



In Service to America

Western New York
Chapter 77
Tonawanda, New York

Mail Call:
October, November, December 2010

President's Message

By: Mike Walker

Well summer's over, I know not by the calendar but, and it was a busy one for the chapter. First we had Cannel Fest. The week was long and hot, but good for the product sales. Another good thing it didn't rain the day of the parade.

Next was the bike show, The Gathering of Iron. Unfortunately bad weather did impact this event; however we still made a small gain. The bike raffle was one of the reasons we made out. The bike was won by Norm Dauphin.

The car show was held on Labor Day down by the river. We made out well. The winner of the Commanders Award was Walter Franczak for his 1934 Ford Pickup Truck

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all who worked on the various committees as well as the events and all who donated to our Monument fund A special thanks to Dan the Sign Man (Dan DeLaney) for the extra work on the advertising display. Without your efforts none of the above events would have happened. We also need to thank The American Legion Post 264 for participating in the bike and car shows as a joint event.



Bill Parmentier and I attended the VVA Leadership Conference in July. The conference was a good experience and we not only learned a lot about how things are to be done, but we bonded with brothers from other chapters.

This summer was also a busy one for the Veterans Administration (VA) The VA attempted to speed up claims processing by putting more people to work on them; and changed the way it looks at PTSD. To find out more on this you came go to the VA web site. (www.va.gov)

Now I'd like to invite all to our Christmas Party. It will be held at the Knights of Columbus next to our Museum. The cost is \$10 per person. The individuals who were at the party last year know the food is good. So bring yourself, your spouse, significant other or lover and join us for the party. The date is Dec. 16th. The party will replace the December meeting. Members who volunteered for the events over the summer events will have their \$10 cost refunded. So hope to see you there.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.

VVA CHAPTER 77 LEADERSHIP

(Terms of office are from April 2010 to April 2012)

Officers

President	Mike Walker	693.4479
1st Vice President	Jack Michel	693.4479
2nd Vice President	Bill Parmentier	693.4479
Secretary	Ron Sdao	694.4411
Treasurer	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
Service Officers	Delores Garcia, NYS Council	857.3344
	Pete Montemurno, National VA Hosp. Rep.	689.4870
	Patrick Welch, Erie Co. Veterans Services	858.6349
Pres.: Associates of VVA	Linda Sopic	683.0051

Directors

Fred Bansmer	693.4479	Dennis L. Eggers	693.4479
Ken Berger (Hon.)	693.4479	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Ed Bodine	864.6247	Mike Marchese	693.4479
Jim Burns	693.4479	Pete Montemurno	689.4870
Jerry Caira	693.4479	Jack Toth	693.4479

Special Duties

NY State VVA Council Delegates	Pete Montemurno	Paul Pietrowski
	Patrick Welch	Bill Parmentier
	Al Brusetti	Jack Michel
VA Hospital Volunteer Ser. Rep.	Pete Montemurno	
Newsletter Editor	Jerry Caira	
Associate Editor	Paul Pietrowski	

Standing Committees

Agent Orange/Veterans Affairs	Al Brusetti	636.0338
Color Guard:	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
	Pete Montemurno	689.4870
Community Affairs:	Ron Pillozzi	694.6052
	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
Constitution Committee:	Larry Covert	823.9118
Economic Affairs	Al Brusetti	636.0338
Education:	Jerry Caira	693.4479
Employment Training & Business Opp.	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Golf Tournament:	Al Schreier	693.3441
Government Affairs:	Al Brusetti	636.0338
	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Grant Writing:	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Homeless Vets:	Pete Montemurno	689.4870
Information Technology:	Mike Walker	695.2420
Membership:	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
	Jack Michel	693.4479
Minority Affairs	Ron Polozzi	693.4479
Museum Curator	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
POW/MIA Affairs	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
PTSD	Jack Michel	693.4479
Public Affairs:	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Nominating Committee:	Larry Covert	823.9118
Vets History Project:	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Veteran Benefits	Jack Michel,	693.4479
	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Women Veterans	Kathy Cromwell	693.4479

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 77,
57 Main St. Tonawanda, New York, 716.693.4479, www.VVA77.org

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

(Board of Director meeting dates are subject to change. Please call the office to verify dates and times.)

