



# M I L E G I O N N A I R E

Michigan Legionnaire & Wolverine Auxiliaire Vol. LXXX No.8

## VA Needs to Improve MST Screening for Women Veterans

American Legion survey finds gender-specific VA medical services lacking in many areas. To view the complete survey report, go [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

WASHINGTON (March 23, 2011) – Nearly 40 percent of female veterans surveyed by The American Legion about VA health care were dissatisfied with the screening process for military sexual trauma. Among those, 26 percent said they were “very dissatisfied” with the screening process, which mandates that all enrolled veterans are universally screened for military sexual trauma.

These and other findings from the Legion-sponsored survey were made available March 22 during a press conference at the National Press Club. The online survey was conducted Jan. 5-31 by ProSidian Consulting, LLC, based in Charlotte, N.C.

At the press conference, Legion officials and ProSidian staff explained results of the 67-question survey, which was taken by 3,012 U.S. military women veterans worldwide.

The survey measured 10 attributes of service quality regarding VA – reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, tangibles and understanding the customer. The survey provided an assessment of specialized services for women at VA and wasn't designed to present a reflection of general VA services that women receive, according to ProSidian.

Among the findings: one in three female VA

health-care users reported they were dissatisfied with their most recent experience with VA's Women Veterans Program Manager, who counsels female patients in the system. The survey suggests there is room for significant improvement for VA to provide gender-specific services such as PAP smears and mammograms. And 38 percent of the survey's respondents said they wouldn't use a VA doctor for a second opinion – even if that opinion was offered at no charge.

“Research on this subject is important, yet it's lacking,” said Verna Jones, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division. “Women represent a vastly growing portion of U.S. veterans, comprising almost 20 percent of our armed forces and representing the fastest growing population of the VA health-care system.

See WOMEN VETS on page 2



Genesee County Convention Corporation members recently presented a State Headquarters Media Excellence Award to Flint Journal Reporter Kayla Habermahl who extensively covered the 2011 Winter Meeting and National Commander Jimmie Foster's visit to Flint. Shown (l-r) Corporation Finance Officer Charles Peoples, Habermahl, Corporation Trustees John Fortney and Dolores Smith.



JUNE 23-26

## Grand Rapids Welcomes State Convention

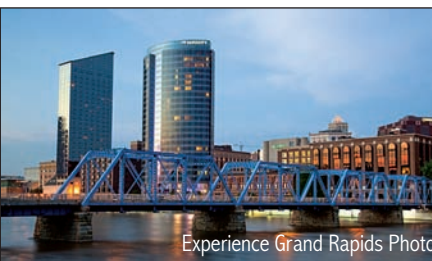
By Patrick W. Lafferty, State Adjutant

Friday, June 24, 2:00 p.m. formally opens Michigan's 93rd State Convention at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids following meetings on Thursday and earlier Friday. The next several days encompasses convention sessions and presentations as the American Legion, Department of Michigan transitions into the 2011-12 year.

Not all our time in Grand Rapids, however, is business. I encourage you and your families to enjoy the many places and events available during our stay in Grand Rapids. To assist you in that regard, the Grand Rapids Convention and Visitor's Bureau ([ExerienceGR.com](http://ExerienceGR.com)) has provided the following highlights for your selection.

### “Grand Rapids: A Grand Destination”

Grand Rapids, Michigan is a city of contrasts. With more than one million resi-



Experience Grand Rapids Photo

dents in the metro area, it offers all the excitement you expect from a big city. Yet it's also a region of abundant natural wonders, where outdoor recreation is a year-round pursuit.

The big-city experience begins in downtown Grand Rapids, where a state-of-the-art convention center, DeVos Place, is connected to several luxury hotels via climate-controlled skywalk.

**A Walkable Downtown** - Just outside these and other downtown hotels, within a five-minute walk of the convention center, you'll find nearly 60 restaurant choices.

A vital entertainment district offers everything from chic jazz clubs to rollicking sports bars. You can attend a football or hockey game, see a touring Broadway show or superstar singer, and even attend a professional opera, ballet or symphony presentation.

Make sure you check out The B.O.B. before or after the show. The Big Old Building is a 70,000-square-foot, four-story renovated warehouse that houses several restaurants, a cigar lounge, microbrewery, comedy club, dance club, billiards hall, jazz stage and wine cellar.

The Gerald R. Ford Museum, located directly behind DeVos Place, pays tribute to the life and times of our 38th president, a longtime Grand Rapids resident. Permanent exhibits include an Oval Office replica, an authentic Vietnam-era UH-1 Huey helicopter and the actual staircase that sat on top of the U.S. Embassy in

See GRAND RAPIDS on page 3



Michigan members visited troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center during the recent National Washington Conference in the nation's capitol. Members shown (l-r) are State Legislative Chairman Douglas Williams, Livonia Post 32 member Mark Sutton, National Vice Commander John Mella, and State Commander William Hafeman.

June 2011

1st Place NALPA Publication Winner 2006 1st Place NALPA Website Winner 2008  
2nd Place NALPA Publication Winner - 2007 & 2009 3rd Place NALPA Publication Winner - 2008

## THE ISSUE

Nat. Conv. Form.....	3
Section Two.....	5 & 13
DEC Reports.....	5 & 6

State Comm. Reports.....	7,8,10,11,14 & 15
Wilwin Open House.....	9
Veterans Service.....	12

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Do you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use? E-mail it to us at [info@michiganlegion.org](mailto:info@michiganlegion.org) or mail it to department attn: Mark Sutton Please keep the photo at least 200 dpi or larger. If you are submitting a hard copy photo, please note photos printed from home printers cannot be used, nor can photos clipped from newspapers.

We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible.

Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan Legionnaire? Please Contact Mark Sutton at: [info@michiganlegion.org](mailto:info@michiganlegion.org) or by phone at 517-371-4720 ext 16.

**Veterans Service Directory Page 12**



**Chaplain  
Eddie W. Brown, State Chaplain**

**“PRAYERS FOR ALL”**

There is a saying that “April showers bring May flowers.” It is an expression of hope for better days. It is sort of like what I referred to in my last article that “every cloud has its silver lining.” Here in the states we got more than showers in April, we got tornados, damaging winds, hail and floods throughout the heartland and the south. The damage was devastating. The pictures on the news could almost break your heart. In some of the communities there was hardly a building left standing, including the churches. Many people lost their lives. One story told of mother and her two young daughters who were killed and it was very sad. Times like that can often challenge your faith. As if to say, “how could God let that happen?”

Matthew 5:43 – 48 reads: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor

and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” So, God isn’t promising that the rain will not fall on you if you’re a believer. But, he is promising to be with you through the storm. And if we keep the faith, we can all look forward to a day when sorrow will be no more. We may not understand it all now but, “we’ll understand it better by and bye.”

There are some things you would wish upon even your worst enemy like the loss of a spouse or their children. The loss of their home and all of their possessions or their businesses and ability to provide for their families. So we need to pray for all according to their needs. And, as we have supported other countries in their time of need, we need to remember another saying that “charity should begin at home.” If there is anything that we can do to help our people in the south, then let us do it. And if there is nothing else, you can always pray. Job 11:13 – 18 reads: “Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him ... Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning; You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in (His) safety.” God Bless You All.

**Continued**

**WOMEN VETS**

“The results from this survey will be used to refine The American Legion’s outreach efforts (and) enhance its written and oral testimony to Congress and federal agencies. The survey results will also help identify unmet needs among women veterans and guide the development of strategic remedies.”

The survey results provided insight about the gap between desired and actual performance of the VA health-care system for women using it. Of the 2,936 respondents who answered that specific question, 63 percent were enrolled in the VA health-care system. Of those, almost 30 percent were dissatisfied with the “reliability” of health care provided by the VA when compared to private health-care providers, and more than 30 percent were dissatisfied when they compared the “responsiveness” of VA to that of private health-care providers.

About 30 percent of respondents reported that they were not allowed an appropriate amount of time with their provider to discuss their specific health-related issues, and 38 percent expressed at least some level of dissatisfaction when asked to compare the credibility of health care provided by VA against similar services provided by private practitioners. Eleven percent were “very dissatisfied.”

“We found in our survey about 66 percent

of the women ... not only registered for VA health-care service, but they also maintained their private health-care service,” said Adrian Woolcock, managing principal of ProSidian. “In addition in that subset, only 40 percent have ever used VA. The women veterans overall do know what their benefits are. It’s really a matter of focusing on improving the quality of service provided to women veterans.”

Other findings from the survey: Almost 25 percent of the respondents rated the convenience of VA facilities locations as poor, indicating that gender-specific care is difficult to obtain for a significant number of women; More than 25 percent of those surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with VA in security-related issues – especially the degree of sensitivity surrounding a patient’s personal information; Approximately one-fourth of the respondents said they were dissatisfied with the level of competence demonstrated by VA health-care providers when compared to private practitioners; Almost a quarter of the respondents gave VA a courtesy rating of less than positive.

Demographic information from the survey indicated that 34.6 percent of respondents were between ages 52 and 61, while 24.9 percent were ages 42-51. Eighty percent were white. More than 68 percent were non-combat veterans; the highest percentage of combat veterans who responded (16 percent)

served in Operations Iraqi or Enduring Freedom.

Some who took the survey contacted The American Legion to offer details about their responses. In those discussions, the women said they didn’t want a separate VA health-care system for women; rather, they want the same quality health care that men receive but tailored to meet gender-specific needs. Others said they hesitate to use VA facilities because they can’t get child care on the days of their appointments.

“Changes in culture take time, and VA is starting to change its approach dealing with women veterans,” American Legion National Commander Jimmie L. Foster said. “The American Legion wants to help VA make this important transition. VA health care needs to be more reliable, responsive and competent in its treatment of women.”

A copy of the 82-page survey was delivered to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki by Peter Gaytan, the Legion’s executive director in Washington, during the organization’s 51st Annual Washington Conference.

“To move into the future, we have to recognize the changing demographics of America’s veteran population,” Gaytan said. “The commitment of this organization is to take this information, stand side by side with the leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs, (and) say there’s a need to listen to what’s being said.”

**STATE OFFICERS**

- State Commander . . . . . William Hafeman, Carney
- State Adjutant . . . . . Patrick W. Lafferty, Mt. Pleasant
- 1st Zone . . . . . Floyd Plowman, Dearborn Heights
- 2nd Zone . . . . . Cliff Rose, E. Leroy
- 3rd Zone . . . . . Terry Montgomery, Redford
- 4th Zone . . . . . Nancy Frye, Holton
- 5th Zone . . . . . Ron Pearson, Marquette

- Finance Officer . . . . . David Buist, Grandville
- Historian . . . . . Ronald Runyan, Wyandotte
- Chaplain . . . . . Eddie Brown, Southgate
- Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . Ernest Berry, Woodhaven
- Judge Advocate..Hon. James A. Callahan, Grosse Pointe
- National Executive Committeeman . . . . . Darwin Krieger, Bridgman

- Alt. National Executive Committeeman . . . . . Thomas G. Holzgen, Grandville
- Immediate Past Commander . . . . . Carnie Jackson, Clarkston
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director . . . . . James Topps, Adrian
- Membership Director . . . . . Louis Oberle, Engadine
- Public Relations Director. . . . . Mark Sutton, Farmington

# Headquarters

William Hafeman, State Commander

Legionnaires Make a Difference Every Day

## The Stage is Set

*“Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.”*



William Hafeman  
State Commander

This article is my last as your State Commander as this Legion year is coming to an end. It has been an enjoyable year with many accomplishments; however, it is also a sad year in that I was unable to accomplish everything that needed to be done.

On the positive side, I completed my 5 Year Plan to move our Department ahead into a more productive future. I am looking forward to having this plan passed by the D.E.C. at the State Convention in Grand Rapids. The plan can be reviewed at [www.michiganlegion.org](http://www.michiganlegion.org), the State Headquarters Website. Also, a

committee will be set up to bring the plan into fruition.

This is how the plan will work in the future. The current State Commander will work with a Committee approved by the D.E.C., telling the committee what part(s) of the plan he/she is interested in accomplishing or would like researched. The committee will do the homework for the commander presenting him or her with the data the commander needs to make the necessary decisions to accomplish his or her goals. The committee will also be responsible for any new ideas to add to the Plan and deleting any ideas that will not be feasible to accomplish. In other words, this Plan is an ongoing document that changes as the future changes.

After I completed the Plan, I turned to working with the Student Veterans of America organization in our State

Universities and Colleges (part of the Plan) to work with the Student Veterans in assuring they are aware of benefits they may be entitled to (Service Officer work) and to register these students within our ranks. This program is moving along at a rapid pace, however, with the 5 Year Plan Committee, all the preliminary work would have been complete so I could “jump right in” and complete this accomplishment. As it is, I’m still doing the preliminary work.

Our Finance/Personnel Committee was instrumental in hiring a new Public Relations Director, Mark Sutton. Mark will be the person responsible for promoting our programs, committees and The American Legion throughout the state. Denise Koets was hired to replace Rhonda in the Accounting Department and is doing an outstanding job in all assignments given to

her. During the year, a Human Resource firm was hired to bring the employee manual and job descriptions up to date. This was last done formally 27 years ago. We also changed our accounting procedures to conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.

The Michigan American Legion’s Wilwin Lodge, located in the U.P., was incorporated as a 501-C-3 non-profit corporation earlier this year. The property saw many repairs with the Guest House now fully handicap accessible. Last summer we had a veteran and his family stay there and we had a Girl Scout troop camp out there. We ask all posts that if they know any veterans and their families who can benefit with a week of rehabilitation, recreation and rest, please let

See COMMANDER on page 14

## Continued

### GRAND RAPIDS

Saigon when that city fell to the Communist Army of North Vietnam.

