

# ON THE LAZY BENCH

*Penn Brad Oil Museum strives to preserve the history of the Bradford Oil Field and the unique culture that developed along with it. The Museum also honors the people and their families whose lives contributed to making Bradford the "Highgrade Oil Metropolis of the World."*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Vol. 12 – No. 1 – Winter 2026

## The Story Behind the Calendar

by Joyce Cline, Treasurer



At last! An industry photo on the Bradford Era's annual calendar!

As a volunteer at the Bradford Landmark Society, I scan documents, books, ledgers, newspaper articles—anything that needs to be preserved off-site.

One of the first projects I was given was the Landmark's collection of Bradford Era calendars. The earliest they had was 1944, then 1950. Beginning in 1958, a calendar for all years through 2025 was in the Landmark's collection.

As I scanned about 70 calendars, I kept expecting some picture of anything related to the oil and gas industry. There were numerous pictures of Old City Hall and other historic buildings, Pitt campus, Kinzua Dam, city reservoirs, landscapes, etc. and I kept expecting an oilfield related one. There were **none!** (The closest was an abstract painting of what I guess was oil.)

I brought this to the attention of the Executive Editor of the Era and asked him to consider correcting this for 2026. He said a picture of the museum, specifically the drilling rig, was being considered. And he made good on his word.

Thank you, Jim, and thank you Wade Aiken for the excellent photo.

## Annual Era Calendar

by Sara Furlong (edited for space, from the original Era article of 1-8-26)

Each year The Bradford Era sends a complimentary calendar to its subscribers. This time around, the calendar features Era photographer Wade Aiken's shot of the Penn Brad Oil Museum in the early dark of a clear autumn evening, the Bill Cline Memorial Derrick lit crisply in the background.

The calendars, collected by many, have covered many sights and topics over the years, perhaps an image from a story of the time or just a great shot representative of the place we call home. They can be seen in offices and garages throughout the area, tacked up with a pin or hung on a nail. The practice dates all the way back to the 1940s or '50s, although no one is certain of the exact start.

Photographers agree, it's an honor to have one of their photos selected for the year's calendar. (Francie Long, our museum manager has had this honor many times.)

## PENN BRAD OIL MUSEUM

901 South Avenue - Bradford, PA 16701  
Email: pennbrad.oilmuseum@yahoo.com  
Website: penn-bradoilmuseum.org

Phone: 814-362-1955

Open:

Thurs. & Friday  
9 AM to 4 PM  
Saturday  
9 AM to 2 PM

Admission Cost

Adults - \$6.00  
Seniors - \$5.00

Children (under 12) - Free  
Active Military / Family - Free

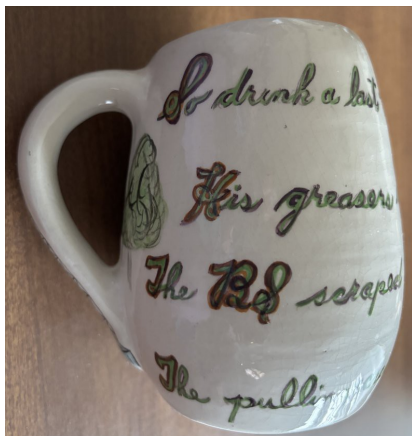


## Hand-Painted Mug, Farewell to Oilman

by Isabelle Champlin w/ photos by Joyce Cline

An intriguing handmade mug is at the Penn Brad Oil Museum, complete with a poem painted in green and black cursive script on the outside:

So drink a last bumper to  
 fireside pumper  
 His greasers now slung by the  
 door  
 The BS scraped off; His  
 callouses soft  
 The pulling crew sees him ....  
 no more.



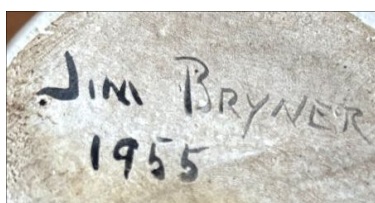
BS is polite slang for “bull s—t”, which refers to the greasy waxy gunk that is found on a pumpjack. It is what makes Pennsylvania crude oil a great source for petroleum jelly such as Vaseline, useful for keeping skin soft as well as for healing scrapes, cuts and burns.



