

SERENDIPITOR



Brooks-Howell Home
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May-June 2014



*United Methodist Women Assembly
Louisville, Kentucky
April 25-27, 2014*

From Our Administrator - -



Although the editor of the *Serendipitor* doesn't like to write about herself, I did not want to pass up a great opportunity to say something myself. Esther Megill has been the editor of this newsletter for nearly nine years. Sounds like a really easy job; right? Actually it isn't because she has to remind, remind, remind all of us to get our articles to her--and I am the worst one of all. With that being said when it is late getting to you it is usually because of me. Since my article is the first one, she must wait to do the layout. The layout alone is quite a job. Then where there are blanks Esther has to write something, or put in an article that she has been holding for a time just like it. The next step is having the proofreaders look for errors on the document. Then comes the submitting to the printers and printing the mailing labels, neither of which are ever without glitches. She must use two or three programs and they are always fighting with each other. Too bad she can't treat them like we do our bad children by sending them to their rooms until they can act better. The entire process is time-consuming and at times frustrating, but the end result is always very good and we all say thank you, Lord that it is she who has taken this task. Not only does Esther do the *Serendipitor*, but she is also heavily involved in several other groups such as Church Women United, United Methodist Women, WNC for Peace and Justice in the Middle East, two choirs, and the Brooks-Howell's Historic library. She also helps with two other libraries. Sorry I can't go on--it makes me too tired to even type a few of the things she does all the time. Now to the main point: Esther does this at age 90!! In fact a large celebration held in April for her birthday included two African ladies who were named for her, a student of Esther's when she served in Africa, family from abroad and friends and family from across the U.S. It was party-time for four days. Time for a few days of recovery? I think not! Monday morning, time to move on and remind people that their articles were due. Needless to say, Esther is 90 going on 70; she looks it and acts it.

On the home front: Our grounds are coming to life with beautiful spring blossoms, new green on the trees and bushes. The residents' yards have been blooming with pretty flowers, and one tree in Marilyn Benson's yard even bloomed with brightly colored Easter eggs.

A few years ago we replaced the carpet in the main living room (lobby) with a snap wood floor. The problem was that the floor was a wood want-a-be, and did not hold up, so now we have had real wood installed and it is beautiful. The residents had to change the route to the dining room for four days by going outside and into the side garden door, but everyone enjoyed getting out into the fresh air.

Read about Assembly in this issue. Of course Brooks-Howell had a fun booth where we met lots of wonderful United Methodist Women.

On a personal note I have been invited to sing with Dr. Joel Reed's "Southern Appalachian Singers" and will be singing at Charleston's Spalato festival in June. An honor indeed, not that I am that good. I think they needed a blonde in the group.

On a sad note: we recently lost long- time residents Beth Griffin and Betty Sue Smith, but are happy to welcome William Clodfelter and Marguerite Hays from the local community.

Your Sister in Christ,
Nancy Garrison, Administrator

In Memory—

Roberta G. Rice

May 29, 1917

April 1, 2014



Roberta Rice, daughter of Robert J. and Geraldine M. Rice, was the first of four children born into a Methodist parsonage in southern Minnesota. Three brothers followed. When she was ten, the family moved to Rochester where her parents

entertained guests from around the world who had come to the Mayo Clinic. One guest was a Board of Missions director from New York who opened doors to mission for her.

Roberta graduated valedictorian from Rochester High School. After graduating cum laude from The Colorado College in Colorado Springs, she entered medical school at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. After medical school graduation she interned at the Research and Educational Hospitals of the University of Illinois in Chicago, and took her general surgical training at the Mayo Clinic in her “hometown.” Her mentor was Dr. Charles W. Mayo.

In June 1950, she was ready to go to the Severance Union Medical College in Seoul, Korea, as a medical missionary. However, with the outbreak of the Korean War, she became a surgeon at the newly opened Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Grand Island, NE.

In September 1956 the way to Korea finally opened. There she served as Professor of Surgery at both Yonsei University (successor to Severance) and Ewha Woman’s University Medical Schools and as a surgical consultant to the Incheon Christian Hospital. She was active in the Association of Korean Medical Schools and played the organ for the Tai Wha Kwan Sunday services.

