



Washington, DC



Gulfport, MS

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**AFRH-GULFPORT**

## Freedom drive

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Photos by Sean Campbell | Lead Recreation Specialist

On March 12, 2021 the Gulfport residents were told the gates were going to open at noon. It's been about a year since the residents have been able to leave the property due to COVID. The vibe around the Home is much better now that the residents have been allowed to venture outside the gates. Resident Ray Ross left in his convertible Mustang with the top down and the music blaring. Employees from AbilityWorks and recreation waved as the residents drove by. Many residents said that they have just been enjoying getting in their cars and driving down Highway 90 along the beach. It's so nice to see so many smiling faces again around AFRH-G. Please continue to practice social distancing and please wear your mask out in public. We can beat this!



## AFRH-G St. Patrick's Day parade

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

St. Patrick's Day observes the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. He is said to have died on March 17 in or around the year 493. He grew up in Roman Britain, but was captured by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland as a slave when he was a young adult. After some years he returned to his family and entered the church, like his father and grandfather before him. He later returned to Ireland as a missionary and worked in the north and west of the country.

The holiday has evolved into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music, dancing, drinking and a whole lot of green. Irish Americans wear the green as a reminder that they are nationalists first and foremost. The colors of the Irish flag are green, white and orange, the green symbolizing the Irish nationalism, the orange symbolizing the Orangemen of the north and the white symbolizing peace. The most common St. Patrick's Day symbol is the shamrock. The shamrock is the leaf of the clover plant and a symbol of the Holy Trinity.

Gulfport resident Dan Ellis organized the parade on March 17 that went down the Boardwalk at AFRH-G right before lunchtime. Thank you to all the residents who took the time to dress up, decorate and go all out on this fun day. I think everyone needed this boost. Happy St. Paddy's Day everyone!



**AFRH-WASHINGTON**

## Shenanigans at AFRH-W

Story & Photos by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

March 17 is St. Patrick's Day and the recreation department was full of fun! We offered green sour apple punch shots, treats from dining, green rice krispie squares and green beer. There were trivia contests to guess how many clovers in a jar and lots of green was worn. There were books and movies that the library had to offer about the Irish heritage. Irish music played and some even sang songs. Happy Irish Day at the AFRH-W. We had a photo shoot for those who wore green and even those who didn't. Lucky me charms! John Smith won the prize for guessing the closest amount of the clover in the jar.



## DC residents join the world in becoming citizen scientists for the Great Backyard Bird Count

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

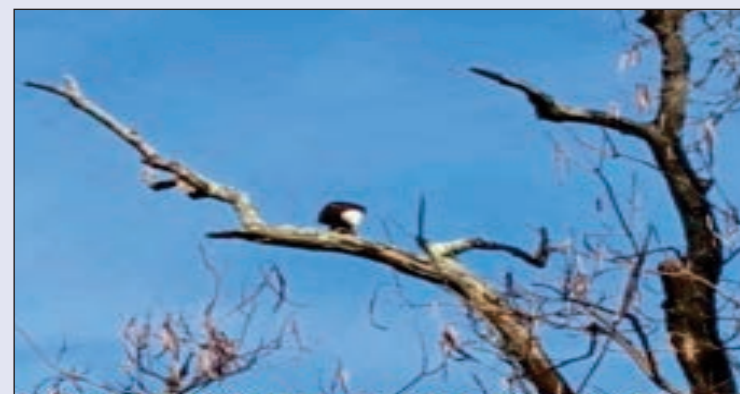
Photo by Hilary Rosado | AFRH-W Resident

Since 1988, people from around the world become "citizen scientists" on the second weekend in February. By identifying, counting and reporting the birds they see in their own backyard, they take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count.

We have a pretty big backyard here at AFRH-W, and five of our residents braved the winter weather, went out to count the birds, and report their findings. Hilary Rosado, Norma Rambo, Lillian Miller, Frank Parker and Jean McCarthy all took on the challenge.

They spotted 16 varieties of birds. In addition to the everyday geese, crows, robins, cardinals, blue jays, sparrows and starlings, also spotted were hawks, mockingbirds, thrashers, mourning doves, nuthatches, tufted titmouse, juncos, and two types of woodpeckers.

The count took place from February 12- 15. Participants could count for as little as 15 minutes on any or all of the days of the long weekend. Their count sheets were turned into recreation, and the totals were added to the count. They were then compiled by citizen scientists all over the world and used by the Audubon Society, and the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. Global counts happen four times a year. The next bird count is Global Big Day, which takes place Saturday, May 8, 2021.



Pictured is a bald eagle, taken on the grounds of AFRH-W. He did not make his appearance during the Great Backyard Bird Count, but we do see one occasionally.

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# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988 Web site: [www.AFRH.gov](http://www.AFRH.gov) Email: [Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov](mailto:Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov)



Christopher Kelly - Public Affairs Officer  
Carolyn Haug - Washington Public Affairs

Becki L. Zschiedrich - Gulfport Public Affairs

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## Serving America's Veterans

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

**-Eligibility:** Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH. The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

**-Active-Duty Career Retired:** Veterans who retired with 20 or more years of active-duty service in a regular component of the Armed Forces.

**-Eligible for Retired Pay:** Veterans, who served in a regular or reserve component of the Armed Forces, who are now eligible to receive retired pay and benefits:

- Retired Guard/Reserves with over 20 years of creditable service (combined inactive and active-duty).
- Veterans who qualified for an early retirement such as TERA (Temporary Early Retirement Authority).
- Veterans who were given a medical or disability retirement with pay and full benefits.

**-Service-Connected Disability:** Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

**-War Theater:** Veterans who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay and now suffer from injuries, disease, or disability.

**-WWII Female Veteran:** Veterans who served in a women's component before June 12, 1948 who are determined to be eligible due to compelling personal circumstances.

**-Beneficiary Spouse:** The spouse of a retired veteran may apply to live with the Retiree if he/she is enrolled as a beneficiary in DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) and was married to his/her sponsor prior to the veteran's retirement from the Armed Forces.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to:  
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## AFRH-W resident highlight - Fred and Sophia Ebner

By P.K. Knor | AFRH-W Resident



Both Fred and Sophia are originally from Florida (and they also retired there). Fred and Sophia met at Palm Beach Junior College in Florida over 60 years ago. Fred met a Navy recruiter in 1961 and was thrilled by the idea of working on a nuclear submarine. After boot camp and electricians training school, he attended Sub School in Groton, Connecticut.

After Fred's first tour, on the USS Trigger, a diesel sub, he attended several nuclear power schools and was assigned for 3-4yrs to the new nuclear sub, the USS Dace in Groton, where he spent most of his time at sea. Before reporting to the Dace, Fred and Sophia got married. After two years aboard the Dace, Fred was sent to B School in Waukegan, Michigan. While there, their first daughter was born. Next he reported to another new nuclear sub, the USS Sea Devil out of Little Creek, VA. Again this assignment was spent mostly at sea.

After eight years, and more time spent on the road with schools and at sea than with family, Fred and Sophia decided to leave the Navy and move to Ft. Pierce, Florida, with the consideration of possibly joining the Coast Guard Reserves. Sophia was pregnant with their second child and was still working. Fred joined the Coast Guard thinking that he would be home more than gone, but...this was not the case.

After Coast Guard Training in Norfolk, Virginia, Fred's first tour was aboard a 50 year old search and rescue cutter the Cherokee, as an electrician. He was then assigned to the Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless in Miami, Florida. But, the Coast Guard was now also conducting law enforcement patrols out of Miami and again he was away from home regularly.

Fred was an E-7 at this time, but he made the Warrant Officer list. So, after WO School and a short assignment on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dependable in Panama City, Florida, the "entire family" was sent to Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where Fred was assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bittersweet. The Bittersweet had an icebreaker hull, so again, he was away and busy during all the seasons. The family loved Cape Cod, but knew it would be too expensive to retire there, so they moved back to Florida

to retire and give their daughters a chance to make lifelong friends and finish school. Fred was again assigned to the USCGC Dependable in Panama City for the remainder of his service.

