



*City of Bellefontaine Neighbors*

# Bellefontaine News

May 2002

**Special Issue**

Issue 16

## **Bellefontaine Neighbors To Host Vietnam Moving Wall - May 20 to 25, 2004**

The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, Mo. will be hosting the Vietnam Moving Wall from May 20 to May 25, 2004 on Recreation Center grounds, 9669 Bellefontaine Road. The wall will be open for viewing and staffed with volunteers 24 hours a day.



"The Musical Voice of America's Veterans," will perform tribute to the men and women of the armed forces and the country he loves. Britt, a Vietnam Veteran, travels year round performing at Veterans Administration Hospitals, state veterans' homes, Veterans of Foreign Wars groups, American Legion Halls or where ever a veteran is in need of his gift of healing music.

The Vietnam Moving wall is a half scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. The Vietnam Moving Wall is six (6) feet high and Two hundred, fifty three (253) feet long. It lists names of more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives in the Vietnam War. The original Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. is called "The Healing Wall" because it helped to heal our Nation. The replica to be displayed here is called "The Moving Wall," not only because it moves across the country, but because the display can be an emotional, moving experience. Every name on the wall represents a soul that made the ultimate sacrifice serving our country.

Evening Ceremonies will be held daily starting at 6:00 P.M. and will include a Flyby by the Air National Guard (weather permitting), guest speakers, flag folding ceremonies, honor guard and taps or bagpipe salute. Saturday, May 22 will also have a Noon ceremony, ending at 1:30 P.M.

Saturday evening, May 22 at 6:00 P.M., Britt Small,

Sunday, May 23rd a non-denominational religious service is scheduled at Noon.

Special recognition will be observed each day while the wall is in Bellefontaine Neighbors:

Thursday, May 20 - Army Recognition Day  
Friday, May 21 - Navy Recognition Day  
Saturday, May 22 - Air Force Recognition Day  
Sunday, May 23 - Coast Guard Recognition Day  
Monday, May 24 - Marine Recognition Day  
Tuesday, May 25 - Women Veterans Recognition Day

Volunteers will be on hand to help visitors by locating names on computers and printed directories and assist with name rubbings, like the original memorial in Washington, D.C. The wall will open at dawn on Thursday, May 20 and will remain open 24 hours a day until dusk on May 25, 2004. There is no admission charged and nothing will be sold.

For more information about the Vietnam Moving Wall, call the Bellefontaine Neighbors City Hall at 867-0076.



# The Moving Wall

The Moving Wall- an article that first appeared in Among Friends, Newsletter of Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Written by Gerry Stegmaier  
Gerry has granted permission for copying and publishing provided the story is attributed to him.

The Wall is solid, its granite face designed to resist the elements for all time. Yet, as visitors touch its surface, the Wall becomes almost fluid. Small ripples of hope and healing spread ever out-wards. Like the concentric circles created when a stone is tossed into a pond, the impact of the Wall grows and grows.

In 1982 John Devitt, a former helicopter door gunner and Army veteran, visited Washington, DC for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to participate in the National Salute to Vietnam Veterans. This visit and experience changed Devitt's life and led to the creation of the "Moving Wall," which has since moved millions of people.

His story is one of thousands spawned by the Memorial. As Devitt explains, "When you approach the Memorial, you don't recognize what's going on. It's a visual experience that words cannot describe. . . Then suddenly, as the words inscribed on the Wall come into focus, it's so subtle, you're drawn in and it's too late. . . You're riveted and the emotions just pour forth."

This emotional outpouring and the pride of having participated in a parade honoring Vietnam veterans inspired Devitt to dedicate the next eleven years of his life to giving people all across the nation a chance to experience a similar catharsis. Originally, Devitt and his friends had hoped to cre-

**"When you approach the Memorial, you don't recognize what's going on. It's a visual experience that words cannot describe. . . Then suddenly, as the words inscribed on the Wall come into focus, it's so subtle, you're drawn in and it's too late. . . You're riveted and the emotions just pour forth."**

ate a photo mural of the Wall, but when the negatives proved unusable, they came up with another solution. The concept was simple: build a replica of the Wall in Washington which could travel across the country, so that everyone who couldn't visit the Wall could share the experience and emotion which it evokes.

