



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

November 2007

McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow
“THE CHAPTER WITH A HEART”

MEETING: General Meetings are open to the public and are held on **the fourth (4) Tuesday of each month** at 7:30 P. M. at the McHenry VFW – 3002 W. Route 120, McHenry.

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**** BOARD OF DIRECTORS ****

PRESIDENT:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Bobby Jones	847-409-1947
SECRETARY:	Tony Bilus	815-648-2826
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	Joe Ferrenti	815-653-4114
	Mike Wisniewski	815-344-5873
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ADVISORS: All Past Chapter Presidents

****COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS ****

BYLAWS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CHAPTER PROGRAM		
GRANTS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CONVENTION:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
"JIM TOBER BASKETS":	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939
HOMELESS:	Mike Iwanicki	815-653-4926
MEMBERSHIP:	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939
NEWSLETTER:	Rose Lewis, Editor	815-568-8939
	Billie Blair Asst. Editor	815-385-2905
NOMINATION/ELECTION:	Joe Kersten	815 338-1796
POW/MIA:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
PTSD:	Alan Belcher	815-344-0411
CHAPTER VETERAN		
SERVICE OFFICER	Ted Biever	815-338-9292
“RAP” GROUP INFO:	Alan Belcher	815-334-0411
VAC: Delegate:	Mike Wisniewski	815-344-5873

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS: All Chapter Board Members and Membership

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		John Bates (Dawn)

National Office Telephone: 815-227-5100 and E-mail: yvnnatl@inwave.com

EDITORIAL POLICY: The Newsletter Staff will evaluate all articles submitted as to appropriateness and Relevancy. Newsletter items must be submitted to the editorial staff by the Chapter meeting each Month.

President's Ramblings for November 2007
Your Chapter President, Joe "The Boxer" Lewis

Wow, another day in McHenry County and our beautiful paradise here in the State of Illinois. No, I am perfectly sane and I do mean every word of my opening sentence. When I moved back to Marengo in August of 1967, I couldn't imagine living in an area where there were no mountains to look at or to go hiking in. I had become use to being able to walk 200 yards and go hunting or target practicing, without a gun card, with my friends.

After the military all I wanted to do was to move back to New Mexico and be close to the mountains once again. Then I came to respect instead of despise being in Illinois. While there are no mountains here, this is a beautiful part of our nation. Sure, it gets cold and the humidity drives us crazy, but we have something here that I really love. This is the changes from one season to another and the splendor of communities.

Maybe one of these days Rose and I will go back to visit New Mexico. McHenry County is our home and I love it here. I have a profound respect for this county that has grown real deep within me. This may account as one of the reasons I work to keep our chapter growing strong. I try to improve the community that we live in and to help the residents who live in and around McHenry County.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T Respect is something that each of us strive to develop with those that we work with, play with, and those we socialize with in our outside activities such as ViêtNow and the other veterans organizations. Each of us work at setting a level of respect that we would like others to view each of us with. This respect is also between the various veterans organizations here in McHenry County. Respect is not something that is earned and not expected to be given blindly by others.

Each veteran's organization works hard in what that group does to better the community. Each organization should be respected for what they do and not looked at for who we are not a part of. Most importantly this includes each branch of the military. Myself, at times I am a little easy with the Marine jokes. While this is done with a humorous gesture, there are former Marines who do not like it one bit at all. In much the same way that others who comment, "Ah, you was with the First Cav, the line is the river that can't be crossed, the horses head is the horse that can't be rode, and the color speaks for itself." This is just a joke, right? Just like some Marines, some of my 1st Cav brothers and sisters get offended as well. In both of these situations this is not being respectful of the other person's military service.

The 2008 "JIM TOBER CHRISTMAS BASKETS" It is that time of year once again everyone. This year will be like previous years with this long running program. With the way the economy has been going the past couple of years, at the October meeting the membership voted to help 25 families this year. Depending on how donations go this year, each family might not get as much as in previous years. But we will be helping more families with what the donations we get.

Mark your calendar for the following dates: Saturday December 8th we will be shopping for food and gifts. On December-15th we will sort, pack, and put together the baskets. Then on December-16th we will be delivering the Christmas Baskets.

Your help will be appreciated for each of these days. So please call Rose at 815-568-8939 to offer your assistance for shopping, packing, and delivery. Your help to make this year's basket goal is needed.

Speaking from experience, if things are not quite going the best for you this holiday season, helping with the baskets has a way of putting things into perspective. Seeing others who may be worst off than you might be can put a smile on your face. If you know of a veteran family who really needs assistance, let Rose and I know and we will see what can be done for them. If you know of a chapter member who needs this, give us a call. This is what the ViêtNow motto is: "Veterans Helping Veterans." It is not just who we are, this is what we do.

SICK CALL We all wish Wes Fortman a speedy recovery from his most recent back surgery. Wes will be up and moving around as soon as he possibly can.

