WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Spokane Veterans Home, an AGORA Award Finalist

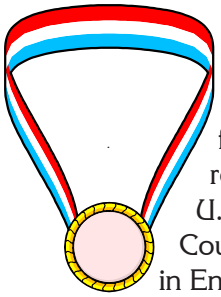
The Spokane Veterans Home recently learned it was selected as a finalist for the AGORA Award, in the non-profit category.

"Over 140 regional businesses were nominated, so making it to the finals is a significant accomplishment for each and every Spokane staff member who makes the facility a wonderful place for Veterans to Call Home," said Kathy Magonigle, Administrator of the Spokane Veterans Home. "Thanks to your continued hard work and dedication, our business partners in the greater Spokane community also realize the contributions this facility makes in not only the veteran but Spokane community!"

The AGORA is a prestigious award presented by the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce for business excellence. In ancient Athens, the AGORA was the center of all business activity, the market place, hence the program name. This program recognizes those businesses in the community and region that exemplify leadership to support a strong economy and quality of life. The Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce directs much of its focus and activity to enhance the growth of existing business, and through that growth, the prosperity of the region.

The Home was nominated by an anonymous individual who obviously watched the staff serve their veterans sometime over the past year. They are competing with SNAP and Second Harvest Food Bank. All finalists were interviewed by an independent team of volunteer judges. They are also eligible to be selected as the AGORA Award winner in the C. Michael Archer Community Service or Entrepreneurial Spirit award categories. The award will be presented to the winner at a special recognition ceremony on May 31st.

Washington Veterans Home Earns LEED Gold



WDVA's newest 240 bed long-term care facility at Retsil, recently earned the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification.

The LEED rating system was designed to encourage and produce the development of more sustainable buildings and requires planning from the very start of the project. The result is substantial savings in the amount of energy the building uses, as well as using environmentally friendly materials for building.

The building design took advantage of the breezes off the water of Sinclair Inlet and the bluff location to eliminate the need for air-conditioning. Using a system of 'natural ventilation' also does away with down-time for system repairs for non-functional equipment.

Use of natural bamboo flooring creates attractive and homelike living space for veterans, and the use of green products reduces chemicals in the environment – a benefit for residents and staff.

"Almost a century has passed since the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil first opened its doors to provide care for aging veterans of the Civil War and their wives," said WDVA director John E. Lee.

"To be able to provide – 95 years later – a home-like facility for our aging veterans and be good stewards of our fiscal and environmental resources, speaks very highly for all those involved in this project."

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

National Moment of Remembrance:

Freedom. What a great privilege. And we know it isn't free. For more than 225 years, Americans have paid with their lives for the freedoms, the hopes and the dreams we all enjoy. We owe these heroes and their families our gratitude.

This is why a part of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs' Vision highlights our ***commitment to honoring veterans in their final resting place.***

This is also why I am asking your help to reclaim Memorial Day as the sacred and noble holiday it was meant to be.

The National Moment of Remembrance on Memorial Day is an effort established by Congress to remind Americans of the sacrifices made by those who died in service to our Nation. The Moment does not replace traditional events; rather it is an act of national unity in which all Americans honor those who died for our freedom. In this shared remembrance, we connect as Americans.

Please, pass the word that at 3:00 pm, local time on Memorial Day, May 29, 2006, all Americans throughout the world should stop for just one moment and remember the price so many have paid.

In addition, please take time to remember more than 400 volunteers in our state who have made it their mission to provide military funeral honors to each and every veteran, not just at the Tahoma National Veterans Cemetery, but at all our cemeteries.

This Memorial Day, I will take part in a special ceremony honoring all Honor Guard Volunteers who participate in the Military Funeral Honors Program throughout the state. They deserve our respect and gratitude for the very special gift they provide to our veterans and their families.

For more information on:

- Moment of Remembrance - http://www.remember.gov
- Tahoma National Cemetery volunteers - 425-413-9614
- Military Funeral Honors Program - 253-512-8786

Memorial Day:

A list of statewide Memorial Day events is posted at: *http://www.dva.wa.gov/Events.htm*

- Spokane Veterans Home: Friday, May 26
- Retsil Veterans Home: Monday, May 29 - 10 a.m.
- Orting Soldiers Home: Monday, May 29 - 2:00 p.m.

Homeless Count:

In January, Deputy Director Alfie Alvarado participated in a statewide homeless count. For the first time, one of the questions asked was 'Did you serve in the military?'

