



News and Views

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

November 2025

CHRISTINE CARY, BOARD MEMBER

Interviewed by Pat Binzer



Photo by Pat Binzer

Introducing Christine Cary, member of the Avila Board of Directors. Upon reviewing the highlights of her life, it appears that Chris has been grooming herself for this position since she was a young child.

Born in Albany's Brady Hospital, Chris has never strayed far from her place of birth. Raised in Guilderland, she graduated from Guilderland High School followed by a degree in social work from UAlbany.

She was the sixth of seven children in a very active household with close ties to her other relatives, especially both sets of grandparents. She noticed that one set of grandparents had everything they needed quite easily, while the other grandparents had to struggle a bit. This seemed unfair to her and began her interest in helping older people have a better, more secure life.

Upon earning her degree in social work, Chris worked her way up the career ladder serving the elderly population. She retired a few years ago as the Director of Senior Resources for

the Town of Colonie. The emphasis of the department was to help people stay in their own homes as long as possible.

As a young professional, she developed the philosophy of the importance of always "paying it forward" when blessed with good fortune. This has been one of her guiding principles throughout her adult life, a principle she has passed on to her children and her staff. She took on interns whenever she could to help them get a headstart in the field of aging. She also believes in encouraging others to develop a vision for themselves going forward if they are planning to make changes in their lives, not relying on the past but envisioning plans for their futures.

Her church and community have played important roles in her personal and volunteer life. She is especially proud of her involvement in the Capital District Senior Issues Forum and the annual Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony it sponsored for many years honoring more than 750 seniors over 85. She has taken part in the Colonie annual "Giving Tree" held each December to provide for people in need, especially in the holiday season.

Being outdoors is a special place for Chris. Gardening is one of her favorite outdoor pastimes. She described the care she gives her plants during the growing season and the special care they get to protect them through the winter months. Walking for exercise and using free weights help her keep in shape.

A house on Cape Cod is her refuge and special place to be all summer. As she said, "Cape Cod has her heart!" She has even joined the local senior center and enjoys some of the exercise classes.

Chris and her husband have two children, a son in Boston and a daughter who works at RPI. Many of her extended family live close by, so sharing family time is an extremely important part of their lives.

MEET OUR NEW NEIGHBORS . . .

MARY CORRADO

By Jane Hale



Photo by Jane Hale

When Mary left her parents and two sisters behind in Schenectady to attend Le Moyne College in Syracuse, it's doubtful that anyone, including Mary herself, realized that the Schenectady to Syracuse trip was going to be the first step on an incredible journey that would take her all over the world.

After graduation from Le Moyne, Mary taught school in Hudson for four years before moving to Albany for graduate school. However, an unplanned detour took her from graduate school to the State Education Department where she quickly rose to a managerial position in the Division of Educational Testing. And that's when the travel bug really bit her.

In 1971, Mary and two friends decided on a western vacation tour, but definitely not an ordinary "Call up a travel agent" style tour. Mary not only plotted the itinerary but also convinced her friends that the best way to see the West was by motor home and guess who did most of the driving and

campground hook ups during the entire trip? Well, that trip went so well that not too long afterward, Mary planned a second trip in an even bigger motor home, this time crossing the border north of Seattle into western Canada. Again, it was Mary at the wheel and doing most of the hook ups along the way. Then, after a few quiet years, Mary outdid herself with a third trip in an even bigger motor home swinging through Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Campobello Island in eastern Canada. No need to tell you who did most of the driving and hookups on that trip.

But then Mary expanded her sights onto far more distant destinations. So began the incredible journey that's taken her around the British Isles, through several other European countries, down under to Australia and New Zealand, into the Baltic states and Russia, from Paris to Normandy and along the blue Danube by river boat, over to Costa Rica and back in the United States for Alaska, the Mississippi, the Snake River and the Smokey Mountains as well as several stops along the way for New Orleans, Memphis, Las Vegas and Monterey. She can also lay claim to having slept on the deck of a windjammer and experienced the excitement (and sadness) of watching Cuba disappear below the horizon on the second to last ship allowed to leave Cuba before its shutdown.

