

Bill calls for cuts on state gambling taxes

Legion leads press conference on e-tabs

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota House Tax Committee forwarded a bill March 23 for inclusion in a future tax omnibus bill that would reduce state taxes on charitable gambling. House File 209, authored by Rep. Kristin Bahner of Maple Grove, would reduce taxes from 36 percent of combined net receipts to 31 percent for gambling operations with net receipts over \$157,500. (See chart on Page 9 for all levels.)

Allen Lund, gambling manager for Osseo Post 172 and part of the Department Legislative Committee, testified on behalf of American Legion posts. “Our patrons like to win, and even when they don’t, they know the dollars they lost stay in the community,” he told lawmakers.

About a dozen American Legion members were in the room watching.

Lund said prices on the games keep rising but the pulltab prices remain the same. He said a \$1 pulltab game from 2000 would be \$1.75 today if adjusted for inflation. But it isn’t, and that cuts into what organizations have to give out.

“The state is unquestionably the largest benefactor of our charitable gambling,” he said.

If the HF209 tax cuts pass, it would result in \$30,000 more per year Post 172 could donate to community nonprofits, he said.

Rachel Jenner of Allied Charities of Minnesota said charitable gambling operations paid, in 2022, \$180 million to the state in taxes. Meanwhile, they

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Shakeup in Hastings



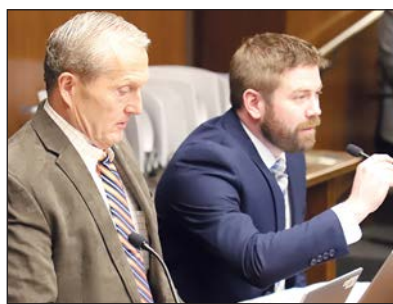
Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke, center, testifies March 21 before the Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Committee. On the left is MDVA Clinical Director Caroline Schauer, and on the right is MDVA Legislative Affairs Director Ben Johnson. MDVA stands for Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, which operates the five veterans homes. Herke participated in listening sessions with Hastings Veterans Home staff earlier that same day.

State VA dismisses 2 administrators; Legion watching closely

ST. PAUL — Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke let go of two senior administrators in the Minnesota Veterans Home system after published reports of a “toxic” workplace within the Hastings domiciliary.

Deputy Commissioner Douglas Hughes, who oversaw the entire Minnesota Veterans Home system, and Hastings Veterans Home Administrator Mike Anderson worked their final day on March 18. Most of the homes are nursing homes, but Hastings is not. It is a domiciliary, meaning it houses and treats veterans with substance abuse, mental health and behavioral issues.

Hughes came on board in 2016 and



Deputy Commissioner of Health Care Douglas Hughes, left, and Hastings Veterans Home Administrator Mike Anderson testify on March 6 for bonding bill funds. They were dismissed March 18.

Anderson in 2018.

The Minnesota Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Committee held a hearing March 21 to get answers on the allegations.

Herke said he became aware of problems at Hastings in June and by August a 10-point plan for improvement was formed. He said he dismissed Hughes and Anderson because the plan wasn’t resulting in an improved work environment.

“We were knocking down the 10-point plan, but not changing the culture,” Herke told the committee.

After questions, he explained there has

Continued on Page 8

Physician, Provider of the Year both from Mpls. VA

WASHINGTON — The American Legion annually awards Physician of the Year and Provider of the Year to federal VA staff. This year, both go to staff at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

The 2022 American Legion Physician of the Year was presented to Dr. Patricia Dickman at the Washington Conference on Feb. 28.

The same day, Physician Assistant Gobind Tarchand was presented with the American Legion Healthcare Provider of

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Student wins state Oratorical Contest 2nd time

ANOKA — A student at Eden Valley-Watkins High School won the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Finals for the second year running.

Megan Blonigen, 17, earns a \$1,500 scholarship from The American Legion Department of Minnesota, in addition to \$700 she won from the 7th District to reach state.

The state finals were held Feb. 25 at Anoka Post 102.

Blonigen, a junior at Eden Valley-Watkins, moves on to compete in the National American Legion Oratorical Contest

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Mentoring Gary Richardson made a difference at his post

By Tim Engstrom

WILLERNIE — The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway brought Air Force veteran Gary Richardson to work at the Northtown Yard in Minneapolis and Columbia Heights as a conductor and yardmaster in 1995. That’s how this Texan ended up living in Minnesota.

He met Teri Keyser on Valentine’s Day in 1999. She was the president for Auxiliary Unit 507 serving the communities of Willernie and Mahtomedi. (Willernie is completely surrounded by Mahtomedi.)

She told him: “As long as you are

going to be involved with me, you are going to be a Legion member.”

Sure enough, Richardson joined and attended his first meeting of Post 507.

What he witnessed was bitter disagreement. He saw grown men arguing vehemently over who was right. He wasn’t sure if this was the right path for him.

As they walked out of the room after the meeting, one of the older members put his arm around Richardson and said, “What happens in that meeting room stays in that meeting room. It was just business, and now we are going to sit together and drink together and be

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Gary Richardson is the commander of the 3rd District and a member of Willernie-Mahtomedi Post 507. The post meets at a barber shop in Willernie and has its offices in the back. The post handles the charitable gambling duties at Frigaard’s two doors down.

Bowling & Buddies

American Legion State Bowling Tournament kicks off the season

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Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary 1st Vice President Sharon Thiemecke opens the ceremony March 18 with words of greeting and camaraderie.



Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 hosts the 77th annual Minnesota American Legion State Bowling Tournament, and Post 172 Commander Larry Fonder welcomes people. Next to him is Unit 172 President Cathy Thornhill.

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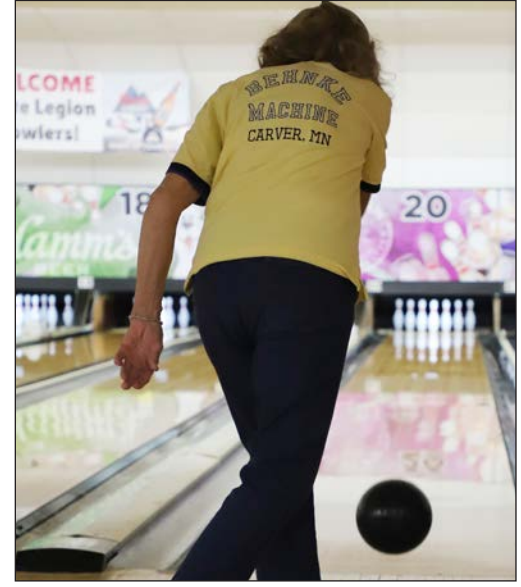
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 - Christmas Wonderland

- Osceola Cheese Store
- Russel Stove Candy Store
- Luggage handling (1 per person)



Leroy Sik, commander of Milroy Post 274, lines up a shot March 18 at Sundance Entertainment Center in Dayton. The tournament continues each weekend through April 22.



Brandi Henning, bowling for Delano Unit 377, brings the bowling ball back while going through her turn on the lane March 18 at Sundance Entertainment Center in Dayton.



Stefanie Hegland throws a bowling ball at Sundance Entertainment Center in Dayton. Her team bowled for Rushford Post 94. Bowlers from various posts around the state show up to compete as singles, doubles and teams.



David Wendt, bowling for Robbinsdale Post 251, practices in the minutes before the action begins at noon March 18.



Luther Berge, sporting a jersey that says "Big Sexy" on the back and "Mean Machine" elsewhere, looks back at his bowl. He played for Rushford Post 94.



James Hultgren, left, leads the Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 Color-Guard during the opening ceremonies of the Minnesota American Legion State Bowling Tournament.



Todd Arndt, bowling with Robbinsdale Post 251, watches his bowling ball roll.



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Being a member means helping veterans

As I write this article, we have managed to dig out from our latest foot and half of new snowfall. The sun is shining, and the temperatures are steadily climbing.

Now that we have moved our clock back up an hour its feels like spring is on its way. We have hired both a department service officer and an assistant department service officer to help veterans. They, along with our Rehabilitation Committee, are working hard to ensure the veterans in Minnesota are heard and taken care of.

Our Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund continues to help veterans across the state with their emergency needs. Please remember to consider that fund when your post is considering donations. This fund helps ensure that no veteran is left cold, hungry or homeless.

We had a department Oratorical Contest winner out of the 7th District. Congratulations to Megan Blonigen. You and the other contestants remind us that the coming generation is heading in the right direction. Know that you have the full support of the Department of Minnesota as you travel to the National Oratorical Contest this month.

Our Legislative Committee and department staff are working hard to ensure that our legislative priorities are being heard by our legislators. Our legislative committee continues to monitor important issues such as e-tabs and charitable gambling tax level, along with property taxes for disabled veterans and property taxes on our brink and mortar posts. We encourage you to continue to call

Commander's Column

Jennifer Havlick



and write your legislators about our legislative priorities.

April will be a very busy month for our department. Along with multiple post visits on the schedule we have our Appreciation Rally in New Prague, immediately followed by the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota.

National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola will arrive in Minnesota on April 17 and will visit until April 21.

His last appearance in the Department will be at our April Department Legion College session on Thursday evening. I am proud to announce that class is completely full. We have a second class scheduled for Oct. 12-15 at Camp Ripley. Applications are available on the department website. The last week of April we have the disabled deer hunt at Camp Ripley.

The Diamond of the Department — Legionville Education Center — has opened registration for our safety camp this summer. We have seven weeks available; we would love to have all seven weeks filled with children laughing, learning and making new friends.

District commanders and Legionville board members, please make sure that our posts have all the information they need to help our safety camp and other projects at Legionville get the support they need. If you have any questions, please contact board

chairman Carl Moon.

The last thing I want to touch on is membership. I know it's easy during the winter months for membership renewals to slow down. Our snowbirds are out of town and sometimes we get overwhelmed with snow shoveling, plowing and basically getting through the winter but I'm asking all our posts to reach out to the members who have not paid for their 2023 dues and check on them.

Sometimes being late on membership dues can mean they are struggling, mentally or financially. If they are, please offer to help. Remember we do *not* leave anyone behind. If they need more assistance than just with their dues, we have funds that can assist. If they are struggling with mental health issues we have partners and assistance available for that also.

If you are reading this and you are struggling, please reach out. We are here for you. Our officers don't screen calls; we answer them. We are here for you. I look forward to seeing you all in the coming months.

Jennifer Havlick of Duluth Wisted Post 28 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Honoring Our Past by Securing Our Future."

April is a time for Children & Youth

A baby is God's response for our world to continue. I certainly know a baby provides plenty of opportunity to change perspectives. These little ones nudge us to expand our hearts and minds for the better is to invest our energy, time and skills not only in our well-being, but into the well-being of another.

This is done through widening our lens of responsibility to include not only our present existence but the possibility of a future.

In The American Legion, April is all about looking at the snapshots of all the ways we devote ourselves to enriching the lives and future of children and youth. Children and Youth are one of four of our main focuses (pillars) of what we do in living out "For God and Country." The opportunities are available to all children and youth as we recognize that our parish extends to all corners of our country and even at times instilling hope in young people across our borders.

After World War II, Legionnaires sent presents to the youth in France to ensure a joyful holiday season after years of war and struggles. It is proven that all our programs contribute to developing a young person's character traits (morals, ethics, beliefs, and personality)

The issues that you face are not new. Most of them only have new names. Injury, sacrifice and scars both visible and invisible have been experienced in service and conflict since time began. Your service is respected and valued, but no more than anyone else who wore the uniform.

That you served honorably is the only requirement that we have for membership. Where you served, when you served and what medals you received are not important to your ability to belong and serve.

The American Legion has flaws and issues just like every other organization that I have ever known. Change will be needed to survive into the next century.

My caution would be to not throw out everything and everyone in your quest to remake the Legion into your image.

Allen Lund
Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172

Ask business managers about tattered U.S. flags

Coming through a neighboring city last week, I looked at a bank flag. I was disappointed at what I saw — an American flag that looked as if it had endured a war.

This badly worn flag did not happen overnight. It was weeks in the making. The American flag is important to me, and I suspect especially so for veterans. For some, it was their only hope of ever being rescued or being covered at the time of interment.

American flags on display,

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



like creativity, patience, compassion, resilience, integrity, honesty, courage and loyalty through the requirements to participate and the nature of the event itself.

A look back into our past with those old black-and-white frames reveal to us that from the very start we supported Boy Scouts in 1919, Boys Baseball in 1925, Boys Nation in 1935 and Oratorical Contest in 1938. The Junior Shooting Sports program has a long history dating back to the 1920s marksmanship teams. It officially began to become a sole youth program in the 1960 and 1970s with complete stand-alone status in 1991.

