

RFTW Newsletter Online

February, 1999

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Pre-Run/Change 1 Information

05 FEBRUARY 1999

Run For The Wall Will Start On 19 May, 1999 At 0800.

Change Information: Included on a separate sheet is the updated information on the schedule for this year's run. The major changes are: 1. We will leave from the TA Truck Stop at the intersection of I-10 and I-15 in Ontario, California on 19 May, 1999. We will not be leaving from the Queen Mary. 2. The first night will be in Ash Fork, Arizona. 3. The second night will be in Gallup, New Mexico. From this point on, the schedule is as before.

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Meet The Board

Chairman of the Board is Ron "Beanie" Valandra, Rosebud, SD - US Navy 65-68, Vietnam, Business Manger for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe - Became involved in RFTW in 1990- has had concerns over the development of the Run over the past few years.

Vice Chairman, Joe "Dragon" Lozano , Colorado Springs, CO, US Army 63-87, Vietnam 1968, 1/5th Cavalry, Involved in Rolling Thunder since 1987, RFTW since 96, Brother killed in Vietnam, Rolling Thunder and RFTW help with his healing.

Treasurer, Lynda "Bandit" Papaioanu, Corona, CA, connection with the run from a flier in 92/93, All the Way 94, 95, 96 and part of the Run in 97 (on her own FXLR) - Lynda and her husband are not veterans but realize that Run for the Wall has become a passion, will always be in touch with the Run. Their son is on active duty US Navy as an aviator.

Secretary, Suzanne Sigona, Denver, CO, formerly of the DC area, Volunteer at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial since 1988 - Has been associated with RFTW since 1991. Last year rode her own bike from Ontario to Limon. Regardless of where she leaves the group, she greets you at the Iwo Jima. She's ready to help anyone regarding research related to Vietnam.

George "Gray Lonewolf" Cheney, Portland, OR, served US Army - A Co, 459th Signal Battalion, Nah Trang, Vietnam 66-68, Has been with RFTW for 2 years, Founder/Coordinator of the Angel Fire Memorial Run from Portland, OR in 1998.

Ron "I need a road name" Eschinger, Alexandria, VA, served US Army, 43rd Signal Battalion at Lang Bian Mountain, Dalat, Central Highlands, Vietnam 67-68, Road Captain of DC Ramblers - Became involved in RFTW in 1992 after Jack Sands coordinated a local group of DC Ramblers to meet the group in Rainelle, Currently VA State Coordinator.

Charles "Chuck" Parola, Energy, IL, served USMC, 1962-1966 - Vietnam 8/65 to 4/66, Weapons 3.5" Rockets, Chu Lai, RVN, Retired Federal Prison System after 25 years, First Run 1996.

David "Prophet" Ambrose, Foley, MO, served USMC, Vietnam 11/67-10/69, 3rd Force Recon, 3rd Marine Division, Current Missouri President of In Country Vets Motorcycle Club, Has been with the Run since 1988, Has worked to support it each of those years, Generally runs from Wentzville to DC.

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From The Chairman Of The Board

My first order of business is to say "thank you" to each of you for being patient during the Run For the Wall's period of change. The adjustments you will see are done to strengthen the RFTW. They were not done to hurt, discredit or make anyone appear to be out of order. The board wants to be sure that we are tending to all who are involved. This includes the riders and the people throughout this ride who support our cause. Some may not agree with the changes, but we must all remember that the focus of the RFTW is the POW/MIA Awareness issue and the healing process for many of those involved - not for our - personal agendas. During our first board meeting in January, 1999, I was honored to be elected as the Chairman of the Board. I have been with RFTW since 1990. Although I did not know all the board members when we started the morning of January 9th, the commitment of each member was abundantly clear. It was demonstrated by their acceptance of the positions when asked to serve. It was further demonstrated by their willingness to travel to this critical meeting at their own expense. Each member discussed their resolve to guide and support the RFTW. The immediate needs of the non-profit organization had to be addressed. We set out to bring the non-profit organization back into good standing with the State of Illinois. This was done with our election of officers, filing of appropriate papers and the ratification of by-laws. These responsibilities had been neglected and required a significant portion of our two day session. The completion of these duties and responsibilities meant that the meeting could only involve members of the Board.

