



PALMER LAKE VFW POST 3915



www.palmerlakevfw.org

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

IN THIS ISSUE

Embracing Change

By: Commander Jarrod McReynolds



Comrades, as many of you may already know, there have been several key changes this past Month at our Post. We are saying good-bye to 2 great individuals who have dedicated a great deal of time and passion to the Post and taking care of Veterans. Both Gary Archambault (Quarter Master) and Miki Price (Club Manager) are retiring. Their leadership and dedication to the Post will be missed.

We welcome Tom Heinrich in as the Quarter Master Pro Temp, to fill in for Garry until elections can be held in March. Tom brings with him great experience in finance, from years doing accounting for other small businesses and doing accounting for his own small business. His dedication and loyalty to the VFW is a great asset to ensuring the financial health of the Post.

We also welcome Andrea Moy as the new Club Manager. Andrea has been an integral facet at the Post for a long time, and this is a well-deserved promotion. Andrea is dedicated to serving the members of Palmer Lake VFW and ensuring the Post home is a clean and fun place to come and enjoy in each other's comradeship.

This month has been cold, what with the Polar Vortex as well as the normal winter weather. If you know of a Veteran and/or their family that is struggling during this time, encourage them to reach out to the Post. We can't help if we don't know that help is needed. There are a lot of resources available and we have two experts in helping Veterans in Scott Hanson and Jeff Jarosz.

I bring greetings back from the Midwinter Department conference from all of the Department Line officers and program Chairs. It was a great conference with a lot of great classes. The Voice of Democracy dinner was great again this year, as it always is, with the 7th District Winner also winning at the Department level.

Auxiliary News

The latest news from our Auxiliary President Page 2

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Comrades or family or a comrade in need. Page 2

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Auxiliary News

By President Tracy McReynolds



Happy Valentines' day Auxiliary members

The district meeting is 2/9 at Richfield Post #5555 at 09:00 am

Have you signed up for the PLVFW Casino trip? The Trip is February 16th, BUS leaves at 11:00 sharp, its \$25 a person. Sign-ups are in the bar area, it's always a fun filled event

We will be doing another year of Taco Fiesta 5/5. This is a huge event for us and can always use people to help out. If interested please let me know

We have **a new membership application effective**

1/2019 here is the URL for it [click here](#). This is a fill in form so you can type in the information and then print. Copies should be hot of the



press in the Post soon. The date should read in the bottom right hand corner of 01/2019

Thank you all for your continued support in helping our veterans and their families.

Our next meeting is February 12th at 630pm.

Remember to turn in your community service hours

<http://www.palmerlakevfw.org/content/enter-volunteer-hours>

Thank you,

Tracy McReynolds, Auxiliary President

Palmer Lake VFW Post #3915 Auxiliary

Email: Trosbacka@yahoo.com

Prayer Corner

Chaplin Nate Gehl



Palmer Lake VFW is not only a Veteran's organization, but also a family. We grow, work, laugh and morn together.

Please continue to keep Gary and Sally Archambault and their family in your thoughts and prayers as Sally continues her battle with cancer. Also, please say a prayer for Gerald Johnson and his family as he continues his fight with cancer.

Oh Lord,

Please help all of our Vets in need and keep all of our loved ones and families safe over the coming year.

Amen

Community Service

Senior-Vice Jim Williams



Serving Community and Veterans,
As we continue to make a difference we are always looking out for opportunities to serve veterans and our community. If you have ideas or projects that you think the post would be interested in participating in, please contact our Senior-Vice Commander Jim Williams at palmerlake.srvce@gmail.com.

