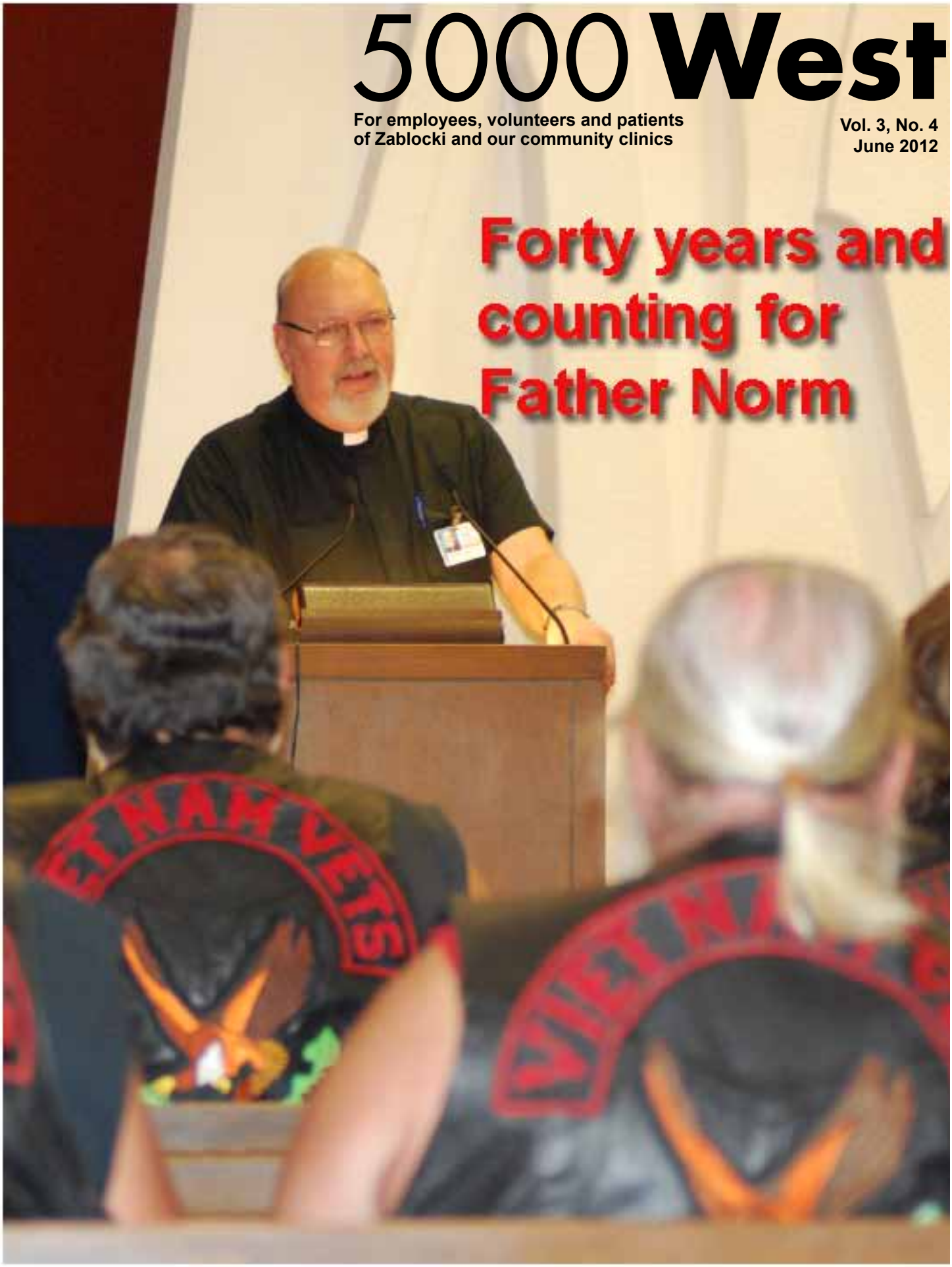
5000 West

For employees, volunteers and patients
of Zablocki and our community clinics

Vol. 3, No. 4
June 2012

Forty years and counting for Father Norm



In Briefs

Summer Solstice ceremony

The public is invited to a special Summer Solstice ceremony, noon June 19 in the Matousek Auditorium.

The event, sponsored by the VA's Native American Indian Employment Committee, will feature sage burning as a spiritual cleanser and a pipe ceremony. Tobacco is used for the ceremony to symbolize the physical manifestation of the prayers of the people, and so the smoke can be carried to the creator, or Great Spirit.

For more information on the upcoming ceremony, call David Kagabitang, at 414-234-7363.

Job Fair features thousands of openings

More than 5,000 private and government jobs across the United States will be available at a Veterans Job Fair, June 26 to 28 at the Cobo Center in Detroit, Mich.

This special event will include on-the-spot interviews for government and private job opportunities.

There will also be free seminars and classes on resume building, interview techniques and more, as well as work groups and information on how small businesses can work with the government.

For more information, register or look at the available jobs, go to www.vaforvets.va.gov and follow the links.

Brewers 5K walk/run to benefit Fisher House

The July 28 Milwaukee Brewers Community Foundation's 14th annual 5K Famous Racing Sausages Run and Walk will benefit the future Fisher House which will be built on the VA grounds.

The event takes begins at 8 a.m. for walkers and 8:15 a.m. for runners. The run will begin and end at the Klement's Sausage Haus, east of Miller Park.The route also makes its way around the warning track of Miller Park.

Participants can actually test their skills against the Famous Racing Sausages.

For a $30 registration fee, participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt, and a terrace reserved ticket voucher good for one of eight Brewers 2012 home games,

Applications are available online at www.brewers.com/5KRunWalk.

Housekeeping express line

Have an environmental management issue but can't remember the right number for housekeeping? Great Minds have made it easier by creating a new, easy-to-remember line: 44EMS, or 44367.

You can also email concerns or requests too. For housekeeping issues, e-mail Jai.Reneau@va.gov or Drew.Dewitt@va.gov, or the supervisor's e-mail group at: VHAMIW FM Housekeeping Supervisors under the global search.

For linen issues, e-mail Joe.Domask@va.gov or the e-mail group, VHAMIW Linen.

HIV testing

The VA is the largest single provider of HIV care in the United States, providing care for more than 24,000 Veterans with the virus. Yet only 20 percent of Veterans have ever been tested. Officials said medications have drastically improved and early testing can be a lifesaver.

Veterans only need to ask their VA primary care doctor for an HIV test during their next appointment. The VA is marking June 27 as a day for everyone to get tested for the virus.

More information on advances in treatment and true stories from Veterans who have learned to live with HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov .

Photo by Gary Kunich

All moved in

Joe Webster, who works in the Milwaukee VA mailroom, displays one of his original paintings which will soon be shipped to the Manhattan Veterans Advocacy Council, which helps VA patients in mental health programs. The painting is a tribute to 9/11. Webster rediscovered his love for painting after coming to the VA for help. For more on his story, turn to Page 11.

5000 West

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Norm's world

Chief of chaplains has made a name for himself with 40 years in priesthood

Photo by Gary Kunich

Father Norm relaxes in his VA office, surrounded by books and gifts given to him over the years by friends and Veterans.

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

There are fuzzy-headed troll dolls and beanbag teddy bears. There's a tiny, decorated Christmas tree in the corner, a devil and a soldier nutcracker, and a Green Bay Packers clock on the wall — along with about 100 other pictures, posters, coffee mugs, books and knick-knacks.

If it wasn't for the collection of crucifixes that also dot the office landscape, you might not even know this office belongs to a priest.

Not just any priest.

The priest — the chief of chaplains at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, a place he has worked since 1990.

"The Associated Press Stylebook" — the Bible of journalists everywhere — say we're supposed to call him the Rev. Norman Oswald.

Patients, Veterans and employees know him better as simply, "Father Norm."

And Father Norm just hit a milestone in his career May 19 when he celebrated 40 years in the priesthood. It's a career that took him to two different parishes before he ended up at the Milwaukee VA for a part-time gig that was anything but, and a stint as the Green Bay Packers official priest when they played their games in Milwaukee.

A half hour interview takes the better part of an hour because, let's face it, when you spend 40 years as a priest, you're bound to have some good stories, and Father Norm doesn't disappoint.

> ***"It was really the spinal cord patients who taught me about life. I always thought, 'If anyone has a right to go through life feeling sorry and depressed, it's them.' But they are anything but that. They embrace life. That's a very admirable trait, and I try to use that myself as the eternal optimist."***
>
> - The Rev. Norm Oswald
> Milwaukee VA chief of chaplains

"This might be the most non-government office in the government," he said with a laugh. "But everything you see here was a gift, and everything here tells a story. Some of them are good stories and some of them are sad stories, but they serve as a constant reminder and memory about what is important."

Being a priest should come naturally. It's something he said he wanted to do since the 6th grade, even though his father tried from time to time to talk him out of it and get him to take over the family carpentry business.

"He was afraid I wasn't doing it for me, and he died six months before I was ordained," Father Norm said. "That's when I found out he was praying for me every day for my vocation. And he was happy when I was ordained as a deacon, because then he knew I was doing it for me, and he knew I was happy."

His dad had been in the Army Air Corps and then the Air Force and served in World War II and Korea. It was only natural, Father Norm said, to want to do the same and serve as an Air Force chaplain. But when he graduated from seminary in 1972, the archbishop refused to let him go and said he was needed in Wisconsin. He was assigned to St. Mark's in Kenosha from 1972 to 1980.

"It was a great place. Got to meet a lot of great people," he said. "My favorite part was the baptisms. You get to see the joy of a lot of first-time parents, and because of that, they reconnected with the church."

It was tough to leave, Father Norm said, when he was reassigned to Immaculate Conception in Bay View — the same place he was baptized as a baby.

"I started there as the associate pastor and then took over, and when we started, we had 1,000 families on our rolls at the church, and when I left, there were 1,700," he said. "We just did it with old-fashioned, door-knocking, and meeting people, inviting them to church and renewing their faith."

But by 1990 he needed a break and took some much-needed sabbatical time. A few months later, the bishop called and asked if he wanted a part-time job at the VA. He figured

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See Father Norm

Father Norm

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it was finally his chance to come full circle. If he couldn't serve in the military, he could serve those who served in the military.

But paperwork got lost, with part of it going to one part of the VA, and the rest of it going somewhere else. He couldn't get hired until one place or the other found the paperwork so it could all be put together.

"And on July 22 — my father's birthday — is when they found all the paperwork, and I was hired. I always felt that was him looking out for me and making it happen," he smiled.

Although it was supposedly a .15 position of six hours a week, he found himself here more and more.

"This was a test," he said. "My assignment was with the substance abuse patients, the locked mental health ward, and spinal cord injury," he said. "It was scary at first, and I had to learn to drop my fears, and learn how to listen.

"It was really the spinal cord patients who taught me about life. I always thought, 'If anyone has a right to go through life feeling sorry and depressed, it's them.' But they are anything but that. They embrace life. They used to wait for me to come up to (the clinic), and they'd race me down the hall. They have such a camaraderie and support for one another, and are so quick to help a new patient and pull him through the sadness. That's a very admirable trait, and I try to use that myself as the eternal optimist."

He's also an eternal Packers fan — hence the green and gold memorabilia that dots his office. And during football season, as he has done for so many years, he always ends his mass with a special blessing for the Green Bay Packers.

Word got back to the team, and he was asked to serve as their Catholic priest when they would play a few games a year at County Stadium, from 1994 to 1998. The job didn't pay, but he got to meet a lot of the greats and had some awesome football seats.

"That was a great time," he said.

He also took over as the chief of chaplains around 1994.

In this position he still counsels those patients who need it most, and says Mass several times a week. He supervises seven other chaplains, along with his secretary, Donna Babineau, who keeps it all together.

"His staff is well taken care of, and no matter what is going on, he is never too busy to lend an ear, offer a helping hand, give you constructive criticism or get your back, if need be," she said. "He seems to be able to find the positive in any kind of situation."

There are so many more stories, but Father Norm's a busy guy. He spent his morning counseling substance abuse patients, and had another appointment coming up.

It's one of the favorite parts of his job now.

"Because there are people who come here with no hope, who don't think they deserve God, and I tell them that they do, that they are all children of God, and children aren't done growing and learning.

"Sometimes people come to me and they're angry and they're atheists. They might leave here and still be atheists, but they don't leave angry," he added.

It's hard to sum up his greatest satisfaction about his time here, but one he is particularly happy to be a part of is the annual bike blessing he started 22 years ago to reach out to Vietnam Veterans.

"At the time, they did not feel welcome here at the VA, and there were still some hard feelings," he said. "I wanted them to know they had a place here and we needed them."

He used it as an opportunity to also help other Veterans, and so the Vietnam Veterans have since come through, collecting tens of thousands of dollars for a special Chaplain's Fund that Father Norm uses specifically for needy Vets, whether it's a warm meal or a clean pair of underwear.

It's hard to say where Father Norm will be celebrating his next career milestone.

He's 66, and already made a deal with the medical center director that he wouldn't retire before him.

"When I graduated seminary I was going to light the world on fire," he chuckled. "And in my own way, I lit my fires. I'm wiser now. So we'll see where I'm at, when I'm 70. I didn't say I'm going to retire at 70. I may still keep going. I like what I do."