You might follow up your Ford Museum visit with a trip to Van Andel Museum Center, the Public Museum of Grand Rapids. Just a few hundred yards away, it features three floors of exciting exhibits, including an actual section of the Berlin Wall, a working antique carousel, seven galleries of West Michigan habitats, and much more.

**A Treat for the Eyes** - Walk another couple of blocks and you’ll discover the brand-new Grand Rapids Art Museum. The museum showcases an impressive collection that spans Renaissance to Modern Art.

You’ll be amazed at the breadth and variety of art that lines downtown streets – from a “floating” astronaut to a park designed by Vietnam War Memorial architect Maya Lin to the mammoth red Calder sculpture that has come to symbolize the city.

For art of a different kind, take a 10-minute stroll “up the hill” from DeVos Place to the Heritage Hill historic district.

If natural beauty is more your style, stroll the two-mile riverwalk as it winds its way through the heart of downtown.

**Shopping, Fishing, Golfing and More** - John Ball Zoo, one of the nation’s oldest urban zoos, is home to more than 1,100 animals. Millennium Park offers swimming, fishing, hiking and biking galore.

Nearby shopping opportunities abound. Neighborhood retail districts feature one-

of-a-kind boutiques and art galleries. Two massive shopping malls each house more than 100 famous brand-name stores.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is a 118-acre oasis spotlighting both manmade and natural beauty. Walk the nature trails and boardwalk, see Michigan’s largest tropical conservatory, visit an authentic Michigan farm garden and marvel at the work of more than 30 renowned sculptors in the outdoor sculpture park.

**Family Fun** - Downtown, the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum provides an interactive, hands-on environment that inspires learning in kids age 2 to 10.

The Children’s Garden at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park offers hours of fun for families. At John Ball Zoo, it’s the Living Aquarium that proves most irresistible.

Kids can see stars of a different (pin) stripe at Fifth Third Ballpark, home of the West Michigan Whitecaps baseball team.

Head to Millennium Park, where kids and parents can cool off under shower sculptures and water cannons, build castles on a six-acre beach, fish in lagoons or swim in a clear aqua inland lake.

**Easy Does It** - “Convenience” happens to be one of Grand Rapids’ greatest assets. The city is located at the intersection of two major Michigan freeways, U.S. 31 and Interstate 96. Drive time from Detroit is 2-1/4 hours; from Lansing, 1 hour; from

Traverse City, 2-1/2 hours.

Once you get here, it’s incredibly easy to get around. The compact downtown is eminently walkable. Covered parking ramps are connected to hotels by skywalk.

The 28th Street corridor in southeast Grand Rapids encompasses two major malls, a plethora of brand-name box stores, dozens of chain restaurants, and many homegrown shops and eateries, all within the space of a mile or two. The Rivertown Mall area in southwest Grand

Rapids is just as compact, and offers a distinctly different mix of shopping and dining options.

It’s all part of Michigan’s West Coast, a destination unlike any other. There’s so much to see and do here – it’s no wonder Places Rated Almanac named Grand Rapids America’s #3 Fun & Recreation City.

Enjoy your convention and its host city, Grand Rapids.

-Pat

## 2011 National Convention Reservation

Hilton Garden Inn - Downtown, 1101 - 4th Ave So., Minneapolis, MN 55404

August 26 - September 1, 2011

MUST BE RECEIVED AT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS BY JULY 25, 2011

Make check payable to and forward to:

American Legion, Department of Michigan, Attn: Kim, 212 N Verlinden Ave, Suite A, Lansing, MI 48915

Room Rate - \$146.29 per room/per night (includes tax) Required Deposits - One night’s rate (\$146.29), \$15.00 Convention registration for each adult. Add-on Events: \$20.00 per person - Michigan Party, \$45.00 per person - National Commander’s Banquet. (Only Valet Parking Available - \$24/day)

FULL NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE CONTACT: Delegate Circle the Affiliation

(1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  No Leg SAL AUX

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

FULL NAME OF ALL OTHERS WHO ARE REGISTERING: Delegate Circle the Affiliation

(2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  No Leg SAL AUX

(3) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  No Leg SAL AUX

(4) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  No Leg SAL AUX

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ King Bed: \_\_\_\_\_ or Double Beds: \_\_\_\_\_

All Rooms are Non-Smoking Handicapped: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUIRED DEPOSITS		MONETARY ENCLOSURE		OPTIONAL ADD-ONS	
A) Room Deposit:	_____ X \$146.29 = _____	C) Michigan Party:	_____ X \$20.00 = _____		
B) Registration Fee:	_____ X \$15.00 = _____	D) National Commander’s Banquet:	_____ X \$45.00 = _____		
A) _____ + B) _____		C) _____ + D) _____		TOTAL DUE: \$ _____	

Michigan Party - Saturday, August 27th

**2011 DEC Reports**

Article IX, Section 1 of the Department By-Laws requires officers and chairpersons to make an annual detailed report for publication in the Michigan Legionnaire. District Commanders are invited, but not required to submit reports.

**Finance Officer**

David Buist  
State Finance Officer

Greetings from your state finance officer. The finance officer is the custodian of the funds of the department. It is a large responsibility. After the better part of two years in this position I've learned to scrutinize every voucher and every check that passes through the department. Usually when there is an error, it is simply a matter of an accidental carry over of the wrong column of information, or a minor math error, but mistakes do happen from time to time so it's good to have oversight.

Mileage for department business is reimbursed for those who qualify at the rate of 40.5 cents per mile. This includes volunteers such as department committee members and members of the DEC. Please use that figure when completing expense reports.

Your department is constantly looking for any cost saving measures that can improve efficiencies and improve the bottom line, thereby improving the bang that you receive for your dues money. There are several items on this year's agenda that will help to accomplish this goal. One is studying various ways to increase funding and grants for our various programs.

I would like to remind everyone that as a 501c19, American Legion posts must file IRS form 990 each year, whether or not your post had income. Also, posts must pay Michigan Sales Tax on purchases for consumption. This includes office supplies, equipment purchases and other items that are not purchased for resale.

Finally, I thank Commander Hafeman for his leadership and our illustrious Department Adjutant Pat Lafferty for his wisdom and ever-present sense of humor. Thank you all for providing me with the opportunity to serve the American Legion Department of Michigan. I am proud to be associated with this great organization.

**Historian**

Ron Runyan,  
State Historian

Commander: It has been a great Legion year around Michigan and I have been honored to be the department historian for the last 2 years. I have traveled around the state attending meetings, going to parades and dinners and socializing and getting to know many of our members within the American Legion Family. I really enjoyed documenting the travels of Commander Hafeman this year and the hard work that you have done for The American Legion and the veterans you serve. Thanks also go out to Jan Hafeman for her assistance with photos and the time and assistance she has given you and the Department of Michigan.

While making visits, I encouraged many Legionaries to either start a post history book or continuing the ones they are doing. As I have asked before in the past, I would like to see more posts getting involved in the Post History and Scrapbook Contest held at department conventions. Last year our contestants received special recognition at the spring meeting and even recommended one entry for national competition. Guidelines for producing these books can be found in the post officers guides and even on the department website in the Publications section. If anyone has questions or would like more information on post history, history books and scrapbooks they can contact me via email or by phone; my contact information is in the front of the Legion paper. This year the judging will be Saturday afternoon at convention. All books must be received in the department office no later than Friday at 4 p.m. Please leave the books with one of the staff members and I will be picking them up to get judged.

Furthermore, I also ask that if I could not make an event that a post had this year I would like it if you sent pictures via email to department to our publications director and myself. We would like to use these for the departments' history and/or in the newspaper to document what we all do for our veterans.

Lastly, I thank the department staff and members in the state for their assistance and for the privilege of representing you as your department historian the last two years.

**Veterans Affairs Division**

James Topps  
Director

This following report is to show our American Legion Family the great work being done by your VA&R Division of the American Legion, Department of Michigan.

It shows our combined "Recoveries" and "Activities" this past year. Our recoveries increased to \$98,960,817.00 this year; this is an \$18,903,012.00 increase from last year's recoveries. This is \$15,000,000.00 more than any other State Service Organization here in the state. We worked 6,652 claims this past reporting period, which is an increase of 1,077 more than last year. By dividing the amount of our grant into the cited recovery figures, it shows we are bringing \$143.53 for each dollar given to us from the State Grants.

The American Legion Family that worked for the VA/VS program worked 10,666 volunteer hours at the Michigan VA Medical Centers and at the Marquette and Grand Rapids Homes for Veterans; this amount of hours comes to \$112,000.00 spent on our veterans this past year. These American Legion Family volunteers have out worked any other Service Organization in the state. What a great job!

As you all remember, we were downsized last year due to budget cuts but the dedication of the remaining Service Officers and clerical staff members did a stellar job. I was hired to be your new VA&R Director and took over on June 7, 2010. We have also undergone some staff changes within the VA&R Division. We have added Tommy Simpkins who brings us 30 years of service with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He will be our new Field Service Officer covering the Western Michigan Area. We have also hired Suzette McGraw who is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan and also serves as the State President of the Student Veterans of America; she will work out of the Detroit Regional Office downtown. They both bring new and exciting dimensions to this great staff. We also added one of the best back to our staff with the return of Lannie Thomas to our Detroit Office. You will be able to meet the new staff members at our State Convention in Grand Rapids.

As you all know, we aligned with the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Marine Corps League, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart to form a Coalition to seek the four (4) Grants offered by the Michigan Department of Veterans Affairs; the Coalition was successful in getting 3 out of the 4 Grants. The total amount for Department's appropriation from the State is \$742,500.00; this grant is good through September 2011.

With the coalition, we have the

best coverage throughout the state. We have also been able to maintain a Service Officer once a month in the Eastern U.P. as well as the Ann Arbor VAMC, Battle Creek VAMC, Detroit VAMC and the Saginaw VAMC, along with many of the VA Community Outpatient Clinics throughout the state. We have been working with the County Counselors getting them Accreditation through our national staff. This is another step in getting assistance to our veterans closer to their homes. Through the years, we have developed a strong working respect for each other, as well as a great bond of friendship. With the state budget cuts in 2009, we feel that teaming up with these dedicated counselors is a plus for the American Legion VA&R Staff, the Department of Michigan, and the veterans of the State of Michigan.

I also like to tell each of you that our State I.T. monies are at work in our Detroit Regional Office as well as with our Field Staff members. Our new Data Base Program, VETRASPEC, is working very well both in the office and in the field. We have purchased new Lap Tops and scanners for our staff members, and they are up and running. At this time we are some 25% paperless in our Detroit Office. Our staff and our members are all working hard to make this important transition possible. I hope to see you all at our upcoming state convention in Grand Rapids this June. We will be having a raffle for a 42" Flat Screen TV as well as a "Good Stuff Auction" on Saturday night at the convention. We are looking for donations for our auction. The monies made from this auction will go to the VA&R Endowment Fund and Wilwin Lodge. Location will be posted during the convention.

The staff will have an informative table set up as well as Department Service Officer on duty to answer any questions you have about VA Benefits; or even file a claim.

On behalf of the entire VA&R Division, I thank Chairman Webster and his entire Finance/Personal Committee for their support and for providing us the funding from our American Legion, Department of Michigan that has permitted us to carry out our main objective of providing expert assistance and service to Michigan's veteran population. Your support of this Pillar of the American Legion makes us all stand tall.

I also want to report we have received \$4,500.00 in donations to our Department VA&R Endowment Fund at this time. \$1,000.00 of this is from the American Legion SAL Detachment of Michigan. Thank you so much for your support of

this Endowment Fund. The VA&R Division thanks you all for this donation. The SAL Detachment of Michigan is indeed a most important part of the American Legion Family. Thank you all from the entire VA&R Staff!

Thank you Michigan American Legion Family for all your dedication to the veterans we serve every day!

**1st Zone**

Floyd Plowman  
Commander

Up until now I was mystified at how fast this year seems to have flown by, but as I reflect on all the events that have taken place this past year, I am not quite so surprised. As I started this year, there was the 4th of July parade in Wyandotte and Post 217 did a great job organizing their contingent and they looked terrific marching up Biddle Ave.; made me proud to be with them. Thanks also for the warm welcome to your post afterwards. Great camaraderie there.

Next came the grand opening of Piquette Square, a place where homeless veterans can re-establish themselves with a job and a small apartment. Thank you Public Relations Chairman Dick Chatman for inviting me to this very worthy event.

The next thing to happen during the summer was the 1st Zone Picnic which was organized a couple years ago by past zone commander Mike Buda and past zone commander Dick Chatman as a way to draw the districts a little closer together. That seems to be working as the picnic got a little bigger the 2nd year with more families in attendance. This is a great event and I do hope it continues with even more families attending.

By September the posts in the districts were resuming their regularly scheduled meetings. Regretfully, I was not able to attend the meetings at some of the posts in the districts which I regret, and for those I did not get to, I apologize to each of you. Most district meetings I was able to get to and was able to assess the health of the posts through their delegates and membership lists.

Commander Bill Acton and Vice Commander Joe Callahan of the 16th District were at 92% of their membership goal as of 4-5-11 and as I write this article, I'm confident the district is now at least 95% and will certainly meet their 100% goal by the time this goes to press. You two and all the post commanders, vice commanders as well as members who worked so hard this past year to retain our



# AUXILIAIRE

*From the Desk of the President* 2010 - 2011 Department President, Jan Kintz

## YOUR PRESIDENT MARCHES ON WITH ACTIVITIES



**WOW!** It's hard to believe that it is June already and my year is coming to an end. These two hands began their work last June and have been working

hard all year helping our veterans and their families. They also used their hands to promote membership.

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you along with the

Legion Family for your support this year. For those District Meetings and functions that I was able to attend, your hospitality will not be forgotten. I still have many travels in May and June with District visits, Battle Creek School Awards, and Holland to name a few.

