each of the girls a framed collection of pictures and newspaper articles about the towns and the dam being built.

Virginia married the “wonderful young man” she had met in the church youth group, and moved to his family dairy farm, where they sent their products to market on the train. Later her husband became a plumber, and they gave up dairy farming, but Virginia still has a stoneware crock from the feed store that M. R. Thomas owned. Virginia has since returned to visit and photograph what can be seen at Thomasdale and Somerfield when the water is very low.

Elaine Jenkins' family spent one year in Selbysport, while her father helped build the road that replaced roadways to be flooded. They rented a house that the owners had to leave because it would soon be under the reservoir. To Elaine, the house was beautiful, with its carved doors and moldings, but it was not modern. They used an outhouse, pumped water in the kitchen, and lit the home with oil lamps. Up the hill from their home, a woman Elaine often visited owned a lovely home that did have indoor plumbing and electricity. Elaine went to Sunday School and grade school, where she remembers swinging on grape vines during recess. She loved listening to the river flowing by at night; she credits this as the beginning of her love for being near water. Like Virginia, Elaine felt that it wasn't right to ruin that little village. She was sorry for the people who were going to lose their homes; this didn't seem like progress to her.

After that year, Elaine's family moved to Terra Alta, West Virginia, for her father's next employment. Later, they moved back to Meadow Mountain in Garrett County, where they settled. Elaine herself went to Cumberland, Maryland, and then to Washington, D.C., for jobs. She married and lived in New Jersey before retiring and moving back to her family home in Garrett County.

Elaine and Virginia's memories serve as windows into the experiences of the many people whose homes vanished under the water. There are still some remnants of these bygone places. The original dedication stone from 1818 and the stone placed on the Great Crossings Bridge in 1912 were moved to the historic stone tollhouse in Addison, Pennsylvania. Inside the tollhouse are some furnishings that were saved from the flooded towns. The Somerfield church's stained glass windows along with the Jockey Hollow church building were moved

to the intersection of U.S. Route 40 and Mae West Road to become Grace United Methodist Church, now no longer used as a church. Mercy Chapel and many cemeteries can still be visited. Information about all the flooded towns was compiled by the Old Petersburg/Addison Historical Society, and printed in 1995.

When the water level is normal, in addition to preventing floods, the Youghiogheny Reservoir forms a large lake that can be used for boating and swimming. Occasionally, when the water level recedes, due to preparation for winter/spring run-off, or to drought, the old stone bridge at Great Crossings and the foundations of the demolished buildings are visible. At these times, people flock to see the ghostly remains of houses,



This three gallon stoneware crock, owned by Virginia Clister, is from M. R. Thomas' General Merchandise and Feed Store, Thomasdale, PA.

sidewalks, roads, and bridges that give viewers a glimpse of the once-thriving villages along this river.

Garrett County Historical Museum
 107 South Second Street, Oakland, MD
 301-334-3226
www.garrettcountymuseums.com
Transportation Museum
 Liberty Street, Oakland, MD
 301-533-1044

Both Museums Open During Autumn Glory!
 Hours: Monday - Saturday 10 am - 3 pm
 See website for Winter Hours

Calling All Cheese Lovers!



Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**



At the age of 16, Olen Beitzel voiced his belief that cheese should be made locally using milk from nearby dairy farms. He had a desire to provide jobs that would allow ordinary, hard working farmers to live well and have a retirement. His dream was to open a cheese-making operation in Grantsville, Maryland. That dream became a reality in 2015 when he, his daughter Linda Kling, grandson Brandon Kling and long time friend Mark Folk, rented a structure and began making cheese. On December 3, 2016, their new facility, High Country Creamery and Market, came to fruition.

High Country Creamery and Market is a local, artisan cow cheese facility, located at 97 Locker Lane, Grantsville, MD. A large viewing window inside the market is available to watch the fascinating process of cheese making. Stop by to shop in the market for locally crafted items and then stock up on cheese – varieties are handmade, from aged selections to curds, spreads and more. Then head to the Farmers Table Eatery area where you can order breakfast items, soups, sandwiches and more. The Eatery is open for breakfast and lunch Monday - Saturday.

