

on the go

**For the Love of
Racing History**

**Fiddle Fest:
A Vibrant
Celebration**



**July
August
2026**

PERIODICAL

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Cover

Talented musicians such as Adelaide Gustavson abound at the annual Berks Fiddle Fest, which is returning to the Fleetwood Park on September 20. If you have the notion, bring your own instrument and jam with the artists. But you don't have to strum a guitar or fiddle a fiddle to enjoy this popular music festival. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket and enjoy special headliner Nyke Van Wyk, opening concert by The Chivalrous Crickets, and the stirring music performed by the Brandywine Colonials Fife & Drum Corps. More on page 6.

On The Go

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President's Note

Peter J. Armstrong
President/CEO

“...there’s a greater benefit to
expanding our focus outward ...”

On Being a Mindful Driver

Showing appreciation in the U.S. was given a mandated “boost” when George Washington proclaimed November 26, 1789 to be a day of National Thanksgiving to commemorate our new government as resolved by Congress. Today there are hundreds of nationally-recognized appreciation days, weeks and months, ranging from National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on January 9 to Look On The Bright Side Day on December 21.

One of the first things we’re taught as tots is to thank someone when something nice is done for us. You get a gift, you say thank you. A door is opened for you, you say thank you. A stranger in line in front of you at your favorite barista pays for your latte and you wish you could say thank you. (By the way, National Barista Day is celebrated on March 1st)

July 1st is National Postal Worker Day. Did you think to say thank you to your mailman or woman for their determination to deliver your mail - junk and otherwise - despite the perils of snow, rain, heat, gloom of night...etc etc? Appreciatively we count on their services as we drop our tax form and payment check into the mail right at the last minute on April 15th.

July 19th is National Ice Cream Day. Now, that’s a holiday many of us can get behind. I scream, you scream, we all scream....President Reagan established this one in 1984 as a boost to the dairy industry. I wonder if his favorite topping was jelly beans?

Next month we have National Friendship Day on August 2nd, National Root Beer Float Day on the 6th, National Back to School Prep Day on August 15th, and August 19th is World Humanitarian Day. August is also National Wellness Month.

Wellness is a worthwhile pursuit. It means more than avoiding an ailment, and can involve more than self. The pursuit of wellness is a motion - an action linked to quality of life goals. While we may first turn

our wellness attentions inward (nutrition/exercise/stress management), there’s a greater benefit to expanding our focus outward to those we intentionally and unintentionally interact with during any given twenty-four-hour period. Certainly interactions that occur on the roadway are some of the most impactful.

Here’s some road travel trivia for you. During the summer travel months, it is not unusual for a driver to be behind the wheel for four to eight hours a day, with longer distance travelers sometimes logging ten to twelve hours at a stretch to reach a vacation destination.

In the U.S., a driver will interact with roughly thirty other drivers per hour on low-volume roads to hundreds or even thousands per hour in dense urban traffic. Lots of opportunity to make a vital difference in someone’s life, adding to their wellness, giving their families a reason to give thanks when they come home safe and sound.

Washington’s proclamation in 1789 reminded a young nation of the importance of being thankful. Making the conscious effort to be safer behind the wheel is a year-round obligation.

Construction zone workers, first responders, and other roadside emergency personnel whose duties take them to the literal edge of danger will be thankful for drivers who have their wellness in mind. Strengthen your connection with others by protecting their wellbeing as well as your own. Move Over and Slow Down. Slow down in construction zones. Don’t be on your phone at any time when behind the wheel (Paul Miller Law for handheld devices now being enforced with fines - no more warnings!) Saving a life is the most valiant thing you’ll do today.

Eyes Up Phones Down - Pay Attention!

Distracted driving puts motorists and highway workers at risk every day along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. With Paul Miller's Law now in effect, it's more important than ever for drivers to stay focused behind the wheel.

Distracted driving's impact extends beyond license points or financial penalties with consequences that are nothing short of life and death for the men and women working to improve the PA Turnpike.

A September 2025 report from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and Cambridge Mobile Telematics found that drivers with a high level of cell phone distraction are 240% more likely to crash. Pennsylvania's Paul Miller's Law, enacted in 2025, prohibits the use of hand-held mobile devices while driving - even while stopped temporarily due to traffic, a red light, or other momentary delay.

Miller died in 2010 when a tractor trailer driver, distracted by his phone, crashed into the Scranton native's car along Route 33 in Monroe County.

The law strengthens existing texting-while-driving bans, prohibiting drivers from using mobile devices while their vehicle is in motion. However, drivers may still make hands-free calls, engage GPS and listen to music.

As of June 5, 2026, law enforcement has started issuing summary citations to violators. Just as the summer travel season gets underway, it's the perfect time to refresh work zone safety and general safe driving habits.

