#### See us for

Experience, Expertise, Personal Attention & a Consistently Low Price

# MEHLER INSURANCE

Sharpsville Plaza 🗞 724-962-5757

www.mehlerinsurance.com

## Trusted for Generations

Auto à Home à Commercial

Life *&Health* 

301 South Broad Street, Grove City, PA 16127



### Whispering Oaks Retirement Community

#### 260 S. Buhl Farm Dr. Hermitage, PA 16148

7/2/2012 SENIORS FOR SAFE DRIVING COURSE

- 10:00am to 2:00pm
- Registration Required to 800-559-4880 or SFSD-PA.com
- 7/4/2012 LITTLE JOE LaTESSA

• 2:00pm

7/13/2012 JIM HUTCHISON

• 6:45pm

7/21/2012 RUMMAGE SALE

- 10:00am to 2:00pm
- Sellers Tables available, Please RSVP to 724-347-3050

7/30/2012 HEARING AID CLINIC

- 9:30am to 4:00pm
- FREE Hearing Tests
- Same Day Fitting
- Please RSVP to 724-347-3050

### Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc **Grove City Senior Community Center**

#### **JULY 2012**

(724) 458-6844 Mercer			County Community Transit: For reservations call (800) 222-8797		
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
2 9:30am-Peppi Exercise 11:00am-Mind Bender Puzzles <u>11:30am-Fourth of July Picnic</u> <u>on the Patio</u> <u>Live Music!!!!</u>	3 10:00am-BINGO 11:00am-Prime Time Health Hand-out 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 2:00pm-CORE Program	4 Center Closed Fourth of July	<b>5</b> 10:00am. – BINGO <u>11:00am-Citizen's Bank presentation,</u> <u>"Idenity Theft"</u> 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 1:00pm-Cards 2:00pm-CORE Program	6 9:00am-Peppi Exercise 10:15am-Bingo 11:30 a.m. Lunch & Social Hour 1:30-Dominos	
9 9:30am-Peppi Exercise 11:00am-Mind Bender Puzzles 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour	10 9:00am-GCMC Blood Lab & Blood Pressure Screening 10:00am-BINGO 11:00am-Prime Time Health Hand-out 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 2:00pm-CORE Program	<b>11</b> 10:00am-BINGO 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 12:30pm-Light exercise w/ Dee 1:00 p.m. Cooking 1:15pm-Cards <b>6:00pm-Music by Dick Fisher</b>	12 BUS TRIP Rivers Casino Reservations Required 8:30departure 10:00am-BINGO 11:30 a.mLunch & Social Hour 1:00pm-Cards 2:00pm-CORE Program	13 9:00am-Peppi Exercise 10:15am-Bingo 11:30 a.m. Lunch & Social Hour 1:30-Dominos	
<b>16</b> 9:30am-Peppi Exercise 11:00am-Mind Bender Puzzles 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour	17 10:00am-BINGO 11:00am-Prime Time Health Hand-out 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 2:00pm-CORE Program	18 <u>10:00am-Super Bingo sponsored by</u> <u>Trinity Living Center</u> 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 12:30pm-Light exercise w/ Dee 1:00 p.m. Cooking	19 10:00am. – BINGO <u>11:00am-Presentation by Southern Care</u> <u>Hopice" Ask the Nurse"</u> 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour <u>1:30pm-Ventriloquist Program by Helen</u> <u>Hammett &amp; Friends</u> 2:00pm-CORE Program	20 9:00am-Peppi Exercise 10:15am-Bingo 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 1:30pm-Dominos	
23 9:30am-Peppi Exercise 11:00am-Mind Bender Puzzles 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour	24 10:00 a.m. BINGO 10:30am- Keystone Blind Association Eveglass Cleaning & Minor Repairs 11:30 a.m. Lunch & Social Hour 2:00pm-CORE Program	<b>25</b> 10:00am-Bingo 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 12:30pm-Light exercise w/ Dee 1:00 pm-Cooking	26 10:00 amBINGO 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour 1:00pm-Cards 2:00pm-CORE Program	27 9:00am-Peppi Exercise 10:15am-Bingo 11:30 a.m. Lunch & Social Hour 1:30-Dominos	
30 9:30am-Peppi Exercise 11:00am-Mind Bender Puzzles <u>11:15am-"Importance of</u> <u>Staving Hydrated" by Cathy</u> <u>Donaldson, RN</u> 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour	<b>31</b> 10:00am-Bingo 10:30am-Prime Time Health Hand-out 11:30am-Lunch & Social Hour		*Farmer's Market Nutrition Program* Center's Program hours: Tuesdays-1:00pm-3:30pm Wednesdays-9:30pm-12:00pm		

