

# THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

[www.sherwood-oaks.com](http://www.sherwood-oaks.com)

February 2025 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 44, No. 2



Photo by Jan Wendt

*CATCHING UP AROUND THE HEARTH*

**Dear Reader –**

Though we find ourselves right in the heart of “the bleak mid-winter”, as poet Christina Rossetti called it, life continues to hum around these parts. After all, we grew up in “the old days” and have seen winter like this before. We bundle up and continue to find our way to the Center, whether by car, bus, foot, or scooter, on our appointed rounds to meals, the fitness center, drama club rehearsal or just to sit by the communal fireplace with a good book or a conversation with friends.

February brings a bit more sunlight, the sweetness of Valentine’s Day, Super Bowl parties (sans Black and Gold), the start of baseball spring training and more. Before we know it, we’ll be christening our new Sherwood Oaks Park renovations and planning family picnics in the pavilion.

So, pour a cup of something hot and enjoy this issue of our monthly circular. See all the ways we don’t let winter slow us down!

~ 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.

**FEBRUARY CALENDAR**

Nat’l Dark Chocolate Day	Feb. 1
Groundhog Day	Feb. 2
Superbowl Sunday	Feb. 9
Valentine’s Day	Feb. 14
Presidents’ Day	Feb. 17
Nat’l Margarita Day	Feb. 22
Mardi Gras	Feb. 25

***THE ACORN***

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Submissions for the February issue must be sent to the Editor no later than **February 15, 2025.**

***IN MEMORIAM***

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

*Barbara Niedhardt      December 23, 2024*

*V. Dale Thurston      December 24, 2024*

*Dennis Lynch      January 20, 2025*

## PAUL SMITH - #127

By Jan Wendt - #158

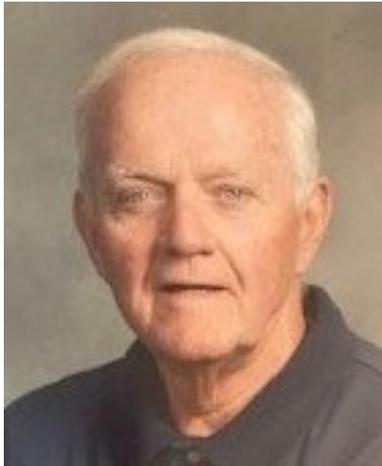


Photo provided by Paul Smith

The setting is The Flanders, a large, old-style beachside hotel in Ocean City, New Jersey. The time is the early 1970's. The players are Paul Smith and Barb Di-Donato (#261), two college students.

Flash forward to September 2024. Paul, a retired special education teacher, has spent a few days visiting his longtime friend, Barb, and her husband, Larry, in their residence at Sherwood Oaks. While driving home across the PA Turnpike, it occurred to him that he might consider this community as a place to perch for the next chapter in his life. And on December 20, Paul drove through the gates and onto our campus, just in time for Christmas.

Born in Philadelphia, Paul later graduated from Temple University. He taught for five years in Philly, and then spent the next 25 years of his career in Ocean City, teaching students with behavioral issues. He also earned his master's degree. He is animated in describing how much he loved working with this sometimes-difficult population of kids. It is clear he had a style of discipline that, while firm, was based on the meaningful connections he forged

with his pupils and often laced with good-natured humor.

In 2001, he retired and moved to Venice, Florida, still in touch with his old friend, Barb, and attending her wedding to Larry. Although married briefly earlier in his life, Paul now had no immediate family, and was able to travel to 45 countries, and six of the seven continents. Six weeks in Australia stands out as a highlight.

In his free time at home in Venice, he exercised in the pool, played a little piano ("Good thing some of the neighbors were deaf," he chuckles) and had a daily walking routine. He is a faithful Roman Catholic and attends Mass daily. He also is a reader.

Paul looks forward to getting to know his new neighbors and developing an exercise routine in our pool.

Find an opportunity to have a meal with him and be regaled with stories of his years at The Flanders. Since he lived and worked in Ocean City, he continued to spend summers working in one of the four dining rooms there. Starting in college as a "roll boy" and working his way up to Maître D', he can take you back to the bygone days of a seaside luxury you don't see much anymore.

Welcome Paul!

### **GREAT TRUTHS ADULTS HAVE LEARNED**

*Raising teenagers is like nailing Jell-O to a tree.  
Wrinkles don't hurt.*

*Families are like fudge...mostly sweet,  
with a few nuts.*

*Laughing is good exercise. It's like  
jogging on the inside.*

*Middle age is when you choose your cereal  
for the fiber, not the toy.*

## **ANN WIETHORN - #316**

By Kathie McCormick - #188



Photo provided by Ann Wiethorn

Growing up on a farm provided her with lots of opportunities to enjoy animals and to garden. When she moved to her house in Greentree, she relished her flower garden. Ann is also a cat lover and even though she no longer has one, her children all have cats which she enjoys. She also taught all her children to cook and bake.

