

# THE ACORN

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

January 2021 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 22, No. I

*“Whew! 2020 is finally in the rearview mirror!”*



*Gentle Readers,*

*Guess what! It's finally 2021, a brand new year full of possibilities. There's a lot to be optimistic about: a coronavirus vaccine to be widely distributed; new energy coming to the federal Administration; greater interest and involvement characterizing our younger people; more and more Non-Governmental Organizations finding new ways to support the needy among us; and much more.*

*Here at Sherwood Oaks, we know it will take some time to open up again. We particularly regret that we will have to wait indefinitely to get to know our new residents and vice versa. Patience, friends! It, too, will happen.*

*In the meantime, we have some articles in the current issue with suggestions on how we can help each other even without visiting in person. We are also welcoming submissions from residents that allow us to find out interesting things about each other that might not have come up otherwise. And, of course, we are always glad to hear suggestions from any of you about new areas of possible interest to others.*

*Here are a few Mottoes for the Elderly [shared by Ron Ouellette - #221] to make us smile in the meantime:*

- Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.
- It's weird being the same age as old people.
- When I was a kid I wanted to be older ... this is not what I expected.
- Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter.
- Chocolate is God's way of telling us He likes us a little bit chubby.
- It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.
- I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

Rosemary Coffey & Ruth Becker

## ***THE ACORN***

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Submissions for the February issue must be sent to the Editors no later than

**January 15, 2021.**

### **REMINDER!**

Please take a look at our college-age selves on p. 7 and see how many you recognize before you confirm your guesses with the identification box on p. 15. Do share your photos **from the time of your first job** for the next issue!

### **JANUARY CALENDAR**

New Year's Day	Jan. 1
Epiphany	Jan. 6
Orthodox Christmas	Jan. 7
Orthodox New Year	Jan. 14
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	Jan. 18
Inauguration Day	Jan. 20

## WILLIAM S. LEFLER - #103

By Connie Brandenberger - #602



Photo from a *Nation* Cruise

Some of our residents might recognize Bill if we were not disguised behind our masks at this time. He has been a regular visitor at Sherwood Oaks for the last two years, during which time he enjoyed eating meals in the Dining Room and attending programs in the Auditorium. In October, he finally made Sherwood Oaks his permanent home, with thanks to Rosemary Coffey for introducing him to our community.

Bill was raised in Pittsburgh, where he graduated from Langley High School and attended Point Park College until the Vietnam War intervened. He spent four years in the U.S. Air Force as an Automatic Flight Control Technician. After his discharge, Bill had a 33-years-long career with IBM as both an employee and a consultant. He held various positions in data processing, equipment repair, worldwide automation efforts, technical writing, and developing manufacturing logistics software. Employees of IBM explained that their initials meant **I've Been Moved**, which he proved by traveling through the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Western Europe.

Since his retirement in 2000, Bill has been enjoying working with his hands. He built a very unusual house in the form of an icosagon, a design with 20 sides. He has been active with Habitat for Humanity and has helped friends remodel their homes. He expects to be taking advantage of our Wood Shop when he has time, and he is eager to use his PC skills to help with computer technology at Sherwood Oaks.

For many years Bill was a "snowbird," spending winters in Florida to be near his son and daughter, nine grandchildren, and a great-grandchild, who live there permanently (with another expected in January). In the summer he would return north to spend time in Pittsburgh, where his mother resided until her death last year. Bill has always taken advantage of the cultural activities of Pittsburgh, including volunteering as an usher at seven different local theaters presenting both plays and concerts.

Bill has enjoyed taking long road trips in the U.S., sometimes camping along the way and trying to see as much of the country as possible. One of his most memorable adventures was driving to and from a conference in Colorado, visiting many national parks along the way.

Over his lifetime, Bill has belonged to many Protestant religious organizations. In 2012 he was introduced to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), to which he felt an instant connection, as he has been a pacifist most of his life. He has now become more involved through his association with the Friends, becoming a member of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting in Shadyside and attending the Fourth Sunday Meeting in the Sherwood Oaks Chapel before the pandemic.

We welcome Bill and his enthusiasm to be an active part of our community as – to use the Quaker phrase – Way opens.

## ALEXANDER FEDDERS

By Denton Bond - #736



Photo by Denton Bond

Alexander Fedders is a new patrol person who joined our campus in August. Alex is appreciative of the opportunity to work in a retirement community, which he considers a public service.

As a high school student, Alex worked in the food service department at Providence Point, a retirement facility in Pittsburgh. He believes that experience has led him to where he is today as a patrol person. It seems to be in his genes, as his father was the Director of Security at the Providence Point facility. Alexander is here at least four days each week.

Alex grew up in the town of Canonsburg, which, by the way, is the home of both Perry Como and Sarris Candies. He attended Penn State and Edinboro univer-

sities and has a special interest in world history and geography.

Alex received his first security training during his two years working for the Transportation Security Administration at Pittsburgh International Airport. Recently he underwent UPMC training, which included de-escalation tactics. The program, titled “Verbal Judo,” focused on learning how to communicate with a person who is being disruptive or combative. Other parts of this training included a psychological test, First Aid, CPR, and AED usage.

