



Backchannels

Army Spouses' Club of the Greater Washington Area

December 2019



PRESIDENT'S PEN

How is it December already? I guess the saying "time flies when you're having fun" holds true, especially as it pertains to our club.

Speaking of fun, how wonderful was our November luncheon? Our Fundraising Chair, Holli Aspland, knocked it out of the park with our second annual Festival of the Firs. Thank you to our creative and giving members for supporting the FoF by sharing your talents with the donation of the beautiful trees and wreaths, and your generous support of the event (to include this month's Charitable Cause, our annual toy drive for the Friends of ACS). Dr. Matthew Costello, our guest speaker, was engaging and I can't wait to read his book to learn even more about George Washington and "The Property of our Nation".

Our membership directory is here! P.A. Mancini and Diane Martinez have spent countless hours since our Fall Kickoff making sure all of our members (373 so far) are appropriately registered and compiling our directory. Thank you, P.A. and Diane, for all your hard work and for that dazzling directory cover.

December will be another busy month for our club. Our annual New York City trip, White House tours, tour of the United States Botanic Garden (all lit up for the holidays), gatherings of our Zip Code and activity groups, will give our members lots of opportunities to share the season with each other. Thank you to our tour "guides", Michelle Zuniga and Mary Alice Jakso, for organizing such delightful excursions. Sadly, Michelle is leaving us shortly as she will be moving out of the area. We are all going to miss her and I know you all will join me in thanking her for all she has done for and on behalf of our club over the years.

The new year will bring some changes to our website as we transition to a new payment system. Look for an email in early January with further information; members will continue to be able to mail in their payments if desired.

Our final event of 2019 is what I know will be another fabulous luncheon. The "Snow Day Bingo" on December 19 will offer the perfect occasion during the hectic holiday season to spend an afternoon relaxing with friends, before the kids get out of school and to take a break from the planning and preparations, and possibly go home with a fabulous prize. I hope you are able to join us and look forward to seeing all the "ugly sweaters".

Wishing you and your families a blessed and joyous holiday!

Michelle Funkhouser

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LUNCHEON DATES

2019

December 19

2020

January 16
February 20
March 19
April 16
May 21

BACKCHANNELS SUBMISSIONS

If you would like to submit an article, information about an upcoming club activity, movie or book review, restaurant recommendation, recipe, local event, or a must-see travel destination please let me know! I would love your input!

All Backchannels submissions are due no later than the second Friday of each month.

Pictures from the monthly luncheon are due the following day on the third Friday of each month.

I can be reached at:
newsletter@armypousesclub.org

Fondly,
Jackie Habel
Editor



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ASCGWA 2019-2020

Honorary Presidents

Maria McConville
Alexandra Grinston
Leann Martin
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	Amie Hovatter	
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Zip Code Groups	Jennifer Stepetic	zipcodegroups@armypousesclub.org

VOLUNTEER



We have a few positions open on our 2019-2020 ASCGWA board. If you are interested in volunteering for a position, and making a strong impact in the community while working on a great team, please contact our president, Michelle Funkhouser, or any of our board members. We will be happy to speak with you!

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Bible Study

The Living Word Bible Study meets every Monday at 10 am at the Memorial Post Chapel on Fort Myer, across from the PX.

Please contact Nancy Jackson at jacksonjn@verizon.net.

Book Club

A story is always better when shared with a group. This club will read a selected book and then meet to discuss the book.

Please contact LaDonna at affinityclubs@armypousesclub.org.

Bridge Groups

The Bridge Group meets the third Tuesday of every month at the Army Navy Country Club of Arlington. You must have knowledge of how to play.

Please contact Henriette Gordon at hmg1776@sbcglobal.net.

Flick Chicks Movie Group

This group meets up to enjoy a movie together, as select movies that are of interest to club members are released.

Please contact Ellen Pirog at Ellen Pirog at mcatmny@verizon.net.

Great Decisions

Do you enjoy talking about current events and exploring the rationale of our foreign policy decisions? Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. The program model involves reading the Great Decisions Briefing Book, watching a DVD, and meeting in a discussion group to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today. A National Opinion Ballot is compiled and presented to the Department of State, Congress, and the White House at the end of the year.

Please contact Jill at specialactivities@armypousesclub.org if you are interested in leading this group (guidance on how to run this group can be provided).

Happy Hour Group

Meet new friends and catch up with other members at Happy Hour gatherings throughout the year in the DC/Northern Virginia area.

Please contact Kim Farnsworth at jkfarns@comcast.net.

