



Department Commander

Richard Ellwein

I was at the 2013 Boy Scout National Jamboree at the Summit in West Virginia. I was a Legionnaire Scout staff member. I manned a booth with other Legionnaire Scouts from other states. National Commander Jim Koutz and his aide paid an official visit to the jamboree. The jamboree was a great adventure. I attended the National Membership conference. I presented the Department five year membership plan to National personnel and received the Department goal for 2013-2014. I attended Class 'A' baseball tournament in Helena. I threw out the first pitch prior to the championship game. I attended the Fort Harrison chapel 70th anniversary service. I attended the National Convention in Houston, TX as a delegate. I attended a multi media workshop. Using social media seems to be the way to tell your community about what your post is doing. I attended the National Security convention committee then the breakout on law and order. I attended the Fall District # 6 meeting in Anaconda on September 14th. I attended the Department Commander/Adjutant conference in Indianapolis. I attended the Royal Canadian Legion Saskatchewan Provincial Convention in North Battleford.

VICE COMMANDER

Roger Hancock

I had the opportunity to attend the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis at the end of July. The American Legion will celebrate its Centennial in 2019 with a goal of 3.2 million Legionnaires. While the Department's numbers were reduced from last year, those numbers were passed onto most Posts who saw a reduction in their Goal requirements. We do need to anticipate continued increases in our yearly numbers through 2019. The National Membership Workshop presented some ideas to help us better achieve our goal and all are workable within our Department. In other Departments Posts have been established in retirement homes, universities, and prisons. In Montana we have retirement homes, universities, and prisons. This year National is promoting the membership slogan "Just Ask". We need to ask people we meet if they are a qualified veteran and "Just Ask" them to join the American Legion.

As an elected delegate I attended the National Convention in Houston, Texas. I sat on the Naval Affairs Committee which is being discontinued. It is being incorporated into a military affairs committee. I also got to attend some of the training on using the Web and Social Media to benefit the American Legion. I walked the Parade holding the United States Ensign. We had a good showing, but we didn't win first place. Maybe chaps and cowboy hats next year. The Department of Montana was honored at the convention with presenting the second for our new National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger. Commander Dellinger's slogan is "Building for Tomorrow – Today"!

I have attended, at the time of this writing, all District meetings except for Districts 8 and 9. I have been pleased with the turnout at most meetings. There is still room to improve attendance at the District meetings. First we need to ensure all Posts are informed weeks before the meeting and again just prior to the actual District meeting date. Second we need to bring some fun into them. I would like to say that I have seen more of Montana in the last month than I have in the last 20 years. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the great people that I have met at each District meeting. I am looking forward to meeting more great country and people over the rest of the year. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

ZONE COMMANDER - SOUTH CENTRAL

Dale L. Webb

Since being installed as Zone Commander, I have tried to stay in touch with all three District Commanders. The District 9 Commander was hard to get a hold of due to his job and since then has resigned. I welcome interim District Commander Demorise Allen Jr. to the job. Having worked with Demorise before, I know that he will do an exemplary job.

I also have kept in contact with Ken McMillon and George Blackard from Districts 7 and 11 respectively. I have tried to be available for them if they need my help.

I attended the District 7 meeting in Livingston and was pleased that they had a good turnout. I realize that it would have been better if it hadn't been on a Friday night. They discussed several things and the Vice Commander and I talked about membership.

I also attended the District 11 meeting in Belfry and was pleased with the turnout. Again the Vice Commander and I talked about membership. I talked about the role of the Legionnaires in maintaining and building membership.

Again I attended the District 9 meeting in Winifred and was pleased with the turnout. Again we talked about membership and the role we all can play in this vital endeavor.

I still think that we can get more members to attend our District Meetings with the help of our Commanders, both District and Post, in informing all members about these meetings and what the agenda will be.

In all three meetings I emphasized the importance of the Legion Family and reminded everyone that we are family and that as family we can help each other with membership drives and membership retention by asking any of the family to come and help if it is needed. I emphasized that I was ready and willing to travel to help with their goals.

I have offered to help with District 9 as they are closing two posts and offered to help District 11 with their troubled post who hasn't submitted any members yet. I have great respect for both Commanders and if they need help from the Department or the Zone they won't hesitate to ask.

Again I would like to thank all three District Commanders on their District Meetings and know that they are all working on the problems in their respective Districts.

ZONE COMMANDER - WESTERN

John Pellegrini

I was elected Zone Commander of Districts 4,5 and 6 at the Department Convention in Lewistown last June and have been running ever since. I have attended all three of my Districts Fall meetings and spoke on what I think is important to keep our membership growing, especially as to how important renewals are. Membership in the Zone is moving along very well. District #4 sits at 63.3% of goal with only one Post in the Red but five not at Target yet. District #5 is at 56.6% with two Posts in the Red and six Posts not at Target. District #6 sits at 62.4% of goal with none in the Red but two Posts not at Target. Of all the Posts in the Western Zone Arlee is sitting on top at 82.6% of goal. Congrats to Carmen McClure and the Post members for doing their job.

I attended one of District #5 monthly meeting and was impressed. I give an "atta boy" to District #5 Commander Gerry Christensen. These meetings keep everyone up on what is happening in the District especially membership. If you haven't already, other Districts should try this.

ZONE COMMANDER – North Central

Hal Rice

On October 5, 2013 I attended the District 2 meeting in Havre and on October 12, 2013 I attended the District 8 meeting in Augusta. I gave talks on the benefits of being an American Legion family member. I tied in this topic with a post revitalization done at Post 26 in Fort Benton on September 16, 2013 with James Fiedler. I attended the evening meeting and took information from there to the District meetings. At Augusta I also talked on the issue of the IRS auditing Legion posts to verify if members are eligible to belong. Posts can ask to be provided with member's DD214s, but there are privacy issues with them. Posts will need to black out Social Security numbers. These can be beneficial to the post for Funeral Benefits, VA care and etcetera. At Post 102, our Honor Guard reads at the funeral

as much as about the Veteran's military history that we can get. If your post doesn't want to go with the DD214, our membership application is a signed document, stating that the veteran is eligible to be a member. Bottom line is, it is the Post's responsibility to verify membership.

On September 18, 2013, I went to Fort Benton to be their acting commander. I conducted the meeting, holding an election of the officers and installing them. For the Good of the Legion, I was honored to give the Vietnam 50 Year Commemorative Medal to 12 of their Veterans.

ZONE COMMANDER - EASTERN

Peter A. Olson

The Easter Zone Commander's accomplishments to date are:

1. Attended the District 1 Fall meeting.
2. Attended Post 81 meeting and discussed membership.
3. Communicated with the Commanders for District 1 and 10 regarding membership.

I did not attend the District 10 Fall meeting due to conflicting, professional commitments. I will not be attending the Fall 2013 Conference due to family health issues.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C)

Mervin G. Gunderson

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the members of the Department of Montana that put their faith in me during the elections at the state meeting in Lewistown, MT. I will do my best to bring the National American Legion perspective to you.

I attended the National Convention in Houston, Texas at the end of August. I was present at my assigned committee and all meetings of the convention. The leading candidate for Commander of The American Legion asked me to give a second to his nomination. That was a very high honor. On August 28, 2013 at the post annual convention NEC meeting I was formally recognized as the new National Executive Committeeman from Montana.

From September 8, 2013 through September 11, 2013 I was in Washington, DC for the National Commander's testimony before the joint armed services committee. While on Capitol Hill, Roger Hagen and I visited with Representative Steve Daines. I met with Senator Max Baucus and Senator Jon Tester. The main purpose of the meetings was to impress on congressional delegation the importance of leaving veteran benefits in place. We also discussed the pending government shutdown and the need to pass the funding for government services. While visiting with our congressional I delegation was able to bring the IRS issue before them. The delegation had not been made aware of the issue until then.

On September 27, 2013 the District meetings of the Department of Montana started. I was able to attend all the meetings with the exception of District 8 and District 9. It was great seeing all the Legionnaires who took time out of their schedules to attend their district meeting.

From October 11, 2013 to October 17, 2013 I was in Indianapolis for the Fall meetings of The American Legion. I attended some of the SAL events and all sessions for the Legion. During the meetings I was appointed to the NEC subcommittee on resolutions. This is a very prestigious position and has brought a great deal of attention to Montana.

During the Fall Conference for the Department of Montana I will be escorting Mike Helm, the Leading Candidate for National Commander and Doug Wooddell, the National Vice Commander. It will be a great opportunity for our Montana Legionnaires to meet both of these special people.

ALTERNATE N.E.C. Dave McLean

I was elected to the position of Alternate N.E.C. at the department Convention. I attended the National Convention in Houston at the end of August 2013.

My major area of concentration has been to advance the election from the Department of Montana of a National Commander. We have been making positive strides in this area and hope to be able to make a more definitive report in the near future. Due to a recent surgery, I was unable to take a call-in to Washington, D.C. for the National Commander's testimony before Congress or to go to Indianapolis for the fall meetings. I hope to return to "full duty" by the end of October.

PAST COMMANDER Jim Carlisle

My attendance at some of the last state meetings and district conferences has left me with feelings of exasperation and frustration. Many see our organization as a "volunteer" organization and that no one has to work. Those that propose changes are met with resistance from all angles. Those that will work have their labors doubled.

During the last few years I've come to believe that the American Legion has fallen in line with most of the political philosophies of our time. We've become an organization filled with people attempting to find "fill material" for their obituaries and spouting rhetoric designed to make them look like intellectuals. We've become an entirely political organization in that we try to please everyone and make them "happy, happy, happy." Unfortunately happiness is something that can only be found within oneself, and doesn't come from outside sources.

I've sat at meetings and had the membership cut at posts that were completely inactive and serving a single digit percentage of their veterans. The reason given was twofold: 1) "We have to make them successful first and then they will do better" 2) "I have special insight into how difficult it is for them." (Personally I found the post commander unable to return any of the three phone calls left on his answering machine. My message was this: "Please let me come and collect these member's dues for you. Call me at 787-5203." I received nothing and this response was quite typical.

At the same time some of the smaller posts serving 200 % of the veterans in their community have their goals increased. The reason given: "It's easy for them."

It is my belief that that entire state needs to realign their goals with scientific evidence backed goals related to the veteran's populations within their communities. These veteran's populations were identified by census. It is my belief that we have to reward as many people as possible using achievement awards that are already identified in American Legion documentation.

Best wishes to all of you. See you in a bit down the road.

-Jim

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN REPORT

Art Ellison



Busy! Busy! Busy! Since my last report that is the way things have been. I attended some of the district meetings and sending photographs for use in the legionnaire. I have enjoyed hearing stories from members of posts of Legion memories. I have encouraged them to put them in writing for future generations. I am a firm believer that if it isn't written; it never happened.

Case in point during the district meetings I talked with Culbertson post commander with suggestions on how to find historical records of his post. Lo and behold he found past post records and one of the former adjutants attic. Also, the Thompson Falls commander found records dating back to 1919 in the storage shed of a past adjutant. If you look around and talk to past adjutants families you will be amazed at what you will find.

As I traveled to the district meetings my objective has been to let people know that their post history does exist. It just takes a little effort seeking and you will find.

I attended the National Convention in Houston and found there is an advantage sitting in the back of the convention Hall. You can walk out and nobody misses you. The disadvantage was I had to walk all the way to the front to take photographs. Of course at my age the exercise didn't hurt.

I continue to work on the Department Narrative History Book and will present it to Past Commander Jim Carlisle at fall conference. I will make a copy and have it available at Department Headquarters.

To help posts with their history books I have been working on a historian's handbook. It is a big project but when I it is done it will be worthwhile endeavor.

Past Department Historian Ray Read and I are working on the Centennial Department history book. I have been gathering a great deal of information as I travel through the state for inclusion in Montana history.

I will be attending the fall NEC meetings in Indianapolis in October and judging post and Department history books. Montana will be well represented by a history of Stevensville post 94, by Jerry Esmay. It won the Department contest and his post received a check for \$100 for his effort.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

After the Department Convention in Lewistown I prepared for the National Convention in Houston. I was assigned no committees because we had a full delegation this year. I missed 2 Fall District Meetings due to the death of my mother. Other activities included visits to Posts in Big Timber and Belgrade. I continued to work with the Legislative Chairman on Legislative matters and either participated or attended the State Administration and Veteran Affairs Interim Committee meetings, and visited the Montana State Veterans Home in Columbia Falls, the Western Montana Cemetery, as well as the Yellowstone County Veterans Cemetery in Laurel. Additionally in coordination with the Montana National Guard I briefed at and 1 Demobilization briefings, as well as assisting with the planning of 3 others. I also conducted 4 reconnect visits. I attended both A and AA American Legion Baseball State Tournaments and attended the Fort Harrison Chapel 70th Anniversary service.

