



VINSON HALL

CAMPUS NEWS & VIEWS

CEO Corner

Strength Through Team and Trust

At the heart of every strong organization is a team built on trust, shared purpose, integrity and credibility. As we move into the spring of 2026, I continue to believe that our greatest strength is not simply in what we accomplish, but in how we accomplish it together.

In times of growth, change and opportunity, the foundation of a successful organization rests on the people who show up each day committed to excellence. Across every department here at Vinson Hall, we continue to see individuals and teams demonstrating resilience, professionalism and a deep commitment to our mission. Whether serving residents directly, supporting operations behind the scenes, or leading strategic initiatives, they contribute meaningfully to the strength of our community and our residents.

Credibility is not built overnight. It is earned through consistency, transparency and follow-through. It grows when commitments are honored, communications are clear and decisions reflect both integrity and purpose. It is extremely important to me that collaboration, responsiveness, communication, and a willingness to keep our values at the center of every decision continues to be a hallmark of the Vinson Hall Senior Leadership team.

Behind the scenes, we recognize that no single person carries success alone. Instead, success comes from the collective efforts of dedicated professionals working together, sharing ideas, solving challenges and, most importantly, supporting one another so that we move forward with confidence.

I am truly honored to be a part of Vinson Hall leadership. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working with and leading many talented teams, and I can say without hesitation that this team is among the very best! The strength of this organization is a direct reflection of the people behind it, and I continue to be inspired by the commitment shown across every level of our community. Leadership is never about one individual, and I am deeply grateful to serve alongside such an exceptional group of professionals. I thank them for continuing to keep our mission at the center of all we do and for ensuring that our residents remain at the heart of every decision, every interaction, and every effort to serve with excellence. ❖



CEO Rob Roe addresses Vinson Hall's oldest residents and their guests at the 95+ Birthday Party.

— Rob Roe, President and CEO

Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation News

Spring and All Its Possibilities

Like so many others, I always look forward to the arrival of spring, the season of rebirth when everything seems possible. At Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, everything does indeed seem possible each spring, as we kick off our Annual Membership campaign. Our goal is always to make a difference in the lives of the residents and staff at Vinson Hall – and this year’s appeal, with its *The Difference You Make* stories, highlights ways in which your generosity allows us to do exactly that.

We so appreciate your continued support to the Foundation! NMCGRF Board members enjoyed the opportunity to express their gratitude personally in February, by calling each of our 2025 donors during our Annual Donor Thank-a-thon. Board members also joined residents on campus for the Annual Membership meeting in May, then had a chance to thank last year’s 4- and 5-star donors at a special Happy Hour that followed. We hope you will join us again this year as a 2026 Foundation member; your support of our four funds – Resident Assistance, Employee Caring, Innovation & Enhancement, and Warrior Transition funds – is what enables us to enrich the lives of those around us.

Take the Innovation & Enhancement Fund, for example. So far this year, we’ve been able to improve the audio and visual system in the Ballroom by outfitting the room with state-of-the-art equipment that includes new microphones, hearing assist devices, and a projector. This Fund also recently paid for 30 new planters placed at campus entrances, as well as new recliners and rugs in staff break rooms – the latter in partnership with the Family Council of Arleigh Burke and The Sylvestery. Meanwhile, through the Warrior Transition Fund, we were able to provide warrior Jacob Groves with a home for six months as he healed. This spring, just as we bid goodbye to Jacob, we welcomed our newest warrior-in-residence, Axel Mondragon, to our family.

Our engagement efforts this year include hosting the annual Paul Peak Resident of the Year celebration in March to thank winner Bud Dougherty and four other nominees for their outstanding service to our community. In April, we hosted The Potomac School middle schoolers, who joined residents for our third annual Earth Day event to plant flowers and a Japanese red maple and share lunch. We love this new tradition that expands our community connections and brings together the young and young-at-heart! So as spring unfolds, we on the Philanthropy & Engagement team are celebrating the infinite possibilities of the season, and looking forward to a great year ahead! ❖

— Michelle Crone, Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement



From left: Elisabeth Wilton, NMCGRF Board Member Rip Sullivan, Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement Michelle Crone, Nancy Kirkendall (seated) and Carol Saunders at the May happy hour thanking the Foundation’s 4- and 5-star donors,

A Fool's Errand

By Jerry Norris



Jerry at the 38th Parallel.

