



CASTLE GRAM

VOLUME LXVIII ISSUE 5 DECEMBER 2021

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From the Gavel



I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving!!!

One of my family's traditions is to go around the table and say what we are thankful for. One of the many things I am thankful for is my military family. Murphy always seems to visit, especially when your spouse deploys. I was walking in my neighborhood and fell and broke my leg about half a mile from my house. My new military spouse friend who was walking with me had never been to my neighborhood before. I had to give her directions to get back to my house to get her car and then to come and get me. She sat with me at the hospital for 5 ½ hours. As soon as my engineer family heard of my predicament, I received Omaha Steak crockpot meals at the door to help me while I was recovering.

The Sunday before Thanksgiving, one of my dogs, Turbo, was doing very poorly. I was supposed to go to lunch with my military spouse friend. Instead, she came with me to the vet's office to help Turbo cross the Rainbow Bridge and then kept me company, along with her husband, all day. I have received so many calls, texts, and messages from so many of you checking on me and offering help and kind words and support. I cannot thank you all enough. I truly feel blessed for all of you.

I wish you a great holiday celebration and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!!

Warmly,

**Mary Alice Jakso
AESC President**



Cookie Exchange Photos



**Isabel Stevens-Launa Klimowicz
Mary Alice Jakso-Stacy Lloyd-Urvi Avichal**

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The annual AESC Cookie Exchange was held at the beautiful home of Sharise Spellmon. The attendees generously donated cookies that will be shared with Engineer residents at The Fairfax at Belvoir Woods military retirement community.

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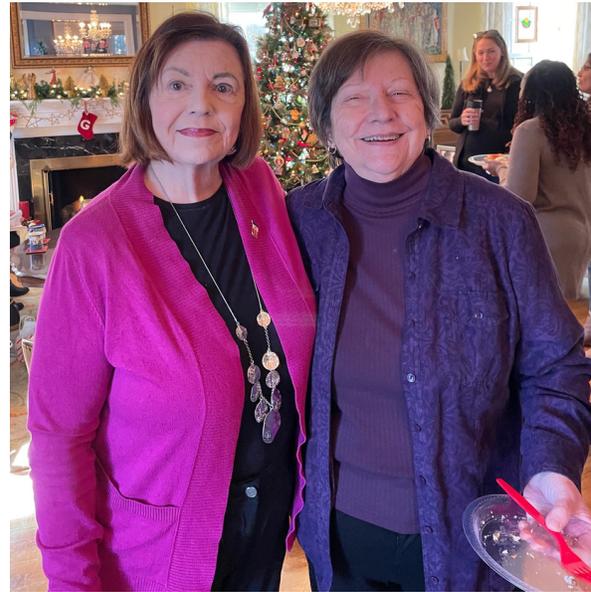
**Stephanie Sattinger
Brenda Schultze**





Sharise Spellmon-Bette Meuleners

**Tanya Toussaint
Brenda Schultze**



Before the Cookie Exchange, the AESC Board held a board meeting and surprise baby shower for our wonderful Historian, Erin Beer.

Jackie Caldwell-Isabel Stevens



Launa Klimowicz-Terri Stevens





Brenda Schultze

Tanya Toussaint

Katherine Geneser

Erin Beer-Stacy Lloyd
Launa Klimowicz



Stephanie Sattinger

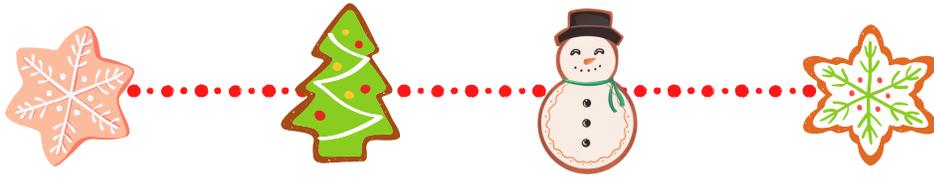
Boumy Funes



Jackie Caldwell



Isabel Stevens with the cookie haul for Engineer residents at the Fairfax.



