Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.,
Chapter 20

Welcome Home

Dignity Memorial

Together Then...Together Now
Marching Unit
Ray Melens, Commander

I wish to thank all who took part in our Memorial Day service at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: the name readers, the Marching Unit members that took part in the Color Guard and the rifle squad, and especially our friends from the Keystone Pipes and Drum Band who add so much to the service. They never stick around to get thanked properly by us. Just like the Lone Ranger, they just ride off before getting thanked for their services. Great job again by all this year! Our 280 Brothers enshrined there thank you also, I’m sure.

If you didn’t attend the picnic after the ceremony at Ira, then you missed a good time, great food and most of all some great fun and laughs. We even had a special guest appearance this year by none other then our own RONBO! Many of you didn’t even know he was there because he was incognito as a regular human being. Trust me, unless you know who he is you never would have known he was there. Very rarely is he ever seen out in public and especially as regular human being. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Dick Oleksyn for organizing and planning this great get together.

I am happy to report that this year’s parade attendance numbers are doing quite well. We have been having some good turnouts. What better way to honor and to remember our brothers who didn’t return, than to march in their honor. It’s also a great visible presence for the Chapter.

Everyone remember to mark their calendars for Saturday, August 25th, because that is going to be the Marching Unit’s picnic. When you read this, and if you have not already done so, please let me know how many members of your family will be attending. I’m hoping by the time this issue reaches you, I will know what the cost will be to everyone. Remember this year we are paying for the picnic ourselves. It’s going to be held again, back by popular demand, at Ray and Gail’s in Hilton. We’ll start again at 2:00 PM, eat around 4:00 PM and then later go out back and have a bonfire and Joe Peck will lead us all in campfire songs. What do you say, Joe?

On Sunday, May 20th, members of the Honor Guard took part in a flag dedication ceremony at Mickey Finn’s in Victor. The owner of the restaurant, Todd Allen, is an active duty member in the Army Reserve and asked us to do the flag raising and dedication for him. He had 3 new flag poles installed, invited all the local girl and boy scout troops to witness the ceremony as we raised the American Flag, POW/MIA and New York state flag, of course all on their own separate poles. Immediately following the ceremony, we went into the restaurant and got something to eat and drink. We had Ralph with us so you know we had to go eat. The food was really good. If you live anywhere in the Victor area and have not been to Mickey Finn’s yet, I suggest you try it.

If there are any MU/HG members who did not sign up to volunteer for ceremonies at the Dignity Vietnam Memorial Wall when it is here in September, please let me know right away that you can help. We will need members not just for the ceremonies, but also for security and as guides. The dates are September 7th through the 9th.

The Honor Guard will not be meeting in July either, due to the fact that we will be in Webster marching in their firemen’s parade. Right now it looks as though we will not be meeting again until September. I will keep the Honor Guard members informed.

Until next month……..AT EASE!!!!!!

Memorial Day Picnic
Dick Oleksyn

Thumbs up to a great Memorial Day picnic. Seventy-one people attended—including Iraq and Afghanistan veterans recently home,
with their families. Thanks to those who brought a dish to pass and to all who helped to make it a beautiful family event (and we even had enough food for Ralph!!)

**Agent Orange/Health Affairs**

**Suzanne Oleksyn, Chairperson**

As the 4th of July approaches, we are reminded that we, the people, ARE America. We are extremely proud of each American citizen who answered their country’s call and served in the military with honor. As we see so many of our noble Vietnam veterans with service-connected health issues still denied or struggling to get their benefits, we now watch and interact and help noble veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq who are coming home and/or dying of service-connected health issues due to their service to their country.

The most important thing that we as citizens can do is support each veteran and tell those public servants whom we fund to make sure that the VA process is streamlined to meet the needs of all veterans IN A TIMELY FASHION. It is not good enough. It is imperative that each veteran communicate his/her health issues to the doctor thoroughly so that the doctor can share information with the VA staff to move the process along.

We have witnessed the glory of the patriotic Americans who have stepped up in another politicized war—in the middle of a civil war—to defend our freedom in whatever way they are ordered to do so. We honor each of them and mourn those precious lives lost. Apathy must end, and each of us must do all that we can to stand up for our democracy and for all of the goodness that comes from each noble American who answers their country’s call.

Never were we so moved as by the repatriation of Francis Graziosi. Full military honors were given to this American hero as he returned home after 37 years MIA. 37 years! Imagine not knowing for one day the fate of your loved one. The outpouring of patriotism, loyalty and love experienced at his honors was amazing. To see his brothers who served with him and who looked for him after his chopper went down standing there—to be with him after 37 years’ separation—and to hear them speak of their time and experiences was so moving. Truly the best of America comes out when we all stand together through all times—good or tough. With great pride, we watched our honor guard and marching unit members as well as so many noble citizens pay respect to this hero—a true united family. That same pride and dedication will see through those who need our help here and now.

