

# VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS



Winter 2024

## CEO Corner

### The Road Ahead

I hope that everyone's 2024 is off to a great start. Despite variable weather, there has been plenty of activity inside the halls of our community to keep us warm and engaged.

In 2024, we'll continue to have a substantial focus on our strategic planning process and execution, both short- and long-term. And while a lot of this work will focus on opportunities to improve the community, I think it's also important to recognize the considerable strengths on which we're building. We saw some outstanding results in 2023 in a number of dimensions.

Our resident satisfaction survey showed a high level of resident engagement at VHRC, with most scores exceeding benchmarks from comparable communities. Our key health care indicators were similarly encouraging, with quality measures far better than national standards in all of our care settings. Occupancy across the entire community continues to be very strong, well above that of our peers both nationally and regionally. And elsewhere in this newsletter, Michelle Crone provides an update on the remarkable success of our charitable funds, underscoring the tremendous generosity of our residents, staff, Board, and other friends of the community.

In terms of our staff here at VHRC, we've also seen some really nice results in 2023. Our employee engagement survey was extraordinarily positive, with overall satisfaction levels more than 10 percent above peer benchmarks. We were also able to provide growth opportunities to a number of employees through promotion to more senior roles. Given these high engagement levels and opportunities for career development, it's perhaps not surprising that – in a labor environment that continues to be incredibly competitive – we are seeing employee turnover rates at VHRC that are roughly half the level of those at comparable organizations.

While these numbers are very encouraging, they of course don't tell the story. As several residents wisely remarked at a recent resident strategy committee meeting, the real "secret sauce" at VHRC is the quality and depth of the relationships here. That is a sentiment echoed by our staff; in surveys and focus groups, they consistently cite their relationships with residents (and each other) as an extremely important factor in their satisfaction and desire to continue to work here.

As we look forward to a busy 2024 and beyond, we will stay grounded in the importance of these relationships along with the VHRC mission and values. In this work, I'm grateful for a strong partnership with VHRA leadership in our mutual efforts to make our community an even better place to live and work!❖



CEO Chip Warner with Sarah and Coleman Kuhn in January 2024.

# Winter at VHRC

The winter months have been full of fun at Vinson Hall Retirement Community. We rang in the New Year with dinner and music and private parties and enjoyed the inches of snow that fell – not once, but twice! – in January. We socialized with each other at monthly birthday teas, social teas, and hot chocolate bars. We watched the Super Bowl together and welcomed a new Wounded Warrior to campus. We met twice with students from the Potomac School to share our personal histories all during the same week that we celebrated holidays in quick succession: Lunar New Year, Mardi Gras and Valentine’s Day. Also on February 14, many marked the day by filling the Chapel in solemn commemoration of Ash Wednesday. We enjoyed a Vinson Voices concert and the work of resident artists in new exhibits around campus. In between all of this, we ventured off campus to see concerts, visit museums and attend the theater. It’s been a great winter!



This issue is dedicated to Roy Easley (1926-2023), a frequent contributor and passionate champion of the *Campus News and Views*.

## About Campus News and Views

*Campus News and Views is Vinson Hall Retirement Community's quarterly literary magazine. The goal of this publication is to share stories and remembrances from VHRC residents and staff. All residents and staff are invited to submit articles for inclusion. All items must be original pieces and must be submitted by the author. This publication is reviewed by an editorial committee comprised of VHRC residents and staff.*

**Campus News and Views is designed and edited by**  
The Office of Philanthropy & Engagement

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## Campus News & Views

### Winter 2024

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*Back cover photo by Scott Harrison, VHRC Chaplain*

# Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

## Thanks for the Wonderful Year!

I hope your new year is already off to a wonderful start! Ours is, and at the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation we are already filling our calendar with exciting plans for the year ahead. But before we closed the books on 2023, we wanted to share last year's many accomplishments – and our heartfelt thanks for your generosity that made them all possible.

We are delighted to share that in 2023 the Foundation raised more than \$425,000 to support residents and staff at Vinson Hall Retirement Community. These donations came from 344 individual donors, 202 of which were Star Members (those who made a membership gift of \$250 or more). Thanks to your support, we were able to provide four residents with assistance, ensuring that no one at VHRC had to leave their home when their resources were depleted.

