

# ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

Meetings: 7:00 PM 1<sup>st</sup> Weds. Of Each Month – Arlington Heights Am. Legion Post 208



Website – [vfwpost981.org](http://vfwpost981.org)

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

## COMMANDER

Once again I'm honored and humbled to be your Post Commander for 2023-2024. After being All-State and All-American, it's a tough act to follow! We, as a Post, accomplished much in the past year. Hopefully we will continue to accomplish much more. We have retained most of our Staff from last year. Tony Kochanny has taken my place as Senior Vice Commander. Larry Bielski, who was a One Year Trustee, is now a full Three Year Trustee. Phil Nagle has taken over as Post Adjutant from Al Hembd.

Congratulations are in order again to our very own Dale Berg, who was unanimously reelected as Commander of American Legion Post 208.

Somehow I became a Trustee for the Legion at their elections on June 13. I think it's only fair that we should be doing more and more together with the Legion. Next time you visit the Legion Post, take a look at the VFW 981 sign in the lobby of the main entrance. Dale also has plans to put up Legion and VFW signs, along with the military branch seals, on the wall outside the main entrance. We may be two separate veterans' organizations, but our goals are the same!

Our membership numbers have been dwindling due to members passing on. Not to steal Tony's thunder, but I have given him a couple of tasks that may help us in our recruitment efforts. First, we are going to create a pamphlet that is *Post-specific* that we will use at our recruitment events - extolling the virtues of the benefits of joining our Post. This will be different from the typical National recruiting material - it will appeal to local veterans and will also emphasize the importance of our relationship with the Legion. Second - Tony will be creating

another pamphlet to be given to our new members - sort of a "welcome to the club" informational document. It's been pointed out to us that we fall short on informing new members about our activities and opportunities. Hopefully this will fill that gap. Third, and more long term since our next Poppy Days event is almost a year out, Tony, with Henry Mueller's help, will create a flyer that we will use during our Poppy Days collecting. This flyer will answer the question "*Where does my Poppy donation money go?*" that we often hear.

Just a brief note on our Clubs Program. Several of our members have suggested having an Investment Club and a Beer Club - to go along with our existing Breakfast and Golf Clubs. If anyone is interested in participating, see Don Luken regarding the Investment Club and Mike Kolbuk for the Beer Club. Remember - turn in your receipts at the end of each quarter for reimbursements (end of June, September, December, March).

Our Poppy Days were again a great success! During the two weekends we collected about \$6,400. Thank you to all the volunteers who gave us their time again this year. And thanks again to Henry Mueller, our Poppy Chairman, for putting it all together! At our last Staff meeting, we discussed ways to increase our collections by dropping non-productive locations and replacing them with better locations. Again - this all depends on securing enough volunteers to staff these locations.

An aside from the normal Poppy collections, we were pleasantly surprised to receive a check from Lynfred Winery last week for \$405. The winery does not collect tips but accepts donations to a local charity or organization of their choice every month.

In May they contributed their collections to VFW Post 981. Dale and I went and thanked them for their donation to our Poppy Fund and, using their Veteran's discount, left with two cases of wine! Two other new "things": our business cards, when reordered, will have, in addition to the VFW logo, our meeting date, time, and location. So when you pass out your card the recipient has all the information he/she needs to find us.

We also now have a new phone number on our Post website (thanks to our previous Commander Matt Voss). It's a Google voice mailbox number. It directs a voicemail to the Commander's phone number and a transcribed message to the Commander's email.

*Smokey*

## SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER

Membership is key and we need everyone's help in getting more members. We are hoping this major move will show our Post is active and looking for more members. Our Color Guard has been doing an outstanding job and is also looking for more members in it. Our Post must grow and will grow with your support.

Any event our Post has join in as the more involved you are the greater feeling of belonging to a great organization is felt. Wear you military affiliation caps always it will advertise and get people to talk to you and possibly ask how I join the VFW Post 981. The more we show our selves the better. We are the only ones who can show our military affiliation and YES we are proud of our service and have joined the VFW for the comradery of knowing what we have done and want to do to help other Veterans.