The members of the board are myself, Ron Eschinger, Chuck Parola, Lynda Papaioanu, Joe Lozano, Suzanne Sigona, George Cheney, and David Ambrose. You will read more about them in this copy of the newsletter. As we examined our individual concerns regarding the Run and the purpose, we were speaking in one voice regarding the "healing" that is offered by this experience. As we set out to do our work, we concentrated on the concerns that had been raised by participants and focused on what could be accomplished to address many of those concerns. The Board also wanted to be sure that this Run is operated with consideration of more than one or two people. Information regarding many of those adjustments can be reviewed in Deekin's column.

As we gather in Ontario, California in May, 1999 to begin our trip across the country let us gather in the night before to begin our own healing. This will allow us to depart on Wednesday morning with the focus of Riding for Those Who Can't. Let us all have a splendid ride and continue to build our RFTW family so that we can remain dedicated to our cause. Again, I want to thank everyone who has helped in any way possible to insure that RFTW remains a healthy organization in POW/MIA awareness. As we cross the continent, may we remain united.

Ron "Beanie" Valandra

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View From the Front, ... 1999 edition

Imagine my surprise when opening my e-mail one chilly, snow-bound morning in January to find that Terry Porter was appointing me as national coordinator for the run effective immediately. Quite a shock, given the fact that I had volunteered to lead the run in 2000 and wasn't planning on doing anything really challenging in 1999. The newly installed board of directors confirmed Terry's appointment a few days later and things have been progressing ever since.

Many of you have likely noticed that the run is growing each year. This continuing growth requires the run become more organized to continue its purpose of providing the participants with a safe and secure journey to Washington D.C. One result of the re-organization was the expansion of the board of directors. The expanded board is comprised of individuals that have been involved not only with Run For The Wall in past years, but they also have experience with POW-MIA issues and veterans issues. I have ridden with all of them in the past and have spoken with all of them at length before accepting this job. I am convinced that each and every member of the board is well-qualified for their position and I look forward to working closely with them to continue

improving the run.

One of the areas the board has sought to improve is rider safety. The board presented me with a mandate regarding the run; get everyone from California to Washington in a safe and secure manner. Safety is paramount. This included getting the run off the road as early as practical each day to give everyone a chance to visit with each other and to rest. The board also wanted the run to spend more quality time at the Navaho Reservation in Window Rock, Arizona. To reach these objectives, some changes had to be made in this year's route. The first major change is the starting date and location. The run will depart from the TA Truckstop in Ontario, California, on May 19, 1999 at 8:00 a.m. The change of the starting point was made for many reasons. Starting at the Queen Mary in Long Beach was truly an impressive kick-off for the run, but the majority of riders felt the challenging traffic conditions and extra time spent navigating the challenges were too high a price to pay for the memorable send off. The first overnight stop will be in Ash Fork, Arizona. Additionally, because the board set time at Window Rock as a high priority, the distance between California and Gallup has to be done in the most efficient way possible. That means starting in Ontario. After deciding to start in Ontario, changing the starting date became obvious. The earlier departure date was to accommodate leaving from Long Beach. Leaving from Ontario achieves two separate objectives: continuing the ten day tradition of the run, and reduces the challenges weathered in the transit out of Long Beach.

After departing from Ash Fork, we'll do a relatively short (233 miles) ride to Gallup, New Mexico. We will make camp in Gallup and then backtrack to Window Rock in formation to visit with the Navajo Nation. Participants may stay in Window Rock as long as they please before returning to Gallup. It is anticipated that people will return to Gallup individually or in small groups, much like the trip from Hugo back to Limon. Then we'll leave Gallup and head to Cimarron, New Mexico. Keeping the priority of getting into camp as early as practical, we will not be stopping at Angel Fire Memorial that day. Rather, we'll be leaving Cimarron at 7:30 a.m. the following morning and riding to Angel Fire for quiet reflection and perhaps breakfast before heading on to Pinon and then on to Limon for the night.

