

## MEMBERSHIP

### Department Membership Team

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Chair

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### 2025 Membership Totals – 27.19%



(as of 9/17/2024)

| District | Goal % |
|----------|--------|
| 4        | 40.21% |
| 5        | 34.27% |
| 9        | 32.64% |
| 3        | 31.73% |
| 2        | 31.38% |
| 6        | 26.16% |
| 7        | 25.10% |
| 1        | 23.97% |
| 11       | 22.99% |
| 10       | 22.04% |
| 8        | 20.92% |
| 12       | 19.78% |

Membership is up and running! By keeping our focus on serving our Veterans, military and each other from the depths of our hearts, our Department goal of 100% membership will be easy to achieve. Membership truly is the foundation for the continued life of our organization, and everyone plays an important role.

Thank you to everyone who has renewed early, especially all officers who were asked to take the lead. A big congratulations to the Mosinee Unit in the 8th District. They are the first unit to join the 100% Club! Membership in the 100% Club is free and open to any unit regardless of size. Joining is easy...just obtain 100% or more in membership and your unit can become an official member of the 100% Club, too. *Don't wait...join today!*

As of September 18, the national Division report shows Wisconsin is in the lead in Central Division and second place in the nation with 27.19% processed. Let's keep the momentum going!

### CENTRAL DIVISION

| Department    | Total         | Goal           | % of Goal     |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Wisconsin     | 4,490         | 16,514         | 27.19%        |
| Iowa          | 3,942         | 17,857         | 22.08%        |
| Indiana       | 7,061         | 40,119         | 17.60%        |
| Missouri      | 1,349         | 8,114          | 16.63%        |
| West Virginia | 724           | 4,923          | 14.71%        |
| Illinois      | 2,881         | 20,083         | 14.35%        |
| Kansas        | 1,253         | 9,189          | 13.64%        |
| Ohio          | 4,084         | 34,719         | 11.76%        |
| Michigan      | 2,529         | 28,792         | 8.78%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>28,313</b> | <b>180,310</b> | <b>15.70%</b> |

National has mailed out renewal notices to all senior members who did not have their 2025 dues processed as of August 9. However, you do not have to use a paper renewal notice to renew your membership. There are two other effortless ways to renew:

- Call National at 317-569-4570 (Mon-Fri 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST) and use your credit/debit card over the phone while talking to a live person. You'll immediately receive an email confirmation and National will mail your ID card. *Bonus: You can renew multiple memberships at once!*
- Create a login ID at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and use your credit/debit card online. *Bonus: Once you create a login ID you will have access to valuable member information on programs, benefits and more!*

To date, we have had over 700 members pay their dues using a credit/debit card through National! Members are finding that using a credit card is convenient, secure and easier than ever before. Why not give it a try?

The future of The American Legion Auxiliary and continuation of our great works depends on our ability to recruit and retain members. While members of The American Legion Family are individually unique, collectively we are a multimillion-member powerhouse of caring advocates dedicated to service.

## MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION

Wisconsin units honored some of their older members for supporting veterans, military, youth and their communities throughout the years.



ABOVE: Marian Barber-Johnson recently celebrated her 97th birthday and was presented a Continuous Member Certificate for her 69 years of service by June Dopkins, President of Webster Unit 96. Thank you, Marian, for your years of service!



ABOVE: Ruby Radke, 42-year member of Otis Taylor Unit 96 in Webster, recently turned 104. Ruby always has a great smile and enjoys an opportunity to wear her ALA Vest. Happy 104th Birthday, Ruby! BELOW: S/Sgt Henry F. Gumm Unit 486 in Jackson celebrated Doris Schulties' birthday. Doris Schulties is seated in front, (L-R): Shelley Baertlein, Teri McElroy, Mary Rofritz, Sue Bliese, Sally Ollinger, Donna King, Pat Herbst, Mary Rogge, and Betty Clement. Happy Birthday to Doris, who turned 100 years young on July 29!



## 2025 ALA DAILY SWEEPSTAKES

- 2025 Daily Sweepstakes entry forms have been mailed. If you want additional entry forms, please call department headquarters. Only original entry forms will be accepted.
- Daily prizes are \$15. Sunday prizes are \$25. One \$500 prize each month.
- The last day to enter is December 31, 2024.
- Official sweepstakes rules are posted on the department website.

Although a donation is not required, the money raised allows the ALA to maintain programs that benefit our Veterans, the military, their families, and our communities – so **donations are greatly appreciated.**

THANK YOU to everyone who already responded.





# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**Donna Jensen**  
Department Chaplain  
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*Hebrews 11:1*  
“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

“That is the definition of faith – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove.” – Dan Brown

What does “faith” mean to you? Does your faith allow you to have hope, inspire you, allow you to do difficult things? What challenges your faith?

