AN INVITATION TO HELP MAP MICHIGAN’S FUTURE
The Secretary of State seeks Veterans to help

By Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State

When my husband served in the U.S. Army as a sergeant in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, we experienced firsthand how military service members and their families face unique barriers to participating in our democracy. We also saw how important it is that the voices and experience of the military community are front and center in influencing decisions made by elected officials every day that affect our veterans and current service members.

That’s why I’m reaching out and asking you to apply to serve your state and country once again as a member of Michigan’s first Citizens Redistricting Commission. This is a historic moment in Michigan democracy. For the first time in our history, voters — not politicians — will have the power to draw the districts for the legislators who represent us in Washington and Lansing.

Now through June 1, you can apply to serve as one of 13 commissioners who will be drawing our state’s districting maps. These citizens, randomly selected from all who apply, will use census data and public input to draw new boundary lines for state House of Representatives, state Senate and Michigan Congressional districts.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to represent our community of veterans and ensure our elections are fair and representative of our entire state. There is no special expertise or educational background required. All you need is a commitment to serving your fellow Michiganders.

Every 10 years following the U.S. census, states across the country must redraw district maps to accurately reflect population. In most states, state legislators are responsible for drawing district lines, and they are frequently influenced by special interests and partisan intentions. But now in Michigan, you can be a part of the independent commission of citizens who will be responsible for this important task.

Interested? Here are some ways you can get involved:

• **Apply today** at RedistrictingMichigan.org. The application takes about 15 minutes to complete and walks through eligibility criteria and restrictions. Commissioners will be compensated about $40,000 for their service.

• **Spread the word.** Encourage members of your community of veterans and ensure our elections are fair and representative of our entire state. That is exactly the kind of commitment to service members of the American Legion bring to their communities every day. That is exactly the kind of commitment to service we hope commissioners will bring to determining district lines for people across the state.

Step up and continue to serve by shaping this historic new process that will directly impact the future of Michigan’s democracy.

Jocelyn Benson is Michigan’s 43rd secretary of state and walks through eligibility criteria and restrictions. Commissioners will be compensated about $40,000 for their service.

Alpena American Legion Post #65 Junior Air Rifle Team Wins State Championships

Dave Cloft, Coach

On a snowy Sunday, the first Sunday in 2020, seven young air rifle shooters and their families traveled to Bay City for their first Air Rifle competition, and the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) and the Michigan Rifle and Pistol Association (MRPA) State Championships. The Alpena American Legion Post #65 created a Junior Air Rifle Team last March. For the past 10 months they’ve focused on building a team and improving their skills. All the hard work paid off on Sunday, January 6th, when Alpena American Legion junior shooters took all three places in the individual competition, and also claimed the State Championship title in the Sporter three-position Air Rifle category.

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition. Shooters use the .177 caliber air rifle and fire in the prone, standing and kneeling positions. Both males and females can participate, through Legion sponsorship; disabled youth are encouraged to join, as competitive shooting is a sport that creates an equal playing field for all competitors.

Having won the State Championships, the Alpena Post #65 Team is now invited to the Northeastern Regional Championships at Camp Perry, Ohio in March. At the Regionals they will compete against 20 of the best teams from the Northeast United States. If they shoot well enough, they will then proceed to the National Championships in June. The team is currently fundraising to cover transportation and lodging costs to travel to the Regionals, so they can represent Michigan, and the American Legion.

State Team Champions: Left to Right: Gunner Spencer, Kyle Clay, Garret Mindykowski, Jaydon Spencer, Gavin Mindykowski, Sydnie Lipski, Morgan Arbour.
"4 QUESTIONS FOR THE 4 CHAPLAINS STORY!"

Larry Vollink
Department Chaplain

Is it STILL Relevant today? Do you remember the pilot who stirred his plane over the icy waters of Hudson River as he brought it down skillfully, and 155 passengers survived? They called it a miracle and the people wanted to give praise to the actions of the pilot. But he humbly said he was just doing his job and did not want the title “hero.” Courage and humility were recognized by the whole nation.

The survivors of the Dorchester saw the courage and the humility of these four chaplains and wanted the world to know of their bravery. They did the right thing and their words of inspiration in times of crisis.

What Has Transpired Since That Day, Feb.3rd, 1943? In 1944, given the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Cross and the Presidential Medal of Honor Jan 18, 1961. A stamp in 1948, a coin in 2013: Stained Glass Windows in the National Cathedral, Four Chaplains Day on Feb.3rd each year. The Chapel of Four Chaplains, Chapel; tons of awards given for Humanitarian Citizens and Young people; A Nursing Home in Livonia Michigan; A viaduct in Massillon, Ohio; Scholarships given in their honor; a movie, and books were written; and pictures hang on walls; art and essay contest tests for young people nationwide; Veterans Groups honor them by their memorial services each year; donations are given to support the organization; and annual banquets given in their honor.

WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER TO HONOR THEM? Check out their website: fourchaplains.org Give a donation if you are able. Attend the annual services. Give out awards in their honor. Subscribe to their newsletter. Pray for our troops and our chaplains who are actively serving. Say thank you in your heart for their words of inspiration in times of crisis.

The Hand of God plucked these men from their parishes, and now they are meeting on the slanted deck above the cold, black churning waters saying, “Our Father, who art in Heaven… Hallowed be thy Name…” Schema Yisroel! Adonay, Elohenu, Adonay Echod… Thy Kingdom Come… Thy Will Be Done…” They joined hands singing as the ship went down. The fog disappeared, and God took them to their eternal reward. May we all join hands and pray in our way for all veterans and for peace throughout the world. AMEN.

Thank you to The American Legion Family

Steve loved and dedicated himself to The American Legion. When he passed away The American Legion Family in return was there to help me through this tough time. Your phone calls, cards, and attendance at his funeral was very much appreciated and greatly needed. I thank you for your support and I am very proud to be an American Legion Auxiliary member in Michigan.

Shari German

GERMAN, STEPHEN J. 53, of Berwick, passed away on Saturday, December 21, 2019, at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville. Born on February 24, 1966 in Mansfield, Ohio, he was a son of Helen J. (Taylor) German of Sandsoky, Ohio and the late Fred R. German. He graduated from Ontario High School, Ohio. He honorably served in the U.S. Airforce from 1987 to 1998, during Panama and Desert Storm. Stephen enjoyed volunteering much of his time to help veterans. His special love was for The American Legion; he was an honorary life member of Roger B. Chaffee Post 154; Wyoming. He was an emeritus member of the Department of Michigan of Internal Affairs Committee. He was past fifth district commander of the Department of Michigan. He was a past commander of Roger B. Chaffee 154 Wyoming and Walter L. Fox Post 2 Dover, Delaware. He was a lifetime member of the NAHDHAL. He was a life member of ANAVICUS. He was also a lifetime member of AMVets Post 1, Delaware. He was also a master mason of the Union Lodge No. 7, Dover, Delaware, and a 32-degree mason in the Scottish Rite, Valley of Grand Rapids.
Hello, Michigan Legionnaires. I am setting in the living room on this Dr. Martin Luther King holiday, while typing my next article for the Michigan Legionnaire, looking at all the snow received over the weekend. I was not present as I was participating in the U.P. tour. It was a great tour and I want to thank all involved to make it such a great success and to add fun to our time together. Zone 5 Commander Wendy Sexton was the “Wagon Master” and held all to the task to ensure all goals were met. Thank you, Commander Sexton, for your leadership and friendship during the tour.

Before heading north, Margaret and I were able to celebrate a “Red Flannel Dinner” at the Glen Hill Post 287 in Cedar Springs, with Department President Georgia Downs and husband John, as well as Detachment Commander Mike Holley and his companion Sherri. A great meal and a good time were dancing in our Red Flannels. Thank you, Commander Townes and members of the post.

There is a real need for each post to reach out to its members. It seems throughout the state Legionnaires do not know they are welcome at their posts. Members seem not to know when meetings take place or when special events occur. Members are not being asked to participate in post activities, so they do not know what needs to be done. Reach out to your members and invite them to the post. Ask them for help, specifically face-to-face, and you might be surprised how often they will say “yes.”

Don’t Miss Another Primary or Election
Ron Runyan
Department Adjutant

Election day will be easier for me from now on and it can be for you too.

