



NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA # 223

THE REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER

Volume 15, Issue 4

APRIL 2013

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(left to right) Sacramento Veterans advocate Pete Conaty speaks at luncheon, VVA-223 President Ken Holybee, Vet Connect's James Poore, California Vietnam Veteran of the Year John McGivney, Alan Peterson and Pete Rusher group up for a picture, and California Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peter J. Gravett.

CSC DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Legislative day at the Capitol for Vietnam Vets
By Charles Earthman

On March 20, 2013, VVA members from all over California descended on the Capitol for their annual CSC Legislative Day.

Veteran's legislative advocate **Pete Conaty**, CSC President **Steve Mackey**, and VVA-CSC legislative Chair **Ken Holybee** hosted the event. Pete Conaty handled the lion's share of the job as emcee.

Breakfast and lunch were served in the Capitol Basement Cafeteria's Eureka Room. The day's activities started with **Peter Gravett**, Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, giving the Department's outlook and goals for 2013 and introducing the leadership team tasked with doing the job. **Charles Hunnicutt**,

President of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, spoke and introduced some of the VSO's who were present. The remainder of the morning we listened to legislators, committee consultants, and legislative staff who dropped by to inform VVA members about some key legislation effecting California veterans.

Many bills were discussed that involve California veterans including bills sponsored by the VVA-CSC. AB 244 would authorize a veteran organization to participate in a special interest license plate program. AB 287 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to annually complete a list of names to be added to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. AB 1289 proposes to make the California Vietnam Memorial the official state Vietnam veterans' memorial. Many more bills too numerous to mention here are supported by the VVA-CSC.

The VVA-CSC Legislator of the Year Award was

(Cont'd on page 6)



**VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA
REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA**

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President's Letter

It's that Time Again

With the coming of spring and daylight saving time again, we start our elections in VVA. In April we will hold our chapter elections to elect all board positions. At the February meeting we voted to elect our officers for a two year term. At the April meeting one of the items on the agenda is to adopt new bylaws for the chapter. One of the changes is to elect the board members for a two year term. This is done in this fashion because of the wording in the national constitution on chapter make up. The changes in the bylaws are to align them with the national constitution and make them a lot simpler.



Ken Holybee

Since it is spring we are also into outdoor events. Among our event are the Rose Parade, Memorial Day, the Good Ol' Boys Motorcycle Run on Memorial weekend, and on May 30 the dedication of the new Plaque in Petaluma. The Petaluma Plaque commemorating Soldiers that died in Vietnam was originally dedicated on May 30 1969. The target date to rededicate a new plaque to replace the one stolen over Christmas last year was chosen because it is on the anniversary of the original dedication. Some of the people on the plaque are more than just names to me, but people that I knew since we were very young.

We have an upcoming national convention in August of this year in Jacksonville, Florida. The chapter is authorized six delegates to this convention. We also have a region 8 and 9 pre-convention conference in Reno in June. These conferences are open to all members that wish to attend. There is a registration form and fee for attendees. It will be held at the Silver Legacy Hotel. This is a good event for members to come and meet members from the western states and also meet the candidates for the national board that come to speak to us. You do not need to be a delegate to attend and your input on all candidates, the resolutions, and the amendments to the constitution appreciated. Any member can have influence on the convention by attending this conference and asking questions and making recommendations.

On March 20th we held our VVA state legislative day in Sacramento. This has become a well attended event and a chance to meet with some of our legislators. Hopefully, we will get some reports next month on how our members perceive the process. We will have some legislators speak to us and we will be seeking out some to give them information on veteran bills that we would like them to support.

Last week I met with Kelly Meeker, field representative for congressman Jarred Huffman. She is new to the game and is very receptive to our needs as veterans.

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NOTICE

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The 119th Annual Luther Burbank Rose Parade and Festival takes place on Saturday, May 18, 2013

This is one of Sonoma County's most honored traditions and one of the oldest and largest events of its kind in Northern California. Congratulations to Santa Rosa's own precision marching team, **THE CAMPI-ONS**, for being chosen as our Grand Marshals at this year's parade! This year also marks the return of the festival to Juilliard Park. Immediately after the parade plan on enjoying music, family fun activities, and lots of different food booths throughout the grounds at beautiful Juilliard Park.