Until Next Time, Stand Tall and be Proud,
You Are The Best of Your Generation, YOU Are ViêtNow.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S VOICE NOVEMBER, 2007

My article this month will not be about Vietnam veterans. After all, we are back home and have other things to talk about from time to time. For all of us who have lost a beloved pet and who have not shared the sadness, well here goes.

I have a Golden retriever named Bridget and she has been with me from the age of 6 weeks. Bridget is now 12 years old. She has been through approximately nine 9 surgeries and three were for cancer. As of three weeks ago the cancer has come back, and it's only a matter of time for our Bridget. The cancer has spread throughout her body.

I come across a story a few days ago that I would love to share with all of you.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to a place called Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals that had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor. Those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group flying over the green grass his legs carrying him faster and faster. The one he loves the most has been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet you cling together in joyous reunion never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart. Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together.

Even though my Bridget is still with me, put her in your prayers. Thanks and God Bless.



Cruising the Mediterranean

By Tony Bilus 10/25/2007 (Tony's Thought's) November, 2008

Disclaimer: *The opinions and ideas presented below and criticisms, actual or perceived, are those of the author and in no way reflect the views of VietNow, McHenry County VietNow Chapter, their officers, or members. The author wishes to present his observations and in no way is intent on belittling, insulting, or ridiculing any one person or person's sensibilities. Please take everything presented herein with a grain of salt.*

In a way of introduction to this story, I want to let everyone know that I am an American. A proud American, who chose to become a citizen of the United States of America, after fulfilling the residency requirements and the military service obligation needed to qualify for said citizenship. I am an immigrant who elected to become an American. My loyalties are strictly to the United States of America, its Constitution and the people of America. I'm a veteran of the Vietnam War; I belong to one of the finest U. S. Veteran's organizations - VietNow, whose motto: "Veterans Helping Veterans", I take to heart, by actively participating in the McHenry County VietNow Chapter, the "Chapter with a heart".

I was generously permitted to come and reside in the United States of America, back in 1959; I had spent the early years of my life living in various countries in Europe and Canada, but none of them "felt like home", I was at home only, when I arrived here, in the United States. I swore then that I will make this my country, my family and my home. Whenever an opportunity arose, I strived to visit each and every state, which I managed to, finally, accomplish. I traveled across the Continental United States of America, saw most of the sites that must be seen and I feel as much at home, anywhere in the United States, as an American who is born here. I recently read an article that was headlined: "15 must see places, in the Continental United States of America, before you die"; Well, I have seen them all, yet, I'm still not ready to die.

Imagine my reluctance to leave my chosen home when my dear wife, Sherry, suggested that we take a cruise in Europe. I've been there, I left it and I don't really care to see it again. Aren't there places that we can visit here in the U.S.? Places that I may be interested to see, places that I'm sure would be of consequence for fulfilling my chosen grandiosity. Then I realized that I had committed the ultimate sin of a partnership, I counted the "I"s, the "me"s and the "my"s; therein was my sin, selfishness. I realized that it was childish and selfish of me to deny my lifelong partner the opportunity to explore the world I came from, to willfully downplay her desire to form her own opinion of the "old world", it's customs and history.

Then I selfishly agreed to go on the cruise, with an again selfish motive, that once we arrive in Livorno, Italy, we would forego the usual tours of Florence and Pisa, to drive up to Castelnuovo Don Bosco, in the Asti province, where I, as a youth, spent six years residing, studying and learning. To my surprise, yet it should not have been so, Sherry, not only agreed with the suggestion, but was more than eager to embrace this variance of the normal cruise, even though we both knew that this variation would increase the cost of our cruise, considerably. The selfish, childish, I won again.

We prepared to leave for our cruise weeks in advance, carefully selecting wardrobes, preening equipment and creams, we preen, travel size shaving and tooth pastes, with care we packed and were ready to travel a whole week in advance. Peanut, our dog, sensing an upcoming shift in his daily routine, apprehensively followed Sherry's every move and appeared to be lost and confused by her unusual activities. The day of travel arrived and Peanut, with resignation and sense of abandonment, hid himself under the recliner; talk about laying on a "guilt trip", that little dog has mastered the technique, he would not even come out to say "so long".

Cruising the Mediterranean

By Tony Bilus 10/25/2007 (Tony's Thought's) November, 2008, page 2

We drove to O'Hare airport and checked our four large suitcases, with room for any souvenirs, at the domestic terminal 3, where American and Iberian airlines have their base gates, but had to drive to terminal 5, the International terminal, to board our plane. Our nephew, James and his friends Paul and Ashley dropped us off there and after confirming our return data, drove our vehicle home. We went through the customary security routines. Shoes, belts, sweaters off, carry on items x-ray scanned, metal detector scans and wand body scans. Eventually, we boarded our Spain bound Iberian plane and were off into the wide blue yonder. Meals were served, movies were viewed, Sherry knitted a whole sweater and when we landed in Madrid, it seemed like it was just a few hours since we left. We were quite refreshed and comfortable, unfazed by the wear and tear of the twelve hour trip, unfortunately, Sherry realized that she used the wrong size knitting needle to knit the sweater and will have to undo what she had knitted and start anew.

