



Proud of our Veterans,
Proud of America!

THE epicenter

Newsletter of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) • February 2002

National Dental Month

VA Dentistry is unique. The VA Dental Service is committed to providing comprehensive oral health care to eligible veterans and to providing essential adjunct dental services to veterans with compelling medical needs.

Our hard working group of dental professionals works closely with our medical colleagues in ENT, Oncology, Cardiology, Pulmonary, Immune Clinic and GMC as well as other interdisciplinary services. Our mission is to provide essential dental care in order to resolve the oral health problems that complicate the related medical conditions of patients under treatment at our health care facility.

Dental care for medically compromised patients is often complicated. Unlike patients seen in most private dental offices, our veteran dental patients more often need special consideration and planning for their dental treatment because of the presence of one or more acute or chronic medical conditions. As our veteran patients grow older and the complexity of their medical care escalates, the need for hospital based dental services will also grow.

In addition to their years of training in dental school, all of our staff dentists have received additional training in treating medically compromised and geriatric patients. In fact, our health care system is



the proud site of one of the VA's popular Dental General Practice Residency Programs. Six new dental school graduates join us each year for 12 months of additional training to learn to effectively provide dental care for medically and psychiatrically compromised patients. While working under the supervision of experienced practitioners our residents gain a diverse clinical experience in all disciplines of dentistry and grow in knowledge and confidence while treating dental patients with complex medical and dental problems.

Whether our service is seeing a walk-in patient on an emergency basis for a tooth ache or treating a patient in preparation for chemotherapy or radiation therapy, our dental triage clinic at the Palo Alto division is busy Monday through Friday seeing veterans with acute or urgent care needs. At the same time, our regular clinics at four sites are busy providing routine dental care on a daily basis.

Dental Service is an essential component of the medical care mission of the VA. As we enter the 21st century and our patient population grows ever older, the need for oral health care will grow in importance. Your dental service is proud to be an integral member of the VA health care team.

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A Word From Our Director



**Elizabeth Joyce Freeman, Director
VA Palo Alto Health Care System**

We have received our budget for FY 2002. The primary concern for VA health care systems across the country is operating within their budget. We were fortunate in receiving a 4.5 % increase in operating dollars over last year's level (\$313.3M vs. \$298.0M). Because this still leaves us with a deficit of approximately \$10M - \$13M, we will be very conservative in filling vacancies. In addition, the Associate Director asked all services to submit budget savings initiatives. I am very pleased to report the majority of services were extremely thoughtful and creative in identifying potential savings. We are in an excellent position to meet our budget.

Dr. Wiebe, our VISN 21 Director, met with us on January 11, 2002, to review our entire FY 2002 performance plan. Among the over forty measures within that plan, he listed the following as our top priorities to date:

- Meet FY 2002 Budget Plan
- Meet Veteran Satisfaction Survey Goals
- Increase Number of Category A Vested Veterans by 1,285 over FY 2001 Level
- Meet Clinical Wait Time Goals (Wait Time 30 days or less) for: Primary Care; Audiology; Cardiology; Eye Care; Orthopedics; Urology
- Meet MCCF Collections Goal of \$9.4M
- Meet Preventative Care Goals
- Meet Clinical Practice Guidelines Goals

We are on track to meet all of these measures after our first quarter of the fiscal year. We anticipate some of the new FY 2002 measures regarding meeting special capacity requirements will be added to our top priorities for FY 2002.

Last year over 500 employees participated in our Goal Sharing Program. The program was focused on achieving our highest priority last year, increasing the enrollment and vesting of category A veterans. This year's program will be expanded to include additional goal areas including making VAPAHCS an employer of choice, improving veteran satisfaction and other areas regarding improving the quality of care and the effectiveness of operations.

We will use the ideas gathered in our January 16, 2002, management retreat as a tool for employees who want to participate in this year's goal sharing program. An informational retreat will be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2002, in the Palo Alto Division Auditorium. All services have been asked to send a representative and all site liaisons are invited. Enrique Vitug, Staff Assistant to the Chief of Staff, will be the primary coordinator of this year's goal sharing effort.