Juilliard Park - Festival of Family Fun 11AM – 3PM

Rock the Afternoon Away with the surf sounds of UNNAMED BAND.

Food booths, Family Activities, Parade Awards and More!

The Parade annually kicks off on the third Saturday of May beginning at 10 AM. It winds its way through the streets of downtown Santa Rosa with radio broadcasters lining the parade route providing lively commentary of the entries. The parade will start at the same Sonoma Avenue and E Street location as last year and proceed north on E Street, turning left onto 4th Street and proceed west on 4th Street then south onto Mendocino Avenue where the parade will disband at 1st Street.

Resources for Women Veterans

By Kate O'Hare-Palmer

*Women Veteran Committee Chair
VVA#223 and VVACSC*

A few weeks ago, I attended a *Webinar* for "Trauma-Informed Care and Other Resources for Women Veterans". It was put on by the Women Veterans Connect.org. and presented by the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. The format was an hour long seminar that was via internet and allowed a question and answer section on line at the completion of the talk. There will be more women veteran topics put together by this organization and it will be interesting to watch what will follow. Some interesting facts below were highlighted:

Women Veterans—the largest subpopulation of female VA health care users.

- Today, women comprise approximately:
 - 14.5% of all active duty military
 - 18% of all National Guard and Reserves
 - 6% of VA health care users

Since 2000, the number of female Veterans using VA health care has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 (FY00) to more than 337,000 (FY11). This growth has outpaced that of the male Veteran population.

Among women Veterans returning from the current conflicts, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND):

- 79.4% are age 40 or below

- 51% are 30 or younger

55% of female OEF/OIF/OND Veterans have received VA health care. Of this group, 89% have used VA health care services more than once; 52.4% have used VA health care 11 or more times.

Average age of VA users in FY09 was:

- Female Veteran = 48

- Male Veteran = 63

In FY09, more than half of women Veteran VHA patients had some level of disability that was caused or exacerbated by their military service (service-connected disability status). About a quarter of the women had a service-connected

disability rating of 50% or higher. VA is committed to serving the needs of older women Veterans.

Women Veterans aged 45 to 64, many of whom are Vietnam- or Gulf War 1-era Veterans, are the largest subpopulation of women VA health care users, comprising 44%.

Growth of this age group has outpaced that of younger women Veterans.

Women aged 65 and older make up 14% of women VA health care users.

.. VA is stepping up to meet the needs of a growing women Veteran population and enhancing primary care to meet their needs. This is a major undertaking for VA.

These Veterans may require more intensive healthcare services as they grow older.

The emphasis goes further:

- More accessible and flexible clinic hours as well as technology access — for working women who may have childcare/eldercare responsibilities and difficulty getting time off for appointments

- Tele-health for users in rural areas

- Emergency services

- Seriously wounded women and women with disabilities

- Providers who recognize and can address:

- Homelessness and special issues for homeless women

- Age-related health effects: Cardiac, obesity, diabetes, cancers (breast, cervical, lung, colorectal, etc.), osteoporosis, and more.

Implementing comprehensive primary care is part of the Women's Health Transformation Initiative, one of VA's **T21 Transformation Initiatives** created by Secretary Shinseki to transform VA into a 21st Century organization. Other initiatives focus on:

- Women Veterans Call Center (**see below**)

- Privacy and Environment of Care

- Homelessness (**see below**)

- Improved care coordination

The health care issues as well as the educational issues and post-war employment and education issues were also addressed. More of this talk can be reviewed on line at the Women Veterans Connect, Inc. website

The Grim Backlog at Veterans Affairs

Editorial
Published: March 11, 2013

The New York Times

A new report based on previously unreleased data from the Department of Veterans Affairs paints a distressing portrait of an agency buried helplessly in paperwork — with a claims backlog that has gotten far worse in the past four years. The average wait to begin receiving disability compensation and other benefits is 273 days, and up to 327 days for veterans making claims for the first time. Those in big cities wait far longer — up to 642 days in New York. The total number of veterans with backlogged claims is about 600,000.