Outside her window, she has a bird feeder hanging on a nearby tree. She loves watching the birds --- it is a busy feeder!

Ann is a reader and savors all kinds of books. She looks forward to getting acquainted with our library here and especially checking out the large-print books! She is very interested in current affairs and keeps up with all the news.

Welcome to Sherwood Oaks, Ann. We are happy you are here.

It was a delightful afternoon visit with Ann Wiethorn and her daughter, Wendy. Ann moved from her long-time home in Greentree and into her unit in December. She is proud of her 93 years, and she is a “bionic” lady with two replacement hips and two replacement knees!

Ann grew up on a dairy farm in Oakdale and attended business school. She worked at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in the circulation department for a few years.

She married her husband, Ralph, who was a radio announcer; he worked at various stations, including WQED and WWSW. They were married for almost fifty- two years and settled in the South Hills to raise their family. They had four children, three daughters and a son. She now has six grandchildren and a great granddaughter on the way in April.

Three of her children and their families live in the area and Sherwood Oaks is right in the middle of them. Wendy is in Zelienople; Lynn is in Cranberry and Eric is in Wexford. Her youngest daughter, Barb, died in 2018.

## **CONTINUED LEARNING**

By Jno L. Hunt - #308

We are finalizing plans for our presentations in March and April. The series will be mainly on Mondays at 1:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. Until then, enjoy 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.

### **February:**

Tues., Feb. 4: “How to Look at and Understand Great Art,” Lessons 13 & 14.  
Encore Thurs., Feb. 6

Tues., Feb. 11: “Eight Wonders of our Solar System.” Encore Thurs., Feb. 13

Tues., Feb. 18: “Ancient Mayan Metropolis.”  
Encore Thurs., Feb. 2

Tues., Feb. 25: “The Holy Land Revealed”,  
Lectures 3 & 4. Encore Thurs., Feb. 27.

## UPDATES FROM SHERWOOD GIFTS

By Jane Paul - #341

Happy New Year from all of us at Sherwood Gifts! We had an excellent year and it's all thanks to our residents and their guests who shopped in the Gift Shop and the Annex. Loyal volunteers who staff both locations also deserve heartfelt thanks. It could not be done without them. As dedicated as they are, we can always use more volunteers! Talk to any one of us if you are interested in learning more. It is our dream to be able to open during dinner as well as lunch, as we did before Covid. We are very fortunate to have a volunteer who wanted to staff the shop on Sundays.

Most of the items we sell have been donated by residents or their families. The only new items are candy, greeting cards and sundries. We still have some lovely pieces of new jewelry, but once gone, that will be it as we no longer have a jewelry buyer.

There are certain items we do **not** accept, such as: clothing or scarves, electronics (including phones), candy or food of any kind, books, bedding/blankets, and anything with names or initials on it.

If you have anything you wish to donate in the furniture realm, call Sandy Smailer (#8151). Glassware, decorative items, games, handbags, or jewelry can be packed up and brought to the Gift Shop. If it is closed, just leave the boxes or bags outside the door and the next volunteer into the shop will take the donation.

Again, thank you for your support of Sherwood Gifts.

## DRAMA CLUB IN REHEARSAL

By Lorraine Commeret - #131

Join us for an evening of comedy and crime as the Sherwood Oaks Players present two one act plays, "Recalculating" by Deborah Ann Percy and Arnold Johnston and "Welcome to Acceptance" by Terryl Paiste.

In the first play, ride along with Libby and Beth, two financially strained art dealers as they drive across Chicago streets to a rendezvous involving the illegal sale of stolen fossils.

In our second play, seasoned bank robber, Sam, meets his match in the clever and challenging bank teller, Mrs. Melcher.

Watch for Jesse Komara's announcement if you wish to join the dinner theatre audience on Thursday, February 20 at 5 p.m., or pick up free tickets at the reception desk one week prior to the matinee performance on Saturday, February 22 at 1:00 p.m.



Photo by Jan Wendt

**Above** – Libby (Janet Desko) and Beth (Laura Kopp) face a gentle reprimand from cop Monika Dalrymple in the Drama Clubs next production on February 20 and 22.

## GOSH, LOOK HOW THEY'VE GROWN!

By Jan Wendt - #158

Many of us recall in the Spring of 2021, just emerging from the Covid pandemic, when three residents took the bold step of adopting **puppies**. We shared their delight as the three fluff balls pranced and danced on the Wimbledon lawn in front of the center (see top photo back cover).

It just so happens our roving photographer managed to find the three canines, plus Tally's younger brother, Fergie, lounging in front of the lobby Christmas tree recently.

Seemed it was a perfect opportunity to reflect on how these three friends have grown, and on the joy they bring to this community every day.

Brodie, Warren and Hedy Howe's animated golden retriever, is a frequent visitor to the Reception Desk (aka "treat center") and the Mail Room. Dad keeps him on a firm routine, so you can kind of know when he's likely to appear. He's always willing to greet you, especially if you have a treat handy.