Scholarships have evolved and developed into our current scholarship programs with each of our 55 departments adding onto what the national programs provide. In the state of Minnesota, for instance, we have many posts award scholarships for high school graduates; provide scholarships for Legionville attendance and other youth programs.

The National Youth Cadet Law Enforcement became

official in 1985.

Twenty-two departments conduct this intensive six-day program for either a high school male or female into aspects of being a law enforcement officer. One other program that is being developed across different departments is girls fastpitch. Minnesota launched our program in 2022. We had the largest first-year team turn-out yet.

I don't know why The American Legion chose April for Children & Youth. It could be because for many of us it marks spring, the hope for a new beginning, a fresh start and hope for tomorrow. It is so encouraging that we continue to offer through our devotion to mutual helpfulness hope for our future. In turn we feel more whole, sure of ourselves and to what we will leave as our legacy.

Please take a moment to stop in and visit with a supervisor or

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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Mail Call

Send letters to the editor for Mail Call to tengstrom@mnlegion.org.

Editor's note: All letters are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily The American Legion or The Minnesota Legionnaire. We do favor dialogue as key to the American form of government.

An open letter to younger Legion members

I am very glad that you belong to The American Legion. It is my hope that you were not subjected to the disdain shown to some Vietnam veterans when they joined or attempted to join the Legion.

At some point you will be the elders of the Legion, and you will eventually be handing over the reins to another generation of members.

I have been a member of the Legion for 35 years. I have been an officer in a post or district for over 20 years. I have been a member of the honor guard or color guard at dozens upon dozens of funerals. I have worked hundreds of events and attended what seems like thousands of meetings during that time.

Yet my service to the Legion pales when compared to those that have given much more than I have.

You seem to think that those of us from previous conflict eras are out of touch and no longer relevant. I understand that to some degree. I was never a fan of ceremony, pomp or circumstance. I thought it unnecessary. The older I get the more that I appreciate remembering those who came before us and



This phone only goes so far, but I think I see your car. Stay at the front gate. I'll be there ... Just got to lug this seabag.

the traditions that go along with that.

You say that we are not proactive in dealing with your current issues.

The American Legion was proactive before most of your grandparents were born. Though we may not make a big show of all we do, we remain proactive to this day. The federal PACT Act and statewide

veterans courts are examples. We are a strong voice for you in D.C. and in St. Paul.

One of my grandfathers was badly injured in the forests of France during World War I that left him physically disabled for life. If it had not been for The American Legion and others, he would not have received the care that he required for the remainder of his life.

James A. Hovda
Rice Post 473



Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Adrian, Douglas A.	83	1/26/23	Army	Vietnam	2	New London Post 537
Anderson, Kenneth H.	96	9/11/22	Navy	WWII	48	Mankato Post 11
Note: He served in the Pacific Theatre aboard the seaplane tender USS Kenneth Whiting as a hospital corpsman.						
Aretz, Lester E.	89	2/20/23	Army	Korea	57	Maple Lake Post 131
Note: He was a member of the color guard.						
Armstrong, Wendell J.	82	11/3/22	Army NG	Vietnam	43	Waseca Post 228
Arndt, Willard E.	89	11/18/22	Army	Cold	56	Cosmos Post 126
Ashley, Russell E.	90	2/24/23	Army	Korea	66	Lyle Post 105
Note: He served in the 24th Infantry Division. He was sent to fight in Korea, but fighting ended before his ship arrived. He served many years on the honor guard.						
Augustson, Ray G.	90	1/29/23	Air Force	Korea	55	Walker Post 134
Bailey, Scott M.	unk.	1/1/23	Army	Leb/Gren	13	St. Paul Park Post 98
Berczyk, Hilary S.	92	1/22/23	Air Force	Korea	32	Richfield Post 435
Bjorlo, Joel P.	79	2/26/23	Navy	Vietnam	13	Winona Post 9
Blochowitz, Gilbert J. Sr.	92	2/11/23	Army	WWII	48	Bigelow Post 496
Braaten, Donald K.	95	2/22/23	Army AF	WWII	49	Bagley Post 16
Brown, Gregory W.	75	2/13/23	Army	Vietnam	4	Roosevelt Post 371
Buessman, Robert J.	77	3/6/23	Army	Vietnam	53	New Ulm Post 132
Note: A career elementary teacher, he served as New Ulm mayor for 10 years and is a past president of the Highway 14 Coalition. He is a past post commander and finance officer, and he was the New Ulm Comrades of Valor Honor Guard trumpeter and chaplain.						
Burtzel, Gerald	91	8/23/22	Army	Korea	30	Mankato Post 11
Bussiere, Steven D.	74	1/5/23	Navy	Vietnam	46	St. Paul Park Post 98
Carstensen, William O.	86	2/10/23	Navy	Korea	45	Pipestone Post 6
Note: He served aboard the submarine USS Sabalo as a radioman.						
Cheney, Robert L.	77	2/11/23	Army	Vietnam	13	Motley Post 124
Daniels, Clarence B.	88	2/11/23	Marines	Korea	63	Albert Lea Post 56
Dovre, Dennis D.	78	1/19/23	Navy	Vietnam	32	Detroit Lakes Post 15
Duff, John E. "Butch"	74	11/20/22	Army	Vietnam	43	St. Paul Park Post 98
Ekholm, John	82	11/23/21	Army	Vietnam	24	Mora Post 201
Erkenbrack, Audrian V.	95	2/5/23	Marines	Korea	27	Deer Creek Post 283
Fickling, William G.	93	2/28/23	Army	Korea	61	Le Center Post 108
Note: He served in combat as a signal/intelligence officer stationed in Seoul.						
Fjerkenstad, Melburne B.	95	2/6/23	Air Force	WWII	65	Boyd Post 198
Flock, John F.	70	1/10/23	Army	Vietnam	41	Milaca Post 178
Gilster, John H.	88	2/17/23	Army	Korea	23	Glencoe Post 95
Haberman, Ferdinand W.	92	2/21/23	Army	Korea	69	Brewster Post 464
Note: "Ferdie" was the 2nd District commander 1968-69, served as district vice commander for three years, district finance officer for 37 years, was past post commander, carried post colors in the National Convention Parade for 55 years and served many years as president of the American Legion Brain Sciences Foundation Board of Directors.						
Haggerty, Clinton J.	94	12/29/22	Air Force	WWII	26	St. Paul Park Post 98
Haubenschild, Leo L.	90	3/1/23	Army	Korea	28	Rochester Post 92
Note: He served in the 1st Calvary Division, then with them in Japan.						
Hille, Peter J.	86	2/18/23	Army	Korea	21	New London Post 537
Holzinger, John G.	91	11/12/22	Navy	Korea	58	St. Paul Park Post 98
Honer, Gary E.	83	3/8/23	Army	Vietnam	32	Dent Post 148
Jansen, Daniel N.	87	2/2/23	Air Force	Korea	23	Milaca Post 178
Jensen, Floyd M.	91	2/25/23	Navy	Korea	69	Mora Post 201
Johnson, Arlo W.	79	6/10/22	Air Force	Vietnam	30	St. Paul Park Post 98
Johnson, Hilding L.	95	12/28/22	Navy	WWII/Korea	45	Owatonna Post 77
Johnson, Lawrence G.	89	2/20/23	Army	Korea	38	Bagley Post 16
Johnson, Lowell H.	88	12/9/22	Army	Korea	34	Shakopee Post 2
Johnson, Merle O.	80	1/9/23	Air Force	Vietnam	53	Mankato Post 11
Johnson, Norman D.	77	2/25/23	Army	Vietnam	22	Austin Post 91
Katterhagen, Robert R.	95	12/19/22	Army	WWII	43	Waseca Post 228
Keller, Larry J.	96	1/25/23	Army	WWII	50	Coon Rapids Post 334
Knafla, Marvin C.	95	2/7/23	Army	Korea	25	Two Harbors Post 109
Kormann, Marvin D.	92	11/29/22	Navy	WWII	50	Waseca Post 228
Krohus, Gary B.	74	1/27/23	Army	Vietnam	55	Spring Grove Post 249
Note: As part of the 5th Special Forces in the Vietnam War, he led 35 recon missions as point man. Why? "Nobody could read a map like this country boy from Iowa," he said. He received two Bronze Stars. His cause of death was connected to exposure to Agent Orange.						
Laird, Richard W.	77	2/17/23	Army	Vietnam	55	Aitkin Post 86
Lamp, Jerry A.	88	12/24/22	Army	Cold	5	Mankato Post 11
Laumeyer, Lloyd H.	94	2/26/23	Army	Korea	65	Long Prairie Post 12
Note: He served in the infantry in combat. His obituary quoted him, "It's worth a million for what I've seen and went through, but I wouldn't give two cents to do it again."						
Lee, Marvin L.	92	1/28/23	Army	Korea	54	Ada Post 26
Lemke, Harlan J.	78	2/21/23	Army	Vietnam	32	Waconia Post 150
Lenz, Roman J.	95	2/14/23	Army	Korea	43	Ellsworth Post 196
Lubbers, Leonard J.	94	2/19/23	Army	Korea	52	Shakopee Post 2
Maciej, Alvin L.	90	2/23/23	unk.	Korea	37	Coon Rapids Post 334
McCormack, Robert J.	98	1/5/23	Air Force	Korea	5	Two Harbors Post 109
McNeil, Charles G.	97	11/24/22	Navy	WWII	61	Waseca Post 228
Miller, LeRoy C.	77	2/18/23	Navy	Vietnam	12	Monticello Post 260
Morfitt, Derald W.	96	2/14/23	Navy	WWII	58	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He served aboard troop transport USS Barnwell, aircraft carrier USS Princeton and attack transport USS Sumter.						
Nelson, Terry W.	74	2/4/23	Navy	Vietnam	1	Golden Valley Post 523
Nistler, Joseph J. Sr.	90	2/5/23	Army	Korea	70	Watkins Post 453
Note: He served in the Army and Army Reserves for 38 years, 9 months and 22 days, including three in the Korean War. He was a full colonel at retirement.						
Oldenburg, Martin "Pete"	93	1/21/23	Army	Korea	24	Litchfield Post 104
Peterson, Dale W.	86	2/21/23	Army	Korea	45	New London Post 537
Pfeifer, Gerald E.	84	3/2/23	Army	Vietnam	4	St. Peter Post 37
Phillipp, Eldred J.	84	2/7/23	Army Res.	Vietnam	56	Paynesville Post 271
Pritchett, Keith G.	86	12/26/22	Army	Korea	11	Minnesota Post 1982
Pulak, Julian J.	95	2/27/23	Army	WWII	35	Pierz Post 341
Reichel, Robert H.	91	8/22/22	Army	Korea	71	Mankato Post 11
Reimler, Robert J.	95	2/4/23	Army	Korea	67	Marshall Post 113
Reutzler, Harvey J.	92	2/11/23	Army	Korea	11	Albert Lea Post 56
Roberts, Robert W.	83	12/23/22	Air Force	Vietnam	34	Lanesboro Post 40
Sorenson, Robert F.	81	1/6/22	Army	Vietnam	49	Lake Crystal Post 294
Spartz, Vernon F.	89	2/17/23	Army	Korea	20	New London Post 537



Ferdie Haberman

All-Family Events Calendar

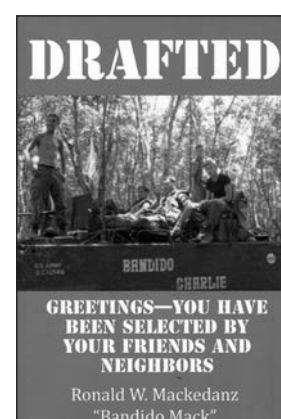
- April 1:** Boys State funding due
- April 14-15:** ALA Junior Conference, New Prague Post 45
- April 15:** DEC/Appreciation Rally, New Prague Post 45
- April 16-22:** Volunteer Recognition Week
- April 17-21:** National Commander's Tour of Minnesota
- April 19:** TAL 95 percent membership target
- April 19:** Chaplain Training, via Zoom
- April 20-23:** Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
- April 22:** Department President's Testimonial Dinner, Spicer Post 545
- April 22:** Military Ball, Fest Building, Spring Grove
- April 22:** Women Veteran Appreciation Event, LC's Venue, Rochester
- April 22:** Military Muscle Foundation Fun Run & Walk, US Bank Stadium, Minneapolis
- April 29:** 4th District Family Testimonial Dinner, North St. Paul Post 39
- May 1:** Boys State reservations due
- May 1-3:** National President's Tour of Minnesota
- May 8-11:** Spring Meetings, National HQ, Indianapolis
- May 13:** Department Commander's Testimonial, New Prague Post 45
- May 17:** TAL 100 percent membership target
- May 26:** National Poppy Day
- May 29:** Memorial Day, local ceremonies
- June 11-17:** Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.
- June 11-17:** Minnesota Girls State, Bethel Univ.
- June 13:** ALA 95 percent membership target
- June 16:** Last Man Club Golf Classic, Shoreland Country Club, St. Peter
- June 23-24:** SAL Detachment Conference, Anoka Post 102
- July 4:** Forest Lake Post 225 Fourth of July Parade
- July 12:** DEC, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls
- July 13-15:** Department Convention, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls
- July 26:** Legacy Run Kickoff Party, North Branch Post 85
- July 27-30:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament, Rochester
- July 27-30:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament, Burnsville
- July 28-30:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, Roseau
- July 28-30:** Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, New York Mills
- Aug. 4-6:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, Granite Falls
- Aug. 15-20:** American Veterans Traveling Tribute, Murray County Fair, Slayton
- Aug. 19:** Fund 85 Run (Minn. Veterans Assistance Fund), Forest Lake Post 225
- Aug. 25-31:** National Convention, Charlotte, N.C.
- Oct. 12-15:** Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
- Oct. 26-28:** Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
- Nov. 11:** Veterans Day, local ceremonies



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Department of Corrections



It turns out the book about the veteran featured in the March 2023 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire is no longer available through Amazon or Polaris Publishing.

