

THE ACORN

SHERWOOD OAKS NEWSLETTER

100 Norman Drive, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

www.sherwood-oaks.com

December 2025 "For the residents, by the residents" Vol. 44, No. 10

Season's Greetings!



Photo by Kathie McCormick

DECEMBER CALENDAR

National Day of Giving	Dec. 2
Candle Day	Dec. 6
Pearl Harbor Day	Dec. 7
National Poinsettia Day	Dec. 12
First Night of Hanukkah	Dec. 14
Winter Solstice	Dec. 21
Christmas	Dec. 25
National Bacon Day	Dec. 30
New Year's Eve	Dec. 31

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 January issue must be sent to the Editor no later than **December 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.

Janet Quint *October 24, 2025*

David Moon *October 28, 2025*

Robertà Evans *October 29, 2025*

Dorothy Fitzpatrick *November 8, 2025*

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.

JOHN AND CARLA PATARINI - #719

By Harriet Burress - #112



Photo by Jan Wendt

Sharing a love and respect for animals defined Carla and John Patarini's business of twenty years, owning and operating Parkway Kennels, one of the largest in Western PA. It could house 150 dogs (and at one time several of ours were boarded there when we lived in Moon Township). A unique aspect of their kennel was its proximity to the Airport, right off the Parkway West, and when there was a layover of a traveling animal, the airlines would send it to them for the overnight.

Carla told of their handling the circumstances of 9/11. "John was resting with a back problem, and when I returned to our home next door to the kennel, he told me of the first plane's crashing into the World Trade Center. When the second building was hit, I told our employees to go home. By the end of the day, we were tasked to house and take care of many animals: chickens, reptiles, monkeys, dogs, cats, etc. It was a long week."

John was born in the small coal mining town of Nanty Glo, north of Johnstown. He received his electrical engineering degree from Point Park College and began his working career in construction as a project

engineer. It was there he met Carla, who was an accountant for the same company. She received her degree from Grove City College where "I was all into athletics playing volleyball, basketball and softball." She is still athletically inclined and had a commitment to play pickleball after our interview. Carla's hometown is the historic village of Saxonburg. Her brother and sister live in the North Hills.

The Patarinis enjoy golf but haven't yet played at Cranberry Highlands. He is in a league with one of his brothers, both of whom are in Pittsburgh. His two sisters live out of town.

When Carla and John sold their kennel, they remained on ten acres nearby where they had built a log home. "The old saying, 'You can take the girl out of the country but not the country out of the girl' is so true. We just love our rides on back roads, especially in the fall," she commented.

Carla volunteered and worked for ten years with Animal Friends of the North Hills. She helped rescue many animals and said, "It was so sad to see the conditions where some lived. We saved most; some we couldn't, particularly those hoarded." About the same time, John volunteered with Meals on Wheels. "It was an eye opener to visit some who were not well," He is a four - year veteran of the Air Force and served for one year in Vietnam as an aerospace engineer.

Verna Korade has been a friend for many years, and her satisfaction being a resident here was an influence in their becoming our neighbors. We certainly welcome Carla and John and their rescued dog, Riley, who already knows where to receive her treats. Two cats also enjoy their apartment.

Our best wishes to them for a blessed holiday season.

TED AND MARY PETTI - #267

By Jan Wendt - #158



Photo by Dave Capan

These are no strangers to Pittsburgh, as the Pettis lived in the East End from 1976-1990. But their work and travels have sent them to many parts of the world.

Married fifty-six years, they have lived in: Akron, Chapel Hill NC; Columbia SC; Pittsburgh, New York City, Indianapolis, and New Jersey. The moves were dictated by Ted's work as a psychiatrist, professor, and researcher. Mary, whose professional life began as a pediatric nurse, earned post grad degrees in education (at Pitt) and has held teaching positions wherever they lived.

Their story begins in Cleveland, where Ted grew up; at Case Western Reserve University he met Mary, a native of Greensburg, PA. Following graduation, Mary worked as a pediatric nurse and Ted went to Akron for a pediatric internship. After they married, they moved to Chapel Hill, NC for Ted's psychiatric training. Following a two-year military stint in South Carolina, New York City was their home while Ted completed his child psychiatry training and began his academic career.

The couple have a son, who lives in Louisville, with his wife. Two college-age grandsons complete the family. Mary is the oldest of six children; two of her sisters live in Wexford and did the "groundwork" chores of making the move to Sherwood Oaks from the Petti's last home in New Jersey.

