HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The 25th Annual Holiday Extravaganza was held on December 16th in the auditorium. There were nineteen acts by 53 performers made up of inpatients, outpatients, and staff. A few were unable to make it due to the snowstorm. There was a wonderful variety; from hand bells, to “Grandma’s killer fruitcake,” to Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Cliff Williams sang, “White Christmas,” and Cary Walker, our newly discovered “Mr. Grinch,” almost stole the show. Fun and laughter filled the auditorium as the Community Living Center (CLC) Kazoo Band made their yearly debut.

Isaiah Bowie (top photo), was Emcee. Beth Woodward, Sarah Hameline, and Nicole Drozd, of Music Therapy, shared beautiful music (middle photo). The VAMC Hand Bell Choir (bottom photo) also performed (Left to Right: Mary Terry, Nicole Drozd, Beth Woodward, Shannon Starkey, Danny Miner, Joni Mills, Betty Watts, [back row Carolyn Paige], Joselyn Cutlip, [back row Mark Realmuto], and Harold Bryant.

The program went on despite the winter weather. A few employees volunteered to perform songs at the last minute — such as Shannon Starkey and Dr. Gregory Jamison. Some acts were missing actors we thank staff members who stepped in to fill in, such as Bob Dore who posed as Santa in a skit with Chipmunks. Even the bell ringers didn’t miss a beat thanks to their teamwork and pitching in.

What a great way to ring in the new year!

About 275 people attended the extravaganza throughout the two and a half hour program.

Thanks to Watson Martin, Ginny Hoover, and Keith Matyi for media, photography, and sound help; and to Bruce Hagadorn and Jodi Flinchum for serving as stage managers. Special thanks also to Recreation and Voluntary Service for their enthusiastic support.

Season’s greetings and happy new year. We wish you health and happiness in 2011.

Carol S. Bogedain, FACHE
Interim Director
A REAL THANKSGIVING STORY
Submitted by Evelyn Sayers

On Thanksgiving Day, November 25th, Ms Melissa Busse came to the Salem VAMC all the way from Lynchburg, with turkey, stuffing, green beans/vegetables, cranberry sauce, macaroni and cheese, cakes, rolls, pies, sodas, and all the trimmings. She said she cleared it through Voluntary Service, and told them she wanted to serve a special meal in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU) waiting room for patients’ families, nurses, doctors, and other employees to “give back for the care and services my family and I got when Dad was an Inpatient in the Salem VAMC ICUs, and to feed patient’s families who were in the hospital who might not have a holiday meal.” She said her father was hospitalized in another VAMC when he passed away in January 2010, and her family experienced staying in the hospital during the holidays without the holiday meal they normally would have and enjoyed if they were home. A couple of her friends baked the cakes, rolls, and pies when she told them of her plan. She added that she was so inspired and touched by the quality of service we gave to her father, she is now taking up the study of Nursing. The patients’ family members and staff enjoyed the generous Thanksgiving Dinner Ms. Busse provided. 
(Ms. Busse provided us with her photo at our request. — Editor)

DIRECTOR’S OFFICE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

The annual Director’s Office Holiday Open House was held on December 9th, with lots of holiday treats, decorations, and music. Special thanks to Annie Grause, Tracy Hicks, Lisa Swim, Pat Jones, and FMS for all the work behind the scenes!


Photos Bottom Left to Right: Charles Allen and Wanda Henry of Veterans Canteen Service serving refreshments in the Associate Director’s Office. Julia Ball and Deidre Keeling serving holiday goodies. Rob Robbins, Bob Cox, and Angie Cooper in the Chief of Staff’s Office.

(Photos by Marian McConnell)
HOLIDAY SPIRIT IS ALIVE AT SALEM
Article and photos by Marian McConnell

Signs of the season are everywhere at Salem VAMC – special events for Veterans and staff, poinsettias, greeting cards, soft strains of holiday music, the beautiful tree in the lobby, and even real snow on the ground. Outside the main entrance near the Valet Parking station, someone created a snowman.

Inside the Emergency Department (ED), the staff were inspired to decorate the temporary walls covering our current ongoing ED renovations with holiday drawings and paintings. Dr. Andres Marte-Grau; Dr. Karen Alldredge; Dr. Durga Mekala; Dr. Pratibha Joshi; Marlene Tinsley, RN; Freda Mullins, RN; Diane Beverly, RN; and George Davis, RN; all had a hand in the colorful artwork.

