



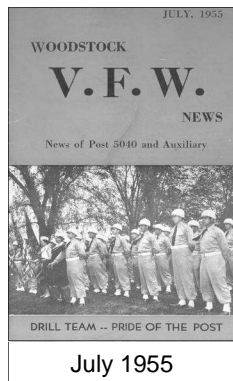
Woodstock

July 2005 • Issue 1, Vol. 51

VFW News

Visit us online at www.vfw5040.org

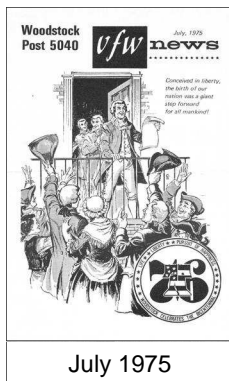
Woodstock VFW Post 5040 and Auxiliary



July 1955



July 1965



July 1975



July 1985



July 1995



July 2005

VFW News celebrates 50 years of Post History

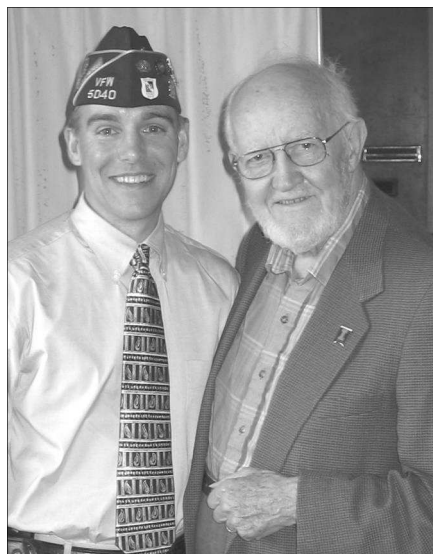
By Matt Klos, VFW News Editor

This month, the *VFW News* reaches a milestone in our Post history. The *VFW News* turns 50 this month, with the first issue published by Don Peasley in July, 1955. Although this milestone does not warrant a celebration of any kind, it should be recognized and that's what this issue will do. Throughout this issue, you will find some new stories of events that just took place and also a look back on the history of the *VFW News*. 50 years is a long time for a publication of this type to exist, and I am proud to be a part of it.

From July 1955 to July 2005, 600 issues of the *VFW News* have been created covering Post events, people, interviews, parades, dinners, etc. This is a vast amount of information, and highlighting each issue would have been a monumental task. Taking a different approach, I decided to focus on the publication itself - the people behind the newsletter, the work that goes into it, and the changes that molded the newsletter each month for 50 years.

Don Peasley created the first publication in July, 1955, and was editor of the *VFW News*. He remained editor until July 2002. The July 2002 issue was the last issue of the *VFW News* that he created before retiring as editor. I, your current editor, began producing the *VFW News* with the August 2002 issue.

When I took over as editor, I really didn't know what the expectation was for this Post



Matt Klos (L) current editor of the *VFW News* (August 2002 to present) pictured with Don Peasley, founding editor of the *VFW News* (July 1955 to July 2002) (Photo taken by Harold Irwin).

job. All I knew was that it involved covering stories about VFW Post 5040 and continuing the tradition and legacy that Don had started. Basically, the role of the *VFW News* was to let our Post membership know what was going on with the Post, to keep everyone informed. So even if you could not make it to a meeting, you could still "keep in touch" with the Post.

With the first issue that was to be published in August 2002, I didn't have a lot to go on. I was new at this and didn't know where to start. Don gave me a little guidance, but I didn't have anything tangible to work with.

See 50th ANNIVERSARY, page 3

Memorial Day Report

By James A. Ogle, Jr.

To our children [sent to my eight children and nineteen grandchildren].

The day dawned bright and early, not so with Gloria and I. It was 8:00 a.m. when we awoke. As always, most bones and joints in our body ached. This is our normal condition before taking our morning medicine and letting it take its effect. The Memorial Day program was to start in two hours. That was less than the time required for two old people to do what is necessary to do to attend. It was a holiday; would it really matter if we stayed home?

Mother read my mind when she said, "Come on, we have got to get going in order to make the program, if we don't we'll regret it all year long".

After loading two folding chairs into the car, we headed for town. We were able to find a handicapped parking space at the public parking lot at Jefferson and Calhoun streets. Gloria carried the chairs and I with my cane climbed up the stairs on the corner of the square. We were able to make our way in to the park in the town square to an area in the southwest quadrant about 45 feet from the band stand. We were seated next to a small tree with a sturdy branch about three feet from the ground. This proved very handy to assist me in getting up and down during the ceremony. What an ideal place to be, close to the speakers, 35 feet from the Civil War soldiers statue in the park and 15 feet from the replica of the cannons that used to be around the statue.

See MEMORIAL DAY, page 3

VFW Post 5040 - Post Officers 2005 - 2006

Commander	Thom Gillespie	(815)-338-6826
Senior Vice Commander	Mike David	(815)-338-5341
Junior Vice Commander	Jim Clegg	(815)-334-0210
Quartermaster	Dwayne Raney (temporary)	(815)-338-1652
Chaplain	Howard Engstrom	(815)-338-4453
Assistant Chaplain	Charles (Chuck) Mathey	(815)-338-5374
Service Officer	Ron Nehls	(815)-338-3671
Judge Advocate	Dick Glawe	(815)-385-3156
Post Surgeon	Harold Irwin	(815)-338-1264
Officer-of-the-Day	Bruce Shisler	(815)-338-4735
Adjutant	Matthew Klos	(815)-479-8842
1 Year Trustee	Larry Dhom	(815)-338-4134
2 Year Trustee	Allen Belcher	(815)-338-7689
3 Year Trustee	Arnie Doerfert	(815)-385-2923

Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 5040 Post Officers 2005 - 2006

President	Nyda Fogarty	(815)-338-1759
Senior Vice President	Bonnie Kagel	(815)-648-4958
Junior Vice	Viola Brown	(815)-338-1446
Secretary	Christine Gehrke	(815)-338-3533
Treasurer	Barbara Gehrke	(815)-338-1546
Chaplain	Karen Wells	(815)-338-4821
Guard	Margie Humphrey	Not Available
Conductress	Irene Brown	(815)-459-3483
1 Year Trustee	Geraldine Salyers	Not Available
2 Year Trustee	Lois Freund	(815)-338-5261
3 Year Trustee	Margaret Webb	(815)-338-4213

Ladies Auxiliary - from the President

By Nyda Fogarty, Auxiliary President 2005-2006

Our new officers for the coming year were installed at our regular meeting on June 2nd. Due to the Post installation the night before Memorial Day we could not have a joint installation this year.

