Department Convention Set for Hutchinson May 20-22

Atrium Hotel and Conference Center, 1400 N. Lorraine Street, in Hutchinson will serve as the site of the 98th Annual Convention of The American Legion Department of Kansas. Joining the Legion in Convention will be the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion who will hold their own independent Conventions in addition to two joint sessions involving all three groups.

The next issue of the Sunflower Legionnaire will include more details of the Convention but now is the time to make housing reservations by calling Atrium toll free at 1-800-362-5018. Room rates for the Convention are $78 and includes a full breakfast buffet.

The Convention is expected to feature a number of speakers including American Legion National Vice Commander Alan Davis, Auxiliary Central Division National Vice President Lynda Lancaster, several of this year’s Youth Champions, and Kansas’ Fire and Police of the Year.

MID-WINTER SWEEPSTAKES RESULTS

Department Headquarters would like to thank everyone who took part in this year’s Mid-Winter Forum Sweepstakes.

The following members’ names were drawn during Sunday’s session of the Mid-Winter Forum: Two Hundred dollar winners were—Wayne Montgomery, Lenexa; Martin Pfatter, McPherson; John Smith, Shawnee; Bobby Black, Bazine; James Scheer, Garden Plain; and August Bogina, Jr., Topeka.

Two Hundred-Fifty dollar winners included Robert Eisler, Jr., Shawnee Mission; Lawrence Crook, Leavenworth; Mike Pyeatt, South Haven; and Merlyn Votaw, Quapaw, OK.

The Five Hundred dollar winner was Joseph Warta of Turon, and the One Thousand dollar winner was John Loudon, Jr. of Olathe. This year’s Mid-Winter Forum Sweepstakes Grand Prize Winner of Two Thousand Five Hundred dollars was Larry Rickman of Clinton, MO.

Congratulations to each winner and again a big thank you to everyone who entered the Sweepstakes.

DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Beginning the last weekend of this month and continuing each weekend throughout April, Districts will meet in Convention for the purpose of conducting its business and electing officers for the 2016-17 membership year which begins on July 1. Each District is required to elect Representatives to the Department Convention’s Constitution and Bylaws, Resolutions, Credentials and Rules Committees, and the District’s Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 26-September 1.

Every Legionnaire is encouraged to attend their District’s Convention as a delegate, alternate, or guest representing their Post. Interested members should notify their Post they wish to serve as a Delegate or Alternate to their District or the Department Convention, or both.

The dates, host Posts and Headquarters/Motel of each Convention are as follows:

**District I** – Topeka Post 400, April 8-10, Holiday Inn Express, 601 NW Hwy. 24 Road, Topeka, 785-861-7200.

**District II** – Olathe Post 153, April 2, La Quinta, 20570 W. 151st St., Olathe, 913-254-0111.

**District III** – Arkansas City Post 18, April 1-3, Super 8, 3228 N. Summit, Arkansas City, king bed $56 + tax, 2 queens $60, 620-442-8880.

**District IV** – Emporia Post 5, April 23, Candlewood Suites, 2602 Candlewood Dr., Emporia, 620-343-7756.

**District V** – Wellington Post 90, April 23, Candlewood Suites, 2602 Candlewood Dr., Emporia, 620-343-7756.

**District VI** – Colby Post 363, April 16, Sleep Inn, 2075 Sewell Ave., Colby, 785-460-0310.

**District VII** – Kansas City Post 68, April 9, Quality Inn South, 11 Des Moines Ave., South Hutchinson, 620-663-4444, special rate $79/night.

**District VIII** – Garden City Post 9, April 15-17, Clarion Inn, 1911 E. Kansas Ave., Garden City, 620-275-7471.

Representatives of Department Headquarters and either the National Executive Committeeman or Alternate National Executive Committeeman will attend each Convention. In addition, candidates for various Department offices are expected to visit most District Conventions as they seek support for their election during the May Department Convention in Hutchinson.

District Conventions provide an outstanding opportunity for members to learn what Posts in the same area do in their communities, to share success stories of what has worked for their Post, and exchange ideas how to improve Post operations and programs. District Conventions also provide an excellent venue to make or renew friendships. Friday evenings are generally reserved for socializing in preparation for Saturday’s business sessions. Sundays normally begin with a Memorial Service followed by a final business session and elections. Some Districts also conduct special events on Friday such as membership workers’ parties or golf tournaments.

CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

On June 5 up to 50 young Kansans will gather for the 46th annual Cadet Law Enforcement Academy session at the Highway Patrol Training Center in Salina. Sponsors by The American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and KS Highway Patrol, the Academy provides high school students an opportunity to learn methods employed to enforce city, county, state, and federal statues with the goal of instilling a better appreciation for those who enforce those laws.

The Academy is not a recruitment program for law enforcement. Students attending past sessions have had a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, and career plans. However many students considering careers in law enforcement, as attorneys, and government service have attended as a means to solidify their plans to pursue such careers.

Open to both male and females, all applicants must be high school juniors, or equivalent, with at least a C+ average scholastically and be physically capable of fully participating in all activities during the week long program. Instruction includes firearms and firing range safety, personal defense, law enforcement history and techniques, pursuit driving on a skid-pan under controlled conditions, practical emergency medical procedures, aircraft use in law enforcement (weather permitting), and the responsibilities of citizens regardless of age.

Primarily classes are conducted by Highway Patrol personnel however representatives of other agencies such as the FBI, KBI, Wildlife and Parks, city and county officials augment the instruction provided throughout the week. Parents and families are encouraged to attend graduation ceremonies on Friday evening, June 10.

Students are encouraged to apply early. Completed applications must include endorsements by a doctor (attesting to the applicant’s physical condition), their high school principal or superintendent, their local American Legion Post Commander or Auxiliary Unit President, and a local law enforcement officer. A sponsorship fee of $300.00 includes housing, meals and supplies needed during the session must also accompany the application and can come from any source (Post, Unit, Squadron, Chapter, a local merchant, parents, etc.). Applications must be received by March 31.
Greetings Kansas Legionnaires.

I had the pleasure to attend the three weekends of the American Legion bowling tournaments in Wichita this year. We had a great time each weekend and got to see some great bowling. There were several 300 games and 290 games bowled. There are some very good bowlers that come to this tournament and even some that bowl like me, so there is a place for everyone to come and join in the fun. I encourage all Sons of the American Legion and Legion members to dust off those bowling balls and join in the fun next year.

The annual Department Mid-Winter Forum was held at the Hays Post #173 this year. I want to thank all the members of Post #173 for helping to make it successful and a great time for all.

Our Kansas Legion Family made the trip to Springfield, Illinois this year to join other Departments that came together to celebrate the birthday of our 16th President of the United States, President Abraham Lincoln. It was a great experience to see and visit such a great tribute to one of our greatest Presidents. Linda and I plan on going back this summer when it's warmer and stay longer and visit more sites of interest.

Our District Conventions will be starting soon and I encourage everyone to make plans to attend your District Convention. They can only be successful if you join in and help make them successful. There is something for all members of the Legion Family to do and be a part of so make your plans to attend.

Kansas American Legion members, your Department needs your help. We are over 5,000 members short of our goal for the year. It is time every member starts to get involved in helping in our membership work. I have helped in our membership revitalization drives for the last four years all across Kansas, and I know there are eligible veterans that can and should be members of your Post. All you need to do is ask. To all Post officers, you need to get your unpaid membership cards out of the desk drawer and go out and get face to face with these members and convince them that they should renew their membership in your Post. There are so many reasons that you can relate to them why they should renew and what The American Legion does for veterans, their community, their state, and nation.

It is your obligation to not let these unpaid members go away. We must keep the members we have. Your District and Department Officers can not possibly contact every unpaid veteran in the state but you can contact all your unpaid members. If you want your Post to remain active then it is up to you to keep it active. There are over 220,000 eligible veterans in Kansas.WHY ARE THEY NOT IN OUR AMERICAN LEGION??? We all must start to become more proactive and help in membership. I would like to see all Posts that have memberships of 100 or less to be at 100% this year. I'm sure it can be accomplished if the Post officers will go out and knock on the unpaid members door, I know it works for me I do it every year all year. So please start working your membership. Just get some members together, divide up the unpaid cards and work them. You and your Post will be rewarded for your efforts. I do hope to see a big surge in memberships in the next month, it's up to you and your members to make a difference.

I want to thank everyone for what you do for our Kansas American Legion. May God bless each and every one and may He continue to watch over our troops and bring them home safe.