I believe everything happens for a reason and is all part of “God’s Plan” for each of us. Our faith in ourselves, those around us, or our country may be challenged by some of the events that take place around us. There is both good and evil in the world and we do not always have control over some of the things that happen, but we do have control over how we react to these things.

We are blessed to live in a country where we have freedoms such as the right to vote, where we can decide who we want to hold public offices. In a world where there is much turmoil and division, we can put our faith in God to see us through these trying times. We can put our faith and thanks in those who have and continue to fight for and defend our freedoms and our right to vote.

As the autumn season is upon us, we can look around at the earth as crops are harvested and the fields and gardens are prepared for the winter season. We can have faith that next spring the crops and flowers will grow, bloom and produce again. I believe that it is through our faith in God and his plan for us that we can find hope and faith in the future.

I am putting together a prayer book for President Becky Mueller and need help from all of you. Please send me prayers, poems or inspirational writings to add to her book. They can be original or from another source (please name the author). Please include your name and unit number. You can send by email ([djensen20@gmail.com](mailto:djensen20@gmail.com)) or mail to me at: Donna Jensen, 6936 N. 86th St., Milwaukee, WI 53224.

**Music:**  
“We Walk By Faith”  
by Henry Alford (1844)  
We walk by faith, and not by sight,  
No gracious words we hear.  
Of him who spoke as none e’er spoke,  
But we believe him near.

**Bonnie Dorniak**  
Executive Secretary/Treasurer  
608-745-0124  
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[www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org)

The 2024 American Legion Auxiliary National Convention was held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Wisconsin members received several national awards as listed below. Congratulations to the award winners and thanks for making Wisconsin proud!

Trish Ward of Kansas was installed as National President for 2024-2025. Her theme for the year is Leading the Way. Since President Ward has seen units struggle with membership and leadership capacity for many years, she is focusing efforts to reinvigorate our organization through membership – from the ground up. Her special

project is the ALA Foundation’s Veterans Project Fund, which awards grants to tax-exempt ALA units to support projects that meet a one-time, new need benefiting multiple Veterans, military and their families. Donations may be made through department headquarters using a Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form located on the department website. James A. LaCourse Jr. of Connecticut was elected National Commander of The American Legion and Joseph Navarrete of New Mexico was elected Sons of The American Legion National Commander.

National Headquarters mailed membership renewal notices in mid-September. You may have received a renewal notice even though you recently paid your dues. National pulled the mailing list in early August so things may have crossed in the mail. If you believe you received a notice in error, please contact your unit membership chairman to

confirm your dues were forwarded to department headquarters for processing.

Members may pay their dues through their unit, online at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), or over the phone. You can easily pay for multiple family members at one time or pay for lapsed membership years if you pay by phone. Please call national headquarters at 317-569-4570, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm (Central Time) to pay by phone. Thank you to everyone who already renewed their 2025 dues!

2025 sweepstakes forms were mailed to current ALA members at the end of August. Proceeds stay in Wisconsin, for Wisconsin programs, but original entry forms must be returned by December 31 to be eligible for the drawings. If you would like more entry forms, please contact Department Headquarters at 608-745-0124. Thank you in advance for your support!

## 2023-2024 NATIONAL AWARDS

American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin received the following awards or acknowledgements for the 2023-2024 administrative year during the 2024 National Convention:

### AMERICANISM

**Dorothy Pearl Award - Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program in Central Division**  
Van Ells-Schanen Unit 82  
Port Washington ~ District 2  
Diane Burkhalter, Unit President

### EDUCATION

**Best Department Education Program in Central Division**  
Department of Wisconsin  
Diane Weggen, Department Chairman

### HISTORIAN

**Best Department History in Central Division**  
Department of Wisconsin  
Mary Petrie, Department Chairman

**Toomey Award - Overall Best Department History**  
Department of Wisconsin  
Mary Petrie, Department Chairman

### LEADERSHIP

**Department Unit Member of the Year**  
Terry Giles  
Brask-Fossum-Janke Unit 185, Grantsburg  
~ District 12

## MEMBERSHIP

Units that reached 100% of their 2024 membership goal by 1/31/2024:

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Birchwood Unit 379         | Milwaukee Unit 448        |
| Black River Falls Unit 129 | Mt. Hope Unit 229         |
| Coleman Unit 280           | Pewaukee Unit 71          |
| Cottage Grove Unit 248     | Rio Unit 208              |
| Dane Unit 503              | Rome Unit 65              |
| DeForest Unit 348          | St. Nazianz Unit 477      |
| Delavan Unit 95            | Spooner Unit 12           |
| Edgerton Unit 30           | Stoughton Unit 59         |
| Eleva Unit 459             | Tigerton Unit 239         |
| Elkhorn Unit 45            | Two Rivers Unit 165       |
| Fifield Unit 532           | White Lake Unit 534       |
| Hartland Unit 294          | Wild Rose Unit 370        |
| Hayward Unit 218           | Winter Unit 303           |
| Kenosha Unit 21            | Wisconsin Rapids Unit 442 |
| Land O' Lakes Unit 464     |                           |

### POPPY

**Best Department Poppy Program in Central Division**  
Department of Wisconsin  
Kay Grosskopf, Department Chairman

**Poppy Poster Contest, Class II (Grades 4 & 5)**  
**Best Poppy Poster in Central Division**  
Easton Knorr  
Sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512 ~ District 9

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Most Outstanding Department Public Relations Program in Central Division**  
Department of Wisconsin  
Bob Shappell, Department Chairman

## VA&R

**Bonnie Jakubczyk**  
Department Chair  
[bon6862@yahoo.com](mailto:bon6862@yahoo.com)  
414-531-7890

Thank you, Veterans, for your service!


