

# The Minnesota

# Legionnaire



AMERICAN  
LEGION  
AND  
AUXILIARY

Volume 99, Number 9

For God and Country

September 2017

## American Legion Baseball



Joyous Tri-City players pile on after winning the Division I state American Legion baseball tournament.

## Tri-City, Pierz win titles

Tri-City Red (New Brighton), the host team in this year's Division I Tournament held in St. Paul, made their fans happy by winning the state Legion Baseball championship.

In Division II action at Spicer, Pierz won the state title. Tri-City and Ham Lake advanced to the national regional at Dickinson, N.D. where Tri-city won one game before bowing out and Ham Lake lost both its games in an effort to advance to the Legion World Series.

Pierz, however, moved onto the Central Plains Regional at Wahpeton, N.D., where they won the title.

Pierz opened the regional with a victory, 6-4, over West Salem, Wis., and then shut out Park River, N.D., 8-0. The Minnesota team got trounced by Marysville, Kan.,

12-3 in the final game of pool play, but still advanced to the championship bracket where they defeated Las Vegas, Nev., 5-0.

West Salem fought its way back to the title game but fell to Pierz 5-3 in a rematch of the first game of the tournament.

There is no Division II national tournament. Pierz won the state title by first defeating Minneapolis Giantvalley 7-4 and host New London/ Spicer 7-0 in pool play. In championship play, Pierz topped Caledonia 8-7 and then defeated Proctor 5-1.

The Tony Sipe Outstanding Player was Noah Boser of Pierz who went 9-13 in the Division II Tournament with

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## Wisconsin's Rohan first woman N.C.

RENO — Denise Rohan, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War era from Wisconsin, was elected the first woman commander of The American Legion at the national convention in Reno, Nevada.

Rohan said her theme for the year is "Family First," and she said she will emphasize the cooperation and strength of the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders working together.

She will preside at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis in 2018.

The convention featured an appearance by President Donald Trump who spoke and later signed a bill passed by Congress that will improve the veterans' appeal process with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Continued on Page 14**



**PRESENTS COLORS** -- Past National Commander Dan Ludwig of Red Wing presented newly-elected Denise Rohan of Wisconsin with her official colors.

## Fall Conference this year will be hosted by Willmar Post, Unit

Organizers of this year's Fall Conference in Willmar are asking those attending to register early.

A registration form is located on page 2 of this issue of the Legionnaire. A complete listing of hotels and contact information is located on the Minnesota American Legion website: mnlegion.org.

DuWayne Underthun, chairman of the conference, advises Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion to let the hotels know if you have any special needs

for your stay.

There will be shuttle service between the conference center, Willmar Legion Post 167, and the hotels in the Willmar area. Those who choose to stay at a hotel in Spicer will be responsible for their own transportation.

Those who have questions or concerns about the hosting of the Fall Conference should contact Underthun at 320-894-8991 or email at dbunderthun@gmail.com.

The Fall Conference is the Legion Family's "school of

instruction."

The conference will be held Oct. 27-28 all under one roof.

There are several motels in the area including The Best Western Plus, Holiday Inn and Express, Days Inn, Country Inn and Suites, AmercInn and Super 8.

All hotel reservations must be made by the individual.

The Legion and Auxiliary will not be doing a joint ses-

**Continued on Page 2**

## DEC elects new Judge Advocate for Minnesota

Minnesota has a new Department Judge Advocate: Greg Colby of Northfield Post 84.

Colby, an Air Force veteran and an attorney was elected to a three-year term at the Department Executive Committee meeting held in August in Elk River.

Tom Lannon, Prior Lake, completed his three-year term at the meeting. He has indicated for some time that he would not seek re-election to the office.

Lannon was given a standing ovation by the Legion's leadership team at the meeting.

Lannon, who is not a lawyer, was able to fill the gap between Don Walsler, who retired three years ago, and Colby – both attorneys.

Colby is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and earned his law degree at William Mitchell College of Law in 1978. He also has a master's degree in public administration from Minnesota State University at Mankato.

Colby was an Air Force ROTC graduate at Minnesota, and attended Judge Advocate General School at Maxwell Air Force Base. He also served in Michigan and North Dakota, and served in the Reserves in North Dakota, Louisiana, and Nebraska. He retired in 2004 with 21 years of military service.

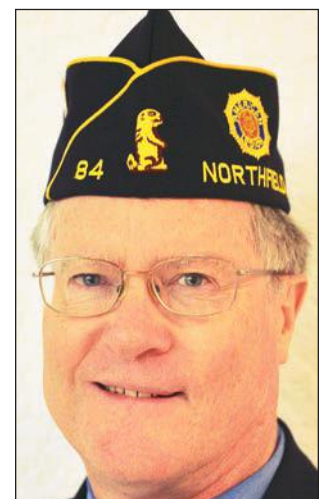
He began his legal career as an assistant county attorney for Goodhue County and held the same position for Rice County. He went into private practice in 1985 and began the Colby Law Office in 1987. Since then he has served as an assistant public defender in Owatonna and managing attorney for the Third Judicial District Public Defense in Owatonna.

Colby has taught in the paralegal department at Inver Hills Community College.

He is presently serving on the Northfield City Council, and also served on the city's Planning Commission.

In other business, the DEC:

**Continued on Page 14**



**GREG COLBY**  
Department Judge Advocate



# Endorsements

## Hill endorsed for Sergeant-at-Arms post

Brewster American Legion Post 464 has endorsed Ryan Hill for Department Sergeant-at-Arms for the 2018-2019 year.

Hill enlisted in the Navy in February, 1968, and served four years on active duty and two years in the Reserves. He served on the USS Oriskany, CVA-34, for four tours to Vietnam and was discharged on 13 February, 1974.

Hill is a 40-year member of Brewster American

Legion Post 464. He helped start the Brewster Sons of the American Legion Squadron and is a six-year SAL member there. He served as 2nd District Commander in 2015-2016, 2nd District 1st Vice Commander in 2014-2015, 2nd District Vice Commander from 2012-2014 and is currently 2nd District Legislation Chairman.

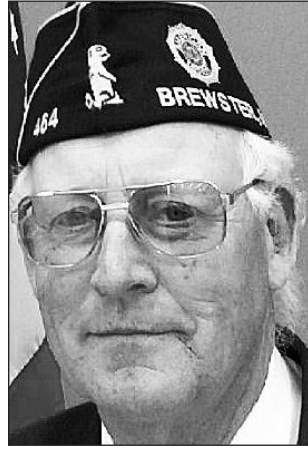
He served as a 4-H Leader while his children were in 4-H in the 1980s

and 1990s.

Hill served on the SDSP soybean crush plant at Volga South Dakota for 14 years, nine of those years as Public Relations Chairman.

He then served as an advisor to the MnSP start-up at Brewster.

Hill and his wife, Naomi, have two children and two grandchildren, all of whom are American Legion Family members. He has farmed in the Brewster area all his adult life.



RYAN HILL

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## Legion ready to help hurricane victims

Heavy rain and severe flooding is ravaging Houston in the wake of Harvey, a category 4 hurricane that is affecting more than six million people, including American Legion Family members. And the Legion is ready to assist those in need.