Tea Group

This group meets to enjoy tea at various establishments in the area.

Please contact Ellen Pirog at mcatmny@verizon.net.

Tours

Throughout the year, various group tours are scheduled. One of the most popular is the yearly New York City bus ride with tickets to the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes show.

Please contact Mary Alice Jakso or Michelle Zuniga at tours@armypousesclub.org.

Walk Around Washington Group

Each month a walk is organized in and around the Washington, DC area.

Please contact Nina O'Shaughnessy at ninaspangos@gmail.com.

or Mary Pawlow at mlspawlow@aol.com

Zip Code Groups

Zip Code Groups meet in one another's homes, at local restaurants, or visit places of interest and are a perfect opportunity to meet your ASCGWA neighbors in a smaller setting.

Please contact Jennifer Stepetic at zipcodegroups@armypousesclub.org.

ZIP CODE GROUPS

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Festival of the Firs



Christmas often means spending time with family and friends and creating happy memories that last a lifetime. A few of our members shared their own treasured memories below. Wishing each of you love, joy, and peace!

Terri Feldmayer enjoyed their assignment in Southern France, where she traveled with French military spouses to Marseille to meet one of the "master santonniers" of Provence. Homes and churches prepare their crèches with charming figures to show how the birth of the Christ Child (the legend says the event occurred in Provence) changed their lives. The characters are in 19th century provincial dress and each is placed in a particular spot around the crèche with the gifts of their labor (wine, cheese, baguettes, olive oil, fish, etc). She became a collector and loves setting it up each Christmas and lets herself drift back to a special place.

Monika Flom loved putting a shoe out the night before Saint Nicholas Day in Germany, knowing that the next day there would be treats in the shoe such as apples and oranges. She also tried to find the biggest shoe to put out, hoping for extra treats but that never worked!

Alexandra Grinston has many fond memories of the Christmas holiday growing up in Germany. Some favorites include Christmas markets, glühwein, lebkuchen, advent calendars, and advent wreaths with candles that were lit on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

Julie Ivester's youngest daughter was born on Christmas day and you cannot beat that memory!

Kelli Reynoldson's Mimo would give each of the grandchildren a special ornament each year. The wrapped ornaments were opened on Christmas Eve and then were placed on her Mimo's Christmas tree. When Kelli married, her Mimo gave Kelli all the ornaments she had been given over the years for her own Christmas tree.

Ramona Smith had moved to the U.S. from Germany, where her mother lives. That Christmas she and her family decided to fly Space A to Germany to surprise her mother. They didn't get on the first flight out, but were able to catch the second flight. They landed at Ramstein, rented a car, and drove to her mother's house. At the doorstep, they rang the doorbell. When her mother asked who was there, nobody answered. They rang the doorbell again and again until her mother finally answered the door. When she saw her daughter and grandsons, she fell to her knees with happiness.

Nancy Stevenson treasures a tradition in her family where baby Jesus is placed in the manger on Christmas Day. Each year a child takes turns doing this important job. The child will carefully hold baby Jesus in their two small hands and carry him to the manger and then they sing happy birthday together. This tradition started when Nancy was a child and it continues with her children and her grandchildren.

Helgard Zebell remembers as a child gathering with the other children in a dimly lit room, and then being lead into the room where the Christmas tree was decorated with live candles. The sight of the lit tree was always something to behold. She and her sister also put out their shoe on Saint Nicholas Day and were so happy to see it filled with treats such as cookies, an apple, and an orange. Oranges were particularly scarce in Germany directly after WWII so it made that treat even more special!

Please join us for some fun
at the

Snow Day Bingo

December Luncheon

December 19, 2019
10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Patton Hall

\$25

R.S.V.P. before December 13, 2019

Guests are invited to wear an ugly sweater!



In light of your generosity over the past two months, we will not sponsor a charitable cause this month!



It is often said that it takes a village, and each and every time our wonderful club members come through. This year's Festival of the Firs was another successful event, thanks to the continued generosity of our members. The beautiful wreaths and trees donated were truly a labor of love! In addition to the support of our members, our club board members worked extra hard to make sure the day was fun for everyone! I am happy to report that our fundraiser brought in \$3723.00! I continue to be awed by the giving that goes into our club and into our community.

Blessings abound!

**Holli Aspland
Fundraising**



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SAVE THE DATE

2020 JAFOWL

FOX NEWS NATIONAL SECURITY
CORRESPONDENT, AUTHOR,
HARVARD GRADUATE, AND
BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR,
JENNIFER GRIFFIN

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020



You might have heard some of our members talking about JAFOWL and wondering what in the world they were referring to. Trust me, you want to keep track of information for this event! The Joint Armed Forces of Washington Luncheon (JAFOWL) is held once a year and is just around the corner!

