

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 16-01

Post Commander: Jim Saur	269-375-2544	quacol@charter.net
Vice Commander: Jake Rickli	269-343-3356	JMRickli@SBCGlobal.net
Adjutant: Don Gillespie	269-873-5115	dlgilles@att.net
Mailing address- P.O. Box 19248, Kalamazoo, MI 49019		Post email - MILegionPost36@gmail.com
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COMMANDER'S POST- Veteran Teamwork

We stand together. Those who have served in our military will agree that teamwork is an important element in the success of any unit or mission. Every member of the team is important and can add or detract from the effectiveness of the unit. We can't all be superstars but we all can contribute something. And we should all be proud of our Post and The American Legion's many contributions to the welfare of our nation and its veterans.

We make a difference. As I reported in the last newsletter, and as reported elsewhere in this one, the activities of your Legion and our Post are promoting Americanism, supporting children's education and sports, and helping veterans to understand and receive their earned benefits. We can do more and I am asking for your help.

We are known in the veteran's community. Let's expand our visibility in the larger community of all Americans by engaging in activities that improve lives. Volunteering to mentor children in reading and math, financial planning for families, income tax preparation, providing free transportation to appointments, and delivering "meals on wheels" are just a few of the things we might do to help out.

I look forward to discussing this subject with our members at upcoming meetings. **Please join us and add your ideas on how we can Continue Serving America.**

For God and Country, Jim Saur



Monthly Trivia- In what year was the GI Bill signed? And by which President? The American Legion wrote the first draft of what became the "GI Bill of Rights"- considered the Legion's single greatest Legislative achievement.

The first person to present the correct answer at a Post meeting will win a prize. Sorry, you can only win once per year. ☺ *Congratulations to Glenn Keith, for winning the 15-4 Newsletter trivia question, with the correct answer of- "the American Legion created the baseball program in 1925".*

ADJUTANT'S CORNER- "About the 2016 Dues Increase"

Because of the rate increase at the National level, your annual dues are now \$40.00 a year. In 2017, your annual dues may go to \$45.00, if there is an increase at the Department of Michigan level. Post 36 receives only \$5.50 from your dues.

After hearing concerns, I want to point out that \$40 or \$45 annually comes out to less than \$4 a month. Where else can you accomplish so much for so little? For \$4 a month we receive the Legion magazines, access to Legion websites, and it helps fund our Post- which gives us and our families a place to meet and have fellowship with our Post members and the other veteran groups. As a member, you can rent the Post facilities at a discount. Those benefits impact you directly, but consider the how much your dues benefit local veterans and the community.

The American Legion is the world's largest Veterans organization. Your dues support Legion programs such as Student Trooper, Boys & Girls State, the GI Bill, Legion Scholarships, Legion Baseball and Scouting, and help the efforts needed to procure and protect your veterans benefits. At the local level, your contributions and dues provide Veterans Service Officers, scholarships in our schools, local youth baseball and softball, and helping our local veterans in need. **Your membership keeps Post 36 strong and allows us to continue the fight for the rights we all earned when we raised our hand to defend this country.** They say, "*Strength is in numbers*", so let's keep American Legion Post 36 strong by staying a member.

Thank you all, Don Gillespie

MEMBERSHIP

Current membership is 276, with over 85% of our members already renewed for 2016. Remember, on January 1st, annual dues went up to \$40.

And, if you know a qualified veteran who might want to join, call Jake Rickli @ (269)343-3356.

WANTED- POST 36 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS-

Post 36 is looking for old rosters, newsletters, photos, etc. Your Adjutant is interested in becoming a Post 36 historian. Unfortunately we have very few old documents. If you, your family or friends have items of historical value to the Post, please let me know. They will become property of the Post and I can copy them if they are items you want to have returned. I especially want to put together a roster of past members. Call Don Gillespie at 873-5115. Thank you.

AMERICANISM- Generous Post 36 Member Donations.

Post 36 members gave a couple of generous donations this fall and we want to share our appreciation for them and to inform everyone of what the financial gifts will be used for.

One gift was earmarked for Chapter #186 of the Blue Star Mothers. This generous gift will assist the Blue Star Mothers in their support of local veterans and veteran families.

Another member gave a large financial to our Post, "to use for our Post and its members". We voted to use it to sponsor a high school senior to the Legion Boys State program and one to the Student Trooper program. These are very good opportunities for high school seniors who want to pursue public service or public safety careers. This generous gift will allow us to fund the scholarships for several years. Thank you both.



The Student Trooper program is designed for motivated young men and women who are seriously interested in careers in law enforcement.

MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Paul Cusano

Paul's family has a long Post 36 history. His father, Angelo was a lifelong member after serving in WWI. Paul and his 2 brothers joined the Post 36 SAL in the 1930's. Paul entered the Army on his 18th birthday, and served from the end of WWII until the beginning of the Korean War. He shipped out of Pearl Harbor and ended up with A Battery, 80th Field Artillery, 6th Inf. Division at Inchon, S. Korea. He was later moved to a transportation group in Pusan. After returning home, Paul worked in maintenance for the Kalamazoo Public Schools for over 20 years. He now lives a quiet life in Milwood.



KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR POST-

It takes the strength of a Warrior to ask for help. Please contact your Legion Post about health issues, because you are important to us. Please feel free to contact us and keep us up to date. Post 36 might be able to help or assist you with questions about the VA Hospital, benefits, nursing home visits, and veteran's funerals. Please call one of your officers from the top of the front page.

We can't help you, if we don't know about the problem.

Please join us in welcoming these new or transferred

American Legion members to Post 36.

Welcome and thank you for still serving.

Michael Shattuck - U.S. Air Force, Panama

James Farrell - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Patrick Hodges - U.S. Air Force, Vietnam War

Kevin Willi - U.S. Air Force, Lebanon/Grenada

Richard Buck - U.S. Navy, Lebanon/Grenada

Douglas Wright - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Paul Bianco - U.S. Army, Persian Gulf

Robert Rorick - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Stanley Bradley - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Timothy Davis - U.S. Air Force, Lebanon/Grenada

Larry Sweerin - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

David Aviles - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Eldon Cattell - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Jeff Flagg - U.S. Navy, Panama

Robert Newbre - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Kenneth Rogers - U.S. Navy, Panama

Michael Schewe, Sr. - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Gene Jones - U.S. Army, Korean War

Harry Thomas - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Robert Bos - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Joseph Ryan - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Frank Nock - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Robert Edwards - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Jack Weber - U.S. Army, Vietnam War



TAPS- The members of American Legion Post 36 extend their deepest sympathies to the loved ones of these fallen members.

EDWARD ROSSI - Edward was born January 1, 1922 in Center Ridge, AR, the son of Frank and Mary (Paladino) Rossi. He was an Army Air Corp Veteran of WWII and owned and operated Rossi State Farm Insurance Agency for 40 years.

Friday Night Dinners are available starting at 6pm every Friday. Dinner is prepared and served by a different group at the Post each week. The dinner schedule is-



1st Friday – meal served by the VFW.

2nd Friday - Talons Out Fund Raiser

3rd Friday – meal served by the American Legion *

4th Friday – Mexican night by VFW Auxiliary

**We could use your help with the 3rd Friday dinners. We need people to help prepare and serve food or you could simply offer to prepare something at home and bring it in. We'll cover expenses for the food. In the past we have brought in self serve chili and cornbread, and we have served burgers on other months. Please help out.*

BSM Chapter #186 Christmas Packing Event

On Saturday November 7th, the Blue Star Mothers Chapter #186 held their annual Operation Holiday Cheer event at the Girls Scouts Heart of Michigan Regional Center. The opening ceremonies were directed by Chapter President Sandy Guy, and Past President Mary Werme. Several songs were sung by Danielle Hoonhors. Post 36 Commander Jim Saur presented a check for \$200 to help with shipping expenses. Then we all got to work, packing boxes for the troops.

Several Post 36 members volunteered, along with members of BSM Chapter 192 of Allegan County, and members of Legion Post 84 Otsego. Over 115 Christmas boxes were packaged and shipped to our troops serving overseas, and in the USA.

2015 was a great success because of the donations and volunteerism by local people willing to give a few moments of their lives to support our troops defending our freedoms worldwide.



Have you visited the Post Library? We have a selection of books and movies for members to borrow. Most of them are military non-fiction or fiction. The selection is slowly growing, so the next time you are at the Post borrow a book to read, or a movie to watch. Library donations are welcome too.

SERVING VETERANS- The Kalamazoo County VSO-

The Kalamazoo County Veterans Service Office is a great local resource you should all be aware of. They are committed to providing services and assistance to those who have honorably served their country. The officers can help you with:

- Claims filing for VA disability benefits
- Dependents and survivors benefits
- VA Home Loan Guaranty
- Burial and headstone benefits
- Education benefits
- Medical treatment
- Military records and medals
- Emergency financial aid
- Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Agents
- Transport to the VAMC in Battle Creek

Non-Service Connection Pension with Aid and Attendance

(A&A)- As our population ages this benefit has come more to the forefront. Elderly veterans and in many instances their children are looking for financial assistance for nursing home or assisted living care. Before you make any commitments to attorneys or private firms you should contact your local Veterans Serv. Office.

