



AFRH-GULFPORT

KABOOM! AFRH-G salad bar tomatoes turn into garden success!

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

Independent living resident and volunteer, Jack Horsley has quite a green thumb, especially this spring with patio tomato plants, sweet peppermint, sage, and his upcoming famous basil herbs. As the story be told, Jack stated that he grew the patio or cherry tomatoes from the take out garden salads he picked up in the downstairs main dining hall. As the story unfolded, it turns out that Jack prefers to eat grape tomatoes instead of cherry tomatoes and would just throw the patio tomatoes into his compost pile near his outdoor roof garden. He didn't cut them up, he didn't dry the seeds, he didn't do small starter planter pots and instead, KABOOM! They just came up on their own. When Jack realized he had so many tomato plants, as usual like the basil he grows, they find a new home on the Valor and Loyalty patio gardens.

This year, they have taken a liking to the Valor patio, have already bloomed despite our cold record temperatures, and now we have garden green tomatoes. After a week of record rain in April, it was said that the Mississippi Gulf Coast received as much rain in a week as it normally rains in 1,000 days. With cold fronts and wind advisories now moving through, the garden has begun to bloom in full with multiple brilliant red amaryllis flowering bulbs, abundant aromatic rosemary, and the signs of returning lady bugs.

Thank you Jack for your ever faithful green thumb, nurturing, and care not only in your gardening success but in our veteran resident's lives that you touch each and every day. Still ringing true from last April's "Happy Planting" article I wrote, "Even under the soil, new growth will be blooming soon and it won't be long until our efforts will be springing forth. Here's to "Happy Planting" for brighter days in your life." For this 2021 year, remember when you least expect it, look around you & "KABOOM! Success & Blessings will appear!"



AFRH-WASHINGTON

Making gardening easier for all

By Linda Bailey | Lead Recreation Specialist

Photos by Mike Hoth | AFRH Resident & Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Last summer our resident gardens moved from near the ponds to right outside the doors of the Sheridan building in our backyard. The Old Soldiers Home Foundation helped us get started by purchasing a garden shed, hose and reel, and a garden seat. While the gardens grew very well last year, gardening at ground level kept some residents with a love of gardening from participating.

This year the Old Soldiers Home Foundation made gardening more accessible by purchasing raised garden beds in three heights. If you can garden most easily by standing, we have two beds at a height of 32 inches tall, removing the need to reach down when planting and harvesting. Four of the beds are 17 inches high, which can be worked from a seated position with no bending, or standing without having to reach all the way to the ground. We left two beds at a mere six inches high, for growing corn or okra, two plants that grow too tall for raised beds. Each bed covers an area six and a half feet by four-feet.

With the popularity of gardening during the pandemic, companies were taking longer to fill orders of all things garden related. Thinking we might have had to wait some time for the beds to come in, and being eager to start in the spring this year, we started with the straw bale gardening method. This would raise our plants up, and allow us to build the raised beds around them. In the photo, you can see the straw bales ready to plant, along with two that have the raised beds installed around the straw. All of our raised beds are now in place.

Some of our gardeners were unsure about using the straw bale method, having never tried it before. The tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and a variety of seeds are now planted and doing well. The straw is conditioned with high nitrogen fertilizer, and wet down. The straw begins to decompose, creating a sponge like environment that holds water well and allows the roots of the plants to grow into the straw. The plants and seeds themselves are planted in a layer of potting soil on top of the straw. Eventually the straw breaks down into a lovely layer of compost at the bottom of the bed. This will lower our planting level. When this happens, usually after two gardening seasons, we will add more soil to the top, along with the compost we are making in the new compost tumbler purchased for us by the foundation.

Our thanks to our resident volunteers who built and installed the raised beds, and to the Old Soldiers Home Foundation who made gardening less of a chore and more of a joy to our residents.



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AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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The *AFRH Communicator* is an authorized publication of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Residents and employees are encouraged to submit photos, art, news items, and features. Materials will be edited by the *AFRH Communicator* staff for journalistic style and length. The articles included in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the management, staff, or residents of the AFRH.

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.

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APPLY TODAY!

AFRH-W resident highlight - Blair Patterson Smith

By P.K. Knor | AFRH-W Resident



Blair Patterson Smith was born in New London, Connecticut when his father was an officer in the Navy. Later, the family moved to Maryland where his father was a real estate attorney. He has an older sister Sandy, who married a judge (now retired), and a younger sister Teri, who retired from the U.S. Army as a JAG officer. The family lived in Prince George's County, Maryland, where Blair graduated from high school. He attended the University of Baltimore and studied psychology, business and finance. On 12 May 1968, while in his third year of college, he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

Blair attended basic training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and infantry school at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. Ft. Polk was such a miserable place to train that he was almost excited when he got orders for Vietnam. In Vietnam, he served one year as a platoon sergeant with the 198th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, in the Quang Ngai Province. He had quite a few life threatening experiences while there. One that stands out occurred while he was walking point on patrol with his men. He triggered a hidden wire which caused a 'bouncing Betty' to pop-up out of the ground. Fortunately for him, it went back into the ground. (phew!)

When Blair left the military he, like most of the troops at that time, was a little lost. He was working as a bartender at his local Moose Lodge when a friend introduced him to her sister, Martha. They were married for 20 wonderful years and raised two daughters. Martha worked as the executive secretary to the postmaster general of the United States, until she passed away almost 32 years ago. Their daughters, Debbie and Diane, have given him six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. His family brings him great joy and he is so happy to be able to see them regularly.

