

Bridge allows energetic seniors to share game, their lives

By Brenda Kirkpatrick
Sentinel-Voice

The Group. Sounds impressive. That's because its members are.

Connected via their love for a game, bridge, this group of 15 men, whose average age is 77.7, the group annually celebrates their longevity and the game that brings them together each week.

The group recently hosted its annual Autumn Festival Nov. 21 at the Officer's Club on Nellis Air Force Base. These lads know how to party.

Dinner was served at 4:30 p.m. menu items including medallions of beef with bernaise sauce or baked orange roughly with white wine sauce and side dishes

such as caesar salad, potatoes au gratin, green beans, rolls and peach cobbler for dessert.

During this event Calvin "Eagle Eye" Shields and his orchestra provided musical entertainment with Sher-ee Lee as the featured vocalist. The decor was seasonally appropriate with gold, green and burgundy balloons and the climate was electric, thanks in part to the electric slide.

Anita Boggan was the oldest guest. Born Nov. 25, 1900 in Minden, La., Boggan moved to Los Angeles in 1972, where she now resides.

Like energetic group members, Boggan is a go-getter. She plays nine to 18 holes of golf each day,

weather permitting.

"I get up at 5 a.m. each day and am teeing off by 6:30 a.m.," she said. "Three or four years ago I used to play 36 holes of golf a day. I have been a supporter of 'The Group' for years and I admire them because they know how to live. Their positive view of life is marvelous."

The oldest group member is Harvey Julien, born Sept. 10, 1910. He's presently hospitalized in Los Angeles. Julien loves recalling memories of his 67-year marriage to Mary, who died in December 1997. Nine of the members have been married for 50 years or more.

Among the Group are 67 children, grandchildren and



LV Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Members of the group enjoy a lively game of bridge during the holiday season.

great grandchildren. Eighty percent of members are retired military veterans.

It all started 16 years ago with three people who liked contract bridge.

The Group doesn't focus on recruiting. "When a member passes away through death or if they leave the area, another is invited to take their place," said Wilbur Brewer, born Feb. 21, 1914, and one of the original organizers. "Because only four tables are played at any session, 16 members is all 'The Group' can reasonably absorb."

Said group president Ray Plouche, "I look forward every Wednesday to going to

the Gold Coast Casino to begin our day of bridge with my friends. We start out our luncheon with prayer and then we move on to the home of a member where we set ourselves down for three rounds of bridge. The home at which they play each week is determined by alphabetical order of the membership."

When asked the secret to such successful longevity, Thomas Leigh, a retired Army Colonel, said, "I have had 78 years to reflect on the many rewarding experiences in my life. My advice to those who aspire to enjoy that many or more years is this: Continue your education — make it a

lifelong endeavor, read, read, read, get involved in your church and community or civic organizations, vote, vote, vote, and last, be true to your own beliefs and wholesome family values."

Besides Brewer, Leigh, Julien and Plough, members include Irving Foster, Emmitt Houston, George Jackson, Harvey Julien, Stanley Loupe, David Perry, Ray Plouche, Carle Stewart, Christopher Sturkey, Julian Tarleton, James Williams and Waverly Williams.

Surely "The Group" deserves our respect and accolades. How about a standing ovation.

Proposals

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forward to meeting with the EEOC representatives and walking through the very proactive steps the department has taken over the past 18 months," Weinhold said.

But Frazier "absolutely disputes the finding that an individual was targeted based on race," he said.

Over 10 years ending in 1995, 99 black officers were terminated, compared to 37 white officers, according to a City Council report on internal police department discrimination.

The Internal Investigation Division received 758 cases in 1994-1996, of which 57 percent were against blacks, according to the report. But blacks accounted for 53 percent of the cases sustained by the division. "The federal government needs to step in and review the cases," said City Council President Lawrence Bell. "We need to bring an outside entity in to evaluate these problems."

The Vanguard Justice Society, which represents the department's 1,200 black officers, proposed the creation of an oversight panel with representatives of the EEOC, city, police department, police union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The society gave the department 10 days to respond and threatened to file a class-action lawsuit if adequate steps to confront racism aren't taken.

The department faces another lawsuit filed by Richards, a former helicopter pilot who accused the department of racial bias in his transfer from the helicopter unit. Trial is scheduled for January.

The Internal Investigation Division reports directly to Frazier and the EEOC report puts the blame squarely on him, said Gary McLhinney, president of the Baltimore City Fraternal Order of Police. "This issue falls clearly on the shoulders of the leadership of the Baltimore City Police Department," he said.

Boeing

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reason.

Andrews, 30, said the group hoped to join a discrimination lawsuit filed in Seattle against Boeing in June. The 32 plaintiffs in that lawsuit are seeking class-action status. They accuse Boeing of failing to promote qualified black employees, fostering and tolerating a racially hostile environment, and retaliating against black workers who complain.

No trial date has been set in the Seattle case.

Another discrimination case against Boeing was dismissed by a federal jury Sept. 30. It involved Jesse Jones, the only black employee in Boeing's fire and security department in Seattle, who contended that less-qualified white employees were promoted ahead of him.

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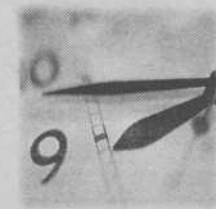
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