

# Windows

October 2025

Vol. XXXVI No. 10 1330 India Hook Road, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29732  
(803) 328-5000





## October Church Schedule

**The 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 3:00 pm  
in Heritage Hall**

**10/8 Pastor Lee Zehmer, First Presbyterian Church of Rock Hill**

**10/22 Rev. Jon Oliphant, First ARP Church of Rock Hill**

**10/12 Catholic Communion Service at 3:00 pm in Heritage Hall.**

**Deacon Angel Juarez of St. Anne will preside.**

**All are welcome!**

**If you would like to suggest someone to conduct a Wednesday church  
service, please contact Nancy Anderson, in apartment 214.**

**All Denominations are welcome!**

If you would like to submit an article or  
pictures, please email them to:  
[camifreeman@westminstertowers.org](mailto:camifreeman@westminstertowers.org)  
The deadline for the November '25 edition  
of Windows is Monday, October 13.

This Month's Contributors:

Alice Airth  
Nancy Anderson  
Arlene Jenkins Blackwelder  
Ed FitzGerald  
Jody FitzGerald  
Milt Jellum  
Pauline Jellum  
Carole Partridge  
Melanie Williams

Correction to September 2025, Windows  
On page 14 is an article to Imogene  
Blackmon from her grandson Daniel  
that was left out last month.

## Windows

October 2025  
Vol. XXXVI No. 10

Newsletter Committee Members:

Linda Lenz - Chairman  
Lou Ardrey  
Arlene Jenkins Blackwelder  
Jody FitzGerald  
Carole Partridge

Grammarian  
Jody FitzGerald

Publisher  
Cami Freeman

# The Wonders of The County Fair

## by Carole Partridge

It's that time of year again - FALL. In the South! Fall is a fairly mild time of year. As a child, it meant going back to school again after a carefree summer. School was an event eagerly anticipated with equal amounts of wonder and fear to a certain degree.

In September, there was a new teacher at school to be anticipated and tested. October brought the prospect of the County Fair - rides and tents spread out in an open meadow of wet grass beaten down with footsteps and machines. A nip in the air turned noses red and regret in not bringing a heavier sweater. Blue jeans were permitted for that school day only when buses, loaded with excited children, headed to the open fields where the rides had been set up.

Lights, motion, the creak of machines. The 50-cent allowance would have to stretch between rides and cotton candy. Usually, a kind and thoughtful adult strolled just behind or to the side of eager children exploring this fascinating world of make believe and serious bargaining. The carousel music urged the colorful horses to prance in a circle faster and faster.

Cheap side shows featured snippets of music and fancy costumed ladies displaying their latest dance steps, hoping to lure the paying customer into tents with mysterious motions of their shoulders and hips.

On the other end of the Fair field were tents filled with prize farm animals which had earned blue ribbons of excellence. The 4-H boys and girls displayed their animals and prize handiworks with great pride and satisfaction.

The Ferris wheel whirled it's high and low circles, swinging dangling seats back and forth upward into the chilly breeze and plunging downward. At the apex, lights twinkled in neighboring villages and towns.

Were they aware of what they were missing? The excitement expelling breathy squeals from fully engaged cowboys and girls whirling up, down, and all around on horses with decidedly limited circular pathways.

Those were the days of willful splurging on cotton candy and candied apples, guaranteed to cover hands and faces with sticky, sweet sugars, and delectables. Then, there was the silent vow to save more money next year in order to try out new and fascinating rides, shows, and teeth-altering sweets, guaranteed to keep family dentists in business another year or so.

As Edith used to sing with a twang:

♪ Those were the days... ♪



# Congratulations “JR” Lester

## by Arlene Blackwelder



Welcome to Our Transferred Staff Member

Burgoyne “JR” Lester, has worked at Westminster for the past 11 months as our bus driver until he recently accepted the position as Building Maintenance Supervisor. When he told the frequent riders on the bus to various outings that he would be stepping down as our bus driver, we were all saddened. He reassured us he was leaving the bus driving position in capable hands because his son Brent would take over. He was correct! The residents are pampered and spoiled by Brent just as much as his dad did!

JR was born March 13, 1970, in Mann, WV, a place he described as “Almost Heaven.” He grew up and attended school in a small place he called cow town in Arcadia, FL, approximately an hour from Ft Myers. As a young boy, he traveled on vacation with his mom and dad in an RV to California Redwood Forest, the west Badlands, and Yellowstone National Park on the way home

to Florida. When he was 13, he and his mom went with his dad to the Holy Land and visited the Pyramids and the Sea of Galilee.