Fred retired as a CWO3 and was able to do what he loved, be a handyman (something he had done all his life) and Sophia continued to work out of their home as a certified cancer data abstractor collecting data for the state of Florida. They moved to Delray, Florida and Sophia traveled with her own business, and Fred accompanied her!

Their two married daughters Julie and Laura live in Maryland and Tennessee.

When they decided to downsize, they saw an ad for AFRH in the Submariners Magazine, came for a visit, and found just what they were looking for. Both are involved in many functions and activities at AFRH-W. They both swim for exercise. Fred also likes woodworking, ceramics and reading. Sophia likes hand-crafts (sewing, embroidery, etc.), genealogy and ceramics.

They have traveled to 47 states and 11 countries since retiring and hope to take advantage of all of the great places to visit in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia areas.



## AFRH-G resident highlight - Cecil E. Riggs

Story & Photo by Lori Kerns | Librarian



Cecil E. Riggs was born in West Virginia in 1936. He was one of seven children raised in a small community of about 35 families. His father, a foreman in a street car shop, and one other man were the only guys in the community that had occupations other than coal miner. As Cecil got older, he understood he did not want to be a coal miner or railroader and also knew that there were not many job opportunities in the area. One day he and a buddy saw the infamous Uncle Sam "We Want You" poster and they both made the decision to join the military. In 1954, Cecil and his buddy joined the Air Force. They headed off for basic training together but never saw each other again.

Cecil had always dreamed of visiting Washington State, Australia, and Germany. When he received his first orders for Spokane, Washington he was a happy man. He began on-the-job training in fire service. About four months later, he was joyful again after getting orders for another destination on his bucket list, Germany. Cecil reenlisted in the Air Force several times staying in the fire service field. He retired with 20 years of service right before he was about to get sent to Vietnam.

While in the military, Cecil had married and had two sons, Bruce and Douglas. He had also started up two businesses in the fire and burglary alarm industry, in addition to dabbling in construction. After retirement he continued to work with these businesses until about a year later when he decided to begin his civil service career as a firefighter. He worked another 20 years in fire service before retiring with a total of 40 years of firefighting working his way up the ladder to every firefighter rank including captain and chief.

After retirement, he decided to do a little more construction work before he and his second wife, Faith, bought a motor home to travel the country. In 2017, Faith passed away. About a year after losing his beloved wife, Cecil moved to AFRH-G where he has been living in "paradise." He loves the fact that he does not have to cook and has no bills. He has found the silver lining to living in the Home, even during the pandemic. In his spare time, he writes books. Cecil is currently authoring on a six-volume work called What Lies beyond the Clock of Time, which is currently 3,700 pages. He's already written other books entitled: Starting over Again, Retirement Life, Haunted House and Other Halloween Tricks, Green Acres, Self-Sermon to Happiness, and My Roommate. He also has other works in the process. When he is not writing, he likes to keep himself busy. His most recent escapade was a trip to Walmart where he discovered how expensive groceries have gotten! He was also very pleased to finally make a trip to visit his wife's grave. Cecil has not had the opportunity to travel to Australia (yet!).

# Happy 100th Birthday Mr. Oliveira!

Story & Photos by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday February 27, 2021 John Oliveira celebrated his 100th birthday at AFRH-Gulfport with family from all over the country!! Family "Zoomed" in from Washington, California, Missouri and other states to share their expressions of "Happy Birthday" to Mr. John Oliveira. A large screen TV accommodated the many family members participating in on the zoom call. As the yellow box highlighted the "speaker," Mr. Oliveira followed along. He conversed and reminisced about family events that shared laughter among all. He also shared wisdom, encouragement and support as the yellow box traveled around to all the family members on the TV screen. Family members came and left throughout the call...but each knowing what a special time it was... so valuable beyond all... to share in such an experience...as "Grampa O" is now 100. When the call ended, Mr. Oliveira stated, "That was my best party!"



# Getting back to some kind of normal

Story & Photos by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Edna Hall has gone once a week to the beauty shop since the war... YES!! WWII!! She reports it was part of her weekly activities that she never missed. Since COVID and at time medical issues, Edna has missed her hair appointments. But on February 18, Edna was able to return to the hair salon at AFRH-G. "Look how wonderful my hair looks," stated Edna. When she returned to the hair salon three weeks later, friends, (fellow residents), greeted her return back to Valor Hall from the salon. "Look how beautiful you are Edna! Look at the curls, I just love it," stated Doris Balfour. As I was walking away to let the ladies share in their friendship, Ms. Edna yelled to me, "I want an appointment now in two weeks, don't forget!" Ms. Edna's spirits jump high on salon day...it's a day she feels beautiful and special but most of all, a day that gives her life quality.



# AFRH-G Employee of the Quarter

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



The 1st Quarter FY21 Employee of the Quarter was awarded to Cynthia Lee, Performance Improvement Integrator for her exceptional service to the Armed Forces Retirement Home during October, November, and December 2020. Cynthia has been an integral part of our efforts to fight COVID. She has dusted off her nursing skills and was trained to perform COVID testing, in which she has excelled. This is Person-Centered Care 101. Her assistance has allowed healthcare to run three rooms, processing more people during clinic. She has performed over 300 COVID tests this quarter. When the call went out to conduct a flu clinic, Cynthia again stepped up and volunteered to go to the towers and immunize our residents. She is truly a team player. She previously assisted with taking temperatures and screenings, freeing up the supervisory staff for other duties. Her commitment and dedication is appreciated during this critical time in healthcare. Her willingness to be available when-

ever healthcare calls has had a tremendous impact on our ability to answer the demands of 100% mandatory testing weeks at a time. True to form, when we needed to put together a COVID vaccination team, Cynthia volunteered to be trained and assist with the mission - while continuing to man the COVID testing room each morning and afternoon. She is an intricate part of the success of our programs. Cynthia's dedication is commendable and reflects great credit upon herself and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Congratulations Cynthia Lee!



# Did you know...

By George Wellman | AFRH-W Resident

The former Governor of the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington, Lt. General George H. McKee (Ret), is responsible for the Scott/Sheridan tunnel that we use daily. The tunnel officially opened in November 1980. President Carter appointed McKee as Governor of the home in 1978. He had follow on appointments by President Reagan and President Bush. A resident recently proposed that the Home name the open space above the tunnel between the Sheridan and Scott buildings in honor of General McKee. That open space is where our Yoshino cheery trees are flourishing and they should be in bloom the first week in April 2021.



# Celebrating Black History Month on Assisted Living

Story & Photo by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist



AFRH-W recognized and celebrated Black History Month throughout February. Some residents on Assisted Living (AL) had asked me what we were doing to celebrate on the unit. Over the entire month, we featured a total of 24 influential and well-known Black Americans (both historical and modern-day figures) whose pictures and facts about their lives rotated between the two AL floors. They included Hank Aaron, Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Kamala Harris, Colin Powell, Harriet Tubman, and many more. Did you know that a Black American woman was at the forefront of the creation of the Moderna COVID vaccine? Her name is Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett and she works at National Institute of Health. The residents enjoyed reading and learning about the different individuals and their contributions.



# Like father, like son

By Christine Baldwin and Marla McGuiness | AFRH-W Recreation



We know Joe's Nesnow's story (April 2019 Communicator) and how the U.S. Navy led him to become an actor! In fact, we have even enjoyed his performances here at the Home. Now, he has shared stories about his father, Harry, who also was in the Navy. Harry began as an enlisted man in 1917 and worked his way up to earning a commission. Anyone who understands the stratification of the Navy in those days, knows that for a Jewish youth from the New York's lower East Side to accomplish this is quite a feat. While serving during WWI, Harry's vessel hit a cargo ship in the New York harbor and sank. While in the water, Harry was able to save five men! Joe's Dad

wasn't much of a talker, so Joe didn't know much about his career. In fact, he found out about this act of bravery from reading an article about it!



