



Harborcreek Historical Society

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Paul Weitz was the 1948 captain of the Harbor Creek football team. Co-captain James Johnson hands Paul a football signed by the 1973 Huskies at the dedication of Paul J. Weitz Stadium October 7, 1973.

Article on Pages 4-6.

Winter Hours: Wednesday & Saturday 10 am – 2 pm
December 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

THE HARBOR VIEW

The Future of Our Past is in Your Hands



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Holiday Open House At the Gifford-Blanchfield House

Saturday, December 8, 2018 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

The Gifford Blanchfield House is decorated. Exhibits are in place. Now we wait for you to join us on Saturday, December 8th between 10 am to 2 pm for our annual open house.



Our main display case features information about Harborcreek residents with Scandinavian roots and their traditions. Over 50 surnames are included in the exhibit, and a notebook containing census records, death certificates and biographical information for early township residents is available to look through.

A quick look-through shows us that Swedish immigrants Gusta Homberger, Celia Lindhon, Hanah, and John Peterson were included in the 1880 US Census as Harborcreek residents. What new information will you find?

Come browse the various nationality notebooks, enjoy refreshments and enjoy the Christmas atmosphere.

Be sure to look for our new sign, too! It is located on Buffalo Road and was funded in part from a 2017 Community Asset Grant awarded to Erie Yesterday by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.



Gifts to the Society

Lawrence Park Historical Society
Class of 1958
Carolyn McIntosh
John & Sherry Nolan

*In appreciation for program and tour
In Celebration of 60th Reunion
In support of the society
In generous support of the society; special thanks
for helping us maintain our new home.*

Thank you to those who have given extra with membership renewals and/or through the donation box!

The Society began the Memorial Gifts program a decade ago, and many members have given to the organization in recognition of a loved one, a classmate or a family celebration. We invite you to consider making a donation "In Memory," "In Honor" or "On the Occasion" of a person or event that is important to you.

Society Annual Meeting Saturday, January 26, 2019 at 10:00 am

We invite members, as well as the general public, to attend the Harborcreek Historical Society's annual meeting at the Harborcreek Township Municipal Building. Penn State Behrend is celebrating its 70th anniversary. Campus archivist Jane Ingold will give an overview of the history of the college from Hammermill to Mrs. Behrend's initial 1948 gift of property to its status as Harborcreek's largest employer. She will also touch on the relationship between the college and the Harborcreek Historical Society.

First All Alumni Party

Organizers of this All Alumni event were totally pleased to see over 200 graduates of the Harbor Creek School District come together in October on Homecoming Weekend. The East Erie Moose Club was filled with the sounds of DJ Brian Shank as alumni conversed and enjoyed refreshments. It was evident that all had Huskie pride and a passion to support this new organization begun by School District Director Justin Gallagher and his committee. They felt that "It was a great beginning for this event." Many others repeated the feeling that they were looking forward to 2019 and were inviting more classmates to join in the Homecoming Reunion.

The Alumni committee initiated a new venue before Friday's game – food trucks at the stadium. Linda Essignmann summed it up with "Great food, great time and awesome win for the football team." The Huskies scored over Titusville 38 to 6. Harbor Creek Pride sounded through the Paul J. Weitz Stadium as the Friday night event ended with the popular sounds of the Marching Huskies.

Light-up Harborcreek December 14th • 6:00 - 8:00 pm At the Township Municipal Building

Are you ready for the Holidays? Well Harborcreek Township is going to help you get in the spirit by inviting you to the 2018 Old-Fashioned Christmas Light Up Night on Friday, December 14th at the Harborcreek Municipal Building.

An exciting night of holiday cheers starts at 6pm with a pre-Santa arrival show that includes the Harbor Creek High School Vocal Ensemble. Santa is scheduled to arrive via horse drawn trolley shortly after to light the lights and hear the wishes of all the good boys and girls of Harborcreek. After Santa lights the thousands of lights on the township grounds, families can enjoy trolley rides and caroling throughout the evening. They'll even have a warming station outside with refreshments.

