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www.sal.legion.org

Ames Legion Family In Action

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The American Legion family met with our legislators on January 17 to discuss our legislative priorities for this session.

We presented four items that require action by the legislature to accomplish.

Military Homeownership Assistance Program: The Military Homeownership Assistance Program is one of the most attractive benefits within Home Base Iowa's arsenal aimed at the recruitment of out of state veterans. The Military Homeownership Assistance Program continues to be marketed to veterans even after the funds have been exhausted for the fiscal year and veterans are placed on a waiting list.

This year we are asking for an additional \$200,000 into this fund. The legislative leadership seemed receptive to that extra request. It

still may not be enough to last the entire year but it will help a few more veterans returning to Iowa.

Veterans' Treatment Courts: Veterans Treatment Courts are specialized courts dealing with veterans whose legal problems may be due to untreated issues from their service. Currently these courts exist in Woodbury and Pottawattamie counties.

The American Legion urges the State of Iowa to expand Veterans Treatment Courts into other areas of the state where treatment for these veterans exists in the VA system. Grouping justice-involved veterans into a specific court docket significantly expedites access to veteran-specific resources, including benefits and treatment earned through military service and provides options for treatment as op-

posed to incarceration.

Funding for Veterans Service Organizations Representing Veterans with the Veterans Benefits Administration: The American Legion supports providing an annual appropriation of \$250,000 to support the operation of Service Offices of the nationally accredited Veterans Service Organizations providing claims assistance to veterans seeking benefits from the Veterans Benefits Administration.

County Commission of Veterans Affairs Fund: The American Legion Department of Iowa asks that \$3,000 of the annual appropriation to the County Commission of Veterans Affairs fund be designated for national training and related expenses for county veteran service officers and appropriate staff.

SAL Merit Scholarship—Final Reminder

The submission deadline for the 2024 S.A.L. Merit Award is fast approaching. We are now awarding two (2) \$1000.00 awards. The deadline is Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Applications are available now on the Ames Post 37 web site, through the Ames and Gilbert High School's web sites, the Home School Network, or at the Post Clubroom (Just ask the bartender for a hard copy).

The current High School senior is eligible;

- if the student is a descendant of an Ames Legion Post 37 member, or
- if the student is the descendant of a veteran and the student attends High School at Ames or Gilbert High Schools, or
- if they are Home Schooled but live with-in one of the two school districts.

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Post Commander Jay's Comments

Hello everyone! Don't know about you, but for me the first month of the year just flew by. Hope everyone's year is off to a good start. We started the month with the Annual Chili Cookoff on New Years Day and there were definitely some tasty entries. The following weekend saw our first Steak Night of the New Year which was well attended, thanks in part to both the ISU Men's and Women's basketball teams being in action that night.

A reminder about renewing your membership if you haven't already done so. Membership dues are vital to helping us continue to serve you and the community at large. If you, or someone you know, is having difficulty paying their dues, please let us know so we can help. Remember, dues increased to \$55 on the first of January.

We've all heard a lot about "Be the One" the American Legion's campaign to encourage American Legion Family members, veterans, servicemembers and others to take action when they

believe a veteran is at risk of suicide. You may have wondered how the American Legion hopes to achieve this:

The Be the One campaign will:
Destigmatize asking for mental health support, creating opportunity for those with mental health issues to speak freely and get the support they need.

Provide peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities.

Deploy FDA-approved therapeutics for veterans to identify issues and find resources for support.

How can you help? The American Legion encourages you to Be the One to:

- Ask veterans in your life how they are doing.
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- Reach out when a veteran is struggling.

This is especially true if you are the family member of a veteran because family members may be the first to recognize the signs that their loved one needs help. This campaign is, and will

continue to be, a main focal point at every level from National down through the individual Posts.

We'll start February with the annual Department Mid-Winter conference in Des Moines from February 1 – 4. That same weekend, the SAL will be hosting the monthly Steak night. On February 16-17 the National Commander, Daniel Seehafer, will be visiting Iowa. The closest he'll get to Ames is the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown. I would encourage anyone who is able to make the trip and show your support.

We will have guests at our regular monthly Legion meeting in February. The President of the Iowa State Student Veterans Group and the Director of the Iowa State Military Affiliated Student Center will be joining us. This is an initial step in seeing how we might get the student veterans more involved with the American Legion.

Ok, I think I've rambled long enough, probably too long for some. Take care and stay safe.

