

# THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER  
100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066  
[www.sherwood-oaks.com](http://www.sherwood-oaks.com)

December 2019 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 20 No. 10

**FOR GOOD CLEAN FUN USE**



**SOAPP\***

**Every Day!!**

**\* Sherwood Oaks APP**

See p. 4 for accompanying article

## FROM THE EDITORS

*Gentle Readers:*

*December is one of those months when so much is happening (see calendar to right) that it may be hard to keep track. In addition to the traditional observation of the birth of Jesus, we remember St. Nicholas and maybe even St. Lucia.*

*St. Nicholas Day is celebrated on Dec. 6, but we know very little about the life of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (Turkey), ca. 342, except that he is the Patron Saint of children and seafarers. His name and title came to the U.S. via Dutch settlers. We certainly have pictures of him in our heads, viz., "He had a broad face and a little round belly, which shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly." Does that remind us of Santa Claus?*

*One story says that Nicholas "once saved three daughters of a poor man from a life of prostitution by throwing a bag of gold through the window of their home for three successive nights to cover all three dowries. ... the three bags are said to have inspired the traditional pawnbroker's sign" (Philip Pfatteicher, New Book of Festivals and Commemorations, cited with permission).*

*As for St. Lucia Day, celebrated on Dec. 13, Swedish daughters still bring coffee and Lucia buns to their parents' bedroom for breakfast and sport lit candles on their tiaras. St. Lucia was an early Christian martyr, killed by the Romans in 304 CE (Common Era). Then there is St. Stephen (d. Dec. 26) about whom Good King Wenceslas sings.*

*But most of all, the end of December is a time to gather with family members, or at least to be in touch with them, to look back at the year just past and forward to the year to come. Here's to 2020!*

Ruth Becker and Rosemary Coffey

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

Winter Solstice (in the northern hemisphere)	Dec. 21
Hanukkah	Dec. 22 – 30
Christmas Eve & Day	Dec. 24 – 25
Kwanzaa	Dec. 26 – Jan. 1
New Year's Eve	Dec. 31

### **THE ACORN**

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Submissions for the January 2020  
Acorn must be sent to the Editors  
no later than **December 15, 2019.**



Photo by Mike Mills

**DAVID GIESCHEN**  
**#174**

By Connie Brandenberger

Sailing on the Chesapeake; driving an RV through most of our United States; pastoring in Canada, Oklahoma, and Kansas; editing in Philadelphia: David Gieschen has led an interesting and far-reaching life.

David was born in Leigh, Nebraska, a small farming community; indeed, he felt that in another life he would love to have been a farmer. However, he was “called” to be a Lutheran minister, following in the footsteps of his father and brother. After receiving his BA at Midland University, he completed his ministerial degrees at the Chicago Lutheran School of Theology and his Master’s in theater at Kansas State University. He spent 18 years in Philadelphia on the staff of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) writing and editing church-related publications while consulting with synod offices and congregations. David served six years as a Chaplain in the Kansas National

Guard, US Army Reserve, with the rank of Captain.

Traveling the United States in their RV, David and his wife, Elaine, who died in 2015 after battling lung cancer, covered most of the US. They enjoyed hiking and all outdoor activities, especially sailing. While traveling, he spent his quiet time making pine needle baskets. His home is filled with over 50 of these beautiful creations of every shape, size, or design. It is worth a visit to his home to see his work, and we would hope that David will have a display of them in January at the Sherwood Oaks arts and crafts event.

Coming to Sherwood Oaks was an easy decision for David, since he already knew some of our residents. He had been attending church with Stewart and Jeannette Lawrence, and then renewed an old relationship with John Becker, with whom he worked over 30 years ago in Philadelphia on the national staff of the LCA. Being in Cranberry Township keeps him near his daughter, who lives in Sewickley. In addition, he has two sons, one living in Florida, and the other sailing the ocean right now as he returns from Ireland. David is the proud grandfather of eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He and his wife retired to New Bern, North Carolina, where they lived for 20 years before moving to be near their daughter.

He enjoys having meals with his neighbors and renewing acquaintances with other clergy. David welcomes local activities, especially the Drama Group. He has agreed to help Jean Henderson in the Grief Support Group, and to be a part of the Chapel ministry in preaching next year. He plans to become a member of Hope Lutheran Church on Rowan Road.

We welcome David to our community and look forward to his involvement in the many activities offered here.

## SHERWOOD OAKS LAUNCHES RESIDENT APP FOR SMARTPHONES

By Jason Lyle

November 1 was the launch date for the Sherwood Oaks app, nicknamed "SOAPP" (the second "P" is silent to minimize spitting). SOAPP is now available for internet-capable smart-phones, personal tablets, and home computers to give Sherwood Oaks residents immediate access to information about activities, dining menus, and transportation schedules, just for starters. The technical possibilities for the app, which are almost endless, bring Sherwood Oaks into the age of interactive information.

SOAPP is the collaborative creation of Sherwood Oaks Dining Services, Skilled Nursing, Marketing, SORA, and internet web developer Touchtown, the Pittsburgh-based company that manages our Channel 900 and lobby information screens. Sherwood Oaks staff Annette McPeck, John Sterling, Donna Fasone, Epiphany Lehman, and Beverly Puglia teamed with SORA "ambassadors" Betty Eichler, Frank Finley, Peter Broeren, Rabe Marsh, Richard Pospistle, Beth Brown, Marta Peterson, and Jason Lyle to build the ground floor of a smart application that will further enrich the quality of life at Sherwood Oaks.