Our Memorial Day program and dinner was a great success and I want to thank all the ladies who donated pies for the dinner. They were wonderful and we had plenty. I also want to thank everyone who donated baked goods or money to our bake sale that was held during the Soup To Nuts Sale the Post put on in May.

Some of our long time members are dropping their membership and this means they will not have cancer insurance and hospital benefit that the Auxiliary pays for. This is a benefit that goes along with your membership and costs you nothing. Dues are \$15.00 a year and are due now.

We are very sorry to report the death of the mother of our Treasurer, Barbara Gehrke on June 7th in Norfolk, VA. Our sympathy to Barbara and her family.

Installation of the 2005-2006 officers took place on May 29 for the VFW and June 2 for the Auxiliary (Matt Klos photos).

VFW officers: front row (L), Mike David (Sr. Vice), Thom Gillespie (Commander), Jim Clegg (Jr. Vice), Howard Engstrom (Chaplain), back row (L) Matt Klos (Adjutant), Dwayne Raney (Quartermaster-temp), Bruce Shisler (Officer of the Day), Harold Irwin (Post Surgeon), Sid Sherwin (2004-2005 Commander).

Auxiliary Officers 2005-2006. Front row (L) Irene Brown (Conductress), Nyda Fogarty (President), Barbara Gehrke (Treasurer), back row (L) Margie Humphrey (Guard), Karen Wells (Chaplain), Geraldine Salyers (1 Year Trustee), Lois Freund (2 Year Trustee)

✠✠ Chaplains Report ✠✠
By Matt Klos

Howard Engstrom did not have a report for this month. He was excused from the monthly meeting due to some family issues he is dealing with. His son is dealing with cancer which, during this time, has put a tremendous burden on Harold's family.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

In this time of need, please pray for Harold's family and especially his son as they deal with this situation.



For the 52nd year the Woodstock VFW has been a major sponsor of the Woodstock Little League. This year's 13-14-year-old team members play in the Junior Division. Front (L): Garrett Davis, Tyler Westman, Ryan McNeil, Brad Warren and Jordan Redman. Middle (L): Tyler Creath, Jimmy Creath, Chris Behler, Tony Vrasich, Ryan Kline, Josh Burno and Patrick Mertz. Back(L): Barry Behler, Mike Mertz and Randy Redman, coaches; and Chuck Vrasich, manager (Don Peasley Photo).



Greenthumb decorates post with color

A note of thanks goes out to Judy David, wife of Senior Vice Commander Mike David, for planting the flowers out in front of the Post for Memorial Day. Judy cleaned up the flower beds and will take care of the flowers through the summer. Thanks, Judy, for giving the Post a little "color" with flowers. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

Woodstock VFW News is published monthly by Woodstock VFW Post 5040, 240 N. Throop Street, Woodstock, IL 60098. (815)-338-5040
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Woodstock VFW Post 5040, c/o VFW News Editor, 240 N. Throop Street, Woodstock, IL 60098.

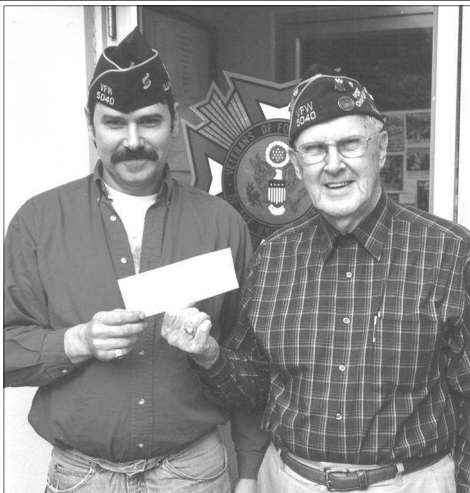
Memorial Day

Continued from page 1

The weather was picture perfect. The band stand was decorated with patriotic bunting, as was the whole square. Sid Sherwin, the local VFW commander, did an absolutely outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies for the entire program. The amplifying system that was used was great. It was wonderful to actually hear and understand the program. As you know, in prior years the effort and hours that many people put in preparing for the Memorial Day ceremony was lost to the public due to a poor sound system. All of the various speakers were diversified and interesting. The school bands were large in number and excellent in performance.

Other items we found of unusual interest was the miniature Vietnam Wall, brought again to Woodstock by prominent local donors. There were several fly-overs by a three ship "vee" of WWII Stearman biplanes, also a higher flying smoke emitting plane. There may have been more but the trees obscured my view. A surprise event was the release of a flock (perhaps a hundred) white doves from near the statue while a choir group sang "America the Beautiful".

The square was packed. It was very gratifying to see so many men, women and children paying homage to our fallen warriors. Memorial Day in Woodstock was certainly Mayberry, USA today.

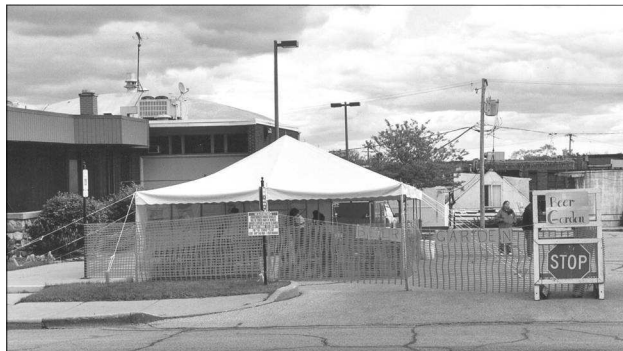


Howard Engstrom, planned giving and public relations director for Family Alliance, accepts a \$1,000 contribution from the Woodstock VFW. The funds will be used to help Family Alliance provide services to veterans cared for at the adult daycare facility. The Veterans Administration has reduced funding to provide services for veterans. From left: Thom Gillespie, VFW Quartermaster (Commander 2005-2006), and Howard Engstrom, VFW Chaplain (Don Peasley Photo).

We Missed You

By Russ and Donna Freeman

We left off a name in the sellers that helped out last month in the Soup to Nuts Sale. It was Wally Ramberg and as far as we know that is the only one. Hope we didn't miss anyone else. Sorry about that Wally.



Woodstock VFW members erected this beer and pop tent and welcomed visitors during Sunday, May 15 Fair Diddle activity in the Woodstock Square. Fencing and careful policing provided excellent security (Don Peasley Photo).