After all that travel, it was time for Mary to think about where her life journey would take her next. After talking to friends already living in retirement communities, she knew it was Avila that would allow her to remain in contact with longtime friends and neighbors, continue her ministerial activities at her parish church and give her an all-important outdoor deck or patio to expand her new apartment beyond just its four walls. So happy you're here, Mary. Welcome!

MAUREEN AND JOE FOGARTY

By Rose Ann Schaeffing



Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

Maureen and Joe are both native New Yorkers. Maureen was born and raised in Utica and Joe was raised on a dairy farm north of Troy. Their paths did not cross until they were both appointed to a parish committee to help with the Diocesan Appeal in 2010. They were subsequently married in 2011. Their honeymoon included a trip to Italy.

This trip became a part of the extensive travelling they have done together. They have travelled throughout Europe and cruised in the Mediterranean, Caribbean and Baltic Seas. One of their most recent trips ended in an unexpected way. Their return flight to Boston, which was routed through Lisbon, was cancelled so they ended up in Lisbon for a few extra days. One day was spent figuring out how to get home

and another day was spent in the airport trying to locate their luggage. Never mind the occasional hiccups, they enjoyed all their travels and hope to do more.

Maureen graduated from Siena College (University) where she studied finance and accounting. She also played basketball, volleyball and softball (before scholarships were offered) which led her mother to say that she majored in sports! She also worked in the Athletic office part time. After graduating she worked as an accountant for New York State, spending most of her career in the Office for the Aging.

Maureen continues to be an active volunteer at her parish, St Michael the Archangel in North Greenbush. She serves as a Eucharistic Minister and lector as well as volunteering in the accounting office. She also likes to attend her twice weekly Zumba classes when her schedule allows.

Joe attended Hudson Valley Community College and then graduated from SUNY at Albany. He spent his career with the state of New York in the Transportation Department where he started as a technician and ended his career as the Director of Appraisals. In this capacity he oversaw the state's acquisition of property to develop the interstate highways here in New York. When it became clear that the Love Canal area had become too toxic for people to live there due to decades of hazardous chemicals being dumped in the area, he was assigned to oversee the appraisal and purchase of approximately 250 homes. During the acquisition phase he purchased approximately eight homes a day. He also assisted those who had to be evacuated to relocate into new homes.

Joe has two daughters and one grandson who now live in Boston and Connecticut. Joe retired to take care of his first wife when she became terminally ill with cancer and who passed away in 2000.

We welcome Maureen and Joe as they settle in their new home here at Avila.

GINA MCGRATH

By Ray and Erin Teichman



Photo by Lynn Altonin

Gina McGrath moved to the Lodge at Avila in July after an active, involved life in the Coxsackie, NY community. She was married to John McGrath, who passed in 1995. They had three sons:

Mark Evans, currently the mayor of Coxsackie, James (Jay), and Kerry McGrath who passed in 2022. For over 40 years Gina served as office manager for State Telephone, a private telephone and internet service founded by her grandfather and developed after World War II by her father. She attended Kenwood and Manhattanville College, both institutions run by the nuns of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a number of whom live in retirement at Avila. Prior to working for the family telephone business, Gina worked as a caseworker for 10 years at Albany County Social Services.

Gina continues to serve her parish church, St. Mary's in Coxsackie, where she was active in Christian formation work. Since her retirement she has also served on various boards and as a poll watcher during elections. She is trained as an intermediate EMT on the Coxsackie rescue squad. She has traveled to Ireland and, at least three times, Italy, once while a student at Kenwood.

She was quite familiar with Avila before moving here, having visited with friends including former pastor, Father Moyna.

Gina is a most outgoing and thoroughly engaging person whose presence among us is a real asset.