When he was first married, Blair was involved in a terrible car accident which put him in a body cast in the hospital for about four months. He still has residual problems from that accident, but that has never stopped him. He used his college training in business and finance and began his employment in the sales industry. He worked for John Hancock Insurance and Brokers, Rollins Enterprises, in local sales, then he was promoted to regional sales director for seven years. He was then again promoted to NE regional sales manager for another seven years. He was next employed at Stewart Enterprises in Maryland, where he became sales manager of the year, after only one year. He returned to Rollins Enterprises when he was offered the position of regional sales manager for Orkin, a subsidiary of Rollins. He retired from Rollins Enterprises after 17 years. After his retirement, he dabbled in real estate, and owned several homes and apartment houses.

Blair gives thanks to the Lord for his wonderful life and all of the times he has been saved. He is very proud of his children and their families and all they have accomplished.



Blair today at AFRH-W.



Blair was married to his beautiful wife Martha (pictured above) for 20 wonderful years.

Veterans looking out for veterans

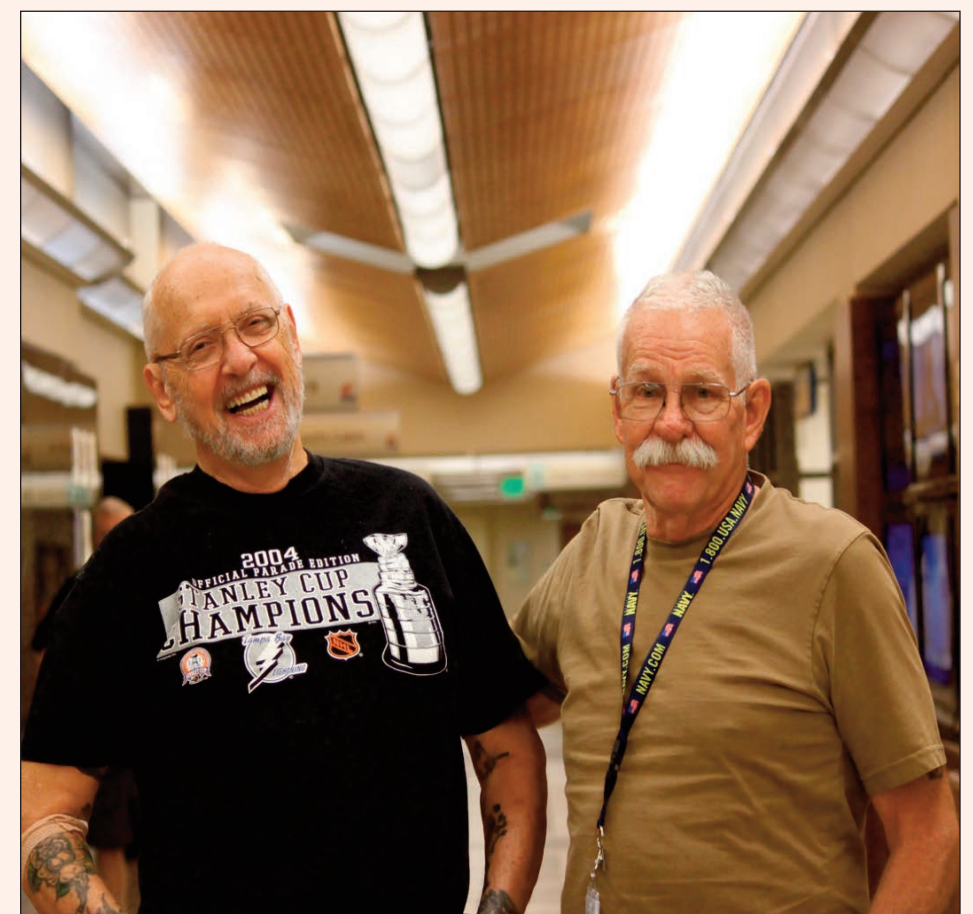
By Kenneth Wayne Farrell | Brother of AFRH-Gulfport resident Kelsey Farrell

My brother Kelsey had a motor vehicle accident on May 10 in Texas near Amarillo. He was on his way to visit his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter in Washington State. He hit some construction equipment and totaled his car, not his fault. He is ok, just a scratch on his arm. He is 83 with a pacemaker and on blood thinners. The sheriff and highway patrolman that showed up were awesome people and took care of him right away until EMS arrived and checked him out and said he was ok. He planned on renting a car and continuing on to Washington. After it was all over and various phone calls made, he called his best friend Ken Henry, who he served on the USS Archerfish SS311 with years ago and who also lives at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi almost 900 miles away. My point to this is Ken Henry, with no second thought, said "Stay put and I will leave in the morning and come pick you up and bring you home." Our family extends our heartfelt appreciation to the awesome highway patrol, sheriff, and especially Ken Henry for being there for our brother. It is a blessing to know that you can always count on Brothers of the Pin.

Kelsey Farrell and Ken Henry are now safely back at AFRH-Gulfport.



Ken Henry (left) & Kelsey Farrell (right) when they served on the USS Archerfish.



Ken Henry (left) & Kelsey Farrell (right) at AFRH-G.

Bear happy

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy
Photo by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor



Patriotic bear, St. Paddy's bear, Valentine bear, and more holiday & seasonal bears were handmade and sent to AFRH-W by dedicated crafter and seamstress Laurie Sisson. Laurie has been a member of the John Alexander Chapter Daughter of the American Revolution for 14+ years. She truly has veterans and their well-being in her heart. The bears will certainly bring a cheerful smile and comfort to the residents of AFRH-W. Laurie Sisson spent some of her COVID days thinking about how to bring some bear happiness from Capital Caring "Caring Bears" to the veterans of AFRH-W. Fellow DAR members Christina Mumm and Lorraine Nordlinger gave a hand in making the "Name that Bear Challenge" come to fruition. The bears will be on display for the residents to come up with the best name for each bear and the bear with the best name will have found its veteran Bearever Home.

Mary's pottery galore becomes even more glamorous!