With at least four more years, he's going to need a bigger office or more wall space.

He laughs that loud, Father Norm laugh.

"No, I can just move everything on the walls closer together."

Photo by Gary Kunich

Father Norm offers a special blessing to a biker at last year's annual bike blessing, now in its 22nd year. The blessing is something Father Norm began to reach out to Vietnam Veterans when he first started.

Department of Defense photo

Military families welcome loved ones back from deployment with flags and smiles. While the returns can be joyful, families may face struggles after the hugs and kisses. Operation Enduring Family at the Milwaukee VA was specifically designed for family members.

Enduring Family brings families back together

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

Spouses, family members and friends of Veterans who are struggling to readjust back to civilian life after being in war have an ally and a support group at the VA.

Operation Enduring Family meets the first and third Wednesday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Room 3425, and no referral is needed.

The group is open to anyone serving in a support role — either through family or friendship — with a Veteran getting care at the Milwaukee VA.

"After being in a war, it can be difficult coming back together as a family," said Ashley Schultz, a licensed clinical social worker who leads the group. "While one spouse has been deployed, the other has been serving in both roles, paying bills, raising kids, taking care of childcare and day-to-day family life.

"The Veteran is used to being hyper-vigilant and now has to readjust to being a family again, and it can take weeks or years to decompress," she added. "In this group we talk a lot about communication. We try not to give advice. It's not a therapy session. It's aimed to be supportive, so we take a step back and let the members facilitate the group, and talk about what works for them."

The group is aimed specifically for those in support roles, Schultz said. Another group, strictly for Veterans, meets at the same time in Room 3430. Plus, the Milwaukee VA does a family and Veteran group twice a year in the spring and fall that meets for eight weeks.

"When people first start the group, they might be distressed, or think they're alone, and they're not," Schultz said. "For the Veteran, he or she might not be aware of what they are doing. They're used to operating in a certain, mission-oriented way. Any of these groups are a great asset to the treatment and the therapy we have here. You don't even have to talk, if you don't want to. Sometimes it's good to come in and hear other people."

For more information on these groups, call Schultz at 414-384-2000, ext. 41860.

Employees take leadership to next level

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

Lt. Gary Hart learned supervision the old-fashioned way — through 22 years in the military, and then time on the police force with the L.A. County Sheriff's Office and now at the Milwaukee VA.

Over the last nine months he got some refreshers and learned some new tricks for the supervision bag through the VA's Leadership Development Program.

He was one of 24 employees who met once a month to develop new and different leadership skills. He and the rest of the class graduated May 11, and celebrated with a lunch at Lake Wheeler.

"It helped teach me that supervision is more than numbers and you need to treat your people as your most important resource," he said. "I learned some of this in the military, but in that environment you sometimes tell people 'Do this because I said so.' This class helps demilitarize you. It helps you to tell your troops, 'I need you to do this and this is why.' By using these techniques, it helps you apply the needs of your troops against the needs of the mission.

"It was exceptional and very motivational," he added. "It's insightful because it makes you look at yourself and your own work ethic."

The leadership course, now in its 11th year, runs from September through May and is led by Dr. Mike Erdmann, the chief of staff, and Shannon Siehr, the administrative assistant to the chief of staff. It's open to GS-5 employees and above, and Title 38 equivalents, looking to improve leadership skills or move into positions with greater responsibility.

Much of it is based on Steven Covey's book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," and it's designed to help employees better understand the VA's High Performance Development Plan.

"The VA is very good in providing leadership and training opportunities and this is one more way where we try to help people grow into bigger roles," Siehr said. "There is some reading, but the biggest benefits are in the group exercises, the personal development plans that each student creates and the coaches who partner with them in small groups.

"It's always fulfilling to watch graduates grow and

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Leadership

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learn about themselves as the course goes on," she said. "Many of them come back and say it helped them to better understand themselves, their personal lives and define what is important to them. It's something that can be used not only on the job communicating, but communicating and interacting with your own family."

Additional objectives include:

- Promoting inter-professional cooperation and collaboration.
- Identifying ways to create balance, manage time, and reduce stress while accomplishing more.
- Developing opportunities to practice newly learned leadership skills.
- Increasing understanding of the necessity of good "soft skills" in high-performing leaders, including the development of storytelling abilities.
- Developing basic understanding of the core business acumen needed to be successful with the VA.

Beyond the high-brow language, it simply makes good people better, said Amanda Urrea, Medical Media photographer.

"In my job I work with a lot of different people on projects, and I saw a lot of the high-quality people I interacted with were the go-to people for their organization, and they had been through the course.

"I think one benefit is you meet other people and that will help you network, but even if you think you are a good leader, this helps you improve on things you are already doing well. It opens your eyes to new ideas and pushes you to do even better. I think I'm a more patient person now, and able to work with people better because of this."

Siehr said interest in the class, now in its 11th year, is still strong. They have to someimes turn people away because the class size is limited.

Applications for the next class must be completed and returned by June 22. For more information, call Siehr at 414-384-2000, ext. 42601.

We remember on Memorial Day

BY BRIAN WALKER
5000 West staff writer

Thousands of American flags fluttered next to white gravestones in Wood National Cemetery, serving as the backdrop for the Memorial Day observance on the Milwaukee VA campus.

Hundreds turned out for the annual event which featured a surprise appearance by Gov. Scott Walker, a vintage Air Force aircraft flyover, and re-enactors from different war eras.

Michael McBride, an Iraq Veteran and psychologist at the VA, opened the ceremonies by speaking about his father and father-in-law, two who served as his own inspiration for joining the Armed Forces.

The dedication of individuals to give everything to their country and ask for nothing in return was one of themes for the day.

Guest speaker, the Rev. Carl Krueger Jr., an Air Force Veteran, spoke about the real meaning of the holiday and the sad fact that so many Americans treat it as a weekend to start summer.

He said we should label the holiday, "Thankful and humble" Memorial Day.

"That would be appropriate for those who gave their lives, who served not for themselves, but for their families, and for people whom they would never know, and for people who would never care about their sacrifice," he said.

Walker recited the names of ten Wisconsinites who lost their lives in the last year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Five re-enactors portrayed the lives of soldiers through five time periods including Darcie Greuel, who teared up in her portrayal of Michelle Witmer, the first Wisconsin Army National Guard female soldier ever to be killed in action. Witmer, buried at Wood National Cemetery, was only 20 when she was killed in Iraq, while serving with two of her sisters in 2004.

The rest of the event included annual traditions, such as music from the American Legion Band, the performance of Echo Taps, presentation of the wreathes, the recognition of 37 Wisconsin soldiers Missing in Action in Vietnam, and the dove release, signifying the ascension of our loved one's souls into Heaven.