STAGG BOWL AND QUILTS OF VALOR
Submitted by Ann Benois/Ginny Hoover

On December 17, football players and cheerleaders from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater delivered donated Quilts of Valor to Veterans in the Community Living Center (CLC). The 78 Americana quilts were handmade by members of the Calvary Way Quilters group in Pensacola, Florida and delivered as their tribute to hospitalized Veterans at the Salem VAMC.

On December 18, the undefeated UWW Warhawks met on the Salem Stadium football field against Mount Union in the NCAA Division III Championship game. UWW entered the playoff with a record of 15-0 and has the longest active winning streak (30 games) in the NCAA. The Warhawks celebrated their third victory as champions with a score of 31-21. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WARHAWKS ON THEIR CHAMPIONSHIP!
HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN  
Submitted by Debra Swain-Elliotte, LCSW

On November 11th, the Salem VAMC Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV) held its 6th Annual Stand Down for Homeless Veterans. The Stand Down was the coordinated effort of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, the Virginia State Employment Commission, the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council and Salem VAMC. The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board secured a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and Salem VAMC was awarded Stand Down funds from the Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Initiative to fund this event.

The Stand Down provided a comprehensive opportunity to offer multiple services and provided homeless Veterans with on-the-spot assistance with their medical, social, legal, employment, economic, spiritual and shelter needs. The Stand Down also provided for other immediate needs such as a hot lunch meal (provided by Salem Catering) haircuts (by Cost Cutters), new clothing, work shoes, personal hygiene supplies, and transportation assistance. The 40 Years After musical group volunteered to set the ambiance for the entire event, which started with the Honor Guard from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and a solo of the National Anthem by Salem VAMC’S own Stephanie Chapman.

A total of 125 Veterans attended the event, which was held at the City of Salem Civic Center (Mayor Randy Foley), who graciously donated space for the event. Thirty-six various representatives from Federal, State, local and private service providers volunteered to provide assistance to Veterans. Salem VAMC was well represented with staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Supportive Employment, CWT, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Social Work Service, Chaplin Service, Rural Health Team, Women's Clinic, and Facilities Management Transportation Services (who provided transportation for Veterans to and from the Salem VAMC and local homeless shelters). There were several representatives from various Veterans Service organizations such as AMVETS, AMVETS Auxiliary, and the DAV. Salem VAMC administration was represented by our Chief of Staff, Dr. Maureen McCarthy and the Chief of Social Work Services, John T. Woodrum LCSW. VISN 6 was represented by Ms. Jennifer Burden PHD. Vision 6 Substance Use Disorder and Homeless Coordinator. Representatives from Senator John Warner and Congressman Bob Goodlatte’s offices, and the Cities of Salem and Roanoke also were present.

The HCHV team at Salem was honored to help facilitate Veterans get much-needed care and services at the 2010 Stand Down. Our team looks forward to serving homeless Veterans throughout the year. We join in the quest with our many dedicated VAMC staff and community partners to end homelessness among America’s Veterans. For more information please contact Shelley Wimmer LCSW HCHV Outreach at (540) 982-2463, ext. 1517.

MHICM CHRISTMAS GATHERING  
Submitted by Lisa Bradford, LCSW

On December 14th the Mental Health Intensive Case Management [MHICM] program held its annual Christmas gathering. This year for the first time the MHICM Veterans organized, secured a meeting place [Metropolitan Community Church] and prepared or brought items for the meal. Fourteen Veterans attended the event, along with 3 MHICM staff and the Supportive Employment Coordinator. One goal of Mental Health Recovery is integration into the community at large. We are proud to see our MHICM Veterans taking this step.
Salem VAMC has a Rural Health Team to serve Veterans in our catchment areas. The team is under Salem VAMC’s Primary Care Service Line, and works closely with Home Based Primary Care, Tele-medicine, Women’s Health, Mental Health, OEF/OIF Coordinator, and other services.

The Team recently shared information about VA health care services at: VA Wounded Warrior Veterans and Holiday Party in Blacksburg; Buchanan Christmas Festival; Red, White, and Blue Ridge PBD Day of Honor Concert in Roanoke; Rocky Mount Community Services Board; Rockbridge County Community Services Board; New River Valley Community Services Board; and the Salem Civic Center Gun Show.