November 11 became a federal holiday in the United States in 1938. In the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War, Armistice Day became known as Veterans Day. This is a day set aside to remember and recognize Veterans who have served or who are currently serving to protect our freedoms.

Yes, we should be thanking our Veterans every day. This Veterans Day why not make it a special day for them? Some ways to do that are by checking for and attending Veterans Day events in your community. If there are none, try to host an event to honor Veterans, like a dinner at your Post. In addition to attending events, check with your Post to see if any members could use help around their homes with yardwork or odd jobs. Organize a group and head over to help them out. Donate to a nonprofit that helps Veterans and their families. Support Veteran-owned businesses.

Beyond in-person events and volunteer activities, try giving back to Veterans through kind words and handmade crafts. Search for craft ideas online for Veterans Day. Make them at your unit meeting and encourage Juniors and Sons to help. A simple thank you card will go a long way. These small acts of kindness should brighten their day.

As members, we should all be supporting the Be The One mission. Ask a Veteran how they are doing, listen when a Veteran needs to talk, and reach out when a Veteran is struggling. There are training sessions available; visit [legion.org/betheone](http://legion.org/betheone) for more information. Remember to report on what you have done and take pictures.

| 2024-2025 National Appointments |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Joanie Dickerson                | Education Committee Central Division Chairman       |
| Diane Duscheck                  | American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Vice President |
| Maggie Geiger                   | Alternate National Executive Committee person       |
| Sue Hembrook                    | Poppy Committee Central Division Chairman           |
| Bonnie Jakubczyk                | National Executive Committee person                 |
| April Kollmorgen                | Membership Committee Central Division Chairman      |
| Amy Luft                        | Legislative Committee Vice Chairman                 |
| Diana Sirovina                  | Poppy Chairman                                      |



## POPPY REMINDER!

Poppies can be distributed **all year long**.  
Veterans Day is a great time to do a distribution.  
2025 Poppy Orders are due by December 15, 2024.  
Orders received after December 15 will be charged an additional processing fee. **Don't delay – order today!**



## ROSEMARIE HAUCK ELECTED CDNVP



CDNVP Rosemarie Hauck

2024-2025 Central Division National Vice President Rosemarie Hauck hails from the Department of Missouri. Her official visit to Wisconsin was during the October 5 ALA in the Know Conference held in Cedarburg.

Rosemarie is eligible for membership through her husband Joel, who served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. She is a member of Florissant Valley Memorial Unit 444 in Florissant, Missouri.

Rosemarie attended Harris Teachers College and Webster University and worked in Design and Development Instrumentation Engineering for 40 years.

## TRISH WARD INSTALLED AS NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Trish Ward was installed as National President of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) during the 2024 National Convention in New Orleans.

She has held numerous leadership positions in the organization at the unit, district, department, and national levels. At the national level, she served as chair of VA&R, Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Leadership, Legislative, ALA Girls Nation, Public Relations, and Membership.

President Ward is a member of John P. Hand Unit 250 in Louisburg, Kansas. She is eligible for ALA membership through her father, John M. Brusati, and her grandfather, Edmund S. Lindberg. Her father served

in the U.S. Army in World War II and her grandfather served in the U.S. Navy during WWII.

In her professional life, Ward retired in 2023 as Senior Lead Project Manager at Lumen, a global technology and IT company. She holds bachelor's degrees from both the University of Southern California and the University of Kansas. Her hobby is studying parliamentary law and she is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians.

Ward's family is also involved in The American Legion Family organizations. She and her husband Steve bring children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to the family experience.



National President Trish Ward

### LEGISLATIVE

**Maggie Geiger**  
Department Chair  
262-377-0329  
maggieg4ala@gmail.com

The Legislative program provides information and assistance to ALA members to advocate for the Legislative agenda of The American Legion. On the ALA department website ([www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org)), click on the Program tab, then click on the Legislative program, for more information about The American Legion Legislative Agenda for the 118th Congress, 2nd Session. You will be able to understand what priorities the Legion is working on to advocate for Veterans in a short and concise explanation.

