

# THE ACORN

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

January 2020 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 21 No. 1

“Each January ... an unknown door opens.”  
(Julie Eden, see p. 3)



Photo by Dennis Lynch

*Gentle Readers:*

*November and December 2019 certainly have not been smooth sailing for staff and residents at Sherwood Oaks. A second sewer backup within the past year has disrupted our regular comings and goings.*

- Someone has had to reassign work-spaces, temporary meeting places, and more ... and then inform us all.*
- Someone has had to lug equipment, records, and supplies to the new work spaces.*
- Other someones have had to mop, vacuum, sweep, wipe, dust, dismantle, and rope off areas on the lower level.*
- Someone had to schedule work and workers: what must be done first, what can wait.*

*Others are building the new systems.*

*All of us have been re-routed to our assigned appointments.*

*Confusion, impatience, anger, disgust might well be the order of the day. BUT we (staff, residents, contractors) are not giving in or giving up. We are working, side by side, and are grateful for such optimistic, energetic, wise, and reliable co-workers and neighbors.*

*Now let's all of us take a breather from looking at plastic sheets covering doorways and walls, carts with ladders and buckets in hallways, plastic tubes slithering out of windows. Instead, let's look OUT a window, or take a walk. Sherwood Oaks is the home to handsome trees, in courtyards, along walkways, near homes, around the lake, in the woods.*

*Which tree do you like best? Let us know which one calls you to look at it in wonder during the winter: the way ice clings to its bare branches, its silhouette against the sunset, its bending to the wind, its reaching out to its neighbors.*

*Tell us where the tree is and why it charms you. We'll share your selections and reasons*

*in the Feb. issue (Jan. 15 is the deadline for submissions). Maybe you will introduce some of us to campus beauty of which you have been aware for years.*

*And then Spring comes not far behind. We will all be able to walk around again and find similar or new reasons to name another tree as our favorite.*

Ruth Becker and Rosemary Coffey

## **JANUARY CALENDAR**

New Year's Day	Jan. 1
Orthodox Christmas	Jan. 7
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	Jan. 20

### **THE ACORN**

#### **Editors**

Ruth Becker

ruthbb@zoominternet.net

Rosemary Coffey

rosemarycoffey@aol.com

#### **Staff**

Julie Eden

Rabe Marsh

Jan Wendt, Profile Coordinator

#### **Production Editor**

Tabby Alford

#### **Photographer**

Ed Borrebach (emeritus)

#### **Ex Officio**

Annette McPeck

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

## **2020 – A LOOK FORWARD, A LOOK BACKWARD**

by Julie Eden - #290

Each January we come up against a new year. An unknown door (see front cover!) opens, and we instinctively look around its edges to a fresh beginning. We cannot help taking a glance backward as well.

We reflect on the past a bit and, in our minds, try to refresh ourselves and think of how we can adjust the future to fit our needs and wishes. Those pesky New Year resolutions, even made subconsciously, become windows into dreams.

This New Year, 2020, marks not just another 12 months on the calendar but a new decade, too.

Do you remember Y2K? Believe it or not, that was 20 years ago. We all imagined chaos – those darn computers on which we had come to rely for so much were going to be our downfall. Well, as it turned out, not much went astray. It all worked out just fine.

On a grand scale, I'll resolve, as I always do, to be a better person, to be kinder and gentler, to share more with my children and grandchildren; to make more memories for them to reflect on someday.

And then, being the proponent that I am of the Summer Olympic Games, I dream of turning the calendar to late July and early August, when, once again, athletes and fans will gather in Tokyo (and worldwide, via television) to compete and cheer on their favorites.

I was in Tokyo the last time the games were there, in 1964. Can it really be

that long ago when I and some Japanese friends broke into the Athletes Village and were subsequently chased out by a local policeman on a bike? Over fences we flew and through gates we escaped. Such foolish youthful errors turned into a memorable adventure.

Those are the things I see in the mirror of time, and now, I wonder what that unknown door I'll open for 2020 has waiting for me.

So, what do you look forward to in the New Year? Don't take it too seriously, but flip that calendar page to January 2020, pull down on the door latch, and sneak a look around it.



### **CAPS FOR KIDS TOTAL**

by Phyllis Franks  
Director, Residential Services

As you may know, each year the residents and staff make and/or donate caps to be handed out to local children in need. Scarves, blankets, and mittens have also been collected and will be handed out as well.

The total number of caps collected for 2019 is 1,187 (131 more than last year). This includes 912 caps made by our residents and 275 donated by the staff at their annual holiday party held in early December.

Thank you all for your kindness and generosity!

## **EDITH McCANDLESS**

**#125**

Interviewed by Harriet Burress



Photo by Mike Mills

### *HAPPY MEMORIES*

While I was visiting with Edith McCandless, it was certainly apparent that this is a person who lives by the title of her memoirs: "Don't cry because it is over; smile because it happened."