On line renewals still continue to be a learning process for all involved, if we could get all the Adjutants and Commanders to attend the District meetings a lot of our problems could be solved. Use of MyLegion.org continues to be a slow process; we gain new Posts using this program at the rate of about 1 a month. We currently have 56 Posts signed up, an increase of 10 over last year, but only about 25 are actively using it. We must continue to teach and encourage our Posts to sign up for this free program and to actively use it.

I missed the Commanders and Adjutants session in Indianapolis due to the passing of my mother. I wish to thank the many Legionnaires and Auxiliary members who sent cards and words of encouragement.

This year we made several changes to the membership report which if used with the Post Transmittal form introduced last year, should alleviate many problems Posts have with their membership transmittals. The challenge is still to get Post Adjutants and Commanders to use the Department website and to regularly read and respond to emails.

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

Kelly Ackerman

As the AL DSO, I attended the following events:

- ✓ August 1-3, 2013- DSO School in Indianapolis
- ✓ All Fall District meetings which were attended by MVAD VSOs according to area of jurisdiction with the exception of the District 8 meeting.

During the Fall District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare, Disability Compensation, Pension, Aid & Attendance, Pension Poaching, and recent changes relating to Disability Claims Processing Programs.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Jim Grosset

After being reappointed as the Parliamentarian, I went to the National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. It was a very good Convention and I got to shake hands with one of the Candidates for President. At the Convention I was asked by some delegates what the duties of the Parliamentarian were. When I told them, they said that this was handled by the JAG. I am not sure how the position came about in the Department of Montana, but I do know and feel that it is an important one. I have felt much honored to have this position and feel that it ties in with the Chairman of the Constitution Committee. If this position is given to the JAG, then I feel that he will have much more on his hands. If I keep this position, I will do all that a layman can do for the JAG.

FINANCE OFFICER

Michael Susag

First off I would like to thank Dick Ellwein for appointing me as you Department Finance Officer and Carl Nordberg for his recommendation. I had previously served 12 years on the Finance Committee.

After Department Convention I assumed the job of Finance Officer traveling to the American Legion office about once a week to sign checks or reconcile the different bank accounts.

I attended National Convention in Houston where I was a delegate on the National Finance Committee.

As of October 8th Gary and I reconciled the bank accounts. On the profit & loss statement for 2013-2014 the projected budget income is \$206,315.00, we are at \$94,721.04 or about 46%, this is about normal. Projected budget expenses are \$195,397.93 and as of October 8th we are at \$42,195.27 or 21.6%.

Membership revenue is down \$4,880.40 from last year this time, so we need to get in those renewals. Also, Gary is still getting checks to reconcile from last April. Please be more prompt in cashing your checks from Department.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

The Judge advocate has nothing to report.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Karen Semple

Following appointment as Department Sergeant-at-Arms, the first order of business was to serve in this position during the close of the 2013 Convention meetings in Lewistown, MT. Following the convention, an article, with a target audience of all appointed post Sergeants-at-Arms, was submitted to and subsequently published in the Montana Legionnaire. This was inspired, upon learning at the convention – while speaking with members from many other posts that, like my home post (for the sake of expediency) other posts also used the “Short Form” installation ceremony when installing elected and appointed post officers, often resulting in many Sergeant-at-Arms’ not knowing nor fully understanding their critical importance and full responsibility to their post. Future articles are planned to continue to educate and elaborate on this vital post position, thereby strengthening it at the post level.

DISTRICT 1

Michelle Harada – Commander

No report submitted.

DISTRICT 2

Lowell Long - Commander

Membership is getting under way in our district. We have several posts that are doing well at this time. Post 57 in Malta is leading the way with 79.01% Followed by Post 110 Fort Belknap at 78.57%, Post 109 Turner at 75.76% and Post 48 at 73.58%. We also have several posts that are hurting and a couple that are about to goal. The District 2 Vice

Commander, Ken Wiederrick is helping me with some of the posts and we hope to have them up to where they should be soon.

I received a notice of members from our area from Post 105 from Elmer Palmer and I wrote a letter to each of them encouraging them to consider transferring to a post in our district. Out of the letters I sent, I had two responses for Post 11 in Havre, one for Post 57 in Malta, and 1 for Post 48 in Chinook. As of this writing, I know that the member from Malta and the member from Chinook have been transferred. I have been working with the Havre post to get the two members transferred and will be checking with the members to see that they are transferred. I have also sent the names of each member to transfer that hasn't responded to my letter to each post asking them to follow up on them to see if we can get them transferred into our posts.

I attended the homecoming of the 495th CS BN in Kalispell. I was invited by the parents of an American Legion member of our district from Post 67 in Rocky Boy. There I joined members of Post 67 and the parents of CPT Chauncey Parker in welcoming him and the rest of his unit home from Afghanistan. It was a very emotional and enjoyable day. It brought back many memories for me of when I came back to that same airport in 2005 from Iraq. I was able to see many other guardsmen that I knew that were a part of that unit. I was glad to see that there were several American Legion members there in their caps showing support for this unit as they returned from a difficult deployment.

I also had the honor of being asked to present the United States Flag at a Powwow in Harlem put on by the Harlem Schools. This was an honor as I was able to do this with Leroy Tucker from the Fort Belknap post. Being asked to do this and represent all the veterans in the audience was truly an honor.

The District 2 Fall meeting was held in Havre and we had a good turnout from the posts that were there. We had several posts missing with two of them responding that they could not be there. We heard a lot of great information from all the Department Officers that were there. We had all our district officers present for our meeting as well. Havre did a great job hosting this meeting.

DISTRICT

Dean Young - Commander

No report submitted.

DISTRICT 4

Ron Hawkinson - Commander

Returning from the Department convention in Lewistown all packets were delivered to the posts. Several post visits have been completed and more are on the agenda. I have approached the posts as an assistance visit, with the district adjutant and district membership chairmen with me. Our focus is on meetings conducted as outlined in the OFFICERS GUIDE AND MANUAL OF CEREMONYS, membership recruiting, timely submission of membership cards to meet goals sent out by Department, programs that when instituted get local publicity and help in recruiting new members. District 4 is getting there in meeting our goals, most posts are in the green a few are close and one post is still in the red, however I expect that to change soon, after my recent conversation with the Post Adjutant. The District has lost one post building due to a fire, Paradise Post #129 was completely destroyed, Eureka Post #74 lost its Adjutant, longtime American Legion member and past District Commander Ron Sperandeo has passed away. The District as well as several Posts have donated several hundred dollars to help the widow with expenses during this difficult time. The District 4 fall meeting was held in Eureka with just a few posts absent. Department Vice Commander Roger Hancock was our guest speaker. District 4 business was conducted and the spring meeting location was decided.

DISTRICT 5

Gerald Christensen – Commander

District five has accomplished a lot since the June convention. Our membership met it's September goal with 56.68% and we are now in great shape to surpass our November goal, ultimately we hope to be at 100% district wide. The commander has been working with posts who were having renewal difficulties and as a result their membership has improved significantly.

Frenchtown Post 124, has been working to improve it's veterans memorial at the Frenchtown Pond State Park. It was awarded a grant by the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation to landscape the area surrounding the memorial in July of this year, the project was completed in September with new sod and an underground sprinkler system being installed. Our next improvement to the memorial will be the commission of two life sized statues of area veterans who served in the war on terror, a male and a female veteran, one a Frenchtown High School graduate who paid the supreme sacrifice the other a female EOD technician from Superior, MT who was seriously injured. A "Wall of Honor will also be erected with the names of those veterans from the area who wish to have them engraved on the wall. The memorial has been an aid to membership in the Frenchtown post.

The district five commander is also exploring the possibility of having a veterans day parade in Missoula sometime around the anniversary of 9/11 in 2014 to honor not only first responders, but all area veterans who served and are serving. We are fortunate to have in Missoula one of the four surviving Doolittle Raiders, David Thatcher. It would only be fitting

that he be honored in this parade. The Parade will also bring favorable publicity to the American Legion and the posts that make up District 5.

At the last district meeting we explored the possibility of creating a "cyber post" for the younger veterans that reside in our area, specifically those that are attending the University of Montana, and the College of Technology in Missoula. We have discovered that the younger men and woman veterans are much more "tech savvy" than many older vets and prefer doing as many things as possible "on line". We believe that the creation of a district five "cyber post" will fill that need and entice younger veterans to join the American Legion. The District 5 Commander is creating a dialog with the local United Veterans Council of Missoula and Ravalli counties by appointing a district five representative to the council who reports at every district five meeting. The United Veterans Council, consisting of Legion and VFW post members, the commander believes that it is important to keep good communications between different veterans organizations in that we are involved in accomplishing the same goals and can assist each other in veterans causes that can only enhance our standings in the community and promote Legion membership.

Our posts are now working with area schools to encourage them to take part in the high school oratorical and essay contests as well as the 7th and 8th grade writing contests. We expect to have a good turnout of schools in our district taking part.

DISTRICT 6

John Kougioulis - Commander

After being sworn in at Department Convention, I delivered post packets to those posts that did not attend convention. "Thanks" for those who helped me do that.

I only attended a few Post meetings since I took command. A lot of posts just got back from summer break and just started their meetings again.

Dillon and Wisdom are going to try to merge their posts. I visited with Dillon's commander and Wisdom's Commander. I also had the privilege to swear in the Dillon Post 20 Commander.

Townsend Post 42 has a lot of things going on. They have a Rifle Raffle that was won at the Fall Fest, where Townsend had a booth; they promoted membership and raised money for scholarships.

I spoke on the phone with the Helena Post 2 Commander. She told me about things and events they were doing, and it sounded like they're getting right after it again this year. I hope to attend their meeting soon. I talked with the Whitehall Commander at their annual gun show. Post 24 is on a roll this year.

I held my first District meeting in Anaconda, at Anaconda Post 21. They hosted a great meeting. I know I made a lot of mistakes and hope to do better at the spring meeting in April, at Dillon Post 20, who is hosting this meeting.

I've been invited to Post 9, Lincoln post to swear in new officers. I've met with their Commander before and they have a lot of ideas.

I met with the Boulder Post 46 Commander and he said they had a nice raffle going on. They have plans on putting up signs coming in to town that welcome everyone on behalf of the Boulder American Legion Post 46.

I will attend all post meetings before the Spring District meeting, or next years Department Convention.

DISTRICT 7

Ken McMillon - Commander

- ✚ All post's have been visited
- ✚ All packets have been delivered
- ✚ Held District 7 Fall meeting in September
- ✚ Held Three(3) Flag Education Classes
- ✚ Attended two (2) Flag Disposal Ceremonies
- ✚ Marched in the Belgrade Fall Festival Parade
- ✚ Continue to work with the Belgrade Senior Center on Veteran related days.
- ✚ Continue to work with our post sponsored Cub Scout Pack #3648
- ✚ Wilsall flag dedication

DISTRICT 8

Mike Mehegan - Commander

I was the District 8 Vice Commander but for personal reason our Commander, Tommy Crook had to resign in August. Once reality set in, I had a lot of work to do before our District #8 Fall Conference in Augusta.

I wrote all of the Posts in our District and stressed the importance of retaining our membership and recruiting new members. I also asked the Posts if there was anything that I could do for them or get for them. A few Posts were missing their oratorical packet which they received at District #8 Fall Conference. I also e- mailed and called the Post and encouraged them to attend the Falls District #8 Conference in Augusta on Saturday, October 12th I gave all the Post my home address, e-mail address, home and

cell phone number.

Augusta Post #26 was in a serious quandary. Most of their leadership had resigned do to relocation or other reasons. The local VFW, where the Legion holds its meeting had its charter revoked. Did they fold and give up. NO!!! Jim Fiedler the recruiter for Montana came in to help; as did our Zone Commander, Hal Rice and so did the leadership of Post #26 which includes, Ron Saville, Ken Knudson and many others. Their current membership is at 94.03% which is the highest in District #8. The moral of the story, "NEVER SAY NEVER".

