



Girls Staters do a "hooray for Girls State" on the St. Thomas University campus. Over 350 girls attended the week-long session that teaches hands-on democracy.

# GIRLS STATE



A county court judge oversees a mock trial at the Supreme Court building on the Capitol campus.



Every seat is filled during a joint session of the Girls State Senate and House in the House chambers.



Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea spoke to the assembled citizens at the Capitol.



With the election tally board in the background, a Girls Stater presents testimony at the Capitol.



Speaker of the House Sydney Nelson oversaw the House proceedings.



During debate in the Girls State Senate, a senator takes the microphone to speak. The elected Girls Staters take over the Senate and House chambers at the Capitol.

# Annual Reports

## To the Convention of the Department of Minnesota The American Legion

### Adjutant

This past year we covered a lot of ground. Our programs touched the lives of veterans, their families and youth from all across the state. We continue to grow in the things we do and how we impact our communities.

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

We provided direct assistance to many veterans at the VA Medical Centers that serve Minnesota's veterans through our on location Assistance Department Service Officer in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and Veterans Hospital Representative in the St Cloud VA.

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

The new training facility at Legionville is outstanding thanks to the donations from dedicated Legion members all around the state. We along with The Minnesota State Highway Patrol and AAA trained hundreds of boys and girls on Road Cross and School Bus Safety at our Legionville training center in the Brainerd Lakes area on North Long Lake. In eight one-week sessions throughout the summer they come together from all across Minnesota to learn safety and enjoy a week in the outdoors.

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

We worked together with our state legislature and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to strengthen state veteran's benefits and entitlements in multiple ways.

We visited Washington DC as a delegation of Minnesota American Legion leaders and rallied Congress for the support of a Strong National Defense and to end the bureaucratic bickering in Washington. We called on the VA Benefits System to clean-up the backlog and worked with them to implement new ways of processing claims in a streamlined fashion which helped ease the backlog of claims even though they still need much attention and work to get under control. We urged congress to implement policies within VA that hold Executive VA leaders responsible for their short falls and not to reward them with extravagant bonuses when they do not meet basic standards. We are intimately involved in holding the VA accountable in the VA Healthcare cover-up of secret waiting lists that resulted in the deaths of veterans awaiting healthcare services. The culture within the VA must change.

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

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

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

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

My thanks to Minnesota's 86,000 members of this great organization for all you do in your communities. And my heartfelt thanks to the staff of our Department Headquarters: Jennifer, Al, Misty, Tom, Laura, Jeremy, Lucas and Gerald your efforts to keep things rolling are so greatly appreciated.

**Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant**



# 2014

### Commander

When you elected me to represent you as your Department Commander I was extremely proud. I vowed to do whatever I could to make sure the Department of Minnesota would always be an example for other departments to follow. It started with a 5-year plan to National and we're seeing some pay-offs. Traveling the state to visit posts, participate in events, or helping veterans has been an eye-opening experience and one I've tried to share via social media and my monthly columns. Those Legionnaires I've interacted with along the way are living proof why we have the greatest organization in the world.

Legionville was my project this year, dovetailing on to Commander Don Pankake's project, and, as I write this, preparations are being made to paint the new education center (barn) and add the final touches to make it workable for the first session of student campers who will arrive this summer. Much is still needed and I encourage you all to keep Legionville on your list of worthwhile donations for the future.

Again, being a copy cat of Commander Don, I've been pushing hard on the Consolidated Post Reports. I've had a couple of districts tell me they were close and one had actually reached 100%. I'm hoping for a minor miracle and a great turn-in at the last minute.

Thanks needs to be given to so many and I want to start with my wife Teresa who supported me throughout my journey. She was there taking pictures (telling me to smile), posting my glad-handing on Facebook and keeping me from missing my next event. I want to thank every post and program who invited me to share in their accomplishments or just sit in on a meeting. I tried to make as many as I could, and without exception, I enjoyed each immensely and was truly honored for the privilege to attend. That brings me to the Department Vice Commanders (Joe, Clint, Mickey, Denise and John) who stood in my place when I was unable to make an event - I could not have asked for a better group of Legionnaires, they were always there when I needed them and stepped up to the plate every

time I asked. And since their other primary responsibility is membership, I need to transition to your Department Membership Director Tom Fernlund. He took on the tough task of membership, but had to be the Master of Ceremonies for the National Commander's Tour - and he received kudos from both Commander Dellinger and his aide. Our membership rallies were a bit different, in both content and location, as Tom tried to increase participation and excitement in attending. Several revitalizations were held with very positive results - more are already being planned for the upcoming Legion year. I want to thank all my Department officers and an outstanding Department office staff. Anytime I needed advice, or information, or to be kept on track, or a good swift kick (verbally of course), I had only to pick up the phone, drop an email or go knock on a door. They all helped make the job of being Commander a lot easier. And what an outstanding crop of District Commanders. I continually saw them throughout their districts, helping out posts and giving the kind of support necessary to make each successful. Last, but not least, I want to thank each and every one of those Legionnaires who contacted me, whether to give praise, encouragement or reprimand (always nicely, of course). It's not so much lonely at the top, as it is trying to figure out if you're being heard (make that being heard correctly) and if you're making a difference.

So thank you all - you heard me, you did your best and together we made a difference.

**Mike Ash, Department Commander**

### Vice Commander 1st and 3rd Districts

The last year has been an honor and rewarding experience to represent the 1st and 3rd District as your Department Vice-Commander. In September I got to attend the membership workshop in Indianapolis. That was a worthwhile learning experience.

Of all the Legion functions and rallies that I attended, Waseca American Legion Post stands out with the Post Everlasting Ceremony, also I can't forget my fellow Legionnaires at the Silver Lake American Legion Post.

It has been a great year working with Commander Mike Ash, Membership Director Tom Fernland and the Department Vice Commanders John Torma, Mickey Ostrum, Denise Milton, and Clinton Burt. I don't want to forget 1st District Vice Commander Brian Medinnus, Membership Director Glenn Mueller, 3rd District Commander Mark Dvorak and Membership Director Duane Anderson.

I want to congratulate Department Vice Commander Denise for leading in the membership race. It's only by 98 members (I hope the 1st and 3rd District's are not dead yet).

Since becoming a Vice Commander for the 3rd District, I loved punching in the membership numbers to see how every one stands.

In conclusion, I would also like to thank all the post members, the Department of Minnesota Officers for the warm welcome and hospitality that my wife Rosemary and I received.

Thank You to the 1st and 3rd District for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

No way, let a veteran go astray.

No way let membership go away.

**Joe Niesen, Department Vice Commander**

### Vice Commander 2nd and 7th Districts

This year has been a great experience for me as the 2nd and 7th District Vice Commander. Going to Indianapolis for training was a good way to get started. This was the first time I had a chance to visit National Headquarters. This gave me an opportunity to have a better idea of how National works and I also got to meet the people we work with at National and other Legionnaires from across the nation.

Visiting the district's conferences and rallies was a chance to meet and learn from them. I was thankful that Department Commander Mike Ash asked me to attend the pheasant dinners at the Luverne Veterans Home and

Sioux Falls VA Hospital, also Round Lake and Wells birthday parties. I attended Second District Commander Gene Oswald's and Auxiliary President Jeanette Merten's Testimonial, and a great time was had. I felt bad I was unable to attend the Seventh District's testimonials due to prior commitments.

I'm looking forward to visiting Boys State.  
**Clint Burt, Department Vice Commander**

## Vice Commander 4th and 5th Districts

I would like to thank all Legionnaires for the opportunity to serve as one of your Department Vice Commanders for the 2013 – 2014 year. It has been a privilege to represent the 4th and 5th Districts in the Department of Minnesota. The support given to me from Commander Partridge and Membership Director Larry Ryan from the 4th District and Commander Johnson and Membership Director Wayne Wessel from the 5th District has made this year very special.

Membership in the 4th and 5th Districts started out strong with early results that were meeting or exceeding goals, but like past years after the 1st of the year we slowed down. I believe that all the Posts worked the membership program hard this year. Both the 4th and 5th Districts held district revitalizations, this hopefully will benefit in next years membership program.

Major accomplishments within the 4th and 5th Districts included the "Shop, Ship and Share" Program under the direction of the 4th District. Money was raised; items were donated and shipped to service members serving overseas. The 4th and 5th District marched with Mass Colors in the Winter Carnival Parade. The Memorial Day Service at the Minnesota Vets Home was sponsored by the 5th District and the Flag Disposal Ceremony at Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake was conducted by the 4th District.

It was an honor to have dinners within the 4th and 5th Districts for our National Commander Dan Dellinger and our National Auxiliary President Nancy Brown-Park.

I give a thank you to Commander Mike for his guidance and help during this past year. District Commanders, Carroll Partridge and Bob Johnson for their hard work and continued service to The American Legion. Without the Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and his staff, we would not have accomplished what we did this year.

I want to thank the Posts I visited this year for their hospitality given me this year. One final thank you to the most important members of The American Legion, the Blue Cap Legionnaires, without them we could not do what we do.

**Mickey Ostrum, Department Vice Commander**

## Vice Commander 6th and 9th Districts

First of all, I would like to thank the Legionnaires of the 6th and 9th District for their warm hospitality and friendship over the past year as I traveled throughout your district representing our Department Commander Mike Ash. I would also like to thank all of the Legionnaires in Minnesota for the trust that you placed in me last summer by electing me as a department vice commander. It was truly an honor that I will never forget.

Both of the districts have worked hard in membership recruitment and retention over the last year while never losing sight of The American Legion programs. Our country, state, cities, veterans and children have been well taken care of. Through the strong efforts of both the 6th and 9th Districts, I have had the honor of being the number one department vice commander for membership since the first of December. A special bit of recognition to my home district which has been the number one district since that same time as well! Commander Vern and your membership team, Commander Tom and your membership team have truly led the way.

I would like to also congratulate Commander Mike Ash on a very successful year and wish him the best in the future. Getting to know you along with Vice Commanders Joe Niesen, Clint Burt, Mickey Ostrum, John Torma, Membership Director Tom Fernlund, and all of the other department officers has made this a very enjoyable year.

**Denise A Milton, Department Vice Commander**

## Vice Commander 8th and 10th Districts

The year as Department Vice Commander is coming to an end. I have enjoyed this year very much, meeting old and new veterans, friendship goes a long way. I would like to thank 10th District Commander Dick Juhl and 8th District Commander E Jerry St. Michel for a great year, and for making my year a very enjoyable one. I have visited many post in the last year, brought greetings from the Department, and spoke on membership, which is very vital to the organization.

I want to thank Department Commander Mike Ash for having a great year, it was great working for you and Tom Fernland, your Membership Director. I was able to fill in for the Commander as he is very busy and had other commitments. The year started out going to Indianapolis to learn all about the Membership program National has set forth for all. I learned a lot and met new friends on the way. Buffalo Legion was my next stop for the Early Bird Dinner, Pheasant Dinner at the Silver Bay Vets Home, what a great place, talked to a lot of the patients there, and they enjoy their stay there very much, a great place. If you have not seen it, stop by and tour the home. Int'l Falls was my next stop to revitalize their post, elected new officers and I had the opportunity to install all the officers, had a great meeting with 24 members showing up to get the post up and running again. Next I brought greetings at the American Legion State Bowling Tournament in Moorhead as the Commander was snowed in. St. Cloud VA Nat'l Salute to Veterans Patients Day was next, had dinner and toured the VA Hospital. West Duluth Legion was next for their Legion Early Bird Dinner, also as at the Moorhead Post-21 for their Legion Birthday Dinner. I put on many miles of driving, well worth it. Attended the Department Rallies, District Rallies, it was a very busy year. It was a real pleasure working with Dept. Commander Mike Ash and Tom Fernland, and the other Vice Commanders. Always remember our veterans at home and away, remember: All gave some and some gave all.

**John W Torma, Department Vice Commander**

## Treasurer

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

The Treasurer is charged with the responsibility and administration of all Department funds and related financial affairs with direct responsibility

ty to the Department Executive Committee. Some of the duties include overseeing accounting principles, and financial processes of the Department Headquarters, assisting the Department Finance Liaison, analyzing and prescribing financial reports, and investing the assets of the Department.

The following is an overview of the Department's investments between May 2013 and May 2014. Investment began the year with an allocation of 25% stocks and 75% bonds. Bonds in the account are primarily high grade bonds and CDs. These bonds and CDs are laddered between one and five years. The stocks are diversified between large, medium, and smaller companies with a heavier weighting toward larger companies. Interest and dividends paid out between June 1st, 2013 and May 31st, 2014 to the Department's checking account totaled \$38,420.57. Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer and I look forward to serving you in the future.

**Richard Horn, Department Treasurer**

## Chaplain

The question is what I did as your Chaplain for the Department of Minnesota this year. I would like to start off by saying I really didn't know what I was supposed to do. First, I took out the officers' manual, which helped a little. However, attending the Chaplains' conference in Indianapolis was the real eye opener. That is where I found out a lot more of what the Chaplains' duties really are. It was definitely worth the time taken to attend and the miles we drove to get there. I found out that the main duty of all Chaplains' is to care for the veterans and their families, and not just by praying for them, although I find that prayer really helps as I'm sure you have heard me say many times before.

I have attended all of the rallies this year except for the last one at the Montevideo post. I had to miss that one because our grandson was receiving his Eagle Scout award and as our Department Commander Ash says, "Family comes first". I enjoyed saying the prayers for the rallies and knowing that I was praying for all of us.

I think preparing for the fall conference was one of my big highlights. Doing the Chaplains' Corner at the conference and also writing the Chaplains' Corner for the Legionnaire. When I was told I needed to write no less than 620 words I thought, how am I going to do this, but when the time came to write it the words just started to come from someplace within me. I hope and pray that each of you that read it got something from it. I loved getting the letters and cards from everyone telling me that you did. It is not hard to write about our God and country. God gave each of us such a special gift and without our veterans and those currently serving we would not be able to have what we have today.

