

THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

www.sherwood-oaks.com

April 2025 “For the residents, by the residents” Vol. 44, No. 4



Photos by Acorn Staff

AT LAST!!!

Dear Reader –

I have been thinking recently about how all of us here, in “God’s Waiting Room,” live with the changes in our own aging bodies and minds, all while we observe the same battle in our friends and neighbors.

Then, I happened on this tidbit from Shakespeare:

Bear with my weakness. My old brain is troubled. Be not disturbed with my infirmity.

“Be not disturbed with my infirmity.” Hmm. Something to ponder because I know I get disturbed with my own infirmities. But what I often observe around our community are residents who gently ignore when friends forget, misplace, misspeak, and otherwise show the effects of aging.

The others who overlook our infirmities are the kind and generous employees we interact with every day in our comings and goings.

This month, *The Acorn* spotlights two such beloved helpers who are moving into retirement, Nancy O’Leary, and John Butler. How fortunate we were to have leaned on them for so many years.

May they, and we, savor the sweet signs of spring popping up around us.

~ 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.

APRIL CALENDAR

April Fool’s Day	April 1
Nat’l Chocolate Mousse Day	April 3
World Health Day	April 5
Passover starts at sunset	April 13
Palm Sunday	April 13
Tax Day	April 15
National Arbor Day	April 18
Good Friday	April 18
Easter Day	April 20
Orthodox Easter	April 20
Patriots Day	April 21

THE ACORN

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Submissions for the May issue must be sent to the Editor no later than

April 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.

Barbara Rankin

March 13, 2025

WELCOME TO
DONNA AND BILL MOUL - #231

By Jean Henderson - #346

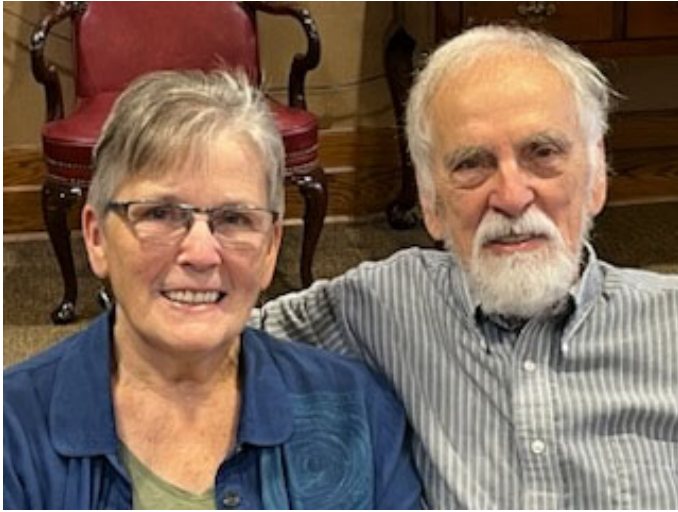


Photo by Security

Confucius said: “Roads were made for journeys, not destinations.” And our new neighbors, Bill and Donna Moul (pronounced like shopping mall) have taken many roads for many journeys!

Growing up as friends in Emsworth PA, they dated off and on from age 13. New roads took Donna to Avonworth High School and Bill to North Catholic and on to Pitt for merging two roads of computer science and industrial engineering.

A new road to marriage occurred in 1963. In 1965 Bill graduated and began a 5-year career at the Computation Center at Pitt. He then was a partner in a small management consulting group until starting an independent consultancy in the early 80’s, addressing industrial computerized control and instrumentation needs.

Donna’s roads were varied but merging as well. While a stay-at-home mom for 25 years, she went to LaRoche (the first in her family to graduate from college) and then on to Duquesne for her master’s degree. For 30 years, as a psychotherapist,

Donna taught women to value themselves, to stop the “internal critic,” to say no, and to make healthy choices. Their children have introduced them to new roads: Dan with IBM in Chapel Hill, NC; Den, an IT consultant in Franklin Park; and Laura, with Carnegie Learning, living in Zelienville. They have four adult grandchildren – Dan’s twin boys and Den’s two girls adopted from Russia.

Exciting roads have led them to many travel destinations with great memories of Fiji, England, Ireland, Canada, and Yellowstone National Park for a family celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Bill’s work has led him to New Zealand, Australia, Luxembourg, France, and Alaska.

Their hobbies and avocations have taken them both down interesting roads. Bill has been an environmental activist for decades; he served as President of the North Area Environmental Council for 20 years, and his dedication continues. He also enjoys reading and hiking and hopes to revisit woodcarving. Donna enjoys cooking, hiking, dancing, and reading and, as a cancer survivor, she has learned that every day is precious. They both believe that volunteerism enriches their lives.

The recent road on their journey led them to us after 52 years on 2 ½ wooded acres in Marshall Township. JRR Tolkien said “The road goes on and on.” How true for the Moul’s! Welcome to Sherwood!

Welcome

THANKS, GRATITUDE AND MEMORIES

By Harriet Burress - #112

Where does one begin to thank a friend, and an employee of Sherwood Oaks for almost 40 years, for her helpfulness, dedication, and faithfulness to her job? As Supervisor of Housekeeping Services, Nancy O'Leary was the epitome of wanting to have everything just right, ready, and nice. Whatever the event or need, her goal was to have the expectations of the resident or committee met, and if a little extra was required, she was up to the task. Haven't we all seen her way after hours pushing chairs, setting up tables, or finding "props" in the storage area. THANK YOU, NANCY for 40 years of service to the residents of Sherwood Oaks.



