

Source

A Newsletter for the Patients, Volunteers & Staff of the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and clinic

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Employee Appreciation Day!



On Employee Appreciation day VA SORCC residents (bottom left) John Thomas of section 4 and William Peacock of Section 6 stood at the main gate at 4:30pm with a VA SORCC signature pizza paddle that read “Thank You”, and waved at each and every vehicle to let the employees know just how much they are appreciated.

Story continues on page 4

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The VA SORCC, welcomes submission of articles of interest to our readers. The editor reserves the right to use and edit all contributed articles. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Administrative Boards, Editorial Staff, or Department of Veterans Affairs.

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A Message from the

Director

Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of VASORCC:

As the heat sets in so does the fourth quarter. In the VA this is the time of year we prepare to finish out the year and plan for the next year. Sometimes this means belt tightening and sometimes it means being ready at the right time to respond. Either way, the SORCC has always performed in an outstanding manner and I believe this year will be no exception.

We will begin to plan for the next year by holding strategic planning sessions in both July and August. This is our chance to reassess where we are going and to best plan for the future of this facility and the veterans that we serve.

The focus will be on closing out the year and planning for the next, but we must always be mindful of Customer Service at every level. This includes our most important customer, the veteran and their families, but also our internal customers, each other. Please keep courtesy, civility and a positive work environment in mind as you interact with veterans, their families and each other. The SORCC has always been a "Center of Excellence" and I believe good customer service is a key component.

So remember Customer Service and stay cool during these hot summer days. Thank you for the work you do every day for our Nation's veterans.



Max E. McIntosh, PhD, MBA
Director

SORCC Received Special Visitors



On June 11 the VA SORCC hosted The Sam's Valley Extension Women's Group. Tom Marshall, CRD Specialist, guided the group on a tour of the Camp White Museum and the new sixty-four bed building. The women were highly impressed with the cleanliness of the facility and the excellent living conditions our veterans enjoy. They praised the friendly environment of staff and volunteers who greeted them as they walked throughout the VA SORCC hallways. They said they look forward to future tours.



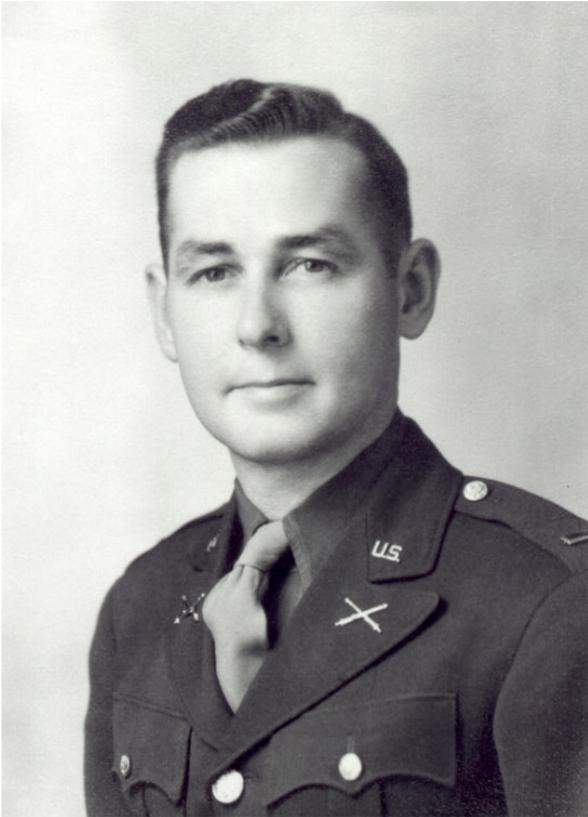
On July 2 the VA SORCC hosted Noah's Ark Daycare Program in Central Point. The group consisted of thirteen students ranging in age from 8 to 13 and two teachers. The group toured the Camp White Museum with Tom Marshall, CRD Specialist along with experiencing the great outdoors by the fish pond (big hit with the kids)...looking for the rumored five pound bass that lurks at the bottom. The whole group enjoyed their visit and plan on spreading the word about our tours to other daycare facilities in the valley.

VAVS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August '08	4 th	VAVS Committee Meeting, 10 am, Activity Room
September '08	1 st	Labor Day - CRD Office closed
	11 th	Patriot Day
	19 th	National POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony
	19 th - 21 st	Stand Down - VA Roseburg

NOTE: This is not an all-inclusive list. It is a general guideline to recurring events!

