



# THE OAKDALE TIMES

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## 100 YEARS AGO IN OAKDALE...



Even before the first wave of Oakdale's finest left on troop ships to fight in the war, a taste of the destruction these men would find on foreign fields occurred right in their own back yards.

Situated on fifteen acres east of town, the Aetna Chemical Company started its local production in 1916. Although this was a million dollar operation, not everyone in town was pleased with it. From the beginning there was apprehension and concern. Among other things, residents complained of the acid fumes that came from the plant. Ill effects from the fumes were reported. But barely had these complaints begun to appear when a bigger

problem, one which residents had dared not consider, appeared. On Friday night, September 15, 1916, an explosion rocked the Aetna Chemical Company.

According to the Oakdale Times of September 26, 1916: "At 8:45, Friday night, September 15, a crack and a roar announced to the people of Oakdale the first of the explosions that have been expected since these terrible explosives were set up in the vicinity. The lights of town went out in the crash and the first sound after was the rush of automobiles toward the east end plant, which was seen to be in total darkness."

The Oakdale Times article is interesting for its lurid prose style as much as it is for the information it conveys. For example: "In the 200 pounds of remains which represented these four men [who died outright], a hand with a diamond ring was identified as Mr. Dodge; a skull was also thought to be his; an arm and hand was identified as that of another man; and this was about all the identification possible." Two examples of collateral damage from the blast will serve to convey the power of the explosion that rocked the town that night. "...the explosion threw a piece of iron weighing 175 pounds on Mankedick's store a mile distant (in Gregg Station)... 25 windows were broken in the school house." An editorial from the second page of this edition of the Times uses tongue-in-cheek sarcasm to drive home the point that as long as the chemical plant operates in the Oakdale area, the threat of imminent disaster is a fact of life: "But they assure us that the stuff will not explode. This is well know to all men. That it did explode was highly unauthorized... It can not explode. Coroner Jamison said so, and he knows. He used to keep a drug store and he made cough syrup out of this stuff."

Despite this editorial and the concern expressed by many of the town's leading citizens over the safety of Oakdale..., nothing was done to prevent a repeat of the disaster. As terrible as this explosion was, it was mere prelude to the even more devastating explosion that was yet to come.

Article Excerpt from The History of Oakdale Borough: 1892 - 2012



## 'OAK'TOBERFEEST: Saturday, September 17th 3pm - 8pm

Food, Entertainment and Fun for All Ages will be centered at the Borough Lot between The Rock and The Oakdale Inn. German and Bavarian-Style Refreshments will be available, to include the new "Helicon Beer," courtesy of Chris Brunetti, Owner of Oakdale's very own Helicon Brewery! There will be Games and Activities, and The Oakdale Hose Company's new Bounce House will be in operation. The following Entertainment is lined up and ready to make this another great Oakdale Borough Event!

- 3:00pm** Clem Rolin's 'German Music' Band
- 4:00pm** Pat Septak: Accordion Player
- 5:00pm** Magic of Ray Lucas ("Kid-Friendly" Magician)
- 6:30pm** Alpen Shuhplatter Dancers
- 7:30pm** To Be Announced!



## **BOROUGH UPDATE**

### **AUGUST BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE**

- Mr. Mark Maximovich made a Motion to approve the 2015 Audited Financials.
- Mr. Jonathan DeBor made a Motion to hire Robert Kurta as a Part-Time Police Officer for Oakdale Borough.
- Mr. Jonathan DeBor made a Motion to hire Joseph Diven as a Part-Time Police Officer for Oakdale Borough.
- Mr. Tom Potts made a Motion to approve Pennvest Funding Offer in the amount of \$340,495.00, for the First St. Water Line Replacement Project Loan. The Interest Rate for years 1 thru 5 will be 1.387% and years 6 thru 20 will be 2.001%.
- Mr. Bill Hartman advised that there are no Borough Events planned for August, but reminded Residents to mark Calendars for 'Oak'toberfest in Oakdale on Saturday, September 17. Our own Helicon Brewery will be featured.
- Chief Lauria reported that there were 115 various Police Calls in July.

Borough Council Meetings are held at the Oakdale Community Center (104 Seminary Avenue) at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of each month, unless otherwise posted.

### **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REGULATIONS**

Oakdale Borough is a small "waterfront" community that boasts beautiful greenery and homes that have been standing as long as the town itself! While we are fortunate to live in such a lush area, the trade-off comes in the form of necessary Lawn Care and Property Maintenance!