Photos by Brian Walker

Hundreds turned out for our annual Memorial Day observation at Wood National Cemetery. The Marine Corps Color Guard (above) marches into place as the Marine Corps Hymn is played. A Vietnam Veteran (left) is escorted toward the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Monument to place a wreath in honor of those missing in action.

Nurse who loved VA donates $169,000

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

Irene Spyhalski always spoke highly of the care her husband, Norb, got at the Milwaukee VA.

She made sure others could have the same kind of care with a donation of $168,799 from her will.

Spyhalski passed away in October 2010. Her nephew and trustee, Dick Cywinski, stopped by the VA April 18 to present the check.

"She and Norb were always very spiritual, very religious and they went to church a lot, and believed if you could do something for someone else, you should," Cywinski said. "She figured she wasn't going to be able to take it with her."

In addition to the VA, she gave the bulk of her estate to other charities, he added.

Cywinski said his aunt and uncle never lived extravagantly. They just worked hard, lived in a modest home and believed in saving their pennies.

Irene graduated from the Marquette nursing school in 1940 and Norb was in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in his 30s but continued to work at a grocery store he owned for as long as he could. He passed away in 2006.

Submitted photos

Irene Spyhalski, as she looked when she graduated nursing school (left), and she and Norb later in life. To show her gratitude for his care at the VA, she left a sizeable portion of her estate to the Milwaukee VA.

"Irene worked as a part-time nurse and at the store, but in the last seven years or so of Norb's life, she was like a full-time nurse taking care of him, and getting him to his appointments at the VA," Cywinski said.

During his visit to the VA to present the check, Cywinski shared stories with senior leaders, nurses and other staff about his aunt and uncle, and showed photos of her in her nursing uniform.

"She was always very proud to be a nurse, and wants this to help the nurses in some way," he said.

"Norb got a lot of occupational and physical therapy here, so we hope it can be used for nursing education, and anyone in rehabilitation."

Robert Beller, the medical center director, was overwhelmed with gratitude at the ceremony.

"We don't get something like this very often, but we want to express our appreciation. We will most certainly honor your wishes and use this so it helps other veterans."

Cywinski said nothing would make Irene happier than to know it was well spent.

"Two things about her," he said. "She was very active in the (Disabled American Veterans) Auxillary, and the VA, because as far as she was concerned, Norb was very well taken care of by the VA for a lot of years."

Patients get praise for healthy living habits

BY BRIAN WALKER
5000 West staff writer

The VA honored a select group of Veterans May 3 with a special luncheon in the Matousek Auditiorium for those committed to healthy living.

Their struggles could have been gaining too much weight, substance abuse, injury, onset of an illness or disease. It didn't matter what the barrier was, these Veterans are finding ways to make their lives, and the lives of Veterans around them, healthier and happier.

Nancy Wilke, an occupational therapist here, nominated multiple Veterans for recognition.

"It is so rewarding to see Veterans whom you have worked with get acknowledged for their hard work in making positive changes with their health," she said. "These Veterans truly understand that each one of us holds the key to our health, and it is the choices we make that effects our health and quality of life. These Veterans are excellent role models."

The individual stories were moving, such as one patient who had a stroke. It left him with Locked-In Syndrome in which he could only communicate through movement of his eyes for several weeks. In rehabilitation, this Veteran is re-learning how to eat, speak, walk, bathe and transfer himself out of a power wheelchair. Throughout it all he is always asking how he can help other Veterans, in his words, to "pay it forward."

Another Veteran made rapid changes in her life in a short time. She had to figure out how to exercise more and break unhealthy eating habits, all the while being a student, employee and grandmother. Bit by bit, she dropped 50 pounds and managed to get her diabetes under better control. She can now chase her grandson and this strong work ethic has carried over into landing a new job, too.

Master of ceremonies Dale Christianson, Primary Care's lead social worker, said it was a great day to spotlight the hard work put forth by patients.

"It is humbling to participate in the Patient Recognition Awards and witness the significant strides these Veterans have made to improve their health.

"On a daily basis, VA Medical Center staff are working with Veterans in many different areas to make a difference. Recognizing the progress so many Veterans have made is heartwarming. Perseverance and motivation are evident in all of the stories of these Veterans. We are grateful for their service and we appreciate their choice to seize control of their lives and make healthy choices."

Photos by Gary Kunich

Photos clockwise from far left: The Cavalry horses from the Civil War re-enactors were a big hit along the parade route, particularly Gen. Ulysses Grant, played by Scott Whitney. Many re-enactors featured soldiers from wars well known and obscure. Bob Blenski from Just Italian grills up some of his homemade sausages at the event. Soldiers from the 452nd Combat Support Hospital lead families through a real-life combat field tent. Friends Carter Fletcher, 7, Sam Schaer, 10, and Kilian Fletcher, 12, look over some of the military supplies available at ROH 2012.

History comes to life at Heritage 2012

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

Carter Fletcher, 7, Sam Schaer, 10, and Kilian Fletcher, 12, clamored and climbed over top one another to dig through the military souvenirs, uniforms and other equipment that soldiers of many different eras used while defending their country.

The items — all for sale to the re-enactors who love this stuff to build up their collection — is always a popular spot at Reclaiming Our Heritage, a two-day event at the Milwaukee VA campus.

Reclaiming Our Heritage, now in its 11th year, features re-enactors from all military eras, along with the Positively Patriotic Parade featuring everything from military troops of bygone eras to baton-twirling girls and dancing grannies.

The boys' excitement at the uniform tent was interrupted by another person working the tent who made their day when he invited them inside to take a free item, possibly creating future re-enactors.

"We just got here, but so far I like the Marines and all the weapons," said Carter.

Others said they were enjoying the living history displays from medical care on the battlefield of World War I to a current combat medical support hospital set up by 452nd Combat Support Hospital.Thousands turned out for the first day of Reclaiming Our Heritage on the Milwaukee VA campus.

Old men dabbed at their brow while seeing re-enactors in the same military uniforms they may have worn 60 years ago or more. Two World War II veterans — Bob Moen and Joe Stimic — were all smiles as they led the parade as grand marshals. Both are residents of the VA's Community Living Center.

While Vietnam re-enactors showed off their wares in one area, others representing the Spanish-American War, World War I, the French-Indian War and so many more dotted the landscape.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans were given special treatment at this year's event. For the first time ever, a tent was set up featuring displays from those wars, manned by people who fought in the war. There was also an exclusive Welcome Home tent for those soldiers where they could get information about the VA, meet other Veterans and get the help they need.

Ron Leskow, who served in Iraq, was especially impressed with the display from World War II, where re-enactor Steve Zahareas showed off a genuine letter opener from Naples, 1945, featuring a buxom woman in a skimpy outfit.