Co-Owner/General Manager Linda Kling says, “At High Country Creamery and Market, we pride ourselves in providing our customers and the community with farm



Co-owner, Linda Kling with some of the handmade items in the market area of High Country Creamery and Market.

fresh items; not only in our local artisan cow cheese, but also in the ingredients at our Farmers Table Eatery and the products available for purchase in our Market. Groups can take a tour of our facility, observing the cheese-making process, shopping and dining.”

Some of our cheeses include:

The Casselman: Our two-year and older aged Cheddar that is very dry and hearty. Extra Sharp and complex with an explosion of flavor that continues to develop until the nutty savory finish, great by itself or paired with a dry red wine.

Meadow Mountain: A Cheddar-Style cheese with an herbal explosion in every bite. Garlic, Onion, Chive and Parsley are mixed into every inch which make for a very delightful snacking cheese.

Sparky's Fury: A Cheddar-Style cheese that is full of flavor and burns slow. After a few bites of this hot pepper cheese be prepared for it to bite back! Great on a spicy grilled cheese or just for a spicy snack. **ACS 2018 1st Place Award Winner!**

Trailhead: A Cheddar-Style cheese that has warm, earthy-tasting tones. This cheese is flavored with green peppercorn, paprika and some other herbs to make it a delicious Fall/Winter favorite! **ACS 2018 2nd Place Award Winner!**

Krabbe Kase: A Cheddar-Style cheese with a delicious infusion that will remind you of a crab feast! A delicious snacking cheese with a savory seafood seasoning that satisfies the urge to crack open a Maryland crab.

Big Savage Stout: If you love beer and you love cheese then you have met your perfect match! This is a Cheddar-Style cheese that is soaked in a delicious Stout beer. Chocolatey and rich, which is even more pronounced when melted and warm.

The Rev Reserve: Using a blend coffee from "Rise Up Coffee," this cheese is robust and unique. Notes of chocolate and the flavor of roasted coffee beans cover your palette. **ACS 2018 3rd Place Award Winner!**

Although Olen has since passed away, his daughter, Linda, is trying to live out his dream. Linda reflects, "Our vision is to grow High Country Creamery and Market with as much locally sourced product as we can as a way to give back to the community. Our vision for the cheese facility would be to one day help more farmers by bottling milk and making butter and ice cream."



High Country Creamery and Market
97 Locker Lane, Grantsville, MD 21536
240-979-0620
www.highcountrycreameryandmarket.com

Top: Head Cheese Maker and assistant making cheddar cheese at the High Country Creamery and Market facility.

Middle: Climate controlled cheese aging room.

Bottom: Farmers Table Eatery offers a variety of breakfast items, soups, sandwiches and more.

Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad

*Offering More Options to
Personalize Your Experience*



The Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad has expanded its services to offer more variety and enjoyment while remaining a favorite tourist destination. Your journey begins at the Wappocomo Station located in Romney, West Virginia.

The Trough Tour takes you on a 3-hour round-trip excursion along the South Branch of the Potomac River. Offered every weekend beginning in May, you'll enter a visually striking gorge known as The Trough, a 6-mile long steep, narrow canyon. Added this year is the Sunset Trough Tour when one weekend a month the train departs the station at 6 p.m. allowing passengers to admire the glow of the setting sun on the scenic countryside. The trough area provides the perfect home to the American Bald Eagle which was adopted as our national symbol in 1782.

While bald eagles are the main attraction for most passengers, Potomac Eagle offers something for everyone. With tourist favorites like the All-Day Trip (a longer version of the Trough Tour, taking passengers even further south to the end of the line in Petersburg) and the Green Spring Special (a northbound trip along the Potomac where passengers can take in sweeping views of idyllic farmland and stunning rock cuts), it's obvious why West Virginia is referred to as "Almost Heaven."

Four classes of service are now offered on all excursions:

Superior Club – for passengers 13 and up, this option offers a 4-course meal complemented on C&O Railroad china in a luxurious, climate-controlled setting complete with restored loveseats and tables.

First Class – offers a 3-course meal service in our upgraded 1947 vintage passenger cars boasting 2-person or 4-person tables and is also climate-controlled.

Premium Coach – provides passengers with a boxed lunch in our table cars. The windows open to the fresh mountain air in the warm weather, adding to the all-encompassing scenic experience.

