

VINSON HALL

RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS



CEO Corner

Taking the Time to Reflect and Connect

By Libby Bush, CEO, Vinson Hall Retirement Community

This time of year, as we approach Thanksgiving, is a time of engagement. For us at VHRC it is especially a time for engagement with residents, staff, and the community around us. It is also a time to reflect and take stock of all we have to be thankful for and to continue to communicate our appreciation – to truly connect.

During NMCGRF's recent Gala, we were delighted to welcome Dana Richardson, honorary president of the Navy Officers' Spouses' Club of Washington, D.C. to make the keynote address. She aptly compared the flourishing of VHRC to a garden. The seed was planted by the Navy Officers' Wives' Club in the 1960s to create the community that became Vinson Hall.

Now 50 years later, we are not just benefiting



VHRC CEO Libby Bush with her husband, Jeff, (left) at this year's Gala and Auction.

from those forward-thinking plans and dreams, but continue work on growing that original "garden." All of our best hopes for tomorrow rest with the hard work and dedication of our staff, with our ongoing connection with our residents, and with our outreach to our community.

Through the recently launched staff and resident engagement surveys, as well as upcoming focus groups, we'll further connect about life here at VHRC.

With the community around us we strive to live up to the commendation that was included in the Resolution presented to us by Delegate Rip Sullivan at our National Night Out in August. In other words, maintaining focus on being an engaging and compassionate home for our residents, a vibrant workplace for our staff, and a key community partner in the coming year and for the next 50 years.



Dana Richardson, honorary president of the Navy Officers' Spouses' Club of Washington, D.C., gave the keynote address at this year's 25th Annual Gala and Auction.

VHRC Celebrated Halloween with Creativity



We were wowed by the creativity of our staff and residents during our Halloween Parade and Party on Oct. 31!

We had sea creatures and living emojis. Martha and George Washington joined us as did several clowns, a pirate, and a farmer. In addition, we had terrifying figures as well as two walking skeletons.

Prizes were given out for the best costume. George and Martha (Maureen and Joe Kammerer) won first place among the residents and the emojis (Resident Care Associates) for the staff.

Also of note was the Accounting department trio who dressed up as cat burglars. (Hmm...Are they telling us something?) Also, we had Cat in the Hat (Beth Lawhorn, HCBS Operations Manager) accompanied by Thing 1 (Winoka Clements, Director of Human Resources) and Thing 2 (Lisa Desmond, Director of Clinical Operations). Check out our Facebook page www.facebook.com/vinsonhallcomm to see more photos.

About Campus News and Views

Campus News and Views is our quarterly VHRC newsletter. This newsletter is reviewed by a newsletter committee, comprised of VHRC residents and staff. Residents and staff are invited to submit articles for inclusion in the newsletter. The deadline for submissions for the Winter newsletter is Jan. 13, 2020. Please submit articles and photos to Amiee Freeman, Communications and Engagement Coordinator, (amieef@vinsonhall.org or 703-538-3069) in the Philanthropy and Engagement Office.

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Campus News & Views Fall 2019

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Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

A Season of Festivity and Fundraising

By Devon Meier, Director of Philanthropy and Engagement

25th Annual Gala and Auction Update

visit: www.vinsonhall.org/2019-gala-and-auction.



Our Gala guests enjoyed the music by Laissez Fouré, hor d'oeuvres and drinks at the Bistro.

The Foundation raised more than \$78,000 through our 25th Annual Gala and Auction on Saturday, Sept. 21. The evening featured an engaging cocktail hour, an enticing silent auction with 66 packages, a three-course gourmet dinner provided by VHRC's Dining Team, and the lively musical stylings of Laissez Fouré and Cognac Jazz.

Thank you to all who attended the event, purchased a sponsorship, and donated to the event. We greatly appreciate your support! To see photos from the event as well as the full list of sponsors and silent auction donors, please

NMCGRF Membership

We are thrilled to announce that we raised over \$82,000 through our 2019 Annual Star Membership Campaign. This represents a \$10,000 increase over last year! Thank you to all who renewed their membership and to all who donated for the first time. Your annual gifts to the Foundation helps ensure that we are able to fulfill our mission of "enriching the lives of those around us, so they are free to live life to the fullest."