To get "Drafted," send a \$20 check and a note with your mailing address to Ron Mackedanz, 9705 37th Ave. SE, Kandiyohi, MN 56251.

"Mack" says there are about 150 copies remaining in his possession.

The book details being drafted, his experience in the infantry in Vietnam War and his return home to civilian life.



SAL Detachment of Minnesota Commander Tim Weaver, left, stands with SAL National Commander Chris Carlton in Rochester in mid-March.

Let's keep surpassing our membership goals

SAL National Cmdr. Christopher Carlton



Greetings, Sons of The American Legion,
We all know how vital our membership numbers are. The more voices we have in the Sons of The American Legion, the greater we are as one voice supporting our veterans and communities with full-throated enthusiasm.

I'm proud to congratulate you on surpassing our 80 percent membership target goal. As of March 17, the SAL is now at 326,330 members. That's 88.73 percent of our membership goal for the year. We had fifty detachments that met this target goal, and four detachments are already above 100 percent.

I appreciate the hard work you all have done to help us get to this point. But let's not ease up now. I encourage you to reach out to former SAL members and invite them back into the fold. Please get out into your communities and find potential SAL members who may not be aware of all that we do.

We are on track but let's make sure we make not only goal, but surpass, our 100 percent membership goal.

I encourage you to support The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF). VCF is not only my project this year but it is such an important part of supporting our veterans and their families.

Donations to VCF help provide food and shelter to children of veterans and service-members facing unexpected hardships. It also helps fund training and accreditation for American Legion service officers, who fill a vital role in assisting veterans and their families apply for disability benefits, survivor assistance, GI Bill opportunities and more.

Contributions are tax-deductible and can be made safely online at Legion.org/VCF.

Be the One!
With passion and purpose.

Christopher Carlton of Indianapolis Squadron 495 is the national commander of the Sons of The American Legion.

Thank you for your support and our growth

SAL Membership Matthew Verkuilen



Two years ago, I embarked on a new project, that of being the membership director for the SAL Detachment of Minnesota. My hope and focus since the beginning has always been to support you at the local level as we work together to grow the Sons of The American Legion here in Minnesota.

We have seen growth not only in general membership, but I'm related with the growth we have seen by welcoming new squadrons into the fold. We welcomed those members filled with new ideas of how to help make our organization better by supporting veterans, their families and our communities.

And while, with this announcement, I will be stepping away from my membership roles at the Detachment of Minnesota level, I encourage you to keep on being #SALSTRONG, to look toward how we can involve our younger members in what we do, how to involve

families into what we do, to continue to look at new ways to invest into our communities and our programs and to continue to preserve our possession of a priceless heritage through the legacies that we create.

I leave encouraged at what has been done so far and even more what the future holds. To quote the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

Thank you for all your support over these last two years and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for the American Legion Family.

Matthew Verkuilen was the membership director for the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.

Taps



Continued from Page 5

Squires, Michael J.	74	2/18/23	Army	Vietnam	36	Rochester Post 92
Stanek, Eugene E.	83	3/5/23	Army	Cold	3	Winona Post 9
Sullivan, Leroy M.	78	5/19/22	Air Force	Vietnam	4	Monticello Post 260
Thielges, Michael J.	72	1/29/23	Army	Vietnam	24	Chanhassen Post 580
Totman, Harold L.	101	1/13/23	Army NG	WWII	78	Pipestone Post 6
Note: He served in South Dakota's 147th Field Artillery, which was called up to active-duty, trained on the West Coast and sent to Australia, New Guinea and the Philippines. He was a past post commander.						
Van Driel, Donavun	90	2/2/23	Army	Korea	69	Mora Post 201
Note: He served in the States and overseas. While abroad, he played on an Army baseball team.						
Volkenant, Richard J.	87	2/27/23	Army	Korea	4	Waconia Post 150
Wagner, Howard E.	90	2/19/23	Army	Korea	18	Rochester Post 92
Weber, Robert J.	75	2/8/23	Army NG	Vietnam	37	Owatonna Post 77
Wright, Everette A.	74	3/13/23	Navy	Vietnam	26	St. Paul Park Post 98
Young, Carl E.	73	2/21/23	Navy	Vietnam	3	Lake City Post 110
Note: He served aboard the helicopter platform ship USS New Orleans as a naval corpsman.						
Zappa, Robert A.	78	2/14/23	Army	Vietnam	41	St. Paul Park Post 98
Zimmer, Joseph F.	95	1/14/23	Air Force	WWII	45	St. Joseph Post 328
Note: He also served during the Berlin Airlift.						

The SAL Update:

SAL national commander visits the Detachment of Minnesota

By Shawn Davis

ROCHESTER — Sons of The American Legion National Commander Chris Carlton paid a visit to Minnesota over St. Patrick Day weekend at the SAL Spring Conference.

Upon his arrival Detachment Commander Tim Weaver and Detachment Advisor Gary Weaver took him on a tour of the Preston Veterans Cemetery and the site of the future Preston Veterans Home.

On Saturday, when Carlton addressed the members of the Detachment and guests, he brought up membership.

"Some of us might be involved; some of us are totally committed. Those of us who make a life out of our commitment need to reach out to our members who are just involved. All our members want to do something. It is up to us to reach out to our members and find out what they are interested in. Good members are hard to find. Leaders are replaceable. We change our leadership yearly," he said.

American Legion National Commander Vincent James Troiola asked Carlton if he would join in on his project. Carlton agreed. Troiola's goal is \$2 million for the American Legion Veterans & Children's Fund.

This is also Commander Weaver's project. Carlton feels that the SAL can be a big contributing factor towards this unified Legion-SAL goal. The SAL is already the largest contributor to the Children's Welfare Foundation (CWF). Later in the program, he helped with the detachment auction for CWF. The day's total came to \$1,674 for Child Welfare Foundation, continuing that tradition at the Spring Conference.

"It is said, The American Legion is a mile wide and an inch deep," said Carlton. "With all the great programs and all the great things, we do. We are wide, but we are just barely breaking dirt. So this year, what the national organization wanted to do was find one thing that could be



SAL and American Legion Riders members gather for a photo with National SAL Commander Chris Carlton in March in Rochester.



SAL National Commander Chris Carlton holds up items as Past Detachment Commander Dave Vulcan auctions them off to raise funds for the Legion's Child Welfare Foundation.

an inch wide and a mile deep — something that would make an impact. When they looked, they saw one of the biggest problems that our veterans faced today was mental health issues and suicide. It is the 'Be The One' campaign."

He went on to describe how the SAL can "be the one" to ask how a struggling veteran or their family members are doing, to listen, to reach out to ask if they need help and help them find help.

SAL members also can be the one to ask how that veteran's family are doing, or other SAL members, when they need support.



Legionnaire of the Year Jim Kellogg of Adams Post 146 brings thanks to the detachment.

Photos by Lou Michaels/Detachment Historian

National Commander's Tour of Minnesota

Vincent "Jim" Troiola also visits some military sites in the Duluth and Camp Ripley areas. Below are the public stops on the tour. Please call or email to reserve your spot.

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Monday, April 17			
West Duluth Post 71	dinner*	6 p.m.	218-628-1495 (Post)
Tuesday, April 18			
Chisholm Post 247 held at Valentini's Supper Club	dinner*	6 p.m.	218-966-0603 (Brad) (or via Chisholm Post 247 Facebook)
Wednesday, April 19			
Aitkin Post 86	breakfast	8:30 a.m.	218-927-2965 (Post, after 11 Tue.-Sat.)
Hackensack Post 202	lunch	noon	763-227-0704 (Rob)
Ironton Post 443	dinner*	6 p.m.	218-833-2117 (Anthony)
Thursday, April 20			
Underwood Post 489	breakfast	8:30 a.m.	218-770-6264 (NECman Bill Barbknecht)
Long Prairie Post 12	lunch	noon	320-732-4045 (Post)

* includes 5 p.m. social hour

What's happening?

Commander's Tour of Minn. is nearing

DULUTH — The National Commander's Tour of Minnesota is ready for blast-off. National Commander Vincent James "Jim" Troiola and Commander's Aide Gary Schacher, both from New York state, arrive at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport on April 17. They head straight north on I-35 to a hotel in Duluth, then to supper at West Duluth Post 71.



Vincent J. Troiola

The chart above shows his public schedule. Members and the general public are welcome to attend, but reservations are needed for meal preparation. The commander and his aide are joined by Department Commander Jennifer Havlick and Membership Director Linda Dvorak, along with some department staff.

In addition to the public stops, Troiola is slated to do an interview with KBJR-TV, visit the Silver Bay Veterans Home on April 18 and Camp Ripley and Minnesota Legion College on April 20.

He departs from MSP on April 21.

Appreciation Rally planned for Post 45

NEW PRAGUE — The Minnesota American Legion Appreciation Rally, hosted by the New Prague Post 45, is Saturday, April 15. Post 45 is also known as The Park Ballroom. It is at 300 Lexington Ave. S. Social hour is at 4 p.m., meal at 5 p.m., program at 6 p.m. The meal is roast beef, mashed potatoes, salad, rolls and dessert. Cost is \$17, paid in advance or at the door. To pay in advance, go to mnlegion.org, then "Events," then "TALMN rallies," then

"Appreciation Rally." The ALA Department Junior Conference is at Post 45 that same afternoon. The American Legion Department Executive Committee meets at 3:30 p.m. at Post 45. Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary is not holding a DEC meeting at the Appreciation Rally. Its DEC meeting was March 25 at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul.

Legionville registration is now open

BRAINERD — Registration is open for sending kids ages 10-12 to Legionville Education Center. Legionville now has a new website. It is at legionville.org. The registration fee is \$500, and that cost typically is paid by the local American Legion post or other sponsor, like a local school, fraternal organization or civic club. Parents complete the registration, but it is advised to have the sponsor lined up first. Session dates are June 11-16, June 18-23, June 25-30, July 9-14, July 16-21, July 23-28 and July 30-Aug. 4.

Commander's testimonial is planned

NEW PRAGUE — Post 45's Park Ballroom also is the site of the Department Commander's Testimonial. It is May 13. Social hour is 4 p.m., dinner 5 p.m., program 6 p.m. DJ Gary Richardson, who is the 3rd District commander, will be up and running 7:30 to 10 p.m. The meal for that event is to be chicken breast, roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, dressing, salad, a vegetable, rolls and brownies. Registration is in advance. Send check for \$25 with names to Park Ballroom, 300 Lexington Ave. S. You also can pay online by visited mnlegion.org and navigating to "Events," then "Commander's Testimonial." For lodging, New Prague has Quality Inn & Suites. Otherwise, hotels are found nearby in Shakopee and Lakeville.

Vietnam War display coming to St. Thomas

MENDOTA HEIGHTS — The Wall That Heals is coming to St. Thomas Academy for Memorial Day weekend. It is a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. St. Thomas Academy is a private all-boys Catholic military preparatory middle and high school. The wall is to be accompanied by a mobile education center.

The display begins at 2 p.m. May 25 and ends 2 p.m. May 29. It will be behind Flynn Hall on the practice fields. It honors the 3 million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War. The wall bears the names of 58,281 men who died in Vietnam. "It is an honor and privilege for Saint Thomas Academy to host The Wall That Heals," said ret. Col. Neil Hetherington, commandant of cadets at Saint Thomas Academy. Group tours are available. To schedule one, email John Morris at revmorris@comcast.net or call 651-683-1547.

