

One sharp shooter

Jr. Shooting Sports keeps producing scholarship winners

By Tim Engstrom

ANOKA — Megan Jaros has been in youth shooting for five years. Her father had been looking for an activity for her.

“None of the other sports were really sticking,” she said.

The air rifle clicked — pun intended just a little — for the Mounds View High School senior. She is a member of the Minnesota Centershots, the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports team for Anoka Post 102.

Within a year and a half, she moved up from sporter class to precision class, which calls for more gear. At first, she borrowed a shooting suit, then had a custom one made two years ago.

She was leading at the American Legion 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship in Colorado Springs through three matches last summer, but she struggled in the fourth match ending up in fifth place. She placed first in kneeling.

Jaros will have a two-thirds scholarship at the University of Memphis this fall. Getting involved in Junior Shooting Sports has yielded benefits.

“I am excited because it’s not just



Megan Jaros, a senior at Mounds View High School, is among the best high school shooters in the nation and almost won the 2023 American Legion 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship. She is headed to the University of Memphis this fall. She competes for the Anoka Post 102 team, called Minnesota Centershots.

the scholarship. It’s the access to tutors and having more structure,” she said.

The American Legion 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship takes place in July in Colorado Springs for team and individual competitors. To get there, they must win state tournaments, then win long-distance

competitions called postal matches. American Legion National HQ runs it.

Many of the competitors are destined to compete at the collegiate level and receive scholarships.

Like with American Legion Baseball, teams are set up differently in various places. Some youth shooting

teams are separate nonprofit organizations with partial funding from the post. Some might be 4-H affiliated, with partial post funding. Some might be entirely tied to the post. In some places, they are varsity high school teams, usually private schools.

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DEC approves resolution to broaden eligibility for VA loans

MONTGOMERY — Commander Paul Hassing said, when a member becomes department commander, they often think they are going to do all kinds of things, change what it means to be department commander, change the world. Hassing has traveled much of the state during his term.

“Then you get in the position, and you go, ‘Wow! They don’t tell you, and they can’t tell you, how much it is,’” Hassing said.

The commander led the Department Executive Committee held March 2 at Montgomery Post 79. The committee approved two resolutions to be forwarded to the 105th American Legion National Convention Aug. 23-29 in New Orleans.

Resolution 2024-7 calls for legislation governing VA loans to broaden eligibility

to include partners and co-habitants of veterans. This would allow their incomes to be considered in the loan application.

The resolution was brought forth by Department Service Officer Ray Kane and went to the 104th National Convention in Charlotte. There, the National VA&R Committee asked for a few minor changes and asked for its return this year.

Real estate agent Jon Haworth, a 4th District vice commander, assisted in bringing the original resolution. He said the resolution brings VA loans to be in line with the Minnesota Fair Housing Act and the laws of several states where it is illegal to discriminate against marital status.

“It is mainly about treating unmarried

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Fourth District Vice Commander Jon Haworth, a real estate agent, explains how the resolution would benefit couples who live together and share finances but aren’t married.



Minnesota Oratorical Contest Chairwoman Jamie Woods stands with state champion Elijah Cox, the 6th District finalist who is sponsored by Walker Post 134.

Walker sophomore wins Oratorical Contest

ANOKA — Elijah Cox of Walker won the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Finals on Saturday, Feb. 24. He was the 6th District champion. He is sponsored by Walker Post 134.

“Good luck, Elijah, as you represent the Department of Minnesota at the National Oratorical Contest in May,” said Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Chairwoman Jamie Woods.

The American Legion National Oratorical Contest is May 17-19 at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

The state semifinals on Feb. 24 were conducted in the morning at Osseo Post 172, and the state finals took place in the afternoon at Anoka Post 102, with a lunch at Post 102, too.

Cox is a home-schooled sophomore from Walker. The

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Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo testifies March 21 before the House State & Local Government Finance & Policy Committee beside state Rep. Zack Stephenson in support of the sports betting bill HF2000.

Sports betting bill calls for tax relief

Charitable gambling could come out stronger by the end

ST PAUL — The American Legion Department of Minnesota, Allied Charities of Minnesota and the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association all are in support of a sports betting bill that would provide historic tax relief for charitable gambling.

The measure also allows posts to put more dollars from gambling proceeds toward maintenance of their buildings.

In the House, the bill is HF2000, and in the Senate, it is SF1949. It is authored by state Rep. Zack Stephenson of Coon Rapids.

He testified at a hearing on Thursday, March 21, before the House State & Local Government Finance & Policy Committee on behalf of the amendment to add the tax cuts for charitable gambling to the sports betting bill. The state, he said, will be able to pay for the tax cuts through increased revenue from sports betting.

Stephenson was asked whether the tax relief will restore losses from electronic pulltabs (e-tabs) losing certain features — free plays, bonus games and open-all buttons — in the 2023 session to begin in 2025.

He said he disagrees whether the game changes or any losses will be as bad as purported. He noted revenue from pulltabs and e-tabs in Minnesota is split 50/50.

“This is a very good thing for the charities. They will be in a better position than they were before last year,” Stephenson said.

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National vice commander: Running a post is a lot like running a business

By Tim Engstrom

MONTGOMERY — American Legion members who wear blue caps matter the most, said American Legion National Vice Commander Raymond Vail at the Appreciation Rally on March 2 at Montgomery Post 79.

"Just because you have a blue hat, it doesn't mean you don't know anything. You are the most important thing," Vail said.

He said there was a time when having a member with a district, department or national cap was welcomed. Insights on how to operate a post and gain members were viewed as helpful.

Vail said too many post leaders these days see someone coming in to give advice as unwelcomed, especially if the white- or red-cappers are elderly.

His example was from when he was a new Legion member and a World War II veteran taught him how to make spaghetti.

"He didn't coddle me. He told me directly: 'You do that. You do that.' He didn't beat around the bush," Vail said.

Now, the visits sometimes are viewed as intrusive.

"They look at us as dominating and going to do things our way," he said. "They fail to realize the post is a business."

He said it is important for members to separate age from the message delivered.



Department of Minnesota Membership Director Pam Krill hands National Vice Commander Raymond Vail a gift on March 2 during the Appreciation Rally at Montgomery Post 79. The gift was a wooden dish the shape of Minnesota.

Vail is an Army veteran of the Vietnam era. He served 1964 to 1966. He was stationed in West Berlin with the 7th Army as a radio repairman with a maintenance battalion.

He has been a Legionnaire since 1986 and is a PUFL member with Post 182 in Arma, Kan. He has served at the post, district, department and national levels. He was Department of Kansas commander in 2015-16. At the national level, he is on the National Security and Foreign Relations committees. He served seven years on the Arma City Council.

Vail's career was in the pet food and can manufacturing industry. He retired in 2000. He

and his wife, Linda, have been married 54 years and have four grown sons, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

He called Department of Minnesota Membership Director Pam Krill's membership plan "a very do-able program."

Minnesota's goal is 58,214 members and is ahead of the target dates, Vail noted. He said the Legion wants young veterans but can gain members by signing up older ones, too, with surprising results.

"Membership is the most satisfying and most frustrating thing you do," he said.

The main topic of The American Legion right now is the prevention of veteran suicides.

The Legion is spreading awareness through the "Be the One" campaign.

"What better organization than The American Legion to help veterans?" he asked. "It is an organization founded in 1919 to help fellow veterans."

Veterans can get involved in the Legion in many ways, but if they don't want to be involved, they should at least join so that the staff in the nation's capital has greater pull when securing and maintaining veterans benefits with Congress — for today's veterans and for future generations of veterans.

"Let's give the national commander the clout he needs," Vail said.

Membership

The Appreciation Rally is a thank-you event with many awards handed out. Statewide, Minnesota was at 91.8 percent of its membership goal and was ahead of the 90 percent target date for March 13. The next target date is April 10, at 95 percent.

"Can we make 100 percent?" Krill asked.

The 10 districts of Minnesota compete. Here is how they stacked up on March 2:

First place: 6th District, 96.61 percent

Second place: 3rd District, 95.30 percent

Third place: 4th District, 93.51 percent

Fourth place: 7th District, 93.37 percent

Fifth place: 2nd District, 92.82 percent

Sixth place: 8th District, 91.94 percent

Seventh place: 10th District, 90.92 percent

Eighth place: 1st District, 90.63 percent

Ninth place: 5th District, 90.10 percent

Tenth place: 10th District, 89.93 percent

Membership standings are posted weekly at mnlegion.org/membership-reports.

Posts received awards as appreciation for their membership efforts. Those posts were:

Waseca Post 228, Hayfield Post 330, Ellendale Post 296, Fairmont Post 36, Prior Lake Post 447, New Germany Post 601, Christie DeParcq Post 406, St. Paul Post 8, North St. Paul Post 39, Minneapolis Post 1, Minneapolis Hellenic Post 129, Minneapolis Northside Post 230, Little Falls Post 46, St. Augusta Post 621, Kelliher Post 470, Porter Post 457, Willmar Post 167, Chokio Post 629, Lawrence Lake Post 476, Moorhead Post 21, Roseau Post 24, Fosston Post 114, Beroun Post 347, Bruno Post 563 and Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172.

District vice commanders receiving recognition for membership efforts were:

Cole Wilcox in the 1st District, Roxanne Zoet in the 2nd District, Joe Bares in the 3rd District, Jon Haworth in the 4th District, Andru Peters in the 5th District, Frank Grittner in the 6th District, John Jones in the 7th District, Larry Pocrnich in the 8th District, Jerome Clovning in the 9th District and Craig Hartman in the 10th District.



Smiles were everywhere at the Appreciation Rally, and it seemed like everyone was happy to see each other again. From left are Past Department Commander Tom Fernlund of Waite Park Post 428, Past National Vice Commander Don Hayden of Le Center Post 108 and Sons of The American Legion National Vice Commander Robert Bristo of Minneapolis Gopher Squadron 440.

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Registration is open for Department Convention



The Department Convention is never short on friendly faces, especially ones from Elysian.

WILLMAR — The 105th American Legion Department of Minnesota Convention is July 11-13 at the Willmar Conference Center, with some standing committees meeting on July 10. Willmar Post 167 is hosting.

The official registration form is found on this page. The registration fee is \$15. To encourage early registration, the fee goes up after June 26 to \$25. That will be the fee for registration at the door, too. Be sure to include one form per participant.

Need another form? It is available for download as a PDF at mnlegion.org/departement-convention.

Registration is available online through Eventbrite by visiting mnlegion.org and selecting "events." Anyone also can find the links at mnlegion.org/departement-convention or mnlegion.org/calendar. Eventbrite will charge a \$2.85 fee.

The Department of Minnesota Convention Corp. thanks Auxiliary member Carrie Werner of Redwood Falls Unit 38 for helping

with registration. She can answer registration questions. Her email is carriewerner@gmail.com.

Organizers urge members to make lodging reservations as early as possible directly with the hotels. Ask for "The American Legion block."

Best Western Plus: 320-235-6060
Holiday Inn Express: 320-231-2601
Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300
AmericInn: 320-365-1995

The convention program is under development. More information on schedules, presenters and activities will be out for the next issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire, which arrives in mailboxes around May 22.

This is the first of five years the convention will be hosted at the Willmar Conference Center. A five-year deal struck last year reduces conventions costs.

The convention is where the statewide Legion membership conducts its business and elects new officers.



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 167" with "Dept. Convention" written on the memo line.

Please mail this form with your check to:

Carrie Werner
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Registration after June 26 will be \$25.

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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 registration fee must be enclosed for each person.

Endorsements

Olson endorsed for department vice commander

Winnebago American Legion Post 82 endorses Randy R. Olson for the position of Department of Minnesota Vice Commander for the 2nd and 7th districts for the year 2024-25.

Olson is eligible for membership in The American Legion through his service in the Army National Guard from January 1977 to October 2007. He is a 30-year member of The American Legion. He served during the war eras of Lebanon-Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf and Global War on Terrorism.

At Post 82, he has served as commander, adjutant, 1st vice commander, 2nd vice commander and director of the Chapter 82 Legion Riders. He presently is chaplain. In the 2nd District, Olson served as commander in 2017-18, 1st vice commander 2016-17 and the positions of vice commander, membership director, board member, ALR director and several committee chairmanships. He also is a member of SAL Squadron 165 out of Bricelyn, where he is squadron commander and membership director.

Olson is a member of the 40&8 Voiture 281. He is involved at Lutheran Church of Our Savior in Winnebago, serving as Sunday School teacher, deacon, usher and council member.

He has been a licensed electrician for more than four decades and has had other side work in trucking and timber purchasing. Olson is an ordained minister. He



Randy Olson

was instrumental in building a Department of Minnesota distribution network for personal protective equipment to reach places where veterans seek care in 2020 during the onset of the COVID pandemic.

Olson and his wife, Robin, have been married for more than 20 years. They have five children between them and six grandchildren.

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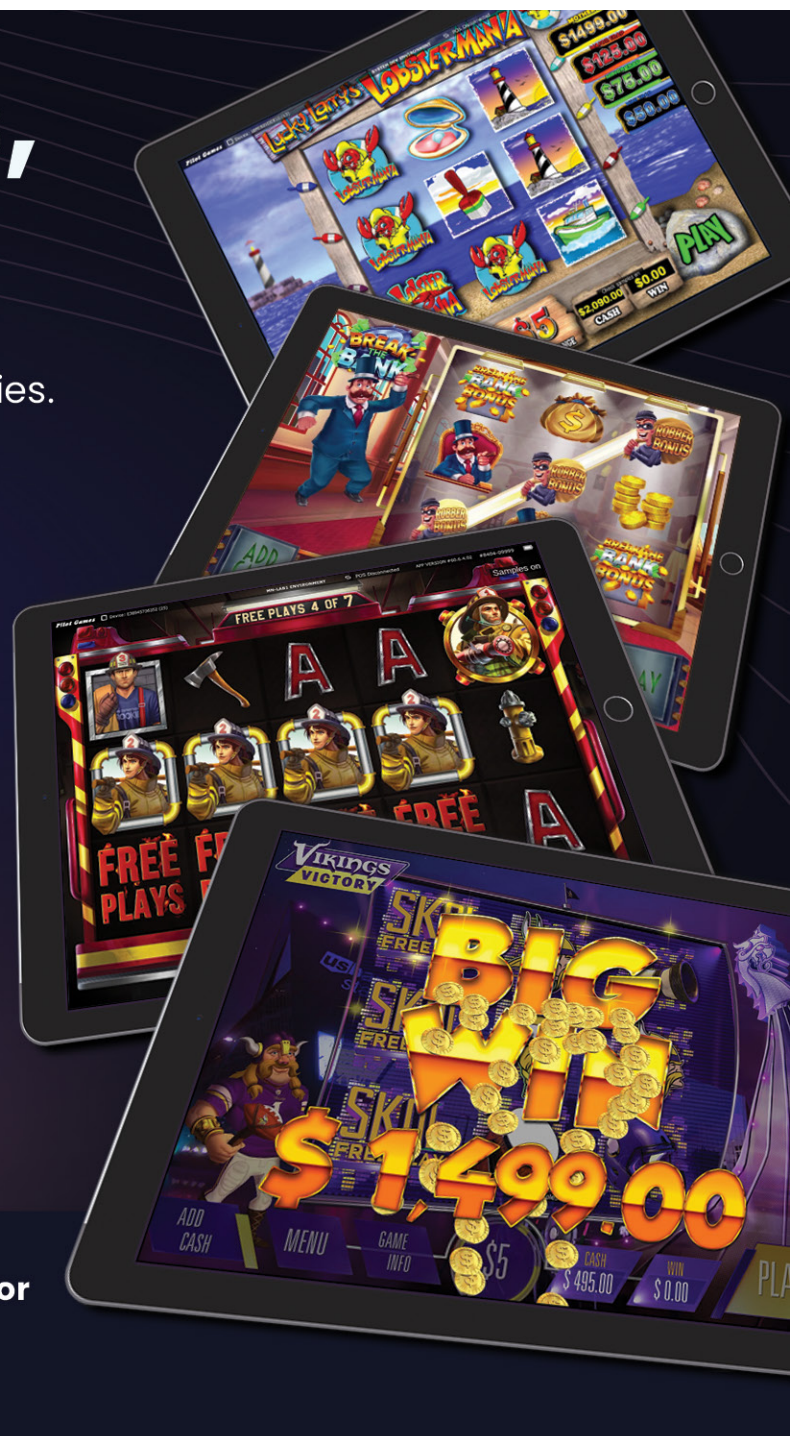
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Sign 1 more member before convention

When I was in the second grade my teacher, Mrs. Herron, had the class write papers on what we wanted to be when we grew up. I wrote mine on how I wanted to be a soldier.

Mrs. Herron told me that she was going to take that letter and put it on display in the local American Legion post. I don't know whether she ever got it there for display, but I do remember how proud I was.

