



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

November 2009

McHenry County Chapter of VietNow

“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 Woodstock AMVETS Post – 12320 Davis Road, Woodstock, IL 60098.

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**** BOARD OF DIRECTORS ****

PRESIDENT:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939	DIRECTORS:	Rick Cross	815-403-3613
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				John Sorensen	815-338-2063

ADVISORS: All Past Chapter Presidents

****COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS ****

AGENT ORANGE:	Bobby Jones	847-409-1947	NOMINATION/ELECTION:	Joe Kersten	815-338-1796
BYLAWS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939	POW/MIA:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
PROGRAM GRANTS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939	PTSD:	Alan Belcher	815-334-0411
CONVENTION:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939	“RAP” GROUP:	Jim Masella	815-344-3352
"JIM TOBER BASKETS":	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939	SERVICE OFFICER:	Ted Biever	815-338-9292
MEMBERSHIP:	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939	VAC: Delegate:	Joe Kersten	815-338-1796
NEWSLETTER:	Rose Lewis, Editor	815-568-8939	Alternate:	Bobby Jones	847-409-1947
	Billie Blair, Asst. Editor	815-385-2905			

“VETERANS HELPING VETERANS” - This is more than our national motto this is the ViêtNow way of life.

“THE CHAPTER WITH A HEART” is our chapter’s motto. We adopted this motto to reflect the positive of ViêtNow and not the negative another chapter had adopted.

Our Chapter’s Beginning - In the early 1980’s there was a group of Vietnam Veterans attending “Rap” group meetings in the McHenry County Health Department building. As time went on some of the vet’s began to deal better with the war but enjoyed the bond that they had come to trust and cherish. Some of the veterans wanted to start an organization because they enjoyed the camaraderie that was in the group. These veterans wanted to stay together because of the bond they had developed. Yet most did not want to be a part of the traditional veterans’ organizations.

Someone had heard of a new group that had formed in Rockford Illinois that called itself ViêtNow. A couple of the vets went to their meetings and liked what they saw. They brought back information on ViêtNow to the group and explained their motto of “Veterans Helping Veterans.” Most everyone liked the idea of starting a chapter here in McHenry County.

It took a lot of work to get this going. In November of 1983, the State of Illinois issued the “McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow” their State Charter as an Illinois Not-For-Profit Organization. This gave the McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow the distinction of being the **first** ViêtNow expansion chapter in this new veteran’s organization.

In the beginnings of our chapter meetings, the founding roots remained a part of the meeting. We would break into small groups and continued the “Rap” group setting. This is what brought us together and this was our common bond with each other during those early days.

****NATIONAL OFFICERS****

PRESIDENT:	Rich Sanders (Mary)	DIRECTORS:	
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Jim Stepanek (Marcia)		John/Augie Augustynowicz (Katie)
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TREASURER:	Terry Buscher (Linda)		John Davis (Sandy)
			Gary Eisenhower (Sue)

National Office Telephone: 815-227-5100 and E-mail: nationalhq@vietnow.com

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EDITORIAL POLICY: The Newsletter Staff will evaluate all articles submitted as to appropriateness and relevancy to the goals of ViêtNow. Newsletter items must be submitted to the editorial staff by the Chapter meeting each month.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marine Corps Birthday – 234 years young• November 10 & 11 – Veterans Day Ceremonies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 11/10/09 – 2:15pm Northwood Middle School○ 11/11/09 – 11:00am Woodstock VFW Post○ 11/11/09 – 10:00am McHenry VFW Post○ 11/11/09 - 9:00am Marengo Community HS○ 11/11/09 - Crystal Lake- no planned events in schools at time of writing○ 11/11/09 – LITH Marlowe Middle School - At 9 a.m., breakfast will be served by students in the school cafeteria, 9625 Haligus Road, Lake in the Hills○ 11/11/09 - 7:30 – 8:30am Harvard Central Grade School, Breakfast for all Veterans○ 11/11/09 1:00pm Richmond Burton HS○ 11/11/09 8:30am McHenry County College• 11/11/09 Participating Applebee's - Veterans eat free from a selected menu all day long.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Proof of service includes: U.S. Uniform Services Identification Card, U.S. Uniform Services Retired Identification Card, | <p style="text-align: center;">Current Leave and Earnings Statement,
Veterans Organization Card, photograph in uniform or wearing uniform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• November 14, 2009 – Kiwanis Steak-tacular<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ McHenry VFW at 6:00pm \$25.00 per person• November 16, 2009 – Golden Coral Restaurants from 5:00pm to 9:pm - Military Appreciation Monday, Free "Thank You" Dinner• November 18, 2009 – McHenry County Veterans Assistance Commission meeting and Board Election, Woodstock VFW Post 5040 at 7:00 pm and vote to retain current superintendent• November 22, 2009 – Breakfast with Friends and Family – Vaughn's in Woodstock• November 24, 2009 – McHenry County Chapter Meeting - Woodstock AMVETS Post 269, Davis Road at 7:30pm• December 22, 2009 – McHenry County Chapter Meeting – Possible - Woodstock AMVETS Post 269, Davis Road at 7:30pm |
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President's Ramblings for November 2009

The "Boxer" your Chapter President, Joe Lewis

Welcome to all of Roses and my friends, family, and brother and sisters. Thanksgiving will be upon us shortly and we wish each of you the very best. Thanksgiving is the time of year when we all give special thanks for the good and the not so good that has happened to us over the past year.

While we might not be able to be with some of our family during this holiday, remember them and keep them close to your heart.

During my last Ramblings, I touched upon a subject that is really upsetting to me as a person. This topic I will touch upon once again, Double Standards. Here are two more examples of Double Standards that get under my skin.

Double Standards #1 - We all know that the federal government used an anti-defoliant in Vietnam that we know as Agent Orange. This chemical and several others were used at other US Military bases and areas of operation around the globe. The federal government is not willing to consider service-connected disabilities due to exposure to these agents unless they served in Vietnam and the Korea DMZ during a certain period.

What about the veteran who served in Panama? What about the veterans who never left Ft. Drumm in Maine? They all should be eligible to receive disability benefits.

Agents Orange and White was used in these locations, but the DVA will **NOT** consider these veterans service-connected until **THEY PROVE THAT THEY WERE EXPOSED.**

The two key words here are *THEY PROVE*. Why does the veteran have to prove their exposure? The DVA and the DOD know where they stored & used the agents.

There is proof that the US Military did use these toxic agents in many places. However, our nation's veterans still have to prove exposure to these chemicals in order to prove their disability claim. Am I the only one who doesn't understand what is wrong with this picture?

If Agent Orange, White, and Purple were used or stored somewhere where our veterans encountered it, give them the respect and disability rating they deserve. Just like everyone else, these veterans deserve to be treated for their illnesses. Nothing short should be acceptable to any veteran.

We all need to think of it like this. When we entered the military, we went where Uncle Sam sent us. We were all just a number and a warm body to them. That is all we still are, warm body and a number.

It is time for us to take a stand on the injustice that our non-Vietnam Veteran brothers and sisters experience throughout the DVA system. We need to make changes to help the veterans being denied the benefits they so deserve. To do this, ViêtNow needs the help from our elected legislatures to correct this horrendous injustice.

Double Standard #2 – Sexual harassment in the work place is something that is illegal and an employee will be fired over. Right? Then why does David Letterman still have his job? Everyone knows the story that he had a sexual relationship with a female intern/assistance, or whatever she was, and he retains his job. He takes the time to explain the situation on his show only because someone was blackmailing him over it. Mr. Letterman should have been fired over his conduct. Pure, plain, and simple.

Two people that I worked with once that had consensual sex one night after a company gets together. The next day when the company found out about this both was suspended until a review of the event was completed. After an investigation, both were people were discharged. Rightfully so I may add.

My question is simple, why is David Letterman still on the air? Why wasn't he fired? Anyone else who pulled this stunt would have been.

Veterans Day – November 11 is Veteran Day, as we all know. We need to get out and attend those Veteran Day programs. There is a lot of tribute shown to our veterans on this day. A school close to you may a hold veteran appreciation day on another day besides on the 11th.

Stand Tall and Be Proud,
YOU are the *Best* of YOUR Generation, *YOU ARE* ViêtNow

SICK CALL – Dwayne Raney recently was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Please remember him in your prayers and moments of silence.



Strange Faces in Strange Places - Who is that man in the tan hat in this picture? Well it is none other than Nick Skyba of our chapter. This picture was taken on September 19 in Kokomo IN. Nick was attending Kokomo this year with a group of friends from his neighborhood in Chicago. Thanks for sharing the picture with us and it was a pleasure to see you in Kokomo.

Once again, my friend, ViêtNow was well represented at the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Kokomo this year. There were many tan hats; members of the national board were there with several chapters being there.

Kokomo and the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Reunion – This year Rosie and I attended the Kokomo Reunion and it was a true Reunion for us. We met up with three-guys I served with in Nam and a close friend of our's who worked on a River Boat that took Seabee's into and out of North Vietnam. All of us had a great time visiting with each other and all of our wives got along very well.

Three of us were in the same platoon and the other person was in 3rd Platoon and walked point for them at the same time that I did. The three of us from 2nd Platoon, (as I shake my head) there was "Summertime" who was an RTO for 6 to 8 months, "Deedo" who humped the 60 for our squad for about 5 months, and then there was myself who walked point for almost 6 months. Could I tell you stories about some of the discussions our three pointmen would have when we walked in company size! (This was a rare event for us.) We will save this for a future rambling.

Rosie and I spent some time visiting with Donna and John Steer. John-John was there and we saw him from a distance. It was great to see all of our friends. Most importantly, we were able to spend more time sitting and relaxing with our friends.

Back To Our Roots – Located in the directory page this month is a rewrite of one of the basics that we use to do during our meetings each month. This small history was written with the hope of providing a better understanding of the chapters founding roots. As I mentioned in the section, part of our meetings was a little “Rap” group of sorts.

Starting November 1, Jimmy Masella will be our point of contact for anyone who would like to seek counseling in a group environment. Alan Belcher will remain our contact person for individual and family

“Veterans Helping Veterans” Committee – A couple of years ago our chapter started this committee with the hopes of being able to help our needy veterans throughout McHenry County. The going has been slow because of limited funding and donations.

Most of our work has been in helping one of our chapter members with fixing electrical outlets and some minor electrical repairs. The chapter bought the material and a friend of the family and mine helped with the installation.

Recently we have been having better luck getting household furniture donations. When we receive the donations, they are stored in a storage unit until there is someone who could use the item. These items are received with the understanding that they will go to assist veterans first and then the public if possible. We also give the person or family a letter thanking them of their donation and our chapter’s IRS tax number.

Besides taking up space here, why am I explaining this to you? We have been working at putting together this program for a few years now. Our shortcoming was that we were not able to find a place to store the furniture until needed. This summer, the Woodstock AmVets post asking if we still had the program approached us. The AMVET post offered to partner with us on this program. They offered to pay for the rental unit and help us with furniture to help out the veteran and his or her family.

What could I say? I graciously accepted their offer. As time moves along and the mission of “Veterans Helping Veterans” blossoms more and more, I will keep you up to date on what we are doing. In the mean time, if you have used yet good furniture and want to get rid of it, give us a call and we can make arrangements to pick it up. This includes dishes, eating utensils, pots and pans & bake ware, and clothing.

Health Watch – HAND SANATIZERS - But to be effective, hand sanitizers must be used properly, and to use them properly, it helps to understand how they work.

Hand sanitizers work by using a high concentration of alcohol to kill bacteria on the surface of your hands. The alcohol penetrates the cell membrane of the bacteria and denatures it (meaning it changes the nature of the bacteria, making it inert) by not allowing the proteins to fold properly. It simultaneously strips the outer layer of oil off of your hands, creating an inhospitable environment for new bacteria. By rubbing enough alcohol over the surface of your hands for a short period of time, you allow the alcohol to make contact with, and destroy, most of the bacteria on your hands.

If your hands are visibly soiled, the alcohol in your hand sanitizer is not going to wipe the dirt away for you. Hand sanitizers work best when they easily can get to the bacteria on hands that are relatively clean (such as in a hospital setting) to begin with, so if you can see the dirt on your hands, regular hand washing is strongly recommended instead. If you do not have access to soap and clean water, however, using a hand sanitizer is better than nothing.

Choose a hand sanitizer that has a high concentration of alcohol. The CDC recommends using a concentration of 60 percent to 95 percent ethanol or isopropanol alcohol, as their formal hand-washing trials have proven this to be the most effective.

In fact, in the March 21, 2006, issue of The New York Times, Scott Reynolds, a specialist in infection control at the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center, comments on his study that suggests lower concentrations of alcohol seemed almost worse than not using hand sanitizer at all: "If anything...the faulty gel seemed to mobilize the bacteria, spreading them around the hand instead of killing them." Be sure to turn the bottle around and read the

label, as almost all hand sanitizers claim they kill 99.9 percent of bacteria and germs even when they have a lower concentration. **Use at least a dime-sized dollop, and rub it briskly all over your hands for 30 seconds. If the hand sanitizer dries in before 30 seconds, you have not used enough for it to be effective.**

Finally, the question of whether hand sanitizers are useful against viruses is one that needs more study. The alcohol in hand sanitizers will not kill viruses, but it will make the surface of your hands a less hospitable environment for them, making it less likely they will stick around

Similarly, hand sanitizers are not recommended for sole use after using the bathroom, as they will not remove fecal matter. Worse, they may not even be able to kill the bacteria in the fecal matter that is still on your hands. According to the experts in back-country hygiene at REI, "Clostridium difficile, a spore-forming bacterium sometimes found in fecal matter, is resistant to sanitizers and requires hand washing for removal."

Health Watch – Can Aspirin Prevent Colon Cancer?

A cursory reading of headlines makes it seem that taking aspirin regularly is a great way to stay healthy. It helps prevent heart disease in men, stroke in women and, according to new studies, colon cancer, too. All that's true -- but it is not all that simple.

We're already quite familiar with both the benefits and associated risks of using aspirin to help prevent cardiovascular problems, but its effectiveness for keeping colon cancer away is newsworthy... or is it? I'd heard some caveats about this finding so I called one of the country's leading investigators on the matter, Andrew T. Chan, MD, MPH, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, to get the whole story.

Does Aspirin Prevent Colon Cancer?

Dr. Chan has led extensive research on aspirin and colon cancer, and has found that long-term aspirin use -- taking at least 325 mg (the adult dose) daily for six or more years -- significantly reduces risk in both men and women. As we know, aspirin has many different mechanisms. According to Dr. Chan, in the case of cancer its efficacy relates to the drug's ability to block passages of certain enzymes important in the inflammatory process -- in particular cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2). High levels of COX-2 can be found in most colorectal tumors, but not in colon tissue. COX-2 seems to promote cancer by supporting blood vessels in tumors and may also help tumors spread to surrounding tissues. Aspirin blocks growth pathways.

However colon cancer is a slow-growing disease, generally starting five to 10 years before diagnosis. Dr. Chan's study found that when people stop the daily aspirin therapy, within just four years their risk reverts to its original level. Therefore, Dr. Chan says that for most people, taking aspirin to prevent colon cancer is not a recommendation -- you'd need to take a lot in order to decrease your cancer risk, and large doses of aspirin carry a risk for internal bleeding. Furthermore, says Dr. Chan, there are plenty of other things you can do to prevent colon cancer, leading him to conclude that "there are few patients for whom it makes sense to take aspirin as the only means of prevention."

Going Natural

Researchers are always on the hunt for natural ways to decrease risk. A group at the Rowett Research Institute of Nutrition and Health in Aberdeen (Scotland) found in 2006 that a particular curry in India is rich in salicylic acid (the chemical from which aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, is made), a fact that might help explain low rates of colon cancer in that country. Dr. Chan observes that since aspirin is from a natural product (willow bark), it isn't surprising to find similar compounds and properties in foods. But relying on foods as a source of salicylic acid makes it impossible to know if the amount you're ingesting is too little, too much or just right. In the future, though, he says we may find dietary sources that offer "a little bit of a boost without aspirin's troubling side effect."

