

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS



Winter 2025

CEO Corner

Saying Farewell

As I write this final message for *Campus News and Views*, I reflect on my time in our community with deep gratitude and appreciation. Since I arrived, I have felt consistently welcomed and supported by virtually everyone here at VHRC. There is no doubt that our community has excellent amenities and a great location and setting in McLean. But time and again, it has been reinforced to me that the most important asset at VHRC is the people and the quality of relationships. Those aren't just nice words to say; it is absolutely the reality of my experience here.

I leave my role as CEO with very mixed emotions. While I look forward to working in a community closer to my home, my time at VHRC has been an incredibly positive experience for me. I'm proud of what we have accomplished together. We have made meaningful improvements to our facilities, enhanced our programs and services, increased our commitment to quality care, and strengthened relationships between staff and resident leaders. And while we have continued this work of incremental improvements, we have also developed strategic and master plans that will build on our extraordinary foundation of strength as a community.

In all of this work, I'm very grateful for the leadership of our NMCGRF Board of Directors and the partnership of our staff and resident leaders. We are very fortunate to have a highly engaged and talented group of people committed to making our community the very best place to live and to work. While we haven't always gotten things exactly right in a complex and evolving environment, I can assure you that we have always made decisions with the well-being of residents and staff, along with the long-term success of our community, as our North Star.

I know that will continue to be the case under the leadership of Rob Roe, our new President and CEO. I'm very excited that he has chosen to accept this role and have great faith in his leadership, his integrity, and his commitment to VHRC. I'm very confident that this community will extend the same welcome, support, and grace that I have experienced. And he continues to have around him the same fantastic group of Trustees, staff, and residents that I was fortunate to have.

It has been a true privilege to be part of this team at VHRC. Thank you again for your support and friendship, and please stop by to see me at Ginger Cove if you find yourself in Annapolis! ❖



Chip Warner with Rob Roe (far right), who assumed the CEO leadership role on February 21, and CFO Rick Mazza (center), who now also serves as Executive Vice President of Business Planning and Development.

— Chip Warner, President and CEO

Having Fun and Staying Warm at VRHC

Winter made its presence known at VHRC in 2025, with a major storm on January 5 that dropped more than 10 inches on our campus and surrounding area. Because the polar chill had settled in, the snow stayed with us for weeks afterwards. But we didn't let it hamper the fun on campus. We still gathered together with friends and neighbors at happy hours and fellowship breakfasts, at birthday teas and trivia nights. We celebrated the reopening of the newly renovated and refreshed pool, happy to get back to regular pool volleyball games and water exercise classes. We welcomed local scouts on campus, as we have in past years, for assistance with knife skills and preparations for the Pinewood Derby. And we gathered in the Sports Bar, the new attraction in the Penthouse Sylvester Lounge, to watch the Kansas City Chiefs battle the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl. To celebrate Valentine's Day,

we enjoyed a special dinner and music by Les Zazous. So when Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter, we steadied ourselves for another snowstorm!❖



About Campus News & Views

Campus News & Views is Vinson Hall Retirement Community's quarterly literary magazine. The goal of this publication is to share stories and remembrances from VHRC residents and staff. All residents and staff are invited to submit articles for inclusion. All items must be original pieces and must be submitted by the author. This publication is reviewed by an editorial committee comprised of VHRC residents and staff.

Campus News & Views is designed and edited by
The Office of Philanthropy & Engagement

Editorial Committee

Nancy McSllarrow	Jerry Norris
Ron Musselwhite	Gene Wentz

Campus News & Views is posted online:
www.vinsonhall.org/blog/

Vinson Hall Retirement Community
6251 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, VA 221014344

Campus News & Views Winter 2025

Inside this Issue:

Philanthropy Update.....	3
The Devil Made Me Say It.....	4
Asimov.....	5
Multicultural Remembrances.....	6
Bad Taste Party.....	7
Pushcart Relays at Cal-Berkeley - #1.....	8
Pushcart Relays at Cal-Berkeley - #2.....	9
Our Gourmet-in-Waiting.....	10
Where Have All the Heroes Gone?.....	11
Semper Fi.....	12
Opening Night.....	14

Back cover photo by Denese Arnold, Senior
Director of Property Management.

Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

Looking Back at a Great Year!

