

Letter to the Editor Setting the record straight

When will Max "Mad Max" Riekse get his facts straight and tell the readers the "rest" of the story on the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs' policy of placing memorials in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park? Apparently not any time soon, as once again I find it necessary to "set the record straight" following the latest of Max's "Letter to the Editor" exposés (*Fruitport Area News*, Presidents/Valentines Day Issue) on memorials in or not in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park. Additionally, he is confused as to how the makeup of the Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Committee is established and funding sources and the utilization of said funds.

Riekse wants to know when the names of Muskegon County residents who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving this country in its Global War of Terror will be memorialized in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park. To date, four residents, Spc. Tony Cardinal (KIA 12/25/05), Sgt. Todd Singleton (KIA 04/08/07), Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Scheibner (KIA 08/03/07) and Cpl. Jason T. Lee (KIA 11/18/07) have made that ultimate sacrifice.

Several years ago, Riekse first brought his concerns of placing memorials in the Veterans Park to the Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Committee. This committee consists of veterans who have been recommended by their service organization (American Legion, DAV, VFW, Vietnam Veterans, Catholic War Vets, etc.) to serve. Candidates are then appointed by the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners to a term of volunteer service. This committee also consists of up to three appointed Muskegon County Commissioners. This group of veterans is responsible for the operational functions of the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs. I am the Director of the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs and the West Michigan Veterans Service Center.

The committee has never been "adamantly opposed to having Jason Lee's name or any other Iraq War veteran who died in service in that war be added to a stone on the causeway" as was asserted by Riekse. Riekse spoke before the committee and pitched his project and was told by the committee that:

- Military Memorials are not traditionally constructed or dedicated until the end of the hostilities in which there were KIAs (killed in action) to insure all the KIAs are included on the stone/bronze marker. Iraq "officially" ended November, 2012. The war in Afghanistan is still in progress and currently we (U.S. Military) have military troops stationed in over 40 countries and in the world's oceans fighting the "Global War on Terror"!

- The warriors of any particular past conflict have, as a group, organized and decided what they want their war memorials to be called and the designs they feel best depict their area/conflict.

- All of the current war memorials set in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park list only the names of those Muskegon County residents who were KIA. There is, however, a Veterans Memorial Trail throughout the park, and along this trail are individual metal markers (over 3,200) privately purchased by veterans, their families or friends. These markers honor the veteran by reflecting the veteran's name, branch of service, and dates of service.

- Riekse was not totally truthful in his statement about the cost involved with the bronze markers he wanted placed in the Fruitport Veterans Park, at the LST, in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park, Hackley Park, and at the West Michigan Veterans Service Center. There was a cost, in the neighborhood of \$5,000.00 associated with the markers proposed for these locations. All five of the proposed markers were for the same three veterans, none of whom were KIA. The Muskegon County Veterans Committee thought this was "overkill" to say the least, and especially since Riekse expects others to raise the funds required for his pet project!

So as you can read, there was a whole lot of information Riekse did not include when he launched his attack on the Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Committee and me. Also, there were very glaring false statements that Riekse made in his letter to the editor. It is a shame I needed to spend my time correcting Riekse, but as he has done in the past by misspeaking and misrepresenting the facts according to his point of view, it has, with this rebuttal, required someone to "set the record straight."

David Eling
Muskegon County
Department of
Veterans Affairs

Letter to the Editor: Gun concerns

The retired Dr. Kleaveland has shown his concern on the gun issue again. I remember the last time he showed his concern. All of us are concerned when anyone gets killed, let alone children! How much concern does Dr. Kleaveland show each year when 197,000 people die due to medical errors and hospital acquired infections in this country? Many of them, I'm sure, are also children. How much concern did he show when the government shot and burned to death 86 men and women and children in Waco, Texas? How about the Ruby Ridge case when the wife and son of Randy Weavers were shot and killed, involving a setup by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives? Has everyone forgotten this miscarriage of justice? What about the recent botched gun trafficking sting known as Operation Fast and Furious where the B.A.T.F. lost track of hundreds of guns, including one involved in the shooting death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry of Flat Rock, Michigan?

Where was the concern?

Doctor Kleaveland, you presented numbers indicating that there have been 1,260,203 deaths in 42 years by firearms. That is an average of 30,221 deaths per year. However, you fail to break out the numbers.

According to statistics available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, the total number of firearm homicides in 2010 equaled 11,078. Tragically, 7,220 involved individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 years in 2010. Yet, according to FactCheck.org, the average per 100,000 is the lowest average rate since 1981. This has occurred during a time when gun ownership and gun manufacture in the United States is climbing.

Of the 11,078 homicides, a total of 4,647 were statistically classified as white; 6,151 were classified as black. A total of 9,340 of the homicides were male.