Camp White Corner



Captain Mel Cotton Founder of the Camp White Historical Association



Maj. Gen George White whom the Camp was named for.

Camp White Historical Association's mission to put together a Camp White Military Museum has been accomplished, with artifacts, archives and a library with an estimated value of one million dollars. Due to lack of county funding, the Camp White Historical Association has decided to disband and turn over to VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic the museum and its artifacts for future preservation. Al Inlow will stay on as curator/manager of the museum and the SORCC will continue to keep the past history of WWII Army Camp White alive. The museum goals for last year included a new glass display cabinet to display the antique weapons with a improved alarm; and a goal for next year is to improve the lighting system in the display cabinets.

Anyone that would like to donate funds to the museum, please send to the VA SORCC Museum attn: James Cunningham (692/135) 8496 Crater Lake Hwy. White City, OR 97503.

Camp White Museum originator Capt. Mel Cotton 91st Div 347th FA "C" BTRY passed away June 30, 2008 at the age of 91. He will be greatly missed, but well remembered.

Employee Appreciation Day!

First and foremost, a sincere thank you goes out to Dr. McIntosh for this year's Employee Appreciation Day celebration! What a fun day! On behalf of the EAD Committee, we hope everyone enjoyed the day and events.

The parade will become a recurring event so think about entries for next year! This year's winners received gift certificates donated by VAVS to Abby's Pizza.

- | | | |
|-------------------|------|---|
| Honorable Mention | \$25 | Pet Therapy Dogs |
| 3rd Place | \$50 | Chris Miller – “70's Remembered” |
| 2nd Place | \$75 | Fiscal – “Money – The Universal Language” |

Grand Prize \$150 MCCF – “Presidents (including Monica Lewinsky and Secret Service Agent)”

Thank-you to the following businesses that donated to this year's event:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Rogue Valley Inkjet & Toner | 2 tickets to Southern Oregon Speedway |
| • David Robinson – Snap-On Tool Dealer | Beach towel, 4 mugs, 2 can holders, |
| • Doug Herbert Diorama Edgewater Inn | One night standard river room |
| • Rogue Regency Inn & Suite | One night stay breakfast |
| • Raft the Rogue – Shady Cove | One 4-man trip on Rogue River |
| • Dinners Done Right – Medford | Gift Certificate - \$30 value |
| • Estemed Bean – CWT | 5 coffee mugs w/biscotti and \$3 certificate |
| • EEO | Armband radio |

Certificates from various local restaurants were given away in addition to the above.

The Rope Swing was a **HUGE** hit. We had thirty-five employees swing like Tarzan – and some of them sounded better than Tarzan! Remember, none of this takes place without volunteers. I want to thank everyone who helped make this year's event so successful. Most of you worked in the background setting up tables, loading and unloading food, decorations, serving food and so much more. Your efforts are what make this place a great place to work!

In the next several weeks there will be a short comment card available for staff to use for feedback about this year's Employee Appreciation Day. Please take the few minutes needed to provide us (your committee) with your thoughts.



.....Employee Appreciation Day Photos Continue



.....Employee Appreciation Day Photos Continue



.....Employee Appreciation Day Photos Continue



Ambulatory Care Service Strives for Even Better Care

The Ambulatory Care Service has undergone some changes that will improve how veterans access their care teams: Direct line to the Ambulatory Care Clinic – vets can now access the call center via the main facility number or the new direct number (541)830-7499.



Tracy Dekelboum, MSW, Coordinator, Ambulatory Care Center

The Ambulatory Care staff hopes this will improve access to treatment teams. Pods – A Pod is a group of treatment teams, each with a designated provider, nurse, and clerk. The teams will support one another when a provider is on leave, provide patients with a direct line to access their teams, and each Pod's designated medical support staff will be able to address veterans scheduling needs. Each Pod will have its own designated check-in and check-out area. There will not be any major changes for vets in accessing your care other than improved access and team support for your treatment needs. The first Pod of the two to three to be established is located on the East side of Building 201. It includes the Gold, Green, Mint, Orange, and Silver teams. Patients assigned to these teams now have a direct line at (541) 830-7475.

Appointment Cards – Veterans will soon notice that rather than receiving letters reminding them of appointments they will receive bi-folded cards. This is a VA Northwest Health Network program which improves how we communicate with veterans regarding appointments. Each card lists the type of appointment, date of appointment, and reminders of required items for appointments. The cards will also include directions and contact numbers should you need to make any changes. If veterans have any questions regarding these new processes, do not hesitate to contact Tracy Dekelboum, MSW, Coordinator for Ambulatory Care Services at (541) 830-7423. Tracy welcomes any input our veterans might have especially on the new appointment cards.

