

THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER
100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
www.sherwood-oaks.com

February 2022 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 41, No. 2

Glimpses of the Cast of “Check, please!”



Photos by Jan Wendt

Thanks to the Sherwood Oaks Drama Club

OUR FAVORITE THINGS

From "The Sound of Music"

Revised for Old Folks

By Rosemary Coffey – #113

*Exercise classes and stronger
eyeglasses,
Nutritious potions and sweet-smelling
lotions,
Bundles of magazines tied up in strings,
These are a few of our favorite things.*

*Grandchildren thriving, while children
are striving,*

*Pets who adore us and friends who
don't bore us,*

*Warm recollections of long-ago flings,
These are a few of our favorite things.*

*When the joints ache, when the bones
creak, when the ears go bad,
We simply remember our favorite things,
and then we don't feel so sad!*

*Tender embraces in far-away places,
Roommates from college and odd bits of
knowledge,*

*Family reunions that summertime
brings,*

These are a few of our favorite things.

*Moments of pleasure, like unburied
treasure,*

*Flashes of insight that come after
midnight,*

*Gardens and mountains and freshwater
springs,*

These are a few of our favorite things.

*When the pipes burst, when the power
fails, when the world goes mad,*

*We simply remember our favorite things,
and then we don't feel so bad!*



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Chinese New Year	Feb. 1
Groundhog Day	Feb. 2
National Pizza Day	Feb. 9
Super Bowl	Feb. 13
Valentine's Day	Feb. 14
Presidents Day	Feb. 21
Screen Actors Guild Awards	Feb. 27

THE ACORN

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

John Becker

December 23, 2021

Josephine DeGross

December 28, 2021

Marcia Murray

January 1, 2022

Agnes Peebles

January 24, 2022

BEA MOORE - #279

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo by Mike Mills

A native Pittsburgher, born in Bloomfield, Bea Moore spent much of her adult life moving progressively farther out into the North Hills, expanding family and home size as she went. While she was still in school, the family transplanted to Glenshaw. After college, she and husband Sam returned to the area and lived in several North Hills communities, winding up in Pine Township in a 7,000-square-foot home Sam designed and contracted.

But, back to the early days when, at age 15, she met Sam at Shaler High School. [Incidentally, she knew Martha Roenigk (#136) during those years.] After she and Sam graduated from Westminster College and married, Bea taught second grade for a number of years in the Shaler school system. Sam sold industrial packaging.

Their clan grew to include two sons, one now in McCandless and the other in Florida, followed by two grandchildren.

Sam had always dreamed of contracting the building of his own home, and the result was that special large “nest” on more than seven acres. As their boys grew up, Sam and Bea discovered a

vacation spot in Deep Creek, Maryland, where they cherished spending many summer and winter weekends. Later, they did some traveling farther abroad, to Alaska, Switzerland, Northern Ireland, and Australia.

Eventually, Bea convinced Sam that the dream home was too much to care for, whereupon they “downsized” to a 4,000-square-foot abode behind Mars High School in Adams Township. Hobbies in retirement included fishing for Sam and bridge, canasta, and 500 for Bea. Charitable retirement pursuits involved volunteering at UPMC Passavant Hospital and North Hills Community Outreach. Contact Pittsburgh and the Crisis Center North were also beneficiaries of Bea’s time and talents.

In the last few years, they took a look at retirement communities, settling on Sherwood Oaks. Sadly, Sam died unexpectedly in August, so Bea made the move by herself on November 1. She seems content in her new surroundings and is beginning to meet neighbors and think about the activities we have to offer. She hopes to sell her home in Mars soon.

Though she no longer drives, she is quite close with a sister in Butler, and the two enjoy lunches and shopping scheduled around doctors’ appointments and other errands. Bea continues to play with her longtime bridge friends as well as another group that plays 500.

Look for her soon in the dining room. She’ll be happy to make your acquaintance!



2019: Stay away from negative people.

2020 ff.: Stay away from positive people.

JESSE KOMARA:
Service/Catering Manager
By Loretta Lippert - #737 and
Denton Bond - #736



Photo by Lynda Cooper

We may hear phrases at Sherwood Oaks such as the following: “God has a plan,” “What a coincidence,” and “That was meant to be.” When Jesse Komara was 14 years old, he knew that he wanted to work at Sherwood Oaks! Jesse was raised in Freedom, PA, where he heard a neighbor girl talk at times about Sherwood Oaks. He started here as a waiter in 1993; after graduating from high school in 1995, he then went to college.

Jesse enrolled at CCAC as a theater major. He loved acting, and we clearly see his wonderful creativity in his work here. When his Mom died during his second year of college, he came home to help his father. He later went to CCBC, where he majored in Liberal Arts.

In 1999 Jesse was chosen as the “Service Manager” for Dining. He has learned “from the bottom up” and on-the-job training, requiring him to be in the kitchen with the chefs, helping them and learning from them. A critical program of

leadership development for health care employees was the “Development, Dimensions International,” a key course that offered training in managing employees. His learning has included certification classes for “serve safe,” entailing knowledge of food chemicals, proper care of food, and “kitchen to serving.” In 2001, Jesse took on catering as another part of his role, changing his title to “Service/Catering Manager.”