The Second Annual Kansas Legacy Run logistics is spinning up. Other states are having their own Legacy Runs to build higher levels of donations to be presented at National Convention. Kansas is in need of retaking the lead this year! We will be coordinating with all Posts and their Chapters. Some Posts, not having their own ALR Chapters, may think this is only a Riders’ event. Nothing could be further from the truth! For those Posts wishing to be visited or coordinate their own efforts with local Posts in soliciting donations from Legion members, local commerce and civic authorities, please contact the ALR chairman, Don Behrens or his Area Directors.

At National, our three quilts which were donated at Mid-Winter Forum were delivered. It had been said that Kansas may have initiated the idea of “Quilts for Kids,” and other Departments are now sending their quilts for donation. Those funds raised are helping support the multitudes of charitable programs aiding children. This year we have no quilts to donate. Ladies it’s up to you now! Please?

Beads of Courage is a beautiful program which gives children suffering terrible illnesses like cancer, a way to account for and share their many treatment stories. The handmade glass beads of specific color, size and shape designate a specific treatment. The kids will often ask each other about beads they are not familiar with, and the conversations give them a sense of honor, acceptance and courage. Nationally printed the Beads of Courage on line. Look it up it’s a wonderful story!

Hello Legion Family. Spring is near! That means District Conventions, as well as the Department Convention. Be sure to get your reservations in and attend! Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

In January, we had a Commander’s Call to meet for Executive Board members. We met at the Newton Post with 19 members in attendance. I believe we had a very successful meeting.

The next day, Sunday, Commander Ray Vail, Adjutant Jimmie Foster, and I went to observe the Legion Bowling Tournament at the Seneca Bowl in Wichita, as it was on its last day. Congrats to each and every player! I must say that we have some very excellent bowlers!

We left the bowling tournament and Cheryl and I went right on to Arkansas City to a District meeting, as they are preparing for the Third District Convention in April. I believe they have some exciting things planned.

The Mid-Winter Forum was held in Hays on February 5-7. It was good to see such a great attendance, considering the snow storm just two days before! The weather did turn out to be beautiful for us though. The meetings were very informative, and much was accomplished with the Centennial meeting and the Executive Board meeting. Hats off to Post #173 for the wonderful hospitality and the hard work. Well done! I especially enjoyed the auction for Child Welfare...my shirt fits!

The Legislative Reception was held at the Capital Plaza on February 10. It’s always a good time to meet with our representatives and discuss our veteran programs.

A big thank you to our Commander Ray Vail, and his wife Linda, Department Adjutant Jimmie Foster, and his wife Rehta (with our ‘Department Dog” Okie), and my wife Cheryl, as well as several of Post #64 members that attended Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins’ relocation of the GOD BLESS AMERICA banner that was removed from the Pittsburg Post Office. We had a great turnout for it and I thank everyone for their support.

People...we NEED to step up on our membership!!! We need East Vice Commander, West Vice Commander, and ALL District, and Post Vice Commanders to GET OUT THERE and get our membership up!!! WE CAN do it!!! Let’s do Kansas proud.

I want to commend our NEC member, Dave Warnken, on designing our new logo for Kansas...100 years, Forever Strong! Great job Dave!!!

Hoping to see everyone soon. In the meantime, God bless America, our troops, and each and every one of us!

Robert E. Munson
Candidate for Department Commander 2016 – 2017

I am requesting your support as a Candidate for Department Commander of the State of Kansas for 2016 – 2017. I currently serve as Your Department Vice Commander and have served as Department Master-at-Arms.

I have served as Third District Vice Commander and Commander, and am currently serving as Benjamin A. Fuller Post # 64 in Pittsburg as their Post Commander for the third time. I am also their Post Service Officer and am very active in helping veterans providing assistance with their benefits. I am on the Heroes Home Network and have taken training in crisis intervention for those suffering from PTSD and am on-call 24/7. While serving...
Expanded Services and Name Change to Effect OEF/OIF/OND Combat and Post 9/11 Era Veterans
By Jennifer Mollerlek, LSCSW

What’s in a name? Webster defines it as, “a word or set of words by which a person, animal, place, or thing is known, addressed, or referred to.” For over a decade now, VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System (VAEKCHS) has been serving Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) combat veterans. The program dedicated and responsible for serving OEF/OIF/OND combat veterans was known as the OED/OIF/OND Program. Makes sense, right? Well for various reasons, names change. It’s only natural as things develop, grow, and expand. This is happening right now at EHKCS. The OEF/OIF/OND Program has officially changed its name to the Transition and Care Management Program (TCM).

