



The Transporter

**Volunteer
Transportation Center**

March 2009

Volume 9 - Issue

North Country 10th Annual Chili Cook-Off



The Jefferson County American Legion Auxiliary and Legion Family were the sponsors of the 10th Annual North Country Chili Cook-Off held on Saturday, February 7, 2009, at the Dulles State Office Building. This year's Chili Cook-Off was a great success raising over \$30,000 for the Volunteer Transportation Center.

This year's event was dedicated to two persons that co-founded the event 10 years ago. Mr. Ben Coe and Mrs. Phyllis Bachman (Past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary). Ben has been helping with the chili cook-off since it started in February 2000. Phyllis participated the years that she lived here in northern New York and now has since moved to North Carolina.



Phyllis Bachman & Ben Coe

Special guests at this year's event were; County Commander Dave Gerrish; County Auxiliary President Linda Welsh; County Sons Commander, John Farrell; Fort Drum Garrison Commander COL Kenneth Riddle; Mayor

Jeff Graham; President of Jefferson Community College, Ms. Carol McCoy; and Legislature Chairman, Kenneth Blankenbush.

Year after year the cook-off is a labor of love for the chefs and their teams. The 34 teams make their chili, design their booths, begin their day very early and are ready for the doors to open at 11 a.m. The competition between the teams is very friendly, but all teams strive to win the prize! It is a day filled with smiles, laughter, fun and great chili. At 3:00 the awards are announced, booths dismantled and, ideas are already forming by teams for the next year's cook-off. This event has become the must "attend" winter event of the year in Watertown.

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Welcome New Drivers To VTC:

- Donna Appolonia, Rodman
- Almeda Grandjean, Adams Center
- Amber Hendricks, Antwerp
- Thomas Hiller, Adams
- Lee LaFave, Watertown
- Margaret Lolar-Cusson, Watertown
- Audrey Robbins, Plessis
- Jennifer Sprague, Black River
- Greg Sullivan, Watertown
- Fred VanAllen, Evans Mills
- Kevin Welsh, Alex Bay

Thank You Drivers!

**Why not join them?
Apply Today**



The Heart Of A Driver

VTC has been honored to have so many individuals dedicate their time and heart to those within our region who are transit dependent. Not only do our Volunteer Drivers offer a ride to bring people from the most rural of locations to where they need to go, but many become dear friends and even second families to those served.

The uniqueness of the service is well represented through the diverse background of our volunteers, some being former bus drivers, military service men and women, stay at home moms, grandparents, retired teachers, and even a former judge. The one common thread weaving them

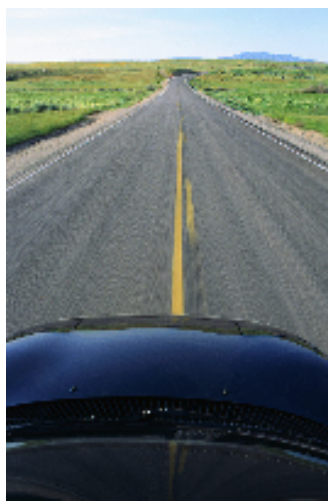
together is the recognition to give within their community. They are the vital connection in maintaining integrity, prosperity and health for all within our great region.

To those who have and those who continue to volunteer at VTC and offer opportunity to those in need, we thank you. Your willingness to devote so much to so many is nothing short of inspirational. Thank you.

VTC offers a unique opportunity through our Volunteer Driver Program in which participants receive financial reimbursement for miles driven. Becoming a volunteer driver, means you share a ride with a person in need to critical medical

appointments. By becoming a Volunteer Driver you directly support those in need within your community.

Interested in becoming a VTC Volunteer Driver? Call our office at 315-788-0422.





**United Way
Of Northern New York, Inc.**

Quote

"Thank you again for providing me with your transportation services. My volunteer driver is so completely dependable and such a safe driver. Because I have to rely completely on your transportation program, I am truly happy to send a donation each month."

Sincerely,
Dexter

Quote

"Your service is much appreciated. I would be grounded with out it. Thank you so much."

Thank you,
Watertown

Quote

"The transportation that I get from your organization has helped me to very much. I am so thankful to the Volunteer Center. I am disabled and do not have a drivers license so to me having a way to get around is heaven. My medical appointment are important and much needed and with out you I would not be able to get to them.