Covid training has been important to him, as he and Dining Services Director Beverly Puglia pass along what they have learned to the trainers in the Dining Hall. He is responsible for training the dining staff, whose courtesy and effort clearly benefit us. Jesse especially enjoys the monthly birthday parties, the grill parties, and catering occasions.

Given this demanding position with unconventional work hours, we were glad to hear of Jesse’s many enjoyable activities when he is away from Sherwood Oaks. He enjoys an annual trip to Walt Disney World/Epcot and participation in the Wine/Food Festival. This feast has chefs from over 100 countries bringing foods and matching them with certain wines. (He has purchased a cookbook from this event and has shared some of the recipes with Chef Fred.)

Jesse enjoys gathering with old friends for camping, fishing, and just hanging out together. Jesse also enjoys his Broadway Ticket Series at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh. As he is very busy through the end-of-year holidays, he takes some days off in January, a welcome and blessed time of retreat and energizing.

Jesse is well-respected and loved by the Sherwood Oaks family. Thanks Jesse!

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 **January 4, 2022**, board meeting:

TREASURERS: Memorial/Special Projects Fund balance is \$114,290. Employee Appreciation Fund balance is \$14,857.27. The SORA bank balance is \$70,116.22.

LIAISON REPORTS:

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

Living with Loss. The Longest Night Service was held December 21, with 37 in attendance.

Curio Cabinets. USA travel items collected by residents are featured.

Movies. A movie will be shown on Channel 901 at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings.

Quilters. A fall quilt is being completed and a new one begun.

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

Programs. On February 24, singer Anna Singer will perform in the auditorium.

New Year's Eve. Thirty attended, fewer than in the past.

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

ADMINISTRATION: Annette McPeck reported that the Butler County positivity rate was 16.5% as of Jan 4. Census: IL 202; SNU 41/43; PC 35/42, and OGC 28/30. Three homes are under contract and several others are in the works.

Masks should be worn and hand washing practiced even after immunization. Visitors/families are to be masked and screened at entry. Residents should not plan on having visitors in SO public areas, e.g., lobby, dining room, billiards room, auditorium, or chapel services. Front gate arms are being replaced.

OLD BUSINESS: A chair is needed for Housekeeping Committee. A committee is being organized for our 40th anniversary. The Dec. 3 Egnog Party and the Dec. 16 SO Party were well attended.

NEW BUSINESS: Winterfest, usually held in January, has been postponed.

VISITORS: Eleven were present.

The next SORA Board meeting is **Tues., February 8**; the next quarterly residents' meeting is **Tues., March 15, 2022**.



BUTLER COUNTY TRAILS

By Peg Rychcik - #297

You may possibly think that this article is about the hiking trails of McConnells Mill or Moraine State parks. They do provide wonderful opportunities to explore the outdoors of Butler County, but there are new trails in Butler County you may not yet have heard about.

February is a perfect month to begin the Butler County Sweet Tooth Trail. It is a self-guided trail of designated sweet shop locations throughout Butler County. Pick up a Passport to the Sweet Tooth Trail at:

Cranberry Township: Dairy Queen NatuRoll Creamery, Peace Love & Little Donuts, Nothing Bundt Cakes

Harmony: The Two Fraus Bakery, Tin Man Sweets Bake Shoppe

Zelienople: Baldinger's Candy, IceBox Creamery, The Meadows Original Frozen Custard

Evans City: P & B's Sweets and Eats, Wendereusz's Candy & More

Valencia: Valencia Donut Company

Saxonburg: Mainstreet Bake Shop, Speckled Hen Chocolate Company

Butler: Peter's Chocolate Shoppe, Donut Connection

Portersville: The Snowman (Open Seasonally)

Beginning at any of these locations, create your own path to filling your Sweet Tooth Trail Passport. Each one has a unique symbol to mark the progress of your itinerary on the Passport. Bring your completed Sweet Tooth Trail Passport to the Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau in Zelienople to claim your commemorative prize.

To find answers to any questions you may have about the Sweet Tooth Trail, go to the website: <VisitButlerCounty.com/SweetToothTrail>.

In 2021, I was one of the first 100 people to complete my Passport. It was a sweet experience, taking me to new areas of Butler County while anticipating what delicious treats awaited my choosing, all while supporting our local small businesses.

Two other specialty Butler County Trails are also available. Consider the Butler County Coffee Connection, which is a self-guided trail of local coffee shops, or the Butler County Beer Circuit, featuring thirteen different brewpubs.

Find your Happy Trail!

CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602
For the Chapel Committee

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

Bring a friend.

Sunday, February 6

Rev. Ed Glover
Christ Church at Grove Farm

Sunday, February 13

Rev. Emily Cooper
Heritage Presbyterian

Sunday, February 20

Rev. Ron Hoellein
Retired – United Methodist

Sunday, February 27

Rev. Moni McIntyre
St. Stephen Episcopal

“Pray, and let God worry.”

– Martin Luther

Suggested New Year's Resolution

If you are not able – or it is inconvenient for you – to attend your “home” church, why not try the Sunday Chapel Service at 2:00 p.m. in the Auditorium?

Thirty-five ministers participate in this program, generously donating their time to lead these services, which usually last about 30 minutes. Pianists assist with familiar music. You will find that these services enrich your lives.

Presiding ministers are announced on Channel 900, in the *Acorn*, and on the bulletin boards in the mailroom and in Personal Care.



