

## *OUTLOOK*

### *January/February 2016*

We hope all of you have had a wonderful holiday. We just finished our last project for the Holiday Season. As usual, the Post & Auxiliary have been very busy the last two months. Sometimes we look at our reports and are amazed on how we could do what we have done with so little at times. We are one of the smallest but have a great group of members that participate in our activities on a local level. We are also the oldest post and auxiliary and many of our members are now unable to do the things they used to and a good number of our members live out of the area. That doesn't leave very many of us left. While we would like to participate a lot more on a district or state level - we simply don't have any members that can do that anymore and we can't stretch ourselves any further than we are stretched. So sometimes we hear about that and it gets a bit discouraging since we feel we give a lot to AMVETS and Auxiliary.

We've come up with a new project(s) for 2016 - Socks for Seniors (catchy title don't you think)? We are going to start with a nursing home (100 women and about 34 men) and go from there. Our goal is also to do the WI Veterans Home at King if we can (about 550 men and 150 women approximately) and other places if we can. We already found some Bogo deals on socks. We will roll each pair and tie a ribbon on it - simple and easy and fun to see exactly how many we can come up with. And this will not take up a lot of room. Any kind will do or slipper socks - just not too many of the very short ones that fit directly in the shoe. And also Socks for Sweeties - we were to Penfield Children's Center for their party (our last one of the year) and asked for the needs list to see if we can help. One thing they need are socks (up to say size 5). Might as well add this to our list.

We need to restock for a lot of the projects that we do. We haven't had to restock for quite a while - if we buy on a continuous basis it doesn't seem quite so daunting. We are down very low on the gifts we use for King for Christmas. We are almost entirely out of the gifts we use for the seniors at Cifaldi. We also on a regular basis give bingo prizes (gifts) for Franciscan Villa's bingo. These can be pretty much the same for all 3 groups. Both King and the Villa are considered more of a nursing home so nothing glass or candle related but small (snack items are good). Cifaldi are senior apartments so those can be a bit more varied and useful for them. We are down very low on the stuffed animals for Penfield and are getting very short on books. Someone said they weren't close by and wanted to help with our project - how would they do that? Simply make a check out to AMVETS Post 3 or AMVETS Aux. 3 and send it in and believe me it will be used.

#### Membership

Congratulations to Auxiliary 3. We won the Florence Stripe membership award (\$10) for early bird renewals for the year. Since we have a minimal number of members, we simply send them all in at one time. I like receiving awards like this too because our founder Florence Stripe was such a good friend of ours and she is thought about often and missed by many. I do believe there is still one of our Aux. members that have not paid their 2016 dues of \$20.

We are still looking for new Post and Auxiliary members. The more members we have, the more we can do to serve our veterans and our communities. Many of our members are retired. We need to be as active as we can within our communities, state and nation. Thus, the more members we have the easier that is to do.

AMVETS membership includes any honorably discharged military member since WWII and those actively serving. Auxiliary eligibility includes mothers, wives, widows, sisters, daughters, granddaughters (18 and older) and female veterans. So if any of our AMVETS has family members eligible to join, that is one way to start to increase our membership. **The AMVETS membership is \$25.00. The Auxiliary membership is \$20.00**

You can send your dues into the address at the end of the newsletter. Please make the check payable to AMVETS Post #3 or AMVETS Auxiliary #3 respectively. The sooner we collect the dues, the more time we have to concentrate on our projects and programs.

**King** - We were up to King for our St. Nick weekend and everyone thought this was the best year ever. Because we have been doing this so long and get to know so many more people - it feels like home there. Some of us went up on Thursday evening and went out to eat - we were able to share a couple of special occasions. Pearl & Jim O'Donoghue from King celebrated their wedding anniversary with us (it was great that they were able to come) and Larry Sampo had a birthday and had just retired.

The party for the female vets was the next day (Friday Dec. 4). There are currently 25 female vets residing at King and about 15 of them attended. This year we made them plastic canvas Kleenex holders and those that were there had to open them up and see all the different colors and patterns. They loved them not only because they were especially hand made for them but because it was something special and unique for each of them. It always becomes difficult to figure out what to make or get them. We spent a few minutes talking with them about gifts and decided we are going to make the beaded Christmas trees on a full sheet of plastic canvas. They take a while but are a lot of fun. It took me a whole weekend to do 1 but as we work on them, they become a bit easier. Someone once asked us why we start immediately after for the next year and this is the reason why - the time it takes.