Standard Coach – is the perfect class for families or groups, offering an affordable, comfortable seating option; cushioned, high-back, bench-style seats with reversible backs allows free movement for passengers to face either direction. These seats are steeped in history, reminiscent of 1920s era coaches that resemble commuter train seating. Windows can be opened

to the sights and sounds of the landscape, providing a pleasant, open-air element to your trip. A concession car is available to purchase snacks and drinks.

Reservations are required for Superior Club, First Class and Premium Coach with entrée chosen at time of reservation.

For more information and to book your trip you can visit www.potomaceagle.com, email info@potomaceagle.com or call (304) 424-0736.



Top: The Revolutionary War era restored 1789 Isaac Kuykendall home is one of the various historical sites along the Potomac Eagle excursion.

Middle: Dining in the Club Car includes a 4-course meal complete with restored loveseats and tables.

Bottom: Experience the magic of the Christmas season from November 20th through December 23rd with a ride to the North Pole where Santa will board the train.

Where Have All The Cowboys Gone?

Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Written by **Tammy Mattingly**, owner/operator of *Broken Spoke Stable, Oakland, Maryland.*

Winston Churchill once said, “There’s nothing better for the inside of a man than the outside of a horse.” That being said, where are all the men? Over the last couple decades the equine industry has flourished with mostly women who are buying, training, and riding horses. The American Cowboy seems to be teetering on the edge of extinction. Broken Spoke Stable is on a mission to change that and in this article you are going to meet three men who have discovered a love for horses in ways that have altered their lives.

Our equine facility lies in the heart of the beautiful community known as Pleasant Valley in Garrett County, Maryland. It’s an agriculture area where many farms have deep generational roots that have been passed down from one family to the next. The way of life in this community is peaceful and on Sunday mornings it is normal to see the Amish heading to church with their horses and buggies. Farm tractors travel up and down the county roads as frequently as automobiles and in mid-summer the aroma of fresh mowed hay fills the air. Grazing horses in our road front pastures attract many to slow down or even stop as they drive by. Since opening for business in 2007 our stable was a place enjoyed mostly by female clients but that is changing and it’s exciting to be a part of that change. I’d like to introduce you to a few of these inspiring “cowboys.”

PAUL —

Paul DeKraai has always loved horses and as a young boy he had family who trained them. He remembers that he loved visiting his cousins so he could sit on the back of a horse named McGee and just walk around the corral. Paul says he would read every horse book he could lay his hands on but never had the funds to actually buy his own horse. As he got older his interest turned to motorcycles and he became less addicted to the hope of ever owning a horse.



Fast forward from the 1970s and Paul was living in Colorado where the opportunity to hunt and fish was abundant. His best friend had two Arabian horses that Paul doted on every chance he could get. Paul moved to Baltimore when he retired and then onto Western Maryland. His brother had bought a ranch in Oklahoma and wanted to celebrate a brother week together. He even bought Paul a horse to ride while on the trip. Paul admits, “It was so emotional to finally own a horse of my own that it brought tears to my eyes.”



So at age 70 Paul decided that before heading to Oklahoma he wanted to take some riding lessons so he wouldn't look like an "idiot" in front of real cowboys. He put a call in to Tammy and the relationship at Broken Spoke Stable began. When Paul first came to the stable he just wanted to learn how to tack up and brush up on his riding. We had a lot of fun with those lessons but I really didn't think I'd see him again once he returned home from his trip. I was wrong, Paul was hooked. He came back and connected with a Quarter Horse named Hondo – a beautiful buckskin that he quickly fell in love with.

Paul says, "Hondo has been training me ever since that first ride. He has his moods and is a bit lazy if you let him, but Tammy is tough on me and brings out the best in us as a team. When I started lessons I thought I was learning to just ride a horse. That is different now; I'm learning about horses and how to behave with them and how to be a leader and a better man. I have learned that it's a relationship and it's about being humble. I've learned to be a horseman and that I have to change the way I look at people and the way I've treated myself."



As a musician Paul understands harmony and rhythm, which is the key to understanding a true partner relationship with your horse. This opened the door for Tammy to use musical terminology in ways he could relate to his riding. Paul was able to mingle the two together quite well in order to keep time with Hondo.



“Tammy is forgiving, she lets me spin on the hook until I get it. Hondo always complies with my fumbling and never complains. It’s become a part of me and who I am. I’ve become forgiving of myself and others. The other day I was walking back to the arena with Hondo and he was just walking along beside me, we were two guys just hanging out. I thought, this is my journey, my path. As long as I can throw a leg over I’m going to keep that relationship because I’m a better man for it.”

