

# SERENDIPITOR

*The Life and Times of Brooks-Howell Home*

(New Series) Volume I Issue 1

NEWSLETTER

January – February, 2016

## THE CHRISTIAN YEAR – 2016

Our current months,  
JANUARY-FEBRUARY,  
Stretch us from the 12 days of Christmas -  
...to the Epiphany of the Lord (January 6)  
...to Transfiguration Sunday (February 7)  
...to Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent,  
(February 10).

## GREETING

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.” (Psalm 90: 1-2)

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“Brooks-Howell Home is more than a group of buildings. A project of United Methodist Women, it is blessed place with a heart where continuing spiritual development for mission workers are central. Joy is caring in the way it happens.”

- Ann Janzen, Deaconess and BHH Resident (from page 17, *PRAYER CALENDAR*, 2016)

## BROOKS-HOWELL HOME Advisory Board of Directors - 2016

### OFFICERS

President: Jackie Rio  
Vice President: Leah Knuth  
Secretary/Treasurer: Delores Meadows

### Members – Class of 2018

Jack Ellison                      Lilwyn Trippe  
Laura Kirby                      Roger Rio

### Members – Class of 2017

Louise Brezillac                Ruby McClung  
Marian Baer                      Jackie Rio

### Members – Class of 2016

Leah Knuth                      Dixie Liggett  
Maureen Carr                    Delores Meadows

### Ex-Officio Members (with vote)

Blue Ridge District – President, United Methodist Women                Joan Stroham

Blue Ridge District UMW – Education & Interpretation Coordinator      Gwen Harris

President, BHH Resident Council  
Mary Z. Longstreth

BHH Residents’ Council Members (elected by that body)  
Debbie Pittman  
Irma Higgins

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ADVISORY BOARD EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (without vote)

Superintendent, Blue Ridge District UMC	The Rev. John Boggs
Comtroller, United Methodist Women (National Office)	Halina Mui
Treasurer, United Methodist Women (National Office)	Martha Knight
Executive Director, Brooks-Howell Home	TBA
Any Director of United Methodist Women desiring to be on the Board	

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OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS ELECTED FOR YEAR 2016

At the November meeting of the Resident Council, the following officers were elected for 2016:

			BHH Residency
President	Mary Z Longstreth	Deaconess, social work; primarily in IN	2011
Vice-President	Don Turman	Missionary, Indoneia; pastor in Indian Country USA	2006
Treasurer	Bev Reddick	Deaconess, community work, mid-West, Iowa	2009
Secretary	Marsha Knight	Community service& volunteer, IN	2011

Committee Chairpersons:

Channel 56/7	Debbie Pittman	Deaconess, Church/Community Worker, college prof	2010
Courtesy	Marsha Knight	(See above)	
Creation Care	June Fisher	Deaconess, community service; primarily KY	2008
Hospitality	Virginia Miller	UMCOR Disaster Relief in US & possessions	2006
Library	Jayne Smith	Missionary, teacher, women's work in S. America	1998
Nominating	Ramona Turman	Missionary, Indonesia; medical technician US	2006
Spiritual Life	Betty Swarthout	Deaconess, Church/Community Worker, US	2014
Representatives	Debbie Pittman	(See above)	
BHH Advisory	Irma Higgins	Teacher/counselor/director in NC	2011
	Mary Z Longstreth	(See above)	

The Brooks-Howell Residents Council seeks to include each resident in the daily life of BHH, regardless of their abilities, and all residents are encouraged to join. The purpose of the Council is 1) to help create a Christian community for retirement living of Methodist Deaconesses and missionaries, and of others approved for residency; 2) to express the collective will of the community; 3) to act as a forum for the concerns, welfare and needs of residents; and 4) to work together with administration and staff for the common good of the community. The work of the Council is made possible only because of the annual dues paid by the residents, which are set on a sliding scale.

Just a few of the Resident Council projects include a wonderful library, courtesy of current residents, such as a warm welcome party, birthday and get-well cards, and various community activities; hospitality to BHH guests; the fostering of spiritual life and growth through weekly chapel, retreats, and other opportunities; TV Channels 56 and 57 for in-house television, movies and church services; environmental projects; mission projects; and annual gift-giving to the hourly employees at Christmas time.

Plans for the 2016 Resident Council have not yet been completed, but the activities will grow out of the residents' suggestions. The new President, Mary Z. Longstreth says, "The Council has a unique role at Brooks-Howell Home. I feel honored to be elected, and I want to be responsive to the residents' interests and needs. I hope that we can engage an increasing number of our residents in developing the directions we go." - Gail Hipkins

### BEYOND THE GATE

This new column will report the interaction of Brooks-Howell Home with the neighboring community. We feature residents who volunteer in the community "serving still" and the service of the community to Brooks-Howell.



"The sun never rises twice on our bread" is the business slogan of the Atlanta Bread Company. Every Sunday night at closing time the Atlanta Bread Company

shares their bounty of left-over bread with Brooks-Howell. Monday morning when the sun rises on the second day of the bread, Brooks-Howell residents and employees delight in receiving Atlanta Bread Company's generous gift. Presently Barbara Campbell and Betty Letzig pick up this gift, transport it to Brooks-Howell, and carefully arrange it for early morning and late morning gleaners. This mutually beneficial relationship has been a regular part of Brooks-Howell life for several years. Thank you Atlanta Bread company for sharing beyond the gate. - Marsha Knight

### CONGRATULATIONS !

The following persons from Brooks-Howell Nursing Department received degrees in 2015:

Beth Buckner - BSN from Chamberlain University, NC

Devlyn O'Conner - BSH Degree from Suny Lelhi University of New York

Anna Baylek - LPN from A-B Tech, Asheville, NC

Freda Woody - BSN from Lees McKae College, Banner Elk, NC

### *SERENDIPITOR* Editor Retires

If ever there was someone who is the epitome of our Brooks-Howell Motto: “Called, Served, Serving Still” – it is Esther Megill.

Esther retired to Brooks-Howell Home in January, 1990 after 39 years as a missionary and deaconess with the Evangelical United Brethren and United Methodist churches.

After the Union of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church Esther served as the Executive Secretary of the North and West Africa Area in the World Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, and later as faculty at Trinity College in Ghana.

Following her term in Ghana she was the Mission Interpreter in Residence for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, followed by seven years on the faculty at Wood Junior College in Mathison, MS. It was during that time that she transferred from her relationship as a Missionary to that of the Office of Deaconess.

Immediately after retirement she returned to Africa as a volunteer working with leaders in the field of Christian Education in the development of Church School literature in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia and Kenya.

That year of volunteer endeavor was followed by travel that included a visit to the Middle East, which intensified her concern for the Christians in that area and particularly for justice for the Palestinians. Since moving to Asheville she has been a mainstay in the Just Peace for Israel and Palestine: The Western North Carolina/United Nations Association; the WNCC MFSA (Methodist Federation for Social Action) of which she was a founding member; and of the newly formed Carolina Mountains Reconciling Group.

Church Women United is another of her passions, having served in virtually all of the offices. She is currently serving as historian and keeper of the membership records.

An active member of Biltmore UM Church she has worked in the library, served as chair of their Missions Commission, is a member of the choir and has been active in United Methodist Women at both the local and District levels.

During her retirement she has written two books: *Sierra Leone Remembered* and *Return to Africa: A Journal*. She has also edited and published the daily letters of her father who served as a chaplain in World War II. Copies of that collection are now in the United Methodist Archives at Drew University, at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, and in the hands of all family members.



At Brooks-Howell she catalogs all of the books for its library, is Librarian for the Archives/Mission Library which “takes a great deal of time,” sings in the choir and keeps the book of bios of all who enter Brooks-Howell.

For twenty years Esther has edited and produced our Brooks-Howell Home Newsletter, *The Serendipitor*. When asked what motivated her to undertake that responsibility she said that she enjoyed writing and there was a need.

Most satisfying to her has been getting other people involved and sharing the news of BHH with District and Conference United Methodist Women and local churches.

Most frustrating has been keeping up with the changing rules of the Post Office regarding mailing labels and keeping the address list updated – especially with the changes of presidents for local units and the changes in local church pastoral leadership. She intends to spend her “newly freed up time” on more family history, and in editing a book of “I Remember” stories from Deaconesses and Missionaries who have lived at Brooks-Howell.

Thanks, Esther, for your many years of valiant service! - Betty Letzig

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IN MEMORIAM:

Anne McKenzie



“Anne” (Mary Annis) McKenzie, a native of East Tennessee, was born in Madisonville to Harry Gaines and Cecile Abernathy McKenzie on October 25, 1927. A sister, Faye, was born in 1927, and is a professor of psychology and guidance counseling at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green. Their mother died in 1974. Harry married again in 1980 to Mildred Swan.

During the girls’ growing up years the family lived on a ten-acre plot near Loudon, TN. Even though Harry was a small town grocer, the family produced much of the food they ate from a large garden, fruit trees, a cow, pigs and chickens. Anne liked to find and pick wild strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries in season. Anne’s early ambition to become a school teacher was changed while she was still in high school and felt led by God toward a church-related vocation. She made public her call and her acceptance of it while a student at Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens, 1943-45.

Between finishing junior college work at Tennessee Wesleyan and entering Scarritt College in Nashville, Anne served as librarian for the three city elementary schools in Athens (1945-46) because she knew of no funds available to continue her studies. She saved enough

money during the school year to take summer courses at Peabody and Scarritt. By the end of the summer of 1946 she had resigned her job as librarian, borrowed \$300 and started at Scarritt.

It was not until she was in her first year at Scarritt that Anne learned about what was then called "Rural Work," climaxing a four-year search for the specific type of work for which she was to prepare. "That's what I've been looking for!" she exclaimed. She became a deaconess candidate, had student employment, and received Woman's Division financial assistance as needed. She received her A.B. degree in early June 1948 and was consecrated a deaconess on June 15 that year.

After serving 1948-54 as a Rural Worker in West Tennessee, Anne returned to Scarritt to finish requirements for the M.A. degree, which she received in the spring of 1955. For the next twelve years she served three appointments in Middle Tennessee (1955-60 Wayne County; 1960-63 Giles County; 1963-67 Humphreys County).

During the 1967-68 appointment year she had the opportunity of serving as an "exchange deaconess" in Mindanao, Philippines. Her experience there made an impact on the rest of her life, as she had learned so much from her coworkers who served so faithfully in difficult situations, with little monetary compensation.

From October 1, 1968 through December 1982 Anne served as a Church and Community Worker in the Overton County Area of Middle Tennessee. The longer tenure enabled results beyond those realized in prior appointments. A group of committed laypersons were ready to carry on even after the Church and Community Worker was appointed elsewhere. Anne's last six years were spent in another cooperative ministry with churches in and around Martin, TN, in the Memphis Conference, beginning January 1, 1983. She retired from there at the end of October, 1988.

"Every year was a good year, but the last twenty-one years were best," Anne claimed. "Each year's experience added to all those before. I was blessed in so many ways and received much more than I gave. Even through the tough times and disappointments, growth and good came."

The Tennessee Annual Conference elected her lay delegate to the General Conferences of 1976 and 1980. In 1984 and 1988 she was a volunteer page and then as a volunteer marshal for General Conference. She has attended six meetings of Diakonia (ecumenical, international deaconess organization) in France, New York, Germany, Manila, England and Switzerland. During the overseas trips and following her exchange deaconess experience she traveled extensively, including visiting mission work in several places.

She entered Brooks-Howell Home November 15, 1988, after forty years of service as a deaconess and passed away November 22, 1015. – Editors

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## **I REMEMBER .....**

Serving as staff for the Committee on Homes for Retired Workers for the Women's Division was a wonderful experience. Getting to know all of the residents of the homes and knowing that I was undergirded by their prayers was a great source of support for me. There was also a strong Committee on Homes, the members of which were Directors of the Women's Division.

Initially there were four homes: Bancroft-Taylor Rest Home in Ocean Grove, NJ; Thoburn Terrace in Alhambra, CA; Robincroft in Pasadena, CA and Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville, NC., though Thoburn Terrace and Robincroft had merged shortly before I began working with the Division.

Reorganization of the Board of Missions in 1964 removed from the Woman's Division the direct supervision of personnel and projects. That limited the Division's responsibility for pension and health care to those already in service. As demand decreased it was decided to consolidate the homes. Purchase of Bancroft-Taylor by the Methodist Homes of New Jersey enabled those residents who chose to do so to remain there with the others moving to Brooks-Howell. Following that move the nursing wing at Brooks-Howell was named the Bancroft-Taylor Unit to continue to honor those early founders.

To determine next steps a professional survey was made that included both active and retired personnel. One salient finding was that the retirees were so self-directed and strong in body and spirit that the surveyor added five years to the normal actuarial tables used for his recommendation: "that Robincroft be closed, all future expansion be at the Brooks-Howell site and that the major need of the future would be for additional health care facilities."

Mrs. Mary Yaggy, Chair of the Committee on Homes; Rebecca Lyons, Treasurer of the Division, and I, as staff, were directed to leave the October, 1947 session of the Division where the recommendation was adopted and fly overnight to Los Angeles so we could get to Robincroft before the news got there ahead of us. Following a breakfast meeting with the Director of Robincroft we met with all of the residents. After the announcement had been made and many questions answered there was a rather prolonged silence. Suddenly, one of the residents rose and said, "The Women's Division and the Lord have always looked after us! Let's start packing!"  
- Betty J. Letzig, Deaconess, retired

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## RAMBLINGS FROM THE (NEW) EDITORS

One never knows what a new year will bring. After twenty years as our editor, Esther Megill has retired. Imagine our task as the new editors just for this first issue. It has taken two of us and then lots of help from others to get it together and to you. We are all indebted to Debbie Pittman for her professional computer skills. We are using a new computer and new software!

The Home has provided the *Serendipitor* Team with our own office (apartment #20). Details later about open hours and our need for helpers in writing and illustrating issues, and maintaining our mailing lists.

As time allows in this new year, we will be tackling some dimensions of *Serendipitor* as a tool of public relations in the life of Brooks-Howell Home. Note the new sub-title on this issue!

- a. We anticipate changing the format of our issues soon. No more staples. The same color of paper on the exterior of every issue will help you locate your copies. The pages folded within will be white. The size type will remain the same.
- b. The contents of the newsletter will reflect a wider and larger readership related to the church, the community and those who serve in the diverse mission of The United Methodist Church.
- c. We hope the newsletter will reach persons who may want to live at Brooks-Howell in the future.
- d. There will be a host of new column topics and sources involved in each issue.

(*Serendipitor* TEAM: Betty and Art Swarthout, Editors. Residents: Gail Hipkins, Ann Janzen, Marsha Knight, Barbara Markham, Virginia Miller. Staff: Tracey Owens)

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BROOKS-HOWELL HOME is owned and operated by the United Methodist Women, an agency of The United Methodist Church with world headquarters in New York City. The home is a caring community for retired deaconesses of the Church (and when space allows, other retired person who have served in mission roles in the Church). The Home provides facilities and activities for the care and enrichment of all its residents. There is independent apartment living and nursing care for all levels of health needs.

*Serendipitor* is a bi-monthly publication of the Home designed for residents, staff, families, and friends. It is prepared by residents and staff in the community. We welcome your suggestions and submissions for publication in future issues when they fit the mission of the newsletter.

The Home welcome visitors but supports your advance planning with us. Weekly Chapel services and other special events are open to the public. Groups, especially United Methodist Women units and other local church classes, are invited to tour our facilities and meet our residents and staff.





# BIRTHDAYS

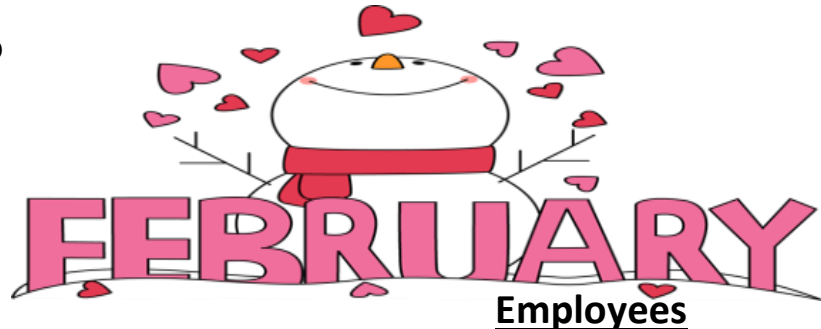


## Residents

- 1 Pauline Gibbs
- 1 Ruth Stewart
- 10 Mary Mallard
- 10 Fusako Krummel
- 11 Faye Glover
- 14 Neil Mason
- 15 Joyce Murtagh
- 18 Jane Sutlive
- 21 Barbara Pontecorvo
- 23 Esther Jones
- 28 Sylvia Smyth
- 30 Jeanne Cosner

## Employees

- 4 Alma Heine - Dietary
- 7 Vilma Marquez - Dietary
- 11 Christine Small - Environmental Services
- 21 Colleen Ownsbey - Administration
- 24 Christina Jones - Nursing
- 27 Rebecca Sloan - Nursing
- 27 Sharon Goggans - Nursing
- 27 Shelia Freeman - Resident Services



## Residents

- 3 Ann Janzen
- 8 Mary Fugelsang
- 11 Ruth Clark
- 18 Betty Letzig
- 23 Preston Hill
- 25 Arlene Merritt
- 27 Esther Megill

## Employees

- 1 Devlyn O'Connor – Nursing
- 5 Debra Lambert - Environmental Services
- 8 Kathleen Goldsworthy – Receptionist
- 10 Bruce Dick – Dietary
- 11 Beth Buckner - Nursing
- 16 Susan Roberts - Nursing
- 18 David Carter - Environmental Services
- 24 Latonya Lee - Nursing
- 27 Alice Luther – Nursing

BROOKS-HOWELL HOME  
266 Merrimon Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801-1218  
Phone: (828) 253-6712  
(ADDRESS SERVICE REQUEST)

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*SERENDIPITOR* is a bimonthly  
Newsletter from the Home owned  
and operated by the United  
Methodist Women.

Items and publication should be  
sent to the Editors (above address)

Our next issue: MARCH/APRIL  
Deadline for Copy: Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR DECEMBER 2015

The Residents express their appreciation and thanks for the area groups who provided special Christmas music for their enjoyment during the Christmas season. The groups included:

- Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> - Piano Concert by the students of Eunice Stackhouse
- Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> - Musika Antiqua Concert
- Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> - Southern Appalachian Chamber Singers
- Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> - St. Paul's Choir Christmas Cantata
- Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> - Residents caroling in the Health Units
- Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> - Nancy Garrison's Retirement Party
- Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> - Remembrance Vigil

- Tracey Owens

