

Merica House Moments

Winter 2024

Scenes from 2024 Merica House Holiday Party



Our Mission

The Alliance for the Physically Disabled, Inc. (APD) is a non-profit organization committed to creating accessible and affordable housing opportunities with full-time personal assistance services for adults with severe physical disabilities.

Inside this issue:

- Cathy Parr: Best Is Yet To Come 2
- Meet Andrea Kemp-Curtis 2
- Deirdre Scoops *The Wash Post* 3
- Matt's Recipe: 30-Minute Chili 3
- Deirdre: A Memory Hero 4
- Thank You To Our Donors 4

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Christine Metz *co-secretary*

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For Cathy Parr, The Best Is Yet To Come

Upon entering Cathy Parr's room at Merica House, a visitor is drawn to the poster of actor and musician John Schneider, who gained fame as Beaugard "Bo" Duke on the Dukes of Hazzard action comedy show of the 1980s. Bo Duke was a "good ole boy" from Hazzard County, Georgia who, in concert with his cousin Luke Duke, fought the system like a pair of modern-day Robin Hoods. By trade, Bo and Luke were moonshine runners and perpetual adversaries to two corrupt Hazzard County officials, Commissioner Boss Hogg and Sheriff Roscoe P. Coltrane.

As a life-long student of fashion, Cathy talks with authority about the link between fashion and social history. She will tell you that cultural protest movements, such as the "beatniks" of the 1960s or the hippies of the 1970s, demonstrate that clothing often serves as an "identifier." Clothing can become a sort of uniform that defines a generation.

In the same way that the beatniks and hippies were identified by their clothing, the blue jeans and unbuttoned shirts that Bo and Luke wore on the Dukes of Hazzard served as their "uniform," reinforcing their rebellious image and disdain for authority. Similarly, the white suit and white cowboy hat worn by Boss Hogg reinforced his greedy and pompous nature.

For Cathy, ornamentation, or the lack of it, can make a statement as well. In watching the Dukes of Hazzard, it is clear that the "trimmings" on the uniform of Roscoe P. Coltrane—the sparkly buttons, outsized sheriff badge and outlandish pocket flaps—were central to the image the character sought to project. Making reference to essayist Adolf Loos, Cathy will tell you that, similarly, the absence of ornamentation can be a way to project spiritual strength. So, whether one is intent on projecting an aura of cultural protest or a sense of authority, a rebellious attitude or spiritual strength, one's choice in clothing can help to convey attitudes and emotions.



For those living with disabilities, clothing is no less important as an identifier. However, as Cathy is quick to point out, the designers of clothing for individuals living with disabilities must consider, as well, the nature and limitations of the disability. In the fashion world, "adaptive" clothing designed for those with disabilities is an emerging field of study. Having recently completed her tenure as Ms. Wheelchair Virginia, Cathy hopes to embark on a career in the world of fashion design, with a focus on clothing that is compatible with the needs of disabled individuals.

Cathy is still early in the process but she is working to identify educational programs that will help her to expand her knowledge of fashion design. She has learned that there are several academic institutions that offer courses in adaptive clothing design. She has yet to settle on a specific academic program, but has been encouraged to find that there are a number of attractive options available to her. The best, she says, is yet to come.

Meet our New Treasurer, Andrea Kemp-Curtis

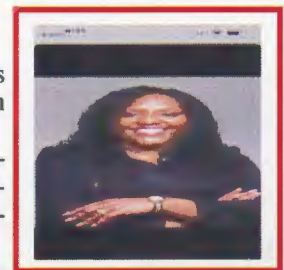
The Alliance for the Physically Disabled is pleased to announce that Andrea Kemp-Curtis has agreed to serve as our treasurer. The APD board of directors formally elected Andrea to that position at its meeting on January 16, 2025.

Until late last year, Andrea had a standing commitment at a local nursing home that required several hours of her time each week. When that commitment ended, friends asked Andrea what she intended to do with her new-found spare time. She replied, "I will find a way to help someone else." Fortunately for APD, "someone else" turned out to be Merica House and its residents.

A resident of Stafford, Virginia, Andrea brings a wealth of experience to the position of treasurer. Since February 2024, she has held the position of president of the University of the Potomac, which is located a few blocks from the White House in Washington, D.C. In that position, Andrea focuses on implementing the University's strategic plan to enhance educational services, foster academic excellence and ensure the financial stability of the University. Prior to serving as president, Andrea was the chief operating officer of the University for a period of nine years.

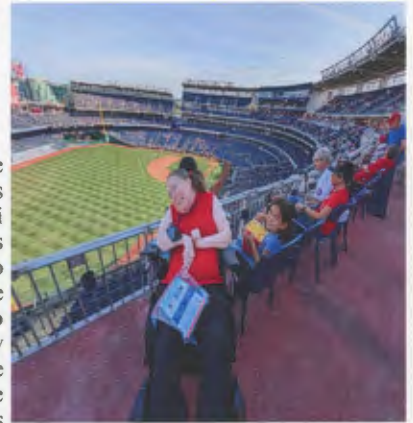
Before her tenure at the University of the Potomac, Andrea was director of student financial services for the Art Institute of Washington. She possesses a bachelor of science degree, with a minor in accounting. She also holds a masters degree in Business Administration and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Business Administration from Liberty University.

Andrea is a member of several professional associations, including the National Association of Professional Women, the Richmond Professional Women for Good, and the American Association of Colleges & Universities Presidents Trust.



