



Volume 21 Issue 4

A Newsletter by and for the Residents of The Forest at Duke

January 2016

Erika Guttentag's Long Walk

Reprinted from *The Forester* November 2013 issue

by Joanne Ferguson

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Erika was in the eleventh grade and her older sister Ursula in the thirteenth. They were living in Stettin on the banks of the Oder River. Since their father had some Jewish ancestry, they were labeled “non-Aryan,” with all the restrictions that entailed. They were not allowed entry into any social or sports groups, and most grievous of all, no admission to universities or most other institutes of learning. Erika’s parents were divorced when she was three; her mother was a school teacher and a woman of great determination. She placed Ursula in Bath, England, as an au pair and then Erika went to the same family and both girls sharpened the English they had learned in school in Stettin. When Erika got home, they found a third-rate business school in Leipzig that offered courses in a number of languages and did not ask the dreaded question of Jewish ancestry.

Her mother realized that her daughters would have trouble finding jobs in Stettin, where everyone knew they were “non-Aryan,” so the girls made a move to Berlin, where each of them found jobs in firms that did not ask about ancestry. They were joined by their mother in 1941 and rented an apartment in northeast Berlin. Their mother was always passionately anti-Nazi and somehow managed to avoid joining the Nazi Party without losing her teaching jobs. Erika says, “I will never know how she did it.”

When America entered the war in 1941 the air raids began, from both the Allies and the Russians. Everyone was herded into the shelters, carrying suitcases with a few possessions in case the building was hit. Erika and her family were on the fourth floor, so they carried their suitcases up and down the stairs, sometimes twice a day, or more of-



Erika

ten during the night.

They suffered from insufficient sleep and with constant hunger. Hunger is a thread that winds through Erika’s whole account of the war.

Their greatest fear was that Hitler might succeed against all odds. “It was an eerie feeling: we needed the air raids, all those killed in action, the burning cities, so Hitler would be defeated and his reign over.” It was punishable by death if you were found tuned to foreign radio broadcasts, so they never knew what was really happening.

It was in late March, 1945, when the battle for Berlin began. They had no idea who would appear first, the Allied troops or the Russians. Erika peered out the window in those last days, hoping for an Allied uniform. She was at work in a suburb when the artillery fire began. The trains had stopped running by the time she realized the guns were dangerously close. She borrowed a bicycle from the office’s landlady and pedaled home. She has always regretted that she couldn’t return that bicycle.

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The Forester

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In Memoriam

T. Benjamin Massey December 9, 2015

Edward Mullinix December 11, 2015

Connie Service December 13, 2015

President's Podium

by Dale Harris

2016 is off to a good beginning for the Residents' Association (RA) and we hope for our residents.

There is very positive news about our Association's tax issue process. In our November Forester I had explained that our RA had applied to the IRS for federal tax exempt status with a ruling not expected for up to 24 months. Happily, in December, we received a letter from the IRS stating:

"We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(7)."

More information about this will be given at our January RA quarterly meeting.

Huge thanks to our Ad Hoc Committee on RA Organizational Structure and Past and Present Tax Filings (**Sylvia Kerckhoff**, Chair; **Tom Keller**, **Robbie Robertson**, **Jim Shuping**, and **Mary Streitwieser**) for the effective job they have done in resolving this problem, with special kudos to **Mary Streitwieser**, our RA Treasurer, for her exceptional effort in filling out the relevant forms.

There are many smiles around on the subject of our Pictorial Directory for 2015 thanks to **Carol Carson**, **Wes Carson**, and **Elodie Bentley**. They have donated lots and lots of their time, skills, and effort to taking our photos, then assembling it all in publishing format, and making arrangements for us to order this directory plus copies of our individual photos when desired. How extremely fortunate we residents are to have this version available for distribution beginning at the end of 2015.

Our January quarterly Residents Association meeting WILL be held, though the physical arrangements will require our adaptability. Since the Auditorium will not be available for our use, the only location available will be the dining area. Since that will not be as commodious as we wish, we will need to do our best to make it work. As all this remodeling moves along we are beginning to identify progress, so we hope this accommodation is very, very temporary and one-time only. So we hope to have many of you all there.