On the Michigan ballot from November 2018, there was a proposal to allow any Michigan resident without reason to request an absentee ballot for a primary or general election. It used to be that a resident could only request an absentee ballot if they were traveling or medically unable to make it to a polling place on election day.

This change now takes any excuse away from residents to participate in an election. For me, this makes it convenient if I happen to be traveling or weather makes traveling difficult. I no longer have to worry about long lines, or unexpected duties that keep me from getting to the polls.

I work an hour from home, and it is not uncommon for me to receive a call at the end of the day that requires my attention and by the time I am done with the call, the hour drive to the polls cuts it close. Not to mention when I have arrived in the past there is a long line. For the March 10 primaries, I have already requested an absentee ballot and voted. If you have trouble getting to the polls, or you just don’t want to stand in line on election day request an absentee ballot. Visit www.michigan.gov/sos , click the Elections menu item, then click Voter Information on the left for a application and instructions. From the SOS website:

**Requesting an Absent Voter Ballot**

Your request for an absent voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to your city or township clerk. (For assistance in obtaining the address of your city or township clerk, see Michigan.gov/Vote) You must request an absent voter ballot by submitting the application, large print application, a letter, a postcard, or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk’s office. Requests may be returned by hand, via postal mail, fax, or email, as long as a signature is visible.

Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 5 p.m. the Friday before the election. If you’re already registered at your current address, you can request an absent voter ballot in person at your clerk’s office anytime up to 4 p.m. on the day prior to the election. If you’re registering to vote or updating your address by appearing at your clerk’s office on Election Day, you can request an absent voter ballot at the same time you register. If you request your AV ballot the day before the election or on election day, you must vote the ballot in the clerk’s office.

Once your request is received by the local clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. You must be a registered voter to receive an absent voter ballot, but you can register and apply for an absent voter ballot at the same time. Requests for absent voter ballots are processed immediately. Absent voter ballots may be issued to you at your home address or any address outside of your city or township of residence.

After receiving your absent voter ballot, you have until 8 p.m. on election day to complete the ballot and return it to the clerk’s office. Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the return envelope and matches your signature on file. If you received assistance voting the ballot, then the signature of the person who helped you must also be on the return envelope. Only you, a family member or person residing in your household, a mail carrier, or election official is authorized to deliver your signed absent voter ballot to your clerk’s office.

If an emergency, such as a sudden illness or family death prevents you from reaching the polls on election day, you may request an emergency absent voter ballot. Requests for an emergency ballot must be submitted after the deadline for regular absent voter ballots has passed but before 4 p.m. on election day. The emergency must have occurred at a time which made it impossible for you to apply for a regular absent voter ballot. Please contact your local clerk for more information about emergency absent voter ballots.
Membership News

Buddy Checks Work, Visits Work, Making Connections Work

Bob Higley
Membership Director

It’s March, and we only have four more months left in the 2020 membership year. The Department missed our February 5th membership goal of 85%. We currently have 54,607 paid members, which is 1,677 members behind where we were last year at this time. This puts us at 84.94% of our goal. We need to get 3,254 members renewed by March 4th to reach 90% of our goal of 64,290 members. It is time for all of us to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Post Commanders, have you set up a Buddy Check for this month? The American Legion’s birthday is on March 15th, and this is a perfect time to do this. For more information about the Buddy Check, go to https://www.legion.org/membership/buddycheck. There are downloadable scripts that you can use. The idea is to reconnect with veterans who may need assistance but don’t know where to go or who to ask. These contacts may be made by a personal visit, phone or email, or a combination. The important part is to reach out to veterans in your community to let them know you care and can provide whatever assistance they may need. It’s what we do for our battle buddies.

Another great source for members is headquarters Post 225. These members can be found using the tools on myLegion.org. Bath Post 412 has been very successful in transferring Post 225 members into their post. They download the list and make a personal visit to the Post 225 member’s home. They have been able to transfer 41 members so far this year. By doing this, Bath Post 412 has been able to achieve 107.98% of its membership goal. There is a $5.00 incentive if you can get a Post 225 member to pay their 2020 dues and transfer into your post. This is a great way to get more members into your post and pick up a little cash at the same time.

We still have time to reach our membership goals. We can’t sit back and wait for the mail to come in. We are asking every Post to reach out to their members that haven’t renewed their membership yet. Many of these members may have forgotten or are simply waiting for that personal contact. We know of some that would not renew until a member visited their home. All of us need to assist our Post officers in this task. Post Commanders get your volunteers together and work your membership list. I know we can show National that Michigan will finish the 2020 membership year strong.

District Meetings

1st District
Mar. 9, 2020, Post 32, Livonia
May 11, 2020, Post 32, Livonia
June 8, 2020, Post 147, Northville
Meeting begin at 7 pm.

2nd District
March 8, 2020, Post 31, Chelsea
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
Mar. 1, 2020, Post 196, Union City
May 3, 2020, Post 55, Albion
Executive Board at 11:30 am, Lunch at noon, Meeting at 1 pm

4th District
March 1, 2020, Post 160, Bangor
May 3, 2020, Post 45, Hastings

5th District
March 6, 2020 Post 6, Holland
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.

6th District
Lunch at noon – Meeting at 1 p.m.
Mar. 8, 2020, Post 294, Swartz Creek
April 26, Post 419, Pinckney.
Memorial service at 11 a.m., Past Commander/President Luncheon at Noon, Meeting at 1 p.m.

7th District
Mar. 15, 2020, Post 7, Caro
May 17, 2020, Post 4, Mt. Clemens

8th District
March 1, 2020, Post 57, Frankenmuth
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
March 14, 2020 at Traverse City
Post 35
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

11th District
April 25, Post 74, Newberry, 11AM

UP Association Meetings
Summer Convention June 12-13, Post 50, Iron Mountain

16th District
Mar. 10, 2020, Post 217, Wyandotte
Apr. 14, 2020, Post 426 (Serv. Off. Sch.)
May 12, 2020, Post 67, Lincoln Park, Memorial/Elections
June 9, 2020, Post 396, Garden City
Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., PSO school begins at 6:30 p.m.
Memorial service 6:30 p.m.

18th District

19th District
Mar. 7, 2020, Post 458, Gaylord
Bowling Center
May 9, 2020, Post 458, Gaylord
Bowling Center
Training – 10:30 am – 11 am, Social hour – 11 am- Noon, Lunch Noon – 1 pm, Meeting at 1 pm.

IMPACT OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

BECAUSE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP….
Our 22 Department Accredited Veteran Service Officers conducted 5,729 personal interviews, file reviews, and status checks for Michigan Veterans. In FY2019, over $120,000,000 was sent to Michigan Veterans in the form of new and continuing VA Compensation and Pensions.

BECAUSE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP BLUE WATER VETERANS NOW HAVE BENEFITS….
In July the President signed the Blue Water Veterans Act into law, and beginning January 1, 2020, those Veterans who served on U.S. Navy ships in the waters around the Vietnam peninsula during the war could qualify for VA Benefits related to Agent Orange.

BECAUSE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP MICHIGAN AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAMS CONTINUE….
Over 230 high school juniors learned how a state government operates, through our Boys State program. 40 high school boys and girls spent one week at the Michigan State Police Academy in Lansing, learning about law enforcement. Over 20 high school students were awarded $500 scholarships, and our U.S. Constitutional Speech Contest continues to grow.

2020 Department Membership Goal: 64,290, as of 2-20-2020 54,811 or 85.26%
From the Desk of the President

Service and Not Self for 100 years

On the road...

By the time this article is published, I will have returned from the Commander’s winter tour of the Upper Peninsula, what a wonderful world. We were blessed with meeting great people, great food and visited many Legion Post, Auxiliaries, and VA Facilities and Hospitals. Our Wagon Mistress Wendy Sexton and her sidekick, Gary Lane, were wonderful and did an outstanding job of scheduling our route. I cannot thank my driver, Morgan (better known as Past S.A.L. Detachment Commander, Dave Mennel) for driving his Miss Daisy. All of us on the tour have picked up a few new Yooper words to add to our vocabulary. All had a great time!

