

"Once again with my brothers...as we were together then...we are together now..."



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

A Nationally acclaimed and award winning Veteran Newsletter & Website

QUAD CITIES CHAPTER 299 WWW.QCVVA299.ORG

JULY 2010

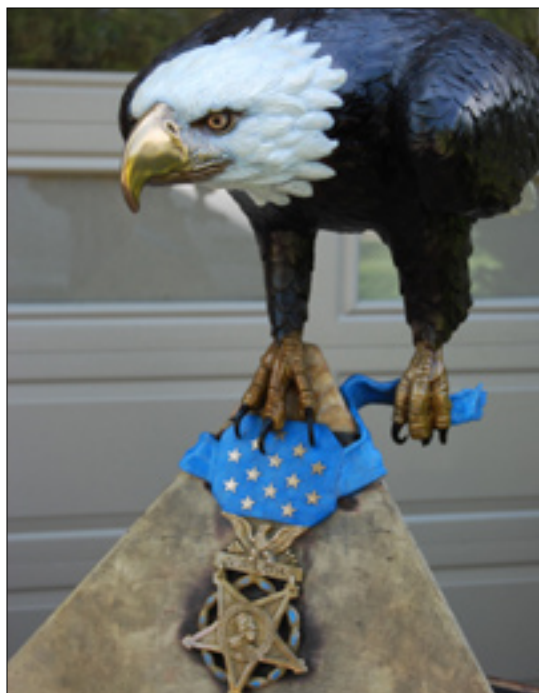
On Saturday, 31 July, 2010 at 1100 hours, Quad Cities Chapter 299, Vietnam Veterans of America will take great pride in sponsoring the dedication ceremony of the I-280 bridge which will be officially named after the Quad Cities Medal of Honor recipient, Sgt. John F. Baker, Jr.

This occasion will further be honored by the dedication of the John Baker/Vietnam Veterans Monument, which will be located in front of the Jumer's Hotel in close proximity to the flags.

The program will be held at the front entrance of Jumer's Hotel, Rock Island, IL. John Baker and his wife, Donnell, will be our most honored guests. NFL great & VN wounded and decorated combat vet, Rocky Bleier, will deliver the keynote address.

We urge all members, as well as the general public, to come and be a part of this momentous and historic occasion.

The photos of the bronze sculpture of the American Eagle clutching the Medal of Honor rests atop the monument capstone. It is the symbol of America and of her strength. It rests now...but is ever vigilant and remains ready to defend our liberty. As is said, we remain the land of the free because of



MINUTES VVA 299 BOARD MEETING - MOLINE VFW HALL -06-08-2010**MINUTES VVA 299 CHAPTER MEETING - ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL -06-15-2010**

MINUTES – VVA 299 BOARD MEETING – MOLINE VFW – 06.08.2010

The Board meeting was called to order by Chapter President Ray Hamilton with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our fallen and missing brothers.

Ray brought everyone up to speed on the monument dedication and reception. All is on target and moving to the end of July deadline.

Bud's Skyline Inn Hog Roast on Sunday, June 27th to benefit the QCA Honor Flight was discussed. Future Hog Roast fundraisers were also discussed. The Hog Roasts are a relatively new source of Chapter revenue that is proving its worth. Bingo continues to generate income for many Chapter projects and charities as well. Ray stated that all volunteers for Bingo, Hog Roast and the many other less public projects that the Chapter has undertaken are to be commended for their selfless giving of time.

The Chapter's September "Golf Classic" was also discussed.

The new election protocol written by Ray was presented in rough draft and was discussed (see membership minutes).

To vote in the Chapter's annual election a member in good standing (dues paid up) must have his/her DD-214 on file. All members are urged, in the strongest possible terms, to make sure their DD-214 is on file with the

Chapter. If in doubt, see Larry Tschappat (for additional information on this subject, see June's STS article on same).

Terry Kramer is the prim coordinator of the office move.

Committee Reports:

See Chapter Membership meeting minutes for reports on committees that had updates.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

MINUTES – VVA299 CHAPTER MEETING – RIA – 06.15.2010

The meeting was called to order by Chapter President Ray Hamilton with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our fallen and missing brothers. A motion was made and passed to accept the minutes as published in the June STS. There was a corrected date in reference to the Honor Flight fundraiser.

