

WISCONSIN



April 2025

American Legion Auxiliary
P.O. Box 140
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www.amlegionauxwi.org

MEMBERSHIP

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2025 Membership Totals – 87.59%



District	Goal %
4	96.17%
6	91.83%
3	90.28%
2	87.72%
11	87.59%
9	86.63%
12	86.41%
5	86.01%
10	85.87%
1	84.70%
8	84.57%
7	83.94%

(as of 3/18/2025)

When one door closes, another opens – sometimes goodbye makes space for the next hello. That's exactly what happened with two of our units.

Frank E. Malone Unit 113 (Mount Horeb, District 3) and Weiske-Farrell Unit 351 (Montello, District 6) both disbanded several years ago. However, it was quickly realized that their American Legion was missing an important link without an Auxiliary. It took only a few individuals to roll up their sleeves and get the message out about supporting their Legionnaires. Now, with newly approved charters from National Headquarters, both these units are up and running. What a great example of working together and keeping our American Legion Family strong. Congratulations!

Wisconsin is one of 34 Departments that met the national goal of 85% by March 15.

Plus, we're holding onto 4th place within Central Division. Congratulations to 4th District for dominating 1st place at the Department level! Remember, all members play an important part of the member-

ship program. Who have you asked within the last 30 days to join the ALA? Signing up new members is a must for our organization. It's a wise idea for everyone (Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders) to recruit for one another. There is strength in numbers and this can be an opportunity to involve others in all that we do. Growing the American Legion Family is, and will continue to be, a priority in the years ahead. Make sure to always carry membership applications with you and don't be afraid to ask... "Have you considered joining the American Legion Family?"

Have questions? Need ideas?

The Wisconsin ALA Membership Group on Facebook provides members a place to learn about the membership program, have questions answered, and share ideas. Members can post their questions to the group and one of our very knowledgeable committee members usually answers rather quickly. Ask to join and then make sure to "like" us, even if we're your one and only friend!



75 YEARS OF SERVING FROM THE HEART



Kasierski-Kozlowski ALA Unit 366 in Princeton recognized members for their continuous years of membership. Unit President Barb Hess presented membership pins in honor of their dedication to the ALA. The four awardees represented 75 years of Serving from the Heart! **LEFT: Debra Mueller (5 years). CENTER LEFT: Debra Bassett (15 years). CENTER RIGHT: Keri Simacek (25 years). RIGHT: Sue Veleke (30 years).**

LEGISLATIVE

Maggie Geiger
Department Chair
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Teddy Roosevelt is credited for the phrase, "Speak softly and carry a big stick!"

I witnessed those words come into action at the Washington, D.C. Conference in February. The American Legion, along with Auxiliary and SAL members from across the Nation, visited our elected officials. Words of gratitude for past support were said by the Legion to our elected officials, which quickly segued into explaining the 2025 Legion legislative priorities and why their continued support is imperative.

With over 600,000 ALA members nationwide, our volunteer hours are a part of the second portion of the phrase "carry a big stick!" That's right, every hour, dollar, and in-kind-donation you report is vitally important when the National Commander goes in front of Congress and reminds them of promises made to our Veterans and how cuts in funding deeply affect our Veterans, service members, their families and more. Unfortunately, we all know dollars and votes make the world of lawmakers go round and round. The more you let your elected officials know that you support the legislative priorities, proves to them that we mean business!

Congratulations TAL family – Wisconsin was awarded the National Legislative Council Award for the most active state on Voter Voice! Every time you send a letter to our elected officials it is

counted – it's part of the "big stick" phrase! If you haven't yet signed up for Grassroots, please do by going to www.Legion.org and clicking on the Grassroots Action Center to sign up – it's as easy as 123. You will receive notifications and can send your lawmakers a letter every 24 hours.

Very often, we as members don't get to see or experience the ALA's mission in action, but I had that opportunity while in D.C. While visiting the offices of our Congressman and Senators, we were greeted by their aides. While waiting for our appointments, we started conversations with the aides and questions were asked such as, where in Wisconsin are you from, how long have you been in D.C., etc. I was surprised to find out that most of them are former Badger Boys and ALA Badger Girls Staters! They thanked us for the

amazing opportunity they had in participating in our programs, told us it was a pivotal experience in their lives, and hoped we continue to support this program. I also had the honor to have dinner with one of our 2024 ALABGS delegates, Meredith Clark of Green Lake, who was one of the 10 \$10,000 Samsung scholarship winners. This was our ALA mission in action.

Your membership is important. You've spent time raising funds and holding events for ALA programs, Veterans, service members and your communities, donated monies, and don't forget the yards of basket raffle tickets you've purchased! All of these "actions" have made a difference in the lives of so many. Keep up the wonderful work and continue to be a voice through your support of the Legion's legislative priorities.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Donna Jensen
 Department Chaplain
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“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

~ Romans 12:2

Renewal. There are many meanings for this word including, make or become new, fresh or strong again; to begin again, resume; to grant or obtain an extension of.

The Spring season is a renewal time for Mother Nature and all things that grow. Many animals are born in spring and it is a time for planting and growth of all plant life. It is a way God shows us he is keeping his promise to us after a long winter season of rest and being dormant.