Tally and Fergie can be found at the other end of Ann Ferguson's leash or over in the dog park. Both participate in obedience and agility trials off campus, for which they sometimes practice in Ann's yard. Ann can regale you with stories about how The Boys each have very distinct personalities.

Siu-Fa ("flower" in Chinese) is the only lady of the group, and can be a bit more reserved, often lying quietly near mistress, Joni Pun, and observing goings on in the Center lobby. Siu-Fa has a couple of special friends, Ruth Lasure and Katherine Montgomery, who take her on their runs for company.

If you are new here and haven't made the acquaintance of our canine friends, find

an opportunity to do so as the weather warms up.

## AQUASIZE MOVES TO AFTERNOON

By Jan Wendt - #158 for Bill Burtner and the Pool Committee



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The Aquasize class has been a staple at Sherwood Oaks for over 30 years. At one time, there were two classes, both in the morning. This program of gentle exercises from the American Arthritis Association works every muscle group in the body. It is not primarily a cardio workout, and is currently held at 10 a.m.

In recent years, attendance has waned. Some residents have expressed interest but find the morning time difficult. As a result, the Pool Committee has decided to move the class from 10 a.m. to **4 p.m.** It will still be held on **Monday and Thursday**.

The afternoon time will mean there is bus transportation, and folks may also find it convenient to stay for dinner right after exercising.

Consider giving this great program a try. It's a tried-and-true way to keep your joints happy!

If you have any questions, call Bill Burtner at Ext. 8542.

## FOOD AND DRINK

By John Bridges - # 123

Nowadays we all go to vast many aisled supermarkets for all our food and drink. When Sheila and I went to Chile in 1958, we felt that we were going back in time regarding shopping. Grocery stores were the size of a present-day specialty store. There were no refrigerators, but 100-pound blocks of ice were readily available.

All Chilean towns had a huge Municipal Market which we soon patronized, like most of the locals. There was a large meat section selling recently killed meat and another for fresh, seasonal, fruit and vegetables. There was always a good selection of nuts. And finally, a section for handicrafts, ranging from badly needed shopping baskets to the less essential handicrafts for tourists.

Except at the one Café Do Brasil in Santiago, no coffee beans were available or imported to Chile and one had to rely on cans of Nescafe. For the dining table, these could be hidden, and fitted into, beautifully, specially made woven baskets available in all the markets.

When we returned home with the week's grocery shopping, the first task was always to empty everything out on the floor of the carport. Toilet rolls had to be taped on end to shake out all the cockroaches, and packets opened to inspect the contents and check that no mold or insects were present before taking them into the kitchen. Similarly, all fresh fruit and vegetables had to be washed and examined for "livestock". Apart from the usual

oranges and pineapple, there were many others such as guavas, passion fruit, and sour sop that could be made into juices with so much more flavor than the "made from concentrate" varieties found here in the U.S.A.

In no way do I consider myself a cook so I must admit that here, at Sherwood Oaks, I rely on the restaurant for one good meal a day and open a frozen meal or snack on cheese and biscuits for the other one.

When we lived in Trinidad. Sheila was working and we had a maid/housekeeper to look after us. We returned home at lunch time and a salad was usually ready and waiting for us with two boiled eggs cut into quarters with seven pieces for us, never more and never less. But we did not complain!



*The fattest knight at King Arthur's Round Table was Sir Cumference--too much pi.*

*I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.*

*She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.*

*A rubber band pistol was confiscated in an algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.*

*No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.*

*A dog that gave birth to puppies near the side of the road was cited for littering.*



## PULLING BACK THE CURTAIN

By Librarians Barbara Christy,  
Jean Henderson and Anne Hunt

The library, run by the residents for the residents, is a treasure for Sherwood Oaks. But many of you, especially new residents since the Covid quarantine, may be unaware of how things work behind the scenes. We recently had an anonymous complaint about how decisions are made regarding what books to add and remove from our holdings. This article will pull back a curtain to reveal what may be a mysterious process to some of you. Look backstage at how the library staff decide to add and remove books from our holdings.

The Book Selection Group members are volunteers, led by Mary Bouwkamp, who recommend books for purchase using the annual acquisition budget of \$1500. Mary compiles a document with all the suggestions plus a summary of each book. The group then votes on the recommendations and the top vote-getters are purchased. We are always looking for volunteers to be part of this activity.

We use a different process for donated books. Because of space limitations, we only accept fiction written in the last two years and non-fiction in the last five years. Beyond that, the library staff check to see if we already have the book. Occasionally we deviate from these criteria and add a book older than two years if it has particular worth or appeal to our residents—that is a totally subjective decision based on the interests of our readers. And we accept large print books of any vintage.

To keep our shelves from being overcrowded we also must remove unused

books. The criteria for removal are that the book has not circulated in the past 10 years or is in poor condition. When books are removed (or not accepted for donation), they are placed on the “give-away” cart in the hallway where residents or staff are welcome to take them. The give-away cart is an open space, so people other than library staff put books there for taking.