Photo submitted by N. O'Leary

Let's take a look at her early years before coming to Pennsylvania. Born the middle child of three, Nancy grew up in Shawnee, Kansas, named for the Indian tribe PA sent there. It was a small town, and everyone knew everyone. Her grandfather owned the hardware store and other ancestors were Belgian farmers. She and her siblings walked to school until new high schools were built on the four compass points. They

then attended Shawnee Mission School NW. Her Dad provided a car for her to drive with the condition that she take the neighborhood boys - not her cup of tea.

Her sister is retired and still in the area, and her brother is in the process of moving to Georgia from South Dakota. Nancy has again been the "middle sister," coaxing her brother to ask their sister to help him find a home in GA, and her sister to volunteer her home for storage of his valuables.

Nancy worked for Ramada Inn in Overland Park, KS for several years. There she met her best friend. As it turned out, her friend dated and married an engineer from Westinghouse whose brother, Tim, was assigned a territory from Pittsburgh to Texas as a winder for power generation, also for Westinghouse. After 8 weeks on the job in Texas, Tim would fly up to KS to visit. The rest is history. He and Nancy met, and although she was not too favorably impressed with his driving her car too close to the audio receptacle at the drive-in, they married, and the rest is history. They later moved to Pittsburgh.

After 3 1/2 years working at St. Barnabas, Nancy took a job at Sherwood Oaks. She was first a housekeeper, then a coordinator and, years ago, she was promoted to supervisor. "When Chris Coroian came, we cross-trained and both worked as supervisors."

AND NOW - MEMORIES, MEMORIES, MEMORIES.....

Peg Rychcik's Mom and Dad, Ralph and Louise Allen, were the first residents on Nancy's new cleaning route - No 1.

She is currently pet sitting the DiDonato's dogs, the third generation of the family's animals she has watched. Barbara DiDonato's parents, the Kehews, lived in 303 and Nancy kept their cat, Foxy. Before that,

she had watched the grandmother's cat at St. Barnabas.

When Nancy was expecting daughter Katie, suddenly, she felt "It is time." Ginny Lott was the community nurse then and exclaimed, "Oh, my, I have never delivered a baby." It was a week later that Katie arrived, much to Ginny's relief. Katie is now a Medical Assistant for Dr. Heyl's Genesis Health Care in West View.

Other recollections:

The private dining room was an outdoor patio when Nancy first arrived.

The area where the apartment building is now located was a parking lot for the employees.

Nancy does not know where the time capsule is located.

"When I first arrived at Sherwood Oaks, there were not many residents in Skilled or Personal Care because, although the patio homes were built, not many had been sold, so there were fewer people who needed care. Cranberry Twp. itself was empty. I only remember the Whale's Tail, an antique store, at the corner of Rtes. 228 and 19 and a restaurant up north on Rt 19. Much has changed."

"There was once a dove release in front of Oak Lodge - probably for an anniversary."

"One day I took a snow shovel down to the lake front where there was a large snapping turtle on the road and flipped it back into the water."

"As one enters the front door of the Center, the large oak Hex sign above the bench came from the barn once on the property." - she thinks near the Summer House.

Nancy remembers the "fancy food" that was served on the front porch - drive through - of Oak Grove when it was dedicated. "The

strawberries were like tuxedos with little bow ties," she said.

As Sherwood Oaks began to grow, new residents arrived with many talents, interests, and abilities. "Mrs. Radcliffe and I used to walk to lunch together and she pointed out different plants to me. She loved birds and would occasionally open her freezer and show me one that had died hitting the windbreakers. She had frozen it for Carnegie Museum where it would be displayed. 'Isn't it beautiful', she would say."

"Marjorie Himes had a collection of shells which she donated to her university, as well as autographs of famous people. She had a program autographed by the Three Stooges and a Brenda Starr comic book signed by the author."

Nancy has enjoyed the residents and has made good friends among them and the staff. "We used to say we are on an island at Sherwood Oaks. It is different than other retirement communities; it is a business but never felt like a business".

THANK YOU, NANCY, from all of us at Sherwood Oaks for 40 years of a job extremely well done. We wish you God's blessings for health and much happiness in your well-deserved retirement.



Photo by Monika Dalrymple

Reminder . . .

MEDICAL MARIJUANA SPEAKER

By Warren Howe - #337

Dr. Antoine Douaihy will be our guest on April 3, at 1:30 p.m. to talk about medical marijuana use by seniors. He is a Professor of Psychiatry and Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and has a strong interest and reputation in the field.

Residents and guests with even a remote interest in the topic are encouraged to attend this worthwhile discussion.

MEMORY LOSS PROGRAM

By Jan Wendt - #158 and
Jean Henderson - #346

Three of your SORA committees, Health Affairs, Living with Loss, and Sherwood Neighbors, are presenting a program on Thursday, April 10, at 10:30 a.m. in the Auditorium.