VIRGINIA OVERDORF

By Rose Ann Schaeffing

Virginia came to Avila after having lived in many places. She was born in Syracuse but at age two, she moved with her parents to a suburb outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the middle of her sophomore year, her father's job brought them to Lewiston, NY near Niagara Falls. Virginia has no siblings and easily admits to being a spoiled only child.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled at Ohio Wesleyan University where she earned a degree in physical education. While at Ohio Wesleyan, she played field hockey and earned the opportunity to go to several national championship tournaments.

Virginia continued her education, earning master's degrees from Indiana University and Montclair University where she earned a master's degree in psychology. Finally, she earned a Doctorate in Motor Learning and Motor Control from Columbia University. While she was studying to earn her doctorate, she was teaching at William Paterson University.



Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

She began each class she taught by telling the students to choose a seat and always sit there. By the second session of each class she knew the names and recognized every student in each class. This certainly contributed to her success as a teacher.

She was very active in the life of the University. She served as the vice president and then as president of the Faculty Senate. She was asked to start and coach a women's tennis team. Not knowing much about tennis and not playing tennis, she went to California to study and learn from Vic Braden, a well-known tennis player and teacher. She went on to establish a successful tennis program at the University. She coached the team for 20 years. The team went to nationals several years. In her last year as coach, the first singles player on the team was second in the country. After teaching, coaching and much involvement in the University life for 42 years, she retired.

Virginia has travelled throughout Europe, enjoyed many sports and dabbled in music, playing the clarinet, saxophone and piano. After retirement, she lived in Sarasota, Florida, for 12 to 15 years. Her cousins encouraged her to move to New York to be closer to family and they helped her choose Avila for her retirement home.

Virginia lives in the Lodge with her beloved dog, Eli. Virginia says Eli is the sweetest, smartest dog she has had. In my short visit with Virginia, I found this to be true. Say hello to Virginia and Eli if you encounter them on their daily walks. Welcome to Virginia and Eli.

MARTA RISER

By Ray and Erin Teichman

Marta Riser was born in Saginaw, MI, the youngest of three girls. One sister is deceased. Her remaining sister lives in Nova Scotia. Marta is a graduate of Penn State and received her master's in public health administration from Russell Sage.

During her work at the NYS Dept. of Child & Adolescent Health, she developed a statewide initiative for working with HIV-AIDS clients and has been published in the Journal of Public Health Management and Practice.

Marta also worked as a volunteer teaching in Kenya for two years. She said she and her daughter lived in a village of mud huts with a one-room mud brick school.

Daughter Tanya lives in Troy, while one granddaughter lives in Los Angeles and the other is a freshman at Clemson University.

Because Marta does not care for the cold, she told us she spent several winters in Salvador, Brazil. While there, she designed and had built her home as well as learning Portuguese.

After visiting several senior living facilities, Marta chose Avila for its welcoming atmosphere and fitness center, especially our pool. In the short time she has been here, Marta has become a regular attendee at the aqua and hydroider classes.



Photo by Ray and Erin Teichman

MARYANNE SOUTHGATE

By Ray and Erin Teichman



Photo by Ray and Erin Teichman

Maryanne Southgate moved to Avila on April 7, 2025, from The Spinney. Jimmy, her husband of 32 years, died in October 2024. As a result, Maryanne felt she needed new living arrangements. Also, due to health concerns, she wanted someplace providing services.

Born in Auburn, NY, she is the youngest of four, brothers, David and Richard, and sister, Brenda. Maryanne came to Albany to study biology and chemistry at SUNY Albany. While working on her Master's, she had a research and teaching assistantship. Unfortunately, she was severely injured in a motorcycle accident; spent five weeks in a coma and three months in Albany Med; had several broken bones and lost her peripheral vision.

Unable to return to her research, Maryanne went to HVCC, studied data processing and worked for Higher Education Services Corp. until retirement. She also volunteered for the City of Albany Head Gardener helping plant tulips for the annual Tulip Festival at the Albany Institute and

other sites around the city.

