

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA    JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER  
P.O. Box 5227, Lincoln Ne, 68505 (physical address 5600 P Street)  
Phone 402.466.1808, Fax 402.466.0182  
Email: [neaux@alltel.net](mailto:neaux@alltel.net) or web: [www.nebraskalegionaux.net](http://www.nebraskalegionaux.net)

Department President Marva Kasl    ~ ~    Department Secretary Jacki O'Neill

A word from PRESIDENT MARVA

Hello Everyone. By the time you get this news, the holidays will be over. I hope you had an enjoyable time with your families and I hope you have a Happy New Year.

We had some very enjoyable experiences as we toured District 1. It is a big territory with lots of miles to travel. It was special spending time with Commander Bill and his wife Sharon, along with Doug Boldt and John, from the Legion office. We met many new people as we traveled with District 1 President Marilyn Philben. We visited Eva Nollette's home, what delicious cinnamon rolls we had there! Jean Hensens had her hotel open again; she's such a special person.

Then we were off to Hot Springs for the Christmas Party. What an experience to visit their hospital. Would you believe about 10 deer just graze on their lawn, what a picture. Cookies and more cookies, thousands were collected as we toured and delivered to Hot Springs. Thanks to Gunner Reis and Karol Lockman for their work and hospitality. It was fun being able to spend time with Virginia and Don Nelsen.

We attended Scottsbluff's Christmas with Gifts for Yanks. Here we were able to visit Roxanne Hiatt and Luayne Weisgerber. The following week we attended the Gifts for Yanks events at Grand Island, Norfolk, Lincoln and Omaha. We were able to find time to work at the Omaha Hospital Gift Shop. Thanks to Gert and Marlene for all their work in Omaha and Marlene Zersen and her helpers at Grand Island. Donna Gana gets thanks for overseeing all these events. It is so rewarding to see happy veterans. *This makes it all worthwhile!*

I hope you enjoy hearing some of our goings on. Yes, we need to get down to business. Mid Winter Conference is almost here. To

be held on January 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> in Kearney. Please plan to attend all or part of the conference. We are planning an educational and enjoyable time. Friday night we are having a fun night, your District President has a theme to follow. Contact her, find out the theme and help her dress the part. You can play bingo that night and help us make money for the Department.

Department officers and chairmen remember your reports and items for your breakout tables. Also plan to prepare a plan of works. I hope you are all busy planning your District Conventions. Please try to attend this educational and enjoyable meeting. I will attend as many as possible. We will try three events on one weekend, it's a challenge, but we will do it.

In the mean time, please get out your ABC book and check all the projects. Check deadlines and participate and then report.

Remember Girls State, Americanism month and essays, scholarships, poppy posters, talk to teachers and ask for participation opportunities. For Martin Luther King Day on January 19<sup>th</sup> you are asked to remember a Veteran or Veterans in a special way. Report your activity in the form available from the "Star". Plan ahead your Legion Birthday activities.

The schedule for favor and centerpieces is also in the "Star". Please call Helen Miller and get an assignment. Let's fill all spaces and add a little fun for the Veterans. Use Juniors, active or not, and invite them to your meeting to help. They'll have the project done in no time. Plan to also take them to the Department Junior meeting in Cook in May 2009.

So ladies keep working hard for those Veterans. With HOPE we work "Piece by Piece for our Peace" Happy New Year again to all! Marva Kasl, Department President

## LEGISLATIVE

The election is over, now there is other work we need to attend to. On November 4, new members of the House of Representatives and the United States Senate were chosen to represent their constituents. The 111<sup>th</sup> congress begins in January 2009. Let us be prepared to be an effective advocate when the new Congress begins. Advocacy is defined as each constituent relaying his/her ideas and opinions to elected and appointed governmental officials. These include senators, Congressional representatives and personnel in governmental agencies. Advocacy is successful when individuals contact governmental officials and personnel to express their views. Together with members of the American Legion Family our voices will be heard. The ALA has been and will continue to be a strong advocate for veterans' issues. There are many bills pertaining to veterans' benefits, military funding, and Veterans Affairs. To help understand these bills and issues there are Websites that offer synopses of the legislation. Advocacy is the responsibility of all of us. One of the best resources for Grassroots Advocacy is the American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Advocacy Guide available online for free download at [www.legion.aux.org](http://www.legion.aux.org) under Resources on the Legislative Committee home page. I will have more websites and information at Winter Conference

*Betty Staal, Legislative Chairman*

The UNIT ANNUAL REPORTS were sent to each Unit President. There is not a hurry to get them filled out but contacting members for their Volunteering information does take lots of time. After Christmas has passed, 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 do! WE are all special in our own communities. .... Let's tell others. Let's share ideas.....

## DISTRICT CONVENTIONS ARE SCHEDULED

Plan to attend your District Convention. A schedule of dates and locations is included with this newsletter. Watch for the District President's newsletters for more details.

