

River Cities News



River Cities Detachment 1090 –
Marine Corps League – Evansville, Indiana

Volume 17
Issue 11
November 2020

Commandant's Corner

Jim Johnson

For those that missed our Detachment 1090 meeting in September, you missed a great evening out. The wives were invited (and will be from now on) and we had a great meal and meeting. We are hoping this will progress into much bigger participation of our members and their wives. Hope to see you and your wife at future meetings.

With all the COVID-19 problems and fears this year, we will not be having our Marine Corps birthday ball. Personally this will be the first ball that I have missed since 1960. We will be planning on a much bigger ball for next year.

Our beloved Marine Corps has been changing drastically lately. We are becoming a very fast reaction force. The Commandant is deactivating all track vehicles including tanks and amtracs. 2nd tank battalion has already been deactivated along with some artillery units. We are also deactivating the Super Cobra helicopter squadrons. There are a lot of other units being considered. We are going back to being an amphibious force for the Navy.

(continued on page 3)

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Editor's Notes: by Bob Reutter

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Paula Landers for working endless hours to put together this newsletter for 17 years. It has evolved over that time into something River Cities Detachment 1090 can really be proud of. I only hope I can carry on her excellence. I had 25 years in the printing industry and want to bring some of what I learned there to this publication. If you know an interesting story about one of our Detachment members, jot it down and send it to me.

(Continued on page 12)

THE BATTLE OF HUE CITY, VIETNAM

Part 1

Gary Burk

The Battle of Hue City, Vietnam has come to be regarded as one of the most infamous urban battles in Marine Corps history. The Battle of Hue City occurred with the Tet Offensive, where Marines were surprised by a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) attack during what was supposed to be a cease fire negotiated during a Vietnamese holiday. The battle started on Jan. 30, 1968 and didn't end until March 3, 1968.

Vietnam War veterans and retired Marine Lt. Gen. George "Ron" Christmas and Brig. Gen. Michael Downs, who were then captains serving as commanding officers in Hue, recently spoke about their experiences in the Battle of Hue City to an eager group of staff-noncommissioned officers (SNCO) during a Professional Military Education (PME) event held at Marine Corps University. The PME was planned in honor of the 50th anniversary of the battle and it also honored Vietnam Veterans Day, which is March 29. The two generals not only told the SNCOs about the difficult fight, but

also told them about the lessons learned that can be beneficial to Marines today.

The generals said that Hue City was unique in that it is divided into two parts by the Perfume River. There were also many obstacles to navigate including moats and walls. Marine units were located on the outskirts of the city to the south and west when they were attacked by the NVA Jan. 30 as part of the Tet Offensive. Only two buildings in the city were held by Marines.

The Marines on the outskirts of the city were able to fend off the initial Tet Offensive attack and back the NVA up to the river, but within a few days the Marines were ordered to take back the entire city, which had become overrun by NVA. The Marines ordered into the city were at a disadvantage as there was no air support available to them for the first to 10 days. (cont. page 13)



Chaplain's Message

Bob Reutter

Since the advent of Covid-19, we have not gone to funeral homes to bid farewell to Marines in our area who have gone on to their tour of duty on the streets of Heaven. We have, instead opted to deliver our prayer folder to the funeral home with a letter of condolence and explanation as to why we are not present in person. It is just not safe for us to go to the services inside, with most of us in the 'at risk' age and health.

Starting from March 1st, I have prepared and delivered 36 folders in 34 weeks. Thanks to Tom Kick, each Marine received an EGA to be placed on their lapel by the funeral home. The condolence letter I provide tells the significance of the EGA and its importance to the Marine, as well as our regret in not being there in person.

As you can see, we are still carrying on our tradition of 'Once a Marine, Always a Marine' even in these trying times.

Semper Fi



Commandant's Corner

(from page 1)

One of the biggest changes being considered is moving the locations of the Marine Corps recruit depots. Marine Corps has been directed to have 100% gender integration of recruit training by 2025. To do this, the Marine Corps is considering closing the current boot camps and opening a totally new boot camp in an undisclosed location. To keep informed of these subjects and many more, you should join the Marine Corps Association Foundation and/or the Marine Corps Times. With the Marine Corps Association Foundation, you will receive the Leatherneck magazine which has an abundance of information on the Marine Corps and where it's heading. The internet will give you guidance on subscribing to either publication.