Be sure to sign-up to receive Grassroots Action Center updates. It lists Veterans' priorities that we as American Legion Family members need to have our elected officials understand how important it is to us that Veterans, military, and their families receive the benefits they are owed. It is very easy to sign-up to have information sent to your email and have pre-written letters to send to your elected officials. From the Grassroots page, click on Action Center; then fill in your name, address, email and 'send.' Shortly after you send your letter, your elected official will usually send you a note thanking you.

Senate Joint Resolution 34, Protect the American flag, has still not passed. Let's all send letters to our congressmen, everyday, until they pass the bill to protect Old Glory. You may only send one letter on each issue in a 24-hour period.

Please keep track of the number of letters and contacts you have with your elected officials, as well as the hours it takes to read and send letters, and report them on your year-end report.

As it is written in the ALA mission statement, "the mission of the ALA is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who served." This is another way we are supporting our Veterans.

With elections right around the corner, remember we are NONPARTISAN, please do not wear your ALA branded clothing or pins to any political rallies, etc. Your personal view is not the view of the entire organization.

**Deanna Farley**  
Department Chair  
farleyofsc@gmail.com  
920-810-2664

The Poppy Program has had a support role in the American Legion Auxiliary since its birth in 1921. On Memorial Day and Veterans Day, millions of red crepe paper poppies are distributed across the country in exchange for donations that go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized Veterans in our communities. Most of us recognize the Poppy as a red crepe paper flower that symbolizes strength, honor and sacrifice. It is also worn or displayed as a special remembrance of those Veterans who served their country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us.

The Poppy Program provides a means to educate people of the financial benefit realized because of the Poppy distribution. As units begin to explore what programs that they will

### POPPY

be working on in 2024-2025, the Poppy distribution is many times one of the top selected programs. That distribution can be done year-round and in many ways.

Think outside of the perpetual box! I would love to hear how you did your distribution! What worked and what didn't? Remember to always ask for permission to distribute Poppies at any business location. There may be some locations where you can leave a donation canister if the owner allows it. If you have not yet ordered your poppies, do so as soon as possible. The deadline to order is December 15, 2024. Orders will be filled as received so don't wait to order!

Sponsor a Poppy Poster Contest in your local school. Contact your local art teacher and encourage them to put the Poppy Story in their curriculum. Provide the poster paper for their classrooms! Budgets are tight so some financial support may help. Ask your local Post members if they are willing to come to

school to present a panel discussion on their military experiences. This can prove to be very effective to give the students some ideas for their poster! Contact me for a sample agenda for your panel discussion. Send me all of your units 1st place winning Poppy Poster Contest entries by March 15th, 2025. They will be judged on the Department level and one winner in each classification will be sent on to Central Division for further competition.

The 2024-2025 Poppy Program Engagement Plan, poppy information and worksheets are posted on the department website ([www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org)) or you can contact me for any information you may need to make your district, county, or unit Poppy Program a success.

Remember, reporting is essential to achieve our mission of quality support for our Veterans. Let me know all the creative ways your unit is promoting the Poppy Program. Photos and newspaper articles are greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from all of you.

### IT'S COOL TO BE PATRIOTIC!



Alois Dreikosen ALA Unit 469 in Marathon celebrated 75 years. The unit was chartered in July of 1949. For the past 67 years the Marathon Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit have sponsored a community event, "Marathon Fun Days." The event includes a carnival, food, entertainment, a Kiddy Day and Sunday parade. The event brings the community together as they say goodbye to summer. The Auxiliary unit uses the motto they established in 2018, "It's Cool to be Patriotic," to promote Americanism, patriotism, and the ALA mission. They lead the Kiddy Day parade with Uncle Sam to teach youth to be proud Americans who respect our military and Veterans.



LEADERSHIP

Teresa Isensee  
Department Chair  
tisensee2173@gmail.com  
715-577-5259  
Committee Members: Sarah Stiff  
and Christina Petranovich

Are you a Leader? Are you passionate about The American Legion Family? Can you adapt to changes? Can you lead by example? Then your knowledge and expertise are needed to help lead the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary, to grow our membership, and keep the values and mission of our organization for future generations. Leadership is more than being an officer – it is about your relationship with members, sharing your knowledge and talents, and creating an environment where individual growth and knowledge helps our organization to connect and grow. Mentor someone you know who has qualities that can enhance your membership and promote your

unit within your community. What are your reasons for not wanting to be an officer, a chairman, or coordinating an event? Is it time, resources, knowledge? Does your unit have a plan in place to transfer knowledge to new officers? What if an officer passes away – say the Treasurer – do you know where everything is kept? What bank the accounts are at? Who are the authorized signers? Does the family know that this information needs to be kept? Create a plan so that all information is available at any time, with no disruption to your unit’s mission. What are your strengths and how could you mentor others? **Are you “Recruiting and Mentoring the next you!”** Creating the next you – an important part of mentoring – who will be there to bring our organization into the future? If your unit, county or district would like a Leadership Workshop, please contact me to set up your event. Let us assist, educate, empower and mentor members to achieve their personal potential!

