



Home Away from Home

FISHER HOUSE WISCONSIN NEWS

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Message from the President



FHW has:

- Celebrated the 24th Annual Brewers Racing Sausages 5/10K Run/Walk with FHW as the beneficiary of funds raised
- Enjoyed a record-breaking 10th Annual Golf Outing with 300 participants
- Drew more than 1,000 motorcycles to the 15th Annual Bill Michael's Poker Run benefiting FHW
- Held our inaugural Annual Town Hall for our wonderful supporters

As everyone is aware, we were approved to build a second house in Wisconsin. Our next house will be built to support the Middleton VA Medical Center. In August, we received notification that we will need to build off-site due to space constraints on the VA Medical Center grounds. Our amazing Board of Directors went into action and immediately asked "how can we help?" After a call with the leadership team at the VA Medical Center to understand next steps, FHW started reaching out to contacts and resources in Madison with the intent to provide land options to the Middleton VA Medical Center. While the VA will need to present the land options to the National VA, our hope is that our help will be embraced while the VA continues to source for land as well. Our goal is to assist where we can in order to provide a Fisher House for the families

As we enter Fall with the holidays around the corner, I can't help but be thankful for all that we have received at Fisher House Wisconsin. Since our last newsletter

of our veterans and active military receiving care at the VA Medical Center in Middleton. After a busy summer for FHW, so many of you continue to ask me how you can help. Some of the ways you can provide help include:

- Sign up to cook at the Milwaukee VA Fisher House! Go to <https://mealtrain.com/39yovl>, create a profile, then choose a date! Our guests LOVE a home cooked meal!
- Watch our website and LinkedIn/Facebook pages for upcoming events to attend
- Host a fundraiser for FHW
- Invite us to speak at a meeting or event to generate awareness for FHW
- Hold a 'Paper Drive' (i.e., paper towels, toilet paper, laundry detergent, individually wrapped snacks)
- Donate cash, stocks and bonds, bequests
- Do your Amazon shopping through smile.amazon.com and choose Fisher House Wisconsin under *Supporting*. A percentage of the money from your orders automatically is sent to FHW.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of FHW. From our supporters to sponsors to volunteers and the staff of the Milwaukee VA Fisher House – we couldn't be successful without each one of you. There's a reason we are one of the top community groups in the world – and it's because of YOU.

Stay safe and healthy this holiday season and thank you again.

—Angie Christianson, President



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Remembering Robert H. Prill

This March, FHW lost a beloved volunteer and supporter – Robert (Bob) H. Prill. Bob, who is survived by his wife and dedicated FHW volunteer Mareta, brought his uplifting spirit and warm sense of humor to everything he did. He and Mareta volunteered at countless events for FHW as well as at the Fisher House over the years; he always had a welcoming smile and generous heart.

Bob was a proud veteran of the U.S. Army, where he served as a cryptographer. He was committed to volunteering his time towards causes that helped other veterans. In addition to his contributions to FHW, Bob was also a regular volunteer at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center. He was entirely selfless with his time and committed to giving back.

As Denzel Washington once said, “At the end of the day it’s not about what you have or even what you’ve accomplished... it’s about who you’ve lifted up, who you’ve made better. It’s about what you’ve given back.” It is undisputed that Bob’s contributions and selflessness will forever be remembered by FHW – he gave back through his time and generosity ten-fold.



Bob Prill & FHW President Angie Christianson, 5th FHW Anniversary celebration in 2021.

We are eternally grateful to Bob for his many years and hours of volunteer service for FHW. He will be deeply missed.

When asked about her memories of Bob, FHW President Angie Christianson said, “Bob was someone who always had a smile and a hug to give. He was the quintessential gentleman right up to his last days on earth with us. When I stopped by to visit him, he tried to stand up to give me a hug but couldn’t. When I bent down to hug him, he gave me a beautiful hug that lasted just a second longer than usual. It was with that hug that I knew

“ Bob was someone who always had a smile and a hug to give. He was the quintessential gentleman right up to his last days on earth with us. ”

I wouldn’t be able to see his beautiful smile again. Bob passed a few days later at home with family by his side. He was someone who always held the door for me, always made sure I ate, and always insisted we have a beer together when outside the Fisher House at an event. In addition, Bob always asked about my family and how work was going. He was extremely easy to talk with and had a passion for Fisher House. His wife Mareta is continuing his legacy by continuing to volunteer at the Fisher House and events.”