I also enjoyed my travels around this great state. My loyal GPS would get me where I had to go. There were times I wondered why it took me on some of the routes it did, but I found out all it needed was to be updated. Now that my year as your Chaplain is almost done I cannot say thank you enough times for allowing me to serve you. When I started my year I thought, am I going to make it, am I going to be good enough? With the help of God and each of you it was easy. Now it is almost over and I'm sorry to see it end. I am not quite done though. I have the Department convention in Rochester to attend and the Memorial service. I am like a minister in church, always hoping it will be a full house, even the front pew. I am looking forward to seeing you again at the convention or somewhere down the road.

May God bless each of you, our soldiers, and may God bless America.

**Richard Wog, Department Chaplain**

## Historian

I would like to thank the American Legion members for electing me to be the Department Historian for the 2013 – 2014 membership year and to Commander Mike Ash. I would like to make a very special thanks to Minneapolis-Richfield for their support this past year. I would like to thank the Commander's wife Teresa Ash and Al Zdon for their help this year with photos and suggestions. I look forward to finishing the Commander's History books so he will have memories to look back on during his reign as the Department Commander in 2013 – 2014. If anyone has any photos that they would like to share in putting them in the History Book, please give me the event, names and dates of the event. I will use all items up to the 2014 Department Convention that will be held July 17-19, 2014 in Rochester. Again thank everyone for trusting me as this year's Department historian, and I look forward to seeing you at the Department Convention.

For God & Country  
**Dennis J. De Long, Department Historian**

## NEC Man

What an exciting, fulfilling, and busy year this has been once again. It all started after the Houston National Convention and with the election of Dan Dellinger, Virginia, as our National Commander.

I have attended the Fall Meetings, Washington Conference, and Spring meetings as your representative on the National Executive Committee. My other NEC assignments include serving on the NEC Sub-committee on Resolutions and as an NEC Liaison to the National Convention Commission.

Once again this past year, I have been summarizing the meetings that I have attended. I have been emailing them to those who have requested to receive them. I have also sent a copy of them to The Legionnaire where they are published when and where there is room available. I have also been forwarding other communication I receive from the National organization. If you are interested in receiving this information, please give me your name and email address.

I would like to congratulate Commander Mike on a wonderful year. His sense of humor, dedication, creative thinking, and hard work are the reasons Minnesota had another successful year. Thank you, Mike.

I want to thank, Alternate NEC, Marland Ronning for his dedication and hard work as an advocate for our veterans and our organization. He is a great person to work with and someone I am proud to call a friend.

I want to thank Commander Ash's Legislative team, led by Bob Hart, for their hard work and leadership. With their strong leadership, they kept our legislators informed on the issues that supported our veterans.

Plans are in place to celebrate the 100th anniversary of The American Legion starting with the 2018 National Convention here in Minneapolis – right where it originally started. The year-long celebration will culminate with the 2019 National Convention in Indianapolis, home of our National Headquarters.

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your National Executive Committeeman. It has truly been an honor to represent you.

**Ray DeZurik, National Executive Committeeman**

## Judge Advocate

The Department Adjutant, Treasurer and Judge Advocate are each elected to three year terms by the Executive Committee. These are staggered terms, so one ends each year. The election for the position takes place at the first Executive Committee meeting after the convention.

My present term will expire this year at the Executive Committee meeting on August 9. I will not be running for another term. Since I have retired from the active practice of law, I feel it is time to retire from this position also.

I consider it to have been a great honor to have worn the white cap of a Department Officer of this fine Department for 20 years. Although that seems like a long time, my predecessor, John Kressel, held the position for 35 years. I am only the sixth Judge Advocate this Department has had.

I appreciated the opportunity of using my training and experience as a lawyer to serve the American Legion as Department Judge Advocate. My thanks and appreciation are extended to all present and past officers and headquarters staff members for the support and cooperation they gave me. I particularly want to thank Bill Barbknecht who, when he was Department Commander, encouraged me to run for the position and who has recognized and supported me throughout my time in office.

**Don Walser, Judge Advocate**

## Americanism

I would like to thank Commander Mike Ash for allowing me to serve as the Americanism Chairman for the Department of Minnesota of The American Legion; and wish you a successful convention in Rochester, MN. I would also like to thank my Americanism Committee members Tom Kunkel and Mel Buesseler; Boy's State representatives Mike Bredeck and Lee Tallakson; Community Service representative Bob Locker; Education representative Gary Weaver; Junior Shooting Sports representative Leon Dahle; Boy's Scout representative Tom Hallett; Oratorical representatives Tess Davis and Lori Jarrett; Safety – School Patrol representative James Blakesley; and the District Americanism Chairpersons for their hard work in promoting Americanism during the past year.

The Department Americanism Committee met at the 2013 Fall Conference. The Boy's State, Community Service, Education, Jr. Shooting Sports, Boys Scouts, Oratorical, and School Safety Program representatives attended the meeting.

Various topics were discussed, including the increase in attendance at Boy's State. Simeon Toronto, Andover, MN, Boys State National Representative was elected Boys Nation President, and Troy Timmerman, Marshall, MN, was awarded a national Samsung Scholarship.

The Boy Scouts American Legion National Square Knot Award was given to Robert Reifsteck, Post 311, Elysian, MN; Michael Kushnierek, Post 30, Fergus Falls, MN and Richard Koechlein, Viking Council;

The Jr. Shooting Sports program had a shooter, from St. Thomas Academy, sponsored by Post 521, Mendota Heights, compete at the National Shooting Sports competition in Colorado Springs, CO.

The 2014 Minnesota Department Oratorical Winner was Caroline Donaldson, sponsored by Wayzata Post 118.

Please see the individual committee reports for further information concerning these Americanism Sub-Committees.

The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, Americanism Committee continues to develop a Junior Law Cadet Program in Minnesota. There are a number of Departments that have started a Jr. Law Cadet Program. There are no established guidelines for these programs; each Department has their own guidelines. The Department of Minnesota will review these already established programs.

The Scholarship Selection Committee met in St. Paul in April. There were seven nursing scholarships, three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust scholarships, and six Memorial scholarships awarded this year.

The American Legion's Service to God and Country program is basic Americanism, and is designed to help prevent the spiritual decay of America, and to charge our citizens with a spirit of positive Americanism, respect for law, regard for authority, and an awareness of our human rights and freedoms.

The responsibilities of the Americanism Committee, and for all Legionnaires, include the combating of "Anti-Americanism; the education of all citizens in the ideals of true Americanism; the distribution of information about "the real nature and principles of American government"; and the fostering and education of Americanism in our schools." Americanism is an unending love of Country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.

**Art Tobkin, Chairman, Americanism Committee**

## Boy Scouts

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

Your posts' support of your local Scout packs, troops and councils is also greatly appreciated. From its birth, the American Legion has supported wonderful youth programs with both volunteers and financial assistance. Additional thanks go to all the posts that have donated to the Department Boy Scout Council Assistance Fund #81. Your donation certificates can be picked up at the Boy Scout booth. Please make a yearly contribution to this fund as we are striving to raise \$40,000 in order to give a yearly donation of \$1,000 to a Minnesota Scout council project.

The great State of Minnesota American Legion family Eagle Scout of the Year is Troy Timmerman of Marshall, Minnesota.

Special recognition goes to the following Scouters for receiving the American Legion Square Knot Award:

- Rod Reifsteck, Elysian, Minnesota, Post #311
- Michael J. Kusinierek, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Post #30
- Tim L. Liffrig, Apple Valley, Minnesota, Post #1776

Congratulations.

I also wish to thank the National Organization and the Americanism & Youth National Committee for hosting the 1st ever National Boy Scout Committee meeting of Department Boy Scout Committee chairmen that was held in Indianapolis, Indiana in September 2013.

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

**Tom Hallett, Department Boy Scout Chairman**

## Boys State

We are back at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall for our 8th year of the American Legion Minnesota Boys State Program.

My sincere appreciation goes to the efforts of the many Legion Posts across the state as well as to the delegates that come to this 66th year of the program. The hard work that the many Posts provided with recruitment and sponsorship of these young men provides our program with the highest level of excellence. Thank you to the Sons of the American Legion for their contributions made to the Minnesota Boys State Program. Also, thanks to the University for being an outstanding host, the American Legion post in Marshall including Commander, Jeff Gay and Steve Glaeser, and the Marshall Independent for helping us in all of these efforts.

More than 350 delegates will be attending the 2014 program:

District	Registered	Change from Prior Year
1	32	-12
2	34	-6

3	49	-4
4	7	-1
5	6	-5
6	48	+4
7	46	+1
8	16	+4
9	38	+3
10	74	-1

Thank you to the hard working staff at the Department Headquarters - Jennifer Kelley, Laura Weber, Al Zdon, and Randy Tesdahl. Their work is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Department Commander, Mike Ash for his support and participation in this year's program.

This year marks Dr. Bill Zweiner's 64th year, David Way's milestone 40th year, W. Lee Tallakson's 20th year, Perry Bock's 15th year, and Peggy Moon's 10th year. We are proud of their service as well as all of the dedicated staff that helps to make the program a success.

Thank you to Ryan Lorsung for the work he does with setting up the program details and lining up the speakers and Andy Post who assists with the registration of the citizens and the recruitment of the staff.

Thank you to all the District Boys State Chairs and to Ken Meyer and Bert Marth for their help and assistance.

In addition to our dedicated staff, all of our speakers volunteer their time and talents during the week. It takes many hands to make this program a success, both the dedicated staff at the Department as well as those who volunteer their time for the week of Minnesota Boys State. Thank you to all the Posts who continue to donate to Minnesota Boys State.

Visit us at our website, [www.mnboysstate.org](http://www.mnboysstate.org) for a complete detailed profile of the program. Finally, I would like to again thank Department Commander, Mike Ash for allowing me to take part in this capacity.

Mike Bredeck, Boys State Director

## Community Service

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

We can try to estimate what was accomplished at state and national levels by reviewing the reports that our posts did submit. This year we had 133 posts turn in reports, which is 23.53%, a little higher than last year. A lot of these are smaller posts which shows how proud they are of their members commitments. But many post not turning in reports are posts with over 250 members. The report summaries turned in for the year are as follows: Children & Youth: hours 3,264 and dollars spent \$191,603. Veteran Affairs: hours 15,415 and dollars spent \$245,758. Americanism: hours 19,414 and dollars spent \$465,888. Funeral: hours 37,636 and dollars spent \$382,329. Community Service: hours 10,483 and dollars spent \$286,285. This gives a total turn in of 87,239 Volunteer hours and \$1,565,692 dollars spent.

Over the past five years the numbers in all categories have varied widely and the number of posts reporting has varied from 131 to 164 which is more or less 25% of posts.

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

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

Bob Locker, Department Community Service Chairman

## Education

The Scholarship Committee met on Wednesday May 1, 2013 at the American Legion Department Headquarters in St. Paul. Six American Legion Memorial Scholarships, three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust Scholarships and \$13,000 in grants for Nurses Training were selected.

From an impressive number of applicants, the committee awarded six American Legion Memorial Scholarships as follows, Michael Chervenak of St Paul, Mark Geerdes of Northome, Teresa Horton of Sebeka, Hayley Johnson of Sturgeon Lake, Damian Lofstrom of Strandquist and Karlee Pfaff of New Ulm.

The three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust Scholarships were awarded to Rachel De Waard of Byron, Logan Sexton of Millville and Kelly Heck of Kelliher.

The Nurses Training grants were awarded as follows, \$1,000.00 to each of the following. Brandon Krawczyk, Katie Inveen and Joycelyn Patcher from the Minneapolis VAMC, Michael Rusch from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home, Jolene Curtis and Sara Ylinen from the St. Cloud VAMC and Phyllis Thalhuber from the Luverne Veterans Home.

I would like to thank the other members of the selection committee and we congratulate all the recipients and wish them well in their continuing education. I also wish to thank Commander Ash for this appointment. It has been an honor serving the Department in this capacity.

Gary L. Weaver, Chairman, Education Committee

## Junior Shooting

The Junior Shooting Sports Program is alive and well in Minnesota. We are small in numbers, but have a high quality program, and manage to grow a little each year. The Program uses both Sporter grade and Precision Air Rifles. The Sporter gun is limited to \$400 in cost. This allows beginning shooters to participate without incurring the high cost of the Precision rifle and other associated equipment. The matches are all shot at 10 meters (33 feet). Thus a air gun range can be set up anywhere you have 40 feet or more of space, and the added expense of ventilation and inspection is not necessary with an air gun.

Air Rifle and Air Pistol are Olympic Gold Medal Sports and one of the stated purposes of the program is to make the U. S. more competitive in Olympic competition. The program works best in the winter months when outside activity is limited. There is a full plate of competition available including the National Headquarters sponsored American Legion Match. We also compete in the USA Shooting sponsored Junior Olympic match, NRA Sectionals, and the US Army sponsored Junior match.

Many posts in the Dept of Minnesota sponsor a program, but I would like to mention a few that really have contributed a lot to the shooting sports. They include Anoka Post 102, Richfield Post 435, Forest Lake Post 225, and my own Post 149 at Morristown.

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

Leon Dahle, Junior Shooting Sports Chairman

## Oratorical Contest

The 2014 Department High School Oratorical Contest was held at Anoka Post 102 at 1:00 pm, Friday January 25th. The Semi-Final Rounds were held at Osseo Post 172 and Coon Rapids Post 334.

Caroline Donaldson, a Junior Home Schooler from Eden Prairie,

Sponsored by Wayzata Post 118, representing the 10th District, was this year's winner. On April 5th, she competed in the National Contest.

The Format is as follows: Student compete in three rounds, all 54 Department winners competed in the morning with Nine Contestants in 6 rounds. The Nine winners move onto the afternoon Semi-Finals with the three winners competing Sunday morning for the First, Second and Third place titles.

Caroline was an excellent representative from the Department of Minnesota; unfortunately she did not advance beyond the 1st round into the Semi Final Round. Donaldson received a \$1500.00 scholarship from the Dept. of MN as well as \$1500.00 from the National Contest

She has been invited to attend the Department Convention and subsequently she will speak there. We should all look forward to hearing this wonderful young woman.

Second Place winner from the 6th District was Aaron Evans; he received \$1000. Third Place winner from the 1st District was Kelly Erpelding; she received \$700.00. Fourth Place winner from the 5th District was Nathaniel Larson; he received \$500.00.