Devitt's idea was deeply personal. He had been out of work when the Wall was dedicated, and had made the trip with financial help from family and friends. "There were millions of people who would never be able to come to Washington," he realized, "I wanted them to be able see and feel what I had."

His emotions ran deep. "Before 1982 I never felt like I needed a parade or a memorial," he says. He had come to the Wall expecting to dislike it, anticipating it



would be as some media stories had said, "a black gash of shame." Instead, the Wall changed his life; it gave him a new mission and sense of pride in his military service. With the help of a few friends, Devitt set out to build a movable wall. They estimated it would take \$40,000, however, pooling their savings they could only come up with \$2,500.

They decided to seek assistance in raising the necessary funds. "We had a tough time in the beginning, convincing people about what we were trying to do," explains Devitt. "The Wall is a visual thing. When you tell people you want to build a half-scale replica, they think miniature and model; they don't realize the power of Maya Lin's design." Searching for a way for the work to be completed, they sought contributions of goods and services. If they couldn't get the material donated, they could at least arrange credit terms and discounted pricing.



# The Moving Wall (continued)

"We were totally surprised by the reaction of the businesses we approached. I didn't even have a credit card at the time, but when we talked to various companies and explained what we were trying to do, they were very sympathetic. Many took the job on our word." Devitt says, "I knew that once we got started, it would pay for itself...and if it didn't, we were prepared to pay for it ourselves." He was convinced of the need for the Moving Wall.

The first Moving Wall was built of plexiglass, with each name silk-screened onto the panels. The photographic negatives of the names were made available by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the organization responsible for building the Memorial. When new names are added to the Wall, they are also added to the Moving Wall at the end of its season. In its present form, the third generation, the Moving Wall consists of aluminum panels and is a half scale replica of the original.



In the eleven years since the Moving Wall has been in existence, it has been visited by millions of people, in over 410 locations. While the material of the Moving Wall has changed, its impact remains the same.

The Moving Wall was first displayed in 1984 in Texas as part of the Tyler Rose Festival. "We hadn't even put up the fifth panel when a Gold Star Mother placed a beautifully decorated candle at the base of the panel where her son's name was inscribed," Devitt recalls. Just like the Wall in Washington, people began to leave mementoes, so many, in fact, that Devitt decided to have them shipped to the Moving Wall's off season home in San Jose, CA. He hopes to build a museum to display the items, but for now

concentrates on making sure the Moving Wall travels to as many cities as possible.

"When you think about it," he says, "two or three million people visit the Wall every year. There are ten or twenty times that many people, who, for whatever reason, will never be able to make the trip to Washington." Scheduling the route of the Wall is a tough job and Devitt tries to be as objective as possible. Dates fill up quickly, almost a year in advance, and there are often schedule conflicts which prevent visits to certain events and locations. "When we start-



ed, it was much simpler," he says. "Someone would call and if I wasn't going to be somewhere else at that time, we would load things up and go."

While the costs involved were greater than expected, Devitt was opposed to any kind of charge to visit the Moving Wall. "Originally, we thought we could put out a donation box and that would cover our expenses," he explains. Convinced that there should be no charge to have the Wall come to a community, someone came up with the idea that local host committees be formed to sponsor the Moving Wall's visit. This solution has worked well, and the schedule of the Moving Wall remains crowded as it journeys across the country.

Many people have not heard about Devitt or the Moving Wall; his humble and hard working attitude are partially responsible. "When the Wall comes to a town, it brings people out from all over. We try to play it low key because the Wall speaks for itself." He continues, "This isn't about me. It's not about John Devitt. It's about remembering 58,000 people who died in service to their country."



# Schedule of Events and Information

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**Hours:** The Vietnam Moving Wall will be open to visitors from Dawn on May 20 to dusk on May 25, 2004. The wall will be open 24 hours a day.

**Cost:** There will be no cost and nothing will be sold on the grounds. Any one who would like to make a donation can send a check to: The Vietnam Memorial Wall Committee, City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, 9641 Bellefontaine Road, Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO 63137

**Volunteers:** Volunteers will be on hand to help visitors by locating names on computers and printed directories and assist the with name rubbings.

**Parking And Handicap Facilities:** Parking will be available on the City Hall Grounds and also Fountain Lake Park. Shuttle Bus service will be available during day light hours for those parking in Fountaine Lake Park. Handicapped parking and rest room facilities will be available on the Recreation Center Parking Lot. Anyone or any group with special needs may contact City Hall at 867-0076.

