

Come Christmas

by Larry Harris, CEO

Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveler thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and quiet home.

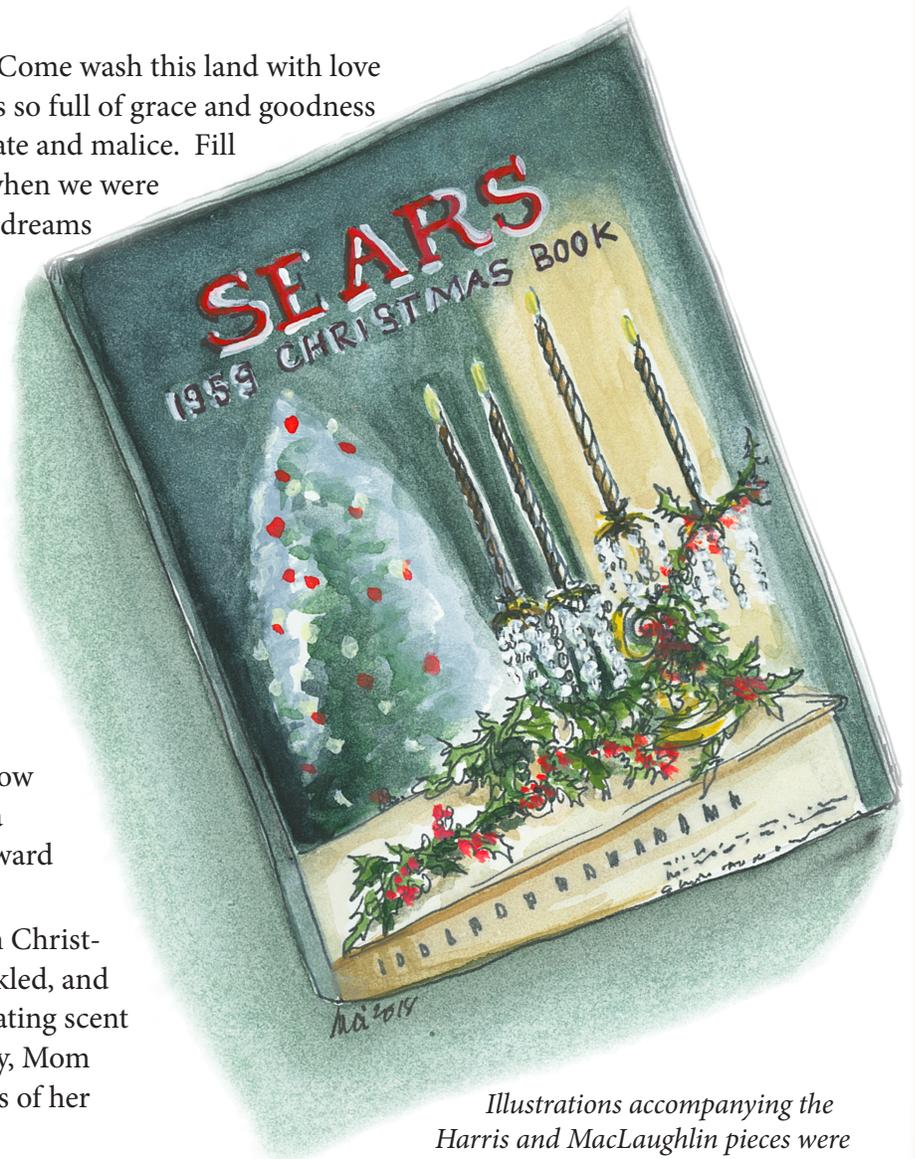
Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Come Christmas. Come now. Come wash this land with love and hope, and pack our hearts so full of grace and goodness that there remains no quarter for hate and malice. Fill us with wonder and innocence as when we were children anticipating the day when dreams came true.

Through the magic of memory, I can journey back to the days of my youth. On these dark wintry nights I've been known to retreat to my recliner with a steamy cup of chocolate for some late-night yule meditations. With our blue-lit tree beside me as a prompt, memories carry me home to the 1950s, to my early Christmases in Kansas City. There is a Christmas tree, of course, always a fresh-cut live one, standing soldier straight in the hollow of a crescent pile of wrapped gifts, a heap that grew each passing day toward December 25th.