At the same time, we awarded more than \$111,000 to our dedicated staff last year to help them weather financial hardships, pay for coursework, or be rewarded for their exceptional service. All totaled, since 2020 the Foundation has been able to convey your appreciation to our wonderful staff by granting nearly \$380,000 to VHRC employees through 912 financial awards! Thanks to NMCGRF donor generosity, we were also able to provide enhancements to campus life by funding things like a state-of-the-art sound system for the Alford Auditorium (thank you, Bob Springer!), portable speakers and mics, new library computer, and all-weather outdoor furniture and cornhole sets for the Sports Park.

And how about that Gala last year! *An Evening in Casablanca* was truly a night to remember, topping the charts in fun and funds, raising a record \$99,800 in revenue for the Foundation! We are always looking for more ways to bring our residents together to celebrate, and last year we hosted our



From left, Paula Yewdall, Michelle Crone, Barbara Raymond, and Sue Clark enjoy the Holiday Decorators Thank You Happy Hour in January 2024.

annual Evening with the Stars, the Paul Peak Resident of the Year Award Ceremony, our Holiday Donor Thank You Tea, and a special birthday celebration honoring our oldest residents, among other events.

One of our favorite roles is to connect our campus to the greater community whenever we can. Last year, we were pleased to foster connections for VHRC residents with the preschoolers of Homestretch (a nonprofit that gives homeless families the resources to become self sufficient), seniors-in-need served by Share (McLean's food bank), elementary school kids at Chesterbrook

on Veterans Day, first responders of McLean Volunteer Fire Department, trainers and their canine friends at Veterans Moving Forward, to name just a few. Last but not least, it is our pleasure to continue to do all we can to keep good communication flowing at VHRC by producing *The Beacon* weekly newsletter, the monthly newsletter, Annual Report, VHRC's website and more. These are all labors of love for the Foundation team, and we can't thank you all enough for a truly great year! ❖

— Michelle Crone, Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement



# Beyond the Call of Duty?

By Bill Mitchell



Photo by dgarkauskas. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 DEED

As a newly minted U.S. Army lieutenant in 1953, I was assigned to the U.S. Forces in Austria and stationed in picturesque Salzburg, home of the musical *The Sound of Music*. (This was really a tough first duty assignment!) At that time, following WWII, Austria, like Germany, had been divided into three zones. Each of these zones were under military control of one of the three major allied powers: USSR, Great Britain and the United States.

The following year, I was selected as aide-de-camp to the one-star general commanding the USA Tactical Forces headquartered just outside Salzburg. My duties were principally related to military functions of the general's office. But they also included certain personal areas as directed by the general. One of these areas turned out to be an intriguing adventure behind the then Iron Curtain.

At that time, the general and his wife were the proud owners of an American Kennel Club registered, long-haired female dachshund, which they considered their only "child." The general's wife was desirous of having the dog impregnated by a champion male. Inquiries were made and the only acceptable sire was located about 50 miles inside the USSR zone.

Arrangements were made with the breeder through an international intermediary, and when circumstances were right, a date and time were set for the meeting. Of course, someone whom the dog trusted had to make the delivery, and the general didn't look far to find me!

On the designated date, I was issued a special pass to go through the Russian checkpoint in Linz, Austria, south of Vienna. I dressed in civilian clothing, loaded the dog into the back seat of my Plymouth and proceeded on my mission. After the dog and I passed inspection by USSR checkpoint guards, we drove to the agreed upon location.

However, my role was not completed. It seems that dogs of that particular breed require some form of human assistance in order for the required act of breeding to take place. The breeder held his dog and I held the general's while the deed was done. Several month later, the dog delivered three Communist pups, much to the general's and his wife's joy and happiness. I was the hero of the day, except in the eyes of the mother dog, who continued to growl at me every time I came close to her.

As a result of that experience, I learned that I am not too keen on small dogs. ❖

# Trump and Me and Classified Documents

By Gene Wentz



*Aboard USS Little Rock in Gaeta, Italy, in 1974, the Commander of the Sixth Fleet, Vice Admiral Daniel Murphy, presides at a farewell ceremony for then-Commander Gene Wentz. They would meet again during a classified briefing in London soon after.*

Much is being made of the possible mishandling of classified documents by President Trump. I had two unsettling personal experiences involving classified matters during my 27-year career in the Navy.