Meeting Location

Chapter and Board of Directors meetings are held at the museum/office located at 57 Main St. in the City of Tonawanda. The office/museum is open every Wednesday & Saturday from 9 AM- 1 PM.

Telephone is 716-693-4479 or visit the website at www.vva77.org

Oct 9 th	Saturday	<u>Orange Blossom Sale</u> , 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Old Country Buffet, 3048 Sheridan Drive
Oct 21 st	Thursday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM
Nov 2 nd	Tuesday	<u>ELECTION DAY</u>
Nov 6 th	Saturday	<u>Orange Blossom Sale</u> , 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Premier Liquor, 3445 Delaware Ave, Kenmore
Nov 11 th	Thursday	<u>VA Hospital Veterans Day Program</u> : 1:30 PM, Room 301, Freedom Hall
Nov 11 th		<u>Veterans Day Ceremony</u> : 6:00 PM, Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Naval & Servicemen's Park, Buffalo, NY
Nov 17 th	Wednesday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM
Nov 18 th	Thursday	<u>Spaghetti Dinner</u> to Benefit the National Wheelchair Games, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Am Legion Post 264
Nov 25 th	Thursday	<u>THANKSGIVING</u>
Nov 21 st	Sunday	<u>Thanksgiving Dinner</u> : for the needy and homeless at the VA Hospital, time TBA
Dec 7 th	Tuesday	<u>Pearl Harbor Day</u>
Dec 11 th	Saturday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 1 of 3
Dec 16 th	Thursday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM <u>Christmas Party</u>
Dec 18 th	Saturday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 2 of 3
Dec 22 nd	Saturday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 3 of 3
Dec 25 th	Saturday	<u>CHRISTMAS</u>
PETER TYCZ SCHOLARSHIP DINNER:		
Jan 27 th	Thursday	4:00 PM – 7:00 PM, American Legion Post 264, 60 Main St. Tonawanda, NY 14150 \$3.00 children, \$7.00 adults \$6.00 seniors, call 693.4479 for reservations

Any other activities will be communicated during the Board, General Membership meetings and e-mail distributions.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

By: Jerry Caira

The winners of Chapter 77's sixth annual Peter P Tycz II Memorial scholarship have been selected by the education sub-committee. Along with me, the sub-committee consisted of Tom Konopka, and Linda Sopic. I would like to thank them for the many hours that they spent sorting and rating the applications; their help was greatly appreciated.

This year, we received over 70 applications from superbly qualified students from schools throughout Erie and Niagara Counties. There continues to be a tremendous need for financial assistance by students in Western New York.

Our fund raising efforts this year have again been exceptional. This was due in part to an increase in donations from individuals, labor unions, politicians and our spaghetti dinner fund raiser which included a Chinese raffle. Because of this, a total of 24 scholarships were awarded with a total value of \$6000. Our future goal continues to be to expand the scope of the scholarship to help even more deserving students. The winners have been notified and their awards have been mailed. I would like to congratulate each of the winners and I hope that they will each have a very successful college career.

2010 WINNERS AND SCHOOLS

Jill Chipman	Iroquois Central H. S.
Kaylee Cirrito	Niagara Wheatfield Senior H. S.
Brian Costanzo	Clarence High School
Joshua Costanzo	Clarence High School
Molly Ferguson	Williamsville North H. S.
William Freeman	Williamsville South H. S.
Jonathan Gall	Lancaster High School
Theresa Gullo	Iroquois Central H.S.
David Heaton	Frontier Central H. S.
Aileen Hinton	Barker H. S.
Samantha Kelly	Newfane High School
Sarah Kucharski	West Seneca East Senior H. S.
Jordan Kurbs	Lockport H. S.
Savanna Kustra	Grand Island Senior H. S.
Anita MacKay	Tonawanda H.S.
Marissa McCarthy	Kenmore East H. S.
Alexandria Mena	Niagara Falls H. S.
Megan Morris	Starpoint High School
Rachel Mulhern	Williamsville South H. S.
Rebecca Reed	West Seneca East Senior H. S.
Michael Richbart	Niagara Catholic H. S.
Jennifer Ruffato	West Seneca East Senior H. S.
Felecia Tycz	Niagara Wheatfield
Thomas Wilkie	Cardinal O'Hara H. S.

