

NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA CHAPTER # 223 THE REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER

Volume 15, Issue 3

MARCH 2013

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH OTHER VETERANS

VVA/CSC Capitol Legislative Day

By Charles Earthman

The Vietnam Veterans of America California State Council will have its annual legislative day at the Capitol on March 20. This event is held annually at the State Capitol to coincide with Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, which is observed in the last week of March each year.

VVA and AVVA members from across California will be there. It will be a great day to mix and mingle and share war stories and VA treatment stories that we all have these days. The day is spent at the State Capitol meeting your local legislators, educating legislators and staff on veterans' issues, and hearing from key legislative speakers.

The State Council provides a free breakfast and lunch buffet to registered VVA attendees. It is important for all interested 223 members to get registered and make the day trip to Sacramento on **March 20** to join other Vietnam Veterans in "The Day at the Capitol" to show our support for these programs and to educate legislators and staff on issues of importance to veterans.

The day will begin at 8:00 a.m. with a full breakfast provided by VVA/CSC in the Eureka Room at the State Capitol Basement Cafeteria and will continue with a full day of events including speakers and award presentations. (Cont'd on page 10)



Charles
Earthman

Plans Grow for Vets Plaque in Petaluma

By Jamie Hansen
The Press Democrat

Along with plans to replace the Vietnam veterans plaque that was recently stolen from Walnut Park, it now appears the park itself could get a makeover.

If all goes according to plan, the 1.5-acre park just south of downtown Petaluma could soon have some or all of the following: a lighted flagpole; red, white and blue landscaping at the base of the gazebo; a bench honoring Petaluma veteran Ron Flagg; new walkways; and, of course, a new, larger veterans memorial.

The original bronze plaque, which sat for decades at the base of the gazebo in Walnut Park commemorating 15 Petaluma veterans who died while fighting in the Vietnam War, went missing around Christmas time and is presumed to have been stolen for the value of its metal.

Hopes are slim that the stolen plaque will be recovered, and so on Jan. 17, a group of about 30 people convened at the Petaluma Historical Museum to discuss how it can best be replaced. The group was made mostly of local veterans, though they were joined by four of the men responsible for erecting the original plaque, representatives of the Petaluma Historical Museum, city staff and members of local service clubs.

The coalition has more than \$10,000 to work with, thanks to donations that have poured in from the Petaluma firefighters' union, local businesses and veterans.

The general consensus seems to be that the plaque should remain in Walnut Park, which was a special meeting place for the men who erected the original in honor of fallen friends as the Vietnam War was winding down. Some suggested that the plaque should be bigger, or even etched in granite. Many expressed an interest in an illuminated flag pole that would hold an American flag as well as a flag commemorating soldiers who went missing in action. Other suggestions included expanding the scope of the plaque to honor Vietnam veterans who have died since the war ended and perhaps honoring veterans of other wars as well.

Interested parties will meet again today to discuss specifics. Any proposed changes to the park will ultimately have to come before the Recreation, Music and Parks Commission for approval, said Ron DeNicola, parks manager for the City of Petaluma, who has been working with the various stakeholders on plans for the park.

At the same time, Petaluma Valley Rotary is planning a rehabilitation of the area surrounding the plaque. The club's members became familiar with the plaque when they cleaned it

Scam Artists Posing as Government Representatives Target: All Seniors

Scam artists are impersonating government representatives and approaching seniors with offers of new programs that are only available for a fee. They may also offer you gift cards or cash cards for a fee. This is a scam and these individuals are criminals! True government representatives will never request money from you. Protect yourself by always asking for a business card and photographic identification from any person claiming to represent a government agency.

If someone approaches you, law enforcement recommends that you:

Ask for the person's business card and photographic identification.

Do not give them any personal information like your name, address, social security number, or account numbers.

