

UPDATES

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Enewsletter

Volume 4 Issue 1

March 2009

Welcome to the new format to the Updates, our evolving newsletter. We need your help. Unfortunately we do not have an email address on everyone in this organization and there are many that bounce back because of incorrect information. Please help us keep current with you by making sure that National has your most current email address. This is how we will be emailing the Updates newsletter. It will also be available on our website: AVVA.org. For those of you without a computer, your local library or a friend's computer could work for you. If you are unable to access a computer, we would like to know that and

We are also looking for your input, what would you like to see in the Updates? Do you have something to contribute, this is your newsletter. We will be changing as we go here, using the technology that is available to create cost effective communications is essential. As a administrative costs to a minimum and ask you to help by participating in this effort.

Please send all submissions, comments and concerns to:

avvaupdates@yahoo.com.

Updates submissions must have the Who, What, When, Where, and Why. We also need the name of the author and a contact number for that person. The committee and I will be editing after this issue. Our suggestion to everyone is to have their articles edited by someone prior to submission to Updates. Articles need to be concise, informative and understandable.

We will even be available to help develop a well written article if needed. Articles can be submitted to either your state representative, regional director or directly to the Updates committee at avvaupdates@yahoo.com. If you choose the direct submission, please forward a copy to both your state representative/president and regional director.

The committee looks forward to serving you and expanding our contact base with this exciting form of communication. We are also requesting that anyone interested in becoming a member of the press club portion of this committee, contact us.

Together Always,

Suzanne Blohm-Weber

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jj in the House

Dear Members of the AVVA;

Many of you may not know who I am, so I'll give you a thumb nail bio. : I'm a rice and bean eating, Chevy stealing, jitterbug -
-
ers child from Spanish Harlem, only we called it "El Barrio", when I lived there.

Now that you've read the stereo typical version of myself, let me give you the j. j. version Yes, I was born and raised in NYC of Puerto Rican parents, I am also a second generation combat veteran. J. J. (dad) WWII, me, j. j. Vietnam, class of 65-66.

I'll stop with the yada-yada, if you continue reading. j. j. in the House will be a series of controversial issues of the day. There will be times when I'll piss off some readers and gain the admiration of others. Other times vice-versa. The fact of the matter is using common sense. Here's the way j. j. sees things. When I write an article, and you may disagree, I'll say "put on your big girl panties and deal with it!" Right away, controversy! But hold on one second! Just like I expressed my rights under the First Amendment, you too, have the same opportunity. j. j. is not Wash D.C. where everything is "politically incorrect". I welcome all those who oppose my views.

Lord knows I will step on many a toes and the "Widow Weber" (Suzanne, my boss)

matter remains: I fought for my country and

talk the talk. I have also worked at the Miami VA Medical Center in "patients services" and also as a client for almost 12 years.

And that my dearest members of AVVA is what j. j.'s all about. Enemies, I don't need.

Making those see the errors of their ways, is what I want to do. And if by chance, I am wrong, I would be more than happy to be corrected and I would acknowledge it openly. I really don't think that at this time I would have to write a disclaimer. But trust me, in the near future, you will see it.

I want to thank Suzanne for giving me this opportunity to write for her. Do I have to write a disclaimer for calling you "Widow Weber"? God bless all of your members. And to all men and women in uniform around the world.

This is j. j. and I'm outta here!

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR VETERANS & FAMILIES, INC.

with the IRS for our 501 C3, we have turned our attention to other important matters. One of them is Strategic Planning. We had a very productive start at our meeting in January. One of our Board members, Don Overton, is trained in strategic planning and is guiding us through this process. We will be continuing with this process at our meeting in April. We are also researching ways to go about helping AVVA and others continue their programs through possible funding opportunities we can take advantage of after we receive our tax exempt status.

Mary Yeomans, President

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

SUPPORT ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FUNDING

FOR VETERANS HEALTH CARE

On February 12, 2009, I attended a press conference in which Senator Daniel Akaka, chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and Rep. Bob Filner, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, re-introduced the "Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009."

This new legislation, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act, would require Congress to approve health care funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) a year in

The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform worked closely with the bill sponsors in drafting this key legislation. This bill will guarantee no further delays in VA health care funding, delayed veterans' care in the nation's largest health care system.

Now more than ever our organization needs your support as well as your family and friends

Important Bills. The Senate Bill is S.423 and the House Bill is H.R.1016. It is critical that you contact your Senators and Member of Congress. Ask them for their support and if they are supporting this issue, ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 1016 and S.423. Please let me know how you make out.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at 585-737-2169 or my email address at NSwitzer@avva.org.

