

THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

www.sherwood-oaks.com

November 2025 "For the residents, by the residents" Vol. 44, No. 8

Autumn Reflections



Photo by Art Sommer

Dear Reader –

Right now, the leather-colored oak leaves are all over the grass which I see from my sunroom. That means we have weathered the Autumnal Equinox. Next up, the Winter Solstice.

Fall, winter, spring, or summer I get a kick (play on words intended) out of swimming in "our" pool. I realize I am down from 44 laps to 20 or so, but it is still relaxing and rejuvenating.

What I am waiting for are the snow-falls. Doing the side stroke while looking out the window as the flakes fill the sky and coat the tree boughs makes me laugh. It also makes me grateful for central heating, indoor plumbing, and other niceties of 21st century living at Sherwood Oaks.

Put your toes in, then knees, hips, and torso. Join in grateful use of health-promoting and invigorating swimming.

~ Ruth Becker

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.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

All Saints Day	Nov. 1
Daylight Savings Ends	Nov. 2
Veterans Day	Nov. 11
Nat'l Pickle Day	Nov. 14
World Children's Day	Nov. 20
Thanksgiving	Nov. 27
Advent Begins	Nov. 30

THE ACORN

Editor

Jan Wendt

janicewndt@gmail.com

Staff

Ruth Becker

John Hennon

Kathie McCormick

Production Editor

Tabby Alford

Ex Officio

Mark Bondi

Submissions for the December issue must be sent to the Editor no later than
November 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.

Anne Williams

September 27, 2025

Betty Howard

October 10, 2025

SID AND BETSY BAXENDALE - #345

By Jean Henderson - #346



Photo by Dave Capan

Socrates said it, “To live well and honorably and justly are the same thing.” Sid’s and Betsy’s lives would surely fit into that saying! Born, raised, and educated well in the state of Indiana, their lives of service have expanded across the globe.

Sid, a CPA, has a BA from DePauw, and an MBA and Doctorate in Business Administration from IU-Bloomington. He taught for 38 years – seven at IUB and thirty-one at University of Louisville – after a few years in financial planning/analysis with corporations. Betsy has a BS from IUB and a Master’s of Divinity from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. She served as a United Methodist pastor after their children were grown. They attend the Global Methodist Church in Zelenople.

The couple married in 1963. Sid’s honorable service on the staff of the U.S. Air Force Auditor General and his two Fulbright scholarships initiated their treks to dozens of countries around the world and made them multi-lingual:

Turkey, Mauritius, France, Ireland, Egypt, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya, Morocco, Greece, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Jerusalem, and Canada.

Their children, a son – Dartmouth and McGill grad – is an international lawyer in Montreal and parent to a 21-year-old son at University of Waterloo. Their daughter – a Chatham grad – lives in Ellwood City and Pittsburgh and works at Perkins Eastman in Information Management. The Baxendales moved to Cranberry eight years ago to be near their daughter.

Their volunteerism proves their dedication to justice. Through their former United Methodist Church, resettlement of refugees became a passion for both of them – Cambodians, Sudanese Lost Boys, Uzbekistanis, and Liberians. Sid is still in touch with one of the ‘Lost Boys.’ Betsy’s church work also led to establishing libraries and health outreach programs.

Sid and Betsy are committed to a life full of variety and adventure. Sid’s hobbies surely show his commitment to living well. He pursued his interest in astronomy with Open University in England, using their robotic telescope on Tenerife in the Canary Island. He fulfilled a childhood ambition by reading all fifty-two writings of the card game called ‘Authors,’ by famous British and American authors. And he’s an AI (artificial intelligence) expert, having read over 50 books on AI.

Lives well lived, with honor and justice ...that’s the Baxendales. I think Socrates would agree. We welcome them to Sherwood Oaks!

JOHN AND LISA EDELMAN - #244

By Jean Henderson - #346



Photos by Dave Capan

Arf! Arf! We are Henry and Theo, Portuguese Water Dogs; our people are Lisa and John Edelman from Economy Borough. Our people married in 1991 after meeting through a dating service because Lisa fell in love with John's dog, our ancestor Trillick, a Wheaton terrier, and married John to get the dog! So we dogs have always been in charge at the Edelmans' homes!

Our people are Pennsylvania natives: Lisa from Harrisburg and John from Fox Chapel. And they're well educated too! Lisa graduated from IUP and John from Pitt in Economics. They've worked hard to give us the life we deserve!

Lisa worked as office manager in a pain clinic at UPMC and now works from home as a notary signing agent. John was CEO of his family's business: Heyl and Patterson Inc., where our Edelman people were involved for over 100 years. He's now retired; we sure like having them both around.

BUT – they're out a lot too! Both have volunteered hundreds of hours at the Sewickley Presbyterian Church. She's

been an elder and deacon, among other duties; he's on the Finance Committee. John is really into Rotary, and before that worked the phone for ten years for CONTACT PGH, where he was also the chairperson.

They also have hobbies besides taking care of us!! He loves chess and reading and she enjoys gardening and outdoor activities, so sometimes we're just on our own....

And travel? Do they ever!! When they're away travelling, we go to Lucky Paws Pet Resort. Sadly, because we're very rowdy, we have to go to the 'detention' section to get 'counseling' while we're there. They call it the Adventure Club! Imagine.

But wait till you hear about our people's adventures! Vacations and/or business and Young Presidents Association travels have taken them to Russia, China, Peru, South Africa (5x), Africa (on a gorilla safari!), Costa Rica, Italy (6x), Australia (5x), Korea, Turkey, and Great Britain, and in October they went back to Italy for a wedding and vacation. John has been to forty-eight states and Lisa to lots of states too! SOOOO...back to the Adventure Club for us!

They also sometimes leave us to go visit friends and John's mother at Longwood at Oakmont. But they always come back to us because we know they really love us!!