**Upcoming Rural Health Team activities (January 2011)**

1/1-2/11—Roanoke Gun Show; Roanoke, VA
1/4/11—Bastian Union Church; Bastian, VA
1/7/11—New River Valley Community Services Board; Blacksburg, VA
1/7-8/11—Rodeo; Salem, VA
1/8/11—Post-Mobilization Yellow Ribbon Event, Hotel Roanoke; Roanoke, VA
1/8/11—AmVets State Conference, AmVets Post 40; Roanoke, VA
1/12/11—VFW Post 7568; Galax, VA
1/13/11—United Auto Workers (UAW); Dublin, VA
1/14/11—Rocky Mount CSB/Senior Center; Rocky Mount, VA
1/14/11—Holiday Dinner; Wytheville, VA
1/19/11—**Rural Health Open House**; Salem VAMC 77-130D; Salem, VA
1/21/11—New River Valley CSB; Pulaski, VA
1/21/11—Staunton Senior Center; Staunton, VA
1/22-23/11—Gun Show; Salem Civic Center; Salem, VA
1/22/11—Flat Ridge Community Center; Grayson County, Troutdale, VA
1/25/11—Carrington Place; Wytheville, VA
1/26/11—Rockbridge CSB; Lexington, VA
1/28/11—Galax Virginia Employment Commission; Galax, VA

If you have an event you’d like to invite the Rural Health Team to, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 855-3460 or email at marian.mcconnell@va.gov.

(Left to right: James Bonds, Kirsten Funk, Paula Kirtley, April Lopez, Vicky Doss, Brenda Hart, Kari Wygal, Kathryn Null, Marian McConnell. Not pictured: Jennifer Noell, Andrew Forest, Kimberly Jarrett, and Joseph Smigiel.)
DIABETES EDUCATION CHANGED HIS LIFE!
(Submitted by Pamela Moreland, RD, CNSC, CDE and Larry Poindexter)

With nearly 24 million children and adults in the United States living with diabetes, and an additional 57 million Americans at risk, there is no time to waste. One out of every three children born today will face a future with diabetes if current trends continue. Diabetes is not merely a condition. It is disease with deadly consequences. Drastic action is needed from everyone.

One familiar person did just that. He is Larry Poindexter, a Supply Management Specialist for VISN 6 Logistics. This is his story.

“Before I was diagnosed as a diabetic, my lifestyle was not very active. I have always enjoyed working but my job primarily was at a desk or in meetings. At home I would spend a great deal of time on the computer or sitting in front of the TV eating all the wrong foods. The only real physical activity I was involved in was an occasional round of golf, as long as I could ride the cart. I had picked up a lot of weight over the last 5 or 6 years.

One day I received a letter from the Medical Center giving me an appointment at the Diabetic Education Clinic, I knew this was some kind of mistake, I don’t have diabetes but I would go to the appointment because the results of my lab work were also included in the letter, and I needed to know how I could reduce some of the high numbers. At this point I think I was in denial of what the lab results were telling me, because this was the last thing I wanted to deal with, I was also a somewhat irritated at myself because I knew most of this was in my control and I blew it.

The Diabetes Education Clinic was the best 8 hours I have spent or I should say invested in myself in my life. The clinic makeup is an interdisciplinary team that includes detailed steps of how to manage and live with diabetes, both Type 1 and Type 2. The class helped me understand that what I was in denial about was in fact called diabetes. As part of the management process some of the keys are monitoring your blood sugar, exercising and sometimes taking medication. The last thing I wanted was to be on another medication, and there was a chance if I would change my lifestyle this may be diverted. As part of my program I would need to lose some weight and maintain it, make healthy eating choices and get active. In the Diabetes Education Clinic they gave me the tools I needed to make these changes and still enjoy life.

