HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The holiday season kicked off to a wonderful start with a Veterans Day Parade in downtown Roanoke; the first in 70 years. Salem VAMC patients, staff, the Rural Health Team, and staff from the Roanoke Vet Center and VA Regional Office participated along with about 80 other groups in the November 6 event. The parade route was lined with thousands of people honoring Veterans.

The Director’s Office staff will have their annual Holiday Open House for staff and volunteers on Thursday, December 9 from 2:00-5:00 pm in Building 1, first floor.

The 25th Annual Holiday Extravaganza will be held on Thursday, December 16 at 1:30 pm in the Auditorium (Building 5). Veterans and staff will share musical selections, poetry, sketches, and other holiday performances; the event is free and open to the public.

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Greenhouse has beautiful poinsettias in 14 different colors for sale. Also available this year are amaryllis; they are extra large bulbs in many unique varieties. The Greenhouse is also selling firewood from trees that died or were pruned on our grounds; all proceeds benefit the Therapeutic Garden Project and planting new trees on the grounds. For information call (540) 982-2463, ext. 2218.

However you choose to celebrate the season, we wish you health, happiness, and hope. We look forward to the New Year and honoring America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Carol S. Bogedain, FACHE
Interim Director
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: the Roanoke Veterans Day Parade, Homeless Veterans Stand-Down in Salem, American Legion Post 36 in Alta Vista, Hillsville VFW Post, American Legion in Wytheville, Hillsville Site of Care, Ruritan Club in Rockbridge County, Franklin County Community Services Board, CWA Local 82160 in Christiansburg, Wytheville Community Services Board, Christiansburg Kmart, and our CBOCs.

**Upcoming Rural Health Team activities:**

- 12/3/10 VA Wounded Warrior Veterans & Family Holiday Party—Blacksburg, VA
- 12/4/10 Buchanan Christmas Festival—Buchanan, VA
- 12/4/10 Yellow Ribbon Event—Hot Springs, VA
- 12/5/10 Red, White & Blue Ridge PBS Day of Honor Concert—Roanoke, VA
- 12/15/10 Rocky Mount Community Services Board, VA
- 12/15/10 Rockbridge County Community Services Board—Lexington, VA
- 12/16/10 Veterans Holiday Party—Salem VAMC, VA
- 12/17/10 New River Valley Community Services Board—Pulaski, VA
- 12/18-19/10 Gun Show—Salem Civic Center, VA

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

Left: James Tolliver, Veteran, learns about lowering his cholesterol from Brenda Hart, RN, of the Rural Health Team at an event in Christiansburg. Photo by Marian McConnell

Middle: Kari Wygal, RN, of the Rural Health Team with Bill Mutschler, Jr, WWII Veteran, at an event in Wytheville. Photo by Paula Kirtley

Right: The Rural Health Team at the Veterans Day Parade in Roanoke. Photo by Ann Benois
PLANNING RETREAT—Plan Ahead because… “You Never Know!”

On November 18-19, about 75 employees from throughout the medical center met for a two-day planning retreat in the Education conference room. After reviewing the past year’s many accomplishments, the group was provided with an overview of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, Patient Incident and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) trends, budget and workload statistics, Performance Measures, and Veterans Equitable Resources Allocation (VERA).

The group then split up into six teams to begin brainstorming and planning:

- Maximizing VERA
- Continuous Readiness
- Staffing
- Customer Satisfaction/Civility
- CBOC Impact
- Ground Up Savings

Each group presented their recommendations, timelines, and goals. You will be hearing more about these initiatives soon. After so much hard work, the group especially enjoyed the humorous, yet constructive video by Loretta LaRoche, “Simple Truths That Lead to an Amazing Life.” (The link was sent out to all employees; it’s an excellent 50-minute refresher course on dealing with stress and having a positive attitude.)

Thanks to Bob Cox and Tim McQuigan who coordinated the Retreat, to the Team Leaders, Veterans Canteen Service for providing the lunches, and all who worked so hard behind the scenes to make the Retreat a success.

BEREAVEMENT & GRIEF SUPPORT
Submitted by Chaplain Michaux

Bereavement and grief support are available for Veterans, their families, and friends on Thursdays at 10:00 am in Building 2, Room 309. Contact Chaplain Michaux at (540) 982-2463, ext. 4248 for more information.

