

WISCONSIN



December 2023

American Legion Auxiliary
P.O. Box 140
Portage, WI 53901

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The official publication of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary

www.amlegionauxwi.org

MEMBERSHIP

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The "Poppy Up" Team started out with a bang but as of the last membership report several of our districts are starting to show signs of tiredness. Membership Chairmen, please do not hold on to memberships. Only those memberships that have been processed by Department are considered valid memberships. If you are flooded with renewals to process, please reach out to your counties or districts or even other unit members for assistance. Working together is the solution to make a huge project seem less burdensome.

As of this writing, our Department is still in 1st Place in the Central Division. Our puppies will not give up and are striving to keep this lead. Let's not let them down!

For those members who recruited new members, please remember that you must fill out a Recruit 1 form to receive a poppy pin. This form can be found on the department website under Programs, Membership, Awards (2024 Recruit 1-Department). If you are unable to locate any of our forms, please contact anyone on the Membership Committee or Andrea at Department and we will be happy to assist.

2024 Membership Totals (as of 11/20/23) – 61.38%

DIST.	GOAL %	MUSHER
12	68.01%	Baby Girl
03	67.55%	Ranger
09	65.09%	Percy
04	64.17%	Winkle
02	63.86%	Sloane
10	61.63%	Balto
01	61.00%	Diamond
07	60.18%	Hero
06	59.87%	Denali
08	59.29%	Isabella
11	50.06%	D.O.G.
05	48.13%	Little Girl



With the holidays approaching it is understandable that we are all getting busy with preparations. While shopping and parties may take precedence, we still need to be visible and promote our organization. Wear branded clothing while shopping as it will most likely lead to some sort of conversation about what our organization stands

for. We are the ambassadors for our Veterans and should show our pride in what we do for Veterans, military and their families.

Have a wonderful holiday season and keep up the great work in promoting our organization and welcoming new members to join our ranks.

FALL CREEK AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CELEBRATES 80 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP!



Betty Patzwald has been a treasured member of Fall Creek American Legion Auxiliary Unit 376 for 80 years, joining at the age of 18. She was a very active member and we are so thankful for all she has done for our unit and the community. We are especially grateful for the many hours she put into the annual poppy drive each year, one of her favorite activities. Betty was presented with a Continuous Member Certificate for her 80 years of service.

*Poppy
Reminder*

**2024 ORDER
DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 15**

Poppies can be
distributed all year long.

**Don't Delay –
Order Today!**



2024 ALA DAILY SWEEPSTAKES

2024 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, 2023.
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

Betty Stone
 Department Chaplain
 bjstone626@hotmail.com

Psalms 95: 2-3 — 2. *Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him.* 3. *For the Lord is a great God, a great King above all gods.*

This is my favorite time of the year. The colors are bright, the harvest is in, and the whole country is Thanksgiving God for his goodness.

PRAYER

Father, you created all things simply with your words. One word from you and your power is evident. I am amazed by your power. We need your power in our lives. We face impossible circumstances and are desperate for a miracle. Would you show us your power in our lives today? Thank you for all the good things you shower on us. Amen

MUSIC

Christmas music is my favorite music. This is a good time to bring music into your meetings, caroling, and enjoy the season with gladness.

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Bonnie Dorniak
 Executive Secretary/Treasurer
 Ph: 608-745-0124
 Email: deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org
 Website: www.amlegionauxwi.org

The department website was recently updated! Please check out all the information available – such as the 2023-2024 Red Book, bi-monthly unit mailings, district newsletters, ALA program contacts and general information, membership reports, forms, etc.

The American Legion Auxiliary will be conducting a session at the Midwinter Conference in La Crosse on Saturday, January 20, 2023. Attendees will make tie blankets, Socks of Love, and Valentine's Day cards for Wisconsin Veterans; hear from guest speakers; and be able to ask questions during a Q&A session. Anyone interested in participating must register for the Midwinter Conference through The American Legion (\$25 before January 1 or \$30 after that) and reserve a spot with the ALA so we can purchase enough supplies for the service projects. Please visit the department website (Programs > HQ-General Info > Midwinter Conference) for details.