The new year is here, and like you, we at the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation are already making plans for a wonderful year ahead. But before we got too far into 2025, we wanted to take a few moments to reflect back on the accomplishments of last year – and thanks to you, it was quite a year!

It is truly a pleasure to share with you that in 2024 the Foundation raised more than \$533,000 to support the residents and staff of Vinson Hall Retirement Community! These donations came from 363 donors, 203 of which were Star Members (individuals who made a membership gift of \$250 or more last year).

What were we able to do with these generous donations? In 2024, through the Resident Assistance Fund, we provided \$122,160 in resident financial support, ensuring that no one had to leave our community when their resources were depleted. At the same time, your support of the Employee Caring Fund enabled us to award \$194,573 to our dedicated staff throughout the year to help them weather financial hardships or be rewarded for their above-and-beyond efforts in support of our community. Last year, we also supported several on-campus improvements financed by the Innovation & Enhancement Fund – notably, an upgrade of the Fitness Center allowing it to remain open for resident use 24-7, an automatic door opener, outdoor benches and a flat-screen TV for our new Sports Bar.

Engagement is also part of our mission at the Foundation, and it was our pleasure to organize a number of fun events for residents, including our sold-out Gala, *Moonlight Over Monte Carlo* – which raised a record \$111,325! Other long-held VHRC traditions we hosted in 2024 included the Evening with the Stars, Paul Peak Resident of the Year Award ceremony, and the holiday decorating effort, along with a few new activities such as a Leap Day Pop Up Sale and a Coin and Stamp Drive

Meanwhile, we continued to look for ways to help Vinson Hall engage with the broader community. We partnered with the Potomac School, planning a joint Earth Day of Service on campus and connecting residents with students for their Witnessing History project. Other community activities we coordinated included playdates with Homestretch's preschoolers, veterans' talks at Chesterbrook Elementary School, and gift bags for SHARE's elderly clients-in-needs. Last but not least, the Office of Philanthropy & Engagement was proud to serve as VHRC's communications hub, bringing you publications like *The Beacon* weekly newsletter – and *The People of Vinson Hall*, a book about our amazing residents.

These were all labors of love for the Foundation team in 2024, none of which would have been possible without your support. We can't thank you enough for a truly great year! ❖

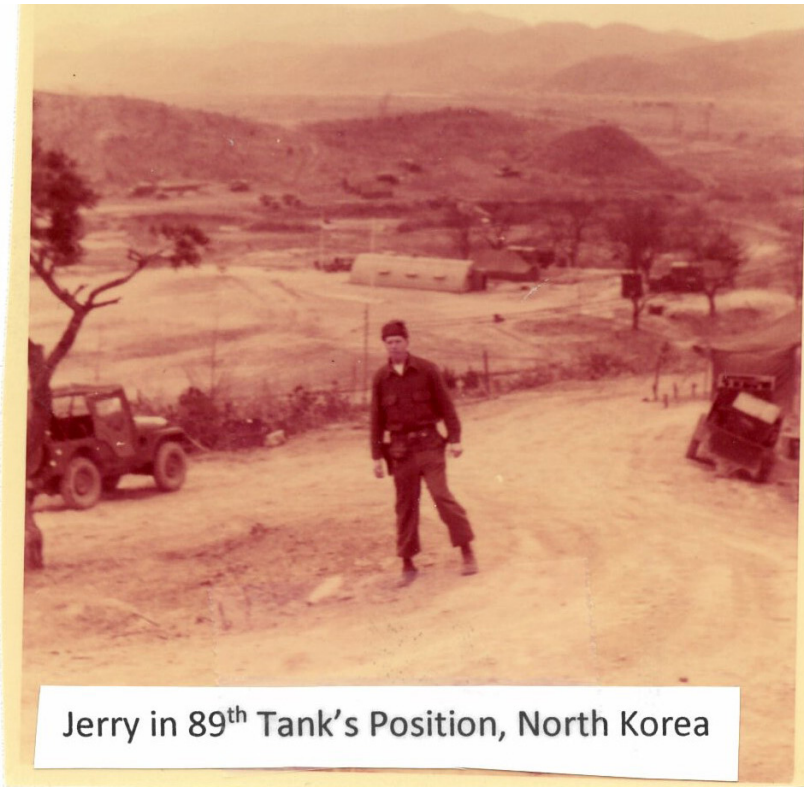


Senior Director of Philanthropy and Engagement Michelle Crone with Nancy Kirkendall and Rhea Austin.

