



AFRH-GULFPORT

Gulfport WWII veteran turns 103

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs
Photos by Lee Corban | Recreation Supervisor



On March 6, 2020 we celebrated Ms. Marion Ritchie's 103rd Birthday! Residents, family and friends gathered together in the Community Center for an ice cream social and cake. Ritchie, as she prefers to be called, was born on March 6, 1917 in Oakland, California. She joined the Navy in 1944 and was a member of the Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) during WWII.

She has five generations of members serving the military. Her grandfather fought in the Civil War. Her father battled in the Spanish-American War. Her step-father served in World War I. She was a part of the WAVES program during World War II, and her daughter, Katie, served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Ritchie loved her life at AFRH-G until Hurricane Katrina destroyed the Gulf Coast in 2005. One of her most vivid memories of this catastrophe was when she was looking out of her eighth-story window at the Home in Gulfport and saw cars down below floating by in the storm surge. She relocated to the AFRH in Washington, D.C., via charter buses the day after the hurricane, along with hundreds of other residents and returned to Gulfport, Mississippi when the new AFRH-G facility opened on October 4, 2010.

Ritchie has enjoyed and stayed active throughout her many years at both Homes. She enjoys attending socials and going out to dinner with her good friends.

It was such an honor to witness this significant milestone. Ritchie continues to say that her secret to happiness is, "Laugh a lot, have a happy heart, make good friends and keep them."



AFRH-WASHINGTON

Celebrating women in the military

By Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Jack Beck | Resident

March is the month of Women in History. AFRH-W gives honors to those women who have served in the military plus we shared honors to women who work inside the Home and have served in the military. We recognize all the women who came before us here at the Armed Forces Retirement Home that made it possible for us to serve with honor and dignity in any role we want in the U.S. military.

Currently, there are twenty-eight women residing in the DC Home, but these eleven women shared their stories of the past for this event: Catharine Deitch, Norma Rambow, Muriel KupperSmith, Barbara Dannher, Margaret Jirek, Emmy Lu Daly, Marion Marques, Corrine Robinson, Christine Engle, Roberta Spangler and Paulette Knor.

There was also mention of great women of the wars; such as Harriett Tubman, Frances Clayton, Clara Barton, Virginia Hall, Julia Childs, and Wilma Ledbetter.

Five women jackets from each branch of the service were displayed in the Hall of Honors. Following the ceremony cake and punch was enjoyed by all.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 2
DC Resident Highlight
Margaret Jirek

Page 5
Eagle Scout Project at
AFRH-G

Page 6
AFRH-W Artists Receive
Recognition



AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988 Web site: www.AFRH.gov Email: Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov



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

Becki L. Zschiedrich - Gulfport Public Affairs

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:

- who are 60 years of age or over; and were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.
- who are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to have a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the Armed Forces.
- who served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be suffering from injuries, disease, or disability.
- who served in a women's component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to:
AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584 ~ 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, ~ Washington, DC 20011-8400

Visit us on the web at:
<https://www.afrh.gov>



<https://www.facebook.com/AFRH.gov>

APPLY TODAY! IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY AT BOTH GULFPORT & D.C.

Black History takes a starring role in February events

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs



At our Black History Month celebration, our guest speaker reminded us that what was formerly Negro History Week has grown to Black History Month. At AFRH-W we have also expanded our celebrations to mark this month. After beginning the month with a social event, we joined in the Black History Month celebration at the Defense Logistics Agency at Ft. Belvoir. Several of our residents were special guests of Lt. General Darrell Williams, who asked our residents to join him on stage to be recognized for their service, and invited them to lunch afterwards.