Veterans employment and services fair

Please help us notify veterans about the Veterans Employment and Services Fair, to be held at:

Villa Park VFW #2801
39 E St Charles Road
Villa Park, IL 60148

"Bring your resume and meet employers, and veteran service organizations."

From 9am to 1pm on Wednesday, July 27. If you know an employer or veterans-related service provider / organization that would like to participate, or have any questions, please contact:

Greg Stefan, DVOP
IDES / Lombard
837 S. Westmore-Meyers Rd.
Lombard, IL 60148

630-495-4345 Ext. 238
Gstefan@ides.state.il.us

50th Anniversary

Continued from page 1

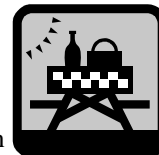
How should it be created? What software should I use? What was the printer expecting? These and many more questions overloaded me.

As many of you can remember, I did publish my first issue and it was a learning experience. I had some software on my computer to create it, but I had to create everything from scratch. The format needed to be created, the advertiser blocks had to be scanned into the computer from Don's last issue, and I had to create a layout that I could use each month. Once this was created, I started adding content like Don would have. I included pictures and before I knew it, I had my first issue of the *VFW News*.

I have learned a lot since creating the first issue, trying new things each month and finding out what worked and what didn't. It took a long time before I had quality pictures published in the paper. For that August issue, there was a lot of improvement that was needed. Trial and error finally got it right and each issue got better. I used some different software for creating the newsletter, I was able to scan in pictures, and when the issue went to print the pictures were finally coming out like I wanted.

From some people I talked with, they wondered what would happen with the newsletter once Don retired. They were glad to see that it was kept on as a membership benefit of the Post. With the help and encouragement of Post members, I am able to continue to produce a monthly newsletter for all our post members to enjoy and "keep in touch".

Informal post picnic planned



Once again, John Hanson will be holding a picnic at his house. It will be on Sunday September 18th, noon to 7 pm. Beer and pop will be supplied. Please bring a dish to pass, as the club will supply hamburgers. There will be swimming, golf contest, baseball games, volley-ball, and horseshoes. All members of the VFW and Auxiliary welcome. Bring your grand kids too! It was a great time last year and we had a lot of fun. His address is 2718 Deepcut Rd., Woodstock.

Please RSVP to John at (815)-338-7890. Pray for a nice day and no rain!

VFW News Meets the Electronic Age

By Matt Klos, VFW News Editor

In late 2002, someone asked if the newsletter could be e-mailed via computer. About the same time someone had indicated that it would be nice if our post had a website. Knowing the limitations of e-mail at the time and the size of the publication, in most cases e-mail would not be feasible.

An idea was born. The newsletter could be put on the internet so anyone could read it if the Post had a website. What turned out to be just an idea blossomed into another role that the *VFW News* editor would take on.

In January 2003, research began on what it would take to get an internet site up and running. Post 5040 did have a website that was put up, but it was not maintained and few people knew about it. It needed to be something on a larger scale, something where each issue of the *VFW News* could reside and be easily accessible.

After researching and finding out how to create a web page, a web site format materialized. One page of the website would be dedicated to holding current and past issues of the *VFW News* so members and the general public could view or print them as needed. On March 12, 2003, the website was launched.

Today, the VFW Post 5040 website remains and each month the current issue of the *VFW News* is loaded up to the website. Traffic to the website has not been exceptional, but it has proved useful. Jim Smith, Commander during 2002-2003, viewed the *VFW News* while in Iraq. With a generic e-mail address on the website, the post has been contacted through the website about specific questions regarding our post and rental facilities.

In 2004, a survey of our membership indicated that only about 24% had internet access. Even though the *VFW News* was available electronically, the paper version would still be mailed out.

Production of the *VFW News* has also seen some changes since it was first created. Each month begins with a template on the computer, and stories and pictures are added as needed. These pictures are either scanned into the computer or are pictures from a digital camera. Don Peasley still provides stories to print and pictures to place, and occasionally Post members send something for inclusion.

In 2005, when we switched printer shops, the *VFW News* made its complete

life cycle electronically. After the *VFW News* is created on a computer and laid out to what it will look like when printed, the electronic file is sent to the print shop through the internet. The only paper copy made is the preview copy and the copy you receive in the mail. Using high-speed electronic copying, each newsletter is created from the electronic file to produce a crisp, clean image.

From its beginning in 1955 as a local VFW Post newsletter, the *VFW News* is now available to anyone in the world with an internet connection. It sure has come a long way since 1955.

Ceremony opens Moving Wall, a Vietnam veterans memorial

By Don Peasley

A solemn ceremony honoring men with notable records during war was a major part of a special program in the Woodstock Square on Friday May 27. The program preceded the unveiling of the Vietnam Moving Wall. The ceremony on the bandstand also honored two McHenry County residents killed in the Iraq War and welcomed Alan Lynch, a Medal of Honor recipient of Chicago.

Family members were in attendance. Ted Bieber, master of ceremonies for the Moving Wall dedication, led the tribute to Marine Lance Cpl. Jonathan Collins and Private First Class Collier Barcus.

Congresswoman Melissa Bean pre-

An integral part of the ceremony opening the Vietnam Moving Wall was honoring two McHenry County residents killed in the Iraq War. Family members were present during the ceremony on the Woodstock Square Friday, May 27. Pictured (L): Ted Bieber, Marine Corps League representative; Sandy Barcus, sister of Army Private First Class Collier Barcus; Jack and Angel Collins, parents of Marine Lance Cpl. Jonathan Collins; Allen Lynch, Chicago Medal of Honor recipient; and Roy Dolgos, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (Don Peasley Photo).



Members of the VFW stand in the bandstand on Woodstock Square on May 26th, pulling guard duty for the Moving Wall and keeping each other company on the chilly night. Pictured (L): Bruce Shishler, Bill Lyford, and Mike David, Brian Ritter, Ralph Ritter, Rex Ritter (Matt Klos Photo).



Jack and Angel Collins, parents of Marine Lance Cpl. Jonathan Collins who was killed in Iraq, receive a flag from Congresswoman Melissa Bean during ceremonies May 27 in the Woodstock Square. The flag flew over the U.S. Capital (Don Peasley Photo).

sented flags flown over the Capital to Sandy Barcus, sister of Collier Barcus; and Jack and Angel Collins, parents of Jonathan Collins.

Representatives of the VFW, American Legion, VietNow, Marine Corps League and AMVETS erected the Vietnam Moving Wall Thursday, May 26 on the north side of the Woodstock Square.