Along the way, they have relished the variety of places they have called home and the diversity of their neighbors and students.

Mary was a long-time and dedicated Red Cross volunteer. Her collection of Dicken's Villages is showcased in this month's Curio Cabinet display.

The couple share the experience of traveling to their ancestral homes (the actual structures), his in Oratino, Italy and hers in County Donegal, Ireland. Their son joined them on the Italian trip.

The Pettis enjoy traveling and have been to Russia, China, Alaska, South America, Europe, Australia, and Iceland. They are mostly settled here and are giving thought to their next travel destination.

Both are avid readers, including the daily *NY Times*, and have joined our book club, as well as the Landscape Committee. They frequent the fitness center and savor getting to know their new neighbors over dinner.

They say they are pleased by the life at Sherwood Oaks and its sense of community. "Everyone has been very welcoming."

Given their wide variety of travels, life experiences and places lived, you'll be sure find a common thread with the Pettis. Find them and explore what you share. Welcome, Ted and Mary!

FRAN SMITH - #716

By Jean Henderson - #346

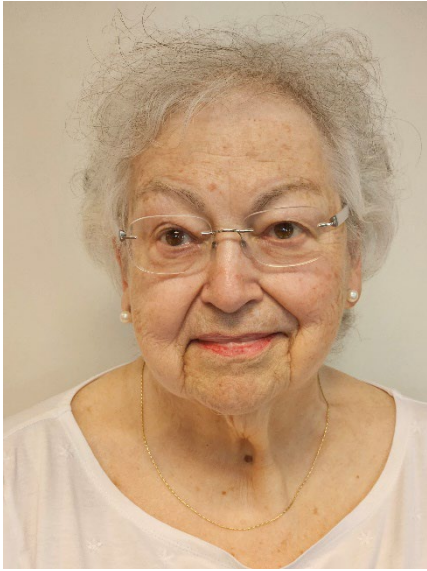


Photo by Dave Capan

We cannot ignore the fact that when Fran Kelly Smith checked her ancestry, it showed 99% IRISH!! So...welcome Fran, whose ***“Irish Eyes are Smiling”*** and her smile ***“tis like the morn in spring.”*** Born and raised in Springfield (outside Philly) to four generations of Irish Kellys from County Cork, Fran was educated at Rosemont College (soon to be a part of Villanova) and worked in an actuarial firm and the GE space program after graduation.

And then came ***“Love’s Old Sweet Song!”*** She and Jack Smith, who were in first grade together, were married in 1963. Jack died in 2023. He was a University of Pennsylvania grad and an Army veteran in the intelligence corps in Wilmington DE. Later, he served as an aviation economist and worked for the Federal Dept of Transportation and the FAA, traveling all over the world.

Fran soon was singing the Irish lullaby ***“Too-la, Loo-ra, Loo-ra”*** to three children - a daughter, now a maternal

addiction specialist at West Penn Hospital; a son, who’s a judge in Boston; and another son who’s retired in Woodstock NY. During those child-rearing days, she volunteered with all their activities, including Girl Scouts. Look for her when we sell cookies again! She also served as volunteer treasurer for many organizations. Her three grandchildren bring her great joy.

While living in Burke, VA when Jack was working in DC, she began employment with the Fairfax County Schools in program languages and continued that career until 1997. After her retirement, they moved to Lewes, DE for 25 years – a town dear to her heart – and to those of us who vacation in nearby Rehoboth Beach.

Her Roman Catholic faith has been a major part of her life and St. Ferdinand’s is already home to her. She appreciates that Mass is said here on campus monthly and appreciates Father Gallagher’s ministry.

Fran’s taken up knitting again, enjoys reading and is a collector of lovely Irish Beleck pottery. She and Jack also enjoyed traveling – the national parks were favorites, as well as Normandy on a Viking cruise, European countries and the Panama Canal.

Sherwood Oaks caught her attention after she moved near here in 2020 to be closer to her daughter. She and her son visited Sherwood one day and Fran felt at home. And are we delighted!

When you see Fran, welcome her with a smile and enjoy those smilin’ Irish eyes!

Welcome

THANKS FOR THE CELERY

By Harriet Burress - #112



During our quarantine several years ago, the Dining Department supplied us residents with a grocery list from which we could order different food and needed supplies - milk, eggs, multi grain bread, dish soap, orange juice, and even celery. That was so helpful, and again, thank you, staff, for meeting our needs.