At the Oct. 24 Night with the Stars, NMCGRF thanked their Star members.

Michelle Crone, Philanthropy Coordinator

Please join me in welcoming Michelle Crone, Philanthropy Coordinator, to the Office of Philanthropy and Engagement. Michelle joined the team on Sept. 25, and she has jumped right in to our activities.

Michelle has an incredible background as an editor, working for such publications as Architectural Digest, The Washington Post, and The New York Magazine. During her time in McLean, she has been very active in community groups like the McLean Project for the Arts, where she served as a Board Member from 2006-2017, and on the Executive Committee from 2012-2017.

Michelle is married with two adult children. Her husband is a native of Denmark. They lived in Copenhagen for several years, where she learned to speak Danish. In her free time Michelle enjoys travel, writing, photography, and practicing yoga.



If you haven't had a chance to meet Michelle yet, please stop by our office right off the lobby of Vinson Hall.

Thresher Tragedy Remembered 56 Years Later

By Amiee Freeman, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

In 1962 and 1963, VHRC resident Joe Kammerer was an engineer-in-training in the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. "We lived in a little town, near the shipyard. It was a great time," he recalled.

Kammerer worked in the design office, assisting the lead engineers with improving sub design. The USS Skipjack, a nuclear powered submarine, was in dock at Portsmouth. It was the fastest and most maneuverable sub of its time. Before it could be released from dock, the Skipjack, like all subs, had to complete a sea trial.

As an engineer, Kammerer was to participate in the trial, monitoring the hydrophone and measuring the noise outside the sub. During this Cold War period, when subs were used to monitor Soviet activity, ensuring that the sub was as quiet as possible was very important.

"The night before the trials, I ate in the crew mess. When it came time to sleep, all the beds were taken up by the crew. I was relegated to a torpedo tube. That was the hardest mattress I ever slept on!" remembered Kammerer.

During the trial, Kammerer recalled that there was some excitement. As the sub was in a dive, the gear that controlled the dive became stuck, causing the Skipjack to continue its descent.

"We continued to go deeper. The helmsman relayed that we were continuing to dive. The officer of the day said to the Commanding Officer, 'Go to emergency systems.' They were about six feet apart, but the CO did not hear him. The officer repeated. Finally, the CO heard him and employed a 400-cycle electrical system to replace the system that went down. The helmsman advised that we had gone down only an extra 100 feet, nowhere near maximum depth." Following this excitement and with a few



The photo above celebrated the launch of the USS Thresher, a nuclear-powered submarine, on July 9, 1960 at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Fifty-six years ago 129 men lost their lives when the sub sank during deep-dive testing off Cape Cod. It was – and remains – the deadliest submarine disaster and delivered a blow to national pride during the Cold War.



Joe Kammerer, who worked as an engineer at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in 1962-63, stands with a model of the Thresher.

additional adjustments, the Skipjack departed Portsmouth for duty.

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Also in dock for a scheduled review was the USS Thresher. The Thresher, a nuclear-powered attack sub, was designed to be silent as it searched for Soviet subs.

Shortly before the Thresher was to complete its sea trials, Kammerer returned to the University of Maryland to complete his graduate work. Upon his return to the D.C.-area, Kammerer learned of the sinking of the Thresher.

On the morning of April 9, 1963, the Thresher left Portsmouth with 129 men – 12 officers, 96 enlisted men, and 21 observers. The Thresher met up with the submarine rescue ship, the USS Skylark, and began its initial dive trials, remaining submerged overnight. It re-established underwater communications with the Skylark at 6:30 a.m. on April 10 to commence deep-dive trials. As the dive test began, the Thresher radioed a status update to the Skylark roughly every 10 minutes.

"At 7:52 the Thresher had reached 400 feet, and paused to check for leaks. At 8:09 it was halfway to its test depth. All seemed well. At 8:27 the Thresher started toward its test depth. The sub checked in at 9:02 and 9:12. At 9:13 a.m. the Thresher reported: 'Experiencing minor difficulties. Have positive up angle. Am attempting to blow. Will keep you informed.' At 9:14 Skylark lost contact with the Thresher."¹

"It is thought that the piping used for blowing water from the ballast tanks failed," said Kammerer. This leak led to greater system failure causing the sub to drift out of control and then implode under pressure from the ocean as it exceeded its "crush" depth.