Thank you,
Carthage

Volunteer Driver Of The Quarter Charles Lehman



Charles Lehman has been a driver of the Volunteer Transportation Center for 12 years. He is a very dedicated and compassionate person. Charlie retired in June of 1996 as teacher from the Carthage

school district. Shortly thereafter his wife was diagnosed with cancer. Charlie was overwhelmed with the volunteering from organizations like hospice. He stated "I decided right then and there that I was going to devote my life to helping others. A friend told him of the Volunteer Transportation Center and two weeks later I began driving." Charlie started out driving a few hours a week and after the death of his wife he began driving like crazy, driving 6 days a week and about 4000 miles a

month. This has helped to heal and gave life some purpose and meaning. He enjoys meeting people.

A couple of things that you may define who Charlie is: he was the "C" in the name JRECK; He has a second passion. He enjoys rebuilding 1935 - 1939 era cars. When it comes to the vehicles, he does it all including rolling and tucking the naugahyde.

Charlie is in the United Way video showing the day of a client from the Volunteer Transportation Center.

Why We Can't Afford To Cut Back On Economic Development

By Jayn Graves of the United Way of Northern New York

State budget deficits have put just about every government program up for review and refinement. While this is going to be very hard on local governments and community services agencies, it could have some hidden opportunities. It isn't just about trying to do more with less - local service agencies have been doing that for years and in a time of financial downturn we know that need is going up - so doing the same with less isn't a good solution either.

Our United Way has preached for years that a key part of our mission is the fostering of economic development activity throughout the North Country. Without jobs, people do not have financial stability and without financial

stability, young people cannot get a higher education without educating our exiting workforce is at a disadvantage. It is easy to see how the cycle can endlessly repeat itself. Fort Drum is a vital economic engine that we are beyond fortunate to have here, but we must set community priorities to not only see our communities through this downturn, but to ensure that when better days are again upon the country and the state, the North Country does not get left behind.

This is a time for serious consolidation, collaboration and coming together to initiate or resolve big ideas. If the state and local communities are going to have to set priorities for the community's future



health and welfare then let us not stint on those vital services that contribute to positive economic development. It is hard to meet service needs in the best of times and the tendency is to want to quickly make the case for "why my service is critical."

The better message as we work our way through tough economic times is to band solidly together and let our public sector know that economic development is our only real hope to grow human services enough to meet real need.

2009 Board of Directors		
Michael Benson	Howie Ganter	Bill Plemons
Dick Brooks	Dr. Henry George	Don Terpstra
Brenda Company	Jean Heady	John Waterhouse
Martin Clement	Clayton Jank	Cathleen Whitcomb
Ben Coe	Aileen Martin	



Safety Check For All Those On The Road

Find a good driving position – Position the seat so you can just hang your wrist over the top of the steering wheel when you extend your arm. Adjust the head restraint so it's directly behind but not touching your head.



Hold the wheel symmetrically, at about 3 and 9 o'clock, so you can steer left or right quickly and precisely. If you drape your arm over the wheel, the air bag can break your arm or push it into your face if it deploys.

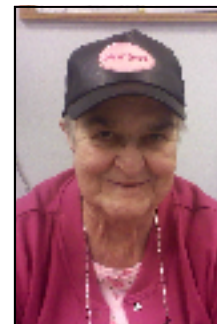
Turn Signal Virus - Have you ever been at an intersection and the vehicle in front of you stops and then turns without letting anyone know their intentions? It can be dangerous and even more frustrating. Turn signals are your communication with other drivers. Please use turn signals even when changing lanes.

Accidents can happen when people do not use their signals.

Multi-Tasking At The Wheel - It's aggravating to other drivers (as well as unsafe) when you aren't paying full time and attention to everything but the road. If you need to make an important call, read a map, do so by pulling over to the side of the road or designated rest stop. You've only got two hands and two eyes. There are so many distractions in daily life, but mixing that with the modern toys, electronics, comfort and convenience controls, driving is a recipe for an accident.

Office Corner

We would like to welcome Marilyn Smith as secretary and intake coordinator. Marilyn is a past volunteer driver and has served the Volunteer Transportation Center since 2001. A welcome addition to our staff and a great liaison between drivers and staff.