She left Korea in 1975 and in 1976 she joined the staff of the Huntington, West Virginia, Veterans Administration Hospital as a surgeon in the newly organized Marshall University School of Medicine (now called the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine). This new medical school was developed to bring doctors to Appalachia. After retirement in 1986 she served as a volunteer physician with Hospice of Huntington.

She entered Brooks-Howell on April 15, 1992. She was active in Central UMC and in the choir. She served as organist at Brooks-Howell for many years. In August 2013 she left Brooks-Howell to live out her final days in the home of a niece in Kansas City. A memorial service was held at Brooks-Howell Home on May

Beth Griffin

April 21, 1923

April 15, 2014

Beth Griffin was born the third child and only daughter of Shelley (Smith) and Robert Morgan, in Plant City, Florida. Her father was a “self-made” man and a local banker until the bank failures of 1929. Her mother was a great influence as to church participation from early childhood.



In 1936 she attended a Methodist youth camp where she made a commitment to full time Christian service as a missionary in another culture. Several local church women affirmed her in that commitment. About that time she met Mary Lou Barnwell, who was serving as a deaconess in Tampa settlement work.

Funds for her first two years of college at Florida Southern were supplied by friends. While there she made two wonderful Chinese friends, who were political refugees; this increased her interest in serving in China some day. At the end of her

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Beth Griffin (Continued from p. 3)

second year, she saw no way to continue, but was given the opportunity to participate in the Caravan Movement in the West Virginia Conference during the summer of 1942.

The Caravan experience and a year's employment as youth director at St. Andrews in Parkersburg, WV, led her to Berea College where she completed a BA in Religion and Sociology in 1945. There she met Hunter Griffin who was in Navy V-12. She and Hunter were married on March 10, 1945.

When Hunter returned overseas she worked as Youth Director at First Methodist Church in Clearwater, FL. After his return, they moved back to Berea while he completed his degree and their first daughter was born, then went to Drew University in New Jersey. Near the close of Hunter's seminary work, they both felt a call to mission and applied to the World Division for service in Africa. They then did graduate study at Cornell University.

They sailed to Africa in 1951 and were assigned to Old Umtali Mission in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). They were there seventeen and a half years. There three more daughters were born. Beth taught Latin in Secondary School, wrote conference Sunday School lessons, taught English and developed and led women's Bible Schools throughout the Conference.

In 1967, after being declared *persona non grata* by the then white supremacy government, Hunter took a job at the Board of Global Missions in New York. Beth upgraded her teaching certificate and taught for 18 years in New Jersey public schools. She became active in UMW at the district and conference level. This service continued in retirement in Florida and in Western North Carolina, where she was Waynesville District President.

She and Hunter moved to Brooks-Howell in 1998 and became active members of Asbury Memorial UMC. Hunter died in 2008. She is survived by four daughters, ten grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. A Memorial Service was held at Brooks-Howell Home on May 3.

I Remember—

My Adventure with Pink Camellias

Deaconess Esther Jones likes to talk about when she was teaching Physical Education at Vashti School in Thomasville, Georgia.



She says, “We had no set facility for Phys.Ed. when the girls decided that they wanted to try basketball. We had green gym suits. They were either too big or too small, but I wore mine with pride.

“This must have been in January, and the camellias were blooming. Lots of blooms had fallen off the trees on to the wet grass.

“I realized that there were enough pink camellias to line off the court so we could play basketball on the grass. We did not play much basketball, but we surely enjoyed those lines of pink camellias.

“We were very careful to leave enough blooming pink camellias for Miss Edgerton and Miss Coger to enter them in the flower show. They continued to enter flowers in the shows even after they came to Brooks-Howell Home.”

—As told to Ann Janzen



2014 Assembly: “Make It Happen!”

Nine folks from Brooks-Howell were among the six thousand three hundred plus members of *United Methodist Women* who gathered in Louisville, KY, April 25-27 for the quadrennial Assembly. The 140 plus representatives of the Western North Carolina Conference *United Methodist Women* were highly visible on the 26th when “everybody” wore red! The Assembly theme “Make it Happen!” – stressed putting Faith, Hope and Love into Action! It was the back-home challenge throughout the event in song, speeches, exhibits and workshops.