AGENT ORANGE LINKED TO GRAVES' DISEASE

By: Jack Toth

A new study by UB endocrinologists has shown that Vietnam war-era veterans exposed to Agent Orange appear to be more likely to develop Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder, than veterans with no exposure.

Ajay Varanasi, an endocrinology fellow in the UB Department of Medicine and first author on the study, garnered first prize in the oral presentation category for this research at the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists annual meeting held in Boston in April.

"Our findings show that Vietnam veterans who came in contact with Agent Orange are more likely to develop Graves' disease than those who avoided exposure," says Varanasi.

"The autoimmune disorder was three times more prevalent among veterans who encountered the dioxin-containing chemical. We also looked at other thyroid diagnoses, but we didn't find any significant differences in thyroid cancer or nodules."

Graves' disease is an autoimmune disease associated with over activity of the thyroid gland, this gland releases the hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3), which control body metabolism and are critical for regulating mood, weight, and mental and physical energy levels.

They compared the frequency of diagnoses of thyroid cancer, nodules, hypothyroidism and Graves' disease in veterans who identified themselves as being exposed to Agent Orange. Graves' disease, however, was three times more prevalent in the exposed group. In view of the known effects of dioxin on the immune system, further research should be conducted on the increased prevalence of Graves' disease in Vietnam veterans. His research group is planning to continue this investigation either in vitro or in animal models

CANAL FEST



This year's Canal Fest was great as usual. The crowds were up and so were our product sales, we sold over 90 tee shirts for the week and many other items. The heat press machine to make hats worked really well, as we made a lot of hats right at the tent. I can't say enough about our volunteers who came out in force again this year. I can't mention everyone as there were so many people who came by to help.



As usual Rick Topolski, Mike Walker, Bob Sargis, Bob Gritzke were there everyday to help move the products up the street. There were many others also there to help us. Bob Lillis came by and manned the table in front of the museum with the orange blossoms and did a great job. The roast beef sale on parade night and during the car show was a huge success. Thanks go out to my daughters JoAnne and Lynne and grand daughter Erika. Kathy Cromwell couldn't make this year but her grand daughter Heather came by to help. Again thanks to everyone, I wish I could list everyone but the list is a long one!

BIKE SHOW

This year's bike show didn't work out as well as we thought it would. The weather wasn't that bad but the bikers didn't show up. Next year's bike show is up in the air right now. Again this year we had to pay for police presence in the park. Several bikers have told us they were coming but with all the police at the entrance they decided not to stop. We have no choice when it comes to public safety. We will maybe look at trying another venue or just drop it and concentrate on the car show.

CAR SHOW



Our car show on Labor Day was a huge success! We had 152 cars in the show and everyone of the car owners were very happy to be near the mighty Niagara River. If you go to RodandPiston.com every car that was in the show is on their web site along with the comments about the venue. I talked to several of the presidents of the various car clubs and they are excited about next year already. We are already planning for next year's show. The car owners want breakfast so we are planning to serve pancakes and coffee right there on site. Our food concession did very well and we will probably need 2 food tents next year. We are also thinking of bringing in various vendors, food, car parts etc. Thanks go out to all of our members and the guys from Post 264 who helped out. Special thanks go out to the Dunlop Riders for all their help with collecting donations, the check in booth and parking bikes. Our chapter and Post 264 will split \$5000.00.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership now stands at 551

WELCOME HOME NEW MEMBERS

Brian Brunner	John Burget	Michael Dauer	Albert Lupejkis
Thomas Maziarz	Paul Schaeffer	Frank Schultz	James Witmer

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS: If you wish, your dues payment can be mailed directly to the chapter office. This will allow us to update the membership roster on a more regular basis.
THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN BUILDING OUR ORGANIZATION.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

By: Al Schreier

Our 16th annual golf tournament was held on Sunday, July 11th at Rothland Golf Course (due to the June 6th rainout). The weather was perfect and the condition of the golf course was great.

Once again, the tournament was a great financial success.

Thanks to those members who bought prizes or got donations (especially Jerry Bogdan, Don Helmbrecht, Fred Bansmer, Bob Lillis & Jim Burns) and the businesses that supported us. We wouldn't have had a successful tournament without them and the golfers who have supported us for the last 16 years.