“Memory Loss: Helping Our Neighbors, Our Friends and Ourselves” will highlight Dementia360, a program of Presbyterian Senior Care Network, offering a full circle of dementia care. The speaker will be the program’s Director, Amy Kowinsky.

Amy was a 2024 Memory Care Innovation Award Winner and will speak to us about types of memory loss, removing stigmas, and how we ALL can be involved in addressing memory loss issues, as we experience it ourselves or with those in our community.

She will also have information about the Dementia360 program and how it helps those diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers and families.

We hope to see you there!

CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602
For the Chapel Committee

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

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and
Easter Services will be in the Auditorium

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

Sunday, April 6 – Communion Service

Rev. Joseph Toomey
Life Pointe Alliance Church,
Mars, PA

Sunday, April 13 - Palm Sunday

Rev. Stan Keehlwetter
Heritage Presbyterian
Franklin Park, PA

Thursday, April 17- Communion Service

Maundy Thursday, **4:00 PM**
Rev. Alick Kennedy
Sherwood Oaks (Retired)

Friday, April 18 – Good Friday

Tennebrae Service, **4:00 PM**
Rev. Jean Henderson
Sherwood Oaks (Retired)

Sunday, April 20 - Easter Sunday

Rev. Ron Hoellein
St. Paul’s UMC (Retired)
Allison Park, PA

Sunday, April 27

Rev. Dan Davis
Christ Church at Grove Farm
Sewickley, PA

*“This is the day the Lord hath made; let us
rejoice and be glad in it.”*

Psalm 18:24

TENEBRAE SERVICE SLATED

By Jean Henderson - #346

The Chapel Committee will present the annual Good Friday Tenebrae Service April 18 at 4:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. The Office of Tenebrae, meaning darkness or shadows, is a Holy Week devotion dating back to the 7th century A.D.

It is characterized by the extinguishing of candles as the service progresses with hymns, prayers, and scripture readings from the Gospel of Luke. The lights will be dimmed allowing the service to end in near darkness for several seconds.

Leading the service will be resident Rev. Dr. Jean Henderson and cantor Timothy Heavner. Please join us for this somber Good Friday devotion.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE AT SHERWOOD OAKS PARK

By Kate Donovan - #293

There will be an Easter Sunrise Service at 8:00 AM on Sunday, April 20, officiated by Jean Henderson. This is in addition to the regular Sunday service at 2:00 p.m., held in the Card Room.

Bus service to Sherwood Oaks Park will begin at 7:30 a.m., traveling with the usual rounds from the Center to all parking lots up to the start of the Easter Sunrise service, then return when the sunrise

service is over. There is a sign-up sheet in the Mailroom for bus service to give Security an idea of how many residents would like this option.

Of course, there will be perfect weather for the Easter Sunrise Service!

SAVE THE DATE:

Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 8, at 1:30 p.m., for the official **Sherwood Oaks Park Dedication Celebration**. See the May Acorn for final details.



A SATURDAY AFTERNOON with STEINWAY "YOUNG ARTISTS"

By Jane Lavender - #253

The Steinway Young Artists mission is to encourage pre-college piano students in their studies. They are given opportunities to take part in master classes, perform in honors recitals and for their peers.

They are the youngsters who often perform before a concert at Heinz Hall. Some of the students will be entertaining us in the Auditorium on Saturday afternoon April 26th at 4:00 p.m.

Do come and enjoy them and their accomplishments.

ARTS FEST A SUCCESS

By Bruce Cooper - #735

On March 7th, our Auditorium and Card Room were filled with examples of the creativity of our residents, with arts and crafts ranging from winemaking to pine-needle handiwork to beautifully knitted sweaters during the 2025 edition of the Sherwood Oaks Arts Fest.



Paintings and poetry by Bob Typanski



Beautiful hand-painted pieces by Winnie Dietz



'Three Weiss Men' wine provided by Frank and Joanne Weiss



Intricate pine-needle handiwork by Dave Gieschen



Knitting and needlepoint from Monika Dalrymple



Ornate woodworking by John Bridges

Thanks to all who participated. And thanks also to the Dining Services, Housekeeping, and Maintenance staffs who played a major part in making Arts Fest a success.

The creativity of our residents is truly astounding!

(above photos by Bruce Cooper)

HAPPY TRAILS, JOHN BUTLER

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo provided by John Butler

If you have lived at Sherwood Oaks for any time, you have likely needed PT (physical therapy) for one body part or another. It comes, as they say, with the territory. And, since PT really amounts to **work** for the client, it's not always pleasant... "no pain, no gain."

But down on the Center's lower level, you will have been greeted by an upbeat guy, John Butler, who has walked with many of us through our more vulnerable moments. And, unfailingly, he has done so with a smile and a "you can do this" attitude.

The 66-year-old arrived at Sherwood Oaks 10 years ago for an interview with Megan Syzmanski, then Director of Physical Therapy. The job application for him was something of a lark, but he was wowed by the "family atmosphere" here and Megan's management style. He says the residents made him feel welcome from "day one."

This soft-spoken guy is pure Pittsburgh, born in the old South Side Hospital, a graduate of St. Mary of the Mount School and CCAC, and living across the street from the home on Mt. Washington in which he was raised.