Inside, there are crafts for kids and hot chocolate and cookies for everyone to enjoy. The Harborcreek Key Club, Builders Club, and Harbor Creek Girls basketball team will be there to assist in serving out the Christmas Cheer!



During the evening, the township will be accepting non-perishable food items and gift cards for the Ella Cochran Harborcreek Food Pantry. Consider helping the less fortunate in our community.

Harborcreek Historical Society is joining in on the festivities and hosting guests in the Gifford-Blanchfield House for tours.

Class of 1948 Reunion

Ricardo's Restaurant was the dinner choice for the 1948 reunion on September 8th. Mary Lou Osiecki, John Testi and several other classmates joined together for an evening of reminiscing about riding Ed Maille's bus to Central School. (See "Harbor Creek's First Private School Bus" in *Harborcreek's Yesteryears*, page 81.)

Class of 1958 60th Reunion by John Skuce

Although classmates have become fewer in number, that sense of connection that we cherish, was as apparent as ever as we shared memories, celebrated our long friendships and caught up on one another's lives this fall – even those who were unable to attend but wrote to us. We were given a wonderful tour of the high school by Ed and Kelly Hess and then spent a morning at the Harborcreek Historical Society with an impromptu presentation by classmate and Gifford-Blanchfield descendant Marti Smith Bunnell. The class had a picnic catered by Nunzi's at the Lawrence Park Fishing Club and topped off the weekend with a semi-formal dinner at Erie's Shrine Club. We numbered about 50 attendees, including classmates, spouses and friends. Literally, all four corners of the United States were represented!

Between now and the 65th reunion, we will continue our annual picnics, monthly breakfasts, Christmas parties and good times when we bump into one another or someone comes home to Harborcreek for a visit.

All Class Reunion – Every year at Whitford Park by John Skuce

This annual August event has grown in popularity with close to 100 alumni attending in 2018. There were some first-timers such as Lew Hoffman who grew up on Bartlett Road. He and his family moved to Vermont in 1954 after eighth grade. Lew returned to be part of the Class of 1958 Reunion, too. Another was Bill Raun and his wife Edie. Bill was in the Class of 1955 – a very active class, which held their annual reunion on August 15 through the 18th.

The earliest classes represented were 1948 (2) and 1949 (1) – Don and Joanie Adams, plus Cliff Snyder. The latest was the Class of 2000 – Tara Putnam. Some came great distances.

School district superintendent Kelly Hess and township Supervisor Tim May not only promoted this event but contributed table clothes, drinks, snacks and even passed out "Harborcreek" items to let us be proud of our heritage and allow others to recognize it, too. We thank them not only for that but for coming to join us. Thanks also to all those who brought delicious food dishes to share in addition to the traditional grilled hot dogs. No event is complete without a ceremonial cake. ***Pictured are Superintendent Kelly Hess and John Skuce with a Huskie Pride sheet cake.***



Harbor Creek Alumni t-shirts may be ordered from the Harbor Creek Alumni Association. Contact Justin Gallagher at (814) 528-1396 or gallagherjustin3@gmail.com for additional information.

Welcome new members!

Roger Pierce, Harborcreek, PA
Mary Bissell, Harborcreek, PA
Steven Salow, Harborcreek, PA
John Firman, Harborcreek, PA
Diane Engelskirger, Harborcreek, PA
Ron & Patti Kane, Harborcreek, PA
Louise Martin, Fairview, PA
Carol Cass Miller, Mesa, AZ



Office Hours

Winter Office Hours:

Wednesday & Saturday 10 am – 2 pm

Please call or email to schedule an appointment with our volunteers. Research inquiries welcome.

Office Telephone: 814.899.4447

Email: harborcreekhistory@gmail.com

Website: www.harborcreekhistory.org

Harborcreek's High Flying Hero - Part IV

A Community Celebration By Cam Stadtmueller

Coming home can bring on the feeling of nostalgia and anticipation of reunions with family and friends. For Paul Weitz and his family, their homecoming on October 6-7, 1973 brought about these feelings and so much more - a two-day all-community celebration! It took the work of several committees to plan a welcome appropriate for the Class of 1949 graduate who had spent 28 days in orbit aboard Skylab, an amazing accomplishment in 1973.

