



Campus News & Views

National Night Out

On Tuesday, August 7, Vinson Hall Retirement Community participated in National Night Out. The event is part of a community-building campaign that promotes police and neighborhood partnerships. We were very excited to host the event again this year on top of the Arleigh Burke Pavilion parking deck. We invited



all residents of VHRC, our friends in the Franklin Area neighborhood, and local police officers to join us for an evening of great food, fun, and camaraderie.

Our CEO Libby Bush addressed the crowd in support of our local first responders. Guests also



enjoyed multiple games of bean bag toss and a face painting booth.

With the help of volunteers and staff, more than 150 people from VHRC and the Franklin Area neighborhood attended. Thank you to TD Bank for sponsoring the event and thank you to Supervisor John Foust for stopping by. A big thank you to the firefighters, police, sheriff's deputies, and EMTs who came to support the event. It was a wonderful evening of neighborly goodwill and fun.



Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation

By Devon Meier, Director of Development

The Development Office has been a flurry of activity since we last checked in. In July, we kicked off our annual Star Membership campaign. As of November 1, we have raised \$47,212 through the Membership Appeal. The total amount raised through the campaign is \$77,561. Thank you to everyone who supported our mission with their generous membership gift. On September 12, the Kathy Martin Community Building Ballroom was hopping as we celebrated our 2018 Star Members: 1 Star: \$250-\$499; 2 Star: \$500-\$999; 3 Star: \$1,000-\$2,499; 4 Star: \$2,500+. Guests enjoyed an evening of hors d'oeuvres and spirits, with the musical stylings of the Cognac Jazz group.

Who needs New York Fashion Week when we can bring to the fashion to you! On October 25, resident models Barb Shaffer, Marjorie Matthews, Bitsy Kotite, Ronnie Hountz, Anna Coutlakis, Ann Withrow, Jean Mertz, Fran Hellwig, and Development's own Devon Meier strutted their stuff down the Ballroom runway. Our

friends at Taylor Marie brought all of the latest fall fashions to VHRC. Thank you to our models and shoppers. Ten percent of proceeds benefited the Foundation. We greatly appreciate your support.



To round out the last few months, we are thrilled to welcome Amiee Henderson Freeman to the Development Team. Amiee serves as the Communications and Development Coordinator for the Foundation. She has seven plus years of communications and editing experience. When she's not at work, she enjoys spending time with

her three kids, cooking, and biking. Amiee has already hit the ground running, designing the newsletter and materials for our upcoming 50th Anniversary.



Our stunning models from our fall Taylor Marie fashion show: Marjorie Matthews, Barb Shaffer, Bitsy Kotite, Ronnie Hountz, Anna Coutlakis, Ann Withrow, Jean Mertz, Fran Hellwig, and Devon Meier.

Fun Fact: Three days after graduating from college, Amiee was on a plane to Central Asia. For two years, she taught English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a city in the northeastern corner of Kazakhstan and had the incredible opportunity to travel to India, Nepal, Thailand, and Turkey.

The Sylvestery

2018 Walk to End Alzheimer's

By Rachel Doherty, Administrator at The Sylvestery

It has been such a fun summer and we are looking forward to the beauty that fall has to offer. We welcome this season embracing the warm colors on the trees and changing temperatures.

The residents at The Sylvestery have remained very active by taking part in several outings, enjoying local entertainment, and even brushing up on their cooking skills. Our activities program continues to grow by customizing offerings and trying new things. The residents have enjoyed a few trips to the local bowling



alley, visiting Smithsonian museums, planting fall flowers, and enjoying pumpkin spice everything. Any and all suggestions for activities are welcomed.

For several years, The Sylvestery has participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's. The Sylvestery is also a member of the Alzheimer's Association of the National Capital Area. Thanks to the support from many in our community, this year's team lead a campaign, raising funds to support the Alzheimer's Association's mission: "To eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health."

Thank you to everyone who came out to support our team on walk day on the National Mall in D.C. It was a fun event for all!

Addy, Vinson Hall's First Dog

By Bee Tosh

Addy was found 18 years ago in the backwoods of Indiana, chained by her neck to a fence. She had a broken leg and was as thin as a rail. She was rescued by a shelter in Indianapolis and taken to a veterinarian. Addy became my dog right after that, and from the first day was the sweetest and most lovable dog imaginable. She became a therapy dog visiting hospitals, nursing homes and schools. Addy just loved people. I took her to school to become a registered therapy dog, which was a three-week course. After just one hour, the teacher came out and said, "Addy doesn't need training; it's part of her. Her love of people is in her heart."

When we first started going to nursing homes, she always sought out people in wheelchairs. She would slowly walk to them and if they would lean over to pet her, Addy would put her paw on their leg so they could pet her. That was instinctive with her.