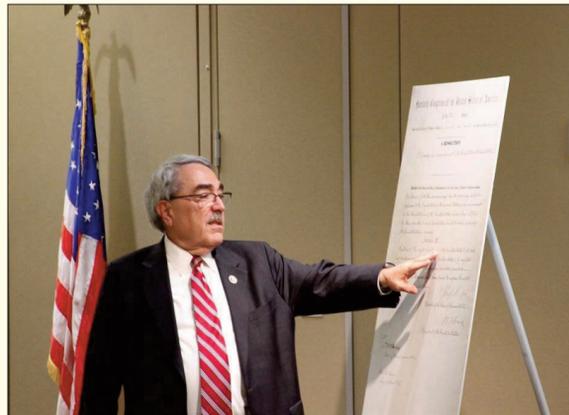
On Thursday, February 27, we joined together with the 4th, 7th, and 8th grade classes of the Creative Minds International Public Charter School for a special movie showing of "The Six Triple Eight: No Mail, Low Morale." The 6888th Army battalion was the only African American female Army battalion to serve in Europe during WWII. Their mission was to organize and send out warehouses filled with undelivered mail to U.S. troops. It was assumed that it would take two years to complete this task. They completed in just six months a task assumed would take two years.

On February 28 we held our annual (and largest) public celebration event, co-hosted with President Lincoln's Cottage. This year's theme was "African Americans and the Vote." Our guest speaker was North Carolina Congressman GK Butterfield, who has a connection at the Home, as he is a friend of our RAC Chairman Billy White. The two grew up in the same town, and went to school together. He spoke on the history of Civil Rights in the United States, as one who had lived through the changes from the 1950s to today. He encouraged everyone to be an active participant in our government by exercising their right to vote.

It turns out that Billy White knows quite a few important people in the DC area. Also in attendance was former Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives Walter Fauntroy, the first person to represent Washington DC as the District's non-voting delegate, and founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Prior to that, he was a civil rights leader, helping to organize the 1963 March on Washington.

Many people took part in this event. Chaplain Goodloe gave the invocation. Administrator Susan Bryhan presented the AFRH-W coin to Congressman Butterfield. Faye Dixon, a longtime volunteer read, "Vote or Die" by Margaret Block. Resident John Lott sang an acapella rendition of "Eyes on the Prize," a civil rights anthem.

Larry Rubin, named in the poem, "Vote or Die" attended. He left home at eighteen as part of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to sign African Americans up to vote in Mississippi. There were several prominent military members present, including Retired Rear Admiral Gay (USN) and Retired Rear Admiral Rochon (USCG) along with his wife. Prior to the program, everyone enjoyed a special lunch in the dining hall to commemorate Black History Month.



AFRH-W resident highlight – Margaret Jirak

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



Margaret Jirak was born in a small community in New York State. Both she and one of her brothers caught scarlet fever as children. He died and Margaret ended up losing her hearing. In school, as long as the teacher was facing her, Margaret was all right, but she was lost if the teacher turned her back and continued talking. After graduation, Margaret worked in the payroll department at the Otis Elevator Company.

When WWII started, one of her brothers entered the U.S. Navy. Since everyone in the community was joining the military, Margaret at the age of 21, decided to join the U.S. Marines. But they were full, so she joined the U.S. Navy. The nice thing was that Otis gave her a \$200 bonus, showing their commitment to the cause. With her previous expertise, the job she performed during the war was in payroll at Norfolk, Virginia, and it covered a 50-mile radius.

When she returned home after the war, Margaret went back to working at Otis. A British company bought Otis out and after a year, they closed and everyone was out of a job. Since Margaret loved knitting, she decided to open a yarn shop. She also married and they had one son. Margaret had the business for ten years and then sold it to a woman who seemed very interested in continuing the shop. Unfortunately, the woman, who was supposed to pay Margaret back in increments, quit one day and Margaret was left in arrears. She ended up selling the yarn in her home, until she was good again.

On a visit to Massachusetts, Margaret and her husband fell in love with a 14-room Victorian house and decided to buy it. When asked by the next door neighbor what they would do with it, Margaret said "Why live in it!" "No," the neighbor said, "You should open a Bed & Breakfast." And that is what they did. After another ten years, and her husband not doing well, they sold the house and moved to Florida. But they didn't like it and moved to New Jersey, where Margaret opened another yarn shop and her husband worked at a coffee shop around the corner from her.

Both Margaret and her husband qualified to come to AFRH-W and did so in 2004. After he passed away in 2006, Margaret stayed on. One of the highlights for her was being the second ever Commander of the American Legion Post 70.