(Cont'd on page 11)

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

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President's Letter

We are in the process of starting our annual election process. Think about this, would you like to assist our members by being a board member or officer? Or maybe serving as a committee chair? Our committees could always use new or more member. We do have a lot of dedicated members that assist in our projects. Some of the committees are looking for new ideas or someone that can give them an hour or two a month. The chapter has about 275 members at this time and about 50 to 60 that attend our monthly meeting. Come in and join us for food and social time on the third Tuesday evening at 6 for dinner. I say six because the members seem to be arriving earlier every month to enjoy someone else's cooking. We have some really fine cooks in the chapter.



Ken Holybee

More about our elections, Not only are we holding elections in April but we will be voting on a rewrite of our chapter by laws. They were sent out in last month's newsletter. We have put them in a simple format and have made them many pages shorter.

All offices and board positions are open for elections. We are in the process of getting ready for the Santa Rosa Rose Parade. We have our annual events that we participate in and some that we host. On March 20th the VVA California State Council will hold its annual legislative day in Sacramento. Also on March 20th there will be a "Women make History" reception. I have just been notified about this so I do not have much information. You can make reservations or get information at: WomenVeterans@calvet.ca.gov this is the CDVA women veterans' web site.

Don't forget to check our calendar for upcoming events and programs. If you would like to write articles for our newsletter, please write them and send them in. Some of our committee chairs could really use writers to put the information out about what they are doing and what they would like to do. KEN



NOTICE

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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A business card size ad in our newsletter is \$100.00 for a full year... With a 100% Tax Credit!

VVA Chapter 223

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THE GRAPEVINE

Talk Around Redwood Empire Chapter

By Charles Earthman

February was not a good a month for many of us. There is a flu bug going around and also a really nasty Super-Cold that seems to go on forever. I was in bed or at the doctor's office most of the last six weeks, and I'm ready for some warmer weather, spring flowers and baseball.



Charles Earthman

Next month's Vietnam Veterans "Day at the Capitol" should be a nice way to break into Spring for California vets. This event is held annually at the State Capitol to coincide with Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, which is observed in the last week of March each year. The day is spent at the State Capitol meeting other vets and local legislators. If you can make it, you should try to be there.

March is Women's History Month. Look for an acknowledgement to the contributions of all women veterans in *News and Views*. There will be a special nod to the women who served in and around Vietnam. Our thanks to them for all they did then and for their contribution to the veteran community today.

This is my third election with Chapter 223 and during that time there has not been an AVVA member-elected representative. In the last year the AVVA has been brought to life by Jil McGivney. This election the AVVA members, who are not VVA members, will have the opportunity to elect a representative to the board. Thanks Jil.

While I was writing this column I heard that the Academy Award-nominated documentary, "The Invisible War", a film about the epidemic of sexual assaults in the US military, did not win in its category. I'm sad to hear this, but an Oscar nomination is no small feat. Congratulations to the film makers, and if you haven't seen it yet, check it out.

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**.

"For the first time ever, more than half of all senior citizens in the U.S. are using the Internet. Yeah, I read that when my grandma sent the entire story to me in the subject line of an email." -- Jimmy Fallon

Comic's Corner

"I asked my doctor yesterday what the difference is between a cold and the flu and he said, 'About \$80.'"

-- Dave Letterman

"You know who gave the shortest inauguration speech in history? George Washington. It was only like three minutes long. Well, sure. George Washington couldn't tell a lie."

--Jay Leno

My wife said that somebody told her I sounded like an owl. I asked, "Who?" but she just started laughing at me. What's up with that? -- Paul Benoit

The way I see it, if you keep your alcohol level up, the flu germs can't get you. And as my grandmother always said: "A shot in the glass is better than a shot in the ass!"

I found the best fortune teller ever. She told me: "You will soon begin to blindly and eagerly accept prophecy without evidence or accountability, and you will continue to do so as far ahead as I can see." I'm totally going back again next week!

THERE, WE FIXED IT: "Surprise [Ariz.] Police: Man Threatening Suicide Shot by Officers" -- Arizona Republic

Beachcombing is a relaxing and sometimes rewarding pastime for many. Sometimes you will see them wandering over the sand, frequently with a metal detector, looking for odds and ends, lost coins, jewelry or other valuables. If they are lucky they will make a few bucks with what they find.

