

Department News

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



2015–2016 DEPARTMENT COMMANDER PAUL W. GARDNER

JANUARY 2016



FINAL REMINDER

This will be the final reminder regarding the per capita increase. We are fairly certain that everyone is aware of the per capita increase that will take effect January 20th. We are proud to say that with the notifications we have at least a 90% reporting of the Post Data change form to Department.

PER CAPITA INCREASE

*The National American Legion has passed a \$5.00 per capita increase at the National Convention, just concluded in Baltimore, Maryland. This will bring the total per capita sent in with each membership processed to \$31.00, up from \$26.00, effective with any cards processed by National on or after **January 20, 2016**. All 2016 membership processed by National before January 20, 2016 will be processed at the \$26.00 per capita rate.*

*If your Post's dues are below the \$31.00 rate or the post wants to raise dues before the January renewal notice is mailed on January 1, 2016, it is important that the Post Data change form be submitted to Department of Illinois by **December 1, 2015**.*

RENEWALS

Reach out now, make that personal contact with your members to pay their 2016 dues. This is a way to save your Post and its member's money by encouraging them to pay their dues early before the per capita increase.

Now is the time to discuss this issue and take action. Your District, Division leadership can assist you with this or feel free to call the State membership staff for assistance.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT ANY 2016 CARAVAN STOP. TO SEE CARAVAN STOP SCHEDULE GO TO PAGE 6.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

AS OF THURSDAY
DECEMBER 17, 2015

TOP 10 DISTRICT AND DIVISION RANKINGS

District Commander

17	HELSEL
13	FUCHS
14	DAVIS
8	SERRANO
9	PIZARRO
1	FREDERICK
20	LAWSON
12	D. JOHNSON
10	R. JOHNSON
16	GOSS

Division Commander

3	GRANBERG
2	FISCHER
4	VOGLER, SR.
1	CARDER
5	HARRIS

From The Desk of Department Commander Paul W. Gardner



By the time this newsletter goes out Districts should be at or over 85%, the December 31st target date. Districts who have not reached this need to work with your underachieving Posts to get them where they need to be. All Districts must continue to work with Posts that need help.

District Officers, a major part of your job is to help your Posts and their members. Don't wait for them to call you. District Officers should be aware of membership and any internal Legion problems within your District, all the time.

District Commanders, Senior Vice Commanders & Junior Vice Commanders, you took on leadership roles and the responsibility that goes with it. Legionnaires in your individual Districts look to you for that leadership and guidance and it's up to you to provide it.

Should a District Commander have a problem they can't handle your next step is your Division Commander. They, and their officers, are there to assist you.

Division Officers are not some elite group who send out letters and emails, they were elected by their members to lead and have responsibilities. They too must be aware of their Districts and the Posts within each.

Membership is every ones business but more so the District and Division

leaders. You all must work together to make your Districts and Divisions strong.

Working together means **COMMUNICATION**. It also means observing **THE CHAIN OF COMMAND**. Those Officers who have a problem with these two things or working with others to achieve membership goals should reconsider their leadership qualities and perhaps their future as an Officer.

Work together, work smart, reach your goals, lead and be proud of your accomplishments.

From The Desk of Department Sr. Vice Commander Cheri L. Stanton



I hope everyone had a GREAT time over the holidays and got a chance to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas, spend quality time with loved ones, and work on the holiday leftovers.

Before the Christmas season started we did one more revitalization with the 14th District. Lots of transfers from the 2910 post were spread out among the district. Our crew got on a roll and we even called some for the 15th District that were close to the border of the two districts. We called all the 2016 that were paid already and the 2015 ones with a phone number, we called them to tell them we were on a membership drive for the end of the year and we would send out a team to sign the transfer and collect the dues. The rest we did door-to-door. Amazing things happen when you get a group together to work as a team for membership.

I visited my son for Christmas and his lady friend is also a veteran. She keeps lunch size sacks in her car filled with snack food, McDonald's coupons, and comfort items. When she sees a homeless person asking for money, she gives them one of these instead of money. That way she knows they will get some hot food and not use the money for "other things." I put it out on facebook and several people thought that would be a good idea for larger areas. Thanks for the idea Rachel.

Whew, now to get ready for the American Legion Family Membership Caravan. Where else could you have a National Vice Commander come almost to your doorstep, and talk about the American Legion and how important it is to be a member, and visit with your Illinois legion leadership. In the DEPARTMENT NEWS and on the website, we have a schedule of all the stops and where you can go to bring those "last few" cards, not to forget the whole family will be there-Auxiliary, Sons, AL Riders, NEC, and Legion. We would love

to see some cards as well as representatives from each post, especially the people who don't always make it to District or Division meetings. You might be surprised at what you're missing. Membership is our life blood...we need to keep our organization going. We have to make Congress listen to us to help the Veterans of the past, present, and future.

Don't forget to be talking to schools to work on candidates for the Oratorical Contest, Essay Contests, Boy's State, Girl's State, Youth Police School, Poppy Poster contest, and all the scholarship applications. **THESE ARE OUR BEST KEPT SECRETS**. Designate someone in your post to deliver these to your schools—that should be the person you have for Children and Youth Chairman. They can **all be downloaded online** or from requesting them from Department.

Can't wait to see you all on the 2016 American Legion Family Membership Caravan.



From The Desk of Department Auxiliary President Kathy Bisna



Happy New Year from the American Legion Auxiliary! December was a time for the American Legion Auxiliary to do Christmas Gift Shops! What a GREAT program this is. The Veterans can come in and choose a gift for a family member. The gift is then wrapped and prepared to ship and shipped all at no cost to the Veteran. I was fortunate to attend 6 of these Gift Wraps and they were all very impressive. The smiles and hugs from the Veterans and the facility employees make it all worthwhile. Thanks go out to the Representatives and Deputies and the Holiday Gift Chairman

who make it all possible.

