



# Holiday Newsletter

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DECEMBER 16, 2015

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Season's greetings as we enter this time of celebration and as we close another year! I would like to thank those people who have contributed to another successful year with the MLS PAG – we are only as good as our supporters, and you have my great appreciation for that support. As we continue to move forward in the future, I would encourage those

supporters to continue their exceptional efforts, or take on a new challenge to make even greater contributions, to lead others and serve as an example to new officers or PAG members. For those looking to increase their role in the PAG, please explore serving on a subcommittee in the next year, or participate in the teleconferences. We need to maintain a strong PAG in order to have a voice, and I am so proud to be a part of the MLS PAG and the great people that make up our PAG.

With that, I leave you in the very capable hands of the 2016 MLS PAG Chair, LCDR Richard Bashay. He has been a tremendous help to me this year as Chair Elect, and we are very fortunate to have his leadership and dedication in the upcoming year. In closing, thank you again for your support as I struggled through this year of Ebola responses and unexpected travels, and I ask your continued support as we embark on another exciting year with an exceptional new MLS PAG leader.

Yours in service,

CDR Renee Galloway

# VETERANS DAY RECOGNITION

## *What it means to the Younger Generation*

### By LCDR Charles Boison

For several years during my tour of duty at Bureau of Prison, NC, it was my tradition to march with some dedicated officers during the Veterans Day Parade at the State Capitol ground in Raleigh, NC. This year was an exception. By virtue of geographical move to Richmond, Virginia, I found myself not as a veteran marching with fellow USPHS Officers, but as a member of veteran honorees at an elementary and middle schools where my children attend.

The morning of the Veterans Day was quite serene and the sky above was bright and promising, and school kids were excited that it did not rain that morning. Being a holiday, I decided to be useful to my kids and drop each of them at their schools. After dropping my elementary child at her school, I remembered they had brought home a slip of paper inviting parents who were veterans to attend the school's function purported to honor veterans. I walked to the office and inquired if I could still register to attend. With excitement, I was given the green light to be a part of the ceremony. The program was scheduled to start at 0830 hrs.

By 0827 hrs. I was at the front lobby of Springfield Park Elementary School to enjoy the celebrations of the day. Seats were reserved for all veterans and we were escorted to our seats in the school's gym by sharp-looking ushers. The students filed in a coordinated fashion and were made to sit on the deck of the gym. Standing in beautiful array of students on stage were over fifty 4th graders who constituted the choir for the ceremony. At the onset of the program, the principal of the school gave her preamble, which indicated the purpose of honoring all veterans for their service, which has provided the nation and other countries the freedom we enjoy. Sitting smartly dressed in my PHS Uniform, I felt tall and proud for being a US Navy veteran and also currently on active duty with PHS to offer my services to the nation.



The ceremony continued with all standing for the Pledge of Allegiance and the Star-Spangled Banner rendition. That was the moment when standing tall in uniform and reflecting on the sacrifices made by veterans felt inspirational and meaningful. I would have wished to be out on the parade ground and be a part of the marching troop, but for once, I did enjoy the honor

Photo of Springfield Park Elementary School Choir

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bestowed on us. The choir sang a number of Armed Forces medleys that revealed how much time they had spent rehearsing and practicing for the event. Thereafter, a number of selected students recited and recounted what veterans had done and contributed to make all of us safe. All veterans present could tell that these students have a sense of appreciation for veterans. It was not only rhetoric to them, but had a meaningful impact for what their veterans had to experience so they can enjoy, peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Some of the recitals by the students included, "Race, color, and ethnicity do not matter in USA" and "Peace belongs to each of us. Let's do our part." The ceremony also included a spot for a guest speaker, a veteran to deliver a short address to the students. A retired Infantry Commander of the Army had the privilege of speaking on behalf of all veterans present. Songs such as "On Veterans Day; This Land is Your Land; Mighty United; and This Day of Peace" were rendered to beautify the ceremony. The highlight of the ceremony was during the end when the principal mentioned the names of each of the veterans present in the room and together with the relative of the student (s) to stand for introduction. At that moment, my daughter was excited that I had showed up for her ceremony. The program came to spectacular end with applause to the organizers and the students who had made the day such an honorable one. The only thing that got my hands clenched together was the fact that during the introduction nothing about USPHS was mentioned. The kids know nothing about PHS, and that was when I planned to return to the school one day and orient them on what PHS stands for and our role during the times of war. We may not be involved in artillery kind of war, but we are also involved in a medical war that saves lives.