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

Just say the word, "pottery" and "97" years young, WWII Navy code breaker Mary Nelson is ready to get busy. Prior to COVID-19, Mary was an avid Fun Art participant on Loyalty Hall and has continued her talents with the help of AFRH-G Art Specialist Milton Williams. Through social-distancing, face-coverings and individualized creative projects, such as pottery with clay, has really kept her busy. With the return of Fun Art on Mondays & Wednesdays, Mary has been breaking her record of producing multiple pinch pots, swans, and her now famous adored snakes. During the week of April 19, she produced six pinch pots on Monday and seven pinch pots in one sitting. With the help of independent living resident Ed Summers, and others in the downstairs art rooms, Mary's pieces have been primed, glazed, and fired to completion in the art room kiln. Throughout the month of March and April, Mary has received her finalized pieces and was brightened with amazement on how beautiful they have turned out. She plans to share some with her family along with her daughter Nancy, from Arkansas. Thanks to all involved for seeing that "Mary's Pottery Galore" became even more Glamorous!



Keep on smiling!

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On May 18 it was even more of a May Birthday Celebration when the announcement came over the intercom right before lunch saying that the mask mandate has been relaxed. Masks are still required in some instances but for lunch it was nothing but BIG SMILES! What a sight to see, especially because we haven't seen each other's faces in over a year. Needless to say, it was an awesome day and a huge milestone. Thank you to all the residents for letting me take your picture because this was really something to capture and celebrate. Happy Birthday to all of our residents born in the month of May!



AFRH-W Arbor Day Tree Planting Ceremony

By Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Marine Robbins | Volunteer Coordinator

AFRH-W planted a tree for Arbor Day and it means more than just planting a tree, it is because we made it through 2020. This has been a very rough year for all of us, both staff and residents. Probably everyone knows of at least one person that this virus hit. AFRH made a safe environment for both staff and residents to stay in the Home. So, a tree was put into the ground to celebrate those who made it through and for those who did not.

A self-pollinated Lapus cherry tree was planted in the back by dining, which will someday produce fruit that others will enjoy in the future. Special thanks to recreation services. We made a mark on AFRH-W that will last forever.

This poem written by Joyce Kilmer, Catholic poet who was killed in WWI called "Trees."

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

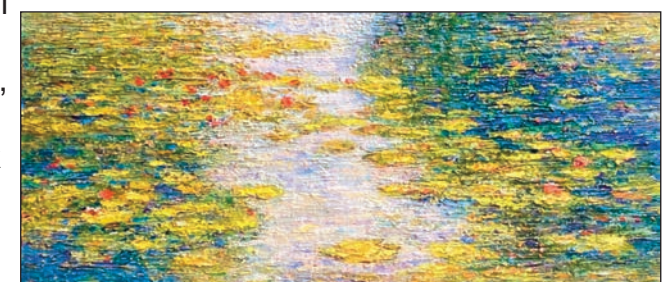


MASTER PIECES - An art show

Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

Have you ever wanted to go to a museum and view the many Old Master's Paintings but Europe was too far? Well, you have an opportunity to view about 50 of their works at the Gulfport Arts Center in Gulfport, Mississippi. Well, it is 50 paintings done by our local artists, who each pick their favorite "Master Artist Painting" and copied it. We all learn from each other and this is one way to "imitate" or "replicate" how Monet, Van Gogh or Renoir painted and learn a new technique perhaps. This great idea was thought up by Alicia Overton, a talented artist in our community. She invited all artists to enter the show. The Old Carnegie Library houses the Gallery and it will be showing thru June 5th.

Gerry Gorsky, Ray Eckert, JB Atchison, Doris Hopper and Corena Wash each have painted a "Master Piece" for the show. Thank y'all for participating. Oh, I have one in there too! A very small version of Monet's "Water Lilies."



Painting by Milton Williams, Art Director.



Painting by Ray Eckert.



Painting by JB Atchison.



Painting by Doris Hopper.



Painting by Corena Wash.



Painting by Gerry Gorsky.

From the AFRH-W administrator



We have finally reached the time of year when we can count on warmer weather. Trees are in full bloom and the grass is growing fast, making it hard to keep up with mowing on our beautiful campus. Our golf course is open! Thanks to the residents who are mowing and keeping it in play. We have about 40 golf associate members, so far, who are happy we are able to open up this year. With the changes the CDC made to their mask and social distancing policy, we were able to update our pilot re-opening policy. It is almost starting to feel normal on campus. Many of us are a bit sheepish about removing our masks after they have become such a part of us for so many months. We are fortunate that we have not had any new positive cases

in many weeks, but continue with random testing to keep ahead of any possible outbreaks. Our visits with friends and families are going well, and we can now allow even more access due to the new policy. Our vaccination rates continue to rise as more staff and contractors agree to get their first dose of vaccine each week, thanks to the great support from Walter Reed. We are gaining new residents each week and things are looking up!

Our recreation team is very happy to be able to offer more in person programming and trips. The garden program is in full swing on the units as well as behind the Sheridan Building, thanks to some generous donations and a lot of hard work. Soon we will enjoy fresh vegetables that they grow and share. We have been able to take outside trips and with the new policy, more locations will be added. We started to have a few limited tours this month, to include MG (Ret) Peter Aylward, the Director of the USA Vietnam War Commemoration. He provided enough appreciation pins so that we can have a ceremony in the near future to honor our Vietnam veterans.

We kicked off the month with a Cinco de Mayo party with all the usual fun. Shortly after, we honored our mothers and all ladies with a tea and a special Mother's Day meal. No matter how old we get, our mothers are always special to us. And we finished the month of May, as we always do, by honoring on Memorial Day those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy in our great country.

This year, just as last, we had to do the program virtually. I believe next year we will be back at the Soldiers Home Cemetery where we can honor General John A. Logan, who is buried there and who issued the order to have the first Memorial Day.