For the luncheon, I know we had originally talked about having small finger foods that we would serve in the afternoon to them but in talking with dietary and some of the others - it was decided it was too soon after their lunch to eat. So we did a steak dinner again and dietary got the information on each member and how they could have their steak and prepared it that way for them. Thus, why we had more attend this year. We had a door prize for each one and a small corsage. Of course, they opened up their door prizes and liked those too. We have already started to purchase these for next year.

We had a few tears as we usually do because some of them do not have much of a family left and this makes them feel special. Next year, we will probably vary the lunch up somewhat. The date for next year will be Friday, December 2.

The St. Nick Party at King itself was on December 5. We did the party at Marden and we had standing room only and even had to turn people away (first time ever). We know it wasn't necessarily us they came to see because we have been doing this for well over 25 years but the AROTC cadets and choir. We did 125 stockings and had a few left so we believe we can keep it at that amount. We used 2 large containers of vanilla frosting and a dozen of other assorted colors and flavors so we have to start over in getting more along with sprinkles, although we had a few left as we have started to inventory our supplies.

We had to rent the bus for the cadets to attend and our fear was that it wouldn't show up or would be late but it was 15 minutes early and all the cadets were out and waiting. They got to King 30 minutes early so we did a mini tour and then divided into 4 groups and visited every building. There were vets waiting for them. The cadets were great with the vets and the vets were excited to see them and talk about themselves and what they were doing. After the short visit, we returned to Marden for lunch of hamburgers or chicken patties. We already had the sprinkles and frosting in containers and with this many cadets - they made short work of setting up tables and putting everything out. We packed the stockings early in the morning while others were getting out the rest of the needed items.

As usual, people arrived early and now with two elevators - we had to find room quickly. The cadet choir sang while the others were there to help with frosting the cookies or serve the punch (3 batches this year), coffee and snacks. We just kept trying to find a place to put the wheelchairs that came in along with those that were mobile. We distributed the stockings as they left. Clean up was nothing, again with all the cadets. We would like to say thank you again to those of you that helped to make this possible by donating to the cause. We couldn't have done it without you.

Next year, we already have Ainsworth booked (it is a larger building) and if there are any restrictions or problems there, we can have it at Olson (larger also) so we don't have to turn anyone away. We just have to remember that neither of those rooms have a working kitchen as did Marden and that means we have to take absolutely everything with us including all trays and any incidentals we may need (we'll have to remember to snag trays from the breakfast room at Stand Down - it is what Sodohox puts their food on and we usually just toss them) and anything else we may need. We can work on what needs to be done there and stash in away in the alcove. Just will be a bit different. On Friday, we have the big room at Marden because it is smaller and for the female vets, works better.

On Monday after the party, there were vets in the Volunteer Office at King talking about the cadets. It is now a few weeks later and Vicki tells us that she has people stopping by every day commenting on how they enjoyed the visit. We were talking with the cadets and we told them we can't do this on our own every year and they are willing to help us fund raise so that they can come and are looking forward to it. However, we need your thoughts and ideas on what would work. We can't do it alone and neither can the cadets, we need everyone's help. We look forward to hearing your ideas. We did already get a small donation to start our fund for next year - every little bit helps.

Thank you to all our elves that helped: Carolyn Ruud, Susan Melms, Jane and Bob Watry, Shelly and Rick Rios and the elfins - Evie, Connor and Anthony, Jim and Mary Weise and Gorgette and Larry Sampo and again to all those that donated financially to the cause. Next year's party is December 3.

This is one of the places we want to do Socks for Seniors. They have about 150 women and 550 male residents. So we will see what we can do.

#### Fund Raising

We definitely need a small fund raiser that we can have and split the proceeds between the post and the auxiliary. It is no longer if but what we will do to get the cadets up to King for St. Nick. At least, they are willing to help us out with whatever we can come up with. We can do sell something small like candy bars or something else but you have to sell a lot to come up with what we need. What would be nice is if we do a fund raiser like a pancake breakfast or a spaghetti dinner (we have the servers in the cadets) - just would have to find a place and time and go from there. Let's all put on our thinking caps and see what project we can come up with.

**Homeless VAP Shelter at King** - On Friday evening we had our St. Nick Party up at the Homeless Shelter located in the old Ove Hall. We had our usual chili dinner with a lot of extras. We haven't changed the menu because the vets really seem to enjoy the chili the way we make it. We cook about 18 lbs. of meat for it. We also have salad; fruit; cheese, sausage and crackers; and a lot of desserts. It is really nice because if there is food left, we eat. And we leave them everything. And they do the dishes. This year, they seemed to have some younger vets there and you often wonder what their story is.