War displays coming to Slayton

SLAYTON — Slayton American Legion Post 64 is hosting a Vietnam wall, too. An 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington arrives Aug. 15, during the Murray County Fair, and will feature opening ceremonies at 7 p.m. This display is from American Veterans Traveling Tribute. It will also have a tribute to the veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other wars and conflicts going back to 1914.

9th District to have testimonial

BAGLEY — A joint testimonial dinner is planned for the 9th District on Saturday, April 29,

at Bagley Post 16. The social hour is 11 a.m., with dinner at noon. The testimonial honors 9th District Commander Terry Buraas and 9th District President Cheryl Grover.

Veterans to get in free to Twin Cities Auto Show

MINNEAPOLIS — The Twin Cities Auto Show hosts Military Appreciation Night from 4 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, April 4. All veterans and active military receive a free ticket, and any family and friends with them get \$7 off. There will be representatives from The American Legion and other veterans organizations at the auto show, which is at the Minneapolis Convention Center. A special salute is planned for 7 p.m., with speakers, bands, color guards and check presentations.

Pork chops in Eyota, anyone?

EYOTA — The Eyota Post 551's American Legion Riders will host a pork chop dinner from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. April 15. The meal is pork chop, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans and side salad. Cost is \$12.50 for an adult, \$7.50 for children 6-10. Ages 5 and younger are free. Proceeds go to Believet, which provides trained service dogs to veterans.



Commander's Project

It's closer!

Department Commander Jennifer Havlick's Project raises funds for Minnesota families receiving mortgage-free smarthomes from Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

She also hopes to raise funds for Project Delta, which creates service dogs for veterans from rescue/shelter dogs, and for Eagle's Healing Nest, which helps veterans with the invisible wounds of war.

Contribution Deadline: July 15

Mail to American Legion Dept. of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

Goal: \$60,000

Present: 71% at \$42,965

Shout out to Posts 11, 21, 147, 282 and 147 and to Unit 102 for their recent contributions.

Make checks out to: Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82. The foundation is a 501(c)3. Gambling funds are permitted.

Date of graphic: March 22

THE WALL THAT HEALS
VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL REPLICA & MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER
A PROGRAM OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND FOUNDERS OF THE WALL

The Wall That Heals is a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Washington D.C. This traveling exhibit allows visitors to view the more than 58,000 names of the service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.



HOSTED BY
SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY
949 Mendota Heights Road, Mendota Heights, MN 55120

May 26-29



FIND OUT MORE HERE!

OPEN TO PUBLIC • FREE ADMISSION • OPEN 24 HOURS • CLOSING 2PM ON MONDAY



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!
Contact Lt. Colonel Lockhart at dlockhart@cadets.com

TOURS AVAILABLE!
Contact John Morris at revmorris@comcast.net

Legion: State needs to fund new buildings at the Hastings campus

Continued from Page 1

been progress: "I just wasn't seeing movement as it relates to the culture."

The St. Paul Pioneer Press published its story on March 5. It alleged the Hastings Veterans Home suffers from a "toxic" workplace.

Reporter Christopher Magan wrote, "Caregivers at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Hastings say a long-standing culture of workplace harassment, retaliation and bullying has led to an exodus of workers and hazards for both residents and staff. Current and former workers say unsafe conditions are ignored, medical decisions are made by unqualified people and staffing levels are dangerously low, according to interviews and documents obtained by the Pioneer Press."

At the March 14 Commander's Task Force meeting, before Hughes was dismissed, veterans with the Legion and DAV asked if administrators ever overruled medical decisions, as alleged in the Pioneer Press story.

"Never," Hughes said. "Not possible."

After his dismissal, Hughes spoke with the Pioneer Press. In a March 22 story, he pointed the finger of blame at Herke's management style. He told the newspaper Herke failed to act.

Anderson declined to comment to the newspaper.

At the Senate hearing, Herke emphasized the care of veterans was not affected.

"At no time was there a situation where we lacked the staffing to take care of the residents," Herke said.

Current and former nurses spoke at the Senate hearing, and they described how many doctors left under duress, as well as other staff. They told of efforts to provide quality care to veterans despite staff problems. There was disagreement between them and agency leaders on whether the issues affected care of veterans.

James Meyer, an existing employee at the domiciliary program in Minneapolis speaking on behalf of the union, said "a downward culture change took off in 2017." He said the care of veterans was not affected because nurses are going to make sure jobs get done. He said he wants to be part of the turnaround.

American Legion response

American Legion Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa testified that The American Legion is troubled by the allegations coming out of the Hastings Veterans Home. He mentioned how the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee routinely visits the five Minnesota Veterans Homes and other places where veterans receive care.

"The American Legion's No. 1 concern is the quality of care our veterans receive in our medical facilities and our homes as this is the first pillar of our four pillars," he said. He said he, VA&R



Minnesota American Legion Adjutant Mike Maxa testifies March 21 before the Minnesota Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Committee. His message was the Legion stands behind the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs; however, lawmakers, if they want to improve the workplace, need to provide money for new state-of-the-art buildings at the Hastings campus.

Committee Chair Marissa LaCourt, Department Service Officer Ray Kane and Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo visited in the home March 8, three days after the story broke.

"While we are not able to give you an assessment of the staff issues or the workplace culture today, we can say to you we do not believe the care of veterans at the Hastings Veterans Home was compromised," Maxa testified. "However, we do have concerns, and our DSO, ADSO and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee will continue to monitor our concerns and to help identify areas needing improvement and recommend best practices. We will be there for assistance to ensure our veterans are receiving the quality care they deserve. Also, we want to ensure the staff has the equipment and supplies to carry out the mission of care in the highest of standards for our veterans of Minnesota. We are here to help."

Maxa noted how many buildings at the Hastings campus were originally built in the early 1900s for an insane asylum.

"Today the veterans receiving care at Hastings do so in an institutionalized setting," he said. "Many of the more modern buildings in the Minnesota Veterans Home system have warm settings. They often feel like home or even a cabin up north. The contrast is stark."

He called on lawmakers to pass the MDVA's \$77.7 million bonding request to aid in replacing buildings at Hastings with a state-of-the-art facility.

The American Legion, he



On March 21 before the Senate committee that handles veterans affairs, nurse Lynn Wachtler describes working at the Hastings Veterans Home. She is a past employee.



Current domiciliary employee James Meyer testified March 21. He described culture problems but added he wants to be part of a workplace turnaround.

said, supports the actions of Herke and the MDVA.

"We believe the agency has the best interest of veterans at heart," Maxa said.

Herke has named Brad Lindsey, who normally is the deputy commissioner of programs and services, to an interim role as deputy commissioner of health-care. Director of Veterans Programs Ron Quade will be the

interim deputy commissioner of programs and services.

Meanwhile, retired administrator Craig Smith has come out of retirement to serve as interim administrator of the Hastings Veterans Home.

Some lawmakers on the committee pledged to get the state funding for new buildings in Hastings, even if it doesn't come from a bonding bill.



Members of the Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Committee listen March 21.

Got a veteran in need? Get to know MVAF

Adjutant Report

Mike Maxa



The American Legion Department of Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund 85 is fast becoming a premier program in our department.

To date we have received 67 applications requesting assistance, and Fund 85 was able to provide assistance to 56 veterans in need. The fund has paid out just over \$175,000 in assistance to our Minnesota veterans.

That includes car repairs, overdue utility bills—phone bills, back rent and mortgages, replacing widows in a home and a couple of motor vehicles so the recipient veterans could get to work. We've helped homeless veterans with shelter. We've referred them to MACV for help. We've provide food and gas gift cards and referred them to the local food shelf.

The MVAF — aka Fund 85 — is doing the job of looking after veterans in need. But that's not all.

Department Service Officer Ray Kane & Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo are taking Fund 85 to new levels by utilizing the "Unite Us" program to refer veterans to other organizations that can better help the veteran.

They both have become great stewards of the funds and how they are disbursed. Their mindset is: "We can help the veteran now with an overdue bill, but what is the veteran going to do four weeks from now when they receive their next utility bill?"

That's where Unite Us comes into play. They review the different organizations and find help for the veteran to learn how to budget.

This is how Fund 85 is supposed to work.

Our posts are the department's eyes and ears to investigate the needs of veterans in their communities and to assess those needs of our veterans. The

application form and the rules are on the department website, mml legion.org. Find veteran services tab, and in the drop down, select "Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund MVAF."

Why are we asking our posts to investigate the need of assistance? The post should know what resources are available in their community that could help for immediate assistance. The post builds a relationship with the veteran and helps the veteran get back on their feet with mentorship.

The department reviews the application and informs the posts of what can or cannot be paid or how we can help. We also review the application for completeness, copies of all required documentation and copies of current bills requesting to be paid.

The department will make recommendations to refer the veteran to another organization for help as needed. This is where Unite Us is utilized reviewing a list of available help. When the process is followed and all required documentation is received, we can usually pay overdue bills or provide assistance within a few days.

Donations are always needed to sustain Fund 85 and to ensure much needed funds are available to assist Minnesota Veterans. Gambling funds can be used to make a donation. If you wish to donate, please make your check out to "Minnesota American Legion Foundation" and in the memo put Fund 85.

Mike Maxa is the adjutant of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. His home post is Montgomery Post 79.



From left are Auxiliary Department President Mary Kuperus, Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Chair Jamie Woods, Minnesota Oratorical Contest Champion Megan Blonigen and Department Vice Commander Paul Orson. See more photos and results on the back page.

Now, Blonigen heads to national

Continued from Page 1

April 21-23 at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. Quarterfinals are on April 22, with finals on April 23.

Visit legion.org/oratorical/ finals to view brackets.

Minnesota American Legion Commander Jennifer Havlick commended Blonigen on her victory.

"It's amazing to see the future leaders articulate thoughts on our U.S. Constitution so

succinctly," Havlick said. "I hope she wins the national contest, too."

Scholarships are awarded at the national level. First place receives \$25,000, second \$22,500, third \$20,000. First-round winners not advancing further get \$2,000.

Last year, Blonigen advanced from the first round but not beyond. She hopes her previous experience serves her well the second time.

House File 209

This bill proposes cutting state taxes on combined net receipts of charitable gambling in Minnesota.

Annual combined net receipts	Present	Proposed
Not over \$87,500	9%	7%
\$87,500-\$122,500	18%	15%
\$122,500-\$157,500	27%	23%
Over \$157,500	36%	31%



Osseo Post 172 gambling manager Allen Lund and Rep. Kristin Bahner testify before the House Taxes Committee on March 23.

'Asking you to reduce the taxes we are paying'

Continued from Page 1

made \$131 million in donations.

She said these places have paid off the US Bank Stadium 20 years early.

"Now we are asking you to reduce the taxes we are paying," Jenner said.

There was an amendment to reduce the taxes on gambling to a flat tax of 5 percent. The amendment failed.

Despite the vote on the amendment, lawmakers from both political parties indicated support for House File 209 and the notion of reducing taxes on charitable gambling.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota led a press conference at the State Capitol on March 6 to show objection to any notion of scaling back electronic pulltabs, better known as e-tabs.

"On behalf of our American Legion posts across this great state, the American Legion Department of Minnesota is working in conjunction with Allied Charities of Minnesota and Protect Our Charities to let our legislators know that e-tabs are crucial for the many small charitable gambling operations and their missions to help their communities and for the American Legion's Four Pillars," said Department Legislative Chair Kristy Janigo of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172.

Reporters asked why there was a press conference even though no bill had been filed to take away or scale back e-tabs.

Department Communications Director Tim Engstrom responded that Sen. Nick Frenz of North Mankato made comments at the 1st District Mid-Winter Conference. Frenz said scaling back e-tabs was up for discussion at the Capitol, and he urged the Legion to take a stance and let lawmakers know.

"So, we did," he said.

Lund, at the press conference, said his post put \$200,000 toward helping people in need and said e-tabs account for 30 to 40 percent of the post's charitable gambling monthly net receipts. That, he said, equates to an additional \$6,000 to \$8,000

a month just from e-tabs.

"A primary focus of our post is food insecurity in our area. In calendar year 2022, our post donated \$40,000 to that cause," Lund said.

Bree England, 13, spoke as a child of a military family and a member of the American Legion Junior Auxiliary. Charitable gambling has allowed her to attend safety camp at the Legionville Education Center and the annual family-oriented Camporee.

England spoke of how she enjoys softball and volleyball and charitable gambling helps cover much of the ever-rising costs.

"Playing sports helped increase my confidence, and I think it would be terrible and unfair if posts could no longer sponsor my fellow athletes whose families cannot afford it on their own."