I have had the pleasure to visit and learn from 3 of our Post. I visited Post #3 on Oct. 8th and they are putting up the flags in town for Veterans Day; having a Veterans Day celebration plus many acts of kindness to deployed and aged veterans. Post #341 cleans a section of the interstate, puts up white crosses along with Post #3. Post #130 will be holding its annual Veteran's Day potluck and Christmas celebration.

The District # 8 convention held in Augusta was a huge success. Not only did Augusta Post #51 do an outstanding job of hosting for the Legion and Auxiliary but they made everyone feel truly welcomed. Department vice Commander Roger Hancock ran an outstanding meeting for the Department.

DISTRICT 9

Demorise Allen – Commander

Due to job and time constraints, Brad Marking of Roundup has resigned as Commander and our current Vice Commander is unable to step up! I took it upon myself to make many phone calls and talked to or left messages with all Post Commanders and a couple of past District Commanders. I could not find a warm body anywhere!

On Sept. 30th I was appointed District Commander and had a District Meeting fast approaching. Invitations went out, Winifred assured me they would host and be ready.

Our District Meeting was welcomed by very nice weather. The morning session was very enjoyable and we were honored with the presence of Department Vice Commander, Roger Hancock; Zone Commander, Dale Webb; Debbie Hancock stepping in for Gary White, Sue Foster of Lewistown stepping in for Kelly Ackerman, Department Service Officer; and Jeff Holmes, Department Oratorical chairman . All reports were interesting and informative.

The Winifred Auxiliary put on an excellent banquet. Very tasty!! Vice Commander Roger Hancock, our guest speaker presented a very good speech.

Our meeting went well (short and sweet) with 16 post members (6 posts) present. We had some good involvement and voted to adjust our goals, donate \$150 to the Big Sky Honor Flight and renew our Big K membership. Harlowton Post #15 accepted the challenge to host our Spring Meeting. The highlight of our meeting was when Roger Hancock was fined for messing up the Preamble.

I hope to help make some improvements with membership, make visitations to all posts and complete Winnett and Lavina paperwork for Post termination and get members transferred. Hopefully finding a Commander and Vice Commander by Spring.

DISTRICT 10

Jeffery Waddell - Commander

We had our District meeting on September 28, 2013, in Colstrip at the Colstrip golf course. We had 5 posts in attendance. Richard Nielson was appointed Vice Commander and Sylvia Beals District Adjutant. We talked about buying a Big K ticket, so one was bought by the District. The District Oratory and the Essay competitions were also discussed. Our next meeting for District 10 will be in Miles City in the spring.

A Facebook page was started for Sidney, Post 12. You will be kept informed on the progress. "American Legion post 12 Richland" is the page name.

DISTRICT 11

George Blackard - Commander

Since taking over as the District 11 Commander I have had the opportunity and the honor to work with many great people, including those who belong to the American Legion and those who do not, serving veterans and our communities in Montana.

On July 4th, 2013 I walked with members of Andrew Pearson Post 117 and the Eugene Sara Detachment of The Marine Corps League in the Laurel 4th of July Parade collecting donations for the Big Sky Honor Flight. That day we collected over \$2,000 to help send our WWII veterans to Washington D.C.

On July 18th I and members of a delegation from the American Legion Department of Kentucky were guests on the statewide radio program Voices of Montana hosted by American Legion member Aaron Flint. We spoke of the American Legion and issues facing our wounded warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan.

July 18th – 27th I collaborated with members of The American Legion Department of Kentucky to bring wounded warrior, national author and American Legion member Gordon Ewell to Montana for several book signing events to raise awareness about PTSD, TBI and

military/veteran suicide. Our host was met and welcomed at the Bozeman airport by our NEC Merv Gunderson. We kicked off the week-long tour in Billings in a private meeting with a group of Blue Star Mothers. This meeting afforded those mothers an opportunity to speak frankly and ask a severely wounded, career soldier and combat veteran about things their own children are going through and experiencing since returning from deployment in the Middle East. The second stop on the tour was a lecture and Q&A session at the Western Heritage Center in Billings. There the public was invited to listen and ask questions of the author concerning the aforementioned topics. The third stop was a book signing & fundraiser at the Squire Lounge in Billings. There the public was once again given the opportunity to meet the author and ask questions regarding his service and the things our military service members and our veterans deal with during deployment and post deployment. The fourth stop on the tour was with the Billings West End Rotary Club where our host spoke about the hardships our wounded warriors face and the often long road to recovery in dealing with not only the visible wounds but also the invisible wounds suffered such as PTSD and TBI. The fifth stop was a Post visit to Gallatin Post 14 in Bozeman where Gordy met post members and autographed his books. The sixth stop on the tour was participating in the Annual Blue Star Mothers Benefit Golf Tournament in Billings. There, our guest along with members of Andrew Pearson Post 117 and myself helped to raise money for the Blue Star Mothers that they will use for care packages and various forms of assistance to military service people and veterans and their families.

I collaborated with officers of the Department of Kentucky and helped to organize and establish the Warriors in Transition project which is a joint effort between Andrew Pearson Post 117, several American Legion Posts in Kentucky and local business men and women from the Billings and Bozeman area to build a temporary housing facility for the families of wounded warriors who are recovering in the Warrior Transition Battalion at Ft. Knox Kentucky.

On July 25th I represented District 11 at the funeral services and grave side services of fellow Legionnaire Scott Stewart of American Legion Post 4 in Billings.

On August 5th I attended a planning meeting for Veteran's Day at Montana Fair at Metra Park. Plans were made for allowing veterans in free to Montana Fair and a ceremony to kick off the event was planned.

On August 12th I did a Post visit and sat in on a general meeting of Post 4 in Billings.

On August 16th I attended Veteran's Day at Montana Fair. The day began with the colors being presented in a morning ceremony followed by key note speaker, wounded warrior and Navy SEAL Bo Reichenbach of Andrew Pearson Post 117. After the ceremony I spent the day with members of Post 117 and Post 119 recruiting new members and passing out information related to The American Legion and veteran's issues. I also spent time collecting donations for the Bo Reichenbach Fund that will help to build a home for he and his family designed to accommodate Bo's condition.

On August 30th I attended and worked a fundraising BBQ at the WalMart in Billings for the Big Sky Honor Flight. I helped to serve food and drink for three hours and over \$4,000 was raised for the cause.

The evening of August 30th, I walked in the Burn the Point Parade held in Billings with members of Andrew Pearson Post 117 and several other civic organizations to collect donations for the Big Sky Honor Flight. We helped to raise over \$6,000 to send our WWII veterans to Washington D.C.

On September 4th I oversaw the completion of the installation of the bronze American Legion Emblem at the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery.

Also on September 4th I attended a meeting of the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery Board held in Billings at the Courthouse. At this meeting we discussed the old but recently enforced policy of the VA not to approve issue of government supplied headstones for any veteran, at a cemetery other than a state or national cemetery, without the signature of the veteran or their next of kin. This causes problems when dealing with indigent veterans who have no known next of kin. Because of this policy the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery has eight veterans who are buried there who currently do not have headstones.

On September 8th & 9th I traveled to Washington D.C. with the Big Sky Honor Flight and had the honor of playing TAPS for the 87 WWII veterans on the trip at the WWII Monument. I was also honored to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the banquet held in their honor during the trip.

On September 18th I attended a meeting of the Yellowstone County United Veteran's Council held in Billings. At this meeting I helped to make plans for the annual Veteran's Day ceremony to be held in Billings on November 11th.

On September 19th I did a Post visit and sat in on a general meeting of Post 119 in Billings.

On September 20th I attended a fundraising banquet at the Northern Hotel in Billings for the Big Sky Honor Flight. At the banquet I led the Pledge of Allegiance and helped with the live auction. Nearly \$30,000 was raised for the cause. I helped secure a location free of charge at a local business in Billings for a fundraiser held on September 21st for a young child from Billings to cover travel expenses to a hospital in Denver for specialized care not covered by insurance.

On September 25th I did a Post visit and sat in on a general meeting of Post 117 in Billings.

September 28th Attended a fundraiser for the Warriors in Transition project at Amend Park in Billings. Sold raffle tickets and t-shirts and over \$2,000 was raised for the cause.

On September 29th I attended the Fall District Meeting held in Clark Wyoming and hosted by Belfry Post

On October 2nd I attended a meeting of the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery Board.

On October 4th I was on a Billings morning radio show discussing wounded warriors and fundraising efforts to assist them and their families.

On October 5th I attended and worked at a fundraiser for the Warriors in Transition project at the Squire Lounge in Billings. I did live radio remotes on two radio stations that day and helped to raise over \$4,000 for the cause.

On October 7th I did a Post visit at Post in Hysham. That night I had dinner with the Post and the Auxiliary and after dinner I spoke about membership, recruiting our Iraq & Afghanistan veterans and the problems faced by our newest group of young veterans including PTSD and military suicide. After dinner I attended the general meeting.

On October 13th & 14th I once again traveled to Washington D.C for Big Sky Honor Flight VII. On this trip I presented the colors at the banquet held in their honor and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

October 14th was a guest via telephone from Washington D.C. on the Voices of Montana statewide radio program discussing our trip, our WWII veteran guests and the blockaded memorials in Washington D.C.

On October 16th I attended a meeting of the Yellowstone County United Veteran's Council.

On October 17th & 18th completed home visits for a grieving comrade who lost his Mother.

On October 19th I attended the NILE Rodeo in Billings on "Patriot Night" and worked at the fundraising table for the Warriors in Transition project. That night we raised over \$2,000 for the cause.

During this time period I wrote several emails to our Montana delegation to Washington D.C. including Senator Baucus, Senator Tester and Congressman Daines concerning various issues pertaining to veteran's healthcare, veteran's benefits and national defense. From this correspondence I have secured two face to face meetings scheduled in the near future.

AMERICANISM

Joyce Babcock - Chairwoman

By now all Posts should have had representatives visiting in their local schools regarding the youth programs you wish to promote. The Education program has the Constitution Essay for 7th and 8th grades which can be accomplished at any time this fall and get the winning essay from each school to the Education Chairman, Fred Bell. Education also has the same essay program available for all high school grades; this can be done this fall also. And last, there is the Americanism and Government Survey Test for Seniors only. This test is to be given only to Seniors and only during the month of March, with winning paper to Education Chairman no later than 15 April, 2014. Again, only one winner per school. If your Post is active in more than one school you can send a winner from each school.

All high school students, grades 9 through 12 are eligible to participate in the Oratorical Contest and those in the lower high school grades can take part every year until senior graduation. They must have a speech on the constitution of the United States and all Oratorical rules and descriptions are in a packet that should be in the hands of the Oratorical Chairman by now or the Post Commander's care. The Zone and Department Oratorical contest is in March in Helena and the Post should have their contest completed in time for winning participant to attend the District Contest which will be scheduled by your District Commander.

It is never too early to begin publishing information about American Legion Boy's State and if you have no Unit in your area, you might consider sponsoring a Junior girl to American Legion Auxiliary Girl's State. Boys State fee this year is \$250 and all registration is done online. Contact the Department Adjutant for information on this if you have questions.

Don't forget the "School Award Medal Program". This program is to place emphasis on the development of the qualities of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service. Developing those ideals of Americanism among young people will make them citizens of the highest type. This program is for boys and girls of graduating class of either elementary, junior or senior high schools and colleges as well.

BASEBALL CHAIRMAN

George Haegele

American Legion baseball continues to be the largest and most recognizable of the American Legion Youth Programs. It remains by far, the largest Youth Program in the Department of Montana, with just over 700 players registered on 47 teams in Montana, Southern Alberta, British Columbia and Idaho. Most of these young men play and practice for 8 months of the year.

The 2013 season came to an end with the four Class A District Tournaments, the Class A State Tournament, the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament, and the Class AA Regional tournament, and the American Legion World Series.

The four Class A Tournaments were held in Billings, (Cardinals), Vauxhall, Anaconda and Eureka (Kootenai Valley Rangers). Winners and runners up advanced to the Class A State Tournament in Helena, Laurel and Glasgow, from the East. Lethbridge and Great Falls were from the North. Libby and Missoula were from the West. And Belgrade and host Helena were from the South.