FOCUS ON THE WORLD

By Nancy Paul - #167



Making a Difference One Child at a Time

Most of us don't know that, among its other harmful effects, the COVID-19 pandemic is creating an unprecedented crisis in child abuse, as well as exposing children to sexual exploitation by predators outside the home.

Who is helping the families and children? One such group is the Children's Advocacy Center of Butler County, which is responsible for coordinating child abuse investigations throughout the county. The Center provides child victims with independent forensic interviews, medical examinations, and victim advocacy services. The Center also offers prevention and child abuse awareness trainings to community and investigative team members.

One unique way being used to help prevent abuse is the Center's Play Safe, Stay Safe initiative, in which it collects new, unopened board games, card games, and outdoor games, and distributes them to families throughout the county. The games are being used to build family ties and reduce the kind of family stress that could lead to abuse.

Come learn more about this crisis and what's being done to help the children.

Thursday, February 17, 7:15 p.m.

In the Auditorium

CONTINUED LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT

By Wallace Christy - #237

In keeping with our general schedule of program topics (Arts, Travel, History, and Environment), we will be showing, on channel 901, the following programs on Tuesdays in February at **10:00 a.m.**, **4:00 p.m.**, and **7:30 p.m.**:

First Tues., **Feb 1:** Greatness in Painting: Two short lectures on Duccio and Giotto, Italian painters who laid the foundation of Italian painting for centuries

Second Tues., **Feb. 8:** Travel to the planets Mercury and Venus

Third Tues., **Feb. 15:** The Strip District (of Pittsburgh)

Fourth Tues., **Feb. 22:** Rethinking the World's Waste

In March, we hope to have speakers again at Sherwood Oaks on Tuesday mornings.



Winter Display in front of Unit #298, courtesy of Patty Ritter



Photo by Rabe Marsh

FROM THE ARCHIVES . . .

By Joe and Peg Rychcik - #297

According to the September 1982 issue of *The Acorn*, while there are many tangible historical features at Sherwood Oaks, it is the involvement of residents providing their talents, time, and experience that would enhance life in our community. In September of 1981, "the residents' committee started, at the request of the Board, to help future residents get to know each other, to plan various activities of the community through committees, and to provide a way to get residents' suggestions to the Board." About sixty future residents attended that initial meeting. "A resident association is designed to directly involve the residents of a community in the decision-making process as it relates to community life and activities." That was the humble beginning of SORA, our Sherwood Oaks Residents' Association. Nine committees were set up to reflect the early needs of Sherwood Oaks:

Walkways: to name walkways and various buildings

Library

Horticulture: to make suggestions on landscaping, vegetable plots, and residents' patio gardens

Furniture: to work with donated items of furniture

Music

Gift Shop

Transportation

Laundry/Social Room Furnishings

Gifts to Sherwood Oaks

Residents were encouraged to become a part of as many committees as they liked, according to their interests.

On September 1, 1982, Sherwood Oaks officially opened. By that time, we already had 53 people living in 39 patio homes. An article in the October 1982 issue of *The Acorn* featured how involved Sherwood Oaks residents already were with setting up activities of all kinds. "We have bridge players, swimmers, quilters, walkers, bike riders, woodworkers, concertgoers, shoppers, and, most important, we have organizers."

The number and diversity of committees and activities available at Sherwood Oaks have grown substantially during these forty years. Indeed, our Community Center is ordinarily the hub of vibrant residential life at any time of day and night. Some of the additional current activities and committees available for residents' participation are:

Painting

Chorus and Handbells

Chapel

Bible Study

Workshop

Sew & So's

Focus on the World

Trips and Tours

Games

Continued Learning

Drama

And the list goes on! Check out all of the possibilities on the SORA bulletin board in the mailroom. "Life at Sherwood Oaks is yours to create and develop. Enjoy the experience!"

PRIMARY ELECTION VOTING

Submitted by Civic Affairs Committee
Dan Cindric - #107, Chair

This year's primary election will be upon us soon, so be prepared for TV ads, billboard ads, and campaign signs. Pennsylvania conducts closed primaries, meaning that only registered party members can participate in the primary election. Registered Independents cannot vote for a candidate in the primary. You may not think this is fair, but it is the law in PA. If Independents re-register with a specific party, they are then able to vote in that party's primary election. That **does not** mean that you have to vote for the candidate from that party in the November general election, but it will give you an opportunity to vote in the primary election. Afterwards, you can re-register as an Independent if you desire.

Mail-in ballots became available in PA in 2015, meaning that you can receive a ballot by mail, complete it, and return it by mail. For many residents at Sherwood Oaks, this is an attractive alternative to voting at the precinct in the Cranberry Municipal Building and risk having to stand in line if the polls are busy. There will likely be many names on the ballot running for Governor, Lt. Governor, U.S. Senator, U.S. House Member, PA Supreme Court judge, and PA Legislature positions in both the state House and Senate, so the polls are expected to be very busy.

The Civic Affairs Committee will soon have volunteers available in the Community Center, at dates to be determined, with blank voter applications. Applications for voter registration and mail-in ballots can also be found online at <www.pavoterservices>

and can be printed or completed electronically.