The reporter, Aaron Glantz of the Center for Investigative Reporting, an independent organization based in Berkeley, Calif., plumbed the Veterans Affairs Department's records through the Freedom of Information Act, confirmed the data with the department and spoke with staff members, veterans, veterans' advocates and members of Congress. He found that while the agency has spent four years and \$537 million on a new computer system, 97 percent of veterans' claims are still filed on paper. His article includes a map showing the scale of the problem and a stunning photo from a report last August by the agency's inspector general about an office in Winston-Salem, N.C., that was so deluged with claims folders that they "appeared to have the potential to compromise the integrity of the building."

The agency admits being overwhelmed, but it says it is getting control. It says its job has become more complicated in part because it added more than 940,000 veterans to the compensation rolls in the last four years and covers more conditions — like those linked to Agent Orange and gulf war illness — while easing standards for proving post-traumatic stress disorder. It says that a digital system will level the paperwork mountain by 2015.

The oddness of the agency's situation — optimistic reports of progress contrasted with dismal snapshots of the status quo — will surely be addressed in a hearing in the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on Wednesday. The under secretary for benefits, Allison Hickey, will be there, we hope, to add clarity to the unsettling picture.

Changing Views in Changing Times The Distinguished Warfare Medal

By Charles Earthman

A very hot topic among veterans, both young and old, is the newly created Distinguished Warfare Medal that honors members of the military for achievements beyond the battlefield since Sept. 11, 2001. The medal, and its order of placement, has caused a backlash from veterans groups that has reverberated through the halls of congress up to the White House.

The controversy centers on the fact that this medal will take precedence over several combat awards that require the recipient to risk his or her life in order to receive them. Placing the Distinguished Warfare Medal above the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star with V Device and the Soldier's Medal would diminish the significance of awards earned by risking one's life in direct combat or through acts of heroism.

As the nature of warfare changes, I believe this medal will eventually be placed in the order of its true significance among the decorations worn by the men and women of our armed forces. I have faith that military people themselves will see to that.

As veterans we will see that this remains an important issue until properly resolved by the Chain of Command up through the DoD to the White House. As for congress — it disgusts me to hear of their **bipartisan** efforts to press the Pentagon to change the medal's designation. Congress needs to tend to the more important and difficult business of the solving the Nation's more pressing problems that they don't want to face.

They will drop the important issues in a second to go off and get on their soapbox over something like this, which while important, does not warrant their attention as much as the many other problems all Americans face. Besides, most of them would not know a Good Conduct Medal from a Silver Star. Veterans groups and the military establishment will straighten this thing out.

As time goes on, new medals and decorations for new acts and types of military service will be proposed and adopted. I believe strongly that military people and veterans will influence the placement and importance of those medals. We earned them, we wear them, and we will have the final word on their placement.

AVVA Notes

By Jil McGivney

I did send an email to JoAnn's Fabrics and invited them to come see the quilt movie and they wrote back that they would be glad to donate material for quilts. In the mean time, if you contact me, they have offered 10-20% discount cards to all AVVA members. Don't forget that April is election month. That will be happening at our monthly pot luck the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Pot luck at 6pm and general meeting at 7pm.

James Saad wonders:

In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.

Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet Soup?

How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

Newly elected Jared Huffman, of the 113th Congress Serves from the Golden Gate to the Oregon Border

Representative Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) was sworn in as a member of the 113th Congress on January 3, 2013 to represent California's second district. The district spans from the Golden Gate Bridge north to the Oregon border, covering six counties including all of Marin, Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte, and much of Sonoma Counties.

Huffman is a member of the Committee on Natural Resources and the House Budget Committee.

Prior to his election to Congress in November of 2012, Huffman served six years in the California State Assembly where he authored more than 60 pieces of successful legislation and received numerous awards for his legislative leadership. Huffman chaired the Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee, served on the Budget Committee and was co-chair of the Legislative Environmental Caucus.