After the ceremony, I passed by my daughter's class and the teacher offered me the platform to say something to the students. And I did give a good speech which charged them to take their studies seriously and grow to be good citizens who will also serve their nation in various disciplines!

Thereafter, I rushed to my older daughter's school, Holman Middle School, where their ceremony was underway. Patriotic songs, recital, video and narratives of veterans' engagement in world wars 1 and II were displayed. The principal of the school recounted the history of Veterans Day and students also read Veterans Day essays. A Marine guest speaker gave the key note address that made all veterans present proud and honored. A reception was also held in our honor, including a coupon for a free haircut. My conclusion garnered from both ceremonies honoring veterans indicated that our younger generation has a sense of appreciation for veterans and many of them have already considered options to serve in our armed and uniformed services to carry on the legacy left for them.



## WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

By CDR Toni Bledsoe

Morrill Worcester was a 12 year old paper boy for the Bangor Daily News when he won a trip to Washington D.C. This was his first trip to our nation's capital and one he would never forget. His visit to Arlington National Cemetery made an especially indelible impression on him. In 1992, Morrill Worcester, now owner of Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, found his company with a surplus of wreaths. Morrill remembered his first visit to Arlington National Cemetery and realized he had an opportunity to honor our country's Veterans. Assisted by Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery. A local Harrington trucking company transported the wreaths from Harrington to Arlington. Volunteers from the local American Legion and VFW Posts gathered with members of the community to decorate each wreath with traditional red, hand-tied bows. Members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C. helped organize the wreath-laying, which included a special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In 2007, **Wreaths Across America** was formed, due to Worcester family, veterans, and other volunteers who had supported the annual Veterans wreath ceremony year after year at Arlington. The mission of the organization is simple: "Remember. Honor. Teach." US Congress unanimously voted December 13, 2008, as "Wreaths Across America Day". In 2014, Wreaths Across America volunteers laid over 700,000 memorial wreaths at 1,000 locations in the United States and beyond. Wreath-laying ceremonies were held at the Pearl Harbor Memorial, Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and the sites of the September 11 tragedies. The goal of laying a wreath on every grave at Arlington National Cemetery was accomplished in 2014 with the placement of 226,525 wreaths. The wreath laying is still held annually, on the second or third Saturday of December, with the annual pilgrimage of the wreaths from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery. This pilgrimage has become known as the 'world's largest veterans' parade.' This year, the annual wreath-laying event at Arlington National Cemetery will be held on Saturday, December 12, 2015. My family and I will be there to lay wreaths on the graves of our American Heroes and thank them for their service to our country. I am certain this visit to Arlington will make an indelible impression on me just as Morrill Worcester's first visit had upon him.

For more information visit the Wreaths Across America website:

<http://www.wreathsassamerica.org>

## **HOLIDAY FAVORITES**

**By CDR Toni Bledsoe**

Favorites, we all have them. It's usually the first thing we think of when asked, "What's your favorite dessert, sport, or vacation spot?" My answer in order to the preceding question would be strawberry pie, baseball, and Nova Scotia (so far). I also have my Christmas season favorites: Did someone say egg nog?! I wondered, if I were to survey MLSPAG members about their holiday favorites, what responses would I receive?

So, my thanks to my fellow officers who responded to: "What's your favorite holiday song/Christmas carol and your favorite holiday season movie? Why is it your favorite?"

Thank you for sharing some beautiful stories and memories.

**LCDR Jessica L Damon, Clinton, OK:**

"My non-traditional holiday song favorite is "This Christmas Day" from Christmas Eve & Other Stories by the TranSiberian Orchestra. The reason I love this particular piece of music is that it reminds me of my first Christmas with my husband. We were married October 26th, 1996 and we were not financially well to do. For a honeymoon we took the little money we had and drove our broken down van from Texas to Louisiana to stay a night or two in a cabin. For a wedding gift we had received a gift certificate to Target. My husband bought this weird Christmas CD and I got a few items for our little house. Christmas Eve & Other Stories was the first album released by this group and the entire album is phenomenal! By the next to last track "This Christmas Day" is a powerful ballad about what really matters at Christmas time and that is FAMILY. In the spoken verse by the rock opera's narrator at the end of the song you hear:

'So the girl had reached her home and the bar was closing down as the angel started back to bring his Lord what he had found.'

Very powerful story. Since that very first Christmas together, we have had beautiful children and a wonderful life together. And we are still fans of TranSiberian Orchestra and have taken our children to see them in concert when they come through our home state of Oklahoma."

**CDR Will Tool, Whiteriver, AZ:**

"My favorite holiday song is "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." My favorite holiday movie is "A Christmas Carol" starring George C. Scott from 1984. George C. Scott gives a powerful performance as Scrooge and the supporting cast is great as well.