Wisconsin veteran gives back to residents at AFRH-G

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



Thank you to Renee Piotrowski for the beautiful hand-crocheted blankets she created for our veterans at AFRH-G. Renee lives in Hatley, Wisconsin and served six years in the Army National Guard as a medic. She also volunteers

on the Never Forgotten Honor Flight, which is a non-profit organization of dedicated volunteers, who provide veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam a flight to Washington, D.C. to visit the memorials built in their honor. Renee said, "It is my pleasure and honor to thank these service men and women. They deserve so much more!"



How bout' a beer?

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Since Fiddler's Green is temporarily closed at AFRH-G and everyone is practicing social distancing, our recreation department decided to lighten things up a bit and serve beer at lunch on Friday, March 20. This was a real treat and brought smiles to many residents' faces during these trying times. Keep up the good work of practicing safety and social distancing. Remember to keep your distance around people and always wash your hands. We would like all of residents to stay safe during this pandemic.



AFRH-W annual Nursing Skills Fair

Story and Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

The Armed Forces Retirement Home – Washington conducted its annual Nursing Skills Fair providing competency-based training for our nursing staff. The Skills Fair Committee, chaired by Nurse Educator Tifni Little, organized the two-day fair to provide face-to-face learning time with staff and reinforce their skills with a fun St. Patrick's Day theme.

Learning stations were set up throughout our Community Center addressing healthcare practices including: Infection Prevention, Falls Prevention, Transfer Techniques, Wound Care, Catheter Care, Emergency Process, Nutrition and Dysphagia, Hospice Care, EKG Training and information on Dementia, Alcohol Abuse, Mental Health, Recreation Therapy and more. Each nursing staff picked up a competency packet and used it as their roadmap through the skills fair as they traveled through each station.

Approximately 90 nursing staff, as well as some of our own residents, learned and reinforced their healthcare skills through the fair. Nurse Educator Tifni Little said, "Thank you to everyone who pitched in and volunteered their time coming in early and staying late. It shows how passionate our staff are about their job and the residents."



From the AFRH-W Administrator



As I write this, we are in a situation that most of us have never experienced. The news is flooded with information and updates about the Coronavirus or COVID-19 that has brought the world to a stop. Restaurants are closed, the public transit system is limited and life as we know it has changed dramatically in a matter of weeks. Our team has worked very hard to protect everyone and to keep life as much as normal as we can here on the Washington campus.

Even though we have no visitors or volunteers, there is still a lot going on. We ended February with a fabulous Black History Month program. Our speaker, Congressman GK Butterfield gave a history lesson of the African American journey through the past several hundred years. It was both engaging and very informative. We also had a poem reading and a beautiful acapella song by resident John Lott. The emcee, resident Billy Bowen kept things going.

Our recreation staff hosted a wonderful celebration that included many of our women veterans by celebrating women in the military. We heard stories of our residents' experiences of their service during all of the wars, going back to World War II. Those of us younger women veterans owe these women our thanks for paving the way for us.

And we couldn't have March without a St. Patrick's Day event even though many will miss March Madness. The Community Center was all green and ready with an Irish theme, food and music. All who attended practiced social distancing and hand washing while listening to tunes

played by resident DJ Billy White. It was a great way to get a break from the news!

And despite the staff being extra busy with keeping everyone healthy, the healthcare team with a few extra helpers were able to hold our annual Nursing Skills Fair to ensure all nursing staff validated their skills. The theme this year was St. Patrick's Day, so there was plenty of green in the room. All who participated commented that they learned quite a lot, and enjoyed getting to demonstrate their knowledge.

While we all work through what is happening around us, I hope that each of you gets a moment to share time with friends and family even if it is over the phone or video. If we all work together, I know we'll get through this and someday look back on these days as just an added memory to so many others we have.

Susan Bryhan



When the going gets tough, the tough get going

Story and Photo by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor

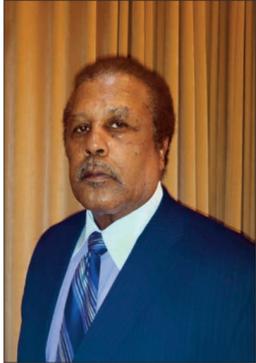
Even though the COVID-19 virus has infected our world and country causing much heartache and financial distress, the old saying comes to mind. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." The news programs have highlighted many citizens in our country standing up in some way to lend a helping hand to their neighbors. Whether some sports stars are paying the salaries of the concession stand workers who have lost their jobs or others are checking in on the elderly to see if they need some groceries, it is always refreshing to see Americans pitching in during this time of need.