More than 600 United Methodist Women came a day early for a *Ubuntu Day of Service* working at nearly 40 sites throughout the Louisville area including two in Indiana.

Highlights for Brooks-Howell included a booth in the Experience Hall where hundreds of persons visited with Brooks-Howell staff Nancy Garrison, Jeannette Byrd and Carole Gilham. Many found helpful and interesting interpretative material, along with the new DVD about Brooks Howell, “Putting the Pieces Together.”

A second highlight was the consecration of Brooks-Howell staff member Tracey Owens as a deaconess in a special Sunday morning service conducted by Bishops Violet Fisher and Cynthia Fiero Harvey, Yvette Richards, president of *United Methodist Women*; and Harriett Olsen, General Secretary. Tracey was one of twenty-six deaconesses, all of whom had some of their training on our campus,

United Methodist Hillary Rodham Clinton was a key note speaker. She credited her Methodist family and early church experiences as the foundation of her passion for social justice. She challenged United Methodist Women to “wake up

the world” about the work that can and should be done regarding the challenges facing women and girls, including inequality, human trafficking, and lack of access to maternal and other health services. Following her address several thousand of those present marched from affluent East Louisville (site of the Convention Center) to the low income area of West Louisville in protest of the inequities of resources and opportunities for local citizens.

Assembly participants had options for one hundred fifty workshops, visiting National Mission Institution and other exhibits, shopping in the “Free Trade” zone, purchasing mission resources or just taking time to renew friendships and make new ones. Betty Letzig and Barbara Campbell were co-facilitators of the “Leaving a Legacy” workshop.

Others attending from Brooks-Howell were Esther Megill, Carole Wingeier and June Fischer. The next Assembly is in Columbus, Ohio, in 2018, when United Methodist Women will be celebrating their 150th Anniversary.

-Barbara Campbell

THE LEGACY FUND
of the
150th Anniversary
of United Methodist Women
\$18.69 = \$59,808,000.

In 2019 United Methodist Women will celebrate 150 years since the founding of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society in 1869. One component of that celebration will be a major fund-raising campaign to assure the work of United Methodist Women now and into the future.

The promotion was officially launched at the Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky, April 25-27. At that time Harriett Olson, General Secretary of United Methodist Women, asked, “What if part of our legacy to our daughters, our nieces, our granddaughters were an endowment to permanently ensure the work of mission allowing them to focus on giving to the needs of the world that move their hearts and souls?” asked Ms Olson.

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Legacy Endowment Fund (Continued from p. 5)

She then announced that the National Office had already received a “challenge grant” in the amount of \$120,867 from the retired deaconesses, missionaries and home missionaries at Brooks-Howell Home who were “sent out” by the Woman’s Division of the Methodist Church prior to 1964 and the Women’s Society of the Evangelical United Brethren Churches prior to 1968.

Throughout the next four years, 2015-2018 and culminating in 2019, every United Methodist Woman in every local unit will be asked: 1) To increase her pledge, and an additional \$18.69 (to match our founding year) for each year of the 150th Anniversary Era Celebration (or perhaps by \$15.00 for our 150th Anniversary;) 2) To consider a major gift over and above the pledge; and 3) To include United Methodist Women, National Office, in their Will/Estate Planning.

An additional gift of \$18.69 for each year, 2015-2018, by each of the 800,000 members of United Methodist Women would equal \$59,808,000. Gifts of this amount or gifts of greater amounts of \$1,869 or \$1500 or more would assure the work of United Methodist Women now and into the future. This would make it possible for our United Methodist Women, National Office to fulfill the theme of the 2014 Assembly “Make It Happen!” - spreading - *Faith, Hope and Love in Action* in response to the ever increasing needs of women, children and youth here in the United States and around the world

--Betty J. Letzig, Retired Deaconess



Tracey Owens Is Consecrated as a Deaconess

Tracey Owens was born on November 3, 1961 in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she grew up in the suburbs. Her parents are Ronald (Ronnie) and Glenda Stout and she has one sister, Rhonda Branson, who is five years younger. She is now married with two children. They run a family business, Stout Trucking, Inc. Tracey was blessed to have parents who lived exemplary lives and they made sure that everyone was in church every Sunday. They began attending Tabernacle UMC, Western North Carolina Conference, when she was six years old, and her family is still active there. She was baptized in 1972 and joined the church in 1974. As a youth, she was involved in UMYF, Youth Choir, Sunday School, and she directed the Children’s Choir.

