

Calvin Reter Class of 1948

Former President of the ROG and Reisterstown's Community Activist



To find a simple biography on Calvin Reter is no easy task. If you “Google” his name on the internet, you will find pages and pages of news articles that mention his name. Since we didn’t have time to actually “interview” Calvin for this presentation, I thought I would share clips from some of the articles that I found. In explorebaltimorecounty.com, there are just 75 articles that mention his name alone. He is one busy fellow!

Oldtimers in Owings Mills shape future out of past Owings Mills Times January 22, 2003

Nine residents ranging in age from 63 to 85 gathered for lunch at Captain Harvey's restaurant on Reisterstown Road a while ago. Almost all were born and raised in Owings Mills. It was a time to reminisce about the swimming holes, dairy farms, general stores, whiskey distilleries and make out spots of their youth, dating as far back as the 1920s.

The past and the future was on the mind of Calvin Reter, former president of the Reisterstown-Owings Mills-Glyndon Coordinating Council and Chamber of Commerce. Reter, then 72, rounded up old friends and relatives, including his brother, Jim, former chief fiscal officer for the Carroll County Board of Education, and their cousin Carl, the last known dairy farmer in Owings Mills. Calvin Reter said he, George Cowman and Henry Lewis used to dream about getting a group together to talk about old times. "It was one of those things you talk about, but never do," he said. But he said that recently, he decided, "I'm getting older. I guess I better do it."

The small restaurant banquet room was filled with memories over the course of a leisurely, two-hour lunch. Carl Reter and his wife Miriam said they were snowed in on their farm for two weeks after they bought the place.

Photographer Charles Smith is the group's new kid on the block because he came in 1979 from Baltimore "an import," Calvin Reter joked. But Smith is as big a local history buff as the others and showed photographs of his studio in the 1920s, when the brick building was a general store at the then-popular sledding spot, the corner of Reisterstown Road and Pleasant Hill Lane.

Many recalled distilleries in town and the residual whiskey mash that farmers fed to their pigs and cattle. Several had fond memories of an ice cream store in Pikesville, where they paid the owner a quarter to use her field as a romantic hideaway.

Smith remembered when Calvin Reter owned a general store and ran the Chamber of Commerce out of it, cutting meat and talking business on the phone. Morris Richardson's family owned a flower shop in town and David Burkholder's family owned a gas station with 28 pumps well, maybe not that many, but a whole lot, they vaguely remembered.

Calvin Reter said his father bought the inventory and name of T.R. Biggers general store in 1936 for \$2,200. He also remembered when residents could watch first-run movies for free at the Rosewood State Hospital for the mentally retarded. Rosewood for many years fielded one of the best softball teams in the region, Reter said.

NW Baltimore County business veteran Reter takes helm at NW County The Daily Record August 12, 2005

Calvin Reter, 75, is a longtime business operator as well as a homeowner. He began his one-year term as president of the Reisterstown-Owings Mills-Glyndon Coordinating Council July 1, with 60 years combined experience on the chamber of commerce and in the homeowners group. Reter is doing his second tour as president of the council. He's also past president and former vice president of the chamber.

If there's one man who can navigate a community crisis, it's Reter. "It's a delicate balance", said Reter, who runs an apartment rental business known as CNJ Enterprises. "Sometimes business interests come into conflict with homeowners over things like zoning. That's when I have to do some soft-stepping".

Owings Mills Times October 11, 2007, Letter to the Editor The 21st annual Reister's Towne Festival in 2007

This year, the festival committee selected Calvin Reter as their Grand Marshal, honoring him for his years of hard work and dedication to Reisterstown. If you are from Reisterstown, you know Calvin. He is a 60-year community volunteer and true "townie." That was part of the reason why they named him the Grand Marshall of this parade.

Owings Mills Times By Norma Bosley, April 12, 2007

Calvin Reter, president of the Reisterstown-Owings Mills-Glyndon Coordinating Council, was recently honored for his 60 years of service to the Glyndon Volunteer Fire Department. Reter, at age 16, became a member May 8, 1946.

At the Annual Life Member Banquet March 3, 2007, Reter received a beautiful, inscribed clock and many congratulatory awards. Baltimore County Executive James T. Smith gave Reter an Executive Citation, and

President George W. Bush sent a congratulatory letter. All of the awards were on display at the Open House March 25 at the Glyndon fire station.

Reter, and his parents, William and Susie Reter, lived in Owings Mills until he was 15, when they moved to Glyndon. William and Susie owned a general store at the Owings Mills underpass. They purchased a second store on Railroad Avenue in Glyndon in 1945, and later, Jim Wisner bought the original Owings Mills store.

Today, Calvin Reter lives in Reisterstown, where he is considered the unofficial mayor of the historic town. Reter belongs to the Owings Mills Old Timers Group. He gets to mix with his "roots" often, as the Old Timers meet regularly at the Owings Mills Volunteer Fire Department.

The National Federation of Independent Business named Calvin Reter, owner of Reter's Crab House in Reisterstown, its Champion of Small Business in Maryland for 2005.