Library Science 101

by Carol Scott

Happy New Year to all our readers!

The Library Committee is looking forward to 2016 with great anticipation, for our move later this month (we hope!) to the new Library by the front door. We want it to be as welcoming and comfortable as the Library we are leaving behind. We know it will be elegant.

Although at this writing (mid-December) we have no idea as to the amount of shelf space and the ultimate arrangement of the Library, we are determined to make it as functional as well as attractive as we can, knowing it may take time and patience to do this. Thank you for your forbearance. We are also hoping there will be cameras in the new room, therefore making it possible to be open 24/7 for the night-owls among us.

Thank you also for your cooperation in returning books to the Library by December 15 and not taking them out again until after the move. As you may know, we needed all of them in place on the current shelves so we could determine exactly how much space we would need for each category of books in the new arrangement. This actually takes some mathematical skills!

Members of the Library Committee meanwhile have made time in their busy holiday schedules to “read the shelves,” putting them in proper order ---alphabetically by author (Fiction) or subject (Biography) or numerically by non-fiction area, then alphabetically by title for all – preparatory to the move. AND they have been processing new books! Yes, there will be new additions to our collection by the time books can be checked out again.

So, hopefully, soon after you read this, the new quarters will be ready for occupancy and we will start off 2016 enjoying the long-awaited new location.

Again, Happy New Year!

Don't Worry, Be Happy

by Don Chesnut

If you walk with a limp, get a cane,
If you want to have fun, find a dame.
What makes us happy as life we pursue
Is doing the things that we want to do.
When you find life's good things, don't abstain.

If you want to make noise, ring a bell,
If you want to get hot, go to hell.
What makes us happy as life we pursue
Is doing the things that we want to do.
On those things that don't count, please don't dwell.

If you want me to curse, write free verse,
But to see my face shine, write in rhyme.
What makes us happy as life we pursue
Is doing the things that we want to do.
When you sit down to write, take your time.

If you're late for a date, please explain.
To make up for it, get some champagne.
What makes us happy as life we pursue
Is doing the things that we want to do.
If your date is a flop, be profane.

Now's the end of this silly refrain.
I hope it was not much of a pain.
But to make yourself happy
is really not sappy,
As I hope to no longer explain.

Erika continued

(Continued from page 1)

When the battle grew closer, the sirens sounded and everyone had to go down to the shelter, where they awaited what would happen next. "We were scared stiff," Erika says, always thinking, "Let it be the Americans." But it was the Russian soldiers who appeared with an interpreter, demanding all their watches, and they were told if anyone held one back they would all be shot. Later that night some soldiers came in, took one girl, and left. "My fear and panic were more than I had ever experienced," she says.

The next morning, her mother said, "We can't stay here." So they loaded up their three bicycles with some essentials and food and went outside, where there were guards in front of every building. They took one tentative step and nothing happened, then another and another and kept walking, past tanks and soldiers. A couple of blocks from their building was a forced-labor camp full of Poles. The Russians unlocked the gates and the men came out at a run, looting as they went.

As Erika and her family walked on, they suddenly began to see German soldiers and equipment. The battle of Berlin was raging around them, artillery fire, dead people in the streets. They ducked into entranceways of houses when the firing got too bad. "The most haunting sight was a man strung up on a tree with a sign on his chest: 'Here I hang because I refused to help the war effort.'" They kept walking and came to the house of Ursula's boss, where they stayed the night. The next morning, much to their surprise they were once again in Russian territory. They kept on with no house in sight. That night in an orchard they found a little tool house where they might shelter. When they opened the door they found four people already there. They all slept on the floor like sardines; whenever one needed to turn over they all had to.

The next morning they reached the little town of Werder. They were now officially refugees with no ration books. They spent the night with a compassionate woman, then were housed by the city government in a kind of shelter. Her mother spotted rifles against the wall and said, "We can't stay here. If the Russians find us we are all dead." The city found



Erika, left, and Ursula with bike 1946

them a little windowless room with featherbeds to keep warm. Erika remembers thinking, "I will never sleep in my own bed again." They lined up for a ladle of thin soup once a day. The town surrendered without a fight on April 10. They now had to decide what to do next. Erika voted to go back. "I couldn't face another uncertain walk, unwashed, no shelter, no food." So back they went. Erika remembers little about the walk back, except as they were walking through a forest, "Horror of horrors a Russian soldier approached. We froze, paralyzed with fear." It turned out all he wanted was a bike in working order so he took Ursula's and gave her his broken one.