"Naples 1945" was inscribed along the side.

One can only imagine the story of the G.I. who owned it, and what letters he read.

"This is amazing stuff and it's real history," Leskow said.

"That's why we do it," Zahareas said. "It's to honor those who served."

Photos by Gary Kunich

Photos clockwise from top left: World War I Dough Boy re-enactors prepare to march in the Positively Patritotic Parade. Staff Sgt. Leah Sloss of the 484th Army Band plays, "God Bless America" during the opening ceremonies. Barb Demotto takes a photo of her family: Joe, Isabella, 7, and Brady, 3. Joe is a Gulf War Veteran who gets his care at the VA, and thought his kids would enjoy the day. Jim Rowan, a re-enactor from the War of 1812, describes how soldiers used the weapons of his era to Lance Cpl. Ben Tomasik, who had some considerably more powerful fire power on hand. A drummer from the Civil War 1st Brigade Band keeps his union soldier re-enactors in step.

ROH helps welcome home new troops

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

Stuart served 23 years in Army Special Operations doing things he doesn't like to talk about and stuff that most people wouldn't understand.

"People who weren't there, they won't ever understand. They'll never totally understand and they shouldn't have to understand. People like me did it so they wouldn't have to."

Stuart — who declined to give his last name — joined the Army in 1985, and became part of Special Forces, because that's what his brother did.

Panama. Somalia. Desert Storm. Iraq. Afghanistan.

He's been to all of them.

On Saturday, he was inside the special Welcome Home tent for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans at Reclaiming Our Heritage, getting information on services offered at the VA.

Reclaiming Our Heritage is a one-of-a-kind, two-day re-enactment of all military eras, and a place of healing, said Laura Rinaldi, who created the event.

"It was really driven home to me when we had a special welcome a few years ago for Vietnam Veterans, and we saw the reaction. Many Veterans who wouldn't talk about their service or come to the VA changed their outlook because of that, and that's what we want to do for our Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans."

While everything else was public at Reclaiming Our Heritage, the Welcome Home tent was reserved exclusively for those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with outreach counselors — many who also served there — to interact with those Veterans.

"It's a very good idea," Stuart said. "I'm part of a small fraternity of friends and we do use the system. But my dad was in World War II and never used it until he was an old man, but he had nightmares until the day he died.

Photos by Gary Kunich

The Iraq/Afghanistan tent was the brainchild of Patrick Aukofer, who was part of an explosive clearing team in Iraq.

"I think some people don't want to come in because they don't want to talk to someone who hasn't been over there," he added. "It does help to talk about it, though."

Despite not wanting to talk about his individual experiences, Stuart said he also works on his own healing by giving public talks about service so people can appreciate the sacrifices that were made.

"I've talked at my daughter's college and a couple other places, just so people could understand that it's not at all glamorous like the movies portray it. Even if people won't ever understand it, I think it helps for them to understand the people who have done it."

Across from the Welcome Home tent, another public tent was set up for thousands to learn more about the sacrifices made in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The display — the first time it was ever available at Reclaiming Our Heritage — was the idea of Spec. Patrick Aukofer, who served in Iraq from 2010 to 2011.

Unlike other displays where re-enactors told the stories of wars, weaponry and tactics, the Veterans manning this tent were actually part of the fighting and gave direct answers as to what it was like.

"I was part of a unit that cleared (explosives) off the road," Aukofer said. "It was always tense. You were always on guard. I'm still getting over that. When the cannons went off (at Reclaiming Our Heritage) it still startled me. I have my watch set for when they're going to go off again, and I'm going to have to sit down and prepare myself."

Thomas Keinert felt guilty for eating hamburgers and pizzas on a sub, so he signed up for a tour with the Army in Iraq.

Stories like this, he said, are the realities of war, but he said he was proud to serve.

That was echoed by Petty Officer 2nd Class Thomas Keinert, who served with an Army unit from 2009 to 2010.

"I'm normally on submarines, but I was feeling guilty for eating hamburgers and pizzas on a sub when my Army counterparts were on their third, fourth and fifth tour of Iraq or Afghanistan, so I was excited and glad to do it," he said.

While most of his time was spent on a base camp, mortar fire was regular part of the tour. "And you just got used to it."

While the public may have misperceptions about the war, he hoped his time at Reclaiming Our Heritage would give a different perspective.

"You only hear the bad in the media, but I know we did a lot of good over there. I saw a lot of the good we did and I want people to know that."

Nicole Kinkade shows off the tattoo she got in honor of three of her friends killed in Iraq.

Nicole Kinkade, who now works as a patient services assistant in the Mental Health Clinic, said she was volunteering at the tent to educate the public and her fellow Veterans.

She was one of four females part of an Army unit that served there from 2004 to 2005.

"It was a busy time. A lot was going on," she said. "The Iraqi soldiers would gawk at us and try to treat us like other Iraqi women. I'm proud that I kept up with the boys, and was just as tough."

She lost three friends over there, and wears a black bracelet with their names inscribed. The tattoo on her right arm of a pin-up girl in Army camouflage was especially done in their honor.

Kinkade has gotten her care at the VA since 2006, she said, and has seen the outreach get even better since then.

"I work on a suicide prevention team, and I'm glad to offer those services because people need it. When I start coming here as a patient, I felt like I was the only one (from this era), now I see a lot of people coming in for care. I'm glad they're getting care, but I want to make sure they get everything they need. We can't expect them to find stuff, and dig for it. We owe them, and this is one way I can help pay it forward and help other people."

Helping others heal

Joe Webster came to the VA to heal and rediscovered a love for painting he first found in Vietnam; now his work is on display to give others hope, too

Photo by Gary Kunich

Dr. Jacquline Bethany helps Joe Webster unveil one of his portraits that hangs in building 7. Smaller versions of the lithographs also hang in the main hospital's mental health clinic.

BY GARY J. KUNICH
5000 West editor

"I just got stupid. I did something stupid, and that's when I realized I needed help," said Army Veteran Joe Webster.

He got it at the Milwaukee VA, which helped him get sober, find transitional housing and a full-time job.

Four of Webster's paintings now hang in building 7, where other veterans also go through recovery, as a small token of his thanks.

Each painting has a Native-American theme, a nod to Webster's Oneida heritage, along with a recovery message. They were unveiled April 4 in a special ceremony that included staff, family and friends, including fellow tribe members from the Oneida Nation.

The steps he painted about are some of the same ones Webster took to get sober after years of drinking.

He hit his lowest point around December 2010.

"I was drinking, and woke up in the bushes outside my daughter's house," he said with a grimace. "My granddaughter came outside to go to school and said, 'Grandpa, are you OK?' She told her mom she wanted to stay home to take care of Grandpa. That finally gave me my reason to get better."