Edith was born in Oxford, PA, near Philadelphia, and never expected to leave. Over her sink are two plates, one of them a picture of the hospital (more like a very large home) where she was born. As the youngest of five children, she "was very spoiled because my siblings were older. My two brothers would come home, pick me up, and swirl me up 'into the sky.' I felt like I had three daddies."

The second plate shows the Baptist Church of Oxford, where she attended as a child and teenager, was baptized, learned to sing and play the hymns, and trusted God's ability to be "the DIRECTOR of her life." Needless to say, washing dishes for Edith is a task that is filled with happy memories.

### *MORE HAPPY MEMORIES*

As a senior in high school, Edith wrote a composition titled "Making Democracy Work." Unbeknownst to her, it was submitted to a contest. At graduation, she was surprised with an announcement that she had won a full scholarship to Temple University, where she majored in math and pursued a master's degree in secondary education curriculum development.

Edith met and married her husband while she was teaching. They moved to Butler in 1960, after he had finished law school. Two "amazing and accomplished daughters" graced their home. One now lives five minutes away, which is "a source of great comfort and help."

### *ONGOING MEMORIES*

Over the years, Edith served on the boards of the Butler Memorial Hospital and Butler Community College. "Volunteerism is an integral part of my life, and I love learning new things, especially technology." She has had quite a "career" as a musician, serving as a church organist, a bell choir leader, and a piano accompanist. Clearly, joining the bell choir at Sherwood Oaks was an immediate "fit."

Edith's interests and talents are many. She has a scrapbook of "adult coloring" pages, the designs of which adorn scripture verses. They are absolutely beautiful and a new art form.

"I am happy to be at Sherwood Oaks and look forward to discovering all the ways people – residents and staff – amaze me with 'random acts of kindness.' That attitude is certainly fostered here." Please welcome our new neighbor and friend.

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

Jean Henderson, Secretary - #611

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

Summary of reports and actions for the Dec. 3, 2019, Monthly Board meeting:

Visitors: Thirteen 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 \$155,157.05. The SORA bank balance is \$32,439.99.

Living with Loss: A six-week grief group is planned for Spring 2020.

Maintenance: Parking lot light bulbs are being replaced. Dining Room ceiling tiles will be replaced in January.

Dining: The 'blueberry' now on the menu indicates BeWell food items.

Memorial/Special Funds: \$500 was approved to buy an 'American' croquet set. In addition, Olive Tiller was commended for her past service as secretary of that committee.

Finance: The Board approved adding a line for Bake Sale under Restricted Funds and putting \$300 from the 2019 Bake Sale proceeds into that line item.

Sherwood Gifts: November netted \$2635, with a 92% profit margin. Volunteers with computer skills are urgently needed.

Administration Report: Replacement doors have been installed for the SNU lobby entrance. Planter renovation

continues at the gatehouse. The PC dining renovation has begun. Plumbing issues on the lower level are being addressed.

Other business: The Winter Fest ArtScape will be held on January 30. The new APP for SO is now running; the training kiosk is in the lobby. A discussion led by the Civic Affairs Committee was held with regard to Candidates' Night and will continue at the next Board meeting.

**The next SORA Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2020, beginning at 1:30 p.m.**



**THANK YOU!**

by Barbara Christy - #237  
Library Committee

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the employees and staff of Sherwood Oaks for their consistently patient and cheerful help during the recent mess on the lower level of the Center. The Housekeeping and Maintenance Departments deserve special recognition for all they did to keep us on an even keel while so many activities and services were upended. I'm sure others feel the same way, but I had a unique opportunity while setting up the temporary library to observe how everyone worked together without stopping to get everything sorted as soon as possible. I have always been proud of where I live, but never more so than the month of December 2019.

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

<i>All the Inn's a Stage</i>	White, Roseanna M.	c. 2019	F WHI
<i>Amreeka</i>		c. 2009	F AMR DVD
<i>Ask the Dust</i>		c. 2006	F ASK DVD
<i>The Black Dahlia</i>		c. 2006	F BLA DVD
<i>Blue Moon</i>	Child, Lee	c. 2019	F CHI
<i>Charlotte Gray</i>		c. 2002	F CHA DVD
<i>The Deserter</i>	DeMille, Nelson	c. 2019	F DEM
<i>Jerry Maguire</i>		c. 1997	F JER DVD
<i>Once</i>		c. 2007	F ONC DVD
<i>Personal Best</i>		c. 1982	F PER DVD
<i>The Queen of Hearts</i>	Martin, Kimmerly	c. 2018	F MAR
<i>Robert Ludlum's the Bourne Betrayal</i>	Lustbader, Eric	c. 2007	F LUS CDs
<i>The Siberian Dilemma</i>	Smith, Martin Cruz	c. 2019	F SMI
<i>16th Seduction</i>	Patterson, James	c. 2017	F PAT
<i>The Son's Room</i>		c. 2002	F SON DVD
<i>The Sweeney, Season 1</i>		c. 2010	F SWE Season 1
<i>The Sweeney, Season 2</i>		c. 2010	F SWE Season 2
<i>The Sweeney, Season 3</i>		c. 2010	F SWE Season 3
<i>The Sweeney, Season 4</i>		c. 2010	F SWE Season 4
<i>Three Things about Elsie</i>	Cannon, Joanna	c. 2018	F CAN
<i>Tiffany Blues</i>	Rose, M. J.	c. 2018	F ROS
<i>To the Land of Long Lost Friends</i>	Smith, Alexander McCall	c. 2019	F MCC
<i>Window on the Bay</i>	Macomber, Debbie	c. 2019	F MAC

**NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES**

<i>Edison</i>	Morris, Edmund	c. 2019	BIO EDI
<i>The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies</i>	Hayden, Michael V.	c. 2018	327.12 HAY
<i>Blowout: Corrupted Democracy, Rogue State Russia, and the Richest, Most Destructive Industry on Earth</i>	Maddow, Rachel	c. 2019	338.2 MAD
<i>The Body: A Guide for Occupants</i>	Bryson, Bill	c. 2019	612 BRY
<i>American Elegy: A Family Memoir</i>	Simpson, Jeffrey	c. 1996	920 SIM p.b. c.2
<i>Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II</i>	Mundy, Liza	c. 2018	940.5 MUN p.b.
<i>The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11</i>	Graff, Garrett M.	c. 2019	973.931 GRA
<i>The Canadians</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1977	978 TIM
<i>The Chroniclers</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Cowboys</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The End and the Myth</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1979	978 TIM
<i>The Expressmen</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1974	978 TIM
<i>The Gamblers</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1978	978 TIM
<i>The Great Chiefs</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1975	978 TIM

## NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

<i>The Gunfighters</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1974	978 TIM
<i>The Indians</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Loggers</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Miners</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1976	978 TIM
<i>The Railroaders</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Rivermen</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1975	978 TIM
<i>The Soldiers</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Spanish West</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1976	978 TIM
<i>The Trailblazer</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1973	978 TIM
<i>The Texans</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1975	978 TIM
<i>The Townsmen</i>	Time-Life Books	c. 1975	978 TIM

### **Sherwood Oaks Book Club**

by Julie Eden - #290

*The Kitchen House* by Kathleen Grissom will be discussed at our next Book Club meeting, Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at 4 p.m., in the Card Room. Used paperback copies are available online, as well as e-book and audio CD formats.

About the story: Orphaned during the passage from Ireland, seven-year-old Lavinia arrives on the steps of a Virginia tobacco plantation and is placed, as an indentured servant, under the care of Belle, the master's illegitimate slave daughter. In time, Lavinia is accepted into the sphere of the big house, though she is always straddling two very different worlds.

Grissom's debut novel is a tragic story of page-turning suspense, exploring the meaning of family, where love and loyalty prevail. (*Amazon*)

New members are always welcome to the Book Club. If you have any questions, please contact me.

### **Jigsaw Lovers, Unite!**

by Joan McBurney - #206

Now that we are headed for a season of colder weather, it's time to relax inside and solve some jigsaw puzzles. The Sherwood Oaks library has a puzzle exchange available in the paperback room, on your right as you come in – that is, whenever the library reopens!

There is no need to sign them out – we operate on the honor system. Simply bring a puzzle in, and take a puzzle out. Or, if you have nothing to exchange, take a puzzle anyway, and return it when you've finished with it!

If anyone is interested in working on a puzzle together with others, we could make arrangements to meet in the lobby or the card room some afternoon to do so, while enjoying each other's company. Another possibility is to set up an ongoing puzzle in a place where anyone passing by would be welcome to stop and put in some pieces.

Let me know if you are interested and we'll set something up. Just put a note in my cubbyhole in the Mail Room.



## THE LIBRARY LOWDOWN

by Barbara Christy - #273

What follows is an update on the status of the library.

The books in the collection have been undamaged. There was one box of donated books on the floor in the office that had to be discarded. We have been blessed. However, the carpet must be replaced, so the library will be closed until that has happened. This will probably take until the beginning of February.

The books and bookshelves have been taken to storage by George Moving and Storage. The company has a great system for keeping track of what goes where, so, we may hope, the unpacking should not be difficult.

A small temporary library has been set up using our book carts and the drop box in the downstairs hallway opposite the elevator. Since the selection is very limited, we will continue to accept all donations and add them to what's available, without making final decisions about what will go into the permanent collection until we are back in the library.

There is some organization of what is available: new accessions are on one cart; large-print books are on another; paperbacks and third and earlier editions are stored wherever there is room.