I Say Goodbye to thee

You brought on this insanity
You've run off all my family
You've beat me down, right to my knees
I say goodbye to thee.

You acted like, you were my friend,
Inch by inch you reeled me in
Harsh realities, you could bend
I say goodbye to thee.

False Pride and courage, were your key
Slanderous outburst you called honesty,
Maniacal rage was integrity
I say goodbye to thee.

Oh alcohol you ruthless whore
You've left me shaking at the door
Howling at the moon for more
I say goodbye to thee.

A trembling weakling you left me
From core out through extremity
Always dodging sanity
I say goodbye to thee.

Until at last I was your slave
Jails, institutions and the grave
The road to hell was aptly paved
I say goodbye to thee.

When total defeat I did succeed
I'd found my surrender had planted seed
From the depths of hell I'd rise indeed
I say goodbye to thee.

In my most desperate hour
I found I had a higher power
My seeds they would then grow and flower
I say goodbye to thee.

So now I've severed the hangmans rope
I've stuck form on this slippery slope
My disparity has turned to hope
I say goodbye to thee

By Bob Kennedy

IRS Sends Stimulus Payment Information to Retirees, Veterans

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today reminded qualifying retirees and veterans that it is not too late to file for an economic stimulus payment and announced it will send a second set of information packets to 5.2 million people who may be eligible but who have not yet filed for their stimulus payment.

The packages will contain everything needed by a person who normally does not have a filing requirement but who must file this year in order to receive an economic stimulus payment. There will be instructions, an example Form 1040A return showing the few lines that need to be completed, and a blank Form 1040A. The packages will be mailed over a three-week period starting July 21.

“All it takes is a few simple steps, and the payment can be on its way. It’s not too late to file, but the sooner people file, the faster they’ll receive their money,” said Doug Shulman, IRS Commissioner.

The mailing is part of an IRS summer campaign to reach out to those people who have no requirement to file a tax return but who may be eligible for a stimulus payment of up to \$300 (\$600 for married filing jointly). For those eligible for a payment for themselves, there also is a \$300 per child payment for eligible children younger than 17.

The IRS has accounted for about 75 percent of the approximately 20 million Social Security and Veterans Affairs beneficiaries identified as being potential stimulus recipients. All but 5.2 million of those have either filed a return, filed a joint return or were not eligible for a stimulus payment (for example, they were claimed as a dependent on another’s return).

To reach the remaining recipients, the IRS is working with national partners, members of Congress and state and local officials to ensure that assistance to eligible people is available. The agency also reminded people that it has more than 400 local Taxpayer Assistance Centers operating normal business hours Monday through Friday. These centers can provide assistance to retirees and veterans

trying to receive their payments. A list of addresses and office hours can be found at the IRS home page, under “Contact My Local Office.”

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 provided for payments of up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married filing jointly) for taxpayers who normally file a tax return and have a tax liability. It provided that stimulus recipients could receive another \$300 for each eligible child younger than 17. The Act also created a special category for people who had certain types of income but may not file a tax return because their income is too low or their income is nontaxable.

People in this category must have at least \$3,000 in qualifying income to be eligible for the minimum amount of \$300 (\$600 married filing jointly). Qualifying income is the total of Social Security, Veterans Affairs and/or Railroad Retirement benefits plus earned income, including nontaxable combat pay

People receiving only Supplemental Security Income are not eligible. Eligible people must have a Social Security Number (unless their spouse is a member of the military) and be neither a dependent nor eligible to be a dependent on another’s tax return.

Receiving the stimulus payment should have no impact on other federal benefits currently being received. The stimulus payment is not taxable. Absent any other filing requirements, filing a tax return to receive a stimulus payment does not mean that retirees and others will have to start filing tax returns again.

As of July 11, the IRS had issued 112.4 million payments totaling \$91.8 billion. Payments are based on 2007 tax returns being filed this year. People must file by October 15 in order to receive a payment in 2008. Those who do not file a tax return to obtain their stimulus payment this year may still receive their stimulus payments by filing a 2008 tax return next spring, but then their stimulus payment would be based on their 2008 qualifying income.

