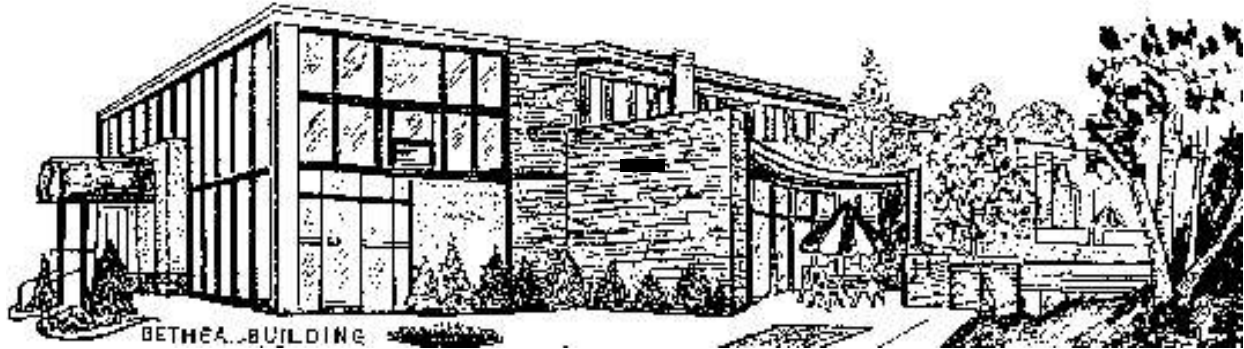


# SERENDIPITOR



Brooks-Howell Home  
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266 Merrimon Avenue  
NANCY GARRISON, Executive Director

Asheville, NC 28801-1218  
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## *Praise in Spring\**



Creator of this wondrous world,  
With all its beauty now unfurled,  
Each newborn leaf is from Your own hand,  
Gift to enhance and bless our land.  
Our hearts are filled with gratitude  
As we give thanks in reverent mood;  
Yours is the glory now and for aye,  
Dear Lord, we pray.

Amen.

--Juanita Kelly, former resident



\*May be sung to the tune "Open My Eyes."

# From Our Administrator --



Brooks-Howell is a member of a non-profit group, The Leading Age, which focuses on homes like ours. It has local organizations in every state. Their lobbyists in both North Carolina and Washington work hard to keep us tax-exempt. They help us stay up-to-date on current issues and how to handle them. They offer continuing education classes for credits toward our licenses, with subjects ranging from medical, to financial, to legal topics. And they provide national conferences, usually with a visit to local continuing care facilities.

The National Headquarters in D.C. recently contacted the North Carolina Leading Age President to ask which facilities they should visit in Western North Carolina. "Definitely Brooks-Howell Home and Givens Estates," he said. So they called me to see if we wanted to host 60 people for an afternoon. Of course -- we were excited to show off our lovely home!

They asked me to lunch at Givens (a much larger home with room to feed 60 extra people), then ride the bus back so that I could tell them about Brooks-Howell. As we started the ride, I asked them to close their eyes and wipe Givens out of their minds so they would not be disappointed by our "Mom and Pop" type home. When they arrived, we had leaders to give them tours, and some of the residents invited them into their homes for brief discussions. They then met together in the Chapel for a wonderful buffet of fruit, cookies, nuts, finger cakes and even a chocolate fountain. Were they impressed!

Deaconess Pauline Precise came to live with us for a short time, then moved back to Huntsville AL where she passed away on March 6. Others who have passed away include Dr. Harry Taylor, Nell Brigman, Mary Kirby, Daisy Walder, Dr. Joseph Brantley and Missionary Elizabeth Howell.

We recently welcomed Ruth Clark home, after staying with her sister in NY for several months. We are happy to welcome other health care residents: Virginia Bradford, Patricia Davis, Phyllis Handley, and Juanita Sigmon.