First Person Report: How Resident Deirdre Shields Scooped *The Washington Post*

You Heard It here First: Nationals Play-by-Play Announcer Bob Carpenter Will Return for the 2025 Baseball Season by Deirdre Shields



Deirdre, with friend Bob Carpenter

Saturday, September 14, 2024 started out like most every other day. I woke early, showered, made a few phone calls, and coordinated with my brother, Andrew. Andrew and I were headed to Nationals Park that day to watch the Nats take on the Miami Marlins. Patrick Corbin, one of my favorites, was scheduled to pitch for Washington. He was going to face the Marlins' rookie, Valente Bellozo. Before the game, as is our custom, Andrew and I were going to meet with our friend, the Nationals play-by-play announcer Bob Carpenter. We've known Bob for the better part of 15 years. He's such a kind man. He often gives us little tips. Sometimes, he'll say things like, "Watch for CJ Abrams to steal at every opportunity today" or "Trey Lipscomb hasn't been hitting very well, so they're going to send him to Rochester." Today, he gave us a much bigger tip. This is how it unfolded.

Andrew and I met Bob at the elevator that goes up to the broadcast booth. I told Bob that I had noticed he wasn't traveling with the team as frequently on road trips as he had in the past. Much like Dodgers announcer Vince Scully had done years earlier, Bob was being selective about the road trips that he wanted to take. Often, his understudy, Dan Kolko, handled the play-by-play when the Nats were traveling to away games. I asked Bob if this meant that he was intending to retire from broadcasting soon. Bob responded, "I haven't told anybody else this but, no, I'm not going to retire just yet. I will be back for 2025. Other than my family, you are the first to know." I asked Bob if he would mind if I broke the news in the *Merica House* newsletter.

He told me, "*The Washington Post* and all the other news outlets will find out sooner or later but, for now, the story is yours exclusively, so break the news to your newsletter readers, they deserve to know."

So, that's the story behind my scoop. Look for more news from Bob when the Nats begin the 2025 season on March 27.

Resident Recipe: 30-Minute Chili

Recipe submitted by Matthew Renfro
Preparation and review by Christine Metz



Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef or turkey
- ¾ cup yellow onion
- 1¼ ounces chili seasoning mix
- 16 ounces beans in chili seasoned sauce, undrained
- 14½ ounces petite diced canned tomatoes

- 10 ounces Rotel Original Diced Tomatoes and Green Chilies, undrained
- 8 ounces tomato sauce
- 1 cup water
- Shredded cheese and sour cream (optional)

Directions

1. Cook ground meat and onion in large saucepan or 3-quart pot over medium-high heat for 5 minutes or until ground meat is crumbled and no longer pink, stirring occasionally; drain, if necessary.
2. Stir in seasoning mix.
3. Add chili seasoned beans, diced tomatoes, Rotel tomatoes & green chilies, and tomato sauce.
4. Pour water into tomato sauce can, swirl water in can and pour into saucepan.
5. Bring mixture to a boil.
6. Reduce heat to medium; simmer 10 minutes, stirring several times.
7. Top chili with shredded cheese and sour cream, as desired.



Matthew Renfro

Christine's Comments: As advertised, this chili recipe offers a satisfying meal that can be prepared without a major commitment of time. The recipe gives one the option of using either ground beef or turkey. I went with the ground beef, believing the beef to produce a more substantial and tasty dish. It's a hearty meal, particularly well-suited for cold winter evenings.



Christine Metz

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Seeking Excellence on Memory Hero
By Deirdre Shields

When I was in school, I used to hear the term “man versus machine.” The term arose, for example, in literature when there was a conflict between a fictional character and some kind of man-made invention. These days I have been spending a lot of time with my own version of “man versus machine.” Through the marvels of Alexa, I am able to play several “Memory Hero” games. My favorite is the “Memory: Animals” game. In this game, Alexa gives me a sequence of clues that describe a specific type of animal. The trick is to listen carefully to the clues. If I am attentive and patient, I can usually identify the kind of animal that Alexa’s clues are describing. When I think I can correctly identify the type of animal, I give Alexa my answer. “Alexa,” I say, “you are a tiger” or “Alexa, you are a cat.” “Memory: Animals” has varying levels of difficulty. I have pretty much mastered the “Easy” and “Medium Difficulty” levels. I am now progressing toward the most difficult level. In addition to playing the “Memory Hero” games, I spend a lot of time each day using audio books to read novels. And, of course, my favorite activities are watching television with my house mate, Matt Renfro, and attending Mass every Sunday at Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Arlington.



Thank You To Our Donors

The Alliance for the Physically Disabled truly appreciates the continuing generosity of all members of the Merica House community. We wish to acknowledge recent donations from the following individuals and organizations:

Benevity Community Impact Fund
Richard Bess
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Stephanie Nortoni
Sonja Parr

Annette Porter
Anne and Dick Rankin
Paula C. Renfro
Donna Snyder

MERICA HOUSE

Alliance for the Physically Disabled, Inc.

YES! Please accept my donation for Merica House and its mission of providing independence with dignity.

Please make checks payable to **The Alliance for the Physically Disabled, Inc.** and mail with this form to The Alliance for the Physically Disabled, 3705 S. George Mason Drive, Apt. # 105 & 106 South, Falls Church, VA 22041.

Credit card donations can be made through our secure link found at <http://www.theapd.org>.

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The Alliance for the Physically Disabled, Inc. (APD) is a non-profit organization committed to creating accessible and affordable housing opportunities with full-time personal assistance services for adults with severe physical disabilities. APD's core mission is to operate and maintain Merica House. APD is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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