Home at last, after an absence of 12 days or so, they found the door kicked in and drawers dumped but surprisingly little missing. The Russians got some supplies going and issued new ration cards. Among the allowances was $\frac{1}{4}$ egg a week! Erika laughed and said that even now without thinking about it, when she breaks an egg she puts her little finger in the shell and makes sure all of it is out. Even getting the food that was allowed was uncertain. They went from shop to shop, stood in line after line. They were thrilled when Ursula got a job in a little Greek grocery store and she could sometimes come home with two potatoes and a carrot.

Then came some good fortune. Erika had always been an opera buff and at last the opera house opened and she went. She sat next to an American soldier and struck up a conversation with him to practice her English. He told her his government was dying for someone with her qualifications and told her where to apply. She got the job, of course, with the Office of Military Government. Since it involved a train commute of three hours on the malfunctioning

Erika continued



Otto
in Berlin,
1945

transportation service, she spent the weeknights with her mother's cousin and went home on the weekends. Her job was interesting, and one of the fabulous perks was the daily lunch the Americans fed them. They lined up and passed from table to table, getting a ladle of food at each. She says, "Sometimes, on a banner day we got a slice of SPAM—an incredible luxury! Another big treat were the occasional Graham crackers. I never ate all the food but saved some to take home on the weekend."

One day an American Captain, who spoke perfect German, came to the door looking for relatives in Berlin. His name was **Otto Guttentag**! Otto was a physician who had volunteered. He not only found his relatives but also Erika, before he returned to San Francisco.

Erika by this time was secretary to Robert Kreider, the Mennonite in charge of relief to all of Western Germany. When he was transferred to Stuttgart, he took Erika along, and she was out of East Germany, already a complicated procedure. In that year of 1947 the law allowing "war brides" to enter the US outside the immigration quota was to expire on December 31. These brides must be married within three months after arrival in the US. Robert Kreider helped her with necessary telegrams, she got a visa, and was on standby for an airline reservation. She went to the airport on Christmas day, spent the night, and, mercifully, the airline ran an additional, unscheduled flight full of people like Erika, war brides, who had to leave the country before January 1, 1948. They left late on December 26, "a planeload full of happy, chattering young women. It was a fantastic, happy flight, even though it lasted 26 hours."

New York had just had the worst snowstorm

of the winter; all transportation stopped, their plane threatened with a possible landing in Baltimore. Robert Kreider had given her five dollars, but that was all she had.

Otto had come to New York and spent the previous night in the airport, not knowing if she would be on the plane or not. She was not on the passenger list since she had been on standby. She was the last one off the plane.

They were reunited at 5:00am, December 28. Erika says, "I don't remember how we managed to get back to town, but of course nothing mattered now."



Happy War Bride

Welcome, New Residents



Tom & Jean Vail

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Jean and Tom came to The Forest from nearby Treyburn, where they had moved from Chicago. Tom grew up in the Chicago suburbs and in Hutchinson, KS. With a Stanford degree in industrial engineering, he joined Morton Salt in the Bay Area. One of three sisters, Jean grew up in Santa Barbara, CA. She went east to Wellesley College, earning a degree in Latin America Studies.

Jean and Tom met and married back on the West Coast. Tom's career took them from California to New York State, Puerto Rico, and the Chicago area. During the early years Jean reared their three children and volunteered actively. As the children left the nest, she pursued theological studies at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (Evanston, IL) and was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. The focus of her ministry was guiding missions, churches and cathedrals undergoing transition in the dioceses of Chicago and Minnesota.

Tom having taken early retirement, the Vails enjoyed extensive travel between Jean's parochial commitments. Jean's active career came full circle as Interim Dean of the seminary from which she had earned MDiv and DMin degrees. Currently she is a priest associate at St. Matthews, Hillsborough, preaching several times a quarter.



