

SUMMER FUN GUIDE

Historic Crystal Cave marks 146 years

It is exactly 146 years ago that Historic Crystal Cave was retrofitted to become Pennsylvania's first show cave. Having been discovered purely by accident the previous November, Samuel Kohler labored to transform a wild cave with a muddy floor and irregular break-down to one suitable for the presentation of visitors. After expanding the entrance he created passages by removing heavy rocks and replacing them with dirt and planks. Rocks and wooden boards were used to create stairways, railings and bridges to cross chasms. After four months of difficult preparation, the "Grand Illumination" of Crystal Cave took place on May 25, 1872. The Greenwich Cornet Band provided entertainment.

After paying their 25 cent admission fee, tourists were given a torch to carry into the dark cave and an extra supply of tallow candles to carry in their pockets.

Protective clothing was also offered as people came dressed in their Sunday best. Kohler created a narrative for the tour based on the romantic landscape of the mid-Victorian era. In addition to giving names to various formations, he created myths and stories about them. Young boys ran ahead of the tour guide and threw kerosene on the rocks to be lit for the purpose of illumination.

Tourists used the railway system then boarded a horse-drawn carriage to travel the uneven dirt roads to Crystal Cave. Drivers at livery stables in Kutztown would also provide conveyance. Train schedules were commonly published in newspapers and railroad guide books. By the spring of 1874, Kohler had erected a hotel on the premises to accommodate the growing number of people coming to Crystal Cave.

The new hotel, built in the Victorian Italianate



style, had six bedrooms and a bath on the second floor and four additional bedrooms on the third. Meals were prepared in a walk-in fireplace and served in the dining area on the first floor.

Samuel Kohler sold Crystal Cave to his 21-year-old son, David, in 1886. David purchased a liquor license that same year and held dances and hoedowns featuring live bands in the Crystal Cave Ballroom. Refreshments and strong drinks were sold from a

small wooden enclosure inside the cave.

By the turn of the century, thousands of tourists came to Crystal Cave every year.

By 1908, new technology transformed the tourism industry. That same year, Ed Slonecker installed the first

electrical wires in Crystal Cave with lights powered by a gasoline generator. Four years later, the stagecoach was retired as cars became the popular mode of transportation. Autos reduced travel time, and by 1917, the "Cave Hotel" was closed af-

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FILE PHOTOS



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610-582-1194

BRING YOUR FAMILY OR GROUP FOR A 'SUNSATIONAL' DAY OF FUN!

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Enjoy a Refreshing Swim In Our Oversized Pool!

Get Outdoors Day

at Blue Marsh Lake

Saturday, June 9
10 am - 3:30 pm
- Free! -
Dry Brooks Day Use Area-
Lakeview Pavilion & Boat Beach

Free full day of Outdoor activities for all ages! Over 50 clubs and organizations promoting outdoor recreation and safety. Scavenger Hunt with Prizes! Food available.

Presented By US Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District partnering with Berks County Parks & Recreation Dept.

Directions: From U.S. Route 222, take PA Route 183 North to Palisades Dr., turn left and take the first right into the Dry Brooks Day Use Area. Parking at Lot D Questions? Call 610-374-2944 or visit us at: www.nap.usace.army.mil/bluemarsh

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For more information,
call 570-366-8736 or visit
www.TheArtsBarn.com or
www.TheArtsBarn.org.

Summer Arts in Berks Parks

Concerts may be canceled due to inclement weather and will be announced on www.countyofberks.com/parks, Facebook and on WEEU 830 AM. For more information, contact Berks

Thursday, July 12, at
Gring's Mill amphithe-

ring's Mill amphitheater: Landsharks Band (Jimmy Buffet tribute band, also rock 'n roll, pop 40, dance music, party music).

Cave

At 57 years old, David Kohler was ready to retire. He sold Crystal Cave to J. Douglas Kaufman, Realtor, and attorney Edwin L. DeLong in 1923. Both men continued to work in their chosen professions while also extensively marketing and renovating Crystal Cave for the anticipated influx of day trippers. Over the next 10 years, the cave was updated with concrete steps, macadam pathways, metal bridges and railings. The electrical service was improved in 1927 with 225 indirect lights powered by 200-watt light bulbs. The road to Crystal Cave from the main highway was widened to two lanes at considerable expense to the Company. A picnic park was created and over 300,000 evergreen trees were planted.