Ray Kane, a gambling manager for the Lions Club in St. Paul Park, said the club paid the state \$338,000 in taxes last year. Meanwhile, it has donated in many ways to local sports, school programs, scholarships, a scoreboard, food shelves and fighting homelessness.

"Who is going to fill in the gaps for these services in our communities?" he said. "Who can the high school football teams and others go to for funds so they can enjoy their sports, statistically keeping the kids out of trouble?"

Bayport Post 491's Pat Logan described how his post is collaborating with the city to construct a pavilion in a park, to the tune of \$225,000 split between the post and city.

"The thing for us, as Legionnaires, is what we can put back into the community," Logan said.

As of press time in late March, no e-tab bill had been filed.

Lund, who is the former director of Allied Charities of Minnesota, cautioned Legion members not to be too optimistic about the present sunny outlook.

"Until the gavel goes down on May 22, it is not done," he said.

Air Force retrained him for silos

friends again."

He said if it weren't for older members taking him under their wings, he is unsure he would have become the active Legion member he is today.

"It is something I will never forget," he said.

Richardson, 65, is the 3rd District commander. He served as the 3rd District sergeant-at-arms for 10 years and is a past district vice commander and membership director. He's presently the Post 507 adjutant and membership director. He served as the post's sergeant-at-arms for 21 years and post commander for two years. He led the Post 507 Honor Guard, and it got first place in the Forest Lake Fourth of July Parade 13 years in a row. He's been a cook during the annual Camporee in September at Legionville and has been a guide for disabled veterans during the Sons of The American Legion John Zgoda Deer Hunt at Legionville.

In other words, he's a guy you want on your team.

Now, Richardson is on the Department of Minnesota Training Committee, and he will be a facilitator at Minnesota Legion College's two sessions this year. The first, April 20-23, is full. The second, Oct. 12-15, has openings. Register at mnlegion.org. Legion College takes place at Camp Ripley.

He attended Legion College himself in April 2022.

"I wanted to get a better handle on what goes on with the Legion," he said. "You never stop learning more about The American Legion."

Staying at Camp Ripley is always enjoyable, he said, and he learned new skills that apply to the Legion and to real life.

"I really enjoyed it up there," he said. "I thought it was fun. One of the big things I did learn was how resolutions are written."

That's a class taught by instructor Paul Edwards.

So why should Legion members attend Legion College?

"I think it builds better leaders. You learn conflict resolution, the Four Pillars and how to accomplish the mission," Richardson said.

The Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament last year was in Burnsville, which is in the 3rd District. As commander of that district, Richardson got to throw out the first pitch on the second day of the tournament. He also had the honor of reciting the Code of Sportsmanship, and he used his emcee voice to do it.

Yes, he has a side hustle as a DJ/emcee. More on that later.

"The respect the boys had



Gary Richardson when he was in the U.S. Air Force.

for each other and the game, it was second-to-none," Richardson said.

He said young veterans like going to places they can take families, and he said the future of The American Legion hinges on local posts being appealing to the community and open to new ideas.

Richardson graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School in San Antonio in 1976. His father served 22 years in the Air Force, and the family had moved often. They had lived in Germany, Thailand, District of Columbia, California, Illinois and, finally, Texas. In fact, when the military sent his father to Guam, the family remained behind in San Antonio. His dad was on Guam when Typhoon Pamela, a category 4 super typhoon with winds topping out at 150 mph, struck in May 1976. Eighty percent of the buildings on the island were destroyed. Thanks to early warnings, only one person died.

Young Gary went to basic at Lackland AFB in San Antonio; then it was off to Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas, where the Air Force schooled him in radiology.

He served eight years at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. Radiology is stressful and rewarding, Richardson said.

"It's painful because the patients are pretty much going to die anyway," he said.

He recalled a young woman who had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The staff was able to get her in remission. She got married and went to the Bahamas for the honeymoon. While there, the condition returned with a vengeance. She flew back.

Richardson asked about her treatment and was informed she had died the day after returning

to Ohio. He asked to transfer to CAT scanners and received his wish. There, he worked with the first generation of the new technology.

The work also involved dealing with X-ray and other tech, as well as emergency room and operating room tasks.

There was a flight crew whose plane exploded in Ohio. Richardson had to X-ray the remains. In another incident, an A-10 pilot became disoriented and ejected upside down while flying close to the ground.

"The medical field was an eye-opener. That's for sure," Richardson said.

This was the 1980s, and America was in an arms race with the Soviets. The military needed techies for missile silos. Richardson was forcibly cross-trained to be an electromechanical technician for the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. The Air Force sent him to Minot AFB for the remaining 12 years of his career.

Imagine standing in the middle of a North Dakota field in Arctic gear trying to get in a below-ground silo in subzero weather.

For the first one-and-a-half years, Richardson was part of a maintenance crew. Then he was placed in job control, monitoring about 150 missile sites from a command center. The missiles would shut down for the slightest of reasons, like ground tremors.

There was an earthquake up in Alaska, and it shut down half the fleet, he said. Every time one shuts down, a crew has to go out and inspect it and get it back on.

After a year of that, the Air Force moved him to missile maintenance planning for the entire 91st Strategic Missile Wing. He was diligent and remains proud that the wing, after an inspection, got the highest rating in Strategic Air Command history to that point.

He went on to make a book about how to maintain everything, and the Inspector General took it, copied it and handed it out to all the wings. The result: Lots of phone calls.

His commanding officer brought him into his office and told him there was no rank. What does he think of him?

Richardson said he is a fine man off-duty but as a CO he was acting like an asshole. He explained how people want

genuine leaders, not people who pretend to be something they are not.

It wasn't long after that Richardson received a field promotion from the CO to technical sergeant. He didn't need to take the test.

Someone told Richardson, "That's the kind of man he must want on his team."

In other words, he was rewarded for being honest to a fault.

Richardson retired May 1, 1994, and he began his railroad career. After railroads, he worked 20 years for USWest, which became Qwest, then CenturyLink.

He had been married in 1976 to his first wife, an Army brat named Becky, in San Antonio. They met in high school. They had a son, Jason.

Jason Richardson served in the Army for 13 years, doing three combat tours in Iraq as a combat engineer. He was with the 1st Cavalry Division's 20th Engineering Battalion. The 1st Cav is based at Fort Hood, Texas. He now lives in Missouri outside his final duty station, Fort Leonard Wood. He and his wife have two kids and now have a grandson.

Gary and Becky, however, divorced amicably, and he remarried a Minot woman in 1990, and they stayed together for nine years. They had a daughter named Katrina, who lives in Dickinson, N.D., with her husband and a daughter.

Gary and Becky remained friends over the years, and when Gary and Teri visit Becky, Teri and Becky are buddies.

"They are thick as thieves when they are together," he said.

Teri brought a stepson and stepdaughter to the relationship, and those two have their own kids these days. In all, Gary and Teri have five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Gary Richardson can be seen riding his bicycle 25 to 30 miles a day, usually on the trails between his town and Wisconsin. He also runs a karaoke/DJ business for weddings and has regular Saturday night gigs. He does the first and third Saturdays at Frigaard's in Willernie. Post 507 handles the charitable gambling there, too.

On the second Saturday of any month, you'll find him at the B-Dale Club in Roseville, and on the last Saturday, he's at Billy's Victorian Bar in St. Paul.



Gary Richardson of Post 507 enjoys volunteering with The American Legion and said he learned a lot at Minnesota Legion College, held at Camp Ripley.

Hutch junior is Eagle Scout of the Year

HUTCHINSON — The Minnesota American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year is a Hutchinson High School junior who worked to educate citizens on the proper way to retire U.S. flags.

Jackson Kramer's nomination was sponsored by Hutchinson Post 96.

"I think you will want to remember his name," said Troop 623 Scoutmaster Brett Rasmussen, "because I am convinced this young man will make an impressive mark on this nation as he goes through life."

Rasmussen said Kramer collected more than 300 flags and worked with Post 96 and other veterans organizations in town to conduct a flag-retirement ceremony. He constructed an oak box where community members can place old flags at the local VFW post for future retirement ceremonies.

Kramer became an Eagle Scout back in October 2019. He has 20 palms and 124 merit badges. He is part of the Order of the Arrow. He is active in his



Jackson Kramer

church and has received Scouting's religious awards. He was 2022 Eagle Scout of the Year for the Sons of the American Revolution.

He has received many honors for his service to the community, conservation groups like Ducks Unlimited and in his church.

"When he was part of my confirmation class at the church, I was blown away at his questions and his desire to learn," said Pastor Steve Olcott of Christ the

King Lutheran Church. "Part of their commitment for the class is community service, and Jackson was always leading the way."

At school, he is on the swim and dive team and he hopes to remain involved with the sport after graduation. He hopes to attend a four-year university. He said he likes the idea of becoming a craftsman.

He also is on track and field, trap-shooting, after-school art club, honor roll, National Honor Society and Link Crew.

"Jackson has an uncanny ability to deal with people," said teacher Timothy Thode. "He is a genuine leader and always is extremely respectful, kind and encouraging to others."

The Department of Minnesota Scouting Committee bestows the award. Chairman Chip Manson said, "After careful review of all of the talented and dedicated scouts, the committee selected Jackson because he rated high in all categories. They say the cream always rises to the top."



The American Legion Department of Minnesota, Allied Charities of Minnesota and Protect Our Charities held a joint press conference March 6 asking state lawmakers to not scale back electronic pulltabs, or e-tabs. Among the speakers was Auxiliary Junior Bree England, who spoke of how gambling dollars help youth activities.

Minnesota charities need e-tabs

Editor's note: This is a reprint of the commentary from the department commander that printed on opinion pages in newspapers statewide this past month.

Charities across Minnesota have heard a great deal of discussion about lawmakers possibly getting rid of electronic-pulltabs, better known as e-tabs. No bills have been filed, but legislators have said publicly the matter is on the table at the Capitol.

They said they want to hear from us. Here is our input in support of our American Legion posts:

We call on state lawmakers to keep e-tabs as they presently are. We did our job to pay off the pro football stadium, often with a mix of paid and volunteer labor and always with volunteer oversight committees. Now the state needs to reward us by reducing state taxes on charitable gambling. It's time.

The revenue from e-tabs has been crucial in dealing with the rising costs of running charitable gambling operations. Wages, supplies, games — the overall cost of living is up.

A \$2,000 food shelf donation given in 2003 and 2013 went a lot farther than the same amount in 2023. Posts have adjusted, and e-tab revenue has helped them support their communities despite price increases. They are able to give and help with life's necessities.

We have no issue with casinos taking on sports betting, and we wish them all the success.

Commentary

Jennifer Havlick



We do oppose giving casinos a total monopoly on all e-gaming. Taking away e-tabs or scaling them down would do just that. When the issue came up in 2021, the state's own fiscal note said local charities would lose \$33 million. Why would lawmakers want that to happen?

Upsetting the charitable gambling landscape of Minnesota would impact children, who benefit from donations for sports, scholarships, food programs, school activities, homeless programs and local nonprofits for the young. Programs such as Wishes & More, which grants wishes to children fighting terminal illnesses, would receive far less.

Veterans will suffer! Legion posts statewide use gambling funds to pay for honor guards providing last respects. Funds are used on important veterans' programs, such as taking totally disabled veterans hunting, or the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans working to solve veteran homelessness, or the Eagle's Healing Nest in Sauk Centre helping veterans who struggle with PTSD. The American Legion's Minnesota Veteran Assistance Fund helps struggling veterans no matter where in the state they reside. It maintains basic needs of a veteran, deployed servicemember's family or to assist surviving minor children of Minnesota veterans. Why would our state

leaders wish to hurt these programs?

In 2021, newspapers statewide editorialized that getting rid of or scaling back e-tabs would be bad government. The state's fiscal note also said it would hurt wages by \$35 million, and local restaurants and bars would lose \$30 million. You look at these numbers and ask: Why? Why is this even being considered?

Minnesotans simply like knowing their gambling dollars will benefit their own communities. Pulltab and e-tab sellers have excellent rapport with customers, and, no doubt, they helped customers become familiar with the new electronic product. That's why they succeeded.

Let the casinos take the lead on sports betting. Let charities keep our e-tabs "as is" so we can continue to help with firefighting equipment, marching band uniforms, football headsets, handicap-accessible playgrounds, ice time, emergency shelter, FFA, park shelters, city parades and so on. Finally, let's reduce the 36 percent state tax on charitable gambling. Everyone wins.

Minnesota American Legion Commander Jennifer Havlick resides in Two Harbors and is a member of Duluth Post 28.

Convention registration is now open

REDWOOD FALLS — Registration is under way for the 2023 Department Convention, hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38.

