



In a yellow room with yellow lights at the Hilton hotel, the 9th District American Legion Band performed patriotic tunes Sunday, Aug. 28, during the Minnesota get-together.



Couples were all over the room. Here are Past Department Commander Mike Schaffer of Fulda with his wife, Nina, who has an excellent sense of humor.



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig and Mary of Red Wing Post and Unit 54 pause to smile for a photo together.



Robin and Randy Olson, of Winnebago Unit and Post 82, stand for a picture.



Bruce and Carol Kottom of Buffalo Post and Unit 270 turn to face the camera. Not only was the room yellowish, almost everyone had yellow polo shirts.



Teresa and Mike Ash of St. Paul Christie DeParq Post 406 smile. Teresa is presently the Department of Minnesota historian. Mike is a candidate for national vice commander.



Third District Commander Gary Richardson smiles while his wife, Teresa, displays humor.



Don Hayden of Le Center Post 108 holds up his hands as people sing "God Bless America."



Past Department Chaplain Betty Jass waves the Air Force flag as 4th District Commander Dave Dahl roots her on.



Comedian, "SNL" alum and radio talk show host Joe Piscopo addresses the Sons of The American Legion Banquet on Saturday, Aug. 27. He is a member of McHenry, Ill., Squadron 491.



Ray Kane of St. Paul Park Post 98 takes video footage with his cellphone. He is a candidate for department historian and is on the department's Media & Communications Committee.



Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Ted Berg, left, stands beside the Minnesota sign with Paul Hassing. Both belong to Bloomington Post 550.

## Minnesota Legion Riders rule entire country

Legion Riders raise funds for the Legacy Scholarships. Minnesota ruled all departments again this year.

Your studious Legionnaire editor wrote down how much each department donated, presented here in order that each stood at the podium:

Department	Total
France	\$1,210
Mississippi	\$4,330
China	\$3,500
Hawaii	\$1,200
Pennsylvania	\$1,150
Michigan	\$35,276
West Virginia	\$23,170
South Carolina	\$97,549
Delaware	\$13,704
Florida	\$2,000
North Carolina	\$8,445
Ohio	\$84,855
Washington state	\$3,236
Colorado	\$28,000
Illinois	\$44,000
New Mexico	\$15,000
Tennessee	\$20,000
New Hampshire	\$2,700
Kansas	\$24,109
Iowa	\$4,727
Missouri	\$94,514
California	\$59,030
Virginia	\$83,000
Arkansas	\$668
Puerto Rico	\$200
Georgia	\$6,000
Arizona	\$8,944
Alabama	\$20,220
Maryland	\$141,000
Wisconsin	\$1,000
Minnesota	\$155,000

Credit goes to Legion posts all across the state for making this possible.



Before the start of the convention, a quick picture was taken that brought America, Canada and the United Kingdom together. From left are American Legion Past National Commander Dan Ludwig; his wife, Mary Ludwig of Red Wing Unit 54; Royal British Legion National Chairman Jason Coward; his wife, Lorraine; Royal Canadian Legion Dominion President Bruce Julian; Jerome Burke of Canada's ANAVETS, and Royan Canadian Legion National Executive Director Steven Clark.

# Olson: 'It was kind of like in the movies'

Continued from Page 1

to the air base, got back on the bird, took off on a commercial flight that brought them to Bangor, Maine, where they slept overnight in a terminal.

The airplane, he said, had a rare problem of some sort, so the Marines had to wait for a repairman to fly to Bangor to fix it. After, they flew on to England, then down to Budapest and finally to Kuwait.

It was the middle of the night and the middle of nowhere when they landed combat style — by dropping quickly out of the sky. Sergeants told them the strip faced the danger of mortar fire. Be prepared! Whether true or not, saying that gets the desired results. The Marines unloaded rapidly, then waited in a nearby hangar for trucks to arrive to take them to Iraq.

The convoy went on “forever,” Olson said, before reaching Karma, a city in central Iraq sometimes also spelled Al-Karmah, Karmah or even Garma. It is 10 miles northeast of Fallujah.

Olson’s battalion was taking over for the 1st Battalion 5th Marine Regiment. “They were ready to go home,” Olson said.

A chemical plant was going to be their firm base — in this case, a company-sized camp — and within one hour of arriving, they received mortar fire. All the combat-experienced enlisted tried to get the new guys under cover. “It hadn’t dawned on us that it was a real-life thing,” he said.

After a day and a half at the chem plant, they moved out because chemicals remained in the site, and they went to a five-story schoolhouse. It was summer; school was out. That would be their firm base.

Recall, Saddam had been captured in December 2003, and a power vacuum existed after the strong central government was ousted. Insurgents grew to oppose the international occupation. In June 2004, the new government of Iraq took over. It aimed to keep the peace between Sunni and Shiite sects.

Many of the insurgents, at the time, were Sunnis dissatisfied or impatient with the international forces, or they were Shiites drawn into religious radicalism. Examples of each are the Mujahideen Army and Mahdi Army. Joining their numbers were foreign fighters.

This was a time between the two Fallujah battles. The First Battle of Fallujah, fought in April and May to get perpetrators who killed four U.S. contractors and five U.S. soldiers, came after the declared end of major hostilities. The Second Battle of Fallujah, in November and December, was the first major campaign against just insurgents — and it turned out to be the bloodiest battle of the war.

Things were touchy in central Iraq in the summer of 2004.

Karma is a spread-out city of canals and no walls with a population of 95,000.

Machine gun posts were placed on the school roof. The Marines performed four-day rotations, as in four days on guard duty, four days on patrol, four days with quick reaction force (QRF) and four days of rest — but they never received the four days of rest because intel reports would result in them being taken away.

The Marines were seeing enemy fire from time to time. The enemy regularly fired mortars at India Company’s schoolhouse and at Kilo Company, holed up at a cement factory. On patrol duty, after the city’s curfew, Marines would check cars looking for IEDs. One night on patrol, insurgents fired rocket-propelled grenades at them from a mosque but missed.

One bright day, a convoy went tearing out of the firm base, kicking up dust, headed to another firm base.



Marine Private James Olson of Amboy when he first arrived in Iraq.



What shrapnel did to one of James Olson’s legs in Karma, Iraq.



