

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER
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Department President Marva Kasl ~- Department Secretary Jacki O'Neill

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT, Marva Kasl

Where has the year gone, it seems we've only just begun. There have been some exciting times and many miles traveled. The pieces have slowly started to come together as we visited Units and their members. We all seem to have the same concerns with membership and getting members active. But somehow you all keep working to piece our projects together for the Veterans.

You ladies have accomplished a lot in our projects this year. Now is the time to get out those reports. Get together with your officers and members and take a look at those projects. Check out what you have done, you may be surprised. Also, there is still time to complete some projects if needed. Don't forget to check with your members, not so active; they may have many hours of service for you. Some services could be Scouts, Bible School, Sunday school, 4-H, Coaches, and more. Mainly ladies, we need to report for Nebraska.

As I am writing this, I have attended my first District meeting. I am anxious for the rest to attend more. Thank you for following the theme I created. It's great to see Pieces and Doves. Thank you all for the great hospitality everywhere we've gone. We are getting spoiled. We are making plans to attend the Awareness Assembly in Washington, D.C. the first of March. I'm looking forward to new experiences and sharing much information.

The big project will be plans for the Department Convention in Columbus on June 26th to the 28th. Please make plans to attend. The Nebraska Junior meeting will be in Cook on May 16th. Plan to take your juniors! Also something special is being planned for the Juniors at the Department Convention, bring a few Juniors.

The Heroes Park project at Norfolk has "Kicked Off". Yes, they held an official kick off on February 6th. My Windmill Project is going great. Thank you for your support. Those of you who haven't donated or bought tickets for the quilt raffle, we're still taking them! We have more tickets if you need them. Also, remember the Nebraska Life Magazine Campaign going on now, February 1st to May 31st. This year we are co-chairing with the Sons - Ladies, please help!

So ladies keep working, the year is not over yet. Also, start planning for the next year, it's coming soon. Remember we're still working for the Veterans. "Piece by Piece" for Peace!

NOTICE: We are working on hosting the National President, Desi Stoy coming to visit July 31 – Aug 2. We are planning visits to the Veterans homes, a parade and a possible get together dinner. WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS TO COME LATER.

In the last issue of the STAR I asked that the Units with Permanent members contribute \$5.00 for each Permanent Member to the Department. The response has been great, thank you so much for your kindness and generosity. As you know every little bit helps. If you haven't contributed you still can.

On page 5 of the December/January STAR issue I had a form for you to send to me requesting that you report on what special things you or your Unit did for Veterans on Martin Luther King Day. Please fill that out and mail it today.

Welcome Wilma!! The DEC approved the appointment of Wilma Halvorson to the position of (2) County Government, replacing Elaine Clancy.

Piece By Piece we Serve Our Veterans for Peace

CHAPLAIN, Bonnie Erickson

“To all Chaplains,” I hope you have all had a great year and have used the Christmas Program and the Gold Star Program or at least recognized her in some special way.

Time is running out to get the prayers to me for Marva Kasl’s Prayer Book. I am putting a dead line for these as May 1st, so I will have time to prepare them before the Department Convention in June. We had a great Conference in Kearney in January and I hope to see all of you at the Department Convention in Columbus.

May God Bless and Keep You Now and Always.

HISTORIAN, Charleen Walters

Good morning ladies! I’m sure enjoying reading the Narrative Histories that have started coming to my mailbox. Auxiliary Units across the state are doing interesting and exciting things for the Veterans, the children and youth, the community, the schools and teachers, etc. The donations are to be commended also.

The District Conventions will be on the downhill slide by the time you read this. We’ve had some excellent History Books entered in the competitions. Remember the winners can be corrected before they are mailed to me for Department competition. **Deadline May 1, 2009!**

AMERICANISM, Vicki Ozenbaugh

We are on the downhill slide of the Auxiliary year. Has your Unit completed ONE Americanism activity? If not, please do so soon. Remember, 100 percent in Units submitting their Americanism report with at least one activity shown will bring out my true colors—red, white, and blue hair.

Please note this correction to the Americanism Essay contest: The ABC Book had a mistake in the number of words for the seventh and eighth grade. The correct figure is 350 to 400 words. Get this information to your school immediately as the deadline is approaching. If you have already received essays for that age group and have selected your winner, I suggest getting the essay back to the student. Allow him/her to re-write their essay to get it in the correct word count. This will make it eligible for National competition. Deadline is postmarked on or before April 1, 2009.