The newspapers and most of the magazines will be out in the lobby for the duration. Look for the newspaper rack near the reception desk. One table-

top magnifying reader is set up in the music room. In addition, one small portable text-to-voice machine is available and can be checked out to your home for the duration.

The Book Selection Group, chaired by Tom Fararo, is continuing, and new books were purchased by SORA in December.

Book check-out is being done the old-fashioned way – by signing the patron name on the card and putting it in the sign-out box.

As for book returns and donations, **please put them in the drop box. Do not try to reshelve books!** Thank you.

When the books are restored to the library, staff will be removing old, unused, and second-copy books prior to doing an inventory. This will probably not be completed before mid-February.



## CURIO CABINETS

by Gussie Dimmick - #160

January is a good time to think about tropical places. So the next display will be ISLANDS IN THE SUN: THE CARIBBEAN. We're featuring the flora and fauna of the islands, as well as the history of the natives who first lived there. Your framed pictures that show the islands are also welcome, as well as your souvenirs and memorabilia.

The current holiday display will come down on Tuesday, January 7, 10-12 a.m. and 4:30-5:30 p.m. Items for ISLANDS IN THE SUN: THE CARIBBEAN will be gladly accepted on Thursday, January 9, 10-12 a.m. and 4:30-5:30 p.m.



## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW BOOKS THE BOOK SELECTION GROUP

by Tom Fararo - #214

Given the work that remains to be done on the lower level, please watch for updates as to where these recently purchased books will be available for borrowing.

*The Siberian Dilemma* by Martin Cruz Smith. Fiction. The latest novel in the Russian crime series featuring detective Arkady Renko takes the reader to Siberia and frozen Lake Baikal. "Fans of Arkady Renko will be pleased" (*Kirkus Review*).

*Blue Moon* by Lee Child. Fiction. The 24<sup>th</sup> Jack Reacher novel. The author is said to be "at the top of his game in this nail-biter" (*Publishers Weekly Starred Review*).

*The Deserter* by Nelson DeMille and Alex DeMille. Fiction. "DeMille and son provide authentic detail, lively dialogue, a vividly drawn setting, and an exhilarating plot" (*Publishers Weekly Starred Review*).

*Three Things About Elsie* by Joanna Cannon. Fiction. An assisted living facility is the setting for this mystery. "The novel breathes with suspense, providing along the way piercing, poetic descriptions, countless tiny mysteries, and breathtaking little reveals" (*Kirkus Starred Review*).

*The Land of Long-Lost Friends* by Alexander McCall Smith. Fiction. No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency #20 "delivers a moving, often poignant yet uplifting note on the loss of the old ways of African village life" (*Book Reporter*).

*Tiffany Blues* by M. J. Rose. Fiction. A young woman enters Mr. Tiffany's artists' colony in the 1920s. "A lush, mesmerizing story" (*Kirkus Review*).

*The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11* by Garrett Graff. Nonfiction. The author draws upon never-before-published transcripts, recently declassified documents, original interviews, and oral histories from nearly five hundred government officials, first responders, witnesses

survivors, friends, and family members. "This is history at its most immediate and moving ... A marvelous and memorable book" (*Jon Meacham*). "Graff paints the most vivid and human portrait of the September 11 attacks yet" (*Goodreads*). "Wrenching, highly personal accounts of 9/11 and its aftermath" (*Kirkus Starred Review*).

*The Body: A Guide for Occupants* by Bill Bryson. Nonfiction. "A pleasing, entertaining sojourn into the realm of what makes us tick" (*Kirkus Review*).

*Edison* by Edmund Morris. Biography. "Not only the definitive life, but a tour de force by a master" (*Kirkus Starred Review*).



## FOCUS ON THE WORLD

presents

*Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence*

Thursday, January 16, 7:15 p.m.

by Julie Eden - #290

Focus on the World presents a documentary film, *Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence*, Thursday, Jan. 16, beginning at 7:15 p.m., in the auditorium.

The film (51 minutes) explores what happens after media attention moves on and the wider public becomes numb to "just another shooting." It draws from conversations with ER chaplains and trauma surgeons, police officers and ATF officials, survivors and victims' families, students and school counselors, and others. *Trigger* examines the "ripple effect" that one shooting has on a survivor, a family, a community, and a society ([IMDb.com](http://IMDb.com)).

After the film is shown, there will be an opportunity for small group discussion.

## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

by Bruce Cooper - #715

This column will highlight information from U.S. government agencies that compiled the 4<sup>th</sup> National Climate Assessment in 2018.

### **This Month's Agency - U.S. Department of Defense**

In September, the department released *A Climate Security Report for America* with the following guidelines:

**Demonstrate Leadership:** Make Climate Change a Vital National Security Priority.

**Assess Climate Risks:** Maintain Unprecedented Foresight about Climate Change.

**Support Allies and Partners:** Reinforce U.S. National Security and Compete on the World Stage by Bolstering Climate Resilience Abroad.