My HealthVet Receives Awards

From Two Major Information Technology Groups



WASHINGTON – My HealthVet -- the web-based portal that enables veterans to create and maintain a personal health record -- has received two major awards from organizations that focus on effective use of Internet Technology.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA)'s Office of Information has been selected to receive one of the prestigious 2008 "CIO 100 Awards" in recognition of its innovative use of information technology at its My HealthVet web site www.myhealth.va.gov. The CIO 100 award program recognizes organizations around the world that exemplify the highest level of operational and strategic excellence in Information Technology.

VA developed My HealthVet www.myhealth.va.gov to be a one-stop location for veterans of all eras to receive critical medical and benefits information and to provide ways for veterans to input and view some of their own medical records online.

Earlier this year, My HealthVet was selected as the Gold Award winner for Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection Awards in the Category of Patient/Consumer Safety by the Utilization Review Accreditation Committee (URAC). URAC is an independent nonprofit group known as a leader in promoting health care quality through its accreditation and education programs.

"These awards demonstrate how VA and its leaders continue to provide innovative Information Technology solutions to enhance veteran and employee health, and improve the quality of care VA's health care system provides," said Dr. Michael J. Kussman, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "I encourage America's veterans and others to log on to My HealthVet and forge a new partnership with us to make their health care decisions."

Recent upgrades to the web-based portal include an Active Duty Center for newly discharged veterans, a new calendar option, and Military Health System (MHS) learning modules which feature three online courses developed in concert with the Department of Defense. Another upgrade will be added soon enabling veterans to view their lab results for certain tests and view appointments.

Craig B. Luigart, VHA's Chief Information Officer, will receive VA's award on Aug. 26, 2008 at the 10th Annual CIO Symposium and Awards Ceremony in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Complete coverage of the 2008 CIO 100 awards will be in the August 15 issue of CIO magazine and available online at www.cio.com on June 1.

URAC announced 22 winners for excellence among entries from health care management, health information technology, health plan and pharmacy benefit management organizations. Gold Award winners were selected for their ability to measurably demonstrate an impact on consumer empowerment or protection, as well as for their potential for wide-spread implementation of the program by other organizations. A complete list of award winners may be found at www.urac.org.

My HealthVet also was selected earlier this year as winner of the 2007 "Top 5" Excellence.Gov Awards for innovative technology from the American Council for Technology's Industry Advisory Council, a nonprofit education organization established to assist government in acquiring and effectively using information technology resources.

Eleventh Annual Veterans Pow Wow-An Honoring Tradition

By Ricky Martin

White City VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic (SORCC) was host to the 11th Annual Rogue Valley Veterans Pow Wow during the first weekend in June 2008. Members of the Patient Council and SORCC residents volunteered many hours to assure the event was successful. The event was open and free to the public during June 6-7 and there were approximately 2000 Native Americans and non-Natives in attendance over the weekend who observed or took part in several festivities and dances.

The Pow Wow kicked off Saturday morning with a Traditional Gourd Dance and Story followed a little later by a Grand Entry led by carriers of the Eagle Staff and our Nations flags. Native American Prayer and traditional songs immediately followed the Grand Entry. Those who participated in the Grand Entry included Native Americans from all parts of the country in full regalia and all veterans were invited to join in the Entry. Both days opened in similar fashion. This year all veterans received a medal presented by Dr. Max McIntosh and Native American Spiritual Leader Grandma Aggie. The medal is to thank all veterans for their service to our country and to welcome them home. The medal was designed by elder Nick Hall and made at the VA SORCC. The SORCC Patient Council coordinated the efforts of over 25 residents who took responsibility for transporting elders and equipment to and from the event, transporting ice to the "Fry Bread" booth, and staffing the "Fry Bread" booth, refuse clean-up and transportation efforts. The weather was warm throughout the weekend, and the people were instructed to drink lots of fluids. Approximately twenty vendors sold arts and crafts. Native American drum groups and Native American dancers came from all over the Northwest to participate in the event.

Throughout the Pow Wow, awards were given. All experienced the honorings, dances, and traditional ceremony. Over the eleven year history, the Pow Wow Committee has been committed to providing veterans at the SORCC and from around the Northwest with access to healing and restoration through the experience of Native American practice, acknowledgement, and fellowship.

Prior to the Pow Wow there was a special Sweat Lodge conducted Thursday and Friday evening elders from several tribes came together for a pipe ceremony in a traditional teepee on the ball field at VA SORCC. These tribal elders came together for the spiritual healing of the pipe and to promote inter-tribal unity throughout the region.