Maryanne has a son, Garrett, who lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Carina Finn, a children's book author. Garrett teaches fitness and indoor rock climbing at Movement, one of a chain of climbing, yoga and fitness gyms.

She enjoys collecting dolls dressed in 19th century costumes.

Recently she went to Denver, CO, in mid-October to attend a Paul McCartney concert.

We welcome Maryanne and Phoebe, a long-haired miniature dachshund, her pet of ten years to Avila.

... AND THOSE WHO ENTERTAIN US

COLE BRODERICK ENTERTAINS RESIDENTS

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald

The October 22nd appearance of Cole Broderick marked his sixth return engagement at Avila and the opportunity to bring his jazz piano style to an appreciative audience at the Lodge.

He has recently specialized in keeping musical memories alive for residents of retirement communities in the Capital Region. Cole has been passionate about the piano since the age of seven, performing jazz and popular music. He obtained a degree in music arrangement and composition from the University of Miami, where the music of Oscar Peterson and Andre Previn influenced his music career. When he decided to give up his bohemian



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

lifestyle in 1980, he left the South and returned to his roots in the Capital Region.

In the 1990s, he formed the Cole Broderick Quartet, appearing at the Newport Jazz Festival and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. He received personal accolades from *Frasier* co-star David Hyde Pierce, who wrote: "The jazz is as cool as it is hot."

The enthusiastic audience of Avila residents that October afternoon would agree with David Hyde Pierce's assessment as they listened to Broderick's piano sounds. One resident commented, "he brings back so many memories and has a great variety of songs that we love." Along with a relaxing atmosphere enhanced by the usual Wednesday wine and cheese, residents appreciated the talents and skills Broderick demonstrated in their living room. As his background music ended, several residents commented that they hoped Cole would return soon with his "cool jazz" renditions.

FOCUS FEATURE

"A shout out to Gordy and Tom T for hanging our quilt with so much care in the Craft room. I caught them in the lobby and asked if they could put it up when they had time and they stopped, got their tool and met me in the Craft room, centered it and it looks great

And thanks to Tom T. and Richard for fixing my ice maker.

And thanks to Richard for doing a great job on spot cleaning my carpet "

Marilyn Seidenberg

"On a rainy Monday, a good neighbor or Avila staff member brought my empty trash and recycling cans from the curb up to my garage door. This was done anonymously! I thank that person, and I want that person to know how much I appreciated that thoughtful gesture."

Margie Faverma,n Cottage 16

"I would just like to make mention of how helpful and compassionate Devin Ryan was last week when I fell in the parking lot. I was on way to dinner from my cottage and thought I could just do the short walk from parking lot into dining room without my walker. Well, I learned my lesson. I tripped over the curb and fell on my face. A resident was passing and went inside and got Devin. I was still lying on the ground. Devin comforted me till the fire dept arrived.

They helped me into the lobby. Since there was a mix up with the ambulance service it took over 45 minutes before they arrived. Between the firemen and Devin, I was well taken care of. I was bleeding profusely from a wound on head, the fireman changed bandage twice while waiting for ambulance. Devin stayed by my side and helped to keep me calm while still manning the desk. I felt very fortunate Devin was there. He has been such a great help on many other occasions not just for me but from many other residents I have been told. We are fortunate to have him on staff, and I am so glad he was there for me."

Lee Murphy, Cottage 28

"A few weeks ago I had a problem which took me out on a stretcher. When I got back to Avila, my walker was in my apartment and I was at the front door. Hoping to hitch a ride, or elbow, for help back to my apartment who should come along but the Housekeeping ladies. When they found out I needed some assistance two of them, one on each side walked me all the way back. Talk about above and beyond. Thank you, ladies. You're great!"

