



The American Legion Department of Maine

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Weekly Update



February 2, 2007

**The person who upsets you the most is your best teacher,
because they bring you face to face with who you are.**

☺ **SMILE** ☺

Congratulations to the following for achieving 100% in membership:

Belfast Post 43

Oakland Post 51

Newport Post 105

Palermo Post 163

Oratorical Contest on Track

Dept. Chairman Bill Barr reports that he is looking forward to an interesting Semi-finals and Finals competition at our Department Oratorical Contest at Thomas College in Waterville on Saturday, February 17th, 2007. The Semi-finals, starting at 9:30 AM, will be held in the Administration Building, which is directly behind the Flagpole as you turn into Thomas College. The Finals, starting at 1:30 will be held in the adjoining auditorium. The contest and presentations will conclude by 3:00 PM.

The Semi-final contests will consist of District winners who will compete in the morning in one of two brackets, East or West, with the winners vying in the afternoon for the first place prize of \$1,000.00 and second place prize of \$500.00. The District winners competing in the morning will receive \$150.00 each, provided that they complete both their Prepared Oration and the Assigned Topic Presentation. The West bracket will consist of District winners west of the Kennebec River, and the East bracket will be those located east of the Kennebec River.

George Bean will moderate the East Bracket and PDC Ramona Naragon will moderate the West Bracket with Chairman Bill Barr moderating the afternoon finals. A light lunch will be hosted by the Department of Maine at noontime in the College Atrium for contestants, staff and parents. Arrangements for the lunch will be provided by Ernie and Donna Paradis of Waterville Post and Unit 5. The staff working this event will include both Legion and Auxiliary members.

For those who are computer literate, a directional map of the Waterville area can be downloaded from the Thomas College web site. For everyone else: From I-95, turn off at Exit 127 onto Kennedy Memorial Drive. (If you are coming from the North, it is a left turn after the exit and a right turn if you are coming from the South). Continue about one mile on Kennedy Memorial Drive, through several traffic lights, to Route 104 (West River Road) and turn right. Thomas College is on Route 104 approximately one mile on the left.

All in the Family

It's one thing to have your family behind you when competing before a national audience of millions of people, but when your family includes the entire American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members of your post, you are truly blessed. At least that is what Karissa Staples, Maine's Miss America contestant would tell you.

Karissa is the granddaughter of Biddeford Post 26 Commander Bill Staples and she recently competed in the Miss America Pageant that was televised nationwide on CMT this past Tuesday evening. Although, Miss Oklahoma, Lauren Nelson, won first place honors in the pageant, Karissa came away as a winner in her own right in many ways.

"The entire family gave their support to Karissa," said Commander Staples. "I'm not just talking about her immediate family, but all the Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL family members of Post 26. That's what makes this experience so wonderful for Karissa," he added.

Karissa, who became a member of the Auxiliary Juniors at age 4 and later a proud member of Auxiliary Unit 26, is carrying on a family tradition of service to America. Also serving America is her grandmother, Laurette a former Unit 26 President. "She has grown up always willing to help out around the post with Legion and Auxiliary events since she was a little girl," said Laurette. "We are so proud of her; she is no stranger to service to others."

A member of the National Honor Society, Karissa is also a founding board member and workshop facilitator for Project Aware, an educational and awareness program that teaches children about conservation. She is also an accomplished vocalist. Former President George Bush attended one of her musical theatre summer productions and congratulated her backstage.

Karissa won the Miss Greater Portland title last year before being crowned Miss Maine in June.

(This article was reprinted from the Weekly Update from our National organization.)

2007 Eagle Scout of the Year

The American Legion, Department of Maine is seeking nominations for the 2007 Eagle Scout of the Year. The state winner will receive a \$500 scholarship and is automatically entered in the national competition. Applicants for the Eagle Scout award must be at least 15 years of age and be enrolled in high school.