**LT Megan Morgan, Hamilton, MT:**

“Favorite Christmas carol- “O Holy Night” – because we would always sing it at my church at the Christmas Eve service. Favorite movie- “Elf” – it’s exactly my sense of humor!”

**CDR Jeri Coats, Pawnee, OK:**

“I’m a bit of a Christmas fanatic, it is ABSOLUTELY my favorite time of year!!

Holiday song(s) – Unfortunately I do not have just one!! Christmas Carol – “What Child is This?” - Harry Connick Jr. and “O Holy Night”- Josh Groban. To me, these songs just represents what the season is all about. My favorite FUN Christmas Song is “All I want for Christmas is You!” by Mariah Carey. Christmas Movies (yes, that is plural, I cannot narrow it down to just one). Classic – It’s a Wonderful Life, It’s a tradition for us to watch it on Christmas Eve. Romantic Comedy – Love Actually (I’m a sucker for British films! Any movie with Colin Firth or Hugh Grant is a win for me), Comedy – National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation (of Course), and animated is Polar Express (because even as an adult, I still believe in the magic of Christmas).”

**CAPT Vickie L. Lopez, Terminal Island, CA:**

“O Holy Night”- It is such a wonderful song that reminds us what Christmas is all about. Movie, “A Christmas Story”- That poor kid wanted that Red Rider BB Gun sooo bad! I love when the kid got his tongue stuck on the pole. I don't know about you, but I was once that stupid. My cousin actually did get his eye shot out by a BB gun, but everything is ok. He still had another eye.”

**CAPT Donna Brown, Butner, NC:**

“Christmas carol- “Silent Night,” because of its beauty and simplicity. Movie- “A Christmas Story!” I own the DVD and it has become a Holiday tradition for my three kids and myself to watch this once a year on Christmas Eve.”

**LCDR Charles D. Boison, Richmond, VA:**

“My favorite carol is “Joy to the World.” It is my favorite because that was the season God became Man and joy was restored to mankind out of the lowliness and humility of the Manger. My favorite holiday movie is “The Preacher’s Wife” starring Denzel Washington and the late Whitney Houston.

**LCDR Lundy Patrick, Miami Lakes, FL:**

“Christmas carol- “Probably “Silent Night,” because of the peaceful vibes I get from it, especially when it is performed by a jazz artist. Movie- Undoubtedly it has to be “Christmas Vacation” with the Griswolds!”

**LCDR Lisa L. Flores, Springfield, MO:**

“I love the old “Rudolph” movie, the Claymation version!”

**LCDR Andrea Peay, Butner, NC:**

“O' Holy Night”- favorite song and “Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer”- one of my favorite movies as a kid. It brings back good Christmas memories.”

**CDR Toni Bledsoe, Morgantown, WV:**

“Three movies we always watch- “White Christmas,” with songs by Irving Berlin- I sing along while I’m wrapping presents; “It’s a Wonderful Life” on Christmas Eve; “A Christmas Carol,” throughout Christmas Day- my husband has a collection from the classic Alistair Sims’ version to the light-hearted “Mr. Magoo’s Christmas Carol” or “The Muppets Christmas Carol.” My favorite Christmas song is a simple gospel song, “Was he quiet or did he cry?” The song isn’t well-known but you can do a ‘google search and listen to a recording. My grandfather, a gospel musician for over 75 years, sang this song at the conclusion of many Christmas plays performed at the small country church where he and my grandmother attended. When I think of this song I am sitting on an oak pew beside my grandmother again and we sing along with my grandfather as he sings:

*‘I wonder, oh yes I wonder, many times as years roll by,  
About the Savior as a baby, was he quiet or did he cry?’*

*Did his precious mother Mary sing to him a lullaby?  
As he lay there in the manger, Was he quiet or did he cry?’*

