Coronavirus Presenting Unprecedented Challenges

legion.org/coronavirus and michiganlegion.org/coronavirus

National Commander Oxford: Take a ‘smart’ approach to coronavirus

By National Commander James “Bill” Oxford
MAR 16, 2020

The nature of the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes. We are all learning here, and I ask that you be patient, flexible and strong as we get through this. And we will get through this because our American Legion Family has proven our toughness throughout our first 101 years.

We must be smart about how we approach this. I have suspended all official travel for all American Legion national officers and staff unless it is absolutely imperative. This policy pertains to me as well and will last at least through the end of April. Travel beyond that date will be reassessed in a timely fashion. While I do not have the authority to mandate that departments take action, I would like to share with you how your national headquarters will be operating for the temporary future. Keep in mind, these policies are also recommended by medical professionals at the Center for Disease Control and other experts throughout the health care and emergency response communities.

We are providing a liberal leave policy for employees who are ill or who have family members who are ill. We are also providing liberal leave or telework options for those experiencing daycare issues because of school cancellations. The workplace at national headquarters will be even cleaner than its usual high standards and there will be plenty of hand-sanitizers available for workers and visitors to use. We have also temporarily halted public tours of the headquarters.

We have many national youth programs, meetings and other events scheduled for the weeks and months ahead. Some will likely be cancelled or postponed. These decisions will not be easy to make but will be thought out with safety being the number one priority. Cancellations and postponements of national American Legion events will be announced promptly on our national website, www.legion.org, and by email to all departments once such decisions are made. I will keep you advised of any new measures at the national level as they occur.

I am asking every department to respect their local civil authorities as well. Different states have different measures in effect. Like veterans, they are risking their health and wellbeing in order to keep us safe. This is a new kind of crisis for them as well.

The Buddy Check program is perhaps more important now than ever before. Rely on telephone, email or social media to communicate since person-to-person contact is not the safest order to keep us safe. This is a new kind of crisis for them as well.

I do realize that some of the measures we have taken will inconvenience many of you. Nobody wants this to last any longer than necessary. And once it is determined that the conditions are safe, operations will return to normal. I thank you in advance for your patience, resilience and continued service to our great organization and country.

Update as of March 26, 2020: The American Legion National Headquarters has cancelled meetings and program contests. The National Oratorical Contest is canceled, American Legion Baseball activities are requested to be put on hold, the National Junior Shooting Sports Program has been canceled, and Boys Nation has been canceled for 2020. TAL has also canceled the National Spring Meetings.

Using Tools to Conduct Meetings under Shelter in Place Orders and Social Distancing.
By Mark Sutton, Public Relations Director

The CoronaVirus epidemic has created some challenges for social organizations like The American Legion. American Legion Districts, and Posts around the State have been ordered by the State Governors to shelter in place and to avoid gatherings of people. So, how are they expected to conduct business?

The first place they need to look is to their Constitution and Bylaws to ensure there are no restrictions outlined in how they may conduct business.

The second part is determining what kind of business needs to be conducted and who is authorized to make those decisions. Most decisions between elections are made by an executive body, like a District, or Post Executive Committee. This is important to determine the number of people who need to be a part of the meeting.

Note: An important component of virtual meetings for corporate governance is ensuring everyone who has a right to be in the meeting is notified in a timely manner. That you have a quorum, and you can track to ensure the person giving the vote is that person. Keep minutes and record the votes.

There are three services to recommend depending on the size of your group.

1. Google Hang Outs: This is a service of Google; it is free but requires a GMAIL account to access. This service allows for a video chat over the internet for up to 10 people for free.

2. Microsoft Skype: This is a free service by Microsoft and allows for a video chat of up to 50 people at one time, users must provide an email address.

3. Freeconferencecall.com: (Writers Favorite). Not everyone has access to a computer, but I dare to say they have a telephone or cellphone. A Commander or Adjutant can create a free account at their website, and they will be given a phone number and access code for them to use and send to their committees. Bonus, this service can handle up to 1,000 participants at one time. Also note, online video conferencing for 1,000 participants is also available for free according to their website. This might only be for a short period during this crisis.

Is Facebook Live a good option for conducting meetings?

No. Facebook Live is a great tool to broadcast a meeting to viewers, but not an easy way to track and interact with participants that a meeting with voting is required.

102nd Department Annual Convention Registration details page 19.
It seems like it is an everyday battle of trying to make everyone happy. In my role as a chaplain and pastor, I know I want all people to love me and accept me if I can make them happy in their life. But the answer is, can I really do that to the whole human race? So, I have done a little research on how we can be better as legionnaires in trying to be acceptable to all.

First, we have this idea that being good, equates to being liked and accepted. But does it require us to give up our self worth about ourselves? Can we have a balance between the two? Yes, and here are some suggestions. Dr. Seuss said, "Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter, and those who matter don’t mind." Also, the Bible, teaches when our vertical focus is on God first, then our horizontal relationship to others will be revealed to where we put others next --- our families, friends, job, our church, and community. When our heart's desire is to please God, we will be able to put others' needs and desires in a healthy perspective. Now, it's beginning to make sense!

Can we begin by changing our behavior by setting new priorities? Can we budget our time and energy as we would our financial budgets? This means to determine how much time will be allotted for specific people and activities, including ourselves. I suggest the following order (in order of importance): relationship with God; family (marriage, children, parents); employment; personal time (time alone with God, time alone with self). This is your Chaplain speaking. Now, we can begin by being all we can be to our fellow Legionnaires by being good to ALL People. Amen!

Michigan 2020 Boys State has been canceled.

The American Legion Department of Michigan takes the safety and concerns of the participants, and our volunteers seriously. After careful consideration the Boys State Committee has decided to cancel the 2020 program.

Boys Nation program was canceled just prior to this printing.

Thank you for your support of the program, stay safe, and we shall plan for 2021.

Stay up-to-date at www.michiganboysstate.org

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

| Department Commander          | Barry Wood |
| Department Adjutant           | Ron Runyan |
| 1st Zone                      | Greg Spight |
| 2nd Zone                     | Richard Parks |
| 3rd Zone                     | Bill Hilgris |
| 4th Zone                     | Gary Walter |
| 5th Zone                     | Wendy Sexton |
| Finance Officer               | Skipper Townes |
| Historian                    | Richard Tracy |
| Chaplain                     | Larry Vollink |
| Sergeant-at-Arms             | Dan Crisp |
| Judge Advocate               | Kimberly Hillock |
| National Executive Committee | John Knox |
| Alt. National Executive Committee | Jerry Lynch |
| Immediate Past Commander     | Steve Striggow |
| Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director | Mark Esterling |
| Membership Director          | Bob Higley |
| Public Relations Director    | Mark Sutton |

Michigan Legionnaire & Auxilire

(USPS 010637) is published monthly except February, May, August, and December by The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan, 212 N.Verlinden, Lansing, MI 48915-1297. Periodical postage paid at Lansing, MI, and additional mailing offices.Subscription $10 non-members, members receive the publication as part of their dues. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Michigan Legionnaire, Department of Michigan, 212 N. Verlinden, Lansing, MI 48915-1297.

DEADLINE DATES

June issue is May 1

Circulation: 96,687

Printed: 3-30-2020- Mailed: 4-1-2020

HEADQUARTERS DIRECTORY

Publisher: Ronald Runyan
Editor: Mark Sutton

The American Legion Dept. of Michigan 212 N. Verlinden, Lansing, MI 48915
(517) 371-4720  Fax: (517) 689-6100
michiganlegion.org
info@michiganlegion.org

LEGION AND SAL MEMBERSHIP deanna@michiganlegion.org
LEGION FINANCE finance@michiganlegion.org
PROGRAMS, BOYS STATE, SCHOLARSHIPS, BASEBALL
legion@michiganlegion.org
VETERANS SERVICE
Wednesday only
PUBLIC RELATIONS, WEBSITE, NEWSPAPER, SOCIAL MEDIA, HISTORY
mark@michiganlegion.org
ADMINISTRATION
kim@michiganlegion.org

Do you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use? E-mail it to us at info@michiganlegion.org or mail it to department attn: Mark Sutton.

Please keep the photo at least 200 dpi or larger. If you are submitting a hard copy photo, please note photos printed from a home printer cannot be used, nor can photos clipped from newspapers.

We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible. Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan Legionnaire? Please Contact Mark Sutton

info@michiganlegion.org
517-371-4720 ext 116.
There is Still Work to Be Done

Barry Wood
Department Commander

Hello, Michigan Legionnaires. As I write this, the weather is attempting to convince me that it will warm up and I can spend more time out of doors. I would hope the warmer weather would encourage all of us to spend more time reaching out to our fellow veterans to assist those in need with necessary projects. It is also a great time to perform “buddy checks” to ensure our “buddies” are ready to come out of hibernation and getting ready to volunteer at the Post and within the community. Also, as I write this, the coronavirus is becoming more of an issue; all the more reason to reach out to our fellow Legionnaires.

Dust off those membership lists. Plan and then carry out the phone calls and visits necessary to reach your post members. At the same time, post membership committee members need to determine the status of those members that have not renewed. Let everyone know how vital their membership is to The American Legion.

Speaking of membership, I lost my wager with the Pennsylvania Department Commander. I wagered that Michigan would have a higher percentage of its membership than Pennsylvania come March 1. We did not. Now I owe the Commander a considerable amount of Mackinaw Fudge. Maybe my pride has been bruised a bit, but no time to be concerned about that. We must continue to work on our membership. Commander Oxford’s goal is 103%. My goal is to provide every veteran an opportunity to belong to the best Veterans Service Organization. We all have work yet to do.

A question that I must ask is, “What is causing our members NOT to renew their memberships?” I would be interested in constructive ideas and solutions to this issue. Every member must be part of the solution. Remember the $5 rebate for each DMS member that you recruit to your Post before they pay their 2020 dues. Have the DMS member transfer and then pay their 2020 dues, and you will have $5. Let’s get 100%. The 2019-2020 year is yet to be completed, so get active and let’s turn this declining membership trend around. Work the programs! Participate in your communities! Take care of the local members, take care of local veterans, and please take care of the Legion.

It was good having National Commander Bill Oxford at our Winter Meeting. Thank you for welcoming the Commander so warmly. He definitely appreciated the reception by Michigan Legionnaires. We were also able to spend time showing him the CLOWNVETS movie and discussing the program with him. He suggested the Department put together a Department Committee to gather facts and present these facts to the National TBI/PTSD Committee. We were able to form the committee with the DECs approval during the Winter Meeting.

Additionally, the DEC approved a special committee, “Voice of the Michigan Legion.” This committee is to look at issues of being a Legionnaire in Michigan and how things can be improved throughout the Department in any number of areas. This is still a work in progress. I thank all Legionnaires that have stepped forward to work on these committees.

District and Post commanders, please reach out to posts to encourage completion of the Consolidated Post Reports. We need this information to let people know what The American Legion is all about and the large number of things being done at all levels of the Legion.

On a further note, District Commanders, I am not convinced that posts are being communicated to when there is information that needs to be passed on from Department or National. Please make this happen. If the contact process is not set up in your District, please make it happen. We need to communicate at all levels. This is not always easy, but it MUST happen. There are posts and Legion Family members being left out of the communications loop.

