***1961*** *Cedar Cliff H. S.*

*Winter 2025 Update*

Happy Groundhog Day!

Soon after the sun rose on the biggest meteorological day of the year, the famous rodent resident of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, emerged from his borrow to make his annual prognostication.

Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow this morning, signaling six more weeks of winter. This marks the 139th celebration of Groundhog Day. The good news is that Phil has only been correct about 40% of the time.



The tradition dates back to 1887 in Pennsylvania, but further back in Europe where it was an offspring of the Christian holiday Candlemas, that marked the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.

Germans embraced the tradition and added a hedgehog to the mix. If during the celebrations the weather was bright and clear, six more weeks of winter would ensue. They believed spring would be right around the corner if it was a dull and cloudy day.

When Germans settled in America, they opted for a groundhog instead of a hedgehog.



*Phil’s Wife, Phyllis, has trouble getting up early, but thinks that Phil’s wrong again.*

Winter! Yikes!

I know that sometimes in recent years, I have remarked that the winters are not as cold as they used to be. And I seem to remember a lot more snow when we were in school. Then we got “global warming” which Americans couldn’t agree on. Whatever the cause, the winters seemed to be somewhat milder. Then came the winter of 2025. It started with a beautiful and mild fall, then suddenly turned brutal. As I wrote on January 21, the high today was 17 degrees, and the low tonight is predicted to be 0 degrees. And of course, those numbers don’t factor in the so-called “wind chill”. Since I walk outside every day, I can tell you unequivocally that I’m ready for spring. Let’s hope the groundhog is wrong this year.

A few months ago, one of our classmates suggested we ask for memories having to do with ice-skating. While we got some nice memories, we also heard about “weak ankles” which prevented many of us from participating. I know for me doing anything with classmates or friends was always a social time, weak ankles and all.

Thanks to Joe Albers for this memory at a venue that I hadn’t even thought about- Marsh Run, just south of New Cumberland.

Marsh Run (New Cumberland)

“I have some very fuzzy memories of skating when I was a kid. I think once I may have skated on the Lemoyne Ice Company’s roof that Brian mentioned, but that’s the fuzziest of memories, if it is even accurate. What I most remember about skating as a kid was being outside the day the ice broke.

When I was a kid growing up on Reeser’s Summit our skating options were limited. I attended Pleasant View, the one room school on the hill overlooking New Cumberland. Some of our classmates lived on Springer’s Lane, but the only one that comes to mind right now is Peter Bowen who was a frequent playmate at that point in my life. For anyone who isn’t familiar with Springer’s Lane it is the extension of Poplar Road where it crosses Route 114.

At the far end of Springer’s Lane, where it intersects the Old York Road (Examining MapQuest seems there has been some reconfiguration of that end of the Lane, since I was a kid; imagine that.) There was a modest-sized pond in the middle of a swampy area. It didn’t appear on MapQuest today, but it was a popular place to congregate for skating when I was a kid. Actually, skating may be a misnomer, since so much of my time was spent riding on ankles.

I vividly recall one cold day when I was with a group of friends and was shuffling across the ice. It was well beyond the shore when I heard the sound nobody on ice wanted to hear, a sharp cracking sound. It only took a moment before I felt myself descending. It’s amazing how time slows when life speeds up. I have no recollection of what I may have been thinking in that brief moment, but I probably didn’t think it would end well. Surprisingly, it did! It turned out the water was only 2-3 feet deep and with some clawing and chopping I eventually made it to shore. My next problem was getting home. This occurred long before I had my driver’s license and the closest thing to a cell phone was the watch Dick Tracy wore. It must have been a very long and cold walk, but like so many bad moments from our past that part of the story has been erased completely from memory.

Another experience I recall more fondly was skating outdoors with my mother. She was athletically inclined and enjoyed skating. One very cold winter we took our skates to the Yellow Breeches Creek directly across from the airport. I think there was a tiny gas station, and we were behind it for those of you who recall that immediate area. I’m guessing this outing must have been prior to my pond experience, because the water in the Breeches would have been relatively deep, and I would have probably thought twice about skating on it. What I recall now is how much fun it was to be whizzing along near the shore with the trees creating a canopy over my head and the snowy bank a couple feet away. It was a beautiful day, and I owe Brian a thank you for helping me resurrect this long-hidden memory of being with Mom. Cheers!”

Joe Albers

 *A marsh, but not Joe’s marsh*



*The Lemoyne Ice & Cold Storage Co. Building as it Exists Today. As you can see, it is now a graphic arts business. The ice rink was removed from the roof for liability reasons.*

 *Joe wasn’t the only classmate to experience the terror of cracking ice. The Susquehanna River was a tempting enticement to give skating a try. Odessa Sykes Shaw and her friend Mary decided to give it a try. Thank goodness everyone ended up safe. Although I believe Joe had a very cold walk back home.*



*Skating on the rink on the Roof of the Lemoyne Ice Company, ca. 1960*

Susquehanna River

Like many of you, the feedback we get from all of you reminds us of memories we had forgotten. I had shared with you that we were playing hockey on the river one day when the New Cumberland Police showed up and escorted us off the ice. Perhaps this got Odessa Sykes Shaw to thinking about ice skating on the river where she had some scary memories.