Just a reminder that June 6th is D-Day and June 14th is Flag Day. Fly your flags proudly and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

I would like to thank everyone for their support, thoughts, and prayers this past

year. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your Department President. Special thanks to Carrie & Mary Anne for stepping in when I was unable to attend a function. I also would like to thank the rest of the Legion Family, Commander Bill Hafeman and First Lady, Mrs. Tag-a-Long Jan, for their support and the fun and laughs we had this year. And last, but not least, my son, Detachment Commander David Mennel and First Lady, the other Mrs. Tag-a-Long, Anita, for their support, fun and laughter. Anita

did a lot for the Legion Family this past year and I will be forever in her debt. Department Chairman and District Presidents, I feel we had a great year and I also thank you for your hard work.

I've enjoyed this past year and I'm not sure I would have changed anything. As someone once told me "people come into your life for a reason" and I am very happy that each you came into mine.

God Bless our troops, veterans and the good old USA!

*Bonnie Olson, Secretary-Treasurer*

## YEAR-END WRAPUP



*"The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen."*  
**Frank Loyd Wright**

Sometimes organizations, and people, have to dig deep to find out what really

makes them tick. This year the Auxiliary has had some difficult times. The Department office was without a Secretary-Treasurer for three months. Right after Fall Conference our President found out her cancer had returned, and has fought her own personal battle. A couple of our units had their charter revoked. National purchased a membership system that still struggles to be fully productive.

Yet through our trials, our members continue to pay their dues, go to meetings, contribute time and energy to department programs, and most importantly, service our veterans. I would like to share with you some of the statistics that are in the new Consolidated Unit Report, which goes to National summarizing the activity of members in our Department.

Total Unit and individual donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund: \$4,748.73.

Children & Youth: Number of Children & Youth activities held: 59. Total number of military families involved: 511. Cash aid to benefit children of veterans/military: \$4,954.55.

Girls State: No. of hours serving veterans/families: 9,912. No. of veteran's families served: 59.

Junior Activities: No. of service projects

participated in: 25. Types of activities: Veterans Gift Shop, adopt veteran family or military unit, Operation Military Kids.

National Security: Unit program participation: Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Operation Homefront, Family Readiness Groups, Family to Family Support, Family Support Network, Operation Comfort Warriors, Heroes to Hometown, Gold Star/Blue Star Banner Program, POW/MIA Initiatives, USO.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Homeless Veteran Activities: 7. Veterans served: 2,075. Veteran hours served: 9,714. Monies donated by Units: \$45,529.68. Creative Arts Festival donations: \$1,599.00.

These statistics are proof that, no matter what the adversity, the Auxiliary will prevail and persevere in its commitment and dedication to our mission of service for our veterans, and their families. I believe in the inner strength of our members to make it happen and get the job done.

On a personal note: I have six nephews that have, or are currently serving in the military and have been deployed to be in harm's way. I thank each of you for your time and contributions on behalf of all service men and women of our country. And I will work each and every day to service you as your Secretary-Treasurer.

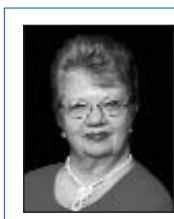
Please enjoy the pictures of various events: Lincoln's pilgrimage, Mid-winter meeting, packing items for the children's home, installation of new unit, CAF winner, Gr. Ledge memorial, ribbon cutting for women's room, Junior Convention, and Awareness Assembly.

See you at Convention!

*Sandra Snyder, Department Chaplain*

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### Have YOU Taken the Time?



June bring us to the close of another year for our Auxiliary.

Have you taken time this year to really spend some time in thought? This month we will finish with the following.

**Take time to be friendly:** It is the road to happiness. Being friendly could bring some one new in to your life, which could lead to a new chapter in your life, so smile and say hello.

**Take time to dream:** It is what the future is made of. Remember when you were in your teens and you would dream about what your life would be all about? Well make a change in your future and seek out one of those dreams and follow it. God will be with you and guide you.

**Take time to pray:** It is the greatest power on earth.

We can all take time to pray, each in their own faith.

Your time is yours and it is free, thanks to our Men and Women who have served our country. When you see one of our service members **Take time to thank them for taking their time** to serve our country, so we can remain a country

where freedom is enjoyed. Try to take time in you life to enjoy that freedom.

I wish you happy times, and God Bless you all.

## NEC REPORT FROM AWARENESS ASSEMBLY

**Judy Lynch, National Executive Committeewoman**

I attended The National Executive Committee meeting March 19th and 20th in Washington D C. at the Awareness Assembly.

The Meeting was opened by National President Carlene Ashworth, followed by the invocation by National Chaplain Vickie Thrower. Roll call was called and was answered by yours truly.

Mid-Year reports were given and were accepted by all. National President Carlene explained what our job was as a

National Executive Committeewoman and that we were voting for what is best for the National organization. It was discussed about how they need to raise the dues and why this is needed.

An audit report was given by Past National President Virginia Hobbs and then she turned it over to Mike Alerding, CPA and he gave the Audit report for the Fiscal Year 2010 and why we need to increase our dues. He did a wonderful job.

I will attend my next meeting at the National Convention in Minnesota in August.

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Auxiliary Membership/Girls State - 19 - [svandlen@michalaux.org](mailto:svandlen@michalaux.org)

Auxiliary Poppies/Scholarships/Bookkeeping - 22 - [lknott@michalaux.org](mailto:lknott@michalaux.org)

## 2011 DEC Reports Continued

numbers and recruit new members deserve a pat on the back. Great job.

Commander Jeremy Bell and Vice Commander Alex Germany and your officers and posts officers are doing a terrific job under very trying conditions. This economy and housing bust has hit your district especially hard and yet the meetings I've attended, I find you upbeat and tending to Legion business and helping the children and youth in your district. You guys are nothing short of amazing and on behalf of department, I thank you for a very good job.

As I write this article, I know the posts and districts are electing and installing new officers for the coming year and I'm sure they'll do their posts and districts proud and I wish them the best of luck as I know they've got a tough job ahead of them trying to retain the present membership and recruit new members. We'll all have to work hard this coming year to make their term in office a successful year. Somehow, we need to connect with younger veterans. Get them into the posts and encourage them to get active and take a leadership role in running their posts.

Lastly, to wrap this article up, I thank Department Commander Bill Hafeman for being a terrific leader with a lot of patience; it has been an honor for me to serve under him this past year and I look forward to any future projects we may share in the next few years as we serve this great organization. Thanks Commander Hafeman.

Very last, I thank all the district delegates in the 1st and 16th Districts for all the warm welcomes at all the district meetings. You've made this year a very rewarding one for me and I look forward to meeting with you for the next several years as I return to the ranks of the blue cap again. Thank you so much.



**3rd Zone**  
Terry  
Montgomery  
Commander

First, I thank everyone for their support this year which has been a wonderful learning experience and I will keep it with me always. A big thanks to Commander Hafeman for letting me fill in for him at times; I had a great time and many thanks to Pat Lafferty for all his help. He was always there when I needed help and that was most of the time; thanks Pat. To my district commanders also, thanks for your great help. You are the backbone of the zone commanders and you do a great job; keep it up. There is still a lot of time for each district to make 100% on mem-

bership, so let's get out there and get it done. Don't hold all membership until the last minute.

I have a question about the Michigan license plate; where is it?

Thanks to Post 125, you're OK in my book. Keep it up you did a great job this year. Dewey and Elmer I may have my check book anyway.



**4th Zone**  
Nancy Frye  
Commander

Because of my having spent eight years as a commander in various capacities in the American Legion, I've had the opportunity to gain valuable information and experience. Fortunately, wise leaders over the past ninety-two years have given serious consideration to what information should be recorded and passed on to Legionnaires. The Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies contain many of the answers Legion members like you and I need when we have to make a decision. With written information for guidance and/or a call to the staff at the American Legion Department of Michigan Headquarters, answers to our questions are readily available. I am writing this because too often, as 4th Zone Commander, I've found that some executive board members of a post rely on hearsay for a solution to a problem rather than seek the correct information. This can cause confusion among the members because an unfounded opinion often spreads misinformation. Our motto should be, "Let's get the facts straight."

Often when a Legion member is asked to become more involved in the post, district, department, or the national level their first comments may be: "I'm not qualified." or "I don't want to show my ignorance." Each one of us had a starting point - a beginning. Much of our accumulated knowledge has come from watching others, reading, trial and error and the encouragement of fellow Legionnaires. As we accept leadership challenges there is often a person or persons we can point to who brought out the best in us. The persons who helped me in my twenty-three years of being a Legionnaire are my husband Hugh Frye a member of Holton Post 397 and my fellow Algot Johnson Post 69 Legion member Verlo Church. As a long-time member of the Legion, Verlo helped me understand the importance of being a leader in our post. He invited me to accompany him to attend my first district meetings so I would learn why attending a district meeting is essential. He was also one of the first to support my being involved in leadership on the district and department levels. Each

step of the way both Verlo and my husband assisted me in doing my best for the good of the Legion. Through their actions, they reinforced in me the value of listening to the opinions of others and reminded me to treat everyone with respect whether I agree or disagree with them. When I think of examples of positive Legionnaires, I think of Hugh Frye and Verlo Church.

In closing, I thank Department Commander Bill Hafeman, Department Adjutant Patrick Lafferty and all members of the Department Executive Committee 2010-2011 for an outstanding year. With the exemplary assistance of the Auxiliary and SAL, our reputation as a leading veterans' organization remains strong.

The three district commanders in Zone 4 are: District 9 - Commander Butch Johnson (25 posts) with 4 posts @ 100% plus in membership. District 10 - Commander Fred Hollister (30 posts) with 7 posts @ 100% plus in membership. District 19 - Commander Bob Luxford (20 posts) with 7 posts @ 100% plus in membership. With their continued effort, Zone 4 will rise above today's 93.55% in membership.

I have enjoyed attending department, district and post meetings and wearing my Legion cap at various community events. I remain a proud Legionnaire.



**5th Zone**  
Ron Pearson  
Commander

The year is quickly coming to an end. It has been an honor to be the 5th zone commander this year. I have had some medical problems this year, but all of your cards and phone calls helped me through these times.

From June 2010 to the present, it has been real busy. I traveled to many posts during the year including district and state meetings and the national convention in Milwaukee in August.

I thank Brett Holt for holding two leadership schools in Gwinn and Newberry. I would like these schools to continue in the coming years as they hold great value for our post and district officers.

The 11th and 12th district officers have done a great job on membership this year. My thanks go out to 11th District Commander Jim Farero and Alternate District Commander Mike Yeadon and 12th District Commander Earl Numien and his alternate District Commander Jack Koivesto. I hope that by the time you read this article, the 5th Zone will be leading the state in membership.

It always seems we have to battle to get results from our posts on Legion programs; The Oratorical Contest, Student Trooper, Boys State, etc. A big ata boy to Tom

Ranta of my home Post 44 Marquette for recruiting 11 boys to attend Boys State this year.

The highlight of the winter was the Commander's Tour of the 5th Zone (U.P.) in January. We made stops at 14 posts and the Jacobetti Home for Veterans in Marquette and the Oscar Johnson Veterans Hospital in Iron Mountain. The tour ended in Marquette with the Mid-Winter Conference.

I thank all our "Blue Cap" Legionnaires, Post Officers, Auxiliary and our "Sons". As a Legion Family we all support a strong military, veterans and veterans programs, youth and community service.

I thank all Michigan Legionnaires who have volunteered to serve the American Legion from the local level through the national level. You are special in my mind. Thanks to each of you.



**2nd District**  
Ray Capouch  
Commander

It is the 1st of May and I have traveled 5,049.7 miles, visited 27(79.4%) of the 34 Posts in my district. There are (7) Posts at 100% or above and the 2nd Dist. stands at (96.22%) overall in membership.

I want to take this opportunity to personally thank the Legionnaires, Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of the Legion, and Legion Riders of the Second District for living up to it's name "Second to None". I could not be prouder than I am right now. You continue to amaze me at each new turn. When it looks like you have fired your last shot, you find another clip of ammunition and "Keep Moving Forward". Way to go 2nd District.

As I have promised my district, I still have (7) posts to visit before my term is complete on June 26th. My promise to visit all my posts will be kept. Warning--- 2nd District Judge Advocate Linda Lefcheck is "Mobile". Linda has given up her walker and now uses a cane to get around and she is driving. Good going Gunny.

It is the month of May, Memorial Day is almost upon us. Take a few minutes on this special day to reflect on the veterans you have known who are no longer with us. You will see that the list grows longer each year but, do not fear as your memories grow longer too. "Semper Fi Mac".

Department Convention is coming up June 23rd, 24th, 25th & 26th and it's important that each Post send their Delegates so the Caucuses are well represented so as to provide the most information possible for decision making. Hope to see you all at Convention.

In closing, I would like to give a special Thanks to my Officers of the Second District. Your assistance

this past year has been invaluable. You jumped in when the going got tough, which again, proves the saying "Second to None"



**4th District**  
Roxanne Resmer  
Commander

My year as a DEC member is coming to a close and what a year it's been. I've been to a lot of great posts and have met a lot of wonderful people.

March 19th I was invited to Stevensville Post 568 for their 62nd Annual Post Anniversary Party; it was a very touching ceremony. On the way home I stopped by Coloma Post 362 for their Annual Post Anniversary Party; the food was great.

April 2, I attended the Three Rivers Post 204 Past Commanders/Presidents Dinner; another lovely meal.

I apologize to the posts that have invited me to events that I couldn't make. I knew it would be a tough year with my daughter being a senior. I also apologize to the posts that I didn't get to visit as I had to visit a couple of posts over and over.

Our district is in 6th place. We have 13 posts that have met the 95% goal and 7 posts with over 100%; great work. See you at convention.



