

THE FORESTER

Volume 30 Issue 8

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

May 2025

Centenarians at The Forest: Mary Ann Ruegg

by Deborah Tunstall Tippet

If you live at The Forest at Duke, you probably know and admire the elegant Mary Ann Ruegg. Perhaps she is the first who invited you to join her for dinner in Rosewood. If you are in the regular breakfast group, you know that you will have a birthday cake and party, thanks to Mary Ann. If you are in the hospital, you may receive flowers or a card from Mary Ann. Or, if you are fortunate enough to be her friend, maybe she is the one who visits you each night when you are having chemotherapy.

Mary Ann was born on July 18, 1924 in Hydro OK to Henry and Nora Eichelberger, who were Mennonites. She grew up on a farm with one younger brother, Cecil Dale. At age three, she contracted polio and was carried everywhere by her father. She remembers lying in bed and looking out the window at a glass wind chime made by her aunt. As a child, her mother was concerned about her fair complexion and made Mary Ann wear a bonnet each time she went outside. Perhaps that explains her beautiful skin now.

She was kept out of school until she was seven so that she could attend a school two miles away. Every morning, her father would place her on

his pony Pet, who would carry her unaccompanied to her grandmother's house. An uncle would take her off the pony, and Mary Ann would walk to school. When she returned to her grandmother's house, Pet, who had been cooped up all day, ran through the county roads with Mary Ann hanging on for dear life. Mary Ann learned at an early age to be independent and resilient.



Mary Ann as a baby sitting on her father's lap on his favorite pony, Pet.

Mary Ann attended a Mennonite high school 20 miles away from her home. She and two other students boarded at the school during the week, cooking their own food. After high school, Mary Ann attended Hesston College in Kansas for three years. For her last year, she trained at La Junta Memorial Hospital in Colorado to receive her RN degree, with internships in Denver and Pueblo CO. After taking the state boards, Mary Ann returned to the farm to help her parents before moving to Kansas for private duty nursing. She completed one year of service at La Junta Hospital

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The Forester

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Additional articles in the May online issue of *The Forester* (<https://theforester.net>) include

- Ted Harris is creating a "secret garden" for TFAD residents, by Carolyn Cone Weaver
- Getting hooked on children's television in the 1950s, by Beth Timson (included are links for viewing clips from selected TV shows!)
- Ten surprising myths about the US tax system, by Howard Goldsweig

NorCCRA

by Margaret Keller

On April 15, 17 residents of The Forest gathered at Croasdaile for the meeting of NorCCRA's Eastern Region. One important take-away: the resolution all 22,500 residents of N.C. CCRC's are urged to send to their Congressional representatives.

I hope each of you has already done that!

News from the RA Board



by Jeff Collins

Dining Services Committee Chair

The mission of the Dining Services Committee (DSC), which I currently chair, is to serve as a liaison between the residents of The Forest at Duke and TFAD's administration to provide the best possible dining experiences for residents. This includes working to ensure excellent food quality, a wide range of food offerings, healthy meal options, friendly and efficient dining staff, and a pleasant ambiance in the various dining venues.

In the time that I have been chairing the DSC, which began in October, 2022, I have been very fortunate in being able to interact with extremely accommodating TFAD staff, notably Nathan Summers, Director of Community Services, who has overall responsibility for Dining Services at TFAD, and the two senior chefs—Executive Chef Darryl Dela Cruz and Executive Sous Chef Karla Ladd—who both joined TFAD shortly after my tenure as DSC Chair began. Nathan, Darryl, and Karla have consistently attempted to address residents' concerns about dining issues and fulfill residents' requests related to specific food likes and dislikes.

Given the marked advances in the diversity of food offerings since Darryl and Karla came on board, I'm pleased to report that the number of positive and complimentary comments submitted by TFAD residents vastly outnumbers the number of negative comments and complaints received. That being said, the monthly DSC meetings tend to focus on addressing specific issues that residents have complained or expressed concerns about in writing, whether that's via the Cubigo portal, direct emails to me, or submission of written comments in the Suggestion Box in Heartwood. My philosophy as DSC Chair has been that if a resident feels strongly enough about something dining-related to submit a written complaint or concern, then this issue should be addressed at a DSC meet-

[Did you miss the RA Quarterly Meeting on March 17, 2025? Watch it here.](#)

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News from the RA Board

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ing even if the issue appears on the surface to be trivial or an outlier.

