

SERENDIPITOR



Brooks-Howell Home

Phone: (828) 253-6712
VOL. XXXVI NO. 6

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Web-Site: <http://www.brooks-howell.org>
November-December 2010

Come to the Fair!



Photo: E. Megill

From Our Administrator - -



Fall greetings from Brooks-Howell. I hope your fall is as beautiful as it is here in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Our home has been decorated for fall and Thanksgiving with a hint of Halloween. In late September our Food Services Director Susan Gerrie created a wonderful fall fair. Things were happening all over the building which you can read about later in this issue.

From time to time thru the years we have spread the ashes of some of our residents on our grounds. Because of the urging of the Reverend John Krummel (who had served in Japan) to remember these people in writing somewhere, I began the search for some way to memorialize all of the missionaries and deaconesses who have lived at Brooks-Howell Home. A few years ago I found a company in New Jersey that did wooden, brass, and copper trees, but unfortunately we did not have the funds for it. Thanks to an anonymous contribution we finally have enough to begin the trees. So far we have three in our stand of trees, and the funds for 350 leaves. If you had or have a loved one at Brooks-Howell, we are accepting contributions for the leaves and future trees that we will need. The trees will be sent to us in late November or December. Look for a picture in a future *Serendipitor*.

To date there has been 426 Missionaries and Deaconesses who have lived or still live at Brooks-Howell Home.

I have just returned from The Women's Division semiannual board meeting, where many members of the staff and fifty women from your conferences continue to work day and night to handle the affairs of the United Methodist Women. Please believe me when I say they work very hard on your behalf and for the causes you believe in.

While I know there is no such thing as a happy memorial service, I believe the service held for Deaconess Sybil Dodson was very close. In the

Chapel her children put fall leaves and fall flowers in pottery made by the Dodson family. While her daughter Deaconess Becky Louter spoke of her Mother, Becky's twin girls found bells to ring. It would have made Sybil smile that her precious grandchildren were enjoying themselves. In the Rose Garden Sybil's other grandchildren covered her ashes with roses. The day was beautiful and truly a day of celebration of Sybil's life.

We also lost two Outreach residents, Stuart Rabb on September 8 and John Planey September 22. A time of remembrance for Mr. Planey was held in the Brooks-Howell chapel on September 25.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Deaconess Nancy Garrison, Executive Director

Thanksgiving



“Now thank we all our God with heart and hands
and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world
rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on
our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

“O may this bounteous God through all our life
be near us,
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer
us;
and keep us still in grace, and guide us when
perplexed;
and free us from all ills, in this world and the next.”

—Martin Rinkart, 1663; translated by
Catherine Winkworth, 1858.

Welcome to the Smoky Mountain Fair!

Those visiting Brooks-Howell on Tuesday, September 28, might have wondered whether they were in a retirement facility. To create a festive setting, the large entry parlor held an unusual collection of quilts, some made by residents, many gifts to missionaries or gifts from home church groups long treasured. The variety of patterns and colors – pieced, embroidered and knit -- some utilitarian and others elegant, were a delight even here in Buncombe County where we see many elaborate carefully judged quilt shows. A blue ribbon was awarded to Margaret Stewart who showed a quilt she had made the year after high school graduation while she was unsuccessfully seeking work in those depression days



A few of the quilts in the display

The room also held a sale of jellies and jams, vegetable displays and our weekly fruit sale. All were things that took many of us back to memories of county and township fairs of our youth.

The day started with a country breakfast prepared by the dining room staff. No packaged cereal - but a feast of country ham, sausage biscuits, grits, cooked cereals, cinnamon rolls. The staff had stayed well into the night before and arrived early to make the dining room a festive place – colorful banners and tablecloths, and windows painted with country fair scenes (even a Ferris wheel). Breakfast had hardly settled when we gathered for dinner: barbecued ribs, fried chicken, corn dogs, baked beans, fried green

tomatoes, and salads - seven by count! Then deserts! Pecan pie, strawberry shortcake, funnel cakes and ice cream.



Charlene Wright, Assistant Food Services Director and Susan Gerrie, Director of Food Services with some of the colorful desserts

The Craft Room was transformed into a Midway.



A scheduled time for health unit residents offered bowling, golf, and ring toss with prizes. Frances Burns consented to try golf, examined the unusual club, asked if that hole was the one she should hit - and proceeded to sink the ball to great applause. By the way, did we mention food?? Popcorn, cracker jacks, cotton candy, other candy, peanuts and lemonade were available. In the afternoon the area was open to any who wanted to try the games. There was even a fortune teller for those who wanted to know their future.