The primary election is scheduled for May 17; however, due to delays in re-districting the boundaries from 18 Congressional seats to 17 seats, and due to re-districting of all the PA Legislature's 50 Senate seats and 203 House seats, the primary may be delayed. We will do our best to provide prompt information on bulletin boards and on Channels 900/901, when available.

For additional information, please see me or any of the other committee members, namely: Peter Broeren (#739), James and Rebecca Mauch (#263), Mary Mion (#202), Richard Pospistle (#252), Peggy and Sandy Rubel (#258), and Barbara Scruggs (#317).

MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARING BIRDS

By Rudy Guilloud - #161

If you have not seen any birds recently at your feeder, this is probably the reason why: we have a peregrine falcon visiting. Other birds are scared of him, because he eats meat rather than seeds. In fact, his main diet is smaller birds and mammals such as rabbits, mice, and so on.

Peregrine falcons are about the size of a crow, but with longer legs. I have observed this one eating mourning doves and robins in the tree behind my patio home. Peregrine falcons may be the fastest birds in the world, having been clocked at speeds near 90 mph in horizontal flight and over 200 mph while diving. They catch and kill their prey while in flight, then eat it in a nearby tree. We hope this one will move on soon and our birds will return.

FURRY FELINES OF SHERWOOD OAKS

By Kathie McCormick - #188

Most of our residents are well acquainted with the canine cadre of Sherwood Oaks. But have you met any of the cats? This series of articles will tell the stories of the feline residents, including their photos.

Let me first introduce **ZANE**, who lives with Marta Peterson in #184.



Here is Zane's story in Marta's words:

"This is my sweet boy, Zane. We rescued each other six years ago.

"There was a cat sanctuary near where I lived in Los Angeles, CA. Cats roamed free in five different rooms. Twice a week, for over a month, I stopped by the facility to visit with the cats. It was quite a challenge to decide which sweet animal would become my next companion. Zane was very shy and a bit scared of his surroundings, but we began to warm to each other. One day, when I was visiting, I was fortunate to meet the woman who had brought Zane to the shelter. I learned that he had been abandoned in an apartment that his original owners had vacated. He was in complete survival mode for many months – first, inside an empty apartment, then outside once he ran away. All this happened before he was a year old.

"There was no way he would allow anyone to pick him up. Even petting him was a challenge at first. It took patience, but over time the trust between us began to grow.

Things really changed for him when we moved to Sherwood Oaks because of the wonderful sunlit living room with the sliding glass door. Zane can watch an array of birds, chipmunks, bunnies, and even ducks and wild turkeys hunting for fallen birdseed on the ground. He loves the view outside and is quite content to live inside.

"Just a year ago, I finally got him to sit on my lap. Now I can't get him to move when I need to get up! It's so wonderful to see a shy, nervous cat become relaxed and comfortable in his forever home."

Next, we have **Suzie-Q**, otherwise known as **KAT**, owned by Anne Williams in #329.



According to Anne, Kat arrived unexpectedly from New Kensington by way of her housekeeper. She is a spoiled princess, whose favorite mode of transportation is on the seat of Anne's rollator. A red-carpeted shelf is one of her many cozy napping places, along with a large blanket-lined basket next to the heating vent. Stuffed toy mice are her enticing playmates that sometimes appear at night on the bedroom floor. Stepping on one in the middle of the night can be disconcerting! Kat also has a faucet fetish: only cold, slowly dripping water will satisfy her. She loves to help with knitting, reading, or crocheting by ending up in Anne's lap. She requires lots of nap time and lots of chin rubs.

If any of the rest of you wish to feature your feline companion, please let me know (8188). We look forward to learning more about the animals who live here beside us.

EMPLOYEE THANK-YOU NOTES

Collected by Jean Henderson - #611

This December, after our gifts were given to SO employees, we received 95 thank-you notes. Do enjoy a sampling below!

Thank you so much, SORA, for your very generous gift. It is such a blessing to be part of this wonderful community!

The bonus means a lot to me and my family!

I enjoy working here. Everyone is pleasant and helpful.

This money helps out so much during this time of year.

The fact that you all give us the EAF checks is honestly just so heartwarming and helps make us employees feel appreciated in these times. SO and all the residents that encompass it are truly special.

I've been here for ten years and every year this monetary gift has helped me throughout so many hardships I've faced.

I've been working at SO for 19 years; the people make it great!

It is a joy to be part of such a wonderful place.

It's an honor and a pleasure to be a part of the SO family – you're so much like family to us.

Thank you for your generosity. It's an honor to be part of your lives.

You are a true angel to me and I'm more grateful to you than words can express. I know I am blessed to have you in my life.

You all go above and beyond to let us know we are appreciated.

I love SO and feel privileged to work here. So kind of you.

Your generosity confirms what we already know – we have great residents here at SO!

Your generosity will make for a delightful Christmas for our family!

I love working here and love all of you!

During my short 2 months working here, I can see what a caring, generous, and loving community you are! SO is not just a community, but a family.

Thank you so much. Every year you come through for us.

It's a pleasure to cook for you every day and to get to see and spend time with you all!

You are all my special friends! "God bless" to all.

In the past we were able to get 2 dogs, and this year, new furniture for our living room. Thank you!

I've come to know you over the last 9½ years and will miss you.

Thank you for the great experience working here with wonderful people.

You make coming to work enjoyable!