A special thanks to non-golfers Mike Walker, John Burget and Bob Lillis who worked the sign-in table, took the pictures and helped in any way possible. Thanks to John Burget and my wife, Pat, for the great job selling raffle and 50/50 tickets. The raffle and 50/50 drawings are a huge part of our financial success. Thanks also to our emcee Bob Sargis and to Paul Pietrowski who handled the score cards.

See you next year.

Al Schreier, Chairman,
693-3441
amschreier@verizon.net

THANKS TO THE MANY SUPPORTERS OF OUR GOLF TOURNAMENT

Advanced Safety
Al-E-Oops Restaurant
Athena's Family Restaurant
Fred Bansmer
Dave Battaglia
David J. Bielski
Allstate Insurance Co.
17 Main St., Tonawanda
Ed Bodine
Gerry & Sharon Bogdan
In Memory of
Ray Bogdan and
Jack Boggs
Buffalo Bisons
Buffalo Sabres
Al Burge
Jim & Tina Burns
Greg & Sheila Cain
Carrabba's Italian Grill
Cookie Expressions
Darien Lake
Dave & Adam's Card World
Dunkin' Donuts
Dunlop Riders
Dunlop Sports
Five Star Bank
Harris Hill Golf Center
Don Helmbrecht
Roger Heymanowski

Scott Hoffman, Exec. VP,
First Niagara Risk Management
Hole Sale Golf
Ken Horn & Associates
Ilio DiPaolo's
June Keem
Tom Konopka
Tom Konopka & Marsh Wood
Vital Systems, Inc.
Bob Lillis
Mike Marchessie
Bill Lindner's Golf Service
Jim May
Mary's Country Kitchen
Bob Metz
Mewer Florist
Michele Krienbuhl
Michele's Motif, Unique
Jewelry
Jack & Joanne Michel
Pete Montemurno
Murphy's Pub and Restaurant
Olive Garden Restaurant
(Walden Avenue)
Outback Steakhouse (Blasdell,
NY)
Pane's Restaurant
Bill Parmentier
Pellicano's Marketplace

Paul & Colleen Pietrowski
Protocol Restaurant & Bar
Jeff Randall
Red Lobster, McKinley Mall
Rothland Golf Course
Russ Salvatore, Russell's Steaks,
Chops and More
Al & Pat Schreier
Salvatore's Italian Gardens
Bob Sargis
Lori Ann Scime – MassMutual
Financial Group
Ron Sdao
Shear Mobility
Smokey Bones Bar and Fire Grill
Paul Stottele – K of C Insurance
Scott Testa - Paintball of
Tonawanda
Texas Road House
TGI Friday's
Tom Thielman
Jack & Sandy Toth
Touch of Italy Restaurant
UAW Region 9 Vets Council
VVA Chapter # 77
Mike Walker - Michael's Gem
Box
ZJ's Family Restaurant
Rick Zurak Golf

NEW VA PROGRAM

By: Tom Konopka

Mickey Mantle once said *“If I knew I was going to live this long, I’d have taken better care of myself.”* I don’t doubt that a few of us have had the same thought. As the birthdays pile up, we find that physical problems tend to increase. The VA Healthcare System is rolling out a new program called **Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)** to assist us in caring for ourselves. Dr. Terri Julian is the Health Behavior Coordinator of this program for the Western New York VA Healthcare System. Many of us are aware of her excellent clinical skills and the leadership that she provided the Batavia PTSD treatment facility. PCMH is basically a more personalized and hopefully more effective approach to healthcare at the VA. Every Veteran will be assigned to a healthcare team that will include the primary care physician or nurse practitioner, a nurse, a clinical staff assistant, and an administrative staff member. This team’s focus will be on the whole person rather than a specific disease or condition. The Veteran’s goals, needs, and care preferences will guide the team’s treatment plan. Communication will be honest and respectful without fear of judgment or repercussions. The goal is to improve our healthcare and satisfaction. An extended team will include a pharmacist, nutritionist, or other specialist as needed. There will be an increased sensitivity to the psychological aspects of our healthcare and it will be up to us to reciprocate by keeping our appointments and being courteous to our team members.