I remember Dad stoking a fire on Christmas mornings. It popped and crackled, and suffused the house with the intoxicating scent of his wood smoke. Later in the day, Mom introduced the whole-house aromas of her

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Illustrations accompanying the Harris and MacLaughlin pieces were created by Marlene Andersen, Director of Resident Life Activities.

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Christmas cooking – a heady blend of sage and cinnamon and pumpkin spices.

But not all my Christmas memories issue from December 25th. At age six I remember tree shopping with Dad on a cold December night, when we assessed the offerings of an impromptu Christmas tree lot set up on a vacant corner. Under strings of bare 60-watt bulbs, he stood each prospect upright and vigorously shook it with a twisting motion to release the branches from their prickly embrace. He let me judge which tree was the fullest with the best shape. That's the one he lashed to the roof of his '56 Ford and carried home.

But no Christmas memory will ever match the granddaddy of all Christmas memories, the one by which all other Christmas memories are measured, the one delivered by the postman each September to millions of mailboxes across this nation. I would hurry home from school each day. “Did it come today, Mom?” “No, not today,” was her reply for a few disappointing days. Each dragged by at a glacial pace. It took an eon for one to pass into the next so the calendar could reset and I could ask again. Finally, one day I came home and she met me with, “Guess what came today?”

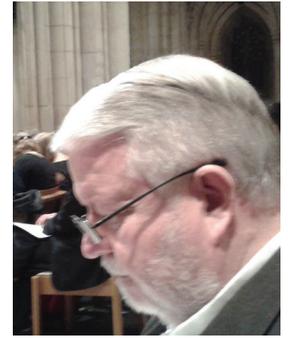
The Sears Christmas catalog! The Wish Book! Seventy-five pages of dreams waiting to be filled! I would grab the book and make a greedy dash for the living room, where I would plop myself down prone on the rug and dig in. I would tear through the grown-up pages in the front, with the boring sweaters, coats, robes and watches, to the toy section in the back. If I was the the first home, I had the book all to myself for a while. If my brother or sister beat me, I was forced to share.

We would scan the toy pages like starved wolves with ravenous appetites, and scribble our names next to gifts that piqued our imaginations. I would typically claim 12 or 15, knowing that on Christmas morning I might find two or three under the tree, delivered by Santa Mom. One of my earliest was a Roy Rogers cowboy outfit.

I graduated to gifts with electric cords in later

years. At nine I got a microscope set, and spent hours scanning a hair plucked from my head, a mosquito wing, or a drop of blood (yes, mine). One year brother Rob and I shared a figure 8 race set, with dual tracks and controls.

I loved those Wish Books. They were a fount of Christmas dreams for me and millions of American kids.



Larry Harris, CEO
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That was Christmas then. Fast forward to Christmas now. Those magical Sears catalogs are now landfill, nothing more than decomposing relics from a misty past. Like everything else in our lives, paper has surrendered to electrons. Sorry, but clicking at a computer screen is just not the same.

Janet and I find our Christmases now settled and reflective. The holiday no longer hinges on garments and gadgets ordered up from a catalog and stashed beneath the tree. In fact, these days Janet and I hardly buy gifts for each other at all, things we don't need, that our kids would only have to lug off to the thrift store someday.

Christmas today quietly draws us hand in hand to the only thing that truly matters – the Bethlehem birth 2,000 years back, best remembered now through tearful hymns like *O Holy Night* and *Some Children See Him*. These hymns all are penned in a minor key, and call forth melancholy, not joy. They hint at a crucifixion. In fact, the birth finds meaning only in the horrid fate awaiting the baby at the end of his story. Without the looming execution and resurrection,

the holy birth would be just another unremarkable birth among the billions in the extensive human register.

So this Christmas, settle in by your tree and open your Bible to Luke chapter 2. Read of the manger, the angels, and the shepherds. Read of the night love came into the world. Read and weep, if the tears are there.

Come Christmas. Come now.



Charles Allen Flies Again at 100

As he approached his 100th birthday, Delaware Run resident Charles Allen had one wish: to fly an airplane on his special day.

To take off, soar through the sky and land the plane, just as he did when he piloted bombers in World War II and Vietnam.

If it were anyone but Charles Allen, it might have remained an idle dream. But even as a boy, Allen had a way of making things happen. Growing up in Oklahoma, Allen loved watching the planes that flew over his family farm. "I always wanted to fly, even as a child. I kept thinking, 'If only I could fly...'"