**Prepare for and Prevent Climate Impacts:** Build U.S. Resilience to Climate Change Risks and Reduce Their Scale and Scope.

**A quote:** *"Climate change is the greatest challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For our future national security, economic well-being, international order, and quality of life, it is essential that the United States step forward and lead. . . (W)e have the opportunity to transform this challenge into tremendous opportunities for technological advancement, sustainable growth and global cooperation."*

### **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 75 co-sponsors. Learn more about the bill at [www.energyinnovationact.org](http://www.energyinnovationact.org) and tell Congress to pass it quickly.

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

## ODE TO THE LIBERTY AVENUE EL

(Brooklyn and Queens, NYC)

by Jean Kabbert - #371

The Avenue vibrated under your heavy tracks,  
fell asleep to the music of your moan.

To City Liners you were a Coney Island roller  
coaster,  
made tic-tac-toe designs on their faces below.

Under your cool shadow you forced us to shout,  
as we shopped the Avenue for pots or petunias.  
We set our clocks by your trains.

You brought home work-tired fathers,  
took us to the magic of Big Apple theatres,  
gently rocked us home from hospital or school.

Under your canopy of noise and dirt,  
a butt of our complaints,  
you made us community.  
We made you our common enemy.

Your screeching halts echoed like loud thunder.  
*Close your eyes*, mothers warned, as  
your web of wood and steel hurled down  
specks  
of metal flecks 'til white pinafores looked like  
dotted swiss.

Seated upon upturned orange crates,  
old men gathered in early morn to share the  
day's stories.

Bent backs braced against storefront windows,  
they gathered in your shade, their words  
punctuated by tobacco smoke and train sounds,  
their tales in sync with your timetable.

At three PM your magic changed.  
Children skated from post to post, young fingers  
Anxiously reaching out to grab your steel arms  
to stop a fall.

Today's storyteller has no respite, no pause,  
to recall the punchline as you rattle overhead.  
Today's dark-eyed children dream no more  
than TV dreams,  
never having heard your syncopated sound of  
faraway places.

## THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE

by Jane Lavender - #253

On the right side of Route 19, as you are going north, sits a building that might have been a barn but now has a sign saying COMTRA. Actually, it was an old beat-up barn when I first saw it in the 1970s. I could stand outside and see right through and out the other side and thought it might collapse at any moment. Fortunately, Marie Teets, a former resident at Sherwood Oaks, looked at it with very different eyes. She had been running a summer theater in a tent on the adjacent property (now Piazza Plaza), and she had dreams.

Marie had studied theater arts at Geneva College and had worked with the travel industry. But she truly loved the theater and acting and had always wished to have a year-round theater in Cranberry. Fortunately, she had the gifts of tenacity and perseverance to make this dream a reality.

In 1983 Marie purchased the property. Bit by bit, as money would allow, it was cleaned out and brought up to code. Used seats were installed, and it became a theater in-the-round and on a shoestring. The seating slopes up from a central stage, with entrances for actors at all four corners. There are raised areas at the corners for balcony or upper-level scenes. Over the years, mics and lights, new seating for 142 patrons, and carpeting have slowly been added to make a unique and welcoming theater.

Residents Betty Tolbert and Betty Cecil, good friends of Marie's, were involved with COMTRA for many years. Marie even talked me into directing the nuns'

chorus in "The Sound of Music" three different times. She was hard to refuse. Christiane Majeski was one of the nuns. There may be other residents who have trod the boards on that stage.

Marie's dream came true and has lasted for more than 30 years. Oh, yes, COMTRA was chosen as a name combining the comedy and tragedy masks that have long represented theater arts.

Most of the presentations now are musicals and run for three weeks. The January play is scheduled to be "Dogfight," which is about a Marine returning from Vietnam. Watch the papers or check on-line for upcoming productions. A Sherwood bus can be arranged for a group.

## QUARTERLY FOOD DRIVE

January 19-25, 2020

by Julie Eden - #290

Our next Gleaners Food Bank collection will be held Sunday, January 19, through Saturday, January 25. Donation boxes will be in the Scooter Room on the benches.

Non-perishable food items, paper products (*these should be individual items, not large packages, please*), personal hygiene items, and checks are welcome. *Be sure the sell-by date has not expired on food items.*

Checks, made payable to Gleaners Food Bank, can be deposited in the labeled box. Monetary donations are used to buy items such as milk, fresh produce, and meat, which are always much appreciated.

Questions? Contact me!

## WHO ARE YOU?

by Kelley Noble - #189

The SORA Continued Learning Committee sent out 270 questionnaires in early November. These were placed in the independent living and personal care mailboxes, leading to 50 responses, some of which were incomplete.