As a reminder, you can log your community service hours by visiting palmerlakevfw.org and clicking on the [community service link](#)

Share the Veterans Crisis Line Number to Save a Life

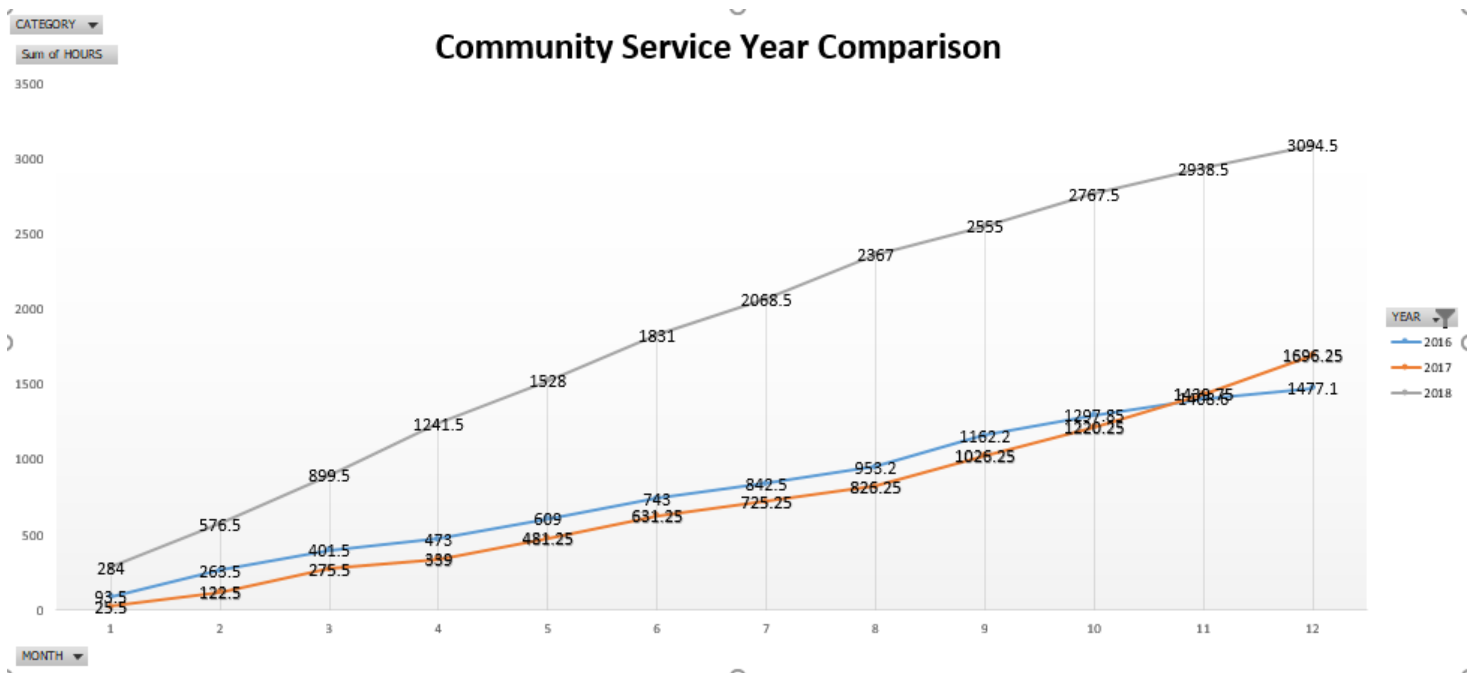
Crisis Line. This confidential, toll-free, 24-hour-a-day hotline serves Veterans and their loved ones year-round. Reach qualified, caring responders:

by phone at 800-273-8255,
via online chat on their website, or
by text message at 838255.

[Learn More](#)

This is a new graph to end the year below, it shows the total cumulative hours of Volunteering for the year. What an outstanding year we had as a Post. Also this year Palmer Lake VFW Gambling and the Post donated \$54,650 to other organizations, scholarships, and programs. For a full listing you can go to this link at the Post site <http://palmerlakevfw.org/content/accomplishments-and-contributions>

Please make sure you are reporting your Community Service Hours [Enter Volunteer Hours](#)



Community Service (continued)

As some of you are aware there is a donation box by the front door of the Club. Items put in this box are given to needy & homeless vets and also to Blue Star Mom's to mail to the deployed troops. The items we collect have changed from time to time so here is a list of the items we are now collecting:

- New personal care items of any size. This includes shampoos, cream rinse/conditioner, body lotion, soaps
- New combs, brushes, shaving items, pocket size tissues
- Dental floss, dental brushes, tooth paste, lip balm
- Baby wipes, hand sanitizers, deodorant,
- Sunscreen and bug spray
- White calf length athletic socks
- White crew neck T-Shirts with no logos
- Eyeglasses

We, the members of the VFW, understand first-hand the essence of rallying community support and the positive, life-changing impact we have on the world around us. That's why VFW members volunteer nearly 9 million hours to community service projects annually, with volunteerism benefiting morale, education, the environment, health sciences and civic projects.

