



NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA # 223 THE REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER

Volume 16, Issue 1
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FEBRUARY 2014



A BUSY ENDING TO 2013

By Charles Earthman



Dr. Mandeep
Nagra

2013 had its share of success and failures; there were some lofty goals achieved and some goals not quite attained. We said goodbye to some close friends and loved ones and welcomed new members to our veteran community. "News and Views" covered the year and was rewarded with national and state VVA recognition. The year ended well with some notable events.

On the 17th of December, after the regular Vet Connect Clinic, veterans were treated to an East Indian meal served by the Santa Rosa Sikh Temple. Members of the local Sikh temple treated vets to hot fresh naan bread, rice, yogurt and vegetarian dishes. Veterans, some of them homeless, took part in the annual event at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building. A jazz band played as volunteers from the Sonoma County Veteran Community provided veterans in need with donated clothing and toiletries. Homeless vets were given new long johns, socks, tarps and back packs provided by The Purple Heart Chapter 78.

Dr. Mandeep Nagra, the primary organizer of this event, is a member of the Sikh temple off Todd Road and a physician at the Santa Rosa VA outpatient clinic. Dr. Nagra said, "It's a longstanding tradition for Sikhs to cook for themselves and their fellow temple members." Their reaching out

to the homeless is an extension of that tradition and an example of our diverse community helping itself. This annual winter event is held when the homeless are most vulnerable to the cold weather and the elements.

In Healdsburg, a group of volunteers got together in the gym at St. John's Catholic School to pack more than 280 decorated boxes bound for soldiers serving in Afghanistan this past holiday season. The community-wide event was directed by Mary St. Clair, creator of Healdsburg SOS (Supporting Our Soldiers), and was done with the help of VVA Chapter 223, local businesses, service clubs, and police and fire departments. The highlight of the packing party was a Skype conversation with some of the soldiers in Afghanistan. The base commander, Lt. Col. Brad Wambeke, and members of his staff shared in a conversation with the volunteers in Healdsburg from a conference room in Kandahar Province where it was just before 8 a.m. the next morning. Thank you, Mary St. Clair, and all those that participated in this show of community support for our troops. (See pictures on page 5)

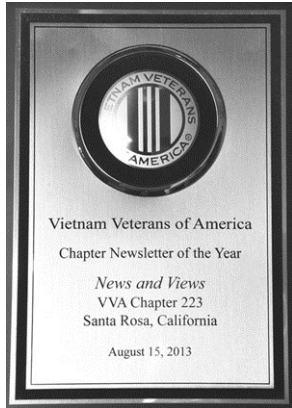
(continued on page 6)



VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA - REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223

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AMVETS POST 40

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Harold Bagdonas 480-5379 - email:

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Lodge Room

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VVA 223 PHOTOGRAPHS

<http://vva223photographs.shutterfly.com>

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of VVA, Inc., National, State, Chapter 223, or the newsletter staff, but of the corresponding party. All articles by the Chapter have permission for reprint in all Vietnam Veterans of America newsletters. Anything else must come from the original source.

To make a contribution to the News and Views, submit a story, or a photograph, please call or email: Brooke McKusick @ 537-9003, or mcq6@vbn.com. To make a complaint about the newsletter, please call: Ken Holybee @ 887-8891, or holybee@comcast.net.

VVA Chapter 223 invites you to place an ad in the News and Views, please call:

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President's Letter



Ken Holybee

It is a new year, and I hope everyone is doing well. It has been quite a while since my last report. The chapter is still active in many things and working on expanding our involvement in some of them. I have asked that the board members put their goals for this year in our newsletter. I am also asking that our members let us know what your goals might be for us as your board.

We will be working a lot on communication this year. With the changes going on in the world, today we can send messages and information to a lot of people very quickly. Although a lot of our members are not plugged in, there are a lot that are. We would like to do a lot of updating our web page this year and make it a place where people can go to see what we are doing next week or next month. I am looking for members to assist with our communication tools. We have a great newsletter. We need to move our web page to the same level. To do this we need to incorporate video into the page and have consistent updates made to it. There are many ways that you can assist. We have been compiling an email list and we would like to know if you would like us to alert you with updates on chapter projects. I know that I need reminders more often than in the past.