The American Legion's National Emergency Fund

(NEF) provides immediate financial assistance to Legion Family members and posts affected by natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and flooding. The fund provides up to \$3,000 for qualified Legion Family members and up to \$10,000 for posts.

The NEF covers expenses such as temporary housing, food, water, clothing and other daily household items.

In order to qualify for an NEF grant, an applicant must:

- Have been displaced from his or her primary residence due to a declared natural disaster.
- Provide copies of receipts of items required to meet immediate needs, such as temporary housing, food, water, clothing, diapers, etc.
- Be an active member of the Legion at the time of the disaster.

Nearly \$9 million has been provided to Legion Family members and posts through the NEF since its inception. All contributions made to the NEF are used to meet urgent needs of Legion Family members.

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# MHS ad

**COMMANDER'S COLUMN**

**By Mike Schaffer**



I just returned from the National Legion Convention in Reno, Nevada, where history took place

Denise Rohan of Wisconsin was elected as the first female National Commander in the history of the American Legion. I'm looking forward to serving with her during this next year.

With the Reno Convention now completed, that means Minnesota will be the host state for the next National Convention. A great deal of the preparation for the 100th Convention has been completed, but there is something you and your post can do for me. Minnesota has a tradition of "massing the colors" for National Convention parades, and I would like to see your Post colors, as well as Old Glory, and get as close to 1,000 flags as you and I can muster for that next parade. Lets give the National audience a sight they won't soon forget. How about it Minnesota?

Each year the Department Commander selects a project to raise funds for, and I've selected two things:

I find important to me to use as a project, Boys State and Veteran Suicide Prevention. For Boys State, I seek to raise funds that will cover the fees necessary to attend the Boys State Program, where none are available to allow the student to attend. Anything I can do to get students (our future voting citizens) to be aware of their part in our country's future is well worth the effort. I'm hoping to raise at least \$5,000 toward this part of my project.

Next is Veteran Suicide Prevention, and where I seek donations is for their 'Emergent Needs Fund.' Donations will be used to support the emergency needs of homeless, indigent and inpatient veterans as they go through treatment to prevent possible suicide. Emergent Need Funds are available only after all other resources have been exhausted. Things funds can be used for include the following:

- 1.) Transportation support - veterans are there as outpa-

tients and inpatients and have no way to get home. Some cannot engage in the treatment programming because they don't have money for transportation.

- 2.) Personal need items - these veterans are often homeless and need everyday items.
- 3.) Household goods.
- 4.) Housing applications when transitioning to permanent housing
- 5.) Rental deposits, and utility bills to avoid disconnect
- 6.) Domestic violence - to help veterans who are escaping domestic violence, many with children

These Emergent Need Funds are managed through the Voluntary Service Office at the VA and there is a process for identification & approval of requests. The Minneapolis & St. Cloud VA hospitals last year, even with all other venues, spent about \$85,000 assisting veterans in need. I'm seeking to raise at least \$25,000 for this part of my project. Please, help with at least one of the projects if you can.

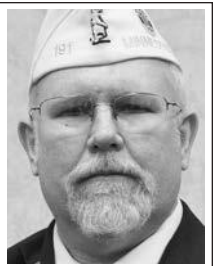
My theme for the year is "Learn from the Past, Mentor the Present, Prepare for the Future." If we do not learn and remember our past, how can we mentor the present and future leaders, so as to prepare them for leadership positions in the American Legion? There will be a move to go beyond visiting our Guard and Reserve units this year, that being approaching the colleges and universities of Minnesota. Each state college and university has a veterans rep on campus that see to the needs of veterans attending school. There are 30 colleges and 7 universities on 54 different Campus sites that have never been approached before that I'm aware of concerning the American Legion and what we can offer them.

Department Membership Director Larry Ryan is working out the details of this and which districts have which school within their boundaries. How many thousands of veterans are attending these schools that we can give information to concerning what we the American Legion as an organization do, its programs, and the many benefits of membership?

Since my election as Minnesota's Commander, I've been busy to say the least; I'll mention just a few of them. I attended the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis with department officers, a Disabled Veteran fishing outing where a good time was had by the veterans and lots of fish were caught. They had the time of their lives that day, priceless it was. I attended the Stand Down at Ft. Snelling. Oh yes, I also attended a meeting to make preparations for the future testimonial, which will be held on April 21st at Jackpot Junction near Redwood Falls. Please save the day, I'm quite certain that the Membership Director and Department Vice Commanders are plotting something big for my demise at this event.

**Chaplain's Corner**

**By Ralph Schneekloth**



Greetings to my fellow American Legion and American Legion Family members. September 11, 2001, 16 years already that we have been waging the "War on Terror." We need to pause and remember those killed and wounded on that tragic day. It truly was a horrific day. Now also is time to reflect, remember all of our service brothers and sisters who answered the call and serve our nation. We cannot forget, it is a major part of the American Legion's first pillar, Veterans Affairs and rehabilitation. We take care of our own, as it says in the preamble, "Our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Many of our veterans and active, reserve or guard soldiers live with and many suffer from, physical and mental injuries. Also many suffer spiritually. It is a fact of life. Also we must address the suicide epidemic that still plagues us. One is too many, and still at 20-22 a day, it is unconscionable. We need to be available and willing to help, to reach out a hand, or just to give a kind word to a fellow vet, or service member, you never know that the kind words you give might be just enough to help keep them in the game, until they can get help. I know this to be true. We are not in it alone, when we served, we were in crews, squads, platoons... so please do not allow yourself to be out there alone. Reach out too, we all hope and pray and know that saving even one life is worth it.

A prayer for the nation-

When the nation we love is in danger, what should we do to ward off disaster? There is something even more important than strengthening her physical defenses and building a strong morale within her, for unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain (Psalm 127:1). Should not a people inquire of their God?

From Thomas Paine "The American Crisis" December 23, 1776:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands for it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: 'tis dearness that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price on its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

We love our nation and continue to serve and love as brothers/ sisters in the brotherhood. Also know you cannot defeat darkness by more darkness. Only light can defeat the darkness. It is true, we cannot allow ourselves to tire in doing good, that which is taking care of our veterans, those still serving, along with their families. I would personally like to say "Thank you" to all who serve, from top to bottom, your service and the jobs you all perform are very valuable and necessary.

In closing, thank you to all who have wished me recovery from recent afflictions, it is very much appreciated. Also as Chaplain I would pray that we may all be safe in our travels, and may your hearts be pure and that we might continue to serve our great nation, and most importantly that one day, there will no longer be "Wars and rumors of war". Till we meet again, go with God, and God be with you.

**Guest Editorial**

**Let's make a great convention in Minneapolis**

**By Jeff Olson**

I am not really certain if you "make" a convention but I am certain that we are in the middle of planning the 100th convention of The American Legion. It's really exciting and people all over the United States are getting excited about attending the convention in Minneapolis, August 24-30, 2018. Many are enthusiastic to celebrate the 100th convention at the very site of the first convention in 1919 at Peavey Plaza just a block from the Minneapolis Convention Center.

