



# THE BRIDGE

BRIDGING GENERATIONS WITH AGELESS FRIENDSHIP

*Friends Across the Ages • Nursing Home Outreach in Gainesville, Florida*

Vol. 5 No. 3 Summer, 2007



## STEVE & ALLISON BLAY Directors' Message

### Changing of the Guard...

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to two Friends Across the Ages Board officers who have recently passed the torch. GEORGE HAMILTON has been President of the Board for the past three years. He has extensive experience with nursing homes, since he has been the administrator at North Florida Rehab for the past twenty-one years. VI ASMUTH graciously took on the role of secretary three years ago. She holds a Ph.D. in geriatric communication, and is a one-to-one volunteer at Park Meadows. Both George and Vi have agreed to continue to serve as board members, and we are very grateful for their commitment to Friends.

Our new officers are JEAN LANSFORD, President, and IRENE DOYLE, Secretary. We thank these officers, old and new, for their selfless dedication and service!

For those who may be interested, our Friends Across the Ages "Starter Manual" (which has been posted on our website for the past year) will be promoted to a wider audience when we attend the statewide Florida Health Care Activity Coordinators Association annual conference in Orlando this July. We will keep you posted of any new developments as we continue to share the concept of Friends with other communities.

## Fourth Annual Bingo-a-Thon ~ An Island Splash

Exotic tropical drinks, palm trees, leis, and island music...Hawaii? No, that was the scene at the 4th Annual Bingo-a-thon on April 21st! And although the palm trees were inflatable and the leis were not quite fresh-cut, this year's event was better than ever.

As in past years, the event was held at five different nursing homes, all at the same time, with many volunteers assigned to each location to play bingo with the residents. However, rather than serving as a fundraiser, as in the past, this year the Bingo-a-thon was simply a celebration for both nursing home residents and volunteers. And celebrate they did!

The Friends Across the Ages Board of Directors did much to make this event such a success, by organizing and preparing the food, making festive signs, and gathering decorations and prizes. The sheer number of prizes would have made Bob Barker jealous -- including homemade pillows (made by LETICIA EW BANK), hand lotions and perfume, and even clock radios. A wrap-up party for volunteers was held in the beautiful courtyard at Barr Systems. For the second year in a row, tasty sandwiches were provided by Joe's Place Restaurant accompanied by side dishes provided by Board members. All Bingo-a-thon volunteers received a free t-shirt. Several special awards were given out:

- HEATHER GEIDEL, a one-to-one volunteer at Park Meadows was given special recognition with the "stick-with-it" award (a roll of duct tape).
- IRENE DOYLE, who served tirelessly on several Bingo-a-thon committees, received the "Worker Bee" award (a jar of honey).
- AGNES BIERBAUM, with 6 years of service as a one-to-one volunteer, received the "Five Years + 1" award (a bag of cheetos - long story, don't ask!)
- RUTH HAZEN, honorary lifetime board member and regular volunteer at University Place, was again recognized for her many years of nursing home volunteering (24 years and counting!)
- All regular Friends volunteers received a special thank you gift and handwritten note from JEAN LANSFORD, President of the Friends Board of Directors.

Altogether about 100 volunteers participated in this event again this year. A total of thirteen coordinators at the five different nursing homes made the event possible. We

believe the Bingo-a-thon achieved its goal of giving the nursing home residents an afternoon to feel really special, and to know they are not forgotten. See you next year at Bingo-A-Thon #5!



Bingo-A-Thon volunteers at Park Meadows.

# Resident Memorial ... Bill Traxler

BY STEVE & ALLISON BLAY, BILL'S Friends

Some of our long time volunteers may remember BILL TRAXLER, who lived at both the Alachua Nursing Center and North Florida Rehab before moving down to a nursing home in Titusville to be closer to his sister. His ready smile and wit endeared him to those who knew him.

Bill was born on Sept. 20, 1920, and died May 29, 2007. He served in the Navy during World War II. He married later in life, and his wife, Betty Ann, passed on in 1999. Besides his sister, Shirley, he also had a brother named Kenneth, and he frequently spoke fondly of them and their families.



history, and Bill was named after his grandfather, William H. Traxler. His father, Earl, was a banker, and some of the other nursing home residents from Alachua remember doing business with him. If you have a detailed map of Florida you will even find mention of the town of "Traxler, Florida", which is now mostly just a historical marker on the side of the road a few miles from the town of Alachua.

Perhaps thanks to many years of working as a groundskeeper at the University of Florida, Bill loved Gator Football, and we had the pleasure of taking him to the Orange and Blue game twice while he still lived in Gainesville. His admiration for Danny Wuerffel and Steve Spurrier never waned even years after they left the Gators.

Bill was an important part of our lives, especially since he was one of the main people encouraging Steve to marry Allison. After we got married, his demands continued – "Where's the B-A-B-Y?" (as he would put it). We were delighted when we finally got to introduce him to our son, Peter.

At his funeral we found out from some of Bill's childhood friends that he used to play the trumpet and that he was also an amateur astronomer. The things we never knew about this special person! We will miss him.

The Traxler family was quite famous in early North Florida

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## Memorial Donations

DIDIER H. NONGA, by *Bintou Melanie Mann*

CATHERINE HARDEE, by *Linda Gardner*

## Welcome New Volunteers

✿ DEBBIE WALKER at *Gainesville Health Care Center*

✿ CHINARA GARRAWAY at *University Place*

✿ CHRISTINA REITZ & ROBBIE CURRY at *Parklands*

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