CHISOM WINS NATIONAL PROSTHETICS AWARD

Wesley “Wes” Chisom, Salem VAMC Prosthetics Purchasing Agent, was recognized with the National Chief Consultant’s Award at the Prosthetics Leadership Board meeting in October 2010. Mr. Chisom was chosen for this award for positive changes he has made in Prosthetics Service for Veterans. Beyond his duties as the VAMC’s Prosthetics Purchasing Agent, he manages the Home Oxygen Program, the Durable Medical Equipment Program, and assists with the Home Telehealth Program. His input and suggestions positively impacted the VISN’s Home Oxygen program, resulting in improved services to Veterans and cost-savings. Wes has been at Salem VAMC for 20 years.

Wes Chisom (right) assists James Collins, a visually-impaired Veteran, with a special watch with easy-to-read numbers and that “speaks” the time out loud. Photo by Marian McConnell
COUNTRY STORE
Submitted by Ann Benois, Photos by Marian McConnell

Voluntary Service thanks everyone at Salem VAMC for a wonderful Country Store! An event like this could not be possible without the support of many people. The baskets this year were beautiful — a big “thank you!” to all who contributed. We were able to raise almost $4,000 to help our Veterans here in Salem. I know money can be tight and everyone really pulled together to make this a success. This is just another affirmation that Salem VAMC is a great place to work!

Thanks also to all who entered the Halloween Costume contest. The winners were: 1st Place—Jamie Baker—CFU; 2nd Place—Sally Poindexter—Dental Service; and 3rd Place—Cindy Killian—Coding. Thanks to Steve Anderson from the Credit Union, Teressa Altic from AFGE, and Ms. Bogedain, Interim Director, for judging and presenting the prizes to the winners.

Top: The baskets this year were terrific!
Bottom: (Left to Right): Steve Anderson, Teressa Altic, Carol Bogedain, Jamie Baker, Sally Poindexter, and Cindy Killian — Halloween Costume Winners

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A KIDNEY WALK?
Submitted by Tracie Dickson

On October 24, staff from the Renal Dialysis Unit, along with dialysis and transplant Veterans, participated in a 1-mile walk at the Roanoke River Greenway. Congressman Bob Goodlatte and his wife were present to kick off the event. The walk is to support the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), and the fourth year Salem VAMC staff and patients have participated. The team once again took 1st Place as the top team fundraiser, and two of the team members were top individual fund raisers for the event.

The NKF has offered help to millions affected by kidney disease since 1950, and today leads the fight against kidney disease. The NKF provides extensive public and professional education and advocates for patients of all backgrounds. One in nine adults has chronic kidney disease, and in most cases is not even aware. The NKF has implemented the “End the Wait” program in the U.S. in an effort to encourage organ donations for those in need of a kidney.

Veterans are the important facet to “Veterans & Company” for they are our inspiration on a daily basis in the Dialysis Unit.

Front Row: (Scooters) Grant Burks Floyd Brown. 
2nd Row: Gary Arrington, Beth Wooldridge.
On November 9, 2010 we celebrated National Caregiver’s Month hosting the Second Annual Caregiver Health Awareness Day, Caring for the Caregiver. The event was held in the Auditorium offering several stations which focused on healthy nutrition such as: various educational handouts and a smoothie station, relaxation stations which included two massage therapists, a massage chair, music therapy, and a walk in "Doggie Park Central" with a few of own therapeutic canine friends. Caregivers were provided self care tips through use of various educational handouts as well as VAMC staff who were on hand to connect with Caregivers on a personal basis offering support. Salem VAMC’s community based programs which were highlighted are: Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT), OEF/OIF, Rural Health, and MyHealtheVet. Salem/Roanoke County Health Department was on hand to help Caregivers remain healthy by providing flu shots.

Each of the CBOCs — Danville, Hillsville (Site of Care), Lynchburg, and Tazewell, also supported caregivers by hosting a reception during the week of November 15-19. Each site provided educational materials to help support and enhance the work caregivers provide to Veterans.

Photos (Clockwise, Top to Bottom):
“Mikey” Johnson posting in “Doggie Park Central.”
“Buddy” of Pups Templeton signs in at the Caregiver’s Event.
Caregiver, Patricia Ferguson, enjoys a few moments in the therapeutic massage chair.
John Ferguson, US Army Veteran, is serenaded by Beth Woodward and Sarah Hameline, Music Therapy.
James “JW” Wood, US Air Force Veteran, with wife/Caregiver, Ethel Wood, in the park. Mrs. Wood said she would glad she was able to receive her flu shot at the event.
Kristy Dingus of the Tazewell CBOC enjoys a chat with Dewy Lowe and Donald Carbaugh, Veterans.
CONSTRUCTION UPDATES
Submitted by Wayne Johnson

While winter weather has begun to impact some exterior construction work, December and January will see a significant amount of progress on the MRI Addition to Building 2A which is now under roof. A portion of the Emergency Department will also be renovated during this timeframe.

