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## Letter to the Editor – Riekse responds to personal attack

This is in response to David Eling's attack letter about me in the May, 2013 *Fruitport Area News*. It was full of half-truths and misstatements. Has our Muskegon County Commission ever had the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs audited as to just what he is doing with our hard-earned property tax dollars?

As to the placement of memorials in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park, (which some years ago I led a committee to restore from the swamp it had become) the Causeway Veterans Advisory Committee, of which David Eling is one of the principle leaders, did, in fact, reject placing any stone memorial to those who died in the Iraq War in a letter to the Muskegon VFW County Council. They stated there are no individual names listed on memorials at the Causeway Veterans Park.

As I pointed out to David Eling and one of his underlings he sent to the VFW County Council to work against placing a stone monument to Iraq War veterans in the park, there are approximately 500 names of those who died in service from Muskegon County (in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War) in both bronze and stone. The War in Iraq is and has been officially over now, so it's time to place a memorial to those such as Fruitport's Jason T. Lee who made the ultimate sacrifice for their — our — country. Why is David Eling, director of the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs, and his causeway park committee so against that?

To give the reason there is an on-going "Global War on Terror," and therefore we should wait for some time in the distant future to honor our Iraq War veterans who died in service is just plain crap. I was in Iraq at the time that the pentagon politicians were trying to skirt tradition and reject an individual service award, i.e. service medal, for Iraq and Afghanistan and in its place put the War on Terrorism Medal. This issue was very well covered in the *Stars and Stripes* in Iraq and Afghanistan while I served in Iraq. Both active military personnel in those war zones and military personnel and the vast majority of veterans soundly rejected a "one size fits all" War on Terrorism Medal put forth by politicians like David Eling. This is why the War on Terrorism Medal was rejected for service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today there is both an Iraq War Service Medal and an Afghanistan War Service Medal. I would think that David Eling should have known that.

As to the current war memorials set in the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park listing only the names of those Muskegon County residents who were killed in action; David Eling has his "facts" wrong. The names on the stone and bronze Causeway memorials are those who died in service during those wars. While the majority of those were killed in action, many were not. There is no way of knowing who was killed in action or died of other wartime related causes.

As to my "pet project" of wanting to honor two Muskegon (not three, Mr. Eling) Medal of Honor awardees at the Causeway park in bronze (i.e. Civil War veteran Alexander U. McHale, and Korean War veteran Duane Edgar Dewey), both lived after their war time service; a rare thing for those who were awarded the Medal of Honor. And what better place than the Muskegon County Veterans Causeway Park to honor them? By the grace

of God almighty, Duane Edgar Dewey is still alive and was present to help dedicate our Medal of Honor bronze plaque at the Fruitport Veterans Park in the Village of Fruitport. David Eling, director of Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs, was not there. The LST was honored to have the Medal of Honor plaque at their ship. Thank you.

As to raising the money for our Fruitport Medal of Honor bronze plaque, Fruitport Village Trustee Jerry Alger helped raise 90 percent of the money to cover the cost; and the Fruitport V.F.W. Polar Bear Post covered the rest of the funding for it. The same Medal of Honor bronze plaque now at the LST was funded by the Muskegon V.F.W. County Council set up to honor Fruitport's Skip Vermillion, who led the Muskegon County Honor Guard for military funeral rites for area veterans for years. His name is on one side of the stone, with the Medal of Honor (MOH) plaque on the other side of it — a fitting tribute to a fellow Muskegon County veteran who did so much for veterans. Muskegon's Superior Monument and Stone Company on Ottawa Street donated the LST-MOH stone. Thank you. That was outstanding! David Eling sent one of his fellow committee members to the VFW County Council to fight against having the bronze MOH plaque at the Causeway. Why did he do that? Just what does Eling have against those who were awarded the MOH? Is he jealous of their bravery in combat service to our nation and freedom?

So you can see, there is a lot of information that Eling did not include when he launched his personal attack on me, along with some very glaring false statements that he made in his attack letter. Over the years, I've learned that Eling is a very good politician; and to take what he has to say with a grain of salt. He once told me that 100 percent of disabled veterans and their children received 100 percent free tuition, etc. to any state of Michigan public college or university. I asked him repeatedly to give me proof of that, but he never did. After my own research, I found that 100 percent of veterans and/or their children can receive around \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year towards college tuition — a far cry from what Eling told me; especially when it can cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$40,000 a year to attend a good Michigan university. It should also be noted that David Eling refused to become a member of any veteran's organization for many years; yet, he was the 'leader' of this county's Department of Veterans Affairs. Many veterans at the time even questioned if he was even a veteran. I think he is; along with being just another self-serving Muskegon County politician who makes a good living off our county property taxes. Let's have that audit of just how our property tax dollars are used in regards to our funding the Muskegon County Department of Veterans Affairs, along with just how much David Eling makes off us in regards to his salary, health benefits, and his future county retirement.

God bless our Republic.  
Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Max Riekse  
United States Army, Michigan Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve (32 years of military service), Vietnam War & Iraq War Veteran, Commander, Fruitport V.F.W. Polar Bear Post #3734, 12<sup>th</sup> District VFW Legislative & POW- MIA Chairman

## WIC income guidelines increase

(Submitted by Public Health Muskegon County)  
New income guidelines issued by the Michigan Department of Community Health WIC office allow more families to receive benefits from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. WIC currently serves over 7,000 families in Muskegon County.

WIC is a health and nutrition program for eligible pregnant, postpartum women, infants and children up to age five aimed at improving pregnancy outcomes and child development and increasing breastfeeding rates. WIC provides a combination of nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, referrals to service agencies and healthcare, and free healthy foods.

The updated Michigan WIC program Income Guidelines are for gross income (before taxes) and cannot exceed the following amounts:

Size of family	Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$10.22	\$409	\$1,772	\$21,257
2	\$13.80	\$552	\$2,392	\$28,694
3	\$17.38	\$695	\$3,011	\$36,131
4	\$20.95	\$838	\$3,631	\$43,568
5	\$24.53	\$981	\$4,251	\$51,005
6	\$28.10	\$1,124	\$4,871	\$58,442
Additional				+\$7,437

A pregnant woman is counted as one (1) plus the number of infants expected (1 or more) when determining income eligibility for the family.

For information on signing up for WIC and the nearest office locations, visit [www.muskegonhealth.net](http://www.muskegonhealth.net) or visit WIC Muskegon County on Facebook or call (231) 724-1391. The WIC Program is a federally-funded nutrition program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is an equal opportunity provider. •

## USS LST 393 hosts movies on deck

The USS LST 393 Veterans Museum has a great lineup of Friday night movies this summer. The deck opens at 7 p.m. with the movie starting after one of Muskegon Lake's magnificent sunsets.

Bring your own chair or blanket, and coolers are acceptable. Concessions are also available for purchase. Movies are free and open to the public, but donations are always welcome. •

## Why not use your smartphone to show proof of auto insurance

(Submitted by Michigan Secretary of State)  
Secretary of State Ruth Johnson and Senators Mike Green and Joe Hune today announced new legislation that would allow Michigan motorists to use smartphones and other electronic devices to show their vehicle registration and valid auto insurance instead of having to present a paper certificate.