Following the disaster, Kammerer was tasked by the U.S. Navy to determine how fast the Thresher was traveling and where on the sea floor it landed. "By my rough calculations, it was traveling at about 100 miles per hour. At that impact speed, it would be mostly covered by



Photo by Maureen Kammerer

On Sept. 26, 2019, the U.S. Navy held a ceremony for the families of the 129 men who perished on the Thresher in 1963 and unveiled a monument to the tragedy.

sand."

Several years ago, Kammerer with his wife, Maureen, traveled to Maine for vacation, stopping in Kittery. The town had erected a monument with the names of the men who perished that day. "I could look at that list and say I knew him and I knew him," said Kammerer.

This past September, during NMCGRF's Annual Gala, Kammerer happened to speak with the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, Ret., who mentioned the memorial ceremony to be held for the Thresher at Arlington National Cemetery. Thanks to that chance meeting, Joe and Maureen were invited to attend the memorial service on September 26, 2019 – 56 years after the tragedy.

"The ceremony was outstanding. The Navy, up to that time, had never publicly mentioned the Thresher or the men who died. This ceremony was a way of putting things right," said Kammerer.

¹ Ruane, Michael. 'The nuclear submarine Thresher was said to be America's best. Then tragedy struck.' *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2019.

Famous People Who Have Met Me

By Bill Bailey

At family reunions, I have frequently been asked by several grandchildren, who knew I made a career in the hospitality business, if I had ever met well-known people.

"Have you ever heard of the Beatles?" I asked.

They had, and tried to out-do each other by naming the Fab Four. Easily they came up with the first names: John, Paul, George, and Ringo. Last names were a bigger challenge. *Can YOU, reader, remember their last names? I will refresh your memory and provide the names at the end of this article.*

One day in early 1964, when I was the General Manager of the Food, Beverage, and Gift operation at SeaTac Seattle's International Airport, the airport's director called with an ominous request. "Bill, I have a catering truck available tomorrow afternoon to unload equipment and service a VIP charter flight. I am not permitted to tell you who is on the flight! We will have the aircraft park at the end of the runway to ensure complete privacy." That sent my imagination racing. He concluded by saying, "I am permitted to tell you one hour before ETA who is on the flight."

Who was the VIP? The President? The Pope? The Queen of England?

We prepared everything as instructed: washed the in-flight truck, loaded the supplies that would be needed before the charter moved on, stocked beverages, cocktail napkins, and a myriad of other items. As promised the director called one hour before touchdown and said, "Bill Bailey, the VIP charter is for the BEATLES!!"

WOW! They were the hottest musical group on the planet. Their appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show set viewing records. Our kitchen co-workers were overwhelmed with emotion.



The Fab Four from 1964: Paul, George, Ringo, and John. For their last names, see the end of the article!

After the aircraft parked and shut down the engines, we approached the galley door. When I opened the hatch, I was almost floored by the sweet smell of marijuana. I looked around and saw the Beatles, who looked just like their photographs. They were surrounded by a bevy of the most beautiful girls (almost all blondes) that I had ever seen in one place.

We replaced all the items in the galley, including the beverage carriers. As a last check of the bar items, I noticed that we had over-stocked cocktail napkins. We off-loaded from the containers some of the sleeves of cocktail napkins. On arriving back to the kitchen, I took a sleeve of cocktail napkins and told our employees that these napkins had been on the Beatles' charter. I asked them to divide them up so that everyone would get a souvenir. Remember the TV show "Queen for a Day?" Well, I was "King for a Day."

I am sure that to this day there are framed and displayed cocktail napkins on a prominent wall in our coworkers' homes. Is there one in Apartment 074? In the 20 moves, it must have been lost!!

Beatles' names: Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr.

