

Avila News and Views

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

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TRACY MOMROW, OUR NEW CEO

By Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

Tracy welcomed us, smiling and confident, into her office to begin our interview session. Having two months of experience under her belt, she appeared poised, energetic, and positive in her new role as CEO. She proceeded to outline her immediate priorities as: developing a healthy budget, establishing a capital improvement plan, maintaining a high occupancy rate, and ensuring a consistently positive level of resident satisfaction. She then acknowledged the role of all staff members—maintenance, housekeeping, marketing, programming, food service, and other individual staff members—interacting with residents to maintain and expand Avila's continued success as a retirement community.

When asked about her previous work experience, personal goals, and ambitions that the Board considered in appointing her as CEO, she recounted her training in accounting, her years of involvement in participatory leadership, and her positive outlook on the future of retirement facilities in the Capital region. Tracy thanks the

residents, staff, and Board members for their expressions of support and welcome during her start as CEO. She commented that the last few months had been a pleasure, as she knew all the staff members personally and appreciated their expressions of support and their willingness to focus on the challenges faced by Avila in an extremely competitive marketplace.

She acknowledged that the aging population nationally is changing in its perceptions of what it wants and needs in living facilities, as well as in financing and levels of interest in programming. She is eager to take on the challenges of maintaining Avila's status as a premier community in the future, as it has been over the past number of years. She is particularly interested in opening new lines of communication with residents, refining levels of programming, and extending lines of communication between committees and resident groups with administration.

Tracy's enthusiasm and energy level support the expansion of her administrative role in the daily operation of this facility.

She plans to invite residents to submit questions before Town Hall meetings to encourage the exchange of information and concerns. She is also exploring the possibility of hosting "Tea with Tracy" at regular intervals each week as a means of informal personal communication with interested residents. Tracy closed the interview with the statement that she intends to know what needs are surfacing before they become complaints.

Tracy and her husband have three children, and her new position aligns with many of her professional goals and her interest in serving the growing elderly population in the country. When she assumed this new position, she felt that it would serve as a welcome challenge for her leadership skills and the many talents of her staff. We welcome Tracy's enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication to the ongoing success of the Avila community.

MEET OUR NEW NEIGHBORS . . .

MADY AND PEPE ALARCON

By Rose Ann Schaeffing



Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

Mady and Pepe are a great addition to third floor west. Their roots are in Europe, and they bring that culture here. Mady was born in Lemgo (in Westphalia), Germany, and Pepe was born in Valencia, Spain. They met in Aberdeen, Scotland, when Mady was there as an exchange assistant teacher where she honed her English skills. Pepe, a Psychiatrist, MD, was working in a local hospital there. They married in Germany in 1972.

When Mady received a fellowship in Germanic studies at the University of Pennsylvania, she moved to the United States. Pepe soon followed. They lived in several places in the United States before settling in Delmar. Pepe worked at Samaritan Hospital in Troy and retired from there as the head of the Psychiatry Department. Mady established the German Language School of Albany. This was a unique school as they taught German to students as early as age three to adult. The school helped high school students prepare for the Regents exam and worked with university professors to enable them to read their sources, like Kant, Kafka and Heidegger, in their original language. Mady also taught ESL classes for Mexican immigrant children in kindergarten and grades one to eight.

Mady and Pepe raised two sons, Alvar and Arno, in Delmar. As their sons grew, the family travelled to Europe annually to visit relatives in Spain and Germany. They go less often now but still stay in close touch with their families in Europe. Alvar lives in Albany and works as a private investigator. Arno has lived internationally and is now settled in Japan with his Japanese wife and son.

When Mady and Pepe moved to Delmar they knew very little about the area, but they have come to really enjoy the Hudson Valley. When they recognized that it was time to downsize, they wanted to stay in the area. They considered possibilities in Saratoga and Albany but are happy to have chosen Avila as their new home. It is still a process as they have not yet sold their home in Delmar and continue with the moving process and necessary repairs there. Ask Mady about this process and her response is "don't even get me started..." Mady and Pepe, we have all been there but are happy you have chosen Avila.