The dream became a reality during World War II. Allen joined the Army Air Corps (now the U.S. Air Force) and became a co-pilot. Lt. Col. Allen served for 30 years and earned many awards.

Fast forward to September 2018. Allen received a call from Joe Blundo, columnist of *The Columbus Dispatch*, who wanted to interview Allen about his war-time experiences. In that interview, Allen shared

his dream to fly again on his 100th birthday.

Once the article was published, offers poured in. Mike Spencer, owner of Spencer Aviation in Delaware, offered Allen the chance to pilot a Cessna 172 and a flight instructor to go up with him.

And so it was, on November 21, his 100th birthday, cheered on by Willow Brook well-wishers and local media, Allen taxied down the runway and took off. He flew over Delaware Run and commanded the plane as expertly as he did when he flew B-24 and B-52 bombers in wartime.

Back on the ground, Allen's face lit up. "It was a little bouncy up there, but I really enjoyed it," he said. Then it was back home to Delaware Run, where residents and community members gathered for a celebration.

Mayor Carolyn Riggle proclaimed November 21 to be Charles Allen Day. Local high school students recorded this moment in history. And Larry Harris, CEO, presented Allen with an award that said "Flying High at 100."

"It was the best birthday ever," said Allen.



Allen was commissioned as a B-24 co-pilot in 1943.



Delaware Run resident Charles Allen flew bombers in the U.S. Air Force from 1941-71. It was his dream to pilot a plane again on his 100th birthday. With help from some friends, he did it!

Tribute Gifts Memorial Contributions September 6 - November 15, 2018

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Esther Bankes

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William A. "Bill" Bardelang

Julie Bardelang-Wolf

David Beckwith

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Robert England

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Association

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William & Joann Reidenbach

Nicki V. Zanetos

Lisa Mack

This issue of *Reflections* is in memory of Betty Reed, former resident of Willow Brook Christian Home.



Gifts made
to Honor the living

Jack & Susan Hendrickson

Amy Rossetti

**Elaine M. Kelly's 100th
Birthday**

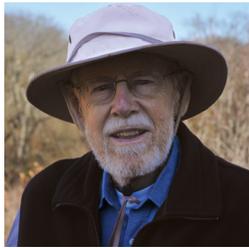
Kay E. Musgrave

Norm Lisle

D. Paul & Carol Gartman

The Neighborhood Gathering

by Tom MacLaughlin,
resident of Willow Brook
at Delaware Run



Najwa Ahmadi arrived home from work on the evening of December 23. She noticed her neighbors gathering on the sidewalk, setting up a large table and bringing a variety of appetizing treats. Her husband, Rashad, joined her at the window. “It’s probably a Christmas celebration,” he said.

The Ahmadis had moved into a house on this short cul-de-sac six months ago and were not yet acquainted with their neighbors.

“Come, Rashad, let’s join them! It’s a great chance to meet everyone!” Najwa said.

Rashad agreed, so they walked to where folks were arranging tempting food items around a large container of apple cider on the table. They approached a woman, Ann Bennett, who appeared to be the organizer, and introduced themselves.

Ann Bennett paused, noticing Najwa’s hijab. Clearly ill at ease, she finally said, “I’m sorry, but this is — ah — a Christian group, and I’m sure you would be uncomfortable, and would feel out of place. I think you would find that you — didn’t belong.”

Surprised, the Ahmadis awkwardly acquiesced, and began to turn, when a car slowly entered the street, and suddenly a boy on a bicycle, Matthew Wilson, darted across the street in front of the car. The car knocked Matthew off his bike, and he fell, striking his head hard on the curb. Several witnesses screamed, and the car came to a stop on top of the bicycle. The driver, Dan Sanders, a cul-de-sac resident, exited his car as Najwa ran to the boy, shouting “I’m a doctor! Someone call 911!”

She knelt by Matthew, who was unconscious, but after a few minutes, began stirring. She monitored his

reaction, noting that he may have sustained a concussion. When the emergency vehicle arrived, she described Matthew’s symptoms and offered to ride with them to the hospital.

Meanwhile, Rashad located Matthew’s mom, Alice Wilson, and offered to drive her to the hospital.