An Honest Mistake Saves Two Lives

By Roy Easley

Emzy Wilson Easley was my paternal great-grandfather. He was a building contractor as well as a farmer and served in the Union Army as a captain in the Civil War. He invented and patented a farm gate that could be opened and closed without leaving one's buggy or wagon. Named as one of the first three deacons of the Pleasureville, Kentucky, Baptist Church, he and his wife, Catherine Ireland Easley, were charter members when the church was organized in 1877.

The first church building was planned and built by Emzy and the first organist was his daughter, Katie.

On February 2, 1865, General Burbridge ordered three Confederate prisoners removed from the prison at Lexington, Kentucky, to be executed in retaliation for the murder of Mr. Edward Darby Massie (strange number as Burbridge's Order #59 specified a four for one retaliation). Emzy at that time was stationed in Eminence, Kentucky, as captain of Company "G," 54th Kentucky Mounted Rifles. It fell upon him to carry out the execution order. In his own words: "I was heartsick over the task assigned me, and would have gone into battle against any force rather than execute those men."

Yet, doing his duty as an officer, Captain Easley met the 4 a.m. train as it came into Eminence and prepared for the onerous task before him. The prisoners were taken from the train and readied for their 9 a.m. appointment with the firing squad. At about 8 a.m., the good captain was handed a



telegram from none other than President Abraham Lincoln. It was an order for stay of execution, and safe return to the prison at Lexington. Relieved of a duty he did not want, Captain Easley quickly read the telegram and put the prisoners on the next train to Lexington.

When going through his wartime papers in 1895 (30 years after the conclusion of the Civil War), he found the order for execution and Lincoln's telegram. Upon comparing the two, Easley was shocked. The order for execution was for three men; the Lincoln telegram for stay of execution applied to only one man, William E. Waller. A quick "glance" became an honest mistake, and two lives were saved!

Mr. Waller may have been deeply touched by his brush with death, as he later became a Baptist minister. The full story was printed about eight years later in the *Louisville Evening Post*, March 14, 1903.

SOURCE: Family Histories, legend, lore and related internet information.

Never Forget the 9-11 Heroes

By Lorna Lagarde



The approximately 23,000 Pentagon employees were already settled at their tasks early that sunny morning of September 11, 2001, when at 9:37 a.m. terrorists crashed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon. I was the Chief of Pharmacy in the Pentagon's Health Clinic. I was having my morning Air Force NCOIC briefing when the PA sounded "Evacuate." My staff immediately carried out the provider's and pharmaceutical kits, while we secured the department.

As I exited my department, I found people running out of the building with fear on their faces. When asked what was happening they could not talk, just motioned to look back. When I did look down the hall, I saw a big ball of smoke and also started to run.

Outside the Pentagon, one of my pharmacists was directing traffic on Route 110, allowing people to cross the highway safely. As soon as they crossed, some would collapse on the ground, hyperventilating. We helped them by giving them pharmaceutical envelopes to breathe into.

During all this chaos, the bullhorn sounded,

calling all medical personnel to return to the clinic to aid those who had been injured. We re-entered the building while people were running out. In the clinic, so many casualties were arriving that it was difficult for us to provide aid. We created a pharmacy off the clinic lobby to dispense medications. Despite our orders to man the clinic, it was evacuated twice because of the fourth plane, which at that time was unaccounted for but eventually crashed in Pennsylvania.

Eventually, the clinic was cordoned off and the staff regrouped in the five-acre courtyard, but still we needed supplies. To help us get supplies, soldiers entered the Pentagon, wading through hot, charcoal-black water in AE Dr., on the interior of the Pentagon.

Casualties were still being pulled out of the dark, smoke-filled hallways and brought to us for triage. The faces of some of the casualties were totally black, covered in soot with their eyebrows and lashes burned off. Others had been hit with flaming metal and had burns through their clothing, down to the bone. Our medical doctors