The first day we walked into Vinson Hall, she met CAPT Bob Kaufman. They bonded immediately and had "morning time" almost every day. Her mission here every day was to go to the lobby and see as many people as she could. She just loved people! Addy had many special friends here. CAPT Bill Schwab, who always had treats for her; our neighbor, Marilyn Ross, who always shared her meals with her; and all the Vinson Hall residents who she loved and who loved her.

I would like to thank everyone who greeted Addy every day and accepted her as part of the Vinson Hall family. Her big eyes and wagging tail will be missed. She will always be in my heart.

Who Wants to Dance?

By Midge Holmes



Moving to the music can be good for the mind and body fitness. Dance the cha cha, the mambo, the boxstep, the shuffle step, a line dance, or a swing step to familiar music from our collective pasts. You will not need a partner. All Vinson Hall Retirement Community men and women are welcome to attend my 45-minute Motion is Lotion dance class in the fitness exercise room on the Garden Level of Vinson Hall each Monday at 2 p.m. Come and enjoy.

Did You Know?

Did you know that we have a wide variety of groups, clubs, events, and activities happening throughout the community? Monthly activity calendars for every building are posted on our website and in common areas throughout campus. In Independent Living there are committees that regularly meet, like the Residents' Association and the Health & Wellness Committee. There are also two bridge groups, The Needlers (our Knitting Group), and a book club.

Exercise is fun here too! VHRC pool volleyball meets on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. and Fridays at 2:00 p.m. in the pool on the Garden Level of Vinson Hall. "Pool volleyball is great for hand-eye coordination, balance and gait, and you will laugh more than ever playing pool volleyball with us," says VHRC Fitness Director George Lynch.



To learn more about the Fitness Center, please visit them on the Garden Level of Vinson Hall or call extension 3924.



A Red Rose for Christmas

By Cirinia Catania

The car pulls up to the grocery store and stops in front of the no parking sign by the entrance. It idles as shoppers come and go with their groceries in plastic bags carried by gloved hands. The winter air shouts and throws itself about trying to get into any corner it can.

Marie sits in the passenger seat. Her face, framed with beautiful grey and white hair, is barely visible through the foggy window. Opening the door, she steps resolutely but still tentatively out into the frost. Her favorite purse, soft beige leather, given to her by her husband years ago, hangs on her left arm where it shelters a small album of all the family and friends that she loves, her favorite pink lipstick, matching wallet and coin purse and her mother's comb, now hers, the one she had used to fix her hair with that morning. Cane in her right hand, she walks slowly into the store. She's in great shape for 87, but since she fell and broke her hip a few years ago, walking isn't the great adventure it once was.

She knows exactly what she wants to bring her friend. A nice plant, maybe something Christmassy, and one beautiful red rose. The plant for cheer and the rose to let him know he is loved.

As the electric door opens, a blast of warm air hits her and she makes her way toward the floral department. She stands in the middle of the rows of flowers looking from side to side. There it is, the perfect flowering plant abloom with white daisies, like snow on green grass. It smiles at her, and she knows this is the one.

Now all she needs is one red rose to put in the middle. This is going to be perfect. White Christmas flower plant in hand, she keeps looking. No single red rose anywhere. She goes to the very busy floral clerk and says,

"Excuse me, where can I find one red rose?"

"We don't sell just one rose, you have to buy a bouquet," says the clerk not even bothering to look over.

Marie really wants this rose.

She goes back to the flowers and waits until another employee comes by. "Excuse me, is there any way I can buy just one red rose?" They keep walking, obviously very busy, and say, "talk to the person in the floral department over there."

But she isn't going to give up. This is a woman, the oldest of four children, who survived WWII in Belgium and who would cross the border to Luxembourg and back to get a 15-pound sack of potatoes with bacon hiding inside. If she could carry that sack across the border back to Belgium in the sub-zero weather, wading through snow with dogs patrolling the woods all around her, she could surely handle this situation.

Then from the back, a young man, finished with his workday makes his way toward the door, car keys in hand and is about to pass her. She has to try, just one more time. So she stops him and says, "Can you please help me? I want one red rose and they're only selling them in bouquets. Could you please help me take apart one of those bouquets?"

The young man can see she is upset. He says, "Ma'am, if we pull apart one of those bouquets, I wouldn't know what to charge you and when you get up to the cashier they won't know what to charge you either. I'm really sorry." And he continues out the door.

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Best friends forever, Marie and Al Catania

Marie, cane leading the way, makes her way to the end of the line so she can pay for her white Christmas flowers.

Her friend will wonder why she has not brought a red rose because that is their tradition. It has always been their way of saying, "I love you. You are special."