The reason I bring this up is because, at 7 years old, I knew what The American Legion was. Legion members were a big part of our community. Would most 7-year-olds today know what The American Legion is? Are we getting our message out to our communities?

Nobody in my family had served in the military, but I still knew how important The American Legion was. I knew how veterans deserved our respect. Is that still the case today? We need to make sure our stories are still being told. We need to make sure that we are around for another 105 years.

The month of March has been a very busy month so far. I have eaten some great birthday dinners and put on a lot of miles. I can't thank you all enough for the great hospitality you have shown me. I know it takes a lot of work from a lot of people to make it happen.

Some of us traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Washington Conference. I am so grateful to Kristy Janigo, chairwoman of the Department Legislative Committee, for setting up our office visits. We had a lot of great meetings, and I think we got our message out. It is great to see that our voice is still important. I do ask that you all look

Commander's Column

Paul Hassing



at the voting record of our legislators though. We need to make sure they are following through with the promises made to our veterans.

The month of April looks like it is going to be just as busy. We have the National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer coming to visit our great state. Please make sure to look at the schedule and get to at least one of the events. If you've never heard him speak, you're in for a treat. He does a great job of getting The American Legion message out.

Veterans Day on the Hill is Wednesday, April 17. Please attend if you are able. We need to show just how much of a force we can be. There are very important issues facing our veterans, and their families. We can't just sit back and hope they will do the right thing.

I want to thank all the individuals and posts that have donated to my project so far. Your generosity is truly amazing. We are getting close to reaching our goal, but more importantly, we can assist more veterans that really need it. If you haven't heard, my project this year is the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund. Donations can be made with gambling funds, and every bit helps.

This time of year, we tend to hit a brick wall with membership. I know we don't like to sign someone up just to have them receive a renewal notice a few months from now. We must get away from this way of thinking.

Please don't hold onto someone's membership application until the next membership year. This only deprives them of the benefits of being a Legionnaire. I'm asking everyone to try and recruit one new member before Department Convention. We are so close to stopping the slide this year. Membership Director Pam Krill and the membership team are working so hard, and wouldn't it be great to be back over the 60,000-member mark again?

It wasn't that long ago when the Department of Minnesota was over 100,000 members. We owe it to ourselves to keep The American Legion going well into the future.

When I look at my grandchildren, I can't help but wonder what The American Legion will look like when they become adults. Will they be able to talk about growing up with the Legion Family. Will their friends know what they are talking about, or will they have to explain what the American Legion used to be? This is up to us.

Thank you all for your support, and I hope to see you on the road ahead.

Paul Hassing of Bloomington Post 550 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. His theme is "The Road Ahead."

No such thing as a dumb question

Just ask.
This is a phrase that I am sure that most of us have heard time and time again in our lifetime. It could have been when we were a young child and talking to a brother or sister and they did not know the answer so they said, "Just ask Mom or Dad."

It may have been in our years in school when we were asked a question that we did know the answer to so we said, "Just ask the teacher."

No matter what the circumstances were, we have all been at one time or another at a point that we need to just ask the question to find out the answer. There is a saying: "There is no such thing as a dumb question."

This aspect holds true to each and every one of us as we deal with daily occurrences in our lives. It may be a personal situation, a problem we have at work, or maybe just talking to a friend about things that are going on in our lives; the same thing is true, if we what to know the answer to anything — *just ask*.

The word "ask" also can stand for, "Acknowledge the situation, Support the information that you find out during the conversation, and Keep in touch with one another to let individuals know that they are not forgotten."

human services organizations near our posts. We fund youth sports scholarships and equipment for local fire departments. We also fund local parades, fireworks displays, county fairs, school flags, marching band uniforms, football headsets, international sister-city efforts, and wheelchair-friendly playground equipment. What I am describing to you represents the best of America, and these traditions need to continue.

I hope your readers will join me in supporting HF 2000 and its Senate companion, SF1949. Contact your state lawmakers in both the House and the Senate today to let them know you expect these tax cuts to go through under the sports betting bill, to the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Teresa A. Davis
Princeton Post 216

Letter about taking a knee was spot on

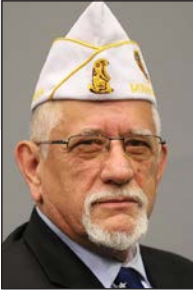
Many thanks to fellow veteran Jeff Miller and his letter to the editor, "Taking knee is disrespectful to war dead," in the March 2024 issue.

I totally agree. Many things change in each generation. In my day, the '40s and '50s, the word "drugs" meant going to the local drug store. The money trail meant putting pennies into the piggy bank. George Mikan, Mr. Basketball from the Minneapolis Lakers, earned \$25,000 a year. Now Mr. Basketball from the L.A. Lakers earns about \$48 million a year.

The "taking a knee" started a few years ago with pro sports athletes kneeling down. One pro football player started the long hair to the waist. Soon, the above and many other things changed and caught on both to

Chaplain's Corner

Dean Knutson



Now how do we use this in our spiritual lives as well.

First, acknowledge our sins, keep the downfalls to ourselves and then through prayer acknowledge them before God. By doing this we open ourselves up to the loving Grace of God and his everlasting forgiveness. This may be uncomfortable for us at first, but if we pray as if we are talking to our best friend, it becomes easier each time and we feel more comfortable.

Second, support for our problems will come to us in many ways and they may be other believers in our God, conversations with one another about what is going on in our lives, or a Bible study and finding those scriptures that can help us through daily situations.

Third, keep in touch. Even though we have acknowledged out sins before God, we need to pray without ceasing and he will support us through these obstacles in your lives. We always need to remember that God's love is unending and is always there for us if we JUST ASK.

"Let us then with confidence

draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in time of need."

"Therefore confess your sins to another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person to powerful and affective."

Some dates in April of Importance:

- April 1: April Fool's Day
- April 2: World Autism Day
- April 7: World Health Day
- April 8: Total Solar Eclipse
- April 9 & 10: Eid al-Fitr
- April 15: Jackie Robinson Day
- April 22 & 23: Passover
- April 22: Earth Day
- April 24: Administrative Professionals Day
- Month of April: Stress Awareness Month, National Humor Month

Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357 is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

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Mail Call

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.

Tax cuts for charities is the top priority

Though most of us stopped wearing the uniform years ago, veterans have a deep-seated need to continue serving their communities. There are 537 American Legion posts throughout Minnesota, and 193 of them have charitable gambling operations. We use the funds to carry out our four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Children & Youth, and Americanism. That is why The American Legion Department of Minnesota fought the state Legislature's changes to e-pulltabs last year so fiercely, alongside many other organizations with charitable gambling.

Veterans service organizations, athletic associations, fire-relief associations, nonprofits, bars, and restaurants with charitable gambling operations became very concerned about their futures with the passing of the Minnesota legislature's tax omnibus bill. The new law specified that e-games with open all features, bonus games, and free plays needed to be taken off the market by Dec. 31, 2024.

This legislative session, charitable gambling is being thrown a lifeline from an unexpected source: sports betting. Rep. Zack Stephenson's bill, HF 2000, was heard in the House State & Local Government Finance & Policy Committee March 21. The A21 amendment contained the language to fund cuts to charitable gambling taxes in a phased approach resulting in

about \$40 million by the third year. State taxes on sports betting will fund these charitable gambling tax cuts.

Our nearly 60,000 American Legion Department of Minnesota members agreed to prioritize advocating for these tax cuts above all other things we want for the servicemember, military family and veteran community — because we think this will have the biggest impact. It's difficult for me to fully describe how much this means to us. The funds we donate pay for honor guards at burial ceremonies, outdoor recreation for disabled veterans, suicide prevention programs, and stopgap funding for homeless veterans. We donate to area schools' programs to help housing and food insecure children. We support nonprofit

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

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

on. With all that going on, no one ever thought of shooting or killing anybody. In the '50s and '60s, a church in our small town of 5,000 had 40 to 50 students who went to religious instruction every Wednesday and were confirmed. Now, the same church has seven or eight students being confirmed, and that's if they are lucky.

We were all taught to be respectful to our elders. My 4-foot-9-inch grandmother ran the house. We had to be home by 6 p.m. for supper. If we were late, the next meal would be the next day at 6:45 a.m. My grandfather worked on the railroad, and the only driver of the house. That meant we all walked to school (12-14 blocks), work or play.

In the sports world, a large amount of students including my older brother and me would have participated, but we could not because of our jobs. Our coaches were great but also demanding both in sportsmanship and in appearance.

Standing for the national anthem? You had better believe that! Otherwise, you were no longer on any team — that also was Bud Grant's style.

Nowadays, at 2 to 3 p.m. each day after school, the TVs, computers and cellphones go into action. Social media takes over. Parents have allowed AK-15s and other guns to be unsecured in the house. Manners and respect are not present in the home and in our schools. Winning is more

important than anything else.

If one follows pro sports, look at the money trail and the changes of coaches. The amazing thing is that the players earn more than the coaches! The pro sports arena has gone bananas with baseball players that are hitting .185 earning millions of dollars. The money trail is much more important than standing for the national anthem. This, to them and to the millions of students watching TV with their friends, is the priority that is passed on to our new generation.

My dad was in the Army during World War I. My older brothers was an artillery observer in the Korean War and in combat for two years. I spent six years in the Army during the Vietnam War. My three sons were all in the Navy for four years, which included the Persian Gulf War.

Maybe, in my opinion, we should go back to the military draft and that might make our children and generations more respectable — not only to our veterans but also to each other.

Again, thanks to Mr. Miller for his letter.

John Peterson
Hibbing Post 222

Peer mentors sought for veterans court

A few peer mentors are needed for the Anoka County

Veterans Treatment Court.

Mentors, who must be honorably discharged veterans, will work with veterans who are going through the veterans' court process and could benefit from a reliable peer support system. Veterans who wish to find out more should contact Peer Mentor Coordinator Paul Evangelist, 612-516-8937, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. or email: deltaco15@comcast.net.

Al Zdon
Legionnaire Editor Emeritus
Hibbing Post 222

Thanks for all the cards

To all Legionnaire readers, Many thanks to each and all of you wonderful veterans and friends who took the time to send cards wishing me a "Happy 102nd Birthday." I received 104 cards as of the time of this writing.

People like you make this country, the United States, the best country in the world. We are blessed to live here.

May every day of your life be healthy and happy.

For God & Country,

Lupe Gasca
Albert Lea Post 56



Fund 85 Run to start in Pipestone

Happy spring! I had a great time in Montgomery earlier this month for the Appreciation Rally. This was the last rally of this Legion year. Boy, has this year gone by fast.

This month we also finalized the kickoff party for the Fund 85 Run! The kickoff party will be July 24th at Pipestone American Legion Post 6. The doors will open at 4 p.m. Dinner will be at 6 p.m., and the program will start at 7 p.m.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Grandstay Hotel & Suites in Pipestone. The rate is \$113.90 plus tax, and the phone number for reservations is 507-562-1100.

The ending party will be July 28 at Bayport American Legion Post 491. We usually plan to arrive at the ending location between 1 and 2 p.m. More details to follow.

Information for the Fund 85 Run will be posted on Facebook and on our website: mnalr.org.

This year, the run will be around southern Minnesota. If your post's Legion family is interested in hosting the Riders this year, please contact me or Minnesota American Legion Riders Ride Captain Ted Berg. My email is director@mnalr.org, and his is ridecaptain@mnalr.org.

Please note, National HQ is no longer accepting donations to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. I know that many of you have it in your budget to donate to the Fund 84 (the Legacy Scholarship fund), if we receive a check made out

Legion Riders

Jody Hassing



to Fund 84 those monies will be applied to the new National American Legion Riders' mission: American Legion Veterans & Children Fund.

The Minnesota National Mission Ride will take place on Aug. 17 and will be hosted by the Slayton ALR chapter.

American Legion Riders, please remember you will receive a copy of the proposed Constitution & Bylaws to be voted on by your chapters during district conventions, if your district is organized, or from your district rep to vote on.

If you would like assistance setting up a chapter at your post,

please let me or your district American Legion Riders representative know so we can help you get things going. If you are interested in having me talk to your chapter or district about the proposed Constitution & Bylaws, please contact me. God bless, and keep the rubber side down.

Jody Hassing of Bloomington Unit 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

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ON-SITE DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION

All-Family Events Calendar

April 9: Air Force Band, St. Michael-Albertville H.S.
April 10: Air Force Band, Waconia High School
April 12-13: ALA Dept. Jr. Conference, Detroit Lakes Post 15
April 15: Registration opens for 2024 National American Legion Legacy Run to end in New Orleans
April 13: Adult Prom, Blue Earth Post 89
April 15-17: National Commander's Tour of Minnesota
April 17: Veterans Day on the Hill, St. Paul Armory
April 20: Military Ball, Fest Building, Spring Grove
April 27: President's Testimonial, Melrose Post 101
April 28-May 2: National President's Tour of Minn.
May 4: 8th District Convention, Aurora Post 241
May 6-9: Spring Meetings, Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis
May 16-19: Legionville Work & Play
May 17-19: 2024 National Oratorical Contest Finals, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Mich.
May 18: 1st District Convention, Austin Post 91
May 18: 3rd District Convention, New Prague Post 45
May 18: 7th District Convention, Morris Post 29
May 24: American Legion Night at Target Field
May 24: National Poppy Day
May 27: Memorial Day, local ceremonies
June 1: 6th District Convention, Brainerd Armory
June 1: 10th District Convention, Fridley Post 303
June 7: Luverne Veterans Home 30th Anniversary
June 8: 2nd District Convention, Fairmont Post 36
June 8: 5th District Convention, Holiday Inn Bmnt. W.
June 8: 9th District Convention, Moorhead Post 21
June 8: Historian Arn Kind speaks on D-Day on its 80th anniversary, Bagley Post 16
June 8: Minnesota Boys State 75th Anniversary Banquet, Anoka Post 102
June 9-15: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University
June 9-15: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
June 15: 4th District Convention, Rosetown Post 542
June 16: 1st session of Legionville safety camp begins
June 22: Commander's Testimonial, Montgomery Post 79
July 10: Department standing committee meetings, Willmar Conference Center, Willmar
July 11: Department Executive Committee meeting, Willmar Conference Center, Willmar
July 11-13: Department of Minnesota Convention, Willmar Conference Center, Willmar, hosted by Willmar Post 167
July 24: Fund 85 Run Kickoff Party, Pipestone Post 6
July 27: Navy Blue Angels perform at the Fargo AirSho, Fargo Air Museum, Hector International Airport, Fargo
July 29-Aug. 1: Baseball Tier 1 Tournament, Burnsville
July 28: Fund 85 Run Ending Party, Bayport Post 491
Aug. 1-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament, Maple Grove
Aug. 1-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament, Bloomington
Aug. 2: Final session of Legionville safety camp ends
Aug. 2-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, Bird Island
Aug. 3-4: Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, Bemidji
Aug. 9-11: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, St. Charles
Aug. 9-11: Junior Auxiliary Fun Weekend at Legionville
Aug. 17: Minnesota American Legion National Mission Ride, Slayton
Aug. 18-22: American Legion Legacy Run, end in New Orleans at the 105th National Convention
Aug. 15-20: American Legion World Series, Shelby, N.C.
Aug. 23-29: 105th National Convention, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans
Sept. 5-8: Camporee, Legionville
Sept 12-15: Legion Riders Romp at Legionville
Sept. 13-15: NS/FR Weekend, Camp Ripley
Oct. 1-6: John Zgoda Memorial Deer Hunt, Legionville
Oct. 7-10: Fall Meetings, Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis
Oct. 24: Department Executive Committee meeting, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
Oct. 24-26: Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud

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Taps



Please send "Taps" entries to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or mail to 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, or visit mnlegion.org/taps. Thank you.