Think of Spring as a chance to start fresh and a new “blank slate” to fill with plans for the things you want to accomplish in the near future. What are your plans for the future? Do you have something you want to accomplish or a hope for renewal of a project, mission or goal? Do you want to do some “Spring Cleaning” of your life or a project you want to launch?

This is also a good time to thank God for helping us get through tough times and allowing us to grow.

Music:

“Here Comes the Sun”
 by George Harrison of the Beatles

*Here comes the sun, here comes the sun.
 And I say it's alright.
 Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter.
 Little darling, it feels like years since it's been here.
 Here comes the sun, here comes the sun.
 And I say it's alright.*

Please Help!

I am making a prayer book for Auxiliary President Becky Mueller and am asking everyone to submit a prayer, poem or inspirational piece to include in this book. They can be original or from another source. Include the name of the author, and the name, Unit number and District number of the person submitting it. Submissions can be sent to me by email (djensen20@gmail.com) or by mail: Donna Jensen, 6936 N 86th St., Milwaukee, WI 53224.

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Bonnie Dorniak
 Executive Secretary/Treasurer
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Wisconsin is proud to distribute memorial poppies made by Veterans. However, we are limited to providing poppies based on how many our Veteran poppy makers are able to produce. Unfortunately, due to an unprecedented volume of poppy orders received this year, the Poppy Shop is unable to process all poppy orders prior to National Poppy Day. Units and Posts have been notified if we anticipate not being able to fill their orders by May. Do you know any Veterans interested in making poppies? If so, please contact me!

This also serves as a reminder that poppies can be distributed throughout the year and

Veterans Day may be a great opportunity for a distribution plan later this year. Sharing the crepe paper poppy and its story are great ways to remind the community how much our Veterans sacrificed on our behalf and how the ALA continues to support our Veterans and military.

Poppy profits are essential for funding the VA hospitals in Wisconsin, Minneapolis, and Iron Mountain, Wisconsin's Veterans Homes, Dayton Care Center, and Camp American Legion. They also fund scholarships, grants to homeless women Veterans, emergency grants for Veterans and active-duty military personnel, and the Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Thank you to everyone who supports the Auxiliary's Poppy Program!

The 2025 ALA Department Convention is scheduled for July 17-20, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency/KI Center in Green Bay. The opening procession will start at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, July

18. Past Department President Joan Chwala will be our special guest with a tribute in her honor presented during convention. Department's governing documents will be reviewed and updated, officers will be elected and installed, and units will be recognized for all their hard work with membership this year. Spoiler alert: Convention is going to be FUN! Please visit the website for more convention details and plan to attend in July.

The 2025 National Convention will be held in Tampa, Florida with ALA convention sessions from August 25-27, 2025. Watch the department website as more information becomes available. Anyone interested in attending should ask to be nominated as an Alternate by their District President. Members who prefer to attend as a guest only, should notify Bonnie Dorniak (deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org) to request a convention packet when available.

2025 ALA DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

**American Legion Auxiliary,
 Department of Wisconsin
 Thursday-Sunday, July 17-20, 2025**

Official Call: The 2025 American Legion Auxiliary Department Convention will be called into session at the Hyatt Regency/KI Center, 333 Main Street in Green Bay at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, July 18, 2025.

Purpose: The purpose of the department convention is to elect officers for the 2025-2026 administrative year; elect delegates and alternates to the national convention; amend the department's governing documents as needed; receive reports of the department officers and chairmen; recognize outstanding unit achievements; and transact business as may be brought before the convention body.

Representation: Representation in the department convention shall be by unit in accordance with the provisions of the department constitution. Units with less than ten paid members or whose district dues have not been paid shall have no representation. Delegates to department convention shall be unit members duly elected for that purpose.

Registration: All attendees to the 2025 Department Convention must submit a registration form and \$30 per person to The American Legion by July 7, 2025. Registrations after July 7 will be \$35.

Voting: All delegates must be registered by 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 19 and seated within their District for voting at 9:00 a.m. Business will resume as soon as voting is completed.

Housing Blocks: Housing has been arranged at the following hotels with discounted room rates until the deadlines or the room blocks are filled, whichever comes first. Reservations must be made directly with the hotels.

Hyatt Regency
 333 Main Street, Green Bay
 \$129-\$169 per night

Hotel Northland
 304 N. Adams St., Green Bay
 Cut-off is Thursday, June 26, 2025
 \$165 per night

Quality Inn & Suites Downtown
 321 S. Washington Street, Green Bay
 920-785-6864
 Group Name: American Legion 2025
 Cut-off is Thursday, July 10, 2025
 \$99 per night - Free Hot Breakfast
 0.8 miles from the convention center

Deceased Members: Names of deceased members that are sent to Department Headquarters by April 25, 2025 on a Member Data Form will appear in the Joint Memorial Service Program.

Installation: Installation of 2025-2026 Department Officers and District Presidents will be on Saturday, July 19 upon conclusion of convention business.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Bonnie Jakubczyk
 Department Chair
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Spring is here and let us start off by recognizing our volunteers during April's National Volunteer Month. It is fantastic to see how our hospital volunteers are making a difference for our Veterans. Not only are they helping our Veterans, they are making a positive impression for the American Legion Auxiliary.

