



RECON REPORT

- Serving Veterans and the Community Since 1985 -

APRIL 2014

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Chapter 218

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Email: vvachapter218@gmail.com



Next Chapter Meeting

April 9, 2014 | 5:45 pm

Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta

Dinner Available
\$8.50 per person

*"Never again
will one generation
of veterans
abandon another..."*

President's Message...

My thanks to all of you who attended our Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on March 29 at the Elks Lodge in Goleta. Triple thanks to Matt Thomas for getting our Huey helicopter on site. We had a wonderful lunch cooked by the Elks, good conversation, sold a few caps and Huey T-Shirts and even signed up a new member: Wayne Halander of Santa Barbara!

This is election month for the chapter and results of the balloting of April 9 will be sent out via e-mail that evening and printed in the May issue of the Recon.

Please bring your ballot with you to the meeting or send in via snail mail so that it's received by 5pm, April 8. Ballots will also be available at the meeting, just in case you misplaced it.

I realize that the past few months have been a time of change for the chapter. We have moved the location of our meetings from the Veterans Memorial Building to the Elks Lodge and changed the day of the monthly meeting as well. I know that for some of you it conflicted with other monthly events that you must attend, but we needed to make this change for the overall good of the chapter. Hopefully it will work out in the future for you to be able to join us on that night.

Please note that the meeting time has been set for a bit earlier at 5:45PM. This is to allow us plenty of time for the ballots to be counted and officers and board members to be announced, as well as giving us time for other business so that we can then head downstairs to the dinner at 7pm or so. I will reserve two tables for our group so that we won't be scattered around the room as we were last month. (I had no idea so many people turned out for the spaghetti dinner, which by the way, is only \$8, with water, soft drinks and beer and wine available at the cash bar).

I've already had a short discussion with the new incoming Exalted Ruler of the Elks who wants to develop an on-going relationship with our chapter. The Elks are supporters of all things Veteran and they want to make sure we are happy in our new meeting place.

I foresee a synergy there that we didn't have at the VMB.

Look forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday, April 9 at 5:45 PM at the Elks Lodge in Goleta.

Welcome Home!

Chaplain's Corner | Pattie Murdy

April is upon us along with that old adage, "April showers bring May flowers." Let us hope that we have an abundance of these April showers to help us with our three-year drought situation.

There are several days in April that may be of significance to some or most of you, both secular and religious.

April 1 April Fool's Day
April 3 Chaplain's Annual Trip around the Sun completed
April 13 Palm Sunday
April 14 Passover begins
April 18 Good Friday
April 20 Easter Sunday & Happy Easter
April 22 Earth Day
April 23 Admin. Professional's Day
April 28 Holocaust Remembrance Day

In our ongoing Homeless Veterans Clothing Project, "Veterans Helping Veterans", I would like to thank the following for their generosity during the months of February and March:

Cathy and Charlie Franco for their large bag of donations of hygiene and personal care supplies.

Family of the late Col. James A. Wasil, WWII veteran for their abundant donations of clothing, shoes, household goods, and hygiene supplies. Their donation amounted to 150 lbs.

Family of the late Dennis Rader, USMC veteran for their plentiful donations of bedding, sheets, pillows, comforters, pillow cases (50) men's clothing and household supplies in the amount of 175 lbs.

Friends of Marge Beavers for their unselfish donations of two large bags of men's clothing including Hawaiian shirts, tee-shirts, shorts, long pants, belts, PJs, bathrobe and socks.

Jennifer Park and her Dad for their donations of blankets, comforters, sheets, pillowcases, jackets, sandals, tee shirts, Hawaiian shirts, baseball caps, visors and miscellaneous household items.

And a very special Thank You to John Kerr, for overseeing the delivery of donations from the Veterans Memorial Building.

Veterans Coordinating Council John Selfridge, 218 Representative

It certainly has been an interesting, confusing and frustrating ride these past several months as events unfolded before VCC.

I must say that the newly elected officers of the VCC—Bob Handy as Chair and Ellery Price as Vice-Chair—have certainly changed the direction of the organization.

Earlier this year Marge Beavers, the former manager, was returned to her old job as part of an agreement to settle an employment lawsuit filed by her against the VCC for wrongful termination in June 2013. Beverly Ochoa was also rehired as assistant.

The chair of the VCC, Steve Penner, had to resign in January due to a conflict of interest in representing the VCC as its attorney before the Labor Board and also serving as Chair.