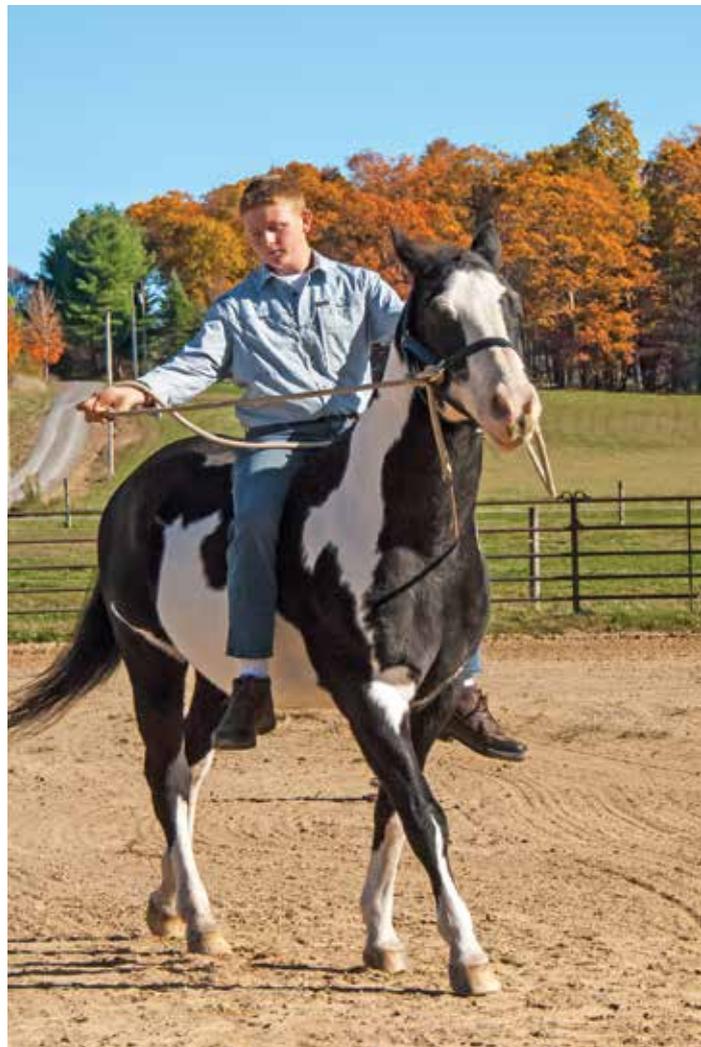
Paul says that every organization he’s worked for he has always ended up being in charge. “I have people who still call me boss. It’s nice to come into a situation where I’m the student and I take that just as seriously.”

RYAN —

Ryan Hoffman was 14 years old when he found his way to Broken Spoke Stable. His parents had been involved with horses several times over the years but after a search to find his dad a horse his mom found a Facebook group that was saving horses from the kill pen. They rescued one horse then another and then a third and then they bailed Major, a handsome black and white paint. When he was delivered Ryan quickly laid claim to him but his mom, Ellen, says that Major chose Ryan first.

Top: “When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.” – *William Shakespeare*

Right: Ryan is one of a few students who wanted to learn the art of riding bareback and with his natural balance it made him a perfect candidate.

