

FORT MEADE, MARYLAND

ESTABLISHED 1946



## The President's Corner

By Mavi Conner

Greetings to my FMSC Family!

I am looking forward to this hot summer, and I am sure you are, too! Summertime is a chance to relax and soak up some sun, but it is also a great opportunity to use your time productively (while still having fun) and give back to your community.

This newsletter is all about our Club and highlights many great events and opportunities we have available.

Hopefully, you will be inspired to join us in our volunteer projects or social adventures. However you choose to be involved, we are here for you!

I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the next few months. Thank you for your continued commitment to our Club!

"You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give." -Winston Churchill



November 2021 MMU  
"Thankful Hearts & Voices"

## Member Snapshot

This month we are featuring a selection of Photography & Publications Committee Members



### Dawne Lee

with kiddos Aspen & Ronin

*Current Neighborhood:*  
Meuse Forest

*Previous Duty Station:*  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State

*Ask Me About:*  
Art, photography, cooking, baseball, hiking, or animals

*Favorite Board Game:*  
Trivial Pursuit or Dicecapades

*Favorite Dessert:*  
Brownies or Cheesecake (or combine it!!)



## MISCHIEF IN MARYLAND

**Summer Shenanigans***By Laura O'Leary*

Summer is in full swing and aside from the mid-summer storms, it's one of the best times of the year to get out of the house to do something new!

The Sunflower Fields are in peak bloom and are a beautiful adventure to go on. Take a picnic and your camera with you, wander through the fields and mazes, and bring home a stunning bouquet that you pick yourself. Near Fort Meade there are quite a few fields, but my favorite is GoldPetal Farm!

Go on a date night or family night adventure to the water lantern festivals hosted all across the nation. July 30th in Baltimore, or later this year in Frederick! Channel your inner Rapunzel and make a wish for the rest of the year as you light your lantern and set it loose to float and mingle amongst the other wishes.

Zoom on down for a walk on the wild side and visit Plumpton Park Zoo in Rising Sun, the National Zoo in DC, or the Maryland Zoo. Meet the animals, learn about conservation efforts around the globe, and catch those rays in the sun! Be sure to check out the schedule in advance so you can get up close and personal with some of the animals during feeding times!

If you're a beach bum, and the sun shining makes you wish for the ocean and the beach, get ready to take a quick trip up to Delaware (just don't try to drive up on a Friday afternoon)! Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach are both known for their glistening sands, foaming waves, boardwalk fries, and being some of the best spots in Delaware to relax and soak in the sun. Grab some fries, a large ice cream cone, and don't forget to check out the Kid Zone amusement area. Those bumper cars and rides aren't just for the kiddings anymore! There are also some pretty amazing local breweries and restaurants to beat the heat and get out of the sun.

**Meghan McDonald Carlson**

*Current Neighborhood:*  
Columbia

*Previous Duty Station:*  
Corry Station in Pensacola, FL

*Ask Me About:*  
Sociology, Texas, baking, reading, running, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), joining the Photography & Publications committee ;-)

*Favorite Periodical:*  
I'm a huge New York Times fan but I really adore The Sun (ad-free magazine with personal essays, gorgeous photos and more)



*Director of Scholarships Jenn Stenberg presiding over the Scholarship Ceremony on May 19th with recipients Natalie Mangen (left) and Caroline Godwin*



## What I Want You to Know . . . About Making Yourself a Priority

By Dawne Lee

We all have dreams, goals, and wants in life. Yet all too often life, itself, gets in the way, keeping them just out of our reach. There are constant excuses and endless tomorrows that we promise ourselves. But time is not infinite and if we don't stop and prioritize ourselves, then tomorrow will never be today. This is my story of grabbing my tomorrow. I hope that maybe it will help others to do the same.

It has been 12 years since my husband first took his oath to defend this country and our crazy rollercoaster ride of military life began. Right from the beginning I was swept into the role of caretaker for both the family and our home. My world became all about providing the best life that I could for my family. I became the very last thought in the list of priorities. It took seeing the plight of a dear friend and co-worker to make me realize this needed to change.

My friend was just 3 years away from retirement and stuck in the awful reality of no longer being able to physically keep up with the job demands. She had been a laborer for most of her adult life, working paycheck to paycheck, and now she had a decision to make: risk her health even more and keep working or leave the job early and have almost nothing for income. This hit home with me as

I saw myself reflected in her. I, too, had been working whatever part time job I could while supporting my husband's career and the kids. The jobs were nothing more than just ways of getting a paycheck and making it through each month.