The national organization will mail the final 2024 dues renewal notices on February 1, 2024. The mail list will be pulled January 2, so please pay your membership dues as soon as possible

to avoid receiving a renewal notice. If you receive a renewal notice but thought your dues were paid, please contact your Unit Membership Chairman to ensure they were submitted to department. Dues are not considered "paid" until they have been **processed by Department Headquarters**. The February renewal notices will instruct members to send their dues directly to department to ensure they are processed in a timely manner. Members may also pay dues to their unit or use a debit/credit card to pay online (www.ALAFORVeterans.org) or by phone at 317-569-4570, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 3:30 pm.

American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State (ALABGS) is scheduled for June 16-21, 2024. The reservation fee of \$400/delegate is due by January 31, 2024. As you are well aware, prices for everything have escalated over the last few years, including the cost to run the ALABGS program. As a result, ALABGS is projected to have a deficit budget this year. Therefore, members should have received a solicitation letter recently requesting a donation to help offset operating expenses. Any help would be greatly appreciated! And, for those who want to do more, please check out the many volunteer opportunities at www.alabgs.org.

Unit Annual Year-End Report forms were mailed to unit presidents in October. Members are reminded to track their volunteer hours and

money spent in support of ALA programs to ensure they are included in the unit's totals. Every unit should submit a report by April 15, 2024 and acknowledge their members for all the hard work accomplished throughout the year. Department program chairmen use the information to prepare their annual reports for the national organization.

There is a lot of turmoil happening around the world. Please remember the military members who are separated from their loved ones, continue to pray for their safe return, and support their families while they are gone – especially during the upcoming holiday season.

ALA HEADQUARTERS HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

December 25-26: Christmas
 January 1: New Year's

We wish everyone a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy 2024!

Bonnie, Linda, Carrie, and Andrea

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Margaret Larson
 Department Chair
 maggiedoit@hotmail.com
 715-410-7936

"In a time of tight budgets, difficult choices have to be made. We must make sure our very limited resources are spent on priorities. I believe we should have no higher priority than investing in our children's classrooms and in their future." – Bob Riley

This quote has taken to new heights in the River Falls community with their "Tools for Schools" event. How was "Tools for Schools" started? Many years ago, there was a crayon crisis in the River Falls community. Many students didn't have the ability to get all the school supplies needed. Volunteers started noticing this at a Tuesday night banquet which is a free church driven meal. Volunteers at that time, thirty years ago, started leaving school supplies on the tables for the kids to take. It has now morphed into this huge event that takes place the third week of August. All the children in River Falls have the opportunity, if they're in need, to participate.



What is given at this great event are school supplies that are needed specifically for their classroom. They get fitted for a new pair of shoes with socks which are donated from a local bank and a brand-new backpack, which is so important, as it needs to last the year. A local dentist hands out toothbrushes and toothpaste and the River Falls Rotary gives a new reading book at grade level for each student. After all that, each student and their family are provided with a sack lunch which contains a sandwich, a bag of chips, and a granola bar. There are also salads made up if they don't like sandwiches, fresh fruit, juice and water.

This year, "Tools for Schools" served 422 children and 100 volunteers made it all possible. This is just one way we can invest in our children's futures.

PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY

Char Kiesling
 Department Chair
 char.kiesling@gmail.com
 920-428-5655

Past Presidents Parley (PPP) is a unique group of highly qualified ALA members who dedicate their talents, experience, and leadership abilities after their service as a President at any level of the American Legion Auxiliary to mentor other members. These Past Presidents continue to promote and foster strong leadership for the future success of our premiere organization.