Nancy Garrison

Executive Director/Administrator



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**Have you discovered that the *Serendipitor* may be seen on line—in color?** Find the Brooks-Howell website at <http://www.brooks-howell.org>. You will find it every two months by the end of the first week, starting in January. If you decide to stop the paper subscription, please inform the editor (Esther Megill) at [esthermegill453@gmail.com](mailto:esthermegill453@gmail.com) and your name will be removed from the mailing list. You will help save the trees, and the cost of printing and postage.

# In Memory

## Elizabeth Melson Howell

August 31, 1926

January 23, 2015

Elizabeth Melson Howell was born August 31, 1926, in Madison, Florida, the daughter of Henry Travis and Mattie (Bunting) Howell. She was the eldest of three, having two younger brothers—William Henderson and Mortimer Bunting. Each had two daughters, and Elizabeth was a close as a mother to her nieces.



Elizabeth received her B.A. from Florida Southern College, Lakeland, in 1947, and an M.A. from Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1953. She was in the first group of J-3s sent out by the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church in 1948. Arriving in Japan on September 16, 1948, she served the next three years at Seibi Gakuen Girls School in Yokohama.

In 1953 she returned to Japan under the Woman's Division of Christian Service, and taught at Fukuoka Jogakuin Girls School until retirement in 1996. She was Acting Chancellor of the school in 1981, and from 1988 to 1989 Acting Principal of the Junior Senior High School. She was an active member of the Fukuoka Jogakuin Church and the Fukuoka YWCA.

Elizabeth returned to Florida and after two years at Sherwood Forrest moved to Riverview, and lived there until moving to Brooks-Howell. She collected stamps and loved to walk. She had several trips back to Japan, including one in the pre-Christmas season when she enjoyed attending a performance of the entire Handel's "Messiah."

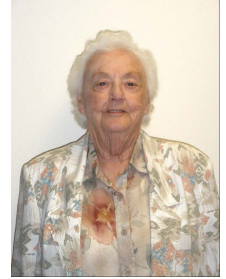
While in Riverview she belonged to the church in Brandon and was very active in the United Methodist Women's group. On the day before she left, they had a huge celebration of her life and work, which included a meal and especially invited family members and the pastor of the church. The next day, November 4, 2003, she moved to Brooks-Howell Home.

## Pauline Precise, Deaconess

March 25, 1931

March 6, 2015

Pauline was born March 25, 1931 in Scottsboro, Alabama, the daughter of Elbert and Lillie Mae Precise. She had two sisters and three brothers. The family was always active in the Methodist Church, and from an early age Pauline heard missionaries tell about the problems of the people they served. She determined then that she wanted to go to Africa to help them.



After high school there was no money for college, so Pauline worked in a local mill as Assistant Designer for Chenille Bedspreads. She later also designed rugs there. But even though she enjoyed her work, she never lost her dream of working for God through the church.

Twelve years later, with the encouragement of the Women's Society of Christian Service of the Methodist Church she began college at night at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, forty miles away. Pauline remembered this as a history-making time, when the first African-American student came to campus. She said, "That was a great night for all of us. No problems—we were all God's children."

Two years later, Pauline moved on to Scarritt College in Nashville, with the help of scholarships from the WSCS. She said, "That was a wonderful experience; it was a place to get a good education as well as to meet students from all over the United States and many foreign countries." After two years at Scarritt she was commissioned as a Deaconess. She said, "I was finally able to do the work I was called to do."

Pauline's first assignment was with Reelfoot Ministries in Tiptonville, Tennessee. This was a place where farm machinery had replaced day

(Continued p. 4)

(Pauline Precise) Continued from p. 4.

laborers. The land owners had allowed the laborers to stay in their shacks and to work when there were tasks for them, but the tasks were few and far between. There was a dire need for schooling for the children and training for the adults.

