

# the ACORN

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*The ACORN is a publication for Trinity Oaks residents, written, photographed and published by residents. If you would like to submit an article or photograph, conduct an interview, or offer any expertise or assistance with The ACORN, please contact Frankie McWhorter or Jim Ryser.*

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***Try this on in the Spirit of Laughter.....***

***Doctor says to his patient:***

***"Your liver results are back. And frankly, they're very surprising considering that I only allowed you one glass of wine per week?"***

***The patient shrugs:***

***"Do you really think you are the only doctor I am going to?"***

## Editorial - Frankie McWhorter . . .

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### ***I CONFESS!!!!***

### ***'In the Spirit of Laughter'***

I confess! Sometimes my mind is bad and my memory faulty.

Call it a lapse of memory, *faux pas*, goof-up, or whatever! It happened as I was looking for material for this issue of the ACORN. I often attend the Memoirs Class as instructor Susan Shinn Turner says, "to scope out material for the ACORN". In October, I announced to the class the theme for this issue would be "spirit".

I had gotten the idea for the theme at a cottage Wine Down when I heard a group discussing their favorite "spirits". Of course, the spirits they were talking about were 200 proof.

In a Memoir Class, Frankie Ritch shared memories of a scramble for whiskey in her essay "Truck vs. Train", and Bobbie Ann Brown shared a humorous memory in "Tequila". Both seemed on theme, and I was off to a good start with articles for the ACORN.

As I searched for other writings that fit the theme, I remembered a memorable essay Carolyn Myers had written about her neighbor, a veteran. That surely was about the "Spirit of Patriotism". And Mike Weeks who chairs the Employee Appreciation Fund Committee had talked of the joy of distributing EAF funds donated by residents and presented to staff in appreciation at Christmas. "Hmmm", I thought, "that's the 'Spirit of Giving'." Jim Gilliland a retired Methodist minister said he would be pleased to write an essay about "The Spirit" as a Pastor's Reflection. But where was I to find two more pages to complete the ACORN layout.



Frankie McWhorter

I began looking through a file on my computer named "ACORN Ideas". In it I found "The Spirit of Santa Claus", and although the holidays had passed, it was such a well written and touching essay, I said, "That's it!". When I read the essay I saw written on the right "by Frankie Ritch", but that was no problem, I would call Frankie and ask if I might use it.

I picked up the phone and dialed Frankie. After the normal "hellos," I plunged into my spiel about her beautifully written and touching essay entitled "The Spirit of Santa Claus" and how much I wanted to use it as part of the next ACORN.

SILENCE.....!!!! Then, she replied, "I don't remember it!!!!!"

I'm sure in trying to cover the awkwardness of the moment, the ever gracious, kind, considerate Frankie added, "You know at my age....."

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I thought, "Could she have forgotten?", so, I continued with, "Frankie, it's the one in which you talk about your grandmother and your brother telling you there was no Santa Claus."

Then I heard Frankie say,...

"I don't think I wrote it!!!!!"

Since I thought maybe she simply had forgotten, I commented, "Let me do some checking to see where I found it, and I will call you back."

I immediately checked all my emails to and from members of the Memoir Class. I even went through each of the annual Memoir Class books. Then in a lucid moment, the thought hit me that during the holidays as I was searching for ideas on "spirit", I did some Goggling. I recalled I had saved some articles for inspiration. I opened the computer, and there it was, an essay "The Spirit of Santa Claus". To the right of the title were the words "by Frankie Ritch". "Ah ha!", I thought.

I was so pleased to have an answer, but then my scrambled brain began questioning. Frankie said she didn't write it. "Could I have somehow attributed the essay to her in error?" "After all, 'at my age'....!"

I had saved the essay from the Internet so I copied the first paragraph, pasted it into Search, and low and behold the entire

article appeared in a website [www.onelaughatitime.org](http://www.onelaughatitime.org). I had found it, but it had been submitted by Anonymous, not Frankie Ritch! I had no idea why I had attributed the it to Frankie. But I did know that the one with concern about "at my age..." wasn't Frankie. It was me!

I called Frankie and confessed. I laughed, and she laughed too, probably with a sigh of relief that it wasn't her. Then we laughed together. She even jokingly commented, "if the essay is that good, I wish I had written it".