## From the AFRH-W administrator



It feels like a lot has happened since last month. We lost an hour due to daylight savings time, the robins are back, flowers are starting to pop out of the earth and cherry blossoms are showing their colors. But most importantly, the best thing to change has been the pilot program to open up the campuses. The day the information came out, it felt like the best day ever. Even though we didn't have many leave our campus, you could still feel the positive energy as residents knew they could depart, if they wanted to. We also were able to open up some visitation for our upper level of care residents so that they also could spend time with family and friends after such a long time apart. We have been able to complete second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and more staff and contractors are getting their first dose each week. We continue to have good results with our testing program, most of it now done here at the Home, with our rapid testing kits, and random follow-up laboratory PCR tests. Many thanks as always to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center staff for their great vaccination and testing support, to the Defense Health Agency for their supply support, and to the Pentagon for their security patrols and now wastewater testing for COVID-19 to ensure we do not have any cases. Thankfully, so far, they have not detected any.

This month we honor women and the history that they helped to create. I know I am thankful for the women veterans that forged the path so that I could serve. It is always great to honor our centenarians and this month we celebrated Mr. Harry Dressler who has lived an amazing life. Happy Birthday! Our recreation team had great fun this month celebrating that March holiday when everyone pretends to be Irish.

There was lots of green for everyone on St. Patrick's Day to include green beer, gelatin shooters, and pictures with leprechauns. All lots of fun! Our Defender's Inn is back as well, now that we can open up activities. It is

so nice to see residents, once again, spending time together even if they must socially distance. There was also a potato based cooking event co-hosted with one of the dieticians and the recreation staff. Potato soup and potato skins were enjoyed after the cooking presentation. And last but not least was the pig calling contest in honor of national pig day. Sooy!

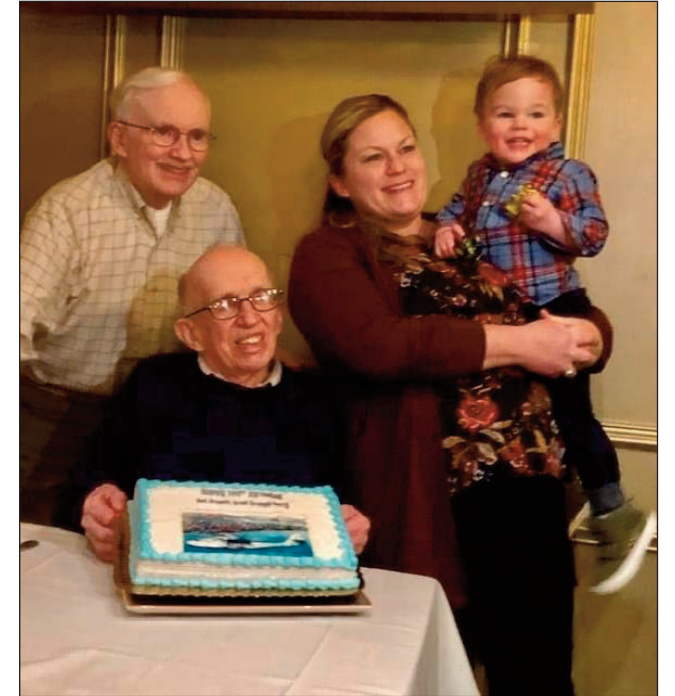
This month, as always, we received donations of masks and other useful items. One person made us over 300 beautifully handmade masks and others donated some colorful disposable ones. It has been heartwarming to see how those outside the gate remember us and show how much they care about our veterans with their generous donations.

As far as staff, I am very sorry to report that our Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz left the Home for greener pastures. He and his wife Jenny have decided to move to his family farm for a big change of pace. They were a part of both Homes for many years as Ron served both on active duty and as a civilian and it really doesn't seem the same without them here. We all wish them the best, and hope that their farm is fruitful. Stay safe, spend time with those you love and take a walk to see the beauty of spring!

Susan Bryhan



DC Administrator Susan Bryhan celebrates St. Patrick's Day with a leprechaun.



Mr. Harry Dressler celebrates his 100th birthday. The above photo is four generations of the Dressler family. Happy Birthday Harry!

## AFRH-Washington highlights Dr. Rong Hu this National Doctors' Day

Story & Photo by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs



National Doctors' Day is held each year on March 30 in the United States. It is a day to celebrate the contribution of physicians who serve our country by caring for its citizens. The first observance occurred in Winder, Georgia on March 30, 1933. Dr. Charles B. Almond's wife, Eudora Brown Almond, wanted to have a day to honor physicians. Greeting cards were mailed and flowers placed on the graves of deceased doctors. The March 30 date signified the first ether anesthetic administered in surgery by Dr. Crawford Long to remove a tumor from a man's neck in 1842. After surgery, the patient said he did not feel a thing. On February 21, 1991, President George H.W. Bush proclaimed National Doctors' Day to honor our nation's physicians.

At AFRH-Washington, Dr. Rong Hu serves as our Chief Medical Officer, providing medical care for our residents since May 2017. As part of our observance of National Doctors' Day, we wanted to highlight Dr. Hu and her role at AFRH-Washington.

### Q. Tell us about your background – education/work experience.

A. Prior to working at AFRH, I had worked as an inpatient hospitalist and outpatient primary care physician, where I honed my experience handling various medical conditions. Earlier in my career, I had pursued medical research at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, which broadened my clinical knowledge through deeper understanding of the pathophysiology of the disease process while sharpening my analytical skills.

### Q. What motivated you to choose this career path?

A. Growing up, my father was a doctor and my mother was a pharmacist, so choosing to be a physician was a natural result of watching their rewarding and fulfilling career.

### Q. What is your typical day like?

A. My days start with housekeeping tasks, such as checking schedules, emails, labs, and x-rays. Then, I take sick calls, followed by regular appointments, and I end the day with medication refills and various administrative tasks. If I am on-call, I will take calls after hours.

### Q. What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

A. Coordinating between different hospitals and healthcare systems can be challenging, but it is a necessary step in improving the safety and quality of our care.

### Q. What do you like most about working at AFRH?

A. The most rewarding aspect of my work is getting to know the residents on a personal level. Our residents come from all different backgrounds, united by their shared military service. Each one has a story to tell, and every one of those stories has a profound impact on my own life.

### Q. Is there anything else you would like to share or any advice you would like to impart?

A. Appreciate everything in life. Take all experiences and grow as an individual.

## Express yourself with a poem in April

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

April is National Poetry Month. I am putting this in March's Communicator because I have a challenge for you: Write a poem! You may think you cannot, but have you ever tried? What qualifies as a poem anyway? This definition is from the internet: a piece of writing that partakes of the nature of both speech and song. If you have a topic that you are enthusiastic about, try your hand at writing a poem. And if you would like, share it with your fellow residents at the Poetry Gathering at AFRH-W on the last Friday in April at 1300 in the theater. You can also share a favorite poem written by someone else. To inspire you, here is a poem written about AFRH-W by our own Billy Bowen:

### My Home: Please Come Live With Me

A Poem by Billy Bowen | AFRH Resident

My Home is Located in Washington DC and is filled with men and women who served their country honorably.

My Home provides most of what I want, and everything I need, including food, medical care, church and a library with good books to read.

We have two spiritual chapels that allow us to practice our beliefs, A COO, CEO, An Administrator, A Service and Ops Director, and a Security Chief. There is so much beauty here; A forest setting with architecture, squirrels, and wild deer. And there is so much we can do, with our bowling alley, theater, state of the art gym, and helping others less fortunate than you.

Come visit our campus, which is safe, secure and clean, And you will be convinced it is the best retirement home you've ever seen.

Here are some other things we've got:

a golf course, fishing lake, hiking trails and even garden plots.

We have trips to shopping malls, base exchanges, commissaries, race tracks, casinos, the White House and other places.

These are just a few of the many things you might want to do, where transportation is provided at no extra cost to you.

We have a Resident Advisory Committee at the Home if you have anything for management to pass on, or give it to a RAC member, and he or she will act as liaison.

