

# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

Updates Committee Chair/Editor

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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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> -  
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  
-  
tions, but agreed to hold these temporary positions  
f-

-  
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!

## California (CA) State Associates -

Elayne Mackey, President

Like all the other states, CA is preparing for their elections. Looking ahead we are proud to say that we  
cers. Associate membership in CA is now at 573 plus. We have an ongoing recruiting program and have been drawing from the CA State Council Board of Directors.

In December, Carol Southern and I set a booth up in Sacramento, CA during the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It was a cool day but a good one.

Many of our members marched in the parade, while we gave out materials for our veterans and their families. One of our purposes was to get the word out about AVVA and what we stand for.

Many of the CA Associate members are now sitting on State Council Committees. Being appointed as Special Advisors, we now have associates serving on the PTSD, Finance, Minority Affairs, Membership and Government Affairs committees. We are pleased to say that we are called upon by the CA State Council to perform a variety of duties.

In January I had the opportunity to attend a dinner and Domestic Energy Presentation in Laguna Beach, CA. A Capitol Hill lobbyist, Richard Stone, made a powerful presentation about using our countries own energy resources. Mr. Stone's hope is to have all veterans organizations back his efforts.

Nomination forms  
and instructions are  
available for the  
**Scholarship Awards**  
(deadline June 13, 2009)  
and the  
**Fellowship Awards**  
(deadline May 16, 2009)  
at:  
**AVVA.ORG**

Chapter 47 Riverside/Inland Empire – Elayne Mackey reported. In December 2008, we planned and coordinated an 88th surprise birthday party for chapter member and Medal of Honor Recipient-Colonel Lewis Millett. The Colonel enjoyed the afternoon with family and friends from throughout Southern California. Messages came from around the world honoring the life and military career of Colonel Millett.

Other December projects included, a toy drive  
niversary Celebration of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sacramento, CA. A booth was set-up with materials for veterans and their families. Recruiting was also done at this time. We played a part in the planning and presentation of the Anniversary Dinner.

Ongoing programs include; donation of personal hygiene supplies to the VA Medical center, Loma Linda, CA.; funding the 2009 AVVA Chapter 47 Scholarship and continued work for the Missing in America Project.

Chapter 391 Sonora, Ca. – Carol Southern reported. On October 3, 4 & 5 VVA and AVVA worked  
ans. The event was very successful with four veter-

clothing, sleeping bags, boots, medical exams, haircuts, etc. We are looking towards next year's Stand Down. The Chapter 391 Christmas Dinner was held on December 6<sup>th</sup> at the Mother Lode Fair Grounds in

which brought in \$400.00. Marlene Parr made fruit baskets and brought in another \$70.00. Events coming up in the next couple of months are the Bobby Rapp Memorial Motorcycle Run and a Harley David Chili Cook Off. We continue to supply personal hygiene products to Operation MOM. Congratulations to

Hawaii - A group of Vietnam Veterans gathered once again on the Richards Street side of the Hawaii State Capitol by the Korea/Vietnam Memorial on Tuesday, December 23, together with supportive family and friends. This is the fourteenth year for this low-key, un-sponsored event. Around 75-100 folks usually attend.

While nothing is required of those who attended, some brought small contributions.

Nevada – Judy Hammock reported. Chapters 388, the Nevada Day Parade on November 1st. The parade is a long tradition held in Carson City to celebrate the day that Nevada came into the union. It has always been a very special holiday for Nevadans. The weather was cloudy and rainy but we had about 40,000 people there. They cheered for our Vietnam Vets and yelled out “thank you for your service” and clapped and clapped. It brought tears to my eyes.

Carson City Chapter, #388, participated with our brothers and sisters in the Reno VVA chapter 989 in the Veterans Day Parade.

On November 13, Judy Hammock went to the Nevada State Prison in Carson City to see a program for geriatric veterans incarcerated for life.

Several members of the VVA Chapter 388 and 989 have joined forces with the Social Work Department at the University of Nevada to form the UNR Veteran’s Coalition Committee. The committee was formed several months ago when members of the Department of Social Work decided to organize a group who would be interested in working on veteran’s needs in the northern part of Nevada. Willing members of both chapters were contacted and, along with others from the university and the communities in northern Nevada, formed a group that is currently in the process of clarifying what services are needed by veterans and future veterans returning home.