This is the abandoned car in the market that exploded. You can see the homemade missile launcher that slid from the roof to the hood after an insurgent attempted to use it. Olson said he was quite lucky to have a shot even reach the roof of the five-story schoolhouse.



Ragnar, a former Minnesota Vikings mascot, stands for a photo with a recovering James Olson at the 2004 MotoFest Parade in Winnebago.

When they arrived, they were one Humvee short. They convoy could not figure out what happened.

Olson and other Marines on patrol had to walk out and around to search for clues. One of them happened to peer over a bridge and spotted the truck in a canal. There had been so much dust the driver couldn’t see, hit the bridge and flipped into the water. All five — a driver, a gunner and three passengers — died.

“And from the school rooftop, no one could see them, even though it was just the length of a football field away. Too much dust,” he said.

The Humvee was waterlogged and

dragged out and away. Some equipment was recovered, and Olson cleaned the MK-19 grenade launcher that had been on the Humvee’s gunner turret.

On the morning of July 20, 2004, some of the Marines on rooftop duty were eager for daylight so they could have a cigarette. The sun finally rose, and Olson and Ken Fisher of Nebraska went to the smoke deck. They chatted about deer hunting, comparing Nebraska to Minnesota.

“Out of nowhere there was a big explosion, and the building shook a little bit,” Olson said.

Missiles hit the roof, a direct strike on sandbags of a guard point. The

sandbags landed on Justin DeMarandille and hurt his arm. He was OK otherwise.

Olson and Fisher put on flack jackets, got DeMarandille off the roof and in the back of a truck. They drove him to the regiment aid station at Camp Fallujah.

This took about 20 minutes, and they raced back to the Karma firm base. Marines had found other missiles that had failed to detonate.

And they found where the rocket came from.

A car with a very homemade missile launcher hooked to a luggage rack was found abandoned in a nearby market parked just off the road. Olson, a 20-year-old private first class, was sent to a T-intersection in the middle of the market, to stand there alone about 40 feet from the car. The Marines had checkpoints outside the market, cordoning off the place. Meanwhile, they waited for EOD — explosive ordnance disposal.

“It was hot,” Olson said. “The sun was out, and there wasn’t a cloud in the sky.”

The 3rd Battalion commander and the sergeant major looked inside the car. Hours go by. Finally, Cpl. Matthew Piano pulled up.

“Why I am here?” Olson asked.

Piano said the car was full of mortars. EOD rolled up. While they donned their gear, their staff sergeant walked over to the car to look inside, and the car exploded, killing him.

Those mortar rounds, none of them exploded. They just scattered. What caused the explosion was 155 mm artillery projectiles daisy-chained together inside the car.

“It went from being sunny to being darkly cloudy out,” Olson said. “I hate to put it like this, but it was kind of like in the movies. I woke up, on the ground. Everything was quiet. I tried yelling at the corpsman who was by the platoon commander. I stood up to walk and figured out something was not right. I could feel all the blood running down my sides.”

Metal shrapnel had struck the entire back of his body.

Olson took a few steps, and Doc Allen MacAfee, who was from Arizona, saw him. Marines often give corpsmen the nickname “doc,” even though they aren’t doctors. MacAfee himself had been thrown up against the Humvee and hit his head hard. He was out for a few seconds.

MacAfee and Doc Jesse Calugcugan of California lifted Olson by each arm and moved him across the street.

Olson is a big guy. He is 6 feet 4 inches. MacAfee is about 5 feet 10 inches tall and Calugcugan is 5 feet 6 inches, so it was like a “Mutt and Jeff” moment.

They laid him on the ground and applied first aid. They ripped up his pants and shirt, opened his flack jacket.

Olson had one question for Doc Cal: “Did my tattoo get messed up?”

“No,” he replied.

Olson sustained a concussion, so things get fuzzy at this point in the retelling of the tale. He doesn’t know how long he was on the ground. They put him in the back of a truck to go to Camp Fallujah. The medical team cleaned up wounds, went in to inspect the shrapnel.

Fisher, his friend from Nebraska, suffered shrapnel in his forearm.

Then Olson was on a helicopter to Baghdad. However, the chopper had to land at an aid station on the way because his blood pressure dropped. It was dark when he arrived at the distinguished 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad. The 31st CSH is an Army unit based out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

Fisher was there, too, but his wounds weren’t serious enough to go home.

He eventually was sent back to India Company.

Olson, as best as he can recall, said he was taken to an exam room, then doctors stuck him in a hospital room for a spell. He then was on an airplane, where he kept waking up.

“It felt like my stomach was going to explode,” he said.

A nurse came to give him morphine. He looked out the window of the aircraft, and it was raining, then he fell asleep. He woke up on an ambulance in Germany.

“It looked like northern Minnesota to me anyway. I didn’t know if I was dreaming,” he said.

He touched the window. It was cold.

He was at the Army’s Lundstuhl Regional Medical Center, the largest American military hospital outside the continental United States. Olson doesn’t recall it, but doctors performed surgery on him.

He does remember that one day a guy came up to him and asked: “What size underwear do you have?”

The man went on to ask about other clothes sizes. He came back with a suitcase of clothes, purchased by the Semper Fi Fund.

Olson doesn’t know how long he was there. Maybe 1 1/2 days, he estimates.

Finally, the military flew Olson to Bethesda, Md., overnight, where the pilots rested, then flew again to Northern California, then to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, north of San Diego, where the pilot and copilot themselves carried him on a stretcher off the aircraft.

“That was the only time two officers had called me sir,” Olson said.

They were pilots with the Alabama Air National Guard. They took him to an ambulance destined for Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, where he underwent another surgery.

He was placed in isolation because he was positive for a form of antibiotic-resistant Iraqi bacteria. The medical staff had to wear extra personal protective equipment. Finally, after a time span Olson can’t recall, it was safe for his parents to see him.

Everyone was in shorts during the first visit, but Olson was shivering. This was still July 2004.

“I was trying to stay warm with extra blankets, sweatshirts, sweatpants,” he said.

The shrapnel. What happened? He later learned a big chunk was taken out of his left ankle and his right leg. A big chunk on the right side of his abdomen went just beneath the bottom of his flack jacket and left him with a 6-inch scar.

“It’s like a big slice through my right side. There’s still a chunk in there they don’t want to take out,” he said.