JR previously owned a remodeling business for 15plus years. He also holds a CDL license to drive large trucks and machinery.

JR enjoys fishing, wood working, golf, hiking, and camping.

JR has been happily married for 35 years as of Dec 28th, 2025, to Cindy “Alysia” Lester. He stated he met Alysia while driving a friend to a hearing in Georgia. He said Alysia and her friend were “running away” to California when her car broke down. The girls were traveling the wrong direction when JR saw them walking on the side of the road, so he stopped to offer them a ride. Long story short, JR drove her back to FL and married her. The rest is history! JR said he knew “God put us together!” JR and Alysia have two adult children: Son William “Brent” Lester and Daughter Victoria “Brook” Lester. They have no grandchildren only “Fur” babies (cats and dogs).

JR said he chose to work at Westminster because he knew of the Towers and the exceptional work ethics. He states he likes the residents, employees, and employers and would like to work here and help in any way he can be a benefit with his abilities until it is time for him to retire. He also likes the Christian based principles Westminster offers.

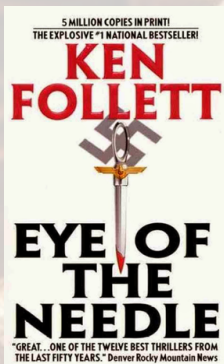
We all have been blessed by JRs’ presence and are so glad he made the wise decision to work here. Thank you for the 11 months we were fortunate to have you as our bus driver. You brighten our days, and we appreciate your prayers to keep us safe on any journey. When you see JR in passing be sure to wish him success in his new position.

# A Note from the Library

by Pauline Jellum

One of the world's most popular authors is Ken Follett with many millions of copies of his books published. The Westminster Towers has several of his books, and many are currently checked out by residents

Ken Follett was born in Wales in 1949. He pursued a career in journalism and later began to write. His writing style combines fact with fiction. He incorporates highly researched historical facts with real and fictional people, real and fictional sites, all blended to create page turning novels that include intrigue, suspense, and romance. Many of his books, which number more than 50, reach more than 900 pages. His most recent book was published in 2025.



In 1978, Follett released the book, Eye of the Needle, that became an instant international best seller and is still popular today. It deals with a military operation during World War II.

In 1989, Ken Follett published a novel that is set in twelfth century England centered on the building of a cathedral and on the men, women, and children whose lives were changed forever. This book, The Pillars of the Earth, remains popular today. It is one of a sequential group called the Kingsbridge Books. These include The Evening and the Morning, World Without End, A Column of Fire, and The Armor of Light. These can be read in sequence or can be read as single or stand-alone novels.



Another set are the Century Trilogy books that cover the 20<sup>th</sup> century and include Fall of Giants (2010), Winter of The World (2012), and Edge of Eternity (2014).



To find complete lists of Ken Follett's books, look up Ken Follett author on your computer. To get books that are not in our library, ask the York County Bookmobile to locate them for you when they visit us every two weeks. Check the weekly calendar for their visit dates.

# Russia: In Better Times, 1992, 1999, and 2008

by Milt Jellum

The current travel advisory by the U.S. Department of State for Russia is: “Do not travel to Russia for any reason.” This is unfortunate considering the history and many historical sites throughout the country, especially in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Stalingrad (now Volgograd). Although we have made three trips to Russia, we have seen a small part of the country. However, we have seen the most populated and the most important areas of a very large country.

1992: A travel company (General Tours) based in NYC, had very cheap rates for off-season (March) tours to St. Petersburg and Moscow. Although it was still winter in Russia, we could not resist taking advantage of their low rates. Communism failed, and the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991 which helped to open the country to travel. At the time of the breakup, the citizens were in severe economic conditions with a shortage of food and goods of all kinds. Several weeks after signing up for the trip, General Tours in cooperation with Finnair encouraged each traveler to take a “care package” for the needy citizens. Finnair eliminated all restrictions concerning weight, size, and amount of luggage. On our arrival in St. Petersburg, we were taken to an elementary school classroom where we were welcomed by a lady from the mayor’s office and by the school’s principal. The students recited poems and sang songs in English and Russian. We (tour group) responded by singing “You Are My Sunshine” (the only song we all knew). After many festivities, we finally distributed our care packages to each student. We had a Russian tour guidebook, and we knew there was a St. Peter and Paul Lutheran

Church on the main street in St. Petersburg. We decided to take a supply of coffee along to donate to their coffee hour. We found the church and saw people go in and out, so we entered the front door and were greeted with a giant swimming pool. Our coffee supply went to our tour guide. I guess we were naive to believe the guidebook was good under communism. According to the internet, the church underwent restoration from 1994-1997 and the swimming pool is gone.



