

THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

www.sherwood-oaks.com

December 2024 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 43, No. 10



Photo by Monika Dalrymple

Our Own Winter Fairyland

Be sure to visit Monika Dalrymple's annual Nutcracker Display on the first floor of the apartment building, through early January. It's amazing! The scene above is just one small part of her collection.

Dear Reader –

As I sit in the November sun in my patio room, I look out at evergreens chock full of pinecones. And the winter birds have taken hungrily and fast to the feeder I hung just a day ago. Could it be we're in for a snowier, colder winter?

Never mind. We had a splendid fall, the election has concluded peacefully, and we now face a raft of joyous holiday activities here: eggnog party, chorus and bell concert, festive meals, and time with those we hold dear.

A song from "Mame" reflects:

*"I've grown a little leaner,
Grown a little colder,
Grown a little sadder,
Grown a little older
And I need a little angel
sitting on my shoulder.
Need a little Christmas now."*

I sense we do need the holidays about now. Let's get to it!

~ Jan Wendt

Memorial Donations and Remembrance Cards

Did you know? Donation envelopes and remembrance cards are on the memorial table in the lobby. The donation envelope lists many options to choose from when contributing in memory of a resident or a loved one. Remembrance cards can be filled out and placed in Cubby #346; they will be collected and given to the spouse/family.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

First Sunday in Advent	Dec. 1
Pearl Harbor Day	Dec. 6
Eggnog Party	Dec. 7
Bill of Rights Day	Dec. 15
Christmas Eve	Dec. 24
Christmas Day	Dec. 25
Hanukkah (1 st day)	Dec. 26
Kwanzaa (1 st day)	Dec. 26
New Year's Eve	Dec. 31

THE ACORN

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Submissions for the January issue must be sent to the Editor no later than **December 15, 2024.**

IN MEMORIAM

Memories are precious possessions that time can never destroy. For it is in happy remembrance that the heart finds its greatest joy.

- Nancy Maddock* *October 25, 2024*
- Kathleen Sarver* *November 1, 2024*
- Catherine Boyle* *November 3, 2024*

JOHN AND CAROL FERRY - #610

By Harriett Burress - # 112

For several years, Carol Ferry kept mentioning to John that it was time to move into a Continuing Care community from their home of 25 years in Seven Fields. John was not “ready” until he spent two weeks this past April in skilled care at Sherwood Oaks. “The care was outstanding, and I wrote a note expressing my appreciation. It was not just a ‘Have a good day’ experience. It was genuine concern and care.”

In October they moved into #610, and John has already participated in the Veteran’s Day Program.

John was raised in the small town of Mauch Chunk in the Lehigh Valley. Interestingly, this little coal mining and railroad town became known as Jim Thorpe. “If you will agree to be buried here, we’ll change our name,” Thorpe was told by the council. John’s family moved briefly to Philadelphia and then settled in Easton, PA, where he graduated from the Catholic High School. After 5 years of experiencing different jobs, he attended Bucks County Community College and graduated from Penn State. The Vietnam War interrupted his plans to teach, but after 10 months he was discharged because of his acceptance into graduate school at IUP, where he met Carol.

It was two weeks after his return from Vietnam, in an environmental education class, that he winked at Carol and their relationship began. “He needed my roommate for a date for his cousin and, although we had gone for walks, that was our first real date. He had beautiful auburn hair, looked very young, and focused on numbers; I, on words. I found out he was three years older than I when a group of friends went out to a pub for a beer, and he was carded.”

John taught 4th and 5th grades for 31 years. He did a lot of hands-on instruction and felt that experience “cemented” the ideas into the children’s minds. He also feels strongly that family experiences or gatherings hold everything together.

Carol was born in Monaca and is a Christmas baby. Santa literally drove her mom to the hospital after he finished his neighborhood rounds on Christmas Eve. Because of the date of her birth, she was named Carol. With a BS and MEd from IUP and 50 post-Master’s credits, she taught for 29 years – mostly 4th grade. “The children are so special at that age - still wanting to please their teachers,” she said.

John and Carol have traveled extensively. On their first road trip across the country, they filled their van with camping gear and had a budget of \$100 per day. They slept in motels, but she cooked – on roadsides, in state parks, in parking lots, even cow pastures. “When we revealed we were teachers, people did everything they could to enhance our experiences.”

John has cousins in Melbourne, Australia, and the couple has met them around the world and traveled together. “My favorite countries are Norway and Australia,” Carol commented.

As you meet and welcome the Ferrys, please ask them to share their many rich stories from around the world, including military concepts, collections, interests, and more travel stories. We welcome them now as residents.