Bieber expressed appreciation to Mrs. Tonya Chambers, Woodstock High School English teacher, and the following students for their work in polishing the wall after it was in place: Joe Hunt, Juan Tapia, Miguel Escorza, Fernando Cruz and Luis Castaneda.

Veterans stood guard throughout the day and night while the wall was in the Woodstock Square.

VFW News – it's not finished until it's mailed

By Matt Klos, *VFW News* Editor

With each issue of the *VFW News* that is created, after the newsletter is printed, there is another piece of work that must take place before it gets to you in your mailbox. It has to be labeled and actually mailed. This is where Harold Irwin and Fred Wallis come in.

Harold Irwin was a Tech Supply Sergeant during WWII. He was assigned to the 19th Bombardier Squadron, 22nd Bombardier Group, 5th Air Force of the US Army Air Corps. Harold started to get involved with the *VFW News* mailings when Commander Bob Watts died, succeeded by Bill Lyford in the term 1997-1998. Bob had asked Harold to do the work of getting the *VFW News* ready for mailing.

Fred Wallis served as an Infantryman in Korea and Operations Intelligence in Vietnam. He was in the Army for 22 years. Fred got involved with the newsletter when Gerry Beckus was in office as Jr. Vice Commander in 1993-1994. Gerry had asked Fred to print the labels for the *VFW News*. "I felt it was something I could do to support the VFW," comments Fred.

Together, Harold and Fred get the *VFW News* ready so it can be delivered to your mailbox. Harold's duties each month consist of maintaining a list of deceased members, address changes, "snow bird" temporary addresses, and the actual labeling of the newsletter.

Towards the end of the month when the newsletters are being printed, Harold and Fred get together to update the master address data base which Fred keeps on his home computer. After all the address changes, corrections, and temporary addresses are updated, Fred prints out the labels. This process itself takes about three to four hours each month.

With the help of his wife, Jeanette, Harold labels and groups the newsletters by zip code and postal centers. This is required in order to comply with the requirements under the bulk mailing permit that is used to send the newsletters out at a reduced rate.

Harold has some other duties that he does relating to keeping addresses of everyone current. He has also been filling out and sending the Member Change Request forms to National so they can keep their records updated and in sync with what we have at the post. "I wish I would have kept track of how much time I spend on this

[labeling and list maintenance]," Harold mentions. "I would guess between 45 and 50 hours a month."

As you can see, the job that Harold and Fred perform each month is an important one. It requires dedication, an eye for detail, and time. Fred and Harold, on behalf of the post, "Thank You" for supporting the post through what you do with the *VFW News*.

Spread the word to get these plates in production

By Paul Hildreth

As many of you know or have seen, there are many different military license plates available to Military Veterans in the state of Illinois.

In a letter from the Office of the Illinois Secretary of State: "In 2001 the Illinois General Assembly passed a bill establishing issuance of an Army Combat Veteran license plate. The bill was signed into law to be effective January 1, 2002. The law states that the plate will display the Army Combat Infantry Badge and will have an additional \$15.00 first time issuance fee. It will be available to all Illinois residents that meet eligibility requirements, and may displayed on passenger cars, motorcycles, trucks and vans weighting 8,000 pounds or less. At this time the Secretary of State has not begun issuance of this plate, as we do not have enough interested applicants."

I encourage anyone eligible for this plate (or any other) to contact the Secretary of State's office. There is no cost to get on the waiting list. Spread the word so we can get this plate made.

By Mail: Illinois Secretary of State
Non-Standard Plates Section
501 S. Second St., Rm. 541
Springfield, IL 62756

By Telephone: 217-785-4175

The Coalition Memorial, pictured under the gazebo, was on display at the same time the Moving Wall was displayed on Woodstock Square. The memorial pays tribute to servicemen and servicewomen from all nations, who have died during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and during peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan. A picture, rank, name, age, military service unit, hometown, country, and cause of death of each fallen service member line the multi-paneled display. The memorial originates from Sharon, WI (Matt Klos Photo).

Ad sponsors support the VFW News

By Matt Klos, *VFW News* Editor

In each *VFW News*, you probably have noticed the advertisers on the last and next to last page of the *VFW News*. Each sponsor pays a yearly advertising fee to have an ad run each month for the entire year. These fees are used to help defray the cost of printing and mailing of the *VFW News*. Their contributions each year are greatly appreciated.

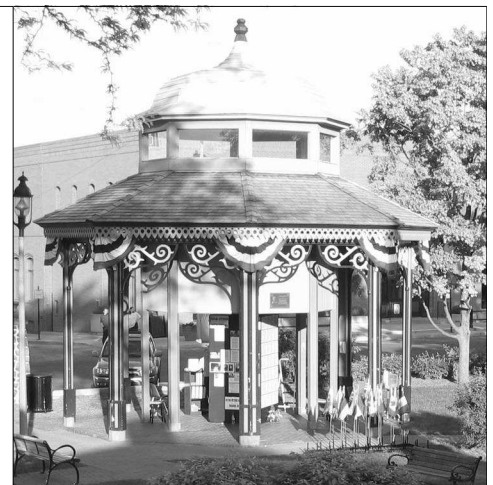
Jerry Donahue, Life Member of VFW Post 5040 and a tail gunner in WWII, has a unique tie to the *VFW News* that few others can match. Jerry Donahue, owner of Donhue's Furniture, was approached in 1955 by Maynard Wilkerson who started gathering advertisers for the first issue of the *VFW News*. Of the 10 advertisers that were featured in the 1955 first issue of the *VFW News*, Donahue's Furniture Company is the only advertiser still advertising in the *VFW News*.

When asked if he had any comments in a letter sent to Jerry, his reply was, "I have been a member of the VFW for over 50 years and have really enjoyed it. Many of my old VFW friends have passed away but some are around. I have been in the Memorial Day Parade the last few years, along with Ray Benoy, Ed Hall, Phil Meier, etc. I feel good about being one of the first advertisers."

The post thanks Jerry Donahue sincerely for his support for all these years. Best of luck with business in the coming years ahead.

Thank you

Thanks to Hubbs Greenhouse in Marengo which donated 24 Emerald Arborvitae to decorate the Moving Wall from May 26 to June 1.



My guard duty experience at the Moving Wall

By Matt Klos, VFW News Editor

It's 11:20 pm on May 26. It's a little chilly. The wall was just erected this morning and the turnout has been a little slow. I have guard duty with Rex Ritter, a Vietnam veteran who has signed up for guard duty each night from 10 pm to 6 am. I wanted to pull guard duty at least once and see what people thought of it.