Applicants must also be a registered, active member of a Boy Scout Troop, Varsity Scout Team, or Venturing Crew, chartered to an American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit or SAL Squadron; or be the son or grandson of a Legionnaire or Auxiliary member.

Applications are available through The American Legion, P.O. Box 900, Waterville, Maine 04903-0900. Applications must be received at Department Headquarters by **March 1, 2007**. For further information, contact Headquarters. The national winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship. Three-second place scholarship awards of \$2,500 are also awarded at the national level.

Help Wanted

The Department of Maine headquarters office in Waterville is looking for a legionnaire to work part-time for approximately 18 hours per week. During peak workload and conference/convention times there is a requirement to work additional hours. This individual must have a background in or be able to be trained in the following areas:

Public Relations – Coordinate with news media agencies, write news releases, provide guidance for inquiries, and coordinate with the Department PR committee.

Conferences – Will assist with the coordination of conferences, conventions and other statewide gatherings of our organization.

Programs – Must be familiar with and able to coordinate with Department committees and or to provide guidance to same.

Other duties as assigned by the Department Adjutant.

This will be a salaried position with no overtime paid for additional hours worked during peak workload times. Salary range will be \$200 - \$250 weekly.

Please send a letter stating your, background, qualifications and desire to hold this position to Department of Maine, P. O. Box 900, Waterville 04903, Attn. Ron Sailor. **Cutoff for applications will be Friday, February 9, 2007.**

Social Security Update

When a veteran applies for Social Security benefits, they should take their DD-214 with them. Social Security then computes the extra benefit and it is added to the monthly payments. In many cases, the Social Security office asks for a DD-214 and this benefit is computed automatically. But, not always. If you are a veteran who is collecting Social Security and you're not sure whether you are receiving this benefit, call your local Social Security office and ask them to check your account. If you are not getting the benefit, take your DD-214 to your local Social Security office and apply. They will compute your new benefit and you will receive larger monthly check plus retroactive benefits computed from the time you started collecting Social Security. Remember, military retirees and government retirees who use military time to compute "time in service" do not qualify for this benefit. For more information, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>.

To learn more about this benefit, visit the Military.com [Benefits Channel](http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/special-military-social-security-rate) <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/special-military-social-security-rate>.

FMI – please contact our Dept. Service Officer Robert Owen at 623-5726 or robert.owen@vba.va.gov.

Legion Lauds Reintroduction of PERA in 110th Congress

INDIANAPOLIS (Jan. 31, 2007) - The leader of the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization today applauded Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan) for reintroducing the Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals and Other Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2007 (S. 415) in the U.S. Senate, a measure that would stop the award of taxpayer dollars in legal fees to groups filing lawsuits against veterans' memorials and public displays of religion. "Legal attacks against veterans' memorials that display religious symbols must not be rewarded by judges reaching into taxpayer pockets to enlarge the coffers of organizations such as the ACLU to encourage more lawsuits against our traditions and memorials," said American Legion National Commander Paul A. Morin.

The Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals and Other Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2007 would amend U.S. statutes to eliminate the chilling effect on the constitutionally protected expression of religion by state and local officials that results from the threat that potential litigants may seek damages and attorney's fees. A similar measure passed overwhelmingly in the House last year but the Senate version was not brought up for a vote prior to the adjournment of the 109th Congress.

Most Americans are unaware that activist groups, such as the ACLU, recover hundreds of thousands of dollars from state and local governments each year based on a provision of the 1976 Civil Rights Attorney's Fees Awards Act, which was intended to assist underprivileged plaintiffs in obtaining legal representation in civil rights cases.