Well at AFRH-W, our residents have noticed the changes happening here where family members and volunteers are not allowed to visit, the dietary line is changing and the staff are wiping down all areas that we come into contact with.

Recently the recreation therapy staff were disinfecting our community center tables, chairs and bingo equipment. Residents Marvin Archer, Christine Engle, Sheldon Shorthouse and Lillian Miller saw us and came in to ask if there was something they could do make a difference during this crisis. Well, we put them to work disinfecting the bingo cards that they and others use each week. They were happy to be doing their part in making our home a safe place to live and work and we were happy to see the teamwork involved in the task!



Notes from the AFRH-W Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



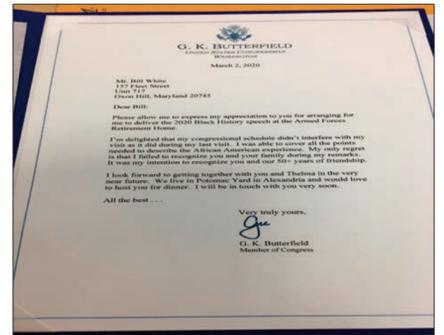
As a kid, I watched the TV show "The Twilight Zone," but none of us could ever think of living through what seems to be a bad dream that won't let us wake up. Everyone here at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington D.C. is like family. If the chain is ever broken between residents and employees it will surely hurt, even if it's just one person. We pray for everyone and their families to be safe. The veterans community outreach is being hosted by Samantha and Shayla, who have taken a number of the residents on wonderful dinner trips to some of the best restaurants in the District, Maryland, and Virginia. Four of the residents went on the last trip to a restaurant called PF Chang's. The food was so good and we are hoping that the PF Chang's restaurant will be included in the eighty acres project.

On February 27, the eighth-grade scholars of Creative Minds International (CMI) Public Charter School showed the residents a film on the historic 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion-the only unit of African American women to serve overseas during World War II. We thank the kids from CMI for that historic information.

On February 28 we had our Black History Month program and Congressman GK Butterfield was our guest speaker. My phone line is still lighting up with people calling to say how much they enjoyed the program. Congressman Butterfield did an exceedingly excellent job! We are truly thankful at the Armed Forces Retirement that he took time to be with us for our Black History Month celebration. We are so happy to have back with us again Faye M. Dixon who has been with us at least seven years. She's like a big sister, so when I call on her she is always willing to help with our program. We want to thank her for the

many years of dedication to helping AFRH-W with this program each year. Yes, I had my sisters and brother with me. Thank you to my family: Judy C. Davis, Linda J. A. L. Hawkins and Gary Hawkins. I would also like to thank the following: Doctor Larry Bland for making sure Congressman Walter Fauntroy and his team made it to the program; Earl L. Gay, RADM, USN (RET), a long-time friend; Steve Rochen, RADM USCG (RET) and his lovely wife, good friends of the Home; Erinn Roth, LTC, USA; first time visit from SGM Michael J. Eason, Commander, VFW Post 9376; Phillip L. Howard, Commander, DAV and his team; and Veronica Ingram, Ward 4 Chair and her members. Thanks to all of you from the Chairman at AFRH, Billy R. White.

Billy Ray White



From the AFRH-G Administrator



March has been a very unusual month, to say the least. Most events and trips have been cancelled due to COVID-19. Please watch channel 4 for updates on Senior TV. AFRH-G is closely monitoring the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for information regarding COVID-19.

Below are the following precautions we have already taken:

- Visitors are not permitted on campus.
- All community activities have been cancelled.
- The "train room" and "puzzle room" are currently off-limits. Puzzles have been moved to the Club Room A245 & A255.
- Fiddler's Green is closed.
- Guest Suite reservations through the month of March 2020 have been cancelled. If you wish to cancel a future reservation, please call (228) 897-4401 and notify the resident volunteer. Refunds can be processed over the phone.
- Residents should limit unnecessary visits to staff and other residents' rooms.
- You must practice safe social distancing. Social distancing means maintaining distance (approximately six feet) from others when possible. These actions may reduce your risk of being exposed to COVID-19, and can slow the spread and reduce the impact of the disease.
- All scheduled AFRH admissions are suspended indefinitely.