Other construction progress will include:
- Elevator renovation: All of the current elevator contract work will be completed during Dec. including renovation/new installations in Buildings 4, 7, 9, 12 (two elevators), 74, 75, and 77.
- Building 143 Fire Alarm System Replacement: Work will be completed during this timeframe.
- Steam repairs: Corridor restoration in Buildings 74 and 75 should be completed.
- Building 75 Education Center: Design work will be completed and construction will resume during this timeframe.
- Underground fuel storage tank leak detection installation: Will be initiated.
- Construction of a Contractor staging area near Parking Lot T: Will be completed.
- Replacement of roofs - East Corridors and Bldgs. 74 and 143/2A: Corridor work and preparation for Building 74 roof will continue. Building 143 work will progress as weather allows.
- Installation of lighting in Parking Lots H and I: Should be completed in December.
- Installation of shuttle bus shelters: Should be completed by the end of January.
- Renovation of Building 9, 2nd Floor: Project should initiate in late January or shortly thereafter. Building 7, 2nd Floor renovation to follow.
- Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure Security and IT HVAC: Work will be completed during this timeframe.
- SPD Renovation for Scope Processing: Design will be completed and work initiated.
- Replacement of exterior lighting with energy efficient LEDs: Continue during this timeframe.
- Building 8 Addition for Mental Health: Design will continue.
- High efficiency heating systems for Buildings 17, 18, 19, and 25: Contract will be advertised.
- HVAC humidification corrections in Building 143: Project should proceed during this timeframe.
- Retro-commissioning of Building 143 HVAC system: HVAC system correction should occur.

Projects which are recently completed or are essentially complete include:
- Vehicle refueling station and surface drainage near the Boiler Plant.
- New Building 168 for Mental Health Service Line.
- Steam system renovation work in the West Building Loop.

A number of additional projects are in design and smaller construction projects are also continuing across the Center.

FMS will continue to coordinate these on-going construction activities, design efforts, and smaller projects with directly-affected personnel and services.

Thank you, as always, for your continued patience as we strive to improve Salem VAMC facilities. We appreciate your reports of unsafe conditions or situations to Safety (ext. 2292) or FMS (ext. 2700).
**ASK ETHEL?**

The Integrated Ethics Committee will pose a question each month in *Just The Facts*. Questions and Answers will address boundaries and other Ethical Issues in the workplace. Answers will appear in the following month's issue. Employees are encouraged to submit questions to Ethics (122). Please include your name and extension if you want a personal response (all responses are confidential).

**November Ethics Question:**
Dear Ethel, If we are not supposed to talk about the patients that have appointments, why do we call the patient’s name over the intercom heard throughout the facility?

**Answer:**
If an overhead page reveals a specific clinic area, then it is a breach of the Veteran's privacy. Patient privacy, according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations, must be respected when using overhead pages. Patients should be asked to report to a specific room number. For example, “Mr. Veteran, please report to room 2J-125,” NOT “Mr. Veteran, please report to the Eye Clinic.” If you have questions or concerns relating to privacy boundaries, please contact: Mr. Bob Bidwell, Privacy Officer, (00PO) Salem VA Medical Center, telephone (540) 855-5050.

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

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**CHIEF OF NUTRITION & FOOD SERVICE A “SUHR” THING!**

Ms. Kristy Suhr, RD, is the our new Chief, Nutrition & Food Service (N&FS), as of August 2, 2010. She came to us from the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where she was the Quality Assurance Manager for Nutrition & Food Service. Kristy grew up in the Pittsburgh area, and graduated from Penn State. She came to work for VA because she feels it’s a "good opportunity to give back" to Veterans. She is in the process of building up the N&FS team, and has some new projects in the works such as greening initiatives (minimizing waste in the food department), and instituting a Hostess Cart program in the Community Living Center. Kristy is also the Chair of this year’s Combined Federal Campaign. Her outside interests include travel, running, and cooking.

Please welcome Kristy to Salem VAMC the next time you see her smiling face!