(Left) After WWII, during the Soviet period, St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church was reconstructed into a swimming pool for the Baltic Shipping Company complete with jumping towers where the altar once stood.



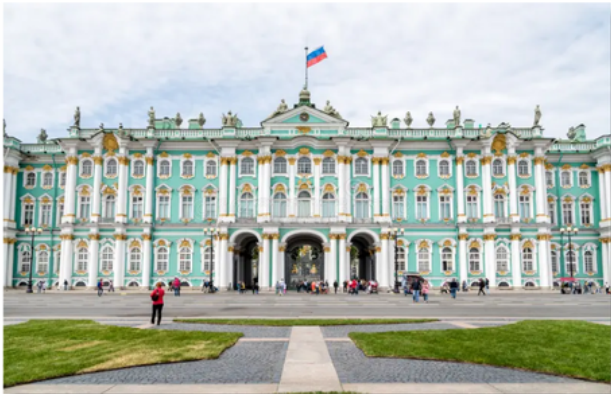
(Right) (1994-1997) Restoration back to a church.

The next several days were spent touring Pushkin Palace built by Catherine the Great, St. Peter and Paul fortress (for political prisoners) and Cathedral (resting place for most of the Tsars).



Pushkin Palace built by Catherine the Great

The original Winter Palace is now the world's largest museum with more than three million items in a complex of buildings.



Hermitage Winter Palace, Museum

One night was spent at the St. Petersburg ballet. From St. Petersburg to Moscow, we had a 400-mile overnight ride on the historic “Red Arrow” train.



Bolshoi Theatre



The Red Arrow is a Russian overnight sleeper train connecting Moscow and St. Petersburg.

1999: Our second trip to Russia was in June of 1999 and consisted of a 650-mile riverboat cruise on the Russian waterways from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Russia was still in economic recovery from communism. One large problem was the Russian mafia, and we saw evidence of its activity on several occasions. Besides the usual Red Square and Kremlin tours, we had a tour of the mausoleum where Lenin's body is on display.

After leaving Moscow by boat, we had many stops to see various historic sites. Going by boat was an interesting way to see the countryside. It was sad to see so many large church buildings that had been abandoned under the communist rule. Some of the churches had been used for grain storage and some had been used as barns for livestock. One of the most interesting stops was made on Kizhi Island to tour the Church of Transfiguration. This church was built with all wood without any nails and has 22 domes.



The Church of Transfiguration of the Savior is the main Russian Orthodox church located on Kizhi Island in Northwest Russia. It was built in the 1700's and is one of the most recognizable symbols of Russian wooden architecture.

St. Petersburg: At the end of our river cruise, we had a couple of days in St. Petersburg before going by bus to Helsinki, Finland. From downtown St. Petersburg, we took a hydrofoil 20 miles to tour Peterhof Palace built by Peter the Great. The hydrofoil is a speed boat that skims on top of the water.



Russian Hydrofoil

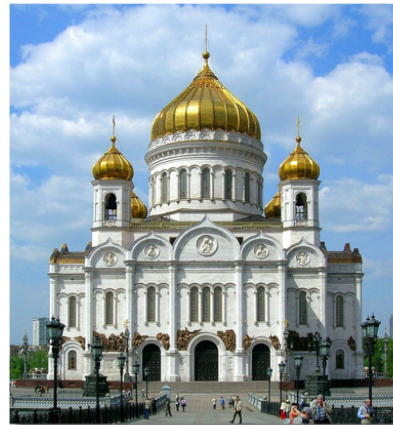


Peterhof Palace, Commissioned by Peter the Great

Our tour group ended in Helsinki after a couple of days of sightseeing. As the tour bus was leaving for the airport, we stood on the sidewalk and waved goodbye. We then made our way to the harbor and took an overnight ferry to Stockholm, Sweden. We rented a car and spent time looking up ancestral homes in Sweden and Norway.



St. Peter and Paul Fortress



Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Moscow

2008: Our third trip to Russia was in 2008, with a river cruise from Moscow to Stalingrad. (See Windows, April 2025.)

For some very interesting reading check out Wikipedia "Grigori Rasputin," a Christian mystic and faith healer.