Past surveys have provided varying information on the number of homeless veterans in Washington State. Some surveys reported there were 3,000 homeless veterans and some reported 8,000. In an effort to better understand how many veterans need our help, a new question was asked during a 'point-in-time' statewide homeless count, conducted by counties and cities across the state. The new question was, 'Did you serve in the military?'

This point-in-time snapshot revealed 1,700 homeless veterans in our state. While the number may vary during the year, our goal is to ensure every veteran has access to safe and affordable housing as well as providing resources and support leading to self-sufficiency.

WDVA currently serves homeless veterans through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. This program uses grants from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide assistance focusing on employment readiness. We provide housing and training to homeless veterans through our federal and community partners.

In December, we finalized a Homeless Veterans Action Plan to provide additional focus on how WDVA can work with other partners to address and combat homelessness among veterans. Part of this plan calls for the development of a transitional residence program.

For additional information on:

- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, contact Barb Logan at *barb@dva.wa.gov* .
- Homeless Veterans Action Plan, contact Jim Rising at *jimr@dva.wa.gov* .

What's New in Vet Services?

Effective May 1, 2006, **Jerry Towne** assumed the Program Manager responsibilities for the WDVA Veterans Reintegration Services in King County. **Ric Price**, has been re-assigned to the Olympia Service Center.

Jerry's role with the King County Veterans Reintegration Services includes oversight of King County Veterans Program contracts that provide services for veterans incarcerated in the King County jail system, homeless veterans, housing and financial support, and mental health counseling in King County. Veterans Reintegration Services also includes Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project services funded by US Department of Labor - VETS. In addition to Veterans Reintegration Services, Jerry will continue to manage the Veterans Community Services Coordinator program that provides services in North Puget Sound, Inland Empire region including Spokane, and Central Washington in Yakima. Jerry will also continue his involvement in developing a State Veterans Cemetery in Eastern Washington.

Ric, who has been the Program Manager responsible for King County Veterans Reintegration Services since 2001, will transfer to Olympia and assume the management responsibilities for the WDVA Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects. In addition to managing the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects, Ric will be responsible for the development of WDVA statewide support services to the Washington National Guard and Reserves.

Both Jerry and Ric will continue their involvement and strategic roll in the development of the WDVA Homeless Veterans Statewide Action Plan. WDVA is developing a community based service delivery network to improve the awareness of homeless veteran issues and to increase the availability of services to homeless veterans.

Meet new staffers

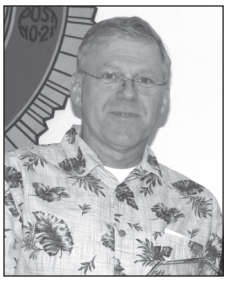
Retsil has a New Registered Dietitian!

Bobbi K. Phillips, RD/CN, MS, MBA, joined the Washington Veteran's Home team on March 6, 2006. She is a former Army Dietitian (retired Major) who brings with her a total of 11 years experience as a Registered Clinical Dietitian. Originally from Eugene, Oregon, Bobbi has served in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Brook Army Medical Center, San Antonio, TX, and Reynolds Army Community Hospital, Fort Sill, OK, among others. She holds two masters degrees. For her Master of Science in Nutrition, she taught nutrition in the San Antonio, TX housing projects to Hispanic residents with diabetes. She also has an MBA.

Bobbi enjoys gardening and spending time with her five year old daughter, Ellie. Bobbi lives in Indianola, by the beach.

In the short time that she has been a member of our team, she has quickly become a valued member of our interdisciplinary care team at the home.

Bobbi's office is in J112, across the hall from the pharmacy and next door to the barber. She has begun holding open office hours for Nutrition Clinic from 8-10 am.



New VBS for Retsil

Washington Veterans Home is pleased to announce that **Willie Slusarski** is their new Veterans Benefit Specialist 2. He started Thursday, April 13th. As many of you know, Willie has been with WDVA at the Bremerton/ Seattle Veterans Service Center for many years. The Home is especially happy to have him located at their facility now.

Dr. Dave Cundiff Joins WVH Team

Dr. Dave Cundiff, a generalist who also works in a number of Indian Health Service clinics in WA and OR has joined the WVH team. He has also previously worked for the State as the medical director for MAA (Medicaid). Dr. Cundiff will be working part-time through the summer and his schedule will change from week-to-week. He will not be assigned any specific units at this time but will be performing regulatory exams and taking calls on weekends.