Since then, he has found shrapnel in the back of his head and in his right knee. The Minneapolis VA has X-rays of shrapnel still in his right side.

While at NHCP, a corpsman said something is waiting for Olson on the quarterdeck. Olson’s father went to get it. He returned with a black trashbag. Inside was Olson’s flack jacket, and the back was all covered in shrapnel. It saved his life. He still has it.

One day, the staff had taken Olson off painkillers, so he requested something to ease the pain. A corpsman came in with two Percocets. Soon, another corpsman came with two more. Later, another came with two more. Then yet another corpsman gave him a shot of morphine.

That’s when someone Olson recalls as “Brig. Gen. Williams,” the acting Pendleton base commander, arrived to award him his Purple Heart.

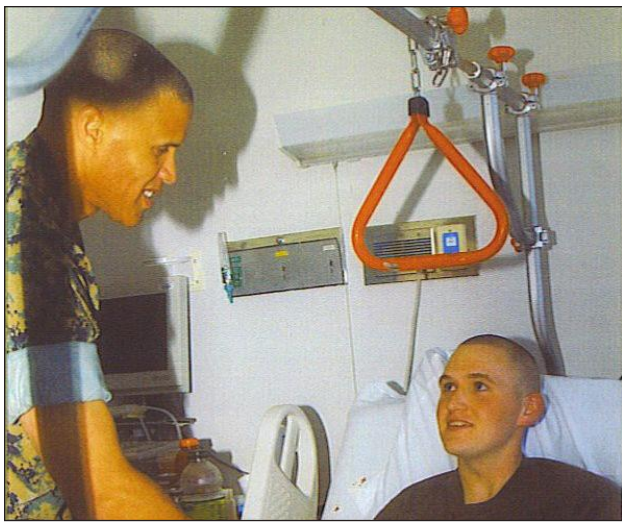
“Man, I was looper than hell when that general came in,” Olson said. “If you look at my pictures of when I got

Continued on Page 13

# Minnesota Legacy

State ride to raise scholarship funds for post-9/11 kids has a great year

Photos by Casey Ek  
for The Minnesota Legionnaire



The acting Camp Pendleton commander gives James Olson his Purple Heart in 2004.



James Olson acts gung ho for a photo while at March Air Reserve Base in California.

## He eventually found Mankato Post 11

Continued from Page 12

my Purple Heart, one of my eyes is looking straight ahead and the other is looking off to the side.”

The Navy was not ready for the numbers of injured servicemembers arriving from Iraq. The Marines put Olson on 30 days of convalescent leave, and he returned to Amboy.

The Minneapolis VA Medical Center performed a skin graft, and Olson had to be away from the Marines for three months, pretty much journeying from Amboy to Minneapolis daily for appointments.

Because he was an outpatient, his parents couldn't stay at the Fisher House.

“That got old. I had a hell of a time sleeping. The only time I could sleep was in the car while Mom or Dad drove,” he said.

In the beginning of November 2005, he returned to Camp Pendleton. He was put on the Temporary Disability Retired List, then on terminal leave March 2006, receiving his discharge papers in April as permanently disabled retired. His time in service was two years, nine months and 10 days.

Olson joined The American Legion in 2006. He lived in Mankato, and one night he told a buddy he was thinking of joining Post 11. His grandfather had belonged to Post 96 in Hutchinson.

“It took me a while to join because I couldn't find the place,” he said.

He found VFW Post 950 in downtown Mankato, so he joined and got to know George Young and Lenny Fritz, among others. One night, when the bar closed, he asked where they went.

“Oh, we go to the Legion,” they replied.

It was there all along. He just couldn't see it. He signed up with Post 11 that night. Young and Fritz each paid half of Olson's first-year dues.

One evening, a bunch of guys suddenly went to the back room. They invited Olson to join them, and he went to his first post meeting. He eventually became the 2nd vice commander, then the 1st vice commander, then post commander for 10 years. In 2021, he was 2nd District vice commander and is district 1st vice commander this year, on track to become district commander.

Olson, 38, makes his living as a real estate agent. He has no wife, kids or pets. He reads a lot, he said.

In addition to his shrapnel wounds, the VA diagnosed him as having “unspecified anxiety.”

He serves on the Americanism Council at the national level. He is on the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Committee at the department level. For his district, he is the chairman of the Children & Youth Committee.

“Being in the Legion is great,” he said. “I wish there were more people excited about it. Some people get jaded by one bad experience, or they encountered the wrong person, but I think they should just give it another shot.”

He said he wants young veterans to learn that, through The American Legion, they can get to know the state, regional and national veterans community. There are many opportunities waiting.

“I was in my first Minnesota Legion College. It was super worth it. The camaraderie was there. I urge people to get involved. I wish I had been involved sooner,” Olson said.



American Legion Riders on the Minnesota Legacy Run pull into West Duluth Post 71 on Tuesday, Aug. 23, the final stop of the ride. However, a handful continued to the National Convention in Wilwaukee.



Minnesota American Legion Riders Secretary Jody Hassing applauds as Legion Riders pull up.



Two Legion Riders hug.



Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai holds up a stuffed toy named Lofer at Post 71.



Two women at West Duluth Post 71 are busy preparing meals for the Legion Riders.



Bloomington Post 550 Commander Luis Campero passes a check for \$25,000. The ride raised \$155,000 this year. The money provides full-ride scholarships for children of post 9/11 servicemembers killed or wounded in war.



Legion Riders go through a line to enjoy a much-earned meal at the end of the ride.



Zandra Davenport says something funny that cracks up Jody Hassing.



Duane Mabon smiles as he goes through the line. He is a Luverne resident, so the ride took him to the opposite end of the state.

# Listening Post



Hutchinson American Legion Post 96, Saluting Community Heroes and other local veteran organizations made a strong impression at the high school football team's Red, White and Blue Night, which is held annually for the home opener. This year, it fell on Aug. 25 against Apollo St. Cloud. Hutch won 46-0. More important than the score, players ask veterans, police officers and firefighters to stand with them on the field during the playing of the national anthem. The balloon belongs to Freedom Flight, which is a St. Cloud nonprofit that aims to raise funds to bring POW/MIAs home.



Eagan Post 594 hosts a 9/11 ceremony in conjunction with the Eagan police and fire departments at the Eagan Community Center Plaza.



