

Fourth of July

*Red, White, & Blue -
A Patriotic Celebration*
By Jerry Carter

Rain did not damper the festivities on the 4th of July 2006. Due to severe thunderstorms this event was moved inside to the Scott Dining Hall. Great country western tunes were provided by the South Bound band and over 320 resi-

dents celebrated the birthday of America. Beer, sodas, wine, cake, and ice cream were provided by Recreation Services during the entire event. Food Service provided a delicious grilled traditional cookout menu which the residents enjoyed. Everyone had a good time and celebrated this special time of the year.

Fourteen little 'Hometown Soldiers'

graciously entertained us retired Old Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Coast Guard and Air Force veterans at the Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington. They were the young sons and daughters of active duty military serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. One was the daughter of a nurse working in Veterans Hospital. They were all from the St. Petersburg, Florida, area and had come to Washington, D.C. to participate in the 4th of July parade downtown and to visit and sing for us here.

They were dressed in what we in WWII called fatigues (they now call them utility suits or something) tams, fatigue caps and they probably would not like to be called "cute" but they were to us and looked so very young. They sang America, and about a half dozen songs (they could sing) and drilled and waved flags. One little boy who looked like he was about five, brought a smile to our Old Soldiers' faces. With his too big fatigue cap he looked like a miniature "Sad Sack" from WWII. They thanked us veterans and we certainly thank them. As the evening was winding down to a close, many residents took advantage of our hill location and were entertained by the fabulous fire works display! Special thanks to Food Service, the South Bound band, and the many volunteers that made this day possible.



Warren Helm takes to the dance floor during the Fourth of July celebration at the AFRH.



American Legion donation, page 18



Seabees replace fence, page 21



People Animals Love, Page 24

AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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The AFRH Communicator is an authorized publication of the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Residents and employees are encouraged to submit photos, art, news items, and features. Materials will be edited by The AFRH Communicator staff for journalistic style and length.

Editorial views and opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of AFRH or its leadership. Throughout the newspaper AFRH-G input will be denoted as (G) and AFRH-W as (W).

AFRH-W Editors Column



Psychology teaches us that “personality” is the sum total of the characteristics of an individual – physiological and psychological. We learn from living only if we are *willing* to learn, and we are usually given many chances to learn before we get it right.

In active duty military life, however, repeated chances are not always the rule. And to some extent, our personalities were forged by our earlier military training and experiences. But here ... **at AFRH** ... we are sheltered from Improvised Explosive Devices and the many other dangers inherent in armed combat.

We AFRH residents now live on an auspicious piece of real estate that is a declared National Treasure of which some have labeled us as “*stockholders*.” We now exist in a relatively protected environment and we pretty much have it our way despite our endless quest for perfection.

I prefer to think of us as “*beneficiaries*” of a national retirement plan that is second only to that afforded our national elected officials. How you handle the semantics is for you to decide. Nevertheless, your personality will dictate how you view the Home as well as your fellow residents.

At the end of my lifelong tour, I would like to think that I have had a positive influence on the lives of the countless people I’ve met. And I suggest that we all work at enjoying our relaxed lifestyle as well as the diverse population of the residents we call “neighbors.”

Enjoy your comparatively serene existence. You’ve earned it.

And above all,
ENJOY YOUR PAPER

AFRH Residency

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement centers are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

Eligibility:

Military veterans from each service branch can live at either Home.

Veterans are eligible to become a resident of the AFRH if their active duty service in the military was at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer or limited duty officer and who are:

● **Veterans with 20 or more years of active duty service and are at least 60 years old, or**

● **Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability, or**

● **Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to injuries, disease, or disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay, or**

● **Female veterans who served prior to 1948.**

To receive an informational brochure please contact the following office:

AFRH at 1-800-422-9988, or write to AFRH Admissions Office, 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington DC 20011-8400.

**Visit us on the web at:
<http://www.AFRH.gov>**

Message from the Chief Operating Officer



Activities are designed to stimulate, entertain

The recreational activities offered at the AFRH are part of our overall vision of providing our residents with an environment that nurtures the health and wellness philosophy of aging. With that in mind, this month I am highlighting our Recreation Department and some of the initiatives staff members have implemented to improve the quality of services to our residents.

Last month, Rec Services formed a Resident Marketing Committee. The committee members are comprised of residents that are actively involved in the various trips, games, and friendly competitions offered each month. At the first Resident Marketing Committee meeting, the group offered positive and constructive feedback about the activities presently being offered and made suggestions about ways to get the word out so that more residents will participate. Suggestions included postings on bulletin boards, flyers on tables in the dining room and enthusiastic feedback passed between residents.

The committee plans to meet quarterly and will continue to look at ways to encourage participation and improve the recreation activities available.

The Recreation Department also conducted their annual resident survey this month. The survey results will be used to determine what programs and activities to continue, based on your feedback, and to hear about new activities you would like. The value of your feedback cannot be understated, please do not hesitate to tell us your ideas, suggestions and concerns. If you are not comfortable completing a survey, stop by Rec Services and talk to a staff member. They have an open door policy and are available to listen to you at your convenience. Our goal is to satisfy you and provide you with stimulating and entertaining activities. Results of the survey taken this month will be made available at a later date.

Also be aware that Rec Services holds a Planning Meeting the first Wednesday of every month at 9 a.m. in the Scott Theater. All residents are encouraged to attend. This is the avenue used to schedule day trips for the next month. In addition to a multitude of events scheduled each month for all residents, there are presently six trips a month scheduled for persons in BPVs ranging from visits to malls, restaurants, museums and other areas of interest. Persons utilizing BPVs are also encouraged to participate in all activities offered by Rec Services. See the August calendar for a complete listing of all events and activities scheduled next month.

Tim Cox

Conversation with the Chief Financial Officer



In this month's conversation, I am discussing three financial issues that AFRH residents have asked me about: living costs for income tax filing, Resident Advisory Council funds, and residents' user's fees.

Living Costs for Annual Income Taxes

The request was to show living costs incurred by living at AFRH that could be itemized and perhaps deducted for annual

income taxes.

AFRH requested a legal opinion from the legal office at Bolling Air Force Base. The legal office agreed that the sample letter shown below could be used by residents for costs incurred living at AFRH. (Please note this is only a sample letter.) The letter will be provided upon request by the Business Center and signed by the Director.

