



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

December 2019

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Annual Christmas Party

The annual Christmas party will be at Barnard Griffin Winery on Tuesday, December 17. Reservations to Bob Allen by Thursday, December 12. This will be a social meeting with no speaker. In addition to a great meal, we will be entertained by live music from Pat & Rich2.



Rich Hirano began playing the saxophone when he was in junior high school. After being interned in World War II, he grew up in in the international district near the Seahawks. In high school, he played in both the jazz band and concert bands, and in college at the University of Washington, he played in the marching band and graduated in mechanical engineering. After a career with Boeing and raising his two sons,

Rich resumed his playing the sax by playing with the CBC jazz band and concert band. He later met Pat when he heard her playing in another group and they soon formed their own duo.

Pat Holten grew up playing the flute in high school and the Hammond organ. Through the years, she had a few piano lessons here and there and sang in a few church choirs. After raising her children, she decided to get serious about playing the piano and took classical and jazz lessons from various teachers. She ended up playing in a trio backing various singers until she met Rich. In the beginning they were just doing instrumentals, but she gradually worked into doing her own singing.

Rich Hirano and Pat Holten have been playing together for about 6 years. They play for various venues in the Tri-Cities, and in Sun Valley, Idaho, where Rich is a ski instructor, and also in Japan where they recently took a trip with fellow WWII internees. Rich is interested in supporting Higher Ground in Sun Valley, which works to get injured veterans on the ski slopes.

Dues

Annual dues of \$25 are due in January. Beat the rush and send your dues now to:

Paul Seipt
232 Somerset Street
Richland WA 99354

Or better yet, bring your dues to the Christmas party.

HqMOAA sends . . .

TRICARE Pharmacy Costs

Prescription drug costs for Tricare users are set to rise Jan. 1, some by as much as 42%. The pharmacy fee increases impact all Tricare users who use off-base pharmacies, including those on Tricare for Life.

Effective Jan. 1, 2020, a 90-day supply of generic drugs received through the program's Express Scripts mail-order pharmacy will increase from \$7 to \$10. Co-pays on brand-name drugs received through the mail will go from \$24 to \$29; the price rises from \$53 to \$60 for non-formulary drugs.

Generic drug prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies will see the cost rise from \$11 to \$13 for a 30-day supply, while the same supply of brand-name medications will increase from \$28 to \$33. Non-formulary drugs -- those not on Tricare's list of fully covered medications -- will go up from \$53 to \$60.

Prescriptions filled on base will continue to be free.

MOAA, Other Groups Ask VA to Expand List of Diseases Linked to Agent Orange Exposure

MOAA is among 20 veteran and military service organizations asking the VA to add four diseases to the Agent Orange presumption

list in an effort to help thousands of affected veterans receive benefits.

In a Nov. 15 letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, leaders of the groups requested the immediate addition of hypertension, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms to the list. Each of the diseases has been linked to exposure to Agent Orange by researchers from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

"However, VA has yet to take any actions on these four presumptive diseases, leaving thousands of veterans waiting," according to the letter.

An estimated 900,000 veterans have been exposed to Agent Orange, an herbicide sprayed from the air to destroy the vegetation enemy fighters used as cover during the Vietnam War.

There are 14 diseases on the VA's current Agent Orange presumptive exposure list. The designation offers veterans an easier path to qualify for disability benefits.

During congressional hearings earlier this year, top VA leaders said they were considering adding four diseases, with a decision to be released by summer. No decision was announced.

The veterans service organizations said they are concerned by the recent release of internal VA documents that indicate officials challenged former VA Secretary David Shulkin's decision to add the diseases. They said they are concerned the VA believes the cost outweighs the need to get veterans help.

"Mr. Secretary, the men and women who served in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange and far too many have suffered effects scientifically linked to that exposure," the leaders wrote to Wilkie. "We call on you to end the wait."

Washington State Dept of Veterans Affairs

OPEN BEDS - The Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard and Washington Soldiers Home in Orting are Now Accepting Applications

Veterans rated 70%-100% Service Connected Disabled, or whose service connected disability is the reason nursing care is needed may have their nursing home care paid by the Federal VA. Rehabilitative Care is also covered by Medicare following a qualifying hospital stay. The Washington Soldiers and Veterans Homes also accept Medicaid, Private Insurance and Private Pay. More information at <https://www.dva.wa.gov/open-beds-washington-veterans-home-port-orchard-and-washington-soldiers->

December Meeting

Tuesday, December 17

Barnard Griffin Winery
878 Tulip Ln
(Off of Columbia Park Trail
near Queensgate)
Richland

Social hour at 6:30
Dinner at 7:00
\$35.00 per person

Reservations by
Thursday, December 12 to
Bob Allen
627-6226
MOAA.TriCities@charter.net

Menu

Beef tenderloin
Fresh vegetables
Baby red potatoes
Side salad with house dressing
Brownies
Coffee, Decaf, Tea