I am looking forward to traveling the state with Commander Paul and Commander Bill on the American Legion Family Caravan this month. The Crazy Cat Lady, Pam Ray, and I are hoping for a big collection of membership. This is also a time to meet and visit with the members of the American Legion Family. I hope you will find a stop near you and come visit with us. Bring some membership while you are at it!

Our Patriotic Conference is just around the corner. This is when National President Sharon Conatser makes her official visit to Illinois. The date is set for March 18th. I would love to see members from all of the Legion Family in attendance. Please contact our office if you need more information.

Earlier I spoke to you about my Special Project, Dogs on Deployment. On my Facebook page I share posts about Military Members in need of Fosters for their pets while on Deployments. My hope is that someone somewhere will see the posts and be able to help out. Have you signed up to be a Foster? If not will you please consider it? Thank you so much.

Do you have a Female in your life who is eligible but not a member of the American Legion Auxiliary? We would LOVE to have her join our great organization. We do Great things for our Veterans, their Families, and their Communities. Membership helps us to do these things. Please help us increase our membership! Thanks for all you, our Veterans have done and continue to do for this Great County!!



From The Desk of Detachment Commander William Geary



Greetings from the Detachment of Illinois. I hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We were very busy in December. On Saturday the 5th our members gathered at Champaign Post 24 for our Winter Detachment Executive Committee. I want to thank all who attended. We had good turnout of Officers and members from most of our Districts. Those who do not attend are missing out on a lot of good information. Reports are given on all of our programs. In fact, in the morning, there are Committee and Commission meetings that everyone can attend and learn everything you ever wanted to know about our American Legion and SAL programs. Please try to attend the next DEC. The next Detachment Executive Committee meeting will be on Saturday, March 12th at the Mt. Vernon Post. Please put it on your calendar.

MEMBERSHIP. You can check the current status of your Squadron and District by going on line to our Detachment website, www.il-sal.org. The Detachment met and exceeded the December 9th National goal of 45% and, as of this writing, we have already exceeded the January 20th goal of 60%. Congratulations to all those Squadrons and Districts that have done so well as to exceed and excel in the membership goals. Unfortunately, there is still a broad gap between the great Squadrons and the struggling Squadrons. There are still far too many Squadrons with zero or less than 10 member. As of January 1st, if the 2016 dues aren't paid, the members are delinquent and out of benefits. The Squadrons under 10 members are not official Squadrons and are in danger of having their Charters canceled. Division Officers, District Officers, Legionnaires, please check your Squadrons that are under 10 members and wake them up. Someone is sleeping at the wheel. Another problem is non-certification of Officers. We have five Districts (2,3,15,20,22) and 11 Squadrons with no certified Officers. One of the big embarrassments for all of us is that three of the non-certified Districts are in the top

10 on the membership report. Please check it out and get these Districts certified. Legionnaires, please help your Squadrons and Districts get back on track.

CARAVAN. Get ready, here we come. Starting January 7th, we will be traveling all around the state visiting nearly every District (only three in the 1st Division). The purpose is to promote membership and to gather membership cards, but it's not just membership we want to promote. I for one will be promoting the programs of the American Legion. We will be traveling with National Vice Commander Dave Gough from Wisconsin. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gough and his wife at the Egyptian Past Commander's Jamboree in November. It will be great seeing him again and learning from his experience in the American Legion. The evening of January 7th, we start at the Bellville Post 1255. On the 8th we stop at 3 more Posts in the 5th Division, on the 9th we travel into the 4th Division, then the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and end up at Rockford Post 340 on Saturday, January 16th. I took this trip last year (all different Posts) and we had a

(SAL Detachment Cmdr continued on page 9)



Did You Know?

From The Desk of Department Service Officer Raymond P. Toczek

Office: 312-980-4266 Email: Raymond.Toczek@va.gov

That before I started working for the American Legion I was employed by the Dept. of Veterans Affairs for over 33 years. During that time I witnessed many good programs and benefits and some bad ones. But my overall impression was that both the employees and the administration had a desire to sincerely help our country's veterans. I recently received this information direct from the VA and would like to share it with you.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a vast organization with a proud history of providing benefits and health care to our Veterans. Since our founding, we have cared for generations of Veterans and their families through a variety of programs and benefits. Please take a moment to see how each Administration and Staff Office in VA has had an impact on Veterans over the years.