This will be the 7th time that Minnesota (six in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul) has hosted the national convention and we are tied with the "Windy City" of Chicago, Illinois, for the most conventions hosted.

Minneapolis is also one of the most heavily attended convention cities in the country. This is no surprise to Minnesotans. Who can beat the parks, the restaurants, the athletic facilities and, don't forget, the feeling of "Minnesota Nice." Everyone is welcome and made to feel like they are at home.

During the convention many events will take place. Certainly business will be done at our convention commission meetings and on the floor of the convention. There will be a parade held, most likely on Sunday afternoon with many Legionnaires, and members of the Legion family. Also participating will be numerous high school bands and possibly some college bands as well. Many military units will be included and it is simply a celebration of The American Legion and a tremendous display of patriotism.

Marching down Nicollet Mall, being viewed by the thousands of people on the mall and having a relaxing time at one of the many patio eateries is really a thrill. I hope you can make it.

After the parade we hope to have a party at the convention center where we can relax (rest), enjoy a beverage from the Craft Brewers Association, some food and listen to some of the great musicians from the parade. Who knows what else could happen?

Tuesday the general session begins. The opening ceremonies are always beautiful and highlighted by many young people who have done great things for their country both in the military and in civilian life. This is truly an awesome event and the talents shown by these fine young people give me great faith in the future of our nation. I hope

that you can attend and share this inspiration.

Wednesday and Thursday are full of reports from our many commissions discussing resolutions that are recommended for action by the convention delegates. These resolutions set the future direction for The American Legion and our nation. Thursday highlights include the election of a national commander to lead us for the next year culminating with the 100th anniversary celebration in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 2019.

So, you are probably asking, "What can I do to help make this convention?" Here are a few ideas for you:

First, putting on a convention costs money and some of those costs are the responsibility of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Minnesota. We are challenging every post in Minnesota to donate to the convention corporation. Small or large, every dollar will help make this convention a rousing success. Please make certain that your donation check clearly has the word "corporation" in the heading.

Second, all of you know of a business in your area that has historically supported veteran's issues and causes. If you think they would like to support the convention effort we can send them a brochure with many different opportunities to participate and a return envelope for the check.

Third, nothing runs without volunteers, the parade organization, registration staffing putting together packets for the 10,000 attendees and many other areas. If you would like to volunteer send an email to centennial@mnlegion.org and we will get back to you.

Last, for this editorial, if you don't really want to volunteer but would like to attend, please do so and bring your "Minnesota Nice."

Thank you for all you do and remember: If it is to be, it's up to me.

*(Olson is the chair of the National Convention Corporation of Minnesota.)*



The Minnesota **Legionnaire**

Official Publication of and Owned Exclusively by 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.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** \$10 for non-members. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

**PHONE:** 651-291-1800, 866-259-9163, **FAX:** 651-291-1057

**ADVERTISING RATES:** Contact Al Zdon, 651-291-1800

**E-MAIL:** azdon@mnlegion.org

**WEBSITE:** www.mnlegion.org

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**POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to The Minnesota Legionnaire, 20 W. 12th Street, St. Paul, MN, 55155-2000. (USPS No. 013-679.) (ISSN No. 1644270)

# What's Happening

## Harvest Rally

The Harvest Rally will be held at Legionville on Saturday, Sept. 9. Turn-in will be from 3-4 with the program to follow. Dinner tickets are \$13 and should be purchased in advance from your district commander.

## 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 Pork 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.

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

## SAL seeking Hunters

The Sons of the American Legion will be holding the annual John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veteran Deer Hunt from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1. The SAL are looking for disabled veterans interested in participating. Applications can be found on the SAL website: mnsal.org, on the Facebook page or by contacting Dave Vulcan, 507-380-5095. Applications are due by Sept. 15.

## St. Cloud Ribbon Cutting

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held for the new resident dining facility at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center on Monday, Sept. 11, at 2 p.m. The new building features a larger dining room and enhanced food prep areas. It is also closer to the veterans it serves.

Parking is in the Building 115 lot.

## Town Hall Meeting

Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System are invited to a town meeting at the VFW post in Montevideo. It will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 5 p.m. It will provide veterans with an opportunity to hear from and question VA officials.

At 4 p.m. veterans can talk about VA health care enrollment with a County Veterans Service Officer.

## Legion Story

The Minnesota Historical Society will be presenting a series of forgotten World War I era stories about individuals and organizations that changed America.

On Saturday, Sept. 9, the MHS will present speakers on the Minnesota American Legion and the Minnesota Red Cross. The program will begin at 10 a.m. and go until 11:30.

The emergence and impact of the Minnesota American Legion will be addressed by Al Zdon, editor of the Minnesota Legionnaire. Phil Hanson will talk about the Red Cross, which mobilized in Europe and then dealt with the flu epidemic in America. The event will be held at the History Center in downtown St. Paul. Cost is \$16 per person, \$12 for members.

## Fall Bomber's Moon Ball

The annual Fall Bomber's Moon Ball will be held Saturday, Sept. 9, at Fleming Field in St. Paul. Doors will open at 6 and a dance lesson will start at 7 with dancing from 8 until midnight. Cost is \$17 at the door or \$14.50 online.

Dance lessons will be provided by TC Swing and music will be by the Roseville Big Band. There will be food, and prizes for the best World War II era dress.

## Carver County Fund Raiser

The Carver County Veterans Memorial and Registry will have a fund raiser and silent auction on Thursday, Nov. 2, with the social hour beginning at 5 p.m. It will be held at the Event Center in Waconia.

The event will feature a dinner followed by a guest speaker, Gen. Johanna Clyborne. Entertainment will be by

Barbara Fairchild and a local group, the Six Outlaws.

Tickets are \$50 per person. Information is available at 952-442-8461 or 952-657-2169.

The following evening, Nov. 3, there will be another fundraising event at Mayer Lutheran Church in Mayer. This will be a two-hour show by Barbara Fairchild. Tickets are \$20 and the show will begin at 6:30 p.m.

## Round Table

The September meeting of the World War II History Round Table will be held at the Fort Snelling History Center on Thursday, Sept. 14, beginning at 7 p.m.

The program will be on winning the war in the Pacific with James D. Hornfischer, author of "The Fleet at High Tide." Veterans will recount their experiences.

## Bowling Secretary Sought

The American Legion Bowling Tournament is looking for a new secretary to run the 2018 tourney and continue into the future. This is a paid position. For more information, contact John Torma at 612-749-3704.

## Greenfield POW/MIA event

The City of Greenfield will have a National POW/MIA Recognition Day Event on Friday, Sept. 15 at the city's Central Park beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Ritual squads and color guards from the area are invited to participate. For more information, contact Kerri Holm-Eberling at 762-202-9359.

## MACV Events

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will hold StandDowns and Legal Clinics coming up:

-- StandDown, Grand Rapids, Sept. 28, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., National Guard Armory.

-- StandDown, Bemidji, Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Curling Club.

-- Legal Clinic, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Sept. 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Flag Atrium Balcony Room.

-- Legal Clinic, Anoka, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sept. 7, Anoka County Government Center.