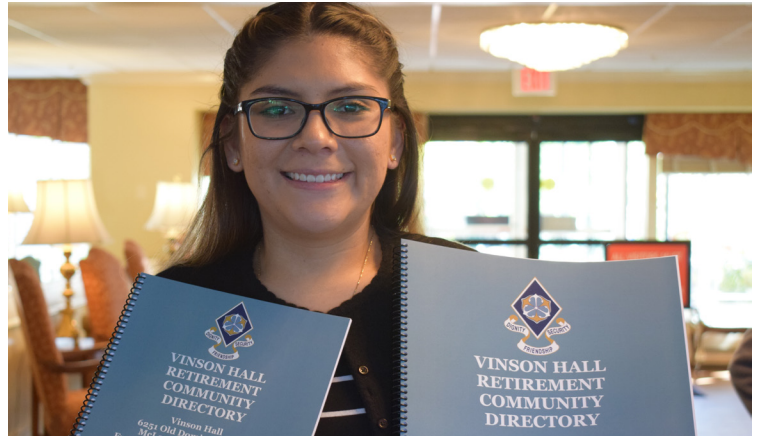
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Directory Observations

By Elaine Baker

I don't ordinarily read telephone directories. However, I sat down with the recently published Vinson Hall Directory and made some interesting discoveries, such as:

- There are a number of unrelated residents who share the same last name, including Dietrich, McIntyre, Murphy, Scott, Whalen, and Williams, but there's not a single Brown or Jones.
- There are quite a few tongue-twisting last names, such as Wiederkehr and Voyiaziakis
- Mary is by far the most popular woman's name. I counted 11 Marys, many with a second name to distinguish it. This does not include variations such as Marion, Mariam or Marta. The second most common female moniker is Elizabeth, with six, plus the same number of Bettys or Betsys. For men, John led the list with six (plus several Jacks), tied with James.
- I didn't count, but it looks as if about 50% of the residents have e-mails.



Analisse Vasquez Soto, our Administrative Assistant, assembled the new directory. Analisse can be found at the Conceirge desk in Vinson Hall.

I welcomed getting the current information on committees and dining room hours and reservations information. I was particularly gratified to find the listings of alumni now living in Arleigh Burke or The Sylvestery.

Putting together the new directory must have been a long and painstaking job. I want to say "Thank You" to whoever did it.

A Remembrance of an Awful Day

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were not trained for rapid sequence intubation, so helicopters transported individuals with more serious injuries to the hospital; the less seriously injured individuals were placed in the waiting ambulances. At this point, an officer stood at the cement bench and gave us instructions to divide into two teams, one in the courtyard the other at ground zero, the crash site.

During the day, needed medications arrived from facilities around the Metro area, all in bulk vials. These medications – pain-killers such as morphine and Demarol – had to be portioned out from the bulk quantity for individual use. This is careful work that requires a steady hand and attentiveness — and we were doing this work under picnic umbrellas in the courtyard with badly injured people all around us, not to

mention the shock of everything we had just witnessed. The work was non-stop until the Red Cross and several church groups came with sandwiches. We appreciated the sandwiches, but really wanted a warm supper; in no time our request was granted and a hot meal was delivered to us.

Afterward, my team and I would be called heroes for the work we did that day. But, we in the triage team had witnessed the real patriots – wounded individuals with burnt hair and faces covered in soot so only the eyes could be seen and others with serious burns, who despite their own injuries, would say, "Help others who are more seriously hurt than me." These men and women are our heroes. We will never forget the horror of that frightful day.

Awareness Leads to a Healthier You

By Lisa Desmond, Director of Clinical Operations

Awareness is defined by Webster's as "knowledge and understanding that something is happening or exists." Being mindful of your surroundings in order to prevent falls, being knowledgeable about healthy food options that help prevent heart disease, and being conscious of opportunities to learn about mammograms are all examples of awareness. The Vinson Hall Retirement Community Health and Wellness Clinic, located on the 1st floor of Vinson Hall, would like to be a part of your awareness experience. According to Bernetta Williams, RN Clinical Manager, the vision for the VHRC Health and Wellness Clinic for 2020 and beyond will be a focus on awareness and prevention to support a healthier you.

The VHRC Health and Wellness Clinic staff has already kicked off an awareness campaign through its support for breast cancer awareness month in October. The clinic reached out to residents and staff offering informational fliers, collaboration with events throughout the campus, and a space to have an open dialogue



about breast cancer. Many staff and residents have taken advantage of this event to write messages of hope on pink ribbons strung in the waiting area. One ribbon simply reads "Stay Strong," a powerful message to those who have lost a loved one, are going through treatment, or have survived breast cancer.