1. Before World War II, college was, for the most part, an unreachable dream for the average American. Thanks to the GI Bill, millions of Veterans who would have flooded the job market after the war instead opted for education. In the peak year of 1947, Veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II Veterans had participated in an education or training program.
2. When VA's Home Loan Guaranty program started in 1944, many of the earliest VA--guaranteed loans were not for homes, but were for farming equipment and business inventory, including taxicabs and delivery trucks. More than 20 million loans later, VA is the largest no--down-payment home mortgage program in the Nation, guaranteeing a record 631,000 loans over the past 12 months--up 44 percent from the previous year--and boasting the lowest foreclosure rate in the industry for 25 of the last 28 quarters.
3. VA is the largest provider of health-care training in the United States and maintains more than 7,200 individual affiliation agreements at more than 1,800 educational institutions. Clinical training was provided to more than 120,000 interns, residents, fellows, and students in more than 40 professions in Fiscal Year 2014. VA health-profession educational programs have a major impact on the health-care workforce in VA and deliver a significant percentage of care to Veterans. Over the last 5 years, VA has expanded the mental health pipeline through targeted increases in training positions and approval of additional sites for mental health training, expanded the VA Nursing Academy, developed new residency programs in nursing and other associated health disciplines, and assumed a national leadership role in interprofessional education and collaborative practice.
4. For more than 90 years, VA's Research and Development program has improved the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health-care discovery and innovation. Notable VA Research and Development innovations and discoveries (<http://www.research.va.gov/about/history/cfm>) include:
 - 1960 - The first Veteran receives an implantable cardiac pacemaker
 - 1962 - The first long-term, successful kidney transplant is conducted at the Denver VA Medical Center
 - 1973 - Rosalyn S. Yalow receives the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for radioimmunoassay, a way to measure insulin.
 - 1984 - VA researchers led by Jed E. Rose, PhD, develop a transdermal nicotine patch.
 - 1996 - VA researchers find that an implantable insulin pump better controls blood sugar and weight for type 2 diabetes.
 - 2009 - VA researchers find that deep brain stimulation may hold significant benefits for those with Parkinson's disease.
 - 2011 - Developed an artificial lung prototype that mimics the structure of a natural lung and is described as a "significant step toward creating the first truly portable and implantable artificial lung system."
5. National cemeteries were first developed in the United States during the Civil War. Due to mounting war casualties, on July 167, 1862, Congress empowered President Abraham Lincoln, "To purchase cemetery grounds and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." This was the first U.S. legislation to state and solidify the concept of a national cemetery.

So next time you are at a Post meeting and someone starts badmouthing the VA patiently listen to their complaints but then interject some of the above items of interest. The VA is not all bad. And from my own experience for my two years of service I got my college degree through them, civil service preference points helped me get my government job and I currently use the VA hospital system.

In closing, I look forward to 2016 and have some interesting articles in mind. Remember to keep sending me your rumors to check out, I will be publishing some new ones soon.

2016 ILLINOIS AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY MEMBERSHIP CARAVAN SCHEDULE

January	City	Post #	Dist#	Div#	ETA
CARAVAN STOPS January 7th — 16th					
Thursday— 7th	Belleville	1255	22nd	5th	6:00 PM
Friday— 8th	Benton	280	25th	5th	8:30 AM
Friday— 8th	Harrisburg	167	24th	5th	11:30 AM
Friday— 8th	Olney	30	23rd	5th	5:30 PM
Saturday— 9th	Greenup	566	18th	4th	8:30 AM
Saturday— 9th	Bement	620	19th	4th	12:00 PM
Saturday— 9th	Chatsworth	613	17th	4th	5:30 PM
Sunday— 10th	Glenn Maker (Chicago)	1160	8	1st	9:00 AM
Sunday— 10th	Argo-Summit (Summit)	735	4th	1st	11:30 AM
Sunday— 10th	Evanston	42	7th	1st	5:00 PM
Monday— 11th	Lake Forrest	264	10th	2nd	6:00 PM
Tuesday— 12th	Huntley	673	11th	2nd	6:00 PM
Thursday— 14th	Springfield	809	21st	4th	8:30 AM
Thursday— 14th	Barry	222	20th	3rd	12:00 PM
Thursday— 14th	Ipava	17	15th	3rd	6:00 PM
Friday— 15th	Roseville	614	14th	3rd	8:30 AM
Friday— 15th	Wyoming	91	16th	3rd	12:00 PM
Saturday— 16th	Rock Falls	902	13th	2nd	8:00 AM
Saturday— 16th	Rockford	340	12th	2nd	11:30 AM



National Vice Commander Dave Gough will be our special guest during the 2016 Illinois American Legion Family Caravan.

Please take time to come to one of the stops nearest you.

Bring any membership cards with you that need to be turned in...even if it's just one.

Please remember to r.s.v.p. to the post if you plan on attending the meal.

Springfield Post #32, The American Legion
1120 Sangamon Avenue - Springfield, Illinois 62702-1853

www.springfieldamericanlegion.com spfldpost32@sbcglobal.net

82nd Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage
to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln
February 11 & 12, 2016

The 82nd Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln will be held in Springfield, Illinois, on **Friday, February 12, 2016**. Springfield Post #32, Auxiliary Unit #32 and Sons of The American Legion Squadron #32 extend a most cordial invitation to you to attend and participate.

National Commander Dale Barnett, National President Sharon Conatser, SAL National Commander Kevin Collier, our Illinois Department Commander Paul Gardner, our Department President Kathy Cisna and our Detachment Commander Bill Geary, will be attending and participating in the activities. Additionally, many other Legion, Auxiliary, S.A.L., and state and local dignitaries will be in attendance to honor President Abraham Lincoln on this very special day.

The Commemoration begins on Thursday evening, February 11, 2016, from 5 p.m. – 1 a.m. with an Open House at Springfield Post #32, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield. A **FREE shuttle** will run continuously between the **Hilton Hotel (Soon to change to the Wyndham Hotel)** and Post 32 from 5 p.m. – 1 a.m. Dinner service will be available at the Mess Hall Restaurant located inside Post 32, from 4:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Reservations are recommended. To place Thursday evening dinner reservations phone 217/523-3415 to reach the Mess Hall Restaurant. We will have plenty of fun, refreshments and a chance to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. The National and Department Officers will be at the Open House to greet everyone.