Here is some of what was learned:

I attend Continued Learning programs

Often—19 Sometimes—29 Never—2

Which time of day do you prefer?

AM—16 PM—22 Doesn't matter—11

Would you attend afternoon programs?

Yes (after 2 PM)—1 Yes—44 No—5

The greatest interest in future programs was concentrated on the Pittsburgh area, Sherwood Oaks residents, and Bill Markus. Other topics of interest (in no particular order) included the following:

- whom to choose for President in 2020
- crafts, hobbies, books
- health or medical ethics
- non-political programs
- Focus on the World and world news
- the environment, ecology, environmental safety
- geography; politics and history; current events
- anything
- astronomy
- nature
- Civilization
- classical subjects such as philosophy, literature, music
- variety
- sports
- Christian speakers

- activities at the age of 80
- travel experiences

In response to the question “What interests you least?” here are the answers:

- arty things
- political or medical (health) issues, practical medical stuff, partisan politics
- any subject that keeps us aware of what the rest of the world is focusing on
- global warming
- residents' careers
- current affairs
- Hollywood stars
- Pittsburgh history, buildings, etc.
- anthropology
- art, photography
- National Parks, travel, cultures
- how it all works at 86
- technicalities of residents' former professions.

Other comments mentioned that most of the programs had been interesting or that the respondent had not yet found any that weren't.

The last question asked was: Are you interested in joining the SORA Continued Learning Committee? Only one person answered, “Yes.”

**WHO ARE YOU?** Please call me. We need you!



### Out of the mouths of ....

*Zachary* (age 7): I don't want to eat turkey on Thanksgiving because it is a real animal. *Dad* (to Grandma): I guess I'm going to have to have a talk with him about chicken nuggets.

## FRIENDS FOR THREESCORE YEARS AND TEN!

by Jean Henderson - #611

Our long-time resident Agnes Peebles and three of her friends met a few months ago to celebrate 70 years of friendship that began at the former United Presbyterian Church in Plain Grove, Lawrence County.

Many different venues have served as their gathering places, but this 70<sup>th</sup> annual meeting for the four friends, all in their 90s, was at our Sherwood Oaks Café. Age and time seem to slip away when they get together, amidst hugs and smiles and reminiscing.

For this special celebration, a few local newspapers, including the *Cranberry Eagle*, sent reporters to prepare feature articles. One of the women declared to the reporter, "We have all of our marbles still!" And another quickly added, "Even though we don't always roll 'em," which brought loud laughs from the lifelong friends.

We rejoice that Sherwood Oaks is a place where friends can gather again and again, even for 70 years ... or more!



Photo by Kim Alwine

Left to right: Agnes Peebles, 100 years old on Jan. 1, Evelyn Smith of New Wilmington, Jane Book of New Castle, and Helen Hammerschmidt of Plain Grove.



## SORA PROGRAM COMMITTEE PRESENTS

### The Beo String Quartet

by Jean Henderson - #611

On Tuesday, January 21, 2020, at 7:15 p.m. in the Auditorium, Sherwood Oaks will welcome the Pittsburgh-based Beo String Quartet.

As a 21<sup>st</sup>-century quartet, its members are not only performers, but also educators, composers, collaborators with living composers, and participants in our global culture through a strong social media presence. Now in its fifth season, Beo has performed over 80 concert works in the US and Europe – including 30 world premieres – and produced dozens of recordings and music videos. Its educational outreach has been shared with more than 3000 students to-date.

Beo (pronounced BAY-oh) is known for performing original works and projects that cannot be heard performed by other ensembles. A recent project, composed by Beo's violist, Sean Neukom, and written for three string quartets – one live and two digital – was premiered at Virginia Tech University in 2017. Beo also enjoys short-term residencies at colleges and universities, as well as an annual residency at Dakota Chamber Music.

So, an invitation to all of you! 'In the bleak mid-winter,' do come and enjoy this talented string quartet!

Just to make it clear, not all disruptions are in response to emergencies!



Photo by Rabe Marsh

## **RENOVATIONS TO PERSONAL CARE**

by Lori A. Greer

Regional PC/AL Administrator  
UPMC Senior Communities

Personal Care has been planning a renovation project for the past few years. Work began on Monday, December 2, 2019, and is expected to last through March 2020. A temporary wall was built, and plastic hung, to keep the workspace isolated and inaccessible until the area is completed and cleared of any work materials.

The project was initiated to provide a more functional dining area for residents. Additional features will include the ability of the chef to do some cooking on the unit and also the addition of a dish room, so that items do not have to be transported back and forth from the main kitchen.

Residents have their own laundry facility in Personal Care. Since they had requested additional machines to reduce wait time, we included this in the project, and it will be completed in the first phase.

The public restroom on Personal Care is also being renovated as part of phase one. Our two smaller bathrooms are being converted into one larger, handicap-accessible restroom.