**6th District**  
William Hilgris  
Commander

It has been an interesting year. I thank everyone for all your help, advice and answers. Not always what I wanted to hear. I am looking forward to spending a lot of time with all of my grandchildren this summer.

We had a very nice Commander's Tour on March 26. We were glad to have Department Commander Hafeman and his wife Jan with us along with Auxiliary President Jan Kintz and her husband Steve, Department Second Vice President Mary Ann Younker, and SAL Commander Dave Mennel. Thank you to Jerry Kunzelman for putting together this nice tour. We had ten posts involved.

We have discussed some post revitalizations or closings and we are working on revitalizing one post in May. I have visited 32 Posts and have 4 left to visit before convention. I hope to see you at Convention in Grand Rapids. Thank you again for a very good year.



**8th District**  
Lavern Spolarich  
Commander

It has been a pleasure to work with  
*District Reports Continued on page 7*

2011 DEC

**Reports Continued**

Commander Hafeman this year and to be one of the many district commanders who helped him fine-tune his excellent 5-year plan.

The 8th District will be adding a new SAL Squadron after the convention. Although it has not come to be as of yet, I am confident this will eventually happen.

We were also able to reestablish Ionia Post 37, which at one time had lost their charter; good luck to them.

Congratulations to all the posts that have achieved 100% this year.

**10th District**

Frederick  
Hollister  
Commander

The 2010-2011 year has been a busy and exciting year. Our membership drive hasn't been as effective as I hoped it to be; of the 30 posts in our district, only 7 reached 100%.

Farwell Post 588 and Roscommon Post 96 reached their 95% goal by April 11, 2011, receiving a check from department. Morley Post 554 hosted an awards dinner for supporting the ROTC Program at Ferris State College with Raymond Moore from Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, 4th Zone Commander Nancy Frye, 10th District Chaplain Ken Burtch, and 10th District Commander Fred Hollister doing the awards, with special thanks to the members and Commander Ron Morse at Post 554.

Farwell Post 558 hosted a dinner for the Honor Guard of Clare County for their certification from the U.S. Department of Defense. A special thanks also goes to the members of Post 558 and Commander William Zastrow for their support.

Commander George Kezlowksi from Roscommon Post 96 has a special program going for the servicemen on active duty. If you have a member in your family on active duty please send their address to George at Post 96 and George will send a card from the post directly to the veteran.

**Post CPR Reports**

Deadline for sending CPR forms to Dept. is June 17, 2011. To fill out and submit a CPR form electronically go to:

[mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org)

(using the mylegion.org site will automatically send a copy of your CPR to Department).

**STATE COMMITTEES EVALUATE '11 PROGRAMS****Americanism & Community Service**

Larry Money  
State Chairman

Americanism as defined in the Webster Dictionary is: a custom, trait, or thing peculiar to the United States of America or its citizens.

Serving as Chairman and having the opportunity to conduct schools of instruction and various other programs I feel that our Americanism Committee has done a superb job once again this year; we have reached out to the communities and schools within the State and have taken our information to them. There have been many veteran related programs and seminars conducted throughout the State in which you the Michigan Legionnaires have participated in. I have participated in many of these personally and have found the response overwhelming, not only to the Vets themselves, but also to the families of the veterans. (Commander Hafeman, at this time I must apologize for not being in attendance at your Testimonial, but I had previously committed to a program in Niles)

Our Scouting Program this year has also shown to be a huge success. Chairperson Arnold has been very busy getting the information out to our various communities across the State, and looking back we have recognized many Scouts and Posts for their fine performances. We once again this year have an outstanding young man for our Eagle Scout of Year award. Thanks B.J. for all the effort you put into this program to make it so successful.

Also this year we added another program to our Community Service awards. We now will be recognizing a Fireman from across the State who has displayed professionalism and dedication to not only the fire service but also to their community. The Fireman of the Year award is one that has been long overdue.

Law and Order Chairman William Miller have also been very busy this past year. As we are all well aware of PDC Miller introduced a second Student Trooper School to our program in 2010, this allowed those students who are not able to attend the June session to participate in an August session. Both sessions were very well attended, and the classes were filled, but through further investigation Bill found that the August session had conflict in other areas. Not to be left out in the cold Bill talked to the instructors and the committees at MSP

in Lansing and came up with yet another solution. Hold the second school in July, and this will alleviate the problem. So this year we will once again be conducting two schools, the first to start on June 26, 2011 and the second school will begin on July 24. Scholarship monies amounting to \$5000.00 total will be awarded between the two programs. Thank you Bill for all the hard work you have put forth to this program.

As I stated before our committee has worked very hard this year getting the message out, but without all the support that we receive from the local Post this would all be in vain. Americanism falls under many headings, those things that we do in our community from marching in the local veterans day parade to putting a handicap ramp on a vets house are all connected in one form or another to Americanism, as stated in our preamble "let us all dedicate ourselves to this vital endeavor"

Before ending, I also need to recognize those Committee members who have worked so hard this past year on all of our Programs, Stan Kennedy, Lawrence Sagataw, Barney Schoenfeld, Frank Galarno and Wayne Roy. Thank you for all your assistance

Commander Hafeman it has truly been a pleasure working for you in this capacity, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Americanism Chairman.

Also remember CPR'S are due into department by June.

**American Legion Baseball**

Donald Hudon  
State Chairman

Baseball is Back! Another exciting season is upon us. Teams are reminded to get their insurance and rosters into their respective district chairmen and then onto the zone chairmen to have then into department headquarters by Monday, June 27, 2:00 p.m. EDT. There will be no excuses for delays like we encountered last year.

Last season the baseball program closed out the season with 50 teams, an increase of 10 teams. This year with the tier system in place and operating we hope every post with a High School Baseball Program in their area will contact the schools and promote the American Legion Baseball Program.

All teams much declare which "Class" they want to play under by roster deadline. Class A is for

teams who want to play just in the state and go no further. Class AA is for teams that wish to play and advance through the state, regional, and World Series.

All teams must go through the internet for filing at [www.legion.org/baseball](http://www.legion.org/baseball). All State and National Rules must be followed. Please read all the rules. No deviations! Chain of Command must be followed: Team/Post/District/Zone, State Committee.

Tournament Dates: District July 15-17, Zone July 22-24, State - Class A and Class AA July 27-31. Class A will be hosted by Hudson at Hillsdale College. Class AA will be hosted by Midland at Northwood University (Grace Field).

This year, 2011, and the next year, 2012 Midland will be hosting the Great Lakes Regional Tournament. This year the dates for Regional are August 4-9 at Northwood University (Grace Field).

Think Baseball! Get out and support your local team. Buy a hotdog and soda; be a volunteer to work the concession stand; sell admission; 50/50 Raffle. A great slogan is: "I Support American Legion Baseball. A Diamond is a Boy's Best Friend".

The dedication of all our managers, coaches, umpires, players, parents, and volunteers should be commended for all their hard work so that we can such a fine program in the state. The commitment that everyone makes causes our job as district chairmen; U.P. committee; zone chairmen, and state committee to be much easier.

Have fun at the ballpark.

**American Legion Boys State**

Nelson "O'Bryan"  
State Chairman

Last year gave us the first increase in our numbers in over twenty years so hopefully things are looking up for this year and beyond. The numbers have slowly gone down over a long period of time, so they're not going to bounce back overnight.

We will be moving back to MSU in 2012, which I think simply because of the location, will help us.

We have made two visits to Buckeye Boys State and picked up a few ideas that could possibly help us.

We have applied for a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, which if it is accepted, will be an annual happening. We are working on trying to incorporate Boys

State as a 501c3 corp. in order to make it easier to get grants.

**Children & Youth**

Ron Geiger  
State Chairman

I thank Commander Hafeman for giving me the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Children & Youth Committee.

After receiving chairmanship of the committee, via email, I expressed our goals to the committee members to promote Children & Youth programs in their respective zones.

I had the opportunity to attend the annual Children & Youth Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 17 - 19, 2010. National Chairman Dennis Boland, national staff and instructors, did a great job of presenting the Children & Youth programs, and advising us on how to promote them and be successful.

The highlight of the conference, I feel, was at the opening session on Friday evening. There were children who were given help in the following programs: Special Olympics, Childrens Miracle Network, American Legion Childrens Home, Childrens Organ Transplant Association and Operation Military Kids. Each of these programs had a child who told their story of how the American Legion Family, in their support of these programs, had helped them change or even save their lives. They were ever so thankful. I will never forget listening to each of them and knowing first-hand what the American Legion Family does for our children.

Fall Conference was held in Troy, Michigan. Children & Youth Committee meeting was held on September 24, 2010. Consolidated Post Reports were discussed on how to get more participation, and that the committee keep reminding posts at their district meetings the importance of these reports. I gave the committee an overview of the annual Children & Youth Conference that I had attended the previous week. On Saturday, September 25, 2010, Jason Kees, Assistant Director of the National Commission on Children & Youth, put on a School of Instruction. He was very informative and answered a lot of questions.

The Children & Youth Committee did not get called to meet at the Winter Meeting in Flint, Michigan. As Chairman, I

# STATE COMMITTEES EVALUATE '11 PROGRAMS CONT.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

did attend and was present to hear about the five year plan that Commander Hafeman had put together.

In April of 2011, I sent in the annual budget for the Children & Youth Committee for the years 2011-2012.

The Children & Youth Committee is meeting on June 23, 2011 at department convention to review this year's Consolidated Post Reports. I would like to thank my Committee Members for their service this past year. Rod Gilmer, Don Meskill, John Knox, Wayne Cuyler and also to remember Bob Janoska who passed away in January of 2011.

In closing, a thank you to Deanna Clark for everything she does for Children & Youth. God Bless our Troops and God Bless America.

### **Economic**

Gerald Merrell  
State Chairman

I thank Commander William Hafeman, Adjutant Pat Lafferty, Deanna Clark, Kim Sielderberg, and Denise Koets for their assistance and guidance for making 2011 a successful year. I also thank my fellow Economic Committee members for their input and support: James Wash, Donald Connor, and Lyle Shanks.

2011 has been an interesting year in economics. The American Legion wrote an article on the pit-falls our returning home town heroes face when they apply for federal jobs. One would think the transition from military service to federal service would be seamless. However, the federal application process on the USAJOBS web page is cumbersome at best. Improvements are on the way. There is a "common sense" application process called the Veterans' Recruitment Authority, or VRA. The Social Security Administration is using this to fill openings. All a veteran has to do is submit their resume, Copy of DD214 and VA disability letter. For more information and to apply simply E mail [ch.mi.area.03.resumes@ssa.gov](mailto:ch.mi.area.03.resumes@ssa.gov) or you can get more information from your Local Veteran Employment representatives which can be found at [www.michigan.gov/vetreprs](http://www.michigan.gov/vetreprs).

Thanks to the American Legion and our other sponsors we had a very successful job fair. The Great Lakes Bay Opportunity Expo was held Friday April 1st at Delta

College Tuesday September 1st. We had over 86 employers and our Veterans corner was a success. Our Home Town Heroes both past and present could find a new job and get information about their veteran's benefits, and learn about the new and upcoming Green Jobs such as Chemical Process Operator, Jobs with DOW solar manufacturing and others. The Department of Michigan Economic Committee continues to be a force in supporting and preserving veteran economic programs for members of the armed forces and those who served in years past. Veterans should enjoy the very freedoms they safeguard. "Honorable military service should create opportunity, not obstacles. "The best friend of any veteran and of our American Legion Economic programs is the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth-Bureau of Workforce Programs, Veterans Employment and Training programs designed to help veterans—those who face employability barriers and those who are job ready. VETS gives priority service to all veterans, with the highest priority afforded to disabled veterans. VETS programs include the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Workers (DVOWS) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERS). If you're looking for a better job in Michigan, locate your nearest Veterans Employment Specialist by calling 1-800-285-WORKS or you can go to [www.michigan.gov/veteranjobs](http://www.michigan.gov/veteranjobs)

The Economic Committee fights for these benefits and more. "Are you willing to reach out your hand to a fellow veteran and invite them to your post home?" Please continue to support your local veterans by remembering to invite them before the post meeting to talk about jobs, education, homes and how to find them. Make your post home their post home. All they ask for is a handshake a smile. "Welcome Home

In closing I congratulate this year's Economic Award winners: DVOP of the Year, David Archer from the Clinton Township Office; LVER of the Year, Alan Nash from the Gaylord Office; Local Office, Macomb St. Claire Michigan Works! Clinton Township Office.

Employer of the Year awards: Small- Williams Tool & Manufacturing Inc. Dorr MI;

Medium- JMA Services Clinton Township, MI; Large: Cintas Corporation Westland MI; Enhance the Lives of the

Disabled Persons Award- Sanford American Legion 443 Sanford, MI; Homeless Veteran Outreach Award: Alternative Veterans' Solutions Flint, MI.

Our Economic award winners are taking care of our veterans, and in some cases they are veterans taking care of their fellow veteran. If you know of a business or individual who goes the extra mile for our "Home Town Heroes" please contact me so we can recognize them next year. 2011 has been both a challenging and rewarding year, but there is no place I'd rather be then helping our "Home Town Heroes" God Bless.

### **Education and Scholarship**

Thomas Brown  
State Chairman

I am taking this opportunity to thank Commander Bill Hafeman for giving me the chance to serve the department as the chairman of the Education and Scholarship Committee.

The American Legion, Department of Michigan, awarded \$10,600 in scholarship monies to 17 individuals this year. It was a good year; however, it was not a great year. It could have been a lot better!