May is the month that we celebrate our nursing staff during Nurses' Week. I know I appreciate this dedicated group even more than ever. They were on the front line keeping all of us healthy and safe. They protected us all by wearing PPE, while they swabbed us, health checked us and vaccinated us plus did their normal job of caring for our residents. To show appreciation, they were treated with lunch boxes, ice cream, compassion cups and breakfast and started the week reciting their creed.

If you are vaccinated, take off your mask and show us your face! It has been a long time since we've seen each other. But, don't forget to stay away from crowds and wash your hands often. Let's keep moving forward!

Susan Bryhan



Thank you to all the nurses.



AFRH-W resident Catharine Deitch created a beautiful hat for Ladies' Day.

Fifteen years in the Army to Director of Nursing at AFRH-Washington

Story & Photo by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

Each May, Nurses Week is celebrated from May 6 to May 12. The week started off with reciting the CNA and Florence Nightingale pledge and cupcakes for each shift. The following days included trivia challenges, encouragement glasses, breakfast and ice cream social and boxed lunches. Many of these activities were coordinated by our healthcare staff and Director of Nursing, Ms. Roberta Ross.

Our nurses and CNAs at the Armed Forces Retirement Home play a vital role in the healthcare of our residents and education of staff. During the month that celebrates nurses, we would like to take this opportunity to get to know one of our nurses, Roberta Ross, AFRH-W's Director of Nursing a little more.

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

A. After serving 15 years in the Army, I separated and went to nursing school. I have been a nurse for 25 years and have worked for the government for 15 years working for the DOD, and the VA. Prior to the government, I worked in various healthcare facilities in Maryland from skilled nursing to intensive care. I am currently pursuing a master's degree in nursing education. Anticipated completion December 2021.

Q. What has been one of your most memorable experiences working in the nursing profession?

A. One of my most memorable experiences was taking care of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed in 2007 and 2008. It was the most difficult nursing I have done but also, the most rewarding. I was continually amazed at the resilience of the wounded soldiers and their families and the dedication and genuine caring of the medical and nursing staff. I worked at the Walter Reed hospital that was on Georgia Ave. It was full of history and tradition much like AFRH. I was sad to see it close.

Q. When did you start working at AFRH?

A. I started working at AFRH in June of 2019 as the night shift nursing supervisor. I then transitioned to the long-term care clinical nurse supervisor and then the assisted living supervisor before becoming the DON in February.

Q. What is the role of the Director of Nursing at AFRH?

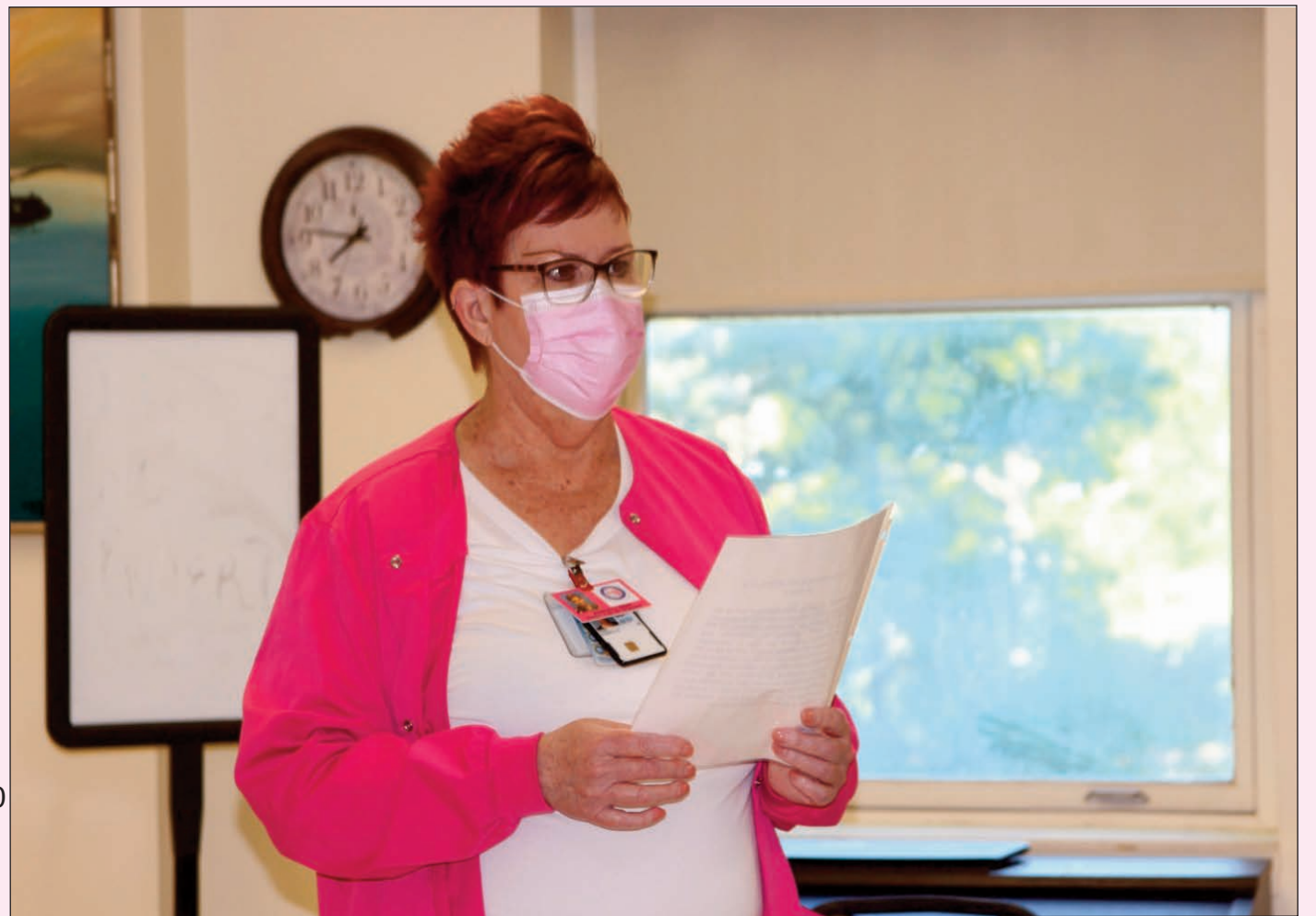
A. The role of the DON at AFRH is to oversee all the nursing care on the memory support unit, long term care, and assisted living to ensure that our residents get the excellent care that they deserve. This involves continued surveillance of the units to make sure all policies and procedures are being followed and education of the staff.

