



7th DISTRICT NEWS

NOVEMBER 2022

AMERICAN LEGION – DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
PLEASE SHARE WITH POST MEMBERS



*Our Legion
 Family*

COMMANDER
 Karen Welander
 C 320.368.0760

VICE CDR AT LARGE
 Jan Ekert
 C 320.339.9927

MEMBERSHIP DIR
 Jan Ekert
 C 320.339.9927

VICE CDR – AREA A
 Carl Wilson
 C 320.304.5333

VICE CDR – AREA B
 Donald Brehmer
 C 320.304.1884

VICE CDR – AREA C
 Rueben Nathe
 C 320.593.8654

VICE CDR – AREA D
 John Jones
 507.469.7995

ADJUTANT
 Carol Jackson
 C 320.979.4016

FINANCE OFFICER
 Chip Manson
 C 320.737.0014

CHAPLAIN
 David Ecker
 C 605.237.4736

SGT AT ARMS
 Keith Seidler
 C 320.309.3411

HISTORIAN
 Victor Gades
 C 320.288.6610

JUDGE ADVOCATE
 Dean Knutson
 320.766.0502

COMMANDER'S THOUGHTS

We have been honored and appreciated at Veterans Day and now is the time to appreciate all we have and why. We have all made sacrifices in our personal and professional lives. The family that has stood by our side in these times recognized the freedom they have received from our nations. We take for granted that the freedoms we enjoy will always be there but that is not always true. Take time this holiday season and enjoy your family and extended family.

Have the time of your life with family and your communities this [Thanksgiving](#) and have a blessed holiday season.

Freedom is not Free
 Commander Karen

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The Pearl Harbor Rally is now at the SPICER Post 545 on Dec 3. It begins at 11 with a social hour and membership turn-in. The meal is at noon followed by the program at 1 p.m. Meal cost is \$15 payable at the door.

DID YOU KNOW?

Learned about a Legion program we previously had not heard of. [Veteransvoices.org](#) is an outstanding program for Veterans looking for a creative outlet – writings and artwork are accepted. Check it out!

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Veterans Day has come and gone again. Many Posts held programs for the public and probably had a supper for Veterans. I hope that many of you were able to enjoy those events. We are heading into the holiday season and once again we get very busy with family and friends. We must never forget about the sacrifices that all Veterans have made to ensure that we are able to enjoy the freedoms that we have. Thanksgiving will be here before we get turned around. We have much to be thankful for living here in our country. We must thank the Lord for all that we have. We will soon be looking forward to Christmas but please never forget that the real reason for Christmas is the birth of Jesus, our Savior. We must not lose sight of that great event so many years ago.

Pray for the troops that will not be able to be home for the holidays. Many of us can remember what it is like to not be home for that time of the year.

Dave Ecker
 District 7 Chaplain

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

As of the writing of this report for the newsletter the " MIGHTY SEVENTH" is in 8th place in the membership Summary. 53 Posts have met or exceeded the November 9th 65% National membership target goal. Congratulations to the ECHO post for exceeding the 100% membership goal with 106.25%. What a great job: we can't let down yet! Keep up the good work. Remember that membership is the job of all. How about inviting a veteran to your meeting to see what we are all about, how the Legion works to insure the benefits for all our veterans. By working together, we keep our voices strong both at the State and National levels. Many voices combined are heard. We have 29 Posts who need 10 or less renewals to meet their goals. Keep up the good work. This past week I sent out 144 letters to all the 1982 members within the 7th district, I also sent the same lists to all the Area Vice Commanders. I am hoping that all of you look at your non renews and as the membership director or adjutants for your posts that you contact them. I will be sending out letters to those members within the 7th who have not renewed as well. Our next membership deadline is December 14 with a goal of 75% membership. I know we as a TEAM can make this happen. I look forward to seeing you at the Pearl Harbor Rally in Spicer on December 3.

