



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 8
OCTOBER, 2019**

Happy Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving (since this should be the only newsletter between now and the December meeting)! These are my notes from the VVA Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting on Saturday, September 21st.

AVVA Notes

Pat's report included the following information:

- New officers were elected at the AVVA National Convention in Spokane:
 - President – Joanna Henshaw, Nevada
 - Vice President – Kaye Gardner, Maryland
 - Secretary – Nina Schloffel, California
 - Treasurer – Kathy Andras, Louisiana
 - Region 6 Director – Fran Davis, Missouri
 - Region 6 Deputy Director – Rick Talford, Wisconsin
- Pat has state level issues to discuss with AVVA members (including information on 2021 National Convention delegates) at the December meeting. If there is no Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure meeting, AVVA will meet before the State Council meeting, otherwise it will be after the State Council meeting is completed.
- Chapter Representative elections must be held in April, 2020 in order to meet delegate voting requirements at the 2021 National Convention.

State Council Notes

President's Report (Richard Lindbeck):

- President Lindbeck recognized attendance at the meeting by past Presidents (John Margowski, Bob Piaro, and Bob Morzenti), Region 6 representative Bob Grabinski, and former Army SSgt Sam Rogers of Concerned Veterans of America.
- National Convention: 13 registered delegates from Wisconsin attended the Convention as part of the 677 regular delegates (200 less than attended the National Convention in New Orleans). The 2021 Convention is in Greensboro, NC and will look at the resolutions regarding direction the organization will take and how its \$20,000,000 in assets will be disbursed when VVA eventually disbands. National election results were:
 - President – John Rowan
 - Vice President – Tom Burke
 - Secretary – Bill Meeks
 - Treasurer – Jack McManus
 - Board of Directors:
 - Credentials Committee Chair – Richard Lindbeck
 - Resolutions Committee Chair – John Margowski
 - Finance Committee Co-Chair – Bob Grabinski
- The U S Army drill team will perform at West Bend High School at 11:30 AM on 11/1
- John Margowski shared discussions about the “future” of VVA at the National Convention. Working Group I (WG I) provided an extensive report that was “accepted”, but not officially recognized, by

National or even discussed at the Convention. Working Group II (WG II) had no report to discuss. John Rowan challenged the Board of Directors to do what many perceived as the task WG II was given. A motion was made to accept WG I recommendations but was never voted on. Concern has been expressed about the lack of focus on how to handle the dissolution situation since this is the 3rd time the issue has been brought up to the general membership. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), which has been mentioned as a successor to VVA, has no veterans benefits program (a very important issue for VVA members). Since VVA was incorporated in the State of New York, if VVA fails to follow New York law at any time, the State of New York can come in and take over the organization and all its assets. If National is dissolved, the WG I recommendations would apply to the Wisconsin State Council.

Guest Speaker - Sam Rogers, Concerned Veterans for America – Wisconsin

Sam served in the Army for 8 years. He became involved with VVA when Rebecca, at VVA National, reached out to him. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) is a policy-based advocacy organization and has its own “mission”. CVA would sponsor “joint events” to provide educational information to the community on a variety of topics (such as toxic exposure, CVA’s foreign political initiative, etc.). Sam talked about the process CVA uses to network with students and/or college professionals in order to get their message out to a diverse audience, including the public and targeted professionals. Veteran organizations participating in the events would be able to share information about their organization at those events; the information could then be spread by word of mouth. CVA’s goal is to empower all veterans organizations to hold the government accountable for its actions, increase visibility, and engage younger veterans on current and/or outstanding issues. Students Veterans of America (SVA) has 360,000 members nationally who “rotate out” when they graduate, then look for a new organization to join. Sam was involved with SVA before becoming part of CVA. There are 18 state CVA Chapters; Wisconsin has 150 active volunteers, 2 full-time and several part-time staff.

Treasurer’s Report (Pat Craney):

The State Council is doing well on their actual vs projected expenses.

National VVA At-Large Report (John Margowski):

John spoke about numerous items:

- There was no opportunity to discuss, nor vote on, the Working Group I report on the dissolution of VVA at the National Convention.
- Wisconsin AB 888 and SB 116 are veteran property tax credit bills; contact your State representative regarding passage of these bills.
- A multi-million dollar court decision was reached on veterans using both the Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 benefits (the Montgomery GI Bill benefits would be used first, then the Post 9/11 benefits). The courts also ruled regarding veterans who were denied emergency care or emergency care reimbursement; this could cost millions, if not billions, of dollars.
- The Northwoods Veterans Cemetery in Harshaw (a new Wisconsin national cemetery) was discussed.
- Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin proposed a bill (which passed the Senate) to protect economic security for veterans and/or their families.
- Several veteran-related scams were discussed, including fake e-mails that may appear to come from VVA
- A bill for Wisconsin to pay for funding to be used to search for MIA’s failed to pass.
- The rule requiring veterans be married 10 years in order for their surviving spouse to collect their disability payment has been changed to a 1-year requirement.

Scholarship Report (Virginia Nuske):

- 3 scholarships at \$1,500 will be awarded again next year. Students who are graduating from high school, or are already in college, are eligible to apply. Applications can be found on the website (vva.wi.org) and are due on 2/15/20.

New Business:

- A question was asked regarding why the State Council meets at The Highground in June. Some concerns were space limitations in the garage and the distance to travel for some delegates. The strong connection between Vietnam veterans, the State Council and The Highground was discussed. A suggestion was made by Jim Ottman (Chapter 331) that the June meeting be moved to The Highground’s newly acquired facility (Camp Victory), about 15 miles north of The Highground. The facility has a room

large enough for the group as well as a full kitchen. The Secretary will contact Jon Weiler (The Highground Executive Director) to see if that would be a possibility.

- Pat Furno distributed the appropriate paperwork Chapters need in order to complete State tax-exempt forms for some types of Chapter purchases.
- Tom Heitman requested a section titled “announcements/information/for the good of the order” (or similar language) be added to the agenda.

Upcoming Events:

December 6-7, 2019:

- Wisconsin State Council holiday party (12/6) and quarterly meeting (12/7); Ramada Inn, Waupaca

May I send you this newsletter by e-mail instead? 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 please leave your phone number so I can contact you). If you have any suggestions on what (or how much) information to include in the newsletter, please let me know. Thank you!



Joy L. Foye
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