AFRH has so many people above ninety years old, and I say to you proudly, boldly and without a doubt, I believe people who live here live longer than those who do not.

Now let's talk about money. In most other homes after you've paid your fees your income is expired. But at AFRH you pay 40% for independent living and nothing more is required.

Now when you get to a point where you require help with your needs, Naturally there will be an increase in your fees.

Now some people leave the Home for this reason or that. They let their emotions override their better judgement. But shortly after leaving, many of them come back. So I say to you who are contemplating leaving, please accept my wish for you to stay, for whatever the reason that brought you here, I submit to you, it has not gone away.



## Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairman



March 12, 2021, time 1200 hours: A day the residents will remember and tell stories about for a long time. I think back to this time last year and wonder how we all made it through and realized it was because of the way our residents, like families worked together to help each other. Did we sometimes get angry and frustrated? Yes we did, I for one can admit to that, but we overcame our own anger, helped where we could, and like many problems in the past we overcame them.

I would be remiss not to give credit to our hardworking staff from the administrator down. Everyone did their to insure the safety and welfare of the residents, please accept our sincerest thank you and apologies for the times we let our frustrations out on you. We must remember as we go forward that we are all in this together and let us make the remainder of 2021 a time to heal and enjoy. In closing I hope everyone has a chance to leave the campus and enjoy their days out. Please remember to wear your mask, maintain proper distance and always be aware of your surroundings.

Fred Layman



AFRH-W RAC Chair Fred Layman celebrates St. Patrick's Day!

# The military life of AFRH-G resident Michael Moran

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident



Michael Moran was born on July 22, 1954 to Thomas J. and Margaret M. Moran at Albany, New York where he attended St. James Catholic Elementary and Christian Brothers Academy. Following the death of his father, his mom moved to Burlington, Vermont where Mike graduated in 1972 from Burlington High School.

After his high school graduation Mike enlisted in the Army and completed his basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey and matriculated through advanced individual training specializing in heavy equipment operation and maintenance (62F) with a concentration on 25-ton cable cranes. He was transferred to Hanau, Germany with the 122nd Maintenance Battalion, and then stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where he performed refueling of helicopters.

Mike was then asked to join the USA Honor Guard at Fort Eustis, Virginia, where he performed precision drill and burial duties until his discharge in 1975.

Upon his first discharge, he joined and served two years in the U.S. Navy Seabee Reserves. His civilian employment included working as a turbine operator at a major electric generating station in New England. In seeking employment advancement, Mike took welding and management courses made available through the GI Bill.

In November 1979, he reenlisted in the U.S. Army, and by regulation he once more processed through basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

He matriculated through advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he was trained as a veterinary food inspection specialist (91R) and spent the next twenty years performing duties as a health inspector, and plus assignments supporting four of the five branches of military service.

For nearly nine years, Mike's duty assignments in San Antonio, Texas was as an instructor of food inspection and sanitation, instructor/writer and duties as staff operations NCO.

While stationed at West Point, New York for three years he was in charge of the cadet mess sanitation and quality control. At West Berlin, Germany he postured three years as NCO in charge of the 168th Medical Detachment for Veterinary Service.

While at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan for three years he was NCO in charge of Veterinary Service for U.S. Military interests in Southern Japan.

During his final tour, Mike served three years at RAF Bentwaters, Felixstowe, England as the USDA procurement quality assurance NCO for beef and pork while overseeing slaughterhouse details, including procurement and grading of shelled eggs.

While performing his duties in the Army, Mike was a single parent to his son Michael Joseph. Mike's son is currently a lawyer.

Following Mike's military retirement with the rank of E-7 in 1999, the U.S. Navy hired him as a relocation assistance program manager at the fleet and family support center in Sigonella, Sicily. His primary duties were to assist active-duty service members, DoD civilians and their families with information and services associated with moving to or leaving Sigonella.

He was later employed at Conagra Foods in Quincy, Michigan as a quality assurance inspector. This engagement was followed by a stint with homeland security as a security screener. His duties were to screen all passengers and carry-on luggage plus he was responsible for passenger safety and detection of potential trouble at security checkpoints.

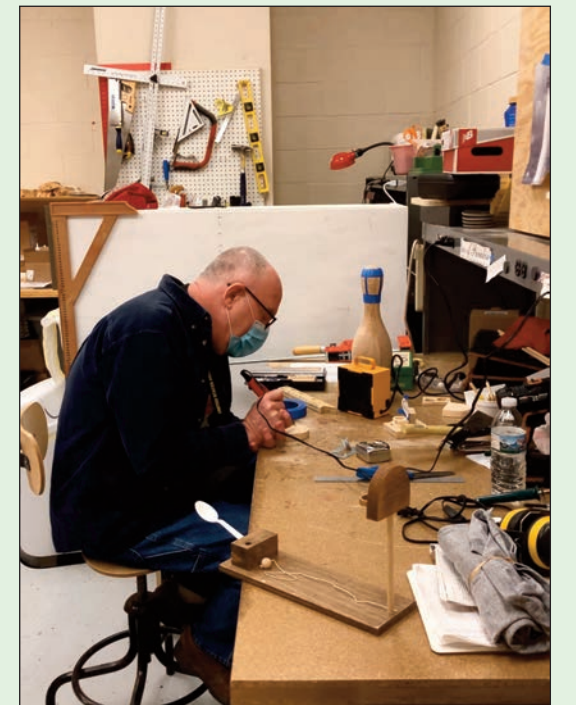
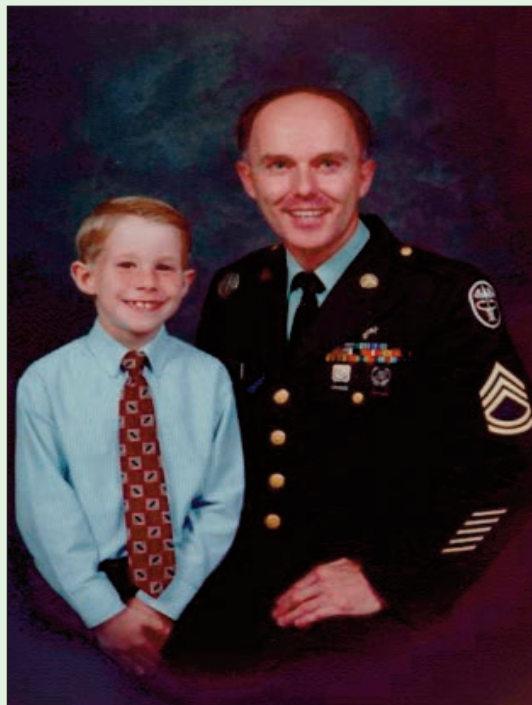
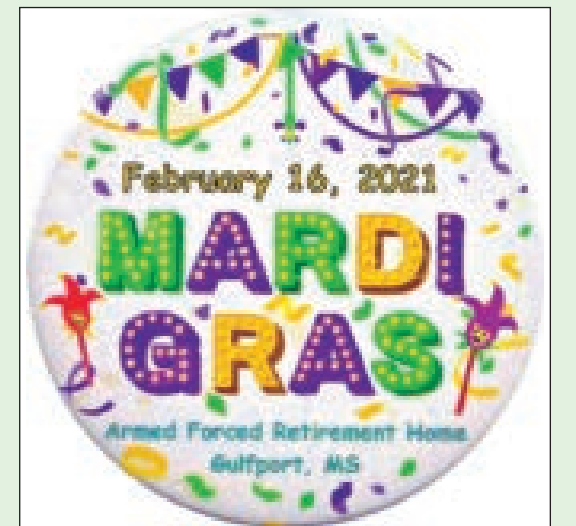
While Mike was making his decision to move to AFRH-Gulfport, he had first made two exploratory trips from his place in New York. The first was in 2018. He even stayed overnight in guest rooms on both occasions and visited with staff members, as well as residents.

He then submitted his application and received his admittance confirmation and he put his home up for sale, which immediately sold in late June 2020.