For seven years Pauline worked with various groups on a variety of projects to help the unemployed workers. She said, "I don't think there was ever a day we met without a circle or other United Methodist Women group there to help with whatever we were doing—whether quilting, making other craft projects, or painting duck decoys for sale to make the workers a little money. Doctors and beauticians volunteered their time, and work groups came in to help with Vacation Bible School and day camps. After the program was doing well and there was land for a building to house the program, a church was reopened. Volunteers taught Sunday School and played the piano for worship services. Pauline felt it was time to move on.

She served as Community Center Director at Cookson Hills, Oklahoma, then eventually settled in Huntsville, Alabama where she worked as Director of the Food Stamp office. Her major task was to make sure the recipients were treated with respect.

After retirement Pauline worked with the Deaconess Program office, where she managed an email listserv to encourage communication between members regarding their joys, needs and prayer requests. She also managed Chataqua reservations for the Deaconesses, and for many years she personalized birthday cards for the entire community. While in Huntsville Pauline was active in The United Methodist Church, particularly with the UMW, where she served four years as local president. She also participated in many environmental activities, such as leading discussions at the local, district and conference level. She even helped lead a workshop on global

environmental issues for the Atlanta conference of Diakonia (The World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities.)

Pauline frequently visited Brooks-Howell Home as part of her work for the Deaconess office, and so she was no stranger when she arrived as a resident on August 20, 2014. She soon settled in at St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

She left us on December 22, 2014, and she died in a hospital in Huntsville, Alabama on March 6, 2015. Burial will be at First United Methodist Church in Huntsville on March 21.

## I Remember —

### 30 Days in an Ancient Land



What a privilege to spend 30 awesome days in a land with thousands of years of human history and wisdom. India dismays, amazes, and provides opportunities to connect with the depth of human dignity and integrity supported solely by self-worth, family, community, faith and material support for life to be sustained if not comfortable. Time has an elusive quality in India for buses, trains, and government officials, villagers, and yes, even impatient Western visitors. When you live in the shadow of many centuries of human history, time isn't lived with frenetic life or death urgency but a suspended moment to be savored and revered.

My Indian colleague, Aswar and I traveled by bus to seek introductions to village leaders in the state of Maharashtra, north of Mumbai, India, by government officials. We hoped the village leaders might be interested in joining 1,000 other

(Continued p. 5)



(I Remember, Marcia Knight) Continued from p.4.

villages in the state to develop a plan for their village using the ideas of all the villagers to create a vision and action steps for the well being of all. The officials met with us and agreed to introduce us to villages who they believed would embrace such an opportunity. We made an appointment with the government official for the next morning and waited. Six hours after our appointment, the Block Development Officer came, and we went to the village. The six-hour delay was explained! The Block Development Officer had a visit from a village leader. Business could not be conducted until the leaders spoke about the health and well being of their families and the families of the village, tea was served and enjoyed, then the business negotiations could begin. No hurry. It was the custom and required time to renew the relationship. Another official from a different village took us for a tour of his district before our introduction to the leaders of the village with whom we would work.

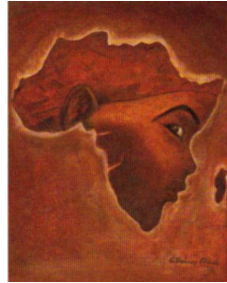
Each village was somewhat interested in the meetings and participated with their ideas, but at the end of the week one village did a work project while the women formed their organization to start a cottage industry. The work project of digging ditches along the streets for water drainage and cleaning out brush blocking the flow of water was the beginning of change and a healing of community differences. Two villages with very different personalities and histories took on their vision and worked together to make changes in their communities. My belief in the power of local people deciding their own destiny was reaffirmed, and I was changed by the experience of authentic cultural differences in relation to time and things.

--Marcia Knight

### **Thelma Caldwell: Miss Africa**

Something interesting is always happening at Brooks Howell Home. Residents and visitors have been watching with interest the development of our Gift Shop in the last few years. One of the most interesting is the growth in the number of

books, articles, and pictures produced by the residents.



