

History of the Myerstown Swimming Pool

From the program for the Dedication of the Myerstown Swimming Pool on Saturday, May 25, 1991.

The Myerstown Lions Club was organized in 1950 and their first project prior to the chartering in February 1951 was to raise funds for the purchase of a tract of land adjacent to the playground to be purchased by the Community Building Association, which in time became the site of the Myerstown Swimming Pool.

The years of 1956-57 became years of unprecedented progress for the Myerstown Lions Club and the community at large. Under the capable leadership of then Lion President Charles O. Heberling who appointed a planning committee for the purpose of building a swimming pool. The committee was headed by past presidents Dewy. L. Shaak and L. Victor Dinger who spent months of extensive research with state recreation consultants with other community pool associations, Myerstown Borough Council, the School Board and Community organizations. After due consideration an open meeting of the community was held March 14, 1957 with Kenneth W. Abell a state recreation consultant who addressed 250-300 citizens in attendance in the high school at which time an approval was received by nearly a unanimous vote for the building of a swimming pool by the Myerstown Lions Club for the community.

The following three and a half months were filled with many committee meetings lasting into the wee hours of the morning finalizing plans, costs, the hiring of a contractor, and obtaining voluntary help for grading and hauling of fill which was a much needed project in itself.

As time progressed everything seemed to fall in place without a great deal of problems. After the pool was in place then came the construction of the bath house. The original bath house was constructed in one day with the help of men, women and children, plumbers, electricians, masons and carpenters, all of which were volunteers.

The pool was completed at a layout cost of \$47,000, however the actual cost without volunteer help on the part of the community would have been close to \$79,000. Through the sale of family memberships and daily admissions the Lions Club was able to pay off \$41,000 the first year of operation and the balance of \$6,000 was paid off prior to the opening date of the pool in 1958.

This was accomplished under the leadership of the committee, the manager Lyon Bill Derr and volunteer help to operate the pool. Lion Bill worked many hours during the swimming season, as well as prior to the opening and closing of the season. The Lions Club would be amiss if they did not recognize the Lions Club members and especially Lion Dan Shiner and Lion Richard Shanaman who have served beyond the call of duty.

The news media judged the original approval meeting of March 14, 1957 as the most spirited within the past 25 years on a public issue. The same was said as to the building of the pool and the bath house. Needless to say the pool and bath house was open as scheduled on July 4, 1957.

Over the past number of years Lion Dan Shiner served as manager, doing an outstanding job, nevertheless, Lion Bill continued doing an excellent job as treasurer.

It can truly be said that when there is a project to be performed in Myerstown the citizens of Myerstown are there to complete it. All one has to do is look to the past, the swimming pool, the Bi-centennial in 1968, as well as the fireman parades and the Halloween parades, etc...

A big thank you is due to all residents of Myerstown and Jackson Township for their continual support to the Myerstown Lions Club, to the Myerstown swimming pool, which will be known as the William L. Derr swimming pool as of the Twenty-fifth Day of May in the Year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred Ninety-One.