After Mike gave his farewells to New York, AFRH-G paused his admission due to Covid-19's effect on the Home. This was a time of uncertainty and unknown criticality, since some of the residents had tested positive. However, Mike was on the road and had arrived in Gulfport on July 13 where he found it necessary to stay at a motel. There was no going back to New York. Later, he rented a room in a private house to reduce his expense outlay, which, at the end of this time frame was nearly \$5,000.00.

Upon notification of his arrival, AFRH set admissions guidelines dictated by the prevalence of Covid within the Home. The AFRH administration alerted the resident services staff and the wellness center. On August 26, Mike received a call from the admissions office confirming his enrollment, providing his entry would take place within 24 hours due to the criticality of the virus. The call took place while he was in his automobile and stopped at a traffic light, then Bang!!! He was rear-ended. With no time to have his car repaired, he arrived at the Home the following day, August 27, 2020.

Having finally arrived, Mike brought with him his longtime avocation of designing, printing and making pin buttons and magnets. This activity started as a hobby while printing ID buttons for his rock & roll band buddies as a youngster. Mike has continued printing buttons freely for residents, which primarily offer informative or motivational messages. Joining with the resident "Doodles" parading group, he printed an abundant variety of Mardi Gras themed buttons.

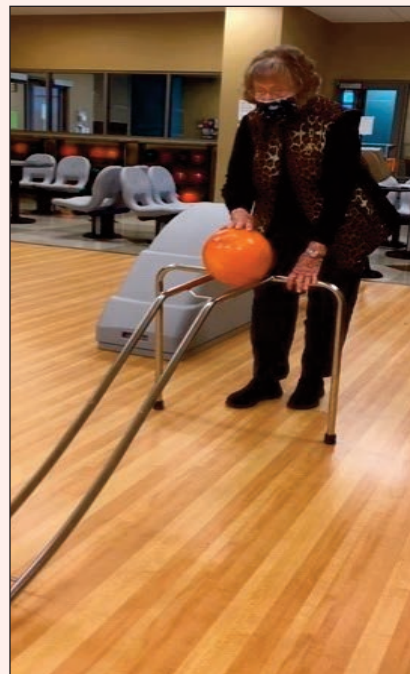


## Finding a way

Story & Photo by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

AFRH-G resident Bettylu Dennis has always been very active. She's an activist for my exercise classes (Thank you!). Recently during one of our stretching classes she mentioned that she really missed being able to go bowling. When I asked her why she doesn't bowl anymore, she stated that she has terrible arthritis in her hands. She also tried to use the excuse that she will be 98-years-young next month. We didn't let that stop us. We ventured over to the bowling center and found a way to make it work. We found a ball that was light enough and used the ramps to help us. We bowled two games and had the best time. With Bettylu as my coach, even I made a spare before we were done! (That's saying a lot because I am definitely NOT a bowler.)

The moral of the story is that even though we all have obstacles, we don't have to let them defeat us. If you love doing something, find a way to make it work. There may have to be some adaptations, but you can still give it a shot. Who knows? You may even have a good time!



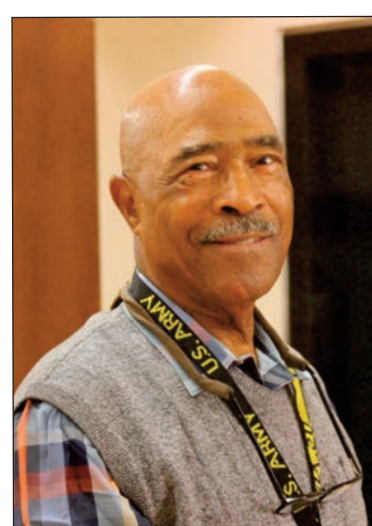
## Dennis has gas

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist  
Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Since the Covid-19 lock down started back in March 2020 some of the residents had been driving on the AFRH -G property to keep their cars running. But driving their cars also ran down their fuel. Starting in December 2020 and ending in March 2021 Dennis Crabtree started to get fuel for the residents who were running low. So, Dennis started a sign up sheet for the residents to get fuel. Information on fuel prices in December 2020 put fuel cost at \$1.60 per gallon and March 2021 fuel cost at \$2.30 per gallon. The total number of residents who signed up for fuel was 53.



## Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairman



One year ago, this month we recognized we were about to be exposed to an infectious disease call COVID-19. The word "pandemic" could be heard around the world. Many health organizations began looking for vaccines to counteract this corona virus that was attacking the respiratory system of humans. Most vulnerable are the elderly. Because our average age is 83 years and DoD's efforts to protect us, our campuses (D.C. and Gulfport) were closed to all except essential personnel. We began wearing face masks, washing and sanitizing hands and maintaining social distance from each other that we still continue through this day.

I am writing this article early in anticipation of departing on leave on the 15th of this month. I had hoped for an "open gate policy" before my departure. Sadly that will not happen. I understand there could be a modified open gate policy before the end of the month. What is important to know is that whatever leave policy we have will be tied to the positivity rate in Harrison County, Mississippi. The mask wearing requirement for the state of Mississippi has been rescinded, but that does not include this campus, or us, because we are federal. So, when you go out please continue to practice good health protocols to avoid reintroducing COVID to our campus. Enjoy your outings and stay safe.



Arthur "Art" W. Jones

AFRH-G RAC Chair Art Jones in the dining hall on St. Patrick's Day.

# AFRH-Washington

## Nursing Skills Fair with a Hawaiian flair

Story & Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

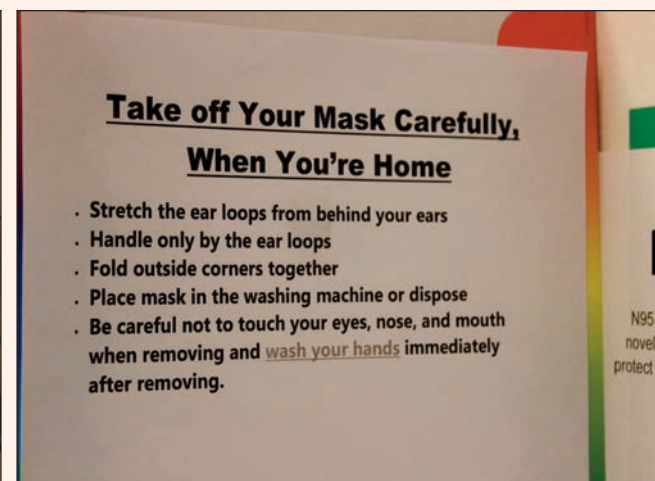
Over the past year, our creative staff have become adept at turning lemons into lemonade. So when this year's Nursing Skills Fair rolled around, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and a lengthy hiatus on exotic vacations, our team decided to host the fair with a Hawaiian Luau theme. "We couldn't leave or be able to go on vacation, so we made our own vacation scenery and decided to have a Hawaiian Luau. Everyone said when they are able to travel, that is where they would want to go first," shares Adrienne Stephens, who is the Interim Health Educator at AFRH-Washington.

The goal of the fair is to provide our healthcare team with annual competency and nursing skills training through testing and demonstration. This year's fair was modified due to COVID-19. Staff had appointed times to attend the fair in order to maintain a safe environment for education and instruction. Stations were set up throughout the Community Center and Defenders' Inn. "This year we covered more topics than we have in the past," said Ms. Stephens.

Stations included: Infection Control Prevention / Donning and Doffing PPE / Hand Hygiene led by Constance Williams, RN assisted by Elizabeth Azubuike and Anntoinette Boyd; Urinary Care led by Director of Nursing, Roberta Ross, RN; Wound Care led by Gladys Osuchukwu, RN; Skin Assessment and Oral Hygiene led by Stella Iyile, RN; Oxygen and CPAP administration led by Olubunmi Akindele; 12-Lead EKG led by Linwood Danzler, LPN; Blood Glucose Testing and Glucometer Demonstration led by Baidu Mansaray-Smith, RN; Emergency Response and Safety led by Nadge Torchenot, LPN; Safe Patient Transfer led by Lynn Holt; Effective Communication, Documentation, Customer Service and Call Bell Fatigue led by Saidat Sogbesan, RN and Olayinka Telli, LPN; Nutrition and Dysphasia led by Leslie Boggus, RD; Mental Health and Dementia led by Elaine Fry and Nakeisha Williams and Low Vision – read and sign stations.