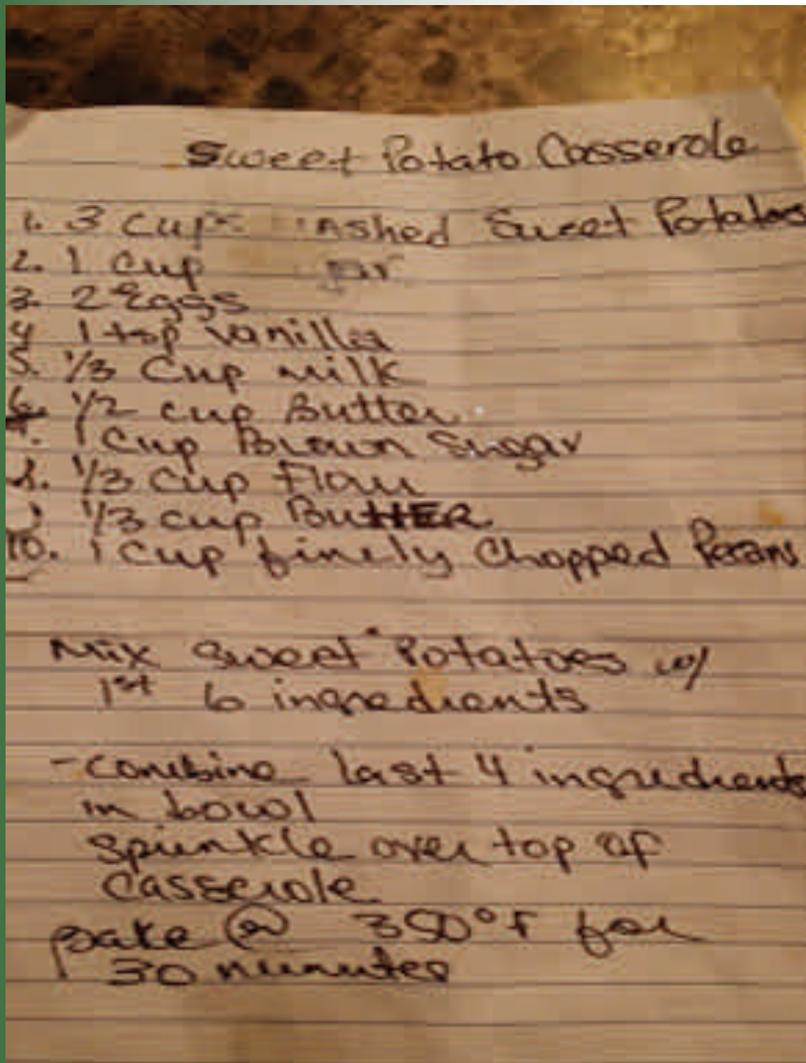
*I know the angels sang, Glory to the newborn king!  
Bring forth the diadem, a King is born in Bethlehem.*

*And I wonder, oh yes I wonder, many times as years roll by,  
About the Savior as a baby, was he quiet or did he cry?’*

## My Favorite Holiday Dish

By: LCDR Angel Daniels Rodriguez, MPH

This recipe was given to me by a dear friend who happens to be a colleague, and mentor, and my son's God mother. I've had this recipe for over 15 years now and it's still on the original paper that I jotted it on. It has become a family favorite that I enjoy making every year for the Holidays.



It's sweet potato casserole that goes very well with all of the other holiday goodness such as turkey, ham, green bean casserole and so on. This recipe is very rich, but very delicious. So since I married into my husband family, his brothers actually look forward to coming to our home for the Holiday dinners so that they can eat this casserole. By the way, one of my brother in-law actually brings his Tupperware to take some home. I have a picture of it below along with my cornbread.



Thank you,

LCDR Angel Daniels Rodriguez, MPH  
Laboratory Supervisor  
Infection Control Officer  
Yakama Indian Health

# NEW TO NEWSLETTER!!!

## Health Tips...

### Workout Safety during the Winter Months

By: CDR Toni Bledsoe



As active people, the winter months can sometimes put a damper on our usual outdoor workouts. But, if we're safe and prepared, we don't have to give up our time outdoors completely. Working out in the cold can be perfectly safe, as long as we are smart about it.

Here are a few tips to keep you safe this winter:

Wear the proper gear! Working out in cold weather doesn't have to be miserable or unsafe. As long as you're dressed appropriately you should be able to continue doing outdoor activities.

Dressing in layers is key to staying warm. If you get too warm, you can always shed layers as you go.

Keeping your ears, head, and hands covered will help to keep in the heat.

Tall socks are also a good way to add a layer of warmth to your legs.

Know when it's unsafe to work out outdoors.

If the roads are icy and slick, stay off them.

If temperatures are too low, winds are too high, or weather conditions have decreased visibility, move your workout indoors.

Pay attention to your body and watch out for any signs of hypothermia.

Look out for drowsiness, weakness, confusion, and uncontrollable shivering. All of these symptoms are signs you should get out of the cold.

Carry your cell phone.

It's always a good idea to have a cell phone with you during solo workouts, but it's especially important to take your phone with you on any workouts done outdoors during cold winter weather. Carrying your cell phone will give you direct contact with emergency support, should you find yourself in a dire situation.



## To Believe or Not to Believe, That is The Question!

By: LCDR Lisa Flores

He is known by many names and has caused a dilemma for parents for decades.