ROBERT MADDOCK - #134

By Connie Brandenberger #602



Photo by Security

Bob Maddock is a Pittsburgh native who has spent most of his life on the North Side of Pittsburgh. Long-time residents of Pittsburgh will understand when he says he lived for 50 years on East Street, where I-279 now soars overhead

He graduated from North Catholic High School, which was on the North Side, but now located in Cranberry Township. He attended the University of Pittsburgh, majoring in history, and he continues this interest by enjoying related books that he likes to discuss. Science fiction, philosophy, and military (especially naval) books are also part of his library.

Bob worked for the U.S Postal System for 36 years before he retired in 2000. Being employed by the Post Office, he has several great stories about the Christmas mail rush when ALL packages say: MUST BE DELIVERED BY CHRISTMAS! There were also many 'angry' stories when Social Security checks didn't arrive on time. Retaining good employees is difficult. He says post office rage is a problem. Bob would be happy to share stories of his interesting life at the post office.

Currently, he is active and passionate about his work with the Community of Reconciliation (COR) which he joined in 1968. Bob met and married wife Nancy at the church. The major concern of COR is outreach and social justice. Bob and his wife Nancy moved to Sherwood Oaks in October. They liked the friendly atmosphere. Nancy had been in failing health. She was admitted to the Skilled Nursing Unit and then to Hospice. Sadly, she died on October 25. They have a son living on Mt. Washington and a daughter who resides in Asheville, NC.

Wally and Barb Christy have been very helpful to Bob's settling in and navigating the campus. He looks forward to meeting new friends and enjoying the community of Sherwood Oaks. Welcome, Bob!



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"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

~ Calvin Coolidge

ATTENTION – WAR VETERANS

By Frank Finley - #613

Are you aware of the Honor Flight Program for war veterans? The program transports war veterans on free round trips to tour the war memorials in Washington, D.C. On October 19, 2024, Joe Nowak (#614) and I were on Honor Flight Pittsburgh mission #14. Each veteran is assigned a Guardian to help the veteran adhere to the schedule. My daughter was our Guardian. Since Pittsburgh is relatively close to D.C., we went by motor coach.

Our buses departed at 5:00 AM sharp from the Northway Christian Church in Wexford. Prior to leaving we had a continental breakfast, donned an Honor Flight T-shirt (helps staff and guardians identify veterans during the tour), received an Honor Flight jacket, a bag of snacks, and a name card on a lanyard. We were offered bottled water at every stop during the day. There was a lot of walking, and Honor Flight Pittsburgh had its own wheelchairs for those who needed them. Each bus had a nurse or paramedic on board with emergency medical equipment and over the counter meds.

After one rest stop, we arrived at the Marine Iwo Jima memorial at 9:45 AM. The next stop was at Arlington National Cemetery, where we viewed the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We had time to view tombstones for several notable veterans. We bussed to the WWII memorial and then to the FDR memorial, where we were served box lunches. This was followed by a stop at the Korean, Vietnam, and Lincoln memorials. The final stop was at the Air Force memorial.

The bus left there at 4:30 PM for the return trip home. We stopped in Hagerstown, MD, for dinner at the Mission BBQ. The bus then departed at 7:20 PM for the remainder of the trip, with one rest stop on the PA Turnpike. We arrived at the Northway Church at 10:45 PM for a welcome home greeting.

To qualify, veterans must have been on active duty somewhere during the following dates for the various conflicts:

WWII Dec 7., 1941 – Dec 31., 1946

Korea June 29, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955

Vietnam Feb. 28, 1961 – May 8, 1975

Lebanon/ Grenada Aug. 24, 1982 – Dec. 15, 1983

Panama Dec. 20, 1989 – Feb. 13, 1990

Gulf War/War on Terrorism Aug. 2, 1990 – Present

To apply for an Honor Flight Pittsburgh mission, complete an application on their website, www.honorflightpittsburgh.org, or contact Maria Pry at 1-833-437-4448, ext. 700.

“In a society that has you counting money, pounds, calories, and steps, be a rebel and count your blessings instead.”

~ Lisa Heckman

Poinsettias at Phipps



Photo by Jan Wendt

THE TIMBER ARTIST

By Dan Cindric - #107

If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? That philosophical thought experiment may not be able to be answered by John Bridges, but if you show him a piece of wood from that tree, he will surely be able to identify it. His five-year training in Timber Technology in England required the ability to identify 120 different types of wood, which is the reason you will usually find him creating interesting functional and decorative objects in the Wood Shop, such as lanterns with wooden candles, bowls of various sizes and designs, vases for dried flowers, and puzzles, some of which are shown in the photo below.



Photo by Dan Cindric

John has been a wood expert for most of his life in Kenya, Congo, Chile, Trinidad, and many other countries. His artistic

work in the Wood Shop is quite a variance from his early childhood, which included being sent to family members outside of London to avoid The Blitz during the Second World War.

John can be seen in the photo below turning a piece of wood on the Wood Shop lathe into the cylindrical form that will eventually become a bowl. He could be called a woodworker, but perhaps he is best described as The Timber Artist.

