

Special 2017 Department Convention issue

The Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary

Legionnaire



Volume 99, Number 7

For God and Country

July 2017

Olson, Schaffer face off for state commander

The 2017 Department Conventions will feature several contested elections.

On the Legion side, Gary Olson of Moorhead will take on Mike Schaffer of Fulda for the Department Commander position.

The sergeant-at-arms position has three contenders: Joe Niesen of Cologne, Garylee Davenport of Atwater and Ryan Hill of Brewster.

On the Auxiliary side, Sally Strasser of Oakdale and Mary Hendrickson of Cloquet will face off for Second Vice President.

The convention will be held at the Shooting Star Casino and Conference Center in Mahanomen from Thursday, July 13, to Saturday, July 15. It will be the 99th state convention for the Legion and the 98th convention for the Auxiliary.

The race for commander will feature two longtime Legionnaires with strong records of service.

Olson served in the National Guard and the Air Force Reserve for 37 years, and has been a member of Wheaton

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Boys State week at St. John's



Boys Staters enjoyed a beautiful spring day at St. John's University. Counselor Tucker Pearson led his city in a game that stressed ethics. Boys State returned to St. John's this year after 10 years at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall. More Boys State news on pages 10 and 12.

Convention will ponder eight resolutions

A total of eight resolutions will be considered at the Department Convention in July. The resolutions will be sent to the proper committee, and then will return to the floor for a final decision by the convention delegates.

The resolutions include:

— Duplicate resolutions from the Second and First Districts that would lower the percentage of posts needed for a quorum at the Department Convention from 20 percent to 10 percent. The resolution states that with the 20 percent requirement, there might come a time when the convention will not have a quorum and will not be able to conduct its business.

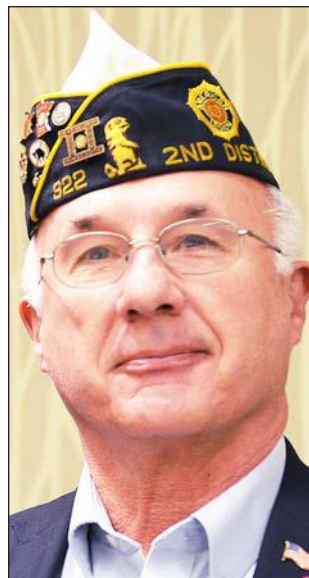
— The Ninth District proposed a resolution that calls for the establishment of a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee to develop, coordinate, facilitate and foster

strategies to establish the program. The committee will have one person, preferably with a law enforcement or education background, and will be part of the Americanism Committee.

— The 10th District passed a resolution that would change the bylaws of the Department to allow district officers who are elected to take their positions at any time, including before the state convention. The present bylaws state that the officers take office at the conclusion of the state convention. The resolution argues that the districts should have the autonomy to choose when their officers shall take office.

— The 10th District also passed a resolution that would seek to establish provisions in the law that would enforce

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MIKE SCHAFER



GARY OLSON

National Convention heads to the wild, wild West

The 2017 National American Legion Convention will be held in Reno, Nevada, in late August.

The Legion also held a convention in the "Biggest Little City in the World" 10 years ago.

The Minnesota delegation will be housed at the Peppermill Resort Spa and Casino, and 90 rooms have been set aside. The base rate is \$156.81 per night for two people. Reservations must be made through Department Headquarters.

The headquarters hotel for The American Legion will be the Atlantis Casino Resort. Most business sessions for the Legion will be held at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center and the Atlantis.

The Sons of the American Legion will hold its annual convention on Friday-Sunday, Aug. 18-22.

The Legion convention will be held Aug. 22-24, but many activities will begin the weekend before including the parade on Sunday.

The Minnesota Party, including a country-fried chicken dinner, will be held Monday evening, Aug. 21, at the Peppermill. The cost is \$40 per person with a cash bar, and will feature line dancing, swing dancing, and country fun. Tickets must be purchased through state Headquarters or at Department Convention by Aug. 8.



Reno, Nevada, will host the 2017 National Convention Aug. 22-24.

Department dues increase going into effect this membership year

The Department dues increase that was approved at last year's convention is now going into effect. Dues notices for the 2018 membership year that were sent out this week will reflect the \$3 increase.

The increase will raise the Department's dues from \$10.75 to \$13.75. It will be the first state dues increase in 10 years.

The Department dues this past year provided about 60 percent of the income.

National dues will remain the same at \$18.50. The total dues package is now \$32.25.

In addition to funding such things as Legion programs, headquarters costs, per diems and supplies, \$3 of each membership goes toward the Minnesota Legionnaire, and

25 cents goes to the American Legion Family Hospital Association.

No decision has been made at this time whether to increase the funding that goes toward the Minnesota Legionnaire.

The Department also earns income from two insurance programs and from direct mail solicitation.

Eight resolutions will be considered by delegates

Continued from Page 1

the mandatory issuance of all correspondence, both electronic and paper, to the original Power of Attorney of submittal. Resolution A, which came out the Rehabilitation Committee, is a duplicate of this resolution.

— Resolution B, also from the Rehab Committee, calls for the Legion to pursue establishing provisions in the law allowing for rating decisions review to be defined as 48 business hours before any rating may be automatically expired.

— Resolution C, from the Department Executive Committee, would establish an Education and Training Committee in the Department, and that there be three members, serving staggered terms. Appointments would be made by the commander.

Resolutions are the primary way to change the way the organization does business, or where it can try to influence local or national policies on veterans.

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Choices at 2017 convention

Continued from Page 1
Post 80, Roseau Post 24, and Moorhead Post 21. He was a post commander and he was Ninth District Commander in 2010-11.

Olson was Department Chaplain, 2011-2012; Department Sergeant-at-Arms, 2013-14; Department Historian, 2014-15. He also served on the Brain Science Committee.

At the national level, he has been an assistant sergeant-at-arms for six conventions.

He has been married for 56 years to Becky and they have three sons and six grandchildren. He has run his own insurance agency, and is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Schaffer served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War era, serving in Alaska and the Philippines. He is a longtime member of

Currie Post 322.

He was post commander, and was Second District Commander from 1998-99. He also served the district as membership director and adjutant.

At the Department level, he has served as Membership Director, 2007-08, Vice Commander, 2009-10, Sergeant-at-Arms, 2001-02, Boys State Counselor, Chairman of both Trophies and Awards and Children and Youth Committees. At National he has served on the National Security Committee, the Distinguished Guest Committee, and as an assistant sergeant-at-arms for many conventions.

He and his wife Nina have been married for 38 years and have three children and four grandchildren. He is a member of St. Gabriel Catholic Church, and is a retired Rural Mail

Carrier.

Also on hand for the convention will be National Vice Commander Douglas Boldt of Nebraska.

The official hotel for the Legion and Auxiliary is the Shooting Star Casino and Hotel. Those attending the convention must make their own reservations by calling 1-800-453-7827 and referencing Block 1738. The room rate is \$85 a night.

The facility also has an RV park. Those interested should call the same number.

Registration is \$15 in advance, and a registration form is on Page 2 of this Legionnaire.

The convention will be preceded by a Department Executive Committee meeting on July 12 at the Bejou Room at the casino at 7 p.m. The Auxiliary Executive Committee meeting will be held 1 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12, at the Richwood Room at 1 p.m.

Bill Eck, convention chairman for host Mahnommen Post 31, said there will be a lunch at the post on Thursday and Friday, and that Ronnie Cash will perform on Thursday.

The convention will feature a memorial service for Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and the Legion at 11:15 a.m. Thursday. The annual parade will be held in downtown Mahnommen at 7 p.m. on Friday evening.

There will be special rates for golf at the Mahnommen Country Club. Call the course for more details, 218-935-5188.

Paul Orson has announced he is seeking Department selection as a delegate-at-large. The Department Convention will select three delegates at large at this convention.

An official ballot for the convention is located on page 9 of this issue.

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OFFICIAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form. Make this check payable to CONVENTION CORPORATION. No credit cards will be accepted.

Registration at the door will be \$18.

Mail to:
Ron Hendrickson, Box 31, Waubun, MN 56589.

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District _____ Phone _____

Name _____

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- Delegate Alternate Guest
 Delegate at Large (Auxiliary)
(Please check one of the above.)

If additional pre-registrations accompany this request, this pre-registration form should be photo copied for each person. The \$15 registration fee should be enclosed for each person.

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Minneapolis is hosting the 100th national convention in 2018. Our great state was the site of the 1st convention and will now host this historic event. The National Convention Corporation of Minnesota is inviting all Legionnaires and posts to say "For The American Legion, I Will" and contribute towards our **Beginning the Second Century of Service** Campaign. Gifts can be directed towards Minnesota's hosting responsibilities for the convention or The American Legion Minnesota Foundation to support programming throughout our state. For more information, please visit www.mnlegion.org and click on 100th National Convention Information.

DO YOU KNOW OF A COMPANY THAT MAY FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE 100TH CONVENTION THROUGH SPONSORSHIP, ADVERTISING OR GIVING?

There are sponsorship, advertisement and giving opportunities for businesses. If you know of a company that may want to take part in the 100th convention, please contact Michael Davy at (612) 247-9960 or mdavy@mnlegion.org.

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**COMMANDER'S
COLUMN****By Denise Milton**

Greetings to my fellow Legionnaires.

This will be my last column as your commander. I want to thank everyone for the support and hospitality you have given me this past year. I would not have had a successful year if not for everyone of you. I've tried to honor as many of the requests/invites this past year, but unfortunately was not able to be in two places at one time. It goes to show you what a great state we live in and the pride we have being a member of the Legion Family. We continue to serve our veterans, their families, our communities, state and nation. We do it gladly.

In last month's column, I had mistakenly written that the bond for a new veterans home had been passed. I apologize for any false hope that I may have conveyed. In my excitement I heard/read that it had passed when indeed it was monies for maintenance and repair of our current five veterans homes in the state. The Legion and all veteran service

Mail Call

The following letter was written to the The Hellenic Post 129, Minneapolis, and is reprinted with the consent of the author.

Amazing Opportunity**To the Editor:**

Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to Boys State. It has been such a joy to meet new people, learn about the U.S. Government system, and challenge myself to be the best that I can be. This is an experience that I have been so blessed to have received and I will never forget it.

I tried to participate as much as possible, and I was elected mayor and senator.

I look forward to the opportunities that will present themselves to me because of having contributed to such a prestigious event as this. Interacting with the rest of the young men like me has been very enlightening and I had a wonderful time.

Once again, thank for the amazing opportunity. I honestly cannot thank you enough.

**Alexander Chadwick
Minneapolis****Generous Gift****To the Editor:**

I am a Korean-era veteran, serving from March 1953 to March 1955.

My wife and I attended the Veterans Day program at Renville County West school in Renville in the morning, and, after lunch, attended a program at the Renville Nursing home.

On the way to Danube, we stopped at Cenex in Renville to fill the car with gas and get a car wash.

I went in to pay, and the cashier handed me a slip for the wash with all zeroes. I looked at it. She said car washes are free today for all veterans. My response was thank you very much, but I owe for gas on pump 5.

"No you don't," she said. "That lady that just walked out paid for your gas." Over \$24 worth. I asked her who it was, but she didn't know and pointed to the vehicle this lady was getting into. I made it out in time to thank her.

I told her she didn't have to do this. Her response, "Oh, yes I did." I thanked her again as she drove off.

It nearly brought me to tears. I don't know who she is, but, sweet lady, if you are reading this, you are a great American.

How did she know I was a veteran? I was wearing my American Legion cap and tie.

**Edsel Bernstrom
Danube****No Money for Vets Home****To the Editor:**

I want to bring to your attention that Commander Milton is wrong on stating that funding was included in the Department of Veterans Affairs for a Veterans Home. There was money, \$10 million, then raised to \$13 million included in the Department of Veterans Affairs budget. Through the infinite wisdom of the governor, he had it removed so he could provide \$27 million for additional state employees. This is right from our area legislators. We can see where veterans are on the Governor's Priority List.

**Marvin Garbe, Commander Post 59 and
Chairman of the Montevideo Area Veterans Home**

organizations make sure that our veterans have a place they can gladly call home when they are no longer able to live on their own. Thank you all for your diligence and commitment in making sure our legislators know where we stand.

Our Department convention will soon be upon us. The Mahnomen post will be our host this year at The Shooting Star Event Center & Hotel. They have done some recent renovations and you now have a greater variety of eating establishments. Our entire Legion Family will be housed under one roof-no shuttles to and from the school. I look forward to seeing you all there, it will be a fun and rewarding convention.

Our new training program will have been completed by the time you have received this newsletter. I know that it will be a success and we will be off to a great start for the next 100 years of The American Legion.

District conventions are now done for the year and we will soon be starting a new year. National Delegates have been elected for the respective districts for the National convention in Reno in August. You will receive your convention packet in the mail in the next week or so. Please read, fill out and return to the department office as soon as you can. To all incoming district commanders who will be attending the National convention be sure to check out and sign up for the district commander training that is being offered this year. This is an opportunity that you don't want to miss. I know that I plan on sitting in on one as well-see you there.

I want to thank all who have assisted me in making this a year that I won't likely forget. I'll have many fond memories for years to come. God Bless you all.

For God and Country

Fort Snelling was a Fort**To the Editor:**

There is an article on Minn Post which you and other veterans should read. The Minnesota Historical Society is seeking \$34 million for re-doing a number of things at the fort. One of the things they will be redoing is the exhibit. Unfortunately, that once venerable institution (the MHS) has developed a strong bias.

To state the obvious, Fort Snelling was a fort, and as such, that is the prime story which should be told. But we have in our midst (and in the MHS) activists who want to make the focus on the Dakota Indians. The Dakota Indians do need to be at the table and tell their story, but the military perspective needs to be kept front and center.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

**Curtis Dahlin
Roseville****Training thank you****To the Editor**

I want to thank each of every one of you who registered and who attended the recent training session at Brainerd. If you registered and could not make it I'm sure the reason was important but at least you intended to. As I said, out of nearly 74,000 Legionnaires in MN there were only 50 who attended making the effort to learn more about their Legion and ways to make it better. Y'all rock.

Again, we apologize for some of the logistical issues in the beginning but everyone worked through them and moved forward. That is an example of your resolve and what can happen in your Posts as issues arise and you address them with an open mind and positive attitude.

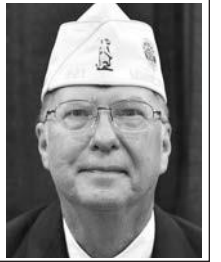
We will be addressing all of the comments we received in a report to Department for further review in order to make the training more valuable. Thank you for your input and your being candid.

Overall we believe the training was successful. Our goal was to cover a handful of subjects which, after much discussion, we believed to be most critical at this time. We may not have delved as deeply into the subject matter as some would have wanted but I hope that what we did cover ultimately provided some desire to want more or even research more on your own.

We did not have a printed agenda as the agenda was still fluid up until the time we reached Legionville so it would be out of date anyway. Additionally, concerning hand-outs, the training this weekend was important but it was also what we may refer to as a "beta" version so it will change, thus the handouts would be outdated before the next session. Not to mention the monetary cost of printing something that may be temporary at the least.

However, you already have the ultimate "Hand-Out" at your Post. The bulk of the information provided this weekend all came from your Post Officers Guide. It's important to read this and fashion your Post's meetings and activities around it.

In the beginning there may have been some dissenting personalities but many of them changed their thoughts once they became engaged in the training and truly opened their minds to the information provided. Thank you all again for being part of this weekend with us. We truly are a family.

**Jeff Gay
Jackson****Chaplain's
Corner****By
Bill Brockberg****Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Help**

About one month ago a veteran visited me in my office to inform me he was moving 150 miles away to a retirement gated community closer to children and family. We early on in our discussion reminisced about where and when we were stationed in Germany and the conversation led to sending and receiving letters and generally trying to communicate with family back home. He laughed about the fact that it used to take seven to ten days to receive a letter. My parents bought a subscription to my hometown newspaper and that took two to three weeks to get delivered to me. And calling home to talk? Forget it. We didn't have cell phones back then. After this reminiscing, the veteran brought up his concern that he wanted to transfer all of his medical records from one Veterans Administration Health Care Services Center to another. I assured him everything can be taken care of in two minutes just by requesting the transfer by email or in person at the new facility. Having said that, I introduced him to his new County Veterans Service Officer by email.

This is amazing isn't it? We are so "plugged-in," so connected nationwide, even worldwide. In the wonderment and appreciation of our advanced technology and communication efficiency, it occurred to me that in order to truly benefit from such advances, my veteran had to ask for assistance first. This is how things work with the heavenly father too.

In this way, just as my veteran asked for help, we in the American Legion family, can come to God and ask for help. We should ask for his help and never be afraid to ask. By so doing, God can work miracles. I have worked with veterans who became addicted to alcohol, prescription and illicit drugs.

Those veterans who asked for help through Alcoholics Anonymous were most successful in becoming and staying sober. Alcoholics Anonymous is renowned for its 12-step program which emphasizes to make a plea for help. This 12-step program is also rooted in belief to our heavenly father to call upon him to work his miracle in us. Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable. Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God. Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. Step 7: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. Step 8: Omitted. Step 9: Omitted. Step 10: Omitted. Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

"Lord God Almighty, none is as mighty as you; in all things, you are faithful, O Lord."

Psalm 89:8.

Legionnaire

The Minnesota

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The American Legion, Department of Minnesota**Al Zdon, Editor**

First published in 1920 as the Hennepin County Legionnaire, the Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 98th year of publication. It is published monthly by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, Room 300A, 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Periodicals postage is paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. The Legionnaire is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National American Legion Press Association.

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What's Happening

Legionville Camp-O-Ree

The 48th Annual Camp-O-Ree at Legionville will be held Sept. 7-10 at the camp on North Long Lake near Brainerd.

The event will include a full bar, pull-tabs, bingo, live music, movie night and camp fires.

Food will include the First District Steak Fry on Thursday; the SAL breakfast, SAL lunch and 10th District Port Roast Dinner on Friday; SAL breakfast, Sixth District Fish Fry Lunch and Harvest Rally Dinner (by ticket only) and the SAL hot dog and hamburger dinner on Saturday; SAL omelet breakfast on Sunday.

Boxes of firewood will be available for a \$10 donation.

People can stay in campers, tents or lodge in camp's dormitories.

Arrival on Thursday is \$10 per person, \$75 family maximum. Active duty military and families are free. Harvest Rally only is \$5 per person, plus the cost of the meal.

Veterans Lake

The annual Veterans Lake outing for disabled veterans is Wednesday, Aug. 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The rain day is the following day. The day will include fishing, boating, lunch and entertainment.

The lake is located at 8702 181st Ave. NW, 3.5 miles east of Highway 169 on Elk River Main Street. RSVP at enstrom06@msn.com or call 763-441-4086.

All equipment is provided.

National Convention posts

The national American Legion is seeking to create a list of posts in the Twin Cities area who would be willing to host events such as parties for state delegations.

Those posts that are interested should contact Convention Corporation President Jeff Olson at jefftal1208@gmail.com.

Drop in Clinics

There will be free drop in legal clinics coming up sponsored by the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. The clinics will feature housing, employment, benefits,

expungement, wills, debt collection, and family law including child support.

For more information call 651-200-4750. Attorneys and staff will be on hand.

A clinic will be held on Tuesday, July 11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium Balcony Room. Free parking.

A clinic will be held Tuesday, July 18, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Auditorium -- Building 9, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mental Health Summit

The 5th annual VA and Community Mental Health Summit will be held Friday, Sept. 22, at the Bishop Whipple Federal Building from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Several keynote speakers will be on hand.

Information tables will be available in the lobby.

If you would like an information table or if you have other questions, contact Amy Wood, 612-629-7614.

Press Association Meeting

The Minnesota American Legion Press Association will meet on Thursday, July 13, at 2:30 p.m. at the annual Department Convention. The meeting will be in the Beaulieu Room.

All newspaper, newsletter and website editors in the state are invited. The association is open to Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion members.

The MALPA, an association of the National American Legion Press Association, has been defunct for many years and this meeting will be important in determining the future of the press association.

Ralph Schneekloth is the president of the state association.

Montgomery BBQ

The Montgomery Post 79 will be having a BBQ rib dinner with the fixings on Friday, July 7, with dinner starting at 5 p.m. There will be live music by the Beginnings from 7:30-10:30 p.m. They play 60s and 70s music. Please call the post, 507-364-7779 with your reservations by July 5.

Veterans free at Hamline

Starting this fall semester, veterans eligible for the Post 9-11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program will have their Mitchell-Hamline School of Law education paid for in full.

Veterans who have served at least three years of active duty since 2001 can have their law school fees paid by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, the Yellow Ribbon Program, and Mitchell Hamline.

For more information, go to the school's website, mitchellhamline.edu.

St. Cloud Events

The VA Health Care System in St. Cloud has announced several events coming up.

-- The 2017 Community Mental Health Summit will be held July 11 from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Resource Training and Solutions in Sartell. The summit is for veterans, providers and organizations. To register please email Julie.Wolf@va.gov.

-- Health Care 101. Those who are interested in learning more about VA health care and how to access the system can attend at a VA Health Care 101 Seminar. They will be held in July, August and September in Building 4, Room 114. For more information, call 320-255-6381. Veterans and families can also participate by teleconference.

-- Physician Ambassador Program. The Department of Veterans Affairs recently launched the Physician Ambassador Program, and effort to recruit volunteer medical providers at the 1,700 VA health care facilities in the nation. The ambassadors should be qualified, trained, and licensed health providers who meet the same requirements as VA professionals. They will benefit veterans by sharing their experience. For more information, call James Kamsen at 320-255-6480, extension 6669.

-- Summer Games. The third annual Central Minnesota Veteran Summer Games will be held Aug. 5 at Building 96 at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. The games are open to all veterans enrolled at the center. Events include running, walking, pool, billiards, badminton, horseshoes, weightlifting, rowing, and table tennis. Lunch is provided. For more information, call 320-255-6365.

