

## Hospice helps World War II veteran claim VA benefits

He was only a teenager, but he witnessed one of the most memorable sights of World War II: the Stars & Stripes flying from the summit of Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima in February 1945.

Clarence Wagner left high school at 17 to join the Navy, and he truly saw the world. Part of the amphibious force that put troops and supplies on the beaches, the 2nd class petty officer and his shipmates aboard the AKA-64 USS Tolland were under constant fire from the Japanese at Iwo Jima.

“We saw the flag up,” he says. “It meant we took the mountain.”

From Iwo Jima, Wagner’s ship made the invasion of Okinawa and was in port with the USS Missouri when the peace treaty with Japan was signed, ending World War II.

Wagner, now 90 and under the care of Coastal Hospice, has lived for 30 years in Fruitland in a home he shared with his wife of 65 years, who passed five years ago. He rests in his recliner covered by a soft blanket depicting the U.S. national symbol, the bald eagle, an honor he received as part



*Clarence Wagner, 90, of Fruitland was serving in the Navy at Iwo Jima when the famous flag was raised.*

of Coastal Hospice’s We Honor Veterans program.

“I can’t sit down in this chair without putting that blanket on,” he says. “It makes me feel good.”

Wagner wasn’t taking advantage of his veteran’s benefits until social workers at Coastal Hospice connected him with the Veterans Administration. Aides from the VA and Coastal Hospice come in throughout the week to help him, and a hospice nurse keeps him comfortable. A Coastal Hospice volunteer and fellow veteran comes in weekly for a visit.

“I have my good days and bad days,” Wagner says. “I don’t have the mobility that I used to, which is expected. I’m very fortunate. I come from a family of long genes. My mother lived to be 101 and five months; my brother is 93.”

Wagner said before he came into hospice, he wasn’t aware of all they do.

“I thought hospice was just for a short time,” he says.

But he’s still getting out and about.

Every Sunday, Wagner goes to his daughter’s house for dinner, and he’s looking forward to his granddaughter’s wedding in June.



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ALANE CAPEN

## Thank you for your vote of confidence

There is no greater honor than to be recognized for quality of service by the families and caregivers of the patients who passed away while in our care.

We are proud to announce Coastal Hospice has received the national “Hospice Honors Elite Award” for 2016 given by Deyta Analytics, a division of HEALTHCAREfirst, at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s Management Leadership Conference in National Harbor, MD in April. Hospice Honors recognizes hospices nationwide that provide the highest level of quality as measured from the caregiver’s point of view.

Deyta Analytics surveys families and caregivers of patients after their passing to evaluate the quality of the hospice services they received. They chose us as an Elite winner, because we exceeded the benchmarks on all 24 questions the families were asked about the service they experienced.

“Hospice Honors is a landmark compilation of hospices that provide the best patient and caregiver experiences,” said Bobby Robertson, president and CEO of HEALTHCAREfirst. “I am extremely proud of Coastal Hospice for achieving this highest of honors, and I congratulate them on their success.”



*President Alane Capen and admissions manager Tracy Fields receive the award from Stephen Williamson of Deyta in April.*

ASK  
DR. WARIS  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR



Ask Dr. Waris is a regular feature of Coastal Hospice News. Send your questions to [ebear@coastalhospice.org](mailto:ebear@coastalhospice.org) or write to Coastal Hospice, Ask Dr. Waris, PO Box 1733, Salisbury, MD 21802-1733. All questions become the property of Coastal Hospice and may be used in future publications.

## Q: What are the signs that someone is dying?

**A:** Death is a journey that each individual takes in his or her own way. When someone is beginning that journey, there are signs along the way that begin well before the actual death. Since everyone is unique, the signs will differ from person to person.

### One to three months prior to death:

When a person realizes that death is approaching, they may begin to withdraw, separating themselves from the world and people around them. They may not want visits from friends, neighbors or family members, or be difficult when someone is around. They may start reliving their life and wondering if there are mistakes they made or any fences to mend. They may also start experiencing a reduced appetite and weight loss as the body slows down, and they may sleep longer, but are not suffering in any way.