A Grateful Heart

Anthony (Tony) Benavidez

By Michelle M. Friedman

On Aug. 5, 2019, Anthony (Tony) Benavidez knew something was wrong when he became excessively fatigued during a short walk to a local ice cream shop. He decided to go to the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center, because he was also feeling dizzy, tired, and generally unwell. A combat Navy veteran who served during the Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm), he was familiar with discomfort.

At 50-years-old, Tony knew several men in his family had suffered heart attacks at an early age. However, he did not know he was suffering from a heart attack when he walked into the VA on that hot August day. Within hours, Tony would undergo a triple bypass surgery, an open-heart procedure to treat three blocked coronary arteries in the heart. At the time of his surgery, he had a severe heart blockage of 98 percent, which had significantly reduced blood flow to his heart muscle.

His father flew in from Arizona and his mother caught a flight from California to be by his side during his recovery. While visiting him in the hospital his parents discussed which hotels might be close to the VA. A nurse in the ward overheard their discussion and mentioned Fisher House Wisconsin as an option. Tony and his parents had not known about the accommodations offered at Fisher House Wisconsin. The nurse put his parents in touch with the house and there was space available for them to stay while their son

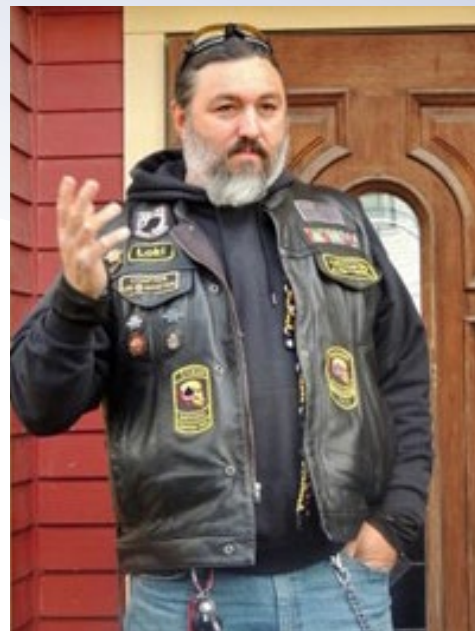
recovered. Once he was discharged from the hospital, he visited the house with his parents and was very impressed and extremely grateful.

Since that time, Tony has been a steadfast supporter of Fisher House Wisconsin and frequently participates in its annual motorcycle rides and other charity events to help raise funds for the house and its mission. "Anything the Fisher House needs, I'm here," he said.

Tony is not only an advocate of Fisher House Wisconsin, but also a full member of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) Chapter 45-6 and serves as its webmaster. CVMA Chapter 45-6 has donated meals to, and raised

“ Tony and his parents had not known about the accommodations offered at Fisher House Wisconsin. ”

funds for, Fisher House Wisconsin. The association, which has eight chapters in Wisconsin, has more than 19,000 members from all branches of the United States Armed Forces. CVMA, which is a 501(c)(3), is focused on assisting individual veterans, veteran care facilities and other veteran organizations and charities. Its mission is veterans helping other veterans. In addition to Fisher House Wisconsin, the Highground Veterans Memorial Park, the Center for Veterans Issues (CVI), the Milwaukee Soldiers Home and countless other veterans and veteran organizations have benefited from the efforts of CVMA Chapter 45-6.



Tony speaking at FHW fall fundraiser motorcycle ride.

During his time in the Navy, Tony was stationed on the USS Midway where it served as the Persian Gulf flagship. He was part of the VAQ 136 Jammer Squadron out of Yokosuka, Japan. He and others worked towards the mission of jamming communications and taking out scud missile sites. His experiences while in the military and as a combat veteran inspire him to continue helping other veterans.

