

Army Engineer Spouses' Club

Castle Gram

Volume II, Issue VIII

April 2012

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The Corps' Connection to the Washington, D.C., Tidal Basin and its Beloved Cherry Trees

Beginning in the 1880s the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers transformed the unsightly Potomac Flats in Washington, D.C., by dredging the river channel, dumping the spoil on the Flats, thus creating new land to the south of the Mall. To spread the spoil, Washington District Engineer Maj. Peter C. Hains used methods developed in levee work on the Mississippi River. In 1897 Congress dedicated some 600 acres of reclaimed land, henceforth called West Potomac Park and East Potomac Park, ordering that it be "forever held and used as a park for the recreation and pleasure of people."

Development of the land began in 1901 under Engineer Col. Theodore A. Bingham, who headed the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. The Washington Engineer District transferred to his control a parcel of land between the Tidal Basin and the Monument grounds and Bingham submitted an estimate for its improvement. Bingham included plans for drives, Japanese gardens, nurseries, polo grounds, athletic and military parade fields, and an electric fountain for the Basin in his grand scheme for the area. Bingham believed the park would provide fresh air and places of recreation for residents and serve as an "emerald setting for the beautiful city." Following Park Commission Plans, he raised the revetment wall along the Tidal Basin, cleared and graded the area, and built a 50-foot-wide macadam drive along the east side of the Basin. Workmen cleared away mounds of rubbish and brush, planted trees, and seeded lawns. In 1908 Congress voted money for a riverside drive from the basin inlet to 26th Street, and extended North B Street—the future Constitution Avenue—west as a park roadway to the Potomac.

On 25 March 1912 final work began on one of the best-known Engineer improvements, as more than 3,000 flowering cherry trees, a gift from Tokyo to Washington, arrived to replace an earlier shipment of diseased trees. On the afternoon of 27 March, the First Lady, Mrs. William Howard Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador, planted the first two cherry trees beside the Tidal Basin, where eleven years of care had created a perfect setting. Workers from the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, headed by Engineer Col. Spencer Cosby, proceeded to carefully lay out and plant 1,800 Yoshino cherry trees around the Basin. The remaining trees, of eleven other cherry tree varieties, were later planted on the White House grounds and throughout the city. Historically, the Yoshino cherry tree species enjoys a life span of about 40 years. Amazingly, an estimated 125 (or about 4 percent) of the original trees, including the first two planted, are now 90-years-old and still dazzling visitors in springtime.

In recognition of the long Engineer endeavor to create and embellish Potomac Park, the name Hains Point was chosen in 1917 for the southernmost tip of East Potomac Park, for Maj. (later Maj. Gen.) Peter Hains, the engineer who raised it from the waters.

The Corps' work in Washington demonstrates what engineering can achieve to provide improved recreation and beauty for crowded city dwellers and visiting tourists from around the world.



Horse-drawn carriages carry passengers along the new drive at the Tidal Basin, early 1900s



Cherry trees in bloom along the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C.

"Keeping our worldwide Engineer family connected - through the years and across the miles."



Kathy Moakler
President

The Gavel



...a note from our President

Dear AESC Friends,

Happy April! We have several great events planned for the club this month. On the 11th we will travel to Knollwood for our annual bake sale for the residents. We offer sweet and savory choices for sale (cookies, lemon bars, sausage balls, etc). More info can be found in this month's newsletter about suggested goodies and pricing. This has been a great success for many years and keeps us connected with our Engineers who reside at Knollwood. If you are not familiar with Knollwood, originally known as the Distaff Hall, here is some history courtesy of their website - Since Knollwood opened its doors in 1962 as the first military retirement community in the United States exclusively for retired officers, their spouses or widows and nuclear female relatives, the mission has been to provide affordable, secure retirement housing and health care to members of the American military family. At Knollwood, residents have the opportunity to live with others who have experienced the unique life of the military family.

*Our Engineer residents at Knollwood include:
COL (ret) Richard and Eunice Brownley
Jean Hayes
Helene Manning*

Thanks to Priscilla Noah, our Knollwood Bake Sale Chairman, for her many years of coordinating this successful event.

Our next April event will be our Scholarship Brunch, to be held at the Fairfax, another DC area retirement community. Thanks to Joyce Rebh who serves as our liaison to our Engineer residents at the Fairfax. They include:

*BG (ret) Pete and Betty Boerger
Kay Burlin
Arlene Camm
Sandy Egber
LTG (ret) Vald and Kitty Heiberg
COL (ret) Harold and Ilse Henson
Emily Jansen
COL (ret) John Kerkering
MG (ret) George & Joyce Rebh
Helen Sawyer
Jeanne Schmidt*

We have held this event at the Fairfax, just outside Fort Belvoir, for the past several years. The invitation is found in the newsletter. We will honor our Army Engineer Memorial Award and Geraldine K. Morris Award recipients at this special event. We hope you can join us to honor these outstanding young scholars who are our Engineer sons and daughters.