### One to two weeks prior to death:

The person may begin to sleep most of the time. They may experience disorientation, delusions or hallucinations, speaking to people that aren't there or who have already died. The person may pick at their sheets and clothing in a state of agitation, and they may decrease speaking or stop altogether.

There are signs their body may show including lower body temperature and blood pressure, irregular pulse and increased perspiration. Their skin color may change, and their lips and nail beds may become pale and bluish. Their breathing may become more rapid and labored, with a rattling sound and cough.

### A couple of days to hours before death:

The person may have a surge of energy. They may want to get out of bed and talk to loved ones, or ask for food after days of no appetite. This surge is usually short, and the previous signs will return more pronounced. Breathing becomes more irregular and rattling with periods of no breathing at all.

Hands and feet, lips and nails may become blotchy and purplish. The person may become unresponsive, and, while their eyes may be open or semi-open, they are probably not seeing their surroundings.

It is believed that hearing is the last sense to go, so the person may hear if loved ones are talking to them during this time.

Eventually, breathing will cease altogether and the heart stops, indicating death has occurred.

## Nurse celebrates 15 years at hospice

For 15 years, Rochelle Corbin, R.N. has been doing a job few would choose to take on: hospice nursing.

"It's rewarding," she says, "because you're making a positive impact on people at a very difficult time in their life."

Corbin cares for patients in their own homes and meets their families. She is the primary case manager for Wicomico County and also works on-call, visiting patients 24/7 when they're in crisis, traveling to all four Lower Shore counties.

Corbin earned her nursing degree from Wor-Wic and worked at Easton Memorial Hospital and the Wicomico Nursing Home before coming to hospice.

At first, she was reluctant to apply. But once she began caring for Coastal Hospice patients, Corbin began to understand her mission.

"In the beginning, in my heart, I didn't feel like hospice was where I wanted to be," she says. "Once I started to work as a hospice nurse, I felt like that is where God wanted me to be, and this is where he truly has wanted me to be for the last 15 years. I don't think initially it was a personal choice. I think I was lead here spiritually."

Corbin appreciates the personal time she can devote to each patient and family.

"I like being able to give the time that every patient and every family member deserves. I don't feel like I'm doing a rush job," Corbin says. "I'm helping them through such a difficult transition in life."

Corbin says she is often asked how she handles caring for people in their final days.

"I handle it by having a very strong support group, including my family, my church group and my team members," she says.



## Team leader earns impressive new credentials



Tamara Fitchett, RN, MSN, CHPN, team leader at Coastal Hospice at the Lake, has earned her Masters Degree in Nursing Leadership from Wilmington University. She has also been designated as a CHPN, a Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse.

Fitchett has headed the clinical team at Coastal Hospice's inpatient facility for two years, directing the registered nurses, social workers, certified hospice aids, chaplains and volunteers who care for patients too critically ill to be cared for at home.

Fitchett was born Exmore, Va. and currently resides in Fruitland, Md.

## Capen: Award

*Continued from Page 1*

Receiving an award based on the opinions of the families we serve is confirmation of the good work and compassionate care that our staff delivers.

We aim to provide the best possible care to the patients in our service, and it is rewarding to hear that our families feel we are fulfilling that goal.

Thank you.

## Carpenter is palliative nurse of the year

Joan G. Carpenter, MN, CRNP, NP-C, GNP-C, ACHPN, nurse practitioner at Coastal Hospice, has received the national 2016 Hospice and Palliative Nurse of the Year Award. She received the award in March in Chicago at the Annual Assembly of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association.

Carpenter's ACHPN certification — designating that she is an Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse — demonstrates to patients and families, colleagues and the community that she has achieved the skills and knowledge to practice at the full extent of advance practice nursing education and palliative care training.

Joan began her nursing career caring for persons with cancer, HIV/AIDS and neurological disease. She quickly realized the need for expertise in palliative care, including advance care planning and clarifying goals of care.

"I found that I was able to make a substantial difference in my patients' lives," she said. "I

realized that because I was there to provide palliative care to patients, the outcome for many was very different."

At Coastal Hospice, Carpenter performs inpatient palliative care consultations at Salisbury Genesis and Peninsula Regional Medical Center, makes home visits to hospice patients and develops practices to increase the utilization and acceptability of hospice and palliative care.

"Her bedside manner and kindness with dying patients is evident to all who work with her," said Karen Bailey, Coastal Hospice's palliative team social worker. "Joan is able to be honest but kind and has a wonderful way of having difficult conversations."

Over the past five years, Carpenter has been performing funded research centering on gerontological palliative care and has authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.

Carpenter, who was born and raised in Pittsburgh before moving to the Eastern



Shore in 2006, received her degrees from Penn State University and the Medical College of Georgia. She recently completed all requirements for her doctoral degree at the University of Utah College of Nursing.

## Farewell, Judy. Welcome, Sally.



Sally Rankin, left, and Judy Hunt-Harris

After more than 10 years with us, Judy Hunt-Harris, manager of volunteer services, has retired to move closer to family in North Carolina. Stepping into her shoes is Sally Rankin, previously a patient care volunteer and State of Maryland employee.

"The hugs I got around town when I'm wearing my Coastal Hospice ID... that's worth more than anything," Hunt-Harris said. "I know I made a difference."

During her tenure with hospice, Hunt-Harris juggled a myriad of duties,

coordinating more than 280 volunteers and taking on new programs such as We Honor Veterans and Compass. While Medicare requires that 5% percent of all hospice services be delivered by volunteers, under Hunt-Harris Coastal Hospice's rate was consistently 11% or higher, a true achievement.

Rankin, who lives in Salisbury with her husband, was administrator for the State of Maryland's 1st Judicial Circuit for eight years. Her background includes human resources experience with the State judiciary in Annapolis and in the healthcare, financial services and education fields.

Rankin's goal is to keep the volunteer standards established by Hunt-Harris high and preserve the reputation of Coastal Hospice.

"As volunteers, we feel honored to be part of a special time in someone's life and the people who care for them," she said. "I'm a person of faith, and hospice work has strengthened that. There's nothing like the expression of joy on the face of a patient or caregiver; the people are so affected by a volunteer's presence. It's like nothing I've ever seen before."

## VOLUNTEER AWARDS

National Volunteer Week was April 10-16, and we honored our volunteers by hosting two morning brunches. All attendees were given a volunteer goody-stuffed gift bag as a small token of appreciation for all they do to support the hospice mission.



Bobbie White received the Jean Camie Jackson Award as the top patient support volunteer.



Margot Ralph received the Jean Camie Jackson Award as the top patient care volunteer.

## Sellout Taste of Finer Things raises more than \$30,000 for Coastal Hospice at the Ocean

The food was amazing. The wine “peared” perfectly. And the crowd was big and enthusiastic at this year’s Taste of Finer Things on April 20 at Harrison’s Harbor Watch in Ocean City.

The event raised more than \$30,000 to fund the capital campaign to build the Coastal Hospice at the Ocean residence. The campaign has just passed the \$4 million mark in funds raised.

The Taste committee — Chair Stephanie Meehan, Macky Stansell, Pam Buckley, Karen Cramer, Cathy Donovan, Madalaine How, Marsha Howarth, Elaine Jacobs, Donna Leiner and Gayle Widdowson — outdid themselves this year. In gratitude for the more than \$160,000 they’ve raised over the years, the kitchen at Coastal Hospice at the Ocean will be named in their honor.



*The Taste of Finer Things Committee*



*Crabs To Go sent shrimp! Mariab and Maddie Sterrett served.*



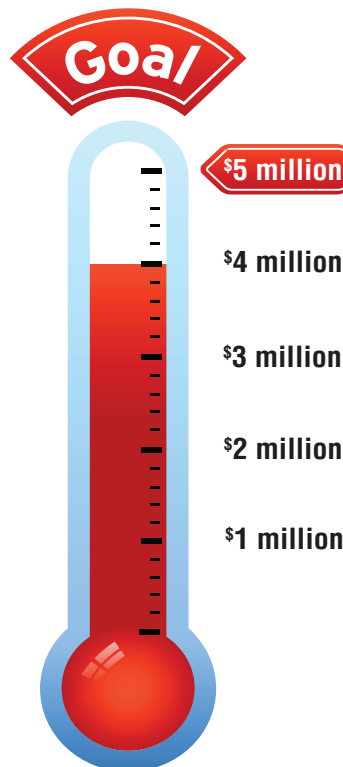
*Norm Comway enjoyed a shrimp cocktail and wine.*



*Mac and Lynne Peverley joined Cindy and Dr. Dave Cowall to support the cause to build Coastal Hospice at the Ocean.*



A benefit for Coastal Hospice at the Ocean.  
Wednesday, September 21, 2016 ~ 6:30 p.m.  
Macky’s Bayside Bar & Grill, Ocean City



### WE’RE ALMOST TO OUR GOAL TO BUILD A HOSPICE RESIDENCE

Thanks to the generous support of our community, we have raised \$4 million of the \$5 million needed to build Coastal Hospice at the Ocean, a new residence in Worcester County for hospice patients who lack an able caregiver at home. The Board’s building committee is hard at work so that this much needed facility will be ready once the money is raised.

It’s easy to make a donation on-line at [CoastalHospice.org](http://CoastalHospice.org) or call us at 410-641-5481. You can also mail in your gift to PO Box 1733, Salisbury, MD 21802. Thank you!

## Thank you for the gifts we received during February, March and April 2016

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## UPCOMING BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

These groups provide a time of respite and a safe place to express feelings in the grieving process. We offer these activities at no cost to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one, even if they were not a patient of Coastal Hospice. For information, call **410-742-8732**.

### Dorchester County

**Dinner Social Group** – Kay's at the Airport, Cambridge  
Every 1st Monday at 5 p.m.  
*RSVP ~ Emanuel Johnson 410-829-0051*

**Support Group** – Dorchester County Library,  
303 Gay St., Cambridge  
Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 6 p.m.  
*Information ~ Emanuel Johnson 410-829-0051*

### Worcester County

**Lunch Social Group** – All at 1 p.m.  
June 16 - Full Moon Saloon, Old Bridge Rd., West Ocean City  
July 21 - Sunset Grille, Sunset Ave., West Ocean City  
*RSVP ~ Bob Carson 410-957-1133*

**Support Group** – Ocean Pines Library, Ocean Pines,  
Every Thursday at 11 am.  
*Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163*

### Wicomico County

**Lunch Social Group** – All at 1 p.m.  
June 8 - Fratelli's, 925 Snow Hill Rd., Salisbury  
June 22 - Brew River, 502 West Main St., Salisbury  
July 13 - Goin' Nuts Cafe, 947 Mt. Hermon Rd., Salisbury  
July 27 - Irish Penny, 1014 S. Salisbury Blvd, Salisbury  
*RSVP ~ Lynette Chase 410-901-2292*

**Support Group** – Community of Joy Church,  
302 South Blvd., Salisbury  
Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 1 p.m.  
*Information ~ Sharon Hutchison 443-614-3742*

**Support Group** – Coastal Hospice at the Lake,  
Deer's Head Hospital, Salisbury  
Every 1st and 3rd Monday at 5:30 p.m. (no meeting July 4)  
*Information ~ Arnold Bienstock 410-572-6166*

### Somerset County

**Support Group** – Princess Anne Library,  
11767 Beechwood St., Princess Anne  
Every 1st Thursday at 12 noon.  
*Information ~ Howard Travers 443-783-1730*