On my first day in the battalion's replacement unit in North Korea, awaiting an assignment to a line unit, I was told to get into a formation with its headquarters company. A sergeant asked for volunteers to go up into the higher mountains and gather engineer stakes. At that moment, my befuddled mind focused on the word "stake," which meant to me "steak." At the time, I hadn't known or heard the term "engineer stake," but soon learned that they are metal poles about 5 feet in length, with serrated edges for wrapping strands of barbed wire. After all, I was a tank crewman and not an infantryman, and engineer stakes were not in my department.

I volunteered in the full belief that I would be getting a steak dinner when we returned. Even today, decades later, I am embarrassed to recall this incident. Yet, I was only a few months from my formative years in an orphanage and the association of word with food remained a bothersome Pavlovian response. I was told to get into a truck with 16 others. The fact that they all had weapons and I had not yet been issued one

didn't register with me. I really was way ahead of myself with thoughts of a forthcoming steak dinner awaiting my return. I could taste it and threw all caution to the wind. It hadn't taken long for a constant diet of C-rations to dim my taste buds.

After some 20 minutes of grinding up a mountain road, the truck stopped and we dismounted. The sergeant started forming up a column, sending off a point man, flankers, and rear guards. I stood there waiting for an assignment. He looked at me with puzzlement, then disdain. In a very controlled but strained voice he asked why I was standing around like a lost soul. "Get your weapon out from under your parka. Do it now, he barked." I hesitated and told him that I didn't have a weapon! This was unwelcomed news. His face contorted. With a rapid movement he jerked off his helmet, slammed it onto the frozen road, muttering that he was surrounded by inefficiency. The other men were laughing and cursing in alternative waves of disbelief and bemusement. "Where

do you think you are anyway, if I may ask, and what bit of stupidity made you volunteer for this assignment?" his words sputtering out in staccato fashion. Before I could stammer out an answer, he waved me away in disgust, saying "Get into the middle of this column and when the first man falls, grab his weapon...if you can manage that much." He spit that out between clenched teeth, obviously not pleased with my presence.

We proceeded up a trail for some 15 minutes or so when suddenly word was passed down the line to get low. I then looked over the crest of the trail and saw an arm jutting out from the snow. It was bent at an angle from the elbow

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almost like an inverted V. In its gloved hand was a pistol, gripped by frozen fingers. It looked like a finely tooled weapon, probably a Mauser. From what I could see of the arm, it was clothed in Chinese Army quilt, of a better than standard-issue and close fitted. Probably an officer caught in full flight during an unsuspecting artillery barrage. I couldn't see the rest of the body, or determine if there was more to it than the arm sticking up from the snow. I didn't know how long it had been there as no flesh was visible.

I now compounded my original mistake by trying to reach out and grab my first war souvenir. It

was a short distance from my arm, so I had to move my torso over the crest to get closer. As I was doing this, the sergeant came down the line, checking his men. Seeing me start to reach out, he said in a totally disinterested low voice "Better get used to being called lefty." My arm jerked back as if I had touched a hot electrical wire. I asked if the hand holding that pistol was booby-trapped, and he responded in a tense disinterested voice, "There is one way to find out, but let me get clear of you first." I decided that the pistol could rest in peace along with what was left of the Chinese officer. I didn't need to know. I envisioned myself trying to cut into that steak with my left hand. Not a positive reinforcement picture.

From somewhere up on that mountain, the men had gathered stacks of engineer stakes and we went back to the mail area. I hadn't picked up a single stake, as the men didn't trust me to share their loads. And there was no steak dinner awaiting our return. As badly, as I performed, I had at least learned an important lesson: Those who had the experience, like the gruff sergeant, weren't known for talking a lot. You watched them, did what they did, mimicked their movements, blended in. They smelled danger, felt it in their skin and bones. They were no saints, didn't pretend to be. They were alive to all the possibilities of how short a day could become if one was careless. There wasn't time to explain things in detail to replacements. But phrases like "better get used to being called lefty" never left my memory from that moment on. Nor did I ever want to pick up a war souvenir again, no matter how clean the area appeared. ❖

The Dog Days of Summer (and Other Seasons)?

By Gene Wentz



From left: Mrs. Gene Wentz holds infant son Thor in Yokohama, Japan in 1961, with family pet boxer Ginger nearby. Gene Wentz and his daughter Broni's family-friendly German shepherd, Tyler.