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Adamek, Robert J.	79	2/18/24	Army	Vietnam	36	New Prague Post 45
Ahlness, David L.	74	3/25/24	Army	Vietnam	27	New Ulm Post 132
Anderson, Robert E.	82	7/31/23	Navy	Vietnam	41	Rochester Post 92
Armstrong, Tristan M.	82	4/12/23	Army	Vietnam	14	Rochester Post 92
Bakke, Glenn E.	88	2/27/24	Army	Cold	3	Austin Post 91
Bastian, Wayne H.	99	1/10/24	Marines	WWII	22	Rochester Post 92
Beeching, Douglas E.	74	6/10/23	Navy	Cold	1	Minnesota Post 1982
Beeman, Karl P.	88	9/23/23	Army	Korea	37	Rochester Post 92
Bicknell, Jimmie A.	79	10/27/23	Navy	Vietnam	8	Clearwater Post 323
Note: He served as an aircraft technician.						
Boelter, Erwin R.	87	3/20/24	Army	Korea	30	New Ulm Post 132
Bonham, Judson R.	70	3/9/24	Coast Guard	Vietnam	9	Kimball Post 261
Bork, Paul H.	89	2/4/24	Army	Korea	32	Robbinsdale and Crystal Post 251
Boyer, Kenneth W.	91	3/20/24	Navy	Korea	39	Rosetown Memorial Post 542
Bullerman, Douglas F.	72	12/15/23	Army	Vietnam	46	Adrian Post 32
Bullivant, Garland C.	96	2/15/24	Navy	WWII	50	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Bunkholt, Clarence H. Jr.	77	3/3/24	Marines	Vietnam	15	Bloomington Post 550
Note: He was post 2nd vice commander.						
Burkhardt, Michael J.	77	2/28/24	Air Force	Vietnam	6	North Mankato Post 518
Burt, Wendel E.	88	12/5/23	Army	Korea	48	Rochester Post 92
Carlson, Alfred L.	87	2/5/24	Army	Korea	32	Wheaton Post 80
Carroll, Charles E.	80	3/8/24	Marines	Vietnam	9	Walker Post 134
Cavanaugh, John P.	81	2/16/24	Army	Vietnam	50	Bloomington Post 550
Note: He served in Okinawa, Japan.						
Chafos, Gus A.	83	11/12/24	Army	Vietnam	17	Rochester Post 92
Cooke, Donald R.	94	2/11/24	Army	Korea	12	Anoka Post 102
Cox, Richard R.	87	11/3/23	Army	Korea	13	Park Rapids Post 212
Davidson, Eldon L.	79	12/29/23	Army	Vietnam	16	New Prague Post 45
Dicke, Alvin R.	95	2/21/24	Army	Korea	40	Zumbrota Post 183
Douglas, John M.	81	2/20/24	Navy	Vietnam	44	Roseau Post 24
Note: He joined in 1962 and served in Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Later, he returned to Japan as part of an exchange program.						
Ebert, Clifford R.	93	2/13/24	Air Force	Korea	49	New Prague Post 45
Eiden, Gene A.	93	12/24/23	Army	Korea	47	Rochester Post 92
Note: He served with the 6th Armored Division Band at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. A longtime musician and music educator, he provided the sounding of "Taps" for many military funerals in the area. He provided more than 150 the year he turned 90.						
Ellingsworth, Paul M.	62	2/28/24	Army	Vietnam	2	North Mankato Post 518
Engel, Clarwin A.	95	12/24/24	Army	Korea	63	Winona Post 9
Fraki, David A.	79	11/8/23	Marines	Vietnam	10	Park Rapids Post 212
Note: He served in Vietnam.						
Gamble, Dennis G.	83	8/16/22	Army	Vietnam	47	Elk River Post 112
Gibbons, Gary B.	91	2/25/24	Army	Korea	30	Alexandria Post 87
Hall, Joseph H.	100	3/7/24	Marines	WWII	40	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He served in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater, including battles in Marshall Islands, Guam, Marianas Islands and Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa).						
Hardy, Robert L.	83	2/10/24	Army	Vietnam	24	Milaca Post 178
Hart, Arlen D.	72	1/28/24	Army	Vietnam	28	Backus Post 368
Hartung, Charles T.	79	11/16/23	Army	Vietnam	53	Sauk Rapids Post 254
Note: He was stationed in Alaska. He was a past grand chef de gare for the 40&8 of Minnesota.						
Hauck, Alvin P.	94	6/25/23	Navy	Vietnam	37	Zumbrota Post 183
Haugen, Jerry A.	77	2/15/24	Air Force	Vietnam	55	Lanesboro Post 40
Heinzen, Dennis L.	81	2/23/24	Army	Vietnam	4	Apple Valley Post 1776
Hoeck, Richard J.	81	2/18/24	Marines	Vietnam	21	Milaca Post 178
Note: He was awarded a Silver Star and a Purple Heart for his service in combat in Vietnam.						
Hoelz, Joel K.	83	1/2/24	Army	Vietnam	24	Aitkin Post 86
Holden, Joseph J.	88	2/21/24	Air Force	Korea	31	New Prague Post 45
Howard, Tellin R.	81	2/12/24	Army	Vietnam	44	St. Paul Park Post 98
Note: He served in the 101st Airborne Division. He was a trumpeter for the Fort Snelling Rifle Squad.						
Kain, Alvin C.	96	2/27/24	Army	WWII	6	Fairmont Post 36
Kaufman, Allen A.	86	3/9/24	Army	Vietnam	41	Albert Lea Post 56
Keithahn, Cecil T.	75	3/23/24	Army	Vietnam	89	Blue Earth Post 89
Note: He served in Germany as a forward observer.						
Kennedy, Thomas E.	93	2/23/24	Army	Vietnam	29	Rosetown Memorial Post 542
Klages, Dean E.	80	3/20/22	Air Force	Vietnam	31	Zimmerman Post 560
Klemetson, Roger D.	72	1/25/24	Navy	Vietnam	46	Greenbush Post 88
Koelln, Charles O.	79	3/7/24	Air Force	Vietnam	13	Litchfield Post 104
Kokesch, David R.	84	3/21/24	Marines	Vietnam	9	New Ulm Post 132
Kraabel, Carlyn G.	80	6/7/23	Army	Vietnam	51	Spring Grove Post 249
Ksiazek, James	86	1/7/24	Air Force	Vietnam	26	St. Paul Park Post 98
Kuznia, Matthew P.	94	2/23/24	Army	Korea	51	Stephen Post 390
LaMott, Edwin W.	99	3/2/24	Army	WWII	70	Silver Lake Post 141
Note: He served in the Philippines and was a member of the post honor guard.						
Lange, Merle R.	85	2/18/24	Army	Vietnam	41	Marshall Post 113
Lanman, Arthur M.	96	3/11/24	Navy	WWII	57	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Note: He served aboard the USS St. Paul cruiser as a helmsman and rammerman in the China and Japan area.						
Lasher, Clayton D.	88	2/25/24	Marines	Korea	6	Anoka Post 102
Lechner, Ronald G.	74	1/7/24	Navy	Vietnam	10	Park Rapids Post 212
Lewandowski, Ernest D.	91	3/12/24	Army	Korea	69	Foley Post 298
Note: He served in the 11th Airborne Division. He served on the executive board at his post.						
Lingren, Marvin C.	94	3/9/24	Air Force	Korea	51	Willmar Post 167
Madsen, Howard J.	93	3/5/24	Navy	Korea	67	Hutchinson Post 96
Martinek, Dennis J.	76	2/17/24	Army	Vietnam	5	Lowry Post 253
McKeever, Noel R. "Ole"	85	3/1/24	Army	Vietnam	25	Middle River Post 444
Meemken, Archie C.	93	3/30/24	Army	Korea	39	Melrose Post 101
Melchert, Paul E.	77	12/7/23	Army	Vietnam	1	Minnesota Post 1982
Meyer, Donald J.	99	3/8/24	Army	WWII	78	Melrose Post 101
Miller, Kenneth L.	76	2/8/24	Army	Vietnam	57	Balaton Post 237
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Moen, Richard O.	90	3/13/24	Army	Korea	21	Park Rapids Post 212
Morken, Allan H.	91	12/19/23	Army	Korea	42	Spring Grove Post 249
Morrow, Margaret R. "Peggy"	76	11/27/23	Air Force	Vietnam	8	Park Rapids Post 212
Nelson, Elaine M.	102	7/24/23	Marines	WWII	35	Park Rapids Post 212
Note: She enlisted in 1943 and served as a turret lathe operator at the assembly and repair department of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point until 1945.						

Continued from Page 6

Nelson, Jerome W.	76	2/9/24	Army	Vietnam	19	Newfolden Post 427
Norgaard, Virgil L.	90	3/12/24	Army	Korea	38	Tyler Post 185
Norton, Thomas J.	68	3/7/24	Marines	Vietnam	19	Woodbury Post 501
Nowak, Stanley M.	91	2/27/24	Army	Korea	26	Hutchinson Post 96
Oelrich, Steven L.	66	3/17/24	Navy	Vietnam	23	Foley Post 298
Ohlemann, Michael E.	73	2/4/24	Army	Vietnam	40	Cambridge Post 290
Olson, Duane A.	91	2/16/24	Navy	Korea	61	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He was past post commander and a longtime honor guard member.						
Orton, John W. Sr.	90	2/19/24	Army	Korea	23	Hillman Post 602
Osland, Norvald A.	97	2/18/24	Army	WWII	52	St. James Post 33
Perich, Terry L.	79	5/22/23	Navy	Vietnam	9	Richfield-Minneapolis Post 435
Peters, Jerome M.	92	3/1/24	Army	Korea	38	Nicollet Post 510
Quast, Joseph M.	92	2/10/24	Army	Korea	44	Elk River Post 112
Quittschreiber, David L.	78	10/1/23	Army	Vietnam	33	Park Rapids Post 212
Rall, Marvin G.	90	2/18/24	Army	Korea	61	Worthington Post 5
Ripka, John E.	85	2/26/24	Navy	Vietnam	1	Mora Post 201
Ross, James O.	80	3/13/24	Army	Vietnam	56	Waseca Post 228
Note: He fought in the war and was the recipient of two Purple Heart medals, in addition to other service medals.						
Schleppenbach, Albert G.	82	12/18/23	Army	37	Albany Post 482	
Schmidt, Larry L. "Scoogie"	72	3/3/24	Army	Vietnam	32	Le Center Post 108
Schroeder, Darrell O.	74	3/15/24	Navy	Vietnam	40	Caledonia Post 191
Schuft, Lester E.	86	2/19/24	Army	Vietnam	45	Hutchinson Post 96
Note: He served as a dentist and directed a battalion band.						
Sebek, Glenn J.	94	12/1/23	Air Force	Aitken Post 86		
Secord, Myrvin C.	97	2/27/24	Navy	WWII	31	Melrose Post 101
Seifert, Leonard H. "Benny"	93	2/27/24	Army	Korea	44	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He was a medic assigned to the medical detachment of the 663rd Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C. He was a member of Post 132's Comrades of Valor Honor Guard and played "Taps" at funerals.						
Selander, Howard G.	96	2/7/24	Army	Korea	71	Maple Lake Post 132
Sell, Douglas R.	73	11/18/23	Air Force	Vietnam	30	New Brighton Post 513
Shelstad, Arland B. "Shelly"	92	2/27/24	Army	Korea	49	Pine Island Post 184
Note: He joined the National Guard right after high school and served 35 years, retiring as a major.						
Shippman, Richard H.	81	3/17/24	Army	Vietnam	33	Le Center Post 108
Siem, Randy P.	76	2/27/24	Navy	Vietnam	45	Litchfield Post 104
Smolnisky, Dale W.	80	3/6/24	Navy	Vietnam	37	Litchfield Post 104
Solberg, Edward M.	93	2/25/24	Army	Korea	36	Austin Post 91
Sommerdorf, Ronald A.	89	2/14/24	Navy	Vietnam	44	Brownton Post 143
Note: He served as an aviation electronics technician.						
Stack, Dean S.	72	11/29/23	Navy	Vietnam	7	Park Rapids Post 212
Starzecki, Gary W.	79	2/24/24	Army	Vietnam	19	Rosetown Post 542
Stoltz, Emil J.	91	2/6/24	Air Force	Korea	36	Alexandria Post 87
Stone, Ronald W.	90	8/14/23	Army	Korea	62	Spring Grove Post 249
Thomsen, Richard L.	81	1/19/24	Army	Vietnam	23	Wheaton Post 80
VanGuilder, Richard C.	81	2/7/24	Army	Korea	23	Bloomington Viking Post 493
Note: He served in Germany. He was past post commander and service officer.						
Volner, Raymond E.	90	12/21/24	Army	Korea	50	St. Paul Park Post 98
Vortherms, William H.	83	2/26/24	Army	Vietnam	60	Adrian Post 32
Weaver, James D.	71	1/20/24	Army	Korea	54	Brewster Post 464
Weis, William H. Sr.	80	10/9/23	Army	Vietnam	52	Apple Valley Post 1776
Note: He was the past chaplain for Post 1776 and for Faribault Post 43.						
Werth, Wayne L.	85	3/4/24	Army	Cold	51	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He served in the Military Police Corps.						
Wignes, Russell A.	89	3/19/24	Army	Korea	50	Albert Lea Post 56
Wilber, Donald E.	78	1/21/24	Army	Vietnam	26	Anoka Post 102
Williams, Richard L.	91	1/14/24	Navy	Korea	54	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Zeig, Leo H.	82	3/3/24	Army Res.	Korea	20	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He was trained in field artillery at Fort Sill, Okla.						
Ziebarth, Gerald L.	85	1/7/24	Army	Vietnam	47	Cambridge Post 290

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The Washington Conference is history. A big thank-you to Kristy Janigo, as our Legislative Committee chairwoman. She did a fantastic job.

We were able to have a sit-down meeting with U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar. She was very receptive to veterans' issues.

When we were waiting at the airport, we were very saddened to hear of the death of Past National Vice Commander Glenn Wahus of North Dakota. He had served in that leadership role just last year and spoke to Minnesota Legionnaires at the Sweetheart Rally at Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 in February 2023. He was a Navy veteran of the Lebanon-Grenada era.

Memberships, please send them in today. If you are not paid-up member and, heaven forbid, you fall on hard times supporting your family, you are not eligible for TFA (Temporary Financial Assistance). If you struggle in life, you will find the Legion has your back. You learn that, when you help others, they will help you, too.

Membership is key for the Legion to garner veterans benefits from state and federal lawmakers. Join today, and you have a strong force there for you in D.C. and in St. Paul.

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



I hope you have sent in your Legionville registration for the girls and boys that you are sending to camp this summer. Also, it is not too late to send in participants for Girls State and Boys State. We are an American Legion Family, so let's watch out for everyone. We need more American Legion girls' fastpitch softball teams as well as American Legion baseball teams. Go to the schools and talk to the students, teachers and the coaches.

Congratulations to Minnesota Oratorical Contest Champion Elijah Cox of Walker-Hackensack-Akeley High School and to Eagle Scout of the Year Jackson Kramer of Hutchinson High School.

Did your post do anything for the American Legion birthday March 15?

Back in the early '90s, I was working to be department commander. I served in the role in 1994-1995, to be exact. The Auxiliary Department President was Beverly Otterness. We became such great friends and remain friends to this day.

Friendships come so very easily, as I also met Peggy and Carl Moon, again great friends to this day. I gave Peggy a department appointment along with many others. I never dreamed I would be lucky enough to be elected National Executive Committeeman years later, along with Peggy as Alternate NECman. It is a great privilege that I certainly enjoy. Thanks to all of you.

As many of you are aware, on March 7, I had open heart surgery. I had four blockages. It was and was not a surprise as I had been feeling very short of breath while walking and always tired.

However, there were no other usual symptoms. I contacted my cardiologist, and she ran all the usual tests, which passed. She did find a spot on the bottom of my heart she said could be a blockage or just a shadow. The options were 1. to watch

to see if I recover and get back to normal, or 2. to do stents.

We chose the stent option. While doing the stents, she could not get through; therefore open-heart surgery was needed.

My point being: You know your body best. If you feel anything out of the normal and it doesn't get better, check it out. Do not always wait for symptoms.

I am just amazed and so very appreciative for all the calls, texts, emails and cards from the American Legion Family near and far. I received a beautiful balloon bouquet from the Department of Minnesota, and a beautiful flower bouquet from King Tuts and Nefertitis.

Donna and I say: *Thank you all!* Veterans really do care about each other whether on the battlefield or in our communities.

In closing, please go to a post that is hosting the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota. You will be glad you did; he is an amazing speaker. These visits are open to the public.

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



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Attention: Minnesota Veterans!

Are You Overpaying for Your Medicare Benefits?

Many veterans go to a doctor for their annual check-up. MY CREDIT UNION and TruLync Medicare Advisors have teamed up to offer MN Veterans a **FREE** annual Medicare/VA Benefits check-up as well. As these plans change over time, many veterans end up overpaying for Medicare coverages already provided by their VA benefits. The goal is to put money back in the pockets of Minnesota veterans! MY CREDIT UNION has a history of supporting MN veterans and therefore we encourage all older veterans to attend the FREE seminar!

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Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

Minnesota DAV is in immediate need of additional volunteer drivers. This **FREE** service provides Veterans with transportation to and from their VA medical appointments and has transported over 15,000 Veterans this year

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St. Cloud Area
(Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec & Wright Counties)



You do not need to be a Veteran or DAV member to volunteer. Drivers must be fully vaccinated.

**DAV
OF MINNESOTA**



Lawmakers with the House State & Local Government Finance & Policy Committee hear testimony March 21 in Room 10 of the State Office Building regarding the sports betting bill HF2000. Many audience members are involved in gambling, whether charitable, tribal or horse racetracks.

ACM, MIGA, Legion stand behind HF2000, SF1949 sports betting bills

Continued from Page 1

He fielded several questions related to horse racing in Minnesota. The committee approved his charitable gambling amendment on an 8-4 vote. The American Legion avoids partisanship, but it is worth noting the vote was not down party lines.

