



# MONTHLY

## MEN ENJOYING LEISURE

About MEL, Melmen and their activities

★ ★ MARCH 2026 ★ ★

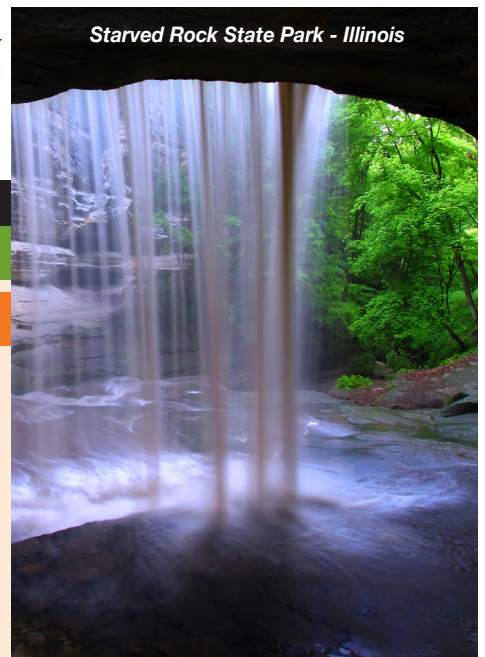
### FROM THE EDITOR



March is insisting on continuing to “roar like a lion,” but MEL roared right back. This month we report on our trip to Cantigny to see the McCormick Museum of the Big Red One, review our first Ethnic Lunch, recount how helpful MEL can be and showcase six new Melmen. We also share the biography of Bruce Edelson, MEL’s President. Plus, we have lots of pictures and terrific upcoming events; and don’t forget birthdays.

Enjoy!

Gerry



Starved Rock State Park - Illinois

## MEL MARCHES WITH THE 1 - By Les Sgnilek



On March 26, 2026, 11 Melman went to Cantigny Park in Wheaton, museum home of the First Infantry Division, known as the Big Red One. The nickname is derived from the big red patch on the Division’s uniform. They were a remarkable army Division; being either the first or second US Army Division to enter every war in which they fought. Their training, experience, bravery and resulting successes helped ensure the freedoms we enjoy today.

The museum is in Cantigny Park. The park is the former estate of Colonel Robert McCormick, the one-time publisher of the Chicago Tribune. Colonel McCormick was in the First Infantry Division during WWI and in 1918 freed the town of Cantigny (Cahn-teen-yay), France from German occupation. In addition to the museum, there are beautiful gardens, which in the summer are spectacular. For those in MEL who like to golf, they also have a course, which I’m told is terrific.



The museum was divided into two parts. The first part covered World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. At each section, you were told stories of people, learned about the equipment, and what it was like to be there. As you viewed the exhibits, the design changed with each war. For example, as you walked through the WWI exhibits, you

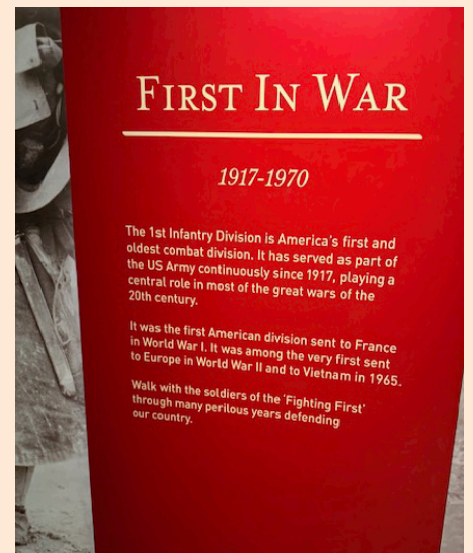


proceeded through a very realistic trench, as WWI was known for its trench warfare. When you moved through the WWII exhibits, the design changed, and you were transformed in one area to the invasion of Normandy with the water behind you and the forbidding beach in front. For Vietnam, the design transformed into a jungle.

The other section of the museum was smaller and had exhibits for Desert Storm, Desert Freedom, and peacekeeping missions. This part of the museum shows how, over time, as the mission

and technology changed, so did the First Army Division. If you wanted to, you could experience being in an Abrams tank and a Blackhawk helicopter. Outside the museum were six tanks, each one for a different purpose. For example, few of us posed in front of one which was used in the desert.

Most of our events involve eating and this one was no exception. Before going to the museum, we ate at a nearby Portillo’s, enjoying the food and conversation. A few of the Portillo’s frequent diners got a hotdog for a dollar in honor of baseball’s Opening Day.



