

updates

Post – Convention 2015

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**Associates of Vietnam
Veterans of America, Inc.
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Suite 100 Silver Spring,
MD 20910**

Toll Free: 800-882-1316

Sharon's quote for this issue:

There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded."

~Mark Twain

-Mark Twain

President's Message

The 8th AVVA National Convention has adjourned; the delegates have returned home; our organization is now governed by a complete revision of our bylaws; our Project Friendship was a huge success; and, the 2015 Board of Directors have already begun working on our goals and objectives for the next two years.

I must thank Cecilia Essenmacher, Bylaws Chair, and her committee for the excellent job they did before and during the convention. Their hard work beforehand made the Delegate's work much easier; and, we walked away with bylaws that are concise, clear, and complete.

The Delegates did a wonderful job! They were engaged and involved through the entire process. They listened; some made comments for improvements, and then they voted. They did their job well!

Barbara Miller, our Parliamentarian, was invaluable. Her guidance and knowledge was most helpful in completing executing the tasks laid before us.

I want to thank all of our state associations, chapters, and individual members who participated in our Project Friendship donation collection. Thanks to you and our strong supporters in VVA, we reached an all-time high of \$10,000 this year. One of the workers at the Spring Street Veterans Renaissance asked me what methods we used to collect our donations. I replied, "We ask, and they give." It is that simple.

I congratulate all the newly elected and returning Board members. We have hit the ground running; business as usual; no free rides.

Our first online educational sessions will be on the upcoming At-Large Representative elections that will take place in January and February in 2016. The State Representatives and Presidents should expect communication regarding these elections after we complete our sessions. I encourage all of our state-level officials to either refresh your memory or become familiar with the process now. It can be found in the Policies and Procedures Manual in Section 5. Our At-Large membership must be given the opportunity of representation at the state-level meetings and at the national conventions.

Together Always,

Sharon

Vice President ~ Cathy Keister

It was wonderful to see everyone in Springfield, IL. I had the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet many new members.

Convention time is very hectic, there are not enough hours in the day to spend time with everyone, I so enjoy the time I have to talk with our membership.

Thank you for re-electing me to the position of Vice President. It is an honor to serve the membership of such a great organization.

I am looking forward to working with our new Board of Directors the next two years.

If at any time I can be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact me. I am always here to serve our membership where ever needed.

Again, thank you for your support.

Why Join AVVA?

Being a member of AVVA gives you the fellowship in which to accomplish all manner of tasks and programs that support the needs of our Nation's Veterans. Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America members walk the halls of Congress supporting Veteran related legislation, and promote programs and events. You can be a part of that on a local level.

If you look at our programs you will see that AVVA is hard at work, helping to improve the circumstance of Veterans and their families in both large and small ways. Our Service Officer Program adds experienced personnel to help with the huge number of claims for Veterans and their survivors, at no cost to them; our VISTA Program encourages 'giving back' to local communities and tracks the 1000's of hours of Volunteer work by our members throughout the country; Paper Safes give Veterans a means of making life less stressful for their family and friends in a time when things can be very chaotic, again, at no cost to the Veteran. AVVA gives grants to organizations helping homeless Veterans, and supports educational programs regarding the effects of Agent Orange and other dioxins.

When you join AVVA you join a family that stretches across this country, whose common goal is to help keep this nation's promises to our Veterans.

Secretary ~ Joanna Henshaw

I would like to say....WOO-HOO! (Ok, yes I am more than 15 years old...HA) Another successful convention has been concluded. I really think that this convention was the best I have ever been to!

All of the 92 delegates who attended did a great job participating in discussions and being conscious of their role. They gave the Board members very good feedback about the things they may want to see in the future, and those things that they especially liked about this year. There were also approximately 70 guests who attended, and added interest to the events.

I was told by many of the participating members that they particularly liked the use of the video equipment, allowing us to display the Bylaws up on a screen in real time. We will certainly be continuing this in future conventions. It gave the delegates and guests the ability to see exactly what the bylaws said, and exactly how they were being changed, as it happened. (Kudos to our President for thinking of that one!)

I loved looking out over the convention floor on Friday, and seeing a sea of red! We had all been asked to wear something red in support of our active military, and everyone did just that. But the main thing was that business got done, and issues were discussed, and our members should be congratulated for their participation.