The VA SORCC organization is proud of the commitment to culture sharing. The Annual Rogue Valley Veterans Pow Wow provides an opportunity for residents in rehabilitation programs at the SORCC and citizens of the greater Rogue Valley to experience the beauty, pageantry and spirituality of this traditional Native American gathering.

Part of the healing quality of the Pow Wow comes from the focus on service to family, community and country. Native American storytellers weave the idea of the spiritual nature of service to others as a key element in recovery. These qualities are also highly valued in the VA SORCC rehabilitation mission. The residents of the SORCC who helped the elders and children find their way, or served up "Indian Tacos", or helped set up and tear down the tents and shelters, displayed the healing power of community. The Pow Wow offers a beautiful display of how veterans

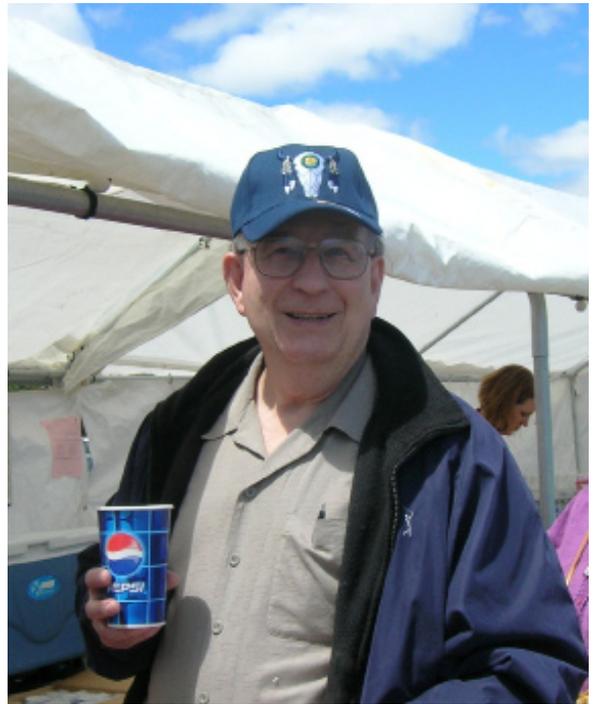
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...2008 POW WOW Continued

continued from page 11

can experience healing by helping others. The Rogue Valley Veterans Pow Wow Committee wishes to thank the VA SORCC Patient Council and the residents for all their help and all veterans, families and businesses for their support and attendance to the 11th Annual Rogue Valley Veterans Pow Wow. The success of this event is directly related to the combined efforts of everyone.



More 2008 POW WOW Photos Continued...





EMPLOYEE NEWS

From Human Resources

June/July 2008

WELCOME ABOARD:

Ambulatory Care Services Klamath Falls CBOC : Sean O'Connor, Medical Support Assistant

Canteen: Misty Downing, Cashier-Checker

Clinical Support Service: Anna Suttmann, RN; Christy Jacobs, RN; Kimberly Oberacker, RN; Shilo Schalk, RN; Avelina Manalo, RN

Dental: Dr. Paul Anderson, Dentist; Kimberly Casey, Dental Assistant/OA

Facilities Management Service: Rodney Grabenhorst, Electrician

Medical Service: James Finney, Ultrasound Technician

Mental Health Clinic Home Based Primary Care: Laura Franco, RN

Office of Information Management: William Dave Easter, Virtual IT

Recourse Management: Lana Liles, Civilian Payroll Technician

MOVING AROUND:

Acquisitions & Material Management Service: Pamela Bean, reassign to Mail Room

Business Management Office: Keith Welsh, Promotion - Service Chief; Michael Schmidt, Promotion – Management Analyst; Brandy Hall, Program Support Clerk; Reta Poplin, Promotion – Program Support Assistant Pre-registration; Sandra Koliass, Promotion – Audiology; Janet Bowen, Promotion – Fee

Directors Staff: Wolf Agotta, Promotion – Patient Advocate

Facilities Management Service: Cindy Zippi, Promotion – Work Order Clerk

Mental Health Product Line (MHPL): Wendy Hicks, Promotion - Hud/VASH Social Worker; Charles Lewis, Promotion – Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist

Nutrition & Food Service: Deb Cary, Promotion – Food Service Worker

Public Safety: Linda Genaw, Promotion – Lead Security Assistant

Resource Management: Judy Northway, Intern Conversion to Accountant; Jennifer Russell, Intern Conversion to Budget Analyst