"A lot of people make money off of weddings, such as caterers, photographers and divorce lawyers." -- Craig Ferguson

"Hard to believe it's March. The Super Bowl is over. The football season is over. You know what that means guys... It's time to take down those Christmas lights." -- Jay Leno

"A new study found that running for two minutes is just as good for you as working out for 90 minutes. That doesn't sound like a study it sounds like something a chubby guy says after being on the treadmill for two minutes." -- Jimmy Fallon

"A company announced they are now selling waffle-flavored vodka. Who is this for, the drunks that still think breakfast is the most important meal of the day?" -- Jay Leno

"Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis once again denied using the banned substance deer antler velvet extract. Before you kids start using the deer antler spray, there are a couple of side effects. Number one, skittishness. Number two, freezing in headlights."

--Dave Letterman

"A recent article says yoga-related injuries are on the rise. It's not surprising that yoga fans are upset with this article. After all, it's easy for them to get bent out of shape."

--Craig Ferguson

"New York City is always striving to improve the quality of life here. Now they're taking down all of the street signs on poles in the city because of clutter. Radioactive steam - not a problem, City buses disappearing into potholes - not a problem, Meat vendors selling squirrel - not a problem."

--Dave Letterman

Shoshana Nyree Johnson became the first black female prisoner of war in United States history

Shoshana Nyree Johnson (born January 18, 1973) is a Panamanian-born former United States soldier, and was the first black or Hispanic female prisoner of war in the military history of the United States. Johnson was a Specialist of the U.S. Army 507th Maintenance Company, 5/52 ADA BN, 11th ADA Brigade. During a gun fight that led to her capture she suffered bullet wounds to both of her ankles. She was freed in a rescue mission conducted by United States Marine Corps units on April 13, 2003. She was held prisoner in Iraq for 22 days along with five other members of her unit including: SPC Edgar Hernandez, SPC Joseph Hudson, PFC Patrick Miller, SGT James Riley - 31-year-old from Pennsauken, N.J. As the senior soldier present, he ordered the surrender. PFC Jessica Lynch - Part of same 507 unit but held in a different location.

Johnson, a second-generation U.S. Army veteran, is a native of Panama, and moved to the United States with her family when she was a child. She is the eldest child of retired Army Sergeant First Class Claude Johnson and wife Eunice. In 1991, Johnson was in the JROTC program at Andress High School, although she did not plan a career in the military. She joined the U.S. Army in September 1998 after dropping out of University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

In February 2003, while serving her second military assignment at Fort Bliss, Texas, Johnson received orders to deploy to Iraq as a Quartermaster Corps Food Service Specialist (MOS 92G) with the 507th Maintenance Company, 5/52 ADA BN, 11th ADA Brigade. Shoshana enlisted with the duty of preparing meals. She says that she had no intention of going into combat. Her company's duty was to supply mechanics to repair the Patriot missile trucks housed at the post.

On March 23, 2003, one month after her arrival to serve as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Johnson was in a convoy that was ambushed and taken captive in the city of Nasiriyah. Iraqi troops ambushed her supply convoy when it took a wrong turn. There had been bitter fighting around Nasiriyah, a vital crossing point of the River Euphrates. Johnson was among a dozen soldiers in the convoy who were captured. She received a bullet wound to her ankle, causing injuries to both legs.

Iraqi authorities broadcast video of Johnson, shortly after her capture. CNN described this video as when "Americans were first introduced to Johnson." During the gruff interview, Johnson looked tense, her eyes darting quickly left, then right. Barely an hour before, she'd been shot in both ankles and captured along with five other soldiers, including Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who was badly wounded and was held prisoner at a separate location.

In 2009, when the Taliban took Bowe Bergdahl



Shoshana Nyree Johnson

prisoner, and broadcast images of him Ed Hornick, reporting for CNN, described Johnson's video as another example videos of captives being used as a propaganda tool.