I made some of changes in my lifestyle and am continuing to work on others. Not only me but my wife and family also made changes in their lifestyles to help me and are very supportive. I try to walk regularly, eat smarter while watching the portion sizes and being aware of how many carbohydrates I am consuming. It’s a change in lifestyle that I have enjoyed. From the time I was notified to attend the Diabetes Education Clinic up to now I’ve reduced my A1c level to below 6 percent and my overall weight about 20%. Glory be to God. “

As you consider New Year’s Resolutions this time of year, let Larry’s story inspire you to make a permanent change toward better health. By increasing activity and losing weight, Larry was able to decrease his blood sugars from diabetes range to pre-diabetes range. The American Diabetes Association has a free booklet that can help you take control, called “Planning For a Healthy Life” and can be obtained by calling 1-800-Diabetes or go to www.diabetes.org. The Diabetes Education Management staff can also provide more information. If you would like to attend the diabetes self-management education class, call Pamela Moreland, ext. 2561. Take control of your life!
FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS
Submitted by Wayne Johnson

Winter weather is currently impacting a number of exterior construction projects including roofing and new shuttle bus shelters, while construction continues largely uninterrupted for interior Projects such as the new MRI Addition to Building 2A and partial renovation of the Emergency Department.

In addition to continued progress in Building 2A and the Emergency Department, January and February construction progress will include:

- Building 143 Fire Alarm System Replacement: Installation and testing of the new system will be completed, and removal of the old system will commence.
- Steam repairs: Corridor restoration in Buildings 74 and 75 should be completed.
- Building 75 Education Center: Construction will commence during this timeframe.
- Underground fuel storage tank leak detection installation: Will be completed.
- Replacement of roofs - East Corridors and Buildings 74 and 143/2A: Corridor work, preparation for Building 74 roof, and Building 143 work will progress as weather allows.
- HVAC systems replacement in Buildings 11 and 12 (in design): Currently in negotiation for initiation of work. Construction expected to begin in February or March timeframe.
- Installation of lighting in Parking Lots H and I: Weather delays – will resume as weather allows.
- Installation of shuttle bus shelters: Weather delays – will resume as weather allows.
- Renovation of Building 9, 2nd Floor: Project will initiate during this timeframe.
- IT Infrastructure Security and IT HVAC: Work will be completed during January.
- SPD Renovation for Scope Processing: Design will be completed and work initiated.
- Replacement of exterior lighting with energy efficient LEDs: Work should resume.
- Building 8 Addition for Mental Health: Design work will continue.
- High efficiency heating systems for Buildings 17, 18, 19, and 25: Contract will be advertised.
- HVAC humidification corrections in Building 143: Currently awaiting a modification – work should resume during this timeframe.
- Retro-commissioning of Building 143 HVAC system: HVAC system corrections will continue.

Projects which are recently completed or are essentially complete include:

- Elevator renovation: All of the current elevator contract work including renovation/new installations in Buildings 4, 7, 9, 12 (2 elevators), 74, 75, and 77.
- Construction of a Contractor staging area near Parking Lot T.

A number of additional projects are either in design, awaiting contract actions, or are continuing across the Medical Center. FMS will strive to coordinate all construction activities and design efforts with directly-affected personnel and services. Thank you for your continued patience as we strive to improve Salem VAMC for our deserving Veterans. We appreciate your reports of unsafe conditions or situations to Safety (Ext. 2292) or FMS (Ext. 2700).

KUDOS TO RIVERS
Submitted by Vonda Broom

On November 24, Mr. Nathan Rivers, Assistant Hospital Housekeeping Officer, received the premier level of commendation from the Association of Linen Management (ALM) in Lexington, KY. His overall ranking score for the Fall 2010 ALM Part III Class was #1 out of 18 participants. The overall scoring is compiled from Team Project, Public Speaking Presentation, Essay/Short Answer, and a Written Exam.

Mr. Rivers holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee 2005, and plans to pursue his graduate degree during 2011-2012. Mr. Rivers has proven to be a valuable member of the Environmental Management Team.
**PRESCRIPTION TIPS—PLEASE ASK THE PATIENT FIRST!**
Submitted by Dr. Carlos Tam, Chief, Pharmacy

Pharmacy has received patient concerns regarding prescriptions renewed and medications mailed automatically when the patient comes for their clinic appointment. Some patients stated they did not ask for the medications to be sent because they are not using them, they still have plenty at home, or the co-pay was cheaper in a retail pharmacy; and they either refused the medication package or asked their medication co-pay be canceled or reset. VA regulations prohibit Pharmacy to reissue any medications returned in the mail or brought back by the patient. Pharmacy cannot reset the medication co-pay charges when there is no medication error. Providers should ask the patient if they need more medications before the prescriptions are renewed, and refrain from ordering more medications unless requested by the patient. This will help also help us avoid unnecessary medication costs, man-power to fill the unwanted prescriptions, and postage for returned mail.

