



*The Tree Unites the
Branches; The Branches
Bear the Fruit*

The ORANJ TREE

Quarterly Newsletter of the Organization of Residents Associations of New Jersey

www.oranjccrc.org

Number 65

Winter Issue

December 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ORANJ is the major organization in New Jersey *supporting, empowering, and bettering the lives of NJ senior citizens*. With your support, we passed the Tax Break for Veterans and *First In – First Out (FIFO)* for your entry fees with refund contracts. We can continue to lead with you behind us!

Stepping up to the podium at Fellowship Village Plenary Meeting to accept the Presidency of ORANJ was smooth and gentle. At that time, part of this year's objectives included the continuation of legislative advances and further development of "best practices" information and dissemination.

I also had the notion of expanding these objectives to include a healthcare initiative. (This would include all residents but focus on the 25% currently residing in Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing.)

Paraphrasing Uncle Sam, "*We want you!*" We need volunteers to accomplish the preceding critical objectives and other items of interest. A review of assets revealed a lack of personnel in several areas: (not limited to) healthcare, finance, officers doubling up on functions and ad hoc committees.

Other items of interest to be looked at: expansion of plenary meeting attendance to include more first-time attendees and ensuring more residents are aware of ORANJ.

Accordingly, you don't need expertise in your area of interest. What ARE needed:

- Interest
- Inquisitiveness and
- Communication skills.

You can volunteer through your RAC, Regional VP or directly to me at presoranj06@gmail.com – (973) 981-0103.

Ralph Hemecker

ORANJ PLENARY – APRIL 15

at

THE OAKS AT DENVILLE

Executive Committee

RALPH HEMECKER, *Crane's Mill*
President

RON WHALIN, *Friendship Village*
Immediate Past President,

DAVE MARR, *Lantern Hill*
Vice President, Northeast Region

HARVEY PETERS, *Crane's Mill*
Vice President, Northwest Region

BARBARA GRUTTER, *Applewood*
Vice President, Central Region

BARBARA TROUGHT, *Medford Leas*
Vice President, Southwest Region

GARY BALDWIN, *Seabrook*
Vice President, Southeast Region

PAUL BASHAM, *Wiley Christian*
Secretary

MAGGIE HEINEMAN, *Medford Leas*
Treasurer

GARY BALDWIN, *Seabrook*
Legislative Committee

WENDY GANSBERG, *Meadow Lakes*
Newsletter Editor

Members

Applewood, Freehold

The Atrium at Navesink, Red Bank

Bristol Glen, Newton

Cadbury at Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill

Cedar Crest, Pompton Plains

Crane's Mill, West Caldwell

Crestwood Manor, Whiting

The Evergreens, Moorestown

Fellowship Village, Basking Ridge

The Fountains at Cedar Parke, Atco

Friends Village, Woodstown

Harrogate, Lakewood

House of the Good Shepherd,

Hackettstown

Lantern Hill, New Providence

Laurel Circle, Bridgewater

Lions Gate, Voorhees

Meadow Lakes, East Windsor

Medford Leas, Medford

Monroe Village, Monroe Township

The Oaks at Denville, Denville

The Pines at Whiting, Whiting

Seabrook, Tinton Falls

Stonebridge at Montgomery, Skillman

Wiley Christian Retirement

Community, Marlton

Winchester Gardens, Maplewood

ORANJ contact

Ralph Hemecker
presoranj06@gmail.com
(973) 981-0103

2019 FALL PLENARY AT FELLOWSHIP VILLAGE

by Ron Whalin, ORANJ Past President

On October 16, Fellowship Village hosted its first plenary meeting in their new Cultural Arts Center. Over 22 volunteers and 150 attendees met in this wonderful space. As President of ORANJ and resident of Fellowship Village it was my role to guide many staff and residents in planning the logistics of the event. The programs and panels explaining palliative and hospice care were administered by Barbara Grutter, Vice President for the Central Region.

After welcoming remarks from Fellowship Senior Living Southeast Region Vice President Gary Baldwin presented me with a plaque. Thank You! A brief business meeting culminated in election of the 2019-20 slate of ORANJ officers who are listed in the sidebar on the first page



of this newsletter.

The morning presentation, "Thoughtful Life Conversations – Exploring Palliative Care" by Vikranta Sharma, MD, included an active Q&A session led by Rosemary Gorman, APRN. (Both palliative care and hospice care provide comfort. But palliative care can begin at diagnosis, and at

the same time as treatment. Hospice care begins after treatment of the disease is stopped and the person is not expected to survive the illness.)



Lunch provided an opportunity to meet visitors from the many participating CCRCs. Exchange of ideas over good food is always a highlight of a plenary. Fabulous

desserts helped make this especially sweet.

After lunch, the Fellowship Village chorus entertained by singing "Shenandoah" and "Good News." Following the concert, the program continued with a panel discussion on Hospice Care. The panel members were Alaina Nemes and Geralyn Kienilen of Fellowship Garden State Hospice and Residents Lou Lorio of Fellowship Village and Barbara Grutter of Applewood. They discussed the ways palliative and hospice care affected them and their families. The panel was moderated by Rosemary Gorman.

New President Ralph Hemecker thanked Fellowship Village for holding the meeting and announced that the next plenary meeting will be held at The Oaks of Denville on April 15, 2020.

VACCINATIONS FOR SENIORS

by Wendy Gansberg

The big four vaccines recommended for seniors by the Department of Health and Human Services are: flu vaccine, pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccine, shingles vaccine and the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) shot – the booster for the childhood DTaP vaccine. Of course, you must speak to your doctor about your personal history and his or her recommendations, but I hope to provide a short guide on the latest information for your use.