Jean Henderson, manager of the paperback room, follows similar guidelines. She checks for duplicates or books in poor condition which are then put on the give-away cart. A book may also be put on the cart to introduce readers to new authors. Books damaged beyond repair may be discarded, but rarely.

We invite people with suggestions and complaints to come forward and meet with us to help improve what is already a gem – our library.



Check out our line dancers, strutting their stuff on New Year's Eve. You may remember them from the Talent Show last Fall. Wonder where they'll show up next?



Photo by Dan Cindric

## FLOWERS, SOONER AND LATER

By Jane Lavender - #253  
and Ann Ferguson - #269

Daffodils are ready to be ordered again this year. The American Cancer Society will make available the bunches of cut 10 daffodils at \$15, and the mini pots for \$20. You may sign up by the posters in the mail room.

Orders and donations must be received by February 15th. Delivery will be the week of March 15th. Brighten the corner where you live!



And the Landscape Committee's annual hanging basket sale will take place in May. Watch for more information and sign up sheets in the Lobby in the next few weeks.

## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES – 2025

By Mary Mion - #202  
and Jean Henderson - #346

Ash Wednesday services will be held March 5 for both Roman Catholics and Protestants.

The Protestant service will begin at 4:00 p.m. in the Auditorium and will include music, scripture, prayers, reflections, and imposition of ashes. Officiates will be resident pastors Alick Kennedy and Jean Henderson.

Roman Catholic residents and staff may receive Imposition of Ashes in the Chapel on the lower level of the Center between 11:30 and 12:30.

Ashes will be imposed for Protestant and Catholic residents and staff in the nursing units in the early afternoon.

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## KEEP YOUR SCOOTER FIT AS A FIDDLE

By Julie Eden - #290

Wintertime driving is tough on drivers and cars, but how about mobility scooters, which are ubiquitous around our campus? A call to the folks at Blackburn Medical Supply resulted in some helpful tips for maintaining your scooter in winter's cold. The Customer Service rep recommends:

- When the temperature outside drops to 40 degrees or below, it is best to store your scooter inside or, at the very least, cover it snugly.
- If you use your scooter every day, charge it every day, just 'til the green light comes on. Do not leave it plugged in once it is fully charged.
- Don't go more than three days without charging it.
- Moisture is a problem in warmer weather, too, as it can damage the battery. Another reason to keep your scooter covered when not riding it.
- Keep an eye on the tires, too. Colder weather can deflate them. Also make sure the tires maintain adequate tread.

## THE HINGES OF HISTORY

By Jno L. Hunt - #308

Thomas Quinn Cahill (March 29, 1940 – October 18, 2022) was an American scholar in philosophy, history, literature, and religion. He was best known for *The Hinges of History* series in which he brought a unique and refreshing perspective to the events and people who provided the foundations of our Western civilization. These books are anything but dry histories. They are very readable, engaging, and highly enjoyable insights on people and events who have shaped our world.

Cahill described his series as follows “We normally think of history as one catastrophe after another, war followed by war, outrage by outrage—almost as if history were nothing more than all the narratives of human pain, assembled in sequence. But history is also the narratives of grace, the recounting of those blessed and inexplicable moments when someone did something for someone else, saved a life, bestowed a gift, gave something beyond what was required by circumstance. In this series, *The Hinges of History*, I mean to retell the story of the Western world as the story of the great gift-givers, those who entrusted to our keeping one or another of the singular treasures that make up the patrimony of the West.”

The six volumes of this series are:

—*How the Irish Saved Civilization*. The untold story of Ireland’s heroic role from the fall of Rome to the rise of medieval Europe.

—*The Gifts of the Jews*. How a tribe of desert nomads changed the way everyone thinks and feels.

—*Desire of the Everlasting Hills*. The world before and after Jesus.

—*Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea*. Why the Greeks Matter.

—*Mysteries of the Middle Ages*. The rise of feminism, science, and art from the cults of Catholic Europe.

—*Heretics and Heroes*. How Renaissance artists and Reformation priests created our world.

You may find the complete series in our library.

## CHRISTMAS NUTCRACKER DISPLAY COMES TO A CLOSE

By Monika Dalrymple - #200  
and Bruce Cooper - #735



Photo by George Steffey

After the nutcrackers finally got tired of standing watch, and the train got dizzy running in circles in the Christmas village, all have gone back to sleep.

Many thanks go to the wonderful “Nutcracker Helpers Team” - Denton Bond, Gary Brandenberger, Mike and Janet Desko, Carole Fox, Carol Harvey, Jno Hunt, Ruth Lasure, Joe Schulties, and George Steffey - who helped us pack up the display and whisk it away till it returns in late November. Their willingness to help is most appreciated by Monika and Bruce.