## Guest Column

### Victimized veterans

By Greg Colby

There I was sitting in a daze in Elk River after the Executive Committee named me the department's judge advocate. "Oh Lord, what have I got myself in for?" I wondered. Within a week, I was on line and learned that Minnesota's Attorney General had filed a lawsuit against some lender that she claimed was ripping off veterans. Hey, I thought, I'm the department's lawyer, I better find out what's going on. Immediately I called the attorney general's office, identified myself and asked "who is getting ripped off and for how much?" A very nice assistant attorney general called me back, answered my questions and said I would get a copy of the complaint. That complaint was e-mailed to me the next day. I read it and I was not happy. If it is true, vets have been victimized and that is just wrong on so many different levels.

Lori Swanson, our Attorney General, filed a lawsuit on August 16th that we all need to be aware of. She claims that seniors and veterans have been ripped off by an outfit known as Future Income Payments LLC and formerly known as Pensions, Annuities and Settlements LLC. She stated in that complaint that Future Income Payments (also known as FIP) violated Minnesota's laws on banking and usury. Usury is excessive and illegal interest.

In her complaint the Attorney General describes how numerous individuals were harmed and includes the stories of six different veterans. Among those veterans were these stories: SS is a disabled Gulf War army vet who borrowed \$2700 from FIP LLC. FIP LLC collected from the vet more than ten times the amount borrowed. Another Gulf War army vet who is 90% disabled also needed money. That vet borrowed \$3400 from FIP LLC but was obligated to repay \$27,000. The annual interest rate was 155%. JF served as a medic from 1969 to 1970 and during his service suffered a traumatic brain injury. He borrowed \$2177 from FIP. His total repayments amounted to \$14,400 (annual interest rate was 165%).

Swanson is asking the district court to find that the defendant in the lawsuit engaged in unlicensed lending and charged excessive interest on loans. She also asked the court to grant those named and harmed relief from those illegal loans. Since this lawsuit is not a class action suit, the Attorney General needs to know who else has been harmed as soon as possible. I am asking that if you know anyone who has been harmed as the vets described above

have been, contact me. I can be reached at greg.colby.northfield@gmail.com or go on line to the Minnesota Attorney General's website at www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Complaint.asp If you need to talk with the AG's office, call 800-657-3787.

As your new department judge advocate, I hope I can help all vets and legionnaires avoid legal problems. You will hear from me from time to time on this subject. In the meantime, my primary task will be to advise department officers and staff. By helping them and helping you, I hope we can create a better Legion.

*Colby is the Department's Judge Advocate*

## Mail Call

### Boy's State Tuesday

To the Editor:

Many schools have Homecoming in September or October. Those that have parades: encourage the Boys' and Girls' Staters to walk or ride to publicize their experiences.

On Tuesday of Boys' State week, the young men are randomly assigned a party designation—Nationalist or Federalist. There are no designated attributes for each party, such as liberal or conservative. Each city is split evenly between the two parties. During the City Caucus, ideas for planks are discussed as a party platform is developed. Also, delegates and alternate delegates are elected to represent the city at the County Convention. They also have the opportunity to endorse candidates for the later election of state Senators and members of the House of Representatives.

At the County Convention, further discussion and development of planks occurs, as well as election of delegates and alternate delegates to the State Convention. It is during discussion of ideas that the boys get to know one another's values and stands on issues. This knowledge is helpful when the time comes for selection of candidates for State offices.

Rules are established for each of the conventions by committees of delegates. Planks are consolidated and ranked by committees, as well.

Also occurring on Tuesday is the filing for county offices and legislative offices.

Neil Kruse  
Spring Lake Park

## New commander wants to know: Are you ready?

RENO -- Standing at the podium after being the first woman elected as American Legion national commander, Denise Rohan had one question for the delegates to the Legion's national convention in Reno: "Are you ready?"

The Wisconsin resident challenged Legionnaires to work together to continue the organization's 98 years of service to the nation, and its veterans, military and their families.

"Are you ready to continue to join forces as part of the nation's largest veteran service organization's family?" Rohan asked. "Are you ready to Purple Up and show the nation that we are a family that not just takes care of our own members, we stand ready to take care of our active-duty military and their families, we take care of our veterans and their families and, in reality, when you look at our four pillars and all of our programs, are you ready to continue to take care of our entire nation's families?"

Rohan said her theme this year will be "Family First," and that the theme is based on The American Legion's motto of "For God and Country."

"I believe we were put here, where you are today, and in the positions you hold currently for the greater good," Rohan said. "We are not here to judge one another. We are here to nurture and take care of one another. Families grow through love and support for one another. As an American Legion family -- we need to treat each other in that same spirit -- like part of our larger extended family."

Taking a cue from the U.S. armed forces, Rohan chose the color purple for her membership shirts. "I chose purple for this year's membership shirts to show that we are joining forces as an American Legion family," she said. "Just like all branches of the military started working together and joined forces, they purpled up over the last several years, it is time for The American Legion family to also purple up as we all work together for the common good."

A 33-year Legionnaire and current member of Post 385 in Verona, Wis., and U.S. Army veteran, Rohan has served as post and department commander. But when her husband, Mike, was first approached about joining The American Legion and Denise identified herself as an eligible veteran, she said she was informed "Women join the Auxiliary."

"That post that denied me membership 37 years ago, they have a picture of me on the wall with a sign that reads 'She could have been a member of our Post.'"

## Sons of The American Legion

By Shawn Davis



As I sit in my room contemplating the end of the national convention, I'd like to reflect back on the impact that we as members of The Sons of The American Legion have had. All the SAL in the nation contributed to the largest donation by the SAL to the Child Welfare Fund, an amount of over \$600,000. We have visited the injured in VA Hospitals and Veterans Homes, saluted deploying troops, comforted and helped their families, provided their children with Josh Dogs to comfort them until their parent came back home. We have participated on Honor Guards to welcome our troops home, whether it was a joyous or somber moment. We have participated in the Legacy Run, and contributed to help the children of our fallen or disabled troops. I could probably fill this entire article with the actions of so many within this great organization that have done something to help others, either directly, or indirectly.

And all it took was to step forward and say, I can help.

For that, all I can say is to repeat Past National Commander Jeff Frain's remark at the end of his term (a remark like so many others when we are humbled by what The Sons of the American Legion can do) and simply say, Thank you.

But time continues, and we must continue the work that we do.

For all those who have gotten their Squadron Officer report forms in, Thank you. If your Squadron has not submitted that form yet, do so immediately even if the officers have not changed from last year. We need to confirm who you are, and how to get in contact with you. Also include your dues amount so that if we get inquiries about joining your Squadron, we can give them the amount, and your contact information.

The SAL storage shed is going up at Legionville. Dave Vulcan has worked hard to gather the funds needed to buy the materials and make a good solid structure built on good foundations that can be used for years. Now we need volunteers to help set it up. Please contact him if you would like to help.

Camporee is coming up, along with the Harvest Rally. I look forward to seeing you there. Tickets are available from your American Legion District Commander. The John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt is taking applications for the hunt at the end of September. Applications can be found on the website - (MNSAL.org), Facebook, or by contacting Dave Vulcan.