It won’t be long before we set our clocks to Spring ahead; with that, we will be getting ready for annual reporting. The Department of Michigan should have 100% of all committees. We have new reporting forms that will make it easier for reporting your information about your committee. A narrative may be requested for some committees. A narrative is a story; just tell how you reached your goals, what actions were taken, etc. if you have any questions, feel free to call your committee chairman.

I look forward to hearing from all Districts and all Committees.

We know the ALA is experiencing a membership slide. Attendance is down at unit meetings and service activities. But we can fix that by making some seemingly minor changes. Let’s start with how we refer to ourselves. No, we’re not planning a name change. However, we can use a different descriptor/tagline to more accurately reflect our brand, who we are, and what we do: A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their families.

In the coming months, you’ll see more of this key marketing phrase throughout national ALA media, and you will be provided you with ways you can utilize it to your unit’s advantage. The choice is ours – adapt to the changing times around us, or stick with statements that may not provide outsiders a more aptly written description of who we are. Ref: alaforveterans.org

Our department membership clerk has been very busy processing the new memberships and the renewals. Her job would go much faster if the Unit transmittal forms were correctly filled out and legible. It takes many hours and much expense to return the incorrectly completed transmittals. Please take an extra moment and check your paperwork before it is submitted to the department. The effort will be greatly appreciated.

Keep our Veterans and their families in your prayers.

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ALA GIRLS STATE NEEDS YOU!
Rosemary Maciejewski

Do you know a high school junior that is interested in a life-changing experience? A daughter, neighbor, a friend’s daughter, or maybe someone from church or a group you belong to? Help us out by telling them about the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program! Keep an application or two in your car or purse, and tell them to Google ALA Girls State, chances are they will want to complete that application. For our program to thrive, we need at least 325 delegates to keep us from going over budget.

ALA Michigan Girls State is also seeking new sponsors. Our primary sponsors are the ALA, TAL, SAL, and Legion Riders who make a huge contribution to this program, but don’t forget to reach out in your community for donations. Community groups and businesses are very supportive of youth programs. The cost to sponsor a delegate is $375 for a seven-day all-inclusive premier program. Delegates are only responsible for a $25.00 fee when registering online. Group smaller donations together and raise enough to send a student, complete a Sponsor Reservation form designating someone from your Post or Unit to be the contact person and mail the form and check to our ALA Department office. That contact person will receive paperwork for a female student of your choice, or you can contact Beryl Robbins who can assign one to you. Don’t forget to send Certificates of Appreciation to those businesses that made donations!

The 80th session of ALA Michigan Girls State is scheduled for June 14 – 20, 2020, at Michigan State University. We need your help to make our program a success! Delegate Applications and Sponsor Reservation forms are available at www.michalaux.org, click on Girls State from the list at the top right of the page.

Top of Form

Past Presidents Parley
Sue Verville, Chairman

The Past Presidents Parley Committee started with the idea that all Past Presidents could and should share their knowledge and experience with our members and officers. The committee was and is to recognize and honor all female Veterans and Auxiliary leaders in their Unit, District and Department. Today we use the term “Mentoring,” but our role is still the same. We are here to help and encourage our members with training, promoting and participating in our Auxiliary programs. This is our way of helping our Auxiliary Members to become good leaders for our organization at any level. We are here to help our members to continue to be involved in our organization. We are all valuable members and we all count.

The Past Presidents Parley Program continues to promote and recognize former servicewomen and the importance of working in areas of VA&R programs. Units honor their women Veterans with luncheons, dinners, gifts, flowers, and cards. Some Units honor our service-women by paying their dues and or adopting the servicewomen in Veterans Facilities. Members can also help our women Veterans with all-female Veterans Stand Down or with the transitions of our homeless female Veterans.

The Past Presidents Parley Program continues to help offer scholarships in the healthcare fields. This reflects the roots of service by women in the military through the nursing profession.

Recognition of past presidents continues in a variety of ways at the Unit level, District level, and Department levels. Some honor them with Unit, District or Department member of the Year Awards. Some Departments recognize one of their Past Department President at their Convention. Honoring these members is an ongoing reminder of service to the American Legion Auxiliary.

Anyone who is nominating a person for an award or scholarship…..PLEASE follow the instructions in your GUIDE.
**What is a Mentor?**

**Mary Anne Yuncker, Leadership Chairman**

Anyone can be a mentor. A mentor advises or trains someone who has less experience than she has. She has knowledge that will enhance the less experienced Auxiliary member's personal and organizational growth. There are 3 Cs of mentoring. A mentor will be 1) a consultant. She will share the insights she has learned through her own experience; 2) a counselor. She listens and guides, not just giving quick answers; and 3) a cheerleader. She provides support and enthusiasm, celebrating the successes of her mentee no matter how big or small they are.

Where did the word Mentor come from? In Greek mythology, when Odysseus had to go to fight the Trojan War, he entrusted his young son to the care of his aging trusted companion Mentor. Mentor then taught the young future king all he would need to rule the land. In the same way, a Mentor in the Auxiliary helps teach and guide newer members to have all they need to carry on the goals and programs of our great organization.

A mentor can be anyone who teaches newer Auxiliary members how to be the leaders of our organization. She follows carefully the 3 Cs mentioned above. She can be older or younger. She is available and takes the time to guide, without being critical. Her role is to teach how the Auxiliary works and then show how a new member can move into her place either as a leader or as a more experienced member of our group.

The My Mentor award is your chance to honor the Auxiliary member whose example has encouraged you to become a good member/leader. She may have worked closely with you or you may have admired her from afar. There is no time limit on this award. It can be someone who inspired you years ago or someone you just worked with recently. Write about how she has impacted your life as part of the ALA. In 500 words or less tell us about her including her name, Unit name and number and District. Send your entry to your District Leadership Chairman by March 31, 2020. The District Chairman will send the winning entry from her District to the Departmental Leadership Chairman by April 15, 2020, with a green slip attached.

The Leadership Team consists of Judy Jones, Katie Hartman-Gleason and myself. We have been visiting the different Districts in the Department with our Workshop entitled “What Makes a Good Leader?” You still have time to contact us to come to your Unit or District. Please give me a call if you’re interested at (616) 780-4884.
Honor Thy Veteran

Mike Holley
SAL Commander

Travels have been many, for the UP to Indy, to Detroit to Grand Rapids In Detroit for parades, and Taylor for dinner to honor vets. I even visited the Chief Pontiac post for dinner. I visited VA hospitals for Christmas dinners in Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, and Saginaw.

I have been traveling around the great state visiting squadron, district meeting, where ever I was asked to show up. All had fun.

Cedar Springs for red flannel, then off to the UP for mid-winter tour. While in the UP, we visited many posts, ate a lot, drove in decent weather expect one day. We visited Jacobetti Veterans’ home, the Viet Nam Museum in Hermansville, and the V A in Iron Mountain. Post 50 was the host post for the final meetings. I want to Thank the post, auxiliary, and SAL for their hospitality!!!!!

Grand Rapids at the Ford museum for four chaplains’ service then Oxford post for another four chaplains service. If you have never been to a service, attend it. You will never forget it.

I will be attending in Dearborn Heights for the 16th District Americanism dinner. Then to Flint for Winter Meeting, and on to South Haven for a discussion about Boys State the first part of the month, then back over to the post for dinner for the veterans from Battle Creek VA.

If you would like a visit from me or any officer contact us, we will do our best to attend.

See You Later Alligator

MEMBERSHIP 2020
Carvin Chapman, Membership Chairman

Where has this year gone, Happy New Years to all, please don’t forget to turn in any membership that you have! After this past January 1st, if you are not paid, you are considered delinquent; that means that All benefits and privileges at the club will be invalid until you pay your dues! Contact your squadron if you are having a problem paying and see if they can help. If you just forgot, stop in and pay them or drop in an envelope and mail it please!

There also should be no Zero Squadrons. As all officers need to be up to date before they are even able to assume the offices, but there are still numerous Squadrons sitting at Zero. As of 2-13-2020, we sit at 79.60% and our next goal is March 5, for 80%. Send in your cards and member dues Now!