## EMPLOYEE THANK YOU'S - 2024

Compiled by Jean Henderson - #346

*Over 100 notes were received from staff members. Here are a few for your perusal...*

I am so grateful for the check! I will put this money away for college and spend it wisely!

Your kindness makes a real difference in the lives of others at Sherwood.

This place would be just a building – not a comforting and home-like place - without you all!

Being here 34 years has been a pleasure – hearing stories of your younger years and what you've accomplished in life.

You all have a good heart! Thank you!

You continue to inspire ME in all that YOU do!

Thank you for all you do to support and advocate for the residents and staff.

I cherish every moment, story, smile, and interaction we share together.

Thanks for making me feel my work here is genuinely appreciated.

I love what I do here! I am blessed to be given this opportunity.

This job has been such a blessing to me and my family.

I hope to use this toward a family vacation; I so appreciate your gift!

Thank you for your endless generosity, kindness, and caring ways!

I always look forward to coming in and being able to be of help to you all.

Your gift was put to good use – swimming lessons for my grandson!

You all make my job feel like I'm with family all day long.

It is a pleasure to cook for you all!

Thank you for the Christmas bonus. I enjoy every day I come into work, and I appreciate being thanked for my work.

I am proud to say I work at Sherwood Oaks and the kindness of the residents is one of the reasons.

Thank you for your continued support for this facility, the staff, and its residents. Without you, this wonderful place would not exist.

There are no words to describe what the residents mean to me...even if it's a friendly hello on the sidewalk. Receiving a generous check as a thank-you is beyond appreciated.

It's always lovely seeing you around. "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy!" (John Denver)



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## SHERWOOD NEIGHBORS Volunteer Opportunities

By Roberta Breninghouse,  
Activities Director

As we start a new year, the Activities Department is offering some new, easy-to-schedule volunteer opportunities to provide connection to and support of our neighbors living in the Nursing Center, Personal Care and Oak Grove.

As an introduction to newer residents, Sherwood Neighbors is a program that enables one to visit with those in our community who reside in the nursing units and assist staff in providing stimulation and one-on-one connection with these folks.



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Here are some ways you could spend a bit of time helping and maybe making a new friend or two:

- escort residents to chapel on Sundays for 2:00 p.m., Veterans program in November, special entertainment, and events in the Auditorium, outside summer parties, gift shop excursions
- assist with activities such as bingo, crafts, art group and painting, men's group, ladies' groups, passing out monthly calendars; spend time 1-2 times a month with group games, coffee chat, etc.
- caring for the plants on balconies and patios, units, and resident rooms, help with outside flower boxes and planting
- become a companion and visit a resident with conversation, socialize, play cards or other games, sit outdoors with a resident, and enjoy conversation
- join the vigil committee and provide in - room support for residents/family at end-of-life

Your volunteer time can be as little as a couple of hours a month or more if you are able. For more information, call Roberta at Ext. 8471

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"We must recognize that, as we grow older, we become like old cars – more and more repairs and replacements are necessary." C.S. Lewis

"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard there is nothing you can do about it." Golda Meir

"I'm so old that my blood type has been discontinued." Bill Dane

"The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened." Mark Twain

"Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes, age just shows up all by itself." Tom Wilson

## 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 **Jan. 7, 2025**, monthly board meeting follow:

SORA Treasurers: The balance as of Dec. 31, 2024, for Memorial/Special Projects was \$26,584, and that for the Employee Appreciation Fund was \$41,938, with 364 employees receiving end-of-year gifts of 44¢ per hour worked. The month-end balance for the two funds was \$41,522. The total SORA checking account balance came to \$90,878.

### **Liaison Reports:**

Sherwood Gifts: The financial report showed sales in Dec. of \$900 and a profit margin of 75%.

Pool, Spa, and Locker Room: The water temperature issue has been resolved, and repairs are underway for the spa.

Bridge: More players are needed.

Curio Cabinets: The current theme is "Treasured Books."

Resident Arts and Crafts Wall needs drawings, paintings, needlework, and weavings to share.

Entertainment: The recorder ensemble program had to be postponed because of illness; it may be rescheduled in February.

Sherwood Neighbors: Holiday cards were sent to residents of Skilled Nursing and Oak Grove.

The Nutcracker Helpers: The volunteers took down the nutcracker display in mid-January.

Book Club: It meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 4 p.m. in the Chapel; it continues to welcome book proposals and new readers.

Handbells and Choir: The group will resume rehearsals on Jan. 22.

Library C'tee: Two beautiful, carved wooden figures were donated by the family of Barbara Neidhardt for display at Christmas.

Drama Club: The group has chosen two plays for 2025, "Welcome to Acceptance" and "Recalculating." Performances have been scheduled for Feb. 20 and 22.

Chapel C'tee: The committee recognized Gary Brandenberger for all the work he does lining up pastors for the weekly services.

Technology C'tee: It has purchased new technology using a wireless HDMI interface among laptop computers, tables, mobile phones, and cable boxes to any TV with HDMI inputs.