On April 13, 2003, after subsequent house raids conducted by United States Marines of the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division in the city of Samarra, Johnson was rescued along with six other prisoners of war. They were welcomed as heroes in the United States on April 16 with a cheering crowd of over 3,000 people. The U.S. Army recognized them for courage, valor, and service with several awards.

On December 12, 2003, Johnson left the U.S. Army on a Temporary Disability Honorable Discharge. Johnson was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and the Prisoner of War Medal for her service in Iraq and has received numerous awards and recognition for her courage, valor, and service to the United States. On New Year's Eve 2003, Johnson was asked to join New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg in activating the Times Square New Year ball drop to ring in 2004. She has presented talks throughout the nation about her experience as a prisoner of war, and has been recognized with standing ovations from small groups to over 65,000 people at select events hosted by public and private organizations.

Critics have accused the military and media of racism in that they focused attention on Jessica Lynch, a white woman, rather than Johnson, a black woman. CNN reported that "Lynch got a million-dollar book deal and more in disability payments from the military than Johnson. Some said it was a long standing and well documented issue of race in the military. Shoshana Johnson says reports that she and Lynch were at odds aren't true."

Johnson signed a deal with Simon & Schuster in 2008. *I'm Still Standing: From Captive U.S. Soldier to Free Citizen—My Journey Home* was released on February 2, 2010.

THE AIR FORCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Airmen Doing an Important Job

By Charles Earthman

While doing research for this story I was inundated with lots of data on the US Air Force's role in the Vietnam War (bomb damage assessments, aircraft and air crew losses, etc.). This was all very important work and deserves a place in the annals of the Air Force. However, what I want to speak to is the behind-the-scenes story of the ground crews and support staff. These Airmen who served at bases in Thailand, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan are forgotten heroes who served proudly. They kept the aircraft flying and probably saved many a ground pounder's tail.

Carlton Smirni, an important member of Chapter 223 and a leader in the Sonoma County veteran community, says that one of his closest colleagues from the Richmond Police Department is very dismissive about Carlton's service at Tachikawa Air Base in Japan. This colleague was a Seabee at DaNang. Carlton was a Flight Progress Airman/Monitor, from the summer of 1964 to the fall of 1967. This colleague, who was a Seabee at DaNang, he must feel that building latrines and mess halls was a more important job than Carlton's.

This kind of "what I did in the war and who I served with was more important and dangerous than what you did" attitude is one I don't buy at all. During the Vietnam War we all served our country, we had jobs to do and most of us did them. I did not think about the ground crews, ATCs and others who helped keep the aircraft doing bombing and strafing runs around some jungle outpost in order to save some recon team about to be overrun. I was on a recon team and I'm able to write about it today because so many people did their job.

During the Vietnam War, about 80% of all USAF air strikes over North Vietnam originated from air bases in Thailand. At the War's peak in 1969, a greater number of Airmen were serving in Thailand than were serving in South Vietnam.

Pat Christen and **Jerry Shimmel**, two of the Chapter's most prolific fundraisers, were stationed in Thailand during the war.

Pat served at U-Tapao from Sept. '68 to Nov. '69 as an ATC Radar maintenance man. Pat says it was good duty; U-Tapao was the most modern base in country and was seaside on the Gulf of Siam.

Jerry was stationed in Takhli as a jet engine mechanic. He arrived there with the first F-111 Squadrons. The F-111, with terrain-following radar, was one of our newest and most advanced weapons systems (three crashed soon after arriving at Takhli and the F-111 fleet was grounded to investigate the problem). Jerry also worked on the F-105s (thuds).

All of these guys had important roles in support of the forces stationed in South Vietnam. Like so many others, they were in theater and played a very important role in the Vietnam conflict. To me there is no difference between those who served in country and these guys and the many others who served in Southeast Asia. They are all Vietnam Veterans and I thank them for their service.