Distracted driving is always dangerous and on highways, where vehicles travel at 70 mph or about 100 feet per second, momentary lapses can be deadly. In 2024 alone, Pennsylvania recorded nearly 10,000 distracted driving crashes, resulting in more than 6,000 injuries and 49 fatalities.

The PA Turnpike Commission is also taking steps to curb distracted driving and other unsafe behavior.

The Commission and PennDOT provide a free, 35-minute Work Zone Safety course in English and Spanish. Featuring videos, infographics and real-life scenarios, the course covers work zone laws, signage and essential facts. Designed for new drivers, it's helpful to anyone wanting to expand their driving knowledge.

A partnership with PennDOT and the Pennsylvania State Police, the Work Zone Speed Safety Cameras (WZSSC) program launched in 2024. Automated speed enforcement systems are used in active work zones on PennDOT and PA Turnpike highways, recording motorists

exceeding the speed limit by 11 mph or more.

The five-year pilot program resulted in a 38% drop in speeding, a 47% reduction in excessive speeding, and up to 50% fewer work zone crashes when enforcement vehicles were present. Fewer crashes mean safer, smoother travel.

The Commission holds "National Move Over Day" in October to promote Pennsylvania's 2020 Move Over Law. Drivers must either shift to a neighboring lane when safe or slow down by no more than 20 mph below the speed limit near emergency response areas marked by flashing lights, flares, signs, or other warning devices for police, fire, ambulance, tow trucks, utility workers, or disabled vehicles.

Just like in work zones, slowing down or changing lanes to provide a buffer between moving traffic and emergency vehicles, tow trucks, and road maintenance crews can save lives.

The PA Turnpike's advanced traffic management systems also provide real-time updates and alerts to notify drivers about these emergency response areas.

If stopped due to an unexpected backlog, customers can text "info" to 47676 for automated, location-based updates on incidents, clearance times and roadway conditions. This service is intended for use only when safely stopped and does not provide routine traffic information.

The 511PA app provides comprehensive information on incidents, construction, traffic and weather conditions.

There's a final piece of this prevention puzzle - you. By remaining alert, attentive and distraction free, you, other drivers, first responders

and highway workers can all arrive home safely. Follow these tips when setting out on your next road trip:

Safe Driving Tips from the PA Turnpike Commission

- Set your GPS and playlists before shifting into drive.
- Pair your device with vehicle systems before hitting the road to ensure hands-free options perform as expected.
- Pull over and park to send or view text messages that can't wait.
- Ask a passenger to be your "designated texter."
- Avoid engaging in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, silence notifications, or keep your phone out of sight until arriving at your destination.



Renew Your Membership at AAA.com

Club Update

8-hour First Time Participant: *attend both days*

AAA Reading-Berks - July 22 & 23 9am-1pm

Boyertown* - July 28 & 29 9:00am-1pm

4-hour Refresher Classes at AAA 9am-1pm:

July 14 or 21 for those who last took the class in July 2023

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*Boyertown Multi-Services Center, Spring Street



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AAA School Safety Patrol members are everyday heroes. Four of them were recognized at this year's AAA School Safety Patrol Night with the Reading Fightin' Phils as a result of our search for the oldest former safety patroller in Berks. Upper left is Fred Keener; upper right is Lois Marquardt. Not pictured are Francis Turner and William Smith.



fiddle fest: a vibrant celebration

Check out this year's high-energy performances - on and off the stage! - during the annual passing down of musical traditions, edible delights, and family-friendly activities

The Annual Berks Fiddle Fest will be held on Sunday, September 20th, 2026, at the Fleetwood Community Park located at 334 West Main Street in Fleetwood, PA. We have partnered with The Friends of the Fleetwood Parks, a 501c organization, with the mission of raising funds to improve and maintain amenities in the Fleetwood parks for community enjoyment. This means that all profits from the Berks Fiddle Fest will go directly to this wonderful organization to help fulfill its mission.

A donation will get you an entire day of entertainment and much more. The gates open at 9:00 a.m. with Main Stage activities starting at 10:00 a.m. The day starts with our traditional worship service, followed by a variety of Americana musical bands until 1:00 p.m. This is followed by our all-ages Fiddle Competition, which is the main attraction of the Fiddle Fest and something you don't want to miss.

The Headliner this year is Nyke Van Wyk. Nyke is a talented violinist known for his innovative approach. With



The Luke Hertzog Trio performed original bluegrass music on the main stage at the 2025 Berks Fiddle Fest, appearing as a featured musical act at the September 21, 2025 event at Fleetwood Community Park.



his signature style and captivating stage presence, Nyke has wowed audiences worldwide with his electrifying performances. Blending his classical and Celtic training with contemporary flair, Nyke brings a unique sound and energy to the world of violin. Whether on stage, in the studio, or in the classroom, Nyke's passion for music and his violin continues to inspire and captivate audiences everywhere.

