

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS



Spring 2021

CEO Corner

Preparing, Planning, and Participating

Happy Spring! I'm sure you share my joy in these longer days and warmer temperatures, which are always a welcome change after a long winter. With COVID restrictions and anxiety connected to the pandemic, this winter has felt especially long. Now that so many of us have received the COVID vaccine and with our family and friends receiving the vaccine too, we are all experiencing a bit of a thaw. It is important to bear in mind that we have come so far thanks to the vigilance of our infection prevention protocols and we do not want to throw caution to the wind. It is necessary to frequently remind ourselves that these infection prevention protocols will continue for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, we are beginning to do something we have not done in over a year: make plans!

It was with great sadness and tremendous feelings of loss that we began cancelling so many activities last year: festive celebrations, religious services, trips, get aways and even small events like dinners with friends and trips to the grocery store. I know I don't need to remind you what that time was like. It was tremendously difficult for our staff and other members of our community to develop events in advance, as we did not know what the next week or even the next day would hold. We all learned the value of being able to "pivot" – a word I will forever associate with 2020.

Now we can celebrate the three Ps: preparing, planning and participating. I must add that for our safety and for the safety of others these activities must all be done with protection



CEO Libby Bush rolls up her sleeve to get her vaccine in January. More than 550 VHRC residents and staff received the COVID-19 vaccine in early 2021.

measures in place. Also, it's important to point out that not everyone will feel comfortable in participating – and that is more than understandable. We will all need to relearn how to be part of a group again. How to continue to wear our masks as needed and how to distance as needed. But we also need to learn again how to plan and how to prepare to participate. If we have learned anything this past year, it is that we are all social beings and we celebrate that. We are – as the old song goes – people who need people and yes, we are the luckiest people!

I hope over the coming weeks and months to see more of you in person – either in small celebrations, meetings or just in the hallways. I know I have missed person-to-person gatherings. So look for me as I too get out more, and I will enjoy the chance to see faces and to chat in-person. We can plan on it!

Vaccines Bring Us Closer

By the end of February, VHRC had completed its sixth COVID-19 vaccine clinic. More than 550 individuals – residents and staff – received the vaccine on our campus. Starting December 28, VHRC, in connection with CVS/Omnicare, worked hard to get as many residents and staff as possible vaccinated. Over the past several months, VHRC has continued to host additional vaccine clinics for new residents and staff. Vaccinating this number of people requires tremendous logistics. We are grateful to VHRC's clinical staff for providing this service and to the residents and staff who opted to receive the vaccine, helping prepare for a safer future!



New Vinson Hall and Willow Oak Residents

We are happy to welcome new independent living residents to Vinson Hall Retirement Community. If you see them around the campus, be sure to say Welcome!

Bill & Suzi Brunelle	Judy Gladstone	Florence League	Carl & Lynne Schone
Lino Charpentier	Maria Henderson	Jerry & Margurette Norris	Roger & Emmy Simmons
Dion Climenson	John Kern	Bob Purks	Barbara Tierney
Sherm & Paige Eagan	Margaret Lane	Yvonne Sabine	Genevieve Timpane

About Campus News and Views

Campus News and Views is Vinson Hall Retirement Community's quarterly newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to share stories and remembrances from VHRC residents and staff. All residents and staff are invited to submit articles for inclusion in the newsletter. All items included in the newsletter are original pieces submitted by the author. This newsletter is reviewed by a newsletter committee, comprised of VHRC residents and staff. This edition and previous editions can also be found on our website at: www.vinsonhall.org/blog/

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Submissions for the Summer newsletter are due July 9, 2021. Please submit entries to Amiee Freeman (amieef@vinsonhall.org)

Campus News & Views

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Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

Silver Linings in a Challenging Year

By Michelle Crone, Director of Philanthropy & Engagement

As 2020 came to a close, people the world over were more than ready to bid good-bye to a most difficult pandemic year. But here at Vinson Hall Retirement Community, we saw some silver linings amidst all the hardships of last year, and one of them was your amazing generosity. At the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, we had a banner year, thanks to you.

With your help in 2020, the Foundation raised more than \$369,000 – which we put to good use in our community as fast as those dollars came in. Last year, through our newly launched Employee Caring Fund, we were able to make 218 financial awards totaling \$76,450 to our dedicated staff, in support of employees who were impacted by the pandemic, encountered unexpected financial hardships, or merited Hero Bonuses.

We were able to offer \$198,300 in scholarship aid through the Resident Assistance Fund so that no resident had to leave their home due to lack of funds. Through the Innovation & Enhancement Fund, we were able to support campus projects like the new VHRC Sports Park and the purchase of iPads to be used to calm residents in The Sylvestery's Sensory Room.

We are truly grateful to all our Foundation members for their continued support. Our Annual Membership Campaign last year alone raised a record \$172,355! We also welcomed more Star Members than ever before – 177 members gave gifts of \$250 or more. (We hope you are enjoying your new NMCGRF Star Member lapel pins!) So for us, you and your generosity are the blessings of this past year.

And now it's on to 2021! The Foundation has already been hard at work on several initiatives, including:



Frank Carrigan, a member of VHRC's photo class, uses Lightroom, a photo editing program, on the new computers purchased by Philanthropy and Engagement, showing Michelle Crone, Director of P&E, what they can do.