As of 2-13-2020:
17,587 Sons
2020 goal is 22,094

New members to date: 1,341

HELP WANTED!!
Finding SAL Squadron Opportunities

As the Director of Squadron Development, I need your help in identifying Posts looking to form a Sons of the American Legion Squadron. There are well over 150 Posts without Squadrons and I believe most if not all could benefit by having the assistance of the Sons. Please contact me if you know of any such Posts. Also, if there are existing Squadrons that could use some assistance in training, meeting attendance, recruiting, etc., please let me know and I will be happy to arrange a personal visit or assist in any way I can. Thank you for your support. (Gary L. LaMunyon – P.D.C. #1 / 734-347-4110 / GARYLL@BEX.NET)

Son of the Year Report
Victor Fisher,
Son of the Year Committee Chairman

Greetings from the Son of the Year Chairperson. I am writing to all SAL members. We have an award that recognizes what a Son has done throughout the year. That award is Son of the Year, we have two, one award for a Son that is 18 and over, and one for a Son that is 17 and younger (Young Son).

We all help Veterans during the year; now is the time to nominate someone whom you feel is worthy of this prestigious award. The details on how to nominate a Son are on our website michiganlegion.org. I am challenging every District to nominate a worthy Son. Either Son of the Year, or Young Son of the Year, or both. Please get those nominations to me. It is time to be recognized. Do not let the opportunity slip by. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at victorsal396@hotmail.com. I am here to help you. See you in Southgate in June, at our Detachment Convention.

Remember Our Troops, Thank a Veteran
MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT
Greg Price, Chairman

I recently attended a meeting with members of the Dearborn Allied War Veterans Council. Their committee meet to help to work on the details for this year’s Memorial Day Service that will Honor Veterans who Have or are Currently serving in the military.

They have Honored Unclaimed Veterans Cremains while they were being transported by a Horse Drawn Caisson along a route that has sometimes been called “The Heroes Last Mile.” These Forgotten Veterans and all Veterans are then Honored at an emotional Memorial Day Service.

They have taken all Unclaimed Veterans Cremains to a National Cemetery, where they were interned with Full Military Honors.

If you locate the cremains of an Unclaimed Veteran and would like to have that Veteran honored in this year’s Memorial Day Service, you can contact Steve Fletcher at stevenfletcher@wowway.com or me at grin-nerman@msn.com.

Thank you again for helping to locate Veterans who have been Forgotten while they sit on shelves in funeral homes across our great state.

Patriot Guard Rider injured in crash after honoring fallen Jasper soldier.

Mark Stratton, 62, is a member of the Patriot Guard Riders of Southeast Texas. He is facing a long road to recovery following a crash he was involved in after spending the day honoring a fallen soldier US Army Specialist Jacoby McFarland on Jan. 18.

Orange Police said a car traveling northbound on Hwy 62 crossed over into the southbound lane, where Stratton was riding. He tried to avoid it and get over as far as he could. He was rushed to St. Elizabeth hospital and underwent emergency surgery where doctors did what they could, but Stratton’s left foot had to be amputated.

Mark’s son said his dad is in good spirits, thanks in part to much-needed support from the community.

Hopefully, those that see these motorcyclists that are serving as an escort will realize their vulnerability.

WILWIN LODGE at CYGNET COVE

In recent months Wilwin has grown and now serves more PTSD and TBI veterans than ever before! We, as Sons, are dedicated supporters and active participants in this vital endeavor.

Our Detachment, Districts, and Squadrons have recently gone to erect a Golf cart shelter and storage area newly constructed on the property (see attached photos), Thank you to the Detachment of Michigan Sons, as well as the Second Zone and District for your generous donations to make this and more golf carts possible.

Thank you to all of the members who have put their time into making Wilwin a place where veterans can have heartwarming memories of reuniting with their families after long deployments. And a place where you can see smiles on their family’s faces and, more important, our returning Veterans!

Our address is: 3383 E. Hawley Road Custer Michigan 49805

Just east of Ludington 231-767-0140, All donations may be sent to the American Legion Department of Michigan Headquarters Attention: Accounting, 212 N. Verlinden Ave., Lansing, MI 48915, and should be made out to Wilwin. Once again Thank you!

Sons of The American Legion
Squadron 224 in Wixom

For the 19th straight year, SAL Squadron 224 has donated 4,000 dollars to the special needs kids of the Walled Lake School District. The proceeds come from our annual golf outing and donations from our Legion Family.
Gary Reynolds (middle) received the Department Blood Donor Bronze Award.
Department Proposes New Districts and Zones

Brett Holt, Past Department Commander, Redistricting Committee Chairman

At the 2019 Department Annual Convention, a special committee was formed to propose redistricting options to the Department Executive Committee and then to the delegates at the 2020 Department Annual Convention. Since July of 2019, the committee has met several times, communicated via email, and had conversations about this process.

For those who may not be familiar with what a district is, a district is a geographical area that contains posts. District Commanders are elected by the posts in that area to help mentor and aid those posts. District Commanders also serve as a member of the Department Executive Committee.

The last time a major overhaul was made to the districts was 1962, 58 years ago. A minor change was made at the 2019 annual convention when the 1st and 17th Districts were merged.

Currently, the department has 15 districts and five zones.

Why redistrict?

Districts have been finding it hard to find volunteers to fill officer positions. In a couple of districts, it has been noted that the area the district covers is too large for some volunteers. Depending on where the commander lives, they could be looking at a 2-4 hour drive one-way to visit a post. For a Legiinnaire who is still working and has a family, that is impossible to expect. Smaller districts will allow a district commander to visit their posts and be closer to help mentor and guide them.

The Proposal

At the 2020 Department Winter Meeting, two proposals were presented to the DEC, conversations were had, questions were answered, and the DEC voted on proposal number 2. This proposal will take the number of districts from 15 to 18, and the number of zones from 5 to 6. A zone is a geographical area containing districts. Zone Commanders are selected from the districts in the zone and serve on the department executive committee, and the department membership committee.

Now that a proposal has been agreed upon by the DEC, a resolution will be written and presented to the delegates at the Department Annual Convention, in June, in Kalamazoo. A yes vote by delegates will accept the newly proposed district, a no vote, means the committee will try to gather more information and present a new proposal next year. The committee will not be dissolved until new districts have been implemented.

What if the delegates vote YES at the convention?

For the next two years, members of the new districts will be asked to start having organizational meetings. These meetings will help to find any problems with the new district and if need be, suggest changes.

The department does not want these new districts to fail. If it becomes apparent that the configuration of a particular district is not working, then the committee and the DEC will revisit the situation. There is room for change even after the new proposal is voted on in June.

The new districts will begin operating following the close of the 2022 Department Annual Convention, for the 2022-2023 membership year.

If you would like PDF’s of the department layouts, both current and proposed they can be found at michiganlegion.org/rd, a contact form will be available to ask questions.

Will Department help with the organizational process?

Yes, the redistricting committee intends to develop a step by step guide for districts to use for the process for their new district. Some districts will have more steps, and some less, depending on their current configuration or if it is a completely new district. Again we do not want districts to fail.

If we only do this every 60 years, then we are doing something right. Whether you agree with the proposal or disagree with it, become a delegate from your post, come to the 2020 Department Annual Convention in June and make sure your voice is heard.

Again, even after a YES vote, if tweaks need to be made we can make them.
SAULT SAINT MARIE (Feb 1) – The American Legion Department of Michigan became a proud sponsor of the International 500 Snowmobile Race in 2020. The 2020 race was the 52nd running of the event. It is a 500-mile race on snowmobiles. About 10,000 people watched the event live at the track, and another 50,000 viewers watched a Livestream provided by Lake Superior State University.

Why did we become a sponsor?

The race organizers want a Veteran who has a disability rating from the Veterans Administration to wave the green flag to start the race. They have been doing this for the past six years, but last fall, their sponsor for this portion had to remove their sponsorship. They approached the Department, and we felt it was a great opportunity.

It was a great four-day event, the organizers were great to work with, and the Department Commander had several opportunities to spread the word the American Legion to thousands of fans at the track, listening on the radio, and via the live-streaming event. We look forward to more years to come.
National study finds 5 key traits shared by financially prepared veterans

Excerpts from the Legion Insurance Trust 2019 Veterans Financial Preparedness Report

(CARPINTERIA, CA – January 30, 2020) — The Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019, a comprehensive national study of U.S. veterans’ financial preparedness found that more than half of all veterans say they are behind in saving for a secure retirement. The report was released by the Legionnaire Insurance Trust (the LIT) for the benefit of the departments and posts of The American Legion.