Prez. Hamilton addressed the meeting about out the annual Chapter election protocol that he pledged to have ready for Chapter approval the end of this year. The initial draft has been completed. The Board approved final version will be published in the STS and voted on by the membership.

The Baker/VN Vet monument timetable was updated: reception Friday, 30 July at 1800-2100 and dedication Saturday, 31 July at 1100. Details in the June & July STS.

Ray advised that John Baker

will have heart surgery end of June. Our special thoughts and prayers are with him.

The Chapter's September Golf Outing is taking reservations and hole sponsors now (see elsewhere in the STS)

Bob Jackson thanked all who volunteered in moving barricades & barrels for the QCA's Criterium over Memorial Day weekend (see STS for details).

The cost of the dedication reception on Friday, 31 July, will be paid for by tickets sold, donations and Chapter Hog Roasts. This will be a First Class event and will be open to the general public, but with preference and a discount to Chapter members. Our intention is to recognize the many individuals and groups that allowed us to achieve our lasting legacy.

We have numerous Hog Roasts scheduled plus Thursday night bingo is ongoing. A sign-up sheet was passed around for both. Individuals were asked to sign up and would be called as the need arose. If available, one could help. If busy, maybe next time.

Andy Andersen reported that "Bobby 2 Spoons" was in the hospital, but is doing well. Long time Chapter member Dave Wardlow is also in need of our Chapter prayers and special thoughts. Anyone who knows of a Chapter member that is sick or hospitalized, they should call Jerry Fox at 309.786.9592. Jerry is Chair of our Care & Compassion Committee.

Chapter Secretary Bill Albracht advised that the 5th Annual Welcome Home Veterans Day Dance is a go! It will be held on FRIDAY, November 5th at Jumers Hotel & Casino Grand Ballroom from 1700 – 2400. Coupe De Ville will play from 1900 – 2300. Tickets will be limited in number and the advance sale price will be \$13, with \$15 at the door. Mark you calendars' NOW! More, much more to follow.

Terry Kramer gave the Treasurer's report. All is in order and we are financially secure.

Larry Tschappat stated that we now have 442 members, which puts us in 9th place. Everyone is urged to renew for the very special price of \$10 per year.

Andy Andersen reported on past and future Honor Guard commitments. Anyone interested in volunteering for the HG, please see Andy or Dennis (numbers are in the front page directory). The VN Moving Wall would be in Clinton in September. Our Chapter Honor Guard would be involved. No additional information was available.

Frenchy Eaves reported that he and Brent Cobb, Rudy Hernandez and Fred Swim visited the sick and infirmed at the IA City VA Hospital on June 1st. Further, Frenchy is again planning a visit to the RI County Nursing Home this fall. More to come.

“minutes” cont. from page 2

Although the VA Hospital & patients are very appreciative of our gifts, no more books will be accepted until further notice. Book will be accepted at the Bettendorf VA Clinic however.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Dennis Laird asked for an accounting of funds spent vs. funds raised with reference to the Baker/VN Monument. Treasurer Terry Kramer as able to reviews the books and determine that to date, \$13,707 have been spent and \$28,941 has been raised. There are several outstanding bills yet to be paid, but it is the Monument Committee’s sincere belief that the project will come in under budget.

Fred Barks addressed the membership and stated that the dedication of this most hallowed monument must not be turned into a political event under any conditions. Fred cited a recent event in which a vet challenged an elected official as to his right to claim veteran status. Although no one questioned the vet’s right to do so, Fred stated that it was not the right venue. Bill Albracht, speaking on behalf of the Chapter’s Monument Committee, addressed Fred’s (and many other members present) concerns saying that only politicians that directly helped accomplish our mission would be recognized and be invited as our Chapter guests. The

list would be restricted to all QCA Mayors and RI & Scott County Board Chairs, IL Governor Quinn, Senator Mike Jacobs and most importantly, Representative Pat Verschoore. No other politician had a hand in our Chapter’s collective accomplishments. All present were in agreement.