So what does this mean? TCM continues to serve combat veterans who deployed in support of OEF/OIF/OND from November 11, 1998 to present. In addition, the TCM Team now assists non-combat Post 9/11 veterans for care coordination and case management. The primary role of the TCM Team members is to ensure service members and veterans receive patient centered, integrated care. The Program Manager has administrative and clinical responsibilities; the Social Worker and Nurse Case Managers coordinate care and services for severely injured and ill service members, veterans, and others in need of case management services.

The TCM Program is based on the principles of case management. Some of the Case Management of America principles include: Use a client-centric, collaborative partnership approach; whenever possible, facilitate self-determination and self-care through the tenets of advocacy, shared decision making, and education; use a comprehensive, holistic approach; Practice cultural competence, with awareness and respect of diversity; promote the use of evidence-based care, as available; promote optimal client safety; promote the integration of behavioral change science, and principles; link with community resources; and assist with navigating the health care system to achieve successful care, for example during transitions.

These principles are used daily as the TCM Team works closely with DoD and Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) to transition the health care of injured or ill combat veterans, and active duty service members from MTF’s to VA health care facilities. In addition, the TCM team outreaches to all newly enrolled combat and Post 9/11 veterans to welcome them to the VA, offer information, support, and assistance as they integrate back into civilian life and enter the VA system. TCM has the privilege of working with individuals and families to better understand their illness or injuries. This includes providing education to the veteran/family/caregiver to help them better understand and navigate the VA system. Case management includes working as part of the Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) to clearly communicate, advocate, and assist to help veterans achieve the best possible outcomes.

Do you know an OEF/OIF/OND combat veteran or Post 9/11 veteran who needs support and assistance? If so, please contact a member of our dedicated TCM Team to further discuss their needs. Jennifer Mollerlek, LSCSW, Acting Program Manager, 785-530-3111 ext. 52356; Bobbi Overby, LSCSW, Social Work Case Manager, 785-350-3111 ext. 52332; and Deb Tangari, BSN-BC, CCM, Nurse Case Manager, 785-350-3111 ext. 52065.

I knew that we dropped a large number of bombs on Germany during World War II, but I discovered after reading an article in the January/February issue of “Smithsonian” magazine that the tonnage was tremendous, 1.35 million tons of munitions. The munitions were dropped on Germany by the United States and England between 1940 and 1945. The bombs caused a lot of damage when they were dropped, but are still causing trouble today over 70 years later. Many of the bombs were armed with time delay fuses in order to extend the terror and chaos. Minutes or days would elapse before the bomb would explode, depending on the time that was set.

Some bombs did not go off when intended, but have not exploded over 70 years later. More than 2,000 tons of unexploded munitions are discovered in Germany every year. Last May, 20,000 people were cleared from an area of Cologne because of a one ton bomb discovered during construction work.

Whenever a bomb is discovered a crew is sent to defuse it. Sometimes it cannot be defused and must be exploded. At other times a crew is killed in trying to defuse. Some explode when just touched. Many homes and buildings are continuing to be destroyed and people killed.

Most of the Germans today had nothing to do with the rise of Hitler, but are suffering because of him. This should remind them to be careful who to trust.

Robert E. Munson for Department Commander
(Continued from Page 2)

I moved to Pittsburg, Kansas with my wife Cheryl, in 2010, where I became an active member of Post # 64.

I have the support of my Post, and of my wife. It would be a great honor to have your support as well for the position of Department Commander of the State of Kansas for 2016 – 2017.

GARY FOOS FOR AREA WEST VICE COMMANDER

Fellow Legionnaires,

I knew that we dropped a large number of bombs on Germany during World War II, but I discovered after reading an article in the January/February issue of “Smithsonian” magazine that the tonnage was tremendous, 1.35 million tons of munitions. The munitions were dropped on Germany by the United States and England between 1940 and 1945. The bombs caused a lot of damage when they were dropped, but are still causing trouble today over 70 years later. Many of the bombs were armed with time delay fuses in order to extend the terror and chaos. Minutes or days would elapse before the bomb would explode, depending on the time that was set.

