

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS



Winter 2020

CEO Corner

Charging Forward into Opportunity

By Libby Bush, CEO, Vinson Hall Retirement Community

Happy New Year!

As we start 2020 together, I can't help but take a moment in reflection, and then, charge forward to the opportunity of this New Year. I've had the privilege of being with you in our community for the last two years. During this time together, we've had our highs and lows being a group of people where relationships run deep and where our common passion, VHRC, unites us. Through the laughter, the tears, the challenges, and the victories, I've come to learn that we all embrace, in our own ways, our commitment to being a place where all individuals can live life their own way.

In other words, moving forward, we want to be a community of people where voices are heard, connections are made, fulfillment is achieved, and well-being is promoted (the four engagement areas from Holleran).

To do this, we continue the transition with goals of outstanding lifestyle and wellness choices, maintaining a high quality and highly valued workforce, ensuring financial health, and seeking new service options, for example, home and community based services. I'm eager to learn more from you about these areas, plus other subjects, from the resident engagement survey results, as well as focus group meetings. As you know, I've asked you to consider three questions prior to each session:

1. What makes VHRC a place where you want to live?



Vinson Hall Retirement Community's CEO Libby Bush at last year's party celebrating The Sylvestery. As we move out of our 50th Anniversary year and into 2020, Libby – and the VHRC community – is focusing on making connections and continuing on building on all that's good to create great.

2. What would make VHRC a better place to live?
3. What short and long-term ideas do you have related to VHRC?

Ultimately, the vision is to be a community of all people — not residents versus staff, and not one area of residency versus another — a community of engaged people where we are continuously building on all that's good to create great.

With my thanks, appreciation, and fervent hope we all have a peaceful, fulfilling 2020.

Creating a Festive Community and New Tradition

By Amiee Freeman, Communications and Public Relations Specialist



Residents, volunteers, and staff together decorated the Vinson Hall lobby.

The week following Thanksgiving was a whirlwind of activity at VHRC. The staff, residents, and volunteers pulled together and decorated the community for the holidays. This was the first time in many years that residents and staff have put up the decorations together.

Just like any home, before the decorations could go up, we first had to remember where we stored them. This task fell to our Facilities team, who, in addition to their regular tasks, helped us locate and put up all 23 trees.

Next, one of the newest members of our VHRC team, Michelle Crone, our Foundation’s Philanthropy Coordinator, was tasked with organizing the tree decorating. First, Michelle categorized the thousands of ornaments, the dozens of tree toppers and ribbons, and the yards of greenery used over the years to decorate VHRC. Then, she and her resident co-chair, Jean Mertz, brought together a steering committee of staff and residents ready to take on the big job.

Finally, our crew of residents, staff, and volunteers, decorated the entire campus! In addition to Christmas trees, the decorations also included menorahs to celebrate Hanukkah and a kinara for Kwanzaa. It was a great opportunity for the residents and staff to work toward a shared goal of making the community beautiful and festive. Many residents commented how much they enjoyed this project. As they downsized into life at VHRC, they had reduced the amount of holiday decorations they put out in their own homes. This holiday decoration project gave everyone a chance to spread some holiday cheer by decorating a space for all to enjoy.

About Campus News and Views

Campus News and Views is our quarterly VHRC newsletter. This newsletter is reviewed by a newsletter committee, comprised of VHRC residents and staff. Residents and staff are invited to submit articles for inclusion in the newsletter. The deadline for submissions for the Spring newsletter is April 6, 2020. Please submit articles and photos to Amiee Freeman, Communications and Public Relations Specialist, (amieef@vinsonhall.org or 703-538-3069) in the Philanthropy and Engagement Office.

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Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

Closing Out a Milestone Year with Thanks

By Devon Meier, Director of Philanthropy and Engagement



*During our 50th Anniversary year, we had a little corn bag fun. Above, Devon Meier, Director of Philanthropy and COL Glenn Bratcher, USMC (Ret.), try their hand at corn bag toss. We had so much fun last year, we are having a 2nd Corn Bag Toss Tournament on **Thursday, Feb. 27!***

A big thank you to everyone who supported Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation in 2019. We had an incredible year celebrating Vinson Hall Retirement Community's 50th Anniversary. Highlights from the year included:

- January 7, 2019 – Anniversary Blessings
- February 2019 – ABP and TS Birthday Celebrations
- March 13, 2019 – Staff and Resident Corn Bag Toss Tournament
- April 5, 2019 – VHRC Talent Show
- June 22, 2019 – VHRC Birthday Block Party
- September 21, 2019 – NMCGRF 25th Annual Gala
- December 31, 2019 – New Year's Eve Happy Hour Send Off

Thanks to you, NMCGRF was able to continue its support for the residents of Vinson Hall Retirement Community and enable them to live life to the fullest. Together, we raised more than \$540,000! We also had another banner year for our Annual Star Member campaign, raising \$85,000.