Editorial

Good Session

The Minnesota Legislature did good by veterans this time around.

There were the obvious big ticket items that they approved such as the \$7.85 million to fix the truss bridge at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis, the \$222,000 for Legionville and the \$278,000 for the Veterans Rest Camp at Big Marine Lake.

But there were plenty of other bills passed that will provide a lasting benefit to veterans in Minnesota.

Funding was put aside to staff the state's third veterans cemetery at Duluth. The federal government will foot the bill for the construction of the cemetery, but the state must staff and maintain it. We anticipate a cemetery just as beautiful and essential as the ones at Camp Ripley and Preston.

Veterans with any level of service-connected disability will now be able to get a free annual state park sticker.

Property owned by veterans service organizations will now have a reduced class rate for property taxes, a terrific boon to those posts that own buildings.

There were other bills that didn't make it, such as one that would have called for a World War I Plaque in the Court of Honor at the Capitol. Maybe next year.

But mostly it was a simply a year where the lawmakers saw the needs of the veterans community and responded. Staff at the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs called it a "spirit of compromise" among the legislators.

That kind of compromise has been sorely lacking at the top levels of government in Minnesota for so many years in so many areas. The current lawsuit involving Governor Dayton and the Legislature is simply the latest example of taking everything to the extreme. Working together in that spirit of compromise can accomplish remarkable things, and when it's all over, people can still talk to each other socially.

In these times, compromise seems as rare as hen's teeth, and so when it happens it should be something that is celebrated and savored.

Our hats are off to the Minnesota Legislature. As they used to say, you done real good.



New Flagpole at Minnesota Veterans Home, Minneapolis

A dedication was held recently for the new flagpole at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis. Contribution for the pole came from Bloomington Post 550 and the Minnesota American Legion Foundation. At top, MDVA Commissioner Larry Shellito speaks. At bottom, veterans gathered at the pole.

Legion

Convention Program

99th

The 99th Convention of The American Legion
Department of Minnesota
MAHNOMEN, MINNESOTA
July 13-15, 2017

THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 13, 2017

7-8:00 a.m. CAUCUS OF ALL DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES BY DISTRICTS

8:30-9 a.m. Music

9:00 a.m. AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION SESSIONS – Shooting Star Casino, Detroit Lakes/Bejou Rm., Mahnomen
CALL TO ORDER: Denise A. Milton, Department Commander, Bagley
ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORS -- 2016 Champions – Waite Park Post 428
POW/MIA FLAG: Jim Kellogg, NS/FR Committee, Taopi
Dennis Delong, Department Sergeant-at-Arms, Bloomington
INVOCATION: Bill Brockberg, Department Chaplain, Worthington
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
"THE PREAMBLE" -- Recital by Commander and Delegates
GREETINGS: Terrence Tibbetts, Chairman, White Earth Nation
Honorable Dave Wiemer, Mayor, Mahnomen
Richard Walz, Commander, Isaacson-Bjorge Post 31
Eric Wilkens, Ninth District Commander, Detroit Lakes
William Eck, General Convention Chairman, Waubun

9:30 a.m. READING OF THE CONVENTION CALL: Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant, St. Paul
APPROVAL OF DEPT CONVENTION PUBLISHED PROGRAM BY CONVENTION ATTENDEES
REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
REPORT OF CONVENTION RULES COMMITTEE
ADVANCE READING OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT RESOLUTIONS:
Don Walser, Past Department Judge Advocate, Hutchinson

9:45 a.m. GREETINGS: Douglas L. Boldt, National Vice Commander, Nebraska

9:50 a.m. GREETINGS: Larry Shellito, Commissioner, MN Department of Veterans Affairs
Stephen D. Black, Director, St. Cloud, VA Health Care System
Other Veterans Service Organizations
Jason Marquardt, President, Minnesota Association of Veteran Service Officers
RESPONSE: Jim Lucas, Department Vice Commander, Pine River

10:05 a.m. "REPORTING NATIONALLY" – Marland Ronning, National Executive Committeeman, Maple Grove

10:10 a.m. Legionnaire Insurance Trust, Bill Barbknecht, Chairman, Battle Lake

10:15 a.m. Centennial Minute, Al Zdon, Department Communications Director, St. Paul

10:20 a.m. 100th Anniversary Presentation, Jennifer Havlick, Two Harbors & Ralph Schneckloth, Mable

10:50 a.m. PRESENTATIONS BY:
Carl Moon, Employment Committee Chairman, St. Joseph
GREETINGS: Scott Mills, Federal Director, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)

11:00 a.m. ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEPARTMENT CONVENTION COMMITTEES AND INSTRUCTIONS
Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant, St. Paul

11:05 a.m. RECESS

11:15 a.m. JOINT MEMORIAL SERVICE – Shooting Star Casino, Detroit Lakes/Bejou Room

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 13, 2017

1:00 p.m. MEETINGS OF ALL CONVENTION COMMITTEES.

2:00 p.m. GAMBLING SEMINAR, Shooting Star Casino, Detroit Lakes/Bejou Room
Moderator: Peggy Moon, Legislative Committee Chairman, St. Joseph

FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 14, 2017

7-8:00 a.m. CAUCUS OF ALL DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES BY DISTRICTS

8:30 a.m. CALL TO ORDER: Denise A. Milton, Department Commander, Bagley
INVOCATION: Bill Brockberg, Department Chaplain, Worthington
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
"THE PREAMBLE": Recital by Commander and Delegates
REPORT: Credentials Committee, Lynne Nottage, Chairman, Minneapolis

8:45 a.m. YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES:
SAL REPORT: Eugene Olswold, SAL Detachment Commander, New Ulm

8:55 a.m. BOY SCOUT OF THE YEAR, Tom Hallett, Boy Scout Chairman, Mankato

9:15 a.m. 2017 LEGION BOYS STATE REPRESENTATIVE
REPORT: Minnesota American Legion Foundation, Lloyd Ricker, President, Dawson

9:20 a.m. REPORT: V4V, Don Pankake, Member, Hutchinson

9:25 a.m. REPORT: Legionville Corporation, Wayne Gilbertson, President, Zimmerman

9:30 a.m. REPORT: Veterans Pheasant Dinner, Chuck Stone, Chairman, Owatonna

9:35 a.m. REPORT: Armed Forces Service Center, Joe Jansen, Representative, Arden Hills

9:40 a.m. REPORT: Kim Douglas, Creative Arts Director, Fargo VA Health Care System

9:50 a.m. QUILTS OF VALOR, Jenny Caughey, State Coordinator, Perham

10:10 a.m. AWARDS PRESENTATIONS:
Marie Goede, President, American Legion Hospital Assn., Plainview
Terry Buraas, Children and Youth Chairman, Grand Forks, ND
Art Tobkin, Americanism Chairman, Bagley
Don Skow, Education Chairman, Lindstrom
James Blakesley, Safety-School Patrol Chairman, Aitkin
Tom Conway, Law and Order Chairman, Argyle
Tom Sanders, Blood Chairman, Pine City
Ralph Schneckloth, Yearbook and Narrative History Books, Mabel
Bob Locker, Community Service Chairman, Fridley
Glenn Mueller, Operation Post Home, St. Charles
Peggy Moon, Legislative Chairman, St. Joseph
Bob Mace, Bowling Chairman, Waite Park

11:15 a.m. NATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE AWARDS:
Marland Ronning, National Executive Committeeman, Maple Grove
Wilson Spence III, Rehabilitation Committee Chairman, Duluth
"PAT" CLIFF AWARD to Outstanding Post Service Officer
Wilson Spence III, Rehabilitation Committee Chairman, Duluth
VA Physician of the Year Award to Dr. Candy Heinlein, MPLS VA Healthcare System

11:30 a.m. PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE:
Jennifer Havlick, Chairman, Two Harbors

11:40 a.m. CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS

12:00 Noon RECESS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 14, 2017

1:30 p.m. CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS

1:45 p.m. GREETINGS: Mrs. Carol Kottom,

Department President, American Legion Auxiliary, Buffalo
Sandie Deutsch, Department Secretary, American Legion Auxiliary, St. Paul

2:00 p.m. REPORT: Neal Loidolt, President/CEO, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), Minneapolis

2:10 p.m. CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS

2:30 p.m. FINAL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Mark Dvorak, Department Membership Director, LeCenter
Gold Brigade Winners - Premier Plaque - Other Membership Awards

3:00 p.m. NOMINATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICE

4:30 p.m. BENEDICTION
RETIREMENT OF THE COLORS
RECESS

VOTING AT SHOOTING STAR CASINO FOR ONE HALF HOUR (30 MINUTES) FROM TIME OF RECESS

FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 14, 2017

7:00 p.m. CONVENTION PARADE - 6:00 p.m. Parade Line-up

9:00 p.m. DISTRICT and CANDIDATES OPEN HOUSES

SATURDAY MORNING, JULY 15, 2017

8:00 a.m. POLLS OPEN for voting at the casino

9:00 a.m. POLLS CLOSE

8:30 a.m. CONCERT: Ninth District Band

9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER: Denise A. Milton, Department Commander, Bagley
ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORS: 2017 Color Guard Winner
THE NATIONAL ANTHEM - Led by Ninth District Band
INVOCATION: Bill Brockberg, Department Chaplain, Worthington
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
"THE PREAMBLE" - Recital by Department Commander and Delegates
"CONVENTION MEMORIAL SERVICE": Bill Brockberg, Department Chaplain, Worthington

9:15 a.m. REPORT: David Bode, Parade Coordinator, Nicollet
FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
REPORT AND PRESENTATIONS:
Denise A. Milton, Department Commander, Bagley

9:20 a.m. REPORT: Mike Perry, American Legion Baseball Director, Minnetonka

9:25 a.m. 2017 ORATORICAL CONTEST WINNER, Debra Norman, Chairman, Northfield

9:30 a.m. REPORT: Shawn Davis, Department Webmaster, St. Paul

9:35 a.m. REPORT: Douglas L. Boldt, National Vice Commander, Nebraska

9:45 a.m. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS AND INTRODUCTION OF NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
Presentation of Department Commander's Badge
Presentation of Past Department Commander's Insignia by Denise Milton's Family
Presentation of Miniature Department Colors to Retiring Commander Jim Kellogg, Past Department Commander, Taopi
FIVE DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS - without numerical designation
CHAPLAIN
HISTORIAN
SERGEANT AT ARMS
MEMBER OF PUBLICATION BOARD - for three-year term
THREE DELEGATES-AT-LARGE TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
FIVE ALTERNATES-AT-LARGE TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS ELECT
BENEDICTION
RETIREMENT OF THE COLORS
ADJOURNMENT

Auxiliary Convention Program

98th

2017 Department Convention

July 13 – 15, 2017

Shooting Star Casino/Hotel, Mahnomon, Minnesota

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12

9:00 a.m. Department Finance – Rice Lake Room
 10:00 a.m. Girls State Committee Meeting – Callaway Room
 11:00 a.m. Governing Rules Committee Meeting – Sales Conference Room
 1:00 p.m. Department Executive Committee Meeting – Richwood Room
 3:00-7:00 p.m. Registration at Mahnomon American Legion Post

THURSDAY, JULY 13

7:00 a.m. Registration Opens – West Corridor
 7:30 a.m. Briefing and Rehearsal for the Processional – Richwood/Pine Bend Room (Convention Hall)
 8:00 a.m. District Caucuses (10) meet – Consult Room Assignment Sheet
 8:00 a.m. Convention Credentials Committee Meeting – Roy Lake Room
 8:00 a.m. Convention Rules Committee Meeting – Pine Point Room
 9:00 a.m. Daily Roll Call of District Presidents – Sandie Deutsch, Dept. Secretary
 9:00 a.m. Auxiliary session convenes – Sandie Deutsch, Dept. Secretary
 9:05 a.m. Processional – ALL COLORS
 9:10 a.m. Call to Order – Carol Kottom, Department President
 Invocation – Judy Stein, Department Chaplain
 Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Sandy Wersal, Americanism Chairman
 The National Anthem – Sandy Wersal, Americanism Chairman
 Preamble to the Constitution – Lori Skallerud, Constitution and Bylaws Chair
 9:20 a.m. POW/MIA Remembrance – Shirley Frederick, National Security Chairman
 9:30 a.m. Response for the District Presidents, Ninth District President Joanie Krantz
 9:35 a.m. Welcome to Mahnomon
 Jean Horack, Auxiliary Convention Chairman, Waubun Unit 436
 Luella Voit, Mahnomon Auxiliary Unit 31 President
 Joanie Krantz, 9th District President
 Richard Walz., Post #31 Commander
 Erik Wilkens, 9th District Commander
 Jason Hruza, 9th District SAL Commander
 Bill Eck, The American Legion Convention Chairman Post #31
 9:40 a.m. Response to Welcomes – Donna Arends, Department First Vice President
 9:45 a.m. Greetings – Gail Brekke – VFW Auxiliary President
 9:50 a.m. Greetings – The Honorable Dave Wiemer, Mayor of Mahnomon
 9:55 a.m. Presentation of Distinguished Guests – Carol Kottom, Dept President
 Donna Arends Jean Walker
 Shirley Frederick Chris Ronning
 Lori Skallerud Carol Holmgren
 Joyce Olson Beverly Otterness
 Norma Tramm Peggy Tesdahl
 Carol Barbknecht Raleen Tolzmann
 Marie Goede Tamara Opland
 Dee Dee Buckley Marsha Bible
 Mary Hendrickson
 10:05 a.m. Response for the Distinguished Guests – Jean Walker, Department 2nd Vice President
 10:10 a.m. Greetings – Larry Shellito, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
 10:20 a.m. Preliminary Report of Convention Credentials Committee – Darlene Wondra, Chairman
 10:25 a.m. Reading of the 2017 Call to Convention – Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 Reading of the 2016 Department Convention Minutes – Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 10:30 a.m. Report of the Convention Rules Committee – Dee Dee Buckley, Chairman
 10:35 a.m. Nominations of candidates for: Department President
 Department First Vice President
 Department Second Vice President
 10:40 a.m. Remarks by candidates for Department Offices
 11:00 a.m. Nomination of _____ delegates-at-large not included under Article IX, Section 1a, or elected at District Conventions
 11:05 a.m. Announcements – Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 11:10 a.m. Recess
 11:15 a.m. Memorial Service – The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion – Detroit Lakes/Bejou Room of the Shooting Star Casino

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 13

2:00 p.m. Meeting of the Convention Committees - Gambling Seminar - Detroit Lakes/Bejou Room - Moderator: Peggy Moon, Legislative Committee Chair, St. Joseph

THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 13

Elbow Lake Beaulieu Room
 7:00 p.m. A Social Gathering of all American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary And Sons of The American Legion and their guests – hosted by Department President Carol Kottom
 Music by Billy Underwood and dancing – Cash bar will be available

FRIDAY, JULY 14

Red shirt day
 7:00 a.m. Registration Opens – West Hallway
 8:00 a.m. District Caucuses (10) meet 9:00 a.m. Daily Roll Call of District Presidents – Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 Call to Order – Carol Kottom, Department President
 Invocation – Judy Stein, Department Chaplain
 Supplemental Report of Convention Credentials Committee Darlene Wondra, Chairman
 9:10 a.m. Recognition of the Department Office staff – Carol Kottom, Department President
 9:15 a.m. The Honorable Mark Dayton, Governor, State of Minnesota
PROGRAM REPORTS
 9:45 a.m. Convention Committee Report – Constitution and Standing Rules, Lori Skallerud, Chairman
 10:05 a.m. Convention Committee Report – Resolutions, Linda Kropuenske, Chairman
 10:15 a.m. Convention Committee Report – Finance, Deb Rottman, Chairman
 10:20 a.m. Convention Committee Report – History, Sally Strasser, Chairman
 10:25 a.m. Convention Committee Report – Past Presidents Parley, Chris Ronning, Chairman
 10:30 a.m. Presentation of the Past Department Presidents – Carol Kottom, Department President
 10:40 a.m. Response for the Past Department Presidents – Marie Goede, Past Department President
 10:45 a.m. Memorial Service for Past Department Presidents – Chris Ronning, Chairman
 11:00 a.m. Americanism – Sandy Wersal, Chairman
 Announcement of Americanism Essay Winners
 11:10 a.m. Community Service – Sharon Voltz, Chairman
 11:15 a.m. Education – Diane Hayes, Chairman
 11:20 a.m. Memorial – Judy Stein, Chairman
 11:25 a.m. Report on The Brain Science Foundation – Diane Sullivan
 11:30 a.m. Report on The American Legion Family Hospital Association – Marie Goede, President
 11:35 a.m. Announcements, Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 11:40 a.m. Recess
 11:50 a.m. Past Department Presidents' Luncheon

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 14

1:30 p.m. Call to Order – Carol Kottom, Department President
 1:35 p.m. Report on Legionville, Wayne Gilbertson, President, Legionville Corporation
 1:40 p.m. Report on Convention Corporation, Pat Logan, President
 1:45 p.m. Presentation - Auxiliary Bowling Trophy – Bob Mace, Legion Bowling Chairman
 Children and Youth – Margee Keller, Chairman
 1:50 p.m. American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State – Marsha Bible, Chairman
 2:00 p.m. Greetings from Evelyn Humphrey - 2017 Governor of Minnesota Girls State, sponsored by Faribault Unit 43 – 3rd District Junior Activities – Pam Hoshal, Chairman
 Greetings from Kiana Coleman-Woods – 2016/2017 Department Honorary Junior President, Lino Lakes Unit 566
 2:15 p.m. Convention Committee Report – Legislation, Donna Arends, Chairman
 2:20 p.m. Convention Committee Report – National Security, Shirley Frederick, Chairman; Marge Machgan, Armed Forces Center Representative
 2:30 p.m. Convention Committee Report – National Security, Shirley Frederick, Chairman; Marge Machgan, Armed Forces Center Representative
 2:35 p.m. Convention Committee Report – Poppy, Karla Otterness, Chairman
 2:45 p.m. Announcement of the Poppy Contest Winners – Karla Otterness, Chairman
 2:50 p.m. Presentation of the Miss Goodwill Ambassador Award, Karla Otterness and Sandy Fredrickson, Strategic Planning
 3:00 p.m. Convention Committee Report – Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Jean Walker, Chairman; Mary Hendrickson, Service to Veterans

3:10 p.m. Chairman; Raleen Tolzmann, Gift Shop Chairman, Vida Bacon, Gift Shop Committee Member
 3:20 p.m. Recognition of the Hospital/Home Representatives Carol Kottom, Department President
 Presentation of Department President's Project – Carol Kottom, Department President – Minneapolis VAHCS, St. Cloud VAHCS, Fargo VAHCS, Sioux Falls VAHCS, Luverne Veterans Home, Hastings Veterans Home, Minneapolis Veterans Home, Fergus Falls Veterans Home, Silver Bay Veterans Home
 3:40 p.m. Report on the Auxiliary Emergency Fund – Donna Redepenning, Chairman
 3:45 p.m. Convention Committee Report – Leadership, Robin Dorf
 3:50 p.m. Convention Committee Report – Membership, Zandra Kessler, Chairman
 3:55 p.m. Department President Convention Committee Report – Public Relations, Michelle Leonard, Chairman
 4:00 p.m. Announcements, Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 4:10 p.m. Recess

FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 14

7:00 p.m. Parade Time – 6:00 Line-up

SATURDAY, JULY 15

7:00 a.m. Registration Opens – Heritage Hall Foyer
 9:00 a.m. Daily Roll Call of District Presidents – Dept Secretary Sandie Deutsch
 9:00 a.m. Call to Order – Carol Kottom, Department President
 Invocation – Judy Stein, Department Chaplain
 9:05 a.m. Supplemental Report of Convention Credentials Committee – Darlene Wondra, Chairman
 9:10 a.m. Presentation of The American Legion, Commander Denise Milton and Adjutant Randy Tesdahl
 Presentation of Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander Gene Olsword and Adjutant Doug Bible
 Presentation of The American Legion Riders, Director Chuck Stone and Secretary Jody Hassing
 9:20 a.m. 9th District Band, Vernon Kuhn, President
 9:30 a.m. Final Report of the Constitution and Standing Rules Committee – Lori Skallerud, Chairman
 10:00 a.m. Final Report of the Resolutions Committee – Linda Kropuenske, Chairman
 10:05 a.m. Presentation of the Department Convention Chairman and Committee
 Jean Horack, Auxiliary General Chairmen, Special introductions and thank-yous, Carol Kottom, Department President
 10:10 a.m. Announcement of Parade Winners, Tom Schottenbauer & Pat Logan
 10:15 a.m. Unfinished Business
 10:20 a.m. New Business
 10:25 a.m. Final Report of the Credentials Committee – Darlene Wondra, Chairman
 Election of Officers - Report of the Election Committee, Carol Holmgren, Judge of Elections
 10:30 a.m. Judge of Elections.
 Department President
 Department First Vice President
 Department Second Vice President
 Results of Election of _____ delegates-at-large
 1. Ratification of the 14 delegates financed by the Department
 2. Ratification of delegates elected at District Conventions other than those financed by the Department
 3. Ratification of alternates elected at District Conventions
 4. Election of _____ alternates-at-large
 Retirement of Department and Past National Presidents' Colors
 Post Convention Executive Committee Executive Meeting – Immediately following Retirement of Colors for the 2017-2018 Committee members
 Elbow Lake - Beaulieu Room
 Installation of Incoming 2017-2018 Department Officers and District Presidents – Lori Skallerud
 Presentation of Department President's Pin to Newly Elected Department President – Carol Kottom, Retiring Department President
 Presentation of Past Department President's Pin – Bev Otterness
 Benediction – Judy Stein, Department Chaplain
 Retirement of All Colors
 Adjournment of 2017 Department Convention – Carol Kottom, Department President

2017 Resolutions

RESOLUTION 1

The following Resolution originated from Hutchinson American Legion Post 96, Hutchinson, MN and was adopted by the Third District and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention, to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017.