After supper, we have a party for them. They provide us a wish list and we purchase something off their wish list (about \$25) either individually or as the Post and Auxiliary. There are always a few that come and go quickly so we remember to get gift receipts just in case. We always have some extra gift cards on hand too. This year, no one seemed to open their gifts but after some persuasion they did. They were all thrilled with an autographed copy of a book they requested or ice fishing supplies or a new clothing item. We also give them a backpack with personal care items, shaving kit, thermal socks and hats and gloves. We can't do the shopping until late October/early November because we don't know who is going to be there. They really appreciate what we do. We always receive many thank you cards from them.

Someone asked if we crashed the Sunday after the parties and we actually said no, we went shopping. Menards had the ski gloves and the hats at the least amount we ever saw them and you have to go with the sales if you want to be able to get everything on the limited budget that we have. We already have enough hats and gloves for 2016. So we are looking forward to next year.

#### POST AND AUXILIARY BUSINESS

**Cifaldi Seniors** - We had a party for the seniors at Cifaldi on December 15. It took us a while to finally get ahold of them as they have a new building manager and she didn't know us from Adam. They called us the night before to double check and said there should be a full house and they are really looking forward to our visit as we missed a year there. Actually, she called because she forgot the day we were coming and didn't put up the notice until the day of. So we ended up with only 11 people but it still worked out well. We played take away bingo and each person got 3-4 items. Then we had a light lunch with salami, cheese, dip, crackers, stollen, muffins and cinnamon bread. Even with just 11 people, everything totally disappeared. After that we distributed the food bags we do for them (enough for one day). Again, this is something that makes a nice gift and something many of them can use and we decided this will be the only gifts they receive but the cost of these bags has jumped with the increase in prices. It worked out great using these as the gifts.

We have also noticed that a lot of dates on food items are into 2017 and beyond so we can start to purchase a lot of the items so we don't have to do everything at one time at the holiday season. We already found vegies that are dated into 2018. There are 23 residents that we pack bags for. It is okay if we get too many of 1 item because we usually end up giving them an extra item or two. Found out we have been doing this for 16 years (the residents keep track) and decided to get the contact information of one of those we have known for the whole entire 16 years. Thank you to Carolyn Ruud and Sue Melms for helping us with the party.

**King** - We will make a trip up to King over the summer and probably work mini golf on a Saturday morning and have a barbeque for the shelter. You keep hearing different places and different dates that the shelter has to be out of there and where it will go. So we'll just try and stay on top of it. We will also make a trip up to King later (probably in September) to drop off a

load of some of the things we need for our St. Nick Party there and visit with the food area about what we want to serve this year.

**Stand Down** - The next Stand Down for Homeless Veterans is Feb. 27. At the last event, we served approximately 170 vets. Let us know if you would like to get involved. We always need items on a regular basis. These include underwear (primarily t-shirts and socks - we are good with briefs right now) from sizes Small to 4XL. We then make them into sets for distribution. We really need shaving cream. We do personal care kits consisting of shampoo, deodorant, soap, toothbrush, tooth paste, combs, wash clothes and small Kleenex packs which are made into sets for distribution. All donations are greatly appreciated - monetary and otherwise. We also need any small type items you might have for the hospitality table.

This last one was very unique for us as we were extremely short of volunteers (especially the first shift) as our AROTC were up at Ft. McCoy. But we will have AROTC back and that really helps us in our planning. The 2016 date in September is the 17th.

**Franciscan Villa**- We talked a little bit to Franciscan Villa about doing some things for the seniors who live in the nursing home/rehab section. The things that are most needed and appreciated are small bingo prizes and snacks items. We keep putting together things they can use as prizes. We have also provided herring for their Thursday get together which the residents really love and want to see about getting a couple of summer sausages. We will definitely continue with the herring. This is one of the places we want to do Socks for Seniors - they have about 34 men and 100 women in the nursing home section.

Our AROTC cadets are also interested in singing for the seniors so come the New Year we will be trying to lock that into place for them.

**Hats, Scarves and Mittens** - We have been lucky this year with the number of our members either making or securing hats, scarves and mittens/gloves. We provide them to Milwaukee Public Schools, Penfield Children's Center, the 5 homeless shelters we work with and also around the Marquette area as the Public Safety Officers run into the homeless that are around the downtown area. We have made/secured well over 400 of the items for the various areas. Thank you to everyone for helping us with this project. We plan on doing this next year as well so as you see them on sale, please think about us.

