

Avila News and Views

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

February 2024

FLOWERS AND GARDENS

By Rose Ann Schaeffing

Avila residents are fortunate to have people who are active in keeping the sunshine of flowers in all our lives. The Wednesday morning Bud Vase group keeps all the vases on the dining tables fresh for all of us to enjoy all year. Tom Wahl takes care of the outside flower boxes all through the growing season. He also waters and cares for plants inside. June and Larry Johnston took care of and kept the area around the fountain in the Avila courtyard beautiful last summer. Mark Jordan has cared for the raised beds at the Lodge for many years. We are grateful for the time and energy these folks give to make all our lives brighter.

As we “weather” the winter we all look forward to spring, sunshine and being outside more. With that in mind, we are hoping to gather Avila’s green-thumb residents to revise the Garden Club. Please watch for and listen for announcements regarding scheduling and location of an early March gathering of residents interested in joining the Garden Club. In the meantime, learn about the possible activities of the Garden Club in this article.

There will be two areas of work. The first is the garden plots behind the garages. As in the past, soaker hoses, initial tilling of the soil, stakes and miscellaneous other tools and hoses will be provided. Tom Wahl, a past coordinator of the Garden Club, has agreed to coordinate this initial preparation. Water would be turned on in April anticipating planting of in-ground vegetables in early May and above-ground vegetables and flowers before Memorial Day, weather permitting. Anyone interested in having a plot in this garden must make a request by March 15. Requests should be placed in Phil and Rose Ann’s mailbox 325 at Avila or put in the envelope marked for the Garden Club at the reception desk in the Lodge. This will allow for the newly revised Garden Club to develop a way to equitably assign plots in a timely manner.

The second area of work is the raised garden beds in the Avila courtyard and one raised bed at the Lodge. These are now planted with perennials. In the summer perennials can become leggy and in need of trimming. Also, these perennials could be thinned and interspersed with annuals for more continuous color. The goal of the Garden Club would be to have one or more people take responsibility for maintaining one of these raised beds. Come to the initial Garden Club meeting (watch for scheduling) to learn more and volunteer to adopt a garden.



Photo by Lynn Altonin

MEET OUR NEW NEIGHBORS . . .

EILEEN FLUSTER

By Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

When Eileen Fluster arrived in November at Avila, she traveled five minutes from her former residence on Western Avenue. A life-long Albanian, Eileen and her family of three sons (Mark, Eric, and Brian) selected Avila without investigating other local retirement communities. Eileen has several high school (Albany High School) friends who live here and share our home's many positive aspects with her. When she and her sons discussed a possible move, they focused on when but not where. Eileen quickly acknowledges that while moving from her home of 20 years had been difficult, moving to Avila was a "smart" move. She is beginning to explore the many advantages of living here: card groups, walking paths, exercise programs, committees, group activities, and even physical therapy.

Eileen attended a welcome party for new residents on the second floor East, as well as dinner invitations from floor representatives and friends, and has enjoyed many conversations with residents whom she met in the hallways. She is the first to admit that one difficulty she faces is remembering the names of

many fellow residents.

After graduating high school, Eileen was accepted to college but "love was in the air" when she met Jay. With her parents' approval, Jay and Eileen began their 65-year marriage, which produced three sons, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Jay operated an electrical supply company on Railroad Ave. Unfortunately, Jay died five years ago, and Eileen experienced back surgery about six years ago, which prompted the family to seek a more supportive community for her. Her family continues to be active in her life: eldest son Mark lives and works in Albany; middle son Eric lives in Charlotte, NC; and youngest son Brian lives in Simsbury, CT.

Eileen enjoys old friends like June Barasch, Gloria Herkowitz, and new friends, so Avila is the right community for her. We extend a hearty welcome to our new resident, Eileen Fluster.

FATHER JOHN MOYNA

Interviewed by Rose Ann Schaeffing

Interviewing Father Moyna was a real pleasure. He has had a full life of ministry and continues that in retirement. He was born and raised in the Bronx. He has no siblings but found community in his parents' parish, St Helena, and the Irish Christian Brothers who served there. Father knew from an early age that he wanted to be a priest and credits the Brothers for influencing that early conviction.

