

Communicating with Members and the Community



American Legion of Iowa
Mid-Winter Conference Feb. 10-13, 2022

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Methods of Communication

- Direct to Individual Members
- Print and Electronic Newsletter
- Website
- Social Media



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Direct to Individual Members – New Members

Dear Legionnaire Scott,

Welcome to Post 37! You have joined the largest veteran's organization in America, with nearly two million members worldwide. Combined with the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion we are over three million members strong!

The American Legion has been instrumental in the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Flag code, and the GI Bill; but without our family we could not have accomplished any of those things.

Here in Ames, we believe family comes first. Our post and many of our events are family friendly. Please consider asking your family members to join and help us grow our family!

Local members can bring their membership card (which is included with this letter) to the post after 3pm and ask for a door fob. The fob will allow you entry to the post without ringing the bell, the post is only open to members except on special occasions. We are located at 225 Main St in Ames.

American Legion members meet at 7:00pm on the second Thursday of the month, American Legion Auxiliary members meet at 6:30pm on the first Tuesday of the month, and the Sons of the American Legion meets at 6:30pm on the second Tuesday. We also have an American Legion Riders chapter that meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm. If meetings aren't your thing, we have many volunteer opportunities from the Honor Guard to fundraiser meals to BINGO!

If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter via email let us know at Legionpost37newsletter@gmail.com.

Follow us on Facebook! American Legion Family of Ames, IA Post 37

We look forward to meeting you and seeing you at the post!

Respectfully,

Jennifer Monserud
Past Commander



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Direct to Individual Members – 729 Transfers

Dear Legionnaire Thomas,

Welcome to Post 37! Here in Ames, we believe family comes first. Our post and many of our events are family friendly.

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Past Commander



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American Legion Post #37 Programs and Activities 2021





Patriotic Activities
 Performed Military Services for 28 Veteran Funerals and Firing Squad for Memorial Day
 Provided Speakers for veteran's commemorations as Requested
 Raised and Retired Flags in Downtown Area for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Flag Day and Veterans Day
 Wreaths Across America initiated at Ames Cemetery

Youth and Community Service
 Sponsored American Legion Baseball Teams from Ames and Gilbert High Schools
 Hosted State Baseball tournament, provided meals to teams, coaches and fans
 Honored Lou Gehrig and ALS veterans at Ames High Baseball game
 Sponsored Junior Shooting Sports Club. New Rifles donated by Post and Squadron
 Presented 270 Academic Awards to Juniors and Seniors at Ames High School
 Presented Awards to ISU Army, Navy/Marine and Air Force ROTC Unit Outstanding Cadets
 Hosted and Maintained Medical Equipment Loan Closet at No Cost to Users
 Presented Eagle Scout Awards as Requested
 Donations to Youth and Shelter Services for programming
 Sponsored visit to Post by Santa and Mrs. Claus for community children

Veterans Service
 Made "Buddy Check" to our WWII and Korea members to check on welfare
 Sponsored three drives to provide snacks to Iowa Veterans Home residents - \$10,000
 Assisted in donation of Personal Protective Equipment and water to Iowa Veterans Home
 Donation to Iowa American Legion Foundation in honor of deceased Members
 Provided Christmas dinner and gifts for veteran family in need

Social Activities
 Hosted Weekly Curbside meals for Legion family members throughout year.

Thank you for your membership, without it none of these local activities would be possible! A portion of your dues also help to fund the American Legion Service Office in Des Moines, representing nearly 70% of Iowa veterans with active VA claims.



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Newsletters

Why is a Newsletter Important?

Retention Goes Up when Membership is Informed

Members that Attend Meetings – First 10%	10%
Members that Come To Social Events at Post – 20%	30%
Members Hearing by Word of Mouth – 20%	50%
Members in Area with Occasional Contact – 40%	90%
Members that Live Out of Area – 10%	100%

Half of Members Only Have Contact if Post Initiates Contact
That 50% is Most in Danger of Not Renewing





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Newsletters

Starting a Newsletter

Appoint an Editor – potential long-term if possible

Qualifications – Writing ability, experience with publishing software (Word, Publisher, similar software for Apple), regular attendee at Post meetings and family activities

Conscientious – Will develop material and publish on set schedule, Involves Legion family leadership in content

Determine publication schedule and size

Single page, multiple sheets

Dependent on size of Legion family and schedule of events and activities

Focus of Newsletter

Will it be local events only or will Department and National issues be included as desired

Will newsletter be “what we did” or “what we are going to do”?



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Newsletters

Develop Publication “Look” – Should be consistent from issue to issue, Depends on software being used. Create a header including publication name, organization logos, names of leadership if desired, date.

Determine publication method – Postal mail only, combination of the mail and email, email only. Email is cheapest and easiest to maintain address list but delivery can be difficult if large numbers. Email addresses can be hard to obtain. Postal mail addresses already in hand but need someone to print labels for address. Need postal permit if using regular mail.