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that _____ was a resident in the _____ (e.g., independent, assisted living, or long term care) status at the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH-W) for the period January – December 200X. AFRH-W collects a residence fee pursuant to 24 U.S.C. 414 that is graduated to the level of care required by the individual. AFRH-W is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in three levels of care: (1) Ambulatory, (2) Assisted Living, and (3) Long Term Care facility.

For purposes of calculating expenses that may be deductible from income tax, medical, meal, and lodging expenses from the following percentage of the resident fee:

-Medical expense:

Ambulatory Care – 5%

Assisted Living and Long Term Care – 35%

-Meal expense: - 19%

-Lodging expense: - 40%

Residents may not be entitled to claim each expense item as a deduction. IRS Publication 502 outlines those medical expenses which are deductible from income tax. The intent of the above information is to make information available to the resident to use at tax time under the rules of IRS Publication 502. Please note – each resident is advised to consult with their own tax preparer and/or the Internal Revenue Service for information specific to their taxes.

Resident Advisory Council (RAC) Funds

The financial accounting function for the Gulfport and Washington Resident Funds is conducted by the Navy Personnel Command, Morale, Welfare, Recreation (MWR) Division, Financial Management Branch, in Millington, Tennessee, since the RAC funds are non-appropriated funds (NAF). Each year the Navy arranges an audit of MWR funds by an independent auditor.

The process for local management of each Resident Fund is through the Director, AFRH-Washington and each RAC, the Washington council and currently the Gulfport council of resi-

See CFO on page 4

Office of the Director



By the end of September 2006 we will once again close residency in the Pipes Building.

In September 2005, we re-opened the Pipes Building to accommodate resi-

dents who had fled from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and who settled into D.C. Those residents and the furnishings will be transferred to the Scott Building within the coming weeks and the Pipes Building will once again become dormant. Residents' Comcast will be transferred over at the Homes expense. Verizon telephone is at the residents' expense.

Transportation from the Pipes will be discontinued at the point of building closure.

We have augmented the dental services with a Mobile Dental Clinic for an assigned group of residents and this addition has relieved the congestion in our Wellness Center for those residents seeking dental appointments. We also have planning underway to improve the processing time for residents in our Wellness Center.

Our three Scott Dining Room resident serving lines are being monitored and timed for periods of congestion. At this

point, we have about 20 minutes of congestion at the beginning of meals based on the popularity of the meal that is being offered. A typical example is the resident Birthday Dinner meal. After the first 20 minutes, the line begins to dissipate and tends to move fairly quickly through serving. We are continuing to monitor the congestion and suggest that many residents may want to wait until 30 minutes after the dining service opens to enter the dining room to avoid the wait.

The residents have asked that each resident remove their hat when dining and place their hat on their chair, not on their dining table. Additionally, all residents who choose to use the dining room are dressed in clean and appropriate street

clothing. These requests and suggestions have come from fellow residents who feel that this level of decorum is a part of the AFRH tradition and we continue to support those high standards.

AFRH is continuing to reposition our Home to benefit changing populations and cultures, while all the while pursuing the best possible services for our resident constituency.

Our modest costs for our Veterans, 97% resident retention, and common interests, are the reasons for distinguishing ourselves from those around us in the retirement community. The human price you have paid is matched by the heritage that we have preserved. Welcome Home and have a wonderful summer.

Ben Laub



Employees gather at a breakfast awards ceremony held last month at AFRH. The ceremony is an opportunity to recognize employees who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done. Congrats to all AFRH employees.

CFO, from Page 3

dents living on the Washington campus. Each year the funds are programmed through the RACs. Any additional requests for funds throughout the year go through the RAC as well.

AFRH User's Fees

In last month's Communicator, I informed you that the COO received a letter requesting information about the user's fees here at AFRH. The questions are below. Answers for questions 3 and 4 are available, but we are transitioning from one accounting system to a new one so the answers for questions 1 and 2 will not be available until the next edition of the Communicator.

1-What is the average user's fee paid by retired military personnel?

2- What is the average user's fee paid by non-military retired and those not in receipt of VA disability compensation?

3-What is the number of military retirees accepted as residents of the Home in FY 2005?

Answer: From the Still Active FY 2005 Approval List are 25 retirees who are still not ready to move in.

- 91 retirees became AFRH residents in FY 2005.

4-What is the number of persons accepted as Home residents in FY 2005 who receive neither military retirement nor VA disability?

Answer: There were (7) persons approved for acceptance into the AFRH during FY 2005 who have not made the final decision to move to the Home.

From the Still Active FY 2005 Approval List are 7 who are still not ready to move in.

There were 25 persons who became AFRH residents in FY 2005.

Current numbers as of 06/06/06

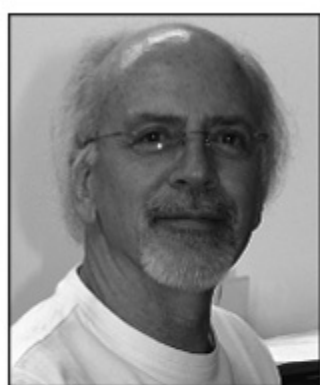
- Retirees: 928 (76%) of total AFRH residents)

- Veterans or Persons (not classified as a retiree or veteran) : 208 (17%) of total AFRH residents)

The intent of this forum is to answer your questions that are of financial interest to you and others. There have been some great questions raised. I hope you find this forum as a useful means of communication on financial topics. Enjoy the warm summer we are having here in D.C., and I am looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Steve McManus

Office of the Director



We certainly hope that each of you are doing well and, please know, that we are thinking about each of you. It just takes a second to remember all the happy times and laughing times and the bright and sunny days that we shared while under the majestic oaks that continue to populate the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport. The scenery has changed for all of us, but the friendships new and old are continuing

to be nurtured by our new acquaintances. The Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington truly seems to be making every effort to accommodate each of you and their efforts are driven by a desire to provide the very best customer service possible.

There are a number of on-going projects that remain on our front burner in Gulfport. The fence project is underway. The Seabees are onboard marking the fence line, removing old and setting new fence poles. The Seabees have all of the equipment to remove our dilapidated fence line and, also, to rebuild the perimeter fence line. The weather lately has not been very cooperative. Our daily thunderstorms have really taken a toll on our fence work project, however, today appears to be one of the only days this week that the weatherman appears to be cooperating. Master Chief Walter Asher has the lead on this project. Many of you remember Walt from his days as our Master Chief.

