



# THE CAROL WOODS NEWS

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## WARTIME CHRISTMAS STORIES

In December 1944, about one week into the Battle of the Bulge, I was taken prisoner along with ten GI's of our squad. I had seen two of our squad left for dead. By late that afternoon the Germans had collected a mob of us. We were marched into the lowest region of a Cathedral about dusk to a dimly lighted, windowless hall with benches (stone slabs) to sit on all night long.

Later that evening one GI started singing "Silent Night," suggesting that it was Christmas Eve. He sang most of the first verse just once and was unable to continue. His dry throat made for a mournful sound. We had gone without water or food the whole day and evening. There were a few muffled words of thanks. It was our Christmas Eve some where in Germany whatever the date.

*Lang Prouty*

During the war I lived with my parents in Berlin. Christmas 1942 I remember best. Although we were in the middle of the war, there were few air raids on Berlin. Christmas eve we attended church services. This was the first Christmas my future husband accompanied us. Coming home Frank asked my parents and me to come close to the Christmas tree. That's where he proposed! While slipping the ring on my finger, he made a short emotional speech about our shared hope for a more peaceful future. We were fortunate that night; the sirens did not go off.

*Edith Haubrichs*

Christmas in my town in Normandy France, during the war, saw mainly darkness outside, since no light was allowed to filter from the houses. We had warmth and weak light inside, because electricity was used sparingly — when it worked at all. On Christmas Eve, Madé and I, the youngest of six sisters and one brother, put up the crèche in a cardboard box we decorated with straw and moss, in a corner of the dining room, the only room with a woodstove. Then we joined the crowd in the kitchen, where our mother was preparing the stuffing for the goose, and all of us children helped, peeling chestnuts, paring salsify, slicing apples, while we sang and played word-games (our father was in his study, listening to the forbidden BBC to get truthful news). We also polished our shoes for Père Noël to put his presents in.

On Christmas morning we got out of bed early and ran downstairs, where our parents had lit a fire in the stove, and we waited to open the presents, starting with the youngest. We each had a big piece of hard candy. I remember once getting a lovely sewing box with pretty, colorful threads, while two older sisters got only a pair of panties. That was all my mother could find and afford. Then we got ready for Mass, which was an ordeal, for it was freezing in the big gothic church, thinking of the great dinner that was awaiting us in the warm dining room. We spent the rest of the day together, playing games in a happy haze.

*Jackie Sices*



## WARTIME CHRISTMAS STORIES *continued*

At the start of the Second World War in 1939, I was a second grader living in Northern Germany. During the "Third Reich" most religious holidays were down-played, but Christmas was still celebrated. It started on Christmas Eve when the candles on the decorated tree were lit for the first time. We sang the old carols; our mother read the story of Christ's birth. There also were presents for everybody. A festive meal followed. I do not remember church services on Christmas Eve during war times. December 25 and 26 were official holidays in Germany and family and friends often got together to share the Christmas goose and other holiday goodies. In the later years, as Hitler declared "total war," Christmas celebrations got more and more modest. There were few gifts and treats, and my father was often away in the war. By 1944 our biggest Christmas wish was for the war to be over soon.

*Gisela Nayar*

For Australians, World War II began in 1939. In those tense, drab years, basics were rationed, and all employment was under strict manpower controls. After Pearl Harbor our fighting forces were rushed back from the European war. In the north, Darwin was bombed; at least one Japanese submarine was reported in Sydney Harbor. A welcome change in our circumstances was the sudden beneficent 'invasion' by American allies.

My family's most unusual summer vacation (in which the Christmas holidays occur) I spent in the accounting office of a war factory, substituting for staff on leave. My brother, a volunteer fruit-picker and over six feet tall, was almost done in by tomatoes, before being elevated to peaches.

*Iris Friederich*

With apologies to Dylan Thomas, this child's Christmas in Wales in 1939 was celebrated despite food shortages. My mother, wise woman, was determined to keep up with traditions. At the start of the European conflict she sensed this war was going to be a long one so she made enough plum puddings to last for future Christmases. Into a huge bowl she mixed dried fruit, nuts and spices galore. The whole family took turns stirring with a big wooden spoon, each making a wish.

On Christmas Day there was a tree, streamers adorned the walls, stockings were primed for Santa. Out of the larder came one of those puddings, ready to be reheated. But first, mother inserted small silver charms and some "three-penny bits," to bring luck to the finders. The feast was borne to the table on a platter, festooned with holly, soaked in flaming brandy – a promise of happier days to come. Those puddings did last for every wartime holiday even though the final wartime Christmas had me clad in gym shorts, pounding the icy drill ground of a grim old fort in northern Scotland.


*John Duguid*

The winter of 1944-45 in Holland under German occupation was a time of near starvation. Our diet had deteriorated to sugar beets, tulip bulbs and potatoes. Even cats and dogs were no longer available. It seemed to us that it would be a bleak Christmas that year: no Christmas dinner, no presents, no joy. Unexpectedly, Father came home with a large gunny sack containing four geese that a farmer had given him, rather than let them be commandeered by the Germans. It was a miraculous Christmas gift! Mother organized a plucking, cooking and canning brigade of friends and neighbors. Big pots were set boiling on the stove and containers were collected for sharing the bounty. My sister and I were given the task of bringing some of it to those neighbors who were too weak to help with the cooking. It was the best Christmas dinner ever and it lasted well into the New Year!

*Otty Snyder*



## WARTIME CHRISTMAS STORIES *continued*



I spent the war years from 1939 until 1944 in York, England. The Christmas of 1939 was the year I got my bicycle and it was still the usual festive affair. Succeeding holidays were more somber, mainly school parties and church. Decorations and presents were homemade, no Christmas lights (black-out), and we scoured the market for a roasting chicken.