Minneapolis Falldin Post 555 delivers school supplies to Valley View Elementary School in Columbia Heights. From left are Adjutant Ray Eiden, social worker Nicole Herje and Commander Donovan Ortel Jr.



Pine Island Fire Department and Pine Island Post 184 collaborated for a 9/11 ceremony. Speakers were Lyman Groenseth of the Pine Island Fire Department and Post 184 Honor Guard and Pine Island Mayor David Friese.



From left are Wayne Beierman of Eagan Post 594, along with Matt and Mike Martin of Granite Falls Post 69. The three are Minnesota Legionnaires who participated in the National American Legion Legacy Ride, which went from Mobile, Ala., to Oak Creek, Wis. Aug. 21-25.



American Legion Post 39 sponsored a hole at the annual Legion Club 39 Golf Tournament on Sept. 17. At right is Carroll "Bird" Partridge standing with his crew of golfers. To the right is Department Vice Commander Randy Bastyr holding the flag for his teammate.



Sixth District Baseball Director Wes Thompson, in yellow, presents the Minnesota American Legion Baseball 2021 Post of the Year to Foley Post 298, for supporting a small town baseball team that reached the final four last year amid teams from big schools. From left are Commander Gary Gruba, Thompson, pitcher Derek Dahmen and coach Jim Von Wald.



Donald Schmid receives a certificate for 50 years as a member of Albany Post 482. Schmid is 102 and a World War II veteran.



Backus Post 368 Commander Brad Taylor presents a check for \$1,000 to Minnesota American Legion Riders Secretary Jody Hassing to the American Legion Foundation Fund 84, which is the Legacy Scholarship Fund.



Buffalo Ridge Young Marines of Worthington present a certificate of appreciation to Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness for the post's support of their activities.



# Listening Post



The Woodbury American Legion and VFW join forces for their annual poppy distribution.



Technical Sgt. Arnold Pedersen of Two Harbors Post 109 celebrated his 100th birthday on Aug. 12. The U.S. Army Air Forces veteran served as a flight maintenance gunner in World War II. In the war, his aircraft was shot down over France, where he was then rescued and hidden by the French Resistance for months before reaching Allied lines. His daughter told the local post that Pedersen loves hats, so they presented him with a brand new Legion cover, which he wore in the photograph.



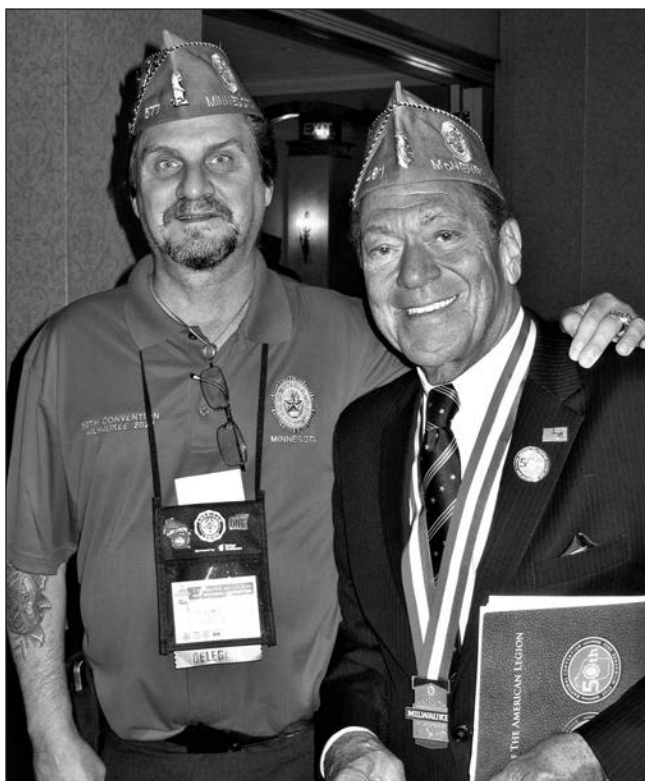
On the serene morning of Aug. 9, Eagan Post 594 Color Guard opens the Dakota County Fair by raising the U.S. and Minnesota flags, accompanied by the "Star-Spangled Banner." The ceremony was staffed by Post 594's Dan Seanoa, Captain Lance Ashland, John Rayman and Wayne Beierman.



On July 8, St. Paul North Side Post 230 donates \$1,000 to the American Ukrainian Center to help with their work to assist relocated Ukrainians in Minnesota. They received a tour of the Ukrainian Center and explained the challenges they face and the necessities people need after fleeing their homes. In the top photo, from left, are Dick Wolf, Roger Dusbabek, Paul Jablonsky, Commander Richard Tetzlaff, Jeff Jarosz and Patrick Watson.



Backus Post 368 held its annual membership and veterans recognition dinner on Sept. 15. Two were recognized for their American Legion Family service. Legionnaire Lyle Lauer was recognized for 70 years of continuous membership, and his wife, Laura, was recognized as the sole remaining charter member of Unit 368. Their son, Alan Lauer, and his wife, Denise, donated a large handmade wooden flag to Post 368 in honor of their parents. Pictured from left are Lyle, Denise, Laura, Alan and Commander Brad Taylor.

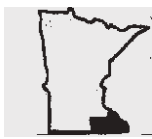


At the Sons of The American Legion Convention, comedian Joe Piscopo spoke and had time for a few snapshots before he had to fly to New York for his radio talk show on 970 AM The Answer. On the left is Detachment of Minnesota Chaplain Stu Sonnee of St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577, and on the right is Lou Michaels of St. Paul 3M Post and Squadron 599.



It was a cute moment at the 103rd National Convention when a granddaughter of National Commander Vincent Troiola placed a red Legion cover on his head.

# District commanders



## 1st District Mary Hanson



Hello, fellow Legionnaires. As of the last department membership report, the 1st District is still in 1st place. I want to thank our district membership director, Dale Wellik, and thank all of the post membership directors. Keep up the good work. It would be nice to see us keep that first-place finish. Keep working the Post 1982 list and the expired list. If you have any questions, please reach out to Dale or myself.

American Legion at post and district levels. A member of the VFW, Jim was involved in his community and always willing to help anyone. My condolences to Jim's family. He will be missed.