BOOK REPORT

Release date: February 8, 2011

SHOSHANA HOLDS NOTHING BACK in this harrowing account of an ordinary woman caught in extraordinary circumstances. She reveals decisions made by chain of command that may have led to her twenty-two-day imprisonment, describes the pain of post-traumatic stress disorder, and shares the surprising story of how a specialist in a maintenance company ended up on the front lines of war. Told with exceptional bravery and candor, *I'm Still Standing* is at once a provocative look at the politics of war and the unforgettable story of a single mom and soldier who became an American hero.

In March 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom made world headlines when a U. S. army convoy was attacked en route to Baghdad. Shoshana Johnson became the first black female prisoner of war in United States history.



HOT COFFEE



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JUMP INTO ACTION

If you have already read every word in this newsletter, then you know there a lot of projects and events coming up on the calendar for the rest of the year. Some of the service projects only require three or four hours per month, like the coffee service out at the VA Outpatient Clinic...

And of course, some of the projects require sporadic bits of time for a couple of weeks, or even months, until the culmination of the event, like the Santa Rosa Rose Parade in May. (Oh, and please note, the Rose Parade will be a VVA-223 project only this year...)

And there are those fiendish long one day projects that can kick you butt, all the while making you feel good that you participated, you know, like the Legislative Day in Sacramento, CA. on March 20th. A long day, but really worth the effort.

Many of our members can't make to every meeting, but they do read the *News and Views*, and they do join us at some of our events, like Joe Oliver and his wife who drive over from Elk Grove a couple of times a year.

SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT



**Veterans Drop In Center for FREE Resources & Services
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Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building - 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa
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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
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Vietnam Veterans of America and Associates

Chapter #223

Present a PBS/Wounded Warriors documentary

'Quilts of Valor'

Stories of quilts being made across the country and given to our returning wounded veterans.

Screening—March 30, 2013

**Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building
1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA**

11am – 4pm, movie at noon

**Refreshments, music and conversation to follow
50/50 raffle**

Free Admission



AVVA Notes

By Jil McGivney

For our first AVVA event, made possible by all of you who bought raffle tickets and supported us with the quilt project we made in Nov./Dec. Thanks, again.

We are presenting the motion picture "Quilts of Valor" on Saturday, March 30th. Please see our invitation to you to the left. We're inviting all veteran groups, auxiliaries and quilters. Everyone is welcome. We have a Vet Connect member, Mel Jones, who has volunteered his services as a chef and **chocolatier** to make our appetizers.

Our goal is to reach out to our local returning veterans and wounded warriors. I feel we need to learn from our history, that it's important that our new generation of Veterans start talking about their experiences now and let them know what VA services are available to them. Maybe we can make a start by reaching out to our local wounded warriors and give them a quilt.

Your AVVA membership participation would be wonderful.

Don't forget the VVA meeting the 3rd Tuesday of the month with potluck at 6pm and the meeting at 7pm. Also VVA and AVVA elections are in April.

I hope to see you at the movie!



Horses Building Communities

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www.horsesbuildingcommunities.org

Military service members have come and are coming home from war. The toll evident in the rapid increase of divorce rates, suicide, crime, domestic violence, substance abuse, unemployment and homelessness. As a community we have a responsibility to those who are serving and who have served our country.

"Horses Building Communities" is a community-based program of wellness and support designed for military men, women and their families. Our mission is to provide a welcoming and supportive environment where military persons and their families may reconnect to themselves and others. This is brought about through a dynamic and powerful relationship with horses. Through this work, participants may experience increased

self-confidence, emotional well-being, improved marital, family and work relationships and a supportive reconnection to the community.

Our program involves activities designed and facilitated by licensed mental health professionals, equine specialists, and horses. Sessions include understanding the physiology, psychology and language of the horse, developing a relationship with the horse through trust and respect, and may prepare to mount and ride while focusing on awareness. Exercises will include, but are not limited to, observing horses in a herd, grooming, horse-manship, riding and reflecting through journal work. Because we are not a therapeutic riding facility and do not have the specialized equipment, anyone riding must be able to mount a horse unassisted.

The Values that Guide Us

Accessible: Satellite programs are offered. We are never too far away from the community that we serve.

