

# THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

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

December 2023 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 42, No. 10

## *Vista of Trees and Reflection of Dining Room*



Photo by Kathie McCormick

*Gentle Readers,*

*Peace on Earth, Good Will to All!*

*We look around us, as we enter the last month of 2023. Good will is certainly at a premium, as evidenced by coarse politics and an outrageous level of incivility, ranging from unkind words to road rage and shootings.*

*And peace? It seems there is no peace, as we see daily with horrible images from Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza. Yet, at this time of year, we are about to celebrate the arrival on earth of a baby many have called the Prince of Peace.*

*What can we do in our own lives here in the Sherwood Oaks bubble, and in the world "out there," to find peace within and to offer it to others? Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

*In small steps, we can do it. Find your peace within, whether by spending time in prayer, in nature, or in quiet solitude. Beyond ourselves, we can intentionally measure our words to others, aim to do one small kindness for someone every day, contribute to an organization that benefits the greater good. Perhaps the journey to peace on earth is found in millions of tiny acts.*

*Wishing you many moments of peace and joy in the weeks ahead.*

The Editors



### **Memorial Donations and Remembrance Cards**

Did you know? Donation envelopes and remembrance cards are located on the memorial table in the lobby. The donation envelope lists many options to choose from when contributing in memory of a resident or loved one. Remembrance cards can be filled out and placed in Cubby #346; they will be collected and given to the spouse/family.

### **DECEMBER CALENDAR**

First Sunday of Advent	Dec. 3
St. Nicholas Day	Dec. 6
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	Dec. 7
Hanukkah (1 <sup>st</sup> Day)	Dec. 8
Bill of Rights Day	Dec. 15
December Solstice	Dec. 21
Christmas Eve	Dec. 24
Christmas Day	Dec. 25
Kwanzaa (1 <sup>st</sup> Day)	Dec. 26
New Year's Eve	Dec. 31

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Submissions for the January issue must be sent to the Editor no later than  
**December 15, 2023.**

### ***IN MEMORIAM***

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

<i>Doris Wiles</i>	<i>October 31, 2023</i>
<i>James Bouwkamp</i>	<i>November 5, 2023</i>
<i>Geraldine Tyson</i>	<i>November 17, 2023</i>
<i>Ralph Flaughner</i>	<i>November 17, 2023</i>

## GARY AND KATHY BLEAKLEY - #265

By Barbara Scruggs - #317



Photos by Scott Vogel

The Bleakleys are a warm, welcoming couple, who, along with a large, fluffy cat, have moved into Unit #265. Sherwood Oaks is hardly new territory, as Gary's mother was once a resident here. Moreover, they are very familiar with the general area, as they have had three different homes in and near Wexford over the past 43 years.

Gary and Kathy met at Penn State on a blind date at his fraternity house and were married one semester before graduation. Kathy, who majored in English, describes her career as that of wife, mother, teacher, and folk artist. Gary, with an MS in Logistics and Distribution, had a 34-year career with US Steel Corp., retiring in 2000. Kathy served Northway Christian Church doing desktop publishing activities. Along with their respective jobs, for ten years they worked together on producing and marketing crafts and furniture items, which funded their children's educations. After completing the construction on their retirement home, Gary provided handyman services with a focus on people in need who could not afford the standard rate for such services. He did this until he was 74 years old.

The Bleakleys' family includes two sons and a daughter, as well as five grandchildren. Their daughter has a doctorate in education and is an elementary school principal in Fairfax County, VA. She was recently honored as being one of the county's "Principals of the Year." One son is a contractor and builder, and the other is a physical therapist who, with his Ph.D., now works in hospital administration. One of the grandchildren is already embarking on an unusual career – unusual for her age, that is. When she was ten, she developed an interest in baking and decorating cakes! She went on to enter a national televised baking contest. Now, at age 12, she has a cake-baking business (which includes multi-tier wedding cakes), takes orders by phone, and made enough profits to fund her expenses when she joined a friend and her family on a cruise through the Bahamas.

The minute one steps into the Bleakley home, one is aware of how extraordinarily talented they both are! For many years they have been designing, building, carving, and painting a host of cabinets, shelves, boxes, and wall decorations. Gary carves, and Kathy paints! There is a large rustic wooden sign (made by them, of course) on the wall of their patio room – Wooden Whimsey – a reminder of their side business from earlier years.

Here at Sherwood Oaks, Kathy is looking forward to pursuing her interest in arts and crafts. Gary, on the other hand, acknowledges that his unusual hearing loss complicates his participation in many group activities, but he still hopes to find opportunities to share his creative gifts.