A good time was had at the American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee. Lots of good presentations and awards handed out. We voted in a new national commander, Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola. It was quite a sight to see the parade of the band and all of his supporter's marching around the meeting room. Congratulations, Commander Troiola.

I enjoyed the National Security Briefing at Camp Ripley in mid-September. In October, we have the Fall Conference. I am looking forward to meeting up with other districts and learning new things.

The 1st District will have the first rally of the year on Sept. 22 in Preston. It will be bittersweet. This one was to be Jim Westby's rally, our district vice commander. Jim passed away on Sept. 11 after a short illness.

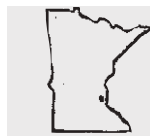
Jim was a family man, Marine, Vietnam veteran and mayor of Mabel. When I think of the Preamble and the sixth clause, I think of Jim. To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation. He was involved in The

webmaster: Wayne Beierman at: beierman66@gmail.com.

My project this year is getting funds for the Hastings Veterans Home wood shop, furnishings for a mental health meeting lounge and repair of one of the outside gazebos that is used as a staging area for their landscaping projects. Donations can be

sent directly to the Hastings Veterans home in care of the American Legion 3rd District Commander's Project.

Let's keep those memberships coming in, the challenge from department is to get a new member and get a member that has let their membership lapse signed back up. We can do it!



## 4th District David Dahl



We've just finished the month of September, which has been designated as National Suicide Prevention Month. While this designation can help to put a focus on suicide prevention, it can never be an observance which we do for a month and then we're done — it must be an everyday mindset.

To further that aim, The American Legion has launched the "Be The One" campaign. The National Commander is asking every one of us to begin thinking, talking and acting to save just one life. To "Be The One," we need to ASK veterans how they are doing, LISTEN when a veteran needs to talk, and REACH OUT when a veteran is struggling.

Instead of talking about the number of daily suicides, we

can "Be The One" to save ONE veteran. We can end the stigma surrounding mental health with your help.

To support us in our efforts to help veterans, access to the Veterans Crisis Line has been simplified. You can now dial 988, and then press 1 to be connected to immediate help for a veteran in need. If the veteran in need feels comfortable using a computer to chat with a crisis counselor, the veteran should be directed to [www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/)

Besides just talking about suicide, we each need to determine what we will do to "Be The One"!



## 5th District Lynne Nottage



What a busy couple of months. The 5th District has worked hard to get everything moving for the new year. We've had our first meeting and are now coming up on a joint 4th and 5th District revitalization.

It's scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. We will meet at North St. Paul Post 39. County Service Officers have been invited for both days to be available for any veteran that may need assistance. It would be great if we could get a representative from each post. Bring your cellphone so we can meet the challenge of getting lapsed Legionnaires back as members.

I am also working on changing up our monthly meetings. I would like to invite members or guests to speak at a district meeting on topics that interest our

members. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to hear, please let me know. Currently I'm working with our first speaker for our November meeting to speak on the history of The American Legion. I'm excited about this format and hope it will draw our members back attending our meetings in person.

Of course, for those that prefer, we will have our meetings as a hybrid via Zoom also.

Reminder: Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 has their pancake breakfast every fourth Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon. Great pancakes and great camaraderie, come join us for breakfast. Bring your family and friends!



## 2nd District Pam Krill



Greetings, fellow Legionnaires!

As we head into fall, I have to say it has been an extraordinary year, and there is so much more to come. This year, I had the experience of my first American Legion National Convention, and I must truly say, I had no idea on what to really expect, and one thing I can say is there is not enough time to gather all the information.

There is so much going on. You truly feel you are missing something important while you are there. With a new national commander now in place, it's a new year and time for another year of excellent commitment to our veterans, our community and our children.

While attending the National Convention, I felt a sense of being rejuvenated and learned we all have challenges but being able to network and build relationship and share ideas and watch the camaraderie. We all have our reasons as to the

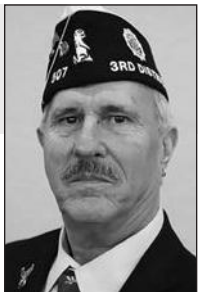
"why" we are a Legionnaire, but I have found one thing that is true among us all, and that is: We care about veterans, our communities and our children. We are looking to the future, and we all want to see our organization grow.

Over the last few months, I have been out and visited numerous posts, and watched the pride and dedication members have to The American Legion. I am honored to be the 2nd District Commander and I will continue to get out and visit posts, attend events and functions, and highlight the great things we have to offer.

Thank you to all of members in the 2nd District for your commitment and dedication to The American Legion and our veterans. With our continued teamwork, we will be Second to None!



## 3rd District Gary Richardson



Greetings, Thundering 3rd District!

In keeping with the programs of the National Security & Foreign Relations Committee, I encourage all posts and district commanders to get out to their local National Guard and Reserve armories and establish relationships with them to get out the message of The American Legion and what we provide in terms of programs and benefits not only at the state but also the national level.

Most armories have open houses during the year which would be a great opportunity to participate and meet the troops.

The Department of Minnesota Fall Conference is at the

end of October, and I encourage anyone who would like to attend to please do so. The conference is an informational event and is open to all Legion members. There will be numerous opportunities to learn. Registration and housing information can be found at [mnlegion.org/fall-conference/](http://mnlegion.org/fall-conference/).

The 3rd District website is currently undergoing updates and removing outdated information. If you have something you would like added (pictures, events, calendar input, etc.), please send them to our new



## 6th District Karen O'Bar



Happy Fall and Happy Halloween, my fellow Legion family. Busy months ahead. We made our 50 percent with 54.2 percent. We should have no problem making the 55 percent in October.

We are in 2nd place now. Outstanding! Keep up the great work.

I'm sure everyone remembers the telephone game. One person starts out with full sentence of things. The second person passes it down to third, fourth, etc. By the time the last person gets the message, it is usually never the same information.

Sometimes I feel as a district and a department, we are like this. Many people fail at

communicating. We all need to step up our communication skills.

I attended the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee. A few hiccups with elevators not working in the hotel and me and Mike hurting ourselves. Again, the Minnesota American Legion Riders came in first for the largest donations to the Legacy Run presented to outgoing National Commander Paul Dillard. Outstanding job!

