

# THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

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

January 2025 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 44, No. 1



Photo by Kathie McCormick

*WARM REFLECTIONS ON THE PATH HOME*

**Dear Reader –**

Well, friends, here we sit on the cusp of 2025, a fresh start, a new beginning!

The turning year offers a natural opportunity to take stock, to inventory anything and everything, be it files, finances, plans, achievements, regrets, hopes. Ah, **hope**. Now there’s a popular theme for this season of the year.

And whether we browse the seed catalogs to plan next summer’s garden, or thumb through travel brochures to dream about a trip or vacation, such activities are premised on hope.

We also hope for those precious intangible things as well: health, peace, and joyful connections in our daily rounds.

So, let hope propel you into the coming year and the next seasons. Start by savoring the “Hope” poem shared by Jane Lohman on page 17.

Even if all your dreams don’t materialize, get busy hoping, as the daylight gradually lengthens in the weeks ahead.

Spring is just around the corner.

~ Jan Wendt

**Memorial Donations and Remembrance Cards**

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

**JANUARY CALENDAR**

New Year’s Day	January 1
Epiphany	January 6
Orthodox Christmas	January 7
Martin Luther King Day	January 20
Inauguration Day	January 20
Nat’l Belly Laugh Day	January 24
Nat’l Puzzle Day	January 29

**THE ACORN**

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Submissions for the February issue must be sent to the Editor no later than **January 15, 2025.**

**IN MEMORIAM**

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

*Thomas Risch*

*December 7, 2024*

*Janet Bristlin*

*December 17, 2024*

## Chris Eibling - #327

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo by Security

About this time of year, many folks pack up and head south for the winter months. Chris Eibling, however, arrived at Sherwood Oaks on November 1, putting behind four years of living in Florida, and ready to start a new chapter closer to his roots and adult children.

Raised in Arlington, Ohio, Chris was over-eager to start life's adventures, arriving at home in a surprise delivery aided by a helpful neighbor several weeks earlier than expected.

His home included an older sister and younger brother, both of whom are deceased. His Christian faith was instilled early, and it is clearly the foundation of his life.

Out of high school, he was drafted into the Army, and did a two-year stint, including service in Vietnam, at Phu Loi. There, his training in encryption was utilized at a helicopter base, where the choppers were prepped for their next, usually secret, missions. Returning home, he met

wife Sue through mutual church group friends, and their union lasted 51 years until her death in 2019 from Alzheimer's dementia.

The couple raised two sons in a large home on the water in Freemont, Ohio. Their expansive home was the site of many happy church youth group activities, and a magnet for teens. Chris still is in touch with many of those now-grown youth today.

He is also in frequent contact with good friends Phyllis and Jim Franks. Many residents remember Phyllis as Director of Residential Services here, and Jim as a driver for Special Services. Their friendship with Chris goes back 40 years.

Following Army discharge, Chris attended Bowling Green State University on the GI bill and earned a degree in business. He worked for a couple of years at Sears, then opened his own quick-print business, which he ran for 14 years.

His unique experiences in working with youth at church, combined with his knowledge of graphics, led to a 25-year career teaching printing and graphics in a vocational high school, a job he loved.

Both Chris's sons live in Ohio. One is a physical therapist who owns several businesses; the other, an administrator with Ohio Health.

Five grandchildren and three greats complete the family.

In his spare time, Chris enjoys bowling, tennis, pickleball, and water sports.

Settling in, Chris has joined the Men's Bible Study and plays pickleball. He also volunteered to help with the New Year's Eve Committee's activity. Welcome, Chris!

## ZOANNE LACABE - #318

By Harriet Burress - #112



Photo by Security

What a surprise it was to visit the bulletin board in the mail room and see Zoanne Lacabe's name listed as a newcomer from Anderson, S.C. That is our hometown, and she lived there almost as long as John and I did – 18 years. What brought Zoe to Anderson from North Augusta, GA? "My job," she answered. "It encouraged me to learn, and I loved it. In the '60s and '70s a nurse did what the doctors wanted – no questions asked. I went to Anderson to manage the anesthesia department as a CRNA (nurse anesthetist). Times had changed."

Zoe's career began in Oil City, PA, where she entered a school of nursing. She also studied at Penn State and graduated from Edinboro. Her specialty, anesthesia, was completed at Oil City Hospital, and she practiced in Mercer, and Newport News, VA, before N. Augusta.

Zoe was born in Polk, PA, near Franklin. She has ancestors who arrived in America about 50 years after the Mayflower.

They settled as farmers in VA and NY until William Penn offered more land and they moved to western PA. She fondly remembers her grandfather's family reunions at Sugar Creek. Her study of genealogy revealed that she has relatives who claim relationship to President McKinley. Her name came from her grandmother Zoe. Her mother removed the "e" and added "Anne. Today, she prefers "Zoe."