I fear large dogs, and they know it. My very first encounter with a big canine – a huge, scruffy German shepherd – occurred when I was age seven. The night watchman at a foundry near home had a German shepherd as a security helper. One day I walked past his house and approached the dog, to pet it. In an instant of either panic or exuberance it launched itself on me and knocked me to the ground. Its owner led it away but I was traumatized for life.

My next experience with an oversized dog was more pleasant. At my Theta Xi fraternity at Penn State we had a house mascot, a male Boxer named Colonel. During my pledge semester I was assigned the duty of walking (and picking up behind) Colonel. The good thing about him was that he was a babe-magnet. Coeds saw him as a cuddly, friendly pet. They approached to scratch his ears and talk softly to him, while paying some small attention to me, his handler.

Colonel attracted the girls, but it was up to me to try beguiling them with my sophisticated patter.

My experience with Colonel convinced me that only a boxer would satisfy my desire for a companion animal. While stationed in Yokohama, Japan, I visited a boxer breeder in Tokyo and selected an exuberant, captivating female from a litter of five. She was pure bred, with papers from the Japan Kennel Club, and cost about \$50 (\$513 in today's money). Ginger was our pet during the birth of our first son and accepted the newborn into the home without any show of jealousy.

It was my habit each morning to allow Ginger outside on a chain and buckled leather collar, to do her business, while I brewed a pot of coffee. One morning when I went outside to bring her into the house, the collar had been undone. Ginger had been dognapped. We posted pictures and rewards but to no avail. Exactly one year after her disappearance I got a call from the base shore patrol saying they had cornered a female boxer. It was Ginger. She was malnourished, underweight and riddled with disease. I spent a considerable sum of money

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bulking her up, curing the heartworm and treating other maladies. But she was never the sweet, loving pet we knew before. She would snarl, bare her teeth and was very aggressive when challenged. When our second child was born she exhibited some disturbing traits toward the newcomer, so we had to put her down.

I shed a tear. I loved that animal. With Ginger in mind, I make periodic contributions to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

One of the favorite features in my hometown newspaper is the weekend page that shows the dogs and cats that are available for people who might be interested in giving them a welcoming home. I read the captions to learn their names, temperament and what special care they may need. I hope they all get adopted.

As for me, my dog days are over. ❖

Xena

By Midge Holmes



My little rescue dog, Xena, turned 10 on January 15, 2026. She is my age-in-place cheerful companion.

Xena loves the following:

- Freeze dried liver treats
- Walks with her owner
- Weekly visits to Arleigh Burke Pavilion
- Circling and sniffing other Vinson Hall dogs
- Chunky peanut butter

- Attending classes and rehearsals with me
- Lying in my lap
- Treats
- Watermelon

She dislikes the following:

- Car rides
- Deep snow
- Fire drill alarms
- Hallway noises
- Being left alone
- Grooming
- Nail clipping
- Pills

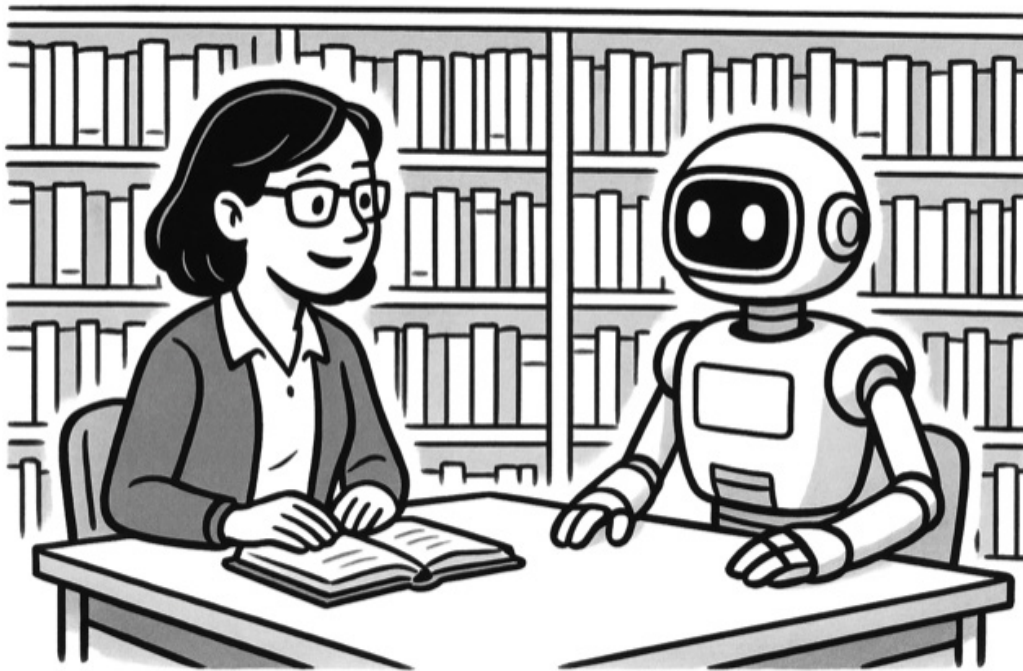
What are Xena's benefits to me?