He currently works as a software integrator at ProShip located in Brookfield, Wisconsin. ProShip is considered one of the most trusted providers of automated, multi-carrier shipping software and was founded by two Navy veterans. When asked how his health is today, Tony said, "Life is good, it's great. I get to watch my children grow up."

Thomas Cobb's Giving Spirit Impacted Many – Including Fisher House Wisconsin

In January 2021, a wonderful man with a generous heart passed away – Thomas Cobb. At 86-years-old, his life was an incredible journey. Even after his passing, his giving spirit impacted many, including FHW. He bequeathed an incredibly generous charitable donation to FHW through his estate. FHW is incredibly grateful for his heartfelt gift.

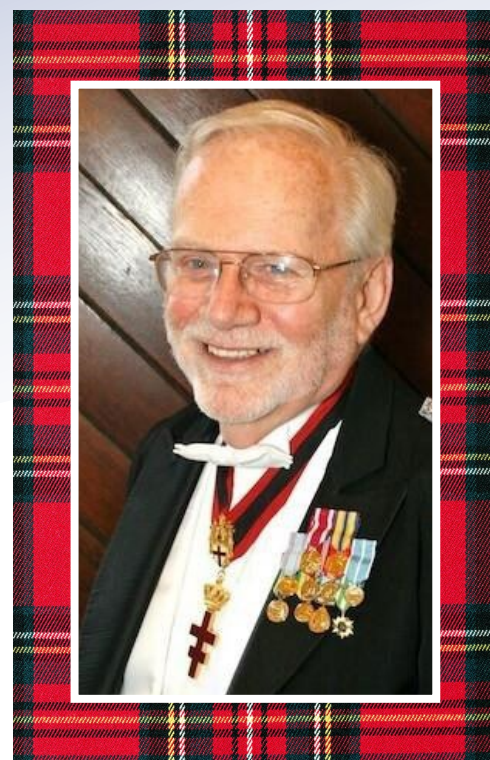
His obituary, as published by Schmidt & Bartelt Funeral, included a detailed account of his amazing journey of service during his lifetime. Below is a portion of his obituary, which shines a bright light on his many contributions, that we want to share with our supporters.

MSgt Cobb (ret.) was extremely proud of his service in US Air Force. His military career spanned over 35 years, during which time he served all over the world. Tom was also an active Mason and Shriner. He was initiated into the Masonic Order in 1990 and was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in 1991 at Lake Lodge #189 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Tom was a member of Tripoli Shrine Temple where he was instrumental in forming the Tripoli Scottish Highlanders Pipe and Drum Band. He also chaired, and was the driving force, behind the Highlanders annual Tartan Ball.

Tom was passionate about piping. He started piping after winning a set of bagpipes in a card game. He formed the Milwaukee School of Pipes and Drums and brought world class instruction to the area, exposing the community to a level of piping, and drumming never experienced before. Tom organized and ran an annual seminar in Milwaukee that was well-attended by pipers and drummers from across the US and Canada. He was also a founding member and piper with the Celtic Nations Pipes and Drums band.

Tom was also heavily involved in the Irish and Scottish community. He was a long-time member of the Milwaukee Shamrock Club and a member of the St. Andrews Society of Milwaukee, where he served on the board of Scottish Fest, now known as the Milwaukee Highland Games, for many years.

In addition, he was a member of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (SMOTJ). He was invested in the Order through the Priory of St. John the Baptist in 2002, where he contributed selflessly of his time. He served for many years as Chief of Protocol, meticulously arranging and overseeing all Priory events, and achieving the rank of Grand Officer.



MSgt Thomas B. Cobb (ret.) US Air Force

One of his life passions was the building of the Battle Cross Monument in the SE Wisconsin Veteran's Memorial cemetery in Union Grove. Tom played an integral part in its design, fund raising, management, record keeping, construction coordination and dedication ceremony. The monument is a lasting memorial to the achievements and sacrifice of many thousands of Wisconsin veterans who find their final resting place in Union Grove. The front of the granite base bears the inscription "All gave some, some gave all" along with the emblems of the five branches of the US military. Without Tom, there would be no monument. For Tom it was a labor of love and will stand for many years as a magnificent tribute to the great man that he was.