Our VA Hospital liaison, Pete Montemurno is presently involved in the introduction of this program. He will be able to update us on the mechanics of PCMH and his impressions of it. The VA should be commended for its effort to improve our healthcare and we should continue to encourage Veterans to enroll.

VA HOSPITAL NEWS

By: Peter M. Montemurno

1. On September 17th the Chapter Color Guard preformed the ceremony of the MIA's, POW's Remembrance Table at the VA Hospital. Former POW'S and their spouses were in attendance.
2. I have been asked to be on a special task force, “Patient Aligned Care Teams” (PACT), at the VA Hospital. The purpose of this team is to improve the health care of veterans at all VA Health Care facilities nation wide. This process is just starting. I will keep you all updated every month.
- 3 The Veterans Day program will be held on Thursday, November 11, 2010 at 1:30 PM in Freedom Hall at the VA
4. The annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner for the needy and homeless veterans will be on Sunday, November 21st, at the VA Hospital. If you would like to donate or volunteer, please contact Judi Kaczmarek, 862-6002
5. On Thursday November 18, 2010 we are having a Spaghetti Dinner to help fund local veterans to participate in the 2011 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The Dinner will take place at the American Legion Post 264, Main Street Tonawanda NY. The cost will be \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under 12 years of age. We will need volunteers to help with this dinner Thank you for your help.

SIDE LINES

By: Jerry Caira

Congratulations to relatives of Chapter 77 members and associates who were recipients of our Peter P. Tycz II Memorial Scholarships: **Felecia Tycz**, Felecia is the daughter of the late Peter P. Tycz for whom our scholarship honors and granddaughter of Chapter member and Vietnam Veteran Bill Parmentier, **Theresa Gullo**, neice of Chapter member Al Schreier, **Brian and Joshua Costanzo**, sons of AVVA member Linda Costanzo, **Savanna Kustra**, granddaughter of chapter member Frank Kustra. They have all demonstrated a unique blend of academic success, community service and exemplifies all of the goals set forth by the scholarship

Congratulations also go out to **Courtney Corbetta** who was recently chosen as the 2011 Peach Queen at the Lewiston Peach Festival. Courtney is the daughter of Jason and Michelle Corbetta. She is the granddaughter of Vietnam Veteran, Paul Curran and his wife, Dawn. Courtney is also the niece of Brian and Denise Konopka. Brian is a son of chapter director Tom Konopka.

AT THE STATE LEVEL (9/11/2010)

By: Jack Michel

This was the Last State Council meeting for the 2010 season. The next meeting is currently scheduled for January 29, 2011. If you haven't been to a State Council Meeting in the past or in a while it might be worth considering. All of the State Council members who attended the Leadership Conference in Orlando had great comments on the gathering and the content of the seminars. There had been suggestions that it may be time to discontinue the conference but the comments were so positive that the leaders plan to keep it going again in 2012.

One of the biggest concerns right now for New York State is money. Up until 2 years ago the State received \$25,000 a year to operate the NYS VVA Service Officer program. The amount was then cut to \$20,000 and this year the State will only give \$10,000 for the program. This is an extremely important service, which VVA provides for ALL veterans. Not just Vietnam veterans. Without the funds to pay Dee Garcia and our downstate service officers the program will have to be abolished. I would welcome any suggestion anyone has about how to raise money specifically for this project. Like Patrick Welch always says, "If you do nothing, when the time comes and you need the service officer, nothing may be what you get". Think about it.

President Ned appointed two new Chairmen at the State Council. The Chairman for the Constitution Committee is Bob Lewis from the Frewsburg Chapter and a new Agent Orange Chairman from Chapter 82 is Walter Schmidt. The Frewsburg Chapter put out a challenge to all in attendance. They will guarantee the State \$1,000 from a fundraiser and challenged any other chapter to hold their own fundraiser for the Service officer's program. By the way, Frewsburg has 24 members.

It was mentioned that the National Convention for 2011 would be in Reno Nevada. The dates will be August 14 – 20, 2011. If you want to go start saving your penny's now. If you have any fundraising ideas to help defer the cost and take more members bring them to the chapter leadership and let's get started. It's only 11 months away. I was given a fact sheet for our Treasurer and Secretary to work off. The document has all the dates our State and National reports are due and which forms are needed. This will be a great help in the future in the event anyone from the general membership steps up and runs for a leadership position.