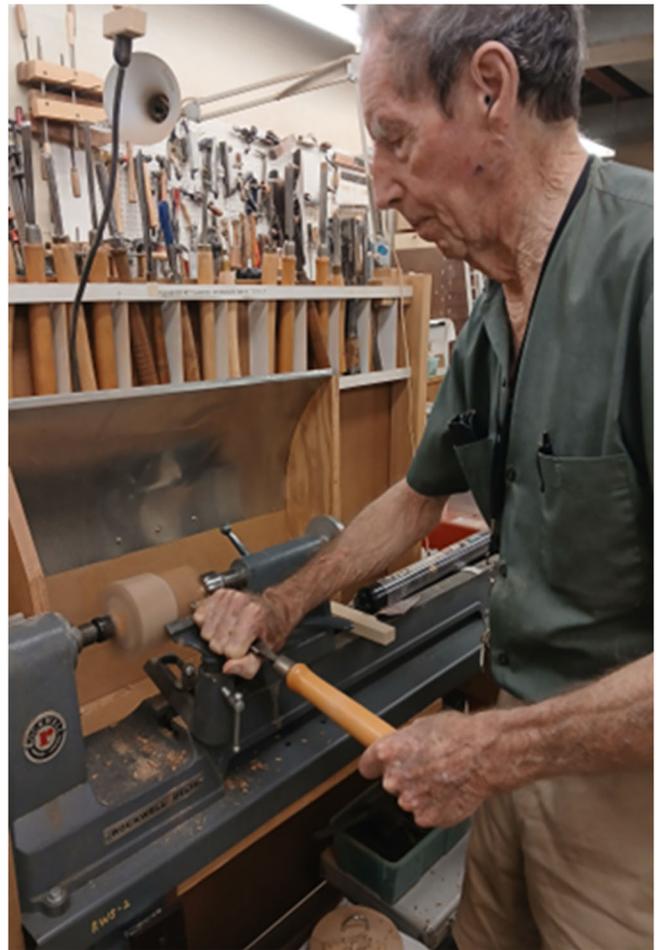


Photo by Dan Cindric

“You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas lights.”

~ Maya Angelou

DECEMBER ENTERTAINMENT

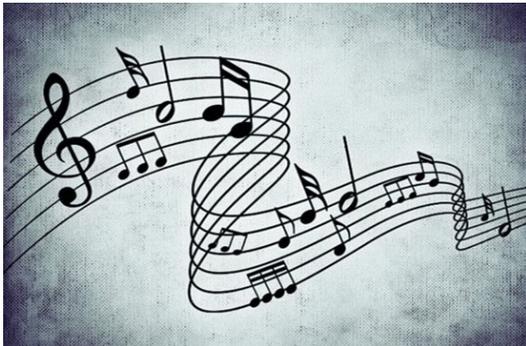
By Jane Lavender - #253

Cranberry Men's Chorus

Some of you will hear this chorus sing during the holidays more than once. It's no wonder that you will be wanting to hear them again! This excellent group of singers presents the best in seasonal music in barber shop format. There has been a special request that they wear their bright red jackets, and they have promised to do so on **Thursday, Dec. 12, at 7:00 p.m.**

You might just sit back, relax, and let your "happy" show.

Resident Jim Hvidding is a member of the group and has been known to sing their praises and enthuse about what a pleasure it is to sing with them.



A Bit of Jazz for the Holidays

YB3 will return to Sherwood Oaks to extend the fun of the holiday season with a bit of jazz.

The band, as you may remember, is composed of a group of Seneca Valley High School students and alums who play together for the sheer joy of it. We've enjoyed them before, and they'll be back in our Auditorium on **Saturday, Dec. 28, at 4:00 p.m.** (That's the Saturday after Christmas) for some before-dinner entertainment. See you there!

PAPERBACK PONDERINGS

By Jean Henderson - #346



Our Paperback room is funded totally by your donations, and I'm so grateful! Here are a few recent additions.

Fiction:

Gaines: "A Lesson before Dying"

Slocomb: "The Violin Conspiracy"

Gilmore: "The Pumpkin Spice Café"

Bennett: "The Vanishing Half"

Pryor: "The Bookseller"

Dempsey: "The Longest Echo"

Backman: "A Man Called Ove"

Smith: "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"

Patchett: "State of Wonder"

Ng: "Everything I Never Told You"

McClain: "The Paris Wife"

Kalechofsky: "Five Women from Ravensbruck"

Shrayer: "A Russian Immigrant"

Haruf: "Plainsong"

O'Brien: "Tomcat in Love"

Belorusets: "Lucky Breaks"

Lamb: "I Know This Much Is True"

Ditlevsen: "The Trouble with Happiness"

Ditlevsen: "Childhood, Youth, Despondency"

Also, several **biographies** and **non-fiction** books have been donated, among them: "Putin's people" by Belton; "Black Elk" by Jackson; and "The Professor and the Madman" by Winchester.

