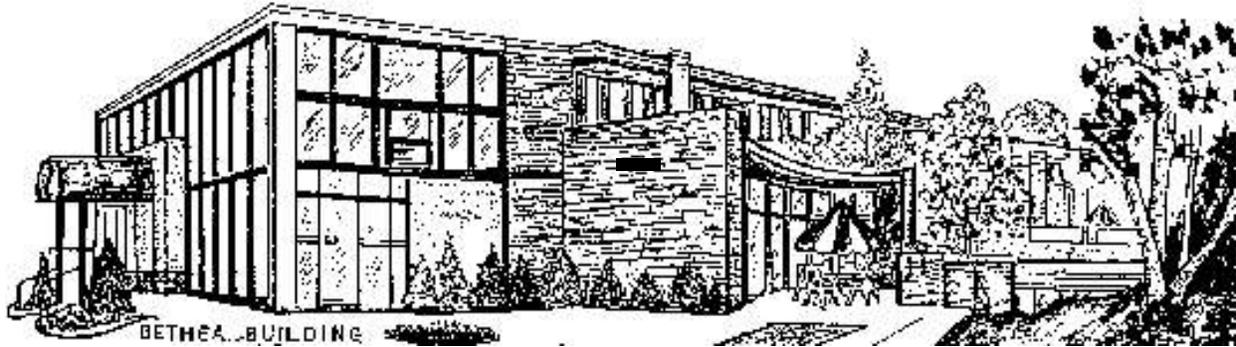


# SERENDIPITOR



Brooks-Howell Home  
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# From Our Administrator—



I hope each of you had a nice Christmas. I pray that you have a very good New Year. As usual, our December was extremely busy, but we were having fun! We began with the beautiful decorations, which of course gets us all in the Christmas Spirit as we prepare for the greatest celebration of all time, Christ's Birth. We continued to celebrate with an open house in several residents' homes as well as all of our offices.

Many Residents went on a bus trip to the Western Carolina Agricultural Center to see an amazing light display. There were many opportunities for Christmas shopping and outside lunches with family and friends. Our residents and employees had a slapstick comedy and talent show--(some not so slapstick), especially when our very talented German pianist Joachim Bruder (Joe) played. We all listened with our mouths open in amazement at how beautifully he played those classical concert pieces. He sings also.

Speaking of singing, last year I had the great honor of being asked to sing with "The Southern Appalachian Chamber Singers." Dr. Joel Reed from Mars Hill University started this group many years ago, made up of students, previous students and people like me who has sung under his leadership.

We had Christmas movies, Christmas sing-a-longs, Christmas goodies, Christmas worship services and a trip to the Asheville Symphony to hear "A Classical Christmas." No one can say we don't celebrate Christ's birth! It is ironic--usually the one with the birthday gets the gifts and the attention, but God loves us so much that he allows us to have the gifts.

At our annual remembrance service on New Year's Eve, we named nineteen people who had gone to Glory. The latest was Missionary Vera Decker Woodcock.

We welcomed to our community: Mrs. Carole Greenspan, Mr. Joseph Brantley, Mrs. Mary Lois Kirby and Mr. Thurman Preston Hill Jr. And Deaconess Betty and Rev. Art Swarhout. Betty was president of the Brooks-Howell Advisory Board. We will miss her in that capacity, but welcome them both as residents.

God be with you,

Nancy Garrison

Executive Director/Administrator

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The editor regrets that because of illness she was unable to prepare the *Serendipitor* on time.

# In Memory--

Dec. 28, 1919

October 29, 2014



Vera Madelyn Becker was born near Harrisonville, Pennsylvania, on a small farm, the daughter of Chester and Mary Melott Decker. She had three brothers and six sisters. She was a member of the Sideling Hill Christian Church. After primary education in one-room schools and secondary education in consolidated schools, she attended Shippensburg College for four years, graduating in 1942. Vera then went home to Needmore, PA, to teach third and fourth grades. It was there on the front porch of the family home, helping her mother peel peaches, that she met Everett Woodcock. When Everett shared with her his desire to become a missionary, she spent the summer of 1942 in mission studies at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee. They were married August 29, 1944, and went to Hartford Seminary Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut for a year of training in the School of Missions.