All four of us are settling in and looking forward to meeting dog friends and human ones too! Arf! Arf!

WELCOME

KATHY KOZDEMBA - #160

By Harriet Burress - #112



Photo by Jason Lyle

When interviewing someone who has a degree and career of 35 years in journalism, it is a little intimidating; however, my time with Kathy Kozdemba in her lovely new home at #160 was such a pleasant visit, more than one hour passed quickly.

Kathy was born in Elmira, N.Y. Elmira is situated near the Finger Lakes and is much like Pittsburgh with the same ethnic populations, food, and customs.

When asked what led her to journalism, Kathy said, "I always loved writing. My 5th grade teacher told my parents that I wrote significantly above my grade level and to support me in that effort. There was never any boredom in my home with plenty of newspapers, magazines, and books. By the time I was in high school, I wrote for the local newspaper on Thursday nights and Saturdays. That was the start of a fulfilling career."

Kathy received her BA in Journalism at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY, and her MBA from Syracuse University. She spent her entire career with Gannett Co., Inc., a media company, beginning as a reporter and later managing news staffs in Ithaca, NY; Springfield, MO; and the Washington, DC,

metro area. She also worked on the Gannett corporate staff in news staff development and news ethics training. She retired in 2003. "The news is much more complex now, and I am glad to be a consumer rather than a producer of the news."

In 1992, Kathy moved to Pittsburgh to become publisher of the North Hills News Record, a newspaper focused on northern Allegheny and southern Butler Counties. (It ceased publication in the late 1990s). "The peak of my career was being asked to lead the start-up of the daily News Record. Not many people experience that kind of opportunity in their careers."

Her community involvement included being a former member and Chair of the Board of Trustees of La Roche University. When she sold her home in Hampton, she moved to an apartment in the Strip District "to decide what I wanted in a retirement community. I loved it, as my apartment faced the Allegheny River and North Hills." She has been a member of St. Stanislaus Church in the Strip for 25 years.

Kathy has a deep interest in Irish culture and has visited Ireland nearly forty times. She enjoys customizing and leading tours there for family and friends. In July, just before moving to Sherwood Oaks, she designed and led an eighteen-day tour throughout the country for a dozen friends. "My heart and roots are there." Her maternal great grandparents immigrated from Ireland in the mid 1800s and settled in Antrim, PA, in the north-eastern part of the state. For many years, Kathy owned a vacation home in County Galway, near extended family and friends.

A bit of fun in her home is a display of signed original newspaper cartoons given to her by the artists.

Our best wishes and a warm welcome to Sherwood Oaks, Kathy.



PHYLLIS RIEDE - #722

By Connie Brandenberger - #602



Photo by Jan Wendt

If you have an interest in antiques, Phyllis Riede is the lady you want to know. Phyllis operated antique shops for 30 years. She began the business in the basement of her home and continued operating in the Grove City area, Leesburg, Volant and in shopping malls. Her apartment is filled with a unique collection of beautiful antique lamps, furniture, and china.

Phyllis was born in Cooperstown, PA (not the baseball city), and has always lived in the Grove City area. She and her husband, Ronald, who died ten years ago, met at a Halloween Party. He told family members that she was the girl he would marry, and he did! He was in the HVAC business with his father. Following graduation from college, he began designing heating systems for schools, hospitals, and other commercial buildings.

While Phyllis was raising two boys and two girls, she still found time to operate her antique business. The grown sons live out of state, one in Tennessee and the other in Texas. Both daughters make

their homes in Pennsylvania, one in Lock Haven and one in Marshall Township. All four children helped in the move to Sherwood Oaks. She has seven grandchildren.

Even with her passion for the antique business, Phyllis always found time for golfing and bowling. She even has a trophy for bowling and several trophies in golf. She plans on staying healthy and in shape by joining one of our many exercise classes. In her younger years, she was into acrobatics, ballet, tap and baton. She will become involved in activities once she settles in and empties all her boxes. Phyllis is interested in Trips and Tours, especially attending plays and musical events.

Besides golfing with her husband, they found time for trips to Hawaii, an Alaskan cruise, and a trip to the Bahamas.

Ten years after Ronald's death, she decided her home was a bit too much for her. She diligently investigated several facilities like our community before deciding Sherwood Oaks was the best choice. She is pleased with the friendliness of our residents and the many dinner or lunch invitations. She is anxious to make new friends. Welcome, Phyllis!



Over the river and through the wood

Now Grandmother's cap I spy!

Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?

Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!



TO ALL RESIDENTS!!!
MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW
TO CELEBRATE THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN US AND
ARE KEEPING OUR FREEDOM.

**"A PATRIOTIC SALUTE TO SHERWOOD OAKS
VETERANS"**

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

1:30 p.m.

AUDITORIUM

Patriotic Piano Music begins at 1:15 P.M.

PROGRAM: "HONORING OUR VETERANS"
THE PROGRAM INCLUDES THE PRESENTATION OF
COLORS, GUEST SPEAKER, FRANK FINLEY, SPECIAL
MUSIC, AND A PATRIOTIC SING-ALONG

WE WILL ALSO RECOGNIZE ALL VETERANS:

Service songs and wreaths in
memory of and in honor of all who have and are serving.

REMEMBRANCE

**There will be display tables for Veterans' Memorabilia
beginning at 10:00 a.m.**

Grab and Go Refreshments will be served afterwards.



HEALTH AFFAIRS NOTES

By Warren Howe - #337

At its September meeting, the Health Affairs Committee considered several items that merit being reported to our community.