I was embarrassed but relieved. Frankie surely must have been relieved that she wasn't the one who had forgotten. But the laughs were good laughs. It felt soooo good to laugh.

Laughter lifts the spirits even when one is laughing at oneself. It is OK. We need laughter. It helps us mentally and physically, and it does feel good. I've read it increases oxygen levels and endorphins and even helps us deal with pain.

I too read of an unexpected benefit that really spoke to me. It's that laughing is great to help tighten flabby stomach muscles. Now, that surely gives a new meaning to a good "belly laugh"!

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### ***Try this on in the Spirit of Laughter.....***

*A man walks into the library and goes up to the librarian and says,*

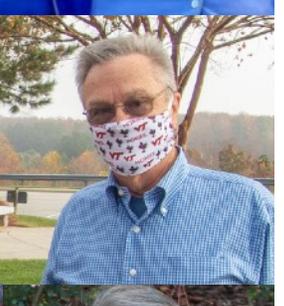
*"I'll have a cheese burger and fries, please."*

*The librarian says,*

*"Sir, you know you're in a library, right?"*

*The man says,*

*"Oh sorry... (in a whisper) ...I'll have a cheeseburger and fries, please."*



# ***The Spirit of Memories....“Tequila”***

By Bobbie Ann Brown



In 1958, “Tequila”, the Latin flavored rock and roll song which revered the well-known Mexican beverage was sung by The Champs and was constantly on the radio.

“I can still shut down a party with whiskey and red wine ....even champagne....But when I taste tequila, I still see ya cutting up the floor... tequila, tequila, tequila!”

Our good friend, Lewis, requested that we send him a bottle of the authentic tequila as we were living on the Mexican border while J. W. served at Laughlin Air Force Base. Yes, he wanted the one with the worm in it, and on a trip across the border we purchased the perfect bottle of tequila, yes, with the worm! We wrapped the bottle in a box with many layers of padding and securely enclosed in heavy brown wrapping paper. The postal worker looked at the package with questions on his face. Bottom line, you can’t mail a bottle of tequila via the United States Postal Service.

We were disappointed that Lewis would not receive the package, at least not soon. My mother and J. W.’s mother were planning a trip to visit us in the near future, so, we would send the package with them. Of course, we could not reveal what was contained in the box or they would not deliver said package. Both were strict Baptist, and alcohol of any form was a complete “no, no”.

The mothers arrived a couple of months later having flown to San Antonio, Texas, from Charlotte, North Carolina. This trip was the first airline trip for both of them,

and they even changed planes in Atlanta, Georgia, which was a nightmare to say the least. But that is another story.

After an exciting visit with our mothers, we were preparing to take them to the airport when we brought out the mystery package and asked them to take it home, call Lewis, and ask him to come by to retrieve his much sought- after item. They didn’t even ask what it was! Great! Everything would be fine even though the two of them would have NEVER taken the package if they had known it was a bottle of tequila, yes, with a worm!

Fast forward to the Charlotte Observer on Tuesday of the following week. Kays Gary, popular columnist who wrote stories inspired by his readers, started his column with the headline: Package Opened in Parking lot of East Baptist Church. He continued his column by explaining how a crowd of people gathered in the parking lot after worship service Sunday for two women who had recently flown to Texas to give a wrapped package to another church member. The recipient opened the package which was securely wrapped to reveal to the expectant group that had gathered, a bottle of Mexican tequila, yes, with a worm.

The two mothers were visually upset, spurring words to each other, denying knowing what was in the package, and probably saying obscenities about J. W. and me under their breaths. Kays Gary wrote that the two mothers abruptly left the parking lot probably to telephone the ones who sent the package and let them know how disappointed they were in their adult children and how embarrassed they were in front of their church friends.

Lewis was elated!!! He had Mexican tequila, yes, with a worm!

# ***The Spirit of Memories....***

## **Train vs. Truck**

By Frankie Ritch

The summer while my brother Billy and I were living with the owners of the hotel in our little town, the siren signaling the need for volunteer fireman rang almost every week. Billy slept in a room with Pat, who was his age and best buddy, and I shared with my closest friend Judy. With the alarm ringing so frequently, Judy and I kept our clothes laid out ready to jump into.