I have been a member of the American Legion for 47 years and have served Sublette Post #205 as their Adjutant for over 12 years and also served as a member of their Color Guard.

I have served the 8th District as District Commander and have held the appointed position of Finance Officer for 12 years.

I am currently a member of Marquette Post #253, having transferred my Membership to their Post earlier this year.

I earned my eligibility for the American Legion by serving in the United States Air Force from 1965 to 1969.

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At the Department level, I have held the positions of Master-at-Arms, Vice Commander, and Commander in 2013 - 2014. I am currently serving on the Centennial Membership, Cadet Law Academy, and the Centennial Celebration Committees.

I am also a member of The Sons of The American Legion, ANAVICUS and the Past Department Commanders’ organizations.

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Hello Legion Family!  

Spring is here, what a great feeling. Keep working on membership as we have been hitting our goals, but not by much. First District could do better, so keep getting those new and renewals in the mail when you get them. Don’t keep them until they pile up.

The First District Convention is April 8-10 at Post #400 in Topeka. I would love to see someone from every one of the 52 Posts in the District. I would like to thank all the Posts that are 100% of goal. That helps a lot.

The Sons of the American Legion have started again in the District, and are helping in a lot of ways.

As we wind down this Legion year I just want to thank all of you for the outstanding work that you and your Posts are doing.

We had our District Oratorical on February 13th and the winner was Miss Grayce McAllister out of Americus. She will be representing our District at the Department Oratorical on March 19th at Manhattan Post #17. We had a total of three contestants. They all enjoyed themselves and said they would be back next year, and not just for the chance at scholarship money. This is a skill, and an education, that they have sadly been neglecting in our school system. Again, thanks to Post #45 for hosting our Oratorical and to Post #5 Emporia for the outstanding young people.

During Mid-Winter in Hays in February we drew the winner of this year’s District Fundraiser for a lifetime Kansas hunting or fishing license. The winner is out of Manhattan, and as soon as she decides which license she wants we will let you all know. Thank you all again for your generous support of these fundraisers which puts money back to the District to help out with Legion projects and programs.

A reminder that Children and Youth Reports are due back to me before District Convention in Emporia this year. Please mail them back to me, NOT to Department please, so we can get a full accounting of our Posts. We were close to 100% last year, would like to see everyoned turned in this year.

Finally, District Convention is April 23rd at Emporia Post #5 this year. Packets are coming out shortly so hope to see all of you there. God Bless!
Welcome Legionnaires, Auxiliaries, and the S.A.L.

March and April is the time we elect our officers for the coming year in our organization. If you haven’t done so I would encourage you to run for a Post, District, or Department Office.

Membership continues to be the challenge and is not showing signs of increasing that we would like to see. So, I will be blunt in this article.

Each Post should divide up their membership cards and let the Post members call or visit everyone who hasn’t renewed. I understand the challenges of membership as we work our Post membership just like everyone else. Currently we are in 7th place out of 8 places.

Membership is now $35.00. If your Post hasn’t updated your Post information that means your renewal notices being sent out may not be enough for a member to renew. It could also mean that your renewal notices are being sent to the wrong address.

At our last Department Meeting, Jimmie Foster, was ratified as the Department Adjutant. This was a good move because it cements his position to start healing old wounds and discontent that had crept in.

I encourage you to put aside personal differences and work for the good of the Veterans and the American Legion. I am fortunate to have been elected to the 7th District because we have been working together well. Thank you Everyone for helping me bring the District out of last place.

Greetings Legionnaires.

First, I will inform you that the Sunflower will be published bi-monthly. This issue will be for March and April. The Mid-Winter Forum was held in Hays, Ks. on February 5th-7th. I also attended the Legislative Reception in Topeka on February 10th. There are several bills pending which are of great benefit to our veterans and veteran families.

I will continue to visit the Posts in our District. I know that most of our Posts will be holding their elections in March. Please fill out your Post officer forms at that time and send them in to Department. We need names and email addresses as well as phone numbers for all newly elected officers.

The Eighth District Convention will be hosted by Post #9 in Garden City. The dates are April 15-17. We will be sending out a copy of the agenda and the Call to Convention. Please elect your delegates to Convention.