As we embark upon 2020, we wanted to share highlights about what the Foundation has supported over the last 15 years.

Resident Assistance

- 2005 to 2019: More than \$5 million provided in support.
- 2019: \$287,250 provided in support.

Wounded Warrior Transitional Housing

- 2013 to 2019: More than \$160,000 provided in support and nine wounded warriors assisted.

Innovation and Enhancement

- Electronic Medical Records Software
- Fitness Renovations
- Paul Peak Award
- Portable Sound Machine
- The Sylvestery Refresh Project – new paint, carpet, and furniture for the common gathering areas
- Two Life Skills Stations for The Sylvestery
- Outdoor Horseshoe Pit

Thank you for your continued support. Because of you, we were, are, and will be able to fulfill our important mission. 2020 here we come!



Introducing Willow Oak

Have you heard the news? The Independent Living Building is now Willow Oak, named after the glorious tree that graces the entrance to the building. The new name was selected by NMCGRF's Board of Directors from a list of names put forward by VHRC residents.

An Experience in Faraway Laos

By Kent Holmes

I was among some 200 people touching their lighted tapers to the pyre that would cremate the remains of a dear friend. The year was 1972 in the bucolic city of Luang Prabang in Laos. My friend's name was Barbara. She was the wife of my Unit Chief, and I was his deputy in this remote outpost.

Barbara was an unusual complement to her husband's official status. An accomplished Lao linguist and student of the Buddhist religion, Barbara spent many hours with the local Buddhist priests (*bonzes*) in the various temples (*wats*) throughout the city. Because of her husband Bob's official position in the royal capital, she gained social access to the Royal Family, with whom she developed a special relationship.

A few days prior to her death, Bob and Barbara invited some staff to their residence for cocktails. On this particular occasion Bob had announced that the local Lao commander had asked Bob to accompany him to a conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Jokingly, he mentioned this would be the first time that he and Barbara would be apart during their five years of marriage.

Two days later Bob left on his short trip to Thailand. The evening after he left, Barbara called me, concerned about the guest list for a party she was hosting. I assured her all was in order. As I think back to this conversation, I wondered if she wasn't somehow attempting to reach out for that last contact with another person.

The next morning, Barbara's maid called our office, saying that Barbara was not responding to her wake up call. Our office secretary yelled out: "The maid thinks Barbara is dead because she is not responding to her calls!" I rushed to



A Buddhist temple in Luang Prabang

the French hospital to find the only European doctor in the city. In about 15 minutes we arrived at the residence. Rushing into the bedroom and viewing her body, there was no question as to the judgment of the maid.

Thoughts on what needed to be done began cascading through my mind. Bob must be told as soon as possible. Moving back to the office, I formulated a plan of action. First an immediate message must be sent to the Embassy in Vientiane. In this conversation, I recommended that we use our Beechcraft to fly to Chiang Mai, inform Bob, and then let the aircraft take him on to Bangkok to make any personal arrangements. The Embassy agreed, and I proceeded to Chiang Mai.

Arriving in the Chiang Mai airport, I immediately called the consulate, asking about Bob's whereabouts. Their reply was that Bob and various consulate officials were attending a lunch, but they did not know where. My only choice was to wait for his return to the airport. After about 45 minutes, we heard an aircraft power its engines. Looking out over the hot tarmac, we saw the Lao Air Force C-47 prepare

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Saying Goodbye to a Friend in Laos

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for take-off. My God, I said to myself, he has left for Luang Prabang not knowing his wife is dead. Looking at the pilot, I said: "How can we call the damn aircraft back?"

The pilot did not wait to answer but raced up the stairs to the control tower. Fortunately, we were able to radio the U.S. Air Force pilot who was flying the aircraft and convince him to return to Chiang Mai. The plane landed and Bob emerged from the aircraft and exclaimed, "What in the hell are you doing here?" Slowly I said that something had happened to Barbara. He replied quickly, "Something terrible?" "Yes, Bob," I replied. "She is dead."