A very real effort was made by the current officers and board members to make this convention as professional as possible, while still allowing for a bit of fun. I think it turned out well. We must all work together to make the next convention even bigger and better!

Convention 2015



AVVA

Photos





VVA Opening Ceremonies





AVVA Luncheon



More Awards & Recognition



COMMENDATION MEDAL



MEMBER OF THE YEAR



THANK YOU!

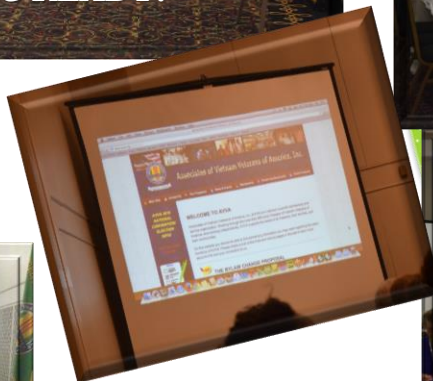


Joanna Henshaw, Cathy Keister & VVA member Sandy Miller received the AVVA Commendation Medal ~ Nina Schloffel, CA, received the Member of the Year Award.



VISTA AWARDS

Dedication



Wear Red – Support Our Troops



TO YOU ALL!

TERESA BREWER AVVA CH 982 CA. TELLER
LYNDA KILBY AVVA CH 1083 MI. TELLER
JOYCE LUPER CH 1004 TN. TELLER
BILL WILLIAMS TIMEKEEPER MT.

& Suzie Meeks ~for everything!
Barbara Miller ~Parliamentarian
Steve Mackey ~for all the great pictures

Awesome Ladies!
Charlene Holloway & Bonnie Grant
Sgt. at Arms



What Happened at the Convention?

AVVA held the Annual AVVA Luncheon on July 22, 2015, at the 2015 National Convention. At this luncheon, the organization gave out the following awards to deserving members:

President's Commendation Medal

Cathy Keister, Joanna Henshaw, Sandy Miller (VVA)

Fellowship Awards (2 were given this year)

John Emery Sr. and John Emery Jr., Chapter 635, WI, Kathy Kutac, Chapter 870, TX

National Member of the Year Award

Nina Schloffel, CA

VISTA Program Awards

1st Place for most individual Volunteer Hours – Bobbie Morris, PA (386.5)

2nd Place for most individual Volunteer Hours – Nancy Briggs, AZ (358)

3rd Place for most individual Volunteer Hours – Karen See, TN (291)

Region with most Volunteer Hours – Region 3 (1705.95)

State with most Volunteer Hours – Tennessee (1167.95)

Chapter with most Volunteer Hours – Chapter 1004 (651.45)



1st 2015-2017 Board of Directors meeting

NATIONAL BYLAWS: Changes

The delegates at the 2015 National Convention considered a proposal for revised Bylaws of the Corporation. Where you see the words "The Corporation" it refers to the National AVVA Corporation as a whole. You will find the new Bylaws linked below, and under the "Governing Documents" link across the top section of each page in this website.

http://avva.org/documents/2015bylaws_adopted.pdf

Project Friendship



AVVA President, Sharon Hobbs presented this year's Project Friendship, Spring Street Veterans Renaissance, with a check for **\$10,000.00**.

2015 AVVA Convention Minutes:

http://www.avva.org/documents/bod/2015ConventionMinutes_adopted.pdf



VVA POW/MIA Ceremony

Committee Reports

Agent Orange ~ Nancy Switzer & Linda Mooney

We have long suspected that there is a connection between our veterans' exposure to toxic substances while serving our nation and the health problems that have plagued so many of our children and grandchildren. We are hopeful that the Toxic Research Act of 2015--H.R.1769 and S.901--will allow for the needed scientific research and provide the long-awaited answers to our questions regarding toxic exposures and their impact on future generations.

In 2009, our organization convened the first of a series of Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting on the trans-generational effects of Agent Orange. Over 200 Vietnam veterans and their families attended. Since then, over 180 Town Hall meetings have been held across the country states, and we have heard from over 10,000 veterans and their families.