On the handle of the mug is painted a tall handsome derrick which is framed by two lofty trees. The insides of the mug are bright green, with the interior bottom painted white. Several suspicious carefully drawn blobs of black glaze on the white bottom might represent small oil slicks or some BS. The signature on the outside of the mug’s bottom reads “Jim Bryner 1955”.



Jim Bryner was a well-known local oil man and was the originator of the Penn Brad Oil Museum, which grew from the 1971 centennial celebration of the Bradford Oil Field’s founding back in 1871. He was a past president of the Bradford district of the Pennsylvania Oil Producers Association and a past president of PIOGA (Pennsylvania Independent Oil & Gas Association) back when it was called POGAM (Pennsylvania Oil, Gas and Minerals Association). Jim Bryner is buried in the Degolier cemetery, only 3/10th of a mile north of his museum.



## Greasers, BS and

by Tom Miller

(Tom Miller, the 77-year-old retired past president of the Penn Brad Oil museum and 4th generation local oilman, was asked to explain the poem’s “greasers”, “BS”, and “pulling crews”. In this article, he mentions Lewis Kinley, who was the father of Jim Kinley, the donor of our Kinley Library at the museum.)

### Greasers

We always called our pulling clothes greasers and they would just be an old set of clothes that would get greasy, oily, and muddy when you pulled a well. At one time I had a separate washing machine just to wash greasers. There was also a laundromat in Duke Center, PA, with a designated machine just for greasers.



Tom Miller’s dad, Don, (about 85 years old) wears his greasers for a tubing job and eats lunch in the back of the truck.

### BS

BS or bulls--t is actually the paraffin wax that accumulates in the tubing and on the sucker rods in a well. When the rods are pulled to service the well, a scraper is used on top of the tubing to scrape the BS off of the rods. Depending on the well, there could be several 5-gallon pails of BS by the time all the rods were removed. The tubing on some wells would also be

## Pulling Crews

clogged with BS and you had to remove it by melting it with steam, blowing it out with air, or some other method. That is a particularly messy job. You may end up with a barrel or two of BS.



*Don Miller on a tubing job at 88. A tubing job is when you first have to pull the rods out and then the tubing, to replace leaky joints or the pump barrel (the two most common reasons).*

Both the BS and crude oil would help keep your hands soft. When we had individual separator tanks or barrels at wells, we would wash our hands and arms in the oil in the tank at the end of the day. At one time there was a woman who was a hairdresser who would come to me on occasion for a gallon jug of crude oil that she would use as a hair treatment.

My grandpa told me that back in the early days when they used mud rigs, there were men who would come around with a wagon and pay you money for the privilege of cleaning up your rig just to obtain the paraffin.

By the way, “BS” is also used as a term for “bottom sediment” in referring to a stock tank. At one time you could get a deduction on your tank run for BS & W which referred to bottom sediment and water.

### **Pulling Crews**

On the old cable tool rigs that drilled most of the wells in the Bradford Field, the personnel consisted of a driller and a tooldresser. However, the ones who got the BS all over themselves were the roustabouts who worked on a pulling or servicing crew. Wells (some more than others) have to be serviced to replace worn parts in the downhole pump, to replace

broken sucker rods or to replace joints of tubing that have developed holes from corrosion or cracks. These are the most common among a myriad of problems that could be encountered. I spent many a day servicing wells and still do on occasion. It is hard and dirty work.

Wells were serviced with a tractor equipped with a special oilfield winch like those on the D2 and the Fordson tractors at the museum. They would be



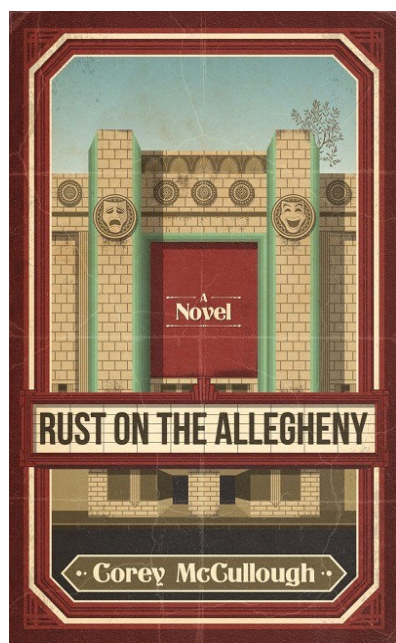
*Grandpa Miller (l) & Don Miller (r) pulling rods with a wooden pole in 1955.*

used along with a steel or wooden pole. I have pulled many a well with a wooden pole, which was just an ash or hickory (because of the straight grain) tree, trimmed and fitted with the proper hardware. It was raised using the winch line somewhat in the manner that we raised the old

derrick at the museum with the winch line on my truck. There are also special service rigs built on a tractor or truck. That is what is used primarily today. I built one on a rubber-tired farm tractor.