Some years ago, John and I attended an exhibit of celery dishes at the Frick Museum in Pittsburgh. There was such a beautiful variety of them - large ones from Old Economy; smaller, cut-glass ones in various colors borrowed from homes of the rich and famous of the city, all a throwback to times gone by.

As we were leaving the museum, we met three ladies and a gentleman going in. I asked them if they had time for a brief story, and they did. It follows:

My great grandmother lived with my grandparents and did most of the cooking. My mother told my sister and me of her recollection that, when she was a child, her grandmother was so proud to have fresh celery for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

At that time, there were no refrigerated trucks to bring fresh produce north regularly from Florida, but somehow it was delivered for the holidays. My great grandmother did not want to waste any part of the celery, so she used the pretty leaves at the top of each stem to garnish the turkey platter.

The gentleman in the group with whom we were talking said, "My grandmother did the same thing."

So, when you buy your next stalk of celery, do take a moment to see how lovely the delicate leaves at the top are.



THE RED COATS ARE COMING!

By Jane Lavender - #253



Credit: Cranberry Men's Chorus

Your Entertainment Committee will present the **Cranberry Men's Chorus** for an evening of holiday barbershop music.

This is a group of about forty men from the surrounding area who make beautiful music together and they have such fun doing it.

So, let's gather in the auditorium on **December 2nd** at 7:00 PM. You can be assured of having as good a time listening as they have singing.



Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall.

~ Larry Wilde

AT 100, A FAITHFUL LIBRARY PATRON

By Lee Wierman - #110

A reader by the age of four, Ina Cheetham, now 100, (the person who's lived the longest at Sherwood Oaks), is still a reader and regularly uses our library. She remembers her father reading to her and teaching her to read.

Some books she recalls are the *Honey Bunch* series: *Honey Bunch: Just a Little Girl*; *Honey Bunch: Her First Visit to the Farm*, etc. Ina did not have a public library card until after graduation from high school, having until then used school libraries: Spring Hill Primary School, Lattimer Middle School, and Allegheny High School of Pittsburgh. Her first card was for the Carnegie Library of the North Side.



Photo by Lee Wierman

Ina's favorite books are the classics but, having read them, she is enjoying reading new authors. She likes using the well - provisioned paperback room of our library, stating "no return date is required."

A part of our conversation was her observation that reading is decreasing among the younger generations; the competition of electronic devices and the need to be entertained contributing to this. Ina noted the inability of some adults to initiate conversation with a stranger, the loss possibly reflecting having no experience with different places and culture through reading.

Ina and our Library Committee invite you to visit the library and take a look at our excellent inventory of biography and large print books. Find yourself a book!

GOOD BOOKS INFORM US,
SUPERIOR BOOKS ENTERTAIN US,
GREAT BOOKS CHANGE US.

THE NUTCRACKERS RETURN!

By Monika Dalrymple - #200

The Elves are getting restless to bring the Nutcrackers out of their sleep. They want all of you here at Sherwood Oaks to come and enjoy the display on the first floor of the Lakeside Apartments starting on November 26.

A few new ones will find a spot among the veterans of this display.

It will be a great start to get the holiday season going!



GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

From the Living with Loss Team

The holidays can be a bittersweet time...many good memories but some that cause us pain and sadness as we recall the places, people, and traditions that are no longer with us. How will we get through the holidays? Here are a few suggestions that may be of some help:

- Do something for others; look outward as well as inward.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and support.
- Plan ahead; take charge of holidays plans if you're able to do that.
- Allow yourself to feel all the many feelings that may arise.
- Be gentle and kind with yourself and with others who try to help you.
- Decide which traditions you want to keep and which you may have outgrown.
- Be grateful for all the *good* memories that you have.

We wish you a blessed holiday season!



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE SLATED

By Jean Henderson - #346



The Winter Solstice, and the onset of nature's dark season, is often a difficult time for many, including those who grieve.

On Wednesday, December 17, Living with Loss will offer its annual Longest Night Service at 1:30 p.m. in the Auditorium.

This non-denominational service is an opportunity to embrace both light and dark. The service will include readings, prayers, and music.

Many residents have found this offering to be a bright spot as we enter the dark days of winter.

.....