At these town hall meetings, we have heard heart-wrenching stories of children who have suffered. We have listened to grown men cry, as they confess they have always felt in their hearts that their exposure during their service is the reason for their children's sometimes fatal health issues. We have heard mothers tell of how they have, over the years, suspected that their child's ill health is due to their spouse's exposure while in service. Our families are suffering.

When our young men and women serve in defense of our Constitution, they willingly risked life and limb, but they did not expect their children and their grandchildren to suffer as well.

That is why I am writing to ask you to contact your members to ask their congressional Representatives to co-sponsor H.R. 1769, the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015 and companion bill S. 901. This legislation is for the children and grandchildren of all veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service in our Armed Forces.

ACT NOW! If your Representative or Senator is not on the below list please contact them NOW, call them in Washington or send them a letter, asking them to join their colleagues and cosponsor H.R. 1769 and S.901, the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015.

Please follow-up on your letter with a call or visit to their district office.

Together we can win this fight!

Are your elected officials supporting this very important bill (see below)

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr1769>

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/s901>

Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings

September 2, 2015

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin
4:00 pm McMillan Memorial Library
490 East Grand Avenue
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
Contact Mike Demske
michael.demske@yahoo.com

September 17, 2015

Green Bay, Wisconsin 4:30 pm.
Green Bay Yacht Club
100 Bay Beach Road
Green Bay, WI 54302
Contact: Mike Demske
michael.demske@yahoo.com

September 19, 2015

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 1:00pm-4:00 pm
VVA Chapter 415
Northampton Community College
Lipkin Theatre, Kopecek Hall
3835 Green Pond Rd,
Bethlehem, PA 18020
Contact: Mike Regrut darnmike07@gmail.com

September 19th, 2015

Douglas, Georgia 9am – 12pm
City of Douglas Auditorium
200 S Madison Avenue Douglas, GA 31533
Contact: Wayne Rowell 912-614-1020
Spence Davis 912-387-6551
vvagsc@aol.com

September 19, 2015

Rapid City, South Dakota 9:00am-3:00pm
 VFW Post Rapid City 420 Main Street
 Rapid City, SD 57701
 Contact: Maynard Kaderlik 507-581-6402

September 27, 2015

Little Ferry, New Jersey 2:00 pm-5:00 pm
 VFW Hall, 100 Main Street
 Little Ferry, NJ 07643
 Contact: Mike Eckstein mre1065@gmail.com

October 3, 2015

Redding, California 5:00 pm Shasta County Veterans
 Hall 1605 Yuba Street, Redding, CA 96001
 Contact: Linda Johnson
 619-318-6087

October 17, 2015

Riverside, CA Details Upcoming
 Contact Zack Earp (951) 352-1278
 wyatt48@att.net

October 24, 2015

Oxford, Michigan 11:00 am Registration
 12:00 pm-4:00 pm Town Hall Meeting
 Christ the King Community Church
 1550 W Drahner Rd, Oxford, MI 48371
 VVA Chapter 133
 Contact: Richard Lash
 rd_lash@hotmail.com
 248-394-0141

Chaplain ~ Diane Nicholson

Thank you for entrusting me with this position. It is something I never thought I would be doing, but I am challenged to do as good as our previous Chaplain, Sherry Anderson.

Since coming home from convention, I have received 89 death notices of which I sent out 83 sympathy cards. Five I did not send to due to the deaths being over 1 year. One I did not send out because there was no address.

I look forward to the next two years as the AVVA National Chaplain.

Election Committee ~ Elayne Mackey

The Election Committee, along with the Credentials Committee, started preparing for the National Elections in January and ended on July 24, 2015.

Thank you to you all that helped make the elections go so smoothly. I am proud to say that we had no problems.

Delegates entered the voting area with a smile on their face which was great to see.

The Credentials Committee reported that a total of 182 registered for the Convention while a total of 92 were voting delegates.

The 2015-2017 Election Committee has welcomed one new member for this term. (*please see below)

Elayne Mackey Chair
 Suzie Meeks Data Base Coordinator
 *Judy Bolio, Diane Nicholson and Ann Rice.

Looks like a great committee!

Thanks again, everyone, for a great 2015 Election cycle.

AVVA NATIONAL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS:

The following are the members of your 2015 - 2017 National Board of Directors.