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**WORLD AIDS DAY**
*Submitted by Mary Lou Barritt, RN, BSN*

World AIDS Day is December 1. An estimated 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV; yet one out of five don’t know it. World AIDS Day is an opportunity to take action.

VA is the largest provider of care to those living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. VA recommends every Veteran — not just those who think they are at risk — get tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime. By diagnosing HIV infection as soon as possible, they can receive excellent care and remain healthy for many years to come. Say “yes” to the test!
HERE COME DA JUGS! (Correction to last month’s article)

Once a formal contract is in place for recycling plastics, containers will be provided so each area can take part in reducing the amount of plastic that goes into the solid waste landfill. Please do NOT begin collecting plastic in your area until a formal program has been put into place.

Questions may be referred to Dan Finley at ext. 2694, or Joan Aders, ext. 2292.

GIRL SCOUTS MAKE CARDS FOR VETERANS

Submitted by Linda Dore

Girl Scout Troup 173, led by Troop Leader Tammy Dunn, sent Veterans Day cards made by their Troop for our Veterans in the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) program. The HBPC staff delivered the cards to the Veterans in their homes during Veterans Day week.

VA Pilots Expedite Payments to Disabled Veterans: 'Quick Pay' and 'Express Lane' Initiatives Work to Cut Processing Time

WASHINGTON (Nov. 16, 2010)- VA has launched two pilot programs to test new procedures that will speed the payment of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation benefits to Veterans with disabilities connected to their military service. These new programs are part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to "break the back" of the disability claims backlog.

"A fundamental goal in the transformation of VA's claims processing is to make sure that Veterans receive in a timely manner the benefits they earned through their service to our Nation," Shinseki said. "VA's ambitious tests of numerous innovations reflect our commitment to constantly improving how we meet our mission of responsiveness to Veterans, their families and survivors."

The "Quick Pay" Disability Program at the St. Petersburg, Fla., Regional Office and the "Express Lane" Pilot, based at the Seattle, Wash., Regional Office, are among a number of new initiatives using reengineered and streamlined claims processes to provide Veterans with faster claims decisions and benefit payments.

Secretary Shinseki established as one of VA's highest priority goals the elimination of the disability claims backlog by 2015, so that all Veterans receive a quality decision on their claim in no more than 125 days.

The "Quick Pay" Disability initiative is designed to speed disability compensation to Veterans who provide sufficient evidence at the time of claim submission to decide all or part of their claim. Since program launch, "Quick Pay" has paid more than $2 million in benefits to 1,656 Florida Veterans. These payments averaged $1,236 monthly and were made three months faster than the department's 125-day goal.

Under the "Express Lane" Pilot program based in the Seattle Regional Office, staff members are realigned to address disability claims based on claim complexity.

Like a supermarket check-out "express lane," small employee teams focus on rapidly processing numerous less complex claims that typically involve only one disability, thus freeing their co-workers to process the more complex and multiple-disability claims that demand the greatest level of unilateral effort.

The "Express Lane" Pilot, while managed from Seattle, is also being tested at three additional VA regional offices: Nashville, Tenn.; St. Paul, Minn.; and Muskogee, Okla.

The St. Petersburg and Seattle pilots are among more than three dozen VA initiatives exploring optimal ways to organize and deliver benefits and improve service to Veterans.

For additional information on VA's claims transformation activities, visit www.vba.va.gov/transformation. Questions about benefits for Veterans may be directed to VA's toll free number at 1-800-827-1000.
HOLIDAY CRIME PREVENTION TIPS
Submitted by Sergeant Andre Fieschel

During the holidays, the potential for thefts and robberies increase. More people are out and about, and they are carrying more gifts and money than during other times of the year. While there's no need to be afraid, you should keep in mind the following holiday safety reminders:

✔ Carry your valuables wisely. If you need to carry cash on you, keep a very small amount. Do not keep cash in your wallet. Instead, keep it in an inside pocket and only carry the credit cards you'll need.

✔ Never leave children unattended while shopping. Shopping areas are crowded during the holidays. Keep younger children close to you. If your child wanders away, contact Police/Security for assistance. Teach your children their full name, as well as yours, and have them carry a card with contact information for you. Carry a current photo of your child with you.

✔ Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. If you must leave packages in your car, put them in the trunk. Keep receipts with you.

✔ Carry a cell phone with you. If someone makes you suspicious or uncomfortable, notify security or call the police.

✔ Whenever possible, park and walk in well-lit areas. Be aware of your surroundings, especially the people around you. Always have keys in hand before you reach your car. Check your car from a distance to make sure no one is loitering near it. Always lock car doors as soon as you get inside.