I want to put an idea out to all of you. I have already reached out to the Zone and District Commanders. I want to have a “corn hole” tournament at the Department Convention in June. This tournament would consist of competition between tournament winners from the different districts. I want to let everyone know THAT AS OF THIS WRITING NOTHING HAS BEEN FINALIZED OR APPROVED; however, I want to solicit support and ideas to accomplish this type of event. I envision a two-person team from each District, that has won a district tournament, would represent the District at the Department tournament. As I have mentioned, DETAILS NEED TO BE WORKED OUT. But I want to get the idea out there with enough time to allow districts to hold tournaments. Of course, the coronavirus could put a crimp in this plan too. Let your District Commander know what you think of the idea.

Thank you for what you do for The American Legion, the Department, your Post, and for the veterans and families of Michigan.

Post Closures – What do we do with the assets?

Ron Runyan
Department Adjutant

As the organization has just passed its 101st birthday, many posts are finding it harder to function. This may be due to higher utilities, higher overhead, less membership, not enough participation in events, and no community involvement. When posts are in this situation, they must make choices to either continue their post membership or close. We always encourage the Post to continue, and we can help with training and leadership to promote the organization in the local community, seeking to renew members, add new membership, and explore ways to save on overhead. However, sometimes a Post and its members might choose to close the Post and cancel their charter. This should always be the last solution for the problem, however sometimes it is needed. If this is the case, there are steps that must be followed within the Post, District, and Zones before coming to the Department. If you and your Post find yourselves in one of these choices, please contact the district leadership and department headquarters for help.

What I want to focus on in this article is what happens to the post assets and property if the choice is to close and turn in its charter.

The first thing that all members and officers of the Post must realize is that they must conform to the state law Public Act 162 and the Department Constitution, Article VII, Section 19. Simply put, no member or officer can directly benefit from the sale of property or receive money, gifts, or paid memberships as a distribution from the Post closure. If the Post has property, assets, and money in the bank that must be given to another non-profit charity, or it must be sent to the American Legion Department of Michigan HQ. A full accountability of all assets must be provided to the Department before the Post will be authorized to close. This includes the last 12 months of bank statements. The officers and members are accountable to ensure the law bylaws are followed. If it were to be determined that post officers and/or members did not comply with the state law, then the matter could be turned over to the Michigan Attorney General’s office for a full investigation.

The 2020 Testimonial Dinner has been rescheduled due to the coronavirus to May 23.

Stay current with information about the Coronavirus on our website: www.michiganlegion.org
Congratulations Posts

Bob Higley
Membership Director

I want to congratulate the 43 posts that have shared in the membership incentive money so far this year. To find out which posts have received incentive money, go to michiganlegion.org and look for the spreadsheet under the membership portal tab. We have one more incentive date, and that is May 6th. Your Post must be at 100% of your membership goal and have not previously received incentive money for being at 100%.

April is here, and we only have three more months left in the 2020 membership year. The real hard work is upon us with trying to get that last 15% renewed. It is going to be especially hard this year with the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Some posts have suspended or canceled events, and some others have temporarily closed their post homes. It is more important now than ever to use the Buddy Check system. We need to check in with our members and make sure they are alright and if they need any help. We can still communicate by phone and email and not have to be afraid of spreading or contracting the virus. If anyone has questions regarding Coronavirus, I urge them to use the Center for Disease Control website or your country’s health department website. There is a lot of misinformation out there on social media websites and the internet in general.

Any post that is having difficulties reaching their membership goal, I urge them to reach out to the headquarters Post 225 members. A list of those members in your area can be found on myLegion.org. If your Post is not using myLegion.org, we can provide a list to the Post. Did you know you can transfer a headquarters post member over the phone? All you have to do is contact the member, ask them if they would like to transfer, and on the member’s signature line on the member data form, just write “per phone call” with the date and time. You will still have to verify eligibility and use your post procedures for accepting them into your Post.

I am asking every Post to please not give up. In the past years, it seems we hit this time of the year, and some posts just figure why try anymore. It takes communication with your members and explaining how important they are to your Post and The American Legion. Remind them what The Legion does, what it stands for, and what their benefits are by belonging to The Legion. If we all pitch in and help, I am sure Michigan can still reach 100% of our goal.

Membership News

Bob Higley
Membership Director

April is here, and we only have three more months left in the 2020 membership year. The real hard work is upon us with trying to get that last 15% renewed. It is going to be especially hard this year with the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Some posts have suspended or canceled events, and some others have temporarily closed their post homes. It is more important now than ever to use the Buddy Check system. We need to check in with our members and make sure they are alright and if they need any help. We can still communicate by phone and email and not have to be afraid of spreading or contracting the virus. If anyone has questions regarding Coronavirus, I urge them to use the Center for Disease Control website or your country’s health department website. There is a lot of misinformation out there on social media websites and the internet in general.

Any post that is having difficulties reaching their membership goal, I urge them to reach out to the headquarters Post 225 members. A list of those members in your area can be found on myLegion.org. If your Post is not using myLegion.org, we can provide a list to the Post. Did you know you can transfer a headquarters post member over the phone? All you have to do is contact the member, ask them if they would like to transfer, and on the member’s signature line on the member data form, just write “per phone call” with the date and time. You will still have to verify eligibility and use your post procedures for accepting them into your Post.

I am asking every Post to please not give up. In the past years, it seems we hit this time of the year, and some posts just figure why try anymore. It takes communication with your members and explaining how important they are to your Post and The American Legion. Remind them what The Legion does, what it stands for, and what their benefits are by belonging to The Legion. If we all pitch in and help, I am sure Michigan can still reach 100% of our goal.

District Meetings

1st District
May 11, 2020, Post 32, Livonia
June 8, 2020, Post 147, Northville
Meeting begin at 7 pm.

2nd District
April 25, 2020, TBA, Memorial service.
11 am-Noon SAL, Noon-1 pm
Riders, 1 pm-2 pm PSO, 2 pm – 4
pm Meeting

3rd District
May 3, 2020, Post 55, Albion
Executive Board at 11:30 am, Lunch
at noon, Meeting at 1 pm

4th District
May 3, 2020, Post 45, Hastings

5th District
May 14, 2020, Post 28, Grand Haven
All District Post Meetings and E
Board Meetings are at 7 pm
All E Board Meetings at Post 179,
Grandville.
E. Board Meetings on Aug 8, Oct. 10,
Dec. 12, Feb. 13, 2020, April 9, 2020,
and June 11, 2020.

6th District
Lunch at noon – Meeting at 1 p.m.
April 26, Post 419, Pinckney,
Memorial service at 11 a.m., Past
Commander/President Luncheon at
Noon, Meeting at 1 p.m.

7th District
May 17, 2020, Post 4, Mt. Clemens

8th District
May 3, 2020, Post 501, Elsie
Adjutant and Service Officer
Seminars at 12:00
Dinner at 1:00pm
Meeting starts immediately after
dinner

9th District
May 9, 2020 at Hesperia Post 411
Noon Executive Meeting, Lunch
1:00, General meeting 2:00

10th District
Mar. 7, 2020 Grayling Post 106
May 2, 2020 Linwood Post 239

A Buddy Check Idea Shared in this
time of Crisis

The National American Legion Commander has encouraged buddy checks during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I’m suggesting we take it a step further.

Let’s put together Legion Family Response Teams made up of Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders from our local posts, units, squadrons and riders that are not self-quarantined, or part of the at high risk demographics to those Legion Family members who need help.

First, the Response Team call our Legion Family Members and get a status check. ALSO remember that we have men and women who are currently deployed. It is our job to take care of their families. Especially during times like this.

How are they doing? Are they sick? Are you self-quarantining? What can we do to help?

Second, contact our local Legion Family Response Team Captain and let them know what the needs in their area is.

Third, Area Team captains (or whatever you want to call the go to person) would call their team members and give them the information and what the need is. Once done notify your team captain. NOW repeat.

The Legion Response Teams members would provide the following support.
- Food Shopping and Delivery
- Medication Delivery
(you can leave the food or medication at the door ring the bell or call them and tell them and let them know their stuff is at the door. Simple no personal contact needed.
- Daily morale calls to members who can’t get out.
- Taking trash out to the curb for pick up.
- Basically, things they cannot do because they are self-quarantined or home bound.

Local Post/Units/Squadrons/Riders would be main contact for their area (they could pick how far out from their post area they would go.

If you have members who are snowbirds or live out of town contact the Legion Family nearest to them and recruit their help to assist your local members.
The American Legion Family is large enough to get this done.

Buddy Check
A National Week of Calling

2020 Department Membership Goal: 64,290, as of 3-19-2020 56,199 or 87.41%
Remember the Military Child

A ceremony to remember the children

Please use this ceremony as often as you can as a reminder and in honor of the sacrifices and contributions by the child/children.

As we honor our veterans and our service members, it is important that we remember to honor those at home as well. In 1986 Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger recognized the importance of military-connected children and their role in military families when he established the “Month of the Military Child,” underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community.

In honor of these children, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will have the “Military Child’s Table Setting” on display in the rotunda of the Soldiers and Sailors Building during April.

The display contains:

- The potted flowering plant—symbolizing that the children of our deployed may flower and flourish where they are planted.
- The hand spade—recognizing that the military children may be transplanted to a new location. They must acclimate themselves to a new school, new friends, and perhaps a new culture.
- The birthday cake and unlit candles symbolize birthdays and special events that their soldier will miss while they are away.
- The baseball and glove represent the games they have without the cheering from their deployed loved ones.
- The ballet slippers signify there are many special occasions that go with-out the deployed loved one sharing in the joys of that day.

The family photo depicting a child with their parents in uniform represents the foundation of our country’s strength of families united in their commitment to national service and their sacrifices.

Ref: Children and Youth Guide.

With Spring just around the corner, it won’t be long before our year is coming to a close, and our annual reports will be due. For a reminder, Unit reports are due to the District chairmen by April 15th, and District reports are due to the Department chairmen by April 30th.

Units and Districts will be holding their election of officers in April and May, along with appointing their committee chairman. There is a form that must be completed and submitted by all Units and Districts to the Department, which includes the contact information for the Unit and District officers and committee chairmen.

Wishing all, a Wonderful and Blessed Easter and Spring. Keep our military families our deployed troops in your prayers. God Bless.

Legislative

Emily Terhune

Another year for our Auxiliary is flying by, and with it, we have had many changes from our communities to our state! May I say thank you to all of you for your hard work this year, and I hope it continues to be a success for all of us in our 100th-year celebration!

As advocates for our veterans, it is a great idea to write to your local representatives about supporting them! An excellent opportunity to do this would be by talking to them about supporting the Coast Guard Authorization Act, ensuring our Coast Guard gets paid in the case of Government Shutdowns. Our Auxiliary has a link to the Legion’s action center page where you can find more information on the Authorization Act, as well as sample letters to send to your government representatives, and it could be a great way to open the doors to more conversations about our veterans and their needs.