**National Officers:**

President: Sharon Hobbs
 Vice-President: Cathy Keister
 Secretary: Joanna Henshaw
 Treasurer: Kathy Andras

Regional Directors:

Region 2: Nancy Rekowski
Region 3: Beverly Pounds
Region 4: Jeri Wallis
Region 5: Cecilia Essenmacher
Region 6: Diane Nicholson
Region 7: Percilla Newberry
Region 8: John Birch
Region 9: Elayne Mackey

Best of luck to you all!

Membership ~ Cathy Keister

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America announce a onetime offer on Life Memberships.

A life membership will be offered from Nov.1, 2015 until Dec. 31, 2015 for only \$100.00.

Criteria for the sale is as follows:

- Any annual or new member may sign up for \$100 life membership
- Dual members are included, following the above criteria
- Membership dues must be current.
- If on time payments, and you have paid \$100 or more by November 1, your payments will automatically stop, and you will receive your life membership
- If have not paid the minimum of \$100 on time payments you may pay a onetime payment of the difference and receive a life membership.
- There will be no time payments offered on this \$100.00 life membership.
- Any member who is a 3 year member, regardless of where you are at with your due date, you can sign up, but must pay \$100 for a life

A special application will be available on our web site avva.org.

This is a great time to give a gift of a Life membership to your family and friends.

Please direct any questions to:
Membership@avva.org.

Public Relations ~ Beverly Pounds

The AVVA Public Relation Committee is excited to have a ***“Welcome to Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America”*** packet. I want to thank the committee members for all their time, ideas and hard work on this project. Great job, Elayne Mackey, Pamela Bossardet, Nancy Rekowski, Sherry Anderson, Joanna Henshaw and Cathy Keister.

This packet is especially for new VVA and AVVA Chapters. The contents contain a welcome letter from our National president Sharon Hobbs, the History of AVVA and information about how AVVA operates as an organization. If you have a new chapter forming in your area please request a packet by contacting Public Relation Chair, Beverly Pounds at bpounds@avva.org

With a better understanding of who we are as an organization we should be able to grow even stronger working hand in hand with each other.

The future of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America is exciting. We are looking forward to seeing where we will be in 2 more years. The Public Relation Committee wants to give ideas and tools that will help get the word out in your local communities about your meetings and events.

The Public Relation Committee is here to serve you. With a membership of 8,500 plus, we know there are lots of creative people. We need and want your ideas.

As Public Relation Committee Chair, I want to thank the following people who have volunteered and served on the committee for the past 2 years, Elayne Mackey, Sherry Wright Anderson, Pamela Bossardet and Nancy Rekowski. Your time and work is very much appreciated.

VISTA Hours ~ Jeri Wallace

Here is a quick update on hours collected from March 1, 2015 thru August 25, 2015.

4367.45

First years totals from August 7, 2014 thru February 28, 2015 were 6210.2

Totals to date are 10,577.65 Hours

We are just 6 months into this year's hours and have 6 more months to go let's double what we did for the first year. Keep sending me those hours and spread the word to others on keeping up with their hours. Thank you everyone!

Regions, States & Chapters

Region 2 ~ Nancy Rekowski

After months and months of waiting in excitement for the 2015 Convention, it's hard to believe that it's come and gone. It's always great to see old friends and making new ones. Region II was well represented and everyone seemed to enjoy taking part in the bylaw changes and elections.

My most humble gratitude to the members of Region II for accepting me as their Regional Director for a second term.

Congratulations to Cathy Keister, (PA) Chapter 542, who was awarded the AVVA Presidents Honor Medal. Bobbie Morris, (PA) Chapter 862 earned first place, Volunteers in Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) Award. Nancy Switzer, (NY) Chapter 20 was awarded an Outstanding Committee Chair by Cathy Keister for her dedicated work as Chair of the Agent Orange Committee.

Members receiving VISTA pins for recorded hours are;

From PA Chapter 364 Linda Haberkorn. PA Chapter 542, Sandra Allen, Sharon Bedrin, Jill Freedman, Ruth McGowan, Jen Imperato, Carol Carter. From PA Chapter 862, Bobbie Morris, Suzanna Bridgewater, Sandra Giordana, Laurel Beitsinger.

If your chapter is not logging their volunteer VISTA hours, I encourage you to start today. You can log your hours by going to **AVVA.org**. You can log your hours by using the online form or print out forms to take too your chapter meetings.