I am accepting money for my Commander's project. In fact, a number of SAL members slapped money in my hand when I talked about it during the MN ALR Legacy Run. All I ask is for \$5 from every SAL member. That is all. It is the price of a pack of smokes, or a fancy coffee. At the end, the money will be divided between The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, The MN ROTC Scholarship, and the American Legion Family Hospitalization Association.

So thank you for all you do as a member of the SAL, and I look forward to seeing what amazing things you will do this coming year.

## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Ron Quade, Director American Legion/ MDVA Claims Division



### Pre-Hearing Conference Update

Your American Legion (AL) Claims Divisions are at the cutting edge of Advocacy at a local, State, Federal and National level. In previous segments you learned about MDVA and American Legion Claims Division involvement in the program named Pre-Hearing Conference (PHC). We have an exciting report on program and progress made, developments and changes in qualifications.

In 2015 MDVA Claims Director (Quade) was contacted by American Legion National Claims Director (Hearn) to discuss participation in PHC. Local Regional Office Power of Attorney (POA) Offices would communicate directly with BVA Judges to determine cases most easily granted or remanded. This program, the first of its kind, would allow the Claims Division Staff, who are most familiar with the claims, to communicate to a BVA Judge directly. Cases in VA Veteran Benefits Management System (VBMS) could be considered for resolution without year's long wait for formal hearing.

MDVA and American Legion Claims Division was contacted by BVA Judge John Crowley as the test pilot POA. MDVA / AL was selected based on our Reputation for education, quality argument and development of VA-46 adden-

## Membership Chart, as of Aug. 24, 2017

District	2018 Goal	Total 2017	Total 2018	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
District 1	8,953	8,895	4,049	253	58		45.23%	4,356
District 2	7,272	7,188	2,814	343	84		38.70%	3,370
District 3	11,712	11,647	5,264	341	65		44.95%	5,626
District 4	2,420	2,402	1,143	106	18		47.23%	1,097
District 5	2,486	2,464	746	161	22		30.01%	987
District 6	11,811	11,740	5,190	335	71		43.94%	5,512
District 7	6,398	6,322	2,499	209	76		39.06%	2,980
District 8	4,252	4,212	2,025	101	40		47.62%	2,094
District 9	6,729	6,664	3,059	241	65		45.46%	3,223
District 10	10,066	10,012	4,409	424	54		43.80%	4,651
District 11	401	2,358	1,077	0	2		268.58%	1,174
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72,500</b>	<b>73,904</b>	<b>32,275</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44.52%</b>	<b>35,070</b>

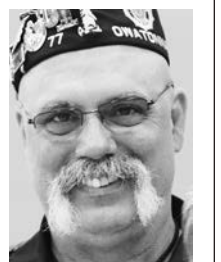
Same Date Last Year



**TOP DOCTOR RECOGNIZED** -- The VA Physician of the Year was recognized by the Department's Rehabilitation Committee. Dr. Amy Candy Heinlein of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center was chosen for her work with veterans. From left, front: Committee Member Darrel Redepenning; Commander Mike Schaffer; Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller. In back: Julie Larsen; Assistant Department Service Officer Heather Larson; Dr. Heinlein; Committee Chairman Wilson Spence; Committee Member Roy Bressler. Dr. Heinlein was honored at the Department Convention held in Mahanomen. This is the first time the award has been given.

## American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone Department Director



Greetings American Legion Family, Wow. Can you believe that? \$200,000.00 turned in for the Department of Minnesota Legacy Fund. This year's ride set a few records. At the start in Walker we had a record number of riders registered and to go without saying there was a record number of motorcycles registered. Hats off to Hoops, Gary Kennedy and their incredible group as they assembled one heck of a kickoff party. Over \$31,000.00 was raised by the Walker community. Stops each day brought out large numbers of folks from the local areas. We were escorted by local police, sheriff and fire departments. Some escorts included the local MNALR chapter. We even had an escort into one city, Owatonna, by a vehicle called a Hack. The Hack is older than anyone on the ride and is a combination of a later 1800s stagecoach mounted on a Model T chassis. In the end Jeremy and the folks in Delano gave us a world class stand down party. Well the 2017 Department of Minnesota Legacy Ride is in the books and we are starting on the 2018 Ride. Please contact your local chapter if you would like to be a part of the 2018 ride.

At various times we had the Department of Minnesota Legion Commander Mike, Auxiliary President Donna, SAL Detachment Commander Shawn and Honorary Junior President Courtney on the ride. This truly is the American Legion Family at work and having fun together, as a family should. A young lady also introduced us to a new motto which we recited many times over and if you were a non believer before the ride I hope you have become a believer now. "If you believe, you will achieve." Thank you Judy for these fine words of wisdom.

Coming up we have the fall Camp-O-Ree and the Riders Romp both being held at Legionville on back-to-back weekends. I hope to see as many of you there as possible as a good time will be had by all. Speaking for the Riders, there will be our fall meetings, a special first aide class tailored to the Riders and fun and games for all. Hope to see you there.

Keep the rubber side down and the chrome side up.

# Pierz, Tri-City Red win state titles

Continued from Page 1

three home runs, two doubles, eight runs batted in and four walks, three of them intentional. Host New London/ Spicer won the Sportsmanship Trophy.

At the banquet prior to the tournament, Montevideo Post 59 was honored as the Post of the Year for 2016.

Other teams in the tournament were Springfield, Pine Island, Stephen-Argyle, and BOLD.

In Division I, Tri-City made it through the opening days of the tournament undefeated, topping Mankato National 6-3, Eastview 16-9, and Waconia 4-1. In the game of unbeaten on Sunday, Ham Lake topped the Reds 4-3.

Tri-City then had to play in the semi-final game against Eden Prairie, which had fought its way to that game through the losers' bracket. Ham Lake, meanwhile, by virtue of its victory, automatically advanced to the championship game and earned a ticket to Dickinson for the Central Plains Division I Regional.

In the semi-final game, Eden Prairie took the early lead, and was ahead 6-5 heading into the bottom of the ninth. Tri-City tied the game 6-6, but it started looking like extra innings with two down and a man on first.

Erik Holloman, who had already scored a couple of runs for Tri-City, stepped up to the plate and hammered a pitch into the bullpen in left field for a walk off homerun.

The momentum carried over into the title game when Tri-City scored three runs in the first inning on three errors by Ham Lake. The Blaine team fought back, but a rally was stymied in the seventh when Tri-City's Joey Lawson, playing second, leapt to stab a liner to end the threat.

Ham Lake closed the gap to 4-3 going into the ninth, but Tri-City plated two more to make the final 6-3 and earn its first state title since 2000. In 1999, the team won the American Legion World Series.

The Fred Wannamaker Trophy for the Outstanding Player went to Tri-City Red's Ross Indlecoffer for both his hitting and clutch pitching performance during the tournament. The third baseman batted .430 for the tournament, and pitched in and won the critical semi-final game vs. Eden Prairie.

The Rob Wassenaar Award for the Outstanding Pitcher went to Ham Lake's Seth Miller, who pitched his team into finals by shutting down Tri-City in a semi-final game.