The VHRC Health and Wellness Clinic staff are working in collaboration with dining, the fitness center, healthcare, resident committees, and outside resources to create events that educate and empower people to be aware.

VHRC Plays Pickleball

Every Saturday morning a group of pickleball enthusiasts meet in the lower level of the Kathy Martin Community Building for a little friendly competition.

After playing this game on the pickleball courts behind Dolley Madison Library, Midge and Chris Holmes decided to introduce this fun activity to VHRC. With some painter's tape and a net, Midge and Chris converted an under-utilized room into a pickleball court. They also purchased the net, paddles, and ball used for the game.

During the Saturday morning competition, teams of two play each other until one team scores nine points, and then the teams rotate. Teams are formed when the participants arrive. As many as 15 have showed up to play.

Midge said they hope to continue to play as long as they have the space for it. If you feel up for a little active fun, stop by the new pickleball "room" at 10 on Saturdays!



Midge Holmes and Brenda Whalen play pickleball. Join the fun Saturdays at 10 a.m.!



Fred Johnson, right, with Carol Saunders, Doris Shank and other VHRC residents, enjoy dinner at Magnolias on the Mill in Purcellville earlier this year.

Fred Johnson, Enriching Residents' Days

By Carol Saunders

Fred Johnson joined the Vinson Hall family in August 1989. Utilizing his experience in the U.S. Army and his degree from the Hotel and Restaurant Management Institute, he first worked with a large contract company, but was soon put in charge of the catering operation for Vinson Hall. There was no staff position for special events and programs, so Fred was tapped to add more life to the living at Vinson Hall. His unique personality has enriched residents' lives in countless ways. He recruited Pam Burns to lead Vinson Voices and Mel to head the popular art and photography classes. He's developed relationships with the ticket offices of all the local theaters to get us reduced price center seats for dozens of shows each year. His connections with George Mason's music program, and other musicians and speakers result in lively in-house evenings.

The many community outreach initiatives he's created include the multi-generational juried art show, exchanges with McLean High, Chesterbrook and Haycock elementary schools, the McLean Orchestra and Youth Orchestra to name just a few. Two years ago, he requested residents' input. This request has evolved into the BIG E Committee, headed by Carol Saunders, with sub committees for Education, Excursions, Exercise, Epicureans and Events.

Residents of Vinson Hall Have a Ball

Members of the Big E Committee penned a poem in thanks for Fred's tireless efforts in enriching the lives of VHRC's residents. The members of the Big E committee are: Carol Saunders, John Duran, Florence Hall, Jack and Lorraine Hannon, Midge and Chris Holmes, Ramona Michels, Ron Musselwhite, Doris Shank, Shirley Wilson, and Jane Zerance.

Going hither and yon
And beyond

To eat out – All about
To go places where lived famous faces

To overnight with delight
At sights big and bright

Lectures abound – teaching and preaching
learning and squirming

at all we did not know – (what a blow
we aren't as smart as we thought.)

Ah, but Fred will find ways to expand
The knowledge we happily sought

And still seek
Take a peek at any week

And up early we get – you bet
To go for more and more

Of Fred's offerings galore!
Happy 30th, Fred, our Event Planner

Making our lives grander and grander
THANK YOU

Volunteer Update

IT Volunteers Available to Help on Weekends

By Amiee Freeman, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

We have a great group of high school students who provide IT support on the weekends. These young men and women help with a variety of activities including iPhone help, printer connections, PowerPoint or Word documents, and more. In addition, they are available to help with small tasks around the home such as organizing files or cleaning display cabinets.

Over the summer I was lucky enough to meet with them as a group. Many of the volunteers have been volunteering at VHRC for a year or more. They are juniors and seniors at the nearby high schools, and they are all very thoughtful kids. Each of them explained that what they find most rewarding about volunteering at Vinson Hall is getting to know the people who live here.