Suggested Donation \$2.50

Two day advance registration required for congregate meal program

What's the answer to that age old question, what did people do before TV? The answer is easy they went to fastpitch softball games. I have been playing modified pitch softball for the last 32 years in what is now called The Shenango Valley Modified Softball League. The league started as a church league around 1960 and in 1996 dropped the church league status in order to compete in ASA state tournaments In 2010 the last vestige of the old league faded into obscurity when Notre Dame left the league. In my 32 years I have had the fortune to win 2 state championships and seven league titles. But it's really about the friendships I've made and the good times playing ball over the years. It's kind of ironic that I am playing ball with some guys whose dads I also played with, even worse now some of those kids have come and gone and I'm still hanging on. As I near the end of my career, I've become nostalgic about the game that I love so well and that's the reason for this article.

Our current league has a debt of gratitude to those leagues who came before us. Sometime in the mid to late 30's, modified leagues popped up around the Valley. There was the Federation of Clubs league with teams from The Italian Home, Croation Club, Twin City Elks, etc. who played at Pargany Park (across from the old National Castings). According to Paul Kranich (see cover) The Federation league started out as a modified fastpitch league or figure eight as they called it back then. Figure eight comes from the motion the pitcher makes as he pitches the ball. Then because Windmill style softball had caught on nationwide the league switched to windmill after WW 2. By the time Paul came back from the Korean war the league had folded. The story is the same for The Independent League, which hosted teams from Sharon Steel and Westinghouse, to name a few. There was no inter-league play during the season between these two leagues but then they would have a playoff with each of the league's champions to determine an overall valley champ. These games were very popular. My dad, Robert, says when he was a kid he would go to the Pine Hollow field to watch games and there would be 500 people or more in attendance. Westinghouse also had its own inter-departmental modified league. It started out as a modified league, switched to Windmill, then switched back to modified. This league lasted until at least 1980 and, of course, played most of their games at Westinghouse Park, where Whispering Oaks and McDonalds now stand. I talked with both Carl and Bill Juranovich for this article, both great players from the past. When Bill was a young man he worked at Sharon Steel. Being a good ballplayer, someone asked him to try out for the Westinghouse Inter-departmental league and, in fact, that was the only way you could get a tryout. At the end of the day they said "Ok you made the team." Bill, looking confused, said "But I work at Sharon Steel." They said "Not anymore you don't." He had to take a 2 dollar a week cut in pay but was a single guy and jumped at the chance.

Around 1960 our modified pitch church league popped up. Tommy Lewis told me his team, Wheatland Methodist, won the title in 1960. And the trophy is still in the church. St. Barts was an early dynasty in the league and pitchers like John Goga and Austie Murray pitched well into their 60's and 70's and were around when I was a kid in the league. Later Lynn Saternow's Notre Dame teams won a lot of titles. Lynn was still pitching last year but most players don't know what a dominant pitcher he was in his day. In my opinion Lynn goes down as the greatest player in the history of the league with Jim Kopan a close runner up. The league peaked in the 80's with 14 teams playing on fields all around the area. Today we have 7 teams in the Valley and many players travel to play in the Meadville league as well as Sharon. Often while I'm standing at third base an old timer in his 80's will come slowly walking onto the field and sit down in his lawn chair to watch the game. I'll smile and and say to the shortstop Matt "Hey Matt, see that old guy there, I played against him when I was a kid in this league, that's gonna be me one day soon." Matt just rolls his eyes. Speaking for all of us who are playing now, thank you to all the old timers who came before us and established this great sport we all love so much. Eric Bombeck (more photos on next page)



Bill "Whiskers" Jacobson applies a tag on an ugly slide by Paul Kranich in a Federation of Clubs game. Early 50s

# The History of Men's Fastpitch Softball in The Valley



tate champs

Coast To Coast Home Equity, a member of the Shenango Valley Modified League, recently captured the ASA lass A Modified-pitch state championship by winning six of seven games at Meadville's Lincoln Avenue Complex, including an 11-3 victory over Harrisburg-based Steers in the title game. From left are: front — Paul Schumacher, larty Bour, Mike Cidila, Chad McCombs and Eric Bombeck; back — Brett Houy, Chad Rowe, Craig Sch nager Scott Clary, Tim Dye, Chris Nagle and Harry Bowser. Results were published Wednesda

2000 Class A State Champions - missing from pic Chuck Joseph