**Daily Events:** Evening Ceremonies will be held daily at 6:00 P.M. and will include a variety of guest speakers, music, flag folding ceremonies and taps or bagpipe selections ending at 8:30 P.M. The Air National Guard will be doing evening "Flybys" weather permitting.

**Saturday, May 22, 2004:** A Noon Opening Ceremony will be held as well as a 6:00 evening program. Saturday evening, Britt Small will be here from Las Vegas, Nevada. Britt is a disabled veteran who sang at the opening of the Vietnam Wall in Washington D.C. Britt is known as "The Musical Voice of America' Veterans."

**Sunday, May 23, 2004:** A Noon Opening Ceremony and Non Denominational Church Service will be held on the grounds. Everyone is invited.

**Artifacts and Military Equipment:** Vietnam war artifacts, photographs, uniforms and military equipment will be on view at the site.

**Counselors:** Counselors will be available evenings for Veterans that may need help visiting the Wall.

**Items Left At The Wall:** Visitors may leave personal items, photos, notes or flowers in remembrance of those on the wall. All items, except flowers will be removed every evening and packed for shipment to the Moving Wall's off season home in San Jose, CA. where a museum is planned to display the items.

**To Volunteer:** Volunteers are asked to call City Hall at 867-0076.



## Memorial Day Service

Because so many of the people who work to make the annual Memorial Day Service special are helping with the Vietnam Memorial Wall, it was decided, for this year only, the Memorial Day Service would be scaled back to a simple, short remembrance at Klein Park, Chambers and Bellefontaine Roads.

Mayor Marty Rudloff and The Board of

Aldermen will join Fort Bellefontaine American Legion Post at 10:00 AM on May 31st, 2004 for a short (ten minute) remembrance of our Veterans with honor guard, lowering of the flag and placing of the wreath.

Plan to join us this year for the brief gathering and mark your calendar for next year's regular Memorial Day Service.





## Marty Rudloff, Mayor

Dear Residents,

Although we have the highest respect and admiration for Veterans from all eras of our Nation's past, we will be focusing on the Vietnam Veterans, their sacrifices and the history of that war from May 20 to 25th, 2004. We are proud to have this opportunity to honor the Veterans and welcome thousands of visitors to our beautiful city.

Mark Franzoi, the Chairman of the Vietnam Moving Wall Committee, and the entire committee have been working tirelessly to honor our veterans in the most dignified manor, taking care of every detail to ensure that every phase of the wall will run smoothly. The committee raised enough funds to pay for all expenses involved in the Vietnam Moving Wall and the only contribution the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors is currently providing will be in the form of labor and facilities. There will be no admission to the Vietnam

Moving Wall or any of the displays and nothing will be sold on the grounds.

During the time the Wall is here, we are expecting higher volumes of traffic than normal, especially on Bellefontaine Road. We have made arrangements with St. Louis County Highways and MoDOT to direct traffic and keep our residents and visitors safe. I hope you will keep this in mind and plan accordingly. I hope all of our residents will show courtesy to our visitors.

Due to the enormous task ahead of us with the Vietnam Moving Wall, The annual Memorial Day Ceremony will be scaled back to a very brief service. Bellefontaine Neighbors and Fort Bellefontaine American Legion Post will meet at 10:00 on Memorial Day to lower the flag and present a wreath. You are invited to join us this year and also next year when we will go back to the regular memorial.

On behalf of the Board and myself, I would like to thank the many, many who have donated funds, time and talents to make this event possible.

*Mayor Marty Rudloff*



## Alderman Mark Franzoi Committee Chairman

Dear Residents,

From the first day that I submitted an application to the Vietnam Combat Veterans a year and a half ago to be a sponsor of the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall, I have been amazed at the overwhelming support that has been offered. It was decided that the Wall be fully funded and organized by citizens, and that there be no politics involved. The Mayor and Alderman fully supported this idea and offered to do anything they could to help as well, not as elected officials but citizens of Bellefontaine Neighbors supporting veterans.