Remember to contact Pat Pudetti at the Monroe County Veterans’ Service Agency, serviceofﬁcer@yahoo.com, or at 753-6040 if you have any service-related needs. Outstanding people stand ready to help you in any way they can.

A travel to all U.S. veterans and dedicated to Vietnam veterans, the Wall is a powerful and emotional experience. Show your support and patriotism by helping plan for the three-day exhibition of THE DIGNITY MEMORIAL® VIETNAM WALL™

To volunteer, please call Alvah Halloran & Son Funeral Home (585) 247-7590

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**Volunteers Needed!**

A traveling, three-quarter-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is coming to Gates Memorial Park, 150 Spencerport Rd. September 7-9, 2007, and we NEED YOUR HELP preparing for its arrival!

A tribute to all U.S. veterans and dedicated to Vietnam veterans, the Wall is a powerful and emotional experience. Show your support and patriotism by helping plan for the three-day exhibition of THE DIGNITY MEMORIAL® VIETNAM WALL™

To volunteer, please call Alvah Halloran & Son Funeral Home (585) 247-7590

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**A Note from Dick Oleksyn**

I want to take a moment to thank VVA Chapter 20 from the bottom of my heart for the Roger Robach Award, presented to me at the annual dinner. I was very surprised and honored to receive it—named after such a wonderful man who held veterans’ issues very seriously. I am very honored to be included with previous recipients of this award. Thank you again to you and to the Robach family for this great honor.
On May 15th, we and members of Chapter 20’s Honor Guard had the distinct honor and privilege to “Welcome Home” SSgt Francis Graziosi. Francis had been listed as MIA for 37 years, and now finally, on this warm and very windy day, he had finally returned home. He did not return to a band playing, or to a crowd of cheering well-wishers. His return home was a somber but moving one for all.

As the Northwest Airlines plane that was transporting the remains of Francis Graziosi pulled up to the terminal and was parked, there began a movement. Not just any movement, but the movement of men in uniform. Some in crisp Dress Blue uniforms of the US Army’s Honor Guard and those in the uniform from an era long ago. Not that long ago, to those that wear the uniform. Then, over the roar of the jet engines winding down, you heard military commands being barked out. The Color Guard of Chapter 20 was taking their position by the aircraft’s wing to render a military salute to a Brother that had returned home. The Army’s pallbearer detail was marching into place to receive the casket with his remains and to then place it in the hearse for the ride to the funeral home.

While standing out there on the tarmac with all my fellow veterans around, I had many thoughts running through my mind. Thoughts of yesteryear when we were only in our late teens, most of us, and were sent off to a foreign land to fight a war we didn’t want or understand. How so many of us lost good friends and comrades while there and most of all, how it was only by the grace of God that it was not myself or any of these other veterans in that casket that we were now standing so tall and proud of in welcoming home one of our own.

I have done many funerals with Chapter 20’s Honor Guard, here at home in the Rochester area, at Arlington National Cemetery and ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Wall in Washington, DC. But I must tell you that it never gets easier. Every time I present a folded flag to a spouse or loved one, it just doesn’t get easier. This time was no exception. Another family had an answer, yes. Not the answer they wanted, but nonetheless, an answer. Unlike the eight other families from our area that still wait for an answer about their loved ones.

We stood at attention and saluted the casket until it was placed in the hearse and then again upon its arrival at the funeral home. All you hear was silence. I’m sure everyone is alone at...
that time, alone with their thoughts.

Also there on the tarmac with Chapter 20’s Honor Guard were Chapter President Ken Moore, Fred Elliott the Region II Director for VVA and, of course, Gail Bologna-Melens, POW/MIA Chairperson for Chapter 20. I know for a fact that just like us, they were proud as hell to be present and to welcome home Francis.

On May 18th, members of the Chapter’s Honor Guard were present at the funeral home where we shared casket guard details with the Knights of Columbus. At the end of the evening Gail addressed those present and read a poem titled, Remains. When Gail was finished, the Honor Guard rendered their final salute.

The following morning we were present at the church for services and after the church service we were at the cemetery to take part in the Military Honors for Francis. In this issue you will find pictures from the repatriation services. The majority of the pictures were taken by Gail and Kathy Gleason.