One of the first pieces of art produced by residents was a portrait of "Miss Africa" by Thelma Caldwell, one of our first outreach residents. It shows a thoughtful young African woman, whose profile is the East Coast of Africa. Her abundant hair completes the outline.

Prints are now available at the Gift Shop for \$10.00, and the total cost with shipping is \$15.00.

Thelma was much loved at Brooks Howell, and many of us asked to be at her table in order to delve into deep and real conversation with her.



Thelma had a feeling for all people, and she became Executive Director of the Asheville YWCA when the black and white branches merged in 1961. Her ability to work with many groups extended into all manifestations of life in Asheville. There was an exhibit of her artistic works in August 2004 by Brooks-Howell Home, when the painting of Miss Africa was featured.

—Ann Janzen

*Occasionally there will be reviews of books written by residents which are available in the Gift Shop. Marcia Knight has written the first:*

### ***Prayers & Pondering* Book Review**

Perhaps you remember that in 2006 persons residing at Brooks-Howell wrote, edited, and published this wonderful book. Are you looking for inspiration from stories, spiritual growth reflections, remembering common ordinary saints, or artwork that gently touches your soul? Do you need prayers formed by experience, the heart, faith, pain, joy and gratitude? Join God's enormous sigh of relief, knowing that these faithful servants understand.

All of this and more awaits you. Simply take this book in hand and read from a place of seeking deep spiritual refreshment. Available at

(Continued p. 6)

(Prayers and Ponderings) Continued from p. 5.  
the Brooks-Howell Gift Shop for \$10.00 or call  
Brooks-Howell 828-253-6712 and order for  
\$15.00, including shipping.

## International Storyteller Here

Betty and Art Swarthout invited their friends to hear International storyteller, Connie Regan-Blake at Brooks-Howell Home on Monday, February 2, in the Chapel.

Sarah Howard, their daughter and her husband Thom arranged for Connie to share stories with them and their friends as their 2014 Christmas present.

It was a snowy afternoon, as we enjoyed an hour with Connie. She shared stories from her forty years as a storyteller in 47 states and many countries.

We thank Sarah and Thom for such a great gift to be shared with others.

–Betty Swarthout

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*The Haywood Street ministry, a ministry to the homeless, sponsored by Central United Methodist Church in Asheville, has become known not only in our Conference but in other places in the denomination. Resident Don Turman called the editor's attention to an article in the Haywood Street Newsletter:*

[http://haywoodstreet.org/2015/01/newsletter-updates-for-the-week-of-january-19th-2015/?utm\\_source=Haywood+St.+Congregation%27s+Main+Updates&utm\\_campaign=c632e0e57f-011\\_letter226\\_2013&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_593a7f799a-c632e0e57f-75656661](http://haywoodstreet.org/2015/01/newsletter-updates-for-the-week-of-january-19th-2015/?utm_source=Haywood+St.+Congregation%27s+Main+Updates&utm_campaign=c632e0e57f-011_letter226_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_593a7f799a-c632e0e57f-75656661)

*We are sure our readers will be interested.*

### **A Reflection from Jody Halstead**

*Jody is Program Manager*

*for Haywood Street Respite*

This last year has been . . . well it has been wonderful and frustrating; life-giving and time consuming; and always, always, it has been good and right.

We welcomed our first Friend to Haywood Street Respite on 1-6-14 and since then we have had the privilege to be in community with more than 80 others. Each person has blessed our community in a special way.

We have learned something from every person who has walked through the doors. We have learned and are learning about ourselves. We have learned and are learning how to be a family, intentionally.

When we first started talking about and planning for the opening of HSR we talked about the facility, a non-skilled facility where a person can rest for a couple of weeks after getting out of the hospital. Because we all know that everyone needs a place to rest after being sick or injured.

We knew there would be challenges. We knew this would be what the rest of the world would call a risky venture. And so we said yes. Yes, we believe God is calling us to be church in this way, at this time.