The UNR Veterans Coalition is working with the UNR Veterans Cub and veterans representatives to determine the needs of veterans on campus as well as the needs of veterans from other campaigns who are in the community. Presently they are meeting on a monthly basis. Their next meeting will be on February 19, 2009 to view Joshua James Frey’s DVD on veterans of the Vietnam War. A discussion will follow on a new program called Vet2Vet, which they are hoping to organize in the community with collaboration from the Reno Vets Center and the UNR Vets Club. Future meetings will include discussion on veterans from the atomic testing in Nevada, Agent Orange, and Gulf War Syndrome and our veterans now serving prison terms.

Members of Chapter 388 include Terry Hubert, Rex Harold and associate member Judy Hammock. Members of the 989 Chapter include

Greg Montalvo, Michial Nolan, Bob Sperry, Bob Marshall, Chuck Fulkerson and associate members Joshua James Frey, Johann Sprenger and Troy Stormoen also representing the Reno Vets Center.

If anyone is interested in attending a meeting or joining the group, contact Judy Hammock at [jhamock@pyramid.net](mailto:jhamock@pyramid.net) or mail to:[jhamock@pyramid.net](mailto:jhamock@pyramid.net) for further details.

Also, chapter 388 member, Terry Hubert is being honored by the National Services Network at their 20th Annual Human Services Awards Breakfast on Tuesday, February 24, 2009. Mr. Hubert was nominated for his outstanding work as a Board member of Ridge House, a halfway house now taking veterans released from prison. Mr. Hubert is nationally known for his work with veterans in prison and recently wrote an article on the Angola Prison in Louisiana for the VVA Veteran.

Associate member of Chapter 388, Judy Hammock, is now volunteering as a veteran’s representative for the Senior Structured Living Program at the Northern Nevada Correctional Center. She is working with veterans, aged 60 and over, on a volunteer basis.

#### New Mexico – Frank Ramirez

AVVA working along side with VVA Chapter 358 in Silver City has been working on a veteran’s monument for a couple of years; received a donated Huey by Holloman Air Force base, which they hope to have up on the pedestal. The chapter is in the process of getting bids on Handicap sidewalks and electrical components for the memorial. They paid out their scholarship to students in need; participated in presenting the colors at a gathering at Gough park in Silver City in remembrance of the event that took place September 11, The Twin Towers,

guard also presented the colors at the New Mexico County Treasurer’s Conference in Silver City. Chapter 358’s color guard has also been asked to present the colors at all the home games at Cobre High School in Silver City.

Chapter 968 now has three vans making trips daily to the area VAMCs which include VA hospitals in Albuquerque N.M, Amarillo TX, Big Springs TX and El Paso TX.

## Utah – Lillian Hunt

In October we had a successful rummage sale

On November 1st, there was a parade in Mesquite, Nevada. All VVA veterans, associates and friends, attended and either walked or rode in the parade. Sgt. Comanche, who is the horse that we take care of, you may have heard of him. He is a retired horse, who served well in the Army. He is an 11th Armored Cavalry Blackhorse trooper, like my husband and so many who live here in Southern Utah. He came from Fort Irwin California, where a lot of our soldiers hail from, they are trained there, all 11th Armored Cavalry, we took him on, he is retired, 16 years in the Army, was also at the parade. We take him to a lot of functions. He is becoming well known, the kids love him and he is adopted by many in Southern Utah.

In November we had a booth on Main Street, St. George, for the VVA and at that time held a drawing. Veterans went to the Santa Clara Intermediate School and talked to the kids about patriotism. This was their 2nd time and the kids learn a lot and ask lots of questions. We took Sgt. Comanche last time. All the Veterans are loved and it is about time, as far as they are concerned. I agree!

We started having breakfasts before our regular meetings to see if we could give some of the members an incentive to come join us. This turned out very successful and will be continued. We also have a breakfast once a month the day after our meetings. We serve food to people who want to make a donation to the VVA and many members come to cook and serve those who come. This has turned out pretty well.

May we all honor our Veteran's and those who are serving everywhere. We just don't realize how free we are until it is taken away.

## UPDATES

Sign up to receive this enewsletter by sending your email address to:

avvaupdates@yahoo.com  
Membership at national  
State Representative/President  
Regional Director

## Region 3 report

Region 3 is alive a well. Our combined membership continues to strengthen with our Region making up 22% of AVVA. Several states are in the top 10 nationwide with membership.

and asked to participate.

Kentucky: Judy Mitchell, State Representative

I participated in "Operation Stand-down" in October along with three more of my AVVA members

Chapter held its 19th Annual Awards and Anniversary Banquet, for which I was appointed Chairperson. At the Awards dinner the rest of my AVVA and I decided to give the VVA Chapter President, Bobby Keller, a special Award for all the support and respect he has shown us.