In the Assembly, Huffman distinguished himself as a legislator who tackles complex public policy challenges, works tirelessly, and gets results – often by forging bipartisan consensus on difficult issues. He played a leading role in crafting and passing the historic package of water reforms in 2009. Other notable laws authored by Huffman include California's pioneering lighting efficiency standards (AB 1109) which were subsequently adopted into federal law; the nation's largest programs for solar hot water heating (AB 1470) and paint recycling (AB 1343); reforms that improve California's State Parks system (AB 1589) and Department of Fish and Wildlife (AB 2402); and creation of a new voluntary type of corporation, California Benefit Corporations, to promote corporate social responsibility (AB 361).

Prior to his election to public office, Huffman was a Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). One of his proudest accomplishments at NRDC was helping forge an agreement to restore a 153-mile stretch of the San Joaquin River in California's Central Valley.

Before he joined NRDC, Huffman was a successful public interest attorney whose victories included several major jury verdicts in gender discrimination and race discrimination trials. He also served 12 years in local government as a Director of Marin County's largest special district, the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), from 1994 to 2006.

Huffman graduated magna cum laude from the University of California at Santa Barbara, where he was also a three-time NCAA All-American volleyball player. He went on to play for the USA Volleyball Team in 1987 when the team was ranked #1 in the world, before attending and graduating cum laude from Boston College Law School.

Huffman lives in Marin with his wife Susan and their two children, Abby (age 12) and Nathan (age 9). In his free time, Huffman enjoys all types of fishing, as well as tennis and home winemaking.



Jared Huffman

Ken Holybee reported that he met with Kelly Meeker, a representative of Jared Huffman's staff and invited her to visit Sonoma County Vet Connect. Hopefully, this will become a long lasting relationship with all of the veterans of the north coast and the offices of the 2nd Congressional District of California.

(Cont'd from page 2) **President's Letter**

I will be spending more time giving her information that, hopefully, the congressman will listen to. With new districting, Congressman Huffman has a district that goes from the San Francisco Bay to the Oregon border and is west of the 101 highway, but does not include Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. He has offices in San Rafael, Ukiah, Eureka, and is opening offices in Petaluma and Ft. Bragg. This is a very rural district and has a lot of veterans in it. Let me know if you are making contact with

your members of congress or the state legislator.

There is a lot going on in the Agent Orange committee at national and more information has been released or just found by our members. I wrote an article for the Zephyr this month that has this information in it. I asked Tom Hohmann, state secretary and Zephyr editor, to put this information on the state web site. There is way too much information to just print in one issue of any newsletter. Hope everyone has a chance to read it. I would like to start planning an Agent Orange town hall meeting for this year in the area. I will keep everyone informed about what is coming up.



Photo by:
"CROOKER"

Jerry Breaster, Bob Evans 'n' Bill Shaffer at the coffee bar the Vet Clinic. Quite a few guys were there that morning. Jerry said, "we could have had a meeting."

5th Annual Event for Women in Military History



The 5th Annual Women in Military History Week Event is hosted by Twin Towers United Methodist Church (TTUMC) to recognize, honor, and celebrate women's military service throughout all eras. The ceremony serves to educate and create community awareness about the various, unique roles women are serving in our nation's Armed Forces and the contributions they've made beyond it.

5th Women in Military History Week
Honoring Women in the Military
Saturday, April 13th 2013 12:00 to 3:00 PM
Twin Towers United Methodist Church
1411 Oak Street, Alameda CA 94501

It is with great privilege and pleasure to announce, that this year's Keynote Speaker is **Lindsey Sin**, California Deputy Secretary for Women Veterans Affairs and Guest of Honor **Starlyn Lara**, Women Veterans Coordinator at Swords to Plowshares..

Please wear the uniform of the day or appropriate civilian attire. If you would like to bring a piece of memorabilia from your service years, there will be a display table provided for these treasures.

Registration for the luncheon is required as seating is limited.