His daughters brought him to the VA.

Fifteen months later, Webster is full of life and appreciation for the second chance.

"I first came to the VA in the 1980s and wasn't impressed. They didn't seem to care back then, so when I came this time, I had a little bit of an attitude, but I knew I needed to get help. They were amazing. I can't say enough about the VA," he said. "Some people say, 'The VA sucks,' or it didn't help them. No, you have to be willing to help yourself. You have to be willing to take the steps and do the work, and I hope this inspires others to get help."

Soon after he entered treatment, Webster rediscovered his love of drawing, something he first started in Vietnam.

"Back then I used to do sketches, but eventually just threw that stuff away. I didn't want anything to do with it."

As he went through therapy, he created 10 smaller lithographs that now hang in the main hospital outside the Mental Health Clinic. Each of those also contains a recovery message.

"They were important to me, but then I'd see people stop and write down the sayings on each one," he said. "That's when I realized it might help others."

He began work on the larger paintings in October 2011, and recently finished the work. They're part of some 45 paintings he's created since coming to the VA. Many are significant for other areas of Webster's life they represent.

"If you look, most of them have eight feathers. That's for my three children and my five grandchildren," he said. "There are also two pines because my mother and father are buried here (on the VA grounds) underneath two pines. I felt a special spirit come over me as I painted these."

Oneida tribe members said they were honored to be part of the ceremony.

"We're so glad to be here and be a part of this," said Kerry Metoxen, the tribal veteran service officer. "I know Joe did some sketching in Vietnam, but I think coming to the VA helped him to rediscover that. It's kind of cool to see this. I hope this helps other vets and makes them realize they can get help, too."

Dr. Jacquline Bethany, who is part of Webster's treatment team, said the paintings will hang for years to come and people will know Webster did them.

"With these paintings, and his enthusiasm, he has given us far more than we could ever give him," she said. "He

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See Webster

In Service

Congratulations to the following Zablocki employees who will reach milestones in May:

45 Years
James Hart

35 Years
John Brecheisen

30 Years
Helen Bolgrien
Catherine Cole
Christian Houterman
John Lopez
Stephen Riordan
James Sebastian
Donna Sibilsky

25 Years
Felicia Mason
Judi Naumann
Lori Saskowski

20 Years
Holly Clanton
Daniel Fitten
Ralph Gerlach
Sandra Lentini
Gwynne Roberts
Karen Thibedeau

15 Years
Clifton Botheroyd
Veronica Bravo
Brian Holzhauer
Martin Runge
Tracy Sanicola
Annette Watts

10 Years
Robin Banholzer
Sharon Besch
Eric Breland
Ronald Davidson
Joni Dorr
Legetta Grayer
Gary Hart
Amanda Honea
Lorraine Keszler
Terri Long
Patricia Odell
Carrie Post
Lisa Rauls
Mildred Spann

Dossier

Carla Brockman
Lead Patient Services Assistant

Division: Spinal Cord Injury Center

Hometown: Milwaukee.

Years of government service (plus any military time): 24

Family: Husband and two nieces.

What is your ideal job?: Retired.

What is the coolest/ strangest thing about your family?: I have about 50 first cousins, and we're all pretty close.

If you could pick your own theme music, what would it be? "Brownskin," by India Arie.

Any pets?: One cat named Princess.

What are your favorite songs?: "Here and Now," "No Woman, No Cry," and "So Blessed."

What are your favorite reads?: Anything by Walter Mosley, E. Lynn Harris or Susan Sizemore.

What are your favorite TV shows?: All the "CSI's," "Law & Order's," "Unforgettable," and "The Nate Berkus Show."

What TV show are you most embarrassed to admit you watch?: "Toni Braxton's Family Values."

What are your favorite movies?: "For the Love of Ivy," "Purple Rain," "Thunderheart," and "Lord of the Rings."

What are you most likely to be searching for when you raid the fridge after midnight?: Ice Cream.

If you were sent to the moon with nothing but a book and a book light, what book would you choose?: "Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned."

Favorite sports and teams?: The Marquette basketball team and the Milwaukee Brewers.

What are your hobbies?: Reading, crafts, cooking and baking.

What's your favorite ethnic food? All of it.

What is one thing most people don't know about you?: I'm a Civil War re-enactor.

What is the best advice you have received?: If there's nothing you can do about a situation, leave it alone. Don't worry about it.

Do you believe in ghosts?: Yes.

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?: Mac & cheese.

What is your biggest pet peeve?: People not being on time.

What is your worst habit?: Being slow!!!

Three things that can always be found in your refrigerator?: Lunchmeat, pickles, and olives.

Waffles or pancakes? Pancakes.

Favorite type of exercise? None.

What book are you reading right now?: "Portrait of Murder."

What clique were you part of in high school? None.

What song do you sing on karaoke night? NONE!

What is the meaning of life?: Live life to the fullest because tomorrow isn't promised to you.

Who is your celebrity crush?: Denzel Washington and Lawrence Fishburne.

Favorite pair of shoes?: All of them.

If you were an animal, what would you be?: Any kind of cat.

Bratwurst and beer, or filet mignon and Merlot?: T-bone steak and Margarita.

If you won $20 million, what would do with it?: Take care of my family.

Favorite Elvis song?: "Love Me Tender."

Photo by Gary Kunich

Carla Brockman has 50 first cousins and is a Civil War re-enactor. Bet you didn't know that!

A little bit country, or a little bit rock n' roll?: Little bit R&B and a little bit jazz.

If you were stranded on a deserted island with just a boom box and three CDs, what would they be?: Anything by Norman Brown amd Anthony Hamilton, and a old school mix tape.

Motto you live by: "Treat people like you want to be treated."

Reporting Aboard

Welcome to some of our newest Milwaukee VA employees:

Makeba "Kiki" Alexander
Medical supply technician
Hometown: Chicago, Ill.
Prior military service: Army, seven and a half years.
Hobbies: Playing pool, watching sports, and listening to music.
Why did you choose the VA?: Thought it would be a great place to work.
First impressions: Huge and clean.

Kenneth Anderson
Supply technician
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Marine Corps, four years, and a Gulf War Veteran.
Hobbies: Chess, golf, basketball and playing acoustic guitar.
Why did you choose the VA?: To serve Veterans — "To serve those who sacrificed so much for their beloved country." I also served my country but now I get to serve my fellow Vets with Honor.
First impressions: The Zablocki VA has always been a commendable place for healthcare. They care about their Veterans and provide quality service to all who come through their doors.