A motion was made, discussed and tabled in reference to purchasing six additional American Flags (+ poles) at the cost of \$600 to be used in a parade once or twice a year. Prez. Hamilton referred the matter to the Honor Guard (since they would actually carry them) to discuss and report back to the membership with a consensus.

The \$25 “Pot of Gold” was won by Bobby Mac McSparin. Bobby immediately donated it to the QCA Honor Flight Program. Thanks Bobby Mac!

Curt Gustafson won the 50/50 life membership drawing. Meeting Adjourned.

Submitted by Bill Albracht, Chapter Secretary

A SALUTE TO CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

A Salute, and a sincere THANK YOU, to the Chapter Members who turned out to help in The Criterium drum, fence, and sand bag move on May 27th & June 1st. The following members helped in the effort to get us a \$300 donation to the Chapter. WELL DONE!

- Andy Anderson 4 Hours Bob
- Brooks 2 Hours
- Terry Lynch 4 Hours Wayne
- Thompson 4 Hours
- Ray Hamilton 2 Hours Bill
- Albracht 2 Hours
- Bob Jackson 4 Hours Bob Mc Sparin 2 Hours

Adam Jackson 4 Hours (Non member Hours donated)

A bigger and better opportunity to raise funds for the Chapter still remains on

Sept. 1st & 2nd, and Sept. 7th, and 8th. The same process for the Rock Island Grand Prix. Please reserve one or more of these dates. Questions? Call Bob Jackson 309-781-8190 We should also be VERY PROUD of the Honor Guard Presentation at the Criterium

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HOME OF MEMORIAL OF HEROES

For those of you who have never been there, Indianapolis, Indiana is quite a nice place to visit. It is the home of the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway as well as Peyton Manning's one-time world champion Indianapolis Colts. It is also the city for which the USS Indianapolis was named. The infamous John Dillinger is buried in the Crown Hill Cemetery in this fair city. But much more than all of this,

Indianapolis, Indiana is the home of The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial. On May 28, 1999 IPALCO enterprises presented to the United States of America in honor of all who served their country and to the precious few who received this nation's highest award for valor, The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial. Located on the north bank of the Central Canal in White River State Park in



downtown Indianapolis, The Medal of Honor Memorial consists of 27 bluish-green, curved glass walls, each between 7 and 10 feet tall. The walls represent 15 conflicts, dating back to the Civil War.

The Memorial also has a touch-screen monitor for visitors to learn more about the Medal of Honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and each recipient including the famous Audie Murphy, and the Quad Cities' only MOH recipient, Sgt. John Baker. Etched into the glass walls are the names of all Medal of Honor recipients with their branch of service

and the site of their heroic deeds. There are 3,410 names enshrined. Every night at dusk, a sound system will play recorded stories narrated by the servicemen who hold the star-shaped medallions. The Memorial is opened seven days a week, 24 hours a day and admission is free. If you're ever in the area, you may find, as I did, that a visit to The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial is quite a moving and humbling experience.

--Jim Loveless

ONE MAN, ONE GIFT, BUT A SHARED LEGACY

I was approached the other day by a Chapter member that wanted to let me know how much the John Baker/QCA VN Veteran Monument meant to him. He talked about his return, about the adjustment, about the toll it took on his personal life until he understood. Until he understood that what he felt was pride for his service. Pride, not the shame that the liberal biased media told him he should feel. Pride for his service, pride in his unit and pride in our Chapter. Let it be known that this monument will stand in the light of day for all to see and for all to know that we did in fact serve with honor. With that he donated five crisp one hundred dollar bills, but only if I would not mention his name in public because he felt that the gift goes farther when intentions are not questioned.

- **Bill Albracht**

VETS' DAY IOWA

Vets' Day Iowa was held June 26 at Marshalltown Vets Home. This was the 1st year and the vets really loved the grilled picnic food, chips, baked beans, watermelon, and grilled meats, and ice cream. They also liked listening to a Rock N Roll, country music band. Making the trip was Frenchy Eaves, VVA Director, and wife Ann Eaves, Director AVVA. A big thank you goes out to Chapter 299 VVA for donating \$400 to this worth while cause for veterans.

VET'S DAY ILLINOIS 2010!