I was happy to get to know them, and I know the rest of you will be, too!



## RALPH AND SANDY SMAILER - #151

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo by Scott Vogel

I have discovered that the newest residents of my courtyard are **producers**! Not of movies or plays, but *things*.

During his long career in the steel industry, Ralph was the guy who figured out new processes. He had tenures with J&L Steel, Lukens Steel, Kraverner Corporation, and others. His specialty was process technology; he loved figuring out new and better ways to manufacture the products. He travelled the world teaching the new methods, from Australia to the Middle East to South America, racking up millions of flyer miles. He also worked as a consultant for 16 years after retirement from the corporate world. Favorite spot from his travels? Perth, Australia.

Raised in Lansdown, PA, he earned his degree in Metallurgy from Penn State. In his high school wood and metal shops, he found he had a knack for creating beautiful things and it became a lifelong hobby. Dismantling his large woodshop to make the move to Sherwood Oaks was not easy, but he will get his hands busy in our smaller shop soon. The coffee table and grandfather clock in their new living room display his handiwork.

Sandy is no slouch in the creative department, either! The two met in the early 1980s in Cleveland. Sandy was a "local" with a Master's degree in chemistry from

Cleveland State. Her career as a medical technologist found expression in labs, hospitals, and doctors' offices.

Watching her mother sew as she grew up, Sandy realized a love for everything in the fiber arts. She is a weaver, spinner, knitter, and sewer. The 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom in their patio home houses her loom and her harp – Yes, harp! The woman has been playing for ten years.

A piano sits in the living room as well. Sandy has already joined our handbell choir and chorus. She also belongs to a number of area fiber guilds and volunteers at Old Economy Village in Ambridge, demonstrating the art of silk spinning.

Their 40-year marriage is a second for both of them. They share Ralph's three sons and seven grandchildren.

The couple spent many happy years sailing on the Chesapeake, where Ralph was captain and Sandy was first mate; together, they formed the crew.

Flag them down in the dining room, and sit with them to learn about their creative lives. Welcome, Ralph and Sandy!!

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*What did Adam say the day before Christmas?* It's Christmas, Eve!

*Why did Rudolph get a bad report card?* Because he went down in history.

*How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?* Nothing. It was on the house.

*What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"?* Santa walking backwards.

*What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?* Cookie sheets!

*What is a Christmas tree's favorite candy?* Ornamints.

## TALK ON JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY

By Warren Howe, MD - #337  
Chair, Health Affairs Committee

The Health Affairs and Continued Learning committees are pleased to announce that Michael J. O'Malley, MD, will present a lecture on "What's New in Knee and Hip Replacement" on **Dec. 4 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Auditorium.

Dr. O'Malley is an orthopedic surgeon on the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. A specialist in hip and knee replacement surgery, he has an outstanding national reputation, standing at the forefront of several innovative approaches to these procedures.

Many of our residents have had or will require joint replacement surgery now or in the future. This will be an excellent way to become familiar with the subject. Dr. O'Malley will tell us about the current "state of the art," as well as providing guidance about what the procedures entail, what preparation for them involves, and what healing and rehabilitation after surgery may be like. He has assured me that he will leave time for queries at the end of his talk; I have advised him that our residents are likely to ask penetrating and thoughtful questions.

Please plan on attending what promises to be a very interesting and informative presentation.

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*It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us parents and children. – J. Schiller*

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

## HOLIDAY MESSAGES AND MUSIC

By Jan Wendt (#158) & Jean Henderson (#346)

On **Sunday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m.** in the Auditorium/Card Room, a unique Chapel Service will be offered by the residents. The service will include the annual Holiday Concert by the Hand Bells and Chorus.

The Chapel liturgy will be led by The Rev. Ben Robbins, with sacred music by the Bells and Chorus, conducted by our long-time friend, Lyn Marsh. You'll also be treated to a few fun secular songs to brighten your season! All are invited to this special event, a gift from residents to residents every holiday season.

## RECYCLING COMMITTEE UPDATES

By Ruth Inkpen - #225

The plastic containers that we receive from the Dining Room that are *not* recyclable include the following:

- The take-out dessert boxes
- The containers from the side cupboard in the Café (salads, etc.)
- The small black plastic cups for sauces, dressings, etc., and their lids

All the above are labeled #6, whereas the recyclables are numbered 1-5. Note that the rest of our take-out plastic containers *are* recyclable ... if clean!

Moreover, please be aware that paper cups containing ice cream or coffee are *not* recyclable (even if washed), although their plastic lids are.