Joey "Sir Jay" Barner
Food service worker
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: Songwriting, recording, poetry, video games and sports.
Why did you choose the VA?: I really love to expand (my horizons), and when I saw there was an opening, I had to apply. It was an honor to be selected.
First impressions: I love it and I'm ready to plug into the system and be a factor in the success of the entire hospital.

Carol Bivins
Registered nurse
Hometown: Whitefish Bay, Wis.
Hobbies: Running, reading, and being with my husband and children.
Why did you choose the VA?: To honor the heroes of our nation.
First impressions: A huge, busy, but very friendly place.

Andrew "Andy" Cleveland
Pharmacist
Hometown: Verona, Wis.
Hobbies: Volleyball and soccer.
Why did you choose the VA?: I was here before as a pharmacy resident and could not resist the opportunity to come back as a pharmacist.
First impressions: Everyone always seems happier here than the private sector.

Allen "Boogie" Colburn
Claims assistant
Hometown: Racine, Wis.
Prior military service: Navy, five years.
Hobbies: Playing basketball, watching sports and working out.
Why did you choose the VA?: From serving prior, I wanted to continue to help out and work for the government.
First impressions: Love it.

Michael "Mike" Cottreau
Management and program analyst
Hometown: Brookfield, Wis.
Prior military service: Marines, 20-plus years.
Hobbies: Bowhunting and hiking.
Why did you choose the VA?: For the opportunities to continue to serve and contribute to our country.
First impressions: I found the right place for a second career.

Virginia "Ginny" Cutler
Health technician
Hometown: Fond Du Lac, Wis.
Hobbies: Walking my dog, hunting and being an active member of the American Legion Riders and auxiliary.
Why did you choose the VA?: I wanted to give back to the Veterans who gave so much to us. Freedom is not free!
First impressions: Very impressive. Love it!

Doniva Davis Jr.
Laundry worker
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: Reading and talking with people.
Why did you choose the VA?: To serve Veterans.
First impressions: Teamwork.

Richard "Rick" Davis
Electrician
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Air Force, four years.
Hobbies: Shooting, hunting and reloading shells.
Why did you choose the VA?: Reputation was very high.
First impressions: Easy to get lost in, but I'm learning.

Jeffrey "Jeff" Fuchs
Health aid
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: U.S. Navy.
Hobbies: Disc golf, softball and volleyball.
Why did you choose the VA?: I enjoy working with and helping Veterans.
First impressions: Very impressed with everyone who works here.

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See Reporting Aboard

Webster

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will never be forgotten here, and these paintings will help everyone else who comes through these doors."

Ken Metoxen burned sage as part of a blessing, which Webster took around so others could waft the smoke over themselves. The smoke signifies a blessing and purification.

Webster was humbled that so many people were on hand for the ceremony, and said the celebration represented the next step in his life.

"Thank you for inviting my tribe," he told the VA employees.

"When you honor one member of the Oneida Nation, you honor all members of the Oneida Nation. I hope I represent the tribe in a good way, and I will not let them down. I will not let any other Veterans down."

Celina Webster, one of his daughters, wrote on Facebook that she is grateful for the new opportunity she has with her dad.

"I am so proud of him and his success," she wrote. "It's amazing how so much can change and turn around for someone in one year. I know he greatly appreciates everything everyone has done to help him come this far, and my sisters and I do also."

Webster has a full-time job in the VA mailroom, and hopes to move into a permanent home in the near future. For now, he enjoys that he can spend time with his family.

"That's the best part of it," he said. "The VA gave me my life back."

Reporting Aboard

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Linda Go
Licensed practical nurse
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: Knitting, sewing and biking.
Why did you choose the VA?: Great opportunity for growth and also to serve those who fought to make this country free.
First impressions: Friendly, busy and clean.

Carol Golden
Patient services assistant
Hometown: Mukwonago, Wis.
Hobbies: Boating, gardening, and riding on the back of a Harley.
Why did you choose the VA?: Enjoy working with Veterans. Worked here in the past.
First impressions: It's good to be back. Everyone is so nice.

Matthew Hohl
Program support assistant
Hometown: Waukesha, Wis.
Prior military service: Air Force.
Hobbies: Fishing, snowboarding and biking.
Why did you choose the VA?: To serve those who protect us.
First impressions: Great place to work.

Andrew C.F. "Andy" Jacobs
Engineering technician
Hometown: Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
Prior military service: Army, nine years.
Hobbies: Swimming and reading.
Why did you choose the VA?: I enjoy working for Veterans and am happy that I can continue to do so.
First impressions: Professionalism and dedication to Veterans.

Jeri "Jj" Jefferson
Program support assistant
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Active-duty Army, six years; and Army Reserves, 13 years.
Hobbies: Hanging out with my family, gardening, bowling, dancing and shopping.
Why did you choose the VA?: I feel very comfortable around Veterans. I want to help wherever, whenever and however I can.
First impressions: Not many children are around.

David Kapelle
Social worker
Hometown: Austin, Texas.
Hobbies: Bowhunting and fishing.
Why did you choose the VA?: I loved working for the DOD and wanted to continue working with retired servicemembers.
First impressions: Great environment!

Anne Keefer
Occupational therapist
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: Quilting, reading, running, Brewers and Packers.
Why did you choose the VA?: I chose to work at the VA because I worked here in the past and enjoyed assisting Vets in their rehabilitation.
First impressions: The staff really cares about the Vets.

Amanda "Mandi" Krull
Program support assistant
Hometown: Edgerton, Wis.
Prior military service: Air Force.
Hobbies: Volleyball, singing and antiquing.
Why did you choose the VA?: I am proud to be helpful to our nation's Veterans.
First impressions: Great.

Dave Kueny
Electrician
Hometown: Greenfield, Wis., but I live in East Troy.
Prior military service: Five years active-duty Army and 17 years in the Air Force Reserves.
Hobbies: Hiking, camping and home gardening.
First impressions: Friendly, caring and

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See Reporting Aboard

Photo by Brian Walker

Not just your everyday people

Re-Creation — a group of college-age performers — perform for Veterans May 30 in Recreation Hall. The group stopped by the Milwaukee VA to visit with residents and put on a show as part of their national tour. The entertainment group ran through hits from the swinging 1930s through the 1980s.

Reporting Aboard

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always Vets are No. 1.

Becky Lauber
Reusable medical equipment coordinator
Hometown: Franklin, Wis.
Hobbies: Biking and volleyball.
Why did you choose the VA?: I wanted out of the private sector where the focus is on the bottom dollar. I liked the mission and vision here. The VA came highly recommended.
First impressions: It is such a welcoming place. Everyone greets each other with a smile and a "Hello."

Daniel Luther
Surgical technician
Hometown: Cudahy, Wis.
Hobbies: Biking, sculpture and video games.
Why did you choose the VA?: My clinical experiences here gave me a great sense of the community, and I felt like I belonged.
First impressions: I got five, "Good morning's" on the way in today. That is always a good start.