The SOAPP launch event in the auditorium on Nov. 1 drew about 100 Sherwood Oaks residents, who learned how to navigate the many modules of interest, while ambassadors assisted in installing SOAPP onto their devices. Marketing graciously provided refreshments and three Kindle Fire tablets as door prizes. Winning residents Frank Weiss, Sally Hollister, and Carole Fletcher had their lucky tickets randomly drawn from the attendance fishbowl.

Not to be confused with Facebook and other social media platforms, SOAPP is a

private resident-access virtual community. Sherwood Oaks residents have access through a password, which then allows each of them to customize Profile information with a "selfie" picture or photo of their choice, perhaps a pet or a sunset, for instance. Your profile can also share biographies, family history, education, and hobbies with other residents.

SOAPP features Channel 900 to watch as a slide show, as we do now on our TVs, or residents can go directly to any slide regarding the day's menu or club activity without the need to wait several minutes for that slide to rotate around. SOAPP also has a module for *The Acorn*, where you can browse all editions from 2017 to this one.

In addition, SOAPP has time-saving features such as auto-dialing to reserve dining tables, take-out, and home-delivery meals. Coming soon to SOAPP will be easy forms for reserving rooms in the Center, the Oak Lodge, or the Summer House.

If you missed the launch event November 1, do not despair. You can find out how to download SOAPP to your internet-capable device by visiting the Computer Center on the lower level, or by asking any of the eight SORA "ambassadors" listed. If you don't own a smartphone or tablet, there is a permanent SOAPP touch-screen in the main lobby for all to test-drive and use.\*\*

The future of SOAPP is bright. What is now an infant just able to crawl will soon grow and mature to run faster than ever thought possible. Your ideas and input are wanted! Watch this space in *The Acorn* for new features and updates as they roll out. "For good clean fun – use SOAPP every day!"

\*\* Thanks also to the woodshop crew for crafting the table on which it sits.



## **WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA? (SO Residents Association)**

By Jean Henderson, Secretary

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

Summary of reports and actions for the Nov. 5, 2019, Monthly Board meeting:

Visitors: Sixteen were in attendance.

Treasurers: The current balance of the Memorial/Special Projects Fund is \$108,813.98. The Employee Appreciation Fund has a balance of \$104,022.05. The SORA bank balance is \$36,814.77.

Landscape: Poinsettia distribution is on December 3. Two trees have been purchased for the Day Lily Garden. Permanent markers will be placed for donated lily plants. Residents should be alert to deer on campus grounds and roads.

Living with Loss: A Service of Peace will be held December 16 at 1:15 p.m. for those for whom the holidays are difficult.

Maintenance: New carpet has been installed in the lower level hallway.

Welcome: The new residents' welcome dinner is December 10.

Dining: Call ahead to x8511 with dietary needs and special orders.

Memorial/Special Funds: An allocation for one year was approved for a Jintronix system for the Rehab Center.

Sherwood Gifts: Donation to SORA for the past quarter is \$3000.

Administration Report: Replacement doors are on order for the skilled nursing entrance to the lobby. The Cranberry Township stormwater management program will cost SO approximately \$10,224.00 for the first year. Computers in the café and dining room do not show meal carryovers; call Kathy Vacca at x8466 for meal count information.

Other business: The Winter Fest will be held on January 30. The new APP for SO is up and running after a successful Launch Party; the training kiosk is in the lobby. Jason Lyle will offer several training sessions in December to teach residents how to run the audio and lighting systems in the auditorium, as he will be away January through April 2020.

**The next SORA Board meeting is Tuesday, December 3, at 1:30 p.m.**

**The next quarterly residents' meeting is Tuesday, December 10, at 7:15 p.m. in the auditorium.**

### **A REMINDER TO SORA COMMITTEES/ACTIVITIES**

Copying materials that are copyrighted is illegal. Please do not ask receptionists or other persons to make copies of materials that are under copyright law.

SORA standing rule voted by the Board, February 4, 2014.

*Betty Eichler,*  
SORA President

## A SUITE CHRISTMAS MEMORY

By Jan Wendt

The 1960 station wagon bumped and rolled over the Catskill mountains in the early dawn of a December morning. My sisters and I, each with a carefully chosen friend, were headed for The Big Apple and the New York City Ballet's annual *Nutcracker* production. Could there be anything more anticipated during the holidays for country bumpkins like us?

My father, the only obstetrician/gynecologist in Otsego County, loved Christmas and all its trappings as much as any of the kids in the car. It was his annual joy to leave his patients in the hands of a doctor in the next county and transport this gaggle of school-age ladies to lunch at the automat and an afternoon of thrills with the Sugar Plum Fairy and waltzing snowflakes – a young girl's dream, at least in mid-century America. This trip also gave my Mom a much-needed respite from the daily grind of mothering four daughters and serving as the answering service for my Dad, who practiced medicine in the days before pagers and cellphones. In retrospect, I think she may have looked forward to it more than anyone.

Of course, the trip always took agonizingly longer than we remembered from the previous year – there was no Thruway back then, so it was all two-lane roads and stoplights in the little villages along Route 17. The adrenalin rush that permeated the car as we pulled out of the driveway evaporated by 9 a.m., turning into requests for bathroom and food stops and, perhaps, a case or two of carsickness. "When will we get there?" I believe there were some snacks prepared by Mom, and the bathroom stops were occasionally made, discreetly, on the roadside. Dad seemed to handle it with aplomb, as I recall.