What's in the fire, and not in the flame?
What's that in the master, and not in the dame?
What's that in the courtier, and not in the clown?
What's that in the country, and not in the town?
What am I (*Answer at the bottom on page 8)

Membership

Junior-Vice Jonell Willson



This year has been a great year so far for membership. We are currently sitting at 101.27% and we are in 55th place for our Division Nation Wide out of 476 other Posts. We are also sitting at 18th place within the state for total membership so far this year. You should all be proud of the great work that you have been doing to get new members. But let's not let our foot off the gas with membership, we need to continue to grow, and it only happens when you ask a fellow Veteran if they know about the VFW.

I had just become a Second lieutenant in The Marines when my mother and I were walking toward the Iwo Jima monument. We were about to cross the street when a truck was coming toward us. We jumped back out of the way.

The driver, a USMC Gunny Sergeant slowed down, leaned out the window, saluted and told mother, "Don't worry, I wouldn't hit an officer -- there's too much paperwork in it."

Service Officer VETERAN'S ISSUES

By Post Service Officer Jeff Jarosz



While working at the latest Post blood drive, I mentioned to a couple of our Post members what a fine program “My HealtheVet” is. Neither of the members had ever heard of it. The program is designed to give our Veterans who are enrolled in the VA Health care system access to their entire VA medical records. Here are some of the things available with a premium account:

- VA Admissions and Discharges (including discharge summaries) - Discharge Summaries are available 3 calendar days after they are completed.
- VA Allergies
- VA Appointments (future)
- VA Appointments (limited to past 2 years)
- VA Demographics
- VA Electrocardiogram (EKG)
- VA Immunizations
- VA Laboratory Results: Chemistry/Hematology/Microbiology - VA Laboratory Results are available 3 calendar days after they have been verified. Depending on the type of test, some laboratory results may not be available right away.
- VA Medication History
- VA Notes - VA Notes written from January 1, 2013 forward are available 3 calendar days after they have been completed and signed by all required members of your VA health care team.
- VA Pathology Report: Surgical Pathology/Cytology/Electron Microscopy. VA Pathology Reports are available 14 calendar days after they have been completed. Some studies done at a non-VA facility may not be available or they may not necessarily include an interpretation.
- VA Problem List - Your VA Problem List contains active health problems your VA providers are helping you to manage. This information is available 3 calendar days after it has been entered. It may not contain active problems managed by non-VA health care providers.
- VA Radiology - Your report is available 3 calendar days after it has been verified by members of the VA health care team
- VA Vitals and Readings
- VA Wellness Reminders
- VA electronic health record information such as VA Continuity of Care Document (VA CCD) and other information as it becomes available
- Department of Defense (DoD) Military Service Information
-

Attached is a link you can open to start your account with simple directions to walk you through the required steps. With “My HealtheVet” you can schedule appointments, have a secure message with your doctor or nurse, order your prescriptions and just about anything else you might need from the VA. This is an excellent program and I have been using it for years. As always, feel free to call me if you have any questions regarding your earned VA benefits. My phone number is: 763-434-9708.

To register: [Click here](#)

Jeff Jarosz
Post Service Officer

Attached is the Anoka County Veterans Advocate link that has some very interesting information for all veterans. [Click Here](#)

Service Officer VETERAN'S ISSUES (Continued)

Congressional Budget Hearings

The Congressional Budget options, if accepted, will have very serious consequences for our Post Veterans and Military Retirees. Our Post Veterans who receive compensation for Un-employability will have that benefit stripped from them upon reaching age 70. Our Post members who are Military Retirees will have to pay \$970. Per family per year for Tri-Care for Life coverage and have a co-pay for all services. At present this is totally free and a benefit that all Retirees were promised when they enlisted if they stayed for 20 or more years. Please e-mail your Congressmen and Senators if you wish to keep your benefits. Little by little Congress will strip away all of your earned Military Retirement benefits unless you make yourselves heard. Contact your representatives today!