The headquarters hotel is usually the Hilton Springfield, 700 East Adams Street, in downtown Springfield. However, as of January 1st, 2016, the Hilton will change hotel names to the **WYNDHAM HOTEL** – same hotel just a name change. Room rates are \$98.00 per night, single or double occupancy, and the rate includes free parking. **Because of this hotel name change, reservations cannot be made over the internet and will have to be made over the telephone at 217-789-1530 (press 0 when prompted).** Remember to tell the clerk that you are reserving a room for the American Legion Lincoln Day Pilgrimage to receive this special rate. **All hotel reservations must be received by January 19, 2016.**

The following program has been planned for Friday, February 12, 2016:

- 8:00 a.m.** **American Legion Auxiliary breakfast honoring our National President, Capitol Room, Wyndham, Springfield.**
- 8:30 a.m.** **American Legion breakfast honoring our National Commander, Prairie Room Wyndham, Springfield.**
- 10:00 a.m.** **Pilgrimage departs Wyndham Hotel for journey to Abraham Lincoln's Tomb.**
- 10:30 a.m.** **Ceremonies and wreath placing from inside Mr. Lincoln's Tomb, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois.**
- 12:30 p.m.** **Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon with Distinguished Guests and National Commander Dale Barnett as the keynote speaker. Wyndham Ballroom.**

Breakfast tickets are \$20.00 each, and luncheon tickets are \$30.00 each with tax and tip included. Please specify when ordering breakfast tickets if they are for the Legion or Auxiliary breakfast. Luncheon tables of eight (8) will be assigned and may be reserved by sending your check for \$240.00 to the below listed address. If you are from Illinois, please indicate your Illinois District number on all luncheon reservations. Checks should be made out to **Springfield Post #32, The American Legion**. Tickets, reservations and further information please write to: American Legion Lincoln Day Pilgrimage, ATTN: Phil Drum, Ticket Chairman, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1853. Phone 217/523-3415. Post 32 e-mail is spfldpost32@sbcglobal.net **SPECIAL NOTICE: All meal checks and/or reservations must be received or canceled by February 4, 2016. No refunds can be made after that date. Please make your plans and reservations early, as we may not be able to seat you if you do not order your meal tickets early.**

We sincerely hope that you will be able to be with us to honor our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, on his birthday in his "Hometown", and that you make time to visit the beautiful **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library**, which is only three short blocks from the Hilton Springfield. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum will be offering their Group Rate to our attendees by merely showing your membership card on Feb 10, 11, 12, 2016.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Thomas J. "TJ" Kilcullen of Grayslake North High School

I would just like to spend some time getting you acquainted with an outstanding young man, that currently lives in Lindenhurst, attends Grayslake North High School, that typifies what I feel, the American Legion Americanism Programs are all about!

Thomas "TJ" Kilcullen, was sponsored by Grayslake Post 659 at the 10th District Oratorical Contest in the beginning of 2015. I first met him at our 10th District Meeting in February where he gave his oration that made it quite clear why he was the District Winner. It also gave him the opportunity to participate in the next phases of the Department Semi and Finals held in Peoria in March. Although TJ did not eventually win the Department Finals he was the runner up. As you all know, there are hundreds of talented Contestants that participate in the Oratorical Contest every year, just making it to the Semi's and Finals is a great accomplishment in itself.

In June, TJ attended Premier Boys State he was elected to Corum City Clerk and Kennedy County Clerk. During his week at Boys State, he won an unprecedented \$8,000 in scholarships available: They were the Model Citizen Award, Hayes-Kennedy Essay Competition, Abraham Lincoln Oration Contest and the Boys State Senator Award and was also selected to attend Boys Nation representing Illinois. Like most of the young men that attend Boys State, they say that it was the "best week of their lives"! TJ will be returning as a Boys State Counselor next year.

I was invited to the Grayslake Post Pig Roast and had the honor of presenting a Certificate of Distinguished Achievement on behalf of the Department of Illinois, recognizing his many scholarships at the Oratorical Program, Illinois Premier Boys State in addition to the high honor of being selected to attend Boys Nation. I had a chance to spend some time with TJ and put together this article and his future aspirations.

TJ is a senior this year and will be participating in the Oratorical Contest once again. He is currently working very hard on this years' oration topics that will be used in the 10th District Contest on January 8th. I also asked him if he was involved in any other extracurricular and community activities: Captain of the Varsity Congressional Debate and Academic Teams, President of the Spanish Club, Member of the Principal's Advisory Team, Math, Chess and Table Tennis teams, Students Who Achieve Together peer group and a Member of the National Honor Society. In the community, he is the Creator and Leader of a local peer community service group, Teen Court juror and Head Sunday School teacher at Grace Life Community Church. I asked him what he does if he has any free time.

At the present time, TJ is also working on the Candidate Fitness Assessment portion of his application to the U.S. Military Academy, West Point which he plans on attending after graduation. He plans on majoring in Political Science and making the Army his career. Once he has some free time - we will put together a Video that will be shown at the Department Convention which will surely be an enlightening and inspiring experience.

It is great to know that there are young Americans out there that are taking advantage of the Americanism Programs that are available to them thru the American Legion Family which can lead to the advancement of our Great Society into the 22nd Century.

Tom Marciciak
Chairman Public Relations/Information Exchange Committee

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Department Office Closed

New Years Day

January 1, 2016

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Legion Family Membership Caravan

January 7th—16th

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Department Office Closed

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 18th

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Lincoln Pilgrimage

February 11th—12th

Springfield

~ ~ ~

Department Office Closed

President's Day

February 15th

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Division & District

Jr. Vice & Sr. Vice Training

10 AM—3PM

February 20th

~ ~ ~

Washington Conference

February 21st—24th

Washington, D.C.