In the **United States** and **Canada**, his name is **Santa Claus**.

In **China**, he is called **Shengdan Laoren**.

In **England**, his name is **Father Christmas**, where he has a longer coat and a longer beard.

In **France**, he's known as **Pere Noel**.

In **Italy** **Babbo Natale**, which means **Father Christmas**, is **Santa**.

In **Morocco** he is known as **Black Peter**

In **Japan**, Santa Claus is called Santa Claus or just "**Santa**".

In **Sweden**, **Jultomten** visits the evening before Christmas day.

In **Russia**, he is called **Grandfather Frost**.

He is also called **Kris Kringle** - which comes from the **German** term "the **Christ Child**".

To believe or not to believe, that is the question! Do you believe in Santa, have you ever believed? As a new parent, I struggled with the dilemma of telling my kids about Santa or not. Would believing foster their imagination or promote consumerism? Does Santa take away from the true meaning of Christmas? What would happen when they figured out Santa wasn't real and I had lied to them? I just didn't know. Ultimately, I decided to tell my children Santa was real. We embraced the traditions associated with Santa, leaving cookies and milk out, putting reindeer food on the lawn, and hanging stockings. It was when the kids figured out the truth that I questioned if this was a wise decision or not. Now that they are older, all of my children are glad they believed in Santa and say they will tell their kids Santa is real. For my kids and me, it was about the spirit of giving not consumerism. I posed the

the question to our MLS-PAG and here are some of the responses I received:

I actually haven't handled the dilemma.... Yet. He's only 6 and not questioning it in the least. I can tell you, that someone's little brother "told" me about him not being real when I was around 8 or 9 and I was HIGHLY upset. Briefly upset with my parents who had lied to me, but then really after I thought for a bit, I was really upset with the kid that ran his mouth. I wanted to believe and quite frankly, wished when I confronted my Dad, that he had told me the little boy was just pulling my leg. I loved Christmas and Santa and all of it, and I only wish I could have been in the dark longer. I'm hoping when my son starts asking questions that I will be able to give him vague enough answers about the spirit living in your heart etc and never really confirm or deny, he can learn to understand it more gradually when he's ready. The story is not written yet though, we shall see!

**Maggie,**

**LT Margaret Kemp,  
NIH Clinical Center,  
Department of Lab Medicine, Bethesda, MD**

We were always honest with our son...We explained the story of Saint Nicholas and the tradition of Santa Claus. He is now 10 years old and has grown up knowing that mommy and daddy provide the gifts and presents...And we choose to focus on the real reason for the season...Jesus Christ...

**Cecelia R. Watson,  
CAPT USPHS, ASQ CMQ/OE  
Quality Management Team, CFSAN FDA**

I have two children. One is 21 and the other is 12. I encouraged both of them to believe long after they knew better. That is to say even with my 21 year old daughter, if she says there is no Santa, I pretend that there are no gifts (of course we both know that Santa is not real, but it is still fun to pretend). I think Santa is just a fun part of the holiday. So much of our kids childhoods are taken from them via social media and the internet that I think it is okay to let them believe. This is just one man's opinion.

**LCDR D. R. Graham,  
USPHS  
DOJ/BOP/FCI FT Worth  
Chief of Laboratory Services**

Believe!!! Always believe! My kiddos have known since they were very young that the Santa in the mall is just a surrogate Santa because clearly the “real” Santa is busy supervising the Elves, checking the sleigh and tending to the reindeer to visit every single Mall for a month before Christmas! I have a 14, 10, and 8 year old. My oldest believed until he was 11 when his school friends convinced him otherwise. The next year he was skeptical but didn’t actually tell me he knew it was me until last year. I suppose it helped that I overheard him telling his friend what he wanted from Santa and got him that without him ever really asking Santa for it. The little two still believe. I explained to my oldest if you don’t “openly believe” and dispute Santa’s existence to your brother and sister, Santa won’t bring you anything. It hasn’t been a problem. There is an iPhone app to track Santa. My kids use that. They also don’t like going to the mall to see Santa (since he’s not legit) so every year I change their father’s contact name to Santa Clause and they text him what they want. He makes sure they are behaving and sites specific behavior to keep them realizing he is watching them all year round. We look forward to this time of the year. I hope they never outgrow it but when they do...I hope they never tell me so I can keep playing along!

We also incorporated the Elf on a Shelf as part of our traditions. Warning...it is a lot of work but totally worth it!