**Penfield Children's Center** - We had our party at Penfield Children's Center on December 17<sup>th</sup> (our last event for the year). I was talking to the new nurse there when they picked up their Holiday Giving Tree gifts and she said they have not been able to secure a Santa since we did our last party. Everyone was looking forward to having their picture taken with Santa. Each child (3 and under that are handicapped, abused or developmentally delayed) gets a bag with a handmade set of a hat, scarf and mittens; a book; and a stuffed animal. We were able to make up enough bags for this year but are totally out of stuffed animals. We have been doing this 35 years. So we always need books, stuffed animals and hats, scarves and mittens. This year, the Public Safety Officers at Marquette want to help out and to go along and visit with the children and distribute gifts with us.

We missed having a party there last year and noticed a lot of changes. The Special Care Nursery has been expanded. They have 2 sections - one for extremely fragile (ill) children and one for just fragile children. We went up to the nursery so the children could have their pictures taken with Santa. They also have new kitchens. They are back to a smaller group of children on any one day and don't have much of a day care anymore. Just the children that really need the services. You can always go out to their website and take a look at what they might need.

As I stated earlier, we are going to try and do Socks for Sweeties (children size 5 and under). Although the children are birth to 3, some are big for their age. They can also really use pants, again up to size 5. They use a lot of art supplies if anyone has any around the house. Coats (up to about size 8) is also a good thing. I asked about blankets and quilts and yes they can use those for the special care nursery on a regular basis. So we have started to put a box together for them.

**Project Night Night** - We continue to make up Project Night Night totes for Joy House, Meta House, Hope House, Cathedral Center and Casa Maria. The totes are for homeless children up to 12 years of age and contain a blanket, book and huggable size stuffed animal. We fill totes on a continuous basis so we always need items. I have been making a lot of crocheted blankets for them. To date, in a little over 5 years over 4000 totes have been distributed. We really ran short of blankets but I have been working on those plus we found some real bargain over the Thanksgiving holiday.

**Other** - We continue to cut coupons and send them to the USO in Germany. As long as there are troops serving afar, we will be there to let them know that someone cares about them. So if you have any small items that we can send them, it would be greatly appreciated.

**Zablocki** - When we were taking to the cadet choir at King, they mentioned they would like to expand their horizons and sing at a few other places but they aren't sure how to go about getting connected to places. We did do some investigating at Zablocki because that is one of the places they want to sing and they have already contacted me about getting the cadets there. If we can do the timing right, we might sponsor them and just need a few of us to go along and provide some treats for the vets. We will know more after the first of the year.

We continue to help as best we can with the Christmas at Zablocki for the Vets. They had their party on December 10. This year, we gave them about 8 boxes of items they could use as gifts and a couple of trays of decorated cookies. Doc has been doing this for about 27 years and really appreciates all the help he gets. He has a large number of volunteers that help but providing items is where he needs the help. We provide anywhere from crossword puzzle books to handmade items to new clothing items and anywhere in between. They also get a number of handmade quilts and blankets. So if you see or get anything during the year, these items are greatly appreciated.

**On-line Fund Raising** -The books, CD's, DVD's and VCR tapes that Renee has been helping us sell over the internet is going fairly well. This is seasonal and has it's up and down time and we have only been able to occasionally get books to sell. So if anyone has any, it would be greatly appreciated. We do take in cans and use that money for projects. We also collect change and a couple of times a year we turn that in for our programs. We have no other income and the money for our projects gets tight. If anyone could think of a fund raiser we could have, it would be greatly appreciated and help us out tremendously.

#### **Testimonial Dinner for State President and Commander**

Peter Jozefowski (Post 33) and Elain Ludka (Aux. 60) are having their testimonial dinner on Saturday, 3/19.2016 (300 Beichl Dr. - Beaver Dam, WI). Menu is sirloin beef tips in gravy; herb baked chicken; cucumber, onion & tomato salad, garlic mashed potatoes; tossed salad with dressing; and California blend vegies. (5 pm - social hour (cash bar) - 6:00 ceremony begins - 8 music and dancing - free beer and soda (cash bar)). Cost is \$20 with check to AMVETS Post 33 Testimonial Dinner - Mail replies to: Beaver Dam AMVETS Post 33 - 300 Beichl Ave., - Beaver Dam, WI 53916. Deadline: March 1, 2016.

Please let us reiterate - we are looking for new members. We really as a Post & Auxiliary need to work on doing that if at all possible. We need **everyone's** help in recruiting people to join. I tried to put a little more information as to the places we do our projects in this newsletter for our new members. If more information is needed, we can do that also. We welcome all your suggestions for the newsletter. If you have anything of interest to the Veterans Community, please try and get it to us by the first of the month always for the next newsletter. If you would like to get involved with any of our projects please let us know. Any help that you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

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