Last month I mentioned a new program called the Director's Dialogue. In the very near future, we will launch a similar program called the Director's Forum. Bill Ball, our Communications Officer, will be working with services to gather participants. This forum is an opportunity for non-supervisory staff to have lunch with other non-supervisory employees and me to discuss whatever topics the group chooses. Participation is voluntary. I hope to get to know many more employees in this very informal setting.

We have held Town Hall meetings at most sites. They have been well attended. We are always looking for your input as to what you would like to discuss at these forums and the times that work best for staff at different sites.

VAPAHCS was recently recognized as having six "Centers of Excellence". The programs receiving this prestigious designation include: Spinal Cord Injury; Cardiac Surgery; Autopsy; Comprehensive Medical Rehabilitation; Domiciliary Care; HIV. Only one other VHA health care system received six such designations. Congratulations to the leadership and staff of these outstanding programs.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your continued excellent work in support of veterans. I appreciate your efforts and am so proud to be a part of this fantastic health care system. Please feel free to offer your suggestions as to how I may communicate with you more effectively. Thanks again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth J. Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Elizabeth Joyce Freeman
Director**

VA Raises Education Reimbursement Levels for Veterans

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is providing veterans a major boost in the monthly educational payments offered under the Montgomery GI Bill.

Concerned about the underuse of Montgomery GI Bill benefits by eligible veterans, VA supported an increase in reimbursement rates well above the normal cost-of-living increases because these annual adjustments have not kept pace with rising college education costs.

“Under legislation signed by President Bush, we now are on track to gain the tuition spending power veterans expect,” VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi said. “We are coupling a series of robust payment increases over the next two years with innovative programs that will help prepare today’s servicemember with the education needed for tomorrow’s job market.”

At the top tier for full-time studies, the tuition reimbursement rate rises from \$672 to \$800 per month, almost 20 percent. That will jump to \$900 next fall and \$985 in October 2003. Rates are adjusted for veterans enrolled part-time or for those with limited military service.

In addition to covering traditional two-year and four-year college studies, a new VA program taking effect next fall is aimed at high technology courses. It will allow veterans to use a lump sum from their benefit for certain expensive courses such as those leading to certification of computer network professionals.

Coverage of up to 60 percent of the cost of such high-tech courses will begin Oct. 1, 2002.

VA currently is developing regulations needed to launch this new program. The new law specifies a formula limiting it to expensive courses. The increase in tuition reimbursement as well as the VA’s support for high-tech courses reflect department efforts to boost use of the current education program, which began in 1985. Veterans generally have 10 years after release from active duty to use the funds, but only about 60 percent have used some of their benefit.

In addition, about 90 percent of all eligible veterans have not exhausted their account. VA hopes new strategies such as accelerated payment for high-tech courses will enable more veterans to take advantage of their remaining benefits.

Few servicemembers opt out of coverage. Participants’ pay is reduced by \$100 per month for their first 12 months on active duty to cover a total veteran contribution of \$1,200. The full-time rate of \$800 a month is paid for up to 36 months of study, which covers the academic months of a traditional 4-year college education for a return value of \$28,800 at today’s top rate.

The new law, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-103), also improves educational assistance for eligible spouses and children of certain veterans, including veterans who died or are permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability.

For more information about veterans educational programs, call VA at 888-442-4551.

VA Lowers Outpatient Care Copayments

Veterans who currently make copayments for VA outpatient health care will have lower bills, and in some cases, no bills at all. VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi lowered the \$50.80 copayment some veterans were paying for outpatient care. The regulation took effect Dec. 6, 2001. “This is great news for veterans,” said Principi. “It eliminates barriers for veterans to get the preventive care they need and lowers the cost of health care for many.” VA has implemented a three-tier copayment system. The first tier covers preventive care and will cost veterans nothing. Care includes flu shots, lab tests, some radiology services, hepatitis C screening and other preventive services. Primary care outpatient visits comprise the second tier and requires a \$15 copayment. The last tier includes specialty outpatient care such as outpatient surgery, audiology and optometry and will cost \$50. The copayments do not apply to officially recognized “service connected” medical problems. The copayments apply primarily to veterans enrolled in Priority Group 7.

Prescription Copayments to Increase

Effective Feb. 4, 2002, the copayment for outpatient medications that some veterans pay will increase from \$2 to \$7 for each 30-day supply. There will be an \$840 maximum annual out-of-pocket payment for veterans in certain enrollment priorities. Every dollar collected from copayments is returned to the VA facility where the veteran receives medical care. The copayment collections are used to improve medical care for veterans.