The committee is concerned about the potential for **radon** exposure at Sherwood Oaks. Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium and thorium in soil, rock, and water. Exposure to radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer (after cigarette smoking). Unhealthy radon accumulations are common in Western Pennsylvania, and seniors are considered at high risk for injury if exposed. Sherwood Oaks has recently tested for radon in the Community Center and found reassuringly low levels present there. Since exposure in our homes may be more significant due to the amount of time we spend there, the committee has asked administration to do sample tests at several dispersed homes in our community; those results will be reported when available. If potentially harmful levels of radon are discovered, steps will be taken to reduce the risk.

In August, seventeen residents participated in a "senior driver refresher course," learning many new (or perhaps forgotten) tips for safe and effective driving.

The instructor announced that a workshop for the "**Yellow Dot Program**" is scheduled at the Cranberry Township Municipal Center on November 3rd starting at 11:00 A.M. This program's goal is to encourage having vital medical information regarding drivers and passengers be available in the car's glove box for use by first responders in case of an accident or emergency. Once the usual driver constructs his/her personal information packet and places it in the glove box, a "Yellow Dot" sticker is placed on the vehicle's rear window to alert emergency personnel to look for it. For seniors who may

be incapacitated while driving, having this information available may be lifesaving. Residents who drive may want to attend the upcoming workshop.

The committee had a long discussion about **falls** occurring on campus. Falls are not trivial events, and often lead to serious injury, hospitalization, disability and even death. Most falls occur at home, and the victim too often has a history of repeated falling episodes. We are all encouraged to report falls to Community Nursing. The committee learned some residents fear that reporting a fall will result in an imposed reduction in one's independent living situation, but this isn't so. Rather, reporting will lead to efforts at rehabilitation and environmental modification which, by acting as a "stitch in time," may increase and prolong independence. Please, as a matter of self-interest, report any falls you experience.

Did you know that the committee subscribes to published health letters on behalf of the community, and that these letters are displayed and available to be reviewed in the Medical Office waiting area? Current subscriptions are for the Harvard and Mayo Clinic Health Letters, but the committee voted to replace the Mayo Clinic subscription with the Cleveland Clinic's Arthritis Newsletter. Feel free to access and read the letters in the Medical Office but be sure to return any you borrow after finishing with them. If any resident wants to share health letters they personally receive by adding them to the Medical Office display racks, feel free to do so.

The committee is eager to hear from any resident who has a health-related concern, or who wants to know more about the committee. Contact Warren Howe, Committee Chair (#337), with any questions.



Enjoy this delightful poem presented many years ago to Jane Lavender's mother, Edith Miner, who stubbornly refused to use a cane. After reading it, did she relent? Ask Jane.

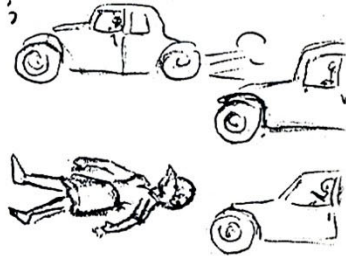
"Doctor, I Don't Want to Use a Cane."



I don't want to walk like a little old lady,
And canes I especially abhor,
But better is a little old lady with a cane
Than a lady lying flat on the floor.



When crossing the street, take care, be discreet;
Get over there whole, safe and sound.
Yes, I'd rather be a little old lady with a cane
Than a little old lady on the ground.



A curb isn't nice, nor a little patch of ice.
It doesn't take much to cause a slip,
So plan to be a little old lady with a cane,
Not a lady with a fracture of the hip.



I'd like to walk proudly on my own two feet
And hold my head high like a duchess,
But I'd rather be a little old lady with a cane
Than a little old lady on crutches.



-Grace FitzGerald, Nov. 1988

MEET OUR CONCIERGES (first in a series)

ANN DELILLE

By Rosemary Coffey - #113



Photo by Jan Wendt

Ann's first acquaintance with Sherwood Oaks came when her parents moved here a dozen years ago (beginning in 2013). Indeed, her mother, Harriet Ritchie, still resides in Independent Living, though her father died in 2022. When in 2020 the campus was locked down because of the Covid epidemic, Ann could no longer come by to visit. This was especially painful, (because her father by that time was legally blind) which meant that the only way they could communicate was in person. She was, therefore, delighted to be hired as a concierge, after being interviewed by Tabby Alford in a trailer parked near the Gatehouse.

Ann, who grew up outside Chicago, graduated from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, where she majored in Human Resources. She ran a cleaning business for many years, which she was able to schedule around her commitments as a mother to the school schedules of her three sons (now employed respectively as a police officer, a network technician, and a brewery worker).

She greatly enjoys her interactions with Sherwood Oaks residents, who, she

says, emit "positive vibes." She feels that she knows "everybody" who passes by the desk just inside the front door. Since she is now receiving Social Security, she is working just three or four days a week, which allows her to spend some time with her mom and with her husband. Feel free to stop by and introduce yourself to Ann if you haven't done so already!



GET TO KNOW THEM FIRST!

By Jan Wendt - #158

Do you like opening presents? Meeting new people? Getting in on the ground floor? Then you might enjoy interviewing newcomers to Sherwood Oaks for *The Acorn*.

The staff has a small, very devoted coterie of interviewers who "open the curtain" for us on our new residents. They enjoy doing it, but with the current tsunami of move-ins, they could use some help.

Being a "Bio Writer" involves spending an hour or so with the newbies, exploring how they came to choose Sherwood Oaks, learning about their families and careers, and what they do for fun.

Not sure you have the writing skills? If you are curious and can take notes, we can help you put it together!

Consider this as a great way to get to know our new neighbors as they settle in.

You might make new friends! If interested, contact Jan Wendt at #8158 or at janicewndt@gmail.com.

TRIPS AND TOURS CORNER

By Maggie Bennardo - #211

First, an update. The late September and early October trips to the Trolley Museum and to Fort Ligonier, as reported in the last *Acorn*, were cancelled due to lack of participation. Transportation costs are divided among participants. When participation is low, the cost per person becomes prohibitive. We may consider scheduling these trips again in the spring. In November, we have planned a shopping expedition to McCandless Crossing with lunch on your own. Later in the month, lunch at Aladdin's Eatery right here in Cranberry.

