



# Vietnam Veterans of America Capital District Chapter 8



“Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another”

## “SITREP”

Volume 1, Issue 2

July 2015

### Chapter News

As of June 17, 2015, Chapter 8 has a total of 60 members. Of that total, 35 are Life Members, 21 Individual Members and 4 Associate Members. The Chapter is allotted 2 delegate seats for all State and National elections.

After 18 years of dedicated service, John Reitano has decided to step down as Chapter President. Last month, Ray Sestak was sworn in as the new President, Gerry Linen the new Vice President and John Reitano filling the Treasurer position vacated by Jim Whitman. John will be acting as Secretary/Treasurer.

Chapter meetings are still held on the third Thursday of every month, 5 PM, at the Legnard Curtin American Legion Post 927, 35 Cohoes Ave., Green Island, NY.

In an effort to increase interest and attendance at our monthly meetings, I am open to making changes to the day, time and even the location of the meetings. I would like to hear from all members as to what would work best for you. Please take a minute and send me a quick e-mail letting me know which day of the week, time and location would work best for you.

Suggested locations would be a VFW, American Legion Post or other Fraternal organization. I will send the results out via e-mail to all who respond, and we can decide whether changes to accommodate the majority of members would be in order.

E-Mail me at: [RaySestak@gmail.com](mailto:RaySestak@gmail.com)

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### Upcoming Events

Chapter 8 has two major events planned over the next several months:

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Honor Our Vets Car Show

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Honor Our Vets Car Show is scheduled for the first Saturday in August, which is August 1<sup>st</sup> this year. The rain date is Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The show has grown in popularity each year and is held on the grounds of the Stratton VAMC, 113 Holland Avenue in Albany.

Due to the dedication and hard work of members from both Chapters 8 and 79 over the past 5 years, the Vietnam Veterans of America have been able to donate over \$50,000.00 to the Voluntary Service Office at the Stratton VAMC

This money has been used to purchase boots and coats for needy veterans, sponsor outings for hospital-bound veterans, blanket warmers for chemotherapy patients, large screen TV's in therapy wards and special Holiday meals for those veterans that are terminally ill and make the Stratton their home.

Please help spread the word about this most worthwhile event and plan on joining us on August 1st. The event is free to the general public and provides a great opportunity for you and your family to see some beautiful classic cars, sample various types of food and, most importantly, help support our brother and sister veterans.

Donations are encouraged and very much appreciated! Checks can be made out to:

Honor Our Vets Car Show  
c/o 1231 Loudon Road  
Cohoes, NY 12047-4091

## Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Watchfire

Save the date! Saturday, September 26, 2015.

As was mentioned in the last Newsletter, "The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and in conducting the commemorative program, the Secretary shall coordinate, support, and facilitate other programs and activities of the Federal Government, State and local governments, and other persons and organizations in commemoration of the Vietnam War."

Chapter 8 is one of only 3 Chapters in New York State that has taken advantage of this opportunity, and has been certified as a "Commemorative Partner". As such, we have committed to conduct at least two events per year recognizing and honoring Vietnam Veterans.

That said, Chapter 8 is hosting a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Watchfire event on Saturday, September 26, 2015, at the Altamont Fairgrounds.

Gates will open at 12:00 Noon, and the event is free and open to all generations of veterans, active duty personnel, the general public and their families.

We will have static displays of military vehicles, food vendors, service related support groups and representatives, and informational displays relative to WWII, Korea, Vietnam and current day wars. There will be face painting and other activities for the children, an honoring of our Gold Star and Blue Star Mothers and a formal retirement ceremony for any donated non-serviceable American Flags.

The Red Cross will host a blood drive, and the day will culminate with the lighting of a "Watchfire"...A very large bonfire where the retired flags will be honorably destroyed.

Please pass the word and help make this event a huge success. I have attached the event flyer. Please help by printing and distributing and posting in your area.