JANE HALE

By Rose Ann Schaeffing



Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

After growing up in the Bronx, Jane spent most of her adult years living in Huntington Bay, NY and Athens, NY with extensive vacation time on Lake Waccabuc and in Windham, NY. After selling her home in Athens, she made the decision to move to Avila but kept her ski house in Windham since that house had been her family's gathering place for almost 50 years. She and her children call it their "happy place" and her three older brothers and their wives have also been frequent visitors.

Jane graduated from Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY and did her graduate work in American literature at Columbia University where her primary field of study was the era often referred to as the Jazz Age when the names Hemingway and Fitzgerald ruled the American literature scene. She continued her interest in American literature during the years she taught high school English on Long Island and especially when she began teaching for Syracuse University in a program called

Project Advance. After being trained by the Syracuse University staff, high school teachers of English and math taught courses to high school seniors that could earn them as many as 12 college credits from Syracuse by graduation and those credits were readily accepted by most colleges and universities.

While at Le Moyne, Jane met her first husband, Anthony, the father of her three children: Barbara is a nurse on Long Island, Diane teaches first grade in the Boston area and Anthony is an IT specialist in upstate New York. Jane and her family, including her six grandchildren, are looking forward to their first family wedding next July when her only granddaughter will be married.

When her husband, Anthony passed away at 47, Jane did not plan to remarry because she had heard too many stories about the problems faced by blended families and ex-spouses. However, four years after her husband's passing, her sister-in-law introduced her to Allen, a widower with no children. At their wedding, Jane's brother toasted her new husband by saying that with one quick "I do," Allen became a husband, a stepfather, a grandfather, a brother and an uncle. Not bad for a man from a very small family.

Over the years, Jane travelled extensively but her two favorite places have always been Italy and the British Columbia section of Canada where she and Allen fell in love with the First Nations art form which they collected over the course of their 30-year marriage. When travelling became difficult for Allen, they switched to cruises and saw a lot of the Middle East and Northern Europe including St. Petersburg, Russia.

Once Jane decided that a senior community would be a good move, she began searching for the right fit that would not be too far from Windham and close to the long-term care facility where Allen now resides. The availability of a 24-7 gym was probably an important deciding factor but playing Mah Jongg and an invitation to learn canasta certainly helped. Or maybe it was the gorgeous Christmas tree in the main lobby this past December. Whatever made the decision for her, she knows that Avila was the right decision for this new phase of her life.

STEVE MOMROW

By Rod Correll

Thanks to Michelle and Ginger's marketing efforts, the empty apartments in the Lodge have been filling up recently. One of its most recent arrivals is Steve Momrow, an affable Albanian, recognizable by his ready smile and deep bass voice, one he has put to good use, singing with Albany Pro Musica and two local church choirs. Following elementary and high school at public schools in the city, Steve went on to SUNY Albany where he majored in English and theater, a vocation he considered embracing as a set designer, but decided against due to the gypsy-like nature of a life in showbiz.

Instead, with his love for interior design and experience in college creating sets for some plays at the college and other local community productions, Steve decided he could make a good living in the furniture business, helping people imagine and furnish the spaces in which they would be living.

His first job was with Mayfair, a well-known, high-end furniture retailer in the Albany area, followed by several years at Stickley, a great places to get a thorough grounding in the mechanics of the business and make contacts with suppliers and customers, some of whom would become his suppliers and customers when he decided, together with Patricia DeMento, a colleague from his days at Mayfair and Stickley, to found their own company, Moose Creek LTD. This venture, specializing in "sophisticated rustic" furniture and artifacts, operating out of two locations, Albany and Lake George, is closed now but, during the years it was in business, provided them with both pleasure and profit as they used their creative talents to satisfy a discerning customer base. A look around his apartment gave me a sense of what had made his business so successful.