The Main Stage is not the only area providing music filling the air at the Fiddle Fest. There is the Open Mic area hosted by Phil Stahl, workshops, our third Scottish

F.I.R.E. Fiddle Competition qualifier, the Dirty Rotten Parrots roving around the grounds playing music, children's shows featuring Miss Maggie Sings!, and a lot of local musicians joining together in jam groups all around the park. You are more than welcome to bring an instrument and join the jams or simply listen and enjoy!

Don't worry about eating and drinking, You won't go hungry or thirsty at the Fiddle Fest! Food and drink will be available to purchase. There will be hot dogs, burgers and drinks by The Friends of The Fleetwood Parks, plus locally made foods as well.

Another one of the keystone features of the Fiddle Fest is our crafter area. With fifty-plus crafters and vendors featuring hand-made and musical items, you will want to browse this area to find a treasure to take home. This year we are again featuring a Young Crafters area for youth 18 years of age and under to display and sell their work. You will want to see what these young crafters can do and support them.

We invite you to bring lawn chairs and blankets and be part of both the experience and tradition of fiddle music and fiddle festivals in Berks County! We look forward to having you at the Fleetwood Community Park on

“...one of the keystone features of the Fiddle Fest is our crafter area...”

Sunday, Sept 20th for the Berks Fiddle Fest! Come and celebrate America's 250th with us!

Contact us at berksfiddlefest@gmail.com for more information, or find and contact us on Facebook.



Dave "Mitch" Miller is a prominent fiddler, multi-instrumentalist, and key figure in the Berks Count traditional music scene, playing with the Hannah Violet Trio, and is involved with regional Celtic and old-time music.



Underrated Summer Travel Vacations

AAA is projecting travel to heat up. While revisiting familiar summer vacation destinations can be wonderful, sometimes heading off to lesser known-places and exploring somewhere new can offer exciting and rewarding experiences.

If you are looking to explore the hidden gems of the USA in a more tranquil environment, heading to an underrated summer travel destination could be a great idea for you. We've selected some of the top underrated summer travel ideas. Get those bags packed and ready to travel, rest, relax.

Lake Placid, New York

Nestled in New York's Adirondack Mountains, Lake Placid offers an ideal summer escape for those craving a break from the usual vacation crowds. Despite its Winter Olympic fame, this village is a laid-back spot in the summer that's perfect for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Visitors can engage in outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking or paddleboarding in the area, with Mirror Lake being a prime location for these types of activities.

Nearby, Main Street offers a relaxed vibe with its shops, galleries and cafes. Those that are into history can check out the Olympic Museum or the Ski Jump Complex for some insights into the town's Olympic past. Whether you're up for adventure or just chilling out, Lake Placid is an ideal location for a peaceful summer getaway.

Top rated accommodations: Grand Adirondack Hotel, Best Western Adirondack Inn.

Suggested activities: Lake Placid Locomotion Scavenger Hunt, Big Slide Brewery, The View Restaurant at the Mirror Lake Inn.

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is a delightful summer travel escape without the large crowds, sitting in the

scenic Ozark Mountains. This town is famous for its Victorian charm, winding streets and relaxed feel, making it an ideal spot for a quiet getaway. Despite its small size, Eureka Springs has a lively arts scene, with lots of galleries and studios showcasing local talent.

Eureka Springs is an ideal destination for those looking for somewhere to wander through some unique shops, art galleries and cozy cafes in a historic downtown setting. Nature lovers will find plenty to do nearby, with parks and nature reserves offering great hiking, biking and wildlife spotting opportunities.

Be sure to visit Thorncrown Chapel, a stunning architectural gem in the forest, and take a ride on the historic Eureka Springs and North Arkansas Railway for a fun trip back in time. With its beauty and laid-back vibe, Eureka Springs is a relaxing gem worth a visit.

Top rated accommodations: Angel at Rose Hall, The Village at Indian Point.

Suggested activities: Enchanted Eureka Springs Scavenger Hunt, Blue Spring Heritage Center, dine at Myrtie Mae's.

Mammoth Lakes, California

Known for its beautiful mountain scenery and clear lakes, Mammoth Lakes is perfect for nature lovers and outdoor adventurers. Even though it's a popular ski spot in the winter, Mammoth Lakes is surprisingly quiet in the summer, which makes it a prime option for a peaceful vacation escape.

You can hike, bike, fish or kayak in the area, with no shortage of trails and lakes to explore. The town also has an arts and culture scene, with plenty of restaurants, as well as galleries and shops from local artists. Other nearby attractions include Devils Postpile

National Monument, which showcases unique rock formations, or the ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, which is home to the oldest trees on the planet. Whether you're seeking adventure or just want to relax in nature, Mammoth Lakes has you covered.