We need an individual from the membership to do regular reporting to NYS on-Line Interchange. You would have to be semi computer literate and only slightly creative. If ANYONE is interested please see Jack Michel.

One of the fundraising ideas the State Council uses is to use **GOODSEARCH** and **GOODBUY** instead of other search engines. Each time a member of VVA uses **GOODSEARCH**, the State Council gets money. Each Time you buy from **GOODBUY** the State Council gets money. It's really simple to use and works the same as other search engines.. Please try it. Here's how: Go to the NYS VVA web site at www.nyvietnamvets.org. When the homepage appears scroll down the left side a short way and you'll see GOODSEARCH. Just click on it and you're in. From there it's just like using other search engines.

Our President Ned Foote has been selected at the Distinguished Veteran of the Year. Ned is the first Vietnam veteran to be selected and the first Vietnam veteran to be chosen for this honor. If you can, please e-mail Ned with your congratulations. It is a great honor for Ned and for our organization. There will be an official presentation and dinner for Ned in November at the NYS Military Museum. If you would like to attend I'll get you more info. Almost all the hand out material from the Leadership Conference is on line through the National VVA web site.

The long battle for a National Cemetery in the Western New York area is over. The final site has not yet been chosen but it is going to be within a 25-mile radius of the Amherst/I-290 intersection. More on this when will follow.

The National Membership stands at 53,640, State Membership, 5,259. To date there are still 1,711 American forces unaccounted for in Southeast Asia.

Jack Michel has been selected as the Veterans Service Organization representative to work directly with the members of VVA Chapter 489. That chapter, if you're wondering, is Attica Correctional. Duties include attending monthly meetings and help get information to the membership that they may request. P.T.S.D. is a big topic as well as substance abuse. If anyone would like to visit the facility let me know.

Dee Garcia still needs help at her office on S. Elmwood. A few hours a week would help her immensely. Please try to GIVE a little of your time to help out Dee and all our veterans.

AVVA NEWS

By: Linda Sopic

It was so good to see many familiar and new faces at our summer events. With the cooler weather upon us, we can look forward to many fall activities.

Our food pantry still has a couple cases of Vanilla Boost, and Glucerna shakes for diabetics available.

In the baby food department, we still have various baby food, and formulas: Similac, Isomil Advance Soy Formula, and Pediatric Nutritional Drinks, vanilla 6, 8 oz. bottles. If we can help someone with these items, please call or come to the chapter soon before these food items and formulas expire at various times.

Voluntary services at the VA Medical Center is hoping to get enough Patriotic or Americana themed small blankets, or throws by Veteran's Day. They will be distributed to our beloved veterans in Willow Lodge. Thank you for your thoughtfulness to our heroes.

Willow Lodge, the long term care unit at the VA plans two food activities a month and appreciates any monetary donations so these activities can be carried out. If you'd like to make a donation, please contact Nancy Kaszynski at 862-3237. The smiling face of a vet enjoying these treats is priceless! They are still accepting men's body wash, good disposable razors, and shaving cream.

The Buffalo News is sponsoring a "Red, White & Blues" event on Friday, November 5, 2010 from 5:30 till 11:00 p.m. Featuring live Blues music, wine tasting and food from some of Buffalo's best restaurants. Tickets are \$35.00 and are available at www.redwhiteandblues.net, or by calling 882-5935. Buffalo News staff reporter Lou Michel will be "Saluting the War Heroes" honored weekly in his column. The proceeds benefit the WNY Veteran's Housing Coalition & WNY Heroes. It will be a fun night for a great cause.

Donations for our annual Chinese Auction at the Peter Tycz Spaghetti Dinner, to be held in January, are always graciously accepted at the chapter. Volunteer opportunities will be available as well. Thank you kindly in advance. Great spaghetti for another great cause. This event benefits our Peter Tycz Scholarship. See you there!