Steve loves the mountains, the ruggedness of the Adirondacks and the culture of the Berkshires. When he felt the time had come to move to a retirement community, he looked in both places, deciding ultimately on coming back to Albany where he has a circle of friends, to Avila because of what it offers its residents and to the Lodge because of its smaller size and greater feeling of intimacy. Asked what he would like to do after he settles in and gets his bearings, Steve confessed that he loves to play card games, not bridge or canasta, but games like Spades, Crazy Eights and pinochle and would love to find three to seven other people who would be willing to play one of these games on a weekly basis in the Library at the Lodge. I told him I'd have to be taught but would enjoy a friendly game. If you're interested call him.



Photo by Ray and Erin Teichman

LORRAINE MURPHY

By Pat Binzer

Lorraine was born and raised in Amsterdam and thought she would never leave. She graduated from St. Mary's Catholic High School and then she went to St. Clare's Hospital School of X-ray Technology in Schenectady which led to a career as an X-ray technician at St. Mary's Hospital in Amsterdam for over 30 years. She was one of the technicians who gave women mammograms. She said she saw a great deal of equipment progress through the years and wonders how accurate diagnoses were made with such poor-quality film results in the early days.



Photo by Pat Binzer

She is the oldest of three sisters. One now lives in Syracuse, and one lives just down the street from her home in Amsterdam. Lorraine was married to her best friend's brother, who had been a big tease while they were growing up, for almost 60 years until he passed away five years ago. They had four daughters, and she now has 10 grandchildren, some of whom live in Rhode Island and North Carolina. One daughter and her family live close by in Guilderland.

After she retired as an X-ray technician, Lorraine became very active in the senior center activities in Amsterdam, enjoying the socialization, parties, trips, and good fun.

After her husband passed away, Lorraine was living alone in a big house. Her children tried to convince her it was time to find another more suitable place to live. Her friends suggested she look around and find a place where she would want to live before her children moved her somewhere she didn't want to be. One summer day she fell alone in her back yard and couldn't get up. That event convinced her they all may be right.

After looking at several places for her new home, Lorraine chose Avila as a good fit for her next life; near one daughter and a place that offered lots of activities she would enjoy and services she might need. More importantly, she wanted friendly people.

She has only been with us for a few months but has settled in like a long-time resident, thanks to all the fellow residents welcoming her and helping her feel at home.

MARTI THOMSON

By Ray and Erin Teichman

In April Avila welcomed Marti Thomson on her move from Washington state to New York to be closer to her family. Marti and her husband, Ted, were married for 49 years. They met in Delphi, Greece, while on vacation from their jobs in Iran. Ted worked for several oil companies in Asia while Marti worked for the US State Department in various agencies.

After postings in African and Southeast Asian countries, Marti and Ted moved to Malaysia where their three daughters were born and the family lived for 25 years.

Marti told us she had always wanted to be involved in international travel. She has traveled to every continent and 130 countries. Toward that goal she earned a PhD in International Education Policy from the University of Illinois. She served in the Peace Corps in Africa; and worked on a Department of Defense contract for the Iranian navy. In Malaysia, Marti served in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as the Regional Educational Advising Coordinator for East Asia Pacific.



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

Part of her job was running educational conferences in 22 countries from Burma to the Marshall Islands and Mongolia to Australia.

On retiring, the family moved to Oak Harbor, WA. There Marti began and ran a book club for 21 years.

Marti's oldest daughter lives in Catskill and is the mother of three young children; her middle daughter resides in Washington; and her youngest daughter, also the mother of three, lives in Austin, TX.

As her boxes are emptied and her furniture arranged, we see Marti has already become part of the Avila family enjoying our Thursday wine and cheese conversations and the book group.

... AND THOSE WHO ENTERTAIN US

SINGING WITH SENIORS AND MEMORIES

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

At her recent June concert, Laura Collins invited the crowd of enthusiastic residents to "name that tune" as she began playing popular theme music from 1960s television shows. Audience members called out "Everyone knows your name" (*Cheers*) and "Own a piece of the rock" (*Jeffersons*) as she sang many of our favorite songs. She continued to delight residents with *Mr. Rogers*, *the Golden Girls*, and *the Brady Bunch*, among others, as we fondly recalled childhood memories of the 1960s TV era.