Paul Marcia
Electrician
Hometown: Washington, D.C.
Prior military service: Marine Corps, 20 years.
Hobbies: Chess and music.
Why did you choose the VA?: Professional teamwork environment.
First impressions: Impressed.

Dylan Moss
Program support assistant
Hometown: St. Francis, Wis.
Prior military service: Army National Guard, eight years.
Why did you choose the VA?: To help Vets.
First impressions: Big.

Martin "Marty" Pitzer
Medical support assistant
Hometown: Waukesha, Wis.
Prior military service: Army National Guard and Army Reserves, 18 years.
Hobbies: Photography and auctions.
Why did you choose the VA?: To serve my fellow Vets.
First impressions: Very positive atmosphere.

Kenneth Rowling
Boiler plant operator
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Navy, four years.
Hobbies: Cars and exercise.
Why did you choose the VA?: It's an honor and privilege to serve.
First impressions: Breathtaking.

Michael Schmierer
Insulator
Hometown: Hales Corner, Wis.
Prior military service: Wisconsin Air National Guard, six years.
Hobbies: Golf and other athletics.
Why did you choose the VA?: To help serve the country's Veterans and further grow spiritually.
First impressions: Great big family.

Stefanie Shierk
Registered nurse
Hometown: West Bend, Ind.
Prior military service: Air Force, five years.
Hobbies: Spending time with my husband and children, cooking and reading.
Why did you choose the VA?: To give back to those who have fought to keep our country safe, to be a part of something bigger than myself, and the opportunity to be challenged in my professional career.
First impressions: Amazing!

Jesse Smith
Dentist
Hometown: Pewaukee, Wis.
Prior military service: Air Force, three years.
Hobbies: Downhill skiing, cooking and biking.
Why did you choose the VA?: To give our Veterans the best care in the world.
First impressions: Friendly environment completely and utterly committed to serving our Veterans.

Helena Snowden
Registered nurse
Hometown: Tucson, Ariz.
Hobbies: Reading, bike riding, writing and anything fun in the sun.
Why did you choose the VA?: I love Veterans and want to repay them by offering quality care.
First impressions: I loved the employees and volunteers — very helpful and friendly.

James Strube
Program support assistant
Prior military service: Marine Corps, 1998 to 2004, and 2007 to 2011.
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: Music.
Why did you choose the VA?: The chance to serve our Veterans along with the great opportunities for advancement.
First impressions: Looks like a great friendly place to work.

Norman "Stormin' Norman" Suber
Medical support assistant
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Eight years in the U.S. Army with the 3rd Infantry Old Guard.
Hobbies: Fishing, bowling, basketball, tennis, baseball, football, motorcycle riding and family time.
Why did you choose the VA?: To continue to help Veterans such as myself and others by being part of the Milwaukee VA mission.
First impressions: People are great — building and parking lot, not so much. It looks like a fun and interesting place to work.

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Photo by Brian Walker

Veteran visit

Beth Csaszar talks to Veterans at the Milwaukee VA during a visit May 23 from the American Legion Auxillary Post 410 and Ozaukee High School.

Reporting Aboard

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Peter Swanson
Boiler plant operator
Hometown: Milwaukee, Wis.
Prior military service: Army, four years; and Army Reserves, 18 months.
Hobbies: Junior basketball coach.
Why did you choose the VA?: To give back to the system that taught me work ethic and service commitment.
First impressions: They take care of our Veterans and take care of those taking care of the Veterans.

Mary Tess-Barber
Licensed, practical nurse
Hometown: Watertown, Wis.
Hobbies: Gardening and cooking.
Why did you choose the VA?: To make a difference and thank Vets for their service.
First impressions: It's huge! So many services.

Benjamin Thiel
Registered nurse
Hometown: Muskego, Wis.
Prior military service: Air Force. National Guard, 13 years.
Hobbies: Brewers games and tailgating, and anything outdoors!
Why did you choose the VA?: To care for Veterans.
First impressions: Great atmosphere. Everyone seems very friendly and very busy.

Tricia Vanderkin
Occupational therapist trainee
Hometown: Plymouth, Wis.
Hobbies: Playing volleyball, running, and watching the Packers and the Brewers.
Why did you choose the VA?: To finish my schooling within a spinal cord injury unit, and give back to Vets who protected and served our country.
First impressions: Large and overwhelming, but unique to the area for all the support and care given to Vets.

Jacqueline "Jackie" White
Licensed practical nurse
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Hobbies: I like to travel and spend time with my family.
Why did you choose the VA?: I have always heard great things about the VA from friends and family who have had only wonderful things to say about the VA.
First impressions: I'm really happy to be here. I feel very secure being an employee here at the VA. Also, everyone really seems to be happy to be employed here. That's a great impression to new employees.

John Wicinski
Human resources assistant
Hometown: Port Washington, Wis.
Prior military service: Air Force, 29 years.
Hobbies: Golf, sports, and spending time with my kids and grandkids.
Why did you choose the VA?: After retiring from the military, I wanted to help Veterans.
First impressions: Positive. I like everyone's positive attitude.

Martin Williams
Food service worker
Hometown: Milwaukee.
Prior military service: Navy, four years.
Hobbies: Music, sports and church.
Why did you choose the VA?: I always would like to provide a good service to my fellow Veterans.
First impressions: I have been a patient for years. I always enjoy the service, so I put in an application.

Sarada "Sara" Yerneni
Dietitian
Hometown: New Berlin, Wis.
Hobbies: Watching TV and gardening.
Why did you choose the VA?: The opportunity for growth and advancement, as well as the chance to serve those who have served our country.
First impressions: Lots of friendly and welcoming people.

VA Voices

Question: What is your favorite kind of music and why?

Hipolito "Hippie" Cantero, DAV parking lot attendant/greeter: "Smooth, old school R and B like Patti LaBelle and Gladys Knight. I like the sound, puts me back in that era and gets me out of the 2000s."

Phillip Reitz, registered nurse: "Big band of the early 1930s. It's snappy and reminds me of the music they used to play on cartoons when I was a kid, like the old Popeye cartoons. It's very nostalgic.

Michael Hughes, mailroom clerk: "Rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, jazz, I like it all. It's all good stuff. I love music because it's soothing and lifts you up, depending on your mood. I can't say I have a favorite. It depends on my mood.

Tomisha Johnson, dental hygienist: "My favorite is R and B slow groove, and Alicia Keys is my favorite singer. I can sing along to her songs, I'm just not going to do that for you."

Graham Ternes, patient services assistant: "Classic rock like Led Zeppelin. They have great lyrics and good guitar work. The music is just timeless."