We have had a bill introduced into the U.S. Senate by Senator Blumenthal from Connecticut. This legislation is what we have been working on for years to get research into intergenerational effects of toxins in the military. Senate Bill, S 1602 "Toxic Exposure and Military Support Act of 2013" needs all of us to contact our Senators and ask that they support it. I have heard back for both and I am not happy with their responses. They wish to wait for the bill to come out of committee, I wish for them to co-sponsor the bill now. Please download this bill and write to your Senators and encourage them to support it and our children.

On the state level we will be holding our state convention in June in Fresno. I am the elections committee chair and am looking for people to run from state office. We will have at least six delegates attending the convention. Since I will be running the elections I will not be a delegate or a candidate. I still serve as the state legislative chair and the new year will mean more trips to Sacramento to meet with our legislators. Our state legislative day is set for March 26th. We will also be celebrating Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day at the Vietnam Memorial. Stay tuned for more information on this.

We will be planning to work the Wednesday night market in Santa Rosa this year. Last year we worked part of it and it was very successful as a way to inform people of veteran issues and tell them about our chapter. I will be looking for members to assist on this since it will take up 16 Wednesday nights.



In Memoriam **Hattie Stone** 1918 - 2013

A Memorial Service for **Hattie Stone**

A public memorial service will be held Thursday, February 27, 2014, at 10:00 hours in the Main Auditorium of the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Santa Rosa. A reception is to follow in the Dining Room.

FARMER'S MARKET

By Charles Earthman

Last year Chapter 223 and Purple Heart Chapter 78 had information booths at the Santa Rosa Wednesday night Farmer's Market. These organizations were there to disseminate information to veterans, their families, and the interested public on a broad range of subjects from health issues to benefits for veterans and their families. The program was very successful and met with a positive response from the public.

This year the Chapter will be at the Wednesday night Market throughout the summer. We need volunteers to help give out important information and answer questions on a variety of topics. Please step up and help.

WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT

National Board Meeting, January 2014

by Kate O'Hare-Palmer

Last week I went back to Silver Springs, Maryland for the National VVA Board Meetings. It was the second meeting that I have attended since taking over as the National Women Veteran Committee Chair. This is truly a whole other level of veterans working to help veterans. They are sincere and determined. While there, I attended the PTSD/SA committee meeting, the Homeless Veterans Committee, and the Government Affairs Committee.



**Kate
O'Hare-Palmer**

Each committee does post their minutes of the meeting on the national VVA website. It is quite amazing what is going on at the national level. Dr. Tom Hall, PTSD/SA chair, currently serves on the Director's Focus Group at the Kansas City, Missouri, V.A.M.C. The committee is continuing to update the PTSD/SA brochures, a proposal for the 2014 leadership conference, and have members continue local community educational outreach efforts, especially Re: suicide prevention. The committee co-sponsored the second MST workshop in partnership with Service Women's Action Network (S.W.A.N.) They also developed a workshop to help non-veterans better understand the values and training of serving in the military.

Dr. Hall stressed the importance of joining into your local VAMC's director's meeting to relay any concerns that veterans have concerning their care. John Crooker represents us at the San Francisco VAMC meeting monthly. If you have concerns, you need to let John know. Next month, I will give an overview of the Homeless Veterans Committee. If you read last month's Veteran, you will see the hard work that Sandy Miller has spearheaded in this area.

Women Veterans Committee meeting discussed the end of the year passing of the DoD budget and the lack of passage of both Senator Gillibrand's and Senator McCaskill's bill on MST issues. There is a deadline of August, 2014, to implement the measures included in the DoD budget bill regarding changes to the handling of MST cases.

We also had the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies for review. Secretary Hagel is directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments to enhance their respective Academy programs through several prevention and response strategic plans. They will also review and expand the institutional alcohol policies as a result of findings that alcohol is linked to most assaults.



National President John Rowan greets Ken Holybee at the January National Board meeting held in Silver Springs, Maryland. Photo by Michael Keating.

A new brochure for MST was suggested to be made by the committee.