Slowly the reality of Barbara's death began to sink in. I edged the conversation around to the reality of what to do next. Bob agreed with my plan that he take the Beechcraft and fly directly to Bangkok. Within minutes the aircraft was airborne and heading toward Bangkok. I returned to Luang Prabang.

Two days later, Bob returned to Luang Prabang unannounced. While still in somewhat of a daze, he rationally discussed his plans. After packing and saying goodbye to friends, he would leave our office for home leave and reassignment. Since Barbara was somewhat of a convert to Buddhism, he thought it would be appropriate if she were cremated in Bangkok.

That first evening after his return, I and a colleague accompanied Bob home to assist him in organizing for his departure. As we were going about these preparations, visitors, including the Governor of the province, the military commander, and several other senior Lao officials, arrived. After exchanging a few pleasantries, the Governor very carefully explained that they had heard that Barbara's body was going to be cremated in Bangkok. He suggested that it would be more fitting to have this done among friends in Luang Prabang. In addition, the Governor said that the King had authorized an award for Barbara – Laos' highest

award for women – "*Merit de Fem.*"

Bob said nothing for a few minutes. The he sadly commented, "I just want to leave this place quietly, taking with me memories of the happy times Barbara and I shared here. Her cremation would blot that out."

The Lao officials pleaded with Bob. As the evening grew late, Bob slowly came around to their proposition. I was assigned the task of cabling the Embassy to have Barbara's body returned to Luang Prabang, which I did early the following morning. Within hours, we had a response back with an approval.

The last paragraph of the cable stated that the initial analysis of the autopsy could not identify the precise cause of death but traces of a sleeping sedative were found. However, the sedative was not the cause of death. I recalled that a month or so before Barbara's death, Bob had mentioned that Barbara had not been feeling well. Several weeks before that, she had passed out while shopping. Apart from these happenings, no solid explanation was given as to the exact cause of death.

The following afternoon, Barbara's body returned to Luang Prabang. Several Lao women accompanied the casket from the airfield to a historic *wat* where Barbara's body lay in state for two days. On the second evening, Bob and I were asked to visit the *wat* and join the *bonzes* in their prayers.

The next day, the cremation took place. Bob did not attend. Each participant was given a taper that would be used to light the pyre. The *bonzes* chanted several prayers and the lighted tapers touched the pyre. For the Americans and Europeans, this ceremony was somewhat of a cultural shock. However, in retrospect it was something that Barbara would have wanted. Today, her ashes are contained in a small crypt situated on a hill overlooking the Royal Palace, the city of Luang Prabang, and the Mekong River.

Goodwill Ambassador Role Launches Career

By Lorna Lagarde

I graduated from the University of Santo Tomas' Faculty of Pharmacy in Manila, passed the board exams and accomplished all the requirements needed to be a pharmacist. However, I was only 21 years old and deemed too young by law to practice the profession. With my free time, I started to sing in a church choir. Lois F. Bello, a well known voice teacher and conductor, gave me a scholarship to the Philippine Christian University, where she taught. Imelda Marcos, wife of then Filipino Vice President Ferdinand Marcos, was also her student.

At this same time – in 1961 – General Chiang Kai-Shek, president of the Republic of China, and Ferdinand Marcos were friends. The General was celebrating his birthday, so the Philippine government decided to send goodwill ambassadors to greet the president on his special day and to entertain the Chinese soldiers stationed on Kinmen Island.

I, along with several of my classmates, was selected for this assignment. We traveled to Kinmen Island, off the southeastern coast of mainland China. On the island, the General started his special day with a worship service in his private chapel. His chapel was gorgeous, surrounded with beautifully manicured flower gardens. In this beautiful setting, we provided the music.



The author, Lorna Lagarde, left, was a Filipino goodwill ambassador to China. She and several other ambassadors traveled to Kinman Island off the coast of southeast China to perform for Chiang Kai-Shek in 1961.

Before we could participate in this grand event, I and my classmates received special instructions from John Finley Williamson, founder and conductor of the Westminster Choir in Princeton, N.J. The Philippine government specially invited Mr. Williamson to the Philippines to give us singers some professional lessons and instructions on how to sing properly. Being a scholarship student, I learned all of his instructions by heart.

Following my engagement as a goodwill ambassador, Philippine opera companies hired me to sing with them. I traveled to several major cities, had a regular radio program, made TV appearances, and, as a member of the Philippine

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Ms. Lagarde performed at the Pentagon hospital dedication.

Continuing to Spread Goodwill and Song



Ms. Lagarde with the late Senator John McCain and journalist Tom Brokaw at a Congressional Seminar where she performed.

