

# THE ACORN

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

March 2022 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 41, No. 3

*“In the cold and snow of winter ...*



Photos by Jan Wendt

*there's a spring that waits to be....”*  
*(Yes, two photos of the same plant!)*

*In a salute to St. Patrick's Day on March 17, here is a sampling of Irish sayings, as provided by Georganne Yurasko, #386:*

*Why should you never iron a three-leaf clover (a shamrock)? Because you may press your luck.*

*A good laugh and a good sleep are the two best cures for anything!*

*May your troubles be less and your blessings be more, and only happiness come through the door.*

*Irish proverb: The three best things: a little seed in good soil, a few cows in good grass, a few friends in the tavern.*

*Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes. – Oscar Wilde*

*And a few comments by American politicians:*

*Ladies and Gentlemen: I don't want to give the impression that every member of my administration in Washington is Irish. It just seems that way. – John Fitzgerald Kennedy*

*All politicians are 100 percent Irish on St. Patrick's Day. Humor, joy, good will, and passion are Irish, and our cultures are intertwined. – Al Gore*

*I'm actually part Irish and I've often been accused of having a certain gift for blarney, though those were not the words used. – Bill Clinton*

– From the editors



Courtesy of Bob Hope:

*ON TURNING 70 - "I still chase women, but only downhill."*

*ON TURNING 80 - "That's the time of your life when even your birthday suit needs pressing."*

## MARCH CALENDAR

Mardi Gras	Mar. 1
Ash Wednesday	Mar. 2
International Women's Day	Mar. 8
Harriet Tubman Day	Mar. 10
Daylight Savings Time begins	Mar. 13
St. Patrick's Day	Mar. 17
First Day of Spring	Mar. 21
César Chavez Day	Mar. 31

## THE ACORN

### Editor

Rosemary Coffey  
rosemarycoffey@aol.com

### Staff

Ruth Becker, Special Projects  
Rabe Marsh, Photographer  
Jan Wendt, Profile Coordinator

### Production Editor

Tabby Alford

### Ex Officio

Annette McPeck

Submissions for the April issue must be sent to the Editors no later than  
**March 15, 2022.**

## IN MEMORIAM

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

*Frances Borrebach  
January 25, 2022*

*James Long  
January 26, 2022*

*Mary Jane Osial  
February 9, 2022*



## ANN PATON - #101

by Jean Henderson - #611



Photo by Rabe Marsh

***“Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind, and spirit.”***

After my visit with Ann, this quote by yoga guru BKS Iyengar reflects Ann’s life for me. Her twinkling eyes, lovely features, and lithe body (for her age!) invite you to further conversation and friendship. Her flat-top black hat with the Patterson tartan is a treasured possession from the Scottish isle of Iona.

And her mind! She is alert to her past, present, and future, with good questions and answers. Her mind was trained well – a B.A. from Geneva College, where she later taught English and Humanities for 36 years; an M. Litt. from Pitt; a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in Medieval Literature; and classes at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge. Her Presbyterian parents were musicians, so disciplines of faith and music enriched her mind as well.

So did her travels, featuring more than twenty trips to Wales, where Ann’s grandfather was born in Cardiff; she usually travels with a nephew, who

helped celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday there at St. David’s, where they stay. She went to Australia to see the Olympic Games; won a trip to Peru as the nationally designated “Most Promising Teacher of the Year,” sponsored by “Quiz Kids” during her first year of teaching; and traveled to Japan, the Holy Land, the UK, and Europe many times. Her pilgrimages to Canterbury have given her three rare and cherished ceramic statues of pilgrims from *The Canterbury Tales*. She also loves reading British female mystery writers.

But Ann would not be in “complete harmony” without her spiritual journey. Every Sunday, her father asked the children (she has an older sister in OH and a younger brother in Los Angeles) to declare what the sermon was about at First Presbyterian in New Castle, PA, where they attended. Her days at Geneva College continued to enrich her spirit.

But it was in her late 50s, at an Episcopal Cursillo weekend, where she felt the call to ordained ministry. She argued with God: “I’m a woman, I’m too old, my local church does not recognize women in ministry!” But God won the argument. The Bishop decided that Ann didn’t need a theological degree to take the ordination exams; having passed them, she was ordained to the priesthood in March of 1991. Never a rector, always an assistant, she worked with the local Diocese and spent twenty years at the Church of the Ascension in Oakland, from which she retired in 1998. Ann is also a trained active Spiritual Director.

So I imagine that old resident friends the McBurneys, Ruth Inkpen, and John Rodgers would agree that Ann’s health is a state of complete harmony of body, mind, and spirit. Welcome, Ann! We’re glad you’re among us.

## GAYLE SWEENEY - #711

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo by Mike Mills

"I meet people easily," says Gayle Sweeney, and that attribute has served her well in life. She is a native Pittsburgher, but her father's job meant frequent moves (and lots of new schools and new faces) growing up. After graduating from high school in Baltimore, she worked for a time at the University of Maryland Hospital, then spread her wings and headed to the Big Apple.

In New York, she found work as a flight attendant ("We were called 'stewardesses'") for American Airlines; all that travel meant lots of contact with the public and meeting a succession of new people. It was during that time that she traveled back to the 'Burgh for a cousin's wedding. Coincidentally, her grandfather died while she was here. All the encounters with family at the wedding and the funeral convinced her she really wanted to move back home.

While she was employed as an executive secretary at H. K. Porter Company, she met and married Tom Sweeney, an executive with Sears. They spent the next 53 years together, until his death last March. Eventually, his career took them to Chicago, where he advanced in the

international side of Sears. In due course, with a young son and daughter in tow, the couple left Chicago for two years in Puerto Rico, where he managed the seven Sears stores there. That experience was fun, including side jaunts to other Caribbean islands.

Then it was back to Chicago, where Tom became VP of International, and Gayle's traveling days were temporarily over. When retirement finally arrived, however, the Sweeneys weren't ready to settle down to a *much* quieter life. They bought eight Gloria Jean's coffee store franchises, all in malls in the Pittsburgh area. Their work involved significant hands-on training, overseeing staff, and buying trips to supply the shops. As you might imagine, Gayle relished dealing with staff and customers and loved her yearly buying trips to Chicago. She reminisces that her favorite role was training the large number of young adults who staffed the stores, instilling good customer service in them, a trait that would serve them well wherever their professional lives took them in the future.