Over the years, when the needs of tourists changed, other attractions and improvements were introduced above ground to enhance the enjoyment of visitors. Today, customers see a movie presentation about the formation of caves and the history of Historic Crystal Cave prior to the tour. A

A photograph of a white, two-story building with a balcony. A sign on the upper left corner of the building reads "WELCOME CRYSTAL CAVE". Two people are walking on the paved area in front of the building. The building has dark trim around the windows and doors.

large gift shop, panning for gemstones, nature trail and picnic facilities operate all season. During the summer, a second gift shop and museum, ice cream parlor, restaurant and miniature golf are open daily.

The long heritage of Historic Crystal Cave could not have been possible with-

out the faithful tourists who continue to patronize and enjoy what nature has created underground. With persistent conservation and preservation of the cave, tours can be expected to continue for generations to come.

For more information, go to Crystalcavepa.com.



2018

SUMMER ARTS

at Berks Parks

Gring's Mill Recreation Area • **FREE**
 Berks County Heritage Center • Admission
 Hamburg Community Park • \$5 Parking

- 🎵 Sunday, June 10th - 6:00 pm
Vinyl Groove
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Sunday, June 17th - 6:00 pm
Maria Damore
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Sunday, June 24th - 6:00 pm
Mike Hertzog Trio • Free
 Hamburg Borough Community Park
- 🎵 Sunday, July 1st - 6:00 pm
A Touch of Blues
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Sunday, July 8th - 6:00 pm
Know Return
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Thursday, July 12th - 6:00 pm
The Launies
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Sunday, July 15th - 6:00 pm
Exeter Community Band
 Berks County Heritage Center
- 🎵 Sunday, July 22nd - 6:00 pm
Sterling Koch & Freeway Jam
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Sunday, July 29th - 6:00 pm
Stephanie Grace
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🌻 Friday, August 3rd - 8:00 pm
Free Family Movie in the Park
 Gring's Mill amphitheater
- 🎵 Thursday, August 9th - 6:00 pm
Landsharks Band
 Gring's Mill amphitheater



Concerts may be canceled for inclement weather.
 Call 610-374-2944 for info or www.countyofberks.com/parks



2018 Concert SERIES

in the Kutztown Park Bandshell



MAY 12 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Dave Mell Band

MAY 19 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Macungie Band

MAY 23 (Wed) 6:30 – 8:30PM
Kutztown School District Instrumental Concert

JUNE 2 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Frog Holler

JUNE 12 (Tues) 7:30 – 9:00PM
Flag Day Concert: Kutztown Community Choir

JUNE 23 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
The Mudflaps with The 60's Boys

JUNE 30 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
The Cramer Brothers Band

JULY 5 (Thurs) 7:00 – 9:00PM
"Summertime Spectacular" – KU Summer Music Festival

JULY 14 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Ben Mauger's Dixieland Band

JULY 21 (Sat) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Swing Fever

JULY 28 (Sat) 6:00 – 8:00PM
The Fabulous Greaseband

AUGUST 5 (Sun) 3:00, 4:30 & 7:30PM
Kutztown Day: Allentown Band

AUGUST 9 (Thurs) 7:00 – 9:00PM
Kutztown School District Summer Band

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THE LIGHT IN THEIR EYES - JUN 24 @ 2pm \$25 adv \$30 @ door

Collaborative Art Auction/Fundraiser for The Arts Barn Edu Cntr

SUMMER FUN GUIDE

Get Outdoors Day at Blue Marsh Lake

National Get Outdoors Day at Blue Marsh Lake is Saturday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Berks County Parks & Recreation offer a free full day of outdoor activities at the Dry Brooks Day Use Area, by the Lakeview pavilion and along the Boat Beach with over 50 clubs and organizations.

Throughout the day, there will be interactive displays, presentations, workshops and hands-on demos promoting a variety of outdoor activities.

Highlights of the event this year include:

- A visit by the PennStar 4 Helicopter
- The New York Life table offering a free child's ID informational sheet

- The Berks County Sheriff's K-9 Unit in action and dog agility demos by the Berks County 4-H Dog Training Club and K'Lin Ken'l
- Red Creek Wildlife Center will be giving talks about local animals and the recent rescue of a great blue heron at Blue Marsh Lake this past fall.
- The new Corps Pa-

trol Boat in a Vessel Safety Check Demo at 2 p.m.