— Michelle Crone, Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement

The Devil Made Me Say It

By Jerry Norris



In May 1953, I volunteered for the Army and was sent to Camp Chafee, Arkansas, for 16 weeks of basic training, followed by additional training at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. Since it looked as though my entire time as a draftee would be spent stateside, in December I volunteered for duty in Korea.

The last leg of our Military Air Transport Service flight from Honolulu took us into Haneda International Airport, just outside of Tokyo. We were bused immediately to Camp Drake, a short distance away. This was the centralized depot for assigning men to various units throughout the Asia Command.

On my second day there, I was summoned to see the base chaplain. I didn't know what was up since I hadn't asked to see him. He was a Catholic priest. The chaplain told me that he had asked the clerks in the Assignment Office to be on the look out for an altar boy. Subsequently, one of them noticed that I had attended St.

Mary's, a Catholic orphanage about 45 miles from Chicago, and this indicated that I must know how to serve Mass.

The chaplain was a kindly man. He asked if I had served Mass while at the orphanage. When I indicated that I had done this at St. Mary's, he was pleased, saying "Perfect, a Catholic orphanage, eh?" He then explained his need for an altar boy, and that if I agreed to serve, I wouldn't have to go to Korea. "Now lad, wouldn't that be a good assignment for you...you won't have to go there...you'll be safe!" He explained the duties, how many days of the week I'd have to serve, and no one would be bothering me to do anything else, especially KP and guard duty, and I'd have a lot of free time in Tokyo. "Well, what do you say?" he added enthusiastically.

I was astonished and he interpreted this as my assent. But to my mind, it became clear that all I had gone through to get into the Army and

volunteer for Korea was now going to end up with an assignment as an altar boy in Camp Drake, Japan! My respect for all priests in general was long ago embedded in me and I couldn't turn him down outright. In my conflict to be respectful and still go on to Korea, the only words I could manage were completely out of character for me. I said, "Sounds like a f...ing good deal to me, Father." That word eased out of me as if it belonged in my vocabulary for many a hard year of unrepentant vulgarity. I can't account for how it escaped from my mouth – especially in front of a priest. Truly, the devil must have made me say it.

The chaplain's head snapped back. My response

was as unexpected as it was irreverent. His face expressed surprise. His eyes widened. Unconsciously, I concluded something like 'in for a penny in for a pound.' Confession would remove the temporal stain of sin but not its immediate secular consequences. I offered no apology. Couldn't. Recovering, he mumbled something of a comment along the lines that of course, there were a lot of other deserving former altar boys that also had to be interviewed and once that was completed, he would be getting back to me. I guess he found another altar boy as I never heard from him again. Within two days, I was on my way to Korea. ❖

Asimov

By Margaret Dean

May I love you always
That's forever plus a day
For ever and a day is always
Can't you see?
Time will stop
as will all great hearts
and our dust will
all will be swept away
to shine
among the stars.

Multicultural Remembrances

By Elisabeth Wilton



Elisabeth Wilton at age 7, in Memphis, Tennessee.

When my father was a student at Stanford, one of his best friends was the eldest of seven boys in the Ehrman family of California. They had an expansive estate called Olive Acres, with vast groves of olive trees that produced what was called "green ripe" olives. These were the greatest I had ever experienced, a true blend of green and ripe olives, and I wish they were still available. Lex was a bit younger than my dad, who was warmly accepted into the family, and his mother even referred to my father as the oldest of her eight boys. She was an intelligent and interesting woman. I remember visiting Olive Acres when I was about nine. They had a cook, a butler, an upstairs maid, a downstairs maid, a gardener, a driver and perhaps others. Still, they were what I considered "regular people."

Mr. Ehrman had an apartment in San Francisco (a suite at the top of the Mark Hopkins Hotel, no less), leaving his wife to run things back at the estate. My Dad had many stories about his visits to the Ehrman home during his college days and it was obvious to me he loved them all dearly.

His own home life was fraught, given the discord between his parents, and life at the Ehrmans' must have been a revelation of what life could be.