There was so much information put out. I think every member of our family should



## 7th District Karen Welander



Greetings Mighty 7th. Fall is in the air.

We need to stop shrinking and educate all posts and our communities that we want to help veterans and the community we live in. If you have a Veterans Day dinner, invite all veterans, not just members. Ask for a donation at that dinner for the food shelf. Pass your Legion cover to collect monetary donations for the food shelf. We are members of many communities and need to support those communities.

The Fall Conference is

coming up, and this is a training meeting for members. You will enjoy many topics, but always let us know what you need information on. There is a gambling seminar all can attend. Load up that vehicle and educate all your members on gambling operations. This will ensure you have a successful gambling manager for the future.

No one left behind. God bless America



## 8th District Larry Pocrnich



Hello veterans,

We are starting another year of meetings and getting new information from the department. There are going to be Zoom meetings with department and district officers. The post commanders or adjutants will have that information if you would like to join in the conversation can get in touch with me, and I will find it.

On membership, we should all have our packets, if not, the 8th posts can contact me. There are still a lot of veterans in the 1982 post that need a home post. Get the list and call the veterans in your area to join the post. That adds to your post numbers, also.

My project this year will be for the Wounded Warriors United group. They take veterans on fishing, deer, hog, and prairie dog hunting. The trips are

at no expense to the veteran. I was on the prairie dog hunt, and we had a blast.

"Integrity" means: the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles, moral uprightness, gracious, respectful, honest, trustworthy, hard-working, responsible for actions... This came from a speaker at one of the meetings I was at. Hits home for all organizations.

If your post is having a function, let me know by 10th of the month, and I can put it in this letter also. If a post needs help, please call me. I will try and get it taken care of or questions answered. My number is 218-969-2460.

Thank you for your volunteer time with The American Legion.



## 9th District Terry Buraas



Suicide.

Yes, it happens anytime, anywhere. A longtime employee lost her husband to suicide. He was depressed and sitting around drinking, watching TV in his basement. All of these are signs that were missed by his wife and children.

I, myself, did not know the man and had not heard about what he was doing. Would I have had the sense to tell her to get him some help? After the fact, he was calling out for help

but no one listened. There are signs and just by talking with him maybe someone would have gotten to him the help he needed. How to deal with this problem that is growing is by asking questions of those who seem to be loners, Seeing the problem. Fixing the problem!



## 10th District William Gordon



Greetings, Mighty 10th District. Please let's look around our local communities, who is a deserving firefighter, police officer, or servicemember of the year? Please get the endorsement forms filled out and submitted.

Our district project this year is Haven for Heroes in Anoka.

More information about this will be in the district newsletter. If you have not received our district newsletter, please send me your email address, and I will forward you the next one. I look forward to meeting you

in person when I visit your post.

My email is [wgor-don2494@hotmail.com](mailto:wgor-don2494@hotmail.com) and let me know the address, date, and time you have your membership meetings. OK, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. As President Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

# AND IN OTHER NEWS ...

September was a busy month in The American Legion and in the Minnesota veterans community. Here are a variety of images from events.



During the Camporee at Legionville, Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota gave white S.A.L. caps to leaders. Doing the giving on the left are Jill Davis and Robert Bristo. Receiving are Commander Jennifer Havlick, President Mary Kuperus and Director Ted Berg.



James Hultgren of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172, 2nd District Commander Pam Krill and Raymond Kane of St. Paul Park Post 98 were at CHS Field for a St. Paul Saints game on Sunday, Sept. 18. The DAV of Minnesota honored Krill on the field during the game and Hultgren and Kane handled the Legion's social media for the event. Krill belongs to Blue Earth DAV Chapter 32 and Fairmont American Legion Post 36.



At the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers' annual Fall Conference, Greg Pickard of Wright County and Lisa Klenk of Sibley County received the MACVSO President's Award for their service to veterans. From left are Pickard, MACVSO Vice President Josh Beninga of Lac qui Parle County, MACVSO President Martin Howes of Roseau County and Klenk. The dress code for the banquet was Hawaiian. It was held Sept. 11-14 at Grand View Lodge near Nisswa.



Members of the Minnesota Commanders Task Force told Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz the items they would like to see passed in the 2023 legislative session. The Minnesota CTF comprises eight congressionally chartered veterans organizations and, as one voice, they coordinate their legislative efforts on behalf of Minnesota veterans. They met at Camp Ripley Sept. 8 and 9 for their annual CTF Leadership Summit.



MACVSO Legislative Director Greg Peterson, a veteran service officer for Brown County, talks on the loudspeaker during a boat ride to Big Island on Lake Minnetonka.



On Sept. 8, county, local and state leaders hear from Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa on what the Legionville Education Center does.



Legionville Camp Manager Adam Felton speaks with Crow Wing County Land Management Conservationist Adam Maleski in the Dining Hall's kitchen. Legionville put 45.1 acres this year into the conservation program RIM, which stands for Reinvest in Minnesota. It compensates landowners for conserving land to benefit wildlife.



Minnesota Military Radio sponsored a banquet at Camp Ripley on Sept. 8 for the Commanders' Task Force (which includes The American Legion), the Minnesota Broadcasters Association and Camp Ripley leaders. Tom Lyons of Minnesota Military Radio emceed the banquet.

Continued from Page 16

attend a national convention at least once. I feel so many of our Legion Family are missing out. Same goes for district training. On Oct. 15, the 6th and 9th districts have training in Detroit

Lakes. Remember, you don't have to wait for this newsletter to come out. The 6th district website and FB are updated on a regular basis. Use the tools that we provide for you.



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 23 Vol. 3

President Mary Kuperus • Treasurer Cathy Radil, cathy@mnala.org

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634 October 2022

## Fall has arrived, and that means time for a conference

### President's Column

Mary Kuperus



Welcome to fall! My husband Bill and I had a great time at Camporee. We were able to pull our camper to Legionville and spend five days in the beautiful setting of the area. The weather was great, and we had a lot of fun.

Thank you so much to members of the SAL and other volunteers for planning this event. Thank you also to those districts that served the delicious meals. We were able to play a lot of bingo. Any winnings I had would go to the Department President's Project. I only won once with \$21.50 going to the project.

The Patriots Day Membership Rally — aka Harvest Rally — was well-attended. Congratulations to all American Legion Family members for turning in memberships and their standings in their respective organizations. The Auxiliary membership notices should be in the mail soon if you haven't already received them.