A huge thank you to all those crafty people that use their time and money to make tray favors, lap blankets, baby items, or cards. These

items brighten up the Veterans' day. Hopefully, members have kept track of this for the Service to Veterans hours. Speaking of which, make sure to share what your unit has done this year by filling out the Unit Impact Report, which is due to your District President by April 15, and the VA&R Unit Annual Narrative Report, which is due to Department Headquarters by April 15, 2025. Remember to include pictures (JPEG format), stories, newspaper clippings, flyers, activity reports, and success stories. By sending in your reports, we can share your activities with National, thus highlighting how Wisconsin units are working our mission.

Are you looking to donate to the VA facili-

ties? You can check out their needs lists on the Department website or contact the Hospital Representative for what the current needs are.

Memorial Day is a day filled with emotion as we remember family, friends, and neighbors who are no longer with us. It is also a day of thankfulness for the freedoms we enjoy because of the sacrifices our service men and women made that we can never repay.

Memorial Day traditions include flags placed on Veterans' graves and ALA poppy distributions. On Memorial Day, Veterans organizations join in with parades and ceremonies.

WE REMEMBER...

Sweepstakes winners are posted at amlegionauxwi.org under the "More" tab.



CONVENTION FUNDRAISER

Laura Calteux
Fundraising Chair
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*Serving Our Veterans, Military and
 Each other from the Depths of Our Hearts*

At department convention, we will have raffle baskets to raise funds for President Becky's special project, the national Auxiliary Emergency Fund. We are asking units, districts and members to donate a raffle basket, including a list of the contents, enclosed in cellophane. We will have different baskets each day, so drop me an email to let me know which day you will be bringing your basket to convention, **lauracalteux@yahoo.com**. Please contact me if you have any questions.

POPPY PROGRAM

Deanna Farley
Department Chairman
farleyofsc@gmail.com

Spring is upon us here in Wisconsin! In a few short weeks, the spring flowers will be starting to bloom, including any of those poppies you may have planted. I will be checking my flower beds for signs of new growth as I do every year. I would love to see your pictures of a beautiful poppy flower bed!

In May, the ALA will be amid one of its busiest months. Many units across Wisconsin will be distributing poppies as we prepare for National Poppy Day on May 23. The poppy is prominent at many Memorial Day services as well and many times is an actual part of the service. If your unit uses poppies as part of their Memorial Day service, I would love to hear about what you do and pictures are always great!

All poppy funds are used to support Veterans, active military and their families. As you distribute your poppies, it may help to have that signage displayed if possible, to support that information. People are likely to be more generous if they know exactly what is being done with any funds received from your poppy distribution. Display sizes can be dictated by how much space you have available. Good luck to everyone!

Does your unit do a Poppy Day Proclamation? A sample Poppy Proclamation is available on the Department website (**www.amlegion-auxwi.org**) under "Programs"/Poppy tab.

Thank you to all who participated in the annual Poppy Poster Contest! We received entries from fourteen units. I am sure the judging will be difficult as all our young students are very talented. The winners will be sent on to be judged with their peers in other states in the Central Division. Good luck to all!

I am very excited to announce we have a candidate for Poppy Princess! Loyal Unit 175 member, Kindyn Fitzl, is in the running to be our next Poppy Princess!! Welcome aboard, Kindyn, and best wishes to you and your ALA Family!

Thank you to everyone for participating in the Poppy Program for the Department of Wisconsin!

HONORING PDP JOAN CHWALA (2011-2012)

Past Department President Joan Chwala will be the honored guest at the 2025 Department Convention at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Joan is a 44-year PUFL member of Unit 326 in Boyd, Chippewa County, District 10. She served as Department President from 2011-2012.

Joan's eligibility for membership is through the service of her father, Robert N. Morris, an Army medic who served in the Pacific Theater during WWII; her husband, Earl T. Chwala, who also served in the Army during Vietnam; and her brother, Lorum "Lem" Morris, an Army Veteran of the Vietnam Era.



PDP Joan Chwala

Joan was an educator for 35 years, teaching children in grades K-8 in the Gilman School District. Following her retirement, she focused her energies on serving our Veterans and their families through her volunteer activities. ALA Badger Girls State was blessed to have her serve as a county counselor for nine years and as the leader of the Americanism and Community Service interest groups. She shared her leadership skills by serving on various department and national ALA committees and in chairmanships. Joan was awarded the prestigious Toomey Award for her Department History in 2008. While serving as

Department Membership Chairman in 2006-2007, she brought her "three ringed circus" to multiple membership round-ups around the state to encourage renewals and recruitment.

Joan's theme, 'Libraries of Love,' stemmed from her love of reading and desire to ensure that Veterans across the state would have access to reading materials that enriched their lives. The gifts she presented on behalf of the Department to each of the Veterans care facilities were quality reading materials including both books and periodicals. Continuing her dedication to Veterans, Joan served as a hospital deputy at the Chippewa Falls Veterans home for 7 years. The Veterans living there recalled fondly their shopping trips with her.

Joan will be honored during the convention session on Friday, July 18. Please plan to join in celebrating her years of service and share your memories of her year as Department President.