My first 1957 duty station was the Navy Support Activity in Naples, Italy. I was slated to become a Crypto Communication Watch Officer (CCWO), meaning I would be handling classified messages ranging from Confidential, to Secret, to Top Secret. A full FBI field check was required to establish my trustworthiness.

An FBI agent was sent to my home in Pennsylvania where he interviewed my nearest neighbors. They attested to my maturity, sobriety and civic correctness. I was granted Top Secret clearance that lasted my entire Navy career.

In the 1970s I was a senior officer at Naval European headquarters in London. So much classified material came to me that I was given a

three-tumbler safe for storage.

My problem with classified material involved a category termed "For Official Use Only," (FOUO) which was not technically classified, but was termed "Sensitive, and only to be shared on a need-to-know basis."

Anyway, I became careless in handling FOUO documents and would routinely store them in the lap drawer of my office desk, which had only a flimsy key lock.

Marine Corps sentries were responsible for building security and were specifically instructed to look for loose classified material. One night, a Marine jiggled my lap drawer and it opened, exposing FOUO papers.

When I arrived for work the following morning, there was a note on my office door instructing me to report immediately to the staff security

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# Destiny on a Mountain Road

By Jerry Norris



*Jerry Norris, right, with a crewmate in North Korea.*

In 1954, I served in the Recon Platoon of the 89th Tank Battalion, then operating in the mountainous areas of North Korea. One day while on patrol, we had gone far up a dirt road with a steep incline and stopped about 25 yards from its summit. The lieutenant then told me to take the lead scout jeep over the top to see what could be seen on the other side (he liked to cross-train us). He said: "You are still in a free-fire zone, so fire at anything that moves." There were no further instructions, just go up this road and see what's on the other side. I put Ray, a crewman on my tank, in the back of the jeep with a .30 caliber machine gun on a swivel mount while I took the righthand seat up front.

We came around a sharp bend and began a descent on the other side. Almost immediately after the turn, a ChiCom (Chinese soldier) jumped out from a deep patch of foliage on the

left side of the road, no more than eight yards away. Stopping was quite abrupt. The ChiCom went into a standard firing stance, aiming his rifle at me – dead on! Ray hollered: "He's mine, he's mine!" as he began to swiftly traverse the machine gun. When it came over my head, without any thought going into my reaction, I instinctively reached up for the front of the barrel, stopping the traverse, while at the same time pushing it towards the sky. I said to the scout in the driver's seat and pointing to the ChiCom, "Put a round in front of that guy." At that, the ChiCom turned and tried to run uphill. The rifle shot hit some rocks to his side and front, splaying chips into the air. There could be no doubt as to where the next shot would land. He quickly threw his rifle down, dropped to his knees with his hands up. Ray was now more furious than before, shouting at me: "You heard the lieutenant, this is a free-fire zone. Let go of the machine gun, he's mine. He's dead meat."

In time, I came to see this moment in an exemplary light, maybe not altogether true, yet not completely untrue, either. Still, the thought gives me immense relief. In the split second when we faced each other on that mountain road, both of us reacted to some other deep and unanticipated primordial impulse. In the passing of a moment – which forever stayed in my consciousness, he handed me my life on that road. I could call up no reflex to take his in return.

Fast forward: It was now 1972 and then-President Nixon had made a dramatic opening to China. I was in the kitchen of my home in Washington, D. C. It was a cold November day, with a hard rain falling outside. There was a

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# Destiny on a Mountain Road

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rapid knock on my door. In opening it, a man announced that he had just purchased the house next door and said, "I am your new neighbor, the Chief Correspondent of the Chinese *People's Daily*. You wouldn't know how to light up a gas furnace?"

That ignited a wide range of neighborly events, no different than the millions of other goings on – helping them get emergency dental services on a Sunday, the mutual cutting of lawns when off on vacations or business, or the celebration of birthdays and school graduations. I only knew the Chinese while serving in North Korea as our

foe, one that I was expected to engage in mortal combat. In the decades that followed, they became my next-door neighbors and friends.