Region 3 ~ Beverly Pounds

WOW!!!

How time flies. When I was elected the Region 3 Director I'll admit I was nervous. Wanting to do the best job I could and to serve our membership. Reviewing back over the past two years, looking at how we have grown as a Region it is amazing.

I cannot begin to THANK YOU enough, the members, for all your support and kindness you have given. Now two years later you have put your trust in me again by electing me to represent you on the National Board of Directors.

I am much honored to serve you. In order to do that, I need your help. I need **HOT Communication** from not only the State Presidents and State Representatives but the chapters and membership also.

HOT Communication is Honest, Open, Two way Communication. The number one way we can continue to grow strong is to continue working together and sharing ideas. I'm so proud of each of our States; Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and District of Columbia.

To all of our members that took the time to turn in your volunteer hours, for the VISTA Program you made Region 3 number One. Again, you are awesome.

With VVA and AVVA working together to help each other work the membership " Fire Sales " I'm anxious to see where we stand as a Region at the end of December.

Only eight months, yes, eight months till we travel to Charleston, West Virginia for the 27th George C. Duggins Region 3 Conference, May 19 – 22, 2015. Mark it on your calendar and start making plans to attend.

Thank you to each of our members for ALL you do to help our veterans and their families. You are making a difference.

***AVVA Tennessee Association Inc. ~
Beverly Pounds***

Tennessee AVVA is busy, busy, busy.

Fall is in the air and in Tennessee that means county fairs. Most of our chapters have booths and fundraisers at their local fairs, giving out information about Agent Orange, DIC brochures, etc. and applications for new members.

Tennessee is known as the volunteer state and that we are.

At the National Convention, AVVA Luncheon, the VISTA Program Volunteer Hours Awards were presented. Tennessee was the State with the most Volunteer hours. The Chapter with the most volunteer hours was Tennessee AVVA Chapter 1004, Linda Yates, Chapter Rep, excepting the certificate. The Individual member with the most volunteer hours, Third place, went to Karen See from Chapter 240, Ann Rice, Chapter Rep, excepting the certificate. We are thankful for all the time and work our members give to help ALL our veterans and their families.

The Big event now is helping with the ***“Fire Sale”*** for VVA membership, continuing on in November with the AVVA ***“Fire Sale”***. Working together helping each other is how we are growing in Tennessee. We are so appreciative of the dual members we have in Tennessee.

Region 4: Jeri Wallis

First I want to thank everyone that came to the 2015 National Conferences and Elections in Springfield Illinois and supported me again to be your Region 4 Director.

AVVA Florida State Association, Inc.: Our efforts to revitalize and reorganize the State Association have not been successful.

At the State meeting in June, the chapter delegates voted to disband the corporation.

After speaking at length with National AVVA Vice President Cathy Keister, it has been decided that we will send out one last letter to each AVVA member in the State of Florida. There will be a letter from myself as the AVVA Florida State President and a letter from Sharon Hobbs, AVVA National President asking each member for their decision to unincorporate the state association.

On a brighter note, AVVA Florida State has partnered with VVA Florida State and created ***“Loving You”***, an assistance fund for widows/widowers of VVA/AVVA members in this state. VVA State Council has graciously opened the fund with a \$500.00 donation along with setting up the availability to receive donations from chapters around the state. AVVA Florida State Association had been assisting widows prior to the start of this necessary fund.

With each passing year, we lose more of our veterans and many of us know firsthand how financially difficult this time can be.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to know more about this fund.

Respectfully Submitted,
Suzanne Blohm-Weber, President
blohmweber@yahoo.com
(386)986-9153

AVVA Georgia State

Keep this date for anyone that can make it to Blairsville, Georgia October 8th through the 15th.

VVA Chapter 1101 has the moving wall at Meeks Park (1/2 mile west of Blairsville on Hwy 515) Blairsville, GA.

They will be showing the Moving Wall alongside the Sorghum Festival (the art of making syrup), and there will be lots of food, vending, live music and more the whole weekend Oct 10 and 11.

Chapter 1101 is a newer chapter that formed in July 2014 and has put a lot of time and energy in to this festival and bringing in the moving wall so let's give them a hand in what they have accomplished.