As we go through these difficult times together, remember we are here for you, our veterans, and we will continue to provide exceptional residential care and extensive support services. AFRH is committed to excellence, fostering independence, vitality and wellness for our veterans, making AFRH a vibrant place in which to live, work and thrive.

God Bless,

Jeff Eads



Jeff Eads brings Roy Deemes safety equipment while he was cutting the grass. Safety First!



While doing the "two-step" Jeff Eads measures the distance between chairs in the conference room, making sure they are six-feet apart.

Eagle Scout project enhances bocce court

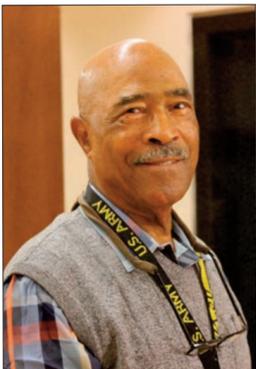
Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

On February 23, 2020, Ryan Bergman, joined by fellow members of Boy Scout Troop 201, completed his Eagle Scout project to install four bocce ball stands and four bean bag stands in the AFRH Bocce Center. After a recent tournament, the idea was initiated to create stands for the balls so that residents would not have to keep bending over to pick them up off the court floor. In January, blueprints were drawn up, a prototype of each stand was completed and they were tested on February 2 for accuracy.

On Sunday, February 9, several scouts and adults met to make the final six matching wooden stands along with eight improved table top holders that included additional molding around the edges. On February 23, Scout Master Skip Wright along with his sons Jeremy and Eddie Wright assisted Ryan Bergman and his father, Timothy Bergman, with the final challenges of leveling the stands with the wooden bocce base beams. We thank Boy Scout Troop 201 and Ryan Bergman for enhancing the recreation outlets and quality of life for the veterans of AFRH. Hope you get to try them out at the upcoming Corn Toss and Bocce Ball Tournaments!



Notes from the AFRH-G Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



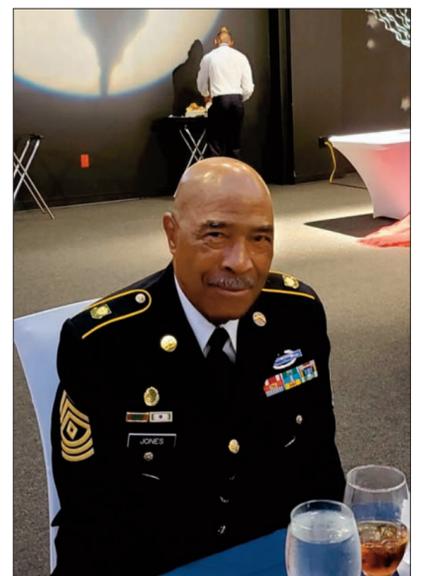
March has always been a joyful month, so many things to celebrate. We began with Daylight Savings Time change on the first Sunday. Pi, a well-known mathematical constant, was remembered on the 14th and St. Patrick's Day was the 17th. Because this is a leap year, spring arrived on the 19th of the month, but the "elephant in the room" this year is the Coronavirus/COVID-19.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus introduced to humans for the first time. It attacks the respiratory system causing fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. According to health organizations, persons most vulnerable to the virus are the elderly. We, average age 83, are the elderly.

We are making every effort to ensure our campus is as safe as possible. We have instituted several policies to reduce our exposure and risk. Restrictions to visitors, volunteers and all social gatherings have been postponed or cancelled. We have an increased awareness about hand washing, hand sanitizing, touching of the face and social distancing.

In the coming days and weeks other safeguards may be forthcoming. We, the residents, must do our part. Yes, these changes may interrupt our normal schedules but safety trumps all inconveniences.

