



The American Legion Family News

Welcome to Post 157

Post Phone Number: 540 547-6160

The American Legion:

Commander: Robert (Bob) Nowak
1st VC: Gene Brockman
2nd VC Eric Stevens
Adjutant: Sherry Brockman
Finance Officer: Vickie Parker

The American Legion Auxiliary

President: Dottie Stephenson
Secretary: Kim Johnson-Smith
Treasurer: Jeanne Bruton

The Sons of The American Legion:

Commander: Darrell Lee
1st VC Richard Schmitt
2nd VC Bill McDermott
Adjutant. James Lillard
Finance Officer Robert Nowak

The American Legion Riders

Director: Bob Nowak
Asst. Director: Ron Bechtle
Treasurer: Gene Brockman
Adjutant: Sherry Brockman

Important information about Dues.

The membership year runs from January 1 to December 31, payable in advance, regardless of when you pay or originally joined the Post.

DEADLINE for purchase of wreathes is Nov 30 in Maine. You can go to their website and make a direct purchase. www.WreathesAcrossAmerica.org click on Sponsor Locally, our group code is VA0028.

If you have email and did not receive a copy of this that way, please email adjutant@vaalpost157.org to be added to the mailing list.

**Commander's Corner:
Greetings,**

This is the beginning of the season to be thankful. As an "all volunteer" organization, we have much to be thankful for. First and foremost, without our members we would not exist. So, to all of our members, thank you! Thank you for all you do throughout the year!

Our December 1st General Meeting will be a Joint Meeting with the Auxiliary and the Son's, spouses are welcome. After the formal opening, we will move to close the meeting and have a Post Potluck Holiday Meal together. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. The Turkeys are provided as is the Ham, everything else is open. Please join us to make this event a success.

If you have not renewed your membership, please do soon. On January 1st, 2016 the cost of annual membership goes up to \$35. Anybody who renews or joins before December 31st, 2015 the cost is still \$30. Please don't delay.

Without our many volunteers, we could not get anything done. For all the volunteers throughout the year, thank you for all you have done.

This year we started offering a breakfast on the fourth Saturday of the month. Ron Bechtle has led this successful effort with his team of 8 members. There is room for more members on his team when we start back up in January.

The Catfish Dinner did well in April and October. We had a change in the team leadership with Vickie Parker and Sherry Brockman stepping up to the plate. Our next Catfish Dinner will be in April, they are looking for help and new faces are always welcome to join the faithful few.

In the last few years Vince Falter and Gene Brockman have led the fundraising efforts with help mainly from Gerry Stephenson, along with a few others with several Rifle Raffles. They have traveled hundreds of miles to show the prizes and sell the tickets. Bill Campbell's donation of the use of his cabin as a second prize is greatly appreciated.

The Team of Vince Falter, Ron Montgomery and Gerry Stephenson did the research and established our Junior Shooter's Program. We currently have the only active Junior Shooter's Program in the 13th District. Vince is working of a grant from the NRA for this program.

For the last few years we have been working on getting our Tax Exempt Status updated with the correct documentation and receiving the proper ID Numbers, Articles of Incorporation and our Constitution and By-Laws updated. Jim Smith, after dedicating hundreds of hours of research and writing, has completed the Articles of Incorporation, and we have satisfied the requirements of the IRS, and the Constitution and By-Laws are ready to be signed.

We have started a Social Hour before our Tuesday General Meeting at 6:00 pm. This effort has been led by Gene Brockman and Richard Schmitt. They have been firing up the grill for us, you just have to bring something to cook for yourself. We average from 3 to 12 members and guests joining us for this informal meal and companionship. There is plenty of room at the table to join us, please do.

Boy's State, Girl's State and Junior Law Cadets were lead again by Gerry Stephenson and Dottie Stephenson making these programs a success again this year. They led their teams to do the interviews, process the paperwork, followed up on the event and then coordinated their Recognition Dinner.

December 14, we will be supporting Wreathes Across America and the laying of the Wreathes at the National Cemetery in Culpeper. This effort is being led by Sherry Brockman again this year. Our Post has agreed to take over from the Blue Knights to be the overall Area Coordinator for Wreathes Across America for the National Cemetery in Culpeper and the greater area. This effort will be under the leadership of Darrell Lee.