Q. What are some of the best qualities you have seen in our nurses working at AFRH?

A. The best qualities I have seen in the nursing staff are caring, kindness, and dedication to duty.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to share?

A. Every month, for the 15 years that I served in the Army there was a deduction of 50 cents from my paycheck that went to "The Old Soldier's Home." I never anticipated that I would one day be working here. I often think of this as I go about my day. Taking care of veterans enables me to combine my love of nursing and the military.



Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairman



It has been a busy month, first I would like to welcome our new residents. It's so great to have you join our family.

Second, thanks to all of our volunteers! What a terrific job everyone is doing. Most of the time they do their jobs discreetly but if you see them, I urge every resident to take some time and let them know how much we appreciate what they do for our home.

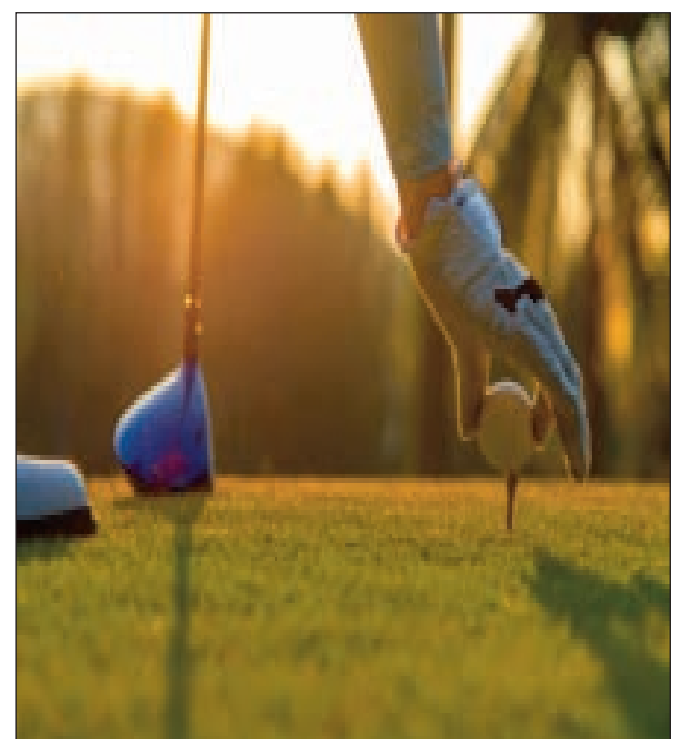
Third, the dining room staff served a fantastic special meal with lobster tail, shrimp and steak, which was appreciated by all. Thanks!

Fourth, the golf course is doing great with many new golfers enjoying a round of golf.

Fifth and final, thanks to our recreational staff, and of course the resident gardeners for their hard work in building the garden area behind the Sheridan building. If you have not visited the area, you should spend some time there, under the pergola and enjoy the view. What a great place to bring your family or friends when they come to visit.

Okay, I know everything in this article is about all the good things that have happened in May, and there are probably some not-so-good things that also occurred. But, after what we have all been through this past year, I think it's great to remind everyone of the terrific life we have here!

Fred Layman



The saga of AFRH-G resident Robert Frost

By Robert Frost | AFRH-G Resident



Robert Frost was born in 1925 in Ragland, Alabama. He entered the Navy in 1943 at age 17 and went to boot camp in Pensacola, Florida. Thereafter, he went to Morehead State Teachers College electrical school in Kentucky. He then went to submarine school in Connecticut, and Gyro Compos and pit logs school in New York. After that he was sent overseas.

Robert traveled on the Pullman train from New London to San Francisco, by ship to Sydney Australia with a brief stop in New Guinea by landing ship truck to Sydney. It took seven days by boxcar ride to get from Sydney to Perth, Australia; an experience Robert won't ever forget. He then learned his final destination; Fremantle, Western Australia. Robert was assigned to the ship repair unit Gyro Compos shop at Fremantle Navy Support facility until at his request for swap-transfer in February 1945 to the USS Rock SS274.

The USS Rock departed Fremantle in March 1945 for its six war patrol with two Australian Commando parties. They were put ashore on Lombok Island to locate the emplacement in hope of aerial bombing. One party was decapitated and the other party was picked up by a PBY aircraft. The USS Rock performed life guard duty, rescued 15 Army soldiers, who had been adrift for 32 days, blew up a free floating mine, shelled an island infrastructure and sank one destroyer escort and returned to Pearl Harbor after 59 days. The USS Rock received 19 depth charges and one aerial bomb; yours truly spotted the aircraft: the USS Rock was at about 60-feet below when the crew sensed the explosion. The USS Rock was dispatched to California for major overhaul and returned to Pearl Harbor two days after the Pacific War ended. Robert was promoted to EM2C in transit to the Panama Canal. The USS Rock sailed via Panama Canal to New Orleans for Navy Day in 1945 and then to New London for decommission in May 1946. After a brief civilian life with Tennessee Valley Authority, Robert rejoined the Navy and was assigned to the USS Tarpon SS175 in New Orleans. In 1948 Robert was promoted to EM1C. In November of 1949 Robert had a family, was in love and resigned from the Navy and joined the Army as sergeant E-6 with boot camp in Fort Riley, Kansas.