The Sweeneys lived in Adams Crossing in Mars until Tom's death. Their son remains in the Pittsburgh area, while their daughter resides in Arizona. Two grandsons and a granddaughter are key parts of her family, along with Gayle's two sisters and a brother. She said her brother has been especially helpful in unpacking boxes in her Lakeside Apartment.

Gayle's longtime friendship with resident Sheila Stepp was a factor in her selecting Sherwood Oaks. She has enjoyed watching the swans glide across the lake from her kitchen window, and anticipates viewing them from her patio as the weather warms. Meanwhile, she will be happy to make your acquaintance in the Dining Room and around campus. After all, she's a pro at making new friends!

## WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA?

(SO Residents Association)

By Jean Henderson, Secretary - #611

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

Summary of reports and actions for the

**Feb. 8, 2022**, board meeting:

TREASURERS: Memorial/Special Projects Fund balance is \$114,291. Employee Appreciation Fund balance is \$15,351.60. The SORA bank balance is \$67,681.43.

### LIAISON REPORTS:

Civic Affairs. Primary election is May 17. Voter information will be available soon in the Lobby.

Computer Center. Richard Pospistle is the current contact person.

Continued Learning. Watch Channels 900/901 for upcoming weekly programs.

Movies. Channel 901 movies will resume when a new encoder arrives.

Trips and Tours. Check the mailroom board for upcoming events.

Chapel. Ash Wednesday service will be **March 2, 4:15 p.m.**, in the Auditorium.

Sherwood Gifts. \$3000 is being donated to the Memorial/Special Projects Fund.

Programs. Monthly in-person programs are planned for the auditorium.

Focus on the World. Educational programming continues on 900/901.

Security and Transportation. Patrol Officers are now Security Officers.

ADMINISTRATION: Annette McPeck reported. Census: IL 200 units, with 254 residents; SNU 40/43; PC 36/42; and OGC 28/30. Four homes are under contract. Butler County positivity rate is 19.19%. Visitors/families are to be masked and screened at entry. Residents should not have visitors in SO public areas, e.g.,

lobby, dining room, billiards room, and auditorium, or at chapel services. Front gate arms have been replaced. The lake fountain will be repaired. A new Wander guard system is in place for PC and SNU.

OLD BUSINESS: Plans are in progress for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. SORA funding is being sought from the SO Fund. Sherwood Oaks will also fund.

WinterFest will now occur as SpringFest on **April 7, 1-3 p.m.**, in and near the Auditorium.

NEW BUSINESS: Nominating chair is Nancy Marshall, with Bruce Cooper. They will recruit three at-large residents.

VISITORS: Sixteen were present.

The next SORA Board meeting is **Tuesday, Mar. 8**; the next quarterly residents' meeting is **Tuesday, Mar. 15**.

## CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602

For the Chapel Committee

**Sunday Services begin at 2:00 p.m. in the Auditorium**

Bring a friend.

Ash Wednesday, March 2 – 4:15 p.m.

Rev. Jean Henderson and

Rev. Alick Kennedy (SO residents)

Sunday, March 6

Rev. Ron Brown

Hope Lutheran

Sunday, March 13

Rev. Ron Hoellein

Retired – St. Paul's UMC

Sunday, March 20

Rev. James Gascoine

Dutilh Community Church

Sunday, March 27

Rev. Steve Hodges

Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding."*

– Proverbs 3:5



## FROM THE ARCHIVES . . .

By Joe and Peg Rychcik - #297

**Cranberry Lake** was known as a popular fishing and picnic destination northwest of Pittsburgh. We are so fortunate that the founders of Sherwood Oaks searched western Pennsylvania by air to see the property, including Cranberry Lake, from a unique perspective.



According to the "Sherwood Oaks Newsletter" of May 1979, this land was the most attractive and usable that they had found. They envisioned the campus lying before them with residential clusters and the views from the dining room overlooking the lake to the tree-lined further shore.

There are so many wonderful features of Sherwood Oaks that make our retirement community truly unique, but it is our lake that really captures attention upon arrival on our campus.



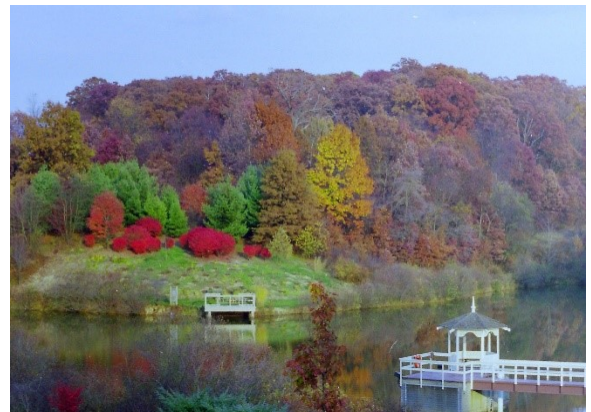
In 1981, during the construction of Sherwood Oaks, the entire lake was drained

and allowed to dry out, in order to construct the overflow at the south end of the lake. Also, the bottom was scraped out and the edges of the lake were made steeper.



The February 1982 edition of "The Oak Log" provided a construction update reminiscent of the original vision during the flight over the property: "The view from the balconied rooms and dining room is a scenic overlook of the lake and surrounding countryside. The lake is now full and will be ready for fish when the time comes to stock it."

The founders were pleased to acknowledge during their first anniversary celebration that Sherwood Oaks had completed the construction of the gazebo overlooking Cranberry Lake. It provides a wonderful vantage point from which to sit and gaze at the lake.



The Sherwood Oaks Fleet consisted of a rowboat and two canoes for residents to enjoy time on the lake.





In addition, a blue heron has regularly been seen on the banks of our lake.



Residents would also be found ice skating on the lake during our very cold winters.



Photo of Frank Hess

Over the years, Cranberry Lake had also drawn a large population of geese, which eventually became a problem.



The environmentally friendly solution for the many geese was found in March 2016, when our swans arrived on the lake. After a naming contest was held, residents chose the names Sherman and Oakley.