MISSION IN ACTION: ALA UNIT 243



Sydney Arndt; a Junior member of Plymouth ALA Unit 243, served as the Poppy representative to welcome home 120 Veterans from two Stars & Stripes Honor Flights. A poppy made by our Wisconsin Poppy Shop was given to each Veteran returning home.



2025-2026  
DEPARTMENT PROGRAM INTEREST FORM

Senior Vice President Sue Hembrook is considering appointments for the 2025-2026 administrative year (July 2025 to July 2026). If you are interested in a department position, please complete the information below and email it to Sue Hembrook (genesuehem@wi.rr.com) by December 15, 2024.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ☐ Cell ☐ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Program/Position (please rank up to five choices, #1 to #5):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ____ ALA in the Know (Vice Chairman)                      | ____ Membership (Committee)                  |
| ____ Americanism (Chairman)                               | ____ National Security (Chairman)            |
| ____ WALA State Bowling Assn (Committee, 3-yr term)       | ____ Office Policy (Committee, must be PDP)  |
| ____ Children & Youth/Liaison to Child Welfare Fdn (Chrm) | ____ Poppy Program (Chairman)                |
| ____ Community Service (Chairman)                         | ____ Public Relations (Chairman)             |
| ____ Constitution & Bylaws (Chairman – must be PDP)       | ____ Public Relations (Committee)            |
| ____ Education (Chairman)                                 | ____ Standing Rules (Chairman, must be PDP)  |
| ____ Finance (Committee, 3-yr term; resume required)      | ____ VA&R (Chairman)                         |
| ____ Fundraising (Chairman)                               | ____ VA&R-Christmas Gift Shop (Chairman)     |
| ____ Junior Activities (Chairman)                         | ____ VA&R-Christmas Gift Shop (Assistant)    |
| ____ Junior Activities (Vice Chairman)                    | ____ VA&R-Homeless Women Veterans (Chairman) |
| ____ Leadership (Chairman)                                | ____ VA&R-Service to Veterans (Chairman)     |
| ____ Leadership (Committee)                               |  |

Describe why you are interested or qualified for this/these position(s).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List previously held positions at the unit, county, district or department level.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List current positions you hold.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bob Shappell  
Department Chair  
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414-899-4067

Why is Public Relations so important that it is an actual ALA program and not just a management function? Consider these reasons:

1. Building Awareness and Understanding. We are unique in many ways, and often a mystery to our communities. PR tools help educate the public about our purposes and our values, while fostering a deep appreciation of what we contribute to Veterans, their families, and our communities.

2. Fundraising and Resources. All units rely heavily on financial support and volunteers. Public Relations plays a huge role in attracting donors, sponsors, and volunteers by communicating the impact of donations, expressing our gratitude, and keeping donors informed of our successes.

3. Corporate Partnerships. Truly successful local Legion Families have solid partnerships with other community groups, resulting in financial support and access to a wider audience through joint events. Effective PR can help secure and nurture these crucial relationships.

4. Crisis Communication. We are not immune to crises. When

challenges arise, whether they are related to financial mismanagement, controversies, or unforeseen disasters, timely PR efforts can manage the situation and protect our reputation. Additionally, PR tools must be used to rebuild public and member trust. This might involve issuing apologies, demonstrating a commitment to change, and showcasing the organization’s positive impact.

5. Impact Reporting. We must clearly and regularly tell our communities how we are impacting lives through our programs, our volunteer hours, and our donations. We report to our National ALA organization, but often fail to pass the same success stories on to our local businesses, schools, governments, and families.

6. Membership. A successful and focused PR program can improve our membership efforts, both in recruitment and retention. Build a solid reputation, publicize our missions and our successes, and people will be more apt to want to become part of what we do.

PR is not merely marketing, nor is it just writing articles for the local paper. Effective PR is vital for our success. A well-developed PR program can raise awareness about our important missions, secure necessary resources, and build lasting relationships.

VA&R – HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS

**Chrys Porter**  
**Department Chair**  
**momchrys@gmail.com**  
**715-797-1289**

Feeling helpless?  
Where can I go for help? I am a woman Veteran in need of financial assistance, where can I go? What will happen to me and my family? I am sure this is a reoccurring thought for some people. But know that there is help!  
You, as a Unit, can start by contacting your local shelters, churches, Veterans’ organizations and start asking questions on how you can help with the specific needs of your community. Then make a list of what is available for Veterans from each

organization and specifically know what is available for our female Veterans. But remember to also educate the organizations that you have contacted with how The American Legion Family programs can help your local Veterans.  
Wisconsin is unique in that we have a Homeless Women Veterans Grant Program that is funded by the American Legion Auxiliary through generous donations. We are able to assist female Veterans who are homeless or at risk of being homeless with a one-time grant to make a positive impact on their life. This grant is paid directly to the vendor, supplier or landlord and not the Veteran. The Veteran must work with a sponsor and complete the application with a

narrative and proof of service.  
Let’s look at the needs within your community and within our state to see what we can do to help our Veterans in need, but let’s make sure we make the needs of our female Veterans known and a top priority. Let’s work together with all the organizations to assist in the needs of Veterans. Let’s educate our Veterans in what is available to them and what the requirements are for the programs so that they are able to make an educated decision on a positive outcome of a situation they find themselves in.  
To support the Homeless Women Veterans Grant program, please send donations to ALA headquarters using the Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form on the department website.

