



CEO Corner

Ending the Year Strong

As we all work hard to keep warm this winter and close out another successful year in our community, I find myself reflecting on 2025 with deep gratitude.

For Vinson Hall, this has been a year of change and resilience, commitment and meaningful connections. Every day, I am reminded that a Life Plan Community is far more than a collection of services – it is a living community where trusted relationships are built with a shared purpose.

To our residents, thank you for your wisdom, engagement, and partnership this past year. Your involvement in our programs and committees, and your perspectives, life experiences and everyday conversations are what make this community truly special. Thank you for creating that “secret sauce.”

To our team members, your dedication and perseverance, and your loyalty to our mission are what define us. Whether you provide meals, maintain our facilities, welcome new residents, provide our amazing health and wellness services, or support other operations across our campus, your compassion and professionalism make a difference to those we serve every day. You are the heartbeat of this community.

To our families and partners, thank you for your confidence and collaboration. Your trust is a responsibility we take seriously.

This past year has brought both challenges and progress. We have strengthened operations through purposeful leadership additions, invested in our facilities and campus, and continue to elevate the partnership between the Vinson Hall Residents’ Association and senior leadership.

We are proud of what we’ve accomplished this year and are even more excited about what lies ahead. We are not only laser-focused on maintaining excellence, but also on continuous improvement that is thoughtful, strategic, and executed with integrity and your partnership. I am confident that together we will continue to build on the great legacy and reputation that is Vinson Hall.

Thank you all for being part of this community. Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and joyful 2026! ❖



CEO Rob Roe addresses residents during the Holiday Decorators’ Thank You Happy Hour in January.

— Rob Roe, President and CEO

Warm Hearts and Winter Chill

Winter took hold of Northern Virginia with a major storm on January 24, delivering sleet and snow that froze solid in the subsequent arctic chill. But the icy mounds didn't slow us down at Vinson Hall. And neither did the Community Area Refresh and Enhancement (CARE) renovations that continued through the fall and winter in Heritage Hall. We still gathered with friends and neighbors at happy hours and fellowship breakfasts, at birthday teas and trivia nights. We celebrated those who decorated our campus for the holidays with a special thank you happy hour. We welcomed local scouts on campus, as we have in past years, for assistance with their preparations for the Pinewood Derby. Our preschool friends came back for their ninth intergenerational playdate. Super Bowl LX drew us to the Sports Bar – this year in both the Bistro and Boardroom – for the fun of watching the

game together. To celebrate Valentine's Day, we enjoyed a special dinner and music by Les Zazous. And over the course of February, the warming temperatures caused the great mounds of ice and snow to retreat, little by little. ❖



About Campus News & Views

Campus News & Views is Vinson Hall's quarterly literary magazine. The goal of this publication is to share stories and remembrances from Vinson Hall 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 residents and staff.

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

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

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Campus News & Views Winter 2026

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Back cover photo by Ron Musselwhite.

Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

A Year to Remember

At the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, we are excited to be moving into a new year and are busily cooking up plans for 2026! But before we got too far along, we wanted to take one last look back at a wonderful year last year in the Foundation, thanks to your generosity!

We are delighted to share that in 2025 we raised a total of \$690,900 to support the residents and staff of Vinson Hall. Last year, we had 387 individual donors, 236 of which were Star Members – individuals who made a membership gift of \$250 or more. In addition, our community had 26 generous Corporate Donors who contributed a total of \$76,000 – more than ever before. So what were we able to do with these generous donations?

In 2025, through the **Resident Assistance Fund**, we provided \$127,560 in resident assistance, ensuring that no resident had to leave our community when their resources were depleted. Your support of the **Employee Caring Fund** enabled us to award \$202,197 to our dedicated staff throughout the year to help them weather financial hardships or be rewarded for their commitment to our community. Through the **Warrior Transition Fund**, we housed three warriors on campus at no cost to them. And we also supported several on-campus improvements through the **Innovation & Enhancement Fund** – notably, a state-of-the-art videoconferencing system in the Penthouse Conference Room, Art Show easels, woodworker's fees to create a table out of a historic White Oak, and recliners and rugs for staff break rooms.

Engagement is also part of our mission at the Foundation, and last year it was our pleasure to organize a number of fun events for residents, including our sold-out Gala, *Silver Spurs Soirée* – which raised a record \$121,300! Other long-held Vinson Hall traditions that we hosted included the *Evening with the Stars*, Paul Peak Resident of the Year Award ceremony, the Holiday Decorating effort, and the Holiday Donor Thank You Tea.

We always keep our eyes open for ways to help Vinson Hall engage with our broader community. Last year, we connected with students from The Potomac School to hold our second annual Earth Day celebration. We continued our series of intergenerational playdates with Homestretch's preschoolers from homeless families. And we partnered with Chesterbrook Elementary School when our veterans spoke to their classes on Veterans Day and their students helped our residents prepare gift bags for SHARE. Finally, we used our communications expertise to keep everyone at Vinson Hall in the know – by publishing *The Beacon*, the monthly e-newsletter, this magazine and other publications, and by helping to communicate Vinson Hall's expansion plans (Project RISE) through articles, presentations and FAQs. In short, we at the Foundation love what we do. It's truly a pleasure for us to support this unique community, and we can't thank you enough for a truly great year! ❖



From left: Margaret Kurth, Joyce Lombardi and Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement Michelle Crone at the Holiday Decorators' Thank You Happy Hour in January.