The Korean War started June 1950 and Robert was soon on a plane for Japan. He was assigned to the 62nd Construction Engineers (building bridges) and landed in Inchon Korea in September of 1950, the most miserable duty he has ever experienced. But it was nothing compared to the infantry and the artillery returning fire and striving

to survive negative 35 degree weather long enough to get out of Korea. The 62nd got up to Pyongyang and evacuated abruptly because of China. Robert received the Bronze Star for meritorious service and was promoted to sergeant E-7 in Korea. After being gone 17 months, Robert eventually landed in New Orleans in 1951 on Christmas day and was greeted by his wife and two sons, one who was 20 months old that Robert had not met yet.

In 1952 he was ordered to Fort Bliss, Texas and attended the Nike Ajax and the Corporal Guided Missile courses. In 1953 Robert was appointed WO-1 and deployed to Germany early in 1954 with the Corporal missile system. He returned to the states after one year and was assigned to Huntsville, Alabama for two years of training and learning the Redstone missile guidance and propulsion system. He was then deployed back to Germany in 1958 with the Redstone system and returned in 1961 to be schooled in the Pershing Missile System. He was assigned to the Pershing Missile School in Fort Sill, Oklahoma until he retired on February 28, 1965 as CWO-3 with 22 years of service.

Thereafter, Frost was domiciled in Slidell, Louisiana for many years. Robert was married to the late Margaret Hidalgo Frost for 66 years and had three sons, and a daughter. Robert and Margaret snow-skied out West for 25 consecutive years, sailed in their 38-foot yacht to the Bahamas twice, traveled domestically and extensively, tried parasailing, and white water rafting, salt water fishing, square dancing, Cajun dancing, and other endeavors. Margaret passed away on November 5, 2014 and Robert entered AFRH-G on September 20, 2016.



Robert Frost today at AFRH-G.



Robert with his beautiful bride Margaret on their wedding day.

It's time to welcome the "weekend" warriors

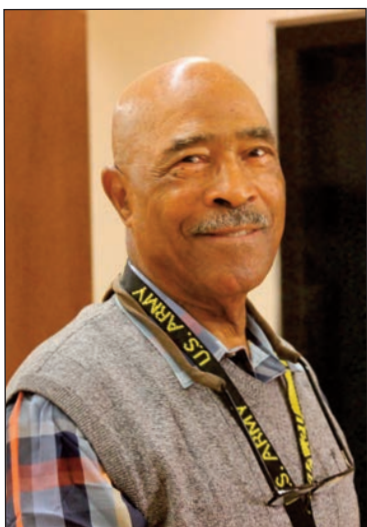
By Pat Smith | AFRH-G Resident

As I sat and listened to our Chief Operating Officer Mr. Jim Branham at the Town Hall Meeting in the community center in March and he mentioned the program to "allow" members of the National Guard and Reserves qualify for residency, I heard some audible gasps in the room. Later, I overheard conversations that expressed the perception that many of us have regarding the service of the National Guard and Reserve members such as they only put a weekend in per month or they weren't professional but simply marked time to avoid active service. Granted, they did have somewhat of that reputation in the 1960's to avoid Vietnam service, but many served proudly helping the nation in times of crisis.

The National Guard and Reserve have supported every war since 1636 when we fought the French. Let's fast forward to 9/11 and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the Defense Management Data Agency, over the past twenty years forty-five percent of all deployments were National Guard or Reserve members. So the "weekend warriors" spent many "weekends" in those war zones, not to mention all of the days in between. Many were wounded and came back with scars both physical, emotional and psychological. Many died. So, for those who served we should not only welcome them but salute them. On this Memorial Day, let's thank them and their families for their sacrifice and say a special prayer in their honor.



Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairman



May is National Military Appreciation month. It is a time to celebrate their successes and recognize their sacrifices. Throughout its existence the United States has sent our citizens around the world to defend the cause of freedom. Not just our freedom, but other people's freedoms as well. I believe this is directly tied to our Statue of Liberty's proclamation "Give me your tired, your poor huddled masses yearning to breathe free." So, we celebrate Armed Forces Day on May 15 to pay tribute to the men and women who have served and who are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

At the end of the May we celebrate Memorial Day. All across our nation in communities' large and small, people gather with pomp and circumstance to remember those who have fallen. Few, if any, families have been excluded from this sacrifice. This year, as in years past, with flags at half-mast we honor those men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Finally, on Memorial Day morning at Arlington National Cemetery, in the nation's capital, accompanied by a 21-gun salute, the Presidential Wreath is laid at the tomb of The Unknown Soldier by the President of the United States, as the Commander-in-Chief. A sincere reminder "ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL. Thank you for your service.

Arthur "Art" W. Jones



RAC Chair Art Jones (right) celebrates the May Birthday Luncheon with fellow resident Dexter Marchman (left).

AFRH-Washington

Healthcare Ladies' Day luncheon

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy

On May 11 the healthcare ladies of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington enjoyed the annual Ladies' Day Luncheon. To make the day special, they enjoyed a day of creating floral sun hats, playing Women in History bingo, and dining on a delicious lunch.

Recreation Specialist Marla McGuinness has a passion for designing floral arrangements and generously provided her expertise, assistance, and flowers for the ladies at the sun hat-crafting table. They enjoyed eating appetizers of crab dip, tomato and cucumber salad, plus assorted cheese and crackers while working on their hats. After they made their sun hats, they joined in on a Women in History bingo, which led to many interesting discussions. It was then time to dine on a delectable lunch to include crab cakes, fresh garden salad, sparkling cider, and last but not least a decadent chocolate mousse cake for dessert. Throughout the event, Music by Marla enhanced the afternoon with memorable tunes.