VA&R – DIRECTOR OF HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

**Sue Hembrook**  
**Department Chair**  
**genesuehem@wi.rr.com**  
**262-945-9791**

Every one of us needs to applaud our Representatives and Deputies who are appointed to our hospitals and homes to serve our Veterans. These Reps and Deps truly give of themselves to brighten the lives of our Veterans that reside in these facilities or have appointments there. These volunteers truly are working the mission. However, they need the support of each and every one of us. Whether it be in the making of items for the Veterans’ enjoyment or donating monies to provide bingo and snacks. Also, wish lists of particular items needed at each facility are in this month’s Unit Mailing and posted on the department website. All of your donations are truly appreciated and our Veterans are grateful for your kindness.  
In our department, we are affiliated with nine VA facilities, all of which are unique in themselves. They offer different types of care; some are hospitals while others are nursing or assisted living facilities. However, they all have

one thing in common – the safety and well-being of our Veterans. The Department of Wisconsin truly has reason to be proud of our hospitals and homes within our boundaries. They provide the best care imaginable and our Reps and Deps add to this immensely. Their caring for those whom they serve is contagious. They truly brighten the days of everyone they come in contact with.  
If you are able to support these volunteers in creating a warm and caring atmosphere for our Veterans, we ask that you refer to each facility’s wish list. The items that are being requested will truly be used and appreciated. As the year goes on, we will try to keep these lists updated as the needs change or your generosity eliminates the need for some of the items on the list. As always, cash donations are appreciated and unless you specify they are for a particular item, they will go toward supplies from the wish list or other activities. All monetary donations should go through our department headquarters using a Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form, specifying which facility you want the donation applied to.  
Please know that your gifts and monetary donations are truly appreciated by our Veterans.

VA&R – SERVICE TO VETERANS

**Mary Petrie**  
**Department Chair**  
**mmrtpetrie@charter.net**

Our mission statement proudly proclaims that In the spirit of Service, not self, the Auxiliary honors the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our Veterans, military, and their families. Since WWI this organization has strived to seek out and address the needs of our heroes. At that time there was no formal healthcare plan or program.  
During WWII, it was determined that a need existed for a coordinated volunteer effort, which then developed into a formal program.  
On April 8,1946, The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and several other Veterans’ service organizations met in

Washington, D.C. with the Assistant Administrator for Special Services. This resulted in a newer administration with regulations and procedures, forming the first VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Advisory Committee.  
In 1964, the Field Service Volunteer program was born. Ten years later, the Home Service program supplemented Veteran care. In 2013, Field Service and Home Service combined to form **Service to Veterans**, where volunteers serve from their homes and in the community, rather than in a VA facility, making the American Legion Auxiliary the go-to resource for the country’s Veterans and their families.  
How is this goal accomplished? Organize or host a Stand Down or Job Fair for both Veterans and spouses, assemble care packages, craft tray favors and greeting cards, assist with a

Veteran’s burial or graveside upkeep, sew, cook, or shop for active-duty military and/or Veterans and their families. Offer to wash the family car, do light home repairs, housework, or yard work, or simply sit with a Veteran to give the caregiver a break.  
Is there a Veteran making a fresh start? Put together a Buddy Basket and gift it. Set up a Benefits Briefing to assure Veterans are knowledgeable about benefits available to them. Contact a local nursing home or assisted living center to see if there are Veterans residing there and if the facility allows visits. Participate in a Walk or Run to raise funds to support your community’s military and Veteran populations.  
Thank you for serving those who served...and remember to thank a Veteran!

VA&R – CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

**Diana Sirovina**  
**Department Chair**  
**dsirovina@icloud.com**  
**414-881-9581**

Since 1928, the American Legion Auxiliary has sponsored Christmas Gift Shops in VA facilities throughout the country. Here in Wisconsin, this wonderful tradition dates back many years. Although the program has undergone many changes over time, the one thing that will never change is our commitment to caring for our Veterans and their families.  
Through this program, Veterans in long-term care facilities can select Christmas gifts for their loved ones at absolutely no cost to them. The cost of gifts, wrapping and shipping are all totally covered by generous donations from units all over our state.  
Our Christmas Gift Shop is a seasonal event. Preparations begin in mid-September, and the entire project is complete by early December. In that span of around ten weeks, the magic of Christmas and the true holiday spirit comes alive for these Veterans and their families.  
Christmas Gift Shop 2024 will look similar to years past. Gifts will be