Please, continue to send in memberships in a timely manner. We all know that membership is the backbone of our organization. A national dues increase of \$6 a year was voted in at the National Convention. Starting in 2024, \$30 total will be sent to department for yearly dues.

Fall Conference is coming up soon at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. Please be sure to register for the event along with ordering tickets for the two breakfast and one lunch buffets. The buffets are to make it more convenient for you.

Northwestern Division Vice President Marlene Boyer will be joining us at Fall Conference. Please be sure to introduce yourself as she spends time in the Department of Minnesota.

The American Legion Auxiliary will have two sessions on Thursday night starting at 6:30 p.m. We are also having two crafting sessions for those interested. They will take place after the sessions about ALAMIS and annual reports. More information will be in the October unit

mailing. We will be collecting at Fall Conference new clothing items for the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. Items needed are sweats L and XL, both shirts and pants all the time, good yoga pants for our ladies, men's regular polo or button-down shirts 3X-5X, zipper hoodies of all sizes L and bigger and decent T-shirts for men M and bigger. A table will be available for the donations.

Congratulations to Samantha Stai on her election as the Northwestern Division Honorary Junior Vice President. She will lead the Northwestern Junior Meeting on Nov. 5 in Minneapolis. More information on this event will be coming soon from the national. Department Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger will be the official representative from Minnesota. Save this date and bring your Junior members for an exciting day.

As we look into the upcoming months, let's start planning for the American Legion Auxiliary's 103rd birthday on Nov. 10 and Veterans Day on Nov. 11. Veterans Day is the day to "honor" all veterans. I say we should honor our veterans every day! Minnesota Veterans Day Program will be held on Nov. 11 at the Veterans Memorial Community Center in Inver Grove Heights.

As we "Serve and Honor Every Day," let's remember those veterans who are homebound. Take the time to give them a call or even visit them. They may even need some yardwork done. Offer your assistance to help with chores they are no longer able to do. Thank you for all you do for our veterans!

*Mary Kuperus of New London Unit 537 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Serve and Honor Every Day."*

## Minn. Member of the Year recognized

Minnesota's Member of the Year for 2021-2022 was Edna Thayer from the Elysian Unit 311.

She was recognized at the 101st National Convention in Milwaukee. She also was recognized at the Department of Minnesota Convention in Minnesota.



Edna Thayer

See Page 5 for the All-Legion Family Calendar.



At the Patriots Rally (also called Harvest Rally) during the Camporee at Legionville Education Center, President Mary Kuperus holds a big ax because the membership theme for the year is Paul Bunyan. The membership chairmen from each district wear knit caps specific to their district.

## ALA chops away at membership



### Pearl Harbor Rally moves to Spicer

By Sandy Wersal  
Membership Chairman

The Patriots Rally (also called Harvest Rally this year) at Legionville on Sept. 10 is done. But what a success it was. The Sons of The American Legion did a great job with the rally and the Camporee weekend. It was a lot of fun!

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	48	3,810	384	384	10.08%	394	10
Two	72	3,819	420	420	11.00%	390	-30
Three	46	3,800	379	379	9.97%	442	63
Four	7	572	75	75	13.11%	120	45
Five	7	518	49	49	9.46%	42	-7
Six	62	4,991	683	683	13.68%	754	71
Seven	57	2,938	220	220	7.49%	329	109
Eight	23	1,237	152	152	12.29%	161	9
Nine	47	3,305	351	351	10.62%	528	177
Ten	43	3,764	382	382	10.15%	484	102
1982 Dept	1	203	56	56	27.59%	47	-9
District Total	413	28,957	3,151	3,151	10.88%	3691	540

Group 1 (Even)	207	14,383	1,712	1,712	11.90%	1,909	197
Judy Ackerman							
Group 2 (Odd)	205	14,371	1,383	1,383	9.62%	1,735	352

Thank you to all the volunteers. Members I hope you plan to attend Fall Conference in St. Cloud on Oct. 28 -29 and bring membership to turn in.

All districts have a Minnesota theme to work with to take part in the Saturday variety show. Check with your district

membership chairman to participate.

NOTE: Pearl Harbor Rally is moved to Spicer Post 545 on Dec. 3. Legion Family, wear your plaid flannel shirts. This is for the Paul Bunyan theme we are doing this membership year.

Question? Call 320-354-4517.



American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota members gather around delegation chairman Patti Coleman for a photo in Milwaukee at the American Legion Auxiliary 101st National Convention.

## Legion Auxiliary elects new national president

The 101st annual National Convention was held Aug. 26 through Sept. 1 in Milwaukee. The convention ended with the election and installation of our 2022-2023 national officers. Minnesota was represented by 24 delegates, 11 alternates and many guests.

Kentucky's Kathy Daudistal,

the 2021-2022 national president, presided over the busy five days as the national chairmen gave their reports. Resolutions were considered, and the newly elected and appointed officers were installed:

National President: Vickie Koutz, Ind.

National Vice President: Lisa

Williamson, Alaska

National Secretary: Dr. Coral May Grout, Mass.

National Treasurer: Marybeth Revoir, Ill.

National Chaplain: Karen Peel, Ohio

National Historian: Laura "Susie" Clyde, S.D.

National Vice President of

the Northwestern Division: Marlene Boyer, N.D.

National President Vickie Koutz has chosen as her theme: "Honoring Our Veterans Every Day." We need to let our own members know what great things this organization does for veterans, children and our communities.

## National awards

Minnesota proudly accepted the following national awards at the 2022 ALA National Convention in Milwaukee.