I must say that I think some credit must go to Chapter 20’s membership, Gail our POW/MIA chairperson and the members of the Honor Guard for all that they do to help keep the POW/MIA awareness issue in the public eye. This is probably the only way to let our elected officials know that we expect a full accounting of our POW/MIA’s.

In closing, I would just like to repeat something that was said by Pete Widener at his brother James’ memorial service back in October. He stated “They don’t have you anymore.” Those words are so fitting when any of our MIA’s are returned home, as well as “WELCOME HOME BROTHER, WELCOME HOME.”
VVA Chapter 20 Bus Trip
25th Anniversary of “The Wall”

November 9-early AM November 12, 2007
Washington, D.C.

Save the dates for a National VVA happening! Call those with whom you served and have them meet you in D.C! All Chapter 20 members (as of April 2, 2007), their families/friends will have first chance at seats/rooms. After August 15, 2007, remaining available seats will be open to others. More details to come.

Transportation
- Bus paid for by VVA Chapter 20
- 56 seats available
- Rest room on board
- No smoking on board (stops will be made for food, etc.)
- Soda/water provided on board

Hotel
- Holiday Inn Capitol (within walking distance to The Wall and Metro)
- 25 rooms reserved for us
- Baggage/handling included
- 4 restaurants in hotel
- Reservations through VVA Chapter 20/Dick Oleksyn only for this block of rooms
- TENTATIVE $250/room (2 nights/taxes/baggage/handling—one price/room—1-4/room)
  - 1/room $ 250
  - 2/room $ 125 each
  - 3/room $ 83.33 each
  - 4/room $ 62.50 each
- (Included is an evening guided bus tour of Washington, monuments, memorials, etc., including guide's gratuity)

Meals
- At your pleasure and expense

TOTAL ROOM RESERVATION AND PAYMENT PAYABLE TO VVA CHAPTER 20 MUST BE IN TO VVA CHAPTER 20, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612, BY AUGUST 1, 2007. All names going must be listed for each room and given to Dick Oleksyn with reservation.

If any seats/rooms remain available, August 2-September 30, 2007, all others will be free to reserve seats. Vietnam veterans will have first choice.

As soon as possible, give Dick Oleksyn, 585 663-5255 or roleksyn@yahoo.com, your names for the reservation list—first come, first served. Let’s all make this a wonderful happening. Together then, together now.
Adaptive Clothing For Military Wounded

American military personnel are serving our country in a variety of dangerous situations and locations. A number of them return seriously wounded or injured. Modern medical technology is having great success saving the lives of these heroes. However, medicine doesn’t address some of their basic needs, such as clothing that will accommodate medical devices and situations - braces, fixators, casts, prosthetics and burns. Many of the wounded troops are left with a hospital gown as their only clothing option.

SewMuchComfort (www.sewmuchcomfort.org/index.asp) is a collaborative of seamstresses from around the country modifying clothing to accommodate these needs. All clothing is provided free of charge to the soldiers.

Marianne Wink-Sturgeon lives in Fairport, N.Y. and requests donations for her part in this project.

Donations of new men’s boxer shorts (sizes L, XL or XXL only, please) are requested. Donations can also be made to Marianne in the form of gift cards to Target, Kmart, Penney’s, etc. or cash (Paypal to mari6art@aol.com). Any and all donations are welcome.

Please bring your donations to the next membership meeting or call Kathy Gleason at 978-1331.

Marianne Wink-Sturgeon
17 Monroe Street
Fairport, NY 14450
mari6art@aol.com
(use this email address for Paypal donations)

Support OUR TROOPS

We’re collecting items to box and send to our troops. Please bring whatever you can from the list below to the next General Membership meeting. We will announce a date shortly thereafter and ask help to prepare packages for shipment.

Likewise, if you know of someone stationed in the Middle East, give us their contact information and address so we can include them on our list. You can bring the information that evening, or email it to kathy14470@msn.com. Thanks for your help!

Items include:
- Soap (bars only)
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Shaving Cream
- Razors
- Deodorant
- Movie DVDs
- Cheez-it Crackers
- Cream Savers (or hard candy) (no chocolate as it melts!)
- Beef Jerky (a popular favorite!)
- Single stick flavor packets for bottled water (e.g. – Crystal Light On the Go)
- Chewing Gum
Chapter 20 thanks the following sponsors of our 25th Anniversary Celebration:

Gold Sponsor: Dakota Restaurant
Dave & Sherri Danzig, Owners

Silver Sponsors: Bausch & Lomb
Excellus Health Plan, Inc.
Rochester Gas & Electric
Don & Sue Charles

Bronze Sponsors: Monroe Litho, Inc.
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THRIFT STORE, CHAPTER 20, LLC
1199 East Main Street, Rochester, NY 14609
Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm
Car Donations 8:30am - 5:00pm
Truck Pick-up: 9am - 4:30pm
(weather permitting)
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All donations go to the Thrift Store at the address above.