Transitioning to E-Recruiting

Human Resource Management System (HRMS) Release 2

Now that we have successfully transitioned payroll and reporting to HRMS, it's time to focus on Release 2 activities; a major component of which will be E-Recruiting.

E-Recruiting is a new enterprise wide, web-based recruitment tool that the Department of Personnel is implementing on September 30, 2006, as part of Release 2 of HRMS. E-Recruiting will be replacing the current application and referral system, changing the way candidates will be applying for positions. To facilitate this transition to E-Recruiting, WDVA will be developing our own recruitment strategies and maintaining our own candidate pools to fill vacancies.

In preparation for the transition to E-Recruiting, the Department of Personnel will be working to close many of the open continuous recruitments they have published.

- Some open continuous recruitments will be scheduled to close on May 31.
- Additional open continuous recruitments will close by June 30.

Why is this important to WDVA employees?

Agencies may still pull from established registers to fill position vacancies after recruitments are closed but once the recruitment is closed employees will not be able to get on the registers for consideration unless agencies conduct a separate recruitment process.

That means:

Employees need to ensure they apply now for positions they are interested in.

On July 1, 2005, as a result of personnel reform, agencies may elect to conduct their own recruitments for positions.

That means:

Employees need to actively seek job opportunities they are interested in. For example, being on a statewide listing for a particular job class does not guarantee that all vacancies will be filled from that listing.

Please contact your human resources consultant if you have questions related to E-Recruiting. Additional information regarding E-Recruiting will be communicated as it becomes available.

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

During the annual Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, a good group of 13 energetic youngsters converged on the Washington Veterans Home to participate.

The kids spent the day going from one department to another, as staff members introduced them to the different aspects of the Home, teaching them how the Home is run by letting them participate in job tasks. They spent time in the laundry, pharmacy, nursing, OT, PT and Recreational Therapy. Then in food service and the maintenance departments.

Two children wrote letters to the Superintendent follwing their experience. They wrote:

Painter Jim Brown took advantage of the extra hands and got the underground service corridor nearly painted. But, he was left to clean up all the brushes and paint trays.

Dear Superintedent Clontz,
Thank you for letting me come. I really liked it. My faveorite part was painting because it allowed me to get dirty. Please personally thank the laundry, custodians, painters, gardeners, pharmisits, doctors, nurses, kitchen, and physical therapy. I hope I will see you next year.

Sincerely,
Garrett Stanley

Dear Superintendent Clontz,
Thank you for letting us come to Kids Day, I had a blast. My favorite part was bowling, because having only two finger holes is hard and kind of fun. I would especially like to thank the people from, laundry, custodial, painting, gardaning, the pharmacy, the Dr., Nurse, Kitchen, and physical therapy was my second favorite.

Sincerely,
Christian Stanley

LEAP Program at Retsil

May 17th Superintendent Jon Clontz, and Director of Nurses Billie Pendleton, met with the graduates from our first LEAP class. LEAP stands for **L**earn, **E**mpower, **A**chieve, **P**roduce. Graduates of the program completed 6 weeks of classes on the roles of licensed nurses in a person or resident centered care environment. The roles of licensed nurses include:

1) Care Role model,
2) Gerontological Clinical expert,
3) Care Team Leader and
4) Care Team Builder

There were two goals for the May 17th meeting. The first was to recognize the 24 nurses for their achievement in completing the training. The second was to brainstorm potential quality improvement projects, the second phase of implementing the philosophy of resident centered care.

24 nurses recently recognized for completing the LEAP training.

Quality improvement projects for LEAP must improve the quality of resident life, improve our retention of high quality staff, or aid in our recruiting efforts. The nursing staff identified a list of work processes they were ready to tackle as quality improvement projects. That work will begin within the next few weeks.

Retsil will begin the next LEAP class for all RN III's later this month and CNA II's will be receiving training during the summer. A second LEAP class for the remaining licensed nurses and new hires will take place in the fall.

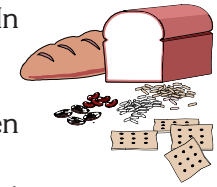
The staff who completed the LEAP Program were very excited about the new skills learned and putting them into action. Jeanie Kewish from C/D neighborhood had this to say about LEAP: "This training has given me valuable tools that have already assisted in working with our CNA's as a supervisor and also in changing the way we do things so we can provide more resident centered care."

