The mission of Nevada’s Legionnaires is to provide services to fellow veterans, their families and their communities

APRIL 2016 EDITION

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“Building for the Future by Veterans helping Veterans”
Department of Nevada 98th Annual Convention  
July 15, 16, 17, 2016  
Held at the Fiesta of Henderson, 777 W. Lake Mead Pkwy,  
Henderson, NV 89015  
702-558-7000

Legionnaires, Sons of the Legion and Auxiliary Members

The Department of Nevada 98th convention is being held at the Fiesta of Henderson hotel and casino. Host for the convention is BMI post #40

Lodging is recommended at the Fiesta of Henderson. Rates as follows: Thursday 7/14/16 $34.99, Friday and Saturday 7/15, 7/16 $69.99, Sunday 7/17 $34.99 and Monday 7/18 $34.99. All room rates are plus tax and the “Cutoff Date” is June 14, 2016. Reservation Phone # 888-899-7770 mention American Legion.

Friday night dinner will be available at Post 40 from 5:30 to 7 PM. Saturday night Commanders Dinner will be at the Fiesta and it will be an Italian Buffet.

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM No host Cocktails  
6:30 PM Dinner  
7:30 PM- 8:00 PM Guest Speaker  
Entertainment will start at 8:00 PM  
(Ron and Lisa Smith)
THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF NEVADA

2016 – 2017
LETTERS OF INTENT

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

BOB TERHUNE                POST 3

DEPARTMENT 1st VICE COMMANDER

YVETTE WEIGOLD              POST 51

DEPARTMENT 2nd VICE COMMANDER

JOEL FORMAN                 POST 76

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

JIM STEWART                 POST 30
RICHARD EBERLY              POST 56

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PERSON
(2016 – 2018)

RON MICHALSKI               POST 40

**** LETTERS OF INTENT AND ELIGIBILITY SOURCE DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND ARE ON FILE AT THE DEPARTMENT OFFICE ****
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chief Information Officer (CIO) LaVerne Council discussed the agency's attempt to fix the scheduling problems throughout the Veterans' Health Administration, the same problems that allowed the secret waitlist scandal to fester for nearly a decade and explode into view during the summer of 2014. At a House Oversight & Government Reform committee hearing last week she said that in April the VA plans to roll out nationally two systems that have been concurrently piloted at 10 facilities—the Veteran Appointment Request App (VAR) and the VistA Scheduling Enhancement (VSE).

The agency has been working on another broader update, known as the Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS), for which Systems Made Simple and Epic won a $624 million contract last August, but Council said that if VAR and VSE are able to scale nationally, the VA will stick with those options over the MASS effort. She noted that because the MASS contract was an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract, the VA's intention was not to spend the full amount allotted; rather, she said, the contract will be available in case VAR and VSE don't work.

The VA is still trying to fire executives who are associated with the initial secret wait-list scandal at the Phoenix VA Medical Center.

Council also continued to discuss the possibility of replacing the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA), the agency's homegrown electronic health record system. The VA still intends to roll out VistA 4 in 2018, she said, but is also looking beyond that deadline to put a strategy in place that extends well beyond her government service.

As part of those efforts, Council said the VA is examining the work of the Department of Defense to see what it's learning from its commercial Electronic Health Record (EHR) acquisition; last July, a team led by Leidos, Cerner and Accenture won a $4.3 billion contract to implement DOD's EHR. TREA will keep you informed as to whether VA moves to a commercially-procured EHR option, and whether or not it will finally be fully interoperable with DOD's EHR. Stay tuned.

Are you a Veteran or concerned about one? The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders. Veterans and their loved ones can anonymously:
- Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1
- Chat online
- Send a text message to 838255

Confidential help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Here it is time once again for another newsletter. I’ve been a little busy lately, doing some research on Agent Orange. No, I don’t have it anyway not that I know of. I’ve been pretty lucky so far, I was talking to a shipmate of mine, and he told me that he has been diagnosed with it, and that several of the other guys that was on the Okinawa have been diagnosed with it. So it has me a little concerned. I was telling him about being in contact with an attorney about another shipmate that died of Mesothelioma, and his family is suing the manufacture of the asbestos. So when you start thinking about things like that, it kind of makes stop and think about many other things. Then I look at the news, and see where some people in Washington want to take away VA Health care as we know it. I have included that article for all to read.