He and wife Susan are the parents of Conrad and Tyler. The family also includes two grandchildren, Sophia (4) and Adam (1).

When done with putting us through our rehab paces, John enjoys cooking, gardening, construction projects and backpacking/camping with his dogs.

He and Susan have purchased an RV in preparation for some leisure travel after she retires a few years from now. This summer, they will do a maiden voyage with the RV to Maine.

I asked John what he thinks makes folks successful with their rehabilitation efforts, and he acknowledged that attitude and a persistent wish to succeed play a big part. Some residents have spent a great deal of time with John during their stay here, and he recalls many of them fondly. He recognizes that folks are often overwhelmed in their first few sessions, usually recovering from a fall, surgical procedure or hospital stay. But, once trust is established, the two work together as a team and progress is made.

John's presence is ubiquitous on the nursing units, as he picks up and returns clients for their therapy sessions. It's clear he values other staff as part of the team. During his last couple of weeks here, he is searching out those whose work he especially admires to let them know how he has valued working with them.

I have always admired John's ability to tailor his PT sessions to his patient's personality. I enjoy 60's Gold Hits and remember his asking me, "what are we listening to today?" as he set up Spotify for background music while I exercised my shoulder. He was also known to bring samples of his cooking in for folks to taste. I recall some yummy borscht made from his garden beets.

We send John off to his well-deserved retirement with profound thanks for helping us to live our best lives.

PLANT SALE AND GOLF....

By Ruth Lasure - # 306



APRIL 10th - the order form will be in your cubby.

APRIL 25th - return the completed form to cubby #312

MAY 7th - Plant pick up starts at 11:30 a.m. at the Community Center

This annual event helps keep our Sherwood Park gardens and grounds beautiful and will also add beauty to your own space. For more information, please see poster in the Community Center.



Photo by Kathie McCormick

(Above) **IMPATIENT?** When winter lagged on and on, Donna Artz took matters into her own creative hands and painted the dried hydrangea blooms behind a nearby garage. That's what you call "hands on" climate change!

GOLF GROUP

Gary Brandenberger - #602

We expect to resume our golf group as soon as the weather permits. The Cranberry Highlands Golf Course is once again providing us Thursday morning tee times every week except when the course is closed for events. When this happens, they will try for another day, which is usually Wednesday. Our tee time is at about 9:30, and we usually reserve 4 times.

Any Sherwood Oaks resident is welcome to participate. Men and women golfer can play 9 or 18 holes. The course "programs" our golf carts to provide more convenient access on the course. The only request they make is that we keep up with the pace of play. This has never been a problem in the past.

I will notify you by email over the preceding weekend of the tee times the course is assigning us. Please respond as soon as you decide whether you are playing **or not**. I will arrange the groups by Tuesday afternoon and let you know by email. Unused tee times will be released back to the course. When we have Wednesday times, we back everything up one day.

Please let me know by email if you expect to participate this year. This will allow me to ensure I have your correct address. It would be helpful to provide me your phone numbers for any last-minute changes. I can be reached at:

gbrandenberger@webtv.net
(H)724-591-5385, (Cell) 412-638-5132.



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GIBSON HOUSE MANOR

By Maggie Bennardo - #211



Photo used with permission from GHM

Did you know that there is a Jamestown, Pennsylvania? And, nestled in the streets of Jamestown, is a place called the Gibson House Manor.

The Gibson House Manor, built in 1855/6 by Dr. William Gibson, was entered in The National Registry of Historic Places in 1978, and is now owned and operated by the Friends of the Manor. The Manor has been carefully maintained and restored to its original state, including the furnishings, and celebrates the Pre-Civil War style.

The building was a family home as well as Dr. Gibson's medical offices. Perhaps more importantly, the Manor served as an important crossroads for the Underground Railroad. Built to protect and aid freedom seekers on their way to Canada, it is one of the few Safe Houses open to the public.

SORA's Trips & Tours Committee is sponsoring a trip to Jamestown to visit the Gibson House Manor in mid-May. Watch the T&T board in the mailroom for further details

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## PAPERBACK PONDERINGS

By Jean Henderson - #346

Our Paperback Room is funded totally by your donations, and we're so grateful! The room is

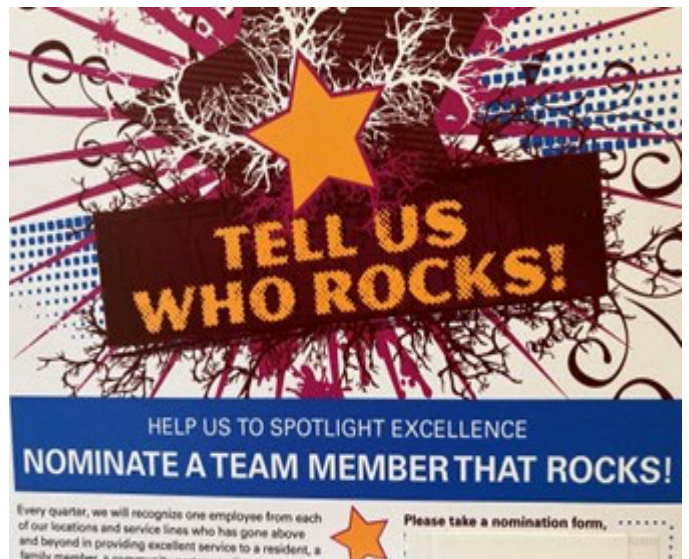
located by the first entrance to the library from the hallway near the public elevator. It is open 24/7 for your perusal.