Livermore Division's Facility Development Plan Fiscal Year 2001 - 2003

Building 90

Building 90, located on the Livermore Division, is a 120-bed long-term care nursing home unit. The building, which was built in 1980, has not been renovated since its inception. Eliminating facility structural deficiencies is our main concern. Building 90's foundation will be sealed to mitigate further water damage. Our project proposal will correct life/safety and ADA deficiencies. In addition, improving the interior décor and replace finishes to improve patient and employee morale is also a top priority.

In December 2001, VAPAHCs awarded a \$1.3M contract to renovate the 1st floor of Building 90. This initial phase will take approximately a year to complete. In order to accommodate Building 90's patient population, VAPAHCs is currently renovating a nursing home care unit at our Menlo Park Division that will be used as swing space to accommodate our Livermore geriatric patient population that will be impacted as a result of this renovation. Following the completion of the 1st floor of Building 90, the VAPAHCs will renovate the 2nd floor of building 90.

Building 62

Building 62 was constructed as an inpatient hospital in 1949. In the mid-1990s, the Livermore VA Medical Center was incorporated into the VAPAHCs. Today, Building 90 is primarily an outpatient facility with a focus on primary, specialty and ancillary services. A 30-bed sub-acute inpatient unit is also housed within Building 62. A number of non-recurring maintenance (NRM) and station level projects are planned to improve functions within Building 62 and 64. For example, the lobby project will provide veterans information and escort services when they enter and will collocate the Business

Office and clerical functions. Veterans will see their physicians faster with fewer stops along the way.

These projects include:

- \$1.4M fire alarm system (all Livermore buildings) - awarded in FY01
- \$1M roof replacement to mitigate roof penetrations and aging roof
- Building 62 has 5 separate roofs and will require helicopters to air lift HVAC equipment off the roof
- \$1M waste line replacement for East Wing of Building 62
- \$500K main lobby and bathroom renovation project to improve services and
- \$150K GI suite will be established on the Livermore Division - awarded in FY02

Additional Projects

Numerous projects will be completed on the Livermore Division over the next few months:

- Install an Advanced Tray Delivery System - 'A la Cart' initiative to improve the quality of meal preparation and delivery
- Build an employee fitness center
- Refinish windows (Building 88)
- Paint water reservoir
- Demo miscellaneous dilapidated structures that are no longer in use
- Re-key the entire Livermore Division

Palo Alto Division Construction Update

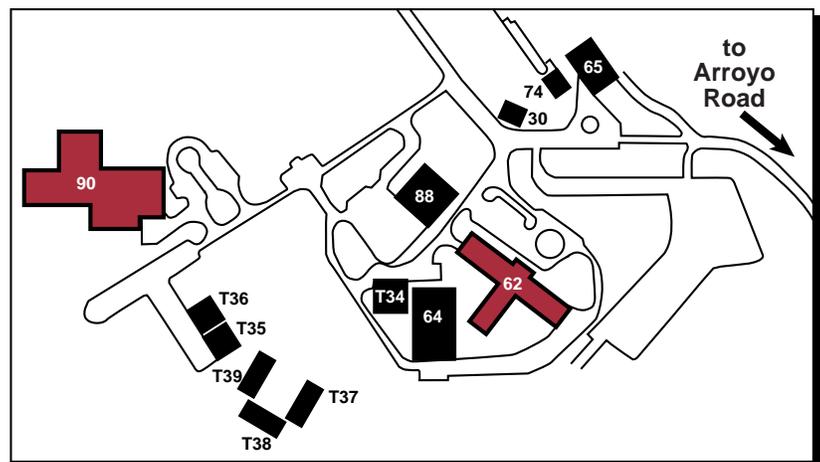
We are close to completing all work in Building 40. We are on schedule and expect Building 23, Gymnasium/Pool to close for seismic corrections at the end of February. The seismic corrections will require approximately 4 months of work to complete.