"Everyone played a part to make this year's skill fair a success. Thank you to all the presenters, everyone did a really great job," adds Ms. Stephens.

Our Director of Nursing Roberta Ross, also expressed her appreciation of our professionally dedicated staff. "I was so impressed with the spirit of cooperation and teamwork among the staff. We managed to complete the mandatory training and everyone had fun."



## Eat well, live well

By Teresa Hui, RD LD | Supervisory Dietitian

Photo by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

Do you remember walking in the halls of LaGarde, Pipes, Forwood, Barnes, King Hall, and the old Scott Buildings? How about when USSAH was renamed AFRH? It feels like just yesterday when food service operations included complete home-cooked meals, a post office, a bank, and even a full sized PX on this campus. My career at AFRH-W began in 1983 as food service manager/dietitian to oversee nutrition counseling to 2,300 residents and an extensive mess hall meal preparation and delivery system. Previously, I held positions as chief dietitian at 385-bed acute care Suburban Hospital in Bethesda Maryland, patient food service manager at 1,200-bed Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland and at 500-bed Georgetown University Hospital in Washington DC. My education background is in food and nutrition science from Vanderbilt University (graduate coursework/internship) and New Mexico State University (undergraduate degree). Food is my passion and nutrition science is my curiosity! I truly enjoy working with all residents and staff at AFRH. Serving America's distinguished veterans for the past 38 years has been the highlight of my career.

Ms. Leslie Boggus is my counterpart and fellow registered dietitian. Prior to joining the AFRH-W nutrition care team in 2004, she worked at National Institutes of Health, Veterans Affairs Medical Center and in private industry as a registered dietitian and nutrition educator. She is not only well experienced and knowledgeable, but also resourceful, kind and compassionate. She is always ready to help residents with their nutritional needs and care. More broadly, all of healthcare service aims to provide the best quality care to all residents.

Our mission is steadfast – to take care of all residents with quality nutritional care. Dietitians maintain credentials and regularly attend conferences to stay abreast with current nutrition science development, recommendations and guidelines, trends and impact on health, and maintaining registered dietitian (RD) status. Both Ms. Boggus and I have visited AFRH-Gulfport (our sister campus) to provide nutrition assistance to their residents. We conduct a monthly peer review with the AFRH-G dietitian via telephone conference and/or email to ensure quality work performance to exceed agency accreditation standards. Despite numerous changes in the past 30+ years, we have reached an efficient level of person-centered care to all residents.

March is National Nutrition Month. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics issues dietary guidelines to all Americans to maintain optimal health. Now is the time to think about your eating habits, focusing on weight management and/or disease prevention. The Academy's 2021 dietary recommendations include: eat a variety of foods every day from all food groups, increase physical activity, and hydrate properly. Bottom line – choose more fruits and vegetables, higher fiber content foods, more whole grains and stay hydrated for metabolic needs. Your body will function more efficiently by utilizing energy from food we eat. The Nutrition Service office provides nutrition review, assessment, counseling, advice and education to all residents and staff for individualized nutrition and dietary needs. We invite our residents to visit us with questions or concerns on how to make informed food choice decisions. We can be reached by phone at 202-541-7670 or 202-541-7671.

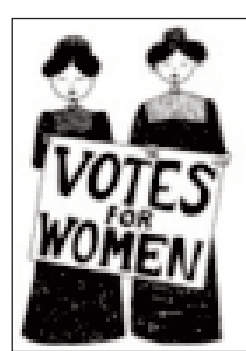
Let's eat well and live well together!



## The American Woman - and "The Right to Vote!"

### SUFFRAGE WINS

By Marla J. McGuinness Recreation Specialist



March is National Women's History Month. AFRH dedicated a play that tells about the history of women voting over the years and the hardship of fighting for the right to vote. We take it for granted as women that these rights have always been there, but that is not the case. Women like Susan B Anthony, Sarah Grimke amongst others have paved the way One-hundred-one years ago, women struggled to get their vote and a voice in running the country. The min-script was shown in the theater and in the hallway for all to view.

Fifteen AFRH-W men and

women played a major role to pull this mini-script together. The voices are the music of script sharing each player of history using the tones of 2021. This is a script The American Woman-and "The Right to Vote!"

Voices of residents and staff playing parts of the yester-year:

Marine Robbins has put all of the technical parts together

Joe Nesnow is the Narrator

Marion Marques is Abigail Adams & Nette Rogers

Fred Ebner is Woodrow Wilson

PK Knor is Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Emmy Lu Daly is Mary W. Dennett, Lucy Stone & Susan B. Anthony

Chris Engles is Clara Barton & Harriet Stanton Blanch

Lillian Miller is Sojourner Truth

Jim Long is Fredrick Douglass & Mr. Regan, a Texas Senator

John Baker is A Cracker-barrel Philosopher & reads a pastoral letter

Christine Baldwin is Carrie Chapman Catt

Hilary Rosado is Frances Gage & reads a Newspaper Editorial

Catharine Deitch is Sarah Grimke

Linda Bailey is voices and a woman's voice

Marla McGuinness coordinator and another woman's voice



## AFRH W's Black History Month virtual celebration

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Steve Briefs | Recreation Supervisor & Marine Robbins | Volunteer Coordinator

Covid 19 limited our annual Black History Month event at AFRH- Washington to a virtual event. Last year's Black History Month events were some of the last events that brought the community and AFRH together. This year, along with President Lincoln's Cottage, we recorded those individuals who present our program.

This year's theme was The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity. Staff members and AFRH residents provided photos of their family members to be a part of a gallery displayed in the tunnel between the Scott and Sheridan buildings. These photos also appeared in the opening of the video program. George Johnson read our poem, "The Black Family Pledge" by Maya Angelou.

This year's song was "It Don't Have to Change," played on the piano by Admissions Director Jackie Halestock and sung by resident John Lott. Due to a piece of video magic, three of John's brothers, Vertis, Raymond and Roland, were the backup singers. You can watch this video, along with the video of the poem recital, on the Official AFRH Facebook page. Usually, the Black History Month program has a guest speaker. This year, in place of a speaker, President Lincoln's Cottage arranged for The Smithsonian Institute Museum of African American History to produce a video on tracing your ancestry. Other players in this video were Billy Bowen acting in his usual role as MC, Chaplain Goodloe who offered the Invocation and our Administrator Susan Bryhan, who thanked the residents for their efforts in putting this program together. We cannot forget our Volunteer Coordinator Marine Robins, who, thanks to her technical expertise, puts all of this into one video, shown for all of our residents on Channel 4, Senior TV, our in-house channel.



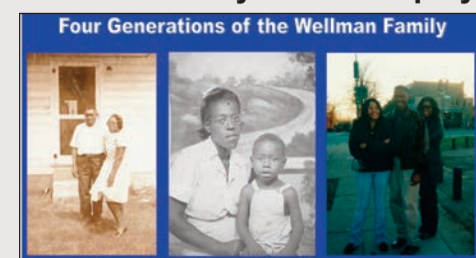
John Lott, Jackie Halestock, and John's brothers (in box in video) singing "It Don't Have to Change."



Billy White with his parents and some of his siblings, from the photo gallery.



Part of the gallery of photos from our Black History Month display



A closer look at one of the photos from the display.