If kisses were snowflakes, I'd send you a blizzard. - Unknown

It is December and nobody asked if I was ready. - Sarah Kay

You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. – Maya Angelou

DECEMBER IS

December is all that we give,
And whatever we receive,
It is those who surround us,
And those who have taken their leave.

December is celebrating light,
Where only darkness dwells,
It is the ripping of wrapping paper,
And tempting culinary smells.

December is letting go,
Of all the past year's fails,
And starting new in January,
As time again chases its tail.

~ Stewart Stafford

GIFT IDEAS TO GIVE TO SENIORS

From the Living with Loss Team

Here are some ideas to suggest to those who want to give us gifts at the holidays.

1. A Shopping Trip – in reality or virtually online, with assistance.
2. Face Time – using your phone to connect with senior's family.
3. A Home-Cooked Meal – prepare favorite holiday dishes and treats.
4. Holiday Services – accompany the senior to a favorite worship site.
5. Gift Wrapping and Shipping – assist with packages being mailed.
6. Online Greetings – teach a senior how to send unique cards.
7. Christmas Cheer – set up lights, trim a tree, put up a wreath, or decorate a senior's room or home.
8. Time – let the senior choose the time and place and activity and give them your undivided attention. The gift of time can be the greatest gift!

***These suggestions are from Senior Care Authority, offering senior care solutions.**

THE 2025 HOLIDAY CONCERT

By Carol Harvey - #235
and Jean Henderson - #346



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

Come enjoy the annual holiday concert by the Sherwood Oaks Handbells and Chorus. On Wednesday, December 10 at 4 p.m. in the Auditorium, your Sherwood friends will be RINGIN' AND SINGIN' IN THE SEASON! Enjoy the music, then head on to supper.

We invite you to support your neighbors as we offer this holiday gift for your pleasure. We're not professionals - our voices are older and creakier, like we are - but we have fun and hope you will too!

I heard a bird sing in the dark of December.

A magical thing. And sweet to remember.

We are nearer to spring than we were in December.

I heard a bird sing in the dark of December.

~ Oliver Herford

SHERWOOD CONNECTIONS

By Ruth Lasure - #306

It is said there are six degrees of separation between most people but here we tell the story of just two degrees between two Ruths at Sherwood Oaks.

Ruth Becker moved to Sherwood Oaks in 2008. Ruth Lasure arrived from Buffalo, NY in 2023. Within two days, she was introduced to Ruth Becker, who had been born and grew up in Buffalo, and wanted to share her remembrances of that city. While each lived in different parts of the city and timelines didn't coincide, it made a great connection and building blocks for a new friendship.

Both Ruths also work with the Recycling Committee sorting plastic for Trex benches. While sitting around the table the volunteers' conversation turned to "what did you do in the summertime?" Well, guess what - Ruth and Ruth had both gone to Camp Twa-ne-koh-tah on Lake Chautauqua for several summers, Ruth Lasure as a camper and Ruth Becker as a counselor. They were briefly there at the same time but in different parts of the camp, so their paths never crossed, but there were more memories to share and compare.

Sherwood Oaks is a community where you just may just find another friend with deeper connections than you expect. This is a great reminder to start those conversations with someone you haven't met before.

Open the door - there just may be a new friend on the other side.

Ed. Note – send us your “Sherwood connection” so we can share.



BATTLING AT BACKGAMMON

By Jan Wendt - #158

Ed. Note – this is the fourth in a series about table games that are popular and played regularly at Sherwood Oaks



Photo by Jan Wendt

Although many residents tell Jason Lyle and Asghar Aghbar that they played backgammon “a long time ago” and enjoyed it, most Tuesdays it’s just these two rivals who show up for this ancient game of strategy and luck. They wouldn’t mind another table or two of players.

This two-player game is ancient, its roots in 17th century England, then spreading to Europe and the United States.

The game is one of contrary movement, in which each player has fifteen pieces known as “men”. Those pieces move along twenty-four points, according to the roll of two dice. The object is to move all the pieces around the board then remove them from the board. The achievement of this while the opponent is still a long way behind results in a triple win known as a *backgammon*, hence the name of the game.

I was fascinated to watch the maneuvering as the pieces moved in opposing direction around the board. With each roll of the dice, the players must choose from numerous options for moving their pieces while anticipating possible counter moves by the opponent.

Even if you might not become a player, spend some time watching the action. You will be mesmerized! Stop by on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Lobby.