There were a number of confusing issues that followed: namely the motion proposed by Bob Handy (not yet the Chair) which called for the new sitting Chair, Michael Cook, to be censored and removed from his position. That motion was approved, then quickly rescinded when it was realized that there would be no authorized individual to represent the VCC at the Labor Board hearing! But at the next monthly meeting, Mr. Handy once again called for the resignation of Mr. Cook, only this time the motion was stated as "a request to resign, not a forced termination". Mr. Cook did step down when the motion passed, which led to the election of Mr. Handy as Chair.

A motion was then introduced to request that the County Supervisors let the "old guard" run the building as they have done for the past sixteen years or so and for that "team" to remain in place for at least another year, well beyond the June 2014 deadline for the County General Service Department to take over management of the building.

I want to see the VMB remain for the use of Veterans for many years to come, but I'm not sure the VCC would be able to accomplish that goal without some necessary changes.

In my opinion, the only thing I can see that will attract

younger Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans to the VMB will be for the VCC to set a goal to include those Veterans on the council and for them to have a vote. This would require a change in the by-laws to recognize the fact that Congress had not chartered a Veterans organization since the late 90's. And it does not appear as though it will do so anytime soon, which is a shame considering that over 2.5 million men and women have served during the course of these two wars.

So the "old guard" of the VCC needs to get with the program and honor the service of these men and women and openly welcome the "new guard".

We must attract Veterans under the age of 40 if the VMB is to survive well into the future. Stated another way: if you were old enough to be drafted you were old enough to VOTE. We won that fight across this nation over fifty years ago, so why is this not the rule at our own Veterans building?

My worry is that the new Vets are not very eager to join the same groups that were not interested in us when we came home. This needs to change!

The next scheduled meeting of the VCC is Wednesday, April 30 at noon.

Chapter 218 Scholarship Challenge

In January, the chapter committed to supporting two scholarships this year and to increase the amount of each to \$750. They will be awarded later this year in the names of Michael C. Dominquez and Stephen B. Neal, both Santa Barbara County residents who died in Vietnam.

The deadline for funding of both scholarships is May 1, 2014. As of this writing the chapter has raised nearly \$750! That means we are nearly half way to our goal of \$1,500 to fund these two scholarships... and you can help.

You're encouraged to contribute whatever you can, whenever you can, to help us meet our funding goal. You can do so at our monthly meetings—the next one is Wednesday, April 9 at the Elks Lodge in Goleta—or send a check in care of our PO Box and mark it for "scholarship fund".

The scholarships the chapter provided in past years have been used for tuition, books and other much needed items by grateful college age recipients. "The cost of college has risen sharply over the past five or six years,"

notes chapter member John Kerr, chair of the scholarship committee, "but even our rather small amounts have proved to be vital when combined with other monies from the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara."

For the two local Vietnam Veterans who lost their lives in-country, it means that their names, their sacrifice and their legacy will continue to live on through these scholarships.

Sick Call

Bob LaPrad, recovering from shoulder surgery.
Mike Masur, reported illness.
Pattie Murdy, (still) recovering from shoulder surgery.
Keith Perkins, recovering from surgery.

Our prayers for continued recovery and for all to be well soon!

VA Removes Annual Income Reporting Requirement

WASHINGTON –The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is eliminating the annual requirement for most Veterans enrolled in VA's health care system to report income information beginning in March 2014. Instead, VA will automatically match income information obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

"This change will reduce the burden on Veterans, improve customer service and make it much easier for Veterans to keep their health care eligibility up-to-date", said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

Some Veterans applying for enrollment for the first time are still required to submit income information. There is no change in VA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or for conditions that are officially rated as "service-connected."

VA encourages Veterans to continue to use the health benefits renewal form to report changes in their personal information, such as address, phone numbers, dependents, next of kin, income and health insurance. For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

The Santa Barbara Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America is a tax exempt, non-profit, community service organization. Our members are Vietnam era (you need not have served “in country”) Veterans and associates (individuals from all walks of life who may or may not have served in the military).

The Chapter meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge, 150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta. The meeting starts at 5:45 pm and dinner is available immediately following (\$8.50 per person). Spouses, family members and veterans of all eras are always welcome.

Publisher/Editor: John Selfridge johnselfridge218@hotmail.com. Please let me know if you wish to receive this newsletter via e-mail in PDF form and check our website for updated information on events and the latest news.

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(Elected Every April)

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Mike Mauro
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Vance Memorial Fund

The Chapter’s Vance Committee distributes funds to qualified disabled American veterans.

Committee is appointed each April.

John Kerr (Chairman) (Cambodianred@gmail.com)

Dan Oroz

Madeline Moreaux

Gerry Roberson

Fred Golin

Mike Mauro

Don Matter

Pattie Murdy (alternate)

Wednesday, April 9 - Chapter Meeting - 5:45 pm
At the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US!