A word about the Girl Scout Achievement Award. This is a National scholarship. No Unit has any financial responsibility for this award. If your Unit receives an essay and application, all you need to do is sign off in support of the Girl Scout's application and send it to me. The application must be postmarked on or before March 10, 2009.

Your possible Americanism project for this time is donating flags to schools or youth groups in your communities. It is so important that we encourage patriotism. Presenting a classroom flag and demonstrating the proper way of respecting that flag can leave a lasting impression on young people. Red, white, and blue! Americanism and you! Go Auxiliary! Go Auxiliary!

LEGISLATIVE, Betty Staal

Earlier this year The American Legion hailed the passage of the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act-commonly known as the "New GI Bill"-contained in Public Law 110-252, which was signed on June 30 and is expected to take effect August 1, 2009. The new law dramatically improves education benefits for veterans and their families, eliminates a \$1,200 buy-in-now charged to military personnel who choose to use the program, and expands services for members of the National Guard and Reserve components.

However, reports are circulating that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is planning to hire an outside company to implement the New GI Bill. There are also reports that VA may hire outside companies to inspect state veterans' homes. Any plans VA has to hire outside contractors for any purpose will face fierce objection from the world's largest veterans organization.

The American Legion, meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, passed resolutions to head off any intention VA has to outsource either the new GI Bill or the state veterans' homes inspections.

"Our newest generation of veterans deserves the benefits administered by the department of Veterans Affairs, not outside contractors." said 2008 National Commander Marty Conatser. "Patients, critics and most media all cite the outstanding job the VA is doing. Outsourcing is not the answer."

The resolution opposing outsourcing the new GI Bill, The American Legion argued that VA should hire the staff necessary to fulfill the law's requirements. The Legion strongly opposes the movement toward outsourcing critical services that could be handled internally at VA. Also passed was a resolution opposing efforts to hire outside companies to perform inspections on state veterans homes which have always been performed by trained VA staff.

The American Legion family is urged to contact their members of Congress at 202-224-3121 and insist that VA be persuaded not to use outside contractors for duties that should be performed by VA personnel.

Senator Johann's offices are: 115 Railway, Suite C102-Scottsbluff, NE 69361
4111 Fourth Ave. Suite 26-Kearney, NE 68845
294 Federal Bldg 100 Centennial Mall North-Lincoln, NE 68508
9900 Nicholas St. Suite 325-Omaha, NE 68114

NATIONAL SECURITY, Gayla Schmid

When sending our troops overseas a piece of home, the first item should be a Pocket Flag. This is a tiny flag folded in a triangle format and it is small enough to be carried in a wallet or a pocket. Pocket Flags can be ordered through the Pocket Flag Project at www.pocketflagproject.com.

Other items to consider adding to the box are those that remind the troops of home through taste and smell. Think about adding powdered tea, lemonade, Gatorade or soup mixes, but be sure to enclose in plastic bags to contain the spill if the package becomes damaged. Personal hygiene items can be valuable especially if you add sun protection lotion to protect their skin from the many hours of sun exposure and some single packaged wipes, some go days with out being able clean up.

There is nothing like relaxing after a hard day so be sure to add some movies, playing cards, video games and snacks in individual bags such as peanuts, trail mix, candy (hard candy is recommended as chocolate will melt) and gum. Don't forget to add homemade cards or letters of thanks from your juniors or local school.

Now that you have gathered all the items, the only thing missing are boxes to ship it in. Call the Post Office at (800) 610-8734 and ask for a Military Care Kit. The kit is free and includes 3 flat rate boxes, 2 cub boxes, 9 address labels and 16 custom forms. A flat rate box can be shipped to any APO/FPO for \$8.95, regardless of weight.

Operation Toasty Toes: Members of the American Legion Auxiliary can show our support for our service personnel is by participating in Operation Toasty Toes. Toasty Toes began in 1997 by a grandmother responding to her grandson’s request for slippers for himself and others with whom he was serving on an aircraft carrier. As word spread about the wonderful slippers more requests were received and Toasty Toes was born. Originally only knitted and crocheted slippers were sent overseas, but the program expanded to include headbands, ski masks, watch caps and more. Patterns for all can be found on the website – www.operationtoastytoes.org.