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Country Fair (Continued from p. 3)

In the hallway on the ground floor were exhibits of old family photos, antiques, and a talent display of handcrafted objects.

Weary staff dismantled decorations at the end of the day. Everyone – residents and staff – agreed that the Fair had been a huge success.

–Joyce Anderegg and Elaine Gasser



Anna Sheley waits for food from Theresa Anderson and Sandy Harrison



Ruth Clark tries her hand at golf



Joyce Anderegg and Phyllis Glahn look on as Agnes Jones takes part in the ring toss



Esther Jones and Debbie Pittman examine their prizes



Martha Strunk has her fortune told

Exhibits



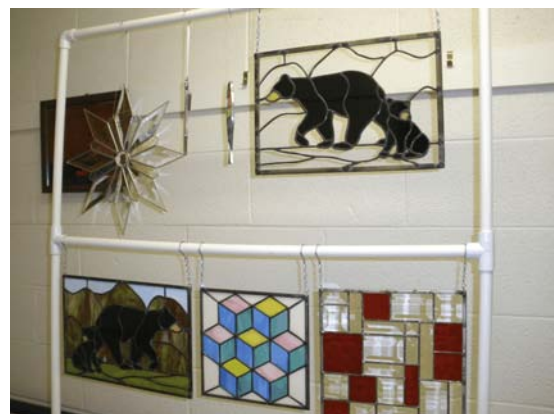
Antiques



Family photos



*June Fischer's stained glass exhibit
Talent Displays*



In Memory—

Sybil Marie Dodson

January 26, 1935

October 8, 2010



*Sybil with granddaughter
Elizabeth
June 2010*

Sybil Marie Dodson was born in Columbia, Mississippi, the daughter of Doris Smith and John Barnes Rawls.

She graduated with an A.B. in Religion from Scarritt College and a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington. She met her husband John while they were both serving as US2s in Nashville, Tennessee..

Sybil's passion for serving others was exemplified by her employment in a number of community service organizations, including the Centenary Methodist Community Center, Nashville; the Neighborhood House, Calexico, CA; the Bethlehem Center, Ft. Worth, TX; and the Senior Citizens' Drop-In Center, Ft. Worth, TX.

She was commissioned a Deaconess on January 23, 1977. In that capacity she served as director of the Open Door Community House, Columbus, GA; as a residence director and as director of the service learning program at Brevard College, Brevard, NC; and as a volunteer social worker at Brooks-Howell Home, Asheville, NC. She also served as a member of the Muskogee County, Ga. School Board.

Sybil and husband, John, started the family business, Mud Dabbers Pottery & Crafts, Inc., in Brevard in 1988. The business, which expanded to Waynesville in 1997, is now operated by their sons. Sybil also ran the store at Rockbrook Camp for Girls in Brevard for many years. During her retirement years, she

focused on her family, providing loving care for her grandchildren.

She was a member of Elizabeth Chapel UMC in Waynesville.

In her last illness Sybil came to Brooks-Howell Home, where she had served as a volunteer and was a frequent visitor.

Survivors include her husband of 48 years, John O. Dodson of Waynesville; two daughters, Beth Williams and husband, Stephen, of Rome, GA, and Becky Louter, and husband, Michael of Gray, TN; two sons, John E. Dodson, and wife, Carol, of Brevard, and Brad Dodson, and wife, Judy, of Waynesville; one brother, Winford Rawls, and wife, Judy, of Tylertown, MS, and one sister, Betty Bourne, and husband, Robert, of Columbia, MS; and nine grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made to Brooks-Howell Home, 266 Merrimon Ave., Asheville, NC 28801.

(Photo Jeannette Byrd)

Mary Aileen Miles

July 5, 1925

September 19, 2010

Another longtime friend who spent many months as a volunteer at Brooks-Howell Home passed away suddenly on Sunday, September 19, at Mt. Carmel East Hospital in Canal Winchester, Ohio. She was eighty-five years old.

Born Mary Aileen Ailes, in Columbus, Ohio, she graduated from Baptist Missionary Training School (later known as Colgate Rochester Divinity School) in Chicago, Illinois. While getting her degree in Early Childhood Education, Mary studied with Margaret Wise Brown, the author of children's book classics, *The Runaway Bunny* and *Goodnight Moon*.

Also while living in Chicago Mary met her husband, Robert Harsha Miles, a Lieutenant in the Army Air

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Mary Miles (Continued from p. 6)

Corps from Lamar, Colorado. They were married in 1945, lived in Colorado until Bob received his Engineering degree from the University of Denver in 1950, and moved back to Columbus shortly thereafter to raise their family. Mary, who was always magic with children, co-founded and ran the Faith Edu-Care Pre-School in Canal Winchester for thirty-five years.