Please advertise all you can and YES talk it up as it is a great organization. Everyone is a recruiter and I'm hoping we all can find new members this year. We have to be aggressive in getting new members in a nice way but we have to keep trying always. Post 981 HAS TO GROW NOW.

*Tony*

## JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER

The second annual Post picnic will be on Sunday August 13 at Deer Grove East Forest Preserves at Dundee and Hicks Road. Meat will be provided by the Post. Bring refreshments, seating items, and games that you want to play. A dish to share will also be appreciated. No cost to attend.

We will need you to confirm you are coming. See the flyer at the end of the newsletter

*Mike K*

## UPCOMING POST EVENTS

- **July Post Meeting** - Wednesday (7/5)
- **August Post Meeting** - Wednesday (8/2)
- **Post Picnic** – Sunday (8/13) Deer Grove East Pavilion #4 11:00 AM-4:00 PM
- **September Post Meeting** – Wednesday (9/6)
- **October Post Meeting** – Wednesday (10/4)

## TAPS



The members of Arlington Post 981, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, pay their last tribute of respect to our departed comrades.

The following comrades passed away, or we have been notified of their passing, since the last newsletter came out:

**Louis C. Anderson Jr.** – Navy WWII.

As brave men and women they marched away with abiding faith in their God, their country, and their flag.

As soon as is possible we request that family members **notify the Post via telephone** (listed on our website) if a comrade has passed away. Too many times we must rely on seeing an obituary in the newspaper which leaves little or no time for members to pay their final respects. Also, our Color Guard needs time to organize the final salute to our members, whether at the wake or afterwards at the cemetery.

## POST ELECTIONS

Here is the elected Post leadership for this year:

- **Commander Mike Smogor**
- **Senior Vice-Commander Tony Kochanny**
- **Junior Vice-Commander Mike Kolbuk**
- **Quartermaster Roger Santagato**
- **Three-Year Trustee Larry Bielski**
- **Two-Year Trustee James Jones**
- **One-Year Trustee Vince Cipolla**
- **Chaplain Don Luken**

Appointed Post Officers:

- **Service Officer Stewart Abbink**
- **Adjutant Phil Nagle**
- **Officer of the Day Jim Benso**
- **Judge Advocate Jack Vrett**
- **Color Guard Dale Berg**

Committee Chairmen for this year:

- **Poppies Henry Mueller**
- **Publicity/Newsletter Mike Kolbuk**
- **Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Mike Smogor**
- **Club Chair Don Luken**
- **Scouts Chair Stewart Abbink**
- **Scholarships Don L & Vince C**



## POST SPONSORS CUB AND BOY SCOUTS

Post 981 is now the sponsor of Cub Scout Pack 132 and Boy Scout Troop 401.

Previously sponsored by Kingswood Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, the National Methodist Church prohibited involvement with scout programs in 2022. The scouts contacted our Post and Stewart Abbink, himself an eagle scout, agreed to serve as our liaison.

The Post has paid for new flags with our name on it, and a new paint job on the Boy Scout equipment trailer. Stewart will be providing all the guidance a sponsorship requires. The scouts will continue to meet at Kingswood.



## POST 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS

At the June Post meeting Eva Mason received the \$3,000 Wally Luetschwager Scholarship Grant. Morgan Lamb was the recipient of the \$3,000 scholarship donated by late member Bob Henderson's family. Finally Julie Olson received a \$1,500 scholarship.



Eva Mason is a resident of Arlington Heights and graduated in 2023 from Buffalo Grove High School. She will be attending Purdue University where she hopes to major in Bio-Medical Engineering. Both grandfathers served during the Korean War, one Army and one Navy, and one was a member of Post 981 before he passed away.

Julia lives in Arlington Heights and just graduated from Rolling Meadows High School, attaining a GPA of 4.0. She is planning to attend the University of Illinois Urbana to major in Music Performance and Marketing. Her grandfather served during the Korean War and her aunt is a Navy veteran.