Veterans Affairs eventually would become “primarily a payer,” much like Medicare, under the plan in a "proposed strawman document." A blue-ribbon panel created to evaluate the Veterans Affairs health system is weighing a radical proposal to eliminate all VA medical centers and outpatient facilities in the next 20 years and transition 9 million veterans to the private sector for health care. A 34-page “strawman document” floated last week by seven of 15 members of the VA Commission on Care calls for giving all veterans immediate access to private health services and closing VA health facilities gradually, starting with those that are obsolete or underutilized in a process similar to a base realignment and closure. VA eventually would become “primarily a payer,” much like Medicare, under the proposal.

Of the seven commission members whose names appear on the document, three are from the private sector and one is a board member of a veterans’ advocacy group that has proposed its own plan to expand privatized health care for veterans. Commissioner David Blom, president and CEO of the OhioHealth system, is credited as author of the report, with input from the six other members. Blom wrote that the health care needs of veterans are not being met under the current system and that the goal is to "meet the needs of every veteran."

“The commission finds the current VA health care system is seriously broken, and because of the breadth and depth of the shortfalls, there is no efficient path to repair it,” Blom and other commission members wrote in the report, created as part of an overall effort to explore VA health reform options. Under the proposal, veterans would be able to receive care at any provider that accepts VA payments or Medicare. Doctors would be reimbursed at rates 5 percent to 10 percent higher than Medicare rates to encourage them to participate.

The proposal, introduced at the commission’s March meeting, earned immediate condemnation from some veterans’ organizations as well as VA officials, who say the VA health system performs significantly better on outpatient measures than civilian, Medicare and Medicaid health maintenance organizations.

Eight veterans’ organizations — including Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America — sent a letter Thursday to Commission Chairwoman Nancy Schlichting denouncing the document.

"We are greatly alarmed by the proposed strawman document that was developed and drafted outside the open commission process … without the input or even knowledge of the other commissioners,” wrote organization officials. "What is most unsettling about the 'proposed strawman document' is the utter lack of consideration that veterans would want to improve and expand the VA health care system."

VA Undersecretary of Health Dr. David Shulkin told commissioners March 23 that VA already is undergoing a “bold transformation” to improve care at in-house health facilities and streamline the Veterans Choice program to improve services. He added that the VA has an "understanding of the consequences of military exposure, PTSD, polytrauma care, prosthetics and other types of care unrivaled by any other health care system" and said any reform recommendations must not impede the "contract VA has with veterans" to
provide state-of-the-art care. Commission chairwoman Nancy Schlichting, CEO of the Henry Ford Health System, told syndicated columnist Tom Philpott that she asked Blom to create the document. She said that by definition, "it's to be evaluated, criticized and considered as part of our discussion." Disabled American Veterans executive director Garry Augustine said the veterans' services organizations that oppose the plan sense that the commissioners who developed this particular proposal also believe it.

"In this regard, there was a lot of discussion leading up to this document that makes us believe the people who put this together are very serious about pushing this agenda," Augustine said during an interview Friday. American Legion officials questioned the motives of the commissioners whose names are on the document, noting medical industry executives, in a release March 24. "Members of a congressionally appointed Commission on Care ... are reportedly pushing lawmakers in Washington to support long-term plans to accelerate privatization of VA health care," American Legion officials wrote. A final report from the commission is due by June. The commission was created by the 2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act to make recommendations on reorganizing the Veterans Health Administration and delivering health care to veterans in the next two decades. The report recommendations echo some proposals set forth by veterans' advocacy group Concerned Veterans For America in a VA health reform plan, "Fixing Veterans Health Care," introduced last year. That plan calls for consolidating VA medical facilities under a nonprofit organization chartered by the government and providing care for veterans in the private sector through a government-subsidized health care program similar to the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan. CVA Vice President of Legislative and Political Action Dan Caldwell said Friday that the straw man document — which he characterized as an "incomplete proposal designed to generate debate" — is important to any discussion of VHA reform. "We are happy to see that more people are looking to expand Choice and give the Veterans Health Administration the tools it needs to better serve our veterans," Caldwell said. "Our proposal makes clear that we do not mandate shutting down VA facilities." Augustine said the straw man devalues a health system that serves the unique needs of veterans.

"We look forward to working with the commission to come to consensus with good ideas that will help resolve the issues that VA has. We are not trying to be obstructionist; we are trying to work with the commission. But we are dead-set against getting rid of the VA," Augustine said. Remember, this is the year to make a lot of changes, and to let Washington know that we are not happy about what’s going on. So I will say once again that everyone needs to get out and vote. Vote for who you want, but be sure they are supportive of us. Well, it time for me to go and cry on someone else’s shoulder. Until next time.