I and the Georgia AVVA State Rep, will be there and working on a membership drive to get the chapters AVVA up and running. There are several that are ready to sign up but want some history on the organization and some guidance.

To find out more about this weekend visit the website visitblairsvillega.com/events.

CLAY COUNTY CHAPTER 1059 assisted Chapters 1046 and 1059 in facilitating the Agent Orange Town Hall meeting on March 27. AVVA composed and distributed letters to Clay County businesses, accepted all donations, fielded phone calls and attended all planning meetings.

March, 2015: Distributed roses to all Clyde Lassen Veterans Home lady vets in recognition of Women in Service Month.

April, 2015: Assisted our VVA at their booth at a 10 day long county fair.

Assisted our VVA with their annual BBQ at the Clyde Lassen Vets Home. Made baked goods and helped serve approximately 150 residents and staff.

AVVA members distributed new, Disney stuffed animals to the lady vets.

In collaboration with Kohl's, we distributed Disney stuffed animals to local home for battered women, Community Hospice, pediatric cardiac patients and bible study children's groups.

Region 5 ~ Cecilia Essenmacher

I am very excited to begin working with the members of Region 5. Our National Convention was productive with lots of first-timers. I encourage each of you to become more knowledgeable and aware of what our organization is doing and supporting.

I look forward to getting to know more about each member and chapter within our region.

If you have any questions or concerns, or news and praise from your chapters, please let me know so we can share what we are doing.

librnok@hotmail.com (please put AVVA in your subject line)

Region 6 ~ Diane Nicholson

I am honored to be the Region 6 Director for the next 2 years. Since returning from convention, I have attended meetings in Ottawa and Topeka, KS.

I will be attending the Kansas State Council meeting on September 13 in Topeka.

I have been invited to read a poem of mine at the VVA Chapter 809 POW/MIA ceremony in Salina, KS on September 18th.

It has been challenging for me for the last month as my husband was hospitalized for a time and still has health issues that have not been resolved.

If any members of Region 6 want to speak with me, please feel free to email me at: dianemnicholson@hotmail.com or text me at 785 608 6920.

Region 8 ~John Birch

"Hello to everyone from this very warm and dry, fire on the mountain smoke in the sky region VIII! The smoke has been horrible but the smoke is the least of our problems in this area. Many homes and lives have been lost to this tragedy and I ask that you pray for those who have suffered.

I want to continue by saying that I am again your Region VIII Director and I consider this a privilege to continue the service. The Convention in Springfield was awesome and a neat experience in the land of Lincoln. The convention center was located in the middle of everything to see in

Springfield and for those who had the time and chance to visit Springfield historical sites were not disappointed. This is a very neat and historical area of our Nation."

08/25/2015 Several members of VVA/AVVA chapter #0585 Mid Valley went to a town Hall Meeting in Sweet Home, Oregon. Rep. Peter DeFazio presiding, and after he was advised by Mr. Tom Owen about S. 901, H.R. 1769 Rep Toxic Exposure Act of 2015 DeFazio stated he would support these bills and when he returned to Washington, D.C. he would sign on! Right On, Groovy and Dig it Man!

News from other parts of Region VIII, Montana comes in the form of a Facebook address;" Vietnam Veterans of America Northwest Montana Chapter #1087." If you are interested please go there and look. This is a relatively new chapter with more chapters to be established. So please check them out and say hello.

Region 9 ~ Elayne Mackey

A heartfelt and very sincere thank you to all of the Region 9 Delegates that attended the 2105 AVVA Convention. As always I was very proud of you all; with your questions, interest and dedication. It is such a privilege to work with you all.



I am, once again, fortunate to serve as Region 9 Director with you all again. Thank you for your vote of confidence. The last two years were great and I know the next two years will be even better.

Linda Johnson & Bobbie Miller – CA Delegates.



A big hug and thank you to Annie Pancrazio for being the Deputy Region 9 Director for so many years. You are truly appreciated, Annie!

Casey Farrell will become the new Region 9 Deputy Director. Casey is the President of AVVA Ch. 975 Inc. Kingman AZ.

Welcome Casey, I am looking forward to you being with us. Thank you!



GREAT SEEING THE GUYS JOIN!



New Documentary ~ The Unknowns



"The Unknowns" is a documentary film created by Army Veterans Neal Schrodetzki and Ethan Morse. Both were stationed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, and bring a unique perspective to the rigorous and intricate training process that soldiers must endure to be stationed there.