Semper Fi



Marine Quotes

*To the optimist the glass is half full. To the pessimist the glass is half empty. To the Sergeant Major the glass is twice as big as it needs to be. **Anonymous**

From Supply Corps to Frogman

By Colonel P. Michael Mitchell, USMCR

In September 1937, my father, Edward A. Mitchell moved to Evansville, Indiana and was hired as a warehouseman and later as district manager for a local food distributor, Hesmer Foods, Inc. By December 7, 1941, at only 27 years of age, Mitchell was President and ½ owner and had a net worth of over \$1 million (\$15 million at today's dollars.) Like most young men of the time, Edward heard the call of his country and on February 22, 1942 his application for a commission in the Navel Reserve was accepted. Due to his civilian occupation, he was commissioned an ensign in the Supply Corps.

Mitchell's first duty assignment was in food administration, Great Lakes Naval Base. He was promoted to Lt(jg) on April 20, 1944. He became very dissatisfied in the Supply Corps. Like most young men, he wanted a line commission to see some action – not wait out the war behind a desk. Mitchell made numerous requests for transfer, all were denied.

Finally, as a lieutenant he was given a chance to join a new unit designated UDT and report to the 'Naval Combat Demolition Training and Experimental Base' for training. This was a new command under Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Upon arrival, Mitchell discovered the Navy did not have enough volunteers for this unknown billet, either enlisted or officers. To meet billet requirements, the Navy filled the 40% shortfall by offering those serving time in the brig a 'get out of jail free' card. This offer to 'volunteer' was made to those brig rats who were incarcerated for minor



Underwater Demolition Team #16. LtCmdr Edward A. Mitchell in circle at lower right.

offenses like AWOL, public intoxication, failure to report on time, etc. Mitchell's command – Underwater Demolition Team #16 – consisted of about 50% brig rats. He was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and with this crew, there were many adventures as well as misadventures.

There is one highly unusual, even amazing, event given the mathematical odds of it occurring, which happened off the shore of Okinawa on D-3 (March 29, 1945.) In an article in our River Cities News about the invasion of Iwo Jima, it was stated there were about 900 ships involved in the Iwo campaign. The Okinawa invasion was much larger in scale with approximately 1,200 vessels of all sizes involved.

Needing certain supplies for the clearing of the landing beaches of underwater obstacles by his team, Mitchell contacted his command ship to get the name, number and location of the ship which had the supplies he needed. He climbed into his motor launch and made way for the designated ship. When he

appeared on the quarterdeck and requested permission to come aboard, the Officer of the Deck questioned his purpose. Since he had not sought prior approval, LtCmdr. Mitchell (who out-ranked the O.D.) explained his need for supplies.

This young O.D. informed Mitchell that the ship's captain 'required proper procedure prior to requesting to come aboard.' He advised the senior officer to return to his ship and make the appropriate request through proper channels. LtCmdr. Mitchell told the young (and junior in rank) O.D. there was a war going on and he was not about to adhere to some 'petty protocol, bureaucratic bulls**t.' The O.D. informed the LtCmdr. that the Captain was an Annapolis graduate and a hard liner, a 'take no prisoner' type of officer. Mitchell's response - "bring him on."


Of course, by this time a crowd of men, both enlisted and officers from the supply ship had gathered to watch the fireworks. They wanted to see this arrogant S.O.B LtCmdr. get

chewed up and spit out by their commanding officer. Soon the Captain was heard, headed for the quarterdeck, fuming and swearing along the way. When he arrived, he stopped and took one look at the 'offending officer.' His jaw dropped and he said "that's my kid brother, Eddie!" What are the odds of two brothers meeting on one ship out of 1,200, 3 days before the invasion of Okinawa? Needless to say, 'Eddie' got the supplies he needed.

LtCmdr. Edward A. Mitchell and his team spent the days from 28 March to 3 April underwater, preparing the landing beaches for the invasion. For his gallantry Mitchell was awarded the Bronze Star (later upgraded to the Silver Star.) The citation reads:

"For heroic service in connection with operations against enemy Japanese forces, as Commanding Officer of an Underwater Demolition Team (UDT#16) in actions from April to July 1945, during the assault and capture of Okinawa Gunto, Ryukyu Islands. Demonstrating outstanding initiative and skill, he led his team to the successful completion of

their reconnaissance and demolition mission, and despite intermittent enemy attack and sniper fire, contributed materially to the successful completing of the operation. His exceptional courage and superior performance of duty was an inspiration to his men. His conduct throughout distinguished him among those performing duties of the same character." It was signed "for the President, James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy."