Speaking of our scholarship recipients - wouldn't it be fun to find out "where are they now?" I'm the mother of two scholarship recipients myself and I know what a difference the monetary award made in tight financial times. If you have a son or daughter who is a past recipient, please send us an update on what they are doing now. Be sure to ask their permission since we will publish the vignettes in a future newsletter or on the website (we are still in the creation stage). Please include:

*The year they received the award
Where they went to college*

What they are doing now (and if it coincides with what they studied in college)

And any other honors or things you want to brag about!

Let's share the success and inspire our next generation of award winners.

I would be remiss if I did not thank our generous host and hostess of the March fundraiser for the AEMA. Donna and Tony Leketa opened their wonderful home to the club with a very entertaining wine tasting. All those attending had a fabulous time and a significant amount was raised to augment the funds available to award for the AEMA.

*Still a few board positions open - contact Bette Meuleners if you would like to serve.
Until next month.
Essayons!*

Kathy Moakler

Knollwood Bake Sale

April 11, 2012 at 10 AM



We are delighted to have the opportunity to revisit Knollwood, with baked goods, hors d'oeuvres and special goodies for diabetics.

Knollwood is the home for retired military and their spouses. Our special treats are sold with all the revenue to return to Knollwood for the benefit of residents who need some financial assistance. We Engineers love to take care of our military families. So start making all types of baked goodies, hors d'oeuvres and other snack mixes.

Please bring the goodies to Knollwood already priced:

Bar Cookies and Brownies - 50¢

Cupcakes -50¢

Mini Loaves \$2.00 each

Cheese, Sausage, or Spinach Balls - 12@ \$2.00

Mini Quiches - 4 @ \$2.00

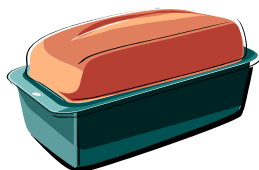
Snack Mixes \$1.00/bag

Appetizers & Other Cocktail-Hour Nibbles - 6 @ \$1.50

Cookies - 1 dozen @ \$1.50 - \$2.00 depending on cookie size

We hope many of you will come join us for a fun day. Please plan to stay for lunch in the dining area.

If you can't make it to Knollwood (6200 Oregon Ave NW, Washington, DC 20015) on the 11th of April but would like to donate baked goods, give Priscilla Noah a call at 703-505-3182.



KNOLLWOOD



Bette Meuleners
Nomination
Committee
Chairperson

MEMBER BUSINESS



.....a note from Bette

As chairperson of the Nominating committee, I presented the following slate for the Army Engineer Spouses' Club (AESC) Board for 2012-2013 at the March 2012 board meeting:

President -- Kathy Moakler
 Vice-President -- Anna Marie Cox
 Secretary -- Roz Riley
 Treasurer -- Holly Scherer
 AEMA Chairman/Treasurer -- Laura Putnam

The board voted to accept the slate of nominations. The club members will vote at the April meeting/function (Scholarship Brunch on Sunday, April 29th, at The Fairfax) as per the constitution.

The President appoints the remaining members of the board with the help of the Nominating committee. The board members appointed so far for 2012-2013 are:

AEMA Scholarship -- Susan Oliveri (Mike Walsh)
 Fairfax Liaison -- Joyce Rebh
 Hospitality -- Lynda Flowers
 Knollwood Liaison -- Betty Swygert
 Knollwood Bake Sale -- Priscilla Noah
 Media Team:
 Castle Gram -- Elsie Mersereau
 Circulation -- Kara Anderson
 Facebook -- Elizabeth Hill
 Publicity/Historian -- Beth Massanti
 Webmaster -- Susan Wright
 Membership -- Jackie Caldwell
 Nominations -- Bette Meuleners
 Parliamentarian -- Vacant
 Reservations -- Sarah Pearce
 Ways and Means (Services) -- Vacant
 Welfare -- Barbara Fleming

We still need:
Ways and Means (Services)
Parliamentarian

Let us know if you might be interested in either of these positions or if you would be able to be a "Co" Vice President or and assistant to the VP?

Thank You!