The convention takes place July 13-15 at Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel.

The Department Executive Committee meeting is at 7 p.m. July 12. Some committee meetings take place on July 12, too.

Attendees must make their own housing reservations with their hotel of choice. All delegates, alternates and guests must pay the \$15 registration fee. Use the form below. After July 1, the fee becomes \$18.

Hotel rooms are \$120 plus tax per night. Use block "American Legion State Convention."

Reservations are on a first-come-first-served basis.

Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel can be reached at 507-679-8000 or 800-946-2274. It is at 39375 County Highway 24, Morton.

"The convention is a time to conduct the business of The American Legion," said Department Commander Jennifer Havlick. "Thank you for taking three days out of your busy lives to come to Redwood Falls. We hope to see new faces and familiar ones, too."

Elections of officers take place at the convention, and a new slate of department officers will be announced on the final day of the convention.



Circle Bar at Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION

— Official Form —

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form.

Make your check payable to "American Legion Post 38" with "Dept. Convention" written on the memo line. No credit cards will be accepted.

Please mail this form with your check to:

Redwood Falls Post 38

P.O. Box 354

Redwood Falls, MN 56238

Registration after July 1 will be \$18.

Legion _____

SAL _____

Auxiliary _____

District # _____ Post/Squad/Unit # _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Delegate _____ Alternate _____ Guest _____

Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary) _____

(Choose Past Dept. President or Dept. Exec. Cmte.)

If additional registrations accompany this request, this registration form should be photocopied for each person. The \$15 registration fee must be enclosed for each person. One form per person.



American Legion VA Physician of the Year Patricia Dickman, third from right, and Provider of the Year Gobind Tarchand, third from left, stand with Legion and Auxiliary members at the Washington Conference in late February. From left are Auxiliary Department 1st Vice Sharon Thiemecke, Legion Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, Tarchand, Dickman, National Security Council member James Kellogg and Department Adjutant Mike Maxa.

Minnesota wins both medical honors

Continued from Page 1

the Year honor.

Dickman is the medical director of the Minneapolis VA's opioid treatment program, addiction recovery services and mental health homeless program. Tarchand serves as the director of the hematology/oncology clinic. He is the hospital's lead physician assistant.

VA Secretary Denis McDonough, who also

is from Minnesota, was present on stage at the Washington Hilton, along with American Legion National Commander Vincent James Troiola, to honor the duo.

They also met with U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who thanked them for serving veterans.

A similar ceremony in front of their peers at the Minneapolis VA will be held this spring. A date has not been selected.

Listening Post



Al Davis of Princeton SAL Squadron 216 donates proceeds from an omelet breakfast to the Princeton FFA chapter.



Albert Lea Post 56 held its Post Everlasting Ceremony on March 20. About 70 people attended the ceremony honoring fallen Post 56 veterans of 2022. The Post 56 Honor Guard presented the colors.



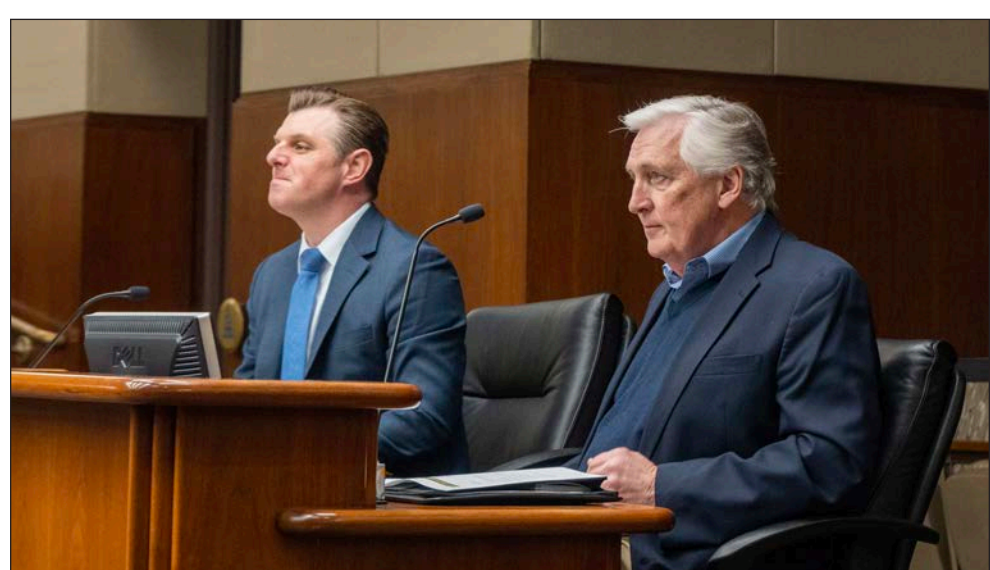
Bloomington Post 550 Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom presents a \$10,000 check to the Kennedy High School show choir to help with their expenses of going to nationals in Branson, Mo. The National American Legion website, legion.org, did a story on the donation. They are the only choir from Minnesota to qualify.



Fairmont Post 36 Executive Board member Bob Altman presents a \$1,000 check to Martin County Youth Empower members. From left are Director Steph Johnson, Misty Geerdes, Tiffany Lowry, Jordan Lamoureux, Gabbie Thoeny and Altman.



North Branch Post 85 member Michas Ohnstad, a past national chaplain for The American Legion and a past state legislator, receives a service pin for 75 years of membership from Post 85 1st Vice Commander and Membership Director Mark Johnson.



Minnesota House Rep. Mike Howard of Richfield and Richfield Post 435 Development Consultant Elwyn Tinklenberg provide testimony at the House Veterans Affairs Committee on March 6. Post 435 is seeking a \$10 million grant from the Legislature that will be used for its Veterans Village 435 project. Veterans Village 435 is a 200-unit apartment complex with veterans preference. A restaurant with bar and events center is also proposed as part of the project being developed by Post 435, next to Veteran Park in Richfield.



Slayton Post 64 Commander Brad Pagel accepts a \$2,000 donation from Fulda Post 318 Commander Steve Magnus toward the Vietnam Wall and Cost of Freedom displays coming to Slayton during the Murray County Fair Aug 15-20.



Ken Roettjer of North Branch Post 85 and nonprofit organization 23rd Veteran testifies before the House Veterans Affairs Committee in favor of state support for Every Third Saturday, a Minneapolis nonprofit that helps veterans and is in part led by Tom McKenna, a Legion member with Minneapolis Wold-Chamberlain Post 99.

District commanders



1st District

Mary Hanson



Greetings, Legion Family. The American Legion is gearing up for another softball and baseball season. Please check with the schools in your area and make sure the applications are in. If you would like to sponsor a team and there are none in your area, contact the committee chair in your district. I am sure there are teams that would appreciate the support to be given the opportunity to play.

Posts are starting to have elections of officers. Please remember to fill out the Department Post Officer Reporting Form and send it in to department. At the same time, the National Reporting Form for Post and Squadron Officers should be completed. Both forms have been mailed to the posts. They are also found on the mnlegion.org website under Membership and Forms and Resources. Make sure you keep a copy for post records.

Another important report that has been mailed is the Consolidated Post Report. This is for the reporting period of June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023. Make sure you wait until June 1 to submit it to capture all post activities. This can be mailed or submitted on MyLegion.org. Once again, make sure a copy is kept for post records.

This has been a crazy legislative session. I hope everyone has been contacting their legislators and letting them know where we stand on the veteran issues. I have been sending the information out to the posts in the 1st District, and I am sure the other districts are doing it, as well.

Together we can make our voices heard.

gatherings, membership rallies, conferences, conventions and community functions are good ways to show some of the things The American Legion does for them. It's also a good

opportunity to see if those members need help, through the assistance programs of The American Legion.

Until next month, stay safe, and thank you for all you do!



4th District

David Dahl



John F. Kennedy said, "A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all."

What is a revolution? This is a dictionary extract:

- [rev-uh-loo-shuhn]
1. the thorough replacement of an established system by the people governed.
 2. a radical and pervasive change, especially one made suddenly.
 3. A sudden, complete, or marked change.

A revolution is a radical change of the established order. Revolutions are started because the current system has failed or no longer serves its intended purpose. Revolutionaries believe in bringing about major, radical changes.

I considered "evolution" as a "softer, easier" theme for this article, but rejected that idea because "evolution" implies something slow moving. We need a

revolution now! We need drastic action, change, new blood!

We have found younger veterans, some of whom are still in uniform, who are willing to step up to the elected and appointed leadership positions in the 4th District. Each will have a mentor from the current or previous leadership. The next commander should be from the current leadership, but also act as the "mentor-in-chief," and lay the foundation for our next younger-generation commander. We need to start handing off the reins of power.

Be part of this revolution! Attend the district meetings on April 12 and May 10 to help plan the revolution. Be at the District Convention on May 20 to elect new leadership. All these meetings are at North St Paul Post 39.

Details will follow!



6th District

Karen O'Bar



Happy spring, my fellow Legion Family members.

Well, I had my right knee replaced in late January 2023, nine months after my right hip. It's going to take a little longer for me to heal. But one day at a time and this, too, shall pass.

I am still getting out as much as I can. On Feb. 19, I saw many of you at our 6th District Executive Board meeting at St. Augusta Post 621. It was a good day for Legion business.

On March 4, I attended the American Legion Riders' chili feed and auction at Long Prairie Post 12. We had a wonderful crowd and were served great food.

On March 9, I attended the Cass/Hubbard County Council meeting at Walker Post 134.

Many of the posts were represented.

On March 14, I tagged along with District Vice Commander Mike VanHeel up to Park Rapids Post 212 for their general meeting. Lots of new faces, and that is good to see. They are trying to make it out and about.

On March 15, I attended the West Stearns County Council in Melrose. County Council Commander Nate Smith ran the meeting. This is a great sign we are headed in the right direction as a Legion Family.

Make communication a top priority. Get the information out to the posts. Blessed be.



7th District

Karen Welander



The responsibilities of the volunteer 18 committee chairs are to collect information and report the activities of the district programs.

This is why it is so important to take the time and complete the reports that will tell our story of what a Legionnaire does day after day. It is so easy with the Consolidated Post Report (CPR) to tell our story. The monthly Consolidated Post Report "CPR" worksheet, from the administrative manual, has really shortened the time to complete the report manually or electronically.

The data presented by national

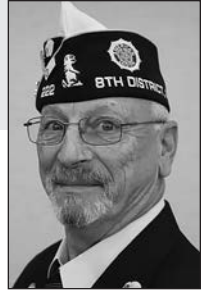
and department comes from these reports to make a case to support veterans and our programs.

In our enthusiasm to meet membership goals, it's also important to recognize and appreciate one another. I've always been impressed by the time and generosity our members offer in the name of The American Legion. Where would we be as The American Legion without all of you. Thank you for what you do and thank you for who you are.



8th District

Larry Pocrnich



Good day, fellow veterans. Thank you for going out and asking veterans to join The American Legion. We moved to fourth place. Now let's push for first, if we can. There are a few in the Post 1982 membership that can go to local posts.

National Commander Vincent James Troiola will be in Chisholm on April 18. Plans are made for him to be at Valentini's Supper Club at 5 p.m. and plated dinner to follow. Contact Brad at 218-966-0603 for reservations. Cost is \$ 25 a plate. Let's show a warm welcome for the national commander.

The 8th District Convention will be on Saturday, May 6, at 9 a.m. for the Executive Committee and 10 a.m. for the joint meeting. This will be at Taconite Post 301.

Contact Shar at 218-244-9371. There will be no cost for this event. Try to make this convention and show support for Taconite post. There will be elections of officers at that time also. Show your support for

the district and be an officer to spread the duties out. There are mentors to assist you with this endeavor.

Aurora Post 241 held a rededication ceremony on April 1. The post has been completely painted inside and out. The post looks good. They hold their meetings on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Veterans in that area should visit the post and join. Met a lot of friendly veterans when I was there last week. Try and make it there and support that post.

As I said before, April is nomination month for officers. The more we have the less everyone else has to do. Same goes for volunteers. Most Legion programs are close to starting, so, get out and volunteer.

Thank you in advance for all you may do with The American Legion.



10th District

William Gordon



Are you dressed? The answer to this question is something I learned from members of the Legion who have been in far longer than I.

It means "Are you carrying a membership form in your wallet?"

I have found by doing so, it helps to recruit members. The form takes up very little room. It has membership forms for the Legion Post, Auxiliary and the SAL. Yes, you can sign up new members for any one of these organizations and for any post.

When a new member fills out the form I collect my post dues amount, I also tell them that the post they signed up for maybe cheaper or more expensive. So long as you are up front most folks will be on board. I look up the post address on line if it's not my post and mail it off to the membership officer of that post or the adjutant.