A woman comes to the wall, we watch as she touches the panels. As she runs her hands down the wall, she stops at a panel and begins to cry. She turns to us and says, "This is so overwhelming". She thanks us for being here, for showing Woodstock the complexity and immensity of the soldiers who gave their lives in Vietnam. She mumbles to herself, "I'm so sorry." Friends, relatives? I don't know. We leave her to help deal with whatever loss she feels.

As you stand at the bandstand, looking at the wall from far away, all you see is a black wall against the black of night. White names are inscribed, row upon row, panel upon panel. Not until you walk the wall do you feel the loss of all those servicemen. So many names. So many families. So many who died for their country.

There are those that see the names for the first time, those that won't go near the wall due to too many painful memories of experiences in Vietnam and memories of friends they knew. Yet it's a chapter in American history that we all acknowledge, forever it will be. Forever to be remembered.



The setup crew. These volunteers and several others spent 7 hours setting up the Moving Wall on May 26 to prepare it for display. Thanks to Tom Shulfer of Tom Shulfer Construction for building the base for the Vietnam wall. Tom and the other men in the photo, the "crew" spent 7 hours building the base and didn't charge a cent for doing it . Thanks guys! (Photo courtesy of Ralph Ritter).



Sid Sherwin, VFW Commander 2004-2005 was Master of Ceremonies for the Memorial Day ceremony held in Woodstock Square on May 30, 2005 (Matt Klos photo)



Following the Memorial Day Parade, a ham dinner was served at VFW Post 5040. Pictured VFW Members who volunteered to serve food to guests are (L) Hank Enstrom, Bob Gibson, and Don Sword (Matt Klos photo).



The Moving Wall at night. This was taken on May 26, the day the Moving Wall was put up. To make searching the Wall easier, two computers were set up under the bandstand to allow visitors to search a data base of all names on the Wall (Matt Klos Photo).



The Moving Wall during the day. Pictured is the POW/MIA table that was set up between the panels of the Moving Wall. The Moving Wall was on display from May 26 to June 1, 2005 (Matt Klos Photo).

Newsletter label and sorting job available

Harold Irwin and Fred Wallis will be resigning from their duties on September 1st. Harold and Fred have been preparing the labels each month for the newsletter, attaching them, and delivering them to the Post Office. In addition, Fred Wallis has kept the mailing roster up to date on his computer. Duties of Harold include:

- Maintaining the Post roster / mailing list
- Preparing labels for newsletter, sorted according to destination
- Attaching labels to newsletter (requires several hours and help from an additional person)
- Delivery to post office
- Preparing membership change request forms
- Filing membership application forms (active and deceased)
- Filing DD-214 forms
- Keeping records of the deceased so records can be sent to State and District
- Syncing up our membership roster with that of National

After the September news letter, Harold is turning in all records and materials. It will take several months for a new person to learn what they have been doing, according to Harold.

If anyone is interested in this work, please let the Post know. Contact Harold Irwin (815)-338-1264 or Matt Klos (815)-479-8842. We need someone soon so they can start to learn the process.

VFW News

A timeline of its history

By Matt Klos, VFW News Editor

Looking back from when the *VFW News* was started in 1955 to today, there are 600 issues that were created detailing information about the Post and its history. From dances to dinners, parades and raffles, remembering veterans and donating money to veterans causes, a new Post home built in the early 50's, and so much more.

When I was going through many of the old issues of the *VFW News* dating back to 1955, of which Dean Mishler had meticulously saved many of the issues dating back to 1955 and had given this archive to Don Peasley for keeping, I was overwhelmed by all that had gone on with the Post. The involvement of the members,

the grandeur of the events that the Post put on, all this was captured in the *VFW News* through pictures and words. The *VFW News* had certainly been a good communication tool to highlight these events for Post members to read about.

But besides all the things that went on with the Post itself, the *VFW News* took on a life of its own. It is the only record, a snap shot from each month, of what the Post was doing. It too made its own strides in the history of our organization. Here is a timeline of some of the changes and recognition that our newsletter has gone through these many years:

- 1955, July – First Newsletter created. Size is 5 1/8" x 8", 12 pages. Issue sent to all members using a 3 cent stamp. Editor Don Peasley, advertising Maynard Wilkerson, and special assistance from Wesley Frame and Guenther Wenk work to produce this first issue.
- 1955, August – *VFW News* sent using postal permit 338. Paper officially named "Woodstock V.F.W News".
- 1956 – *VFW News* wins National publication contest.
- 1957, June - *VFW News* changes size to 5 3/8" x 8 1/2".
- 1959, January – Masthead changed to "VFW" in white letters in black block, with "News" in white letters. Changes in size to 5 3/4" x 8 7/8", paper type, standardized cover layout, use of cover from same paper in magazine, and fewer photos are keeping with the need to lower costs of the magazine to the VFW.
- 1963 – *VFW News* wins National publication contest.
- 1968 – *VFW News* places 2nd in National publication contest.
- 1970 – *VFW News* places 2nd in National publication contest.
- 1971 – *VFW News* wins National publication contest.
- 1983 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 1984 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 1985 – *VFW News* wins National publication contest.
- 1986 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 1990 – *VFW News* places 2nd in National publication contest.
- 1991 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 1993, July – Masthead changed to two stars and a wavy, partial flag. Size changed to 7" x 8 1/2".

- 1995, July – Masthead changed to three stars and a wavy, partial flag. Size changed to 8 1/2" x 11".
- 1996, June – 44 page edition of *VFW News* created for 50th anniversary of Post.
- 1997 – *VFW News* places 2nd in National publication contest.
- 1999 – *VFW News* places 2nd in National publication contest.
- 2000 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 2001 – *VFW News* places 3rd in National publication contest.
- 2002, July – Don Peasley produces his last newsletter and resigns from 47 years as Editor of *VFW News*.
- 2002, August – Editor Matt Klos produces his first issue of the *VFW News*.
- 2003, March – Website launch and issues of the *VFW News* dating back to August 2002 posted to website.
- 2004 – *VFW News* places 2nd in Illinois publication contest.
- 2005 – *VFW News* places 1st in Illinois publication contest.
- 2005, July – *VFW News* celebrates it's 50th year of bringing the news of the VFW Post 5040 to each members mailbox.

Not mentioned above is all the state awards that the *VFW News* received when Don Peasley was editor. The *VFW News* garnished more than 25 state awards.