T&T Activity members are busy planning holiday events for December. Our regular trip to the Phipps for the Holiday Flower Show is on the docket. A trip to downtown Pittsburgh and a neighborhood tour of holiday decorations are in the works. Watch for more details.

We look forward to seeing you on one of our events soon.



"In style" means the clothes that still fit.

"On time" is when you get there.

Even duct tape can't fix stupid - but it sure does muffle the sound.

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house.

CONTINUED LEARNING

Submitted by Jno L. Hunt - #308

We enjoyed a full schedule of seven speakers for this fall, three in September and four in October. The topics ranged from opera to ethics to travel to tugboats and warships to native Americans to beautiful birds. We are already working on our schedule of speakers for the spring.

Due to several issues, our presentations on Channel 951 were suspended earlier this year. Some of those problems have been resolved, so we are resuming our videos on **Channel 950**. Initial airings on Tuesdays are at 10:00 a.m. Encore presentations are usually on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. Informational posters are in the mail room.

November:

Tues., Nov. 4: "**BBC Great Composers—Puccini**". Encore on Thurs., Nov. 6.

Tues., Nov. 11: "**The Evolution of Technology**". Encore on Thurs., Nov. 13.

Tues., Nov. 18: "**Andrew Carnegie—Prince of Steel**". Encore on Thurs., Nov. 20.

Tues., Nov. 25: "**The Holy Land Revealed—Lectures 13& 14**". Encore on Thurs., Nov. 27.

HEAR! HEAR!

By Jason Lyle - #293

A major improvement has just been added to help those residents challenged with hearing loss. The Auditorium and Card Room sound system has been enhanced with the installation of a hearing loop, completed on October 8.

What is a hearing loop and how does it work? Hearing Loops allow people who wear hearing aids to directly receive the sound from the PA system in their own hearing aids without having to pick up a separate listening device. The Hearing Loop is special copper wiring that is located behind the ceiling tiles of the Auditorium and Card Room. This copper loop acts like a radio station, transmitting the sound of the PA system (microphones and music) directly into your hearing aids.

Do you use hearing aids? If you wear hearing instruments, you will need to find out if your hearing aids have the wireless receiver called a T-coil or Telecoil to hear better with the hearing loops in our facilities. The T-coil program is accessed by pushing a button on a hearing aid. This T-coil program has to be activated by your audiologist. Talk to your audiologist to find out if your hearing aids have a T-coil.

Headset receivers are available for those without T-coil hearing aids. You may use your own earphones or use the earphones supplied with the receiver. Ask the event coordinator for a headset receiver before the event begins.

For questions about your hearing aids and telecoils talk to your audiologist.

To learn more about hearing loops, visit www.hearingloop.com or brownaudio-service.com.



T- Coil Logo

Below – Beautiful but deadly/poisonous mushrooms. Known as Jack O Lantern or False Chanterelle; scientific name is *omphalotus illudens*. Thanks to Dan Zander for photo and identification. These can be seen just off the B Parking Lot along the walkway.



Photo by Dan Zander

SEE YOU THERE!

By Barb DiDonato - #261

Mark your calendars! This year's Eggnog Party is **Friday, December 5th** from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

This 35-year tradition has been hosted **by** residents **for** residents of Sherwood Oaks. It's the dress-up party that opens the holiday season.

There will be a special menu of delectable edibles, liquids both soft and hard and, of course, eggnog – both clean and spiked.

Your invitation, with the list of the hosts, will be delivered to your cubby in mid-November.

Please be sure to **return your RSVP** as soon as possible so the staff can make the appropriate dining arrangements.

All the hosts hope you will join us to welcome the holiday season with this grand tradition.

And, if you would like to be a host, there is still time. Please call Barb DiDonato at #8261 or Carol Harvey at #8235 before November 8th.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

BONDI TO RETIRE IN EARLY 2026

By Jan Wendt - #158

In mid-October, Presbyterian Senior Care Network announced a transition in Sherwood Oaks administration with the retirement of Mark Bondi, slated for early 2026.

PSCN President and CEO James Pieffer lauded Mark's long service in senior living and at Sherwood Oaks, where he was at the helm from 2004 to 2014 before being selected to lead all UPMC Senior Communities.

When Annette McPeck retired as SO Executive Director in May of 2024, Mark slipped back into his old seat and guided us through the alignment with PSCN.

Look for more about this transition in upcoming issues of *The Acorn*.

ROBERTA AND THE CHAMELEONS!

By Jane Lavender - #253

The Chameleons are a new group for us to enjoy. The band plays a unique blend of Rock, Funk and Jazz music.

Knowing that our own Roberta Breninghouse performs with them is all we need to know to ensure a most enjoyable evening's entertainment.

The group is a six-piece ensemble, comprised of bass, drums, piano, saxophone, and trumpets.

The Entertainment Committee invites all to join us on November 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. Hope to see you there.

IN DEFENSE OF A TREE

By John Bridges - #122

Queen Elizabeth and I shared birthdays. I was impressed when she made a solemn vow at 21 to spend her life serving her country. I always pretended that the 21-gun salutes fired in her honor each year were really for me. When I reached that age, I also made a vow which was to always protect trees and try to ensure that, even after life, they should serve a useful purpose.

I recently had to listen to a tirade against a lime tree which forms part of the Sherwood Oaks Arboretum and felt that I just *had* to rush to its defense.

"It is a dirty tree." She quoted this from her book, apparently written by a City Dweller and not a Tree Lover, like me.