### FIRST IN WAR

1917-1970

The 1st Infantry Division is America’s first and oldest combat division. It has served as part of the US Army continuously since 1917, playing a central role in most of the great wars of the 20th century.

It was the first American division sent to France in World War I. It was among the very first sent to Europe in World War II and to Vietnam in 1965.

Walk with the soldiers of the ‘Fighting First’ through many perilous years defending our country.

## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT - *By Gerry Linda*



This month we profile **Bruce Edelson**, President of MEL, who, sponsored by Aaron Hershinow, became a Melman in 2015. After distinguishing himself as MEL's version of an Energizer Bunny, he joined the Board in 2022 and became our chief activity planner. He was re-elected in 2025 and was named President by the Board. Bruce still acts as our activities sparkplug and personally participates in just

about everything. He was also the second recipient of the Gurolnick Founders Award (after Bill Gurolnick was honored with the inaugural distinction).

Bruce was born in Albany Park in 1951 and has a brother, David, six years younger. His dad was a buyer at Polk Brothers and later moved to a similar position at Toys 'R' Us; his mom was primarily a homemaker. When he was in the 2nd grade, the family moved to Skokie (Sharp Corner Grammar School) and when he was in the 6th grade, they moved to Highland Park (Red Oak Junior High and Deerfield High School). In High School he participated in a work/study program at Polk Bros. He started as a stock boy and by the middle of his senior year was Assistant Manager of their Skokie location.

In 1970 he helped start the Audio Department for the whole chain and, thereby, launched himself into the business sector that would occupy the rest of his work life. Included in his economic journey was ownership of an audio store in De Kalb and then working for an organization of sales representatives that specialized in audio/video. He fronted such lines as: Hitachi, Akai, Maxell, and many others. He met his wife, Jan, there in 1982. They married in 1986 and lived in Prospect Heights. They moved to Mount Prospect in 1988, a few blocks away. In 1984, he opened his own rep firm and ran that for 30 (!) years until he retired in 2014.

Apart from MEL, Bruce has four passions he'd like to share with you: (1) writing, singing, and playing music, (2) working with high school students in the DECA program, (3) traveling in the USA and (4) horse racing. Let's take them in reverse order.

Bruce claims he has gone to the track almost every Saturday for the past 55 (!) years. If you'd like to know anything about the beauty, agony, and ecstasy of the "Sport of Kings," or how to gamble weekly

for 55 years and not become bankrupt, talk to Bruce. Bruce and Jan love to travel around the country. They have been to all 50 states and have seen many of the finest sites the US has to offer. We've all read of this in the many articles Bruce has written for **MEL Monthly** in its various incarnations.

In 1970, as a senior in High School, Bruce participated in DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), which led to his work/study stint at Polk Bros. Clearly, it made a big impression because in 2014 he heard that DECA was looking for judges to evaluate student presentations. He applied and has been judging for the past 12 years. In 2017, Melman, Rich Hirsch, mentioned to Bruce that Deerfield High School was looking for mentors for their inaugural class called "Incubator"—teams of 3-4 students who either invented a new product or modified an existing one. He instructed them on all aspects of bringing those products to market. His teams won the contest five years in a row. In 2023, he became an assistant teacher for the 115 kids in the program.

Did you know Bruce is a talented musician, singer, and song writer? When he was just a kid in Chicago, he'd come home from school and watch American Bandstand. Between that show and the radio, he soon learned most of the popular songs and would sing along. His parents were impressed enough to give him voice lessons. He and his fellow voice students even appeared on WGN's "Little Stars" program. The whole school also would perform at supper clubs in the area. His parents gave him guitar lessons as a Bar Mitzvah present. He learned well. By the time he was in high school, he was a very much in demand singer and performer. The world kept spinning and at age 28 Bruce, with the stage name "Electric Eddie," played all of the instruments on his first record of original music. By 1996, he had written over 350 songs and made a CD, "The Two Sides of Bruce Edelson,"—those sides being musician and businessman. And in 2004, he released another CD, on which he played bass, keyboards, harmonica, electric guitar, acoustic guitar and percussion in addition to vocals, "Still Electric." After he retired, he wanted to make one more CD, so in 2017 he released "Take Another Look." If you're interested, those last two CD's by Bruce can be found on Spotify.

Bruce has advice for all Melmen: "Participate! We have had tremendous growth in our levels of participation. This is a function of both better-than-ever events and a wide range of varied activities. My favorite MEL word is 'camaraderie'. When you join MEL, you instantly have over 150 friends. Don't be shy. Introduce yourself to everyone!"