Rations were saved for the Christmas cake and pudding. One year when the cakes were being mixed the siren sounded, so pans were quickly placed in the oven. Later in our “shelter” my mother exclaimed “I forgot to put in the flour”. After the “all-clear” flour was added and the baking was judged to be as good as usual. (From a culinary point of view this sounds entirely miraculous. Ed.)

*Harry Gooder*



## YEAR ROUND HOLIDAY ELVES

Coping with TV, VCR, telephone or lamp problems, or picture hanging often confound us. At Carol Woods a corps of residents volunteer to help their neighbors when confronted with such perplexing problems. They are the “Maintenance Volunteers” who serve as an adjunct to the professional maintenance staff by assisting with the small but often annoying little tasks that affect the quality of everyday life. One Call Does It All. The resident seeking assistance need only call the Front Desk Receptionist who triages and routes the requests to the proper staff or to the Maintenance Volunteers. Residents are then contacted to arrange a mutually convenient time to fulfill the request. Not only does this solve the request for assistance, it encourages a closer connection and friendship among residents who might otherwise not to get to know each other.

*Lewis Woodham*

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## WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS

**Blair Bowers (Apt.156)** is a native North Carolinian who completed undergraduate and M.S. degrees at Duke before going on to Harvard where she earned her Ph.D. in Biology. She lived in Cambridge for ten years while in graduate school and as a post-doc. and then moved to the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. For thirty years she was a research scientist in their Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Her volunteer activities during those years were mostly work related: on the Council and as Treasurer of the Microscopy Society of America and similarly for the Histochemical Society. She has continued to volunteer part time at NIH.

Now the hobbies she hopes to pursue at Carol Woods are generally in crafts – wood-working, metal-working, including some enamel jewelry. She has no children but a large family of nieces and nephews. Bird watching, genealogy, botanical gardens, travel are also on her agenda and also improving her skills in digital imaging.

*Fran Weaver*

**Bill and Judy Eastman (Apt. 203)** have lived in Chapel Hill since 1966. Judy came from Virginia. Her schooling was at Mars Hill Jr. College, Westhampton College and UNC-Chapel Hill where she earned her MSW. She worked for seven years in the UNC’s Division for Disorders of Development and Learning. An active volunteer, she chaired the Estes Hills Democratic precinct; in the Jr. Service League she helped found the Chapel Hill Day Care Center. She enjoys playing the piano, reading and politics.

Bill grew up on New Hampshire dairy farms, and earned degrees in counseling from University of Pennsylvania and the University of Maryland. In 1976, after ten years as marriage counselor in the UNC-Chapel Hill Student Health Service, Bill opened a private practice of psychotherapy, later joined by Judy, and which they still continue. They are active in Binkley Baptist Church, have traveled widely to spiritually meaningful sites around the world and covet time at their Smith Mt. Lake retreat in Virginia. They love their Lower Loop location at Carol Woods.

*Sally Rohrdanz*

## WHAT'S GOING ON HERE

**Dorothy Morris, age 97**, was recently a very special guest at Southern Illinois University for a ceremony to exhume a time capsule from the cornerstone of the Morris Library. She was present fifty years ago when that cornerstone was laid. "Glory be!" she said. "I don't think I've ever had my picture taken so many times in my life! When they get the Library fixed up in three years, you just tell them to give me a call. If I'm able, I'll be back!"

The Orange County Commissioners have voted to name the new Southern Orange Senior Center as the **Robert and Pearl Seymour Senior Center**. Completion of the new building that will replace the very crowded Senior Center in Chapel Hill is expected by the end of next year.

Mimicking the Twelve Days of Christmas, the talented and hardworking team that brought us the variety of performances in the Summer Festival has organized a dazzling array for twelve evenings of **Holiday Celebration** beginning on December 21 and concluding on January 4.

The complete schedule has been distributed and posters will appear in advance of each event.

## SPIRITUAL LIFE AT CAROL WOODS

Although Carol Woods does not hold a religious affiliation, many residents have an interest in spirituality. Like so much else that happens at Carol Woods, many activities that enrich our spiritual life have been developed by residents themselves. Ecumenical services take place on Sunday afternoons in the Assembly Hall and Monday mornings in the Health Center, sponsored by different nearby churches. A Meditation Group meets on the first, third and fifth Mondays of the month. A group of Quakers meet regularly. Unitarian-Universalists have dinner together on the second Tuesday of each month. Jewish holidays are observed with special meals prepared by residents. Guests come from all over the campus to the Country Kitchen in Building Four to enjoy the treats and learn the history of the traditions.


**Mark Weber**, Carol Woods' Pastoral Counselor, supports residents' interests in spirituality whether or not they stem from a particular religious faith. He facilitates a spirituality discussion group twice monthly to explore the sacred as expressed not only in religious teachings and individual spiritual practices, but in a broad spectrum of experiences ranging from creativity and the arts to contemporary science, culture and current events. Still others prefer no religious rituals at all. What matters to everyone is that all of us have the opportunity to follow our own spirit. (So far we've heard from only one Druid.)

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<b>CONCERTS AND LECTURES</b>
<b>Tuesday Concerts</b>
Dec. 13 – Mayron Tsong, Piano
Dec. 20 – The FourMost
<b>Thursday Lectures</b>
Dec. 15 – <b>Anne Whisnant</b> - The Blue Ridge Parkway

**STAFF:** Natalie Fiess, Chair; Jane Berryman, Russell Graves, Ray Mack, Nancy Martin, and Mary Scroggs. Ann Kendall, drawing.

**Circulation:** Barbara Allen, Janet Campbell, Helen Hawley, Beth Jukes, Eva Lynch, Jessie Lutz, Stella Lyons and Lang Prouty.

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