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Theater of the Performing Arts, was selected, along with a few others, to be the mainstay of the Malacanang Palace when foreign dignitaries visited the Philippines.

Many years later, I immigrated to the U.S. I had a cousin who worked at Georgetown University, so I settled in the D.C. area and found work as a pharmacist at Walter Reed Medical Center. In my free time, I continued to sing – but only with organizations that had the same rigor and seriousness as I had experienced in the Philippines. I sang with the Paul Hill Chorale of Washington, D.C. I also stayed in close contact

with the Philippine Embassy.

In 1986, at the invitation of President Reagan, Filipino President Corazon Aquino visited the U.S. She was honored with a high mass at the Cathedral of St. Matthew in Washington, D.C. The Philippine Embassy invited me to sing *Ave Maria* in an arrangement by Francisco Santiago, a Filipino composer.

Eventually, my career took me to the Pentagon, where I was the chief pharmacist. Since I worked with the federal government, I felt I could only sing if commissioned through my military commander. So, for example, I was commissioned and performed at Camp David, the U.S. Congress, the Department of State, the National Guard Headquarters, at memorial services, dedications of clinics, openings of conferences, and so forth.

Since retiring, I have been invited to join other choirs; however, I have declined. All the same, I remember the words of a medical physician from Fort McNair who invited me to sing in her church. When I declined, she said, "Once I became a medical person, people think of me only as a medical person. You, as a singer, will always be a singer."

Hubris

By Elisabeth Wilton

The trees begin to wave good-bye while end of Summer breezes sigh,
And grasses brown, and leaves turn red as Autumn lifts its fiery head.

The weather's been delightful here: our Winter mild, a Spring so clear,
And then a Summer full of pleasure: sun and rain in equal measure.

Oh lucky we for whom the wrath of Mother Nature's darker path
Seemed far away. To others came torrential floods and searing flame.

Yet next in line are hurricanes whose marching alphabetic names
Do not repeat but still imply ferocious storms of years gone by.

It seems unfair that we should be so blessed in perpetuity!
Perhaps another seismic kiss¹ would rouse us from our mindless bliss.

¹ On Aug. 23, 2011, a 5.7 magnitude earthquake hit near the Piedmont area of Virginia and was felt throughout the D.C. region and several surrounding states.



The Path of Life Reacquaints Former Classmates

By Amiee Freeman, Communications and Public Relations Specialist



Paula Yewdall and Terry Burke attended the same school in Taft, Ca. They are holding their framed 8th grade class photo.

This small world story started with a cocktail party hosted by Barbara Raymond to welcome new residents Doyce and Terry Burke to the community. Paula Yewdall attended the party and sat next to Doyce. The two new neighbors began introducing themselves.

"We started backwards with the introductions, starting with the place we last lived, moving backward in time to the places we lived before that. I concluded by saying that I am from California," explained Paula. "Doyce replied that Terry is from California – Taft, California to be precise. I just couldn't believe it! I am from Taft too. Turns out Terry and I went to the same elementary school. I was just blown away."

If you check a map of California, Taft is a small town just over 30 miles southwest of Bakersfield. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Taft had under 10,000 residents. In 1950, when Paula and Terry were in 8th grade, Taft was an oil town.

Paula had moved to Taft with her family when she was in the 3rd grade and began attending school. Terry had been attending this same school since kindergarten. From 3rd grade to 8th

grade, Terry and Paula attended school together and had some of the same friends.

Following their reacquaintance at Barbara's cocktail party, Doyce called up Murray, one of those mutual friends, and told him the surprising news. Following the phone call, Murray sent a photo to Terry showing all of them in their 13-year-old glory in a class picture.

In December of her 8th grade year, shortly after the class photo was taken, Paula and her family left for Indonesia. Paula's stepfather had accepted a position with Standard Oil in Sumatra. In Sumatra, Paula tried taking correspondence courses her freshman year of high school, but she was so far away from civilization – living in the jungle, as she put it – that often the envelopes of assignments were lost. In the end, she took a year off from school. By the following year, after some long family conversations, Paula returned to California to live with grandparents in Bakersfield, returning to Indonesia in the summers. In the days prior to long-distance flights, traveling from California to Indonesia required many stops for refueling — first on Hawaii, then Wake Island, again on Guam, and a several day layover in Manila, before finally arriving in Indonesia.