Worth A Look

Books New to Our Library

By Barbara Christy - #237

Rust: A Memoir of Steel and Grit by Eliese Colette Goldbach. Non-fiction. To some, Cleveland is the heart of the rust belt – and Eliese Goldbach begins to understand the true meaning of that when she is hired by a local steel mill. Born the second daughter in a staunchly Catholic family, with dreams of entering the convent, Eliese's life veers from Senior Class President to graduating, almost, with a Master of Fine Arts degree, to painting houses and living in a roach-infested apartment she can't afford. When a friend shows her his paycheck, she rethinks her options, applies, and is hired into one of the coveted jobs in the steel industry. Thus begins her education about steel making, blue collar life and values. The author flips between recounting her life's path and describing the reality of working in the mill in a gritty style that is hopeful and absorbing. As the daughter of a Butler Armco steelworker, I can vouch for the accuracy of the steel mill descriptions. 669.1092 GOL

The Travelling Cat Chronicles by Hiro Arikawa. Fiction. The cat in the title has no name and no home at the beginning of this self-narrated travelog. He is taken in after a car accident leaves the cat with a broken leg. During his recuperation, the Japanese man and the cat become acquaintances, then friends and finally, travel companions. In the process, they get names: Nana, the cat and Satoru the Japanese man. They set off on an extended journey to see Satoru's old friends and, unknown to Nana, find a new home for the cat. The narrator is the cat

and a delightful tale he tells, all from the cat's point of view. This is a charming book, a delightful read for a dreary day. F ARI

The Story She Left Behind by Patti Callahan Henry. Fiction. Inspired by a true story, this endearing tale is about a super talented mother, a literary sensation at age twelve, and her mysterious disappearance when her own daughter is twelve years old. The mother, Bronwen Fordham, has left behind the sequel to her famous novel but it's in a secret language and no one has been able to decode it. Twenty-five years later, daughter Clara is an illustrator and mother to Wynnie. Then Clara is contacted by Londoner Charlie Jameson with information about her mother's lost papers, including the code to her book. Clara and Wynnie depart for London, get caught in the Great London Smog of 1952 and are forced to relocate to the Lake District. There, while family ties are deepened and romance surfaces, the mystery of her mother's disappearance and her missing papers is revealed. F Cal

We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution by Jill Lepore. Non-fiction. The author presents this book as "the gripping and unfamiliar story of our own past." With the 250th anniversary coming up next summer, it seemed reasonable that the library makes available a reference book to help us understand the principles our Constitution was to establish. Why is it so difficult to amend? What does the term "originalism" mean and why is interpretation challenging? Is the constitution currently vulnerable, as some claim? Does the failure to update with amendments lead to civil violence? Ms. Lepore asks more questions than

she answers but her prose is well-crafted and entertaining, as well as informative. 342.02 LEP

NOTE: We also have in our library two other examinations of this important document: *Signing Their Lives Away* by Denise Kiernan and Joseph D'Agnese and *The Evolving Constitution* by Jethro K. Leiber. *Signing Their Lives Away* is a compilation of biographies of the signers of the constitution, giving a very human face to some well-known names. *The Evolving Constitution* is encyclopedic in approach, looking at how the Supreme Court has viewed the topics, arranged alphabetically, over time. Both books will be on the New Books shelf until the end of Summer, 2026.

A LIFE WELL LIVED

By Diane Horn - #203

They were so young when they said their vows and bonded together for fifty-nine years. He was a dreamer and gentle while she was the practical one.

His artistic eye created so many things in the home and garden. He made furniture for his children and restored antiques. He built stunning walkways and rebuilt stone walls. Churchill and he could have smoked their cigars as they fitted the stones neatly in place.

His garden was his sanctuary. He planted and weeded every spare minute. First it was vegetables, then he grew

flowers which he donated to the parks. Later came pumpkins for all the children who lived nearby. As he grew older and his health declined, he was rewarded with the love of his neighbors. They had watched and enjoyed his creations and spirit.

Life flew by but those memories remain. The dreamer and the practical spouse became as one, tightly woven and even stronger together.

PAPERBACK PONDERINGS

By Jean Henderson - # 346

The Holiday Books Cart is waiting for you in the Library near the checkout desk! Dozens of themed books will welcome you into the season. Do enjoy.

Six categories of books are housed in our Paperback Room:

- Five shelves of **Music** (biographies, opera, and histories)
- Two shelves of **Spirituality** books
- Thirty-six shelves of **Biographies**
- Two shelves of **Living with Loss** books
- One shelf of **Recent Donations**

Stop in and get acquainted with all our shelves. No need to sign them out. Just take one and check off the small sticky note in the back that it's been read before you return it.