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Newsletters

Newsletter content

Calendar of events – good quick reference of events for readers

Leadership comments – Allows elected leaders to communicate priorities, side benefit; less content that editor needs to create.

Graphics and pictures – Use to communicate quick hit of content of article and draw attention.

Legion family programs – Include Department and National programs, not just local events. Remember the Four Pillars, try to include something from at least one of them in each issue.



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Newsletters

Tips and Best Practices

Publish on set schedule not “as needed”

Use email list to publicize post events and calendar reminders on more frequent basis – weekly updates


Year’s issues are good record for use in creating Consolidated Post Report

Create annual issue to mail with renewal reminders and membership cards



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THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

Post Commander: Jennifer Monsrud
Unit President: Sandy Deacon
Squadron Commander: Bob Bellinghausen
Chapter President: Cliff Barker

www.ameslegionpost37.com
www.legion.org
www.iaaia.org
www.ssa.legion.org

Tel: 515-231-6198
April 2021
225 Main Street
Ames, IA 50010
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www.legion.org
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www.ssa.legion.org

Ames Legion Family In Action

Spring Cleaning?? Donate all those items you no longer need or want to the online auction to benefit The American Legion Family of Ames. From toy cars to real cars, check your attic to garage, we'll take it all, almost.

Please ensure items are clean and in usable working condition. Sorry, but we cannot accept clothing at this time. You can drop your items off anytime in the reception room of the Post home at 225 Main. Deadline for drop off is April 11 so that tagging and photography can be done. The online auction itself will be run on April 23rd.

Many thanks to Katie at Access Auction Solutions for hosting the auction. Have questions? Contact Ann at annrehbein@ann.com or call 515-231-6198.

Online Auction Planned

If you are not familiar with online auctions, they have become very popular during COVID-19. Go to www.auction.com and explore the site without entering any personal information. That is only necessary when you are serious about bidding on an item.

You will see all kinds of items being auctioned, housewares, cars, hand and garden tools, too many items to mention. Take a look and you may get some ideas on things you can donate for the auction. You will be able to choose which organization receives the proceeds from your donation.

Most auctions are open for bidding several days. We will provide a link to the auction through the weekly update or you can email Ann when the auction gets closer.

Thank You to Generous Donors

The Adopt-A-Month program got off to a very successful start. We have had donors step forward to make those adoptions nearly through the month of July.

- March was adopted by the MacCrea and Patrick families
- April has been adopted by the Rehbein and Monsrud families
- May has been adopted by Doug and Linda Ward and Richard Tarman
- June has been adopted by two anonymous donors
- July (the first 19 days) have been adopted by Don Johnson, Mike and Carrie Meyers and James and Linda Wettestad.

We are beginning to see what we think may be the light at the end of the tunnel now that the vaccine is being more widely distributed. We are exploring the possibility of reopening the bingo game, our major fundraiser.


We know that not everyone can donate. We know that many of our members experienced as much hardship as did our post. We hope they were able to find the same kind of help that we found among our members.

We can only try to say thank-you and hope that our members realize how much their generosity meant through this very trying time. As life comes back to normal, you will never be forgotten.

You can get your newsletter by email. Send your email address to davidrehbein@msn.com. Not only will you help your Legion family save some money but you will also get the color version of the newsletter.

Inside this issue:	
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Board of Directors	2
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Legion Riders	3
Membership	3

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Clubroom News

baked potato \$8
Wed. April 14-Chicken Enchilada's \$7, Taco Salad \$8, Southwest Chicken Salad \$8
Wed. April 21-Burger Night
Wed. April 28-Ham Balls, Cheesy potatoes \$8

Thanks to all who helped out at the post in the last month!! It is very much appreciated.
Sandy Deacon, Mike Deacon, Tom Belz, Addison Donovan, Ken Woodley, Chris Duncan, John Schomaker, John and Lynn Sellmeyer and Julie Rindat.

CLUBROOM COUPON

Any Tuesday in April
Present Coupon to get
2 drinks for the price of 1.
Cash Purchase Only

Legion Family Needs Your Membership

The membership total for the three Legion family groups continue to climb upward toward the goals they are working to reach. They won't be able to reach these goals without your help.

Have you renewed for 2021? If you have, THANK YOU! Please look around your neighborhood, your place of work, your circle of friends. Odds are there is someone in one of those groups that served in the military or that is the family member of someone who served.

We need you to ask that person to join you as a member of the Legion family. We would like to be able to ask them ourselves but with the COVID-19 problems, still ongoing and the need for everyone to protect ourselves, making those door-to-door calls is almost impossible.

You are a member now because you are proud of the service that you have given in the military or supporting a family member in the military and the service that you continue to give as a member of the Legion family in Ames. Share that pride, ask someone to join you as a member.