Amendment of Department Constitution - Quorum requirements

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the American Legion, Department of Minnesota, provides, in ARTICLE FIVE, Section 5, that the annual Convention of the Department shall be the legislative body of the Department, and

WHEREAS, this important legislative function is exercised by the delegates to the Convention who are elected by their respective Posts, and

WHEREAS, under the Department Constitution, a quorum shall exist when twenty percent of the Posts are wholly or partially represented by delegates or alternates; and

WHEREAS, current circumstances and schedules have caused reduced attendance on some days of recent conventions, and

WHEREAS, failure to meet quorum requirements would prevent the conduct of important legislative business of the Convention; and

WHEREAS, reduced quorum requirements would assure that the business of the Convention could proceed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Constitution of the Department of Minnesota, ARTICLE FIVE, Legislative Organization, Section 5, which now reads:

“Sec. 5. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention when twenty percent of the posts are wholly or partially represented by duly chosen delegates or alternates.”

Shall be amended, effective immediately, to read:

“Sec. 5. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention when ten percent of the posts are wholly or partially represented by duly chosen delegates or alternates.” and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13 -15, 2017, for concurring action.

RESOLUTION 2

The following Resolution originated from William Allen Post 179, Plainview, MN and was adopted by the First District and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention, to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017.

Amendment of Department Constitution - Quorum requirements

WHEREAS, the constitution of The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, provides, in ARTICLE FIVE, Section 5, that the annual Convention of the Department shall be the legislative body of the Department, and

WHEREAS, this important legislative function is exercised by the delegates to the Convention who are elected by their respective Posts, and

WHEREAS, under the Department Constitution, a quorum shall exist when twenty percent of the Posts are wholly or partially represented by delegates or alternates, and

WHEREAS, current circumstances and schedules have caused reduced attendance on some days of recent conventions, and

WHEREAS, failure to meet quorum requirements would prevent the conduct of important legislative business of the Convention; and

WHEREAS, reduced quorum requirements would assure that the business of the Convention could proceed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Constitution of the Department of Minnesota, ARTICLE FIVE, Legislative Organization, Section 5, which now reads:

“Sec.5. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention when

Twenty percent of the posts are wholly or partially represented by duly chosen delegates or Alternates.”

Shall be amended, effective immediately, to read:

“Sec.5. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention when ten percent of the posts are wholly or partially represented by duly chosen delegates or alternates.” And be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13 – 15, 2017 for concurring action.

RESOLUTION 3

The following Resolution originated from Irvin Blix American Legion Post 16, Bagley, MN and was adopted by

the Ninth District and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention, to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017.

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, during its Annual Convention, held in 2015, established the following Americanism Mandate:

“We establish a Junior Law Cadet Program using guidelines from the National Organization to be administered by the Americanism Committee and one member of the Americanism Standing Committee to be the program chair”, and

WHEREAS, the National Executive Committee, in session May 2014 passed Resolution 30, as follows:

“That the name of The American Legion Junior Law Cadet Program be changed to The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.”, and

WHEREAS, the Report to the National Americanism Commission Spring Meeting, held on May 3, 2016, recommended the following:

“... that an American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Subcommittee be established.

The goal of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program Subcommittee shall be to promote, sponsor, coordinate, facilitate and foster activities to ensure the continued development, sustainability, growth and viability of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.

The objectives of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program Subcommittee shall be to:

Formulate and recommend guidelines (administrative and safety), policies, strategic plans, and activities of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.

Review and be familiar with the resolutions pertaining to The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.

Promote The American Legion Youth Cadet Program and its principles at all levels of The American Legion.

Engage in methodology encouraging those departments without an American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program to establish the program.

Work towards an ultimate goal of establishing a national capstone program such as Boys Nation is to the Boys State program.

Such other purposes as may be assigned to it by the Americanism Commission.”

Now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, that the Americanism Mandate, established at the 2015 Annual Department of Minnesota American Legion Convention, shall be rescinded; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Department Commander is hereby authorized to formally establish a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee shall develop, coordinate, facilitate and foster strategies to promote the development, sustainability, growth and viability of the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee program; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee shall report to the Department Americanism Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee shall consist of Chairperson, with a strong background in law enforcement and/or experience with youth programs, that is nominated by the Department Commander, and appointed by the Department Executive Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the purposes of this committee are:

To formulate and recommend guidelines (administrative and safety), policies, strategic plans and activities of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program

To review and be familiar with the resolutions pertaining to The American Legion Youth Cadet Enforcement Program

To promote The American Legion Youth Cadet Enforcement Program and its principles at all levels of The American Legion

To promote uniform branding of The American Legion in prominence in the American Legion Youth Cadet Enforcement Program

Such other purposes as may be assigned to it by the Department Executive Committee and/or the Department Americanism Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee shall be authorized to meet at the same time the Americanism Committee meets, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13 -15, 2017, for concurring action.

RESOLUTION 4

The following Resolution originated from Princeton Post 216, Princeton, MN and was adopted by the Tenth District and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention, to be held in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017.

District Officer to Assume their Office

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Minnesota is an organization of War Era Veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of Community, State and Nation, and

WHEREAS, this service is performed through the American Legion's 4 Pillars, Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, and

WHEREAS, the administration of the Department is governed by the Constitution and By-Laws, and

WHEREAS, from time to time it is prudent and necessary to review and amend the Constitution to make changes to be relevant to current times, and

WHEREAS, current practices within Districts vary as when District Officers take office, and

WHEREAS, since there is no definitive time for newly elected Post Officers to assume their office, the individual Districts should be given the autonomy to decide when newly their elected officers assume office, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Constitution and By-Laws of the Department of Minnesota be amended so that Article Six, Section 2, sentence two which reads “District Officers shall be selected annually, who shall assume their office at the close of the next Department Convention”, be amended to read “District Officers shall be selected annually, who shall assume their office no later than the close of the next Department Convention” and be it further

RESOLVED, that this change would not affect the makeup of the Executive Committee as promulgated in Article 6, Section 2 of the Department Constitution and By-Laws, and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13 – 15, 2017 for concurring action, and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that these change to the Constitution and By-Laws become effective at the close of the Department Convention.

Resolution 5

The following resolution originated from the 10th District and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention to be held in Mahnomen, MN July 13-15, 2017

Original Power of Attorney Notification

WHEREAS, Prior to 2012 VA was efficient in communicating with Power Of Attorney (POA) and Veterans Service Offices (VSO) while adjudicating veteran benefits. VA correspondence including, yet not limited to, notices to the claimant, rating decisions and appeals notices were in paper form and a copy was delivered in every case to the Power Of Attorney (POA) or Veterans Service Office (VSO) of original Regional Office jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, In 2012 VA announced, “VA Transformation” and VA’s intention to digitize all information including claims folders and information submitted on behalf of claims and appeals. Scanning of information post 2012 was mandatory for all cases being initiated or considered. Since, VA has established an information system in where work is digitized and issue to a National Work Que (NWQ), delivering work to Regional Offices not of original jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1MR1, I.3.B.1.b Notices that must be provided to the Representative: Unless representation is limited by the claimant, power of attorney (POA) representatives are entitled to notice of any VA decisions affecting the payment of benefits or relief sought by the claimants whom they represent. Representative also must receive other forms of correspondence sent to claimants. These include, decision notices, statements of the case and supplemental statements of the case, notice of certification and transfer of appeals to the board of veteran appeals (BVA), intent to file a claim notice and requests for information and evidence needed to substantiate a claim(e.g. development letters), now be it

RESOLVED, By the Executive Committee of The American Legion Department of Minnesota that The American Legion hereby endorse efforts to establish provisions in law enforcing the mandatory issuance of all correspondence, both electronic or in paper form, to the original Power Of Attorney (POA) of submittal. That correspondence from VA to the claimant be copied to the original Regional Office of Jurisdiction and to the applicable Power Of Attorney (POA) authorized to represent the claimant, and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention in Mahnomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017 for concurring action, and be it finally,

RESOLVED, That if passed by the Department Convention, a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to

2017 Resolutions (CONTINUED)

National Convention 2017 for proper action.

Resolution A

The following resolution originated from the Department of MN Rehabilitation Committee 2016-2017 and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention to be held in Mahanomen, MN July 13-15, 2017

Original Power of Attorney Notification

WHEREAS, Prior to 2012 VA was efficient in communicating with Power Of Attorney (POA) and Veterans Service Offices (VSO) while adjudicating veteran benefits. VA correspondence including, yet not limited to, notices to the claimant, rating decisions and appeals notices were in paper form and a copy was delivered in every case to the Power Of Attorney (POA) or Veterans Service Office (VSO) of original Regional Office jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, In 2012 VA announced, "VA Transformation" and VA's intention to digitize all information including claims folders and information submitted on behalf of claims and appeals. Scanning of information post 2012 was mandatory for all cases being initiated or considered. Since, VA has established an information system in where work is digitized and issue to a National Work Que (NWQ), delivering work to Regional Offices not of original jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1MR1, I.3.B.1.b Notices that must be provided to the Representative: Unless representation is limited by the claimant, power of attorney (POA) representatives are entitled to notice of any VA decisions affecting the payment of benefits or relief sought by the claimants whom they represent. Representative also must receive other forms of correspondence sent to claimants. These include, decision notices, statements of the case and supplemental statements of the case, notice of certification and transfer of appeals to the board of veteran appeals (BVA), intent to file a claim notice and requests for information and evidence needed to substantiate a claim (e.g. development letters), now be it

RESOLVED, By the Executive Committee of The American Legion Department of Minnesota that The American Legion hereby endorse efforts to establish provisions in law enforcing the mandatory issuance of all correspondence, both electronic or in paper form, to the original Power Of Attorney (POA) of submittal. That correspondence from VA to the claimant be copied to the original Regional Office of Jurisdiction and to the applicable Power Of Attorney (POA) authorized to represent the claimant, and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention in Mahanomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017 for concurring action, and be it finally,

RESOLVED, That if passed by the Department Convention, a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to National Convention 2017 for proper action.

Resolution B

The following resolution originated from the Department of MN Rehabilitation Committee 2016-2017 and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention to be held in Mahanomen, MN July 13-15, 2017

Ratings and Power of Attorney or VSO Notification

WHEREAS, Prior to 2012 VA was efficient in communicating with Power Of Attorney and Veterans Service Offices while adjudicating veteran benefits. VA correspondence including, yet not limited to, rating decisions in paper form in where a copy was delivered in every case to the Power Of Attorney or Veterans Service Office of original Regional Office jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, In 2012 VA announced, "VA Transformation" and VA's intention to digitize all information including rating decisions. Scanning of information post 2012 was mandatory for all cases being initiated or considered. Since, VA has established an information system in where work is digitized and issued to a National Work Que (NWQ), delivering work to Regional Offices not of original jurisdiction. Rating decisions are issued to the National Work Que for a period of forty eight hours for Power Of Attorney review, and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1MR1, I.3.B.1.d. Providing notice to Power Of Attorneys: VA must use Veterans Benefit Management System (VBMS) to provide adequate notice that correspondence is available for review, and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1MR1, I.3.B.3.b. Establishing time limits for Veterans Service Officer review: Veteran Service Center Managers (VCSMs) will provide Veterans Service Officers 48 hours, from the time the VA activates the Veterans Service Officer Review Status work que, to review a rating decision prior to promulgation. If the Veterans Service Officer does not review and approve the decision within 48 hours the decision is automatically expired and the decision is promulgated by VA, and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1 MR1 I.3.B.3.c. Veterans Service Officer Review at Redistributed-Work Sites, if no author-

ized Veterans Service Officer is available at the redistributed- work site, the completed rating decision is promulgated without Veterans Service Officer review and the case is then returned to the station of origination (SOO), now therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the Executive Committee of The American Legion Department of Minnesota that The American Legion hereby endorse efforts to establish provisions in law allowing for rating decision review to be defined as 48 "Business Hours" before any rating may be automatically expired and then subsequently adjudicated by VA without review of the Power Of Attorney or Veteran Service Officer of original jurisdiction. In that: in M-21-1 MR1 I.3.B.3.c. Veterans Service Officer Review at Redistributed-Work Sites, if no authorized Veterans Service Officer is available at the redistributed- work site, the completed rating decision is promulgated without Veterans Service Officer review and the case is then returned to the station of origination (SOO). Be reevaluated and rewritten to state the information must be returned to the work que or mail box of the Power Of Attorney or Veteran Service Officer of original submittal or Jurisdiction, and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention in Mahanomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017 for concurring action, and be it finally,

RESOLVED, That if passed by the Department Convention, a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to National Convention 2017 for proper action.

RESOLUTION C

The following Department Executive Committee Resolution is based on information presented to the Department Executive Committee by the Strategic Planning Committee and is submitted for consideration by the 2017 Department Convention, to be held in Mahanomen, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2017.

Training Committee

WHEREAS, The leadership of The American Legion

Legion applauds VA accountability bill

The U.S. House of Representatives voted in June to pass S. 1094, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, which will enhance accountability at the VA and provide the department with the tools it needs to improve the care veterans receive.

"On behalf of the 2.2 million members of The American Legion, we applaud the House of Representatives passing of the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017," said American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt. "This legislation, as currently written, will provide the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs the authorities to improve accountability and raise employee performance and morale. We are impressed by the speed by which Congress acted to move this critical legislation forward to the president's desk in a bipartisan manner. We look forward to this bill becoming law."

The bipartisan legislation, which received overwhelming support following a 368-55 vote, will help ensure that VA is accountable to the nation's veterans by:

- Increasing VA's authority to remove employees at all levels of the department;
- Shortening the removal process and ensuring an individual removed from the VA is not kept on the VA's payroll while appealing that decision; and also
- Making it easier for VA to remove poor performing executives and replace them with qualified candidates.

In addition, any appeals by senior VA executives would no longer be brought before the Merit Systems Protection Board, but instead would be handled directly by the VA secretary under an expedited timeline, according to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee's (SVAC) website.

"It's common sense – we need to hold our employees accountable for their actions if they violate the public trust, and at the same time protect whistleblowers from retaliation," VA Secretary David Shulkin said in a press release .

As SVAC noted, S. 1094 also includes a number of other provisions to hold employees accountable:

- Requires VA to evaluate supervisors based on the protection of whistleblowers;
- Incentivizes managers to address poor performance and misconduct among employees by requiring the VA secretary to include this as part of the annual performance plan;
- Prohibits bonuses for employees who have been found guilty of wrongdoing; and
- Prohibits relocation expenses to employees who abuse the system.

Department of Minnesota and all of its 10 Districts and all of its County Councils and all of its Posts can change on an annual basis, and

WHEREAS, Technology and means of communication are changing at a more rapid pace than ever in our history, and

WHEREAS, Informed Leadership is essential to the existence of The American Legion, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion Department of Minnesota Executive Committee, in regular meeting, held at Legionville, Brainerd, MN, on March 4, 2017 that an Education and Training Committee be established to educate and train the Leadership of the Department, County Councils, Districts and Posts of the American Legion, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the said Committee be made up of Three Legion Members, in good standing, of the Department of Minnesota to be appointed by the Current Department Commander for 1 three year term, 1 two year term and 1 one year term with future appointments to be made by the Department Commander upon their Election, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Department Convention to be held in Mahanomen, Minnesota, July 13 -15, 2017, for concurring action.

OFFICIAL BALLOT

The American Legion, Dept of Minnesota
Election of Officers 2017-2018

To Vote, Make an X in the box next to your choice

Like This: 

Department Commander (vote for one)	
Gary Olson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Schaffer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Department Vice Commander (Vote for 5)	
Rosemary Niesen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steven Klinkner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Will	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eric	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willia Stump Jr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

NECman (vote for one)	
Marland Ronning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Alt NECman (vote for one)	
William Barbknecht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chaplain (vote for one)	
Ralph Schneekloth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historian (vote for one)	
Glenn Mueller	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sergeant-at-Arms (vote for one)	
Garylee Davenport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ryan Hill	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joe Niesen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Board of Publication (vote for one)	
Bob Locker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leo Montie of Marine on St. Croix elected governor of 2017 Boys State

By Neil Kruse

The week of American Legion Minnesota Boys' State concluded on June 17th at St. John's University. Andrew Baran of Independence and Eric Carlson of Blaine were selected to attend Boys' Nation in Washington, D.C. later in July as senators from the Gopher State. Participants attending the week of learning about and experiencing local, county, and state government elected Leo Montie of Marine on St. Croix as their governor. Leading up to the election, the two party system was experienced from the city caucus through the state convention for the Federalists and Nationalists.



LEO MONTIE

After 10 years in Marshall at SMSU, Boys' State has moved to St. John's University. Also new this year is Tom Nelson as director of the program, replacing long-time director Mike Bredeck, who retired at the end of the 2016 session.

A suggestion to Legion posts is to provide a means (convertible, pick-up, float, etc.) for local Boys' and Girls' State participants to join local parades in the area throughout the summer. A sign "Ask me about Boys' State" could promote discussion that could encourage soon-to-be juniors in high school to desire attendance of the program next June. What about a booth at the county fair for further promotion?

The expectation should be that all Boys' Staters report to local posts in person relating experiences of their week of mock government. Encourage them to spread the good word about Boys' State, especially to underclassmen at their school. Just under 290 attended this year.

The current website www.mnboysstate.org has pictures

Kakos honored by Minnesota House



Nick Kakos, longtime member of The Hellenic Post 129 in Minneapolis, was recently honored by the Minnesota House of Representatives for his lifetime of volunteer work. Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, right, presented Kakos with a House Resolution during the recent Memorial Day Service at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. Dettmer, who is chairman of Veterans Affairs Division, read the resolution. Kakos was lauded for his military service with the Army Air Corps in World War II, his 70 years of membership in The American Legion, and his role as Fifth District legislative chair. Kakos serves on the United Veterans Legislative Council and the Military Action Group. He is presently a vice chairman of the American Legion Family Hospital Association. He was also cited for his work in his Minneapolis neighborhood. Kakos was a longtime baseball director for the Fifth District and under his leadership several new teams were added to the program. He is a member of Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame.

and information from last year's session. The new website www.mnboysstate.com will have this year's results, experiences, and pictures. Minnesota American Legion Boys State will get the current information on Facebook.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By
Jeremy Wolfsteller



Pillar 1: VA&R

The Legion has been the nation's leading advocate for veterans for over 90 years, supporting veteran's health care and earned benefits. The world's largest veteran service organization was founded by World War I veterans. The American Legion was instrumental in creating the Veterans Administration in 1930 and a dedicated supporter of its rise to Cabinet status when it became the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1989.

Over the years the VA has grown exponentially and The American Legion continues to advocate and lobby Congress to ensure that while VA modernizes, it delivers the highest quality of healthcare and access to timely entitlements this country's brave men and women deserve.

In Minnesota, The American Legion has a Department level Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee that is tasked with advocating for Minnesota veterans access to high quality and timely VA healthcare, the delivery of benefits administered through the Veterans Benefits Administration, access to State Veterans Homes and both State and Federal Cemeteries.

The Rehab Committee travels on site visits that mirror its National's System Worth Saving mission. The committee conducts up to 15 site visits per year traveling the entire state and both North and South Dakota. Visits are annually made to Sioux Falls, Fargo, St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA Health Care Facilities, Fergus Falls, Silver Bay, Luverne, Hastings and Minneapolis Veterans Homes, State and National Cemeteries and local nonprofits that are funded to deliver care to Minnesota veterans.

During these visits the committee and agency leadership have an open conversation about the facility, its successes and challenges. The committee is non-adversarial although known to be a strong critic at times, and believes in the mission and fully supports these agencies' continued progress to deliver the highest quality of care to veterans.

During the upcoming 2017 Department Convention a first of its kind Annual VA&R site visit report will be available to look at all facilities delivery of care.

The Rehabilitation Committee is here to be the voice of the veterans in Minnesota. They will deliver the message, good or bad and partner with the VA to help facilitate any issues veterans are facing.

jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org



Membership Chart

As of June 13, 2017

District	2017 Goal	Total 2016	Total 2017	Percent of Goal	Same Date '16
1	9,380	9,322	8,847	94.32	9,315
2	7,572	7,488	7,179	94.81	7,487
3	11,977	11,912	11,632	97.12	11,898
4	2,592	2,572	2,397	92.48	2,551
5	2,679	2,657	2,464	91.97	2,651
6	12,109	12,038	11,699	96.61	12,020
7	6,695	6,619	6,296	94.04	6,612
8	4,417	4,377	4,201	95.11	4,372
9	7,015	6,950	6,654	94.85	6,945
10	10,611	10,557	10,002	94.26	10,553
At-large	1,953	2,710	2,348	120.23	2,707
Totals	77,000	77,202	73,719	95.74	77,111

BOYS STATE OFFICERS --

- From left:
Steven Orzolek
Associate Justice
Caleb Meyer
State Auditor
Sam Goaley
Attorney General
Leo Montie
Boys State Governor
Paul Cushman
Lt. Governor
Timothy Jirik
Secretary of State
Isaac Johnson
Chief Justice
Isaac Stone
Associate Justice

Veterans on Lake fishing outing recognized on Legion website

For 51 years, veterans in Minnesota have headed to Ely, Minn., in May for a week of relaxation and fishing. But the annual Disabled Veterans Fishing Retreat is not just about fishing and taking in the amazing scenery on Fall Lake and inside Superior National Forest.

It's also about healing. That's what Legionnaire Denny Houg, who has volunteered at the event for a decade, has seen take place.

"We meet all kinds of veterans with different needs," said Houg, a member of Post 254 in Sauk Rapids. "Some are blind. Some are physically handicapped, possible amputees. Wheelchair-bound. PTSD.