But Marie is not feeling very special right now and she knows she is going to disappoint her best friend that she has traveled all the way from Pennsylvania to visit. She has lost this battle. Tears are pushing their way up. She is determined not to cry in front of these people. Her heart is pounding and she is feeling faint.

At the front of the store, the electric doors open, a gust of warm air blows and the young man comes back striding over to the cashier and says, clear

across the grocery-laden counter and over the other customers, "Ma'am, do you know what? I'm going to go over there and buy my wife a bouquet of roses and I'm going to give you one."

He goes over to the indoor garden, picks out a huge bouquet of beautiful red roses, reaches into his pocket and counts out enough bills to pay for the flowers. He walks to Marie, who is by now so touched she is crying, and hands her one red rose. Then he's gone, bouquet in hand.

Later that afternoon, Marie walks down a long row of graves at Arlington Cemetery, overlooking the Pentagon where the plane crashed on 9/11. She remembers how the country rallied together that day and the days after. She remembers that there are warriors in the world. She knows that some of them fight wars and some of them give one red rose to a stranger in a grocery store.

Marie places the potted plant of white Christmas flowers, with its beautiful red Christmas rose standing tall in the middle, on the grave of her best friend, Colonel Alfred J. Catania, and says, "I love you. Merry Christmas."

Cirinia is the daughter of Marie and Alfred Catania. She is also a writer, director, and photo journalist. This article was posted on her blog, www.filmvault.biz and was used with permission.

Vinson Voices

By Jean Ryan

The chorus is waiting for Pam
They hope she's not caught in a jam
She comes once a week
Never misses a beat
And strikes up the group with a bam

What started as a simple limerick has developed into an introduction to Vinson Voices, the residents' choral group here at Vinson Hall. In 2011, a volunteer group of residents came together to form the first Vinson Hall Choral Group, supported by Joan Mason and Bets Carnahan. In the spring of 2014, Pam Burns arrived and helped the newly organized group find its voice.

Pam is a talented and spirited director and pianist, who leads the group in weekly practice sessions. She juggles a busy schedule as full-time music instructor for a private Virginia school, choir director for McLean Presbyterian Church, mother of three active children, and, of course, her commitment to Vinson Hall. (Some residents may remember Pam's

confident young son appearing as Uncle Sam at a Fourth of July concert, decked out in top hat and on stilts, to the delight of the audience.)

Pam seems like the perfect fit for the chorus whose numbers have grown from about 12 members when the last director left to the current 35 plus. She directs from the piano, popping up periodically to correct a tempo or offer specific advice.

The group's repertoire is drawn from a Vinson Hall Song Book of approximately 100 pieces including selections from "golden oldies," memorable Broadway musicals, pop tunes, romantic ballads and, of course, patriotic and military tributes, all frequently updated to keep the chorus inspired. New members receive a song book when they join and all books are maintained by choral member Ramona Michels, who serves as librarian and coordinator. Evening concerts are planned and scheduled by Pam with input from members and held in the ballroom of the Kathy Martin Community Building four or five times a year.

Membership is open to any Vinson Hall resident who enjoys music and choral singing. No audition or experience is required. Sopranos, altos, tenors and basses are all welcome. To volunteer, come to the Alford Auditorium on the penthouse level a few minutes before practice begins on Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. to sign up and receive your song book.

Be prepared for an experience that can bring joy and pleasure into your life. Or as Cervantes

claimed: "He who sings scares away his Woes."



Volunteer Program Highlights and Update

By Amy Bian, Activities and Engagement Manager

Fall is upon us, and change is in the air. The volunteer program has gone through somewhat of a transformation of its own. As of June 18, the volunteer program transitioned from the Development Department (Sara Sims) to the Life Enrichment Department (Amy Bian). While much has stayed the same, we have made some minor changes that we hope will invite more volunteers to our community to assist us in a variety of areas.

As the new leader of the volunteer program, I am very grateful to our volunteers (youth, adults, and furry friends too!) who willingly give their time and talents to our community. I am enjoying the opportunity to get to know each of the volunteers who visit us on a regular basis as well as the groups of volunteers who assist us with large events.

Over the last couple of months, we have had the pleasure of working with several volunteer groups. On the evening of "National Night Out" (August 7), volunteers from the Barbera Foundation brought Arleigh Burke Pavilion

residents to and from the event, which was held on the Arleigh Burke Pavilion parking deck. On Saturday, September 8, 30 George Washington University students participated in their annual "Freshman Day of Service." Students were paired up with residents from Arleigh Burke Pavilion to conduct oral history interviews. This proved to be a very meaningful experience for both the residents and students. In early October, we welcomed volunteers from West Financial Services, Inc. who assisted residents with voter registration; volunteers brought Arleigh Burke Pavilion residents to and from the ballroom when the Outreach Coordinator from the Fairfax County Board of Elections visited our campus.