The Class A State Tournament was outstanding. Local Host, James Bowers and Class A Chairman, Bill Houston put together one of the best tournaments we have had in many years. Laurel won the Class A Championship, defeating Belgrade 1-7. Laurel represented Montana well at the Northwest Class A Tournament, held in Wheatland, Wyoming. They defeated Utah #2 and Alaska before losing to eventual champion, Oregon 9-7. They were then eliminated by Utah #20-9 in a semi-final game.

The Class AA Tournament was held in Billings and was a fine tournament managed by local chairman Joe Studiner and Class AA Chairman Duwy Scott. The Billings Royals were crowned champions, defeating the Missoula May 5-0 in the final game. The Royals went on to represent Montana at the Northwest Regional Tournament in Eugene, Washington. They defeated Wyoming 15-2, but lost to Washington 5-4 and eventual champion, Hawaii 7-4.

I was honored to be appointed to the World Series Staff this year, as Assistant Field Manager in Shelby, North Carolina. It was a great experience and a hotly contested tournament. Northwest Regional Champion Hawaii lost to California 8-2 in the semi-final game and the team from Brooklawn, New Jersey defeated California 10-0 to win the American Legion World Series. The paid attendance for the 2013 World Series was Veterans Day with over 200 veterans honored on the field before the night game. Two Medal of Honor recipients were present and introduced on the field.

Each year we award a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a deserving Class A and Class AA player. This year's Class A scholarship recipient is Quinn Harlan of the Mission Valley Mariners. The Class AA recipient is Nate Lamberty of the Bozeman Bucks. We select a Most Valuable Player at the Class A and Class AA State Tournaments. This year MVP's are Class A, Dakota Cortese of the Laurel Dodgers and Class AA Chance Ackerman of the Billings Royals. This year Riley King of the Missoula Mavs, was selected in the Major League June draft and signed a professional contract with the Kansas City Franchise. We had several players receive scholarships to the NCAA D1 Universities. We again had about 100 players who received offers of scholarship help from work study offers, to full scholarships at JCs, NAIA, and NCAAA D2 and D3 colleges and universities.

Class A Vice Chairman, Bill Houston decided to retire. He has done an outstanding job in this position for many years. He will be sorely missed. He will remain involved in American Legion Baseball as business manager of the Helena Senators and Reps. Bill will be replaced by our Class-A Southern District Chairman, Gary Parry. We know Gary will an outstanding job in his new position.

My heartfelt thanks to Bill and Class AA Vice Chairman Duwy Scott, District Chairmen Ron Edwards, Jim Monteith, Wayne Raymond and Gary Parry, for all of their support and hard work in making the 2013 season a success. Gary White and the rest of the Department officers remain solid supporters of American Legion Baseball and without this support, we could not achieve our current level of success.

BOY SCOUTS

David Gray – Chairman

No report submitted.

BOYS STATE

John Louk - Chairman

The 2014 Session of Montana American Legion boys State will be held at Carroll College June 8-13, 2014. The delegate fees were raised from \$230.00 to \$250.00 per delegate.

Delegates do NOT need to be in Helena before 8:00 am on the opening day, as they cannot check in until 8:00 am. They need to be in Helena before 11:00 am, to be checked in and ready for the opening session at 12:00 noon on Sunday, June 8, 2014. Any late arrivals are to be verified and permission given by the American Legion Boys State Director, Mike Hedegaard. All delegates must register online again this year. The online registration address is: <http://mtlegion.org/departments/boysstate-registration.html>

Once the delegate is registered online, you then need to send the fees to the Registrar, Gary White by May 1, 2014 and no later than May 3, 2014.

Please be advised that it is extremely important that the BLUE American Legion Post Chairman Card be filled out and sent in AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, even if you have the same chairman. Any questions may be directed to Chairman John Louk at phone number (406) 259-9032, Director Hedegaard or the Registrar Gary White.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Randy Kemp

This has been a busy and challenging 3 months for Children and Youth beginning with trying to obtain all the information from the previous Chairman John Pellegrini. He will be missed from this position and I hope he will continue to have success as he goes forward in his future endeavors.

I was unable to attend the annual National Children & Youth Conference September 20 – 22, 2013. I received a report that during the 2012-2013 program year, the Temporary Financial Assistance Program provided \$847,158 in grants to veteran families. These grants provided food, clothing, and shelter for 1,723 children throughout the United States. During the same period nearly 154,000 pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed to posts and department. The American Legion Family Support Network fielded over 1,600 requests for assistance and information. Despite the decrease of National Guard and Reservist being called to active duty, the National Headquarters continues to field 30 calls for assistance weekly. Through the generous support of Legion family members, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation provided \$734,220 in grants to twenty nonprofit organizations to assist in promoting their programs and provide for the “betterment of all children.”

During this time period and as of this date I have received 7 Temporary Financial Assistance requests and after reviewing them, sent them on to National Children and Youth Commission. Of the 7 sent forward, 5 were approved and checks were issued to the veterans. Of the 2 that were not approved, 1 is under further investigation in an attempt to help the veteran in need. The 1 remaining was disapproved based on the children not being children of the veteran biologically or adopted legally.

I thank all the posts for their understanding and willingness to work with the new guy on the block and I hope that I will be able to perform my duties to the standards expected of me.

CONSTITUTION AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Jim Grosset - Chairman

Since my last report of 2012, I have been working with the Steering Committee on trying to save money for the Department. At the Convention in Lewistown, the report was tabled as it had to be sent to all Post and approved later.

I attended the National Convention in Houston last summer. I learned a few things as you do at any Convention. It was good to meet some old and new friends. Last June I was a part of the contingent representing the Department at the Royal Canadian Legion Convention held in my home town of Calgary. This was a very enlightening experience.

CONVENTION 2014

Randy Kemp

The American Legion Gallatin Post 14 will host The American Legion Department Convention "2014" in Bozeman, Montana June 25 through June 29, 2014.

1. Rooms are blocked out at The Grand Tree located at 1325 North 7th Avenue in Bozeman, Montana.
2. Chamber of Commerce has Welcome Packets ready for pick-up.
3. The following committees have been established:
 - a. Booklet Committee with Tom Jones as Chairman.
 - b. Decorating Committee with Dixie Parsons as Chairperson.
 - c. Registration Committee with Diane Ostermiller as Chairperson.
 - d. Transportation Committee with Dave Polmanteer as Chairman.
 - e. Food and Beverage Committee with Terry Kemp as Chairperson.
4. Contacted Grand Tree and reconfirmed rooms and the requirement for special rooms as required by the Department Headquarters.
5. Remain in constant contact with Convention "2013" Chairman in an attempt to capture "Lessons Learned" from their extremely successful convention hosted in Lewistown 2013

CONVENTION 2015

Jed Damson

Your 2015 American Legion Convention will be hosted by the American Legion Family of Post #11, Havre and District #2. We are on the Chamber calendar and they are looking forward to our convention. They have brochures to highlight some of our tourist attractions.

- ✓ HRDC is looking forward to us using their facilities again for our meetings.
- ✓ We are working with the Eagles for meals and other committees to make this a great convention.
- ✓ The motels are delighted that we are planning a convention in Havre, but it is too early for them to give us prices.

This convention will be similar to the convention we hosted in 2006, with a few changes for the better.

We are looking forward to serving you and we will have more details at the 2014 Convention.

CONVENTION 2016

Randy Kemp

The American Legion Gallatin Post 14 will host the American Legion Department Convention "2016" in Bozeman, Montana June 23 through June 27, 2016.

1. The Grand Tree has been notified that the American Legion Department of Montana will again be in Bozeman for the "2016" Convention and tentative plans have been made to roll over the room requirements for the convention. Rooms will be blocked out at a later time when the convention time gets closer.
2. Will notify the Chamber of Commerce of the Convention and have them prepare "Welcome Packets" as the time gets closer.
3. Establish the following committees:
 - A. Booklet
 - B. Decorating
 - C. Registration
 - D. Transportation
 - E. Food and Beverage
4. Establish deadlines for attaining planning goals.

More information to follow as it becomes available for the planning of the convention and report the progress of the committees.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Sam Pappas - Chairman

During our Department convention we had the privilege of having Past National Commander (1995-1996) Dan Ludwig and his lovely wife as our guests. Commander Dan was also our main speaker at our Saturday night banquet. We were also privileged to have had our comrades from Royal Canadian Legion join us. Comrade Bob Grey, Past Dominion and Immediate Past President, Alberta North West Territories Command. As well as Brent Wiggins, President, Saskatchewan Royal Canada Command. It was a pleasure to have Commander Dan as our main speaker and the interest he still maintains with his love for the American Legion. Again it was good to see our comrades from north of the border (better known as north Montana); our comradeship will always endure. This concludes my report.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Fred Bell - Chairman

I really don't have a lot to add to my last written report at the American Legion Montana Department Convention on June 27th to 30th, 2013 in Lewistown, MT. However, as far as **EDUCATION**, I would like to reiterate that all 7th and 8th grade and high school essays and Senior High Americanism & Government Surveys must be completed by March 1, 2014 and must be to me by March 15, 2014.

I will repeat, each post please select a chairman to handle these contests and interface with the schools. *Some schools can't afford copy paper/laser ink cartridges to give copies of the Survey to all high school seniors, so if your post or some business can contribute copy paper/laser ink cartridges, that might help.* It would be great for every senior in Montana to take the Survey. Begin each contest at the appropriate time, ensure that the winners receive whatever post awards that you give out, and finally forward only your first place winning contestant's work and the data sheet to me (**Fred Bell 4032 Laredo Place Billings, MT 59106**). If you have any questions or problems, e-mail me at bellsystem4@hotmail.com or call me at 406-656-8448 and leave a message – I return phone calls. Post Chairperson, remember that you may have a winner for each school in your post area and a winner who is home schooled.

The Montana Department of the American Legion will award the 2014 American Legion Montana 7th and 8th Grade Essay winners:

1st Place \$400 Scholarship

2nd Place \$250 Scholarship

3rd Place \$150 Scholarship

The Montana Department of the American Legion will award the 2014 American Legion Montana High School Essay winners:

1st Place \$400 Scholarship

2nd Place \$250 Scholarship

3rd Place \$150 Scholarship

The Montana Department of the American Legion will award the 2014 American Legion Montana High School Senior Government and Americanism Survey Exam winners:

1st Place \$400 Scholarship

2nd Place \$250 Scholarship

3rd Place \$150 Scholarship

That's a grand total of \$2400 in Scholarships each year. This year's Senior Survey has had the Constitution questions relaxed a bit, but still demands that you/the young people know your American History. I recently talked to a new U.S. Citizen and she had to know the whole Constitution and pass the citizenship exam by 95%. How many of us "born here U.S. Citizens" can do that?

As far as **TRAINING = LEAD (Leadership Education And Development)** goes; if you have attended LEAD training on Friday in Lewistown, then you have the following Legion courses under your belt and a LEAD pin for your cap or lapel or collection:

2 hrs. Children & Youth

2 hrs. Post Operations and Membership Development

2 hrs. MyLegion.org (How to access your post lists and make changes, etc. and convert to Excel for Adjutants, Commanders, and Vice Commanders dealing with membership)

2 hrs. Resolutions

There have been 2 more **LEAD** courses offered here at the October 25th Helena Fall Conference:

2 hrs. Finance

2 hrs. Fundamentals of Fundraising

If you have taken these six courses (12 hrs.), then you are 25% on your way through the 24 **LEAD** courses offered by the National American Legion. If you have already taken the 4 hr. **The American Legion Extension Institute** course online, you are then 29+% done. Note, most of the 24 courses are 2 hours, however three are 4 hour courses including the above Ext. Inst. Course. Posts can request National to send people to teach LEAD courses to post personnel.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Art Ellison - Chairman

Montana American Legion endowment fund was created by resolution at the Montana American Legion annual convention in 2009, for the purpose of establishing permanent financial legacy to provide scholarships to the youth of Montana who participate in the many Americanism and patriotic programs of the American Legion and provide financial support for active military and veterans in need. All monies received will be invested into the endowment fund and used as stated above.