The Rochester Patriots won the Father Moran Sportsmanship Trophy for their conduct in the tourney.

Other teams participating in the tournament were: St. Michael, Stillwater, Burnsville, Moorhead Blues, Duluth Lakeview, Waconia, Mahtomedi, Excelsior, St. Cloud 76ers and Spring Lake Park.

Games were played at four fields in St. Paul: CHS Field, Siebert Field, Toni Stone (Dunning) and Hargis Park at Bethel. CHS Field in Lowertown, St. Paul, is the home of the St. Paul Saints.

Prior to the tournament, the annual Division I Banquet was held at Envision Center in Oakdale.

The main speaker for the event was Mike Veeck, who owns the St. Paul Saints along with actor Bill Murray.

Veeck first paid tribute to Gail Kalata, the chairman of this year's host committee for the tournament. He said Kalata, who is the team manager for Tri-City Red, was instrumental in getting the funding for CHS Park.

Veeck, who is the son of Bill Veeck, the famous baseball owner who did such things as send a midget to the plate during a major league game, said, "I've been fired by four major league teams, and I'm proud of it. I can't hold a job."

He said he was chosen to speak because "Bill Murray was busy." He had advice for the players. "This is not a dress rehearsal. This is life."

He said, "I love young people. I realize this world isn't in the greatest shape, but you will work it out."

He said the "fun" aspect of minor league baseball in St. Paul has made the team the seventh biggest draw in all of the minors. "We average 8,400 fans a night in a stadium with 7,200 seats. St. Paul has changed the way we market baseball in the United States."

Earlier in the program, Bob Klefsaas of Eastview was honored as Coach of the Year for 2016. He told the 300 ballplayers in attendance, "Let's carry on this great game of baseball. It is America's Pastime."

Ron Nenovich of Bloomington was inducted into the American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame. "I love to teach the game of baseball," he said. He noted that in his days of growing up in Chisholm, he delivered the newspaper to Moonlight Graham, a Chisholm doctor who was made famous in the baseball movie, "A Field of Dreams."

Chris Long of KSTP-TV was the host. 3M Post members Bird Partridge and Carl Renalls participated in honoring the flag and the POW table at the banquet.

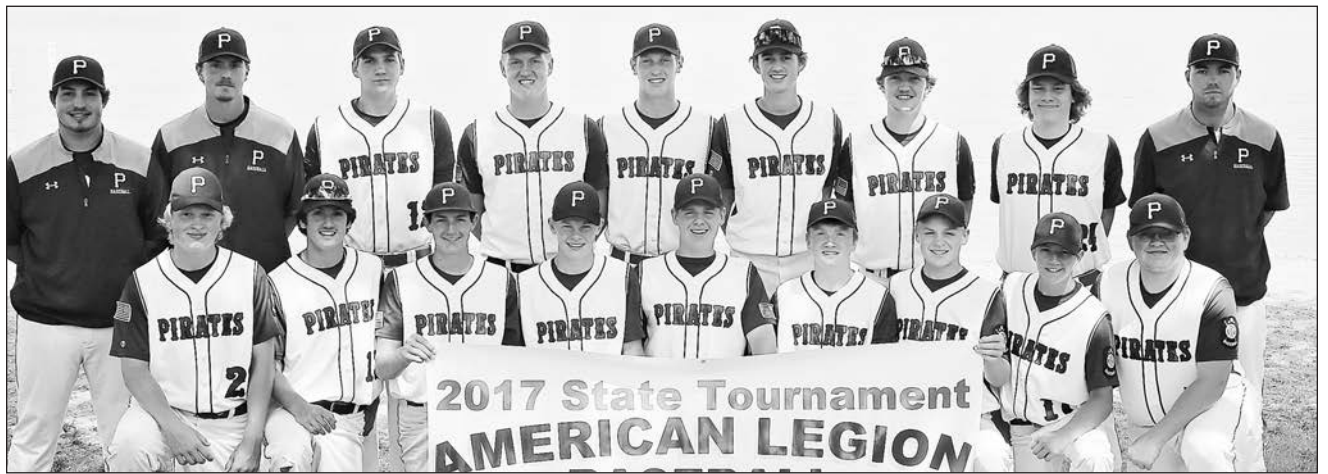
In Junior Legion Baseball, Edina won the state tournament, defeating Excelsior 3-2 in the finals at Apple Valley. Edina went on to win the Mid-States Junior tournament by topping host Fargo Post 2, 13-4.

Next year's Division I Tournament will be held in Edina. The tournament will revert to a Thursday-Sunday schedule to accommodate the national tournaments moving up a day.

The Division II Tournament will be in Pelican Rapids.



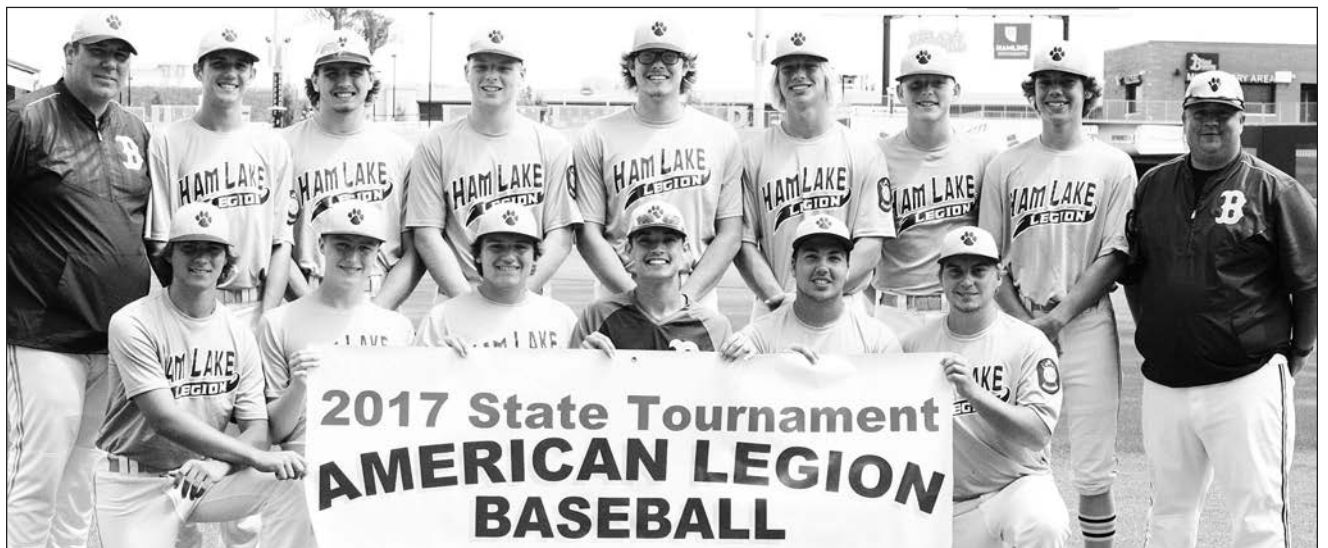
**STATE CHAMPIONS, DIVISION II** -- Pierz won the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Division II championship at Spicer, and went on to win the Central Plains Regional at Wahpeton, N.D. From left, front: Tom Funk, Alex Funk, Noah Boser, Jack Suska, Reese Kapsner, Terryl Scholl, Matt Tautges. In back: John Hopkins, Matt Kummet, Al Lochner, Luke Girtz, Preston Rocheleau, Jesse Marshik, Coach Dylan Pittman.



