

My Memories of George

By Chet Zaremba

*Nanticoke Historical Society Life Member
George E. Shern of Little Falls, New Jersey
passed away on Saturday, September 4th. He
was my friend. This is our story.*

George and I grew up together in the Dewey Park section of Nanticoke. We were two months apart in age. George's father had passed away when he was about four years old, but he had a mother and two older brothers to keep him in line. We rode our bikes together down to the armory where we played on the U.S. Army tanks parked there. We used ashes from our coal burning stoves to draw lines on the alley to simulate the lines on a football field. As we grew older, we sat around watching Home Run Derby on TV while listening to Buddy Holly records.



From left, George Shern, Brady Zaremba, Chet Zaremba

Then on a July day in 1960, George's world fell apart when his mother died. George went to Moosic to live with his aunt and uncle. We stayed connected by mail, and I visited him whenever I could. George was a terrific football player and was the starting tackle on the Riverside High School team as a sophomore. I was able to see one of his games and he knew I was there because he played great.

In June 1963, I had graduated from high school and weeks later had joined the Air Force. We still exchanged letters but soon lost touch with each other as I was in Germany, and he was getting ready to graduate from high school. He had started school in Nanticoke a year later than I and he lost a year during his transition from Nanticoke to Taylor-Moosic High School. Upon his graduation, George followed me into the Air Force where again he was a great football player for various Air Force teams. As the years went on, we lost touch. With the advent of the Internet, I made a number of attempts to find George, but I never met with any success.

One day in 2017, I was working at my desk at the Historical Society office when John Sherrick answered the phone. He had the phone on speaker, and I could hear the conversation. The caller asked, "Is Chet Zaremba there?" John answered that I was. Then I heard "Tell him George Shern is calling." I could not believe what I was hearing. I took the phone and after a short conversation I asked him how he found me. He said that he had just got a computer and was looking for things about Nanticoke on the net when he came across our Historical Society web site. He then saw my name listed under the officers and decided to try to call at that moment. Impressed by the web site and the on-line newsletter; he became a life member of our society. In the months and years following that he was very generous to our group and was always there to help when we had a special project or need. For the next few months, we caught up with each

other's lives and we met in New Jersey to find that neither one of us had really changed since our days in Dewey Park so long ago.

At one point George said that he would like to make a trip back to Nanticoke to see a high school football game. When I told him that my Grandson Brady was on the team, he said that that would make it all the better. That day came and he and I rode around Nanticoke so he could see how much it had changed. A visit to our Historical Society building was high on our list and he was extremely impressed. We toured the old neighborhood and reminisced about a prank we once pulled off. No detail concerning that will be revealed here. The night at the game went well with Nanticoke posting a victory and he said that he wanted to meet Brady. We did that and took the opportunity to take the accompanying photo.

Back in Jersey we continued our phone calls and text messages quite intensely. One message I regretted ever reading was the one that he told me that he had cancer. George was a big man, and a tougher man than you can imagine. George fought and overcame many things in his life, but this was one thing he could not beat. George leaves his wife Stephanie, in Little Falls where they enjoyed a marriage of over 50 years; he leaves his brother Phil of Virginia, whom I know he held in extremely high regard, and he leaves a world better off because he was here. 📷