Divine justice works in an ever mysterious, enriching circle. There was a time in the past now vivid still in memory, when on a nameless mountain road in North Korea two common soldiers disobeyed their orders and extended to each other the gift of life. I made it home because of him. Now, with my family, I was living my end of it alongside one of that soldier's own countrymen in Washington. ❖

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# Trump and Me and Classified Documents

...Continued from page 5

officer, who spoke very sharply to me. I admitted negligence, promised to atone and countered that the documents were not technically classified. He listened, shrugged and dismissed me with a wave toward the door.

I had one other extraordinary experience with classified material. During the Middle East War of 1973, I was among a small cadre of officers who accompanied the Sixth Fleet commander, Daniel Murphy, a three-star admiral, to his flagship for the duration of the conflict. I was at his side for all classified matters except when super-secret compartmentalized information was being discussed. After the war, I was posted to a higher echelon job in London.

Admiral Murphy soon visited my new command for a briefing of my four-star boss on lessons learned during the Sixth Fleet standoff with the Soviet-Russian Mediterranean squadron. I did

not have the security clearance for the briefing but went to the command center just to say hello.

When Admiral Murphy saw me, he greeted me warmly, took me by the elbow and started a conversation as he guided me into the briefing theater. Security checkers assumed I was with him and did not intercede.

I listened to his briefing and was amazed at what intelligence gathering went on behind the scenes with satellites, submarines and undercover sources. But when it was realized that I did not have the clearance for such information, I was taken aside, thoroughly debriefed and signed numerous papers swearing to never reveal what I had just learned.

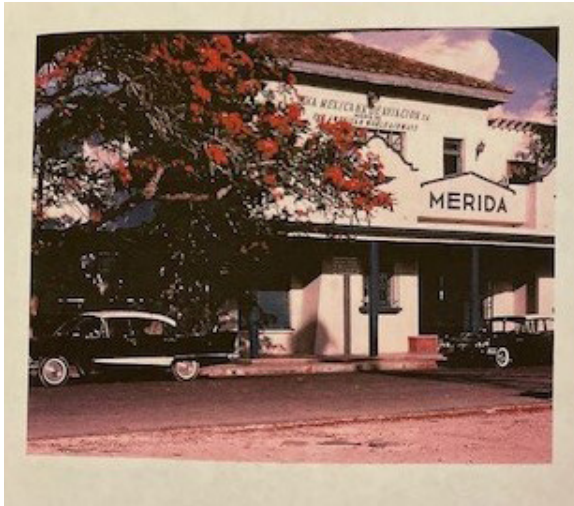
Those secrets will go with me to the grave. ❖



# To South America in a Single Engine Plane

## Part 2

By Maureen Kammerer



*Part 1 of this story was published in the Fall 2023 issue of the Campus News and Views.*

Our first stop in our little plane was Jacksonville, Florida, to refuel. It was my first glimpse of waving palm trees, stifling tropical weather, bugs the size of mice, and gorgeous pink bougainvillea flowers iridescent in the sun. We took off and crossed the state to get to Tampa/St. Petersburg. We landed in a tropical storm near the small pink shack that was then the Tampa air terminal. It was at the end of a runway near the ocean. We could barely see the lights as we taxied to a halt in the rain and thunder within yards of the ocean. It had taken two attempts to land and I said to the others, "Don't look. Just let Mike handle it." This was our first clue that not all our plans were exact. It had become very dark during the rainstorm and visibility was limited. The landing was frightening. When we told the airport personnel where we were going the next day, they were incredulous. "Mexico? In this plane?"

A kind man drove us to a little bed and breakfast, where we each paid \$2 for the night. We found a typical bar/restaurant with big ceiling fans,

shrimp, and cold beers. When people talk of "old Florida," this is the kind of place they are thinking of – a bit grubby, filled with men in print shirts and shorts, and women who smoked and drank along with them at the bar.

The next day at the little Tampa airport, we filed our flight plan for Cozumel, a small island off the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. It took a long time to do the paperwork. As we were flying, we realized we had missed the island, so we requested permission to land in Merida, Mexico, on the mainland. I didn't worry about it, and figured it was all part of the adventure. I realize now that we were mad to trust the unknown skills of a mere acquaintance. Many people having heard my tale have shaken their heads at our folly.