By late morning, Dad issued periodic

reports of the sights coming up: the Tappan Zee Bridge, the Hudson River, and, soon, the silhouette of skyscrapers. Sitting passengers rose out of their seats to take in the city sights, including the sophisticated pedestrians on the sidewalks and the department store windows elegantly dressed for the holidays. Even with craning necks, however, we couldn't see the tops of skyscrapers from the car windows.

The car safely parked, we headed to the Horn and Hardart, and carefully made our lunch selections, watching with awe as the sandwiches and milk cartons, and even hot entrees, dropped through the machine. Amazing! Why, we wondered, was there no automat back in Oneonta, NY?

By 1:30, we were seated in the theater, our crinoline dresses rustling and our Mary Jane-attired feet not touching the floor. Then, magic: the first strains of the overture, the curtain up on the opening scene of Christmas Eve in young Clara's home. We knew the music by heart, as it was played at home often. But here, it was accompanied by an expanding Christmas tree, swirling snowflakes, and a battle of life-sized mice, along with dancing peppermints and all the inhabitants of The Kingdom of Sweets. The two-hour performance swept by in what seemed an instant. And then, it was over.

Adrenaline long depleted, we ambled back to the car, and the scramble for the "way back," so we could sleep on the trip home. The journey in the dark, again, was subdued, but filled with visions of sugarplums, as we drifted in and out of sleep. Christmas had begun.

Christmas begins again for me each year with the first strains of the *Nutcracker* overture. This tradition has been passed on to my children, and our tree is decorated annually with this glorious music, and all it evokes, in the background.

## CHRISTMAS IN VIET NAM - 1967

By Barbara Christy

Wally and I have had many a lovely and memorable Christmas together. But probably the most unusual was the one we spent in Viet Nam.

We had arrived in August, so we weren't "newbies" by December, but we had no idea what to expect. I don't remember everything, but here are the things I do remember:

*Fruitcakes:* Apparently every church lady group and women's service organization in the US had been informed that fruitcakes traveled well and would be appreciated as a token of Home. So, starting the first week of December, our hospital was inundated with these well-intentioned gifts. Our ward alone must have gotten 15-20 fruitcakes a day, and we had only 20 patients at a time! I have to add that fruitcakes were not a GI's favorite Christmas goody. (They often opted to eat the popcorn they were packed in instead.) Since we couldn't give the stuff away, we staff members had our choice of these lovingly intended offerings. Home-made, store-bought, big, small, walnut or pecan – take your pick. Wally and I became connoisseurs of fruitcake. We were still eating some when we left for the USA eight months later. If you were one of those who sent a fruitcake, thank you! It was a kind thought, and our GI's appreciated being remembered. I still make a fruitcake every November to eat all year long.

*The Bob Hope USO show:* I was on duty the day of the program, so I didn't get to see it, but I really appreciated the time the troupe took in greeting and chatting with our patients. Raquel Welch (remember her?) was the real draw that year, and I was amused to see how tongue-tied our eighteen-year-old patients were by her

glamour. She spoke to every patient in the ward, and my opinion of her and Bob Hope went way up.

*Decorations:* Every ward had a small, fake Christmas tree with mostly homemade decorations. Making decorations was a bit of occupational therapy for our patients that made the time go a bit faster for the ones expecting to return to combat. We had yards and yards of construction paper chains, but we certainly didn't look like Macy's window in New York. My mother sent us our own small tree and appropriately sized ornaments that we set up in our hootch, along with some red candles for atmosphere. We were the only ones on our base to have private accommodations, with the tree as our pièce de résistance.

*Christmas dinner:* Wally spent six days a week in the field with the troops, so he was going to be with them for the day. Amazingly, he was able to arrange a spot in a jeep convoy to take me and another nurse from my unit out to join him and his guys. It wasn't elegant – we wore helmets and flak jackets, with dinner served on tin trays and eaten while sitting on the ground. Wally was pleased that the field commanders insisted on a hot meal of turkey with all the trimmings. But what I remember most is the effort the officers expended to make sure none of the GIs chose to take his shower during the time we were there. Showers involved a black plastic bag hung on a pole and left to get warm in the sun ... with no walls or curtains. So waiting till we were gone was a good idea.

*New Year's:* Wally and I were married on New Year's Eve, and our first anniversary was in Viet Nam. My mother, a great one for tradition, had sent us half of the top layer of our wedding cake to eat on our anniversary. We were scheduled for in-country R&R in Vung Tau, so we took the cake with us and enjoyed it after a great French dinner on the beach. It was not your ordinary first anniversary, but then nothing about that year was ordinary ... especially Christmas.

## GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

By the Living with Loss Team –  
Ann Ferguson, Jean Henderson, and  
Peggy Meister

The holidays can be a bittersweet time, with many good memories, but some that cause us pain and sadness as we recall the places, people, and traditions that are no longer with us. How will we get through the holidays? Here are a few suggestions that may be of help to you:

- Allow yourself to feel all the many feelings that may arise.
- Be gentle and kind with yourself and with others who try to help you.
- Search out and count the blessings you may have forgotten.
- Spend time with your memories, even if it hurts.
- Do something for others; look outward, as well as inward.
- Plan ahead; take charge of holiday plans if you're able to do that.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and support.
- Decide which traditions you want to keep and which you have outgrown.
- Look for creative ways to be true to the holiday spirit while facing your loss.
- Let people know if what they're doing is helpful or NOT helpful to you.
- Rejoice in all the good memories that you have!

We wish you a blessed holiday season!