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURE

By John Bridges - #122

When filming of "Swiss Family Robinson" was complete, I was able to buy one of the two 20 ft. English Longboats. With a friend, Sheila and I assembled a small outboard, rope, a small sail, flashlight, and a cutlass. We used the local cargo steamer to get from Trinidad to Scarborough in Tobago, sharing the deck with several racehorses. This proved hard when the inflated mattresses deflated.

Catching a taxi, we transported our collection of supplies northwards to where the boat was moored. There we quickly cut a bamboo and fitted it as a mast, cut some coconuts for drinking on the voyage back to Trinidad and up-anchored late in the afternoon.

Sailing along with North coast in the moonlight was delightful, with the North-east trade wind filling the sail. Maybe some of us dozed off, but it was too exciting and unusual for a deep sleep. Reaching the Boca Grande channel between Trinidad and Venezuela, the sail was dropped, and the outboard used to get to the Yacht Club at about 4 a.m.

Sheila went off to retrieve our car whilst my friend and I tidied things up and found a mooring. At the end of this adventure, Sheila was a little dishevelled and grimy, resulting in the watchman not wanting to release the car to her.

He called me by phone and asked pedantically, "Do you accept this woman to be your wife?"

HANUKKAH, JEWISH FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

By Julie Eden - # 290



menorahs lit

remembering oil lamps
burning for eight days

Hanukkah reminds us
miracles can occur
light, part of our lives

each night
another candle is lit
light intensifies

for those in darkness
may light form a pathway
I watch radiance glow

celebrations with friends
songs and stories fill the air
spinning dreidels for fun

small gifts exchanged
great victories remembered
glow eternal flame

jelly-filled donuts
potato pancakes served
holiday party

coming to the end
the last candle lit
for past, present, future

TRIPS & TOURS CORNER

December 2025

By Maggie Bennardo - #211

The holidays are upon us — And the T&T group is offering a few low stress activities. Sign up for these events and leave the driving to us!



There is a trip planned to Pittsburgh for shopping at the Christmas Market; reveling in the downtown holiday spirit; and visiting the ice skaters around the Christmas Tree at PPG Place.



An early evening tour of Cranberry neighborhood holiday decorations is planned as well.



Transportation to the Seneca Valley Senior Holiday Event is available for those who sign up. Check the mailroom bulletin board for details on this annual event.



T&T's outing to the Phipps for their Holiday Magic show is on tap also.



And for those model train buffs, how about a trip to the Western Pennsylvania Model Train Museum?

More information and details are available on Channel 950 and posted in the Mailroom. Check it out.



A TRIP REMEMBERED

By Lavonne McCandlish - #133

The group had a beautiful day to travel to the Westmoreland Museum of Art. There was no admission fee and a docent was provided. The docent chose a gallery featuring successful Black women artists, and their subjects.

The museum was bright and cheery, and there were plenty of chairs to make us comfortable while we observed the beautiful display.

We journeyed on to the Olives and Peppers restaurant located in a renovated old train station for lunch. We all enjoyed the museum and the restaurant.

Do you check the bulletin board in the mail room to find out what new adventures we have planned?

A “SUITE” CHRISTMAS MEMORY

By Jan Wendt - #158



The 1950's station wagon bumped and rolled over the Catskill mountains in the early dawn of a December morning. My sisters and I, each with a carefully chosen friend, were headed for The Big Apple and the New York City Ballet's annual *Nutcracker* production. Could there be anything as anticipated during the holidays for country bumpkins like us?

My father, the only obstetrician/gynecologist in Otsego County, loved Christmas and all its trappings as much as any of the kids in the car. It was his annual joy to leave his patients in the hands of a doctor in the next county and transport this gaggle of school age ladies for lunch at the automat and an afternoon of thrills with the Sugar Plum Fairy and waltzing snowflakes. A young girl's dream, at least in mid-century America.

This trip also gave my mom a much-needed respite from the daily grind of mothering four daughters and serving as the answering service for my dad, who practiced medicine in the days before pagers and cellphones. In retrospect, I think she may have looked forward to it more than anyone.