# Fall in the Adirondacks

## by Nancy Anderson

I am very familiar with both New England and the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York, as both my immediate and extended families lived in several locations in them when I was growing up. We traveled the winding roads often, and took many scenic trips, usually stopping along the way by some stream to eat a picnic lunch. Traveling during the winter, however, was a treacherous experience, as the snow was often deep and the roads slippery. The most favorite time of the year in the mountains for me was fall when the hillsides were ablaze with a blend of bright oranges, reds, and maroons mixed among the evergreens.

I remember our pastor beginning the service one Sunday by commenting on the beauty that surrounded us as we drove to church that fall morning. He couldn't believe how anyone after observing it could possibly deny that there was a God and that he was a master creator/designer!

During my years in nurses' training and college in Illinois, I would brag about the beauty of fall where I had grown up, lamenting that I hadn't seen anything like it in the Midwest. Truly, colorful trees could be seen there, but the steep hillsides of both New England and upstate New York, where hundreds of trees displayed their brilliance at the same time, were not to be found there. That was what I missed. To my amazement, one of my roommates, a Midwesterner, who had traveled in the Adirondacks one fall, came back agreeing with me! She was full of awe at the beauty she had seen there.

There are many scenic places in our nation - literally "from sea to shining sea," and I have seen many of them during our travels across America. I truly appreciate them all. But the glorious display of color during the fall on the hillsides of upstate New York, New Hampshire, and Vermont still holds the top place in my heart.



# A Minute with Melanie

I first connected with Westminster Towers long before I worked here—each Christmas Eve, I visited my mom's former grade schoolteacher who lived here, and she always gifted us with the most beautiful cookies. That memory stayed with me, and in 2015, I officially joined Westminster after applying through a newspaper classified ad. Though I didn't hear back for months. I eventually went through three interviews and was thrilled to become part of the team. Since then, I've truly enjoyed working here—sharing laughter, prayers, tears, and meaningful moments with our residents.

I was fortunate to have an amazing supervisor, Allison Matthews, who not only guided me at work but also shared life lessons—like doing daily devotions. It was then I realized Westminster wasn't just a workplace; it was something deeper; it's been a community and a calling. I miss her dearly, but we still get together and catch up. I'm thrilled to have a new partner-in-crime and sidekick, Dawn Anderson! She officially joined me at the end of May, though she's no stranger to Westminster—she's been part of the team for three years.

I'm originally from Rock Hill and graduated from Winthrop University with a degree in Business and a minor in Dance. I met my future husband there at Campus Crusade for Christ. We have been married 12 years now. He's originally from Hartsville/Darlington and works in IT for the school district. I would be lost without his technological expertise! God has blessed us with little ones that keep us young at heart.

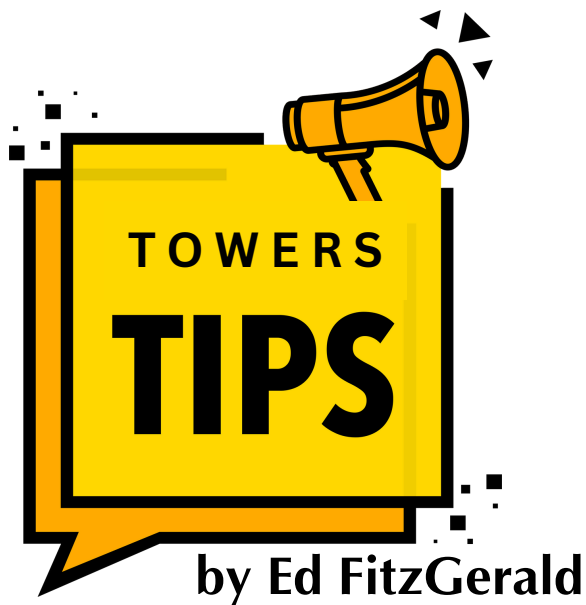
A few things about me: my favorite movie is Dirty Dancing (I'll never get over Patrick Swayze!). My grandmother named me after a character from Gone with the Wind. I grew up spending time in my granddaddy's garage, and in high school, my



dad and I rebuilt his classic Mustang. He taught me to drive a stick shift—and I loved speed shifting! My grandparents were my favorite people in the world, and they taught me so much about what truly matters in life. I cherished hearing their stories about the 'good old days,' and I think that's why people have always called me an old soul. I've always had a love for the arts too—I sang Alto with the Northwestern Troubadours and even taught myself how to play piano. These days, I don't do as much of that since my family keeps me busy, but honestly, that's the most important and rewarding job of all!

