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Old cars keep these guys young

By REBECCA BRIA
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In the spring of 1998, friends Art Pimm and Frank Ide were hanging out at Pikes Creek Park when the two decided to start a club for old cars, trucks and motorcycles. They invited Jim Davis, Ide's father-in-law, and other friends to join the group, called Hi Lites Motor Club, which met at the park.

The Back Mountain-based club soon grew to 30 people and began to hold antique car shows and cruises to raise money for charitable organizations and people in need.

Currently in its 10th year, Hi Lites remains strong with a membership of about 40. The mixed gender and all-ages club actively has car cruises throughout the Wyoming Valley.

IF YOU GO

Cruise-in at Twist & Shake 1405 State Route 29, Pikes Creek 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16. A special 10th year commemorative plaque will be given to the first 25 vehicles to register at the event.

Hi Lites is hosting a car cruise from 6 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 16, at Twist & Shake on Route 29 in Pikes Creek. The cruise is free and open to the public and anyone

may show off his or her classic automobile at no cost. A 50/50 raffle will be held to raise money for the club's contributions to charity.

Last year, Hi Lites Motor Club donated \$1429 to area causes, including the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House, Toys for Tots and the Veterans Affairs Canteen Service. They also gave funds to Scott Davis, a Jackson Township police officer and son of original member Jim Davis, who suffers from a brain tumor.

Several weeks ago, Hi Lites held a car cruise in conjunction with an air show by the Wyoming Valley Flyers at the Hazleton Airport. The two groups have been holding a show together for the past five years. This year, the event raked in \$6300 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, enough money to grant wishes for two children.

Other scheduled Hi Lites car cruises for this year are the following: September 7, 1 to 4 p.m., Veterans Affairs Hospital, Plains Township; September 20, 4 to 7 p.m., Wegmans, Wilkes-Barre Township; and October 18, 2 to 7 p.m., Sheetz, Trucksville.

Jack Judge, 65, of Lake Silkworth, a former Lehman Township police officer, has been a member of the club for five years and serves as president. He learned about the club through Frank Ide, who worked for the Lehman Township Road Department.

"I'm proud they elected me to run the club," Judge said. "It's not something I really wanted to do, but I felt somebody had to do it. I met a lot of new friends and it's my way of socializing. Otherwise, I just sit around and watch TV."

Judge owns a 1969 Mustang Grand Coupe, although his very first car, a 1953 Lincoln Convertible, is much older and he recalls

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Susan Makara, of Lehman, commands 15-week-old Prince Caspian to put his paws on her lap at Starbucks in Shavertown. Makara is training the black Labrador Retriever to be a service dog for a disabled person.

Serving the disabled

Area women training dogs to be service dogs for people with disabilities

By REBECCA BRIA
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Each time Susan Makara and Sarah Kabata take their 15-week-old black Labrador Retrievers out in public, people swoon over the puppies. But Prince Caspian and Princess Cinderella don't pay any attention because they're being trained to be service dogs for the disabled.

Makara, 43, of Lehman, and Kabata, 22, of Benton and formerly of Sweet Valley, are two of three area women training puppies to be service dogs through Susquehanna Service Dogs. The third woman, Patty Dooley, lives in Blakeslee and is raising a dog named Princess Kida.

The women are the first in Northeastern Pennsylvania to train dogs for Susquehanna Service Dogs. Their dogs are from the same litter, coined the "Royal Litter" because all the dogs are named after Disney princes and princesses.

Kabata and Makara originally met when Kabata attended Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School with Makara's daughter, Kaitlyn. Makara raised 10 Seeing Eye Dogs and Kaitlyn was occasionally allowed to take one of the dogs to school. Kabata saw the dogs and became interested, later raising one Seeing Eye Dog.

SUSQUEHANNA SERVICE DOGS

Anyone with questions about puppy raising for the Susquehanna Service Dogs or who is interested in attending a meeting may call Susan Makara at 675-3409 or Sarah Kabata at 864-2700. Visit www.mydallaspost.com for a link to Susquehanna Service Dogs' Web site.

Kabata shared the Susquehanna Service Dog's Web site with Makara and the women decided to get involved with the organization.

Susquehanna Service Dogs, a non-profit program of Keystone Children and Family Services, breeds Labrador Retrievers and relies on volunteers to do basic obedience, housebreaking and socialization with each dog until it reaches the age of 18 months. After a physical and training evaluation, dogs who pass are further trained by the organization to become service dogs. The dogs are matched with deaf persons, those in wheelchairs, children with autism, therapists and are used as balance dogs for people with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis.

Although the organization has an 80 percent placement rate, dogs who do not pass are released and placed

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Prince Caspian ignores Starbucks customers in Shavertown and pays attention to his trainer, Susan Makara, right, of Lehman. The dog is allowed in public places under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jerry Schmid has pumped his last gallon of gasoline

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post Correspondent

It's been 40 years of pumping gas, driving a wrecker and fixing cars in the Back Mountain. But now, Jerry Schmid is retiring.

He leans back against the brick facade on his building, wistfully looking at the clouds and traffic madly passing by his BP Amoco station on Route 309.

"I didn't think it would end this way," he said.

Schmid hardly has a minute to muse when Ed Pappas, of Trucksville, comes in to ask about a clicking noise in his steering column. One listen and look under the hood and Schmid announces, "You've got a bad 'knuckle.'"

Dick Morgan, of Shavertown, stops by to say good-bye and wonders why the station is closing suddenly. Schmid explains the costs of doing business and how he feels credit card companies have taken away the small profit he had left in card fees.

That, combined with having a large supplier like Sheetz a mile down the road



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Jerry Schmid has shepherded many youthful area mechanics over the years, including Adam Hunsinger. "We've had a lot of fun," Hunsinger said. "He taught me stuff I never knew."

selling gas at a penny or two below what Schmid can buy it for, have killed his business.

"I used to sell 60,000 gallons a year and now I'm down to 10,000 gallons," he specifies. "I made 10 cents on the gallon until

three weeks ago," he laments.

So, when Schmid was approached to sell his property, he reluctantly agreed and the station will re-open as a convenience/gas station. Feeling as if he's been over-charged and manipulated by greedy gas companies and banks, Schmid doesn't think he's getting what the property is worth.

Ironically, it was the manipulation and fickleness of gas companies in 1972 that allowed Schmid to enjoy one of the few vacations he's ever taken. During the '72' shortage, gas stations were rationed to an 85 percent allotment of what they had sold the year before. The Ranch Wagon hot dog restaurant went into business as a gas station and some stations received more than Schmid's allotment.

"I put out a sign that said 'ALL THE GAS YOU WANT,' sold my whole allotment right away and went to Mardi Gras," he recalls.

It's been a bittersweet career for Schmid.

"Cars were my life since I was 12," he

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