The Paperback Room includes several hundred Fiction books, which begin to your left as you enter and are in alphabetical order by author and are labeled (N) for novels. Books by at least ten popular novelists with many published titles are shelved at the end of the alphabetically ordered novels.

To the right as you enter the room are biographies – (B), spirituality books – (S), and non-fiction books – (N-F) as well as a shelf which holds the most recent donations.

An added plus to the room is to the left as you enter: various books about music, including biographies of musicians.

So, stop by and enjoy all the variety we offer in the Paperback Room.



Above - PUT YOUR GRATITUDE INTO WORDS - Forms like the one above can be found in the Mailroom, and they provide a way for you to say "thanks" to any employee. We know you recognize superior service every day from those who help us, whether in Security, Housekeeping, Nursing, the Dining Room, Maintenance or Special Services. Take a moment to acknowledge those things. It means the world to each employee.

## CONTINUED LEARNING

By Jno L. Hunt - #308

We have enjoyed five wonderful and informative presentations during the month of March ranging from law enforcement to music to space to robbery!

We have two more presentations for April (please note the date changes!):

**Monday, April 7:** Bruce Cooper, Advocate for Environmental Action, will present “The Planet is Getting Tippy” in recognition of Earth Day.

**Monday, April 14:** Thomas Wendt, Prof. of Jazz at Duquesne University, will present “The Life and Music of Teddy Wilson.”

Both presentations will be in the Auditorium at 1:30 p.m.

## CURIO CABINETS FOR APRIL/MAY “WHO AM I?”

By Janet Desko - #210

A thank you to all residents who brought their “Go Green” items for the March/April curio cabinets. The cabinets looked especially spring-like!

On **April 22**, please pick up your “Go Green” items from **10:30 a.m. – noon** and from **4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

For our April/May curio cabinets, we will need your school-age photographs (ages 5-10). It will be a fun “Who Am I?” game to see how many of our residents you can recognize from way back then! Drop off your photos on **April 24** from **10:30 a.m. – noon** and from **4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Try to spot your fellow residents from the list of names on the table between the two cabinets. Only Peggy Meister and I will know for sure!!

## THE GOODNIGHT KISS

By Robert Typanski - #190

When we were young a parent would say:  
It’s time to end your playful day.”  
Those words were softly said.  
For we knew that when in bed . . .

we would not miss  
that soothing, loving Goodnight Kiss.

However times do change.  
As we grew older  
we wanted to rearrange  
Our lives. So we got bolder.

But we would start to miss  
That soothing, loving Goodnight Kiss.

Then we found a love so true  
We were always together.  
The skies were brilliant blue  
With mostly sunny weather.

Once again each day without remiss  
ended with a loving Goodnight Kiss.

But carefree times can end  
when we lose ones we love.  
Those true loving friends  
Who leave and find peace above.

But we still have the memories  
of that soothing, loving Goodnight Kiss.

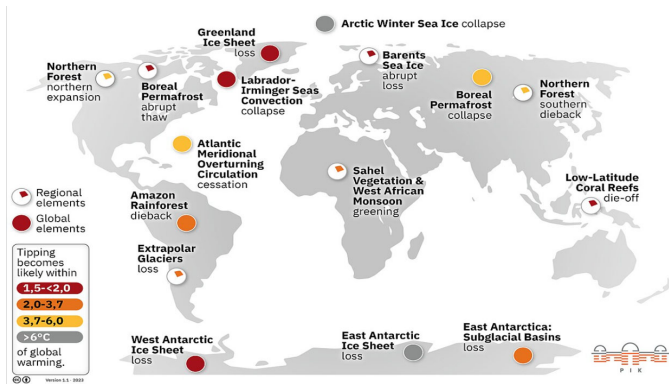


## COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #735

Man-made Climate Change is NOT a Hoax

The earth's natural systems exist within a delicate balance of temperature and moisture. We modern humans are altering that balance to achieve our economic goals and, as a result, have knocked the planet's natural systems akilter.



The chart above is difficult to read. It displays expected 'tipping points' as we warm the planet with our releasing of millions of tons of fossil fuel emissions into the atmosphere every day.

A tipping point occurs when a small change in one part of the earth's balance suddenly creates a runaway condition. If you slowly tip the chair you're sitting in backwards, there will be a tipping point when you suddenly fall backwards. That is what is happening to our natural systems as the planet heats up.

My presentation, 'The World is Getting Topsy', at 1:30 pm on Monday, April 7, will delve into the tipping points displayed in the chart above that climate scientists expect will occur at different levels of increased planetary heat. Each of them is potentially catastrophic. We must find ways to stop heating the earth before we reach them. For some, we're already too late.

**Watch *Climate Extremes – Into the Abyss?* on Channel 950 or 951 when the system becomes fully functional again, hopefully on April 14 and 16.**

## LIBRARY LOWDOWN

By Barbara Christy - #237

There's always an unintended consequence. In this case, it is a fallout from putting the spacers behind the books on our bookshelves. The spacers are working just fine; we no longer have books lost behind other books. BUT – we now have some books which are too long for the shelves and stick out into the aisles.