While Paula was traveling between Bakersfield and Sumatra, Terry graduated from Taft High School and then Long Beach State University. Following college, Terry joined the Navy and served as an EOD officer. He eventually worked for the federal government and lived in Springfield, Va. All the while, Terry stayed in close touch with his childhood friends. Each year, in fact, several of them get together, either in Colorado or California. And now the long-winding road of life has brought Paula and Terry together again in Vinson Hall – and even to the same floor of the same building.

A Visual – Knitted – Temperature Record



Susan Osborn knitted a record of daily temperatures for 2019. Each row of color represents the daily high temperature.

With devastating wildfires in some areas and flooding in others, climate change has been a key news subject for the past several months. The D.C. region was not spared from this shifting weather phenomenon. This past summer, this region saw a record 62 days with temperatures of 90 or higher.

Susan Osborn put her knitting skills to use and created a *tempestry* or a visual, knitted record of the year's daily temperatures.

For Susan's project, she noted the daily high temperature as recorded by *The Washington Post* at Reagan National Airport; she then knitted a row of color. Temperatures in 10 degree ranges were assigned a certain color. For example, temperatures in the 90s were recorded with red yarn, temperatures in the 80s were orange yarn, and so on.

At the end of year, Susan had a terrific – and terrifying – record of the year's temperatures. More than half of the colors used were red, orange or yellow – temperatures above 70. Some of those temperatures are in the normal range, admittedly; however, on the whole it looks like it was a very hot year.

Temperatures last year never reached 100 degrees. Susan said if the temperature had reached that extreme, she would have coded it black to reflect her despair of having to deal with such heat.

The Healing Power of Water

By Barbara Raymond

In May 2017, I had an appointment with Dr. David Romness for a knee replacement at the Virginia Hospital Center. The surgery went very well, and I was home the very next day.

I followed up with a home-based physical therapist, who was excellent. Physical therapy at the Virginia Hospital Center was next. Now my knee is as good as new, but it was time to think about my other knee. Dr. Romness gave me a cortisone shot for my right knee, but I knew it was only going to last so long and that a knee replacement on this knee was inevitable.

Soon after, I had a conversation with George Lynch, fitness director at Vinson Hall, who strongly suggested that I begin walking in water. The cost of a new bathing suit was far less stressful than another knee replacement. I took his advice and started to walk in the pool between 3 and 5 days a week. Here it is January 2020, and fortunately there is no sign that I will need the other knee replaced. I am grateful for George's advice and have certainly learned firsthand about the healing power of water.

Keeping a New Tradition Going

By Carol Henderson

Ask for help with a party, and the neighbors really come through! This past fall, Eric and I wondered how we would keep our New Year's Eve party tradition going. To explain our dilemma requires a bit of history. When the building now called Willow Oak was new five years ago, many of us moved in within a few months, and few of us knew each other.

Betsy and Seb Lasher began the idea of monthly cocktail parties in the spacious lobby – residents took turns hosting, and everyone brought their own drink and a nibble if they wished. It was popular and helped us make friends.

As New Year's Eve approached in 2015, Eric and I hosted a party in our apartment just for third floor residents. It was successful, but a year later, we wanted to involve more people. Based on the cocktail party model, we asked if we could use the lobby for an 8 to 10 p.m. New Year's Eve party. Staff were very supportive, and for three years we provided a case of inexpensive bubbly, and urged everyone to bring a glass, dress festively, and join us.

By late 2019, however, Eric was still recuperating from a serious illness and needed help getting around. He was not in shape to stand for a couple of hours and open bottles of bubbly. We sent out a flyer to building residents: Should we continue this tradition? If so, we would need help. The response was immediate and

overwhelming. Everyone who could help wanted to do so. "Tell us what you need," they said.

There were lots of ideas. Bob Springer suggested a Viennese theme. Susan Berkey suggested a black and white color scheme, and offered supplies from her vast cache

of party "stuff." Fran Hellwig said she could help with black and white décor. A further flyer listed a set of chores from which residents could choose to help make this party special.

Susan and Fran were in charge of decorating, helped by Ann Withrow and new residents Doyce and Terry Burke. Housekeeping and concierge staff were terrific, bringing extra tables and chairs and helping with any request. Decorating started promptly on the morning of December 31, the space transformed into a black and white wonderland: tablecloths, little white lights, battery powered candles, metallic glitz and intriguing centerpieces, capped by an enormous black and white bulldog (Fran Hellwig's Oscar) set in the middle of the central table.