The pack out of government furniture and other pieces of property is progressing along. We will be evaluating proposals from prospective movers this afternoon. The furniture and other pieces of property have been prepositioned in the ballroom, game room and in the exercise room waiting the awarding of the contract. Hopefully, an award will be granted very soon and we can start the process of moving these pieces of government property to Washington. The remaining pieces of memorabilia will be moved this week. The Seabees are on schedule to move the very large pieces of our history (governor's boards in the reception room, model ships, crocheted America Flag leading into the ballroom, two wooden eagles and many more pieces) to the Seabee Base. The grounds are finally looking really good; the day long showers have really help the cause. The Campus Ops folks have really stepped up and have found imaginative ways of keeping the entire facility presentable. It has been a team effort these last 11 months and each and every challenge that has been presented to this staff has been worked out, overcome and completed in a workmanlike manner. They are terribly smart, industrious and forward thinking. I am proud to be associated with this group of Armed Forces Retirement Home staff and, whatever the future holds, these staff members will be fine.

Take good care of yourselves, we miss each of you and remember the old Falstaff commercial,

“We are all in this together.”

Robert Locke

AFRH Population Report as of 14 July 2006

Total number of AFRH residents to date: 1211

Eligibility categories:

1. Veterans with 20 or more years of active duty service and are at least 60 years of age.

Female: 44

Male: 879

Total: 923

2. Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability.

Female: 7

Male: 73

Total: 80

3. Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to injuries, disease, or disability and served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay.

Female: 2

Male: 145

Total: 147

4. Female veterans who served prior to 1948.

Total: 61

Branch of Service	Female	Male	Total
U.S. Air Force	9	380	389
U.S. Army	60	450	510
U.S. Coast Guard	0	7	7
U.S. Navy	38	227	265
U.S. Marine Corps	9	28	37
Not Assigned	0	3	3

Combat Services (Individuals could have served in more than one war theater):

Desert Storm - 4

Granada - 4

Korea - 585

Vietnam - 507

WWII - 598

Average age of Residents	Female	Male	Total
39 & under	0	0	0
40 – 49	0	3	3
50 – 59	2	8	10
60 – 69	3	105	108
70 – 79	21	441	462
80 – 89	81	486	567
90 – 99	7	53	60
100 & over	0	1	0

Then and Now...

Andrew Pellkofer



Bernice Goldstein



Margaret Jirak



William Sinnott



Right - A Bolling AFB volunteer assists a resident in strapping on a life jacket for the boat ride on the Potomac.



Doris Jones gets ready to cast a line during the Outdoor Adventure day at Bolling AFB.



AFRH residents enjoy Outdoor Adventure Day at Bolling AFB

By Laura Fogarty

On Monday, July 17, 2006, 10 residents and five staff ventured to Bolling AFB for a day of activity despite the record breaking temperatures forecasted for the day. We did modify the day and make it a half day trip. With sack lunches, breakfast bars, juice and plenty of water on hand, the residents were excited to go fishing and enjoy a boat ride down the Potomac. Bolling AFB volunteers were on hand to operate the boats and to assist with the fishing. Doris Jones caught a fish which added some excitement for the group.

After the morning activities, we enjoyed our lunches prepared by the dining hall which were great. Thank you to Food Services for preparing some great lunches. Lastly I would like to thank resident Homer Rutherford and employee Howard "Keith Turner" for making this trip a reality. Another trip to Bolling will be held in September/October timeframe based on when the pavilion is available.

Visit to Gettysburg

A group of over 40 residents visited the Gettysburg National Military Park on July 24. While there, the group toured the park and had the opportunity to walk around the park and see the historical markers and monuments. The trip to Gettysburg was sponsored by Recreation Services.

Photos by J.W. Hickman



July 27th marks anniversary of cease fire that ended the Korean War

... "Having brought Rhee into line and resolved all other outstanding issues, the senior delegates met at Panmunjom at 10:00 a.m. on July 27. In a cold, wordless ceremony, witnessed by Western and Communist journalists and photographers, Generals Harrison and Nam II each signed nine copies of the armistice. As set forth by its terms, twelve hours later, at 10:00 p.m., the guns fell silent along the front and the war in Korea was over..."

Reprinted from the book The Forgotten War authored by Clay Blaire

Resident recalls serving in Korea

By Mary Kay Gominger

Photo by Sheila Abarr

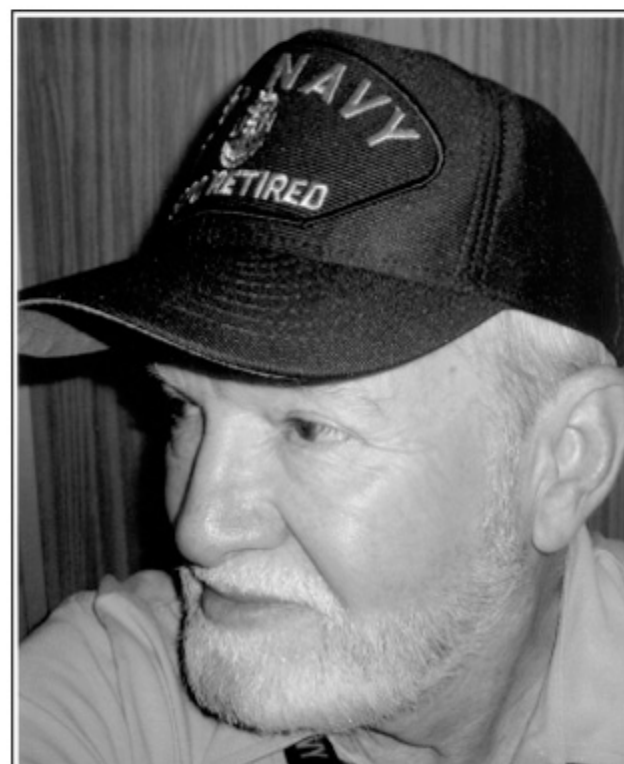
Waco, Texas, is a long way from the shores of North Korea but that is where J. W. Hickman ended up one short year after joining the Navy in 1949. He was on the destroyer WILTSIE (DD716) for the duration of the Korean War and was, in fact, right off the shore of Wonson Island when the cease fire order was given on July 27, 1953.

"We had been hearing for days that today is the day the treaty is being signed," J. W. said in a recent interview. "Well we had heard that for a while and none of us were really sure that the cease fire was really going to happen that day.