Other District Champions Competing were: 2nd District: Mackenzie Carter, 3rd District: no show 5th District: no show, 7th District: Josiah Green, 8 District: No Contestant, 9th District: Aurora Eckberg

I would like to thank all the Judges and Volunteers for their help this year. The weather was tough, and you folks are true and dedicated. I hope fun was had by all. Our contest could not be as successful as it is without you. I would also like to thank all of you that came to see these wonderful young people. It was nice to see a full house for the final. A very special thanks goes out to my assistant Chair Lori Jarrett.

Thank you Commander Ash for appointing me to this wonderful program.

Tess Davis, Oratorical Contest Chair

## Safety Patrol

The Minnesota Twins are playing some very exciting ball this year. Their efforts don't always translate into wins, but the play on the field is interesting to watch. There have been some very close games and the winning streak has been great baseball to watch. If you haven't treated your patrolers to a Twins game, consider doing it. The stadium is a great baseball facility to watch a game.

The Legionville Safety School Patrol Center is a valuable part of the Safety - School Patrol Program. It is the only facility ever developed for this purpose. The new barn is nearing completion but much remains to be done. Work is now focused on getting the classrooms ready. The camp is being readied for this summer's sessions. The dorms will be remodeled as available during the summer. I encourage all Posts to participate in this most worthwhile project. I commend the board of directors for the tremendous job they have done in providing a safe camp for our school patrolers. The commitment to this program by the Legionnaires of this Department has been most encouraging and appreciated.

I also encourage Legion posts to promote safety programs in their local communities. There are many areas of safety education and they are best addressed at the local level. I am aware of many posts that are hosting safety programs and networking with other groups to provide safety training in many areas. There were 43 residential fire fatalities in 2013 in Minnesota; down from 50 in 2012 and 56 in 2011. One structure fire was reported in Minnesota every 1.4 hours. 4,863 of a total 6,436 structure fires in Minnesota occurred in residential property. 58 percent of fire deaths occurred where people generally feel safest - at home.

Preliminary reports show traffic fatalities are down slightly from last year as 375 people were killed compared to 395 deaths in 2012. Primary contributing factors continue to be drunk driving, seat belt non-use, speeding and distracted driving. The 375 deaths include: 278 motorists - down from 293 in 2012, 60 motorcyclists - up from 55 last year, 31 pedestrians - compared to 40 in 2012, Six bicyclists - down from seven in 2012. The sad news is that this year we are seeing an increase in vehicle deaths over the same period last year. Lack of seat belt use and speed appear to be the contributing factors.

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

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

Jim Blakesley, Safety-School Patrol Chairman

## Armed Forces

"The only one of its kind in the country." The Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC), located at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport, has been hard at work this year greeting military flights and providing rest and refreshment facilities for traveling military. As the Department Representative for the AFSC, I've been involved as a member of the by-law revision sub-committee (which were successfully passed by the full board) and as the Food Representative. The later position had me working closely with the staff at the center to find out what was happening in the area of feeding our guests, and relaying that information to board members. This communication allowed the donating organizations to see that their contributions are being maximized. The future of the AFSC is likely to include a request for expansion into Terminal 2 with limited operations. The AFSC is continually in need of volunteers. If you'd like to learn more or get involved visit [www.mnafsc.org](http://www.mnafsc.org).

Joseph Jansen, American Legion Representative

## Blood

I want to thank Commander Mike for appointing me as Blood Chairman for 2013-2014. Thank you to the Department Staff for their help and support. This year two Districts did not send in blood reports. A special thank you to all the Post and District Chairmen who took the time to send in their reports.

It was noted on some reports the positive response and the increased donations when their Post hosted a blood drive with a blood mobile.

Total donations by Districts was not part of the Blood Donation report form.

There were no reported 25 gallon donors for 2013 - 2014.

District 1: 1st place Post 9 Winona; 2nd place Post 146 Adams; 3rd place Post 56 Albert Lea.

District 2: no report

District 3: 1st place Post 433 Gaylord; 2nd place Post 79 Montgomery;

3rd place, Post 225 Forest Lake

District 4: 1st place Post 39 North St Paul; 2nd place Post 542 Rosetown; 3rd place Post 474 North End.

District 5: 1st place Post 435 Minneapolis Richfield; 2nd place Post 1 Minneapolis; 3rd place 493 Viking.

District 6: 1st place Post 101 Melrose; 2nd place Post 212 Park Rapids;

3rd place Post 12 Long Prairie.

District 7: 1st place Post 186 Olivia; 2nd place Post 156 Marietta; 3rd place Post 158 Browns Valley.

District 8: 1st place Post 60 Grand Rapids; 2nd place tie Post 122 Deer

River & Post 262 Cloquet; 3rd place Post 241 Aurora.

District 9: 1st place Post East Grand Forks; 2nd place Post Dent; 3rd place Post 27 Warren

District 10: no report

Steve Nelson, Blood Chairman

## Children and Youth

I attended the annual Children and Youth Conference in September at Indianapolis. This year information on child abduction was presented with the mother of Jaycee Dugard speaking on her abduction. It was very emotional to listen to her and feel her pain. Luckily her abduction turned out where she was reunited with her mother after 18 years. Many other times it is not. She has gone through intensive therapy which is why the mother was speaking about The JAYC Foundation which stresses animal therapy. This is just one of many organizations that solicit money from the Children and Youth Commission.

I would like to thank Tom Newman for his assistance this fast year with a couple of family assistance issues that could not be resolved by myself. I have come to respect him more and more over the last couple of years as a major source of assistance. Thank you, Tom.

I have received the C&Y annual reports but sadly only about 40% are sending this report in. I need this report to make my report to National. Be sure to send in your Consolidated and Children and Youth Reports. Reporting is very important in the American legion as this is what the organization reports to congress on every year.

Terry Buraas, chairman, Children and Youth

## Citizen's Flag Alliance

Commander Mike, I would like to thank you for this appointment. It has been an honor to serve you and the Department.

A matter of special interest to the Legion is pursuit of a Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment. Joint resolutions to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States were again introduced in each the House and Senate earlier this year. There are currently 22 co-sponsors for the Senate legislation and 23 for the House.

Opponents of the amendment have led many to believe that the amendment, alone, will ban flag desecration. It will not. It would only allow Congress to write a law that, like any law, would be subject to debate, required to be voted on by both houses of Congress, and subject to veto by the President. All fifty states have asked Congress to pass the amendment and send it to the states to be ratified.

But as we know, the current government gridlock, which is also directly affecting our benefits and services as veterans and American citizens, is front and center right now - and rightly so.

The American Legion will continue to support a Constitutional Amendment to protect the United States Flag from acts of physical desecration.

John Bey, Citizens Flag Alliance Chairman

## Convention Corp.

The Department Convention Corporation committee again has had a busy year, with site and local committee visits for upcoming convention and fall conference locations. At a Department meeting last November in St. Paul, attended by the department staff and many others, the guidelines for hosting department conventions and fall conferences were reviewed. As a result of this meeting the guidelines have been updated to help show the responsibilities of each entity and to more reflect the modern times, schedules and meetings.

We presently have the years of 2014 and 2015 conventions and fall conferences awarded. We are accepting bids for the years 2016 and 2017. Please consider hosting a future convention or fall conference. If you are interested, contact the department adjutant or any member of the convention committee. Thank you to all of the past cities for being such gracious hosts.

Phil Bellefeuille, Chairman, Convention Corporation

## Employment

This year as Department Chairman of the Employment Committee, meetings were held in March in Washington DC in regards to employment for veterans. What was discussed were the new roles and responsibilities of the Local Veterans Employment Rep. (LVER) and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). The Local Veterans Employment Rep. works strictly with employers in developing jobs for veterans. Then get the information to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Rep. to let the veteran know about job opportunities. The Disabled Veterans Outreach Rep. works strictly with veterans who have severe barriers to employment. In Minnesota all WFC offices are responsible and have a high priority to work with veterans coming into the offices.

As Department Chairman of the Employment Committee, I will again be presenting the Employer of Veterans Award. Waconia MFG from Waconia, Minnesota will be receiving this award. A plaque will be presented to them at the American Legion Department Convention in Rochester, Minnesota.

During my time in Washington I was able to connect with two Legislators, Colin Peterson and Keith Ellison. These were the issues that were discussed with those Legislators:

1. TRICARE: The American Legion opposes Tri-care increases.
2. ENSURE STABILITY OF VA FUNDING: Ensure that veteran's health care will no longer be held hostage to annual budget battles in Washington.
3. PROTECT VETERANS BENEFITS AND HEALTH CARE: Protecting VA from the effects of Sequestration is not enough in budget battles of Congress, eternal vigilance is required to ensure vital programs are not getting short shrift.
4. THE VA DISABILITY CLAIMS BACKLOG: The goal is that 2015 there would be no claim waiting more than 125 days and all claims would be adjudicated with 98 percent accuracy.
5. WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR: The American Legion supports the reinstatement of the tax credit to encourage veteran employment.
6. VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS: Keep promoting contracting and subcontracting with "small business" by federal agencies.
7. VETERAN HOMELESSNESS: Devote resources necessary to end veteran homelessness by 2015.
8. GI BILL EDUCATION: Improvement for the Veterans GI Bill Education.
9. THE DISABLED VETERANS TAX/THE WIDOWS TAX: For veterans to keep their full service-connected disability benefit and military retired pay.
10. FLAG AMENDMENT: That Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.
11. FULL FUNDING OF THE LVER AND DVOP PROGRAMS: American Legion supports full funding of the Local Veterans Employment Rep. and Disabled Veterans Outreach Rep.

Dave Heidebrink, Employment Chairman

# Energy and Conservation

The American Legion Energy and Conservation program is twofold in nature: the sale of tree seedlings and the conservation of natural resources. 2014 was another great year for tree sales. The Itasca Greenhouse near Cohasset was once again very professional in dealing with our tree orders. Our total sales included 3,590 tree seedlings. Totals by District included: District 1.....30; District 2.....0; District 3.....410; District 4.....100; District 5.....30; District 6.....470; District 7.....210; District 8.....1,420; District 9.....530; District 10.....390.

District 8's Littlefork Post 490 again purchased a large order of 1,110 tree seedlings (\$633.25 worth). The Itasca Greenhouse allots a certain number of seedlings per species for us based on last year's sales. Our allotment of certain species sells out quickly. In 2015 please place your order early. It was nice to have the tree order form on the Minnesota American Legion website this year.

The 2013-2014 winter was a brutal one with high energy costs. We are constantly hearing that the U.S. is becoming less dependent on foreign oil, yet propane, fuel oil and natural gas price gouging placed a heavy burden on many families this past winter. Let your legislative representatives know of your concerns. Let's do what we can to preserve our natural resources for the use of future generations. Keep using energy-efficient appliances and recycling.

Thanks, Commander Mike, for my appointment as Energy and Conservation Chairman.

**Carl Hendrickson, Chairman, Energy and Conservation**

# Family Hospital Association

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to report on this past year's activities of the American Legion Family Hospital Association. Please keep in mind that the American Legion Family Hospital Association's fiscal year does not end until 31 July. More activity will be experienced by that time. Application history is listed below:

20 Applications were received for FY 2014

17 of these Applicants received funds from the ALFHA

1 Application was disapproved

2 Applications did not meet the requirements to receive funds from the ALFHA

Listed below is the breakdown on the number of claims and amount of payouts by District:

District	# of Claims	Dollar Payout
First	2	\$2,322
Second	2	\$4,677
Third	1	\$1,493
Fourth	2	\$453
Fifth	1	\$2,892
Sixth	1	\$0
Seventh	0	\$0
Eighth	3	\$2,400
Ninth	3	\$5,853
Tenth	5	\$9,523
TOTALS	20	\$29,613

Listed below is the financial picture for the ALFHA as of the end of May 2014:

Total Assets:	\$ 241,682
Total YTD Income:	\$ 40,439
Total YTD Expense:	\$ 32,221
YTD Net Assets Gain:	\$ 8,218

Special thanks to Laura Weber, Cathy Radil and Roger Myren for all the work they do for the American Legion Family Hospital Association. Also thank you to the board members who have served this past year. They are: Marland Ronning, Jan Walker, Jim Kellogg, Marie Goede, Nick Kakos, Mike Ash, Shirley Frederick and John Affolter.

Thanks also to the American Legion Family Hospital Association for allowing me the honor of serving as your President.

**Dennis Blue, President, American Legion Family Hospital Assn.**

# Finance

The Department Finance Committee met at the Kelly Inn, St. Cloud on September 24, 2013 and set the budget for The American Legion, Department of Minnesota for the fiscal year 2013 - 2014.

The budget was approved as follows: total revenue \$1,263,287, total, expenses \$1,263,242, resulting in a revenue exceeding expense budget by \$45.

Mileage for FY 2013 - 2014 was set at 45 cents per mile and per diem to be paid at the rate of \$45.00 per day for 2 or more day meetings. The Finance Committee received the final auditor's report from Clifton Larson Allen, our CPA firm, for the fiscal year 2012 - 2013. The report indicated a gain in net assets of \$204,146.

Revenue from USAA ( added revenue) this year helped, as membership continues to decline by about 3,500 members each year making the budget process at times difficult.

The Committee wishes to express a special thank you to Commander Mike Ash, Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, Finance Liaison Laura Weber, and all the office staff for support they provided this year.

Members of the Finance Committee include: Chair Bill Goede, Tom Burau, Floyd Kumerow, Ray DeZurik, Robin Picray, Commander Mike Ash and Department Treasurer Richard Horn.

**Bill Goede, Chair, Finance Committee**

# Fund for Hosp. Vets

The annual meeting of the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans Committee was held on October 9, 2013 at 11:04 AM at Department Headquarters.

Members present were Roger Johnson, Wes Thompson, Mike Maxa. Also present were Department ADSO Jeremy Wolfsteller and Department Auxiliary Secretary Sandi Deutsch. Mike Maxa volunteered as secretary.

The financial report was approved for 2012-2013 which showed donations at \$ 17,811.00 and a budget which was set at \$ 13,300.00 giving us a positive of \$ 4,511.00 for 2012-2013.