Cranberry Lake is a true gem at Sherwood Oaks to appreciate anew during our Ruby Anniversary.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

By Dan Cindric - #107

Voter registration applications (along with mail-in and absentee ballot applications) will be available at the Civic Affairs Committee tables in the Community Center this month, so be on the lookout. New residents can use the voter registration applications to change their address. They can also be used to change party registration, if you so choose.

For those who are comfortable doing so, you can perform the same activities online at <[www.pavoterservices@pa.gov](mailto:www.pavoterservices@pa.gov)> using a computer or even your smartphone. In Pennsylvania, each county is responsible for conducting its election, so the applications from Sherwood Oaks must be mailed to the Butler County Voter Registration Office, PO Box 1208, Butler, PA 16063; the office can be reached by phone at (724) 284-5308. To vote in the Primary Election, you must have been a resident of the voting district that includes Sherwood Oaks for at least 30 days before the election (presently scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, 2022), and Butler County must accept the application at least 15 days before the election. However, it is recommended that the application be sent as early as possible, so that a confirmation can be received by the resident.

## **RESIDENTS' DISPLAY WALL**

By Joni Pun - #304

I trust you have seen the newest display on the wall of the scooter gallery. I am always looking for residents who would like to display their works – be they paintings in various media, sketches, weavings, needlework, photographs, or crafts. Anything that you have done and

that can be hung with a wire is acceptable. This display will be running from February through April.

I have had a suggestion for May and June to honor mothers and fathers. One of my friends commented that she had in her possession works that were done by her mother that she would like to display, so I am devoting those two months to works done by parents and other family as well.

I hope that some of you have taken to heart the suggestion that I made a few months ago – to have a collection of paintings or sketches of areas of Sherwood Oaks (buildings, houses, trees, and so on), seen in the four seasons of the year. This does not mean that you have to do a scene in each of the seasons, but rather that the artwork can be of any season. I hope that all four seasons might be represented somewhere in our works. I myself have taken many photos of our wonderful snowfall in February and hope to use them to paint a few pictures in winter. We are hoping to have this display at the end of the year.

---

## **HAND BELL RINGING**

By Rosemary Frelke - #348

Why, you may ask, should you be interested in becoming a Hand Bells “Ding-a-ling”? Well, it turns out that there is more than one answer!

The first is that becoming part of the Hand Bell Ringers offers fellowship with a group of pleasant people. The second is that you'll have the opportunity to help build a team to play good music. And the third is that it's fun!

Join us in the **Auditorium on Wednesday afternoons beginning at 1:00 p.m.** Call me ahead of time at x8348 or just show up.



## SPRINGFEST (aka WINTERFEST)

Thursday, April 7, 2022

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Auditorium and Card Room

By Frank Finley - #615

A SORA-sponsored event for all residents, new and not so new, this event will showcase the committees and activities under the SORA umbrella. Sherwood Oaks is a resident-driven community, which means the residents themselves determine the activities, entertainment, and special events to make our lives rewarding and fulfilling. There are also committees and activities that provide input to the Sherwood Oaks administration.

You will have an opportunity to meet with people you don't see every day who will be able to describe the various committees and activity opportunities. You can then decide which areas you believe best fit your skills and interests.

There may be short presentations, along with tables set up representing the many areas of interest. Most of all, you will meet some new friends and have a good time at this spring event. **Don't miss it.**

## THE SAGA OF THE PLASTIC CAPS

By Ruth Inkpen - #225

For the Recycling Committee

Have you been wondering what happened to the small "PLASTIC CAPS" container that used to be on the shelf in your Trash Room?

Long story short: A company called Preserve Gimme 5 (Google it!) closed its receiving facility in November 2020 because of COVID and has not yet reopened. So we stopped collecting caps.

What is Preserve Gimme 5? It's an organization that takes #5 plastics, including plastic caps (which "are among the most frequently found items of trash on beaches") in order to make **reusable** dinnerware, food containers, utensils, returnable toothbrushes – all from #5 plastics (<preserve.eco>). Since the company has a mail-in program, the Recycling Committee had decided to collect plastic caps, placing a small container on the shelf in each Trash Room. We have collected and are holding five boxes ready to be sent to Gimme 5, when or if it reopens.

### *In the meantime...*

We have found Green Tree Plastics with its ABC (A Bench for Caps) program, an "environmental education" partnership in which school groups, Girl Scout troupes, and adult organizations (etc.) collect plastic caps *and lids*, with a goal of receiving a bench in return. The website has extensive information: see <greentreeplastics.com/abc-program>.

We would like to send our current collection of caps (about 40+ pounds) to help one of the groups that is participating in this ABC program – **if** we can locate a nearby group.

Here's where you might help: Are you on Facebook with adults or kids who might be involved in the "A Bench for Caps" project, or who might know of a group that is? If you're willing, post a request such as: "Does anyone know of a group participating in the Green Tree Plastics 'A Bench for Caps' project? The recycling committee here at Sherwood Oaks has collected about 40 pounds of plastic caps and would like to give them to a group that is already collecting caps for this project."

And then let me know, so I can send them off to the right place!

## FOCUS ON THE WORLD

By Ellie Castle - #307

Focus on the World Committee

Have you stopped listening to the news because it's too depressing? Do you still want to know what's happening outside the gates of Sherwood Oaks?

Focus on the World is an activity created to meet that need. Its mission is to "help residents be aware of world, national, and local issues, of current efforts to address them, and of resources available for our involvement."

Focus does this by providing:

Speakers who are knowledgeable about problems in our area and beyond and are involved in solutions. These programs are held on the third Thursday of most months at 7:15 p.m. in the Auditorium. Recent topics have been homelessness, child abuse and trafficking, and Afghan refugee resettlement in Pittsburgh.

Documentaries shown on TV Channel 901 that provide useful information and inspiration related to social issues.

Quarterly collections of food in response to local hunger needs.

Watch for notices of these events and plan to attend. You're also invited to join us at our meetings on the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the Conference Room.

*And now for the March program:*



## "Bee Part of the Solution"

By Nancy Paul - #167

**Thursday, March 17**

**7:15 p.m.**

**Auditorium**

The decline in global bee populations has been described as "a crisis of epic proportions." Bees pollinate in excess of 336,000 types of plants, so "epic crisis" is an apt description. No one cause is responsible, but one principal reason for the decline is the spread of the varroa mite, which causes deformed wing virus in bees.