It's complicated ... but it's still worth doing. And remember: we can now also recycle glass in the boxes so labeled.

## LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

By Jan Wendt - #158

Once again, the Living with Loss team will offer its Longest Night Service, this year called "A Service of Faith." Held on **Thurs., Dec. 21, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Auditorium, it includes readings, prayer, music, and a gift stone.

This offering is held on the shortest day of the year at the winter Solstice. It is Christian based, but can be of help to all of us facing the holidays with heavy hearts for a variety of reasons.

## CONTINUED LEARNING

By Jno Hunt - #308

We enjoyed a variety of informative and interesting presentations over the past several weeks, including Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, the Status of Voting Rights, the Chicago World's Fair, and Teaching Deaf and Blind Children. Following a presentation on Joint Replacement by Dr. Michael J. O'Malley on Dec. 4, we will be working on our slate of speakers for next spring. Please contact Jno Hunt (x8308) if you have any suggestions.

As for Channel 951, initial airings on Tuesdays are at 10:00, 3:30, and 7:00. Encore presentations are usually on Thursdays at 10:00 and 3:30.

**Tues., Dec. 5:** The World's Great Paintings – Lectures 23 & 24. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 7.

**Tues., Dec. 12:** Inventions – Lectures 21 & 22. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 14.

**Tues., Dec. 19:** Scotland – Highlands and Islands. Encore on Wed., Dec. 20.

**Tues., Dec. 26:** Comparative Religions – Lessons 23 & 24. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 28.

## TOUGH TIMES AT THE HOLIDAYS?

By Jan Wendt - #158

It's not unusual for many of us to find the holidays to be a bittersweet time. We can easily feel isolated and not so merry, when it seems like those around us are light-hearted.

If you find yourself having a difficult time, feel free to reach out to a trusted friend to talk, or be in touch with anyone on the Living with Loss team. The chairs are Ann Ferguson (#269) and Jean Henderson (#346). Any of us would be happy to provide a shoulder and a smile.

## CRAZY CRAFTERS

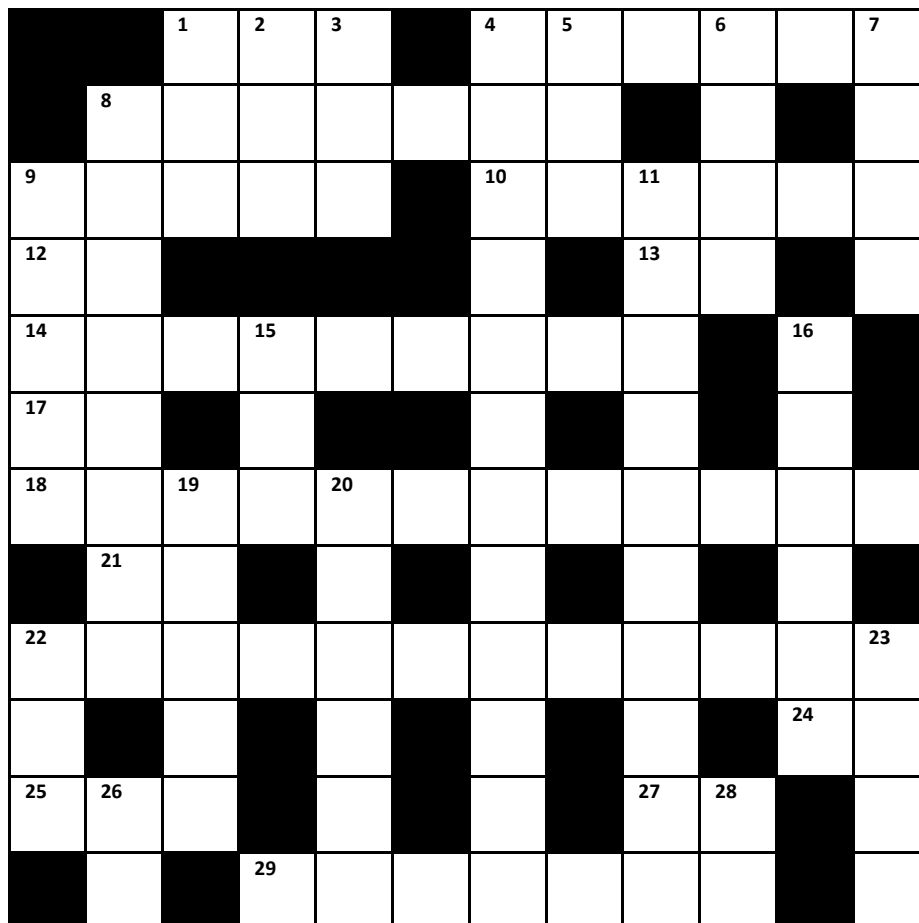
By Joni Pun - #304

The Crazy Crafters Committee recently concluded a very successful eight-week Pottery Class. Fifteen students, divided into two groups, attended the eight-week course. An excellent instructor made the course interesting and productive by helping each student make six or more pottery pieces.