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Debra Sloane
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Gary T. Redinski
Email: gtredinkiphotos@frontiernet.net
Rochester, New York

Various topics are offered from military / veteran oriented, patriotic, scenic,
landscapes, nature, botanical, animals,
fantasy, in a variety of sizes and gift items

www.GTRedphotos.com
The Veterans Walk Committee of Chapter 20, VVA want to thank you for your purchase of a personalized, engraved paver brick. Each paver brick (4” x 8”) can have from one to three lines of engraved information. The cost will be $50.00 per brick. Make checks or money order payable to: VVA Chapter 20, Veterans Walk.

The engraved line(s) can include any of the following information:
- Full name
- Branch of service, rank
- Dates of service (1967-1969, etc.)
- Conflict (WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, etc.)

Please print the information you would like engraved on the brick below. (Maximum of 14 letters/numbers, including spaces per line).

1. 
2. 
3. 

When you return the completed form to the Veterans Walk Committee at
P.O. Box 12580,
Rochester, New York 14612,
please include your payment and “Proof of Service” for above recipient.

PLEASE NOTE: Order may take up to 6 months to be fully processed.
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20
Membership Application

Return this application, along with a copy of your DD214, to:
Vietnam Veterans of America, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612

Name: ___________________________________ Date of Birth: ____________________ Sex: M / F
Address: __________________________________ Home Phone: (____) ________________
City: _____________________________________ Work Phone: (____) ________________
Zip: ______________ Country: ______________ E-mail Address: ______________________

Chapter # ________ (if known) _______________ Sponsor: __________________________

I am not a Vietnam veteran, but I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families.
Please accept my donation: ___________________ ☐ AVVA Membership
$10 $20 $50 Other ($_______)


Term: _____ 1 year ($20) _____ 3 years ($50) _____ Life Membership: $250 (ages 49 and under)
$225 (ages 50-55) $200 (ages 56-60) $175 (ages 61-65) $150 (ages 66 and over)

Payment Option: ______ Check ______ Money Order

VVA is a non-profit veterans service organization.
Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.
The Dignity Memorial® Vietnam Wall™

The Dignity Memorial® Vietnam Wall™ is a traveling, 3/4-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Dignity Memorial funeral, cremation, and cemetery service providers created this powerful memorial as a service to those who might never travel to the nation’s capital to experience “The Wall” firsthand. Honoring past and present U.S. service men and women, and dedicated to Vietnam Veterans, Dignity Memorial’s faux-granite replica is 240 feet long and 8 feet high. The Wall contains the names of more than 58,000 Americans who died or are missing in Vietnam.

Rochester’s local Dignity Memorial provider, Alvah Halloran & Son Funeral Home, along with the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20, are proud to bring The Wall to Rochester this year. Please join us in honoring the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our armed forces.

Messenger Post Newspapers’ special section will be printed on premium paper and inserted into all subscriber copies of our weekly Post papers and the Daily Messenger.

September 7 - 9, 2007
Gates Memorial Park
150 Spencerport Road
This event is free and open to the public 24 hours a day.

ADVERTISING OPTIONS:

Full Page 9.75” x 11.5” $1,599
Half Page 9.75” x 5.5” $899
Quarter Page 4.75” x 5.5” $499
Eighth Page 4.75” x 2.5” $299

Full Color $200 Spot Color $100

A portion of all proceeds will benefit the local chapter of the Vietnam Veteran’s of America

DEADLINE: August 14th
PUBLICATION: August 29th

To reserve your ad space, please call 585.394.0770 x247
Between the Lines

Peter M. Galle
Email: PGALLE5000@aol.com
http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/Awards/BRONZE%20STAR1.html

Bronze Star Medal

1. Description: A Bronze star 1½ inches in circumscribing diameter. In the center thereof is a 3/16-inch diameter superimposed bronze star, the center line of all rays of both stars coinciding. The reverse has the inscription “HEROIC OR MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT” and a space for the name of the recipient to be engraved. The star is suspended from the ribbon by a rectangular shaped metal loop with the corners rounded.

2. Ribbon: The ribbon is 1 3/8 inches wide and consists of the following stripes: 1/32 inch White 67101; 9/16 inch Scarlet 67111; 1/32 inch White; center stripe 1/8 inch Ultramarine Blue 67118; 1/32 inch White; 9/16 inch Scarlet; and 1/32 inch White.