- Holding the Paul Peak Resident of the Year event and virtual celebration this month
- Purchasing new computers for the Art Room's photography students
- Partnering with the Resident Association's IT Committee to help fund the new resident engagement app or portal
- Applying for and receiving a \$30,000 grant to support the Employee Caring Fund
- Expanding the Resident Assistance Fund to include those who need support from VHRC's Resident Care Associate Program.

This is just the beginning of what promises to be a great year, because of you! So stay tuned!

To learn the latest Foundation news, check out our new monthly newsletter sent to you as an email from NMCGRF.

ABP Continues to Transition from Good to Great

Arleigh Burke Pavilion (ABP) is in a bit of a transition period – “transitioning from good to great,” as Antionette Doublin, Senior Director of ABP and The Sylvestery (TS) says. Antionette transitioned herself from being Administrator of TS to overseeing both communities in November. ABP and TS, as is the case for the entire VHRC community, is also transitioning to a “new normal.”

Antionette’s transition from “across the street,” as she says, was made easier by the wonderful ABP staff and families. “The staff have really taken care of me,” said Antionette, for which she is grateful. She is also getting to the know the families – by Zoom – which has its challenges, but she hopes over the next few weeks and months to have more time to spend with residents and their families.

Key among Antionette and the ABP team’s recent accomplishments is that ABP has secured a five-star rating. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid evaluates nursing home communities on a five-star rating system to help consumers, their families, and caregivers compare nursing homes more easily. Communities with five stars are considered to have above average quality. To determine the star rating, surveyors review health inspections, staffing, and specific quality measures that focus on how well the community cares for its residents’ physical and clinical needs. This five-star rating shows that ABP is working at the top of its game and Antionette hopes to be able to maintain this accomplishment.

In the Community Building’s Rehabilitation wing (CB), Antionette has worked with Shawn Bostic, Director of Facilities, to reposition the nurse’s station. This station is now at the end the hallway, so the nurses “can see and hear everything.” Previously, the nurse’s station, which was visible from the entrance into CB, did not have a good view of the hallway, making it difficult at times to engage with the residents. Antionette hopes that the new position of the nurse’s station will provide the nurses with greater connection with CB residents.



ABP residents and family members enjoyed some traditional Irish music on St. Patrick’s Day as well as green beer and green smoothies.

The big issue on everyone’s mind is how ABP will transition after the previous year. ABP recently brought onboard a new Activities Manager, Nicole Largent. Antionette explained that in addition to being a very fun, energetic, and organized person, Nicole is also a music therapist. Antionette said that ABP purchased a guitar for Nicole, so she can connect with residents and provide some cheer.

In addition to one-on-one attention, ABP’s activity coordinators are also encouraging residents to participate in social and small group activities. Entertainers have been invited to return to ABP, and the calendar now includes several in-person performances each month. Families, too, are happy that they are able to come in and visit.

“Everything is working out well. We, of course, would like to do more – and slowly but surely we will. But we do not want to go backward,” said Antionette, referring to the challenges of the past year.

The Sylvestery News

Looking Forward to Making Connections

The Sylvestery has a new Assistant Administrator: Analisse Vasquez Soto. Analisse is a familiar face at VHRC. Previously, she was the Administrative Assistant for Vinson Hall and Willow Oak.

Analisse is excited about her new position and looking to spending more quality time with residents and families. "My goal is to spend a certain amount of time, one-on-one, with residents. Whether that means taking someone out to the courtyard and enjoying the sun together or massaging someone's hands while we listen to music," said Analisse.

Analisse said that her transition from Vinson Hall to The Sylvestery has been very smooth, thanks in large part to the support of her VHRC teammates and to TS families. "Everyone has been very supportive and kind. Randy [Fowler, former Administrator of Vinson Hall and Willow Oak] and Antionette [Doublin, Senior Director of Arleigh Burke Pavilion and The Sylvester] have been very supportive. All the families have been great too, very supportive and so friendly," said Analisse.

Over the next few months, Analisse will continue to connect with families and plan engaging activities. "Antionette and I are looking forward to

hosting monthly family get-togethers soon – something casual to help create connections. I'm also looking forward to working with Antionette and Haider [Mahmood, Senior Director of Vinson Hall and Willow Oak] and continuing on our path to making VHRC one true campus," said Analisse.



Analisse Vasquez Soto

Analisse also hopes – like all of us – that over the next few weeks and months we can regain a bit of the "normal life" that was lost to the pandemic. "I am looking forward to the days we can call normal again. I am very hopeful that will be soon. I love the courtyards in TS as do the residents, staff and families. We hope to be able to host small events in the courtyards, like grilling burgers and hotdogs, especially as we progress and leave COVID behind us."

Furry Friends Visit The Sylvestery



The Sylvestery had some furry visitors in April. Squeals on Wheels, a traveling petting zoo, brought a menagerie of animals, including a guinea pig held by Martha T. and one held by Wilma V. with help from TS Activities Assistant, Carlos Leiva, to visit TS residents and staff.