Alexander’s favorite part of the job is making the rounds while driving the daily shuttle bus. In addition, he very much appreciates the encouraging signs that residents have posted throughout the community thanking all employees for their extra service at this time.

Alex’s interests are currently focused on the plans he and his fiancée are making for a March wedding. They have been sweethearts since they were at Canon-Mcmillan High School. He and his fiancée, who recently earned a degree in psychology from Southern New Hampshire University, live nearby in Cranberry Village. With a keen interest in computers, Alex has, part by part, built his current unit. Computer games will continue to play a big part in his life – at least until he gets married!

Alexander’s enthusiasm for working here was clearly evident in the course of our conversation.



“There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn’t true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true.” – Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*

## WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA?

(SO Residents Association)

By Jean Henderson, Secretary - #611

**NOTE: Complete minutes are always available for review on the SORA mail-room bulletin board, on the SO APP, and in the SORA Library binder.**

Summary of reports and actions for December 15, 2020, board meeting:

**The meeting was not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** The following reports were submitted and dispersed as minutes.

**TREASURERS:** Balance for Memorial and Special Projects is \$61,382.79. The Employee Appreciation Fund balance is \$163,120.97. Over \$153,000 was given to employees by residents – 35 cents per hour worked – a two-cent increase from last year. Thank you for your generosity!

### **LIAISON REPORTS:**

**Sherwood Gifts.** November sales were \$787. \$4000 was donated to the Memorial/Special Projects Fund.

**Dining Services.** Personal Care dining room renovations are complete. Please use comment cards.

**Health Affairs.** All employees are screened prior to start of shift, and vendors are screened prior to start of service. Number of falls this quarter was 31: 24 were in the home; 22 involved injuries.

**Continued Learning.** Plans are underway to use Channel 900 for special programming. Handel's MESSIAH will be broadcast December 23 at 6 p.m.

**Bells.** A Christmas Concert will be presented on Channel 900 during the holiday season.

**Name Badges.** Stan Foster reported that badges were distributed December 6 to 185 IL and 6 PC residents. The cost was \$681.84. 140 lanyards are in inventory for future use. The Welcoming Committee will oversee future distribution of badges.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Census in IL is 217 units occupied. SNU is 36/43. Personal Care is 35/42. Oak Grove is 28/30. Watch for COVID-19 and vaccine information on Channel 900 and in Annette McPeek's FYIs.

## LIVING WITH LOSS

By Jean Henderson - #611

**LITERATURE ABOUT LOSS** – Dozens of potentially helpful books and pamphlets in dealing with loss are available in the Paperback Room in our Library. No need to check them out – just borrow and return. Look on the right as you enter.

**A PRAYER FOR END OF DAY** – Creator God, by whose mercy and might the world turns safely from light to darkness and to light again: we give into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes, knowing that only those things you bless will prosper. To your great love and protection we commit each other and all for whom we have prayed, knowing that you are our sure defender. Amen.

**SERVICE OF LOVE** – If you would like a copy of the bulletin for this year's service, held on December 21, please contact me at 724-553-5203.

### *IN MEMORIAM*

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

*Louise McKee*

*December 3, 2020*

*Jane Mallory*

*December 3, 2020*

*Rolf Rolles*

*December 8, 2020*

## FOCUS ON THE WORLD

Quarterly Collection for  
Gleaners' Food Bank

**Sunday, Jan. 16 - Saturday, Jan. 21**

Submitted by Agnes Peebles - #324

It is a new year – and the need for the work of the Gleaners' Food Bank has not diminished. Linda Peery, director, writes this: "In October and especially November, we started having new, as well as former, clients, sign up, as jobs were lost and/or incomes reduced. Many had lost jobs months ago, so now they need our help, as they find themselves turning to a food bank. We are also seeing more first-time food bank families signing up. I expect this need to continue."

We who have our dinners brought to our doors every day may find it hard to imagine waiting in line for a meal over in St. Ferdinand's parking lot, yet that is what many of our neighbors have been forced to do. It is in response to this need that Focus on the World sponsors the quarterly collection.

During this pandemic, we will not collect food items. Instead, we can help buy food to stock Gleaners' shelves. Checks (made out to Gleaners' Food Bank) and cash donations may be placed in cubby 358 during the week of Jan. 16. Thanks in advance for your support!

## NO LONGER MISSING

By Ann Ferguson - #169

The hunt for the missing gnomes has come to an end. These mischievous creatures have been found and noted by Diane Neely, who is an avid walker around Sherwood Oaks. As she accomplished her miles of steps, she located all 30 of the loose creatures by December 5 at 1:15 p.m. They were on posts, under benches, in Christmas decorations, yelling for the Steelers, and hanging on for dear life in various locations.

Congratulations to Diane Neely!

## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #715

This column highlights information from US government agencies that authored the 4th National Climate Assessment in 2018.

