

# The Veterans Voice



Newsletter of the New Hampshire Veterans Home, Winter 2014

## Commandant's Report

Margaret "Peggy" LaBrecque



I would like to send out a tremendous "Thank you!" to all of you for providing the most wonderful Holiday Season to our Veterans here at the Home. Visitors abounded from Thanksgiving right through Christmas and New Years and finally to our Post Holiday Party in January.

Lots of things have changed since State of New Hampshire first erected a stately Victorian-style brick building at the crest of the hill on Charles Tilton's farm a decade before the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Over the 124 years that followed, the Soldiers' Home for veterans of the Civil War has evolved into the sprawling New Hampshire Veterans Home of today. The red-brick castle has been replaced by the current multi-building campus. But the mission of providing the best care for the men and women who have served our country has been the enduring constant.

It's with that mission in mind that we're undertaking a major capital spending program this year to maintain and upgrade the resources and tools that let our dedicated staff provide top-flight care to the residents.

Most of the \$1.6 million in work won't be apparent when you visit the Home: It includes things like new heat pumps to replace worn-out units throughout the building and a new HVAC control system, new water-and-energy-saving laundry equipment, new kitchen equipment and a redesigned workflow to boost efficiency and make dietary workers' jobs easier, and new, upgraded secured-door units to prevent wandering off from the Life Enhancement Dementia units.

There's more detail on the plans in the story at right.

Separately, work will also be getting underway on installation of the long-

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**GIFT OF ART** — Ashland artist Bill Bernsen makes a presentation of his metal assemblage "Cannon Ball Circling into Plowshares" to NHVH Commandant Margaret "Peggy" LaBrecque on a sunny and snowy December morning. Bernsen, an Army veteran, lives and works in a converted train station and has been making art from found metal objects since the 1980s. And for more than a decade, he has offered free weekly Tai Chi classes to Veterans Home residents. His piece is installed to the right of the main entrance.

## \$1.6M upgrade project coming in '14

The design phase has started on our big construction project for 2014, \$1.6 million in equipment upgrades that will make some much-needed enhancements to the New Hampshire Veterans Home building.

Laundry will get new washing machines and dryers installed, the machine used for folding linens and sheets will be rebuilt, and a new venting and exhaust system will be installed for the dryers and other mechanical enhancements.



The area for sorting soiled linens will be well ventilated and a climate control system installed to make conditions for the staff more tolerable, particularly during the summer months when the Laundry workers swelter at their tasks while wearing their required protective equipment.

The Kitchen will get a large amount of all-new equipment, and its installation will

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## Recent generosity

Mark and Pam Rosenqvist present commandant Peggy LaBrecque, right, with a \$1,000 check from the entire Rosenqvist family in remembrance of Mark's mother, Mary Jane Rosenqvist, who passed away on Feb. 23. A tea will be held in her honor and the balance will go to the Resident Recreation Fund.



## Fogarty family endows scholarship

In the final days of his life last July, various family members of Daniel "Chuck" Fogarty of Laconia were at his bedside here at the Veterans Home virtually around the clock. The genuine warmth and caring they were afforded by every member of our staff during those trying days made a great impression, and the family has decided to return those caring gestures with a big one of their own.

All of the memorial gifts received in honor of Mr. Fogarty, who was a widely known insurance agent and financial

consultant in the Laconia area, are going to a permanent fund to set up a scholarship program for the children and grandchildren of active employees of the New Hampshire Veterans Home. Mr. Fogarty, who was known to many as "Coach" during his two years here, was a major college athlete and Army captain who served five years in Vietnam, and a man who had a lifelong commitment to education.



D.C. Fogarty

The Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 7312, Gilford NH 03247, is administering the program.



**CUED UP** — NHVH recreation therapy intern Jill Flieger displays the brand new set of pool balls donated by the family of "T.C." Caswell, left. David Caswell, right, and his family have also helped out recreation efforts with repairs and replacement of the tips on several of the pool cues used by residents.

## Commandant

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awaited Electronic Medical Records system, a computerization of the current paper-based system aimed at increasing efficiency and safety by reducing medication errors.

So please be patient if you encounter construction during your time visiting here. Keeping the facility in top-notch shape to provide the best home and experience possible for your loved ones is a continual challenge.

Work starts around mid-year, and should be done in plenty of time for celebrating the Home's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in December, 2015.

Thanks to everyone for your understanding and continued support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peggy LaBrecque".

## Construction

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be strategically designed to make the workflow more efficient and ergonomic for the dietary staff.

The current configuration of equipment is very inefficient and requires the staff to move to different stations around the kitchen to perform their jobs, so changing the workflow will make the work much easier. We will also be rebuilding Dietary's six coolers and freezers to current standards to ensure proper and safe food storage for many years to come.

LEDU G and LEDU 1 will receive a completely new Secure Care System. The current system is original equipment from early 2004, and it's in need of an upgrade to the latest technology. As part of the upgrade we will have to replace the unit doors, closures, and magnetic locks.