**Spread the word and plan to attend!**

## POPPY CORSAGES

**At each District Convention a Poppy Corsage Contest is held. There the judges choose which Poppy Corsage is the winner. The winners are then taken to Mid Year Conference to be put on display. From there the corsages will be taken with the Department President to the Awareness Assembly in Washington, DC.**

## Mid-Year Conference

With the Holidays behind us it will soon be time for our Annual Mid-Year Conference. This year could be the best year ever for education and fun. The District Presidents have been working the first half of their term and are anxious to report what their Units have done. The chairmen are also busy planning ways to make their programs available to you. In fact, at Mid-Year Educational Conference they plan to explain what the programs are and how the Units can get involved! Mark your calendars, load up members and head to Kearney. The DEC meets on Friday morning, and then the conference will begin following lunch.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

## STANDDOWN 2008

THE STANDDOWN WAS HELD AT THE CIVIC AUDITORIUM IN OMAHA ON DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>. 2008 HOMELESS VETERANS WERE GIVEN COMPLETE HEALTH CHECKUPS, DENTAL CARE, EYE EXAMINES, PODIATRY CARE, SHOWER, SHAVES, HAIRCUTS, BAGS OF SNACKS, NEW UNDERWEAR, SOCKS, LEGAL ADVICE AND A WARM COAT. AFTER 12:00 THE DOORS WERE OPENED TO NON VETERANS. 75 NON VETERANS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE CARE AND CLOTHING.

**The American Legion has a donation box for items that will be sent to soldiers in Iraq.**

If you can't donate items the organization is also accepting money to help pay to ship the collected items to our soldiers. "365 Days of Giving", is a great way to let our soldiers know we care.

Go to: **www. WeLoveOurTroops.us**

#### 365 DAYS OF GIVING

Christmas is right around the corner and many of our soldiers are in Iraq protecting our freedoms. They have many essential needs and our mission is to meet those needs and provide them some joy during this holiday season and beyond. We started sending packages the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, and hope to continue the giving 365 days a year.

#### How can you help?

Please, drop off any of the following items, unwrapped and we will wrap the care packages for you and mail your gifts to our soldiers, and send them to different bases in Iraq. Cash or check donations can be made at these locations as well. Make checks payable to "We Love Our Troops" Thank you for supporting our beloved troops.

(If you would like to add your location as a donation site, please contact us.)

#### Items Needed:

- Shampoo / Conditioner
- Liquid Soap
- Chapstick
- Toothbrushes / Toothpaste
- Books
- Black Ink Pens
- Socks (tan, green, black)
- T-shirts (tan)
- Popcorn-microwaveable
- Calling Cards
- Gum & Candy
- Pop Tarts & Breakfast Bars, Fruit Snacks
- Music CD's (New or Previously Loved)
- Movie DVD's (New or Previously Loved)
- Video Games for PS3, Wii, Xbox 360 and/or Gameboy (Previously Loved)
- Send our Troops a Christmas card and support letter as well.

**Donations will be accepted at the Mid Year Conference in Kearney, January 9-11, 2009.**

**Even though Christmas is soon to be gone, The Christmas Spirit lasts all year long.**

Below is an article that was printed in the Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> Omaha World Herald about the Gift Shop at the Omaha Veterans Medical Center. It's great to see how appreciated our work and donations are for Veterans.

## Hospitalized vets given holiday shopping help

BY MICHAEL O'CONNOR  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Elmer Barrett shopped for a Christmas present for his wife, but he didn't have to leave his hospital



room at the VA Medical Center in Omaha.

At the VA Medical Center, volunteers from American Legion Post 1 in Omaha show up with the gift cart

in the room of patient Joe Pelikan, 77, so he could pick out gifts for relatives. The volunteers are, from left, Bev Harral, Rich Johansen and Marcia Allen.

The 78-year-old picked out a pair of winter gloves from a gift shop on wheels through a program run by the regional American Legion Auxiliary.

"It's a great feeling to have somebody helping you," said Barrett, who lives in Tilden, Neb.

The auxiliary has run the program for more than 20 years, said Gertrude Johansen, a volunteer who coordinates it.

The program provides free gifts that veterans can pick out for relatives or themselves. Volunteers wrap the gifts.

Barrett said the gift for his wife is topped with a "fancy bow."

"They did better than I would have," he said. Patients who have difficulty leaving their rooms can choose presents from the gift cart. The veterans also can visit a Christmas gift shop on the hospital's ninth floor.

Johansen said that so far this season, nearly 1,400 gifts have been provided to veterans.

The auxiliary purchases the gifts.

Many of the gifts are for grandchildren, so dolls, stuffed animals and toy cars and trucks are popular.

For older relatives, there are sweaters, watches, jewelry, coffee makers and other small appliances.

Barrett said he's looking forward to surprising his wife with her gift on Christmas.

"I'll have to smuggle it home," he said.

### Past President's Parley

We are coming to the end of the year soon. It is important to have each District President alert the Unit Presidents to encourage their Units to partake in the awards challenge this year.

1. War on Terrorism – Salute to an Active Duty Service Woman. (*I know someone knows of an Active Duty Service Woman*)
2. Unit President of the Year. (*I know many of you have an outstanding Unit President*)
3. Selection of an Outstanding Female National Guard. (*And I know that we have many female National Guard in our area.*)

Let me know if you need an entry form and I will get that to you. I am waiting to receive entries from each Unit this year. We are at war and I know our District Presidents will all like to be involved in this program.