Unfortunately, over the past four years the committee has attempted to become 501C(3) nonprofit corporation under the IRS. It has been a long difficult process making no headway at all. The committee decided rather than wait any longer they would put the endowment fund under the American Legion of Montana as a 501C(19). The monies received are kept as a separate fund and currently invested in CDs. All funds will be used only for the purpose intended and all administrative costs will be absorbed by the Department of Montana. Only the interest received on the principle will be turned over to the finance committee as the funds are needed to enhance program scholarships.

There has not been much of a push for donations because of the anticipation of becoming a separate Corporation and designated a 501C(3) nonprofit which would be better for receiving larger donations.

At present there is approximately \$27,000.00 in the fund and hopefully it will grow substantially.

I would encourage all district commanders who will receive a pamphlet explaining the endowment fund to talk to their posts and encourage them to donate to such a worthy cause.

FLAG ALLIANCE 2013

Linda Cousineau

Senate Joint Resolution 17 (S.J.Res.17) sponsored by the Senator Orrin Hatch of UT was introduced 13 June 2013, read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. It is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.113th Congress (2013-2014)

S.J.Res.17 has been pending in committee ever since introduction and the previous attempt in 2011 was defeated in the House. Advocates are continuing to gain cosponsors (even as recently as Sen Ayotte, NH 27 Sep 2013) and hopefully after the financial crisis is addressed, we will see some movement through the system. Our Montana Senators Baucus and Tester are not as of yet cosponsors of this new bill but Senator Baucus was a

cosponsor on the failed 2011 bill. Please consider sending a personal letter to both Senators encouraging their support of S.J.Res17.

While I was conducting research for flag legislative status, I came across several articles concerning desecration of the flag and improper protocols of displaying the flag. The culprits ranged in age from 14 years old and up, to include a Marine holding the flag inverted. Were these actions due to ignorance of proper respect or intentional desecration under the First Amendment Freedom of Speech?

I would like to make a personal appeal to all Legion Posts of Montana to increase the proper displays of American flags within your communities through awareness campaigns and personal contacts with business and property owners. For example, Broadwater Post #42 went door to door to all the businesses on Main Street asking for donations to purchase new flags for the streets poles. They were so successful in their heartfelt appeal, they were able to purchase replacements for all of the tattered flags as well as have a stock for coming years. The community flies American flags on light poles along Main Street from Memorial Day through Veteran's Day each year.

As a community effort, consider giving a new flag and 'Thank You for Being a Patriot' certificate to low income senior citizens, veterans and other individuals in the community who have faithfully displayed the American flag but may need financial assistance to continue to do so. The certificate should also include directions on where to take their old flag for proper disposal.

I am honored to have been chosen to be your Flag Alliance Chairman and will continue to keep you updated on status as it develops.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mervin G. Gunderson - Chairman

I would like to thank and acknowledge the members of the committee for their diligence and commitment to the Legion this financial year. The entire committee worked to create a finance budget that met the needs of the various committees, officers, and staff while frugally protecting the financial assets of the Department. Elmer Palmer, Michelle Harada, Jed Damson, Jeff Nelson and Finance Officer Mike Susag have done an excellent job with their positions on the committee.

The Ways and Means committee continues to develop and promote fundraising ideas that ensure the resources are available to keep our Department funding needs met. The Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been a tremendous asset to the committee. The money they have provided has allowed us to look at additional funded programs and positions. Your Finance Committee did make a significant change in finances this year by authorizing our department to enter an exclusive relationship with USAA Insurance. So far we have realized an additional income for this year. Our investments continue to bring in revenue.

Even with the markets are down, the conservative nature of our investments has allowed profits to flow to the Department. The Big K fundraiser is off to a good start this year. It appears we will continue to grow that program. As you can see, your Finance committee relies on various mechanisms to ensure our financial needs are met.

Since the Department convention in Lewistown, I have had the opportunity to review the finances of the Department on a monthly basis by comparing vouchers and deposit receipts to computer entries. All finances have been accounted for and our annual audit has been completed. At the present time, all Department budgets are in order.

At this time we are over 63% of our membership goal. That is behind where we were last year. Many of our posts and members continue to seek out new Legionnaires and work on renewals. Membership is by far our greatest revenue source. Our income from membership dues is over \$82,000.00. The budgets the finance committee set this year appear to be on target. Our revenue for the 2013-2014 year has increased due to insurance income. Our expenses have held fairly constant.

The Ways and Means committee requested reinstatement of the Big K for this year. That fundraiser was felt to be extremely important because the funds generated are distributed to Posts, Districts, Auxiliary, and SAL. The cost of the fundraiser is totally born by our Department. All the Districts, Posts, Units and Squadrons that participate receive income. Last year we made a profit off revenue of the Big K. However, that can be easily reversed if Districts and Posts do not diligently promote the program. We have lost a number of Big K participants due to deaths. However, we have received many renewals from people who have not renewed in the past few years. All posts and districts must work to encourage all their members to sign up for the Big K. Your finance committee will continue to monitor the Big K throughout this year to ensure it is a viable fundraiser for the Department. Since this is the only program that generates income to be distributed throughout the Legion family we must have increased emphasis from all the Legion family to make the Big K work.

Last year the Ways and Means committee announced the raffle for a "Quigley" Sharps 45-70 rifle manufactured by Shiloh Arms out of Big Timber, Montana. That raffle was extremely successful. The Finance Committee wishes to thank all members who took the time to sell the raffle tickets. Their efforts are immensely appreciated.

This year, the Ways and Means committee is raffling another "Quigley" Sharps 45-70 rifle made in Big Timber, Montana. The second place prize is a 60 inch LED Vizio television. Both of these prizes are exceptional and should again generate a good interest in the raffle. The third place drawing will be for \$300.00 and the 4th place drawing will be for \$200.00. The Department Adjutant is distributing tickets on a request basis only. It is hoped this will cut the cost of raffle maintenance over sending tickets to Posts. In the past we found that many Posts just returned the tickets as unsold. That creates problems with printing costs for additional tickets as well as tracking how sales are progressing. It was felt the method of requesting tickets is a better option. Out of each book of tickets sold the Post, Unit, Squadron, or Riders is allowed to keep \$10.00. That way the local entity has the ability of generating some financial gain from this fundraiser.

The committee is reviewing our investments. Our investments with D. A. Davidson Company continue to keep generating income. We have investments in Mutual Funds, CD's and a Money Market account. Due to the volatile market, the Finance Committee has moved more of our finances into Mutual Funds. The finances invested in conservative funds but are generating more revenue than CD's or Money Market funds. The committee is moving finances from CD's to Mutual funds as the CD's are continuing to generate minimal funds for the Department. As we move funds we are able to realize a more current interest rate. Mutual funds always follow the market trend but they are usually fairly safe in the longer term. Those investments are designed for longer-term returns and will respond with the economy. Due to volatility of the market, we will continually monitor the Mutual Fund account. The committee is receiving updates from D.A. Davidson on the funds we have invested.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust continues to be a dependable source of income. Thank you to all the Montana Legion members who participate in the program. Last year we received \$27,542.38. This year we should receive a much smaller amount. To offset that decrease we entered into an exclusivity agreement for homeowner and automobile insurance with USAA insurance. We received \$5,500 in income from them. We will receive an equal amount in 2014. The up side of receiving the monies from the LIT and USAA is it has allowed us the ability to send several of our new District Commanders to Indianapolis for a membership workshop. They received valuable information and a greater insight into the Legion and its workings. Also, we were able to fund the LEAD training in Lewistown and Helena.

Address Labels continues to be a mainstay of income for the Department. It is our third largest income source. We are continuing that program. We get few complaints and have received several compliments on the labels.

On-line renewals continue to increase. More members are utilizing this simple method of renewing their membership. Each post adjutant has the responsibility to continually monitor the post's on-line renewals (mylegion.org) to minimize the delay between the veteran's renewal and the time the veteran receives his or her membership card. We are still seeing problems with the timeliness of this process.

Additionally, the Department has now instituted the means to accept credit card sales for merchandise. The Department will be evaluating this new process and looking at ways we can expand the use of credit cards for internet sales, new member sign up, and membership renewals on line.

The Finance committee is responsible to ensure that our finances are balanced. We do the best job possible to maintain the integrity of our investments in order to derive an income source from interest. The committee will continue to monitor the Department's investments to maximize our revenue stream. Overall, the Department is in as good shape as last year. However, the committee will continue to be conservative with our resources and monitor all requests for expenditures. It is every member's responsibility to help. Our biggest downfall is membership renewal. The committee would appreciate everyone's concerted effort to

increase the renewal rate. As always, asking a veteran to join and acquiring new members is extremely important. Between the DMS members that National is releasing for us to acquire, Department holding Post members and the "stay active" referrals, Posts should be able to flourish.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve the Department of Montana as your Finance Committee Chairman again this year. Your Finance Committee and I are looking forward to serving all of you for the remainder of this year.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN

VACANT

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

Lee Heser - Chairman

The American Legion White Marker Fatality Safety Program continues to be a huge success across the entire State of Montana. This past summer I traveled the entire width of Montana from Troy to Bainville, and all points in between. I made a loop traveling south from Wolf Point to Glendive and then traveled Interstate 90 to Livingston where I then traveled down to Gardiner. Earlier this year I traveled to Dillon and on up to Lima and Monida Pass.

I am happy to report the American Legion White Marker Fatality Safety Program is alive and well. This year, as in the past year, a few more posts have reinstated this program. Not every Post is involved in this most worthwhile program, but we are gaining.

As I have said before, I want to repeat my thanks to the Department Commander for his emphasis on this program. He has made sure his Zone and District Commanders have made this program a priority. Therefore, a most sincere thank you to all Posts who are active in this life-saving program that has brought credit to you and the American Legion. The American Legion White Marker Fatality Safety Program is only administered here in Montana. None of the other 49 states have this program. Therefore, be proud of this accomplishment. For those Posts that are involved in this great program, keep up the good work. For those posts that are thinking about doing this program, don't procrastinate. Get started now! If you feel you need some help, call me. There is a possibility I can make a trip to your Post, but as a minimum, we can do a phone call or get together at the Fall Conference in Helena.

I am averaging about 6 to 8 calls or emails per month requesting Posts to put up a white marker. I try to answer these emails quickly with a copy to the geographical Post responsible. My biggest disappointment is many of our Post Commander or Adjutant emails are wrong. Be sure and correct your emails by contacting our Department Adjutant, Gary White, prior to our Department Roster being published.

Within District #4, I have made trips to some of the Post meetings to request more hands on as their white markers are rusty and have considerable deferred maintenance. So far this has fallen on deaf ears. Please do your annual maintenance as one American Legion Post can make an entire District look bad, and this discredits our entire State American Legion White Marker Fatality Safety Program.

I continue to get requests for names of the victims from various posts and the public. Per our Letter of Agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation, which specifically states, "We can no longer provide a list of accident locations or fatality names." They cited a decision from the Montana Attorney General in this regard. I will quote from the Letter of Agreement, "Individual American Legion posts will need to get the information locally." The information generally needed is accident location. If we get names of next of kin prior to setting the white marker, you may check with next of kin to see if it is okay to install the white marker. This is not a requirement—only a courtesy to the family to lessen their pain of their loss—post discretion.

Also, I have had posts ask if they could put up two or three markers in the same location to represent that many fatalities. Again citing our agreement letter and Post Leadership and Planning Manual, whereas it is stated, "Only one post per fatality location is allowed." Our Agreement Letter reads, "One marker per accident site." Hopefully, this will clarify some of these questions.

Montana Department of Transportation has requested the American Legion Post members wear fluorescent safety vests when doing white marker maintenance or when setting a new marker.

Overall, in my travels throughout the State, the program appears well and healthy with numerous posts doing their due diligence and keeping these white markers painted and free of memorabilia. I salute the posts that make this one of the best safety programs in Montana. Thank you and keep up the good work!

This year as in the past 7 years we have the American Legion White Marker Program on the Montana State highway maps which the Governor puts out.

With this, happy trails and drive safely.

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Raymond Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now 5 years old years old. Department Commander Richard Ellwein re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program. I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Montana Statistics Related to Homeless Veterans are as follows:

Facts Of the 102,000 recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 76,000 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 25,200; Vietnam- 35,500; Korea-11,100; WW II-8,800. Peacetime veterans number 25,200. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 8,000 and Male veterans 94,000. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veterans household that the total veterans population including family members is close to 255,000 or over 1/4 of the total population of Montana.