To send you need to obtain addresses locally of currently deployed military personnel - send the package to them and ask for their help in distributing. If you have trouble getting address you might consider writing the editor of your local paper indicating that you are looking for names and address of military personnel to whom you would like to send care packages. Have them contact the Unit with the information.

Contact other organizations also such as “Give 2 the Troops” www.Give2theTroops.org. or “Blue Star Mothers” at www.bluestarmothers.org.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION, Donna Gana

There has not been any change at this time in the rules and regulations concerning cookies being taken to the veteran’s homes.

I am suggesting you contact your elected officials, both state and congress, by e-mail or letter (no form letters), to emphasize how you feel about the law stating we cannot take cookies to the homes as a thank you gift to our veterans. The letter writing campaign will show how strongly we feel about taking one more thing away from our veterans. I suggest that you write immediately to your senator in the Nebraska Legislature and also to the United States Congressmen to show them we are unhappy about the legislation.

DON’T PUT THIS ON THE BACK BURNER.

CONTACTING ELECTED OFFICIALS

OFFICIAL	E-MAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE #	FAX #
U.S. President: Barack Obama	president@whitehouse.gov	202-456-1414	202-456-2461
Governor Dave Heineman	www.gov.state.ne.us/mail/govmail.html	402-471-2244	402-471-6031
Secretary of State, John A Gale	receptionist@sos.ne.gov	402-471-2554	402-471-3237
Attorney General, Jon Bruning	www.ago.state.ne.us/	402-471-2282	402-471-3297
Treasurer, Shane Osborn	info@treasurer.org	402-471-2455	402-471-4390
U.S. Senator, Ben Nelson	http://bennelson.senate.gov/	202-224-6551	202-228-0012
U.S. Senator, Mike Johanns	http://johanns.senate.gov/	202-224-4224	202-224-5213
U.S. Representative, Jeff Fortenberry 1 st District	http://fortenberry.house.gov/	202-225-4806	202-225-5686
U.S. Representative, Lee Terry 2nd District	http://leeterry.house.gov/	202-225-4155	202-226-5452
U.S. Representative, Adrian Smith 3rd District	http://adriansmith.house.gov/	202-225-6435	202-225-0207

Additional sheet enclosed with 2009-2010 Nebraska Legislature

POPPY, Kathleen Obermiller

There have been **two changes** made this year in the Poppy Poster Contest. There are now seven classes. Class 1: Grades 2 and 3, Class 2: Grades 4 and 5, Class 3: Grades 6 and 7, Class 4: Grades 8 and 9, Class 5: Grades 10 and 11, Class 6: Grade 12, and Class 7: Student to be classified as Development Disability pupils or those who are in special education in our school system. The other change is in the size of the poster. The poster shall be on 11" x 14" poster board. Drawing paper will not be accepted. Be sure you write on the back of the poster, in ink, the name, address, age, and grade of the contestant; the unit #, the name of the Department and the class in which the entry is submitted. These posters should be postmarked no later than May 8, 2009. All of these rules for this contest and other Poppy Contest are found in the A B C book on page 99+.

There has been a short fall on the number of poppies made so far this year. All orders will be filled but not all orders will be able to be filled in time for your District Conventions. Every effort is being made to fill these orders as soon as possible. This takes a lot of coordination and effort by a few people, so please be patient.

UNIT DEVELOPMENT & REHABILITATION, Connie Deke

SPRING CLEANING TIME!

Ladies, it soon will be spring time and spring cleaning and getting organized will be here! Please get your Auxiliary Units organized and membership turned in. Please contact members who have not paid dues or don't participate in activities and make them feel welcome. Ask them to help with an upcoming project. Ask a question or their opinion on some item of the Auxiliary business in your Unit. I know it takes time to ask, but it never hurts to ask. We need not to be so independent on ourselves and more dependent on our members. Remember member by member, piece by piece we serve our Veteran's.

We can not do all the work by ourselves.

2nd NOTICE

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Just a reminder that at your District Convention the District Presidents will be asking for "volunteers" to serve on committees at our Department Convention. Each District needs 2 members to serve as pages. Each District will need members to serve on the credentials, election, registration and the rules committee.