✔ Carry your purse close to you, with the opening or flap towards your body. Never leave a purse unattended in a shopping cart.

✔ Do not keep a wallet, credit cards or cash in a backpack. If you are in a crowd, consider carrying the backpack in front of you. Pickpockets can quickly and easily remove items from a backpack without being noticed by the owner.

✔ Protect your credit card numbers and other personal information. Carefully dispose of receipts that have a credit card number on them. Never provide credit card information in response to unsolicited calls or emails. Consider getting “gift receipts” for items purchased as gifts.

✔ Don't announce your new high-dollar purchases after the holidays. Break down the boxes of TVs, stereos, computers, etc. and turn them inside out before putting them in the trash or dispose of them in a dumpster.

✔ If you are traveling for the holidays, make your home look "lived in". Have a friend or neighbor collect your mail and newspapers or have your service suspended while you are away. Use timers to turn lights off and on. Timers can be purchased at any home improvement store ranging from $10-30.

Here are some numbers to keep on hand:

✔ EMERGENCY-911
✔ Salem Police Dept Non-Emergency 540-375-3078
✔ Roanoke City Police Dept Non-Emergency 540-853-2411
✔ Roanoke County Police Dept Non-Emergency 540-562-3265
✔ Vinton Police Dept Non-Emergency 540-342-8135
✔ Virginia State Police Non-Emergency 540-375-9500 (Cell Phone - #77)
✔ Valley View Mall Security 540-580-5186
TALENT HAS NO BOUNDARIES  
Submitted by Jeanne Wilson, RN

In 1988, Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) increasing the public awareness educational effort from one week yearly to one month. The program began in 1945 when Congress "enacted a law declaring the first week of October as the "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to better acknowledge the employment contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities.

The month-long celebration "emphasizes the contributions of people with all disabilities from all ethnic and racial groups" states NDEAM Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez. Particularly exciting, states Martinez, is the "landmark Executive Order signed by President Obama on July 26th that calls on all Federal Government executive departments and agencies to create goals and action plans for increasing the numbers of people with disabilities hired and to improve retention and return to work of Federal employees with disabilities." In addition to hiring practices the public education effort also focuses on specific employment barriers that still need to be addressed and removed in the workplace.

On October 20th, the VA Salem EEO/Diversity Committee sponsored an educational event with booths showcasing the services available to our disabled Veterans and others both here at the Salem VAMC and in the community.

Representatives were on hand from the following agencies and departments to answer questions and provide handouts:

- League of Older Americans
- Alzheimer's Association
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Medical Foster Home Care Program

- VA Salem Audiology Department
- VA Salem Prosthetics Department
- VA Salem Physical Therapy Department
- VA Salem PRRC Department
- Excel Prosthetics

Light refreshments were supplied by the VA Canteen Services. The well-attended event was organized by Kathy Godbey, Chair, Disabilities Program, and Co-Chair Tanyia Jones.

For more information please refer to the Office of Disability Employment Policy website http://www.dol.gov/odep/faqs/ndeam.htm

EMPLOYEES SELECTED FOR 2011 LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS  
Submitted by Rod Hiduskey

Congratulations to the following employees that have been selected to the following VISN 6 LEAD Leadership Programs for 2011:

**Leadership Development Institute** (LDI): Shelby Assad, Rhonda Driver, Brenda Hart, Mike Jackson, Susan Lundy, Kimberly Slaughter, and Judy Zeller.

**Mid-Atlantic Program for Leadership** (MAP): Ashley Hicks (LeFrois), Laura Watson (McFall), Kristin Pugh, Tony Richards, Susan Ridenhour, and Ben Sackett.

**Non-Supervisory Leadership Development Program** (NLD): Bertha Anderson, Christi Blake, Kim Cardwell, Catherine Craighead, Penny Davis, John Jett, Nikki Moore, Sherrie Reed, Mike Richards, Luise Spencer, Warren Spencer, Shirley Swain, Loretta Welch, Toni-Anne Williams, and Molly Wilson-Kelly.

Congratulations to everyone for making the commitment to learn leadership and career development skills. Application periods for LEAD 2012 programs should open around July/August 2011. Contact Rod Hiduskey, HTM Coordinator, extension 3599, for additional information about these programs.
COMPLIMENTS CORNER
Submitted by Ann Benois

☺ “I think [Salem VAMC] is the very best. I have been going there since 1969. They have been very good to me and my family. I had thyroid cancer in March 2009. Dr. White was my surgeon and words are not enough for me to say what a fine doctor he is. He made sure I was taken care of… Diane Godman in Primary Care is the best and has always been good to me.”