"Moss grows on the trunk." This is normal for any tree and not confined to lime trees. It will be thicker on the windward side and thus was a useful guide to early explorers. It forms a useful habitat for insects which in turn provide food for birds. The inner bark contains *Bass* used to make rope and gives this *Linden* tree the name *Basswood*.

"It is a useless tree and gives me hay fever." The flowers are obviously not spectacular, like the splendid show put on by pears and magnolias to herald each spring. But they are much sought out by bees to make the delicious, expensive Linden Honey.

"It litters the ground with unsightly twigs." This is part of a normal process in nature. Unlike oaks and maples, lindens do not shed heavy branches. Their small, fallen twigs will be easily mulched by a mower to provide greener grass. They break

easily because their timber is relatively weak and soft. But they are ideal for carving as evidenced by the famous work of Grinling Gibbons.

"Water collects in puddles under it." This is no fault of the tree. We prefer relatively flat ground to walk on without deep ditches to trip us up. So, if there are several inches of rain in a few days, it will take a while for it to drain away. Grass could be exchanged for concrete and quicker drainage, but which is more pleasing to the eye?

"There are too many mushrooms and toadstools which affect my allergies." Again, this are no fault of the tree. They become prolific in damp conditions, and I must admit that they do produce spores. Whilst some are poisonous, most can be eaten, such as the eagerly sought truffles. In countries such as Switzerland you can take any mushrooms you find to the local chemist's shop for verification of species and edibility. With their varied forms and colors, they are a delight to many artists. They indicate acid conditions which could be reduced by the spreading of lime.

Consider the case of residents who have come to Sherwood Oaks from the city. They have exchanged the constant breathing of exhaust fumes for the occasional whiffs of perfume (and pollen). Can't this be considered a benefit?



RUMMIKUB

By Harriet Burress - #112

Ed. Note – *This is the third in a series of articles on small table games enjoyed on campus. Several times a week, folks gather to play Rummikub.*

RUMMIKUB - “Brings People Together” the box and brochure say. That is exactly what it is doing twice a week at a table in the lobby. The goal of those who are currently playing is to fill two tables with 3 or 4 friends at each. It is a game of fun, fellowship and, we hope, mental skills.



Photo by Jan Wendt

RUMMIKUB is comprised of tiles of four colors numbered 1-13. One never knows how a game will proceed, which depends on the original draw of 14 tiles and the placement of these in “groups” - 7777 all different colors, or “runs” - 2345 - all one color. On a recent afternoon, the four players experienced both the shortest and longest games they remembered.

Please consider joining Loretta, Linda, Ann, Zoe, Joan, Jeannette, Harriet, and La-Vonne (we play as schedules and health allow) on Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. or Saturday at 12:30 p.m. You will enjoy the time, feel mentally challenged, and be with friends.

NEED ADDRESS LABELS?

By Mary Kretchmar - #287

Sherwood Gifts now has personalized address labels available. You may have a drawer full of freebie labels, but the design might not be to your liking, or the address might be outdated.

You can customize these labels, choosing the text and design, maybe even including a Sherwood logo.

S SHERWOOD SMITH
123 Norman Dr
Cranberry Twp PA
16066 - 0000

The labels would make a great stocking stuffer for the holiday.

For \$5, you'll get 30 labels of your design which will support the Gift Shop, where all proceeds go to SORA.

Stop by the shop to place an order soon!



Turkey Photo by Marta Peterson

A BUILDING BOOM AT SHERWOOD OAKS PARK!

By Kathie McCormick - #188

Cranberry Township is facing another major housing development right here at Sherwood Oaks Park. The genesis of this project has three parts. One, John Bridges was enjoying a pause on the bench across from the pavilion and noticed a family of wrens occupying a well-worn, not fancy, birdhouse. He watched the wrens raise two families there. Two, John was reminded of the massive dovecote found in his homeland, Wales. It was a massive structure that was built around 1600 in Penmon to house pigeons and doves – room for over a thousand nests. The birds provided an important source of meat and eggs. Inside, there was a revolving ladder used to reach the nests.



Photo submitted by John Bridges

Three, John remembered the birdhouse kits that the woodshop put together a while back for residents and staff to make their own. Aha! Why not use those plans and build nesting boxes for each of the flower beds in the summer garden?

There were already several BeeNBees built by one of our wonderful dining servers, and the butterfly house had been replaced by a newly built one, thanks to Ann Ferguson. So now it was time to build the birdhouses!

The woodshop was busy with all this new construction. There were three housing

designs: smaller ones for the smaller birds like the wrens; a little bit bigger ones built for birds like the tits and sparrows. What about the robins? Two even bigger ones were built for them and placed at the edge of the woods.



Photos by Kathie McCormick

The houses are quite fancy and colorful. Ann Ferguson and Donna Artz painted them and placed them in each flower bed and the woods. Interestingly, there are no perches at the entrance of these structures. The purpose was to deter access by rodents, like mice, who often behave like squatters. The next time you enjoy a stroll around the garden, enjoy the building boom, thanks to John, Ann, and Donna.



MEDICATION ADVENTURE

By Julie Eden - # 290

One of my inhalers is no longer being made in the United States, and Medicare does not cover the generic version unless you jump through hoops that would not be good for me. So, my doctor recommended that I get the medication I need from Canada.

I contacted the company she suggested in British Columbia, and everything went as it should for a year. I'd periodically called and got three months' worth of the drug at the same price that I had been paying, about \$300 for the three months with a shipping fee of \$9.00.

It was time for another refill toward the end of September and I called. In this case, there were no Customer Service reps answering. I held on for about a half an hour and then left a message for a return call. The second time contacting them, the recording suggested that I email for a quicker response. It also said that due to a Covid outbreak they were shorthanded. I did email but got no calls back.