Another great way to get out there and advocate is by spreading encouragement to vote in our local, state, and national elections. Our state’s primary election is on August 4th of this year, and the general election is on November 3rd! Showing pride in our country and making our voices heard is important, so remember to put on your vote stickers and buttons and go out and vote!

Remember, we are all advocates, so put on your ALA gear and start spreading the amazing things we can do for our legislation! Happy advocating, ladies!

Greetings from the 4th

Kathy Garrett, District President

It’s been a trying year for the 4th there is talk of the 4th being split up and sent to different districts. I do realize everything has to change from time to time. But it doesn’t make it any easier. Also, with the COVID 19, some auxiliary units are not having meetings since the clubs are shut down; however, I hope everyone is healthy and stays that way. Membership is plucking away I find there are a lot of new officers in the units with the old officers just dumping it on the new. I guess what a way to get your feet wet. It is also hard to believe the year is coming to a close rather rapidly testimonial being postponed convention right around the corner. We hope to see everyone at the convention, be safe, have fun.

CoronaVirus Update

as of March 24, 2020

Due to Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order the Department Headquarters is limited in its ability to conduct business until April 14. The best method of communication is via email at info@michalaaux.org, you may call and we will return your call as soon as we are able.

The National office is currently closed until April 7.

Thank you for your understanding. Follow our website at michalaux.org for the latest information.
Chaplain

Kimberly S. Champion
Department Chaplain 2019-2020

I hope this writing finds everyone well. Keep safe and stay healthy. Remember, when you send in your notifications, whether it is on the Deceased Member Notification Form or written notification, please remember to identify the Unit they are from as well as the District.

As always, you can contact me anytime. If you don’t get me right away, I will get back with you as soon as I am available. If I can’t answer your question(s), I will get the correct information to you when I get it. I can be reached by phone, email, or in writing. I published my information in the last Chaplain’s Article, but the information can also be found in my Chaplain’s Guide.

MEMORIAL GARDEN

Particia Lamb, Unit 34, District 2
Ann Kammera, Unit 28, District 5
Nancy C. Keech, Unit 28, District 5
Nancy Pagel, Unit 47, District 5
Dottie Peters, Unit 150, District 5
Reina Svacha, Unit 351, District 7
Charlene Hodges, Unit 101, District 8
Virginia Holstad, Unit 101, District 8
Dormalea Marshall, Unit 101, District 8
Doris Rasmussen, Unit 101, District 8
Leona Reinert, Unit 150, District 8
Patricia Helen Akkala, Unit 44, District UPAA
Gloria M. Kuster, Unit 27, District UPAA
Virginia O’berst, Unit 11, District UPAA
Mary “Cookie” Fettes, Unit 198, District 19
Elaine Floeter, Unit 122, District 19
Roberta Vroman, Unit 122, District 19

Literacy is a Key Life Skill

Carol Burke, Education Chairman

In 1921 the American Legion was seeking ways to generate public support for education and literacy, as 25 percent of the country’s World War I draftees were illiterate. This concern led to the American Legion co-sponsoring, with the NEA, the first American Education Week. The simple truth is that the United States is ranked 12th in literacy worldwide, and 25% of children in America grow up without learning how to read. Students who don’t read proficiently by the 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out of school. Literacy is a crucial life skill. Promoting literacy should be a core mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

One of the ways that our organization can help promote literacy is by supplying books to our youth. The Reading Rockets website, https://www.readingrockets.org/article/search-free-books, offers these suggestions plus more.

The Literacy Empowerment Foundation (LEF) is dedicated to assisting educational programs by providing inexpensive children’s books. ($88 per set of 100 books).

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.
Through the program, all young children in a participating community are eligible to be enrolled at birth, to receive books in their homes each month.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) the nation’s oldest and largest children’s literacy organization.

Book Drives sponsor a book drive to collect gently used children’s books for your organization to distribute.

Encourage your Juniors to read to either younger children or older adults. Encourage your Auxiliary sisters who are unable to physically participate in Unit activities to remain active and contribute, by reading to others. In the words of Dr. Seuss, “You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.”

Memorial Garden

Anita Mennel, Membership Chairman

Greetings all! Thru everyone’s hard work and persistence, I am proud to report Michigan is at 90.61%

One week of caring and sharing is quickly approaching, April 1-7. This is a Nation-wide project. The full information can be found in the program guide under Membership. On our www.michalaux.org home page, upper right corner click on 2019-20 Plans of Action (Program Guides), then on the next page, on the left side, click on Membership Guide 2019 – 2020 – Sharing is Caring. That’s where you will find all the info you need to complete this event. There are even ‘scripts’ you can use. And then, of course, there is the REPORT part! The form is right there as well.

During these unknown waters, we are in; this is a project that is very timely. It can be done on the phone. And while your talking, ask those who have yet to renew, to share their reasons, encourage their importance. Most importantly, be genuine—!

Yes, this is a multi-purposed call. Jot down reasons for non-renewal, and send them on to your membership chair, OR myself, so we can brainstorm and identify reasons.

National Security

Macry Jorae, Chairman

As a program of the American Legion Auxiliary, National Security has many facets and many ways to become involved as a way to maintain and promote a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families.

This country would not have a strong national defense without the active military. Not only do they serve our country, but their families serve as well. As Auxiliary members, we need to show support for the active military through ways such as greeting service members as they deploy, sending care packages while they are deployed, and welcoming them home at the end of their deployment. Our responsibilities don’t end there. Servicemembers may need help in locating housing when they return home, obtaining an education and/or employment, and appropriate help with putting their civilian lives back together so they can move forward in their lives.

Families of deployed service members may have needs that Auxiliary members can meet while their loved ones are deployed. Those needs include such things as financial assistance, physical help such as yard work, babysitting, or some friendly companionship and support. Auxiliary members should let those family members know that we appreciate the sacrifice that their loved ones are making by serving our country, and we appreciate the sacrifice that the family members make while their loved ones are serving.

Blue star banners were first displayed during WWI and have become a traditional way to honor those serving our country during a time of conflict. These banners may be purchased through Emblem Sales and given to families to show our support of their loved one’s service, and as a way, they can honor their servicemember by placing that banner in their window.

As Legion Family members, our support can also be shown by wearing red on Fridays – a symbol of “Remember Everyone Deployed.” While any red attire can be worn, one can purchase red shirts that specifically address Red Shirt Fridays. There are currently such shirts available for Legion members through Emblem Sales. Many other companies sell “Red Shirt Friday” shirts. Yellow ribbons are another show of support for our service members.

These are some of the ways that we can show our support for our military. Some of them may seem like little things to us, but could mean the world to a servicemember or their family – and that should mean the world to us as Legion Family members.
Sons of The American Legion
Detachment of Michigan Newsletter

SAL Detachment Commander Comments

See You Later Alligator

Mike Holley
SAL Commander

It has been a pleasure serving as your Detachment Commander. Since this is my last article, I would like to thank my officers and chairmen for a great year. I would also like to thank my Legion dad (Barry) Auxiliary mom (Georgia) and honorary auxiliary little sister Leah. Also, the Commanders Lady Sherri, Thanks.

No matter where I traveled, the Sons are known at the local level, state level, and nationally. Michigan is well known for the volunteer hours and money donated at VA facilities. We should be PROUD of ourselves.

My travels have taken me in all directions from Indianapolis to Washington, DC.

As a member of the SAL for over 20 years, and being in the Legion family most of my life, I have learned what we do as the sons for veterans and others in time of need.

I have had a fun year of traveling throughout the great state, catching up with old friends, making new ones, enjoying new places, and enjoying good. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

Well, that’s all, folks! Thanks for the Memories
Hon Thy Veteran.

Michigan 2020 Boys State has been canceled.
The American Legion Department of Michigan takes the safety and concerns of the participants, and our volunteers seriously. After careful consideration the Boys State Committee has decided to cancel the 2020 program.

Boys Nation program was canceled just prior to this printing.
Thank you for your support of the program, stay safe, and we shall plan for 2021.

Stay up-to-date at www.michiganboysstate.org

Boys State Report
Mike Holley, Boys State Chairman

It is with sadness; I must report that due to the Coronavirus epidemic spreading over the country that the decision was made to cancel the 2020 Michigan Boys State program this June. The American Legion National Headquarters canceled Boys Nation and asked Departments to consider canceling their summer programs for 2020.

Boys State is near and dear to my heart, and the experience will be lost in the current year of Juniors.

What will happen next year?
Too early to say, but stay tuned, I am sure it will work itself out.

Please continue to support my special project.
Thank you to everyone who has given to my Boys State special project. Your donation is not in vain, Boys State will be back, and your donation to my project will only strengthen the program for 2021. I would ask if your Squadron can, is to donate any money you would have used this year to support a high school student to Boys State to the department, and then find more kids for next year.

Thank you for your support and dedication to this great American Legion program.

Membership 2020
Carvin Chapman, Chairman

First, let me say that it’s time to do a significant push for MEMBERSHIP! Whether you mail them in to the department or use My SAL, the time is NOW! Get it done ASAP! Your delegate strength is based on your membership as of May 5, 2020, turned in! There are no excuses for zero Squadrons or, for that matter, any Squadron’s under 80% at this time; if you are having problems with transmitting, please get a hold of me, and I will help in any way I can,cchapman0371@gmail.com.

Don’t forget to attend our Detachment Convention at the Holiday Inn Southgate in June. This is your Convention, so Speak up!

On that note, I am running for National Executive Committeeman for the years 2020 to 2022 and am asking for your support for this high honor. I promise to serve you well and; and deliver information to you as it comes to me. We at Squadron 377 are also asking you to support William “Bill” Degroot for the office of Sgt. at Arms for the year 2020-2021. Bill has been an active Squadron member for many years. Remember, membership is the lifeblood of this organization!

Goal 22,094 - March 19, 2020 Membership 19,880 - 89.98%

Candidate for Alternate N.E.C.

My Fellow Comrades: Please join the Lynn C. Weeman Squadron 514, in Ida, and the 2nd District in supporting me for the high office of Alternate National Committeeman. This important role assists our National Committeeman in keeping you updated on National Organization decisions as well as making sure visiting dignitaries have a memorable experience when visiting our Detachment. I will be honored to serve, and thank you for your consideration.

Gary L. LaMunyon P.D.C. #1
Director of Squadron Development
Second District Director of Legion Baseball
“My Comrades Caddy”
As our 2020 Detachment Convention is approaching, I am proud to say that it will be hosted by the 16th and 18th Districts in Southgate. The committee has been working hard on putting together a program that will be enjoyable for everyone that attends.

There will be a swimming pool at the hotel, and there will also be a 2-hour boat ride on The Diamond Jack Saturday evening that should create a lot of memories. You can take in the sights as you travel to and from the boat ride in a shuttle that will pick you up, and then return you to the hotel.

That boat ride will happen after a fun-filled Picnic that will be held at the La-mond-Frank American Legion Post, Southgate. During the picnic, there will be an Air

**Missin g in America Project**

**Greg Price, Chairman**

The Missing In America Project helps to provide Honor and Respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes. Many states have volunteers that visit Funeral Homes in their communities to locate, identify, and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans.