Donations to help support this event can be sent to:

Vietnam Veterans of America  
Chapter 8  
c/o 1231 Loudon Road  
Cohoes, NY 12047-4091

## Car Show ...(Continued)

I have included a Car Show Flyer along with this Newsletter. Please help to advertise the event by making copies and distributing in your area.

## Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to Life Member Ed Baniak on the loss of his wife of 43 years, Johanna. Johanna lost her battle with cancer on July 7. Her obituary reads, in part; "Johanna was very active with the Watervliet Lodge of Elks 1500, serving as Exalted Ruler from 2007 – 2008. She served as membership chairman, district membership chairman, dictionary and veterans chairman and was on the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery Support Committee. Johanna received a Presidential citation for volunteering over 4,000 hours at the Stratton VA Medical Center. On April 20, 2015, she received the 2015 Albany County Executives Volunteer Award from County Executive Dan McCoy for her 6,000 hours of volunteerism."

Johanna was a personal friend of mine and a co-worker at the New York Lottery for many years. She will be sorely missed by all those in the military and veteran community that she supported so passionately over the years.

-Ray Sestak -

## Help Wanted

Webmaster - Chapter 8 is looking for a member to help maintain the website <http://VVA8.org> The site was resurrected a few months ago and we are looking for someone who is handy with a computer, has basic website skills and has the time to keep the site up-to-date.

If you are interested, please let me know –  
[raysestak@gmail.com](mailto:raysestak@gmail.com)

Event Coordinator – We can use a little help in coordinating the Welcome Home Vietnam Vets Watchfire event. As you can imagine, there are hundreds of details that need to be tracked and coordinated in order to make this event happen. If you have free time during the day and think you can help out with making phone calls and coordinating some of the activities, please let me know. Thanks.

[raysestak@gmail.com](mailto:raysestak@gmail.com)