Due to the success of the class, a second iteration may be held in the spring based on continuing interest and instructor availability. A newcomers' class may be started as well.

Responses to Barb Dixon's resident interest survey regarding a possible art class indicated that over 24 residents would be interested. We will, therefore, try to sponsor a spring class based on finding a qualified instructor.

## THE DECEMBER ACORN CROSSWORD – by John Bridges



### CLUES

#### ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ obvious
- 4 Flower \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Used to prepare cheese
- 9 Ships tie up to them
- 10 MacIntosh or Delicious
- 12 French airline inits.
- 13 On or near
- 14 Most peculiar
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ heard
- 18 Where we live
- 21 Either/ \_\_\_\_\_
- 22 Upset the love nest
- 24 Old fashioned "the"
- 25 Name before marriage
- 27 Ever \_\_\_\_\_
- 29 \_\_\_\_\_ in arms

#### DOWN

- 1 Anger
- 2 Used on roads
- 3 Abbreviation for political areas
- 4 Examination results
- 5 Quickly
- 6 Idiot
- 7 Food
- 8 Place to spend money
- 9 Spanish dried grapes
- 11 Individual lodging
- 15 What we breathe
- 16 He has a brother
- 19 Eat away
- 20 Often used to get around
- 22 Mother's pride and joy
- 23 Shout
- 26 French "and"
- 28 Do it \_\_\_\_\_ else!

See p. 15 for the answer key.

## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper – #715

Having begun on Nov. 30, the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP28) is meeting in Dubai under the presidency of Dr. Sultan Ahmed al Jaber, whose other job is CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

Wait ... what?? Where?? Who?? How can it be that the agenda for this year's conference is under the control of the head of a national oil company in a place on the planet that sits atop huge fossil fuel reserves? Are these meetings valuable, or are they just a means to kick the can down the road for another year? It should be clear that the fossil fuel industry is very active in keeping us from a path to a green-energy world economy.

There is one aspect of this year's conference, however, that has the potential to focus the planet's population on the climate crisis, the existential problem that is now affecting us more rapidly and with more widespread devastation. While previous editions of the COP conference have sought to roll out goals for rapidly reducing fossil fuel emissions, COP28 is scheduled to present results measured against those previously defined goals. With worldwide fossil fuel emissions at an all-time high, the picture will, no doubt, not be pretty.

As you'll see in this month's climate video, we are trying out every possibility for weaning humanity off fossil fuels. We have solutions; what we lack is the political will to make changes quickly enough to make a difference. Please let Mike Kelly, Josh Shapiro, Bob Casey, and John Fetterman know that you want them to take action.

**Watch *Fine-tuning the Climate* on Channel 951 on Mon., Dec. 11, at 10:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., or 7:00 p.m. Encore presentations are on Wed., Dec. 13, at 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.**

## DECEMBER SCAVENGER HUNT

By Joni Pun – #304

This December, the Crazy Crafters group will again offer a game – a hunt to find some objects in the Independent Living areas. However, it will differ from the two previous games. There will be 36 small objects hidden in the pathways in front of the units, and the goal is to find *three* of the objects, all of which are variations of angels or snowmen. You will pick up the three (and only three!) and bring them to the front desk, where you will receive a small, tasty reward. You may hand in only ONE group of the objects. We will notify you of the date when the contest begins.



## EGGNOG PARTY THANKS!

Thank you to all who worked to make our Resident Eggnog Party on Dec. 1 possible:

Co-chairs: Jno & Anne Hunt, Maggie Bennardo, Ruth Lasure  
Decorations: Kate Donovan  
Catering: Jesse Komara  
Set-up: Nancy O'Leary  
Wine & Spirits: Gary Brandenberger  
Music: Jason Lyle  
Name Tags: Peter Broeren

And a special thanks to all 73 sponsors whose donations funded our event!



[Some members of the Eggnog Party's Decorations Committee, hard at work!]



## CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602  
For the Chapel Committee

Services begin at 2:00 p.m.  
in the Card Room – except that  
**Dec. 10 will be in the Auditorium.**  
Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

### Sunday, December 3

Rev. Hollis Haff  
New Community Church, Wexford

### Sunday, December 10 (Auditorium)

Rev. Ben Robbins  
Northmont Presb., McCandless Twp.  
Service will include Sherwood Oaks  
Chorus and Handbells.

### Sunday, December 17

Rev. William Dambach  
North Hills Presbyterian, Ross Twp.

### Sunday, December 24

In House - Service of Prayer  
Carols and Meditation

### Sunday, December 31

NO SERVICE

*"Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you."*

- 2 Corinthians 13:11

## COME HEAR THE MERRY MADS

By Jane Lavender - #253  
Program Committee chair

The Seneca Valley Madrigals are a small, select group of 20 singers chosen by audition at the beginning of the school year. They are affectionally referred to as "The Mads" at school. A goal of the Madrigal Singers is to promote the highest degree of excellence in choral music. They recently took 1st place at the North American Choral Festival in New York City. They were also designated as the top madrigal choir out of all those competing in North American festivals at 19 different locations across the eastern United States.

The Mads will be here to entertain you on **Tues., Dec. 7, at 7:00 p.m.** in the auditorium. Please put it on your calendar right now, and then come to hear them and enjoy a warm-up to the holiday season.

## THE ANGEL TREE

By Bob Typanski - #190

Several years ago we bought a tree.  
That wasn't unusual, you see,  
since Christmas was the reason  
and, to buy a tree, it was the season.

Time came for us and the tree to part.  
But she said to me, in a soft voice,  
to change that action I meant to start.  
So I had to stop. I had no choice.

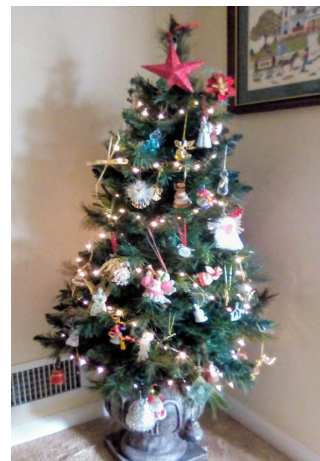
She then said: "I only have this to say.  
The angel tree is here to stay."  
I don't know why, but I do feel  
a need to keep it here, and real.

We truly need to keep in mind  
that He came to us to remind  
that we should change our ways  
and live in love throughout our days.

We must recall what was said above:  
that in God's view, we all are loved.

So here it is during rain and snow.  
It's always there with that soft glow.  
It says each day to recall the word  
of peace on earth to all who heard.

Now, when nights become too long,  
I go to where the tree now stands,  
and remind myself of its song  
of love and peace for fellow man.



## TRAIN TRAVEL

By John Bridges - #122

When the Wild West was being settled, travel was often by stagecoach with 6 passengers facing each other and being jostled around. When railways started competing, it was thought that passengers would prefer to continue sitting in small compartments rather than in a large carriage. Even when corridors were added, the carriages often still retained separate compartments, with doors to the corridor but none directly to the station platform. Today there often is more emphasis on utilizing space to the maximum, and less insistence on individual privacy.

In 1950 my father was working in Central London, but living in a small satellite town 30 miles to the north. He travelled by train each day, along with many other commuters from this friendly community. Many of the passengers wanted to spend the time in the train usefully; some started holding up cards in carriage windows stating that that compartment would be used for Spanish conversations (similar to our language tables in the dining room). Other compartments would concentrate on such subjects like French, history, geography, or politics.

Pigeon racing was popular before World War II, so it was a common sight to see stacks of cages containing cooing pigeons at many stations. These would have been sent with instructions to the Station Master to release them at such and such a time on a specified date. The pigeons would immediately set off to fly back to their home roost. The cages would be put on the next available train to return at a slower pace (freight paid in advance).

In 1952, when I arrived in Kenya, all the mainline trains had expatriate drivers for the huge, expensive engines that were needed to haul heavy trains from the coast up to 8,000 feet, down to 3,000 in the Rift Valley, and up to 4,000 in Uganda. Smaller engines had Indian drivers, and small

shunting engines were operated by Africans. This was not a case of a color bar, but a practice based on experience.

There could be an amusing sequel to saying goodbye to friends at Nairobi station. You might say goodbye to them again, an hour later, at the next station! This is because a car can travel the 30 road miles and climb 2,000 feet faster than a train can reach Limuru. The return to Nairobi can be exciting, as you freewheel with the gear in neutral at up to 60 mph.