Born a Twin: A Lifetime of Companionship

By Joe Kammerer

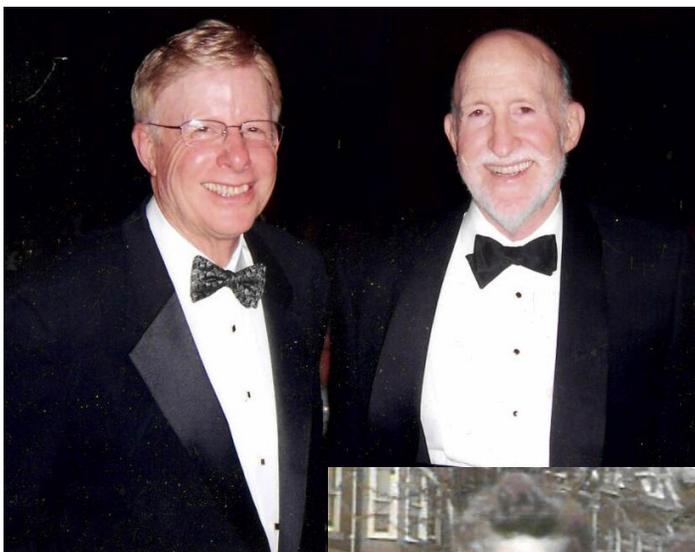
The most significant circumstance in my life was being born a twin. We came into this world only five minutes apart. I wonder why the doctor expected only one of us. My mother said, "Doctor, I know there's another baby coming and it's coming now!"

To this day my twin jokingly demands "respect" from me since he is the oldest twin – by five minutes. I respond that the only reason he was first was because I pushed him out.

What a wonderful time we had being raised as twins. We wore the exact same clothes to school every day until high school. How did we keep our clothes separate? My mother stitched a red thread in every piece of my clothing – underwear, shirts, coats, pants, and ties. The red stitch meant that it was my clothing. (I had red hair.) No red stitch meant it belonged to John.

Being a twin meant I always had someone to play with. And, there was always a partner for activities, such as sports, hiking, serving mass as altar boys, and scouting activities. There was also time for mischief such as tossing snowballs at cars as they drove past. There were times at Bunker Hill Grade School when I felt obliged to protect my twin brother from an aggressive adversary. That was easy! No one picked a fight with my brother unless they fought me first. And, few if any wanted to fight me first because I was big for my age and tough. Two older brothers, eight and nine years older taught us how to fight. An older sister, twelve years older, also was a significant influence on us. She taught us how to behave. A younger sister, six years younger, was the youngest child. We protected her.

We were very athletic all through our lives,



Joe Kammerer and his twin brother, John, have shared a lifetime of companionship, laughter, and camaraderie. The two brothers (left) are shown at a New Year's Eve celebration a few years ago and as children (below).



whether it was in the alley behind our home on 18th Street in northeast Washington, DC, on the Holy Name College's basketball court, or the Walter Johnson Baseball League at Taft Junior High School on Saturdays. Whenever we had a little bit of time to spare, we made our way together to the football field, basketball courts, the Holy Name College where we had to climb an eight-foot tall fence to reach the basketball court, or to the corner lot baseball diamond to play softball or baseball together. We both played on the high school teams, and a few years ago, brother John was instrumental in making sure I was nominated for the High School Athletic Hall of Fame, to which I was selected. We continue to play golf together to this day.

My mother played piano and encouraged my twin and me to enjoy singing. We developed our singing talents to harmonize such songs as "Now
Continued on page 7...

A Lifetime of Companionship and Laughter

Continued from page 6...

is the Hour," "Sentimental Journey," "I Want a Girl," "Galway Bay," and various Christmas songs. We had many practice sessions with Mother and a capella. We would sing at family gatherings or other events as requested. My twin would say, "Come on, let's practice that song faster or in a little lower pitch." And later, our school quartet won second place in Sylvia Devy's TV talent show.

In school, we complemented each other. John was always better in History, Social Studies, and English, while I was always better in Science and Math. Since we shared a bedroom that included our beds and study desks, we made time to discuss our courses and learn from each other.

We left the public school system to attend Archbishop Carroll High School. The parish priest, Father Dressel, told us we wouldn't be able to keep up with the Catholic school kids. Boy, was he wrong! Our Father made us take our first year report cards with all A's except one or two B's to Father Dressel and say, "Well Father, what do you think of these public school kids now?" Father Dressel managed to say, "Well, that's very good boys," not, "that's terrific, I guess I was wrong about the public schools."

We were day-hop students at the University of Maryland, where we shared my '56 Chevy to get back and forth from school to home. Our study habits continued through college where, John was an Economics major and I was an Engineering major. When I took my required Economics course as a college undergraduate, my twin brother and I spent long hours discussing the principles of Economics. Unfortunately, I learned much more Economics than what was required in this lower level course. As a result, I didn't do well in the multiple-choice exam. But John was an honors student in Economics and he accompanied me to a session with the professor. It was a very successful meeting and earned me an "A" in the course.

As we finished college, we took different career positions in the Washington, DC area, but we were only a telephone call away. One night, very late (1 a.m.), I received a telephone call from John who had a problem. John was in a six-month reserve duty in the Army at a base near New York City. He and a few friends went to New York and decided to jointly give a party for their friends at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. Well, the party cost more than they planned, and they needed me to send them cash by wire to cover their debts. The manager at the Waldorf Astoria said, "You boys aren't going anywhere until we get our money!" I was newly married and living in a third floor walk-up apartment and didn't have much savings. I sent the money and my brother eventually reimbursed me. But this is the advantage of being a twin.

Before and after his Army stint, John was often a guest of my wife, Maureen, and me, at our apartment. One of Maureen's friends asked her: who did she marry, John or Joe? But, my wife understood our relationship as twins. We always welcomed John.