In her former home in Anderson, Zoe had a big sewing room to accommodate this hobby she acquired at age 40. She took lessons and made each pattern twice, the first time out of muslin. "I have an embroidery sewing machine and can decorate most anything with it." Another pastime achievement of Zoe's was putting together her own cookbook of her grandmother's handwritten recipes. They are a treasure – a little bit of this, and a little bit of that. She enjoys reading, has a Nook, but likes to hold a book in her hand. The SO library beckons her.

Zoe has a son who lives in Franklin and three daughters located in Argentina, Texas, and Virginia. Six grandchildren and four great grands complete her family. One of her grandsons came for her the Saturday before Thanksgiving for their family get-together in Franklin, and "I talked to him more during that ride than I ever have at one time." She is excited and looking forward to all her family coming in July to celebrate her 80th birthday. In the meantime, she enjoys the company of her 7 lb. chihuahua, Letty, and meeting new friends, particularly at lunch.

Please welcome Zoe in #196 as she awaits her permanent residence, #318.

## JANET LIPCHAK - #105

By Rosemary Coffey - #113



Photo by Security

Janet Lipchak, known as “Jan” to her friends, has lived in Unit #105 at Sherwood Oaks since October 10. Her previous residence was in Bethel Park, which is hardly surprising, since she had lived in the South Hills all her life until her latest move. She attended a local Catholic school starting with the fourth grade, followed by a Catholic college in Ohio known as Dayton University. She specialized in home economics, including childcare as well as both cooking and sewing, which led her to a career in teaching in local schools for more years than she can remember. She served mostly at Brashear H.S. in the South Hills, but spent time in several other schools, at both middle and high school levels. Interestingly, her first knowledge of Sherwood Oaks came from her connection with former teacher and long-time SO resident Jean Kabbert.

Janet and her husband John have four children, two of each gender, who now live in Wexford, the North Hills, the South Hills, and Florida. They have four grandchildren as well, and one great-

grandchild, with another on the way. Janet’s father, originally from New Orleans, had several sons, but none of them, in turn, produced sons of their own. Finally, one of the sons adopted a boy from Mexico, who then carried on the family name.

As a volunteer, Janet has led projects with intellectually disabled children. Currently, she is already playing bridge regularly, both in the afternoon and in the evening, and beginning to read through the “Great Books” that she has been collecting for many years. In her spare time, she visits her old house, which still harbors many of her possessions. Little by little, with the help of her daughter in Wexford, it is being cleaned out so that it can be sold.

You may be wondering what has happened to John, since he is obviously not living here with Jan. At the age of 92, he truly appreciates the quiet provided by living by himself and is simply not ready to move to a retirement community; hence he maintains his residence at a second house nearby, and Jan talks to him every day. Perhaps he will change his mind and join her in the future.

For now, Janet is happy with her move, believing that it was the right choice for her at this time of her life. Do stop to talk when you run into her, as she always has something to say!

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*I changed my car horn to gunshot sounds. People get out of the way much faster now.*

*Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.*

## HATS OFF TO ALL HOLIDAY ELVES!

By Jan Wendt - #158

Santa's elves were everywhere on campus during December. So, kudos to:

\*Amy Welch, Landscaping Department, who spent hours installing lights and holiday trimming at the Gatehouse, Center, and Oak Grove and other locations. The festive touches were especially appreciated in the dark hours, lifting the spirit wherever one looked.

\*The residents who teamed up to decorate the Lobby trees, giving the Center that "at home" touch. Led by Beth Brown, they include Harriet Burress, Connie Brandenberger, Dolly O'Toole, Joan Reynolds, and Rich Greer, with Patrick from Maintenance doing the ladder work.

\*To Donna Artz and Ann Ferguson, who made peppermint sticks out of the walkway poles, an enchanting seasonal transformation some courtyards may want to adopt in the future.

\*And, of course, Jesse Komara and crew for the magical atmosphere created in the Auditorium for the holiday parties.

Ann Ferguson says there is an elf loose in the Wood Shop as well! She and other dog owners found this trinket, given anonymously. The card reads "The Wood Shop wishes all you dog owners a Happy Christmas."



Photo by Ann Ferguson



Photo by Kathie McCormick



*The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but the ability to keep your mouth shut in any language is priceless.*

*Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't decide.*

*When I get a headache, I take two aspirin and keep away from children, just like the bottle says.*

*Happiness is not having to set the alarm clock.*

## HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

By Warren Howe, Chair - #337

There are several items to report to residents following the Health Affairs bi-monthly meeting in November.

Did you know that ClearCaptions phones for folks with hearing loss are compatible with the Sherwood Oaks phone system? Anyone interested in this “free” (US Government-supported) service can call (866) 868-8695 to check their eligibility and request the service.