Laura Collins performs regularly for Avila's residents with a mix of classical, country, folk, and standard oldies. The Malta resident is a unique songwriter and entertainer who specializes in entertaining residents at retirement and nursing communities. When asked how her specialty developed, Laura credited her mother, who worked with geriatric patients, as one of her early influences, who encouraged her to focus her singing on senior audiences. Her mother often said, "All it takes is one song to bring back 1000 memories." This was undoubtedly true at Laura's June concert.

Laura began her career singing in Brooklyn bars at a young age, even before she could drink in them. Later, she moved to Denver and then to northern New Mexico, where she entered a prolific period of writing and composing songs. During this time, she organized a female trio called "Blue Moon Prairie." When she moved back to upstate New York in 2019, she continued to compose songs and to entertain seniors at retirement facilities.

Laura performs at Avila to sizable and appreciative audiences. Overheard at her concert, one resident commented, "Laura is one of my favorite singers since she never disappoints when I request my favorite tunes." Other residents added that Laura has a beautiful voice and is a talented guitarist and pianist. Another added, "We thoroughly enjoy Laura's visits with us and look forward to her future performances at Avila." One resident commented, walking out after the performance, "Laura's singing and songs bring back so many memories for me!" That last comment fulfills her mother's prediction that one song can generate 1000 memories.

MARVIN FREEDMAN AWARDED

By Tom Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

The Interfaith Alliance of Upstate NY will recognize the contributions of resident Marvin Freedman at its September 9th celebration at the Albany Country Club. Marvin has received numerous awards for his leadership and community-building efforts over the years. He has been and continues to be active in the Jewish community's and Capital Region's activities. We congratulate Marvin for this recognition of his past contributions.

FOCUS FEATURE

"Thank you to Tom T. for help with programming the TV in the guest suite; technology is not our strong suit.

Thanks to Tom K. for responding so promptly to my request to move our refrigerator closer to the counter. It was done before I returned to the apartment."

Erin Teichman

"The weather this summer has been hot. As residents, we talk about the heat and humidity, but need to acknowledge that the housekeeping and maintenance staff continued to serve us during this heat wave. I know that we appreciate their effort to keep Avila and us in good shape during this season of unpleasant temperatures."

Tom Fitzgerald

"We have always had activities here at Avila, but never the volume and diversity we now have each week, thanks to Fran Amedio's work and patience. We are all grateful to Fran for what she does for all residents with music, performances, trips, and creative activities. Keep up the good work, Fran; you are appreciated."

Tom Fitzgerald'

INTRODUCING MARJORIE FAVERMAN

By Pat Binzer

Known to all of us as Marjorie Gertzman or simply Margie, she decided she would really like to go back to her maiden name. As of this publication, she has officially become Marjorie Faverman.

Years after her spouse was deceased, she realized there were no longer any family ties to the name Gertzman but there were connections to Faverman. She discussed the idea with her family members and was pleased they understood her decision.

Margie knew it would not be easy to legally change her name. She knew it would take time to get used to the name change. She would feel the same, talk the same, and think the same. With the help of her lawyer, she undertook the adventure to be known as Marjorie Faverman.

To make this name change official, Margie had to file an affidavit in the State of New York Supreme Court in Albany County testifying who she is and who she wished to become. Then in August she had to appear in front of the judge before he would approve the petition.

Once the court accepted the requested name change, she began to update everything legally from Gertzman to Faverman. The list seemed endless: driver's license, bank accounts, credit cards, mailing addresses, retirement accounts, Medicare, Social Security, phone numbers, email accounts, and many more. There would be no guarantees that there would be no interruption in services or benefits.

Decisions, decisions. What must be done first? Business notifications followed by letting family and friends know that the change was now official. Her lawyer will help her wade through some of the legal forms and notifications to make the transfer take effect as soon as possible. She will follow up with the rest as well as the personal notifications. What would be the most expedient way to do that? By mail? By phone? Was email too impersonal?

Refreshed from her trip to Paris with her daughter, Margie is ready for the challenges that lie ahead as she transitions back to Marjorie Faverman.