The film covers select portions of the Sentinel training program, and will answer questions and dispel myths that have circulated regarding the elite site since its establishment.

This Independent documentary was made possible by the 149 people who contributed to our successful KICKSTARTER campaign. With their support, we raised over \$15,000, secured \$35,000 in loaned equipment, and utilized a talented crew to bring the production to life.

We are currently in post-production, and are planning to release this movie on ***Veterans Day, 2015***. We are also researching our distribution options. At a minimum, we will make this film available through digital download, or online purchase for delivery.

To assist with final finishing costs, please visit the 'Support' section of this web site.

Thank you very much for your interest in this project.

<http://www.theunknownsmovie.com/>



12 Qualities of an Enlightened Person ***"If you think you are enlightened, go home for Thanksgiving." -- Ram Dass***

We sometimes say that some people are enlightened, but do we really know what that means? We might say that because they are kind, loving, and insightful. While these may indeed be qualities of an enlightened person, it's hard to be sure unless we ourselves are enlightened.

I've been on a spiritual path most of my life, and in my experience I've seen how people are transformed through spiritual practices. Here is a list of qualities that most of them attain. This is not a comprehensive list, but I think it contains some of their most prominent qualities.

Keep in mind that there are varying degrees of enlightenment. That is, everyone is at a different point in his spiritual development, and some may be more enlightened than others. Also, these qualities can be possessed by both men and women. Enlightenment is not exclusive to either sex.

1. Happiness The enlightened person is happy and joyful. He has a cheerful disposition most of the time, and is willing to share that joy with others. He is always optimistic that all challenges have a resolution. Even though the resolution may not be the most desirable, he is confident that he is capable of being at peace with it.

2. Peaceful and Serene The enlightened person is peaceful and serene, because he is free of fear and other unwholesome emotions. He can see that the human condition reaches beyond this physical existence, so he no longer has a fear of the unknown. He is free of worry because he understands that freedom from suffering comes from within, and not from material possessions.

3. Loving, Kind, and Compassionate The enlightened person is loving, kind, and compassionate for two main reasons: 1) he genuinely cares about other people, regardless of whether they care about him, and 2) he knows that other people provide him with the spiritual nourishment he needs to continue growing. Therefore, he remains spiritually open to everyone.

4. Not Self-Centered The enlightened person is not self-centered, because he has lost the sense of a separate self. He can see the interconnected nature of our existence. To him, this is not just a concept, but a reality. He realizes that all physical manifestations (humans, animals, plants, etc.) depend on each other for their survival.

5. Emotionally Stable The enlightened person is emotionally stable because he no longer has an ego that needs validation for its existence. He is not hurt because there is no ego to hurt. He does not get angry because he is understanding and compassionate toward those who are not as far along the spiritual path.

6. Patient and Understanding The enlightened person is patient and understanding because he appreciates how our ignorance creates our own suffering. He understands the challenges of achieving enlightenment, so he doesn't condemn people for their missteps.

7. Humble The enlightened person is humble. Since he knows his place in the universe, he doesn't need validation from others. Therefore, he has nothing to prove to anyone, including himself. His humble nature allows him to be kind and gentle, and be open to everyone he encounters.

8. Insightful and Open-Minded The enlightened person is insightful and open-minded. He is able to see the world with great clarity, without attachment to preconceived ideas about people, places, and things. This enables him to observe the world without jumping to conclusions. Belief and intuition are replaced with clarity of vision and understanding.

9. Inner Strength The enlightened person has great inner strength. He has learned healthy ways of connecting with the sources of spiritual nourishment -- through healthy interactions with people, and within. He no longer has a need for the power struggles that most of us engage in.

10. Leadership The enlightened person is a leader. Having awakened to the point of understanding the nature of suffering, he realizes his duty to help other people find freedom from suffering. He leads by example, rather than control. People follow him because of who he is and what he stands for. They want to be more like him.

11. Mindful of His Health The enlightened person is mindful of his health -- physical, mental, and emotional. He knows that his mind, body, and spirit must be in harmony in order to maintain his spiritual condition. He has developed an understanding of physical and mental health, and doesn't blindly depend on others for his health. He is mindful of the nutrients and substances he puts into his body.