Some states have revisited the graves of these Forgotten Heroes. Last year on November 3, 2019, Ohio had a bus from 20th Century Tours, leave out of north-east Ohio, and arrive at the Quantico National Cemetery at 0900hrs for a tour of the cemetery and presentations about the Missing In America Project. Upon arriving at Section 22 of the cemetery, everyone disembarked the bus and posted American flags at MIAP gravesites.

I would also like to share that last year on November 12, 2019, MIAP – Georgia, interned the cremated remains of seven World War II veterans, with full military honors at the Georgia National Cemetery. The veterans that were interned served in the US Army and the US Navy during World War II.

I would like to thank everyone once again for your continued efforts in supporting the Missing In America Project. Through your hard work, Veterans that had been forgotten in funeral homes while they sat on shelves, have finally received the Honor’s they were promised while they proudly served this great country.

**Rifle shooting contest.** There will be trophies given to those who have good scores in different age groups.

Of course, we will be conducting important business such as elections of Zone Commanders on Saturday, and Detachment Officers on Sunday. Come on out and support your candidates and be a part of the ceremony for our outgoing Detachment Commander, and our newly elected Detachment Commander.

The Convention will be on the 5, 6, and 7 of June. I hope you can make it and be a part of our American Legion family members that will enjoy the fun-filled weekend.

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., Central Region Chairman
Sons of The American Legion
National Membership Committee

Gentlemen,

Please allow me this opportunity to thank and congratulate you. Your hard work is paying off, and your membership and renewals continue to rise. Keep up the AWESOME work!

As we get closer to Detachment and National Conventions, we must continue to work hard to get our renewal numbers up. The Central Region has had great success in renewals and has led the organization on many occasions. But we’re not done. We want to make sure we meet National Commander Clint Bolt’s goal of a renewal rate above 95%. We also want to help reach his goal of 400,000 members. Are you up to the challenge? Can you help? Who’s next?

As you travel, please remember to promote the Sons of The American Legion and National Commander Clint Bolt’s goals for Membership and all Legion Charities:

- **RECRUIT, RETAIN, AND REINSTATE** to reach 400,000 members
- **Renewal rate above 95%**
- **Obtain 105% in membership by National Convention in Louisville, KY**
- **Recognize our achievements**
- **Child Welfare Foundation**
  - $500,000
- **National Emergency Fund**
  - $100,000
- **Soldiers Wish**
  - $100,000
- **Legacy Scholarship**
  - $100,000
- **Veterans & Children’s Fund**
  - $100,000
- **Operation Comfort Warriors**
  - $100,000

There is one thing we always need to remember, and always want to remind others of. We all joined this organization for a reason. Mine was to help my dad around the Post. It was 25-years ago when we chartered Mahoning Valley Squadron 15 in Poland, Ohio. He’s not with us anymore, and I miss him every day. I find myself doing with my sons what he did with me and teaching the values of The American Legion Family. I also joined to honor all Veterans and to assist where I could. I have met many amazing people and cherish our friendship.

Why did you join? Do you remember? Since you became a member of Sons of The American Legion, what have you done? Are you involved? Do you attend meetings?

Have you recruited any new members? If you have not, why? In our organization, we have many great programs, and we can’t expect our members to be involved in every one of them. But when you find one you fall in love with, have passion about, and truly support, roll up your sleeves and go for it. Do what you can to get others involved and spread the word. Tell your community what you are doing and ask for their help. This can also turn into a great recruiting tool, where new members of The American Legion Family can be added to our rosters. Don’t be afraid to brag about your accomplishments and events. Don’t be afraid to blow your own horn.

For those of you who do not know, I publish a weekly newsletter in the Central Region called Round-Up. The purpose of this publication is to keep our members up to date on our membership program, as well as provide additional information from National Committees and Committees.

Each week, I publish news and events from around the region, when available, and welcome your input. If you do not receive this weekly publication from me and are interested in getting your copy, please email me, and I will add you to the list. It’s a great way to see what is going on outside your Squadron and may peak your interest in other programs. It may also get your blood pumping and start you thinking about leadership positions outside your Squadron. I have about 400 members on the list right now and want that number to increase. Who’s next?

Finally, let me say this, Sons of The American Legion is a valuable organization, not only to The American Legion Family, but to our Community, State, and Nation. We are Proud Possessors, and we are #SALSTRONG. Keep up the AWESOME work!

“Serving Those Who Served...Full Steam Ahead”
## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-1

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article VII, Section 12, now reads:

In addition to the newly elected Post Commander, each Post shall select one (1) delegate for each fifty (50) paid-up members, or major fraction thereof, to represent such Post at the Annual Department Convention. Each Post shall select an Alternate for each Delegate chosen. The Delegates and Alternates shall be chosen by each Post from among its own members in good standing. The names of all Delegates and Alternates shall be certified to the Department Adjutant at least ten (10) days before the opening date of the Annual Department Convention.

To be Amended by:

Changing: "at least ten (10) days before..." to "no later than the close of business on the Friday before..."

So that when amended, Article VII, Section 12, shall read:

In addition to the newly elected Post Commander, each Post shall select one (1) delegate for each fifty (50) paid-up members, or major fraction thereof, to represent such Post at the Annual Department Convention. Each Post shall select an Alternate for each Delegate chosen. The Delegates and Alternates shall be chosen by each Post from among its own members in good standing. The names of all Delegates and Alternates shall be certified to the Department Adjutant no later than the close of business on the Friday before the opening date of the Annual Department Convention.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-2

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article VI, Section 1, now reads:

The Department organization shall consist of the following officers: the Department Commander, Vice Commanders, Department Adjutant, Department Finance Officer, Department Judge Advocate, Department Historian, Department Chaplain and Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

To be Amended by:

Adding: ...."First and Second Vice Commander".... and changing the second wording of Vice Commanders to Zone Commanders

So that when amended, Article VI, Section 1, shall read:

The Department organization shall consist of the following officers: the Department Commander, First and Second Vice Commander, Zone Commanders, Department Adjutant, Department Finance Officer, Department Judge Advocate, Department Historian, Department Chaplain and Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-3

A proposed change to the Department Bylaws, Article V

To be Amended by:

Adding a Section, to become Section 3: ...."First and Second Department Vice Commanders shall be elected annually at the State Convention and shall not serve more than one (1) consecutive term with the same office. It is preferred that Legionnaires desiring to serve as Department Commander become a part of the "team" by being elected Department Second Vice Commander, then progressing by receiving the official nomination for Department First Vice Commander and, eventually, by receiving the official nomination for Department Commander...." This section in no way supersedes or eliminates Department of Michigan Bylaws Article II, Section 1.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-4

A proposed change to the Department Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 2. now reads:

Expenses – No Department officer or member of any committee shall be paid or reimbursed from the funds of the Department for any travel or other expense incurred upon Department business, unless a travel order or other suitable order, duly Called by the Department Commander or Duly signed by the Department Adjutant, shall accompany the order for payment thereof.

To be Amended by:

Changing verbiage: "travel order" changed to “expense voucher” and “suitable order” changed to “suitable authorization”

So that when amended, Article VIII, Section 2, shall read:

Expenses – No Department officer or member of any committee shall be paid or reimbursed from the funds of the Department for any travel or other expense incurred upon Department business, unless an expense voucher or other suitable permission, duly Called by the Department Commander or Duly signed by the Department Adjutant, shall accompany the order for payment thereof.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-5

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article IX, Section 1. now reads:

For the purpose of administration, the Posts of the Department shall be grouped as they currently exist, and are hereinafter referred to as "Districts". No Post shall transfer from one District to another except with the consent of the Department Executive Committee, on application made by the Post and with the consent of both Districts involved.

To be Amended by:

Removing: "on application made by the Post and with the consent of both Districts involved" and adding "or at Department Convention"

So that when amended, Article IX, Section 1, shall read:

For the purpose of administration, the Posts of the Department shall be grouped as they currently exist, and are hereinafter referred to as "Districts". No Post shall transfer from one District to another except with the consent of the Department Executive Committee or at Department Convention.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-6

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article X, Section 1. now reads:

The Department shall be divided into five (5) Zones which shall be composed of Districts as shall be determined by the Department Executive Committee.

To be Amended by:

Removing: the word ‘five’ and the number ‘5’” and adding “or at Department Convention”

So that when amended, Article X, Section 1, shall read:

The Department shall be divided into Zones which shall be composed of Districts as shall be determined by the Department Executive Committee or at Department Convention.
A proposed change to the Department By-Laws. Article VI, Sections 1 through 11, now reads:

Article VI COMMITTEES Section 1: The following permanent Department Standing Committees and Subcommittees are hereby authorized:

Americanism and Community Service
- Subcommittee: Junior Shooting Sports
- Subcommittee: Law & Order
- Subcommittee: Scouting

American Legion Baseball
American Legion Boys’ State
Children and Youth
Education and Scholarship
Finance/Personnel
Internal Affairs
- Subcommittee: Constitution and By-Laws
- Subcommittee: Legion Riders

Legislative
Media & Communications
Membership
National Security and Foreign Relations
- Subcommittee: Blood, Eye and Vital Organ Bank
- Subcommittee: POW/MIA

Permanent Time and Place/Resolution Assignment
Post Development
Reconnect
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
- Subcommittee: Heroes to Hometown
- Subcommittee: V.A.V.S./V.H.V.S.

Veterans Employment & Education

Section 2: Such other special committees and liaisons may be appointed by the Department Commander and authorized by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 3: All Department Committees and Subcommittees shall function under Rules of Procedure approved and adopted by the Department Executive Committee. Committee Rules of Procedure may be amended in content, but not in format, by a majority of the members of the Committee, submitted to the Internal Affairs Committee for review and recommendations and finally approved by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 4: All committee members shall be appointed and may be removed for cause by the Department Commander, with the approval of the Department Executive Committee. The Department Commander shall name the Chairman of each committee to serve until the next Department Convention. Members that are on mandated committees (Permanent Time and Place), or serving in an Alternate or Assistant position on the Department Executive Committee, may also serve on an appointive Department committee but not in a Chairmanship, with the exception of the Permanent Time and Place Chairman, who may serve in that role. No member shall receive per diem and travel pay more than once per call, regardless of the number of committees they serve on.

Section 5: The term of office of all members of Department Committees shall be staggered so that the term of one-half of the Committee shall expire at the close of the annual Department Convention each year. Appointments, except when a shorter term shall be necessary to comply with this provision, shall be for a term of two (2) years each.

Section 6: No Legionnaire may be appointed to serve on more than one regular standing appointive Department Committee at any one time.

Section 7: Finance/Personnel Committee: The Commander shall appoint, subject to ratification by the Department Executive Committee, a Department Finance/Personnel Committee to be composed of five (5) members, one member to be appointed from each Zone of the Department. The Commander and Finance Officer shall be ex-officio members of this committee, with vote, the Director of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation shall be an ex-officio member of this committee and the Adjutant shall be ex-officio Secretary of this committee, without vote.

Section 8: All funds received from any source for the Department of Michigan, including any Board or Committee created and or appointed by The American Legion, Department of Michigan, shall be under the possession, control and supervision of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Said Committee shall be charged with the duty of setting up a proper and adequate system of centralized control and procuring audits of such funds.