The report found that the No. 1 personal financial concern for veterans of all ages is having enough money for retirement, followed by funding their long-term care expenses. Veterans from all ages and all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces—1,507 in all—participated in the study.

Which veterans are financially prepared

Given that so many veterans are behind in saving, what sets apart the 36% who are on-track or the 8% who say they are ahead of schedule?

According to the report, 5 attributes were common among these veterans:

1. They are knowledgeable about personal finance
   Personal financial issues may not be an area of interest or expertise for many veterans, but doing research and becoming educated on topics such as retirement planning, investments and insurance can be an important element of financial preparedness.

2. They are ahead or on-track in saving
   Veterans who are ahead or on-track say they are knowledgeable about personal finances, while those who are behind are much more likely to say they do not consider themselves knowledgeable.

3. They are educated about personal finances
   For financially prepared veterans, retirement planning is a continuous process. While 36% of those who are ahead or on-track work on their retirement planning approximately $124,300. Every dollar saved for retirement is important, and the advantage of saving early generally can be seen in the value of veterans’ retirement portfolios, thanks to both years of contributions to their savings and the factor of compounding, which increases the value of one’s contributions with each passing year. For example, the mean portfolio amount of veterans over age 40 who started saving immediately after high school or within the first 2 years of joining the military is approximately $247,000. For veterans who started saving later in life, the mean portfolio amount is approximately $124,300.

4. They understand the importance of frequent planning for the future
   Financially prepared veterans, retirement planning is a continuous process. While those who are behind tend to only address their personal financial plans as the need arises, the vast majority of veterans who are ahead or on-track work on their retirement planning on a quarterly basis at minimum.

5. They work with a professional financial advisor for expert advice
   Partnering with a professional financial advisor is another important aspect of veterans’ financial preparedness success. Three-quarters of veterans who are ahead of schedule and nearly one-half of those who are on-track work with an advisor, compared to just 13% of those who are behind.

The vast majority of veterans who work with an advisor say they are satisfied with them and that they are confident they are making the best financial decisions for their family.

5. They protect their family with an emergency fund and life insurance
   Alongside diligent saving and planning, veterans who are financially prepared also maintain an emergency fund and invest in life insurance to safeguard the nest eggs they have built. 93% of veterans who are ahead have an emergency fund, as do 75% of those who are on-track. In comparison, only 32% of veterans who are behind have an emergency fund.

Similarly, 75% of those who are ahead have life insurance, compared to just 44% of veterans who are behind. Those with life insurance are more likely to be confident they are making the best financial decisions for their family.

More insights and education

Additional data and educational information that can help veterans strengthen their financial position is available as part of the Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019. It offers key findings, practical benchmarks by age band, advice from veterans and insights from Certified Financial Planner™ Russell Simmons, a chief warrant officer in the Army Reserve who is active in helping veterans develop sound financial plans.

“When it comes to financial preparedness, personal responsibility is at the heart of veterans’ success,” added Burke. “We found that those who take charge of their finances through personal education, saving early and working with a financial advisor are in a position of confidence when it comes to their families’ financial future.”

“We learned that veterans who don’t consider themselves very knowledgeable or confident about their personal finances are also more likely to say they have not started saving for retirement. We want to change that trend,” stated Burke.

To access the full report, please visit www.theLIT.com.

About the Legionnaire Insurance Trust

For over 50 years, the Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been crafting benefit programs that protect what veterans value most and has returned nearly $90 million to the departments of The American Legion for programs in communities across the nation.

The Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019 coincides with The Legion’s 100th anniversary. Data reported at a 95% confidence level, +/- 2.52% margin of error. To download the report for free, visit www.theLIT.com.

SITUATION, MARCH 7

9:00 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

DETROIT VA MEDICAL CENTER
4646 JOHN R STREET
DETROIT, MI 48201

Join Hiring Our Heroes and the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Detroit Military Hiring Fair. At this event, job seekers will have the opportunity to:

- Attend a workshop that will assist with resume writing and how to successfully navigate a hiring fair.
- Meet with over 60 local and national employers— all who have open positions and are currently hiring.
- Meet with HR professionals to review and update your resume. If you meet with the career coaches, bring your resume on a thumb drive. You will be able to update it on site and print out copies.
- Meet with VA counselors to sign up for or learn more about your VA benefits.

This free professional development event is open to active duty service members, National Guard members, military reservists, veterans, military spouses, and military caregivers.

Free parking will be available.

NEED A RESUME?

Visit ResumeEngine.org or MyCareerSpark.com

Resume Engine and MyCareerSpark are the quickest and easiest way to send your resume to employers at the Career Fair. Build a powerful resume at ResumeEngine.org for service members and MyCareerSpark.com for military spouses.

REGISTER NOW

Visit HiringOurHeroes.org/events to find upcoming events and register now.

HIRING OUR HEROES
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

Free parking will be available.
Four Chaplain Service in Oxford. Dave Mennel SAL 18th District Commander, Mike Fitzgerald Legion Commander, Auxiliary member, Darlene Jones, Abbie Jones, Department Honorary Junior Historian and Charleigh Faydia Junior Miss Poppy from Unit 377.

PDC Pat Pustay, Detachment Commander Mike Holley, Squadron 28 Jeff Ruff, National Chaplain Rodney Tolbert and 5th District commander Todd Van Dam. At the Four Chaplains service in Grand Rapids at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum standing in front of a piece of the Berlin wall.

A Blast from the Past!

Past SAL Squadron 28 Commander, Dr. David Ireland (below) and SAL Squadron 28 founding (second chartering) member, Jonathon Stevens (above) received Life Memberships for their outstanding work and dedication to the good of the SAL Squadron 28.

Tecumseh SAL Squadron #34 Raising Money for Veteran Causes

Pictured above are members of Tecumseh’s SAL Squadron #34, presenting a check for $3600.00 to Elizabeth Salerno, Executive Director of Housing Help of Lenawee. The money will be placed in a dire needs fund, earmarked to assist local veterans in need. This money is raised through hole sponsorship at the annual SAL Squadron 34 golf outing, held at Raisin Valley Golf Club located in Tecumseh. Other proceeds raised at the golf outing and through other squadron efforts go to other veteran causes in our state including, Fisher House of Michigan and Wilwin at Cygnet Cove. Kate Melcher, Executive Director of Fisher House of Michigan, was our guest and speaker for 2019. We would like to see her again and others involved in veteran causes join us this year on Saturday, July 18, 2020. For more information on the golf outing this year, please contact Randy Sparks, squadron 34 adjutant at uobaseball@hotmail.com

The squadron has raised and donated $3445.00 (with fund matching) this last year to Fisher House of Michigan, and we support Wilwin at Cygnet Cove throughout the year in any way possible. We would like to see these numbers grow each year with the help of our veteran supportive community!

Remember the 2020 Detachment Convention is June 5, 6, & 7 in Southgate

ANTIGO, Wis. — The CoVantage Cares Foundation has awarded a total of $382,183 to non-profit groups in communities where CoVantage Credit Union has branches.

The funds came from donations by CoVantage Credit Union members, staff and community members who responded to the Foundation’s 2019 Giving Tuesday campaign.

Giving Tuesday, which is immediately after Black Friday, is nationally recognized for charitable giving. The foundation selected this date as an opportune time to kick off fundraising effort in support of local organizations that help individuals and families in need. Branch staff throughout CoVantage Credit Union’s locations were asked to select a non-profit group in their community to receive the funds raised, with the understanding the foundation would match contributions generated over two weeks up to $150,000. The $382,183 total represents a 25% increase from 2018.

“We are overwhelmed by the generosity of our members, employees and community members for giving a financial boost to these twelve deserving charities,” said Charlie Zanayed, CoVantage CEO and CoVantage Cares Foundation board member.

“CoVantage Cares Foundation was established as a way to provide financial support to organizations that serve individuals, especially those experiencing significant financial challenge, and organizations that work to enhance quality of life in communities served by CoVantage Credit Union.”
Greetings one and all we hope you had a fantastic Holiday Season!