"We had a young person with severe PTSD who caught his first two walleyes. The guy, he couldn't hardly carry on a conversation prior (to catching the fish). But you just saw the medicine. It's therapy."

The retreat, which takes place at Veterans on the Lake Resort, started as a Department of Veterans Affairs program, but VA decided to end the program three years ago. That's when The American Legion Department of Minnesota teamed up with Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America and other veterans service organizations to keep the program going.

Department of Minnesota Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said that while the department didn't officially become involved with the retreat until around 2005, Legionnaires and posts have been supporting it for decades.

In May of this year, more than 30 Legion family members volunteered at the camp, helping with meals and doing anything else needed. Department of Minnesota Commander Denise Milton was one of the Legionnaires who showed up to support this year's retreat.

"It's pretty awesome," Milton said. "Up here, almost everyone loves fishing and hunting. I think it brings a sense of normalcy, to be honest: being able to do what others do."

Veterans don't pay anything to participate. Funding for the event comes via donations and grants. Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans, a nonprofit set up to provide grants to organizations that assist veterans with their transition into the civilian world, has been a longtime supporter of the fishing retreat. The organization provided a three-year, \$90,000 grant to cover housing and food expenses for the week; the event is in the second year of the grant.

Tesdahl said the program provides much more than an outdoors experience for its participants. "We cannot claim to be an alternative form of mental health care. But in reality, we are," he said. "You see that when these guys get



VETS ON LAKE OUTING -- Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl volunteers his time at the annual Veterans on the Lake fishing outing near Ely. (Photo by Theresa Scarbrough)

together on a boat deck. They start talking about the commonality. They have shared experiences even though they're generations apart. There is a healing effect to it."

Dave Berscheit, who served in the U.S. Marines from 1986-1992, suffered a spinal stroke in 2006 that impaired his mobility from the neck down. While he enjoyed catching fish at this year's retreat, there was something he found even more fulfilling.

"To be up here with a group of guys ... it doesn't matter if you catch fish," Berscheit said. "It's not necessarily about that. There's no real barrier. It's just easier to talk to them."

Berscheit and the other veterans who took part in this year's retreat applied for a spot in the event. Those applications are vetted by former longtime VA employee Dennis Erie, who was hired by the Minnesota Legion and other VSOs to coordinate the program.

Erie said he received around 50 applications for this year's 35 spots. Preference is given to disabled and World War II veterans, as well as those applicants who have never taken part in the event.

Like Tesdahl, Erie sees a healing effect from the week. "It's all positive," he said. "There are a lot of smiles coming back. It's an opportunity to get out in Northern Minnesota and be around some other vets."

The veterans are provided professional fishing guides who donate their time – and equipment – the entire week. When word of mouth spread about the event, Tesdahl said guides lined up to volunteer.

That professional guides are there is because of the efforts of Minnesota National Guard Col. Scott St. Sauver, the outgoing commanding officer at Camp Ripley – one of the largest National Guard training bases in the nation. A co-angler on professional walleye circuit, St. Sauver also has seen what he calls the "tremendous" healing power of the outdoors and has worked with the Legion on other outdoor events for veterans.

Using his contacts in professional fishing, he was able to line up guides for the retreat. But St. Sauver admits he didn't have to pitch the event too hard to get buy-in from the pros. It's their way to give back," he said. "It's patriotism. These guides will get \$500, \$600 a day right now, but they're up here for free."

That's why professional fisherman Mark Courts, the 2015 Lucas Oil Walleye Angler of the Year with 12 top-10 finishes in the Fishing League Worldwide, was at Ely this year. "For me, it's my way of giving back," he said. "I wasn't able to serve when I was younger due to health issues, and I always had ties to it. For me, this is fun."

Courts also saw a transformation in the veterans he took out on his boat this year. "Outdoors is an amazing place," he said. "It's got healing powers that nobody can really explain. The minute you get somebody outdoors – no matter their situation, their mindset or any of that – it just goes away. All they're thinking about is what they're doing and how they're enjoying the outdoors."

For Tesdahl, an avid fisherman who used his own boat to take veterans out to fish during the retreat, the event also is a valuable promotional tool for the Legion. "It's all about branding," he said. "It's all about marketing. It's all about ... changing the image. We're doing cool stuff."

And it's stuff that's making an impact. Houg fondly remembers what could have been a tragic story from the retreat that instead showed the power of camaraderie. He said that a few years ago a gentleman died of a heart attack while at the retreat. But on the day he died, the man had fished, watched the Minnesota Twins win a baseball game on TV and then won at cards that night in his cabin.

"We went to the funeral," Houg said. "His sisters said, 'We were always afraid that he would die by himself in his apartment.' I said, 'He sure didn't do that.' They were so thankful. He'd had a good last day and died with friends all around him."

American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone
Department Director



Greetings American Legion Family,
July is upon us and that means a big birthday party for our country. Many will have time honored traditions for family gatherings, a trip to their favorite lake or maybe taking in a sporting event. Most will end their day gazing up into the sky watching fireworks. I often wonder how many will take a brief moment to reflect on the men and women in uniform protecting our country so that we can celebrate another birthday. It doesn't take long or much effort but how many really will take a single minute to reflect? Will you?

The Second District recently completed its Legacy Ride. The First will be having its Tour of the First District this month. It is our hope and desire that one day each district will host its own Legacy run. Then on the state level we would like to designate a four-day weekend in which we would visit each district collecting Legacy donations collected on the district runs.

I would like to thank those that were able to attend the ride at Mystic Lake Casino to raise money for Minnesota Military families. We have already been invited back next year. This is a free event. Yes you read it right, a free event. Mystic Lake Casino donates \$15 for every rider and \$10 for every passenger to Minnesota Military Families. All you have to do is sign in and ride. They also have free entertainment. As of this printing a final total of the amount to be donated has not been determined. I hope to be able to have that at convention.

July also means Department convention. As most if not all of you know we will be returning to Mahanomen once again. I am extending an invitation for all Department of Minnesota Riders to make the trek to Mahanomen for this grand event. There will be a parade in which the Riders are invited to rumble in. Hope to see you there.

Don't forget that the Department of Minnesota Legacy ride is one weekend earlier this year. We will be getting things started and thanks to Walker American Legion Spencer-Ross Post 134 on Thursday July 27th.

Keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down.

Boys Nation opportunity for friendship

Choteau Kammel almost didn't become the vice president of American Legion Boys Nation 2016.

"I was actually one hand-raise away from dropping out of the vice presidential race," Kammel recalled. Kammel, of Omaha, Neb., credited North Carolina's Michael McCray for convincing him to stay in the race.

Kammel ended up getting the Nationalist party nomination for vice president — ironic because his Federalist opponent would be North Carolina's other Boys Nation representative, Rudy Ogburn.

At the end of the vice presidential debate, Ogburn announced he was withdrawing from the race, all but ensuring Kammel's victory. It wasn't one he took lightly, however.

"He gets up there and announces his intent to drop out, I'm sitting there thinking, did I hear him correctly? I'd like to think I was probably doing well in this debate, but I didn't know. So when he said that, I remember being very surprised, but I wasn't sure what was happening so I made sure to give my final answer," Kammel said.

"I have a lot of respect for Rudy, because we're all 17-year-old males who are stereotypically competitive and don't like to admit even perceived faults in front of others. I talked to him later that night, I really don't know what happened but let me give you a hug because it took a lot of

guts."

Kammel acknowledged it took some guts of his own to break out of his comfort zone and run for office.

"I decided I wanted more than just my plane ticket stub and a bunch of friends' names from my national experience, I might as well throw my hat in the ring," he said.

Kammel said his high school, Omaha Central, has a long history of sending delegates to Boys Nation, so he knew going into Cornhusker Boys State that he would face high expectations.

Previous Central students told Kammel "make sure you're focused on the program," he recalled. "Socializing is important but make sure you're getting the most you can get out of the educational experience, and a big part of that is talking to the (American) Legion guys."

Of course, with his experience at Boys State and Boys Nation, it's been Kammel's turn to share his experience with those coming after him.

As for those going to Boys Nation 2017, or considering trying to go in the future?

"How many guys can say that they have 97 friends across the United States?" Kammel said. "If you have stereotypes about anyone from any state, go to Boys Nation and see those stereotypes fall away."



Adam and Isaac Logeman taught the 280 Boys Staters at St. John's how to sing some of the Boys State songs, including choreography.



Boys State provides an environment where lifetime friendships can be made.

Boys State



When speakers are done, the Boys Staters are encouraged to ask questions.



Hank Shea, a professor at St. Thomas University and a former U.S. Assistant District Attorney, lectured on ethics and making good decisions.



A pledge of allegiance preceded each program.



Anna Bixby speaks on a bill before the Girls State House. The girls spend a day at the Capitol conducting their legislature and courts.



Marina Berardino makes a point in the Girls State legislature.

Girls State



An annual tradition is for the entire Girls State citizenry to sing songs in the Capitol Rotunda.



Gov. Evelyn Humphrey spoke before a joint session of the Girls State Legislature.



Waiting during a break in city pictures, Girls Staters have some fun and make some friends.

Annual Reports

To the Convention of the Department of Minnesota The American Legion

Adjutant

Despite the fact that we are adjusting in size along with the overall lower numbers of veterans today, our programs continue to touch the lives of veterans, their families and youth from all across the state.

We provided honors to thousands of veterans as final respects were given at military funeral honors all across the state.

We continue to explore new ways to get our face and name out there through promotional opportunities that incorporate our American Legion logo. And we have explored relationships that bring the message of our organization to others in ways that we may have not explored in the past.

We helped provide an opportunity for many disabled, recently returned, and older veterans to get together in the great Minnesota outdoors at events such as the veterans Deer and Turkey Hunts and the Trolling for the Troops and Ely fishing events.

Our VA&R committee managed by our Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller met with the senior leadership at each state and federal VA facility that serves Minnesota veterans as they do each year. They ask the difficult questions relating to care, facilities and budget. They are respected in the veteran's community and work closely with all key stakeholders at the Local, State and National levels. They provided training to The County Veterans Service Officer (CVSOs) through our National offices and to State VSOs by taking them to Indianapolis and Washington DC to attend our in-house VSO training.

Minnesota's Youth remain one of our focuses and many from all across the state participated in our American Legion Oratorical Contest where they prepared and gave oratory presentations on the Constitution of the United States of America. Several won scholarship money for their efforts.

We sent several hundred boys from all across the state to Boys State for one week where they learned firsthand from our state's leaders how our government operates. They then formed city, county and state offices and drafted and moved legislation that ran those entities.

The baseball program increased to over 350 teams this year, and continues to be the largest and best program nationally. Literally, hundreds of volunteers make it work.

At Legionville, the new training facility is outstanding thanks to the donations from dedicated Legion members all around the state. We along with The Minnesota State Highway Patrol and AAA trained hundreds of boys and girls on road crossing and school bus safety at our Legionville camp in the Brainerd Lakes area on North Long Lake. In eight, one-week sessions through the summer, they come together from all across Minnesota to learn safety and enjoy a week in the outdoors.

Training and education scholarships were presented at recognition ceremonies in posts, high schools, colleges, and training facilities all across the state as our posts, districts and Department recognize the talented efforts of our youth and their desire to expand their horizons in the form of financial scholarships.

We worked together with our state legislature and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to strengthen state veteran's benefits and entitlements in multiple ways. Our Department Commander Denise Milton and the Legislative Chair Peggy Moon lead a strong legislative agenda through this year's session with outstanding results that included funding for the completion of the required reconstruction of the bridge leading into the Minneapolis Veterans Home as well as \$222,000 of funding from the Legacy Fund for Legionville.

We visited Washington DC as a delegation of Minnesota American Legion leaders and rallied Congress for the support for our veterans, and their families, sounding the call for a strong national defense, protection against the degradation of our American Flag, and the promotion of Americanism in our communities.

My thanks to Minnesota's 76,000-plus members of this great organization for all you do in your communities. And my heartfelt thanks to the Staff of our Department Headquarters, Jennifer, Al, Misty, Laura, Jeremy, Heather, and Shawn. Your efforts to keep things rolling are so greatly appreciated.

Randy Tesdahl
Department Adjutant

Commander

Where has the time gone? It's hard to believe that soon we will start another year with newly elected officers. The American Legion will remain strong and relevant for another century when we continue to have



2017

members willing to volunteer many hours of their time and talent to support the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

We had a whirlwind of activity immediately following the Department Convention – national membership workshop, two weekends of the ALR Legacy Run and the first department executive committee meeting in conjunction with the department membership rollout and training.

Now, I would like to thank Mark Dvorak for accepting my request to be the Department Membership Director. We've had an awesome year under his direction along with our Department Vice Commanders Skillestad, Wahl, Norenberg, Lucas and Spence -- as well as the 10 District Commanders. I would also like to thank the other department officers: Chaplain Brockberg, Sergeant at Arms DeLong, Judge Advocate Lannon and Historian Schneekloth. Thanks also go out the NECman Ronning and Alternate NECman Barbknecht for keeping us in the loop with the national organization. We have worked as a "Team" throughout the year even with the national dues increase and finding ways to increase our membership among our younger comrades. Thank you for all your hard work.

One of my priorities when I took office was to put together a First-Class education and training seminar that will hopefully be a permanent annual event for the Legion here in Minnesota. After many hours of planning and putting together an itinerary, the committee has created a truly informative and unique learning experience. It is designed to meet the needs of everyone, not just those in current leadership positions. This will be held the last weekend of June.

I have traveled throughout the state to many veteran-centric events as well as local posts and I always come away with a good feeling that there are so many people who are willing to help a fellow veteran, their families and communities and believe in a strong America.

Thank you to all that I've met on my travels, you have all been so generous in your hospitality and friendship. It is truly a year that I will never forget.

The leaders that you have surrounded me with have become good friends and I am sure that those friendship will last a lifetime – Department

President Carol Kottom, Detachment Commander Gene Olsword, Honorary Junior President Kiana Coleman-Woods and American Legion Riders Director Chuck Stone.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank Randy and the staff at department headquarters. You all have been a big help to me this past year in keeping me on track and gently reminding me of things that needed to be done by a certain deadline. Thank You. Al Zdon, I want you to know that I appreciated your patience with Legionnaire deadlines.

A thank you to my husband Dennis for giving up a lot of his time to accompany me (actually my chauffeur) and to my two grandchildren who thought grandma forgot them a lot of the time. We will have plenty of time this coming year for those extra excursions.

God Bless You All.

Denise Milton
Department Commander

Vice Commander 1st and 3rd Districts

I thank the American Legion Family members of the First & Third Districts for giving me the opportunity to serve you. To the 1st & 3rd District Commanders, Membership Directors, Adjutants, and Vice Commanders. Thank you for your friendship and support this past year. Your District membership teams have worked hard this year to achieve all the membership goals.

It has been an honor to work with Department Commander Denise Milton. She set high goals to maintain high standards for the Department Of Minnesota. Department Membership Director Mark Dvorak kept us on our toes, we never looked back, always forward. To the Department Vice Commanders Jim Lucas, Wilson Spence, Curt Norenberg, and Harley Wahl. I thank you for the handshakes, the humor and wise comments.

Most impressive events were meeting all the Legionnaires. One Legionnaire that had 6 Purple Hearts. He was at the Walker Post where eight young boys played drums and sang in their native language while the Color Guard presented the flags and met the National Commander.

Finally, a big thank you to the staff at National Headquarters. Your assistance when needed, and all the hard work. It has been an honor to serve as a Department Vice Commander.

Richard Skillestad
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 2nd and 7th Districts

It was a pleasure to serve the Department of Minnesota as one of the Vice Commanders. I attended the first Executive board meeting held by Commander Denise at Anoka, on August 13. I was not able to attend the leadership training at Indianapolis. I then attended a membership rally that was held at Legionville on September 10th. I attended a membership rally for the 7th District at Glenwood in September. I attended the Department Fall Conference at Marshall and I participated in the Walk for Veterans held uptown.

On Thursday, we had an executive board meeting in the evening. On Friday, I led the Pledge of Allegiance at the Red Baron Arena.

I attended the Veterans day program in Slayton where I was the speaker. I also enjoyed a wonderful meal at that meeting. I attended the Birthday dinner at Round Lake where I also was the speaker and I also had a wonderful meeting there. I also took part, as they awarded many long-time memberships.

I attended the Mid-winter meeting with the 2nd District in Redwood Falls. I attended the Pheasant dinner at Luverne Veterans Home and I also attended their venison dinner a few weeks later.

My post in Tracy had a revitalization for the 7th District. I also attended the 7th District Mid-winter that was held in Olivia. Just this month I attended the fishing outing for the Veterans from the Luverne Veterans Home.

This is put on by the Second District and was very well attended. It was held in Lake Benton at Beckers Resort and was enjoyed by all who attend-

ed. I thank the 2nd & 7th Districts for giving me the honor of serving as their Vice Commander.

Harley Wahl
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 4th and 5th Districts

It has been a distinct honor and pleasure to serve the 4th and 5th Districts as the Department Vice Commander. I was able to attend all of the monthly meetings of both Districts and represented the Department Commander at meetings in the metro area that she was unable to attend.

The two Districts cooperated in attending events such as marching in the Winter Carnival Parade with massed flags; supporting the Shop, Ship, and Share which recorded breaking the record for sending over 1200 boxes to our Minnesota Military Guard and Reserve members over seas; the flag disposal event and a joint picnic at the Vets Camp on Big Marine Lake; and attending both re-vitalization membership drives that each District held.

I attended several meetings of the legislative Military Action Group and committee meetings on Veterans Affairs at the State Capitol. Our Department Chair, Peggy Moon, provided excellent leadership at these events.

I attended both District Conventions and enjoyed the warm reception by both delegations. I especially commend our Department Commander for her leadership in support of Veterans Serving Veterans and her attendance and accomplishments as our Commander.

I thank our Department Commander for her guidance and support given to the Department Leadership. It was certainly a pleasure to be part of her team.

Curtis Norenberg
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 6th and 9th Districts

Commander Denise, it has been an honor and a privilege to work with you this past membership year getting the business of The American Legion done.

This past year has been very educational and a great learning experience for all posts and even myself. I believe all posts are finally learning what CPR's are. There are some that still need to realize that these are what National takes to Washington DC to tell Congress what we are fighting for. Our Posts need to do a better job on this. It was a great honor to help in saving a couple posts that wanted to turn charters in. I wasn't gonna let that happen, Thank You, Randy and Commander Denise for advice in saving them. Revitalizations are a big thing and work great if you work at those. I know in the 6th Dist they had a 33% success rate at the time of revitalization and had about 10 or so after it was done. So it works.

This past year I have done Veterans Day speeches, Memorial Day speeches. I have represented Commander Denise at the St. Cloud VA. We had veterans fishing and hunting trips for disabled veterans. I attended the muskie fishing and it was chilly out. Had the pleasure of fishing with Jeremy Wolfsteler that day and it was fun.

Jim Lucas
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 8th and 10th Districts

It has been a distinct honor serving The American Legion Department of Minnesota and the 8th and 10th Districts this year. I would like to commend our Department Commander Denise Milton for the outstanding performance she has provided to the Minnesota American Legion Family and the veterans of Minnesota this year. She has raised the bar to an extremely high level for future Department Commanders. It has been a pleasure to serve as one of her Vice Commanders.

I was able to participate in several of the 8th and 10th District events, including both Midwinters the 8th in Two Harbors and the 10th in Anoka; and both Conventions 8th at my home Post in Duluth and the 10th in Osseo. My home post in Duluth was also host for the 8th and 10th Rally on April 1, 2017. Yes, I know it was April Fools Day but it was a fun event, and that is no "fooling". I would like to give my appreciation to the 8th District Commander Ken Oliver and the 10th District Bonnie Hanson for their cooperation, camaraderie, and friendship they provided me this year. I thoroughly enjoyed working with them both.

I look forward to being with all Minnesota Legion Family members at our Department convention in July as we celebrate all we, as a team, have accomplished this year.

Wilson W. Spence III
Department Vice Commander

Treasurer

As Treasurer, I serve on the Department Finance Committee, Minnesota Legionnaire, and the Legionville Board of Directors. It has been my pleasure to serve you again this past year as your Department Treasurer.

The Treasurer is charged with the responsibility and administration of all Department funds and related financial affairs with direct responsibility to the Department Executive Committee. Some of the duties include overseeing accounting principles, and financial processes of the Department Headquarters, assisting the Department Finance Liaison, analyzing and prescribing financial reports, and investing the assets of the Department.

The following is an overview of the Department's investments between May 2016 and May 2017. Investment began the year with an allocation of 31% stocks and 69% bonds. Bonds in the account are primarily high grade bonds and CDs. These bonds and CDs are laddered between one and five years. The stocks are diversified between large, medium, and smaller companies with a heavier weighting toward larger companies. Interest and dividends paid out between June 1, 2016, and May 31, 2017, to the Department's checking account totaled \$41,206.02. Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer and I look forward to serving you in the future.

Richard Horn
Department Treasurer

Chaplain

I have been flattered and humbled to be your Department Chaplain this year. The year got off to a very fast start with little to no let-up in the work schedule of writing columns, invocations, benedictions and general and table prayers. Before becoming Chaplain, when I would read the Bible or indulge in any Christian or religious affiliated stories and information, I would do so like I was reading and studying history and philosophy. I would read to be entertained. When it came time to write my columns for the Minnesota Legionnaire, I would read the bible, go on the internet or read columns from Church newsletters and religious newspaper segments as a resource and study guide to complete my columns to include bible passages and thought-provoking epistles. The flattering part of being Chaplain was the numerous compliments I received monthly for writing my columns. Often times I found writing the columns to be interesting and stimulating; sometimes even fun. Likewise with writing prayers, I was often complimented and also experienced camaraderie with many comrades finding humorous, self-deprecating ways for me to pray for them. I appreciated input I received from former department chaplains and communication from current district chaplains.