Building 90

Planned \$3-4 Million Project to Overhaul 120-Bed Nursing Home Building
Anticipated Construction: FY02-04

Building 62

Planned \$4 Million Renovation of Miscellaneous Functions (Roof, Waste Lines, Lobby, GI Suite)
Anticipated Construction: FY02-04



EMPLOYEE NEWS

New Employees

Acquisition & Materiel's Mgmt
Robert C. Orate

Canteen Svc.
Stephen J. Ow
Gayeanne M. Tamisin
Shelton W. Young

Engineering Svc.
K. Cherry

Environmental Mgmt. Svc.
Johnnie T. Davis
Darrin L. Duke

IRMS
Terlaje Lina

Medical Svc.
Sujuan Cai

Nursing Svc.
Ethel Mace
Isidora Pascua

Nutrition & Food Svc.
Nena A. Aguilar
Antoinette M. Hall
Cynthia M. James
F. Dwight Pylant

Pharmacy Svc.
Yagnesh Brahmhatt

Physical Med & Rehab.
Lena Hwang
Karen P. Kao
Daniela Lita
Grace G. Victoria

Research Svc.
Laura V. Gigliello
Allison N. Granot
Che-Chin Lie
Kelly Murphy

Retirees

Engineering Svc.
Charles Caldwell (32)
Carol Reitmeier (16)

Environmental Mgmt. Svc.
Chandra Varma (8)

Human Resources
Connie Meyer (27)

IRMS
Robert Newman (24)

Nursing Svc.
Dorothy Kern (16)

Nutrition & Food Svc.
Betty Dokes (34)
Bertha Jones (34)
Mary Malone (37)
Virginia Reed (30)

(Years of service are indicated in parentheses.)

Employee Service Awards

10 Years

Andrea Dodd
Business Office

Beth Goldfaden
Social Work Svc.

Susan Hyder
Social Work Svc.

Oliver Jarata
Pharmacy Svc.

Sungok Kim
Nursing Svc.

Patrick McAtee
Medical Svc

Patrick Meusel
Acquisition & Materiel's Mgmt.

Stefan Ripich
Medical Svc.

John Sirley
Domiciliary Svc.

Redemcion Trapsi
Nursing Svc.

Clydell Tuggle
Nutrition & Food Svc.

15 Years

Yolanda Bancod
Nursing Svc.

Yolanda Beasley
Nursing Svc.

Perfecto Bolfango
Recreation Svc.

Lydia Bravo
Acquisition & Materiel's Mgmt.

Van Buren James
Nursing Svc.

Insoon Kang
Nursing Svc.

Delores Larocca
Director's Office

Dorene Loew
Psychology Svc.

Virginia Olitoquit
Nursing Svc.

Lavonzer Parker
Acquisition & Materiel's Mgmt.

Pauline Saine-Julian
Nursing Svc.

Maria Sanchez
Nursing Svc.

20 Years

John Cox
Engineering Svc.

Helen Cross
Nursing Svc.

Garry Deshields
Engineering Svc.

Alice Ford
Nursing Svc.

Mary Hooper
Nursing Svc.

Janet McCollister
Nursing Svc.

Susana Wong
Pathology & Lab Svc.

25 Years

Susan Engard
Nursing Svc.

Pat Martinez
Nursing Svc.

Robert Newman
IRMS

James Spinks
Police & Security Svc.

30 Years

Lavola Cushshon
Business Office

Stanley Remer
Nutrition & Food Svc.

Eloisa Williams
Nursing Svc.

CALENDAR OF TRAINING & EVENTS



EES=VA Employee Education System • HR=Human Resources • ORM=Office of Resolution Management • TQI=Total Quality Improvement • TBA=To be announced

DAY	DATE	SERVICE	TIME	PLACE	INFORMATION
Monday	2/4/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room	Anger Management Case Discussion
Wednesday	2/6/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Anne Martis, MSW Gerotranscendence: A Theory of Aging
Wednesday	2/13/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Bruce L. Miller, MD Recent Advances & Research in Dementia
Monday	2/18/02				Holiday
Wednesday	2/20/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Gloria Kuhlman, DNSc, RN Aspects of Delirium
Monday	2/25/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room	“Julia Kasl-Godley, Ph.D” End of Life Issues
Tues/Wed	2/26-27/02	HRMS	8am-4pm	Bldg.101 “Auditorium, PAD”	New Employee Orientation
Wednesday	2/27/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Gary Hartz, Ph.D. Clinical Considerations in Communicating with Chinese-American Elders
Wednesday	3/6/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Pia Marloff, RN, MS & James Hawkins, MD Robots and their uses for elderly persons
Wednesday	3/13/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Updates on Dementia: Translating Research Translating Research into Practice VAPAHCS, VISN 21
Wednesday	3/20/02	Psychiatry	12-1 pm	Menlo Park Bldg.324 Rm E117	Martha D. Buffum, MD Pain and Dementia
Wednesday	3/27/02	Psychiatry	1-2pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Margaret Florsheim, Ph.D. & Joanne Weith, RN, MS Grroup Psychotherapy in the Nursing Home Setting