Working for you for 19 years has been a blessing.

Christmas will be wonderful this year! Thank you.

Your thoughtfulness is a gift.

WORDS FROM PHYLLIS FRANKS, who retired on 12/31/21: Your bountiful generosity always goes above and beyond what I can ever imagine. I express my gratitude for the privilege of serving as Director of Residential Services and, before that, as a part of the Marketing Department. My 15+ years at SO have been the best years of my working career. I will truly miss seeing you and having conversations. A plaque in my office read, "The best things in life aren't things." So it's not what's under that tree this holiday that matters most, but who's around it. A happy, healthy 2022 to each of you! Many thanks again!

A LIVING DOLL

By Ellen Brierly - #734

I recently had the “privilege” of staying at Passavant Hospital in McCandless. I will not bore you with the things that one usually associates with hospital visits. We all know about tasteless food, interruptions of sleep, and general discomfort.

Instead, I want to take all the ladies back to their little-girl years. Do you remember the Betsy Wetsy doll? She was my dream come true. She actually came with diapers so that I could change her when the diaper was wet. This was made possible by strategically placed holes that would allow her to be fed water from a bottle. A tube inside the body rushed it to the necessary outlet and Voilà, a wet diaper.

Now, you may wonder what this has to do with my hospital stay. Well, I was given IVs around the clock. Liquid was cascading into my veins 24 hours a day.

I was not permitted to get out of bed without help, so I became the nuisance patient who constantly called for assistance. In spite of pads on the bed and on me, I was soaked and frequently in need of complete changing. In other words, I turned into a Betsy Wetsy doll – a soggy, drenched, irritable living doll!

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS...

By Joan McBurney - #206

When Joel was three years old, he often repeatedly asked his mother for something he could not have. Finally, she asked, “What part of NO don’t you understand?” Joel answered, “I don’t understand the N, and I don’t understand the O!”

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

By Harriet Burress - #112

It was a bittersweet morning when the two beautiful Christmas trees in the lobby were undecorated and packed away. This year, Sally Hollister, Norma Hansmann, and Gussie Dimmick retired after a combined total of 38 years as caretakers of the trees.

Sally started twenty years ago and, over time, became the one in charge. For ten years, Norma oversaw decorating the large tree by the front door, while Gussie has assisted with both for eight. With the help of the Maintenance Department and a few other resident volunteers, they have annually planned, decorated, and then carefully put away the trees and their lovely ornaments. The many handmade satin balls on the “CAP” tree were made by Gussie’s mother and aunts; we at Sherwood are so fortunate that she has donated them to be used in the future.

Needless to say, the front doors to the Center and the Scooter Room always present a huge welcome with the lovely efforts of Cheryl from Landscaping. This past Thanksgiving, we found that the “arrangements” were the most outstanding in our twelve years here. New additions appeared almost daily, and the appearance of the cattails brought back memories for me of childhood celebrations. She found them “down by the lake.” As Christmas approached, it was such a delight to see the balled arborvitae welcome us with colored lights and to know that they would be planted when it is time. Cheryl plans to retire in the spring and will surely be missed.

Yes, a heartfelt thank you to these ladies who have served so well for so long!

MEET ME AT THE FARM GARDEN

By Betty Eichler - #355

The Farm Garden Activity will hold its annual meeting in the Auditorium on **Friday, February 25**, beginning at **10:45 a.m.** If you have used one or more raised beds in the past and wish to garden again this year, you are encouraged to attend this meeting. If you have not been a farm gardener previously, but think you might be interested, you are welcome to attend.

The Farm Garden is located behind the Summer House and is enclosed by a high fence. We have over thirty raised beds, each one of which is approximately three feet by six feet and about 28 inches high. The beds are filled with good topsoil. Gardeners may grow whatever vegetables and/or flowers they like. Water and hoses are available, and there are a few community-owned tools that you may use. All gardeners are responsible for planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting their own beds. They are also expected to clean up their beds at the end of the growing season. Perennial plants may remain there if one expects to use the bed again the following year.

Gardening is fun and productive. It is great to raise and enjoy your own tomatoes, lettuce, beans, carrots, or whatever veggies you like to eat. You can also grow beautiful flowers to decorate your home. Vegetables and flowers can be shared with friends who may enjoy them.

Gardens do require regular attention and physical labor. Please come and give gardening a try.

For more information, contact Betty Eichler at 8355.

HILLTOP SUNSET

By Joanne Weiss - #154

At times, as fate would have it,
I must remain behind on the hilltop,
After the others have so quickly
Traveled home for the day.

Then, familiar places that were,
Just moments before, pulsing
With the youthful presence of many,
Turn foreign, even lonely, in the stillness.

From the window, I view the leafless fingers
Of the trees rising from the snowy hilltop.
I yearn to be with the others, but,
With resolve, I set my mind on my work.

The afternoon grows short as the
Shadows of the trees increase in length.
These are rare, sunny February days,
Fairly longing, straining to be more.

Then suddenly I see the sun is going down.
The linings of the clouds
Begin to blush, as the snow
Takes on a heavenly, golden hue.

I feel warmed, I feel loved.
I feel good about what
I have accomplished here.
The hilltop is a special place to be at sunset.

This is God's Valentine to me.
And now, in the telling,
I have passed it on
To you.