Mary and Bob were married for fifty-two years when Bob passed away in 1997. She devoted the balance of her life to volunteer service, notably with the organization SOWERS and the Brooks-Howell Home.

She leaves behind one daughter, Vanessa Miles, and sons William Grover Miles, Roger Harsha Miles, Ray Michael Miles, Thomas Victor Miles, James Frederick Miles and Robert Paul Miles. Nineteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren will greatly miss their grandmother. Also surviving Mary is her brother, James Roger Ailes of Heath, Ohio.

A memorial service was held at the Faith United Methodist Church in Canal Winchester on September 23. In lieu of flowers, Mary wished contributions to be made in her name with Books for Africa–Rwanda.

She will be greatly missed.

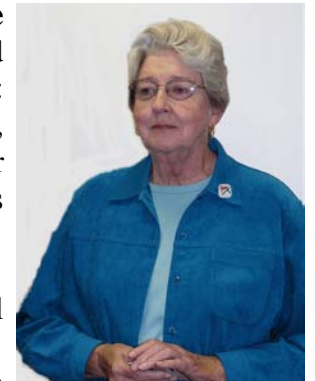


*Mary at a farewell party on May 25, 2004
(She returned at a later time!)*

Photo–E. Megill

I Remember—

I remember the phone call—out of the blue and completely unexpected: “Virginia, I am Bob Smith*, and I would like to volunteer to help in our church’s disaster response.”



“Well, that’s great. Tell me more.”

“I was a policeman in Atlanta for many years, and retired on disability, but I can do home repair. My wife is caring for an elderly mother and cannot be away, but I would like to do this.”

We talked for a while, and I got a sense of this person, and finally I said, “There’s one place that needs a person just like you. _____ County in West Virginia had a flood some time ago. The United Methodists and Mennonites have had volunteer teams doing the major repair. The person I sent to coordinate the teams and work with families has gone home. This is a very poor area, and there are still hurting families. I have been praying for the right person to send, who can work alone and do this—but I must tell you, this is a remote area and folks are very suspicious of outsiders.”

His reply was, “I grew up in that very county in West Virginia.”

He worked for several weeks completing the repairs, while he lived in his covered truck in a nearby state park. He was truly an answer to prayer.

–Virginia Miller

*Not his real name



News from Resident Services

Gaudy Day Celebration

On October 19 Brooks-Howell celebrated Gaudy Day. Everyone was encouraged to wear their most outlandish, creative, tasteless outfits. The health care residents were outfitted with mismatched hats, jewelry and scarves. To culminate the day, a Gaudy Day Party was held in the Chapel. The tables were decorated with newspaper tablecloths and centerpieces from all four seasons, including Easter and Christmas! The refreshments were gaudy as well; pigs-in-a-blanket, ants on a log (celery with peanut butter and raisins) and pink Valentine cupcakes. Prizes were awarded in the following categories: Best use of jewelry – Leon Strunk; Most creative floral – Frieda Morris; Most Creative Hat – Pat Riddell; Most colorful – Bev Reddick; Traveled the farthest distance – Ann Janzen (she claimed to be from Alaska); and Best Overall Effect – Lydia Dunch (our dining room hostess).

A highlight of the party was when Frieda Morris, dressed as a bride, and Nancy Garrison, dressed as her gaudy bridesmaid, paraded around the room as “Here Comes the Bride” was played on the piano. A fun, silly time was had by all!!

–Tracey Owens, Social Services



*Delores Carnegie, Pat Riddell, Agnes Jones
enjoying refreshments*



*The “Bridesmaid” (Nancy Garrison) and
“Bride” (Frieda Morris)*



*Some of the Staff in Their Gaudy Attire
Susan Gerrie, Nancy Garrison, Jeannette Byrd,
Tracey Owens, Myrika Chambers, Phyllis Glahn*

Photos–E. Megill

Bits and Pieces--

--Two groups visited with us during September. The Deaconess Candidates were part of our family for two weeks as they continued their study. A group of Church and Community Workers were here for a three-day retreat led by Kathryn Mitchem. Residents who had been Church and Community Workers were invited to participate. All found Brooks-Howell to be a graced place to spend some time apart from the busy world.

--A number of residents attended the Annual Meeting of the Conference United Methodist Women at Lake Junaluska on September 11 when special recognition was given to missionaries and deaconesses. Some attended the entire meeting, September 10-12.