pre-selected on Amazon for people of all ages, from the young to the young at heart. A colorful catalog will be prepared for the Veterans to view. Orders from our heroes will be taken either by our volunteers or with the help of VA staff members. Gifts will be wrapped with great care and shipped to those special family members.  
Many times, we receive cards and notes from family members, telling us how excited they were to receive a gift chosen by their loved one. Family members are pleasantly surprised to receive their beautifully wrapped gifts, knowing their Veteran was able to select it especially for them. These personal notes are a wonderful reminder of how important this program is to so many.  
Even though our Christmas Gift Shop season is only a few months long, your unit can make it a year-round event by making a generous donation to this great program anytime you have funds available. Checks payable to ‘ALA-Wisconsin’ should be mailed to Department Headquarters noting Christmas Gift Shop in the memo field. This program would not be possible without your generous funding. Thank you for supporting this program!

AUGUST 2024 DAILY SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

| Day | Prize | Winner             | City            |
|-----|-------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | \$15  | Barb Polich-Endres | Madison         |
| 2   | \$15  | Christina Gordon   | Wausaukee       |
| 3   | \$15  | Doris Filter       | Oconto          |
| 4   | \$500 | Isabel Moudry      | Radisson        |
| 5   | \$15  | Diane Larson       | Osseo           |
| 6   | \$15  | Kay Nyberg         | La Crosse       |
| 7   | \$15  | Phil Koehler       | Plover          |
| 8   | \$15  | Amanda Warner      | Exeland         |
| 9   | \$15  | Eleanor Borchardt  | Rothschild      |
| 10  | \$15  | Brenda Guse        | Somerset        |
| 11  | \$25  | June Dopkins       | Webster         |
| 12  | \$15  | Rose Schroeder     | Lake Mills      |
| 13  | \$15  | Jane Bates         | Gordonville, TX |
| 14  | \$15  | Jane Jacque        | Port Washington |
| 15  | \$15  | Mary Kay Sieckman  | Platteville     |
| 16  | \$15  | Catherine Olsen    | New London      |
| 17  | \$15  | Bonnie Murray      | Melrose         |
| 18  | \$25  | Marilyn Sellers    | Park Falls      |
| 19  | \$15  | Carrie Miller      | Kewaskum        |
| 20  | \$15  | Rachel Larson      | Webster         |
| 21  | \$15  | Ellen O’Brion      | Rio             |
| 22  | \$15  | Dennis Lind        | Lone Rock       |
| 23  | \$15  | Deanne Walter      | West Salem      |
| 24  | \$15  | Betty Banta        | Janesville      |
| 25  | \$25  | Nancy Fields       | Marion          |
| 26  | \$15  | Darcey Kendl       | Oak Creek       |
| 27  | \$15  | Karen Walker       | Boscobel        |
| 28  | \$15  | Catherine Kramer   | Kaukauna        |
| 29  | \$15  | Gary Orth          | Seneca          |
| 30  | \$15  | La Rene Carpenter  | Bagley          |
| 31  | \$15  | Patty Hewitt       | Dane            |





**Jim Johnson**  
Department  
Commander

I truly hope this issue of the Badger Legionnaire finds you well and looking forward to activities that celebrate our day, Veterans Day. While many of us will be doing the work of The American

Legion, make sure you take some time for yourself. Reflect on the positive aspects of your military service, the lifelong friends you have made, the positive impact you have made on others because of your service, commitment, and sacrifice. You deserve a day!

I know some will mark the day with Veteran appreciation meals, enjoy! Those are great opportunities to meet up with other Veterans or even meet a new Veteran.

If you know a Veteran that will mark the day with loneliness, please reach out to that Veteran. Your voice may make a huge difference in their day. A little bit of kindness goes a long way.

## DEPARTMENT COMMANDER



I'm truly enjoying the visits that I've been on so far and I'm looking forward to those events and visits ahead. It's amazing hanging out with Veterans from throughout our Great State!

As I write this article, I just completed a weeklong tour across Districts 8, 9, 10, and 11 including a stay at Camp American Legion with my fellow American Legion Riders. My visits so far have left me with an overwhelming sense of pride in The American Legion, The American Legion Family and everything we represent. In Wisconsin we are blessed with the spirit of service and an incredible Legion Family!

I will share just one picture that I think embodies our journey in service, courtesy of our Adjutant Julie Muhle. We will continue to make Wisconsin #LegionStrong by adhering to our purpose and Being The One for other Veterans!

Thank you for the privilege to serve as your Commander.



**Allen Watry**  
SAL Detachment  
Commander

Greetings Wisconsin Legion Family,

A very powerful Work Safe Message was shared at my place of employment this week. A co-worker told us about a very tough conversation they were recently a part of. A close personal friend of theirs called early one morning to share her husband had died the previous evening from a work-related accident. It was a very hard conversation; one nobody wants to be a part of. My co-worker felt compelled to share it with us as motivation for all of us to stay focused on Working Safe.