— Michelle Crone, Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement

Tustumena Lake and a Leaky Boat - Part 2

By John Stockman



Image by Nic McPhee, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

Part 1 of this story was published in Fall 2025.

Early one morning while glassing from the knoll near the cabin, we saw smoke rising from the cabin chimney. Carey, Clarence and I had left the cabin before daylight with no fire so we knew someone else was in the cabin. We went to investigate. We found that two gun hunters and two guides had moved into the cabin. They told us they had been hunting mountain goats and got caught in a storm and needed to spend the night to dry their clothing and equipment.

As we were talking to the four newcomers, a float plane carrying two game wardens landed near the cabin. The wardens checked all our licenses then left.

The senior game warden didn't have full use of one arm, his face was scarred and one eyebrow and scalp were askew. After the wardens departed, I asked the guides if they knew how the warden had incurred his injuries. The older guide said the warden had been backpack bowhunting moose with his wife, and was awakened at night by his wife screaming. A grizzly bear was dragging her from the tent. The husband began kicking the bear, which then dropped the wife and pulled the warden from the tent and mauled him severely. The bear

broke off the attack and vanished. Although the warden was seriously injured, he was able to walk. Assisted by his wife, they stumbled to the nearest road and the warden was taken to a hospital.

Sometime during the night that we shared the cabin with the mountain goat hunters, I was awakened by one guide and the hunters. They told me that the older guide had suffered a heart attack. He needed to get to a hospital. No one had a radio or any other means to contact rescue personnel. The younger guide asked me if I would accompany one of his hunters, Joe, off the mountain and seek help. I told him I would and that I knew where two cabins were located on the shore of Tustumena Lake. My hope was that one of the occupants had a radio or boat that could be used to secure medical help.

Joe and I set off in the dark headed for the closest cabin three miles down the mountain. We arrived at the trailhead opposite the cabin at daybreak. Fortunately, the rowboat was beached on our side of the stream. Unfortunately, the glacial stream was roiling. We removed our packs, coats, boots and guns and tied them inside the boat. This later proved to be a prudent

action.

With grave reservations (no pun intended), we embarked on what became a brief but harrowing experience. The surging current swept us out into Tustumena Lake where the stream's force eventually diminished and we were finally able to steer the sluggish craft toward the cabin. Joe and I frantically paddled and bailed. In spite of our best efforts, the lake won. We sank. Fortunately, we were near shore and were able to reach dry land and salvage the boat and our gear. We were cold, exhausted and on the verge of hypothermia.

We staggered to the cabin hoping to warm ourselves inside and see if the owner had a radio. A grizzly bear had demolished the door and ransacked the cabin. What a disappointment! With great difficulty we managed to start a fire. We huddled around it and gradually restored our core body temperature to a safe level.

Joe and I frantically paddled and bailed. In spite of our best efforts, the lake won. We sank... We were cold, exhausted and on the verge of hypothermia.

I told Joe there was another cabin several miles down the shore and asked if he was willing to go there. He said he was. I then told him we would have to cross the glacial stream again to begin our trek along the shoreline. He exclaimed, "You have to be kidding me (paraphrased)."

With full knowledge of what faced us, we shoved off in the old boat and made a wide detour around the mouth of the raging stream. We paddled and bailed, furiously fighting both the current and a strong wind. Once again, the lake prevailed and we sank near shore. We dragged the boat onto the rocky shore, built another fire, poured water from our boots, packs and weapons and wrung out our soaked clothing for

the second time that frigid morning.

Our plan was to travel the shoreline and hope we could hail a fishing boat for help. We fought our way through nearly impenetrable brush for hours. Grizzly bear signs were abundant and we were on high alert. We finally heard the roar of a stream and I knew we were near the cabin.

The cabin was nearby – and vacant. To say we were dejected would be an understatement. We had checked the only two cabins in the area and found them empty. We had nearly drowned twice and had narrowly escaped hypothermia. We had fought our way through brush for miles in prime grizzly bear habitat and failed to see a boat within signaling distance.

As we stood on the lake shore, cold and exhausted but not yet beaten, we considered building a huge signal fire that could be seen by both aircraft and boats. We planned to use logs and rocks to form an SOS on the beach in hopes a plane would see it. Before we could begin implementing our plan of action, we saw the game warden plane circle over us and land.

The game wardens had landed on the small lake near the prospector's cabin and flown the guide to an Anchorage hospital. My partners told the game wardens that the two of us were looking for help and where we planned to go. The wardens then came looking for us. The pilot warden said he would fly us one at a time to our cabin.

On the last day of our hunt, Carey, Clarence and I hiked to our pick-up point for our float plane ride back to Anchorage. The sun was shining and we could see for miles across Tustumena Lake. It was a perfect day to end our hunt.