Affordable: We are dependent on donations, but no one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Comprehensive: We offer a variety of programs that are designed to support each individual's goals.

Non-political: People will not feel judged, but rather safe and accepted.

Respectful: We strive to foster the utmost respect for human, horse and the natural world at all times, and to understand that we are interdependent.

Safe: All our activities will provide the safest possible conditions for the participants, service providers and horses at all times.

Community Involvement: Our programs and facilities are supported through relationships with other community members and organizations.

Working with the horse, we help the clients develop connections and effective communication. Horses' sensitivity to non-verbal communication assist us in developing a greater awareness of ourselves, what we may be communicating non-verbally and how this may affect relationships.

Through this horse-centered relationship many people are able to develop confidence and patience while reducing anxiety, irritability and feelings of isolation.

This leads us to our work with rescue horses who require nurturing, patience and gentle care. These horses will give a different insight than the program horses because of their unknown and/or traumatized pasts. This parallels with the veterans, knowing that no person or horse will completely understand what they have experienced.

Diana Poulson is a licensed marriage and family therapist and educator. She has a BA in Sociology and a MA in Counseling Psychology. Diana has been teaching sociology at Santa Rosa Junior College since 1994 and also teaches in the graduate Counseling Psychology program at University of San Francisco.

Casey Derrick is a highly experienced horse handler and riding instructor. She has a BS in Equine Studies from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and 20 years of riding experience. Having grown up with horses, Casey has a keen ability to communicate with both horse and human.

The facility is located in Sebastopol. It has a covered arena, an outdoor arena and 2 barns. We will be operating rain or shine unless otherwise notified. Be sure to dress accordingly.

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* * * * *

"A new study shows current members of Congress speak at a 10th grade level. When reached for comment, Congressman Eric Cantor said, 'Nuh-uh!'" -- Conan O'Brien

Chapter Elections Next Month

Important Issues to be Addressed

By Charles Earthman

The 2013 Chapter Elections are right around the corner and I want to remind our membership of some important issues we will be considering. Chapter elections are a serious matter, especially in a Chapter of our size.

Our Chapter enjoys both national and state recognition. We are in the top 25 in VVA Chapters in membership (18) and are third in California. We have a member who holds office at VVA national and at CSC. Our newsletter "News and Views" is recognized on the national and state arena. It is for these reasons that elections are so important in assuring that the leadership continues to help our Chapter grow on the national and state level and continues our active role in the Sonoma County veterans' community.

In this election there are some proposed changes to the Chapter bylaws pertaining to the length of time the Chapter's Board of Directors serve. The changes to the bylaws would allow the board members to serve two-year terms instead of a one-year term.

Nominations for office will close at the April month's general meeting, just before the election. AVVA elections will also take place at that meeting. If you are interested in running for a Chapter leadership position, or want to nominate someone, contact **the Chapter Election Chair, Ron Sidbeck, at 707.665.9276**. There's always room for new people and new idea; that's what keeps our Chapter vibrant and creative.

The Chapter will be sending an undetermined number of delegates to the VVA Regions 8 & 9 (Western United States) meeting held in Reno in June. Some of these same delegates may go on to the national convention in Jacksonville, Florida, in August. Are you interested? Give us your feedback on who you think should represent our Chapter.

These are some of the things that Chapter members will be deciding at the general meetings in the near future. You must be a member of Chapter 223 in good standing (dues paid up) to participate in the election. If you have any questions about your membership status, contact **the Membership Chair: Charles Earthman at 707.778.6598 or 707.318.2837**. Get on board and help us keep a good thing going.

Chapter 223 Product Sales

The chapter products that we have on hand will be on sale at the general meeting for a reduced price.

At this time there is no chair for our product sales so the only sales we have will be at our general meeting. We do have members that would like to continue working in our sales booth but they need someone that would be able to take responsibility for the logistics of the program.

This is a problem we have every few years when our members start overworking themselves and need to take a break. Many thanks to Bruce and his crew for their years of time and energy put into this effort.