When we alighted from the plane in Merida, we were hit in the face with the heat and humidity of Mexico in June. To this day I can feel the excitement of seeing the beauty of the old colonial architecture in Merida, the brilliance of



the flowers. The officious men in khaki uniforms at the airport collected our landing fees and wondered at tourists going to the Yucatan the next day to see the ruins at Chichen Itza in 120-degree heat.

We took a taxi to the air-conditioned Merida Hotel, had a delightful dinner, and rented a car to drive the 80 miles to Chichen Itza that evening. I started out driving on a simple road with no street lights, and in the dusk we saw an occasional Mayan in a brilliant white shirt or embroidered dress walking or standing near the plain white stucco houses or simple thatched huts in the middle of little villages. They lived on

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**I realize now that we were mad to trust the unknown skills of a mere acquaintance. Many people having heard my tale have shaken their heads at our folly.**

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the proceeds from the sisal they grew in their fields. We saw hammocks slung from the walls and children playing, adults

lounging, and a few entrepreneurs selling Coca Cola from metal coolers on stands. The children were joyous and their big brown eyes were luminous and full of curiosity about us, a lone car on the road to the ruins.

We arrived hungry and thirsty at Chichen Itza, and were the only visitors at the hotel. We entered our simple rooms, listening to the scurrying of the lizards, roaches and other bugs. We stood on the beds and used towels to urge the lizards off the ceiling onto the floor to shoo them out. The windows had no glass or screens and in the morning after sleeping under mosquito nets, we were awakened by the mooing of a black and white cow as she put her head with her lovely eyes in the window to inspect us.

We had omelets served by the diminutive Mayan waitress who was eager to please the only guests. I remember the scent of the exotic peppery plants surrounding the porch where we ate. We explored the ruins, meeting one Mayan worker with his machete whose face was the same as the ones carved on the stones making up the stone ziggurats and sacrificial altars; there has been little intermarriage among the indigenous people of the Yucatan over the centuries. I imagined the lives of the Mayan chiefs, their worship of the ancient gods and the cups of chocolate they drank on feasts and sacrifices to those gods. I stood alone and peered into the well into which the bodies of young virgins were thrown as offerings to those gods. I gazed at the remarkable sculpture of Chac Mool, the reclining male figure that later influenced my own work.

I climbed the stairs of the highest ziggurat, clinging to them as I rose to the top. When I peered over the topmost step I surprised a three-foot-long ugly white iguana staring back at me. Backing down the steps carefully, I was grateful to reach the bottom. Chichen Itza no longer allows you to roam as we did, and there are local vendors now where we stood in awe of this ancient city. We returned to Merida to take off for our trip to Costa Rica to see Mount Irazu, which had erupted just six months before. After we arrived in Costa Rica and peered into the volcano, an adventure lay ahead in the farmers' mountain pastures damaged by the eruption. ❖

*Look for Part 3 of this story in the Spring 2024 issue of the Campus News and Views.*

# My Second Trip to Pakistan in 1993

By Jill Stryker



*Jill Stryker at the Kyber Pass in 1993, with her driver (left) and Pakistani soldier.*

Everyone who knew me, heard about my time as an AFS student in Karachi, Pakistan, when I was 17. Many also met my Pakistani host family members, who visited me in McLean.

When I first lived in McLean, we had numerous neighbors who were with the State Department or CIA. Many had lived overseas and worked in embassies. One day my nextdoor neighbor, Edith, called me. She said, "Jill, a friend who was in Singapore when Frank and I were at the embassy is now ambassador to Pakistan. He has invited me to visit. I thought you might be interested in traveling with me."

"When are we going!" I said. We had two months to get our shots and apply for a visa. I also contacted my Pakistani mother, who was still in the house I had visited in Karachi when I was in high school. I let my Pakistani brothers and sisters know too. My sister Seemi, who then lived in the U.A.E., said that she would meet me in Karachi. We had a fun reunion.