As far as the kids finding out and feeling betrayed...I told my oldest that Santa Clause represents what the giving spirit is all about. “Santa” gives selflessly and only asks for your good behavior and thanks in return. It is a tradition that goes back for generations and for those of us who are Christian, it represents the celebration of St. Nicholas who for 22 years watched over his church and provided the children gifts and told stories of Jesus, which is what Christmas is really about. I tell my kiddos we receive a “birthday gift” for Jesus because he loves us so much he’d rather see us with a gift than receive one himself. Our love is his gift.

**Renaë Hill**  
**LCDR, USPHS**  
**IHS/PHX**

My kids believe, but every now and then they know we are “hyping” them. It’s fun for them to realize on Christmas morn that the tree is laden with gifts that they did not see the night before. It just gives them some false hope. But I believe they have to know and appreciate the sweat of their parents in acting as “Santa Claus “ to get them those gifts.

**Charles D. Boison**  
**LCDR U.S. Public Health Service**  
**Food and Drug Administration**  
**Richmond, VA 23294**

I have 2 teenage children. I DID promote Santa:) That was how my parents did it so I figured that would work for my kids as well. I can't remember when my oldest asked me about the Santa vs. Parent issue. I do remember sitting down with her and explaining that Santa was not real but, what he represents is real. We are Christians and we celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas. We give gifts to represent not only the precious gifts that the wisemen gave to Christ but, to represent the gift of salvation that Christ gave to us. Santa's gifts mirror this. When a child is old enough to understand this it can be a positive experience. I think that the idea of Santa is healthy in that it promotes wonder and imagination. From a practical perspective it also allows a child to experience the same excitement and wonder as the majority of his/her peers.

When my youngest finally learned about Santa, it was a bittersweet moment for me. Part of me regretted that his innocence had changed, and part of me was proud of how he was beginning to grow into a young man. Even though my children know the truth about Santa now, they still make me/Santa a Christmas list, leave me/Santa a snack, and write me/Santa a note. It is very touching and sweet. I know that popular psychology says to tell your children the truth about Santa but, believe me I wouldn't trade the memories of Santa with my children for anything.

On the same note, however, we do not promote the Easter Bunny in my household. For me as a Christian, I did not wish to taint the observance of Easter with a "distraction". I wanted my children to observe it with reverence. You could treat Christmas the same. It is your choice. I hope that this helps:)

Sincerely,

**LCDR Katrina Redman, MT(ASCP)**  
**United States Public Health Service**  
**Clinical Laboratory Sciences**  
**FMC Butner**



# Heart Healthy Blueberry Cornbread

**Ingredients: 1 cup cornmeal**

**1 cup all-purpose flour**

**½ cup white sugar**

**3 teaspoons baking powder**

**1 teaspoon salt**

**3 egg whites**

**2/3 cup of skim milk**

**4 oz. granny smith apple sauce**

**2 cups fresh blueberries**



Christmas 2015 (from LCDR Katrina Redman)

## Blueberry Cornbread directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Grease a 9-inch square baking dish with heart healthy cooking spray. In a small bowl mix cornmeal, flour, sugar, and salt. In a larger bowl beat egg whites, skim milk and applesauce. Add cornmeal mixture to the egg white mixture; mix until just combined. Gently fold the blueberries into the batter. Pour the batter into the prepared baking dish. Bake in Preheated oven for 25 – 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Makes 16 small squares.



# Crockpot Lasagna



## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 (24 ounce) jar of spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 (15 ounce) container Ricotta cheese
- 1 (7 ounce) package shredded Mozzarella Cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 egg
- 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, 1 Roma tomato diced,
- 6 uncooked lasagna noodles

## Crockpot Lasagna directions:

Brown beef in large skillet; drain. Stir in spaghetti sauce and water. Mix ricotta, 1 – 1 ½ cups mozzarella, 2 TBSP Parmesan, egg and parsley. Spoon 1 cup meat Sauce into slow cooker, tope with layers of half each of the noodles (broken to Fit) and cheese mixture. Cover with 2 cups meat sauce. Top with remaining Noodles (broken to fit), cheese mixture and meat sauce. Cover with lid. Cook On low 4 – 6 hours or until liquid is absorbed. Sprinkle with remaining cheeses; Let stand, covered, 10 minutes or until melted. Serves 4 -5 people.

Christmas 2015 (From LCDR Katrina Redman)



## **Pumpkin Risotto Recipe (Source: Bettycrocker.com)**

**Submitted by CDR Toni Bledsoe**

### Ingredients:

1 cup vegetable broth

1 cup water

1 tablespoon olive oil

½ cup chopped onion

1 cup uncooked Arborio or regular long-grain rice

¾ cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)

½ cup dry white wine or vegetable broth

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Freshly shredded Parmesan cheese, if desired

### Directions:

In 1-quart sauce pan, heat 1 cup vegetable broth and 1 cup water over medium-high heat just until simmering. Keep liquid at a simmer while preparing risotto.