SCI Research Wants You!

We are currently looking for subjects who interested in participating in two research studies involving Heart Rate Variability and ECG abnormalities in able bodied individuals. Results will be used for comparison with individuals with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI).

Who is Eligible: People with SCI/D who:

- Men over 18 years of age who can walk, and without history of heart disease.

Study Duration:

2-hour appointment plus 24-hour monitoring (done while you participate in your normal daily activities).

Compensation:

\$50-100 dependent upon level of participation.

Interested?

Contact Wilsa Charles at 650-493-5000, extension 64259.

The History of Black History Month



Dr. Carter G. Woodson

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as “Negro History Week” and later as “Black History Month.” What you might not know is that black history had barely begun to be studied-or even documented-when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America at least as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a respectable presence in the history books.

Blacks Absent from History Books

We owe the celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history, to Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Born to parents who were former slaves, he spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines and enrolled in high school at age twenty. He graduated within two years and later went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. The scholar was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the black American population-and when blacks did figure into the picture, it was generally in ways that reflected the inferior social position they were assigned at the time.

Established Journal of Negro History

Woodson, always one to act on his ambitions, decided to take on the challenge of writing black Americans into the nation’s history. He established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915, and a year later founded the widely respected Journal of Negro History. In 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history.

The Month in Black History

- | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|---|
| February 1 | Black History Month begins | February 15 | US and African nationalists protesting the slaying of Congo Premier Patrice Lumumba disrupt UN sessions, 1961 |
| February 2 | Ernest E Just, biologist, receives the Spingarn Medal for pioneering research on fertilization and cell division, 1914 | February 16 | Frederick Douglass, orator and activist, elected President of Freedman Bank and Trust, 1857 |
| February 3 | The 15th Amendment, providing for Black suffrage, ratified, 1870 | February 17 | Huey Newton, founder of the Black Panther Party, born, 1942 |
| February 4 | The 24th Amendment, abolishing the poll tax, ratified, 1864 | February 18 | Gambia Independence Day |
| February 5 | Henry “Hank” Aaron, the home run king of major league baseball, born, 1934 | February 19 | WEB Dubois, activist, organizes the first Pan-African Congress, 1919 |
| February 6 | Arthur Ashe, first Black male to win Wimbledon, dies, 1993 | February 20 | JF Pickering patents his airship invention, 1900 |
| February 7 | Irwin C Mollison appointed judge of the US Customs Court by President Truman, 1945 | February 21 | Lemuel Haynes, first Black minister to serve for a White congregation, becomes the first Black person to receive an honorary degree (an MA) from a White college (Middlebury College), 1804 |
| February 8 | Three South Carolina State students are killed during segregation protests in Orangeburg, 1968 | February 22 | Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., activist and chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, denied his congressional seat, 1967 |
| February 9 | Martin Luther King, civil rights activist, meets with President Lyndon Johnson to discuss Black voting rights, 1965 | February 23 | WEB Dubois, activist, born, 1868 |
| February 10 | Joseph Charles Rice, educator, born, 1854 | February 24 | Bishop Daniel A Payne, reformer and educator of AME Church, born, 1811 |
| February 11 | Nelson Mandela, South African president and political activist, released from prison after 27 years, 1990 | February 25 | Martin Luther King Jr, activist and civil rights leader, is ordained as a Baptist minister, 1948 |
| February 12 | NAACP founded after riot in Springfield, Il, 1909 | February 26 | Theodore “Georgia Deacon” Flowers becomes first Black middle-weight boxing champion, 1926 |
| February 13 | The Renaissance, the first Black pro basketball team, organized, 1923 | February 27 | Debi Thomas, figure skater, becomes first Black American to win a medal at the Winter Olympics, 1988 |
| February 14 | Morehouse College founded as Augusta Institute, 1867 | February 28 | Michael Jackson, musician, wins eight Grammy awards, 1984 |