Mary Anne Walker

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Mary Anne comes to The Forest from Massachusetts, where she spent most of her adult life. She grew up in communities in the greater Philadelphia area, but she also was rooted to a family homestead in Birmingham, IA, where she often spent summers. The Iowa farm has seen five generations, and for family gatherings Mary Anne is now the matriarch.

After preparation at Moorestown Friends School and Tredyffrin/Easttown High, she entered Penn State University, majoring in Food Chemistry and Institution Administration. (In Massachusetts she subsequently earned a Master's in Food & Nutrition and a Certificate in Public Health.) Her Penn State degree led to food related positions in the historically significant Walker Memorial Building at MIT (then a student center), Harkness Commons at the Harvard Law School, and the Spine Cord Service at VA Medical Center, West Roxbury, MA, this last to meet the critical nutritional needs of patients immobilized with traumatic spinal cord injuries.

Mary Anne brings insight from a retirement community in Easthampton, MA, a way-stop en route to The Forest. She is an active gardener and has been a botanical-gardens & forest volunteer, a homeless-shelter cook, a Buddhist-monastery cook, and a library volunteer.

Welcome, New Residents



Harrison Brooke

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Harrison was born and grew up in Staunton, VA, where at a very young age he was introduced to what became life-long passions: horses and bridge. His parents were active riders and his mother, like her mother-in-law, were addicted to bridge which he was allowed to observe at every opportunity. He entered Emory University at 16 as a pre-med student, a goal he abandoned when he was invited to witness an autopsy and passed out when the pathologist reached for the first instrument. He switched to math.

With a degree but not inspired by math, he entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, dropped out after the first year, and landed a few jobs off-Broadway and minor jobs on TV. With the exodus of TV to California he worked first for the American Heart Association and then the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research before moving to Durham to work at Duke as a financial officer. He quickly got re-involved with horses in the hunt field as well as the show ring. He reached the rank of Gold Life Master of the American Contract Bridge League in 2006.

We had a victory!

by Margaret Keller

It was a statewide effort, and Forest residents were in the thick of it. After the North Carolina Continuing Care Residents Association appointed Carol Woods resident **Sindy Barker** to chair its newly created Legislative Committee, she and the NCCCRA president **Walt Boyer** wrote letters during the summer to all members of the North Carolina General Assembly. Their message: Reinstatement of the deduction for medical expenses on state income taxes.

By this time many residents of North Carolina CCRC's had filed their 2014 state income tax forms, and they were shocked – Forest residents alone lost more than \$2.2 million in deductions. They were motivated to act.

The effort was long, like the legislative session this year. Letter writing began in March addressed to the House Committee on Aging, and ended in September with letters sent to the top legislative leaders. In between they went to six other committees and caucuses. Thousands of residents signed letters, including over 170 from The Forest (who lined up on two different days to sign letters to two different groups of legislators). E-mails were also sent, and presentations made to key committees; **Sindy Barker** spoke to the House Committee on Aging and our own **Russell Jones** to the House Appropriations Committee. The news that the deduction had been reinstated was celebrated in CCRCs across the state.

The NCCCRA team at the Forest, **Carol** and **Wes Carson**, **Ethel Foote**, **Gretchen** and **Bob Dix**, **Russell Jones** and **Margaret Keller**, thanks all of you who participated with great patience as you bent over low tables, used clipboards in your laps because your Jazzies wouldn't fit under the tables, or pushed your walkers wherever you could find a place to sit on them. Legislators listened and North Carolina's older adults (as well as the disabled) will benefit.

Organic

by James Stanley Barlow

Whether dreaming or waking I am
At the keyboards and pedals
Of this massive pipe organ with its many voices,
Sometimes harmonious, melodious, soothing,
Pianissimo, largo, sotto voce, then suddenly
Blaring and cacophonous with my playing.

Not too good at it but I am learning.
Still have too little control on the voices
And the images that come with them:
Mother, Sisters—all four! Grandmother,
Grandfather,
With his gnarled wooden cane that could push
you aside
And his smile as he handed you a buffalo nickel;
Deflected portrayals of my father—who died too
young!