You may RSVP no later than March 29 online or by calling **888-548-4944**.



Our old friend, Assemblymember Rocky Chávez, spoke to the capitol guests on Legislative Day. Rocky was elected on November 6, 2012 to represent the 76th Assembly District which includes Camp Pendleton, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Oceanside and Vista.

He spent more than 28 years as a United States Marine, rising to the rank of Colonel and being assigned Chief of Staff for the 4th Marine Division. Rocky serves as Vice Chair of the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee.

Cont'd from page 2)

CSC DAY

presented to Senator **Rod Wright** (D-Los Angeles) for his tireless work on legal issues on behalf of California veterans stationed abroad and for his past support Californian veterans issues. He spoke passionately of his close friendship with a survivor of the Port Chicago incident in World War Two.

VVA members visited with legislators to discuss key bills and afterwards there were closing remarks in the cafeteria before adjourning to walk to the California Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Capitol Park for the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony.



Brooke McKusick with Santa Rosa City Councilman **Gary Wysocky** and Sonoma County Supervisor **Susan Gorin** at a St. Patrick's Day party in Santa Rosa.



In attendance at the Legislative Day hosted at the state capitol, Sonoma County Vet Connect's James Poore (from lower left clockwise), Charles Hunnicutt. President of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, VVA 223's John McGivney and Ken Holybee, and VVA-CSC President Steve Mackey, who spoke to the gathering.



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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

Women's History Month

A Salute to All Women That Served

By Charles Earthman

March was Women's History Month. The contributions of women throughout American history cannot be understated, though often they are overlooked. We pay special tribute to the women who have served in our armed forces.

Women have served in one way or another in every war throughout the history of the republic. They served as camp followers, doing much of the work to support the army, including combat support under fire. Some women disguised themselves as men and served bravely in combat. In 1901 and 1908 the establishment of the Army and Navy Nurse Corps opened the door for women in the military ever so slightly. It wasn't until the United States got involved in World War One that some parts of the government got serious about using woman power. American women served and in all branches of service and government in World War Two. They opened new doors and proved capable of handling any task handed them. They had opened a box, both in the military and socially, that could not be closed.

In Vietnam significant numbers of women served admirably in all branches of service as professional nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, air traffic controllers, aerial reconnaissance photographers, intelligence and language specialists, legal officers, and in security and administrative positions.

Civilian women also served in Vietnam in the Red Cross, USO, the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as in other government agencies. Other women worked there as journalists, flight attendants, and in various church and humanitarian organizations. They all volunteered.

Today there are very few job barriers left for women to break in the military. Social stigmas still exist, but women are seen everywhere in today's armed services. Although there is still a way to go to full equality, the women of today's military serve proudly and competently thanks to the trails blazed by the strong and heroic women before them.

To all those women, past and present, who proudly served their country we humbly say "Thanks for your service."

In Memoriam



Dennis Orland "Doc" Croucher lost his battle with cancer on Feb. 8. He was born in Ventura on March 24, 1949, just a scant 63 years ago to Rita and Harley Croucher. He and his brother, Michael, were world travelers as children due to being Navy brats.

As an adult, after a stint in the Army, he worked in the music, publishing, and communications industries. He moved to Mariposa in 1979 where he met and married his wife Chelli, and they raised four children: Mindi, DJ, Tomi and Keena.

Doc was an avid reader who also enjoyed fishing, gardening, online poker and slots, playing his moldy oldies, shooting pool, hanging out with friends and family, cooking, yelling at the TV when his team was losing, and helping people. When it snowed, he would make coffee and give it to the stranded travelers, then help them chain up and send them on their merry way.

He was the "Voice of the Grizzlies" for about 10 years. He emceed the Labor Day and Butterfly Day parades, the home show and various other community events. He was president of the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and first vice president of the California State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

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THE GRAPEVINE

Talk Around Redwood Empire Chapter

By Charles Earthman

Another March has come and with it Spring and all the hopes of brighter times that accompany the season.