It is critical for Residents to actively monitor "Hazards" such as Tree Branches and Brush that grow over Sidewalks and into the Street, causing unsafe conditions for Foot and Vehicle Traffic. Also, please keep in mind that Oakdale Ordinance requires that lawns be kept to a height of 6" or less, and that Trash, Waste and 'Junk Vehicles' (non-operational and/or not inspected) may not accumulate on property within the Borough.

Finally, remember that it is against the Law to sweep or blow Grass Clippings and Yard Waste into the Street or into the Creek! The Federal Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of pollutants into waterways, and Pennsylvania has developed the Stormwater Management Act, including the MS4 Program, in order to meet Federal Requirements for run-off related problems.

Oakdale Borough is responsible for ensuring that "eco-friendly" practices are being followed by local Businesses and Residents so that our waterways remain safe from preventable Flooding, Pollution, and Stream Bank Erosion, as well as threats to Human Health. Please watch for additional Information on Stormwater Management and "MS4" in upcoming Issues of the Times!

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have questions, please contact the Borough Office during regular Business Hours.

### **REMINDER: BOROUGH NEWS: HOLIDAY TRASH SCHEDULE & OFFICE HOURS**

The Borough Office will be closed on Monday, September 5th, for the Labor Day Holiday. The Office will reopen on Tuesday, September 6th at 8:30am. **Trash Collection will take place on Tuesday, September 6th, and Recycling Collection will be Wednesday, September 7th.**

### **REMINDER: TEMPORARY TRASH/RECYCLING TIME CHANGE: THROUGH SEPTEMBER 13th**

**Between Monday, August 15th, and Tuesday, September 13th, Borough Trash and Recycle Collections will begin at 5:00am (versus the normal 6:00am Start Time).** Residents should take Trash and Recycle to the Curb no later than 5:00am, to ensure same day pick up. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### **AETNA CHEMICAL HISTORICAL MARKER**

2018 will mark the centennial of the Aetna Chemical Explosion. Plans are underway to install a Historical Marker in Oakdale that best explains this tragedy while paying homage to those who sacrificed their lives. Funds are needed for the design and installation of this important sign. If you wish to donate to this fund, please make checks payable to "The Panhandle Trail Association". Be sure to include the phrase "Aetna Sign" in the memo portion of your check. They can be mailed to the treasurer of this organization at 2520 Hilltop Road, Oakdale, PA 15071. **All donations are tax deductible.** Your generosity and support in this endeavor are greatly appreciated!!

## **BOY SCOUT NEWS**

Troop 248 is proud to announce we have our 89<sup>th</sup> Eagle Scout. On July 26, 2016, **Lochlann (Lake) Gilbert** completed his Eagle Scout Board of Review. Lake logged over 400 hours of Community Service of trail maintenance along the Panhandle Trail in the Oakdale Area for his Service Project.

Lake is a member of the West Allegheny Marching Band, West Allegheny Stage Band, West Allegheny Chorus and a member of the West Allegheny Marine ROTC Program. The formal presentation ceremony is scheduled for later this fall.

### **Troop 248 Earns Several Awards at Heritage Reservation and Several Scouts Elected to Order of the Arrow**

Troop 248 had our annual weeklong summer camp from July 10-17 at Heritage Reservation near Farmington, PA. The Troop won a 2nd Place in the Iron Chef Dutch Oven Cook Off. The Troop also earned the Baden Powell Honor Unit Award, 6 Green Bar Bill Honor Patrol Awards, and 23 Honor Camper Awards, as well as 23 Camp Service Awards. There were 3 National BSA Outdoor Challenge Awards received. Michael Starkman, Jaxon Pottle, and Eric Diffendal earned the 3-mile Swim Award, while an overall Troop earned a total of 133 completed and partial Merit Badges.

We are proud to announce Alex Kot and Ethan Cooper were elected into the Order of the Arrow. They will be doing their Ordeal later this year. Also, Eric Diffendal, Nathan Mavrich, Hayden Shipley, and Patrick Gannon completed their Brotherhood for the Order of the Arrow, along with 8 members earning the new Order of the Arrow Lodge Camp Service Award.

## **KILLBUCK LODGE open during OAKTOBERFEST**

The Friends of Killbuck Lodge have worked tirelessly over the past 17 months to rebuild Killbuck Lodge. With the help of the DIY-Barnwood Builders and the partnership of many Companies, Organizations and Friends, we succeeded and have received our Occupancy Permit.

