



Harborcreek Historical Society

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday 10 am – 2 pm, Thursday 4 – 7 pm



Paul Weitz pointing out mesa at the Grand Canyon and talking about the geological names of the rock layers which give the formations outstanding coloration.

THE HARBOR VIEW



The Future of Our Past is in Your Hands



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Harborcreek's High Flying Hero - Part Three The Berrys and Weitzs and Their Leisure Time Together

By Cam Stadtmueller

Every family remembers vacations spent together, especially those adventures that were one-of-a-kind and ranked among the best! In a recent interview with John and Karen Berry of Harborcreek, they spoke about their vacation experiences with Paul Weitz and his wife, Suzanne, who was John's sister. Paul's daughter Cindy shared her most memorable vacation ventures with her parents and brother, Matt, by email. Recollections from both are represented in the following article.

After Skylab in 1973 and the Challenger Mission in 1983, Paul gained celebrity status as a well-known astronaut. His work with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was the subject of many printed articles and television documentaries, and, as a result, he was often recognized in public and asked for autographs and to answer questions about space travel. Vacationing privately with his family, relatives and friends became a challenge. Paul was an avid outdoorsman, and he wanted to pursue his passions for fly fishing, hunting, and experiencing America's Rocky Mountains and Southwest as "just another tourist."

Cindy Weitz recalled, "Dad loved the four seasons, which is, in part, why he moved to Flagstaff, Arizona after retiring from NASA in 1994. As a family, we took a couple really nice 'leaf peeping' trips through Colorado to see the aspen turning. Dad loved nature, and I suppose he's where I got my love of nature from as well. He loved to putter outside at his home, and the climate suited him well, it being dry there. He hated the humidity of Houston. We took several houseboat

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Gifts to the Society

Roger Pierce

In Memory of his father Andrew Pierce

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.

Thank you to all who gave on Erie Gives day!

Harborcreek Historical Society was one of 381 nonprofits that participated in The Erie Community Foundation's annual Erie Gives on August 14th. During the 12-hour giving campaign, nearly \$4.5M was raised in total.

Thanks to the following donors, the society was gifted \$1,519: Barbara Anderson, Charles Bliley, William DePlatchett, Karen Drake, George Frank, Priscilla Hamilton, Lois Heise, Theresa Herrera, Kelly Hess, Heather Kensill, David Maille, Nancy & Eric Marshall, Charles McKay, Jacques & Melinda Meyer, Theresa Moore, Patti Myers, John & Sherry Nolan, Michelina Rodland, Carolyn Ruth, Rick & Louise Smerick, John & Judy Skuce, Gwen Smith, Bob & Carlene Stroup, Ann Umbach, Charles Wagner, and John & Brenda Weaver.

We wish to thank all who gave to the Harborcreek Historical Society – and the other nonprofits, too! – for the 2018 Erie Gives. This support is so important to the ongoing operations of the society and the Gifford-Blanchfield House.



Society board members John Skuce, Louise Smerick, and Melinda Meyer, and John's wife Judy, attended a check presentation at the Erie Zoo on August 28th. Also pictured is Michael Batchelor, Executive Director of The Erie Community Foundation.


Upcoming events by Cam Stadtmueller

The Harborcreek Historical Society is looking forward to a busy fall schedule, and we're hoping to see you at one or more of these upcoming events.

The society will have a table at the **Eastside Family YMCA Health Fair** on October 12th 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

We're excited to attend the **All Alumni Party**, sponsored by Harbor Creek School District, at the East Erie Moose Club October 6th 8:00 - 11:00 pm. There will be no admission fee, and the event will include a limited menu, cash bar, music by DJ Brian Shank, giveaways, and photograph opportunities.

Join us at Boscov's on October 16th for the **"Friends Helping Friends" benefit**. Shopping passes may be purchased through the Harborcreek Historical Society in advance for \$5.00. Please contact us at harborcreekhistory@gmail.com or (814) 899-4447 for more information.