In December, of course we had our Annual Christmas Dinner with American Legion Post #244, where we hold our meetings. I was assigned to cook two turkeys for the dinner. Our Chapter and Chapter #88, are ongoing in supporting a homeless clinic in Covington, KY, called the Pike Street Clinic. In November and December, both our major fundraisers were for Pike Street Clinic, not to mention the two truckloads of clothing and toiletries. The cash donation alone was over \$1000.00.

I still help out at VA for "Movie and Popcorn Night" down" wards at the Louisville VA Hospital. I donate the soft drinks and the cups and napkins. Two other of my AVVA members usually help out too.

Karen Hurt of Chapter #851 does a lot of volunteer work at the new Veterans Home in Hazard, KY. She always has a special Christmas program there and she has an "Ice Cream Social" there once a month.

North Carolina Donna Crowell, State Representative

Chapter 124 gave out three scholarships. Chapter 272 gave Christmas gift cards, candy and toiletries to Women's Shelter. Provides a free lunch once a week for Veterans. Planning a spring yard sale. Chapter 654 helped a Vietnam Veteran wife with

his burial expenses. Helped a family in need for Christmas. Provided a Christmas for a family. They also donated funds to a Nursing Home and the USO.

Chapter 885 helped two families at Christmas. Took 18 men out for a Christmas Dinner. Set up a tent at the Battleship Race and provided refreshments. Participated in the Martin Luther King Parade. Working on funds for when the Vietnam Memorial Wall will be there in June.

Helped Veterans with money for electric and and medical attention for Homeless Veterans.

Tennessee is gearing up for the upcoming State elections in June and Chapter elections in April.

next state meeting is being held on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. We will be going over the election process to ensure valid and uncontested elections.

The latest edition of the *Tennessee Volunteer* has -  
ment is now a part of all future editions. All Af-

### West Virginia

Region III Conference to be held in Charleston on April 16-18, 2009. This is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. One fundraiser will be a basket created from wines and whiskeys brought from each of the states in the Region. We will have educational seminars on Saturday. Among the topics will be Chapter Incorporation and Membership Retention/Effective Communication. One dedicated AVVA member will be selected to receive the Heart and Soul Award. I invite everyone to attend. Details can be obtained at [www.vva.org/VVA-WestVirginia.html](http://www.vva.org/VVA-WestVirginia.html)

will take place this spring and summer. Elayne Mackey, National Election Chair, sent the new election guidelines to all current Representatives and Presidents. I look forward to working with

Sharon Hobbs, Region III Director  
[blondyhobbs@aol.com](mailto:blondyhobbs@aol.com)

## Leadership 2009

Louisville, KY

July 27, 2009 to August 2, 2009

Tentative topics include:  
Leadership Development

Health issues and assistance

Legislative

Web Site

Newsletters

By-Laws

Helping the next generation

## Join the AVVA Talklist!

Send an email to:

[southern@lodelink.com](mailto:southern@lodelink.com)

and request to be put on the talklist

## Region 2 report

Nancy S. Switzer, Region II Director

As you can see by the below, Region II AVVA members have been quite busy. I thank all of the State Representatives for keeping me informed of what wonderful things they are doing "together with" their VVA chapters.

in Pennsylvania who have taken the steps to become incorporated as a chapter.

Chapter 542 Harrisburg has completed the Incorporation process, they have sent the paper work

necessary paperwork for IRS compliance are in order. Once the Finance Committee approves the paperwork, the sub-committee under membership will notify the president and ask that a Charter be issued. The paper

as sub committee chair on Dec. 14th.

Chapter <sup>296</sup>~~299~~ Philadelphia has requested in writing to have a Petition to Incorporate sent to them, Cathy Keister is awaiting their check for the funds and will immediately send them the Petition.

*WE Sent ✓ + Have paperwork*

### Chapter 82 Report: Cherie Steers

I have been volunteering every week at the Northport VA Hospital I have been working the desk at Volunteer Services. I have gone to wards to give out ditty bags to incoming patients. Connie drives the van around the campus to take patients to their appointments. On December 7th our chapter had its annual Christmas over 130 members and children and grandchildren attended. Santa Claus gave gifts to all the kids. On December 13th myself, Associate Members Dottie Goldblum and Susan Hassell attended Northport played Bingo and served coffee and donuts. Gave all the patients ditty bags of shampoo, socks lotion, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste. Each patient received a chocolate lollipop that I made. On December 19th 2 Associate members and 10 individual members did our annual gift giving at Hagedorn Little Village School for disabled or traumatized children. The kids are so adorable and we all enjoy it and we know the kids all love. They react to Santa Claus same as every-

one else. I also helped the local VFW send packages to troops overseas.