Freedom, PA, resident Dr. Beth D'Alessandro, who was aware of the bees' decline, and her husband Ron became volunteer beekeepers of 14 beehives with a population of 420,000 bees at Scott Conservancy's Kane Woods Nature Area, when the previous beekeeper retired.

Dr. D'Alessandro was interested in seeing what she could do to protect the bees. Using her career data analysis and information technology education skills, she began to research how the mites were affecting the hives. Having worked on different treatments that would kill the mites but not affect the hives' honey, she prepared a plan to treat the hives in the fall. Imagine her surprise when she found that the bees were protecting the hives themselves by attacking the mites and biting off their legs!

Bees are amazing insects, and there is much to learn about them. For instance, a hive of bees will fly over 55,000 miles to make one pound of honey and can create 100 pounds of honey in a year.

Come meet our neighbors, Beth and Ron D'Alessandro, and learn more about these fascinating pollinators and how we can help save them!

## **CONTINUED LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

By Wallace Christy - #237

In March and early April we will be having programs on Tuesday mornings with outside speakers. These programs will be held in the auditorium beginning at **10:30 a.m.** They are listed below.

### **3/1 - Don't Miss the Myths**

### **3/7 - Story Telling and the Hero's Journey**

These two lectures will be given by Carrie Kennedy, a teacher in the fields of the Arts and Humanities, who has authored three books in this area. She is the daughter of residents Dick and Rae Zuberbuhler.

### **3/15 - Carmen - What a Woman!**

Presented by resident Jno Hunt.

### **3/22 - Why Music is Important in Politics: Putin Will Teach You to Love the "Motherland"**

Kristin Bidoshi is an associate professor of Russian and the director of the Russian and Eastern European studies program at Union College. She is also the granddaughter of resident Olive Tiller.

### **3/29 - Talking to the Vines**

Janet Wermouth is a co-owner and operator of the Crooked Tree Vineyard on Kelleys Island, where she lives with her husband.

### **4/4 - The Climate Crisis – There is No Silver Bullet**

Bruce Cooper will utilize information from Project Drawdown and the EnROADS climate model to engage the audience.

The Channel 901 programs will continue to air on Tuesdays at **10 a.m., 4 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.**

### **3/1 - The Symphony – Beethoven**

### **3/8 - James Webb Telescope**

### **3/15 - Costa Rica: The South American Paradise**

### **3/22 - Planet Earth II – Islands**

### **3/29 - The Dawn of Religion: Documentary on Ancient People**

### **4/5 - The World's Great Paintings: Lessons 3 and 4**

## **JAZZPLAY RESCHEDULED!**

By Jean Henderson - #611

Your SORA Program Committee is delighted that JazzPlay will be with us **Thursday, March 24, at 7:15 p.m.** in the Auditorium ... LIVE! Come welcome our own Roberta Breninghouse on piano, Joe Pencak on drums and percussion, and Perry Pinto on bass. You'll enjoy a great evening of toe-tapping tunes!

## **HEY, MISTER!**

By Ellen Brierly - #734

Since his parents were divorced, our 4- year-old grandson had never been in a men's bathroom. He always accompanied his mother into the ladies' room. One summer day, we decided to take him and his mother on a boat ride down the Monongahela River. Visiting the restroom before our endeavor seemed wise, so his mother permitted him to go into the men's facility, while she waited outside the door.

A gentleman emerged and asked if the little boy in there was hers. She confessed to that being true, whereupon he told her that the child had said, "Hey, Mister, there are two toilets in here. Why are you peeing in the sink?"



## FELINES OF SHERWOOD OAKS: PART 2

By Kathie McCormick - #188

Let me introduce you to **ANDY TOO**, who lives with Larry Brown in #617.



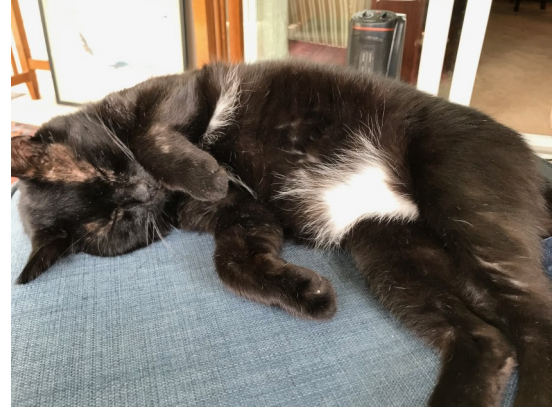
“Andy Too, an orange tabby rescue cat, was my wife’s cat. He wanted nothing to do with me until Sandy passed away last year. Now he is *my* cat. He follows me everywhere. He’s at the door when I come home. He can’t wait to sit in my lap or hang over my head on the back of the easy chair. I think he’s really a dog in cat’s clothing. He’s my constant companion, and I love him for it. Thanks, Andy Too, for being there for me.”

How did he get his name? “We were a dog household for the first 20 of our 54 years together. Then the cats started coming. I’m not much of a cat guy – they were for Sandy. It wasn’t until cat #7 that I found one I liked, and he liked me. A rescue cat, Andy (the original) was also an orange tabby. He had been greatly abused, with fractured teeth and a wounded eye that had to be removed eventually. But he was the most loving cat. He was the first of all the cats to jump in my lap. When he died, we thought we’d never see another like him, but along came another orange rescue cat. If possible, this one is even more loving than Andy (one), so we named him Andy Too (not *two* – this guy’s an

also!). He was six when we got him and now is nine.

---

Here we have **TIMOTHY**, who lives with Jan Wendt in #158.



Jan says, “I’ve had cats all my adult life, most of them rescued from shelters, many in their golden years. My very favorite of them was Eli, whom you may hear about in a future installment. But my current feline roommate joined me at Sherwood Oaks a month after my beloved Eli dropped dead (literally) at age 16½.

“I was recovering from my second shoulder replacement surgery, so was home from work and feeling lonely. Although my head told me it might be ‘too soon’ after his demise to offer my home to another cat, my heart was rattling around, lost and lonely, without a furry friend.

“So, released by my surgeon to drive, I headed to Animal Friends to see what the kitty offerings were. I was led into a room full of black, FIV+ felines. There must have been nine or ten of them. I spent some time watching and greeting several of them. I had never had a black cat, but had experience with FIV+ cats (the feline equivalent of HIV, though most can lead a normal life). I finally pointed to no place in particular and announced, ‘I’ll take that one.’