Years later, I was in Ghana, travelling on a train pulled by a diesel-powered engine. Due to a mechanical malfunction, the driver sensibly said that to continue with no lubricating oil in the motor would cause a breakdown. Because of the tribal system, he was nonetheless forced to continue by order of the Stationmaster (politically appointed?). As was to be expected, the motor seized up and the train subsequently had to go to the workshop for extensive and expensive repairs.

On another occasion, we were sitting on a Swiss train, resting in a siding until it was time to start. In came a cleaning lady with bucket and broom, who immediately started talking in her broadly accented German about how proud she was to be working on a Swiss train. She spoke of keeping her carriage clean, working on Swiss trains, being part of the Swiss railway system, and being able to add her part to the country's general well-being and efficiency. This continued for most of half an hour, and we were left with the feeling that, if all the Swiss felt such a pride in their system, then it was no wonder that Swiss railways were so clean and efficient. In today's world of frequent strikes and demonstrations, it is refreshing to remember this *small cog's* pride in HER organization.

I have to admit that I have not travelled by train in the States except to get from airport terminal to flight departure point. So all my comments relate to experiences in other parts of the world.

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After making friends while living in various African and South American countries, Sheila and I found ourselves back in England with time to travel around Europe to visit friends who had also returned to their native countries. We started with a voyage from the North of England to Bergen, Norway, where we met old friends from the Congo. Then on by train to Oslo, where a visit was marred by a young son becoming jealous that his Mum was spending time with us instead of him. This problem was solved by the ex-husband/father taking us to see the local sights, including the restored wooden vessel, the VASA.

Trains then took us to a small town in Sweden, where we met other friends and were taken to a picnic with their parents. We were allowed to smell, but not to taste, that Swedish delicacy, *Surstromming*, which are small herring that have been allowed to ferment in a bulging can.

A ferry carried our next train across the sea to Denmark, where once again we were able to spend a few days with friends before continuing on to Kehl, in southwestern Germany. We visited the workshop and beautiful wood turnings of a man who had run a sawmill in Ghana. He and his wife took us to the famous nearby Gardens.

Trains continued to bear us across Europe, with German changing to French. We spent time with our doctor friend, who had retired to a delightful small house in Paris, near beautiful walks along the River Seine. She organized visits to the usual sights of Paris and also a trip in her car to distant beauty spots.

Our travels continued south alongside the River Rhone, with the train sometimes behaving like a streetcar, running on rails in the center of streets. We went onward to squeeze through the narrow gap between the Pyrenees mountains and the sea, past seemingly endless orange groves to the end near Cadiz. Our son met us

and took us to his charming Spanish home at El Puerto de Santa Maria. Unlike Swiss trains, the Spanish ones left much to be desired, with the nonsmoking compartments full of smokers, with all their dirty habits and rude comments, when we politely asked them to refrain.

Travelling by train instead of flying had the advantage of our always arriving in the middle of the town instead of at some distant airport. Admittedly, unlike travel by ship, we had to carry our suitcases and pack and repack at each stop, but with care and forethought this was not a big problem. We could travel where and when we wanted, often gaining savings by purchasing special one-day trips and not having to buy a single ticket for the entire trip.

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### Poem by Sheila Bridges

(discovered after her death)

My spouse is enamored of all that floats,  
Especially when it is wooden boats.  
He loves to sail them, he loves to make them,  
He loves to varnish or even to paint them,  
But he doesn't like to sand.

John's wife is sweet, and she likes a boat;  
She'll paint or varnish, yes! Coat after coat,  
She'll help to rig, she'll help to splice,  
Natty knotting she does really nice,  
But she doesn't like to sand.

John has often bemoaned his lot,  
He paid his shilling and look what he got:  
A wife who'll play him a merry tune  
(and that, at times, is quite a boon),  
But she's damned if she'll sand his boats.

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## WORTH A LOOK BOOKS NEW TO OUR LIBRARY

By Barbara Christy - #237

*A Mighty Force* by Marcia Biederman. Nonfiction. In Force, Pennsylvania, 1946, sewage from company housing was contaminating the community drinking water. Dr. Elizabeth Hayes, the last of her family's seven physicians to work for the Shawmut Mining company, appealed to management to rectify the problem; when they refused to do anything about it, she left the company in protest. But she didn't quit. Instead she joined forces with the union and led them out on strike. As the work stoppage dragged on, wartime restrictions limiting miners' ability to change companies were lifted, public sanitation became more widespread and acceptable, and Dr. Hayes discovered how to use the power of the press, whereupon the balance of power began to shift. Soon the situation in Force was receiving national attention, and even Truman's White House became involved. Eminently readable and engaging, this book will open many windows on Western PA's past and shed light on one of our heroines. 362.10 BIE