**This Month's Agency: National Science Foundation; website: <https://www.nsf.gov>**

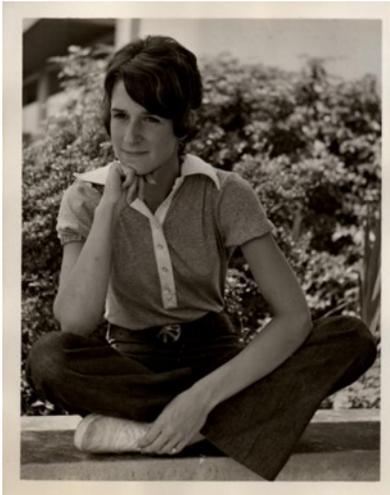
**"Climate change is the most important puzzle humankind has attempted to solve."**

Researchers funded by NSF have discovered signs of a changing climate in nearly every corner of the globe, from the icy expanses of Earth's polar regions to its equatorial ecosystems. Our planet's climate affects – and is affected by – the sky, land, ice, sea, life, and the people found on it. To piece together the entire puzzle of climate change – what we know, what we still have to learn, and what humankind can do to prepare for the future – we must study all of the physical, natural, and human systems that contribute to and interact with Earth's climate system.

As researchers piece together the climate puzzle, they are revolutionizing the way we understand the Earth system as a whole. Researchers have realized that they must reach across disciplinary boundaries to study questions that extend beyond any one field of science or engineering. In fact, because of the complexity of Earth's climate, this research involves contributions from nearly every field of science, mathematics, and engineering.

### Current "Carbon Tax" Legislation

Learn more about the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend bill, with 82 co-sponsors, at [www.energyinnovationact.org](http://www.energyinnovationact.org). For constantly updated information on the climate crisis, follow @CCLSlipperyRock on Facebook.



1

Here we are in our college years ... how many of us do you recognize?

See p. 15 for the answers when you're ready!



6 & 7



2



4



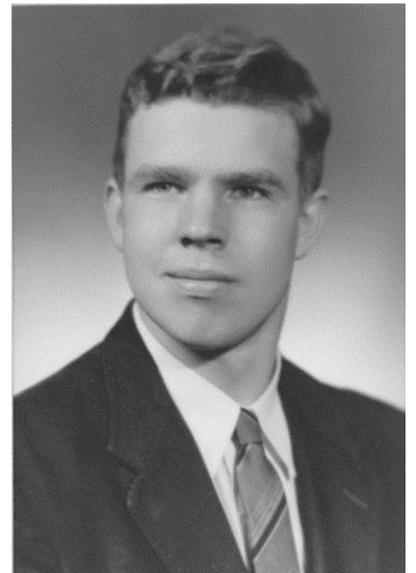
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9

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

Atomic Love	Fields, Jennie	c. 2020	F FIE
Double Trouble	Meyer, Gabrielle	c. 2020	F MEY
The Evening and the Morning	Follett, Ken	c. 2020	F FOL
A Fallen Petal	Herne, Ruth Logan	c. 2020	F HER
Locked On	Clancy, Tom	c. 2011	F CLA
Piece of My Heart	Clark, Mary Higgins	c. 2020	F CLA
Pontoon	Keillor, Garrison	c. 2007	F KEI L.T.
RED		c. 2010	F RED DVD
The Return	Sparks, Nicholas	c. 2020	F SPA
A Saint from Texas	White, Edmund	c. 2020	F WHI
A Time for Mercy	Grisham, John	c. 2020	F GRI
The White Queen	Gregory, Philippa	c. 2009	F GRE L.T.

## **NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES**

Ana's Story	Bush, Jenna	c. 2007	362.19 BUS
Chuck Noll: A Winning Way	O'Brien, Jim	c. 2013	796.33 O'BR p.b.
Crisis of Character	Byrne, Gary J.	c. 2016	973.92 BYR
The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington	Meltzer, Brad	c. 2018	973.41 MEL
Islam and the Jews	Gabriel, Mark A.	c. 2003	297.2 GAB p.b.
Left of Boom: How a Young CIA Case Officer Penetrated the Taliban and al-Qaeda	Laux, Douglas	c. 2016	958.104 LAU
Pilgrimage: My Search for the Real Pope Francis	Shriver, Mark K.	c. 2016	282.09 SHR
Silver Hair: A Handbook	Massey, Lorraine	c. 2017	646.7 MAS p.b.
Things That Matter	Krauthammer, Charles	c. 2015	814.6 KRA p.b.
Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts & Maps	Wilson, Neil S.	c. 2001	220.3 WIL p.b.
Uprising: Who the Hell Said You Can't Ditch and Switch	Hardaway, Lynnette	c. 2020	320.092 HAR
A Very Stable Genius: Donald J. Trump's Testing of America	Rucker, Philip and Carol Leonnig	c. 2020	973.93 RUC
Waging Peace on Islam	Mallouhi, Christine A.	c. 2002	261 MAL p.b.



