



**Next Chapter Event**

**March 3** – The next Chapter Dinner Meeting will be held at Sleder’s Family Tavern in Traverse City beginning at 6:00 p.m. See the attached flyer to make your reservation. **Please RSVP to Mark Benjamin NLT Monday, 28 February.**



**In Case You Missed It – News from MOAA (Click on the links to open them):**

- The latest figures tracking consumer prices – numbers that determine the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retirees, disabled veterans, and many others – show an increase not seen in decades.  
For more information: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/cola-index-increases-at-highest-rate-in-40-years/>
- MOAA Interview: VA Secretary Denis McDonough on Toxic Exposure, COVID, and More.  
For more information: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/moaa-interview-va-secretary-denis-mcdonough-on-toxic-exposure,-covid,-and-more/>
- Change Simplifying Transfer of GI Bill Benefits Gains Foothold in Congress  
For more information: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/change-simplifying-transfer-of-gi-bill-benefits-gains-foothold-in-congress/>
- VA to Overhaul Disability Evaluations for Mental Health, Other Conditions  
For more information: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/va-to-overhaul-disability-evaluations-for-mental-health,-other-conditions/>
- MOAA President Sounds Warning on Benefit Cuts in ‘The Hill’ Commentary  
For more information: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-president-sounds-warning-on-benefit-cuts-in-the-hill-commentary/>



## **Northwestern Michigan Chapter MOAA**

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT – CDR Tom Haase, USCG RET**

Happy belated New Year to you all. As you read this, my first newsletter as President, our days are getting longer by about three minutes each day, it will be summer before you know it! I personally want to thank Bob Kutulis for all his work in getting this Chapter started and all the work he did to build it to what it is today. His dedication to “Never Stop Serving” should be an inspiration to us all. Thank you, Bob and Carol!

Our December meeting was a great success. Unfortunately, due to Covid and scheduling we did not have all of our scholarship winners with us but we hope the ones we missed will be able to join us at our March or June meetings. I would like to thank our Events Chairperson and Vice-President, Mark Benjamin, for all his efforts in making the December meeting go so well. Planning events during and post-Covid is getting quite a bit more challenging and this meeting was no exception.

I am very pleased to welcome new members since our last newsletter. Ralph Mittelberger, Greg Mosesian, Marty Colburn, Tom Petzold, Phillip Haldaman and Brad Graft. I am very, very pleased to announce that Greg Movesian has agreed to serve as our Membership Chair. Greg and Karen have enjoyed living part time in Rapid City for some time but recently made the permanent move and decided to join our Chapter after serving many years with the Capital Area (Lansing) Chapter. Greg is also involved with the Michigan Council. We won the daily double when Karen agreed to serve as our Surviving Spouse Liaison. Karen will share more about MOAA’s surviving spouse programming at our September meeting. While we are on the topic of membership, I want to ask each of you to be on the lookout for potential members as you go about your daily business. If you come across a potential member and are not comfortable approaching them about joining, please reach out to Greg, myself or any of the other board members and we will be happy to reach out and invite them to join us. Please remember that anyone who has served as an officer is welcome to join us. They do not have to have completed a 20+ year career. I’m sure our membership will always lean toward the retired officers but there are many who moved on to other things that make great members of our Chapter. We all need to participate in growing our Chapter.

Finally, and sadly, I want to make sure all of you know of the loss of one of the “Plank Owners” of this Chapter, Lt. Russ Gilbert, USCG (ret). Russ was a local boy (Elk Rapids) who enlisted in the US Coast Guard in 1950. In his twenty-two years of Coast Guard service Russ became a Warrant Officer and was then direct commissioned as a Lieutenant. After he and Jean moved back to the Traverse City area Russ did a lot of different things including a stint as the Executive Director of the local chapter of the American Red Cross. If you were lucky enough to get to know Russ, you know he truly lived our motto of “Never Stop Serving”. Russ, you will be missed.

## 2021 Annual Christmas Gala Scholarship Awards Dinner

The annual Christmas Gala and Scholarship Awards Dinner was held at the Park Place Hotel in Traverse City on December 10, 2021. Over sixty MOAA members and guests were present for the dinner meeting.

Outgoing Chapter President Bob Kutulis handed over Chapter leadership to incoming president Tom Haase. Bob was presented with an award in recognition of his outstanding work and leadership, having formed and grown the Chapter since its founding in 2015.



The highlight of the evening was the awarding of over \$5,000 in scholarships to seven winners, including two returning MOAA Scholars. Not all Scholarship Winners were able to attend the awards dinner. Scholarships were awarded to:

- Returning Scholar Evan Renn, who is attending the University of Michigan
- Returning Scholar Olivia Lowe, who is attending Hope College
- Marissa Kohler, who attends Suttons Bay High School and will attend Northwest Michigan College
- Lane Cool, who attends Kalkaska High School and will attend Career Tech Center
- Elizabeth Kucharek, who attends Grayling High School and plans to attend Northern Michigan University
- Daniel Smith, who attends St. Mary Cathedral and plans to pursue a degree in Finance and Accounting at either Saginaw Valley State College or Michigan State University
- Caroline Ducharme, who attends Elk Rapids High School and plans to attend Northwest Michigan College.