Product Sales Super Sale

Everything in stock is 1/2 price or two for one, including but not limited to - Pin - Badges - All Patches - Hats - Tee Shirts - Bullets - Key Rings - License Plate Frames - Bumper and Window Stickers - Magnets

Come to the next meeting and bring your money...

A Truly Atomic Sale

"Japanese researchers have successfully grown mouse eggs in a laboratory dish, thus giving hope to millions of infertile mouse couples that hope to start a family."
-- Jay Leno

SONOMA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE (707) 565.5960

**3725 Westwind Blvd
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Santa Rosa CA 95403**



Westwind Boulevard is located near the Main Terminal at the Charles M. Schulz (Sonoma County) Airport. From Highway 101: Exit Airport Boulevard, left on Westwind Blvd. and right into the parking lot. Check Sonoma County Transit Airport route 62 & 64 for bus schedule.

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Legislative Day

(Cont'd from page 1)

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day will also be observed and there will be a ceremony and wreath laying at the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial starting a 3:00 p.m. All veterans and the public are invited.

Chapter 223 President Ken Holybee, the VVA/CSC Legislative Chair, will be an important participant in the day's festivities.

Please refer to the link posted below for more information on the "Day at the Capitol" and talk to other members about car-pooling to Sacramento and let's make a good showing.

For more information contact **Ken Holybee** or other Chapter Officers or Board of Director members.

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(Cont'd from page 1)

VETS PLAQUE

last October before dedicating a nearby site as the future location of a bench honoring club member Ron Flagg, a highly decorated veteran and local supporter of youth and veterans who died last year.

Led by club member Maureen Frances, the group plans to beautify the area around the bench, which Frances hopes can be installed this spring.

The group hopes to get approval to replace the current shrubs that ring the gazebo with plants that flower in red, white and blue — roses, white cistus and lavender. The group may also erect a pole with the word “peace” inscribed in six different languages.

In talking with the city about the changes, Frances learned that the pathways in Walnut Park are crumbling, making it difficult for residents in wheelchairs or walkers to traverse the park. Frances also spearheads a coalition of seven service groups called the Petaluma Service Alliance. That coalition is planning to work with the city and do what it can to replace the pavement, possibly with help from volunteers with the U.S. Coast Guard.

“It's almost like we're going to be adopting the park, doing ongoing landscaping,” Frances mused. “It's a bad thing that happened, but it's almost like it reversed itself.”

“It's like the Veterans Day Parade,” commented veteran Steve Kemmerle, who organizes that huge event each year and has personally donated money for the new plaque. “For whatever reason, it's just multiplied. The patriotism in this area is just amazing.”

(Contact Jamie Hansen at jamie.hansen@arguscourier.com.)

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL DAY AT THE CAPITOL MARCH 20, 2013 STATE CAPITOL SACRAMENTO, CA



Who is this guy?

Hint: He played Martin Sheen in the movie.

CHAPTER 223 GENERAL MEETING MARCH 19, 2013 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 8.

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.

VVA-223 GENERAL MEETING - Third Tuesday of every month, POTLUCK 6:30 pm; meeting 7:00 pm.

FOOD-GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM - Fourth Tuesday of the month. Volunteers will please check 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... March 2nd, April 6th, May 4th, June 1st, July 6th, August 17th, September 7th, October 5th, November 2nd, December 7th, and January 4th, 2014...

MORNING COFFEE - Volunteers are still needed for the all veterans coffee table at the Vet Clinic. Please call Lou Nuñez @ 291-5314 for more information. Oh, and stop by for a cup of coffee...

"According to a Twitter study, people are happiest on the weekends and when their workday is over. They also discovered that if you stand in front of a moving train, it will kill you." -- Jay Leno



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The POW Memorial displayed in Sonoma for Veterans Day and the crew who assembled it...from the left: Matt Kamanu, Dave Bariski, Gerry Brester, Sonoma Gene Campagna, Joe Cholewa, Bruce Thomson, Dave Kistenmacher, Earl Walters, John McGivney. Not pictured: Steve Wiegert.