Do stop in and enjoy ALL types of books in the Paperback Room! No need to sign out the book; just checkmark on the inside back cover that you've read it, and return.

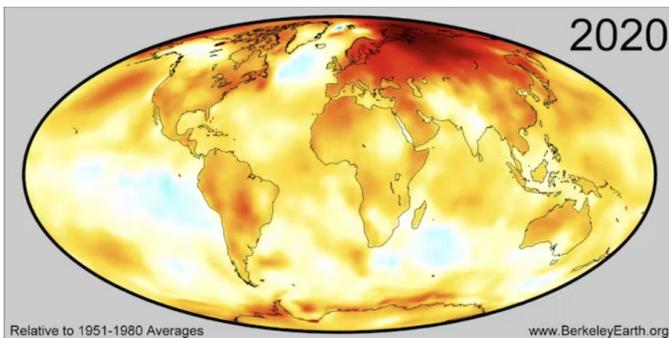
COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #735

Man-made climate change is NOT a Hoax.

While most of you know that the earth is warming and this year will probably exceed the 1.5° C target set by the 2015 Paris Agreement, you may not realize that the temperature increase varies considerably by region of the planet.

The Arctic region, including Greenland, is warming twice as fast, known as the Arctic amplification. The albedo effect of white snow and ice is very high, reflecting most of solar radiation back out into space. The albedo effect of the ocean is low, allowing most of solar radiation to be absorbed. Because the ice covering the Arctic Ocean has been steadily reducing as the planet warms, the area is heating up much more quickly than the rest of earth.



While that's bad by itself, it also means that the permafrost isn't so 'perma'; as it melts, it will release as much methane into the atmosphere as is already there; and that's very bad news.

Let's be glad that the same phenomenon isn't happening in the Antarctic. There, the ice is melting, but at a much slower rate; there, we only have giant icebergs to worry about.

Watch *Polar Extremes* on Channel 951 on Monday, December 9, at 10:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., or 7:00 p.m. Encore presentation on Wednesday, December 11, at 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.



CONTINUED LEARNING

By Jno L. Hunt - #308

We have concluded an enlightening series of topics from bees to opera, the Middle East, Impressionism, Native Americans, to exotic travels, presented by six different speakers. We are in the process of finalizing our speakers for our spring series starting in March. In the meantime, enjoy our presentations on Channel 951. Initial airings on Tuesdays are at 10:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. Encore presentations are usually on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

December:

- Tues., Dec. 3: "How to Look at and Understand Great Art"—Lessons 11 & 12. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 5
- Tues., Dec. 10: "Connections—Fire from the Sky." Encore on Thurs., Dec. 12
- Tues., Dec. 17: WQED—"Holy Pittsburgh." Encore on Thurs., Dec. 19
- Tues., Dec. 24: Lost Christianities (23 & 24). Encore on Thurs., Dec. 26
- Tues., Dec. 31: "Our Seasons—The Circle of Life." Encore on Thurs., Jan. 2

IS THERE A NEW EPIDEMIC ON CAMPUS?

By Dennis Lynch - #335

I think there might be, and I think I have it. Maybe I am Patient Zero. Or maybe I am just deluded. I am writing this to find out if any of you also suffer from this annoying disability. If you do, let me know!

I admit that this has been troubling me for several months now. Procrastination and co-morbidities have kept me from setting pen to paper. I feel, however, that I cannot delay any longer and must speak out. I only hope I am not too late.

I read a lot, and now, whenever I turn a page (properly, carefully, from the top like my bookseller father taught me) ... well ... I get *two pages* instead of one! Many times it is very hard to separate out the page I want, and I have to resort to a lot of foolishness to finally succeed. Sometimes, in desperation, I even have to spit on my fingers (don't tell my father!).

For example while rereading *The Lord of the Rings*, page turning led to the following mental disconnect (in *The Two Towers*, my least favorite volume):

"There are eyes!" Legolas said. "Eyes looking out from the shadows of the trees! I never saw such eyes before."

[turn page]

between them fords for horses that went

[Huh??]

Of course, I had turned two pages.

I have even started to turn two when I am thumbing backward through *The Vermont Country Store* catalog.

And now—last night, as I was rereading Reginald Hill's fine police procedural, *Death Comes for the Fat Man*, I turned a page and brought up, not two—but *three!*

DECK THE HALLS!

Chorus and Handbells

By Jan Wendt - #158

The Sherwood Oaks Chorus and Handbell Choir will present a Christmas Concert, "Deck the Halls!" on Wednesday, December 4, at 4:00 p.m. in the Auditorium.

Director Lyn Marsh will lead the groups in a presentation of festive seasonal music. You'll hear arrangements of well-known Christmas carols and songs, as well as some less familiar music.

Come and start your holiday season with the choirs, then hum your way into dinner with friends!