We ask for your prayers and good thoughts and wishes for **Randy Flater** and his family. Randy is very ill and is hospitalized right now. Randy is one of the most likeable guys in our Chapter and has been a tireless worker for Vet Connect and Chapter 223 for a long time. We hope for the best for him.



Charles Earthman

At this month's general meeting there was a challenge by a few members to change the Chapter's planned Rose Parade entry from a POW/MIA theme to something fitting the theme of this year's Rose Parade, which is "Surf 'N Safari." There was discussion and a solid majority of the members present decided to keep with the planned theme.

Petaluma has begun the process of replacing the stolen plaque honoring their Vietnam veterans killed in action. They will stay true to the original design and it will remain in the same location. They will add an illuminated American flag and a POW/MIA flag. Others killed after the original plaque was made will also be added. This memorial will be more secure so that it cannot be pried away or cut loose from its base.

Nominations for Chapter officers and the Board of Directors have not yet been completed; there are still some openings that need to be filled. In the past year we have had some members who have transferred to our Chapter from other places that have experience in VVA matters. We can use that experience and help in our Chapter.

That's it for now. If you would like to contribute anything to the Grapevine, contact Brooke McKusick at 707.537.9003 or Charles Earthman at 707.778.6598 or 707.318.2837.



If You're a Returning Veteran ...

by Bill Hewitt,

Sunday's Parade Magazine

No group is in greater need of job assistance than young military vets, especially those 24 and under, who face an unemployment rate of 29 percent. And yet experts say the news is not all grim; there are good jobs for those who know where to look and how to market themselves. As Kevin Schmiegel, a vice president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, points out, the typical young vet is someone who volunteered to serve out of high school. After a four-year hitch, these vets are understandably eager to return home to their support systems. But that's a crucial mistake if home is not where the jobs are. "Don't make a decision of the heart when leaving the military," says Schmiegel. "Target cities that are growing." The Chamber's website has a [Fast Track page](#) that identifies the nation's hot regions, which lately include the Portland and Dallas areas.

Ted Daywalt, CEO of [VetJobs.com](#), adds that some careers that might appeal to young vets (either because the jobs don't require a college degree or because they involve skills developed in the military) can pay handsomely. Certified welders in certain areas of the country, such as oil-rich Texas, Oklahoma, and Montana, can make up to \$55 an hour. And given that many vets have experience operating big rigs, they may find job opportunities in transportation, where there's already a shortage of 20,000 long-haul drivers, says the American Trucking Association—a figure they project will grow to 239,000 within a decade.

Another bright spot for vets seeking jobs: Walmart has pledged to hire any veteran who has left the service in the past year and was not dishonorably discharged. Daywalt predicts that other companies won't be far behind. "What they're doing is fantastic," he says. "I suspect that when other big-box stores see the success that Walmart is having, they'll follow suit."

HAVE YOU CALLED LOU NUNEZ YET?

Lou may be a very lonely man, out there at the VET CLINIC, serving coffee to any and all vets who find their way out to the facility. He is putting a lot of time into the "coffee project" at the clinic, but he just can't do it all by himself! Lou needs your help to fill the calendar of VOLUNTEERS who serve coffee and good will...

Think about it. You could put in three or four hours a week or month. You could literally bust your butt and put in a whole day, but bring your own pillow.

Give Lou a call and give a little of your time...



LOU NUNEZ = 291-5314



CHAPTER 223
GENERAL MEETING
APRIL 16, 2013
BE THERE EARLY!!!

REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION
HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM

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

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 7.

VETERANS DROP-IN GROUP - Every Tuesday @ high noon in the North Room of the VETS building. All veterans are welcome.

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 @

1300 North Dutton Avenue, Santa Rosa

VVA-223 GENERAL MEETING - Third

Tuesday of the month. SEE ABOVE... Potluck about 6:00 pm; meeting at 7:00 pm

FOOD-GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM - Fourth

Tuesday of the month. Volunteers will please check in at 7:15 am with **John McGivney**. Give-away @ 8:30. For more information, please call John @ 570-9201.