Unit President Jamie's Comments

February is the shortest but one of the busiest months of the year! We have Mid-Winter conference beginning right away Feb. 1-4. This is a great way to find out more about the American Legion Auxiliary as well as many other programs from the family. The silent auction is also held over the weekend and this could be your chance to help with some funding for Girls State and pick up some fun items as well! Donations are always welcome and encouraged. Perhaps a themed basket is something you can put together? Or a donation of a baked item like bars, pies, etc. Those are always the first to go I think. Mid-Winter holds a programs fair and also one of my favorite events is the Oratorical contest. If you can't make it to the conference sessions, I suggest trying to come down to Des Moines on Sunday to watch these amazing young people. Any time you can come and listen to some of our department and even national leaders, is time well spent. Ideas are meant to be shared and that's what we do at these sessions! There is a small registration fee of \$10 and may be paid

online or even at the door!

As we shared at our January meeting, we have been collecting hats for our Department Membership committee and will donate them at the Mid-Winter Conference. However, don't slow down just yet! We are starting a new drive for the month of February for winter gear for elementary students. As many people may know, kids seem to lose hats and mittens all the time, so we are working to gather hats, scarves and mittens to donate to Kate Mitchel school here in Ames. Please help us support some families in our local community.

In February, we are holding a Day of Service on February 10th from 9am-3pm. Come on up to the Post and work on any project you may have or join us as we work on some of ours. It could be a quilt of valor you've begun, a wheelchair or walker accessory, tie blankets, or help us with our new loom process which is used to make bed mats for our homeless veterans. The most important thing to bring is YOU, so come have some fun and work on projects for our veterans. It is a fun time.

A special thank you to so many people

who helped with our steak night in January. We were a busy crew, but it sure was nice to see our friends out and about even in the cold months! Special thanks to our cook, fryer, dishwasher, prep, wait staff, money handlers and the ones who make our food order from the store and pick it up. These things don't just "happen". It is only by dedicated volunteers that they are a success. If you haven't worked a steak night and want to donate some time to perform any of pieces for running this dinner for any month, just let me know. We also appreciate those of you that come in to eat with us. It is so good to see our friends, especially once it starts getting dark and cold outside!

Lastly, as I look at this month and consider the topic of Americanism, one of the ideas at department was to teach a child the Pledge of Allegiance. If you are blessed with kids around you, maybe ask them if they know it? Let them recite it to you. Do they say it in their schools? Do you have some time to break down the meaning of the words? It is never too young to learn to love this beautiful country!

50-50 Raffles Help The Legion Family

The Legion Family are hosting 50-50 raffles each month to support the post and the programs. There is a new project each month. This month the raffle proceeds will be used for lighting repair in the basement, specifically in the kitchen.

Half of the money spent on tickets goes to the raffle winner with the other half used for that month's project. Stop in and buy a ticket. The cooks will be glad you did when the lights get fixed and you might walk away with the proceeds. GOOD LUCK!

Clubroom News

Clubroom News

Happy February! Hopefully you are surviving all this cold weather and snow. I feel like this week alone we have had a whole winter. If you are itching to get out of the house the clubroom is a great place to come and visit with friends. Join us for a meal, cheer on the Cyclones (or your favorite team), or just to visit. We would love to see you. One of our Wednesday meals is on Valentine's Day this year and we will be offering a special meal that night. Watch our Facebook and weekly updates for more details.

We have had a busy January with lots of rentals in our reception room. If you are looking for a place to have a party or an event keep the Legion in mind. Members receive a discount and it is a great way to support the Post. Call the clubroom to inquire about availability.

Super Bowl Madness- Join us Sunday, February 11 for the ultimate place to watch the Super Bowl. Enjoy the big game on our jumbo 110" TV. Please bring a munchie to share. Come watch the game with us!

Sunday, February 18-Daytona 500 party. Join us for NASCAR's biggest race. Bring a munchie to share and get

in on the fun.

Soup Contest

Do you make an awesome soup? Enter it into our contest. We are asking that our members help with this fundraiser. All soups will be entered into the contest for a chance to win one of three places. All winners will receive a prize plus bragging rights for the whole year. We ask that entrants have their soup at the post by 5:45pm on the 16th, and also ask that you bring whatever compliments your soup the best (i.e. crackers, cheese, bread). Everyone is welcome to enter!! Free will donation will entitle all members to enjoy all the many soups provided by contestants. All proceeds benefit the Building Repairs Fund.



Thanks again to all who make everything possible for clubroom events. Your help is very much appreciated. Sandy and Mike

Deacon, Marty and Jo Kelly, Greg Hobbs, Jamie Barker, Tom Fowler, Ken Woodley, Bill Donovan, Russ and Vicki Belz, Julie Rinard, Colten Christensen, Rodger VanVoorhis.