She reduces stress, makes me laugh, boosts my physical health, gets me moving, offers unconditional love, reassures my offspring that I am okay, combats loneliness, warms my lap, increases my social interactions, and protects me by loudly deterring perceived scary intruders. Mostly, she is just "doggone" fun.

And, I wear trousers. Xena, pants. ❖

Artificial Intelligence in the Library

Carol Henderson



AI-generated image prompted by Carol Henderson.

I've been asked if I would write about the future of libraries and how they will be affected by artificial intelligence. This was something I couldn't toss off quickly, but the subject has been percolating as I've learned more about AI, so I'll offer some thoughts.

AI, or the ability of machines to simulate intelligent behavior, is a truly transformational technology at which staggering amounts of money are being directed. Its evolution changes daily, so it would be foolish to try to predict in what directions it's heading. Other such transformations have taken at least a few generations for the full effects to be clear, giving individuals, firms and institutions time to adapt. AI is rushing at us with disorienting rapidity.

AI is clearly superb at analyzing vast amounts of data to discover patterns, enabling discoveries in science, medicine and many other fields. It's great at summarizing material, producing work

documents and correspondence, and creating works "in the style of..." any artist, author or celebrity requested.

Some experts have noted that previous technologies enabled machines to substitute for humans on routine work through automation. In contrast, AI may substitute for humans on work that requires codified skills or follows a definite set of rules, affecting workers farther up the educational or professional ladder. Work that requires tacit knowledge, or tips and tricks that accumulate with experience, may not be as affected.

It's also important to distinguish between occupations and tasks, or between institutions and the various duties performed by their staff. So how does this apply to libraries? Public libraries may conjure up images of books on shelves, but today public libraries are community institutions providing access to information in

a wide variety of formats and services. These include printed materials, of course, but also online books and journals, special formats and equipment for those who need it, book clubs, story hours for children, literacy tutoring, local history archives, public access computers and printers, even 3D printers, with help in using such equipment, and classes in how to spot fake information.

Our own Fairfax County Public Library loans Chromebooks, tablets, educational kits, binoculars, framed artwork, board games, home and science tools such as thermal cameras and energy conservation kits. As an example, a member of Vinson Hall's resident Health and Wellness Committee borrowed an air quality meter and tested various campus locations. This proved so useful it was decided one should be purchased, but it was quite helpful to be able to borrow one, try it out, and see exactly how it worked and what it measured. The library also loans meters to test for carbon monoxide and radon gas, and to test batteries.

There are many useful databases and commercial information sources that require payment or a subscription. Without subscribing individually, the public can, through the library, access genealogy sources, Consumer Reports, medical and legal databases, language learning resources, major newspapers, and newspaper and history archives.

Major research libraries in universities, government agencies and specialized firms provide this access at a much more expensive level of professional and scientific journals, databases, and specialized software. This provides researchers access through the library's subscriptions or contracts rather than each having to pay for them individually. In these libraries, the librarians often have backgrounds in the subject areas the institution covers as well as graduate level work in library and information

science and the associated technologies. This is as specialized an area as each researcher's own subject, and the librarians and researchers work together.

Recent news reports provide an example of this. The major cutbacks of staff at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include the entire staff of the CDC library. This has caused distress and concern by researchers whose ability to work efficiently has been compromised without the librarians. Researchers report that they value the librarians as trained experts in ferreting out highly technical data and studies across complex databases and specialized publications around the world. Some have listed librarians as co-authors on their papers because they have been so intimately involved in the research projects.