“So began my life with Timothy, who arrived home one week before the shelters closed due to Covid. Lucky us: we were

locked down together and forced to make our acquaintance. In that time, we've come to respect and enjoy each other greatly.

"Although very different from Eli, his immediate predecessor, 'T' is very much his own personality, and it's been fun to watch him grow from a scruffy and jumpy street cat to a suave fellow with a luxurious coat and king of all he surveys."

---

And here is **KATI** who lives with Jean Henderson in #611.



"Meow! I just woke up from a long nap (I nap about 22 hours a day!). My name is Kati – it was Shadow, when I was in the Animal Services in Tampa, FL. I was born in the summer of 2011, and a nice lady named Catherine (Kitty) Bohn adopted me and brought me to Sherwood Oaks. She and I loved living together in our patio home. I would sit in her kitchen window, and all my friends would come by and talk to me. Of course, I understood every word, but could only MEOW back to them.

"Then Miss Kitty had to move ... and so did I. Before I found a new home, Miss Kitty's friends took care of me. They were so nice!! But soon, a man and woman came to see me. I interviewed them – their name was Henderson – and I decided that they would be okay to be my new family.

"The first night was a bit scary, but the next day they had a big party, and I was invited!! I sat in the middle of the couch for the

whole party and behaved myself. They kept telling me how happy they were to have me, because the cat they had before (Callie) had run away and was never found. That made me sad too, so I NEVER, ever, try to get outside.

"My hobbies are napping, eating, lying by the fireplace, and sitting on the woman's lap when she's reading. I miss the man; I used to be beside him on the bed at night or sit on his stomach when he was lying on the couch. But now I lie beside the woman at night – or anywhere warm I can find!

"The woman told me that we're moving to a new patio home in the Spring. Can't wait to check out that place! So MEOW for now. Stay warm!! I certainly plan to."

If you wish to have *your* cat featured, please let me know at #8188.



### **PITY THE NATION (after Khalil Gibran)**

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti (2007)

Pity the nation whose people are sheep  
And whose shepherds mislead them  
Pity the nation whose leaders are silenced  
And whose bigots haunt the airwaves  
Pity the nation that raises not its voice  
Except to praise conquerors  
And acclaim the bully as hero  
And aims to rule the world  
By force and by torture  
Pity the nation that knows  
No other language but its own  
And no culture but its own  
Pity the nation whose breath is money  
And sleeps the sleep of the too well fed  
Pity the nation oh pity the people  
Who allow their rights to erode  
And their freedoms to be washed away  
My country, tears of thee  
Sweet land of liberty!

## FOCUS ON FORTY

### Sherwood Oaks Celebrates!

By Gary Brandenberger - #602

Sherwood Oaks is the hidden gem of Cranberry Township. While it is in the heart of the township, a very desirable and convenient community, we enjoy a private setting on 84 acres, including a lake with swans.

We plan to enjoy and celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FIRST Continuing Care Retirement Community in Western Pennsylvania, including having our residents be part of a publicity effort to show off our facility. We have a lot to be proud of, and we believe a well-planned publicity program could assist the Marketing Department's efforts to attract new residents in an increasingly competitive 'senior world.'

A key part of our marketing support will be an Open House, depending on Covid restrictions. Having people visit the campus to see its beauty, tour our homes, and see us at our best will call for a lot of help from our residents and staff to make this possible.

We expect to have two major celebrations: one on July 4, and another in September featuring a formal dinner and program. In addition, we are planning several events to occur throughout this year.

**One of the first decisions we need to make is selecting a theme.** Later on, you will receive a "secret ballot" where you can submit your recommendation. Return your ballot to Tabby Alford by dropping it off at the Front Desk. Everyone who participates will receive a "prize." The winning theme will receive a "grand prize."

If you have any celebration ideas or would be willing to help, please place your name and ideas in the SORA mailbox or contact Jean Henderson (412-352-8001) or Gary Brandenberger (412-638-5132).

For now, look for the "FOCUS ON FORTY" column each month in the ACORN. And Happy 40<sup>th</sup> to all of you!



### TREE-MENDOUSLY INTERESTING TREE-VIA?

By John Bridges - #122

Petrified wood is very hard. It is sometimes said to be formed when the wind blows and makes the trees rock. More seriously, the cellulose is gradually replaced over thousands of years by silicates, making it a continuing source of wonder to me that by looking through a microscope one can still see the cellular structure and actually identify the tree species that grew all that time ago.

At the age of 21, before she became Queen, Princess Elizabeth made a solemn vow to dedicate her life to serving her kingdom. This impressed me, and I made a similar vow to try and ensure that each tree cut down should be turned into something useful.

The names given to trees can be puzzling, amusing, or just plain interesting. For instance, here, in our Summer Garden, we have a Harry Lauder bush, named after the famous Scottish comedian, Sir Harry Lauder, who always strutted onto the Music Hall stage with a gnarled, twisted stick.



Towering above one of the Ambridge Village patio homes is an example of an American Sweet Gum tree. When the wood from these trees is exported to England, the paler sapwood under the bark is confusingly marketed as Hazel Pine, whereas the darker Heartwood has the commercial name of Satin Walnut.

It may be surprising to learn that there are over 400 different species of oak trees. At Sherwood Oaks, we have half a dozen of these, including the pin oak, with its smaller and more delicate leaves, which still conform to the general outline of the well-known oak leaf. Both the red and white American oaks can be seen growing wild in the woods.

Number 93 in our Sherwood Oaks Arboretum is a lime tree. The wood from European lime trees was chosen by Grinling Gibbons for all his exquisite wood carvings. However, the wood from the American lime tree was often called Basswood, because fiber for rope or basketry could be made from the inner bark, or “bast.” Bees can make a delicious, delicately flavored honey from the flowers before the tiny fruits form.

After World War II, many strange African timbers were imported to Europe, using the African names. It was only after further study of the African languages that it was found that one of these names could be translated as “I don’t know”!

*Mahogany* is often used as a loose term to cover any tropical wood with a reddish color. At other times, it refers to a specific tree that grows in the West Indies. In Jamaica, where the slaves came from West Africa, they thought that these trees looked like ones they had known in the Ibo language as *mogono*. The French used the word

*acajou* from the extinct Tupi language of Brazil, but I have been unable to find a plausible reason why *mahogany* is called *caoba* in Spanish.