We will also be replacing 145 heat pumps in the building that have reached the end of their service life. Along with the heat pumps, the energy management system -- will be upgraded, merging the two stand alone systems into one.

The project will begin with advertising for competitive bids in early Spring with construction expected to get underway in May or June. So far, we anticipate the duration of the work to be 8 to 12 months.

Much of the funding for this project will come from the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs. The VA will support 65 percent of the cost with the State paying 35 percent.

Jon T. Bossey  
Plant Engineer



# After 20 years, Anne Howe heads for a busy ‘retirement’

Director of Resident Care Services Anne Howe will be stepping down at the end of March after two decades of guiding the evolution of the New Hampshire Veterans Home from a 150-bed nursing home into the current multidisciplinary patient-centered long-term care facility.

Just don’t expect her to be “leaving” anytime soon.

Anne, who says spending more time with her nine grandchildren was a major factor in the decision, has plenty of projects on her “retirement” agenda, including a return to teaching LNA courses for the community college in Laconia, a couple of major trips to Texas and the West Coast, and doing some volunteering here at the Home.

“I feel like I’ll always be part of the Veterans Home family,” she said. Not that she hasn’t been already. Both of her husband’s parents have been residents here during her tenure, the late Clayton Howe and mother-in-law Daisy “Okie” Howe, who’s still here and going strong at 97.

The Home was a much different place when Anne started here in July of 1994, fresh from a six-year stint as a nursing educator teaching LNA courses at the community college in Concord. The college job had her running all over the state, and with small children at the time, she wanted a job that would anchor her to the area. She found it by answering the NHVH ad.

What the Home needed most at that time, she said, was an advocate for nursing, someone to get them the resources they needed to do the job, from simple infection-control measures like stocking resident bathrooms with paper towels for hand washing to electric hospital beds to avoid staff back problems after hand-cranking heavy residents on old manual beds.

The changes kept coming after that as the emphasis shifted more and more to person-centered care and away from the old “nursing-home” model. A single supervisor for each shift was replaced by



“I feel like I’ll always be part of the Veterans Home family.”

—Anne Howe



**THEN AND NOW: Anne with LEDU 1 Nurse Manager Denise Corey in 1997 when Denise received her nursing license.**

a team of three nurse-managers. Her title was changed from nursing director to director of resident care services, a conscious effort to get better teamwork among all departments, from nursing to physical therapy to social work.

But the biggest change came with the opening of the LEDU units in 2004, adding 100 beds. “It kinda forced us to become the experts on dementia care,” she

said, and to gear up with things such as secured-door units for the then-new “environmental” approach to managing dementia.

A pinnacle for her was the Home winning the state Quality of Life award in 2007, one of only four institutions in the state to do so.

That was the result of everyone working together: “That’s the real hallmark here that I’ve been proud of, trying to integrate the departments working together.”

It’s an atmosphere where staff can ask the question: “Why can’t we do that?” she said. When recreation staff asks if activities like horseback riding or bicycles are OK, her response is: “I’m good with everything, but when you start asking me if they can water-ski, that’s where I’m gonna draw the line.”

But the level of activity is just one of the things that make the Home special. Even the large size of the facility – two city blocks or more – can be an advantage, since residents can move around and aren’t limited to a single unit.

Anne was brought up in Melrose, Mass., and had summered

in Sanbornton since the age of 2 weeks. She got her undergraduate nursing degree from St. Anselm College and her master’s degree from UNH.

Anne sees nursing as “the life cycle: birth to death and everything in between.”

When the end of life is near, palliative care enters the picture. “We want residents to live life to the very end, but when you reach that wall, we’re here to care for you and make that transition as good as it can possibly be.”

She says she’ll miss the Home and its people, but not the stress and responsibility of the job, and says it’s the right time to pass the responsibility to the next generation.

She says she just wants to ride her bike, take walks and generally “pick and choose what I want to do.”

Anne, who’s been married 42 years in August, admits to only one item on her personal bucket list at the moment: get back into downhill skiing. Her husband Dick has taught seven of the nine grandchildren to ski so far, and she wants to join them on the bunny slope.



## *New Hampshire Veterans Home*

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## **Return Service Requested**

### **Upcoming Events**

**3/24** Spring Fling Dance, with entertainment, 2:30 p.m. Town Hall

**4/6-4/12** Volunteer Appreciation Week

**5/3** USO Show sponsored by Unit 22 of Lebanon. Town Hall

**5/10** Mother's Day Dance with entertainment. Town Hall

**5/11-17** National Nursing Home Week

**5/17** Armed Forces Day with entertainment, 2:30 p.m. Town Hall

**5/26** NHVH Memorial Day Ceremony, 11 a.m. Town Hall

**5/30** Memorial Day Ceremony at NH State Veterans Cemetery

**6/14** Flag Day

**6/15** Father's Day Dance with entertainment. Town Hall

**6/21** Corvette Club Ice Cream Social w/music and door prizes – Pavilion



**5/26** Memorial Day Ceremony, 11 a.m., NHVH Town Hall.



**5/3** Auxiliary Unit 22 of Lebanon will bring its USO show to NHVH.