Around the world in the military

Story & Photo by Christine Baldwin | Librarian AFRH-W

Starting with a suggestion from a resident, there is now a 48" x 72" laminated map just outside the Scott Library, near the Hall of Honors at AFRH-Washington. The names of several permanent duty stations have been added already, as residents can see where others have been stationed. Come and add your names to the lists!



AFRH-W Amish friendship bread

Story and Photos by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Residents and recreation staff made Amish bread to eat and the starter dough to share with friends. Residents were required to take care of the starter dough for 10 days. During those ten days, new ingredients were added to their starter bags. The starter bags were a bit pungent, but made a sweet bread after baking was complete. Residents got a chance to have a taste during lunch. We spoke about Amish heritage and where the friendship bread recipe started; it began when others would share with those who were sick and less fortunate than others.



B - I - N - G - O

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

When small group programs on Assisted Living resumed a couple of months ago, the most popular program appears to be BINGO. When Amanda Jensema, Recreation Therapist for Assisted Living, arrives on the unit to set up there are residents already waiting, socially distanced and ready to go. Usually Bingo is not thought of as a social game, but this one is. Between games, and sometimes in the middle of a game, a brief conversation will suddenly erupt or a joke is told. Prizes are rewarded to the winners and currently the best prize seems to be a box of tissues. Bingo had only been offered twice a month, but starting in June the residents have requested to do it every week. Their wish is my command! Some other types of small group programs offered are exercise/stretch programs, trivia, games, news review, and music, which is the second most popular on the unit.



Poetry celebration

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian

Photos by Jack Beck | Resident

To celebrate Poetry Month, a group of AFRH-W residents enjoyed reading and reciting their favorite poems. On this gusty afternoon, Christine read a poem written by resident William Sorince titled "The Wind." This was followed by "My Home: Please Come Live with Me" written and read by Billy Bowen, dealing with AFRH-W. Norma Rambow followed up with the moving poem "Desiderata" by Max Ehrmann. Rick Walk then read the famous poem "Dedication" by Robert Frost. Next, staff member Linda Bailey read "Who are my People?" by Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni and the uplifting "I Know Something Good About You" by Louis Shimon. New resident Richard Potts added to the celebration with his own composition "Byways," bringing back memories of small town living. An excerpt from Robert Frost's "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" was recited by John Orr. Emmy Lu Daly then chose her award winning poem "Being a Wave in World War II" and followed it with her "Ode to Feet" to entertain the group. In memory of a long time resident poetess, Ida Emily Simpson, Christine read "Prejudice," which is on a plaque on a bench in the courtyard. With his acting ability on stage, Joe Nesnow read the infamous "Highwayman" by Alfred Noyes. Paul Grimes finished the program with a heartfelt rendition of the poem "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" written by Robert W. Service (a favorite of the gathering). A special thanks to all of the residents who participated, along with Neil Ferguson, Linda Bailey, Marla McGuinness and Amanda Jensema.



AFRH-Gulfport

Corn Toss Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist



On May 4, 2021 residents competed in the Corn Toss Tournament in the Bocce Room. The players were seen competing against each other. The rest of the residents watched them play and took notes to get that perfect throw.

Fred Ray took 1st place, Mary German took 2nd place, Webb Wayland took 3rd place and Fredi Van Pelt took 4th place.

Hook and Ring Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On May 11, 2021 residents competed in the Hook and Ring Tournament in the Bocce Center. 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 to 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. Ernie Fowler took 1st place, Dianne Hatley took 2nd place, Wayland Webb took 3rd place and Jerry Anderson took 4th place.



April Mystery Game

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist
Photo by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

On April 26, 2021 recreation held its Mystery Game. The Mystery Game was Coin Toss. Residents were given instructions on how to play. This was a double elimination game.

Players were given 15 coins to throw on the ledge. Whoever had the most coins on the ledge advanced in the bracket. All residents were six-feet away during the game.

There could only be four winners for this Mystery Game. Wayland Webb won 1st place, Doris Denton won 2nd place, Ernie Fowler won 3rd place and Mary German won 4th place.



Pong Pool

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist
Photo by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

On May 3, 2021 recreation held its Mystery Game. The Mystery Game was Pong Pool. Residents were given instructions on how to play. Each resident was given seven ping pong balls and they had to roll them across the table into the solo cups. Each solo cup was worth a different point. All residents were six-feet away during the game.



There could only be four winners for this mystery game. Don Blaylock won 1st Place, Wayland Webb won 2nd place, Doris Hopper won 3rd place and Joe Chappel won 4th place.

Pong Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On May 14, 2021 recreation held its Pong Tournament. Residents were given instructions on how to play. Each resident was given seven ping pong balls and they had to bounce them across the table into solo cups. Each solo cup was worth a different point. If their ping pong balls went into their opponent's cup that meant points were going to their opponent. All residents were six-feet away during the game.

All residents playing gave it their "college party try!"

There could only be four winners for this mystery game. Wayland Webb won 1st Place, Don Blaylock won 2nd place, Sharon Price won 3rd place and Mary German won 4th place.

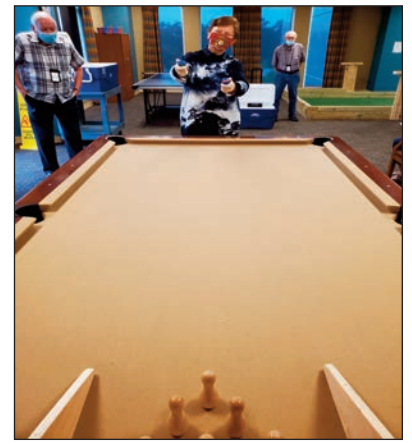


May Mystery Game

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist
Photo by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

On May 18, 2021 recreation held its Mystery Game. The Mystery Game was Miniature Bowling.