In response to several resident requests for an explanation of what the annual “ambulance fee” provides, Mark Bondi has informed the committee that Administration is working to schedule a presentation about this from the EMS service in Cranberry Township. Watch for this opportunity to get your questions about local ambulance service answered.

Our highly rated Skilled Nursing Unit has taken another step forward by initiating use of a new record-keeping software called “PostClick,” which is a recognized standard for nursing services. This represents further continuing action to improve our facility, and, since potential employees are more likely to be familiar with it than the previous system, recruitment may benefit as well.

In response to the recent health affairs survey in which residents expressed interest in knowing more about “medical” marijuana applications for seniors, the committee is arranging an on-campus presentation by an expert from the Psychiatry Department at UPMC in early March. Watch for further details.

The library of health-related videos for Channel 951 continues to expand. Catch the presentations on Thursdays and Saturdays when you can. If there are additional subjects you would like the committee to include in these programs, let us know.

The Health Affairs Committee is always very interested in ideas you may have to improve the health status of our community and wants to respond to your questions, so tell us about your concerns.

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## CURIO CABINETS FOR JAN/FEB “TREASURED BOOKS”

By Janet Desko - #210

Everyone outdid themselves with the Holiday decorations in the curio cabinets for December! Thank you to all who provided their “Favorite Things”.

On **January 7**, please pick up your “Favorite Things” items from **10:30 a.m. – noon** and from **4:30 p.m. – 6:00 pm**. In January/February, we will be displaying your “**Treasured Books.**” These are books that have been passed down in your family, a book that you have read many times, children’s books, textbooks, books that you have written, yearbooks, cookbooks, any book that you especially treasure. We would appreciate not more than 3-4 books from each contributing resident.

On **January 9**, please drop off your “**Treasured Books**” from **10:30 a.m. – noon** and from **4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** We look forward to arranging your collections in an artistic and interesting display!

## CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

By Monika Dalrymple - #200

I was raised in a very Catholic little town in northeastern Bavaria, by the name of Tirschenreuth. It is located very close to the Czech border; we celebrated our Christmases a little differently.

Santa Claus did not come on Christmas morning; he came to visit with us on St. Nikolas day, which is December 6th. If we were good for most of the year, St. Nikolas left candy and fresh fruit for us. If we were not so good, our reward was not nearly as nice. Santa had a helper by the name of Knecht Ruprecht, whose job would be to find us, for a little beating and some black coals. We were told that he had a whole sack of those coals and could be very generous with them. Ergo, my sister and I were always very good for a few months before December 6th.

Now, about Christmas. When Christmas Eve arrived, we had a very small traditional lunch of fish, mashed potatoes, and sauerkraut. No dessert was offered. The Catholics did not eat meat on Christmas Eve. However, a very mouthwatering pan of apples roasting slowly in the oven would be waiting for us after we returned from the movies, which we were always allowed to attend. (That was our first reward for being good for most of the year. The movies were always about children living charmed lives.)

When we came home from the movies, all we could smell were roasting apples and the scent of fresh pine needles. Mom and my grandmother told us that the Christ Child was on the way to our house to bring us a beautiful tree with lit candles and lots of lovely gifts. Sitting around the kitchen table, anticipation was testing our patience to a great degree waiting for the miracles of this child from heaven to visit us. Mother would then tell us to be quiet and listen. Suddenly,

we heard a little bell ringing, and a sweet song was heard coming from our living room. Grandmother came out of the living room and told us that the child from heaven came to leave us gifts. Rushing in, we were surprised by a beautiful pine tree with lit candles affixed to every branch and smelling so heavenly indeed. Then, we saw the greatest miracle of all! Under the tree were beautifully wrapped gifts, just for us. Then the frenzy of ripping ribbons and tearing papers filled the air! Sweet Jesus, what a beautiful evening we experienced. I will never forget the smells and sounds of these evenings of love and miracles.

Following the gift giving, a small but delicious dinner was served of warm potato salad, cream puffs filled with mixed vegetables, and sweet onions, and the best smelling roasted apples loaded with cinnamon, and brown sugar. We thanked God for the fortunes of our lives.

When we were a little older, mother and grandmother took us to midnight mass. Our hearts were full of love and gratefulness, and we sang the old song, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" and it seemed that this night was truly a night of love, fulfillment, and thankfulness. I never did find out how our mother always knew what we wished for, since we did not write wish lists.

To finish off this wonderful experience, a traditional lunch was served on Christmas Day, including roast goose, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and sweet little treats for dessert. In the afternoon we visited our uncle Hugo and Gute Tante and their daughters Aunts Lilli and Mimi. We were treated to a very potent egg liqueur which was so thick that we had to lick it out of our little schnapps glasses. These sounds and smells still follow me every year and my heart is thankful for all the good in my life.