The Department Convention will be at Hutchinson Post #68 this year. As for our District we are still behind on our membership this year. We need to continue working hard to get everyone renewed before Convention time. We all know how hard that can be. Please continue to make the phone calls and knocking on doors.

We still need volunteers for the District wide Honor Guard. Thank you for all that you do for The American Legion and your community. May God bless you, The American Legion, and the United States of America.

David R. Thomas

David R. Thomas Candidate for Alternate National Executive Committeeman

Dave Thomas has been endorsed by the First District and Byron H. Mehl Post 23 in Leavenworth as a candidate for Alternate N.E.C. for the 2016 – 2018 years and is asking for your support. A forty-five year Life Member of Post 23, Dave earned his American Legion eligibility while serving four years in the Kansas National Guard, with two years active. One year of that spend in Vietnam (1969). Dave has been a staunch support of Veterans and their Families, and treats all with respect.

Dave began his American Legion career by serving as Vice Commander and Commander of Post 10 in Boulder, Colorado prior to returning to Kansas. He has served as Finance Officer for Leavenworth Post 23 for 22 years, and has served the First District as Sergeant-at-Arms, a three year term as Executive Committeeman, Adjutant, Vice Commander and District Commander. In addition, Dave has served as his District’s Children and Youth Chairman for 12 years, being 100% reporting.

Dave served as the Department Employment Chairman for three years, the Ranch Land Committee for four years. He served as Vice Commander 2008-2009, and Department Commander 2009-2010. He has served on the Department Finance Committee for the past six years.

He has served 10 years on the National Foreign Relations Council and National Security Council, The Military Benefits Quality of Life Council two years to present.

He has attended a number of National Conventions, The Washington Conference, 24 Department Conventions and several American Legion Leadership College Sessions.

He is a reliable membership worker, and has qualified as a Gold Brigade Member twice for recruiting 50 Members per year, and a Silver Brigade Member for recruiting 25 Members.

Dave has been in the commercial glass business for over 53 years, which will allow him time to serve his fellow Legionnaires as Alternate N.E.C. He has also

(Continued Page 7)
Hello Team Kansas!

Mid-Winter was a great time, even though cold, but winter time in Kansas. Really was nice to see many of old friends and some new ones.

I know everyone is looking forward to our respective District meetings. Hope that I can get to all those, I couldn't last year and to see many of family I know and to meet new people. Hope that many new people will get involved in our family. Also keep in mind our State Convention is Hutchinson in May.

Everyone, we still need membership to make our all time high again this year, asking for help from the family. Thank you for all your hard work whether Auxiliary, Legion, Sons, or ALR.

BUCKLE UP, LIGHTS ON & LIVE

The Kansas American Legion, in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Governor’s Office will make an effort to reduce traffic accidents and fatalities over the Memorial Day weekend. This year’s program is scheduled for Friday, May 27.

This endeavor is in conjunction with the beginning of Memorial Day Weekend, and the theme is “Ditch the distractions, not the car! Just Drive.” The goal is to remind motorists to use their seat belts and headlights throughout the weekend. Observation of all traffic laws, take plenty of rest stops on long trips, watch out for other motorists and motorcyclists, and to drive safely are also stressed.

Complete information for this NO COST program has been mailed to every Post and is available from Department Headquarters. Legion Family members are asked to spend an hour or two at major intersections on May 27 to hand a brochure describing the reasons to drive safely to each motorist as they stop for a signal light or stop sign. Some Posts choose to place the brochures in service stations, rest areas, convenience stores, and super markets, etc. All efforts are to be coordinated with local and area law enforcement officials.

A coupon for ordering a supply of brochures is located below for your convenience. All requests must be ordered by the Post Commander or Adjutant, Unit President or Secretary, or Squadron Commander or Adjutant.

Well, the New Year has started out with a bang!

The 2016 Mid-Winter Forum in Hays was a success. A BIG Thank You to Hays Post # 173 for their hosting the Forum. The meals, facility and over all support was tremendous. I know they have been going through some changes, but they did NOT let it show. Everyone pitched in and helped out where needed. I will have to admit that Post Commander Vance Chartier can produce excellent cinnamon rolls, they just don’t have to be size of a platter for each roll. HA!

We are still looking for some Post to step up to the plate to host the 2017 Mid-Winter Forum. If your Post is interested, PLEASE contact the Department Headquarters ASAP by e-mail or telephone.