*The In-Between* by Hadley Vlahos, RN. Nonfiction. We live in a community that is familiar with end-of-life issues and problems, but hospice nurse Hadley Vlahos has much to say about how to live as well as how to die. There is wisdom and comfort to be found in this volume. 616.02 VLA

*Good Night, Irene* by Luis Alberto Urrea. Fiction. Based on the experiences of the Red Cross "donut dollies" of WWII, this is an inspirational story of the unlikely friendship of a super-sized, brassy Midwestern broad and a New York socialite fleeing an abusive relationship, as they learn to drive the Clubmobiles, manage rowdy servicemen, and power their way through

the sometimes terrifying and sometimes absurd events of the war in Europe, from the Battle of the Bulge to Buchenwald. A rousing good read to follow Veterans' Day. F URR

*The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. Fiction. Described as "a murder mystery inside a great American novel." In the 1920s, Chicken Hill, Pottstown, was a lively ethnic mix of blacks, Jews, and European immigrants. Ambitious Moshe is building a bright future with theaters catering to the entertainment desires of the black community, while his wife, Chona, insists on continuing to operate a kosher grocery store, the Heaven and Earth Grocery, which caters to blacks as well as immigrants. Beloved by the black families of the town, Chona becomes the protector of Dodo, a blind-deaf boy whom state officials want to institutionalize. Helped by her husband's black janitor, Dodo is spirited away to safety, while the citizens of Chicken Hill struggle to survive in a failing community. F McB

*Be Mine* by Richard Ford. Fiction. In the latest of four works sharing his unique perspective on American life, Frank Bascombe is now grappling with caregiving and mortality – not his, but his son Paul's. Paul is suffering from ALS and finishing a two-month experimental study at the Mayo Clinic. As father and son are navigating the emotionally fraught world of the terminally ill, impulsively, while they still can, they decide to see Mt Rushmore. Not at all depressing, this is an uplifting story of finding happiness in the midst of turmoil. F FOR

*Dinner at the Center of the Earth* by Nathan Englander. Fiction. Set on the border between Israel and Gaza, this novel is extremely topical. Z is a Jewish American, recruited to spy for Israel but now remorseful over the Palestinian carnage he has caused, branded a traitor, and at



risk for his life. "The guard" is Israeli, recruited because he is loyal, a fool, and able to keep a secret. The secret is that he is to be the sole guardian of the prisoner at a black site in the Negev desert, an assignment that lasts 12 years. "The General," a famous Israeli militant, has been lying in a hospital bed for the last eight years. He alone knows about the prisoner and the guard left in the desert. How their lives intertwine with those of a Parisian waitress and a Canadian businessman creates a witty, suspenseful, and improbable story that nevertheless incorporates the moral ambiguities of the conflict today. F ENG

### CHRISTMAS MUSIC

By Jim Mauch - #263

Christmas is coming very soon. It may be here before we are ready for it. In our family, Christmas brings the music of John Rutter, carols such as *Angels' Carol*, *Candlelight Carol*, *Carol of the Children*, *Christmas Lullaby*, an arrangement of *Love Came Down at Christmas*, and many more.

Rutter also wrote arrangements of other carols, such as *Silent Night* and *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, as well as choral works, such as *Here We Come Awassailing* and *The Holly and the Ivy*.

For notes about John Rutter, I am indebted to the many CD covers I have read, and to Wikipedia. He was born in 1945 in London, where he grew up in the family home, over the Globe pub on Marylebone Road. He attended Highgate school and, as a chorister there, took part in the recording of Britten's *War Requiem*, under the composer's baton.

Rutter read music at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was a member of the choir. Later he became director of music at Clare College, where he led the

choir to international prominence. He founded his own choir, the Cambridge Singers, with which he has made many recordings of sacred choral music. His compositions include larger works, such as the *Requiem* and the *Magnificat*. His *Mass of the Children* was written after the death of his son Christopher, also a student at Cambridge.

### ACTIVITY FEE RESULTS

In November many of us came away from Anna Singer's fine program with a song in our hearts. More than 70 residents had gathered for an evening's entertainment and for the joy of being together. Someone asked if this was all volunteered, or how could Sherwood afford to have such fine programs. The answer is, "It comes from the Activity fees to which we all are asked to contribute." So many of the extras we enjoy here are casually accepted as something that just appears. But, yes, they are paid for by us through our SORA Activity Fund. Please remember the pleasure we have shared at these events when it's your turn to give.