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

By Jean Henderson - #346

The Living with Loss Team will offer its annual Longest Night Service on Tuesday, December 17, at 1:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. Yes, it is earlier in the month than usual because of several conflicts. The service includes readings, prayers, music, and a gift stone, GRACE, reflecting this year's theme for the service.

Attendees will have an opportunity to prepare a tree ornament as a memorial to a loved one and hang it on a small tree that will sit on the gratitude table in the lobby.

The service is Christian-based but can be of help to all of us facing the holidays with heavy hearts for a variety of reasons.

A JOURNEY OF HANUKKAH, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

By Julie Eden - #290
Written for 2023
Festival of Lights
eight nights to celebrate
candles lit, wax drips

(a series of haiku and tanka)

Night 1, 2023

we light Menorahs
remembering the oil lamp
burning for eight days

Hanukkah reminds us
miracles can occur
light, part of our lives



Night 2:

light radiates
connects the past to the present
into the future

I see light of the past
studying my family
expectations they had

how they overcame
the fear of uncertainty
found comfort in their lives

I share photos
whopping miracles of nature
what I see each season

I see light spreading
Into the future through children
And grandchildren

Night 3:

I think of the ways
I saw and felt light today
at first, pale, weak

calm light while I worked
in my office writing
later, sounds of rain

light in voices of friends
and our conversations
even when alone

as I prepare candles
light of sunshine tomorrow
counterbalances today

I miss the blue jays
sounding off in my courtyard flitting from
tree to tree

Night 4:

a prayer for peace
now that the Middle East
is in turmoil

I yearn for light
to break through the suffocating
darkness and repression

for man to find courage
to overcome tragedy
in the conflict

Night 5:

each night another
candle is added and lit
the light intensifies

with humans as well
I have hope it can be that way
that we may spread light

Night 6:

I have the sensation
tonight when lighting the *shamash
of it making a pathway
for those now in darkness
I watch it glow till the very end

Night 7:

I remember family
those who are no longer here
and guided me

I also see
the bright light of family
who surround me now

* the shamash is the “helper” candle - lit
first and then used to light the other
candles in the menorah

Night 8:

the Festival of Lights
as I light the last candle
ends for another year

it is bittersweet
I think of past celebrations
with friends in their homes

how we have scattered
but still stay in touch
our light connects us

past, present, future.
though I am not alone tonight,
I’m not isolated:
Jews around the world
also light the last candle



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WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA?

(SO Residents Association)

By Rosemary Coffey, Secretary - #113

NOTE: Complete minutes are always available for review on the SORA bulletin board in the mailroom and in the SORA binder in the library.

Excerpts from minutes for the **Nov. 5, 2024**, monthly board meeting follow:

SORA Treasurers: The balance as of Oct. 31 for Memorial-Special Projects was \$22,133.16, and that for Employee Appreciation was \$108,046.45 – for a total of \$130,179.61. The balance in the checking account was \$54,017.86, while the total SORA balance was \$94,017.86.

Liaison Reports:

Dining Room: Resident tours of the kitchen areas will be offered early next year.

Curio Cabinets: The Nov.-Dec. theme is “My Favorite Things.”

Crazy Crafters: Current classes in the Craft Room are focusing on making holiday decorations.

Drama Club: The “Night of the Stars” variety show was presented on Oct. 24 and 26. Nearly 200 people attended in all.

Sew and So, as of Oct. 30, had made 1,054 scarves, hats, headbands, and blankets, donated to local charities.

Jigsaw Puzzles: Joni Pun is now chairing the group. Please do not donate puzzles with more than 300 pieces.

Bells and Chorus: The group is presenting a holiday concert on **Wed., Dec. 4**, beginning at **4 p.m.**

Living with Loss: The Longest Night Service will be on **Tues., Dec. 17, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Auditorium; it is designed for people who may be having a hard time during the holidays.

Sherwood Gifts: Xmas items are now for sale; the Annex is open every Tuesday.

Outdoor Games have now become Indoor Games, mostly in the Cranberry Lake Fitness Center; a complete Cornhole set is available, along with the ping pong table.

Lounge Music: If anyone is interested in continuing this tradition in the evenings after dinner, please see Jean Henderson (8346) or Lois Greer (8347) to locate the supplies.

Landscaping: The renovation of the Summer House building continues.

Trips and Tours: There may be a tour of the Phipps Conservatory for its Christmas show and a trip to the Aviary in the New Year.

Administrator's Report: Census: 195 residents are in IL, plus 35 in Skilled Nursing and 75% occupation of Personal Care. A new resident satisfaction survey is being developed. Filling vacancies in Housekeeping remains a problem. Health Center staff are happy with the new Electronic Medical Records system. SO's cash reserves are currently listed at about \$18.6 million.

Old Business: The Summer House continues to undergo renovations. There will be a water fountain by the outside wall between the two restrooms.