Jan Ekert
District 7 Membership Director

GIRLS SOFTBALL

District 7 is organizing a District Softball Committee and is in need of volunteer members – especially female Legion members to serve. This will be the 2nd year of conducting and supporting the program. It will not work in the future without member volunteers willing to service. If you have an interest in the program and can support and serve, please contact Hal Meyer, District 7 Girls Softball Chairman, at either 507-530-4412 or email Halmeyer3@gmail.com. District 7 posts should start organizing local teams if interested in joining the Girls 2023 Softball Season. Planning needs to start ASAP and we need YOU!

VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE

WOW, what a great Fall conference with lots of training opportunities. I wish many of you could have been there. Mark your calendars for the upcoming conventions and Department conferences as many of them will be held close to home in St. Cloud. Some of the training topics included in breakout sessions addressed – My Legion.org, Officer Responsibilities, Member suspension, Post Service Officer Responsibilities, Writing resolutions, American Legion Programs, Membership retention and recruitment. A lot of great ideas were shared. Many of you are aware of the focus on Suicide prevention at both the State and National American Legion levels. We had a great speaker Friday afternoon. Her name was Vicki Randall, the mother of a suicide soldier. The impact of her story in the loss of her son was heartfelt. She shared her struggles with the loss, the difficulty of managing during COVID, and how this tragic loss empowered her to become involved in helping other veterans and their families. She spoke of the wonderful things at the "Healing Nest", how many veterans have found inner peace and are regaining their lives back. The Legion has a program called S.A.V.E., for more information check out the Department or National websites. Remember saving someone might just be a phone call away.

Jan Ekert
District 7 Vice Commander At Large

2023 DISTRICT 7 ORATORICAL CONTEST

When: Sunday, February 5, 2023 at 1 p.m.

Where: Willmar Home Post #167, Willmar Minnesota

Awards: 1st Place \$700 and the opportunity to advance to the Minnesota Department Contest scheduled for February 25, 2023.

2nd Place \$500. 3rd Place \$250

Interested in knowing more and have questions? Contact Rueben Nathe, District 7 Oratorical Contest Chairman, at either 320-593-8654 or email Ruebenn@hutchtel.net.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

Once again, I attended the National Security and Foreign Relations briefing at Camp Ripley. I am sad to say that the Young Lady who was submitted by the 7th District for the Enlisted Soldier of the year was not chosen. Be assured I will resubmit her Bio and Resume as she is quite remarkable. The selection process is scored on many things and the task for the selection committee can be daunting. How many of you have a Guard or Reserve Unit within your area? Start thinking about a soldier or guardsman you might know who has gone above and beyond. Let me know. I will try to make contact with them and with their Unit Commander and First Sergeant. There are many aspects that fall under the auspices of National Security and Foreign Relations with the standouts always being the “**Four Pillars of the American Legion**”.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation – taking care of our veterans both in our communities, our Posts, utilizing our county Veteran Service Officers, VA hospitals and outreach clinics. Making sure we are taking care of both the veteran and their families.

Americanism – “For God and Country” comes to mind when I see this pillar. In my heart it means promoting the values we cherish as Americans. Freedom, being a good citizen, staying true to our oath of Office or Enlistment.

Children and Youth – This will be the second year of our Girls Fast Pitch Softball. What a great thing to see and be part of! Remember the District Oratorical contest is in February followed by Boy’s and Girl’s State in the Spring. These programs are all about giving to young people. Many of the programs that your post is involved in support Children and Youth. We also talked about the ESGR program. For those wondering about the acronym, ESGR stands for Employer support for the Guard and Reserve. This is a program that recognizes employers that have shown support for our soldiers during and after deployment.

I salute each and everyone of you in your commitment to the American Legion and for your service to your Country. Stay strong and support your brothers and sisters in Arms.