Patients can help by telling their Provider if they do NOT want their prescription filled by VA.

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**December Question:** Dear Ethel, There is a very nice, cute Veteran who was in our program. He was discharged 2 months ago. Is it ok for me to ask him for a date?

**Answer:** It depends. If you met the Veteran while performing your official work duties and exchanged personal contact information with him and/or you accessed his personal contact information from the electronic medical record, then it would be a violation of the Salem VAMC Memorandum 658-00-01, entitled, “Boundary Issues Between Employees, Staff, and Supervisors and Patients, Former Patients, Patients’ Families, and Trainees/Students.” Section 2. POLICY states, “Boundary violations that blend or distort relationship roles have a high potential for harming patients and trainees. For this reason, official relationships must be distinct from and not coexist with unofficial relationships of a personal, business, or intimate social nature. Employees must actively respect and protect the boundaries of patients and trainees by avoiding behaviors that may result in misinterpretation or confusion about roles and role expectations, create the impression of bias or preferential treatment, or unnecessarily infringe upon individuals’ rights to privacy. The procedures in this policy pertain to all employees, regardless of status, title, or compensation arrangement.”

Many professions such as Nursing Professionals have a code of ethics that all Nursing Professionals agree to adhere to. The “Nursing Code of Ethics” link is: [http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics.aspx](http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics.aspx). Provision 2 states, “The Nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.” Provision 2.2 Conflict of Interest for Nurses states, “Nurses guard the patient’s best interest and preserve the professional integrity of the Nurse.” Provision 2.4 states, “The Nurse maintains appropriate limits to relationships. In all encounters Nurses are responsible for retaining their professional boundaries.”

Whenever in doubt, please contact your immediate supervisor for clarification on such issues.

**January Question:** Dear Ethel: My father is a Veteran, and I am an employee at Salem VAMC, but also serve as my father’s Power of Attorney (POA) and Executive of Special Needs Trust. Is it ok for me to ask care-related questions of his VA Providers to make sure his rights are observed?
CHIEF QUALITY MANAGEMENT
Article and photo by Marian McConnell

Yvette Spangler, BSMT, CPHQ, was selected as Chief, Quality Management (QM) in October 2010.
She received her Bachelors Degree in Biology from the University of Mary Washington, and Medical Technology Certification from Roanoke Memorial.

Yvette began her career at Salem VAMC in 1981 in the Lab. Since then she has worked in Quality Management, and again in the Lab as Ancillary Testing Coordinator, Central Lab Supervisor, and Chief Med Tech/Lab Manager. She has provided leadership in quality, contracting, and external/internal reviews for Salem, as well as in the VISN.

Yvette says her vision for her newest role is to “make a difference,” and to “lay an organizational foundation for quality functioning that will serve as now as well as in the long term.” Our next Joint Commission Review is coming anytime after January 27th; perhaps in March or April; the bottom line is that we need to be continuously ready — we should be doing all the right things for our patients all the time. In other words, be pro-active rather than reactive. The Joint Commission’s focus will be on Patient Communication; which continues to be a Salem Priority (part of providing Excellent Service and patient satisfaction) as well. She has already been hard at work with her QM team providing nuts and bolts training to staff on such topics as Minutes Training and Lean 101 — getting organized and efficient.

The Quality Management team is made up of:

Yvette Spangler—Chief, Quality Management
Cheryl Briles, RN—Tracers, Medical Program Reviews, Occurrence Screens
Rick Chandler—VASQIP (VA Surgical Quality Improvement Program)
Jeannette Murrell, RN—EPRP (External Peer Review Program), Narcotics, Occurrence Screens
Mike Nelson—Program Support Assistant, ADPAC (Computer/IT) for Building 1 Staff
Becky Simmons, RN—Risk Manager, Tort Claims, Medical Malpractice Cases
Jolene Yunger, RN—Utilization Management
Sarah King, RN—Utilization Management
Jennifer Deweese, RN—Utilization Management
Brad Looney, RN—Bed Flow Coordinator
Dino Tinsley—Program Assistant
Crystal Harrington, RN—(Director’s Office) - Patient Safety Manager
Molly StClair, RN—Resource Utilization Nurse (Insurance), Transfer Coordinator

Information about QM is found in Medical Center Memorandum (MCM) 658-00-55, “QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT (PI) PLAN” dated October 12, 2010. Key components of the PI Plan include quality and performance improvement, patient safety improvement, internal review, external review, performance management, stakeholder perceptions, utilization management, risk management, and quality information resources.