National Statistics indicate that up to 3.8% of Montana's population of veterans are considered to be at risk or homeless. The definition of homeless as defined by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is, "Without an abode or home, living with family or relative because they cannot afford or qualify for a home residence, or living in a institutional setting because they cannot qualify or are financially unable to rent or own a home."

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey for 2011 of the 2,261 respondents 526 they had served in the military but had no family with them; 86 respondents had family members with them totaling 335 of which 163 were children. This indicates that homelessness among Montana veterans was 6% based on the Survey results. Looking forward to updating this survey in the up-coming months

Recommendations for 2013-2014:

1. That the Montana Department of the American Legion continue to develop its Homeless Veterans strategy in coordination with the National Economics Division of The American Legion, the Veterans Administration of Montana, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services and the many local service organizations who dedicate resources to reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness in Montana.
2. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion establish homeless Veterans coordinators at Post, District, Zone levels to interface with the Department of issues and solutions of Veterans homelessness. In lieu of dedicated resources the responsibility falls to the post , district, and zone commander by default.
3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion support the various Homeless Veterans Stand downs scheduled throughout Montana for the Remainder of 2012 and on into 2013. They have been identified as being in Plains, Montana, Helena Montana, Missoula, Montana, Dillon, Montana Miles City, Montana and on the High line of Montana with Havre, Montana as the hub.

Submitted by: Raymond K. Read, Department of Montana Homeless Veterans Coordinator 406-458-9847 or myfun51@msn.com.

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

We have received no new disbursements since the last report in June; our next anticipated disbursements will be in April 2014. We starting to see some gains in the number of policy holders, therefore we should see an increase in revenue from the insurance programs. We need the help of all Posts and members to insure members are receiving and returning the AGIA Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD & D) insurance forms and cards. Those who fill out the forms will be signed up until August 2016. We must continue to encourage our members to look at the Legionnaire Insurance Trust programs for their insurance needs. The Trust is constantly updating their programs looking for new and better insurance products for our members. It is not our intent to be selling insurance, but we should be making our members aware of the products available to them.

During the District Meetings we continued to register members for the free AD & D; I encourage you to do the same at your local Posts meetings periodically.

Initially the Department finance Committee declined an offer from USAA to enter into an exclusivity agreement with them for consideration of some revenue; however after much pressure from National, the Committee in September approved an agreement with USAA to give exclusivity to USAA on homeowners and auto insurance only. Please encourage any of your members who have homeowners or auto insurance policies with USAA to notify them that they are American Legion members and want to be associated with the American Legion affinity program. For all Legion members thus registered the Department will receive a percentage.

LEGISLATIVE

Duane C. Carlton - Chairman

Since the completion of the 63rd Legislative Session, most activity that involves veteran bills or impact is on the back burner. I had discussions with a few of the legislators during the spring and summer months. Roger Hagan, a legislator from the Great Falls area and also retired Air Force non-commissioned officer, is still working on a few new pieces of legislation that would positively impact our Montana veteran population. He is looking forward to the next session. The American Legion family in Montana is about 13,000 strong, and should have a voice in some of what goes on in Helena. All of us need to be a bit more vocal when dealing with our elected politicians. During the last session, there were quite a few pieces of legislation which were considered "veterans bills," but were of very little value. I call these "fluff" bills – they get the legislator a little press, but don't do anything for our veterans. Maybe we should support fewer bills that actually impact our members positively? That would be better. Our elected officials need to get the message. V/R ~Duane C. Carlton

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer - Chairman

The Membership Chairman attended the annual Membership Workshop in Indianapolis during August. Much fine information was disseminated during the two-day event. Our visit with the Leading Candidate (now the National Commander) led to a reduction of several hundred members from our anticipated goal.

I worked with the Vice Commander to readjust the goals for each of the Districts, with these goals being transmitted to the Zone Commander. Each Zone commander passed the goals to the respective District commanders.

Emphasis at the Membership Workshop was particularly directed to the Direct Mail Solicitation members from last year. We were given the goal of transferring these members to a local post, and renewing the ones that had an expiration date of 2013.

I have utilized the www.mylegion.org site to locate the un-renewed members in each District, and have forwarded these lists to the District Membership Chairman where there was one listed, and to the District Commander where there was not. An info copy of the list was sent to the District Commander, Department Commander, Department Vice Commander and the Department Adjutant. I also broke down the Headquarters Post 105 list by District, and forwarded this list to the Districts. Only three of the eleven District Commanders have contacted me with questions or comments, even though I have asked to be kept up to date.

A membership DVD was introduced at the Membership Workshop. It is entitled, "Just Ask", and was done by some of the top 'Membership Getters' in the Legion, including our own Jim Fiedler. I have a copy for each District. Districts 4 and 7 have copies that were given to their Membership Chairman at the Workshop.

We have met the first three targets, but cannot stand on our laurels. The Each one is harder to reach. Remember, "Membership is Everybody's Job." Let's get it done, and reach goal this year. Work your Post renewals. Retention is 90+% of the job. We can easily make goal if you get every one of last year's members to renew.

NATIONAL SECURITY REPORT

Randall A. Brown

At the Department Convention that was held in Lewistown during the month of June, I made my written and oral report. I also worked on one resolution with the National Security Committee and our recommendations were made at the meeting.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and al-Qaida continue their resistance with military action, suicide attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Recently, some of these terrorists have infiltrated the Afghanistan Security Forces and have killed several of our NATO advisors, (mostly US Forces). As a result, many of these advisors have suspended training operations with their Afghanistan counter parts. Currently, NATO Troop levels are

being reduced and more areas of the country are being turned over to the Afghanistan Army for their control. Current plans are to end the NATO combat role by the end of 2013 and make a transition to a training, advise and assist role.

North Korea continues to be a national security concern because of its nuclear program and the fact that this country has launched various military strikes against South Korea many times over the past years. Currently, this country is making threats that it is ready to launch nuclear weapons on the U.S. and its allies. This situation is a serious threat and must be kept in check.

In Pakistan increased military action against government forces and prominent leaders has forced the Pakistan Army to step up the fight against Taliban militants with increasing degrees of success. Military missions that cross from Afghanistan into Pakistan are causing some potentially dangerous political ramifications with that country as the Taliban use parts of Pakistan as a sanctuary. The situation between Pakistan and India over Kashmir remains a national security concern because of both country's nuclear capabilities.

Yemen is a training area for terrorists and the U.S. has increased counterterrorism aid to this Arab nation to support Yemen's campaign against al-Qaida. Citizens in this country are currently involved with the pro-reform protests that are spreading throughout North Africa and Middle East countries.

Protesters forced longtime Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to resign, and a new government took control of the country of Egypt electing Mohammed Morsi as President. It appears that the new regime has been working toward an Islamic form of government which has caused many demonstrations throughout Egypt. The Egyptian Guard toppled Mohammed Morsi on July 3rd and replaced him with an interim president. The Muslim Brotherhood called for an uprising and shootings have taken many lives during protests. This situation is causing serious problems for all Egyptians and for this entire region.

In Syria, demonstrators against the current government have been attacked and many killed by government forces. Many countries have expressed their desire to have the current leader to step down; however, at this time this has not happened. The United States has closed its embassy in Syria and recalled its ambassador. Syria has launched missiles into neighboring Turkey and evidence points to chemical weapons being used against protesters and innocent citizens. The United States has now deployed Patriot Missile Batteries along the Turkish border and has deployed Navy units near Syria. These units are designed to counter attack any further missile launches from Syria and have the capabilities to launch cruise missiles. The President has asked congress to give permission to strike targets in Syria in retaliation for using chemical weapons. Congress began debating this issue on 3 September. This brings the United States one step closer into becoming involved in this conflict. Russia has entered into this situation and has proposed a scenario that would destroy Syria's chemical weapons which Syria has agreed to. The United States welcomes this initiative and is holding out hope that military action will not be needed. Also, there is not much support for launching an attack on Syria by the American public and our allies. Because of Iran's nuclear program, which western nations believe is enriching uranium for

weapons purposes, the US recently imposed sanctions targeting Iran's ability to sell oil on the world market. Canada has closed its embassy and brought their ambassador home. They have also sent Iran's diplomats back to Iran. Other nations have pledged to buy less oil from this country. Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran to be a threat because of its missile capabilities, support for anti-Israel militants and frequent references by its president to destroy Israel. The US is concerned that Israel might be preparing to attack Iran over its nuclear program.

China has military strength and capabilities that cannot be ignored. Recently, China has constructed and deployed its first Navy Aircraft Carrier. Current relations with China are good and it is hoped that this will not change.

The situation between the Palestine's and the Israelis is always a national security concern. Currently, the Fatah group controls the West Bank and the Hamas group has seized control of the Gaza Strip, therefore, splitting the two parties. Israel and other western nations are supporting the Fatah Group, but do not recognize or support the Hamas Group. The Hamas Group continues to defy an uneasy cease-fire truce currently in place which could trigger a strong Israeli military response.

Illegal immigrants entering this country from Canada, and mostly from the Mexican border, continue to be a national security concern. A large percentage of these illegals actually enter the United States on a VISA, however, never return to their country. Many of these illegal immigrants siphon off welfare funds, become involved in criminal activity, and receive humanitarian aid that is designed for legal residents of this country. The Canadian border has many areas across the United States where it is relatively easy to cross without being detected. When illegal Mexican immigrants are apprehended, there is little or no punishment involved, and they are returned to Mexico. Often times, they are back across the border within days of deportation. This is a serious problem.

Our country has been in a recession. Currently, the economy is starting to improve, and the strength of the US dollar is rising. Unemployment rates are still high and jobs are scarce. The country is faced with huge debts and high oil prices. The majority of employment opportunities are within the service industry. The higher-paying manufacturing jobs continue to be eliminated or exported out of the country. It has become more and more difficult to even buy products that are made in America. The current administration is drastically reducing our military forces and military capabilities which will have the affect of even more unemployment problems and impact our national security interests. Mandatory Federal spending cuts have taken place, which are having huge impacts on national security issues, and at the same time this administration is giving millions of dollars away in aid to other countries. Almost daily, waste fraud and abuse issues are surfacing at all levels of government. This is all part of the debt problems that this nation is experiencing. Current policies need to be re-examined and it is evident that changes are needed.

In summary, there are many national security concerns that affect this country. The United States must be very careful about possibly intervening in pro-reform events taking place in the Middle East and African nations, and to re-examine our foreign aid policies. The things

that our nation needs to make top priorities are the total support of the Armed Forces and it's needs, continue reducing the effects of recession including high unemployment rates and budget deficits, to reduce the current oil prices, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and we need to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada.

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

First off, I would like to congratulate and thank Shae Rowe of Jefferson City for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest. You made us proud, and we are glad that you decided to further your leadership education through the American Legion Oratorical Program. I would also like to thank Helena Post #2 for sponsoring the contest as part of their post objectives.

Secondly, I would like to encourage those posts that currently do not have an oratorical contest to host one. Now is the perfect time to start preparing your contestants. The Department Oratory Finals will be held in Helena on March 9th. The district contests need to be completed a week prior, and notification to Department is due immediately upon completion of the district contest.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate and thank Carl Bartman for doing such an awesome job as our Oratorical Chairman in the past. He has set some very high standards, and left some massive shoes to fill.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Keith Sibbert

The Public Relations and Publications Committee has accomplished the following since the Department Convention in June:

- ✓ Taken over editorial, advertising and content responsibility for the Montana Legionnaire from Adjutant Gary White.
- ✓ Established and published rules and judging standards for the Department Newsletter competition.
- ✓ Created a Readership Drawing contest aimed at increasing readership of the Montana Legionnaire and to gauge readership levels.
- ✓ Asked for volunteer opt-out of the print edition of the Montana Legionnaire to help reduce the cost of printing.

I was able to attend five Fall District Meetings and was given the opportunity to highlight changes in policy for publication of the Montana Legionnaire and to encouraged Districts and Posts to establish active PR programs. I also received a lot of good feedback from the Legionnaires in attendance.

The results of the Readership Drawing and opt-out program thus far have been quite underwhelming. To date we have a handful of entries for the drawing and three opt-outs. I would ask District Commanders and Post Commanders to please encourage members to take advantage of the opportunity to win some money for both the Legionnaire and their Post and to help cut down on the number of print copies of the Montana Legionnaire we send out.

