



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46
NEWSLETTER
January, February, and March 2011

"In Memory of Those Who Served and to Honor Those Who Are Serving."

To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

At the end of each year, I try to recap some of the events which occurred and am always surprised first, how quickly each year slips by and, secondly, how many momentous events occur each year – military actions by our troops serving overseas; elections here at home and around the world; natural disasters such as earthquakes, blizzards or floods; terrorist activities in a growing number of countries; major legislation which, unless modified, will have a major impact on our lives and pocket books or those of our children and grandchildren; greatly improved benefits and services for our returning veterans; etc. – the list could go on and on.

This fall, Post 46 was involved in a number of activities. Once again, we participated in Veterans Day ceremonies at Concordia University and, upon the raising and dedication of a new flag, the retired flag was entrusted to us for proper disposal. Some of our members spent some time at the VFW on Wagner Road and participated in filling and sending "care" packages to our troops overseas; members again assembled at Webers in early December to enjoy our annual Christmas party and exchange stories and renew friendships with Post 46 members, guests, ROTC cadre and students and Post 46 baseball team members and families; finally we ended the year with Bingo night at the Veterans Hospital for those unfortunate veterans who are hospitalized at this otherwise festive time of year.

At many of our meetings, we have discussed how to encourage members to become more involved in Post 46 activities and to increase our membership with new younger veterans. A recent article describing the efforts of the VFW to engage in this same process was forwarded to me by one of our members and more details appear later in this newsletter. Needless to say, if any of you can find more time to devote to your fellow veterans or to the community, please let us know. We also would appreciate your suggestions as to how we can become more relevant to younger veterans. Finally, I am pleased that the number of our members who are now "on-line" is slowly growing. I do not expect you to Twitter or use Facebook but I do like to send out emails once or twice a month to keep in touch with those of you on the internet. Too many months go by between quarterly newsletters.

On behalf of our Commander, Steve Duncan, Post 46 extends to all its members best wishes for a prosperous and healthy 2011 and also extends a cordial invitation to all of you to attend our meetings and luncheons so that we can better fulfill our duty to serve our community, our veterans and active military personnel. Best Wishes for a Happy New Year,

Michael P. Malley
Judge Advocate

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 3	Regular Post Meeting Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
January 9	2 nd District Meeting Manchester American Legion Post 117, 2:00 p.m.
January 19	Luncheon Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11.45 a.m.
January 21	Bingo Ann Arbor Veterans Administration Hospital, 7:00 p.m.
February 7	Regular Post Meeting Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
February 16	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
March 7	Regular Post Meeting Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
March 13	2 nd District Meeting Morenci American Legion Post #368, 2:00 p.m.
March 16	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.

LUNCHEON MEETINGS

As always, our luncheon meetings are held each month at the Classic Cup Café on Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. It is an opportunity for all members to get together, relax, enjoy a meal and get to know other members of Post 46 in an informal setting. We intend to invite guest speakers from time to time on various topical issues. Please suggest what type of speakers you would like - salesmen, investment advisors, athletic coaches, veterans, etc.

REGULAR POST MEETINGS

Our regular post meetings continue to be held each month at Weber's on Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. All members are invited to attend and become active in Post 46 activities. These meetings are also operated in an informal manner and members are urged to participate to express their views, voice their opinions, and vote on any business matters on the agenda.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

As always, the Post 46 gathering at Weber's on December 4th. was truly a festive one and the hospitality, food and service of Weber's was again appreciated by all attendees. Each year, it is surprising that every single member of Post 46 (who is still in the Ann Arbor vicinity and able to travel) does not take advantage to attend the annual Christmas gathering of Post 46 members, ROTC cadets and midshipmen, Post 46 baseball team members and their families, active duty personnel, and other invited guests to exchange stories, revive old friendships and make new ones, or to simply enjoy a good meal courtesy of Post 46. Those many fortunate members who did attend were also informed and entertained by our guest speaker, Robert P. McDivitt. As most of you may know, Mr. McDivitt was recently appointed to serve as the Director of the VA Hospital here in Ann Arbor effective December 6, 2009. Among other things, Mr. McDivitt served in the U.S. Army from 1975 to 1977 and is a member of Post 46. His graduate and undergraduate degrees are from the U of M (Sorry the other U of M - Minnesota). Mr. McDivitt has since devoted his career to the care and treatment of our veterans and his informative talk outlined some of the objectives he hopes to achieve here in Ann Arbor. After the address by Mr. McDivitt, Post 46 then awarded door prizes to a number of lucky winners. The festivities were then ended with a closing prayer.