Yvette and most of the QM staff are located in Building 1, on the second floor, mailing symbol (10Q), ext. 1700.

Yvette is married; she and her husband Delmore will celebrate their 30th anniversary in May. Her son Matthew is 28, and will soon be graduating summa cum laude from New River; and her daughter Sarah is 21, and a Senior at the University of Mary Washington. Yvette and Delmore enjoy fixing up their home and are in the process of renovating it — “quality improvement.”
SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS FOR NEW YEAR’S DAY
(Submitted by Evelyn Sayers)

Here are a few customs from around the world to give you hope and laughter for the holidays:

1. Eating pork on New Year’s Day is lucky because pigs eat moving forward. Therefore, those who eat pork will move forward in the coming year. Chickens and turkeys scratch for their food and move backwards and those who eat them will “scratch” for their food all year long.

2. Make lots of noise at the stroke of midnight. Evil spirits attempt to come into the brand new year at this time—horns and whistles chase them away.

3. Dancing around a tree (especially outside) ensures luck, love, and prosperity.

4. Cupboards must be stocked with goods. Larders, rice, sugar, salt, flour must be stocked up in order to stay that way all year long.

5. The first words you hear in the minutes of the New Year will set the precedence for the entire year.

6. Do something you are good or successful at on New Year’s Day, especially if it is work-related. This will tell how the rest of the New Year will go.

7. Any baby born on New Year’s Day has good luck the rest of his/her life. The baby also brings good luck to the family.

8. Nothing goes out—not even the garbage. Or, nothing goes out until something new comes in.

GERVAIS RECOGNIZED BY LOCAL DAR CHAPTER
Submitted by Ann Benois

Ms. Nicole Gervais, senior at Salem High School, was recently recognized as the Outstanding Youth Volunteer by the local Fort Lewis Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) for her youth volunteer activities at the Salem VA Medical Center.

Nicole has a total of 434 volunteer hours at Salem and also volunteers for several other organizations in the local community. She is President of the National Honor Society at Salem High School and involved in several athletic programs.

"Nicole's assignments included running errands to inpatient units, providing phone assistance in the Phlebotomy section of the Laboratory, escorting Veterans to Imaging exam rooms, and many other related tasks. Nicole has truly enjoyed her volunteer time with the medical center. She is professional, the staff has nothing but admiration for her, and she always has a ready smile for the Veterans. She serves as an inspiration to other youth volunteers and I am so pleased she will be pursuing a career in the medical field. We could think of no one more deserving our nomination to the State NSDAR Youth Volunteer of the Year," said Ms. Harriet Hadley, NSDAR representative.

Nicole's nomination will now move forward to the State of Virginia DAR for even further consideration at the state and national level.

Nicole Gervais receives award from Harriet Hadley at DAR Award Ceremony of the Fort Lewis Chapter of the DAR.
Photo by Ann Benois
KUDOS TO JASEK  
Submitted by Michelle Cabaniss

The Imaging (Radiology) Department is proud to announce that one of our own has accomplished a major milestone!

Mr. Ed Jasek began his adult life in college at Concord University in Athens, WVA where he earned his BS in Biology and a minor in Psychology. He was on a pre-med track when, “being tired of school” led him to the airline industry where he served as an Aircraft Mechanic Avionics Technician and Inspector for American Airlines, Piedmont Airlines, and U.S. Airways from 1983-2006. Mr. Jasek accepted early retirement due to the turbulent atmosphere within the airline industry and inevitable outsourcing within his job field.

Having a medical background, Mr. Jasek searched for job security and identified medical imaging as his interest. He attended Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke from 2005-2007, graduating with an Associates in Applied Health Sciences. After passing his Radiological Technologist registry he accepted a job with us here in December 2007. Once his training in diagnostic was completed he moved on to train and eventually take his hired position as 10 hour CT/Diagnostic tech working every other weekend.