The longitudinal study on Women veterans who served during the VN era is due out this year. Two reports are in for publication review now. I will keep you posted when the findings are available and I hope to have one of the researchers speak to the committee this year.

March is Women's History month and committee members as well as all VVA chapters are encouraged to participate in their local community events. Tammy Duckworth, Illinois 8th Congressional District Representative and former Blackhawk pilot during OIF, is an awardee in this year's National Women's History Project.

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Mary [St. Clair] - thanks again! The Soldiers loved receiving the boxes today. We snapped a few pictures while we were handing them out. The ones with multiple boxes were picking up for their sections. We hope you had a blessed Christmas.

v/r Brad

LTC Brad Wambeke, Commander, HHBNCJTF-4 / RC(S)



Santa Rosa Quilting Guild and AVVA

By Jil McGivney

There are several ladies from the Santa Rosa Quilting Guild that I have met recently. Over the past few months they have made a huge difference in many Veterans' lives.

The first time I met LaVella, Mirna and Karen they gave me 9 quilts, all about twin bed size, and 20 wheel chair bags. I turned 8 of them over to the VA Clinic and the Director of the homebound Veterans program. The quilts flew out the door, as well as all the bags that very first day.

My husband John took one of the quilts to the hospital for one of our own VVA chapter members. He told me he slept on top of it the first night then gave it to his sister to take home. That's how much he loved it and was afraid of it being stolen!

The next time I met with 'The Quilters' they gave me 16 lap quilts which I again took up to the VA Clinic. We divided them between the homebound Director and the prosthetics department, making sure they made it into the hands of Veterans in wheel chairs.

Since that first meeting they have been making quilts at a fast pace. At least every other week I get a call from them to pick up more.



Some of "The Quilters," Cora Stewart, Lavela Cassinelli, Mirna Estes are pictured with AVVA President Jil McGivney, second from the left, while discussing plans for the coming year in the world of quilts.

In December, when we had that freezing weather, The Quilters brought in 40 fleece blankets. 25 of them went to the Hearn and Rocha Veterans homes. The Director there said the rooms are so dull and generic that the blankets would really brighten things up. The rest of the blankets we distributed between the homeless shelter and the Rescue mission.

The week before Christmas I met another Quilting Guild member, Leslie, who gave me 30 knitted scarves and hats. I set up a table outside the clinic and gave them out there. By noon they were all gone. One Veteran told me that now he has a Christmas present for his daughter.

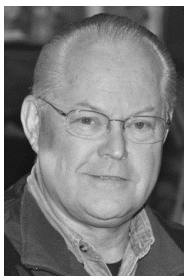
They haven't slowed down any either. They continue to make quilts, wheel chair bags, bags for walkers along with hats and scarves.

The Clinic has an orientation class for wheel chair Veterans. They have been handing out the quilts and bags there, as well as to anyone who rolls in for an appointment.

The Quilters are so excited and committed to making sure their quilts get into the hands of Veterans. I am very glad they found me, and that I am able to distribute them into the Veteran community and help them meet their goals.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND OPEN TO FAMILIES & VETERANS

By Sunny Campbell



**Sunny
Campbell**

Every January your VVA 223 sends out scholarship applications to all the high schools in Sonoma County plus Sonoma State, Santa Rosa JC, and Empire College. The funding for these scholarships comes from the efforts and fund raising of all the members of VVA 223 throughout the year.

The scholarship forms get mailed to the scholarship coordinators of the respective schools in our county. The requirements for the high school and college students are that they are a child or a grandchild of a Vietnam Era Vet. The applicants will be graded on grade point, academics, community service, and a 500-word essay on, "What effect did my parent's or grandparent's military service have on my life."

There is a category for college students who have recently served in the military in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. They will also be graded on academics and grade point average and will need to provide a 500-word essay on, "What effect did my military service have on my life."

Last year we presented 3 scholarships for \$1,000.00 each, one to a student at Petaluma High School, and two to vets attending Sonoma State and Empire College.