Uncle Joe, like a picture of Stalin
Upbraiding me, Jesus hanging bleeding on the
cross—
“Lift high the cross;” Uncle Haynes—genial and
fatherly;
Uncle Dave, the Miller Brothers’ workhorse,
whom I would call
When we needed more sand for the sandbox or
kindling
In the basement and coal for the hopper, a man of
few words
But who was always there for us;

Uncle Robert Rush, who looked like Mother’s
twin,
Whom— six years after his senior law partner, my
father,
Died too young—I see in his own steel flower-
decked coffin;
His three sons and Aunt Gertrude beside her
father,
Judge Samuel Cole Williams, who had joined the
firm.

Uncle Ernest, the gentlest of my father figures,
My father’s brother-in-law and cousin on
Mother’s side,
Sat with me on his lap and marveled that my
hands
Looked so like his wife’s, Grace. She was
playing her violin
“In heaven;” and her sister, Ethel, very much
alive,
Had a way of saying her dead brother’s name that
Magnetized his son to his noblest image.

The colorful brothers of my grandmother, Sanna
Taylor Miller;
Tales of Bob and Alf Taylor, and Hugh, the poet,
struck my funny bone.

Cousin Hugh Millard, Ethel’s son, acted in plays.
I see him with cigarette-yellowed fingers
At the piano playing jazz and I relive
Hiking with him to White Rock on Buffalo
Mountain...

As in a troubled river the ballads tumble on;
sometimes with scenes
Of family embarrassments: ‘Cousin Pole’ and
others, including me.

“Oh how our organ can speak with its many
And wonderful voices,” time out of mind!
Whether I am asleep or awake, mine plays on.

Reflections on the Book: **David Brooks: *The Road To Character* (2015)** by Lee Murphy

With wisdom, humor, curiosity, and sharp insights, David Brooks focuses on the deeper values that should inform our lives. He encourages us to rebalance the scales between our “résumé values” – achieving wealth, fame, and status; and our “eulogy values” – kindness, bravery, honesty, and faithfulness. What kind of relationships have we formed over the years?

Brooks offers the two opposing sides of human nature as Adam I – the career oriented ambitious side of our nature– and Adam II – the internal striving to not only do good but be good. We live in a culture that nourishes Adam I and neglects Adam II. We are busy, but we have a vague anxiety that life has not achieved its ultimate meaning and significance. This book is about Adam II, the inner life.

At today’s commencements, speakers encourage graduates to follow their passion, to trust their feelings, to reflect and find their purpose in life. They encourage graduates to take time to discover yourself, define what is really important to you, what your priorities are, and what arouses your deepest passions: What is the purpose of my life? What do I want from life? What are the things I truly value, that are not done just to please or impress the people around me? What does life want from me? What are my circumstances calling me to do?

Brooks writes about famous people and how they coped with life and life’s difficulties. Dwight Eisenhower is one of his examples. The concept of conquering your own soul was a significant one in the moral ecology in which Eisenhower grew up. It was based on the idea that deep inside we are dual in our nature. We are fallen, but also splendidly endowed. We have a side to our nature that is sinful, selfish, deceiving, and self-deceiving – but we have another side to our nature that is in God’s image, that seeks transcendence and virtue. The essential drama

of life is the drama to construct character, which is an engraved set of disciplined habits, a settled disposition to do good. The cultivation of Adam II is a necessary foundation for Adam I to flourish.

Eisenhower was rambunctious from birth. He is remembered for epic brawls in his childhood. At West Point, he was defiant, rebellious, and misbehaving. He ran up a string of demerits for gambling, smoking, and general disrespectfulness. At graduation, he ranked 125th out of 164 men for discipline. He did not accomplish much until his forties, when he was introduced to General Fox Connor, who became his mentor – an open and honest man. He arranged for Ike to attend the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His final speech at the end of his presidency was that of a man who had been raised to check his impulses and had then been chastened by life. It was a life organized not around self-expression, but self-restraint.

Adam I wants to live according to a utilitarian calculus – to maximize pleasant experiences, to guard against pain and vulnerability, to maintain control, to experience hundreds of small successive feelings: a frenzy of admiration, hope, doubt, possibility, fear, ecstasy, jealousy, hurt, and so on and so on.