Nancy Switzer, Legislative Comm. Chair

IN MEMORY PLAQUE

In 2004, the In Memory Plaque was dedicated. A 2'X3' granite slab, it is located adjacent to the *Three Fighting Men* statue. Its purpose is stated in its inscription: "In Memory of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War

The original plan called for this plaque to be elevated and canted

visitors do not even know that it's there. It is ill-lit. It is often obliterated by fallen leaves and twigs, and unknowingly stepped on by visitors.

rates. This is not what was envisioned by those who fought to realize it.

This situation has upset and offended many families of veterans who

On February 12, 2009, Mokie Porter, Bernie Edelman and I sat down and reviewed everything that had been done with trying to get the In Memory Plaque corrected. We looked at everything everyone has been

and a lot of promises also and realized we had gone around Ruth Coder-Fitzgerald, the founder of the In Memory Plaque. Mokie quickly got Ruth on the phone and we talked with her for at least an hour and a half. Great lady.

Many of the Senators and Congress people that Ruth and her husband were involved with during the creation of the plaque, had all stepped down. She gave us a lot of insight to contacts. Our approach would be to go to the En-

SOLUTION The granite plaque needs to be redone in a thicker slab of granite or other stone and then be raised above ground

ing foliage. It also needs to be properly lit for viewing after dark.

PROCESS We all agreed that the two key people to this were Ken Salazar and Senator John Tester from Montana. Senator Tester is on the Veterans Affairs Committee and is on the Energy and National Resources. Ken Salazar is the new Secretary of Interior and just so happens he was on the Energy and National Resources commission.

are wasting no time in setting up a meeting with him to discuss the same, while I will be going to Silver Springs in March, we will go and see Congressman Salazar.

was because of the actions of Congress as set forth in Public Law 106-214. Now, additional action by Congress is necessary if the In Memory Plaque is to be what it was intended to be: an honor and homage to men and women who died from causes related to their service in Vietnam, yet who are ineligible to have their names inscribed on The Wall.

sure to something that has so honored our veterans, their widows and families.

Nancy Switzer, Region II Director

Region 8 Report

After attending the Convention in South Carolina this last year, I arrived home with a lot of enthusiasm, and energy to get busy to strengthen the various states in my Region.

Region Counsel Meeting put together by the VVA Region 8 Director. I made contact with the Montana, Idaho, Washington, AVVA Reps. I now have Montana in the loop again, and later I was invited to Boise to their VVA/AVVA State Council meeting. There I attended the AVVA meeting went over the process to get their corporate papers to National. In January

My next big step is Alaska; I have been told by Rick Davage that there are AVVA members that are ready to get involved with the VVA and their commitment to helping our Veterans, their families, and their Communities. I should have more information on this in a later Update. Oregon is doing great things, and growing in membership. Greeting our heroes as they return home, helping their VVA Chapters with local events. This is also happening in Idaho, Montana, Washington, and hopefully soon in Alaska. And I have not been able to make contact in Wyoming, maybe someday.

I was hoping to go to Alaska, I was invited by Rick Davage to make a trip in April, but I think the Budget will not allow it. So I will be using the Internet to help them get started.

I will be attending the California/Oregon combined Pre-Convention Council Meeting in Reno in June.

This year Oregon has their Elections, there is a member who is going to run for Oregon State Rep. but I have not received anything regarding elections in other states in the Region. I will have to send out reminders. Don't forget to go on line and get the information on the various Awards. And lets get more than a couple Nominations this year. The AVVA is now responsible for the Awarding the Fellowship Award; all nominations have to be in by June 1, 2009. Go to VVA.ORG and Award Nomination Forms. These awards etc. will be going through a severe updating. I should have a rough draft by April BOD.

See you in April the good Lord willing, and the creeks don't rise.

Frances Rowan, Region 8 Director

Region 9 Report

Hello from Region 9. I want to thank all the AVVA Associates within Region 9 that I am honored to represent. When I contacted you to help me by volunteering to be a contact for your state, chapter or just to provide information on what is going on, you stepped up to the plate with no hesitation. I encourage all AVVA members to get on the AVVA Talk List. Email Dick Southern at southern@lodelink.com and request to be put on the Talk List. Also if you know of any members that are not getting the "Updates" via email, please ask them to send an email to avvaupdates@yahoo.com request to be put on the "Updates" email list. Thank you

Carol Southern – AVVA Region 9 Director

October 3 to 5, I attended the Nevada State Council meeting in Tonopah, NV, October 16 to 19, attended the National BOD meeting in Silver Spring, MD, October 24 to 26, attended the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA, December 10 to 14, attended the 20th Anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sacramento, CA, January 8 to 11, 2009, attended the National BOD meeting in Silver Spring, MD. Had a great weekend sharing ideas and planning the Leadership Convention in July. On January 23, 24 and 25, I attended and represented Region 9 at the VVA and AVVA State Council meetings in Fresno, CA. Since the VVA State Secretary was unable to attend, I sat in at the VVA BOD and General Meeting and took the minutes. On Saturday, January 24th I set up the AVVA Collectibles table with the items I purchased while in Silver Spring. Various AVVA members manned the table and we sold around \$166 in products.