We will have applications available to VVA223 members who would like to give an application to any of their children or grandchildren that meet the above requirements. You can contact Sunny Campbell at 707-849-4399. VVA223 members can also receive an application at our monthly meetings, the third Tuesday of the month. Applicants must return their applications no later than **April 15, 2014**, to C.A. Campbell, 2163 Alejandro Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.





The 2013 Chapter Christmas Party was held on December 6 at the Veterans Memorial Building Auditorium and was attended by merrymakers of all ages. The decorations set-up was not as well attended as in past years (the weather and an aging membership may have had something to do with it), but those who were there to help Kate O'Hare-Palmer did a great job and the auditorium was ready on time and looked great. A steady downpour outside did not dampen the spirits of the partygoers and fun and good cheer was everywhere. A holiday feast was served and a table laden with desserts of all kinds capped the culinary feast. There was a silent auction and a raffle with lots of great prizes. And finally, Santa was there to hand out toys and gifts to all the children, both naughty and nice. It was a great evening and a nice way to end 2013.



BEST YEAR EVER FOR DUCKY BRIGADE

2013 was a big year for fund raising, and Bruce Thomson with the illustrious Ducky Brigade made a huge contribution to the veteran community. This year Supreme Ducky Commander Bruce Thomson presented each member of the Ducky Brigade a Golden Ducky Award at the November membership meeting. The Brigade has donated \$8,100.00 to the Wounded Warrior Project and the Bernardo Recovery Fund in 2013.

Recipients of the prestigious Ducky Award include: Jerry Kroner, Kate O'Hare-Palmer, Joe Cholewa, Anthony Tate, Mary St. Clair, Stan Fife, Matt Kamanu, David Kistenmacher, Ronny Sidbeck, Dave Bariski, Bruce Carpenter, Earl Walters, Ken Holybee, John McGivney, Alan Dalton, "Wild Bill" Burke, Jerry Brester, and J. J. Wheeler.



THE GRAPEVINE

By Charles Earthman

The Grapevine is back after its winter hiatus. I want to wish everyone a belated happy new year and I hope that we get some badly needed rain soon.

The Grapevine has been a part of News and Views for the past three years and has focused on events and people in the Sonoma County Veteran Community and Chapter 223 members; we have relied on input from those sources for material for the column. This year the Grapevine will focus primarily on health issues. The youngest Vietnam-era veteran will be 56 years old this year and most of us are well into our sixties and beyond. There is no shortage of health issues to talk about with this group and that is what we will talk about in the Grapevine this year.

The idea for this emphasis on health issues comes from hearing chapter members and other veterans talk about various health problems affecting them. Some were passing along helpful information and recommending places to go for help with a particular malady. But some conversations were based on not-so-good or erroneous information and offered medical advice that could be detrimental to the recipient. The Grapevine will try to help clear up some of the questions about various health issues that we face every day.

The subject matter will come from VA material and other medical sources. There will also be contributions from medical clinicians in our chapter and input from members and readers of this column. We will offer discussions on health issues that affect Vietnam era veterans and seniors. We will not be giving medical advice as we are not qualified to do so. We will, however, be directing readers to web links and other sources of material on subjects we are covering that month. This month the Grapevine will not cover a particular medical topic because I want to get the word out that this format exists. Your input is welcome. So let's get the conversation started.

If you would like to contribute anything to the Grapevine, contact Charles Earthman at 707.778.6598 or 707.318.2837.

2014 - A YEAR WITH MUCH TO DO

By Charles Earthman

Chapter 223 had an active 2013; we are one of the most active chapters in the state and probably in the country. Our list of activities in 2014 will again fill the calendar and require participation from as many members as possible.



Charles
Earthman

The Chapter will participate in local veterans' events that we do annually such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies and other days set aside for veteran remembrances. We will also participate in the Rose Parade and the Air Show as we do every year. Jerry Shimmel, Pat Christen, Bill Burke, Carlton Smirni, Earl Walters, and a host of other volunteers will continue to run the very successful monthly poker tournament fundraiser. There are also a number of events put on by local veterans and civic groups that we will attend and support. We will continue, with the Redwood Empire Food Bank, to run the monthly food giveaway. These events and others will require the participation of as many members as possible.