In the case of the specialized research library, it seems likely that AI will replace some tasks, but may augment others. Librarians will need to adapt their skills with knowledge and experience in making the best use of AI. Choosing which version of AI, framing the question, negotiating to fine-tune the search, and evaluating the results to spot inaccuracies or made-up conclusions or sources will require the specialized skills and experience librarians have always brought to their work. Pairing a medical researcher with a librarian who has both subject expertise and experience with AI sounds like taking advantage of two kinds of tacit and experience-based knowledge.

For the public library, the tasks done may change significantly. Formats of information and entertainment will evolve, but the changes AI brings will not all be open and free. In our capitalist system they will be monetized in a variety of ways. The public library has always been an equalizer, making information and the technology to access it available to all members

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Golf Musings

By John Stockman



I have played a lot of golf in a lot of places over my long life. I started playing golf in college and have continued playing to the current time. I love the game, its history, its customs, and its challenges. I play for fun and am not overly concerned with shooting a low score. Making an improbable shot, though, is important to me. I love risk/reward holes such as doglegs. If I have to choose between a safe shot and a challenging shot, I usually choose the latter. With the preceding as background, I'll relate some of my golfing experiences.

I once played a course in Okinawa that required players to use caddies who were young women. The course had numerous water hazards. My caddy soon learned of my risky tendencies. Several times when I faced a long shot over water, she would shake her head "no" when I reached for a wood and hand me an iron to lay up in front of the water. I didn't always take her suggestions. She didn't speak much English

and I didn't speak much Japanese. When we finished the round, I gave her a generous tip. She smiled and said something I didn't understand. I repeated her words to a Japanese friend and asked him what she said. "Reckless golfer, but good tipper," he said.

At a conference, I was appointed to arrange some off-duty entertainment for the group. I immediately thought of golf and arranged to play night golf on a local course. I procured golf balls that glowed in the dark. We drove golf carts with headlights. We had a shotgun start (everyone teed off at the same time on different holes). Soon glowing golf balls were flying through the darkness. The course was home to a sizeable snake population, and the night is when snakes are most active. As a herpetologist said, "The night belongs to the snakes." Several times I heard feminine screams. And sometimes I heard male curses that made me wonder if I was playing with sailors. Fortunately, all the snakes

did was terrorize some players. Overall, it was a fun event.

The most difficult hole on the course was a long uphill par five with a narrow fairway, and woods on both sides and a small putting green. It had bunkers in front and back of the green. The only thing it was missing was a water hazard. I seldom parred the hole and had never birdied it. My drive was long and split the fairway. I hooked my second shot into the woods. My ball ended up in front of a large tree that was in line with the green. The smart shot would be to simply take my medicine and knock the ball back into the fairway where I would have a clear shot to the green. My playing partner saw me looking at the tree and green and knew I was going to try a miracle shot. The tree was tall and the green was small, but I thought if I used my lob wedge and played the ball forward with my weight on my back foot and opened the face of the club

She smiled and said something I didn't understand. I repeated her words to a Japanese friend and asked him what she said. "Reckless golfer, but good tipper," he said.

I could clear the tree and land the ball on the green. With hope in my heart, I swung hard. The ball rose quickly, cleared the tree and dropped onto the green about two feet from the hole. I stroked it into the hole for a birdie. My partner shook his head and said, "unbelievable." I didn't think so, it was implausible but not unbelievable.

Another one of my best shots was a putt. The hole was a par four. It was downhill for about 300 yards with a stream crossing the fairway. The last 150 yards was steeply uphill to a shallow green. The green was at the crest of the hill and sloped sharply down from back to front. If you were unlucky enough to land your approach shot above the hole, you faced an incredibly difficult

putt downhill that would probably run off the green and roll another 20 yards downhill. (The green was elevated.) My approach shot landed at the very back of the green and the hole was near the front edge. My ball would have to traverse nearly the full depth of the green and curve severely to the left to reach the hole. I judged the speed and break I needed and nudged the ball. It started slow, picked up speed and dropped in the hole. It was one of the best putts of my life. My playing partners were impressed. I was too, but knew luck had played a large part in my success.

While a patient at Bethesda Navy Medical Center, I learned that there was a nine-hole golf course on the property. The daily greens fee was \$9.00. You could play as many rounds as you wanted for a total of \$9.00. A friend and I played there frequently. It was the best deal around.