Barbara Merritt

AVILA'S FUTURE: PRESENTATION BY LIFESPACE TEAM

By Jane Hale



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

As a "next step" in the proposed affiliation between Avila and Lifespace Retirement Communities, an informational meeting followed by a Q & A session was conducted at Avila on November 6 by Lifespace CEO Jesse Jantzen. During the informational session, several members of the Lifespace management team had the opportunity to define their roles in creating what Lifespace describes as "the platform" upon which residents get to fulfill their aspirations to be all that they want to be during retirement.

According to Mr. Jantzen, that platform is created by putting together a highly stable management team whose members are encouraged to personalize their approach to their jobs with the aim of creating an exceptional environment for their residents.

One of Mr. Jantzen's approaches to personalizing his own job has been to create an open email called "Ask Jesse" for residents to contact him directly. As expected, the Q & A session was heavily focused on what consequences Avila residents can expect financially, socially, medically and governance-wise if the affiliation with Lifespace occurs.

SHAKEER HIGH SCHOOL WRITING PROJECT

By Tom Fitzgerald

Dr. James Bell, an English teacher from Shaker High School, invited Avila residents to join his Writing Project by exchanging letters with students from his Advanced Placement classes each month during the 2025-26 school year. The 20 residents who participated that morning eagerly asked for details about the writing assignments and heard that his students are being trained in persuasive rhetoric.

Dr. Bell, beginning his 17th year heading this project, responded to a question about what we should write about with the simple advice, "Write what you know and like since my students want to understand your experiences, your impressions, and to hear your advice as they consider college choices, career fields, and building a happy future life."

The Writing Project operates in three retirement communities in the Capital District: Avila, Beverwyck, and Shaker Place. Residents are asked to share their life experiences with young people who are growing up in a radically different environment. It is our privilege to be asked to serve future generations as their mentors.



Photo by Ellen and Tom Fitzgerald

The discussion that morning in late August went from the details of the well-crafted writing project for advanced students to cultural and ethical issues facing both young and old, such as the potential of AI, use of cell phones and iPads, family issues, and how to deal with emotional crises.

Residents left the session with a strong level of enthusiasm for the project and the challenge of serving as mentors.

AGEING SUCCESSFULLY AT AVILA

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald

We all came to Avila with the expectation that this retirement community would serve our needs as we pursue ways to age successfully. Research has many conclusions on what ageing can and should include as we strive to maintain a zest for life during our senior years.

In May, the Spirituality group presented a session attended by 27 residents eager to discuss how to describe and achieve success during our senior years. This session, presented by Tom Fitzgerald, had three residents describe their experiences dealing with the inevitable life changes that challenge each of us. Ellen Fitzgerald, Rod Correll, and Elizabeth Hammer spoke forcefully about their life paths over the past ten years as an introduction for those attending the session to discuss their own experiences. The conversation focused on ten findings researchers have identified as characteristics of those ageing successfully. We ask, "How does each of us match the following ten practices?"

1. Accepting diversity and a willingness to adapt
2. Expressing gratitude
3. Living in the present
4. Keeping active
5. Staying curious and learning new things
6. Realizing we have a purpose in life
7. Establishing new close relationships
8. Connecting with younger people
9. Building community connections
10. Exercising a sense of spirituality

How did you do with these traits of ageing successfully? The Avila community has many features that support us in reaching our goal of ageing successfully. Yes, while none of us is perfect, we can all keep striving to maintain that zest for living.

A FROG'S TALE

By Dennis Murphy

I was telling a fellow resident about my experiences with the wildlife I have visiting my balcony. They suggested I write an article about it for *News and Views*.

When I moved here to Ávila three years ago, I already had numerous encounters with frogs and toads. In rural Medusa, where I lived for 22 years, we had a pond in front and fields and woods in back that created a perfect habitat. Bull frogs serenaded us with their baritone base anthems, leopard frogs supplied their high-pitched tones along with spring peepers, but my

favorite was the thrilling trill of the gray tree frog. It is amazing what a concert a chorus of these diminutive creatures can supply. Their resonant calls can fill many hours.