I fulfilled duties as Department Chaplain at National Convention. We observed a time of silence in memoriam to departed colleague General John J. Vessey Jr.

In the fall, a get-well card and letter was sent by me on behalf of the Department to National Commander Candidate Denise Rohan after she fell off of a ladder and broke her ankle.

I attended all Department rallies this year and the Fall Conference. I didn't receive the Department Chaplain's binder until after the start of the Fall Conference. As a result, we had no "Chaplain's Corner" scheduled as a part of the Conference or Executive Board. Emphasis will be stressed to next year's Chaplain to be ready and have about a 15-minute presentation.

I attended the department testimonials for President Carol Kottom, Detachment Commander Gene Olsword and Commander Denise Milton. At commander Denise' testimonial we observed a moment of silence in memoriam for Minnesota Legionnaire and Medal of Honor recipient Leo Thorsness.

For the Chaplain's budget, no increase was made. I made one request for mileage expense for rallies which were not combined with an Executive Board meeting. With my final expense of mileage and per diem for Department Convention, I will use up my entire budget. I would fall just a bit short on expenses, but I can collect mileage from a different committee for Convention.

Department Auxiliary and SAL Chaplains and I are completing plans for the Department Convention Memorial Service. Convention Committee funds will be used to cover expenses for the Service. (i.e. Programs, guest speaker accommodations, honorarium and mileage.)

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as your Chaplain. May God bless our troops, our comrades and the United States of America. For God and Country.

Bill B. Brockberg
Department Chaplain

Historian

I would like to first say what an honor and privilege it has been this past year to serve as the Historian for Commander Milton and the Department of Minnesota. We are at an amazing time in the history of our beloved American Legion, and it is extremely humbling to have the opportunity.

The Post History contest judging will be done Thursday afternoon at 1330 hours by myself and selected individuals. Districts, coordinate with your posts to ensure they are all at the Convention. Remember, the format is in the Post Officer Guide pages 147- 156. I certainly hope that there is a good turn out this year. Reminder as well, that this year there is a prize among the District Historians as well as an award for the District with the highest percentage of entrants.

Finally, please continue to move forward with haste to the Commanders goal of registering 100% of the American Legion Posts on the Centennial page at legion.org/centennial, as well as entering information and photos about local memorials throughout the state at postphotos@mnlegion.org.

In conclusion as we move toward the second century of service, we do need a revival of the Post Historian position as well as District and Department. This is in keeping with the goal of the National Historian of bringing the importance of the Historian position back. For God and Country.

Ralph Schneekloth
Department Historian

NEC Man

I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to serve each of you as the NEC (National Executive Committeeman) from Minnesota. As you know the NEC, is the governing body of the American Legion between National Conventions. Along with serving as your NEC I am a member of the resolutions sub-committee. We meet at the fall meeting, Washington DC conference and the spring meeting. This committee reviews and approves all the resolutions before action by the NEC. We are also available at the National Convention if needed. I also serve as chairman, of the NEC Liaison committee, to the National Security Commission. I have attended everything required as your NEC.

I want to congratulate Commander Milton on a great job representing us as commander and to all the members of her team. Outstanding job Denise. Thank You....and your team. Of course, behind every great team is a great staff. To adjutant Randy and all the staff at Department Headquarters thank you, and your staff. I'm sure as this year ends the wheels are already turning preparing for the next year.

I'm proud to work with your Alt NEC Bill Barbknecht. He's a true advocate for the veterans and a great Legionnaire, and friend.

As you know in 2018 Minnesota will host the 100th Convention. This is just the beginning of plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of The American Legion. After Minnesota, we will go to Indianapolis culminating a yearlong celebration. Indianapolis is the home of our National Headquarters. For those of you who have never been there I urge you to try and see it. It will give you a whole new perspective of our National Headquarters. On another note if you have never been to a National Convention, again, I urge you to try attend one. You will enjoy and have a greater outlook of our great organization.

At the spring meetings in Indianapolis, the National Commander opened the NEC meeting with a video showing George Jones, singing his hit "Who's going to fill their shoes"? Then he asked, "Who's going to fill OUR shoes"? It's a question we all need to think about.

It's almost time for our Department Convention. If you haven't made plans to attend please do so as soon as possible. This where our new leaders at all levels should be in attendance. This is where the Chairman give their final reports to the membership. If you want to know what happened this past year in Minnesota, in your American Legion, this is the function you need to attend.

National Convention, is fast approaching, also. This year we go to Reno. History will be made there. As of now only one candidate for National Commander is endorsed. If elected, Denise Rohan from

Wisconsin will become the first female Commander to lead The American Legion.

Thank you to everyone for the opportunity to represent you and Minnesota as your National Executive Committeeman.

Marland Ronning
National Executive Committeeman

Judge Advocate

The Department Adjutant, Treasurer and Judge Advocate are each elected for a three year term by the Executive Committee. These are staggered terms so that they all do not end the same year. The election takes place at the first Executive Committee meeting each year, after the Department Convention.

My three year term began with the Executive Committee meeting on August 9, 2014. With the help of Adjutant Randy and the headquarters staff, I managed to complete the concerns that arose timely. Questions concerning membership, name usage and post charter decisions were addressed.

The election of Department Judge Advocate will be in 2017. I will not seek another term.

Tom Lannon
Department Judge Advocate

Americanism

I would like to thank Department Commander Denise Milton for allowing me to serve as the Americanism Chairman for The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, and wish you a successful convention in Mahanomen.

I would also like to thank my Americanism Committee members Larry Poernich and Tess Davis for their able assistance during the past year.

I would lastly like to thank the Chairpersons and their Assistants of the seven Sub-Committees of the Americanism Committee, for their dedication and hard work over the past year. They are; Boy's State representatives Thomas Nelson and Lee Tallakson; Community Service representative Robert Locker; Education representative Don Skow; Junior Shooting Sports representative Leon Dahle; Boy's Scout representative Tom Hallett; Oratorical representatives Deb Norman and Linda Dvorak; Safety – School Patrol representative James Blakesley; and the District Americanism Chairpersons. Please see the individual committee reports for further information concerning these Americanism Sub-Committees.

The Department Americanism Committee met at the 2016 Fall Conference in Marshall. The Americanism Sub-Committee Chairpersons, and Vice-Chairpersons from Community Service, Education, Boys Scouts, Oratorical, Safety-School Program, Jr. Shooting Sports and Boys State; six District Americanism Chairpersons; and one guest, attended the meeting. The re-organization and naming of the Junior Law Cadet Program was also discussed.

The Scholarship Selection Committee met at the Waite Park American Legion Post in April 2017. There were, three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust scholarships, and six American Legion Memorial scholarships awarded.

The Americanism Committee continues to promote the increased submittal of The American Legion Consolidated Post Report (CPR). There were approximately 357 CPR's submitted in 2016, equating to 71% submittal. We have continued to track the submittals of the CPR, and have recorded the information that is submitted under the AMERICANISM category of the CPR (Items 52 through 92). This Americanism information is then transmitted to the various Americanism Sub-Committees and to the respective District Americanism Chairpersons.

The Department of Minnesota Americanism activities exceed The American Legion National Americanism averages in the following categories:

- Legion Baseball Involvement & Support
- Other Sports Involvement & Support
- Boy Scouts Support
- Oratorical Contest Support
- American Legion Education Week Involvement & Support
- Scholarship Involvement & Support
- Local Flag Presentation Support
- Memorial Day Activities
- Shooting Sports Involvement & Support

Needless to say, we are below The American Legion National Americanism averages in the remaining Americanism categories.

Americanism is an unending love of Country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the Flag, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. Our forefathers laid the foundation for a civilization that is the envy of the world. It has brought us greater spiritual and material wealth than any people has ever known. This is our heritage.

The responsibilities of the Americanism Committee, and for all Legionnaires, include the combating of "Anti-Americanism; the education of all citizens in the ideals of true Americanism; the distribution of information about "the real nature and principles of American government"; and the fostering and education of Americanism in our schools."

Art Tobkin
Chairperson, Americanism Committee

Boy Scouts

I first want to thank Department Commander Milton for reappointing me as the Department of Minnesota Boy Scout Chairman. I next want to thank all ten District Boy Scout Chairmen for their support and dedication to the Boy Scout programs. They have been outstanding with their help and knowledge; we make a great team.

Your post's support of your local Scout packs, troops and councils is also greatly appreciated. From its birth, The American Legion has supported the wonderful Scouting youth programs with both volunteers and financial assistance. Additional thanks go to all the posts that have donated to the Department Boy Scout Council Assistance Fund #81. Your donation certificates can be picked up at the Boy Scout booth. The fund's status as of May 19, 2017 stood at \$44,260.00. Please make a contribution to this fund each year as we are striving to raise additional interest in order to give more than a yearly donation of \$1,000.00 to a Minnesota Scout council project. Current records show that no donations have been received from the 6th, 7th and 8th Districts so far this year.

Once again, thank you, one and all, for supporting Scouting in all its programs to advance the cause of freedom and its dedication to 100% Americanism.

Congratulations to Wyatt Hahn from Troop 623 in Hutchinson who is our Minnesota American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year for 2017.

Tom Hallett
Chairman, Boy Scout Committee

Boys State

This year has been a year of transition with us changing locations and my first year as director. We returned to St. John's University this year after being away for ten years. We were happy to have our 69th year of Minnesota American Legion Boys State in Collegeville. Thank you to St. John's University President Dr. Michael Hemesath for hosting us, and a special thank you to Director of Events and Conferences Jeff Wubbels and his team for all of their hard work.

I want to thank my entire staff for their hard work and dedication. All 50 volunteers that helped this year gave a week of their time to help continue impacting the lives of the young men who attend the program. Special thank you to Assistant Director Mike Bredeck, the Dean of Minnesota Boys State David Way and chairman of the program Ryan Lorsung. I would also like to recognize everyone else who put in extra time throughout the year to prepare for the week. Tom Johnson, Neil Kruse, Todd Henning, Adam Logaman, Nate Trembley, and Tom Wyatt-Yerka all put time in throughout the year to make this program better. Dan Swanson went above and beyond helping me in multiple ways throughout the year including developing our new electronic voting system. This year was Neil Kruse's 35th year with the program, thank you for many years of dedicated service.

District	Reg. Delegates	Change From Prev. Year
1	25	-2
2	22	-4
3	49	-17
4	3	-3
5	8	+2
6	34	-6
7	36	-8
8	9	+1
9	20	-15
10	70	+9
Total:	276	-43

As shown above, the number of delegates sent to Minnesota Boys State dropped again this year. Last year the number of delegates dropped by 24 and this year by 43. Our program relies on the districts and posts for recruitment. Minnesota Boys State teaches these young men about State and Local Government as well as instilling in them an appreciation for our form of government. This type of program is needed now more than ever. The move from SMSU in Marshall to St. John's University in Collegeville makes us centrally located for everyone in the state. I ask that every district take extra effort to stop and reverse this downward trend.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Department Headquarters staff: Jennifer Kelley, Laura Weber, Al Zdon, and Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl. Their work is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Department Commander, Denise Milton, for reposing her trust in me by appointing me the position of Director. I am excited to continue the role of director and I am confident that Minnesota Boys State will continue to shine.

Thomas Nelson
Director, Boys State

Community Service

It is that time of year to look back and review what our American Legion Posts have meant to our communities. How do we do this is the question? Our post officers must summarize what our members have done this past year and report this back to their members and then get this to the Department of Minnesota who can summarize for our state and pass it on to National. Our members deserve this information as feedback. Nothing helps pull an organization together more than celebrating together what they have accomplished.

We can try to estimate what was accomplished at state and national levels by reviewing the reports that our posts did submit. This year we had 133 posts turn in a report, which is 24% of the total 552 posts in Minnesota. A lot of these are smaller posts which show how proud they are of their members commitments. But many posts not turning in reports are posts with over 250 members. The report summaries turned in for the year are as follows: Children & Youth: hours 7464 and dollars spent \$332,810. Veteran Affairs: hours 31,099 and dollars spent \$466,380. Americanism: hours 23,404 and dollars spent \$751,574. Funeral: hours 23,568 and dollars spent \$281,780. Community Service: hours 32,612 and dollars spent \$567,213. This gives a total turn in of 118,155 Volunteer hours and \$2,399,757 dollars spent.

Over the past six years the numbers in all categories have varied widely and the number of posts reporting has varied from 129 to 164 which is more or less 24 to 25% of posts.

The winners will be announced at the Department Convention so plan on being there to accept for your members.

I want to thank Commander Milton for appointing me to this chair as I have found it very informative and it was a pleasure to work with him.

Bob Locker
Community Service Chairman

Education

The Scholarship Committee met Friday April 14th, 2017, at the Waite Park Silver Star Post and the American Legion Department Headquarters in St. Paul.

Six American Legion Memorial Scholarships and three Minnesota American Legion Foundation Scholarships along with seven Nursing Grants were awarded.

The six Memorial Scholarships were awarded to Clayton Hartle of Chandler, MN sponsored by Lake Wilson Post 285; Chelsea Montgomery of Bloomington, MN sponsored by Richfield Post 435; Jacob Plaetz of Lucan, MN sponsored by Lucan Post 467; Logan Larson of Caledonia, MN sponsored by Caledonia Post 191; Wyatt Hofius of Red Wing, MN sponsored by Mazeppa Post 588; Reid Gerber of Rochester, MN sponsored by Rochester Post 92. The three Minnesota American Legion Foundation Scholarships were awarded to Garrett Scheel of Dilworth, MN sponsored by Dilworth Post 397; Jules Efta of Stephen, MN sponsored by Argyle Post 353; Olivia Gerbracht of Bagley, MN sponsored by Bagley Post 16.

The Nurses Training Grants were awarded as follows: \$500 to each of the following Carly Olson, Ann Dougherty, and Steven Rudolph of the Minneapolis VAMC; Catherine Menawa of the Minnesota State Veterans Home - Minneapolis. Jane Matejcek, Lauren Ehle, and Rebecca Hagen of the Fargo VAMC.

I would like to thank the other members of the selection committee. They are Art Tobkin, Tess Davis, Larry Pocernich, Jeremy Wolfsteller and Heather Larson. We congratulate the scholarship recipients and wish them well in their continuing education. I would also like to thank Commander Denise Milton for this appointment. It's been a pleasure serving the Department of Minnesota.

Don Skow
Education Chairman

Junior Shooting

The Junior Shooting Sports Program is alive and well in Minnesota. We are small in numbers, but have a high quality program, and manage to grow a little each year. The Program uses both Sporter grade and Precision Air Rifles. The Sporter gun is limited to \$400.00 in cost. This allows beginning shooters to participate without incurring the high cost of the Precision rifle and other associated equipment. The matches are all shot at 10 meters (33 feet). Thus an air gun range can be set up anywhere you have 40 feet or more of space, and the added expense of ventilation and inspection is not necessary with air gun.

Air Rifle and Air Pistol are Olympic Gold Medal Sports and one of the stated purposes of the program is to make the U. S. more competitive in Olympic competition. The program works best in the winter months when outside activity is limited. There is a full plate of competition available including the National headquarters sponsored American Legion Match. We also compete in the USA Shooting sponsored Junior Olympic match, NRA Sectionals, and the US Army sponsored Junior match. Happy to report that one of our Shooters from Morristown got first place (Gold Medal) at the NRA National Championship at Bloomington IL. We also have one shooter from Anoka Post 102 that has qualified for The American Legion National Championship at Colorado Springs, in July.

Anyone interested in starting a competitive shooting program, let me know and I will help.

Leon Dahle
Chairman, Junior Shooting Sports

Oratorical Contest

The 2017 Department of Minnesota High School Oratorical Contest was held at Anoka Post 102 on Saturday, March 11, 2017. In 1st Place, and our representative at the National Contest in Indianapolis on April 22-23, 2017, was Elise Sopelle, a sophomore who is home schooled in Brainerd, Minnesota and sponsored by District 6, who received a \$1500 scholarship. Place winners were Emily Parker – District 10 (2nd - \$1000); Ricky Erpelding – District 1 (3rd - \$700), and Charles Babcock – District 3 (4th - \$500).

Semi-final competition was held at Osseo Post 172, with 7 contestants. Other District champions included Cynthia Winch – District 2, Hunter Holzer – District 5, and Elysia Morris – District 8.

Competition at the National level is comprised of nine contestants in each of six rounds during the morning session. The top nine contestants advance to the semi-final round in the afternoon, and the top three advance to finals on the following day. While the competition is fierce at the National level – this contest provides wonderful networking opportunities for young people from all 50 States and Territories of the United States.

All contestants at the Department level were excellent representatives of their Districts, and demonstrated significant knowledge of the Constitution as well as displaying a high level of maturity. We hope to introduce Department winner Elise Sopelle during the 2017 Department Convention, to which she will be invited to present.

Thanks to Commander Denise Milton and President Carol Kottom who, despite very busy schedules, met with our contestants at the banquet, and all who stepped up to Judge, Time, Tabulate, Escort and Chaperone. Special thanks to the host Posts that opened their doors in support of our youth, and all who promote the High School Oratorical Contest throughout the State.

On behalf of Vice Chairman Linda Dvorak and myself, thanks are extended to Commander Milton for our appointments to lead this program.

Debra Norman
Oratorical Chairman

Safety Patrol

The Minnesota Twins are having a rocky start this year. They have been struggling to stay above .500. The games are still interesting. If you haven't treated your patrollers to a Twins game, consider doing it. The stadium is a great baseball facility to watch a game.

The Legionville Safety School Patrol Center is a valuable part of the Safety - School Patrol Program. It is the only facility ever developed for this purpose. Clean up from last year's storm continues. With Minnesota Legionnaires coming forward again, the camp is in shape for the season. There are many finishing touches yet to be done. The support of AAA Minnesota - Iowa has been appreciated. I encourage all Posts to participate in this most worthwhile project. I commend the board of directors for the tremendous job they have done in providing a safe camp for our school patrollers. The commitment to this program by the Legionnaires of this Department has been most encouraging and appreciated. I remind you that as schools are moving into a more rural setting crossing guards are not as much in demand as in the past. With increased bussing, bus patrol and bus rider assistants are becoming more and more in need. The State Patrol teaches bus patrol and bus rider assistant programs. Legionville instructors teach first aid. School busses are one of the safest modes of transportation. Let's do everything we can to keep it that.

I also encourage Legion posts to promote safety programs in their local communities. There are many areas of safety education and they are best addressed at the local level. I am aware of many posts that are hosting safety programs and networking with other groups to provide safety training in many areas. There were the second lowest ever with 36 residential fire fatalities in 2016 in Minnesota; down from 57 in 2015 and 44 in 2013. The state's all-time low fire-death figure was 35 in 2009; the high was 134 in 1976. Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Test them monthly and replace the batteries twice a year. Use flameless candles instead of real ones. Never leave food cooking on the stove unattended. Keep flammable materials at least three feet away from any heat source.

Preliminary reports show that traffic fatalities show 397 people were killed compared to 411 deaths in 2015. This is 362 fatal crashes, compared with a final figure of 375 in 2015. There were 53 motorcyclists, compared with a final figure of 61 in 2015. Seven bicyclists died, compared with a final figure of 10 in 2015. And we had 60 pedestrians, compared with a final figure of 41 in 2015. This increase in pedestrian fatalities is quite distressing. Motorists must treat every corner as a crosswalk and stop for pedestrians crossing at all corners and crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked, drive at safe speeds and be alert for pedestrians and pay attention. Drive distracted free. Driver distraction is a leading cause of pedestrian/vehicle crashes.

Pedestrians can ensure their safety by crossing at a corner, a marked crosswalk or where a traffic light is present. Never cross in the middle of the road or walk down an interstate. Wear bright colored clothing when walking at night. Pay attention and look both ways before crossing. Even if you have the right of way, it's important to check for vehicles, especially those that might be making a right turn into your path. Make eye contact with all drivers before you cross, and as you are walking across the street, can ensure your safety.

Speed was a factor in one in five fatalities. Drunk driving was a contributing cause in one in four fatalities. Distracted driving contributed to one in five fatalities. It was noted that half of motor vehicle occupants killed were not wearing their seat belt. I remind everyone too of the need for safety on the water and on recreational vehicles. We are known for our

outdoors activities. I encourage everyone to think safety first. Nothing takes the joy out an activity as much as would an injury or death at an activity designed to be enjoyable.

Safety is not just for our youth. I encourage Posts to invite your district State Patrol Safety Officer to a meeting to present a program on this and other issues. Fire, police and other safety program professionals are available most times just for the asking. I encourage you to use them. Every community has its own safety concerns. I encourage Legionnaires to identify these areas of concern and implement programs of safety education.

As usual, the balance of my report will be given on the Convention floor at Rochester.

Jim Blakesley

Am. Legion Riders

Greetings from the Department of Minnesota American Legion Riders. The Riders continue to grow, and do great things. To date we have almost 70 chapters throughout the state, and all 10 districts are represented.

A lot of these chapters are very active at the posts doing great things for their communities, Veterans, and the families of Veterans. I am truly in awe at the enthusiasm, and dedication these riders show.

I want everyone to remember that these riders are first and foremost members of the American Legion family. It does not matter whether they joined the legion family to become a rider, or if they were already a member when they joined the riders. The Legion riders are dedicated to promoting the American Legion family and the values, programs, and support for Veteran's causes that the world's largest Veterans organization is known for.

Our Minnesota legacy run is fast approaching. The Kickoff will be in Walker this year on July 27th. Details of times and places are available. Please contact your posts, and people of your community to donate. This is a really great cause providing scholarships to children who have lost a parent on active duty since 9/11 2001. Steve "Sully" Sullivan has issued a challenge to the state of Minnesota to raise 200,000 dollars this year. I know we can do it, and make Minnesota proud. Minnesota has been number one for a few years now, and many states say they are going to beat us this year. It will be tough, but I know us Minnesotans can do it.