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has recently published an annual report: Options for Reducing the Federal Deficit: 2019-2028. This report is an extensive list of possible options for Congress to consider for reducing the budget deficit. They are not legislative proposals but rather recommendations. However, concern about the growing annual spending deficit for the current fiscal year (currently estimated at \$984 billion) is increasing in Congress and these recommendations could be considered to help reduce the deficit. Some of the many recommendations in the report include:

- A new TRICARE-For-Life (TFL) annual enrollment fee of \$485 for individual coverage and \$970 for family coverage, and increased cost-shares;
- Increasing TRICARE Prime enrollment fees to \$650 for individual and \$1300 for family;
- Increasing TRICARE Select annual enrollment fee to \$485 for individuals and \$970 for a family;
- Reduce active duty BAH to 80 percent of actual cost;
- Limit active duty annual pay increases; and
- Eliminate VA's Individual Un-employability payments to disabled veterans at the full retirement age for Social Security.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR VETERANS

Coming up in the first quarter are free legal clinics for Veterans. These clinics provide lawyers to answer legal questions you may have about wills, trusts, health care directives, power of attorney, housing employment, debt collection, expungement, child support and family law. **These services are totally free and you don't need an appointment, just walk in.** I can't stress enough the importance of your spouse and yourself having valid "power of attorney" documents on each other. In case of sickness or death these documents will save you numerous headaches and heartaches.

Here are the dates for the upcoming Veterans Legal Clinics.

The Legal Clinic in Anoka is: March 12, 2019 room 237 at the Anoka county court house from 9 – 2pm

The legal clinics at the Minneapolis VA medical center are:

February 5, 2019 from 9 – 2pm in the flag atrium

March 7, 2019 from 9 – 2pm in the flag atrium

Just bring a copy of your DD-214 to show proof that you are a Veteran and have your questions ready for the Legal Team.

If any member has questions about their earned VA benefits, Minnesota Veteran's benefits or questions about filing a VA claim. I can be reached at jajarosz@q.com or 763-434-9708

TRICARE

Sign up for TRICARE email updates at www.tricare.mil/subscriptions.

Poppy Program

Program Chair Lynn Olkives



The red poppy has connected generations of veterans, service members and their families with civilians in remembering all those who have fallen. And for more than 75 years, the VFW's "Buddy"® Poppy program has honored those who have sacrificed by raising millions of dollars to support veterans' well-being.

Remember that a portion of the proceeds for Buddy Poppies goes to support the National Home for Children.

The VFW National Home for Children was founded in 1925 in Eaton Rapids, Michigan as a place where families left behind by war could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn't come home.

Today's military and veteran families face different challenges -- reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment and rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, among others -- and the National Home has evolved over our decades-long history to meet those changing needs.

In addition, we understand that the impacts of war can be generational. The National Home is here to help veteran connected families as well who are directly related to a VFW or Auxiliary member or are eligible to become one.

Resident families can accomplish significant life goals by participating in our program. We offer case management services to help families establish their plans for the future and set goals, education, recreational, and enrichment opportunities for parents and their children, as well as free housing and daycare. Community resources and counseling provided as needed.

Youth Activities



This year's winner for VOD at Palmer Lake VFW is Emma Hanson



This Year's winner for the Patriot Pen at Palmer Lake VFW is Leo Johnson who also won at District 7, and is now competing for Department Honors.

*Puzzle answer – The letter r

Legislation

By Program Chair Larry Fonder

Greetings Palmer Lake Comrades, Friends, and Family!

The 2019 “Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill” is scheduled for Wednesday, 20 March 2019! The event is an opportunity for Veterans, family members, and advocates to hear from and speak with Minnesota law makers regarding legislation affecting Minnesota Veterans and their beneficiaries. VFW membership numbers count on paper, but an in person rally in the state rotunda full of VFW members, Veterans, and supporters can be striking to lawmakers!

The Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers (MACVSO), the Minnesota Commander’s Task Force, and the United Veterans Legislative Council of Minnesota are sponsoring the event. The agenda is not set, however tentative plans call for a luncheon at 11:30 followed by a rally at 13:30 in the capitol rotunda. Last year’s event also included small group issue oriented break-out sessions with local lawmakers – hopefully this will be included this year as well. I’ll provide more information as details unfold to include legislative topics and possible transportation options to and from the event. Meanwhile, here is the link to the Minnesota Department of Veteran’s Affairs website with details [Click Here](#)

The National Department of the VFW has released the legislative priorities for 2019. Please see page 19 for a complete listing.

Comrade Larry Fonder
VFW3915legislativechair@gmail.com



The VFW Action Corps Weekly, an easy-to-read electronic newsletter that highlights the VFW’s advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.

- Immediate access to a nationwide database of contact information for all elected officials, a congressional directory.
- Regular VFW “Action Alerts” on how to get involved when our nation’s veterans, service members and their families need their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

To view this week’s edition: [Click here](#)

Veteran and Post Activities

By Program Chair Blair Sorvari

POST ACTIVITIES (Open to all Post, Auxiliary Members and their Guests)

Monday Texas Hold'em Poker – Starts at 7pm and goes until one individual has all the chips. This is open to All Members and Guests and there is no cost to play. Winners receive Palmer Lake Gift cards, and can earn points to larger Tournaments.

Wednesday and Friday – Bingo (6:30) and Bargo (7:30) respectively

Tuesday (5:00) and **Saturday** (3:30) – Meat Raffles

Cribbage: Staring October 1st through April 30, 2019.

No experience required and cheap at twice the price.

Entry fee \$6. All money paid out and each player receives a drink cup.

Sign-up 11:30AM - Draw for partners - Games start Noon.



Do not forget
Electronic pull tabs



This Year's fantasy football winner is



Angela Wood

At 108 and 105, cribbage player's battle for title (Adapted from the story by Boyd Huppert of Channel 11 News January 13, 2019)

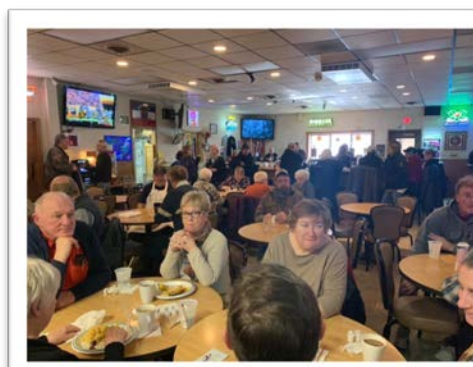
NORTH OAKS, Minn. — In the game of life, Harry Camp is already in triple overtime. 108 years of age, makes Harry the 15th oldest man in America, according to website that tracks such things. Harry is number one in Minnesota – and at cribbage. He and his wife Myrna reside at Waverly Gardens senior community in North Oaks and play at least once a day. But today will be a different kind of challenge, Harry has a cribbage date with a new and younger opponent. A Tahoe pulls up to Waverly Gardens. Slowly deliberately Don Carruth emerges from the passenger seat. At age 105 Don is all business. "When I'm supposed to do something, I want to do it," he says bluntly. "Let's get it done".

Excitement builds as the Waverly Gardens auditorium fills with spectators. Harry is wheeled toward the stage, stopping several times for hugs and encouragement. Then, it's on.