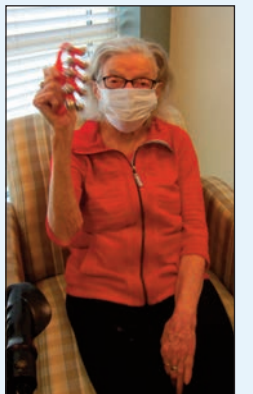
# AFRH-Gulfport

## Got rhythm? Of course you do...Drum it up returns!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Board Certified Music Therapist  
Photos by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Got rhythm? Of course you do on Fridays in March as Drum it up drumming returns. On Friday, March 12, 2021, residents on Loyalty Hall along with IL resident volunteers, Jack Horsley and Ed Summers, joined in for a social distanced, face covered morning of fun. Warming up with various hand percussions, residents increased their concentration and listening skills to shake along and stop on cue. Giggles could be heard, oh...no...was that Mary I heard jingling? Tossing her feet in the air and tapping the floor to dance along, she said, "Oh...Yes!" Continuing along into a rhythm wave of shakers around the circle and once stopped, residents got to pick which direction the wave of sound would continue to move. Would it be right or left? It was then time to take some deep breaths and stretch out those arms and hands before moving on to the drums.

On a variety of Buffalo Drums, Bucket Drums, Lollipop Drums, Hand Drums, and Djembes, residents added rhythms to a recording of music therapist, Christine Steven's, "I am a Tower of Strength" followed by playful teasing of rhythms between residents and Susan. Afterwards, Bob said, "Got a trumpet? I used to play." Well, the next best thing was grooving along to Al Hirt's "Java." As the group began to reminisce about past musical instrument playing, you could hear, "Got a clarinet?" which led right into Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing" and more rhythmic jamming. To conclude, Curt gave the morning two thumbs up. Bob said, "It was relaxing," Mitchell (known to all as "Ski") said, "You got me moving," "101" young Lois said, "It picked me up," and Mary raised her arms in the air saying, "Happy! Happy! Happy!" While gathering the instruments, someone said "What about the rock-n-roll?" which led to resident, "Ski" jumping up to dance some smooth moves to "Splish Splash!" The morning proved that we all "Got Rhythm" and much, much more! We look forward to Valor Hall and Allegiance Drum It Up! Drumming on the other Fridays in March in the Valor Hall Piano Lounge. If you can move your feet, clap your hands or snap those fingers, "You Got Rhythm, too!"



## What luck! A sweet treat Valentine & sham- rockin' pot of gold!

Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Services

What luck! Since this past December, Deirdra Obrien and her fellow friends and co-workers have adopted AFRH-Gulfport residents in the healthcare areas with the mission to bring cheer, personalized messages, and to remind them that they are not forgotten during these challenging times. On Friday, February 12, 2021, you could hear, "A Valentine...for me?" Once peering in and then opening their red and white heart covered treat bags, healthcare residents were delighted to find Hershey's kisses, Oreo cookies, candy, a handmade stuffed patriotic heart ornament, and a personalized Valentine card. On Wednesday, March 17, 2021, residents were once again surprised with a handmade shamrock embroidered mug rug fabric coaster in which a mini pot of gold filled treats fit so perfectly for St. Patrick's Day! Bev Brady and Toyel Mook were the amazing sewing masters and Tina Ali and Deirdra Obrien supplied the festive bags, goodies and treat holders. We thank our many community partners, volunteers, and individuals that are working behind the scenes. Making an enormous impact in the lives of our treasured veterans, it was a sweet treat Valentine & a sham-rockin' St. Patrick's Day indeed!



## Hook and Ring tournament

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On Tuesday, March 9, 2021 residents competed in the first Hook and Ring Tournament in the Bocce Center since the Covid-19 shutdown. The object of the tournament was to throw the six rings and hook them on the hooks for points. Whoever had the most points at the end advanced in the single elimination bracket. All the residents were seen concentrating for all the points that they could get in their throw.

There could only be four winners that day. Wayland Webb took 1st place, Ernie Fowler took 2nd place, Jerry Anderson took 3rd place and Fredi Van Pelt took 4th place. Fredi Van Pelt won an ice cream sandwich for 4th Place.



## Washer toss tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On March 16, 2021 residents competed in the first washer toss tournament in the Bocce Center since the Covid-19 shutdown. The object of the tournament was to throw the washers for points. Whoever had the most points at the end advanced in the single elimination bracket. All the residents were seen concentrating for all the points that they could get in their throw.

There could only be four winners that day. Wayland Webb took 1st place, Jerry Anderson took 2nd place, Faye Jefferson took 3rd place and Don Blaylock took 4th place. Don Blaylock won an Ice cream sandwich for 4th Place.



## Generosity

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator  
Photo by Lori Kerns | Librarian

A few weeks ago I was contacted by Col. John Ladner (RET) from St. Martin High School. Col. Ladner had several students from the Air Force Jr. ROTC, Fine Arts Dept. and other clubs interested in giving back to residents. We spoke briefly about his idea... but I was floored when he delivered over 50 beautifully decorated boxes full of hygiene items, sweet treats, note pads and more for upper levels of care. The artistic ability is just stunning.



## When plans change

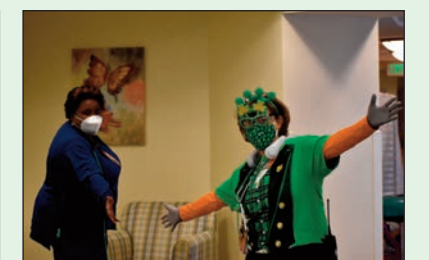
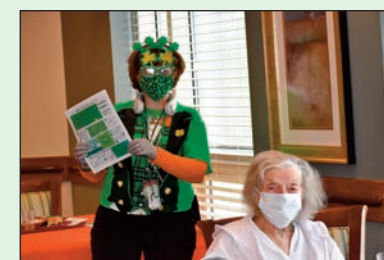
By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

Many of you know that my family was scheduled to relocate to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. We've been stationed at Keesler Air Force base since 2016, making this our longest assignment in my husband's career thus far. We were informed last week that our assignment was canceled. Although we were looking forward to our move (and colder weather) I am excited to remain at AFRH-G a little while longer.

## Luck of the Irish & much more cook-in!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services  
Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, healthcare residents enjoyed a "Luck of the Irish" cook-in. With the Loyalty Dining Hall decked out in the green, orange, and white décor of the Irish flag, residents enjoyed their comedic St. Patrick's Day funnies handout. "Top of the Morning to You!" could be heard along with "Wow! That's a lot of green?" Although no green beer, soda and other sparkly drinks were lifted in lucky cheer. Cook-in favorites included hamburgers, hot dogs, onion rings, potato salad, baked beans, chocolate cake, and many headless coconut shrimp (still the most popular resident requested favorite that seems to be eaten quickly!) Lois Hogan, who recently celebrated her 101st birthday, visited virtually through Skype with her daughter, Beth Hogan. Thanks to the recreation therapy electronic tablets, Ms. Lois was able to chat during the cook-in and enjoy her meal. She was amazed to see her daughter across the miles in North Carolina. She said, "It's amazing!" With Irish music playing in the background, the cook-in brought much luck and enjoyment for all!



## Mystery game

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Lee Corban and Sean Campbell

On March 8, 2021 recreation held its mystery game. The mystery game was not given out until 0930 and it was called the Reverse Washer Toss. Residents were given instructions on how to play. The washer toss boards were reversed, which made the board go downward instead of upward. All of the residents were six-feet away during the game.

There could only be four winners for this mystery game. But wait, there was a rule change for the four winners and all residents who played were all winners. Fourth place went to Jerry Anderson, who got to pick four snacks. Third place went to Earl Gassery, who got to pick three snacks. Second place went to Sharon Price, who got to pick two snacks and first place went to Wayland Webb, who got to pick one snack.