VEIL OF MAKE UP

By George Knauer

A hazel eyed treasure, who hides her true beauty beneath the veil of make-up.

With colors and powders to guide her way.

The world sees glamour, gloss and flare,

But misses the soul that lingers there.

For underneath shimmer and lines so neat,

Lies a softness raw, a grace discreet.

If ever she let the paint run free,

The world might blink, and finally see:

No powder, gloss, or painted hue

Could match the light that burns so true.

DINING COMMITTEE

By Rose Ann Schaeffing

As with all committees here at Avila, the purpose of the dining committee is to facilitate communication between residents and management. For the dining committee this also means maintaining good communication with the food service provider, Unidine. The dining committee meets the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 AM in the Great Room. The committee has ten members: three representatives, each from the East and West wings of Avila and the Lodge and one representative from the Cottages. All residents are also welcome to attend the meetings.

Representatives from Unidine management attend the meetings and the committee members relate to them the issues, suggestions and complaints and compliments that residents have given to committee members throughout the month. Unidine management responds during the meeting and also takes items under consideration for further thought. They may also present suggestions and comments to get initial responses from committee members and other residents. Residents may also participate actively in the meeting. That being said, residents are encouraged not to wait until the meetings, but to bring concerns and comments to Unidine management throughout the month by using the interactive stand or by approaching Abra or Matt.

While the committee works with Unidine and Avila management, its role is advisory. In turn, Unidine management here must adhere to corporate policies when they make decisions on purchasing, offerings, etc. Avila management is responsible to the Board for policies, contracts, etc. Tom Wahl, who has been chairman of the dining committee for three years, says the input from the committee and residents is heard and respected within the limits of its advisory role.

AVILA RESIDENTS DEAL WITH ECOLOGY NEEDS

By Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

Living in this retirement community is a blessing in so many ways. With a sense of gratitude for what we have, residents recognize the need to support others and address the growing concerns facing the world's ecology. In one small but significant way, residents appreciate the convenience of using paper bags to carry their take-out meals to their apartments. The question becomes, what do we do with used bags? Lois Wilson and Ann Kahle have a charitable yet straightforward solution: recycle them, addressing both our need to reduce waste and serve others in need.

Residents now drop off clean, used bags in either the craft room, as pictured here, or leave them in the trash rooms on each floor for other residents to bring to the craft room. Lois and Ann organize the bags for weekly pickups by Focus Interfaith Food Pantry. This charitable organization, serving nearly 100,000 families yearly, estimates that these bags represent \$300 per month savings for them, thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of Avila residents.

"Brown Bags" represents one more example of gratitude on the part of Avila residents for what we have and our commitment to serving others in the Capital District while supporting the environmental movement worldwide.

LITTLE REMINDERS OF A TIME

By LEILA (LEE) MURPHY

I was thinking that it was time to start cleaning out some knickknacks, souvenirs and collectables. Over the years I have accumulated many items that mean a lot to me but not to others. I never really thought a decision had to be made about what to do with all these precious things, just assuming I would always be around to enjoy them.

There comes a time when reality hits and now decisions must be made. Looking at all these items have brought back some memories I thought were forgotten. I am sure you all have been in the same position having recalled sometimes, very long ago, that may have brought a smile as you picture the day and event.

As I perused some of the items in the china cabinet I relived the incident that made me save it.

Among the items are several rocks, about 15 or so. You may wonder why save rocks? Each rock about the size that fits in the palm of a hand has a date, location and names written on it.

Many years ago, I started to collect rocks as a souvenir to remember a special place, day and event. As I look at each one, I can recall the people I was with and where we were. There is one I picked up from the entrance to the hospital where my husband spent a good part of a year in Pittsburgh, PA. He was there for a possible liver transplant in 1992 which turned out not to happen. I lived in a motel with our dog nearby for that time.

I also have a rock from the garden outside my apartment. It was a very sad time but saving these rocks helped me to remember our precious time together before he passed.