Arthur "Art" W. Jones



AFRH-Washington

St. Patrick's Day in Washington, DC

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

This year the St. Patrick's Day Social was milder than in past years, but still vibrant and full of laughter and cheer. Residents who came enjoyed merriment with their fellow comrades while also following social distancing protocol. Served to the tables were assorted fruits, vegetables, and cookies. Beverages included green punch, soda, water, beer, and Irish coffee served by our resident bartender, Sheldon Shorthouse.

As you probably guessed, the coffee was a hit! The people of Ireland know their beer, but they are notorious for their toasts. Everyone had an opportunity to recite their own, or they had toasts at their tables to read.

Recreation Specialist Marla McGuinness started the toasts. Some were deep and made you think, some were humorous, while others were sweet. Our very own DJ Billy White filled the Community Center with Irish tunes, and led us in a sing-a-long to, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," "Molly Malone" and of course "Danny Boy."



AFRH-W artists receive recognition

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Annemarie Wilson | Recreation Therapy Supervisor

You can get much satisfaction by creating a piece of art. It is all the more special when your work is displayed for many people to see and recognized for the skill and creativity you put into that work. The resident artists at AFRH-W had the opportunity, along with other veteran artists, to display their work at the annual VA Creative Arts Festival. This nationwide competition is co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary.

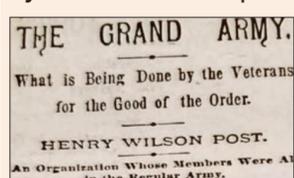
Winners at the local level were to have their work displayed at a number of venues throughout the month. First-place winners advance to national judging. Those who are gold medal winners on the national level are invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival hosted by the VA at locations that change every year. This year's Creative Arts Festival will be hosted in St. Petersburg, Florida in December.

Six of our residents entered pieces in the show this year; Mimi Rifkin, Mike Hoth, George Wellman, Fred Layman, Bob Farris and Jim Morrison. Three took first place, and will have their artwork go on to the national level for judging. One resident also earned a second-place ribbon. Congratulations to our winners, and we will keep you posted on their next level of competition.



Henry Wilson Post, 17

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



Last month we read about the Henry Wilson monument beside Rose Chapel. This month we are following up with an article taken from the August 27, 1896 edition of the Washington, D.C. newspaper, "The National Tribune." It reports of an inspection of the Grand Army Post 17, (known as the Henry Wilson Post), located at the U.S. Soldiers' Home. Membership of the post was at 114 members and it was noted that everyone wore full uniforms, including white belts and gloves. The books that were audited were in "first class condition, without blot or erasure." A complete description of each "comrade" was carefully kept and, it was noted, that everyone had signed the U.S. Constitution. This Post was the banner post of the year, in the manner of recruiting, and we remember them now.

Scavenger hunt

Story & Photo by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

AFRH-W held a scavenger hunt that they talked about for days. Residents were paired up and given one clue. Once they solved that clue, it would lead them to the next clue.

There were 25 clues hidden inside the entire Home for them to find. Clues like, "Let's have a drink and play some tunes." Drinks are served in the Defenders Inn and tunes inside there leads to the piano. They looked under the piano key cover and sent them on their way to another clue. Another clue, "No they are not fishes but you could get stuck." There is a large fish tank that holds cactus plants inside the main hallway inside the Sheridan. I did allow them to ask questions and I was there to help but I did not give all the clues away.

Depending on how quickly they figured out the clue was how fast the game happened. That is not all, at each clue area they had to take a "selfie" with their partner. At times, you would see a group going by and then coming back. Everyone was a good sport and no one gave up on the clues. The first pair back with all pictures and the final clue in hand won a \$25 gift card from AFEES. Congratulations to Roberta Spangler and Bill Jentarra, who won first place.



Golden Corral buffet & grill... belly busters bring it on!

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Who doesn't enjoy an endless buffet of great food? Residents were treated to a much-awaited trip to the Golden Corral Buffet & Grill in Hanover, Maryland, which has a delicious home-style menu with so many choices. The menu consisted of all-you-can-eat soups, salads, assorted rolls, seafood, fried chicken, spaghetti, burgers and hot dogs off the grill, and homemade desserts, including a chocolate fountain to dip strawberries and pineapples in... WOW, what more could we have asked for...ok they had it...not just soft serve ice cream but hand dipped ice cream too!