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Department Oratorical
Semi Finals and Final Contest

March 5th

Peoria Civic Center—Peoria

~ ~ ~

SAL Spring DEC

March 12th

~ ~ ~

American Legion Birthday

March 15th

~ ~ ~

Department Office Closed

Good Friday

March 25th

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**WE'RE
HIRING!**

Employment Opportunities

American Legion Department Headquarter Positions available:

- ★ **Finance Secretary**
- ★ **Membership Director**

Please contact Marty Conatser, Department Adjutant for an employment application or for more information.



HONOR, RESPECT, SERVICE, COMMUNITY

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Before televisions and central air conditioning ushered people inside after dinner each evening, the front porch was a beloved gathering place for families and friends. Children played in the yard. Adults discussed the day's events. Stories, jokes and opinions were freely exchanged. Neighbors stopped to chat for hours before retiring to their homes for the night.

It was a different time.

That's quite a contrast to today when a text message or Facebook update is quickly sent before moving on to the next urgent matter.

Today's technology has many advantages over the days of old, but sometimes it actually creates a communication disconnect. Like many people, I would not want to surrender my cell phone. However, no matter how reliant we have become on instant communication, there's still a vital place for one-on-one human interaction.

For certain, the act of sharing a story about a Legion success on social media has great value because you reach so many people so very fast. But at the same time, we should not dismiss or overlook the impact of a one-on-one conversation with a prospective Legion member, public official, media representative or someone who needs to know what the Legion is doing in local communities throughout the nation and beyond.

Our American Legion Family members are working with veterans and helping them with their benefits questions, giving them job leads and volunteer opportunities, assisting the elderly at veterans homes, inspiring youth to participate in our programs, honoring the fallen by volunteering at funeral services and placing flags at gravesites, and working behind the scenes to make communities better.

You may or may not actually be on a front porch when sharing those stories and encouraging eligible veterans to join or inspiring others to get involved. You may be at the gas station, the grocery store, church or a sports event. And don't get me wrong: tell those stories on Facebook and Twitter, too, as well as [our Legiontown USA website](#).

No matter the communications technique, the values developed on front porches decades ago – honor, respect, service, community – still resonate for Americans, maybe now more than has been the case in a long time. It's what [The American Legion](#) does every day.

Regardless of generation, prospective members and potential friends of our organization will feel that same neighborly bond that was shared over a glass of lemonade on the front porch years ago, as long as we make a point to look them in the eye and tell them in person what it means to continue serving.

Duty. Honor. Country.

(SAL Detachment Cmdr continued from page 3)

great time meeting all of the great members of the American Legion Family. Please check out the full itinerary and visit with us at one of our stops. I'm looking forward to meeting as many members as possible.

OUR PILLARS - OUR PURPOSE. That's this year's slogan for the Detachment. "Remembering Our Commitment – Keeping it Every Day" **R O C K E D**. This is National SAL Commander Kevin Collier's slogan this year. As I said, on the caravan I will be promoting the programs of the American Legion. As members of the

American Legion Family we have a purpose and a commitment to that purpose. The four pillars show us our purpose. Veterans, Defense, Americanism, and Youth. All of our American Legion programs fall under those pillars and it is my goal this year to bring those pillars, and our commitment to our purpose, to the forefront in everyone's mind. We harp on membership all the time, but the bottom line is we need that membership to provide all the services of the American Legion Programs. Is it snowing yet? As of this writing, not much. I am looking forward to seeing you all on the caravan.



Sharon Conatser 2015-2016 National President

300 CLUB ~ DECEMBER WINNERS

\$500 – Quincy Auxiliary Unit 37

\$250 – Yorkville SAL Squadron 489

\$150 – Dolores "Dee" Phillips

Take Down Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C (hep C) is a significant health concern facing U.S. military veterans today. It has been suggested by several studies that a higher prevalence of hepatitis C is seen in veterans versus nonveterans. Over 5 percent of veterans enrolled in the care of the Veterans Health Administration have hep C. When left untreated, hep C can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hep C is curable – which means the hep C virus is not detectable in the blood months after treatment ends - but the first step is to get tested. This is why The American Legion is launching the **Take Down Hep C** campaign.

You may have hep C and not know it.

- Hep C is a blood-borne virus spread when your blood comes into contact with infected blood of another individual.
- Hep C is inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus.
- Up to 75 percent of people with chronic hep C in the United States do not know they have it.
- Most people living with the virus have no symptoms following infection.

Symptoms of the disease can be flu-like and include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, jaundice, abdominal pain, joint pain, dark urine and gray-colored stools.

U.S. veterans are at elevated risk of having hep C.

A veteran could have been exposed to hep C in one or more of the following ways:

- Combat medical work or sharing of personal items such as razors or toothbrushes.
- While receiving a blood transfusion, blood product or organ transplant (before 1992).
- Sharing dirty needles or receiving a tattoo or body piercing with contaminated equipment or by a non-professional.

Exposure to contaminated blood on the battlefield or during sexual contact with a person with hep C.

Are you ready to Take Down Hep C?

- All veterans should know their risk factors, get tested for hep C antibodies and learn their results so they can talk with doctors about next steps including treatment options.

Hep C antibody testing is available at all VA medical centers and you may qualify for a free test. Contact your American Legion Department Service Officer (DSO) for more information. To find department service officers near you, visit www.legion.org/serviceofficers.

Take Down Hep C – The Campaign

- **Take Down Hep C** is a national movement to encourage people who are at risk to get tested for hep C antibodies.
- The American Legion is working together with Abbvie, Inc., a national corporate alliance of The American Legion, to **Take Down Hep C** because the disease is a significant health concern facing U.S. military veterans.
- The American Legion National Executive Committee has passed Resolutions 140 and 148 that urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to approve presumptive service connection for hep C and increase funding for medical research for hep C and other health-care issues veterans face.