The reason for these changes is due to the growth of the run. We have 10 days to get from California to Washington. The distance between those two points remains constant: approximately 2700 miles. A larger pack requires more time, gas and meal stops take longer, eroding time spent on the road. Some other stops that do not include either gas or meals are simply no longer a possibility. If the media wishes to cover this event, we will make arrangements to meet them at a gas or meal stop. Few other changes are expected before we reach Washington. The stop at the Iwo Jima is restored. It is necessary to stop at the Iwo for several reasons: to pay our respects to our Navy and Marine Corps brothers, (yes, one of the men on the Iwo is a sailor, an FMF corpsman); to give everyone the chance to briefly rest from the ride into Washington; to give folks a chance to prepare themselves for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall; and to meet our police escort - so critical in getting us to The Wall through Washington's rush hour traffic safely. Other changes in Washington include a new hotel. We will be staying in Alexandria, Virginia instead of Fairfax, Virginia. (See the enclosed revised schedule for complete information.) This change also requires a relocation of our Friday night dinner from the Black Eyed Pea. Efforts will be made after this run to stay and eat where we have in past years. In any event, some folks will be going over to the Pea and T.T. Reynolds to let them know that they are still our friends and that we have not forgotten them. I'm looking forward to serving you and providing you a safe, efficient run. I'm hoping that you look to do the same. If you want to speak to me for any reason, my phone number is: (847) 328-9903 and e-mail is deekin@rftw.org.

See you in May.
Deekin

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First Board Meeting

On January 9, 1999 the Board embarked on a two day session to realign the framework of the Run for the Wall. Each member seemed to silently recognize the responsibility they each shouldered. As we gathered in Colorado Spring, the greetings were something like, "Oh you're 'that' guy. and "I DO know you!"

The meeting got underway with a full program relating to the by-laws and corporate structure. A resolution was passed to adopt and ratify the actions of the State Coordinators and members that was taken during a special meeting on December 20, 1998. This meeting established the current Board of Directors. Resolutions were adopted regarding the structure of the corporation, the composition of the board, the term of service for board members, the process of succession and the number of meetings per year.

There was a motion made and passed that on January 9, 1999 that we would accept the unsolicited resignation of Terry Porter. Further, the Board honored Terry's request to have the resignation retroactive to 12/24/98. The Board also accepted Terry Porter's recommendation that Dan "Deekin" Coyne be the replacement for the current position described as "national coordinator".

A significant amount of time was devoted to assessing the preferences of the participants (as expressed through the survey summaries) and the basic needs of riders. The reported survey tally indicated that people set our Window Rock visit as a priority. The other information to be factored was the interest in not leaving from Long Beach and the interest in avoiding the additional day. Consideration was also given to safety, those who value the time to share their experiences at the end of the day, and the campers (who might like to set up their tents in daylight). With priorities set and a skeleton of a route, the final schedule was left for the Chairman and Deekin to work out.

In terms of merchandise related to the Run, a determination was made that items using the Run for the Wall name must be reviewed by the board. This is in line with the legal acquisition of the rights related to the Run For the Wall name. Other topics discussed included - a policy on vendors - merchandise sales - financial support - the newsletter - the web site - the "End of the Run" dinner (see information from Ron Eschinger).

Committee were established with board members - please make note of these if you have questions regarding any of these matters.

Merchandise - George - Chuck

Newsletter - Suzanne

Finances - Lynda

End of the Run Dinner - Ron E

A motion was also made and passed to contribute the proceeds of two of our 50/50 drawings to support the repair of the North Wall. An article with updates on this situation should appear in our next newsletter.

Please take a few minutes to get information back to our editor regarding your interest in the newsletter. We plan to publish at least one more prior to the Run. For those who don't know, the costs related to the preparation and mailing is currently about \$1000.00. We want to see what transmissions can be done electronically and also want to see who wants to stay on the list.

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"End of the Run" dinner

From "Rambler" Ron E. comes the official news that the Friday night dinner this year will be at Generous Georges - approximately two miles from the Days Inn hotel, right on Duke Street. This year, there will be a \$10 per person charge at the door for the dinner, salad, coffee, tea or sodas. There is a cash bar in the basement (that is our private area) which will cater to those with a thirst that iced tea won't quench. The Friday night dinner begins at 7PM and will run until everyone is stuffed. This will give everyone time to linger at the Wall after we get into town, go to Burke Lake Park to set up their tents, or just stand around and give each other the support that they may need.