Kate O'Hare Palmer and Ken Holybee represent the Chapter at VVA national. Kate chairs the Women Veterans Committee and serves on several other important committees. Chapter President, Ken Holybee, serves on several important committees as well, giving the chapter a profile at VVA national. Kate and Ken also serve on or chair committees at the California State Counsel. John Crooker serves as First Vice President for the VVA State Counsel.

The Chapter newsletter *News and Views* has a readership that extends across the country and, with a planned enhancement to the web site, the Chapter profile will be raised and we will need lots of help from the membership.

Here are some of other important events scheduled for 2014:

- CSC State Legislative Day, March 26, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA.
- CSC convention, June 25 - 28, Holiday Inn at Fresno.
- VVA National Leadership Conference, Aug 5 - 10, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita, KS.

If you are interested in participating, you should let someone in the Chapter leadership know. Let's help make 2014 a good year for veterans in our community, state and country.

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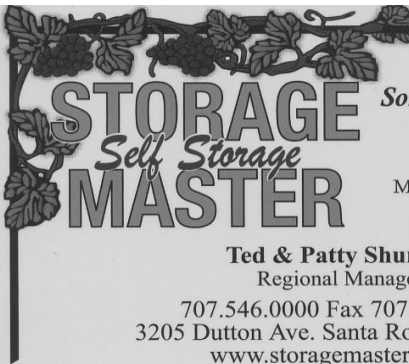
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Volunteer seeks photos of Sonoma County soldiers who died in Vietnam

By CHRIS SMITH - THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Volunteers who are collecting photographs of the U.S. servicemen who died in Vietnam have issued the names of five Mendocino County men whose pictures still are needed for inclusion in an Education Center being constructed alongside The Wall in the nation's capital.

Creators of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Education Center hope to acquire and display photos of each of the more than 58,000 Americans lost to the war in Southeast Asia.

Volunteer Janna Hoehn of Hawaii said the Mendocino County servicemen whose photos still are needed are:

Donald G. Armstrong, Ukiah; Charles E. Crain, Redwood Valley; Robert M. Lathrope, Mendocino; Lewis L. Short, Covelo; Jeffrey S. Wesolowski, Ukiah.

Hoehn said volunteers with the Vietnam Education Center have acquired photos of all of the serviceman from Lake County who died in Vietnam. But she still is looking for pictures of nine Sonoma County men who were casualties of the war. They are: **John N. Brewer, Sonoma; Rickie D. Fisher, Santa Rosa; David L. Harding, Rohnert Park; Jason D. Hunnicutt, Petaluma; Ronald D. Marcum, Monte Rio; William E. Montgomery, Healdsburg; Cameron A. Rice, Petaluma; Dana G. Rose, Santa Rosa; Jerry D. Schroeder, Santa Rosa.**

Anyone who possesses one of the photos can contact Hoehn at mauifloralelegance@gmail.com.

AVVA Report

By Jil McGinney

The Christmas party was great fun. We had so many toy donations this year thanks to the Canine Companions and to Lois Stewart from AmVets. Invaluable to preparing for the party were Jeanne Aven and Kathy Kistenmacker for creating Kate O'Hare Palmer's vision. Everyone there that day were so talented and helpful. Bruce Thomson gave away duckies, and we had some great silent auction and raffle prizes. The food was masterfully prepared by Melissa from the Veterans Building staff. Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time including Santa and all the kids. Thanks to everyone who helped out to make this fun for all.

The presents that were left over we handed out on Christmas Eve to the kids at the Food Bank food distribution program.

We are continuing to work with the Santa Rosa Quilting Guild, handing out their quilt creations to Veterans all over Santa Rosa and Sonoma County. I'm looking forward to a happy, healthy, and productive 2014. Happy New Year!

VVA 223 PHOTOGRAPHS on SHUTTERFLY

<http://vva223photographs.shutterfly.com>

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Photos by **Brooke McKusick**

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SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT



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These services are, also, available at the Veterans Memorial Buildings in **Guerneville** on the 2nd Thursday, **Sonoma** on the 3rd Thursday, and **Petaluma** on the 4th Thursday of every month. Please note the time schedule for these resource and service meetings is: Noon to 3 pm

ALL VETERANS ARE WELCOME, NO CHARGE SERVICE



CHAPTER 223

GENERAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 18, 2014

BE THERE EARLY!!!

SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT -

Every Tuesday morning, 9:00 am to noon @ the VETS building. Vets helping vets solve problems. Coffee and donuts served. See page 10.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING -

Second Tuesday of the month, 1:00 pm @ the VETS building. Look for the guys looking for the room...

NAMI - First Thursday, 9:30 am @ the Vet Building, East conference room.

VVA-223 GENERAL MEETING - Third Tuesday of the month. **POTLUCK @ SIX**. Meeting starts at 7 PM. See above...

FOOD-GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM - Fourth Tuesday of the month. Volunteers will please check in with **John McGivney @ 570-9201** for time and station.

REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION -

HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM - Every Monday evening @ 5:30 pm. **101 6th Street, Santa Rosa.**

POKER SCHEDULE - Cards in the air at 6:00 pm. Check-in and pizza 5:00 to 5:55 pm... Usually the first Saturday of the month:

FEBRUARY 1ST - MARCH 1ST - APRIL 5TH - MAY 3RD - JUNE 7TH - JULY 5TH - AUGUST 16TH - SEPTEMBER 6TH - OCTOBER 4TH - NOVEMBER 1ST - DECEMBER 6TH



COMIC'S CORNER

Someone needs to open an express shop for mending clothes called Tailor Swift. -- Warren Holstein

"Members of 'Duck Dynasty' are releasing their own brands of wines. Wine experts are saying that it's red wine with varmint and white wine with critters." -- Conan O'Brien

"Some grocery stores refuse to sell eggs to teenagers on Halloween. Isn't that terrible? It makes me feel bad for well-behaved kids just looking to make an omelet." -- Craig Ferguson

California park rangers found three hundred tons of pot growing in a forest guarded by bears. Now it all makes sense. Bears sleep three months a year, all you ever see them doing is rummaging through the trash looking for food, and their leader's name is Smokey. -- Argus Hamilton

"The President said yesterday that if it's taking too long you can bypass the Obamacare website and enroll by mail. Only the federal government could come up with a website that's slower than sending something by mail." -- Jay Leno

Police in Sweden said they are investigating a man's allegations a woman stole money and food from his apartment and slapped him with a mackerel while he was sleeping. I don't know. The man's story sounds kinda fishy. -- Gary Bachman

The popularity of Congress is at an all-time low according to a recent poll that says Americans like head lice more than they like Congress. But you know, I think the real story here is that some Americans like head lice. -- Conan O'Brien

Life is constantly screwing with me. The day before yesterday, it gave me lemons. Yesterday it gave me tequila. Then today it gave me Splenda. WTF am I supposed to do with Splenda? -- Marco

This morning Joe Biden personally greeted government employees who'd been out of work during the shutdown. Haven't those people suffered enough? -- Craig Ferguson

Apparently there is a huge crack cocaine problem in Toronto. Luckily, it's just confined to the mayor's office. -- Jay Leno

Although wholesale coffee prices have fallen by almost a third in the past year, Starbucks and other coffee shops haven't reduced prices. Well, guess that was about as likely as airlines reducing fuel surcharges when gas prices drop. --Janice Hough

The Obama administration asks Hollywood to work positive mentions of ObamaCare into its TV shows and movies. So AMC's new zombie drama is titled: 'The Walking Dead But Not Due to Preexisting Conditions'. -- Conan O'Brien



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Mark Lazzini, who owns Mark's Christmas Trees at the corner of Third and Dutton, invited the Ducky Brigade to enhance his tree lot during the holiday season. The Ducky Brigade had a very successful year at the tree lot this year. All of the guys had fun and wish to thank Mark for a wonderful Christmas season.

Pictured left to right: Earl Walters, Supreme Ducky Commander Bruce Thomson, Anthony Tate, Mark Lazzini, Dave Barisky, Jerry Brester, and David Kistenmacher. Mark and Steve Lazzini own Lazzini's Market & Delicatessen at 3449 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa - 575-3888. Give 'em a try...