One memorable late night what woke us instead of the screaming device was the explosive crash of train against truck only a block away on our two-block main street. By the time the call to action ended, we were in our clothes and on the way. When we arrived at the track, men and boys were scurrying around trying to avoid the broken glass while stuffing

bottles of whiskey in pockets and accumulating personal piles.

A tale remembered about a well known man was that when he was told there were better brands on the other side of the train, he abandoned his stash, which the trickster quickly confiscated.

The excitement was short lived, but all youngsters in town were confined to our quarters until our parents were convinced that all whiskey had been consumed.



Frankie Ritch

## **My Picture of Patriotism**

By Carolyn Myers

Ralph Sturkey,\* our former down-the-hill neighbor, is my picture of patriotism. Ralph served in the Marine Corps during WWII. After growing up in Salisbury, he served in China and other area of the Pacific during his military career. Every morning his ritual outside of the carport could be observed by neighbors: Ralph marched outside with the U.S. flag, carefully placing it in position on the post to fly all day. He then stepped back facing the flag where he stood straight and tall, giving a brisk salute before entering the house for the day's activities.



Carolyn Myers

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*\*(Ralph Sturkey, Jr. served with distinction as a US Marine Officer and participated in both Iwo Jima and Okinawa as well as in Northern China. He remained in his Trinity Oaks cottage home leading a dignified and full life and as the neighbor of Robert and Carolyn Myers until his death in 2012 at the age of 95. Carolyn's tribute was included in the 2017 The Stories We Tell, a Memoir Class Booklet of stories written by residents and friends of Trinity Oaks. A copy of the booklet is available in the Trinity Oaks Library.)*

# The Spirit of Santa Claus

By Anonymous; Source: [www.atimetolaugh.org](http://www.atimetolaugh.org)

I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit Grandma on the day my brother dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," he jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted, "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad! Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun.

"Where" turned out to be Kirby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten



dollars. That was a bundle in those days.

"Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kirby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church.

I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat.

I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat! I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?", the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby."

The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) in Christmas paper and

ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it. Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially, one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally, it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were -- ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95. May you always have LOVE to share, HEALTH to spare and FRIENDS that care...And may you always believe in the magic of Santa Claus!



# The Spirit of Giving

## Christmas Comes Early to Trinity Oaks Staff

by Mike Weeks



Mike Weeks

The employees of Trinity Oaks Retirement Center received an early Christmas present on December 15<sup>th</sup> – a cash gift from the Employee Appreciation Fund. The EAF was set up by Trinity Oaks

residents many years ago to provide a way to thank the employees, since ad hoc tips and gifts are not permitted. The Fund is operated by the residents entirely independently of Trinity Oaks management. Residents make voluntary contributions to the Fund during the year and distribute the Fund balance to the employees in mid-December each year, in time for Christmas. The Fund totaled a record \$73,790 in 2020 and was distributed to 100 full- and part-time employees, using a formula based solely on the number of hours worked during the year – not on job title or salary.

Four members of the Trinity Oaks Employee Appreciation Fund Committee – Mike Weeks, Russ Gavitt, Donna Loosley, and Anne Wilson -- had the high honor of giving the individual gift envelopes to the employees. The employees showed obvious excitement as they received their gift and again later, when they opened the envelope and counted the cash. The Committee heard repeatedly how much they appreciated the generosity of the residents, and how rewarding it was to work at an organization where their hard work was tangibly acknowledged by the beneficiaries of their efforts. We also heard some specifics about how the gifts would be used, including some

unexpected Christmas presents, much needed car repairs, and post-pandemic family gatherings and vacations. The employees documented their appreciation



in the oversized thank-you card they signed and displayed in the Lodge following the distribution.

The Committee was surprised and pleased at the generosity of the residents during 2020. Contributions were received throughout the year from 137 residential units and 35 non-residents (friends and family of residents). How fitting it is to have collected a record amount during a pandemic year, when the demands and pressures on the staff were unprecedented!

Having said that, we are now in 2021, the pandemic and its aftereffects are still with us, and the Employee Appreciation Fund is starting over from scratch. The Committee's goal for 2021 is to match or exceed the funding level obtained in 2020. While this is a high bar, the Committee is confident that we can meet this goal if we residents continue to show how much we value the wonderful staff at Trinity Oaks.