As our lives went in different directions with our different careers, we nevertheless communicated almost every day on the phone. More recently, we have attended collegiate sport events and Nationals baseball games. Now instead of conversations about college courses and careers, we are sharing stories about our grandchildren.

I wonder what my life would have been like if I had not been lucky enough to be born a twin? Being born a twin set in motion a rich and loving relationship of laughter, sharing, and camaraderie, even though our politics are different.

Recently Maureen and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary and my twin was there to celebrate with us. And, believe it or not, we are both age 82!

May I Have a Donut?

By Lorna Lagarde

During a recent conversation with Dr. Eric De Jonge, VHRC's Medical Director, I realized a fact of life that I should have noticed before. I began my career as a pharmacist in the 1970s, starting as a pharmacist at Walter Reed and ending my career as the Chief Pharmacist for the Pentagon. During those years, as Dr. De Jonge reminded me, most pharmacists were men. Looking back through some photos, I realized that he was right. Also, I am frequently questioned about my husband's career or my husband's thoughts about my career. I feel I need to set the record straight by saying I became a pharmacist for myself and by myself. While I was reminiscing, I realized that for whatever reason – perhaps because I was the only woman among this sea of men – I was often given flowers and sweet treats. Below is a story of one such occasion and some reflection on how I came to work at the Pentagon.

Before working at the Pentagon, I was the pharmacist at the Andrew Rader Health Clinic at Ft. Myer. While working there, the Pentagon's Army Health Clinic Commander observed me at work to ensure that I would be a good fit at the Pentagon. I must have passed his test because he offered me a position at the Pentagon, which I promptly refused because the parking lot at the Pentagon is just too large. I told him that by the time I walked from the parking lot to my work station I would be too tired to do anything. He assured me that every day I would park in Lane O (for Official Business) near the building. With this assurance, I agreed to report for work the following Monday.

One morning, after I had worked at the Pentagon for a few years, one of the pharmacy's customers brought in a box of a dozen donuts, which the non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) who worked in the pharmacy carried directly to my office. Shortly thereafter another pharmacy customer bypassed the "In Window" and



Lorna Lagarde, who was the Pentagon's Chief Pharmacist, often received tokens of appreciation such as the flowers in this photo or delicious treats like the donuts in this story.

proceeded to the "Out Window" and requested to see me. This customer happened to be the Army Inspector General.

The NCOIC, who just a few minutes earlier had dropped off the box of donuts, returned to my office, telling me that the Inspector General wanted to see me. The first thought that ran through my mind was one of worry – that my department had made some terrible mistake. I did not have too long to think these awful thoughts before the Inspector General himself was in my office with his stern expression and commanding voice. Again, I thought quickly about what we must have done wrong.

"What can I do for you, sir?" I asked. The face of the Inspector General lightened and he replied, "May I have a donut or two for breakfast?" I immediately said, "Yes, sir," and offered him a cup of coffee to go with it. He also needed to get his wife's prescription filled, which my NCOIC completed right away. Then, he thanked me and took his donuts, coffee, and prescription and left the pharmacy. I have to admit I was relieved that all he wanted was a donut.

Cabbage Patch Doll History

By Audrey Cole

When the Cabbage Patch Doll trend was at its height in the 1980s, Audrey Cole had one of the dolls – a yellow-haired girl doll called Suzy. For years, Suzy sat on a child's chair and watched all the action of the Cole household. "Suzy was just so chubby and happy. I liked that little doll," said Audrey. Then sadly, when Audrey and her husband, Enser, were packing to move to VHRC, Suzy was "kidnapped." Before she was taken from the Cole household, Audrey painted Suzy's portrait, which she recently rediscovered. This rediscovery led Audrey on a learning journey about the history of the Cabbage Patch Doll and its creator, Martha Nelson Thomas.

When I began researching about the Cabbage Patch Doll, I learned the true history of that toy. The doll that became the Cabbage Patch Doll was originally created by a woman from Kentucky named Martha Nelson Thomas. In 1971, when Martha was an art student at Louisville School of Art, she began experimenting with soft sculpture in the form of dolls. She designed her "Doll Babies" with input from children she knew. Martha made the dolls by hand and sold them at craft fairs around Louisville. Martha's dolls came with adoption papers, and Martha considered that the dolls were adopted – not simply purchased.

Then, in 1976, at one of these craft fairs, Martha met Xavier Roberts, who was also an art student. Xavier asked Martha to supply him with dolls to sell in Georgia, where he lived and worked. The dolls – which Xavier renamed Little People – were tremendously popular, so much so that Xavier wanted to mass produce them. Martha was opposed to this plan, as to her each doll was unique. Seeing Xavier's intent, Martha took back her dolls from him. However, Xavier was adamant in selling the dolls, and in 1978 he created his own version of the doll.

In 1982, Xavier licensed the dolls to Coleco – a toy manufacturer – for mass-production under the name Cabbage Patch Kids. Xavier copyrighted



Audrey Cole and a portrait she painted a few years ago of her beloved Suzy, a Cabbage Patch Doll.

the dolls. Additionally, on each doll's bottom, Xavier's signature appears. Xavier began to claim that he had created a new doll. This claim generated millions of dollars for him.

Before this happened, in 1979, Martha filed a lawsuit against Xavier, which went to trial in 1985. The case eventually settled in Martha's favor. Martha never disclosed how much she got out of the settlement. She did say that it was enough to pay for her children to go to college and for that she was satisfied.