- Mascots Globey, Smokey Bear and Bobber the Water Safety Dog

Participants can join in the GO Day Scavenger Hunt by visiting each of the partner organizations throughout the event to be entered in prize drawings that occur throughout the day and a grand prize drawing will



Kayaks on Blue Marsh Lake

happen at 3:30 p.m. (winner must be present to win).

Blue Marsh Lake's Get Outdoors Day on Saturday, June 9, is a fantastic event where you can learn about the many outdoor opportunities that are available at Blue Marsh Lake and throughout the Berks County area.

For information, call 610-374-2944 or visit www.nap.usace.army.mil/bluemarsh.

SUMMER FUN GUIDE

Sensational summer fun

French Creek Pool & Boat Rental offers swimming lessons, boat rentals

French Creek Pool & Boat Rental operates from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day. Certified lifeguards are on duty at all times.

We offer swimming lessons for children 3 to 12 years of age.

Located next to the pool is a snack bar for your convenience. We provide hot and cold food items, ice cream and a variety of cold beverages. Also, available at the pool is a pavilion to rent for your summer parties or picnics.

Pool Hours (weather permitting): open daily: 11 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.; Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Boat Rental is located on scenic Hopewell Lake below the swimming pool. We offer rowboats, kayaks and paddleboats. Also, come try the new stand-up paddleboards, which are the new exciting way of recreating!!

Boat Rental Hours (weather permitting): weekdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; weekends: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Bring your family or group for a "sensational" day of fun!

We are located in French Creek State Park, 843 Park Road, Elverson, PA 19520.

For information or directions, visit us at frenchcreekpool.com or call 610-582-1194.

SUMMER FUN

Get prepared for summer camp season

Summer camp season is just around the corner. Each summer, millions of children depart for campsites around the country to swim, hike, craft and enjoy the companionship of friends.

Summer camps in North America were first established in the 1880s and were attended by children without their parents for overnight stays. By the 20th century, summer camps had become an international phenomenon, and various organizations hosted traditional summer camps or camps geared toward religion, sports, music and other subjects and activities. According to the American Camp Association, each year more than 14 million children and adults in the United States attend camp. America is home to more than 14,000 day and

resident camps (8,400 are overnight camps and 5,600 are day camps). Nonprofit groups are the largest sponsors of summer camps.

Many people put off summer camp planning until it is too late. Parents should keep in mind that camps begin registration early in the year and have specific cut-off dates for enrollment. Parents who want to beat the crowds this year can use this guide to help plan a summer camp agenda.

- Attend an orientation seminar. Take the time to visit prospective camps for a tour, and use this open house as an opportunity to learn more about the programs offered. If available, find a camp employee to discuss your child's eligibility for enrollment. Some camps may offer webinars for convenience.

- Fill out the enrollment package completely. Each camp has their own requirements for registration. Expect to submit some personal information, including a medical background and proof of insurance, names and numbers of emergency contacts and any other pertinent information as it applies to the camper. This may include allergies, fears, physical or mental disabilities or even preferences in camp courses.
- Establish payment schedules. Summer camps vary in price. The ACA says camp costs range from \$100 to more than \$1,500 per week. However, many accredited camps offer some sort of financial assistance for children from families with limited financial means. If cost is a factor, be sure to broach the subject.
- Prepare children for the physical challenges a camp may present. Summer camp activities may be rigorous, and campers may need to be cleared by a physician before starting. Be sure to schedule your child a physical and bring along any pertinent forms. Children also can increase their levels of physical activity compared to the often sedentary nature of winter. Such preparation can prevent injuries when engaging in outdoor and physical activities.
- Shop for supplies. Camps are likely to provide a list of requirements with regard to clothing and other equipment campers will need. Make sure kids have enough shorts, T-shirts, socks, athletic shoes, swimsuits, toiletries and other camp necessities before they leave.
- Keep children in the loop. Engage children in the planning process to help alleviate their fears and get them excited about summer camp.

Summer camp can foster lifelong memories. Parents can help kids prepare in advance for the fun that's soon to arrive.

Article courtesy of MetroCreative

Visit Historic

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