## A SERVICE OF PEACE

By Jean Henderson

A *Service of Peace* will be held on Monday, December 16, from 1:15 until 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium. This is a traditional service, which is Christian-based, but which can be of help to all of us facing the holidays with heavy hearts for a variety of reasons.

The service includes music, candle-lighting, prayers, and holy readings. A small symbol of peace will be given to all who attend. Leaders are the Living with Loss Team and David Gieschen.

## TWO STRANGERS

By Robert Typanski

Trying not to have eyes meet,  
they wait to join the street  
of circling life and swirling sounds.  
Then go their separate ways.

Two strangers immersed in thought.  
Planning their day. Waiting to get  
a ticket of safe passage from  
their island of introspection.

Could it be that they  
are two that once were one?  
Now they are leading separate lives  
unaware of what has become.



Painting by Robert Typanski



## THE TRADITION OF CHRISTMAS BOOK FLOOD OR “JOLABOKAFLOD”

By Julie Eden

Here's a novel (excuse the pun) way to spend your Christmas Eve: wrap yourself up in a warm blanket, make a mug of hot chocolate, and read a book you've been given for Jolabokafloð.

Instead of the typical gift exchange on Christmas morning, in Iceland Christmas Eve is reserved for book giving. Yes, every member of the family opens a new book and spends the night reading.

Some select a book for each member of the family, others choose a book they themselves like and recommend it. There is even a new book catalog published at the beginning of November each year, showing every new title published in the country that year – and it is sent to every household.

The tradition started during World War II, when paper was one of the few commodities not rationed. This led to Icelanders sharing their love of books even more than before. The country already has more writers, as well as more books published and read per capita, than anywhere else in the world.

Why not try this in your family? But remember: no e-books allowed!



## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper

This column will highlight the latest information regarding the climate crisis that is rapidly warming our planet. I'll try not to proselytize.

### **This Month's Agency – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

NOAA circulates a graph showing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere during the last 800,000 years, based on ice core samples. It was never above 300 parts per million until 1950, when it began its rapid climb to a current level of 415 ppm.

### **NOAA's Highlights:**

- Human activities have increased the natural concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, amplifying Earth's natural greenhouse effect.
- The global average amount of carbon dioxide hit a new record high in 2018: 407.4 parts per million.
- The annual rate of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past 60 years is about 100 times faster than previous natural increases, such as those that occurred at the end of the last Ice Age 11,000-17,000 years ago.
- The ocean has absorbed enough carbon dioxide to lower its pH by 0.1 units, a 30% increase in acidity.

### **Current “Carbon Tax” Legislation**

Of the bills presently introduced in the federal House of Representatives, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act has the most support, with 73 co-sponsors. You can learn more information about this at [www.energyinnovationact.org](http://www.energyinnovationact.org).

For constantly updated information on the climate crisis, follow [@CCLSlipperyRock](https://www.facebook.com/CCLSlipperyRock) on Facebook.

## **“LET’S WEAR THE CARPET OUT” CRANBERRY TWP. MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

By Jane Lavender

Our township municipal building on Rochester Rd. certainly looks like no other municipal building I have ever seen. It also has a rather unique history. It was built in the 1940s, when foremost in the minds of the builders was WWII and the demands of the war effort. 2525 Rochester Rd., a bit of farmland at the time, was to become the site for Perry Forge, where parts for submarines were produced. After the war, the forge continued for a few years and then stood idle for many more.

Cranberry Twp. offices at that time had recently moved from the old Sample School to another building, on the north side of Rochester Rd., with a big “C” window in the front. The need for a larger building quickly became apparent, as the township became one of the fastest growing townships in the country. As it turned out, Frank Hess, one of the Sherwood Oaks founders, foresightedly purchased the forge building with the intention of selling it to the township as soon as the township was ready to buy it. The offices were moved there in March 1991. With the wisdom and advice of a citizens’ committee, the newly renovated building designated space for a library, the Parks Department, police station, a gym, a senior center, and offices for local state and federal representatives.

Four renovations have taken place since then. Several more offices have been added, along with a large addition for the Police Department and some meeting rooms for general use. Today

it is a very well-used building all day and into the evening. It makes space for art exhibits, voting stations, international gatherings and celebrations of our diversity, and senior meals and activities. Moreover, no one minds the constant use. When the idea of a multiuse gathering place was first conceived, one of the many questions that came up was regarding the carpet and its need for periodic replacement. The answer was, **“LET’S WEAR THE CARPET OUT.”** We are most welcome to do so. *[with thanks to Jerry Andree, Township Manager]*



## **SWIMMING POOL AND SPA**

By Jean McLaughlin

Since the days of cold and shortened daylight hours have arrived, it is harder to get outside exercise than at other times of the year. But our beautiful indoors swimming pool and spa provide wonderful exercise! We invite you all to come by and try out our own Aquasize classes.

Aquasize meets on Monday and Thursday, beginning at 10 a.m., for about 45 minutes. It is a program of exercises that involves every muscle in the body! The buoyancy of the water eases the challenge posed by our old joints. There are separate dressing rooms for men and women, and towels are provided.

The pool area has recently been painted, new carpeting has been installed, and the spa has been renovated. How can you resist? Come join us: everyone is welcome! Please call me if you have any questions: 724-592-5584.

## A LITTLE RUFUS OVER MY HEAD

By Dennis Lynch

This is a story about the Marx Brothers movie *Duck Soup*, and our new cat Molly. It begins in a dentist's office.