Roots and Branches: The committee has made considerable progress in accessing online genealogical resources; residents interested in researching their family tree should contact Jno Hunt or Peter Broeren.

Trips and Tours: There may be a tour of the Phipps Conservatory and a trip to the Aviary in the New Year, along with various restaurants.

Administrator's Report: Census: 192 IL units are inhabited; we also have 34 residents in Skilled Nursing, 35 in Personal Care, and 29 in Oak Grove. All employees transitioned to the Presbyterian SeniorCare Network payroll as of 1-6-2025.

Old Business: Jean Henderson provided a Wish List update.

New Business: We recognized the publication in a national journal of an article by staff members Theresa Murillo (Director of Nursing) and Gabrielle Barmada (Staff Dev. and Infection Control Coordinator). Bruce Cooper's move that a Green Energy Study Activity be created was carried unanimously.

Announcements: The marriage of former employees Edward (Sarge) Barto and Kristina Peffer in mid-December had been announced. Jason Lyle informed us that a new trail cam records motion (by animals and people) every 30 seconds.

Future Board Meetings: The next Monthly Board Meeting will be held on **Tues., Feb. 4, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Card Room. The next Quarterly Meeting will take place on **Tues., Mar. 11, at 7 p.m.** in the Auditorium.

## FLUNKING FRENCH

By Dennis Lynch - #335

Almost a century ago, in the eighth grade, I took a semester of Latin (required). That encounter convinced me that foreign languages were my *bête noir*, and I resolved to avoid them.

Avoidance worked until, a few years later, I left the tranquil sunshine of the South Pasadena Senior High School to try my luck at Stanford—and two years of a foreign language were required to graduate.

I duly enrolled in French 101 and, equally duly, flunked it. When my sophomore year started, I enrolled again. The result was the same. Stanford decided to flunk me. Well, there were some other grades involved.

Thirty years later, in 1984, my late wife, Linda, and I were bucks up, and the dollar was strong, so we went on a European tour.

We managed to navigate our days in London despite whatever language they were speaking (Being There! The sign on a house: “From this house Captain William Bligh left for ...”!) Then off to Paris and (gasp!) the French.

The morning of our first day in Paris we rushed underground to the Metro and I went to the ticket window.

I was third in line. Number one guy was just leaving and the woman in front of me drew a deep breath and stepped forward. She was in her late 20s, well and carefully dressed and coifed, and more obviously a Yank tourist than I was. She announced to the woman behind the counter, “I want to go to the EYE-full Tower.”

The ticket seller, who had greeted her with an open expression and a slightly raised eyebrow, unleashed a loud, fast, and incomprehensible stream of French, and raised her brows higher. There was silence.

The tourist straightened up even more, inhaled deeply again, and, speaking slowly and enunciating carefully, said, “I want to go to the EYE-full Tower.”

The seller raised her eyebrows further and released another, longer, faster stream of French. My fellow tourist released a long tight breath and, I thought, her patience. As she inhaled for a third try, I thought that this was wasting my precious vacation time. A glance behind me noticed a queue forming.

After a quarter century of teaching, I no longer embarrassed easily, so I stepped forward— “Pardon me, Miss—perhaps I can help?” Without waiting for her approbation, I turned to the Ticket Lady, who was eyeing me doubtfully.

For the following exchange, upon your imaginary forces work, and think that you hear miserable French (pronounced confidently, however) delivered with a good Cleveland accent, with every other word either mispronounced, wrong, or both.

“Le mam’zell,” jerking my thumb at the woman next to me, so there could be no doubt, “desirée un ... billet ... pour (very clearly) le Tour Eye FELL.”

The seller’s face lit up. Understanding dawned, eyebrows descended, “Ah!! La Tour Eiffel!!!” she announced.

She exchanged a ticket for some francs, and the American, breathing hard, walked off, inappropriate heels clicking.

The seller and I transacted our business, smiled at each other, and—was that a wink? I hope so because I winked back and strutted out. Take that, Stanford!

**Editor Note-** *The staff is grateful to Dennis, who died on January 20, for his years of witty contributions to The Acorn on a myriad of topics. We have stockpiled a few more of his writings, to be published and enjoyed in the future.*

**WORTH A LOOK**  
**Books New to Our Library**

By Barbara Christy - #237

***Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookstores*** by Shaun Bythell. Non-fiction. The 120-page gem of a book will both amuse and irritate its readers. Written by the owner of a Scottish second-hand bookstore who is admittedly a grouch, the book generalizes his customers into such categories as: The Expert, The Loiterer, The Bearded Pensioner, The Not-So-Silent Traveler, etc. from erotica browsers to Americans looking for books on their ancestral clan, Bythell has seen it all and has lived to tell us about it. 381.450 BYT.