Father is a proud alum of All Hallows High School in the Bronx. He is particularly proud of the fact that 90 - 95% of current graduates go on to higher education. Father notes that this is particularly impressive since it is in the poorest congressional district in the U.S. After high school graduation, he went on to Christ the King Seminary at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York.

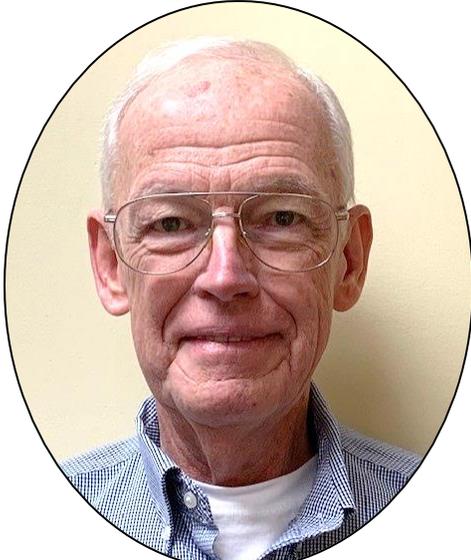


Photo courtesy of Avila Administration

After ordination in 1973 his first assignment was to St Clare Parish in Colonie. He served in several parishes in the Capitol District until he was assigned to be pastor at St Mary's parish in Coxsackie in 1986. He served there for 29 years. There he oversaw complete church renovation. That was a big task as the church had not had much work done to it for several years.

While in Coxsackie, Father was asked to become chaplain at the unit for elderly inmates at the local correctional facility. In that role he developed the hospice program for these inmates. It was the first such program in the correctional institutions in the state of New York. Further, he set up a program for healthy inmates to become hospice volunteers in the program. This is particularly important to the families of the ill inmates as they know with the support of his hospice volunteer, their loved one will not die alone. Further, Father advocated for the seriously ill to be medically paroled so they could be transferred to nursing facilities close to their families. In some cases, to be medically paroled to the home of a family

member if the family had the ability to provide good care. What a wonderful gift these programs are to the elderly inmates and their families.

Father has also served as chaplain on cruise ships when he traveled with his aunt and cousins from Florida. This is an example of how diverse his active ministry was. At this point I thought my interview was complete, but Father said he had one more topic to discuss: The ministry of retirement. He said it is retirement from administration...so don't ask him about leaking roofs, boiler problems and definitely don't show him the budget! He now ministers at St Mary's in Albany. He regularly says Mass on Saturday and early Sunday morning. He is also available to perform the sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony. Another area of his current ministry is being on "speed dial" at Daughters of Sarah so he is called upon for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick for their seriously ill residents.

My conclusion: Retired? No, just busy with the ministry he enjoys.

SISTER ROSE MARIE QUILTER, RSCJ

Interviewed by Wilbur Shapiro

Sister Rose Marie first graced the halls of Avila as a resident on August 14, 2023. She grew up in the Syracuse area in a faith-filled family. Along with her three brothers and two sisters, her extended family included 45 first cousins.

Mother Rose and Grandmother Mamie O'Boyle Eggleston were women of simple and habitual prayer. They were affectionate and natural teachers of children.

Father, Thomas J. Quilter, worked for a wholesale appliance company. He started as an office boy at age 18, became an executive at 30, and stayed until retirement. His promotions led to many moves to new neighborhoods. It also meant new school systems for the children.

From grades 6-12 Rose Marie attended the Franciscan Academy in Syracuse, NY, known as "The Convent School," graduating in 1954. Her education there fed her desire to become a nun. Tom Quilter insisted that Rose Marie finish college before entering the convent. She happily attended Le Moyne Jesuit College in Syracuse, completing a BA in English. As her desire for religious life grew, Rose became acquainted with the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (RSCJ) at Kenwood. She entered Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart, believing that her life would be one of prayer, study and teaching in schools run by RSCJ.