Mr. Jasek took it upon himself to keep track of his exams; a certain number of completed exams are required for the registry, study and prepare himself to take the CT registry. Once he felt ready he took the registry on December 13, 2010. Thanks to modern technology he learned that he had passed before he left the testing area.

The Radiology Department is proud of Mr. Jasek for his initiative and desire to increase his knowledge to ultimately benefit Veterans!

CONGRATULATIONS TO CLINICAL PHARMACY STAFF  
Submitted by Francine Farnsworth, PharmD, BCPS, CPE

Please join us in congratulating several of our Clinical Pharmacy Specialists who recently obtained additional specialty pharmacy credentialing:

☆ Dr. Monica Wilson, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Primary Care (Clinic 2) acquired the Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) credential.
☆ Dr. Jena Willis, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Primary Care (Clinic 1) attained the Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS) credential.
☆ Dr. Joseph Smigiel, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Mental Health and Rural Health attained the Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS) credential.

EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION TRIPS ARE SUCCESSES  
Submitted by Cindy Killian, EA Activities Coordinator

The Employee Association (EA) bus trips to the Barn Dinner Theatre on October 16th, and to New York City on November 6th were both a HUGE success!

The Barn Dinner Theatre Trip included shopping at the Four Season’s Mall in Greensboro, NC, and seeing the Motown-inspired play “The Love Machine” while enjoying an all-you-can-eat buffet. We shopped, danced, laughed, and ate the night away. Plans for another trip to the Barn Dinner Theatre in 2011 are in the works! More details to come at a later date.

The New York City Trip included sight-seeing on a double-decker bus around NYC with stops at the Eifel Tower, The Statue of Liberty, and shopping at Macy’s and other famous NYC stores, eating at some of New York’s finest restaurants, and watching the New York City Marathon.
On December 6th, 2010, the Post Graduate Year-1 Pharmacy Residency Program at the Salem VAMC began its recruiting efforts at the 45th Annual American Society of Health-System Mid-Year Clinical Pharmacy Meeting and Exhibition at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California.

During the 3-hour residency showcase, our preceptors (Drs. Loyed and Farnsworth) and current residents (Drs. Hall and Troester) did not let one moment go unused! There was ‘standing room only’ as interested students awaited their turn to talk to our staff about our ‘hidden gem’ of a residency program. Many of the students who were drawn to our pharmacy residency training program mentioned that this was due in part to our positive reputation for training well-qualified Clinical Pharmacists in the areas of Primary Care, Mental Health and Inpatient Medicine and Intensive Care areas.

Overall, we had a very respectable turn out with over forty interested Doctor of Pharmacy Candidates residing across the United States - from Boston to Nevada and even Hawaii – and are looking forward to an excellent residency recruitment period for the 2011-12 residency year!

A special ‘thank you’ to Heather McKee for ensuring that all of our recruitment materials and program display were ready on time and arrived safely in Anaheim.

Top Photo, Left to Right: Dr. Hannah Troester, PGY-1 Pharmacy Resident; Dr. Joyce Loyed, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist—Primary Care; Dr. Ashley Hall, PGY-1 Pharmacy Resident

Bottom Photo: Dr. Francine Farnsworth, PGY-1 Pharmacy Program Director and Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator
COMPLIMENTS CORNER
Submitted by Ann Benois

☺ “Dr. Goldwasser in Primary Care did a great job. I was also in your Day Hospital Unit in May; they did a phenomenal job providing my care and showed a lot of compassion for my wife and mother. The staff went over and beyond their call of duty. Thanks to Pamela Moreland and Stephanie Baynton and the Diabetic Education team. Thanks also to Monica Wilson in the Pharmacy; her efforts really helped with my diabetes. She is a very caring person and always makes me feel special. Thanks to Dr. Tingler and Elsie Keys for their care; Dr. Tingler has a great attitude and I admire the way he works with patients.”

☺ “Thanks to Cindy Webb in PCT G; you are an angel and a star angel.”

☺ “Thanks for the wonderful care our father received during his stay at Salem VAMC on MICU-A. I could not have taken care of my father without your help.”