### Americanism

Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program in the Northwestern Division: Blackduck Unit 372

### Auxiliary Emergency Fund

To the department contributing the largest amount per capita: LuAnn Marschel, department chairman

### Children & Youth

Outstanding Department Award, Northwestern Division: Nancy Lewison, department chairman

Most Outstanding Unit Award, Northwestern Division: Elysian Unit 311

### History

Toomey Award, the overall Best Department History: Jean Horack, department chairman

Certificate of Merit, the Best Department History in the Northwestern Division: Jean Horack, department chairman

### Junior Activities

Junior Public Relations Award, Best Media Coverage of an Activity or Project: Bev Johnson, Warren Unit 27

### Leadership

Best Department Award, Northwestern Division: Mary Efta, department chairman

### Legislative

Outstanding Unit Award, Northwestern Division: Elysian Unit 311

### Unit Member of the Year

Engraved Plaque & Recognition at National Convention: Edna Thayer, Elysian Unit 311

### Poppy

Poppy Poster Contest, Northwestern Division, Class III (Grades 6-7): Nathan O'Malley

### Public Relations

Outstanding Public Relations Program, Northwestern Division: Karla Minnick, department chairman

Outstanding Public Relations Program Unit Award, Northwestern Division: Montgomery Unit 79

Congratulations to all of you for your outstanding accomplishments in the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.

## Stai elected honorary president of NW. Division

At the 101st National Convention, it was announced that Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Junior Member Samantha Stai, a member of New London Unit 537, was elected to serve as the honorary junior president for the Northwestern



Samantha Stai

Division for the 2022-2023 year. Samantha was elected by her peers in the Northwestern Division via electronic voting in July.

Congratulations, Samantha! You continue to make all of us ALA members proud.

## Poppy orders now accepted

Orders for the 2022-2023 poppies are now being accepted. A pink order form was in the first unit mailing. Prices are small poppies \$25 per 100 and large poppies \$18 per dozen.

The shipping and handling pricing has stayed the same from last year, only use the current form. We will ship the poppies according to the dates you enter on your form. We have a good supply on hand and can ship immediately.

officers and our special national guests. It will be followed by entertainment by Curt & Michelle Vocal Show, compliments of Bill and Donna Barbknecht.

Please bring as many memberships as you can to Fall Conference.

Membership Chairman Sandy Wersal and the 10 District Membership Chairmen have some membership fun planned for Saturday morning. All membership turned in by 1 p.m. Friday will be counted in Saturday morning's report. You won't want to miss it!

### Sign up for meals

There is a registration form on Page 5 for Fall Conference, but be sure to go to mnlegion.org, then "Events," then "Fall Conference."

There, you can download a form to pay for meals on site, too. You have to pay for these by Oct. 14 or you will have to eat elsewhere.

## Department to offer \$1,000 scholarships

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota,

will again offer eight \$1,000 scholarships to deserving students who wish to further their education, attending any institution of higher learning. They must be a resident of Minnesota or a member of the Auxiliary, Legion or SAL.

There is also the Past Presidents Parley Health Care Scholarship of which up to ten \$1,000 scholarships are available to Minnesota Auxiliary members who are furthering their education in any healthcare field.

Our national organization is again offering four national scholarships this year: Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship, Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior Members, Nontraditional Student Scholarship and Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship.

The American Legion also offers a Legacy Scholarship. All the forms will be in the next unit mailing and are posted on our website mnala.org under the scholarship tab.

Be certain you use the current application forms. Share these with your schools and members and assist eligible persons to apply. If you need additional forms, please duplicate those you received or request copies from the Department Office.



Auxiliary members gather for a group photo at the 1926 art deco hotel Hilton Milwaukee City Center with President Mary Kuperus, who stands in the center of the front row.



## 2022-2023 national appointments

National President Vickie Koutz has appointed the following national appointments:

Patti Coleman	Northwestern Division Junior Activities Chairman
Norma Tramm	National Public Relations Committee Chairman
Robin Dorf	Vice Chairman of the Junior Activities Committee
Mary Hendrickson	Northwestern Division Americanism Chairman
Sandra Fredrickson	Northwestern Division Poppy Chairman
Peggy Tesdahl	National ALA Girls Nation Committee Member
Carol Kottom	Northwestern Division National Security Chairman
Tamara Opland	Northwestern Division Membership Chairman

Please congratulate these fine ladies when you see them. They devote much of their own time to both the national and department organizations.

## October is month for reviewing rules

By Carol Kottom  
Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules Chairman

We spent a great deal of time in 2021-2022 updating our Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. Hopefully this year will not be quite as involved. Remember, these documents are available on the website and will be printed in the Unit Guide. The Department Constitution & Bylaws and Department Standing Rules, District Constitution & Bylaws, Unit Constitution, and the Unit Bylaws.

Every unit and district have their own unique standing rules. Review them at the beginning of the year and update them to fit what you have planned for this year. But, keep in mind, these

are still rules and should be written in a manner where frequent changing is not necessary.

Standing rules are the most versatile. This set of rules relate to the details of the administration rather than to parliamentary procedure. In accordance with Robert's Rules, these can be adopted or changed upon the same condition as any ordinary act. You can adopt a standing rule by majority vote without prior notification. You may suspend a rule when its application is in context of a meeting at any particular session. But the suspension does not pertain to future sessions. Rules that have any application outside a meeting context, cannot be suspended.

The standing rules pertain to your unit, district or department

only. Sometimes it is helpful to get some idea from other units or districts. Maybe they have rules that you agree with and would like to add to yours. Share. These rules should not include anything already covered in the Constitution or the Bylaws.

Be sure to review all governance annually. Department will be having committee zoom meetings again this year. Read the documents and let me know if you disagree with anything or if you see a need for additional rules.

Also avoid gender references in rules. With men in the ALA, we should no longer be using "her" or "she," "he" or "him." Please remove these.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

## Fall Conf. is jam-packed

Fall Conference will be Oct. 27-29 in St. Cloud. We have a lot of information packed into these three short days for units to partake of.

A reminder to all that we will once again be holding our silent auction on Friday at Fall Conference. There will be something for everyone to bid on and a few items to purchase as well. Please bring your donations for the auction Thursday and first thing Friday morning to the Opportunities Suite, Weidner Room.

All proceeds will go to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. We need everyone's support for this most important program.

Our conference wouldn't be complete without our Poppy Contests on Friday. Deadline for entries to be on the Poppy Table on Friday, Oct. 28, is 10 a.m. There will be two contests this year: The first is a challenge to show suggestions on how to use the poppies in a month other than May. The second, using President Mary's theme "Service & Honor Every Day," show us how you would display the poppy in the month of May to encourage donations.

We will offer first, second and third place prizes as well as having People's Choice voting. Votes for the people's choice are \$1 with all proceeds going to Department President Mary Kuperus' project.

Friday evening will once again have our grand march, which showcases department

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