On The heels of June's Vet's Day Iowa, Chapter 299 in cooperation with the UAW, is helping to sponsor Vet's Day Illinois. This year, as in the past, it will be held at the Mantino, IL Veteran's Home on 21 August. This event is the highlight of the year for many of the home bound vets. An outdoor BBQ is planned as well as music and overall camaraderie. Frenchy Eaves as chair of the Vet 2 Vet committee, will be once again represent our Chapter at the annual event and asks any & all members to consider volunteering to help in this special day. Please contact Frenchy at 563.386.1696 for additional information.

VA OFFERS NEWEST EDITION OF VET BENEFIT HANDBOOK

The 2010 edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors is available online at www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp. Produced by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the handbook's chapters cover such topics as pensions, home loans, medals and records, special veteran groups and federal benefits. This handbook can be viewed by chapter or section, or download the entire document, in English or Spanish. At last count, less than 12% of the American population is considered veterans, having served on active non training duty for six months or more. The benefits that the Federal Government has authorized for veterans is not an entitlement program, but rather benefits that were earned by the sweat, blood and sacrifice of every American soldier, seaman, airman and marine that served. *Contributed by Chapter member Dan Johnson.*

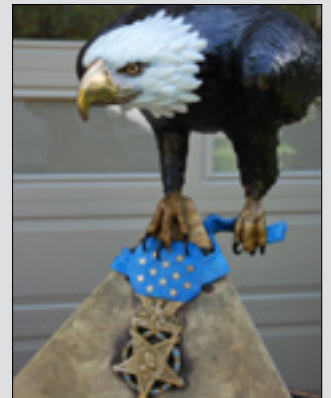


**PHOTOGALLERY - FROM
QCVVA299.ORG:
CAPTURED: A LOOK BACK AT
THE VIETNAM WAR ON THE
35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FALL OF SAIGON**

MONUMENT ENGRAVING

This three sided obelisk style monument will recount John Baker's heroism on one side, pay respect and tribute to all QCA VN & VN Era vets on side 2, and recognize all veterans, past, present and future on side three. Side one will have the bronze relief of a young John, side 2 will have our Chapter's VVA logo and side three will depict the I-280 bridge. With respect to the Hanoi Hilton brick, the message as stated is clear.

The Monument Committee



John Baker, JR. MOH Citation Summary: Side One

Sergeant John Baker, Jr., was born in Davenport, IA, on 30 October 1945. At a young age, his family moved to Moline, IL, where John was raised and enlisted in the United States Army.

On 5 November 1966, while serving in the Republic of Vietnam with the United States Army's 25th Infantry Division, Sergeant Baker and his company came under intense fire from a hostile enemy force. With utter disregard for his own personal safety, Sergeant Baker and a fellow soldier immediately neutralized two enemy bunkers. With the other soldier wounded during this action, Sergeant Baker carried him to safety and returned to the fight to lead repeated assaults against entrenched enemy positions. At one point in the assault, Sergeant Baker was blown off his feet by an enemy grenade, but

recovered and cleared several more enemy bunkers while inflicting heavy casualties. Using a fallen comrade's machine gun, he rallied his company and again led an attack on multiple enemy positions. When the lead element was ordered to withdraw, Sergeant Baker provided cover during the evacuation of his company's wounded, several of which he personally carried to safety. He continued providing covering fire and evacuating his wounded brothers in arms until the last man had made it to safety. In deepest gratitude for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, a grateful nation awarded Sergeant John Baker, Jr., its highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Side Two



QUAD CITIES CHAPTER 299,
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

“ONCE AGAIN WITH MY BROTHERS...AS WE WERE
TOGETHER THEN...WE ARE TOGETHER NOW...”

This monument stands in recognition of the heroism of Chapter 299 member and Quad Citizen John F. Baker, Jr., and as a legacy to all Quad Cities area Vietnam and Vietnam-Era veterans who served with honor when their

country called. Let this monument be a reminder, to our community and to our nation that freedom comes at a cost. Let it also give inspiration to our current generation of warriors – that they may know their service will be recognized, deeply appreciated, and always remembered with pride and honor.