WEBMASTER

Kevin Kent

When I took over as webmaster 2 years ago for mtlegion.org, the website was on an older platform and did not get updated that often. I took all the pertinent information from that site and created a more current looking website on a newer platform and it gets updated almost daily. I thank everyone who has submitted information to put into their District news section, without that nobody really knows what each individual District has been doing. In addition, the Department of Montana is the first to do American Legion Boys State registration completely online which saved the Department close to \$1,000 by cutting printing costs and saving on postage. A big thank you to Mike Hedegard, John Louk & Gary White for helping make that happen, without them and a few others this would not have been possible. I have recently been asked by the Auxiliary Girls State Committee to start setting up their registration online so they can do the same thing next year and I expect it will run just as smoothly. If you haven't been on the website I suggest you at least take a look at it. You can print almost any application, forms and certificates that you may need as well as numerous manuals that are helpful on Post, District and Department levels. I monitor the amount of "traffic" we get on our site and it continues to grow, just last month in September we had 1,793 hits on it and that is just one month. When someone searches "American Legion of Montana" our site is the first result that they yield and that is due to the amount of visits we get as well as things I have set up on the backend to make it the number one search result. Please, if you have Post Facebook pages, newsletters or pictures / videos e-mail them to me or the Department Adjutant and I will post them in your District News section, the more information I have the more content our site will display. Also feel free to contact me with anything you would like to see on there, Keith Sibbert has been great at this and thanks to his ideas we now have a way for members to opt out of getting a paper copy of the Montana Legionnaire and just getting an electronic copy e-mailed to them which obviously saves the Department money. In closing I just want to stress to members the importance of having this information out there for people to see and I appreciate all of you that are using it as a resource on any level.

SAL ADVISOR REPORT

John Pellegrini

SAL membership is coming in slow so far this year. This means that some Squadrons are not sending out the renewal notice. They should be sent out as soon as we begin getting the Legionnaire notices in the mail. The push for SAL membership is just as important as Legion membership in your Post. The SAL is a very important part of our Legion Family. As of this writing, Montana is sitting in 5th place for the Nation but at only 30%. We have only 10 Squadrons over 50% and three of those have made goal.

I attended all meetings at the SAL National Convention in Houston and we did receive one award for membership but we sat well in back of the hall. Let's do better this year. Get those dues notices out and see if we can sit up front where we belong at National Convention.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Raymond Read

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that provides the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment, and competition. **The program utilizes the .177 caliber air rifle, both males and females can participate, through American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit, or SAL squadron sponsorship.**

It is a three-part program that combines the Basic Marksmanship Course, Qualification Awards, and Air Rifle Competition.

The Basic Marksmanship Course is a comprehensive package for the beginning shooter with little or no marksmanship experience. Gun safety and marksmanship fundamentals are taught through a balanced mix of short lecture and discussion followed by hands-on activities. The cornerstone of the Basic Marksmanship Course is the SHOOTER'S GUIDE TO POSITION AIR RIFLE, now in its third edition. The guide provides a thorough explanation of the essential fundamentals need for success as an entry-level competitive shooter.

Another highlight of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is our annual JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT. The tournament begins with postal matches to determinate state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a Qualification Round (also a postal match) to determine the shooters who will earn expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship. The next American Legion National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match, programmed held in August 2013 at the USA Shooting range facilities, at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

If you are getting started we would strongly recommend that you focus your program efforts on the sporter category.

It does not take a lot of money to get started in the sporter category; the junior athletes do not need any sort of sophisticated shooting clothing like the precision category does.

If you have not already done so we would recommend taking a look at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's Web Pages at www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/3P.htm. Look at the National Standard 3-Position Rules at <http://www.odcmp.com/3P/Rules.pdf>. This will give you a very good background on what is allowed in terms of sporter category rifles, clothing, and additional equipment.

With regards to sporter category rifles, those that have been successful in our National Championship tournament have fired the Daisy 753/853 pneumatic rifle, the Daisy M888 CO2 rifle or the Daisy XS-40 Valiant compressed air rifle. More information about these and other rifles can be obtained from the Daisy WebPages at daisy.ifware.com/cgi-bin/daisy2/products_avanti.html.

The CMP has an excellent extended payment program to purchase either the 853 or the M888 rifles. More information can be found at www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/Sporter_Air_Rifle.htm.

It is up to you, your finances, and the number of junior athletes you will have as to how many rifles you would want to consider buying. Most teams will have 3 or 4 athletes training on one rifle. Of course this will mean re-adjusting the sights for each of the athletes but this is good training. As you progress and find that you have two or three athletes that are better than the others you may want to consider letting them fire only their particular rifle.

If your Post continues with the program and have some athletes who are interested in continuing in 3-Position competitive shooting that would be the time to consider moving them into the precision category. I or one of the active programs can provide you with more information if you would like.

We hope that the above will prove to be helpful. If we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your interest in 3-position air rifle and The American Legion's Junior Shooting Sports Program.

American Legion Posts: [Please update your Shooting Sports Contact Information Send a copy to the Shooting Sports Coordinator](#)

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION (VA&R)

Kelly Ackerman

- Explanation of the nation-wide push to reduce the claims backlog within the VA.
- The push by VA Central Office to have all Regional Offices use the Fully Developed Claims program. This program is proving to be very effective.
- The average days for claims completion for a FDC claim at our RO is about 90 days or less. Some claims do require development on the part of the VA, but our AL VSO's are trained to accomplish the development prior to submission.
- There is a new electronic program available to VSO's called Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP). This allows us to work with the veteran through their ebenefits account, which works very well for veterans in remote locations.

- As a member of the VA&R Resolution Screening Committee during the National Convention in Houston, TX, I was able to see first-hand how many great ideas are coming from the AL Posts across the nation.
- One resolution that was passed by the VA&R Committee would allow WWII veterans automatic enrollment into the VA Healthcare System without the burden of meeting the financial criteria.

V.A. V.S. COORDINATOR – BILLINGS

Dale Webb

As Volunteer Services Coordinator for Billings, I had a meeting scheduled on October 16, 2013 with Billings and Fort Harrison, but it was cancelled due to the government shutdown.

Since Kathleen Henson has resigned as the Volunteer Services Coordinator for the V.A., we are in limbo until a new replacement is named and we can make arrangements for meetings for Billings and Fort Harrison.

We need this meeting to understand just what volunteers they will need at the clinic in Billings.

I have attended a meeting of the representatives at Fort Harrison and another via phone conference. All V.A. reps and the Director of the V.A. Montana Health Care were present at both meetings.

V.A. V.S. COORDINATOR – Fort Harrison

Bill White

1. Appointed American Legion Representatives to VA fort Harrison June 2013
2. According to VA historical documents Dale Webb and I are first two American Legion Representatives since 2000
3. Completed required course from American Legion Extension Institute
4. Attended 2nd and 3d quarter meetings for VAVS members at Ft. Harrison
5. Worked with the Marine Corp League from Great Falls to insure that there were refreshment at admissions VA FT Harrison
6. Working with Dale Webb VAVS Representatives from Billings on Veterans needs and what the American Legion can do to help our Veterans visiting the VA Clinics and Hospital

V.A. V.S. COORDINATOR - MILES CITY

Robert Crow

Things here, at the Miles City V.A. seem to be going along as usual. Both in the outpatient clinic and the Community Living Center (this used to be called the V.A. Nursing Home).

Staff in the C.L.C is working to keep the residents as active as possible. Some residents would just as soon eat and sleep.

Traffic in the outpatient clinic continues to fluctuate. I guess we all decide to get sick at the same time.

I think they expect two new employees here. One will take care of the homeless Vets and the other will handle H.U.D. housing.

This is my report for 2013.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Mervin G. Gunderson - Chairman

I would like to thank committee members Mike Susag, and Pete Fabiani for their assistance.

The Ways and Means Committee looked at several options for revenue generation this year. Our Committee would like to encourage anyone with ideas on fundraising to give us their assistance.

We recommended leaving the Big K in place. The Big K is a premier fundraiser that distributes funds to Posts, Units, Squadrons and Districts; as well as, deriving revenue for the Department. The Ways and Means committee believes it is essential to keep a fundraiser in place that rewards those entities that promote the program. The label program has long been a good revenue source for the Department. The Ways and Means committee recommended we continue the label program.

The largest fundraiser for the Department has continually been our firearms raffle. The Ways and Means committee recommended we raffle a "Quigley" Sharps rifle for this year. The nice thing about this rifle is it is made in Montana by the Shiloh Arms Company located in Big Timber. In the past we have received complaints that not everyone wants to win a weapon. This year the Finance Committee recommended a second place prize of a Vespa motor scooter. However when we were unable to find a Vespa at a reasonable price that would work for our fundraiser. We made the decision to offer a top line LED television. The screen size is 60". It is a prize well worth winning. The third and fourth place prizes will be cash of \$300 and \$200 respectfully.

The Ways and Means committee recommended that tickets for the rifle raffle be distributed on a request basis. It has proven to be very costly when we send books of tickets to Posts that do not sell or promote the fundraiser. Additional cost for printing tickets creates a

problem. Especially when hundreds of unsold tickets are returned to the Department Adjutant at convention. This year the committee recommended the tickets have sequential numbers and placed in books of 15 tickets. The price per ticket is \$10.00 or three for \$20.00. In an effort to ensure those selling tickets get a portion of the income, the entity selling the tickets is allowed to retain \$10.00 from each book for their fundraising efforts. The net gain for the Department is a minimum of \$90.00 to a maximum of \$140.00 per book.

WOMEN VETERANS COORDINATOR

Ruth Cheney

Although the Resolution to include a gender box on the Legion application forms did not pass at the Department of Montana Convention in June, the Department of Colorado was successful in passing their Resolution requesting the same. Application forms require updating due to addition of another war era (a decision made at the national convention in Houston), and the gender box will hopefully be added at that time.

In an effort to encourage the Legionnaire Magazine to enhance its appeal to women veterans, a letter was written to the magazine Editor requesting updating ads in the magazine to appeal to women veterans, as well as to younger veterans.

The Department of Montana was asked to remove the Women Veterans Coordinator blog appearing on the Department website. Initially I hoped the blog would overcome difficulties inherent in distance in such a large state, and I hoped it would encourage communication between women veterans regarding gender specific issues. The blog did neither.

I have established an email link with each of the District Commanders, to facilitate discussion regarding recruiting women veterans into the American Legion. I am currently planning to attend each of the District's Spring 2014 meetings to assess increases, or lack thereof, in the involvement of women veterans at the Post and District levels. It is my general sense that the practice of encouraging women veterans to participate in the Legion Auxiliary rather than the American Legion continues.

Women veterans have not sought, nor taken the opportunity to make me aware of issues regarding their VA benefits. There are more direct avenues to communicate with the VA than through the American Legion Women Veteran's Coordinator. Thus this role has become one of championing the full inclusion of women veterans in the American Legion. My observations are that this represents a much needed culture change which is occurring slowly, and sometimes reluctantly, within the organization. Increasing male Legionnaire's awareness and acceptance of the approximately 8000 women veterans in Montana is a priority, and challenging them to actively recruit women veterans into their Posts is an ongoing process. Once a woman veteran joins the American Legion, ensuring she is welcomed and fully included in Legion activities requires a culture change within some Legion Posts. The practice of "encouraging" women veterans to join the Legion but confine their activities to the Legion Auxiliary seems to continue, although many reasons are given

as to why women “prefer” the Auxiliary. Women are most likely adding to the problem by not self-identifying as veterans and by not feeling as worthy of their veteran status as their male counterparts. This also requires a culture change which will come over time as women’s roles in the military continue to expand and the nation increasingly recognizes women’s contributions to our nation’s defense. In the meantime, effort needs to be expended in recruiting women into their local American Legion Posts and including them in Legion activities at the Post, District, and Department. Women veterans have no desire to be treated differently or as though they are special. They want to be just another Legionnaire. A warm and genuine greeting and a “hearty handshake” will go a long way toward making them feel welcome, just as it does male veterans.

AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE

Elmer Palmer

The steering committee was appointed by Past Commander Carlisle and reappointed by Commander Ellwein to examine the operation of the Department of Montana, with special emphasis on the budget and ways to save money **and** improve operation. The committee consisted of: Past Commander Jim Carlisle, Commander Dick Ellwein, ex officio, Vice Commander Roger Hancock, Alternate National Executive Committeeman David McLean, Adjutant Gary White, Parliamentarian Jim Grosset, Past District Commander Jon Monteaux, Zone Commanders Dale Webb, Past National Vice Commanders, John Pellegrini and Merv Gunderson, Women Veteran Coordinator Ruth Cheney, Publicity Chairman Keith Sibbert and Committee Chairman Elmer Palmer. Past District Commanders Scott Eldridge and Kenneth Fenstermaker served the Committee for the first year, and resigned for personal reasons.

This process has been, and is being, done in a number of Departments, and Resolution 1 was approved by the National Executive Committee on 8 May 2013 to accomplish the same type of reorganization at the National level.

The Committee thanks Commanders Carlisle and Ellwein for the opportunity to serve, and the members of the Department of Montana that took time to provide input to the committee. Our special thanks goes to Adjutant Gary White and Finance Chairman Merv Gunderson for their extra efforts in compiling information for the committee, sometimes with little or no fore warning.

The below report is submitted.

Report of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee (annotated)

The Steering Committee met several times through Electronic Methods, and two meetings of a majority of the committee on 15 October 2012, Carlisle, White, Gunderson, McLean and Palmer; and on 25 October, 2012, Carlisle, White, Hancock, Ellwein, McLean, Monteaux,

Gunderson and Palmer. In November two District Commanders, Dale Webb and Scott Eldridge, and Past National Vice Commander John Pellegrini were added to the committee.

In January the chairman met with Finance Chairman Gunderson and Adjutant White to assign cost savings to the various recommendations. A conservative estimate was used in most cases, so the actual savings could be more, but not likely less. Most of the labor since that time has been reviewing the draft of this report and making necessary corrections in the language and order of the findings. A few items were modified, combined or removed. The ideas put forth in this report are highly supported by the committee, most with unanimous support of committee members.

The Committee presented a report to the 2012 Fall Conference of the Department Executive board. A complaint was made that there was no way for members to give input to the Committee. A procedure was provided by the web master to allow anyone to give feedback to the Committee.

The purpose of this committee is to look for ways to streamline the Department of Montana with a look to saving money and possibly form a more productive operation, getting more performance for the money we spend.

Other departments and the National Organization are considering the same measures. Some Departments have found it necessary to raise dues and others have dropped participation in some of the Legion's most prestigious programs. Either of these answers would be disastrous to the Department.

The report was being presented to the Department Convention in Lewistown, as part of the approval procedure for the resolution. Before much information could be given, the resolution was tabled, and the information was not available for many members of the Convention.

The time to act is now. Recent discussions with Adjutant White has indicated that with the current budget of the Department of Montana, and the expected raises in costs for materials, services and postage, and the short time expectations in membership gain, the Department of Montana could easily find it necessary to cut programs or increase dues.

The following recommendations are presented to the Department Executive Committee and Convention for approval:

1. Eliminate the four Zone Commanders. This action has been taken by other departments, and has had no unfavorable effect on the department. The savings realized would be four call-ins for Fall Conference and Convention. This action would not eliminate the term zone or the makeup of the current zones. When the position of Zone Commander was originally created, the prime duty assigned to them was conducting the Zone Oratorical contests. Shortly thereafter, it became evident that the Zone contests were not being conducted in all Zones as intended, and the Zone contest was combined with the Department contest. This position is also a burden on the district providing the Zone commander, decreasing the

available leadership in that district. The Department of South Carolina has done this, and after a year they feel that the benefits were not only a financial savings, but resulted in a better relationship between the District Commanders and the Department Commander and Department Adjutant, and vice versa.

Savings: \$3400

2. Eliminate the positions of Chairman of the Membership Committee and Membership and Post Activities Chairman. We will create an Appointed Department Office of Membership Director a member of the Executive Committee with Voice no Vote, appointed for a renewable term of three years. This would not realize a savings, but would strengthen the membership program of the department. Strengthening our membership will bring in more dues and cover part of our programs. Making a Membership Director position and making it a non-voting position on the Executive Committee has a couple of advantages for the department. First, it will ensure that the person in charge of membership will be present to answer to and/or give input to the Executive Committee at the meetings of the DEC, and second it puts the knowledge of the membership leader at the immediate availability of the DEC. Several departments have been using a Membership Director for years, often making it a paid position.

Cost \$35

3. Post Activities duties are few, and will be handled by the Vice Commander, as he will no longer have direct membership duties, but will retain the general membership responsibilities held by all officers. His primary job will be developing leadership skills and filling in for the Commander as needed. He will take on any additional duties as assigned by the Commander, with particular interest in Post Activities. As Past Commander McLean refers to the position of Alternate NEC, the vice commander is in a lot of ways the 'spare tire' for the commander. This does give him/her an opportunity to gain leadership experience and a feeling 'close-up' to all the duties of the commander.

Wash

4. Reduce the Membership Committee to one member from each Zone plus one 'At Large' member. This will reduce the number of members from 13 to five. The saving would be eight call-ins for both the Fall Conference and Convention. With a term of three years, the rotation of these members would be determined after implementation. The current makeup of the Membership Committee is unwieldy. Many of the members do not attend the meeting because they figure there are enough other members there and they are not needed. Additionally, it is hard to find five members that have an interest in membership, and nearly impossible to find thirteen members that are interested and willing to accept the duties.

Savings: \$2800

5. Create the Appointed Department Offices of Americanism Director a member of the Executive Committee with Voice no Vote, appointed for a renewable term of three years. All Americanism programs will report to this Director, who will in turn

report to the Executive Committee and thus the commander. This will replace the Americanism Chairman. **Cost \$35**

6. Remove Training from the Education and Training Committee and combine the Education and Oratorical committees forming the Civic Programs Committee to be responsible for all of the Constitution and Government programs; Oratory, Constitutional Essay and Government Survey. Additionally, the Civics Program Committee would be assigned to the Americanism Director, in keeping with the organization maintained at the National level. With a membership of five members with one being designated the chair, a three year term with rotation to be determined after implementation. These programs, if properly presented, can feed on each other and given the opportunity to see the whole picture, a contestant in one program can easily adapt into another program. In a department the size of this one, we should be able to operate all these programs, but it takes coordination between them, and putting them all in one committee will do that much better. **Savings: \$1050**

7. Create the Appointed Department Office of Training Director, member of the Executive Committee with Voice no Vote, appointed for a renewable term of three years. This Director will be in charge of all training. With the advent of the new American Legion Extension Course and the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) training program, the National Organization has taken the responsibility for training. The Director will accomplish the scheduling of training. As discussed in the Membership Director, making this person a member of the Executive Committee creates a closer linkage between this person and the Executive Committee. Our training committee has spent many hours working to achieve some form of training to reach the 'blue cap' Legionnaire, and the National Organization has put that package together, The Training Director should work hard with the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee to see that we get this training to the members of the department.

Cost: \$350

8. Reduce the Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Committee to a single SAL Liaison. National requires that there be a liaison between the Department and the Detachment. A committee of four is an overkill of this requirement. There is really no business conducted by this committee. The liaison could be done by a single individual member. Savings, three call-ins for Convention.

Wash

9. Revise the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will take responsibility for all financial activity, to include Ways and Means and Endowment. The Finance Committee Chairman will become the Department Finance Officer. The committee will consist of seven members, to one member from each zone and three 'at-large' members, with no more than two members from any zone. Ways and Means and Endowment will be sub-committees of the Finance committee, as assigned by the Committee Chairman. The term of office will be three years and makeup will be such that no more than three members will be appointed in any

year. This will eliminate the Ways and Means and Endowment Committees. The Commander will assign the Chairman/Finance Officer from within the Finance Committee. Initial terms of office will be adjusted to give proper spacing to the rotation. The committee has spoken with the current and former JAG, and they states there is no problem with these procedures. No conflict of interest will be present. In order for donations to qualify for the Montana Charitable Tax Credit, the Montana American Legion Endowment needs to be a separately incorporated 501(c)3 tax exempt entity. When this incorporation takes place, the American Legion of Montana Finance Committee would be listed as the Board of Directors and the Finance Officer as its primary officer. This corporation would have its own set of bylaws directing its operation.

By making the Ways and Means Committee and Endowment Committee sub-committees of the Finance Committee, the sub-committee could meet after the Finance Committee, having plans for the approval of the Convention, since this would occur before the first day of the Convention.

The Endowment Committee was appointed at the Post Convention Executive Committee meeting of the 2008 Convention. Members of that Committee report that it has not met as a committee since its appointment, and no special project to raise funds for the endowment have occurred. Being a sub-committee of the Finance Committee would allow it to meet when the Finance Committee met.

Savings: \$1300

10. Make better use of Electronic Media. Resolution ? approved at the 92nd Convention in Miles City called for all posts to have a post email address by the following convention. Utilizing email for general correspondence with the posts can reduce the postage necessary. The committee realizes that we have too many older legionnaires that cannot handle electronic communications, and that it will take time to get some posts onto the email and web. But the department should use these means of communication as often as we possibly can. Each letter that we don't send saves us the price of the stamp, paper, and envelop.

Savings: \$750-1000 (conservative.)

11. Montana Legionnaire. The largest single line item in the budget after wages and benefits is the Montana Legionnaire. Each issue runs at a cost of roughly \$6630.00, and postage costs are expected to drive this cost higher. There are three options that could happen with the paper. Reducing the publication of the Montana Legionnaire to a **quarterly paper**, printed **four times** a year. The time of printing for the four issues would be adjusted by the Department Executive Committee.

Savings: \$13260.

Total savings. As stated above, each of these items was evaluated by the Adjutant and Finance Chairman. They used a conservative "best estimate" to come up with the numbers. Depending on which of the publishing potions is selected, the final Total Savings are as follows:

Total: \$22,140.

Implementing these changes will require actions by the Executive committee and changes to the Department Constitution and By-laws. While examining the constitution to consider the needed changes, Past Judge Advocate McLean and the chairman found that there are several areas where the constitution is in need of change for both form and content. This would be a perfect time for the Commander to assign a review by the Constitution Committee to examine the constitution and by-laws and update them. The American Legion National Constitution and By-laws contain only that information needed to organize the organization. There is a *Procedures for the National Executive Committee* and a *Procedures for the National Convention* that explain how to conduct business. These may be changed by the National Executive Committee, and do not have to go before the convention. McLean suggests that when the Constitution and By-laws are next revised that this concept be included in the Department of Montana Constitution and By-laws.

Conclusions: Since the purpose of the Steering Committee was to work for the best savings of funds for the Department of Montana, the obvious conclusion would be to accept the largest savings and drop the publishing of the Montana Legionnaire to four issues and maximize the savings. In informal talks with Adjutants and Commanders at the National Conventions and Fall and Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, members of the committee found that several of the departments have already dropped their paper to a quarterly publication. One has eliminated their Zone Commanders. One failed to participate in the Oratorical Contest. All of this due to the involved expenses

It is the recommendation that the report of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee be accepted with the total savings the Department of Montana \$22,140.00 in this coming year. A resolution has been prepared for submission to the Resolutions Committee of the 2014 Convention of the Department of Montana to adopt the recommendations of this committee as the actions of the Convention of the Department of Montana.

Additionally, resolutions have been prepared to raise the Department Per Capita Dues effective 1 January 2015 or eliminate the Per Diem payment for the Fall Conference and the Department Convention, effective 1 July 2014. These would be presented only if the resolution to accept the recommendations of the Committee.

The costs of doing business; postage, materials, travel, convention fees etc.; are increasing. Chairmen are asking for higher awards for their programs. Officers are requesting additional travel. The amount of work in the office may require additional hired help. National Headquarters are suggesting unfunded advertisement and public awareness programs. These will all contribute to the necessary increase of our expenses.

Using the Post Locator on the national website to check the dues rate for posts in the surrounding states, the average was around the \$33.00 mark, with a few in small towns in

the \$28.00-32.00 level. The top ran in the \$40.00-45.00, although there is a Post in California with dues of \$100.00. Our average in Montana is at the \$30.00 mark.

We do not have to raise dues or cut per diem payments. The recommendations of the committee will decrease costs and improve operations. Yes, it is cutting some 'sacred cows'. But this is necessary to continue to grow and accomplish our goals without having to generate new funds. We request that you approve the recommendations of the Steering Committee as the Actions of the Department Convention.