The annual budget for 2013-2014 was set at \$ 15,300.00 which is approximately 15 % more than the prior year because of the amount of donations we received. As of May 15, 2014, we had received \$ 9,620.00 from 50 Posts, 9 Auxiliary Units, 1 SAL Squadron and 2 individuals.

Donations from the Posts, Units, Squadrons and individuals are the only source of income for this committee. The funds received are used for notepads for the Hospitalized Veterans, Emergent need for each Hospital, Legion Lounge, Canteen Books for 4th and 5th Districts. Thank You cards, and Dept. of Minnesota Auxiliary Hospital Veterans Program.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank every Post, Unit,

Squadron and individuals that have donated and thanking in advance for any other donations received. Thank You for staying alert to the needs of Hospitalized Veterans. Thank you, thank you.

Remember that one of the cardinal principles of The American Legion is "The care of those who are now suffering from wounds, disease and want." One hundred percent of your donations go to the Hospitalized Veterans at Minneapolis VAMC, St. Cloud VAMC, Sioux Falls VAMC, and Fargo VAMC.

Thank you, Commander Mike, for appointing me to a very important committee.

**Roger D. Johnson, Chairman, Fund for Hospitalized Vets**

# Law and Order

Law and Order committee is responsible for selecting the outstanding Law enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the year. This year the committee received 4 nominees for Law Officer of the year and 1 nominee for Firefighter of the year. In April the committee met to review and discuss the applications. After some discussion there was a unanimous selection for Officer of the year and Firefighter of the year. Both nominees were nominated by North Branch Post 85. Todd Frank a 25 Year Law enforcement veteran currently working for the North Branch Police Department for 15 years as the primary investigator was selected for the Officer of the year award. Mitch Holmes has been a 7 year member of the North Branch Fire Department, along with his regular duties, Holmes is also the event coordinator for the Department.

The Law and Order committee would like to thank all The American Legion Posts who took time to select and nominate these outstanding individuals for their work in their respected communities. Thank you to the members of the Law and Order Committee, Pat Logan and Richard Abraham for their part in the selection process.

**Tom Conway, Law and Order, Chair**

# Legionnaire Insurance Trust

This past year the Minnesota American Legion received over \$105,000 from the LIT.

Important: Call 1-800-235-6943 or go to theLIT.com to register for your free \$1,000 accidental death benefit. \$5,000.00 while on American Legion business. Your registration this year will be good until August 2016. I ask every post adjutant and post commander to get all members signed up for this free accidental death insurance. Every member should receive an activation card with your membership card.

Thank you to all of you that have taken out insurance with the trust over the years and continue to provide protection for your family.

The dividends received by the Department of Minnesota are used to carry out American Legion programs such as baseball, boys' state, VA and R and many others to benefit veterans and children.

The past two years the department has received over \$310,000 The Auxiliary receives a portion of this.

The LIT has insurance for accidental death/travel accident, cancer care, disability, critical illness, dental, and long term care. This is the 49th year the Department of Minnesota have received dividends from LIT. Earnings from the 49 years total 3,550,000.

The trust has paid out over \$500,000,000 in claims to Legionnaires and Auxiliary members.

The trust has enrolled with LifeLock Identity Theft. To enroll call 1-800-LifeLock or visit www.LifeLock.com.

For additional information; the toll free number is 1-800-235-6943. Claims information 1-800-882-0220. The address is Legionnaire Insurance Trust, P O Box 219, Santa Barbara CA, 93121-0060. The web site is www.thelit.com. You may also contact Bill Barbknecht at 218-770-6264, P.O. Box 121, Underwood MN 56586.

Think about helping your American Legion, by considering LIT for your insurance needs.

A big thank you to our department staff for all they do to contribute to making the LIT a success.

If you have any questions, please call me 218-770-6264

**Bill Barbknecht, Chairman, LIT Committee**

# Legionville

This has been a very challenging year at Legionville. We have had several issues that have confronted us, but we have met them head on. We will continue to work for the benefit of Legionville and the campers that attend camp.

We aren't as far along in the completion of the new building as we would like to be, but the areas that need to be completed for opening of the camp session will be done. Both classrooms and the hallway leading to both will be complete. We will continue to complete other areas as time and man power permits. The well has been turned on and water lines run. The furnaces and air conditioners are on site and they are currently working on hooking everything up.

We are working with a new forester on our timber harvest. The one we had last year is no longer available. We are waiting for the forester's final results to determine when we can start the harvest. The plan is to do the harvesting this summer.

We are currently working with AAA on a sponsorship program. This will be a great way to give us some initial money and provide some yearly income for us. This was approved at our spring meeting.

The pavers have been engraved and Roy picked them up and has them at Legionville, so we can start the installation as time permits.

The rain gardens are all in and planted. Thanks to the grants that Roy applied for and received. With the grants we were able to pay for all the work that was accomplished.

Legionville Camporee will take place September 4th - 7th, 2014. This is a chance for everyone to come up and check out the progress on the new building. The American Legion Riders Romp will be held September 25th - 28th, 2014.

The camp and new building are now completely wireless. Thanks to several people that dug a trench from new building to house and installed the wire. Thanks to Roy's son and friend that came up to do all the installation. We were able to save money by doing it this way.

I would like to thank Commander Mike Ash & SAL Commander John Affolter for taking Legionville on as your project this year. With everyone's help we can get the project done and completed.

I would like to thank Roy Kruger for his efforts on getting the new building as far along as it is. Without his knowledge and time we wouldn't be where we are at.

I appreciate the people that took time out of their busy schedule and came up to help out.

The representatives on the board are: 1st District - Carroll Hill, 2nd District - David Hanson, 3rd District - Eugene Leifeld, 4th District - Joe Jansen, 5th District - Dennis Delong, 6th District - Wayne Gilbertson, 7th

District - Bob Hirmer, 8th District Richard Zahn, 9th District - Tom Conway, 10th District - John Torma, Legion Representative - Roger Myren, Department Commander - Mike Ash, Department Adjutant - Randy Tesdahl, Department Finance Officer - Dick Horn, Department Auxiliary President - Shirley Frederick, SAL Representative - Gary Semmel, School/Safety Chair - Jim Blakesley, 40 & 8 Representative - Bruce Harms, Finance Liaison - Laura Weber, and Legal Counsel - Don Walser.

**Wayne M. Gilbertson, President, Legionville**

# Legion Riders

The American Legion Riders of Minnesota have worked very hard this year to continue to grow the Legion Riders. Our goal is to have a Riders organization in every Post in the state that would like one.

We still need to work on more communication both up and down the ladder. Because the American Legion Riders are a program that is growing, every spring there may be some reluctance to send information about officers and membership to department or district reps. Without that information, it is difficult to make sure information is getting to the right person at the post.

Thank you Commander Mike Ash for this appointment.

**Rick Oelschlager, American Legion Riders Liaison**

# Legislative

The Legislative Committee was chaired by Robert Hart and ably assisted by Lyle Folz, Gary Larson and Larry Ryan.

The Minnesota Legislative session was expected to be fairly mundane given what we believed to be a modest agenda put together by the Commanders Task Force. However, an early threat to VA funding to phase 3 of the Minneapolis Veterans Home as well as a plan to change the admission rules especially as it related to spouses of veterans, disrupted the calm. It seems that those challenges were set aside, at least for now, when the voices of the veteran community were heard.

The Commanders' Task Force, of which the American Legion is a part, supports a change in the vehicle registration taxes for 100% service connected veterans.

The CTF Supported amending the Veteran Homestead Tax exemption and that was extended from 5 to 8 years.

We also expect progress in certification of Veteran-owned small businesses so that they can compete for business and contracts at the state level without having to go through the federal certification process.

In addition to action at the State level, the American Legion Washington DC Conference went well with appointments with most representatives and Senators.

Our priorities at the national level included protecting Veterans and DOD from harmful cuts due to sequestration. Improving the disability claims process to eliminate the VA Claims backlog. VA Disability compensation should not be offset from retired pay regardless of the VA rating percentage. Nor should the survivor benefits from military Survivor Benefit Plan.

We oppose any further increases in TRICARE Fees, including prescription drugs fees.

We feel the nation should provide quality education through a Post 9/11 GI Bill.

And the American Legion continues to support legislation to safeguard our nation's flag from physical desecration.

But at this time all of this is overshadowed by the horrendous "epidemic of VA Mismanagement" at the Federal level. While some senior administrators have stepped down, The American Legion is calling for criminal investigations surrounding secret waiting lists that may be responsible for scores of veteran deaths.

The clamor to correct these problems must ring at the state as well as the Federal level so I expect this will be well into the coming year.

I thank Commander Ash for the confidence placed in me this year and this concludes my report.

**Robert Hart, Legislative Chairman**

# Membership

The 2013 -2014 membership year has been exciting and contained new challenges and opportunities. The year began with planning and introducing a 5-year membership plan which each Department presented to National. The plan is a guide for developing a culture for increasing membership and post development.

American Legion's Tools of Opportunity Learning Sharing (AI's Tools) was the theme used to promote the awareness of all the tools the American Legion has for recruiting, post development and for learning more about our organization. A new challenge this year was the Version 2014 Membership Contest.

The District Membership Contest goals were changed to focus more on attaining National membership goals. The Premier Race point system was also adjusted to enhance friendly competition between Districts. The awareness and use of "Mylegion.org" by Districts and Posts as a tool for recruiting and sourcing eligible veterans increased this year.

One of the factors for the increase in use of "Mylegion.org" was the District Revitalizations held in the 4th and 5th Districts. A National representative traveled to Minnesota two separate times to assist with the training and set-up of the revitalization efforts which provided invaluable hands-on experience for all Districts.

Congratulations to 3rd District Commander Mark Dvorak along with his whole District and membership team for winning the Premier Race Version 2014.

I commend all the Minnesota Districts, Posts and members for all the hard work that is put into retaining membership. I am honored to have been your Department Membership Chairman and to have shared in the tireless volunteer efforts our dedicated members provide to keep our organization strong.

The Department of Minnesota was one of the top states nationally for a good part of the year until we started getting near the 95% goal. Even though we started dropping in the National standings for percentage towards goal, our total number of actual members remains near the highest in the Nation.

Recruiting for the 2014 membership year is not over until Dec. 31, 2014. Continue to ask and ask again veterans to be a part of our American Legion Family, the largest wartime veterans service organization in the nation.

**Tom Fernlund, Department Membership Director**

## National Security/ Foreign Relations

The planning and instructional meeting for the District Commanders, NS/FR Department Committee and District NS/FR Chairs was held on September 27-29, 2013 at Camp Ripley. The Department Committee in attendance were: Jay Beebe, Don Amundson, Jane Ellefson, Richard Gosse and Curtis Norenberg.

The judging and selection of winners from the 12 nominees for the Outstanding Guard and Reserve Persons was done on the first day by the Department NS/FR Committee. Winners included two from the Army National Guard (a change due to larger numbers assigned state wide), Air National Guard, and Navy Reserve.

The Saturday and Sunday morning meetings were attended by eight District Commanders and nine of the District Chairs plus the Department Commander Mike Ash and invited guest speakers for the program. The Post Commander gave a brief and overview of Camp Ripley. A guided tour was given of areas of interest on Post that included: Val Halla Residence, military museum, automated rifle ranges, flight simulators, village combat training area, observed ROTC field training and state of the art distance education facilities. The Sunday morning session included duties and responsibilities of NS/FR that included: Beyond the Yellow Ribbon and family support, Outstanding Enlisted Program, Civil Air Patrol, ROTC, National Security/Foreign Relations, POW/MIA activities, and liaison with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

The Outstanding Enlisted Award winners and their families, plus Post and unit commanders, numbering over 45, were hosted at a reception at the Fall Conference at Marshall on October 24-26, 2013. Winners were awarded a plaque with other nominees award framed certificates. The five Civil Air Patrol scholarship winners were also announced. The Conference concluded with a presentation by Al Zdon on the 100th Anniversary of the Civil War including the Battle of Gettysburg with an outstanding historical perspective.

The Washington, D. C. America Legion Conference was attended on March 23-26, 2014 by committee delegates Don Amundson and Richard Gosse along with Curtis Norenberg on the National Commission. Support is appreciated from all Department Posts and the American Legion Family that is given to NS/FR programs and the outstanding support of our Minnesota men and women that serve in our military.

**Curtis Norenberg, Chairman, National Security/Foreign Relations**

## Operation Post Home

During my travels this year I have had the opportunity to promote the Operation Post Home Award. Yet, there still seems to me some confusion out there as to just what this award entails. Operation Post Home is a program through which The American Legion Post Home is open to citizens of the community, especially veterans, in need of regularly scheduled educational, recreational, and social activities. In the case of veterans, you may be inviting them to a place where you can maybe have a cup of coffee or play some cards and just meet up with good friends to chat.

It became an official program when Resolution #12 was adopted at the NEC spring meeting of 1978. This action came about after a successful pilot program at Post 71 in Duluth and an additional program in Minneapolis at the Gopher Post. This committee falls under the close watch of the VA&R program.

This gives each post an opportunity to recognize that one special individual who goes the extra mile and gives without any thought of what they get in return. While I have received a couple of applications for Volunteer of the Year already it is always good to see more. The applications will be reviewed by a committee and the award will be given out at our department convention in Rochester.

Commander Ash, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve in this capacity during your year of leadership.

**Denise A. Milton, Chairman, Operations Post Home**

## Pheasant Dinner

The 72nd Annual Hospitalized Veterans Pheasant Dinner Program was again a great success. There were 250 Posts, Units, Squadrons, Voitures and other donations contributing the equivalent of 7,521 pheasants. These figures reflect Legion donations only. Contributions came from all areas of the state and a few from outside Minnesota.

There were 1587 actual pheasants used to feed the veterans in 14 hospitals and/or Veterans Homes involved which are: Minneapolis and St. Cloud VAMC's, Sioux Falls SD and Fargo ND VAMC's, Minnesota Veterans homes at Minneapolis, Fergus Falls, Hastings, Dresbach, Silver Bay, and Luverne, the veterans in St. Peter, and Good Samaritan Society Nursing Home in Brainerd, Post Home 167 - Willmar and Post Home 602 - Hillman. The Pheasant Dinners served at the fourteen locations were deliciously prepared and enjoyed by all.