Najwa stayed at the hospital for several hours, conferring with the doctors and communicating with Matthew’s mom. Finally, the doctors were encouraged by Matthew’s condition, but recommended he remain throughout the next day, and were hopeful that he could be released on Christmas Eve. Alice Wilson stayed overnight in a hospital bed beside her son.

On Christmas Eve, Matthew was discharged, and Rashad drove him and his mom home. Several residents had gathered at the Wilsons’ home and applauded as Rashad escorted the boy and his mother into the house.

Finally! December 25! Christmas Day! Alice and Matthew emptied their bulging stockings (filled, of course, during the wee hours, by Santa!) Matthew opened gifts of books, games and new clothes, then two mysterious gifts: a shiny brand new bicycle from all the neighbors (organized by Dan Sanders), and a bike helmet from the Ahmadis, with a prominent note: “Always wear this when riding your bike!”

That afternoon, the Ahmadis’ doorbell rang. It was Ann Bennett. “May I — come in — for just a minute?” she asked nervously.

“Yes, of course,” replied Najwa, “Please do.”

“Thank you. I want to apologize most sincerely for my terrible behavior when I — ”

“Oh, thank you so much,” Najwa answered. “We graciously accept your kindness. Please come in and have a seat. I’ll fix a pot of tea for the three of us, and we’ll visit for a while.”

At that very moment, at the North Pole, Mrs. Claus said, “What on earth brought on that huge smile?”

“I’ve just experienced a wonderful moment.” Santa chuckled and helped himself to another chocolate chip cookie.



Your First Christmas

By Joy Lackey

Sweet dreams my darling baby
On your first Christmas night
Outside the snow is falling
So soft and clean and white
Do you know it's Christmas?
When another baby came
All the way from Heaven
Jesus is his name

Good night my precious child
Sleep snuggly in my arms
While Christmas lights and music
Surround you with their charms
Dream of love and laughter
Of hope and peace and joy
For that is what we're given
Because of a baby boy

Sleep tight my little cherub
While underneath the tree
Your beautiful presents are many
Your presence the best gift to me
And as each Christmas comes and goes
Just know that you are loved
By all your friends and family
And by Jesus up above.



Joy Lackey (left), a caregiver at Delaware Run, met her niece, Clemence Wren, last Christmas. Baby Clem's mother is Grace Lozanovski (right), who is Lackey's sister and a former Willow Brook employee.

"The story of baby Jesus is so familiar to me that sometimes I forget the magic of it," Lackey said. "Holding my little niece that night brought back the joyous wonder of the miracle of Christmas through the birth of a tiny baby."



Brettney Culler (left) and Celeste Rape enjoy the magic of the season. Culler is a staff aide at Willow Brook at Delaware Run, where Rape resides.



Each holiday season at Delaware Run, resident Bob Johnson, founder of The Diamond Cellar jewelry chain, displays solid gold and bejeweled ornaments that he and his son made. Resident Janet Enck (left) and Willow Brook's First Lady Janet Harris (right) admire his nativity scene (enlarged at right).



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Columbus, Ohio 43235
Phone: (614) 885-3300

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Willow Brook at Delaware Run

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Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 201-5640

- Retirement living
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Reflections is published quarterly by

Willow Brook Christian Communities

with offices at:

100 Delaware Crossing West
Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 201-5640

Erin MacLellan, Editor
Joel Hornsby, Designer

not for profit • Church of Christ
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Fourteen years in a row! That's how many times Willow Brook Christian Home has received a perfect inspection by the Ohio Department of Health for its assisted living department, headed by Kacy Meade, director of assisted living (left). The latest deficiency-free report came this fall.

"We have an amazing team," said Meade with April Jackson (middle) and Caroline Njoroge. "We all take pride in what we do and strive to go above and beyond to provide the best care and awesome customer service. We do whatever it takes to make our residents happy."



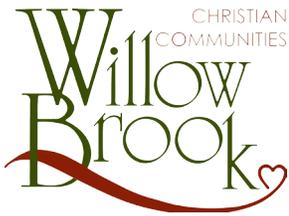
Chaplain Dana Slingluff delivers a message of hope at the Memory Tree Service at Willow Brook Christian Village. Each year, Willow Brook hosts a Memory Tree Service on each campus to honor those we have lost in the past year. Family members hang an ornament on the tree to remember their loved one.