Mid-week it was Jewish New Year, so I stopped trying. On Friday I decided to try again at night when phone traffic might be less. It was Shabbat and we are not to conduct business on Shabbat, but I considered this an adventure. I settled in watching a WNBA battle while waiting forty minutes on the phone — then a very nice gal answered.

She told me the recording I had heard was an old one; there was no Covid outbreak, but they were fielding three times their usual calls. I soon found out why.

I asked for my regular refill, and she said, great — but there are a few things we need to go over. I figured it was verifying my address and credit card number, etc. No,

wrong idea. It was a lot more than that. The adventure continued.

And it turns out, timing is everything. The rep said that they could not mail the medication from Canada right now as there was a mail strike which had started that day! Others must have known this was coming. Everyone, it seemed, was calling to see where their medication was. I had no idea about the strike. And she had no idea how long it might go on. She also wanted me to know that there was now a tariff on drugs shipped from Canada to the United States and the cost would be an extra \$175.

Before I could even comment on either potential problem, the phone rep said she had a solution. I could get the medication through them from a different country. She offered me a shipment from New Zealand for only \$160 for the three months. That sounded good to me, and then she said that the tariff there would only add \$16.50 to the regular cost. Even better. That is what we decided on.

Now the waiting game of two-six weeks starts; that is the time frame during which the medication should arrive. A possible hurdle will be United States Customs. They once held a package from Canada for about a week in Los Angeles. The adventure continues.

I also heard this morning that the President has requested new tariffs (100%) on many pharmaceuticals starting later this week. Let's hope my meds make it out of New Zealand before any more changes are made.



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AN “OLD SCHOOL” ROAD TRIP

By Jan Wendt - #158



A road trip across these United States today involves GPS, interstate highways, motels, Airbnb's, RVs, and luxury resorts. But in 1953 it was a different America: mostly state and county roads, few motels, rare air conditioning and many fewer options for dining and lodging.

In the summer of 1953, Alverta Jacobs Smyser, age 72 and widowed, embarked on a month-long trek across the country with church friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wertz. There *is* a Sherwood Oaks connection in this tale; Alverta was the grandmother of Janie Naylor (#139), and Janie recently unearthed Alverta's diary with details of the journey taken over seventy years ago.

Alverta, herself, presents an interesting snapshot of a 19th/20th century woman. Born in 1877, one of nine children, she spent much of her life in eastern Pennsylvania, where she married and raised two sons. She was a graduate of the Maryland College for Women, wrote and published some works, many of them religious in nature. She was a devoted Sunday school teacher and family caregiver late into her life and managed an “old folks” home in Akron, Ohio. She died at 96.

But the summer of 1953 was one of adventure. The trip began July 20 in Strinestown, York County, PA with a return home on August 21. In the intervening month, Alverta and friends traversed west through the plains and mountains into the Pacific northwest and California, then dipped briefly into Mexico, and headed home through Texas and the deep South into the Shenandoah Valley and up through Virginia back to eastern PA.

The travelers stayed in “cabins” and ate in diners and restaurants in small towns and larger cities along the way. Their car needed frequent

servicing and tire changes, and they endured the heat of the west and desert areas with little air conditioning. But these elderly wanderers saw sights they had only read about and marveled at cotton fields, “brown” Mexicans, mountain peaks and the Pacific Ocean.

The first third of this expedition took them across PA into Ohio where, on the first evening they attended a “camp meeting” in Van Wert, Ohio, it being a Sunday. Alverta writes that “Rev. Norris preached.” (The diary reveals that the trio worshipped every Sunday of the trip, going to a Catholic Mass in Salt Lake City, a Baptist church in Texas, and a service at Hope Reformed Church in Shreveport, LA).

Two days later, they arrived in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where they set back their watches in the first of several time changes. The diary notes that the fields they drove past in Minnesota showed that farmers there “make 16 furrows at one time. Big fields, big machinery.”

They stopped in Minneapolis for lunch, then arrived near the South Dakota border where they stayed the night. The next day, they passed Spirit Lake, Iowa, home of Lake Okoboji. Once in S.D., they visited the Corn Palace in Mitchell. She notes the temperature was a sizzling 105.

In the heat, they traveled through the Badlands, “which are very beautiful,” and on to the Black Hills, “where we saw Washington, Jefferson, T. Roosevelt and Lincoln on the mountain” (Rushmore).

Before settling down for the night, they spotted two coyotes.

July 26 found them in Cody, Wyoming, where they crossed Big Horn Mountain and went to a rodeo. The ensuing days were spent in the Yellowstone National Park area, headquartered in Moran Grand Teton Lodge. They marveled at the hot springs, including Old Faithful and the variety of wildlife.

A typical Alverta diary entry:

“Left Grand Teton Lodge at 6:30 a.m. Had car greased and changed tire at Montpelier, Idaho. Breakfast at Jackson Hole. Much snow on mountains. Saw herd of buffalo,

hobbled horses. Lunch at Great Bear Lake. Came to Utah. Mts. high but you drive at base. Fruit and vegetables in Utah. Stayed the night in Ogden."

Ensuing days included seeing all the sights in Salt Lake City, the Grand Canyon, as well as Bryce and Zion National Parks.



Above – *Alverta Smyser in a photo taken a few years before the 1953 cross-country trek. Photo submitted by Janie Naylor, her granddaughter.*

The journey continued into Idaho and along the Columbia River into Washington and the Cascades. They enjoyed venturing into British Columbia for dinner at the Holland Café in Vancouver, then returned to Portland for the night.

August 7 entry:

"Left Portland and had breakfast in Newberg. Many fields of lima beans – lots of irrigation, much wheat and barley, groves of English walnuts. Lumber mills for miles. Spent the night at Grant's Pass."

They made their way into California, marveling at 300 ft.-high redwoods, along with olive trees and then loads of geraniums, dahlias, and oleander in Eureka.