In the very early days, the wooden standard rig that drilled the well was replaced by a smaller “mud rig” that was used for pumping and servicing. Sometimes the derrick of a mud rig would be used with a team of horses for hoisting power. Teams were also used with pulling poles made of wood or iron.

When I was a young boy, the Kinley Oil Company was still using horses for well servicing because Lewis Kinley was quite fond of his horses. When I first went to school, the bus didn’t go down my road. I would get off of the bus at Kinley’s horse barn and wait for the teamster who lived next door to us. He would feed and bed the horses in the barn and I would ride home with him. *(additional picture on pg 8)*



## Book Review

### Rust on the Allegheny

by Corey McCullough

Self-published, 2021

Review by Isabelle Champlin

In this historical novel, three generations (grandfather, father and son) of the McCullough family are presented in three separate eras (1939, 1964 and 2019) in a northwestern Pennsylvania town.

Their changing economic prospects and problems all take place after the prosperous oil boom times in 'The Valley that Changed the World' (Oil Creek, PA, site of the famous 1859 Drake's Well).

The family's fortunes are traced through decades of depopulation and stagnation which are familiar to many rural communities throughout the nation now. Here it is Latonia City, across the Allegheny River from Oil City at the mouth of Oil Creek.

The cover is a simplified illustration of the façade of the 'Derrick Theatre' which figures prominently in the book, both in its glory days of 1939, and later in its decline in 2019 with a tree struggling to survive up on the roof. This is modeled on the enormous and luxurious Art Deco Latonia Theatre in Oil City that opened in 1929. (Which coincidentally became for sale this past summer.)

One might think that this well-written saga is a depressing novel, but it realistically and hopefully shows the value of community and family unity. As the middle generation McCullough says (p. 281): "All my generation wanted to do was get out from under the shadows of our fathers and the things they built here. But maybe if we stop expecting this place to be what it once was, and instead start building something of our own, maybe it can become...I don't know. Something new. Something even better." One of the last scenes in the book is a group effort to restore the elegant marble mosaic floor of the downtown lobby of the city's newspaper building.

This is the 7th novel written by the author, who lives in western Pennsylvania, and a copy is available in the museum's Kinley Library.

## Membership Drive

Penn Brad Oil Museum could not operate without our supporters who faithfully make donations to the museum every year. Your donations cover some basic expenses such as payroll for one employee, payroll services, utilities, newsletters, and postage.

Money for all of the other museum expenses, including insurance, repairs and maintenance, marketing, advertising, and other miscellaneous operating expenses, are paid for through fund-raising projects like the Ice Cream Social, Dan Palmer Memorial Golf Scramble, Yellowdog Award Dinner, Fireside Pumpers breakfasts, etc.

March is the month when reminders are mailed out asking for your support for 2026. Keep in mind the importance of "**preserving the history of the Bradford oil field for future generations**" when you decide your level of support. Every dollar is deeply appreciated.

If you are not yet a supporter of the museum and would like to become a member, you can download the Membership Form on our website, [penn-bradoilmuseum.org](http://penn-bradoilmuseum.org).

# Fireside Pumpers Breakfast

**Note a change in dates and location!**

The Fireside Pumpers of the Penn Brad Oil Museum meet each 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month for a breakfast meeting with a guest speaker, at Mama Jane's Eatery (formerly Perkins Restaurant) at 31 Bolivar Drive in Bradford.

The public is welcome as an educational outreach and fundraising effort by the Museum. Donations are appreciated. Attendees order off the menu, at their cost, beginning at 8 am, and the program begins at 8:30.

If you or your business would like to sponsor a breakfast, please complete the form on our website or call the Treasurer at 814-368-6824. Sponsorship profits go toward museum improvements.

