Notes from the Department Commander

Fellow Legionnaires!

Fort Scott, Kansas was the location for the Kansas American Legion Mid-Winter Forum this year. Kicking off the event on Friday evening, early attendees were treated to a dinner of hamburgers and fixings at the Brewhaus, donated by The E3 Ranch outside of the city. The ranch is owned by Adam LaRoche, retired baseball player from the Chicago White Sox and his family. They raise certified beef and wild game packages marketed around the country. Through their E3 Foundation, the organization supports American Veterans and active military, the foundation maintained by 10% of the profits from the ranch. In addition, they made possible the extraordinary ball field at Fort Scott by providing the majority of funds for construction in 2015, aptly named the LaRoche Sports Complex. Our Baseball committee has the field on their list of stadiums for use in Kansas American Legion Baseball. For more information and to help support the mission, visit the website E3ranch.com of a company that helps our Veterans.

Mid-Winter provides a chance for members to be updated from various Legion committees such as Children and Youth, Public Relations and the Legislative committee to name a few. Guest speakers provide information on areas such as Veterans Services and activities of interest on Legion services to our veterans. Make plans to attend next year for an informative and fun affair. Check the website ksamlegion.org later in the year for an announcement of time and location.

One of our important Child and Youth programs is upon us, that being the annual Oratorical Contest, begun in 1938, and held for high school students speaking on the topic of the United States Constitution. Scheduled at various locations by the district, the Department winner will receive $2,000 by competing in the first round at the National Contest and an additional $2,000 if selected to move to the next round. The eventual winner will be awarded $20,000, $17,000 for second place and $15,000 for third. Please contact your post for time and location of the contest in your district and make plans to attend. You will not be disappointed.

The Boys State program, initiated in 1935, will be in Manhattan at Kansas State University from Sunday, May 31st to the closing ceremony on Friday, June 5th. A nationally acclaimed program by universities and educators, the program allows high school juniors to participate in a mock state environment with assigned tasks that mirror today's state government. Past graduates include many governmental officials who became interesting in serving the country's citizens as a result of attendance at the program, including former President Bill Clinton. Sponsorship to the program can be obtained from posts, local civil groups and some foundations. Further information is available
from a district Boys State Chairman, on the website ksbstate.org, or by contacting the Boys State office in Wichita at 866-241-9920.

Our Cadet Law Enforcement Academy, a week-long program in Salina at the Highway Patrol Training Center, is also conducted from May 31st through June 5th. High school juniors and seniors receive instruction from the Highway Patrol, KBI, FBI and other law enforcement personnel. Not used as a recruiting tool, the program provides attendees with an appreciation for law enforcement at all levels as they observe and participate in activities mirroring those that are commonplace in this field. For further information, contact Department at 785-232-9315.

This E-Newsletter was begun in June of 2018 and has endeavored to bring interesting and useful information on Legion events and plans to recipients that have provided emails to our National Headquarters. We would like to thank Don Culver, who initially distributed the publication, followed by Carl Jowers, for donating their time to put the newsletter together and work with national for distributing in the state.

Beginning with this issue, the newsletter will be the generated by Jeff Bond, Assistant Department Adjutant with articles from the Commander, Vice-Commander and Department Adjutant included in the publication.

IN ADDITION, another issue will be emailed, to those whose emails are listed with National, on or around the 15th of each month to include flyers that posts/districts would like to share with fellow Legionnaires. Flyers should be sent to kansaslegionnewsletter@gmail.com for inclusion in the mailing. This will reach over 9,400 Legionnaires (at this time) to help boost attendance at your events.

Thank you for all you do to make the Kansas American Legion the Premier Veterans Support Organization.

For God and Country,

*Join the American Legion…and you join a Family!*

RC "Chuck" Shoemaker  
Commander  
Department of Kansas  
The American Legion  
chuckshoemaker@sbcglobal.net

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**Notes from the Department Vice-Commander and Membership Chairman**

This month I wanted to touch on a topic that relates to membership, but not directly. I’m sure most of you are aware that The American Legion is a nonpartisan organization, meaning we do not side with a political party or take a stand on anything political that is not related to one of our four pillars. We also do not endorse candidates for government offices; however, we do pay attention to which politicians are supportive of our causes.

With that being said, as members of this great organization we need to be more conscientious of what we post on social media, the emails we send, and the words that we speak. I’m not saying that we need to not have an opinion, what I am saying is we do need to be able to recognize when it isn’t appropriate to share those opinions. At no point ever will all of us agree on everything but we can still all work towards common goals.
An example of how this can affect membership:

You’re wearing your favorite pro-so-&-so hat and approach someone wearing an Army shirt and strike up a conversation. You tell them that you belong to the local post and invite them to come to an event that is happening over the weekend. They say something about your hat, and you proceed to rant about how much you love so-&-so and how horrible a person their opponent is. As it turns out, they actually like the opponent. They don’t tell you that because they just spent the last 10 minutes listening to you tell them how terrible their candidate is, and subsequently they don’t ever come by the post to an event. They never become a member because now they have the wrong impression of what The American Legion is all about.

Things to consider:

No one in their right mind is going to do their political research on social media. Therefore, that is not the place to share that kind of information. This is especially important if you have a considerable following on social media that considers you a representative of The American Legion. You don’t want to accidentally give the impression that what you share is the stance of our organization. Trust me, even if you comment that it’s your personal opinion not that of our organizations they won’t notice that comment. You can send this kind of thing in a private message to people that know you and trust your opinion.