If we all work together, we can increase our membership. What's that saying "Many hands make light work."

Summer will be here very soon. Let's reach out to our community and get the names of the students attending Legionville Safety Education Center this year. Remember they do not have to be dependents of veterans; any child can go between ages 10 to 13 years old. You can find out all the information you need at legionville.org.

District Adjutant Paul Orson has sent out copies of the forms needed for your reports and nominations. Let's get them done. Also, it's time to start pulling together that CPR report.

Time for you to tell your story of what you do in your communities. No one else can tell it better. Please send copies of

your CPR to myself or the district adjutant and to department before you send it off to national save a copy to your computer and then email it to us.

Your help is greatly appreciated. Our district convention is being held at St. Michael Post 567 this year, and we are looking forward to seeing many of you attend. The Riders will hold their district convention on June 1. Our banquet will be the evening of June 2. Bring your special person and have a great dinner and enjoy some comradery.

The 10th District Convention will be on June 3. If you would like to place an ad in our convention booklet, please reach out to me at wgordon2494@hotmail.com.

One last thing. S.A.V.E. training is available; just reach out to me for more information. Please take a few minutes and reach out to a fellow veteran or member you have not seen for a while, and those veterans trying to get back on their feet. YOUR words of encouragement are so important to them.

If I have not yet visited your post, please send me an email wgordon2494@hotmail.com with the date, time, location. Also, if you have an event coming up you would like me to attend, please send me an invite via email or a telephone call, 763-515-3686. I will do my very best to ensure I attend.

"If you are not willing to learn. No one can help you. If you are determined to learn no one can stop you."



2nd District

Pam Krill



Now that spring has arrived, it's time to spring into action. We have been steadily winning the membership race, but we cannot give up. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and commitment to our veterans and The American Legion on strengthening our team.

We continue to renew memberships, and recruit those who are eligible. Our stay at No. 1 in the Department of Minnesota shows we can do anything in our area. We can continue to come together and connect with our veterans new and old.

As the weather continues to get warmer and the days a little longer, we will now roll into spring sports, community events, fairs, barbecues. Let's talk about The American Legion. We need to remember that every member counts.

Whether it's The American Legion, the Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, the Riders or Juniors, every member matters, and we cannot do it without each other.

Posts are already starting

with their festivities, and we would like to make sure everyone in the 2nd District is aware of what is going on. Make sure you are sending those to the district email box. We can share them on Facebook, or email out to other post commanders. We need to make sure we share the great things we are doing.

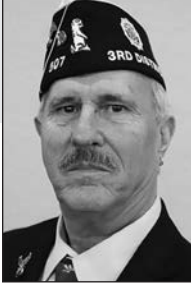
I want to thank all of the posts in the 2nd District who have made my travels fun and interesting. I am not done yet and plan to get out and visit more. It has been very welcoming and informative on what you have all shared, and I hope to see some of you at the upcoming 2nd District Conference in June. It will be held at Madelia Post 19 on June 9 and 10. Keep an eye out for your reminder and save the date.

Enjoy this spring weather and "thank you" for everything you do.



3rd District

Gary Richardson



Greetings, Thundering 3rd District!

Boys State registration process is in full swing, and we are looking forward to sending as many as we can this year. If you haven't already, please take the time to get with your local high school counselors and principals and get them on board. It may be a little late, but it's never too late to get them thinking about it for next year.

The commander's project at Hastings Veterans Home to complete a Veterans Mental Health Lounge and continuing support of the wood shop is still on track to my goal of \$10,000. Thank you to all the posts who have supported this effort. All

donations can be sent to Robert Vandembos, c/o Hastings Veterans Home, 1200 18th St. E, Hastings, MN 55033; please specify "Legion 3rd District Commander's Project" to assure the funds are properly allocated.

We are still working to get current and past members to renew their membership, this time of year it becomes more difficult but, we need to stress how important it is that we try everything we can to keep retention up and to get new members. District or department functions like family

Minnesota Legacy Run route is out

NORTH BRANCH — North Branch American Legion Post 85 will serve as the site of the kickoff for the 2023 Minnesota Legacy Run of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

The first kickstands down and overnight is Thursday, July 27, at Walker Post 134.

The second is Friday, July 28, at Thief River Falls Post 117. The third is Moorhead Post 21. The ending party is Saturday, July 30 at Spicer Post 545.

Hotel blocks for the Legacy Run are:

- AmericInn, 38675 14th Ave., North Branch, 651-243-4596, "American Legion Riders."
- Walker Hotel, 907 Minnesota Ave. W., Walker, 218-547-2200, "American Legion Riders."

- AmericInn, 1920 U.S. Highway 59, Thief River Falls, 218-681-4411, "American Legion Riders."

- MicroTel by Wyndym, 2915 12th St. S., Moorhead, 218-284-4022, "American Legion Legacy Fund."

The Legacy Run raises money for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides full college tuition to children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty or have a 50 percent or greater disability.

Minnesota for many years has been the top donor in The American Legion. At the 2022 National Convention, Minnesota presented \$155,000 for the Legacy Scholarship.

Goal: 100% Post Service Officer Report

The annual Post Service Officer Report is due on May 1 to your district Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee chairs.

Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo (adso@mnlegion.org) will be reviewing the consolidated reports. If your post does not have a post service officer, the commander or a member from your Executive Board Committee will assist.

On May 3, Janet and I will be reaching out to the district VA&R chairs and district commanders to request a 100 percent compliance. If you have questions, our website is a valuable resource. Here are a few steps to follow.

How and where do the post adjutants or post service officers access the report and instructions online?

1. Go online to mnlegion.org.
2. Hover over "Veteran Services."
3. Click on "Post Service Officer."
4. Click on "Post Service Officer Report."

VA & Rehabilitation

Ray Kane



5. Simply print out the report and complete the report. Then send to your respective district VA&R chair.

We look forward to answering any of your questions. The report demonstrates all the ways our American Legion Family are making a difference in our communities.

Our posts in Minnesota do wonderful work on giving back, putting their heart and souls into what they do. Last year, the Department of Minnesota received 65 percent of the PSO reports. Let's work on a 100 percent report.

We want to thank everyone that we are seeing on the road as we do our Back to the Basic tour throughout Minnesota. Our goal is to ensure veterans are taken care of, and they can maintain their dignity. We have spent some time getting to know our partners at the VA Hospitals,

Homes and Cemeteries. We have had some surprising reunions with friends, and co-workers, we are thankful to continue networking with others who have the same goal and passion, and that is to continue serving our veterans.

To wrap up, what I'm most excited to see in the upcoming months is the work Lorenzo, Department of Minnesota VA&R Committee Chairwoman Marissa LaCourt and Department Legislative Committee Chairwoman Kristy Janigo will be doing for our women veterans in Minnesota. More to come.

Ray Kane is the Department of Minnesota service officer. Reach him at dso@mnlegion.org.

There is time to register for Boys State

Questions about the upcoming session of Boys State can be answered at www.mnboysstate.org or by program coordinator Jennifer Kelley at jkelley@mnlegion.org. June 11-17 will be a great experience for attendees, counselors and visitors to St. John's University campus at Collegeville.

Not only are local, county and state governments practiced by the young men during the week, they also are exposed to flag etiquette. Literature is read, reviewed and quizzed upon, as well as participants advancing

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



and retiring the colors each day of the week. Flag retirement is demonstrated by the Anoka 40 & 8 squad.

Saturday of Boys State is recognition day. Scholarships, team sport awards, test awards, and Boys Nation selections will be made known. Hugs and tears close out the productive week, as the young men travel back to their hometowns.

There is still time to register, if your post hasn't any selections yet. Thank you for your support of this valuable program!

Neil Kruse is a counselor for Minnesota American Legion Boys State.

Minn. lawmakers who served in U.S. military

Please contact your local officials about being part of your local Legion post.

Name	Branch	Residence	Legion Post, Member Status
Gov. Tim Walz	NG	St. Paul	Mankato Post 11 (current)
Sen. Bruce Anderson	Navy, NG, AF Reserves	Buffalo	Buffalo Post 270 (current)
Sen. Cal Bahr	Army	East Bethel	(not a member)
Sen. Zach Duckworth	NG	Lakeville	(not a member)
Sen. Glenn Gruenhagen	Marines	Glencoe	Glencoe Post 95 (current)
Sen. Jeff Howe	Navy, NG	Rockville	Waite Park Post 428 (expired)
Sen. John Jasinski	Navy	Faribault	Faribault Post 43 (expired)
Sen. Andrew Lang	NG	Olivia	Olivia Post 186 (expired)
Sen. Nicole Mitchell	Air NG	Woodbury	(not a member)
Rep. Matt Bliss	Navy	Pennington	Bemidji Post 14 (expired)
Rep. Matt Grossell	Army	Clearbrook	(not a member)
Rep. Shane Hudella	Army	Hastings	Hastings Post 47 (expired)
Rep. Jerry Newton	Army	Coon Rapids	Coon Rapids Post 334 (expired)
Rep. Bjorn Olson	Army Res.	Fairmont	(not a member)
Rep. Brian Pfarr	NG	Le Sueur	Le Sueur Post 55 (current)
Rep. Roger Skraba	Army	Ely	Ely Post 248 (current)
Rep. Mark Wiens	Army	Lake Elmo	Windom Post 206 (expired)

There are lots of veterans to sign up

I just received some statistics regarding the veteran population in Minnesota.

We have 303,272 veterans in the state of Minnesota. At the time of this writing, we currently have 55,425 American Legion members, including those attached to the at-large post, which is Post 1982 (1,454).

That is 18 percent of the veteran population are members of The American Legion. Eighteen percent!

We need to reach out to the of 82 percent. Maybe they don't want to join, that's OK! Maybe they can't afford the membership. Help them out! Maybe they never heard of

Membership Moment

Linda Dvorak



what we do for them. Inform them! Maybe they used to be members. Renew them!

Another topic, unrelated to membership but just as important, is the Consolidated Post Report. It is now time to start working on the CPR. Every post is able to complete the CPR, either online or the paper version.

Every member that pays dues donates 25 cents to the American Legion Family Hospital Association. This is a reportable item on the CPR. The form

may look intimidating, but it isn't as difficult as it looks. This report is how we get Congress to listen to us.

Let's get this done and have 100 percent CPR completion this year.

Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 is the membership director for the Department of Minnesota.

Washington Conference was valuable

The national commander of The American Legion visits Minnesota annually.

This year, the tour is April 17-20. Vincent James Troiola hails from New York. He goes by "Jim." He is a Navy veteran and outstanding Legionnaire who really cares about all of our military personnel.

Spring will be arriving soon and the national commander along with it. He will visit many American Legion posts, the Coast Guard station in Duluth, Camp Ripley, as well as Minnesota Legion College. Please check his schedule to see if he will be in your area. You will not regret you did.

I ask every Legion post to please do all you can to exceed last year's membership. The veterans are out there. Please visit with them to explain all the good things The American Legion does for the veterans, children and community. We all are volunteers; however, we all have the responsibility to our post and membership to see growth in our membership program.

Congratulations to the 7th District for having the winner of the Oratorical Contest at the state level. She is now on her way to Indianapolis for the National Oratorical Contest. See a story on the front page.

Thank you to all the participants and district volunteers that promote and conduct this program. Such a wonderful opportunity for our youth in

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



our communities and schools. They are our future; however, we need to give them the skills they need for that future as well.

A big thank you to Department of Minnesota Legislative Chair Kristy Janigo for doing an outstanding job at setting up appointments with our senators and representatives.

Kelley Adelsman, Betty Jass, Jim Kellogg, Steve Kleinglass, Dr. Carl Moon and Alternate National Executive Committeeman Peggy Moon, Lloyd Richter, Tom Schottenbauer, Auxiliary VA&R Chairman Sharon Thiemecke, Department Adjutant Mike Maxa and Commander Jennifer Havlick for taking the time to be at the Washington Conference with me.

They visited with Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith. They also visited with representatives in the House. Department Chaplain Kelley Adelsman, thank you for stepping up to do the prayer prior and after our meeting.

I was fortunate enough to go to Arlington National Cemetery with the leadership team and director of Selective Service for a wreath-laying ceremony. If you ever go to D.C., stop across the Potomac River to see Arlington National Cemetery, where

the real heroes are laid to rest. Again, you will not regret you did.

Upcoming events to think about are registering your students for the School Patrol Student training at Legionville. Registering your Boys and Girls Staters, Legion Baseball and Girls Fastpitch Softball teams.

Have you got a speaker lined up for Memorial Day?