Some committee members sought another amendment friendly to horse tracks, but it failed. The bill gives licenses to the tribal casinos for the operation of sports betting, but it does not provide the means for the state's two horse racing tracks to conduct sports betting.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo told the committee the Legion supports HF2000. She described how 193 posts and units have gambling licenses and tax cuts will help them in their mission, with things like honor guards, youth sports, suicide prevention, providing stop-gap funding for veterans in need, food shelves, fairs, fireworks, international sister-city programs, fire departments, schools, parks and more.

"Never before have we seen this level of tax cuts," Janigo said.

The provisions for making repairs or replacements to posts is necessary to prevent more veteran posts from closing in Minnesota, she said.

Gambling managers will want to know what the new proposed tax rates are. Taxes are paid monthly, and the rate is based on cumulative net receipts. As the months go by, the taxes are higher. Many urban organizations with busy bars zoom past the first three levels in the first

or second month.

The present thresholds are:
\$87,500 and under: 8 percent
\$87,501 to \$122,500: \$7,000 plus 17 percent
\$122,501-\$157,500: \$12,950 plus 25 percent
\$157,501: \$21,700 plus 33.5 percent

For the year between July 2025 and June 2026, the sports gambling bill lowers the percentages to 5.5, 15, 23 and 32.5 respectively.

For the year between July 2026 and June 2027, the bill lowers them to 4, 13, 20 and 28.5.

Finally, for July 2027 and beyond, the bill lowers them to 3, 10, 18 and 26.

For post improvement, the expenditure is limited to 50 percent of profits from the previous fiscal year, allowing them to carry forward unused allowances (i.e.: savings) for two years to assist in the cost of major items, such as roof repair. They must identify the project to the state. The project must be within the existing building, not for a new building or expansion. It does not matter which part of the building is bar, restaurant, banquet, gambling, restrooms, offices or exterior.

Andy Platto is the executive director of the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, which represents nine tribes. He spoke in support of the bill, which allows the tribes to run sports betting in Minnesota.

He thanked the veterans organizations and Allied Charities of Minnesota for their good-faith dialogue.

Speaking for the bill was Patrick Gibbs of the Coalition for

Fantasy Sports.

"We have more fantasy sports players per capita than any other state in the country," he said.

Stephenson said sports betting in Minnesota is a big issue that needs state supervision.

"Just because sports betting is illegal in Minnesota, it doesn't mean it doesn't happen in Minnesota," he told the committee.

The state rep told how it is easy to use an offshore website to bet on sports. The downside is there is no consumer protection, no taxes, nothing.

"The right approach is to regulate it, not stick our head in the sand," Stephenson said.

The committee moved to send the bill as amended to the Tax Committee.

In an email message to gambling managers statewide, Allied Charities of Minnesota wrote, "With this amendment, the updated version of the bill will include an additional \$40 million in tax relief for charitable gambling. Coupled with the existing \$15 million in tax relief charities received last year, the new amount will be \$55 million. Once fully implemented, it is projected that for the first time in recent years, charitable gambling organizations could earn and receive more funds to support their missions than they will pay to the state in taxes. The reduction in combined receipts tax rates will increase your profit on paper pulltabs, tipboards, electronic pulltabs and electronic bingo."

Nothing is written in stone, to be sure, and there are several weeks left in the session. The Minnesota Legislature adjourns May 20.



Legislative Committee Chairwoman Kristy Janigo, Department Service Officer Ray Kane and Legislative Committee member Alexandra Fleming wait for the hearing to begin March 21. Janigo sends out legislative updates every Sunday via email, tracking the various veterans' issues the Legion is working on this session.

Ever wonder how Legion youth shooting works?

Continued from Page 1

According to the American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, there are five teams in Minnesota registered for the Legion's national tournament this year. Anoka Post 102 has two teams. The others are Redwood Falls Post 38, Pipestone Post 6 and Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435.

Post 102's Junior Shooting Sports crew is called the Minnesota Centershots. Post 435's team goes by X-Men. Post 6 is Pipestone County 4-H. Post 38 is registered as "38 4-H."

There are American Legion teams not participating in the national tournament. Forest City Post 225 is called "Gopher" because it is tied in with the local Gopher Rifle & Revolver Club. Houston Post 423 has the Houston Hurricanes. St. Thomas Academy has a youth-shooting team that isn't Legion-connected.

They all compete under rules set by the CMP — a national shooting organization with a focus on safe youth shooting called Civilian Marksmanship Program.

The program traces its roots to an age when the federal government encouraged rifle marksmanship among youth as part of national defense. It was originally called the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, or NBPRP, signed into existence by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. By 1907, national matches were held at Camp Perry, Ohio, though funding shortfalls sometimes led to cancellations.

In 1918, Franklin D. Roosevelt, during his time as assistant secretary of the Navy, was chairman of the NBPRP. By the Cold War, the program fell under the Department of the Army. In the 1960s, Army leaders concluded recruits could be taught adequately without civilian programs, and with some in Congress willing to defund gun-related programs, NBPRP struggled. In 1996, Congress spun it off as a federally chartered nonprofit called CMP.

The legislation stated, "In carrying out the Civilian Marksmanship Program, the corporation shall give priority to activities that benefit firearms safety, training and competition for youth and that reach as many youth participants as possible."

Visit its website "thecmp.org," and you find American Legion registration fairly swiftly under "youth."

Typically, photos of teams at competitions show them shooting indoors because they are firing air rifles that shoot the standard .177 pellet at tiny targets on the other side of the room. A common brand name is the Crossman Challenger. That said, teams at times compete outdoors in smallbore competitions, too.

Bill Buesseler is the head coach for the Centershots, and at the 2024 CMP 3PAR State Championship at Anoka Post 102 on March 16, he served as match director. There were 40 kids competing.

Buesseler said there are two classes in youth shooting: sporter and precision.

The sporter class competes with just the rifle, normal clothing and no accessories. The precision class shooters wear



Olive Meinen, who competes in the precision class for Anoka Post 102's Minnesota Centershots, sports cheek shamrocks and green eyeshadow at the 2024 CMP 3PAR State Championship at Anoka Post 102 on March 16. After all, it was St. Patrick's Day weekend. She placed second with a score of 567.



Ten competitors lie in the prone position in the basement of Anoka Post 102 on March 16 and aim at targets across the room. Match officials and parents use binoculars to see how the kids are shooting. The three-position matches also call for kneeling and standing positions.

a canvas and leather uniform and special accessories such as butt plates, weights and cheek pieces.

Precision class is what TV viewers see when they watch the Olympics.

A three-position air rifle (aka 3PAR) match is 60 shots, 20 from each position, with each shot right in the center worth 10 points, Buesseler said. The three positions are kneeling, prone and standing.

"Once a kid is achieving above a 450 score, we move them up to precision class," he said.

He said the Minnesota Centershots receive great support from Anoka Post 102, through its charitable gambling program, along with fundraisers and grants from Midway USA Foundation. Selling gear is one way to raise funds. A tan Minnesota Centershots/Anoka Post 102 T-shirt is \$12. A knife-and-flashlight kit is \$25.

"We really try to support new families and new shooters when they come into the club," Buesseler said.

Match fees are low, he said. The one in Anoka on March 16 was \$25. The prior tournament the Centershots were in was \$6. Some are free.

St. Thomas Academy won the sporter class team competition on March 16, followed by X-Men in second place. The champion of the sporter individuals was William Sellner of St. Thomas Academy, with a 517 score.

Jaros was the champ of the precision class among individuals. Her score was 591. The Centershots dominated the precision class team competition that day, with the Gophers in second place.

Jaros made it to the American Legion 3PAR National Championship in Colorado last year. Allison Buesseler went two years ago for the Centershots (and she hails from Forest Lake), and she is a junior at the University of Kentucky on the varsity shooting team.

Gavin Barnick of the Centershots made it three years ago, and now he competes for the University of West Virginia. In his first two years of eligibility, he competed for Alaska-Fairbanks and he guided them to an NCAA National Championship.

Just last month, the TCU Horned Frogs won the 2024 NCAA title, with West Virginia placing second, Alaska-Fairbanks third and Kentucky fourth. Garnick was the individual champ for air rifle.

Buesseler said posts can launch teams of their own by checking to see if any air rifle teams exist in their area, then asking if they want to participate in American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, too. Register teams at legion.org/shooting. Find more information at thecmp.org/youth/american-legion/.

"With the Summer Olympics coming up, it's cool to get the kids jazzed up for it right now," he said.



From left are Minnesota Oratorical Contest Chairwoman Jamie Woods and finalists Caleb Robrahn (Le Center Post 108), Abigail Erpelding (Kasson Post 333), Elijah Cox (Walker Post 134) and Madison Price (Eden Valley Post 381).



State champion Elijah Cox stands with his parents, Chris and Courtney Cox.

6th District contestant wins Oratorical Contest

Continued from Page 1

contest requires participants to give timed orations on aspects of the U.S. Constitution and its amendments.

Second place went to Abigail Erpelding of the 1st District. She was sponsored by Kasson Post 333. The competition was tied at the end of the finals, and a tiebreaker was employed to determine first and second place.

Caleb Robrahn of the 3rd District came in third. He was sponsored by Le Center Post 108.

Madison Price of the 7th District placed fourth and was sponsored by Eden Valley Post 381.

Coming in at fifth place was Katelin Flack of the 2nd District. She was sponsored by Mankato Post 11.

"Congratulations to all the contestants. It was a fierce competition to judge," Woods said. "Thanks to all who assisted by volunteering your Saturday to help with this event."

Minnesota Boys State is June 9-15; register now

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



The 75th gathering of Minnesota American Legion Boys State will take place at St. John's University in Collegeville June 9 through 15. There is still time for young men to register to take part in this event. Doing so at www.mnboysstate.org, they can find valuable information about the week ahead of them.

College scholarships can be earned as a result of participation in the program. Observing and becoming local, county and state governments, provide insight into the goings-on of Minnesota's city councils, township boards, county boards and the legislative, executive and judicial branches in our state. Lobbying and campaigning for candidates are also explored. Discussion and compromise lead to life-long relationships with fellow Boys Staters.

Current government office

holders at various levels serve as guest speakers.

The boys are able to quiz them before they leave campus. Learning and practicing flag etiquette is another part of the full week of activities. During recreation time the guys can take part in kickball, basketball or volleyball, as well as having the opportunity to sing in the choir and write for this year's newspaper.

Thank you for encouraging those in your area to join us for a week in June! I'm grateful for all you do for veterans, as well as the development of our future office-holders.

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



The Minnesota Centershots gather for a team photo March 16 at Anoka Post 102. Back row from left are Elsa Eugster (P), Parker Barth (P), Ireland Christianson, Avery Lee, Olivia Lee, Lucas Russell and Megan Jaros (P). Front row from left are Sarah Karger, Anders Meinen, Gabriel Kocak and Olive Meinen (P). The four marked with a P compete in precision class. The rest compete in sporter class.



From left are American Legion National Legislative Committee Chairwoman Patricia Harris of North Carolina, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and American Legion National Commander Daniel Seehafer of Wisconsin. Seehafer presented Klobuchar with the award on Feb. 26 during the Washington Conference, held at the Washington Hilton.

Sen. Klobuchar receives Distinguished Service Award from Am. Legion

WASHINGTON — The American Legion awarded U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minneapolis the 2024 Distinguished Public Service Award from The American Legion for her leadership on a range of veterans' issues.

She was honored for her work ensuring Department of Veterans Affairs benefits include comprehensive care for veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances; supporting the Afghan allies who stood with our troops; and pushing to end the blockade of military promotions in the Senate. The award was presented to Klobuchar by National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer during the organization's Washington Conference.

"It's an honor to receive the Distinguished Public Service Award from an organization as esteemed as the American

Legion," Klobuchar said. "I believe that public service and patriotism are about putting our differences aside to stand with those who have stood up for our nation. From breaking through unnecessary blockades of military promotions to pushing for more legal certainty for the Afghan allies who supported our troops, I am proud to work in partnership with the American Legion to advance our national security priorities."

Seehafer added, "We are grateful for Sen. Klobuchar's leadership on key legislative priorities of The American Legion and the veteran service organization community. Her consistent efforts to bring colleagues on both sides of the aisle together to fight for veterans and for our nation's security interests are highly appreciated by our organization."



Sons of The American Legion National Vice Commander Robert Bristo and 3rd District Chaplain Kelley Adelsman take a selfie in front of the U.S. Capitol during the Washington Conference in late February.



Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo sits in the U.S. Rep. Brad Finstad's chair during the Washington Conference. Standing, from left, are Department Service Officer Ray Kane, Past Department President Mary Kuperus, Auxiliary National Poppy Chairman Norma Tramm and a Finstad aide.

Minn. American Legion is helping fellow veterans

Continued from Page 1

couples like married couples," Haworth said.

He told the story of how an unmarried couple using a VA loan had to come up with an additional \$47,000 because of marital status.

The resolution notes: "A substantial number of veterans are in committed relationships or cohabitate with individuals who, while not legally recognized as spouses, play a critical role in maintaining the household's economic well-being."

Resolution 2024-6, written by Kane, calls on The American Legion to urge Congress to amend the Johnny Isakson and David P. Moe Veterans Health Care & Benefits Improvement Act of 2020. A change to that law could preserve burial benefits for veterans opting for a plaque or urn. Presently, they lose the options of a headstone or marker.

Kane gave a report on the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund. He said the fund has provided \$350,000 in assistance during its existence, with about \$2,348 per case on average. He thanked Assistant DSO Janet Lorenzo for her strength.

"Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund is more than just a grant. It's a promise and a commitment to engage and embrace our veterans and a part of our community, a part of what I know now as family," Kane said.

He said it is critical that posts have connections to their county veteran service officers.

In the effort to prevent veteran suicides, he and Lorenzo hope to have the VA S.A.V.E. training in all 10 districts of the Minnesota American Legion in 2024.

Candidates for office

Candidates for Department of Minnesota office stood and introduced themselves:

- Commander: Carl Moon of Zimmerman Post 560.
- Vice commander for 2nd & 7th districts: Randy Olson of Winnebago Post 82.
- Vice commander for 2nd & 7th districts: Pam Krill of Fairmont Post 36.
- Vice commander for 6th & 9th districts: Veronica Fernlund of Waite Park Post 428.
- Historian: Christopher Anderson of Hastings Post 47.

Two others have announced that they are running:

- Historian: Karen O'Bar of Bertha Post 366.
- Sergeant-at-Arms: Betty Jass of Sleepy Eye Post 7.

A new post in Moose Lake

National Vice Commander Raymond Vail of Kansas attended the DEC meeting. He saved his comments for the Appreciation Rally later the same day.

The DEC accepted the charter turn-in for St. Bonifacius Post 396.

Right after, Hassing announced National HQ has issued a charter for Post 1918 in Moose Lake. The DEC will need to approve the permanent charter application when it is received.

"It's very exciting to have a new post," Past National Commander Dan Ludwig said.

The post number is a reference to the



Sixth District Commander Anthony Koop expresses his pleasure for his district finishing in first place for membership at the Appreciation Rally.

historic Fires of 1918. Moose Lake has Post 379, but the new one is a prison post.

Legion Riders & Convention

American Legion Riders Director Jody Hassing said the Minnesota ALR is working on a constitution and a set of bylaws to replace a standard operating procedure set up in 2015. She has worked with Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby on it.

The DEC meeting normally slated for the evening of Wednesday, July 10, right before the Department of Minnesota Convention in Willmar, could be moved to the morning of Thursday, July 11, to save time and money, said Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa in his report. No decision has been made.

He noted the change would not preclude department standing committees from meeting Wednesday, if they desire. The convention committees, he said, could meet at their usual times.

Maxa said the department has received calls on whether the Gopher Legion Honor Guard patch it sells will change designs, in lieu of the fact that the Minnesota state seal and flag are changing.

"I've been telling them no. One of the biggest reasons is we have 2 1/2 cases of these patches," he said.

Maxa scouted the National Convention site in New Orleans. He said the hotel, SpringHill Marriott, is smaller than the one Minnesota was assigned for Charlotte, but it is only two blocks from the convention center. However, the convention center is so large that, once inside, people will walk another four blocks to reach the convention hall.

He said the 934th Airlift Wing at Fort Snelling thanked The American Legion for its support for the Family Day event last August.

Finance Committee Chairman Dennis DeLong said department revenue exceeded expenditures for fiscal year \$346,614 as of Feb. 29. The prior year, at the end of February, the same benchmark was at \$550,361, and the previous year it was at \$257,008.

National

NECman Bill Barbknecht reported on the Washington Conference, which took place in late February. He praised Legislative Committee Chairwoman Kristy Janigo for "an outstanding job." He said U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar was

very appreciative of an award she received from The American Legion.

He urged members to see National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer on the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota and went over the schedule, including the final stop — Veterans Day on the Hill at the St. Paul Armory.