American Legion Money taken in this past year was \$52,646.00 which is \$3,065.00 less than last year's total of \$55,711.00 (The V.F.W. is a joint sponsor of the dinners only). When you subtract the Legions share of the costs of the pheasants (\$9,482.60) this leaves \$43,164.00 remaining which was put into the American Legion Hospitalized Veterans Dinner DEDICATED FUND which was established 34 1/2 years ago. This DEDICATED FUND is administered by the department, and can be used only to benefit hospitalized and disabled veterans.

Since the DEDICATED FUND was established 34 1/2 years ago, \$1,542,391.73 was spent on 697 projects to aid hospitalized and disabled veterans. If you include the Legion's share of the cost of pheasants used for the dinners over the past 34 years, would bring the total expenditures to \$1,663,437.00. We research the projects and they must be approved by our committee before they can be funded.

The second District American Legion and Auxiliary continue to be the highest donating district in the state with almost 30% of the donations coming from that district.

There were 34 donations of 50 or more pheasants - 7 more than last year. OWATONNA was 1st in the Legion Donations with 1,240. BLUE EARTH was 2nd with 437, ELMORE was 3rd with 428 and WINNEBAGO are 4th with 286, WELCOME was 5th with 150. Because of limited space, we are unable to list additional donations but they will be recognized at the Department Convention. One Auxiliary Unit we must mention is Bemidji with 71. We wish to thank all the Posts, Units, Squadrons, Voitures, individuals and other donors who are not mentioned here because of space. Your help is greatly needed and appreciated.

At the Department Convention in Rochester we will have a pheasant display booth with listing sheets of all donations. At this time, we will award one pheasant pin to each Post, Unit, Squadron and Voiture that contributed.

I want to thank Art Rosin, Bob "Fuzz" Martin, Committee Vice Chairmen, the Department and District Officers, the staff at the Department office, The Minnesota Legionnaire and to everyone in bring-

ing this year's program to a successful conclusion and to all those who helped make this year's Pheasant Dinner Program another successful year. Respectfully submitted,

**Chuck Stone, Chairman, Hospitalized Veterans Pheasant Dinners**

## Post Development

The Post Development and Revitalization Committee met at Legionville Camporee for its organizational meeting. Bill Stein was elected as chairman and Bill Brockberg was elected secretary.

Discussion was made on problems that may arise for posts throughout the Department of Minnesota. We did not have an annual training session this year. Fall Conference was held in Marshall. We had a round table discussion on what might cause or begin post problems stating that lack of communication is also a major problem. As a group, we decided to have two committee members visit a post that is having a problem and requesting help.

Some of us took part in helping the 4th district in getting more membership into the district. I'm not sure of the final total of new members added to the district but the membership challenge of getting new members was a huge success. Post Development is what helps posts obtain positive activities.

If your post or if you know of any post that would like to speak to anyone in the committee or the committee as a whole, please contact any of us. Thank you to members Bill Brockberg, Thomas Norgaard, Carroll Partridge, and Dennis Lewison.

**Bill Stein, Chairman, Post Development**

## Public Relations

The Public Relations Committee had big goals this year. We moved very aggressively into the social media arena. The Public Relations committee provided all 10 Districts with IPADs. The purpose of the IPADs was to provide instant access to social media and to promote the activities in their district. The districts had a very successful first year. The first year is always a learning time. Some Districts used the resources more than others. Over the year the Public Relations Committee has monitored the activities of each district as well as made adjustments with those using the IPADs and the social media for the districts. Through the ups and downs and along with the learning curves that each district has had, there have been a lot of positive results. There were two districts that have had even received new members due to their face book pages. The districts used their Facebook page for district communication with everything from what's happening in the district, to pictures of events, as well as state and national information. It's always exciting to share all the things that the members of the American Legion family do. With social media we are able to share what we are doing with the world not just the person that we are talking to.

We continue to work within the professional sports arena, making sure that the American Legion has a presence during their events.

We had success with live streaming the Department Convention and Fall conference. The streaming of events has allowed members that are not able to attend the events to watch the events.

We worked with the membership Director to provide promotional posters that were distributed throughout the state. We continue to provide promotional ads during Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

There were many great things that happened this year. The Committee's mission is to help our Veterans, assist Posts in their membership programs, and to get the mission of the American Legion out to as many people as possible throughout the state of Minnesota in as many sources of media as possible. The goal is to attract Veterans of all ages, gender and nationality and open doors through technology.

**Teresa Ash, Chairman, Public Relations Committee**

## Rehabilitation

The Minnesota American Standing Department Rehabilitation Committee is a five member committee comprised of organizational members with a background, knowledge, or professional experience related to the delivery of VA benefits, programs, and services. Committee members are volunteers who serve terms from two to five years. Past and present committee members have been former directors or administrators Federal and State department of Veteran Affairs, County Veteran Service Officers, Vet Center Team Leaders, American Legion Sr. Organizational Leadership or past Department Service Officers.

Currently our committee of five volunteers is staffed by Wilson Spence III, Jeff Johnson, Lauri Brook, Luke Weinandt, and myself.

This has been again an action packed, weather challenged and informative year. Together with Post Service Officers, District VA/R Chairman and Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and the SAL we have assisted and provided a wealth of information and services to the Veterans of Minnesota.

Most importantly, this year, we have seen the resignation of the Deputy Commissioner of Health from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs after one year of service to the calling of the resignation of Department of Secretary Veteran Affairs Secretary Shinseki by our National Commander the Honorable Dan Dellinger.

These events affect us all, and cause us to pause and recognize that the work of the VA/R committee is essential to provide quality services for our veterans and provide assistance to agencies who strive to serve them. This is no easy task, and I wish to thank all the members of the VA/R team.

I especially wish to thank the work of our Department Service Officer, Tom Newman and the Assistant Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller, and our St. Cloud Hospital Service Office Gerald Lenorud for the countless hours they put in serving Veterans on the front lines pre and post service. Lastly the Headquarters staff of St. Paul is the best. I have been honored to serve as the Chairman of this committee for the past year, thank you.

**Phil Ringstrom Chairman, Rehabilitation Committee.**

## Resolutions

The resolutions assignment committee is comprised of three (3) members, Chairman Jeff Olson, Stillwater; Don Schroedl, Minneapolis and Merlyn Haugen, Argyle. The responsibilities of the committee include the review of all resolutions submitted to the department convention for consideration. After the review of all resolutions the committee assigns them to a committee for action. During the convention each committee chair reports the actions of the committee to the gathered delegates who have the final authority on all resolutions. The resolutions assignment committee completes a final report on the actions taken on the floor of the convention on all resolutions.

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

**Jeff Olson, Chairman, Resolutions**

## Sons of the American Legion

The Sons of the American Legion are nearing their All Time High goal of 11,000 members. Their most important job is obtaining the renewals and signing up new members.

The Minnesota S.A.L. continues to do an excellent job in supporting the Legion Family Child Welfare program at the National level.

The Spring and Fall Conferences are well attended, with informative reports from the members attending. The S.A.L. P.U.F.L. membership continues to grow.

The Commander's project is to support Legionville in Brainerd. Posts and Auxiliaries are welcome to donate to this project, as well. Donations may be sent to Department Headquarters.

The Annual Campout was held at Legionville at Brainerd on June 27, 28, & 29. All Legion Family members are welcome to attend the Campout. Good attendance and good time every year.

A special thank you to Walt Folendorf in the North and to Brian Medinnus in South for their assistance. Thanks to the Department Headquarters staff for their help. Thank You to Commander Mike Ash for asking me to chair this important program of The American Legion.

**Raymond D. Ozmun, Chairman, Sons of the American Legion**

## Sports: Baseball

Greetings from the Minnesota Baseball Committee. Current members of the Committee are Mike Perry, State Director; Darwin Berg Vice director, Division I; Al Davis, Vice Director Division II; District Directors 1-Jarvis Anderson, 2-Vern Kitzberg, 3-Bruce Young, 4-Gail Kalata, 5-Jim Larson, 6-Wes Thompson, 7-Mike Gort, 8-Dave Kunz, 9-Jeff Miller, 10-Gene Berg and Junior Director Jim Peck.

This past year, we welcomed to the committee Jim Larson from District 5. We also offer a special note of thanks to the supporting posts, baseball associations, coaches and part time administrators who contribute to Minnesota Legion Baseball and makes it the most elite program in the country.

In 2013 at the division I level, we introduced the Sub State format which was a huge success with competitive play and increase fan attendance. Nine of the fifteen sub states required an extra game to determine the winner.

State tournaments for 2013 were held in Edina-Division I with Eden Prairie emerging as state champions and Burnsville as Runner-Up. Division II was held in Bird Island with LaCrescent the Champion and Ely the runner-Up. Eagan hosted the Junior Tournament with Eden Prairie the Champion and Excelsior the Runner Up.

Sites for the 2014 State Tournaments will be Eagan hosting division I, Luverne division II and Apple Valley the Junior Tournament. During our Division I banquet we will be inducting Dennis Frey from Howard Lake in the Hall of Fame. Other award recipients will be Scott Hackett from Eden Prairie as Coach of the year and Dean Acheson of Moorhead as Graduate of the Year. At the Division II banquet, Bird Island and Olivia will receive the Post of the Year Award.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Al Zdon, Laura Weber and Gail Kalata for their work throughout the year, which enables our baseball committee to function effectively.

**Mike Perry, Director, American Legion Baseball**

## Sports: Bowling

The Legion 2014 State bowling tournament was held in Moorhead, hosted by Post 21 at the Sunset Lanes. The number of bowlers was down by 35%, this also brings payout lower than normal. We had a total of 495 bowler's total, Legion, Auxiliary and SAL. The Legion had 110 teams; Auxiliary had a total of 14 teams bowl. The winning team in the Legion went to Springfield Post 257 with a score of 2718. Springfield bowled the first weekend and that score held up for 8 weekends. The Auxiliary team event went to Cold Spring Post 455 with a score of 2630. Legion singles went to Gary Holtz of Litchfield Post 104 with a score of 765. Doubles went to Kurt Kratz - Bob Reiner with a score of 1414 from Springfield Post 257. The Auxiliary Singles went to Jackie Lagoon with a score of 743 from Mahtomedi Post 507. Doubles went to Kelly Miller - Naomi Christopherson with a score of 1360 from North Branch Post 85.

The 2015 tournament will be hosted by the Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 at the Brunswick Bowling Lanes in Brooklyn Park. They will have 28 lanes available for the Legion to use. The paperwork will be out in the fall and will be posted on the web site as it was this year.

We are looking for bids for the 2016 tournament. Interested Posts can contact me.

**John Torma, Bowling Chairman**

## Strategic Planning

### Committee Summary

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is impaneled to design, develop and make recommendations, vetted at the District level, to The Department of Minnesota. These recommendations must include the following: 1. Rationale (need), 2. Scope (department and district impact), 3. Value (if approved and implemented), 4. Cost (if not implemented), 5. Solicit input from department executives and staff, as needed, and engage district leadership as partners to ensure adequate coverage and confirm specific issues are addressed within each recommendation, 6. Each recommendation must be strategic in nature with related tactics to facilitate measurable and successful outcomes.

The committee maintained, as a focus, membership growth and sustainability. Additional priorities included intra-department communications at the District level and succession planning. Recommendations will cover "Lessons Learned" from current-state (Call-In Structure, Department/District Communication, Education and Continuity.) "Process Improvement" opportunities will be recommended at the Department level. Some recommendations may be implemented as early as the 2014 Fall Conference.

The 2013-2014 SPC members are: Dan Williams, Chair; Peggy Moon, Secretary; Roger Olson, Committee Member; Richard Wog, Committee Member; Merlin Ellefson, Committee Member; Mike Ash, Department Commander; Don Pankake, Jr. Past Commander; Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant; Dan Ludwig, Special Advisor.

The SPC completed the year on track. We worked very well as a group and leveraged our combined experiences. This approach allowed the SPC to now serve as a high-value entity within the Department of Minnesota.

### Scope

Our Scope includes but is not limited to: Working as a complement to Department Membership Director on sustainable membership over a rolling 5-year period, working with Districts on Education, Succession Planning, Communication, Department Call-In Structure and Committee / Program consistency with National where possible.

## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Tom Newman



### Got VA Health Care?

As most are already well aware the Federal Dept. of Veterans Affairs is facing a challenging time right now. This means that ultimately our Veterans, and to a lesser extent those of us who work within the veteran services community, to include anyone else vested in the health and wellbeing of veterans, will quite likely be too. I mean after all, events prompting such national news headlines which have referenced secret patient wait lists, veterans dying in line awaiting health care, VA medical manipulating of numbers so patient access times to care look better than they really are, bonuses, reports of "systemic" failures, and Sr. VA leadership resignations, just to name a few, is all BIG! I would ask you, how can we not be impacted with the magnitude of changes which will need to be made, or are now, very likely, on the horizon?

In my opinion, due to local VA leadership in Minnesota remaining receptive to concerns expressed by our County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO's), to include representatives from the Minnesota Veteran Service Organizations (VSO's), as well as from Veterans and their families, it appears we're much better off than perhaps many other parts of the country. I've always felt pleasantly encouraged when a particular VA entity in Minnesota has hosted open meetings for our Veteran benefit professionals, you know those who know what don't smell right, in order to inform but also prompt the bringing forward of concerns in a constructive environment. For example, the St. Cloud VA Medical System hosts a regularly scheduled meeting for VSO's held every quarter. I think the VA needs to implement more of these types of meetings - as we need to remain vigilant so problems and issues get identified and resolved before they ever get an opportunity to take root.

In the spirit of meetings intended to inform and to encourage constructive dialog for the benefit of our veterans, I would ask you all to consider attending our upcoming VA/R meeting which will be taking place on Wednesday, 16 July at 4:00 p.m. in ballroom - 1 of the Marriott Hotel in Rochester, MN. We're anticipating a number of guest presenters representing both the Federal and State Dept. of Veterans Affairs, as well as other closely affiliated program/agency representatives who will be providing valuable updates.