# HONOR OUR VETS CAR SHOW

6th  
Annual

August 1, 2015

To benefit the patients at the VA hospital  
**10am - 3pm**

113 Holland Ave.  
Albany NY 12208

\* At the Albany Veterans Hospital \*

**All Years, Makes & Models WELCOME**



## TROPHIES

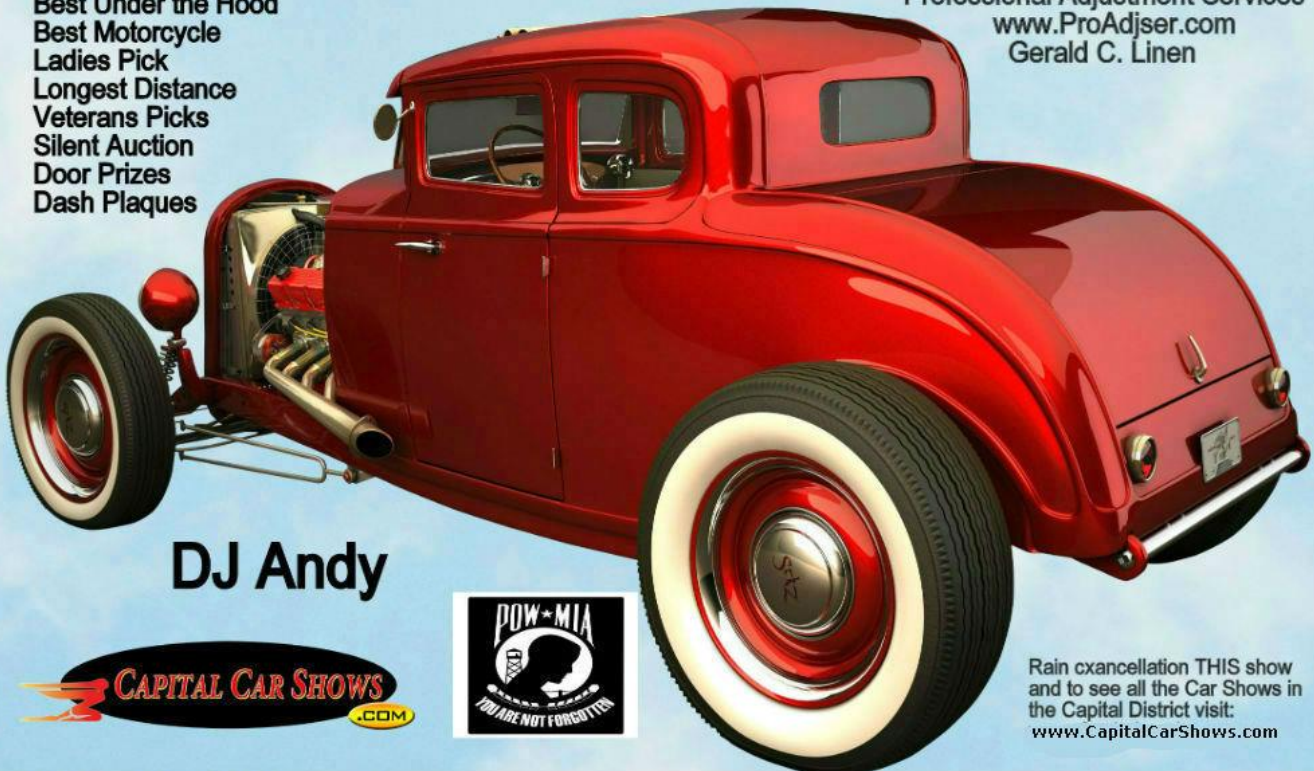
- Food & Music
- Top 25 Favorites
- People's Choice
- Kid's Choice
- DJ's Choice
- Best of Show
- Best Paint
- Best Under the Hood
- Best Motorcycle
- Ladies Pick
- Longest Distance
- Veterans Picks
- Silent Auction
- Door Prizes
- Dash Plaques

## PRESENTED BY:

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 8 & 79

**Registration \$10 Minimum**  
**Please be generous to our Vets**

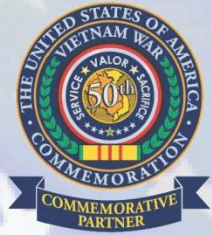
Professional Adjustment Services  
[www.ProAdjser.com](http://www.ProAdjser.com)  
Gerald C. Linen



DJ Andy



Rain cxncellation THIS show  
and to see all the Car Shows in  
the Capital District visit:  
[www.CapitalCarShows.com](http://www.CapitalCarShows.com)



# WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETS WATCHFIRE

**Saturday, September 26, 2015  
Altamont Fairgrounds  
Altamont, NY**

**Gates open at 12:00 Noon**

**This event is free and open to all veterans, active duty soldiers, the general public and their families, and will feature:**

- *Static displays of military vehicles*
- *Food Vendors*
- *Facepainting and other activities for the children*
- *Informational military and veteran support personnel*
- *Displays relative to the Vietnam War Era*

**At 4:00 PM**, the **Siena College Mohawk Battalion ROTC Color Guard** will post the colors. **The Mendelssohn Club of Albany** chorus will perform the National Anthem, followed by a reading of the names of the 190 Capital District soldiers, sailors and airmen that were lost during the Vietnam War.

**At 5:00 PM**, we will honor our **Gold Star Mothers** and **Blue Star Mothers**, followed by a flag retirement ceremony.

**At 6:00 PM**, the Gold Star mothers will ignite the Watchfire containing all donated non-serviceable American Flags.

This memorable event is being hosted by the members of the **Vietnam Veterans of America, Capital District Chapter 8**, supported by their 50th Anniversary Commemoration Partner, **iHeart Media, Inc.** and the **Management and Staff of the Altamont Fair.**

**This is a Rain or Shine Event, so we'll see you there!**

**Altamont Fair  
129 Grand  
Altamont, NY 12009**