As you may have noticed, this issue marks another change, if only slight. The masthead on the front of the *VFW News* has changed once again to mark the 50th *VFW News* anniversary issue. This masthead was created by my brother, Ryan Klos. He is a Graphic Designer who is in the process of getting his MBA in English. I asked him to create it for the *VFW News*, an idea all his own. I wanted him to retain the simplicity and familiarity, yet bring a new look to the front cover you see monthly. Hope you like it.

Pics, pics, and yes more pics

Did you miss the Memorial Day Ceremony on Woodstock Square? Wish you stayed for the parade? Couldn't make it to the VFW or Auxiliary installation? Couldn't make it down to see the Moving Wall? Had other plans so you couldn't attend the dinner after the parade? You're in luck! For those of you with website access, you can view pictures from all these events. Posted on the website are 213 pictures from these events. See www.vfw5040.org

An interview with founding editor, Don Peasley

By Matt Klos, *VFW News* Editor
Co-written by Don Peasley,
founding editor of the *VFW News*

Many of you are familiar with Don Peasley's work. You've read his articles in the *VFW News* for the past 50 years. You still read his articles in the local newspapers. One thing I noticed going through back issue of the *VFW News* is that Don really didn't mention much about himself and experiences. In the July 2002 issue, there was a column about the dinner the Post sponsored in a salute to Don, culminating his 47 years as *VFW News* editor.

With this being the 50th Anniversary of the *VFW News*, I saw it befitting that I should get Don's point of view. After all, he started this newsletter. As editor for 47 years, he produced 564 issues of the *VFW News*.

I came up with a list of questions for Don and he so graciously provided a robust reflection on his life and a history of the *VFW News*. The following are the comments provided me:

Tell me about your military service career:

I was 20 when I joined the military on July 1, 1943. I was in the U.S. Navy Reserve (US NR) during World War II.

I served aboard two ships in the U.S. Navy from July 1, 1943 to September 1, 1946. I was aboard the USS BLUE RIDGE which was the amphibious force flagship for the landing at Leyte Gulf when General MacArthur kept his promise in the Philippines when he said as he left Corregidor: "I shall return."

During the last year while on active duty, I served aboard the USS LAWRENCE C. TAYLOR, a destroyer escort, working closely with an aircraft carrier with four other D.E.'s as a hunter killer group.

I was communications officer aboard the TAYLOR, a deck officer aboard the BLUE RIDGE. I was Lieutenant (j.g.) when I was discharged from the Navy. I stayed as an active Naval Reserve officer for about six years.

While on an officer messenger trip during the landing at Lingayen Gulf on January 9, 1945, I was aboard the British cruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA when it was struck by a Japanese kamikaze plane.

Tell me a about your family:

My wife is Fran Peasley who is a psychotherapist professionally. She obtained

her master's degree after raising four children, going back to college in her late 40's. I have four children: Mary, 53, special education teacher in Chicago; Mark, 52, retired dentist, now a U.S. mail carrier; Chuck, 49, computer programmer living in Yorba Linda, California; and Sarah, 43, paralegal with a law firm in Littleton, Colorado.

What is your background (where you grew up, went to school, jobs, etc.) leading up to when you first produced the VFW News in 1955?

I was born on a farm in rural Stronghurst, Illinois, December 5, 1922. I grew up on the farm and doing the usual chores of milking cows, feeding hogs and cattle. My dad was one of the first farmers to raise soybeans as a major crop and he improved on that by planting the beans in rows rather than broadcasting them.

I remember driving a team of three horses with a two-row cultivator to cultivate the soybeans. I think my first paying job was to ride a hay horse for my Uncle Joe and I received generous pay for those times. It was 50 cents a day.

I graduated from Terre Haute High School with a full scholarship to the University of Illinois. I concentrated on working on the *Daily Illini* but I also attended college and became assistant sports editor my final year at Illinois (1946-47). I attended three years of college before going into the Navy.

Work on the *Daily Illini* prepared me to become editor of the *Woodstock Journal*, *Hebron Times* and *Huntley Review* at Woodstock starting October 6, 1947. I continued that job until the paper was sold January 26, 1950. I was fortunate to obtain a job in radio and publications with the Illinois Farm Bureau in April 1950.

I was asked by local organizations to take photos of their important activities for pay and provide photos to the *Woodstock Sentinel*. That grew to become an important public relations activity locally while working in Chicago.

Meanwhile in 1955, I became a member of an educational investment club. That led me to the Merrill Lynch office at Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive and I picked up a little 5 x 8 inch publication which inspired me to urge the start of a similar-sized publication for the Woodstock VFW.

I had become casually involved with activities at the VFW prior to that because I remember one of the long-time residents telling me soon after I came to Woodstock, "You want to become involved in the VFW. They are an up-and-coming

group."

This man worked with the Wilkerson brothers, Don and Maynard, and had a close awareness of the VFW's impact in providing strong leadership for returning veterans.

How old were you when you started the VFW News?

I was 32 when I started the *VFW News*. [Editor's note: Matt Klos was 32 when he took over as editor in 2002. Coincidence?] The first issue had a timely headline story because this was announcing the start of the V-J Day parade and pageant of drums. This publication was printed by Allied Printing for many years, a letter press company owned and operated by Betty Lindvall and Helen Jenner (two well-known, highly-respected people in Woodstock).

I received help with production of the *VFW News* for the first few years. Maynard Wilkerson sold advertising and Dwayne Raney later helped sell advertising and would occasionally provide me information regarding an article.

During those first years we used a heavier cover to add a little class to the publication, and we used one color. Printing color photos was unheard of even in most recent times because of the cost.

What and who inspired you to create the first issue of the VFW News?

A key to the start of success with the *Woodstock VFW News* was strong support provided by Earl Holm, Commander of Post 5040. He made the presentation to the membership.

I visualize the purpose as a way to inform members of activities involving veterans, projects the VFW conducted to assist veterans and letting men and women know of help available at a time of need. In this respect, the *VFW News* did fulfill the early requirements, and under the present excellent leadership it continues to meet those lofty goals.

As it stands today, do you think the newsletter is still accomplishing your original goals set forth in 1955?

Yes, very much so, thanks to a hard-working editor who has expanded the coverage and the scope of the publication. From the early years I did urge the Commander to write a column, actually, I interviewed the Commander, helped him come up with ideas for the column, and wrote it for the Commander.

The life blood of the VFW News: Post membership

By Matt Klos, *VFW News* Editor

You've read it in the National *VFW Magazine*, you read about it in the *Illinois VFW News*, District talks about it at meetings. What am I referring to? The life blood of any post of course, its members.