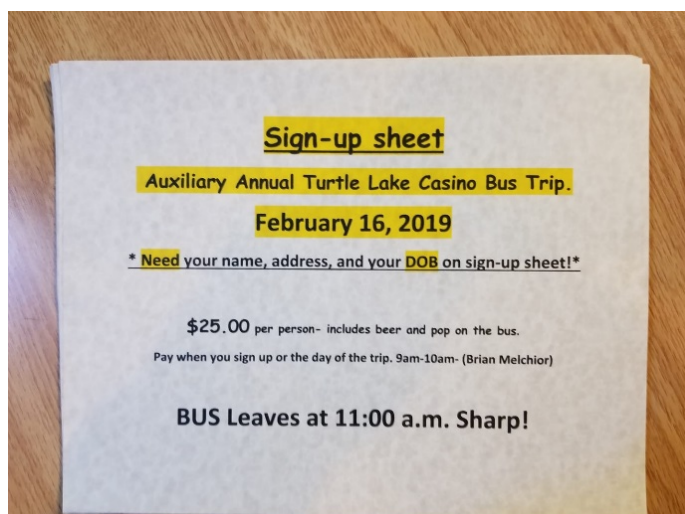
Story continued on page 18

Veteran and Post Activities (Continued)

Commanders Omelet Breakfast was enjoyed by everyone



Don't forget the casino trip



Safety

Program Chair Don Herman



This year's winner for Police of the Year for Palmer Lake VFW is Officer Steve Holt.

We did not have any entries for Fireman of the year. So if you have contacts with the local fire departments please let us know as we try to continue this great program.

Americanism and Citizenship

Program Chair George Hunt

Upcoming Holidays/Dates



Feb 1 – National Freedom Day

Feb 2 – Ground Hog Day

Feb 8 – Boy Scouts of



Am Founded 1910



Feb 12 – Lincoln's Birthday

Feb 14 – Valentine's Day



Feb 18 – Presidents' Day

Feb 22 – Washington's Birthday



Calendars must be very popular they have so many dates.

Honor Guard

Color Guard Commander Robert Hystad



The Cootie Corner



"Keep them smiling in their beds of white".

I always have trouble starting this article each month. With the onset of colder weather everyone tends to go dormant or go south. Our pup tent continues to make our monthly nursing home visits, bringing a brief period of enjoyment to the residents. The warm feeling you get when visiting and see the smiles on the faces makes the cold outside a little less cold. I invite anyone to join us at least once..

My 7 year old grandson, Keenan (the one on the right), competed in his first ever pinewood derby. He won 2nd place in his division and in the race off he place 3rd overall. Now, on to division

To contact me:
E-mail at wagnerterry@comcast.net
Or phone at 612-581-2719

Terry E. Wagner
Seam Squirrel PT (Sticktites) #66



Help Wanted

Content Contributor/Video Editor – Looking for an individual that is tech savvy that can assist in uploading and managing YouTube content, along with editing video content. Maybe also an opportunity to record content. There is no pay associated with this job, it is strictly volunteer.

Email - palmerlake.vfw3915@gmail.com

Newsletter Journalist – This newsletter should be more than just the commander or the President giving out information. If you have something you want to share, this is your chance. Go to [Input info here](#) and upload a news story, or a picture you want added to the newsletter, it will be looked at, and someone will be in touch with you.

DATES TO NOTE

Next Aux meeting Feb 5th at 1830

Next Post meeting Feb 12th at 1900

Next Hospital Visit Feb 19th at 1900 meet at the post at 1830

Next District Meeting Sat February 9th Richfield Post #5555 at 10:00 for VFW Members 0900 for Auxiliary

Blood Drives Mar 11 and May 13

Fish Fries start again on Friday March 8th



CONTACT US

Commander	palmerlake.vfw3915@gmail.com
Auxiliary President	Trosbacka@yahoo.com
Newsletter information	editor.palmerlakepost3915@gmail.com
Club Manager	bar-mgr@palmerlakevfw.com
Lawn Care Team	davthomp07@gmail.com

General News and Information

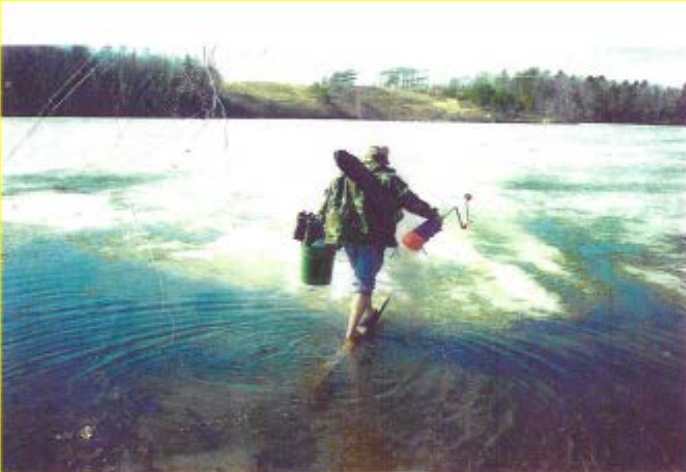
Save the Date/Ice fishing

By Booya

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FISHING?