Golden Corral restaurant opened in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1973. It was one of the first in the restaurant business to offer customers real wholesome foods in a family-friendly atmosphere. Special thanks to the staff and fellow customers for treating our veterans with honor and respect. One hundred year old resident, Catharine Deitch, was even treated to an "on the house meal." We look forward to going back again in the future, after we've all lost a pound or two or three!



Armed Forces Retirement Home presented with Flags of Valor Plaque

Courtesy of the Marine Corps Marathon Organization (MCMO)



The Marine Corps Marathon Organization (MCMO) recognized the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington D.C. (AFRH-W) for their longstanding support of the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) and the local amateur radio operators (HAMS) by presenting a special plaque created by Flags of Valor at last week's Town Hall Meeting. The program kicked off with a welcome message from AFRH-W Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz, followed by a brief address from Colonel William C. Bentley, III, Commander of Marine Corps Base Quantico, who thanked the residents for their years of service. "It is not lost on me the legacy and the great things you all have done. So, I do want to take the time to say thank you...thank you for your family members, caregivers and all the great folks

you have here that provide the great service and care that you need. We are here today because of your service."

Col. Bentley and MCMO Director, Rick Nealis, presented the plaque to Mr. Kartz on behalf of Susan E. Bryhan, Captain, U.S. Navy, (Ret) and administrator for the AFRH in Washington, D.C. Ms. Bryhan has been the coordinator between the MCM HAMS & AFRH.

"The AFRH location is very advantageous for us due to its highly secured compound, as well as being located at a very high elevation that allows the HAM Net Control to communicate to all operators along the MCM's course," said MCMO Deputy Director of Operations, Cory Cole.

The HAMS plan and carry out quality radio operation for all MCMO events throughout the year, as well as provide data entry for the medical team. And for the last 15 years, the AFRH-W has allowed the MCMO's HAM Operators to use their facilities to conduct their annual training and establish "Net Control" during MCM Weekend.

AFRH-Gulfport

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



Gulfport resident Dan Ellis had a special parade planned for St. Patrick's Day, with photos of the late Dwight Wilkinson as the Grand Marshal. Unfortunately, the parade was cancelled due to the coronavirus. Dan and seven other residents decided to dress up anyway for a photo shoot in the Hall of Honors. Hopefully next year we'll have the parade and it will be business as usual. Until then, stay safe everyone.



The good times roll with St. James Elementary!

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

On February 19, 2020 St. James Elementary School's 5th Grade Class performed a medley of songs in the Valor Piano Lounge including patriotic, religious, and Mardi Gras favorites with pianist, Terese Evans.

Afterwards, the students, led by teacher Susan Ladner, gave out beads and paraded through the Valor Dining Hall and Loyalty Dining Hall. The group concluded with a visit and parade through the main Independent Living Dining Hall to sing and give out beads along their way. Since Mardi Gras 2011, we thank St. James for their continued community partnership with their annual visit to AFRH-G.



Service Saturday – A tremendous success

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

On March 7, nine members from the Naval Construction Training Center (NCTC) supported Service Saturday at AFRH-G for the second time! Eight E1-E3 active duty service members dedicated their time and abilities on Saturday morning assisting 25 residents with individual requests. Several residents had furniture assembled, re-arranged their rooms, had TV's/computers reprogrammed and had their mattresses flipped.

Service Saturday occurs once a quarter. It provides an opportunity for active duty service members to volunteer on the weekend while also completing personalized requests for residents. We are looking forward to NCTC returning in June for the next Service Saturday event. A big thank you to CPO Michael Weston, PO1 Alexis Smith and PO2 Brandon Jones for their support!

Are you a resident interested in signing up for Service Saturday? Don't wait to sign up for the next event! Sign-ups are completed at the front desk in Administration. Sign-ups close the Wednesday before the event. Check the plan of the week for updated information on Service Saturday.

Seabee Ball 2020

Photo submitted by Tony Langdon | Resident

AFRH-G residents attended the 78th Anniversary Navy Seabee Ball, on 7 March 2020 at the IP Casino Resort, Biloxi, Mississippi.