We say to our young men and women in uniform, be vigilant and always prepared, for you stand in harm’s way as the guardians of our democracy.

MONUMENT INSCRIPTION REF: BRIDGE NAMING, Side three

There will be an engraving in the face of the stone of the I-280 Bridge and below it will read:

This span of steel known as the Interstate 280 Bridge, joining the great states of Iowa and Illinois, is dedicated to Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John Baker, JR – as it also is to every veteran, past, present, and future, but especially to the Quad Cities’ veterans of Vietnam and the Vietnam-Era who, in a time of national turmoil and transition, gave service that was honorable to a cause that was just.

This monument stands tall and proud, as did those who served their country. It represents the strong pillar in our society that our returning veterans became. It is also a lasting symbol of the solidarity they shared – for you see, while some men are born brothers, others become brothers.

*Dedicated this 31st day of July in the year
of Our Lord, 2010*

POW Brick

The below verbiage will be engraved into the capstone that separates the brick base from the actual monument. It will be on side two, which is the VVA Chapter 299 side. It will be above the HANOI HILTON BRICK which will be centered on the brick base below the capstone. There should also be the **POW-MIA** logo on the capstone at the beginning of the verbiage.

“The below brick was part of the infamous POW prison in Hanoi that was commonly called the Hanoi Hilton. This brick is placed as a tribute to all the POWs that endured and all the Vietnam War’s missing whose fate is known but to God.”

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE: WELCOME HOME JOHN BAKER

As this message goes to press, John Baker, our Chapter 299 Medal of Honor recipient, lies in the Veteran's Hospital in Charleston, South Carolina recovering from cardiac surgery. John is not in the best of health but he is determined to be with us on July 31 for the Bridge dedication.

On that same day, the long anticipated Monument citing John Baker's heroics and the service of all local area veterans will also be officially unveiled. It will be a special day!

When John Baker wore a younger man's clothing and he was thrust upon the stage of fame his preparation for such celebrity status was not well grounded. He is the first to tell you that things came at him quickly and from all directions after he received the Medal and he could have and should have handled many issues differently. Isn't hindsight wonderful?

Well, John Baker's odyssey has brought him a long way and he has grown into the role of "custodian" of the Medal,

as he likes to say. His pride is obvious and he shares the preciousness of this award with all of us, especially his brother veterans who have served and sacrificed in a war that resulted in a lot of personal collateral damage. Along the way we have all grown up and assumed our rightful place as productive and contributing members of society.

The Bridge and Monument speak volumes about commitment, caring, responsibility, dedication, appreciation, legacy and pride. We as a Chapter shall stand tall along with our fellow veterans shoulder to shoulder and be counted on July 31, 2010 as we recognize one of our own and say to the local citizens, we have persevered, we have served and these physical objects, the Bridge and Monument, are a testimony to our sense of Duty, Honor, Country.

Welcome Home John Baker, we salute you!

RESPECTFULLY
RAY HAMILTON, PRESIDENT

CHAPTER 299

VETS IN CRISIS HOTLINE
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r.hamilton@mchsi.com
Vice President-Jim Lavell

309.786.0527

jal350z@mchsi.com
Secretary-Bill Albracht

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walbracht@gmail.com
Treasurer-Terry Kramer

309.799.7763

kramertn@sbcglobal.net
Membership-Larry Tschappat

309.788.2729

let289@hotmail.com

Veteran Service Officers
Al "Butch" Huber-VSO

309.721.1453

Steve Lowther-VSO

309.737.2954

VVA National Offices

800.882.1316

VA Outpatient Clinic Bettendorf

563.332.8528

VAMC Iowa City, IA

800.346.1843

319.338.0581

IL Dept of Veterans Affairs
Dan Bebbler VSO

309.793.1460

RI County Vet Ast Comm.