On a lighter note, another rock is from the hotel where I stayed in Fiji. It was the last stop on way home from Australia. I had brought my little friend who was 13 at the time and lived next door in Edison, Nj. This was my second time going to Australia, but this trip was special. Today, many years later, we are still close and at times reminisce about the time spent together. The rocks brought back from that trip bring back such wonderful memories of our time together that we share even today.

So many people think it is silly saving rocks, but each one has a precious memory attached and means just as much as a store-bought souvenir. There are so many memories all of us treasure and my rocks hold so many for me. It may seem silly to some but to me it is part of a past I will remember forever.

After writing this and reliving some of the memories, I have changed my mind about cleaning out at least some of the knickknacks. So, keep these little souvenirs and enjoy the memories they bring back to you of a time long ago. Even if it's just a little rock.

DARK, MYSTERIOUS ROOM AT AVILA, THE MEDITATION ROOM

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald

You probably pass the room, labeled 'Meditation,' several times each day and might wonder what takes place in the semi-darkened, quiet location. Three Tuesdays a month, residents gather there to meditate at 11:00 a.m. What is that? Is it something religious or otherwise mysterious? Something that we should avoid for our safety? Hardly. Meditation is a simple and effective way to sleep better, reduce stress, and better prioritize our daily activities. What are you afraid of when thinking about meditation?

Jackie Weckesser, our certified instructor, leads the group of residents in a series of breathing exercises designed to enhance a sense of calmness and ability to focus our minds. Meditation is an ancient practice used by people of all ages worldwide to relax and reduce stress. A typical meditation session is designed to focus on one thing, eliminating the stream of distracting thoughts that usually overcrowd our minds. The result provides a sense of calm, peace, and balance that benefits our emotional well-being and overall health. Practitioners experience reduced negative feelings, lower heart rates, increased creative energies, and often lower blood pressure.

You may ask, "What does it take to meditate?" Four simple conditions: focusing your attention, relaxed breathing, a quiet setting, and sitting in a comfortable position. You can do that and remember the extensive benefits that come from developing regular meditation practice.

When you next walk by the meditation room, you know what takes place at 11:00 AM three times each month at Avila. You can now feel safe and always welcome to join your fellow residents in the simple yet beneficial practice of meditation.

AVILA'S 3-BS OF ECOLOGY: WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

By Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

We can take pride in our efforts to preserve the environment while also contributing to charitable causes. Our efforts to address the need for environmental conservation may be only a small beginning, but they are nonetheless a valuable effort. You might ask, "What are the **3-Bs of Ecology** at Avila?"

1st - Brown Bags Collection: Residents save our clean brown bags on each floor, which are then sent to various food pantries for their charitable use. The Focus Food Pantries of Albany estimate that this saves them \$200 each month.

2nd Battery Collection: Used batteries are collected separately on each floor for proper disposal, saving money and reducing pollution at landfills.

3rd - Bottle/can Collection: Used plastic bottles and soda cans are again collected on each floor for our maintenance staff, who return them to grocery stores for the small deposit, which is then sent to selected charities, amounting to approximately \$700 each year.

Avila residents now have a means to expand their **3Bs** by building a deeper understanding of the critical impact their lifestyle choices can have on the environment.

George Gerardi comes to Avila with extensive experience, knowledge, and interest in integrative ecology. He invites residents to join him in discussing issues related to preserving the environment, visiting local centers such as the Pine Bush and Siena's "Laudate Si" Center for Ecological Study, and mapping future ecological activities here at Avila. These informative meetings provide an ideal sounding board for all of us to become more knowledgeable about the need to repair and save our fragile planet.

While Avila residents can take pride in what we are already doing to support our environment, our **4th B** might be called **By George Activities**.

We look forward to seeing you at any or all the upcoming events!

"BREAKING OF WINGS": AIR FORCE TRADITION

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald



When our granddaughter completed her basic flight training in August 2024, we were proud to participate in her achievement. The graduates attended several ceremonies at Vance AFB, OK, to mark their designation as 2nd Lieutenants in the US Air Force.