If you would like to inquire further about the volunteer program, feel free to stop by the Activity Office located on the administrative wing of Arleigh Burke Pavilion. You can also contact Amy Bian by phone at 703-506-4251 or via email amyb@vinsonhall.org. We are always looking for resident volunteers from the IL buildings, so don't be shy!



Original Poetry

How Strong is Spider Silk?

By **Pauline Gilstrap**

A small whirling at the window
catches my eye.
A hummingbird in November?
How can this be?
But no, a browning leaf the size of
my thumb spins there,
Curled like a fat new moon and
awhirl at the whim of the wind.

A thin tether dangles it high above strewn leaves
Scattered on the grass below—
One fragile thread from a spider's web anchoring
the swing of this fading crescent leaf.

I stay to watch the show. A wild dancer, it bobs
and circles,
playful, capricious, testing the limits.
A sudden gust reverses and flattens it with
awkward jerking.
Another flips it upright and twirls it like a paper
lantern.

How long can it last, this joining of leaf and spider
strand?
Unwilling to witness the end, I turn away, but the
joy of it lingers.
With a flashlight and feeling foolish, I return at
midnight
And shine my beam on ... the leaf! Wet with rain
and still spinning.



For three days this marvel of a gift dances at my
window.
Whenever I pause there, I feel myself smiling.
On the fourth day the leaf is gone; I cannot find it
on the grass.
Yet a warm peace exists, and I begin to think of
links and strength.

For my life, like the leaf, is anchored by a line.
The love of God secures me as it stretches
through the long, fleet pilgrimage of years –
Invisible, tireless, magnetic pull. Suspension divine.

No buffeting gale ever severs this hold.
No wayward adventure meanders too far
for His abiding presence. And one day in His time
He will draw on the line to lead me gently home.

Baker Bill

By Bill Baily

After arriving in Japan in October 1946 as part of the Japan occupation force, and after volunteering for parachute training, I was sent to Sapporo, Japan, the capitol of Hokkaido, on the most northern of the Japanese islands.

My new home was Camp Crawford, which was still under construction and was designated as the new base of the 11th Airborne Division.

Sapporo was extremely cold with snow on the ground from November until May. Drifts were 15 feet deep. It was no surprise that Sapporo hosted the 1972 Winter Olympics. It had all the ideal wintery conditions for the games.



We began our field training in this very cold environment. After a week of surviving these conditions, our company commander informed us that a few of the company cooks were being rotated back to the U.S. He asked for volunteers to join the kitchen staff.

I was only 17-years-old and had never so much as cooked an egg, but I wanted out of the snow and into a warm kitchen. I volunteered.

Rising at 4 a.m., I reported to the mess sergeant and was assigned to Arkie, the company baker,

who was going home. I shadowed Arkie for two weeks and boom, I was his designated replacement.

Then the company commander asked if I would like to go to a cook school, which had been just established.

When I reported to the sergeant in charge he asked what my present duties were. "I am the company baker," I responded. "Great," he replied, "you are now the baking teacher." After three weeks as a baking professor I reported back to my company and was promoted to corporal.

My fellow soldiers informed me that they knew my daily baking duties were successful when I personally served my oven creations. Otherwise, a Japanese helper was the server.

Soon, the company commander told me the mess sergeant was rotating, and I was now the company's mess sergeant. Remember I was 17-years-old and now responsible for serving 165 men three meals a day, supervising a staff of six cooks plus several Japanese helpers, also without the DNA of James Beard or Julia Child.

As a reward, I was promoted to sergeant. The army had given me a great opportunity. I was 17, no college education, making \$50 extra each month for just jumping out of an airplane, and already a sergeant. Three promotions in three months after enlisting. Great!

In my fantasy thinking, I could imagine a future with bars on my shoulders, as a battalion commander, possibly regimental commander or even division commanding general. Ha.

This was the army for Bill Baily. GERONIMO!



VINSON HALL
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
6251 Old Dominion Drive
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Dignity ★ Security ★ Friendship

Campus News & Views Fall 2018

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Tell Us Your Story

We are always looking for interesting pieces for this quarterly newsletter. If you have a news story, an original poem, piece of short fiction, or cartoon you would like to share with the community, please let us know! Written submissions should be 500 words or less. Electronic submissions are encouraged, but not required. All submissions must be original works by the person submitting them. We cannot print anything with a copyright. Submissions are subject to approval and printed on a space-available basis. Some submissions may be held for print in the future.

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:

Independent Living: Development Office,
Email: amieef@vinsonhall.org or Call: 703-538-3069
Arleigh Burke and The Sylvestery: Contact Building Administrator

Deadline for the WINTER 2019 Newsletter: FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2019