Tuesday, October 16, 2018
8AM to 11PM

Join us in supporting our
Community Agencies and Organizations!

**YOUR \$5 SHOPPING PASS
BUYS A FULL DAY OF:**

- 25% Off Discount Shopping Pass
- Refreshments • Entertainment
- Fabulous Register to Win Prizes

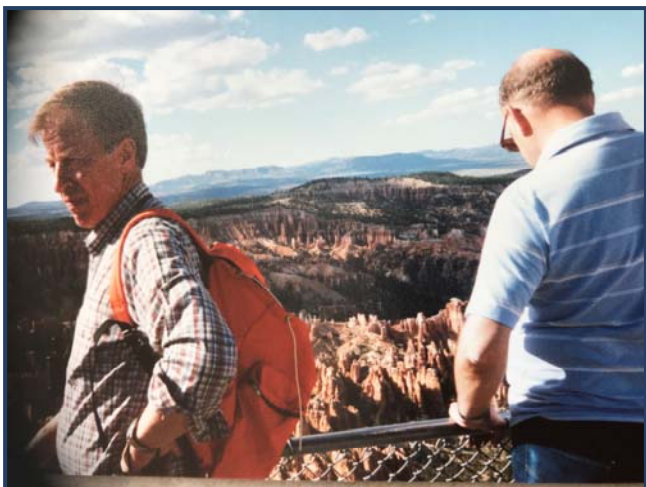
All Shopping Pass proceeds benefit participating local non-profit agencies and organizations.

Please save the date for our **Holiday Open House** at the Gifford-Blanchfield House December 8th 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. This annual tradition is the society's social event of the year!

The Berrys and Weitzs *(Continued from cover)*

vacations on Lake Powell in Utah. Dad loved driving the boat and exploring the side canyons to observe the water and wildlife there. Those were exciting trips, and I will always cherish the memories.”

Karen and John Berry joined the Weitz family on a few of the houseboat vacations. Karen recalled how Paul, in his down to earth manner, would point out night time sights such as Skylab orbiting above them, or a particular satellite, planet or constellation. After all, the space above our Earth was Paul’s home away from home!



Paul Weitz and John Berry viewing Bryce Canyon hoodoos (rock formations).



Paul Weitz, John Berry, and John's sister Suzanne Berry Weitz at Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park.

John and Karen journeyed with Paul and Suzanne on visits to explore Bryce Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, White Sand National Park, Monument Valley, and many more of the natural wonders in America’s Southwest. Paul’s absolute favorite was the Grand Canyon, a short drive from his home. The Berrys liked hearing Paul name the exposed layers of rock and tell about their geological era. While walking the rim on both the north and south sides of the gorge, Paul would share his vast knowledge of this well-known natural wonder. They hiked with him to “the famous point of no return,” a well-known spot deep in the canyon. Karen recounted that Paul was “like a walking encyclopedia, sharing his knowledge.” It was never a trip to see the sights; it was an adventure to experience each place! Both couples treasured the sunsets over the Grand Canyon with all the changing rock hues illuminated by rays of descending sunlight.

BUT the GRANDEST ADVENTURE of all was a seven day rafting trip on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Matt, Cindy and Paul Weitz, along with John Berry and his son Mike, went on the trip. John spoke of how physically challenging the rapids were, as well as the awesome spectacle of seeing the canyon from bottom to top instead of rim to river. Along the route, they camped on the sandy areas created by various turns in the river and explored side canyons with unimaginable natural formations. All were lifted from the river to the South Rim by helicopter, which was another exciting part of the trip. (Paul had spoken with Chuck Arnold about how awesome this one-of-a-kind adventure was. The first September of his retirement, Chuck joined a group who shot the rapids of the Colorado. Ironically the 9-11 tragedy occurred while Chuck was deep in the Grand Canyon.)

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Office Hours

**Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday
10 am – 2 pm, Thursday 4 – 7 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

Dear members,

Please invite a friend to join!