Some of these cases include lawsuits against veterans' memorials, the Boy Scouts of America, the public display of the Ten Commandments and other symbols of America's religious heritage. Last year in a testimony to the Senate, Rees Lloyd, former ACLU attorney and Department of California District 21 Commander, provided these examples of ACLU awards of taxpayer money: approximately \$950,000 in attorney's fees was awarded to the ACLU in a settlement with the City of San Diego in its lawsuit to drive the Boy Scouts out of Balboa Park. In the Judge Roy Moore Ten Commandments case, the ACLU received \$500,000. In a recent "Intelligent Design" case against a school board, the ACLU received \$2,000,000 in attorney's fees by order of a judge--although the law firm that represented the ACLU informed the court and public that it had acted pro bono and waived any attorney's fees; these fees were pure profit to the ACLU.

"If the ACLU feels it has to bring lawsuits that most Americans abhor, it should at least have the decency not to assess these to the taxpayers to make a profit," Morin said.

"It is not fair for taxpayers to pay the legal bills for groups like the ACLU," said Brownback. "Currently many towns comply with the demands of the ACLU rather than risk going to trial and paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees to the ACLU if they lose the case. Brownback is a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights.

Morin concluded: "The American Legion will do everything in its power to educate the public about this abusive practice and why this law must be passed."

American Legion Dirigo Boys State

We have finalized the details of The American Legion Dirigo Boys State program and the mailings to each school and each post adjutant were in the mail last week. For those who may not receive one of these mailings, the following information may be helpful.

The cost for each delegate to attend Boys State remains at \$230.00. The dates for this year's program are June 16 – 21, 2007. Graduation has changed from Friday morning to Thursday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. This year the program will be held at Thomas College in Waterville.

This program is for students who have completed their junior year of high school. The selection process varies from post to post, but is generally done with the school recommending the students and the post selecting the delegates. Merit and ability are two important factors, but attitude and desire to attend also play a large part in the selection process. The real key to a success, both for the student and for the program is participation. When delegates participate, everyone wins.

If you would like more information on the program, please contact this office and we will be pleased to send it to you. You can also check out the program on our web site at www.mainelegion.org

What's Happening?

Gray Post 86: Feb. 4, 1 p.m., Four Chaplains Service. Refreshments to follow.

Bath Post 21: Feb. 4, 9 a.m. Post will conduct a Four Chaplains Service at the Elm Community Church on Middle Street in Bath. FMI 442-9206

Belfast Post 43: Feb. 4, 8 a.m., Four Chaplains Breakfast. All are welcome, no charge.

Augusta Post 205 & Belfast Post 43: Feb. 10, 8:00 – 10:00 p.m., Dance to benefit the Beal's House at Belfast Post 43. \$10.00 per person. FMI contact Don Grotton 557-5455

Valentine's at Togus: Feb. 14, volunteers are needed to visit the wards and distribute goodies to the patients. Costumes are optional.

40/8 Washington's Birthday 2007: Feb. 16-17, Best Western- Merry Manor, 700 Main St, So Portland. For more information contact Dick Prince at 428-3737 or chiefw4@aol.com

Belfast Post 43: Feb. 24, 5 – 7 p.m., public supper with a chili cook-off. Cost: \$6 Proceeds will go to benefit Maine Special Olympics. FMI contact Betty Seeley 338-4050.

District Meetings

4th District: Feb. 4, Farmington Post 28 Lunch at 1:00 p.m., meeting at 2:00, then Super Bowl Party from 3:00 til end of game. Lots of food, pool table, card games, etc. All welcome.

13th District: Feb. 4, Bangor Post 12, 12 noon lunch, 1 p.m. mtg.

16th & 17th Districts: Joint meeting, Feb. 4, Van Buren Post 49, 1 p.m. dinner, Four Chaplains

8th District: Feb. 8, Topsham Post 202, 6:30 p.m.

3rd District: Feb. 11, Lisbon Post 158, 1 p.m. Four Chaplains, 2 p.m. mtg.

7th District: Feb. 11, Damariscotta Post 42, 2 p.m.

15th District: Feb. 11, Pembroke Post 59, Oratorical and Four Chaplains, dinner, 2 p.m.

12th District: Feb. 12, Ellsworth Post 63, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. mtg.