## NEW CONSTRUCTION

By Kathie McCormick - #188

Bedford for Birds, the birdhouse village (off Parking Lot G), has expanded. A new birdhouse, *Larry's House* (for Boston Celtic legend Larry Bird, jersey #33) has been completed by Jack Dills. And now there are a total of seven structures! Here is a photo of the new house, #33.



Photo by Kathie McCormick

## THANKS, FROM BELLS AND CHORUS

By Jean Henderson - #346

What a joy it was for the ringers and singers to see so many of you at our recent DECK THE HALLS concert! Thanks for supporting us in our dreams of still being able to ring and sing as we did so long

ago! We are especially grateful to resident volunteer Jason Lyle for his hard work with the sound and lighting for the concert. Because of him, we sounded even better! Thanks, Jason, for all you do for all of us.

## CALLING ALL ARTSY AND CRAFTY RESIDENTS

By Bruce Cooper - #735

Do you have art objects or craft projects that you've produced over the years that you'd like to show your fellow residents?



Have I got a deal for you!! The biennial Sherwood Oaks Arts Fest will occur on Friday, March 7, in the Auditorium/Card Room from 1:00-4:00 pm, with set-up beginning on Thursday, March 6. So, dust off those pet projects that you'd like to show.

Look for more information and a sign-up sheet later in January.

*If you see me talking to myself, just move along. I'm self-employed. We're having a meeting.*

*Becoming an adult is the dumbest thing I've ever done.*

## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

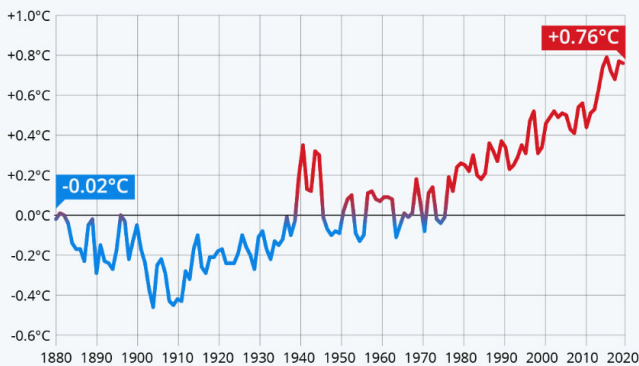
By Bruce Cooper - #735  
Man-made Climate Change is NOT a Hoax

2024 produced 18 named storms, 9 hurricanes, and 4 major hurricanes in the Atlantic, exceeding the average annual totals (14 named storms, 7 hurricanes, and 3 major hurricanes). One of the major factors generating so many storms was warm water both in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.

According to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information, "The top few meters of the global ocean store as much heat as Earth's entire atmosphere."

### The Oceans Are Getting Warmer

Annual divergence of global ocean temperature from 20th century average (1880-2020)



Ocean surface temperatures

Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)



statista

As we continue to dump 162 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere every 24 hours, the oceans are absorbing 93% of the excess heat. So, expect 2025 and beyond to be worse.

When will we learn? Let's hope NOAA stays intact.

Watch *Superstorms and Global Warming* on Channel 951 on Monday, January 13, at 10:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., or

7:00 pm. Encore presentation on Wednesday, January 15, at 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.



## ARE YOUR "AFFAIRS IN ORDER"?

By Jan Wendt - #158

Somewhere on your desk or in your files you'll find the "getting things in order" packet of papers you received when you moved to Sherwood Oaks. This is a project of the Living with Loss team, and it provides a way to state your wishes for care when you are ill, and to organize important information for those who will tend to your affairs after you die.

Once a year, the LWL team offers a time to review and update these documents, or to complete them with any assistance you might need.

On Tuesday, **January 28, at 10:30 a.m.** in the Auditorium, you can obtain a packet, or bring yours from home, ask questions, and then have the peace of mind you and your family deserve. Plan to attend; let's get it done!



## PAPERBACK PONDERINGS

By Jean Henderson - #346

Our paperback room is funded totally by your donations, and I'm so grateful! Here are a few of the new offerings, available on the "Recent New Donations" shelf, to the right as you enter. Listed below are some other **Non-Fiction** paperbacks available:

Winchester: **The Map that Changed the World**

Menand: **The Metaphysical Club**

Loeb: **The Impossible Will Take a Little While**

Mundy: **Code Girls – WW II American Women**

Gladwell: **What the Dog Saw**

Meachem: **Franklin and Winston**

Orman: **Women and Money**

Hillenbrand: **Sea Biscuit**

Irving: **Waking Up White**

DeCourcy: **Husband Hunters**

Beevor: **Stalingrad**

Bombeck: **Forever, Erma**

Theroux: **Deep South**

Brown: **Our Vietnam Wars**

Bryson: **Notes from a Small Island**

MacIntyre: **Rogue Heroes**

Do stop in. No need to sign out the book; just check on the inside back cover that you've read it...and return it.

## CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602

For the Chapel Committee

Services begin at 2:00 p.m.  
in the Card Room

*Everyone is welcome.  
Bring a friend.*

Sunday, January 5

Rev. Dena Roy

Cranberry Community Presbyterian  
Cranberry Township

Sunday, January 12

Rev. Greg Cox

Ingomar United Methodist  
Ingomar

Sunday, January 19

Rev. Liddy Barlow

Christian Associates of SW PA.  
Pittsburgh

Sunday, January 26

Rev. Moni McIntyre

St. Stephen Episcopal Church  
McKeesport

*"Commit your activities to the Lord and  
your plans will be achieved."*

Proverbs 16:3

## **THE COLETTA MCKENRY LIBRARY ACCESSIONS FICTION, INCLUDING LARGE TYPE AND DVD's**

After Annie	Quindlen, Anna	c. 2024	F QUI
Alice and Greta	Simmons, Steven J.	c. 1997	JUV SIM p.b.
The Curse of Penryth Hall	Armstrong, Jess	c. 2023	F ARM
The Day the Crayons Quit	Daywalt, Drew	c. 2013	JUV DAY
Den of Iniquity	Jance, J.A.	c. 2024	F JAN
Everyone on This Train is a Suspect	Stevenson, Benjamin	c. 2023	F STE
The Grey Wolf	Penny, Louise	c. 2024	F PEN
Identity Unknown	Cornwell, Patricia	c. 2024	F COR
Island Boy	Cooney, Barbara	c. 1988	JUV COO
Lion & Lamb	Patterson, James	c. 2023	F PAT
Miss Morgan's Book Brigade	Skeslien Charles, Janet	c. 2024	F SKE
The Paper Airplane	Testa, Fulvio	c. 1981	JUV TES p.b.
Raspberries!	O'Callahan, Jay	c. 2009	JUV O'C
The Teeny-tiny Woman: A Ghost Story	Galdone, Paul	c. 1984	JUV GAL
The Waiting	Connelly, Michael	c. 2024	F CON

## **NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES**

A Place Called Home: A Memoir	Ambroz, David	c. 2022	362.7 AMB
Be Ready When the Luck Happens	Garten, Ina	c. 2024	641.50 GAR
The Counterfeit Countess: The Jewish Woman Who Rescued Thousands of Poles During the Holocaust	White, Elizabeth B.	c. 2024	641.3 WHI
The Cycle of the Gift: Family, Wealth, and Wisdom	Hughes, James E.	c. 2013	306.85 HUG
King of the Wind	Henry, Marguerite	c. 1943	809.9 HEN
Life after Power: Seven Presidents and Their Search for Purpose Beyond the White House	Cohen, Jared	c. 2024	
War	Woodward, Bob	c. 2024	WOO
War Torn: Stories of War from the Women Reporters Who Covered Vietnam	Emerson, Gloria (Introduction)	c. 2002	364.151
Watts on Wealth	Watt, J. Barry	c. 2024	322 WAT



## WORTH A LOOK

### BOOKS NEW TO OUR LIBRARY

By Barbara Christy - # 237

***A Place Called Home*** by David Ambroz. Non-fiction. Imagine, if you can, being hungry, cold, and homeless on the streets of Manhattan at Christmas. This memoir begins with that scene. David Ambroz is just five, the youngest of three children and living on the street with his mentally ill mother. This is his dismal account of a childhood of poverty, abuse, neglect, and hunger. But David is intelligent, observant, and careful; even as a child he learns survival skills. Eventually, at age 12, after his mother violently attacks his brother and is caught, the three siblings land in foster care, where he is separated from his brother and sister because their foster family doesn't want him, a gay child. A series of foster homes makes him wiser about the world but also more emotionally damaged, careful, and constrained. To fit in at school he shuts down, hides his love of learning and his enthusiasm for literature. One bright spot is a summer job as a junior counselor at a YMCA day camp. The senior counselor is Holly, a warm and accepting young mother who opens David's eyes to what life could be like in a normal family. The summer ends with a weekend at Provincetown, where David sees gay couples living openly and happily, a concept that hasn't existed for him before. He has been convinced by many therapists and foster parents that being gay is illegal, unnatural, ugly, and even evil. In high school he finds it hard to engage in give and take with kids his own age. Through Holly, David is exposed to giving and receiving straightforward, uncomplicated love. With her encouragement, he becomes a

member of student council and the National Foster Youth Advisory Council and is even asked to speak to members of Congress. But he is disillusioned with the mistakes, indifference, and ineptitude of foster care and is suddenly ready to be on his own. To escape the foster system, he gets a scholarship to study in Spain for one year. Despite discouragement from his guidance counselor who advises community college as the only realistic goal for a kid in foster care, David aims for admission to Vassar and gets a full scholarship. And he is on his way to the life he has only seen from the outside. 362.7 AMB