For Xavier, shortly after the settlement with Martha, he sold the rights to the dolls to Hasbro for a little over \$30 million.

For me, this history provides some connection with my lost Suzy doll and a reminder of the joy the doll brought me and so many others.

Audrey learned about the true history of the Cabbage Patch Dolls by googling about it on the Internet.

Precious Pandemic Picnic Plan

By Maureen Kammerer

The six of us have been friends for 62 years. Two of the six – Bob Griffith and my husband, Joe – have known each other since kindergarten at Bunker Hill Elementary School in northeast Washington, D.C. Bob’s future wife, Valerie Jarwin, joined them while they were all students at Taft Junior High. They met Tim Gorman from Bethesda at John Carroll High School. The boys all went to the University of Maryland together, where they met Tim’s wife, Mary Daly, from Chevy Chase, and me – I was Maureen Kane from Silver Spring then.

After dating and partying together during college, the three couples married and have been close pals ever since. All of us remained in the Washington, DC area. We were in each other’s weddings, we buried and mourned each other’s parents. We celebrated at joyous gatherings, anniversaries, and noisy singing fests, and funerals or memorial services. All of our children have been sung to on their wedding days by the “guys.” New Year’s parties have been especially fun with each of us in dress-up regalia and other friends joining in too. We have brought lunches and dinners to each other after surgeries, consoled one another after losses, celebrated awards, victories, birthdays and retirements. But mostly we regaled each other with stories, jokes, laughter, loving hugs and kisses over a lifetime. And then, we couldn’t.

The pandemic put a stop to gatherings. It was so hard not to be with one another and to not be able to hug and kiss and dance and sing together. But we found a way. Joe and I devised the Precious Pandemic Picnic Plan, as it was safer to meet outdoors.

For our first Pandemic Picnic, we met at Chesterbrook Elementary School. On picnic tables, we remained socially distanced, with everyone wearing masks. The next month, the Griffiths, who live at Leisure World, chose Great Falls Park in Maryland for the picnic. Prior to the meeting, Bob surveyed the area and found



In place of meeting indoors, Joe and Maureen Kammerer and their long-time friends developed the Pandemic Picnic Plan and enjoyed each other’s company outside.

tables close to the canal path for our picnic. The next month, the Gormans hosted us on their side porch. It was large enough for all of us to socially distance and enjoy our lunch and catch up.

Another time, we met at Glen Echo Park where all of us had spent time as children. But on this occasion, it rained, so we went back to Tim and Mary’s porch. For our most recent picnic we met at Great Falls, this time on the Virginia side. That picnic was an adventure! There were long lines to get into the park and mud was everywhere from the heavy rains the night before.

For each picnic, Valerie baked a dessert and we each brought a sandwich or whatever else there was at home to share. We also brought our “walking sticks,” hearing aids, glasses, masks, cell phones, hand sanitizer and recent pictures of the grands.

We have not let the pandemic and its safety measures keep us from seeing one another. Distancing? Yes. Hugging? No. Would we wear long underwear for long friendship? Yes. Joy at being together in strange circumstances? Yes. Laughing? Sharing? Staying committed to this unique friendship? Yes.

Barry and Betty

By Mitzi Halla

Our families always had pets. Our dog, Rowdy, was an early favorite. We have pictures of him guarding my baby carriage while Mother shopped. When living at the Presidio, we also had a rabbit, a canary and white mice. In later years our constants were a Buick and dog, generally a black Schnauzer.

Roman spent summers with his grandfather in Bucovice, Czechoslovakia, the Halla's Bohemian home village, with dogs, horses, pigs and chickens. In Prague they had canaries. Jimmy III, who would sit on his shoulder or coffee cup, was his favorite.

During our 65 years together, we've loved our dogs: Mavro, Doozie, Bingo, Muffin, Biscuit. When we lived in Tehran we also had a pet kitty, Chicky, a pampered chicken, and Too-too, the turtle. Our last dog lived 17 years. We miss them all.

Fast forward to December 2020. A call explained that our family (sons, Ken and Brian, their wives and eight children) decided our Christmas gift should be a bird. Well, actually two! "Don't tell Dad; let it be a surprise!" On Dec. 23, Debbie, our daughter-in-law, arrived with two white zebra finches, a huge cage, feed and toys. "You can change their names." No way! Barry and Betty White have been our adoring and adored companions ever since.

Rick Bova, VHRC's CFO, was in the Willow Oak lobby when Debbie arrived. As at that time, visitors and family members were not allowed in apartments, Rick kindly offered to push the wheeled cage to our apartment while I carried the bag of feed, toys, cage cover and small box with Barry and Betty.



During COVID, the Halla's family grew to include two finches – and then it grew some more with the addition of two chicks. Mom and Dad are Betty and Barry White (since they are white finches). In keeping with the B-names, the chicks are Berta and Beatrice.

Barry chirps enthusiastically with a muffled sound. He adores Betty, protects her and pecks her face to keep her clean. They generally sit side-by-side, close together. They come to the cage front when I call. The 53-inch high cage has five doors and four feed/water stations. They prefer the lower ones or jar tops put on the cage floor with treats. Broccoli is Betty's favorite. Barry loves to tear apart yarn; Betty prefers cuttlebone, a calcium supplement for birds. Their very favorite is tissue paper. That's now in their new beehive shaped home, with five millet sticks, with/without millet. Are they hoarders?