I had had one of those "procedures," and the dental assistant was holding my coat for me to put on. The normal drill would have been for me to walk to her, turn 180 degrees, and put my arms back for her to slip the coat on.

But the ghost of Harpo Marx appeared with the honk of one of those horns he carried, and a scene came into my mind. The brothers were in some kind of medical office. Groucho and Chico were wearing white lab coats, and a nurse was holding one out for Harpo to put on. Harpo moved toward her, arms outstretched, but instead of turning he went straight on, slipped his arms into the sleeves, and gave her a big hug.

I couldn't resist, so I duplicated Harpo's move but with a briefer and more chaste squeeze.

Then I walked myself back and said, "I apologize! It was too good a chance! Do you remember Harpo in that movie?" Blank look. "Harpo *Marx*?" Blank. "You know, the *Marx Brothers*?" Well, obviously, she didn't know. Probably had never seen a rotary dial phone either.

That's the lead-in to the cat story. We now have seven pounds of rescue cat, about three years old, Molly by name. She is Siamesey, ostensibly a "Snowshoe Siamese," a thousand bucks from a breeder but only fifty from the Beaver County Humane Society. She is just getting comfortable with our patio home. She is less comfortable with our

rescue hound, Maggie, but has all sixty pounds of Mags under her paw because she can spit and yowl and leap and look like a Hallowe'en cat, and Maggie can't.

So the other night we were all in our living room. The sliding glass door to the patio was half open. It was light inside, but dark in the patio, and the glass acted as a mirror. Molly was heading toward the patio to try to look outside. When she got close to the door she noticed her reflection. "There's a cat on the patio!"

Moreover, "There's a cat out there! First the dog, and now this! What did I do to deserve this?"

Molly's idea of defense is a good offense, so she carefully put her head around the door to confront this interloper in the flesh. But there was no cat behind the door! She quickly came to the front again to check, and there, surely, was that blasted cat. Catch it quick and give it what for! Around the door again: no cat. Back to check: cat. She moved a little away from the opening and the other cat followed her. Ha! Back for a quick check and, once again, no cat. Well, Molly would not be played for the fool. She turned and walked as calmly as she could, tail twitching, slowly back through the living room and into The Closet for a cooling drink of water.

I was bursting with suppressed laughter. And I could hear Harpo's horn again. The episode had been so like the funniest scene in any film (in my opinion) – the one in *Duck Soup* (1933) where Harpo pretends to be Groucho's reflection in a non-existent mirror. If you haven't seen it, rent or borrow the film – it is in the Butler system. It is one of the classics, as Molly discovered.

## THE LIFE OF A COMMENT CARD AT TABLE 8

By “A Comment Card”

Relayed by Carolyn Broeren

Whew!

It was a relief to get out of the cellophane wrap, but I didn't think I would stay on Bev Puglia's (Director of Dining Services) desk for such a long time. It was somewhat interesting, through listening to the journey of my cellophane wrapmates who made it out into the dining room before me, as they conveyed the comments of our residents at Sherwood Oaks to various people. After they were dropped into the comment card box, Bev or Jesse (Service/Catering Manager) retrieved them and the journey really began. First, all of the dining managers review the card and – listen to this – Bev takes them to the boss, Annette McPeck (the Executive Director of Sherwood Oaks), to review at their bi-weekly meeting. Then Bev sends e-mails to the dining managers to address any concerns that were mentioned on the cards. My friends said that Bev looks for patterns, matching comments of meal dates with the chefs on duty that day. She also includes card issues in the weekly dining manager/ supervisor's meetings.

And ... there is this committee called Dining Services that meets monthly. One of the members of that committee – I think her name is Barbara – takes all of the cards and makes a log of what residents check on different items as well as specific comments. My friend said that the committee seemed interested and discussed some of the issues presented on the cards. In the end, they are returned to Bev, who keeps them for a year to review, if necessary.

Finally, one day, I was put on Table 8. It was so exciting to be able to help the residents convey their thoughts, questions, opinions, thanks, and wishes concerning the food and service to the

staff. As the conversation at my table went on, someone said that the chicken that day was dry, but another person said that the lamb chops were outstanding, and that the server was really good. I thought that maybe someone would write a comment so I could begin my journey, but nobody did, so I just stayed put in my holder. As a matter of fact, in the next several days I heard lots of comments, some good and some bad, but no one reached for a card. Then finally someone picked me up and wrote all of the correct information, including the name, the date, and the mealtime, followed by a comment about the potatoes being too salty. I was so excited, because I knew that, while I was on my journey, various people would learn about the issue and it could be corrected. What a good life!

## NEW CHRISTMAS TREE

By Sally Hollister

You will notice upon entering the Center's lobby on Dec. 3 a new Christmas tree, a special gift from and a memorial to Frank and Kay Pittman. Please look for the “Pittman Ornament,” front and center:



Photo by Rabe Marsh

**COLETTA MCKENRY LIBRARY ACCESSIONS**  
**FICTION, INCLUDING LARGE TYPE AND DVDs**

<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass</i>	Carroll, Lewis	c. 2004	F CAR p.b.
<i>At Home in Mitford</i>	Karon, Jan	c. 1999	F KAR L.P.
<i>Beach Road</i>	Patterson, James & Peter DeJonge	c. 2006	F PAT L.T.
<i>Carolina isle</i>	Deveraux, Jude	c. 2006	F DEV L.T.
<i>The Cat Who Said Cheese</i>	Braun, Lilian Jackson	c. 1996	F BRA L.T.
<i>Christmas at Rosie Hopkins' Sweet Shop</i>	Colgan, Jenny	c. 2013	F COL L.T.
<i>City of Girls</i>	Gilbert, Elizabeth	c. 2019	F GIL
<i>A Dangerous Man</i>	Crais, Robert	c. 2019	F CRA
<i>Death, Lies and Apple Pies</i>	Malmont, Valerie S.	c. 1997	F MAL L.T.
<i>A Delicate Truth</i>	Le Carré, John	c. 2013	F LE L.T.
<i>A Door in the Earth</i>	Waldman, Amy,	c. 2019	F WAL
<i>Double Take</i>	Coulter, Catherine	c. 2007	F COU L.T.
<i>False Impression</i>	Archer, Jeffrey	c. 2006	F ARC L.T.
<i>Fatal</i>	Palmer, Michael	c. 2002	F PAL L.T.
<i>First Family</i>	Baldacci, David	c. 2009	F BAL c.2
<i>Forget-Me-Nots</i>	Bateman, Tracy	c. 2019	F BAT
<i>The Giver of Stars</i>	Moyes, Jojo	c. 2019	F MOY
<i>The Guardians</i>	Grisham, John	c. 2019	F GRI
<i>Just One Look</i>	Coben, Harlan	c. 2004	F COB L.T.
<i>The King of Torts</i>	Grisham, John	c. 2003	F GRI L.T.
<i>Looking for Chet Baker</i>	Moody, Bill	c. 2002	F MOO
<i>The Matchmaker's List</i>	Lalli, Sonya	c. 2019	F LAL p.b.
<i>The Night Fire</i>	Connelly, Michael	c. 2019	F CON
<i>Nothing Ventured</i>	Archer, Jeffrey	c. 2019	F ARC
<i>Olive, Again</i>	Strout, Elizabeth	c. 2019	F STR
<i>The Other Woman</i>	Jones, Sandie	c. 2018	F JON
<i>Rooted in Malice</i>	Fields, Jan	c. 2019	F FIE
<i>A Rule Against Murder</i>	Penny, Louise	c. 2009	F PEN p.b.
<i>Seascape in Shadows</i>	Mehl, Nancy	c. 2018	F MEH
<i>The Secrets We Kept</i>	Prescott, Lara	c. 2019	F PRE
<i>Shark Bait</i>	Putman, Cara	c. 2018	F PUT
<i>The Street Lawyer</i>	Grisham, John,	c. 1998	F GRI L.T.
<i>Trespasser</i>	Doiron, Paul	c. 2011	F DOI L.T.
<i>What Happens in Paradise</i>	Hilderbrand, Elin	c. 2019	F HIL
<i>Where the Light Enters</i>	Donati, Sara	c. 2019	F DON
<i>The Winner</i>	Baldacci, David	c. 1998	F BAL L.T.
<i>Woes by Any Other Name</i>	Fields, Jan	c. 2019	F FIE

## NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

<i>Where the Past Begins: A Writer's Memoir</i>	Tan, Amy	c. 2017	BIO TAN
<i>In the Country of Women: A Memoir</i>	Straight, Susan	c. 2019	BIO STR
<i>Passionate Spirit: The Life of Alma Mahler</i>	Haste, Cate	c. 2019	BIO MAH
<i>Calculated Risk: The Extraordinary Life of Jimmy Doolittle, Aviation Pioneer and World War II Hero; A Memoir</i>	Hoppes, Jonna Doolittle	c. 2005	BIO DOO
<i>The Quiet Man: The Indispensable Presidency of George H.W. Bush</i>	Sununu, John H.	c. 2015	973.92 SUN
<i>Mary Boleyn: The Mistress of Kings</i>	Weir, Alison	c. 2011	942.05 WEI
<i>The Nickel Boys</i>	Whitehead, Colson	c. 2019	813.6 WHI
<i>The New York Times Crossword Puzzle Dictionary</i>	Pulliam, Tom	c. 1984	793.7 PUL Ref
<i>Age Erasers for Women: Actions You Can Take Right Now to Look Younger and Feel Great</i>	Fisher, Patricia	c. 1994	613.04 ROD
<i>Wildflowers: A Guide to Growing and Propagating Native Flowers of North America</i>	Cullina, William	c. 2000	582.13 CUL
<i>Kochland: The Secret History of Koch Industries and Corporate Power in America</i>	Leonard, Christopher	c. 2019	338.7 LEO
<i>Talking Peace: A Vision for the Next Generation</i>	Carter, Jimmy	c. 1993	327.17 CAR
<i>Miraculous: A Fascinating History of Signs, Wonders, and Miracles</i>	Belmonte, Kevin Charles	c. 2012	231.7 BEL
<i>The Library Book</i>	Orlean, Susan	c. 2018	027.47 ORL



### Out of the mouths of ...

Phil, about 7 years old, walks into the kitchen from the family room and asks Nana Joyce (who is babysitting for the weekend), "What does *sensual* mean?"

Nana Joyce: "What television show are you watching?"

Phil: "Rugrats." (That didn't give her a clue as to how to answer.)

Nana Joyce, wondering how she will respond, stops and thinks for a minute.

Maybe I should call his mother and ask her how to explain this ... No, I was once a kindergarten teacher; I can handle it.

Then she replies: "You know how Cousin Bobbie (a massage therapist) gives people massages? Sometimes those make people really relaxed and they feel good. Does that make sense?"

Phil: "No, not really. On television they said the next Rugrats show would be on at 6 p.m. Eastern and 5 p.m. 'sensual' time."