I knew that my singing friends dwelled in the upper reaches of tree branches, but I figured living on the fourth floor here at Ávila, I'd have to become a long-distance observer and listener. I was wrong. I find them right on my fourth-floor balcony. Gray tree frogs aren't like their usual ground-dwelling cousins. They like the higher altitudes of trees, buildings, poles, just about anything they can get their suction cup like toes on. It always surprises me that they have the ability to climb four story buildings.

As you can see from these pictures, they do vary in markings and color. They are mostly active at night. When I found them during the day, they were lurking in the dark crevices my balcony offers behind tubs, pots, and pails. I was surprised one time when I was filling a small watering can to have one pop up on the brim, looking at me accusingly of trying to drown him.

A word of caution: the skin of gray tree frogs contains a mild toxin, so it's best to avoid handling them—or at the very least, wash your hands thoroughly if you do.



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

By Jane Hale



Photo by Jane Hale

Whether it's caring for a single pot on a windowsill or trekking through the raised beds at the main building, Avila has something to offer to all its wannabe gardeners.

Every indoor gardener knows that without good light, there are limited choices available for a bit of indoor greenery or a spot of flower color. So, when that lovely plant you couldn't resist buying in May begins to look a bit peaked in November, what's the solution? It may be time for your sad beauty to spend some time in the light-filled greenhouse in the main building for a bit of R & R. With eastern facing windows, the room is filled with the kind of morning light that may be just the jump start your failing plant needs. In addition to the available light, the greenhouse has its own water source and potting bench for the care you'll be giving your plant during its stay.

For the more adventurous and agile gardeners, a group of volunteers in the main building has taken on the care and watering of the annuals planted in the courtyard's raised beds resulting in a colorful oasis for all the residents to enjoy during the warm weather months.

And now, Tracy Momrow, Avila's new CEO, is offering the Lodge the opportunity to brighten its courtyard with an array of annuals planted in the raised planter behind the patio, an offer conditioned on there being enough residents to watch over the planter for any signs that the automatic sprinklers are not working or that some of the plants are not looking too well.

What a small price to pay for having a bright display of annuals in the background as you enjoy lunch on the patio or savor the new colorful view from your apartment window. If you'd like to be one of volunteers who could make all that happen just by keeping an eye on the planter, let Shawn Hall at the Lodge know you're interested (phone #406) and next spring the Lodge could be looking at a completely rejuvenated and colorful planter in its courtyard.

Be assured that the greenhouse in the main building is open to all Avila residents as are the opportunities to be part of a group of gardening volunteers. If you have a gardening talent or ability or just a bit of gardening interest, consider sharing that with other members of our community. Drop me a note (mailbox #224) and I'll pass your info along. Words to remember: The only things that grow without care in a garden are weeds!

SMILE MAKERS

By Rose Ann Schaeffing

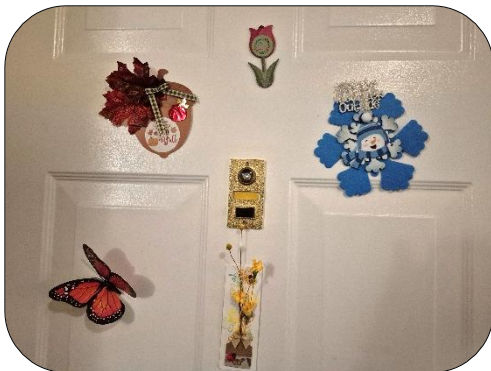


Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

Where do the lovely seasonal decorations on our doors come from? They come from Amazon, Dollar Stores, Hobby Lobby and other stores—in pieces!! Diane Holzschuh, our night security personnel, picks out and buys all the pieces and then puts them together to create the lovely seasonal door decorations. She does most of the work at home, only occasionally putting finishing touches on them during her night hours at Avila.

How do they get to our doors? At Avila, an anonymous resident places the magnet-backed craft works on our metal apartment doors. Diane has placed small wooden plaques on Lodge apartment doors, and she places the decorations on them using Velcro. She puts the ones for the Cottage folks in their Avila mailboxes. Diane also puts them on office doors and some public spaces.