In June of 1977 Art Buchwald, an American humorist and columnist for the Washington Post, was contacted to ask if he would speak at a spouses' club luncheon. Answering the telephone himself, Mr. Buchwald declined, saying that he received too many requests from military wives' clubs.

When asked, "What if all five of the services' spouses' clubs sponsored a joint luncheon?" he was excited to accept the invitation. The club presidents were contacted and all agreed it was a great idea; they would work together to host the event. The Joint Armed Forces of Washington Luncheon is now an annual affair.

Your JAFOWL Committee is comprised of representatives from each of the spouses' clubs of the five military services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Past speakers have included U.S. Presidents, First Ladies, well known military and political

figures, and celebrities. Most importantly, the luncheon provides the opportunity to make new friends in other services, and to promote and celebrate the unity of military spouses.

JAFOWL information will be distributed through Backchannels, our ASC-GWA website, and email. Plan on attending this very special event!

Connie Semonite
JAFOWL Representative



Is there someone that needs a little cheer, a get well wish, a condolence, or a congratulations? If you know of a member in need, please let our secretary know.

Email the member's name, address, and the type of card that should be sent to Michelle at president@armyspousesclub.org.



The Army Spouses' Club of the Greater Washington Area (ASCGWA) is a non-profit organization seeking to enhance the quality of life of its members and the Military District of Washington community at large.

We offer friendship, monthly luncheons, special activities and many volunteer opportunities. Additionally, there are zip code groups to make it easier to connect to the military spouses who live near you. Our volunteers organize fun activities and share information about unique opportunities available in the Washington, D.C. area.



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ASCGWA Lynch Creek Farm Fundraiser

We have partnered again with Lynch Creek Farm to offer you a variety of fresh greenery such as wreaths, centerpieces, trees, and garland. These arrangements make perfect Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts and they are gorgeous!

Ordering options are available until December 15, 2019 and ASCGWA will receive 15% from each item ordered.

All items can be ordered at:

<https://www.lynchcreekfundraising.com/teams/215255>

thank you,

ASCGWA Fundraising



Wishing the happiest of birthdays to our members with a December birthday!

December 1 - Regina Gilbertson, Maggie Hollinger & Judy Roberts | December 2 - Monika Flom | December 3 - Evelyn Rodriguez | December 4 - Casey Obringer | December 6 - Edith Gunnels Klimow | December 7 - Sharon Fogarty | December 9 - Christene Frazier, Dawn Fenton, Lise Harvey, & Jennye James | December 11 - Lain Harvey | December 12 - Claire Foley, Paula Gibbs, Lucille Griswold & Charlotte Tragakis | December 15 - Marianne Lee, Jackie McKenna & Monica Neal | December 16 - Elaine Freeman & Lisa Howard | December 17 - Kris Keith & Viviana Scrivner | December 18 - Carol Phillips & Brenda Schultze | December 20 - Debra Japzon Gillum & Jennifer Phillips | December 21 - Holly Scherer | December 22 - Holli Aspland, Laura Badami & Kelli Reynoldson | December 23 - Patricia McMillan & Wanda Thomas | December 26 - Jennifer Bowen | December 27 - Cheryl Edenfield | December 28 - Jackie Habel | December 29 - Jeannie Leson & Schele Mongeon

calling all
Vendors

Sign up. Show up. Sell.

Want to sell your creative work? Know a great vendor you'd like to see at a luncheon? Please contact Christie Kehoe, Vendor Chair, at vendors@armyspousesclub.org.



Ways & Means

Do you know we travel? In October, the Ways and Means table was at the AUSA event and in December we will be traveling to Knollwood Military Retirement Community for their coffee social. We are excited and honored to be able to attend their Holiday Boutique.

If you would be interested in helping at the Ways and Means table during our monthly luncheons or for a travel event, please email us directly or sign up to be a volunteer through the link on our club web page.

We are always willing to consider new items so stop by and talk to us about what you would like to see for sale. We are happy to announce that we will again have Polish Pottery available for sale at a limited number of luncheons.

Amie and Karen
waysandmeans@armyspousesclub.org

CHARITABLE CAUSE

We have always known that we have the best members! In light of the generosity you have shown with the food voucher program, the toy drive, and the Festival of the Firs, we will not have a Charitable Cause in the month of December. Know that your giving has helped brighten the lives of so many people.