Visit TakeDownHepC.com to learn more about the risk factors, importance of hep C antibody testing, and discussing the results with your doctor for possible treatment options.

Do your part – get tested today! Together we can **Take Down Hep C**

Is Your Vehicle Registration due soon?

Due to the lack of a state budget, the Secretary of State's office is suspending the mailing of vehicle registration renewal reminder notices. By suspending this service, which will save approximately **\$450,000 per month**, the office will be able to prolong the ability to mail vehicle registration renewal stickers, titles and license plates to vehicle owners for a few months longer before the postage account is depleted. Vehicle owners are encouraged to be mindful of their vehicle registration status. Motorists can sign up to receive reminder notices electronically by email. Go to <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/>

Americans Encouraged to Greenlight Opportunity for Transitioning Veterans

With 250,000 members of our military transitioning back to civilian life each year, veterans are returning to schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods across the country to take on important roles as neighbors, co-workers, coaches, teachers, leaders and engaged and active citizens. But their transition doesn't end with the return home. That's when it begins.

Today, empowering organizations including the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Team Red, White and Blue, Team Rubicon, Hire Heroes USA and Blue Star Families joined Walmart to launch Greenlight A Vet. This is a campaign to help create visible and actionable national support for America's veterans and their families. You interact with them every day at work, at school and in the neighborhood. However, it's hard to show them support or recognize their contributions when, back home and out of uniform, they're more camouflaged than ever.

A green light means go and that's what veterans are known for - their ability to take action quickly no matter the challenge. They demonstrate great leadership skills in any situation and represent the best of America. Their involvement in communities is central to our nation's success.

"The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University is proud to be part of Walmart's campaign to Greenlight A Vet in support of those who have served in the military and their families, said Dr. Mike Haynie, Executive Director of the IVMF and Vice Chancellor at Syracuse University. "Participating in a national movement, designed to recognize those who have worn our nation's uniform as values, contributing members of our communities, is our way of encouraging all Americans to meaningfully engage with veterans and their families and by so doing, appreciate them as respected civic assets."

"By uniting behind a visible symbol, we can ignite a national conversation in our communities about opportunity, success and service for veterans as they take off the uniform," said retired Brigadier General Gary Profit, Walmart's senior director of military programs.

All Americans are invited to show support for veterans through a visible symbol. Even if we can't always see our veterans, they should always be able to see our support.

Anyone can Greenlight A Vet:

- Hire one today. Or help a veteran find a job.
- Volunteer and serve with veterans groups in your local community.
- Start a mentor/mentee relationship with a returning veteran.
- Raise awareness on social media.
- Or simply signal support by changing your porch light to green.

Walmart is committed to greenlighting veterans, including hiring 250,000 veterans by 2020 through its Veterans Welcome Home Commitment. As part of this effort, Walmart proudly greenlighted the company's 100,000th veteran hire this past month.

While a job is a vital piece of transitioning from military to civilian life for a veteran, it also takes a coordinated, multi-sector effort to create healthy transitions to civilian life. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation committed \$20 million in grants to organizations that provide veteran job training, education and community-based collaboration. As part of this pledge, the Walmart Foundation provided donations to organizations focused specifically on transitioning veterans:

- A \$500,000 grant to Hire Heroes USA (Hire Heroes) to help increase their capacity. Hire Heroes has built a national reputation of excellence for their success at helping unemployed veterans find jobs.
- A \$190,000 grant to Blue Star Families for a tech-train-to-hire project that will train military spouses for high demand and high growth careers in technology. This program speaks to the heart of one of the greatest challenges to military life, which is 58 percent of unemployment and underemployment among military families.

"Through continued, collaborative work with our nonprofit partners, we greenlight innovative public/private community-based initiatives that address the navigation challenges many of our veterans face when returning to the civilian workforce and their communities." said Kathleen McLaughlin, President of the Walmart Foundation. "There is no better tribute to our men and women who serve than recognizing the value of their contributions and fully engaging them in our communities and workforce when they return home."

For more information about Walmart's Greenlight A Vet campaign please visit: www.greenlightavet.com.



The American Legion Department of Illinois Legionnaire of the Year

(Nomination Guidelines)

Deadline is June 15th

The nominee must be a member of a Post in Illinois.

Honorees will be recognized for significant public service contributions made at the local, state or national level and by excellence achieved through action above and beyond the call of duty. Nominees should also have made significant contributions in volunteer work in support of veterans and/or the military.

In addition to information requested on the nomination form, please provide the Veteran's membership ID number as well as a brief written summary of the nominee's achievements; to include: (a) a description of significant accomplishments, including dates, (b) information concerning military service, and, (c) a list of military awards and decorations received by the nominee.

Nominations will be evaluated on the scope and impact of a nominee's achievements and the extent to which his/her efforts benefit and provide inspiration to the American Legion and other Veterans. Please document significant achievements and accomplishments, especially those made after the nominee's military service.

Nominations will be reviewed and the recipients will be ultimately chosen by the Department of Illinois.

Nominations should be sent to:

The American Legion
Department of Illinois
Attn: Legionnaire of the Year
2720 E. Lincoln St.
Bloomington, IL 61704
Fax – (309) 663-0361

Deadline is June 15th

**The American Legion Department of Illinois
Legionnaire of the Year**

Please read the Nomination Guidelines prior to completing this form. Please attach a written summary of the nominee's achievements following the guidelines.

Nominee _____
Date & Place of Birth _____ Member ID# _____
Home Address _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

Nominator's Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

I have read the nomination guidelines and attest that the above information is accurate and true. If selected as a "Legionnaire of the Year" I agree to attend State Convention with nominee to receive the award.