Your participation is always welcomed.

2nd NOTICE: Plans have been made for the 3rd Reunion Party for Carol Van Kirk and Tom Bock the 2005-2006 Past National President and Commander. They have planned a 2 hour dinner cruise on Sunday, August 23, 2009. You can board the Spirit of Jefferson at the historic Louisville wharf. The Spirit of Jefferson will provide the perfect setting to make this evening memorable as you cruise, dine and enjoy DJ music on the Ohio River. She has the look and feel of an old-time steamboat. Carol and Tom always offer a night out to people from their states going to National Convention. If you are planning to go to National Convention and joining them on the dinner cruise a registration form will be included in the Delegation packets that are handed out at the Post DEC meeting in June, 2009. If you want to sign up now you can request the form from the Department Headquarters or from your District President. There is only room for 150 reservations. Tickets are \$39.00 each. Sign up today!

2nd NOTICE: The UNIT ANNUAL REPORTS were sent to each Unit President. You have until May 1st to get them into Department. Remember, contacting members for their Volunteering information does take lots of time. Contact your members and compile all the needed information to complete your Unit forms. If your Unit doesn't do exactly what is asked, let the chairmen know WHAT you do! WE are all special in our own communities. ... Let's tell others, Let's share ideas Let's not keep it a secret anymore!

Department of Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary has a new e-mail address - neaux@windstream.net Note: All alltel.net emails are now windstream.net

****Correction for 2008-2009 History Book Competition next year - The Introductory pages should be single spaced and centered on the page.**** Please make a note, now, in the ABC book that the Historian will be looking at next year. Thank you!

2009 DISTRICT CONVENTION SCHEDULE

District 8 - Saturday, Feb.7th - Gretna Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 10 - Saturday, Feb.14th - Nelson Legion - winter storm, postponed until later date

District 13 - Saturday, Feb.21st - Auburn Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 11 - Sunday, Feb.22nd - Beatrice Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 9 - Saturday, Mar.7th - Palisade Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 4 - Saturday, Mar.7th - Alliance Legion - officer attending - Carol Ulrich, Department Vice President

District 5 - Sunday, Mar. 8th - Hershey Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 7 - Sunday, Mar. 8th -Valparaiso Legion - officer attending - Jacki O'Neill, Department Secretary

District 12 - Saturday, Mar.14th - Syracuse Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 6 - Sunday, Mar.15th - Gibbon Legion - officer attending - Carol Ulrich, Department Vice President

District 2 - Sunday, Mar.15th - Crofton Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 3 - Saturday, Mar.21st - Carroll Auditorium - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

District 1 - Saturday, Mar.28th -Ainsworth Legion - officer attending - Marva Kasl, Department President

Try to attend your District Convention! The District Convention is a smaller version of the Department Convention and closer to where you live. If you attend **you will be glad you did.**

MEMBERSHIP "VETERANS - OUR SOUL & INSPIRATION ", Beverly Neel

What a great time we had at Mid-Year Conference 2009 in Kearney. A very BIG "thank you" to all the Main Street Classics - 101 characters; namely, Carol Ulrich, Renee Van Winkle, Kathy Mazur, JoAnn Sieck, Donna Hatfield, Lisa Moore, Vicki Ozenbaugh, Lucille Capek, Norma Arington, Alice Vieselmeyer, and Helen Miller. You are TOPS in my book.

UNIT PRESIDENTS PLEASE ENSURE YOU MAKE ALL MEMBERS AWARE OF THIS INFORMATION.

As of January 31, 2009 any Auxiliary member not having her 2009 dues paid is considered delinquent and suspended from all Unit activities, including but not limited to, VOTING, being an Officer or Chairman, discussion of issues, etc. Any member not having her 2009 Membership Card in her possession is suspended until such time as she pays her 2009 dues. By December 31, 2009 any members who do not have their 2009 dues paid, will be considered "dropped."

Nebraska is ranked #6 in the Nation as this article is written. We are over 85% to National Goal. What we really need now is TEAMWORK to complete our 2009 membership drive. So take out all renewals not paid and divide them among your officers and conquer the task. If your Unit Membership Chairman is unwilling to give you the names, then you may contact the Department Office at 402 466 1808 and they will send you a listing of all unpaid 2009 members. It is that simple. Let's get it done.