We are looking forward to another great year in 2020! As part of the Michigan Legion Family, we cannot forget our servicemen and woman active or inactive, past, and present!

The Legion Family charities are an important part of the role we as Sons play in the organization. As of January 22, 2020, we as Sons have donated $5,834 to The Child Welfare Foundation or approximately 30 cents per member. National Commander Clint has asked for each Detachment to be at $1 per member we still have a way to go. So please continue to send in these donations and get copies to myself and John Kailunas. As for the N.E.F., the Son’s in Michigan is sitting at $6,630; with all the recent disasters, please continue to give to this fund as well, and don’t forget Michigan’s own Missing and returning Warriors project.

As your Editor and Public and Media relations chair, I am a little concerned about how we are using Social Media. Remember we are a non-political and a non-denominational organization so how we use it should be for the betterment of our organization and its members and not for an individual platform or to spread hate!

Show the positive in what you post and the love we have for the Legion Family throughout our great land! Brag on yourself! This also holds for our section of the Legionnaire; I should not have to beg for articles and pictures! I know what we do in this state, so why not let everyone know what this Great Organization is all about. One more thought when you see a Veteran or a man or woman in uniform, thank them and shake their hand; You will be amazed at what these two little words “Thank You” means to them.

Support the CWF and Get Ready for the Grilling Season!!

Aprons are currently available. The suggested donation price is $20 per apron. Since we will be shipping aprons, I would like to ask that if at all possible please consider consolidating your orders into one large order for a detachment or squadron. This will help cut down on the processing time and the cost of shipping. If you would like to donate to help defray the cost of shipping that would greatly be appreciated.

Aprons will be shipped once the donation has been received. Please make sure to include the following information; number of aprons and where you would like them shipped too.

Please send donations to the below address
The American Legion
c/o Child Welfare Foundation
PO Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Help the Detachment reach its goal of $23,000 for 2020 to the Child Welfare Fund.
This goal represents $1 per member in donation.

Chaplain’s Report
Ronald Wyatt, Detachment Chaplain

I hope everyone is healthy and having a good year so far. Please keep Jack Helminski in your prayers. He is having some back and leg issues. Anyone who has diseased members needs to let me know who they are. So I can put my memorial service together for the convention. There is a form online that can be filled out and send to me. Address 6399 Jericho rd., Stevensville MI 49127. These are due by April 30, 2020. We want to be able to recognize them in the memorial service. Thank you in advance. Please keep our men and women of our armed forces in your prayers. Also, if you know of any of our members that are in the hospital or home ill let me know so I can get a card out to them. Email: wyatt0506@comcast.net

Strength in Number, Royal Oak Squadron 253
Steve Peters, Squadron Commander

Our SAL members enjoyed another great year of membership numbers and fundraising in 2019 that allowed us to exceed all of our goals. At the top of our list was targeting more involvement within all Charters at Post 253 as well as other American Legions in our District. The "strength in numbers” approach paid off in our combined fundraising efforts which allowed us to increase again the number of donations made throughout the year to Veteran’s groups & many Charitable organizations in our community.

2020 is off to a great start; on January 30, the Legion Family of Post 253 hosted Veterans from the John Dingell VA Medical Center at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Taylor. We’ve had to adjust a few of our annual events due to our 100-year celebration and have already had our annual Chili Cookoff which has been growing in popularity each year. I’m sure all of you are experiencing the same situations when it comes to scheduling events so please keep us informed as your events come up. Our website will be updated as we book activities. This year’s Convention looks like it’s going to be one of our best and we are all looking forward to seeing everyone there!
Historian Report

Julie Becker, Department Historian

The heart of any organization’s history is in its records. Items that officers, members, directors, staff and volunteers have produced and compiled over the years. They provide unique testimony to the achievements of any organization. Records also contribute in other ways; members are able to look back and learn what efforts were successful or unsuccessful and why. Exhibiting materials stimulates enthusiasm and encourages members to maintain the organization’s standards and promote its future. Pride in the organization has a direct correlation to motivating the current membership to bring in new members, achieve more goals, create a sense of strength and conviction while developing leaders at all levels. Maintaining and preserving our records are invaluable to society by serving as informative and educational resources to a variety of potential users.

Community Service

Peggy Nolff, Chairman
pegnolff1956@gmail.com

As we prepare for Spring and many upcoming Holidays, there are many opportunities for Units or members to get involved in activities in their local areas.

It can be a local food closet donation, an Easter basket for a needy family, or participating in a parade. Report those hours and monetary donations in your year-end reports. Many of the programs we participate in overlap, if you report numbers in another program, you can still report about it in your mid-year and year-end reports. I would love to see 100% reporting from all our Districts. If you are a District President and did not receive an email from me, please reach out so I can re-send. Please pass the information out to your units and District Chairman.

Don’t forget we have the Department Community Service Project, “One Pair Can Make A Difference.”

I have been blessed to hear from a couple of Units and received an email of a picture of shoes donated. The flyer is included in this newsletter is a reminder of what to report. I know we asked for a January 1 deadline, that was to get some shoes or boots on the feet of those who needed them before winter.

That does not mean this project does not last all year long. Donations are given to your local needy and homeless shelters. Count how many pairs, send me a picture, tell me how many centers were donated to. If you don’t do it as a Unit and do it as an individual, that is great, you can report to me as an individual.

A few key points for Community Service:

- In your program guide, there is an hour reporting form, and this is important for many awards in Community Service. Be sure all members have this information; this will let them keep track of what they do as an individual. Be sure that you have one available at each of your events so the chair can track members participating and time spent.
- If working a funeral dinner, if the dinner is for a family member of the veteran it VA&R, if it is for the deceased Veteran and you are doing it the family, it is Community service.
- Remember to report your activities outside of unit activities; if you volunteer with one organization, I am 95% positive you volunteer somewhere else!
- Do you volunteer on a community board? Wear your Auxiliary apparel or emblem and be recognized as an ALA member.
- Take time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on these families provide.

This year we adopted Wilwin. Our goal of several thousand dollars will be met. Unit 119 and the Lions donated two kayaks. This was publicized in the Lions Newsletter distributed across Michigan with a link to learn more about WilWin. So far ½ of our units have sent funds or items to adopt Cabin #3’s needs.

We built a Roadshow including dioramas to educate our District members. We encourage unit fundraising at our District meetings and cross unit events such as garage sales, craft fairs and projects. We included notes from Department Conferences in District Newsletters.

Disappointments. We have no Webpage for reference material. We did not locate talent to fill all our chairmanships. We need to step up next year.

6th District, Foundation and Inspiration

Pat Lozano, 6th District President

I firmly believe the primary purpose of the District is to support the units, not the reverse. And the secondary purpose is to mentor future Department leaders. With that basis I find pride in our accomplishments.

Foundation: Respect and cooperation is demonstrated by our team of 6th District members, we are now a team of sisters and brothers working together. We updated District and many Unit foundation documents. Lacking a means of knowing, we created a “Unit Contact List” units return to District. District Chairs now contact those unit representatives. We identified two forms of online attendance tools; the best practice for fee program, Zoom. And the less function but free Facebook xxx partnered with text feedback. We built relationships with non-Legion organizations including VCAP and MVAA to enable Veteran Fairs and Expos; County government and private organizations to enable Stand-downs, housing and assistance projects; VFW, DAY, VV of A and other veteran organizations for Vietnam Wall, K9 honors, Ride finds and other projects; and joined our First Responders for fundraisers for their personal crises.

Inspiration – I want to celebrate the multi-generations in all our units by introducing you to the Wiederhold family from Clio Unit 158. I look forward to our future
Endorsements:

American Legion Auxiliary
Chief Pontiac Unit #377 - Michigan

January 12, 2020

At regularly scheduled meetings of the 18th District American Legion Auxiliary, we voted to endorse Kimberly Champion for Department 2nd Vice President 2020-2021.

Kimberly is a dedicated, active Auxiliary member who joined under her deceased father, a World War II. She is committed to serving the Veteran and their families and has shown her loyalty over a 39 year period of selfless giving. It is our honor and duty to ask for your support of Kimberly Champion for the Office of Department 2nd Vice President 2020-2021.