Bob
From the 2nd Vice Commander

Looking for something to do in your spare time? The VA Hospitals are always looking for volunteers to help out!

The Southern Nevada VA Hospital and clinics have these openings:

All Locations in Las Vegas as well as Pahrump, Laughlin and Mesquite are in need of volunteer drivers for the DAV’s Volunteer Transportation Network.

Hospital needs:

- URGENT NEED 5th floor waiting area
- URGENT NEED Coffee Cart at Hospital
- Information Desk Volunteers – Most Shifts
- URGENT NEED Make appointment reminder calls
- Mail Cart

Primary Care Clinics

- Information desks
- Escort volunteers
- Coffee Counter volunteers

If you don’t see it listed here. Let us know, we may have an opportunity to fill a niche! If your group is interested in doing a special event, or making bedside visits, please contact Karen Cinnamon to set up a date and time. (702) 791-9134

Northern Nevada (Sierra) Veterans Hospital has these positions listed on their website

We've listed some of the ways you can volunteer below. However, if you have special skills to offer, please call us so we can discuss how you can best use your talents to help our patients. 775-328-1491

Volunteer Van Driver: Help pick-up outpatients receiving chemotherapy, dialysis, radiation therapy, and other outpatient appointments. To fill this role, you must have a current driver's license and automobile insurance and pass a physical exam.

Parking Lot Golf Cart Driver: Help outpatients in our large parking areas with access to the medical center. To fill this role, you must have a current driver's license.

Clerical Support Assistant: Help different medical or administrative offices in the medical center. Duties include filing, answering phones, and greeting and directing patients.
Patient Escort Volunteer: Provide assistance with pushing patients in wheelchairs to their scheduled appointments.

Hospitality Beverage Cart: Serve complimentary coffee to outpatients.

Amenity Relief Volunteer: Visit with and distribute 'Welcome' bags of toiletries to all new patients.

Magazine / Book Cart: Sort donated magazines and books, and replenish book shelves in various waiting areas.

Friendly Visitor: Visit with inpatients.

Meal Service Assistant: Prepare inpatient tables for meal tray delivery. Assist patients with opening containers, etc., and visit to encourage eating (no feeding of patients).

Hospice Compassionate Visitor: Serve as a compassionate visitor for designated patients.

Yvette
What a GREAT DAY to be a Legionnaire!! Now is the time to share that feeling with all of your other Legion members, and if for some unknown reason they have not renewed their membership what should you do? Your right just ASK, maybe they just forgot, or are a little low on funds at this time. There are a ton of reasons not to renew but none are valid. With that being said let’s all take a few minutes out of our busy day and pick up the phone, or get in your car and visit with a Legionnaire that has failed to renew!! They will feel better knowing that they are still a member of the World’s best veteran’s organization and you will feel better knowing the fact that they and you have done your part to support the American Legion. The leading candidate for Department Commander (Bob Terhune) and myself will be traveling to Indy in July to sit down with the Leading Candidate for National Commander for next year to discuss our membership goals for next year. How great would that be for Bob to tell them we made are goal last year and have plans to do the same in the future. We can still make our goal for this year (a little behind right now 133) but it still can be done.

It’s getting late in the membership year to get new members or get some of your fellow veterans to renew, but guess what it is never to late!! I would bet that the National Headquarters would take membership right up to the Convention. At that point it would be to late for the Department membership numbers but we would still be doing a veteran a service and having them renew or join us. It can be done!!

Since the last Newsletter I have had the privilege of visiting with the top three post in membership for last year (not necessarily in numbers) reaching that 100% goal on time and on target. So my question to you all is what is it that the Department can do to motivate each and every one of you to support your Department in membership??

Enough said on that point, again just a few words on the 2017 National Convention, I have sent a letter along with a signup sheet to all posts and districts within the Department requesting volunteers to assist us with the convention. No need to act right now but now is the time to start making plans to help us out. There will be many different task that need to be done to assist the Department in making this one of the best ( if not the best) convention that all Legion Family Members have ever seen.

In closing I would again want to thank you all for the support that you have given the Department this past year.