[tnewman@mnlegion.org](mailto:tnewman@mnlegion.org)

## Reports (Cont.)

### Schedule

The SPC is on track to present findings and recommendations at the July DEC. We envision no specific roadblocks or insurmountable barriers as long as we continue to work in collaboration with Department and District Leadership.

### Activities

At our December meeting we invited Department Vice Commanders, District Commanders, Candidates for 2014 District Commanders and Special Guest, National Vice Commander Satrom.

The meeting went well and received positive feedback. The District participants requested and received copies of the 3rd District Training Manual with permission to update for the needs of their Districts. This was our second year inviting Department Vice Commanders and District Commanders to the December meeting and the first year the SPC invited incoming District Commanders. Next Year, the SPC should work closer with incumbent District Commanders to make sure each candidate for District Commander receives an invitation.

### Call-In Structure:

- Reviewed current Call-In Structure.
- Provided Initial SPC thoughts, Taking into consideration committees/programs and mandates and By-Laws.
- SPC members will communicate with Districts for input and additional options.
- Final draft created in consultation with Department Staff and Department Judge Advocate

The SPC worked with all districts throughout May and June to communicate the Call-In Structure recommendations. All issues and questions will be addressed and covered within this final report.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Dan J. Williams, Chair, Strategic Planning Committee**

## Trophies and Awards

Your Trophies and Awards Committee of the Department of Minnesota met on July 18, 2013 at the Mahanomen High School in Mahanomen, Minnesota. After considering all briefs and yearbooks presented, the following awards were made:

### Father L.J. Fortin Trophy

To the Post which contributed the most outstanding record in promotion of The American Legion's "Back To God" movement  
Gopher Post 440, Minneapolis

### Lindell Community Service Bell

To the Post accomplishing the most outstanding single piece of community service work during the year  
East Grand Forks Post 157, East Grand Forks

### Frank J. Ring Boy Scout Trophy

To the Post with the most outstanding Boy Scout program during the year

## Taps

**Purdy, Jerry S.**, 88, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 1, 2014. He served in the Azores as a radioman. He was a member of Golden Valley Post 523.

**Manson, Earl**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died June 12, 2014. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Hosek, Roger**, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 22, 2014. He was a member of Bertha Post 366.

**Anderson, Donald Berhard**, 88, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died May 23, 2014. He made many crossings of the Atlantic on cargo ships. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

**Lange, Robert "Bear,"** 75, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 13, 2014. He was a machinist mate who served aboard the USS Higbee, DDR 806. He served in the engine room. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

**Kraemer, Werner Joseph**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 12, 2014. He was a motor machinist third class. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

**Lundquist, James**, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 10, 2014. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

## Darwin Berg, 71, long time Legion baseball director

Darwin Berg, 71, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 10, 2014. He was a past commander of Hutchinson Post 96.

He was a three sport athlete in high school at Winthrop, and later played town ball.

He was vice director in charge of Division II baseball in the American Legion program from 1997 to 2003 and then became state director where he served for the next nine years.

He returned as a vice director this past year after serving as director emeritus.

He is survived by his

two children, Brian and Brenda, and four grandchildren.



**DARWIN BERG**

Silver Star Post 428, Waite Park

### Levi M. Hall School Patrol Trophy

For outstanding School Patrol activity  
Edward B. Cutter Post 102, Anoka

### Joseph W. Finley Trophy

To the Post with the best all-around program of Post activities  
Erickson-Strom Post 186, Olivia

### Stafford King Conservation Trophy

To the Post or individual with the best conservation program  
East Grand Forks Post 157, East Grand Forks

### Americanism Trophy

To the Post with the best Americanism program  
3M Post 599, St. Paul

### Nate V. Keller Civilian Defense Trophy

To the Post with the best Civilian Defense program  
NO ENTRIES

### Lloyd Grossnickle

To the Post with the most outstanding single Children & Youth project  
Edward B. Cutter Post 102, Anoka

### Hanson Education Trophy

To the Post contributing most to the field of education  
Silver Star Post 428, Waite Park

We continue to have low participation with the entries to this program.

I have and will continue to encourage our Posts to submit reports on all the wonderful things they do in their communities that qualify for the many categories within this program. It's a shame that our Posts are hesitant to receive credit for all their hard work. This committee is always receptive to any and all entries.

**Michael Schaffer, Trophies and Awards chairman**



**STILL BUSY** -- Past Department Commander Don Pankake has become an active member of The American Legion Amateur Radio Club. His call name is W8EVJ.

**Scherer, Alcuin M.**, 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died June 13, 2014. He served for 20 years. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

**Fjelstad, Herbert H.**, 79, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 2, 2014. He was a member of Millville Post 579.

**Studer, Darol S.**, 78, Marine Veteran of the Korean War, died June 3, 2014. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

**Bohaty, James William**, 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 28, 2014. He served in Korea. He was a member of Rush City Post 93.

**Rowe, Marjorie M.**, 89, Women's Army Corps veteran of World War II, died May 27, 2014. She was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

**Nelson, Gordon**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died May 22, 2014. He was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

**Hinds, Edward Neill**, 81, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 23, 2014. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

**Formo, Gordon Lester**, 85, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 28, 2014. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

## National Convention

Continued from Page 1

day.

The Westin Charlotte and the Hilton Charlotte Center City will be the two official hotels for the Legion.

The SAL will hold its convention at the Charlotte Convention center on Friday and Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 22-24.

The registration hours for the Minnesota delegation will be Friday, Aug. 22, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. Registration will be in Governor VI.

Those who are unable to register at those times should arrange for someone else to pick up their packet.

The Minnesota caucus will be at the Sheraton in Mecklenburg 2 and 3 on Monday, Aug. 25, from 8-10 a.m.

The Minnesota Party will also be at the Sheraton on Monday, Aug. 25, starting with a cash bar at 5 p.m. It will also be held in Mecklenburg 2 and 3. There will be a Jimmy Buffet theme and Hawaiian shirts and flip flops are encouraged attire.

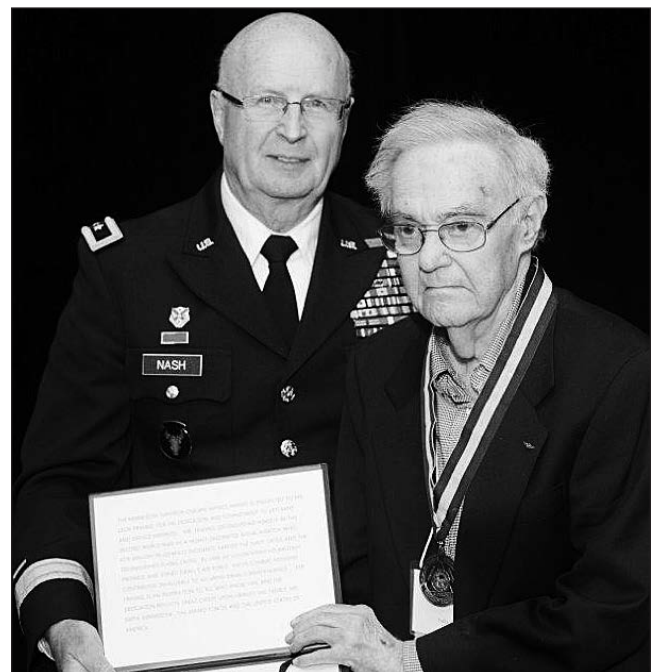
The burgers and fixings will be set out at 6 p.m., followed by music and dancing. Tickets are \$28 and must be purchased in advance.

The National Commander's Banquet will be held at the convention center on Tuesday, Aug. 26, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45. The State Dinner will be at 7 p.m. the following night.

Order sheets for the Minnesota Party and the National's Commander's Banquet are available through Department Headquarters. To order tickets for the States Dinner must be purchased through the Auxiliary Headquarters.

The annual parade at the convention will be Sunday, Aug. 24, at 4 p.m. There will be a patriotic religious service on Sunday at 11 a.m. at the convention center.

Charlotte is named after King George III's wife, and it is the second largest banking center in the United States. There are several tours available, including a brewery, NASCAR, and the Billy Graham Library.



**FRANKEL HONORED** -- Major Gen. Richard Nash, adjutant general for the Minnesota National Guard, presented Leon Frankel a certificate honoring him for his dual service in the 1940s. Frankel earned a Navy Cross flying a torpedo bomber in World War II, and then flew fighters in 1948 for the Isreal Air Force Squadron 101, the first squadron for that nation. Frankel was honored by the Jewish Community Relations Council at a recent dinner in the Twin Cities.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

Brian Medinnus  
Commander



Time has flown by- Down to my last article for the Legionnaire. It has been a good year for the 1st District. We have made changes that I feel have benefitted the District now and will continue to do so in the future.

Membership: The District still needs 105 Memberships to reach the 96% goal. We can get a part of the prize that goes to any District that can reach 96% by State Convention. It would be nice to get a share of the prize for the District. I am asking all District Posts to dig deep and help us reach this goal.

Post Consolidated Reports- If your Post has not turned one in yet- please do so ASAP. Commander Mike is looking for 100% turn in from all Districts. We are down to our last hand full-Adjutant Wayne will be contacting Posts who have not turned in their Report to assist in getting this done.

State Convention is in Rochester July 17-19. Please make your plans to attend. There is no reason why the 1st District is not well represented because it is in our backyard. Please make plans to attend.

## SECOND DISTRICT

Eugene Olsword  
Commander



It is time for me to turn over the reins of Commander to Jennifer Kafka of Post 89 in Blue Earth. This will take place at change-over after the Department Convention in Rochester in July. I want to wish Jennifer well and know she will do a good job as Commander for year 2014-2015. She is also the FIRST Lady Commander the District has had. As we can see, history is always in the making.

Membership for my year as been very good. I did not make the 95.00% I was hoping for, however, we still had a good year. The District ended up with 93.86% which is 524 short of goal. With the 84 posts in the District, we ended up with 33 posts at goal with 23 posts exceeding goal with 56 new members. Membership is always easy to get and it takes everyone to go out and do their part for their posts. The top post is Earl Christopherson Post 274 in Milroy with 112.24%. Congratulations to Commander Don Pals and the Membership for this achievement. Commander Don is going to be the District Vice Commander for Redwood and Brown Counties for this coming year.

At the District Convention held on June 7th, I presented to Vice Commander Ryan Hill the "Top Banana Award". This was something I started this year in the District without the Vice Commander's knowledge. It is a brass banana paperweight given to the Vice Commander with the highest percentage which was 95.30%. Ryan asked me permission to make it a "traveling award" in the future which I granted.

In closing, I want to thank all my officers for their great work and support and all the posts in the District for their continued support of The American Legion and all its programs. God Bless America.

## THIRD DISTRICT

Mark Dvorak  
Commander



It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve the Third District this past year. Thank you to all the posts that invited my wife and I to your post functions - your hospitality will long be remembered and much appreciated!

The dedication and commitment to the principles of the American Legion is strong throughout the Third District.

As we go into the 2014-2015 membership year - we have to come up with ideas that can be implemented to attract and keep new members. My home post has an open house planned for mid-October. Last year we held an open house and the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL added a total of 12 new members: three Gulf War vets, one Vietnam Vet and one young Marine, the remaining joined the SAL or Auxiliary.

Our post also is planning on writing a monthly article for the local paper titled: "Did You Know..." and provide basic information about a Legion, Auxiliary, SAL or Legion Riders fact or program.

We have an amazing organization called the American Legion and we must get the word out to the general public.

The New Prague Veterans Honor Guard did an outstanding job performing their duties as Third District Color Guard. Thank you to Randy Fierst and the other members for their commitment to the Third District.

I would like to again thank all the officers of the Third District for your support, commitment and dedication to the American Legion.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

Carroll Partridge  
Commander



Hello and goodbye by 4th District.

This is my last column in the Legionnaire.

First, thanks for your support the last "two" years. I have learned so much about the American Legion and became friends with so many. This has been a great experience.

Keep up the good work for the 4th District and your posts.

As always, it's great to see Daryl and the guys at Creekside.

See everyone at the District meeting in Aug. It's at my home post, St.Paul, Eagles 33.

Thanks again.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

Robert Johnson  
Commander



We had a great turnout at our annual convention in Bloomington. Department Commander Mike Ash addressed our convention. He spoke of the continuing need to pursue membership and recognized a job well done by the Fighting 5th. Commander Ash personally thanked Commander Johnson and expressed his appreciation for the support the 5th District has given him during his term in office. Other speakers included Department Vice Commander Mickey Ostrum, Marland Ronning, Alternate NEC, Peggy Moon, Candidate for Department Commander, Mike Schaffer, candidate for Department Commander and Dan Williams 4th District Commander.

We approved a Resolution to be forwarded to the Department of Minnesota to realign the State Legion baseball tournament by the official Districts rather than the sub-state regions currently in place.

Election of Officers is one of the most important issues we deal with at the Convention. Here are the 5th District Officers for 2014-2015: Commander Wayne Glanton, 1st Vice Commander Gary Martin, 2nd Vice Commander Ray Eiden, 3rd Vice Commander Walt Lyndsley, and Finance Officer Lynne Nottage. New Executive Board members include: John Austin, Joe Bayer, and Jim Munson. National Delegates are: Bob Johnson, Wayne Glanton, Gary Martin, and Alternate National Delegate Don Schroedl.

We look forward to the Department Convention in Rochester and wish all of our newly elected officers the very best in the upcoming Legion Year.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

Harold Meyer Jr.  
Commander



Greetings from the mighty 7th district

This will be my last newsletter as your commander. A big thank you goes out to my vice-commanders and officers of the district. In my book they did an outstanding job this year, and to all of the membership teams that worked so hard.

I know you will help our commander elect Victor Gades and his new incoming officers for the next year and try and make it a better year than the last. With that note we need to get in your new officer's list sent in to the state. If you still have the same officers as the last year you still have to send in a new officers report.

Consolidated reports need to be sent in now. The district is really lagging behind this year and we need to step up and get these reports in as soon as possible.