As I reflect on what was shared and why, I believe it is a message which also applies to our "Be The One" mission. During State Convention one of our National Guests, NVC Terry Harris, shared an experience he continues to live with and be affected by. He had a very close friend, who was a Veteran, who took his own life. Terry shared how he feels he failed his friend. He

continues to ask himself how did he miss the signs this person was struggling so much? What could he have done differently to keep this person from committing suicide? Again, a situation I hope all of us can agree we would rather not have to go through and/or share. So, let's make sure we are embracing our "Be The One" mission. Lets do all we can to not have to be in those two situations.

Now, on a lighter note to close, I am looking forward to "hitting the road" again this Fall. District Fall Conferences are right around the corner. Your Detachment Executive Committee members and I are looking forward to being out and seeing/hearing about all the great things you are doing. Please continue to do all the great work you are doing. Please continue to be that needed advocate for our Veterans, our Active Military, and their Families. And continue to "Be The One" for the people around you!!

For God and Country,  
Allen Watry

## SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER



**Brad Heller**  
State Assistant  
Director  
American Legion  
Riders Association

The change in the wind, and the bright colors starting to show through the trees, means the Fall season is upon us. With that, motorcyclists from all over the state and beyond descend upon the Tomahawk area for the Fall Color Ride. It also means the Legion Riders make the annual trek for the Fall Ride to Camp American Legion.

For over 10 years The American Legion Riders of Wisconsin have descended on Camp in the fall to bring donations to support Camp and better understand its mission: A place for healing Veterans and families. Camp opens up to the Riders for the week to stay and enjoy all that Camp has to offer. From the stunning views and the rustic settings, the peace that it brings can be felt to your core. The staff and volunteers truly make you feel at home and as was stated by PDC Ken Rynes, "It is the pearl of the Department of Wisconsin American Legion." It encompasses so much of what our Pillars teach us in one place. The tranquility, serenity, and camaraderie that is experienced is unparalleled. The week is busy

with Riders getting a hearty breakfast and venturing out to experience the surrounding communities and landscapes on two wheels. Then back to Camp for stories and laughter around the fire with the moon and the lake as a picturesque backdrop. The week culminates on Saturday, with the Riders rallying in Tomahawk and riding as a group to Camp. Fifty bikes were in the procession to Camp and it turned a lot of heads as we thundered by. Once at Camp, Jim and the staff put on an absolutely fabulous lunch and tour, followed by the important work of the day, donations.

This year the Riders brought donations of over \$32,000, monies that will be used to re-stain the main lodge. The giving and generosity of the Riders was on full display and there were several moments of tears as the love for Camp was obvious to those in attendance. While I've made several trips to Camp, it was my first time truly staying there. As the newly appointed Rider Liaison to the Department Committee on Camp American Legion it gave me a better sense of what Camp is and how it should be cared for. If you've never been, you need to go. For the Riders, Camp will always be revered and cared for not just in the Fall, but for all time.

Brad Heller can be reached at brheller65@gmail.com.

## LEGION RIDERS



**Becky Mueller**  
2024-2025  
Department  
President

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

God's blessings to you! Your heartfelt love is being demonstrated around Wisconsin, evident from my travels to our Legion Family events.

I am looking forward to attending ALAITSK and visiting with more of you on a one-on-one basis. Fall Conferences are in full swing, and I am hoping to listen in on what your units, counties and districts are doing and planning to make this a wonderful year serving our Veterans, military and each other. Auxiliary members serve from the heart, making a difference in the lives of so many.

The holiday season is here – a chance to demonstrate our love and commitment to our extended family embracing our entire community. Pause for a moment and show respect to our Indigenous People and all of us that emigrated here to find a better life as set forth in our Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Continue to work to make it possible for all to grasp the American Dream. It is worth fighting for.

Enjoy the Halloween season with the children and youth – sharing our coloring books and safety tips. Remember those who left a legacy for you on All Saints Day.

Veterans Day is so important. Thank all those Veterans and service members you know and meet for their willingness to serve and protect this great country. So many of us will be at a dinner table with them – listen to their stories, honor their service, celebrate our freedoms.

Thanksgiving is truly an American holiday. Say a prayer of thankfulness to God above for family, food, and football! Don't forget our Wisconsin traditions of deer hunting and shopping.

Continue to serve by working on our programs, listening to those who need an ear, looking around to see the needs and then fulfilling them. I am looking forward to your innovative ways to Make a Difference.

Be The One – check on each other. This time of year brings much joy and happiness but to some it is a depressing and lonesome time. Be alert and reach out. You can change lives and may be instrumental in even saving a life. Go ahead – BE THE ONE!!!

Yours in Service, Becky Mueller

**Veterans  
Crisis Line**   
**DIAL 988**  
then **PRESS 1**



## 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*