I was playing with a friend on a Florida course that was home to numerous alligators. We were warned to keep a safe distance from the gators. I hit a shot that landed close to a gator that was sunning himself on the fairway. I asked my playing partner to drive close to the big reptile and "keep the engine running" in case I needed to make a hasty escape. I smacked my ball, which apparently annoyed the gator. He turned in my direction, and I ran for the golf cart. (I didn't bother to repair my divot.)

Several years ago, a rheumatologist put me on steroids to alleviate rheumatoid arthritis. The first day I played after taking the medication, I added thirty yards to my drives. My regular playing partner asked me what had gotten into me. I replied, "steroids." The improvement was short-lived. Two weeks later when my doctor took me off the steroids, my driving distance dropped 30 yards.

I regularly play a course that has an extremely

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Family Traditions

By Ed Davis



Sheila and Ed Davis in the Penthouse Lounge.

Every family has traditions. Some are handed down from generation to generation and others develop during a marriage.

Sheila and I developed a new tradition while I was a postulant, training to become an Episcopal vocational deacon. As part of my training, I took one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. In effect, I was a hospital chaplain intern for eight weeks at St. Francis Hospital in Charleston, South Carolina. We had classes in the mornings, and we then visited patients in the hospital in the afternoons.

One of my rotations was the emergency room, and while I was there, a high school senior came in one day. Sadly, he had collapsed in the parking lot of his school and was dead on arrival. His mother was the secretary to the North Charleston Police Department, so the police chaplain came and took the lead while I observed and helped as much as I could.

After a considerable period of grief, the mother was finally able to calm down to the point that she could discuss the situation. This is what she said: "I shall always be grateful that the last thing I said on the phone to my son this morning was 'I love you.'" This had a tremendous impact on me.

It had such an impact that Sheila and I developed a new tradition. Now, whenever we part, the last thing we say to each other is "I love you." One never knows what might happen or whether the other one will return.

So "I love you" is the last thing we say to each other. ❖

Golf Musings

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difficult par three hole. The hole requires you to fly the ball over water and a rock wall in front of the green. The green is short from front to back. A steep hill backs it. Distance control is paramount. If your shot is short, your ball will join countless other balls in the lake. If your shot is long, you will face a difficult chip from a downhill lie and the ball will probably run off the steep green into the lake. The smart tee shot is to aim for a bailout area just off the left side of the green and thus avoid the water and the steep hill behind the green. I never choose that option. Instead, I aim for the center of the green and take my chances with the lake and the steep hill

in back of the green. I freely admit that I would score better taking the bailout route, but what fun would that be?

I will continue to attempt difficult shots knowing that many of them will not end up well. I will also resist advice from others to play the "safe" shot. And I will fail more often than I succeed when attempting improbable shots that test my abilities. But how will I know my limits if I don't test them? ❖

Artificial Intelligence in the Library

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of the public, regardless of means or technical expertise, and whether needed for purposeful living, personal education, or simple pleasure. That community and institutional role is an important one, and in my view it should and will continue.

This snapshot of the situation was drafted in November 2025. Meanwhile, AI continues to chip away at the expertise not only of librarians but of experts in many other fields. And our younger students are easily tempted to rely on AI rather than work out problems or assignments on their own. We have atrophied memory because it's so

easy to look things up. We now have the ability to outsource thinking as well. Where that leads us is a troubling question.

Carol Henderson was a librarian at George Mason University in the 1970s. She spent 24 years with the American Library Association as a registered lobbyist on library and information policy issues, and retired as ALA Associate Executive Director. The image with this article was created with AI; the text was not. ❖

Aestheticism, Significance and Sentimentality

By Harvey Follender

I was reading about Aestheticism, the duality of human nature, the relationship between art and life, morality, and the pursuit of pleasure. Some define it as the approach to art exemplified by the Aesthetic Movement. Aestheticism promoted an “art for art’s sake” philosophy, celebrating beauty as free of moral or utilitarian considerations.

I had just dealt with that issue here at Vinson Hall. With a renovation of Heritage Hall recently completed, the hallway-art “Rehanging Group” was laying out nicely framed pictures to be mounted in our newly painted corridors outside of our apartments. They had picked out some pictures for the areas near our doorways. I remember seeing many peaceful scenes, gardens, flowers, and birds. Then they invited us (by building and floor level), to a conference for open discussion of their plans.

They spoke about “art” – it seemed to be all about the art – but I heard very little about the substance, moral, or utilitarian considerations, and it made me squirm. Art for art’s sake, in my opinion, belongs in a museum, but near our own doors and hallways we should have pictures that are significant to us.