Squadron Commander Cort's Comments

Your SAL Squadron was knocked back on its heels from the blizzard of January 2024, but its footing soon recovered and we held our January meeting a week later than planned. When the weather becomes dangerous, please check the Ames Legion Family's Facebook page for cancellations. We are all hoping that the worst of this season's winter weather is behind us.

Mid-Winter Conference is February 2-4, at the Holiday Inn Conference Center across from the Des Moines Airport. I always enjoy attending the opening session on Friday evening at 7:00 PM. I encourage everyone to attend at least that session. Plus there are SAL sessions on Saturday and Oratorical Finals on Sunday of the conference.

Your Squadron 37 will be hosting a Steak Dinner on February 3. Please come on out, enjoy some really good food and camaraderie. Bring friends!

On behalf of the Sons, I want to thank the family of Everett Freel, who donated \$200 to Squadron 37 in memory of Everett who passed away last year. We greatly appreciate the Freel family for their generosity and for honoring the memory of Everett. These funds will be

used to support the needs of veterans and their families.

For those who have not yet renewed their SAL membership, please be aware that your club room key fob has been disabled. To regain access, simply renew your membership. If you have already renewed, thank you!

Merit Award Applications are due by February 29 at 7:00 PM. Details for applying are elsewhere in this newsletter. If you have an eligible high school senior, don't let this opportunity pass!

The Ames Junior Air Rifle Club competed in its fourth and fifth Iowa Postal match. Nine shooters will have competed on January 21 in the American Legion National Postal Match. The air rifle club is grateful for the support it receives from the Ames Legion Family. A total of 16 area youth benefit from this program.

And as always, if you haven't been to an SAL meeting for a while or ever, please join us. We meet every second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM. Speaking on behalf of the Squadron, we value every member and would greatly benefit from your input and contributions.

Legion Riders

Almost Done. As I was digging out for the 3rd or 4th time in January I kept saying it over and over. Almost done, and I said it louder while blocking the motorcycle in the garage with the snow-blower..

Spring is a mere 6-8 weeks away, it says so on the calendar, not forgetting the first "False Spring", and with any luck we'll be riding again soon.

We're beginning to get the schedule for this year's rides together. Dinner rides are giving way to a more destination ride format. The Road Captains are putting together a few longer rides to go explore some places we've been unable to see as a group. If you have any points of interest, let one of us know, we'd love to ride to it.

It's still winter though and there's not a lot of riding being done. Unfortunately, as has been the case every year, we were hoping to get the wreaths picked up this month, but weather came in and covered them up. Stay tuned for the new date.

Thank you to all of you that have donated to the 2024 program so far. The 1 for 1 bonus period really helped us get a head start on what will be a new goal of over 1900 wreaths. We are also working with the City of Ames and the County VA to acquire the missing veterans markers so that every Veteran in Ames Cemetery has permanent recognition. The goal is to have all of these new markers in place by Memorial Day.

Mid-winter Conference is just around the corner and we will also be planning out District Legacy Ride. This year the mission has changed to move our support and resources to the Veterans and Children Foundation. This foundation provides funding for training the many Service Officers of the American Legion, but also to the Temporary Financial Assistance programs for our Veterans in need. We embrace this mission as part of our creed. and hope you all will continue to support us in this new task.

Thank you all for your support of your Ames Legion Riders, none of what we do could be possible without your help.

Ride safe, and ride often

Cliff Barker

Ames ALR Director

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FEBRUARY

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
YOUTH AIR RIFLE 1-3 AT IZAAK WALTON	 Find us on Facebook at American Legion Family of Ames, IA Post 37		American Legion Family of Ames, IA Post 37	1 DOG NIGHT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE 6:00	2 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	3 STEAK DINNER 5:00—7:00
4 BINGO	5 LEGION RIDERS 6:30	6 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP AUXILIARY REGULAR 6:30	7 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL LASAGNA	8 DOG NIGHT LEGION REGULAR 7:00	9 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	10 DAY OF SERVICE 9:00—3:00
11 SUPER BOWL PARTY BINGO	12	13 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP SAL REGULAR 6:30	14 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY VALENTINES STEAK DINNER	15 DOG NIGHT SOCIAL COMMITTEE 6:00	16 FIREBALL FRIDAY SOUP CONTEST	17 PAST PRESIDENT'S PARLEY 10:00
18 DAYTONA 500 PARTY BINGO	19 VFW POST MEETING 7:00	20 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP	21 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL HAM BALLS	22 DOG NIGHT 40&8	23 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUSIC BINGO BAKED POTATO BAR	24
25 BINGO	26	27 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP	28 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL CHICKEN ENCHILADA	29 DOG NIGHT		