Of course, the trip always took agonizingly longer than we remembered from the previous year. There was no Thruway back then, so it was all two-lane roads and stoplights in the little villages along Route 17. The adrenaline rush that permeated the car as we pulled out of the driveway evaporated by 9 a.m. into requests for bathroom and food stops and, perhaps, a case of carsickness.

"When will we get there?" I believe there were some snacks prepared by Mom, and the bathroom stops were occasionally made,

discretely, on the roadside. Dad seemed to handle it with aplomb, as I recall.

By late morning, Dad issued periodic reports of sights coming up: the Tappan Zee Bridge, the Hudson River and soon, the silhouette of skyscrapers. All sat up in their car seats to take in the city sights, the sophisticated pedestrians on the sidewalks, the department store windows elegantly dressed for the holidays. Even with craning necks, we couldn't see the tops of skyscrapers from the car windows.

The car safely parked, we headed to the Horn and Hardart, and carefully made our lunch selections. We watched with awe as the sandwiches and milk cartons dropped through the machine. Amazing! Why, we wondered, was there no automat back in Oneonta, NY?

By 1:30, we were seated in the theater, our crinoline dresses rustling and our Mary Jane-attired feet not touching the floor. Then, magic: the first strains of the overture, the curtain up on the opening scene of Christmas Eve in young Clara's home. We knew the music by heart, as it was played at home often. But here, it was accompanied by an expanding Christmas tree, swirling snowflakes, a battle of life-sized mice, along with dancing peppermints and all the inhabitants of The Kingdom of Sweets. The two-hour performance swept by in what seemed an instant. And then, it was over.

Adrenaline long depleted, we ambled back to the car, and the scramble for the "way back," so we could sleep on the trip home. The journey in the dark, again, was subdued, but filled with visions of Sugarplums, as we drifted in and out of sleep. Christmas had begun.

Christmas begins again for me each year with the first strains of the *Nutcracker* overture. This tradition has been passed to my children, and our tree is decorated annually with this glorious music, and all it evokes, as background.

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 November 4, with the following information shared:

Finances: Memorial/Special Projects Fund Balance is \$17,883.11 and the Employee Appreciation Fund balance is \$105,167.05.

Technology/SOapp: The hearing loop in the auditorium is fully operational and available for residents with t-coil hearing aids. There are also three handheld receivers with earbuds for those without t-coil hearing aids.

Pickleball: Pickleball has moved inside and will be promoting clinics in December and January.

Pool, Spa and Locker Room: The Aqua Power High Intensity Water Aerobics is suspended until January. There will be a pool event in January.

Bingo: Bingo will be the last Monday in each month except for December.

Men's Bible Study: Men's Bible Study is in danger of being canceled due to lack of participation.

Continued Learning: The schedule for the Spring is as follows:

March 9 – Dr. Vitale, Superintendent of Seneca Valley School District

March 16 – Resident Frank Weiss on the craft of winemaking

March 23 – Mike Fialkovich, President of the Three Rivers Birding Club will talk about swans

March 30 – Verdi's *Falstaff*

April 13 – Dr. Ayoub: Arthritis

April 20 – Marcus Rediker - Life of Benjamin Lay

Resident Art and Craft Wall: Arts and crafts are wanted for the exhibition walls.

Sherwood Gifts: The shop had another amazing month and donated \$5,000 to the Memorial Fund. With the addition of new volunteers, the shop is now open on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. If you are interested in volunteering, please stop by the shop and give your name to the cashier. Gift wrapping will be available during the holidays.

Administrative Report: Marketing has offered a new program for those on the waitlist called Community Club where future move-ins get to use some of the community benefits.

Sherwood Oaks Park Committee: The Board approved the formation of a committee to oversee, support and coordinate the activities at the park. Members will be representatives of all the activities that use the Park along with appropriate staff.

Next Board Meeting: 12/2 at 1:30 p.m.

Quarterly Meeting: 12/9 at 7:00 p.m.



"Preening time"

Photo: Diane Horn

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

*Reviewed in "Worth a Look"

Clown Town	Herron, Mick	c2025.	F HER
Coded Justice	Abrams, Stacey	c2025.	F ABR
El Dorado Drive	Abbott, Megan	c2025.	F ABB
First Do No Harm	Kenda, Joe	c2024.	F KEN
Framed in Death	Robb, J. D.	c2025.	F ROB
My Life is Murder		c2019.	F MYL DVD
The Unraveling of Julia	Scottoline, Lisa	c2025.	F SCO
The Woman in Suite 11	Ware, Ruth	c2025.	F WAR

NONFICTION, INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES

Enola Gay	Thomas, Gordon	c1977.	940.53 THO
History Matters	McCullough, David G.	c2025.	973.07 MCC
Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI	Grann, David	c2017.	976.6 GRA P.B. L.T.
Rust: A Memoir of Steel and Grit*	Goldbach, Eliese	c2020.	669.10 GOL
A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II	Purnell, Sonia	c2019.	940.54 PUR P.B.