Health Care System Recognizes National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans



Ms. Stephanie Baldwin, Miss California, 2001, will be the featured guest visiting patients at the three inpatient divisions and the San Jose Clinic. This marks the eighth year Miss California will participate in the program. Along with Miss California, veteran organizations, volunteers and local schools will also participate. Activities include ward visits, valentine, gift and flower distributions, and photo opportunities.

“This program is both a tribute to our hospitalized veterans who were willing to sacrifice so much, and a time of remembrance and reflection for all Americans who have benefited from their service. It’s a way to honor and say thanks to our veterans who have given so much. The program increases community awareness of VA and en-

courages Americans to visit hospitalized veterans,” stated Glenn Endsley, Chief, Voluntary Service.

For the fourteenth consecutive year, newspaper columnist Ann Landers has devoted her column to the National Salute, asking readers to send Valentine cards and letters to hospitalized veterans. More than a million cards and letters are received each year during the National Salute.

Actor Gerald McRaney, accomplished stage and television actor is the Chairperson of the 2002 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. Mr. McRaney is a strong supporter of the men and women serving in America’s armed forces. He will visit hospitalized veterans during salute week and at various times throughout the year, serving as spokesperson for VA Voluntary Service.

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program will be held the week of February 11 through 15, 2002. The program will start in San Jose and Livermore on Tuesday, February 12th, at Menlo Park on Wednesday, February 13th; and at Palo Alto on Thursday, February 14th.

It’s significant the National Salute falls during the week of Valentines Day - a day that connotes deep caring and cheerful sharing. Our veterans truly deserve this nation’s recognition and honor.

Olympic Torch *Lights the Fire from Within*

On Friday, January 18th, Robert Hart, a Veteran and alumni of the Dom Program, proudly carried the Olympic Torch down San Fernando Street to the Tech museum in San Jose. The Saturday, January 19th, Kitty Hevner and her seeing eye dog, Sunstar, Western Blind Rehabilitation Center (WBRC) training specialist, passed on the torch at the Fort Point Gates in San Francisco. Later that day, David Talas, WBRC living skills teacher, jogged a quarter mile down Wall Street in Richmond with the flame. These Olympic Torch bearers, like all the rest of the 11,500 chosen to carry the flame through 46 states before it arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah on February 8th, were selected because they give of themselves and their stories inspire others to do likewise.

Robert is employed by Intel and feels very strongly it is important to give back to the community. For the last five years he has headed up “Intel Involved,” the corporation’s community outreach program. He is their Team Captain and Special Olympics Sponsor. Kitty, who has been blind from birth, has been volunteering since 1974 when she received her amateur radio operator’s license. She has provided safety communications for numerous bike and run/walk fundraising events. David said a co-worker he worked with prior to coming to the blind center submitted his name and wrote, “even with his visual impairment, he inspires myself and others to put aside our limitations as a reason to not give of our self to others.”

Ted Brock, staff writer for the Olympic web site, feels that the Olympic Torch Relay has special meaning this time around because of these special people with their special stories. “To be sure, it’s an honor to hold the Olympic Flame on its journey to the Salt Lake Games. Likewise, the Games are honored by the presence of torchbearers with stories that inspire.”



Robert Hart, Kitty Hevner, Sunstar the dog, and David Talas

You Make a Difference!

Submitted by our veterans and their families. We welcome more contributions from LVD, Stockton, Modesto, San Jose, and Monterey.

Kathleen Turner-Hubbard (PAD-4C), Medical Service, is a truly devoted and knowledgeable nurse practitioner. She takes great effort to explain procedures to patients and family. She is a professional with a human touch.

Thurman Roberts (PAD), Nutrition & Food Service, is a cut above. He is positive, motivated, and has an infectious smile given to all he comes into contact with. He does more than just his duty and is dedicated to the VA and the vet.

Linda Rosen (LVD), Audiology & Speech Pathology Service, made each of my visits pleasant. We felt very much was accomplished in an outstanding manner to make life better.