## What about some competition – Indoor Shuffleboard!

Story & Photo by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

On Thursday, March 4 & March 11, 2021 Mitchell "Ski" Kisielewski, along with independent living resident Ed Summers met up in the bocce center for a friendly game of indoor shuffleboard. Little did I know, Ski is quite the indoor shuffleboard player and will rarely let another player get a point on him. Back when Ski first moved into the Home in November 2019, he and Ed Summers began a friendship of comradery as they were neighbors up on the eighth floor in the "A" Tower. Ed had never played indoor shuffleboard before meeting Ski and on March 11 was thrilled to have gained a few points to take the lead and win one game. They each seemed to tease each other, dish out the rivalry, and brighten with laughter and delight. The real story is, I was playing red on one side while Ed played red on the other side with Ski walking back and forth. The next day Ski said, "They ganged up on me... how could I win?" I'm sure this will never ever happen again since Ski is a truly professional indoor shuffleboard competitor. He played throughout his years in the Navy quickly followed by the Air Force as he played on many of the bases where he was stationed. Lots of laughs, competition, comradery, and good times were had by all during indoor shuffleboard with Ed & Ski.



# WASHINGTON

## National Pig Day - popcorn, pork rinds & pig calling contest

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy  
Photos by Steven Briefs | Recreation Supervisor  
& Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

What a day! If you did not know it, March 1 was National Pig Day and what better way to celebrate than to have a pig-calling contest! It was a fun filled day with over 20+ participants including staff and residents from all levels of care. Thankfully, we only had minimal heckling but lots of laughter from socially distanced spectators.

Old "pig" memories came tumbling back to resident Submariner Warren Pospisil who proudly took off his shoes and socks to show off his pig & chicken foot tattoos. He then told the story of how he and his fellow shipmates operated out of Pearl Harbor and listened to a tale being spun by their ships's chief. The chief told his crew that to keep alive they needed to have a pig tattooed on one foot and a chicken on the other... that this would keep them from drowning. Hence, Warren is still here today!

Following the event, resident pig calling judge Jim Hunnicutt felt the need to give a shout out to a fellow friend and submariner residing at AFRH-G, Ken Henry aka "Pig Pen" expressing that both Homes would benefit from celebrating National Pig Day:

"Dear Ken....

Attached is the flyer for the National Pig Calling Day Contest here at the Home. There were Pork Rinds & Popcorn, no beer or wine (which will be corrected in the future). Carol had movies from a state fair pig calling contest just to warm things up.

I didn't call the pigs but was the official umpire and official judge. Pops didn't call the pig either but was there as an avid supporter.

Steve, Recreation Director, didn't call the pigs, but I gave him a "10" in a special category - Costume, he was dressed as a "Pig Porker". Everyone calling the pig scored an "8" for (categories I came up with): enthusiasm, loudness, animation, face expressions, embarrassment, or just plain heart. At Carol's insistence that I pick a winner, finally gave one contestant an extra quarter point so that we had a pig caller head & shoulders above the rest.

This will become an annual event. You remember Ron Kartz, he is retiring and moving to his dad's pig farm in Michigan. He promised to bring a porker here next year so that we can end the event with a pig roast....

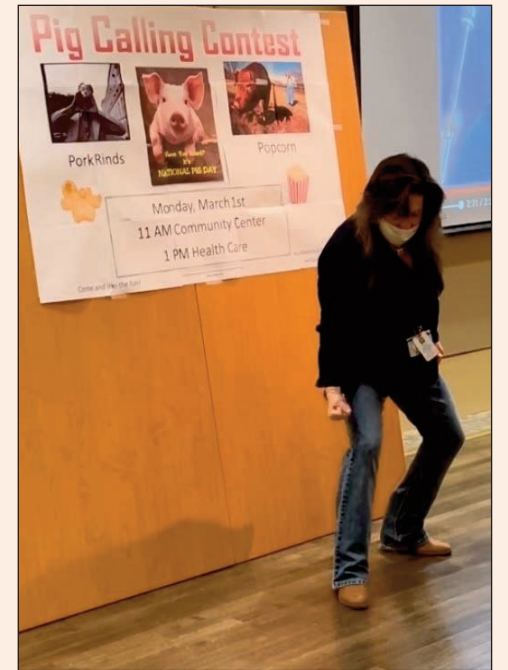
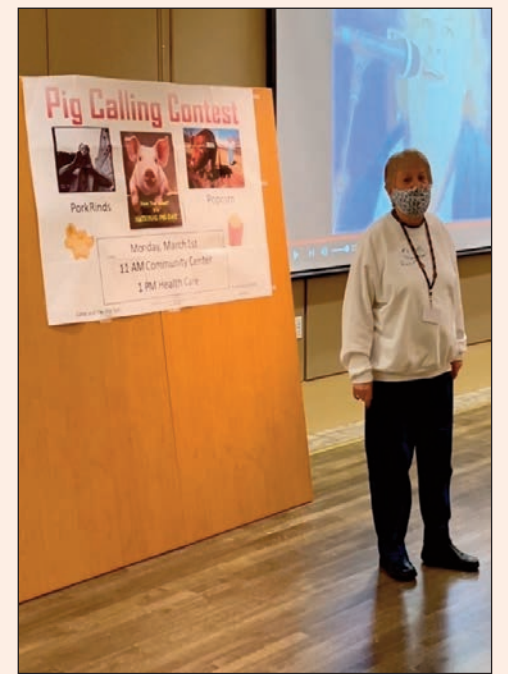
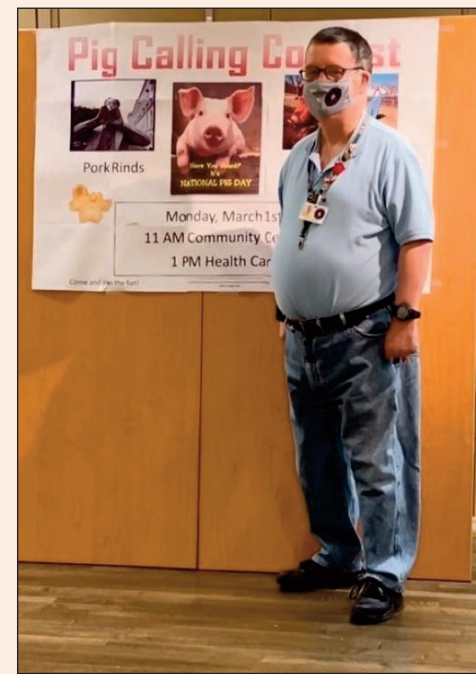
Can't believe that Gulfport let this extraordinary day celebrating your "expertise" pass into history without celebrating your fame. I think six lashes with a wet noodle is appropriate.

Give my best to all down south, can't wait to get a little sand in my shoes."

Congratulations to our 2021 pig-calling winner resident John Baker. Thanks to all who participated. Keep your eyes and vocal chords open and ready for next year's challenge. Please see the AFRH Official Facebook page and website to view the event... It is sure to put a smile on your face.



John Baker- Pig Calling Winner



# GULFPORT

## The lost year

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident  
Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



When AFRH closed down its many amenities in Gulfport on March 9, 2020 due to the coronavirus, a significant number of residents protested verbally and even made appeals on TV. Some moved out to proclaimed greener pastures, and about thirty residents took temporary refuge with friends or family.

Those of us who stayed the course have seen 39 of our residents pass on to their "Happy Hunting Grounds," while we have endured this pandemic with masks and the standard six-foot social distancing from one another.

It was standing orders that residents, who left even for only a day, were placed in quarantine for two weeks upon their return.

We have been tested for COVID-19 about nine times during this period and 19 of us tested positive, so they too were placed in quarantine for two-week durations. Containment has been the rule by which we have passed each day. Even after AFRH partially reopened amenities in December, many of our residents have not yet stepped up to regain lost benefits. Attendance in the activity rooms is way below posted limits.

How long will close contact continue to be suspended? Friday night dancing, one of my favorite activities, will this be long in returning?

Statistically, the coronavirus has shown to be harder on older people: More than 80 percent of U.S. deaths have occurred among people who are 65 or older. For the last couple of years, the average age here in the Home has been 84, so in retrospect, caution has been a byword for the administrators.

We have not liked some of the deterrents put in place, but after all is said and done, I, for one, prefer to have stayed the course here in the Home rather than in the outside world.



No matter what the situation is, you can always find Dan Ellis having a good time with a big smile on his face. Thank you Dan! All photos were taken pre-COVID-19.