

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

STATE COUNCIL MEETING
Holiday Inn & 1000 Imperial Ave., Rothschild

MINUTES

September 12-14, 2008

Chapter 767 performed the **opening ceremony** on **Saturday, September 13, 2008**. After posting of the colors and playing the songs of the various branches of service, President Demske led everyone in the **Pledge of Allegiance** and a **Moment of Silence**.

Rothschild Mayor Jim Tipple gave a greeting and honored the veterans of the land.

President Demske gave a greeting to all attendees.

Pat Furno gave an update on **AVVA** activities.

Pat introduced the **AVVA National President** Simmons who gave greetings from the National AVVA.

Karen Seipel, Convention Chair, gave a **Convention Report**. Overall, it was a good convention, but we need more participation by members. There were 11 first time attendees.

Jeannie's daughter, Carrie Nuske, read Lindsey Gueller's daughter's VVA winning scholarship essay.

Lindsey Guellers' father gave remarks about his service in the war and his daughter's essay.

Joyce read Sara Kiiskila's winning scholarship essay.

Moderator John Margowski introduced **the Legislative Panel**. The panel consisted of Senator Julie Lassa (24th Senate District), Representative Jerry Petrowski (86th Assembly District) and VVA Legislative Chair Clif Sorenson. The panel discussed past and current veterans' legislation and took questions from the VVA members. All in attendance very well received the panelists.

Paula Schuler (non-traditional scholarship essay winner) read her essay.

Following a break, Dave Simmons gave a very interesting and informative lecture and presentation on **Vietnam Veterans Against Drugs**.

Our friends from Wisconsin Public Television gave an update on **the Wisconsin Vietnam Stories Project**. There was great interest in this project since many of our fellow VVA members are deeply involved (more can be involved still). There will be a kick-off ceremony honoring all Vietnam Veterans during **the Welcome Home Weekend** at Lambeau Field in Green Bay on **May 21-23, 2010** (mark your calendars). There will be a parade for the VN period veterans. Families should also participate in the Green Bay Parade. This will be followed by the release of the 3-hour documentary and related activities. The next meeting of the organizers of this event will be held at WDVA (second floor) at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 11, 2008.

Please get the word around to all Vietnam period veterans to attend – those who served during the period 1-1-59 to 5-7-75 – they do not have to belong to any veterans' service organization.

President Demske reminded us that we should make sure that all era veterans are recognized by our organization.

After a catered lunch, Kirk Rodman gave an informative update of what is happening at **the HighGround**. They are working on an exhibit honoring the veterans of the Global War on Terrorism.

John Margowski moderated **the Veterans Benefits Panel**. The panelists included Jon LiDonne, President of the County Veterans Service Organization of Wisconsin, Kathy Gausmann, Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) from Monroe County; Jim Gausmann Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) from LaCrosse County, Holly Hoppe, Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) from Oconto County and Andrew Clark, Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) from Outagamie County. The panel discussed veterans' benefits and services and took questions from the VVA members. All in attendance very well received the panelists.

John Margowski moderated **the Native American Panel**. The panelists included Nate Nez, WDVA Tribal Coordinator, Kerry Metoxen, Oneida Nation Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO), Jim Greendeer, Ho Chunk Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO), Dave Turney, Menominee Nation Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO) and Susie King DeGraaf, Talking Circle Organizer. The panel discussed past and current issues facing Native American veterans and took questions from the VVA members. All in attendance very well received the panelists.

Chapter 767, Racine, performed a very moving **closing ceremony**.

The **Evening Banquet** included a delicious catered meal. It was followed by a wonderful speech by Dan Naylor, of Waupaca. Dan was appointed to the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs for a six-year term ending May 1, 2013.

Dan is a Vietnam era veteran, having served in the U.S. Army from 1971 – 1973, primarily at Fort Hood, Texas as a Military Police Officer and Correctional Specialist. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal. In 1973, Dan began his veterans' service as a work-study student with Vets for Vets on the UW Madison campus. In 1974 Dan assisted in the establishment of Vets House, a service center for Vietnam era Veterans in Madison. During his tenure at Vets House, Dan helped expand the incarcerated veterans outreach program as well as the development of the Attic Correctional Halfway House, which he also directed. Naylor also testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs in Washington regarding the importance of Vets Centers similar to Vets House. Eventually over 200 Vets Centers have been developed nationwide. Dan helped create and direct PTSD treatment services for veterans in northern Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan under contract with the VA. Over the last 30 years Dan has been involved in supporting veterans' groups and their activities throughout the state.

President Demske presented two prestigious Wisconsin State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America awards. The **Educator of the Year Award** was presented to Barb Margowski. The **Vietnam Veteran of the Year Award** was presented to Duane Canon, Chapter 437. All had an evening of friendship and Frank Mueller provided entertainment. The attendees appreciated Frank's services.