For each seasonal set, Diane makes at least 200! These surely bring smiles to our faces when new ones appear and often as we come and go to and from our homes. Thank you to Diane and her volunteer deliverer for making and placing these lovely smile makers on our doors.



Photo by Rose Ann Schaeffing

SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE . . .

Comments and photos by Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald.



This Fall, Avila residents recall the sacrifices endured by our fellow Americans during 9/11, in October and in November, our veterans' fight for democracy and our country. Our flag recalls all we stand for, and the sunflowers represent our hope and prayers for the future. Avila is stronger when we stand together respectfully with our memories and hope for our future.

Pictured are a group of residents accepting and setting up donated items for the third annual Yard Sale on October 10th. Organized by Barbara Merri, donated items were displayed for residents who "shopped" for valued items, and in exchange, made donations to the Albany Alzheimer's Association. The success of the Yard Sale was measured in Avila's service to charities, the opportunity for residents to socialize, and a way to express our sense of gratitude. This activity demonstrates the strength of Avila's shared culture of service and support.



Pictured is the overall winner in the Halloween costume competition, Fr. Jim Kane, who appropriately dressed as St. Teresa of Avila. Pictured next to the winner is one of the competitors who did not win if the lack of a smile is any indication.



November is a time of remembrance as residents gathered on November 12th to share their thoughts and love for those who died during the past year. Pictured is Fr. O'Brien, Avila's chaplain, Rabbi Wendy Love Anderson of Temple Israel who was the guest speaker, Fr. James Kane, and Fred Seltzer, who read from the Hebrew scripture for the event.

Avila residents continue their generous consideration for others who may not have sufficient food at Thanksgiving. Residents donated over \$1,534 and 37 bags/boxes of food supplies, for use by the Focus Food Pantries serving several sites in the Capital Area. Pictured are Barbara Merritt, the drive chairperson, with Lori and Jeff from our staff, who helped organize the food donations. Nameless, deserving recipients, thank each resident for making their Thanksgiving joyful.



One example of how Avila residents display their hospitality is by using door decorations. For these fourth-floor east residents in the picture, they may be displaying "puppy love", "doggy heaven," or just "welcome." Do you have a favorite door decoration that we could use in the future?

YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEANT?

By Patricia J. Binzer

*We talk to people every day
Sometimes just in passing
Sometimes at the games we play.*

*There are times we smile
before the words come out
If they are farther away
we may have to shout.*

*How do we sound
to the ears of those we greet?
Were we warm and friendly,
Polite or discreet?*

*When talking to someone
who doesn't hear very well,
do we tend to raise our voice
and perhaps even yell?*

*In the main dining room
seated at a table for four,
There's usually lively conversation
With stories galore.*

*What may happen at a table for eight?
It's hard to be heard
So you stare at your plate.
Or one lively guest with stories to tell
will do all the talking so things go well.*

*Remember the times as a kid
when your mother would say
"Don't use that tone to me"
And you would shrug your shoulders
and just walk away,
hoping there was no more to see.*

*Not knowing what was wrong
with the words you chose to use,
guess it was the way she heard it
though wrong is no excuse.*

*Then there are those "sweet talk" sounds
when favors are requested.
Words and tone are carefully phrased
Careful planning must be invested*

*To get just what you're asking for
the timing should be just right.
A smile, a tone, warm fuzzy words
delivered confidently with might.*

*There are occasions to be gentle.
Times to be sincere
It's all in how you say it.
how it will reach an ear.*

*Try out your voice using different words
See how they sound to you:
anger, love, questioning, encouraging, protest,
comforting,
Use your hands and facial moves .
They are part of communicating too,*

*When speaking on the telephone or texting to a
friend,
Do you often give in to shortcuts
Just keep it brief. Hit send.*

*By adding just a word or two,
The receiver will think more highly of you.
Use your nice and patient tone
be it a text or on the phone.*