RENEW YOUR LEGION MEMBERSHIP TODAY

Your annual dues help support programs in your community and across the nation. American Legion programs and services include: Troop Support, Child Welfare Foundation, Heroes to Hometowns, American Legion Baseball, Department Service Officers, Family Support Network, Flag Advocacy & Etiquette, Junior ROTC & ROTC, Operation Comfort Warriors, Scholarships, Veterans Job Fairs, and many others. Thank you for ensuring that The American Legion remains the most powerful voice in America on behalf of veterans, service members, their families, and communities across the nation. - See more at: [http://www.legion.org/renew#sthash.DX0t4fN8.dpuf](http://www.legion.org/renew#sthash.DX0t4fN8.dpuf)
April is Children and Youth month according to The American Legion. "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for the country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards." This phrase from Theodore Roosevelt reflects the social climate of the United States during the early 20th Century, a conviction that shaped the minds of those young citizens who would go on to serve in World War I and, as veterans, create The American Legion.

As we are now in April and Children and Youth month, we reflect upon what "a square deal" meals today. When those combat-weary doughboys returned from years of trench warfare, machine-gun firefights, mid-air dogfights and mustard gas, they knew that not every soldier, sailor and airmen made it home. They knew that children were made orphans by the war. They knew that many had little chance to succeed without help.

In response, our founders formed the American Legion Endowment Fund, the original benefactor of our Temporary Financial Assistance program; a decade later, the Child Welfare Foundation was launched. Over the years, Legionnaires have raised millions of dollars and volunteered countless hours in order to help children who are sick, in need or simply looking for better opportunities. The American Legion has advocated on behalf of children across the country, fighting against such social ills as child pornography, teen suicide, drug abuse and violence at home.

Legionnaires demonstrate their commitment to providing "A Square Deal for Every Child" in their communities - not Just in April but every day by:

- Representing military veterans in school events or town parades;
- Sponsoring youth or family events, such as picnics and carnivals, at their posts;
- Liaising with nearby military installations in order to grow the local Family Support Network;
- Submitting a story to the local media about an amazing child in the community;
- Raising monies for Americans Legion Child Welfare Foundation and/or American Legion Endowment Fund;
- Sitting alongside a veteran family in distress to help them complete a TFA application;
- Urging a congressman to push for support of a bill that will benefit American children;
- Inviting experts to present information about child safety/welfare at a post meeting; or
• Conducting a community service project with and for children.

When Legionnaires called their first caucus at Paris in 1919, they focused not on themselves but on the children and youth of America. Fast-forward nearly one hundred years and members of The American Legion continue to champion youth causes and programs throughout their communities, states and nation. Each of us has the opportunity to provide “A Square Deal for Every Child” – that balanced foundation for American children that our founders first envisioned.

* reprinted in part from A.L. Americanism Bulletin April 2016

This has been a busy time since our last article. Americanism has bloomed like the flowers in our gardens. The US Vets Spring Stand Down presented the opportunity to help many of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Plans are underway already for the Catholic Charities Winter stand down. Meetings with Sen. Heller and Rep. Edwards on Veterans legislative issues, a start in the right direction. Vietnam Veterans Day celebration at the Vets Center saw many veterans gathering and enjoying refreshments and a chance to talk about old times. Fundraising at Denny’s for Boys State, Veterans Job Fair at PBS, Channel 10 were both very productive. Posting the colors at the ISCW convention at the Sands in front of 30,000 attendees is always an exciting experience for us. And finally dinner at the AF ROTC at UNLV with the cadets, just makes you feel proud to be an American.

Joel
Tears fell from the eyes of Brooke and Robert Edie as they watched daughter Julia's face light up. She was fitted for hearing aids on March 25 in Reno, Nev., thanks to The American Legion.

It was the first time the 5-year-old girl could hear her parents’ voices clearly, having lived up to that moment with 45 percent hearing loss in both ears. “I was excited about this moment ... it was very emotional form,” said Brooke of Zephyr Cove, Nev. “Just asking (Julia) if she could hear me more clearer was very touching.”

The family’s joy was likewise shared by Harold “Hal” Sherwood, Children & Youth chairman for The American Legion Department of Nevada. The hearing aids for Julia were made possible by the department’s Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow program, which was initiated by Sherwood.

After he was elected the department’s Children & Youth chairman in 2008, Sherwood questioned who provides financial help for families with children who need hearing aids. The answer was “nobody.” A hearing aid user himself, he discovered many insurance companies do not fully cover the cost of hearing aids for children. The discovery prompted Sherwood to write a resolution in 2009 to create Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow, which provides financial grants to Nevada families who cannot cover the cost of hearing aids for their children.

The Department of Nevada approved the resolution, and the first grant was issued in December 2010, providing hearing aids to a 7-year-old in Las Vegas. Since then, 21 Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow grants of up to $3,000 have been provided to help families with hearing impaired children throughout Nevada.