Congratulations to All the Mid-Winter Sweepstakes winners. There was No individual Winner in attendance, if they were, they would have received an additional $200.00 for just being present. Thank You to Everyone who purchased one or more tickets.

Your contribution ensures that Our Department programs will continue to grow and prosper throughout the next year and so on. Keep up the Great Donations!!!

Leading Candidate for National Commander of The American Legion Charles Schmidt from the Department of Oregon had a great time. He commented that the Department of Kansas American Legion Family was “Alive and Well”. He appreciated all the hospitality and courtesies extended to him during the weekend.

On February 10, 2016, the Department of Kansas American Legion hosted the Legislative Reception at the Manhattan Conference Center located at the Topeka Capitol Plaza Hotel. Many Legislators within the State of Kansas linked up with constituents from their individual Posts and Districts and visited and discussed what The American Legion would like for them to move forward here close to Home.

It was a very successful event for ALL Kansas Veterans and their Families. Enclosed within this edition of the Kansas Sunflower Legionnaire are our Key Priority Items.

Many of the Kansas Legion Family attended and just returned from the 2016 Washington, D.C. Commander’s Call and Assault on Capitol Hill to interact with the United States Senators and United States Congress Representatives. The Delegation broke down into Groups and visited with the Legislators from Kansas. We got to see Senator Moran personally. We visited with the Legislative Director from Senator Roberts Office as the Senator was unavailable.

On the House Side, WE got to see Congressman Pompeo personally, and visited with the Legislative Directors from Congressman Yoder, Congressman Huelskamp and Congresswoman Jenkins Offices. Most of the House Side Members of Congress were just returning from their respective Districts in the State of Kansas. Each Legislator and their Staff were very supportive of Our Legislative Priorities and assured US that they would vote to move each bill along in the Government structure.

National Commander Dale Barnett addressed the Combined Senate and House Armed Services Committees on Wednesday Morning, 24 February 2016. Commander Barnett gave an excellent oration detailing the 2016 - 2017 Plan of Action that the American Legion would like to get approved to make sure that ALL Veterans get the entitlements that they earned or have been promised from Our Government.

The weatherman cooperated and I believe everyone flying in and out made it home safely. A couple of American Legion Family Members were driving back from D.C. to Kansas. I can’t guarantee they won’t run into some turbulent weather across this Great Land.

The 2016 Department Oratorical Contest is fast approaching. It will be held at Manhattan Post # 17 on 19 March 2016. PLEASE plan to attend and watch the “Good Kids” in Kansas put their best foot forward learning about Our Constitution and how they perceive it. I am sure you will be amazed, I know I am every year.

It’s still not too early to start planning for the 2016 Department Convention in Hutchinson. The dates of the Convention are 20 to 22 May 2016. All meetings and events will be held at the Atrium Hotel and Conference Center located at 1400 N. Lorraine Street, Hutchinson, Kansas.

As a reminder, the Department Executive Committee voted to publish the Sunflower Legionnaire every two months in the future. The costs associated with the printing, postage and fees are tremendous. PLEASE plan your Articles accordingly.

Until next time, continue to support the Greatest Veterans and their Families, in the Greatest Veterans Organization in The Free World, The American Legion.
The preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion begins with this declaration: “For God and Country. We associate ourselves together…” These lofty goals attain for sure; the chief goal is for “God and Country”. It is for this purpose that I share this article with you and the members of The American Legion family.

Patriotism is a broader category for God and Country. In fact, the preamble describes what Patriotism is. Patriotism is defined to one’s country and only that country. This is my country, my home, I need no further reason to be loyal to it or show special concern for its well-being.” plato.stanford.edu

May a better way to celebrate The American Legion birthday, March 15, 1919; is to resolve in ourselves that we offer “Gratitude” for this country that we have inherited. We pledge anew our lives in service for “Liberty”.

In a quote from Governor John Winthrop 1630; he described Liberty as two-fold; “National – common to man w/beast and other-anew our lives in service for “Liberty”.

Dave has the support of his family including his wife Che, who is a Past Department Auxiliary President, their four children, 11 grandchildren, and five great-grand children of which ALL are Members of The American Legion Family.

The First District Executive Committee and Members of Bryon H. Mehl Post 13 asks for your support of Dave Thomas for Alternate NEC for 2016-2018.