When a tree is cut down and sawn into boards, it will start to lose moisture. In a cool, rainy area like Valdivia in Southern Chile, it will often rot before it dries to an equilibrium moisture content of 35%. Farther north, in the capital, Santiago, furniture will settle in at about 8%. In the dry Atacama desert, it will be as low as 2%.

Obviously, if a piece of furniture is taken from Santiago to the Atacama, it will shrink, distort, and dry out even further. So do not be surprised, if you move to Sherwood Oaks after having lived farther south, with windows often open to catch welcome breezes, you then notice that, with constant central heating or air conditioning, your prized antique suffers splitting or distorting.

Before the days of metrification, all English kids had to learn how many farthings were in a florin (96). And all timber imported from Russia to England was measured in *standards*. Each of these complicated units contained 165 cubic feet of wood, consisting of 120 pieces, each 12’ x 1½” x 11”. Nowadays many people are surprisingly reluctant to utilize the simpler metric system, as, for instance, the carpenters who use pocket calculators programmed for feet and sixty-fourths of an inch!



## SCAMMER UPDATE

By Rabe Marsh - #187

As NortonLifeLock has advised its customers:

“Criminals fraudulently use the names and brands of major banks, telecoms, retailers, and credit card companies to trick and defraud consumers. So, it is smart to be skeptical about any unexpected contact you receive – no matter how trusted the brand.”

Recently, I received an email purportedly from PayPal, a trusted financial resource:

**From:** Customer Service <bhagu.ph556th657@gmail.com>

**Date:** February 9, 2022  
at 6:13:30 AM EST

**To:** [rabemarsh@mac.com](mailto:rabemarsh@mac.com)

**Subject:** Attn: We noticed unusual activity in your PayPal account.

**Reply-To:** [bhagu.ph556th657@gmail.com](mailto:bhagu.ph556th657@gmail.com)

Dear User,

**Attn: We noticed unusual activity in your PayPal account**

Thanks for your patience while we review the unauthorized activity case on a payment you have sent. We're happy to confirm that this transaction is eligible for PayPal Buyer Protection, and we'll cover the full disputed amount for you if there are any.

The payment for this transaction is now pending in your PayPal balance awaiting confirmation from the sender. If It's you, There's no further action required from you at this time. We'll let you know if we need any additional information.

## Transaction details

- Merchant's name:  
HOME DEPOT LLC
- Merchant's transaction ID:  
KNPUS6658USWE3698
- Your transaction ID: PPDTY25  
PE3323
- Invoice ID: INV01-HFGD-PUSA-  
5252-2220
- Transaction date: 09 February  
2022

Transaction amount: \$ 1249.99 USD

If you did not authorize the charge, you have 72 hours from the date of transaction to open a dispute. For more information, we recommend you to get in touch with us (*giving a phone number*).

Although the email page looked completely legitimate, the email address of this fraudster looked strange, as were the unnecessary capitalizations in the next-to-last sentence of the initial paragraph. There was no credit card information. The writer's grammar was poor (e.g., "we'll cover the full disputed amount for you if there are any"). So, after recovering from the shock of the transaction amount, I did a bit of investigation. I went online to my credit card statements and saw no such purchase. I went online to my PayPal account and saw no such purchase. I then knew for sure that it was a fraud.

The lesson is: Be skeptical, and don't ever make the telephone call or engage the internet contact requested, and you will have saved yourself some grief.

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

Apples Never Fall	Moriarty, Liane	c. 2021	F MOR
Better Off Dead	Child, Lee and Andrew	c. 2021	F CHI
	Child		
Criminal Mischief	Woods, Stuart	c. 2021	F WOO
Deadly Cross	Patterson, James	c. 2020	F PAT
The Deed in the Attic	McCrite, K. D.	c. 2020	F MCC
Double Cross Crochet	Chase, Marlene	c. 2020	F CHA
Haunted	Patterson, James	c. 2017	F PAT
The Lifeboat	Charlotte Rogan	c. 2012	F CHA
Mercy	Baldacci, David	c. 2021	F BAL
Miracle at Augusta	Patterson, James	c. 2015	F PAT
Now You See Her	Patterson, James	c. 2018	F PAT
O Beautiful	Yun, Jung	c. 2021	F YUN
Red Alert	Patterson, James	c. 2018	F PAT
What the Cat Dragged In	James, Miranda	c. 2021	F JAM

## **NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES**

The Aviators	Groom, Winston	c. 2013	629.13 GRO
Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show	Karl, Jonathan	c. 2021	973.933 KAR
The Complete Poems of Walt Whitman	Whitman, Walt	c. 1995	811 WHI p.b.
Things That Aren't there Anymore	Sebak, Rick	c. 2003	900 THI DVD
What Just Happened	Finch, Charles	c. 2021	814.6 FIN

### **THE DEER ARE EVERYWHERE!**

By Rosemary Coffey - #113

First, there were footprints all along the grass at the back of our homes. Then the contents of our bird feeders disappeared overnight ...



Photo by Rosemary Coffey

... so many of us began taking them indoors after dusk.

Next the deer started running into things, as this wind shield in front of Unit #280:



Photo by Jan Wendt

Who or what will be next? Stay tuned: the Bambi image may be gone forever!



## WORTH A LOOK

### BOOKS NEW TO OUR LIBRARY

By Barbara Christy - #237

*Vortex* by Catherine Coulter. Fiction. A disappearance seven years ago from a frat party gone bad, a midnight attack on a wounded CIA agent engaged in secret negotiations with Iran, and a first-time political campaign by a good-looking scion of a wealthy New York family: how are they related? It's FBI agent Savich's job to find out, all the while trying to keep himself and his partner alive. F COU

*Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty. Fiction. When wife Joy Delaney goes missing, along with an injured stranger the couple has befriended, husband Stan becomes the prime suspect. Despite their being known in the community as a successful and obviously happy long-time couple, as the police investigate, it appears that there are secrets in the closet. F MOR

*Criminal Mischief* by Stuart Woods. Fiction. Waiting to meet his partner for dinner, Stone Barrington is picked up by a gorgeous, dark-haired young woman in a black dress, complete with cleavage. She asks his advice about an investment, only to ignore it and lose it all. Thus begins an international hunt for recovery from the Mafia-style con man. F WOO