Signature of Nominee _____ Date _____

SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:

The American Legion Department of Illinois
Attn: Legionnaire of the Year
2720 E. Lincoln St.
Bloomington, IL 61704
Fax – (309) 663-0361

**form available online at
www.illegion.org
or call (309)663-0361**

Deadline is June 15th

New Illinois Laws You Should Know Going Into 2016

New Laws

Despite failing to agree on a budget, Illinois lawmakers and Gov. Bruce Rauner did find common ground on hundreds of new laws during 2015. In all, 237 of them will go into effect with the start of the new year on Jan. 1. The lengthy list ranges from new drunk driving laws to bans on newfangled but potentially dangerous products.

The lengthy list ranges from new drunk driving laws to bans on newfangled but potentially dangerous products. Here's a look at just a few of the new laws.

1. Truck drivers and tow companies pay close attention to this one! A NEW LAW IN ILLINOIS PUTS IN PLACE LIMITS ON NON-CONSENSUAL TOWS OF LARGE TRUCKS. The new law prohibits towers from removing a commercial vehicle under the vehicle's own power without authorization from law enforcement. It also requires law enforcement responsible for patrolling highways to maintain at least one tow rotation list.
2. Sixteen years after the bobcat was removed from the Illinois threatened species act, a new law establishes a four-month hunting season for the animal. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which will oversee the hunting, said the state's bobcat population has been growing since hunting was banned in 1972. Supporters say hunting the animals will help keep the number of animals in check. Opponents said the cat does little harm and should be left alone. The legislation is House Bill 352
3. Following the caffeine-induced overdose death of a high school athlete in Ohio, lawmakers moved to prohibit providing powdered caffeine products to anyone under 18. The legislation is Senate Bill 9.
4. Opening your pill bottles will become a bigger pain in than they already are. NEW NUMERICAL LOCKING DEVICES WILL BE PLACED ON OPIOID PHARMACEUTICAL PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES. This new lock will be similar to a gym locker, with a combination. Now your pill bottle has an extra layer of protection against those who shouldn't be taking your prescribed medication in the first place.
5. Although a product known as "Palcohol" won federal approval, Rauner and lawmakers agreed to ban the substance from store shelves in Illinois. Supporters of the ban say the product could be used to secretly spike someone drink or food, leading to an overdose. Creators of the powder say it is convenient for tailgaters and backpackers who want to mix a lightweight form of rum or vodka. The legislation is Senate Bill 67.
6. TRAFFIC TICKETS WILL NOW COST YOU \$5 MORE. To help police pay for new equipment, like body cameras, traffic tickets are upped by \$5. This does not include parking, registration, or pedestrian offenses.
7. Some Illinois counties and municipalities will get the power to create zoning regulations for wind farms under a new law taking effect in the new year. The measure clarifies existing law regarding the placement of wind turbines and will only affect counties that do not have local zoning laws. The legislation is Senate Bill 920.
8. If you have a loved one in a long-term facility, FAMILIES AND SKILLED NURSING RESIDENTS WILL NOW BE ABLE TO USE THEIR OWN RECORDING DEVICES AND CAMERAS TO MONITOR WHAT HAPPENS IN THEIR OWN RESIDENT ROOMS. This new law allows residents or their families to install their own monitoring devices in rooms at certain long-term care facilities, including licensed nursing homes and facilities licensed to care for developmentally disabled. This will allow you to take watch on grandma and make sure she is getting the best care, which is what she deserves.
9. Bring your pets inside and treat them the way you want to be treated! THE NEW LAW MAKES IT ILLEGAL TO LEAVE PETS IN EXTREME HEAT OR COLD. Owners found guilty could be looking at a year in jail or a \$2,500 fine.
10. A new law is designed to help terminally ill people by allowing them access to experimental drugs. The so-called "Right to Try" Act would give patients access to clinical-trial, experimental medical treatments and medications. Among those expected to be affected are people with HIV, ALS or cancer. The legislation is House Bill 1335.
11. Beginning in 2016, Illinois will formally have a system to find missing adults who have wandered off because of Alzheimer's or dementia. The Silver Alert law would be similar to the Amber Alert program for tracking missing children. The legislation is Senate Bill 1846.
12. Marijuana may be legal, BUT IT WILL BE ILLEGAL TO BE IN POSSESSION OF, DISTRIBUTE OR MANUFACTURE SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA OR SYTHETIC DRUG "K2." This is good because the stuff is deadly. Make it be known, any compound that contains the analog of K2, but is modified to not have the exact chemical composition or structure of K2, will also be illegal.
13. Following a scare in which dozens of school children in Macoupin County were affected by a carbon monoxide leak at their school, lawmakers adopted a law requiring CO detectors to be placed in all school facilities. The legislation is House Bill 152.
14. Three new laws affecting ignition interlock devices were approved in 2015, including one requiring the use of ignition interlocks for five years for all repeat offenders. An ignition interlock is a device that tests a driver's blood alcohol content before they drive and blocks them from driving if they've been drinking. Other changes include requiring fourth-time offenders to use an interlock for the rest of their lives. And, rather than wait 30 days, any first-time offender can begin using an interlock immediately after a revocation.
15. Lawmakers and Gov. Bruce Rauner added a symbol to the state's growing list of official state animals, plants and products. In honor of Illinois being a top-ranked producer of pumpkins, the General Assembly designated pumpkin pie as the official state pie. The legislation is House Bill 208.