### Chapter 20 Report: Kathy Gleason

Rochester Chapter 20 successfully completed its second annual Support the Troop project, sending one hundred boxes of goodies to those in the Middle East. The objective: somewhere in the Middle East a soldier would receive a box, totally unexpected, from a

Planning started back in September of 2008, with requests to the community to provide names of soldiers deployed to the Middle East who would be there through February. Names started coming in and the list grew steadily, maxing out at 127 names. A list of snack items was compiled with input of the Vietnam veterans who well remembered receiving similar packages from home.

The decision was made to not include toiletries, but to focus on the more "fun" items – beef jerky, Easy Mac & Cheese, trail mix, hard candies, pepperoni, canned fruit, pudding cups, canned pasta, etc. Several community organizations included our list items in their holiday projects and the Chapter received more than \$3,000 worth of items.

RDA Container of Rochester donated 500 cardboard boxes with the Chapter's logo and information to conform to postal regulations. A local Girl Scout Troop asked each house they visited to donate just one box for the troops, and arrived on the evening of packing with 143 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

Friday evening in January and, in just one hour, all one hundred boxes were packed, sealed, labeled and loaded on a truck. The very next morning, before most even had a cup of coffee, 25 volunteers (most of whom had been there the night before) met at the Main Post Of-

an hour before opening to process the boxes. Within an hour, the boxes were all processed and in tubs to go on trucks. A letter from the Chapter was included, letting the soldiers know that the Vietnam veterans respected

being made by their families.

Nearly 75 volunteers all worked with energy,



## **Chapter 862 – Beaver County**

In September Chapter 862 hosted The Moving Wall. While the Wall was in Beaver County a tent with displays of memorabilia from Vietnam was open to the public. Another tent honored the men from Beaver County who did not come home from Vietnam or who died as a result of their service in Vietnam. An information tent was staffed at all times to answer

information about those listed on The Wall and to direct people. AVVA members served with VVA as volunteers in the tents and during set up and take down. During the opening ceremonies, AVVA members served as surrogate Gold Star Family members for those that could not attend. A Gold Star Family luncheon was held during the week and a POW/MIA ceremony took place following a ride of nearly 2,000 motorcycles in honor of the missing. As school classes arrived, volunteers spoke to the classes and directed them to The Wall.

During October AVVA and VVA members passed out Orange Poppies in remembrance of Agent Orange while collecting donations for Agent Orange education programs. Some of the proceeds of the collection were used to take out a half-page ad in the local newspaper listing illnesses and conditions attributed to exposure to Agent Orange in order to reach veterans that are unaware that they may be eligible for

Visits were made to the County nursing home in October and December to deliver toiletries, snacks and gifts to over 80 veterans. While the gifts are appreciated, the time spent just visiting seemed to be the highlight. They also participated in the Beaver County Veterans Day Parade.

A “Night at the Races” Fundraiser was held in the middle of November with the proceeds used to provide Thanksgiving dinners for six needy families in the county. Following the December Chapter meeting a “Christmas Buffet” was provided for members to enjoy.

## **Chapter 967 – Hainley-English of Greater Blair County**

Several projects have taken place recently including an Oktoberfest and a Western Day at the

Hollidaysburg Veterans Home. A gift-giving project took place for the patients and residents at the VAMC, Altoona for Veterans Day and Christmas.

They made 100+ cool-ties, which were given to the Armed Forces mothers to be included in the Christmas packages sent to Iraq. They have also assisted with the VVA with selling fundraising chances, marching in the Veterans Day Parade and with the POW/MIA Vigil at The Wall That Heals at the VAMC in Altoona.

## **AVVA New Jersey - Irene Gratacos**

I will be having an AVVA meeting for all AVVA members, including all the “AVVA members at large” on April 11th 2009 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel, New Jersey at 1:00pm.

## **Chapter 899 – Susie Guckin**

VVA of Bordentown continues to support the efforts of the VVA Chapter 899 on Monday night get together with the troops of Fort Dix Warrior Transition Unit. We are continuing to receive and distribute handmade quilts, blankets, pillows, and helmet liners to the troops of the warrior transition unit. The blankets and quilts are given out and the soldiers, in exchange, pose for a picture with their new blanket or quilt. The items were created and donated by the ladies of the holiday villagers in Mount Laurel, NJ. Marilyn Darrone, AVVA 899 member, has befriended these ladies, and continues to be a wonderful contact person in continuing their efforts.