Section 9: The Finance/Personnel Committee shall be charged with the preparation of a yearly budget, the financial policy of the Department, the handling of funds under the budget, and approval of expenditures of all Department funds not budgeted, and preparation and approval of the audit of all books and records of the Department and other additional audits as often, in addition thereto, as it may deem expedient. It shall file a written report including the official audit with the Annual Convention, setting forth in detail the financial recommendations as it considers advisable.

Section 10: The Finance/Personnel Committee shall be charged with the duty of fixing the amount of and providing a proper and adequate fidelity and crime insurance for the Department Adjutant, the Department Finance Officer and all other Department officials and employees who handle Department funds; in an insurance company or companies approved by the National Adjutant. The expense of the insurance provided for herein shall be borne by the Department. The Finance/Personnel Committee shall also be responsible for the investing of all trust funds, excepting those funds left in trust for purposes of the authorized subsidiary corporation.

Section 11: The Constitution and By-Laws of all Department Subsidiary Corporations shall be adopted and amended only with the consent of the Department Executive Committee.

To be Amended by:

So that when amended, Article VI, Section 1 through 11, shall read:

The following permanent Department Commissions are hereby authorized:

Americanism Commission
Finance/Personnel Commission
Internal Affairs Commission
Legislative Commission
Membership Commission
National Security and Foreign Relations Commission
VA&R Commission
Veterans Employment & Education Commission

Section 2: Such other special Committees and Councils, Council Members may be appointed by the Department Commander and authorized by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 3: All Department Commissions, Committees and councils shall function under Rules of Procedure approved and adopted by the Department Executive Committee. Commissions, Committees and Councils Rules of Procedures may be amended in content, but not in format, by a majority of the members of the Commission, submitted to the Internal Affairs Commission for review and recommendations and finally approved by the Department Executive Committee.

Section 4: All Commission and Committee members shall be appointed and may be removed for cause by the Department Commander, with the approval of the
PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-9 .. cont.

Department Executive Committee. Council Members supporting the Committees will be on the recommendation of Posts, Districts and Zone officers, Submitted to the Department Adjutant for Commander acceptance. The Department Commander shall name the Chairman of each Commission and Committee to serve until the next Department Convention. Members that are on mandated committees (Permanent Time and Place), or serving in an Alternate or Assistant position on the Department Executive Committee, may also serve on an appointive Department Commission or Committee but not in a Chairmanship, with the exception of the Permanent Time and Place Chairman, who may serve in that role. No member shall receive per diem and travel pay more than once per call, regardless of the number of committees they serve on.”

Section 5: The term of office of all members of Department Commission or Committees shall be staggered so that the term of one-half of the Commissions and Committees shall expire at the close of the annual Department Convention each year. Appointments, except when a shorter term shall be necessary to comply with this provision, shall be for a term of two (2) years each.

Section 6: No Legionnaire may be appointed to serve on more than one regular standing appointive Department Commission or Committee at any one time. A department Council member can support more than one Committee or Commission at one time as they will not be called to Department meetings, functions or Conventions.

Section 7: Finance/Personnel Commission:

The Commander shall appoint, subject to ratification by the Department Executive Committee, a The Commander shall appoint, subject to ratification by the Department Executive Committee, a Department Finance/Personnel Commission to be composed of one (1) member appointed from each Zone of the Department. The Commander and Finance Officer shall be ex-officio members of this committee, with vote, the Director of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation shall be an ex-officio member of this committee and the Adjutant shall be ex-officio Secretary of this committee, without vote.

Section 8: All funds received from any source for the Department of Michigan, including any Board, Commission, Committee or Council created and or appointed by The American Legion, Department of Michigan, shall be under the possession, control and supervision of the Finance/Personnel Commission. Said Commission shall be charged with the duty of setting up a proper and adequate system of centralized control and procuring audits of such funds.

Section 9: The Finance/Personnel Commission shall be charged with the preparation of a yearly budget, the financial policy of the Department, the handling of funds under the budget, and approval of expenditures of all Department funds not budgeted, and preparation and approval of the audit of all books and records of the Department and other additional audits as often, in addition thereto, as it may deem expedient. It shall file a written report including the official audit with the Annual Convention, setting forth in detail the financial recommendations as it considers advisable.

Section 10: The Finance/Personnel Commission shall be charged with the duty of fixing the amount of and providing a proper and adequate fidelity and crime insurance for the Department Adjutant, the Department Finance Office and all other Department officials and employees who handle Department funds, in an insurance company or companies approved by the National Adjutant. The expense of the insurance provided for herein shall be borne by the Department. The Finance/Personnel Committee shall also be responsible for the investing of all trust funds, excepting those funds left in trust for purposes of the authorized subsidiary corporation.

Section 11: Committees and Councils of the Commissions will be determined by the Department Executive Committee and confirmed at the 30-day meeting each year and published in the DEC manual Annually.

Section 12: The Constitution and By-Laws of all Department Subsidiary Corporations shall be adopted and amended only with the consent of the Department Executive Committee.

Note: The Following Committees and Councils are Recommended to the DEC for approval in the DEC Manual.

Americanism Commission:
Committee: Junior Shooting Sports
Committee: Scouting
Committee: Student Trooper
Committee: School Awards program
Committee: Teacher of the Year Awards (Patriotism)
Committee: Oratorical Contest
Committee: Citizen Flag Alliance
Committee: Boys State
Committee: Baseball
Committee: Children & Youth
Committee: Education and Scholarship

Finance/Personnel Commission:
Committee: Permanent Time and Place
Committee: Media & Communications
Committee: Wilwin Organization
Committee: Michigan American Legion Foundation

Internal Affairs Commission
Committee: Constitution and Bylaws

Committee: Resolutions Assignment
Committee: Legion Riders
Legislative Commission
Membership Commission:
Committee: Membership
Committee: Post Development
National Security and Foreign Relations Commission
Committee: Blood, Eye and Vital Organ Bank
Committee: POW/MIA
Committee: Law and Order
Committee: Law Officer of the Year
Committee: Firefighter/First Responder of the Year
Committee: Homeland Security

VA&R Commission
Committee: VAVS/VHVS
Committee: Heroes to Hometown
Committee: Operation Comfort Warrior
Committee: Reconnect Council:
Committee:  Homeless Veterans
Committee: VA Cemetery representatives
Veterans Employment & Education Commission
Committee: Veterans Employment
Committee: Education
All Committees or councils in the DEC Manual will be updated and published/available online within 72 hours of any modification or vote by the DEC.
PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-7

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article X, Section 4, now reads:

The Zone Commanders shall be elected at the Zone caucuses held at the Annual Convention, by the Districts which compromise the individual Zones. The Zone Commanders shall also be known as Department Vice Commanders.

To be Amended by:
Removing the sentence: “The Zone Commanders shall also be known as Department Vice Commanders.”

So that when amended, Article X, Section 4, shall read:

The Zone Commanders shall be elected at the Zone caucuses held at the Annual Convention, by the Districts which comprise the individual Zones.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 20-CA-8

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article XII, Section 1, now reads:

The elective Department Officers shall be chosen annually at the Department Convention by a roll call vote of the Districts of the Department, with the exception of the five (5) Vice Commanders, who shall be chosen at the “Zone” Caucuses by the Districts making up the “Zone” which that individual Vice Commander is to represent. Each Vice Commander so chosen must be and shall remain a member of a Post within their respective Zone or the office shall be declared vacant.

To be Amended by:
Removing: “the Five (5) Vice Commanders” and replacing with “the Zone Commanders”

Removing: the title “Vice Commanders” and replacing with “Zone Commanders”

So that when amended, Article XII, Section 1, shall read:

The elective Department Officers shall be chosen annually at the Department Convention by a roll call vote of the Districts of the Department, with the exception of the Zone Commanders, who shall be chosen at the “Zone” Caucuses by the Districts making up the “Zone” which that individual Zone Commander is to represent. Each Zone Commander so chosen must be and shall remain a member of a Post within their respective Zone or the office shall be declared vacant.

What is the procedure of making amendments to the Department Constitution?

Article XVI

AMENDMENTS

Section 1: This Constitution may be amended by two-thirds vote at any Annual Department Convention, provided notice be published electronically on the Department website at least 60 days prior to said convention and be published in paper form in a spring edition of the Michigan Legionnaire. Said proposed amendment shall be referred to the Convention Constitution and By-Laws Committee, which shall submit the same to the Department Convention with its recommendations with regard thereto.

What is the procedure of making amendments to the Department Bylaws?

Article XII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1: These By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds vote at any Annual Department Convention, provided notice be published electronically on the Department website at least 60 days prior to said convention and be published in paper form in a spring edition of the Michigan Legionnaire. Said proposed amendment shall be referred to the Convention Constitution and By-Laws Committee, which shall submit the same to the Department Convention with its recommendations with regard thereto.

Department Legion Rider Subcommittee

By Robert “Skip” Kamin, Chairman

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Robert “Skip” Kamin. There is a lot of you that know me, especially in southeast Michigan. I am the Department Chairman for the Legion Riders.

The days are getting longer, the groundhog did not see his shadow, so you all know what that means, and riding season is right around the corner. There are a lot of things that we all have coming up, parades, poker runs, or just a simple dinner run. Just to get your knees in the breeze, whatever the reason to get out and ride.

The reason for my article is to gather and give information. The goals of the committee are to organize the Riders, to get all the chapters on the same page, to share information from one part of the state to another, and to be a resource. I want to say I do not know everything, but I do know enough people to get your answers.

So, let’s start with the reason why we need this. In the last few weeks, I have been asked for some help with a couple of things. The first was a family in the Saginaw area that had a family member that had passed and was a Veteran. They needed five pallbearers and to possibly do a flag line. Luckily there was someone who knew the rider chapter in the Saginaw area, and we were able to take care of it. The next one is the city of St. Clair Shores looking for riders to take part in their Memorial Day Parade on Sunday, May 24th. Here is the problem; we do not have a list or knowledge of how many chapters there are. So my mission is to gather and create a list of all the chapters’ locations, directors, and contact information. That way, the information can be given to the chapters in the area of need. What I want to do is have all the chapters to email me the following information: post number, director name, contact information, and the number of members in your chapter. You can email me at skip0616@yahoo.com. I will take the information and create a spreadsheet and get it to the Department so it will be on file.

The final thing I want to mention is that we will need some people to be part of the communication chain; one from each zone would be great. The purpose would be to get information from the Department to the chapters, and the chapters to the Department in the simplest way. There would be an email to each of the zone representatives, they, in turn, will get it to their district representatives, and they would get it to the individual chapters. It would work the same in reverse.

I appreciate everyone taking the time to read this. I look forward to getting your information. Looking forward to the riding season, I hope our paths will cross, and we can ride together.
4th Zone Report
John P. Brown, Commander

Spring is almost here. It will be nice to see winter wind down and let the temperatures warm up.

I hope everyone got there 2019-2020 dues monies turned in on time. In my last article, I mentioned all dues monies should be turned in by the second week of March 2020.

Elections are coming up for most Squadrons, best of luck for those of you running for office. Don’t forget to turn in your officer’s list & bonds. Getting this done will get your new membership cards to you in June 2020.