I think I know now how John Devitt, Norris Shears, and Gerry Haver (who created the moving wall) felt when they first began building the wall for display at Tyler Texas in 1984. I am amazed by the support and

the response that we have gotten from the beginning. I held the first meeting in January to begin making plans and organize the week the Wall will be in Bellefontaine. Since then the responses are growing everyday, from people who want to help at the wall, contribute money, food or just time. Many of these are people who want no recognition at all, they send money as just friends of the veterans.

I said at one of the last Board of Alderman meetings that if you don't think veterans are appreciated you should see the responses for support of the Wall. It also doesn't matter which war they served, there are veterans stepping up from WWII, Korea, Persian Gulf, including veterans from the most recent war in Iraq. I think as an overall St. Louis community event, and that this occasion, though solemn, pulls hearts of many together behind one cause, remembering those who gave so much for our freedom.

Our Thanks to everyone who has donated their time, money and talents to this event and plan to join us honoring those who gave their lives for our freedom.

*Alderman Mark Franzoi*



# Home Town Heroes

Young men from all over the world died in the Vietnam War and each of them deserves recognition and thanks. It is impossible to be sure that our searches have found every young man that called Bellefontaine Neighbors or the immediate area home. If you know of someone this article has been looked over, please accept our apologies and call the Bellefontaine Neighbors City Hall and give us that information so the names can be added to this list.

While the Vietnam Moving Wall is here, we will be read every one of the 58,000 plus names to be sure no one has been left out. Here are some of the young men we know of from our area on the wall.

At the entrance to the Riverview Gardens High School football field is a marker naming the field "The Meyerkord Memorial Field." The field is dedicated to **Lieutenant Harold Dale Meyerkord**, the first Navy Officer to die in South Vietnam combat. Lt. Meyerkord graduated from Riverview Gardens High School in 1955 and received a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from The University of Missouri. He received his commission on June 10, 1960 after completing Officer



Candidate School. He joined South Vietnam's struggle for freedom in July of 1964. He died on March 16, 1965. His medals included the Purple Heart, Navy Cross and Air Medal. The USS Meyerkord, DE/FF 1058, a Knox Class Destroyer, launched in April, 1967 and decommissioned in December of 1991 was named for Lt. Harold D. Meyerkord.

The memorial at the high school football field honors others who fell on the fields of Vietnam:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
<b>Terry Mills</b>	Army	April 19, 1965
<b>Carl Scholemer</b>	Marine Corps	Sept. 25, 1965
<b>Bernard Murry</b>	Marine Corps	June 10, 1947
<b>Robert Summers</b>	Marine Corps	May 13, 1967
<b>David Weidner</b>	Army	May 12, 1969
<b>Larry Buffington</b>	Army	May 5, 1970
<b>Daniel Walters</b>	Army	Mar. 24, 1971
<b>Frank Lakitsch, Jr.</b>	Army	Jan. 2, 1971
<b>Thomas Goszewski</b>	Marine Corps	Nov 27, 1970

Another name on the wall is that of **Robert Nelson Hutter, Jr.** who listed his home as Bellefontaine Neighbors. Robert was a Marine who made the ultimate sacrifice on January 30, 1968.

Additional searches have found two young men from Spanish Lake.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
<b>Daniel F. Fennewald</b>	Army	May 3, 1968
<b>Michael G. Langston</b>	Marine Corps	May 5, 1967

## Displays at the Wall

Members of the Vietnam Memorial Wall Committee have been working hard securing displays at the wall and to date, we have military vehicles, uniforms, maps and Vietnam era memorabilia. Be sure to stop by the Artifacts Tent that will be located on the grounds and take a look at the items on display.

The Marine Comfort Quilt Group will be hosting a booth where they will be asking visitors to sign quilt squares for the families of our fallen Military personnel in Iraq. The group started to make comfort quilts for the families of Marines, but as the war goes on and so many more have died, they are reaching out to all branches of the service.

To date, the group has delivered more than 164 quilts. Each quilt is made of 30 squares. The group's goal is to get 22,000 squares signed.

Hopefully, the need for comforting families will end with the war, but until that time they are Honoring our Fallen one quilt at a time. Stop by the booth and sign a square to tell the family of fallen military you care.

Members of the Vietnam E.R.A. (Education - Reconciliation - Association) will be on hand with their Vietnam Photo Exhibit "Through Their Eyes." This will be in the Artifacts Tent.