My year was a very rewarding for me. I had met a lot of great people and made many more friends. Thanks go out to all of the posts that invited me to their programs and all of the speeches I gave during their membership dinners. I think I gained a few more pounds then I needed. I put a lot of miles on this last year and it was well worth it. Thank you to all.

I hope to see a lot of you down the road in the coming year and wish you well in whatever you do. Remember that we all do this for the Veterans and their families.

God bless. God bless you, God bless America, and God bless our troops.

## TENTH DISTRICT

Richard Juhl  
Commander



Well, it's that time of the year again. By the time you read this, the District Convention will be in the books. We know who will lead us through the next year and I congratulate them.

They should be honored that you have chosen to put your faith in them. I know that I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve you as your commander this past year.

It is a huge responsibility and one that I took very seriously. I hope I have lived up to the task that you entrusted me with. It's been a busy year but I wouldn't trade one minute of it. I have met a lot of new people, made a lot of new friends and learned a lot. I have learned that there are a lot of different ways to approach our tasks and challenges. It is amazing to watch the creativity, enthusiasm and imagination of the Legion family at work.

"To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness" has never been more meaningful than it is today. While our numbers may be smaller, my experience has shown that the devotion and dedication is as strong as ever. I came into this year with one goal, to leave it a little better than I found it. Hopefully I did that.

But let me be clear. If there is credit to be taken for this year or good that came from it, it is you who deserve the credit. The work of all of the members of the American Legion family is what makes us who we are and makes us the greatest veterans' organization in the world.

Thank you for the warmth, friendship and support you have shown me and if you continue that with our new leaders, we can't fail.

I thank you from my heart and I salute you. Semper Fi.

## Minneapolis VA

Continued from Page 1

auditors why the two facilities were flagged.

Otherwise, the audits revealed that the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and the St. Cloud VA system, were among the best in the country for wait times. Minneapolis scheduled 98 percent of its appointments within 30 days and St. Cloud scheduled 97 percent of its appointments in that timeframe.

Specialty care is one area where the wait times increase, the audit said, and Kelly agreed that has always been a problem area.

Three areas in particular have been audiology, eye exams, and orthopedic care, and Kelly said those areas are being worked on. He said the Minneapolis VA works closely with the University of Minnesota to provide some highly specialized care.

"The VA has been very well funded over the last few years, but we have also experienced significant growth. That's a good thing, because it means we're serving more veterans, but it has stressed the system."

This past year, there was a two percent growth at the Minneapolis medical center, but an 11 percent growth at the 13 community-based outpatient clinics in Minnesota.

An effort has been made to place the clinics in strategic places to cut the drive time for veterans, but not every specialty is available in every clinic. "We been moving to telemedicine where a patient, say in Hibbing, can work with a doctor in Rochester or Minneapolis."

Staffing has been strong throughout most of the system, Kelly said, and the VA can generally match salaries with the civilian sector. But in remote clinics, such as Hibbing, it is sometimes difficult to find a doctor willing to move there even if the salaries are comparable.

Sub-specialists can be difficult to find because their salaries can be extreme, which is where the connection with the University of Minnesota helps out. "We are always trying to find a balance between the best deal for the taxpayers and the best deal for the veterans."

The system has 900 full time nurses, Kelly said, and there has been no problem recruiting that profession.

Wait lists and staffing will always be challenges, Kelly said, but he pointed out some reasons to keep faith with the Minneapolis facility.

For instance, this past year, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center was one of 16 hospitals in the state cited for superior safety and quality by an outside agency.

Mental health care and wait times are among the nation's best at both Minneapolis and St. Cloud.

Of the 152 VA medical centers in the nation, only Minneapolis and Boston have received five-star quality marks each year since the VA began rating the hospitals.

And Minneapolis has consistently been in the top 15 percent in veterans' satisfaction surveys nationwide.

"The national system is drawing a lot of attention these days," Kelly said. "We look at it as an opportunity to get better."



# 2014 Resolutions (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS, The percentage of Veterans who work for the Department of Veterans Affairs is currently about 30%; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs currently heads up programs to get Veterans hired in the civilian sector; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, Department of Minnesota adopt this resolution to seek and support any legislation or administrative proposal to require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VBA – Veterans Benefits Administration) to maintain 50% veterans in their work force; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Department of Minnesota for consideration at its regular convention to be held in Rochester, MN July 17th through 19th, 2014 for concurring action.

## RESOLUTION 14

The following Resolution originated from Arcade Phalen Post 577 in St. Paul and was adopted by the 4th District in convention at Roseville, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

### American Legion Riders Optional Patch

WHEREAS, The Department of Minnesota American Legion Riders resolution Article V Section 2 be changed to read, to allow the wearing of another design of the American Legion Riders center back patch that is approved by the Minnesota Department Adjutant and sold through Emblem Sales; and

WHEREAS, The changes being made to the original back patch of the following: addition of a gold ring around the whole center patch, the words American Legion Riders be embroidered in gold lettering. Also being changed is the detailed lines within the wings of the eagle in black and the enhancement of The American Legion emblem colors; and

WHEREAS, All American Legion Riders Post Chapters and only ALR members within the state of Minnesota would have the right to vote on this resolution concerning/affecting American Legion Riders Post Chapters within the state of Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, This would be a second choice of the center back patch and not replacing the original center patch, now be it

RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the Minnesota American Legion Riders Department Committee for a vote of ALR District Representatives and their ALR members around the state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Minnesota Department Convention July 17, 18, and 19, 2014 in Rochester, Minnesota for concurring action; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That it be forwarded to the American Legion National Convention to be assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, Aug. 22-28, 2014 in regular session for consideration to be looked at by the ALR Ad Hoc committee for adoption.

## RESOLUTION 15

The following Resolution originated from Lee-Osborn Post 59 in Montevideo and was adopted by the 7th District in convention at Marshall, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

### Veterans Home in Montevideo

WHEREAS, Many American Service members are in need of professional nursing care in Veterans Homes in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, There is a waiting list of over One Thousand Veterans in Minnesota in need of professional nursing care; and

WHEREAS, There is already a Veterans Affairs Community Based Out-patient Clinic (CBOC) adjacent to the Chippewa County/Montevideo Hospital; and

WHEREAS, The City of Montevideo and Veterans Committee has been pursuing a 90 bed nursing home in Montevideo for the past six years, and

WHEREAS, The City of Montevideo has engaged the Minnesota Department of Affairs for pre-design that meets federal veterans administration guidelines; and

WHEREAS, The City of Montevideo will donate thirteen plus acres of land with local infrastructure in place; and

WHEREAS, The City of Montevideo has raised five million dollars through city, county, business, and private donations; and

WHEREAS, American Legion Post 59 has always given full-hearted support to our Veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, To indorse the support of a Veterans Home in Montevideo, Minnesota; and be it further

RESOLVED, That District 7 includes Seventy Seven Post and 6,269 members to date who support additional care for our veterans; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution be then forwarded to the American Legion Department Convention being held at

Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014 for adoption and submission to appropriate legislative committees indorsing support for a Veterans Home in Montevideo, Minnesota

## RESOLUTION 16

The following Resolution originated from Nelsan Horton Post 104 in Litchfield and was adopted by the 7th District in convention at Marshall, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

### Post Sponsorship, Management of Baseball Teams

WHEREAS, The MN American Legion through its appointed baseball committees and team business managers has successfully registered baseball teams since 1925; and

WHEREAS, MN has had a great history of success organizing and implementing the baseball program through National's and its own Minnesota rule book, MN registers more than 250 teams annually; and

WHEREAS, MN until several years ago required all teams to be sponsored by a Minnesota American Legion Post and Posts could sponsor more than one team; and

WHEREAS, MN until several years ago required all team Business Managers to be bonafide American Legion members representing their respective Posts; and

WHEREAS, MN has in the last couple of years allowed non-Legion sponsored teams with non-Legionnaires to act as their team Business Managers; and

WHEREAS, The Business Manager of a team has many important responsibilities for the baseball team and program. Team Business Managers secure financing through community fund raisers, private sponsorships and from Legion Posts. They also appoint or hire coaches, and monitor their success; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, That since the Minnesota State Gambling board requires Post gambling managers to be members of the American Legion to hold them responsible for its gambling operation; and

WHEREAS, Membership in the American Legion and Posts is very important for continued support of the many Legion and community programs it supports; and

WHEREAS, The Legion baseball program should be run by its members who support the Legion Americanism programs, conducting pregame ceremonies such as the playing of the National anthem, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the reciting of the American legion code of conduct before each game; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the MN Department Commander and Executive Committee be instructed to inform the Department Baseball committee to require all teams to be Post sponsored and team Business Managers to be current bonafide American Legion Family members of a Minnesota American legion Post; and be it further

RESOLVED, That from 2015 and forward, the Minnesota baseball rule book shall reflect the Post and Business Manager requirement of being sponsored by a MN Am. Legion Post and Business Managers being a Minnesota American legion Family member; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Minnesota Department Convention July 17, 18, and 19, 2014 in Rochester, Minnesota for concurring action.

## RESOLUTION 17

The following Resolution originated from Nelsan Horton Post 104 in Litchfield and was adopted by the 7th District in convention at Marshall, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

### Baseball Tournament District Representation

WHEREAS, The MN American Legion through its appointed baseball committee represented by its District baseball chairman has successfully registered baseball teams since 1925; and

WHEREAS, MN has established a history of success organizing and implementing the baseball program through Nationals and its own Minnesota baseball rule book; and

WHEREAS, MN because of its over 250-300 team registrations annually and being one of a few states makes them eligible to advance two Division I teams to Regional National tournament play. Baseball is also one of the largest MN Americanism program; and,

WHEREAS, The MN Legion baseball committee has divided its teams into three Divisions: Division I, Division II and Junior for age 17 and under. Registration is based on High school recruiting enrollment counting the top three grades; and

WHEREAS, The Division I program is designed for larger programs recruiting from 400 or more. The Division II is designed for smaller programs of 400 and less. The Division I and Division II programs each have half or an equal number of teams registered and participating; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Districts plays a vital role in assisting the Department of Minnesota recruiting membership; and

WHEREAS, The MN Legion baseball committee decided to eliminate District team representation and qualifying teams for its annual year end Division I tournament. The baseball committee zoned the State into 15 zones and seated the hosting team. The committee decided to arbitrarily seat teams by zone for the Division I 16 team double elimination tournament for the 2013 and 2014 state tournaments.; and

WHEREAS, The 2013 Division I zoned tournament resulted in three Districts not being seated with a team to represent them in the year end tournament; and

WHEREAS, The Division II teams continued to qualify teams by District, however two metro Districts not having teams eligible or interested in playing Division II baseball; and

WHEREAS, MN Districts are a vital part of the Department of Minnesota and deserve to be granted state representation in all Department committees. All ten Districts should at least be granted the option to participate if they have qualified teams and should not be excluded from representation; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the MN Department Commander and Executive Committee instruct the Department Baseball committee to include and offer all Districts seated representation in all Division I and Division II Department annual state baseball tournaments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this requirement to offer all 10 Districts to be seated in the State Baseball Tournament be included and implemented with the 2015 year and rule book; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Minnesota Department Convention July 17, 18, and 19, 2014 in Rochester, Minnesota for its adoption and implementation.

## RESOLUTION 18

The following Resolution originated from Lozar-Mrace-Loushin Post 248 in Ely and was adopted by the 8th District in convention at Grand Rapids, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

### Support of Copper-Nickel Mining in NE Minnesota

WHEREAS, Ely, Minnesota American Legion Post 248 is one of 41 Minnesota 8th District Posts; and

WHEREAS, Many of the Minnesota 8th District Posts are located in Northeastern Minnesota communities; and

WHEREAS, Economic development and job growth in many Northeastern Minnesota communities lags behind the rest of the state; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota's mining companies have long provided employment for our Minnesota military veterans; and

WHEREAS, The development of copper-nickel mines and the expansion of iron mining operations in Northeastern Minnesota would stimulate economic development and provide employment for our Minnesota military veterans; now therefore be it

RESOLVED That Ely Post 248 supports the environmentally friendly and safe development of coppernickel mining and the expansion of ferrous mining operations that will stimulate economic development and job growth in Northeastern Minnesota; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Minnesota Department Convention July 17, 18, and 19, 2014 in Rochester, Minnesota for concurring action; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution of support for the development of copper-nickel mining and the expansion of iron mining operations in Northeastern Minnesota is to be presented to our elected officials, both State and Federal.

## RESOLUTION 19

The following Resolution originated from and was adopted by the 6th District in convention at Walker, MN and is submitted for consideration by the 2014 Department Convention, to be held in Rochester, Minnesota, July 17-19, 2014.

**Unfilled District Delegate Positions to Natl Convention  
Same as Resolution 1**



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 14-12

President Shirley Frederick

July 2014

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By Shirley Frederick



This is my last official article in the Legionnaire as your Department President. In so many ways it seems only a few short months ago that I was elected and sworn in and now it is nearly convention time and we will be electing a new President to lead us. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve this past year: Meeting so many wonderful people with the same belief and dedication to the programs of our organization. That dedication results in the lives of many, many veterans, service men and women, and children around the country being touched as only a volunteer believing in them can reach out and touch them.

The 10 District Conventions are over and new leadership in place for the coming year. The Testimonials have taken place and we are getting ready for the Department Convention that will be July 17 – 19 in Rochester.

Come prepared to hear what our Units have accomplished this Auxiliary year, greet old friends and meet some new people. Our Northwestern Division Vice President Patricia Steranka will be with us for part of our convention. The Musical Extravaganza chairman DeeDee Buckley promises a fun time for all attending it.

I attended the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State as a staff person. At opening ceremonies and Inauguration ceremonies I represented the Department as I brought greetings to the Girls State Citizens. It is amazing to watch the progress of these young ladies from the time they arrive through the time they get ready for departure. The knowledge gained and the friendships made in that short time. Wow.

I would like to thank everyone that attended my Testimonial at Northern Lights Casino, hosted by Hackensack Unit 202. Thank you to Marsha Bible for being the emcee, Carol Thon for leading the opening and closing songs, Ryan Pels for his singing of God Bless the USA, my unit for hosting it. Thank you to all who sent cards, emails and Facebook messages because they were not able to attend.