Sharing wisdom and knowledge can make a difference in mentoring a member, even if for just one member. Eligibility in the PPP is simple – serve one year as president at the unit, county, district, department, or national level and pay the current year's PPP dues. Members who initially started as vice president but needed to fulfill part of the president's term due to resignation or death, are also eligible to join the PPP. Presidents serving a second term are eligible to join the PPP after completion of their first year in office.

We need to increase PPP membership to achieve the primary goal of the PPP – offering three scholarships in nursing or healthcare fields. PPP membership has been falling so the PPP increased PPP dues to \$7 per year which is still reasonable to guarantee and accomplish the purpose of the PPP. Recruit those presidents who aren't aware they are eligible and encourage them to join the PPP!!

The Mentor of the Year Award was presented for the first time at the 2023 Department Convention to Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan. The PPP values its outstanding members and their devotion to values of the PPP so please nominate the next Mentor of the Year!

It is suggested that units have a Cavalcade of Memories to preserve the history of the unit to display and share with others. If you visit Department Headquarters in Portage, look over the Past Department Presidents' Cavalcade of Memories in the Legion Museum – it's a beautiful tribute to those who served the American Legion Auxiliary wholeheartedly.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sandy Mack
Department Chair
smack0555@gmail.com

The purpose of the Community Service program is to promote the American Legion Auxiliary's commitment to making our communities better places to live by supporting local service projects.

This year the focus is to promote American Legion Family Day on April 27, 2024. Posts are encouraged to open their doors to members of their community for them to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion members, Legion Riders, and American Legion Auxiliary to bring awareness to the organization's "Be the One" initiative to reduce the rate of Veteran suicide. As a Legion Family, gather ideas on what your post can do. Focus on planning things for children of all ages. Spread the word on the date/time/place you have set for this. Post it on social media.

Develop a plan and implement community service activities that aid Veterans, active duty servicemembers, and their families. Promote economic security for Veterans, the military, their families, and homeless Veterans while encouraging the public to assist in this endeavor.

It is important to record your community service hours. See what works best in your unit. It may be done by documenting in

a unit folder each month or documenting on your own volunteer hour-tracking sheet. This is a wonderful way to assist in year-end reports. An hour here and an hour there adds up.

Ask yourself two simple questions and discuss them within your units: "What can we do as a group to make our programs more successful?" and "What new and creative ways can we promote our program?" Listen to all program suggestions. Do not be afraid to think out of the box and leave your comfort zone, and of course, keep doing what works best for you. Invite members from the community to assist in fundraisers. They may also be eligible to be a member. *Always* keep an application/brochure on you. If someone shows interest, sign your name and number on the brochure and ask for theirs – then do a follow up call in a week or two.

Let us show our communities who we are and what we do. Celebrate our rich history and show the pride we have in our organization.

Reach out to a Veteran and ask them how they are doing. Listen when they need to talk and if you see them struggling, let them know help is out there. Call 988 and press one, or text 838255, or visit the VA Crisis Line website.

"BE THE ONE"
Together, We Can Make a
Difference!
For God and Country

Laura Calteux
Department Co-chairman
414-379-2943
Char Kiesling, Co-chairman
920-428-5655

We all know that our Juniors are one of the ways we look forward to growing our prized organization. In working with our young people, we find that our future is bright with enthusiastic, imaginative, and patriotic young girls. The Junior Activities program has joined ranks with our young Sons of the American Legion boys with many of the same activities and projects. It has been a successful way our Department Family works together for the good of our Veterans!

Both groups are encouraged to work the Patch Program and learn about the many programs needed in carrying out the ALA mission to help Veterans, the military, and their families. It's easy to work on the patches at any time with some help from an adult to earn the patch. Department Juniors and young SAL members, upon earning their first patch, will receive a backpack where they can attach their patches. The patches are in four levels according to the grade level of the member, with a new Purple level for Juniors that are age 3 – kindergarten. Please visit the department website to review the patch qualifications.



JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

A recent campout for the Juniors Fall Conference was held at the 500+ acre Turning Rivers Youth Camp near Campbellsport and included SAL, moms, and even some grandmas who are real troopers! This is also Camp Hometown Heroes and is a beautiful facility. Those present learned what the camp does for our military children, Veterans, and military. There were crafts, cooking by fireside, hiking and a scavenger hunt. Cabins were amazing and so well equipped for children. All this was an immense success due to the assistance of a very devoted, special ALA member, Past Department Historian Sue Turowski, and her husband Bill, who volunteered to be the counselors for our SAL. All young campers received an ALF dog for themselves and one to present to a military child in their school, etc. – compliments of the SAL. This was a solemn promise made by each one and they need to report back to Sue to be recorded.

Thank you, President Maggie for your visit in the rain, and thank you, Sue and Bill, for all your efforts! We know you couldn't prevent the rain on Saturday, but hardy souls prevailed. The awesome colors of fall more than made up for the weather.

Also, congratulations to Rylee Turowski, Junior member of Grafton Unit 355, for winning the National Junior T-shirt design contest! Juniors at national meetings will be wearing her T-shirt.

Hopefully these amazing adventures will encourage more junior members to become active and attend the future spring conference ... plans are already underway!



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY STATE BOWLING ASSOCIATION
22nd NINE PIN TAP TOURNAMENT (48th ANNUAL TOURNAMENT)
April 6 & 7 / April 13 & 14, 2024

100% Prize Fee Returned Sports Page Bowl
 75% Handicap – 200 Scratch 1174 W Broadway Avenue
 Medford WI 54451

The bowlers listed below enter the specified contest(s) at the annual WALASBA Tournament and hereby agree to comply in all respects with the rules of said tournament. The individual members are bona fide 2024 members of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary.

WALASBA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SUBSTITUTES!

Team Name: _____ Unit/City/Location: _____ Unit #: _____

Indicate what Events bowler is entering:

Team (Will be bowled on Sunday)	Team \$31/Person
1. _____	Y N
2. _____	Y N
3. _____	Y N
4. _____	Y N

All doubles and singles will be bowled on Saturday (please indicate your desired time) and all Teams will bowl on Sunday.

DOUBLES/SINGLES:
 Saturday: April 6 11am Saturday: April 6 2pm
 Saturday: April 13 11am Saturday: April 13 2pm

TEAM:
 Sunday: April 7 9am OR Sunday April 14 9am

Doubles and Singles (will be bowled on Saturday)	Doubles \$31/Person	Singles \$31.00	All Events (if you want to enter all Events) \$3.00/Person
1. _____	Y N	Y N	Y N
2. _____	Y N	Y N	Y N
1. _____	Y N	Y N	Y N
2. _____	Y N	Y N	Y N

Bowling	\$15.75
Prize	\$ 7.75
Expense	\$ 7.50
Total	\$31.00/Person/Event

Please print complete address & phone # where mail will receive immediate attention

When two or more teams are inter-bowling for doubles partners, please be sure to send your entries together.

Captain: _____ Ph: () _____
 Complete Address: _____
 (City/State/Zip)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

TEAM _____ DBLS _____ SINGLES _____
 ALL EVENTS _____ TOTAL PAID _____

Email: _____ (Revised 10-2023)
 NOTE: TOURNAMENT RULES ARE POSTED ON THE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE (www.amlegionauxwi.org)

MILWAUKEE COUNTY CONFERENCE OF UNITS
 Invites all Legion Family Members and Guests



The 95th Annual George Washington Luncheon
Presidents Day
Monday, February 19, 2024



Meyers Family Restaurant
4260 S 76th Street, Greenfield, WI
Social Hour: 11 AM • Opening Ceremonies: 11:45 AM • Lunch: Noon
Cost is \$30.00 per person

Come and celebrate our first President - George Washington our Veterans and the American Legion Auxiliary

For information contact Laura Calteux, 414-379-2943

Deadline for reservations is February 10, 2024

Detach here and return lower portion

GEORGE WASHINGTON LUNCHEON REGISTRATION

UNIT NAME & NUMBER _____
 NAME OF EACH PERSON ATTENDING: Auxiliary, Legion, SAL, Guest

UNIT CONTACT & PHONE
AMOUNT ENCLOSED: # OF RESERVATIONS _____ X \$30.00 = _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MCCU
 SEND TO: Laura Calteux, 7012 W Squire Ave, Greenfield, WI 53220
Reservation deadline: FEBRUARY 10, 2024 —NO WALKINS!!