"We were firing until a minute or two before the 2200 hour the time that had been set for the cease fire. Everything was pitch black, both on our ship and on shore. Suddenly there was an eerie silence. We were the first ones to start turning on a few lights. Then we noticed that the North Koreans starting turning on some lights too. Pretty soon the whole place was lit up. It was different because we had become so accustomed to darkness for so long," he said.

With the Korean War over, J.W. eventually made it back to California after a brief stop in Japan. He served 16 more years in the Navy, serving on the USS Cusk SS348, shore duty at Pearl Harbor and then aboard two aircraft carriers during the Vietnam era. He retired with nearly 21 years of service.

J.W. came to live at the AFRH in Gulfport in 2004. He's living in DC now awaiting the reconstruction of the Gulfport facility.



J.W. Hickman recalls serving aboard the USS WILTSIE during the Korean War. He was onboard the destroyer when the order came for the cease fire on July 27 and the shooting stopped.



Resident artist displays talent at local Art Show

AFRH resident and artist Mike Martinez recently had his artwork on display at the 20th Annual "Young At Art" exhibition held the week of July 17 - 27. The annual art show is sponsored by the Alexandria Commission on Aging, the Friends of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. The exhibits were presented in Alexandria's Campaign Center.



In the past, several AFRH artists have submitted entries and have been chosen to exhibit. This year, Mike's southwestern still life entitled, "Pottery Glow II" was selected. During the past two years, Mike's Dupont Circle paintings were selected to exhibit.

During the past two years, Mike's Dupont Circle paintings were selected to exhibit.

"Three hundred entries were presented this year to an organization whose exhibit hall can only accommodate 95 selections," Mike said. "Having my artwork selected for exhibition is



A piece of Mike Martinez' artwork on display in the Sherman Building, third floor.

quite an honor."

Mike's art studio is located in Sherman North Building, third floor.

My Garden of Dreams

By Henry J. Haladyi

Come walk with me I will take you to my garden of dreams.

Where beautiful flowers grow as tall as Christmas trees

And their fragrance lingers with a pleasing scent that grows on you as you walk in this garden of dreams. Here the birds fly and sing and have all the colors of the flowers in this garden of dreams. The breeze blows gently across the flowers releasing the pleasing scent of all flowers in this "My Garden of Dreams," and sends it to flowers — that bloom in the early spring.

Here in this garden of dreams I sit and think of all the yester – years gone by my mind is filled with love and tears of all the years gone by in my garden of dreams. And now my heart is filled in what life could have been in my yester – years that have gone by.

As I look up and see the setting sun descending over – "My Garden of Dreams" I feel a soft rain blending with my tears... and now I can see all my friends of yester – year joining me in "My Garden of Dreams."

Resident Profile

Resident committed to helping others through volunteering

By Bill Tobin

This resident is a chip off the old block a la Winston Churchill. Whereas Churchill used the letter V as his personal sign for eventual victory in World War II, Esker McConnell uses his as his dedication to volunteering!

I'm sure most of us have seen him patrolling the campus as a volunteer security officer in the mornings, but few know that that is not the whole scope of his duties. He also serves time as a volunteer in the Newcomer's Room. In addition, he has been known to go off campus to the Greyhound Bus terminal downtown to purchase tickets for residents wanting to visit other locales in the country. There's a whole list of volunteer acts that Esker performs on a daily basis.

Esker was born in Long Beach, Calif., on Dec. 12, 1943, which puts him just at the 'legal age' for admission to AFRH. He went to school in Needles, Calif., where he graduated in 1961. Esker enlisted in the Army in 1963 and endured Basic Training at Fort Ord where he found himself back in California again. His Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) was also held at Fort Ord. From there he was selected, chosen, directed, (call it what you will), but certainly ordered to be a clerk at the NCO Academy. But just when you think you are settled the military often changes things, and in Esker's case this was no exception as he found himself bound for Germany. And it was to Frankfurt for a three year tour with the finance section. His next tour was back in the USA at Fort Dix, New Jersey, for four years. It was at Fort Dix that he reenlisted in 1965. Then in 1968 he was off to Seoul, Korea, but his travels were not finished as he was then sent back to Fort Ord for two more years and then back to Germany (Wertzburg). Next it was off to Fort Meade, Maryland, where he was back in finance.

Next up was a change for he was off to Patrick AFB, Fla., for EOE School. After that it was back to Fort Meade and then finally off to Fort Ritchie, Maryland,



Esker McConnell finds volunteer work to do almost every day.

where he made SFC. This was a six year tour where a lot of personal contacts were made. Next up was to Nuremburg, Germany in 1982 and finally back to Fort Meade for retirement after 22 years and six months.

Esker then went back to San Bernadino, Calif., with his family where he became a substitute teacher in math for the city schools and the Job Corps. This went on for seven years. Then in 1997 he went to work for the Census Bureau for two and half years. This was not a knocking on doors job, however, but office work only where he was in charge of nine clerks in the finance division.

Esker 'retired' in 2000 at the 'tender' age of 61 whence he enjoyed his freedom until Sept. 2004 when he came to AFRH. Some 'other stuff' as he calls it, are that he has one son who lives in Pennsylvania. While at Fort Meade, in 1976, he was detailed to be part of the support staff for the election ceremony for President Carter. And, in 1974, while in Wuerzburg, he was sent to the NATO Chemical School for a three week 'chemical peel.' In Germany, he joined the Toastmasters Club and became the District Commander of Dist. 18 (MD and DEL). He was also the President of the Exchange Club of Waynesboro, Penn., and a member of the American Institute of Parliamentarians. If one takes into account all the aforementioned info, it's easy to see that Esker really likes to stay involved. I needn't mention that there are two V's in that last word.

In closing, the name Esker is from the Gaelic but don't ask him what it means. Personally, I think it means commitment!



Esker McConnell (standing) assists John Bowery with some paperwork. Esker is dedicated to volunteering at the AFRH in his spare time.

Catch Me At My Best

Residents appreciate dedicated employees

Marilyn Norris - Food Services

This note is all about Marilyn Norris! We just loved her wonderful smile and laugh in Gulfport. To have her here with us in Washington, DC is wonderful. She works hard and is such an asset to the Dining Room.

Marilyn is such a caring person. I saw her in the room where they give away clothing. She was trying to outfit a fellow worker that was going through a very tough time. She has kept our spirits high.