The department committee members worked very hard as I'm sure did the district and post chairmen. Part of the problem is the lack of applicants for the available scholarships. This is compounded by the unwillingness of far too many schools to disseminate the information that is sent to them. Those of you who are lucky enough to be allowed in the schools to promote our programs should be thankful. For those of us who are not so lucky, it is quite frustrating. I am also the chairman for my district and it is really disturbing to see only one application for a Wilson or Brewer Scholarship from one of the four schools in my immediate area. I know that other district chairmen are still trying to get the schools to allow us to visit at class assemblies, as I am. Keep trying guys and gals; we'll eventually convince them that we're not the bad guys.

It would be wonderful if we could give bigger and more scholarships, but we are limited to the interest on the Wilson and Brewer monies plus the five cents per paid member. We were able to give thirteen \$500 scholarships to some very bright and very deserving young men and women. These were selected from the 96 applications (6 per district) that were received at department. This made for a very long and reward-

ing day for the committee members and alternates who participated; many thanks to all of you.

We only had four contestants for our Department Oratorical Contest this year, but it was a very competitive group of kids. At the end of the day we had given out \$4,100 in scholarships. I thank the following people for giving up their time to help with the Oratorical Contest: John Bradford, James Atkinson, Joe Lafnear, George Maciejewski, Mike Buda and Ray Moore. And, a very special thanks to Deanna Clark. Without all who helped at post, district and zone levels, there would be no contest so I thank you for all that you do.

### **Finance/ Personnel**

Roger Webster  
State Chairman

Thank you Commander Bill for this appointment.

I knew we were going to have a busy year, and boy was I right. This work would not have been completed without the work and dedication of your entire committee and their forward thinking. Thank you lady, and gentlemen.

This year began with receiving and accepting the resignation of our accountant Rhonda Howell. This action presented the perfect opportunity to make some recommended changes from our auditors regarding some of our office procedures. This resulted in hiring a temporary bookkeeper for a six (6) month period while searching for a permanent Assistant to Finance. Denise Koets was our selection for this position. Welcome, Denise!

At this time, we have received a retirement date from Warren Stensrud, our faithful and dedicated public relations plus employee. What a lucky guy!

Taking into consideration the many advances in technology, the requirements for this position had to be updated. We have hired a young man, Mark Sutton, who comes to us well versed in communications at many levels. Welcome, Mark!

One of the important jobs the committee accomplished was the significant change of outsourcing our check writing. This change has been put in place.

Our employee handbook, job descriptions, and personnel files had not been formally updated for twenty seven (27) years. A Human Resource firm was hired to bring these rules and regulations into compliance with our Federal laws.

At the present time, we are

working on the employee health insurance program. This is an extremely tough job. We are trying to keep the same benefits, but at reduced cost. Your committee is working hard to get this done by the end of the year.

Well, we all know there is no "free lunch" in today's world! In most cases, we have saved enough to cover the cost of these changes. By this time next year you will be able to see that the changes that have been brought forth will definitely result in savings to "The American Legion, Department of Michigan".

### **Internal Affairs**

Stephen J. German  
State Chairman

The Department Internal Affairs Committee had very busy and productive sessions this past year. The main purpose of the Internal Affairs Committee is to formulate and recommend policies, procedures and changes regarding the organizational structure of the department and other such matters that do not come within the scope of other department committees.

We have proposed one amendment and we are asking for your approval of this amendment: Amendment 11-C-1. The proposed amendment addresses cut-off dates and allows the department staff to send out the delegate information and credentials earlier in the year. The amendment also changes the delegates strength cutoff date to the prior year's membership number thus giving the post a full year of advanced notice of their delegate strength.

The second proposed amendment 11-C-2 submitted by the 6th District would create a department standing committee for the Legion Riders. We recommend the rejection of this amendment.

In closing and speaking on behalf of the committee (Pat, Bob, Don, Lynn, and myself), we thank Kim Siedelberg of the department staff for her administrative support to our committee. And "Thanks" to Commander Hafeman for appointing us to this great committee.

### **Legislative**

Douglas Williams  
State Chairman

The most recent economic indicators show we are beginning to experience a turnaround in our state. While it is too soon to predict good times are coming, it is



July 16

## Open House Notice

By William Miller, Committee Member

The 2011 Open House for the Michigan American Legion Wilwin Lodge will be held on July 16. (changed from July 9th.) This is an all day Saturday event. Food and beverages will be provided at no cost to visitors. This is your second chance to see this beautiful property and buildings that will provide recuperation and family reunions for veterans returning from active duty. As we improve and increase facilities, we will also have events, meetings, and a way for Legion Family members to spend some time there. We want to reach out to Boy and Girl Scouts to plan on using campgrounds that we will be developing this year.

Last year we had many people who are not members of the Legion Family and we hope more of them will attend this year. Please bring relatives and neighbors up with you. Our web site, [www.michiganlegion.org](http://www.michiganlegion.org), has directions and a list of motels and facilities for those who want to spend the night up there. Please look over our "want list" to see if there are things you can donate when you come up.

## BOWLING UPDATE

By Scotty Graham, State Director

First, we thank all the staff at Imperial Lanes for the assistance and patience for putting up with the difficulties of running our tournament. Hats off to Mary, Naomi, Jeff and the ever elusive Joe. Furthermore, Mt. Clemens Post 4; what can we say, but well done. Art Miller was a very good honorary president, keeping things running smoothly and I'm sure he's ready to do it again. Commander Dave Martinez and his staff kept everyone enjoying those raffles, while Fran took care of the K-P for all three weekends. Our official scorekeepers were absolutely fabulous; way to go Leslie.

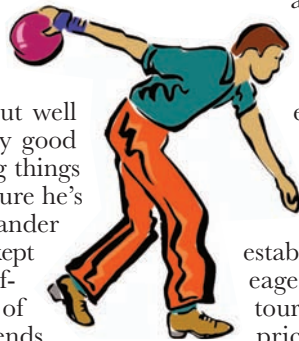
The champions of the 75th annual bowling tournament 2011 are: Team Event; from Newberry Post 74, Team 74-1, Bob Bowler, Chris Smithson, Eric Cornell, Jason Cameron & Chad Bodi. Score 3458 (Hcp. 309). Doubles Event; also from Newberry Post 74; Chad Bodi & Chris Ison. Score 1475 (Hcp.84). Singles Event; from Flushing Post 64; Jim Ducharme. Score 761 (Hcp. 00). Honorable mentions go out to Chris McLarty of Pontiac Post 377 & Jim Behringer of Livonia Post 32 for 300 games! Also from Post 32, Jim Woelkers Jr. for a 297. Great bowling everyone. The checks were sent out in May. You will need to contact your team captain or post depending on the address that was put on the entry form to see if you made the prize list. Checks must be cashed within 90 days. Checks not cashed will be returned to the general fund and not reissued.

This year we have seen a loss of 24 teams from the 74th tournament. Only 90 teams registered this year. I stated 3 years ago, if we drop below 100 teams it becomes a burden on the hosting post to generate

funds for their programs. We contemplated on not having the tournament next year. However, the contracts were already in place for the 76th annual tournament and the figures were not available until the last minute. After discussing the situation with next year's host post and bowling establishment, we came up with the following solution. The host post and the bowling establishment will hold the tournament for two years. The bowling establishment agreed to hold the lineage at the current rate of the 75th tournament, so we will not have a price increase. However, if next year's tournament does not go over the 100 team participation, they will have the right to withdraw from 2013. Let's cross the ole fingers and toes and hope we can recoup.

The bowling tournament for 2012 will be held at Colonial Lanes located at 5430 Pierson Rd. in Flushing during the weekends of April 14, 21, and 28, 2012. Squad times for the Doubles and Singles Event on Saturday will be 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. Team Event shall remain the same for Sunday. Team Event will start at 12 noon. Flint Post, Auxiliary & Squadron 64 will be your host. Rick Johnson will be the honorary president and the organizer of the functions (Subject to change). Flint Post 64 is located in Flushing at G-4314 W. Carpenter Rd.

This is important to all participants: you do not have to bowl in all three events, you may bowl in any combination of events, be it just one or all three. Furthermore, you may bowl in doubles and team events as many times as you like provided you have a different Doubles partner or Team! It is also your responsibility to verify your averages with your team captain.



## STUDENT TROOPER "11"

# ARE WE THERE YET? - YES -AND NO

By William Miller, State Law & Order Committee Chairman

May 4th was the last date for accepting the applications for the June Student Trooper School. We settled on May 2nd for the June session and I am proud of the posts and Legionnaires who did their part to provide this great opportunity for our young people. And, after the students completed the week at the Michigan State Police Academy they will be thankful you gave them the chance to be there.

Now, here is the "no". There is a very limited time to find students to attend our July session. We are well short of the numbers we need by the June 6 (tentative) deadline for the next school. With the high schools almost ready to close the doors for the summer, we all need to get to the schools right away or the students will be hard to find. Even though there may not be many who have decided to go to the academy, there are likely to be some who have thought seriously about it, but

never were contacted. Find them soon and help them with the applications and with finding the funds. You too can join the Legionnaires who have felt the pride of having helped our youth.

If you are still not sure what the academy is all about, pay a visit there during one of these sessions. The State Police encourage any of us to visit there. You can sit in on one of the many classrooms or watch the field type training for traffic stops. Every day there is something interesting going on there. The students would appreciate seeing Legionnaires there wearing their covers. If you had a hand in recruiting the student, or are a family member, then you should be there on Friday of that week and watch the impressive graduation ceremony and see how much that student has changed in that one week.

Remember, the best source of Student Trooper information and applications is our web site at [www.michiganlegion.org/pages/trooper](http://www.michiganlegion.org/pages/trooper).

### Veterans Night at Comerica Park

**Oakland Athletics vs. Detroit Tigers**  
 Tuesday, July 19, 2011 at 7:05 pm

All Veterans, their families and friends receive  
 Lower Baseline Box Seats.\* Groups of 15 or more receive a food coupon  
 for a free small drink and hot dog

Tickets are limited, get your orders in early to not miss out!  
 \* Seat location is best available. Tickets are subject to availability

#### GROUP OUTING

#### TICKET ORDER FORM

DO YOU REQUIRE HANDICAPPED SEATING?  Y  N    NUMBER OF TICKETS: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ 25.00    PER TICKET = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (SUB TOTAL)  
 NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED SEATS? \_\_\_\_\_ + (SHIPPING AND HANDLING) \$6.00  
 = \_\_\_\_\_ (GRAND TOTAL)

#### CONTACT AND BILLING INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD TYPE:  VISA  MC  AMEX  
 NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ SECURITY CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Ticket locations are subject to availability. This ticket order form must be used to receive the special discount for the game. This offer is not available at the Comerica Park Box Office or through any Tickets.com outlets. Orders must be received by: **June 20, 2011**  
 A sales representative will contact you when your order is received.

FAX THIS FORM TO (313) 471-2599 OR E-MAIL THIS PDF TO: [Carolyn.Shanks@Detroittigers.com](mailto:Carolyn.Shanks@Detroittigers.com)  
 OR MAIL TO: DETROIT TIGERS, 2100 WOODWARD AVE., DETROIT, MI 48201, ATTN: Carolyn Shanks

# STATE COMMITTEES EVALUATE '11 PROGRAMS CONT.

## LEGISLATIVE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

never the less a positive note. As I stated in my last report to you, the atmosphere in our state government offices is positive and they seem to be happy to work with us on our legislative issues.

The Governor's Advisory Board representing the 11 chartered veterans organizations has concluded its work of preparing a proposal for a stand-alone Department of Veterans Affairs and this proposal was placed on Governor Snyder's desk. (A copy of this proposal will be available at the June Convention for your review) We hope to hear back from him sometime before the end of this month or the first of June. This advisory board will continue to meet with the Director of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Jason Allen, monthly into the future and the next scheduled meeting is May 17, 2011 in the boardroom at the American Legion Headquarters. This signals a new approach and we are grateful we now have a seat at that table. I encourage our organization and veterans across the state to work with Mr. Allen as his goals will set new and needed standards for the state's veterans community.

There is still a definitive need for the elimination of term limits and we should encourage our members to help with this. It is very difficult to effectively interact with and educate the incoming freshmen & women at both the House and Senate every two or four years. Continuity and knowledge of veterans' issues is helpful to us, and with term limits that disappears. We need to encourage exercising term limits at the polls; if you don't like them, vote them out. As stated in my February report, you need to make contact with your state representative and senator and your federal government representative and senator and inform them of our state's needs, especially those needs of our veterans. I will place a copy of the goals and priorities set by the national Legion office and those set by the Commanders Group here in Michigan on the table at the convention; please pick them up and help us with these issues.

At the Winter Meeting the Legislative Committee was asked to initiate a more productive legislative approach. Now that the issue of establishing the Office of Veterans Affairs has concluded with our proposal being submitted to the governor, I hope to be able to work with Past State

Commander Sammons and hopefully initiate a new program that will bring more power to our legislative efforts.

There are changes that will take place with the initiation of the state's budget and we will be forced to accept these. In all of the appropriations committee hearings I have attended this year the main theme has been where can we save the taxpayer's dollar? The governor's budget proposals have and will create problems for every tax supported service in our state, but as most of you are aware, cuts must be made and we will not be exempt.

Our meetings with our Michigan delegation in Washington DC in March gave us the opportunity to inform them of our needs and hopefully they can and will help.

This year, the Legislative Reception that we normally host in February was instead hosted and paid for by member organizations from the Commanders Group and we will do the same thing next year. Spreading the cost around is the right thing to do as we all benefit from the program. I thank those organizations that joined with us in this and would encourage those who did not to join with us this year. Working hand in hand we have 274,000 veteran voices to be heard on veteran issues.

### Membership

Louis Oberle  
State Membership Director

Time is slipping by fast as we prepare to attend our annual summer convention. Coming even faster is our last goal for membership. By the time you read this final report from our membership team the results will have been finalized and our work completed for another year.