ALABGS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MEREDITH CLARK

Meredith Clark, a 2024 ALA Badger Girls State delegate from Green Lake High School, has distinguished herself as a leader and scholar. She was honored as a national recipient of the prestigious Samsung American Legion Scholarship, awarded in memory of her late great-grandfather, Leonard P. Reetz, a Korean War Veteran. Meredith is pictured with Senator Ron Johnson and her father Justin Clark during The American Legion's annual Washington, D.C. Conference where she was recognized with the other national Samsung Scholarship winners for their accomplishments.

Following her graduation, Meredith plans to attend Ripon College, where

she will pursue dual majors in biology and business. With aspirations to earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree from Colorado State University, Meredith aims to establish her own veterinary practice in the future.

Her transformative experience at ALA Badger Girls State fostered her personal growth, deepened her understanding of democratic principles, and strengthened her leadership skills. It also provided her with the opportunity to build lasting friendships and develop resilience, ambition, and confidence. Meredith credits these experiences with inspiring her to strive toward becoming the best version of herself.

CHILDREN & YOUTH (C&Y)

Joyce Endres
Department Chair
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608-772-1763

"The youth is the hope of our future." Jose Rizal

Play cards with C&Y to: Encourage decision making; improve memory, problem solving, fine motor skills; and foster social skills through taking turns and communication. Teach friendly competition to help kids handle winning and losing gracefully.

Play ALA Activities Card Game with members: Cards include ALA program resources and support activities. Work in teams to increase knowledge, encourage action on ALA programs, and enhance member participation.

Reported current C&Y activities: Many volunteer hours and donations help units succeed!

District 2: In April, Ozaukee County Council plans to assemble "Clutches for MoMs" for USO Baby Shower.

District 3:

- Unit 348, DeForest: Distributed lunches to children at designated DeForest Parks; Junior member, Sophie Cimaroli, organized a lemonade stand to donate profits to Veterans' programs; American Legion Family hosted the Legion State Girls Softball tournament; Donated All4Hope,



Inc. to purchase 25 Brownie Kits for military C&Y attending Camp American Legion.

- Unit 437, Mazomanie: Worked with the local library to set up a kids snack corner and plan to donate a refrigerator and healthy snacks; Donated a Brownie book to the library; Junior members made Valentines for Veterans.

- Dane County Council PurpleUp for Military Children (pictured): Units from Cross Plains, Dane, DeForest, Madison, Mazomanie, McFarland, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Verona, and Waunakee (host) donated \$1,400 towards Wisconsin Youth Camp. With the Army National Guard's generosity and Culver's donation of 500 Kids Meals, 28 vol-

unteers made up 500 bags for military children.

District 10: In April, Unit 121 in River Falls is holding an awards banquet to honor C&Y Good Deed and Youth Hero Award Recipients.

District 11: Unit 431 in Three Lakes and the Legion Family organized a Christmas party for the children of Veterans. They provided lunch to attendees, Santa and his elf handed out age-appropriate gifts and goodie bags, and children shared stories. They had face painting booths and set up stations for children to decorate cookies and make ornaments.

Serving from the Heart for Children and Youth!

Sue Hembrook for Department President

Sue Hembrook announces her candidacy for Department President. Her journey in the American Legion Auxiliary began 22 years ago at the unit level. In addition to chairing many committees in her unit, she served as Unit President for six years. She also was the 4th District President and President of the Milwaukee County Conference of Units. On the department level she has served as Education Chairman, Strategic Planning Group Co-Leader, Director of Hospital Volunteers, Representative at the Dayton Care Center and Poppy Shop Supervisor.

She was also appointed to positions at the National level: 2015-2016 Legislative Committee, 2016-2017 Education Central Division Chairman, 2018-2019 Poppy Committee, 2019-2021 Central Division Children & Youth Chairman, 2021-2022 Central Division VA&R Chairman, 2022-2023 Central Division Americanism Chairman, 2023-2024 Central Division National Security Chairman, and currently Central Division Poppy Chairman.

She is eligible for membership through the service of her late father, Norton Kaiser, a WWII Army Veteran, and that of her husband, Gene, a Vietnam era Air Force Veteran. She has four children and nine grandchildren all of whom are members of the Legion Family. Her son Joe is currently a member of the Air Force Reserve and son-in-law Jeremy is serving actively in the Navy.

Sue and her husband are members of Holy Cross Catholic Church in Wilmot, WI. She has been involved in her faith community with their school, parish council and many other fundraising events sponsored by the church and school.

Her dedication to this organization and our Veterans has been steadfast. She supports the VAs wholeheartedly as they supported her family when her father contracted MS and was admitted to a study being done by the Milwaukee VA. She knows that her Dad had a much better and longer life due to the care given him and also the support given to the family. She also realizes the hardships incurred by the families of our military both active duty and reserve as she witnesses them firsthand through the lives of the families of her daughter and son.



Sue Hembrook

Christina Petranovich for 1st Vice President

Christina Petranovich announces her candidacy for Department 1st Vice President and is a 22 year Paid-Up-For-Life member. She served as chaplain, secretary, and President of Unit 118 in Thorp. She was District 7 President for almost 2 terms, taking over the position when her predecessor stepped down. She has been a district chairman of several programs, including Poppy, Juniors, National Security, and Public Relations. Christina has attended several department and national conventions and mission trainings. She is very involved in her community and church and served on the parish council, several parish committees, and was a Girl Scout leader when her daughters were younger.