Our trip started in Karachi. Then, we traveled to the Kyber Pass, which has been the setting for so many British novels and someplace I had always

wanted to visit. The Taliban had already invaded Afghanistan, but we were assured that it was safe. We hired a driver who was recommended by our hotel. The Pakistani government required people going to the Kyber Pass to also hire a soldier to travel with them. The driver explained that we did not really need the soldier for safety, but it was a way to increase soldiers' salaries. We went to the base to pick up the soldier. He sat in front of me and put his rifle over his shoulder with the rifle pointing at my forehead. I asked the driver to tell the soldier to reposition the rifle so it was not pointing at me. The driver said, "Oh don't worry. The gun is probably not loaded." I insisted and the soldier repositioned the rifle.

The Kyber Pass was like I had pictured it in my mind. It had many twists and turns and was mostly sand. We did see several mansions. I asked the driver about them. He said that "drug lords" lived there.

While we traveled through the Kyber Pass, we saw many tents in the desert. We were told that they were Afghan refugees who were trying to escape the Taliban. Pakistan had enough poor people and would not let the Afghans live in their cities at that time. I kept wondering how they got water in the desert. After several hours, we got to the gate blocking the road. Afghanistan was on the other side. We looked through the gate at more desert. Two men were guarding the gate. They offered us tea and we had a nice visit.

After a short time, we returned to the Army base and dropped off the soldier. The driver took us to the train station and we took a train to Islamabad, where the U.S. embassy was located. A rickshaw took us to the U.S. embassy, which had a high wall encircling its buildings and the surrounding land. We later learned that the wall had been built after the embassy had been attacked five years earlier. The head Marine had us on a list of guests of the ambassador, so we

were escorted to the ambassador's home where a butler welcomed us at the door.

Our time at the embassy was delightful. At a cultural event in Islamabad, we saw traditional dances and heard music of different tribal groups. At a craft sale, I was surprised to see a USSR soldier's belt. Edith said, "You realize that the belt was probably taken off a dead soldier." I bought it anyway.

After four days, we got tickets to fly into the Himalayan mountains. We were told that the plane would not leave unless the weather for the next five days or more was going to be perfect. Radar did not function in the Himalayan mountains. Luckily, the weather was good and we boarded the plane. The pilot said, "As Allah

taught us, let us pray." My friend, Edith, was Jewish and I was Protestant, so I thought we had everything

**There were no street lights, so it was a challenge to see the roads, once the sun set. All went well until Edith screamed, "Stop!"**

covered. The mountains were beautiful, but we saw very few buildings or villages.

After several hours, we landed in a small town and got a taxi to our hotel. We slept very well that night. The next morning, the hotel got us a jeep and two drivers to take us further into the mountains. A beautiful bright blue river ran along the side of the road. As we traveled along the mountain roads, we could see the roofs of small houses that were built into the wall supporting the road. On the roofs was food that was drying out to be eaten during the winter months. Large boulders were on the road in some areas, indicating that landslides were in that area. This realization made me nervous since we were in an open jeep. Luckily, our day in the mountains did not involve large boulders rolling down the mountain. We returned to town during late afternoon. We stayed there for several days.

When it was time to return to Islamabad, Edith called the airlines to find out the departure time of our plane. She was told that no planes would be landing for several days due to approaching bad weather. We worried about connecting with our flight home, so the people at the hotel suggested that we get two drivers and a jeep to drive us back to Islamabad. We were concerned about the roads in the mountains, but we were assured that they were safe.

We met our two drivers and started on our return trip. We traveled through small towns and villages. It became dark and still we continued. There were no street lights, so it was a challenge to see the roads once the sun set. All went well until Edith screamed, "Stop!" Luckily, the driver slammed on the brakes and stopped. "What is wrong?" I asked. "The bridge is out," she said. That bridge crossed a river that was far below us. We sat there shaking, just thinking about our close call. It took some time to find someone to give us directions to another bridge and we continued to Islamabad.

We spent eight more hours on the road. By the time we got to the embassy, we were covered with dirt. We were dropped off at the gate. The Pakistani soldier asked us what our business was at the embassy. We told him we were guests of the ambassador. The soldier looked at us skeptically and said, "Sure you are. We are going to have to search you." Edith said, "Call the head Marine. I am sure we are on the list!"

"Sure you are," he said. But he left to find the head Marine. When he returned, he opened the gate.

We walked to the ambassador's residence and were met by the butler. He looked at us and said, "Madame would like a bath." We assured him that we would! We spent several delightful days at the embassy recovering from our adventure in the mountains and then we flew home. ❖



# The Golden Road

By Althea Coetzee



Photo by wilford peloquin, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

*New York City's Broadway at Times Square in the 1960s*

*Althea Coetzee wrote this celebration of New York City's Broadway in 1977.*

"Main Street, U.S.A," is an oft-used expression for the epitome of American culture. There is another street known worldwide that is clearly identified simply by using its name. No other country nor state can boast its equal. Songs have immortalized it, while the poor and the rich, the pure and the pervert, the matron and the mistress, the famous and the unknown have trod its way. For some it is the ultimate of goals; for others it is a path to misery. Whatever it is, there is only one Broadway.

This renowned thoroughfare traverses Manhattan from the Battery up to the New York City-Yonkers boundary, a distance of 18 miles. Packed into these 18 miles are every imaginable type of human being and way of life. The Broadway I remember was like this.

It started at the Battery, where one could, for a nickel, hop a ferry to Staten Island or the Statue of Liberty, take a sightseeing boat around

Manhattan Island, catch a boat up to the Catskills or Connecticut, or become a strap-hanger on the various networks of subway systems. Broadway wound its way through the financial and business districts. Five days a week this area was streaming with humanity making its way hither and yon. On the seventh day, one felt like you were entering an uninhabited planet.

A little further along was old Delancey Street, where shops serving every need were identified by hieroglyphic codes. This was the home of the Jewish delicatessen, whose odors stimulated the most jaded appetites. There was the rabbi of old hurrying to his synagogue. If one strained, one could hear the cantors chanting the ancient psalms in all their glory. A unique world and rite of its own was old Delancey Street.

Passing these crossroads of interest, one moved along through the environs of Chinatown and Greenwich Village. The color and glamour, as

# The Golden Road

well as the sordid and miserable, were therein contained. The Chinese still adhere to many of their old and fine traditions. Have you ever seen a dragon belching smoke? Or perhaps you might like to wander off into the many curio shops. Chinatown has much to interest the tourist.

Greenwich Village still retained its old flavor. One might come upon the distinguished matron hurrying to an appointment at New York University. Crossing her path was, well, I thought it was...I give up! Let us simply say it was a human being, for I cannot distinguish the gender!

As Broadway meandered along above 20th Street it became a throbbing metropolis. Leaving behind Macy's, Gimbel's, and Herald Square, one quickly landed on the perimeter of the garment district. Here, history was made in the fashion world and reported in the *Woman's Wear Daily*. One could see the ultra-suave model, who starved herself although earning a six-figure salary. If you knew the right person, you might be able to purchase a gown which, under normal circumstances, would have cost several weeks' salary.

Suddenly we were at the crossroads of the world – Broadway and 42nd Street – 42nd Street with its dives and its dollies, its movies and its burlesque, its pickpockets and its prostitutes, its con men and its auctioneers, its flea circus and its pool tables, its one department store and its one library, its park and its concrete jungle. All were there; the aura encompassed one.

To many, Broadway was the epitome of the actor's world. Some would only have their name adorn the marquee of the movie house. The more fortunate, the matinee idol, would see his name in lights over the entrance to a Broadway stage production. Opening night was a particularly exciting event for the star, his audience, and the stage-door familiars. The taxis and chauffeured limousines discharged their

passengers. The women with their long graceful skirts, luxurious furs and heady perfumes were escorted by men no less striking, for theirs was the world of white ties and tails. One was easily caught up in the glamour, romance, and excitement attached to a Broadway production. Forgotten were the weeks of grueling rehearsal, costume fittings, production changes, missed lines, and cues. Excitement was high, for soon the curtain would rise. Would it fall on success or failure?

Many miles of Broadway still lay at one's feet. Gradually it wound towards the Hudson River, as it continued along its merry and not-so-merry way. Perhaps it would be best to stop now, while one could still see, touch, and feel the pulse of this street, for one had just glided along the golden mile.