I decided right then that it was time. I was going to finally chase my dream, go back to school and start a career. I had attempted college once; it was before I met my husband and I had a very hard time paying for it. This left me with a large amount of student loan debt. I did not want to go down that path again, but being an army spouse this time, I knew that there were benefits out there for me. So, I went to the education center on base and was amazed at what I found. There were so many school options, scholarships, and even career counselors to help me out. It was a huge world of difference. They helped me pick a college, find funding, and get enrolled. This was it; I was on my way.

I wish I could say that the next few years of school were easy, but again, life happened. The COVID outbreak hit us as hard as everyone else. I lost my job and had to find a new one, while also becoming my kid's teacher. My husband was deployed for 6 months, and then a few months after was sent to an unaccompanied duty assignment or a year. This meant doing the duty

of a single parent while he was gone, as well. Then, after his assignment we were all re-stationed from one side of the country to the other. During this time most of the internship programs out there were either paused or canceled as well, causing me to have to think way outside of the box to find the hours I needed for my degree. It was rough. Through all of this my mantra became "Keep Moving Forward." I realized that even if I could only manage one class a semester—it was still progress. I could still reach my goal, and I didn't have to do it alone. I utilized the support I had with the career counselors, college advisors, and my family and made it through. They helped me find what I needed and cheered me on the whole way. I am happy to say that I graduated this June with my Associates degree in Digital Design.

While I am not done and have further to go to reach my career goals, I feel that having gone through this I have come out the other side with more confidence and hope than ever before. I share my story so that it may inspire others to grab their tomorrow, *today*.

Keep moving forward!







## WILDERNESS WONDERS

### For Your Consideration: Bats!

By Jennifer Denton

On my way out of June's Book Club meeting, I was chatting with another member when I noticed what I thought was a large moth in the dusky sky. After a few more minutes I realized that it was not a moth but a bat and there were several others flying around above us!

Little brown bats are common in Maryland. They are likely to be seen in the hours around dawn and dusk. They can eat up to 1200 insects in one hour and can live up to 34 years! They are considered 'model organisms' in the study of bats or chiropterology.

Bats are a much-maligned creature. Many people fear them or even think they enjoy nesting in your hair, which is not true! By understanding them better, we can fear them less. They are actually incredibly helpful to humans and should be respected for their role in keeping Maryland a great place to live. Maryland has 10 species of bat: six are cave bat species and four are tree bats. The US Geological Survey (the sole science agency for the Department of the Interior) has labeled them all as Greatest Conservation Need which means we need to protect them! After all, bats are the best form of pest control; they eat moths, stinkbugs, mosquitoes, and many other insects.

Due to all of their benefits, I think we can agree that bats deserve a second friendly look and a lot of respect! They also need our help. Two straightforward ways to help our Maryland bats: We can report bat sightings to Maryland Department of Natural Resources so they can study them and help ensure their safety. For the more adventurous out there you can try your hand at building a bat box; a bat box is kind of like a bird house but for bats. Here is a link to a simple design (but you can always have a look at more in depth boxes if you want a challenge):



Build a  
Bat House



Report Bat  
Sightings



Bats comprise about 20% of all mammals. There are over 1,400 species and they are the only mammal truly capable of flight.



Membership Appreciation Event on May 21st  
in the Baltimore Harbor



Mindy, Carrie, Addison & Baby Daisy at the  
December 2021 MMU





## Post Thrift Shop Finds: Next Stop, Post Thrift Shop

By Mallory Noble



I can still remember the first time I stopped at the Post Thrift Shop at Fort Meade. It was just after I joined the Fort Meade Spouses' Club which, at the time, was still the Enlisted Spouses' Club. I went in to get my Thrift Shop volunteer hours and my shopping habits have never been the same.

You see, the Post Thrift Shop already had excellent prices on their clothes and on top of that, they had a variety of sales. The most lucrative sale has always been its Bag Sale. Prior to COVID the Post Thrift Shop would take its older inventory and put it into a room called the "Back Room." In this room everything you saw could be placed in a brown paper grocery bag for only \$3.00. The key was to roll and fold the items as tightly as possible and maximize your space and savings. One could easily leave with a bag regularly valued at \$50 for only \$3. The savings seemed too good to be true, but they weren't and it's how I buy a majority of both my children's clothing.