In addition to resident-initiated specific complaints or concerns, the DSC meetings also address much broader dining-related issues. A key topic at the present time is how TFAD will accommodate the dining needs of an additional 125 residents when The Terraces opens later this year, even taking into account the addition of The Bistro dining venue in the new building and Greenwoods being brought back into operation in some fashion.

A DSC subcommittee composed of **Sharron Parker**, **Dave Sloan**, and myself has been spearheading discussions with TFAD's administration to ensure that dining operations will continue to function smoothly despite the upcoming increase in TFAD's resident population. **Jim Freedman** and **Mike Bracy**, President and Vice-President, of the Residents' Association (RA), have also been involved in this planning process. While considerable thought and planning by TFAD's administration has been done to get ready for the increased demands on Dining Services that will occur with the opening of The Terraces, it is fair to say that there is still considerable unease on the part of many residents as to how this increased demand will be met.



Another significant issue that the DSC has dealt with over the past year is sustainability practices, particularly attempts to reduce the use of non-recyclable plastic containers. TFAD's administration has been very receptive to suggestions made by the DSC and the Green Team (spearheaded by **Sharron Parker** and **Robyn**

Sloan) and has moved toward compostable take-out containers and a transfer station in Heartwood to encourage residents to utilize reusable containers from home rather than plastic take-out containers. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the amount of non-recyclable plastic used at TFAD, a definite plus for the environment. Also in response to suggestions from the DSC, TFAD has shifted to lighter-weight dishes to facilitate carrying of dishes in Heartwood by residents. In addition, TFAD's administration has been receptive to the DSC's suggestions concerning hours of operation of the dining venues and modifications to the menus, especially with respect to Taproot.

Given the importance of the dining experience at TFAD to most residents, it is not surprising that more residents request membership on the DSC than any other standing RA committee during each annual solicitation cycle. However, in order to keep the DSC operating efficiently, I have limited the size of the committee to 12 people, so it has not been possible to accept everyone who has indicated an interest in joining the DSC. Nevertheless, I encourage those residents who would like to be on this committee to continue applying, and hopefully your request will be fulfilled as members complete their 3-year terms. In addition, I urge all residents to continue providing written comments on your dining experiences at TFAD, whether positive or negative, so that we all can have the best possible experiences with this very important aspect of life during our time here.



[Heartwood's Salad Bar](#)

[Click here for a minute-and-a-half presentation made by Shannon AuCoin, TFAD Nutrition Manager, at the March 12, 2025 Dining Services Committee meeting.](#)

Mary Ann Ruegg

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as an operating scrub nurse and worked for a local doctor for seven years. Some patients were concerned that she was not married and hosted dinner parties where Mary Ann would find a single man sitting next to her. One turned out to be Don Ruegg; and by their third date, Don asked Mary Ann to marry him.

When she first started dating him, she thought, “this will never work.” After all, he was a Catholic and a widower with six children aged one to seventeen. She married him in June of 1964 and changed from being an independent career woman to a wife and mother of six, with a husband who traveled for his job. Don was a railroad man who became the Executive Vice President of the Santa Fe Railroad. Once the children left home, Mary Ann traveled with him in their own private rail car.

After Don’s retirement and a diagnosis of Parkinson’s, he had a bucket list of places he wanted to see. They traveled together all over the world. In 1993, he decided that it would be good to live in a CCRC where he could have his health issues addressed. They considered Chicago where they were living, then heard about a new place being built near Duke University. When they visited, they saw lots of construction and no forest. However, they liked what they saw and thought that this would be the perfect home between trips. Once, Mary Ann recalled, she had three hours between two cruises to unpack and pack. Don and Mary Ann moved to The Forest in April of 1993, making her a Pioneer.