New Business: We are happy to celebrate an award given to Karen Obringer, our Care Manager for Personal Care, as the PALA Keystone 2024 Outstanding Nurse Caregiver of the Year. We will recognize her at our December Quarterly Meeting.

Announcements: Cathy Connolly, who worked in our beauty shop, has retired. Her husband Bob died recently, and she is also caring for a sick daughter.

Future Board Meetings: The next Monthly Board Meeting will be held on **Tues., Dec. 3, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Card Room. The next Quarterly Meeting will take place on **Tues., Dec. 10, at 7 p.m.** in the Auditorium. There will be a holiday concert on **Dec. 4**, an Eggnog Party on **Dec. 6**, and a Residents' Party on **Dec. 19**. Mark your calendars!

GRANDMA'S FEATHER BED

By Reed Harvey - #235

If you were a child between the years of 1930 and 1950, this information may conjure up fond memories of the past.

Society in the U.S was structured quite differently at that time. Families and extended families generally lived together, with parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins living near the family homestead. (This was before the diaspora that followed World War II.) It was common practice for the extended families to gather at grandma's house for a meal periodically, usually on Sunday afternoons. Conversation was plentiful, political positions were shared, and even the Pirate games may have been listened to on the Philco upright.

Grandma's skill in the kitchen was legendary. Chicken was the usual fare of the day. Grandma could make a little go a long way. A large bowl of mashed potatoes and her delicious gravy rounded out the core of the meal. A supply of vegetables from her garden just added to the banquet. Then, of course— was the piece de resistance – dessert! Oh, those special "goodies"!

But the best darn thing about Grandma's house was her great big feather bed. It was a massive piece of furniture, probably a gift from Grandpa on an early wedding anniversary or birthday. There were four posters to hold the mosquito netting in summer. The inside perimeter of the frame was lined with wooden pegs over which a checkerboard pattern of rope was strung, which served as the spring suspension. When the rope got stretched

and the rope sagged, it was tightened with a device called a key. Over the rope suspension was the all-important "tick." a large linen or muslin bag stuffed with goose feathers, the more the merrier. A back flop on this mattress was like falling on a marshmallow. You came to know what it would be like in heaven.

THE FALL OF 2024

By Harriet Burress - #112

What a beautiful fall we have experienced and enjoyed this year! Riding down I-79 toward the Ohio River bridge was like traveling through stained glass windows, a wonder of orange, yellow, red, and green on display.

Just as outstanding has been the clear night sky. Hopefully, all who are early risers have looked up to see the many bright stars and planets "move" westward as the earth rotates eastward toward the rising sun. It has been amazing to see God's creation—especially Orion the Hunter with the three stars in his belt—the same Orion that I have seen many times in the South Carolina sky 600 miles away "progress" out of sight of my patio windows.

This has been an exceptionally beautiful fall season. Thank you, Lord.

"There is October in every November and there is November in every December! All seasons melted into each other's life!"

~Dylan Thomas

WORTH A LOOK

Books New to Our Library

By Barbara Christy - #237

The Glassmaker by Tracy Chevalier. Fiction. Murano, Italy, has been the center of art glassware for centuries. In 1496, Orsola Rossa is grieving the fact that, as a daughter not a son, she is not permitted to engage in her family's art and livelihood, but she is an enterprising young woman and finds a way to make glass beads in secret that she makes into fabulous jewelry. As the family's fortunes rise and fall over the centuries, her glass beads become the financial underpinning for the family. Through the plague, the Napoleonic Wars, both World Wars into the present with Covid and computers, the family traditions endure while the family members age only a little. Meanwhile Orsola's true love remains elusive. The fantasy of one family's members remaining unchanged while actively participating in the global changes around them makes this an unusual novelistic approach and a gratifying read from the author of *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*. F CHE

Tell Me Everything by Elizabeth Strout. Fiction. This is a book for fans of Olive Kitteridge. The familiar residents of Cosby, Maine, are dealing with a murder, which throws them all off kilter. Lawyer Bob Burgess is called upon to defend the accused and

muses over its complexity in his walks with Lucy Barton, a neighbor down the road with whom he is becoming quite close. Community stalwart Olive Kitteridge, who is now living in a retirement home, meets Lucy and starts sharing afternoons with her, reminiscing about people they have known. Together they conclude that "Love comes in so many different forms, but it is always love." F STR

If I Survive You by Jonathan Escoffery. Fiction. This book opens when the protagonist, Trelawny, is an elementary school mixed-race child in Florida just beginning to realize he's different. When asked "What are you?," he doesn't understand the question. He speaks English, so he's American. But his parents speak Jamaican patois, and his friends speak Spanish. Gradually, mostly through schoolmates, he learns some of the complexity of Black, White, and other (Caribbean?), but still struggles to know where he fits. Surviving Hurricane Andrew, homelessness after a fight with his father, and a hilarious assortment of odd jobs, Trelawny arrives at college for a whole new set of cultural experiences. As a college student who looks "white," but sounds eclectic, he dates diversely and muses about how differently the same situations are valued when viewed through the lens of identity. Trelawny, his brother Delano, and cousin Cukie endure hilarious and sobering adventures as they try to create a foothold in America for themselves. F ESC