The Battle Cross Monument in the SE Wisconsin Veteran's Memorial cemetery in Union Grove.

FHW: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By the Numbers

As a nonprofit, it is no secret that generous donations, fundraising activities, and our many volunteers are the lifeblood of the FHW mission. FHW is a home away from home for veterans and military families who need temporary housing while their loved one receives care at a VA approved medical center. Since the house opened in 2016, more than 3,500 families have stayed at the Milwaukee VA Fisher House. The many fundraising events hosted throughout the year help raise the money necessary to keep the FHW mission going! Here's a brief look back at 2022.

FHW hosted its three signature annual fundraising events. The 10th Annual Golf Outing, the 15th Annual Bill Michael's Poker Run, and the 24th Annual Brewers Racing Sausages 5/10K Run/Walk. Combined, more than 1,500 people participated in the events, which collectively helped raise more than \$60,000 in funds for FHW.

Also, in July, hundreds of people lined up to purchase bottles of Eagle Rare Bourbon Whiskey from Buffalo Trace Distillery – the proceeds of which were all donated to FHW. The bottles, which hit the shelves at Discount Liquor in Waukesha and Milwaukee, literally sold out in less than seven minutes.

In addition to official FHW-sponsored events, our generous supporters also hosted numerous independent fundraising campaigns in 2022 which directly benefited FHW, some of those supporters included:

- Sloppy Jo's & Smoke on the Water Fall Ride for FHW
- Hidalgo/Warner Annual Golf Outing
- Friends of Ziggy Ride
- Social Haus Fundraiser for FHW
- The Legends Patriot Day Golf Outing
- Wauwatosa Men's Meat Night in Memory of PFC Ryan Jerabek
- Milwaukee Milkmen Baseball
- Sherwood Forest Bowmen
- Ellenbecker Investment Group Veteran Appreciation Event
- Big Bob's Discount Furniture
- Belgium Legion Memorial Post 412
- Day-Lite Masonic Lodge
- Ricoh U.S.A.
- VFW Post 9677
- United Steelworkers Local 1343
- Dousman Community Club Inc.
- The Lunch Bunch



TWO WAYS TO GIVE

ONLINE

Donate online via credit or
debit card from our website
fisherhousewi.org/donate-online/

MAIL

Mail a check payable to
Fisher House Wisconsin
P.O. Box 13768
Milwaukee, WI 53213-0768



Year-End Donation

As the year closes, consider making a donation to Fisher House Wisconsin in honor of a loved one or in honor of all those who have served.

Donation Tributes **APRIL 23, 2022 – NOVEMBER 16, 2022**

Captain Kevin M. Kryst, USMC
Henry J. Vey
John F. Bird
Thomas M. Bowe, Jr
Tony Clopper

IN HONOR OF

Andrea Potthast
Barbara Lucas
Bill Michaels
Daniel A Wycklendt
David Erickson
John J. Miethke Jr.
Jonathon Lucroy
Robert Taylor
Robert W. Sonnen
The Bruhn Family

IN MEMORY OF

Albert A. Keinert
Beverly Spoehr
Bret Carroll

Buell D. Witt
Clifford M. Sundquist, Sr.
Col. William D. McKeown
Darrell Malmarowski
David E Cash
Donald Grave
Donald Gregory
Donald Vlcek
Ellen "Cookie" A. Manteau
Emil J. Burmeister
Frank Brugger
Grace Eells
Ian Terry
James Moran
James C. Roberts
Jane Hagensick
Jean Heling
Jerry Staehler
John Louis Steffes
John Matternich
John H. Streets
Kelly J. Brown, U.S. Army
Veteran

Kenneth Aronson
Lorna Davel
Marvin Ruffert
Merrill Solsrud
Michael Dukes
Mike Egan
Paul Peter Vavra
Raymond Meyer
Raymond Solinas
Richard Halsey
Robert T. Hansen
Ron Anderson
Ronald C. Chimenti
Ronald Kreutzer
Ronnie Cohn
Ryan Jerabek, USMC
Steve J. Hogrefe
The Kihslinger Family
Thomas Kubicek
Tony L. Clopper
USAF Ret. Lt. Col.
Francis E. Ebnetter