Back to front: Tanya Toussaint- Launa Klimowicz-Stephanie Sattinger-Brenda Schultze-Urvi Avichal Terri Stevens-Erin Beer-Mary Alice Jakso-Bette Meuleners-Stacy Lloyd-Isabel Stevens-Amy Tarbox Boumy Funches-Jackie Caldwell-Sharise Spellmon-Katherine Geneser

Holiday Message



As we approach the Season of Giving, I am sincerely humbled by the generosity of time, talent and genuine dedication of our AESC Board and Members. From our dear Senior ladies who always support our activities and share their wisdom and experience, to our Board members who never fail to plan, organize, and facilitate our activities, meetings, philanthropic goals and support for our members. To our Members who continue to support our Castle Boutique and other fundraisers for our Memorial Awards, thank you too!!

I am truly grateful to be a part of such a phenomenal group of Engineer spouses. It is a family which I will always treasure. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!

Essayons and BEAT NAVY!
Sharise Spellmon

Engineer Friends Out and About

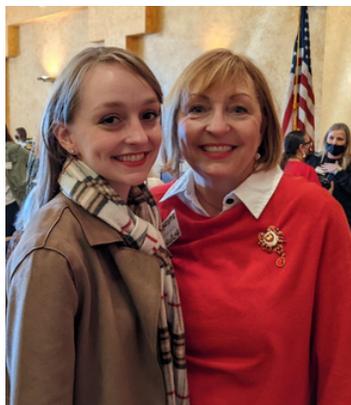


Mary Alice Jakso-Michelle Funkhouser
Brenda Schultze-Launa Klimowicz-
Stephanie Sattinger

DC area Engineer spouses enjoyed an Army Spouses' Club of the Greater Washington Area luncheon. The group also celebrated Pat O'Neill's birthday.



Mary Alice Jakso-Katherine Geneser-Sharise Spellmon-Launa Klimowicz-Michelle Funkhouser-Pat O'Neill-Brenda Schultze Stephanie Sattinger-Connie Semonite



Katherine Geneser
Sharise Spellmon

Service/Welfare

LYNCH CREEK FARM

Bring the outdoors in this season while giving back! Our Lynch Creek Farm fundraiser is now active. For each purchase, we receive 15% back.

The fundraiser is scheduled to end Sunday, December 5, 2021 this year! So order quickly before the deadline passes!!

Last year, because of your support, we raised \$948 out of our \$1,000 goal and this year we have surpassed that and are only \$52 from reaching our total goal!!!!

Thank you for your continued support of AESC!!!!



\$922 of our \$1000 goal raised so far!!!!

Ordering can be done through the link below:

<https://www.lynchcreekfundraising.com/teams/275261-army-engineer-spouses-club-2021>

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

AESC has a group page for sponsoring wreaths for Arlington National Cemetery again this year.

Each wreath sponsored through our group page, provides AESC with a \$5 contribution to our AEMA and Fairfax and Knollwood funds.



7 wreaths sponsored so far this year

Please consider sponsoring a wreath using the following link:

<https://wreathscrossamerica.org/VA0549P>

If the link does not take you to our sponsorship page, please visit wreathscrossamerica.org and enter our group number, which is VA0549P, to find it.

Service/Welfare

HONOR FLIGHT

After being grounded for over a year and a half, Honor Flight has begun conducting flights again. This is an exciting opportunity to welcome our nation's veterans as they embark on their D.C. journey.

There are, of course, safety precautions being taken and we encourage you to become familiar with them before arriving to the airport, whether it is at Reagan National or an airport nearest you. We want everyone to be safe, while still having a wonderful time!

For Reagan National Airport (DCA), their flight schedule is below and goes through November 2021:

<https://honorflightdca.com/2021-schedule/>

If you do plan on attending an arrival or departure, please make sure to review the following information:

<https://honorflightdca.com/2021/07/06/2021-honor-flight-season-all-volunteers-must-read/>

And don't worry! You can participate even if you aren't in the DC area! The schedule for all Honor Flights around the country can be found here:

<https://www.honorflight.org/current-trip-schedule.html>

Pick a time and date that works for you, invite family and friends along, participate safely, and, most of all, enjoy honoring our nation's veterans.



