



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
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I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. Here are my notes from the Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting on Saturday, December 11, 2021 (as well as the holiday gathering on Friday) in Waupaca.

AVVA Report

Pat provided her AVVA report.

- National AVVA Convention information:
 - Although candidates are usually required to attend the AVVA National Convention, Rick Talford (from Wisconsin) was granted an exemption and was re-elected as Region 6 Director. Barbara Coan is the new Region 6 Deputy Director.
 - There were only 4 Region 6 delegates at the Convention.
 - New National officers are: Sharon Hobbs, President; Kathy Andras, Vice President; Nina Schloffel; and Kaye Gardner, Treasurer.
 - The next Convention will be held in Orlando.
 - Dual members can vote only if there is an AVVA Chapter.
 - The Convention emphasized Caregiver benefits; the approval rate for only those benefits is only 15%.
- Pat reminded us 2022 is an election year so she will hold an AVVA meeting at the regular State Council meeting in March. We also need to discuss the pros and cons of Wisconsin AVVA incorporating.

State Council

Since there was not a quorum, no formal business could be conducted; the following is informational only.

VVA Convention

- John Margowski reminded everyone of the recommendations of Working Group I on how to dissolve the organization at some point in the future. He also shared that most Convention resolutions went smoothly. Resolution G21 (to change the name of VVA and open membership to ALL veterans) may be retired at the next Convention. John also mentioned Resolution GA-22 which would amend eligibility dates for the Vietnam Service Medal to include the period from March 28, 1973 to April 29, 1975.
- John felt the Convention was very well-run with very strict local COVID restrictions.
- John was elected as Region 6 Director and Richard Lindbeck was elected as an At Large Director.

President's Report (Michael Demske)

- New VVA National officers were elected at the National Convention: Jack McManus, President (nominated from the floor); Tom Burke, Vice President; Bill Meeks, Secretary; and Linda Schwartz, Treasurer (nominated from the floor).

At Large Director's Report (Richard Lindbeck)

- Richard shared that 733 delegates were listed and 702 delegates attended the Convention.
- Richard was elected as an At Large Director (he was among 3 new At Large Directors) and was re-appointed as the Convention Credentials Chair.
- Sandy Wilson was appointed to the Agent Orange Committee.
- The National Constitution was changed to allow electronic meetings which will positively affect national, state and local Chapters.

Region 6 Director's Report (John Margowski)

- The Minnesota State Council was told they had to close the State Council if it closed their benefits group which was not correct.
- John is trying to get Region 6 to become more active, including having a Region 6 meeting in Iowa, but COVID is complicating the process.
- John believes we should continue the Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure town hall meetings.
- John suggested the State Council focus on a limited number of committees to make sure we makes the most of our limited resources.

Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure (Mike Demske)

- There are a number of different AO/TE "groups" (i.e., 360 Burn pits, etc.) that need to join forces to be most effective.

Legislative Committee (Dan Sciuti)

- Dan reported on multiple bills signed into law by President Biden including: maternity benefits for veterans; conducting ethnicity studies on veterans benefits; veterans being charged out-of-state tuition when they are eligible for in-state tuition; and requiring the VA to report to the government whenever they monitor veterans using cameras.
- Call your legislator and ask them to support Wisconsin AS245 bill which reduces the disability rate from 100% to 70% for veterans to receive property tax exemption. Republican legislators previously supported the bill but seem to be opposing it after Govern Evers was elected.

Old Business

- There was a clarification to the minutes regarding Convention expenses reimbursement. The amount was calculated by taking the total allotted amount divided by the number of delegates attending. Payments were expected to be \$500-\$800 per delegate; the final reimbursement amount was \$600.

New Business

Dates for the 2022 meetings were confirmed; the dates for June and September were changed from dates provided in September (corrected dates are shown below. You will need to contact Comfort Suites (in Waupaca) directly to get the \$98/night rate.

Upcoming Events:

March 19, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

June 18 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting and picnic; Camp Victory (N9839 Sterling Road, Willard, WI)

September 24, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

December 2-3, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting and holiday gathering; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

May I send you this newsletter by e-mail? If so, please contact me at jlfoye@frontier.com with a subject line of "AVVA At-Large Newsletter" or by phone at 715-842-9197 (we don't have caller ID so you'll need to leave your phone number in order for me to return your call). Any suggestions on what (or how much) information to include in the newsletter is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Take care and stay safe.



Joy L. Foy
Wisconsin AVVA At-Large Representative