Our membership teams are to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication. All of our goals have been met with the exceptions of 95% (April 11th) and our 100% (as of May 9th). I write this on May 2nd, so as a department we should finish above 95% for the year. Currently, as I write this article our department membership is at 93.8% as of the April 29th report. Please go to the department website <michiganlegion.org> for a breakdown by districts and zones.

I have made a few calculations and of course numbers can change, so please don't hold me accountable for these results. An estimated 102 posts have achieved 100% membership retention (out of 439 total posts including Post

225). This equates to 23% for our department. For those successful posts, congratulations and thank you for your hard work. A very unsettling number of 67 posts finished the year between 95% -100. Many of these only needed 1 or maybe 2 or 3 to obtain 100%. Had these posts obtained their goals - oh well, we all know the story "coulda-woulda-shoulda". The monetary rebate program seemed popular with 31 posts earning \$ 1.00 / member, 24 posts earning \$ .75 / member and 47 posts earning \$.50/member.

Overall, I feel we started the year very optimistic and hopeful that we would make this the year to "toot our horn". We will do that anyway, because what we set out to do was accomplished and our Post Development, Public Relations and Membership Team worked very well together and everything that we set out to do was successful. I am confident we will look back and say "job well done".

I want to recognize and thank Barb Money for her membership work that was above and beyond, (she was always in the clouds somewhere), all our zone, district, and district vice commanders for contributing many hours promoting our program. Cliff Rose, you pulled it off (but, watch out for Ron Pearson who is sneaking up behind you). It looks like Larry Gibbons and Pete Satterwaite in District 5 have it in the bag. (as of today you are very close to making 100%, go for it). Our department membership team of Mike Bruntjens, in da U.P. eh? Jim Wallace in da lower and Barry Wood working with DMS membership have done a terrific job. Thank you for all of your help. Post Development Chairman Al Ford and Public Relations Chairman Dick Chatman, thank you for being such good mentors and for your devotion to our Legion Family. Roxanne, Thank you for your sharing your knowledge of computers and your ever present smile. Warren, I will always be thankful for your guidance and willingness to extend deadlines...Best Wishes in your future endeavors and new chapters in your life. (write that book)

In summary, I can report that American Legion membership in Michigan is "maintaining, meaningful, healthy, and rewarding". Remember to thank our "blue cap Legionnaires", Auxiliary Ladies, SAL Squads, and Legion Riders for promoting our Membership Program. Best wishes for a successful summer con-

vention.

### Michigan Leadership College Brett Holt State Chairman

It was a great privilege to be asked by Commander Hafeman to act as chairman of this year's Michigan Leadership College. It is my profound hope that I, my committee and instructors, were able to leave each of the members who attended this year's college with some knowledge that they can use to the benefit of our great organization.

This year's class was a road show of sorts. We took the class to the zones hoping to increase participation. Classes were held at Post 298 Battle Creek, Post 76 Ludington, Post 294 Swartz Creek, Post 349 Little Lake, Post 74 Newberry, The Detroit VA Hospital, and Post 416 St. Helen. Two hundred twenty five leaders and future leaders took the course of instruction. We also opened the course up to all members of the Legion Family. I am happy to say that members of the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders attended side by side with Legionnaires.

Congratulations are due to the First Zone for having top attendance. The late John F. Kennedy was once quoted as saying "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." This is the very essence of why we have a Michigan Leadership College. Please bear with me as I go through the myriad of people to be thanked. I thank all two hundred twenty five members who attended the classes. Many of you traveled several miles to be with us and that is not taken lightly. Rosabeth Moss Kantor once said "Leaders are more powerful role models when they learn than when they teach." Each of you exemplified those words with your attendance.

A big thank you goes to all the posts listed above that willingly invited the classes to be held at their post, put on the breakfast and lunches and generally treated the staff and attendees with the kindness of true Legion Family members.

I thank the instructors who traveled many miles and sacrificed their time for the benefit of this class. Steve German, a valuable asset, gave me sage advice on the class and followed up by instructing at three of the seven classes. Bud Hansbarger, who also was a member of the committee, traveled to all seven class loca-

tions throughout the state to teach. Bud was my right hand man in this endeavor and I could not have completed this course without his help. Lee Bolton assisted in three classes. Lee and his newspaper were a valuable addition. Those of you who attended the class will remember Lee's newspaper. Marilyn Britten and Richard Dubay each assisted with one class. A quote for my instructors, "We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own." Wendell L. Willkie.

To the district commanders, zone commanders, and SAL officers who wrote such glowing reviews of our course in previous editions of this publication and the SAL Newsletter, thank you. I hope all the attendees felt as inspired as you did.

To all the many people who have leadership positions, thank you for realizing that it never hurts to refresh what you think you know and that there is always a chance to learn something new. We had several zone commanders, many district commanders, everyone from the membership team; the VA&R chairman, public relations chairman, and even our national vice commander attend at least one session. If I missed any others, please forgive me. I give you a quote from Harold S. Geneen that sums up your attendance. "Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions."

To Roxanne, my contact at department headquarters, I have no idea how you get everything done. Roxanne took care of all the registrations, made up all the certificates of graduation, sent out letters to posts and districts, ran registration information in various publications and probably a hundred other things I have forgotten she did for the class. Thank you Roxanne, we couldn't have done it without you.

Finally, to my wife Bonnie, who traveled to all the classes with me, helped with checking in the attendees at each class and put up with not having many weekends free from September to January, thank you for your support.

Many of you who attended the class have stopped me at various functions to tell me you have had a tough time implementing the things you learned. Remember, everything taught in class came from one of six sources: The Officers Guide, The Post Operations Manual, The

# STATE COMMITTEES EVALUATE '11 PROGRAMS CONT.

## LEADERSHIP COLLEGE CONT. FROM PAGE 10

Post Adjutants Manual, The Department Protocol Guide, The Parliamentary Procedure hand-out from National Emblem Sales, and Roberts Rules of Order Revised, 10th Edition. Your hand-outs and these guides, manuals and books will serve you well.

I leave you with two thoughts: "Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure." - Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, and ... "You do not lead by hitting people over the head — that's assault, not leadership." — General Dwight D. Eisenhower

### **Permanent Time & Place**

John Skinner  
State Chairman

First, as you attend our 2011 State Convention in Grand Rapids this month please take time between business meetings to enjoy the many fun events in this city as covered in this paper and at [www.michiganlegion.org](http://www.michiganlegion.org), the state headquarters website.

Now that this committee has gotten through reviewing and updating its rules of procedure, this past year has been more of a "business as usual" environment.

We always like to take the time to thoroughly evaluate the sites we have visited, review new bids, and ultimately make decisions that give our members and our headquarters the best meeting opportunity for the money.

Currently we have selected the Marriott Hotel in Troy for the 2011 Fall Conference from September 16-18 and the 2012 State Convention at the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo from June 27-July 1.

We anticipate selecting a site for the 2012 Winter Meeting at this convention. You can refer to the "events" link of the face page of [www.michiganlegion.org](http://www.michiganlegion.org) periodically to see future meeting details.

### **Post Development**

Al Ford  
State Chairman

I am pleased to report a successful and productive year for this committee. We started the year with a big effort in revitalizing most of the posts in Detroit. The National M&PA committee sent in a team to assist in the recruiting process. Many PDC's and other Legionnaires from all

over the State assisted in the 3 day long event. The next re-vivify event was Post 14 in Troy. To finish out this Legion year we still have revitalization events scheduled in May and June for Post 505 in Detroit, Post 296 in Williamston, and Post 282 in Ypsilanti.

In the New Post department, we finished the formation of Post 532 in Cutlerville and formed Post 80 in Trout Lake, Post 37 in Ionia and Post 277 in Marine City.

During the year we merged 5 posts into other posts and the sad news is we had to recommend the cancellation of 6 post charters.

I have reviewed the post locations in our state and in my opinion there are at least 16 communities that do not have posts that could support them and are in need of the American Legion programs.

Looking to next year, I currently have 4 posts requesting information on merging into other posts. I have 9 posts requesting information on revitalization or charter cancellation and I'm sure more will seek help as the year progresses. Hopefully we will be able to form at least 5 new posts.

I thank all the members of this committee who worked so hard to achieve our success, also all the other Legionnaires who gave us a hand when we were in their areas; we could not have done it without them. Also a special thank you to our department staff who have always been there when we needed them, especially Barb and Warren.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve.

### **Public Relations**

Richard Chatman  
State Chairman

Our goals this year for public relations were maintaining and enhancing The American Legion name brand, helping to mold a positive image for the Department of Michigan, target our key publics through effective communication and building relationships with them, and taking advantage of some of the many new avenues available to reach the public through electronic media.

By visiting the Department of Michigan's home page and clicking on PR, you will find many PR opportunities. You can join the BCWN (Blue Cap Wolverine Network) and be a part of a network of Legionnaires who have websites and newsletters. You can see the numerous PR awards available to Legionnaires who go

above and beyond in promoting PR at their posts and in their districts. If your post does something that brings good publicity for The American Legion and enhances our name brand, we will publish it in the Blue Caps At Work section. Events that promote the 4 pillars of the Legion will be posted for Legionnaires across the state. Legionnaires can join both NALPA and MALPA through the PR webpage.

This Legion year has flown by and I'm very much looking forward to the upcoming 2011-2012 PR year. We will continue to build upon what we started. As we become more tech savvy, the things we will be able to do to reach our key publics will be very much 21st century. We also will be asking our Legionnaires with computer skills to join our BCWN and help us spread the knowledge and wisdom to our members.

Keep in mind, there are a lot of folks out there, especially veterans, who have computers and when they are looking for something, they "Google It". I urge you to put your post in a position that enables them to find you when they "Google" The American Legion.

I'm sincerely in awe of what our Legionnaires do for veterans, our children & youth, our country and our national security. You are special Americans; the Department of Michigan is a special organization which makes public relations for The American Legion an easy sell.

It's great to be a Michigan Legionnaire.

### **Reconnect**

Gary Tanner  
State Chairman

The 2010-2011 year has been a very exciting and productive year! The Reconnect Committee has continued to support our National Guard families by attending as many of the National Guard's Yellow Ribbon workshops, Deployment briefings and Homecoming events as possible. Jim Maki and Willie Coomer have also taken on additional responsibilities as peer counselors in the Buddy -2-Buddy program that matches returning service members with fellow service members and veterans who have gone through similar situations and who know how to navigate the Reintegration process. The ELMObility Room has been a great success once again thanks to the Volunteers who help transport, set up and tear down the room. Gerry Dennis, Bob

Korenchuk, Brett Holt and Bruce Daniels have all given freely of their personal time to make this mission a reality for our Military Families. Many others have also volunteered for future missions and will have the opportunity to make a profound impact in the lives of military families throughout Michigan. Our committee is poised to begin sending wounded warriors and returning service members on Retreats to locations on Mackinac Island and the Wilwin property. Last year ACO Hardware partnered with the Reconnect Committee and the American Legion Department of Michigan to collect over \$20,000.00 dollars to fund the Wounded Warrior Retreat program and have offered to collect donations from their customers again this year from May 23rd to July 4th 2011 in hopes of increasing the available funding to this program. ACO is optimistic that we can top \$30,000.00 this year. ACO has requested our assistance with the collection process this year. They would like our Legion Family Members to:

- Volunteer at the stores to engage the customers and distribute donation slips.
- Place signs in their stores with the name and address of the local Legion posts
- Advertise the program in their respective Posts
- Tell all of our family and friends about the Wounded Warrior Program Collection
- Have Posts create thank you banners after the collection period to thank their customers.

Along with ACO, the Michigan Psychological Association Foundation has agreed to offer educational seminars and caregiver retreats as part of the Wounded Warrior Retreat program. This will be a huge asset and solve a missing piece to the project! This year's Junior Auxiliary President, Chelsea Kovac, has decided to make the ELMObility Room her personal project. This was a great honor and we look forward to a very creative and successful year working together to promote the welfare of our military families. Thank you so much Chelsea! We are so proud and grateful that you chose a cause near and dear to our hearts to support this year. Be sure to support the Juniors and lend them our full support!

I would like to Thank Commander Hafeman for the opportunity to serve the Department once again as Reconnect Chair and for giving me such an outstanding group of veterans to work with. I would

also like to thank our Department Liaison, Denise Koets who always finds a way to make our committee just a little bit better and Roxanne Osga for her great work with making our Reconnect Committee page on the Department Website a reality. Last but not least, I would like to thank each one of you for supporting our committee and its projects. It truly is the efforts of the entire Legion Family that makes everything possible!

For God and Country.

### **Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation**

Raymond Moore  
State Chairman

Let me begin by thanking Commander Hafeman for his confidence in making this appointment. I would also be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to the VA&R staff both in Detroit and the field for their continued dedication and work ethic in support of what I believe to be the singularly most important of the Four Pillars of the founding of our organization.

This has been a very trying year for our staff, with several retirements and additional staff reductions due to funding problems. We can only hope there is light at the end of the tunnel, wherever that may be.

I am continually amazed at the reports I receive from our director, Mr. Topps, as to the continuing increasing work load. In these economic times it only seems appropriate that our nation's heroes, our veterans, are looking more and more to the Veterans Administration for those benefits which they so richly deserve and which can make a difference in receiving health care, or an education, or buying groceries. That's what we do in Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation, and it works.

As always, however, we need your continued support in our efforts to restore the staffing and funding levels. Whether you are only a dues paying member or fully involved in your post, district or department activities, your voice counts. At this time it most especially counts with our Michigan legislature to ensure appropriate funding for VA&R. We need to restore our funding levels at the state level and we also need to lobby our Legion leaders to support this program internally.

## American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Our staff is dedicated to providing the very best veterans' advocacy to Michigan veterans and their families. They can assist with claims preparation, presentation, and appeal counsel in veterans' benefits, services, and activities.