3. Criteria: a. The Bronze Star Medal is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the military of the United States after 6 December 1941, distinguished himself or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight, while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

b. Awards may be made for acts of heroism, performed under circumstances described above, which are of lesser degree than required for the award of the Silver Star.

c. Awards may be made to recognize single acts of merit or meritorious service. The required achievement or service while of lesser degree than that required for the award of the Legion of Merit must nevertheless have been meritorious and accomplished with distinction...

5. Background: a. General George C. Marshall, in a memorandum to President Roosevelt dated February 3, 1944, wrote: “The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their morale of great importance. The award of the Air Medal have had an adverse reaction on the ground troops, particularly the Infantry Riflemen who are now suffering the heaviest losses, air or ground, in the Army, and enduring the greatest hardships.” The Air Medal had been adopted two years earlier to raise airmen’s morale.

b. President Roosevelt authorized the Bronze Star Medal by Executive Order 9419 dated 4 February 1944, retroactive to 7 December 1941. This authorization was announced in War Department Bulletin No 3, dated 10 February 1944. The Executive Order was amended by President Kennedy, per Executive Order 11046 dated 24 August 1962, to expand the authorization to include those serving with friendly forces.

c. As a result of a study conducted in 1947, the policy was implemented that authorized the retroactive award of the Bronze Star Medal to soldiers who had received the Combat Infantryman Badge or the Combat Medical Badge during World War II. The basis for doing this was that the badges were awarded only to soldiers who had borne the hardships which resulted in General Marshall’s support of the Bronze Star Medal. Both badges required a recommendation by the commander and a citation in orders...

The Bronze Star Medal is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the military of the United States after 6 December 1941, distinguished himself or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service...
Wednesday
August 22, 2007
at Greystone Golf Club

Your entry fee of $100 includes
18 holes of golf with cart, lunch,
dinner, prizes and LOTS OF FUN

9:30am to 10:15 am - Registration
10:30am - Presentation of Colors
(US Marines of “A” Co.
Anti-Terrorism Bn. 4th
Marine Division
11:00am - Shotgun start,- Four-
person scramble
4:30pm - Cash bar
5:15pm - Dinner and Awards

(Time subject to change depending
upon number of players)

For additional information please con-
tact: Len Benedict at 585-750-7099 or
Visit our web site and register online at
www.mcccrochester.org then click on
MCCC events.
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Treasurer: Ray Melens ..........392-2079 (h)

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Ron Trovato .......................... 544-8470 (h)

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Veterans Walk .................... Chuck Macaluso 225-8288
Volunteer Coordinator ............ Kathy Gleason 978-1331

WEB SITES/E-MAIL ADDRESSES
Veterans Widows International Network members@aol.com/vetwindows
NYS Department Health: www.health.state.ny.us/nyvets
Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park: www.vietnammemorial.org
Operation Welcome Home: www.operationwelcomehome.org
VVA New York State Council: www.nyvietnamvets.org
Region 2 Director: www.region2vva.com

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION
Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial... 585-753-7275
Ira Jacobson American Legion Post #474..... 663-7030
VA Clinic - 465 Westfall Road ............ 463-2600
Veterans Outreach Center ............. 546-1081
Vet Center ................................ 232-5040
Veterans Administration ............. 800-827-1000
NYS Council .......................... 888-678-VETS
Monroe County Veterans Service Agency.... 753-6040
e-mail: serviceofficer@yahoo.com
Veterans Benefits Hotline ............. 800-827-1000
“Veterans Bill of Rights” .................. 800-342-3558
VA Medical Center in Batavia........... 585-297-1000
VA Hospital in Buffalo................ 716-834-9200
VA Medical Center in Canandaigua .... 394-2000
VA Medical Center in Bath............. 607-664-4000
V.V. of America in Washington .... 800-VVA-1316
V.V. Memorial Fund “The Wall” ....... 202-393-0090
Nat’l Lge. of Fam. MIA/POW Updates... 202-223-6846
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The Resource Center ........................ 546-4250
Stars & Stripes .......................... 546-3524
Persian Gulf Vets, Inc. ................. 385-4097
Operation Welcome Home ............. 234-4694

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Donation Pick-up, Cindy Rowley .................. 482-8016
VVA Vehicle Donations, Cindy Rowley ............ 224-8484
VVA Chapter 20 ................................ 482-7396
bdivic@vva20.org

VVA CH. 20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MTG. ATTENDANCE

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<td>Barnard Firemen's Parade</td>
<td>Webster Parade Membership Meeting 7:30 PM</td>
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If you would like your Birthday or Anniversary included on the BTL calendar, please call the office at 482-7396 or E-mail info@vva20.org