Bette Meuleners
 AESC Nominating Chairperson 2012-2013
 571-235-3566
bmeuleners@gmail.com



- ✧ April 11 – Knollwood Bake Sale, 10 am
- ✧ April 27th – DC Design House
11 am, Tickets \$20 (pay at the door)
- ✧ April 29th – Scholarship Brunch
1pm, The Fairfax
- ✧ May 9th – Tour of Oakalona

Upcoming Board Meeting

Wednesday, 4 April 2012
1100-1300
Home of Mollie O'Neill
5901 Mt Eagle Dr #1406
Alexandria, VA 22303
703-317-3961
Members are welcome



THE CAPITOL CONNECTION



SHARING

Wine Tasting

3 Mar 2012

~Mary Pratt

This year's wine tasting was an extraordinary event and we would like to give special thanks to Tony and Donna Leketa. The Leketas opened their beautiful home to AESC and sponsored the wine tasting, delicious hors d'oeuvres and a piano performance. Every detail of the evening was well designed and made it a memorable event.

Tony chose five Cabernet Sauvignons and five Chardonnay wines for the guests to taste. As the guests savored each sample, Tony provided an in-depth description of the wines qualities and flavors. As one would expect, each wine was exquisite and unique.

The evening provided a great venue for the members of AESC to enjoy fellowship, as well as raising money for the scholarship fund.



THANK YOU:

*Tony and Donna Leketa for Hosting
Gene Villiva—Photographer*



Birthdays.....

Ann Harrell Grisoli	April 01
Sally Ball	April 02
Star Henderson	April 10
Jackie Danielson	April 12
Sandy Davis	April 12
Mary Scott	April 15
Susan Hofman	April 17
Lee Boutin	April 18
Susan Oliveri	April 20
Mary Lorber	April 23
Heidi Rassatt	April 25
Dolores Felch	April 29
Jennifer Riordan	April 30

Renee Johnson	May 01
Allison Chamberlayne	May 02
Karen Emenheiser	May 08
Kathy Candido	May 09
Mary Pratt	May 09
Beth Lockwood	May 12
Lynda Flowers	May 13
Tricia Murphy	May 15
Lauren Castro	May 17
Carolyn Hudson	May 17
Ruth Bond	May 18
Donna Dabbieri	May 18
Sandra Loew	May 18
Pamela Jacobsen	May 21
Cindy Wesley	May 21
Kathy Moakler	May 22
Debbie Rapp	May 26
Lorna Loring	May 28
Bette Meuleners	May 28
Emily Jansen	May 29



MEMBER CELEBRATIONS



Q: Why do people clink their glasses before drinking a toast?

A: It used to be common for someone to try to kill an enemy by offering him a poisoned drink. To prove to a guest that a drink was safe, it became customary for a guest to pour a small amount of his drink into the glass of the host. Both men would drink it simultaneously. When a guest trusted his host, he would only touch or clink the host's glass with his own.

Laura Putnam

Nancy Temple

SCHOLARSHIP

ARMY ENGINEER MEMORIAL AWARDS

“The awards established in memory of Army Engineer Officers who died in Vietnam shall be given annually to honor Engineer Officers who die in the line of duty.”

Money for these awards comes from various projects sponsored by the club during the year. Also, money frequently is received from individual members, either as an outright gift or as a memorial. We thank all of you who have donated to the AEMA. We appreciate your generosity, as do these scholars who have qualified for the Awards this year.

AWARDEES:

- KATHERINE MARIE KEM from Wiesbaden, Germany
- NICOLETTE PAIGE YOUNG from Williamsburg, VA
- JORDAN SCOTT LLOYD from Honolulu, HI

GERALDINE K. MORRIS AWARD

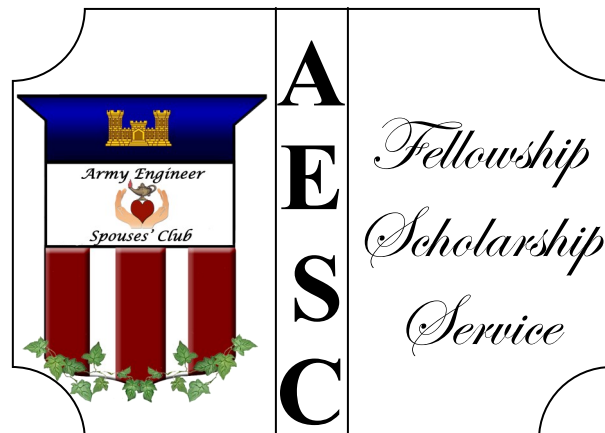
Established in memory of Geraldine K. Morris, this award is given annually to a candidate who intends to enroll in a program leading to a nursing degree or certification. Mrs. Morris was a former Army nurse, Army wife, wife of the 44th Chief of Engineers and Honorary President of the Army Engineer Officers' Wives Club.

We thank the Morris family for their generosity in establishing this award, as does the scholar who has qualified for this Award this year.