Bob Springer provided Viennese waltzes as background music; Al Kuhn brought ice for the cooler; folks brought champagne, prosecco, sparkling cider, eggnog and other drinks of choice. Charlie Shank and Chris Holmes served as

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Carol and Eric Henderson had lots of help organizing the 2019 New Year's Eve Party. (Photo by John Gardenier)



Charlie Shank and Chris Holmes served as bartenders at the New Year's Eve Party. (Photo by Charlie Mertz)

Neighbors Help Keep a Holiday Tradition Going



Two Susans (Osborn and Berkey) converse at the New Year's Eve Party. (Photo by Charlie Mertz)

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bartenders. Food contributions spilled over four tables with many kinds of delicious finger foods, including a marvelous Serrano ham from Marty and Bonnie Hurwitz.

While the Hendersons remained the organizers, the amount of help received was amazing and heartwarming. Folks felt they were needed and were contributing; it made the 2019 party especially festive. It was a delight to note the spectacular outfits pulled out of closets to keep to the black and white theme, including several men in tuxes. We thank everyone who participated. We live in a truly wonderful community.

Welcome to New Residents and Staff

We are happy to welcome new residents and new staff to Vinson Hall Retirement Community. Below are the residents who have moved in recently. We also have several new staff members. Below are the staff members who have started working at VHRC since October. If you see them around the campus, be sure to say *Welcome!*

New Residents

Ingrid Caverly

Waltraut Dawson

New Staff

Jennifer S. Adomako, Accounting Assistant

Fekerte L. Alemu, Certified Nursing Assistant

Chrystal S. Besorak, LPN Charge Nurse

Jose A. Flores Rivera, Dishwasher/Utility

Jose A. Garcia Hernandez, Dining Room Server

Valerie K. Haviland, Receptionist

Annie M. Jackson-Brown, Certified Nursing Assistant

Ibrahim S. Kamara, Administrator

Charles Kato, Lead Certified Nurse Assistant

Karamjit Kaur, LPN Charge Nurse

Navdeep Kaur, Receptionist

Chongsuk Kimcho, Resident Assessment Manager

Elyn B. Lawhorn, Operations Manager

Cynthia Macalintal, Dining Room Server

Anne Dour

Stephanie Kitchen

Christopher P. McGinn, Security Guard

Juan J. Mejia, Cook

Theresa Morgan, Director of Nursing

Zainabu Nahra, Registered Nurse Supervisor

Nabaraj Parajuli, Clinical Manager, Assisted Living

Milton Ramirez, Cook

Mauricio J. Segovia, Cook

Odelia Serdon, Dining Room Server

Ernest Sesay, LPN Charge Nurse

Salvacion Simons, Dining Room Server

Mavel Vargas Mendoza, Cook

Karin C. Vasquez Garcia, Dining Room Server

Genesis G. Vasquez, Dining Room Server

Phu D. Vo, Cook

Nigist Worku, Certified Nursing Assistant

What's Your Name and Where Are You From?

By Bill Bailey

When I meet new people and need a topic to stimulate an opening conversation, I usually ask their names and original hometowns. In turn, I offer, "I'm Bill Bailey from Philadelphia."

For people who are familiar with the 20th century pop music scene in America, the name "Bill Bailey" has a resonant ring. It is the title of a song made famous by Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Bobby Darin: "Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home." I am accustomed to being teased because of the association.

I am not offended by the kidding because it allows me the opportunity to make new friends and brings back fond memories.

In the 1950s I was home on leave from the 11th Airborne (called back on active duty for the Korean War) and was joined by brother Bob, also on leave from Quantico. While home in Philadelphia, we decided to go to a popular jazz club in uniform. The club featured two headliners that night, Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden. At closing we were among the last to leave.

Suddenly, I heard a gravelly voice ask, "What's your name and where do you come from, soldier?" It was Louis Armstrong. I replied that my name was Bill Bailey and my buddy was my brother, Bob, and that we were both from Philly.

"Are you joshing me, Bill Bailey?" he responded. I assured him I was not, and he invited us to join him and his bandmates for chitlins in South Philly.

How many folks can say they had breakfast with Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden? We had a wonderful time and heard some great stories.

Another name-related memory is from just a few years ago and was with my son who (don't smile) is also named Bill Bailey. My son was invited by



Bill Bailey, as guest of his son, attended a White House dinner during the George W. Bush Administration. This framed photo is a memento of that visit.

President George W. Bush to a White House reception. Son Bill took me as his guest, and we lined up for a photo with the President and First Lady Laura Bush.