Marching on with seafood at the Reef

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Therapy Assistant

On February 28, 2020 the healthcare residents enjoyed a day out with shopping and lunch. The day began at the local Wal-Mart. Many wandered the aisles to find personal items, snacks, candy and craft supplies. As the residents shopped, items were crossed off the lists, creating many accomplished feelings. After shopping, we went to lunch at the Reef restaurant in Biloxi and had good tasting seafood with a twist of Cajun spices to open up the taste buds. Good food, good friends, good company... another great day at AFRH-G.



Card Battle tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On March 12, 2020 residents competed in the Card Battle Tournament in the Community Center. The object of the tournament was to get the highest card to win both cards. Whoever had the most cards at the end advanced in the double elimination bracket. All the residents were seen concentrating for all the cards that they could get in their battle.

There could only be four winners: Diana Dopp took 1st place, Wayland Webb took 2nd place, Sharon Price took 3rd place and Bill Jossendal took 4th place.



Hearts tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On February 27, 2020 residents competed in the Hearts Tournament in the second floor Club Room. Each player played four hands at the table. The two players with the highest score moved on to the next table. Each player played a total of 20 hands by different players. The object of the game was to get the lowest score possible.

There could only be four winners: Fred Ray took 1st place for 21 points, Steve Smith took 2nd place for 58 points, Woody Hilliker took 3rd place for 74 points and Mary German took 4th place for 76 points.



Bocce tournament

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On February 28, 2020 residents competed in the Bocce Ball Tournament in the Bocce Room. DC Breland and Woody Hilliker competed against each other to see who would advance to the final four. Residents lined up on the outer court and watched the game. Also, DC Breland took advantage of the new Bocce ball stand that was built by a local Boy Scout Troop for their Eagle Scout Project.

There could only be four winners: Ernie Fowler took 1st place, Fred Ray took 2nd place, Jim Haydon took 3rd place and Woody Hilliker took 4th place.



Pool (9-Ball) tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On March 10, 2020 residents competed in the Pool (9-Ball) Tournament in the second floor Club Room. Bill Truitt looked to get that combination shot into the corner pocket. Mike Longwell checked out Bill Truitt's impossible shot.

There could only be four winners: Mike Longwell took 1st place, Bill Truitt took 2nd place, Ernie Fowler took 3rd place and Woody Hilliker took 4th place.



WASHINGTON

For chocolate lovers only!

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy
Photos by Mike Hoth | Resident



Chocolate candy, chocolate cake, chocolate brownies, chocolate macaroons, M&M's, and to top it off, a chocolate fountain with chocolate covered strawberries, pineapples and bananas! On February 25, the Recreation Therapy Chocolate Lover's Social and Dance was held...it is a favorite yearly event at AFRH-W! Since it was "Fat Tuesday" the residents were greeted at the door by military volunteers with colorful beads to liven up the celebration.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) hosted the decadent and delicious DAR dessert bar. The ladies of the

DAR and the Catholic University of America student volunteers came ready to shake a leg and dance the night away, mixing and mingling with 60-plus residents. Great music was provided by resident DJ Dr. Love (aka Billy White). Food Services provided tasty finger sandwiches, fresh fruit and cheese & crackers...it's hard to believe that some people don't like chocolate!

To top off the refreshments, the NAM Knights Capital Chapter sponsored the open bar known for the night as "Love Potion Central" and was bartended by resident Sheldon Shorthouse. Resident Dave Kaetzel got everyone up and moving to the beat for a huge Conga line streaming in and around tables, chairs and fellow residents. It was a fun-filled night for all.



GULFPORT

"Hootenanny" special guest sing-along

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

On March 4, residents throughout AFRH joined special guest musicians for a "Hootenanny." The afternoon sing-along was led by Donna Snell, on ukulele and banjo, Pete Snell on guitar with harmony vocals, and Linus Clark on mandolin. Resident's lips could be seen as they sang, recalling memories triggered by a variety of gospel, folk, patriotic, big band, and country and western songs. During "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad," residents joined in with different rhythm instruments, steel rail ties hit with rail spikes, and a wooden train whistle added for authenticity. An appreciative thank you to Independent Living resident, Leonard "Lenny" Kempisty for inviting these welcoming musicians to share their talents with our AFRH veterans and we look forward to another "Hootenanny" shindig in the future.