Wild Turkeys at Sherwood Oaks

Photo by Jno Hunt

## MORE HOLIDAY MEMORIES

*Just like the last of the holiday cookies and candy, we have saved a few more delicious recollections from Sherwood residents for the New Year. Savor them, then pack them away till new memories are made in 2021.*

### CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

By Bill Paul - #167

Planted firmly in my memory is an event that unfolded when I was eight years old and walking behind my parents on our way to a community Christmas Eve service. The sidewalk was already covered with snow, which continued to fall. My heart was bursting with anticipation and feelings of love. Without thinking, I did what I would likely have done on a school playground to a favored girl classmate: I made a soft snowball and tossed it underhanded at my mother's back. Unfortunately, I didn't calculate the distance properly. Instead of it becoming a soft loving pat on the middle of her backside, which was what I intended, it landed on the back of her neck. She turned quickly and began to brush the snow away. My father, however, not realizing the love gift I had meant it to be, let me know in no uncertain terms that my tossing a snowball at my mother was not at all appreciated. What was for me a sign of my love misfired, and I could not at the time find the words to explain my intent. Forgiveness came quickly, however, and Christmas that year was another childhood joy.



## CHRISTMAS ACROSS THE WORLD

By Pete & Carolyn Broeren - #739

In 1986 our oldest son Rob decided to skip his senior year in high school and study for the International Baccalaureate Degree at the Armand Hammer United World College in Montezuma, New Mexico. So in August we sent him off to study with 200 students from more than 100 different nations. His roommate was guaranteed to be a person from a different culture. Later in the fall, the College requested that each American student host another student over the holidays who could not return home. Rob called us to ask if he could invite Iwo Bender, a student from Lublin, Poland, to join us for Christmas. We quickly agreed, and everything was set up for the trip.

Then a week before Christmas, Rob called to say that there might be a snag. It turned out that Iwo's father, a professor at the University of Lublin, would be in Washington, DC, over Christmas on an exchange program in US-Polish relations. He wondered if it might be possible to reunite father and son at our house. We immediately said Yes, so, several days before Christmas, Rob and Iwo flew to Pittsburgh, and Iwo's dad took a train here.

Christmas Eve dinner was not our family's major celebration, but unbeknownst to us, that's what it is in Poland. At the blessing there, families share the Opłatki, which is an unleavened wafer symbolizing family unity. Iwo's father brought half of the Opłatki from Lublin and shared it with our family, even as his wife and daughter would do at home.

On Christmas day, as we celebrated with our extended family, we made arrangements for Iwo and his dad to have a

conversation with their family in Poland. They were overjoyed. Traditions may be different, but Christmas often brings families together – sometimes across the world.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

By Ellen Brierly - #734

While Christmas evokes many fond memories, New Year's Eve stands out as even more memorable. Our church offered a celebration on that evening that included the whole family. The large Gothic church was resplendent in its beauty, and hundreds of people came to take part. Following entertainment and refreshments, we were invited into the sanctuary at 11 p.m. for a worship service. The singing was joyful, and God's Word faithfully spoken. The lights grew dim, as we lit our candles and felt the warm glow from them and from within. Our voices united in singing "Silent Night." Yes, all was calm and all was bright. Christ, the Savior, was born.

*Lit espalier surrounded by snow*



Photo by Peg Rychcik

## HAPPY 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO OLIVE TILLER

December 13, 2020

*The Baptist Pacifist Fellowship of North America announced the one-hundredth birthday of its founding board member, Olive Tiller, as follows:*

A lifelong peace activist, Olive has supported BPFNA since its inception, and even before, as she was active in the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship, which later transformed into the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. Olive and her late husband Carl Tiller were also the co-recipients of the Dahlberg Peace Award in 1991, which recognizes those who have made significant efforts in working for peace and justice over a period of time.

Her family reports that her health is OK, but not great, and that she lives in the Skilled Nursing portion of a retirement community. The limitations imposed by the virus shutdown have been hard for her, but she is mostly in good spirits.

As we celebrate this significant milestone in the life of Olive Tiller, we also remember how she helped BPFNA celebrate a historic 10<sup>th</sup> birthday of our own almost 27 years ago. On July 5, 1994, Olive gave a recorded speech to those present in Granville, OH, at that year's Summer Conference. In it, Olive shared ... her future vision for what she hoped the organization would become:

*And now I'm one of those older folks who dream dreams. And what are my dreams for the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America? Here are some:*

- *I dream that the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America will lead*

*the way in bridging the chasm that exists between races;*

- *I dream that the BPFNA will support urban youth in bringing peace to our cities;*
- *I dream that the BPFNA will initiate conciliation movements in areas of tension throughout the world;*
- *I dream that the BPFNA will establish itself as a non-governmental organization with consultative status at the United Nations and become a force for world peace;*
- *I dream that the BPFNA might establish zones of peace where people can come to solve problems;*
- *I dream that the BPFNA will become a champion of justice and human rights for all;*
- *I dream that the BPFNA will influence the passage of legislation for reducing the military budget and ending the Selective Service System [US];*
- *I dream that the BPFNA might create a tangible demonstration of peace somewhere – not a monument or a museum, but an ongoing festival, celebrating our oneness as a human family;*

*These are some of my dreams and prophecies on this 10<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. What are yours?"*

\* \* \* \* \*

We happily join the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship of North America in celebrating Olive Tiller's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Happy Belated Birthday, Olive, from everyone here at Sherwood Oaks!