Christina was reluctant to join the ALA when first asked by her mother-in-law, Genevieve. She proactively signed up her daughters for membership when they were born, but was very vocal in telling Genevieve that she did not have the time nor desire to be involved in another organization. Her daughters, very active Junior members, finally convinced her to join and take an active role. Her desire is to see every unit in Wisconsin get involved and have Junior members, and to tap into their enthusiasm and love for Veterans and this wonderful organization.

Christina is eligible for membership through her father who served in the U.S. Army; her oldest son, a former Marine who is currently stationed at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan with the U.S. Coast Guard; two brothers who served in the USMC and Navy; one sister who was in the USMC; and her middle son who was a soldier with the U.S. Army National Guard.

Christina is a Postmaster in Thorp and has worked for the USPS for the past 32 years, currently working as a Wisconsin District Lead for the Route, Count and Inspection Team.

She has been married to her husband, Wayne, for 34 years and they have six children, one step-daughter, four grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, two step-great-grandsons, with two brand new grandbabies on the way!

She has a passion for God and Country and feels strongly about advocating for our military, our youth and our Veterans. Thank you for your consideration and support.



Christina Petranovich

Danie Wilson for 1st Vice President

Danie Wilson is excited to announce her candidacy for the position of Department 1st Vice President. Danie is endorsed for this position by the Sheboygan County American Legion Auxiliary and Prescott-Bayens Unit 83 in Sheboygan.

Danie found her passion for Veterans as a member of Military Family Connect. Families being separated by deployments and homeless Veterans tugged at her heart. She learned of the American Legion Auxiliary; an organization helping Veterans and a way to make a difference.

As a Paid-Up-For-Life member, the American Legion Auxiliary has provided her many avenues of service over the past 17 years through holding various officer positions at the unit, county and district levels, including 2nd District President. Danie was privileged to serve as Department Chairman for a number of Auxiliary programs. As County President, Sheboygan County Council received the Department Award for Excellence.

Danie enjoyed being a Badger Girls State Counselor for five years, taking ALA Academy Courses, attending several national Mission Training classes, attending ALA In The Know sessions, and being a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College.

Currently, Danie serves the 2nd District as 1st Vice President, Membership Chairman, her unit as President, Membership Chairman and Badger Girls State Chairman.

Eligibility in the American Legion Auxiliary is founded on her father's WWII service, brother's Vietnam service, and son, an Air Force Veteran currently serving in the Air National Guard. Five granddaughters are Auxiliary members; one being a seasoned Stars and Stripes Honor Flight Poppy Princess.

In her church she is working with resettling vetted refugee families making new lives in our communities.

Going forward it is Danie's goal to continue advocating for Veterans, military and their families utilizing the programs and tools of the American Legion Family. God Bless the USA!



Danie Wilson

Amy Luft for Senior Vice President

Amy Luft announces her candidacy for the position of Department Senior Vice President. Amy is endorsed for this position by Rose-Harms Unit 355 in Grafton and the Ozaukee County Council.

As a Paid-Up-For-Life 18-year member, Amy's membership honors her late father Robert Akright, a WWII Army Veteran. Amy's passion for the American Legion Auxiliary has blessed her with many opportunities. She has served in several different officer positions including President of her unit, county and 2nd District. Amy also has held many different areas at the department level, currently serving as the Department 1st Vice President and Membership Chair. Her past chairmanships have included Americanism (winning the National Award for Best Americanism Program), Leadership (winning the Department Award for Excellence), National Security, Public Relations and Membership team. In addition, she co-chaired ALA In The Know and served on the Strategic Planning Committee. At the national level, Amy had the honor of serving as the National Convention Chairman for the 2022 National Convention in Milwaukee and last year served as the National Leadership Chair for Central Division. Amy currently serves as the National Legislative Vice Chair.

Amy has attended several national Mission Training classes and completed many ALA Academy courses. She is also a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College. As a member of Stars & Stripes Honor Flight since 2009, Amy served as Vice President for 10 years and continues to serve as an ambassador for the program. To date she has participated in 54 honor flights. Amy is also a member of the VFW Auxiliary Unit 5373 of Ozaukee County. She volunteers with Interfaith Caregivers, Meals-On-Wheels and has served as a Village Trustee for the Village of Grafton since 2020. Amy has a degree in business management and has spent over 22 years in sales and marketing in the senior healthcare industry. Currently Amy works in the nonprofit sector at a local food pantry. Amy and her husband Todd have two daughters and two grandsons who belong to the American Legion Family. Amy's goal is to promote the initiatives and programs of The American Legion Family while supporting and advocating for Veterans, military and their families.



Amy Luft

Maggie Geiger for National Executive Committeeperson

Maggie Geiger wishes to announce her candidacy for the position of National Executive Committeeperson to represent the Department of Wisconsin.

Maggie Geiger is a 20-year member of Peter Wollner Unit 288 in Cedarburg. Her eligibility is through the service of her late father, Herbert "Buck" Masters, a WWII Veteran.