After the storm (Katrina) she came in and helped us get our life together. She got no pay and worked so hard helping!!!

Barbara Folk, Scott 6045

Marilyn Norris – Food Services

It's a happy day when I see "eggs on the grill" Gulfport Marilyn behind the serving line in the chow hall.

She truly is some great employee – happy, smiling, hard working and ready to greet the throngs of residents with eggs, pancakes or whatever. I sincerely hope that she is appreciated as much by management as she is by the recipients of her well prepared food.

There are always good workers, bad workers and mediocre workers, but rarely do you get an outstanding worker. Marilyn fills that bill hands down.

Sara "Sally" Manning, Scott 6047

Karla Norris – Food Services

I would like to say a few words about Karla Norris. She is a ray of sunshine in the Dining Room! Carla is always ready to help. She is so happy and cheerful, which is much needed in such a dreary room. She is always on hand when a resident needs something. A harder worker would be hard to find!

Barbara Folk, Scott 6045

Karla Norris – Food Services

I would like to express my appreciation for the positive attitude of your employee, Karla Norris. She is hard working, neat, clean and so pleasant that she really is an asset.

Her wonderfully effervescent personality is such a pleasure to be around.

We are very fortunate to have such a happy, smiling face greet us on a daily basis.

Sara "Sally" Manning, Scott 6047

Donated flowers decorate our dining hall

By John Bowery

Earlier this month we were greeted with beautiful flower arrangements on every table in the dining room. The flowers were donated for our enjoyment by a local organization called "Blooms over Washington, DC."

The American Institute of Floral Designers is the floral industry's leading non-profit organization dedicated to advancing education for the professional floral designers.

On a personal note, in the 17 months I have been here at AFRH-W, our dining room has been transformed into an entirely new and exciting place to relax and have a well prepared meal. The look of wonder, disbelief and pure joy on the faces of our residents entering the dining hall and seeing the flowers was a very uplifting experience for me.

I have composed a letter thanking the folks at "Blooms over Washington, DC" to acknowledge our gratitude.





Joe Gray gets a hit and heads for first base.

Take me out to the ballgame...

AFRH Diamondbacks enjoy slow pitch softball participating in DC Community League

By Mary Kay Gominger

A group of AFRH staff members and residents teamed together earlier this summer and decided to participate in the DC Community League slow pitch softball season. And what a great time they have been having.

With the season now over, the team finished with 7 wins and 4 losses. But more important than the overall record is the amount of fun they had playing.

"I'm having the time of my life," said co-captain Roy Cougle. "I had never played organized sports in my life but I knew I was physically able and wanted to do this. The residents that signed up play what they can and we all have just had a great time."

The group named the team the AFRH Diamondbacks. They play other teams in the area, teams from hospitals, other federal agencies and private companies. Games are held at various fields around the city and a few were played at AFRH.

"When we played here, we had more than 50 residents and staff cheering us on," said Cougle. "It was exciting to see everyone getting involved."

Resident Bill Malcomb was part of that spectator crowd.

"I enjoyed walking down to the fields and cheering our team on," said Bill. "The games drew quite a crowd," he said. "We really appreciated the guys that got out there and played. It

was great fun to watch."

The AFRH Diamondback team is coached by Jerry Carter. Team members are: Leon Barrick, Willy Battle, Tim Bourgeois, Antoine Brooks, Tim Burns, Jerry Carter, Brandon Cavanaugh, James Cavanaugh, Roy Cougle, Ernie Fowler, Joe Gray, Warren Helms, Joe Jefferson, Troy Lucchesi, Carol Mitchell, Len Montague, David Nokes, Adam Peza, Adam Peza II, Cleophus Snow, Rod Washington, Bill White, and Raymond White.



Jerry Carter gets in to position to make a play. Below - players high-five at the end of the game.



Roy Cougle running for home base.



Joe Gray stretches to reach home plate. The catcher better move out of his way! Joe was safe at home.



Ernie Fowler throws a strike as shortstop Tim Burns stands ready.

Volunteers make a difference

'Coasties' enjoy meeting residents while working on a variety projects

By Mary Kay Gominger

Sometimes what we think is a good idea turns out not to be and other times, good ideas turn into great opportunities that benefit a lot of good people. That's what happened with the DC Chapter of the Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association. Two years ago the group, led by Chief Warrant Officer Sean Fennell, decided to contact the Armed Forces Retirement Home and see if there were any projects that he and his group of 40 volunteers could help with.

"Here we were with all these Coast Guard people looking to help out a group of people with a good cause," said CWO Fennell. "I grew up in the area and knew about the AFRH and it just seemed to be a natural fit. I contacted Melodie Menke, the Volunteer Coordinator, and she told me they could really use some help getting the newly started American Legion room set up. It was a perfect project. We painted the meeting room and everyone left wanting to do more," he said.

CWO Fennell said that his group gets satisfaction from the work they are doing but they also enjoy talking with the residents.

"We'll be working on something and residents will come up and starting talking to us. It's great. We've heard some great stories. We love hearing about what the military was like when they served but they are also interested in what it's like in today's Coast Guard. It's a great learning experience for us both," CWO Fennell said.

Other projects the group has worked on include pond work and they came in after the holidays and took down all the Christmas decorations throughout the campus' six buildings.

"We were especially proud of this job. Melodie said it would take twelve people about six hours, and eight of us did it in about two hours. We were very proud of our team effort on this project," said CWO Fennell.

"We like to come out at least quarterly and work on something,"

Coast Guard volunteers take down and pack Christmas decorations after the holiday season last January. The volunteers, members of the DC Chapter of the Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association visit the home on a regular basis and work on a variety of projects.

CWO Fennell said. "We find this to be a very positive experience and I can speak for everyone when I say that we are always eager to come back. We especially like painting jobs, making the places they use look better. We'd also like to lay a cement patio area by the rehab center. This job in particular would be a great use of our professional talents, and stand for a long time as testament to our affection for the AFRH."

The Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association is made up of active duty members from a variety of units in the DC area. CWO Fennell is attached to the Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of Military Compensation.



A volunteer cleans up around the pond.

See Coast Guard Volunteers, next page



Coast Guard Volunteers...

“The Coast Guard leadership has always encouraged community involvement and we stand ready to do for AFRH anything they need us to do. This is a great group of people,” CWO Fennell said.

CWO Fennell’s group invites all Coast Guard veterans at the AFRH to attend their birthday picnic on Aug. 5 at TISCOM in Alexandria, Va.



These two volunteers rack up and bag leaves on the grounds.



A Coast Guard volunteer uses a shovel to clear the pond.

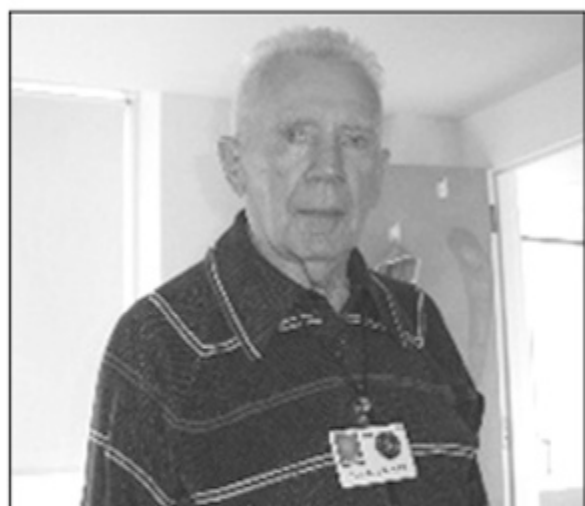


Several volunteers cleaned all the benches around the grounds.



Using a chainsaw, this Coast Guard volunteer helps clear downed limbs.

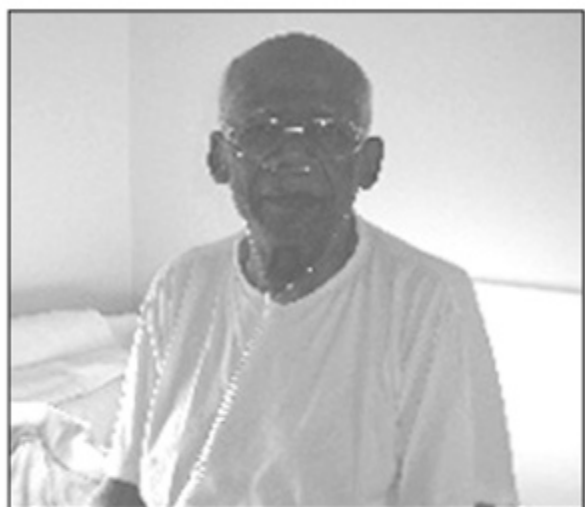
Welcome Aboard!



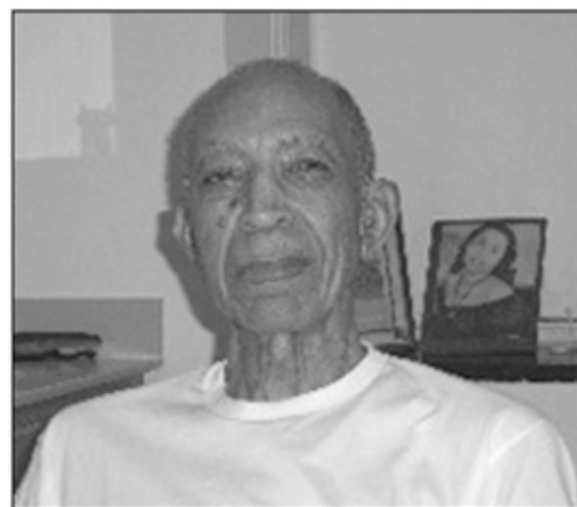
Resident: Edward J. Conley
Branch of Service: Navy
Rank: EMC-E7
Entry date/location: Dec. 1939, Newport, Rhode Island
Separation date/location: July 1959, Newport, Rhode Island
War theaters: Korea, World War II



Resident: John F. Morash, Sr.
Branch of Service: Marines
Rank: SSGT-E6
Entry date/location: Feb. 1944, Boston, Mass.
Separation date/location: June 1965, El Toro, California
War theaters: Korea, World War II



Resident: Earl T. Sherman
Branch of Service: Army
Rank: SGT 1st Class
Entry date/location: June 1941, Camp Shelby, Mississippi
Separation date/location: April 1962, Staubing, West German
War theaters: Korea, World War II



Resident: Leo F. Pearson
Branch of Service: Army
Rank: Sgt, E-6
Entry date/location: May 1944, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina
Separation date/location: May 1964, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia
War theaters: World War II



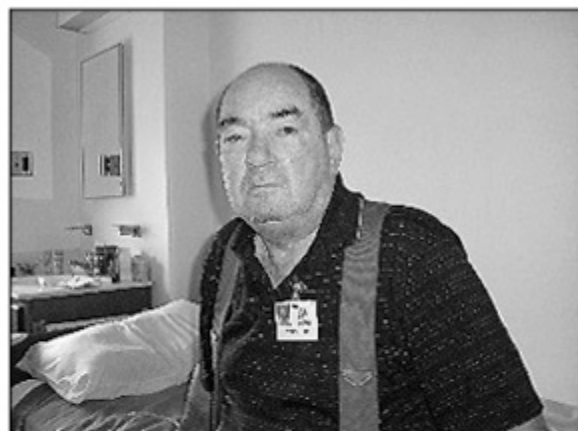
Resident: John E. Dibbs
Branch of Service: Air Force
Rank: CM Sgt - E9
Entry date/location: April 1943, Oakland, California
Separation date/location: November 1967, Columbus, Mississippi
War theaters: Korea, World War II



Resident: William T. Fowler
Branch of Service: Air Force
Rank: TSgt, E-6
Entry date/location:
Separation date/location:
War theaters: Korea, World War II



Resident: Doris E. Balfour
Branch of Service: Navy
Rank: SK3C
Entry date/location: June, 1944 Alabama
Separation date/location: December, 1945, Pensacola, Florida
War theaters: World War II



Resident: Dedrick L. Ray
Branch of Service: Navy
Rank: E7
Entry date/location: August 1958, Columbia, SC
Separation date/location: January 1978, Norfolk, VA

Veterans organization continues to volunteer, contribute to AFRH

American Legion Post 227 donates lumber and routers to the Wood Hobby Shop

By Mary Kay Gominger

A group of five members of the American Legion Post 227 from Brandywine, Maryland, made a special delivery to the AFRH on July 20, 2006. They delivered, much to the delight of residents that work in the Wood Hobby Shop, two truck loads of lumber and a collection of router bits. The donated material is used by residents in making plaques, flag boxes and special interest items that they present to organizations that help out at the AFRH.

“These guys were tickled to death to see the lumber and router bits,” said Wayne Manuel. “There’s a mixture of mahogany, oak, white cherry, maple and pine and just over 20 router bits. The guys were so happy, they couldn’t believe it.”

Wayne has been a member of the American Legion Post 227 for a number of years and since Hurricane Katrina has become extremely involved in helping out at the AFRH.

“After the storm there were just so many veterans that were displaced that needed our help,” he said. “We did fund raisers which allowed us to provide residents with things they needed.”



Patrick Beattie, son of Isadore Beattie, helps unload the lumber.



Homer Rutherford (second from left) presents a shadow box made by the Wood Shop Sergeants to the American Legion Post of Brandywine, Maryland.

According to Melodie Menke, AFRH’s Volunteer Coordinator, the American Legion Post 227 has, for the past year, more or less adopted the AFRH.

“These guys have really been great,” Melodie said. “In addition to this amazing donation for the Wood Hobby Shop, they have also provided a seemingly never-ending supply of coffee, nuts and popcorn for our residents and they donated a printer for our volunteer room. They were a tremendous help right after the storm helping to get the Gulfport residents settled in.”

In addition to volunteer work at the AFRH, the American Legion Post 227 helps out in other areas as well.

“We made a \$2,500 donation to the Fisher House at Walter Reed,” Wayne said. “We also have a boys’ camp in town we help out with and we support the Boy Scouts.”

Wayne is a veteran that served in the Navy during Vietnam. The American Legion Post 227 has 108 members. They raise money throughout the year sponsoring golf tournaments and raffles.



Members of American Legion Post 227 unload lumber at the AFRH Wood Hobby Shop. The group donated approximately \$2,500 worth of lumber and routers for use by residents in the Wood Hobby Shop.

Chaplain's Corner

“...I do recall my grandmother, a first generation American, telling me not to litter because it spoils God's creation...”

Frequently, I jog or bicycle around the AFRH campus. Besides the exercise, I enjoy the outdoors, especially the scenery that our campus affords. Its many trees, the sloping hills, and the lake. There are the walking paths through the woods, the wildlife, and the abundance of flowers and blossoms, especially in the spring and almost the whole year, courtesy of the Smithsonian.

Ruefully, the Home's land isn't always a beautiful sight. I see blemishes on the landscape now and then. Such as papers, cups, napkins, tissues, cigarette packages, beer and soda cans, candy wrappers, latex gloves and plastic bottles.

All the litter does not come from the hands of the residents. I've seen workers contributing to the project. Once, I watched as an employee pitched her empty soda can on the street near Sheridan, and heard her laugh at the noise it made.

In one of my earliest childhood memories, my grandmother gave me my first instruction about littering. Perhaps it was I who had thrown something on the ground - I don't remember - but I do recall my grandmother, a first generation American, telling me not to litter because it spoils God's creation.

She was a patriot to the core and hung the flag everyday that she lived with our family. And it was especially upsetting to her that anyone who is so privileged to be an American could soil the land with garbage. I don't remember whether it was her words, or the way she said them, but her lesson has stayed with me all my life. I've never been a litter lout.

So we at AFRH have three easy reasons to avoid littering: It blemishes our landscape, it counteracts the beauty of God's creation, and it says that veterans are not proud and appreciative of their country.

Chaplain Franc Higgins

Services are available to diagnose, help with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

*By Gary Gregory
Social Worker*

Do you suffer from Shell Shock? It is also known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This condition occurs often after exposure to severe life threatening events. This can include severe automobile accidents, rape, violence and maiming that occurs during wartime, fire and severe storms. Many of the symptoms can be quite distressing: inability to sleep at night, nightmares, flashbacks, emotional numbing, intense psychological stress, exaggerated startle response, irritability or outbursts of anger, uncomfortable physical symptoms such as extreme panic and profuse sweating, inability to have loving feelings and relationships. Some people who suffer from this condition feel alone, isolated and can be perceived as different. Having these thoughts and feelings is not a sign of weakness. It is a normal response to traumatic events.

There is help for this condition. Medication can help alleviate symptoms. Talking to someone about feelings, thoughts and experiences can also help. Simply acknowledging that you may have these feelings is helpful and may enable you to understand that what you are experiencing is very common among others who have suffered similar events.

The VA Medical Center on Irving Street offers support services for those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. They have doctors, nurses, social workers and therapists who offer a variety of services. Evaluation, medication, counseling and support groups are available.

In order to access these services you must see your color team physician and explain what you are experiencing. They can then give you a referral.



AFRH-G Spruce Up

Campus Ops employee Gary Sullins mows the grass in front of the Gulfport AFRH main building. As you can see in the photo, the oak trees are making a comeback from the winds and water of Hurricane Katrina. The spring and summer have been extremely dry but rainfall in the last couple of weeks has the grass growing back and even some flowers blooming..

Military Historical Milestones

U.S. Air Force

August 1, 1960 – Strategic Air Command's 43rd Bombardment Wing at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, accepts the first operational B-58 Hustler medium bomber. The first supersonic bomber, the delta-wing aircraft flies at twice the speed of sound and can be refueled in-flight.

U.S. Army

10 July 1781 – A force of New York militia surprise and rout a group of Tories and Indians in their camp at Sharon Springs Swamp, New York.

U.S. Marines

1778 - Captain Nichols and twenty-six Marines captured Fort Nassau in the Bahamas.

U.S. Navy

1959 to 1960 – The first unmanned helicopter flight in history occurs on August 12, 1960, under a Navy contract to Gyrodyne using a unmanned rotorcycle, designated DSN-1. Later the aircraft would be designated the QH-50A. 350 flight hours are accumulated during trials.

The Amazing Deck of Cards

Submitted by John Paul

It was quiet that day, the guns and the mortars, and land mines for some reason hadn't been heard. The young soldier knew it was Sunday. As he was sitting there, he got out an old deck of cards and laid them out across his bunk. Just then an army sergeant came in and said, "Why aren't you with the rest of the platoon?" The soldier replied, "I thought I would stay behind and spend some time with the Lord." The sergeant replied, "Looks to me like you're going to play cards." The soldier said, "No, Sir. You see, since we are not allowed to have Bibles or other spiritual books in this country, I've decided to talk to the Lord by studying this deck of cards."

The sergeant asked in disbelief, "How will you do that?"

"You see the Ace, Sergeant? It reminds me that there is only one God. The Two represents the two parts of the Bible, Old and New Testaments. The Three represents the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. The Four stands for the Four Gospels: Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. The Five is for the five virgins - there were ten, but only five of them were glorified. The Six is for the six days it took God to create the Heavens and Earth. The Seven is for the day God rested after making His Creation. The Eight is for the family of Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives, the eight people God spared from the flood that destroyed the Earth. The Nine is for the lepers that Jesus cleansed of leprosy. He cleansed ten, but nine never thanked Him. The Ten represents the Ten Commandments that God handed down to Moses on tablets made of stone. The Jack is a reminder of Satan, one of God's first angels, but he got kicked out of heaven for his sly and wicked ways and is now the joker of eternal hell. The Queen stands for the Virgin Mary. The King stands for Jesus, for He is the King of all kings. When I count the dots on all the cards, I come up with 365, one for every day of the year. There are a total of 52 cards in a deck; each is a week of 52 weeks in a year. The four suits represent the four seasons, spring, summer, fall and winter. Each suit has thirteen cards; there are exactly thirteen weeks in a quarter. So when I want to talk to God and thank Him, I just pull out this old deck of cards and they remind me of all I have to be thankful for."

The sergeant just stood there. After a minute, with tears in his eyes and pain in his heart, he said, "Soldier, can I borrow that deck of cards?"



In Gulfport**Seabees begin replacing fence***By Mary Kay Gominger*

The AFRH-G is taking on a new look this week as a group of Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 remove the concertina wire and begin to construct a new perimeter fence line around the facility.

The Home's fenceline was wiped out in many places by Hurricane Katrina last August. Immediately after the storm, the Seabees came in and put the concertina wire up to safeguard the facilities and protect the vehicles and belongings of our residents.

NMCB-74 is homeported at the Naval Construction Battalion Center and just recently returned from an overseas deployment. Replacing the AFRH fenceline is just one of their homeport projects.



A hot job - Working in 95-100 degree temperatures, Seabees waste no time in getting the old fence down.



A Seabee pulls out of fence post in front of the AFRH.



Several Seabees work along the front of the AFRH property cutting and rolling the existing wire to remove it.

Department of Veterans Affairs celebrates 75th anniversary



AFRH residents participated in the Department of Veterans Affairs 75th anniversary celebration held on July 19, 2006, in the Rotunda at the U.S. Capitol. Nineteen residents took part in the celebration which featured music by the U.S. Army Band, Presentation of Colors by the U.S. Capitol Police Ceremonial Unit and remarks by the Honorable Steve Buyer, U.S. House of Representatives.

Photo by Greg Moore

Resident Advisory Council Elections

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

GROUND FLOOR LOBBY

IN FRONT OF DINING ROOM ENTRANCE

(The election will be conducted by present RAC members and a staff monitor.

Resident Services will select non-participants to count votes)

Sign up in Resident Services

Nominate yourself or others for

1 CHAIRMAN

2 FLOOR REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH FLOOR

**Chairman candidates may campaign throughout the Home.
Floor representative candidates may campaign on their own floors.**

GOOD LUCK!

AFRH-W Golf Course News

On Friday, July 14th, 25 residents met at the golf course for the second scramble of the season. It was an exciting finish as two teams finished at 3 under par to tie for first place. In the sudden-death playoff, Jo Soboleski made a 10-foot putt to help her teammates Jesse Hines, Charles Robinson, and Andy Pellkofer win first place honors. Finishing in second place was the team of Emil Byke, Ernie Fowler, Tom Moore and Frank Hale. Roy Webb and Andy Pellkofer hit the best shots of the day to win closest to the hole on the par 3's. All the golfers enjoyed cold beverages and snacks after the nine-hole round as the prizes were awarded on the patio at the golf shack.



Tom Moore follows through. His team finished 2nd in the Golf Scramble.



Above -Frank Hale after impact. Frank teamed with Emil Byke, Ernie Fowler and Tom Moore to finish second.



Mimi Rivkin takes a shot while the group looks on.



Ernie Fowler swings his club during the resident scramble.

'People Animals Love' make an impression at AFRH

"Dogs are our link to paradise. They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent. To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring--it was peace."

Milan Kundera

By Mary Kay Gominger

If you have ever had a pet, say a dog or cat, or even a hamster, fish or a pot bellied pig...you know the bond that grows between you and that pet. But did you know that there are certain health benefits you can gain by being associated with a pet.

According to the National Center for Infectious Diseases, pets can decrease your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels and feelings of loneliness. They also can increase your opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities and increase your opportunities for socialization.



Rufus

The AFRH recognizes the benefits of pets for our residents and welcomes organizations such as People Animals Love (PAL) to visit the home. Melodie Menke, the AFRH Volunteer Coordinator, works closely with the PAL group volunteers and she sees first hand the results of pets and people.

"The PAL volunteers have been coming out once a month for a couple of years," Melodie said. "We've gotten such a positive response that we recently added another day. The residents really look forward to seeing the dogs and visiting with the volunteer dog owners," she continued.

Patricia Wells, the PAL group leader, explained that once the number of residents increased after the hurricane, they saw a real need to come out more often.

"We added a Saturday, out in front of the Sheridan, and it has been a huge success," said Patricia. All of our volunteers really enjoy visiting the Home and they usually end up staying longer than we planned."

Two of the PAL regulars that have been visiting the Home are teenagers, Lizzie and Nora, and they have especially enjoyed bringing their pets to the AFRH.



"I like bringing my poodle, Arnold, out to see the residents," said Nora

Sandler, one of the teenagers that has

been coming out to AFRH this summer. "I plan on doing it throughout the year, on weekends. The veterans are so happy to see the dogs, they remember them and look for certain ones. It really is fun," Nora said

"The girls just love it," said Patricia. "They spend a lot of time bathing their dogs and getting them ready to come see the residents.

They do extra things like teaching their dogs tricks so they can show the residents and Lizzie actually made up and passed out cards with her pets' picture on it for the residents to keep. It was really nice. I was so inspired

by them that I went home and made up cards of other dogs and now we pass them out and the residents pass them around and trade them."



The PAL volunteers and their dogs visit King Health Center the second Tuesday of every month and are in front of the Sheridan building the third Saturday.