This next year 2020-2021 membership cards will have a dues increase of $3.00 per member. This increase is being done by National Headquarters, and these new monies will go directly to the SAL National level. Each Squadron can either increase their Squadron dues or absorb them within the current dues. National dues will go from $2.00 per member to $5.00 per member in 2020-2021 dues year. The detachment wanted to get this information out to all Squadrons, so as, they can prepare for this change.

This year’s SAL Convention will be in Southgate on June 5, and 6. I hope all Squadrons in the 9th, 10th, and 19th Districts can send a delegate to the convention.

There will be a vote in June 2020 at the American Legion convention. This vote will decide to change the Districts and Zones or to leave them the same. These changes, if made, will dramatically change the 4th Zone by splitting and adding a 5th Zone to our area. The changes, if made, will not take effect for two years after the vote on this issue. I will keep you informed of any changes are made.

Sons are doing many things; please email me at willieallen107@gmail.com and let me know what’s going on in your Squadron. I will try to get this information to the detachment to let them know what’s going on in the 4th Zone.

16th District Report
Victor C. Fisher, Commander

Greetings from the 16th District,

I am writing to you today to remind you of our upcoming convention. The 16th and 18th District is hosting this convention together.

However, the convention will be located within the 16th District. The convention will be held in Southgate, June 5–7. There is a ton of stuff to do in this area if you choose. The hotel is the Holiday Inn located at 17201 Northline Rd, in Southgate. The room rate is 109.99 per night, for a single King or Double Queen. We currently have the whole hotel, with the exception of 10 rooms, blocked just for our convention. The room blocks are being held until May 2020. Please get your reservations in now. If there are any issues with making a reservation, please let me know. My email is victor-sal396@hotmail.com. The information for our convention is located on the state web site, at sons.americanlegion.org.

The hotel is working with the YMCA, located next door so our guests can use their facilities, which includes a splash park. The hotel is also offering a movie night for the children, which is free of charge. This will be a kid-friendly convention. Please join us for a fun-filled weekend.

S.A.L. 2020 State Convention

2-HOUR Detroit – North/Bridge Cruise--Wyandotte “Diamond Jack’s River Tour”
Saturday June 6, 2020

Travel by Bus: MEET in front of Hotel by: 6:15 pm
Ship leaving: 6:45 pm / Returning 9:00 pm

Limited Tickets Available (Rain or Shine) Full Payment is Required (No Refunds)
$ 25.00 (per Ticket)

CASH BAR / Snacks (prices vary) available at BAR.

Deadline: For your Cruise TICKETS: Wed. April 15, 2020

Mail Your Check to: Bill Shaw at 13248 Cunningham, Southgate, MI 48195
Home #: 734-284-6600 or Cell #: 734-231-3296

Make Check Payable to: Sons of the American Legion

# of Tickets _______ x $ 25.00 per Ticket = _______

(PICK-UP Your Cruise Tickets at Registration)
S.A.L. Processor: Received _______ on Date:
I am Honored to have Served
Mike Boughner, National Executive Committeeman
As my final year as the Detachment National Executive Committeeman comes to an end, I want to thank everyone for their support. It has been my pleasure to share all the information with the Detachment after every N.E.C. meeting and National Convention to keep you all informed on what is going on at the national level.

As we approach the issuance of our 2021 membership cards, don’t forget that there has been a National dues increase of $3.00 per member, so the new amount that you need to send into the Detachment for 2021 is $11.00.

The National Resolution that was passed at our 48th National Convention in Indianapolis.

RESOLVED, That the Sons of The American Legion in National Convention assembled on August 23-25, 2019, in Indianapolis, Indiana, amend the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, Article X, Section 2 to read, “The amount of such annual National dues shall be $5.00 per member and shall be payable October 20 of each year and for the succeeding year;” and be it further

RESOLVED, That the increase take effect on June 1, 2020, with the distribution of the 2021 National Membership cards, and applied to all membership transmittals received after that date.

Membership dues help to cover the costs of administration of membership and our programs, at the Detachment and National level.

For God and Country

The Honor Guard, Bring Legionnaires and Sons Together
Scott Gregory
Who are the Honor Guards, and what do they do? The Honor Guards provide funeral honors to fallen comrades. The Honor Guards are guardians of our country’s colors. The Honor Guards are our ambassadors to the public, seen at parades and other community ceremonies, presenting a positive image of our U.S. Military Servicemembers and Veterans and what they mean to us.

At the Underwood-Orr American Legion Post, in Tecumseh, the leader of the Honor Guard is John Mersdorf, United States Marine Corps Veteran from 1980-1983. He is affectionately known to all of us at our post as “Bulldog.” John is a dedicated veteran that welcomes all to our post with a handshake and a smile, however, when it comes to the Honor Guard duty, that is where a different no-frills Marine Corps veteran can shine. He and all involved expect perfection when it comes to honoring a fallen comrade, so we practice. John will teach anyone interested and dedicated the movements, the calls, and how to be in synchronicity with one another.

The Underwood-Orr Sons of The American Legion Squadron were asked if we would help the Legion Honor Guard to make sure they had enough people to carry flags and give a proper 21 gun salute, to send a veteran off with a proper goodbye. Of course, we said yes. John immediately went into his role as our “drill instructor” so to speak. After our regular monthly meetings, John gave lessons on the calls and how to handle the rifle correctly, and so began our relationship with the American Legion Honor Guard.

We now have a group of S.A.L. members that help with funeral honors. They include S.A.L. members Kirk Maves, Richard Cangley, Tom Pollock, Keith Kapnick, Joe Knadler, Randy Hernandez, Dan Dotson, Randy Sparks, John Birchfield, Billy Viers, Lynn Gubbe, and myself; Scott Gregory. It is a double-edged sword for us; we burst with pride to assist our Legion veterans, and yet we are filled with sorrow to say goodbye to another veteran. The reality and brevity hit us when we hear Larry Harper; our Legion bugler blow those 24 notes known as “Taps.”

WILWIN LODGE at CYGENET COVE
Earl and Bev Ruttkofsky
We want to thank all that came out for the fall clean-up and closing of the lodge for the year. But low and behold, we are not far from opening back up to serve our Veterans and their Families!

One of our biggest fundraisers and activity on the property is our Annual Pure Country Music concert, in support of our Veterans. Headlining again this year will be the award-winning Richard Lynch Band, with local acts opening up for them. The date is August 1, 2020, and gates will open at 2 P.M. All donations are graciously accepted and appreciated.

The day is filled with Good Food, Good Friends, and Good Music!! And also don’t forget the live auction will be going on all day!!

Chaplain’s Report
Ronald Wyatt, Detachment Chaplain

I hope everyone is doing well and in good health. For those that may be sick prayers and a speedy recovery to you.

Please keep the Svacha family in your prayers. The passing of Reina Svacha mother of past PDC Andre Svacha.

Just a reminder to make sure that you send me the names of any deceased SAL members. Need these names so we can remember them at our convention in the memorial service. You can email them to me at wyatt0506@comcast.com or fill out the report form that is online and send it to Chaplain Ron Wyatt 6399 Jericho Rd, Stevensville MI, 49127.

As always, keep our men and women that are serving our country in your prayers.

For God and Country

The August Mattson SAL Squadron 71, Gladstone Makes Donation to Boys State.

The 2020 Upper Peninsula Association of American Legion Posts Mid-Winter Conference was held Jan. 17-18 at the Uren-Cooper-Johnson Post 50 in Iron Mountain. One of the first stops for dinner was at the August Mattson American Legion Post 71 in Gladstone. On hand to greet the New SAL Detachment Commander Mike Holley with a donation for Boys State was Squadron Commander Randy Bruntjens and his Officers.

The August Mattson SAL Squadron is proud to support Commander Holley and Boys State. Holley told the gathering that “The American Legion Boys State program started in Illinois in 1935 and came to Michigan in 1938. By participating in mock local, county, and state government exercises, delegates learn first hand about leadership, practical citizenship, and the democratic process through activities that include legislative sessions, court proceedings, presentations, bands, choruses, and recreational programs”. Thank you again from the August Mattson SAL Squadron. The Sons of the American Legion was founded for preserving the American Legion Traditions and Programs while improving the quality of life for our nation’s children, caring for veterans and their families, and teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.

Photo Caption Left to right: August Mattson SAL Squadron Commander Randy Bruntjens and State SAL Commander Mike Holley.

Pickard Elected the 5th Zone Commander for Michigan S.A.L.

John Pickard from August Mattson Squadron #71, in Gladstone, was elected to be the Michigan S.A.L. 5th Zone Commander for 2020-2021 Membership Year. John replaces William “Bill” German. “I grew up in a Legion Family in Gladstone and a strong family of Veterans. Beginning with my grandfather, who was the third Post Commander, who served in France and Belgium in World War I. My father served two terms as the Post Commander and was a Veteran of the China-Burma Theater in World War II. Lastly, my brother served during the Vietnam Era; it was only natural to become a Son of the American Legion to honor and serve all Veterans”.

The lodge is operated by the Michigan American Legion Family and supported by The Love Tattoo Foundation, please attend and view this extraordinary facility made especially for our Veterans and their Families!

Stay inside
Stay home if you are sick
Call and check on your members.

This to shall pass.
2020 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CONVENTION CALL

The 100th Annual Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan is hereby called to be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan June 25 - June 28, 2020.

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, considering amendments to the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Rules, receiving reports of the National Executive Committee, Department Officers and Chairmen, electing Delegates and Alternates to the 100th National Convention and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

REPRESENTATION

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 2: The Annual Convention shall be composed of Delegates and Alternates qualified as follows:

a. Delegates and Alternates shall have paid their National and Department dues for the current year to Department Headquarters not less than thirty (30) days prior to the convention.
b. Delegates and Alternates must be over eighteen (18) years of age, except as provided in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2 (a).
c. Delegates and Alternates must be elected at a Unit meeting duly called for that purpose: notice of said meeting having been given no later than two (2) weeks prior to election.
d. Alternates shall have priority in order of their election.

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 3: Each Unit of ten (10) or more members shall be entitled to one (1) Delegate and one (1) additional Delegate for every one hundred (100) members or major fraction thereof.
a. Units may send Delegates or Alternates only if they have paid their Mandatory Funds for the current year to Department Headquarters not less than (30) days prior to Convention.
b. Units will be permitted to vote from the floor only if they have complied with all mandates and are represented by at least one (1) Delegate or Alternate.
c. Units organized during the year (after July 1) will be given the privileges of the Convention floor.

d. Alternates shall have priority in order of their election.


UNIT CREDENTIAL FEES

Standing Rules (Department of Administration) credential fee is $10.00 for each delegate, $1.00 fee will be charged for lost credentials for Department Convention, must be paid by the Unit for each Delegate to which it is entitled by virtue of its membership.

DELEGATE AT LARGE

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 4: All elected and appointed Department Officers, all members of Department Standing Committees, the Hospital Representatives and their First Deputies of the VA Hospitals, Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans and all non-VA Hospital Chairmen and their First Deputies shall be Delegates-at-Large to the annual Convention and entitled to vote.