12. Committed to His Spiritual Practice The enlightened person never forgets how he achieved enlightenment. He is also aware that it takes continuous effort to remain that way. It takes a great deal of spiritual nourishment to help others along their path, so he's aware that he needs to replenish his spiritual strength on a daily basis. Otherwise, he'll lose his effectiveness as a spiritual messenger.

Overall, the enlightened person is mindful of himself, and the world around him. Furthermore, he is curious and willing to continue learning. He is aware that even though he can see with great clarity, developing an understanding of the true nature of our existence takes time to observe and investigate.

This is not a comprehensive list of the qualities of an enlightened person. But I think these are the most prominent. My purpose for examining these qualities is to give us a compass to guide us in our spiritual journey -- a vision of the path that lies ahead.

From this list, it seems clear that enlightened people live rich and fulfilling lives. Those who achieve any measure of enlightenment do so through some form of daily meditation practice, a willingness to let go of old views, and a commitment to helping others find peace. It takes work and dedication, but it is well worth it.

LAUGHTER – THE BEST MEDICINE

Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing.



Last but Not Least

Why You Need to Cover Your Webcam RIGHT NOW

Your computer's built-in webcam is easy to take for granted if you don't use it very often. But just because you don't take advantage of this amazing piece of technology — as a woman in Toronto was recently shocked to learn — doesn't mean it isn't being used.

Chelsea Clark's night watching Netflix with her boyfriend didn't seem like anything out of the ordinary — until pictures of the couple from that evening were sent to her Facebook account by the hacker who'd taken them from her webcam.

Clark described this as "a terrifying notion. It was a really bizarre thing to receive those messages and it really took a second to be like, 'OH MY GOD, that's what this means, that's the implication of receiving this message is someone was just watching us. We obviously had no idea it was taking place at the moment, but retroactively it was like a really, really deeply creepy feeling. It was very unnerving. I mean it does feel like there's just someone in your home with you."

Hackread reported previously that hackers use Remote Access Trojan (RAT) to gain access to unsuspecting users' computers and record their activity, including webcam sessions. In a separate incident, a Canadian woman who had taken control of users' webcams was arrested for spying.

This RAT malware is easily obtained by young and novice hackers through those with more experience. Called "ratters" because of the name of the malware they most often use, these hackers take control of a victim's computer and electronic devices and then attack, according to Hackread.

Toronto Police are investigating Clark's case. An easy safeguard everyone can use to prevent their candid moments from being seen by prying eyes is to attach a **small piece of any opaque tape, band aid, or other material over the webcam.**

In fact, if you haven't yet, maybe that should be the next thing you do.

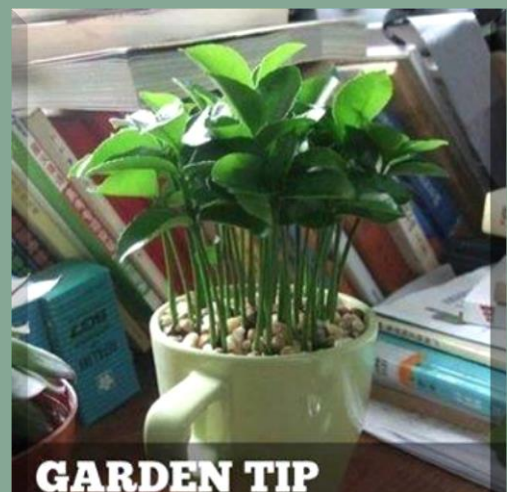


ASPARTAME - Roaches and ants won't eat it, cats and dogs won't eat it, even house flies won't eat it — but the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) serves Aspartame to you!



Side effects include...

Headaches, Muscle spasms, Irritability, Heart palpitations, Loss of taste, Joint pain, Dizziness, Weight gain, Tachycardia (heart racing), Breathing difficulty, Tinnitus (ringing in the ears), Blurred vision, Seizures, Rashes, Insomnia, Hearing loss, Depression, Vertigo, Nausea, Blindness, Slurred speech, Fatigue, Memory Loss, Numbness.



GARDEN TIP

Plant lemon seeds from your lemons!
Lemon leaves smell so good. Awesome for kitchens, bathrooms, or any place in the house.