



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

July 1, 2021

IronPigs Game

We did not have a monthly club meeting in June. Instead, we gathered as a club in fellowship with family and friends at our annual “Allentown Kiwanis Day at the IronPigs” game on Sunday, June 13. We hosted the event in a Dugout Suite, with 30 members and their guests in attendance. It was an overcast afternoon, with a rare sprinkle or two. This made it very comfortable outside. We invited Lehigh Valley Children’s Center director **Ron Hatcher** to join us with his three sons. One of his sons threw out a ceremonial first pitch, and did very well! Regrettably, the ‘Pigs lost the game 7-3 when the Rochester Red Birds hit a grand slam home run in the top of the 9th. But a good time was had by all! We enjoyed a 2-hour buffet of hamburgers, hot dogs, fried chicken, pulled pork, ziti, garden salad, potato salad, chips, fresh fruit and cookies. One of our newest members, **John Moser** won \$75 in our 50/50 raffle. It was great to see everyone in a personal group setting, maskless and fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. Sadly, two regular attendees of the outing, Sam and Missy Saxton were absent. Sam passed away just a week before the game. They both loved baseball and enjoyed joining us for this event, often with their son. We will miss Sam dearly. Later in the newsletter is a tribute to both Sam and former long-time member Frank Szabo who we also lost this year.



Judith Chase Memorial Bench Dedication

The weather on June 17 was perfect for the Judith H. Chase Memorial Bench Dedication Ceremony at LVCC South Mountain Center in Allentown. The ceremony began at 4 PM when LVCC CEO **Charles Dinofrio** greeted attendees. He introduced **Debra Lamb**, retired LVCC VP of Development, who provided a history of Judy Chase's legacy in founding the organization, and her impact on the development of quality early childhood education in the Lehigh Valley. Deb was followed by our club's VP **Tom Harp** who provided some background on Kiwanis and our club's support of LVCC and its programs. Over the years, our club's foundation has awarded over \$61,000 in grants to LVCC for purposes that included the purchase of new busses, renovation of buildings, funding of science and arts programs, and much more. Tom mentioned our club's "signature project" – the annual LVCC picnic, our annual Christmas Party and Mother's Day flower pot project. Judy Chase was a member of our club from January, 1991 until her passing in December, 2005 – nearly 15 years! Although she never served as an officer or board member, she served on various committees and was a trusted advisor to our club during Kiwanis' "Young Children Priority One" years. Last year, our Foundation approved a grant to purchase a commemorative bench in honor of Judy Chase. We scoured the internet to find a company that specializes in memorial park benches and ordered a six-foot bench made of recycled plastic with the engraved message "In Loving Memory of Judith Chase From the Kiwanis Club of Allentown." The bench was assembled and installed in front of the LVCC South Mountain Center in early November, 2020. We then scheduled a dedication ceremony for later that month, but the event had to be cancelled due to a COVID-19 incident at the center. Since then, the bench has been heavily used by parents waiting for their children outside the building. The delay in dedicating the bench actually worked out for the better with a gorgeous spring day, and the participation of three out of four of Judy's children. In his remarks, **Peter Chase** shared memories of his mom as she founded LVCC in the 1970's, and on behalf of his family thanked our club and foundation for sponsoring the memorial bench. The event was attended by **Enos Martin** and **Terry Kennedy** of our club, **Cathy Kane** of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown Northeast, **Ellen Kern**, representing State Senator Pat Browne, and State Representative **Peter Schweyer**, as well as several LVCC staff. Following the ceremony, we had time to enjoy some light refreshments and conversations with Judy's family.



Deb, Tom, the Chase Family and Charles D.

A Glance Into Our Past

In the past few months, we lost two longtime members of our club. This month provides a celebration of and tribute to the lives of Frank Szabo and Samuel Saxton:

Frank Szabo: A native of Bethlehem, Pa. Frank was born on November 24, 1946. He graduated from Liberty High School in 1964 and Penn State University. He was employed by Pennsylvania Power and Light Company for many years as Coordinator-Utility Relations. He volunteered for many years for the Minsi Trails Boy Scout Council in various roles. In 1983, he was awarded the Silver Beaver Award for his many dedicated years of service to the Boy Scouts.

Frank joined the Kiwanis Club in September 1975 and kept his membership until September 2010 for a total of more than 35 years. He was first elected a director in 1976-77 and 1977-78. He also served as a director in 2001-02 and 2003-04. He was elected 2nd vice president in 1981-82 and 1st vice president in 1982-83 prior to serving as president. He served as club secretary during 1996-97, 1997-98, 2005-06, and 2006-07. In 1996-97, Szabo served as lieutenant governor of Kiwanis Division 18. He organized the American Parkway cleanup for many years. He was a passionate Kiwanis member until the time that multiple sclerosis forced him to give up his membership.

Frank was very diligent in maintaining the club's physical archives which had been passed on from the very beginning of our club by a series of six club secretaries. He kept the files in his home's basement until they were accepted into the archives of the Lehigh County Historical Society. His willingness to keep the files ensured the use of these records to complete the extensive history of our organization.

On March 31, 2021, Frank passed away as a result of complications from his multiple sclerosis.

Sam Saxton: Sam was born on January 30, 1926, in Pittsburgh, Pa. He was drafted into the US Navy in July 1944 during World War II. After being discharged from the Navy, Sam moved to Allentown in 1946 to join his father in the operation of the Cedar Hill Cemetery on Airport Road. In May 1952, Sam received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Huron College, Huron, South Dakota.

At the June 9th, 1952, board meeting Sam was approved for membership into the Kiwanis Club of Allentown and he was inducted into the club at its regular meeting on July 12th at the Americus Hotel. In September 1955, Sam participated with 31 other Allentown Kiwanians in building a cabin at Camp Moseywood near Lake Harmony for the Allentown Girl Scouts. Sam served on the Ladies' Night, Music, and Projects Committees. One of Sam's fondest memories was his participation numerous times in the annual comedy skits presented by the Kiwanians at Ladies' Nights at the Lehigh Country Club.

Sam was elected to the board of directors for the Kiwanis Club for a two-year term in 1959-1960. On February 7, 1963, Sam left for Africa for a 2 ½ month big game safari. Upon his return from Africa, he made numerous presentations, to various Kiwanis clubs and other organizations, about his experiences during the safari. Sam was elected 2nd vice president of the Kiwanis Club for the 1969-1970 year and 1st vice president of the Kiwanis Club for the 1970-71 year. Sam served as president of the Kiwanis Club for the 1971-72 year.

On September 27, 1995, Sam piloted his plane, with 4 other Kiwanis Club passengers, from Allentown to Toronto, Canada, to attend an interclub meeting with the Kiwanis Club

of Toronto. In February 2011, Sam achieved the distinction as the longest serving Allentown Kiwanis Club member as he surpassed Ward Kraeg's previous club record of 59 years 7 months. In 2019, Sam and his wife Missy funded the publication of the Club's 100th anniversary history book to allow proceeds of book sales to benefit the Club's Foundation.

On June 5, 2021, Sam passed away four days short of the 69th anniversary of his acceptance into the Kiwanis Club of Allentown.

- **Enos Martin**

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, July 8 beginning at 6:00 PM (social hour from 5-6 PM). Speaker is Allentown Mayor Ray O'Connell.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, July 28, 5 PM on Zoom.



July Birthdays



15 – Peg Harp

23 – Jeff Burnatowski



- **Tom Harp, Editor**