***Palisades Park*** by Alan Brennert. Fiction. LARGE TYPE. Eddie Stopka was eleven years old when the Palisades Park opened in Newark, New Jersey, in 1922. It became a centerpiece for his life as he first rode the rides, swam in the famous saltwater pool, and ogled the fat lady in the freak show. In 1930, after three years away and down on his luck, Eddie is hired as a temporary "sweeper," inspecting the rails of the rollercoaster daily by walking them, uphill and down. Hired on as a cotton candy concession operator, he meets and marries Adele and they struggle through the Depression while welcoming their growing family: son Jack and daughter Antoinette (Toni). Growing up as "park kids," Jack and his sister Toni get to know the performers, the maintenance people, the concession operators. From Fireball Bee who sets herself afire before high diving into a pool of burning water to kindly Bunty Hill, a lifeguard who teaches them to swim and later to dive from the highest platform, there is an endless supply of fascinating "carnies" for them to observe and mimic. In 1935, the park goes up in flames only to be rebuilt by new owners; in 1941 the park hosts war bond drives; in 1943 Eddie enlists in the

Navy; in the 1950's Toni develops her career as a high diver.

This is an engaging story of one amusement park family, but in the background is the history of a famous park that operated through tumultuous years. F BRE L.T.

**First Lie Wins** by Ashley Elston. Fiction. LARGE TYPE. It's an old story, "The first lie wins." According to Evie Porter, the lie must be the strongest, the most important, because it sets the stage for everything that comes after. As Evie begins an apparently serious relationship with wealthy Ryan, his friends want to be sure she is not a gold digger. But the reality is that the life story she tells is a compete fiction, as is her hometown, college experience, and family background. And Ryan may be the mark, but he has secrets of his own. F ELS L.T.

**FUNNY STORY** By Emily Henry. Fiction. Daphne is a super practical, highly reserved children's librarian in Waning Bay, Michigan. Her life is on track for a great future with her tall, handsome fiancé Peter. Until it isn't. Peter realizes he still loves his ex, Petra, and dumps Daphne. Suddenly she must find a place to live, and with her meagre salary from the library, she cannot afford much. Enter Miles, Petra's former fiancé. They become not-really-ideal roommates, sharing melancholy and take-out food in equal measure. They amuse themselves by planning revenge scenarios, including pretending that they are now a couple. Let the fun begin.... F HEN

**Freedom** by Angela Merkel. Biography. Our daily news tells us that our world faces far-reaching changes as

governments across the globe become more authoritarian. Governments fall (Syria), countries are invaded (Ukraine), former alliances weaken (NATO), and climate change threatens all. This is a good time for a behind-the-scenes look at the life of one famous world leader, who has led a powerful and admired European country through many of those changes. Raised in Eastern Germany and a powerful force first in newly unified Germany, Angela Merkel is no stranger to the world stage. How she responded to the collapse of Communism, dealt with the Japanese Fukushima nuclear plant disaster, and decided to accept a million Syrian refugees into German society in a country that did not welcome strong women politicians is fascinating reading of contemporary history. BIO MER

**Lovely One** by Ketanji Brown Jackson. Biography. Justice Jackson offers an inside account of the triumphs and challenges of being a black woman in a white man's world. Highly attuned to her family narrative – ancestors who were slaves, grandparents who endured segregation, parents who were civil rights activists – she is also grateful for the opportunities she has experienced. Open and forthright, Jackson shares her loneliness at Harvard without her large, boisterous family, her lengthy battle with imposter syndrome, learning to 'fit in' with her husband's wealthy and privileged family, and the struggles of being the only black person in her legal world. Since she is one of the younger Justices on the Supreme Court, we can look forward to many years of seeing the results of her extraordinary life. This is an opportunity to understand the forces that have shaped her. BIO JAC

## MORNING MYSTERIES

By Kathie McCormick - #188

At 6:30 in the morning when I am walking my Alaskan Malamute, Betsy, we can be entertained by interesting sightings. And Betsy is curious about everything!

One recent morning, in the dark, we discover a pair of sneakers at the edge of the road by a culvert. Hmm... a mystery.



Photo by Kathie McCormick

As we proceed further, we find an upside-down bucket on the sidewalk. (?) Then we notice a lid to a coffee cup which Betsy must check out. And then we come across a piece of paper with writing on it. All together, these items could make up a really good story!

