

# For the Good of the Legion

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## **Background:**

I first became involved with our Post 47 in 2012, at a time that we were on the verge of closing the doors and allowing the Department take over the operations. I offered the previous regime a path forward with a get well plan and a strategic action plan which fell on deaf ears. I decided then that the only way I could make a difference would be to become commander and put my plans into place and see how it went. As commander I developed processes, budgets, and spreadsheets for various activities to get us on the road for success. I began with Monday night dinners, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday breakfasts, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Pit Beef, and First Fridays at the Pavilion. We also started doing Pit Beef sales at the park during the week of 4<sup>th</sup> of July of great success.

The Monday night dinners and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday breakfasts proved to be marginally profitable and required several volunteers to execute so it was decided to discontinue because I just couldn't keep up with all that had to be done to keep it viable. Saturday Pit Beef, and First Fridays have remained successful.

Notable mention to Josh League who tried to help the previous leaders figure out finances and Alma Orive providing direction to their executive board to no avail. Jeff Mack came onboard expending many volunteering hours trying to make the ship right. The good news is that they are still active with the Post and are making a difference.

## **Initiatives:**

In 2014 with the help of Jacob Barger with mostly volunteer hours and donated equipment was able to install a Point of Sales cash register accounting system to our lounge and kitchen. Jacob developed spreadsheets for daily, weekly and monthly accountability. His mother Ginger Barger is now keeping track of our books and banking records to ensure we don't get out of hand with expenses. We have an accounting firm on hand to take care of our taxes annually. In September 2014 we were able to secure Instant Ticket Lottery Machines (ITLM) which provides weekly income to the Post and has proven to be profitable and doesn't require volunteers.

We now have a great lounge staff with April Jolley (entertainment manager), Missie Jamison, Carolyn Speraw, Dana Fouts and David Ridgley to ensure our members and guests are welcomed. We have added Stacey Sheppard to our staff to provide daily evening menus for our members and guests. We have made some updates to the lounge through donated carpet, chairs and bar stools (Hollywood Casino). We also have installed several flat screen TVs upstairs and in the lounge for our members and guests.

The Ladies Auxiliary have been helpful with their Craft Fairs, Bingo, Card Parties and providing several lunches and dinners for Post events. (Candice Bossoli president)

The SAL with the direction of Commander Bengie Dimauro and Ralf Ahrens (Trip) have done a great job putting on events for the Post i.e. Halloween dance, New years eve dance, Wild Game feast, Valentines dinner, ST Paddy's day dinner, wild game feast, and fish Fry. This year through Jim Boatman we began to provide a Car Show which has been a great benefit to our Post.

We are now proud through Mike Waid and Louis Hess to have added the addition of the Hogs & Heroes motorcycle chapter to our Post. They have been a great help with various functions such as Saturday Pit Beef and First Fridays setting up and volunteering to work the functions.

The ALR have produced minimal contributions to our Post's financial well being.

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## Summary:

I was diagnosed with cancer in October 2014 and have spent the 3 + years going through radiation and Chemo therapy in 2015 and 2016 to battling all of the after effects that are impacting me now. I still have a ways to go with new ailments coming to light with my life.

The good news is that while I was out of commission several members have stepped up to operate the Post.

Shirl Gittings is our unsung hero and MVP to the Post 47 operations. Shirl plans, schedules and books events and activities throughout the year. She maintains our employee's time keeping and submits reports to our payroll company for taxes and bi-weekly pay. Shirl reconciles operations through the daily weekly and monthly banks and ensures staff records are on track. She maintains the Lottery ITLM spreadsheets for accounting accuracy and submits weekly deposits to the bank to cover our Lottery expenses. Our Post is # 16 performer of the 87 sites within the state. Shirl maintains inventory of products and material and places orders for any upcoming event or activity.

Jeff Mack has taken the responsibility of handling of our legion business by overseeing meetings as well as Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. Josh League is much better equipped to manage our financial health with the processes we now have in place. Mike Bush has brought the Post adjutant job with membership to the highest level it has ever been. Alma Orive continues to perform functions for the Post as well as maintain our Face Book page. Tracy Robertson has brought a solid business concept for managing our events as well as maintaining our website. Johnny Boker has initiated the sales of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary coin which should be a profitable endeavor. Rev Rick Haynes, a working man's chaplain has provided solace and comfort to many of our veterans in the area with myself included.

Jason Robertson has brought a new concept to our community outreach with the initiation of our monthly kids' night in our main hall. Jonathan Dansicker has made our service organization cognizant and in sync with the VA in assisting veterans in our area. Andy Powell has become our judge advocate ensuring we are following the rules of the American Legion. Our executive board consisting of Bill Crouse, Louis Hess, and Kelly Irrgang bring Post 47 a provided assistance on making business decisions that require the perspective of our members.

We have a cadre of consistent volunteers that have always helped out when call upon. Josh and Dianne League, Bill & Lois Crouse, Mike and Tracy Bush, Kelly and Scott Irrgang, Linda Shifflet and Kenny Baker, Chris Dulik and several others within our membership which can't be listed at this time. Thank you!!

**I am both excited and optimistic regarding our organization's future success. Having said all of this I will be stepping down as the Post 47 commander in the next few weeks to allow for my exit transition due to my recent health concerns. Thank you all for the support that you have provided. I truly appreciate all of you.**

## Unfinished Business:

We have a dire need for a new surveillance system. We have donated cabling (Jacob), and a new 36 inch monitor. We still need new cameras installed and a DVR system.

In Legion Service,

*Ronald (Bud) Lilly*, Commander,

January 31, 2019