The project does not change the floor plan of the unit nor affect resident rooms. We appreciate everyone's patience during this renovation project. The residents and staff are looking forward to the updated Personal Care quarters in 2020!!!

## **“SPEEDING UP AND SLOWING DOWN AGING!”**

by Jean Henderson - #611

### What Speeds Aging UP:

- 1) Inflammation – A natural defense against infection, it can go overboard and boost our risk for diabetes and cancer.
- 2) Metabolism – A protein determines when to grow new cells, but it can misfire and speed up with age.
- 3) Macromolecular damage – Some mischief-making compounds can cause aging by messing with our DNA.
- 4) Proteostasis – The body’s ability to heal itself is reduced as we age.
- 5) Stem cells – The process for developing these body-building cells slows down as we age.
- 6) Stress response – Both physical and emotional stress, such as losing a spouse or caregiving, take a greater physical toll as we age.

### What Slows Aging DOWN:

- 1) Fruits and vegetables – Each of over 20,000 nutrients has a unique role in fighting age-related damage to our bodies.
- 2) Lean protein – Our bodies hold on to muscle better with at least 25 to 30 grams per meal.
- 3) Strength training – This helps improve mobility and metabolism by maintaining muscle.
- 4) Aerobic exercise – This means walking, running, biking, or just moving for a minimum of 30 minutes 5 times a week.

- 5) Sunscreen and sunshades – These help reduce sun exposure, which damages DNA.
- 6) Vacation – Going on vacation can offset chronic stress, which speeds aging by reducing inflammation (see no. 1, above!).
- 7) Weight loss – Losing extra pounds, especially around the middle, can help reduce inflammation (see no. 1, above, again!).

*(Based on an article in AARP: The Magazine, June/July 2019, p. 60)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## **THOUGHTS ABOUT TREES**

Trees are poems that earth writes upon  
the sky,  
We fell them down and turn them into  
paper,  
That we may record our emptiness.

– *Kahlil Gibran*

I think that I shall never see  
A billboard lovely as a tree.  
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall,  
I'll never see a tree at all.

– *Ogden Nash*

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

– *Joyce Kilmer*

As the poet said, "only God can make a tree," probably because it's so hard to figure out how to get the bark on.

– *Woody Allen*

## A COWBOY TALE

by Don Gowan - #173

My uncle Alfred Gowan was a great storyteller. He was the last of my uncles to die, and he told me this story the last time I visited him. He asked me if I knew of Badger Clark, who had been poet laureate of South Dakota when I was a student at the University of South Dakota. I said that I did, and that led to his story. Uncle Alfred, who had been Dean of Sioux Falls College for many years, had been retired for some time, but he had recently attended a meeting there. He had chatted with a young minister, who told him about her experiences learning about life in the West. After graduating from Andover Newton Seminary in Massachusetts, she had made a drastic change in location by taking as her first pastorate a Baptist Church in Timberlake, South Dakota (pop. 440), out on the prairies west of the Missouri River.

One evening, she answered a knock on the door to see two cowboys, who apologized for disturbing her, saying that they had come to town needing a minister and had been directed to her home. Their friend had died that day, they said, and they had buried him out on the prairie, but then they didn't feel right about it. There should have been a minister to say the appropriate words, they explained. Would she be willing to come with them and do just that?

She decided that she should do it. Riding out to the gravesite in the truck with them, she pondered what she could say. She had read the work of Badger Clark, as she was getting acquainted with life in the West, and recalled one of his poems that she had

memorized. When they reached the grave, therefore, she recited his poem "The Cowboy's Prayer," and the friends seemed to be deeply moved. On the way back to town, they thanked her profusely for doing just what they had hoped a minister would do. I would guess that this led the community to think she would fit right in, no matter how far she had come from her previous home way back east. Things can still be different West of the River.

Having told me that, Uncle Alfred went upstairs to his study and brought down a postcard that he had bought at the Wall Drug Store (you know about it), on which was printed that very poem, Badger Clark's "A Cowboy's Prayer." He gave it to me. Here are the first lines:

Oh Lord, I've never lived where  
churches grow.

I love creation better as it stood

That day You finished it so long ago

And looked upon Your work and  
called it good.

You may see now that my story is not so much about an Andover Newton graduate and two cowboys as it is about Badger Clark, the Cowboy Poet. I still have the postcard.



## ERRATUM

In the December *ACORN*, we misprinted Jean McLaughlin's telephone number at the end of an article about the swimming pool and spa. Once they are again available to us, please call her at 724-591-5584 if you have any questions about the Aquacize classes or anything else related to the pool.



## LETTER TO FOLKS THINKING ABOUT MOVING TO A CCRC

Dear Tony and Cindy,

Barbara told me that you were planning on moving to a CCRC! That is great news, and I hope you will give Sherwood Oaks serious consideration. After living here for four years, I'd like to offer you a few search tips the Marketing folks might not mention.