An escort ushered us to a staging area and announced our names, "Mr. Bill Bailey and Mr. Bill Bailey." The First Lady immediately seized on the similarity and remarked, "Two Bill Baileys? That's cute."

In an aside to the Bushes, I mentioned that one of my brothers, Jim, had been the Little League baseball coach of the President's younger brother, Jeb, in Texas. Laura, intrigued by this bit of information, quickly asked, "In Houston?" I answered in the affirmative just as the photographer snapped the picture and we were gently but firmly led off the small stage.

As I was walking away, I heard a voice commanding, "Hey Bill Bailey!" I looked back and there was President Bush in a baseball batter's stance with an imaginary bat: "Jeb was good hitter, wasn't he?" I said I would ask my brother.

The Sylvestery

Moving Into 2020 With a New Look

By Antoinette Doublin, Administrator of The Sylvestery

It is hard to believe we are moving into the second month of the year. I hope you have had a good start to 2020. It is still a good time to set new goals for yourself. I have been doing this as well.

I am excited to announce our renovations have been completed, new furniture, and life skills stations are all in. It looks beautiful and bright. The Sylvestery team thanks all of you for your patience with us during construction. It took some time to complete, but I am so proud of how the renovations turned out.

We have some exciting plans for this upcoming year and it is my hope that you all will join us at our events. Nothing chases the winter blues away

more than the warmth of love.

- With the celebration of **Valentine's Day**, love will certainly be in the air! We are planning to have a Valentine's Day dinner for all of the couples. This will be a grand time for all to enjoy.
- On March 11 from 1-4 p.m., we are hosting an **Open House** and inviting everyone to come check out our new look.
- Remember that our Alzheimer's support group is held every **2nd Tuesday of the month at 2:15 p.m.** Please come out and join us. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making The Sylvestery a home away from home.

NMCGRF Funded The Sylvestery's Updated Look

Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation was thrilled to provide the funding to refresh the Sylvestery. Over the past several months the community has had a complete make over: wallpaper was removed and the walls have been repainted and old carpeting has been taken up and fresh carpeting put down. The color scheme shifted from a mossy green to a beachy theme, sand colored walls and Pacific blue carpeting. Additionally new furniture was purchased and added to sitting rooms and quiet nooks throughout the community. The overall affect is very soothing and fresh.

In addition to these cosmetic changes, the Foundation, under the guidance of The Sylvestery Administrator Antoinette Doublin, purchased two life skills stations. One station recreates an infant's nursery and the other is a workshop area. The stations are designed to spark the memories of residents' previous lives, either experiences with raising and caring for children or working on a hobby. The hope is that these stations will help The Sylvestery residents



The Sylvestery Administrator Antoinette Doublin shows one of the life skill stations which is designed to look like an infant's nursery complete with crib, dolls and stuffed animals, and a changing table.

remain active as they practice routines and life skills that were part of their previous lives.

As mentioned above, The Sylvestery is hosting an Open House on March 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. Please be sure to stop by to check out the refreshed look and the other improvements taking shape at The Sylvestery.

Hooked on Genealogy: Researching Family History

By Roy Easley

"Those who do not look upon themselves as a link from the past with the future, do not perform their duty to the world."

—Daniel Webster

Robert I Easley (1655-1711) arrived in Jamestown Colony, Virginia in 1673. In 1681, in Henrico County, Virginia, he married Ann Warham Parker (1661-1720). Robert I is believed to be the first of the name Easley, and the only of that name to arrive in Jamestown Colony. Genealogists believe every Easley in the U.S. is descended from Robert I and Ann Parker.

Claudius Miller and Roy Woodson were born in 1891 and both served as U.S. Army lieutenants in World War I. Both were brigadier generals in World War II, and were Assistant Division Commanders of infantry divisions in the Pacific War. They both fought in the battle that captured Leyte Island in the Philippine Archipelago, and both were wounded by Japanese forces in that struggle. Claudius was a Texan and Roy a Kentuckian, and both had the same family name Easley! When the battle for Leyte concluded, the two generals Easley met and discussed Easley family history. They concluded they were probably distant cousins.

I decided to tiptoe into Easley family genealogy to test the distant cousin theory and got hooked. I added one of my West Point instructors, a Major Easley. Checking West Point registers of graduates and former cadets, I found his full name to be Preston Warham Easley. He was born in Tennessee and became an aviation cadet at the Academy. He graduated with the Class of June 1943 and was a fighter pilot in Europe during World War II. He died in California in 2004 at the age of 85.