In December 1945 they arrived in the then-Belgian Congo. They were assigned to the Sandoa Mission Station, where they worked with first generation Christians, equipped Africans in basic skills and Christian discipleship, and learned both French and the local dialect. Their second term involved similar work in the Kapanga District. In later terms they were stationed in the South in Lubumbashi (the Congo's second largest city), in the North Katanga area, and then back in Lubumbashi. During some of those years a civil war was raging, and they lived with suitcases packed, not knowing when they might have to evacuate. Only once did they actually have to leave briefly to Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).

The Woodcocks' greatest satisfaction during those forty-one years came from equipping, supporting, and partnering with Africans for leadership in church and society. Vera broke tradition by training young women and girls in homemaking skills by having them work in their home.

Returning to the States in 1986, the Woodcocks spent one year itinerating for the Board. They retired in 1987, then served another year with Everett as minister of visitation at Broadway UMC in Indianapolis. They bought a camper and criss-crossed the country for two more years, visiting their children and other relatives. In 1990, they moved to Waynesville, North Carolina, to be near their son Ray and family. Daughter Mary is a nurse in Kingston, NC; daughter Elaine and family live in Springfield, Missouri; and daughter Nancy and husband Joe live in Attica, Indiana. Son Arnold passed away in 1990 in Charleston, West Virginia. The Woodcocks have seven grandchildren.

Finally, a life of rich experience and dedicated service brought Everett and Vera to Brooks-Howell in September of 2006. They joined Groce United Methodist Church in Asheville and continued to serve God as their health allowed.

(Vigil of Remembrance) Continued from p. 8

- Bettie Sue Smith
- Helen Katherine McCracken
- Patricia Anne Riddell
- Alice Ruth Parada
- Eunice Hope Sluyter
- Hurman Kenneth Culbreth
- Laura Belle Wells
- Elizabeth Carol Johannaber
- Donna Lee Shaw
- Vera Decker Woodcock

**A former employee:** Mary Jones Shelley

**Nurse Linda Hemstreet's mother:**

Betty Olson Hemstreet

# Welcome—

## Betty Swarthout



Born in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, Betty Lindsay spent her first seven years on a small farm near West Decatur (known by the locals as Blue Ball) just off the Erie Pike. As a child she enjoyed being outdoors walking in the woods and along the stream. She picked wild flowers for her grandmother and wild berries for her mother. The wild berries were made into jams, jellies, and syrup. At age 10 Betty knew she wanted to be a missionary and go to India. During her teenage years she was the fill-in preacher at her church when the pastor was away. Influences in her spiritual growth and leadership skills were the Baptist Church missionary annual week with speeches of missionaries from around the world, Women's Society of Christian Service (UMW), and 4-H Club where she learned many skills including leadership.

Betty considers herself, an extreme introvert and suffers from a physical condition which affects her with a low energy level. Hard to believe when you read her resume and all she has accomplished but she has learned to pace herself, sort of. Christian vocation has always been a part of her. During her college years at West Virginia Wesleyan a package from her mother with all of her prize ribbons for 4-H projects won at county and state fairs created an aha moment that led Betty to pursue a degree in home economics and further convinced her that missionary service in the United States was where her gifts were needed.

Betty believes that with each experience in life God leads to the next experience where we are needed. That belief has shaped her life of service as County Extension Agent with adults, high school teacher of Home Economics, director of a community action agency, Church and Community Worker with rural cooperative parishes, district churches, and

UMCOR disaster response consultant. As a retired Deaconess and Diaconal minister, Betty has served in many positions with the UMW.

She was Guardian ad Litem with the Haywood County Court (10 ½ years). Betty is passionate about the need to educate youth regarding the full range of opportunities for service in the church.

Betty is the immediate Past President of the Brooks-Howell Home Advisory Council, so most of our readers are familiar with her work.

Betty anticipates enjoying her sojourn at Brooks-Howell with REST, pursuing her wood-carving and other creative interests which she believes contributes to her continuing spiritual growth and weeding out things.

Betty is married to Arthur W. Swarthout, retired United Methodist minister. (See his biography below.)  
—Marcia Knight

## Art Swarthout



Art Swarthout was born in 1933 at Seneca Falls, NY, the son of a nurse and a farmer-turned-state government-worker. His only sibling, an older brother, died at age sixteen from leukemia, shortly before graduating as high school valedictorian.

Art has moved often for his education and his ministry. After graduating high school in Ithaca, NY, he completed his education at West Virginia Wesleyan College (where he met Betty, and later taught for four years) and then at Garrett Evangelical Seminary. Art was ordained in the Central New York Conference of The Methodist Church (now United Methodist).

Art and Betty were married in 1957. They have three children and twin granddaughters. Throughout their ministry, Betty has worked in various roles. (Continued p. 5)

Art Swarthout (Continued from p. 4)

Art has served as a pastor, minister of education, college professor, and librarian. He worked in six annual conferences over a period of 42 years of active service and 17 years of retirement. He and Betty have lived in NY, NJ, NE, PA, MD, and WV. After Art's retirement from the Nebraska Annual Conference, they moved to Lake Junaluska, NC.

One of Art's special interests is libraries. With a graduate degree in library science from the University of Maryland, he has fulfilled various roles in church and school libraries. He was the librarian at Alderson-Broadus College (Baptist) in Philippi, WV, for five years. In 1986-1990, he served as Assistant General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, in Madison, NJ. During retirement, he served for several years as Director of the Heritage Center of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, and as Director of the World Methodist Museum, both at Lake Junaluska. He is a charter member and past President of the Church and Synagogue Library Association. Art is currently a Trustee of the Haywood County Library and Co-Leader of the Mountain Area of the Friends of North Carolina Public Libraries. He also writes a religious column for a newspaper in Waynesville, NC.

Needless to say, Brooks-Howell warmly welcomes Art and Betty Swarthout, and their energetic community participation. He has already preached in Chapel, and is looking forward to doing so again. There is lots of room for their service here!

–Gail Hipkins

## News from Resident Services

We wish to thank the following individuals and groups for providing entertainment for residents during the Christmas season:

Piano Students of Eunice Stackhouse - Recital

Asheville Choral Society – caroling

Southern Appalachian Chamber Singers –  
Christmas Concert

Hanger Hall students – caroling

Central UMC Youth – caroling

Ruth Planey & Ellen Pappas – Variety Show  
sing-along

St. Paul's UMC Choir – Lessons & Carols

“Santa & Mrs. Claus” – Keith & Vi Megill

--Tracey Owens, Director of Resident Services



*Santa with Brittany McGaha's son Hayden*



*LaTonya Lee's daughter T'yarion*

(Continued p. 6)

(Santa Claus) Continued from p. 5)



*Sally Burns' great-grandson Niem*



*Erica Sanchez's daughter Jennifer*

### Christmas Variety Show

At Brooks-Howell Home we make as part of our Christmas celebration at least one event that is just simply fun. This year on

December 18 we had a massive musical event, put together by Tracey Owens of our Resident Services Dept. The opening number was a piano duet, "Sleigh Ride," by the "Librace" Sisters (Debbie Pittman and Tracey Owens), followed by the

Ding-a-Lings, our own Handbell Choir, who rang their way through "Jolly Ole Saint Nicholas," and "Up On the Housetop," directed by Barbara Crouse. Helen Frey then played a piano solo, "Bell Medley."

June Fischer followed with fun poetry readings from "Heart Throbs," an old book from which her father used to read to her. She was appropriately dressed in a nightgown and cap.