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW BOOKS THE BOOK SELECTION GROUP

By Tom Fararo

These recently purchased books will be on the new bookshelf in our library. If a book you seek is not there, you can fill out a reserve slip or reserve the book online from your home computer.

*Passionate Spirit: The Life of Alma Mahler* by Cate Haste. Nonfiction. Alma Mahler (1879-1964) was a charismatic and talented Viennese socialite. Her marriages included those to composer Gustav Mahler, architect Walter Gropius, and novelist Franz Werfel. "A sympathetic, engrossing biography" (*Publishers Weekly* starred review).

*The Night Fire* by Michael Connelly. Fiction. Harry Bosch and his partner, detective Renee Ballard, work on a cold case. "Connelly continues to cement his legacy as one of the greatest crime writers of all time, and reading one of his books is an experience unlike anything else the genre has to offer" (*Real Book Spy*).

*The Giver of Stars* by JoJo Moyes. Fiction. This novel is based on the true story of the Pack Horse Library Project established by the Works Progress Administration in Kentucky in the 1930s. "Moyes (*Still Me*, 2018, etc.) brings an often-forgotten slice of history to life.... A love letter to the power of books and friendship" (*Kirkus* starred review).

*Where the Light Enters* by Sara Donati. Fiction. A story of two female physicians in 1884 New York. The author "evokes the world, the problems, the personalities of the time and place so well that it's easy to forget you're reading ... masterfully composed historical fiction" (*New York Journal of Books*).

*Olive, Again* by Elizabeth Strout. Fiction. The author of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Olive Kitteridge* returns with what a reviewer calls "A tour de force.

With extraordinary economy of prose – few writers can pack so much emotion, so much detail into a single paragraph – Strout immerses us in the lives of her characters, each so authentically drawn as to be deserving of an entire novel themselves. Compassionate, masterly and profound, this is a writer at the height of her powers" (*The Guardian*).

*Note: Spotlight on New Books* features only books purchased with SORA funds, as selected by a group that for some time has included Nancy Baker. This month, as so often in the past, Nancy has donated books that we would very likely have purchased. It is a pleasure to recognize her for two such donations this month: *The Guardians* by John Grisham and *What Happens in Paradise* by Elin Hilderbrand. Thanks, Nancy!

## SHERWOOD OAKS BOOK CLUB

By Julie Eden

For our next discussion, the Book Club chose *The Return of the Dancing Master*, by Swedish crime writer Henning Mankell. The book won a 2005 award for the Best European Crime Novel. Members are responsible for getting their own copy, either from the Sherwood Oaks or another library, via an e-reader, by buying it (used paperback copies are available online), or by sharing with others.

With regard to the story, a young police officer investigates the murder of his former colleague on his remote farm in the northern forests of Sweden. The mystifying case has no witnesses and no apparent motives. What is found are chilling links between the death and an underground neo-Nazi network. (Goodreads)

The next Book Club meeting will be Tuesday, December 10, at 4 p.m. in the Chapel. New members are always welcome. If you have any questions, please contact me at 8290.

## LIBRARY LOWDOWN

By Peggy Meister

If you are wondering if our library is accessible to residents with low vision ... read on. We have a new magnifying reader in the library and two text-to-voice machines that can be checked out to your home for two weeks at a time.

Besides the whole wall full of large-print books that we already had in stock, a number of new books have been added in the last month. They are located on the top shelf of the bookcase on the left. We are grateful to Betty Queer for donating many of these new large-print books.

We can also help low-vision readers apply for recorded books directly from the state library. This is a free service whereby audio books are mailed to the reader and then returned in prepaid mailers. If you are interested, stop by the library office and we will give you a folder explaining the application process.

Finally, Holly Stants, a low-vision specialist, is now on-board in the Rehab Services Department. She has lots of new tricks to help low-vision readers. She can help you learn to use our equipment as well as show you new ways to get text-to-audio on your phone or iPad.



Painting by Megan Coffey

*Those of us who have pets or used to have them may relate to the following sonnet. I wrote it at a time when I was feeling sad and alone, and yet aware of the attentions of my 16-year-old cat Sunshine, whom I had inherited some eight years earlier upon my mother's death. I completed the poem, which acknowledged his love and attention ... and then three days later he died. That is the reason for the title.*

## INADVERTENT EPITAPH

31 May 2008

By Rosemary Coffey

The solitude becomes too much to bear  
When time is hanging heavy on my  
hands;  
I do not want to work, nor do I care  
To read a book or answer the demands  
For food and love from one insistent cat,  
Who won't accept my No! or Go away!  
As fair reactions to his feeling that  
I need some love myself. What can I  
say?

Of course he's right. Somehow, he  
seems to know,  
When I am trembling on the brink of  
tears,  
He needs to stay nearby. He will not go  
And leave me here alone to face my  
fears.

His body warms me gently through the  
night,  
Until we come again into the light.





## Holiday Happenings

**Friday, December 6**

**4:30 to 6.00 p.m.**

Lobby, Auditorium, Card Room

The **Eggnog Party**: all residents are invited. The Dining Room will be closed for dinner; however, the Café will remain open and takeout meals are available during normal dinner hours. Please note: this is a dress-up party!

**Tuesday, December 10**

**4:30 to 6:00 p.m.**

Cranberry Lake Grill

**Holiday Dinner** for Oak Grove Center residents and family members.

**Wednesday, December 11**

**Lunch and Dinner**

Dining Room & Café

**Winter Wonderland Birthday** theme. Reservations are recommended if you plan to eat in the Dining Room at dinner.

**Thursday, December 12**

**11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Dining Room

The **Employee Holiday Party** will be held in the Dining Room, which will be closed for lunch. The Café will remain open, and takeout meals will be available at the counter during normal lunch hours. The Dining Room will be open for dinner.