Utilization Management: Theresa Smith, Promotion – Psychology Technician

VISN 20IT: Paul Otnes, VISN IT; Mark Brown, VISN IT

RETIREES:

Business Management Office: John Wilken, Management Analyst

Facilities Management Service: Gary Thompson, Gardener/Motor Vehicle Operator

Resource Management: Karen Wilken, Accounting Technician

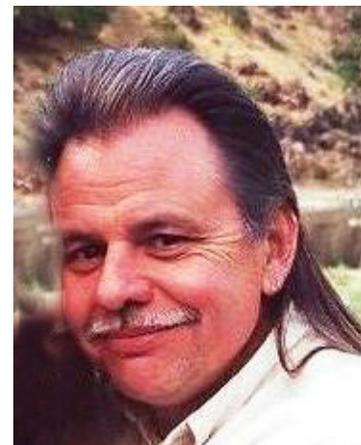


Behind the Lines

By Patient Council

This month in behind the lines, we would like to recognize Rick Martin for his outstanding work here at the VA SORCC.

Rick's career started twenty-two years ago in Topeka, Kansas which would eventually lead him to the VA SORCC, White City. Rick has seen and made many changes in his career but what has been most rewarding to Rick is working with the veterans. "If it was not for the vets, I wouldn't be here today." One of his most recent works was his volunteer service to coordinate this year's Annual Native American Pow Wow. Rick spent many hours getting residents to participate, put on meetings after business hours so residents could join, and spent the four days of the Pow Wow making sure that everything went smoothly. Rick believes it is a great gift from the Tribes to come and share their peaceful culture with the residents and believes it to be an honor to be able to coordinate such a spiritual event. Rick also helps coordinate the monthly Native American Sweat Lodges, which also cleanses the spirit.



In his spare time, Rick likes to spend time on his ranch and with his partner of seventeen years. He tries to bring the peace from this life to work, which has made him a more compassionate leader whom his employees enjoy working with.

The veterans here at the VA SORCC appreciate all Rick's dedication to serving them and making their stay a learning and spiritual venture. The extra time Rick volunteers to the veterans has not gone unnoticed. We would like to give a big Thank You to Rick Martin.

Integrated Ethics

Integrated Ethics LEADERSHIP addresses the culture of the organization. Leadership can move the culture:

FROM: Reactive	TO: Proactive
Case based	Systems Oriented
Narrow	Comprehensive
Silos	Collaboration
Punishment	Motivation
Rules	Rules + Values

Any staff person who has an Integrated Ethics question or concern can contact a member of the Integrated Ethics Committee through the Associate Director's office. Patients may forward questions by contacting the Patient Representative.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

As employees of the VA, we see on the walls and in pamphlets handed out the statement, “Patients are our first priority.” And this rings true with our Mission statement, goals and priorities. But I would remind us all that it is not the words written in Mission Statements or Goals and Objectives that determine how patients are treated. Rather it is what the veteran personally experiences from each VA employee that will tell the veterans the truth of our priorities here at the VA SORCC. This also holds true in the area of spirituality and faith. It is not important that the minister says the right words; it is always much more effective for individuals to “see a sermon” than to “hear one.” Many who do not wish to be a part of any faith community have given for the following reasons: “I never ever met a true believer” or “I did meet a believer and he or she did ...” We can fill in the, dots. In I Corinthians 4:2 it says, “Moreover, it is required of stewards that he be found faithful”. How well do you and I represent our faith in God to others? I found a poem that I’ve had for a long time and it still speaks to me. The author of the poem is unknown... I hope you will not only enjoy it, but that it might speak to your life as well.

“There’s a sweet old story translated for men, but writ in the long, long ago –“
The gospel, according to Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, of Christ and His mission below.

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day, by the deeds that you do, by the words that you say.

People read what you write, whether faithless or true. Say – what is the gospel according to you?

Men and women read and admire the gospel of Christ, with its love so unfailing and true; but what do they say, and what do they think of the gospel according to you?

We are writing each day a letter to others; take care that your writing is true. ‘Tis the only gospel some will ever read, it’s the gospel according to you!”

Chaplain Roberts

Gordon Pritchett, Patient Advocate

Can help you with: Compliments, complaints or unmet needs. If you have SORCC policies and procedures questions not answered elsewhere, come see me I have an open door policy. My hours are:

6:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Monday—Thursday
Building 202, Room 103
Ext. 3657

