

Short Hop

Golden days: sleds, arcade, sodas

At an old factory in Duncannon, Pa., nostalgic reigns

By BO SNOZKA
Special to this site
There is at something of a time in Duncannon, Pa., a no-crop-flight town tucked along a bend in the Susquehanna River about 80 miles north of Baltimore...



RAELEEN CRULL, 11, waits for her ice cream at the Old Sled Works soda fountain.

Meander through the narrow alleys past collectible glassware, antique tools and stuffed bears, and you'll find Jimmy Rosen's Old Sled Works Arcade...

Snowy-day thrills

During the holiday in the 1980s and '90s, the Old Sled Works plant churned out as many as 1,800 of its trademark...

And, Rosen adds, 'kids have other things to do today. Kids didn't have shopping malls to go to and all the plant closed in 1991...

The long brick building's history is still evident today, from factory hardware mounted in the rafters to red paint that speaks the concrete floor where freshly painted steel runners slipped and slid...

A small museum - not much more than an alcove, really - tucked between antiques dealers traces the history of the Light-nug Guider. Glancing at the dozen wall-mounted steel, some dating to the 1930s, I can almost...

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Games are gentle, sodas are sweet

[Arcade, from Page 61]

computer-generated voices or operators of a modern game room. The only sodas are the red-and-white striped device and simple pills from pinball bumpers.

Unlike the antiques and crafts that fill every other nook and cranny of the Old Sled Works, none of the arcade machines is for sale. They aren't...

These games need to be played, says Rosen, who at 59 is younger than most of them. "You can set a video game aside for weeks or months, plug it back in and it's going to play. These games don't operate well if they...

When you go

Getting there: Duncannon is about 90 miles from Baltimore. Take I-83 north to Pennsylvania Route 581 west to I-91 north. Then take Routes 11 and I-70 north about 10 miles to Route 274 and 100-101. The Old Sled Works is about three miles east at 722 N. Market St.



touch of the '50s, stop by Atomic Warehouse (www.atomicwarehouse.com) in Harrisburg on your way home. The store is stocked with vintage furniture, appliances, advertisements and more.

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An old factory's new delights

[Arcade, from Page 74]

could be moved and connected to the main building via a 25-foot extension cable. No detail is overlooked here from old ads and photos to the Seabury Wall-o-Matic jukeboxes on the fountain counter stocked with Chubby Checker and Jerry Lee Lewis. The authentically even extracted Hollywood portraits of the fountain were used in the 1993 Mypona Ryder film, GH7.

As I savored a root beer float prepared by 71-year-old Mary Emma Sterner, I half-expected to see Richie Cunningham, the Forz, and the rest of the Happy Days gang at the next table.

A lifelong Duncannon resident, Sterner has been here before she worked as a soda jerk - 65 on the dispenser handles - 63 on the dispenser handles - 63 on the dispenser handles. That's her store as a 14-year-old. That's her in the sple-tored photo near the counter.

Now, 67 years later, she's back at it, whipping up milk shakes and concoctions of pec, cherry and raspberry soda water and other acid. "I guess I've come full circle," she says. "Friends of my father will come in and say, 'Can you serve me what you served me 50 years ago?'"

For a speech view of Duncannon and the Susquehanna River, climb the 110-foot fire tower across the street from the Old Sled Works. The tower, originally located along a highway a few miles away, was slated for demolition as part of a road expansion. Harris and Rosen bought it and sold cigarettes for something like \$1.50.

Back on the ground, I return to the soda fountain, where 71-year-old Shirley Kolter is making the final annual visit to see my father's old soda fountain. To see my father's old soda fountain at Bennett's Pharmacy in Harrisburg as a 13-year-old.

"You were supposed to be 14," she says, "but back then, they didn't care. My gosh, I think we sold cigarettes for something like 1 cent a pack."



The factory produced Lighthouse Guider sleds from 1964 to 1990. huge financial headaches. months of bureaucratic red tape open for visitors to climb all 144 steps (for \$1.50). Duncannon's New Year's Eve celebration concludes with - what else? - a giant sled descending from the tower to ring in the new year. stop the tower and perch high atop the tower, and you'll have the great rail bed behind the Old Sled Works where boxcars once were loaded with sleds by the thousands.

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