Every year, this Newsletter urges all members not to miss our annual Christmas party. It is a great tradition dear to the heart of our late Commander, J.J. Van Gasse, and continued by Commander Steve Duncan. Please **today** make a note on your new 2011 calendar to join us next December to usher in yet another Christmas season.

PACKAGES FOR TROOPS SERVING OVERSEAS

The local posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America are fortunate to have a facility where they can pack and send "care" packages to our men and women serving overseas. Many of our Post 46 members participate in sending these packages to our troops, which are enjoyed not only for the tangible benefit each package might contain but as an intangible symbol of our thanks for their service. I am also sure that the participating members of our Post derive considerable satisfaction in knowing they are doing their bit to send some form of aid and support to our troops. I am able to communicate the dates of these events by email to those of you who have access to the internet. For those of you are not on the internet but wish to participate, please either attend our meetings or call to let me know you want to be involved in this rewarding and worthwhile enterprise and I will make it a point to let you know when these dates have been scheduled.

WHEN CHILDREN ACT LIKE ADULTS AND ADULTS ACT LIKE CHILDREN

Each year, the Post 46 newsletter likes to pick up on one particular news story in which American Legion members have been involved and which should have some interest to our members. Last year, we followed the prosecution of the Navy Seals who apprehended and allegedly mistreated Ahmed Abed, the murderer of Americans in Iraq whose bodies were subsequently hung on display on a bridge. This particular story had a happy ending and all the Seals were acquitted of wrong doing by court martial proceedings although each must now carry this accusation on his record. This year's story involves a

young boy who chose to ride his bicycle to school with an American flag mounted on the back. I assume that most of you read and were amazed by this story. It was reported as follows:

Officials in a Denair Unified School District, California, instructed a middle school student, Cody Alicea, that he must remove the U.S. flag from his bike to avoid "racial tension" and because of complaints from other students. In supporting his decision, Superintendent Parraz was quoted as saying "The First Amendment is important. We want the kids to respect it, understand it, and with that comes a responsibility." Post 46 members might well be confused by Mr. Parraz's use of the First Amendment to justify his decision because, among other things, it contains the most forceful prohibition against the denial of freedom of speech. Additional statements by Mr. Parraz were similarly confusing. He justified his prohibition of the display of the flag by explaining that racial tensions had boiled over at his school around the Cinco de Mayo holiday and the U.S. flag was, in his view, inciting unrest.

Fortunately, this story also has a happy ending. Literally hundreds of American Legionnaires paraded in protest of the prohibition and escorted the young student to his school with the U.S. flag proudly mounted on the rear of his bicycle. Faced with this public pressure, Parraz changed his mind and let Cody display the U.S. flag. If you have internet access, you can view on UTube some of the public protests made on Cody's behalf and a brief clip of his very well expressed reasons for acting as he did. His family includes many veterans and he himself plans to serve in the air-force (nobody is perfect!) I hope all Post 46 members enjoy reading stories such as this whether or not you agree with its outcome. It does serve the purpose of reminding us all that when a sufficient number of veterans join together to achieve a certain goal, they can achieve them if they truly put their hearts and minds into the effort. Please let us have any comments or follow ups about this story you might care to write and we will include them in the next news letter.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER VETERANS GROUPS