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 23RD
2019**

**Vet's Camp on
Big Marine Lake**



Save the date!

More info to follow!

Limited cabins available!

Pot Luck! Prizes! Fun!

1ST ANNUAL PALMER LAKE VFW/FOREST LAKE VFW FISHING EXTRAVAGANZA!

Vets Camp Fishing Event

We will be holding a fishing event on Saturday February 23rd at the Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake. We are currently finalizing all the details and will post them in the February Newsletter. We expect the event to start at 11AM and go until 3PM. Prizes and door prizes will be modest in our first year, but we will make this event memorable to build on in the future. Palmer Lake Post 3915 and Forest Lake Post 4210 will be the leads. Friends and family are welcome. We know of several people bringing their kids.

About the Event

We will have 2 person teams. 1st and 2nd prizes for Walleye, Northern Pike, Crappies, and Sunnies. The cost will be \$30.00 per team with kids 12 years and under free. Pre-registration is required and will begin in January. **Payment is due upon registration and is non-refundable.** Some of the proceeds will go to the Vet's camp for plowing etc. **Weigh-in is at 3:00PM.** No fish can be turned in after that time. More details to come.

Pot Luck

After the weigh-ins there will be a pot luck in the canteen. This will start +/- at 4:00PM.

About the Canteen

The pot luck and after hours "go to" place is the canteen. This is a set-up bar with sodas and beer available for sale. You will need to bring your own liquor.

About the Cabins

We have booked one 1 bedroom cabin and nine 2 bedroom cabins. They are all spoken for at this time. There is a short waiting list in case something becomes available. Some beds may be or become available. You must bring your own bedding, towels and food. The cabins are equipped with a full size refrigerator, microwave, stove, coffee maker, showers, TV, WiFi, pots, pans, dishes silverware etc. Check-in is Noon Friday and check out is Noon Sunday. If we can catch fish on Friday afternoon we will cook them up for supper on Friday.

About the Vet's Campground on Big Marine Lake

11300 180th Street N. (Manning Trail NE of Hugo and SE of Forest Lake.

WWW.vetscampmn.org

Deadline for registration is 15 February 2019

Points of Contact:

Palmer Lake VFW: Dave Thompson or Blair Sorvari

Forest Lake VFW: Bryan Lee

The Children's Christmas Party

Remember you have until February 28th to send in your cute kid pictures for our contest.

And the WINNER'S are:?

Ages 0-2

Ages 3-5

Ages 6-8



At 108 and 105, cribbage players battle for title

Adapted from the story by Boyd Huppert of Channel 11 News January 13, 2019

Continued from page 10

“What's going on today, we're having a cribbage tournament between two of our oldest residents in Presbyterian Homes,” explains Rob Lahammer, who arranged for Don to travel from his apartment at SummerWood of Chanhassen to Waverly Gardens. “When Harry met Don, a game for the ages,” says Rob, repeating the title that tops the posters pinned to the bulletin boards publicizing the event.

“He's been playing cribbage probably most of his life,” Bob Carruth says about his dad. “He loves the game, played with my mom forever.”

Harry has thrown down the gauntlet. “It's going to be a pretty good person that beats me,” he said earlier in the day. “So, we're going to find out today.”

Rob introduces the players who've been fitted with white and green jerseys, their respective ages – 105 and 108 – displayed in large numbers on their backs. Microphone in hand, Rob informs the crowd both Harry and Don were alive when women gained the right to vote - and were of drinking age during prohibition. “Just tell me to stop,” he tells Don, “if you get annoyed with me talking too much.” At 105, Don doesn't miss a beat. “Stop,” he says. The crowd erupts in laughter.