Aida Vinluan and Tony Pratts from E/F neighborhood have both reported that they feel they are working better as the dayshift nursing leadership team. Communication, problem solving, team building and complimenting each others skills have given them a sense of increased satisfaction.

Many of the other participants have expressed positive sentiments and are looking forward to our Quality Initiative projects beginning soon.

Nutrition Team Reaching Out to the Community

The Veterans Home nutrition team of Theresa Stanton-Grose and Bobbi Phillips have started a community outreach program at the local gym in the Port Orchard area. The gym has a senior exercise program called *Silver Sneakers*, tailored to the senior population. Once a month, a nutrition professional from the facility goes to the gym and teaches a class on a healthful eating topic. So far, they have discussed Heart Healthy eating, Fluids and Hydration, Fiber and Whole Grains, and Sodium, to name a few. In March they discussed National Nutrition Month and the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between diet and exercise.



The program seems to be a great success thus far and the seniors are very receptive to the information presented. The team has had fun providing information to the local seniors while informing the community about the quality services that the Veterans Home provides its residents.

SVH Staff Committee Sponsors Monthly Gatherings

The Employee Activity Committee sponsors a monthly potluck. May's theme is "favorite casseroles" to be held May 25th. The silent auction winners of the Themed Baskets will also be announced.

In April, the committee sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt, giving out 30 prizes for finding paper eggs. All staff had fun searching the facility for eggs. April's monthly potluck was centered around "finger foods". Diana Clark won the Prime Parking Spot. Someone anonymously purchased a ticket for her, for a job well done and she was a surprised winner. Ginny Fabbe donated a hand quilted Easter wall hanging. It was raffled off and was won by Shannon Sullivan.

The annual SVH Employee picnic is being planned for Saturday, July 29th from 11 to 6 at the Medical Lake Waterfront Park. Long Horn BBQ will be catering the event and special activities have been planned for the day. Employees and families are welcome. Meal tickets are on sale now through June 30th and will cost $1.00 for each person.

Celebrating Loyal Volunteers

The Soldiers Home Volunteer Luncheon was held on April 27th in Chilson Hall. Food Manager Cornelius Bibb and Betty, a food handler staff, provided a great meal which the large crowd of volunteers enjoyed.

Glenda Vick, Operations Manager, was on hand to present the volunteers with their hours of service appreciation certificates and give each volunteer a mileage pedometer so they can see how many miles they walk around the grounds helping veterans. They also gave away flowers for door prizes.

Bobbie Ballard, a volunteer for 23 years, received a basket full of goodies for her many years of service and her dedication, always helping with the Volunteer Luncheon.

Bob Campbell, a volunteer of over 17 years, was also given special recognition. Lynn Zemke presented him a zippered binder so he can always have his writing material handy when he writes up articles for the weekly newsletter. Together, the volunteers donated over 7,000 hours this year. The Recreation Department could not have conducted near as many programs without these loyal volunteers.

"Dealing With Volunteers Is No Gamble"

Washington Veterans Home held a special Volunteer Awards Dinner Tuesday, April 25th at 6:00 PM. Nearly 100 volunteers were in attendance. This years theme was "Dealing With Volunteers Is No Gamble." Casino theme decorations were used, and a dinner of honey baked ham, rolls, scalloped potatoes, jell-O salad, green beans and chocolate ribbon cake was served. Music during dinner was provided by a lounge singer named Fluffy!

Certificates of Appreciation were handed out by Superintendent Jon Clontz, along with door prizes of a casino theme. Volunteers put in over 10,000 hours at the Veterans Home this past year. Thanks to ALL of the wonderful volunteers.

American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Chair Doreen Hinrichs continues to organize the Holiday Gift Shop each year for the Veterans Home residents.

"Squeak" Pogreba is the Veterans Chairman for the Gig Harbor Elks. He coordinates the monthly bingo games and breakfast outings to the Gig Harbor Elks.

SVH Honors Their Special King

During Volunteer Week in Spokane, Rosalie King of the VFW Aux. was nominated as the "Hospital Volunteer of the Year."

Rosalie spends a great deal of time at the home, specifically assisting with holiday events and veteran events. In the past four years it's estimated that Rosalie has attended greater than 95% of the events at the Spokane Veterans Home and has been responsible for a major part of each event. In addition to her presence and support, she garners assistance from others to assure each function is well supported so that the veterans are well served.