LtCmdr Mitchell separated from the Navy on December 6, 1946. His Navy separation sheet shows Silver Star, Bronze Star, American Theater, Asiatic Pacific (5 stars) and Victory WWII. As you probably know, the Underwater Demolition Teams evolved into the Navy "Sea, Air and Land (SEAL)." E.A. Michell went into politics and was elected U.S. Congressman for the Eighth District of Indiana (Southwestern Indiana.) 





Marine Corps League Strategic Plan

Vision: The vision of the Marine Corps League is to be the premier veterans service organization focused on serving past, present and future wearers of the Eagle, Globe and Anchor.

Mission: The mission for the Marine Corps League is to promote the interest and to preserve traditions of the United States Marine Corps: strengthen the fraternity of Marines and their families; serve Marines, FMF Corpsmen and FMF chaplains who wear or who have worn the Eagle, Globe and Anchor; and foster the ideal of Americanism and patriotic volunteerism.

Plan Purpose and Intent: The purpose of this plan is to provide a statement of the goals, objectives and strategy for the Marine Corps League for the next 3-5 years, with specific elements of the plan extending beyond this timeframe. The intent of this plan is to define the steps and initiatives that the Marine Corps League is putting in place in order to fulfill these corporate objectives:

1. Provide a premier Marine Veterans organization for our members.
2. Develop financial stability to ensure continuation for the organization in perpetuity.
3. Provide support to active duty Marine, their families and their local commands.
4. Provide support to Marines and their families to aid in their transition back to civilian life.
5. Support Legislative activities in support of Veterans issues.
6. Support of youth programs to drive better citizenship in future generations.
7. Establish appropriate measures of performance for existing and new programs and activities.

Note: to read the rest of the Plan, go to <http://mclrivercities.org/> and click on "Links."

November



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1 Change time to CST Change to Winter Uniform	2	3 Breakfast at Libby's & Mom's – Everyone invited. Assemble after 0600 Order at 0700	4
8	9	Happy Birthday  Marines  (245 years) 1775-2020	11
15	16	17 Breakfast at Libby's & Mom's – Everyone invited. Assemble after 0600 Order at 0700	18
Deadline for inclusion in the December Newsletter	23 Southern Belles # 441 1830 AmVets #84	24 Breakfast at Libby's & Mom's – Everyone invited. Assemble after 0600 Order at 0700	25 With families gathering for Thanksgiving, no Detachment meeting.
29	30		

Submit articles, ads and anything you would like included in the newsletter,



Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5	6	7
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #ffcccc;"> Items for the December Newsletters – Articles, Ads, Pictures – are due by November 22, 2020. </div>		
12	13	14
19	20	21
26	27	28



Support Our Sponsors -----



In memory of Detachment #1090
Members who have gone on to
guard the streets of Heaven.

2020

Donald Landers, Sr.

Irene L. Midle-Blessing

Susan Grayson

04/2021

Compliments of Casey Canfield

Life Member

River Cities Detachment #1090

01/2021

Compliments of Bob & Linda Reutter

Life Members

River Cities Detachment #1090

06/2021

You Read this.

Place Your Ad Here to Reach More

Compliments of the

Marine Corps League Auxiliary



Southern Belles Unit 441

10/2020

Compliments of John & Judy Bryant

Life Member

River Cities Detachment #1090

05/2021

---They Help Make This Newsletter Possible

Semper Fi!

Mike Mitchell

*Life Member
River Cities Detachment #1090*



06/2021

**Compliments of
Gary Burk, Life Member**

*Optimist Club of Evansville
Downtown
Friend of Youth Since 1921*

**Compliments of
Joe & Kathy Filipczak**

*Life Member
River Cities Detachment #1090*

12/2020

*Place Your Ad
Here*

In Memory Of

Marine Tommy Collins

*And All Deceased
Detachment Members*

Our prayers for our nephew who was recently deployed. May God Bless all of our service members, protect them, and give the strength to carry. Amen!

Roy and Carolyn McWilliams.