KILLBUCK Lodge was originally reconstructed on Clinton Avenue in 1934. On September 17, you can visit the new Killbuck Lodge during the Open House from 10am to 2pm, with the Pioneers West Log Cabin Tour, or visit us during the Oaktoberfest Celebration in Oakdale (3pm to 8pm)!

During the Log Cabin Tour Time, the Boy Scouts of Troop 248 will have a Display and will be serving up some culinary treats.

[www.friendsofkillbucklodge.org](http://www.friendsofkillbucklodge.org) / [www.facebook.com/Pioneers-West-Historical-Society-1424998944431044](https://www.facebook.com/Pioneers-West-Historical-Society-1424998944431044) /

<http://www.pioneerswesthistoricalsociety.org>



## **The Bottle Club**

**2nd Thursday of Each Month / 6:00pm - 9:00pm**

**Oakdale Borough Community Center / History Gallery Room**



Do you have an interest in Antique Bottles (and Buttons and Buckles...)? Are you a serious Antique Hobbyist looking to Buy, Sell or Trade? All are Welcome!!!

Bring your own Treasures or Browse the Unique Pieces on Display!

For Additional Information, please contact Gary Lauderbaugh (412-200-8795) or Derrick Moore (724-693-8062).

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Do you have Photos that would add value to the History Gallery? Check the Attic and Basement for old Photos of Oakdale (and surrounding area) Landmarks, that can add to our Collection!

Bring your Photo(s) to the Borough Office for Reproduction (Originals will be returned promptly) and Public Display in our History Gallery.





## **LOVE YOUR LIBRARY THIS SEPTEMBER: Fundraising Match Month!**

We are thrilled to announce that thanks to the generosity of the Jack Buncher Foundation, every donation made to Western Allegheny Community Library throughout the month of September will be MATCHED - up to \$500 per Donor! With an entire month to "Love Your Library," there are lots of ways to get involved and double the impact of your support. Please consider joining us for one or more of these opportunities:

- Fall for Your Library - Saturday, September 10: Our annual fundraising event, with delicious food, fabulous wine, and endless fun.
- Parents' Night Out - Saturday, September 17: A great way for you to have a night out, for your kids to have fun at the library, and for us to raise money!
- Day of Giving - Wednesday, September 21: Day of Giving continues the online giving event organized by The Pittsburgh Foundation; there is a \$2,155 remaining matching pool for the library - help us reach our goal!
- Truck Touch - Saturday, September 24: The 5th year for this benefit, come to Clinton Park and get up close and personal with over 20 vehicles including a school bus, fire trucks, construction vehicles of all kinds, a race car, tow truck, and more. Also includes a concession stand and kid-friendly activities.
- Backyard Campaign - The library is beginning a special "Here We Grow Again" campaign to create a Backyard at the library, creating a flexible outdoor area for reading, relaxing, listening to a storytime, attend a gardening program, and much more. Help us build the new Backyard!
- Sarris Candy Sales - Get some delicious chocolate and support the library. It's a win-win!
- Cash Donations - Go online, send it by mail, or donate when you stop in at the front desk. Every little bit helps - and don't forget, this September, your donation will be MATCHED!

Please take the opportunity this September to show how much you "Love Your Library!" Thank you so much for your support!

## **ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S STREET FAIR: A GREAT SUCCESS!**

Although it was HOT, the rain held off for most of the week, providing a great setting for the Annual Street Fair! Residents of Oakdale and many of our neighboring Communities found Food, Fun and Nightly Entertainment courtesy of The Hose Company - Oakdale's Volunteer Fire Department, as well as a special Sunday Concert, provided by The Rock.

These hardworking Volunteers pulled out all of the stops and provided Oakdale with a Rib Night, a Spaghetti Dinner, 2 Car Cruises (!), a variety of Food and Beverages, Music, a brand-new Bounce House, and Games for kids of all ages!

The Hose Company extends its thanks for your part in making this year's Event a great success!



### **2016 FIREMEN'S STREET FAIR**

#### **RAFFLE WINNERS!**

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Monday, July 25th    | Kirt K.       |
| Tuesday, July 26th   | C.F. Custer   |
| Wednesday, July 27th | Desiree Julia |
| Thursday, July 28th  | Lian Gurena   |
| Friday, July 29th    | John Hickey   |
| Saturday, July 30th  | Mark Harbaugh |