While going through the back issues of the *VFW News*, it's amazing to read about events that brought out *hundreds* of people to the post such as dinners and dances. This happened quite frequently.

Undeniably, membership is a sore spot for any Post. It's what keeps Posts alive and at the same time closes Posts due to a lack of.

If you can believe that the *VFW News* is 50 years old this month, what do you think this reflects in our Post membership? Yep, our membership is older too! With less members joining VFW Posts every year, it is harder for posts to stay open, maintain their place in the community, and help current veterans in need.

Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it), new veterans are becoming more readily available. It's now just a matter of getting them interested in the VFW and other veterans organizations.

When I contacted Fred Wallis and Harold Irwin for this issue, I asked them a question that, if I asked a majority of the Post, a similar answer would be given. The question to them was, "Can you provide a short observation on the changes you have seen to the Post over the years, the quality, the importance of [the *VFW News*] to the Post? Their answers were quite similar in tone:

Fred Wallis's response was, "I think the graying of the club is the biggest change. The current vets are not joiners. This is reflected in civic, fraternal organizations and in churches. I sometimes wonder what will happen if we cannot get new members. I know as I grow older and have quit drinking, I don't spend the time [at the post] as I did in the past. I wonder if this is true of others. I used to have trouble breathing at the club because of smoking. I know they have improved the air circulation, but I still have trouble. **I do not want to see the club close.** I think it is important to the community."

Harold's response was similar, "Sadly to say, the biggest change is the aging and dying of the dynamic members who founded the Post and kept it thriving

through the years, with the help of a very active Auxiliary. Since I have been keeping records starting in 2000, 116 members have died, including nine this year. Obviously I didn't know most of them, but I just reviewed the lists I have and I saw the names of about 50 deceased members who could be counted on as active supporting people that I can remember, and I'm sure there were many I didn't know of their involvement.

I've heard it said by newer members that they can't work or take an office because "I'm working and have a family to raise." Well, so did the WWII, Korean, and Vietnam vets have to work and raise families, but they, as you [Matt] are doing, help keep the Post going. The main reason they did and are doing so is because of very supporting wives.

As you've heard, in the past, much of the work of keeping the Post alive was done by volunteers and now the Post has to hire people to do the work. If it was not for the "handful" of volunteers working today, the Post would "go down the tube"!

I overheard a conversation a few years ago by a Kiwanis official, who said the people of today, aged approximately 35 to 55, would work hard on a project or two a year, but that most would not join a service organization for the "long haul".

I'm so very glad to see men of your [Matt] age pitching in and it seems as if the Post is "holding its own" memberwise. The Post should be growing by leaps and bounds because all the people returning from the current foreign wars. It's sad to me that we don't have a real active recruiting committee.

The Post needs more Klos's, Ritter's, Mathey's, Lyford's, Gibson's, Fish's, Nulle's, Sherwin's, Engstrom's, Wallis's, Honor Guard guys, and Auxiliary members - you know what I'm saying."

Yes, Harold, we know what you're saying. It has been tough for the Post in the recent years regarding membership. There are a select few that keep things going. Each year it becomes harder to maintain our level of membership, fill open officer positions, fill committees, find an individual to take on an active part in the post.

Last I heard, even the new Crystal Lake Post that opened in February 2004 is struggling. Sadly, it's a sign of the times though.

Maybe things will turn around. I too hope to see our membership grow and the Post revitalized. It will happen all in due time, hopefully sooner than later.

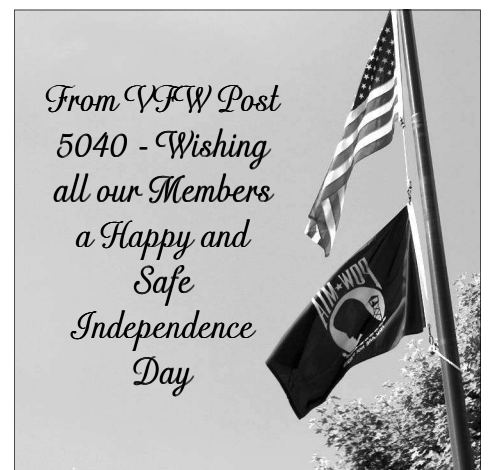
Thank you for making this your newsletter

By Matt Klos, *VFW News* Editor

I would like to take a little space to thank all of the people that have helped make the *VFW News* the newsletter it is today. Even if it was comment in passing at a meeting, emails, or a letter in my mailbox, thank you very much. Without this input, I would not have the information to help fill out each issue of the *VFW News*.

Thanks especially to Don Peasley for continuing to provide me pictures and stories to use each month, Harold Irwin and Fred Wallis for preparation of the labels and mailing of the *VFW News*, Candy Forte for reminding me of dinner specials, Kelly Gorham for reminding me of dates to go in the calendar and rental hall information, Ralph and Pat Ritter who always have some tidbit of information and miscellaneous pictures about things going on at the Post that I am not aware of, Nyda Fogarty for her monthly column on the Auxiliary, VFW Chaplain Howard Engstrom for his notes on the deaths of departed comrades and status of our membership in need, my wife, Kim, for her understanding and patience each month as I put the newsletter together. She has played the role as proof reader, delivered final copies to the printer, and made suggestions to improve the *VFW News*. Without her support, the job would be much harder.

Finally, thank you to all the members of the Post and Auxiliary that show up for each monthly meeting. All the input from you helps keep me abreast of current events, which through the *VFW News* helps keep the rest of the membership current on things going on at the Post. Please keep up the good work, keep the information coming, and let us all work together to keep our Post going strong.



Don's interview

Continued from page 8

In addition, I was able to take the information I gathered for the *VFW News* and often times the comments of the Commander to send to the *Woodstock Sentinel* and the *Elgin Courier News* as news stories. (Until the early 1970s, the *Elgin Courier News* as a major source of providing coverage for things happening in McHenry County. I became a major correspondent for the *Courier News* and was able to work in a great deal of veterans' related information.)

Was there a story or issue that stands out in your mind as very significant, above all that you created for the VFW News?

I remember soon after the *VFW News* began I thought it would be timely to feature one member with some background of his military involvement, his VFW involvement and his personal life.

I remember I approached Bud Behler, official at the Woodstock Die Casting, to ask him a favor. I told him I wanted to start this series and would he be willing to be the first featured member.

Starting with 1956, the 10th anniversary of the VFW's start, I highlighted accomplishments and recollections every five years. This provided a way to summarize personnel and activities. The highlight was perhaps the 50th anniversary issue, a major publication.