FISHER HOUSE

Fisher House is excited to be welcoming us back for meal donations very soon!

Please watch your email for more information in the upcoming months!



ANGEL TREE

SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE

Each year the AESC sponsors two Angels from the Angel Tree. While we are waiting for more information about that for this year, we do know that you can always sponsor an Angel individually!

To do so you can click on this link: salvationarmynca.wufoo.com/forms/qld0knp16yxcki/

Additionally, if you would like to volunteer in the Angel Tree program, you can sign up via this link: <https://cerv.is/m?0355x123>

Happy December Birthday!

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Vicky Groninger | 3 |
| Tricia Stevens | 3 |
| Jay Burcham | 7 |
| Shelley Hatch | 7 |
| Jenny Offringa | 10 |
| Kimberly Gibbs | 11 |
| Mary Jo Hirata | 14 |
| Isabel Stevens | 15 |
| Julie Handura | 17 |
| Brenda Schultze | 18 |
| Jen Phillips | 20 |
| Holly Scherer | 21 |
| Christine Hill | 22 |
| Shireen Lackey | 24 |
| Tracy Hathaway | 25 |
| Melissa Riely | 25 |
| Tracey Corbitt | 29 |



Volunteer Opportunity Nominations Chair

AESC is looking for someone to serve on our board to help us find members to serve on our 2021-2022 Board. This position has a wonderful advisor in Bette Meuleners, our Nominations Emeritus (she served as our Nominations Chair for many years and has a lot of experience).

If you are interested in serving as our Nominations Chair or would like additional information please email nominations@armyengineerspouses.org.

Red Book Update

The publication of the Red Book will be delayed until mid December due to a nationwide paper shortage.

A digital version of the Membership Section of the 2021-2022 Red Book can be emailed to you upon request (please email Jackie Caldwell at jbc21047@aol.com) for all of you working on your holiday cards.

Additional details concerning the Red Book will be emailed to members on an as needed basis.



Will you be attending a holiday gathering with Engineer friends and/or families? We would love to share your photos with our members in our January CG. Please email Michelle at engineerspouse@gmail.com or send by text to 573-528-1422 by December 29.



Castle House Readers Book Club

The next meeting of the book club will be in January. The club will read *Beyond the Point* by Claire Gibson.



ELECTED BOARD

President

Mary Alice Jakso

Vice President

Urvi Avichal

Secretary

Brenda Schultze

Treasurer

Boumy Funes

AEMA Chairperson

Kerri Chase

APPOINTED BOARD

Castle Boutique

Stacy Lloyd

Castle Gram Editor

Michelle Funkhouser

Circulation

Basia Kent

Fairfax Liaison

Isabel Stevens

Historian

Erin Beer

Hospitality & Reservations

Erin Caswell

Knollwood Bake Sale

Priscilla Noah

Knollwood Liaison

Ann Kem

Membership

Jackie Caldwell

Nominations

Vacant

Nominations Emeritus

Bette Meuleners

Parliamentarian

Launa Klimowicz

Publicity/Facebook

Vanessa Joly

Webmaster

Terri Stevens

Service/Welfare

Jennifer Broderick

HONORARY ADVISORS

Honorary President

Sharise Spellmon

Honorary Vice President

Tanya Toussaint

SES Spouse Advisor

Jackie Caldwell

Army Engineer Memorial Awards

The Army Engineer Spouses' Club announces the Army Engineer Memorial Awards and the Geraldine K. Morris Award for 2022.

Applications must be post marked by February 28, 2022.

For more information, please email awardsapplication@armyengineerspouses.org. In your e-mail subject line, please indicate 2022 AEMA Award.

Applications, requirements, frequently asked questions and general information about the Army Engineer Memorial Awards may be found at our website at <https://www.armyengineerspouses.org/army-engineer-memorial-awards-aema.html>



Support the Army Engineer Memorial Awards through AmazonSmile

Who else is still working on their holiday gift list? If Amazon is your place of choice for your shopping, please consider designating the Army Engineer Memorial Awards as your preferred charity on AmazonSmile.