Weitz's Arrival in Erie – Saturday, October 6, 1973

On Friday, October 5, Paul Weitz and his family flew from their home in Houston, Texas to Washington, DC. There, Secretary of the Navy John W. Warner honored the crew of Skylab 2 (SL-2) with Distinguished Service Medals. Captain Weitz was joined by Captain Joseph P. Kerwin of Oak Park, IL and Captain Charles "Pete" Conrad of Philadelphia, PA. The three astronauts had spent 28 days together in space, May 25 through June 22, 1973. They were the first manned Skylab mission to log 672 hours aboard the orbital workshop.

On Saturday October 6, the Weitz family boarded a private jet at Washington, DC Airport and flew to Erie International Airport. Upon landing in Erie, county Officials and Harborcreek Supervisors along with the Harbor Creek Marching Band greeted the family. Erie County Commissioners Karl Boyes, Bill Hill and Michael Flatley were the first to welcome Paul Weitz home. They were followed by Mayor Louis J. Tullio, who presented Weitz with a Tribute from the City of Erie. Greetings were also extended by Harborcreek Supervisors Robert Gindlesperger, Frank Schwabenbauer and James Whitby.



City of Erie Mayor Louis J. Tullio extends a Citation from Erie City Council to Paul in recognition of his NASA Skylab I mission.

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***Businesses which have been a Society sponsor for ten years or more.**

Harborcreek's High Flying Hero - Part IV *(Continued from Page 4)*



Paul Weitz and his wife, Suzanne, are greeted by former superintendent of Harbor Creek Schools Fred S. Clark.

The reception included a press conference in which Weitz was asked about his experiences during the NASA mission. Paul spoke of his “thoughts of his family and friends in the Erie area, spotting the peninsula and his favorite fishing locations from his orbiting space craft as he passed over the Erie area.” To a reporter’s question “What was the purpose of your space mission?,” Weitz replied “Information gained from the Skylab mission may aid man’s travel beyond the solar system.” Paul was referring to the experiments that determined the effects of outer space and weightlessness on the human body for prolonged periods of time.

The Harbor Creek High School Band, under the direction of Walter Baran, played “Anchors Aweigh,” which is the marching song of the United States Navy. The reception at Erie International Airport was arranged by former Superintendent and Mrs. Fred Clark.

State Street Parade – Saturday, October 6, 1973

At 2:00 pm on Saturday, October 6, the parade began from Veteran’s Stadium on West 26th Street and marched north on State Street. Local residents and “throng of well-wishers” lined the sidewalks from 26th Street down to 12th Street on the sunny afternoon.

The Harbor Creek High School Band marched directly in front of the lead car, which contained the Weitz family. Seated atop a red convertible were Suzanne, Paul and Cindy, with son Matt in the front seat. The next division began with cars carrying Erie City officials Mayor Louis Tullio and City Council President Joseph Walczak, County Commissioners Hill, Flatley and Boyes, State Senator Quinton Orlando and U.S. Representative Joe Vigorito. Other divisions represented the U.S. Army, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard, as well as the Navy Color Guard and R.O.T.C. Color Guard.



Welcome banner posted on railroad bridge over State Street near 14th Street.

Near 13th and State Streets, Paul and his family took seats in the Reviewing Stand. They saw 30 units which passed by in the one and a half hour parade. Paul rose numerous times to salute as the United States flag passed by. Marching units stepped to the cadence of patriotic music. The parade concluded with a massive display of U.S. Army tanks and trucks.

Erie Times writer Dick Deckert summed up the afternoon by writing, “All in all, our Harborcreek Astronaut was greeted in the most American way possible in the heart of the All American City – Erie, PA.”

