



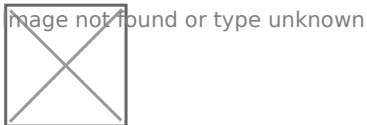
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Vietnam Veterans Host Ceremony At Mel's Place

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November 14, 2006



Sen. Cathy Young, left, hands Melvin Perks, owner of Mel's Place in Falconer, center, a certificate from the national Vietnam Veterans of America organization. Looking on at right is Bill Servis, chapter commander. **P-J photo by Patrick L. Fanelli**

By PATRICK L. FANELLI

FALCONER — Mel's Place was packed wall to wall Sunday as state Sen. Cathy Young, R-Olean, spoke of the sacrifice so many men and women have made while serving in the U.S. armed forces. "We're so blessed to be Americans, we're so blessed for our freedom," she said. "We take so much for granted. "Make sure everytime you see

a veteran, you simply say, "Thank you." Sen. Young described the weekend — which, for her among many, has been filled with Veterans Day observances — as a “rollercoaster ride of emotion,” and she helped present flags to the families of three veterans only recently deceased. It seemed like she felt right at home at Mel’s Place, a bar on West Main Street in Falconer that serves as the headquarters for the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter

865. Bill Servis, chapter commander, gave her the floor shortly after the ceremony, shouts of “our next governor” coming from the crowd. Chapter members as well as Mel’s Place owners Melvin and Brenda Perks think highly of Sen. Young and her contributions to veterans since she was first elected to the state Senate in May 2005. In fact, just last week they announced Sen. Young had secured a \$25,000 grant for the chapter to help them one day acquire a place to call their own.

"We owe it to veterans to be devoted to them because they have been devoted to us," said Sen. Young, who was unopposed on Election Day. "We can't ever forget their service to our country." Honored during Sunday's ceremony were veterans William Olsen Sr., Gerald Lee Scroggs and Harold "Duffy" Boerst, who only recently passed away. Aside from Sen. Young, chapter members also recognized the efforts of Richard Kimball and active area veteran Tony Costanzo. "People don't realize what war is until they're there," Costanzo said.