Documents Needed For Non-Service Connected Pension A&A:

- Discharge Papers: DD214 or WWII Equivalent
- Marriage License and/or Divorce Degrees
- Death Certificate
- \$\$ Number For Assets (Not Including Home)
- Income: Social Security, Pensions, Annuities
- Out of Pocket Medical Expenses
- Medicare Supplement Premiums
- Co-Pays For Doctors and Pharmacy
- Dental and Eye Glasses
- Incontinence Supplies ("Depends" ®)
- Prosthetics, Canes, Wheel Chairs, etc.
- Doctors Statement: VA Form 2680

Note: Keep in mind that everything is based on household (both veteran and spouse's) income and expenses.

Your County Veterans office has one interest, THE VETERAN, and will do everything possible to see that he/she receives everything to which their military service gains them entitlement.

Phone: (269) 373-5304

Monday, 8:30AM – 4:00PM – WALK-INS

Tues. – Thurs, 8:00AM – 4:00PM – By APPOINTMENT ONLY

Friday – Office is CLOSED

VA Medical News & Numbers- The Battle Creek Toll Free number for appointments and information is 1-888-214-1247.

The local number is (269) 966-5600, and for afterhours triage is 1-888-838-6466. Extensions are, for triage ext. 35053,

Prescription ext.-35500, customer service ext.31990 or at ext.

31980. For further VA questions you can also go to this website

for current VA news. <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel>

For assistance obtaining discharge records, visit-

www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/



COMING EVENTS

- Tues. 05 Jan Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Sun. 10 Jan 3rd District Mtg. – George Custer Post 54.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
- Sat. 16 Jan 25th Anniversary of Operation Desert Storm
- Thurs. 21 Jan Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm, come in at 6pm
to help with Post cleaning before meetings.
- Tues. 02 Feb Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Fri-Sun 12-14 Feb Department of Michigan Legion Winter
Meeting. Holiday Inn, Flint.
- Thurs. 18 Feb Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
- Tues. 01 Mar Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Sun. 06 Mar 3rd District Mtg. – Reading Post 360.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
- Thurs. 17 Mar Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm

Review- the Redesigned American Legion Website-

A recent American Legion Online Update included an article about recent improvements to the American Legion website- www.legion.org. After going on-line to see for myself, I was impressed. They have made the website very easy to use and navigate. For example- from the main page, there are links to information about Programs, Benefits, or Members. The Benefits link takes you to a page with a benefit calculator, or a page about how to get assistance, and other benefit-related pages. The Member link goes to a page with renewal information, or to MyLegion, Paid up for Life and other member-related pages. In my opinion, it is a much nicer website, it's very easy to use, and most importantly it is very helpful. As far as I can tell, the Legion website links you to useful information on nearly anything you may want to know about the Legion or your veteran benefits. It was also improved to work better with mobile-devices.

The following is an excerpt from the article-*“Our website provides news and information for a significant and growing audience- members, donors, those involved with our children and youth programs, and many others. Thanks to the responsive design, our visitors are more engaged with the website whether they are on their cellphone, tablet, desktop or laptop.”*

Another area of growth is the Legiontown USA website. In the past few years, hundreds of readers have shared their stories on their service, a family's military history, post and community memorials, Legion Riders events and more.”

If you have computer access, I highly recommend visiting the American Legion's national website, www.legion.org. It's a great tool for finding any information you may need as a veteran.



Re-establish Post 36 American Legion Auxiliary

We had exactly zero replies to our question – “is there any interest in re-establishing an Auxiliary at our post?” The Post 36 Auxiliary disbanded several years ago, due to low membership and participation. We already have a few interested women and a few from other Posts who want to transfer in, but we need 10 paid members in order to establish an Auxiliary Unit at our Post.

The American Legion and Auxiliary were designed to serve together, to have the support and inclusion of their spouse and family members. We sure would welcome more spouse and family member involvement at the Post.

Eligibility requirements are- “Any woman who is eligible for membership in the American Legion is also eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. The mother, wife, daughter, sister, grand-daughter, great-grand-daughter, or grandmother of members of the American Legion, and deceased veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the listed war eras”.

If you or your spouse is interested in becoming a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, please contact a Post Officer. Annual membership dues would be approximately \$20 - \$25 per year. And, Auxiliary membership would make a good gift.

NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS OR POST EVENTS?

If you need a ride, please contact us. Lack of transportation should not stop anyone from participating in our Post events.

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Each newsletter we can email saves postage costs. That's money we could spend on helping veterans. Thank you.

We also need your change of address when you move.



The Four Pillars of the American Legion

1. Strong National Security
2. Taking Care of Veterans
3. Mentoring Youth
4. Patriotism and Honor (Americanism)

THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218

Post 36 meetings are held every 3rd Thursday from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW Post at 1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Portage