When they first married, Don encouraged her to convert to Catholicism. She sought the advice of her childhood minister, who was also her uncle. He urged her to find a church that would be comfortable to her in each city as they relocated and to get involved. So she became active in the Presbyterian Church where she held a range of leadership positions, including Elder, Deacon and Stephen Minister. When she moved to Durham, she joined the First Presbyterian Church. Mary Ann has always dressed up for church with a hat that matched her outfit. If you look in the archives for *The Forester*, you can see photos of her in various hats.

After Don’s health stopped him from traveling, they started the lunch bunch at TFAD, trying out new restaurants and planning creative excursions for residents. On one adventure, residents took the train to Southern Pines where they ate lunch on the train. When Don died in 2006, Mary Ann thought of what she could contribute to her community. She noticed that there were widows who never left their homes and decided that she would host nightly dinners where they were invited to join her and other residents. She added it was a good way to meet new residents. It is no wonder that many at The Forest call Mary Ann, “the hostess with the mostest.”

Mary Ann now has four living children, twenty-five grandchildren, and thirty-eight great grandchildren. She is also close to her nieces and nephews and took a trip when she was ninety-eight to visit her family in Oklahoma. For her 100th birthday, many of her family members came to visit her.

When I asked Mary Ann to describe what contributed to her successful aging, she replied that having good genes and growing up on fresh produce and meats that were never treated with chemicals. Her father believed in organic foods before the term was ever used. She added being active and exercising every day as well as avoiding smoking and only drinking in moderation. I would add a sense of discipline in self-care, kindness, a generous spirit, curiosity about others, and a strong sense of purpose has added to her long life filled with meaning. 🌿

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Deborah Tippet and Sherrill Blazer are writing a series of articles on centenarians at The Forest. Last month’s article on Jean Anderson was written by Sherrill Blazer.

Click to watch

[AARP Fraud Watch Minutes](#)

How to Win Friends and Influence People Using Cubigo

by Ken Barrett

Today we take on the task of motivating the 300+ residents of The Forest at Duke to update their biographical information (Bios) into our new Community Management Platform, called **Cubigo**.

Bios are essential because they help us learn about both new and familiar acquaintances. At the Forest, with so many new people to meet, our Resident Bios—carefully compiled over the years—serve as a valuable resource. These Bios are accessible now on the RA Website. As the RA Website transitions to Cubigo, it raises the question, “Are Bios important to a community like The Forest?”

Sharing Bios enhances the community in several ways:

Building Relationships: Find common interests, leading to meaningful friendships.

Personalized Engagement: Activities and events may be tailored to individual preferences, enhancing residents’ participation and quality of life.

Community Integration: New residents, like the 120 we will soon welcome to The Terraces, integrate more easily when their Bios are shared to facilitate welcoming and transitioning into the community.

Celebrating Individuality: Documenting residents’ unique histories fosters respect and recognition, contributing to a positive and inclusive environment.

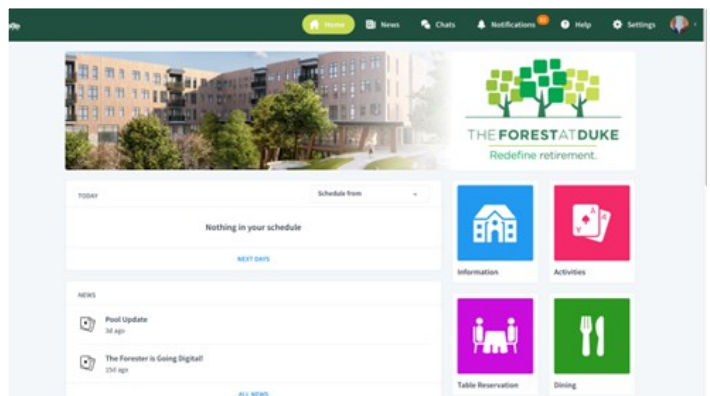
Many residents developed Bios through interviews for *The Forester* newsletter and paper copies were stored in the library. Lowell Goldsmith extracted Bios from old *Foresters* to put on the RA Website. Currently, each resident is solely authorized to update their own Bios for sharing with others in Cubigo.