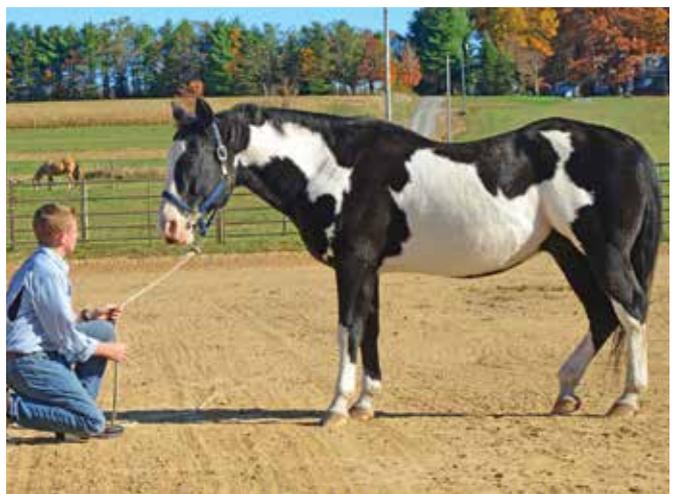


In Ryan's words: "When we first got Major he was just going to be another horse that we saved but he ended up becoming so much more. It was obvious that he was well trained but his first owner had used him up and then just threw him away. We took our time bringing him back to full health. At a certain point he was able to be ridden both bareback and under saddle. Once we realized how trained he was we decided I should take lessons at Broken Spoke Stable. That helped get the ball rolling. I was able to learn something with the lesson horse and then replicate it back home with Major. When I did this I could feel the bond growing between us. It gave me a strong emotional tie to him."

"Our family has saved many horses in our time but he was special! Yet sadly, all good things must come to an end. A few months after our photo shoot for *Mountain Discoveries* magazine, Major passed away and my whole family grieved his loss. But this is what makes life, life." Major was estimated to be around 25 years old.

At the time of this writing the Hoffman family has financially recovered 5 horses themselves and have had 9 more stabled with them that others have bailed at their expanding facility in Bruceton Mills, WV. They currently have one girl that is doing a foster sponsor on their farm. She rides, grooms and helps care for horses and in exchange covers all the vet and farrier bills. The goal is to get a few more

Rescue horses often come with hidden issues so the best way to approach any training with them is to begin with ground work and build on that. We teach natural horsemanship in a way that promotes trust and confidence. Ryan and Major bonded very quickly with this technique. We begin by desensitizing with the lead line gently thrown over the back and wrapping around the girth area to telling your horse "whoa" and have him stand, unsecured while lying across their back and rubbing all over them until they relax. These exercises create the ultimate trust between horse and human.



horses that can be ridden and place them with a foster sponsor. It's definitely a family endeavor as everyone is involved. The Hoffmans have just completed a beautiful new barn with added stalls and enlarged pastures so that they can continue to rescue horses from the kill pen.

Horse rescue is one of the hardest endeavors in the equine industry. These horses can come with great mental and physical challenges. Some have been so traumatized that they find it hard to ever trust a human again. Many are extremely underweight once they find themselves in a kill pen. The sad fact is that often times very good horses, by no fault of their own, take this path and if it weren't for people like the Hoffmans these horses end up being slaughtered. I encourage all horse owners to include your horses in your will. Have a plan for them in the event that they outlive you. Often family members who know nothing about horses are left with the decisions of what to do and then these



"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened." – Anatole France

horses begin a new journey that more times than you may think end in a bad place. Fortunately many are saved and adopted and live out their lives being well cared for. As for the horses who find it difficult to ever trust a human again, life can be a constant circle of in and out of auctions until one day there is no one to bail them out.

Rescued horses are expensive to care for; you may

need constant vet care in the first few delicate months. Special food must be given in small amounts several times a day to ensure that the horse won't colic. Many of these horses make a full recovery and some even go on to do great things in the show ring. Others have injuries that prevent them from being ridden but still make great companions. A handful succumb despite every effort to nurture them back to health. We've had many rescue horses board at our stable and I can say that these horses are the ones who steal your heart, there's just something about a horse that has been rescued. They seem to know that their lives were saved, that a second chance has been afforded them. Then there's that day you reach up to stroke their neck and they don't flinch or they begin following you back to the gate after you've unhooked the lead line and they could have turned and run away. Or the second they press their face against your chest and just stand there in a moment of silence. I believe if you listen close enough between their breaths you would hear them quietly say, "thank you for saving me!" It takes special people to rescue special horses. If you are interested in becoming a foster sponsor to a horse living on the Hoffman farm, please call Jeff at 304-282-4779.

AIDEN —

At age 11, Aiden Helton had no idea that he was about to discover a love for horses. His sister Clair was on the Broken Spoke Stable show team and like any good brother Aiden went to that first show with his family to cheer and support Clair as she participated in her first youth western

Aiden on the trail with Cissy, one of our most popular lesson horses.