April Is National Volunteer Month

The definition according to en.wikipedia.org of a **volunteer** is someone who works for a community or for the benefit of environment primarily because they choose to do so. The word comes from France, and can also be translated as "will" (as in doing something out of one's own free will). Many serve through a nonprofit organization – sometimes referred to as formal volunteering, but a significant number also serve less formally, either individually or as part of a group.

Volunteering comes in many forms: serving food at the local homeless shelter, providing computer technical support to a nonprofit organization, acting in a leadership capacity on a

charitable organization's board of directors or coordinating the emergency response in the case of a disaster. Around the world volunteer centers exist to support the voluntary sector and make a difference in the communities that they serve.

National Volunteer Month presents an opportunity for individuals, families, nonprofit organizations and government entities alike to celebrate the ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things through volunteering services. These are the people who do not count the cost, are moved by a strong spirit and motivation to help improve society and who believe they can make the world a better place in which to live.

"Volunteers are seldom paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are PRICELESS!" -- unknown author. Many more organizations and individuals deserve recognition for their selflessness and invaluable contribution to needy people. They make the agonies of life less difficult and more bearable.

Volunteering means something different to each of our volunteers; their reasons for being a part of this organization are as unique and special as they are!

Our volunteers are a wonderful community who gather together to be a part of something that benefits all in our surrounding community.

Hits For Rides Youth Baseball Tournament

Take me out to the ball game, buy me some peanuts and cracker jacks...," that's right, one of the first youth baseball tournaments will be taking place May 30th and 31st at the ball parks at North Junior High, Hoard Street in the City. It is a great opportunity to watch our future stars in age groups 8 – 10 and 10 – 12 pursuing the "National Pastime." There will be a



concession stand available, what's baseball without a hotdog? Sports vendor "Mizuno" will be there with their memorabilia. And now for the best part, admission is free. Chairman Don T. is still looking for tournament sponsors, please call 788-0422. All proceeds are for the benefit of the transportation programs of the Volunteer Transportation Center.

Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc

203 N Hamilton Street
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: 315-788-0422
Fax: 315-788-8021

E-mail: volctr@westelcom.com
www.VolunteerTransportationCenter.org



A Friendly Reminder

Transportation programs would be
Non-existent without donations.
Please donate if you are able.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Watertown, NY
13601
Permit #xx

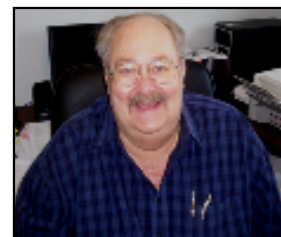
*Our Newsletter
Is Currently Mailed Out
To Various Persons / Organizations*

Executive Director's Message

It is with pleasure that I am able to open the mail daily and receive comments such as the ones that follow.

Comment from a client:

"I always consider it a privilege to contribute each month to your much needed transportation services and the wonderful work you are doing. There are so many in this area that have no means of transportation to necessary appointments except that which you provide. I am so grateful you are meeting these needs and are out there for those of us who must depend on you. Thanks are certainly due to the good people who serve as volunteer drivers, so often going beyond the call of duty to show kindness and consideration to their clients."



Comment from our partner agencies:

This is a paraphrase of a letter from a partner agency that one of our drivers provided service above and beyond what was expected. "We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your response to the #### transportation. Your continued efforts to contact someone to express your concerns were appropriate and greatly appreciated."

Comment from a funding agency:

"The (funding agency) volunteers believe that this service is a critical one to the well-being of the elderly and disabled and want this service to be seen as a priority in times of limited funding."

As the Executive Director of the Volunteer Transportation Center, I am extremely proud of the service offered to our clients by a very competent staff and a group of really dedicated volunteer drivers. Our service offers more than just transportation. It offers the human touch, if a person needs help getting into a vehicle, it is given; if a person needs help with groceries, it is given; if a person needs help getting in and out of their home, it is given. The VTC drivers routinely perform services above the norm while expecting nothing in return but a "thank you".

The month of April is National Volunteer Recognition Month. If you are serviced by a volunteer during the month of April, please say thanks for what you are doing.

If you are looking for a way to give back to the community, I would like to avail you the opportunity of becoming a volunteer driver. Just call our office 788-0422 and request a volunteer driver's application.

In the spirit of "neighbor helping neighbor"