## **NEW MEXICO DESERT**

By Mike Rose - #503

On top of a mountain  
in the New Mexico desert  
vaguely uncomfortable  
that I am alone  
amidst the beauty  
and the grandeur.

How egotistical can I be!  
I am not alone.

Living creatures abound  
who call this place home  
and who will be here  
when I am gone.

Lizards scurry from rock to rock  
searching for food and shelter.  
Insects take flight to escape the  
lizards  
and live on.

Eagles soar overhead  
searching for prey.

Grasshoppers hop  
where there is no grass.  
Scrub pines no taller than a man  
hang precariously  
on the mountain's edge  
fighting for sun and water.

They have all adapted and  
survived  
in this magnificent world  
and I look on with envy.

From *Parallel World/Places*

*We asked residents whose parents had lived at Sherwood Oaks to share their own reasons for moving here. Below are some of the responses:*

## **COMING HOME**

By Peg Rychcik - #297

The concept of a Life Care Community was generally an unfamiliar retirement option in the 1980s in Pittsburgh. As my parents, Louise and Ralph Allen, approached retirement, they were seeking that possibility in the area. My father's siblings were in a Life Care Community in Florida and New Mexico, which gave my parents greater insight as they did their research.

Sherwood Oaks offered all of the amenities on their checklist and more. They moved to their patio home in 1985, beginning what would become 28 years of fulfilling involvement and friendships in our Community.

Throughout those 28 years, my family witnessed their happiness, participated with them in recreational opportunities offered on campus, and saw firsthand the compassionate medical care they received.

Fast-forward thirty years to 2015, when Joe and I were preparing to retire and were seeking a Life Care Community. After 35 years in ordained ministry in four states, we had the opportunity to experience many types of such communities where our church members resided. We noted each in comparison with Sherwood Oaks. You guessed it: Sherwood Oaks always rose to the top of our list of possibilities.

Our close connection with residents and staff throughout the time my parents

resided here, the familiarity with Community life, and the peace of mind Sherwood Oaks provided for my family were exactly what we also wanted to provide for our sons. Thus, when we moved to Sherwood Oaks in March of 2015, we were coming home!



## **THE MOVE TO SHERWOOD OAKS**

By Ann Ferguson - #269

Norm and I had decided that we were moving to Sherwood Oaks when the time was right, but Mom moved here first.

I had retired and was looking 'way into the future. Oh, my! I had no children and no family here, just friends my age. They would not be much help as I got older, because they would be in the same situation.

Some eight years ago, Sherwood Oaks sent out a postcard with an invitation to a luncheon. I decided to attend and was blessed to be able to sit with the speaker and her daughter. It was interesting listening to the story of how the parents told the children where they were moving. It got me thinking even more. I wanted a walking community and an area with many different activities, with shopping not too far away. Sherwood Oaks certainly fit the bill. This would be where I moved when it was time.

Meanwhile, my dad had died, and Mom had come to visit. We began looking for a senior-style living place to which Mom would want to move when she decided it was time to give up the house in Texas. Then she went home and found nothing like Sherwood Oaks in her area.

During my Texas visit in the 2012/2013 winter to enjoy warmth with Mom, she announced she was moving north to Sherwood Oaks. And she did. Mom, aka Mary Ann Williamson, has now lived here for nearly 8 years, and it has been a good place for her.

I had started discussing with Norm that the house in Franklin Park was toooo big with toooo much to care for on a half-acre. I wanted to downsize to a small house and yard, and then move to Sherwood Oaks when it was time. He told me that he would give me one move, not two. Now the timing became the issue. In the meantime, we kept visiting Sherwood Oaks to spend time with Mom. When we went to an SO presentation, Dave suggested we go look at the patio homes. We weren't ready to move, but thought, Oh well, let's go look. As we walked up the hill and got to the end of the line, Dave opened the door to #269 ... well, everything was perfect, and we decided that that very day was the day to start moving. We have now been here 4½ years. What a blessing! It has been all I could have hoped for and more.



## **MY SHERWOOD OAKS LEGACY**

By Linda Mamaux - #284

The story of my legacy begins with my former neighbors in Shadyside 30 years ago.

Our next-door neighbors, who retired in their mid-sixties, moved seemingly abruptly to a place called Sherwood Oaks. What would cause them to move to a place we had never heard of? They were still young and healthy. Neighborhood speculations were rampant ... and mostly dire.

My husband and I visited our former neighbors once they were settled in their new #188 patio home; we found them to be extremely happy with their decision to move. She had already joined the chorus, was an active water aerobics participant, and soon was entertaining audiences with the clown skills she had learned at an Elderhostel camp. As a member of the Landscape Committee, he was immersed in improving the courtyard in front of their home as well as the area surrounding the large deck off their living room. He later started and was director of the Hand Bells Chorus for many years and was even president of SORA.

Meanwhile, my mother, Martha Barber, who lived in Butler and did not drive, had become widowed and despondent. Since she knew my old neighbors, I brought her to Sherwood Oaks so she could experience first-hand a typical home, a meal, and a tour. Once she saw the pool, she was sold. Within three months she had sold her home and moved to Patio Home #191, with her own bench outside her front door. She made friends with a group of ladies with whom she ate regularly, and she rode the bus to and from the Center as well as to the nearby malls. My sister took her grocery shopping, while I took her clothes shopping, because dressing up was still the norm. When she passed away unexpectedly in 1996, in the process of dividing up her furniture I claimed her bed, dresser, and tallboy.