Reflections

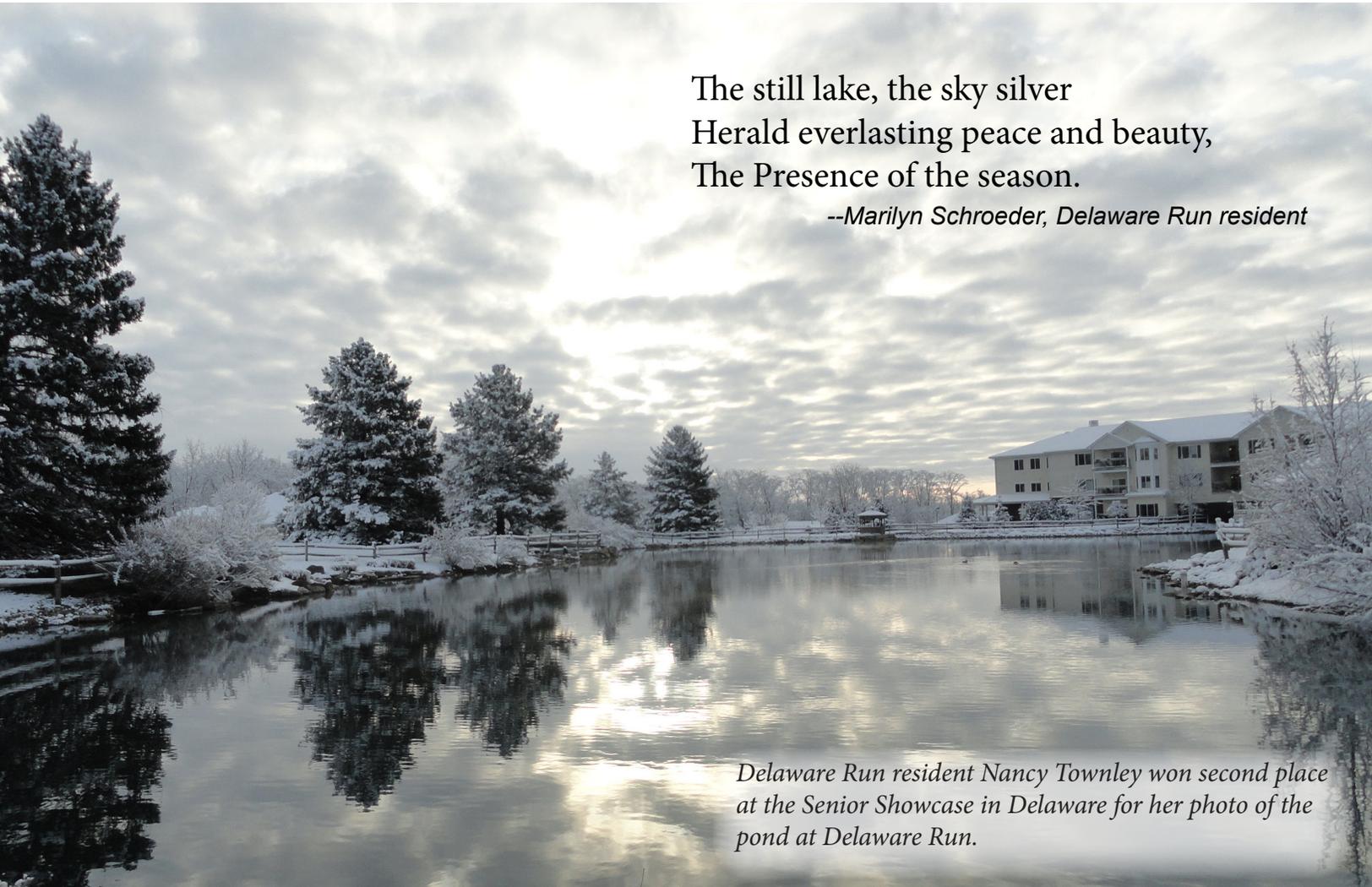
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The still lake, the sky silver
Herald everlasting peace and beauty,
The Presence of the season.

--Marilyn Schroeder, Delaware Run resident

Delaware Run resident Nancy Townley won second place at the Senior Showcase in Delaware for her photo of the pond at Delaware Run.