AGENT ORANGE LAWSUIT

By: Joe Pasek

It has been 35 years since the Vietnam War officially concluded, but the lingering after effects continue. For many of us the exposure to the herbicide commonly referred to as "Agent Orange", resulted in serious health problems.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized fifteen (15) illnesses as being "presumed" to be caused by contact with this defoliant used to eliminate hiding places of the enemy.

In the early 1980's a class action lawsuit was brought by Vietnam veterans and their families against seven chemical manufacturing companies in a case involving a product liability. More than 200,000 veterans claimed that a number of diseases including cancer were caused by defective manufacturing processes which produced dioxin.

On May 7, 1984 a tentative OUT-OF-COURT settlement was announced whereas the chemical companies agreed to pay \$180 million dollars and a Settlement Fund was created to disperse the money.

AGENT ORANGE LAWSUIT (CONTINUED)

By: Joe Pasek

To be eligible, the Vietnam veteran had to establish serving in Vietnam between 1961 and 1972 and the applicant was either totally disabled or the survivor of a deceased Vietnam veteran whose death was not caused by a traumatic or accidental occurrence.

After many years of delay caused by legal challenges brought about by groups who felt the proposed settlement was not fair, the court designated Atena Life Insurance Company to serve as the claims administrator. By this time the assets in the settlement grew to about \$250 million dollars.

Under the watchful eye of the United States District Court Judge Jack Weinstein, the deadline for submission of a claim was extended. The payment program continued until 1994. After several appeals, the District Court ordered the Fund closed, its assets fully distributed as of September 27, 1997.

In November 2001, the Second U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that two Vietnam veterans who developed cancer after the settlement funds were exhausted had the right to sue the chemical companies that produced Agent Orange. This time however, the chemical companies decided not to settle out-of-court and pursue this through litigation. Ultimately in March 2009 this issue arrived at the U. S. Supreme Court which then refused to hear the case. The explanation given was that the chemical manufacturers were protected from liability under the government contractor defense and that the product they had provided met the government's specifications.

Recently in a newsletter from Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, he states that a time extension was signed into law by Governor David Patterson allowing Vietnam Veterans who were in contact with Agent Orange the right to initiate a lawsuit. This extension is through June 16, 2012.

I spoke to an attorney who is a partner in the law firm that tried to present the case against the chemical companies to the Supreme Court. He believes the court would contend the government would have used Agent Orange even with the knowledge of the harmful effects to the military.

Regardless, this issue should be presented to a jury and allow those who suffered to have their day in court.

At the August Board meeting I received the support of the Officers and Directors to pursue reinstating a lawsuit against the manufacturers of Agent Orange. I will be seeking advice from the National Office of the VVA and I will be contacting Congressman Bob Filner, Chairman of the House of Veterans Affairs for his assistance.

If any member has suggestions or ideas on this subject, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Orange Blossom Sales

By Joe Pasek

Now with summer vacations over, I will be starting up the Orange Blossom Sales again. Check the dates in this newsletter and our website for any new dates.

I want to thank Bob Lillis and Mary Cameron for doing a fine job during the Canal Fest, raising over \$200.

Vietnam Veterans of America
WNY Chapter 77
57 Main St.
Tonawanda, NY 14150
Return Service Requested

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #77
Grand Island, NY 14072

Application for Membership

Please send this application, with you dues payment and a copy of your DD-214 to: VVA Chapter 77, 57 Main St., Tonawanda, NY 14150

Name _____ Male ___ Female Date of Birth _____
Address _____ e-mail address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone number _____ Sponsor (optional) _____
Membership Type: ___ Individual – 1 year \$20 ___ Individual Member – 3 years \$50
Life Member: ___ \$250 (age 49 and under) ___ \$225 (age 50 – 55) ___ \$200 (age 56 – 60)
___ \$175 (age 61 – 65) ___ \$150 (age 66+) ___ Time Payment Plan: \$50 down, \$25 per month

Eligibility: Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975. You must submit a copy of your DD-214 with this membership application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- I am a spouse, family member or friend of a Vietnam veteran and would like membership information about the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.
- I would like information on membership for permanently hospitalized Vietnam veterans.
- I would like information on membership for incarcerated Vietnam veterans.
- I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families. Please accept my tax-deductible donation: ___\$10 ___\$20 ___\$50 ___ Other: \$_____

(VVA is a non-profit, veteran's service organization. Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.)