[February 6, 1990; based on experiences and conversations with Kurt]

Author's note: As many of you know, our son, Kurt, is a childhood bone cancer survivor and amputee. When he was diagnosed, he was 15 years old and a freshman at North Hills High School. His teachers volunteered to work with him after school to make up for the many days and nights he spent in Children's Hospital for chemotherapy and surgery. North Hills H.S. is known for many things, not the least of which are very generous teachers and the view of beautiful sunsets from its hilltop in Ross Township.

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

The Islands of Divine Music	Addiego, John	c. 2008	F ADD
The Stranger in the Lifeboat	Albom, Mitch	c. 2021	F ALB
No Offense	Cabot, Meg	c. 2020	F CAB
Catherine the Great		c. 2019	F CAT DVD
Twisted Tea Christmas	Childs, Laura	c. 2021	F CHI
Better Off Dead	Child, Lee and Andrew Child	c. 2021	F CHI
Darling Lili		c. 2005	F DAR DVD
The World Played Chess	Dugoni, Robert	c. 2021	F DUG
800 Words, Season 1	Eight	c. 2015	F EIG DVD
800 Words, Season 2 Part 1	Eight	c. 2017	F EIG DVD
800 Words, Season 3 Part 1	Eight	c. 2018	F EIG
Nothing More Dangerous	Eskens, Allen	c. 2019	F ESK p.b.
Game On	Evanovich, Janet	c. 2021	F EVA
The Judge's List	Grisham, John	c. 2021	F GRI
What the Cat Dragged In	James, Miranda,	c. 2021	F JAM
The Persuasion	Johansen, Iris	c. 2020	F JOH L.T.
The Family	Krupitsky, Naomi	c. 2021	F KRU
The Mists of Avalon		c. 2001	F M DVD
Amahl and the Night Visitors	Menotti, Gian Carlo	c. 1964	F MEN DVD
Forever Christmas	Miller, Robert Tate	c. 2014	F MIL
All Her Little Secrets	Morris, Wanda M.	c. 2021	F MOR
Fear No Evil	Patterson, James	c. 2021	F PAT
Wish You Were Here	Picoult, Jodi	c. 2021	F PIC
Verses for the Dead	Preston, Douglas J.	c. 2018	F PRE
Dava Shastri's Last Day	Ramisetti, Kirthana	c. 2021	F RAM
The Last Trial	Turow, Scott	c. 2020	F TUR L.T.
The Traveler	Twelve Hawks, John	c. 2005	F HAW L.T.

NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional	Tripp, P. D.	c. 2014	242 TRI
Playing with Fire: The 1968 Election and the Transformation of American Politics	O'Donnell, Lawrence	c. 2017	324.973 O'D
Jan Karon's Mitford Cookbook & Kitchen Reader	Karon, Jan	c. 2004	641.5 KAR
The Pride of the Yankees: Lou Gehrig, Gary Cooper, and the Making of a Classic	Sandomir, Richard	c. 2017	791.437 SAN
The Slide : Leyland, Bonds, & the Star-crossed Pittsburgh Pirates	Peterson, R. F.	c. 2017	796.357 PET
Shakespeare's Kings: The Great Plays and the History of England in the Middle Ages, 1337-1485	Norwich, John Julius	c. 2000	822.33 NOR
Rick Steves' Europe Travel Skills	Steves, Rick	c. 2018	910 STE DVD
The Ride of Her Life	Letts, Elizabeth	c. 2021	910.92 LET
Lightning Down: A World War II Story of Survival	Clavin, Thomas	c. 2021	940.54 CLA
Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit	Matthews, C.	c. 2017	973.922 MAT
The Road to Camelot: Inside JFK's Five-year Campaign	Oliphant, T.	c. 2017	973.922092 OLI
The Strip Show		c. 2004	974.83 S DVD
Unconditional Love: The High Side of Life	Turnbull, Keith	c. 2020	BIO TUR p.b

WORTH A LOOK
Books New to Our Library

By Barbara Christy - #237

Funeral at Noon by Yeshayahu Koren. Fiction. A bored Israeli housewife forms an attachment to a ten-year-old neighbor boy; a lone soldier haunts an abandoned Arab village; a lost canteen becomes a gift they pass between them. Of such mundane things is life both built and lost. This is an elusive, tragic, but gripping story of village life in Israel. F KOR

The Islands of Devine Music by John Addiego. Fiction. Cholera, malaria, poverty, and starvation in 1880s Italy lead many poor Italians to think about America. But, when bright, literate Rosari is tricked into writing a ransom note for two shrewd gangsters, America suddenly becomes a means of escape from danger. Thus begins a multi-generational saga of the Verbicaro family. From New York through California, and in Cuba and Venezuela, the action with this lovable, legally-challenged family never ends. F ADD

Never Change by Elizabeth Berg. Fiction. In high school, Myra Lipinski was a good listener, liked by all but dated by none. So going to nursing school at Boston College seemed natural. Work in the ICU left her with no time to talk to her patients, so she switched to being a visiting nurse, all the while learning to live alone, content with her career and her dog, Frank. At the age of 51, she is assigned to care for the boy, now a man, she adored from afar in her teens. Interspersed with snippets about her other patients, we follow Myra and Chip as he moves through decisions about his therapy, his relationships with his family, and his unexpected reunion with Myra. A heart-warming tale. F BER