*The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan. Fiction. Stretched to the limit by work pressures, responsibility for her infant daughter and lack of sleep, single mom Frida makes a disastrous decision: to leave her daughter alone for an hour while she races to the office to retrieve papers she needs to work from home. When Family and Children's Services are called about her "abandoned" child,

Frida's whole life begins to unravel amidst her struggle to get her daughter back. F CHA

*The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich. Fiction. Flora, a devoted customer who died on All Souls' Day, 2019, is haunting a Minneapolis bookstore. Tookie, recently a prison parolee, now an employee, survived incarceration by reading. Because of her jail library experience, she was hired by a struggling bookseller. Now Tookie has taken on the challenge of Flora, an Indian-wannabe, newly-turned ghost, who comes to the store only when Tookie is working. As she deals with real customers and the staff of the store, and with the aftermath of George Floyd's death in the community, Tookie grows in her understanding of what it means to be indigenous. F ERD

*Sharpe's Assassin* by Bernard Cornwell. Fiction. After the Battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington turns to long-time military warrior Sharpe to take on a secret assignment in Paris investigating a fanatical band of revolutionaries fomenting violence. F COR

*Shelter* by Jung Yun. Fiction. Kyung Cho is a mid-life husband and father struggling with mounting debts and a sense of estrangement from his wealthy immigrant parents. When they are victims of a kidnapping attempt, their home becomes off-limits as an unlivable crime scene. So Kyung and his wife Gillian bring them home until the investigation is over. Soon, grappling with the generational and cultural differences is a problem, as is the fact that Kyung still struggles with a sense of never having been loved and, therefore, unable to truly love his own family. F YUN

*The Maid* by Nita Prose. Fiction. The work life of a maid is generally orderly – which suits Molly perfectly, since she is on the autism spectrum and has trouble navigating novel or complex situations. When she discovers a wealthy patron dead in bed, her world is turned topsy-turvy. Worse, because of her odd behavior, she becomes the chief suspect. Fortunately, friends she never knew she had come to her rescue in this heart-warming mystery. F PRO

*The Aviators* by Winston Groom. Non-fiction. A WWI air ace, a daredevil cross-Atlantic pilot, and the first pilot to fly “blind” – using instruments alone – this is the beginning of their story. Their exploits only increased during WWII, when Jimmy Doolittle led the daring raid on Tokyo, pariah Charles Lindbergh secretly flew bombing missions in the South Pacific, and Eddie Rickenbacker, on a secret mission to General MacArthur, had to survive a crash landing and float in the Pacific for 3 weeks. Gripping storytelling combined with meticulous research make this a great read. 629.1309 GRO

---

## SOMEONE IS WATCHING YOU

By the Editors

Sometimes you can think that you’re in a perfectly safe place – like, say, the Sherwood Oaks dining room – only to discover, to your shock and surprise, that someone ... or something ... is keeping an eye on you.

For example, have you ever been seated at Table 23? It’s a bit to the right as you walk straight ahead from the main door, in the second row. From that table, all you have to do is look up toward the ceiling, and this is what you’ll see:



Photo by Bill Lefler

Whaddya know? It’s a lamb ... innocent enough, perhaps, but still: How did it get up there? What is it doing? Why hasn’t it come down?

Well, it probably isn’t doing any harm. And it is fun to look up from time to time to see if it’s still there. It may, of course, disappear at any time, so do seek it out some day when you’re settling down for lunch or dinner. You can even wave to it when you walk by.

## ENGLISH CONTRADICTIONS

- 1) Found Missing
- 2) Open Secret
- 3) Small Crowd
- 4) Act Naturally
- 5) Clearly Misunderstood
- 6) Fully Empty
- 7) Pretty Ugly
- 8) Seriously Funny
- 9) Only Choice
- 10) Original Copies
- 11) Exact Estimate
- 12) Tragic Comedy
- 13) Foolish Wisdom
- 14) Liquid Gas
- 15) Working Holiday
- and the newest one of all is
- 16) "Social Distancing"

## MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH HAIKU

By Julie Eden - #290

When my high school English teacher announced that we would be writing a term paper, I was delighted; my classmates groaned. The subject I chose was haiku. I still have the original handwritten paper (this was 1964), with a note from the teacher. In her opinion, I did such a great job that she wanted a copy to share with future classes. I'm still fascinated with haiku, and recently have enjoyed pairing them with my photos and sharing them with Japanese friends.

You may know *haiku* (the plural is the same) as a short poem of Japanese origin – but it is more than that. In the English language, a haiku is often written in three short lines; when read aloud, it takes about six seconds – but the images created last a lot longer.

Haiku are written in the present tense, in ordinary language, and work particularly well when two different images are used in contrast with each other. They usually include one or more of the senses, such as sound, smell, taste, or touch, not just what we can see. Most importantly, haiku don't tell, or describe; they allow readers to enter the poem in their own way.

Traditionally, the poems deal with nature, and the Japanese use a specific set of words to describe each of the seasons. But the themes are not limited to nature. Going deeper into haiku, you find that the theme is nature as compared and contrasted with human nature.

When writing haiku in English, the goal has been for the first and third lines to have 5 syllables, and the second line, 7 syllables, but haiku do not have to be in that precise format. Japanese haiku count the sounds, not necessarily the syllables. For example, in English the word *haiku* is counted as two syllables, but in Japanese it contains three sounds.

Here are some additional basic principles to remember:

- A haiku is not made up of only one sentence, but more often of two parts.
- Haiku are meant to be simple; they do not use literary devices like simile, metaphor, hyperbole, etc.
- Don't worry about capitalization, and use minimal punctuation or none at all: haiku are designed to feel almost unfinished.
- The magic of haiku is to contrast two different things, thus creating emotional resonance. Instead of telling the reader how a scene makes you feel, show them the details that resulted in the emotion. The key is to highlight something interesting in what you are describing.

This is my guide when I write haiku, though I'm not always successful:

- \*\* Use the first line to describe the setting.
- \*\* In the second line, describe the subject and what it does.
- \*\* Think of something totally contradictory to the first two lines, and use that for the third line. Add a surprise to make it more fun.