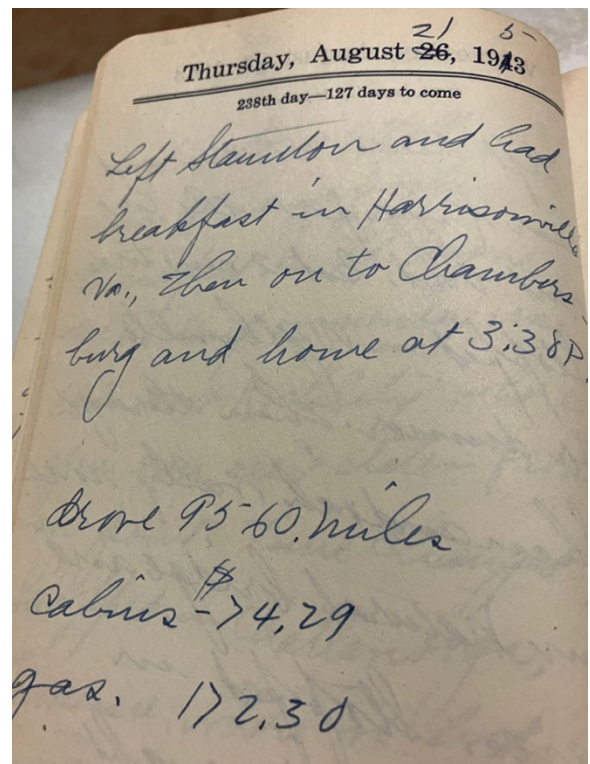
After sampling the sights in San Francisco and Los Angeles, they ventured through San Diego and Laguna Beach. And, of course, a day in Tijuana, *"where we shopped and had dinner. It looks*

much like Atlantic or Ocean City, only people are different. Stores along all streets." Coming back across the border, she writes, "we had to declare everything we purchased over \$7.50." After continuing through part of the Yuma desert, they spent the night in Winterhaven, CA.

The trio found the mountains in New Mexico "very unusual" and enjoyed more available air-conditioning in Texas and the deep South. *"Vicksburg (MS) is an old city, looks like Gettysburg. Got to Alabama, where we saw lots of cotton fields, and got some cotton from pickers."* The temperature reached a scorching 120 in Attalla, Alabama.

Staunton, VA was the last stop before arriving in Strinestown on August 21.

The last entry in Alverta's diary, seen below, lists her total expenses for the four-week journey, an eye-popping contrast with the outlay for a similar adventure in 2025.



That's: 9,560 miles
Cabins (lodging) \$74.29
Gas \$172.30

CHAPEL NOTES

By Gary Brandenberger - #602
For the Chapel Committee

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

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

Sunday, November 2

Rev. James Shoucair (Retired)
Christ Episcopal
McCandless Township

Sunday, November 9

Rev. Ron Brown
Hope Lutheran Church
Cranberry Township

Sunday, November 16

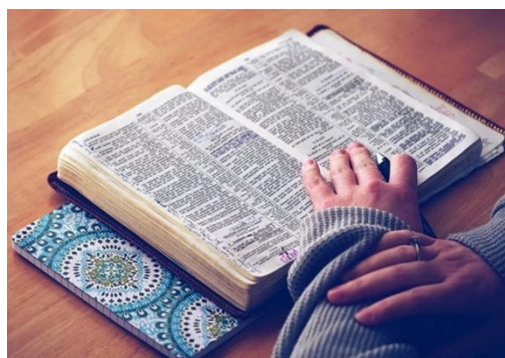
Rev. Liddy Barlow
Christian Associates
Pittsburgh

Sunday, November 23

Rev. Dena Roy
Cranberry Presbyterian
Cranberry Township

*"I sought the Lord, and He heard me and
delivered me from all my fears."*

Psalm 34:4



COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #735

According to a recent report from the Public Library of Science (PLOS), "(an) anthropogenic climate change has uneven impacts across the globe and throughout the year. Such unevenness poses a major challenge for human adaptation, especially for agricultural and other managed systems. Estimating effects beyond one region is challenging, however, because differences between regions make it difficult to know what seasonal periods of climate to compare. Both local climate and the planting decisions of a region affect the relevant periods for estimating changes in climate."

As you'll see when watching this month's climate change documentary, some of the most affected places on the planet are pretty close to home. Alaska, Glacier National Park, and the Napa Valley are all expected to be heavily impacted. This year, Juneau, Alaska was flooded with what is



becoming an annual glacier lake outburst from the Mendenhall Glacier. I stood on that glacier three years ago; but I wouldn't do it now.

While there were 150 glaciers in Glacier National Park in 1850, only 26 remain. And large wildfires in the Napa Valley in 2020 (67,500 acres) and 2025 (6,800 acres) produced large evacuations and destruction of property. So far, we're lucky to live in western PA.

Watch 10 Most Impacted Places by Climate Change on Channel 950 on Monday, November 10, at 10:00 A.M. Encore presentation on Wednesday, November 12, at 3:30 P.M.

WHAT'S NEW WITH SORA?

(SO Residents Association)

By Thea Stover, Secretary - #606

Note: Complete minutes are always available for review on the SORA Bulletin Board in the Mailroom and in the SORA binder in the Library.

The Board met on October 7, with the following information shared:

Finances: Memorial/Special Projects Fund balance is \$17,648.95. Employees Appreciation Fund balance is \$17,951.61.

Dining Committee: Residents can submit their favorite recipes, and some will be featured in the dining room.

Welcoming Committee: 9 new residents have moved into SO and there are more moving in soon.

Trips and Tours: November 5, trip to McCandless Crossing for shopping and lunch on your own. November 20: lunch at Aladdin's.

Entertainment: Chameleons are coming in November and Cranberry Men's Chorus in December.

Living with Loss: Longest Night Service will be held on December 16, at 1:30 p.m.