05/2021



Semper Fi

09/2021



Marine Corps League Department of Indiana News

The following dates have been selected by the Conference/Convention Committee and approved by the members through Motions at the 2020 Fall Conference:

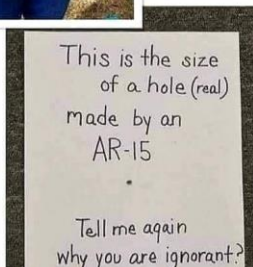
March 6/7, 2021 Department of Indiana Spring Conference

June 4/6, 2021 Department of Indiana Summer Convention

October 16/17, 2021 Department of Indiana Fall Conference

All events will be held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in Plainfield, IN. Specific information on each event will be sent appropriately beforehand, including hotel and event registration, agenda's and other pertinent information.

Questions can be directed to Conference/Convention Chair Glenn Newton at sgtglenn@psci.net or Department Paymaster Dave Englert at englertd@psci.net.



Editor's Note (continued from page 1)

If you believe a fellow Marine would be willing to share his/her story, tell me and I will contact them.

Let me know what you think about the newsletter: what you like, what you hate, what you would like to see (or see more of) on these pages. **Gung Ho** is Chinese for 'working together.' If we can be more 'gung ho' **we** can continue to improve and grow the River Cities Detachment 1090 and our newsletter.

Battle of Hue City (from page 2)

Christmas was leading Hotel Company into Hue City from the south. Since Vietnam was expected to be a jungle fight, Marines who fought in Hue had only one hour of training in urban combat. This is where their training to fight in “any climate and place,” and adapting to and overcoming situations, proved essential.

“[In urban combat] you may want to know that one of the things you’re supposed to do is isolate the city,” said Christmas. “Then, you need to select where you enter the city, then you can determine what you are going to use to take the city. None of that was available. The city was totally overrun, so we’re not about to isolate it because we don’t have the forces. We are going to have to fight our way in piecemeal and then gather up and retake the city from within.”

In another part of the city, where Downs’ company was flown in by helicopter, he was leading his men from building to building but had to use ingenuity and tear gas to do so.

“We would progress in this way throughout the fight,” said Downs.



In one instance, Downs says there was a machine gun directly down a street that his Marines needed to cross to advance their attack. While Downs was deciding how to approach this problem a young lance corporal and a private first class came up with an idea.

“I know how to do this,” said the lance corporal according to Downs. “Sir, I’ll roll my gun right out the door (a 106mm recoilless with .50 caliber attached), I’ll turn my gun, I’ll fire it, sir you know how big the round is. They’ll pull their heads in and you can run the whole company across the street if you want.” That’s exactly what Downs decided to do, and it worked.

“This is called Lance Corporal ingenuity and Pfc. power. It’s alive and well today and is in response to your leadership,” said Downs to the SNCOs gathered in the lecture hall.

Marine ingenuity was showcased in the battle to retake Hue City. The Marines had to use the weapons that were available and often, they were used for other than their intended purpose.

For example, anti-aircraft vehicles called “dusters” were used in the front and the back of a 12-truck convoy heading into Hue City since there were no tanks available. The lightly armored dusters did not provide as much armor as a tank, but they were effective.

“[People would say] that weapon isn’t for use in an urban environment. Forget that. If you can use the weapon to do what you need to do in the city, you use the weapon. It’s all up in here,” Christmas said, pointing to his head. “You know where those decisions come from? It comes from the non-commissioned officers.”

Urban battles are also known for close combat fighting. “The enemy was 35 meters away and we were launching RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) at each other,” said Christmas. “The enemy was so close to us that when the round went up, it went up so high that we thought

it was going to come down right on top of us.”

“Remember, an urban fight is a casualty producing fight. It’s not just the round but all the debris that comes off of it. Why is that important? You’ve got to protect your corpsman,” said Downs.

In addition, in any combat fight, there are going to be innocent civilian bystanders.

“This will differ by city, it will differ by what the NVA does. The enemy usually pulls them all together and tries to build a buffer,” said Christmas. This can be a tricky situation for any Marine – trying to save civilian lives while in the process of a firefight. This is also where the Marine needs to use their ingenuity.

During the Battle of Hue City, most of the civilians hid out in buildings, according to Christmas.