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 5: All Past Department Presidents, as long as they remain members in good standing in a Unit in this Department, shall be Delegates-at-Large to the annual Convention and entitled to vote.

STANDING RULES (DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION)

A credential fee shall be paid for each Delegate-at-Large for the Department Convention. All credential fees collected for Department Convention shall be allocated to the printing account to help defray the cost of the Annual Report Book. Credential fee is $10.00.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEE

The fee of $15.00 charged by The American Legion Convention Corporation must be paid by ALL DELEGATES, ALTERNATES, DELEGATES-AT-LARGE, AND GUESTS. Convention program book, badge, etc. will be given only on presentation of the Corporation’s receipt at the registration desk. The registration fee of $15.00 must be paid even if housing is not required. The convention registration fee of $15.00 is to be mailed to the American Legion 2020 Convention with a registration form.

2nd District Report

Dawn Gramza District 2 ALA President

Greetings from the 2nd District, as we are ending our centennial celebration, the 2nd District continues honoring and supporting veterans, military, families, and our communities.

Members have been working and volunteering in their communities, VA Hospital and The National Creative Arts Festival, held in our great state of Michigan.

Lynn C. Weeman Unit 514 was the first in the District to accept a male member in the ALA John Weimert who joined the unit honoring his wife, Barb. John is also a veteran and has been an active member of Post 514.

This year my special project is Veterans Matters a nation program assisting housing homeless veterans; I am so thankful for the donations I have received from the units in the 2nd District.

The District came together with the cabin adoption at Wilwin Lodge; the units have donated linens, cash, and their time to give Cabin 1 an update.

I am so thankful for the support I have received from the units in the 2nd District, allowing me to continue honoring the memory of my dad.

Looking forward to the next 100 years informing the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

In service not self.

Join Us in Kalamazoo
June 25-28
for the
Department Annual
Convention
at the Radisson Hotel.

Visit
michiganlegion.org/2020kazo
or page 19.

for hotel information.
Junior’s Report
Chris Merlington, Chairman

During the year, when asking about Juniors at different Units, I have gotten responses such as “our Juniors don’t do anything.” We have over nine hundred (900) Juniors paid into Department. I have asked do you Juniors help with Poppy Days, do they help set up and clean tables at Fish Fries and dinners? Do your Juniors sell candy bars or help with a bake sale? Do your Juniors ride in floats during parades? Do they go to the Cemetery to lay wreaths? “GUESS WHAT!” most of the Juniors in Michigan participated in multiple things so far this year. We had one Junior from West Michigan attend the National Junior meeting in Kalamazoo this year. We have had Juniors from around the state participating along with the Senior members at the Airports to welcome home Service members for Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. The 5th District held a Junior Jamboree in October, where the Juniors created Goodie Bags by coloring and drawing on the outside of lunch sacks that would then be used to put oranges and snacks and such to be handed out at the local nursing homes and Veteran organizations. They also made multiple Christmas cards during the Jamboree to be handed out at the Grand Rapids Veterans Home to the members. Juniors from around the state participated in Veterans Day Programs, including parades and laying of wreaths. They have participated in multiple fundraisers to help with the programs at their posts. The Juniors are actively working on the patch program as well. The Juniors are also actively participating in the Poppy Program. Our MICHIGAN JUNIORS are very active. I am amazed at the amount the Juniors did; our Juniors did SOMETHING. Keep up what you are doing, Michigan Juniors. You are our Future.

Thoughts from the National Executive Director

March 20, 2020

TO: National Executive Committee Members, National Officers, National Chairmen, Past National Presidents
CC: Department Presidents; Department Secretaries
From: Kelly Circle, Executive Director
Re: Weekly Briefing 3-20-2020

It's been another hectic week of adapting and improvising but we are persisting! Because of the pandemic, our “rules of engagement” are changing daily. Different regions are being impacted differently so perspectives are different. Please be mindful of that and seek to understand if you are reading Facebook posts or emails and wondering why people are making the decisions they are making. I realize that many people on this distribution list have met me once or twice or maybe not at all. This can create fear and uncertainty amongst our members in this time of complete uncertainty, so I’d like to try to be open and honest about who I am as a person and what kind of leader I aspire to be.

Here are my priorities as Executive Director:

1. Safety for our members and employees
   A large percentage of our members and some of our employees fall into an “at risk” category for the virus through age or medical issues. Our first priority is to the safety and well-being of our members/employees. (My 89 year-old MIL lives with me so I’m especially cognizant of being a carrier and putting her at risk.)
2. Our Mission
   An organization consists of people with “can do” attitudes. We will move mountains to keep the operation and our mission going without regard for our personal well-being. I HAVE to make our well-being a priority and maybe make unpopular decisions to safeguard our mission and the resources (members) to carry that out. We may have to limit our activities in the short-term so we have all of our members still with us in the long-term to keep our mission strong.
3. Open communication and trust
   I am very fortunate I am middle-aged and still trust until proven otherwise. Unfortunately, others are not that way and I forget that. Please know that I come from a place of optimism and good faith. If I inadvertently send a message that comes across in a negative manner, please give me the benefit of the doubt and ask me if this is what I meant. I have stuck my foot in my mouth more times than I care to remember so please, let’s keep an open dialogue!

So, with that background, let's get back to the business at hand:

Your NHQ team are mostly all working remotely and we are utilizing technology to

Children & Youth
Kathleen Copeland, Chairman

“The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families – their health and well-being.”

This is the perfect statement for the focus of this program. It is an essential program for the entire Legion Family to get behind. We support our youth through a variety of programs that focus on our youth and their development.

April is Children & Youth Month. This year Children & Youth Day is April 3rd. We ask you to “Purple UP” (wear purple) this day in their honor. Continue to show them year-round how we encourage them through the Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy and Girls State, The Child Welfare Foundation, the Oratorical Contests, Scouting, Youth Hero Awards, Good Deed Awards, scholarships and many more ways we support our future generations. Let's celebrate them and stamp out negativity in their lives. All of these endeavors are ways to encourage them and watch them grow into good patriotic citizens.

We can find many young people to support within our ranks. Our Veterans and members have children and grandchildren; we can help support. There are nieces and nephews who currently have one or more parents deployed, and we can offer ourselves to them. Everything does not have to be monetary. It might be just some time spent with our Children & Youth. Let's use our own Post Homes or meeting places to have weekly Youth game days. Where help is limited, call on other area units to help. We are all in this together in support of our future.

Last, please report your efforts. Reporting your time, as well as your monetary support, added to all the other reports, paint an awesome picture of who we are in service to others.
**VETERAN SERVICES NEWS**

**VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS ARE ON THE JOB!**

Gary Easterling, DVSO Director

**Update as of March 25, 2020:**

Note: Please monitor the Department Website and Facebook page for the latest updates on the Veteran Services Division.

The Coronavirus epidemic has created some challenging situations for every one of us. I am happy to report that your American Legion Department of Michigan Veteran Service Division is still monitoring claims, taking phone calls, faxes, and emails. The team members are working from their homes, following up with veterans on claims, and talking to the Veteran Benefits Administration about those claims. I want to share information that is important to veterans who have claims pending, have a hearing scheduled, or another situation.

**The VA Health Administration is OPEN!**

If you have an appointment, keep your appointment, unless the VA calls to reschedule. Some non-essential medical procedures are being rescheduled to keep traffic in the health centers to a minimum. If you are not sure, call the center where your appointment is for further instruction.

If your appointment is still going on, give yourself extra time to get there. All facilities have established designated entrances to screen everyone coming into the facility.

**The VA Benefits Administration is WORKING!**

I say working because by order of the Governor and to keep health centers safe, we are not able to be at our scheduled places to meet veterans. However, that does not mean we cannot serve Veterans. We currently have challenges with submitting first-time claims for Veterans, because we need a signature and those with cases involving financial information. Depending on the situation will depend on how we handle obtaining the signatures. Again, it is only a challenge. If you need to start a claim, we can help you.

How does a veteran get a hold of an American Legion Department of Michigan Veteran Service Officer or have a question?

Call me, **Gary Easterling at (313) 549-8557, or email me at geasterling@michiganlegion.org**. I will answer your question or direct it to one of our DVSO’s. Please give your name, phone number, and case number when calling or emailing your question.

Our FAX number during this period is **(517) 689-6000**.

*NOTE: All hearings have been postponed and will resume on May 1. Watch your mail about rescheduling. However, I am currently working with VBA to do virtual hearings. I will be contacting Veterans who have hearings scheduled, and if they have the technical capability to participate, it might be done sooner. Virtual hearings will be a case by case basis.*

For those Veterans waiting for a C&P exam, many of those will have to be rescheduled due to clinics the VA contracts within areas being closed. Contact me or the VA if you have questions.

Don’t forget to use ebenefits.va.gov for information, and we recommend calling ahead to any VA service you might have scheduled.

Because of your membership, donations, and support, the VA&R Division implemented the capabilities last year to be more mobile, not knowing what was ahead. Thank you for your support!

We are here to help, just reach out.

**SAVE the DATE: The Richard Morrison Post Service Officer Training will be held September 2-4 at the DNR Higgins Lake facility. Details and registration coming soon. Seating is limited to the first 150 participants.**
AMERICANISM: THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT – REGULAR MAINTENANCE REQUIRED

Clyde Sinclair
Scouting Chairman

I don’t know, and maybe I’m the only one who becomes upset when I see someone desecrating the flag or hear of someone violating another’s 1st Amendment rights. Does anyone care any longer? Do we believe that if we ignore it, it will all go away? I suppose we can tolerate it as long as our freedoms are not violated. After all, it’s not our problem, is it?

Question 1: What do you know about the American Legion? Most people had heard of the American Legion, but only a few knew anything about it (We should probably get out into the community more often).

Question 2: Have you ever heard the term “Americanism,” and what do you think it means? 60% of those interviewed had never heard of the word, and only a few took a guess about its meaning.

Question 3: Is it important that a nation’s citizens express a sense of patriotism? 80% said yes, the other 20% adamantly replied, “NO.”

Question 4: How would you describe patriotism? Responses ranged from “Pride in one’s country and a willingness to serve” to “something evil that causes people to put the country’s interests before the interests of others.”

Question 5: What is the 1st Amendment, and what does it do? Only 40% could tell me what the amendment was about. When given hints, some figured it out. I received the same response when I asked about the 2nd Amendment.

Upon the completion of each interview, I presented them with a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as a gift. While presenting it, I turned to the Declaration of Independence and read the first paragraph and part of the second. I then turned to the 1st Amendment and read that to them. The Declaration of Independence and Constitution are both available in booklet form from the Legion web address above.

All in all, it was a pleasant experience, but when you run into someone who has a negative opinion about the country; it’s pretty hard just to smile and say thank you. But then, those are the people we need to talk to.

I believe the members of the American Legion are missing valuable opportunities to model and reinforce Americanism. In some instances, it’s going to take more time and effort to teach the truth about our laws and purposes. If I could have spoken freely to those who believe the USA is a selfish nation, I could have given them something to think about.

I now believe it’s essential for those of us who are the most elderly in the Legion, to share both our experiences and knowledge. There is an element of our society that has been misled and needs to hear the truth about America. The bottom line is that we need to get up off the couch and share our stories. The future of our nation and the direction it goes in the future is in our hands. May God bless America.