“It was indeed scary!!! I must have been 7 or 8 or 9 and lived in “Wormtown” (our nickname for Wormleysburg). I had a friend, Mary, who suggested we go ice skating on the river. I had a pair of clip-on metal skates that I found to wear.

So off we went and climbed down the riverbank to the ice-covered river. The ice was thick because it was a very cold winter. We decided to skate to City Island and back again. About halfway there, there was a big crack in the ice and we could see the water flowing under the ice. That wasn’t bad enough- the ice was cracking and when it did it made a roaring sound. Terrifying!!! I don’t remember if we continued to the Island or not. I think not, but I’m still afraid of the river.



*Ice Breaking Up on the River*

Later, when I was older, I skated at the ice rink in Lemoyne with Bev Horton. Afterwards we would go to Hickey’s Drive-In on Carlisle Pike. Thanks for bringing back a scary memory!!”

Odessa Sykes Shaw.

Silver Lake

I ran into Don Shearer at the Camp Hill Post Office and while we were catching up, Don shared that he was on a hockey team composed of classmates and other Cedar Cliff students. They played regular games at Silver Lake just outside of Lewisberry. Although it wasn’t an “official” team, they had a schedule and at least some equipment. Of course, ice hockey wasn’t a big sport back then, but today almost all high schools have a team, and they play really good hockey. (Not to say that Don and his friends didn’t play great hockey)

Don Shearer

Lemoyne and West Fairview

Because a lot of classmates lived in Lemoyne, the Lemoyne Ice Company was a popular ice-skating spot. But for those classmates living in the then Borough of West Fairview, it was best of all. Sherry Phillips Deibert did just that. Here are her memories:

“A group from West Fairview would go down to the Ice and Cold Storage Company where they had an ice-skating rink on top of the building. We would go on Saturdays for All-Skates. The ice-skating rink operated during the years 1959 until around 1969. Relay races were held on Saturday mornings. Tuck McGraw from West Fairview worked at the rink.

I grew up in West Fairview and lived along the Susquehanna River. Our backyard faced the river, so in winter we skated and in summer we fished along the banks. Where the river and creek (Conodoguinet) meet at what we call the point underneath the railroad and highway bridges it would freeze over every winter. When it was frozen Tuck McBride would check it and announce that it was frozen enough to skate. People would come from all over the area to skate.

*(I should point out that there was a seventeen-foot-high wall behind her home down to the river. Occasionally they got some water in their back yard, but only during Agnes did they have flooding in their home).*

I remember many times when the ice would begin to thaw and break up and start moving it made loud noises. It would usually break up in March. That was back in the days when it was cold all winter. I got my first pair of ice skates for Christmas one year and went out back and skated. I also skated up in Marysville on a pond behind where they have the carnival in the summer and over at Italian Lake in Harrisburg.

*Sherry and friends at the pond in Marysville.*

Sherry Phillips Deibert



*Sherry Phillips Deibert skating on the Susquehanna River, 1962*

Thanks to all of you who have contributed. I’m not listing all of you that had “weak ankles”, because it is a long list, me included.

We’re always looking for topics that you would like to explore through sharing our memories.

How Can We Help One-another?

Recently I had a note from Tom Croke, who reminds us that some of our classmates are surviving better than others. And maybe one of the things we all could do is check in with those who may be struggling a little bit. After all we are “octogenarians” and have slowed down a little bit, but we still have big hearts.

I was driving through the Washington DC area yesterday, and stopped to see Jackie (Hennessey) Cohen, CC '61.  Jackie was one person who kept everyone smiling back in the day.  Currently, she is pretty much housebound with 20% lung capacity. She lives there just with her cat. She takes in elderly cats from a local rescue shelter.

Jackie's daughter and son-in-law live nearby, and they take good care of her. While I was there her son-in-law came in and, among other things, took the attached picture of Jackie and me.  Note my face mask. Anyone entering her house must be wearing a GOOD QUALITY mask.  Any illness, even a common cold, could be fatal for Jackie.

I encourage all of Jackie's friends from back in the day to offer a friendly hello.  She is at 505 Barrymore Dr. Oxon Hill, Md 20745   301- 567-2404. Keep any phone calls

short.  Talking on the phone can take a lot of her energy.  She does well with email.   email: opossum505@yahoo.com

Hearing from her old friends (are any of us old?) is one of her favorite things.

Tom

Keep Our Minds Sharp- Learn (Re-learn) Another Language

All the experts tell us that learning another language is a good way to help keep our brains sharp. To that end, we offer the following child’s poem. The vocabulary isn’t that practical, but it is easy to memorize!

Die deutsche Ecke (The German Corner)

Muh, muh, muh, *Braune Kuh* - 

So macht die braune Kuh,

Sie gibt uns Milch und Butter,

Wir geben ihr das Futter,

Muh, muh, muh,

So macht die braune Kuh!

*Translation*

*Moo, moo, moo,*

*That’s what the brown cow says.*

*She gives us milk and butter,*

*We give her fodder (tasty)*

*Moo, moo, moo,*

*That’s what the brown cow says.*

As I wrap up this Winter Update, the Groundhog has told us that we’ll have six more weeks of winter. So hopefully it will be a mild one. Kudos to all of you who live in or spend your winters in the sunny south. I’ll wait for the “onion snow” then plant my onions.

Brian