Todd Harlow - Supt. & VSO

tharlow@co-rock-island.il.us

309.558.3546

Fred Weymouth @

the VET CENT

309.762.6954

IL Vet Employ Reps Ken Lilly &

John Tolle 309.764.8731

Iowa Veteran Affairs

David Woods-VSO

563.326.8723

Honor Guard Co-Captains

Dennis Laird - Funerals

C: 309.230.3559

Andy Anderson - Parades

C: 563.940.5980

C. Norris & J. Kerr

IA Workforce Vet Reps,

563.445.3200

WWW.QCVVA299.ORG

ARMY HERO AND NFL LEGEND TOGETHER (REPRINTED FROM JUNE STS)

On Friday evening, July 30th, 2010, Chapter 299 and Jumer's will sponsor a cocktail reception at Jumer's Hotel & Casino, Rock Island. The event will run from 6pm-9pm. We are very fortunate to have the Quad Cities own Medal of Honor recipient, John Baker AND NFL legend and combat wounded and decorated Vietnam veteran Rocky Bleier!

Tickets to this reception are \$50 each to the general public and \$40 each to VVA Chapter 299 members and their spouse or guest. This too is one of a series of fund raisers for the John Baker/Vietnam Veteran Monument that will be dedicated on Saturday at 11am.

The dress will be business casual and there will be an open bar plus hors doeuvres. This will also be an event to acknowledge and thank many of

the people that made our Chapter's monument project happen.

By request, Rocky will have copies of his book FIGHTING BACK, which tells the inspiring story of his life and his incredible journey from the NFL to Vietnam and back.

While recovering from his wounds, he was told that with therapy it was likely that he would walk without a limp. Four Super Bowl rings later, he continues to set the standard in what one can accomplish in life.

The books are available in limited quantities and all will be signed by Rocky. If John had a book, we would



have that there too!

Tickets to the Baker-Bleier reception will be available at the door but for planning purposes, please make a reservation. Contact Bill Albracht at walbracht@gmail.com or call at 797-2660. If you are interested in a copy of Rocky's book, also notify Bill so one can be reserved in your name.

CHAPTER 299 AVVA YARD SALE!!

Friday, 16 July & Saturday 17 July, our Chapter's Associate Members will be conducting a large Garage Sale at 164-15 Avenue, EM. The hours of operation will be 0700 – 1600 hours both days. The proceeds will go to fund the AVVA participation in the Chapter's Holiday Food Basket Program and Christmas for nursing home bound veterans. Remember, one man's trash is another's treasure!

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER IS BROUGHT TO YOU EACH MONTH BY:

**BILL ALBRACHT & JIM LOVELESS NEWSLETTER CO-EDITORS
and SEAN MURPHY - CHAPTER WEBMASTER & NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR**



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 299 Golf Tournament

September 10, 2010
Highland Springs Golf Course
9500 35th Street
Rock Island, Illinois



In Service to America®

“9/11”

Always Remember

Listen Up!!

Preferred Ball 4 Man Scramble
1:00 Shotgun start
Entrance Fee \$240.00 per team
(\$60.00 per person)
Includes

- Golf
- Hog Roast to follow (Roast only \$10.00)
- Door Prizes
- 1 Complimentary Keg of Beer after golf
- 2 Drink complimentary beverage tickets in cart

Prizes for 1st Place, 2nd Place and Middle Score
Womens and mixed teams welcome!
50/50 Raffle

ALSO

- Mulligans for sale
- Special events
- Car for hole in one

Team/Captain.....phone.....

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Questions call Jim Lavell @ 786-0521 or Dick Schroeder @ 788-8849 Chairman John Katherman 799-7995

Register by August 15, 2010
Checks payable to VVA QC Chapter 299
P.O. Box 6076
Rock Island, Illinois 61201-6076



All proceeds support Veterans / Community Programs and Honor Guard Service



DONATIONS ACCEPTED
No Ringers Please!!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Currently, we have a total of VVA 442 members, and a total of 52 AVVA members. Our newest 1-year members are: Wayne Turney, Robert Holliday, Robert Dalton, Robert ‘Rocky’ Bleier, Brian Wyoske and Gary Brecht. Our newest 3-year member is: Rick Rathburn. And our newest LIFE members are Al VanLerberghe, Sam Stewart and Kirk Gustafson. Thank you, guys.....and welcome aboard !!
Respectfully,

Larry Tschappat
Membership Chairman

**God Bless America
&
God Bless
Our Troops & Veterans.**

 **Eriksen**

CHEVROLET • BUICK

Milan, Illinois