Meanwhile, in 3-quart saucepan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion in oil 2 to 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until softened. Stir in rice; cook 5 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently, until edges of kernels are translucent. Stir in pumpkin and wine (or ½ cup vegetable broth).

Reduce heat to medium. Stir in 1 cup of the heated broth mixture. Cook uncovered about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until broth is absorbed. Stir in remaining broth mixture. Cook 10 to 15 minutes longer, stirring frequently, until rice is just tender and mixture is creamy. Stir in grated Parmesan cheese and pepper.

To serve, sprinkle parsley, nutmeg and shredded Parmesan cheese over risotto.

## **Cranberry Hootycreeks Recipe (Source: allrecipes.com)**

**(A festive cookie in a jar recipe)**

**Submitted by CDR Toni Bledsoe**

Ingredients:

5/8 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup rolled oats

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup packed brown sugar

1/3 cup white sugar

1/2 cup dried cranberries

1/2 cup white chocolate chips

1/2 cup pecans

Layer the ingredients in a 1 quart or 1 liter jar, in the order listed.

Attach a tag with the following instructions: Cranberry Hootycreeks 1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a cookie sheet or line with parchment paper. 2. In a medium bowl, beat together 1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg and 1 teaspoon of vanilla until fluffy. Add the entire jar of ingredients, and mix together by hand until well blended. Drop by heaping spoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheets. 3. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until edges start to brown. Cool on baking sheets, or remove to cool on wire racks.

**MLS Focus**  
**LCDR Donald Ertel,**  
**Food and Drug Administration Regulatory Officer**

**Education: Degrees, Universities, Dates:**

BS, Medical Technology from University of Maryland at Baltimore, School of Medical Technology; May 1992 (Registered ASCP, 1992)

MS, Quality Assurance/ Regulatory Affairs from Temple University, School of Pharmacy; May 2015 (took me about ten years off and on, but I finished last spring!)

Certified Quality Auditor, ASQ, Dec 2013

**Background: Hometown, Family, Hobbies:**

I grew up in Baltimore City, and live in Baltimore County, MD (Go Ravens!), with my wife, Teresa, and three daughters, Ava (17), Lily (16) and Corinne (almost 13), and Winnie (our dog), and Sagwa (our cat). Just this past June, we moved to our new (old, built 1948) home in Towson where we are closer to schools and family & friends. My daughters are artists and actors (including my wife and myself), and we have enjoyed doing Community Theater for about ten years now. I am a singer (tenor) in the PHS Choral Ensemble, and a bass player in my leisure time. I played relentlessly in a professional Rock cover band for most of the 1990s. Aside from my PHS day job, I work part-time (about two or three shifts per month) at the Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH) Blood Bank in Baltimore City. I started working for JHH a few months after I graduated from Med Tech School, and I have been with Hopkins for over 23 years now. (about 7 years full-time, 16 years part-time)

**Current Agency:** Food and Drug Administration, White Oak Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD

**Job Title:** Regulatory Officer (Reviewer/Inspector), equivalent to the civilian Consumer Safety Officer

**Current Assignment and what you like most about it:**

I work for the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) in the Office of Biologics Compliance, Division of Manufacturing and Product Quality (that is FDA/CBER/OCBQ/DMPQ).

My primary job is to review the Chemistry, Manufacturing, and Controls (better known as CMC) section of new Biologics License Applications (BLA) or supplemental (significant changes to original) applications. I am responsible for evaluating the information related to Facilities and Equipment which also includes assessment of container closures, aseptic processing techniques, contamination control program, and process validation. My background

and education as a Medical Technologist, especially blood banking, serves me well in my current job. The Review function includes assessment of copious amounts of scientific data, which means a lot of reading, and drafting of review memos. During the review process, many interactions with the applicants may occur for information requests in support of my review. One thing that I like about my work is, with most reviews, I can usually increase my understanding of a technical or regulatory aspect of biologics manufacturing, and I am privy to innovations of the Biopharmaceutical companies. The other major part of my job is performing Pre-license (original BLA) and Pre-approval (supplement) inspections. I lead inspection teams in these Good Manufacturing Practices inspections, which are part of the integrated review process (i.e. if an inspection outcome is objectionable, the application could be considered for non-approval). There is a lot of work involved in the inspection process (preparation, performance, and reporting), however, the inspections get me away from the computer screen for a week or so, and have taken me all over the world, including France, Germany, England, Ireland, Mexico, etc. Although, the workload is heavy and days are long during the inspection, one can find the occasion to slip out in the evenings or weekends, and catch some local culture (especially the food).