The National Convention will be held August 22-28 in Charlotte, NC. Make your plans now to attend. There is much you can learn and do there.

It has truly been my honor and privilege to serve as you Department President. I thank you for all you do every day in this organization promoting Patriotism, Thanking our Veterans – Teaching our Children.

## Brainerd teen chosen Girls State governor for 2014

The 68th session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State ended on Friday, June 20th. Singing together the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State song one last time, the 374 citizens, once strangers, formed new friendships to last over the years. A week of intense study and learning all about our government, at all levels city, county and state, and the history of our great State of Minnesota. We hope that the girls left with an appreciation and understanding of Minnesota government.

The 2014 American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Constitutional officers are:

Governor – Anna Gardner, sponsored by Brainerd Unit 255

Lt. Governor – Emily Hartman, sponsored by Delano Unit 377

Secretary of State – Lauren Ross, sponsored by Moose Lake Unit 379

State Auditor – Katie Coyne, sponsored by Apple Valley Unit 1776

Attorney General – Christina Reinhardt, sponsored by Bloomington Unit 550

Chief Justice – Meghan Onserio, sponsored by Wayzata Unit 118

Supreme Court Justices – Mia Grace Smutny, sponsored by Osseo Unit 172, J.J. Zeng, sponsored by Bloomington Unit 550

The 2014 recipient of the Ed Viehman Award – Kayla Coulter, sponsored by Eden Valley Unit 381. Once again Dan Viehman was able to present this award personally.

Minnesota's entry into National competition for the Samsung Scholarship – Heidi Bau, sponsored by Lake Wilson Unit 285.

The Spirit Award was won by Jamie McDonald sponsored by Watertown Unit 121.

Girls Nation Senators were chosen:

Senior Senator – Grace Hoffa, sponsored by Shakopee Unit 2

Junior Senator – Deanna Hoffenkamp, sponsored by Sebeka Unit 456

Alternates – Maria Kosovich, sponsored by Little Falls Unit 46. Kathy Wang, sponsored by Bloomington Unit 550

The President of the Senate – Rose Whitney-Eliason, sponsored by Duluth Unit 71

Speaker of the House – Sydney Nelson, sponsored by Duluth Unit 71

Senate Chaplain – Sammy Gervais, sponsored by Currie Unit 322

House of Representatives Chaplain – Amber Norman, sponsored by Buffalo Unit 270

There are many highlights to the week at American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State: the wonderful visiting speakers throughout the week, the Thursday night Inauguration ceremony with Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court Lorie Gildea presiding over the Oath of Office, the Friday trip to the Capital and evening festivities including a variety show.

Thanks to all of the Unit American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairmen for the work that you have done to bring all of these girls to this wonderful program. And to all of the fantastic volunteers that spent the week at St. Thomas University with the girls, this program cannot function without you. And finally to our 2014 American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Director Kris Nelson, Chairman Suzette Maluchnik, Education Director Bethany Dickert, Americanism Chairman Jean Walker, Committee members Donna Arends and Jessie Hoppe. Thanks for another GREAT year at American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State!

2013-2014 donations to Girls State: \$4,062.00

The 2014 American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Service Project was "Children's activity bags for the Minneapolis & St. Cloud VA hospitals."

These activity bags will be for children of veterans who are with their parent(s) waiting for a doctor's appointments or perhaps visiting a parent who is hospitalized at the VA hospital. The activity bags are intended to help entertain young children and help them pass the time a little easier while they are waiting.

Our deep appreciation to all of the Unit Girls State



**NEW GOVERNOR** -- Girls State Director Kris Nelson pins new Governor Anna Gardner of Brainerd.

Chairmen, it is each of you that made this program a success. Hip, hip, hooray for Girls State.

### JUNIOR FUN WEEKEND

Junior members are invited to participate in the 6th Annual Department Junior Fun Weekend, held Friday August 1st thru Sunday August 3rd at Legionville near Brainerd. All current 2014 Junior members and their Advisors/Chaperones are invited to attend. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Junior members must be between the ages of 3 – 18 and do not have to be from an active Junior group. The cost is \$20.00 per person and is non-refundable. This includes all meals and activities. Registration forms and fees must be received in the Department office no later than Friday, July 18, 2014. No refunds will be given. Registration information was mailed to ALL units in May. Call the Department office if you need registration forms. Please make sure and have our Juniors attend. This is a fun-filled week-end and teaches our future leaders what we are all about along with giving them a chance to make many new friends. Come and see all the changes and improvements that have been made at Legionville.

### PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

This year Department President Shirley's project was to give the St. Cloud VAMC donations to share between the Minnesota Creative Arts Program, clothing room needs and their general activity fund. Shirley also wanted to provide a three year subscription to the Legionnaire magazine for each of the C-BOC waiting rooms along with a designated amount of money to provide coffee supplies for the C-BOC waiting rooms. President Shirley also asked Units in Minnesota to purchase educational comic books to disperse to schools, waiting rooms, etc. to teach our children flag etiquette and what Americanism means.

### 2014 -2015 DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

Our Congratulations to the ten District Presidents-Elect who will be serving their respective Districts for the 2014-2015 year:

- 1st District – Michelle Weaver, LaCrescent Unit 595
- 2nd District – Vida Bacon, New Ulm Unit 132
- 3rd District – Michelle Leonard, Farmington Unit 189
- 4th District – Joan Strack, St. Paul/North End Unit 474
- 5th District – Cari Lamb, Minneapolis Unit 1
- 6th District – Jessie Hoppe, Sauk Centre Unit 67
- 7th District – Sandy Wersal, New London Unit 537
- 8th District – Zandra Kessler, Two Harbors Unit 109
- 9th District – Margee Keller, Crookston Unit 20
- 10th District – Robin Dorf, Monticello Unit 260

May each of you have a most successful year of service as you assume the leadership of your District for the 2014-2015 Auxiliary year.

### UNIT OFFICERS' LIST

All Units should have held their elections for the 2014-2015 Auxiliary year by now. Your incoming secretary and Membership Chairman should be appointed and ready to

## Auxiliary Membership as of June 18, 2014

District	6-18 Total	Percent	Goal
First	5,227	92.06	5,678
Second	5,114	93.78	5,453
Third	4,501	92.56	4,863
Fourth	781	92.98	840
Fifth	961	91.96	1,045
Sixth	6,311	92.82	6,799
Seventh	4,099	93.24	4,423
Eighth	1,753	91.21	1,922
Ninth	4,542	94.19	4,822
Tenth	5,394	93.43	5,773
Depart.	151	78.24	166
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,834</b>	<b>92.94</b>	<b>41,784</b>

# Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

assume their duties.

Each Unit was asked to return their officers' list for the coming year to the Department office by June 15th. A second request was sent out this week and to date we are still missing 162 of those lists!

These lists are very important as we develop our mailing lists for the year from them. NO 2015 membership cards/packets will be mailed to your Unit until we have received your 2014-2015 list. You can download the form on our website [mnala.org](http://mnala.org) to your own computer, fill it out and email it in to us. It is as simple as that.

## 2015 DUES NOTICES

The National office will send out the first dues notice for the 2015 membership year on September 15th. It will be sent to Senior members only. Ask your members as soon as possible after the Department Convention to pay their 2015 membership dues. They do not need a dues notice to be able to pay their dues.

## 2015 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Very soon we will be kicking off the new membership year. The 2015 membership information will be sent out to all Units who have submitted their 2014-15 officers list. These will be sent out to the Unit Membership Chairman as soon as we get all of the information from National. If you have no Membership Chairman listed, they will be sent to the Unit Treasurer.

## DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The 95th Annual Department Convention will be held in Rochester at the Kahler Grand Hotel, July 17 - 19th with the Rochester Unit and Post 92 serving as hosts. Department President Shirley will call the Convention to order at 9:00a.m. on Thursday, July 17th. The delegates will conduct the business of the Auxiliary, hear reports from our chairmen and elect our 2014-15 Department officers. We hope that your Unit plans to be represented. All Auxiliary sessions will be held at the Kahler Grand Hotel.

The following members have declared their candidacy for Department office:

- Department President – Chris Ronning, Osseo Unit 172
- Department 1st Vice President – Sandra Fredrickson, Glenville Unit 264
- Department 2nd Vice President – Carol Kottom, Buffalo Unit 270

Nominations for Department officers will be held Thursday morning. A secret ballot will be used for any office where there is more than one candidate. Balloting hours will be in the convention rules. Where there is but one candidate the vote will be by acclamation. There will be nominations for delegates-at-large to the National Convention, and election by secret ballot if there is more than one nomination. The same rules used for election of department officers will apply.

A highlight to our Thursday morning's session will be the address by the Northwest Division National Vice President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Patricia Steranka of the Department of Colorado. On Wednesday evening there will be a reception in honor of our Distinguished Guests beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Elizabethan Ballroom and everyone is cordially invited to attend.

District caucuses will be held on Thursday at 7:30 a.m. prior to the opening of the Convention. The Convention will convene at 9:00 a.m.

There will be two Poppy contests at the Department Convention this year. The first is to come up with a color book, 6 pages long and each page depicting a patriotic theme. The second is a Poppy Hat. Dress up any existing hat you may have - make them as elaborate as you want!! Can't wait to see them.

Let's have some fun and use our imagination with poppies. Any and all members may enter either or both of the contests and there is no limit to the number of entries. All entries must be at the Department Convention by 9:00 a.m. on Thursday the 17th. Tables will be set up in the Display area for your entries. Winners will be announced during the Poppy report on Friday.

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

## NATIONAL CONVENTION

Our 2014 National Convention will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 22 - August 28. All Auxiliary Delegates and Alternates elected at the District Conventions will be receiving their information on housing, registration, States Dinner, Woman of the Year Luncheon, etc. shortly.

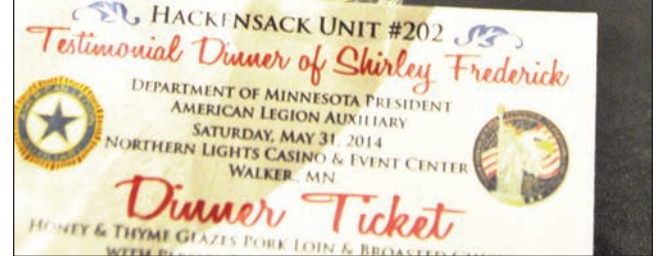
Registration on housing requests must be sent to: The American Legion, State Veterans Service Building, 20 W 12th St #300, St. Paul, MN 55155. If for any reason you are not planning to attend, yet were elected a Delegate or Alternate, please notify the Department Secretary immediately and prior to our Department Convention. There will be packets available at the Department Convention for

# President Frederick's Testimonial held

The 2014 Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Shirley Frederick was toasted and roasted May 31 at a testimonial dinner in her honor hosted by her Hackensack 202 Unit.

Mistress of Ceremonies Marsha Bible welcomed 145 guests including Shirley's family, Unit 202, 6th District, and State members to this event held at Northern Lights Casino. Special greetings were received by Department Legion Commander, Mike Ash, Honorary Department Junior President, Kaitlin Fernlund, Legion Post 202 Commander, Rob Albrecht, Hackensack Unit 202 President, Bev Sauer and Hackensack SAL Member, Cliff Thon. Department SAL Adjutant and Past National SAL Commander, Doug Bible, brought greetings from the Department SAL. The National Anthem and God Bless America were lead by Carol Thon and Ryan Pels sang God Bless the USA. Opening and closing prayers were given by the Department Chaplain, Dolly Zitur and dinner prayer by 6th District Chaplain, LuAnn Marschel.

Shirley's theme for this past year was Patriotism, Thank our Veterans-Teach our Children. Her project was to raise funds for the Creative Arts Program, Clothing Room and General activities fund at the St. Cloud VA. Her project also included money for the coffee supply fund and a 3-year subscription to the Minnesota Legionnaire for the waiting room of each 16 C-BOC's (Community Based Outreach Clinic for Veterans) as well as four educational comic books, Pledge Allegiance, Our Country's Flag, Light of Liberty, and Our Country's Veterans which have been purchased by many Units and distributed to schools, libraries, waiting rooms and other places. Shirley's symbol was Our American Flag, the Eagle and the Statue of Liberty.



The glassware gift from Frederick to her guests bore her slogan for the year.



Honorary Junior President Kaitlyn Fernlund presented President Shirley Frederick with a momento of their year in office.



Department Commander Mike Ash presented gifts and also gave a hug to President Frederick.

those At Large Delegates and Alternates elected at the Convention.

All registrations, housing requests and reservations for the States Dinner, Women of the Year Luncheon must be received by July 21st. The credentials and housing lists as well as reservations for dinner and luncheon must be finalized and forwarded to our National organization.

## SECRETARY SANDIE'S CORNER

Well I must say that I experienced something I never thought I would. I was a Senior Counselor at our Girls State Session that was held at the University of St. Thomas. What an experience it was. I had 19 little duckies (as I called them) and what a wonderful group of girls they were. We shared stories, jokes, pranks and other things throughout the week, along with learning all about our Minnesota government practices. I learned very many interesting things I never knew myself. Aside from getting only about 5-6 hours of sleep each night for 7 nights straight and I believe Patti Coleman said we climbed about 10,000 steps, I wouldn't have wanted to change a thing about the week with my City of Tate. It was heartwarming to see this bunch of young ladies come together not knowing a soul and going home with tears as some didn't want to leave their "new family." A shout out to Dan Taylor at the University of St. Thomas. He was always there, answering questions, putting out fires and even setting up chairs for the Inauguration. I would encourage any of you to step forward and volunteer to be a counselor for this wonderful event. No rest for the wicked, now on to Department Convention, National Convention, Membership Packets, August Workshop, Budgeting and then Fall Conference - where does the time go?

On a serious note I would like to take a moment to thank President Shirley Frederick on the wonderful year she gave to our organization. She is very dedicated to our Veterans and we are blessed to have her.

**PATCHES: I BUY PATCHES THAT I NEED**  
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March 14-22, 2015



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- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Jenny Gilbertson
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- 8 Nights accommodations
- 14 Meals
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