These statistics still fail to provide enough detail. We don't see how many were shot during home invasions or by law enforcement. We cannot see how many were killed by mentally ill people.

The report does tell us that there were 38,364 suicides in 2010. A total of 34,690 were statistically classified as white; 2,144 as black. A total of 19,392 were firearm suicides, 16,781 committed by whites. A total of 9,532 were people 45 to 74 years of age. That means another 18,972 ended their life by other means. Within that number, there were 9,493 suffocation suicides, while 6,599 folks took their own life by poisoning themselves. According to statistics from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the suicide rate has been on a steady increase since 1999.

Despite the efforts to educate the public of the dangers, there were 25,692 alcohol-induced deaths, of which 22,167 were again classified as white. There were still

40,393 drug-induced deaths, of which 36,020 involved folks statistically classified as white. Unfortunately, there is no breakdown between legal drugs and illegal drugs.

We still allow advertising on television for some of these products. Of course, you cannot advertise illicit drugs like heroin, or alcohol like bourbon on TV these days, but you can certainly advertise beer. And have you ever watched the legal drug ads on TV and listened to the possible side effects? I've read stories tying pharmaceutical drugs like Prozac, Ritalin and similar drugs to many of these tragic mass murders. Yet doctors still write prescriptions.

The drugs are, of course, developed, manufactured and supplied by Big Pharma drug companies and Big Pharma's goal is to sell more prescription drugs. Interestingly, Big Pharma remains one of the world's largest contributors to political campaigns.

Where is the good doctor's outrage?

Even though we have highway patrolmen, speed limits, seat belts, and anti-lock brakes, and child safety seats, 35,332 people, young and old, died in 2010 in motor vehicle accidents.

Government doesn't seem to mind sending our kids to foreign lands to fight questionable wars. Our leaders don't have a problem supplying guns, weaponry and taxpayers' dollars to countries like Israel, they deem as our allies. They don't mind playing gun-running games with the public. Details of another botched B.A.T.F. sting operation, this one in Milwaukee, are now beginning to emerge. Government continues to allow movies and television shows depicting mass destruction with guns. Video games where the player is the shooter are hawked at nearly every mass market retailer in America.

Where is the doctor's concern?

Apparently, it's OK because government allows it. As *Chronicle* writer Clayton Hardiman states, "We want to believe there is something we can do to keep this from happening again."

In 1927, Andrew Kehoe killed 38 elementary school children and six adults with a series of bombs at a school in Bath, Michigan. Three months later, a 39th child died due to injuries suffered in the blast. Despite our best efforts to legislate them away, madmen continue to populate the earth. They know no geographic boundaries. They always find a way.

Each of these reported killings is tragic.

The time has come to stop believing the propaganda and assemble, study, and honestly report the truth. To quote FactCheck.org, "No single number can tell the whole story."

Ronald E. Pesch
3351 Millard Street
Muskegon



Fruitport Old Fashioned Days Run

Saturday
May 25, 2013
9:30 a.m.

Sponsored by
Fruitport Lions Club

Football Field
Fruitport High School
Corner of 6th & Beech St.

Course

Measured loop course through scenic, but hilly Fruitport countryside.

Aid station at 3 miles and 5 miles: split times at 1, 3, and 5 miles. Post race refreshments provided. Restrooms and showers available at the Fruitport Middle School.

Entry Fee - two choices

With T-shirts

\$20.00 before deadline date (5/23/13)
\$25.00 thereafter including race day

Without T-shirts

\$13.00 before deadline date (5/23/13)
\$15.00 thereafter including race day

T-shirts not guaranteed for late registration.

Make checks payable to:
Fruitport Lions Club Run

Race Time

5K & 10K 9:30 a.m.

Runners at finish line will be electronically timed.



Registration

• On-line registration ending at 11:00 p.m. Thursday, May 23, 2013

(www.GoRaceGo.com)

• Race day, Saturday, May 25, 2013, packet pick-up and registration beginning at 7:30 a.m. on FHS football field.

Race packets, including tee-shirts if requested, can be picked up between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. on race day at the Fruitport High School football field.

mail to: Old Fashioned Days Run

P.O. Box 74
Fruitport, MI 49415

or deliver to Lundberg's Storage Group in Fruitport (Formerly Lundberg's Hardware)
Hours: M - F: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sat: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
or on-line registration at

www.GoRaceGo.com

Awards

Ribbons for all finishers. Trophy to over-all male and female finishers. Medals in each division based upon percentage of entries.

Any proceeds the Fruitport Lions Club realizes from this event as well as other Old Fashioned Days activities are used to support new and ongoing community projects.



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