Amazon will donate 0.5% to AEMA at no extra cost to you when you shop at AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) using your existing account and designate the Army Engineer Memorial Awards as your preferred charity. AmazonSmile is also available on the Amazon App.

For our members that have already designated AEMA as their preferred charity, if you shop in the Amazon App please remember to update and renew AEMA as your preferred charity (this must be done twice a year).

Thank you for your support!

Morven Park and Dodona Manor Tour Photos



Mary Alice Jakso - Erin Caswell



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AESC members enjoyed a tour of Morven Park and George C. Marshall's Dodona Manor, both located in Leesburg, VA, with friends from the Belvoir Spouses' Club.

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Erin Caswell - Jackie Habel



Mary Alice Jakso - Erin Caswell



Culinary Corner

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If it's the winter holidays, it must be time to bake some cookies. I have so many wonderful memories of making holiday cookies with family members and I'm excited to continue the tradition with my three granddaughters.

For additional holiday treats recipes, please check out my Pinterest board "Holiday Sweets and Treats."

<https://www.pinterest.com/mfunkhouser/holiday-sweets-and-treats/>

Happy Baking! Michelle (Castle Gram Editor)

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Chocolate Toffee

Contributed by Bette Meuleners

1 1/4 cup (2 1/2 sticks) butter
1 1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Pinch kosher salt
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup toasted chopped almonds
1/2 cup toasted chopped pecans
Flaky sea salt, for garnish



1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine butter, sugar, vanilla, and salt. Let butter melt and sugar dissolve and bring to a boil, then cook, stirring constantly with a whisk, so the butter and sugar don't separate, until mixture turns a dark amber and is thick, 12 to 15 minutes. (if you'd like to use a candy thermometer for this step, attach it to the saucepan and cook until the temperature reaches 285 degrees.)

2. Pour toffee mixture onto a prepared baking sheet and immediately top all over with chocolate chips. Let sit 2 minutes so chocolate begins to melt, then spread chocolate all over with a spatula to create a layer on top of toffee.

3. Sprinkle all over with almonds and pecans (use chopped crumbs too for nice texture!) and flaky sea salt.

Chocolate Mint Candies Cookies

Contributed by Stacy Lloyd

3/4 cup butter
1 1/2 cup brown sugar
2 Tablespoons water
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
2 eggs
2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 (4.5 ounce) packages chocolate covered thin mints (such as Andes)

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, cook the sugar, butter, and water, stirring occasionally until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in the chocolate chips until melted and set aside to cool for 10 minutes.
2. Pour the chocolate mixture into a large bowl and beat in the eggs one at a time. Combine the flour, baking soda, and salt. Stir the dry mixture into the chocolate mixture. Cover and refrigerate dough for at least 1 hour.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease cookie sheets. Roll cookie dough into walnut sized balls and place 2 inches apart onto prepared cookie sheets.
4. Bake for 8-10 minutes, being careful not to overbake. When cookies come out of the oven, press one mint wafer onto the top of each cookie and let sit for 1 minute. When the mint is softened, swirl with the back of a spoon or a toothpick to make a pattern with the green filling of the mint wafer.



Castle Boutique Sales Photos

For the first time since the onset of the pandemic, AESC was able to hold an in person sale at USACE Headquarters in Washington, DC. As you can tell by the crowds around our table, people were excited to have the opportunity to shop from our fabulous inventory.



Happy Shoppers!

**Shannon Heitkamp-Stacy Lloyd
Launa Klimowicz-Brenda Schultze**



Sara Bailey



Castle Boutique

Stock up on Engineer swag for the holidays!

Many great items \$10 and under that are perfect for gifting and stocking stuffers!



Find that special gift online at the Castle Boutique. (Lots of new inventory that is NOT sitting on cargo ships!)



<https://www.armyengineerspouses.org/castle-boutique.html>

Dress up your holiday tables while showing your Engineer pride!

All proceeds go towards scholarships (Army Engineer Memorial Awards) to deserving Engineer sons and daughters!

It's a great way to shop while also giving back to the community.