Be ever watchful for prospective members. Invite them to visit a Unit meeting, share why you are a member and find out what their interests and talents are. Every Unit could use new ideas, talents, so do not let prospective members pass us by.

We are just about ready to wrap-up the District Spring Conventions this month and prepare our annual reports. Now don't sigh – how else will our time, talents, resources be accounted for if we do not – record them. If you have not already done so, refresh your recording sheet and bring it up-to-date so at your April meeting you can hand your hours/expenses into the Unit for recording and completing the annual reports.

It is H.O.P.E.(ful) (Honoring Our Promise Everyday) that the "Divide & Conquer" method has been used to bring in the last renewals for 2009 (and 2008 – there are always some late bloomers). If not, please do so. If you need to know how it works simply give me a call at home 402 529 3593 or work 402 379 0700 or email me at bagn1g2b@gpcom.net. I am available to explain at any time. We have heard about this method for four years, I would H.O.P.E. this method would become a standard procedure in your Unit. Give it a try – you may find it works and saves you a lot of time and energy. Besides it INVOLVES your MEMBERS – who doesn't like to have a helping hand to share the task with?

As always keep our military and their families in thought and prayer as well as our own members. Even if we are unaware of personal concerns a simple "Act of Kindness" type card does wonders for our soul. Go on, try it – the reward is greater than the act.

The inserts included with this newsletter are:

1. The Americanism Essay Contest with correction for grades 7 and 8.
2. Explanation sheets on the American Legion Auxiliary Insurance Programs that are offered to members.
3. ****YOU CAN WIN \$300 OR \$100 DOLLARS**** National President's Top recruiter Award rules and entry form enclosed. It's easy, just sign up new Auxiliary members and score points. Receive 2 points for every new senior and 1 point for every new junior member.
4. Unit Development & Revitalization Outline for Plan of Work
5. 2008-2009 Unit Membership Dues and date of last filing of Constitution and Bylaws booklet
6. Gold Star Members History Project
7. 2009 - 2010 Nebraska Legislature
8. 2010 Unit Data Form – Membership Chairman information for the upcoming year.
9. Girls State news / reminders
10. Juniors newsletter

The www.nebraskalegionaux.net has been updated. Check it out.

ASK QUESTIONS ~ GET ANSWERS

Question: Our Unit sends coupons to overseas commissaries monthly. It does cost our unit for the postage. We never get a response so we don't know if they have received or even want the coupons.

Answer: Unfortunately, the overseas commissaries do not send verification of receipt of coupons. I have heard from one young soldier, I work for his mother, what a difference the coupons have made to him and his young wife. They are stationed in Japan which if you have ever seen the cost of living there, it is one of the highest. The coupons have enabled them to make their monthly budget while keeping the stress of living overseas somewhat in check. He said the coupons are placed either on a bulletin board or in a table where when you enter the commissary you can search through the coupons to use that day. He said it's best to go early as they don't last long.

I know it would be nice to receive verification of receipt but in the absence of that, as a member of the National Security Committee please accept my thanks for taking the time to help our soldiers and families serving overseas. Thank you for making a difference.

Marcia Wheatley Vice Chairman, National Security Committee

Proud member of the American Legion Auxiliary Serving veterans, their families and their communities.

The \$100 Membership Chairman's portion of the 2008 membership awards received for reaching target dates has been donated to the Norfolk Veterans Home for their Garden Project. Thank you Beverly!

UPDATE

National President's Project

Create a Plan of Work – Condensed Form

At Mid Year we held a session of how to create a Plan of Work, since then I have received different rules for this contest. In fact, the rules are better for us to use.

UNIT AWARD – National wants to have an outline from Units on three (3) of their programs that they are able to briefly detail –

GOALS (what Unit intends to accomplish) –

TACTICS (steps Unit uses to work the program) –

MEASURABLE OUTCOME (successful results).

This needs only to be in outline form such as power point presentation. Need ONE page per program, but any Unit entering must describe three (3) programs. Program examples: Americanism, Poppy Membership, Children & Youth, etc. Pictures may be included but not required. This is NOT a narrative report.

Mailed on February 20, 2009