Fear No Evil by James Patterson. Fiction. Dr. Alex Cross and his long-time partner John Sampson are about to go on a vacation camping trip to Montana. But CIA agent Catherine Hingham is found dead in a DC parking garage, and Cross's old enemy M is somehow involved. F PAT

All Her Little Secrets by Wanda M. Morris. Fiction. A Black attorney having an affair with her White boss; shady dealings in her corporate world; a little brother she needs to protect – Ellice Littlejohn's world is crashing in on her. When she finds her boss/lover dead in his office with a gunshot wound to the head, Ellice walks away in order to keep her secret life out of the limelight. It doesn't work. F MOR

Dava Shastri's Last Day by Kitthana Ramisetti. Fiction. Faced with her impending death due to a brain cancer, wealthy socialite and philanthropist Dava Shastri decides to control her own obituary. By isolating her children with her on the privately owned family island, she expects to keep from them the "news highlight" that she herself released announcing her death. But the news leaks to them. As they adjust to the idea of their mother's illness and impending death, yet another shock occurs. A woman surfaces, claiming to be their secret sister – and there is more to come. F RAM

The Family by Naomi Krupitsky. Fiction. Childhood friends and next-door neighbors, Sophia and Antonia grow up in Brooklyn, gradually absorbing the knowledge that, while their families are different, they are Family. When Antonia's father is ordered to kill Sophia's, the true meaning of Family becomes clear. But Sophia and Antonia remain friends, through marriage, growing families, the Depression, and WWII. Then one of them is forced to make

a choice between Family and friendship. F KRU

O Beautiful by Jung Yun. Fiction. Development of the Bakken oil field in North Dakota is precipitating change in the community, with fortune-hunting rough-necks rushing in and change-fearing residents holding on. Elinor Hansen, former model, former hometown girl, and aspiring journalist, is assigned by a prestigious magazine to cover the emerging picture. But covering that story also means uncovering her unhappy past, and Elinor has to confront both her anger over her alienated childhood and her love of the land. F YUN

A Mitford Cookbook and Kitchen Reader by Jan Karon. Non-fiction/fiction. Ester Bolick's recipe for orange marmalade cake, rector Father Tim's meatloaf, Cynthia's heavenly tea – now Mitford fans can make their own scrumptious dishes while re-reading scenes from previous novels and enjoying a new, previously unpublished story. If you want to know how to properly season an iron skillet, this is your go-to source. 641.5 KAR

What Just Happened: Notes on a Long Year by Charles Finch. Non-fiction. This is a humorous, intimate, yet universal recounting of the year 2020 by locked-down, sheltering-at-home author and essayist Charles Finch. He takes us through the first Covid cases in northern California, racial protests, his personal reading list, Presidential electioneering, and trailer-park life via his personal diary. As the pandemic swells, recedes, and swells again, readers will laugh and cry at his take on current events, written with irrepressible wit and sagacity. 814.6 FIN

PAPERBACKS, RECENTLY DONATED

By Jean Henderson - #611

The Queen of the Big Time – Trigiani
Drawing Lessons – Sands
Last Christmas in Paris – Gaynor
Meet Me in Monaco – Gaynor
Paradise Park – Dailey
One Good Deed – Baldacci
The Bodies in the Library – Wingate
Near Dark – Thor
Why Survive? Being Old in America – Butler
A Registry of My Passage upon the Earth – Mason
The Perplexing Theft of the Jewel in the Crown – Khan
The Holy Thief – Peters
The September Society – Finch
Five novels by Archer

THE COSMIC DANCER

By Brigit Anna McNeill

<https://www.brigittannamcneill.org>

May the stories of the old ones, the ancient ones, the land and the trees, the plants and earth be whispered to you.

May you warm your toes by the hearth side as the land starts to speak in the cold and old icy voice of winter, the voice that appears when we pass the mid-winter mark; the voice that talks in stories of growth, of becoming, of new slates and brand new mossy gateways.

May you be comforted by the fire that can be lit inside your body, by the light you hold inside, the light of love, forgiveness, and passion.

Rest well, dear one, warm your bones and listen in the silence, in the cold, for the rustling of truth-telling that comes from the earth and the air, the rustling of the newness that springs from the compost of the old.



SWIMMING POOL UPDATE

By Ruth Becker - #340

For the Swimming Pool, Spa & Locker
Room Activity Committee

"It's been a long, long time ...," as the old song goes.

The Sherwood Oaks pool closed for renovations on November 26, 2021. It reopened for swimmers the day after Christmas, with more work still going on. We now expect that the project will be completed "within a couple of weeks."

The work is playing out this way: Since all three vent fans died within weeks of each other, those fans were replaced. That meant that the Maintenance Dept. staff had to cut out large sections of the ceiling. A plywood wall between the pool and the windows was built to keep the dust down to a minimum. The staff had to put ladders in the pool in order to reach the grates in the ductwork to replace them, which meant that they had to empty the pool.

When the pool was drained, a large crack appeared in the left side of the pool, near the deep end. Moreover, the pool paint was looking shabby. So the staff repaired the crack, and the pool was repainted. The ceiling is being replaced with plaster board and plaster.

In terms of outside help, Tudi Mechanical (you have seen their trucks, no doubt!) completed the exhaust and ductwork. R. C. Elite and SO staff member Bob Motta painted the pool and deck. The ceiling will be repaired "in-house."