Madrid's International airport was a maze of long corridors that we had to negotiate, going up and down various escalators and never ending passageways to reach an airport commuter train that would transport us to the equally maze like and confusing domestic terminal for our connecting flight to Barcelona. Needless to say, Madrid's airport is not on our favorite places list. We managed to locate our connecting flight and soon we were up in the air for the fifty minute flight, headed to Barcelona.

Upon disembarking in Barcelona, we were met by our airport to hotel transport driver who whisked us via express and by ways to our Barcelona hotel, pointing out, in broken English, some places to see and things of interest to do while in Barcelona. He skillfully negotiated the narrow, medieval streets of Barcelona and delivered us to the doors of our hotel. We checked in at *Hotel Comfortel*, our room was small but quaint; we would use it for one night only, so it was good enough for us. We then went out to explore the city.

We walked to the old *Gotica Basilica*, Gothic Cathedral, which has been under some sort of construction for over one hundred years and is still being constructed and will continue to be constructed for who knows how long. Paid our entry fees and walked about, taking pictures of all things of note, various altars, nooks and crannies. The nave, the pillars, the sepulchers, the graves, the choir stands, even the "holy palm trees and holy ducks" in the internal courtyard. Although Sherry was apprehensive that the church would collapse upon her, I'm not sure why, we were able to explore and exit the Basilica unharmed, there was no catastrophic event...

The author will, now, thankfully, pause this story; due to the longevity of the article. The author will defer to the readers with this question, do you want this story to continue or did you have enough and wish it to stop? Please let the editor know of your choice and the author will comply with your desire.

For those who wish to view the photographs of this spectacular cruise, here is the Internet link to the albums:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/cdedriver>

Thank you,
Tony B.



On Thanksgiving Day – November 22nd - in McHenry, AmVets and the Moose Lodge is hosting dinner for the Sailors. If you would like to join in to help or just to visit and have dinner with the sailors, please contact Raleigh Showens @ 815-482-7897.



AmVets Christmas Tree Sales – Start on November 23rd and run thru till all trees are sold. Located behind the old Farm & Fleet on Davis Road in Woodstock. Bring four non-perishable items to receive \$3 discount on your tree. OR come on out and help – and have fun doing it. They are also a drop off for Toys for Tots. Thank you.



DECEMBER 1ST, 2007 – McHenry County Independent Riders Holiday Dinner @ Monocco's in McHenry on Route 120. Cocktails start at 6 pm with dinner to follow at 7 pm. The cost is \$25 per person. Buffet style. The price covers food and entertainment. **It is a GREAT TIME TO ENJOY AND KICK-UP your heels.**

Come and visit with Santa's Elves.

I would like everyone to be there to support our friends. They help support our "Jim Tober Christmas Basket Program" every year by donating items and helping with the deliveries.

PLEASE BE THERE. THANK YOU, ROSE

Don't forget – December 8th – shop for Christmas baskets – Wal-Mart in Woodstock – time to meet @ 7 pm.

Sort and Pack on December 15th at 10 am at the Lewis' house and delivery on December 16th. Deliveries start at 9 am. Thank you.

Breakfast with Family and Friends

The last breakfast of the year 2007 will be November 25th @ Cullom Knoll Restaurant in McCullom Lake

No breakfast for the month of December.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Last month we had 17 people come. WOW!!! It was GREAT!!!

Maybe we can try for 20 people???? What do you say? See you all there.

RAFFLE CALENDARS FOR SALE

Rose Lewis has raffle calendars for sale. They are \$10 per calendar. You have 365 chances of winning. She is helping Rock River Valley Chapter sell the calendars. Rose has roughly 35 left to sell. She always has them with her. If you would like to buy one please give her a call @ 815-568-8939 (home) or call her at work, direct line 815-568-4449. If she does not answer, please leave a message. Thank you.



**McHenry County Chapter
P.O. Box 998 McHenry, IL 60051**

postage

Next Meeting
Tuesday, November 27, 2007
@ 7:30 pm

McHenry County Chapter ViệtNow Membership Application

DATE _____ **DATE OF BIRTH** _____

NAME _____ **PHONE ()** _____

ADDRESS _____ **CITY/STATE/ZIP** _____

SEVICE BRANCH _____ **DATES OF DUTY (1957-CURRENT** _____

_____ **I am a veteran and want to be a FULL MEMBER OF ViệtNow**

_____ **I am not a veteran but want to be an ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF ViệtNow**

Enclosed is my check for _____

**Memberships are \$15 annually renewable June 30th.
Veterans must enclose a copy of their DD214 form.
Send with check payable to: McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow
PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051**

For a sum of ten (10) times the yearly dues , one can become a LIFE MEMBER