Sincerely,
Your friends at HHS



A special “thank you” to our summer volunteer by Cam Stadtmueller



Before beginning his freshman year at the University of Pittsburgh as a History and International Studies major in August, Eric Brinling wanted to know more about the workings of the Harborcreek Historical Society and signed up to volunteer. Volunteering at the Gifford-Blanchfield House this past summer gave him a variety of experiences, including working side-by-side with the directors, greeting visitors, and digitizing a portion of our archival collection.

Eric’s assignment in the archives involved the Dodge Family Collection, which contains letters written by John Dodge 1861 - 1880. Susan Frost Hayes-Masa, a direct descendant of John Dodge, donated the collection to the society. Eric scanned original documents, saved them on the society’s computer, and organized the saved files. His efforts will help make these primary resources more accessible to our volunteers and the public.

When asked what he learned from his work with the collection, Eric quipped that, “anything I would write will be legible and meaningful enough to be scanned by someone in 150 years. Oh! And always sign my full name.”

Eric is a 2018 graduate of Harbor Creek High School who was acknowledged with HIGH FIVE for excellence in Advanced Placement courses covering Calculus I and II, Psychology, United States Government & English Language and Composition. He was recognized as an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction & National Advanced Placement Scholar. Additionally, he was a member of the Marching Huskies Band and excelled at tennis. He was chosen for All Region Second Team Doubles.

Thank you, Eric, for taking an active role in the society this summer! We greatly appreciate your interest in local history and wish you the very best with your studies. (Incidentally, Eric’s uncle Ted Halgren was one of the initial members of the society when it formed in 1994.)

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Business Spotlight by Cam Stadtmueller

Re/Max agents can aid you in a search for private housing or commercial properties on a worldwide level. At the local level, RE/Max can evaluate your property, list your property for sale, and aid you in purchasing a new location.

At the Harborcreek office there are two experienced agents who have listed and sold hundreds of properties in our area. **Linda Miklinski**, a resident of Harborcreek since 1968, started her real estate career in 1978 and is now celebrating 40 years in business, with the past 20 years at Re/Max Real Estate Group. Linda appreciates hearing from previous clients and meeting new ones, and she is dedicated to her motto of “recognized experience and integrity for 40 years.” Linda can be reached at (814) 899-4209 or (814) 746-1517.

Seth Tuttle Sr. is a member of the Seth Tuttle Team, which includes Seth Tuttle, Jr., Nancy Duke, and Hannah Allesie. They have a combined 75 years of experience. The Seth Tuttle Team specializes in sales and marketing in all areas of real estate including subdivision, development and best use evaluations. They offer free consults to help you evaluate the factors in your next real estate need. “We believe service and experience are hallmarks of anyone you consider to address your real estate needs.” The team can be reached at (814) 898-3558.

Discovering two immigrants’ story by Brenda Weaver & Cam Stadtmueller

When searching census, birth, and death records, there is always history; sometimes there is a mystery, too. Such was the case for two death records, which state that Henry John Oltman and Edward Young (aka Eite De Young) – both immigrants from Holland - died in Harborcreek Township.

To learn more, Brenda Weaver researched Erie newspaper articles on microfilm in the Heritage Room at Blasco Library, and she uncovered the truth behind the two death certificates issued 100 years ago this month.

On the morning of Sunday, August 18, 1918, three brothers boarded the *Crescent*, a fishing tug owned by the Eugene Loesch Fish Company. Edward (34), William (30), and Henry (23) Young were fishermen employed by Loesch. At 5 am, two other men joined the brothers on the *Crescent* for a day on Lake Erie. They were Henry John Oltman, a painter, and John E. Bierbach, a brick mason.

When a strong northeast wind began late in the afternoon, other fishing boats in the Erie fleet reported that the *Crescent* was experiencing gasoline engine problems. The crew of the *Erie* estimated that the *Crescent* had two ton of fish aboard as “she rode low in the water,” which appeared to compound the problem. Tragically, the fishing tug sank, and all five men aboard the *Crescent* drowned.