Another morning, after a fresh layer of snow, we see tracks. We see cat tracks around H parking lot. A deer wandered

across the road and a rabbit hopped around the grassy area.

As we traveled further, near parking lot D, we found more cat tracks— a different cat. These paw prints were a little smaller. And of course, more deer tracks and more rabbit hops!

Maybe all these sightings could elicit the muse in some budding storyteller. I wish that were a talent of mine. My late husband would have enjoyed coming up with a great tale!

## UNSOLVED *mysteries*

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## HELPERS

By Ellie Castle - #307

On my recent trip to the ER, I had the chance to talk to five EMT's and several nurses, and I asked them why they chose these occupations. Without hesitation, they all said, "I want to help people" and added "It feels like I am doing something important."

Despite the challenges and scheduling family adjustments, they are in it for the long haul. Their competence, kindness and support were much appreciated during this new experience.

As Mr. Rogers said, "Look for the helpers." They are all around us. Thank them.

## CONTINUED LEARNING

By Jno L. Hunt - #308

Enjoy our presentations on Channel 951. Initial airings on Tuesdays are at 10:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. Encore presentations are usually on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

### January:

Tues., Jan. 7, Encore on Thurs., Jan. 9  
"BBC Great Composers–Bach

Tues., Jan. 14, Encore on Thurs., Jan 16  
"The Rise of Genetic Engineering"

Tues., Jan. 21, Encore on Thurs., Jan. 23  
"The Rebuilding of Notre Dame"

Tues., Jan. 28, Encore on Thurs., Jan 30  
"The Holy Land Revealed" – Lectures 1 & 2

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## PARTY FEEDBACK INVITED

By Ruth Lasure - #306

The Eggnog Party is over for this year but will return on the first Friday of December 2025. Save the date!

This party is all about us - the residents of Sherwood Oaks. We can host, we can be greeters, we can decorate, we can just talk about it to our neighbors and friends, we can just come and enjoy.

Do you have ideas about how it can be better or different? Feedback is most important.

Jot down those comments and ideas and put them in Cubby #261. Every idea is welcome.

## SEASONAL HAIKU

By Julie Eden - #190

### winter

cold rises  
meets stiff breeze head on  
squirrels hustle



Photo by Jan Wendt

### our first snow

wind sweeps, snow scatters  
window views vary in time  
quickly changing seasons

white blasts against walls  
lost wandering courtyard paths  
sugar spun on grass

leaves wave in wind  
almost bare trees shudder  
sidewalks slick



## HOPE

By Laura Martin  
(Submitted by Jane Lohman - #717)

I will not tell you to have hope  
in the future.  
I say: have hope right now.  
Right now, someone is sweeping the  
street, singing,  
Someone is folding laundry,  
Sewing a button on,  
Holding out a hand for another to step  
down more easily.  
Right now, someone is buying flowers to  
Give them all away,  
Playing piano in the darkening day,  
baking bread.  
Someone is caring for a dog,  
Smoothing a child's forehead,  
Setting down food for a cat.  
Right now, someone is working for  
an end to war,  
for a beginning to a song,  
for the trees in a forest,  
for the lights to stay on,  
for the sun to power a school,  
for someone cold to be warmed,  
for someone sick to be healed.  
For this brilliant earth.  
It is enough to have hope right now.

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## PROGRAM POSTPONED

By Jane Lavender - #253

Due to an illness in the group, the Pittsburgh Recorder Ensemble will postpone their performance scheduled for January. The group hopes to reschedule for a date in February.

## CORRECTION

The staff offers corrections to "A Journey of Hanukkah" which appeared on pages 10-11 of the December issue of *The Acorn*.

The last stanza of Night 2 should read:

*I see light spreading  
into the future through children  
and grandchildren*

And the last stanza of Night 8 should read:

*past, present, future.  
though I am alone tonight,  
I'm not isolated:  
Jews around the world  
Also light the last candle*

We regret this error in proofreading.



Photo by Jan Wendt

## WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA?

(SO Residents Association)

By Rosemary Coffey, Secretary - #113

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

Excerpts from minutes for the **Dec. 3, 2024**, monthly board meeting follow:

SORA Treasurers: The Memorial/Special Projects Fund received a deposit of \$5,000 from Gift Shop proceeds. The total of the Employee Appreciation Fund increased by \$55,000 to \$241,000; checks were to be given out on Dec. 13, based on 44 cents per hour worked. The total amount earned from CD investments in the past 14 months came to \$2,338.

### Liaison Reports

Drama Club: Rehearsals were to begin in January for a performance scheduled for Feb. 20 and 22.

Health Affairs: Community Nursing reported 10 falls in Sept. and 8 in Oct. Georgeanne Yurasko is a new member of this committee, while Ruth Reubi has resigned.