If you are wearing anything that says “The American Legion” or the emblem or even something that has one of the other three American Legion Family’s names or emblems on it then you are representing The American Legion. Please be careful what you say as again you could inadvertently make an eligible member feel uncomfortable about joining.

Last, if you are wearing that pro-so-&-so hat or shirt, tread lightly when talking to potential new members, or even current members for that matter. If you are able, I recommend removing the hat or changing the shirt before starting the conversation. If you can’t change the shirt and they ask about it, don’t make a big deal, simply state that, “It’s just a shirt.” Do not get into a political conversation with a new member or one that you don’t know personally as this can cause the person to misunderstand the aims and purposes of our organization.

For God and Country,

Marri Krupco
Department Vice-Commander
The American Legion, Department of Kansas
mkrupco@gmail.com

Department Adjutant’s Newsletter February 2020

LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE: Call 1-800-432-3924 to learn the status of a bill or leave a message for your State Senator or Representative.

RENEWAL TARGET #5: All unpaid and paid members whose membership cards are not received in Topeka by February 10, 2020 will receive a national dues renewal notice around March 1. All Posts are urged to conduct membership drives to help Kansas meet its nationally assigned target. Do not hold members’ cards--transmit them to Headquarters at least every two weeks. Please do your part.

CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY: Information on the Cadet Law Enforcement Academy is enclosed with this Adjutants Letter. Dates are May 31–June 5, 2020.

BOYS STATE will be held on the Kansas State University Campus, May 31–June 5, 2020. Applications have been mailed to all Posts and High Schools and past sponsors. Deadline for applying is April 30; additional applications are available online at www.kansasboysstate.org or by calling 866-241-9920.

RENEWAL POST CARDS: Department Headquarters has a supply of the 2020 Membership Renewal Post Cards. These post cards can be very effective when sent to delinquent members. Contact Headquarters with the number that you need.

SERVICE OFFICER REPORTS have been mailed to all Post Service Officers. Reports must be completed and returned to: The American Legion DSO, 1314 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, KS 66612 by March 1, 2020. An additional copy is enclosed.

CHILDREN & YOUTH REPORTS are due to your District Chairman no later than your District Convention. Report forms have been mailed to District Chairmen for distribution to Posts.

POST CONSOLIDATED REPORTS will again be sent to the Posts by Department Headquarters. They will be sent to the Post Adjutants shortly.

POST DATA FORM will be enclosed with the Consolidated Report. This report is very important as it will contain the information for your Renewal Notices.

STATE CONVENTION: Dates for 2020 are May 15, 16, 17, 2020. This year’s State Convention will be held at the Ramada Hotel, 420 SE 6th St., in Topeka.

STATE CONVENTION HOUSING: As in the past, Posts who reach or exceed their membership quota by February 15, will be given priority housing at the State Convention. Posts with priority housing status must exercise their option by March 15 after such time housing availability is open to everyone on a first come, first served basis. Priority housing winners will be notified when they start making their reservations.

POST ADJUTANTS be sure to notify Department Headquarters of any changes or corrections in Post Officers or changes in their addresses. Notify Department Headquarters separately from the Member Data form sent to National (Post Officers only).

POST HISTORIES AND SCRAPBOOKS must be certified by their respective District before they can be considered for state and national competition. Certification forms are enclosed; please see that your Post Historian receives it. Outlines are in the Post Officers Guide.

CONGRATULATIONS: To Horton #7, Leavenworth #94, Kansas City #213, Alta Vista, Burdick, Westmoreland, Dwight, Gridley, Florence, Cheney, Lebanon, Haviland, Kingman, Grainfield and Selden for making QUOTA. (As of January 30)
DISTRICT STANDINGS AS OF JANUARY 30, 2030: District IX, 998 - 89.03%; District IV, 2,908 - 87.64%; District I, 3,736 - 87.41%; District V, 2,788 - 86.34%; District VII, 1,551 - 85.79%; District II, 3,363 - 85.46%; District VI, 1,306 – 84.10% District III, 1,980 – 83.76% and District VIII, 813 – 82.54%. Department Headquarters Post 58 (included in Dept. total) is 653. Total membership is 20,330. Membership last year this date was 21,218. We are BEHIND 888 members.

IN ORDER TO AVOID RECEIVING THE NEXT RENEWAL NOTICE ALL PAID MEMBERS' CARDS MUST BE IN THIS OFFICE BY FEBRUARY 10, 2020.

Post or District Legion events will be advertised on each midmonth Kansas Legion newsletter. Email event information or flyers to kansaslegionnewsletter@gmail.com by the 12th of the month to insure inclusion in the midmonth newsletter.

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Centennial Coin Raffle

Win a piece of American Legion History!

One person will win three

American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coins
1 Uncirculated $5 Gold Coin ($463 value)
1 Uncirculated Silver Dollar ($57 value)
1 Uncirculated Clad Half Dollar ($31 value)
($551 total value)

Tickets $5
5 tickets for $20

11 tickets for $40
Drawing to be held at Department of Kansas Leadership College on June 7, 2020 (need not be present to win)
To purchase tickets online contact: Jeremy Ehart at 1-620-899-0010
or jjehart23@gmail.com; or Marri Krupco at 1-620-224-7354 or mkrupco@gmail.com