“But once you get them out you have to take them out the way you came in. This could mean going through the same holes and breaches that you have been through. We walked them down the streets until they were out of the line of fire. You have

to deal with it. You have to work out how to deal with it." Once again, NCOs must think outside of the box to accomplish the mission.

"We take care of civilians," added Downs.

Of course, with any firefight, there will be mistakes made. But, both generals agreed that you learn from those mistakes and you have to live with them.



Christmas says there's not a day that goes by that he doesn't think about two mistakes he made during the Battle for Hue City. One had to do with machine guns, which he didn't elaborate on. Another mistake was that he didn't move his snipers around and the NVA found the snipers and fired many RPGs at them.

"I live with that to this day," Christmas said.

He went on to say that what is important is that each Marine stay above the emotion of the fight.

"We're all emotional, we care about our Marines. That young Marine of yours, that corporal who has always been the joy of everybody and always has a joke, gets killed next to you. It's pretty easy to get emotional, but what leaders get paid for is to stand above the emotion. It's not easy," said Christmas. "But if you can do that you will make the right decision. If you get emotional about it you won't."

Downs agreed that the emotional aspect of the fight is important and that he had his own way of dealing with the pain. He essentially made a memorial of each Marine by keeping a book in which he wrote down the names and dates of all Marines killed and injured during the battle. It helps him remember them.

"It is an enlisted man's war in many respects. We had 30 personal decorations awarded to the company and of the 30, 27 were enlisted with 24 being corporals and below," Downs said.

Both generals went back to Hue City decades after the battle. Quantico Marines enrolled in Marine Corps University have also toured the city to learn from the history of the battle, a common way for Marines to learn leadership and learn from the Marines who came before them. The passing down of information from Marine to Marine is a cornerstone of Marine training.

Downs said that Hue City has been rebuilt since the battle; however, there are still reminders of fighting that occurred there. In some of the buildings today, the remnants of the fight remain; there are pock marks in some of the building's exteriors that were hit with gun fire and M16 bullets. Overall the city is beautiful.

"Whether you like it or not you are all leaders and someday, one way or another, you will be involved in urban operations," Christmas said. "The world is urban and that's where you're going to fight and it's up to you to ensure that you prepare yourself. Everybody will fight. Everybody is a rifleman. When you leave here, think about urban warfare and think about your contribution." 🏠

Happy 245th Birthday United States Marine Corps



In these troubled times of global pandemic, it is important for us, as Marines, to remember our heritage and celebrate the birth of our Corps individually and in smaller groups. Commandant Berger declared that his decree cancelling the "**Commandant's Birthday Ball**" which was expected to attract over 3,000 did not extend to all world-wide Marines. He said that commanders in each location had the ability to decide what was appropriate for their commands. Larger commands around the world followed his lead and have cancelled their Balls for 2020.

We, in Evansville made the hard decision to do the same and cancel our 2020 ball. Safety first.

Ship's Store

The following items are in stock at the Detachment Ship's Store.
The Ship's Store will be brought to each meeting so you may purchase items.
A slight increase in cost over National Ship's Store has been added to cover shipping costs

Item	Cost	Item	Cost
EGA Cap Ornament, Regular Member, gold, screw-back	\$ 5.00	FMF device, for Marine of Year ribbon	1.50
Patch, MCL logo with ASSOCIATE rocker, 3" for right shoulder	4.25	Department Staff Elected ribbon, silver	2.00
Patch, MCL logo, for REGULAR member, 3" for right shoulder	4.00	Detachment Commandant ribbon	2.00
Patch, US Flag, field forward, for regular member, right shoulder	4.00	Detachment Staff Appointed ribbon, bronze	2.00
Sunburst Collar ornament, regular member, prong back	12.00	Community Service Ribbon	2.00
Cover, MCL, woman's, 7 5/8	30.00	National Meritorious Unit Commendation ribbon	2.00
Cap Strip, LIFE, Red with gold lettering and border	3.50	Individual Meritorious Commendation ribbon	2.00
Metal Ribbon Holder, 3 ribbon	1.25	Ceremonial Guard ribbon	2.00
Metal Ribbon Holder, 4 ribbon	2.50	EGA Belt Buckle, for leather belt	18.50
Metal Ribbon Holder, 8 ribbon	3.50	Trousers, dress blue, 44R	45.00
Metal Ribbon Holder, 9 ribbon	3.50	Trouser stripe, red, 1 1/8"	15.00
Metal Ribbon Holder, 12 ribbon	4.50	Belt, white, for dress blues	15.00
Tie Clasp	9.00	Patch, Devil Dog, 3" round for cover	4.00
Star Clusters for Ribbons, 2 stars, bronze	1.50	Rocker, Colorguard, for Devil Dog Vest	3.00
Star Clusters for Ribbons, 3 stars, bronze	1.50	Cap Strip, Dogrobber	3.50
Patch, Life Member	8.25	Neck Ribbon, PDD, gold with eyelet	5.00
Tie, black	6.00	Neck Ribbon, DD, black with eyelet	5.00
Item	Cost	Pin, MCL	1.00
		Pin, MCL Life	1.00
		Pin, MCL Associate	1.00