Winter Word Find

Z C H R N V F G E M I T T E N S T L
 P S L F P B N R T X Y M M M U O S U
 F P Z Y Q I B S A G T N W J X A O L
 M F G R D G W T L C A Z K I Y H R K
 M H L D Y K F O O P S U A I X I F M
 X F E S I S V P C H O I K K B P D Z
 H L I K A E H R O F A I C W W I H F
 S I Z A S R L O H J I T J I M R E K
 X K N T A H S K C L C G S H C O U G
 B Y R I T H I P T C N G Z P E L Y H
 V I K N N O Z W O A P O L Q F P E X
 Y M P G Z X H H Q R Z G S R E I S
 Z Y Q R A P O E U X H S T A O C O F
 B U J C T W T F R K U V G S T D W W
 Q C G C D E M I Y N M O V H A N O M
 A X X N N Z D Q C T Y I Y S Q N L Z
 O K J S C O L D D V E K U S S F R F
 E V Z D B J U O L O Q D K U S V F F

- | | | |
|---------|----------|--------------|
| COATS | COLD | FROST |
| GLOVES | HATS | HOTCHOCOLATE |
| ICICLES | MITTENS | SCARF |
| SKATING | SLEDDING | SNOW |



**During the Cold Temperatures
 PLEASE don't forget to check on our
 comrades who are alone or can not get out!**



**Take a few minutes
 to make sure they are
 warm and have food**



2015 – 2016 DIVISION & DISTRICT MEETING DATES

DATE	DIST./ DIV.	TIME	POST	CITY
1/10/2016	5TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	COLLINSVILLE POST 365	COLLINSVILLE
1/10/2016	19TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	WINDSOR POST 725	WINDSOR
1/10/2016	21ST DISTRICT	1:00 PM	CHATHAM POST 759	CHATHAM
1/15/2016	10TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	SHARVIN POST 397	NORTH CHICAGO
1/17/2016	23RD DISTRICT	11:00 AM	CENTRALIA POST 446	CENTRALIA
1/17/2016	24TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	ALBION POST 590	ALBION
1/17/2016	25TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	THE HAVEN	CARBONDALE
1/20/2016	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	SESTERHENN POST 166	MORTON GROVE
1/21/2016	5TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	STICKNEY POST 687	STICKNEY
1/24/2016	22ND DISTRICT	1:00 PM	NASHVILLE POST 110	NASHVILLE
1/27/2016	9TH DISTRICT	7:00 PM	MERLE GUILD POST 208	ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
1/28/2016	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	REHFELDT-MEYER POST 474	MATTESON
2/7/2016	12TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	MARSEILLES POST 235	MARSEILLES
2/17/2016	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	EVANSTON POST 42	EVANSTON
2/18/2016	5TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	CICERO POST 96	CICERO
2/19/2016	10TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	LAKE ZURICH POST 964	LAKE ZURICH
2/21/2016	16TH DISTRICT	10:00 AM	ELMWOOD POST 638	ELMWOOD
2/24/2016	9TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	FRANKLIN PARK POST 974	FRANKLIN PARK
2/25/2016	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	HAZEL CREST POST 398	HAZEL CREST
3/6/2016	2ND DIVISION	1:00 PM	PEARL CITY POST 1014 (POPPY SEMINAR @10AM)	PEARL CITY
3/6/2016	5TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	CARMI POST 224 (POPPY SEMINAR 11:30 AM)	CARMI
3/6/2016	18TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	TOLEDO POST 764	TOLEDO
3/6/2016	21ST DISTRICT	1:00 PM	CHATHAM POST 759	CHATHAM
3/9/2016	2ND DISTRICT	7:30 PM	FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT POST 923	CHICAGO
3/13/2016	3RD DIVISION	1:00 PM	LIMESTONE POST 979 (POPPY SEMINAR @11AM)	BARTONVILLE
3/13/2016	17TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	CHATSWORTH POST 613	CHATSWORTH
3/13/2016	19TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	SULLIVAN POST 68	SULLIVAN
3/13/2016	4TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	CLINTON POST 103 (POPPY SEMINAR @10:30AM)	CLINTON
3/13/2016	25TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	HERRIN POST 645	HERRIN
3/16/2016	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	MORTON GROVE POST 134	MORTON GROVE
3/18/2016	10TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	ROUND LAKE POST 1170	ROUND LAKE
3/20/2016	15TH DISTRICT	10:00 AM	FAIRVIEW POST 644	FAIRVIEW
3/20/2016	22ND DISTRICT	1:00 PM	GEORGE E HILGARD POST 58	BELLEVILLE
3/23/2016	9TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	PALATINE POST 690	PALATINE
3/24/2016	5TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	ROBERT E COULTER JR POST 1941	LAGRANGE
3/24/2016	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	EDWARD SCHULTZ POST 697	LANSING

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
P.O. BOX 2910
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS 61702

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Phone: 309-663-0361 Fax: 309-663-5783
Email: hdqs@illegion.org Web: www.illegion.org

Department Commander Department Editor
PAUL W. GARDNER MARTY CONATSER

Now Is The Time To Stand Together For Our Flag

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JANUARY TRIVIA

1. What did an enemy have to be, for a U.S. soldier to call him a "believer" in the Vietnam War?
2. What trials, beginning in 1945, spawned the phrase "I was only following orders"?
3. What was the first war the U.S. took part in that was partially financed with lottery dollars?
4. What southeastern state was the last to return to the Union after the Civil War?
5. What Persian Gulf warrior called his young majors in charge of combat operations "Jedi Knights"?



Visit our website!
Scan Here

ANSWERS:

1. Dead.
2. The Nuremberg war crimes trials.
3. The Revolutionary War.
4. Georgia.
5. Norman Schwarzkopf.



2016
HAPPY
NEW YEAR