I was told by the Rehanging Group that aesthetic appeal was just part of the reason they had chosen the pieces they’d placed in the corridors. Many of the pieces also have sentimental power and speak meaningfully to residents because they are reminded of a former neighbor or they are works that have become familiar over the years. I found that acceptable and was delighted by the insight the group had shared with me. I learned a lot and it widened my view.

I selected the following to be near my own

doorway, all of which have significance to me. Please stop by to see them.

Courage

I have always had empathy and admiration for those active duty service members (like my daughter, in the Iraq combat zone) who risk sacrifice, along with the families who may suffer their injury or loss. This picture shows the evolution of uniforms from the American War of Independence to WWII. They went from being decorative (as for a parade) to being utilitarian, more comfortable, less observable, and more protective, so the soldier is more survivable.

The uniform changes remind me of a story. Many of my annual active-duty (Army Reserve) assignments were done in places where it was considered dangerous to wear a uniform (for example, Defense Attaché offices at third-world US embassies). During that time, changes had been made to the green combat uniform known as fatigues, and the combat uniform had evolved into a camouflaged battle dress uniform (BDU).

Since I hadn’t been wearing the combat uniform regularly, I wasn’t aware of those changes. After the BDU replaced fatigues, but before I knew of the change, I arranged an assignment in a remote location of Thailand where I was expecting to wear my green fatigues. I arrived



Sunday evening. On Monday morning, I put on my uniform and walked outside where I was greeted with hysterical laughter. Someone asked whether I had come from a museum. I was very embarrassed and planned to leave. Another officer said I should go to the uniform/tailor shop where they would fix me up. I went there and I was quickly re-outfitted.



Painting by Cherry Baumbusch

Falcon

This falcon's eye has depth in which I can almost see its retina. I have a badly damaged

retina and I envy the falcon. I have always had a fondness for birds. Living on the southernmost block of Brooklyn, abutting the Atlantic Ocean, my life was filled with pigeons, seagulls and sparrows. My mother noticed my affinity for birds and brought home a handsome green parakeet. We named him Skippy. Mom allowed me to leave the cage door open so Skippy was free to fly around the house all the time. He followed us to different rooms and was so friendly, always chirping to us. One morning, we found there was an egg in the cage. The family thought I was pulling a prank. The joke was on us. "He" was a "she." To us she was still our dear Skippy. We enjoyed her company for many years.

Decades later, my wife brought home a Skippy look-alike. Although we knew the gender of this bird, we gave him a neutral name. Since he responded when I had started calling "birdie, birdie" to him, we named him Bert E. Birdie. When I would come home, he would fly to me and perch on my eyeglass frame. He also shared sunflower seeds and peanuts with me and was our dear friend for many years.

Naval Replenishment

This naval sea-scene reminds me of the Navy sailors, Marines, and Coast Guard servicemen who bravely served at sea during WWII. Replenishment deliveries brought the sailors critical supplies for battle operations, maintenance, and sustenance, plus letters from sweethearts and family. While other nations developed their own methods for at-sea logistics to deliver supplies to warships enroute, the U.S. Navy pioneered and most extensively used modern underway replenishment capabilities and procedures. The sight of a supply ship would probably have been one of the most welcomed sights on the sea.



Native American Teaching

This picture reminds me of how "India" (the country) has been important to me throughout my life. "India" has been used in a variety of ways:

When I was a child playing "Cowboys and Indians" with my friends, I would choose to be an "Indian." That may be the name that Christopher Columbus applied to Native Americans, but I didn't understand the distinction at the time; while I was a cadet at The Citadel, I was assigned to "India Company," with India (aka "I") being the 9th numbered company in the cadet regiment; my young family and I were stationed in India (the actual country) for four years and I returned there 15 times until recently, because I relish the culture of the turbaned tribal people in mountain and rural areas, and especially with camels in the desert. It feels like "India," in so many ways, has been a continuous thread in my life. ❖

VINSON HALL Campus News & Views Spring 2026



We made the most of the beautiful spring weather at Vinson Hall! Clockwise from left: We chose the 2025 Paul Peak Resident of the Year, we walked to support the Alzheimer's Association, and we celebrated Earth Day with our friends at The Potomac School.

NAVY MARINE COAST GUARD RESIDENCE FOUNDATION