To prevent people from bumping their heads or legs on them, we are going to move the worst offenders to the "Oversize" bookshelf. This means you could be looking for a book that is now in a new location. Oversize books are shelved in the middle of the Non-fiction section and there is a sign on top of that rack.

The online catalog will be updated as we move the books so you will be able to tell if that is where your book went.

We think this is an improvement – let us know if it is not.

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## PRIMARY ELECTION UPDATE

By Dan Cindric - #107

For the Civic Affairs Committee

The Municipal Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, May 20. County offices on the ballot will be: Two (2) Common Pleas Court Judges, Sheriff, Controller, Coroner, and Clerk of Courts.

Cranberry Township offices on the ballot will be one (1) Supervisor and the Judge of Elections.

There will be no Seneca Valley School Directors on the ballot this year for our school district Region 2.

## **FRIENDS, LOST AND FOUND**

By John Bridges - #122

About 40 years ago, we wanted to increase membership in the Moraine Sailing Club and garnered the Otto family. The 8-year old son, Mathew, soon wanted a boat of his own. I produced a kit of parts for an 8-foot Optimist sailing Dinghy. I joined the family to build this with sister, Maggie, who helped with the sanding and painting. I remained friends with the father for many years, as the kids drifted off to other activities after learning to sail.

This year I had to go to the hospital and was taken there by ambulance. The driver took one look at me and said "You're the man who built my boat."

In Wales during World War Two, a group of us English kids tended to stick together. One special friend, John Yates, and I spent a lot of time building scale and flying model airplanes. After the war was over, we returned to our original homes and lost touch. Later, in 1953, I strolled one evening down to Yarmouth harbour in the Isle of Wight and, to my surprise, bumped into John Yates ashore from the Sail Training Ship "Moyana". He had come ashore to get supplies before the turn of the tide which meant he had to rush back. We did have time to exchange addresses

and kept in touch over the years with Christmas cards after this unexpected meeting. Later, we were able to connect again and really catch up after we had both retired, as well as meet the two wives we had collected over the years.

These unexpected chance meetings bring a feeling of warmth to the heart and somehow make the world seem to be a smaller, more friendly place.

When Sheila and I moved to Chile, our next door neighbors were a German family that welcomed us to the small enclave of a dozen houses. We almost lost touch with them when we went back to England and then completely when they left Chile to get away from Allende (three days before he was deposed). Years later, in 1980, I passed through Bogota Airport on my way to Chile and who should I bump into but Carl, our old German friend, on his way back to Germany, from seeing a Columbian client. As a result of this meeting, we were able to visit them on our next trip to Germany and re-live old times together.

In Chile, we often enjoyed trips to mountain areas with another German, Fritz, and visited his family in their home, and they to ours. On one memorable occasion, we were balancing on a knife-edge ridge on a Chilean mountain when there was

a fairly severe earthquake. This was, to say the least, quite an exciting moment. We did not maintain contact with Fritz after leaving Chile. Years later, and after I had retired, we caught a plane in Bogota, Colombia, enroute for a holiday in Germany.

The lady sitting in front of us turned, and said in German, "I think I know you." After many questions and answers, we realized she was the mother of Fritz.

Apart from these friends who were lost and then miraculously reappeared, there was another group of eight plus scattered around the world with whom we maintained contact by exchanging Christmas cards. These usually included a circular letter describing their family and activities. After a spell in foreign lands, many of them returned to Europe. When I retired, Sheila and I were able to take a leisurely trip across Europe to visit many of them.

We started in the north of England, then took a ferry across to Norway and saw several friends in parts of that country before proceeding to Sweden, Denmark and Germany. There were side trips to Switzerland and to Italy, where we caught up with Ugo, who had been responsible for reviving and interest in sailing catamarans on Lake Arthur. Then, on to Paris and sightseeing with a doctor friend we had met in the Congo who had moved to Paris when she retired. She proved an excellent guide, taking us to both

touristy and non-touristy sites. And, finally, a visit with Francis, who was working for Ford Motor Company in Spain, near Cadiz .

For this delightful, leisurely journey, we travelled by train without any need to make reservations.

Unfortunately, I have outlived many of these friends, and the list is now much reduced as I relax at Sherwood Oaks, lie back and remember our many happy times together.

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PUZZLE BUZZ

By Joni Pun - #223

You have probably seen the table in the lobby that we use for doing jigsaw puzzles. We try to have an easy one - 300 to 500 pieces - out, as well as a more difficult one with 1000 pieces. Anyone is welcome to stop by and try their hand at either or both.

On the table near the gift shop are puzzles that you may take to work on at home. But please, **BRING THEM BACK WHEN FINISHED.**

There are many puzzles we have seen and wanted to try, but they don't seem to return. Check your shelves and closets for any that you have not received as gifts or purchased and bring them back. We would appreciate it.