Top rated accommodations: The Westin Monache Resort, Château du Sureau, Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino.

Suggested activities: Premium Snowboard Rental, Beginner Climbing Class, eat at Morrison's.

Sedona, Arizona

Arizona is known for its stunning red rock scenery and Sedona is a prime example of that, being a laid-back spot for those seeking underrated summer travel ideas. Offering a breathtaking landscape and spiritual vibes, Sedona offers a peaceful getaway without the usual hustle.

While you're in Sedona, check out the cool art galleries, shops, and local eateries. Outdoor lovers will dig the hiking and biking trails snaking through the red rocks, with awesome views amongst a desert landscape. For a trip that's both relaxing and awe-inspiring, it's hard to find somewhere more visually unique than Sedona.

Top rated accommodations: The Wilde Resort and Spa, L'Auberge de Sedona.

Suggested activities: Outback Trail Jeep Adventure, Half-day Sedona Sightseeing Tour, enjoy a meal at Cress on Oak Creek.

For more summer travel inspiration, visit readingberks.aaa.com/travel/trips and aaa.com/tripcanvas. When you're ready to make your dreams a reality, call us at 610-374-5600 to talk with a AAA Travel Professional. You can also make an appointment to sit down with a AAA Travel Professional from our website at www.AAA.com/travel.

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Getting There is Half the Battle - AAA Can Help

Deciding how you get to the airport for your next itinerary is a decision many struggle with, because how you start off can set the tone for the entire journey. Travelers find themselves with several options - a) drive yourself and park ON or OFF airport parking lots, b) utilize a park-and-stay hotel, or c) use a transportation company that offers door-to-door service.

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agents can reserve your spot in advance.

For those early morning departures, or exhausting late-night arrivals, a park-and-stay hotel package is a hidden gem. Your agent can pre-book a one-night stay that includes parking. Hotel stays can include parking for up to fourteen days at some locations. Additional parking is usually at a lower cost than airport parking lots.

Then there is the limo or private car/van service. AAA Travel works with local transportation companies that offer a variety of vehicle styles for you to choose from. This eliminates the burden of driving, traffic navigation, and parking fees entirely. You are dropped off and picked up by the curbside - relaxed and ready for your journey.

Ultimately, the right choice bal-

ances budget against peace of mind. Your AAA Travel agent is ready to assist you in finding the perfect fit for your next journey.



Brenda Huey, VP, Travel Center

EES Implementation Update - Full Deployment

The European Commission has officially confirmed that the Entry/Exit System (EES) is fully deployed.

The phased introduction period, which began on October 12, 2025, concluded April 9, 2026. From this point onward, all twenty-nine Schengen Area countries will be required to apply EES at their external borders.

While the system is fully in place, Schengen countries will have limited flexibility to temporarily pause EES operations after the April 9, 2026 date to help manage potential summer travel congestion.

EES is separate from (but connected to) the upcoming European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). ETIAS will require

pre-travel authorization for visa-exempt non-EU travelers and is expected to launch later in 2026.

Understanding how EES works,

and how it connects to ETIAS, can help you prepare for smoother travel to Europe. For more information, visit <https://etias.com>.



Uh Oh, That Doesn't Sound Good...

Dear Ask Ed:

Thanks for writing this column. Not knowing a lot about cars, I always panic when mine makes a new noise or a garage says I need some kind of repair that is going to cost a lot of money. Am I being taken advantage of? How do I know what is necessary and what isn't?

The reason I'm contacting you is because my Subaru has started making an odd squeaking noise when I put my foot on the brakes. At what point do I need to take it seriously and take it to a garage?

I appreciate your response.

Denise R.

Dear Denise,

I get to talk to a lot of people who have the same questions as you. It's the same feeling we might get when we have a new body pain. At what point do we need to see a doctor? Do we go to a general practitioner or a specialist? How much is this going to cost? Will they find something even worse than what I'm expecting to have to deal with?

In my experience as an ASE Master Tech, I've had lots of customers describe noises like squeaks, knocks, and grinding sounds when they brought their ailing vehicle to me. They've also told me about sensations like shaking and "pulling" - all of which is a good starting point.

While a road test and a closer inspection of the vehicle is necessary for a correct diagnosis, customer feedback is very important to provide clues to a good mechanic. When you go to your repair shop, remember that details are important, just like when you go to a doctor. At what speed does the issue occur? Is it only when the vehicle is cold? Does it only happen when you're turning? Etc...



Noises, squeaks, or grinding sounds coming from the brakes is one of the most common vehicle owner complaints I've heard. While this can happen to any make and model, there are several vehicle brands that are known for this to happen more commonly, including certain Buick, Toyota, Subaru, Acura, and VW models. I've actually heard some mechanics explain to their customers that this condition is "normal" for their vehicle.