Thank you Commander Denise Milton for allowing me to continue as your Riders liaison, and thank you for all of the Legion family support everyone showed me and my family (even flat Paul) while I was deployed.

Paul Hassing
Liaison, American Legion Riders, Minnesota

Armed Forces

The Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) is enjoying a year of providing hospitality to active duty, reserve, national guard and military retirees. The hospitality we provide starts with a warm welcome to a place where they can come & relax. Then a brief tour of the facilities, offers of food and drink, access to WIFI, computers, books, bunks and assistance with navigating the airport. While routine for the AFSC volunteers, we are the only airport group (that I know of) that offers "Meet & Greet" to service members arriving here via charter flights. When the AFSC is notified a unit will be stopping at MSP volunteers roll out the carts, set up tables, place signs and banners welcoming them back to the USA. On the tables we provide water, coffee, cookies, sandwiches or muffins. Additional baskets give the various toiletries (tooth brushes, tooth paste, razors etc.)

As often happens with the government our move to the secure side of the airport has been delayed again. Neither a specific date nor a specific location have been given but the move will be after the superbowl in 2018. We have received an estimate for expenses to remodel the space MAC is going to provide: \$100,000.00 I, as the State Department Representative to the AFSC, am asking American Legion Districts and posts to make donations the AFSC and state that the money is to be only used for the costs associated with the move & build out of the new location.

Joe Jansen
Legion Representative on the AFSC Board

Blood

This 2016-2017 year has been a very exceptional year for the American Legion Family in participation of Blood Drives and in Blood Donations. I want to thank all the District Chairs for their hard work and excellent reports and 100% Reporting. To Department Commander Denise Milton, my many thanks for appointing me Blood Program Chairman.

1st District, 1st Place- Winona Post # 9, 2nd Place- St. Charles Post # 190, 3rd Place-Albert Lea Post #56
2nd District, 1st Place-St. James Post # 33, 2nd Place-Round Lake Post # 461, 3rd Place-Brewster Post # 464
3rd District, 1st Place-Forest Lake Post # 225, 2nd Place-St. Paul Park Post # 98, 3rd Place-Gaylord Post # 433
4th District, 1st Place-North St. Paul Post # 39, 2nd Place-3M Post # 599, 3rd Place-Hamline Post # 418
5th District, 1st Place-Richfield Post # 435, 2nd Place-Viking Post # 493, 3rd Place-Minneapolis Post # 1
6th District, 1st Place-Melrose Post # 101, 2nd Place-Holdingford Post # 211, 3rd Place-Upsala Post # 350
7th District, 1st Place-Ashby Post # 357, 2nd Place-Elbow Lake Post # 321, 3rd Place-Browns Valley Post # 58
8th District, 1st Place-Grand Rapids Post # 60, 2nd Place-Aurora Post # 241, 3rd Place-Cloquet Post # 262
9th District, 1st Place-East Grand Forks Post # 157, 2nd Place-Moorhead Post # 21, 3rd Place-Middle River Post # 444
10th District, 1st Place-Milaca Post # 178, 2nd Place-St. Louis Park Post # 282, 3rd Place-Osseo-Maple Grove Post # 172

Thomas J. Sanders
Chairman, Blood Program

Children and Youth

Do you have access to these publications at your post? The most important one is Temporary Financial Assistance which assists families with minor children in the home who are about to be evicted or other problems that arise because of lack of funds to pay for rent, food, medical etc. As a post you need to keep this one on hand at all times. It is easy to follow and needs to start at the post level. Anyone needing financial assistance that have minor children in the home and has parental control over the which maybe a grandparent can apply.

Other publications that are available are April is Children & Youth Month, Children & Youth Programs, Children & Youth Resolutions, Family Support Network, Gateway Drugs, Make Halloween a Fun & Safe Night, National Family Week, Paly It Safe, Warning Signs, and American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. These can be ordered through the national organization.

The Children & Youth Reports are down from last year which makes me wonder what the commander and adjutants are doing with the paperwork required in their positions. Fill out the reports and get them into the people that need them to make their report to the national office.

Terry Buraas
Children and Youth Chairman

Convention Corp.

The Convention Corporation Committee has been busy overseeing the responsibilities for selecting Convention locations for the Minnesota American Legion.

It was a year of changes within the Convention Committee.

- Phil Bellefeuille, unfortunately resigned from the Corporation. His leadership and professionalism was an unquestionable value to this organization and the Department. He will be greatly missed.
- Pat Logan was elected President of the Convention Corporation.
- Ken Meyer was voted in as a Trustee.

Supervising and coordinating venues and logistics is a key role of the Corporation.

- Pat Logan traveled to The Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen for a site visit meeting with Daniel LaFrinier to finalize arrangements for the Department Convention on July 13-15, 2017.

- The Convention Committee met with the Willmar Post in Marshall to firm up and make adjustments for the Department Fall Conference to be held in Willmar on October 26-27, 2017.

- The Corporation met with the Rochester Convention and Visitors Bureau, along with the Convention Hotels to secure the details and contract for the 2018 Department Convention.

The Convention Corporation Committee is looking for bids from Posts and Districts to host future Department Fall Conferences and Department Conventions.

Please contact the Convention Committee or Department Adjutant for further information.

Pat Logan
Convention Corporation Committee President

Employment

I am pleased to report that veteran's unemployment in the State of Minnesota is at 3.8%. The state unemployment rate among non-veteran's is at 3.9%. Nationally the Veteran unemployment rate is close to 5%. Mr. James Finley, who is the Director of the Veterans Employment Programs Workforce Development Division for the State of Minnesota, indicates that although unemployment of Veterans is low and has remained below the State and National averages for 1.5 years, it is the under-employment of these Veterans that continues to be the problem. In other words, many of the employed veterans do not make enough to sustain a living for them and their families. Mr. Finley and Mr. Scott Mills, who is the Director of Veterans Employment and Training U.S. Department of Labor both feel that this problem is not a simple one to overcome.

According to both Mr. Finley and Mr. Mills, we need to change the Veteran's mind set from looking for a job to looking for a career. There are so many free resources available through the State Work Force Centers, the LVERs, and DVOPs to assist Veteran's in developing a plan for their future. They can even assist Veterans in going back to school to gain more knowledge about what and who they want to become. So if you know a Veteran that wants to better him or herself or has a dream to just do something different, please put them in touch with one of these State Agencies.

Earlier this year I asked Mr. Finley if he could provide me the names of Minnesota Companies who do an outstanding job of hiring Veterans and support Veteran's programs. Mr. Finley, through the Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) who report to him, not only provided me with the names of 33 companies but also provided the names of the people to contact.

I have forwarded this list to each District Employment Chairman and asked them to make contact with and complete an application for those Companies in their District that they feel would be worthy of recognition by our Legion Department.

I am looking forward to meeting and introducing those deserving Employers to our membership at our Department Convention.

Carl R. Moon
Chairman, Employment

Energy and Conservation

As Carl Hendrickson, last year's Energy and Conservation chairman stated: The primary job of the Department Energy and Conservation chairman's position is to conduct tree seedling sales. During the last years, tree seedling sales have been declining.

This year 1600 seedlings were sold. Nine out of the ten Districts purchased tree seedlings. Once again Legionville asked to have tree seedlings purchased and donated to them. A total of 180 seedlings were purchased and went to them.

I would like to thank all that purchased tree seedlings and Commander Denise Milton for this appointment.

Joe Niesen
Chairman, Energy and Conservation

Family Hospital Association

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to report on this fiscal year's activities. I am reporting on all activities from the beginning of the fiscal year August 1, 2016 through May 31st, 2017. A complete fiscal year report will be provided to The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the SAL at our annual meeting held at the Fall Conference. Application history from the beginning of the fiscal (August 1st, 2016) through (May 31st, 2017) can be seen below:

	FY-2016	FY-2017
Applications Received	36	15
Applications Approved	34	13
Total Dollars Disbursed	\$ 47,863	\$13,654

Listed below is a breakdown of the number of claims and amounts paid out by District:

DIST.	FY-2016 CLAIMS	FY-2017 CLAIMS	FY16 DOLLARS PAID	FY-17 DOLLARS PAID
First	5	2	8,990	3,340
Second	3	2	1,204	916
Third	3	1	5,475	0
Fourth	3	2	3,300	3,710
Fifth	1	0	258	0
Sixth	4	0	6,772	0
Seventh	4	2	5,846	1,037
Eighth	1	0	3,000	0
Ninth	5	6	5,685	4,651

Tenth	7	0	7,333	0
TOTALS	36	15	\$47,863	\$13,654

Total Net Assets as of 30 April 2017 \$ 262,826

Special thanks to Roger Myren and Laura Weber for all the work they do for the American Legion Family Hospital Association. Also thank you to the board members who have served this past year. They are: Alberta Marth-Wohlfeil, Sharon Thiemecke, Denise Milton, Dennis Blue, Nick Kakos, Carol Kottom, Roger Stoick and Gene Olsword.

A special thank you to the American Legion Family Hospital Association membership for allowing me the honor of serving as your President

Marie Goede
President, American Legion Family Hospital Association

Finance

The Department Finance Committee met at the Kelly Inn in St Cloud on September 26, 2017 to set the budget for our Department for 2016-2017. Commander Milton determined the budget will be set based upon 77,000 memberships, our National goal.

The budget was approved as follows: Budgeted Income-\$1, 245,712 Budgeted Expense-\$1,244,482 Excess Income-\$1,230

Our external revenue (insurance, cards, calendars, note pads, etc) continues to be a very important part in maintaining our programs. These non-membership revenue sources contribute over 25% of our income. During our meeting, it was decided to have Bill Goede to be the Finance Committee Liaison on these and new external sources.

The committee thanks Commander Denise Milton, Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and the office staff for their help. A SPECIAL thank you goes to Laura Weber for her help. She is an invaluable resource for this committee.

Members of the committee are: Chair Ray DeZurik, Robin Picray, Bill Goede, Tom Burau, Lloyd Kumerow, Commander Denise Milton and Department Treasurer Dick Horn.

Ray Dezurik
Chairman, Finance Committee

Fund for Hosp. Vets

The Fund for Hospitalized Veterans meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Maxa at 10:10 a.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2016 at The American Legion Headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota. Chairman Maxa asked if Auxiliary Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch would take notes for the meeting. Introductions were made by all attendees. The following members were present; Mike Maxa, Chairman, Wes Thompson, Roland Hanson and Jean Walker. Also in attendance were The American Legion Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and Auxiliary Secretary Sandie Deutsch. Board Member Gene Olsword was excused.

The minutes of the October 20, 2015 meeting were brought up for review. A motion was made by Jean Walker, seconded and carried to approve the minutes as printed. Chairman Mike Maxa stated that the Financial Reports show that the fund had a very good year and we have over \$70,000 to work with. Adjutant Randy gave a report on behalf of DSO Jeremy Wolfsteller, who had a prior commitment and couldn't attend this meeting. It was reported that all Districts have plenty of items to distribute to the hospitalized veterans. Everything is going very well.

Chairman Maxa stated that there had been talk about dissolving this committee. Adjutant Randy was asked what the future was. Randy Tesdahl stated that this committee could be dissolved by a resolution. The funds would have to remain where they are and would be dispersed as needed. Chairman Maxa stated that he would like to keep this committee active. Adjutant Randy feels there is a need for this committee. He wondered if the committee would have new ideas regarding how we spend the dollars.

The date and location of the annual meeting for the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans was brought up. Sandie Deutsch suggested having a phone conference meeting as it is such a short meeting, whereby there would be no mileage expense to attend. Wes Thompson suggested that this meeting be held in conjunction with Fall Conference as all the Committee members generally attend. He stated the meeting should be held after The American Legion Rehab meeting. Adjutant Randy will talk with DSO Jeremy Wolfsteller to update him. A motion was made by Wes Thompson to hold the meeting during Fall Conference, was seconded and carried.

The budget of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was brought forward for discussion. Chairman Maxa stated that the 4th District hasn't used any of their budget again this year. We will need to talk to the 4th district and see if they have plans to use the funds budgeted for them? If not we should remove them from the budget? The 2017 budget was discussed and a motion made to approve the budget, seconded and carried. With no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting, motion carried. My report is respectively submitted to the Department of Minnesota Commander.

Mike Maxa
Chairman, Fund for Hospitalized Veterans

Law and Order

Law and Order committee is responsible for selecting the outstanding Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter officer of the year. This year we received 6 candidates for Law Officer of the Year and 2 candidates for Firefighter of the year. In April the committee members reviewed the applications and this year selected for Law Officer of the Year was Dave Watson a Detective with the Lakeville Police Department submitted by Lakeville Post # 44 of the 3d District, and Firefighter of the Year was Mark Denn who is the chief for the Madelia Fire Department submitted by Madelia Post 19 of the 2nd District. Thank you to all the posts who submitted applications for Law Officer and Firefighter of the year, all of the applications were outstanding.

Some information I would like to share as I have been asked several times of what the selection process consists of. Our selection is based on the same process National uses in their selection. Applicants on based on four things each having points in the selection which is the following, Community Service-35 points, Professional Career-40 points, Heroism- 20 points, Letters of recognition, news clippings and other substantiating documentation-5 points. I hope this helps those who are planning on applying for a candidate for next year. If you have any questions feel free to call me. Also a reminder applications for Law officer and Firefighter are mailed out to the Posts in November.

Tom Conway
Chairman, Law and Order

Legionnaire Insurance Trust

Great news. Minnesota won the National LIT award for submitting the best activities report for the use of money received from LIT. Thanks to a great Rehabilitation Committee and Jeremy Wolfsteller. The income from the LIT remains the second largest source of income for the Department of Minnesota. The Jack Flynn award is presented annually to the LIT chairman that excelled at promoting the programs and services of the LIT. A special thank you to committee members Cal Van Horn and Mike Schaffer for helping Minnesota excel this year.

This year Minnesota received over \$76,000 from the LIT, which is a big financial help for our department. A big thank you to our Department Office Staff and Mike and Cal. Your efforts make us successful.

Bill Barbknecht
Chairman, Legionnaire Insurance Trust

Legionville

The Legionville camp is looking great. Have you noticed the pictures that Roy has been posting on the web page? Additional brick paths have been added and the overall landscaping looks great. Thanks to the Feist family from Zimmerman that came up several weekends to help with this project. Thanks to Larry from the 9th District for helping Roy complete putting the mulch down.

At the spring board meeting several items of importance were approved for the upcoming year. Approval was given to reroof the Bauer & Trooper cabins, the two shelters to the south of the new building, and the shelter down by the swimming beach. Currently the two cabins and two shelters have been reroofed. Approval was given to a local contractor to have the beach and swim area treated for weeds. Approval was given to purchase a new communication system for the camp from Granite Electronics of St. Cloud at a cost of \$7,177.74. The system includes 15 radios and a base unit like the local police & fire departments use. It requires us to have a license to operate the system. This will allow us to be in contact with the counselors, troopers, and staff as needed.

Work and play weekend went well. There were several people from the 1st District who went over all the equipment and got everything in good running condition. Several people from the 6th District cleaned cabins, dorms and made sure all heaters and fans in dorms were in good working condition, and they split several cords of wood. Some people from the 9th District assisted Roy with door replacement on the dorms and did some planting. Thanks to Randy for mowing and trimming over the weekend. Awesome teamwork by all that took time to help.

Legionville received another donation from the John & Cathy Buesseler Foundation. This year's check was for \$6,160, which brings the total donation from last year and this year to \$11,760. Thanks to Mel Buesseler who recommended to the foundation to donate to Legionville, to benefit to our mission.

The paver project is an ongoing project and we continue to order pavers as orders are received and get them engraved. We still have several granite benches on site that are looking for sponsorship. As they are purchased they will be installed in various locations and a granite paver will be installed to indicate in memory of.

Our gratitude and thanks to all the Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units, S.A.L. Squadrons, and Legion Rider Chapters for their continued donations to Legionville to help with the projects and maintenance.

Legionville Camporee will take place September 7th - 10th, 2017. This is a chance for everyone to come up and enjoy a great fun filled weekend. The American Legion Riders Romp will be held September 14th - 17th, 2017.

The representatives on the board are: 1st District - Glenn Mueller, 2nd District - David Hanson, 3rd District - Eugene Leifeld, 4th District - Joe Jansen, 5th District - Dennis DeLong, 6th District - Wayne Gilbertson, 7th District - Victor Gades, 8th District Carl Hendrickson, 9th District - Dennis Henkemeyer, 10th District - Richard Oelschlager, Legion Representative - Roger Myren, Department Commander - Denise Milton, Department Adjutant - Randy Tesdahl, Department Finance Officer - Dick Horn, Department Auxiliary President - Carol Kottom, SAL Commander - Gene Olsword, School/Safety Chair - Jim Blakesley, 40 & 8 Representative - Bruce Harms, Finance Liaison - Laura Weber, and Legal Counsel - Tom Lannon

Wayne M. Gilbertson
President, Legionville

Legislative

The Legislative Committee is chaired by Peggy Mon and assisted by Past Department Commander Mike Ash, Robert Hart, and Gary Larson, in addition to ten District Legislative Chairmen.

The American Legion works with eight other federally chartered veteran organizations along with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) as part of the Commanders Task Force (CTF). The CTF crafted a legislative agenda which focused on asset preservation for properties managed by MDVA, full funding of the MDVA's budget request, as well as repair of the historic truss bridge at our Minneapolis Veterans Home. The base budget for MDVA was included in the Omnibus State Government Finance Bill, as well as the operating adjustment and funding to operate the new State Veterans Cemetery in Duluth. A bonding bill was also passed that included money to repair the historic truss bridge, as well as asset preservation money to repair buildings at the Minnesota Veterans Homes.

The MDVA Veterans Health Care division received its funding to operate the five Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay. There was no money included to fund a new Veterans home.

The Minnesota GI Bill was expanded to increase administrative support and improve equity between the Apprentice and On-The-Job Training program and the amounts offered to persons receiving higher education benefit funding. It also expanded the permitted uses of the Minnesota GI Bill, adding the use of the benefits to pay for costs such as school applications, exams, licensing, and other certifications.

A new law was created requiring a disclosure statement and waiver language that must be signed by veterans if they are seeking veteran benefits services from private, for profit providers.

The Minnesota American Legion co-sponsored a bill that would give \$222,000 to our Legionville Safety Patrol Center, and \$278,000 for Veterans Rest Camp. This was included in the Legacy Bill. Thank you to our Adjutant, Randy Tesdahl for initiating this bill and seeing it successfully pass.

Veterans Day on the Hill was a huge success this year, with a large, enthusiastic crowd. It was extremely memorable returning to the Capitol Rotunda after two years of renovation. Thank you to everyone who participated.

On the National level, our American Legion Washington DC Conference was well attended. We returned to our past experiences, and scheduled individual meetings with each Senator and Representative.

Feedback was excellent, and we were able to meet with all but two Representatives. Representative Colin Peterson was busy on the House Floor, and Representative Keith Ellison was out of town. In both cases, we met with their respective aides. I want to thank Shawn Schloesser from Representative Tim Walz's office for assisting us in making contact with the proper individuals. Thanks for your help.

This year, the entire Legislative Committee, along with the District Chairmen, met at Fall Conference to review Legislative priorities. Updates were sent prior to Mid Winters, and the conventions to assist the chairmen in updating their members.

Thank you, Commander Milton, for allowing me to serve in this capacity.

Peggy Moon
Chairman, Legislative Committee

Membership

Thank you, Department Commander Denise Milton, for this appointment - it has been an absolute once in a life time experience and an honor to serve you and this amazing organization. Working with the Department staff has helped me realize their dedication and commitment to this great organization. All the Legionnaires that I worked with at the department, district and post level are truly an inspiration to the American Legion.

There is no question in my mind, that the highlight of my year as your State Membership Director was the opportunity to travel around the State and visit with so many outstanding and dedicated Legionnaires and you are all American patriots.

I mentioned at the beginning of the membership year that I felt our organization is strong and will grow stronger - I feel more confident about this than I did a year ago. Our membership numbers have declined over the last few years for various reasons and this decline has nothing to do with our mission as an organization. We all need to have a better, more focused effort getting the word out about our American Legion Family's everyday involvement in our community, state and nation. The main part of our effort and focus should be at the local post level with individual attention to the posts involvement/accomplishments in the local community. The PR Committee along with the Training Committee could possibly assist with ideas on achieving this visibility in the local posts community.

The number one question I get from veteran's is what does the American Legion do? Obviously, we need to do a better job in the community getting our message out. There are many posts that do a wonderful job getting the word out in their communities, and these posts need to share their success stories with their District Adjutant and publish the story in the District Newsletter. I'll share one from my post, New Prague Post 45. Our Post Commander Paul Busch and another member of the post have visited all the first-grade classes in the New Prague school district and gave each student the "Our Country's Flag" children's magazine purchased from Emblem Sales. This was received by all the schools with great success. The local newspaper was invited, came and took pictures and published an article in the local newspaper.

Working together and sharing ideas of how we can help make our American Legion Family grow is a constant challenge and all suggestions are welcome. Let's all support and help the new Leadership Team that will be installed at the Department Convention in Mahanomen July 15th. Once again, thank you all for your support and it truly has been an honor and privilege meeting and working with so many wonderful individuals.

For God and Country,
Mark J. Dvorak
Department Membership Director

National Security/ Foreign Relations

Your Department committee kicked off the year with our organizational meeting at Camp Ripley last September. The Department Committee met on Friday and reviewed the applications that were submitted by the Districts for the Outstanding Enlisted Soldier of the Year from the National Guard of Reserve. It was noted that more applicants were needed from all branches of the Service.