The holiday villagers recently experienced the loss of Marth Bogen. With that, we sent a letter of sincere gratitude and condolences for her contributions to the efforts of our organization and the soldiers of Fort Dix.

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with VVA 899, we attended the fun fair at Fort Dix for the children

of deployed parents. It was a very exciting event for

friendship for the children and their families. Kathy Noon, AVVA 899 member, worked in conjunction with family support to help in preparation prior to that date.

Also, Maria Basara, another one of our members, who is also a member of the Battleship NJ organization, has in conjunction with that organization, has continued to arrange trips and overnight stays for the soldiers of the warrior transition unit to spend a day at the ship and even stay overnight.

We are currently working on making arrangements to create a chapter quilt to the agent orange quilt of tears, and we are continuing to attend arrivals and deployments at both McGuire AFB and Bravo Company, Ft Dix shaking hands, greeting the troops, and being a friendly face when they leave and when they return.

We also sponsored a bus trip to Atlantic City for the soldiers of WTU and the community. We were proud to have 48 soldiers attend the trip and a variety of members and others. It was a day of beach, boardwalk, and casinos.

#### **Chapter 799 – Irene Gratacos**

I had my AVVA State meeting, it was open to all AVVA members on October 11<sup>th</sup>, and was held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel. Refreshments were served and we talked about what AVVA members would like to see in their own chapters.

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, we had the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam Memorial in Elizabeth, prior to that ceremony we also in conjunction with the POW/MIA ceremony at the union County Court House in Elizabeth.

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup>, our members and AVVA members did a product sales table at the Italian-American Festival in Union, NJ.

Also our chapter color guard marched in the Columbus Bicentennial Day Parade in Union on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, and also marched in the Halloween Parade in Linden, NJ on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Chapter 825 – John Tappen**

VVVA Chapter 825 held a coin drop on September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and AVVA members helped collect the money.

#### **Chapter 602 – Dotty Crawford**

Our Chapter has not been very active for

bike club, “Red, White & Blue Freedom Riders” and a local Marine supply store, Barnacle Bills, Chapter 602 is holding a fundraiser called “boat-ers, bikers and Vets Support Our Troops”. The goal of this fundraiser is to have blankets, gloves, scarves, hand held games and board games donated to be shipped over to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, as Christmas presents. We hope to be able to ship these items out the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December for them to arrive in time for the holidays.

Our Chapter web site can be accessed at:

[www.vvachapter602.com](http://www.vvachapter602.com).

Chapter 602 AVVA members are holding a Penny Party on October 26<sup>th</sup> we are accepting all of your “junk” donations (except clothes).

#### **Chapter 452 – Philip Rule**

AVVA members joined with Chapter 452 for the Chapter picnic in August and for the Somerville Street Fair on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Chapter 327 – Margit Rahill**

Chapter 327 AVVA members are currently working on a project for Thanksgiving as our VVA members visit Lyons Hospital each month. For the holidays, we are making up our usual Thanksgiving bags. Each veteran at Lyons will receive a

are also looking to partake in the project for Morris County Cares Campaign for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans along with the local Rotary District.

#### **Chapter 800 – Jean Weaver**

jointly with Chapter 800 VVA members. Each month we visit both Lyons PTSD Ward and East Orange VA Hospital where we provide food and support to our hospitalized veterans. We make necklaces that are sold to provide funds used to support our hospital visits. In August our visit to Lyons was a barbecue. Several times each year we hold can shakes

to raise funds for our programs. We donate \$100.00 worth of items to 6 soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

Park July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade. We also provided stock, toys and electronic games for a visit from Santa Claus to tomorrow children for the sick children.

We presented a POW/MIA Flag to the Secaucus Vet Center. In September we participated in the Labor Day Street Fair in Rutherford where we not only try to meet Vietnam veterans and non-veterans to a quant them with our programs and to raise funds for our programs. We marched and donated \$50.00 to the John Basilone Parade. We also donated \$250.00 to the Stand Down in Newark.

## Region 4 report

Chapter 25 - Palm Beach County, Fl

Mary Qualls, AVVA Chapter Representative

December, January and February have been busy for us. We purchased Christmas dinner for an Iraqi wounded veteran and his family. OIF/OEF holiday party was held at Mike Carroll's Ranch in Loxahatchee on December 7, 2008 which the chapter attended.