Ignoring a new noise or sensation that is not normal for your car is like dismissing a health concern without consulting a doctor. And it can lead to really expensive repairs that could have been avoided by a timely visit to your favorite mechanic or AAR facility.

There could be a simple fix for your car. Some typical causes for brake noise are worn brake pads, rust buildup, or dust and debris between the pads and rotors.

If you have a habit of riding the brakes (keeping your foot lightly on the brake pedal while driving), the brake pads and rotors will become hardened and glazed by the resultant overheating, producing an annoying noise.

If you've just had your brakes serviced, it's possible that the new brake pads have not yet been "broken in". The new pads will soon quiet down and won't make that annoying vibration-induced squeak.

It would be a good idea to have a competent mechanic check out your vehicle. Knowing for sure what is going on sooner rather than later can be easier on your budget and will certainly give you peace of mind. You'll find several reputable repair facilities within Berks County that you can trust at AAA.com/REPAIR.

I hope this information is helpful. Thanks for writing in. Happy motoring!

Ed

Contact Ed with your automotive question either by email at AskEd@aaardgberks.com or by writing to him at AAA Reading-Berks, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610, Attn: Ask Ed.

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for the love of racing history



Long before the Fairgrounds Square Mall rose and fell, thrills better than a Boscov's CrackerJack sale were appreciated by fans of various types of racing competition, attracting crowds from near and far.

When auto racing came to Berks, the Reading Fairgrounds was already drawing thousands to its horse racing and events beginning with the first fair in 1854. Easy access to transportation from Reading and the Pennsylvania Railroad certainly contributed to the Fairgrounds' success. Transitioning to motorized racing in 1924, the Reading Fairgrounds Speedway would play an important role in the history of Berks County.

From the first Big Car race (later known as sprint cars) on September 20, 1924 (promoted by Ralph 'Pappy' Hankinson and won by Grady Garner) to the final checkered flag on June 29, 1979 (won by RSCA modified driver Dave Kelly), the Reading Fairgrounds would be recognized as one of the premiere half-mile dirt speedways in the country.

Following Ralph Hankinson were Reading's Sam Nunis, George Marshman, Russ Moyer, Ed Otto Jr., and two businessmen from Temple, Lindy Vicari and Albert Gaspari, all highly recognized by their peers. Together they brought in the biggest names from the sanctioning organizations - AAA, USAC, NASCAR (both stock car and drag racing), ARDC, and AMA, as well as the RSCA, promoted by Lindy and Albert.

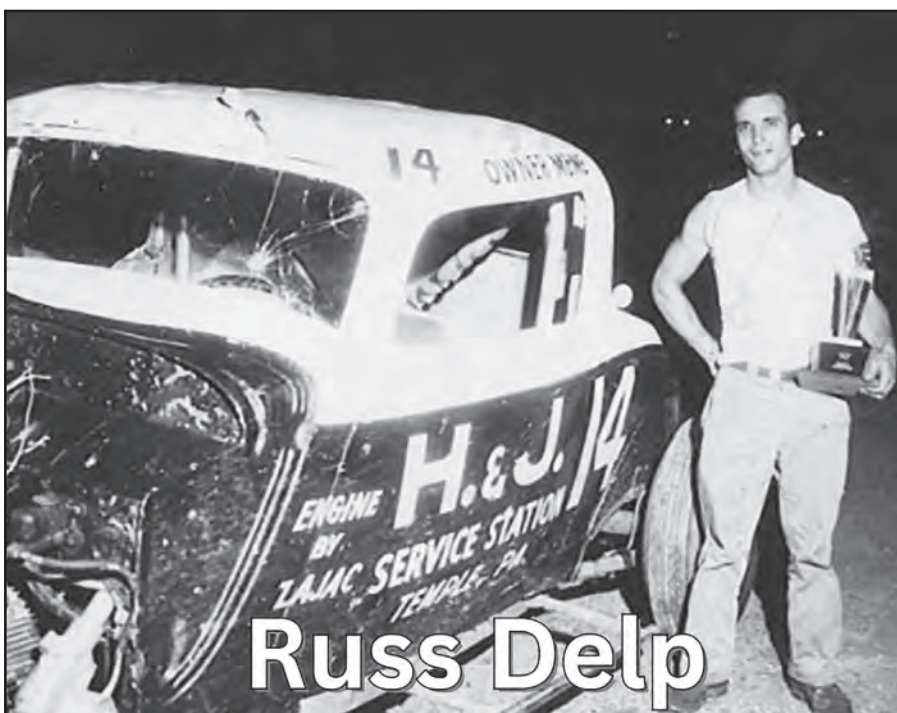
In February of 2004, Mike Grim, owner of several Memory Makers vintage cars, racing historian Ken Johnson, and Barry Schultz held a meeting at the Elks Club of Reading with the goal of preserving the memories and history of the Reading Fairgrounds. Backed by a group of very dedicated volunteers, the Reading Fairgrounds Racing Historical Society immediately became a reality.

