



The Diamonds of First District

November 2023



It has been a long time since the last newsletter, so let's catch up. Lots going on and we've been busy.

Hope everyone had a good summer and was able to do lots of things. I'll start with The American Legion Department of Wisconsin Convention was held in Rothchild in July. Informative and hope most learned new things that you can carry back to your Units.

An item of particular importance that I took notice of was that you can be a member of the Past Presidents Parley. If you have been or currently are a President, you can be a member. The cost is 7 dollars per year and these funds support scholarships. This was very interesting to me, as I did not know a lot about this and was surprised this is the group that gives the scholarships to the ones wanting to go into nursing. They must apply like all the other scholarships. I'm encouraging everyone to become a member and be a part of his group. Forms are available on the Dept website.

Then it was time to prepare for the National Convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was interesting to see and hear from all the states. They talked about adapting to new things that had been discussed in our causes. Such as you only need to have 10 members to charter a new unit, but no minimum number of members to maintain a unit. Kind of different from what we have to work with from other times. We will adapt and move forward.

Our new ALA National President Lisa Williamson is from Alaska. We wish her the best during the next year. It will be a good one, I am sure. She is in support of Wreaths Across America, and that was wonderful to hear. Honoring veterans, who sacrificed for us. By contributing to this worldwide program is the least we can do to show them and their families the utmost respect, they deserve. Please note that Poppy Funds CANNOT be used to support Wreaths Across America.

In the First District, we are supporting The Southern WI Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Union Grove. Our First District Chaplain, Mary-Ellen Crandall, is the Fundraising and Volunteer Coordinator for this location. Feel free to contact her with any questions at 262-894-5420.

Wreath distribution this year will be on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Ceremony at 11AM with distribution to follow. Looking for 600 volunteers this year to get all the wreaths laid. Unit participation means the world to me. Let's do our best and continue to support this great program.

Then on to our First District Fall Conference. I have to make a quick comment.... To all the Units that have hosted the conferences, you've all done an amazing job from organizing, themes, and food.

The Units that have held a conference during this time are Unit 209, Pink Round-up Rodeo, Unit 171, Queen for a day, Unit 450, music. I would like to say thank you. I am very grateful to you all for the outstanding job that you did for these. I'm so very proud of all our great members that do their best. We have many programs that you and your units work on and to see how much you all do is truly a great thing. We realize that we cannot do them all, but we sure give it our best trying. The programs that your Units work at are very impressive, keep up the great work.

It can be daunting to call your members and talk about membership. Ask yourself this... what made you want to be a member of the Unit? Why did you join? I will be sending out a survey in a few days. Please watch for it.

This brings me to the next thing. I spoke about this at our fall conference. Volunteers! What makes people want to take part in Unit activities? I joined because my son was going into the Marines, my grandfather served in WWII. I am paying it forward. Plain and simple ... I want to help our veterans and their families. I want to give back.

I am asking all Unit Presidents to send me what is going on in their Unit. We could put this in the newsletter and let everyone know what you are doing and maybe everyone could go to the event. This is what it is all about, being there for each other. Supporting each other, in any way we can. This District is the best and I know that we can do anything. When we put our heads together, we can do magic.

What is a volunteer? Members who are kind-caring-encouraging and make you feel welcomed and valued. We need to remember what it was like when we first joined. We can do this by making a difference.

Volunteers are a vital part of this organization and all organizations. What makes a good volunteer, what makes them feel like they belong. Working together for the same goal makes people feel like they are valued. Sharing ideas. If a new volunteer attends a meeting, we need to make them feel welcome, talk to them, and get to know them. Listen to them and make sure they are heard. If you have volunteers that help at all or most events, make sure to do something special for them.

We must start thinking outside the box. Actually, lets break the box and do things that shine light on our members. Here are just a few things: give out a movie ticket, a gift card, someplace for food or someplace they like. This is just an example of what you and your Unit could do. Show them they are appreciated. It can be whatever you think is right for your Unit volunteers. Set up an event to recognize these volunteers and let them know that what they have done is of great value. Such as your posts birthday dinners.

If we do not value our members that is when we lose them, and it is important to listen to all your members and look at it from their point of view and maybe it would work or maybe not but at least you tried something different. Don't get me wrong, some of the old things have a proven track record of working. We still need to move forward and by collaborating with everyone we all benefit from it. After all, it's all about the VETS! "Volunteers Encourage Team Spirit!" Let's make them feel like they belong to our organization.

Don't forget to celebrate all the new members that have just joined and welcome them. And let's not forget the current members. They are the glue that holds us together. We need to celebrate them as well they have been helping and doing these program and events, so we must recognize them, they are just as important as our new members. When we work together, we can do anything and then some. Please remember we cannot do this all by ourselves, it takes a team and, yes, lots of work. In the end it is all worth it.

At our fall conference we had the pleasure of having 5 special guest speakers. The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin President Maggie Geiger. The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin Auxiliary First Vice Sue Hembrook. The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin Department Parliamentarian Teresa Isensee. The American Legion First District Commander

Nathan Bond. The American Legion S.A.L Commander Randy Timms. They all talked about volunteers and how important they all are.

That is a good thing to want our members to feel valued and welcomed. Without them we do not function. So, when talking to someone either about renewing their membership or recruiting someone new, just remember that they do not know all the things that we may know from being a part of this great organization.

We need to talk to them to let them know that they are valued. That they can be heard and not looked down upon for asking a question? We need to treat everyone like we would like to be treated. With kindness and compassion.

I hope that everyone attending our conference enjoyed it. We did our business and then had a little bit of fun. We played a game where teams were given a song and had to substitute the words with ALA words and then sing it. I was really impressed at how everyone did a great job and made it fun. Everyone was a winner.

I am looking forward to our Spring conference to be held May 4th at Unit 209 in Orfordville. More fun is on the horizon. Think patriotic!!! Everyone is encouraged to attend. Looking forward to seeing you there. Details are forthcoming. I am very proud of every one of you, keep those diamonds sparkling.

Your First District President.

Zondra Morris

Together we can make things better for our Veteran's. After all they are the ones who made sure we were free.



Thank you.