Below is a recent example of my haiku, with accompanying photograph:

beaming velvet face  
didn't I see you chasing  
winter into spring?



Photo by Julie Eden



## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #715

Unit 2 of the Climate Solutions 101 program produced by Project Drawdown is titled “Stopping Climate Change,” described as follows: “To achieve drawdown – the point when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and start declining – it’s important to understand the sources of emissions and nature’s means of rebalancing the climate system. This unit explores the sources and impacts of greenhouse gases, and zeroes in on three critical principles: reducing sources, supporting nature’s “sinks” for storing carbon, and centering equality in global action.”

Total world emissions increased over 6 percent in 2021, the year in which COP26 in Glasgow was supposed to produce specific national goals for the planet to reach “net-zero” by 2050. We are simply running out of time to address the climate crisis before we encounter “tipping points” from which there is no return. We may have already passed a couple of them, namely: melting ice in Greenland and melting permafrost in the Arctic, where explosive sinkholes are cropping up and methane is bubbling up out of lakes throughout the region.

You need to tell Congress to act.

In a Continued Learning in-house presentation scheduled for April 4, I’ll be using material from Project Drawdown and the En-ROADS climate model to get you engaged in determining a way forward. I hope it will be fun, as well as enlightening.

### Current “Carbon Tax” Legislation

Learn more about the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend bill, with 94 co-sponsors, at [www.energyinnovationact.org](http://www.energyinnovationact.org). For constantly updated information on the climate crisis, follow @CCLSlipperyRock on Facebook.

## FOCUS ON THE WORLD



Coastal erosion on the coast of the White Sea, northwest Russia

**WATCH ON CHANNEL 901**

**MONDAY/MAR. 14**

**10:00 AM, 4:00 PM, 7:30 PM**

**FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN  
HOME!**



### CONTRONYMS

(Single words with contradictory meanings)

*Apology:* a statement of contrition for an action, or a defense of one

*Bolt:* to secure, or to flee

*Bound:* heading to a destination, or restrained from movement

*Cleave:* to adhere, or to separate

*Dust:* to add fine particles, or to remove them

*Fast:* quick, or stuck, or made stable

*Left:* remained, or departed

*Peer:* a person of the nobility, or an equal

*Sanction:* to approve, or to boycott

*Weather:* to withstand, or to wear away

## MARKED!

By Winnie Dietz - #725

After the siege of Covid-19 started to wane, Barbara Scruggs and I began to get the itch for a cruise. Settling on a domestic liner, we opted for a trip to see the ports of Maine. Unfortunately, that cruise was booked solid, but Barb was persistent. Many phone calls later, she had become a personal friend of the booking agent, who finally put us on a preferred substitute list. When the call came, we were ready!

Our first port was Bar Harbor, a lovely old tourist community replete with gorgeous shops, scenery, and wonderful restaurants. Barb went on a tour, but I elected to go to the Thirsty Whale for a clam sandwich. The return bus was scheduled to leave at 3:30 (or so I thought!), but it was nowhere in sight at that time. Another bus was there, from a different tour, so I asked the driver about mine. He said he'd call my ship to find out where it was. I must have read the schedule wrong, because he learned that my bus would arrive at 5:00.

People-watching is fun for me, so I wasn't bored, but Barb had not shown up after her tour. She loves to shop, so when our social director arrived to see us home, he set out to locate her. Although everyone on the bus was eager to get back to the ship, we waited a full half-hour after cocktails and appetizers had already been served ... but still no Barb.

Eventually, our Director came back with her, having found her one street away; her phone had run out of power, and she didn't know where we were. He had also been in contact with the ship and heard about my getting the bus time wrong, so

he announced, "You're marked!" We were to be monitored in the future by a staff member or a younger passenger whenever we left the ship!

Barb and I wondered if he had found out that we live in a retirement community or, worse yet, had looked up our ages. Anyway, we were definitely "marked," and he never lost us again.

I was telling this story to a friend of mine, who said, "Just like when we couldn't find you in London, or when your tour left you behind at the Louvre!" Oh, dear, perhaps I need a "keeper." Anyway, all's well that ended well.

## COMING IN FROM THE COLD....

By Kathie McCormick - #188

I am a mailbox key who found myself out in the cold! I flew off the key holder without Kathie knowing when or where (or even how). It was warm and sunny for many days, and then the temperature changed. Precipitation arrived: rain, and then snow. It was downright miserable, to say the least. Then I was found, but I didn't have a number on me. The solution was for someone to try me out on the various mailboxes until I opened one, and – would you believe it? – it was #188! At least, it wasn't necessary to try ALL of the boxes! I was turned over to the receptionist, who informed Kathie that I had been found. I am now safely ensconced INSIDE a warm patio home in a safe place! Warmest thanks to whoever found me.



## HARD WORK . . . WHEN OLD

By Robert Typanski - #190

The day was cold.  
The horse was old.  
He labored up the hill.

The sky was gray  
that winter day.  
His load, it did not spill.

Chimney smoke hung low.  
Winds began to blow.  
Clouds gathered to block the sun.

An unending day it seemed.  
But together, they're a team,  
working till the job is done.

A nearby boy looked on,,  
Saw man and horse so strong,  
ignoring the biting cold.

He wished for times to change.  
That we might rearrange  
the need to work so hard  
. . . when old.



Painting by Robert Typanski

## BRINGING STUFF TO SHERWOOD OAKS

By the Editors

In an earlier issue, we asked for submissions regarding "stuff" we brought with us but wished we hadn't ... or didn't bring with us but wished we had.

Here are a few responses we've received to-date:

- I brought an extra living room chair that I didn't need, but I wish I'd brought a clothesline and a fire-place!
- I really didn't need the rod and reel I brought with me, but I wish I'd brought my own vacuum cleaner.
- I just have too many knick-knacks, but I should have brought some gardening tools.

What about you? Let us know!

---

## SOME MORE WISDOM FROM BOB HOPE

*ON TURNING 90 - "You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake."*

*ON TURNING 100 - "I don't feel old. In fact, I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap."*

*ON PRESIDENTS - "I have performed for 12 presidents but entertained only six."*

*ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL - "I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it."*

*ON HIS FAMILY'S EARLY POVERTY - "Four of us slept in the one bed. When it got cold, mother threw on another brother."*



## *More views of Winter 2022*



Photos by Monika Dalrymple