While waiting in the Anchorage airport for our flight home to Virginia we were discussing where we next wanted to hunt. I told my partners I was agreeable to anything as long as it did not involve a glacier lake and a leaky boat. ❖

Looking in from Left Field

By Sherm Eagan



Image by Edward Lich from Pixabay CC BY 0

It was 9:05 a.m. when I stepped off the elevator into the crowded hallway of the U.S. District Court in Alexandria. The well-coiffed TV people stood in a cluster, keeping their distance from the rest of us like they might catch something.

The veteran court reporters were easy to spot – rumpled suits, loose ties. Women and men sported puffy vests from Eddie Bauer. There was even a bomber jacket – pleather, I expect. They talked about nothing. “My brother’s getting married in Chicago. Hope this wraps fast so I can make my flight. Bachelor party tonight.” They’d covered a hundred hearings like this. This was just another Thursday.

They looked me over. I pulled out my notebook and started writing. No one else was writing. There’s some unspoken respect you get when someone thinks you’re writing down something they don’t know. They gave me a little space. Their eyes asked the questions: Who is this old guy? Good suit, not a wrinkle. Expensive tie. Foreign press? Maybe some law review? Anyone know him? Anyone seen him before?

At 9:45, after we’d been breathing the same air for 45 minutes, one of them, a guy in a bow tie,

smiled. “Hi.”

More people arrived. The hallway got tight. The noise rose – not excitement exactly, just impatience – let’s get this show on the road. His brother’s getting married. Then from the front of the line, silence rolled toward us like a wave. The line moved.

We filed into Courtroom 600. Some of the good hair people peeled off to the overflow room across the hall. Better audio, more space. But I wanted to be in the room where it happened.

Inside felt like arriving late for midnight mass. No seats anywhere. Seven rows of pews, twenty people in each row, shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow. Maybe 140 of us packed in.

From row six, I couldn’t see much. Everyone stood as the judge walked in. Diagonally across the room the head and shoulders of the tall detective writer, my grandson’s godfather, towered above the crowd – as far from me as you could get in that courtroom.

If you were the judge – the home plate umpire calling balls and strikes – you might see me in deep left field, maybe one step inside the foul

line. The detective writer is in the first base coach's box as far away from left field as you can get.

The judge ascended the bench. Diminutive. Barely middle aged – 45 max. No gray. Glasses that magnified her eyes.

The first lawyer, Ephraim McDowell, spoke about a private citizen walking into a grand jury and demanding they hand up an indictment. I had to strain to hear him. I'm old.

Then came the government's man, Henry Whitaker. Perfectly trimmed beard. Just the right amount of gray at the temples. Dark suit. No wrinkles. The perfect TV lawyer, too good-looking to play the bad guy. He belittled the reason we were here as "at best a mere paperwork error."

The judge tilted her head, inquisitively. Her voice warm, like a favorite grade school teacher coaxing a better answer from a shy student. "None of this matters," said the well-tailored Mr. Whitaker, oozing gravitas, because the Attorney General of the United States of America had reviewed and certified the indictments.

"Judge, the rule of law is at stake here. Individual liberty and process are at stake. This is not a mere technicality. The statute requires you nullify."

The judge let the TV lawyer babble, giving him just enough rope to – well, you know the rest.

That's when she interrupted, now in her assistant principal voice. "Let's cut to the chase, Mr. Whitaker. I saw the grand jury transcript. You're telling me the Attorney General reviewed that transcript and certified that indictment." She paused. "There's a section missing. Either the court reporter wasn't there or wasn't working. I don't know which, but the transcript is incomplete. "If the Attorney General reviewed it,

she could not have certified it. It could not have been certified." She looked at the TV lawyer. "Mr. Whitaker?"

Word salad.

"Mr. McDowell, anything?"

The defense lawyer rose, maybe a little taller, maybe a little straighter this time. I couldn't be sure, because I was looking in from left field. "Judge, the rule of law is at stake here. Individual liberty and process are at stake. This is not a mere technicality. The statute requires you nullify."

What McDowell didn't say – what some of the courtroom cognoscenti had heard – a grand juror, maybe more than one, had complained to the grand jury judge. Lindsay Halligan, the hot-shot prosecutor, fresh out of Trip and Fall Claims in the White House insurance department, had leaned on the grand jury: Order dinner, you're not going home until you hand me an indictment.

That was missing from the transcript – so was the grand jury's vote. "A mere paperwork error," Mr. Whitaker had said earlier. "None of this matters," he'd said. Did the grand jury even see the actual indictment? Did the foreperson just sign it because she had dinner plans, or maybe she was heading to that wedding in Chicago?

Little details like that do matter. Details like that were why the detective writer, my grandson's godfather, was standing in the first base coach's box. That's why 140 of us had packed into those pews. That's why young Mr. McDowell told the judge, "the statute requires you nullify."

The judge looked at both lawyers. "You'll have my order before Thanksgiving. We're adjourned. She stood.

We all stood.

Continued on page 9...

Bathing In The Forest

Arma Jane Karaer



Image by the U.S. Forest Service, in the Public Domain.