**Friday, December 13**

**7:15 p.m.**

Auditorium & Card Room

**Holiday Traditions, the Hand Bells and Chorus Christmas Concert**, will feature an assortment of beautiful music of the season. Please join us for a joyous evening.

**Thursday, December 19**

**4:30 to 6 p.m.**

Auditorium, Card Room, Lobby

**Resident Holiday Party**, hosted by Administration. No guests, please. The Dining Room and Café will be closed for dinner. Takeout meals will be available at the Café counter from 5 to 6 p.m.

**Friday, December 20**

**11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Auditorium

**Holiday Lunch** for Skilled Nursing & Personal Care residents and family members.

**Tuesday, December 31**

**9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.**

Auditorium & Card Room

**New Year's Eve** tickets are \$10 per person. Purchase them at the front desk beginning December 2. Guests are welcome.

## THE WEEKLY CHIEF

By John Becker

Eighty-two years ago when I was 10, David, Ray, and I decided to start a newspaper, even though money was in short supply back in 1937. To be specific, we couldn't figure out how we'd print a newspaper. We couldn't afford a mimeograph machine, and none of us had access to one, but we kept planning anyway. We needed someone to report the news, someone to edit the news, someone to distribute it, someone to secure some sponsors and advertisers, and, finally, someone to handle subscriptions.

None of the three of us ever received an allowance from our parents. I never felt destitute, so Mother must have slipped me some change whenever the need arose. But we had never "felt the need" of a mimeograph machine before, and we knew it was totally out of the question.

So we decided to start with a hectograph, a tray of gelatin to which a sheet of paper, typed with special ink, is transferred. One original can produce about 50 copies ... more than the number of our subscribers.

When David's father heard of our plans, he mentioned that, when he was a boy, he had published a paper called the *Weekly Chief*. In a flash, we had our name. David's father also gave me the key to his hardware store on Main St., so that I could use his typewriter for an hour before school and before the store opened. When the two pages were typed, we printed the *Weekly Chief* at home. Since many of the jobs listed above never did get done, and David and Ray's interest often faltered, I became the fall guy.

My nanny was my big supporter in this project. She saved a copy of every issue and many years later gave me the collection. I recently reread some of the faded pages with great delight and many laughs. I have them safely stored in plastic pages in a three-ring binder. Precious memories! Those seventeen

issues of the *Weekly Chief* date from early March through June 1937. The last issue announces plans to resume publishing in the Fall when school reopened, but that evidently did not happen.

Each copy cost two cents and was a splendid example of phonetic spelling, as in "Of corse." We included the honor roll of the Fifth Grade complete with grades, in the interest of full disclosure.

David's sister Mary, who was a reporter for a while, gave us complete coverage of all the comings and goings of the socially mobile Cooperstown young crowd that year. The back page had ads for some of the prime businesses of the village, namely: Fred Green's real estate business [my grandfather], the McGown Hardware Store [David's father], the Second National Bank [my father], to mention a few.

We also featured a joke, or "jock," in each issue. For example: "A Scotsman asked his friend why he was wearing two overcoats. His friend replied that he was going to paint his barn that afternoon and the paint label said, 'For best results, put on two coats.'" The joke was sometimes split between two issues. Half the joke: "A son asks his father, 'Dad, did you go to Sunday School when you were a kid?'" The father replies, "Why, yes, Son, I did. I went every Sunday." Then the next issue had the rest of the past week's joke: "So, it didn't do you any good, either!"

Our granddaughter Ava, age nine, who visited recently, is a whiz at taking pictures and messaging on her smart phone. She quietly said she knew how to type on the computer at home.

Imagine what I could have done with the *Weekly Chief*, if I had been ten years old in 2019 instead of in 1937!

(Note: This story is included in a book of family stories by John Becker scheduled for publication next year.)

## CHAPEL NOTES

Leading Chapel Services in December:

*Sunday, December 1*

The Rev. Ben Robbins

Northmont Presbyterian Church

*Sunday, December 8*

The Rev. Karen Slusser

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

*Sunday, December 15*

The Rev. William Dambach

North Hills Presbyterian Church

*Sunday, December 22*

The Rev. Barry Mariana

Christ Church at Grove Farm

All services begin at 2 p.m.

*Tuesday December 24, 7:00 p.m.*

In House Christmas Eve service

*Sunday December 29*

In House Chapel Service

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

Reminder: The new Chapel Flower program, described in the November *Acorn*, is designed to remember or honor an important person in your life.

**Attitude and the spirit in which we communicate are as important as the words we say. – Charles Stanley**

Gary Brandenberger  
Chapel Committee



### *IN MEMORIAM*

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

*Rita Nowak*

*October 25, 2019*

*Marian Cooper*

*November 6, 2019*



### **ACTIVITIES IN THE CHAPEL**

Women's Bible Study

First and third Mondays of the month

Promptly at 10:45 – noon

Men's Bible Study

Weekly, Wednesdays

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Holy Communion, Episcopal Rite

Second Monday of the month

11:00 a.m.

Rosary – Led by Chester Ludwicki

First, Second, and Third Fridays

9:30 a.m.

Quaker Meeting for Worship

December 29th (5th Sunday!)

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.



## ***2018 Caps for Kids tree***



Photo by Tabby Alford