Maggie has been an active member on the unit, county, district, and department levels, serving as Department President 2023-2024. While president of Unit 288, they were honored to receive the National Presidents Award for Excellence in 2013-2014.

She has served the Department on numerous committees and in chairmanships and offices, as well as committees and chairmanships on the unit, county and district levels. Currently, Maggie serves as the Department Standing Rules Chair, Legislative Chair, Auxiliary Consultant for Camp American Legion, and Alternate NEC.

Attending National Mission Training sessions, Legion College Graduate, Midwinter presenter, ALA In The Know presenter, and attending the Department Conven-

tion annually, Maggie understands the importance of keeping members informed. It is vitally important not only on the department level but as well as what is happening on the national level. She believes in the importance of the ALA mission and making sure that stays viable for years to come. The National Executive Committeeperson is very important to our department as well as our members – the more we know, the better we serve.

As an American Legion Auxiliary member, Maggie proudly volunteers and supports The American Legion and the entire American Legion Family. We are the strongest when we serve together!

Maggie and her husband Brian have been married 49 years and they have two children and four grandchildren, who are all members of the American Legion Family.



Maggie Geiger

Dawn Rudey for 2nd Vice President

I come from a long line of military including uncles in different branches of the military, my father who served in both the Army and Navy during WWII, two older brothers served in the Marine Corps, and my son Travis who served in the Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom (1999 – 2005).

I have been an Auxiliary member since 2003. I started out as a quiet member for a couple years till I attended my first state convention in Middleton. I was full of questions and wonder. When I grew up in Beaver Dam, I knew nothing of The American Legion, the Auxiliary, or what they represented in the community. I grew up and moved to Horicon, where my husband and I raised our two children Travis and Elizabeth, both members of the Legion family along with my granddaughter Taylor.

I served as the ways and means chairperson for Horicon Unit 157 for three years before I was mentored by two very important people in my life, Nadine Gadow and Betty Kell. I became Unit President, not once or twice, but three times. Then I became the Dodge County President and served at the district level as the District President from 2015 - 2016. After my term I served as the ways and means chairperson where I guided a car show event for the Candidate for National Commander along with many 2nd District Sweepstakes to raise money to support Veterans organizations throughout Wisconsin.

I am now a member of Robert W. Ginther Unit 521 of Fox Lake and serve as unit parliamentarian. Our unit helps our Legionnaires with pork chop dinners, brat fries and bake sales and we participate in the Memorial Day and Veterans Day services. I have worked at Marlin Technologies for 20 years and convinced the owners to hang a large flag in our building to show our pride in the American flag to customers and employees. I have headed up the credentials committee at state convention for the last three years. I enjoy what I do for the ALA and especially our Veterans. May God bless our Veterans and the USA!



Dawn Rudey

Betty Stone for 2nd Vice President

Betty Stone announces her candidacy for Department Second Vice President for 2025-2026. She has been an American Legion Auxiliary member for the last 48 years and held the following offices in the ALA: Unit – President, Vice President, Treasurer, which includes Membership Chairman, and Badger Girls State Chairman; County – President; District – 2nd Vice President and VA&R Chairman, 1st Vice President and Membership Chairman, President five times for two years each; Department – Scholarship Chairman, Chaplain, Historian and on the Department Membership Committee.

Outside of ALA, Betty has been in church work since age 16 teaching Sunday School, Youth Groups, Bible Studies, and planning events. Currently, she is the facilitator for the prayer group that meets once a week. She is also in charge of the yearly Ladies Encounter at her church and involved in Church camp where she has taught classes for the youth, cooked in camp, and a financial supporter. Also, taking part in Community activities, as a Sheldon Village Board Trustee and volunteering at the local Elementary School as a Forester Grandma three days a week.

The ALA Preamble states, “For God and Country we associate ourselves together...” Our Mission is to serve others not self through the many programs and activities we support and participate in throughout the year. We serve Veterans and also the Community.

Reading the history of our Unit and District is a motivating factor to continue to serve our Veterans and community with enthusiasm. Thank you for considering Betty’s candidacy for Second Vice President.



Betty Stone

Donna Jensen for Department Historian

Donna Jensen is announcing her candidacy for the office of Department Historian for 2025-2026. She is a Paid Up For Life member and has belonged to the American Legion Auxiliary since 2006. Her eligibility is through her late brother, John Powers, who served in the Air Force during the Vietnam era and her husband, Past Department Commander Wayne Jensen, who served in the Navy during the Vietnam era and also the Navy Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve and Air Force Reserve.

Donna has experience on many levels and is currently serving as Department Chaplain for the second time. She also served as a Department Chairman for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Children & Youth, and Fundraising and was a member of the Leadership Committee. On the district level, she has held the offices of President, Secretary, Historian, Sergeant at Arms and Chaplain as well as chairman for many programs. She is currently the Milwaukee County President and this will be her 5th year volunteering at ALA Badger Girls State.

Along with her husband, Donna has attended Department Conventions since she joined the Auxiliary. She has also attended National Conventions for the past 25 years and volunteered at the three National Conventions held in Milwaukee in 2000, 2010 and 2022. In addition, she has attended Auxiliary National Mission Training and regularly attended ALA In The Know.