View of Cape Perpetua from Hill Top, Siuslaw National Forest.

The day after absorbing Lee Smith's Vinson Hall Residents' Association presentation on forest bathing, I left for a visit with my daughter, Ceren, and her family in Eugene, Oregon.

On Sunday, Ceren proposed a hike down to the Pacific beaches about 50 miles from Eugene. She had researched the "Hobbit Trail," which all her sources described as an easy beginner's trail, almost flat, about a half mile long. I can do that, I thought. I walk about a mile every day around Vinson Hall. The "almost flat" should have given it away. We both knew we were going to be hiking from the top of a cliff to the shore.

We set off with my 4-year-old grandson, Griffin, to a spot just short of Cape Perpetua. Ceren said we wouldn't be walking on the beach that day because there were warnings of "sneak tides" and people were told to stay off the beaches. A sneak tide is one that slips under the already wild waves hitting the shore and goes much farther

up the tide line, pulling the unwary back into the ocean. Indeed, we saw warning signs posted along the entrances to all the beaches on our route.

We parked at the head of the trail and started down. It was well trodden, but tree roots snaked and snarled over the surface. Griffin, who has only been walking at all for two years and four months, skipped right ahead. Grandma, who has been walking for 84 years, started clutching at the insubstantial bushes on the side of the trail, trying to keep her balance and find somewhere to put her feet. Hobbit Trail indeed. I could feel the eyes of the Ents watching me unkindly from the foliage. Ceren, who was muttering something about unreliable hiking guides, tried to help, but it was slow going, and my plunge into nature was definitely not soothing my nerves.

Fortunately, about a third of the way down the trail, a middle-aged couple came up behind us

and asked if we'd like to borrow their hiking poles. OMG yes! We agreed to return them in the parking lot on the way back.

With the help of the poles, I made it down to a perch just above the beach where I could admire the volcanic boulders and wild waves below and Griff could chuck rocks into the tide pools above the "sneaky" beach.

But then, we had to go back up. No problem for Griff or Ceren. Me? I proved that my lungs are still working, if painfully, and the poles helped me pull myself up the side of the cliff with my

arms more than my legs. I met my benefactors in the parking lot and thanked them sincerely. Without those poles I'm convinced Ceren would have had to drag me up the cliff in a body bag.

As I trot around Vinson Hall, past Lee's numbered benches, on a paved path which is straight and free of grasping tree roots, I thank our gardeners and our health committee and hope my neighbors are taking advantage of this much kinder opportunity to commune with nature. ❖

Looking In from Left Field

...continued from page 7

In the hallway, the excellent hair people jostled their way into the elevators, racing to the cameras waiting outside. They knew something had just happened. The gallery knew. The ruffled suits knew. The puffy vests knew.

The detective writer certainly knew, I could tell, as I watched him vacate the coaching box, surrounded by his team. He never saw me, looking in from left field, but I knew. This diminutive judge with the big eyes, had read between the lines of the missing transcript pages.

In the lobby, the ruffled suits reclaimed their phones and checked for lunch plans or flights to Chicago. It was Thursday.

Epilogue

Five days later, two days before Thanksgiving, just as promised, the diminutive judge with the big eyes, the government's ringer imported from South Carolina, Cameron McGowan Currie, issued her order, saying Lindsay Halligan was improperly installed as Acting US Attorney for

the Eastern District of Virginia, and invalidating all charges against New York Attorney General Letitia James and the tall detective writer, James Comey. Halligan remained at the U.S. Attorney's desk.

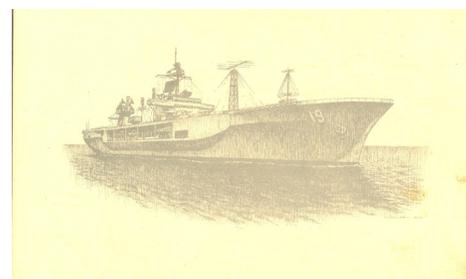
On January 8, 2026, U.S. District Judge David Novak, a Trump appointee, ruled "the charade of Ms. Halligan masquerading as the U.S. Attorney for this district, in direct defiance of binding court orders, must come to an end." He ordered Halligan to explain why her continued identification as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District did not amount to making false statements to a court.

Then on January 19, Judge M. Hannah Lauck, Chief Judge of the Eastern District of Virginia, declared the "position of U.S. Attorney Eastern District of Virginia is vacant" and ordered a help wanted ad be placed in professional legal journals.

Lindsay Halligan then left the government. ❖

Up Close and Personal with USS Carl Vinson

By Frances Sullinger



My first Foreign Service assignment was to the Republic of Korea, as public affairs officer for Pusan and the Southeast of the country. Our number one issue at that time was to emphasize U.S. commitment to maintaining security for Korea. And Pusan offered major opportunities to display that commitment.