Friday evening all District Chairmen and Commanders were invited to join with the Department Committee. On Saturday morning out meeting began at 0800 we were briefed by Camp Ripley personal and began our day long tour of Camp Ripley. Camp Ripley is so large and covers such a broad training spectrum, only parts can be seen in a one day visit. New developments are occurring on an annual basis as training requirements change. National Guard and Reserve Components from all over the United States and some from Norway train here as well as College ROTC units. Our noon meal was held at the new Base dining facility. Notice I did not say mess hall. Meals were prepared by contracted personal. No more K P. My how the Military has changed. Think of all the fun they are missing peeling potatoes.

On Sunday our joint Department and District Committee and District met. Training on the duties and responsibilities of District Chairman and Commanders was held. A new challenge was put out to all District Commanders and Chairman to hold at least one meeting with a Guard or Reserve component in their District along with the Auxiliary, SAL, and Legion Riders to tell the American Legion story. Break out sessions were held to begin the planning of these events. All District Chairman and Commanders accepted the challenge. Prior to writing this report I asked each District Chairman to report to me on their activities of this past year. Most reports included a visit to at least one Unit in their District. Plans are to continue this every year.

At Department Fall Conference in Marshall awards were presented to those selected for Outstanding Enlisted Soldier of the year. During the year Scholarships were presented to College ROTC students selected by their Leaders.

Washington Conference was attended by three Committee Members. We were able to attend the Testimony of our National Commander before the joint Congressional Bipartisan Committee on Military affairs. Upon conclusion of the National Commanders testimony He received a standing ovation from the Congressional Committee. A site rarely seen in today's political climate.

I want to thank all Department and District Chairman and District Commanders for all of their support of this program this past year. I also want to thank the Department Commander for the privilege of chairing this Committee this past year.

Jim Kellogg
Chairman, National Security and Foreign Relations

Operation Post Home

Operation Post Home is a one member team and doesn't really get any information from Department. I have searched the Web pages of the districts and checked out a load of news channels both local and on the web for a posts to give certificates and honor. I have asked district commanders for help through the Legionnaire newspaper but have had no luck. I know there are communities out there that do a ton of events for their Legionnaires but for some reason it's a secret. We do not toot our horn loud enough. If anyone has any special event that your community or Post did and it helped or honored a veteran, please shoot me an email, leave me a voice mail or event tag me on Face Book and let me know before the convention.

Thanks for this appointment.

Glenn Mueller
Operation Post Home Chairman

Pheasant Dinner

The 75th Annual Hospitalized Veterans Pheasant Dinner Program was a great success. There were over 200 Posts, Units, Squadrons, Voitures and other donations contributing this year. Contributions came from all areas of the state and a few from outside Minnesota. There were a few new organizations which came forward with donations.

Over 1,600 pheasants were used to feed the veterans and their guests in 14 hospitals and/or Veterans Homes involved which are: Minneapolis and St. Cloud VAMC's, Sioux Falls SD and Fargo ND VAMC's, Minnesota Veterans homes in Minneapolis, Fergus Falls, Hastings, Dresbach, Silver Bay, and Luverne, the veterans in St. Peter, and Good Samaritan Society Nursing Home in Brainerd, Post Home 167 - Willmar and Post Home 602 - Hillman.

As donations continue to filter in this year I will hold a few special edition pheasant pins for the last minute donations. Donations taken in so far this year is \$45,784.89 at the time of this report. (The VFW is a joint sponsor of the dinners only). After expenses and donations totaling \$24,055.40 the remaining \$21,729.49 is placed into the American Legion Hospitalized Veterans Dinner Dedicated Fund which was established 36 ½ years ago. The Dedicated Fund is administered by the department and can only be used to benefit hospitalized and disabled veterans.

At the Department Convention in Mahanomen, I will have special 75 year pheasant pins commemorating the program. They will be given to each of the 10 District Commanders for disbursement to posts, units, squadrons, etc.

I wish to thank Arnie Troe, Don Amundson, Richard Skillstad, the Pheasant Committee, Department and District Officers, the staff at the Department office, the Minnesota Legionnaire and to everyone in bringing this year's program to a successful conclusion. A special thank you to all those behind the scenes that prepared, served and assisted veterans with their dinner.

Chuck Stone
Chairman, Hospitalized Veterans Pheasant Dinners

Post Development

The Post Development and Revitalization Committee works to help posts with problems and concerns. At our last committee meeting in October 2016, members present were, Carroll Partridge, Carl Hendrickson, Chuck Kruger, Tom Norgaard, excused (Victor Gades).

We again have great sorrow for the passing of our committee member, Tom Norgaard. He will be missed.

Lake Post 571 has turned in its charter.

Post 245 has sold their building and we are talking with other posts to encourage them to stay the course.

Respectfully submitted,

Carroll (Bird) Partridge

Chair, Post Development and Revitalization Committee

Public Relations

The 2016-2017 Public Relations Committee has been working hard on providing both technology and literature to the Districts within the Department of Minnesota to assist them with getting The American Legion Mission out to the public. We have also worked closely with local broadcasting networks to ensure that Commander Milton has a platform to reach both veterans and their families along with the public. Committee members have assisted with technology during membership rallies, conference and convention. We continue to work on new and exciting ways to provide positive branding for the American Legion in everything we do and we are looking forward to the Centennial Convention being held here in Minnesota in 2018. Respectfully Submitted.

Jennifer Havlick,

Chairman, Public Relations

Rehabilitation

The Minnesota American Legion Department Rehabilitation Committee is a five-member committee comprised of organizational members with a background, knowledge, or professional experience related to the delivery of VA benefits, programs, and services. Committee members are appointed by the Department Commander to a five-year term or to the remaining portion of the term of a resigned member. Past and present Rehabilitation members have been former directors or administrators of VA Medical Centers, state Veterans Homes, County Veterans Service Officers, Vet Center Team Leaders, American Legion Sr. Organizational Leadership and Department Service Officer all with a working knowledge of the VA, MDVA, legislative process and The American Legion.

Currently our committee consists of Wilson Spence, Luke Weinandt, Darrell Redepennig, Bill Brockberg, and Roy Bressler. We work very closely with Jeremy Wolfsteller, our Department Service Officer, and Heather Larson, our Department Administrative Assistant. District Rehabilitation Chairmen and the Post Service Officers are also integral members of our committee. Together we make up Minnesota Rehabilitation. Each segment of the Minnesota Rehabilitation has an important roll in providing services to each Minnesota Veteran, and protecting the well-earned benefits provided by the United States and Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Rehabilitation is one of the four pillars on which The American Legion was founded and holds the roof above the head of all Legionnaires. Because of the roll we play in Minnesota, it is very important to keep the Minnesota Rehabilitation Committee very strong and functioning. This year we meet with every VA Medical Center who treats Minnesota veterans and every Minnesota Veterans Home. We also visited VA Vet Centers, VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), and Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) facilities. We advocate to the US and the Minnesota Legislatures for the facilities contacted; and provide the Legion family with information gleaned from our facility visits. This year we provided a scholarship to seven nurses, who work at a Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Minnesota Veterans Homes, to help with their continued education and goal of providing improved care for veter-

ans. We provided expertise at the Minnesota Job Fair at the St Paul Xcel Energy Center. The Rehabilitation Committee conducted an appreciation reception for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Claims office staff in appreciation for all they do for American Legion veteran claims.

The Rehabilitation Committee is a hard working Pillar of the American Legion for the State of Minnesota American Legion. Each member of this committee is honored to serve on the Rehabilitation Committee for veterans of Minnesota.

Wilson W. Spence III
Chairman, Rehabilitation Committee

Resolutions

The Resolutions Assignment Committee is comprised of three (3) members, Chairman Jeff Olson, Stillwater; Al Davis, Princeton and Bob Hirmer, Marshall. Responsibilities of the committee include the review of all resolutions submitted to the department convention for consideration. After reviewing all resolutions the committee assigns them to a convention committee for action i.e. Approval, Rejection, Amended and approved. During convention each convention committee chair reports the actions of the committee to the gathered delegates who have the final authority on all resolutions.

The resolutions assignment committee monitors all reports and prepares a final report on the actions taken by the delegates gathered.

We would like to thank Department Commander Denise Milton for appointing us to this committee. Also, many thanks to the Department Staff who assist so greatly in getting all resolutions properly completed prior to the presentation to the delegates at convention.

Jeff Olson
Chairman, Resolutions Assignment Committee

Sons of the American Legion

This year, as in the past, the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Minnesota, will reach an All-Time-High by Camp Out Convention. Way To Go Guys. The Annual Camp Out Convention will be held June 23, 24 and 25, at Legionville, Brainerd.

Remember all Legion and Auxiliary members and families are welcome to attend the annual Camp Out. There is a lot of good food and fun for all who come.

Another great year with one new squadron chartered this year with more applications pending. Welcome to Taconite Squadron #301.

The Minnesota S.A.L. continues to do an excellent job fund raising for the Legion Family Child Welfare program.

The Spring and Fall conferences were well attended with informative reports to be brought back to the squadrons.

A special Thank You to Walt Fোলendorf in the northern area and Gary Weaver in the southern area for doing a great job in assisting the S.A.L. Squadrons.

Thanks to the staff at the Department office for all their assistance. Thank You to Department Commander Denise Milton for asking me to chair this great program of The American Legion.

Raymond D. Ozmun
Advisor, Sons of The American Legion

Sports: Baseball

It is summer and American Legion Baseball is thriving in the great State of Minnesota. Once again, we lead the nation in number of teams participating in legion baseball. I would like to thank all the supporting Posts, baseball associations and part time administrators who contribute to Minnesota Legion Baseball and make it the most elite program in the country.

Our Baseball Committee has remained the same this past year: Mike Perry, State Director, Mike Gort, Vice Director, Division II, Steve Nelson, Vice Director, Division I. District Directors: Scott McCready, Dist. 1, Vern Kitzberger, Dist. 2, Bruce Young, Dist. 3, Gail Kalata, Dist. 4, Jim Larson, Dist. 5, Wes Thompson, Dist. 6, Randy Schaub, Dist 7, Dave Kunz, Dist. 8, Mike Arvidson, Dist. 9, Gene Berg, Dist. 10, Jim Peck, Junior Director.

State Tournaments for 2016 were held in Delano for Division I with Woodbury Blue emerging as State champion with Forest Lake as the Runner-up. Division II was held in LeSueur-Henderson with Minneapolis Giantvalley as champion and Glenwood Lowry as Runner-up. Junior Tournament was held in Apple Valley with Hopkins as State Champion and Burnsville as Runner-up

A special thank you to Al Zdon and Laura Weber at State Headquarters for their work throughout the year

Mike Perry
Director, Minnesota American Legion Baseball

Sports: Bowling

I want to thank the Sundance Lanes and the Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172, for hosting the 2017 American Legion Bowling Tournament.

The tournament was cut down to six weeks, and this filled the week-ends up, having more bowlers. We had a total of 500 bowlers this year, about the same number as last year. We had less Auxiliary bowlers this year. The 2018 Tournament will be held at the same place, Sundance Lanes, again being six weeks long as this year. Please let everyone at your post know when it is, and invite them to bowl with you. We are looking for someone to host the 2019 tournament. You will need 24 lanes to host it. If your post is interested, contact anyone on the bowling committee or the Legion Office.

The winners this year in the Aux. Division-Singles-Shari Giesen -Post-144 score-696--Doubles-Norma Tramm/Cindy Goepferd-score-1306-Post-455--Team-Delano Post-377-score-2514.

All Events-Jan Henning-post-377 score-2004.--Legion Winners--Singles Tom Leonard Post-507 score-767--Doubles-Scott Arndt/Robbi Arndt Post-377 score-1455-- Team -Hopkins Post-320- score-2668--All Events-Chris Daniels Post-377-score 2208.

Thank you to all that bowled and made this year another great year, hope you all had a good time. Thank you All.

Bob Mace
Bowling Chairman

Strategic Planning

As in the past, the mission has always been the same: taking care of our veterans through the American Legion programs. The question is how do we as a Legion Family do such a large project? The answer is simple: through our programs that the American Legion promotes.

Another question is how very simple through membership without membership the goals cannot be meant. This year's committee has been very committed to the leadership through education for all leadership officers not just commanders but at all the levels of leadership. Following the

District Commanders

SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney
Commander



Greetings to the Solid Second:

I cannot believe that the year has come to a close for me and it is time to pass the torch to our new District Commander, Randy Olson from Winnebago. It seems like just yesterday that I started to write my monthly articles and communicate my pride in the Second District, but now my year is over. Randy has some new and exciting ideas that he plans to bring forth this year and ramp up the excitement. I am so proud of all of you for answering the call to get the memberships when it was tough. This year I believe was a record setting year for posts to reach or surpass their goals. Let's see if we can beat that next year with our new Membership Director.

I know many of you have been asking about my testimonial since I had to postpone it due to my back injury. Unless you hear otherwise, the change over and testimonial will take place at the Hi-Lo Dinner Club in Lakefield on July 30. Change over will be at 4 p.m. with social hour at 4 and dinner at 5. There will be a buffet with chicken and roast beef and the cost will be \$18. Make your reservations to Alberta Marth, 1116 1/2 5th North, New Ulm, 56073, or call 507-359-2351.

It has been hectic since the District Convention and with the constraints of our by-laws, Incoming Commander Olson. President Kathy, Commander Gebel, and myself had to work a date that would be open to all parties.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you this year and God bless the American Legion and God bless the Second District.

THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa
Commander



It is hard to believe my year is fast approaching the end. What a great year it has been and again thank you "Thundering Third" for entrusting me with the command of your district. The award I am most proud of is the new recruit award we won as a district. We led the department in the number of new members signed up and enforced my theme for the year, "ask" a Veteran to join and the legion family will grow.

The post visits and attending your banquets, services, holiday celebrations were my favorite part of my year. The posts are truly where the rubber meets the road! With that said, is their room for improvement at the post, district, department and national levels? Yes there is and we need to work as a legion family to grow our organization. We have/do too many great programs to let one of them disappear and this would hurt a Veteran, child, community, and our national security. Don't break what's not broke, but, think outside the box and what's it going to take to get our younger family members to join and get involved? Plus we older hats (includes me) need to mentor our younger family members. Our programs will survive by; Recruiting-Retaining-Renewing. God Bless our American Legion family. God Bless our troops who are standing watch keeping us safe. God Bless our United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, Army, and Coast Guard. Still serving.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr
Commander



Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth.

I can hardly believe it's July and my year is coming to an end. I thank you all for your support and friendship. It has been a great learning experience and a fantastic year.

Upcoming District events: July 10th - Pre-convention meeting, Post 39 at 7 p.m.; July 13-15 - Department Convention in Mahanomen; and July 16th- VA Hospital visitation at 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District. Thank you all for your service to God and Country.

I will now turn the column over to our new Commander-Elect Lane Stunkel to give you a little intro of his upcoming year.

Commander Randy Bastyr

I want to thank the members of the 4th District for electing me as their Commander. I am honored and look forward to having a great year. My goal this year is to work with the Posts in the 4th District, and with Auxiliary, SAL

and ALR to increase membership and involvement in the various activities, such as the rallies, Post activities and District functions.

I want to thank Commander Randy for leading the way in getting more membership involvement in our RCCC's, Auxiliary, SAL and ALR. We are seeing more people attending District meetings and events. You are leaving the District strong. With your assistance, District Officers, and the members of the 4th District, we will be stronger. Duty, Honor, Country.

Commander-Elect Lane Stunkel

FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden
Commander



Greetings from the Fighting Fifth.

This is my last article as we now begin a new membership year. I would like to thank the 5th District for the privilege of allowing me to be their commander this past year. It is my honor to be part of a District that has a memorable history and has done so much to support our Veterans over the years. I thank all those members of our family who supported me; the Legionnaires, SAL, Auxiliary, ALR and the Junior Auxiliary. We had a great year and accomplished much. That's what happens when you work together. I congratulate all of our newly elected and appointed officers, especially Walt Lyndsley on becoming our new Commander. They all have my support in the coming year. I also congratulate our Department Vice Commander, Curt Norenberg, for his service to the 4th and 5th Districts. He was always there for us.

We had a successful District Convention and now it's on to the Department Convention. Our Department Commander, Denise Milton, had an outstanding year and showed great leadership. I hope our new Commander does as well. The 4th and 5th District had their annual picnic on June 11th at the Vets Camp on Big Marine Lake. It was one of our joint gatherings with the 4th District and everyone had a good time. Our special guest was Commander Milton. I hope everyone has a good summer.

God bless America and God bless our Veterans.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund
Commander



This has been a memorable year.

The 6th District had a great team of officers and chairmen who worked hard to make the year successful and fun. I am honored to have the opportunity to work side by side with our great American Legion family. The entire family, Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Legion Riders, worked together to make sure our joint project of raising funds to purchase a golf cart for the St. Cloud VA was a success. The new 2018 membership cards are out but you can still sign-up members for 2017 until December 31. Some members want to maintain their continuous years. I look forward to seeing a lot of familiar faces at the upcoming Department Convention in Mahanomen and hope to meet a lot of new members. The hospitality my family and I received throughout our travels this year is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to all the newly elected officers and I wish you all a successful year.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport
Commander



Greetings Mighty 7th.

Wow where has all the time gone? My year as your Commander has gone way too fast and I wish I had more time so we, as a District, could accomplish more.

Our District started fairly strong and at one point we were in 3rd place in the state for membership, but it looks as if we will end up in 7th or 8th place in the state for membership. I need to say a big thank you to everyone in the 7th District that helped to work in the effort to gain more members for the American Legion Family. During my year as Commander I had the opportunity to visit many Posts. I wish that I had been able to visit more Posts and meet more of the American Legion Family members. As everyone that knows me, knows that I love to talk to new people and sometimes just to BS in general with all of the American Legion Family.

I would like to say "thank you" to the entire 7th District Family for all the support that I have received over this past year. It has meant a great deal to me.

Congratulations to the new incoming District Officers.

I look forward to working with all of you this this coming year.

NINTH DISTRICT

Eric Wilkens
Commander



Greetings from the Roaring Ninth District. Hard to believe that the year has come to an end and that we will meet soon in Mahanomen for our Department convention. This year has been full of events, learning, and meeting fellow Legionnaires throughout the state. We had a good membership year even though some Posts fell short of their goals, others met and some exceeded those goals. Our District convention as held on June 10th and we have elected very qualified individuals to carry us forward into the next year. Thank you to everyone across the state for the great things you do in the name of The American Legion and God bless.

TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson
Commander



Hello from the 10th District,

So, I thought last month was my final article. Haha. So again, it has been a year to end all years for me. I am sure all the District have had their Conventions and elected new officers for the 2017-2018 year and I want to say good luck and we can always do the American Legion Family proud. You will have a new Motto and a project to carry on. I really want to say thank you to the Officers and Chairperson's that helped me in the 10th District.

I had a surprise on Memorial Day when Senator Amy Klobucher came to Buffalo Post 270 and presented me with a flag that had flown over the United States Capitol and a certificate with my name on it and I was smiling from ear to ear. The flag will be encased and shown in the glass case at the Buffalo Post and I want to personally thank the Buffalo Legion Members who stayed or came back when she was there in the afternoon. Hoorah.

We have the Department of Minnesota American Legion Convention in July and hope to see many of you then. Also, I want to say Congratulations to Delano and Hopkins Post for winning 2017 Minnesota Legion Bowling titles.

So again remember "family first" and God bless America and keep our troops safe.

Strategic Planning (Continued)

National five-year plan to work off of as a guideline, we as a committee after hours and careful planning and much discussion we submitted our plans to the DEC for their approval. This year the committee submitted a resolution to the DEC to form a three-person education committee as follows: a three-year a two-year and a one-year. Their task is to promote and design a program of education for any Legionnaire who wants to attend. The first class will be held at Legionville, June 23-25. But saying this it takes each district and every Legion post to buy into the program and support it. By doing this we'll become stronger in items such as Recruitment and Retention also leadership skills and having this training we'll make our leaders stronger and we as a great organization will become stronger in leadership and membership.

This year's committee has held six meetings throughout the year and we are not done yet. When this committee started this year we had a goal. I feel we have meant the two of the main goals we set the same as the Strategic planning committees before us and those following us. It has truly been an honor to have served on this committee and with the members I have served with the last four years. The members of 2016-2017 Strategic Committee members are Richard Wog, Chairman, Merlin Ellefson, Secretary, and team members Tom Fernlund, Bishop Dan Williams and Jim Lucas. Department Commander Denise A. Milton, Junior Past Commander James Kellogg, Special Advisor Dan Ludwig, and Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant, also serve.

Richard Wog
Chairmen, Strategic Planning Committee

Legion scholarships listed

The American Legion Memorial Scholarships have been announced for 2017.

Clayton Hartle, Chandler, Southwest Minnesota State University, sponsored by Lake Wilson Post 285.

Chelsea Montgomery, Bloomington, University of Minnesota, sponsored by Richfield Post 435.

Jacob Plaetz, Lucan, college undecided, sponsored by Lucan Post 467.

Logan Larson, Caledonia, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, sponsored by Caledonia Post 191.

Wyatt Hofus, Red Wing, University of Wisconsin, Stout, sponsored by Mazeppa Post 588.

Reid Gerber, Bagley, University of Minnesota -- Duluth, sponsored by Bagley Post 16.

Listening Post

News from around the State



DENT TOWN MEETING -- A VA town hall meeting was held by Service Officer Charlie Kampa for all area veterans at the Dent Post 48.



ST. PAUL BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL CHANGE OF COMMAND -- Karla Wagner, new commander at St. Paul Business and Professional Post 450, accepted congratulations for outgoing commander Larry Calhoun. Wagner is retired from the Army.



DENHAM HONORS -- Denham Post 361 honored Ramond Katchmark with a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership. It was presented by Commander Walter Sarvela.



BAGLEY FLAG CEREMONY -- Department President Denise Milton helped out with the flag retirement ceremony at Bagley Post 16. At left is Post Commander Dave Hallen, and at right is Jim Mitchell.



SECOND DISTRICT OUTING -- The Second District sponsored a day at the lake for residents of the Minnesota Veterans Home in Luverne. They enjoyed boating, fishing and a lunch.