Tracey attended Alamance and Nathaniel Greene Elementary Schools, and Southeast Junior and Senior High Schools. She was a good student, with membership in the Beta Club (Junior High) and National Honor Society (Senior High). Since the seventh grade she was involved in the music programs at school, and was the first student to be chosen to sing with “The Ensemble” as a sophomore. She was in the musicals “South Pacific” and played Golde in “Fiddler on the Roof.” Her classmates voted her the senior superlative “Most Talented.” In the summer of 1979, she was chosen to attend the NC Governor’s School, specializing in Chorus.

During the next years she attended college at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She started out as a Music major, but decided to change her major to Business Administration. There followed years of summer work at Duke Power Co. as a teller and summer intern, and in the summer of 1983 she was chosen to be a member of the

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Tracey Owens (Continued from p. 6)

Western NC Conference's Scandinavian Caravan. This was an exchange program with the UMC in Scandinavia for college students to visit and minister to the churches there. They were the first group allowed to go behind the Iron Curtain in Estonia.

In the fall of 1981 she began dating Warren Owens, her minister's son. Warren graduated from High Point College in 1982 and began his graduate studies at the Institute for Textile Technology in Charlottesville, VA. They both graduated in 1984 and were married on June 30.

Their first home was in Pinehurst, NC. Warren was working in the carpet division of J. P. Stevens, Corp. Tracey worked at an insurance agency. They were very involved in their church, Southern Pines UMC, North Carolina Conference, and were active in Choir, Sunday School, the Drama Club, and Young Adult Fellowship. They led the Junior UMYF, and Tracey was active in UMW. She attended children and youth workshops and felt the presence of God in a new way; she felt God calling her to apply for the position of Director of Lay Ministries at her church. She did so, and was hired in August 1986.

In October 1987 they moved to Columbus, Georgia, and began attending St. Luke UMC Church. There she was active in Choir, Sunday School, Education Committee and Disciple I & II. She and Warren were a member of the mission team that went to Belize in 1989 to build a church there. She was hired as a preschool teacher at the St. Luke Child Development Center, and also as the Youth Choir Director.

In May 1992 another job change came about for Warren, and they moved to Calhoun, GA. She became employed as the Director of Program at Calhoun First UMC. And worked there for three years. She especially enjoyed working with older adults.

From 1996-1997 she worked part-time at a Tea Room/Antique shop. The couple became involved in a small country church in Calhoun, Wesley Chapel UMC. Tracey was elected the Education &

Interpretation Coordinator of the District UMW. They were able to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January-February 1996. In January 1998 she began work at Ringold UMC, North Georgia Conference, as their Children's Director.

In November of 1998 Warren informed Tracey that he had felt the call into a full-time ordained ministry. It was a major change from his career in the carpet industry. They returned to North Carolina and Warren began attending Duke Divinity School. He was also a student pastor serving a three-point charge in the Sanford District, NC Conference. Tracey began working in her family's business.

Samuel Warren Owens was born on November 10, 2000. After waiting 16 years for a baby, Tracey became a stay-at-home mom.

Warren was assigned to Cherry Street/Hiatt UMC in the Winston Salem District, Western NC Conference, in January 2003. Tracey began working part-time in the family business. She became the choir director and later the pianist at Hiatt and was involved in the UMW at both churches.

In June 2006, they moved to Avery's Creek UMC in the Asheville District, Western NC Conference. Samuel was starting kindergarten, so Tracey wanted a part-time job. She became the Administrative Assistant at Biltmore UMC in September 2006. In the summer of 2009 she began to seek full-time employment with benefits. She wanted to be in some type of ministry. She applied at Brooks-Howell Home and was hired as the Activities Coordinator in September 2009. She remains there today in that capacity.

In February 2011 Warren was appointed to Acton UMC due to the death of the former pastor. Tracey is involved there in the Choir, Sunday School, UMW, and on the cooking team for Wednesday night fellowship. She became a member of the Nominating Committee for the Asheville District UMW, and this year is Spiritual

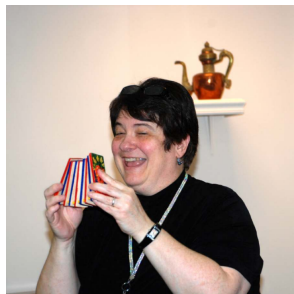
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Tracey Owens (Continued from p. 7)

Growth Coordinator for the (now named) Blue Ridge District UMW.