The American Legion recognized February as Americanism month this year. What did you do to promote Americanism in your schools or community? It doesn’t have to be much. As a veteran, you can create quite a bit of goodwill by visiting an elementary school and sharing your story or some literature about American history.

I took the opportunity to visit a group of Cub Scouts and shared my military experience with them and taught them how to fold the flag. I keep a few of the Legion’s “Light of Liberty,” “Our Country’s Flag,” and “Our Country’s Veterans” comic books on hand, so I passed those out. I also keep a roll of flag stickers on hand all the time, and I gave each Cub Scout two or three stickers. Upon receiving the stickers, they immediately stuck them onto their face, hands, or the back of the scout standing next to them. These items and more are all available at www.emblem.legion.org.

I also visited a local mall here in the Grand Rapids area and interviewed numerous people. I wanted to know what the people of Grand Rapids knew about Americanism, patriotism, and American history. I was pleasantly surprised, though all that I heard was not good.

Here are the results of my interviews;

Question 1: What do you know about the American Legion? Most people had heard of the American Legion, but only a few knew anything about it (We should probably get out into the community more often).

Question 2: Have you ever heard the term “Americanism,” and what do you think it means? 60% of those interviewed had never heard of the word, and only a few took a guess about its meaning.

Question 3: Is it important that a nation’s citizens express a sense of patriotism? 80% said yes, the other 20% adamantly replied, “NO.”

Question 4: How would you describe patriotism? Responses ranged from “Pride in one’s country and a willingness to serve” to “something evil that causes people to put the country’s interests before the interests of others.”

Question 5: What is the 1st Amendment, and what does it do? Only 40% could tell me what the amendment was about. When given hints, some figured it out. I received the same response when I asked about the 2nd Amendment.

Upon the completion of each interview, I presented them with a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as a gift. While presenting it, I turned to the Declaration of Independence and read the first paragraph and part of the second. I then turned to the 1st Amendment and read that to them. The Declaration of Independence and Constitution are both available in booklet form from the Legion web address above.

All in all, it was a pleasant experience, but when you run into someone who has a negative opinion about the country; it’s pretty hard just to smile and say thank you. But then, those are the people we need to talk to.

I believe the members of the American Legion are missing valuable opportunities to model and reinforce Americanism. In some instances, it’s going to take more time and effort to teach the truth about our laws and purposes. If I could have spoken freely to those who believe the USA is a selfish nation, I could have given them something to think about.

I now believe it’s essential for those of us who are the most elderly in the Legion, to share both our experiences and knowledge. There is an element of our society that has been misled and needs to hear the truth about America. The bottom line is that we need to get up off the couch and share our stories. The future of our nation and the direction it goes in the future is in our hands. May God bless America.

CARE. CARE was founded in 1945 when 22 American organizations came together to rush lifesaving CARE Packages to survivors of World War II. Thousands of Americans, including President Harry S. Truman, contributed to the effort. Today, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and bringing relief and emergency aid to survivors of war and natural disasters. Please visit www.care.org to learn more about this great American story.

America’s response to every hurricane, outbreak, famine, and tragedy around the world has always been with generosity and goodwill. I believe I’m safe to say that no nation of people has ever been so generous with their resources, and it’s only right that we are! Our nation has been blessed beyond belief with tremendous industry and abundant farmland.

Americans are not greedy. Thousands of our nation’s sons and daughters have died to provide or defend the freedom of others. We have spent and invested millions and millions of dollars to rebuild countries that only a few short months earlier were our enemies. Now they live in peace with freedoms and constitutions mirroring our own.

Fellow Legionnaires, there are many who would love to hear of our experiences and knowledge. There is an element of our society that has been misled and needs to hear the truth about America. The bottom line is that we need to get up off the couch and share our stories. The future of our nation and the direction it goes in the future is in our hands. May God bless America.
2020 Department Annual Convention
Kalamazoo, Michigan, June 24-28

Hosted by the Grand Rapids American Legion Convention Corporation

A registration badge is required for attendance at any meeting or session.

The American Legion Department of Michigan requires that each person attending must register with the corporation.

Kalamazoo Convention Registration Information

Registration fee is $15. Make checks payable to: GRAL Convention Corp.
Mail to: Jerry Dennis, 840 Colt Ave N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Or Register online at michiganlegion.org/2020kazoo

Do not send your delegates to this address, those go to department.

Please PRINT

Organization/Post/District/Zone

Name: ________________________________________________________
O P/U/S Dis. Z: ____________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________

City/Zip: ______________________________________________________

Additional Names: _____________________________________________
O P/U/S Dis. Z: ____________________________

Add names on back. Number of registrations: ______ x $15 = $ __________________

Arrival date: ____________________ Departure date: ____________________

Hotel reservation at Radisson? Yes ____ No _____

In case of questions: Phone # _____________________

MAIL TO:

Jerry Dennis, 840 Colt Ave N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Hotel only.

The hotel shall hold the block until 6-2-2020 OR UNTIL THE BLOCK FILLS, whichever occurs first. Reservations made after 6-2-2020 or above the contract block amount, are subject to the availability and pricing availability of the hotel.

- Standard Rooms (King or Double Queen):
  - Single Occupancy: $115
  - Double Occupancy: $115

- Standard Concorie (King or Double Queen)—9th Floor:
  - Single Occupancy: $155
  - Double Occupancy: $155

- Standard Concorie (King or Double Queen)—9th Floor:
  - Single Occupancy: $165
  - Triple Occupancy: $175

- Please call the hotel directly at 269-343-3333 (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays) to make your reservation (mention American Legion Convention to get the group rate).

- Online Booking Instructions:
  - Go to www.radissonkz.com
  - Put in the dates of stay between (6/23 – 6/29/2020)
  - Click on more search options
  - Under rate type, pick promotional code and then enter Promotional Code: AL2020

- Credit Card is required for all stays
- Special Room requests cannot be made through the online portal
- For Hospitality Rooms—Please contact Jerry Dennis at: gnd459@gmail.com or 616-901-1667
- Entire Property is non-smoking
- $4.00 per vehicle/per night -self-parking in parking ramp for hotel guest staying at the Radisson Hotel only. Standard Hourly and Valet Parking rates apply.
- Parking Ramp maximum height 6’-7”
- Valet Parking is NOT included - $30.00 per day
- Trailer parking available for a fee at nearby surface lot

The Only Written

Official Call to the 102nd Annual Department Convention

American Legion, Department of Michigan

June 25-28, 2020

Radisson Hotel
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Purpose: To receive Department Officers’ annual reports, consider Department Constitution and By-Laws amendments, elect Department Officers and conduct any other business brought to the convention. Only the committees and chairpersons listed below are called to officially participate in the Convention.

Registration: Registration fee of $15 will be charged to all delegates, alternates and guests.

Department Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday June 25 at 4:00 p.m.
Opening Session: Friday June 26, at 3:00 p.m.
Subsequent Convention Sessions: Saturday, June 27, 9:00 a.m. & Sunday, June 28, 10:00 a.m.

CALLED Standing Committee Meetings: Thursday, June 25 (TBA – see schedule at www.michiganlegion.org)

- Finance/Personnel
- Children & Youth
- Legislative
- Membership
- Permanent Time and Place
- Americanism
- Veterans Employment & Education
- Media & Communications
- Reconnect
- VAVS/VHVS
- Internal Affairs
- Post Development
- VA&R

CALLED Committee Chairmen ONLY:

- Baseball
- Boys State
- Education & Scholarship
- Leadership College
- National Security & Foreign Relations

Convention Committee Meetings: Friday June 26, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Convention Committees are comprised of one person per district. Each Delegation Chairman will name the members to serve on the Convention Committees and certify that list to the Department Adjutant.

Americanism & Community Service (includes Education & Scholarship, Boys State, Law and Order, Scouting) – Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Credentials, Veterans Employment & Education, Finance, Legislative, Membership, National Security & Foreign Relations, Post Development, Media & Communications, Reconnect, Rules, Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation and VAVS/VHVS

District Caucuses: Friday, June 26, 10 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Zone Caucuses: Friday, June 26, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Joint Memorial Service: Sunday, June 28, 8 a.m.
Elections & Adjournment: Sunday June 28, 10 a.m.

The new 2020-2021 Department Executive Committee and the 2020 National Convention Delegates and Alternates will meet upon Convention adjournment.
Around the State...

PDC John Mella visited with Marco Savarin from 2013 Boys State working in Senator Peters Office, in Washigntom, during TAL Conference.

Richard Cramb, Sr. received his 50-year continuous membership from the Myron H. Beals Post 32, Livonia.

The Americanism Committee was a major sponsor of the 2020 Eagle Recognition in Novi.

(L-R) Ypsilanti Post 282 Vice Commander Alan Howe (L), and Peter Raymond (R), presented PDC and 282 members Al Ford with a Meritorious Service Certificate for his dedication and service to the Ypsilanti Post 282.

Lakes Area American Legion Post 341 Adjutant Nick Murray (L) and Commander John Scholl present post member Betty Hamilton with her 50-year continuous membership award. Betty served in WW 2 in the Navy. She is currently enjoying life and teaches exercise classes in the complex she lives in. She is truly an inspiration for all our members.

Below -Myron H. Beal American Legion Post 32, Livonia, honored Legionnaire Johnathan Cox who turned 100 years-old. Wayne County Commissioner Glenn Anderson presented John with a resolution in his honor.

2020 Wilson & Brewer Scholarship Recipients

Brewer (Education and Scholarship Committee Selected 5)
1. Cambria Brantley- Brownstown Township
2. Kaylee Roehm- Grass Lake
3. Safiya Webster- East Lansing
4. Seven LaRoue- Fremont
5. Mary Slagle- Norway

Wilson Scholarship Winners-Selected by District Commanders
District 1 - Emma Miesner (Redford)
District 2 - Donovan Snyder (Addison)
District 3 - Carriane Thomas (Quincy)
District 4 - Rachel Bosse (Wayland)
District 5 - Lindsey Miller (Byron Center)
District 6 - Erica Behnfeldt (Fenton)
District 7 - Bayley McIlhargie (Kinde)
District 8 - Lauren Reed (Saginaw)
District 9 - Jonah Villanueva ( Traverse City)
District 10 - Kristine Kubisiak (East Tawas)
District 11 - Rebeca Havelka (Wallace)
District 12 - Mary Slagle (Norway)
District 16 - Nia Jones (Plymouth)
District 18 - Sidney Childers (Holly)
District 19 - Kendra Grafenauer (East Jordan)

Wilson Scholarship Winners (Selected by Educ. & Schol. Committee)
1. Miles Klapthor (Ann Arbor)
2. Kaylee McCommas (Monroe)
3. Margaret Harris (Edwardsburg)
4. Steven Levra (Holt)
5. Adele Battel (Cass City)
6. Summer Nielsen (Warren)
7. Luke McMaster ( Traverse City)
8. Samuel Massey (Newberry)
9. Martina Hedlund (Gwinn)
10. Erik Salminen (Negaunee)
11. Kyle Ruselowski (Taylor)