Recently I was a patient on your **Cardiology Unit** (PAD). I wish to express my appreciation for the excellent care afforded to me. The level of care provided by your staff impresses me. I was at all times provided with informative and personable information concerning my condition and I lacked for no comfort before, during, and after my procedure. I wish to commend, in particular, **Dr. Jan Engvall** and **Dr. Kelly Richardson** (Medical Service).

Ernestine Nelson (MPD), Environmental Management Service, came in on her day off to help Recreation staff and patients during a holiday party. She worked very hard serving patients and families, almost 200 plates of food with a smile and lots of Christmas cheer. Her going beyond the call of duty was very much appreciated. Thanks Ernestine.

Valentines Day History

There are varying opinions as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Some experts state that it originated from St. Valentine, a Roman who was martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February 14, 269 A.D., the same day that had been devoted to love lotteries. Legend also says that St. Valentine left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Other aspects of the story say that Saint Valentine served as a priest at the temple during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Claudius then had Valentine jailed for defying him. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius set aside February 14 to honor St. Valentine.

Gradually, February 14 became the date for exchanging love messages and St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers. The date was marked by sending poems and simple gifts such as flowers and candy. There was often a social gathering or a ball.

In the United States, Miss Esther Howland is given credit for sending the first valentine cards. Commercial valentines were introduced in the 1800's and now the date is very commercialized. The town of Loveland, Colorado, does a large post office business around February 14. The spirit of good continues as valentines are sent out with sentimental verses and children exchange valentine cards at school.

Recycling Update!



You may have noticed that we have new, green metal bins for cardboard recycling located around the grounds.

At Palo Alto, they're near the loading docks of buildings 100, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

At Menlo Park they're behind buildings 334, 331, 324, 323, 205, and 137.

Livermore's are located behind Bldings 62, 64, and 90.

Please help the recycling effort by flattening all boxes and by putting nothing but corrugated cardboard in the bins.

SAFETY ALERT! Numerous cigarette butts have been found in the cardboard bins. Please do not throw cigarettes in the recycling bins. The combination of a lit cigarette and dry cardboard could be disastrous!

February Word Search



V A L E N T I N E S C A P E S
 C A N M A R D I G R A S L O E V
 H O G G R O N U D H E A T R S I
 I Y A D S T N E D I S E R P L F
 P C D C O O K I E C L I N E C L
 S C A I D K E H S W A E G T H E
 S W E E P L A N E G D N L I V E
 G O H D N U O R G A A O D R S G
 R V A L E N C V T B R L A Y R B
 B L S W E E T H E A R T H I E S
 H I S N B L A C K H O T S S W Y
 S H O L P I N G H O W G L I O F
 E Y R O T S I H K C A L B P L R
 P R E C S I D N E T L I N C F L
 P I N N W A S H I N G T O N C N
 C A N I D Y A R R O R A R R R N
 R V A L E N T I N E R I N G T O
 W I F E L O H U B B Y T T D E T

Find the following words in the letters above:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| Angel | Flowers | Mardi gras |
| Arrow | Groundhog | Presidents day |
| Black history | Hearts | Sweetheart |
| Candy | Lincoln | Valentine |
| Cupid | Love | Washington |



A group of angry groundhogs calling themselves the "Woodchuck Brotherhood" disrupted Groundhog Day festivities when they began to chuck all the wood that a woodchuck could chuck.

Did You Know...

February is American Heart Month? Every 53 seconds, someone in America has a stroke.

February is Sinus Pain Awareness Month? Chronic sinusitis affects 37 million Americans each year.

February 1-7 is National Patient Recognition Week? Time to re-focus our commitment to patient care, our profession and our field by placing "care-ism" before capitalism.

February 10-16 is National Child Passenger Safety Week? Six of ten children who die in car crashes are completely unrestrained.

February 14-21 is National Condom Week?

February 11th is World Day of the Sick?



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Submissions should be received by
 the 1st working day of the month to
 be included in upcoming issues.
 Due to space limitations, it is not
 possible to publish all submissions.

We welcome any comments,
 suggestions or story ideas
 you may have; please contact the
 Communications Officer (00A) at
 ext. 64888 or directly at
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