Kimberly has held every office in the unit level, and served as Girl State Chairman, Junior Chairman, Americanism Chairman, Past Presidents Parley and Membership Chairman.

Kimberly also served the 18th District she has held every office and served as Parliamentarian, Girls State Chairman, Junior Chairman, Past Presidents Parley, Poppy Chairman and Membership Chairman.

At the Department level, Kimberly has served on many levels, Finance, Poppy, Parliamentarian, Membership, and Juniors. She is serving as Dept. Chaplain at this time. She is always willing to help any one that ask for help.

Kimberly has served on the National Strategic Planning Committee. On a personal level she is has a very successful career at Havenwick Hospital and the Josh Foundation. She has two daughters who are both members and active in the American Legion Auxiliary.

Darlene Jones
18th District President
2019-2020

Robin Puckett
18th District Secretary
2019-2020

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary Reino Unit 21, Stambaugh, held on September 23rd 2019, Julie Becker was endorsed for the office of American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan Chaplain for the year 2020-2021.

Julie’s eligibility is through her Husband Robert A Becker, 2nd Force Recon, USMC, Her father Korenian War Veteran, Army, maternal Grandfather WW II Veteran, Army, and her paternal Grandfather WW I Veteran, Army.

Julie has a degree in business management and hospitality. She was a corporate trainer for Buffalo Wild Wings from 1996 until 2010 when she retired. Prior to 1996, she worked for her family restaurant. She also was the Vice President for the U.P. Championship Rod and Gun for 3 years. Julie is very active in her community as well.

She has 3 children, a daughter and 2 sons who are all part of the legion family. She also has 2 granddaughters and a grandson.

Since Julie joined Reino Unit 21, Stambaugh, she has been a chairman for Americanism, Poppy, JRs, Community Service, VA&RC National Security, Children and Youth, Constitution and By-Laws, Leadership, Public Relations, Past President Parley.

She has held the offices of Sglt's Arms and Chaplain At the district level she has been chairman for the following committees, JRs, Public Relations, Americanism, Membership, Leadership and Constitution and By-Laws, She has held the District offices of Chaplain, and Second Vice President. At the Department level Julie has been UPAA area representative for Membership, 100th Anniversary Committee and Leadership Chairman for 2 years. She is currently the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan Historian 2019-2020. Julie has also attended 3 National Mission Trainings. Julie is dedicated to the American Legion Auxiliary, but first and foremost our Veterans.

Reino Unit 21 President
Linda Nasser
Reino Unit 21 Secretary
Christine Reardon

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the U.P.A.A. District, held October 5, 2019, Julie Becker was endorsed for American Legion Department of Michigan Chaplain for 2020-2021.

UPAA President
Mary Schram
UPAA Secretary/Treasurer
Janice Hoffman

The 2nd District Association of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Lynn C Weeman Unit 514 proudly endorses Dawn Denise Gorman for the office of Historian for the Department of Michigan 2020-2021 year. Dawn is eligible for American Legion Auxiliary membership through the service of her father Donald Stewart U.S. Army. Dawn has been a member of Lynn C. Weeman Unit 514 since 2009. Dawn has served in her unit as historian, vice president, unit president and member of executive board.

At the District level, Dawn has served as 2nd District as secretary (2yrs), vice president (3yrs) and District President (2yrs). She has also served as Chairman of Leadership Committee, Community Service Committee, and Legislation. Dawn was also a member of the committee that created the 2nd District Annual Golf Tournament, she still serves as an integral member on that committee, which has given $11,000 in scholarships to Veterans in the past 4 years.

On the Department level she has sat on the DEC for the past two years as a District President and previously was Chairman of the Community Service Committee and served as a member of the Leadership Committee.

Dawn is retired after working as an R.N for 20 yrs. for Visiting Nurses of South Eastern Michigan.

Dawn has served the City of Luna Pier as a member of the Planning Board, Zoning Board and currently is serving as an elected official of the City Council. Dawn has been a member of the Board for the past 4yrs, Dawn also serves as a member the Public Housing Board for Luna Pier Lotus Manor. She is also active in various committees throughout Monroe County as part of her position as a City Council Representative.

Dawn is the widow of Harry Gorman and the mother of Courtney and grandmother of Sophia Campbell who are both members of ALA.

Dawn is an energetic, hard working Auxiliary sister. She answers the call for those in need and will bring lots of energy and experience to the Department of Michigan as Historian for 2020-2021.

Carla Pohl, 2nd District V. President

Peggy Noff, President
Lynn C Weeman Unit 514

Winter Meeting 2020
Flint, Michigan
2020 WINTER TOUR REPORT

Wendy Sexton, 5th Zone
Commander

On Sunday the 12th
our adventure began.
I'll share our experience
the best that I can.
Fourteen rested travellers,
six from the U.P.
8 from the lower,
al Yooper Wanna-be's.

We started in Hulbert,
and oh, what a feast!
A re-energized post,
exciting to see!

Next day off to lunch,
the Engadine Post.
Hamburgers, fries,
and warm, welcoming hosts.

Gladstone for supper,
new husband and wife team,
made homemade lasagna.
First Lady's smile beamed!

Tuesday to Hermansville,
we had a great stop
at the Vietnam Museum,
wows, did our eyes pop!

Vast amounts of war history,
preserved and displayed.

Preserving for all time,
the price that was paid.
Then to the post
for another great lunch,
visiting a WW2 Vet,
we appreciated a bunch.

A drive north to Marquette,
Jacobetti Veterans Home,
caring for those who served
faithfully
on air, land, or foam.

Then dinner was held
at Marquette Post 44,
drink, presentations,
comradery galore!

Then Wednesday morning,
we're just up the road
for coffee and donuts
at Greenwood's abode.

Then on to the L'Anse post
as we look out on the bay.
Pork loin and potatoes
and big smiles at mid-day.

Checked into our hotel
in Houghton that night.
Crossed onto Keweenaw Island
Are we there yet? Not quite.

Another 20 miles north
to Lake Linden we go.
Great dinner, great fun,
but here comes the snow!

Next morning, there's snow
and more snow and more snow.
But off to White Pine,
just let the snow blow!

A tour of the Vietnam War's Moving Wall
is next on our tour,
it took just a call.

Arron and John
showed us how it's all done.
We were in great awe
at the process begun.

They live for the honor
of creating this wall,
to bring this memorial
of fallen to all.

Soup, chili, grilled cheese
in a warm, welcoming post,
White Pine will be remember-
as a good, gracious host.

By then the snow stopped
and we went on our way.

Had pasties at Bessemer's
post, end of day.

Commander's clown noses
were truly a hit.
Although we felt kind of silly
at first, we admit.

Yooper training was accom-
plished each visit, in turn.
"You's guyes", "You betcha",
Commanders did learn.

And if you are ever
on one of these trips,
a styptic pen's needed
to stop shaving blood drips.

Eating and drinking
and driving each day.
We had a great time
and we all want to say...

We felt very welcome
at each visit we made.
Thank you! Big Hugs!
We give you top grade!

Sincerely grateful to all
travelers, hosts, and partici-
pants for a wonderful 2020 Mid-Winter Tour!
Clyde Sinclair
Scouting Chairman

Uncle Don being the oldest, then my father, and Uncle Jack, the youngest. In that article, I shared my sense of guilt that I had not interviewed Uncle Jack and saved his story of service during WWII. Well, I have again sat by while a veteran dies and takes his story with him. This time it was my older brother Bob, who had served in Vietnam. Bob passed away late in January, just two weeks ago.

Bob and I had what I believe was a unique relationship. Yes, we were brothers, but we were best friends as well. Though three years older than I, he never treated me like a little brother. All through our life, we did things together. When he would go out with his friends from school, he’d invite me. We regularly hunted together, and always with his friends from school, he’d invite me.

When it came to pulling an engine from the State Forest north of Clear Lake, We always sat together, Bob looking to one area and I was looking at another. We’d spend the day enjoying the out-of-doors, mixed with a little talk and perhaps a short nap. Taking home, a deer was always a bonus, but never our purpose. We just loved being in the woods with each other and all that nature provided, just as we had when we were scouts.

