

Sad News

Lynne Kovash died on 14 February and she will be missed by our community for her good deeds. I met Lynne when she was a student at MSUM, we worked on several committees together. She was a significant part of MSUM and later the Moorhead community. She called herself an Army brat, her father was in the service when she was born. She was always concerned about our Veterans and their care. Lynne's obituary listed many of the projects and committees she worked on but missed one. Lynne was the representative of the Moorhead education district to the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Moorhead organization. She easily could have given that duty to another staff member in Moorhead, but her concern for Veterans, service members and their families was so strong she served on our board herself. BTYR was formed when we had several deployed service members. BTYR main mission is to help with the families of those deployed. In this area Lynne's contribution was essential, she organized a program at our schools so students of deployed soldiers could be identified and help provided to them. When our soldiers go to war, we often forget the toll it takes on families left behind. Lynne provided the resources to make sure that didn't happen on her watch. I will miss Lynne.

Lynne would have liked the sign we saw last week as we were driving toward Flagstaff, AZ. On the overhead signs on the Interstate where information on roads, times to exits and other information are normally displayed, we saw this sign "DON'T PARK ON HIGHWAY SHOULDER TO PLAY IN SNOW". It wasn't just on one sign but more than twenty signs. Apparently, drivers were stopping on the Interstate to play in snow.

At the national level, VA Director Wilkie announced proposed changes in health care for Veterans that could impact our region. The new program called the Mission Act will take place in June and redefines the rules for Veterans to be able to receive health care from non-VA hospitals. The Mission Act will replace the Choice program with some rule changes including the distance from the Veterans home to the VA, if the needed care is not available at the VA hospital and something new called "best medical interest" which the announcement didn't define. We can all hope that health care Veterans receive will be on a more timely basis. In my opinion, significant upgrades to the software used by the VA is necessary.

The American Legion held its annual convention in Washington, D.C. in February. The Legion is a very strong supporter of Veterans' benefits. Timely access to health care is one its top priorities.

The VFW Auxiliary recently announced that the Auxiliary through its partnership with Hear in America offers free hearing benefits to its members and their families. With no fee, members can enroll in the program and receive an annual hearing screening.