A good strategy, says *Daily Health News* contributing medical editor Andrew Rubman, ND, is to limit intake of processed and broiled meats and trans fats, all of which have been linked to increased risk for colon cancer. Dr. Rubman also suggests increasing intake of wheat-bran fiber and fruits and vegetables and taking fish oil, which seems to blunt COX-2 activity and the production of cancer-promoting hormones.

In summary, aspirin therapy isn't for everyone. It can cause internal bleeding that may be dangerous, even lethal. Its preventive properties differ depending on your gender and there are important caveats that apply to its value in holding back colon cancer. If you heard about the benefits but didn't pick up on the risks in the media reports, you may have missed the most important parts of the story.

Source(s): Andrew T. Chan, MD, MPH, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, Boston.

The following Bits and Pieces is from the Military.com website's *Veteran's Update for the week of Nov. 2009*

Obama Signs VA Healthcare Reform Law

President Barack Obama recently signed new legislation that creates predictable funding for veterans' health care. The Veterans Healthcare Reform and Transparency Act calls for appropriations a year in advance after more than two decades of regular budget delays. "No longer will VA and the veterans in its care have to suffer from the 'check's in the mail' syndrome," said Clarence E. Hill, national commander of The American Legion. "Advance appropriations will go a long way toward minimizing compromises in the delivery of the high quality VA health care our veterans expect and deserve."

Cash for Illinois Veterans

Illinois Veterans will get 100 percent of the net proceeds from a special state lottery game. The new Stars and Stripes scratch-off tickets will be on sale for about six months as part of the Veterans' Cash program. The state expects to raise more than \$1 million from the new lottery tickets. For more information, including how to apply for an Illinois Veterans Cash Grant, visit the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs website.

To learn more about your state's benefits, visit the [Military.com State Veteran's Benefits Directory](#).

A Groundbreaking PTSD Court Decision

A groundbreaking verdict for accused veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was decided recently in Canyon City, Ore. when former Soldier Jesse Bratcher, on trial for murder, was found guilty by reason of insanity. It appears to be the first trial in the U.S. where a veteran's post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was successfully considered to mitigate the circumstances of a crime. For more information on the case, visit the [National Veterans Foundation](#) website.

Veterans Day Teacher's Resources

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) maintains an informative website about [Veterans Day](#). The website offers a teacher's guide and a VA children's website. Other educational websites include the U.S. Army's Center of Military History's [History of Veterans Day](#), [VA's History of Veterans Day](#), and the [Military.com](#) website.

Housing Assistance Program Pays Claim

The Sacramento District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued the nation's first check under the new Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) as expanded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The Recovery Act expanded HAP to provide assistance to wounded servicemembers and DoD civilians reassigned due to medical or rehabilitation purposes or retirement due to their disability; surviving spouses of the fallen; BRAC 2005 impacted homeowners; and servicemembers undergoing a permanent change of station during the mortgage crisis. The Corps of Engineers operates the program on behalf of the military branches. For more information, including eligibility requirements, visit the [Homeowners Assistance Program](#) website.

Best wishes to all of you this holiday season. During this time of thanks giving, sit back and give thanks for all that you have. There is a great commercial out there that hits home during these economic times we are experiencing. Do something kind and it will be passed along 100-fold. No gesture, no matter how small, will go unnoticed. It is the small gestures that make the big differences during these times.

*Until Next Month, remember this, "Freedom has a flavor the protected will never know."
Hope to see you at the November 22nd Chapter Meeting!*



Postage

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

Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 22, 2009

7:30 @ Woodstock AMVETS Post 269

12320 Davis Road, Woodstock, IL 60098

McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow Membership Application

NAME _____ PHONE (____) _____ - _____

DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

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

_____ I am an honorably discharged 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 _____

Membership Dues and Fees are \$15 annually - renewable June 30 of Each Year
Veterans must enclose a copy of their form DD214 that will be reviewed and returned

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

Send with check payable to: **McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow**
Our Address is: **PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051**