She retired 15 years ago from Travelers Insurance after working there for 25 years. Since retiring she volunteers for numerous events at her church and has been a member of the choir for over 30 years, including singing with the funeral choir. She and Wayne have been married for 54 years and have two daughters and two granddaughters, who are all members of the American Legion Family.

Donna has the support of her family and endorsements from her Unit, 4th District and Milwaukee County. She humbly asks for your support for her continued service to the Auxiliary through the office of Department Historian.



Donna Jensen

Christine Johnsen for Department Historian

Dr. Christine Johnsen enthusiastically announces her candidacy for ALA Department of Wisconsin Historian. She is a 23-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and her eligibility is through the service of her husband, Cliff, a 12-year Veteran of the Air Force, and her stepson, Clifford, who served for 8 years as a corpsman in the Navy. Christine and Cliff have a blended family of three daughters, three sons, and two grandsons.

Previously a member in District 8, Christine is currently an active member of, and endorsed by, the e-unit, Mumm-Welsh Unit 352, Cassville. She has held multiple leadership positions in her units, District 8, and Department, including Department Sergeant at Arms, Education Chairman, Public Relations committee, and currently Junior Activities Chairman. Having herself been a citizen of ALABGS, Christine has returned to serve ALA Badger Girls State as a nurse since 2016, and as Lead Nurse since 2022.

Christine recognizes the importance of staying informed and involved. She has completed all available courses in the ALA Academy and has attended National Mission Training and Girls State/Girls Nation Leadership Conference. She attended fourteen of the last fifteen National Conventions and was honored to serve as the Mailroom Chair for the 2022 ALA National Convention in Milwaukee.

Professionally, Christine is a nurse practitioner and currently sees patients with complex healthcare needs in their home setting, statewide. She is also self-employed as a consultant in healthcare technology and has traveled throughout the United States to provide advisory services to over eighty healthcare organizations. Dr. Johnsen continues to be an educator, speaker, mentor, and leader in the healthcare industry and a staunch advocate for healthcare access for Veterans, seniors, and underserved populations.

Christine is honored to serve our Veterans, military, their families, and the community, and humbly thanks you for your consideration and support.



Christine Johnsen

Sandy Mack for Department Chaplain

Sandy Mack is announcing her candidacy for the office of Department Chaplain. Sandy is a 14-year member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 288 in Cedarburg and joined in honor of her father, Paul Golabiewski, who served in WWII in the Marine Corps.

Sandy graduated from MPTC with a degree as an Accounting Assistant, then changed the direction of her career. Two American Family Insurance agents have employed her and she is currently still working. She has dedicated over 30 years of service between the two agents. She holds a License with the Office of Commissioner to provide Life, Health, Property and Casualty Insurance to Wisconsin residents. She holds a Certificate of Appointment from the Selective Service System and

appointed to the position of Local Board Member of the State of Wisconsin.

She has attended District Conferences, Department Conventions, National Conventions, ALAITK and other training/leadership meetings. Sandy has also served as the National Page Chair for the 2022 National Convention held in Milwaukee.

Sandy has held the unit positions of President, Secretary and served on the Executive Board. On the county level, she served as President, 1st Vice, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. At the district level, she served as President, 1st Vice/Membership Chair and on the department level, as Community Service Chair along with PR Chair.

Sandy’s long-term goal is to continue working as long

as possible and serving the mission of “service not self.” It is not what she has achieved, it is where her heart is, taking one day at a time assisting Veterans, our military (at home and abroad), and their families. Sandy has received endorsements at both the Unit and County levels.

Sandy and her husband, Howie, are celebrating their 50th anniversary in March. They have two daughters and six grandchildren.

Sandy has studied with different religions and found the one that serves her best is nondenominational. This is Christian based and not affiliated with a specific denomination. Sandy’s beliefs are in the word of God. She is asking for your support and the opportunity to serve as your 2025-2026 Department Chaplain.



Sandy Mack



Jim Johnson
Department
Commander

**Looking Forward:
Strengthening
The American Legion**

As we celebrate 106 years of The American Legion, we take pride in our accomplishments, but we cannot rest on them. Instead, we must focus on what lies ahead. Our mission of service to Veterans, their families, and our communities is ongoing. Have we done enough? That question isn't meant to challenge what we've achieved but to spark a conversation about our future. Our strength lies in our resolve to continue serving and strengthening The American Legion.

As you read this issue of the *Badger Legionnaire*, ask yourself: Am I engaged in our

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

mission and purpose? Let the world see your passion for The American Legion, our Pillars and our commitment to service.

Looking ahead, we must use our past successes as a foundation for future growth. To do that, we need strong leaders at every level of our organization. Leadership selection is, or should be, happening across The American Legion. As you participate in this process, I encourage you to choose servant leaders, those who put the needs of their fellow Legionnaires before their own. True leaders don't just direct; they roll up their sleeves, get to work, and inspire others to do the same.

But leadership is a two-way street. To attract and retain strong leaders, we must support them. We must respect their commitment and stand behind them as they take

on the responsibility of guiding our organization. Past Commanders have continuing responsibilities. "You possess a great wealth of knowledge gained through your leadership experience. Place this wisdom at the disposal of your successors in order that your comrades may benefit there from." (Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies) Be The One for each other in all aspects of service, and you will achieve your goal. Through unity, dedication, and unwavering support, success becomes a shared victory.