And as is usually the case, the more we say yes the more we are blessed.

We said yes to a facility and God gave us a community. We no longer identify ourselves as a facility. We are not just a place to come after getting out of the hospital. We are not a group of strangers with similar circumstances. We are a community called out for the purpose of praising God and offering a place of rest. We are family.

I could share with you some impressive numbers. I could share that more than 80 companions have brought their offering to respite either through gifts or time. I could share that companions have provided an average of 40 rides to appointments every month or that more than 240 meals have been brought in and shared with respite.

Of our 85 new Friends, some have stayed more than once. We have had 95 arrivals to respite. Of those, 78 went somewhere other than back to the streets. Friends have gone to rehabilitation/recovery programs, reconnected with family, gotten an established bed at Western Carolina Rescue Ministries or gotten their own place. Over 95% of the friends staying with us made it to their first follow up visit with their doctor.

All of these are impressive numbers and evidence that God has blessed us. And that is not really the point. The point is that we have been given an opportunity to be with our brothers and sisters, we have been given the privilege to experience community with someone who is not just like us. We have been given a glimpse of the kingdom. We have been given a family.

Amen, Jody

## Fat Tuesday

What is Fat Tuesday?

According to Wikipedia, “Fat Tuesday” conjures up images of beads, beer, and the Big Easy (New Orleans). But the history of Mardi Gras (French for “Fat Tuesday”) is that of a Christian holiday that dates back thousands of years to pagan spring and fertility rites. Also known as Carnival, it is celebrated in several nations, particularly those with large Roman Catholic populations.

When Christianity came to Rome, religious leaders decided to incorporate some raucous pagan traditions into the new faith rather than to compete with them. As a result, the debauchery and excess of the Carnival season began a prelude to the forty days of penance (Lent) between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. And the day before Ash Wednesday became known as Fat Tuesday because of the pre-Lent feast of eggs, milk, cheese, and meat, which were often given up for Lent.

French explorers brought Mardi Gras to the US in 1699, and the celebration, with its rich colors of green, gold, and purple, has continued until today.

Even though our culture at BHH is primarily conservative Methodist, not Roman Catholic, BHH still enjoys the fun, food, and fellowship of Fat Tuesday. The kitchen staff worked several days ahead to give our residents a wonderful Mardi Gras experience. Upon entering the dining room, we were invited to don colorful beads. A few residents wore fancy costumes or colorful hats. The festive dining room was decorated in green, gold, and purple, and it raised our spirits with recorded jazz music.

Scrumptious Mardi Gras food reflected the French influence: gumbo, Fleur de Lis chicken, crab cakes with remoulade sauce, hot cakes and sausage, sweet potato hash, jambalaya, heart-healthy collard greens and black-eyed peas, cornbread, potato salad, and yummy, rich bread-pudding. And there were extra treats, like deviled eggs, baked brie and crackers, donuts, chocolate-covered strawberries, special punch, and other goodies. The dietician and kitchen staff outdid themselves – again!

This is just another example of how the staff at BHH – and the residents themselves – go all-out to make our home a very special place to live.

–Gail Hipkins



*Don and Ramona Turman have returned to Indonesia where they formerly worked. Don responded to my request for word from them with the following article.*

### A Report from Medan

Early in 2014 Ramona and I were asked to return to Indonesia as volunteers in ministry at Wesley Methodist Church in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The church asked for help because their pastor had been diagnosed with oral cancer and needed to be away for treatment. Because of our circumstances we could not come until February 2015 and by that time the pastor had died and a new pastor appointed. The invitation held so we decided to come for the weeks of Lent.