Morgan Lamb lives in Palatine and graduated from Glenbard East High School in 2006. She is attending Harper Community College majoring in Business Management. Morgan has started a non-profit organization that gives free haircuts to veterans and the homeless community. She has been active in supporting veteran causes for years. Her father and grandfather served in the military.



## POPPY DAY COLLECTIONS

Our Poppy Chairman, Henry Mueller continued his fantastic job organizing this valuable fund raiser.

On May 21 Post members were at 8 locations in Arlington Heights and at 7 locations in Buffalo Grove on May 28.

The final collection total was \$3,421 in Arlington Heights and \$2,566 in Buffalo Grove. This was more than last year by \$321 (not counting a \$500 donation by Meyer's in 2022). In addition, Roger

Santagato manned a table at Memorial Park before, during and after the Arlington Heights Memorial Day ceremony, bringing in \$382 profit on hat sales and donations. Total Memorial Day proceeds came to \$6,369.

A list of worthwhile organizations will be submitted to the Post to receive our Poppy money. Ideas for spending the Poppy fund are always welcome.

## VOICE OF DEMOCRACY/ PATRIOTS PEN

The themes for 2023-2024 have been announced by VFW National: Voice of Democracy - "What Are the Greatest Attributes of our Democracy?"; Patriot's Pen - "How Are You Inspired by America?"

The deadline for entries is November 1, 2023. If you are aware of anyone in grades 6-8 (Patriot's Pen) or 9-12 (Voice of Democracy) please send them my way.

Finally - I have been the Chairman of the Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen since 2014. It's time for new, hopefully younger, blood to take this position. If you are interested, please contact me directly. The program usually starts in earnest in July and goes through the middle of January - but it's not as bad as it sounds. Step up to help our Post!

*Smokey*

## MORE POPPY DONATION

On Monday April 17 the Post donated \$1,000 to Braveheart in Harvard Illinois. This organization connects all veterans and their families with horses, from riding to ground activities to gentling wild mustangs, all at no cost.



## BOOMERS OUTING

It was a first for our Post outings. A SELLOUT! On Sunday June 25 15 Post members and 20 guests filled the skybox. A screw-up by the Boomers lost our food order, but by 1:00 PM pulled pork, BBQ chicken breasts, Mac and Cheese and dessert items were available for all-you-could-eat. Unlimited soft drinks, some beer ordered by the Post, and lots of popcorn, peanuts and Cracker Jack completed the menu. The game had swirling winds making for dropped and missed flies and a bunch of home runs. Leading in the 8<sup>th</sup> 5-4, the Boomers gave up an 3-run homer and the game ended with them losing 7-5.



## NEW POST MEMBERS

**Paul Fadz** was in the Army and served in Vietnam from July 1966 – February 1968.



**Gene Vrane** transferred to our Post. He was in the Army and served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav. in Vietnam in 1970, earning a Purple Heart. He lives in Palatine, fishes, and works part-time as a consultant.



Welcome them to our Post when you see them at our activities.

## POST PAYS FOR CLUBS

If you are interested in joining a club that is open to all members, or starting one yourself see Don Luken. Based on participation and cost the Post will reimburse expenses.

There are already 4 approved – Fishing (Don Luken), Golf (Smokeymike), Beer Brewing (Mike Kolbuk) and Breakfast (Dale Berg).

You must be an active member of the Post - participating in meetings, activities and such.