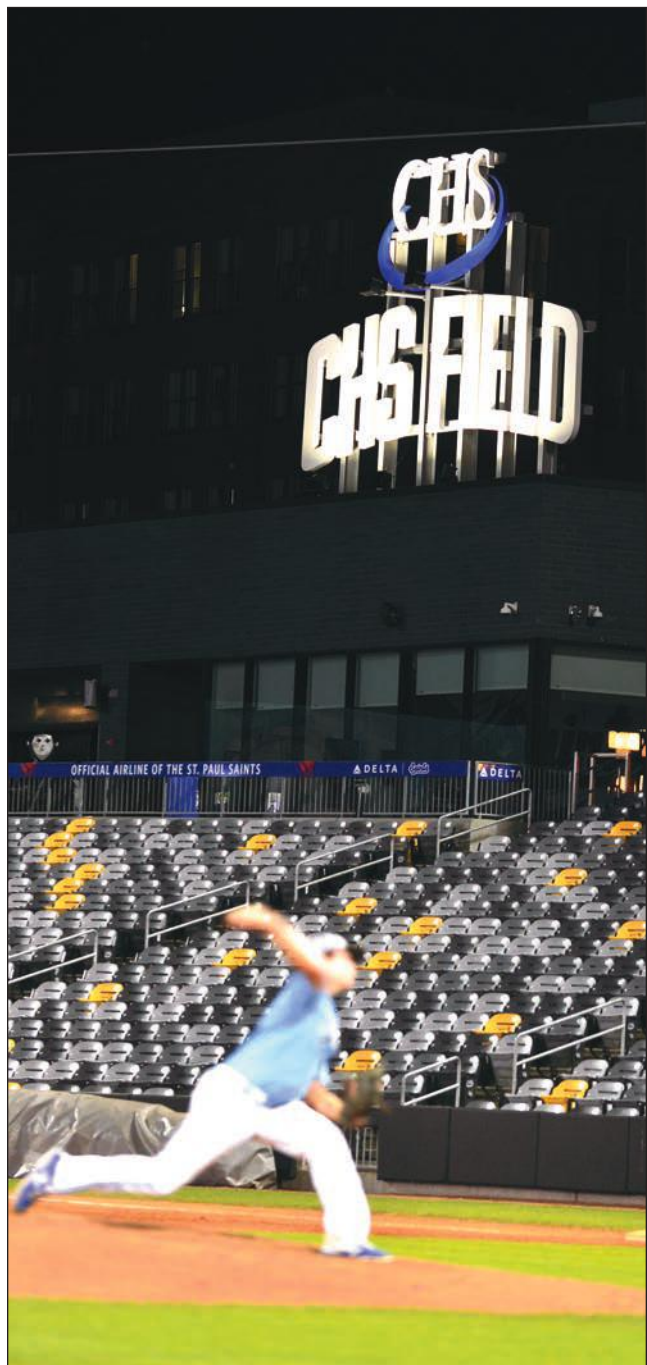
**RUNNER-UP, DIVISION II** -- Proctor finished second in the Division II State American Legion Baseball Tournament held at New-London/ Spicer. From left, front: Mason Flick, Jake Malek, Matt Tracy, Bryce Hoffman, Luke Nordquist, Austin Parrott, Will Tracey, Reed Olson. In back: Coach Cody Dosen, Coach Dale Nikko, Ryan Lear, John Aase, Blake Koski, Zack Gunderson, Cole Johnson, Jake Pioro, Coach Jake Lewis.



**STATE CHAMPIONS, DIVISION I** -- Tri-City Red (New Brighton) won the Minnesota American Legion Division I Baseball Tournament held at St. Paul. The team was the host of the tourney. From left, front: John Solfest, Joey Lawson, Matthew Herold, Erik Holloman, Ryan Nickel, Channing Cole, Jeff LeMay and Ian Bahn. Back row: Coach Jake Hanzlik, Ben Jepko, Adam Davidson, Trevor Stephan, Ty Koehn, Ross Indlecoffer, Matthew Laursen, Justin Langer, Riley Flanagan, Scott Kalthoff, Coach Nik Anderson.



**RUNNER UP, DIVISION I** -- Ham Lake (Blaine) finished second in the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Tournament held in St. Paul. From left, front: Nick Grote, Luke Johnson, Seth Miller, Mike Gottschalk, Jonathan Coello, Mitch Matuska. In back: Coach John Webb, Andrew Jorgenson, Charlie Studer, Logan McDonald, Spencer Smith, Connor Melton, Joe Messier, Sam Riola, Coach Eric Feigum.

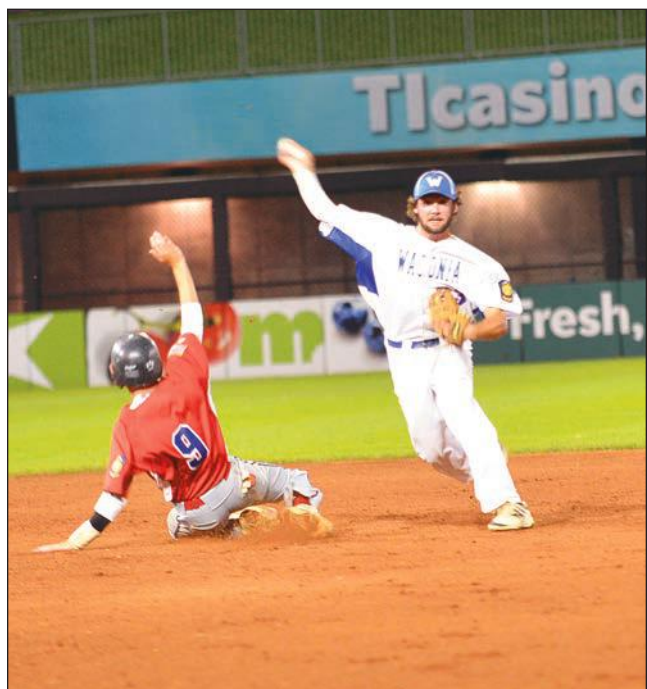


Ham Lake's Seth Miller delivered a pitch at CHS Field in St. Paul. Miller was named the tourney's top pitcher.



Noah Boser stroked his third homerun of the tournament in the championship game to lead Pierz over Proctor at the Division II Tournament at New London/ Spicer. Boser won the Tony Sipe Outstanding Player Award.

# Legion Baseball 2017



Waconia shortstop Robbie Smith turns a double play as Tri-City's Joey Lawson slides in.



Springfield's Decker Scheffler scores the winning run vs. Caledonia to win the Division II third place game.