If you were a member in 2020 of the Post, Unit or Squadron and have not renewed for 2021, please do that now. This has been a difficult year for everyone. The Legion family included. We have asked a little more of many of our members, to support us through the outside world. To observe extra rules and restrictions when they visited the post, to make a monetary donation when times were especially tough.

Through that all, we worked hard to keep our programs going and to continue to serve our community. The Academic Awards were presented to nearly 250 students. We are continuing to sponsor baseball and the air rifle team. We made several shipments of snacks to the Iowa Veterans Home and followed that up with Girl Scout Cookies.

We may not have been able to do as much as in a normal year but this was anything but a normal year. Be sure that as the pandemic lessens, we will get back to the activities and programs that have made us the top Legion Family in the state. If you don't have a 2021 card, renew now and be with us. Legion dues are \$45. Auxiliary dues are \$30 or \$25 for junior members and \$20 for Auxiliary members who are also Legionnaires. Squadron dues are \$45 or \$15 for those who are also Legionnaires or under 21. Renew now and be with us as we return to normal Legion Family activities.

MEMBERSHIP IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Spring is here and the riding awaits. Gladly knowing 2020 behind us, your Legion Riders are looking forward to the ride and activity schedule for 2021. First up this year is the Sleeping Angels Fun Run on May 1st. The Ames Legion Riders were asked to be among a dozen or so groups to plan and lead our own leg of this benefit ride. Joey Droste and his team at The Sleeping Angels Foundation put this ride together along with several other benefits throughout the year to raise funds and awareness for families in the area that have lost children in infancy. Last year, despite all of the challenges of Covid they raised over \$40 thousand dollars. We are very proud to be a part of such an amazing organization. For more information visit thesleepingangelsfoundation.com.

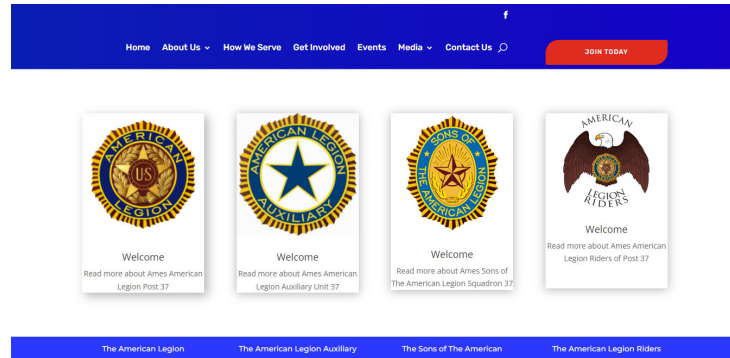
Daily through 2021 has brought its own challenges, and on February 28th we unexpectedly lost a Legion Rider and dear friend, Bruce Schuller, to pancreatic cancer. Bruce was a past Riders President, and a long-time Road Captain and will be truly missed. Members of the Legion Riders, the Road Guard, and many others escorted Bruce home to Boone on March 6th. His family has announced that a celebration of his life will be held on April 23rd. The celebration will begin at 11 at Sunset Oaks in Boone, and an escort will proceed from there to Van Meter Cemetery for a 2 pm service. I'm told that Bruce wanted to wait for "good riding weather". Undoubtedly he was a Rider to the end.

Our Winthia Ames America Committee is proud to announce we have sponsored wreaths for Ames Municipal Cemetery. We've been given access to the Veterans' grave list and map from the city so we can plan the logistics of placing the wreaths in December. Thank you to everyone that has already stepped up to make this mission possible.

As always, the riding season is just beginning, so if you venture out on 2 wheels remember to keep your head on a swivel and pay close attention to road and weather conditions. Ride safe everyone, Cliff B.

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Websites



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Websites

Good Examples

- IALegion.org
- Legion.org

Not So Good Examples

- Teacherstalk.com (Teachers Talk)
- Choosespain.com (Choose Spain)

- Keep names short
- Easy to type
- Research it



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Websites

- Include all four family organizations
- Have a separate section for each including mission statement, current officers, eligibility, & membership application
- Use a joint calendar
- List links to Department & National organizations for each group
- Link to your social media pages
- Tell your American Legion family story, how you were founded or who you are named for
- Also include history, photo archive, and contact pages for each organization



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Social Media



Twitter – Brief messages limited to 280 Characters



LinkedIn – Networking among professionals, great for community relations



Facebook – World's largest social media network, easy to use



YouTube – Upload, view, and share videos



Instagram - Photo sharing and brief videos



TikTok – Mostly light-hearted, short videos



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Social Media

- Plan ahead and keep a schedule of events or days you want to highlight such as Flag Day or Veterans Day
- Keep language brief and to the point
- Follow the rules when using the emblem or logo
- Encourage sharing of graphics
- Post regularly
- Share posts from other sources such as the National Headquarters pages



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Social Media



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Volunteers

In Ames we have a team of volunteers that work on our family communications

- Newsletter Editor
- Webmaster
- Facebook Administrators
- Weekly Update



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Results



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Questions?

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Weekly Update

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