I attended the AVVA meeting, which was very interesting. Letters of intent to run for

Mackey. The election for California State th meeting in Fresno. Discussed were the upcoming elec-

tions and changes to the policy and procedures. I gave a report on the AVVA BOD meeting in Silver Spring.

On January 26th -
erans of Modern Warfare at the Sonora Veterans Hall. A small group was present, but the word is getting out and soon Sonora, California will have an active group.

As of January 31, 2009 Region 9 has a total of -
orado (19), Guam (22), Hawaii (15), New Mexico (33), Nevada (66), Philippines (11) and Utah (16).

Associates of Arizona - Arizona has a new VVA
ited AVVA Chapter. VVA Cochis :
Chapter 1020 was formed October 14, 2008. The
first official meeting was held F
O... Affili-t-d AVVA ~-d it- VVA
serve all of Cochise County, including; Fort Hua-
chuca, Sierra Vista, Huachuca City, Benson, Doug-
las, Tombstone, and outlying areas. Cochise County
is home to a great number of Vietnam & Vietnam
Era Veterans, Retirees, active Military and Fami-
lies. The new chapter was formed from a roster
of 51 interested veterans and their families. What
started as a small AVVA membership has quickly
grown to (6) active members, with the possibil-
ity of (3) new members in the month of February?

Our AVVA membership was formed with com-
mitments from each member to hold different po-
sitions of responsibility. As Arizona AVVA is not
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tions, but agreed to hold these temporary positions
f-

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ny - Alternate Chapter Rep/Secretary, Donna Hor-
ton - Treasurer, Sharon Davis - Second Alternate
Chapter Rep, and Darliene Passama - Historian.

We are a very active AVVA. Some of our fundrais-
ers & efforts follow:

In December 2008, AVVA 1020 & AVVA 106
worked together in bringing Christmas to a wheel-
chair-bound disabled Vietnam Veteran and his two
young sons. Together, we contributed toys, games,
food and other gifts for the holidays. Eleanor Apo-
daca, AVVA Chapter 106 Rep, obtained food con-
tributions from (8) Tucson Supermarkets. We also
secured sponsorship by Southwest Airline for return
tickets for the boys valued at \$800.00, contributed on
behalf of the Hispanic Medal of Honor by Director
Rick Avolio. We continue to support this Veteran and

his needs to date; Eleanor continues to pick up and
deliver groceries approximately twice a month, Les
Ryan, VVA VBO & DAV Cactus Chapter 2 is assist-

In January 2009, AVVA Chapter 1020 successfully
held two fundraisers in support of our VVA Chapter

of Sarge Lintecum's Vietnam Blues-Combat Tested
CD's! On January 18 we held our second fundraiser
in front of Wal-Mart, with baked goods donated by
chapter members and patriotic items donated by the
Order of the Silver Rose. We raised funds for our
VVA Chapter and established our AVVA Line Item.
Some of our VVA members supported us by pass-
ing out VVA & AVVA membership applications,
Silver Rose information, Agent Orange information,
and assisted veterans and active duty military with
questions. As well, we raised funds to cover shipping
costs of 8-10 "Boxes to the Troops" for Afghanistan.

Currently members are working on a "poppy"
quilt for fundraising. This project is being lead by
Darliene Passama. Darliene is also making chap-
ter members' denim vests, tote bags, and name
badges. In the plans is also a quilt for The Order of
The Silver Rose to support its Agent Orange Aware-
ness Program. The community can take part in this
quilt by "donating" blocks they personally deco-
rate to memorialize their Veteran affected by AO,
which will be combined into a quilt for display.

AVVA Chapter 1020 is excited to be in existence
and welcomes the opportunity to fundraise, provide
awareness, participate in community events, and as-
sist VVA Chapter 1020 in the future. Some of us

Laughlin, where we met other AVVA members. We
had a great time and thank everyone there for their sup-
port and welcome! Chapter 1020 is off to a great start!