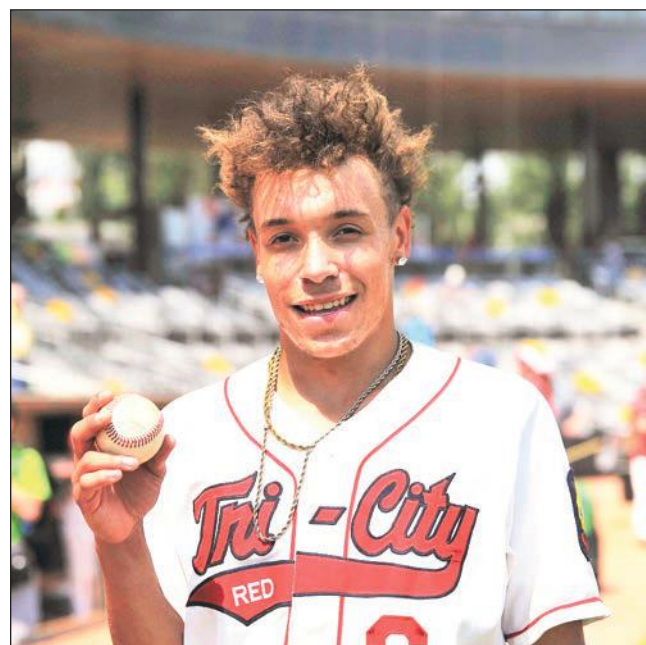
American Legion Riders took time out from their Legacy Run to line the infield at Spicer on Saturday as Maren Van Meter sang the National Anthem.



The 1999 Tri-City Red team gathered on the infield before a game at CHS Field. This band of brothers won the World Series and set a national record for home runs.



Tri-City Red's Ross Indlecoffer slams a hit to left field at CHS Field. Indlecoffer was named the outstanding player of the Division I tournament.



Erik Holloman showed off the ball he hit for a walk-off homer that put his team in the title game.



Mike Perry's granddaughter Sophie lent her arm to the medals presentation.



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig cheered on the finalists at CHS Field.



Legendary Legion pitcher Rob Wassenaar presented the top pitcher award to Ham Lake's Seth Miller.



Tri-City's players raised the state trophy high.

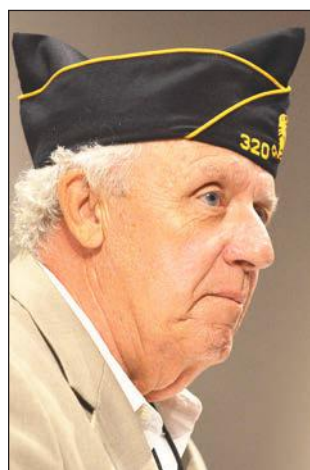


Post members from Montivideo were at New London/

## Speakers



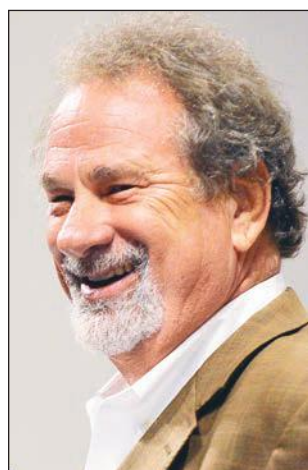
**DENISE MILTON**  
Department Commander



**MIKE PERRY**  
State Director



**RON NENOVICH**  
Hall of Fame



**MIKE VEECK**  
Keynote speaker



**BOB KLEFSAAS**  
Coach of the Year



**PAT DOLAN, SCSU**  
Division II speaker

# Minnesota's 2017 - 2018 Leadership Team



**MIKE SCHAFER**  
Fulda  
**COMMANDER**



**ROSEMARY NIESEN**  
Cologne  
**VICE COMMANDER**



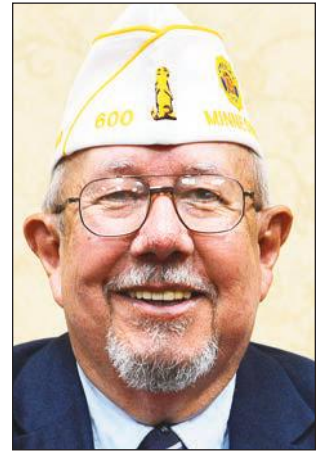
**STEVE KLINKNER**  
Madelia  
**VICE COMMANDER**



**DAN WILLIAMS**  
Vadnais Heights  
**VICE COMMANDER**



**ERIC WILKENS**  
Detroit Lakes  
**VICE COMMANDER**



**BILL STUMP**  
St. Louis Park  
**VICE COMMANDER**



**LARRY RYAN**  
Oakdale  
**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**



**GLENN MUELLER**  
St. Charles  
**HISTORIAN**



**RALPH SCHNECKLOTH**  
Mabel  
**CHAPLAIN**



**GARYLEE DAVENPORT**  
Atwater  
**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**



**LES SHAUNCE**  
Albert Lea  
**DIST. 1 COMMANDER**



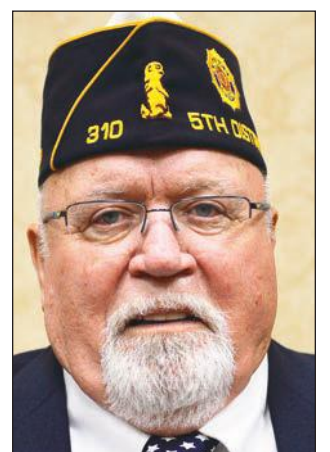
**RANDY OLSON**  
Winnebago  
**DIST. 2 COMMANDER**



**GENE LEIFELD**  
Zumbrota  
**DIST. 3 COMMANDER**



**LANE STUNKEL**  
St. Paul  
**DIST. 4 COMMANDER**



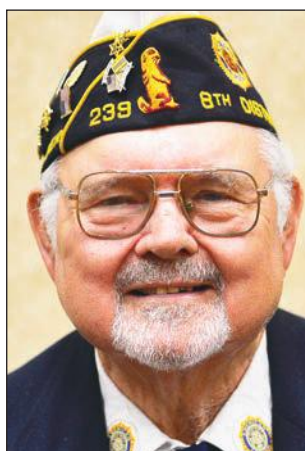
**WALTER LYNSLEY**  
Minneapolis  
**DIST. 5 COMMANDER**



**KEN JOHNSTONE**  
St. Cloud  
**DIST. 6 COMMANDER**



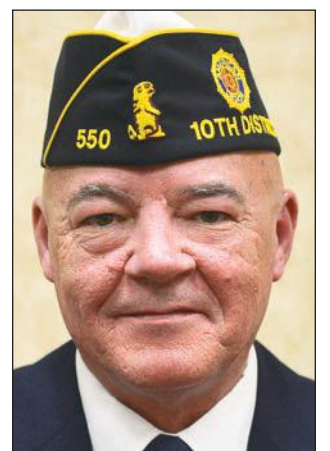
**RICHARD WOG**  
Willmar  
**DIST. 7 COMMANDER**



**DONOVAN GOBLIRSCH**  
Gilbert  
**DIST. 8 COMMANDER**



**TIM HAUGEN**  
Moorhead  
**DIST. 9 COMMANDER**



**PAUL HASSING**  
Montgomery  
**DIST. 10 COMMANDER**