Once the ceiling has been completed, the wall will come down and the rest of the deck will be painted. In the meantime, as you swim the side stroke, check the "panels and the 2 x 4s" and pretend to peer through them to the trees across

the Lake, maybe catching sight of the new houses on the hillside. Then, when the view is open to us goggled swimmers, we can rejoice in the real thing. "Haven't felt like this before, since I can't remember when"

FISH IN THE AIR

By Agnes Peebles - #366

There was an over-abundance of rain this fall. Still, I was not prepared to see from my second-floor window what appeared to be fish on the Oak Lodge driveway. Later, silently questioning my eyes and my mind, I looked again. No fish. A figment of my imagination? or a vain hope?

A few days later, I again stood at the window, watching people coming to dinner. Once again, I thought I saw fish – but now they were closer, beside the bird bath in the middle of the medical wing circular drive. There was a breeze, and three silver fish were merrily swimming through the air. I applauded.

I have a particular attachment to that mobile. It was made by one of the sons of [late residents] Dorothy and Bob Freedman, who is a mobile artist. (One of his creations was installed in the Pittsburgh Airport Terminal.) This fish mobile stood on the lawn outside Dorothy's skilled nursing window. When it disappeared a few months ago, I grieved – silently. To be able to see it again is a gift! Thank you, Nancy O'Leary and the Grounds Crew, who saw its beauty and its value and saved it for all of us to enjoy.

Note: Agnes died shortly after submitting this article. Thank you, Agnes, for sharing the history of the fish. We shall cherish them for years to come.

THE NIGHT THE ALIENS LANDED

By Dennis Lynch - #335

Back when I was just a teenager, we lived in Southern California. I was a devout fan of that new genre of novel: Science Fiction. Although our library had about half a shelf of sci-fi books, I had read them all, so I was dependent on pulp magazines like *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, or *Galaxy*. For most, a one-year subscription (12 issues) cost \$2.50.

We had a nice house in a suburb of Pasadena. It was a blocky two-story, with a tall single-story living room sticking out of one side. My bedroom, on the second floor, had a window that overlooked the roof of that living room. My bed was just under that window.

One night in the summer of 1949, I was awakened by mysterious sounds outside the window. There were distant crunching, crackling, banging noises, along with unintelligible voices speaking a foreign language. They sounded like they were right on the roof.

I understood immediately that aliens – visitors from Outer Space! – had landed, and that they had chosen to alight on the roof outside *my* window. I also realized that the sounds indicated that they were unloading equipment from their spaceship, preparatory to making contact.

Preparatory to making contact with *me*! Because they knew I was a simpatico guy! Clearly, I must look out the window and make “first contact,” welcoming them to Earth and hoping they came in peace.

But I was too scared to sit up and look out the window.

I knew that I had been honored by their choice and that, really, there was nothing to fear. Nevertheless, I could not bring myself to peek over the sill.

But was I not a Boy Scout: trained, prepared, courageous, and brave? I was! I looked!

And there was nothing there – nothing at all on the roof right below my window. But the noises were still there, louder, more insistent, more mysterious.

I looked up, trying to locate the sounds. And, finally, down the street a block or so (we were on a bit of a hill), there was the answer. No aliens, alas, but a group of firefighters on the smoking roof of a house. Bright lights, crashing and banging ... but no spaceship. No space suits. No BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters), no BBBs (Big Bosomed Babes). Nothing but a great feeling of disappointment and foolishness. And of wondrous opportunities lost.

I sank back into bed and consoled myself to sleep, remembering that the new *Amazing* was due in the mail by the end of the week.



11/49; painting by Arnold Kohn

COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #715

In 2017, Project Drawdown, a non-profit organization founded in 2014, published *Drawdown*, which quickly became a *New York Times* bestseller that looks at solutions for the climate emergency our home planet is now experiencing.

The organization's vision statement is as follows: "(s)topping global warming is possible, with solutions that exist today. In order to do this, we must work together to achieve drawdown, the point when greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere start to decline."

Drawdown looks at 100 solutions "that exist today." And, while we will find additional solutions that do not exist today, there is much that can be done right now, if we can generate the political will to move forward.

As I write this column in early January, Congress has not yet passed legislation to take on the climate emergency. Let's hope they will have acted before you read this.

On Channel 901, beginning on February 14 and continuing through May, a series of videos will take you through Project Drawdown's "Climate Solutions 101," a program that will hopefully give you a sense that we still have time to save the planet.

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 engage you in determining a way forward. I hope it will be fun, and enlightening.

Current "Carbon Tax" Legislation

Learn more about the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend bill, with 92 co-sponsors, at <www.energyinnovationact.org>. For constantly updated information on the climate crisis, follow @CCLSlipperyRock on Facebook.

FOCUS ON THE WORLD



DOCUMENTARY

Building the future we want requires an understanding of our collective past. Explore the last 50 years of stunning change—from food demand, water, population, ocean health, and beyond—to see our current climate inflection point in context.

WATCH ON CHANNEL 901

MONDAY/ FEB. 14

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

FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

Neither snow nor ice nor cold ...



Photo by Rosemary Coffey

*... shall keep the ducks from their
appointed rounds.*