Winks Photobooth
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Instagram: @WinksPhotobooth
Facebook: WinksPhotoboothDMV
Email: winksphotobooth@gmail.com
Cell: (808) 398-8066

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ADVERTISING

Are you looking for an opportunity to advertise your business? Showcase your company with an advertisement in the ASCGWA monthly newsletter and on our web page. We have four options to suit your advertising needs.

For more information, please contact newsletter@armyspousesclub.org.

\$40 package: 2" x 3.5" ad in the newsletter and on the web page with customer-provided graphics (October - May & a summer issue).

\$25 package: 2" x 3.5" ad in the newsletter and on the web page with customer-provided graphics (October - January or February - May).

\$60 package: 2" x 3.5" ad in the newsletter and on the web page includes design and graphics provided by ASCGWA (October - May & a summer issue).

\$35 package: 2" x 3.5" ad in the newsletter and on the web page includes design and graphics provided by ASCGWA (October - January or February - May).



Volunteer Corner

We love our volunteers and are always grateful for any extra help our members are able to give us. We can always use volunteers before, during, and after our luncheons. If you are able to lend a hand at one of our club tables (Fundraising, Special Activities, Hospitality, or Ways and Means) or at our photo booth, just let us know!

Our club uses Sign Up Genius to coordinate our volunteer needs. Please visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084FA9AA28A0F94-ascgwa> to view the online sign up sheet, or click on the Sign Up Genius link at the bottom of our club's home page, or contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Maggie Hollinger, at volunteer@armyspousesclub.org.



Sending a warm thank you to our November luncheon volunteers. Your generosity in helping to make the day such a success means more to us than we can say!

- Judy Caldwell
- Chris Jones
- Paige Kellog
- Mary Pawlow
- Kelli Reynoldson
- Sara Wade



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The Tea Group visited Cherry Hill Farmhouse in Falls Church, where in addition to having tea, they learned about the historic home from interpreter Mrs. Blaisdell.



The Walking Group met at the Old Post Chapel on Fort Myer and then walked across Key Bridge, along M Street, and back. A stop was also made at Georgetown Cupcakes!

Looking for something fun to do? ASCGWA has several clubs to join! Don't see a group that you would like us to have and want to start one? Let us know!

Please direct any questions to LaDonna Cavanna, Affinity Clubs Chair, at affinityclubs@armypousesclub.org.

Out and About

One of the many benefits of living in this area is the plethora of activities the VA, MD, and DC area has to offer. Each month we will spotlight one event that catches our eye! Get out and enjoy the day!

Ice! Featuring Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas

December 1 - 31

Gaylord National Resort
201 Waterfront Street
National Harbor, MD

The must-see holiday attraction is back! ICE! featuring the 1957 Dr. Seuss classic, How The Grinch Stole Christmas! Watch how the Grinch tries to steal Christmas from the Whos of Whoville through interactive ice sculptures and displays. Experience favorite scenes from this Christmas special such as the Grinch lurking through the chimneys of the Who-ville homes, the Grinch's heart growing three sizes after realizing Christmas means a little bit more and sitting down at the Whos' feast where the Grinch carves the roast beast. Everything is hand-carved from 2 million pounds of ice!

Additional information and tickets maybe found at:

<https://tickets.gaylordnational.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=34>



First Person

Judy Jagielski



Judy and Joanne

Some of the best parts of being a military spouse are the volunteer opportunities, the mentoring, and the friendships. Our volunteering makes an impact in our communities and along the way we grow lifelong friendships. Occasionally we even get the chance to mentor young military spouses. We are a giving and a loving community.

Judy has spent a life volunteering over the course of 19 moves in 25 years, and has continued to make a difference in retirement. During an early assignment at Fort Knox, Kentucky, she developed a friendship with Joanne Patton. Mrs. Patton came from a military family and, yes, she married into THAT military family. Judy felt that Mrs. Patton was the personification of what a military spouse should be. She was a kind woman who inspired people to want to help in their community and started one of the early young spouse mentorship programs. Judy was one of the instructors in this program.

In subsequent assignments Judy continued to volunteer and has held many board positions in various spouses' clubs, to include three presidencies. She has always recognized the importance of spouses' clubs as a way to get people involved in their communities and as a way to make friends. She initiated many programs in the clubs she volunteered with, to include gourmet groups and international groups. Judy's family also sponsored several international families while at different installations.