*Gertrude Johansen, Past President's Parley*

### 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.**

### 2008 Omaha Gift Shop

425 Veterans were served at the VA Hospital in Omaha at the Gift Shop this year.

70 volunteers including Auxiliary and Legionnaires made this possible.

We are credited with 519 volunteer hours.

The Gift Shop was open for 8 days on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the hospital. We were thankful for the beautiful weather we had this year. Parking is still a problem and I want to thank all of you that battled that problem. I also want to thank the units for their donations of Christmas wrap and cookies. And a very special thank you to Unit 183, Friend, NE. for the fabric gift bags you sent to us to be used in the Gift Shop. These bags were ideal for the hard to wrap gifts.

*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. Forms will also be available at Mid Year in Kearney also. There is only room for 150 reservations. Tickets are \$39.00 each.*

### WHAT IS A PLAN OF WORK?

*Is there a reason why we doing this?*

*Why not let National Chairmen do it?*

*Can I really do this?*

**WHY ME?**

- ✓ *A Plan of Work is a detailed set of instructions that must include goals, tactics and outcomes to design an A.L.A. program's year.*
- ✓ *The National President's Award of Excellence this year will be awarded to the 5 Units and 1 Department that submits the BEST Plan of Work.*
- ✓ *National always lets “their people” make the plans that we help to carry out. This year they are asking for our input!*
- ✓ *Yes, you can do it ~ we have a great Department and great ideas that never get beyond our year end reports. This is your opportunity to let the rest of the A.L.A. organization know what you do that makes this Department so productive.*
- ✓ *President Marva was asked by the National President Desiree to implement this program across the State of Nebraska!*

Before you shut your mind off to this request think of what you have to offer. We have strong Units with members that get the job done and these Units actually do, “Honor Our Promise Everyday”. See enclosed instructions.

*Piece By Piece We Serve Our Veterans For Peace*

## AMERICANISM

Red, white, and blue! Americanism and you! Go Auxiliary! Go Auxiliary!

Ladies, we are half way through the Auxiliary year—have you promoted one Americanism activity yet? Remember my goal/challenge? Every Unit submitting the annual Americanism report showing that they have done at least one Activity. Reward—your unit/community/youth have been inspired in patriotism and good citizenship with an appreciation for our freedoms and the American way of life as well as seeing me with red/white/blue hair at State Convention.

### Reminders:

Girl Scout Achievement Award  
deadline is March 10.

Americanism Essay Contest  
deadline is April 1.

Remember that our Juniors need direction in Americanism, also. A great way to do this is with the **Junior Patch Program for Americanism**. Log on to [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org) to check it out. Work with your Department Junior Activities Chairman to make this information available to all Junior members, whether they are part of active Junior groups or not.

And the easiest way to promote Americanism anywhere is to encourage everyone to fly our American flag. The **2009 American Legion Flag & Emblem Catalog** has many resources to help—from Flag Appreciation Certificates to Flag Replacement post cards and the Flag Code pamphlet.

OK, ladies—there are a couple more ideas to help your Unit promote Americanism. YOU can do it! Red, white, and blue! Americanism and you! Go Auxiliary! Go Auxiliary!

*Vicki Ozenbaugh, Americanism Chairman*

## VA&R Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Dollar Days, Gift Shops and Gifts For Yanks are now history. I want to thank those who helped make the Veterans happier this season. The 20 ladies who came in to help set up the Gift Shop and wrap gifts were especially appreciated in Grand Island. If these ladies from Central Nebraska had not pitched in to help, those Veterans would not have had a Merry Christmas. To those of you who had a first time experience, thank you and we hope to see you next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Donna Gana, VA&R Chairman*

## ERROR IN STAR

\*\*The Martin Luther King - MLK form on page 5 should have JANUARY 19<sup>th</sup> not January 10<sup>th</sup>. Please make this correction\*\*

## National Security

PROJECT "**LET'S SAY THANKS**", was created by Xerox Corporation as a way to deliver millions of cards to servicemen and women overseas. "Thank You" cards are sent via email and deliver our messages of support from the home front. There is no limit on the amount of cards you can send through "Lets Say Thanks" website; the more you send, the more the troops deployed overseas are reached.

How it works:

You pick a design and personalize your card through the website [www.lets saythanks.com](http://www.lets saythanks.com).

Xerox handles printing out the cards and the cards are bundled and added to care packages from "Give2The Troops". Cost to you - a few minutes of your time. Thank you!

*Gayla Schmid, National Security*

## MID YEAR UPDATE

The American Legion Adjutant has just announced the Saturday night, Jan. 10th entertainment at the Ramada Inn.

### **PATSY CLINE Impersonator**

She'll take us back a few years and many memories ago.....

Don't miss this event!

The inserts included with this newsletter are:

District Convention schedules - back of this sheet

Just for Juniors information

Auxiliary Emergency Pamphlet

Newly revised "This is the A.L.A." Brochure

Sample National Plan of Work instructions with National Community Service Plan of Work