**COLONNY DONATIONS**

Following is a list of donations received since the November/December issue of the Sunflower Legionnaire for the Harry W. Koelliker memorial. Tom & Jo Ann Kirkwood, Olathe; Onapperheimer & Co., Inc., Leawood; SAL, National, Indianapolis, IN; Equity Bank, Wichita; and Steve Thompson & The Green Wave, Lawrence.

**CORRECTION**

The passing of Jerry D. Drummond from Cottonwood Falls, was incorrectly reported to Department. We are very glad to announce that Mr. Drummond is alive and well!!
Child Welfare Foundation Dinner

This year’s Department Convention will feature a buffet dinner as a means to raise funds for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The dinner will be held Saturday evening, May 21 from 6:30 until 8:00 pm in the Grand Ballroom of the Atrium Hotel and Conference Center, 1400 N. Lorraine St., Hutchinson.

The buffet dinner will include: Garden fresh greens with assorted dressings, roast sirloin of beef with au jus, chicken teriyaki, whipped potatoes with gravy, and cheesecake with cherries or blueberries. Cost is $35 per person and reservations must be received no later than Tuesday, May 17.

The purpose of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation is: “To contribute to the physical, mental emotional and spiritual needs of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and their programs.” “To make wider, more effective use of the knowledge already possessed by well established organizations to the end that such information will benefit youth and be more adequately used by society.”

To make reservations for the Saturday, May 21 dinner please complete and return the coupon on this page to Department Headquarters, 1314 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, Kansas 66612. Reservations must arrive by May 17; or telephone your reservations to 785-232-9315. Payment is due no later than May 20 without exception.

Bowling Tournament Results

The 69th annual American Legion Bowling Tournament was held in Wichita at Seneca Lanes.

The total number of entries were 71 teams, 159 sets of doubles, 318 sets of singles, and 315 all events, with a total prize fund of $8,406 including jackets for each division champion.

Emporia’s Johnny Clarks’ 2260 scratch all-events won him the Dr. Elfert Memorial Trophy.

First place team was Sunday Rollers from Seneca; second was Tokan Designs, Inc., from Topeka; third was Jello Shots from Burttton; and fourth was P3 Investigation from Lawrence.

First place doubles was a tie between Phil Olsen/Herbert Eley and Joe Ellison/Jerry Walls all from Junction City; second place was also a tie between Chris Swift/Larry Swift from Emporia, and Gary Klassen/James Carr from Hillsboro.

The first place singles was Sam Dole, from Olathe; second was Ken Johnson, from Hillsboro; third was Aaron Randle, from Manhattan; and fourth was Austin Jones, from Newton.

The first place handicap all-events was Ken Johnson, from Hillsboro; second place was Johnny Clark, from Emporia; third place was Keith Deters, from Seneca; and fourth place was James Carr, from Hillsboro.

The 2017 Tournament will be held the first three weekends in January in Topeka at Gage Center. The 2018 Tournament will be held in Lawrence at the Royal Crest Lanes.

Exciting news, the American Legion Auxiliary National President, Sharon Conner, will be visiting Kansas from Monday, March 7th to Wednesday, March 10th. On Monday, March 7, she will be at Department Headquarters from 3:30 to 4:30 and at Perry Post Home for dinner. On Tuesday, March 8, Sharon will have lunch at the Great Bend Post Home and dinner at the Ness City Post Home. A brunch at the McPherson Post Home with dinner at the Mulvane Post Home is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9th. The American Legion Family is encouraged to attend any of these stops to greet our National President and hear her message.

On March 12th, McPherson Post Home is hosting the Department Junior Meeting. Make plans to attend this exciting meeting of our youth. Manhattan Post Home will host the Oratorical Contest on March 19th. April is designated as Children and Youth Month. See if there is a need to support a youth project or activity in your community and then collaborate together to enrich the lives of the younger generation. Don’t forget to work with members of the American Legion to promote Cadet Law, Girls and Boys State programs at High Schools in your area.

It was an honor to attend the Lincoln Pilgrimage with Commander Vail. May each of us keep our promises as we, in the words of President Lincoln, “strive to finish the work we are in.”

AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Jeanne Haas
600 Arrowhead Dr.
New Strawn, KS 66839
620-364-5893

DON’T FORGET APRIL IS CHILDREN & YOUTH MONTH