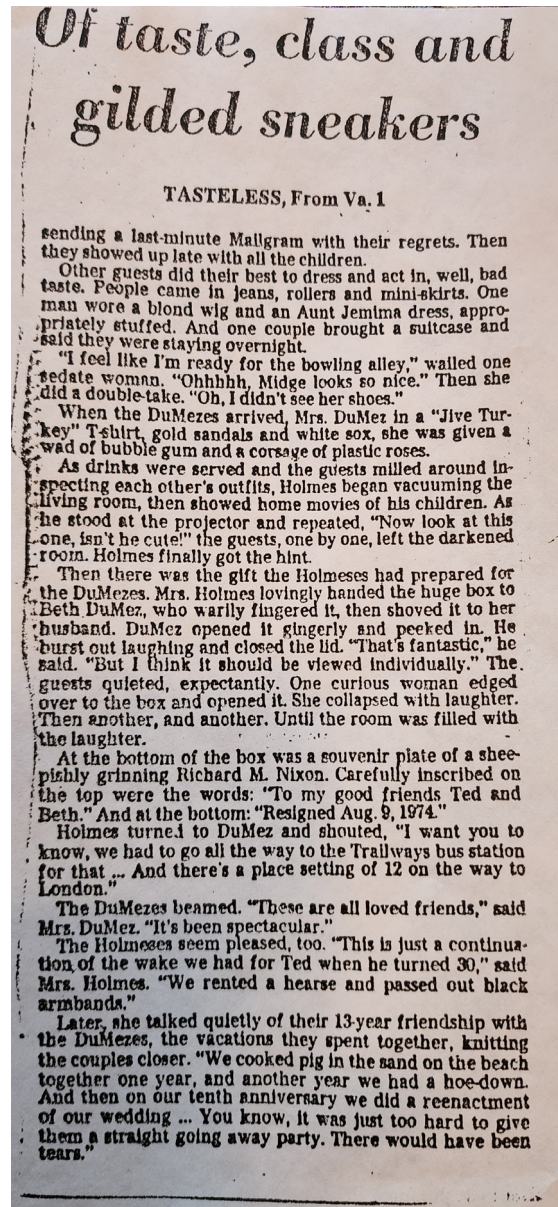
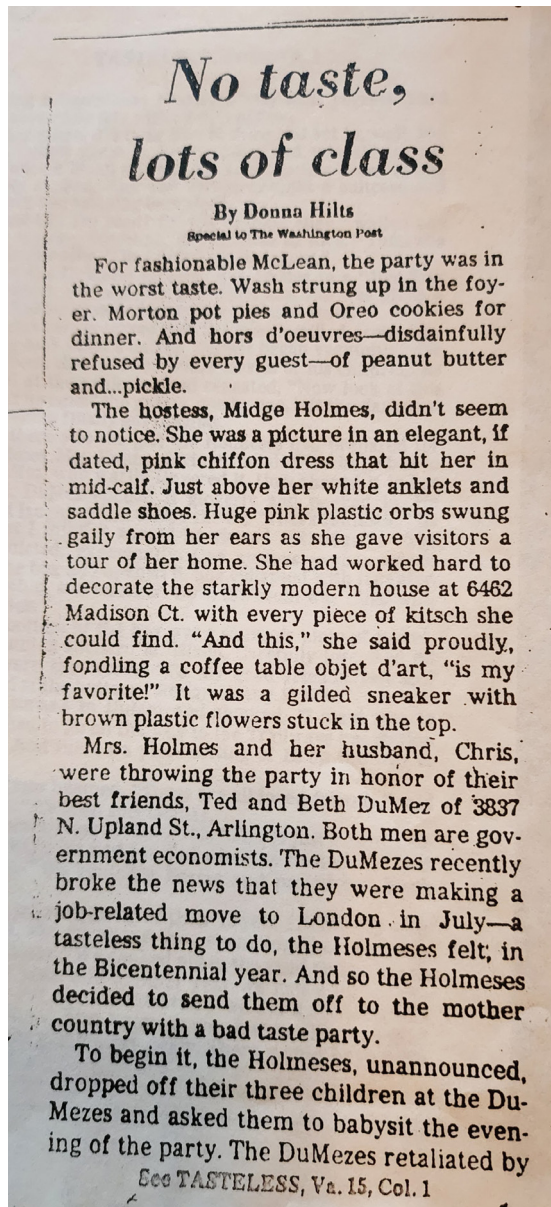
I grew up with these stories, which were delightful in themselves, but only years later did I understand that there was another level to all this. The Ehrmans were Jewish. Lex was bright and ambitious and wanted to go to the Naval Academy. He even obtained the necessary sponsorship. But the service academies did not accept Jewish men in those days, so his hopes for a Naval career were dashed. I did not learn this part of the story until years later.