A real glutton for punishment, I pushed further into the unknown. Researching in the Vinson Hall library, I discovered a John White Easley: U.S. Marine lieutenant colonel, commander third battalion, Sixth Marine Regiment, Second Marine Division, KIA in the capture of Tinnia Island, in



Lt. Col. Roy W. Easley, Jr., U.S. Army General Staff, 1964

the Northern Marianna Islands, awarded the Silver Star, posthumously, citation (in part) "for conspicuous gallantry, valor, and intrepidity in action while in the face of grave peril." Of course, I wanted this WWII hero to be a relative, the closer, the better! I quickly added him to my genealogical search list.

Genealogists believe that most people do not know the names of their grandparents on both sides, and if they do, they do not know the names of their great-grandparents. Through her work, Aunt Nell, my father's sister, Source 2, found that our immediate family is indeed honored to be direct descendants of Robert I.

In genealogical terms, our ascendancy chain from my great-grandchildren to Robert I is thus: Parker Woodson Schwarz, son of Kaitlin (Easley) Schwarz, daughter of Roy Woodson III, son of Roy Woodson Jr., son of General Roy Woodson, son of Samuel Woodson, son of Emzy Wilson, son of Woodson Gale, son of Joseph, son of Warham, son of John, of the eleventh generation
Continued to next page...

Life's River

By Jim Davenport

When we enter this life's flowing river, hopefully it will be a scenic trip of life. As we are carried along its flowing currents, Mom and Dad keep our boat away from rocks and falls. All too soon we bid them farewell and board our shiny new boat. We visit their boat from time to time, stopping by to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and being with them in their times of need.

As the river of life flows, with God's blessing, loved ones leave their boat, only to be following with God returning later for the last partner.

Soon our new boat takes on tiny passengers, our

precious children. Our boat, like Mom and Dad's, gathers speed with the current. All too soon, those tiny passengers become adults and leave our boat for their new boat of life.

Our days start to speed up. Sundays come and go so rapidly that they become a blur. Age numbers climb, with strangers offering to help us in our tasks. We start to plan for leaving our boat with wills, thus trying to provide for those remaining on the river. As the end of our journey comes in sight, it brings tears from family and friends.

Easley Family Genealogy

Continued from previous page...

from Robert I. From this ascendancy chain, it is determined that my father, General Roy Woodson Easley, is the seventh generation from Robert I; last chain link is John, son of Robert I. Our family descendancy from Robert I, nine generations was a direct copy from Source 2, a "gift" from my Aunt Nell. I added the tenth and eleventh generations, my grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Finding the direct descendancy of General Claudius Miller Easley and Lt. Colonel John White Easley was a much different matter. Searching and analyzing 278 pages of Easley names was a grind. Following are the results of that work.

1. General Claudius Miller Easley, son of Alexander Campbell, son of William IV, son of Jesse, son of William III, son of Warham, son of John, of the seventh generation from Robert I; last chain link is John, son of Robert I.
2. Lt. Colonel John White Easley, son of Dr. Charles A., son of Dr. John White, son of John Scruggs, son of Isaac, son of Daniel I, son of William I, of the seventh generation from Robert I; last chain link is William I, son of Robert I.

The three U.S. Armed Forces Officers above

are direct descendants of Robert I and hence distant cousins. On page one of Source 1 the author states he found direct descendants of only John and William, and hence the possibility of direct descendants through them. For the other four children of Robert I. (Warham, Robert Jr., Elizabeth and Margaret), he did not find such direct descendancy and hence ascendancy through them to Robert I would not occur. Obviously, each person has ascendants and many, if not most, have descendants, but for genealogical purposes, such descendancy must be recorded somewhere, and if recorded, it must be found! Lt. Colonel Preston Warham Easley and I may be distant cousins, but I could not find the required information in Source 1.

Aunt Nell spent ten years on her work, 1962-1972. "Ten years of research, correspondence, procrastination, and organization. I have worked in the records of twenty courthouses in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia; in the State Archives of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Utah; and I have spent hours reading microfilm census records. And then there were letters!" Source 2.

Sources:

1. Easley Genealogy by James Daniel Easley of the Sixth Generation from Robert I, 278 pages, 1952.
2. The Easley-Hamilton Story by Nell (Easley) Davis of the Seventh Generation from Robert I, 164 pages, 1972.



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VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Campus News & Views

Winter 2020



The holiday season was a ton of fun ... decorating the campus, parties, parties, parties, and ringing in the New Year. Best of all, we all did it together!