I was truly disappointed to receive no response or acknowledgement from the National VFW when I sent a copy to headquarters in Kansas City. Even more amazing, the *VFW News* did not win a National VFW award that year.

I frankly think they thought it was too good to be true.

Was there anything you wish you had done with the VFW News but were not able to, due to time or budget constraints?

Through the years, costs have been a major factor. When the *VFW News* first started, I was still a struggling journalist getting my foot in the business world, and the VFW agreed to pay me \$20 a month. This included my time to take photos, to buy film and print photos, to obtain material and write the stories and to supervise editing and production.

When money disappeared, payment quickly ended but I felt it was an important way to keep members informed—to make members willing to help when called on to work on a project or help at a dinner because they would think to them-

selves, "They are doing a good job, I'll help out."

There was a short time when money ran out and the publication nearly died. I became fully involved in the late 1970s and with the help of an understanding membership, this monthly publication regained its stature by 1983.

One of the satisfying achievements was winning 14 National awards and more than 25 state awards. (Each year I entered the state contest we won in our classification.)

Throughout your years as editor of the VFW News, who helped you write stories, take pictures, or assisted you with the production of the newsletter?

I did 95 percent of the writing, taking photos and producing the *VFW News*. Maynard Wilkerson and Dwayne Raney assisted with advertising and Raney would provide an article on occasion.

Joe Thiede ranks near the top. As VFW manager, Joe kept the Post together during some very difficult times. With his help we were able to provide articles of encouragement to round up support and workers. He was a valuable aid in keeping me informed on things coming up and in helping me get in touch with the right person for upcoming events. For a short time Frank Loss filled in as acting editor in the late 1970s through I actually did much of the work.

I did have the strong help of my staff members in later years, specifically Leslie McLeer and Marybeth Vogrinc. Without them I would have had to quit before I did.

When you retired as editor of the VFW News, did you think a suitable replacement editor would be found? Did you think the VFW News would cease to exist after you retired?

I told the Commander almost a year before I retired as editor that I planned to depart with the July 2002 issue. The reason I had to quit was because my wife's health was such that I could no longer have any assurance of following through on covering events, photographing activities, writing stories and supervising production.

Fortunately the Commander found you, Matt, to take over and improve the *VFW News*.

What are you presently doing now?

I continue to own my public relations business and write for the *Northwest Herald*, *Woodstock Independent* and do a variety of photographic assignments. I most recently completed production of a 28-page yearbook for the Woodstock Little

League titled *Play Ball!* and I'm pleased to be able to help with some articles and photos for the *VFW News*.

On average, how long did you spend on creating the VFW News each month?

It's difficult to measure time involved because covering an activity of an organization involves constant attention. It involves watchful observation and requires many hours of writing, editing, photographing and interviewing. It was just one of many ongoing, ever-present responsibilities.

When the VFW News was first being produced, what steps were involved?

First responsibility was to obtain information and photos and write stories and make the prints. I did the layout page by page and provided that to Allied Printing. I visited the printer to read proofs and correct layouts. The printer did the mailing for the first few years.

This was the procedure I followed throughout, except that in later years mailing was handled by several different people.

How responsive was membership in giving you stories to print or providing information that should be included in each month's newsletter? Did you have to "dig up" most of the stories on your own?

Members were average in providing information. Frankly, it was a case of digging information out although for the most part I would emphasize when the Auxiliary presidents did write a column and would keep me informed of some of their major projects.

Dwayne Raney was helpful in providing stories on things he was involved in. As Commander and as the Post Adjutant he was an excellent source of accurate, dependable information.

As for digging up information, I would say on average I originated 90 percent of the copy and photos.

Do you have any "words of advice" for the Post membership today concerning the VFW, the newsletter, the officers?

I believe the *Woodstock VFW News* is a major way to keep members informed of the services available to members of the VFW and to the Auxiliary. I believe it is a wise investment even at times of financial stress. It has provided a significant link between the membership, the work of those closest to the day-to-day operations and to those who serve in major positions of responsibility.

July 2005

☆☆☆☆☆☆ Post Normal Operating Hours (unless noted otherwise) ☆☆☆☆☆☆

Closed	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm	4:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28 Dirtt Group 7 pm	29	30	1 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	2
3	4  Independence Day Post Closed today.	5 Dirtt Group 7 pm	6	7 VFW Ladies Auxiliary 7:00 pm	8 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	9
10	11 American Legion 7:30 pm	12 VFW Board Mtg. 7 pm Dirtt Group 7 pm	13 Cub Scouts - ?? Pm	14	15 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	16
17	18 VFW Meeting 7:30 pm VFW Pre-Meeting Dinner (VFW Members Only) 6:30 pm Deadline for August 2005 VFW News items	19 Dirtt Group 7 pm	20 Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County 7:30 pm	21 Marines 7 pm Marines Auxiliary 7 pm	22 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	23
24	25 Girls Softball ?? pm	26 Dirtt Group 7 pm Jaycees 7 pm	27	28	29 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	30
31	1	2 Dirtt Group 7 pm	3	4 VFW Ladies Auxiliary 7:00 pm	5 Fish Fry / Salad Bar 5 - 8 pm	6



From the editor's desk By Matt Klos, Woodstock VFW News Editor

Whew! This issue was a lot more work than I anticipated. Here are some final notes for you. The June meeting, officially the last meeting of the 2004-2005 officers, was very short. About 30 members were in attendance. Several of the officers were absent (vacation, etc.). We did conduct a meeting, led by Bill Lyford, and finished up in a little over an hour. Dwayne Raney announced that he would not be able to perform the Quartermaster's roll. However, while it is unofficial at this time, we may have a replacement for Dwayne. Some money was donated to the Veterans Assistance Commission (\$200) and new siding will be put on the office in front of the VFW (\$400 in materials). As we begin a new VFW year starting in July 2005, our newly elected officers will officially hold their first meeting this month. We wish the best of luck to the officers this coming year as they perform their duties and lead our Post. Enjoy the summer and Happy Independence Day!

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If you would like to send a letter to the editor, please send it to the following address (do not send it to the post address):



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VFW 5040 News Editor
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(815)-479-8842

And for those of you with access to the internet, you can e-mail me at:

matt.klos@vfw5040.org

Visit our Post Website:
www.vfw5040.org

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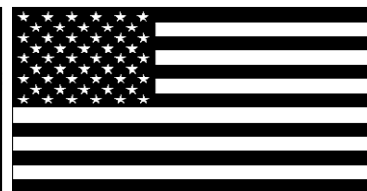


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