When Betty became ill, listless and wobbly, Barry never left her side. Four days later we found the cause: one tiny egg! We all were relieved. Betty got her energy back, and Barry and Betty emerged from the nest upbeat, active and very happy. Then, some time later, I found five more eggs. From these six eggs, we now have two new additions to the family: Beatrice and Berta. Please stop by and meet the love birds. They will charm you too.

Parade

By Eric Henderson

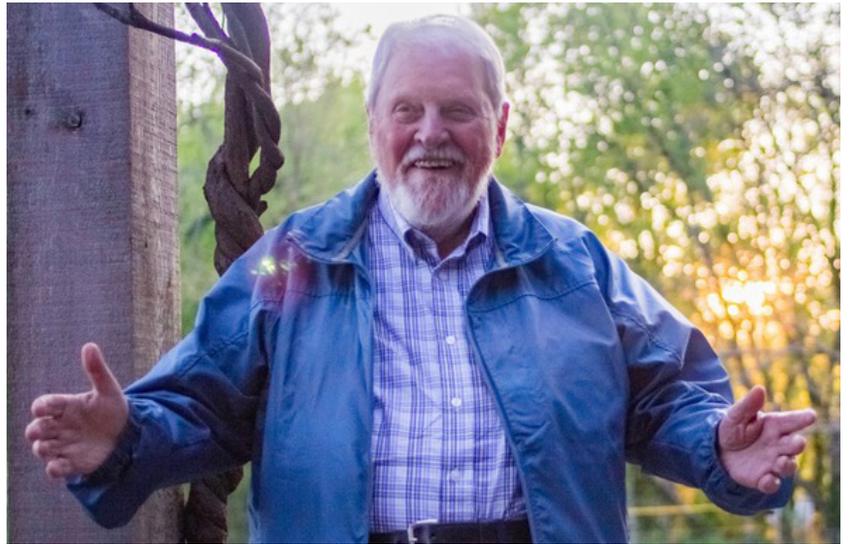
A few years ago I marched in Washington, D.C.'s Cherry Blossom Parade. At the time, I was playing in a PRJC (Potomac River Jazz Club) band. PRJC was an organization of amateur bands and fans of "trad" jazz. It had many bands. I played bass in one of them.

That year, in response to the annual call for bands for the Cherry Blossom festivities, PRJC decided to see if its musician members could form a marching unit from its five Dixieland bands. The leader of my band asked if I could also play a tuba. I told him I could, and that I had an old sousaphone (the type of tuba that wraps around the player). He was pleased, and so he offered our band in the PRJC effort.

On the day of the parade, we were to wear black trousers and white shirts, bring our instruments, and report to an assembly point at a designated time. The five bandleaders met earlier that morning to make up a playlist. Later we all met as directed. Our assembly place was at the intersection of Constitution and Pennsylvania avenues, opposite the Museum of Natural History.

Our assembly area was also the area where the Cherry Blossom princesses, one for each state, were to gather. They were 50 high school or college-age young women, each dressed in a gown and sitting up in and on the back of a beautiful 1955 Thunderbird convertible. I was amazed that that many 1955 T-birds still existed. I wasn't the only one. The guys, while waiting for orders to form up, were milling around, looking at the T-birds. As I walked I heard one girl say to a guy: "You should be ashamed of yourself, you dirty old man." He stopped, looked at her for the first time, and replied: "Don't flatter yourself. We're looking at the beautiful cars, not at you kids."

Soon our cue came to form up – each band in single file, five bands across. Trumpets were first, then clarinets followed by trombones. Next were banjos, then the tubas. The last row was



Eric Henderson is a long-time musician, including, on one occasion, playing the sousaphone in the Cherry Blossom Parade.

three snare drums, a set of cymbals, and a bass drum. The playlist consisted of seven or eight old Dixieland tunes that we all knew. We had no rehearsal, only a little discussion about which key each number would be played in. The tempo and beat would be set by the drums.

The time came; our leader blew a whistle. The drums played a roll off, and we were on our way. I had not marched with a sousaphone since I was in the high school band. I wondered if I would tire during the march. It wasn't a problem. The pace was leisurely, and I was totally immersed in the process.

As we marched and played, we could see the crowd, its size, its enthusiasm and enjoyment. We went through the playlist several times. As we passed the reviewing stand, we played a Dixie version of *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. That was the one number that was not a Dixieland standard, but most of us had played it at one time or another.

When we finished, somewhere on Constitution Avenue near 23rd Street, we broke up. Each of us made our way back along the Mall behind the crowd. To our delight, many, many people told us that we were the best band in the parade because we played the whole way. Most of the bands had played only once or twice along the way, saving their energy for their time in front of the reviewing stand. When I finally got back to my car, I was tired but had many happy memories.

Respectful Lines for a Gentleman who Deflects Compliments: To Ted Russell

By Valerie Vesser

In this place there is a worthy knight,
Sir Theodore does most things very right.

Always courteous, he listens well
And diplomatically he can sell
All kinds of rules the management decrees,
Even modifies those that cannot please.

A man of tact, refinement and finesse –
Just who is needed to prevent a mess.

A model husband, father, an almost perfect bloke,
Most other men beside him are a joke.

His modesty another becoming trait,
He ages very gracefully – a fitting fate.