***Remembering Peasants*** by Patrick Joyce. Non-fiction. Most, if not all, of us are descended from peasants, either here in the US or in Europe. But “the peasantry” is disappearing – in France and Germany, over 40% of the population were peasants at the time of the First World War. Today, less than 2% are. English peasants disappeared during the agricultural revolution of the 1700’s but the Irish, Welsh and Scottish hung on. This book is an elegy, written by an accomplished ethnographer but not in academic language. It is a sensitive and sympathetic recounting of the variety and complexity of peasant life, its disappearance from European society and a recounting of how peasants remembered themselves. And it is an important reminiscence of what we owe to a population of survivors on which our present society is built. 303.5 JOY

***The God of the Woods*** by Liz Moore. Fiction. Summer camp is ending, the final campfires are going strong and at least one counselor is off enjoying a private time with her secret boyfriend. But the idyllic scene ends abruptly when 13-year-old Barbara Van Laar is found missing from her bunk. She is the daughter of the wealthy Van Laars who built the camp and donated it to the community. As the community gears up for a massive search, we learn that Barbara’s disappearance is not only alarming but eerily similar to the disappearance of her brother, Bear, 14 years ago. Told from several points of view, this is a story with many threads, from mother-child relationships, intense camp friendships, to rich-poor community tensions. It’s a riveting tale of a missing child that enlarges into much more. F MOO

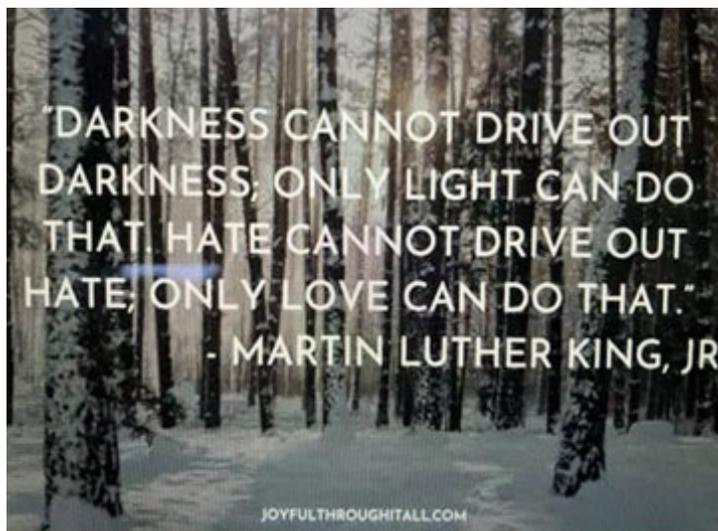
***A Short Walk Through a Wide World*** by Douglas Westerbeke. Fiction. Paris, 1885. Aubry Tourvel is an ordinary nine-year old walking home from school when mysterious things begin happening, ending with a serious illness that threatens her life.

By accident, she discovers that movement from place to place keeps the illness at bay and thus begins an itinerant life that takes her around the globe several times, usually alone but sometimes connecting with an individual or family that remind her of home and how normal people live.

Written with good humor and sympathy, this book is a fascinating tour of a young woman’s response to adversity. F WES

***Life After Power - Seven Presidents and Their Search for Purpose Beyond the White House*** by Bob Woodward and Jared Cohen. Non-fiction. If you watched any of the Carter funeral observances, you may have been prompted to wonder about other presidents and what they are doing now. If so, this book is for you.

Presidential historian Jared Cohen chose the eight post-Presidencies of Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover, Jimmy Carter, and George W. Bush because, unlike most other former Presidents, they were able to choose how they spend their lives after power. While other presidents are included in small ways, the focus of Cohen's book includes a review of the Presidential years and how they relate to the "after" years.' While the book is large, it is an easy read, and would be valuable even if only to read about one or two of those included.  
973.009 COH



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## 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, February 2

Rev. James Benson

Cranberry Community Presbyterian  
Cranberry Township

Sunday, February 9

Rev. Jeff Sterling

Faith Community UMC  
Rochester, PA

Sunday, February 16

Rev. Leonard Finn

All Saints Anglican Church  
Cranberry Township

Sunday, February 23

Rev. David Paul

Calvin Presbyterian Church  
Zelienople

*"So, prepare your minds for service  
and have self-control."*

1 Peter 1:13

## THE WINTER OF YOUR GRIEF

(A resident requested we share this writing, which was used at the Longest Night Service in December).

The winter of your grief is a time to do what is best for you: a time to be, just to be.

A part of you may wish to push ahead.

Winter says, "Take your time."

A part of you may wish to get this over with as quickly as possible.

Winter says, "Be patient."

Something within you may want to escape.

Winter says, "This is what you need right now."

This time offers an opportunity to do what you may not often do: sit and be quiet, walk and be aware, write or talk and be reflective.

You can spend time with yourself and make a close friend.

You can immerse yourself in the stillness and let it inform you.

You can open your eyes to the starkness that is around you and find unusual beauty, and the light the season offers.

You can use this time of barrenness to begin your healing.