## Song for the Seventies

By Beth Bowers



My name is, of course, C.U. Later.

I'm your friendly but shy alligator.

If you'll find me a mate

We'll proliferate,

And little Izods will follow their pater.

Photo: Gareth Rasberry, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

# Lost at Sea

By Carl Schone



*Carl Schone prepares for a dive at the Buddy Dive Resort in Bonaire.*

Years ago, as a new SCUBA diver, I joined my Lynnhaven Virginia Beach Dive Club colleagues on my first dive trip to explore a sunken German submarine, U-352. Sunk in 1942 by the Coast Guard, this boat ultimately rested at 110 feet below the Atlantic ocean's surface some 30 miles south of Moorhead City, North Carolina. On the day of the dive, my group of 25 divers made our way to a marina where our charter boat was anchored. Weather was a challenge. The sea had waves running four to six feet, and only three charters chose to make the trip out of the marina to dive the sub. Dive sites often have mooring stations where boats can hook up and remain tethered on site. This site now hosted three charters. In spite of deteriorating seas, all three boats decided to begin the dive. Each mooring station provides a rope that extends down to the wreck, and divers follow the rope-way from the surface to begin the dive. On this day, subsurface currents were strong and the rope provided a stabilizing handhold. As my dive began, my mask began to leak. Mask leaks are not uncommon, and all divers train to reseat their mask and empty water out by exhaling air

into the mask while tilting its bottom away from the face. This requires two hands. That's when I got into trouble. The current pulled me away from the guide rope and I couldn't get back to it. I had been told that currents often abate at the bottom, so I planned to complete my descent and make my way back to the sub.

Meanwhile, drama unfolded on the surface! One of the other charter's bow lines disconnected and the boat began to drift into another. Its captain started the boat's engine and tapped the throttle, jostling a diver – who flipped into the water and onto the propeller, cutting an artery in his leg!

Below, I was not making any progress and I decided to ascend, pause for a safety stop at 20 feet and surface to yell for help. I was about a football field away. The seas were higher! I learned later that everyone on my charter was on the port side watching the rescue of the injured diver, while I floated away on the starboard side. The waves blocked my cries and I continued

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# Lost at Sea

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to drift away. I dropped my weights, moved to snorkel, and fully inflated my floatation vest and began to wait. I spent over three hours drifting in the sea lanes. Simultaneously, a Coast Guard cutter, a chopper and my charter boat found me. I was taken to the Coast Guard station for a quick medical triage. Two medics took my blood pressure, asked my name, asked who was

president, and asked my birthdate. "8 February 1946," I replied. They looked at each other and exclaimed, "That's weird, about three hours ago we worked on a diver with a cut leg artery – he was born on the same day, month and year as you!" ❖

## On the Death of Your Marriage

**By Margaret Dean**

The death of your marriage  
Has broken my heart  
Tears drown my eyes  
Pools of my sorrowing.  
  
I had always thought in  
Fragmented chips of memory  
You two were perfect;  
you were golden  
Each magnifying the other's light.

Not my sorrow; not my grief  
Rather this loss of one's heart is  
Yours and hers to share.  
What are you searching for?

what do you want?  
More loving? More true?

You made her laugh  
oft through the years  
What else could you do  
To keep your heart close  
Tears sobbing, voice cracking  
What could I do?

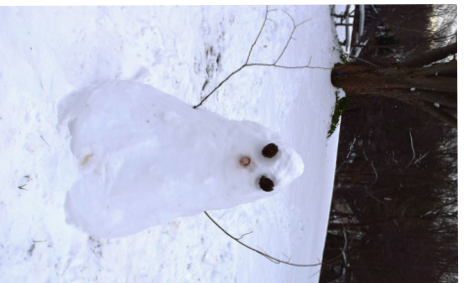
I thought you had it all  
Happiness forever  
But winter freezes/shadows lengthen  
The starts hide themselves. ❖





VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

# Campus News & Views Winter 2024



Winter fun at VHRC included the Holiday Decorator's Thank you Happy Hour, the Hot Chocolate Bar social in the Vinson Hall Lobby and the Valentine's Day Dinner and Dance. Also, we got snow! Mclean received slightly more than four inches January 15-16 and about the same amount again on January 19.