Since its inception, the RFRHS has maintained a busy schedule guided by Presidents Mike Grim, Mike Shaub, Allen Carter, and currently Galen Koller. Earlier this year, Beltzner Hall on the

grounds of the Kutztown Fairgrounds was the site of the RFRHS's annual Reading Fairgrounds Nostalgia Reunion with a nice display of race cars, memorabilia and twenty-three former race drivers in attendance.

With summer upon us, Classic Car and Street Rod enthusiasts can gear up for RFRHS-hosted car shows on June 7th at the Lyons Fire Company with vintage and current race cars, August 8th at the Classic Auto Mall in Morgantown, and September 20th at Jim Dietrich Park, also featuring historic as well as modern race cars.

Recommended for those with fond memories of the Reading Fairgrounds as well as folks interested in looking back at some of its racing history revealed in books, pictures and videos, the RFRHS Traveling Museum will fit the bill. Walking through the pop-up mobile exhibit, visitors will see pieces of Reading Fairgrounds history, such as the racing uniform of Reading's Ernie McCoy, a veteran of two Indy 500s. Also on display are helmets, trophies, pictures of the sprint cars, modifieds, sportsman, AMA motorcycles, Destruction Derby, ARDC/ USAC





midgets, drag racing, sports cars and Olympic Stocks.

Reading had its own nationally-known and local heroes: Tommy Hinnershitz (four-time AAA and two-time USAC Eastern Sprint Car champion), Joie Chitwood, Al Herman, Bill Holland and Red Riegel. Also, AMA racers Bill Huber and Red Wolverton, stock car drivers Russ Smith, Russ Delp, Charlie Bailey, Kenny Brightbill, Dick Tobias, Gary Gollub, Freddy Adam...the list is endless.

The Reading Fairgrounds was in itself unique. There were big personalities such as Rudy Gaenzle, who could be seen waving the green flag from the dusty racetrack. Fans will remember unforgettable characters like Warren Ruffner and his drivers' nicknames, Fred Adam "The Kutztown Komet" known for his hard-charging style of stock car racing, legendary dirt modified racer Gerald Chamberlain "The Everett Express", locally-born NASCAR/dirt modified driver Kenny Brightbill whose nicknames "The Shillington Slingshot" and "Mr. Excitement" stemmed from his aggressive driving style.

Racing trivia enthusiasts no doubt recall the three-minute clock - unique to the Reading Fairgrounds track. It was used during the first caution of a feature race. If a car was involved in an incident, the driver's team had three minutes to get repairs done and be ready to resume the race.

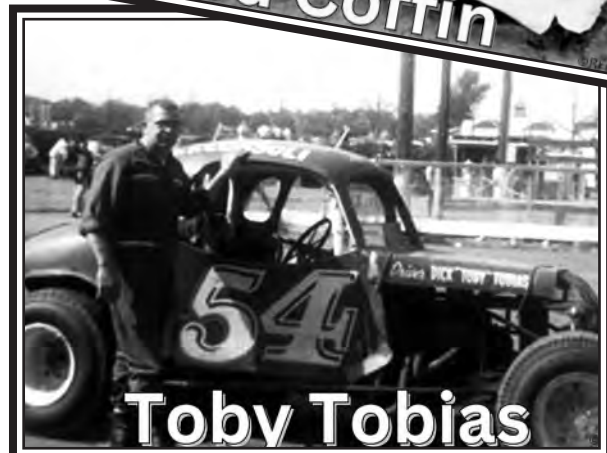
Another fan favorite was Fan Club Banner Night. The front rows of the grandstands were covered with large, colorful banners supporting the crowd's favorite drivers.

Entering the 47th anniversary year of the Reading Fairgrounds' closing, the track is still remembered as the "Home of Champions", which is also the theme of the RFRHS's Hall of Fame. The institution has been inducting individuals since 2009 - drivers, owners, officials, and members of the media who have made an impact on the Reading Fairgrounds and racing in general.

In 2004, the RFRHS was invited to have their first Reading Fairgrounds Racing Reunion at the new Reading Fairgrounds in Bern Township. The event was an enormous success and resulted in a second reunion the following year at the same location, but this time with the

addition of permission to use the arena that was used for Berks County Fair demolition derbies. The arena was transformed into a racetrack and began promoting racing featuring the National Slingshot race cars of Richie Tobias. A new tradition was born, continuing from 2005 through 2018. In 2019, 2021 and 2022, RFRHS racing promotion moved to Shellhammers Speedway in Leesport, renamed The Dave Cordier Sr. Nostalgia Nationals, in conjunction with the dirt track's racing reunion. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 event was canceled.