We held a Four Chaplain's Ceremony last February, coordinated by Jeff Schroeder.

We had several members, led by John Miska, support two National Project Healing Water's events providing direct support and contact with Wounded Warriors and other disabled Veteran's and one National Project Healing Water's Fundraising Event.

Our ALR Rider's supported the Blue Ridge MS Society during two Fundraising Events.

Lisa Davis led the efforts of Kim Smith and Elenore Montgomery working with the students from Madison County Schools in celebrating Constitution Day and Veteran's Day with Art and a History Program.

There was a need for more round tables, Gene Brockman found the best price for the Post and the three organizations went together for a group purchase for the Post. Gene also found some rolling racks to move the new tables around.

The Honor Guard needs a Ceremonial Bugle, this time Gerry Stephenson did the research and found one. It will be here before Christmas. It's all about seeing a need and volunteering to do the research and taking action. Our success is because of the involvement of our members.

Our Web and newsletter is back up and running thanks to Sherry Brockman. But to make them stay current and informative, she needs inputs and articles. Any of the Committee Chair persons can submit articles as can anybody who was part of a community event.

We hosted the Veteran's Day Ceremony and co-host the Memorial Day Ceremony.

I believe our Post with members from all of our different organizations; The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Legion Riders have volunteered to help in one of these events every month this year!

This is truly what caring and giving is all about. Our members/volunteers make a difference in our community. Our 2015 TAL membership was over 140. All the volunteer work I talked about above was completed by about 20 people and they were not all TAL members. They are looking for more help. If any of these events sounds interesting and/or you would like to learn more or would like to be part of the team, contact one of the names I mentioned or contact one of the officers of the elected leadership team. Your membership is the first step in volunteering to support your fellow Veteran's and your community.

On behalf of myself and my family, thank you for all you do! Have a Happy Thanksgivings with your family and friends. And, finally Merry Christmas to one and all wishing you only warm thoughts and the best of wishes for the upcoming New Year!

Bob and Carol Nowak

Service officer: Big John Miska (may be contacted at Bigjohn@cstone.net)

Was able to assist two widows whose husbands were wartime veterans in obtaining benefits from the VA which they were unaware were available to them. See http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent_survivor.asp

Additionally there is a State of Virginia Educational Benefit for dependents of Veterans with Wartime Disability rating of 90-100 percent. See <http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/education-employment/virginia-military-survivors-and-dependents-education-program/Post>

The Service officer will be available to discuss benefits application following the Post Breakfast each month.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing will be offering free casting lessons at The Post Home after the Regular Post Breakfasts beginning with January.

Al Aitken
James D Allen
Kenneth D Beeks
Maurice L Butler
Michael K Butters
Rosser Carter Jr
Brooke A Corson
Tho Huu Crane
Richard F Crist
Alexander B Cuppett
Donald R Eddins
Burton D Erickson
Jeff H Farmer
Mark A Fields
Mark P Frazier
Catherine L Frost
Christopher J FroSt

Mark A Frye
Jeremy M Fuller
Joseph L Gorman
Thomas S Hawkins
Mike Horrocks
Christy Jordan
Clifford T Kavanaugh
David A Lewis
Charles E Love III
Joe May
Neal McDermott
Adam O McLeod
Robert A Mingloski Jr
Douglas F Mow Jr
Richard G Munn
Ed Nicholson
Richard A North Jr

Jose D Olea
Vickie Parker
Joe Parker
Trent Printz
Scott B Puryear
Joseph F Rice
Stanley G Rowan
James H Smith
Michael K Smith
Eric Stevens
Brandon A Tidwell
Tama Treat-Thomas
Lisa Vaughan
Dawn M Wagner
William E Walthall
James C Webb
Isaac Woodson Sr

Membership Dues Will Increase!!

On January 1, 2016 our membership dues will increase to \$35.00. Renew now and save \$5.00. At the National Convention in Baltimore this year a resolution was passed that raised the National Membership Dues by \$5.00. This dues increase will go into effect at National Headquarters in January, 2016. Memberships submitted to Department Headquarters after the 1st of January 2016, must include the \$5.00 increase.

Below is a list of members who have not renewed for 2016. If you are on the list please send your dues ASAP, or renew online at: www.legion.org/renew/form

If on the list and have paid, please contact me, at 540-948-6683.