Photo by Wilbur Shapiro

In addition to a full teaching schedule, and studying for master’s degrees, the Sisters devoted several hours each day to meditation, reading, and chanting psalms in Latin. They wore a habit designed in 1820, sang Georgian chant and Palestrina in chapel, supervised dormitories and study halls, and observed silence in the community whenever they were not enjoying brief periods of recreation.

By 1965, the Vatican council called the nuns to modernize their lifestyle, while further deepening their call and opening possibilities for new forms of ministry. Sister Rose Marie’s attraction to prayer led her to Abba House in Albany and then to Ephphatha House of Prayer in suburban Detroit. After completing a master’s degree in theology, she served actively in parishes in inner city Detroit, and in Houston, Texas.

In 1992, Sister Rose Marie was given permission to study therapeutic massage as a healing ministry in Houston. After receiving her license, she opened a private practice serving pregnant women, adults suffering from a variety of painful conditions—and many burdened with stress. In 1999, she

pursued further massage study and practice in New Orleans, until, in 2002, she was diagnosed with cancer. She returned to Albany, was successfully treated and completed further studies at the Center for Natural Wellness to qualify for a New York massage license. For 10 years, Rose Marie offered massages to many of the 80 RSCJ retired at Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart, continuing to care for them as they transitioned to Teresian House.

In 2013 she received an unexpected invitation from a Mexican RSCJ to serve on the Texas/Mexico border, teaching basic health, spirituality, and relaxation practices. She, along with another Sister, and occasionally joined by other RSCJ and students, worked with immigrant women leaders near McAllen, Texas. Thus began another ten-year adventure!

Now, at 87 years of age, Rose Marie joins her RSCJ sisters at Avila. She is a delight to converse with and a positive addition to the Avila Lodge.

... AND CATCH UP WITH SOME OF OUR EARLIER- RESIDENTS

GLORIANA CLARK

By Pat Binzer



Photo by Pat Binzer

Gloriana and her husband Dick established their home and raised their three daughters in Guilderland near the UAlbany campus where he was a professor of education psychology and Gloriana commuted to Troy for her job as an elementary school librarian. The family now consists of three daughters, seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

In her years on the property in Guilderland Gloriana was an avid gardener and specialized in hybrid iris and day lilies. She was developing a special variety of day lilies. She also enjoyed the time spent at their backyard pool.

After 38 years, the new house they had built in Guilderland was becoming old and in need of repairs. By now the Clarks were both retired, so they decided it was time to start looking around and making some decisions about their future home.

They rejected one popular senior development because Dick was not about to wear a jacket and tie to dinner every night. Out shopping one afternoon, they came upon a sales table at Colonie Center shopping mall that was marketing new residential construction referred to as Avila Retirement Living or Avila Independent Living. After listening to the sales pitch and gathering all the information available about the project they made the decision to sign on.

Over the next several months, they enjoyed driving by the construction site watching Avila take shape. They were invited to a few meals in area restaurants with other potential residents to help them become acquainted with their new neighbors.

Nineteen years ago, in August 2005, which was week one of the opening of the west wing in the Avila main building, Dick and Gloriana Clark became tenants on the fourth floor west in apartment 426. Everything was ready right from the beginning: the dining room and the meals; the Bistro and the light breakfast. The pool was filled and ready for use. Transition to their new home was under way. As Life Master bridge players, they enjoyed the chance to play duplicate bridge with other experienced card players. Gloriana continues to look forward to the Saturday bridge games here at Avila.

Gloriana and her husband traveled extensively. Dick really enjoyed planning the details of their trips and was not one to book a tour. One of their adventures was a two-year stay in Lesotho, an independent country surrounded by South African territory. During this two-year period Dick was an advisor for a special program and Gloriana volunteered in the local library.

Dick passed away nearly a decade ago, but Gloriana is fortunate to have many family members nearby.