"This is the first time ever the national commander of The American Legion is going to be the speaker over at the armory," Barbknecht said.

He spoke about The American Legion's new partnership with the Wellcare insurance company, and he said it could affect Legionnaire Insurance Trust.

Legislative

Janigo then gave her report. She urged members to visit legion.org/legislation and visit the Grassroots Action Center to send messages to lawmakers on veterans' issues.

"All you have to do is press a couple of buttons," she said. "It will generate an email for you, and it knows already who your representative is based on your address."

She said the Minnesota Legionnaires who visited D.C. spoke on supporting Afghan allies, supporting Gold Star spouses, support the expansion of Arlington Cemetery, paying the Coast Guard during government shutdowns, standing with veteran caregivers and stopping claim sharks.

Janigo noted Klobuchar was in an upbeat mood when receiving the award.

"She tends to be a very task-oriented lawmaker," Janigo said. "She was very happy, kind of jovial, joking with us, and just really appreciating being in the presence of Minnesota Legionnaires prior to getting nationally recognized."

At the state level, Janigo has been in the negotiations on charitable gambling, with hopes of delivering meaningful tax relief. She also mentioned a legislative networking event on Feb. 6 at Mancini's was well-attended.

"We had lawmakers from both sides of the aisle come visit us," she said.

Legionville

Legionville President Carl Moon said he has a wish list of items the camp needs.

"We still need a couple of hot water heaters installed before camp gets on this year. Faucets and drains, we need to put some new ones in to the tune of about \$2,000. We're going to put up a swing gate instead of a rolling gate that we have, which freezes up every year, approximately \$600 for that. A bagger system is needed for the lawnmower, \$2,700."

He noted that Legionville will have six sessions this summer. Normally, it's been seven. Sessions begin June 16 and end Aug. 2.

"We would like to see a lot more kids this year," Moon said.

Registration is available at mnlegion.org/legionville and at legionville.org.

He added that Work & Play Weekend is May 16-19. Volunteers from across the Legion Family are sought to work and clean at the camp.

Moon discovered in Washington that one of Sen. Tina Smith's aides had attended Legionville in 2008.

"She said it was the most fun she had at any camp," Alternate NECman Peggy Moon added.



American Legion Riders Director Jody Hassing addresses the Department Executive Committee on March 2. Beside her is her husband, Department Commander Paul Hassing. They live in Montgomery and are members of Bloomington Post and Unit 550.

Hello American Legion Family. Hopefully spring has finally sprung.

As I've gone through this year as detachment commander, I've become aware of something.

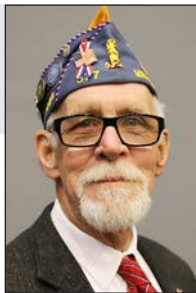
I've noticed that there's been a lack of mentoring as people come up through the offices and chairmanships. Leadership and mentorship go hand in hand with each other.

We need to be aware of the new members coming into our organization and encourage them to be involved in the organization. My thought about new members is, if you are going to be attending a meeting and you see someone who you don't know, approach them and introduce yourself and welcome them to whatever meeting that will be taking place.

I was taught this lesson by the man who became one of my mentors and best friends. RIP, Bud!

Detachment Cmdr.

John Weiss



As an all-volunteer organization, we can't demand anything from our people, but we can encourage and support these new people to help them become active and vibrant members of the organization. We in leadership also need to be aware that learning about the organization and the programs is an ongoing process.

I, for one, am still learning about the programs, and I strive to keep learning as I go along in service to our veterans and their families. Knowledge is the key to great leadership. I'm pretty sure that I have not met anyone in the Legion Family that knows everything about the programs and workings of our great organizations.

I assure you that I do not have even half of the knowledge that

I should probably possess. A very wise woman (my mother) once told me that if you don't learn something new every day you've wasted the day.

So, in closing, I would like to ask of you my family to please keep learning.

Looking forward to seeing you as I travel our wonderful state. Be well and be safe in your travels.

John Weiss of St Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577 is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion. His theme is "Honoring the Past, While Moving Forward."

Detachment to match squadron donations to Minn. Boys State 75th Anniversary Banquet

At the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Spring meeting held in mid-March at Forest Lake Legion Post 225, the Detachment Executive Committee voted to match any squadron donation, dollar for dollar, that is earmarked for the Minnesota Boys State 75th Anniversary Banquet.

Minnesota SAL has long been a supporter of Minnesota Boys State. Many counselors are members of the SAL and some are dual members.

Detachment Commander John Weiss commented: "Our squadrons see the value of having each post send boys to Minnesota Boys State. Many squadrons provide money each year so their Legion post can send an extra boy. By matching squadrons' money donated to the 75th Anniversary Banquet, those in attendance, counselors, staff and alumni can remember an event that keeps Minnesota Boys State growing."

Checks must be made out to: "Minnesota American Legion Foundation" with "Fund 77 Banquet" in the memo. It must indicate the banquet and must be received by June 1. Send checks to Minnesota American Legion Foundation, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A., St. Paul, MN 55155.

Fund 77 is the fund for Minnesota Boys State. Anoka Squadron 102 member David Way, the dean of Minnesota Boys State, has scheduled the banquet for June 8 at Anoka Post 102.



Joseph Navarette of New Mexico Squadron 72 in Albuquerque addressed the SAL Detachment of Minnesota Spring Conference in March in Forest Lake.



Above are, from left, Past SAL National Commander Douglas Bible, who is currently detachment adjutant, and SAL National Vice Commander Robert Bristo.



Detachment of Minnesota Commander John Weiss stands with Joseph Navarette, leading candidate for SAL national commander.



From left are SAL National Vice Commander Robert Bristo, candidate Joseph Navarette and Past SAL National Commander Joseph Mayne.

Photos by Lou Michaels

From left are SAL National Vice Commander Robert Bristo, candidate Joseph Navarette and Past SAL National Commander Joseph Mayne.

American Legion National Commander's Tour

Please call to reserve your spot.

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Sunday, April 14 Moorhead Post 21	dinner*	6 p.m.	701-261-6973 (Tim Haugen)
Monday, April 15 Fergus Falls Post 30 Willmar Post 167	lunch dinner*	noon 6 p.m.	218-736-2708 (Post) 320-235-8136 (Post)
Tuesday, April 16 Howard Lake Post 145 Le Center Post 108 Golden Valley Post 523	breakfast lunch dinner*	8:15 a.m. noon 6 p.m.	320-543-2904 (Jean Schmidt) 507-357-4787 (Post) 480-695-6574 (Erika Fossen)

Wednesday, April 17
Veterans Day on the Hill doors open 10 a.m. Open to all veterans and their
keynote speaker lunch 11:30 a.m. supporters, at St. Paul Armory
* includes 5 p.m. social hour

Read the story to find out about non-public-oriented stops on the tour.



The great food on the National Commander's Tour is another reason to go.

National Commander's Tour of Minn. concludes at Veterans Day on the Hill

ST. PAUL—The national commander of The American Legion is coming to Veterans Day on the Hill April 17.

Seehafer is slated to speak at the annual legislative gathering. The event launches from the St. Paul Armory and finishes at the Minnesota State Capitol. It brings together about 600 to 700 veterans from several veterans organizations.

Seehafer's home post is Post 157 in Horicon, Wis. He is a past American Legion national chaplain and a past Department of Wisconsin commander.

The first stop is Sunday, April 14, with dinner and a program at Moorhead Post 21.

On Monday, April 15, the tour visits the Fergus Falls Veterans Home, followed by a luncheon and a program at Fergus Falls Post 30. That evening, dinner and program will take place at Willmar Post 167.

Breakfast and a program on Tuesday, April 16, are at Howard Lake Post 145. Le Center Post 108 will host a lunch and a program. That evening, Golden Valley Post 523 hosts dinner and a program.

Veterans Day on the Hill is Wednesday, April 17. The national commander will spend time that morning with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs staff at the Veterans Service Building, before heading over to the St. Paul Armory, where he is the keynote speaker after lunch.

Seehafer and Rowan head back to Wisconsin late that afternoon.

Presentations of checks to the National Commander's Project can be made at the end of each stop's program. His project is the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. Posts are encouraged to bring donations.

Members are able to get a photo with Seehafer after the program at each stop.

Seehafer is a native of Merrill, Wis. He received a bachelor's degree in pastoral ministry from Concordia University in Mequon, Wis., and a master of divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

He was commissioned as a naval officer in March 1995. He spent time with sailors in San Diego; Newport, R.I.; Everett, Wash.; aboard the destroyer USS Paul F. Foster; and with Marines



Daniel J. Seehafer

at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

In August 1997, he came to Horicon, Wis., as the assistant pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church & School. In October 2000, he accept his current role of administrative pastor at St. Stephen.

He has been a Legion member for 17 years. After joining Horicon Post 157 as a PUFL, he was elected post adjutant. Eventually, he became post, county and district commander. He was the state chaplain of Wisconsin in 2006, the national chaplain in 2010-11

and a 2012 graduate of American Legion College.

He is a member of the Sons of The American Legion, too.

Seehafer is married to his wife, Denise. They have two children, Jacob, 8, and Emma, 4. They reside in Beaver Dam, Wis.

Veterans Day on the Hill

Doors open at 10 a.m. for coffee at the St. Paul Armory for Veterans Day on the Hill 2024. The free lunch is at 11:30 a.m. Be sure to thank the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota for the meal and for renting the armory.

Seehafer will speak after the meal. The veterans march is at 1 p.m. At 1:15 p.m., the Minnesota Commander's Task Force and the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers present Rally in the Rotunda. It ends at 2 p.m.

Organizers are asking participants to contact their legislators in advance and ask them either to visit the armory or make time for an office appointment to discuss veterans issues.

The DAV of Minnesota will reimburse half the costs of bus rental so veterans from all across Minnesota can come to St. Paul.

FREE TRAINING!

ON ANY AMERICAN LEGION SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP, OFFICER ROLES, CONDUCTING MEETINGS, COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES, YOU NAME IT!

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CONTACT US AT:
TRAININGCOMM@MNLEGION.ORG.



What's Happening?



Commander: Let's get the biggest Legion turnout ever for Twins game

MINNEAPOLIS — Attend American Legion Day at Target Field. The Minnesota Twins take on the Texas Rangers at 7:10 p.m. May 24. This is the Friday of Memorial Day weekend.

"We welcome anyone who is part of the American Legion Family: veterans, relatives, supporters, Legion baseball and softball players, coaches and their families, and anyone who participates in any American Legion program, such as the Riders, Oratorical Contest, Boys and Girls State, Legionville, you name it. We want to have the largest American Legion presence ever at this game," said Department Commander Paul Hassing.

Purchase your discounted tickets here: <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/American6>

Or find the link at mnlegion.org, then hover on "Events" and click on "Twin Game."

The purchase deadline is May 3. Commander Paul Hassing will toss out the first pitch, and Membership Director Pam Krill will raise the U.S. flag. George Hunt of Brooklyn Center Post 630 is slated to sing during the 7th inning stretch.

Districts plan their conventions

ST. PAUL — It's one thing to be involved at the post. How about trying to get involved in your area? The best place to start is a district convention.

They begin at 9 a.m. (except for the 3rd District, which begins at 8 a.m.), though they usually have a few committee meetings the evening beforehand. Most attendees show up in the mornings.

Members of the Legion Family can register when they show up without a problem. To register in advance, you may have to visit either the district website or Facebook pages to find registration information.

Here are the dates and places:

- 1st District: May 18, Austin Post 91
- 2nd District: June 8, Fairmont Post 36
- 3rd District: May 18, New Prague Post 45
- 4th District: June 15, Rosetown Post 542
- 5th District: June 8, Holiday Inn Bloomington West, 5120 American Blvd.
- 6th District: June 1, Brainerd Post 255
- 7th District: May 18, Morris Post 29
- 8th District: May 4, Aurora Post 241
- 9th District: June 8, Moorhead Post 21
- 10th District: June 1, Fridley Post 303

Blue Earth to host an adult prom

BLUE EARTH — Blue Earth Post

89 is hosting a fundraiser called "A Night Under the Stars."

This "adult prom" is at 7-11 p.m. Saturday, April 13, at the post, 115 W. Sixth St. in Blue Earth.

The cost is \$25 or \$50 per couple. Proceeds benefit local veterans.

Contact the post at 507-526-2443.

PTSD book signing coming to Post 54

RED WING — Red Wing Post 54 and the Hiawatha Valley Family Beyond the Yellow Ribbon are hosting a book signing and presentation at Post 54 from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, June 21.

The book is "Veterans in Crisis: Treating the Unique Needs of Those Who Served," and the authors are Dr. Steve Lansing and ret. Col. B. Wayne Quist. The book chronicles the history of PTSD from ancient times to the present day as well as what to expect in future combat scenarios.

Post 54 is at 218 W. Fourth St. in Red Wing.

A social hour is planned for 4 p.m., with the presentation at 5 p.m. and signing and discussion at 6 p.m.

There will be free veggies, meat, cheese, chips and salsa.

The book is from Veterans Empowered Inc. which is raising funds to publish books and treat veterans suffering from PTSD. It has a goal of \$500,000.

Luverne Veterans Home to turn 30 years old

LUVERNE — The Luverne Veterans Home is celebrating a birthday.

The state-run nursing home for veterans is hosting an open house on June 7 to mark its 30th anniversary. There will be tours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a lunch between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., with a program at 1 p.m.

The public is invited.

Parking will be available in the back parking lot and across the street at the American Reformed Church. A shuttle service will be available.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs owns and operates the Luverne Veterans Home, as well as seven other veterans homes in the state of Minnesota.

Bagley Post 16 to mark D-Day with presentation

BAGLEY — Historian Arn Kind is set to host a free presentation on D-Day at Bagley Post 16 at 11 a.m. June 8.

This year is the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Normandy, and Kind offers a realistic portrayal of the invasion, from the paratroopers jumping from the sky to the soldiers wading through the heavy surf.

The public is invited. There is no fee. The program is offered free of charge thanks to funding from the Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund.

It's time for the annual Military Ball

SPRING GROVE — The 17th annual Military Ball is scheduled for Saturday, April 20 in the Fest Building in Spring Grove.

This event honors military personnel, past and present, as well as spouses and families. It is open to servicemembers, veterans and their supporters.

The event features a dinner, entertainment, presentations and displays.

Cost for the evening is \$30. Attendance is by RSVP only. Contact Gary Buxengard at 507-498-3461 or janleebuxengard@gmail.com about receiving invitations.

A social hour with photos is at 4:30 p.m. A dinner of pork or chicken is served at 5:45 p.m. Dancing and entertainment is planned for 8 to 10:30 p.m. The band is nine-piece group Cheers Big Band from La Crosse, Wis.

The annual event is planned out by Spring Grove Post 249 and other American Legion posts in the region.

Spring Grove is in southeast Minnesota near Caledonia. In the past, attendees came from across the tri-state area.

Past commander of Marine Corps Forces Command to speak in Medina

MEDINA — Veterans are welcome at the Medina Entertainment Center on Monday, May 20, for no charge or obligation to hear a guest speaker and to get information on Medicare benefits.

The speaker is ret. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John E. Wissler, who will present "On Behalf of a Grateful Nation ..."

Wissler is a past commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command. He retired in 2017 with 39 years of service.

Minnesota veterans Mark and Allison White will give a free reviews on VA and Medicare benefits plans.

There is a morning session from 9 to 11 a.m., and an afternoon session from 1 to 3 p.m. Veterans only need to attend one of the sessions, not both.

The event is sponsored by My Credit Union, TruLync, UCare and Medica. A light snack is included.

To register, visit mymncu.org. Users can toggle the arrows to the veterans seminar. An offline option is to call 612-798-7100.

See the advertisement on Page 8.

Volunteers sought for Fargo AirSho

FARGO — The Fargo AirSho will feature the U.S. Navy Blue Angels aerial demonstration team.

The fun is planned for July 27 and 28 at Hector International Airport.

The American Legion in the Fargo-Moorhead area is helping out with rounding up volunteers.

Volunteers are sought to do concessions. They will receive free parking, free admission and free food, a saving of over \$50. Volunteers must be 13 or older.

To volunteer, contact Gary H. Olson via email at garyholson@702com.net or via cellphone at 218-790-5130. Families and groups can be placed in the same work tent.

Volunteers will work the full day, with the report time between 7:30 and 8 a.m. on the south side of the Fargo Air Museum. They wrap up around 3:30 p.m. after the Blue Angels are done.

Olson suggests wearing sunglasses and bringing a lawn chair. Ear protection will be provided. It is best, he said, not to wear tanktops or flip-flops. Water and drinks are provided.

Breakfast to raise funds for new veterans memorial

ATWATER — Atwater Post 375 will hold a fundraising breakfast on Sunday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Atwater Community Center.

Proceeds from the free-will donation

will be used to construct the new Atwater Veterans Memorial Park.

Are you ready for some classic cars?