--Several attended the MFSA (Methodist Federation for Social Action) meeting at Winston-Salem on September 25 when the Rev. Dr. Mark Sills led a program on immigration reform.

--Barbara Campbell, Betty Letzig, Esther Megill, and Doug and Carol Wingeier took part in the "Rethink Mission" Conference in Nashville October 14-17, and the UMMA meeting which followed, October 17-18.

--Resident Jorie Ruegger sponsored a reunion of Stony Point alumni from the fall of 1965, on October 24-29. Twenty-four persons, representing different denominations, met at Brooks-Howell.

Interesting Questions Overhead in BHH Halls

Question to Gladly Kiger: "Who painted your cane?"

When Naomi is away, I push Harry and fill empty spaces for devotions. His part of this action is to carry my cane. One time, when I was pushing him

back to his room after breakfast, he said "Gladly, that's the ugliest cane I've ever seen."

I answered, "Well, I'm sorry, but I have to have it."

Harry came back with, "When we get to my room, I'll show you a nice cane."

He pointed to a corner to a white cane with beautiful figures painted on it and said, "I'll tell you who did this, and I'll ask him to stop by your room. Stuart will make an ugly cane beautiful."

I was new at Brooks-Howell, and did not know who this person, named Stuart, was, or what he did, but I decided to trust Harry.

That afternoon there was a rhythmic bump-bump-bump on my door, and a young man stuck his head in and said, "What do you want on a pretty day like this?"

I answered, "Harry said that you could take my ugly cane and make it beautiful."

He looked at my cane and said, "Well, it looks useful, but it sure is ugly." He picked it up and started out, then stopped. "What do you want on it?"

By that time I knew Leon was an exceptional gardener, so I said, "I'm a flower lover like Leon; so how about some flowers like Leon's?" Stuart nodded and left.

The flowers that bloom year round on my cane now brighten my life and that of many other Brooks-Howell residents.

It is a beautiful cane, and I invite all of you to view it.

--Ann Janzen



From Our Chaplain - -

Blueberry Picking

For the past several years Ramona and I have joined with family and friends during Labor Day weekend for a day of blueberry picking in the high mountains of the Shining Rock Wilderness Area. We always look forward to this experience even though we know it will be a demanding outing.

There is a price to pay. It begins with an early morning one hour drive after which we may be greeted with cold temperatures, fog, rain or all three. Next is a three-mile walk to get to the blueberries which also includes steep climbing through briars and the thick growth of blueberry bushes. Midday may bring bright sun or rain showers. The long walk back out in late afternoon is more difficult because of the weight of a backpack filled with blueberries. And when the day is finally over, there are sore muscles and a tiredness that goes to the bone. This is when there may be some thoughts of never doing this again.

But the rewards are many and include the joy of spending the day with old friends and family members, spectacular views throughout the day, sweet blackberries to snack on while picking and snacking on sweet blueberries. Then the ultimate reward that makes it all worthwhile is that of bringing home an abundance of blueberries to enjoy in cobblers, cereal, and even homemade ice cream in the following months. And there is always enough to share with those who could not make the trip.

There is also the satisfaction of succeeding at something that was not easy, and that becomes the lesson to remember throughout the following year. Maintaining good relationships, keeping physically fit and being faithful to the spiritual disciplines that bring newness and growth are much like our annual outing to pick blueberries. The cost is high but the rewards make them extremely worthwhile.

--Don Turman, Chaplain



Spiritual Life Committee

September is always a busy time for residents and staff at Brooks-Howell. This year new activities were brought forward by the Spiritual Life Committee from their spring planning retreat.

Bev Reddick, who is already a busy member of the committee, asked for support for a silent retreat for residents, which was held on September 20, here at Brooks-Howell. A committee made up of Pat Richardson, Gladys Kiger, Chaplain Don Turman and Faye Lance, with Bev acting as chair, developed a plan uniquely designed for our residents. One participant said after the retreat that she did not know that twelve hours of her life could make that much difference to her. Silence was the predominating element, with times alone, times reading and truly absorbing scriptural passages, hymn singing and a communion service.

Pat Riddell put in place an invitation to all newly appointed clergy in the Asheville District and their spouses to come to lunch at Brooks-Howell. Members of the Spiritual Life Committee were hostesses at tables small enough to encourage conversation. After lunch the guests moved to the Media Room and saw the new DVD about Brooks-Howell. Many of them have parishioners who are residents, and there was much sharing of dreams and visions with them at this time. All were invited to chapel on that day, and Chaplain Turman talked with them about their preaching in the future. We also invited them to come to our beautiful chapel for private prayer and meditation at any time.

--Ann Janzen