Using an AI App to get complex answers is easy (and sometimes correct). I asked my AI App, “What does it mean to live in a community?” The AI answer:

“Living in a community means being part of a network where individuals **share common interests** and **engage** with one another. It involves feeling safe, accepted, and **connected**, allowing individuals to be authentic. Community living includes **mutual** support, **shared** experiences, and collective efforts to address local issues. It provides a sense of belonging and purpose, contributing to mental health and emotional well-being. Freedom, choice, and **mutual help** are also key components” (*emphases mine*).

Having a complete set of resident Bios is key to realizing the community traits highlighted in this AI answer. Cubigo is our go-to platform for all things community, from activity scheduling to sharing Bio information. For privacy, only residents can enter their own personal information, including Bios, into Cubigo's profile section.



Since residents of the Forest have varying levels of tech proficiency, three levels of assistance are available to update Bios in Cubigo:

Comfortable with your devices? Follow the step-by-step procedure in the Information Cube of Cubigo by selecting “Cubigo Biography Instructions”

Need more assistance? Bring your device to Tech Help Sessions, monthly 1:30pm on 2nd Wednesdays.

Want individual help? Call Emma Quick at Community Life at 919-419-4043 to schedule assistance. ☎

Welcome New Resident

Stephen Blank

Apt. 4006

917-375-2615

Sblank5642@aol.com

Welcome to Stephen Blank, an enthusiastic new resident who arrived a few weeks ago. He is happy to be at The Forest, which he found after researching other residences as affordable and the best place for him. A native of Pittsburgh, Stephen spent most of his life in New York City, although he has also lived in London and Cambridge, England, Japan, Germany, Mexico and across Canada.



He received a BA in History and Government from Dartmouth, an MA in History from Cambridge University, and an MA and PhD in Government from Harvard. From 1963 to the present, Stephen held an academic position, either tenured, visiting, or part-time, and worked in business and not-for-profit and government agencies as well. His research, writing and consulting has revolved around government-business topics—public and private sector and company-government relations—and most recently focused on North American economic and political relations.

Among Stephen's honors are Woodrow Wilson Fellow in 1961 for graduate study; Fulbright

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A Sense of Long Ago, Not Far Away

By Ellen Baer

On one of the last days of March, I joined a group of neighbors who were treated to a "field trip" that took us to a field, a pond, and a famous historic house. Fellow resident **Jay Williams** led the excursion to Ayr Mount, an old plantation near the Eno River less than a 30-minute ride from TFAD. On the way there, Jay, a longtime volunteer tour guide for the Eno River Association, gave us an overview of the area going back more than 600 million years. He provided enough geological history for us amateurs to grasp how the similar landscapes of central North Carolina and Scotland and Morocco came about. That helped explain why a fellow named William Kirkland came to this country in the late 18th Century and felt so at home in this part of the state that he purchased 500 acres near Hillsborough in 1799. In 1815 he built a house in the Federal style and called it Ayr Mount after his Scottish hometown of Ayr. For three generations of the Kirkland family, Ayr Mount was a working farm.



The next owner was businessman Richard Hamilton Jenrette, who succeeded in making sure the house was preserved, and it remains now, along with eight acres of land, as an important site on the National Register of Historic Places. Once the large brick home stood out among the simple wooden houses in the area; and it still stands out,

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Stephen Blank

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Distinguished Professor, University of Montréal in 2005; and Fulbright Visiting and Research Chair in Government and Public Administration, University of Ottawa, 2014-15. He was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec by the Government of Québec in 2001. He was a founding partner of MultiNational Strategies, an international consulting firm and Managing Director of the PanAm Partnership (of four North American business schools). Stephen is at present a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Over the years Stephen has published some one hundred articles and wrote or co-wrote twelve books.

During his early college years he was much involved in B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, becoming International President of the young men's program in 1958.

Stephen has three children from his first marriage to Elaine Portner—Daniel, Judith, and Rebecca, and additionally Holly Levine, daughter of his late second wife Lenore Levine.