### Detroit Office

Patrick V. McNamara Federal Building,  
Rm. 1210  
477 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48226  
Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Phone: 313-964-6640 or 6641 or 6642 Fax: 313-964-3697 Email: toppsjamesc@yahoo.com



**James C. Topps, VA&R State Director**  
Robert Rasche, Veterans Service Officer  
Tripp Cantwell, Veterans Service Officer  
Lannie Thomas, Veterans Service Officer  
Michael Assenmacher, Veterans Service Officer  
Suzette Price, Veterans Service Officer

Robert Rasche covers Genesee County Office of Veterans Affairs – Flint, MI  
810-257-3068/Mondays 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Mike Assenmacher covers the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center on Wednesdays 8:00 am - 4:00 pm 313-576-3506

### Field Veterans Service

**Tommy Simpkins**, Veterans Service Officer Cell Phone 269-330-6539 – simpkinst@michiganlegion.org

Muskegon Co OVA Office – 165 E. Apple Suite 201 – Every Monday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Grand Rapids CBOC – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Kalamazoo Co OVA Office – Kalamazoo – 2nd Wednesday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Kent Co OVA Office – Kalamazoo - 1st Wednesday - 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Holland AL Post – 3rd Wednesday Each Month – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Louis Teistler AL Post 47 Comstock Park – 3rd Wednesday - 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

South Haven AL Post – 3rd Friday – 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Grand Haven AL Post – 3rd Friday – 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Allegan Co OVA Office – 3255 122nd Ave Suite 102 – 4th Wednesdays 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Barry County OVA Office Hastings - 4th Friday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Van Buren Co OVA Office – Paw-Paw – 2nd Wednesday Each Month – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Morley AL Post – 2nd Friday Each Month – 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Croton AL Post 381 – 2nd Friday Each Month – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**Patrick J. Kline**, Veterans Service Officer Cell Phone 989-280-3009 – pjcline@michiganlegion.org

Saginaw VA Medical Center – Tuesdays – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm 1500 Weiss Street, Saginaw, MI – Room 115

Bay County Office of Veterans Affairs – 515 Center Ave – Room 212 1st Wednesday of Each Month – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Kalkaska Co OVA – 1st Monday of Each Month – 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Grand Traverse Co OVA – 1st Monday Each Month – 1:00 pm to 4:00 PM

Gaylord VA CBOC – 806 S. Otsego - 2nd Monday Each Month – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Alcona Co OVA Office – 1st Thursday Each Month – 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

Oscoda VA CBOC - 5671 Skeel Ave – Suite 4 – 2nd Thursday Each Month 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Alpena VA CBOC – 180 N. State Street – 1st Friday Each Month – 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

Presque Isle Co OVA – 1st Friday Each Month – 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Clare VA CBOC – 11775 N. Isabella Rd – 2nd & 4th Wednesday Each Month – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Emmet Co OVA Office – 200 Division St. – 2nd Friday Each Month 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Charlevoix OVA Office – 301 State St – 2nd Friday Each Month - 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Gladwin Co OVA Office – 555 W. Cedar – 4th Thursday Each Month - 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Roscommon Co OVA – 500 Lake Street - 4th Friday Each Month – 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Ogemaw Co OVA – 205 S. Eighth St – 4th Friday Each Month – 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Cheyboygan Co OVA – 3rd Friday Each Month – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Third Week of Each Month Pat Will is In the U.P

3rd Monday Each Month – Manistique Co OVA Office 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

3rd Monday Each Month – Rapid River AL Post 301 – am to 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

3rd Tuesday Each Month – Marquette AL Post 44 – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

3rd Wednesday Each Month – Munising AL Post 131 – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

3rd Wednesday Each Month – Newberry AL Post 71 – 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

3rd Thursday Each Month – Sault Ste Marie VA CBOC – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Phillip “Phil” McCaskey**, Cell Phone 269-330-6543 – p\_mccaskey@yahoo.com

Ann Arbor VA Medical Center – Room B-156 First Floor Every Monday and Thursday Each Week

8:00 am to 4:00 pm - 734-845-5924 PLEASE NOTE YOU MUST CALL THE AA VAMC OFFICE NUMBER CELL

PHONE WILL NOT WORK IN THIS LOCATION

Cass Co OVA Office – 1st Tuesday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Branch Co OVA Office 2nd Tuesday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Eaton Co OVA Office 3rd Tuesday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Hillsdale Co OVA Office 4th Tuesday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Lansing Headquarters Office – 212 N. Verlinden Ave Every Wednesday Each Week

8:00 am to 4:00 pm - 517-371-4720 extension 12 or Cell 269-330-6543

Battle Creek VA Medical Center – Every Friday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Building 2 – Cell Phone 269-330-6543

**Please Call to Assure Times and Locations**

**PLEASE NOTE SCHEDULE TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE**

### APPLICATION - 2011 - VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 9, 10, 11 2011

“SERVING AMERICA'S VETERANS' EVERY DAY”

DNR RALPH A. MACMULLEN CENTER - 104 CONSERVATION DRIVE, ROSCOMMON, MI 48653

#### PLEASE PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

Package “A” - 2 nights Lodging & 6 meals \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \$175.00

Package “B” - No Lodging - 6 Meals \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \$105.00

Package “C” - Saturday Classes & 3 Meals \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \$ 80.00

( ) Handicap Room ( ) 1st Time Student? ( ) District Service Officer?

( ) Quiet Room ( ) County Counselor ? ( ) Post Service Officer?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Post # \_\_\_\_\_ District# \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to share a room with: \_\_\_\_\_

Check your package of your choice, make corresponding payment before August 18, 2011 by check payable to:  
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

NOTE: **NO APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED WITHOUT PAYMENT** Send To: American Legion VA&R

Division - ATTN: Debbie D., 477 Michigan Ave. - Room 1210 Detroit, MI 48226.

## Letter “Good To Be Home Again”

A few years ago I made a decision that changed my entire life. I left my job as Assistant State Director of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation for the Department of Michigan, my family, as I felt emotionally I had lost all control and all contact and my home was just another material responsibility. I convinced myself it was the right thing to do at the time. I will spare you the details by saying that this decision was nearly fatal for me. It took a while, but I soon realized that I was slowly losing my identity. I can tell you the journey that I have been on for the past few years is one I do not wish anyone to undertake. Due to my own selfishness I made up my mind to change my life for what I felt was a better life.

It took a while for me to fully understand the consequences of a near fatal decision. To tell you the truth, I never really wanted to leave but I felt I had no other viable options. I felt as though life was throwing nothing but curve balls at me. I was bound and determined to hit one of them. That never happened. It wasn't until I received a phone call from a dear friend that I realized that not all was lost. I was offered the chance to return to my home, the only job that I know and to my family.

I can't begin to express the gratitude in my heart for the opportunity that has been given to me. I feel as though I let my extended family down when I left as well as my own family when I walked away. Returning to this great state of Michigan is the best thing that has ever happened to me. This is my extended family, all the veterans and their families that I come in contact with and have the privilege of assisting means so much more. I said earlier, it's the only thing I know, and being allowed to do it again is so exciting for me, I can't wait to get to the office to meet the challenges every morning. To everyone who had anything to do with my return,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Mr. Topps, Mr. Lafferty, and Mr. Moore, I can never thank you enough.

“It's Good to be Home Again”

Your friend  
Lannie R. Thomas, State Veterans Service Officer

## 4th District

By Sharon Futey, 2nd District President

Greetings from Second District! First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ladies in Second District for the confidence they had in me to serve as their President. I can't believe my year is coming to an end. I've had the privilege of attending Unit meetings at 16 of my 27 units so far, and let me tell you, these ladies are "hands on" doing amazing things for our Veterans and communities.

I was welcomed as I visited unit meetings. It was interesting to see how different units run their meetings. Some formal, some not, some with many members attending, some with few, but all were there for the same reasons. Ladies are busy sending boxes, running bingo's, dinners, concessions stands, Christmas Gift Shop, charity poker events, helping homeless vets, poppies and much, much more. Membership is a priority, getting new members, but more importantly retaining the members we have. Annual reports were written and turned in.

I have chosen America's VetDogs as my special project. Working from the principal that Veterans are our nation's greatest citizens, VetDogs provides assistance dogs to America's wounded warriors to help them return to an independent life. Physical and occupational therapy dogs are trained to work with amputees in military and VA hospitals; combat and stress control dogs are trained for active duty service members. I am very passionate about this project and on a personal note I am a dog lover and a Rescue Mom. The units have been very generous in their donations to my project and some units have held special fundraisers for my VetDogs. Thank you all. I have traveled many miles during my year as President, made friends along the way and learned a lot. But I'm always so very proud to be a part of this dedicated organization and to serve as Second District President.

## THANKS TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS

By Bonnie Holt, Saginaw VA Representative

My year as the Saginaw VA Representative went very well with our Two Hands. I would like to thank my 1st and 2nd Deputy's for the many hours they have driven and volunteered to be there each week to serve our veterans. Also, thanks to all of the other volunteers who come each week. One big thank you goes to SAL #416 who faithfully each month sends a check to help support our Saginaw vets.

The Saginaw VA had the privilege of working with fifteen Dollar Daze Stores in the 8th and 10th District this year for our Christmas Gift Shop. Together, the

stores contributed \$7,000 in donations to be used both for the Christmas Gift Shop and throughout the year. Our veterans had items like belts, underwear and toys to choose from for themselves and their families. Our veterans had a lot of fun. We served over 40 homeless and over 70 patients during our week at the Christmas Gift Shop. At the end we boxed everything up, and stored it away to use the items, as we need them. The toys we gave to a local children's shelter as a Christmas project.

Each week we still serve our veterans with many useful items. We love them so much because of what they have all done for all of us.

## MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Deborah Meskill, Past President Parley Chairman

This year there was an abundance of applications for the Medical Scholarship given by the Past President's Parley. Unfortunately we were only able to give eleven scholarships. It would have been great if it were possible to help everyone that applied.

Applications were for all forms of medical careers. It is amazing to see how dedicated these students are to advancing in a career that will be of immense help to all of us in the future.

I would like to thank each that applied and am sorry that we were unable to help more.

## GREAT YEAR FOR HELPING VETS

By Deanna Cortright, VA&R Chairman

What a year this has been for this committee!!! My thanks to all of you for the wonderful work you do on behalf of our Veterans and their families. You are all super and I don't know what we would do without you.

There were a few Districts that I did not receive reports. But what I had, it appears that, even though the economy is down, our veteran support remains very strong.

There were 1,497 veterans and their families served with Homeless Veterans Activities. This entailed 194 volunteers, 8,044 hours and a cost of \$29,156.77. Stand downs served 578 veterans with 74 volunteers, 1,670 hours and a cost of \$13,372.91.

Units participated in Welcome Home

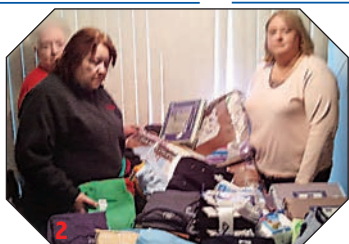
Celebrations, the Veterans Creative Arts Festival, Ride to Recovery and Spinning Recovery Labs/Outdoor cycling. There were dinners held, breakfasts served, blankets and lap robes made and donated, boxes shipped to military personnel overseas, as well as many other donations and hours given in the support of our veterans. There is an endless list of the time and support all of you have given to make the lives of those that have served for us better.

I would be totally remiss if I forgot to thank my Hospital Representatives, their Deputies, as well as all of the volunteers that spend so many hours at our VA Hospitals and Homes for Veterans. Without you, the lives of those that are confined there would be very mundane. You do so much for them and I know that they all appreciate it so much. For

anyone that has not been able to visit or volunteer, please do so. You won't be sorry.

For the last and probably greatest piece of this article, I am pleased to report that my goal of 25 new volunteers that was set at the beginning of the year has again been surpassed. I received reports reflecting 51 new volunteers this year! This is just on the VA Facility end. I haven't received all of the numbers on field service or home service yet.

My appreciation to all that have worked with me for the last three years and tolerated my lack of knowledge while helping me to understand all that needs to be done on the VA Hospital and Home for Veterans end of this committee. You are a wonderful group of people and I am so happy that I agreed to take this chairmanship 3 years ago.



1 - Department President Jan Kintz and Department Commander Bill Hafeman, commemorating Lincoln's pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois with a wreath. 2 - Members of Unit 4 are sorting new items for the Marland Children's Home, formerly the American Legion Children's Home. They are Suzanne Knapp, President; Kathleen Copeland, Children and Youth Chairman; and Sandy Knapp, Secretary. Donations for the home may be sent to: 1300 Summers Place, Ponca City, OK 74604 3 - Above is a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new women's room at the homeless shelter in Detroit. Pictured are Donna Fuelling, Central Division National Vice President; and Chelsea Kovacs, Honorary Department Junior President. The room was dedicated in the memory of Reva DeRousha, a member of Unit 377 that worked long and hard for our veterans. 4 - The black sparkle brigade: LeAnn Knott, Vickie VanWyk, Sandy Vandlen, Sharon Futey, Bonnie Olson, and Mary Anne Yuncker, at Mid-Winter Meeting just before the banquet for the National Commander. 5 - Cook Nelson Unit #20 of Pontiac is the Department's newest unit. Above are the Officers who were installed at the March ceremony. Sandra Carter (far left) is the charter president. They were installed by Darlene Jones. 6 - All the Juniors present for the Department Junior Conference stopped for a photo. The new Honorary Junior President Chelsey Kovacs was installed at the close of the weekend's activities. 7 - 1st Vice President, Carrie Bowerman (center) is presenting to National President Carlene Ashworth (left) and National Vice President Kris Nelson (right) a check for \$1,413.80 from the Department of Michigan for the National Creative Arts Festival. The presentation was made at the Awareness Assembly in Washington, D.C. Each department presented their own check and the total amount raised was over \$44,700. 8 - Unit 48 donates \$2,145 to a Vietnam Veterans memorial in Grand Ledge. The memorial honors those from the area killed in action from wars between WWI up through the current conflicts. Pictured is the President of Unit 48, Corinne Lyon presenting a check to Linn Driver, project committee member. Also pictured are Rick Jones, state senator of District 24, and Commander Duane Miller of Post 48. 9 - Claudia Barber-



Martin of Unit #32, and a Navy veteran is a Department of Michigan winner at the Veterans National Creative Arts Festival show at the Dingell VAMC. She was selected as the best in category for watercolor and will be advancing to the next level of competition in the festival. 10 - National President Carlene Ashworth salutes the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery during the Awareness Assembly tour. The Auxiliary presented a commemorative wreath in honor of those fallen in service to our country.