Ted Russell Wins Paul Peak Resident of Year

Each year, VHRC residents nominate a fellow resident who demonstrated outstanding service to the VHRC community and its residents during the previous year. The award was established in 2015 by Mrs. Jane Peak, in memory and in honor of her husband, who was a 25-year resident of VHRC. CAPT Paul Peak was a strong believer in the value of community and was an active supporter of the VHRC community and its residents.

We are pleased to share that this year's winner is Amb. Ted Russell! Ted fully embodies values shared by Paul Peak. For the past two years, Ted has been the president of the Vinson Hall Resident Association. This position took on a new significance during 2020 as he became the prime representative for Vinson Hall and Willow Oak residents helping them navigate the challenges of the pandemic.

Ted's importance to VHRC in the past year is captured by this comment: "In 2020, Ted was a rock for residents. He represented their concerns about the virus and about the restrictions we adopted to thwart the spread of the virus. While



Amb. Ted Russell, with his wife, Sally, (right) and Jane Peak, (left) was recognized as the Paul Peak Resident of the Year at a small event in April.

advocating to VHRC management for reasonable relaxations of restrictions, he also forcefully reminded residents of the importance of observing masking, distancing, handwashing, and small group meeting protocols. His leadership contributed significantly to the relatively low incidence of cases in Vinson Hall and Willow Oak."

Many thanks to Ted for his commitment to our community and congratulations on this recognition!

Hooked on Genealogy: Part 2

By Roy Easley

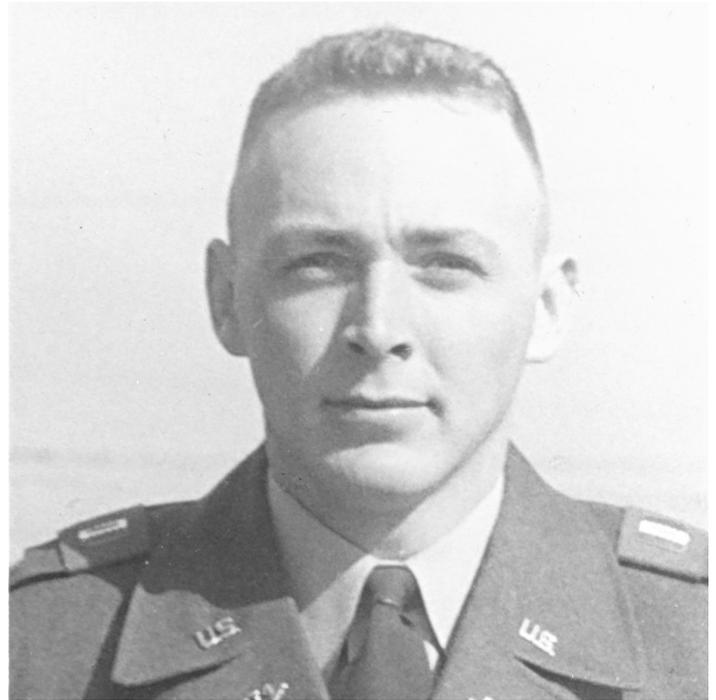
My Aunt Nell's decades long compilation of genealogical data was a journey of love. My entire family fully appreciates her exhaustive effort to meet Daniel Webster's proclamation that "those who do not look upon themselves as a link from the past with the future, do not perform their duty to the world."

Thomas Easley, Sr., born Nov. 14, 1792, married Rachael Murrah, born Dec. 7, 1799. They raised seven sons and three daughters. Their fifth child Thomas, born April 23, 1823 in Virginia, was the first Easley to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. He graduated with the Class of 1846. Thomas's grandfather was Robert Easley IV, and his great grandfather was Warham Easley. His great-great-grandfather was John Easley, son of Robert Easley I. Hence, Thomas Easley is a direct descendant of the fifth generation from Robert I; the last chain link is John, son of Robert I.

Since I am also a direct descendant of Robert I, Thomas and I are both distant cousins and graduates of West Point, although three generations (he of the fifth and I of the eighth generation) and 104 years apart (Class of 1846 to Class of 1950).

When Thomas graduated from the Academy, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and assigned to the Third Infantry Regiment for service in the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848. He was killed in action during the Battle of Churubusco, Mexico, on August 20, 1847 at age 24. Active fighting concluded three weeks later and the Third Infantry led the victory parade into the plaza of Mexico City. While passing the reviewing stand, the Army commander, General Winfield Scott, instructed his staff, "Gentlemen, take your hats off to the Old Guard of the Army." And since that day, the Third Infantry Regiment has been known as The Old Guard. (Source 5)

In late 1946 the Old Guard was relieved of occupation duty in Germany, returned to the



Roy Easley as a young lieutenant in Japan after the Korean Conflict Armistice in 1953.

U.S. and deactivated. Just two years later, in April 1948, the Old Guard was reactivated and permanently stationed at Fort Myer, Va., serving Arlington National Cemetery, the Military District of Washington, and other locations as required. (Source 5)

Warham Easley's son Joseph (1764-1849) was the first of our branch of the Easley family "universe" to arrive in Kentucky. He was born in Stokes County, N.C., and he and his wife, Catherine Deatherage (1767-1850), were parents to seven sons and six daughters. In 1811 they moved to Shelby County, Ky., 30 miles east of Louisville. Joseph was a carpenter and a farmer and capable of fine cabinet work.

I knew from Source 2 that Joseph's son, Woodson Gale (1790-1854), was my great-great-grandfather. What I didn't realize when producing the first part of this genealogical saga was that Woodson Gale's brother, Joseph Jr., would lead me to Preston Warham Easley, one of my instructors at West Point.