BUFFALO — Buffalo Post 270 is known for hosting classic car shows throughout the summer.

The 2024 Veteran Cruisin' Lineup is slated for 4:30-7:30 Wednesdays, June 19 and Aug. 14, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays May 18, July 13 and Sept. 21.

Visit buffalolegion.org to learn about Post 270's events and menu.

Reunion of Vietnam veterans planned for Sept.

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Any service-member stationed at Cam Rahn Bay Air Base, in Vietnam, please take note. There is a reunion planned for Sept. 19-22, 2024, in the St. Louis, Mo., area. Contact dicancook@gmail.com or call 920-609-5672 (cell) or go to the Cam Rahn Bay 24 Reunion website for registration and information.

According to co-coordinator Jimmy M. White of Wadena, the primary person coordinating this reunion is an Air Force brat whose father was stationed at Cam Rahn Bay Air Base September 1969 to September 1970. This is her fifth reunion.

Veterans welcome to open house

ST. PAUL — Veterans and their families are invited to attend an open house at Saint Paul College 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 16.

There is free campus parking and refreshments.

The Yellow Ribbon College will introduce veterans and their families to instructors and explain options for their futures to earn family-sustaining wages. There will be support resources available.

For questions, call the admissions office at 651-846-1555 or email admissions@saintpaul.edu.

The website is saintpaul.edu/OpenHouse.

Eagle Group helps veterans find jobs

BLOOMINGTON — The Eagle Group of Minnesota Veterans meets at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of every month at The Toro Co. headquarters, 8111 Lyndale Ave. S.

The Eagle Group comprises veterans who are helping other veterans find employment and veteran-friendly employers. Anyone is welcome, as long as they sign up in advance at eaglegroupmn.org. There is a free meal, too.



Bill Gordon presents a \$2,500 check from St. Michael Post 567 to Commander Paul Hassing's Project at the Appreciation Rally.

Eagle Group also hosts a networking mixer at 5 p.m. the second Tuesday of any month at VFW Post 5555 in Richfield. Anyone can just drop by and chat and get casual assistance with job hunting.

Veterans home is hosting career fair

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis Veterans Home will host a career fair on Thursday, April 25.

Seeking work? New career? This is an opportunity to meet leaders and experience a scenic workplace at 5101 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis. Currently available jobs are nursing assistants, nurses, food-service workers, housekeepers and repair workers.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, which runs the Minneapolis Veterans Home, offers sign-on bonuses and career advancements.

Questions? Call 612-548-5989.

State planning Vietnam War commemoration

BLOOMINGTON — Welcome home, Vietnam veterans.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is planning a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, in conjunction with numerous stakeholders.

The event is slated for 11 a.m. Friday, June 14, at the Mall of America.

The MDVA plans to recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by allies of the United States during the war. There will be resource tables for Vietnam veterans seeking information on benefits and services.

The Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum will provide historical displays.

There is a free brunch planned for after the event.

Save the date for more information about this event in the mid-May issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

Pine City Riders make the news

PINE CITY — The Pine City American Legion Riders made the Pine City News in mid-March for a special project they are leading.

The motorcycle riders have a project called the Birchwood Veterans Memorial.

The project is installing pavers to help fund flagpoles with the flags of all six branches of service, according to the news article. They hope to raise \$20,000.

Visit their Facebook page by searching "Pine City American Legion Riders" to learn more about the project and how to donate.

APPRECIATION TIME



Department Commander Paul Hassing, left, and National Vice Commander Raymond Vail, right, stand beside a member from Hayfield Post 330, which received an Outstanding Post Award on March 2 at the Appreciation Rally.



Tenth District Commander Matt Berens accepts an Outstanding Post Award on behalf of Beroun Post 347, 10th District Vice Commander accepts for Bruno Post 563 and Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 Adjutant James Hultgren accepts on behalf of his post. See more award photos from the Appreciation Rally on Page 17 and a story on Page 2.

Endorsements

O'Bar endorsed for dept. historian



Karen O'Bar

Karen O'Bar has been endorsed by William Larson Post 366 in Bertha for department historian for the year 2024-2025 year. O'Bar served in U.S. Army from 1985 to 2009. She is a 15-year American Legion member at Post 366 and has served as post commander, is currently membership director, adjutant and Boys State chairman.

On the district level, she has served as 6th District commander, vice commander and membership director. She is in her past district commander year. She has been on the finance board, and is also district Children & Youth Committee

chairman. She has been a delegate to several national conventions.

O'Bar is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 366 and the American Legion Riders Chapter 366.

She has two children — Krystal, who is 26 and married, and Ryan, who is 22. She still works part time as a direct care specialist. Karen and Mike VanHeel have been together over nine years and he currently serves as a vice commander in the 6th District. and is serving on the 6th District Finance Committee. He is commander of Post 366.

Anderson endorsed for dept. historian



Christopher Anderson

Christopher Anderson Sr. has been endorsed by Hastings Post 47 for Department of Minnesota historian for 2024-2025.

Anderson is the immediate past commander of Hastings Post 47 and currently gambling manager. He also has served as membership director.

At the 3rd District level, Anderson proudly serves as a vice commander.

At Department of Minnesota level, he has brought his many technical talents to service on the Media & Communications Committee.

Anderson is eligible for membership

in The American Legion through his service in the U.S. Marine Corps, during which time he served in the Persian Gulf War. He is a graduate of the Minnesota American Legion College. He has two sons (both proud Sons of The American Legion members) in Moorhead, and his wife, Christine, is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Along with being a member of The American Legion, Chris is a member of the Marine Corps League and the VFW. He is a senior engineering technician with Dakota County.

American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year repeats

HUTCHINSON — The Eagle Scout of the Year for 2024 is the Eagle Scout of the Year for 2023.

Jackson Kramer, with Troop 623 in Hutchinson, is a senior at Hutchinson High School with a 3.9 grade-point average. He was sponsored by Hutchinson Post 96.

Kramer became an Eagle Scout back in October 2019. He is part of the Order of the Arrow. He is active in his 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 23 palms and 139 merit badges.

Troop 623 Scoutmaster Brett Rasmussen said, in his recommendation letter, "Keep in mind, only 1 percent of all Eagle Scouts earn a single Eagle palm. When he joined Scouting, he set a lofty goal of earning every merit badge. Consider it done. With 139 merit badges, he is on a list of just 581 Scouts who have earned every badge since 1910."

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

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.

His Eagle Scout of the Year application came with letters of recommendation from his

Scoutmaster, his swim/dive coach, his math teacher, his Christ the King Lutheran Church pastor, his science teacher, his English teacher (and assistant swim coach), his technology instructor, and his track and field coach. He was nominated by his grandfather, James Anderson.

Kramer plans to attend the South Dakota State University in Brookings next fall. He plans on studying mechanical engineering.

"Choosing to be a mechanical engineer is a decision driven by my fascination with how things work and my passion for innovation and design," Kramer said.

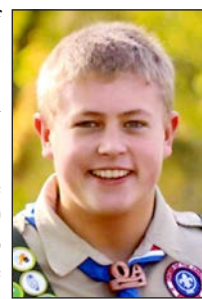
He also hopes to continue in

the sport of swimming by teaching youth swimmers.

Kramer will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the American Legion Department of Minnesota

Scouting Committee, which is under the Americanism Committee. The funds come from the Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 56.

The Scouting Committee met



Jackson Kramer

March 9 at Apple Valley Post 1776 with six applicants.

Also, the Scouting Committee awarded a \$1,000 donation to the Twin Valley Council based in Mankato. The funds come from the Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 81, which is the Boy Scout Council Assistance fund.

Scouting Committee Chairman Chip Manson said he hopes more councils apply for assistance.

To apply for Eagle Scout of the Year or council assistance, visit mnlegion.org/programs, and open the icon of a folder to find "Scouts." The forms are downloadable PDFs.

This World War II veteran served in the Forgotten Theater; now he is 100

By Pamela French

BAGLEY — In 1924, you could buy a new house for \$7,720, a car for \$265 and gas was 11 cents per gallon. It was the first year New York City hosted the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Jimmy Carter was born that year, as was George H.W. Bush.

On Saturday, Feb 25, 2024, Irvin Blix American Legion Post 16 in Bagley was the setting where about 80 family and friends, from all over Minnesota, gathered to celebrate Eugene "Gene" Sandberg's 100th birthday. Sandberg, a Bagley resident, is a World War II veteran.

On Feb. 25, 1924, Eugene Axel Sandberg was born to Martin and Olive (Fredenburg) Sandberg in Bunker, south of Hibbing. He grew up in a section house on the railroad and went to a one-room school with one other family. Sandberg had three siblings.

He graduated from Hibbing High School, where he met his wife, Wilma (Chadwick), when he was 15. The two were married Dec. 15, 1945, less than

one month upon Sandberg returning from war. The couple had seven children; Barbara (Janesville), Christine (d.2000), Dale (d.1997), Kathryn (Bagley) and Raymond (Janesville). Scott and Gwendolyn died at birth.

Sandberg was in high school when Pearl Harbor was bombed. He was drafted into the Army in March 1943, induction date May 27, 1943, and began active service June 4, 1943.

Sandberg said that, when he enlisted, "three busloads of boys were brought down to Fort Snelling for physicals and then trained in New Orleans."

He left for war on Dec. 10, 1943, arriving Jan. 1, 1944 in India at the China-Burma-India Theater — the wars "Forgotten Theater." From there troops took a train to Calcutta, paddleboats upriver, then a 3-mile walk to another camp.

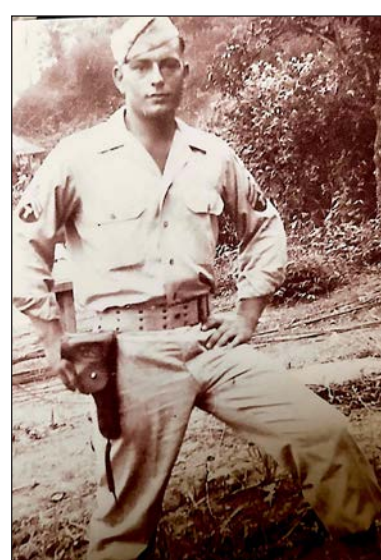
Sandberg left theater for his return to the States Oct. 27, 1945, arriving in New Jersey on Nov. 24, 1945. He said upon arriving back to the United States, it was "a mad house" as people were coming home from everywhere around



Eugene A. Sandberg at his 100th birthday party at Bagley Post 16.

the world. After a trip to Minneapolis, the soldiers took coach buses back to Hibbing.

Sandberg was a locomotive mechanic with Co B, 726th Railroad



Sandberg with the rank "technical fifth grade" in the Army.

Operations. He received the Good Conduct Medal, and had three overseas service bars.

After his honorable discharge on Jan. 27, 1946, he worked on the Duluth,

Missabe and Iron Range Railroad for 21 years. He then moved to Janesville in 1963 and worked at Mankato State University as an engineer. In 1980, he moved to Bemidji to accept a job at Bemidji State University as chief engineer. He retired in 1987. In 2018, he moved to Bagley.

Sandberg was an avid hunter and trapper; he helped form the Trappers Association in Minnesota, was the vice president in 1959 and president 1959-1963. He also was a member of the Free Masons for 50 years.

Gene has 12 grandkids, 30 great-grandkids — plus one coming in August, and nine great-great-grandkids — plus one in July. Sandberg's "grands" are scattered all over Minnesota; Bagley, Janesville, Owatonna, Hallock, Nevis, Akeley, Kasson and Rice.

Over 16 million Americans served in World War II. According to the National WWII Museum, just over 119,000 were still living as of November 2023, with an average of 131 passing each day.

Listening Post



Apple Valley Post 1776 held its annual Welcome Home Vietnam War Veterans Celebration on March 30, with a short program from Commander Bernie Baumann, along with prayer, pledge and other messages. This photo was taken before breakfast and fellowship.



Fairmont Post 36 Finance Officer Jim Miller donates \$1,500 from the post to Youth for Christ Director Chuck Rudolph in support of the YFC Breakfast Club at local public high schools.



A service called the Children's & Veterans Mass was held at Saint Michael's Catholic Church on Jan. 31 in St. Michael, with many members of St. Michael Post 567 participating.



Pequot Lakes Post & Unit 49 served over 165 people at a free-will Easter Dinner.



During the February meeting of North Branch American Legion Post 85, the North Branch American Legion Riders presented Commander Rick Hals with a flag that was flown at the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor. From left are Ed Chromey, Kirk Laszcowski, Riders Chapter Director Camille Wentz, Hals and Austin Dall



American Legion Post 6 Pipestone
The American Legion is conducting the 33rd Junior Three-Position Air Rifle Postal Tournament which provides competitors an opportunity to test their marksmanship ability in competition with other junior competitors throughout the nation. On Jan. 27, Pipestone American Legion Post 6 1st Vice Commander Chris Hoss judged the Pipestone County 4-H Shooting Sports Team & Individual Postal Match, Round 1, in the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program (JSSP). Post 6 affiliated with the county 4-H program for the JSSP Sporter Class Air Rifle competition. The Pipestone team placed first in Minnesota in sporter class. Post 6's Joe Kor placed first individually, with Braedon Kor placing fourth. Todd Deterling from Redwood Falls Post 38 placed second, Donar Heldebrand from Richfield Post 435's X-Men finished third. Front row, from left, are Zach Schulze, Ethan Faber, Joseph Kor and Addison Burke. In back are Coach Dean Schulze, Braedon Kor, Coach Scott Kor, Coach Robert Faber and 1st Vice Commander Chris Hoss.



The Department of Minnesota Scouting Committee met at 10 a.m. March 9 at Apple Valley Post 1776 for the purpose of reviewing and selecting the 2024 Eagle Scout of the Year scholarship winner and conducting other Scouting Committee business. Four District Scout Committee chairmen were in attendance (Districts 2, 4, 7, 9), along with Department HQ representative Jennifer Kelley, Department Americanism Chair Tess Davis and National Americanism Commission Member Al Davis.



Members of Barnum Post 415 are shown with storage lockers and a ceremonial bugle they purchased with donations given to the post.

Listening Post



Fairmont 36 Finance Officer Jim Miller donated \$600 to Let's Go Fishing Representative Dave Alm for senior fishing excursions on Fairmont-area lakes.



St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 Commander Mike Buhl presents a \$3,000 check to Col. Dwight Dorua, commander of the Johnson High School Air Force JROTC Program.



CareerForce Veterans Employment Representative Stephen Kolcinski hosted the Joint Service Career Fair at the Scouting Base Camp on Fort Snelling, welcoming servicemembers, veterans and their families. They had 60 vendors and 91 career seekers attend. Bloomington Post 550 provided the color guard, and the 934th Airlift Wing paid for the venue. Eagle Group of Minnesota helped with setup and takedown.



Steve Fosness of Fairmont Post 36 donated \$1,000 from his post to Fairmont Area High School Post Prom Committee Member Ilana Moeller.



A great group of volunteers from the St. Peter Post 37 Family pull off another Bingo Night. They are, not in order, Joenilla Robertson, Robert Jones, Kenny O'Connell, Mike Quick.



St. Mary's volunteer Margie Ferring served cake to Triple Purple Heart recipient Dave Grahek and his wife, Carol.

3 Purple Heart recipient attends Vets Day events

By Rose Korabek
The Caledonia Argus

HOUSTON — “I got invited by a 12-year-old girl named Jaelyn Foellmi from Brownsville who goes to school at St. Mary’s,” said Dave Grahek, an area resident and a United States Army medic who earned three purple hearts in Vietnam. “It was such a nice letter, and I wanted to meet her.”

So, he wrote her back and attended. “He even took time off of deer hunting to come,” said Grahek’s wife, Carol, emphasizing the priority her husband made in coming to the event.

Grahek said he had also been invited to the Houston Elementary School program on Friday. He’s a member of the Houston Post 423.

Grahek was drafted into the Army on Flag Day, June 14, 1965. He started with basic training at Fort Knox. Then he was sent to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas for advanced individual training to become a combat medic, not thinking he was ever going to be one.

From there, his orders took him to Hawaii for 10 days, where he joined the 25th Division. He became a private first class with A Company, 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division.

“Next, I was over in Vietnam. In January 1966, we went over,” said Grahek. They were stationed at a camp near Saigon.

Purple Hearts

From there, they started doing missions and were involved in a number of fires.

“We got sniped a lot,” said Grahek, who was there for less than a year. “We ate C-rations (now MREs) for meals. We were supposed to get hot meals, but by the time we got back, it wasn’t hot.”

Grahek doesn’t know how, but he survived being wounded on three separate occasions a few months apart. The first one involved shrapnel in his body and a scratch on his eye. He feels lucky that he didn’t lose his eye.

The second injury came when the armored personnel carrier that he was in was blown up.

“I don’t know how I got out of that,” said Grahek. “I heard a great big explosion, and then I was waking up 50 feet from the carrier. The guys behind me in another carrier saw me fly through the air and thought I was dead, so they

gave me the nickname Superman.”