Our first few days back in Indonesia were spent in Jakarta where we enjoyed worship at the churches we had previously served and many conversations over very delicious traditional meals. We arrived in Medan on February 16. Since we served at Wesley Church more than 20 years ago, we have been delighted to meet many old friends and begin getting to know the many new members. Wesley is the only Methodist English language congregation in the Northern Conference of the autonomous Methodist Church of Indonesia. The young senior pastor, Rev. Hembang Tambun, has asked Ramona to tutor him in English while we are here. The associate pastor, Rev. Lilis Pangaribuan, was our student when we taught at the seminary near here. We have already been involved in a variety of Wesley Church ministries and have

(Continued p. 8)

Turman letter (Continued from p.7)

been asked to meet weekly with the youth fellowship, a lively group of unmarried young adults. We are also participating in a Monday night service that is being held in one of the camps for Iranian refugees.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) has been present in Indonesia since the Viet Nam war carrying out Indonesia's refugee protection mandate. At present there are more than 10,000 refugees in Indonesia including persons from Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia and Sri Lanka. Most of them are asylum seekers hoping to be resettled in Australia, a country that doesn't want them.

The Iranians that Wesley Church has befriended are Christians who left Iran because of political or religious persecution. They were attracted to Wesley because a few of them speak English. The Monday night service is attended by 10-12 persons. We are saddened to witness their living conditions in the camp and to hear their stories about why they had to leave Iran. Some have already been here several years but hold on to a hope that they can be resettled.

We have been challenged in many ways as we try to fit back into this diverse culture and understand the different ethnic accents used in speaking the Indonesian language. In addition to the people and the food, we are also basking in the warm tropical weather. We were happy to discover that Rev. Lilis spends an hour each morning with an exercise group on a downtown sports field. She welcomed us to accompany her so we are walking for 40 minutes and then going through the exercises we learned in Body Recall.

We are having a great time and expect to be back on campus around midnight on April 28.

-Don Turman

# From Our Chaplain--

## Signs of Spring--and of Resurrection!

I have been told that in Asheville we need to temper our excitement about spring arriving, because everyone remembers the blizzard of 1993... But I can't help it! I want to run around sharing with everyone the signs of spring I see everywhere.



There are crocuses blooming! The trees are budding! I have seen yellow daffodils and purple hyacinths just outside our dining room! And there is a pair of bluebirds making a nest in the bluebird house in my yard!

Even though we are still in the midst of Lent, the signs of resurrection joy are shattering the gloom, just like the signs of spring burst through the dreary winter.

The Lenten Season is an important time of self-examination and reflection. And yes, there are plenty of times that we fall short of following Jesus' leading in our lives. We do need to take a look at our failures, ask forgiveness and open ourselves to God's leading. Beware of wallowing in despair and self-loathing, however. We are, after all, Easter People. And Easter is never far away. It shines through the gloom, the pain, and the failures, and reminds us that we live enveloped by God's love.

Happy Spring!

-Alycia Johnson, Chaplain







## BIRTHDAYS

### March

#### Residents

- 18 Helene Hill
- 23 Virginia Bradford
- 24 Dana Tyson
- 26 Patricia Davis
- 29 Barbara Markham
- 31 Lela Maxwell

#### Employees

- 8 Alycia Johnson - Chaplain
- 13 Stephanie McCurry - Nursing
- 15 Michael Lee – Dietary
- 26 Sallie Tipton - Nursing

### April

#### Residents

- 3 Marjorie Ruegger
- 7 Marie Nailing
- 8 Eleanor Charlton
- 13 Marcia Knight
- 23 Virginia Bradford
- 28 Rosemary Scheuerman

#### Employees

- 1 Benjamin Rose –Dietary
- 2 Joachim Bruder – Gardener
- 9 Ellen Coles – Nursing
- 9 Lyudmyla Kebap – Nursing
- 12 Jason Gerrie – Maintenance
- 13 Gussie Hines – Environmental Svcs.
- 20 Sharman Hess – Receptionist
- 23 Karen Underwood – Administration
- 23 Patti Wilson – Gardener
- 24 Joan Page – Nursing
- 28 Annis Lytle – Receptionist

