

Gilroy Veterans Memorial Hall

South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District

April 2022

Message from the Executive Director

April Showers and New Beginnings at Vets Hall

Spring is in the air, COVID restrictions have been lifted and things are slowly getting back to normal. At the Gilroy Veterans Hall we are seeing more and more local veterans coming in for various services or just to socialize and hang out. And we love it!! Stop by and say hello!

Veteran Service Officers & VA Mobile Medical Team

We have been hosting the VSOs/VA for DMV verifications, Vet IDs, benefits review, claims start up, healthcare eligibility and medical check ups.

They come every other Friday. The next visits scheduled are May 6 and 20 from 8:30am — 4:30pm. Bring your DD12 and your questions.

With the VSOs here it's now easier to access VA benefits. You no longer have to drive 40 minutes to see your representative. Their presence here helps you start and continue the process. See you May 6!

Vets Helping Vets

We have formed a new working group called Vets Helping Vets that meets monthly. It's comprised of leadership from the different groups at the Hall — the American Legion and VFW posts, the Auxiliaries, Bar Council, Color/Honor Guard, Gilroy Legion Hall Association, CVMA, VA and the South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District (SSCVMD). These leaders should be sharing information with their respective members.

The idea is to share information to help all of us in these individual groups better serve local veterans. At the first meeting we talked about the different ways to verify a person has served because many civilians come to the Hall claiming to be a veteran and asking for help. There are other community services we refer people to if they are not a veteran. But if they are a veteran then we need to find out what their need is and where to direct them. We shared the local resources available to vets so everyone knows where best to direct them.

Additional meetings have focused on sharing info about activities open to veterans such as:

- Vietnam Veterans Open House at the Hall on March 19 from 1-4. About 30 veterans attended and enjoyed a light lunch and good company.
- Corn Hole tournament where VFW member Patrick Goold and American Legion Commander Joe Loquiao teamed up to represent Gilroy in the tournament. They had a great time.
- Vet Resource Fairs — The Hall hasn't hosted a fair since before the pandemic, but all agreed it's time to bring them back. Look for one to be scheduled this summer.

Since Vets Helping Vets is about working together and sharing information, please be sure to share your email address with your commander or auxiliary president to receive info.

Additionally, we will post info on the Gilroy Veterans Hall Facebook page and the "Military Veterans of Gilroy" group on Nextdoor.com. Like/Join these social media groups to stay informed.

Parade for Veterans

Due to uncertainties coming out of the pandemic, the annual Parade on Memorial Day will instead march through downtown Gilroy on Veterans Day in November. But the Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony at Gavilan Hills Cemetery will still take place.

"We know the Memorial Day parade is a Gilroy tradition, but with the additional time to plan," said Parade Committee member and veteran Jesse Sanchez. "We hope the parade will properly honor our local veterans."

The Veterans of Foreign War Post 6309 will still host a Remembrance Ceremony at Gavilan Hills Cemetery, at 1000 First Street in Gilroy, on Monday, May 30 at 9 am. Please plan to attend.



Gilroy Veterans Memorial Hall

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Gilroy, CA 95020

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www.GilroyVeteransHall.org

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Did You Know??

Vets Pantry

The original coat room at the Gilroy Vets Hall has been converted into a Vets Pantry. Gilroyan Vince Saso collects food donations from Nob Hill, Costco and Second Harvest to stock the pantry. Bread, pastries, canned goods, pastas, fruits and vegetables are stocked regularly. VFW member Michael Scalmanini helps keeps it organized and makes sure food is fresh. The pantry is open to local veterans. Stop by and help yourself. All we ask is that you take what you need and use what you take. Don't waste.

Lending Library

Thanks to a large donation of military books (fiction, non-fiction, reference, etc.) by local veteran Richard Hudnut, we now have a lending library. It's located just inside the door of the Gilroy Vets Hall. You are welcome to pick up a book for your reading pleasure.

Flag Box

Worn and tattered American flags can be dropped off at the Gilroy Vets Hall during business hours. There is an official flag box just inside the front doors. The retired flags will be properly disposed of.

Recycle & Reuse

Veterans' families often donate mobility items after a veteran no longer needs them or passes away. These items are often nearly new and still have life left in them. The only thing families ask in return is they be given to a veteran who can use them. However, these items come with no warranties or guarantees. We currently have a small scooter, a hospital bed, a few walkers and wheelchairs. We don't always have all these items, but it's good to check to see what's in stock before you purchase them. Call the Vets Hall at 408-842-3838 if you or a vet you know can use these items.

Fundraising Continues for Veterans Hall Improvements

The Board of Directors for the South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District, which owns and operates the Gilroy Vets Hall, is committed to keeping the Hall a social center of the community for years to come. So the Building Improvement Fund must continue.

Now that the restroom remodel is complete, we are moving on to new projects. While there are always small projects to tackle, but a full kitchen remodel is needed to comply with current health and safety standards. Before we can start planning a kitchen remodel a new mop sink needs to be installed, which will happen over the next few

weeks. Then planning for the kitchen remodel will begin in earnest once that is done.

Since all of the donations and most of our reserves were used on the restrooms remodel, fundraising has continued. We expect the kitchen remodel to cost about as much as the restrooms — \$200,000+. Fortunately the SSCVMD is already off to a strong start. We received about \$75,000 in COVID relief funding and the board earmarked this money for the Building Improvement Fund. With additional donations from veterans and the community we have raised about \$95,000 so far.

Thank You for Your Generous Support of the Latest Building Improvement Campaign

William Allan Jr.
American Legion 217
American Legion Hall Association
John & Shirley Blaetler in Honor of Fathers:
Peter M. Blaetler (WWII) & Robert C. Drewitz (Korea)
Kenneth Boucher
Ben Carrasco
Bob & Genn de Aragon
John D. Flynn
Phil Garcia
Robert Goldman
Mercy Goold
George E. Hall
William "Joe" Hall
Chet Kirby
James Law
Joan Marvia Lewis in Memory of Thomas Lewis

Carlos & Juanita Lopez
Victor Martinez
Steve McWilliams
Monterey Army Recruiters
Brian O'Mara
Stephen Poli in Honor of Edward J. Poli (WWII)
Ermelindo & Mary Ann Puente
1SG Daniel Rhodes
Emmanuel Salcedo
South Valley Property Management
David Sturla in Memory of Jack Sturla
Jack Thurman
Fernie Valdez
Ted Viola
Dorothy Wilkinson in Memory of Maurice Wilkinson
Wayne Winningham

Yes, I would like to help the Vets Hall continue 'Serving Those Who Served'

Building Improvement Campaign with a donation

_____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ \$1,000 _____ \$5,000 _____ Other \$ _____

To Donate Mail checks made out to **South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District (SSCVMD)**, 74 W. 6th Street, Suite A, Gilroy, CA 95020. Or visit www.sscvmemorialdistrict.org/capital-improvement-campaign to use a credit card.

Charitable contributions to SSCVMD are tax-deductible

under section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax ID #26-2910989

For More Information about the Vets Hall Building Improvement Campaign contact Christine West, Executive Director at 408-842-3838 or christine@sscvmemorialdistrict.org