COOPER'S CLIMATE CAPSULE

By Bruce Cooper - #735

Melting polar ice is primarily caused by global warming, which leads to rising temperatures that cause glaciers and ice sheets in places like Antarctica and Greenland to lose mass. This melting contributes to rising sea levels, which can have significant impacts on coastal communities and ecosystems. Current loss of ice in Greenland is 266 billion tons per year, while in Antarctica the loss is 135 billion tons per year.

All of this melt has several negative effects on the planet's environment:

- Melting ice contributes to rising sea levels, which can lead to coastal flooding and erosion;
- Loss of ice reduces the Earth's ability to reflect sunlight, leading to increased global temperatures;
- The influx of cold meltwater affects ocean currents, which can disrupt weather patterns.

As an example, the Hektor Glacier in Antarctica has retreated nearly half a mile per day, a rate ten times faster than previously recorded for grounded glaciers.

The melting of polar ice is accelerating as the result of global warming, with far-reaching consequences for global sea levels, weather patterns, and ecosystems. Understanding and addressing this phenomenon is essential for mitigating its impacts. Rapid elimination of greenhouse gas emissions is essential.

Watch *A Planet in Peril – The Polar Crisis* on Channel 950 on Monday, December 8, at 10:00 AM. Encore presentation on Wednesday, December 10, at 3:30 PM.

CONTINUED LEARNING

By Jno Hunt - #308

Due to several issues, our presentations on Channel 951 were suspended earlier this year. Some of the 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. Posters are hanging in the mail room.

December:

Tuesday, Dec. 2: "How to Look At and Understand Great Art," Lessons 19 & 20. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 4.

Tuesday, Dec. 9: "Fusion Power — Energy of the Future." Encore on Thurs., Dec. 11.

Tuesday, Dec. 16: "Uzbekistan —This Country will Surprise You." Encore on Thurs., Dec. 18.

Tuesday, Dec. 23: "The Holy Land Revealed"—Lectures 15 & 16. Encore on Thurs., Dec. 25.

Tuesday, Dec. 30: "Alaska's Winter." Encore on Thurs. Jan. 1

From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens...the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house, and the garden of the mind's eye.

~ Katherine S. White

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, December 7

Rev. William Dambaugh
North Hills United Presbyterian

Sunday, December 14

Rev. Bob Cummings
Christ Church at Grove Farm,
Sewickley

Sunday, December 21

Rev. Joe Toomey
LifePointe Alliance Church
Mars, PA

Sunday, December 28

In House – Service of Carols,
Prayer and Meditation

*“Wisdom will save you from the ways of
wicked men, from men whose words are
perverse.”*

Proverbs 1:11



A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME

Shared by Ruth Becker - #338

Excerpted from **Agape**, the newsletter of Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, these tidbits are shared with permission of the compiler and author, Rev. Jonathan Jenson, Rector. Look for more in future *Acorns*.

Many phrases in the Bible have passed into everyday speech. How many of these did you know came from Scripture?

Can a leopard change its spots? (A person's inner nature does not change) Jeremiah 13:23

Gave up the ghost (To die. From Jesus on the cross) KJV of John 19:30

Turn the other cheek (Don't retaliate wrongdoing) Matthew 5:39

Go the extra mile (Do more than required) Matthew 5:41

Feet of clay (Something strong but brittle and/or unstable) Daniel 2:33, 41

Good Samaritan (someone, you might not expect, who helps others with no thought of reward) Luke 10:30-33

Old as the hills (Really old) Job 15:7

Old as Methuselah (Also really old. He was the longest-live person in the Bible at 969 and also the grandfather of Noah from the Ark) Genesis 5:27

You reap what you sow (Your actions determine outcomes) KJV Galatians 6:7

Forbidden fruit (Taboo or prohibited. Adam and Eve with fruit. The Bible never says apple or what variety of fruit it was) Genesis 2:9



Photo by Marie Emanuel