About 30 percent of people 65 and older skipped their flu shot last year, about two-thirds didn't receive the recommended shingles vaccine, and 43 percent aren't up to date on tetanus shots, according to a 2017 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But these vaccines are important for this age group.

"As we get older, our immune system becomes much less robust, which means we're not just more at risk for getting diseases like flu and shingles but of developing life-threatening consequences from them," says William Schaffner, M.D., an infectious-disease specialist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. The weakening immune system that age brings could also make vaccines somewhat less effective. "Your body doesn't respond with quite as many antibodies as it would if you were younger," Schaffner says. And no matter what your age, vaccines don't necessarily provide complete protection, but reducing the odds seems like your best option.

SUCCESS – VETERANS FIGHT ENDS!!

by Gary Baldwin

Hooray for ORANJ!

Occasionally I hear the Billy Ray Cyrus' country-western song in which there are the lyrics **“some gave some, some gave all”** and it has real meaning to me. For those who “gave some” I stand tall on Memorial Day and salute the fallen warriors who “gave all” for their country. For those of us who stood up when the calling came to again defend this great country in times of war or conflict or when freedom was being tested around the globe I believe Veterans Day is an outstanding example of respectful recognition for those who “gave some.” To my point in this writing, recognition for sacrifice should not just be reserved for these two honored days each year. Veterans and their widowed spouses exist 365 days a year and often get forgotten as they weave their way through the trials of life. As they near life's end many step into the quiet and more protected life in retirement by choosing an age-restricted community seeking an environment that will give them the restful life they seek. With the development and spread of

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) across New Jersey, veterans and their spouses relocated in large numbers to these facilities not knowing that benefits provided to them while living in privately-owned homes would be taken from them. Here is where ORANJ began its long, long journey to correct this inequality.

Many, or perhaps all, veteran residents living in our state's 25 CCRCs have become aware over the past 18 years of the fight put forth by members of the ORANJ organization who sought to make this change. With the passage and signing of the bills changing the law, the final step was made when the voters of New Jersey overwhelmingly passed the referendum on November 5, 2019 to amend the Constitution of the State of New Jersey to permit the small tax reduction for eligible veterans and widowed spouses living in our CCRCs. I am proud to say that it was a team effort by my colleagues in ORANJ leadership and another example of what ORANJ has done through the years for its membership.

APPLICATION DEADLINE AND “HOW TO” FOR VETERANS AND WIDOWED SPOUSES OF VETERAN IN CCRCs

by Gary Baldwin

For those of you who are eligible for this tax reduction, I am sure you are aware of the need to file the newly revised State application form to become eligible for the small reduction in your 2019 property tax. This reduction only applies to those occupying Independent Living apartments in your CCRC. Filing is a one-time necessity and you must have lived in your current unit prior to October 1, 2018. The application filing deadline date is **December 31, 2019** and you may apply either in person or by mail at the Tax Collector's Office in the town in which your CCRC is located. If you cannot get there personally, call the Tax Collector's Office and they will send you the application form. The form is also available online. Return the completed form, along with copies of the required documents reflecting the date you

moved into your current unit, your state residency eligibility (driver license or other government issued ID), and proof of your veteran eligibility status and service (DD form 214) to the Tax Collector's Office. Your application process must be complete by **December 31** of this year to be eligible for the tax reduction for the current year, 2019. For widows of veterans, your specific eligibility requirements can best be determined by calling the tax office and speaking to an employee in the Tax Collector's Office in your municipality.

My thanks to those of you who have waited patiently with me to see this richly deserved benefit restored.

To the Veterans and their Spouses, I proudly say:

...

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE”

LIVE THEATER COMES TO FELLOWSHIP VILLAGE

by Faith W. Eckler

After nearly three years, the mountains of dirt and the earth movers are mostly gone, and Fellowship Village has its new Cultural Arts Center, which has already hosted several performances by local repertory companies. It was a long time coming and a major disruption in our lives, but it is beginning to demonstrate its worth.



Ever since Fellowship Village opened 23 years ago, it has lacked an adequate auditorium. Its largest gathering space could seat no more than 75 people and had no stage or facilities for special lighting or acoustics. Community-wide meetings had to be held in the dining room with video in the bistro. The dramatic group had to stage three performances per production so that everyone who wanted to could see our theater group's presentations. It was time to construct something larger.

As long as we were going to build something, "let's do it right," we said, and so we partnered with Trilogy,

local repertory company. Architects were hired to design a building with all the accoutrements of a Broadway theatre. There is an orchestra pit, which can magically disappear to enlarge the stage area. There is a mammoth screen, which can be raised or lowered for showing movies. The same mechanism will enable us to change backdrops during performances. The seats can be removed altogether or moved into different configurations to create space for such things as theater in the round.

We named the theater "The Mitchell and Ann Sieminski Theater" in honor of one of our current residents, who decided that Fellowship Village was a more worthy recipient of her generosity than the Metropolitan Opera to which she had previously planned to make a generous gift. It serves three purposes. Our residents have access to professional or semi-professional theater, music and dance at a very reasonable cost. Members of the wider community also have another source of entertainment without traveling to New York City and paying Broadway ticket prices. And artistic groups have a venue for their performances.

Outsiders, as well as residents, can make an evening of it at Fellowship Village. Dinner can be purchased in the Terrace View Dining Room before the show. During intermission, snacks and beverages, including cappuccino are for sale in the Bistro.

Inviting theatergoers from the community onto our campus required the expansion of our parking capacity. We employed a novel technique that involved a layer of fine gravel, a polyethylene mesh, and a layer of topsoil, all of this covered with sod and laid down on top of our front lawn. This will allow cars to park on the grass.

Happy Holidays
and a
Healthy New Year!
from your

ORANJ Executive Committee



RALPH
DAVE GARY PAUL
BARBARA BARBARA
MAGGIE WENDY HARVEY RON
II