## American Legion Boys State

By Nelson O'Bryan, State Director

Here it is May once again and time to put on one last big push to increase Boys State attendance. We made a small increase last year and it would be nice to continue on that same path.

We all know times are hard right now, but I believe one of our problems is that we are unknown. We all need to get out and spread the word about who we are and what we do.

I have heard some posts have money for a boy but can't find a boy to attend. In this case, send a check into Deanna and I'm sure we can find a boy for you and, you are still

supporting the program. There are too many young men out there missing out on Boys State.

We have a very dedicated group of Legionnaires on our Boys State Committee this year and I'm looking forward to working with them. They are; John Burke, Jerry Lynch, Ron Elston, and SAL rep Mike Holley along with alternates Jerry Kelley, David Rodriguez, David Wells, and Bob Drebenstedt. These Legionnaires deserve a big thank you for all the efforts they put in to make this program a success.

As I told you before, this will be our last year at Northwood University. We will be back to MSU in 2012.

## Letter

### Michigan Boys State

Hello American Legion/Sons of the American Legion members, my name is Alex Stacy and I am writing this piece in regards to the upcoming Boys State program that will be taking place this summer in Midland, Michigan. I, along with three of my close friends, attended Boys State in the summer of 2006. I can honestly say that my participation in the program was one of the most valuable, educational, fun-filled, and memorable experiences of my life. While in attendance, I met some amazing people, learned a great deal about National and State Level political systems (through an entirely non-partisan and non-biased educational staff), and learned effective leadership skills and techniques that I regularly use today while completing my undergraduate studies at Western Michigan University.

I recently met with Nelson O'Bryan, the current man-in-charge of the Boys State program, and I learned that attendance has dropped significantly over the past several years. I also learned that general awareness toward the program has declined as of late. It is my goal to change both of these trends. Boys State is an incredible American Legion program, and I would hate to see it disappear.

So please, speak with members at your local post, ask questions, sponsor high school boys, and help Nelson and I make this summer's program a success. I plan to return to Boys State this summer to help give back to the program that helped change my life. I hope to see several hundred attendees while there, but this will only be possible with your help. So please, draw attention to the Boys State program, and help bring a positive change to high school students in your neighborhood.

-Alex Stacy

## Nat. PR Makes Radio PSA's Available to Posts

The American Legion's PR division offers a free CD featuring PSAs on vital aspects of the Legion for local stations to air.

As an offshoot to last year's "A Powerful Force for Our Nation" campaign, the Legion's Public Relations Division has created a CD featuring radio-ready public service ads on the Four Pillars of Service, as well as the Legion's service to veterans and the Legion family.

**The 30- to 60-second ads can be delivered to any local radio station willing to play them on air. And while CDs have already been sent to several talk-radio stations across the country, they are equally well-suited for local**



**FM stations and can be used as a launching point for Legionnaires to personally record a Legion PSA.**

The PSA campaigns have been designed to broaden the Legion's

reach nationwide by using grassroots efforts of Legionnaires at their local posts. The PSAs allow Legionnaires to use local media to showcase all that the Legion does every day in our communities.

**To obtain one or more copies of the CD free of charge, contact the PR division at (317) 630-1253 or e-mail pr@legion.org. The materials for "A Powerful Force" campaign – a DVD and booklet – are also available by contacting the PR division.**

## Continued

### COMMANDER

the department know as soon as possible. We would like to make it possible for as many needy veterans as possible to enjoy the facilities this year. If your post has a Scout Troop, plan on visiting the property and spend a few days hiking, bivouacking, doing plant identification or any other programs your troop can do.

Other accomplishments completed this year included revitalizing our Leadership College Program thanks to the leadership of Legionnaire Brett Holt. Seminars were held around the state with great success, accomplishing what we set out to accomplish. Another program was the reinstatement of our Post Development Committee to start new posts and/or revitalize others. Chairman Al Ford had to start from scratch and spend a lot of time trying to update this committee. It is my hope this committee continues in the future. There are so many posts that need to be revitalized and have Charters reviewed. Our Legislative Committee under the direction of Doug Williams has been second to none in working with the Coalition and our newly elected Governor, his transition team, and State Legislators. A special thanks to Chairman Gary Tanner for his work with the Reconnect Committee and his great fundraiser through ACO Hardware raising \$20,000 for our Wounded Warrior Program; and to William Miller for his two Student Trooper sessions.

Chairman Nelson O'Bryan and I have been working relentlessly with improving our Boys State Program. After visiting the most successful program in the nation, Ohio, we know this will not become an overnight

accomplishment. The best we could do this year is to move the Department Boys State program back to Michigan State University in 2012; by the way, that will be its 75th Anniversary.

I thank our Veterans Service and Rehabilitation Director Jim Topps, his staff, and service officers for working within a limited budget, setting a new record in bringing monies into the state through getting our eligible veterans their benefits.

Although we did not meet our final membership goal, I thank all the posts for being the best that they can. Your hard work was much appreciated.

Thank you for letting me serve all of you as your State Commander. It was a great ride (in fact almost 50,000 miles worth) visiting numerous Legion posts throughout the state, 3 visits to Indianapolis, a visit to Washington D.C. and to Ohio Department Headquarters in Delaware, Ohio —and approximately 40 trips from the U.P. to Headquarters.

Before closing I thank our State Adjutant Patrick Lafferty for spending a whole lot of extra time with the Finance/Personnel Committee and me in revamping our office operation. Thanks to the staff for the work they do.

*"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race"* —Douglas McArthur

# Legionnaire Insurance Trust Serves You & Michigan Well



**By William Hafeman, State Commander**

The Legion families in this department are very fortunate to be part of something that has been around almost half a century - the Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT). The Department of Michigan joined with the other forty-seven (47) departments that made-up the LIT in 1967. The LIT became this department's sponsored insurance program and remains so today. Make no mistake, the broad range of insurance products and services found under the LIT umbrella are your products and services. These products and services are not available to just anyone - other veterans included - but only to members of this department's "Legion family".

By combining the Department of Michigan's programs with the other LIT participating departments, we can be assured our products and services are continually reviewed and updated (plus new programs added) so that you have access to the best selection possible. A Board of Trust Directors - one Legionnaire Director from each participating department, does the oversight of the programs of LIT. Like most Legion "Jobs", it is an unpaid

appointment so the director is serving on your behalf and not his; which is one more way to make sure you are getting the best possible coverage when you buy through your department.

Again, this department sponsors a broad range of insurance products and services - ranging from the "no-cost" AD&D to HOSPITAL HELP to CANCER CARE to Emergency Assistance + (EA+) to MEDICARE Supplement to Auto/home-owners and more - so one or more will likely fill a need or void in your family's insurance portfolio. But, lets' talk a bit about buying insurance - the best way to

buy is to shop, compare, and then purchase the coverage from a source you trust. We invite you to compare this department's endorsed products with any on the market and then you can buy with the confidence of forty-five (45) years of continuous service to Legion families behind the LIT. (By the way, buying through the LIT also helps the department underwrite its ability to serve our veterans and the communities.)

**To learn more about your department's insurance products and services please Call the LIT's administrator at (800) 235-6943 or checkout the programs at theLIT.com. Either way, there will be no hard sell or obligation to buy when you do.**



## HEROES TO HOMETOWNS UPDATE

**By Eddie W. Brown, State Chairman**

I would like to say a big thank you to all who have supported H2H during the past year. We lost a couple key team members so I would like to welcome Deanna Clark to the team and she will be helping us in Zones 2 and 3. Although we have not had a lot of candidates who qualified for the program, our team did supply other aid as needed and referrals to other pro-

grams like Reconnect or to posts for general assistance.

Just recently we were able to assist an injured Afghanistan veteran with a wife and children save their home. We have also been informed of another wounded Michigan soldier that soon will be coming home to Zone 1. We still have about \$15,000 in the fund to help as needed. So, if you hear of a possible candidate, please refer them to the "Programs" H2H information on the department website.

## STATE COMMITTEES EVALUATE '11 PROGRAMS CONT.

VA & R CONT. FROM PAGE 11

Mr. Topps has advised that our recoveries approximated \$130,000,000.00 for fiscal 2010. (Yes, that is 130 million dollars) At a time when our staffing was reduced due to fewer dollars available from the state, and subsequently the department, this is critical to those veterans and their families to whom we provide assistance to navigate the federal benefit system. It should be noted that just for The American Legion, this represents approximately \$130.00 for each \$1.00 appropriated.

Given the current economic

conditions and our shortage of staff, I continue to beseech you at the post and district levels to find someone to step up as your local service officer to provide direction to those veterans and their families looking for assistance, and either begin the process directly by filing some paperwork, give them the information they need to gather supporting documentation, and or put them in contact with our staff.

I also offer my thanks to all of the members of this committee and to the members of our VAVS sub-committee, who mostly go unrecognized, but perform such valuable assistance to our hospitalized veterans and the CBOC's

in their areas, for their continued interest and involvement in these most important discussions.

We encourage attendance for those with an interest at our meetings, at any and all post service officer trainings at the district Level, at our annual training for post service officers in September and at Fall Conference.

I also am compelled to take a point of personal privilege and thank all of those members, past and present, for allowing me the opportunity to represent our veterans as a member of your department service officer staff for 22 years. The only problem with retirement is—you never get a day off.

### See you at the 93rd Annual State Convention held at the Amway Grand in Grand Rapids

### June 23 - 26, 2011

Full agenda\* is available online at:  
[www.michiganlegion.org/pdfs/2011ConvAgenda.pdf](http://www.michiganlegion.org/pdfs/2011ConvAgenda.pdf)

\*subject to change

## Classifieds

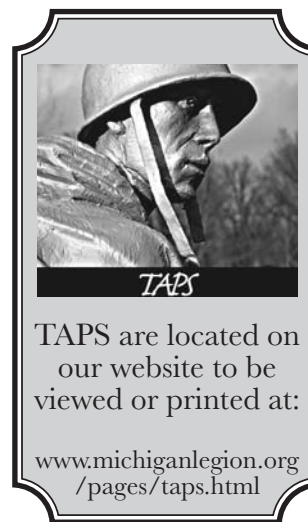
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# Around the State...



Caledonia Post 305 Color Guard, and Hastings Post 45 Color Guard, escorted Sherrie Cook of Grand Rapids Unit 459 as her homemade "Freedom Flag" with 1,021 Michigan veterans' thumbprints in its design was presented at the Art Prize 2010 event during the Ultimate Sport Show at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids recently.



Several Legionnaires recently attended dedication ceremonies for the new Homeless Women's Dormitory at the Detroit Veterans Center. Shown (l-r) 1st Zone Commander Floyd Plowman, State Chaplain Eddie Brown, and PDC Gary W. Sammons.



National Vice Commander John Mella of Michigan was recently honored for 22 years of volunteer service to the the Dickinson County Veterans Affairs Council through the auspices of Director Chuck Lantz. Shown (l-r) Chairman Marvin Fetterly, Finance Officer Jim Olen, 2nd Vice Chairman Robert Morrell, NVC Mella, 1st Vice Chairman Bernard Raymond, and Iron Mountain Post 50 Commander Don Trulock.



Ida Post 514 Commander Thomas Smith and Unit President Peggy Nolff present a \$1,000 donation to Ida Fire Chief Paul Metz to purchase fire retardant gloves for the firefighters. They also donated \$1,000 to Wilwin Lodge and \$2,000 to the Monroe Salvation Army to help Monroe County Homeless veterans.



See "Grand Rapids Welcomes State Convention" on Page 1



Members of Grand Ledge Post 48 and VFW Post 3293 recently accepted a \$1,000 donation from State Senator Rick Jones for the Grand Ledge War Memorial. Shown (l-r) Tom Dingler, Post Commander Duane Miller, Linn Driver, Senator Jones, Graydon Briggs, and Richard Cupp.



National Vice Commander John M. Mella joins with State Post Development Committee Chairman Alton R. Ford, members, and officers of the newly instituted Ionia Post 37 during there initial post meeting.



State Commander William Hafeman, State Adjutant Patrick Lafferty, and State Legislative Chairman Douglas Williams at the nation's capitol building as they led a Michigan Delegation to the recent 2011 Washington Conference. Legion delegations from across the nation gather in Washington DC annually to discuss and promote federal veterans legislation with their respective Senators and Representatives.



During recent ceremonies at Morley Post 554, a number of awards were presented to members of Ferris State College ROTC as a continuation of a 14 year 4th Zone tradition of recognizing ROTC military and academic excellence. Participating in the ceremony, emceed by State Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Chairman Raymond Moore, were 4th Zone Commander Nancy Frye, 10th District Commander Frederick Hollister, 19th District Commander Bob Luxford, Post 554 Commander Ronald Morse, Captain Jason Sannis, and nine award recipients.