**April 15, 2026**  
 William Robertson  
*Some Creepy Tales from New York State Strange*

**May 20, 2026**  
 Lisa Olszak Zumstein  
*The Brady's Bend Flood of 1980*

**June 17, 2026**  
 Scott Morgan  
*Ghost Towns of McKean County*

Feel free to contact Patty, our program scheduler, with suggestions and comments on future programs. Perhaps you want to attend a breakfast without a speaker so you can spend more time socializing. Patty can be reached by text or phone call at 814-657-4101 or by email at picketpin@comcast.net.



# Info About Our First Three Speakers

by Patty Lehosky

**April 15: William Roberston.** Bill is a return and favorite speaker at our breakfasts. He is a writer of various topics including novels, short stories, ghost stories, poetry, and autobiographical sketches. He has also co-authored, along with David Rimer, a Civil War Bucktail series of ten books (bucktailsandbroomsticks.com). Bill will have books available for sale at the breakfast. In the meantime, check out his YouTube channel and books on Amazon.com.

**May 20: Lisa Olszak Zumstein.** A native of Brady's Bend, Lisa is a writer fueled by a passion for local history. In her book, *The Brady's Bend Flood of 1980*, she chronicles the harrowing forty-minute thunderstorm that triggered a devastating flash flood, claiming nine lives—including two children. This multicellular thunderstorm mirrored the volatile weather patterns characteristic of the Appalachian corridor. Lisa will have copies of her book available for sale during the breakfast.

**June 17: Scott Morgan.** Scott is fiercely interested in local history and will be speaking on the topic of his upcoming book, "Ghost Towns of McKean County". He is a Bradford native and currently lives in Kane. Scott is a volunteer at the Mt. Jewett Historical Society.

## Two Corrections

Our apologies, but in the last 'On the Lazy Bench' newsletter (Fall 2025 issue, Volume 11, No. 4), there are two errors. We thank Bob Esch for pointing these out.

The first is on page 3 in the "Yellow Dog Award Dinner" article, in the first paragraph, 4th sentence. It was 1966 [not 1943] that Kendall Refining Company was acquired by Witco Corporation.

The second error is in the last sentence on the last page's article "A Unique Donation to PBOM". It should read: We thank John Osadnick, the maker's son [not the grandson] for this generous donation.

## Important Dates for 2026

- Thurs. April 2 - Museum Open for the Season
- Sat. May 9 - Ice Cream Social Opening Event
- Sat. July 11 - Derrick Day
- Sat. Aug. 15 - Dan Palmer Memorial Golf Scramble
- Wed. Oct. 28 - Yellow Dog Award Dinner
- Sat. Oct. 31 - Museum Closed for the Season

# PENN BRAD OIL MUSEUM

## SEASONAL OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026 11AM - 2PM



### OLD-FASHIONED ICE CREAM SOCIAL

- ENJOY A SLOPPY JOE & MAKE YOUR OWN ICE CREAM SUNDAE
- TOUR THE STANDARD RIG, VINTAGE ENGINES & DISPLAYS
- CHECK OUT THE 28-FOOT 50TH ANNIVERSARY MURAL
- WATCH LOCAL HISTORICAL MOVIES & ENJOY FRESH POPCORN
- MEET THE MUSEUM BOARD MEMBERS & MUSEUM MANAGER
- VISIT THE GIFT SHOP FOR A NEW TSHIRT, SWEATSHIRT OR BOOK
- FREE ADMISSION!! \*\* DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED \*\*

PENN BRAD OIL MUSEUM 901 SOUTH AVE (219 SOUTH) BRADFORD, PA 16701  
814-362-1955 PENN-BRADOILMUSEUM.ORG

OPEN APRIL 2 - OCT 31, 2026 THURS/FRI 9AM-4PM SATURDAY 9AM-2PM





The Miller oil men on a well site in 1954. Tom Miller (far lower right) with his brothers Mike and Mark. Their father Don Miller (l) with grandfather Will Miller. Tom Miller was responsible for pumping his dad's band wheel power at age 13. It was "essentially like farm families where the kids start to help with certain jobs as soon as they are able."

[Visit our Facebook page for more articles, photos, and updates. User name: Penn Brad Oil Museum.](#)