Adam II looks for some inner harmony, inspiration, joy, and uplift. Love is a state of poetic need; it exists on both a higher and lower plane than logic and calculation. Love opens up the facility for spiritual awareness. It is an altered state of consciousness that is intense and overwhelming, but at the same time effervescent. The more you love, the more you can love. Love impels people to service. Love ennobles and transforms. There are limits in how much we can change other people, or how quickly we can change ourselves.

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Character continued

(Continued from page 9)

The meaning of the word “character” changes. It is used to describe traits like selflessness, generosity, self-sacrifice and other qualities that sometimes make worldly success less likely. It is instead used to describe traits like self-control, grit, resilience, and tenacity, qualities that make worldly success more likely. The usual traditions tell us how to do the things that will propel us to the top, but they do not encourage us to ask ourselves: WHY am I doing them?

When outer ambition comes into balance with inner aspirations, when there is a unity of effort between Adam I and Adam II, when there is that ultimate tranquility and that feeling of flow – when moral nature and external skills are united in one defining effort – then people will feel a satisfaction, a silence, a peace, a hush. These moments are the bless-

ings and the signs of a beautiful life. They are on the Road to Character.

Mystery People: Do you know who they are?



25 years old



Engagement-1947

Good Genes

by Carol Scott

Recently I had another birthday --94—and, again, people—including physicians—are exclaiming, as they have since I entered the 90s, “I can’t believe it! You don’t look it!” To which I reply, “I have good genes.” And I do. Genes inherited from my father, who always looked younger than his age.

There is one story, almost never repeated, that once in a restaurant with my father, my two sisters and me, my mother was complimented on her three daughters and one son. That was NOT a favorite family story! But there was one other that my father dearly loved to tell.

During WWII my father, Walter J. Seeley, was chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department at Duke. He had been in the anti-submarine service of the Navy in WWI, and became a consultant at the Naval Ordnance Lab in Washington during WWII, in addition to his duties at Duke. He would teach during the first part of the week, then go to Washington for the latter part, arriving back by overnight train on Monday in time for his first-period class at the university.

One Monday the train was running late. Daddy asked the conductor what time the train would arrive in Durham. Upon hearing the time he exclaimed “Oh dear! I’m going to be late for my first-period class.” The conductor responded kindly,

“Son, you jus’ tell the p’fessah that the train was late, and he’ll excuse you.”

Daddy LOVED that story, because he, of course, WAS the “p’fessah”, and was actually 49 or 50 years old at the time.

And that’s where my good genes come from.

Now, of course, there is more than one way to look younger than one really is. An example is a great-grandmother whom I never knew. But I knew this family story about her.

She remained 39 until it was obvious that her son was 30, so she took another tack. At, probably, about 50, she added ten years to her actual age, and told everyone she was really 60. To her great pleas-

ure, everyone then exclaimed, “I can’t believe it! You don’t look it!”

We don’t know if she was really 92 or 82 when she died.

But I REALLY AM 94.

Lost World

by Ned Arnett

We’ve been there once,
Now all we can do
is watch them, the little kids;
four, five, six or seven years old.
They’re in the supermarket, at the beach
or in a schoolyard having fun and laughing.
Even in the worst of circumstances,
perhaps in a detainment camp,
or escaping from Syria,
crossing from Turkey to Greece
in an inflatable boat
surrounded by frightened grown ups,
the little kids know each other
and they start laughing.
They find any way they can to start playing:
jumping up and down in a puddle,
kicking a soccer ball, playing tag—
they’re doing it and laughing.
Too young to know how serious life is,
they’re playing and laughing, and laughing.
So, is it really true that
of such is the kingdom of heaven?

By **John Henry**

With credit for the idea to **Molly Simes**



Retirement Announcement

After ten years of editing *The Forester* **Joanne Ferguson** will be retiring in June of 2016. She offers to write the cover story or profile if or when the new editor might wish.

We invite a volunteer for this position, who will have the summer of 2016 to absorb the machinery in place. It's well oiled, by the way, so don't be fearful.

To volunteer, please call Nancy McCumber at 919-419-8225.