Judy was the president of our club during the years of 1995-97. She started a special activity group that was an English conversation class for our international members. One class was spent on idioms and they spent the entire time discussing the word "fender bender." Prior to her board position as president, she served as the tour chair and was the first to start the trips to NYC, the very same trip that many of us will be going on this December 11th.

Judy continued her friendship with Joanne Patton. As Armor officer spouses, they had several overlapping assignments. They were stationed together in Stuttgart and at the same time that General Rommel's son was the mayor of Stuttgart. Can you imagine the sons of two WWII adversaries meeting, and developing a friendship?

Judy too personifies what a military spouse should be. Get involved, foster those friendships, and enjoy this amazing life we live.

Do you have an interesting story or photo relating to one of your military posts or a job you have held? If so, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Jackie at newsletter@armyspousesclub.org



Ghost and Graveyard tour

December Tour Schedule

December 11

NYC

December 18

United States Botanic Garden

Tour questions should be sent to
Mary Alice or Michelle at:
tours@armyspousesclub.org.

MEMBERSHIP

We are always thrilled to welcome new members to our club, regardless of the time of the year. Membership information can be found on our web page or by contacting Diane or P.A. at membership@armyspousesclub.org. Our membership directory has been printed and there is a blank page at the back where new members can be written in. Any new member who joins our club after the directory was printed will be listed in Backchannels. Please look for "new member" ribbons on name tags at our monthly luncheons and take a moment to introduce yourself and welcome our newest members.

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Community News

Military Spouse Community Bands Together for 1 Million Acts of Kindness for GivingTuesday, Military Edition

One act of kindness can change the world. It is with this in mind that three military spouses from different branches of service made the decision to go global and inspire **1 million acts of kindness** within the military community and beyond by establishing the inaugural GivingTuesday Military edition. GivingTuesday, which is the Tuesday directly following Thanksgiving, was established in 2012 with one goal in mind, to make generosity go viral. This global day of giving is designed to inspire charitable giving to organizations that are changemakers in their communities, but also stimulate collaboration in communities. It was this sense of community and generosity in mind that led 2019 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year Branch winners Jessica Manfre (Coast Guard), Maria Reed (Army) and Samantha Gomolka (National Guard) to launch the inaugural GivingTuesday Military edition which will occur on Tuesday, **December 3, 2019**.

The challenge to military service members, military families (including Gold Star and surviving families), veterans and patriotic supporters is to complete **1 million acts of kindness** and share a photo, video or post of their act through social media channels using #GivingTuesdayMilitary on December 3, 2019. This movement is not about money, but about doing. Doing something kind for a fellow human.

Manfre, Gomolka and Reed are currently engaging 'Chapter Ambassadors' for this viral campaign at the more than 800 military bases worldwide and currently have over 3000+ members. "These acts of kindness can be small, but give members of the military community an opportunity to connect with each other and the communities they live in with a meaningful gesture," says Manfre. "The opportunities are limitless and could be as simple as buying a cup of coffee for a stranger, volunteering at a food pantry or animal shelter or simply sharing a hug with someone who needs it.

Chapter Ambassadors are being challenged to spearhead local efforts to garner acts of kindness both within the military community and civilian sector. "Our military, veterans and their families are a strong and cohesive group and we hope this day of generosity will show the world what we are, beyond the uniform," says Gomolka. Social media pages have been set up on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the December 3 viral campaign, all with the handle @GivingTuesdayMilitary. For more information or to join the movement, please visit givingtuesdaymilitary.com

"We were brought together by the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year program for the work we do individually, but soon realized that as a team, we could really enact change in communities around the world. GivingTuesday was that perfect opportunity to amplify our collective voices" says Reed. "One act of kindness can have a ripple effect and we hope that with one million acts, we can create a tidal wave." Anyone can participate, **simply be kind and share**.

Maria Reed

2019 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year (Army)



The SOWC December event is a potluck tea on 10 December, 10:30 a.m., at Barbara's home. The event will also include a Christmas card, cookie and gift exchange. We would love you to enjoy us. For further details, please call Barbara at (571) 261-2540.



The Arlington Zip Code Group took a private tour of Voice of America, followed by lunch at the Native American Museum.



The Burke Zip Code Group enjoyed lunch at Mllano's Family Restaurant in Springfield.



The Prince William and Beyond Zip Code Group enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by hosts Dawn Zagame, Evelyn Rodriguez, & Michelle Zuniga. After, they created two wreaths and two trees for the Festival of the Firs.



The Belvoir Zip Code Group works on a wreath for the Festival of the Firs.



The Springfield Zip Code Group met for lunch at Dos Amigos in Springfield.

gather