If you are interested in getting some help with IT or around the house needs, please sign up for



I had the pleasure of meeting with our IT volunteers this summer. From left to right they are Chris Song, Jennifer Wu, Lena DelBianco, and JT Raymond. Since this summer we have added two new volunteers: Noel Boadi and Lucas Zurbuchen.

a volunteer on the clipboard in the Vinson Hall lobby. If you have any questions or concerns about the Volunteer Program, please do not hesitate to talk with me. I am in the Philanthropy and Engagement Office just off the Vinson Hall lobby. Thanks!

Community Gardens Get Deer-Proof Fencing



BEFORE



AFTER

It is not uncommon to see several deer on the VHRC's campus anytime during the year. They must love our little island of calm amid the busy streets of McLean. They also love all the vegetation. Even the potted plants are nibbled down to the dirt! In response to these four-footed guests, 10-foot fences were installed around the community garden. Let's hope these fences keep the deer from enjoying our residents' carefully tended plants!

The Sylvestery

The Sylvestery Participated in Alzheimer's Walk

By Antoinette Doublin, Administrator of The Sylvestery

The Sylvestery has really been on the move. We participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's on Oct. 12 and raised over \$2,300. We walk and raise money every year because we care for those living with this disease. Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. Currently, more than 5 million people are living with Alzheimer's. It is our goal and continued effort to help the Alzheimer's Association raise funds to find a cure.

The Sylvestery would also like to thank Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation for funding the renovations taking place in the building. The Foundation provides funding for the community as well as scholarships for residents in need. We really appreciate NMCGRF for all they do. Things are really starting to look great and I can't wait until it's done. I'm sure you all will be surprised and love the new look. It is our hope to have all the work completed by Thanksgiving.



Antoinette Doublin, Administrator of The Sylvestery, along with VHRC staff members, Mirna Fuentes, Hannah Vaughn, and Analisse Vasquez Soto, participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's on the National Mall.

Our holiday party is scheduled for Thursday, December 5 at 5:30 p.m. I look forward to seeing you all then. As always, I thank you for allowing The Sylvestery team to care for your loved one.

NMCGRF Funds Sylvestery Update



Just a few months ago we celebrated The Sylvestery's Sweet 16 with a fun birthday party. While 16 years may be sweet for a young person, for a building it's time for an update!

Throughout the community, the old wallpaper has been stripped and fresh paint applied. Soon the old carpeting will be taken up and new carpeting put down. New furniture will also be added. The color scheme selected is a pleasing coastal theme – warm sand and calming blue waters.

Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation is covering the costs of these updates. NMCGRF raises funds throughout the year to support residents either directly through the Resident Assistance Fund or by funding expenditures such as this one through the Innovation and Enhancement Fund.

Welcome to New Residents and Staff

We are happy to welcome new residents and new staff to Vinson Hall Retirement Community. Below are the residents who have moved in recently. We also have several new staff members. Below are the staff members who started working at VHRC since June. If you see them around the campus, be sure to say *Welcome!*

New Residents

Gladys Brennan
Sharon Higgins
Kent Holmes
Joyce Lombardi
Joseph Long
Jardell and Charles McMillan

Paul Quinn
Maria and Donald Romhilt
Monica Rozycki
Barbara Szczepanski
Ted Walker

New Staff

Bryan Aleman, Dining Room Server
Fekerte Alemu, CNA/ Med. Tech
Senovia Argueta-Chevez, Lead Server
Laila Bakaroum, CNA/ Med. Tech
Adilio Barrera, Assistant Dining Services Manager
Daniel Bonje Sr., Certified Nursing Assistant
Stephania Choute, Certified Nursing Assistant
Christopher Clark, Bartender
Winoka Clements, Director of Human Resources
Michelle Crone, Philanthropy Coordinator
Lisa Desmond, Director of Clinical Operations
Stephanie Dodson, Activities Assistant
Dennisha Dwawo, CNA
Ali Ferman, Security Guard
Travis Fisher, Security Guard
Rosmery Herbas, Resident Care Associate
Monik Hergesheimer, Dining Room Server
David Hernandez, Dish Washer/Utility
Earnest Housen, Dining Room Server