The Wisconsin State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America meeting was **Called to Order** by President Demske at 9:00 a.m. on **Sunday, September 14, 2008**.

All in attendance recited the **Pledge of Allegiance** followed by a **Moment of Silence**.

Secretary Sorenson took **Roll Call**. All officers were in attendance except Region 2 and At-Large Directors. The following Chapters were in attendance: Chapter 5, 101, 206, 220, 324, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 535, 731, 767 and 768.

There were no **suspensions** or **reinstatements** of Chapters.

The President appointed John Margowski as **Parliamentarian** and Richard Lindbeck as **timekeeper**. The **agenda was approved** without objections.

Minutes from the meeting of June 28, 2008 were approved as received. M/S/P

The **Legislative Report** was given by Clif Sorenson, Wisconsin State Council Legislative Chair. He acknowledged that he recently attended the National American Legion convention in Phoenix where he received a national advocacy award for his work on behalf of homeless veterans.

He also just returned from Washington D.C. where he was at a joint Senate and House Veterans Affairs hearing with The American Legion Commander and others. The items discussed were appropriations, VA outsourcing of the New GI Bill, VA budget recommendations, reform for VA medical care and Medicare reimbursement. He also visited five Representatives' offices and spoke to staff members of these initiatives, the need for support of continuous funding for homeless veterans programs and PTSD, Traumatic Brain injuries, Traumatic Blast Injuries and Suicide Prevention among our soldiers and veterans. He also looked for co-sponsors of Representative Kagen's new bill adding all gastrointestinal diseases as presumptive disabilities for Agent Orange/in-country Vietnam War veterans.

I just received a recent VA News Release that VA Announces "In House" Option to Implement IT Aspects of New GI Bill. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it will rely upon its own workforce to set up the information technology programs needed to implement the educational benefits of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill will provide educational assistance to veterans, military members, reservists and National Guard members who have served since Sept. 11, 2001. By law, the new benefits are scheduled to start on Aug. 1, 2009.

Your Legislative Chair will continue to work with federal and state legislators in an attempt to make sure that our veterans benefits are protected and proposals and suggestions for new benefits and services are presented to them.

Other **committee reports** were suspended.

There were donations: \$250 from Chapter 751 to Dryhooch; \$1250 from State Council to Steve for Swords to Wheelchairs and some to the Agent Orange Rehab Center.

Treasurer Beeman gave the Treasurer's Report.

Clif gave an update on the **homeless veterans**. There are now 20 veterans and 8 Single Room Occupancies (SROs) at the Chippewa Valley VAP. StandDowns were attended in Milwaukee and will be attended in LaCrosse (Onalaska). He's doing legislative work for the homeless veterans in DC also.

Judith Singer gave an update on **Being There – Reaching Out**. There is a run across America for fallen OIF/OEF veterans' families. There will be a discount at Rothschild Camp for families who can go there for a weekend retreat. Veterans Day Parade in Milwaukee will have a float; there'll be a third Gold Star Family Day; working with Senator Feingold's office; Joe Campbell gave an update on various things they are doing for families; many of the fathers served in Vietnam; Joe thanked us for providing the grill at HighGround.

Under **New Business** we will delete any meal reimbursements and increase travel mileage to the prevailing IRS rate currently at 58.5 cents per mile.
Morzenti/Lindbeck/Passed

Bob Curry and John Kusko spoke about PTSD/Substance Abuse. The President appointed Messrs. Curry and Kusko as co-chairs of the PTSD/Substance Abuse Committee.

Richard Lindbeck will be reimbursed for travel to the Trickster Gallery that will help Native American veterans work better. M/S/P He reported that there was a good event at Summerfest in Milwaukee. The President explained what a Pow Wow means to veterans; Reclaiming our Heritage in May. We all showed our appreciation for Frank once again.

The meeting was **adjourned** without objection.

You Are Cordially Invited To:

Annual Holiday Party

Saturday, December 6, 2008

Best Western Grand Seasons, Waupaca

Come and join us at the annual Holiday Party with our traditional “white elephant” gift exchange after dinner! A white elephant is something you no longer (or never did) want. Check those closets for that special treasure! Or purchase a gift (we suggest a maximum value of \$5) at an outlet store, Goodwill or Salvation Army!

Room reservations must be made by 11/05/08. Please contact the hotel directly at: 715-258-9212 or 1-877-880-1054. Mention Vietnam Vets to get the \$57/night (single or double) rate.

The cost of \$25.00 per person can be mailed to Karen (see address below) or paid on Saturday (make checks payable to Wisconsin State Council). RSVP to Karen by 11/30/08 in order to have an accurate meal count for the hotel.

**Karen Seipel 920 684-4386
1610 Green Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220**

E-mail: alicekaye2000@yahoo.com

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