The American Legion is the largest volunteer Veterans service organization in the country. To keep Wisconsin #LegionStrong, we need dedicated leaders and engaged members working together. Our best days are still ahead, let's build them together.



Becky Mueller
2024-2025
Department
President

**PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE**

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!
Our clocks have jumped ahead and so have our schedules. Time to do our accounting of all the activities and events we did over the past reporting

year. So much has been accomplished – so many lives have been touched. Continue to *Be The One* to make a difference or even save a life!

I encourage each of you, with your units, to report your activities on the impact report and send it to your District Presidents. I know they are eagerly waiting to hear from you. Our Department Chairpersons are anticipating reports of how our Auxiliary has worked the programs and the success stories to be shared. Please send in those reports by April 15. Don't wait until the last minute – they are too important not to complete and be counted in our reports sent to National and Congress. What you do MATTERS!! P.S. – Don't forget to send in your nominations for the Heart of the ALA Award. I have already received some, but I may have to give more awards as you continue to serve from the depths of your hearts.

Many of you are getting your bowling balls warmed up. Have fun! Just because we work hard to serve our veterans, military and each other doesn't mean we can't have fun doing it.

Spring Conferences are already planned. I am looking forward to attending as many as I can. I know you will welcome my officers who will bring greetings in my absence. Your hospitality is appreciated. I can't wait to hear all the reports about your achievements and to welcome your new officers if you hold elections. Don't forget to nominate Alternates for the National Convention. Please plan to join together for the Department Convention in July.

By the time you read this – I will have had the honor of presenting new charters to Mt. Horeb and Montello Auxiliary units. Welcome to the Legion Family! It is so much fun celebrating with our units on their achievements. More areas are looking into starting Auxiliary units afresh ... exciting times!

Wisconsin has achieved National's membership goal of 85% by March 15, 2025. Congratulations on all your hard work and encouraging others to renew or join our organization. The next goal is in sight, and I know working together we can achieve that also.

Continue your magnificent work – you are amazing! Blessings for a joyous Easter season.



Allen Watry
SAL Detachment
Commander

Last time I commented we just finished a great Midwinter Conference. What I loved at Midwinter was hearing about the great things happening at the local level. Since then I have been traveling around the state and continue to be amazed at all the great work happening. There are just too many examples to share so I will just say THANK YOU for all you are doing!!!

We are now in the final quarter of the 2024/2025 Administrative year. This means there are several items which need to be com-

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

pleted. First is submitting Squadron Data Reports. The reports were mailed out late March, we need every Squadron to return them. Even if nothing has changed, please return them to confirm the information on file is correct.

Second is Consolidated Squadron Reports. These, like the Squadron Data Reports, need to be filled out each year. This year they are due May 31. These reports can be used to help your local Legion Family develop a Community Impact Report. The CSRs are also used to generate State and National Impact Reports. They are also a piece of the criteria for the awards which will be handed out at Convention. So please make sure your Squadron is submitting

your report. More information (including the form) can be found on the Detachment Website www.wisal.org.

Finally, start to identify your delegates for our State Convention. This year Convention will be in Green Bay the weekend of July 18. We will be celebrating our successes of the past 12 months and prepare for the next 12 months. I hope your squadron will be represented. More information can be found at www.wilegion.org or www.wisal.org.

To close, keep up the great work. We ARE making a positive impact in our Communities, State, and Nation.

For God and Country.



Corey Doehrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

Greetings to my fellow Wisconsin Legion, Auxiliary & Sons of the American Legion members. Mother nature has sure been giving us a roller coaster ride. I was out enjoying the wind in my face on Friday and now Sunday we have a fresh covering of snow. Not what we motorcyclists want to have. Planning has really started for the summer season. All our efforts to support the military and Veterans as well as participate in many parades takes a lot preplanning to ensure we're ready.

One of the questions I hear a lot is who is eligible to join the Legion Riders. You must

LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

be a current member or eligible member of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of the American Legion. Additionally, be a registered owner (member or spouse) of a motorcycle of at least 500 cc and lastly, hold a current motorcycle endorsement (member or spouse). So, if you are receiving this publication and enjoy the "freedom of the road" on two wheels (or three!), please consider joining.

Our mission is to participate in parades and other ceremonies that are in keeping with the aims and purposes of The American Legion. Promote motorcycle safety and provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interests while promoting and supporting the programs of The American

Legion. We are not a motorcycle club. We are a group of American Legion Family Members who ride for a cause. Our causes range from the very local level helping a Veteran or a Legion post all the way up to supporting the Veterans and Children Foundation at the national level.

The Wisconsin Legion Riders – Cruise for a Cause, "Be the One for WI – 25" is coming up in June. See article in this publication for more info and registration link.

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don't hesitate to contact me: Corey Doehrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at alrawi.director@gmail.com. Our next meeting after the publication of this will be at 1 p.m. on May 3 at Post 263 in New London, WI.



**County Veterans Service Officers Association
of Wisconsin**

**EVERY COUNTY AND TRIBE IN WISCONSIN STANDS READY
TO SERVE ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AT NO COST TO YOU.**

Your local Veteran Advocates, serving you since 1935