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... **April 6th**, May 4th, June 1st, July 6th, August 17th, September 7th, October 5th, November 2nd, December 7th, and January 4th, 2014... Please call **Jerry Shimmel** @ 528-3474 for more information.



Jerry Shimmel

COMIC'S CORNER

"Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new." -- Ursula K. LeGuin

"A new study found that a growing number of parents regret the name they gave their baby. They actually have a name for those parents: 'celebrities.'" -- Jimmy Fallon

TWO, TWO, TWO TIMES AS DUMB! "Man Gives Two Names, Arrested on Two Warrants" -- Dayton (Ohio) Daily News

"Facebook and the Department of Labor have teamed up for a new app that displays job openings. It'll be weird when people find a job because of Facebook, then get fired from that job for using Facebook, then use Facebook to find another job. It's the circle of life." -- Jimmy Fallon

"The NYPD is apparently teaching its officers how to be more polite. It's true, last time I got frisked, the cop was like, 'Have you lost weight?'" -- Jimmy Fallon

"Chicago has changed a lot since the last time we were here. I'm having a hard time calling the Sears Tower the Willis Tower. It just feels wrong. It's like calling the Olive Garden an Italian restaurant." -- Conan O'Brien

"New research shows that eating organic foods can make people more arrogant and judgmental. In fact, eating just one handful of organic bean sprouts has the same effect as driving 1,000 miles in a Prius." -- Jay Leno

"The Oxford English Dictionary revealed that its word of the year is GIF - the format for animated files. People who use dictionaries were like, 'What's a GIF?' And then people who use GIFs were like, 'What's a dictionary?'" -- Jimmy Fallon

"A new report suggests that Christopher Columbus may have secretly been Jewish. What tipped historians off was Columbus' diary entry where he described his journey to America as 'a real schlep.'" -- Conan O'Brien

"French President Francois Hollande has promised to ban schools from assigning homework. Seriously? That's not a European president's platform - that was my 9th grade student council platform. I'm gonna do away with homework, and put RC Cola back in the vending machines!" -- Jimmy Fallon

"According to a leaked report from an upcoming U.N. study on climate change, solar activity may play a greater role in global warming than previously thought. The sun may be involved in global warming. It's always the last place you'd think, isn't it?" -- Jay Leno

"A man in Georgia was arrested for stealing a Krispy Kreme doughnut truck and leading police on a high-speed chase. The police charged him with one count of grand theft irony." -- Jimmy Fallon

"It's a great day for a bunch of thieves in Belgium. They got away with more than \$50 million worth of pure, uncut diamonds. This diamond heist is the biggest robbery ever pulled off at an airport if you don't count them charging \$25 to check a bag." -- Craig Ferguson

"A college student in Pennsylvania is suing her school for the C+ she got in a class. She said, 'I'm suing whoever's responsible for this!' And her professor said, 'Don't you mean WHOMEVER?'" -- Jimmy Fallon



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News and Views

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This program works
because we all have the same goal.

VETERAN FURNITURE DRIVE

It starts with a housing voucher from HUD/VASH. The Veteran (who has either been homeless, in a group home or a homeless shelter). Once they get a voucher from HUD/VASH, Vet Connect supplies an inventory of furniture we have available. Furniture generously donated from our community.

From that list, the Veteran can choose what he needs to furnish his new home. From kitchenware (dishes, pots&pans, utensils), couches. Dressers, and beds. Our community has been very generous in their donations where we can furnish a complete apartment down to pictures on the walls.



It has been our experience time after time, once the Veteran has a nicely furnished apartment, they have a better outlook on life. Comments we would like to share. "This is the nicest furniture I have ever owned.", "I have been sleeping on the floor for 3 years."

Our immediate financial needs are:

A new bed fund

Money for storage unit rentals

Money for gas for the Veteran volunteers

The storage facility we use has also been very generous to us. From donating 2 units out of 6 that we have, they allow us to use their moving van for just the price of gas and they have posted our 'Veteran Furniture Donation' flyers in their window.

All donations pick-ups and furniture deliveries and the administrative needs in between are handled by all Veteran volunteers.