Shown above are Bob Kutulis, Caroline Ducharme, Marissa Kohler, Olivia Lowe, Evan Renn, Tom Haase, and Scott Dennis.

## Quarterly Dinner Meetings and Upcoming Events

CDR Mark Benjamin, USCG, RET  
Programs Chair and Veterans Coalition  
Representative

### Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition:

The Veterans Suicide Prevention Group 22 2 None, receives a percentage of sales from Olsen's Grocery store as well as Family Fare Food Markets. Save these receipts and turn them in to any MOAA Board Member. We will forward them on to this worthwhile organization.

### Events:

**Thursday the 3rd of March Quarterly Dinner Meeting:** Informal dinner meeting at Sleder's Family Tavern. Guest speaker is Traverse City, City Manager and MOAA Chapter member Marty Colburn. *No ties allowed.* This will also serve as a major new member recruiting event as we invite Officers from the USCG Air Station and many others. If you know of someone who is eligible for MOAA membership, please bring them. See the event flyer for more information.

**Mid May. Date TBA:** Miniature golf outing. Putting for Patriots, Pirates Cove, Traverse City. Bring the kids and grandkids. MOOMers Ice Cream after the golf. Keep score as a winner will receive a prize. Proceeds go to wounded veterans.

**Friday June 17th Quarterly dinner meeting:** Traverse City Country Club. Guest speaker is our own chapter member and well-known author COL John Wemlinger, USA (Ret).

**Thursday September 8th Quarterly dinner meeting:** Cambria Suites in Traverse City. Guest speaker will be newly designated Surviving Spouse Liaison, Karen Movsesian.

**Friday December 16th: Christmas Gala and Scholarship Awards Dinner:** Traverse City Country Club. Guest speaker, Dr. Nick Nissley, President, Northwest Michigan College.

## 2022 Northwestern Michigan Chapter Structure

(Effective December 2021)

### Board of Directors:

Immediate Past President ..... Capt. Bob Kutulis, USAF (ret)  
Director (USCG Liaison) ..... CDR Gregory Clayton, USCG  
Director..... Col Randy McClure, USAFR (ret)  
Director (Elected)..... TBD

### Chapter Officers:

President..... CDR Thomas Haase, USCG (ret)  
Vice President..... CDR Mark Benjamin, USCG (ret)  
Treasurer ..... MGen Michael Lehnert, USMC (ret)  
Secretary..... Open  
Membership Chair ..... Col Greg Movsessian, ANG (ret)  
Legislative Liaison ..... LtCol Steve Chowen, USA (ret)  
Programs Officer..... CDR Mark Benjamin, USCG (ret)  
Communications/Newsletter CWO4 Curtis Erickson, USCG (ret)  
Scholarship Chair ..... BGen Scott Dennis, USAF (ret)  
Personal Affairs Officer..... Open  
Surviving Spouse Liaison..... Karen Movsessian  
Chaplain..... CWO4 Thomas Peterson, USN (ret)

## 2022 Veterans Lunch and Learn

The Grand Traverse County Department of Veterans Affairs is presenting three lunch seminars for veterans this year. The seminars are presented at no cost to veterans and will be held at the NMC Hagerty Center, 715 E. Front Street, Traverse City.

The seminars will be presented from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on the following dates:

- Friday, March 18 – Veteran's Benefits
- Friday, July 22 – VA Spouse / Widow Benefits (open to veterans and their spouses)
- Friday September 16 – Veteran's Benefits

Veterans will be served a lunch buffet while learning about benefits that are available to them. Every attendee will get entered to win a "Bug out bag".

Call the Grand Traverse Department of Veterans Affairs at 231-995-6070 to register for a seminar. You can also show up at the door the day of the event.

These seminars are funded in part through a Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency Grant.



**Quarterly Chapter Meeting**

Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 6:00 PM  
 Sleder’s Family Tavern, 717 Randolph Street, Traverse City, MI

**Guest Speaker**

**Marty Colburn**

Traverse City Manager and NW MI Chapter Member

Social Hour 6 to 7 PM

Appetizers and beverages of choice

Order dinner off the menu with separate checks

Event cost: \$10.00 per person

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: One Member @ \$10.00 and \_\_\_\_\_ Guest(s) @ \$10.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Prospective New Member (list name) \_\_\_\_\_ No Charge

Scholarship Donation..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Dues: 1 year @ \$20.00, 3 years @ \$55.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Total Amount Due* ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***If possible, please pay in advance.*** Make checks payable to NW MI Chapter MOAA

Reservations:

Mail – Mark Benjamin, 3688 Holiday Village Road, Traverse City, MI 49686

Email – *mebmd11@gmail.com*, or

Text – (231) 642-1201

Negative replies requested via email or text message.

***PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28***