Every spring, the Seventh Fleet arrived at the Port of Pusan with the command ship and an aircraft carrier. I worked closely with the mayor and other city officials and with the Seventh Fleet public affairs officer to provide multiple opportunities for Korean influence leaders and others to go on board for lunches with the Captain and senior staff and for guided tours for many others. The Port of Pusan was so deep that the carriers could dock right on the edge of the city. And I could escort reporters from local and national press on board to ensure country-wide coverage of our security commitment. My staff had become accustomed to translating tour information and always added additional information in Korean about those carriers which had previously visited.

When the USS Carl Vinson visited for the first time, we arranged transportation for a number of local influence leaders to have lunch with the captain and senior officers, because the ship was not coming into port, but was, instead, anchoring out.

My first duty was to get the press on board. We set off in a small boat on a choppy sea, but when we approached the Carl Vinson, we learned that another ship had taken its anchorage, leaving it without the capability of getting us on board by stepping out of our boat onto a stable entry point. So, with TV cameras and other paraphernalia, our only way onto the ship was to climb up the side of the ship on a rope ladder! My first thought was that we would lose cameras, if not journalists as well! My second thought was "Is this in my job description?" But we made it intact and the journalists were pleased with the coverage they got!

By the time we left, all was in order for us to get onto our boat from the secured back platform. The elite group, which had been transported in a

larger vessel, had a fine time and never realized they were on board for several hours longer than expected because the sea was too rough to transport them back to the port!

And my story does not end there! The next year the USS Carl Vinson paid another visit. This time the decision was not to come directly into Pusan, but, rather to remain in the Sea of Japan, which Koreans call the East Sea, and to invite high-ranking Korean military officers to come on board to be entertained by flight maneuvers overhead. Of course, the press wanted to be there. To accommodate us, the Seventh Fleet

sent a small airplane to land us on the carrier – the jerk of the landing was something I had never expected to experience!

The Korean journalists were elated to be given such an opportunity, with the result that the U.S. commitment was widely covered across the country!

But then there was the being catapulted off the ship when the plane took off! Wow! And, again, my question: “Is this really in my job description?” I guess I know the answer to that!



Where Did We Begin Our Lives?

By Margaret Dean

Where did we begin our lives? Were we
released from the oceans' depths, or
did a shooting flare from millennia
yet born,
still fling that burning power across the depths of sky.
One heart beating in the silence of nothingness,
to stand upon a hill, shrouded in time with memories that linger still.
One beating heart
Born hundreds or thousands of years ago,
More likely even
Thousands of tens of thousands of years ago.
We see Hundreds of generations watching generations
Absorbing what there is to learn beyond. Watching every step
Every cell evolves into Egyptians, or Croats, even Phoenicians,
Moravians, Brazilians, Hungarians, or South Africans.
Perhaps Nigerians. Or even perhaps Mesopotamians. As many as we are.
Today man sees the latest sight: a trove of bronzes, buried deep
Compellingly so. Otherwise the universe would run away with itself, with us.
As it does double itself in a fraction of a beast's heart rate.
Archeologists still exploring Celtic sanctuaries across Burgundy, boast.

We have the process in hand. ❖

Maine

By Lynne Schone



The camp, before remodeling.

There once was a log cabin in Maine where memories were stored by the years – and where Carl and I have spent our summers. It was cozy for two or three, tight for four or six, and cramped for six adults and two children. But the fun wasn't inside, it was once you walked out. There was a two-foot piece of land that divided the camp (as it is called in Maine) and the lake. It was not a large lake but big enough to take an hour going around it by a slow boat.

Mainers have nose down to a science, and every evening they gather on their boats to see if someone has done something different to their camp. This is not a bad thing because most live in remote areas and are accustomed to keeping track of their neighbors and are ready to lend a hand when needed. I digress; I must describe the camp to have you truly appreciate the experience.

Cabins on lakes are called camps because, as far

as I can tell, they are maybe a half step up from a tent. Not all have running water or flushing toilets. When my parents bought the camp there was a potbelly stove for cooking and heating in the kitchen. There were a few cabinets and shelving for overflow. The refrigerator was placed so that the door opened toward the back door. This made bringing in the groceries a bit of a challenge. If two people were attempting the task, one brought in the bags while the other put the food away.

Often, the fridge door blocked access to the back door, causing a log jam of sorts. The solution was to either bring in all the things and then put them away, or to quickly throw cold items into the fridge, slam the door, pivot and open the back door and take the new bags. Since the nearest town for groceries was 45 minutes away, this Kabuki dance did not happen frequently. But when it did, it took at least 30 minutes to

complete.

Once through the kitchen, you walked into the living area. Wood log construction was evident from the floor to the ceiling. Looking up, you saw two loft spaces, each with one bed. Looking straight ahead, you saw a knee wall with sliding glass above and an enclosed porch with a door to the lake. There was a dock that was slid under the camp in the winter. The dock was wood and sat on one of the numerous rocks in the lake. It was from that dock that our seven-year-old son fished. He caught the same sunfish time and again all summer, as he spent them there with my parents.

Just past the steps to the loft was a small room partly under the steps. It had a closet and one bed crammed in. That was where my dad slept, just outside of the tiny bathroom. The shower had a soap dish that fell off the metal shower wall when one turned or bent.

It was from that dock that our seven-year-old son fished. He caught the same sunfish time and again all summer.