When asked what she likes most about Avila, she responded that she appreciates having the meals prepared and the housekeeping services. Most mornings you can find her with many of the regulars in the Bistro enjoying some of the "prepared food".

MICKEY FLEISHMAN

By Pat Binzer

Mickey has lived at Avila almost since its very beginning when she and her husband were looking for a place to relocate from their long-time residence in Cobleskill. Being near quality health-care facilities was a top priority for them. Avila Retirement Community met that requirement with Albany Medical Center and St. Peter's Hospital both close by.

Mickey was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1932 and grew up there during WW II. In 2015 she wrote a long piece describing what her life was like during those years until she moved to the United States. Her story was published in an earlier issue of *News and Views* and is available upon request from the editor.

When asked what she likes most about the life here at Avila, Mickey quickly responded that it was the people. She finds the people very understanding, sophisticated, and willing to share in conversation. In addition to the people, Mickey appreciates all the services that allow her to live here independently, such as shopping trips and other transportation. They give us so much to help us stay healthy.



Photo by Pat Binzer

When she arrived in this country in 1960, she settled in Cobleskill in Schoharie County. It was here she earned an associate degree in dietary services and then a BS in Dietary Services. She was head of dietary services for 20 years at the Cobleskill Community hospital (now Cobleskill Regional Hospital).

As a student she found she needed to devote a great deal of her time improving both her spoken and written use of the English language, especially reading and writing for examinations. As a student, she met her future husband, a member of the Cobleskill faculty.

She claims reading and sewing as her main interests, in addition to being with people. She is head of the Avila flower arrangers that meet every Wednesday morning to arrange fresh flowers that are placed throughout the main-floor public spaces. She has also become well-known for organizing parties: parties for a few people such as the single men; parties for the people on her floor, or just Wednesday night dinners in the dining room.

When asked if she had been given any special awards, she laughed and said that a long time ago she had been given the Congeniality Award. If you spend any time with Mickey, you will know that the award was well-deserved.

RHODA KRATENSTEIN

By Ray and Erin Teichman



Photo by Ray and Erin Teichman

Rhoda Kratenstein is one of Avila's original residents. She moved into her east wing apartment on October 2, 2004. At the time she was Avila's youngest resident. Born in Brooklyn, Rhoda and her brother were raised in Valley Stream, Long Island. She graduated from Nassau Community College in 1970 with an associate degree in data processing, and later earned a B.S. degree in management information systems from Empire State College. She began employment with the New York State Department of Transportation in Albany as a computer programmer in 1970 and continued with NYS agencies in systems management until leaving state service in 2001. Rhoda's brother and his wife live on Long Island; she has a nephew in Brooklyn and another nephew recently moved to Florida.

Rhoda was introduced to her life-long passion, bridge, at work. She began playing lunchtime bridge with coworkers after attending instruction classes at the Albany Jewish Community Center in 1971 and became a Life Master in 1976. Rhoda has taught bridge at Avila since it opened, and privately in the Albany area and when at her winter home in Delray Beach, Florida. Bridge has always been a regular activity at Avila from the early days. In 2006, Rhoda established two weekly duplicate bridge games at Avila (Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons) for our residents and invited players from our local community; the Saturday game continues.

Rhoda discovered Avila in its development stages through a friend, Carol Chandler, who also became a resident. Having moved to Florida in 2002, Rhoda worked remotely with Marketing Director Sherri Van Orden to choose her apartment style, flooring, tile, adding electrical outlets, and other features. It took 15 months from the time of her deposit in 2003 to move in.

As an original, Rhoda worked with other original (2004) residents to establish the Residents' Council; write the bylaws; develop committees; set-up the White Pine Holiday Fund; and served as the first Council president.

Rhoda mentioned she misses some of her neighbors who have left Avila; but looks forward to getting acquainted with her new neighbors.