The body of Henry John Oltman was found in mid-September on Moorhead Beach, now known as Shorewood. Edward Young washed ashore in the same area and was found a few days later by a farmer. This is the reason the two death certificates list Harborcreek Township as the place of death. Both men were buried on September 20, 1918 in Erie Cemetery along with the other three men who drowned on August 18th.



The present display at the Gifford-Blanchfield House features stories, photographs, and traditions of German, French, Dutch and Swiss immigrants.

Brenda Weaver has organized her research for the current and past exhibits into notebooks containing census records and some birth and death certificates. She has created notebooks for Harobrcreek Township’s immigrants from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. Please be sure to stop in and check out these new resources!

The Berrys and Weitzs *(Continued from Page 3)*

Cindy Weitz shared the following account of a much earlier family vacation when she and her brother Matt were young.

Dad would plan something incredible every year, and those vacations were good and long, sometimes three weeks. I remember Mom, a homebody to her core, saying as we were backing out of the driveway 'In 21 days we'll be home.' But she always went and was a good sport about it. One vacation that stands out in my mind was going to a ranch for astronauts in Colorado. Dad thought it would save driving time and be exciting to fly. He had procured a Cessna 170 for the trip, and I remember taking off, Mom and me in the back seats and Matt up front with Dad. Well, we had just gotten airborne and Matt's door flew open! Mom grabbed his arm so tight I thought it was going to pinch off in her grip, even though Matt was seat belted in and couldn't have fallen out if he tried. Dad had to circle around and land. We shut the door and off we went again. I remember Dad was as cool as a cucumber even though it took Mom a while to calm down. She hated flying, but we kids thought it was great fun. Another great family summer vacation involved flying out of our country to Mexico. Then we ventured by taxis and busses all over Acapulco, and I vividly remember very cool accommodations and cobbled streets in nearby small towns. We traveled back to the U.S. by train, which took a few days because it kept stopping at every small town and crossroad. We slept in berths, and I'm sure my homebody private Mother hated them as much as we kids loved them."

Matt and I always vexed our friends because we vacationed as a family well into our 40s and Mom and Dad's 70s. Friends would say in disbelief, 'You still vacation with your PARENTS!'

Karen Berry stated that, although Paul and Suzanne never sought fame and fortune, it found them. Along with it came the challenge of preserving family unity and privacy. Therefore, the Harborcreek Historical Society is grateful to the Weitz and Berry families for sharing these stories with our readers.

The final part of this four-part series will describe the events of October 5-7, 1973, which included recognition by Behrend College, a hero's welcome and parade on State Street, a Testimonial Dinner at Harbor Creek High School, and the dedication of Paul J. Weitz Stadium. If you attended any of these events, please contact Cam Stadtmueller at harborcreekhistory@gmail.com, with the subject line Weitz Tribute, or call the society's office at (814) 899-4447. She would love to hear your stories!



Summertime happenings

The ***All Class Reunion*** for Harbor Creek School District graduates was held at Whitford Park on August 15, 2018 4:00 – 7:00 pm. As you can see from the photograph to the left, there was a great turnout.

Harborcreek Community Night was held at Township Community Park on August 17, 2018. The Harborcreek Historical Society attended the event, and our volunteers enjoyed speaking with people who visited our table.

PA Representative Curt Sonney's annual ***Senior Citizen Expo*** at Harborcreek Social Hall was September 7, 2018 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. We participate with this event every year and appreciate the chance to "talk history" with those who attend.



Seeking Guest Writers

Would you like to share your historical interest or family lore about Harborcreek Township with the readers of ***The Harbor View?*** We welcome submissions from guest writers for each issue. They are usually one page in length and may contain photographs or other graphics. Please contact the Society via email at harborcreekhistory@gmail.com or call (814) 899-4447 if you have a story you'd like to see printed. We look forward to hearing from you.