Grahek ended up with a broken nose and cuts and bruises.

“After the first two (injuries), it wasn’t enough to be sent anywhere,” recalled Grahek. “They did an X-ray and said I broke my nose, but they didn’t do anything. I took care of it when I got back.”

After the third injury, he had shrapnel in his hand and neck, but also would have a cast on his wrist for six weeks, which ultimately sent him home.

“Best words I ever heard: you’re going home,” said Grahek, as he visibly sighed.

Coming home

Upon return, he was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and there he was a non-combat medic. He started in the emergency room. Leadership thought they shouldn’t have a Vietnam vet doing emergencies, so he became a shot team member and gave hundreds of shots.

He got out of the service on June 13, 1967.

He then married Carol, the girl back home who had waited for him, on Oct. 19, 1968. They just celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary, so he bought her an emerald bracelet (the gemstone for a 55th).

Life today

Grahek is an avid turkey and deer hunter, which originally brought the couple to the Caledonia area. They owned 80 acres up north, but there were no wild turkeys to hunt.

“So, we came to the wild turkey capital,” he said. They built a home in Yucatan and lived there for 17 years before moving to Caledonia for a year. The couple now resides in Rushford.

While the memories aren’t all happy, Grahek is proud of his service.

“A Purple Heart is something you never want to get,” he said. “But I got three.”

The Purple Heart Honor Roll shows his date of incident as May 23, 1966, with the status of wounded in action.

Currently, the Purple Heart, per regulation, is awarded in the name of the president of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the service branches after April 5, 1917, has been wounded, killed or has died after being wounded by enemy action.



Kids file in for lunch with veterans.

District commanders

1st District Mark Maloney



Well, it is already April. Wow, where did the year go?

I had a busy year learning the job and planning events and helping people find answers. It was said that the district officers cannot do anything to help posts with post issues. Well, I found that statement completely wrong after hearing it 11 years ago.

I have worked my way up and found secret hiding places of the books that stated the opposite. I have shown people the books and helped post officers find the books and had classes to convince them that the things the officers before me and the way that things were handled was outdated. There is no room in today's American Legion for personal agendas.

To be the biggest veterans support organization, we need to work as we did in the military — as one big well-oiled machine after the same objectives, such as being there for veterans, their families and our community, state and nation.

We cannot do that if we are picking and bickering with each other, having post commanders thinking they are kings of the post who answer to no one.

Well, sorry, but that is not the

way it is. The right way is checks and balances. There is not time for such games as who the post belongs to. It was built and operated by generations of members, and we hold ourselves to accountable to members, not them to us. We, as leaders, are the mouthpiece for them, and we do their bidding. We do our best to make happen what they desire.

Remember, we are a team — "legion" literally means a large team — and our goal is to help veterans and their family's community awareness. If you do not know the job of your position, ask. Don't take a position to fill a spot. Learn. Seek out training. You can even bring in training for the entire post by contacting the Training Committee at trainingcomm@mnlegion.org.

Our past members need to mentor the young ones so they can do the job as well as you did it. Don't let pride get in the way. You shine if they end up doing it even better than you.

God bless America, and God bless our troops.

commander representing the Legion and what we stand for to the Minnesota House and Senate on April 17 at Veterans Day on the Hill. We all need to be there to support our national commander at the Capitol. This parallels the "Get It Done" slogan.

I would be remiss if I didn't remind all our post that my project for Legionville continues to be my top priority. As always, thank you for your donations

and support.

Finally, recognizing military families goes beyond mere phrases; it requires a "Can do!" spirit and an authentic support for their sacrifices. Our brave families need to be appreciated for their ultimate challenges. Our gratitude goes a long way and starts with "Holding the Line" and demonstrating resolve and adaptability to uncertainty while emerging stronger.

4th District Teresa Ash



Well, it's been great year. There have been many great events in January for the 4th District.

Marching in the Winter Carnival Parade is always exciting. The 4th and 5th districts have a great tradition on this day of marching in the parade and meeting at Arcade Phalen American Legion Post 577 for a membership rally.

For many years, we had a trophy that was made up of a plastic leg. One very similar to the one in The Christmas Story. We had a great turn out.

There are many exciting things happening in the 4th this year. With our young new leadership, they have many great and

exciting ideas. One of which is a new program looking to be started called Legion Cruisers. It is similar to The American Legion Riders but for classic car enthusiasts.

We will be having our District RCCC (Ramsey County Council Committee) for April at North St Paul American Legion on April 10. Our 4th District Convention has been changed this year and will be held at Rosetown American Legion Post 542 on June 15. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Watch the 4th District Facebook page for all information.

6th District Anthony Koop



Greetings and salutations from the Big 6th!

In just a few short months, we will be getting ready to start the next membership year. We have done well this year, but there is still more to be done.

The Big 6th is currently sitting in 1st place at 96.72 percent, over 5.26 percent higher than last year at this time! We need 309 more members for goal, but I am hoping we can find another 570 after that to reach 10,000.

I know they are out there, so keep checking the expired and Post 1982 lists.

A big congrats to the Department Oratorical Contest winner from Walker Post 134! He will be competing at nationals May 17-19 in Michigan.

Remember, there is still time to get your Boys State applications and fees sent in, but they are due next week. Legionville is still looking for more campers. Remember that anyone can

help pay the costs, including posts, units, squadrons, fire departments, civic organizations and even parents. Our final District Executive Committee meeting was postponed due to weather. It was rescheduled for Sunday, April 7. This was the last scheduled one before the district convention.

We have one post to close. Menahga Post 448. All members have transferred and the post itself has no belongings. It is sad to see this happen, but we were able to get the remaining few members to posts of their choosing.

I am looking forward to the 6th District Convention on June 1 in Brainerd. This is a reminder that if you want your voice heard, your post needs to send delegates!

7th District Jan Ekert



To all of the district executive officers as well as all of the committee chairmen, I want to say thank you for attending the 7th District Mid-Winter Conference, and I hope to see all of you at the 7th District Convention May 18 at Morris Post 29.

I know that we are all terribly busy with the coming of spring and now the reentrance of winter, but hopefully this last hurrah of Mother Nature is done.

To all of the members of the 7th District and beyond, it is your experience, knowledge, and willingness to serve that will make the tasks we face easier. We are a great team.

To all of the members of the 7th District, I look forward to your support, input and even criticism, because that is how we develop solutions and make things happen. Together we can do amazing things.

At the present time the 7th District remains in fourth place in the membership drive. To the post membership directors, keep making those calls to those who have not renewed and talk to those veterans who don't belong. To all of you, keep doing those Buddy Checks, you may not realize that you can make a difference for someone.

Now for exciting news, National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer is coming to Minnesota this month. He will be in several locations, which I am sure Editor Tim Engstrom has listed in this edition of the Legionnaire, but I want you to know he will be in the 7th District. He stops at Willmar Post 167 on April 15 for both a social hour at 5 p.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. You can call Post 167 to reserve space, 320-236-8136.

And now for some of the

more tedious work. Deadlines are coming up for reports that need to be submitted. Your post adjutant should have gotten many in the mail over the past several weeks. The most important one is the Annual Post Data Report, which needs to be in to the department by April 15.

This is the form that will drive your dues for the upcoming membership year; its effective date needs to be July 1, 2024, or sooner for the post dues amount payable for 2025.

Remember the renewals start going out in July. Make sure you are also completing the Consolidated Post Report as that is one of the documents the national commander uses data from when he reports to Congress what The American Legion is doing. Remember to make copies of the reports you send in and send them to the person or place that is noted on the form.

A gentle reminder on my Commander's Project and a big "Thank you!" to the posts that have donated to it. It is veterans helping veterans.

I am to the halfway mark on the low end of my goal of \$5,000 to \$10,000 for the veterans at the Montevideo Veterans Home. Make your checks payable to "7th District Commander's Project" and mail them to me at 31693 733rd Ave., South Haven, MN 55382.

Again, I look forward to seeing many of you at the district convention.

Remember our strength lies in our numbers.

"Veterans Helping Veterans."

2nd District James Olson



Greetings, 2nd District! I missed my last article, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who came to the 2nd District Mid-Winter Conference held at Post 464 in Brewster! I hope that everyone found it informational. Thanks to all the folks in Brewster who put it all together.

We are still doing pretty well as far as membership goes. If your post has members who haven't renewed, please get in touch with them and find out why. Some Legionnaires lose interest if they aren't involved or don't hear from their post other than when they are getting hit up for their annual dues. A

phone call or a visit to their home never hurts.

All of the post commanders and adjutants in the district received a postcard in the mail with information regarding the 2nd District Convention. Registration forms will be sent out soon as well. The convention will be held at Fairmont Post 36 and is hosted by Post, Unit and Squad 36 June 7-8. The Executive Board meeting will be on June 7 at 7 p.m. The convention will open at 9 a.m. on June 8.

Keep on doing great things!

5th District Dick Ward



Spring training is in full swing and most of us are looking forward to our outdoor, warm weather activities. We still have much spring cleaning ahead of us. Stay focused!

Report season is upon us: Blood Drive Reports, Consolidated Post Report (CPR), Committee Reports, Oratorical Contest reports, etc.

All posts must provide their membership dues information as we move forward. National and department increases should be counted in your calculations. The new three-year option works. I tried it! I'm good through 2027 and avoided the membership cost increases for three years.

If you need some assistance, contact me, and we'll get you through it.

The Fighting 5th District is back online with our VA Hospital Visitation program at the VA Medical Center. We gather at the VA Medical Center auditorium, off of the Flag Atrium, at 1:45 p.m., the first Sunday of every month. We have an opportunity to visit with patients who may be from outstate areas and have no local family or visitors. Share a moment, provide some enjoyment and leave with a smile.

It is time to consider stepping up your game and become a candidate for a one of the district open positions. They can be rewarding as you discover more about the American Legion and our programs. Volunteering for a committee to assist the chairperson is a way to get started. I have the Oratorical Contest. Come work with me and experience the wonder as our beloved U.S. Constitution being viewed for the first time, through youthful eyes and a brand-new perspective.

As we work with this, and other Children & Youth programs, there is much good we can do while contributing to your American Legion experience.

As mentioned last month, The Hellenic Post 129 scheduled a blood drive at St Mary's Church in south Minneapolis. The drive was an unqualified success, and my thanks to Commander Don Forchais for taking charge of this project. I sense an annual commitment as we move forward and grow this awesome program.

Three of our posts were called out as Outstanding Post Award winners, at the Department of Minnesota Appreciation Rally in Montgomery, Minneapolis Post No. 1, The Hellenic Post 129, and Northside Post 230, were all recognized. Formal certificates will be presented at our April district meeting, Saturday, April 6. Congratulations to you all!

Thanks to all for your continued support and the membership you transmit. We continue to meet the goals assigned by national. As we near the later part of the year membership gets more focused and requires additional steps. All of the low-hanging fruit has been harvested. We now need to get on the phone and have conversations about renewals. You'll be surprised what the personal contact can do. Stay the course and keep 'em coming!

Come to the Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 Pancake Breakfast on the fourth Sunday of every month.

3rd District Rod Reifsteck



To the Thundering Third District, the mission is "Holding the Line" for membership and to advance our goals in the face of adversity. It signifies the resolve of our Legion to maintain our membership, stay focused on our goals, remain steadfast in our beliefs, and to move into our new three-year membership options.

Our membership, as it refers to "holding the line" encourages openness and the focus on our goal to remain resilient in The American Legion beliefs and to preserve our traditions. The term "holding the line" involves staying true to one's principles, values and convictions even when confronted with compromise. With the strength of our membership program, we will overcome our adversity for the long-term objective of mem-

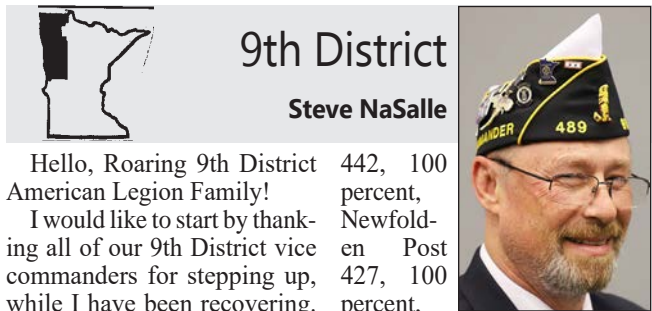
bership. When I use the term "holding the line," to me it reflects committing to our standards and our integrity. It is all about inspiring others to do the same.

Overall, involvement in The American Legion will offer veterans a sense of belonging, opportunities for service, and avenues for advocacy and support. When "holding the line," this also means preserving our heritage. We have dialogue with the Legislature concerning the veterans omnibus bill and the ongoing charitable gambling tax relief. Also in mind are details on sports betting.

We have an advantage given to us in that we have the national

District Commanders

Continued from Page 16



9th District Steve NaSalle

Hello, Roaring 9th District American Legion Family!

I would like to start by thanking all of our 9th District vice commanders for stepping up, while I have been recovering. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your dedication and service. Great job!

With that in mind, the 9th District is proud to announce this year's 9th District 2023-2024 Vice Commander of the Year. It is Jerry Clovning, for his outstanding service to the 9th District. Congratulations to Jerry!

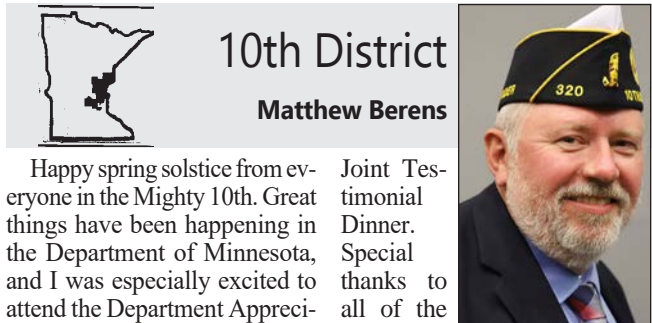
As you know, this time of year membership can be a bit challenging, so please stay on top of your current members, and keep reaching out for new members. As a district, we are just above 90 percent, but we are more than capable of reaching 100 percent, so keep up the good work. I would like to congratulate the following posts for reaching or exceeding 100 percent goal: Henning Post 18, 100 percent, Red Lake Falls Post 22, 101.18 percent, Alvarada Post 35, 100 percent, Fosston Post 114, 105 percent, Winger Post 200, 100 percent, Lancaster Post 214, 103.92 percent, Oslo Post 331, 100 percent, Nielsville Post 336, 100 percent, Halstad Post

442, 100 percent, Newfolden Post 427, 100 percent, Karlstad Post 445, 100 percent, Standquist Post 466, 114.29 percent, and Gully Post 603, 133.33 percent. Fantastic job to all!

Please continue to be mindful of our members who are homebound or in assisted living facilities and remember our buddy checks. In addition, we have some very important news about our upcoming district convention, scheduled for June, so please visit our 9th District Facebook page or our 9th District newsletter for updates.

A special thank you to our 9th District Legion Riders for their continued support throughout our district. Remember, our Riders are here to help and support our district. If you would like to schedule an event with our 9th District Legion Riders, please feel free to contact me at: snasalle@gmail.com, or call me at: 701-640-7879.

"Caring for veterans shouldn't be a partisan issue. It should be an American one." — Jennifer Granholm



10th District Matthew Berens

Happy spring solstice from everyone in the Mighty 10th. Great things have been happening in the Department of Minnesota, and I was especially excited to attend the Department Appreciation Rally in Montgomery on March 2.

We heard some good membership ideas from National Vice Commander Raymond Vail. Who wants a Legion Hot Rod Club? He also had some very positive insights on life at the post level: The folks in the blue hats are really the ones that keep The American Legion moving for veterans. Montgomery Post 79 did an outstanding job with the meal and refreshments, and Department Membership Director Pam Krill did an amazing job as master of ceremonies.

I would also be remiss for not thanking everyone that was involved with our 10th District

Joint Testimonial Dinner. Special thanks to all of the department heads, Paul Hassing, Jody Hassing, Sharon Cross and John Weiss. They stopped by Osseo Post 172 to see us, even though they all had previous engagements. The Osseo post did a phenomenal job, and the Coon Rapids Auxiliary was superb in organizing the event.

Lastly, special thanks to Anne Steffen, Jason Voss, Dan Freund, Liliana Campero, and all of the other attendees for making the night truly memorable.

That's it for me; let's all get out there and get some new members before the national commander comes to Minnesota on April 14!



At the Appreciation Rally, district vice commanders line up to be recognized for their membership efforts. In some cases, someone fills in for the award winner as they stand 1 through 10 left to right. The winners were: Cole Wilcox in the 1st District, Roxanne Zoet in the 2nd District (Brad Pagel filling in), Joe Bares in the 3rd District, Jon Haworth in the 4th District, Andru Peters in the 5th District, Frank Grittner in the 6th District, John Jones in the 7th District (Jan Ekert filling in), Larry Pocrnich in the 8th District (Jennifer Havlick filling in), Jerome Clovning in the 9th District and Craig Hartman in the 10th District.