BACKUS OUTING -- Veterans from Eagle's Healing Nest attended a fishing outing at Tuck-A-Way Resort recently. The resort provided boats, bait, gas and more. Backus Post and Unit 368 provided the picnic afterwards.



EAGAN CEREMONY -- Eagan Post 594 Commander John Flynn congratulates a student during the post's Enlistment Recognition Ceremony at Eagan High School. Eleven enlistees were honored.



WABASHA COUNTY DAY -- Wabasha County District 1 and Area 1 recently helped sponsor a Boys and Girls County Day at the Wabasha County Criminal Justice Center. Students were from Wabasha and Lake City.

Listening Post

News from around the State



LAKE CITY INSTALLATION -- Past National Commander Dan Ludwig administers the oath during the installation at Lake City Post 110. From left: Mel Blattner, Gene Schumann, Emery Fick, Dan Smith, Andru Peters.



MILLVILLE HONORS -- Millville Post 579 recently honored its 50-year members. From left are Membership Director Dick Grobe, Gayle Leonhardt, Augie Schleicher and Commander Gary Balcome.

Taps

Asche, Bruno G., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died May 3, 2017. He served in the Philippines. He was a member of Clara City Post 485.

Meints, Clifton, 82, Navy veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, died June 3, 2017. He served on several ships including the USS Salem, Sequoia, Forrestal, Washoe County and Clarion River. He served 23 years. He was a member of Clara City Post 485.

Fritz, Vernon O., 94, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died June 9, 2017. He fought in the Solomon Islands. He was a member of Clara City Post 485.

Schaepi, Frank P., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 23, 2017. He was a member of St. Paul Park Post 98.

McCarthy, Wally, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died May 31, 2017. He was a past commander of St. Paul Park Post 98.

McCauley, Paul J., 78, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 7, 2017. He was a member of St. Paul Park Post 98.

Schmidt, Robert A., 77, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 7, 2017. He was a member of Bloomington Post 550.

Lee, Duane A., 84, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died May 25, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Bode, Herbert Henry, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 3, 2017. He was a member of Nicollet Post 510.

Kruger, Jackie, 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 28, 2017. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

McMahon, Curtis, 67, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 2, 2017. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Jenkins, Raymond E., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died June 2, 2017. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Florine, Donald C., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 10, 2017. He served in the South Pacific for two years. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Nistler, Leonard C., 94, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died June 12, 2017. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Kohlhoff, Terry, 71, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 30, 2017. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Siegle, Ronald E., 74, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 6, 2017. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Johnston, Stanley D., 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 12, 2017. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Meyer, Roman V., 87, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died June 7, 2017. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Olson, Edward "Bing," 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 8, 2017. He was an F6F Hellcat fighter pilot, flying missions in the South China Sea from the USS Yorktown. He earned an Air Medal and a Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of Ashby Post 357.

Matter, Arnold, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died June 10, 2017. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Selenski, Donald C., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 1, 2017. He was a member of Denham Post

361.

Munsell, William, 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 30, 2017. He was a member of Franklin Post 308.

Behrens, Loren John, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 7, 2017. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Arm, Donald Arthur, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 9, 2017. He served on the USS Wren, the fastest of the World War II destroyers. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Morrison, Vernon Clair, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 29, 2017. He was a pharmacist's assistant at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Peetz, Harry, 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 28, 2017. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

Smith, Richard, 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 2, 2017. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Miller, Jerald Duane, 93, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 20, 2017. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Worringer, William G., 91, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died May 20, 2017. He was a fighter pilot. He was a member of Tower Post 245.

Zych, Stanley George, 96, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died May 29, 2017. He served in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and earned several decorations including three combat bars. He was a member of Graceville Post 297.

Popp, Robert, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 26, 2017. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Odegard, Wallace B., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died June 11, 2017. He was trained as a machine gunner and served in France in the 104th Division, Company M, First Platoon. He served on the Red Ball Express, and later served in Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was a past commander of Granite Falls Post 69.

Teaser, Mark M., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died May 8, 2017. He served in the South Pacific. He was a member of Truman Post 115.

Haber, Lester, 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 12, 2017. He was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

Ingvalson, Harlan, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 22, 2017. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

Sandberg, Richard L., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 19, 2017. He served in Germany. He was a member of Janesville Post 281.

Peterson, Miles "Pete," 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 19, 2017. He served on landing ships. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Grams, Paul, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died June 22, 2017. He served in combat in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. He earned a Purple Heart. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Florine, Donald C., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 10, 2017. He served in the South Pacific. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Lippit, Dennis H., 70, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 11, 2017. He served in the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines serving tours in Vietnam. He volunteered as a "tunnel rat" and earned a Purple Heart. He was an Honor Guard member at Monticello Post 260.

Aamont, Richard A., 83, Air Force veteran of the

Vietnam War, died June 17, 2017. He was a jet mechanic and a gunner of B-52 bombers and flew 22 missions over Vietnam. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Lawrenz, Francis J., 93, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 7, 2017. He was on a B-26 bomber crew and made 65 bombing runs over Germany. He earned 13 Air Medals. He was a past commander and served on the honor guard at Gaylord Post 433.

Hinrichsen, Michel H., 67, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 18, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Swanson, David C., 74, Marine Corps and Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 24, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Peterson, Paul G., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 9, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Paulson, Gary W., 75, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 10, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Schwab, Gary Joseph, 69, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 25, 2017. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Kalenze, Jerome, 65, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 24, 2017. He served in Korea. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Sontag, David W., 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 9, 2017. He served in Seattle, Washington and China. He was a member of Lake City Post 110.

Stevenson, Robert, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 23, 2017. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

Obituary Policy Minnesota Legionnaire

Updated: February 2006

Obituaries of members of the Legion Family will be published in the Minnesota Legionnaire in a monthly column under the heading "Taps."

Obituaries must be recent, within the last two months prior to the publication of the new edition of the Legionnaire. For example, the February edition would only contain obituaries from January and December.

While the obituaries are brief, the Legionnaire does seek certain information for our readers:

1. Complete name of deceased.
2. Age at death.
3. Branch of service and war or wars the veteran served in.
4. Exact date of death.
5. Additional information about the veteran's service background including unit, type of service, place of service, medals, etc.
6. The post, unit or squadron the deceased belonged to.
7. Additional information about Legion service including officer posts held.

The Legionnaire reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 17-11

President Carol Kottom

July 2017

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

Department Headquarters, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634

The President's Column

By
Carol Kottom



It's amazing how fast a year in your life can pass by. What a wonderful time it has been.

The conventions are done and everyone is prepping to go to the Department Convention in Mahanomen. Congratulations to all the newly elected Unit and District Officers. Effective Saturday July 15th, you will officially assume those positions. Appoint your chairman, set your plans, get your budgets ready for the year and then - - have fun with it all.

I have made a discovery that I was happy to find. There isn't anything wrong with the grass roots members in our organization. The units that I visited are all so organized and the members are all so willing to volunteer. They will drive to wherever it is they are asked to go. They not only spend a couple of hours, but they will spend as much time as needed. Sometimes it may be a weekend event and yes, they will be there. No one has their hand out to be paid, they are just there and willing to do their part. Not just 4 or 5 of the members, but I'd estimate at least 25% or better of their members. I would love to see a class conducted by some of the presidents I met this year. I know it would be absolutely amazing. I am sure that their communities benefit greatly by supporting the American Legion Auxiliaries in their towns. God bless you ladies. You are fantastic!

Pocket angels - what a blessing they have been for me this year. I have met so many wonderful veterans by just walking over to them, sitting down, and introducing myself. Then having the privilege of handing them a pocket angel. Lots of tears and emotions displayed by both of us and those who happened to be with them. The most common thing I heard from them was "I don't deserve this". Can you imagine a veteran who does NOT deserve to have a pocket angel? I can't. Brought tears to my eyes every time they said that. We, as a country, are doing something wrong. How can they not know? I would give each and every one of them a real angel if it was within my power. "God, please hear this request - that each and every veteran receive their own angel." That's the best that I can do.

The golf cart was delivered to St Cloud (see pictures) - what a beautiful thing to see. They were really excited to receive it. There is still plenty of funds, thanks to each and every person, Unit and Post that donated, that the other 3 health care systems and 5 VA homes will receive a fair amount to spend on their veterans also. Can you even visualize how many veterans you have had a hand in helping? Countless.

What a marvelous tour Zandra Kessler, Shirley Frederick, Sandie Deutsch and I had with our National President Mary Davis. She is such a fantastic lady. And you know what - she is just like every one of our members. Warm, friendly and tons of fun. We had a great time at Girls State, Camp Ripley, Legionville, Grand Rapids Legion, Silver Bay Veterans Health Care System, Gooseberry Falls (I thought she was going to run under the Falls!), West Duluth Legion, North Branch Legion, Minneapolis Veterans Home, Wayzata Legion, Memorials by the State Veterans Building and finally ending up in Buffalo where she stopped to visit one of our buffalo statues to end the evening. Thanks to all who came to the luncheons and dinners. Mary is a great speaker and has a lot of information for us. She did ask that we all work a little harder on membership. Give it a personal touch - call, don't email! Get the ones that are still unpaid - the year has not ended yet. We are very close to losing a delegate to the National conventions. We can't afford to let that happen.

Thank you all for such a memorable year. Your hospitality has been the greatest. Hope to see you at Mahanomen for the final closing of this year and the beginning of the next.

Evelyn Humphrey elected 2017 Girls State governor

The 71st session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State ended on Saturday, June 17. Singing together the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State song one last time the 361 citizens, once strangers now friendships to last over the years have formed. A week of intense study and learning all about our government, at all levels city, county and state, and the history of our great State of Minnesota.

We hope that the girls left with an appreciation and understanding of Minnesota government.

The 2017 American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Constitutional officers are:

Governor - Evelyn Humphrey, Wanamingo, sponsored by Faribault Unit 43

Lt. Governor - Katie Fredrickson, sponsored by St. Louis Park Unit 282

Secretary of State - Lacey Wedell, sponsored by Forest Lake Unit 225

State Auditor - Grace Heller, sponsored by Rochester Unit 92

Attorney General - Olamide Adebayo, sponsored by Rochester Unit 92

Chief Justice - Oreoluwa Odeyinka, sponsored by Rochester Unit 92

Supreme Court Associate Justices -
Maison Jobe - sponsored by Brainerd Unit 255

Anne Omer - sponsored by Lake Park Unit 181

Summer Schwintek - sponsored by Forest Lake Unit 225

Minnesota's entry into National competition for the Samsung Scholarship - Margaret Kleiman, sponsored by Hutchinson Unit 92.

The Spirit Award was won by Emma Otremba sponsored by Hillman Unit 602.

The Ed Viehman Award was won by Hannah Mitchell sponsored by Cloquet Unit 262. Daniel Viehman was on hand to present the award at the Thursday Inauguration Ceremony.

Girls Nation Senators were chosen:
Senior Senator - Izabella Raleigh, sponsored by Lino Lakes Unit 566

Junior Senator - Taylor Kvidsten, sponsored by Wayzata Unit 118

The President of the Senate - Rylie Young, sponsored by Nisswa Unit 627

Speaker of the House - Izabella Raleigh, sponsored by Lino Lakes Unit 566

Senate Chaplain - Madison Verheist, sponsored by Canby American Legion Post 524 and Laura Jansky, sponsored by Waite Park Unit 428

House of Representatives Chaplain - Kyra Possin, sponsored by New Richland Unit 75.

There are many highlights to the week at American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State, the wonderful visiting speakers throughout the week, the Thursday night Inauguration ceremony with Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court Lorie Gildea presiding over the Oath of Office, the flag disposal ceremony and many others.

Thanks to all of the Unit American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairmen for the work that you have done to bring all of these girls to this wonderful program. And to all of the fantastic volunteers that spent the week at Bethel University with the girls, this program cannot function without you.

And finally to our 2017 American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Director Peggy Tesdahl, Chairman Marsha Bible, Education Director Norma Tramm, Americanism Chairman Sandy Wersal, Committee members Jessie Hoppe and Patti Coleman. Thanks for another great year at American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State.

Best wishes to our soon to be elected Department Officers and appointees. Keep volunteering - you can't do it wrong. Remember to always "Thank a Veteran - all gave some, some gave all" and carry pocket angels.

And finally - "God bless our veterans, our active military and their families, those of us who have gathered during the past year, and God bless America."



OATH OF OFFICE -- Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lori Gildea swears in Evelyn Humphrey as Girls State Governor. Department President Carol Kottom is in back.

JUNIOR FUN WEEKEND

Junior members are invited to participate in the 9th Annual Department Junior Fun Weekend, held Friday August 5 through Sunday, August 6 at Legionville near Brainerd. All current 2017 Junior members and their Advisors/Chaperones are invited to attend. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Junior members must be between the ages of 3 - 18 and do not have to be from an active Junior group. The cost is \$20 per person and is non-refundable. This includes all meals and activities. Registration forms and fees must be received in the Department office no later than Monday, July 24, 2017. No refunds will be given. Registration information was mailed to ALL units in May. Call the Department office if you need registration forms. They are also posted on our website. Go to the home page, calendar, click on Junior Fun Weekend and it will take you right to the registration forms. Please make sure and have our Juniors attend. This is a fun-filled, very inexpensive week-end and teaches our future leaders what we are all about along with giving them a chance to make many new friends. Come and see all the changes and improvements that have been made at Legionville.

2017 -2018 DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

Our Congratulations to the ten District Presidents-Elect who will be serving their respective Districts for the 2017-2018 year:

- 1st District - Cheryl Nyman, Plainview Unit 179
- 2nd District - Kristen Donnelly, Northrop Unit 522
- 3rd District - Kat Benjamin, Chaska Unit 57
- 4th District - Lynn Olson, Roseville Unit 542
- 5th District - Sonja Dauphin, Richfield Unit 435
- 6th District - Vicki Bibeau, Walker Unit 134
- 7th District - Karla Minnick, Spicer Unit 545
- 8th District - Anna Eells, Grand Rapids Unit 60
- 9th District - Doreen Norgaard, Bagley Unit 16
- 10th District - Jody Hassing, Bloomington Unit 550

UNIT OFFICERS' LIST

All Units should have held their elections for the 2017-2018 Auxiliary year by now. Your incoming secretary and Membership Chairman should be appointed and ready to assume their duties.

Each Unit was asked to return their officers' list for the coming year to the Department office by June 12th. We are still missing officer's lists from 129 Units.

These lists are very important as we develop our mailing lists for the year from them. No 2018 membership cards/packets will be given to your Unit until we have received your 2017-2018 list. You can download the form on our website mnala.org to your own computer, fill it out and email it in to us. It is as simple as that.

2018 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Very soon we will be kicking off the new membership year. The 2018 membership information will be available to all Units at the 2017 Department Convention, if we have your Unit Officer list on file. If your packet isn't picked up

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

at Department Convention it will be given to your District Membership Chairman at the annual August Workshop.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The Annual Department Convention will be held in at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen with the Mahanomen American Legion Family 31 serving as hosts. Department President Carol Kottom will call the Convention to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 13th... The delegates will conduct the business of the Auxiliary, hear reports from our chairmen and elect our 2017-18 Department Officers. All Auxiliary sessions will be held in the Richwood Pine Bend Room of Shooting Star

President Carol has made Friday of Department Convention "Wear Red Day." Let's all show our spirit and wear red to the convention on Friday, July 14.

The following members have declared their candidacy for Department office:

Department President – Donna Arends, Willmar Unit 167

Department 1st Vice President – Jean Walker, Warren Unit 27

Department 2nd Vice President – Mary Hendrickson, West Duluth Unit 71

Department 2nd Vice President – Sally Strasser, North St. Paul Unit 39

Alternate National Executive Committeewoman – Raleen Tolzmann, Minnesota Lake Unit 287

Nominations for Department officers will be held Thursday morning. A secret ballot will be used for any office where there is more than one candidate. Balloting hours will be in the convention rules. Where there is but one candidate the vote will be by acclamation. There will be nominations for delegates-at-large to the National Convention, and election by secret ballot if there is more than one nomination. The same rules used for election of department officers will apply. There will be two Poppy contests at the Department Convention this year. The first is to make a Table Centerpiece and the second is Tri-Fold Educational Board. The criteria for both contests is in the Trophy and Awards booklet and also on our website; www.mnala.org. All entries must be at the Department Convention by 9:00 a.m. on Thursday the 13th. Tables will be set up in the Display area for your entries. Winners will be announced during the Poppy report on Friday.

Please see the complete convention program printed elsewhere in this issue of the Minnesota Legionnaire.

CORRECTION

There was a misprint in the June Legionnaire under the Scholarship information. Ashly Willis was awarded the Department Non-Traditional Scholarship. She was sponsored by the Marietta Unit 156. My apologies for the error.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Our 2017 National Convention will be held in Reno, Nevada, August 18 -24, 2017. All Auxiliary Delegates and Alternates elected at the District Conventions will be receiving their information on housing, registration, States Dinner, Woman of the Year Luncheon, etc. shortly.

Registration on housing requests must be sent to: The American Legion, State Veterans Service Building, 20 W 12th St #300, St. Paul, MN 55155. If for any reason you are not planning to attend, yet were elected a Delegate or Alternate, please notify the Department Secretary immediately and prior to our Department Convention. There will be packets available at the Department Convention for those At Large Delegates and Alternates elected at the Convention. Please note that The American Legion will only make your housing reservations until July 17, 2017.

All registrations and reservations for the States Dinner, Women of the Year Luncheon must be received by July 24th. The credentials and housing lists as well as reservations for dinner and luncheon must be finalized and forwarded to our National organization.



CART FOR ST. CLOUD -- President Carol Kottom presented the St. Cloud VAHCS a golf cart to be used for transporting Veterans around the VA campus. Kottom and James Kampsen, Director of Voluntary Services, posed in front of the cart. The cart was made possible through her Department President's project donations.



PRESIDENTS -- National President Mary Davis and Past National President Evelyn Starr met at the West Duluth American Legion Post 71.



LEGIONVILLE -- NEC Shirley Frederick, National President Mary Davis, Department President Carol Kottom and Department Commander Denise Milton toured the Legionville Safety Patrol Camp.



GREETINGS -- National President Mary Davis greeting a World War II POW survivor at the Military Flag dedication held at the Minneapolis Veterans home.



RESEMBLANCE -- American Legion Auxiliary National President Mary Davis had a wonderful time joining in the Girls State festivities.



AMERICANISM -- Chris Ronning was the Americanism speaker at Girls State this year.

June 14, 2017, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	5,000	4,668	93.36%	4,827
Two	4,924	4,540	92.20%	4,729
Three	4,411	4,076	92.41%	4,246
Four	720	693	96.25%	690
Five	824	711	86.29%	800
Six	6,042	5,691	94.19%	5,841
Seven	3,934	3,600	91.51%	3,810
Eight	1,628	1,507	92.57%	1,537
Nine	4,350	4,015	92.30%	4,208
Ten	5,159	4,784	92.73%	4,977
1982	160	159	99.38%	156
Totals	37,152	34,444	92.71%	35,821

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- 4 nights at The Millennium Broadway Hotel in Times Square
- Broadway Musical
- Radio City Music Hall: "The Rockettes Christmas Spectacular"
- Manhattan Island City tour
- 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Harbor cruise with lunch
- Lunch at Carmine's
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

\$2,499.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Holiday Branson

November 16-20, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 4 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 7 Meals: 4 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- Luggage handling for one suitcase
- Titanic Museum
- 6 Shows: Dutton Family, Dixie Stampede Dinner Show, Andy Williams Christmas, Daniel O'Donnell Holiday, Christmas Wonderland, Hits of 50's and 60's Christmas

\$789.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

New York City & New England/Canada Cruise

September 15-24, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to New York City
- All transfers from airport, hotel and pier
- 2 nights stay at the Millennium Hotel in Times Square
- Circle Line Cruise of Manhattan with lunch
- A Broadway performance
- 9/11 Memorial Museum
- 7 night cruise on the Crown Princess
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling at hotel and on cruise

Starting at
\$3,199.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Mexican Riviera Cruise

November 4-12, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Los Angeles
- 1 night pre-cruise at the Los Angeles Marriott
- 7 night cruise on the Emerald Princess
- All meals and entertainment while aboard the Emerald Princess
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling on the ship

Starting at
\$1,999.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Christmas in Chicago

December 3-5, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 2 nights accommodations
- 3 Meals and 1 Holiday hors d'oeuvres party
- Goodman Theatre - A Christmas Card
- The Wonderland Express
- Christkindlemarket
- Christmas around the World Tree display
- Trolley Christmas lights tour including Zoo lights at the Lincoln Park Zoo
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$599.00 per person double occupancy

San Francisco City by the Bay

October 19-24, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- 5 nights stay at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Fisherman's Wharf
- Breakfast daily
- San Francisco City Tour and Muir Woods
- Visit to Alcatraz Island
- Sonoma and Napa Valley Wine Country Tour
- Boudin San Francisco Sourdough Museum Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

\$2,099.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Smoky Mountains

October 23-30, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 7 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 11 Meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 dinners
- Dollywood Theme Park
- Nashville Highlights tour
- Guided tour of Smoky Mountains National Park
- Grand Ole Opry, Hatfield and McCoy dinner show and Music Mansion
- General Jackson Showboat tour
- Ole Smoky Moonshine Distillery tour

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General Douglas MacArthur, commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in the South Pacific, on an inspection trip of American battle fronts, late 1943. From left: Staff Sergeant Virgil Brown (Pima), First Sergeant Virgil F. Howell (Pawnee), Staff Sergeant Alvin J. Vilcan (Chitimacha), General MacArthur, Sergeant Byron L. Tsingine (Diné [Navajo]), Sergeant Larry Dekin (Diné [Navajo]). U.S. Army Signal Corps

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