

Three Members Recognized by New NFCA Program

The National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA) announced its *Fraternalists-in-Action* program in May of this year. The new program recognizes individuals from fraternal benefit societies whose unique stories best represent 21st Century fraternalism. These Fraternal MVPs (Most Valuable Participants) volunteer their time, energy, and compassion to strengthen their communities through participation in local branch activities and other charitable endeavors.

National Mutual Benefit is proud to recognize three of its own fine fraternalists who have been named MVPs by the NFCA's new recognition program.

Sue Vlasnik of Milltown, Wisconsin, is president of Indianhead Branch 828 and the Society's first Fraternal MVP. She is a charter officer of her branch and instrumental in spearheading many local fund-raisers for people in need. She also prepares the branch newsletter, keeping members updated on branch activities.

When a severe tornado hit a small community in the branch area, Sue orga-

nized a group of volunteers who helped with clean-up efforts. Under her leadership as president, the branch held a Hurricane Katrina fund-raiser where 18 volunteers served 117 pancake breakfasts and raised over \$1,000 to send south.

Joe Popelka of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, is president of Oconomowoc Branch 717 and has been instrumental



in the branch's success for many years. He has served in several other positions and has chaired many events that bring NMB family

members together for community outreach. He was actively involved in fund-raising efforts for the area fire department, as well as for families suffering adversity due to fire and extreme medical expenses.

Joe is probably best known for his commitment and service as chair of NMB's Clark Farm Nature Center project, where he orchestrated the rebuilding of an amphitheatre, the addition of several benches and a sampling pier, and ongoing cleanup and maintenance efforts.

Violet Bergum of Madison, Wisconsin,



Fraternal MVP Violet Bergum meets with Wisconsin Senator Herb Kohl in Washington, D.C.

sin, is vice president of Madison Branch 400 and third Fraternalist-in-Action MVP, honored for outstanding fraternal service. She is continually teaching children and adults through her 49 different presentations, which include portraying Betsy Ross and teaching the history of the U.S. flag at NMB's Flag Day ceremonies and Madison area schools. She especially enjoys putting on presentations at long-term care facilities and making the seniors laugh.

Violet was chosen by the NFCA to go to Washington, D.C., in September and meet with members of Congress who represent her home state and Congressional district to be honored for her volunteer service.

NMB President George Yanna commended each of NMB's Fraternalists-in-Action when he said, "We are so proud to have these valuable volunteers as a part of our benevolent and charitable program. They have an impact on many families, doing honorable things from collecting canned goods for food pantries, to organizing fund-raisers of large magnitude without blinking an eye."

To find out more about each of these special volunteers, visit www.nmblife.org. For more information on the Fraternalists-in-Action program go to www.nfcenet.org or call NMB's Fraternal Department at 1-800-779-1936, ext. 6093. ♦



NMB Fraternalist of the Year, Violet Bergum, draws names from a basket held by President George Yanna for the four gifts awarded for participation in the recent election of NMB Directors. Winners of the digital cameras were Jean Frederick and Naomi Collien, while the Apple iPod winners were Alan Stein and Oliver Grebing.