Shortly after his graduation from Stanford, my father had another connection with a marginalized culture. While he was coaching football at a local area high school, he also coached an all-Nisei (first generation Japanese-American) football team in the Bay Area. (My mother was teaching English at another

Continued on page 15...

Bad Taste Party

By Midge Holmes



My husband Chris and I threw a bad taste party for friends Ted and Beth who, in bad taste, were leaving for London in the bicentennial year of 1976. Of course, it would have been in bad taste to have invited *The Washington Post* to cover the party, so I called them. Imagine our surprise when reporter Donna Hiltz rang our doorbell.

The party was a blast. Guests were encouraged to discuss surgeries at dinner, in what we cleverly referred to as "organ recitals." Other guests inappropriately hawked raffle tickets. One guest

cut her husband's hair in my kitchen. My ironing board was set up in the living room. The back of my bra was revealed in a low-backed dress. We wrote "Hi" in the dust on a table. A guest insisted on singing a solo, purposely off key of course. We gave out blueberry flavored cigars as party favors. Kitsch ruled, and participants were hilariously clever as they joined us to tease Ted and Beth who, in turn, were good sports and appreciative of the fun. ♦

Pushcart Relays at Cal Berkeley - Memory #1

By Lee Smith

It's not uncommon for residents of Vinson Hall Retirement Community to discover they crossed paths with a fellow resident at an earlier time in their lives. Residents Stan Trost and Lee Smith discovered they were both students at the University of California at Berkeley at the same time. In conversation about their college days, Stan and Lee realized they both experienced the pushcart relay races. Here, they share their very different memories of the event!

Lee Smith writes: *Stan, I have only vague memories of entrants and street names since it was in about 1956. As I recall:*

There was no sponsorship for this event. Enthusiastic members of several fraternities agreed to meet at an assigned time to race. The vehicle was to be a bed with mattress. This could not be done immediately since the vehicle had to be obtained by each entrant. A bed is equipped with very small wheels and is difficult to control with the small wheels. This was not a feature that was anticipated by the planners. The bed was propelled by two or three pledges, who were selected from each fraternity. The event was held on the northside of campus, which has more and steeper hills. The bed was to have a lightweight, intrepid rider, roped to the bed.

The race course was down one street, around a corner, and ended at the next street beside the campus. Needless to say, the race course was

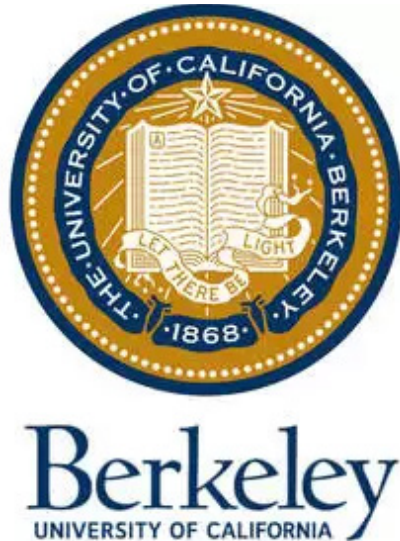


not cordoned off by police since this was not sanctioned by any organized group and traffic would be affected.

On your marks, get set, GO. The beds sped off. "Sped" is an overstatement, because the small wheels prevented speed. However, the wobbly wheels were quite noisy, and the beds rattled as the pushers tried to gain speed. Soon a wheel came off with a bed careening into the center of the street, blocking the street for the next bed coming down the hill. Stopping was impossible, and the imminent crash shortly became a reality. Two beds reached the street corner, but beds are not made to go around street corners; so more wheels were lost, and it became a push and drag propulsion. No bed made it to the finish. So ended the first and last push bed race for Cal, Berkeley. ❖

Pushcart Relays at Cal Berkeley - Memory #2

By Stan Trost



This A.I.-generated image was created using the prompts: "college, fraternity, bed race, 1950s."

Stan has a slightly different take on the event. Perhaps because he participated:

In the days before protests, demonstrations, rallies, and so forth, universities had time to stage fun events. At Cal Berkeley, one example was the pushcart relays.



The relays were held annually on Gailey Road just below the football stadium.

Any group could enter, but most of the teams were from fraternities. Some of the wealthier fraternities had custom-made, lightweight pushcarts, and they had varsity athletes to push them.