Pay now. Save \$5.00.

**Gene Brockman
1st Vice, Membership**

Adjutant's Comments:

Highlights of meeting minutes and results/actions taken over the past couple of months:
September: Voted to support the Auxiliary hosting a candidates forum end of the month at the Post. (Later moved to a different location). Voted to Purchase round tables for the Post with Aux and SAL assisting in funding. (Gene Brockman found 12 tables for a bit more than the originally allotted

amount for 6, Aux and SAL boosted their contribution to \$200, tables were ordered and received before October meeting.) Gene and Sherry are loaning the Post a portable sound system for events such as the Boys State/Girls State recognition dinner.
October: Bill Campbell requested that we hold a candidates event. Executive committee decided to host a Meet and Mingle event. (all but 2 candidates accepted and attended on Oct. 29th.) Executive Committee decided to streamline the rental financial

terms and establish a Non-profit rate to be approved on a case by case basis – proposed use affects eligibility for rate. We still do not allow rental for open fundraisers unrelated to the Post. The October Catfish fundraiser was hampered by the Fire House having their steak dinner fundraiser the same night. Several of our regulars called to apologize for not coming this time.

November: No breakfast this month (Thanksgiving weekend). Veteran's Day went very well. Gracie Brooks from the Madison Eagle took lots of pictures; hopefully you saw them in the Nov. 19 edition. Post received an Award for its support of Project Healing Waters from the President, Ed Nicholson who was our keynote speaker. Excellent coverage.

December: Joint meeting meal, Pearl Harbor/WWII dinner, M1 Raffle drawing. NO breakfast, they will resume in January. (It's been a year, have you been by to see the new floor yet?)

As mentioned several times, dues do go up to \$35 on January 1, 2016. You can renew online, in person, or by mail; but please don't wait until the last minute to do it. You should also consider Paid up for Life membership. You are protected from future dues increase and no one will call you to remind you that you haven't paid your dues. I did it years ago and have been protected from the past increases as well as this one. The Post still gets the same differential \$ as it did at that time despite the dues going up by \$5 so far. So it does benefit the Post as well.



NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY

The Auxiliary has been busy since our more or less official kick-off in September. As part of the Post "spruce-up", the Auxiliary participated in the round table purchase program, designed to have enough of these tables to reasonably fill the hall. These are preferred by our guests since they allow conversation during events and are often requested by those who rent the Post.

Thanks to Treasurer **Jeanne Bruton**, we also now have an official Auxiliary budget that was adopted at the October meeting. This plans for our contributions to Post family programs, particularly our Americanism in

the Schools which is run under the able direction of **Lisa Davis** (dual member).

In this category, we started the year with Constitution Day on September 17th. For the past several years, we have partnered with GODORT for an international poster contest on stylistic representations of the Constitution – and the results from Madison County High School were nothing short of amazing. Each child received a certificate, a framed copy of their submission, and copies of the Constitution that govern us. Seven were selected to go on to the judging by the Library of Congress. (Our one national winner's work is in the display case in the small room). The help of both the Art Department and the History Department at Madison County High School contributed to the success of this endeavor and a greater appreciation of what the Constitution actually means.

Auxiliary members, as part of our community education (non-partisan) program, also provided treats for the September Candidates' Forum.

October's highlight was the Catfish Supper where the family came together to give the community an outstanding dinner. Young and old alike attended. Our fantastic Auxiliary photographer, **Rusty Love**, captured the evening for us, including our tireless "kitchen" staff of Auxiliary members, under the guidance of **Vickie Parker** (Auxiliary Chaplain and Post Finance Officer) and **Sherry Brockman** (Post Adjutant). We also had wonderful help from the students who were our delegates to Boys State, Girls State and Junior Law Cadet. They were fantastic – and had fun!

Speaking of photographs, the Auxiliary is seeking to make the Post a true "Post Home" for all veterans by displaying pictures that reflect what we do in the community and who our members are and have been. There are lots of ideas being advanced, and it is our hope that the Executive will act.