Jan Ekert
District 7 National Security and Foreign Relations Chair

VA&R COMMITTEE

9/11 Veteran Service Bonus- Veterans Service Bonus eligibility includes Veterans, currently serving service members, Veterans’ beneficiaries, or Veterans’ guardians, conservators or legally appointed personal representatives. Check MN statute 197.447 for the definition of Veteran in MN. The service bonus is payable to eligible veterans who served from 9/11/2001 to 8/30/2021. There are three tiers of the Post-9/11 Veteran Service Bonus: \$600, \$1,200, and \$2,000. Application period is 7/7/2022 to 6/30/2024, unless funds have been exhausted before then. Apply online at VetServiceBonus.mdva.mn.gov.

For more information contact your CVSO or your PSO. Information shared from the MN Department of Veterans Affairs- State of MN (mn.gov)

Keith Seidler
District 7 VA&R Committee Chair

LEGIONVILLE

The total number of campers this year was 384. The camper numbers are declining each year and COVID did not help. We have a goal of 500 campers next year. We need to find a way to send more youth to Legionville. Maybe we can approach bus drivers and bus transportation companies for eligible youth and we can certainly partner with other nonprofits. Children can even be paid and sent by parents. I think bus drivers would welcome a youngster with the ability to help if there was an accident. This could make a drastic difference in outcome for all. The price to attend Legionville was raised to \$500 due to the COVID pandemic and the camp being closed for a year. The first session begins June 11 – 16, 2023 and a new session starts every week with the exception of the week of July 4th. The final session is scheduled for 30 July – 4 August, 2023. For a list of maintenance items and major wants see the last page of this newsletter.

The Camporee committee is looking for 2 volunteers from each District to help during Camporee weekend (7, 8, 9 September 2023).

Victor Gades
District 7 Legionville representative

Probably the best year to attend a Fall Conference! Multiple training programs were available Friday morning and afternoon (6 sessions) and you chose the sessions you wanted to learn more about. Choices were: MyLegion.org; Media Communications; Officers Responsibilities; Member Suspension; Post Service Officer Responsibilities; Writing a Resolution; SAVE Training; Membership Recruit & Retain; American Legion Programs; Mentor New Members; Sale of Post Assets, Post/District Revitalization;

MEMBERSHIP BANNING OR SUSPENSION

- National & Department rules exist (see their By-Laws) and rule if post by-laws don't address a given situation.
- Banning usually means banning from building or meetings for a set amount of time; Suspending is considered as discipline. Discipline is subject to Due Process rules
- Supporting info found in
 - Department's Constitution, Article 11
 - Department's By-Laws, Para 6
 - National By-Laws, Page 14, Section 2
- Discipline rules include:
 - Formal notification identifying infraction (spell it out clearly), post rights (prosecutors), member rights (defense)
 - Appeal is available per Article IV, Sec 3 of National By-Laws
 - Trial must be held unless member formally waives trial & accepts discipline
 - Trial must include 3 jurors & a prosecutors
 - Member can bring lawyer if they choose
- Non-Members – Usually just issue letter to person (certified with person's signature) – Minnesota statute 609.605 covers these requirements
- Highly recommend Banning & Suspension rules being included in Post By-Laws
- Any bad behavior issues alone – posts should look for causes of that behavior and consider getting the person help/referring them to proper facilities/programs.

LEGIONNAIRE NEWSPAPER

- Each issue costs \$15K to mail, \$4.7K to print, total cost \$25K per month
- Annual dues increase might have been used to help pay for Legionnaire costs
- Cost Saving recommendations discussions include:
 - Grant requests written and submitted; hoping for positive results
 - Seek/Ask for Legal Gambling donations from posts
 - Convert Legionnaire to on-line only
 - Ask legion members to change to receiving electronic paper instead of actual paper version
 - Ask Legion Family members with multiple people in the house to reduce number of printed papers they get to One
 - Reduce issues from monthly to every 6 weeks saving approximately \$75,000/year

VA's S.A.V.E. SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

- Newly added phone number – 988, (press 1 for veterans) for veterans assistance
- Or, Text MN to 741741
- SAVE acronym stands for:
 - S – See the SIGNS
 - A – Ask the questions
 - V – Validate!
 - E – Encourage & Expedite getting help!