During the last two years she prepared to become a deaconess, and at the UMW Assembly in Louisville she was consecrated as a Deaconess of the United Methodist Church.

We welcome Tracey as she returns to her work as a Deaconess!



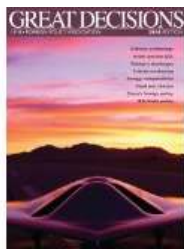
Tracey directing the “rhythm band” with residents from the health unit.



–Adapted from an autobiography written by Tracey Owens. Photos by Debbie Pittman

Great Decisions: Participating in Discussions that make a difference

Twenty plus Brooks-Howell residents have been participating in the 2014 Great Decisions program of the Foreign Policy Association. After each session participants are able to submit a ballot that reflects their views on very important issues facing the United States Government. Policymakers who are involved in shaping foreign policy will receive these ballots. Perhaps our ballots will influence foreign policymakers to see and act on new perspectives. The issues



include U.S. trade policy, China’s foreign policy, Energy Independence, Islamic Awakening, Turkey’s challenges, Israel and the U.S., Defense Technology, and Food and Climate. The discussions are informative, lively, and many of the participants have first-hand experience in the countries and the issues we discuss. Thank you to the presenters that brought this very important opportunity to Brooks-Howell: Don Turman, coordinator, June Fischer, publicity, and presenters Doug Wingeier, Barbara Campbell, Betty Letzig, Esther Megill, Mary Z. Longstreth, Gail Hipkins, LeGrand Smith.

–Marcia Knight

OUR NEW VIDEO IS READY!

Released during Assembly, “Putting the Pieces Together” tells the story of Brooks-Howell from its beginning to the present. If you’ve ever wondered what it is like to live at Brooks-Howell, what the buildings look like or what you can do to help, this is the video for you. In less than 16 minutes you will find out why Brooks-Howell was created, see the facilities and care levels that are available, meet some of our residents (deaconesses, missionaries and volunteers in mission) and learn how Brooks-Howell gives back to our community.

To order your copy, please send a request to
Public Relations
Brooks-Howell Home
266 Merrimon Ave
Asheville NC 28801

A contribution to help cover printing and mailing costs is appreciated.



–Debbie Pittman

[Editor’s note: We owe our appreciation to Debbie for ‘putting the pieces together’ for this video!]

Pfeiffer University Students Visit

In the late morning of April 3 twenty plus students and professors from Pfeiffer University arrived at Brooks-Howell. The students, several of them international students, were members of a Servant Leadership Class being taught by Dr. Patty Meyers who accompanied them. (Dr. Meyers holds the position at Pfeiffer formerly held by resident Susan Carmichael.)

There were special moments when residents had direct contact with students that made this a special time for both. The students toured areas of Brooks-Howell where their guides live and touch the lives of other residents.

At lunch, instead of being isolated in their own group, the students were seated among residents, and much lively conversation made our dining room ring with shared stories and with laughter. The students then met with individual residents to interview them, in order to write a report for Dr. Meyers.

The chapel service, which the students led, was special to all present. It created a unique time that produces happy memories. The residents will not forget these students and the joy they shared.

—Ann Janzen

A Visit from the Bishop

Because of the beautiful location of Brooks-Howell Home in Western North Carolina, only twenty miles from the Lake Junaluska Conference Grounds, the residents are often blessed to receive visitors from all over the world. On March 20, 2014, Brooks-Howell Home enjoyed fellowship with Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams and his wife Esme, from South Africa. Along with our Chaplain, Don Turman, the Bishop led us in a special Lenten service, “What Shall I Do?” He reminded us of what God requires of Christians, and he served as a living example of humility throughout his visit.

Bishop Abrahams was born in the midst of Africa’s apartheid struggles. He said, “I grew up in a home where the Biblical texts were as important as the freedom songs. I attended all the women’s meetings in my mother’s belly.” Early on, he knew he would become a minister. He studied at Rhodes University, the University of Cape Town, Federal Theological Seminary, and Pacific School of Religion.