RAY AND ERIN TEICHMAN

By Rod Correll



Photo by Lynn Altonin

Ray and Erin Teichman have been Avila residents since 2004, members of the small group that settled into the cottages and main building when it opened its doors. They have been active participants from the very beginning and continue to play significant roles in programs, groups, and activities designed to make Avila a vibrant community. Erin is rightly proud of the job she did, together with Rhoda Kratenstein, in forming the Resident Council. Ray has good reasons to be equally pleased with what he has done, much of it behind the scenes.

Ray Teichman was born, brought up and educated in Detroit, MI. He attended the University of Detroit as an undergraduate, went on to Chicago for his master's and PhD degrees at Loyola University. Given the limited opportunities available in academe when he graduated, Ray

shifted his career focus from becoming a history professor and landed a job as archivist at the FDR library in Hyde Park, NY, a 34-year tenure that must have been extremely interesting and rewarding.

Erin was born in Carbondale, IL, but when she listed the schools she had attended, it became clear that this was only a waypoint in her childhood. She went to grade school in Tulsa, OK, high school in Peoria, IL, and college in Dubuque, IA, at Clarke University. Her major there was history, with a minor in secondary education. While teaching seemed a likely next step, Erin decided to try something else that would not require her bringing work home. Familiar with Chicago, she decided to join a friend there and work for the Cook County Department of Public Aid. Her work, assessing the eligibility of clients applying for public assistance, wound up to be much more than the nine-to-five job for which she had been looking. However, she found it meaningful and rewarding. The same held true for the work she did for the Office of the Aging in Poughkeepsie when the family moved there in 1970.

Ray and Erin met in the Chicago apartment Erin was sharing with a college roommate, someone Ray knew when he was living in Detroit. It was the day of John F. Kennedy's funeral, November 25th, 1963. Lacking access to a TV, Ray was hoping that she might have one so that he could watch this historic event. She did and Erin, who had fielded Ray's call, invited him to come over. It was the start of what is now a 61-year relationship, to marriage in 1965 and the birth of two daughters, Amy in 1968 and Margaret in 1969, both of whom live nearby in Dutchess County.

No profile of Erin and Ray would be complete without mention of their wanderlust. The couple spends two months each summer at the cottage Ray's father built in Michigan. Add to that the numerous trips they have taken, all over the world, many with Road Scholar, a company that specializes in educational travel. They told me that they had taken each of their four grandchildren on one of those trips. What a way to enjoy one's life as a senior, forming a bond with your grandchildren as you open their eyes to the wide world.

RESIDENTS COUNCIL'S CHANGING OF THE GUARD

By Rose Ann Schaeffing and Tom Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

During the third week of each month, residents are invited to a meeting of the Residents Council to hear committee reports and outcomes of meetings with management and to raise questions and concerns. New residents often ask about the purpose of the Council and how individuals become members. Their question can best be answered by looking at recent Council activities and its resident members.

The January Council meeting saw a change of guard as Lynn Altonin stepped down as president, and Laura Leeds assumed that position. We thank Lynn for her years of service on the Council in various offices and as president for the past year.

The Council's bylaws state that it may have up to 11 members, with leadership provided by a president, vice president, and recording secretary. For 2024, the Council leadership will be Laura Leeds, president; Sr. Maria Bonato, vice president; and Hank Binzer, recording secretary. This year, the remaining eight members of the Council represent the standing committees operating within Avila. Their function is to represent each of these committees, read individual committee reports concerning their meetings, report on their activities, and respond to any questions raised during the Residents Council meetings. A reminder that all residents are welcome to attend committee meetings as listed in the monthly calendar.

Residents can review Council members' names and committee chairs posted in the Residents Center (outside the staff offices, next to the Post Office boxes). The minutes of Council meetings are available on each floor in a binder labeled "Residents Council." Since the operation of Avila and its standing committees are the focus of the Council meetings, your attendance and participation are critical to Avila's community and social and administrative functioning. **Your** attendance is imperative.

See you at the next Residents Council Meeting in March!