When I was widowed in 2009, I waited for a year to see what my life would be like. I volunteered once a week at the Phipps Conservatory as a Master Gardener, but it was difficult to make new friends: I was spending too much time watching TV.

With my children's blessing and encouragement, I moved to Sherwood Oaks in 2011 at age 72. My mother's bed, dresser, and tallboy were returned to Sherwood Oaks by the same moving company! Since that time, I have served on the Library, Security and Transportation, and Landscape committees, chaired four bake sales, worked in the Gift Shop and the Annex, shown the Saturday night movies, and helped to plan two New Year's Eve parties. I still volunteer at Phipps Conservatory as a grower and continue to be a parishioner at St. Stanislaus Church in the Strip.

In all these instances, our lives were enriched and more fulfilling than if we had tried to "ride it out" in our old homes. So, it is true that the best referral is one from a current resident. Have you guessed the names of my former neighbors? They are Delores and Ralph Peabody, gone but definitely not forgotten.

## **OUR HISTORY WITH SHERWOOD OAKS**

By Jason Lyle & Kate Donovan - #293

We have a long history with Sherwood Oaks. Jason's parents, Robert (RD) and Joan Lyle, were residents here from 1995 until 2016.

RD and Joan Lyle first learned of Sherwood Oaks from visiting Joan's childhood friend Kim Smith, who lived in Patio Home #301. When Kim passed in 1994, Joan and RD assisted with the disposition of her possessions, finding Kim's humorous note "bequeathing" her patio home to them. The notion of living at Sherwood Oaks appealed to the Lyles, as Joan longed to return to her Pittsburgh roots after spending the previous 15 years in Chadds Ford, PA. As luck would

have it, Patio Home #301 was available, and neighbor Andrew Wyeth agreed to buy their Chadds Ford house for his own. In September of 1995, therefore, RD and Joan Lyle settled into their life of luxury.

The Lyles volunteered to take up management of the gift shop for their first few years, and RD's hobby of clock repair made him a natural to maintain the winding and health of the lobby's grandfather clock. RD supported SORA, and both Lyles enjoyed being active in the community.

We visited RD and Joan four or five times a year from our home in suburban Philadelphia, until we retired in 2015 and moved to our "forever home" in the Dominican Republic. After RD passed in February 2016 (Joan had passed in 2013), Kate began to wonder aloud if Sherwood Oaks might someday be a wise choice. As lovely as our tropical home was, the day would come when more elder assistance might be needed than the Dominican Republic could offer. During a stateside visit, we stopped by Sherwood Oaks to inquire about the process of becoming residents in ten or fifteen years. Annette McPeck cautioned us not to wait that long, as the Baby Boomer generation would likely create a waiting list. Jason was only 60, but had wisely married a slightly older woman in Kate, who met the minimum age requirement of 62. We decided to join the community while the challenges of international relocation would be the easiest.

We became residents of Sherwood Oaks in September 2017, continuing to enjoy the best of two paradises until the eventual sale of our Dominican home.

*[See photo of Lyles at top of next page.]*



Kate Donovan; RD, Joan, & Jason Lyle

*We understand that there are additional current residents who had parents or other relatives living at Sherwood Oaks before they came here. We look forward to hearing from you in time for the February issue – that is, by **January 15**. Do share your stories as you are moved!*  
 – The Acorn staff

*Mottoes for the elderly:* Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

If you can't think of a word, say, "I forget the English word for it." That way, people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

- Shared by Ron Ouellette - #221

## RESOLUTIONS I WISH Y'ALL WOULD MAKE

By Dennis Lynch - #335

For too many years now I have made New Year's resolutions. I've kept some, trashed some, and forgotten most. No longer. Now it is time for the World to come to me and resolve to do things the way *I* want.

First, resolve to continue things I like:

- Eliminating the male necktie. How comfortable we guys look with our shirts gaping open! Pocket squares offer a decorative opportunity.
- Continuing to be more aware of and concerned about our fellow persons, as initiated by COVID-19. Keep it going, but with your smiles uncovered.
- As non-COVID illnesses have gone on here at SOAKS, maintaining the practice of supporting those who need help with laundry or shopping or just a friendly chat.

At the same time, I fear that there are many things y'all must resolve to curtail:

- Forgetting about the global pandemic, economic disaster, and climate emergency, while focusing on such issues as getting me to stop flying "LGTBQ" pride flags and "legal weed" flags from the back of my truck.
- Adding additional sexual permutations to the mix. "BIPOC" and "LGBTQIA+" and – I suppose there are more to come – what behaviors do these chastise? Do we really know? Do we care? Enough is enough. Let us simply resolve to encourage plain, old-fashioned respect and dignity for everyone.
- With regard to more elections, resolving to make an app that will tag phrases like *chip in, whatever you can afford, you promised to donate!*, and other phrases of that ilk, and automatically delete the messages containing those phrases from my computer. If they come around again, just unsubscribe me!

