

3 MONTHS
FREE

MCKINNEY COURIER-GAZETTE
BUY NOW AND RECEIVE 12 MONTHS
FOR THE PRICE OF 9 MONTHS

ONLY \$41.25 (25% off regular rates)

Join online today at www.starlocalmedia.com/subscribe/12for9

\$41.25
YEAR
THREE MONTHS FREE!!

McKinney Courier-Gazette

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019

VOLUME 122, NUMBER 52

STAR LOCAL MEDIA

Think pink

LIZ MCGATHEY

lmcgathey@starlocalmedia.com

For the fourth year in a row, Star Local Media is once again partnering with the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the mission to provide early detection mammograms in North Texas.

"We are honored to be a valued partner of the National Breast Cancer Foundation."

JOANI DITTRICH,
VICE PRESIDENT
AND GENERAL
MANAGER OF STAR
LOCAL MEDIA



cancer. NBCF provides support through their National Mammography Program, Beyond The Shock, breast health education and research programs.

In next week's newspaper, readers will find a special section featuring information on risk factors, early detection, treatment and more. A portion of all advertising proceeds from the section will benefit the NBCF.

"We are honored to be a valued partner of the National Breast Cancer Foundation," said Joani Dittrich, vice president and general manager of Star Local Media. "We're privileged to be able to support them in the great work they do."

Recognized as a world leader in breast cancer support, Frisco-based NBCF is Helping Women Now by providing early detection, education and support services to those affected by breast

'WE HAD A JOB TO DO'



LIZ MCGATHEY
lmcgathey@starlocalmedia.com

A stranger passing by the meeting room of the Allen La Quinta Inn on Thursday may have overheard their conversation. The first impression they might have is there's a group of old friends in there catching up, just chatting about grandchildren, health troubles and life in general. For the 20 or so men who gathered in Collin County this weekend, it's much more than that.

Thursday through Saturday marked the biannual reunion and chapter meeting of the Texas Chapter of the Third Marine Division, an assembly of Marines who are or once were members of the Third Marine Division. The group spent the weekend in McKinney, Frisco, Plano and Allen, taking in sights like The Star in Frisco, Southfork Ranch and the George Bush Library and Museum. The men, about



World War II veterans Oliver Smith, Hubert Spann and John T. Kula came together Thursday for the three-day biannual meeting of the Texas Chapter of the Third Marine Division.



Marines from the Third Division - Pete Post, Ron Whitacre, Bob North and Oliver Smith - catch up with each other and with fam-

LOOK INSIDE



McKinney writer named home nation's ambassador

Accompanied by European dignitaries, McKinney writer Gjeke Marinaj, PhD, received the title of Nation's Ambassador at a special reception organized by his native Albania's government. Active in many fields, Marinaj received the title for his contribution to Albanian and world literature and culture through poetry, prose, journalism, literary criticism, philosophy and academic teaching. Marinaj launched his original philosophy, "Protonism Theory," as a form of literary criticism that aims to promote peace and positive thinking. Read the full story on Page 4A.

EDUCATION / GOVERNMENT / VOICES

TO SUBMIT YOUR
STORY IDEAS
OR PHOTOGRAPHS,
EMAIL
LMGATHEY@
STARLOCAL
MEDIA.COM

VOICES

At the bottom again

As a kid, I don't remember the word "careers" being spoken about at home. The word "job" was uttered a lot but never showed up in a sentence with "career" in it. Careers, I thought, were something had by folks that didn't need to work for a living. Jobs were something had by simply selling your labor.

As for selling your labor, visions of a better life weren't inconsistent with that possibility if you had a good work ethic.

I was 21 years old when I first learned there are limits to what unskilled labor is worth. I was driving a local delivery truck for a Richardson meat processing plant five days a week for \$10-a-day wages.

My bride and I were living in a three room-house in Allen. Our first child had been born and I needed a raise. Did I get that raise? Well I sorta. The boss said I could come in on Saturday and make a delivery to a Tyler, Texas, warehouse for an extra \$5 in my pay envelope.