A surprise piano solo, "Kinderscenen" by Schuman was presented by our gardener, Joe Bruder. We did not know that we had a classical pianist in our midst!

David Carter, an Elvis impersonator, presented "Blue Christmas."



Ruth Planey and Ellen Papas, long time friends of Brooks-Howell, closed the program by leading sing-alongs, and residents joined in and sang from their hearts.



We lingered to thank all of the performers and to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

–Ellen Papas (left); Ruth Planey

–Ann Janzen

[With appreciation to Karen Harris, a professional photographer, for allowing us to use some of her photos.]

## **Barbara E. Campbell Received Scarritt-Bennett Center Legacy Award**

The Scarritt-Bennett Center Legacy Award is presented annually to an individual or group that has made a witness to the historic vision and mission link between Scarritt College and Scarritt-Bennett Center.



Dr. Carolyn E. Johnson, former president of the Women's Division and a current member of the SBC Board, made the presentation to Barbara at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner on December 6. In presenting the award Dr. Johnson also made reference to the Barbara E. Campbell Lectureship given to Scarritt-Bennett Center by the Division Officers. In her response Barbara laughingly stated that the Division Officers felt the Lectureship most appropriate because of the many times she had "lectured" them.

No one could deserve the "Legacy Award" more than Barbara. She is a graduate of Scarritt College. It was she who knew history well enough to know of the legal restriction that in the event Scarritt College closed the property would revert to the Women's Division. She and Joyce Sohl, then Division Treasurer, were the ones who cleared out all the "stuff" left behind with the closure of the school. She was a member of the "visioning committee" that conceived the dream that became Scarritt-Bennett Center. She served on the Scarritt-Bennett Board from 1988 to 2002, and in 2005, when SBC was facing a severe financial crisis, served as Interim Executive Director for nine months as a volunteer until a new Executive Director was in place.

Others receiving rewards at the same event were: Bishop Minerva Caracno–The Ann L. Reskovic Courage Award; and Ms Anne Fleming Williams, former president of BMCR (Black Methodists for Church Renewal)–the Belle H. Bennett Vision Award.

–Betty J. Letzig

## **I Remember --**

### **Christmas Dinner with the Fishing Fleet**

When you hear the words "Christmas Dinner," what memory do you have? Mine is of Christmas, 1991, in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Our small but growing United Methodist Ministry had decided that no member of our fishing fleet would go without a Christmas dinner that year. We had shared a worship service in the midst of a heavy snow storm on Christmas Eve and now looked forward to a sturdy and delicious dinner for all – in The Elbow Room bar.



There was no other place where we could feed our fleet. The only really difficult decision had been where we would provide this sumptuous dinner. All of the suppliers of food had been happy to bake a couple of large pans of rolls, order in some extra salad supplies, or bake a pie or two. One fish processor had even offered to bake four turkeys for us and throw in a couple of hams. When we took a deep breath and approached Flo, the owner of The Elbow Room, to host the event, she laughed, shrugged her shoulders, and said, "Well, they told me you Methodists would change things when you got here. I like this kind of change. I won't serve any alcohol until three o'clock."

When we opened the door at eleven o'clock, we had quite a spread of food on a "church table"; My husband Harry was playing Christmas music on an old piano; Flo was filling glasses with water; the rest of us were decorating the last booth. We looked out and saw men and women approaching through the snow. We stopped serving food at two forty-five and made a tall stack of turkey sandwiches with lettuce and tomato, to feed any hungry people who arrived after we quite serving or to take home with them. Flo rang a closing bell for us, and we hugged her, had a prayer of thanksgiving, and made our way home.

–Ann Janzen

# From Our Chaplain--

Happy New Year! Welcome 2015!

We have crossed over to 2015 . . .and now I have to learn how to write 2015, instead of the habit I have formed of writing 2014! Old habits are hard to break.

Isn't that the truth?

Did you unlearn any old habits last year? Did you develop new habits for a fuller and healthier life?



The arrival of a new year gives us the opportunity to wipe the slate clean and start the new year with new goals. Did we accomplish all we set out to do in the past year? The answer is yes – and no. I am sure we can claim some successes and some failures. I personally didn't get to sew as much as I wanted to, and I didn't really get into better exercise habits despite attempting to do so off and on during 2014. But I am eating healthier. (Hurray!) And I am much better at recognizing the little moments that bring a smile to my face and joy to my heart. Sometimes it's as simple as noticing the chickadee outside my window!

As we begin 2015, I encourage you to notice those things that bring you joy. It could be the smile on the face of your table partner, the soft caring touch of the CNA helping you in the morning, the song sparrow outside your window, the sun shining through the patio door... Make it habit of paying attention to those moments and cherish them in your heart. Then the new year will be filled with promise and joy.

*So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!*

2 Corinthians 5:17 CEB.

With God's help, let us become part of the new creation in 2015.

Peace and Joy to you this year!

–Alycia Johnson, Chaplain

## Vigil of Remembrance

The fifth annual Vigil of Remembrance was held in the chapel from 3:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve until 1:30 p.m. on New Year's Day. The Vigil of Remembrance was started in 2010 out of concern for the nursing staff who are usually not available to attend the memorial services for the persons they have loved and to whom they have given care. Since there are around 20 deaths among the Brooks-Howell Home family each year, another concern is for both residents and staff to have an end-of-the-year opportunity to reflect on the loss of many close friends and acquaintances.

This year's Vigil provided an opportunity for staff, residents and families to honor the memory of the 17 Brooks-Howell Home residents and 1 former employee who died in 2014. We also remembered the mother of nurse Linda Hemstreet.

The Vigil began at 3:30 p.m. with the Circle of Remembrance at which time the name of each person was read, a candle was lit by her or his photograph in a chapel window, and memories of each were shared. During this time a photograph of each person was projected onto the media screen.

The chapel was dimly lighted and recorded music played continuously for the 24 hours of the Vigil so that people could come at their convenience. Biographies were available in a Book of Remembrances created by Nursing Supervisor Sheila McCarty.

Persons who lives were honored were:

### Residents:

Mary "Mimi" Freeman

Dena Castanes Peterson

Gow Shuck Low

Sue Durham Sessler

Betty McElroy Williamson

Roberta Geraldine Rice

Elizabeth "Beth" Griffin

(Continued p. 3)



## January 2015

### Residents

- 1 Pauline Gibbs
- 1 Ruth Stewart
- 10 Fusako Krummel
- 10 Mary Louise Mallard
- 14 Neil Mason
- 18 Jane Sutlive
- 21 Barbara Pontecorvo
- 23 Esther Jones
- 24 Loise George
- 28 Sylvia Smyth

### Employees

- 4 Alma Heine - Dietary
- 7 Vilma Marquez - Dietary
- 11 Christine Small – Enviro. Services
- 15 Jonathan Benfield - Dietary
- 21 Colleen Ownsbey – Admin.
- 24 Christina Jones - Nursing
- 27 Sharon Goggans - Nursing
- 27 Shelia Freeman – Transportation

## February 2015

### Residents

- 3 Ann Janzen
- 8 Mary Fugelsang
- 9 Marjorie Jamison
- 18 Betty Letzig
- 23 Thurman Hill, Jr.
- 23 Dorothy Smith
- 25 Arlene Merritt
- 27 Esther Megill

### Employees

- 1 Devlyn O'Connor – Nursing
- 2 Lucinda Adams – Nursing
- 4 Melissa Cooper – Nursing
- 5 Debra Lambert – Enviro. Services
- 8 Kathleen Goldsworthy – Admin.
- 10 Bruce Dick – Dietary
- 11 Beth Buckner – Nursing
- 16 Susan Roberts – Nursing
- 18 David Carter – Enviro. Services
- 24 Latonya Lee – Nursing
- 27 Alice Luther – Nursing