There was also a rusty nail that protruded into the already small shower. Every time the soap dish fell, everyone in camp could hear it clang onto the metal floor. Most of the time we bathed in the lake with floating Ivory soap. It was cold, but not as cold as the water would turn if more than two gallons of hot were used. Yikes!

We had some good memories at that camp. When we inherited it, we decided that more doors would be nice. Now, we have a downstairs bedroom with bath, and the wall to the porch has been opened up. We rearranged the kitchen so that the fridge is no longer by the back door. And there are more cabinets with much more countertop space. The ceiling is still low, but not as noticeable with the white cabinetry. We have

a dishwasher because it only takes two gallons of water to wash the small load, saving our precious well water for other purposes. We still have a wall of recliners looking out onto the lake, and there are even more neighbors taking their boats around, looking in to see who has come back to camp.

We put out our mailbox and American flag up by the road to signal that we have arrived. The local Postmistress takes a personal interest in our comings and goings, making sure our mail goes to the correct location. The UPS guy knows to call us if a shipment has been sent after we have left. The last time he just called and said that he would redirect it to McLean. We know the people who work at the small store/eatery. They are the grandparents of the children who come to the Methodist church's Vacation Bible School. This is an area with much poverty, so a tradition was born last year. When the parents pick up their children from VBS at 5 p.m, they are offered meals to go for the whole family. We packed and gave out more than 100 meals each day for the week of VBS. This was a tremendous help to the families.

We have a generator now, but when we didn't, everything came to a halt when the electricity went out. No water from the well. No electricity for lights. During the summer it doesn't get dark until after 9 p.m. and then gets light around 4 a.m. Everyone used to have a flashlight by their bed so that we could make it to the bathroom at night. Sleeping upstairs in one of the lofts meant that you had to navigate the stairs in the dark. There were no railings, but you could hold on to the large logs that crossed the camp. The first step down was twice the normal height and all the steps were made for children's feet. You might be awakened by a curse if someone new was sleeping upstairs and had forgotten about the tall step. Luckily, the stout tree trunk rafter

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A Metamorphosis Amidst Snowflakes

By Jerry Norris



Jerry, taking a much-needed bath off an armored personnel carrier in a North Korean river.

When the 120-day “Ceasefire in Place,” effectively ending the Korean War, had expired in December 1953, our unit was based hard up against the northernmost point of the DMZ, then simply a line on the map. Because of a shortage of water, with each 10-man squad tent getting five gallons a day for personal use, keeping clean was a perennial problem. One day in early March, an announcement swept through our area: The Division’s Shower Unit was coming! Soon, plumes of smoke were rising off a nearby river bank. The shower unit had broken holes through the ice and was pumping river water into huge caldrons. There, it began to boil and

was then pumped into mixing tanks. Two large tents were set up, one for officers, the other for the men – with both the same size!

Because we were in the Headquarters Unit, we got first use of the hot showers. In the frigid cold, we lined up on the river bank and turned in all of our clothing. The guys running the shower unit were friendly. They had been doing this duty long enough to have worked up a comedy routine: “You know what we are going to do with your rags? They will be steamed cleaned, then we’ll burn them.” They enjoyed it immensely, though they must have used the line a hundred times with other units. Still, it was new to us and we didn’t disappoint them. We laughed in appreciation. Then, just as we were forming up a line to enter the shower unit, a brief snow squall hit the area, lasting not more than a few minutes, and leaving hardly a trace of snow on the ground as it passed.

Having stripped down to buck naked in an outer tent, we moved into a delousing room which led into the blessed showers with hot water! The tent was filled with steam. The shower crew had laid down planking, which was worn smooth. We

each got two minutes to shower. Before going in, a gruff speaking sergeant gave us the drill: Start at your head by shampooing your hair, then move down to your armpits, then your privates and your anal cavity, your toes, all the while letting the soap in your hair wash down on the remainder of your body (his use of language was rather more graphic and explicit). This system worked quite well. In any event, we were out of there in two minutes flat.

Once finished, we moved into an outer tent and warm towels were passed to us. We were sprayed again, but no one informed us what the spray product was. It most definitely was not a deodorant. On my way out, due to some residual soap suds in my eyes, I accidentally blundered into the wrong tent flap and smack into the officer's shower. I was not received well. If they had been nurses, I would have understood their

reaction better. They were definitely men—but also officers and gentlemen – and now there was an enlisted man in their presence! I think, though, that their response was more from embarrassment: They were getting more than two minutes of shower time!

After recovering from this unintended fiasco, I found the right flap and entered another tent. Here, there were freshly laundered piles of clean clothing arranged by various sizes. And there were piles of clean wool socks! We didn't have to worry about going back to our old rags. For at least a few days afterwards, the glow of that hot shower stayed with us. We looked clean, smelled clean and acted normal. Everyone seemed a little more pleasant to be around. My mates seemed different; they had cleaned up well. We had gone through a much-appreciated metamorphosis – butterflies amidst winter's snowflakes. ❖

Maine

...continued from page 13

allowed for "safety."