# AROUND CAMPUS - Residents and Staff

**WELCOME NEW TRINITY OAKS RESIDENTS FOR 2020:** Betty Brown, Jack Reid, Eston Doyle, Sally Hutchinson, Bill Staton, Magaretta "Peggy" Curran, Mary Ann and Edward (Ed) Klebaur, Nelson and Eula "Tennie" Shepherd, Jacqueline "Jackie" Taylor, Yvonne and David McGaha, Betty Willis, Edwin (Ed) and Peggy Lutz, Judy and Eric Teeter, John Phillips, Julia "Faye" Phillips, Patricia Lee and Scott Shaffer.

**TORA OFFICERS for 2021 are:** President - Linda Thurston, Vice President - Kathy Gregg, Secretary - Terri Carnes, Treasurer - Allen Brantley, Immediate Past President - Richard Paschall....**TORA AREA (FLOOR) REPRESENTATIVES for 2021 are:** 1st floor - Al Carter , 2nd Floor - Donna Loosely, 3rd Floor - Courtney Drake, Assisted Living - Mary Kidd , Cottages - John McWhorter....**A DATA ADVISORY COMMITTEE** will assist management in keeping resident information (e-mail address, telephone numbers, etc.) updated and accurate on the Portal, in the Resident Directory and at the Front Desk. Chairperson is Russie Hattaway with members Billie Bryant and Georgina Ryon.... **SPECIAL THANKS** to Henry Brown, William (Bill) Gregg, Jamie King, and Frankie Ritch who served in various TORA capacities for 2020 . Also Thank You to Bea Hall and Susan King who served on TORA committees.

**SWINGS** have been installed near the Lodge 1) between B and C wings and 2) near the entrance to Trinity Oaks up the hill on the left behind the Apartment sign and across from the children's swing set. The swings were purchased with a donation from \*Shop on the Corner, installed by Maintenance, and made easily accessible with paved pads and walkways thanks to Management. Two swings for the cottages have been funded and will be installed at a later date. Photos of the swings are on The Portal under the *video/gallery tab*. \*(Note: In 2020 Shop on the Corner also donated funds to the Employee Assistance Fund and purchased new "fair linen" cloth for the chapel altar.)

**FROM THE LIBRARY -** If you are QUARANTINED: Please **DO NOT RETURN BOOKS TO THE LIBRARY!** Instead, keep them in your residence until your quarantine ends. When Quarantine Ends, place them in a bag and place them on the floor next to the Library Return shelf to receive *special attention*. If you WANT BOOKS while QUARANTINED make a list of several authors and titles and Debbie Snyder will send your list to the Rowan Public Library. Your requests will be pulled if available. Debbie also can make returns. The Library Committee, a TORA committee, is Holt Aaron, Billie Bryant, Donna Loosely and Marie Magaletti. They send a "*Tremendous Thank You* to those who make Monetary Donations and Contributions of Books." **YOU GROW THE LIBRARY!**

**THE VACCINE -** Thank you to Trinity Oaks Staff for planning and executing the delivery of the first dose of COVID VACCINE to residents and staff on January 12. It was flawless and the diligence and excellence in planning is greatly appreciated.

**BLESSINGS** to David Blizzard for the masterful wooden cross he made that now graces the chapel.



# Pastor's Reflections . . . .

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## Feel the Spirit

by Rev. Dr Jim Gilland

Spirit is an interesting word. It can be understood as the real meaning behind something. A team with spirit means that they are ready to play. "Good spirits" means happiness. Patriotism often evokes "the Spirit of '76". The dictionary defines spirit as "the seat of emotions and character, a person's true self, the character of a person".



Rev. Dr. Jim Gilland

As a pastor/teacher I am drawn to the Bible's understanding of the word which appears in fifty-one of its books. I like to sing "Come Holy Spirit truth divine...Love divine...power divine...right divine". I think of the spirit as the gentle grace of God drawing me to trust, believe, and serve. That gentle grace is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest.

The Spirit offers the gift of understanding, perceiving with the mind as well as with feelings, to know well, and to love. The Spirit offers the gift of fellowship, partnership, and communion. The Spirit offers the gift of goodness, honesty, kindness, graciousness. The Spirit offers the gift of holiness, reverence, and truthfulness. The Spirit offers the gift of faithfulness, persuasion, fidelity and reliability.