He and his wife spent thirty-five years collecting art (Nova Scotia folk art, Inuit carvings, and Outsider art (artists with no formal training). He proudly wrote an essay every week for the Roosevelt Island (NY) Historical Society during the Covid crisis. 🌿



*"Rusty Pipes Band" from Croasdaile Village, April 7
(photo by Sanford Berg)*

Ellen Baer

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not only for its impressive exterior but also for its interior, which contains museum-quality period furniture and decorative arts, along with the original woodwork.

We followed an easy one-mile path called the Poet's Walk, where instead of a poem we got more history from Jay, as we walked around the grounds to a pond with a bench in the shade, a good spot, it seemed to me, for reading or writing poetry. We were aided on this entire journey by Community Life's Glenn Arrington, who drove us there and back and also provided top-notch technical assistance that allowed Jay to talk to us, both while riding in the van and walking on the trail.

At the end of the Poet's Walk, we stood in front of the house and heard more about the treasures inside. Unfortunately, we couldn't go in because house tours are limited to certain days, starting in April. Some of us wondered if Jay was just laying the groundwork for another trip to Ayr Mount. If so, count me in (with or without a poem). 🌿



*Duke Chamber Music, April 10
(photo by Sanford Berg)*



*Robert Buxton on piano, April 11
(photo by Sanford Berg)*

River Heroes

By Sharron Parker

A river seems a magic thing. A magic, moving, living part of the very earth itself. - Laura Gilpin

April's Earth Day/Month activities remind us that clean water is crucial for all living things. You know about canaries warning miners of toxic air; did you know that tiny creatures in streams can warn us about polluted water? The nymph stages of crane flies and damselflies, along with mussels, are highly sensitive to pollution, and their presence or absence alerts us to the quality of the water in streams.

Mussels do even more. They actually filter the water and can turn it from murky to clear. For example, the larvae of the Atlantic Pigtoe mussel (good name for a rock band?) ride in the gills of their host fish, the threatened Creek Chub, in Duke Forest's New Hope Creek. When they leave the fish, they change into the mussels that begin filtering the water. To help the fish travel more easily, among other reasons, Duke Forest will replace an existing concrete bridge with one that doesn't block water flow and remove the defunct Billy Erwin Dam. Soon mussels will be able to clean much more of the creek.



Tiny creatures could not do their work without the help of the many agencies and organizations that care about our rivers and streams. My favorite is the Eno River Association, which has been protecting the river's watershed since 1966. It has helped to establish seven parks along the Eno and provides educational and recreational activities to raise community awareness about the importance of protecting our rivers and streams. Among these activities are guided hikes, day camps, and the annual Festival for the Eno. Thank you to all protectors of our rivers.

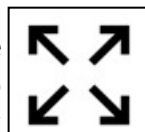
Tips for Reading The Forester on a Mobile Device

By Stephen Koff

If you would like to read your online copy of *The Forester* on a mobile device, such as a smart phone or a tablet, you may find it challenging because the text seems too small to read comfortably or the pagination doesn't seem to fit properly on the screen. The following tips might help you to get more comfortable with this new format.

First you need to access the newsletter, either from the direct link (<https://theforester.net>) or from the link on Cubigo. If you're on Cubigo, click on the "Information" cube, then scroll down to tap on *The Forester* link. For either route, the magazine will immediately be more legible if you're holding your device in the **portrait mode** (that is, vertical).

The magazine will open on the current issue, though earlier issues are also available if you want them. To enlarge the page, tap on the four-arrow symbol at the bottom of the page. To "turn" the pages forward or backward, simply tap the arrow on either side of the page in the direction you want to go.



To make the page larger, so that you can read all of the text comfortably, you can expand the text as much as you wish by clicking on the "+" (plus sign) at the bottom of the page. If you are reading *The Forester* on a small device, like a phone, enlarging the text will mean that you have to move the page from column to column to read an entire article. You can move the page by touching the screen with your finger and sliding the image right or left, up or down.



Reading any text material on a smart phone isn't the easiest kind of reading, as you know if you use your phone for any Word documents or Kindle e-books. *The Forester* is no different. To have the convenience of reading on your handheld device, you have to do a bit more maneuvering. 🌿