My parents always had a boat, usually gotten second or third hand so definitely in need of work. One boat had major issues with the cut-off mechanism. We were getting ready to come in from a boat ride with friends and pulled next to the dock. As it happened, Carl had allowed me the pleasure of docking. He jumped out and I turned the boat key to off. The boat kept going. He had to let go of the rope or be pulled into the lake. He kept yelling to me to turn off the boat, to which I finally pulled out the key and held it up for him to see. I steered the boat back around for another go at the dock, slowing down as much as possible, and Carl jumped in. He fiddled

with things until he could finally turn the engine off. We jumped out and pulled the boat back to the dock. I'm sure our neighbors were in gales of laughter inside their camps. That was the last year for that particular boat.

Now you have a picture of the place Carl and I call home each summer. We miss our friends at Vinson Hall, but we do enjoy getting together with our Maine friends and my two cousins. It is wonderful that we feel excitement as we head north, but also when we head back south. We feel so very blessed to have two very different places that feed our soul. ❖

To Dream Perchance? Very Likely

By Gene Wentz



Then Commander Gene Wentz takes a snooze (not likely to dream) before going On-Watch in flag plot aboard USS Little Rock in Gaeta, Italy in 1974.

In "Hamlet," Shakespeare wrote the familiar line, "To be, or not to be, that is the question." In that same work, he also made reference to sleeping and dreaming with the words, "To die, to sleep, perchance to dream."

I do not pretend to understand or know much about the meanings behind the prose that came from the pen of the Bard of Avon. But I do know that when I sleep, there is no "perchance to dream," it is a certainty.

I fall asleep within five minutes after my head hits the pillow, and I dream every single night. The vast majority of my dreams are pleasurable, but there will be an occasional nightmare in which I am fighting for my life. That seldom happens. Other slightly upsetting dreams have to do with flying, being naked, being chased and falling.

A dream that reoccurs frequently is one in which I am back in college and need to pass the final exam in one more course for my diploma. But, in this fantasy, I have not attended a single class during the semester and can't even find the classroom where the final will be held.

Another somewhat disturbing dream has me driving a car on a precarious mountain road. The foot brake on the auto will barely function, and I must resort to rapidly pumping my foot while steadily applying the hand brake. Fortunately, I always bring the car to a halt without some catastrophe intervening.

There are other curiosities in my dreams. For example, if in my dream Hoagy Carmichael is singing "Stardust," I hear the exact words to the song, even some obscure lyrics at the end of the refrain. Awake, I can remember very little past the first bars.

Also, in my dreams, I can do complex mathematical calculations in my brain that I would normally need a pencil and paper or a calculator. Weird.

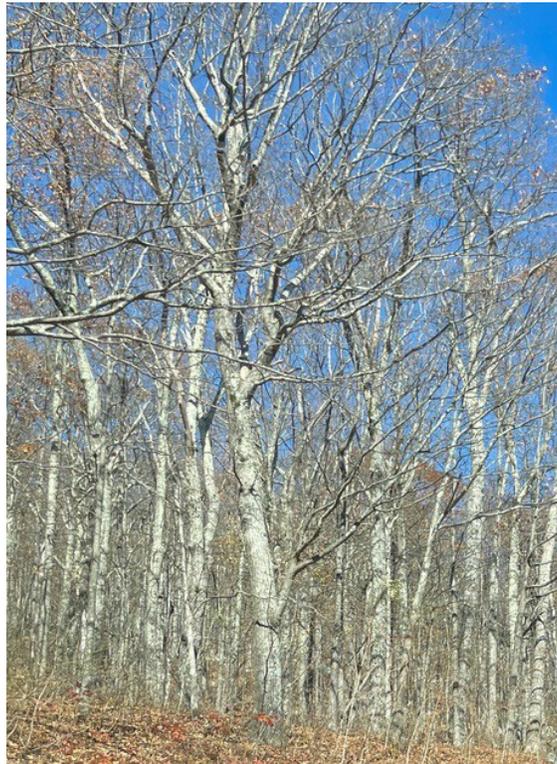
A dream is a succession of images, ideas, emotions and sensations that usually occurs involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep. The content and purpose of dreams are not fully understood, though they have been the topic of philosophical and religious interest throughout recorded history. The study of dreams is called oneirology.

Some research studies contend that most people don't pay attention to their dreams. Like me, they dismiss them as harmless, mostly pleasant, sleeptime fictions. And many people insist they do not dream at all.

Psychiatric pioneer Sigmund Freud, in the 1920s, explained dreams as manifestations of one's

deepest desires and anxieties, often related to repressed childhood memories or obsessions. Furthermore, he believed that virtually every dream topic, regardless of its content, represented the release of sexual tension.

Holy cow. Now that's something to think/dream about. ❖



Waiting

By Nancy McSlarrow

Across the somber hillside
Skeletal arms reach skyward.