### KEY TO RESIDENT COLL. PHOTOS

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 5. Janie Naylor    | 1. Ann Ferguson    |
| 4. Jno Hunt        | 2. Bill Laffer     |
| 3. Diane Neely     | 7. Joni Pun        |
| 8. Rosemary Coffey | 6. Carole Fletcher |
| 9. Rabe Marsh      |                    |

## “SHERWOOD NEIGHBORS” - A NEW WAY TO STAY CONNECTED!

By Jan Wendt - #158

Sharing concerns about loneliness during the pandemic, members of two SORA committees have joined to form **Sherwood Neighbors**. These representatives of the Health Affairs and Living with Loss committees are now looking for your help in launching the project. Whether you live in a patio home, the Oak Grove, Skilled Nursing, or Personal Care, you have doubtless experienced at least a moment or two of feeling isolated, bored, anxious, or lonely. Since we are all part of this unique community, the solution is as close as next door or around the courtyard!

The hallmarks of this effort are that it is *intentional* and *regular*, does not duplicate what staff are doing to provide activity and cheer, and clearly comes from one's neighbors. Already, **Sherwood Neighbors** has assembled small arrangements of fresh Christmas greens, with a notecard, for each resident in Personal Care and Skilled Nursing, under the tender direction of Barbara Christy. The gifts were delivered the week of December 7.

Residents in the units may feel confined to their rooms due to Covid restrictions. Occasionally, when a birthday comes around, local family and friends will appear outside a resident's window to sing, waving signs and balloons. For those whose families live far away, **Sherwood Neighbors** could provide this little celebration.

In Independent Living, the courtyard provides a natural structure for staying in touch. A volunteer from each courtyard

will be enlisted to phone neighbors weekly or so, just to say, “Hi, how are you doing?” Certainly, many folks have been doing this during 2020 on an informal basis, but this new system will ensure that no one is left out.

**Sherwood Neighbors** is eagerly looking for more ideas and helping hands. If you have unused postcards, greeting cards, or calendars, save them – they can be recycled as a greeting to someone. There are now two boxes in the mailroom where we may drop unused calendars.

Please let the following know how you'd like to be involved: Wally Christy (#8237), Barbara Scruggs (#8317), Jan Wendt (#8158), Ann Ferguson (#8269), or Betty Eichler (#8355). It is anticipated that some of these activities may carry on in the post-Covid era.

## BOOKS WORTH A LOOK

By Barbara Christy - #237

These recently requested books, purchased with SORA funding, are on the shelf in our library. If a book you seek is not there, you can fill out a reserve slip (found on the library desk.)

**How to Raise an Elephant** by Alexander McCall Smith. Fiction by the author of the beloved *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*. Mma Ramotswe is asked by a relative for help with a distant cousin. Meanwhile, at home, new neighbors are airing their grievances too loudly to be ignored.

**Squeeze Me** by Carl Hiassen. Fiction. When a prominent, high-society dowager vanishes during a swanky holiday gala, panic and chaos erupt. This grande dame was notable not only for her wealth and her jewels – she was also an ardent supporter of the occupant of the Winter

White House. Irreverent, ingenious, and highly entertaining.

**Squirm**, also by Carl Hiassen. Fiction. Deserted by his father, Billy Dickens has lived in six different Florida homes with a Mom wild about bald eagles. He discovers his dad's address and sets off to find him – in Montana. He also finds grizzly bears, spy drones, and a dead parrot.

**The Office of Historical Corrections** by Danielle Evans. A novella and stories. A black scholar in Washington, DC, is drawn into a complex, historical mystery that spans generations and puts her job, her love life, and her oldest friendship at risk. Moving between humor and grief, these stories provoke one to think about the truths of U.S. history.

**Ten Lessons for a Post-pandemic World** by Fareed Zakaria. Historical and political philosophy. Three years ago, this author predicted that a tiny, deadly pathogen could trigger a global health crisis and that the U.S. was unprepared to deal with it. Now that the pandemic is here, Zakaria presents his understanding of how international relationships, global politics, and economic development will be affected.

**The Mirror and the Light** by Hilary Mantel. Fiction by the author of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies* (also in our library.). The third and final volume about Thomas Cromwell's climb to power and wealth during the reign of Henry VIII. Beginning with the death of Queen Anne Boleyn, the author traces the final years of the boy from nowhere who achieved enormous influence over a perfidious king, only to die a convicted traitor.

**Migrations** by Charlotte McConaghy. Fiction. In a world where mass extinction of species has become common, naturalist Franny Stone arrives in Greenland with the sole purpose of finding the world's last flock of Arctic terns and following them on their final migration. She convinces a fishing boat captain to take her along, as they follow the terns to find fish. Despite danger and conflict, she fiercely pursues both the birds and answers to her personal distress.