**Dogs.** Most CCRCs permit pets, though some have curious restrictions ("Not more than 50 pounds." Fifty pounds of parakeets is a lot!) As you look around, note how many dogs are about, and if they are under control and seem well-mannered and simpatico. Are there dogs walking inside the main building? How do the staff and other residents interact with them? How many know their names?

**Staff.** Watch interactions between staff and residents. Are they standing easy? Do they know each other's names? Are they smiling or laughing? A pleasant staff makes a happy home.

**Noise.** Are there public places that are quiet – where you can hear yourself think or just sit in peace? A library, maybe? Then go into the dining room and listen at mealtime. It should be noisy! Lots of happy talk is a good sign, even if it is loud. (They are all hard of hearing and just trying to talk over each other!) And while you are in the dining room: do the residents know their servers' names? And do the servers know their patrons' names and drink orders?

I hope to see you in our Marketing office soon!

Dennis Lynch - #335



### HELP IS ON THE WAY

by Robert Typanski - #190

When we have problems  
that give us much pain,  
we hope they get resolved  
so we can move on again.

We should always realize  
there is another source.  
One that helps us, but  
we must set the course.

He tells us we should start  
and to honestly try.  
Then if we need Him,  
He will stay by our side.

We should feel Someone near,  
although He never appears.  
He is telling us that He  
will help address our fears.

When we think we can't do it,  
we should seek His support.  
He will show what is needed,  
so that we won't fall short.

He is always helping,  
but not doing it each day.  
He guides us in our search  
to find our own way.

## NUTCRACKERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

by Monika Dalrymple - #200

Even as a child, I always liked the nutcrackers' display of pompous garbs and fierce looks. I had a small (mind you, a *very* small) collection of them. They also were quite proficient at the actual job of cracking nuts.

As with many old crafts, there was a legend connecting the earthly with the not-so-earthly realm. They were made to look fierce, in the hope that they would scare off evil spirits from entering into the homes of their owners. The story has lasted to this day. Indeed, it seems to have helped me as well.

As a young adult, due to my lifestyle at the time, the nutcrackers took a backseat to life as it came. But, after I got married and settled into my life here in the US, the nutcrackers seem to have come back into my life. Indeed, I started collecting them in the 1980s.

Their history started long ago, sometime in the 17th century near the mountain range of Central Europe called the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains), at the northern border of the Czech Republic. Many metals were mined there, including copper, silver, and gold. After several centuries of mining, the ores became more difficult to remove, so other means of earning money took priority. One of these was whittling wood, which passed the time and brought some income to the needy of the area. A craftsman of the town of Schleiffen seems to have been the first nutcracker designer.

This tradition is still practiced by German craftsmen in the Ore mountains. I was born a little south of

these mountains, and was often captivated by the stories of my mother and grandmother about the art of making nutcrackers.

My purchases have taken place during vacations in Germany, as I browsed through antique shops, visited local craft shops, and Christmas markets. Others were, of course, bought online.

I am now the owner of about 207 nutcrackers, from the very small and the very tall to every size in between. Other than the tiny tree ornaments, some of which are duplicated, I have managed to find different ones everywhere I looked.

I hope you have a chance to stop by the corridor on the first floor of the Lakeside Apartments, where you may enjoy the variety of colors and sizes of these protectors of my abode.

*See the back cover for a colorful sample of the nutcracker displays.*



Photo by Tabby Alford

## CHAPEL NOTES

Leading Chapel Services in January:

Sunday, January 5

The Rev. David Gieschen  
Sherwood Oaks

Sunday, January 12

The Rev. Moni McIntyre  
Calvary Episcopal Church  
Communion will be celebrated.

Sunday, January 19

The Rev. Connie Frierson  
Calvin Presbyterian Church

Sunday, January 26

The Rev. Brian Janssen  
Heritage Presbyterian Church

Services begin at 2 p.m. in the Auditorium.  
Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

Remember the new Chapel Flower program,  
described in the November *ACORN*, to honor an  
important person in your life.

**The pages of your past cannot be rewritten,  
but the pages of your future are blank.**

**– Zig Ziglar**

Gary Brandenberger (#602)  
Chapel Committee



## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The walls of books around me, dense with  
the past, formed a kind of insulation  
against the present world and its  
disasters.

– Ross Macdonald, novelist (1915-1983)

## *IN MEMORIAM*

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

*Carol Caum*

*November 30, 2019*

*Andrew Briskar*

*December 6, 2019*

*Mary Frank*

*December 9, 2019*

*Henry Herchenroether*

*December 17, 2019*

## CHAPEL ACTIVITIES

*As the cleanup proceeds, please contact  
the front desk for temporary locations.*

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

Fourth Sunday

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.





Photos by Rabe Marsh and Monika Dalrymple