By far the favorite part of Aiden's lesson is getting out on one of our beautiful trails.

pleasure riding class. Aiden soon found himself liking everything about the show; he liked seeing all of the different horses in the different classes. With each show Aiden says it got harder and harder to just sit there and watch. But horseback riding was Clair's "thing" so Aiden continued to keep quiet and support his sister until eventually he just couldn't take it anymore. He finally asked his parents if he could also take lessons, which they agreed to and after just one ride on Frosty, Aiden was hooked.

"Riding is so much fun," Aiden says. "I feel very relaxed and happy on a horse. I like learning new things and I want to learn even more." Aiden progressed so well that he got to enter his very first show at the end of the season last summer. It was the annual Hoof Prints 4-H show and even though it was pouring rain, bitter cold, and mud everywhere, Aiden was the only one participating who was smiling the entire day. Aiden is the first young man to ever participate on our show team and he has spent all winter working on improving his skills so he can be better prepared once show season begins this coming year.

The Helton family has a lot of medical stress with their youngest daughter Sophie. Many trips back and forth to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore sometimes keep Aiden and Clair from attending their lessons. They take

their lessons together and there is absolutely no sibling competition between the two of them — it's amazing how well these two get along. Aiden is pretty quiet by nature and usually keeps his thoughts to himself. But a few months ago Aiden had something happen that really scared him. At age 12 he had two strokes and a mass was found on his brain along with a hole in his heart and a clotting disorder. This was a total shock to all of us! So when Aiden's mom called to schedule lessons for both he and Clair I was pretty surprised. I knew the best thing for all of us was to make sure we didn't treat Aiden any differently but still horseback riding does come with some risk.

Aiden has also fallen in love with the Quarter Horse named Hondo and I felt very secure in allowing Aiden to ride him for that first lesson back after being diagnosed. His mom stayed close by that day and gave me a few special instructions and once we got started I could feel all fear melting away (I think I was more fearful than Aiden). Aiden says that when he's riding he doesn't think about anything, he just rides. Sometimes I will question if he's hearing me. He says he is always really listening to what is being taught

but sometimes just needs to take it all in. His favorite part of riding is at the end of the lesson when we take what we've learned and go out and put it to practice on the trail. There's nothing any more relaxing than a ride through the trees, going up and down hills while maneuvering over rocks and showing your horse that you are a leader he can trust. Aiden is becoming that kind of a leader and we all look forward to seeing where the future takes him.

These three men — Paul, Ryan and Aiden — have been such a blessing in my life. Watching them transform into the successful horsemen they have all become is the joy of every riding instructor. They each had a different agenda when they started but each has discovered the very same inward emotions that are very hard to put into words when it comes to a man and his horse. I think Aiden said it best when I initially asked him to expound on what riding horses meant to him. His reply, "I just love it!"



There is always a big smile when this young man is near a horse!

**If you want to learn more about our stable and all that we do, please visit our website: brokenspokestable.net
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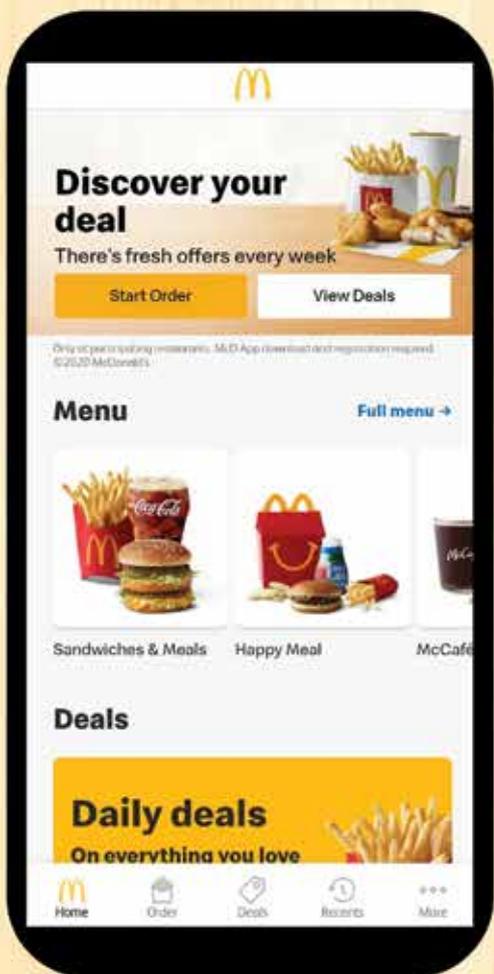


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