In my freshman year, we rented a trailer, built a papier-mâché Trojan horse, filled it with Kappa

Nus dressed in Togas, dressed a few of the brothers in Togas to pull the pushcart, and we slowly ambled our way down the street. When we reached the judges stand, the brothers all jumped out and squirted the judges with water.

The following year we decided to be in the race in earnest. I had been in the soapbox derby in Los Angeles, and I had a set of wheels. I had my parents ship the wheels to Kappa Nu Fraternity. We built a cart – just a flat platform. We used a lawnmower handle as a pusher, and the front axle could be steered by a fraternity brother lying flat. (Another example of real-world engineering). We got our lightest brother to be the driver, we got four very fast brothers to be pushers, and we were ready.

I think the audience (and the other teams) laughed at us, but we were going to have the last laugh. The race started – and, we won! ❖

Our Gourmet-in-Waiting's Favorite Dishes

By Gene Wentz



Before enjoying an Asian meal at the famed Raffles Hotel, Gene Wentz sampled a drink made famous by one of its bartenders – the Singapore Sling cocktail.

I am a foodaholic. I love to eat. Each morning my first thought is to wonder what will be on the table for dinner that evening. In the political science department of a university where I once taught, my colleagues would usually scan the list of attendees at White House state dinners to determine who were the important personalities in whatever event was being hosted. Me, I immediately read the menu to see what fantastic selection of dishes were served. Here, for example, is a dinner recently served the President and his guests: chilled carrot and fennel bisque, lavender-scented rack of lamb, steamed sea bass with ginger and lime, seared ruby peppers, polenta with woodland mushroom ragout, sorbet and summer fruit and almond cookies.

I'm drooling.

Over the years my work has required that I attend social functions and make polite, light conversation with dinner guests. I have

discovered that a noncontroversial and popular subject for dinner conversations is to ask my table partners what is his/her all-time favorite meal – from starter to main course, side dishes and then dessert. I am always asked to reciprocate with my own selection. Actually, I have a list of three great foods I enjoy. It's a personal list, subject to change. Were I a wealthy man with a personal chef, I would enjoy them more often. In reality, Ronald McDonald and I probably have more in common than most people.

Anyway, one of my three favorite main dishes is Chinese Peking Duck, which is a hot, crispy-skinned delectable dish, portions of which are eaten in a rolled warm, thin pancake laced with plum sauce and scallions. For starters I prefer wonton soup and a crispy shrimp roll with mustard sauce. I once described this meal as the most succulent I have ever tasted.

Another award winner in my Foody Hall of Fame is Dover sole, a delicate white fleshed, flat-bodied fish found only in the waters off the English port of Dover, thus the name. With lemon butter and boiled new potatoes as a side dish, this is a diner's delight. This fruit-of-the-sea dinner would be preceded with a shrimp salad. The restaurant in the White Cliffs Hotel in Dover, overlooking the English Channel, was the perfect venue for my enjoying this repast.

In my opinion, the best cut of beef known to mankind is a filet mignon – the tender center portion of beefsteak sometimes served with sauteed mushrooms. I like mine medium grilled

and sometimes garnished with bearnaise sauce. This dish requires a side dish of something special such as asparagus or leaf spinach. The starter would be something exotic like genuine Scottish smoked salmon with a slight drizzle of lemon juice and fresh ground pepper. The perfect dessert would be Crepes Suzette – paper thin pancakes covered with fresh squeezed orange juice, a light dessert liqueur and brandy and then set afire for about 30 seconds.

I'm still drooling. ❖

Where Have All the Heroes Gone?

By Elisabeth Wilton

That people long for heroes cannot be denied.
What overwhelms the rest of us a Hero can push aside.
We had a lot when we were young: Superman, Ike and Dad,
A whole array of Good Guys to deal with all the Bad.
And so, we naturally supposed the ones we chose to lead —
Like Senators and Presidents — would ride the same white steed,
Or fly with cape or Batmobile to keep us safe and warm,
Trusting that they loved us and would shield us from all harm.
Alas, they are mere mortals too, the same as you or I,
And, even worse, they tend prove the Hero Myth a Lie.
Perhaps we should have recognized the task was ours to do
And been ourselves the Heroes whose loss we daily rue.