### A LITTLE SOMETHING JAZZY

By Jane Lavender - #253

The Yoga Ball Bass Band (maybe they can explain the name), led by Colton Marley, is a student-run band involving students all through high school and beyond. Beginning in the Fall of 2022, it started as Colton's senior project. Now it has grown to perform many concerts and public performances, striving to play fun music and have a good time!

This jazz band will entertain us on **Dec. 28 at 7:00** in the auditorium. It will be one more fun evening in our holiday season.

Are we having fun yet? You bet!

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

By Jane Lohman - #717, Secretary

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

Data from minutes for the Nov. 7, 2023. monthly board meeting.

**SORA Treasurers:** Memorial/Special Projects Fund balance is \$33,307.73, with \$107,038.35 in the Employee Appreciation Fund, plus a short-term CD of \$20,000. The SORA operating treasury balance and CD investment is \$94,283.70.

### **Liaison Reports:**

**Dining Committee:** Private dining room may reopen over the holidays.

**Focus on the World and Continued Learning:** Speakers are being finalized for spring. Lecture times will focus on mornings and afternoons rather than evenings.

**Program Committee:** Anna Singer held a very successful concert on November 7.

**Living with Loss:** Annual memorial service will be held on Sat., Nov. 18 at 1:30. 45 residents will be honored.

**Book Club:** Will review The Little Paris Bookshop by Nina George.

**Sherwood Gifts:** New items are on display, plus a new line of cards.

**Pickleball:** Ladies' day session to begin in January. Investigating "quiet" balls and paddles to reduce noise.

**Trips and Tours:** Several concerts and a dinner are posted on the bulletin board.

**Handbells and Chorus:** Concert will be held on Dec. 10.

**Executive Director (Mark Nord for Annette McPeck):** Census: IL 193/250 – 3 homes under contract. Marketing events scheduled in Nov. and Dec. SN 34/43 (5-star CMS rating); PC: 29/42; OGC: 29/30. Auditorium project: Meeting held with auditorium task force to address resident concerns; follow-up meeting has been scheduled. Covered Walkway Repairs: Section D is scheduled next. Fall Vaccines: Flu and Covid-19 vaccines have been scheduled.

**Old Business:** Frank Finley provided an update on the Summerhouse renovation project. It is hoped to have the proposal ready for bidding by next summer.

**New Business:** A new procedure was adopted by the Board for committees requesting budget changes outside of yearly review. Jno Hunt requested a review of the auditorium/stage project at the next Board meeting.

**Next Monthly Board Meeting:** Tues., Dec. 5, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. in the Card Room. All Residents are welcome. The next SORA Quarterly Meeting will be on Dec. 12, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

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Teacher: *How old is your father?*

Kid: *He is six years old.*

Teacher: *What? How is this possible?*

Kid: *He became a father only when I was born.*

Teacher: *Maria, go to the map and find North America.*

Maria: *Here it is!*

Teacher: *Correct. Now, Class, who discovered America?*

Class: *Maria!*

## THE COLETTA MCKENRY LIBRARY ACCESSIONS

### FICTION, INCLUDING LARGE TYPE AND DVDs

Amazing Grace Adams	Littlewood, Fran	c. 2023	F LIT
Be Mine*	Ford, Richard	c. 2023	F FOR
City of Dreams	Winslow, Don	c. 2023	F WIN
A Fatal Lie	Todd, Charles	c. 2021	F TOD
Good Night, Irene*	Urrea, Luis Alberto	c. 2023	F URR
Happiness Falls	Kim, Angie	c. 2023	F KIM
The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*	McBride, James	c. 2023	F MCB
The Last Kingdom	Berry, Steve	c. 2023	F BER
The Legacy in the Attic	Dodson, DeAnna Julie	c. 2013	F DOD
The Rabbit Hutch	Gunty, Tess	c. 2022	F GUN
The Ring in the Attic	McCrite, K.D.	c. 2013	F MCC
A Song Everlasting	Jin, Ha	c. 2023	F JIN
Zero Days	Ware, Ruth	c. 2023	F WAR

### NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

A Mighty Force*	Biederman, Marcia	c. 2021	616.02 VLA
The In-Between*	Vlahos, Hadley	c. 2023	LA

\*Books reviewed in this issue.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION – by John Bridges

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# *Goodbye to Autumn at Sherwood Oaks*



Hallowe'en Reminder Photo by Kathie McCormick



White Squirrel Photo by Bob Batykefer



Autumn Leaves Photo by Bob Batykefer



Fall Colors II Photo by Bob Batykefer