A year ago in this newsletter, there appeared an item under the same title as appears above. The concerns noted in that item have not changed or, if anything, have continued to get worse. As then noted, most of you are aware that American Legion posts and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts are closing across the country as the number of members continues to decline. Further, there will obviously be no more Vietnam veterans to fill the ranks. A recent article sent to me by Legionnaire Krapohl highlights the efforts being made by some VFW posts to remedy the situation. One of these VFW posts was located in Leavenworth, Kansas, which is, fortunately for the Post, located in an Army town. The Leavenworth VFW Post was traditionally dominated by aged ex-servicemen. In recent years, however, new young leadership has transformed the post into a center providing support and companionship for male and female veterans of all ages and conflicts. The 36 year old commander of the post, Lynn Rolf, stated: "We have to transform ourselves or we won't survive." Rolf enlisted his veteran friends and they led what he describes as a "coup" to reform the post. Now the post hosts parties for the children of deployed soldiers, has organized a motorcycle rally to raise money for the families of deploying troops, offers resume writing classes for service members and their spouses and the members have even come together to clean up the home of a soldier who was deployed while his house was inundated with floodwater (Similar to our efforts with Post 46 member James Doyle?). The biggest problem faced by Rolf was one of perception and he now sees a sea change at his post because he sees younger vets, older vets and even some very old vets attending events together. Post 46 obviously suffers from the same problems and needs help in solving them. In the first place, are any members willing to initiate or participate in activities like those VFW events listed above or have ideas for any similar civic and/or veteran functions which we can undertake? Secondly, do any of you have friends who are Iraq or Afghanistan veterans in our

community? If so, please do not feel shy in asking them to join Post 46 or contact us so that we can encourage them to join us as fellow veterans. Similarly, if you know of any such veterans who you believe are entitled to some form of benefits arising from their military service, please let us know so that we can point these veterans in the right direction. We cannot and should not forget the “veteran connection” which links us all together.

BINGO NIGHT AT THE VA HOSPITAL

Post 46 entertained the veterans hospitalized at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital on the night of December 29th with a Bingo session. Post 46 awarded gift shop booklets as prizes to the Bingo winners and, so as to not let anyone leave empty handed, gave every participant a gift certificate to the hospital gift shop. Legionnaires Hegel, Krapohl (Graydon), Edwards, Malley, Howley (and grandson) and Burgess were among the “usual suspects” who gathered together to support the veterans aided by other volunteers. One person who was sorely missed and who usually leads the Post 46 contingent and calls the numbers was our own Commander, Steve Duncan, who was recovering from some recent medical treatment. Commander Duncan reports that he has now fully recovered and is ready again to “call the numbers”. This particular Bingo night was more crowded and more popular than ever not only because the construction of the new recreation room had not been completed so that we were in a smaller room but also because the veterans post which had been scheduled to conduct the Bingo session the night before failed to show up. If you can help us on Bingo nights with hospitalized veterans either to assist with bingo cards, hand out prizes or simply chat with the veterans, please let us know. You will be glad you did.

NEWS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Linda Kelly and Ed Zurey (who you might remember addressed our Christmas Party two years ago) have moved to Montana and with them has essentially moved the moving force of Operation Never Forgotten (ONF). ONF was initially formed here in An Arbor with the assistance of Post 46 . From January 7 to 11, 2011, ONF is hosting “Operation Sports, Afield and Stream” in Bozeman, Montana, for warriors with physical and/or invisible wounds. This is a 5 day rebound program where veterans from around the country will be introduced to “new passions, skills, thrills comforts and even purpose.” Linda is a human dynamo working tirelessly for the benefit of our wounded veterans. If you would like to support her efforts in any way, please contact Linda at linda@operationnf.org or at 406-581-8358.

As some of you know, there is a homeless tent community located in Ann Arbor which has named itself Camp Take Notice (CNT). Some of its residents are homeless veterans. Post 46 intends to cooperate with the homeless shelter here in Ann Arbor to offer aid and assistance as requested. If you would like to learn more about this issue, please visit www.michigantentcity.org Also, if you have further questions, wish to attend meetings involving CTN or can otherwise lend some support, please contact Post 46. Thank you.

Our Post 46 website - www.americanlegionannarbor.org - is under renovation and should be up and running before the end of January. Thanks for your patience.

POST OFFICERS

Steve Duncan, Commander & Finance Officer
Greta Krapohl, Sr. Vice Commander
Michael Malley, Jr. Vice Commander & Judge Advocate
Elmer White, Adjutant
John "Laurie" Howley, Sgt. at Arms
Robert Oxenger, Chaplain
Graydon Krapohl, Service Officer
Thomas Scott, Executive Committee
Douglas Woolley, Executive Committee
Dale Burgess, Executive Committee

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