☺ “Salem VAMC is the best among VA hospitals that I have been in. I moved from Florida to Christiansburg to join my friends after I learned that Salem VAMC is the best place to go for Veterans’ care. Thanks to the Step Down Unit for your wonderful service.”

☺ “Thanks to Margaret Mulcahy in Social Work for helping us secure our mother’s 100% service-connected disability, thus enabling her to remain at the assisted living facility. We hope the VA realizes what a jewel they have in you!”

☺ “Thank you for the care you gave me, and the surgical procedure I had done. Dr. Choudhury was the surgeon and everything went smoothly. Thanks for the excellent care. The incision looks so good you can barely tell I had surgery. I also appreciated having the stitches removed in Hillsville [site of care] instead of having to come all the way back to the medical center.”

☺ “Genova Saunders in the Patient Advocate Office is the sweetest, nicest person that deals with people on the phone and in person. So many times I have stopped by to say hello and she is calmly helping Veterans. An excellent job!”

☺ “I found out the hospital Emergency Department is a great place to have a heart attack, if you must have one. If you mention that you’re having any sort of chest discomfort you go to the head of the line. Within just a few minutes you are plugged up to an EKG, surrounded by Nurses, Techs, and Doctors, and headed to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab to receive two stents. After a two-night ‘vacation,’ most of which was spent in ICU, I was sent home with a bag of pills and list of follow-up appointments. In spite of the horror stories about single-payer health care, death panels, and health care rationing, I decided to have my heart attack at a government-run hospital, the VA Medical Center in Salem, VA. The care was continues to be excellent. Nearly a month after the event, my strength is coming back… I begin a Cardiac Rehab program in a couple of weeks.”

☺ “Tony Lane and Mike Ridenhour in Housekeeping have been doing a great job on Ward 8-2. A patient had been incontinent over the past 2 days; they have been quick to help clean up the floor and mattress. At one point Tony noticed the mattress had a tear in it, so he initiated getting a new mattress and he and Mike changed it out that morning. These two gentlemen are doing a great job and have been efficient and helpful. They have a good attitude and have been willing to do anything the staff asks them to do.”

Veterans: Do you have a compliment or suggestion to help us exceed your expectations? Our goal is to provide excellent care. Please ask to speak to the Service Level Patient Advocate (also known as “STAR”) in the area. You may receive a survey in the mail; we encourage you to complete it and return it with your feedback. Thank you!
## REPORTING SAFETY & QUALITY ISSUES
Submitted by Quality Management

Any employee of the Salem VAMC may report safety and quality of care issues directly to the Joint Commission, our accrediting agency. Concerns may be reported without retaliation or disciplinary action against the reporting employee. Reports may be reported to the Joint Commission through several means:

**Mail:**
- Division of Accreditation Operations
- The Joint Commission
- One Renaissance Blvd.
- Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60180

**Phone:** 1-800-994-6610

**Fax:** 1-630-792-5636

**Email:** complaint@jointcommission.org

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## EVENTS CALENDAR
*(Also see events online on the Salem homepage, and in the Weekly Bulletin)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Happy New Year!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2-8</td>
<td>National Folic Acid Awareness Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 3</td>
<td>Free smoking cessation patches, lozenges, gum available to employees indefinitely. Call ext. 1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>Employee Federal insurance plans info will be available in the main lobby from 8a-4:30p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 9-15</td>
<td>Home Office Safety &amp; Security Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>National Cut Your Energy Costs Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Weight Watchers at Work info and sign-up meeting at 4:30p in Auditorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Program at 1p in the Auditorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Religious Freedom Day (1786)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td><strong>Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Holiday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Rural Health Open House in 77-130D from 1-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23-29</td>
<td>Certified Nurse Anesthetists Week Medical Group Practice Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>National IV Nurse Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**JUST THE FACTS**

The newsletter is published around the 1st of each month.

If you have ideas for *Just the Facts* articles (250 words or less), photos, or suggestions, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 982-2463, Ext. 1400; or email marian.mcconnell@va.gov at least 10 days before the first of the month.

Remember, you can read current and past issues on the Salem VAMC Intranet homepage.

Disclaimer: We reserve the right to edit/condense articles and information as appropriate. We will make every attempt to notify the author(s) first.

Now posted online at: [www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov)