Microbial foe mobilizes Lexington resident to her sewing machine

By Matthew Breazeale

With the Centers for Disease Control's announcement last Friday, April 3, that all U.S. citizens don cloth masks while in public, the need for protective gear continues to grow.

Ninety-two year old Mary Eubanks is no stranger to meeting the needs of her country. During the 1940s, when she sewed soldiers uniforms for the allied forces, she became acquainted with supporting frontline efforts against foreign foes.

Eubanks strategically takes time out of her day while a resident at Lexington Manor, on her own personal sewing machine which her daughter, Beth Alford, brought to her, stitching personal protective gear for nurses and health care staff at Lexington Manor.

Eubanks was asked by the staff if she was willing, then took to her sewing machine. Eubanks has also worked at Henson-Kickernick in Lexington until it closed and done alterations as a side gig.

Alford said her mother witnessed first hand the ravages of the Great Depression but current world affairs with the COVID-19 pandemic "really beats it."

Lexington Manor is on lockdown, having no visitors coming in and out of the building, according to Lisa Williamson, administrator. Eubanks still has a full schedule outside of sewing, including window visits with family, bingo and playing with resident pet dog Macy.

Mary Eubanks (pictured left) sits with Lexington Manor Activities Director Jaisha Jolly at her own personal sewing machine making protective cloth face masks for the nursing staff at Lexington Manor. (Photo Submitted)

This undated photo from the 1940s shows Eubanks (pictured center table in back) sewing soldier uniforms for the United States armed forces for World War II homefront efforts, along with other ladies. (Photo Submitted)

MSU high voltage lab works to retrofit 550 ventilators for use in COVID-19 response

Press Release

Mississippi State University researchers are working to convert over 550 ventilators from battery power to AC power so they can be used in the state's medical response to the COVID-19 coronavirus.

MSU's Paul B. Jacob High Voltage Laboratory was contacted by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning this week to discuss converting the battery-powered ventilators, which are designed to fill temporary needs in the aftermath of emergencies like hurricanes.

Once converted to AC power, which will allow for easier long-term use because they can be plugged into a wall, the ventilators will be sent to the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

"I am proud that our talented researchers can put their expertise to use as Mississippi continues the battle against COVID-19," said MSU President Mark E. Keenum. "These ventilators will allow our state's outstanding medical professionals to save more lives and provide needed care, and I appreciate the team at our High Voltage Lab working to put these to use as fast as possible. MSU stands ready to assist in this fight in any way we can."

David Wallace, manager of the High Voltage Lab, said he and his colleagues designed modifications that allow the ventilators to run on AC power or battery power. Louisville-based Taylor Machine Works is assisting with sourcing parts for the ventilators and converting them. The ventilators are expected to be ready for use by the end of this week.

David Wallace, manager of Mississippi State University's Paul B. Jacob High Voltage Laboratory, demonstrates how a battery-powered ventilator can be converted to AC power. The lab is working to convert 550 ventilators to AC power so they can be used in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo by James Carskadon)

"With the help of my graduate students, we were able to design the circuit that we needed and figure out what parts we needed," Wallace said. "We have enough space in the lab and enough manpower to bring everything together and get these assembled once all the parts are in place. Taylor Machine Works is capable of doing the same thing at their facility, so they're going to take our design and convert approximately half of them. Between the two of us, we can have these ready very quickly."

The Paul B. Jacob High Voltage Laboratory is part of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the James Worth Bagley College of Engineering.

The lab was constructed in 1977 and is the largest university-operated high voltage laboratory in North America. For more, visit www.ece.msstate.edu/high-voltage-lab.

Happy Birthday

April 9 - Witmon Keith, Janice Barrett, Jasinteah L. Edwards, Susanne Lawshe, Charlotte Hammett

April 10 - Jay Austin, Melon Garrett, Vendell Benson, David Stotts, Drew Durff, Sam Smith, Erica Wentworth

April 11 - Anna Kay Fletcher Davis, Stephen Wigginton, Carla McGill, Brittany Eddy

April 12 - Byron Porter, Jr., Lila Shows, James Hogsett

April 13 - James Self, Brandon Purvis, Lily Fran McCrory, Jessica Coats, Dwight Holt, Nicholas Frank, Paulette Taylor

April 14 - Tyrese Horton, Cailey McBride, Elizabeth Barrett, Judy Broyles, Rachel Smithson Hutton

April 15 - Pepper Boutwell, Clark Atkinson, Jonnie Edwards, Randy Montgomery, Dock Holt, Blythe Barton

Happy Anniversary

April 9 - Bill and Tammie Burrell

April 10 - Jeff and Jerry James

April 12 - Ronnie and Kathy Chisholm, Toby and Shanna Smith

April 13 - Cole and Amanda Johnson

April 15 - Pete and Crystal Belk, Bill and Eva Barrett

To add your birthdays and anniversaries to our list, please send your information by mail to P.O. Box 60, Lexington, MS 39095; fax 662-834-1074; email to hcherald@gmail.com; or stop by our office at 308 Court Square in Lexington. No phone calls, please.