☺ “Dr. Bonk: As a result of you doing a quick examination of my left leg and foot, which were suffering from intense pain… you suggested a surgical procedure. When you did the examination you then exclaimed, ‘I can get ride of the pain.’ I quickly agreed to the surgery but I expected only some possible decrease of the pain not the elimination of it… Well sir, I have been healing quite well and I now move about quite freely and I must say, the pain is basically gone from my leg and foot… I wish to sincerely thank you and tell you that I am willing to advise anyone suffering as I did to have this procedure performed ASAP!”

☺ “I want to thank the [Rural Health Team] for being so dedicated and doing such a great job to assure our Veterans know of the services we offer. Leadership is very fortunate to have such a caring team.”

☺ “Special thanks to Barbara Leahy, RN, for her care and compassion during our family member’s stay on Ward 2-3 the past few years.”

☺ “Thanks to the staff of Ward 2-3 for their excellent care while our family member was on your ward.”

☺ “Thanks to Ricky Beaver for all his hard work in the ER.”

☺ “Thanks to Deborah Goodman; she does an excellent job and has a great bedside manner with all her patients in the Lab.”

☺ “Thanks to Julia Ewen, MD, and Carolyn Parker in PCT B for outstanding treatment.”

☺ “We have always been impressed with the courteous and professional way which we have been treated at the VA by everyone; special thanks to Dr. Chand Singh.”

☺ “I just wanted to take a moment to recognize the extraordinary efforts of a few employees here at Salem VAMC. As many of you may know, our walk-in freezer has been out of service due to necessary repairs. We have relied on two freezer trucks to maintain our food supply for patient meals. Last night, one of those trucks experienced mechanical failure. A team of truly incredible workers came to the rescue. Through their efforts we were able to save about $7000 in food products. The team was Ray Klimuszka, Kenneth McBroom, Larry Fitzgerald, Dennis Enoch, Marcus Claussen, David Kolar, Rickey Johnson, James Alexander, Mike Harr, and Dennis Morgan. Also thanks to Magna Brito and Kathleen Brightwell in N&FS for taking time out of their evening duties to assist with the recovery efforts as well.”

☺ “Cathy Warner really cares and has a great personality.”

☺ “Thanks to Jeff Webster for his help with a patient’s family member. The patient had a mentally challenged son, and had been left with the patient alone overnight. …when the Veteran was in his final hours, Jeff made a point to take the son off the ward, bought him lunch, sat with him, and stayed with him until the rest of the family arrived. We wanted to make sure his coworkers knew what a jewel he is.”

☺ “Dr. Yazel in the MHC has been a tremendous help through some real tough times. He has been a wonderful doctor.”

☺ “Catherine Theisen is so very pleasant and made our appointment so much easier. She helped us find our way around and was so nice to us.”

☺ “Thanks to Kathy Hairston, CNA, Ward 2-2 — she treats you real nice and does wonderful care.”

☺ “Thanks to Edith Austin, CNA, Ward 2-2 — she gives wonderful care and is so nice!”
**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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**JUST THE FACTS**
The newsletter is published around the 1st of each month.

If you have ideas for improving *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

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>World AIDS Day Display in Main Lobby from 9a-1p</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2-9</td>
<td>Chanukah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 5-11</td>
<td>National Aplastic Anemia Week</td>
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<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day</td>
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<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Director’s Office Holiday Open House in Bldg. 1, 1st floor, from 2-5p</td>
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<td>Dec 10-17</td>
<td>Human Rights Week</td>
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<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Christmas Service in the Chapel from 11:30a-12:30p</td>
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<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>2nd Annual Operation Christmas Pet in parking lot outside Canteen Bldg. 4 from 10a-4p</td>
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<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Bill of Rights Day</td>
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<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>25th Annual Holiday Extravaganza at 1:30p in the Auditorium</td>
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<td>Dec 21</td>
<td>Winter begins</td>
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<td>Dec 24</td>
<td>Christmas Holiday</td>
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<td>Dec 25</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
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<td>Dec 26—Jan 1</td>
<td>Kwanzaan</td>
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<td>Dec 31</td>
<td>New Year’s Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 1, 2011</td>
<td>Happy New Year!</td>
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