Rosalie King serving refreshments, provided by the VFW Aux., at one of the many holiday events at the SVH.

What's So Special About May?

National Nurses Week - May 6 - 12

1982 In February, the American Nurses Association Board of Directors formally acknowledged May 6, 1982, as "National Nurses Day." The action affirmed a joint resolution of the United States Congress designating May 6 as "National Recognition Day for Nurses."

1990 The ANA Board of Directors expanded the recognition of nurses to a week-long celebration, declaring May 6 - 12, 1991, as National Nurses Week.

Retsil Nurses Celebrated on Tuesday, May 9th. The management team came to distribute small gifts (purchased by WSNA) and a card for each nurse. They also provided cake and punch and spent time thanking them for their dedication to caring for home residents.

At Orting, a fabulous spaghetti cook-off prepared, cooked and served by the Nurse Managers for the rest of the Licensed Nurses, took place on Tuesday, May 16th.

COMING JUNE 15 - 22
NATIONAL NURSING
ASSISTANTS' WEEK

Older Americans Month

May is designated as Older Americans Month by the DHHS Administration on Aging. This year's theme, *Choices for Independence,* reflects the continued commitment of the U.S. Administration on Aging to help our nation prepare for a larger aging population, and to bolster the efforts of baby boomers and older adults to achieve healthy aging. Independence for adults as they age relies on a balance of important elements: empowerment in consumer choice; healthy lifestyles that emphasize nutrition, physical activity, prevention, and active participation in one's health care; and access to the tools necessary to make informed decisions. Combined, these elements help all adults maintain the dignity they deserve, providing more opportunities to live longer independently while contributing to communities they cherish.

May is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services would like to remind health care professionals, that Medicare provides coverage of bone mass measurements once every 24 months (more often if medically necessary) for people with Medicare at risk for osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis (often called the "silent disease" because bone loss occurs without symptoms) is responsible for an estimated 1.5 million fractures annually – an event that often leads to a downward spiral in physical health and quality of life, including losing the ability to walk, stand up, or dress, and can lead to premature death. 20 percent of senior citizens who suffer a hip fracture die within 1 year.

According to the US Surgeon General's 2004 report *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General,* due to the aging of the population and the previous lack of focus on bone health, the number of hip fractures in the United States could double or triple by the year 2020. The report found that many patients were not being given appropriate information about prevention; and many patients were not having appropriate testing to diagnose osteoporosis or establish osteoporosis risk.

Retsil Leadership Team caught with dirt on their hands – literally!

Friday April 18th was declared Area Beatification Day at Retsil by Superintendent Jon Clontz. With the move to the new facility, the grounds crew inherited seven additional court yards to weed and maintain. A daunting task for any crew but for a crew of two it can be overwhelming. To show support and lend a hand the Leadership Team at Retsil donned their jeans and bib overalls, put on their gardening hats and gloves and got down and dirty with the grounds keepers. The weeds didn't stand a chance. Residents enjoyed the show and expressed their appreciation.

Recreation Mgr. Catherine Shaw, in her pink hat and shoes.

DNS Billie Pendleton,

HR Consultant Liz Berens,

and, Associate Superintendent Barbara Culley.

Bird Flu in America -- No Need To Panic

A made for TV movie *"Fatal Contact: Bird Flu in America,"* ran May 9. The Association for Professionals in Infection Control has developed the following message in response to the airing of this movie.

- The ABC Movie "Fatal Contact: Bird Flu in America" is a movie, not a documentary. According to ABC, the film deals with the current threat of the avian flu virus (H5N1).
- It is important to remember that H5N1 avian influenza is almost exclusively a disease of birds. The H5N1 virus has not yet appeared in the U.S.
- While the movie serves to raise awareness about avian and pandemic flu, we hope it will inspire preparation – not panic. Individuals, families and communities can take steps to prepare by keeping a supply of food and medicines on hand in the event you become homebound. You can practice good public health measures like frequent hand washing and staying home when sick.
- The film highlights an important aspect of planning – individual and community planning and cooperation that will be so vital to sustaining communities and neighborhoods during an extended wave of an influenza pandemic. An extensive set of planning documents, including planning checklists for businesses, schools, health care providers, community organizations and states as well as an individual and family planning guide can be found at *www.pandemicflu.gov.*

For more information, contact Sally Shunn at Retsil, 360-895-4466.