There's lots more to learn about the Reading Fairgrounds Racing Historical Society. Check out their website at readingfairgroundsracing.com.



Worsening Struggle with Headlight Glare

A new AAA survey reveals a growing concern among drivers: headlight glare. Six in ten drivers say glare is a problem after dark, and nearly three-quarters of those affected believe it has worsened over the past decade. The findings are renewing concerns about road safety, headlight regulations, and modern lighting standards.

“Headlight glare has become a major source of frustration and concern for millions of drivers,” said Greg Brannon, director of automotive engineering and research at AAA. “As vehicle lighting technology evolves, so must our understanding of glare, its impact, and the steps drivers can take to maintain safety.”

Glare Problems Are Worsening

Headlight glare continues to worsen for U.S. drivers, with 73% of those who experience it saying the problem has intensified over the past decade. “Driven by several factors including new headlight technologies and taller vehicle designs, drivers are becoming frustrated with the issue of headlight glare,” said Brannon.

Most drivers who experience glare cite oncoming headlights as the primary cause, with 92% identifying it as their top concern. About one third also report glare issues in their rearview or side mirrors.

At the same time, AAA’s latest testing shows significant progress in nighttime pedestrian automatic emergency braking (PAEB) performance, with impact avoidance improving from 0% in 2019 to 60% in 2025. Some of this increase could be due to improved sensor visibility due to headlight design.

Additional Survey Findings:

- Drivers who wear prescription glasses (70%) experience more glare than those who do not (56%).
- Pickup truck drivers are less like-

ly to report glare (41%) than drivers of other vehicle types (66%), likely due to higher seating position.

- Female drivers (70%) report glare more often than male drivers (57%).
- Age alone does not show a statistically significant impact on likelihood to report glare being an issue.
- The height of the driver does not significantly influence the likelihood of experiencing glare.
- Drivers with aftermarket LED headlights are just as likely to encounter glare as those without them.
- Only 9% of nighttime drivers have installed aftermarket LED headlights, with men more likely than women to do so (12% vs. 6%).
- Women are more likely to report rearview mirror glare (41% vs. 30% for men), and Millennials are more likely than Boomers to report side mirror glare (38% vs. 20%).

AAA Encourages Driver Awareness and Safer Nighttime Driving

AAA is committed to helping drivers stay safe. To help reduce headlight glare and improve overall nighttime visibility, AAA recommends that drivers:

- Ensure both headlights are clean, fully functional and of the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) design.
- Avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights to maintain visibility.
- Visit an AAA Approved Auto Repair facility or NAPA Auto Care Center for professional headlight inspections, replacements, and aim adjustments.

AAA will continue to research the topic and provide recommendations to industry on how we can work together to balance the ability to safely see the roadway with the growing concerns around headlight glare.

How does AAA define “headlight glare”? Is it based on perception or a technical standard?

In this survey, “headlight glare” refers to driver-reported experiences of discomfort or visibility disruption caused by oncoming headlights or lights reflected in mirrors. This is based on consumer perception rather than a technical measurement, but it provides valuable insight into how real drivers experience glare on the road.

What’s driving the increase in reported glare over the past decade?

Most drivers who experience glare—73%—say it has worsened over the last ten years. While this survey did not measure physical brightness levels, the release notes several potential contributing factors: evolving headlight technologies, taller vehicle designs, and changes in lighting patterns on modern vehicles.

Is glare expected to worsen as headlight technology evolves?

Survey results show that drivers *perceive* glare increasing, and AAA notes that emerging technologies and taller designs could contribute. Ongoing testing will help clarify future trends.



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Destinations & Diversions

Sunday Open House at Historic Virginville Farmhouse

Those who love learning more about Berks County will want to attend this month's Sunday Open House at historic Dreibelbis Farm, happening July 19 from 2:00 to 4:00pm. Rain or shine, afternoon tours will be hosted at the 1868 farmhouse in Virginville.

Docents will lead visitors through the un-remodeled Civil War-era house built by Joel H. Dreibelbis. In addition to featuring the Victorian-style furnish-

New for 2026, two earlier Sunday Open House events included special features. On May 17th, visitors learned a bit about old-fashioned Pennsylvania Dutch gardening and had an opportunity to plant some seeds to take home. On June 21st, the special feature was an introduction to mementos, stories, and artifacts relating to some notable members of the Dreibelbis family who grew up on this Virginville farm.

On July 19th, the additional focus will be on antique farm wagons and equipment as used on Pennsylvania farms in the late 19th century.