“I get very emotional about children who need hearing aids because they are our future,” said Sherwood, a member of Post 37 in Fernley. “The program ensures that children are not excluded from their peers or any educational opportunities at school. Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow goes hand in hand with the Legion ... because it gives these kids an opportunity to maybe participate in an Americanism program such as Legion Baseball or the Oratorical Contest. And that to me is more important than anything else.”

The program received a $3,000 American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant in 2009, which provided promotional flyers to audiologists and ear, nose and throat doctors statewide. A parent’s veteran status is not a requirement to receive a Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow grant. Hearing specialists inform parents about the grants and put them in contact with Sherwood to fill out applications and discuss payment needs. Sherwood then speaks with the patient’s hearing specialist to see what type of hearing aid the child needs, and if approved, a grant is issued directly to the audiologist or the specialist.

“We were happy to receive a generous gift from The American Legion in helping us with the payment of those hearing aids (for Julia),” Robert said. “It took a load off our shoulders knowing that we didn’t have to come up with the bulk of the payment.” Brooke was “surprised to find out that insurance didn’t cover something that’s just as everyday as eye glasses,” she said. “As far as (Julia’s) education going forward, hearing is imperative. The American Legion has been a blessing to us and we are so grateful.”

Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow is financially supported by donations from the Nevada Legion family - Legion posts, Legion Riders, Sons of The American Legion Squadrons and Auxiliary Units, as well as some private donations. And often the incoming department commander or Auxiliary president will make the program their fundraising project. “The Legion family cares about these kids,” Sherwood said. And that compassion is illustrated in the positive impact Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow has had on hearing-impaired children in Nevada.

For example, one 15-month-old girl needed a special head unit until she could receive cochlear implants at age 7. The program provided a $1,500 grant for the head unit and now “the child can say words because she can hear,” Sherwood said. A 13-year-old boy had been wearing used hearing aids provided by his school; they kept breaking. A Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow grant provided the boy with new hearing aids and the “look on his face when he received them makes all the work of Hear Today – Learn Tomorrow worth the effort that I have put into the program,” Sherwood said. “The program has an educational and social impact on these children. This is where our future is.”
HISTORIAN’S ARTICLE

CHALK UP ANOTHER ONE FOR NEVADA

At its March General Membership meeting, Post 60 voted to sponsor a Legion Rider Chapter. Little did the members know what an impact this would make on the Post Family. Because what started out as a nucleus of 6 individuals within a month turned into a Chapter with 18 members, 14 bikes, and 4 supporters. The influx included Post Family members, transfers and new members all eager to participate in The American Legion and its efforts to support and honor our Veterans, and impact the lives of our Youth. Chapter 60, as its initial activity, participated in Laughlin’s Town Fest Parade. They led the parade and carried “Old Glory” with dignity and pride. Following the parade, the Chapter participated in a historical photo op and then in a fun ride for lunch and an opportunity to meet one and other. It was a memorable day and one that will live in the history of Post 60.

As a little history, the concept of the American Legion Riders was first introduced in 1993 by two individuals from Post 396 in Garden City, Michigan. Post Commander Bill “Polka” Kaledas and Chuck “Tramp” Dare shared a dream of starting a motorcycle association within its Legion Family so members could enjoy and share their love of motorcycles. They wrote a letter to the Department Adjutant, Hubert Hess, who provided guidance on managing such a program at the Post Level. Post 396 supported the concept and passed a resolution at a general membership forming a program to be known as the “American Legion Riders”. Kaledas and Dare along with 19 others became the first American Legion Rider Chapter. Today, there are 106,000 American Legion Riders (plus Post 60’s 18) who meet and ride as American Legion Riders. There are over 1000 chapters organized within the 50 State Departments, and in at least 3 foreign countries. These Chapters perform services to their communities and State; and have raised millions of dollars for local, state and national charities; with the Legacy Run being the most legendary of them all.

From a National perspective, there is not an American Legion Program; however, Resolution 36 of 2007 and as amended by Resolution of 2011 established that “all American Legion Rider Groups must be a program supported by a Post or Department of The American Legion and shall uphold the declared principles of The American Legion as well as conform to and abide by the regulations and decisions of the Department, Post or other duly constituted Department governing body.” The resolutions also provided guidelines for the ALR program; however, no directive of specific requirements has ever been published. The ALR back patch is copyrighted and must be treated accordingly. The patch is protected by the trademark laws of the United States.

Fred