During deer season, when our father no longer hunted, Bob and I would enjoy our weekends hunting in the State Forest north of Clear Lake. We always sat together, Bob looking to one area and I was looking at another. We’d spend the day enjoying the out-of-doors, mixed with a little talk and perhaps a short nap. Taking home, a deer was always a bonus, but never our purpose. We just loved being in the woods with each other and all that nature provided, just as we had when we were scouts.

So what does all this have to do with Scouting? Trust me; I’m coming to that.

Anyway, as you can imagine, as the deadline for this article approached, I was uninspired. My mind was on days of old, and memories of another time rolled over me like the waves of the sea. Finally, with less than 48 hours to the deadline, a thought came over me. Perhaps I could find inspiration in my brother’s Scouting Handbook. I went into my office and returned to the couch with a fifth edition of the Handbook For Boys, printed in 1950 (which, in my personal opinion, has the best cover of all Scout handbooks).

My search for inspiration was soon fulfilled as I read, “Have you ever dreamed of hiking the wilderness trails that were worn down under moccasin feet hundreds of years ago? Do you hear in your imagination the almost noiseless dip-dip of Indian canoe paddles in that stream where you fish today?” Like many of you, my answer to that question was a resounding “YES!”

I read with deeper thought and feeling. “There is someplace where you can go camping and feel that you are in company with men like Roger’s Rangers, Lewis and Clark, Daniel Boon, Davy Crockett. “ then the book goes on to say, “This adventure awaits you in Scouting!”

After reading the rest of the introduction, I thought of how scouting has changed since then. I then arose, went into my office again, and came out with a more current handbook. There was no talk of dreams or of being in the company of Davy Crockett; rather, it was cold in comparison.

Then I made the discovery! As I turned the pages of each book, I discovered that the real message, the important stuff was still there. Promises of experiences in the great outdoors, friendship, opportunities to achieve, tools to help you grow, and more.

And within the pages of each book was the heart and soul of scouting, the Scout Oath, and Law.

Yes, much has changed since 1950, but Scouting’s purpose is still the same. “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”

Sometimes we all get stuck in the past, but time marches on. I had to chuckle last night as I looked at pictures of my family’s scouting adventures that were taken in the ’50s. We pitched “pup-tents,” cooked on an open fire, and by today’s standards, “roughed it.” But like the scouts of today, we had fun, and that’s the point.

It’s not such a bad thing that the Blacksmithing merit badge has been replaced by the Welding badge, or the Hog and Pork Production merit badge being replaced by the Digital Technology badge. Times and interests change, and there’s not one of us that can deny that boys are one of God’s most inquisitive creatures, always looking for something new.

Still not sure that Scouting is up to what it used to be? I would suggest that you attend more Eagle Scout Courts of Honor. Listen intently as stories are told and experiences shared by other scouts, as they share the impact that this new Eagle has had upon them during their scouting days. Listen, too, as the leaders share their thoughts and observations about this young man who has impacted so many.

I’m well aware that Scouting has changed. Troops attending our camporee hauled all the required gear in large, beautifully decorated trailers, many cooked on gas stoves and slept in “fancy” tents. But all of that is just peripheral stuff. Look at the Scouts, their faces, their smiles, and hear their excitement.

I’d be lying if I said I didn’t miss the old days with all of their memories, but that’s all they are memories. Today, myself and many like me, are in the business of helping young Scouts create their memories, and we could use your help.

And so I want to take a moment to ask you for a favor. The Department of Michigan is interested in investing more in our youth through Scouting. This was made evident when after many months and hundreds of hours, we held the first of what we hope will be many camporees at Wilwin. But to continue to provide a great scouting experience, will take an effort and contribution from all of us.

There are improvements planned for Wilwin that we feel are necessary to continue and build a great scouting and youth experience. These improvements will require resources such as volunteer help and funding. To get the ball rolling, Commander Wood has chosen the improvement of the Scouting area at Wilwin as his “Special Project” and is donating all the funds raised by the sale of his challenge coin to this cause. I ask you to please donate to the future of all the youth who will be visiting Wilwin in the future. The commander is asking $20.00 for his coin, but donations can be made in any amount. Please, give generously.

To donate online, go to www.michigan- legion.org.

Thank you!
In the past year, the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency has made considerable strides to connect more veterans to the benefits they earned for their service. We plan to continue that momentum through ambitious outreach and by partnering with groups and organizations that can help us achieve that goal.

Here are just a few of our accomplishments from fiscal year 2019:

- Our Veterans Resource Service Center – reachable 24/7/365 at 1-800-MICH-VET – handled 13,314 inquiries from veterans and family members, including 1,853 calls for emergency assistance. In the past three years, the Resource Center has handled nearly 40,000 cases.

- Our five Veterans Service Officers submitted 1,136 applications for veterans looking to connect to benefits — totaling nearly $20 million in recoveries for veterans and eligible family members.

- We reached more than 80,000 Vietnam veterans using the state Vietnam Veteran Coalition Appropriation made to our agency in 2019.

- We held more than a dozen “listening sessions” and recognition ceremonies for veterans around the state in which we connected with hundreds of veterans.

Going forward, we will attend and facilitate even more veteran-centered events and increase awareness through our 10 Regional Coordinators, who cover the entire state.

Another way we’ll reach more veterans is through new and enhanced partnerships. Last year, for example, we welcomed the opportunity to build a partnership with the Bay Mills Indian Community in Brimley. I’m proud to say that State Veterans Affairs Offices can now accredit members of tribal organizations and that soon we will partner with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in Manistee as well.

As the central coordinating agency for Michigan’s approximately 600,000 veterans and their families, we must break down silos and eliminate misconceptions while building stronger partnerships with all veteran-connected agencies and organizations. But we need your help to do this – I believe that we are stronger together and owe it to our veterans to make sure they are supported.

To learn more about the MVAA, call 1-800-MICH-VET or visit MichiganVeterans.com. You can also stay informed by connecting with us on our Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn channels.
Cole-Briggs Post 48, Grand Ledge, hosted the Lansing area Homeless Veterans on 24 November 2019. Over the past four years, Post 48 has hosted the Homeless Veterans for a Thanksgiving meal and clothing drive for them. Many members and locals donate clothing and personal care items for these Veterans. 16 Veterans arrived with Holy Cross Staff lead by Kara Richards, to enjoy the meal, Military Trivia contest with prizes and the many items the Veterans could take for their use. After the Veterans picked what they needed, everything else collected was boxed and taken back to Holy Cross for future needs. The Legion Riders from the post through the annual Bradley Rappuhn Memorial Fundraiser donated a portion of the proceeds to the Holy Cross Services for $8,000 to assist with the Homeless Veteran needs.

The George Wagner Post 127 and the Lions Club in Dorr, held a Christmas Party for local kids. Pictured is Post Commander Bill Genther, with Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus taking Christmas orders for around 100 kids. They also had many presents, hot dogs, and desserts on hand.

HUFFMAN-HAMMOND-RANDO POST 502 IN THE COMMUNITY

Post 502 donates $200 to Elsie Area Food Bank

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, a luncheon was held for the distribution of funds raised through the Annual Chief Moguago Veterans Golf outing. Those present from the Tribal Veterans Council were Chairman Jeff Chivis, Tribal Elders Doug Taylor and Gary Collyer Sr, from area Veterans Groups, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 7, Veterans Helping Veterans, Southwest Michigan Veterans Relief, Posts 257, 280, 454 and 196 and 3rd District Commander Duane Miller. This event was sponsored through American Legion Post 196 & The Bucket!

The above two photos: Legionnaires from the Merritt Lamb Post 9, Muskegon, visited the Seminole Shores Living Center in Norton Shores on January 28. For the past three years, we have held a holiday party there. Each veteran gets a personalized gift that they have requested. This year 7 other members of Post 9 and I went to serve up ice cream and cupcake and conversation. There were 16 veterans on hand. In June of each year, we treat them to a fabulous catered steak dinner.

(Pictured Left) The Harry Ollrich American Legion Post 4, Mt. Clemens, gave a lesson on “Old Glory” to the fifth grade class at Willkerson Elementary school in Warren. There were 90 students in attendance three teachers and three members of Post 4, Doug Carignan, Jerry Stalker, and Joe Olson. We thanked Principal Anthony O. Viviano for permitting us to put on this Flag program to his students. God Bless America.