There is a \$6 tour fee. On-site parking is free. The next Sunday Open House will be held on September 20th. The Historic Dreibelbis Farm is located on Route 143 south of the village of Virginville. GPS address: 356 Hard Hill Road, Hamburg, PA 19526.

Additional information on this Berks County historic site can be found at www.Dreibelbisfarm.org, "Historic Dreibelbis Farm" on Facebook, or by



ings and some items going back to the original 18th century log home on this site, the tour will highlight the vast Native American artifacts collection of items found on the farm.

contacting Janine Dreibelbis at 610-451-1193.

Come out and spend a Sunday afternoon at the farm! Save the date for the annual Historic Farm Festival on August 22, 2026! Bring a friend!





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Temp Impacts on EV and Hybrid Efficiencies/Costs

AAA's latest study shows extreme temperatures reduce efficiency, range, and increase operating costs for electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrids.

Researchers tested six vehicles at cold, moderate, and hot temperatures to examine how electrified powertrains perform under non-ideal conditions. This information is intended to help consumers better understand how temperature can affect vehicle performance, inform purchasing decisions, and set realistic expectations for driving and ownership throughout the year.

Building on their 2019 study, the AAA automotive engineering team, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California's Automotive Research Center, evaluated the powertrains of three EVs and three hybrids. Testing was conducted on a chassis dynamometer – a device like a treadmill for cars – with the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) set at 72 degrees in the vehicles and the temperatures in the laboratory test cell at 20°F, 75°F, and 95°F. The cost portion of the research leveraged the AAA Gas Price Data to determine national average fuel and electricity prices as of March 27, 2026.

Key Findings

Impact of Hot Temperatures (95°F):

- Hybrid vehicles experience a 12.0% decrease in fuel efficiency (miles per gallon, MPG).
- EVs show a 10.4% reduction in efficiency (MPGe, miles per gallon of gasoline equivalent) and an 8.5% loss of driving range compared to moderate temperature (75°F) conditions.

Impact of Cold Temperatures (20°F):

- Hybrids lose 22.8% in fuel econ-

omy.

- EVs demonstrate a 35.6% drop in MPGe and a 39.0% decrease in calculated driving range.

Impacts of Cold Temperatures (20°F) on Operating Costs:

- Hybrids showed an increase in fuel cost of \$28.44 per 1,000 miles.
- EVs experienced an increase in operating costs of \$32.11 per 1,000 miles when charged at home electricity rates and \$76.93 per 1,000 miles when using public charging.

Impacts of Hot Temperatures (95°F) on Operating Costs:

- Hybrid operating costs increased by \$13.02 per 1,000 mi.
- For EVs using home charging, operating costs rose by \$6.78 per 1,000 mi, while public charging costs climbed \$16.25 per 1,000 mi.

Powertrain Cost Comparison:

- Cold operation (20°F) showed the largest cost gap: EVs cost \$36.19 less per 1,000 miles at home electricity rates, but \$86.26 more using public chargers than hybrids.
- At high temperatures (95°F), EVs were \$46.11 cheaper per 1,000 miles at home electricity rates, but \$41.00 more expensive at public charging rates compared to hybrids.

"EVs are efficient in moderate temperatures but lose significant range in the cold," said Greg Brannon, director of automotive engineering and research at AAA. "We expected this from our previous research, but were surprised by the 23% reduction in fuel economy for the hybrids in cold temperatures. Drivers should consider climate, energy costs, and driving patterns when choosing a vehicle that best fits their lifestyle."

EV and Hybrid Consumer Survey

American drivers continue to show

greater interest in hybrid vehicles than in fully electric models. This year, 35% of U.S. adults say they are "very likely" or "likely" to purchase a hybrid for their next vehicle, whether new or used. Those who favor hybrids most often point to reduced concerns about driving range and access to charging.

AAA recommends:

- *Factor climate into vehicle choice:* Cold conditions increase energy demand for both powertrains, but EVs are more affected due to battery performance limitations and the need for cabin heating. Drivers in cold-climate regions should plan for reduced range and more frequent charging stops.

- *Budget for seasonal cost changes:* Winter raises energy use across all powertrains. EV cost increases are most pronounced when relying on higher-priced public charging; hybrids will consume more fuel due to engine warm-up and heating demands.

- *Manage efficiency in hot weather:* At high temperatures, air conditioning and thermal management can reduce efficiency for both EVs and hybrids; impacts are often smaller than in cold weather.

- *Evaluate charging access and energy pricing:* EV operating costs depend heavily on electricity rates and where charging occurs. Home charging can help manage seasonal cost swings compared to frequent public charging.

- *Adopt real-world efficiency strategies:* For EVs, avoid sustained high speeds in extreme temperatures, and plan charging sessions to minimize unnecessary fast charging in cold weather.

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