Worth a Look Books for April

By Barbara Christy - #237

Varina by Charles Frazier. Fiction. Why read a book about the wife of Jefferson Davis? This book describes the courtship and marriage of impoverished 18-year-old Varina Howell to the wealthy 37-year-old Davis. Expecting a sedate life as a country planter, she got a political life full of turmoil, war, death and destruction. Told as a series of flashbacks, in 1906 Varina shares her memories of the war years with Jimmie, the black child she raised until he was six, then lost. Jimmie's memories of his early life are very vague and he approaches Varina with questions about her decision to adopt him, her understanding of the struggles of the slaves, her participation in the war effort. Narrated by Jimmie, Varina's story displays her complicity – knowing or unknowing- with slavery and is not romanticized or sugar-coated but is a stark portrayal of the ugliness and brutality of that time. F FRA p.b.

The Briar Club by Kate Quinn. Fiction. The century old Briarwood House, boarding house to 16 people, is the narrator in this Washington-based thriller. The house is excited to have a real murder occur within its walls because it provides the excitement that has been lacking. The sixteen residents, all of whom are suspects and one of whom is the actual killer, are not so thrilled. Grace March, the attic apartment, is a widowed, gracious host for weekly dinners that draw the reclusive residents out of themselves. From lanky, 17-year-old Pistol Pete, in love with the lovely young widow, to the elegant-on-a-shoestring Nora Walsh who is friendly with the Irish mobsters down the street,

there are plenty of interesting characters with reason to commit the murder but the house isn't telling. You will have to read the book to learn "who done it." F QUI

The Lost Passenger by Frances Quinn. Fiction p.b. Pretty, young, and impressionable, Elinor reads a lot about fairy-tale romances. When her own appears on the horizon in the person of an attractive aristocrat, she falls head over heels in love and never questions the motives behind a penniless duke marrying a wealthy merchant's daughter. She finds that her blue-blooded in-laws look down on her, criticize her every move (and word) even forbid her to spend unchaperoned time with her young son. Her father offers her short-term escape in the form of tickets on the maiden voyage of the Titanic for herself, her husband and her son. When the ship goes down Elinor seizes her chance, steals another woman's identity and, with her son, survives. Now she must make her way in a strange new world she knows nothing about. F QUI

The Curse of Penryth Hall by Jess Armstrong. Fiction. Party girl Ruby is sent west to mythic Cornwall by her octogenarian employer to deliver a sealed trunk of books. She stops enroute to visit an estranged friend who is living with her perhaps (abusive) count in an old, creaky mansion on a hilltop. Determined to get to the bottom of her friend's circumstances, she is present when Penryth Hall's bells ring after 30 years of silence and Edward, the husband, is found dead in a thicket of trees. Immediately, the housekeeper sends for the pillar, the man who can break curses; that's when Ruby knows for sure that she is in an environment that is not quite normal. F ARM

What the Light Touches by Xavier Bosch. Fiction. In 2008, Margaux, WWII survivor and victim of a Nazi propaganda scheme, moves into a retirement home. Her granddaughter Barbara is delighted to move into her Paris apartment as a means of escaping her unhappy marriage. These two characters each become their own timeline in this beautifully written historical novel. Margaux and her lover, musician Damian, face the challenges and dangers of occupied Paris, including the damage to her family's reputation caused by an unauthorized propaganda photo of Margaux. Barbara, dealing with the financial pressures caused by the end of her marriage, rents out a room only to find out that an interloper photographer is part of the agreement. The confinement resulting from the devastating snowstorm of 2008 forces her to deal with him and her family's past. F BOS

Three Days in June by Anne Tyler. Fiction. The day before her daughter's wedding, private school administrator Gail Simmons walks away from her job in shock after she is told she will not be rehired next year. Her lack of people skills is the reason given reason and even Gail must admit there is some truth there. But the wedding will go on and Gail's next challenge is that her ex-husband plans to move in, with his cat, for the three days of the festivities, followed by an unnerving discovery by the bride-to-be. How Gail and Max deal with the valued by the press as a good distraction from the economic woes everyone was experiencing. Friends with Truman, Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson, Mesta became more than a socialite, promoting

dilemma, and each other, forms the basis of the novel with revelations about their own marriage thrown in. Typical of Anne Tyler, this is a lovely small book with a satisfying end. F TYL

The Woman Who Knew Everyone: The Power of Perle Mesta, Washington's Most Famous Hostess. Non-fiction. Known as "the hostess with the mostess," Perle Mesta was a force to be reckoned with in Washington for more than three decades. Born into Texas oil wealth, she married into Pittsburgh steel money and made her husband, George Mesta, the center of her life. But, in 1924 she was abruptly widowed by a fatal heart attack. Set adrift, she chose to live in Washington, D.C. instead of the Pittsburgh mansion in Squirrel Hill. President Hoover and Vice President Curtis became her close friends and she started on her career as a party-giver. During the Depression, Mesta became a household name for her lavish lifestyle and was valued by the press as a good distraction from the economic woes everyone was experiencing. Friends with Truman, Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson, Mesta became more than a socialite, promoting political causes like civil rights and the Equal Rights Amendment. She was an epic personality who lived an epic life. 973.909GOR