Sew and So: Knitted hats and accessories decorated the tree in the corner of the lobby before being donated to charities.

Sherwood Gifts: The shop donated \$5,000 to the Memorial/Special Projects Fund. Jane Paul, shop manager for the past 7 years, is now looking for a replacement.

Maintenance: Patio home upgrades are in progress; the dining room is being repainted and fall gutter cleaning has begun.

Continued Learning: Among the programs scheduled for 2025 are Jane Lohman on *The Life of Benjamin Lay*, Jno Hunt on *Madama Butterfly*, and Thomas Wendt on jazz history.

Landscaping: Renovation of the Summer House is just about done. It is expected that the remaining work will be completed soon.

Recycling: Three benches have been built and a fourth is on the way, thanks to our recycling of plastic bags.

Sherwood Neighbors: Participants continue to engage in projects with residents of Personal Care and Skilled Nursing.

Library: Usage of the library has dropped considerably in the last three years.

Security and Transportation: The committee strongly supports acquiring a new 14-seat bus to replace the large one. An issue with false smoke alarms in the Lakeside Apartments has been resolved.

Trips and Tours: Watch the Bulletin Board for updates!

Curio Cabinets: The theme of "My Favorite Things" is helping celebrate the holidays.

Administrator's Report: Census: Of our 340 residents, 247 are in IL, plus 33 in Skilled Nursing and 60 in Personal Care or Oak Grove. The new billing system began with the November bills. Filling vacancies in Housekeeping remains a problem. Our budget is being prepared by a new operating company, and a new marketing plan is waiting to be approved.

Old Business: The Summer House restrooms are complete except for the floors. Re the Card Room Darkening Blinds: they are held in place by tape and provide 99.4% coverage.

New Business: A Wish List was distributed to all residents on Nov. 25; it will be discussed at the Jan. meeting. Bruce Cooper will be arranging displays of residents' artwork on Mar. 7. A new activity called "The Nutcracker Helpers" seeks residents willing to assist in the annual work related to the Christmas Village and Nutcracker displays. Bruce will also be chairing a task force to consider how to celebrate July 2026, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S.

Future Board Meetings: The next Monthly Board Meeting will be held on **Tues., Jan. 7, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Card Room.

## HOLIDAY CASSEROLE

By Winnie Dietz - #725

Last January, my son presented me with a beautiful porcelain tureen embellished with 24-carat gold gilding the handles and lid. One of my hobbies is painting ceramics, but my first thought was, "how do I have the nerve to paint this antique piece?" I knew dainty little Dresden flowers just wouldn't be appropriate, so my next option was a big gaudy design of bright colors.

Red geraniums were the answer, and I gradually worked it out. By then, Thanksgiving was imminent, and this same son invited several friends and me for the big dinner. The painting process was proceeding nicely, generating a plan.

One of the guests was the son of my best friend of years ago, who had come to my house every Thanksgiving, bringing a wonderful sweet potato dish we all loved.

I then determined to replicate that recipe from memory. I bought the sweet potatoes, pineapple, and pecans in preparation, but that morning I was not strong enough to make my can opener pierce the top of the can. I tried everything but failed.

I waited for the decent hour of 8:30 a.m. and, in my bathrobe, knocked on my neighbor's door with the can in hand. My neighbor lady listened to my sad story and took the can and opener back to her husband.

In a bit, he came back with the can, but not the opener. I asked where it was, and they both didn't know and couldn't find it. Finally, he attacked the can with a huge screwdriver and a hammer! When this didn't work, I returned to my apartment, deciding I just wouldn't have a sweet potato casserole after all.

Shortly, my neighbor knocked at my door and asked if I'd found the can opener, and I told him I'd seen it last when I gave it to his wife. He left and said he would look again. Later, he came back and told me he'd found the opener under a chair. We laughed and went to work on the can. Success!

I tried to remember the ingredients and added cinnamon, vanilla, and dark brown sugar, plus a little cornstarch. I piled it all in the tureen, put it in the oven and took it to the dinner.

My friend's son was thrilled to taste his favorite holiday dish that his mother had always made. I was thrilled, and all the guests enjoyed it too.

My son loved the gift of a spectacular tureen to display and in which to serve delicious concoctions to his future guests.

I felt so blessed to be able to bring my friend's memory to our Thanksgiving table.



### **LIFE'S REAL LUXURIES**

Time

Health

A quiet mind

Slow mornings

Ability to travel

Rest without guilt

A good night's sleep

Calm and "boring" days

Meaningful conversations

Home-cooked meals

People you love

People who love you back

~Anonymous

# *HAZY GRAY DAY* *...WINTER IN PITTSBURGH*



Photo by Monika Dalrymple