Semper Fi

By John Stockman



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Alexa M. Hernandez. January 30, 2020. Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

Semper Fi is a shortened version of a Latin expression (Semper Fidelis) which means “always faithful.” It is the motto of the U. S. Marine Corps and is frequently used as a greeting or farewell among Marines. It represents a bond to fellow Marines.

This is a story of how four Marines used the expression to say goodbye to another Marine and the impact their action had on him.

For several years, I had the privilege of teaching archery to wounded warriors as part of their rehabilitation process. The facility where I taught gave priority to service members suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder rather than to those with physical injuries. Eventually, the facility director asked me if I would be willing to teach a group of eight amputees (four soldiers and four Marines). He told me that at least one of the warriors was a double amputee. When I met the group, I saw that the director’s comment was a gross understatement. All eight of the warriors were at least double amputees. Several were missing three limbs and one soldier accompanied by a young wife had no arms or legs. He was strapped into a wheelchair.

As an infantry officer, I had seen Marines lose arms and legs in combat. Some survived thanks to the heroic actions of our Navy Corpsmen. Some died on the battlefield. Thus, when I was asked if I’d be willing to work with amputees, I said I’d be honored to do so.

All the soldiers were entitled to the U.S. Army Combat Infantry badge. All the Marines were entitled to the Marine Corps Combat Action award. They were my kind of guys. I felt a kinship with all of them.

One of the first things I noticed about the group was their positive can-do attitude. They basically told me to show them what to do



John Stockman.

and they would do it. And they did. Normally when a person shoots a bow, he holds the bow with one hand and draws it with his other hand. I didn’t have that luxury. None of my group had two natural arms, so I improvised. I selected someone with a left hand/arm to hold the bow and designated someone with a “real” right hand/arm to draw the bow.

I then positioned the wheelchair-bound soldier directly behind the shooters and had him aim for them. He would instruct the man holding the bow to raise or lower the bow and/or move his bow left or right. When he was satisfied with the alignment, he would tell the shooter to draw and release. The three-man teams produced accurate shots in short order. I was able to get everyone involved in the shooting process. They were enthusiastic and competitive. A staff member had to enforce a lunch break with a promise of more shooting after lunch.

I quickly learned that the wounded warriors didn't want pity. They wanted acceptance and maybe some gratitude. I'm not a therapist and

One of the first things I noticed about the group was their positive can-do attitude. They basically told me to show them what to do and they would do it.

didn't try to be. I am a good listener though, and was willing to listen as long as they wanted to talk. That seemed to be important to them.

When darkness came, we had to stop shooting. I wanted to thank each warrior individually and wish them well. I knew that anything I said would be totally inadequate. What can you say to someone who has sacrificed limbs and will

live with the consequences for the rest of their life? I didn't know, but I had to try.

When I talked with the first Marine and tried to thank him for his service and sacrifice and wish him well, he turned the conversation around and thanked me for spending time with him, giving him confidence and respect and listening to him. He hugged me and quietly said "Semper Fi." I choked up. The same thing happened with the other three Marines. I think they sensed my empathy for all eight warriors, and their comments were their way of saying to me, "Don't worry about us, we'll be fine." I wasn't so sure. Despite their optimism and determination, I think they face serious challenges. For example, how many women would be interested in a relationship with a multiple amputee, and how many occupations will be unavailable to them? I worry too about the wheelchair-bound soldier and his wife. I can't even comprehend the challenges they face. God bless them.

At the end of the day, I knew that I had spent a day with a group of heroes not only for what they did on the battlefield but also what they did off the battlefield. They demonstrated an unbelievable determination to adapt to their injuries and showed no bitterness for their situation. I am proud and humbled to have shared their company. ❖

Opening Night

By Maureen Kammerer



Joe and Maureen Kammerer and their children prepare for the long drive to Rochester.

In the summer of 1968, the Department of the Navy sent my husband Joe to the University of Rochester Simon School of Business for an MBA. The program involved him taking 45 graduate credits in one year, along with 30 other candidates, 27 of whom were military officers, three of whom were civilians. We had two babies under three years old, and Joe had just completed all the coursework, language requirements, and comprehensive tests for his Ph.D. in engineering while working full time for the Navy's Bureau of Ships. He had started research on his dissertation and I was looking forward to his spending more time with us. I did not want to stay home by myself with the two babies, so we all went to Rochester, New York, for an adventure. We would see a new part of the world.