SPRING

By Erin Teichman

Rainy days'
pale, soft lawn;
Sunlight beams
on first bloomings;
Wind
blown through trees'
bare budding;
Fluttering wing;
Voices heard —
passing

NEEDS OF AVILA'S NEW RESIDENTS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

By Tom Fitzgerald

New residents joining our community often bring diverse needs when arriving to make Avila their home. They come for a variety of reasons, backgrounds, and locations. Karen and Michelle introduce each one to our facilities, resources, handbook, and supportive programs. The first few months are the most difficult with dining procedures, names of their fellow residents, new activities, and committees.

Several Avila committees and groups seek ways to address these needs. A new group began in April 2023 called New Residents Conversations, organized by Elizabeth Hammer and me with bi-monthly sessions on the second and fourth Fridays at 2:00 in the Meditation Room. Its purpose is to introduce services and committees operating here, provide time for residents to raise unanswered questions, vocalize feelings about their new beginnings and what they left behind, and familiarize those unfamiliar with the Capital area and its services.

Elizabeth continues leading the group and observes that Avila has experienced few new residents over the past six months. She stated that the occupancy rate now hovers around 92%, indicating that a rapid increase in new residents can be expected in 2024. "Conversations" continues to be the place to express unanswered questions and discuss unmet needs or even emotional issues related to their new beginning at Avila. A high percentage of new residents have experienced the loss of a partner/spouse shortly before joining Avila.

Dennis Murphy, who participates regularly in the conversation, said that it provides a forum so you don't feel alone, or your questions will go unanswered. He also stated that you receive very useful information (i.e., that stamps are available at the reception desk, a list of residents is also available, and a sheet of "Tidbits" is distributed by Elizabeth).

Whether you are a new resident or have resided here for years, you should investigate New Residents' Conversation as a forum to raise your observations, concerns, or unanswered questions. Join this or other Avila groups to help make your life in our community more enjoyable.

LEAP YEAR

By John Wagner

The year 2024 is a leap year and so February has 29 days.

Leap years are used to keep civil calendars in step with the solar year, (the ones with the seasons). The length of a solar year is the time between successive vernal equinoxes, when the sun crosses the equator on its way north. It is 365 days, plus almost a quarter of a day more (0.2422 rather than 0.25)

Most ancient calendars, such as that in ancient Rome, were based on both the sun and the moon. But in 46 BC, Julius Caesar introduced a solar calendar, now called the Julian calendar. This calendar averaged 365.25 days in length by adding an extra day in every fourth year. This is a bit longer than the solar year, which is 365.2422 days, and so the Julian calendar falls behind the solar calendar almost a day every century.

By the year 325 AD, the Julian calendar was almost three days behind the solar calendar, and this created a problem in scheduling the feast of Easter. (Easter should be the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox), so the Council of Nicaea prompted the Emperor Constantine to "remove the effect of the extra leap days."

By 1582 AD, astronomical observation revealed that the vernal equinox in this modified Julian calendar was 10 days behind the actual one. Pope Gregory XIII ordered that the 10 days be removed and the procedure for identifying leap years be modified. Hence, Thursday, 4 October in the Julian calendar was followed by Friday, 15 October in the Gregorian calendar. This change was adopted by the Catholic countries in Europe, but the Protestant ones delayed for religious reasons: Great Britain didn't change until 1753. Today, most of the world's nations now use the Gregorian calendar.

The procedure for identifying leap years was changed as follows.

- The year is a leap year if it is exactly divisible by 4,
- The year is a leap year if it is exactly divisible by 400.
- The year is **not** a leap year if it is exactly divisible by 100.

Thus, 1800 and 1900 were not leap years, but 2000 was.

With this procedural change, the average length of a Gregorian year is 365.2425 days, only 0.0003 days longer than the solar year. Consequently, the Gregorian calendar will fall behind the solar calendar one day every 3,000 years. (That won't happen until 4582.)

Interestingly, the major calendars in the Western world all measure time from a birth. The Hebrew calendar measures the time since the birth of Adam. The Julian calendar starts at the birth of the city of Rome. The Gregorian calendar marks time since the birth of Jesus Christ. The Islamic calendar begins with the birth of Mohammed.