Flash forward to today and while the bag sale looks different, it is still an incredible deal and now current clothing inventory is included in the bag sales. Plastic grocery bags are all you can stuff for \$5, brown paper bags are \$10, and our best deal is our extra large reusable shopping bag which is \$15 for your first fill/purchase but only \$8 to refill on your next visit.

The possibilities for savings are endless at the Post Thrift Shop and extend beyond just their bag sales. Like Forrest Gump would suggest, it is often like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get. One day I walked in and found a new bicycle with training wheels for my six-year-old for only \$15. I don't know who was more excited, my son or my husband and I.



What could be the cherry on top of this already thrilling shopping experience? What if I told you the Post Thrift Shop sends its net proceeds to the Fort Meade Spouses' Club to go right back into our Fort Meade Community? It is true, all that savings and I am still supporting the Fort Meade Military community through scholarships, a fabulous Children's Holiday Party, and many incredible outreach programs.

I love sharing my passion for thrifting with anyone I encounter and the best way to do that is to share our stories of our Post Thrift Shop Finds and the incredible way our store gives back to the community. This is where you come in, we want your stories of your best thrift shop finds. Each issue of The Pinch will share stories of your favorite finds, why you love them and what you would have paid if you made this purchase at a larger for-profit store. If you have a Post Thrift Shop find/story you would like to share, please send your pictures and purchase details to

ThriftShop@FortMeadeSpousesClub.org to be featured in the next issue of The Pinch.

Until then, happy thrifting!

### Some Upcoming Dates

August 6th - Thrift Shop Open Day  
August 9th - Back to School Bash  
August 10th & 24th - TS Open Night  
August 18th - MMU  
August 25th - TS Work Night

### Social Clubs:

August 1st - Cooking Club  
August 8th & 27th - Playdate Club  
August 15th - Book Club  
August 26 - Wine Club

Contact Stephanie Oberbeck  
for access to the Google calendar



## Bunco is Back!

By Meghan McDonald Carlson

What was once the purview of British con-men and scoundrels looking for suckers is now a lighthearted game of chance among friends and acquaintances. Yes, folks—we're talking Bunco! It's a simple dice game that re-emerged during the mid-20th century as a fun, low-stakes offering in living rooms and church basements across the United States. One demographic that has traditionally enjoyed it is actually military spouses. With no skill required and accessible buy-ins, the setting of cheery Bunco gatherings is well-suited for our fluctuating communities, which are so often quickly-formed and deeply-bonded.

Member Tonya Starbeck first experienced Bunco at an FRG event while courting her husband in Washington state and can confirm the festivities can get a bit intense as everyone pursues rolling the right numbers. "Getting a Bunco is a rush!" she laughs. For Stephanie Oberbeck, the costumed themes are especially fun. Her absolute favorite was Harry Potter-themed: "I dressed up as Bellatrix Lestrange and drank champagne with my friends, only to discover the very next morning that I was expecting my son Jack. Talk about a memorable evening!" Laura O'Leary recalls the long-running tradition of Evelyn Silva's Mardi Gras-themed evenings of Bunco, "her gumbo, jambalaya, and red beans were the hit of the party!"



Evelyn's love of Cajun tradition and military life were center stage amidst infectious laughter and constantly rolling dice.

This year Wilma Potts has taken the Bunco Club under her wing. She's excited to be BACK and is kicking things off with a decade theme. Wilma says, "Everyone is welcome, but not required, to dress up in the decade they were born, the decade they graduated high school, or just their favorite decade! Join our Facebook group for more info!" Join your friends as a new season of the Bunco Social Club rolls BACK into action.



*Evelyn was a stalwart member of the Enlisted Spouses' Club, which was the institutional predecessor to the FMSC. She cooked for days in preparation for Mardi Gras Bunco.*

## Haikus on Military Life

Military life:  
what a crazy ride it is.  
Haiku about it.

*Stephanie Oberbeck*

Boxes all around  
PCS season is here.  
Say, see you later

*Laura Duncan*

When Spouse Friends Become  
Your Emergency Contacts  
The first time you meet.

*Bee Zoll-Johnson*

I don't want to go.  
I finally like it here.  
Dang! Orders again!

*Cristina Leon Guerrero*

Military spouse  
Resilient, gritty, and strong  
Also very tired

*Alexa Greathouse*

*The Pinch is the product of the FMSC's  
Photography & Publications Committee  
with Meghan McDonald Carlson at the  
helm as Director.*

*Join us!*

[photopublications@fortmeadespousesclub.org](mailto:photopublications@fortmeadespousesclub.org)