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

*Indicates books reviewed in Worth a Look

The Briar Club*	Quinn, Kate	c. 2024.	F QUI
Clean	Trabucco Zerán, Alia	c. 2024.	F TRA
Great Expectations	Dickens, Charles	c. 1971.	F DIC c. 2
In Too Deep	Child, Lee	c. 2024.	F CHI
Is She Really Going Out with Him	Cousens, Sophie	c. 2024.	F COU p.b.
Karla's Choice: A John le Carre Novel	Harkaway, Nick	c. 2024.	F HAR
The Last Sinner	Jackson, Lisa	c. 2023.	F JAC
Last Twilight in Paris	Jenoff, Pam	c. 2025.	F JEN
Man in the Water	Housewright, David	c. 2024.	F HOU
Open Season	Kellerman, Jonathan	c. 2025.	F KEL
Overkill	Brown, Sandra	c. 2022.	F BRO
Pride and Prejudice	Austen, Jane	c. 1976.	F AUS
Robert B. Parker's Buried Secrets	Farnsworth, Christopher	c. 2025.	F FAR
Robin Hood	Creswick, Paul	c. 1984.	F CRE
The Spies of Shilling Lane	Ryan, Jennifer	c. 2019.	F RYA
Three Days in June*	Tyler, Anne	c. 2025.	F TYL
Varina*	Frazier, Charles	c. 2018.	F FRA p.b.
Westport	Comey, James	c. 2024.	F COM
What the Light Touches*	Bosch, Xavier	c. 2023.	F BOS p.b.
Yellowstone: Seasons 1-5	Yellowstone	c. 2022.	F YEL DVD

NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II	Graham, Elyse	c. 2024	940.548 GRA
A Certain Idea of America: Selected Writings	Noonan, Peggy	c. 2024	973 NOO
Grow Something Besides Old: Seeds for a Joyful Life	Jones, Laurie Beth	c. 1998	158.1 JON
Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World	Nouwen, Henri J. M	c. 1992	248.482 NOU
The Wide Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact and the Fateful Final Voyage of Captain James Cook	Sides, Hampton	c. 2024	910.62 SID
The Woman Who Knew Everyone: The Power of Perle Mesta, Washington's Most Famous Hostess*	Gordon, Meryl	c. 2024	973.909 GOR



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 **Mar. 4, 2025**, monthly board meeting follow:

SORA Treasurers: The balance as of Feb. 28, 2025, for the Memorial/Special Projects Fund was \$26,584, and the balance for the Employee Appreciation Fund was \$17,389, for a total of \$43,973. The total SORA checking account balance came to \$88,700.

Liaison Reports:

Security & Transportation: Longterm wheelchair parking in the Scooter Room has been significantly reduced from last month.

Pool, Spa, and Locker Room: The June issue of the Fitness Center monthly calendar will feature pool activities.

Farm Gardens: A number of beds are available to be reserved.

Trips and Tours: Trips to the Heinz History Center and the Aviary are being planned.

Resident Arts and Crafts Wall still needs drawings, paintings, needlework, and weavings from residents, their relatives, and SO employees.

The Living with Loss team, the Health Affairs C'tee, and Sherwood Neighbors will present a program titled "Memory Loss: Helping our Friends, Family, and Ourselves" on Tuesday, Apr. 10, at 10:30 a.m. in the Auditorium.

The Dining C'tee now has newly designed comment cards. The winner of the Souper Bowl tasting was creamy Italian sausage, with beef Stroganoff in second place.

Green Energy Study Activity members have been meeting twice a month to gather information about various forms of green energy.

Roots and Branches will be meeting on Thurs., April 3.

Handbells & Chorus: The group continues rehearsals for a concert on May 7.

Games, including Cornhole and Ping Pong, continue every Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. in the Cranberry Lake Fitness Center.

Sherwood Gifts: Total sales for February came to \$1000, with a profit margin of 87%. Good numbers came from Granny's Attic, the Annex, and the sale of greeting cards and jewelry

Administrator's Report: Our current census includes 186 inhabited IL units; we also have 34 residents in Skilled Nursing, 34 in Personal Care, and 40 in Oak Grove. Several new staff members were to begin work in March. The "You Rock" program posted in the mail room allows anyone to nominate employees who have demonstrated excellence in customer service, high quality work, leadership, initiative, and performance improvement. We've had over 100 new leads so far this year, which is a new record.

Old Business: Peter Broeren, reviewing the Employee Appreciation Fund policy, pointed out that employees of CURA Hospitality are eligible to participate in the Fund distributions. The SO Senior Director and employees of HealthPro Heritage Physical Therapy are eligible for a \$200 stipend. Re the Nominating C'tee, SORA attendees unanimously approved the membership of Bruce Cooper (chair), Peter Broeren, Denton Bond, Jane Lavender, and Carol Harvey.

New Business: On May 22, 1100 Seneca Valley middle school students will be bused to 9 municipalities, while a tenth group will come to Sherwood Oaks to work outside for 3 hours and then have lunch. Dedication of Sherwood Oaks Park is set for Thurs., May 8, 1-3:30 p.m.

Future Board Meetings: The next Monthly Board Meeting will be held on **Tues., April 8, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Card Room. An Easter Sunrise service will occur at the Park Pavilion on **April 20, 8-8:30 a.m.**



Photo by Kathie McCormick

GOODBYE WINTER . . .