Last but certainly not least, contact the Governor's Office and your senator to leave e-tabs alone and ask them to lower the taxes on gambling and licenses. We would be able to give so much more dollars back to our communities.

In closing, I want to give a big thank you to Communications Director Tim Engstrom for all the information on our memorials in Minnesota and a big thanks also to Ray Kane and Janet Lorenzo for all their work on helping our veterans and their families.

Bill Barbknecht of Underwood Post 489 is the Department of Minnesota's National Executive Committeeman.

Firing range to help disabled vets

Greetings Legion Family, With this crazy weather it makes you wonder if spring will ever get here, but I have faith that it is right around the corner cause we want to get out and ride!

March has been a busy month with fundraisers, birthday celebrations and district meetings and cannot forget the Legion State Bowling Tournament. We also had a booth at the Donnie Smith Bike Show.

The Legacy Ride and the Fund 85 Ride are also coming together with more details to follow.

I know there are a lot of local and district rides and events planned for the summer so please get them out on social media for maximum exposure and make this summer a summer to remember I would

Legion Riders

Ted Berg



like to get out to each district this summer for a run in each if possible. So please feel free to contact me with dates. First come. First served.

Also, here's a reminder that I am still raising money for the Forgotten Heroes Ranges & Retreat being built outside of McGregor. This range is my project for the year, and I will be volunteering there for as long as it is operation.

It is for physically disabled veterans, law enforcement, firefighters and EMS. They are putting in pistol, rifle and archery ranges and will be designed with physical disabled, wheelchair-bound and

amputees in mind so they are easily accessible for shooting.

Any questions can be sent to me via text email or phone my contact info is as follows cell: 507-766-1143 email tattootheo.tb@gmail.com.

Thank you for everything you all do.

Ted Berg of Bloomington Post 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 23 Vol. 9

President Mary Kuperus • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

651-224-7634

April 2023

National President's Tour of Minnesota

National President Vickie Koutz of Boonville, Ind., Unit 200 visits Minnesota in May.



Vickie Koutz

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Monday, May 1 Redwood Falls Post 38	dinner	6 p.m.	507-828-7657, jmertens3868@gmail.com
	social	5 p.m.	cost: \$18 register by April 21
Tuesday, May 2 Spicer Post 545	lunch	12:30 p.m.	320-295-6824, jodie1562@yahoo.com
	social	noon	cost \$20 register by April 21
	dinner	6 p.m.	218-821-6575, brendashogren@icloud.com
	social	5:30 p.m.	cost: \$20 register by April 21
Wednesday, May 3 Monticello Post 260	lunch	12:30 p.m.	612-483-4076, RobinLDorf@yahoo.com
	social	noon	cost: \$15 register by April 26
North St. Paul Post 39	dinner	6 p.m.	651-269-1199, flipflops55025@gmail.com
	social	5 p.m.	cost: \$20 register by April 21



Anoka Unit 102 celebrated The American Legion's birthday in March. From left are Minnesota American Legion Vice Commander Paul Orson, Auxiliary Department President Mark Kuperus, Unit 102 President Cari Sturgill, Post 102 Commander Jared Sturgill and Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Ted Berg.

It is time to 'Purple Up for Military Kids'

I have enjoyed traveling to units and posts for American Legion birthday parties! The food has been delicious, especially the birthday cake! It is also good to visit with American Legion Family members along the way.

Excitement is building for our National American Legion Auxiliary President Vickie Koutz to arrive in Minnesota for a tour May 1-3. Information on opportunities to visit with her at stops along the tour is above. Come and learn about her National President's Project — the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival competitions.

She is also working to raise awareness on our country's Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. Donations will be accepted along the way.

The 60th annual Department Junior Conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, at New Prague Post 45, also called the Park Ballroom. Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger would like to encourage all Junior members to attend and celebrate an awesome year of "Juniors spreading kindness like confetti."

President's Column

Mary Kuperus



Donations will be accepted for the Department Junior Project of raising funds for adaptive sports equipment to help improve independence, well-being, and quality of life for veterans provided by the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

April 15 is also "Purple Up for Military Kids." We hope all who are attending the Appreciation Rally that day at New Prague Post 45 will wear plaid and purple. Let's show military kids that we support and care about them. Pictures will be taken!

Reservations are being accepted for the President's Testimonial Dinner. Come join us at Spicer Post 545 on April 22. The "Custom Made" Band will get us all dancing after the dinner and short program! Let's have some fun! Reservation form has been in the unit mailing and is on the mnala.org website. Reservations are due April 14.

Reservations are being accepted for Department Commander

Jennifer Havlick's Testimonial Dinner on May 13. Please look for reservation information on the Minnesota American Legion website and Facebook pages.

Thank you all for the donations towards the Department President's Project. The three new veteran homes will appreciate all that the American Legion Family does for them and their residents.

As we "Serve and Honor Every Day," let's remember all veterans who have served our country at home and abroad. Thank you for all you do for our veterans and military!

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."



Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Mark Kuperus, front row left, sits with several members of Anoka Unit 102.



Brownston Unit 143 held a birthday party for its American Legion Family. Seated from left are Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Mark Kuperus, Unit 143 President Marcie Baysinger, 3rd District President Kim Carlander and Unit 143 Secretary Deanna Meyer. Standing second from left is Department Membership Chairman Sandy Wersal. She is surrounded by Unit 143 members.

3 objectives for Children & Youth

By Karla Otterness
Children & Youth Chairman

Since last September, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota children and youth program has been focusing on three objectives.

At Fall Conference we talked about the "Who I Am Child ID Kits." Units can have these kits personalized with our logo with permission from National. They are a wonderful tool, for parents to keep all their children's personal information and data used for identification. Units can hand these packets out, at community functions.

National put out a challenge to all departments to have a Youth Hero and Good Deed awarded from each state. Minnesota has accepted the challenge. If you have watched the news this year, we have had several children meet the criteria for this award. I hope the units have submitted their application for these children from their community. It's not too late! the deadline for this



PURPLE UP!
for military kids

year is April 15.

Last, every April 15 is Purple Up Day for our military children. This year we are fortunate enough to have the Appreciation Rally that day. I hope every member that attended this rally wears purple.

I would love to get everyone wearing purple in a group photo. This photo will go into my children and youth report to national and on the National Children and Youth Facebook page.



Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

Reminder: Reports are due by April 15

A reminder that all reports are due no later than April 15, 2023. Every Unit should send a Unit Impact Report, Deceased Member Listing, Service to Veteran Hours Report and Unit History to the Department Office with a copy sent to your district president.

Program Entry Reports and entries for national awards are also due on the same day. Send those to the department chairman for the specific program, district president and the Department Office. These report forms replace all other previously used documents. These reports will allow Minnesota to report nationally on what our units have been doing to work the mission.

Please send in the Officers Form

Soon it will be time to elect new unit officers. Every unit is required to complete a new Officers Form every year, whether your unit keeps the same officers or not. Please review the information and submit to the Department Office by June 1. This gives the office time to input the information into our system prior to the Department Convention in July.

Registration for Minn. Girls State extended

The 2023 Minnesota Girls State registration deadline has been extended to April 15. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the following:

- Department Office: 651-224-7634.
- Girls State Chairman Yolanda Daily: yolanda.daily@icloud.com.
- Girls State Director Peggy Tesdahl, ran-peg0814@hotmail.com.

• Girls State Education Director Patti Coleman, pic3555@aol.com.

Here is poppy info for the 7-county metro

An agreement made with the VFW in 2013 and agreed upon thru 2025 for the seven-county metro area (Anoka, Hennepin, Washington, Ramsey, Carver, Scott and Dakota counties). This information does not apply to units in any other county in Minnesota.

Poppy Card Day (Post Home Only) April 13

Poppy cards may be distributed within the confines of one's own Post Home to members and patrons only on Thursday evening, April 13th only if they are to be hung on the wall of the Post Home. No "distributed" Poppy Cards may leave the Post Home on Thursday.



Poppy Card Distribution April 14-April 23

Poppy Card Days are from Friday, April 14th through midnight Sunday, April 23rd for the ten day "closed territories". Effective Monday, April 24th Poppy cards can be sold anywhere by anyone. Poppy Cards may be sold right up to Poppy Day.

Poppy Days May 19-20, 2023

Poppy Days commence on Friday, May 19th, and carry over to Saturday, May 20th if permitted by the community and the Post/Unit wants a two-day distribution. Closed territories are in effect until noon on Friday, May 19th. Open territories begin on Friday, May 19th at 12:01 p.m. when anyone can distribute poppies anywhere.

TESTIMONIAL DINNER CELEBRATING AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA PRESIDENT MARY KUPERUS

HOSTED BY:
NEW LONDON UNIT 537



APRIL 22, 2023,
SPICER
AMERICAN
LEGION POST 545

SOCIAL HOUR: 5PM
DINNER: 6PM
PROGRAM FOLOWING
COST: \$25

SEND RESERVATIONS
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MENU:
BROASTED CHICKEN
& MEATBALL BUFFET

MAKE CHECKS
PAYABLE TO
UNIT 537

ENTERTAINMENT:
"CUSTOM MADE BAND"



NAME _____ # OF GUESTS: _____
CONTACT # AND EMAIL: _____



Faribault County Register
Members of Winnebago Unit 82 present Faribault County Veteran Services Officer Jenna Schmidtke with \$620 worth of gift cards she can use to help veterans in need. The gift cards are for Hy-Vee, Casey's and Marketplace Foods. Pictured, from left, are Joyce Wetzler, Retha Rasmussen, Schmidtke, Robin Olson and Ethel Anderson. Schmidtke told the Faribault County Register she has received gift cards from many area veterans organizations, such as Blue Earth Post 89 and Legion Riders Chapter 89.



March 13, 2023, Membership:

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal
One	48	3,810	36	3,211	84.28%
Two	72	3,833	66	3,213	83.82%
Three	46	3,797	39	3,218	84.75%
Four	7	570	15	435	76.32%
Five	7	515	16	404	78.45%
Six	62	4,991	72	4,250	85.15%
Seven	57	2,938	52	2,462	83.80%
Eight	23	1,237	11	1,047	84.64%
Nine	47	3,305	17	2,795	84.57%
Ten	43	3,758	75	3,020	80.36%
1982 Dept	1	203	6	230	113.30%
District Totals:	413	28,957	405	24,285	83.87%



In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae, first published Dec. 8, 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Poppy Day is on May 26 this year

By Linda Kelly
Poppy Chairman

Poppies — they are just those small, red flowers, but they mean so much. They have been associated with our veterans for over 100 years, and they are just as important today.

As poppy chairman for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota, I have tried to encourage all of us to use, display and wear poppies throughout the year. They are best known in May as a memorial to our fallen veterans, but there is no reason we can't show our remembrance all year long.

I was hoping that by the time this publication is out in April that most of our snow would be gone, but my field tells a different story. I hope that you will consider using poppies in your home and your Legion Hall

throughout the year.

Remember: May 26 is Poppy Day this year. I hope that all units are planning their distributions. I suggest that you ask one of your family's veterans to sit with you at a local bank, grocery store or hardware store. Their presence will add to your display and may draw some questions from their customers.




Purchase a "Support Our Troops" Plate.
Call: 651-4TROOPS
Visit: www.minnesotaveteran.org



SCENES FROM THE ORATORICAL CONTEST

Geoffrey A. Forbes, MS
 VA Accredited Claims Agent ★ U.S. Army Veteran
 Mobile: 612-251-9681 ★ gforbes@vabenefitspro.com



I WANT YOU
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VA CLAIM

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Contestants who reached the Minnesota State Oratorical Contest and the sponsor posts were Myra Neumann of Brainerd Post 255, Christian Fells of Lake Crystal Post 294, David Vickers of Minneapolis Falldin Post 555, Megan Blonigen of Eden Valley Post 381, Abigail Erpelding of Kasson Post 333 and Tyler Sherette of Jordan Post 3. Each of them won their districts. The finals were held Feb. 25 at Anoka Post 102. The winners were 1st: Blonigen, 2nd: Sherette, 3rd: Erpelding, 4th: Vickers.



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 Cummingsmobility.com



From left are Seventh District Commander Karen Welander, Auxiliary Department President Mary Kuperus, Bill Kuperus of New London Post 537 and Cathy Newman of Anoka Unit 102.



Al Davis of Beroun Post 347 of the National Americanism Commission and Department Americanism Chair Tess Davis of Princeton Post 216 are all smiles at the Minnesota State Oratorical Contest.



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*The Accidental Death, Cancer Care, Hospital Help Plan, and On-The-Move Accident Insurance Plans are underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, St. Paul, MN. Plans may not be available in all states. These policies contain limitations and exclusions. Please visit www.TheLIT.com to review plan details.



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