Residents were given instructions on how to play. This was a double elimination game. Players were given two miniature bowling balls to roll down and hit the miniature bowling pins. Since this was a mystery game the bowling pins that were left standing was their score and the lowest score was the winner. All residents were six-feet away from each other during the game. There could only be four winners for this Mystery Game. Ernie Fowler won 1st place, Jim Hayden won 2nd place, Doris Denton won 3rd place and Dianne Hatley won 4th place.



Outdoor Shuffleboard Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On April 20, 2021 residents competed in the Outdoor Shuffleboard Tournament at the basketball court. The morning was cool, crisp and the bugs were not biting. Doris Hopper and Doris Denton competed against each other. Dianne Hatley, Wayland Webb, Don Blaylock, Earl Gassery and Mary German waited for their turn to play.

There could only be three winners that day. Doris Denton took 1st place, Don Blaylock took 2nd place, Doris Hopper took 3rd place and Earl Gassery took 4th place.



Thank you Ingalls Shipbuilding

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

Ingalls Shipbuilding often donates flowers to AFRH-G. Surely you've seen the beautiful arrangements that adorn the first floor on occasion. Well, Ingalls has recently made some additional donations. Lovely art canvases, paints, and puzzles were donated through Mr. James Davey, in the DDG Program Office at Ingalls.

We appreciate their efforts in supporting AFRH-G. I can't wait to see all the beautiful artwork made on these new canvases!

The Triple Crown of thoroughbred racing

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

Growing up in upstate New York, my family would go to Saratoga racetrack several times a season. It was a tradition to wake up very early to get to the track to see the horses warm up for the day, then walk into the beautiful and historic downtown Saratoga Springs for breakfast before heading back to the track for the races in the afternoon. My parents had huge parties at their home every year to watch and celebrate the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. Together, these three major races form the "Triple Crown." The first two races run in May (always on the 1st and 3rd Saturday) and the Belmont follows in the beginning of June. If you missed any of the earlier races, there is still time to catch the Belmont Stakes... but don't blink; you might just miss it!

Gracious donations

Story & Photo by Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

The American Red Cross: Service to the Armed Forces is a unique area of the Red Cross which serves the military community at home and around the world. In addition to offering 24/7 global emergency communication services, they also offer deployment services, financial assistance, and services for veterans. Hunter Smart, with the Alabama - Mississippi region of the American Red Cross reached out wanting to donate items to AFRH-G. The organization graciously donated a portable disc golf set, new resistance bands for the fitness center, and a variety of art supplies. These items will offer some new opportunities at AFRH-G, so be on the lookout! A big thank you to Ms. Janie Williams and Mr. Hunter Smart.



Kicking back and catching some rays

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On May 14 South Mississippi was shining brightly, as it does, with southern charm, relaxation and soaking up the sun. The day's temperature was in the high 70's with clear blue skies, a cool breeze and a warm bright sun. For residents on Allegiance Hall getting back to some sort of normal means sitting outside on the patio to enjoy what brings those to south Mississippi. "It doesn't get any better than this," stated Don Smith as he posed for his patio look. Flip flops, sunglasses, shorts, a smile with good company is all you need here to have an enjoyable relaxing retired afternoon.



It's always a good day when I can play the piano

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Bernice "Goldie" Goldstein has been out and around the Home outside enjoying the beautiful weather in her wheelchair. She has also gone to special places that house the pianos.

Since the COVID-19 restrictions have been modified and Goldie has made her way to the piano room on Valor and to the reception room in the lobby to play around on the pianos. When she plays, others around her tune in as her fingers create songs from her memory without hesitation.

"I prefer to play on the grand piano," states Goldie, "I feel normal when I play the piano, she added." I watch in amazement as she plays her "normal." The sounds can calm the storm.



WASHINGTON

Fiesta days

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy and Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapy

Recreation Therapy had a great week celebrating Cinco de Mayo with the healthcare residents of AFRH-W. Recreation Therapists Carol and Amanda put on their sombreros and dished out some homemade guacamole and salsa while dancing and entertaining the residents with traditional Mexican music. The basics of an authentic guacamole is of course avocados, tomatoes, red onions, cilantro, jalapeno peppers, salt, pepper, and lime. From there you could add in garlic, chili powder, cumin or any other seasoning that makes it perfecto. When selecting your avocados be sure to pick the freshest. How do you know when it is ripe? You give it a gentle squeeze to test for softness or pick off the stem. If it is green inside its ripe, if it is brown, it has gone bad and definitely will not have a good taste. The essentials of a tasty homemade salsa include fresh tomatoes, cilantro, jalapeno, red onion, green onion, garlic, lime, chili powder, and cumin. Both dishes, of course, need tostados to round out the full flavor and added crunch.

Cinco de Mayo, or May 5 is a holiday that remembers the Mexican Army's victory over France at the Battle of Puebla. This is not to be confused with their independence day, which is celebrated in September. Even though this holiday is not widely celebrated in Mexico, it has evolved into a festive event in America that commemorates Mexican culture and heritage.

Residents and staff all joined in the revelries partaking in dancing, eating, and fellowship. Adios Amigos!



GULFPORT

Happy Cinco de Mayo los amigos

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Cinco de Mayo, or the fifth of May, is a holiday that celebrates the date of the Mexican Army's May 5, 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. The day, which falls on Wednesday, May 5 in 2021, is also known as Battle of Puebla Day. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a commemoration of Mexican culture and heritage.

On the fifth of May AFRH-G celebrated Cinco de Mayo with a Mexican style luncheon consisting of nachos, tacos, queso, Mexican steak casserole, Mexican fried rice, Mexican stuffed peppers, Mexican corn, Mexican zucchini, Mexican egg rolls, Mexican cornbread, Mexican brownies and margaritas. Everything was absolutely delicious. Muchas gracias to dining services for such a delicious meal enjoyed by all.