Continued on page 15...

Genealogy: Linking the Past with the Future

Continued from page 14....

Joseph Easley, Jr. (1805-1890) married Elizabeth Hamilton Gaines (1818-1894) in 1837. They were parents to seven sons and eight daughters. Two of their children, Hamilton and William, served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and both were killed in the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, October 8, 1862. Hamilton was 24 years old and William was 20. They served in the Army of the Ohio, First Corps, 15th Kentucky Infantry Regiment.

Joseph and Elizabeth's second child was John Preston, born 1839. In a previous paragraph, I underlined Preston before Warham and, here, Preston after John to indicate that I was closing the gaps leading to Preston Warham Easley's lineage. My research shows conclusively that my West Point instructor is a direct descendant of Robert Easley I. So, Lt. Col. Preston Warham Easley and I are distant cousins, but he does not know it, unless he is looking down from heaven!

I was on page 185 Source 1 when I believed I had found the information that would lead to the conclusion, in part one of this saga, that Brig. Gen. Claudius Miller Easley was a direct descendant of Robert I through Warham Easley. General C.M. Easley is a direct descendant of Robert I, but his descendancy is through Warham's brother William II. Information on page 2 of Source 1 confirms this fact, as does information from Source 3. Since I had far from perfect recall of the information back on page 2, I blundered on, and if not for Source 3, I would not be making the following correction.

Warham's brother William II died in 1752, the year Warham married Ann Woodson. Warham and Ann were parents of seven sons and two daughters and they named one of their sons William III, I believed, to honor Warham's brother William II. But the bloodline William III was on page 2: "William (William II) Easley, the oldest son of John married and lived in Dinwiddie County, Va. It is supposed that he and his wife both died young. There was but one son left and his name

was Benskin. Benskin married and left a son William (William III)." Hence: General Claudius Miller Easley, son of Alexander Campbell, son of William IV, son of Jesse, son of William III, son of Benskin, son of William II, son of John, of the eighth generation from Robert I; last chain link is John, son of Robert I.

In part of this saga, I stated "our immediate family is indeed honored to be direct descendants of Robert I." Our family is even more honored by our thoughtful and brave men and women ancestors who helped create our nation.

Aunt Nell's compilation of Easley genealogical data sources opens with "Ancestry Chart of Revolutionary Solider or Patriots." She found eight included in this list: Colonel John Woodson and Warham Easley are two of the eight. Colonel Woodson first lived in Henrico County, Va., and in 1731, married Mary Miller, daughter of William Miller of Lancaster County, Va. Their daughter Ann Woodson married Warham Easley in 1752. Colonel Woodson served in the Revolutionary Army of Virginia, and also was a Patriot Member of the Committee of Safety and Convention of 1776 from Cumberland County. Warham Easley was a Patriot Member of the Committee of Safety and Convention of 1776 from Charlotte County.

My saga is now concluded. It has been a grind but well worth my time and, I hope, your time.

Sources:

1. Easley Genealogy by James Daniel Easley of the Sixth Generation from Robert I, 278 pages, 1952.
2. The Easley-Hamilton Story by Nell (Easley) Davis of the Seventh Generation from Robert 1, 164 pages, 1972.
3. www.ancestry.com, an ancestry database.
4. The Register of Graduates and Former Cadets, 1802-2002, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.
5. *SACRED DUTY: A Soldier's Tour at Arlington National Cemetery*, by U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, 297 pages, 2019.



Vinson Hall Retirement Community

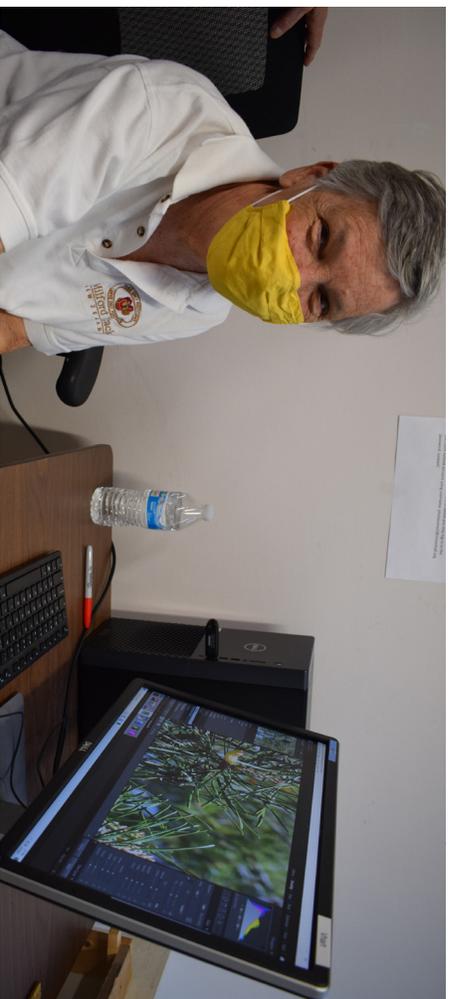
6251 Old Dominion Drive

McLean, VA 22101

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Campus News & Views

Spring 2021



The highlight of the past few months has been the COVID-19 vaccine clinics, which have provided over 550 individuals with the vaccine. Also during these past few months we celebrated St. Patrick's Day and new computers in the Vinson Hall art room!