FOCUS FEATURE: AVILA'S FINE STAFF

"You know his work, his voice, and his face! Eric Steiner works behind the scenes setting up the Great Room for events, calls us with daily reminders, and arranges our trips. Thank you, Eric, from all of us."

Tom Fitzgerald

"We sometimes overlook those who serve us well here at Avila. As an example, we gathered for Thanksgiving dinner and appreciated the cooking, service, and wait staff of the dining room who gave up their holiday celebrations to be with us. We now express our appreciation to the dining room leadership of Abra and Phillip, the entire wait staff, the cooks, and all the support personnel who provide for us on special occasions as well as every day. You folks do a fantastic job, and we appreciate it."

Tom Fitzgerald

JUST A REMINDER THAT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES EXIST AT AVILA

- **The Country Store**: devote one hour a month to the Country Store and greet many of your fellow residents. Interested? Contact Erin Teichman (#661 or email eteichman411@nycap.rr.com).
- **The Linus Project**: Prepare beautiful quilts using your sewing and creative skills. Interested? Contact Marilyn Seidenberg (# 673 or email menands2@gmail.com).
- **The Eddy Alzheimer's Services Care Teams Caregivers Respite Program**: Provide non-medical assistance, support and companionship to individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia, as well as their families. A Care Team member may assist with transportation, meal preparation, run errands, or brief respite visits. Interested? Contact Karen Meemken (#436 or email kmeemken@avilaretirement.com).

SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE . . .

Commentary and photos by Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald



One Wednesday afternoon in November, four resident Catholic priests hold a prayer service that included anointing for 72 participating residents. Pictured is Father John Moyna, a new resident at Avila. Father O'Brien, Father Menty, and Father Kane joined in the prayer service and the anointing ceremony.

Residents join in the Christmas spirit with the lighting of the holiday tree and with singing traditional songs of the season to welcome this special time of year.



Avila made the Channel 6 news on December 11th with our annual Hanukkah songfest organized by Maxine Koblenz. A large group of residents in attendance sang songs of the season, led by Cantor Emily Short of Beth Emeth congregation and participated in the Festival of Lights on the fourth day of Hanukkah.

The residents start off 2024 with family and friends demonstrating that we are happy, well fed, and eager to tell others about our memories and our resolutions for the upcoming year. All those attending dinner have smiles on their faces and are looking forward to the new year with the promise of health, happiness, and enjoyment in 2024.



IT'S BEEN AN EASY WINTER

By Patricia J. Binzer

*It's been an easy winter
While waiting for spring not yet begun.
A mix of days shared with gray
clouds and an ever-warming sun.*

*We're tempted to be lulled into
that giddy feeling that always comes
as we notice the longer days
with the warmer suns.*

*We feel such joy just walking about
noticing things that are new.
Is that a different Avila vehicle
I look forward to a ride or two.*

*It looks like some of our birds are back.
I hope they had a good flight.
Where did they spend the winter?
Where will they spend the night?*

*Watch out where you're walking
See that big pothole just ahead
That's something left from winter
Those dangers our cars dread.*

*This puffer jacket still feels okay
as I continue looking around
One more go around the block
to see what can be found.*

*It's interesting to notice little things
perhaps of no real importance to you
But what I see around me
Gives my brain something to do.*

*I wonder where that came from
Or how that it was made
I notice how it looks so different
When it's resting in the shade.*

*There's a lonely small left glove
That came from a child's hand
Resting on the sidewalk
Not missed yet. Not in demand.*

*Now there seems to be commotion further down the
street
There's honking noise and red taillights
I wonder if two cars did meet.*

*I guess I will just turn around
and saunter back to my home
And see what else will interest me.
I think I hear my phone.*

*I smile as I answer to that familiar sound
I hope it's bringing family news.
I stand here waiting on the ground.*

*Waiting in the waning sun for
Something they wish to tell
And I will share what I saw
And say that all is well.*

*It's been an easy winter
So far, is what I'll say
Keep warm and yes, I love you.
Have a wonderful day.*