**(From Winter Grief – Summer Grace** by James E. Miller

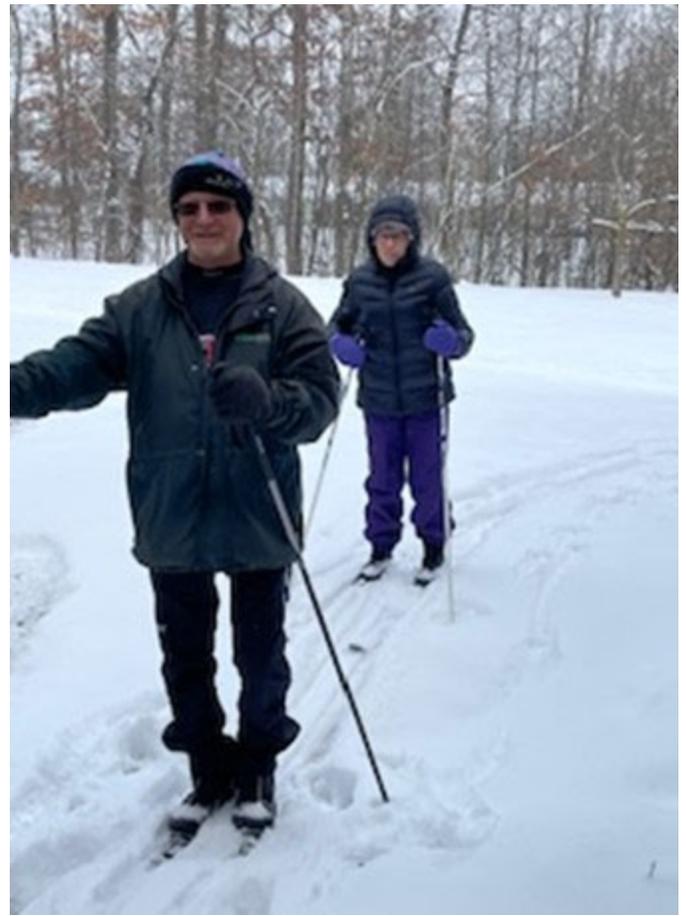


Photo by Beth Brown

Making the most of this old-fashioned winter are (above) Terry and Diane Neely, avid cross-country skiers. Whenever we get a significant snowfall, you may spot them swishing along in the woody area behind their patio home, and beyond.

Beth Brown encountered them one day recently and thought we all should be reminded that just because we are older, we don't just sit around in rocking chairs all the time. At least, some of us.

Good for you, Terry and Diane. You make us all look good!

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

|                                   |                   |         |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|
| The Accusers                      | Davis, Lindsey    | c. 2003 | F DAV |
| The Day after Tomorrow            | Folsom, Allan     | c. 1994 | F FOL |
| Funny Story                       | Henry, Emily      | c. 2024 | F HEN |
| Bad Liar                          | Hoag, Tami        | c. 2024 | F HOA |
| The Sequel                        | Korelitz, Jean    | c. 2024 | F KOR |
| Drawing Conclusions               | Leon, Donna       | c. 2011 | F LEO |
| Blood Sisters                     | Lillie, Vanessa   | c. 2023 | F LIL |
| A Christmas Duet                  | Macomber, Debbie  | c. 2024 | F MAC |
| North Woods                       | Mason, Daniel     | c. 2023 | F MAS |
| The God of the Woods              | Moore, Liz        | c. 2024 | F MOO |
| Here One Moment                   | Moriarty, Liane   | c. 2024 | F MOR |
| We Solve Murders                  | Osman, Richard    | c. 2024 | F OSM |
| After Annie                       | Quindlen, Anna    | c. 2024 | F QUI |
| Intermezzo                        | Rooney, Sally     | c. 2024 | F ROO |
| Miss Morgan's Book Brigade        | Skeslien, Charles | c. 2024 | F SKE |
| Counting Miracles                 | Sparks, Nicholas  | c. 2024 | F SPA |
| A Short Walk Through a Wide World | Westerbeke, David | c. 2025 | F WES |

**NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES**

|                                                                                                         |                        |         |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-------------|
| Penman of the Founding: a Biography of John Dickinson                                                   | Calvert, Jane          | c. 2024 | BIO DIC     |
| Lovely One: A Memoir                                                                                    | Jackson, Ketanji Brown | c. 2024 | BIO JAC     |
| Grand Avenues: The Story of Pierre Charles L'Infant, the French Visionary Who Designed Washington, D.C. | Berg, Scott W          | c. 2007 | BIO L'EN    |
| Life after Power: Seven Presidents and Their Search for Purpose Beyond the White House                  | Cohen, Jared           | c. 2024 | 973.099 COH |
| Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookshops                                                             | Bythell, Shaun         | c. 2020 | 381.450 BYT |
| Remembering Peasants: A Personal History of a Vanished World                                            | Joyce, Patrick         | c. 2024 | 305.5 JOY   |



# *THEN... and NOW*



Photo by Jan Wendt



Photo by Kathie McCormick