### **Previous Assignments:**

I started working at the FDA in March 2010 as a civilian, and converted to Commissioned Corps, a year and half later (due to “the Freeze”) in November 2011. In fact, I accepted my Commission on Veteran’s Day, 11/11/11. I have been in the same assignment since then. However, prior to coming to the Agency, I worked as a Quality Professional (Engineer, Manager, etc.) for many years “on the other side of the table” in pharmaceutical & biotech industries, and the clinical laboratory and transfusion service at JHH.



# **FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS**

## **MLS Focus: CAPT William “Bill” Wyeth**

### **Education:**

BS Microbiology, Clemson University 1983 Go Tigers!

BS Allied Health/Medical Technology, Clemson, 1984

MA Health Services Administration, Webster University, 1988

### **Certifications:**

American Society for Quality (ASQ): Certified Quality Manager/Organizational Excellence, Auditor and Food Safety (HACCP)

### **Background:**

Dad was in the Air Force we traveled around. Dad was stationed in Texas, South Carolina, Spain and England. He retired in Surfside Beach, South Carolina which I call home. Dad retired after 28 years in the Air Force and served as my service mentor from being a grunt in the Army all the way up to being a Captain in PHS.

Having a great mentor to me is key to making the most of your career. I was also blessed in having CAPT Bert Tallant recruit me out of the Army and into PHS.

### **Hobbies:**

Kayaking

Cycling

Weight Training

Organic Farming and honey bee keeper

Snorkeling/Diving

**Current Agency:** Just finished my last PHS assignment with FDA, Office of Regulatory Affairs

**Current Assignment:** Worked in the Office of Enforcement and Import Operations. It is fast paced and deals with many interesting products and appropriate regulatory actions. I also served as a Quality Systems Manager

## **Previous Assignments**

US Army for 9.5 years

Fort Jackson, SC

Fort Benning, GA

- Fort Sam Houston, TX
- National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA
- 2nd Field Hospital, Bremerhaven, Germany
- Forensic Toxicology and Drug Testing Lab, Walter Reed Army Medical Center
- Fort Meade, MD

PHS

- BOP, FMC Carswell
- US Coast Guard
- CMS
- OCCO
- FDA, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research and ORA
- Backfilled at Indian Health Facility in South Dakota ( much different than South Carolina :))
- 2 Details with CDC to Saipan. Where I was one of the PHS officers that rotated in 2013 to help the lab pass CLIA certification. Subsequently asked by CDC to rotate for 4 months at a time in 2014 and 2015 to further improve lab operations.

## **Deployed to key historical events to include;**

- Kosovo Refugees at Fort Dix, New Jersey
- September 11, 2001, New York
- Multiple Hurricane relief missions

## **Now;**

Farm: The challenge is to clear 20 acres of 6 ft weeds, briars and other forms of thorns and convert this into a facility that assists in providing organic produce to local vets and the community.

Local VA Clinic: Will serve as a driver to get vets to their medical appointments. I would encourage all to volunteer and make a difference

Coast Guard Auxiliary: I have always enjoyed being a part of the Coast Guard (aka my favorite PHS assignment). The local CG Flotilla provides me with the means to continue to be a part of the Coast Guard community.

If anyone should have any questions about retirement/transitioning, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you.

Bill

# Scholarships



The Foundation's Board of Trustees was proud to release the

2015 Dependent Scholarship application. The deadline closed on May 1.

Applicants must be the spouse; biological, step, or adoptive child; or biological, step, or adoptive grandchild of

a member in good standing of the COA. Applicants must be registered students for undergraduate or graduate study at schools located in the United States.

**Next  
Readiness  
check is  
January  
15, 2015!!**

## Travel Tip

**When leaving electronics in a hotel room, take a picture of them with your cell phone. That way if they should go missing you have picture proof to show the hotel.**

## Promotion Tip

Don't forget to use the new Fax Cover Sheet located on CCMIS in the Promotion Section whenever faxing additions to your eOPF file.



*JOIN THE MLSPAG*

*MEETINGS*

*Join us via  
teleconference*

*every second Thursday  
of every other*

*month @ 1400 EST*

*1-866-882-1054*

*Passcode: 2066464*



**To submit an article for the MLSPAG**

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**CDR Jeri Coats, CDR Cara Nichols, LCDR Charles Boison, and**

**LT Michelle Hohensee**

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