10th District: Feb. 12, Skowhegan Post 16, 6 p.m.

14th District: Feb. 17, Brownville Jct. Post 92, 6:30 p.m. supper, 7:30 p.m. mtg.

5th District: Feb. 20, Rumford Post 24, Nominations, 7 p.m.

Donations

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

Robert Rich, Lisbon Post 158	\$20.00 – Special Olympics (Lobster Dip)
Frank Houtman, Corinna Post 73	\$25.00 – VETAID
Harpswell Post 171	\$40.00 – Commander's Project
Sheri Leahan	\$10.00 – Commander's Project
New Auburn Post 153	\$50.00 – Commander's Project
Richard Prince, Gray Post 86	\$25.00 – National Commander's Campaign
So. Portland Auxiliary Unit 35	\$100.00 – Commander's Project

Condolences

Priscilla Tanguay, mother of Windham Post 148 Commander Dave Tanguay and spouse of post member Real Tanguay recently passed away. Cards can be sent to Commander Dave at 34 Running Brook Road, Windham 04062 or to her husband Real at P. O. Box 642, Windham 04062.

**Sons of the American Legion
Detachment News**

The milestones the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Maine should achieve this year are to 1) maintain the programs we have sponsored, 2) be able to conduct business by having enough attendance for a quorum for the rest of the detachment meetings and to 3) achieve 105% membership by Convention.

Through the squadron's actions and your support The American Legion is beginning to believe that we are a supporter. Hopefully, based upon our increased productivity, there will be more communication and interaction with the Legion in the future. This can only lead to a better understanding and cooperation in completing projects and goals. This can only make the Legion Family stronger.

The Lobster Dip was a success and it is time that we turn our attention to the Boy's State Program. Remember that we cannot change the world by ourselves, but collectively we can make significant differences and who knows, we may even gather support along the way. We certainly need to support the Boy's State Program, after all it is our members who will be attending and benefiting from this so it is a "no brainer" that squadrons support this. This year the price to send a boy to Boys State remains the same at \$230.00. Is it possible to send more than one to this great program? Shawn Babine, who is the Deputy Director of Boy's State, has asked if we can take part in the 60th Annual Boy's State Program by having our State Color Guard take part in the opening ceremonies. This is quite an honor. I wonder if we can sponsor 50 boys this year?

The long-standing Lobster Raffle tickets have been sent and already we have seen some results, as there has been a lot of interest. The good this raffle does is truly amazing and here is where that collective effort takes precedence. Squadrons come together to sell those tickets and then send their money in and all of a sudden there is \$3000.00. Can we do more? Always, but let's get behind this project so there is more money to spend on our veterans and more smiles on their faces.

Don Allisot
Detachment Commander

Best Wishes,

Ron Sailor
Department Adjutant

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR AWARD

NAME: _____
(Applicants will be assessed based on previous year(s) accomplishments)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

POST NAME & NO: _____

MEMBERSHIP STATUS: _____ **CONTINUOUS YEARS:** _____

POSITIONS HELD IN LEGION: _____

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: _____

WHAT EXEMPLIFIES THIS PERSON AS A LEGIONNAIRE: (use additional sheets as needed)

IS THIS PERSON A LEADER IN WHAT HE/SHE DOES: _____

DOES LEGIONNAIRE INTEND TO ASPIRE TO HIGHER POSITIONS WITHIN THE

AMERICAN LEGION: _____

IS THIS PERSON WELL RESPECTED IN HIS/HER POST AND COMMUNITY: _____

WOULD YOU AS A CITIZEN LEADER RECOMMEND THIS PERSON FOR

ADVANCEMENT IN THE AMERICAN LEGION (explain): _____

This form must be submitted to THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MAINE
PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS AWARD, P.O. Box 900, Waterville, Maine 04903-0900, no
later than May 1, 2007.

SUBMITTED BY: _____

Complete with attached recommendations. Do NOT submit more than eight (8) pages of additional documentation.