## Open House:

Thank you to all the residents and staff who joined us for the Cottage Open House on August 28—we were thrilled to welcome over 80 guests! We're excited to share that all 10 cottages are now under contract, and our wait list continues to grow. Thank you for spreading the word as that's the best marketing of all!



# TOWERS TIPS

by Ed FitzGerald

- Cart Nappers are back! Many of our residents are using the shopping carts and not returning them to the storage area after use. These carts are communal, and the Golden Rule applies. Please be a considerate neighbor and return your cart as soon as possible. Thanks.
- Beware of scams that claim you owe for emergency medical services or toll road fees. These scammers use email to demand payment action or else! Do not reply to the phone number listed. If you do, you will be hooked. If there is a legitimate billing issue, the agency will contact you by letter.
- Please note that Towers bus transportation for activity events will depart at the time listed. The Activities Department requests that riders gather at the Portico 15 minutes prior to departure. This will allow for timely loading and departure.
- Our Dining Room is evaluated by the State, and the results are posted. We scored an "A". The sign is posted on the wall at the entry right over the love seat. South Carolina DHEC does not post the numerical score.
- Sunday, November 2, Daylight Saving Time ends. Please set your clocks back 1 hour.

- In anticipation of continued influenza and Covid infections, experts in masking techniques, recommend only the N95 mask as an effective barrier. Cloth and surgical masks are not effective. N95 masks are available on line or at your pharmacy. It would be a wise decision to have a few of these recommended masks available.
- Coffee Ice Cream has been added to the Dining Room Menu. Thanks, Maureen.

## Life of the Lambs Ear by Jody FitzGerald

From beginning to end, Barbara Marnock's Lambs Ear has been a joy to watch grow!



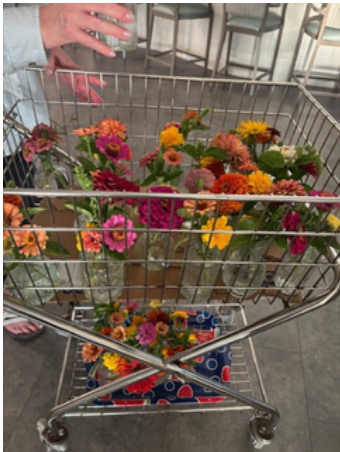
Barbara is now preparing her garden for fall blooms.

# Memorial Day Memories

by Jody FitzGerald

During May, Janice Gardner and Pat Cashion had the wonderful idea to use flowers from the residents' gardens to decorate the dining room for Memorial Day! Janice and Pat are very talented and both have a "green thumb."

Flowers were cut from the gardens and Janice and Pat designed the arrangements. Our wonderful Judy Krepps, from Housekeeping, furnished the perfect containers for the tables. The dining room staff provided colorful red, White, and blue tablecloths with the garden arrangements which made for a perfect Memorial Day meal.



*Flowers from the residents' gardens.  
Arrangements crafted by Pat Cashion, Wanetta Foote, Judy Krepps, and Jody FitzGerald*



## Acknowledging Those Who Donate



### *In Remembrance/Honor*

Lou Ardrey

Gayle Hadley, Margaret Giles,  
Weltha Martin, Dorothy Kerr,  
& Frank Kiser

Jody & Ed FitzGerald

The Marriage of Eladio & Amber

If you want to make a donation to any of our funds (Endowment, Employee Appreciation, or General Fund), please bring cash/check to Pam Engle in the business office. You can make checks out to Westminster Towers, and in the memo section, indicate the fund you are supporting.

## Grandparents Day Tribute

*Last month, in honor of Grandparents Day on Sept. 7, I received letters of appreciation for grandparents who reside here at the Towers. Apologies to both Imogene Blackmon and her grandson Daniel, for omitting his tribute.*

When I think of Nana, I always think about her cooking. At Christmas, we always had so much good food and even now when we go visit, she has banana pudding that my daughter looks forward to. Once when my family was at the beach with Nana and G-G, my dad and I caught fish, and Nana fried them up for dinner that night. She has always been a great cook and showed her family love from her kitchen.

**Love Daniel Blackmon**

The Activity Committee will meet on Monday, October 13th, at 2:00 pm in the 4th floor lounge. Please come and share your suggestions for lunches, dinners, and other fun outings. Hope to see you there!!



Linder Tucker,  
Activity Committee Chairman