At age 37, Ivan Abrahams became the youngest person appointed bishop in Africa. He worked on reparations when apartheid was over. From 2003 through 2012, he served as Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, one of the largest Christian denominations there. He served as co-chair of the South African National Religious Leaders Forum for ten years and on the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches. He gave the homily at the Memorial Service of Nelson Mandela.

Bishop Abrahams is the fourth person and first South African to be General Secretary of the World Methodist Council, where he has served for the past three years. He explained, “There are 80 different strands of Methodists. There are eighty million Methodists globally, in 132 countries. Twenty million of them are not a part of the family. My task is to tell them there is room at the table, a Methodist UN where the smallest group has a voice.” He also insists that women serving the church should be considered equal with their male counterparts.

Bishop and Mrs. Abrahams live and work at Lake Junaluska. They are considering a move to Asheville so that Esme can work there and become more active in the community. Esme is a Registered Nurse who worked her way up in hospital management until she became the COO for a private, for-profit hospital, one of the largest in South Africa, where she served for ten years.

When asked about his next big project, Bishop Abrahams said, “The World Methodist Council, in cooperation with the World Federation of Women,

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Bishop Abrahams (Continued from p. 9)

will hold a conference in North America for the first time in forty years. It will be held for four days in Houston in 2016. People will come from every conference in the world. They will receive the best there is to be offered, many courses from many traditions, leading to continued dedication. They will even receive college credit for their work.” The Bishop’s smile was contagious and his own dedication showed through.

The Brooks-Howell residents appreciated Bishop and Mrs. Abrahams’s chapel visit, and many expressed hope that they will return to their campus soon.

–Gail Hipkins



The Altar from the Good Friday Tenebrae Service

[Photo: Alycia Johnson]

From Our Chaplain--

Spring

The effect of spring on many of us is nothing less than miraculous. As the earth greens and blossoms, we, too, feel our spirits lightened, our bodies invigorated, and our minds refreshed.

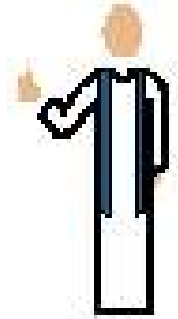
But I think it is more than a change of seasons that is responsible for the change in us. During Lent many of us have engaged in spiritual disciplines that have nurtured our spirits and made possible new growth and a fresh outlook on life and the world around us. The fruit of our Lenten disciplines is realized in a new alertness to the importance of our relationships and the needs of the world.

Through spring it is as if God is showing us what we can be. Lent may have been for us what the period of winter dormancy is for plants. Now as the plants are bursting forth with new growth and life and preparing to bear fruit it will be that way with us if Lent has been for us forty days of spiritual retreat.

During a recent storm, many trees in our area were uprooted, including one in our son’s yard. It was the type of tree that is notorious for shallow roots. It was a reminder to me of the importance of the daily disciplines that keep us deeply rooted in God’s love and the truths that Jesus taught and upheld all the way to the cross—a way of life that must extend beyond Lent.

So, as I am again captivated by the miracles of spring, I also commit myself to continue the disciplines of Lent that produce life and growth.

--Don Turman, Chaplain



BIRTHDAYS

May

RESIDENTS

2 ETHEL RADDON
15 MARILYN BENSON
19 JUNE FISCHER
21 PATRICIA RIDDELL
24 JEAN MORGAN
31 RAMONA TURMAN



EMPLOYEES

2 LYUDMILA YAROSH, NURSING
9 BARBARA INGLE, NURSING
21 FREDA WOODY, NURSING
27 VELIA VALDEZ, ENVIRONMENTAL SVS.

RESIDENTS

19 GAIL HIPKINS
20 LEON STRUNK
30 JACK MINER



EMPLOYEES

6 BRITTANY EDWARDS, NURSING
7 CAROLE GILHAM, ADMINISTRATION
7 JEAN METCALF, NURSING
8 DANNY DUMORE, DIETARY
12 LYDIA DUNCH, DIETARY
16 NANCY GARRISON, ADMINISTRATION
23 MARSELINO PLASCENCIA, DIETARY
25 BEATRIZ DE LA CRUZ