The greatest gift is that of unconditional love—"a love that will not let us go". Perhaps you remember George Matheson's hymn:

*O love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

I invite you to read again I Corinthians 13 which reminds that faith, hope, and love abide, but "the greatest of these is love".

I have felt these gifts of the Spirit often in my life and ministry helping guide me in faithfulness to my calling. Jesus invited his followers to receive his Spirit. I rejoice in its presence now and often feel the joy in singing the old gospel song:

*"Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray."*

# We Remember...

## **Marcia Ann Griffin Bremser**

**November 21, 1932  
October 14, 2020**

*...a fantastic person who embraced happiness and as an artist created beautiful crewel pictures. She was devoted to all Girl Scouts and was President of the Hornet's Nest Council. A member of the American Contract Bridge League, she taught others to play Bridge. And she LOVED those Steelers!*

## **Mary Drinkard Key**

**January 15, 1929  
October 19, 2020**

*...a gatherer of people whether at church, school, or anywhere. She was always in motion, ever smiling, conversing, singing, and dancing every chance she got. As a wife and matriarch of a large extended family as well as a friend, neighbor, teacher, she was much loved and respected as the beautiful, talented, loving soul she was. She started Sing-a-Long and Conversational French and Spanish groups at Trinity Oaks.*

## **Francis Ann Diehl Tannehill**

**September 24, 1927  
October 25, 2020**

*...a lover of life, family, books, people, friends, church, choir and, of course Dr. Bob, whom she put through medical school by working in a lab. She is remembered for her life of service and dedication. With a beautiful alto voice, amazing quilting skills, fierce determination, mastery of party giving and hostessing, tenacity, the skill at of making people comfortable, and the ability to organize and leave things better than she found them, she left her mark on all who knew her.*

## **John "Jack" Connery**

**June 4, 1934  
November 5, 2020**

*...trusted and kind, ever loyal to family and friends. He had a ready smile, a bit of dry humor and a quick retort, and he had a gift of making everyone comfortable. He recognized the value of volunteering and served as President of the Resident's Association. After retiring as a Naval Commander with 20 years of service, he became a technical writer. He always loved a great story, and in 2017 wrote his memoir, "After a Meal Like This, You Don't Need Dessert", to share his early life.*

## **Rev. Maurice Staley**

**September 4, 1927  
November 19, 2020**

*... a kind, gentle, faithful servant who demonstrated commitment to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ every day. He was a friend to all, and after retiring as a Lutheran minister, he continued to minister with the NC Prison Ministry, the Boy Scouts (he was an Eagle Scout), and with Assisted Living where he lead devotionals and provided spiritual care to other residents and caregivers. He never failed to express thanks and gratitude for any kindness. He was a blessing to many.*

## **Martha Smithdeal Brown**

**May 20, 1923  
November 28, 2020**

*...mother of three sons, grandmother of six, and great grandmother of eight. She was dedicated to family and took great pride in her position as Assistant Director of Food Services for Cabarrus County Schools. She loved crocheting, quilting and reading Christian literature.*

## **Mary Lou Null**

**October 19, 1927  
January 4, 2021**

*...a loving and devoted mother, wife and homemaker who was filled with kindness and laughter. She loved gardening, the arts, interior decorating and long conversations. A talented knitter she made sweaters, baby blankets, prayer shawls and helmet liners. She too was famous for her cookies, chocolate cake, homemade bread, and the delicious "smell of her kitchen".*

**"One lives in the hope of becoming a memory." Antonio Porchia**

## ***The Spirit of Thanks***

**Christmas 2020**

**So, so many thanks go out to each of you for everything you have done in caring for all Trinity Oaks residents: From concern for our health, activities to help in keeping us sane, surprise treats to small events and dining rearrangement, and there is the personal touch - you have gone above and beyond the realm of your duties. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE.**

**Trinity Oaks is a special place - not like any other. It is because of the attention you give to make us all happy. I was certainly blessed that God directed me to make the move to Trinity Oaks.**

**It is my hope that you will be able to spend some time with your family and enjoy the blessings of the season.**

**Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy HEALTHY New Year!!!**

**Georgina Ryon**