The Members of the Vietnam E.R.A. will also give Veterans a chance to participate in the Veteran's History Project which is a program created to document and record the memories of the American Hero. These tapes will be made on site and become a permanent record in the Library of Congress. If you are interested in participating in this program, stop by the Artifacts Tent for more information.

## Proclamation

**Whereas;** For the past Two Hundred Years and more, American Veterans have given their all to guarantee our freedom; and,

**Whereas;** The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO salutes all Veterans from all eras from all branches of the Armed Services for the sacrifices they made for The United States of America; and

**Whereas;** The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors will host the Vietnam Moving Wall from May 20 through May 25, 2004; and,

**Whereas;** The Vietnam Moving Wall has 58,000 plus names inscribed of Heroes who died in the Vietnam War; and,

**Whereas;** The Mayor and Board of Aldermen encourage all residents of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors to take the opportunity to visit the Vietnam Moving Wall to pay their respects to the men and women who gave so much; and,

**Whereas;** Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors welcome thousands of visitors to our city to join us in a dignified salute to Vietnam Veterans; and,

**Therefore Be It Proclaimed;** with respect and adoration, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO unanimously declares:

Thursday, May 20, 2004 - Army Recognition Day  
Friday, May 21, 2004 - Navy Recognition Day  
Saturday, May 22, 2004 - Air Force Recognition Day  
Sunday, May 23, 2004 - Coast Guard Recognition Day  
Monday, May 24, 2004 - Marine Recognition Day  
Tuesday, May 25, 2005 - Women Veterans Recognition Day

**Therefore Be It Further Proclaimed;** the week of May 20, 2004 to May 25, 2004 be known as Veterans Week in honor of all Veterans from all eras from all branches of the United States Services in the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO.



*Marty Rudloff*

Mayor Marty Rudloff

*Charlotte Youngman*

Attest: Charlotte Youngman,  
City Clerk



# Thanks To Our Sponsors

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*Many, Many thanks to everyone who gave so willingly to make the Vietnam Wall visit in Bellefontaine Neighbors a reality. All of your contributions are appreciated.*

## *The Vietnam Memorial Wall Committee*

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Aerospace District Lodge 37 IAMAW	Kay-Bee Electric
American Legion Post 569	Knights of Columbus Council No 1098
Mary Bardgett	Knights of Columbus Council No 4596
Mark J. Behlmann	Kraft Foods
Bill Bierman	Alderman & Mrs. Don Merz
Bricklayers' Union No. 1 of Missouri	Alderman & Mrs. Anthony Miglizzo
Caring & Sharing Program Inc.	Elizabeth Ann Mueller
Carpet Linoleum Hardwood & Resilient Tile	North County Labor Legislative Club
Layers Local 1310 Contingency Fund	ORMI Fort Bellefontaine Compost Center
Cristos Restaurant	Mary Oswald
DePaul Health Center	Alderman Shirley Paro & Mr Norvel Paro
Edward C. Farrington Auxiliary	Pepsi Cola
Enterprise Leasing	Plumber & Pipefitters Local 562
City of Florissant, MO	Mayor & Mrs. Rudloff
Fort Bellefontaine Memorial Post 335 American Legion Inc.	Reed & Scharf Construction Co., Inc
Gamma Tree Service, L.L.C.	St Catherine of Alexandria Men's Club
Gardenville Afton Memorial Post 300	St Jeromes Church Ladies Guild
Dan Glenzy	St. John Florists
Grey Eagle Distributors, Inc	St. Louis County
International Brotherhood Electrical Workers	Steven Staniszewski
Local Union No. 1 AFL-CIO	Richard Thomas
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, A.F.L., - C.I.O., Local 1439	United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers & Allied Workers Union No. 2
Iron Workers District Council of St Louis and Vicinity	VFW Auxiliary 6133
Jennings Do Dads	VFW Post 3222
Alderman & Mrs. John Jordan	VFW Post 5553
Kaplan Lumber	Waste Management Service Center
Bill Kiefer	Walbart & Sons
	Weston EID
	Charlotte Youngman

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Our apologies to anyone that might have been left off the list. Many plans and arrangements are still being made and not all committee members have been able to finalize arrangements at the time of printing. A full list of all contributions in funds, time, talent and materials will be available at the Vietnam Moving Wall site.