I needed the money so I took the offer. But the fact was I'd be working a sixth day for half the wage I was getting for the other five days.

That was a long time ago, but variations of that same scenario are facing a lot of working folks today. They're working longer for the same pay in an age where a \$20 bill buys what \$2 bought back then.

Jobs used to be the result of producing and selling goods or services. Jobs were kept because profits were made on those goods and services.

For large businesses, another way to add profit is through direct subsidies, tax deferrals and tax write-offs for labor saving upgrades. Those are incentives usually unavailable to the small business owners who create most of the jobs.

Today, the moment a person decides they're gonna chase the American dream and go into business for themselves, government becomes their nemesis. If they want to trim toenails for a living they have to get government permission and buy a license.

To appeal for the working class vote, a lot of folks running for elective office are pushing the idea of upping the minimum \$7.50 hourly wage to \$15. Which begs the question ... if \$15 an hour becomes the "new" \$7.50 an hour, what of all those employees that started their job at \$7.50 an hour and have now worked their way up to \$15? It appears to me that they'll be at the bottom again.

If time and experience have taught me anything it's that if the minimum wage is raised from \$7.50 to \$15 an hour, it won't be long till \$15 will only buy what \$7.50 once bought.

The opinions that appear in the "Voices" section are not necessarily those of Star Local Media. Send your letter to the editor to lmcgathey@starlocalmedia.com.



KEN BYLER
kbyler@tcrr.com

McKinney writer named home nation's ambassador

STAFF REPORT

Accompanied by European dignitaries, McKinney writer Gjeke Marinaj, PhD, received the title of Nation's Ambassador at a special reception organized by his native Albania's government.

Active in many fields, Marinaj received the title for his contribution to Albanian and world literature and culture through poetry, prose, journalism, literary criticism, philosophy and academic teaching.

Marinaj launched his original philosophy, "Protonism Theory," as a form of literary criticism that aims to promote peace and positive thinking. Already taught in European universities, Protonism and its practice are central to Marinaj's recognition and goals in cultural diplomacy.

The writer spoke of his awarded title as a "great honor," a "ladder to a higher level of moral and literary life," and a "secret key to the great gates of the literary civilization that keeps us human."

"Being worthy of such an honor is essential to my mission for the betterment of humankind,"



Gjeke Marinaj, left, receives the title of Nation's Ambassador from Albania's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Gent Cakaj. COURTESY PHOTO

Marinaj said. "Cultural diplomacy seems ever more important."

The Sept. 22 reception, held at New York's Kimberly Hotel and Suites, was organized by the Albanian Embassy in conjunction with Albania's Ministry of Diaspora and office of the Prime Minister.

At the reception, Marinaj was presented with the award by Albania's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Gent Cakaj. Also present were the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Behgjet Apcolli, along with a range of other European political and literary

figures.

Ambassador Floreta Faber and First Secretary Etleva Dore of the Albanian Embassy, Washington, D.C., helped organize the New York event as well as the relay of the award from overseas.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Edi Rama and former Prime Minister Pandeli Majko preliminarily granted the title to Marinaj in absentia. The writer was asked to receive the award at the second Summit of the Albanian Diaspora, held in March in his home country's capital, Tirana. A prior official engagement, supporting cultural diplomacy in Vietnam, kept him from returning to Albania for the ceremony. Instead, Marinaj received the Nation's Ambassador title in New York at the recent government-sponsored event.

Marinaj also serves as the director of Mundus Artium Press, a world literature publisher founded in 1967.

Ismail Kadare (International Booker Prize, 2005) calls Marinaj "one of the most distinguished Albanian poets of our time" and "among Europe's best poets."

Local awarded for academic achievement

STAFF REPORT

Melinda M. Najera, of McKinney was recently awarded a Love of Learning Award worth \$500 from The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Najera is one of 200 recipients to receive the award.

Love of Learning Awards are designed to help fund post-baccalaureate professional development for active Phi Kappa Phi members including graduate or professional studies, doctoral dissertations, continuing education, travel related to teaching and research, ca-

reer development and more.

Najera, a graduate assistant at Texas Woman's University, will use funds from the award towards tuition as she pursues a master in music education degree.

Najera was initiated into Phi Kappa Phi in 2019 at Texas Woman's University.

Established in 2007, the Love of Learning Program gives 200 awards annually.

The selection process for a Love of Learning Award is based on the applicant's academic achievement, campus and community service, intended use of award funds as it relates to academic and career goals, and a personal

statement.

Since 1932, Phi Kappa Phi's award programs have recognized members and students on its chapter campuses for outstanding academic achievement. In addition to the Love of Learning Program, Phi Kappa Phi awards graduate and dissertation fellowships, study abroad grants, and grants for local, national and international literacy initiatives. Nearly \$1 million is awarded each year through programs that last year recognized more than 355 individuals.

For a full list of recipients, visit phikappa-phi.org/1012019recipients.

MARINES

From PAGE ONE

he'd never met.

But that's the way of the Marine Corps brotherhood. As Spann puts it, "a Marine is a Marine and always will be, and he's always a friend to another Marine."

"Any time one Marine meets another Marine, maybe it's just on the street, you've made a friend for life," he said.

The men say they simply had a job to do, and they did.

While Smith said he doesn't often tell his own war stories, he said each chapter meeting brings in new friends, and every meeting brings new stories.

"But all the stories come back to one thing: We had a job to do. We did it," he said.

The younger members, themselves approaching their 70s and 80s, returned home from Vietnam to a much different social climate than what their WWII brethren

saw or what more modern soldiers experience now. But as the times have changed and they're often thanked for their service, they still seek comfort in one another.

Vietnam veteran Ron Whitacre said he didn't wear his Marine Corps cap for many years after his time in the service.

"Now I wear it all the time," he said. "It's not because every once in a while a little old lady wants to hug me in a grocery store, which happens. It's because I'll run into one of these guys out there in the world ... it starts a different kind of conversation that's enjoyable to me."

Through the chapter and the relationships the members have made, they can always lend a hand, whether it's to find health care services or to connect with other resources.

Pete Post of Georgetown, Texas, has spent the last few years working to bring home the remains of two Marines under the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), a task force whose mis-

sion is to account for Americans who are listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. His current goal is to bring back Cpl. James Trimble and Pfc. Tony Pepper, who were killed in Khe Sanh. Post fought in the April 6-7, 1968, battle that claimed the squad leader and radio operator. He said 11 were killed in action (KIA) and 45 were wounded.

Post has been back to Vietnam three times in the search, and despite looming health concerns, mistaken locations and funding limitations, he hopes to bring Pepper and Trimble home to be laid to rest on American soil.

One positive experience Post has had since his return was during a stay at a hotel in Dong Ha south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ). He said during dinner one evening he noticed a group of members of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and struck up a conversation.

"Through the interpreters, one of them said, 'Look, your country asked you to do a job. You did it. Our country asked us to do a job.

We did it. Forgive and forget,'" Post said.

No matter where their paths have taken them over the years, the chapter members agree the Texas Chapter of the Third Marine Division is a source of therapy in itself, and they hope to see it grow with the younger generation.

"It helps to reunite with other people who did the same thing," Post said. "A lot of them have PTSD and a variety of different problems. They can say these guys are still living, they're still functioning, I guess I can, too."

Chapter President Bob North of Houston said it pains him to lose members or when they're absent from the reunions. And, as veterans of earlier conflicts age, efforts to gain new members continue. Anyone from the Third Marine Division is eligible to be a member. Associate membership is open to those who are legal dependents, parents or spouses of those, living and deceased, eligible for regular membership. For information, visit caltrap.org.