AWARDEE:

- ELLEN GABRIELLE HENDRICKS from West Point, NY

Many thanks to AEMA Chair Laura Putnam and Scholarship Chair Nancy Temple for their excellent stewardship of this selection process.





Please Join Us

*Army Engineer Memorial
Awards Brunch*

April 29, 2012

1 pm

The Fairfax

Guest Speaker

MG Temple

Acting Chief of Engineers

*Join us as we enjoy a Champagne Brunch
and recognize our 2012*

*Army Engineer Memorial Award and
Geraldine K. Morris Award Recipients.*

RSVP by April 23

A-M - Pat O'Neill PPoneill6@aol.com

N-Z - Sarah Pearce pearcesall@cox.net

Cost is \$25+tax per person (pay at the door)

AN INVITATION

**AESC MEMBERS WILL VOTE ON
2012-2013 ELECTED OFFICERS**



UPCOMING EVENT

As many of you might know, Carl and Julie Strock purchased Oakalona when they retired from the Army and the Corps of Engineers (Carl was the 51st Chief of Engineers). Although they have been living in England much of the time since then, they were able to restore this lovely home--keeping the renovation as historically accurate as possible and also incorporating modern conveniences--like a gourmet kitchen and a bathroom on the main floor (under the stairs like Quarters 9 at Ft. McNair). Some of the board members at the time when the Strock's purchased the property were able to see the home right after it was acquired. To say it had not been well cared for is a real understatement--it was in terrible condition, but Julie could see it's potential. The house is now almost completely renovated (some of the "out" buildings still need work)--it is unbelievably beautiful and the furnishings are just gorgeous! In fact, it is so well done inside and out, it was on a tour of plantation homes in December of 2011 that was advertised in "Southern Living".

Julie has graciously offered to host us for a house tour and a potluck luncheon. The day has been set for Wednesday, May 9th. The Strock's "new" (170 plus years old) home is located in Hustle, VA--a little more than 1 1/2 hours from Fort Belvoir and about 25 miles east of Fredericksburg. More details will be in the May issue of the Castle Gram. We'll arrange a place to meet so those who'd like can carpool or follow each other down to Oakalona that day.

Any questions please email Bette Meuleners at bmeuleners@gmail.com or call her cell at 571-235-3566.

The following is the write up about the history of Oakalona that was used in advertising for the tour of plantation homes.

This lovely Greek Revival style home brick home, c. 1840, offers wonderful original doors and moldings and wide pine hardwood floors on first and second floor. The period mantels, wide crown molding, and plaster walls throughout the home are also original. There are four chimneys, two on each end of the house and well designed porches on the front and back, each supported by large white pillars with bricked rooms beneath. Both the lower and top floors have large center halls flanked symmetrically by the various rooms of the house. Built by John G. Bentley on 796 of the original 2,200 acres owned by Thomas Gouldman, his wife's great-grandfather. The house was sold to William Taliaferro and his wife Daisy Chapman Taliaferro in 1905. Taliaferro, blinded in a hunting accident in his early 20's, became one of the most successful farmers in Essex, specializing in growing watermelons for pickles. He and Daisy had nine children, two of whom, Daisy and Andrew, made their at Oakalona until 2001. The Taliaferro heirs sold to Charles L. Williams in 2003, and in 2007 the Williams sold to Mr. and Mrs. Carl A. Strock, who have restored the house and grounds.



WELCOME TO OUR 2012 AESC NEW MEMBERS:

Tawanda Agee, Lorton, VA
Email: tawanda.agee@usace.army.mil

Casey Andrysiak, Arlington, VA
Email: casey_andrysiak@hotmail.com

Allison Chamberlayne, Mt Pleasant, SC
Email: allison@chamberlayne.net

Tayna Dalton, Stafford, VA
Email: TaynaDalton55@hotmail.com

Shannon Hendrickson, Ft Belvoir, VA
Email: household6-00@yahoo.com

Martha Kem, Wiesbaden, Germany
Email: thekems@tk-net.com

Elisa Kinsman, Clarksville, TN
Email: elisa.kinsman@us.army.mil

Dee Lee, Mandeville, LA
Email: alanddeelee@aol.com

Germaine Savoy, Washington, DC
Email: gsavoy3@gmail.com

Harbans Singh, Rockville, MD
Email: hksingh7@hotmail.com

**Be a part of the only Engineer network for spouses, join today
and invite a friend.**

Membership application can be found in our website

<http://armyengineerspouses.com>



**As income tax time approaches, did you ever notice:
When you put the two words 'The ' and 'IRS'
together, it spells**

'THEIRS'?

**Jackie Caldwell
Membership
Chairman**

MEMBERSHIP



AESC
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Alexandria, VA 22306-6332