\* \* \* \* \*

### IN SEARCH OF . . .

By Peg Rychcik - #297

On the night of December 9, 2020, we were instructed by a local meteorologist to look for a rare display of the Aurora Borealis in Pennsylvania. At 10 p.m., Joe and I went out into our backyard to gaze in a northern direction in hopes of seeing the spectacular show of lights that we'd only seen on television. Unfortunately, what we saw was the typical cloudy skies of Pittsburgh.

Then we heard the familiar call of hoo, hoo-hoo-hooo coming from a southerly direction. We loved hearing this call at night. We had often gone out late in the evening over the years to try to see this elusive owl that resides somewhere in the cluster of oak trees near the Oak Grove Center. This time, it would be different. In the distance, at the top of an old oak tree, we saw the silhouette of the Great Horned Owl whose call had resounded through the dark sky from its perch.

[See next page for photo of owl.]



Photo by Joe Rychcik

Originally in search of one type of phenomenon in the sky, we were unexpectedly rewarded with a view of this magnificent bird instead.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Q. Where does a snowman keep his money?*

*A. In the snowbank.*

*Q. What do snowmen call snowflakes?*

*A. Stem cells.*

### END OF THE CAPS FOR KIDS TREE

By Agnes Peebles - 324

The tree is gone – and so are the caps!

In 1986, Nancy Huckestein, proprietor of the former Huckestein Printing in Zelienople, learned of the Caps for Kids project and decided to form a local group of participants to knit, crochet, and donate caps to help keep underprivileged children warm through the winter. She canvassed nursing homes and women's groups to find volunteers, among them residents of Sherwood Oaks and Passavant in Zelienople. Each year, Nancy

would set a goal of 4,000 to 5,000 caps, and each year her goal was exceeded by at least 1,000 caps. They were collected at Huckestein Printing and distributed to children throughout Butler, Allegheny, and Lawrence counties.

After 19 years and nearly 99,000 caps, Ms. Huckestein looked for someone to take her place. Betty Bauer of Butler became the new coordinator. In 2007, a few ladies from his church got Jerry Burr of Zelienople interested in knitting and in joining Caps for Kids. In his lifetime, Jerry made over 4,343 caps, using a plastic circular loom. Also serving as a distributor, he was the one who picked up the caps from Sherwood Oaks. (Jerry and his wife Louise provided transportation for many residents here.) Currently, there are approximately 35 knitting and crocheting groups, the farthest being in Cresson, PA.

Roberta Smith, manager of West Shore Savings Bank here in Cranberry Township in 2010, made arrangements for the Caps for Kids group to store their inventory in the basement of the bank, which continues in generously accommodating the inventory.

On December 14, Phyllis Franks, who collects our caps and counts them into bags of fifty, reported that in 2020 residents and staff contributed a grand total of 1,174 caps (936 from residents, 238 from staff), which will warm the heads of many children in the winter days to come. Way to go, folks!!!

\* \* \* \* \*

*For last year's words belong to last  
year's language,  
And next year's words await another  
voice.*

- T. S. Eliot

## THE LIBRARY LOWDOWN

By Anne Hunt - #308

The library has three low-vision readers. Two of these are available for residents to use at home for up to three weeks at a time. Easy to use, they work by taking a “snapshot” of a page and reading it back to the user. The third reader works by magnifying a page at a time for the user. This one is large and must be used in the library. If you are interested in these readers, please contact Barbara Christy (8237) or Anne Hunt (8308). We would be happy to provide training in the use of these machines.

After a several-months dry spell, we are now ordering new books again. Look for them on the new book shelf in the library.

## STOP THE REVOLVING DOOR

by Charles R. Swindoll

[Submitted by Safwat Habashi - #320]

Oct. 8, 2017

Scriptures: 2 Chronicles 7:13-15

The history of great civilizations reminds me of a giant revolving door. It turns on the axis of human depravity as its movement is marked by the perimeter of time. With monotonous repetition each civilization has completed the same cycle, having passed through a similar sequence of events. One man [Pastor Bill Henderson, Nov. 17, 2009] summarized it like this:

From bondage to spiritual faith  
From spiritual faith to great courage  
From great courage to strength  
From strength to liberty  
From liberty to abundance  
From abundance to leisure  
From leisure to selfishness  
From selfishness to complacency  
From complacency to apathy

From apathy to dependency  
From dependency to weakness  
From weakness *back to bondage*

Whether Roman or Athenian empires ... Egyptian or European cultures, the chronicle tells its own tale. Regardless of geography, origin, achievements, or level of prosperity, each one has sunk deeply into the vortex of ruin.

It was about two hundred years ago, while the thirteen colonies were still part of Great Britain, that Professor Alexander Tyler addressed himself to the fall of the Athenian Republic. He declared:

*A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves excessive gratuities from the public treasury. From that moment on the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the treasury, with the result that a democracy collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship.*

A revolving door has to be pushed by those within it. When we stop pushing, it will stop turning ... but not until.



## FAMILY SAYINGS

It is not flesh and blood, but the heart, that makes us parents and children. (J. F. von Schiller)

That best portion of a good person's life: the little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love. (William Wordsworth)

The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved – loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves. (Victor Hugo)

My son, may you be happier than your father. (Sophocles)

*WRING OUT THE OLD ...*



*RING IN THE NEW!*

