

# The Powerhouse Press

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Sincere apologies for having skipped last month's newsletter! The editor was "temporarily grounded" during a large part of December (probably for misbehavior), but is now back to her old (and I **do** mean **old**) self and raring to return to the computer. In the meantime, I'm sure some of your many friends in Camilla filled you in on the December activities, which, as always, were plentiful, varied, and most enjoyable. No one knows how to celebrate Christmas and the holidays as fully and as enthusiastically as do the Camilla residents and staff!

One of the most recent and exciting additions to the recreation department here on the hill was the acquisition of movable indoor putting equipment donated by a very generous benefactor. Not too many of our sisters are adept at golf, but we hope that will soon change. None of you will be surprised to learn that the newly named director of this budding program is our own Toddy Kirsch (Sister Marita David.) Those of you who know her realize that she is quite a pro, and if anyone can teach us how to putt, it's Toddy. The putting green will be set up in the Blessed Mother parlor on the first floor. Tentative days and times for practicing and learning this special art are Tuesday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. and Thursday evenings at 6:00, beginning in February. Toddy assures us that no previous experience is necessary (thank God!) and that all are most welcome. Sister also encourages wheelchair wanna-be putters to attend.

The celebration of Chinese New Year's on January 23<sup>rd</sup> was a delightful surprise to all of us. In addition to being a lot of fun, it was an educational experience for most of the residents. The dining-room decorations were exquisite, and the luncheon menu unexpectedly (to most of us) delicious. (Any hesitation we had about eating sweet and sour chicken disappeared at the first bite!) And we learned so much – for example, under what year of the Chinese Zodiac each of us was born. You'll be interested to learn that 29 of our sister-residents were born in the Year of the Rooster; the smallest number, during the Year of the Dog. (Your editor is proud to claim the distinction of being a member of this elite group.) Other noteworthy facts are that 23 sisters claim the Year of the Rat as their birth-year, and 17, the Year of the Pig. (For some reason, these groups do not seem eager to brag about this classification.) We also learned that each animal is associated with certain characteristics, and that those qualities are, naturally, transferred to the person born under that sign of the Zodiac. Four characteristics were listed for each animal – the first three, quite laudatory, but the fourth, a real "zinger," that immediately brought us back to reality. Some were told, for instance, that they were loyal, friendly, generous – but also **judgmental!** Others learned that they exhibited patience, kindness, honesty, and **self-indulgence!** (That momentary sense of pride was quickly squashed!) I think you can understand why we had so much fun at this wonderful celebration, which, we understand, was chiefly the brain-child of our highly-creative Marie Furlong. Thanks so much, Marie!

As you all know, Sister Anne Veronica is one who believes in sharing "behind-the-scenes" goings-on with all of us. During January, she has made available to the residents and staff the blueprints of the projected renovations and new construction that will be started later this year. (Sister has also visited the solariums to explain just what those sometimes mysterious markings on the blueprints represent.!) The drawings have been exhibited on all floors of Camilla to make certain that all are aware of just what we can expect and what progress is being made. Periodically, Sister also publishes a highly popular newsletter entitled "Happenings Around The House," in which she seems to anticipate questions we might have about anything that has to do with Camilla. Here are a few items from the January 16<sup>th</sup> issue that **you** may not know. *The census of Camilla*

*Hall has remained steady at about 184 sisters since our recent residents arrived in August 2011. The median age of the sister-residents is 83. 39 Camilla sisters are 90 years of age or older. The combined years of consecrated life of the Camilla sisters is 11,196 years. (Keep these facts in mind, in case you receive an invitation to appear on Jeopardy!)*

On January 16, we were privileged to attend a Generation Life Presentation in the community room. I think not many (if any) of the sisters knew much about Generation Life until that meeting, but we can never say that again. Two young women working in the program shared with us just what they were doing to help achieve the admirable goals of the group. Martha Jordan, a Steubenville graduate, works as a missionary for Generation Life, educating youth in promoting chastity. Caitlin McCarry, a relative of our own Sister Benedicta, is a student at West Chester University, and although still in college, presently serves as an “ambassador” in G.L., assisting, in numerous important ways, those on mission. In addition to their remarks and informal discussion with the sisters, the women showed an interesting and informative DVD, chronicling their interaction with and influence upon their peers. The sisters were quite impressed with the presentation, and extremely grateful to hear of the work being done by Generation Life.

The sub-title of January’s “Moments for Music” was *The Wonder of Winter – The Truth in Fairy Tales*. The overflowing audience was treated to such favorites as “Edelweiss,” “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” “Evening Prayer” from *Hansel and Gretel*, and “Camelot.” One of the highlights of the program was a beautiful meditation which closed with the thought that “...it is not too late for the child in me to take hold of the truth that I **can** and **will** live happily ever after.”

On Saturday, January 28, a Memorial Mass was offered for Norman Cote, father of Koreen (IHM) and Karen (a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament.) The chapel was filled to capacity with sisters and other friends unable to attend the funeral services in Maine earlier in the month. At the conclusion of the beautiful liturgy, Koreen delivered a touching eulogy, in which she thanked the IHM’s in Pacis and Camilla for the gracious welcome extended to Mr. Cote on the occasions of his visits to Chester County in the years following his wife’s death. Our two convents, she insisted, were like second homes to him. Sister’s obviously sincere comments touched the hearts of all the sisters, although we had to admit that our delight in welcoming such a personable and humorous guest far outweighed his pleasure in visiting us. It was somewhat of a mutual admiration relationship, I guess! At any rate, there were more than a few tears shed during Saturday’s moving ceremony. We will truly miss Mr. Cote’s welcome visits!

“The Weight Control Nutrition Seminar with Janelle” drew a large and enthusiastic audience to the community room on Friday afternoon, January 27. Our nutritionist, who works three days a week at Camilla, addressed the challenges that face three groups of people: those who wish to gain weight, those who wish to lose weight, and those who want to do neither. Her remarks elicited a range of provocative questions from the group. We’re not making any promises, but perhaps, on your next visit to Camilla, you should keep your eyes open for some changes in sizes and weights.

And now we come to the **etcetera** section of the newsletter – that part of the paper where we squeeze in the items for which we lacked the vision to plan before we began writing. Here goes! In addition to making our resolutions on New Year’s Day, we also spent time in front of the TV, watching the various parades.\* During January, we had a number of Sing-a-Longs, in addition to the informal recitals of the Camptown Ladies (more about them in the next issue – if I remember.) \* Our House Meetings were held on January 5<sup>th</sup>, and a special “Little Christmas Luncheon” on the 6<sup>th</sup>. \* The Regional Superiors paid their welcome annual visit to Camilla from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup>. \* We were happy to welcome Sister Janice McGrane, SSJ who delivered a lecture, followed by a book-signing, on January 12. \* Three sessions in E-Readers were offered for those interested in this technology. \* The Young Adults of Chester County hosted a most enjoyable Bingo Game on January 21. \* Marge Reher’s Book Club met in St. Joseph’s Parlor on January 18. \* Small groups of residents met with representatives of the Internal Advisory Board. \* S. Shaun’s Art Classes met each Monday. \* Those who celebrated January birthdays were honored at the monthly Birthday Bash on January 31. **More next time!**