Ellendale's Fidelity Post 296 was recognized for their membership efforts with an Outstanding Post Award.



Donny Skow accepts the Outstanding Post Award certificate for his post, Forest Lake Post 225.



Fourth District Commander Teresa Ash accepts for North St. Paul Post 39, and Vice Commander Jon Haworth for his and her post, Christie deParcq Post 406.



Commander Dick Ward accepts for The Hellenic Post 129 and Minneapolis North Side Post 230. Department Vice Commander Lynne Nottage accepts for her post, Minneapolis Post 1.



Eighth District Commander Jennifer Havlick accepts for Lawrence Lake Post 476.



First District Commander Mark Maloney fills in for Waseca Post 228, which received an Outstanding Post Award. With recipients in these photos are Department Commander Paul Hassing and National Vice Commander Raymond Vail of Kansas.



Third District Vice Commander Joe Bares accepts for New Germany Post 601 and Prior Lake Post 447.



Department Vice Commander Brad Pagel accepts the certificate for his post, Slayton Post 64. Read about all the Appreciation Rally awards on Page 2.



Willmar Post 167 Commander Jon Olson accepts for his post, while 7th District Commander Jan Ekert accepts for Porter Post 457 and 7th District Membership Director accepts for Chokio Post 629.



Gary H. Olson accepts on behalf of his post, Moorhead Post 21.



Sixth District Commander Anthony Koop accepts for Kelliher Post 470, St. Augusta Post 621 and Little Falls Post 46



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 24 Vol. 8

President Sharon Cross • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

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

651-224-7634

April 2024

National President's Tour of Minnesota

National President Lisa Williamson of Fairbanks, Alaska, Unit 57 visits next month.

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Monday, April 29			
Sauk Centre Post 67	dinner	6:30 p.m.	320-290-8761, Jessie Hoppe
cost: \$15	social	5:30 p.m.	register by April 19
Tuesday, April 30			
Redwood Falls Post 38	dinner	6:30 p.m.	507-828-7656, Jennette Mertens
cost: \$20	social	5:30 p.m.	register by April 19
Wednesday, May 1			
Adrian Post 32	lunch	noon	507-290-0011, Diane Strassburg
cost: f-w donation	social	11:30 p.m.	register by April 22
Lake Crystal Post 294	dinner	6 p.m.	507-726-2155, Barb Spencer
cost: \$20	social	5 p.m.	register by April 22

National President Lisa Williamson will arrive in Minnesota late Sunday, April 28.

Department President Sharon Cross is looking forward to showing off the Department of Minnesota and all we do and have for our state's veterans. The tour will start in the Twin Cities area with a tour of the Minneapolis VA, Fisher House and the Brain Sciences Center before heading west.

Some of the confirmed stops are Eagle's Healing Nest in Sauk Centre, the new state veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls and bingo time at the Luverne Veterans Home. Stops at local Legions for lunch and dinner are listed above.

President Cross is finalizing the details. The meet and greet events are posted on the Department of Minnesota's Auxiliary Facebook page and on www.mnala.org.



Lisa Williamson



Auxiliary membership leaders were out in full force at the Appreciation Rally at Montgomery Post 79 on March 2. From left are 2nd District President Kollett Kaehlert, Department Membership Chairman Jenny Nelson, 6th District Membership Chairman Dori Hamilton, 4th District Membership Chairman Mary French, 7th District Membership Chairman Sandy Wersal, 5th District Membership Chairman Jill Davis, 10th District President Ann Steffen, 3rd District Membership Chairman Deb Chicos and 8th District Membership Chairman Tamara Opland.

"Cruising the Sea for Members!"

We are not quite there with poppy effort

My wish for every unit is that you take pride in what you have done and report what you have done from April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. The district chairmen and each district president will be doing their part to tally the year-end report totals for your district.

Coming soon! District chairmen and presidents' year-end report deadlines for your reports! I am anxiously anticipating the awesome stories and numbers that will be in this year's department year-end reports. Plus, I am looking ahead to my year-end report to national from all those wonderful reports.

April is the Auxiliary's Children & Youth Month. Keep an eye out for those youth heroes and the exceptional good deeds happening in and near your community. What a great way to start our new program year. Emphasizing the good our youth do and honoring them. As our C&Y Department Chairman Brandi Christensen has reminded us, "Honor and show your support for the military children and Purple Up on April 15!"

The children of our veterans and active-duty military qualify to join our Sons of The American Legion and our Auxiliary Juniors. Gifting a membership to their veteran parent is a great way to get them to enroll their children, and their spouse, into our organization. Get them and their parents actively involved in this great organization. Assisting their families and helping them to understand we are willing to mentor them and their children.

What can you do to mentor these families? How will you show them meaningful ways to

President's Message

Sharon Cross



keep honoring their parents and grandparents service? When will you have time to hear their ideas and allow them to breathe new life with their enthusiasm into your programs? Where will you be when you discover those new veterans and their families? Can you explain the benefits of the American Legion Family?

Spring is a time of new birth and growth. Have you or your unit taken the ALA Academy classes on ALAforveterans.org? You can be more informative when talking to a prospective member by taking these sessions on our website. You can take them individually or as a group. There's even a Junior Academy class. So, let's learn something new or remember what we forgot about our organization.

Poppies. We are getting the job done but we are not quite there. Keep encouraging our veterans to take on this task and

get rewarded with a stipend. Thank you to the veterans, Auxiliary units and members who are helping this year during our poppy shortage. Contact Department Chairman Marsha Bible if you need more information. Her contact information is in your unit mailing.

My testimonial at the Melrose American Legion Post 101 is fast approaching on April 27. It is being catered so be sure to make your reservations today if you have not already.

NEC Jean Walker and I will be heading to the airport Sunday, April 28, to greet National President Lisa Williamson as she arrives from Alaska. Thank you ahead of time for all the hard work our department office staff will be doing to help us make her visit to Minnesota memorable.

March was a whirlwind with the Appreciation Rally, Legion birthday dinners, District Junior Conferences and video meetings. Spring has arrived, welcome April we are off and running! At least this time of year any snow we do get will not last long.

Sharon Cross of Bemidji Unit 14 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Be The One to Dance Into the Hearts of Veterans."



DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,762	32	3,076	81.77%	3,232	156
Two	71	3,890	7	3,111	79.97%	3,246	135
Three	46	3,882	22	3,175	81.79%	3,288	113
Four	7	579	1	438	75.65%	448	10
Five	7	522	9	300	57.47%	406	106
Six	61	5,031	6	4,115	81.79%	4,290	175
Seven	53	2,955	5	2,374	80.34%	2,497	123
Eight	19	1,185	0	1,021	86.16%	1,050	29
Nine	46	3,348	7	2,629	78.52%	2,840	211
Ten	42	3,812	55	3,013	79.04%	3,088	75
1982 Dept	1	332	0	263	79.22%	236	-27
District Totals:	400	29,298	144	23,515	80.26%	24,621	1,106
Group 1 (Even)	200	14,497	69	11,698	80.69%	12,122	424
Robin Dorf							
Group 2 (Odd)	199	14,469	75	11,554	79.85%	12,263	709
Judy Ackerman							
RANKINGS							



People will see the good we do and want to join Legion Auxiliary

Jenny Nelson
Membership Chairman

How are your membership efforts coming along? We need every member to be a recruiter!

When we are seen involved in our communities working our programs, our membership grows. One key to a successful membership promotion is the amount of interest and buzz we can generate. The more people who see what we offer as an organization, the greater number of new members we will attract and retain.

Your best outfit is your smile. Wear it proudly and with goodwill in your heart. Share all the positive things that you love about our organization!

Now that we have gone to the Appreciation Rally on the Island of Palm Tree Oasis, we need to get more creative on the next part of our journey as we approach Volcano Island where we can really blow up our membership goals! We sure had a great turnout! Keep in mind that the memberships turned in at the rallies do count toward the rally count.

Have you been reaching out to your membership list and contacted those who have not renewed? How are your goals going? Is it a stretch or are you close? Do not be discouraged!

When we look at the numbers, it is easy to slow down. But the good news is, we can all call at least two members

and check in with them!

Did you know that your dues do not help your post or unit financially, but it's renewing your membership and your commitment to helping other veterans that make you a valued member!

Congratulations to 8th District for a fine job being in first place at 85.40 percent. The 6th District is close at 80.44 percent and the 1st District is at 79.90 percent. Oh boy, the competition is close!

Thank you for working hard! We can do this! Hold your head high and be proud of your fellow members. We can all be mentors if we try! See you soon! Find up-to-date numbers at mnala.org/membership.



Department President Sharon Cross installs new Department Treasurer Shannon Brown at the Spring DEC meeting at Montgomery Post 79.



On March 3, Pine City Post 51 hosted a mid-winter Kids Fun Day. The attendees were entertained by a ventriloquist and a magician, then listened to a story about the meaning behind poppy flowers. After, there were several craft stations for the kids to visit. The Pine City Auxiliary Unit 51, with help from the Pine City Legion Riders, hosted a booth where the kids could decorate a poppy and then together assembled a "Flanders Field." At another booth, the kids wrote thank you notes to the veterans in their lives. All the kids who attended received an Auxiliary Poppy Coloring Book.

Poppy information for 7-county metro

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

- Poppy Card Day (post home only) is April 18.

Poppy cards may be distributed within the confine of one's own post home to members and patrons only. Thursday evening, April 18, 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 is April 19 through April 28.

Poppy Card Days are from Friday, April 19, through



midnight Sunday, April 28, for the 10-day "closed territories." Effective Monday, April 29, poppy cards can be sold anywhere by anyone. Poppy cards may be sold right up to Poppy Day.

- Poppy Days are May 24-25.

Poppy Days commence on Friday, May 24, and carry over to Saturday, May 25, if permitted by the community and the post/unit wants a two-day

distribution. Closed territories are in effect until noon on Friday, May 24. Open territories begin on Friday, May 24, at 12:01 p.m. when anyone can distribute poppies anywhere.

Leadership training

The last Leadership Training for the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year has been cancelled.

Reminder from the Department Office

Unit dues forms were due to Department Office on or before March 15. If you haven't sent the form in, please, do so right away. You can email them to DeptOffice@mnala.org.

Unit Annual Reports are due to your district chairman on or before April 15. Also, 2025 Officer Lists are due in the office by June 1.



TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORING

American Legion Auxiliary
Department Of Minnesota
President
SHARON CROSS

April 27, 2024

Melrose American Legion Post 101
265 County Road 173 SE, Melrose, MN

Social Hour: 5pm

Dinner: 6pm

(Menu: Chicken, Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Carrots, Gravy, Dressing, Cole Slaw, Dessert)

Program Following

Cost: \$30

R.S.V.P. By April 21, 2024

Local Lodgings:

American Lodge and Suites: 1230 Timberline Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 320-352-2800

American Best Value Inn: 322 12 Street, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-7256

Palmer House: 500 Sinclair Lewis Avenue, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-9100

Super 8: 231 County Road 175, Melrose, MN 320-256-4261

Name: _____ Unit _____ Post _____

Number of people: _____

Total amount of check: \$ _____

Address check as: (American Legion Auxiliary)

Mail Registration to: American Legion Auxiliary, Dept. President Testimonial, Attn.: Judy Hennen, P.O. Box 152, Melrose, MN 56352

April is Month of the Military Child

In the USA, there are more than 1.6 million military children. April is the month that is dedicated to them.

To show them that we see and appreciate their own service and sacrifice April 15 is "Purple Up Day!" for Military Kids. It's a day when we can all show our support by just wearing purple. You can also encourage everyone else in your communities to wear purple on April 15 including city officials, businesses, schools and other organizations.

Why purple? Purple is a combination of

all branches of military. Army-Green, Coast Guard-Blue, Air Force-Blue, Marine-Red, and Navy-Blue.

Help spread the word by posting on your social media about Purple Up Day. We live in a "tech age." This is the fastest way of letting everyone know about how they can support military children.

Submit nominations for Youth Hero and Good Deed Award by visiting the national website. Is there a youth in your community that has done something incredible that deserves recognition?



The 10th District Commander's Testimonial took place March 9 at Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172. From left are SAL Detachment Commander John Weiss, Department ALR Director Jody Hassing, Honorary Junior 10th District President Liliana Campero, Department Commander Paul Hassing, 10th District Commander Matt Berens, SAL 10th District Commander Jason Voss, Auxiliary Department President Sharon Cross and Auxiliary 10th District President Anne Steffen.



The Luverne Veterans Home hosted a venison dinner on Feb. 2. From left are Department President Sharon Cross, 2nd District President Kollett Kaehlert and the home's volunteer services coordinator, Duane Mabon.



Auxiliary Honorary Junior Department President Taylor McElroy, who also is a Legion member with Le Roy Post 161, addresses the Minnesota American Legion Family at the Appreciation Rally on March 2.



Auxiliary members were decked out in Hawaiian shirts and leis at the Appreciation Rally in Montgomery.

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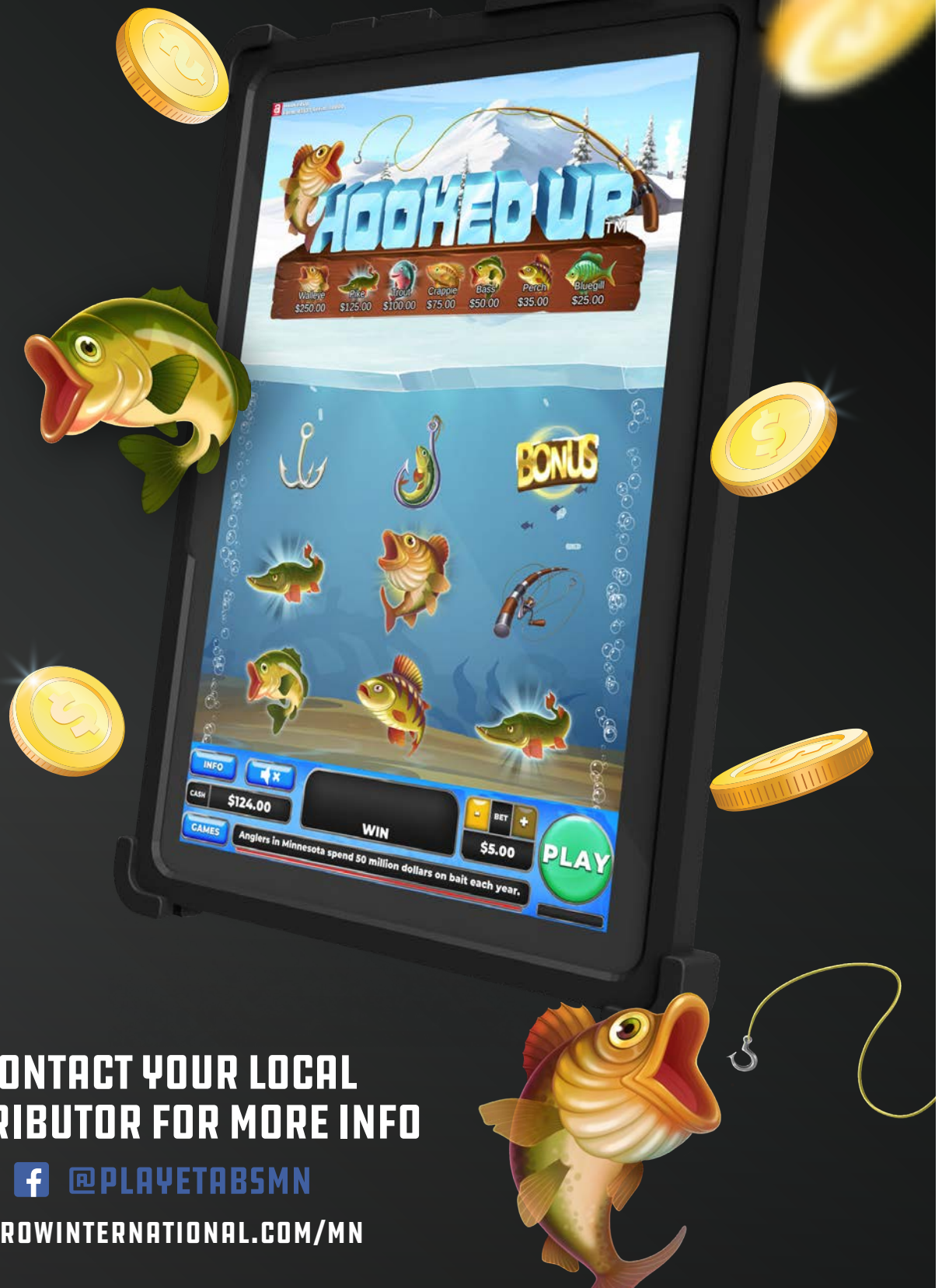
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