For the next 30 minutes the 105-year-old retired principal and the 108-year-old retired forester engage in an intense back-and-forth. “Oh, it's serious, cribbage is serious for my dad,” Bob Carruth says. “Go dad!” he cheers. Myrna Camp nervously watches her husband take an early lead, then surrender it. After several hands, one point separates the players.

“This is crazy,” Rob Lahammer announces to the crowd. “Harry Camp is four pegs away, Don Curruth is three pegs away.” Myrna puts her face in her hands as the tension builds. Then, the young upstart makes his last move.

Game over.

By one point, 105-year-old Don has defeated 108-year-old Harry.

The crowd cheers and Don and Harry shake hands. For Don, there will be no savoring the victory. He takes a bow and grabs hold of his walker. “Just another game,” Don says and heads for the door. Don's son smiles. “When it's over, it's over for dad. He's moved on already,” Bob Carruth says. “Probably why he's lived to 105.”

Harry lingers, remaining onstage at the table as he accepts congratulations for a game well played. “The best man won,” he says. “But next time I'll get him.”

At 108 Harry Camp is still game.

2019 PRIORITY GOALS



BUDGET

To fully fund veterans and defense programs, Congress must:

- ✓ Reform the dysfunctional federal budget process and end sequestration.
- ✓ Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- ✓ Ensure the POW/MIA Accounting mission is fully funded.
- ✓ Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.

HEALTH CARE

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA and DOD must:

- ✓ Properly implement the VA Mission Act of 2018.
- ✓ Reduce the number of service members and veterans who die by suicide.
- ✓ Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- ✓ Modernize VA and DOD health IT systems.
- ✓ Strengthen health care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries (TBI).
- ✓ Expand gender-specific programs and competencies.
- ✓ Research and effectively treat health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- ✓ Prevent the increase of pharmaceutical copayments and remove copayment requirements for preventative medicines.
- ✓ Research the efficacy of medical cannabis.
- ✓ Expand telehealth services.
- ✓ Make nursing home eligibility part of the VA health benefits package.
- ✓ Keep community care reimbursement rates competitive with private health insurance.

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE & MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

To ensure veterans and their dependents have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- ✓ Properly implement the modernized appeals process.
- ✓ Consider treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- ✓ Establish presumptive disability compensation benefits for hearing loss, tinnitus, TBI and for health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- ✓ Increase burial allowances to account for inflation and include spouses' information on all headstones.
- ✓ Authorize more than one adaptive automotive grant for disabled veterans.
- ✓ Reform the Gulf War Illness Disability Benefits Questionnaire.
- ✓ Transfer control of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery to the NCA.
- ✓ Update regulations and laws governing claims to account for digital claims processing.
- ✓ Expand VA wartime benefits to early Vietnam veterans.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, they must have access to:

- ✓ High-quality and sustainable education benefits.
- ✓ Strong employment and training programs.
- ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services throughout their lifetime.
- ✓ Small business development opportunities.
- ✓ Civilian credentials or academic credit for military training.
- ✓ Hiring preferences in the civil service and with large government contractors.
- ✓ National veterans treatment court advocates.
- ✓ Education and training in new and expanding career fields.
- ✓ Timely and improved transition assistance including access to programs for veterans after they leave military service.

- ✓ Affordable housing and wraparound services to avoid homelessness.
- ✓ Equitable education benefits for dependents regardless of where they live.
- ✓ Improved character of discharge review and appeals procedures.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

To maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force, Congress and DOD must:

- ✓ Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- ✓ Protect and improve on-base quality of life programs.
- ✓ Ensure that military housing is safe and free of toxic substances.
- ✓ End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- ✓ Eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset.
- ✓ Increase the government's Thrift Savings Plan contribution.
- ✓ Eliminate sexual assaults in the military.
- ✓ Establish the Armed Forces University.
- ✓ Improve stability and support for military families.

NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS & POW/MIA

To fully support U.S. troops and their mission to fight the war on terrorism and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world, Congress, DOD and DHS must:

- ✓ Expand partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- ✓ Secure America's borders.
- ✓ Preserve the all-volunteer force.
- ✓ Maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea.