

PARCR NEWSLETTER

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Masonic Village, Elizabethtown

As the January meeting opened, we were told that George Tjiattas, PARCR president, was unable to be present. Later it was announced that he had collapsed in his home Tuesday evening and had been taken to the hospital. He was released on Wednesday morning with instructions to go home and rest and go no where for the rest of the day. Ray Vaughn, the First Vice president presided for the day.

After an opening prayer, Bill Davis, the CEO of the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown, gave a presentation on Advocacy, emphasized as essential by both AAHSA and PANPHA. 501 © (3) organizations are permitted to advocate for issues but not for candidates. Resident Association Councils are an already established structure to disseminate information for action. PANPHA has asked member communities to select a Member Advocacy Coordinator (MAC) to promote advocacy. Councils can make voluntary decisions on issues, either to move forward in promoting advocacy or not. Methods of advocacy include letter writing, e-mail and phone calls. The use of a form letter to make clear the issue and points either in favor or opposed can be helpful, but not sending the form letter itself to legislators. Personally formulated letters, e-mails, or phone calls are much more effective than form letters.

A couple of successful advocacy actions were cited. In August of 2007 a bill to freeze Medicare payments to Nursing Homes was under consideration. 77% of residents were contacted. 72% participated. The program was pulled out of consideration in December 2007. Another bill being considered in October 2007 proposed reconsideration of user fees. After advocacy action, it was pulled in December 2007.

Present concerns include funding of nursing facilities with limited state and federal dollars.

Following this instructive presentation, Ray Betts, president of the Resident Council of Masonic Village, Elizabethtown gave a brief welcome, and offered a tour of the Model Railroad set up to those interested, at the end of the meeting.

The business meeting followed. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as sent out. Evert Fuller, the PARCR secretary gave a report on the Web site. It has been provided to PARCR free but the person who has been giving it has sold the agency and the new owner does not feel able to provide the same free service. A decision will have to be made about continuing the site.

Evert spoke about the increasing cost of postage. One possible way of saving money would be the use of non-profit bulk mailing. The minimum amount of mailing to use this would be 200 items at one time. This means we need an increase of at least 80 new members, either communities or associate members.

After the approval of the Treasurer's report, the membership chair, Carol Wendell, told us that she has tried sending letters to communities not presently members of PARCR but because she does not have the names of Council officers, her letters have to go to administrators. She asked that if we had contacts within non member communities to please give her the names and addresses so that she can use these contacts to get in touch with resident officers.

The new legislative chair person, Sarah Hughes, from Green Ridge Village, was introduced and reported that she was just getting started, and that the legislature was beginning its session. More will be reported later.

The Program Chairman talked about some of the topics which are being considered for future programs, such as drugs, 2008 tax questions, joint ownership of assets, and what is the most fun in each community. The program for the April meeting at Woodcrest Villa will be Katherine Pearson of Dickinson Law School speaking on CCRC resident membership on Boards. In July the program will be on tax questions.

Under new business, a resolution was unanimously passed sending good wishes for quick and complete recovery to George Tjiattas and his wife, who had a problem with irregular heart beat and had a pace maker installed.

Russ McDaid from PANPHA reemphasized the importance of Advocacy. He introduced Chris Glen who is a new staff person at PANPHA who is responsible for establishing communication between residents in communities and PANPHA. Chris distributed cards seeking names, addresses and e-mail addresses of delegates and visitors so information can be distributed when issues need to be considered. Russ also urged that each community make sure that a MAC has been designated for the community.

Our program chairman gave an extensive introduction of our speaker, John M. Levitski of PP&L, who has a varied background of service with PP&L. He spoke on the topic Understanding Deregulation and Electric Rates.

PP&L has 50 million customers both in this country and internationally. Power is generated 55% by coal, 20% nuclear, 8% gas and oil, 8% hydra power and other.

In 1998 competition was begun in Pennsylvania. Rate caps which were set at that time actually kept real competition from happening because of the artificial cap on the rates at a lower than actual market rate. Cost for electric rates includes generation of power, transmission, and actual delivery. In 2010, as deregulation occurs, the rates, no longer controlled by rate caps, will reflect the actual costs. PP&L has been making contracts in 2007, 2008, and 2009 so as to reduce the risks and control the costs.

During the period in which rate caps were in place various things happened to cause increasing costs including rising fuel costs, and new environmental regulations. Regulated States such as Alabama and Mississippi have not been immune from rate increases.

Mr. Levitski urged us to stay informed, think efficiency, and take advantage of the new tools from PP&L and other electric utilities. He pointed out that although some have sought the continuation of rate caps that is not the correct answer. The costs will continue to increase, and if rate caps are continued, it increases difficulty in borrowing for development, would lead to job losses, and ultimately might lead to bankrupting the company. Our electric service is a great value. Forbes Magazine listed PP&L as the best managed electric utility. Customer service is the top priority.

A number of questions were asked. One person asked about what PP&L was doing about using wind power and other "green energy" sources. Mr. Levitski said that the company is working to use these kinds of power generation where possible, but the starting costs for such power sources are high while the operating cost are low. Someone asked about the nuclear plants the company has, how old they are and what plans there are for new nuclear plants. The existing plants are 30 years old. The company is asking for them to be allowed to continue for another ten years, and has plans to build a third unit at Berwick. It is much easier and less expensive to add a unit to an existing plant than to build a new plant, especially with all the bureaucratic problems involved with getting the necessary permits. Another question concerned the problem of making sure coal was "clean". The company is installing scrubbers at two local power plants at considerable cost. The scrubbers are not only costly to install but also costly to maintain. Another person asked about the motivation behind deregulation. Some companies were in favor of it, and some pressure came from the government. While rate caps are a benefit to consumers for the time being, deregulation lets the market control the cost, permitting real competition.

Ray Vaughn thanked Mr. Levitski for his helpful and informative program. Then a very generous and delicious lunch was served.

Following lunch, Frank Stoltzfus, the Agricultural Production Supervisor for Masonic Village (he said this was a very fancy name for a farmer) gave an illustrated explanation of the use of the farm land at Masonic Village. The 1400 acre farm is divided between crop land and beef grazing. A farm market store, begun in the 30's to sell vegetables and fruit, is now selling both fruit and beef. Vegetables are no longer marketed there.

At the 2008 Farm Show, the Masonic Village herd was the number one herd. A bull calf, raised by a 4H teenager working with the staff, was the champion bull calf at the Farm Show.

The farm sells breeding stock and show cattle as well as semen from champion bulls. The beef is sold not only in the farm market store but also in other markets. In addition to the beef, the farm has 60 acres devoted to orchard with dwarf trees. There are 35 varieties of apples, 6 varieties of peaches with also pears, plums and a few nectarines.

In response to a question about organic farming, Mr. Stoltzfus said that the word "organic" requires quite specific definition, and so he prefers to talk about natural, and said that the farms production is 75 % natural.

After thanking the speaker for his excellent presentation, Ray Vaughn called for the roll call. 17 communities were present. Luther Ridge spoke about the LIFE program, which means Living Independently for the Elderly. A building is to be built in Chambersburg for day care for seniors who will continue to live at home. Brethren Village reported that a one hundred and ten million dollar project is about to be started. Messiah Village spoke about Pathways Institute which offers single day courses which are open to the public.

The next quarterly meeting will be held at Woodcrest Villa in Lancaster on April 9th. The July meeting will be held at Quincy Village and the October meeting will be at Sprenkle Village in York.

News from our Communities

Bethany Village

Bethany had a good response to this year's Fitness Challenge. They had a total of 104 people participate, 20 people less than last year, but Bethany finished with 160,150 minutes or 5345 miles which was about 400 miles more than last year. The average per person increased as well from 41 miles to 51 miles this year. 43 people logged over 50 miles, and four of them made over 100 miles.

The new Bethany West Cottages and Estate homes are not entirely gone, but there are only 17 remaining. Customers love the open floor plans and the large eat-in kitchens. The future residents of these homes have many choices to make, so that they truly get to make a home built to their tastes and likes.

Brethren Village

The Village is swiftly moving forward with its major campus redevelopment effort. The redevelopment project called Covenant Crossing at Brethren Village will greatly enhance the existing healthcare and assisted living services. The project components include a state of the art, new healthcare center with 78 private living units and 42 shared private living units, a new assisted living space featuring 36 private living units, a new assisted living memory support space featuring 25 private living units for memory support residents, an expansion of the Fieldcrest building including 135 independent living apartments, and a new Welcome Center with multipurpose and support space. Already there have been 100 apartments in the independent living portion pre-sold.

The 17th Annual Brethren Village Golf Tournament held on September 13th at Foxchase Golf Club raised a record \$30,178 for the Village's Good Samaritan Benevolent Fund. The net proceeds from the tournament will support the current benevolent needs of residents by providing financial assistance to those who are unable to pay the full cost of their care.

Cross Keys Village

Square Dancing in the Village picks up again in January. Strap on your dancin' shoes and do-se-do! Square dancing classes are starting in January and it's all the rave among the Villagers. No experience or partners required! You should be able to stand on your feet for an extended period of time and two left feet are prohibited.

Green Ridge Village

On Monday, November 12, the Green Ridge Village Auxiliary was awarded the *Spirit of Philanthropy Award* by the Central Pennsylvania Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals at a banquet held at the Sheraton Hershey-Harrisburg Hotel. Representing the Auxiliary were Barbara Rhodes, President, Elizabeth Banks, Bea Miller, Vivian Noss, Dorothy Reed, Goldie Pringle, and Ann Smith. Joining them at their table was Steve Proctor, President and CEO of PHI. Also honored, posthumously, was Margaret S. Strome, who served as Administrator of the Schock Home in Mt. Joy, was a PHI Board member, chaired the PHI Auxiliary, was a faithful volunteer and long-time resident of Green Ridge Village. She presided over the official formation of the Green Ridge Village Auxiliary in May of 1977. Margaret passed away September 30th, just shy of her 90th birthday.

Homewood at Plum Creek

What has 54 holes and 432 golfers? The answer: 3 Homewood Golf Classics that averaged 144 golfers each, who, along with our great sponsors, contributed \$228,648 for Homewood programs and activities.

Through the year, co-workers, residents and families have enjoyed special events in celebration of Homewood Retirement Centers' 75 Anniversary. From picnics to dances to religious services, the underlying theme honors Homewood's past, looks with hope to Homewood's future and celebrates what makes Homewood special – the people of Homewood.

A Harvest Social on Sept. 16th, attended by 88, kicked off the 2008 Auxiliary membership Campaign at Homewood at Plum Creek. Church representatives, guests and Homewood co-workers heard reports on auxiliary purchases totaling \$6,461 in the past year for items to enhance the care and help provide meaningful activities to residents in the hearth care units. Dues income and the profit from a tea held in June made these gives to the Homewood possible.

Dart Baseball has really caught on at Plum Creek. A 4 foot square print is mounted on a large board. Darts are thrown from 15 feet away. Areas on the board include strike, ball, single, double, foul ball, hit by pitch, double play. Where your dart lands determines what happens to your game. Teams play each Friday at 2:00 p.m. and there are enough residents participating to field four teams. Score cards are kept by the "official Scorers" who also produce batting averages every week. A couple of times a year there are games between residents and staff.

Landis Homes

Landis Homes in Color is a newly printed book of photographs taken on the retirement community campus. The book is the work of cottage residents Dr. J. Lester Eshleman and his wife Lois. It includes over 100 color photographs reflecting the changing seasons on the campus and surrounding properties. Many of the photos have been used on the closed circuit television on the campus along with announcements of the day. "So many people shared their appreciation with me for these images, and they encouraged me to put them all together somehow," said Dr. Eshleman. "This book is the result of their suggestions."

George Biggs enjoyed fishing all of his life. In late summer of 2007, when he entered the healthcare setting, George expressed his sadness at the possibility that he might not ever be able to go fishing again. Several healthcare and maintenance staff teamed up to share a late summer afternoon fishing trip to one of the Landis Homes ponds. George even invited his brother to join in the event. He caught his fish! "That experience meant so much to George," said his wife Doris. George talked about it for the next few weeks, right up until he passed away.

Lutheran Social Services

Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania broke ground Thursday, November 15 for a new building that will be home to LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly), an option for health care that helps individuals remain independent and living safely in the community for as long as possible. LIFE Lutheran Services is a creative program that serves seniors with chronic care needs, providing access to the full continuum of preventive, primary, acute and long-term care services.

Kelly Drive

In February, 2008, Dick Eisensmith, a cottage resident of the Village of Kelly Drive will have been an active member of the Boy Scouts of America for 65 years. In 1943 he officially joined Troop 37 and was an active participant until he received his draft notice in October 1949. After serving two years in the Army during the Korean War, Dick returned to York and to Troop 37. He served as Assistant Scout Master from 1948 – 1961, and as Scout Master from 1961-1977 and from 1988-1990. He has all the merit badges a scout can earn, including the highly sought after Silver Beaver Award (the highest award a volunteer can get in scouting) and the Shiff Scout Award for Wood Badge Training. He received the George Meaning award from his union for outstanding service to youth. Today at 77, Dick is still very much involved, serving on the Round Table Committee for the 1st Capital District of the Boy Scouts of America. He is an active presence with Troop 37, and continues to camp and go to as many of the events he can. "I won't leave scouting," he said. "They will have to kick me out." He means it – Scout's Honor!

Senior Companion Program volunteers and resident volunteers from the Village at Kelly Drive are hard at work creating 45 blankets to be donated to Bell Socialization Services in York. The blankets are being created as part of the Senior Companion Programs "Martin Luther King Day of Service." Resident volunteers in the Village at Kelly Drive contributed the blanket project by helping to fold the fleece material, count out pins, and assemble 45 individual "blanket kits" to be distributed to the Senior Companion volunteers. The Sewing Club has also offered to help complete any blankets that the Senior Companion volunteers are unable to finish.

A party attended by both Sprenkle Village and Kelly village residents was held at Kelly Manor on October 26 to celebrate Emily Swisher's 100th birthday. Born in Williamsport, PA in 1907, Emily was one of six children. Over several years, during the Great Depression, all six received their degrees from various colleges. Emily graduated from Dickinson Seminary, now known as Lycoming College. Following graduation, she was accepted to the Philadelphia College of Art, majoring in fashion design. Her first job in Philadelphia after graduation was for a company that designed for Wanamaker's Department Store. After her marriage to Oliver Swisher, the couple moved to York where their three daughters were born. Although Oliver's career took them to New York, when he retired they remember their love for York and they returned. In York, Emily became active in the York Art Association, taking and giving instruction. After Oliver passed away, Emily moved to a cottage in the Village at Sprenkle Drive. When she decided the cottage was too large, she moved to an apartment in Kelly Manor. She continued offering art lessons to residents of both Sprenkle Village and Kelly Drive.

Masonic Village

At the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown, summer weather and a beautiful lake provide the perfect setting for fishing. A wheelchair-accessible dock was built so all residents could enjoy this favorite pastime. The activity is an ideal opportunity to provide Therapeutic Recreation with a change of scenery; fresh air and sunshine.

When Masonic Village resident Louise Mahaffey's name was announced as the Pennsylvania Therapeutic Recreation Society's (PTRS) Volunteer of the Year, Louise was the only person surprised. "She's a great volunteer," Rhonda Conaway, Recreation Coordinator, said. "She's a godsend. She's always willing to help and does a lot of things that go unseen."

After a severe illness when she was 35, she didn't even recognize her family. "I was going to be put in a 'home'," she said. She defied all odds and decided to use her new-found faith to help others. She was heavily involved in her church and especially loved working as a youth leader. Now her work with residents who have Alzheimer's disease and dementia is very rewarding. She shares poems and stories about her grandma's farm and gardening, things residents can relate to. Louise has also worked with people, who due to curtain conditions are bed-ridden, even unable to open their eyes. She'll read a psalm or sing a hymn and watch their lips move along with hers.

Elizabethtown resident Carlton Stauffer may have saved up to 480 lives throughout his lifetime. He's not a fireman, EMT or doctor as you might expect. He's a blood donor. He gave his first pint in 1950. On Autumn Day this year, he donated his 160th pint.

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