Saturday morning we will leave the Days Inn around 10:30 for Arlington Cemetery. Our wreath laying ceremony is between 11:30 and noon. Afterwards, all the RFTW group will be taken over to the D.C.Ramblers Clubhouse for an early Saturday afternoon dinner - compliments of the D.C.Ramblers. The Ft. Washington Harley Davidson dealer is having his open house the same time - but our clubhouse is a bit quieter and cleaner.

(D.C.) Rambler - Ron

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From the Newsletter Writer

As newsletter writer, I need the below information to update the RFTW mailing list. The cost of newsletter mailings increases as awareness increases. Many have moved or, for any number of reasons, do not participate in the run. Please write the information so we both can read it.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

email _____

phone _____

I really need this information to continue sending you newsletters. If I do not get a reply before 1 May, 1999 when I will update the mailing list. Send to:

RFTW Newsletter

8124 Blossom Lane

Lemon Grove, CA 91945

EDITOR'S NOTE: All of you who return the address update form can expect another newsletter before the run. It will contain other information that was not included in this one due to time and money factors. For those who have Internet access, be sure to visit Run For The Wall's Website at www.rftw.org.

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Late Note: Posted by deekin on January 30, 1999 at 17:53:29:

Tom Margetich Jr., the son of Tom & Christina Margetich, was critically injured in a job-related accident on Friday, January 29, 1999. Tom was working in a steel mill smokestack when his safety scaffold broke and he plunged 130 feet to the bottom of the stack. He is in critical but stable condition. Christina asked that we send Tom some cards to pick up his spirits. The address of the hospital is:

Tom Margetich, Jr.
Post Office Box 442
Glasford, IL 61533

Tom Sr. and Christina are long-time supporters of Run For The Wall and have traveled with us to Washington for several years. The black bracelets we wear are manufactured by Tom Sr. Please keep this family in your prayers.

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Rainelle School Million Penny Drive

By Dragonrider

I started a fund drive to outfit the Rainelle School with some computers in memory of Lee Venerable, killed in a motorcycle accident (August 98). Lee was the husband of the Rainelle School principal Monica.

Since our last visit (May 98) the school district has provided 18 computers to the school and established a computer center (sorry guys we're too late for that one). I contacted Monica, the school principal, about what project we could do for the kids and she expressed the "Wish" that we could help with their Million Penny Drive to establish a real playground at the school.

They have plenty of volunteers to the grunt work (to install everything) but most of the items they want to install are VERY expensive and they have to do two sizes (real little kids, grades K-2) and stuff for the bigger kids (3-6 grades). Monica's logic was that the playground would be something the entire community could enjoy year around and a good project for us to help with. As of 1 February, \$545 has been donated. Thank you for your support in these projects. I will continue to accept donations for the Million Penny Drive until April 20th. I'll be departing DC on May 1st to head to somewhere called Ontario, Canada.

Send contributions to:
QMC Patrick McCarthy (RFTW)
U.S. Naval Observatory
3450 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20392-5420

Please include your road name and make check/money orders payable to the Million Penny Drive.

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New Mexico State Coordinators

Phil and Linda Wright are the new New Mexico State Coordinators. They can be contacted at:
P.O. Box 7355
Reudioso, NM 88355
(505) 378-9148

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Board Information

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INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT 1/1/98 Through 12/31/98

Subcategory Total

INCOME

Donations	7,805.00
Merchandise Sales	17,507.24
Merchandise Sales - Unassigned	17,507.24
Income - Unassigned	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$25,312.24

EXPENSES

Advertising	350.00
Bank Expense	14.00
Campground Fees	350.00
Chase Vehicles	380.00
Cost of Goods Sold	4,700.18
Flags	1,100.00
Miscellaneous	63.00
Patches	1,494.58
T-Shirts	6,715.86
Total Cost of Goods Sold	14,073.62
End Of Run Dinner	2,386.00
Financial Assistance Given	1,380.00
Gas	572.00
Merchandise Vehicle	200.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	32.01
Newsletter	1,153.43
Office Supplies	490.85
Postage	454.97
Printing	460.22
Sales Returns	43.50
Shipping	234.25
Telephone	93.12
Website	250.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$22,947.97

INCOME LESS EXPENSES \$2,364.27

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