## COLOR GUARD

The Color Guard Past events:

May 15 - Commencement Ceremony Oakton Community College

May 27 - Rolling Meadows Memorial Parade

May 29 - Memorial Day Parade

Up Coming events:

July 4 - Arlington Heights July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade

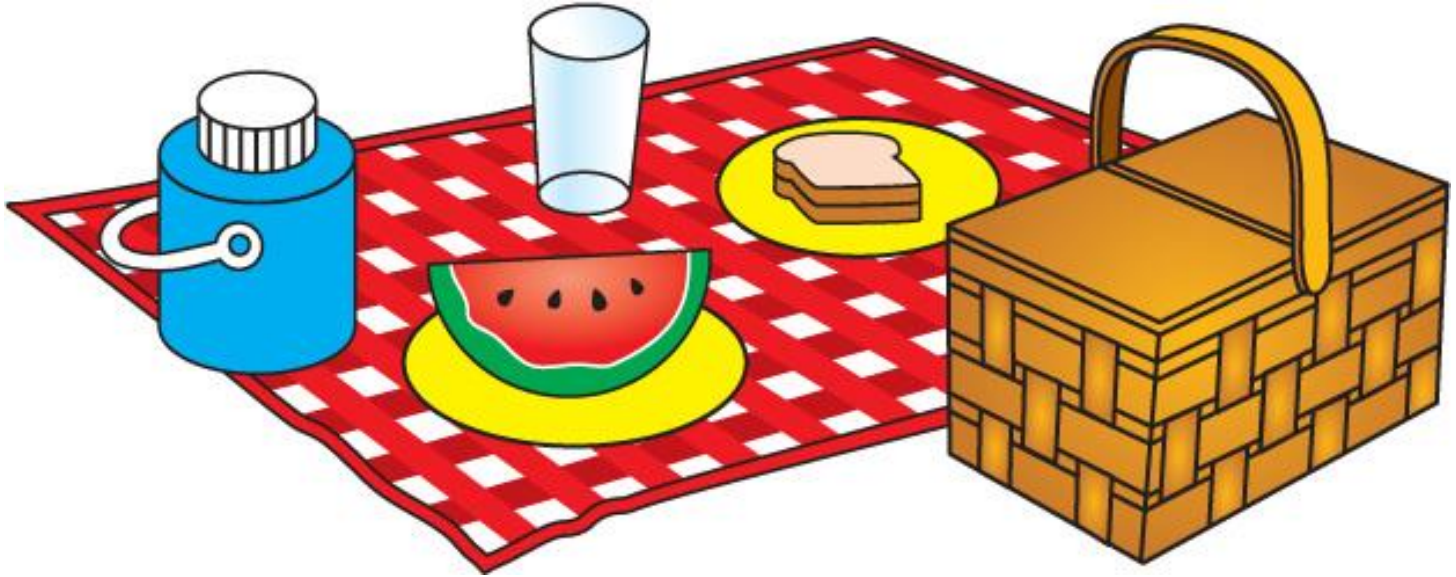
Sept 3 - Buffalo Grove Day Parade

Even if you cannot march you can participate in wakes and funerals. In addition, there are many other activities that we are involved in that you could participate in. If you would like to learn more about joining the Color Guard and the commitment level please contact, Dale Berg at 847-636-1479 or email [bergda@comcast.net](mailto:bergda@comcast.net).

*Dale Berg*



# ARLINGTON VFW POST 981 AUGUST PICNIC



## **Deer Grove East – Grove #4**

Entrance is Dundee Rd West of Hicks Rd

JOIN US ON AUGUST 13 FROM 11:00 AM TO 4:00 PM.  
POST WILL PROVIDE THE MEAT, UTENSILS AND CONDIMENTS.  
YOU PROVIDE YOUR BEVERAGES AND A SIDE DISH TO SHARE.

TABLES ARE AVAILABLE UNDER A WIDE SHELTER AND THE  
BATHROOMS ARE NEARBY. BRING YOUR OWN SEATING AND  
GAMES TO PLAY IF YOU LIKE. FAMILY & FRIENDS WELCOME.

**NO CHARGE!** But, we need a count.

See Mike Kolbuk at Post Meeting; Email  
[vfwpost981@gmail.com](mailto:vfwpost981@gmail.com); or call (224)324-4362 by Aug 10

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®**

**MFA**

**ARLINGTON VFW POST 981**

**C/O Mike Kolbuk**

**P.O. Box 825**

**Arlington Heights, IL 60006**

**TO:**