American Daughters by Piper Huguley. Fiction. Portia Washington, daughter of famous Booker T., has spent her adult life supporting and defending his school, the Tuskegee Institute, and his values. She teaches music and drama there. But when she marries a controlling, insecure man, fulfilling her dreams becomes impossible. Meanwhile, Alice Roosevelt Longworth is busy carving out space for her agendas, women's rights, and other Progressive causes. As daughters of famous men, the two women have much in common and become friends. Though separated by class and caste, and often by distance as well, the two remain friends for 30 years, sharing the joys and pains of marriage, politics, and social change. FHUG

Homing: Instincts of a Rustbelt Feminist by Sherie Flick. Non-Fiction. Does the place where you grow up affect your experience of feminism and sexism? Flick says "yes," as she describes growing up in the '70s and '80s in rust-belt Pittsburgh. She writes essays about gardening, living on the slopes of her South Side neighborhood, Andy Warhol, traveling to escape home and faith, all from a feminist perspective. Decidedly not nostalgic, this is writing about Pittsburgh as it was and is. 920.009FLI

The Life Impossible by Matt Haig. Fiction. Receiving a plea for help from a suicidal former student, Grace Winters responds with a lengthy, encouraging email about her own experience with losing meaningfulness in her life. A friend dies in suspicious circumstances on the island of Ibiza and leaves her house to Grace. On impulse, the retired math teacher decides to go check it out. Arriving with no plan and no return ticket, Grace is

instantly entranced by the glowing seagrass and stupendous scenery. As she delves into what happened to her friend, Grace is caught up with new friends in fantastical adventures and finds new reasons for living. Though this book has gotten mixed reviews, all commentators agree that the writing is lyrical with many inspiring quotes and an uplifting message. F HAI

War by Bob Woodward. Non-fiction. Unlike previous Woodward books, this has a more sweeping range. It covers President Joe Biden in high level secret conversation with Vladimir Putin, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. At the same time, he is reporting on Donald Trump conducting a shadow presidency, President Biden's approach to managing the most significant land war in Europe since World War II, and his efforts to contain the bloody Middle East conflict interleaved with Trump's public and unofficial statements. The frightening consequences of wartime back-channel diplomacy and decision making to deter the use of nuclear weapons and a rapid slide into WWII is clearly laid out. At the same time, the 2024 Presidential campaign, with all its twists and turns, is covered, bringing Kamala Harris into the picture as a potential world leader. NF 973.934

"As I sat strapped in my seat waiting during the countdown, one thought kept crossing my mind . . . every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder."

~ Alan Shepard

JUST TALKING

By Robert Typanski - #190

Here we are, just us two.

You say something.
And I say to you:
Do you remember when . . .

Oh, yes I do!
Well, it happened right after . . .

*It was a wonderful time.
We had fun when . . .
Wait, don't you recall?
It was work for both of us!
We didn't have money
and the children were . . .*

*Yes, the children were . . .
They were always there.
Never giving us peace.
Always in our hair.*

*Yes, they were always there but. . .
Well, I see your view.
I miss their noise and laughter too.*

*I wonder how they are doing?
And their children too.
Let's give them a call.
And hear them all . . .
just talking.*



Photo by Jan Wendt

Did you know? Above, in a previous holiday season, is the Hat Tree, an up-front display of the amazing number of children's hats produced each year by our Sew and So group. Stay tuned for their output this year.

ON ELECTIONS

By Rosemary Coffey - #113

Oh, those weary days of strife and
strain,
When men all fought for votes instead of
love.
Campaigns and talks in sunshine or in
rain
Compelled the common man to push
and shove
His way to sanity. The one said this,
The next said that, and who knows what
was true.
For accusations either hit or missed,
And contradictions fast and furious flew.
Our histories immortalize the fame,
The truth, the lies, and every misspent
dime
Each candidate has added to his name
In all elections since the start of time.
But Life is short, and I've too much to
see
To spend my time in reading History!

November 3, 1952
At age 15

*"My kind of loyalty was loyalty to one's
country, not to the institutions of office-
holders. The country is the real thing; it is
the thing to watch over, and care for, and
be loyal to; institutions are extraneous,
they're its mere clothing, and clothing can
wear out, become ragged, cease to be
comfortable, cease to protect the body
from winter, disease and death."*

~ Mark Twain

CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602

For the Chapel Committee
Services begin at 2:00 p.m.
in the Card Room

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend!

Sunday, December 1

Rev. David Gieschen
Sherwood Oaks (Retired)

Sunday, December 8

Rev. Ben Robbins
Northmont Presbyterian Church
McCandless Township.