AMENDING CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

- Issue in question not in Post's Constitution or By-Laws? - then Dept & National By-Laws and/or Roberts Rules of Order dictate
- Must announce proposed changes to all members, explain changes and announce when voting on the proposed changes will take place.
- By-Laws Flushes out details identified in Post Constitution, have both been updated?
- Grammar, proper words, issues addressed, emergency replacements of post officers (when, who, how, etc.), when annual post property inventories are done (bldgs., rifles, ammo, kitchen items, tables, etc., etc.), and using electronic media in post meetings/activities are all important items for your by-laws
- Watch donated items – what happens to them when post no longer needs or have room for them
- Post positions/officers. Not all posts need all officers. A good Judge Advocate can help post maneuver through various issues.

DID YOU KNOW?

- National & Department rules require the PREAMBLE and POW/MIA flag/drape be included in all Post meetings; along with pledge and prayer
- ADMINISTRATIVELY – POST MEETING MINUTES MUST BE KEPT A MINIMUM OF 6 YEARS BUT FOREVER IS PREFERRED FOR HISTORICAL ACCURACY
- Approved minutes must support post member support of decisions/changes and must be signed and filed by the Adjutant
- Our National PREAMBLE has only been changed twice since authored – the word “War” was changed to “Wars” when WWII started and “The Great Wars” was changed to “All Wars” within the past few years
- There are 9 Clauses of the Preamble that follow the opening statement. These clauses are the ideal goals we've set for ourselves; our foundation brought to us from our fallen/early comrades

LEGIONVILLE

- Now open for more campers/kids
- Not only school patrol members
- Open to any young person interested in safety and having fun
- Emphasis is on Safety Programs & Fun
- New/additional programs soon to be added
- See Legionville's web site and/or link on mnlegion.org

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

- Department Family putting together new Cookbook to raise funds to pay committee expenses
- New weekly Podcast now happening:
 - Airs Each Thursday, 2pm
 - Found on You Tube or mnlegion.org (click on Patriots link)
 - 1st issue can be found on MN Legion's FB page (interview with next year's candidate for Nat'l Commander)

MINNESOTA AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION

- All foundation funds are established to help veterans in one form or another. Any help is greatly appreciated.
- Excellent programs to help Veterans
- Any monies donated by check MUST be payable to "MINNESOTA AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION" and, if designated to a particular fund, it must be noted in the memo as "FUND ##" -fund number here. If no Fund number is shown in the memo line, the funds will be put into the Foundation's permanent fund and used to help other veteran requests and/or help the numbered funds as needed.
- Foundations really needing additional funds
 - Boy Scout Scholarship Fund 56 (to increase \$ amount awarded to Eagle Scout/Year – currently \$1,000)
 - Oratorical Scholarship Fund 75(to increase \$ amount awarded to Oratorical winner-currently \$1,500)
 - Veterans Assistance Fund 85(Minnesota veterans helped with emergency funding)

Note: District 7 gave a total of \$1,000 to Fund 85 last year

LEGIONVILLE MAINTENANCE ITEMS AND MAJOR WANTS

Toilets for ALL cabins \$3000

Mattresses for ALL bunks \$200 each for a total of \$33,600

New Water Heaters \$6000 each for a total of \$36,000

Waterslide for Swimming Area \$2500

Flooring for Dorms \$20,000

UPDATES TO THE 2022/2023 DIRECTORY

Page 5 – change Dean Knutson's (Judge Advocate) email to deknutson29@gmail.com

Page 7 & 8 – Millerville Post 527 has a home bldg. Please put an asterisk after their town's name. The Post address is 12209 County Rd 60 NW, Millerville, MN. Their zip code is 56315. They are not open to the public and do not have a Post phone. They do not meet Jan – Mar. Please change Post Home to Y, Hours to N, and Tele: to N/A

Tracy Post 173 – Please add David Dieter as the Post Commander. His address is 14131 140th St, Walnut Grove, MN 56180. His phone number is 507-829-9176 and his email address is DD Dieter1960@gmail.com