Participation in the South Florida Fair with our annual chapter information booth collected both donations and a record number of veterans. The local Vet Center Director spent three Fridays at the booth and was amazed at the number of veterans attending the fair.

After donating "ditty bags" to our local Fischer House for the house guests visiting their hospitalized veterans a thank you was received for all the donations that we give. We will be purchasing a Medal to be presented to the local ROTC High School Graduates for their outstanding work with veterans issue.

Chapter 23 - Ft. Lauderdale, Fl

Marilyn McKenzie, AVVA Chapter Representative

I have been a life member of the AVVA since November of last year and my husband has been a life member of the VVA since 2000. When I went to my second

meeting, I was asked to help collect donations for the Center of Hope Ministry in Ft. Lauderdale and to assume the duties of fund raising for the AVVA

ery month, the Center of Hope feeds and clothes the homeless, many are veterans. We also try to enlist those veterans that are Vietnam era and assist

their Christmas dinner and after hours of calls and meetings we were able to fund not only the dinner but some of the Ministry's future food programs.

With the help of my husband we delivered the following in time for Christmas: 81 turkeys, full sheet cake, 5 -5 lb. bags of potatoes,

the members of VVA Chapter 23. We were also able to collect and distribute clothing and food

The chapter donated three one hundred cup coffee pots to the Ft. Lauderdale VA outpatient clinic for the veterans. Ninety pounds of coffee has been distributed between the Broward Outpatient Clinic, Bruce W. Carter Miami VAMC, and the two local Vet Centers. This is being made possible by Cafe Bustello in Miami who also supports our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan by sending them free coffee.

cates from Sweet Tomatoes Restaurants, Lester's Dinner, Jaxson's Ice Cream and Hollywood Ale House to use for fund raisers. I am also looking for other fund raising activities and other Help the Homeless programs through our Community Outreach Donations Program.

## Letters to the Editor

next edition

submit to [avvaupdates@yahoo.com](mailto:avvaupdates@yahoo.com)

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Chapter 266 Philadelphia AVVA continues to support VVA activities including visits to the Philadelphia VAMC for movie and/or bingo events. In addition, we continue to collect soda and other tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and cancelled stamps for the VA Hospital in Tucson.

Chapter 862 Beaver County continues to do many events for their community. Due to recent surgery no report is available on these projects.

PA AVVA Chapters are preparing for their Elections in April and will continue to work for the Veterans of their area.

*N. Anay  
Switzer  
Region II  
Director*

### **NEW JERSEY- Irene Gratacos, State Representative**

Chapter 899, Susie Guckin, is continuing to support the troops of the Warrior transition unit at Fort Dix, helping VVA. Marilyn Darrone continues to collect quilts, made and donated, by the holiday villagers in Mt. Laurel. She distributes the quilts to the soldiers of WTU and then the soldiers take a picture with the quilt. The joy they have brought to the soldiers. We also continue to support mobilization and demobilization missions, by welcoming the troops home and giving them a handshake as they are deployed.

We have begun work on a Chapter 899 memorial quilt to honor friends, family members, neighbors, and battle buddies who fought in the Vietnam War. We have collected many names to honor on our quilt. Each quilt square will display their name, Branch of Service, rank, and information regarding whether they were killed in action and if it was an agent orange related death. We will display our chapter logo in the center and then current VVA members have signed the perimeter of the quilt and AVVA members will sign a square.

We are also involved in supporting the National Guard food pantry in Toms River. We have recently begun collecting donations to be delivered to the National Guard to help support their needy families, as well as, local veterans.

Vicki Pfeffer has also been involved with sharing our mission with the Burlington County Hogs Group and Mills Harley Davidson, both of which will be involved with helping to support our mission of collecting food.

Kathy Noon continues to provide information regarding soldiers Angels, an organization which she has adopted a chaplain to support. So we have continued collecting rosary beads, bibles, religious literature, scapulas, and other toiletry items to support this mission. All items are shipped to Iraq or Afghanistan and are distributed to soldiers in need. Also Marelyn Maslak also gets the items blessed before shipping.

Nancy Marshello, an active member, is working hard hand in hand with the VVA to help write grants to get funding for our mission at Fort Dix WTU, VVA Cremins Project and the food pantry, as well as overnight stays at the Battleship New Jersey for military children and families. We are also collecting donations of hard candy and snack items to help support the joint readiness command at Fort Dix. Maria Basara helps sets up overnight stays at the ship.