IMPORTANT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

National changed the due date,
so that everyone is
paying dues at the same time.

Dues for 2020 - 2021
By July 31st - \$25
August 1st or after - \$35

Initial Membership Dues are \$35

Mail your annual membership fees to:

River Cities Det. #1090
Attn: Membership
PO Box 6581
Evansville IN 47719-0581

To see the Marine Corps League
Strategic Plan in its entirety,
Go to <http://mclrivercities.org/> and
click on "Links."

River Cities Detachment
Officers

<u>Commandant</u>	Jim Johnson (812) 431-2451
<u>Sr. Vice Commdt.</u>	Gary Burk
<u>Jr. Vice Commdt.</u>	Melissa West
<u>Jr. Past Commdt.</u>	Bob Reutter (270) 314-9484
<u>Adjutant</u>	Tim Jones (812)454-8717
<u>Paymaster</u>	John Bryant (775) 287-1876
<u>Judge Advocate</u>	T.C. Shane
<u>Chaplain</u>	Bob Reutter
<u>Sgt. at Arms</u>	Tom Kremer
<u>Newsletter Editor</u>	Bob Reutter
<u>Web Sergeant</u>	Tim Jones



Information on Life Membership

***National Bylaws Article Six -
Members,
Section 645 - Life Members:.***

Any member of the Marine Corps League who is in good standing may become a Life Member, upon proper payment of the fee, as is required herein. A Life Member shall be subject to payment of no further dues of a Detachment, or National, such member shall have all the privileges, rights, and benefits enjoyed as a member so long as that Life Member shall live.

Current Life Membership
Price Information
(As of January 2014)

Up to and including age 35 - \$500.00

**Age 36 up to and including age 50 -
\$400.00**

Age 51 up to and including age 64 - \$300.00

Age 65 and over - \$200.00

The cost of replacing a Life Membership
Gold Card is \$10.00

We have space available in our ad pages.

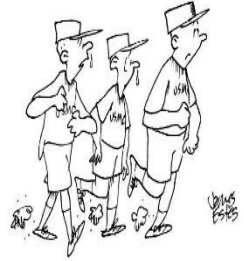
Advertisements are available at the following rates.

Business Card Size....\$15.00 for 6 months

1/4 page \$25.00 for 6 months

1/2 page\$50.00 for 6 months

The editor has the right to reject an ad that is not appropriate such as loan companies, adult entertainment, etc.



Are we there yet?

Newsletter Booster Club

Booster Member

Expires

MCLA Southern Belles.....	Oct-2020
Joe & Kathy Filipczak.....	Dec-2020
David Jones.....	Dec-2020
Casey Canfield.....	Feb-2021
Tom & Alice Kick.....	May-2021
Gary Burk.....	May-2021
Tom Kremer.....	July-2021
Ned E & Rose Wellmeier.....	July-2021
Dannie & Debbie Russell.....	July-2021
Roy & Carolyn McWilliams.....	Aug-2021
Bob & Linda Reutter.....	Aug-2021
Dorothy Odom.....	Sep-2021
Chris Boyd.....	Oct-2021

Your name could go here

A big thank you to all those that donate to the Newsletter Booster Club. **We still need Booster Members! A donation of \$5.00 or more per individual** is all it takes to become a member. As a Booster Member you get your name listed in the Newsletter for 1 year. This lets everyone know that you help support the River Cities News. The Booster Club and Advertisements help to **defray** the cost of printing and postage.



NEWSLETTER BOOSTER MEMBER

NAME: _____

DONATION: \$ _____

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