Seerat Jehan, Receptionist
Mariam Kanoute, LPN Charge Nurse
Charles Kato, Lead CAN
Nantaka Khoohatong, CNA/ Med. Tech
Kouadio Koko, RN Supervisor
Elyn Lawhorn, Ops Manager
Carlos Leiva, Activities Assistant
Sofia Lekbad, Server
Digna Marquez, Dining Services
Nasser Masoud, Cook
Patricia McKay, CNA
Michele Parra, Executive Assistant
Sean Pickett, Facilities Manager
Lina Ramirez, Human Resources Generalist
Brenda Rojas, CNA
Mustapha Sawi, RN Supervisor
Ada Timbo, LPN Charge Nurse
Sifon Udokang, CNA
Analisse Vasquez Soto, Administrative Assistant



Is Real or is it Virtual?

Our Arleigh Burke Pavilion friends had the chance to take a virtual tour thanks to a visit from Viva Vita. Donning Oculus goggles, the viewers were able to visit wildlife parks in Botswana. Virtual reality experiences such as these have been shown to help keep minds active and engaged while at the same time being entertaining and educational.

Memories of Oktoberfest at Vinson Hall

By Paul Peak

First published in 1999

This article, written by Paul Peak, was first published in October 1999. Paul and Jane Peak moved into Vinson Hall in 1989. Paul passed away in 2014, however, he, together with Jane, created a legacy of joy at Vinson Hall. Each spring, we select the Paul Peak Resident of the Year – the resident who through his or her service to Vinson Hall shares Paul's commitment to the community. The article below is about an Oktoberfest that Paul and Jane hosted for several years. This event is an example not only of Paul's love of a good party but, more importantly, this community.

Jane and I, with eight other hosts, have just held our 10th annual Oktoberfest, a potluck on the grounds at Vinson Hall. It was a beautiful fall day, with golden leaves drifting down on our guests, seated at picnic tables attractive with white tablecloths and fall decorations. At least 110 neighbors and friends were seated in the picnic area and on the North patio, enjoying the weather, our lovely park, the Deutsche music from our accordionist, and each other's company. The food was good, too. "Beer, burgers, and bratwurst" and cider provided by the hosts, plus the grand display of 24 feet of potluck salads and desserts. More than we could eat, even though we fed about 135 persons, counting the hired cook and waiters, residents in Assisted Living and the Infirmary, and us hosts.

Our annual Columbus Day party began in 1990 when Camille and Bob Allen, Jane and Paul Peak, and Virgie and Dick Zimmerman – three couples from A to Z – wondered why our lovely picnic area was so little used. We also wanted to provide a party for all of our neighbors, similar to the Christmas Party hosted by five ladies which the Peaks had enjoyed two weeks after moving into Vinson Hall in December 1989. The six of us determined to give a potluck picnic for all residents to introduce them to the picnic area.

At the first Oktoberfest we served 54 residents and family guests. Attendance has risen each year, as we have reached out to our neighbors in assisted living and on the binnacle list, soon-to-be residents, and residents' relatives. More, literally, is merrier.

Our first party was on Sunday of Columbus Day



weekend, 1990, at noon, and some Jell-O salads melted in the warm sun. In 1991, we shifted to 4:00 in the afternoon of Columbus Day holiday to get more shade on the patio and because there was no competing evening meal in the Dining Room. In 1993, we had cool fall weather, and it was getting dark when we completed the last of the clean-up. So, in 1994, we moved the party time up to 3:00, and then in 1995, back to noon, in coordination with the dining room manager, who provided take-out meals for all residents not attending. This also gave more of the dining room staff a real holiday, and has continued to be "our party date". Celebrating the harvest season of the year with a German theme, for a Venetian sailor who discovered America when in the employ of the King of Spain, and whose first port of call on return was in Portugal!

"Your hosts will provide beer, bratwurst, burgers, and buns; please bring an appetizer, a salad, or a dessert to share" was our invitation the first year, and we are still using the same formula. We have been blessed with good weather for 10 successive parties. Once my "after-action report" did describe it as "brisk," but never has it rained on our picnic! Our Vinson Hall Oktoberfest is a fun party. Won't you come next year?



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VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
Campus News & Views
Fall 2019



Photos from NMGRF's 25th Annual Auction and Gala held Sept. 21.
More details on page 3.