Drama Club: No show this fall. Winter show planned for February 18, 19, 21.

Sherwood Gifts: Shop had outstanding September; sales totaled \$2,250. In November, there will a craft sale and a gift-wrapping sale will follow for the holidays in December.

Landscaping: 10 gum trees have been removed due to their effect on roofs. A request has been made to Penn Power to clean up the area along Norman Drive.

Bingo: With the death of Marlene Morrell, the future of Bingo is in flux.

Administration report:

Occupancy is increasing. Armstrong has wired the campus for fiber optics and has presented a proposal to offer everyone TV, Internet, and telephone.

There will be a free trial of an adult day program named Day Break for residents living with dementia in November. The program will run a few days a week from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Activities Fair will occur in March.

Next Board Meeting: November 4 at 1:30 p.m. in the Cardroom.

Quarterly Meeting: December 9 at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium.

WORTH A LOOK

Books New to Our Library

By Barbara Christy - #237

Eternal Summer by Franziska Gansler. Fiction. Bad Heim is a spa town in Germany, deserted because of forest fires that make the air unsafe. Iris, the lone survivor in her family, has inherited the hotel that was the family business. Now, the owner-manager-cook-housekeeper Iris spends her days alone in the vast openness of the hotel until Dori and her daughter, Ilya, arrive. Initially they are reserved and private but, over time, it emerges that the mother is escaping from an abusive relationship. They feel safe in Bad Heim, in part because of the dangerous wildfires just across the river. When two climate activists arrive, their youth and optimism add new life and energy to the dispirited hotel; when Dori's husband arrives, the atmosphere becomes more oppressive, adding to the oppressive smoke-filled air outside.

F GAN

The Children of Eve by John Connolly. Fiction. Large Type. If you're among those who love gritty detective novels and are drawn to things that go bump in the night, this book is for you. The opening scene is in Mexico, where an elderly antiques dealer is tortured and murdered to get secret info. In Maine, Charlie Parker is hired to find and protect a wanna-be art thief named Wyatt Riggins, boyfriend of a rising metal sculpture artist. Along the way, he is distracted by the need to search for four missing Mexican children who are wanted by a drug cartel boss. Lots of blood, thrills, and magical realism in this one. F CON

The Unraveling of Julie by Lisa Scottoline. Fiction. The setting is sunny Tuscany where recently widowed Julia Pritzer has inherited a vineyard and villa from an unknown benefactor. Julia, an adoptee who knows nothing about her birth family, goes willingly in search of answers. Julia has recently developed a serious interest in astrology when she learns that her husband's death during a mugging in Philadelphia was predicted by an astrologist. In Italy she finds that her benefactor was a paranoid recluse with delusions of grandeur. She believes herself to be the offspring of Duchess Caterina Sforza, a Renaissance powerbroker. Soon sinister events surround Julia and cause her to question her own sanity. F SCO

The Paris Hours by Alex George. Fiction. It's 1927, Josephine Baker is the talk of Paris. Behind the post-war glitz, four Parisiennes strive to live as best they can despite the burdens they bear. Souren, Armenian by birth and street puppeteer by profession, fears going to sleep and facing his night terrors. Artist Guillaume needs to sell his paintings to repay the Mafia-style loan shark who's on his tail. Jean-Paul hobbles around his shabby apartment on his wounded leg rehearsing the questions he will ask of the American ex-patriot he will interview today. Camille visits the grave of Marcel Proust to bring flowers and ask forgiveness for her betrayal. In one 24-hour day, all four lives will be dramatically changed in one symphonic climax. F GEO

Note – We have received a large donation of Inspector Morse and Inspector Lewis DVD's. If you're a fan of those PBS series, please stop by the library to check them out.

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

<i>Billion-dollar Ransom</i>	Patterson, James	c2025.	F PAT
<i>The Break-in</i>	Faulkner, Katherine	c2025.	F FAU
<i>Eternal Summer*</i>	Gänsler, Franziska	c2025.	F Gän p.b.
<i>Godwin</i>	O'Neill, Joseph	c2024.	F O'NE
<i>Ground Truth</i>	Miles, Rebecca	c2022.	F MIL
<i>The Housemaid</i>	McFadden, Freida	c2022.	F MCF p.b.
<i>The List</i>	Berry, Steve	c2025.	F BER
<i>One Big Happy Family</i>	Day, Jamie	c2024.	F DAY p.b.
<i>Only if You're Lucky</i>	Willingham, Stacy	c2023.	F WIL p.b.
<i>The Paris Hours*</i>	George, Alex	c2020.	F GEO
<i>The President's Shadow</i>	Patterson, James	c2025.	F PAT p.b.
<i>Sing to Me</i>	Browner, Jesse	c2025.	F BRO
<i>The Story She Left Behind</i>	Henry, Patti Callahan	c2025.	F HEN
<i>Summer People</i>	Nicole, Brittanee	c2025.	F NIC p.b.

***Reviewed in Worth a Look**

NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

<i>Mark Twain</i>	Chernow, Ron	c2025.	BIO TWA
<i>A Beginner's Guide to American</i>			
<i>Mah Jongg</i>	Sandberg, Elaine	c2007.	795.34 SAN pb
<i>The Cold Genius of Robert Frost</i>	Engel, Elliot	c1997.	809.1 ENG DVD
<i>The Complete Idiot's Guide to the</i>			
<i>Vietnam War</i>	Maga, Timothy P.	c2010	959.70 MAG pb
<i>It Doesn't Have to Hurt</i>	Gupta, Sanjay	c2025.	612.8 GUP
<i>Raising Hare</i>	Dalton, Chloe	c2025.	599.32 DAL



November comes
And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.

With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate,

The fires burn
And the kettle sings,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next spring.

~ Elizabeth Coatsworth