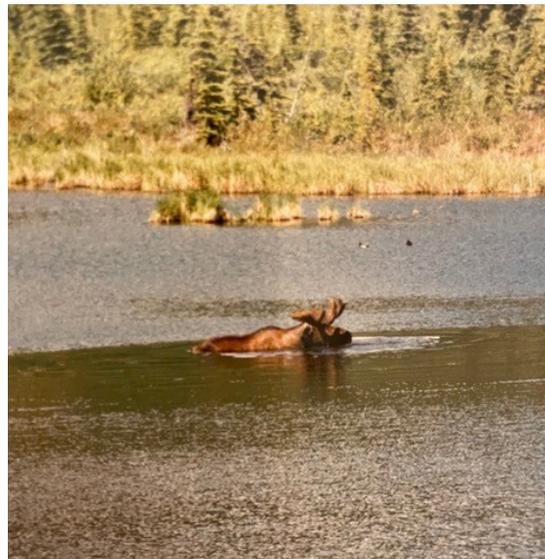
Their robes of rust
Have blown away.

The empty trees stand sentinel

Awaiting winter. ❖

Wild Life in an Alaskan Lake

By Maureen Kammerer



Ninety miles from the entrance to Denali National Park sat North Face Lodge in the middle of the wilderness. One could stay there for only three nights, as the waitlist was long. The lodge has been closed since 2020, but we had the privilege of staying there for three days in 1996. It was owned by a family that was permitted to keep it when Denali expanded its park perimeters in 1980.

Each morning the guide/naturalist would ask at breakfast what level of difficulty we hikers wished that day. Joe always chose "strenuous," and I chose "moderate." Most guests chose "easy." The last morning, Joe chose "moderate" and announced that we would hike together that day.

We grabbed our backpacks and mosquito netting hats, met our companions and went onto the tundra, anticipating magnificent views and terrain. Our experienced guide was probably in his 30s, a middle-aged doctor and his wife also joined, and our group also included an older gentleman, a grouchy, entitled, retired executive, whose wife was not a hiker. As this tale unfolds you will see that we were able to make him smile.

The July day was warm and sunny and our

destination was a lovely lake in the wilderness. We hiked on the tundra/permafrost, which was soft and spongy at that time of the year. We walked on tiny white wildflowers and little red berries that the bears would feed on in summer. Joe found a huge discarded caribou antler, and we saw a momma bear and two cubs in the distance.

We began shedding our jackets after walking a couple of miles and saw in the distance the beautiful lake glistening in the sunshine. It was probably three acres in size. As we approached, we saw a lone gigantic moose feeding in the middle of the lake. We were hot and sweaty and ready to sit and rest. We rested and drank our water and were awed by the beauty and solitude here in the wilderness.

Suddenly, Joe leaped up and announced that he was going to jump in the lake. Our group was surprised, but Joe, ever the adventurous Eagle Scout, started to take off his shirt. The doctor told the retiree not to do it as he knew he had a heart issue. The doctor and his wife demurred, as did I. The guide said, "Wow, thank you. I've been wanting to do this for years!" He too, took off his shirt and they ran to the edge of the

lake, took off the rest of their clothes and dove in head first. The executive and I followed with our cameras, wishing to capture the wild life! The moose remained placidly eating breakfast as the swimmers yelled exuberantly during their breathtaking, freezing plunge. The moose seemed unperturbed at the invasion of his territory.

The swimmers didn't last very long in the arctic water, and emerged from the lake running to dry

off with their shirts and get dressed again. We all resumed our hike, acknowledging that it had been truly eventful wildlife viewing. We did not tell the guide's boss what we did, and I promised not to publish the photos of all the wild life we saw that day until 30 years later. ❖

A fun memory of Joe Kammerer

1938-2026

Tradeoffs

By Turkan Gardenier

There are tradeoffs
To advancement
To road blocks, or road-maps,
Tradeoffs to pleasure
Tradeoffs to leaving
Or exposure to winds
And streams...which lead
To roads unknown
To many, or all
Who have dared
Or seen.

Tradeoffs to methods
Untried or discarded
Tradeoffs to means
Unhealthy or beguiled
Uncanny as it seems ... there
are
Tradeoffs to growing
Tall or modest.

Whereabouts unknown...
There are tradeoffs to caring
Or loving too deeply...so you
are
Scared and beguiled
Calloused forever.

There are tradeoffs to travel
To seeing while seeing
To appreciate, yet in secret
To try to be
As they are...unencumbered.
By ties which, as yet
You imagined...to be
Seemingly simple.

Tradeoffs to here, or there
Or yet...to roads not taken
While you wished there were
Paths not trodden

By all but few
Who venture far, as yet to see
Those whom you may
Not appreciate.

And when you have
Come here as far
There are...
Tradeoffs...
To tiredness which then
You regret...and yet
The quest, seems all worth it
After the fact. ❖

VINSON HALL Campus News & Views Winter 2026



The warmth of our community kept us going through the cold winter at Vinson Hall! Clockwise from left: We thanked the holiday decorators at a happy hour in their honor; we invited our preschool friends for an intergenerational playdate; we cheered on our teams and enjoyed watching the Super Bowl with friends and neighbors; and we watched CARE renovations transform Heritage Hall.

NAVY MARINE COAST GUARD RESIDENCE FOUNDATION