Sunday, December 15

Rev. William Dambaugh
North Hills Presbyterian Church
Ross Township

Sunday, December 22

In House
Prayer, meditation and carols

Sunday, December 29

In House
"A Bible Lesson"

*"God still draws near to us in the ordinary,
commonplace, everyday experience and
places. He comes in surprising ways."*

~ Henry Gariepy



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HIGH HEELS

By Winnie Dietz - #725

It all started when I visited Marshall's in Cranberry Mall. There they were: gorgeous designer shoes by Ann Klein, Michael Kors, Ralph Lauren, and others...CHEAP! Luckily, I wear a small size, so there was a bonanza for me!

Through the years, I enjoyed wearing high heels and never stopped, even though I live in a retirement facility. After all, the Queen Mother was wearing them at Diana's funeral when she was 96 years old. So, between church on Sunday and special parties at Sherwood Oaks, I had many opportunities to wear them.

Several years ago, a gentleman friend of mine thought the new five-inch heels would look wonderful on me, so he asked my size and ordered them. When they arrived, they were black, white, red and navy! I gulped and tried them on. At home, by myself, I clomped and lurched around the house, wobbling and weaving. When I didn't master them, they quietly found their way to the Goodwill Store.

In the meantime, my supply of shoes, boots, and sandals increased. My closet had run out of room. Fortunately, I ran across an ad featuring a "shoe tower" – a carousel that operated on a tension pole and held 36 pairs of shoes! My son installed it, and my problem was solved. Now, I could go shopping again!

Gradually, time has taken its toll on my balance, and, with three bouts of gout to cramp my style, I have lost interest in the highest heels. My favorite ones went into the garbage after one heel got caught in our apartment entrance, causing me to

fall. Although I wasn't hurt, I had enough sense to tell my highest heels goodbye.

It was a happy ending for those beauties when Loretta Lippert's daughter discovered she wore the same size and subsequently carted home six pairs, starting the cycle once again!



Redbird

Red bird came all winter
Firing up the landscape
As nothing else could.
Of course, I love the sparrows,
Those dun-colored darlings,
So hungry and so many.
I am a God-fearing feeder of birds,
I know he has many children,
Not all of them bold in spirit.
Still, for whatever reason –
Perhaps because the winter is so long
And the sky so black-blue,
Or perhaps because the heart narrows
As often as it opens – I am grateful
That red bird comes all winter
Firing up the landscape
As nothing else can do.

~ Mary Oliver
From *Redbird*, 2009

THE COLETTA MCKENRY LIBRARY ACCESSIONS
FICTION, INCLUDING LARGE TYPE AND DVD's

American Daughters*	Huguley, Piper	c. 2024	F HUG
Blood Work		c. 2002	F BLO DVD
Cat Ballou		c. 2024	F CAT DVD
A Christmas Story		c. 2006	F CHR DVD
Cry Macho		c. 2021	F CRY DVD
The Glassmaker*	Chevalier, Tracy	c. 2024	F CHE
If I Survive You*	Escoffery, Jonathan	c. 2022	F ESC p.b.
In My Country		c. 2004	F INM DVD
Lawrence of Arabia		c. 2012	F LAW DVD
The Life Impossible*	Haig, Matt	c. 2024	F HAI
The Maltese Falcon		c. 2010	F MAL DVD
The Mule		c. 2019	F MUL DVD
Once Upon a Time in America		c. 1985	F ONC DVD
The Secret Life of Sunflowers	Molnar, Marta	c. 2022	F MOL p.b.
Tell Me Everything*	Strout, Elizabeth	c. 2024	F STR
The Treasure of the Sierra Madre		c. 2010	F TRE DVD
The Wedding Dress Circle	Ryan, Jennifer	c. 2022	F RYA
When Harry Met Sally		c. 2007	F WHE DVD
Young Frankenstein	Pearlman, Gilbert	c. 1974	F YOU DVD

NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

America's Deadliest Election: The Cautionary Tale of the Most Violent Election in American History	Bash, Dana and David Fisher	c. 2024	324.973 BAS
Every Vote Equal	Koza, John	c. 2024	324.6 KOZ
Hiroshima: The Last Witnesses	Sheftall, M. G	c. 2024	940.542 SHE
Homing: Instincts of a Rustbelt Feminist*	Flick, Sherrie	c. 2024	920.009 FLI p.b.
The Jolson Story		c. 1986	780.92 JOL DVD
Reminisce: Through the Decades - The 1940's		c. 2007	920.009 REM DVD

***Reviewed in Worth a Look**



Photo by Kathie McCormick

*"Haul out the holly
Put up the tree before my spirit falls again
Fill up the stocking
I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now
Cause we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute
Candles at the window, carols at the spinet
Yes, we need a little Christmas now!"
-Idina Menzel, from "Mame"*