

1 T I M E S

NEWSLETTER OF
P I T T S B U R G H P R I M E T I M E R S

FEBRUARY 2008 ISSUE

Tuesday, February 12

Tuesday Musical Club will perform at 12:30 PM St Andrews Episcopal church in Highland Park. This free event will feature Brahma's G minor piano quartet and German art songs for soprano. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

Thursday, February 14

Happy Valentine's Day! If you are wondering what to give your favorite Valentine, try a membership in the Pittsburgh Prime Timers. Or maybe you should phone and ask a friendly looking member to a PPT event.

RSVP for the Film Group's Feb 16 movie - *Out of the Past*, a film about the founding of the gay straight education alliance. RSVP to the number listed below.

Friday, February 15

RSVP for the Sunday Social on February 17 - NO EXCEPTIONS! - We have to give the caterer a count for the Sunday Social on this date. Please honor this deadline.

Saturday, February 16

PPT Film Group will meet at 2:00 PM. This month's selection is *Out of the Past*. This film is about the founding of the gay straight education alliance.

Sunday, February 17

Monthly Social at 4:00 PM at the Allegheny Unitarian Universalistic Church. 416 W. North Avenue, North Side. Cost \$5.00 Members and \$10.00 for guests. Pay at the door. Cash or check made out to Pittsburgh Prime Timers. This month we take a break from the pot luck. The super will be homemade lasagna –traditional Italian and vegetable – plus a salad, bread, desert and beverages. Come and enjoy the social.

Our program will be a discussion of the legal issues for mature gay and bisexual men and will be based on the legal information distributed at the Prime Timers Worldwide Convention in Reno, NV last October.

Tuesday, February 26

RSVP for the Dine Out Group on Thursday by calling the contact number below.

Thursday, February 28

Dine Out Group will meet at Max's Allegheny Tavern at 7PM. 537 Suismon Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 on Pittsburgh's North Side. The North Side has perhaps the most interesting history of any of the many geographical entities that comprise the City of Pittsburgh and its environs.

It all started in 1820 when the first bridge was built connecting Allegheny City (Now the North Side) with Pittsburgh. From that point on, Allegheny City grew at a rapid pace. By 1880, beautiful mansions lined Ridge Avenue, while down on General Robinson Street a few so-called "sporting houses" were in evidence. From local conversations it appeared that nobody ever visited these houses, but they did seem to survive quite well.

By 1884 Allegheny City was inhabited by a mixture of ethnic cultures. The Scotch and Irish settled to the west towards Manchester while the English gathered within the Commons in the center of Allegheny City. The Germans chose to settle in the east of Allegheny City in what became known as Dutchtown.

It was in this atmosphere that George Rahn decided to strike out on his own and leave the employ of his uncle, who operated a broom factory on Spring Garden Avenue, to become the proprietor of a saloon at 900 East Ohio Street.

As Allegheny City continued to grow and prosper, so did George Rahn's business. By the turn of the century, George was able to sell his saloon business and purchase the Farmers and Drovers Hotel at 539 Second Street (now Suisomn Street) in the most fashionable section of Dutchtown. The Farmers and Drovers Hotel (now the Allegheny Room at Max's) was a popular overnight stop for the drivers of the wagons coming in from the north with produce and wares for sale in the busy market houses of Allegheny City and Pittsburgh.

The hospitality business proved good to George and in 1903 the Hotel Rahn was erected on a vacant lot on the corner of Middle and Second Streets. This building now houses the main bar and dining room at Max's. From the elegant hand carved back bar with the beveled glass mirrors that was brought to Allegheny City from the St. Louis Exposition to the white ceramic tile walls and five colored patterned tile floors, no cost was spared. Brass chandeliers that featured a combination of both gas and electric lamps provided the illumination for the bar and dining rooms. Solid oak ice boxes stocked the many beers produced by Allegheny City breweries. As popular then as it still is today is the Dutch Club Beer brewed by the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company on Troy Hill Road.

George's wife Katherine's good food became well known throughout all of Allegheny City. The smell of fresh baked apple pies coming from the second floor kitchen greeted the early riser at the Hotel Rahn. A dumbwaiter from the second floor kitchen carried the popular "Dutch" influenced meals to the dining rooms on the first floor of the hotel.

In 1907, after a bitter fight, the City of Pittsburgh annexed Allegheny City and the grandeur of Allegheny began to diminish. Seven years later, on New Years Eve in 1914, tragedy struck the Rahn Family. A guest at the hotel, having too much to drink, became rowdy and George Rahn was forced to expel this inebriated patron from the bar. In the process of doing so, one of the swinging doors at the entrance hit George on the head, causing a severe concussion. George died New Years Day at Allegheny General Hospital at the age of 61. A cousin, Harry Rahn, helped Katherine operate the hotel until her death in 1920. The Rahn estate was liquidated and the hotel sold.

During prohibition, the former Rahn Hotel was a well known speakeasy. An outside visitor to the North Side during prohibition would have been surprised because beer, wine and bootleg liquor flowed so well here. After prohibition the bar and hotel were operated by Joe Miller whose grandon, Gene Miller, operates an insurancy agency on East Ohio Street. In 1944, the business was sold to Charley Niederst, who operated the bar and hotel until 1970 when the business was purchased by Jennie and Lou Lardo. In 1977, the business and real estate was purchased by the present owners who changed the name to Max and Erma's Allegheny Tavern. A dispute with the large food chain from Columbus, Ohio, over the name caused the name Erma to be dropped several years ago.

Extensive work was done on the physical plant to restore it to the grandeur of earlier years. We invite you to browse through the dining rooms and Ratskeller. In the Allegheny Room is a color lithograph of the Eberhardt and Ober Brewery. The framed opening in the ceiling of Erma's Dining Room is all that remains of the dumbwaiter that carried the food from the second floor kitchens to the first floor dining rooms. The ice box in the bar has been keeping beer cold since 1903 and the wooden beer cooler in the basement has stored the draft beer that flows from the taps at the main bar for over eighty years. The wine cooler in the Allegheny Room and the cast iron stove in the Ratskeller once graced the second floor kitchen at the Hotel Rahn. A picture of the bar taken shortly after the hotel opened in 1903 is displayed in our main dining area. We thank Eddie and Doe Rahn for presenting Max's with this picture.

We hope that your experience at Max's reflects the same hospitality that has been a part of this "Neighborhood gathering place" since the turn of the century. 1.

February's Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday PPT Members

Birthdays

James D. Feb 4

Anniversaries

(There are no known anniversaries)

Joseph B. Feb. 16
George B. Feb 24
William C. Feb. 26
Terry B. Feb. 27

this month.)



THE **T I M E S** is the official newsletter of the **PITTSBURGH PRIME TIMERS**. Members are encouraged to submit articles and letters to the editor by the due date posted on the calendar to horseNunicorn@aol.com. All other communication should be directed to:

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