In August, we packed up a U-Haul truck, which

Joe drove, and strapped the babies into the back of the VW Beetle, which I drove, and we made our way to a motel in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, that night. Williamsport is home of the Little League World Series, and we let the kids run around the bases until they dropped. The next day, we pulled into a lovely neighborhood near the University of Rochester and the famous Highland Park. Our furnished rental house, which belonged to a professor who was at Princeton that year, was furnished with antiques and a full library, fine china, and many other belongings that our young children, Eric and Michelle, couldn't wait to play with. I quickly rearranged the owners' things to protect them.

We received invitations to the symphony season at the Eastman School of Music when Joe registered for class. We would have seats in the balcony, the student section. I was thrilled and I arranged for a baby sitter from the nursing school for opening night. We anticipated a marvelous performance by the renowned Eastman School of Music Orchestra.

New friends, an Air Force officer and his artist wife, went with us to the opening night concert. We were all well dressed and glad to be mingling with the upper crust of Rochester society, who were in jewels, tuxedos, and long gowns. Laszlo Somogyi, who had escaped from Hungary in 1956 and was well known in Europe, would be conducting a Haydn symphony. The atmosphere was electric with anticipation of the opening night of the season, and we enjoyed watching the elegant grande dames of Rochester and their wealthy spouses from Kodak and other companies arriving in limousines. The chandeliers were sparkling in the beautiful concert hall of the Eastman School. The conductor was elegant in his white tie and tails as he mounted the podium and snapped his baton on the music stand to

bring the orchestra to silence. A hush came over the hall.

About five minutes into the first movement of the Haydn symphony, the violin section had several measures of pizzicato plucking of the strings that sounds like a ping pong ball hitting a paddle.

Suddenly, hundreds of ping pong balls came crashing down on the orchestra from the catwalk above. They hit the orchestra members, the instruments, the stage and the conductor. A few balls rolled off the stage into the pit below; most stayed near the musicians. There was a loud collective gasp from the orchestra seats. Titters, and guffaws and laughter came from our student section. The solemn occasion was obviously disrupted by students, but no one knew who they were.

The conductor marched off the stage in a huff leaving the musicians sitting there. A few violinists used their bows to scoot away ping pong balls surrounding them. More laughter ensued. The president of the women's group that raised funds for the orchestra was not

amused. She stood up from her seat, gathered her glittering gown to her ample bosom, and marched up the stage steps and disappeared into the wings.

There was a loud buzz of conversation in the hall as we waited to see what would happen next. At last, Madame Chairman came forth and took her seat. A few minutes later, Conductor Somogyi came out of the wings, went to the podium and cried, "From the beginning!" The balls stayed on the stage for the whole concert.

As we were leaving after the concert, someone told us that a few years before, during the playing of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, thousands of feathers had come down from the catwalk above onto the orchestra when the music to the exploding cannons played. No one ever knew which students did it.

We attended all the concerts that season, and remained close over the years with the friends who went with us the first time. However, Laszlo Somogyi left the Eastman School of Music after that season. ❖

Multicultural Remembrances

...Continued from page 6

area school and had many of their wives and girlfriends in her class.) Dad was very impressed with their ability to absorb the limited training he could give them. He spent one evening with them during the week, but couldn't be with them for their weekend game because of his other obligations. But they learned well and achieved many goals. When I heard on the radio that we were "at war with the Japanese", I said, "Not OUR Japanese!" Later, many were sent to "relocation" camps and at least one accompanied his deported parents to Japan, where they were all immediately imprisoned and his parents were killed in a bombing raid.

So, as a child, I had these many loving "aunts and uncles" who clearly loved my parents and cared about my brother and me. I received Japanese dolls, lacquered dishes and other delights, and Mrs. Ehrman sent my brother and me comics and games for many years. These people were always "family" and I was truly fortunate to have them in my life. I'm sure these experiences were instrumental in my becoming a citizen of the world, happily learning about all the different ways that we are human and enjoying seeing life through the eyes of others. I know they instilled in me a horror of all forms of oppression of "the other." ❖



VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY Campus News & Views Winter 2025



At Vinson Hall we spent the cold months of winter enjoying the warmth of friendship and community. We supported neighbors at a donation drive in December. We enjoyed the concerts and performances. We celebrated a job well done at a Thank-You Happy Hour for holiday decorators. And we cheered the opening of the newly refurbished Vinson Hall pool.