The Legion and Auxiliary members also participated in a program November 1st with the Senior Center and the Hospice of the Piedmont recognizing veterans. This was a fundraiser for Operation First Response, a group founded in Culpeper (now national) that raises funds to meet the day-to-day needs of veterans and their families (mortgage, rent, utilities, etc.) when their own resources are inadequate. This was in part a pinning ceremony for all the veterans in attendance (led by our Commander **Bob Nowak**) and spouses of those who have served. Legion member (and past commander for 17 years), **Jimmy Fox**, set up the room (among other things) and posted the colors.

One of the Senior Center's requests that we could not meet was for a bugler – which the high school did provide. This led to a request for an electronic bugle for ceremonies to avoid always borrowing one. The Auxiliary is supporting this effort.

Honoring veterans is always the theme for Veterans Day, and again under the direction of **Lisa Davis**, the schools stepped up and gave us some wonderful submissions. There were over 100 submissions in grades 1 and 2 alone and 32 winners (1st through Honorable Mention) in grades 1 through 8. **Lisa, Ellie Montgomery, Dottie Stephenson** and **Kim Smith** judged the entries several days before the ceremony at the Post on 11/11/15 at 11:00 a.m.

[Editor's note: the list of winners and some of their posters can be found on the Post website-
www.vaalpost157.org]

The Auxiliary has its own programs, and two of our members participated in Wrapped in Love, a program designed to give children in need a coat, hat and mittens. We are also researching our Department President's program – Homes for Heroes – that provides home ownership for veterans and their families.

Coming Events: **Dottie Stephenson** (Auxiliary President), in addition to representing us at various Department and District meetings/conventions, will also be coordinating our activities at the Pearl Harbor/World War II dinner on December 6th, a joint Post Family Holiday Party and meeting scheduled for early December, and our participation in Wreaths Across America. We also voted to again adopt a family for Christmas. Stay tuned!

Legion Riders Keep the Wheels Rolling

The Director's Report

First let me welcome aboard our two newest Riders; Colleen and Eric Stevens. Then, I have to report the first loss of a member of the Riders. Earlier this year David Cronk was run off the road by a car near Ruckersville. The driver did not stop. He spent a

few days in UVA. The bike was totaled and he is no longer able to ride.

Our members have been very active volunteering throughout the year supporting the Post programs and our Community. We helped raise funds for Blue Ridge MS Society and Project Healing Waters. With the colder weather upon us, our time on the road is very limited. After the first of the year as the weather warms up and the colors start to come out, we will start to hit the road again.

Our goal for 2016, is to do better on our organized rides by moving our monthly meeting back to a Saturday. The Third Monday did not work out well for time in the saddle together with our members. Keep your rubber side down and your sunny side up! Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year!
Bob

The Five Year Plan: As the newly appointed chair, I am asking for any member who has an improvement or change to be made to the PHYSICAL Post building to contact me with their ideas and an outline of what they think it would entail. This will allow us to have long range plans related to the building and grounds. I know that Eric Stevens has a plan to add insulation to the roof when (not if) it is replaced. A long time on the wish list is improvements to kitchen. There is also a vision for a coffee station in the hall. These are the things which need to be approached with a long range plan scheduling which things should (and can) be done first or need to wait until they mesh with a larger project. – Sherry B,
(bmwrldr@gmail.com or in care of the Post address.)

Contact info:

Bob Nowak – 540 948-4975

Dottie Stephenson 540 948-5019

As winter approaches, keep in mind to find out if a meeting is canceled due to weather conditions; call the Post phone, a message will be recorded once the decision has been made to do so.



The American Legion
 Post 157
 310 Thrift Road
 Madison, VA 22727

**Calendar of Events for rest of Month – Please see calendar on Website
 (www.vaalpost157.org) for updates and/or changes**

At Post	Executive committee meeting	6:00 pm	Mon Nov 23
At Post	Joint Christmas covered dish meal with all parts of the legion family	6:00 PM	December 1
At Post	Pearl Harbor/WWII Dinner.		Sat. Dec. 5
	Drawing of prizes in Raffle	8:00 pm	Sat. Dec 5
	Breakfast at IHOP before Wreathes Across America	8:30 am	Sat. Dec 14
	At Culpeper National Cemetery		

November 11, 2015

Presentation of the Project Healing Waters

Award. Photo taken and provided by

Gracie Hart Brooks of the Madison Eagle.