## MEL VISITS ARMENIA - *By Gerry Linda*

On Friday, March 13, 2026, MEL began a new tradition--its first quarterly Ethnic Lunch. Twenty-one Melmen met at Armo Grill, a stand-alone restaurant on Milwaukee Avenue in Wheeling, to partake of Mediterranean-style food with an Armenian flair. The fare included familiar items like shawarma, kabobs, pilafs, pita, hummus, baba ganouj, tabouleh and Jerusalem salads and much more. Each dish is ordered at the counter, individually prepared, and then delivered to your table.

The restaurant prides itself on the "Six No's:" no ingredient from a can, no ingredient that is processed, no fried menu items, no trans fats, no microwave preparation, no item that has been frozen. Although the decor seemed suitable for a fast-feeder, the amply proportioned, attractively plated servings were delicious. Most Melmen had a "build your own plate" that included: (1) a choice of a kabob protein, (2) selection of a starch—pilaf, kasha or potato, (3) a choice of three salads, and (4) a choice of three appetizers. With a beverage, most checks were about \$20. A few guys, including, yours truly, couldn't finish the large portion.

Bruce Edelson has done it again! Thanks, man. Can't wait 'til next quarter.



## MEL PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



Machu Pichu by Bob Greenberg

Derelict House by the Salten Sea by Gary Salit

### A CUTTING EDGE THANK YOU TO MEL - By Walt Brown



I would like to thank all the Melmen who helped me with my recent hernia operation. Doctors advised that I needed to “undergo the knife” to repair the offending body part

soon. Trouble was, I knew no surgeons here. I decided to rely on the experience and good will of MEL and sent out an email requesting recommendations for surgeons who would be up to the job. Many members replied; so many that I had to “count the votes” and declared the surgeon named on the most “ballots” as the winner.

The medical procedure employed cutting edge technology -- using a robot to do most of the work. The operation took place February 4th and was successful. There are no plans for another one.

This is yet another example of how helpful and caring our guys are. We should all feel fortunate to be part of this great group.



The future of MEL is secure: Joel Karlinsky's grandson, Brody



*Pickleball, Scottsdale, March 2026:  
Sheldon and Abby Kail vs. Bob and Sharon Stein*



*The MEL Hustlers. L to R: Gene, Howard, Sheldon, Bill, Bob, Nick*

**UPCOMING SPECIAL AND SEMI-REGULAR EVENTS**

- April 9** Bocce at Pinstripes (Les Sgnilek)
- April 20** Mini Golf 1st of the Season at The Highland Park Golf Learning Center (Bruce)
- April 30** Long Grove Confectionery Chocolate Tour w/ lunch at Lou Malnati's (Larry Krupp)
- May 28** Men Who Have Lost A Spouse breakfast at Scrambled (Larry Williams)
- June 19** Cubs/Blue Jays at Wrigley Field (Bruce and Bob Shuman)
- June 25** Ethnic Lunch restaurant TBD (Alan Esterman)
- July 22** Annual Dinner at Chevy Chase (Bruce-Ron Meibach-Harris Cohen)
- Aug. 14** Air Classics Museum Tour in Sugar Grove- Details TBD (Alan Esterman)
- Sept. 8** Cubs/Brewers at American Family Field (Bruce and Bob Shuman)



**MEL ADDS SIX NEW MEMBERS**

On Monday, March 16, 2026, six new members and two sponsors (Bob Shuman and Joel Stein) attended the new member presentation hosted by Sheldon Kail and Bruce Edelson at Scrambled. MEL warmly welcomes **Saul Federman, Rich Ferdman, Gary Stetson, Jack Solway, Jerry Bernstein, and Joe Mintz** into our great family.



*Air Classics Museum*



MARCH		APRIL		
5	Ken Davidman	74	2 Ansel Edidin	87
12	Yale Gordon	77	4 Jack Solwa	75
13	Bill Gurolnick	95	7 Richard Horwood	86
13	Jerry Schecter	80	14 Jerry Schwartz	79
18	Bob Stein	76	14 Marv Topel	88
20	Irwin Fischman	95	16 Steven Wolf	73
23	Dan Forman	74	19 Fred Nathan	88
26	Lou Epstein	88	2 Al Simon	90
28	Morry Glicksman	75	27 Richard Delevitt	79
28	Don Horwitz	79	27 Ron Sandler	86
			28 Bill Keroff	83
			29 Stan Ascher	86
			29 Lonnie Klein	82