As officers, each received their flight wings in recognition of their training and joined in the ceremony of the "Blessing of the Wings" led by Base Chaplain Gilmore, who asked the Lord to give them strength to lead, wisdom to guide them, eyes to look before them, a hand to guard them, and a shield to protect them from anyone who would harm them.

Later that day we witnessed the tradition of "The Breaking of the Wings," during which each graduate took the pin from his/her uniform and broke it in half, one half to be kept by the pilot and the other given to a loved one.

The tradition of breaking wings is a significant culmination of the Air Force's pilot training program. As a time-honored practice, it symbolizes the risks of flying that they embrace, while recognizing that no one can succeed alone and the critical support that family, friends, and comrades play throughout the pilot's career, however long it may be.

As we celebrate Labor Day this year, we also appreciate and honor those serving in the armed forces as well. We acknowledge the risks they accept on our behalf, and the debt we owe to them. We are truly blessed to have such a high caliber of young men and women serving this country.

SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE . . .

Comments and photos by Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald.



The Memorial Day celebration at Avila this year served several purposes. We remembered those in the military who helped preserve our freedom, and we also celebrated Fr. O'Brien's 59th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. We all had a memorable and enjoyable time that day.

Looking for a low-impact and high-energy activity some afternoon? Re-discover the pool table and equipment just off the reception area. All this is available every day, but if you would like to challenge other residents to a game of pool, arrive any Thursday afternoon and join the friendly and supportive group as pictured, (left to right) Dave Ditton, Sam Hazleton, Tom Wahl, and Alex Gerchikov.





How do Avila residents spend the first "hot day" in June? They, of course, join the ice cream social at the Lodge's newly renovated reception area. Shawn Hall prepares an ice cream sundae with special ingredients requested by residents and guests.

One June afternoon, Conductor David Allen Miller guided a large number of residents in an engaging and informative session on the various tasks facing every conductor of a large orchestra: namely, tempo, beat, and uniformity of sounds. We were all enthralled by Miller's humor, insights, and instruction, all of which demonstrated why the Albany Symphony, under his direction, is one of the leading highlights in Albany's music scene over the past years.



The ancient game of Bocci Ball is alive and well on the lawn of Avila's Lodge each Tuesday at 9:30. Spectators encourage the members of the two teams who compete in high spirits for the honor of being victors. All residents are invited and welcomed to participate or to watch the competition, sitting in the sunshine.

Ginger McGehee scored another success organizing the Senior Citizens' Day carnival activities in August for the large group of Avila residents attending. Mary Ellen and Jack Bendick are seen joining the excitement of the afternoon, as they look forward to participating in the eight tables of challenging games, and to food prepared by Undine. Residents left with bags of prizes, candy, and happy memories of their carnival experiences.



WAITING FOR SEPTEMBER 1

By Patricia J. Binzer

*On summer days
in our small towns
we yearned for what
was yet to come.
We kept eyes on the calendar
Looking for September 1.*

*Days were getting shorter
Hot sunshine still kept beating
The summer days were ending
and vacation time retreating.*

*As a child growing up
during World War II
Gasoline was rationed;
limiting the things we could do.*

*We could not go anywhere alone
And never out of sight.
Sometimes we'd be allowed to sleep
in the backyard in tents at night.*

*We thought it was an adventure
and lots of outdoor fun.
But we were still very anxious
waiting for September 1.*

*At the very end of August
with the 31 days
Summer events started
to close down.
The stores were offering special sales.
Bargains were offered all over town.*

*We knew that meant
our date was near
September 1 was almost here.*

*Labor Day was special
with the town picnic
where everyone would come.
for music, games, and salads and dogs
Of course the short distance run.*

But more about September 1.

*In a very few more days
school would start
And our lives began once more
Friends we hadn't seen
for those summer months
would meet us at the door.*

*On September 1 plans kicked in.
Time to get ready for school once more
Line up pencils and notebooks
saved from the year before*

*Check out the closet
and decide what to wear
Pick something special;
don't forget your hair.*

*Summer is over.
A new year will have begun
It's exciting when it happens.
The all important SEPTEMBER 1.*