Testimonial Dinner – Saturday, October 6, 1973

The Weitz Testimonial Dinner was held at Harbor Creek High School Cafeteria. The Saturday evening event began with Joe Sonney introducing the distinguished guests in attendance. Superintendent Dr. John Hillkirk followed with a gracious welcome to everyone who gathered to honor Astronaut Captain Weitz. The Reverend James Fahey from Harborcreek Home for Boys presented the Invocation before dinner, which was served by

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Harborcreek's High Flying Hero - Part IV *(Continued from Page 5)*

LaCastro Caterers. The toastmaster for the event was Charles LeMasters, who was high school principal when Paul graduated.



Head table with distinguished guest and the Weitz family.

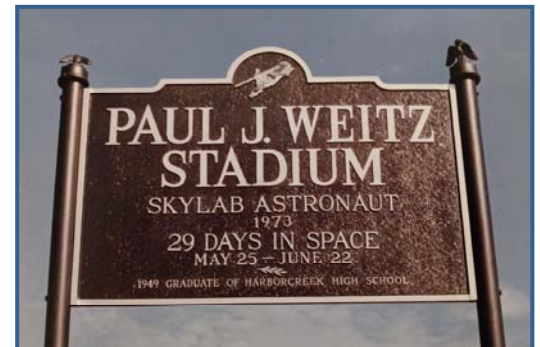
In his casual manner, Paul joked from the podium about being compared to Buck Rogers, a science fiction character who fascinated comic book readers with tales of rocket ships to the moon. He revealed that it had been a boyhood dream to be a test pilot, and he was motivated to pursue space travel. In 1966, Paul was one of 19 chosen for astronaut training from 351 applicants. While speaking of his training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Weitz said he was never apprehensive about the Skylab mission and had trust in the NASA program and his fellow astronauts. When asked if he took anything special with him for the Skylab mission, Paul replied that he took along Edward Fitzgerald's seven translations of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and audio tapes of 1950s hits by Nat King Cole and the Ink Spots. Throughout his remarks it was apparent that Paul's personality had not been changed by his status as an astronaut. He was still a Harborcreek boy.

The evening event closed with a Benediction by Reverend Sheldon Logan of Harborcreek Presbyterian Church. Special gratitude was expressed to Honorary Chairman Charles McClymont and his wife, Elsie, uncle and aunt of Paul Weitz. Helen Arnold of Harbor Creek High School Guidance Department had served as overall chairwoman, assisted by Audrey Longo and Joe Sonney. The October 6th Testimonial dinner was chaired by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sonney and Mr. and Mrs. John Cunningham.

Naming of Paul J. Weitz Stadium – Sunday, October 7, 1973

Following an ecumenical service by Harborcreek clergy, former Superintendent Fred S. Clark provided opening remarks, the Boy Scouts gave a presentation of colors, and Charles Neir, the first president of the Harbor Creek Sports Boosters, spoke of Weitz's athletic accomplishments as a Huskie. Paul had played football, baseball and basketball during his sophomore, junior and senior years. His senior year teammates chose him as captain of the 1948-9 football team.

The dedication of the athletic field was conducted by Dr. J.M. Hillkirk, Superintendent of Harbor Creek School District. The plaque (that is on Buffalo Road) was designed by former HCSD Art faculty member John Donofrio. John Fails and Joe O'Neil organized the event.



Stadium sign on Buffalo Road.

Nearly 30 years later, Paul spoke at the dedication of the current \$4.35 million athletic complex September 7, 2001. At the ceremony, Weitz said that he was humbled by the naming of the new facility. But, he added, "What's really impressive...is the school spirit I've seen evidenced here today."

Every hero has a story. That is the message of this four part series published in the 2018 issues of *The Harbor View*. Forty-five years ago, most people were in awe of the accomplishments of NASA and the 1949 Harbor Creek High School graduate Paul Weitz. Today, we see his name on the school district sports complex. The generations of today and tomorrow can reflect on Weitz's accomplishments, from his teen years in Harborcreek to his contributions to NASA and the early years of space exploration.

Sources:

Erie Times News, multiple issues and articles, October 4, 5, 6, & 7, 1973

Program for Testimonial Dinner published by HCSD Committees

Harborcreek Historical Society, notebook titled Skylab I Astronaut Captain Paul J. Weitz