ALA UNIT 215 SUPPORTS ZABLOCKI VAMC



Members of Pardeeville Unit 215 presented a check to Department Secretary Bonnie Dorniak for \$1,000 to support the women's programs at Zablocki VA Medical Center. Pictured (left to right): Linda Cason, Lauren Lueck, Dixie Roe, Bobbie Goodman, Bonnie Dorniak, Betty Telvick, Mary Soderlund, and Nancy Borish.

QUILT PRESENTATIONS



The Columbia County Council, American Legion Auxiliary, along with the Quilts of Valor Foundation, presented Robert Adams, oldest active member of American Legion Post 208 in Rio, WI, with a quilt on October 14. Pictured: Bob Adams & Barbara Sigmund.

MEMORIALS



ALA UNIT 384

ABOVE: Unit 384 ALA members set up a Flag Garden in front of the Legion Post in Kewaskum. The 450 12x18 flags are in memory of deceased service and family members. Students in the 6th to 8th Grade Builders Club of Kewaskum Middle School were invited to help put up and remove the flags for Memorial Day, Flag Day and Independence Day.

ALA UNIT 447

AT RIGHT: A Veterans memorial bench was installed at the Viola Cemetery. This special memorial was donated by ALA Unit 447. It was made possible by memorial gifts given in honor of deceased ALA members Arlene Gilman, Betty Wheeler, Ione Williams, Eva Carmack, Jean Pellet, Lorraine White, Ruth Spangler, Roxanne Hoke, Louise Bender, Naomi Sanford, Lillian Geary, Orla Simonson, Golda Cutler, the estate of Ray Sime, and through the dedication and donations by ALA members.



Haugen Unit 540 held their annual fundraising event during Haugen Fun Days, August 12 and 13. Raffle baskets, kolaches, root beer floats, cookies, and bingo were highlighted, as well as Unit 540 sponsoring the Quilts of Valor program with 13 recipients receiving quilts.



Unit 239 of Tigerton, WI presented a lap quilt to Chief Warrant Officer III Micah Couillard while he was on leave in Wisconsin. Micah has been in the U.S. Marine Corps for 20 years and recently reenlisted. THANK YOU for your service, Micah! Pictured (l-r): Micah's wife Yuki, son Phillip, Unit 239 President Virginia Kauffman, Chief Warrant Officer III Micah Couillard, and son Alexander.

OTHER NEWS



Therapy dolls can have a remarkable effect on individuals with Alzheimer’s and related dementias. The simple act of cuddling a baby doll is calming and can help reestablish nurturing feelings, provide a sense of purpose, express emotions, and bring joy and comfort for men and women living with dementia symptoms. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Tomah VA for making this donation possible. Pictured: Brittany Kelly, CTRS-Geriatrics, CDP with Tomah ALA Hospital Representative Helene Stein.

ALA UNIT 469: MARATHON LABOR DAY



Alois Dreikosen ALA Unit 469 in Marathon assists American Legion Post #469 in sponsoring the annual Labor Day celebration. This has been an annual event since 1957 to promote the community, good citizenship, American patriotism, camaraderie and fun. Pictured: Unit President Betty Blume with Uncle Sam (Brent Bundgaard, a teacher in the Bloomer School District).

ALA UNIT 196: LUCKY DUCKY VETERANS RIVER RACE



As Sherri Ritz, member of Delafield ALA Unit 196 and organizer of the 4th annual Lucky Ducky Veterans River Race said, the event was a “SpecQuackular” success. The race consisted of 2,520 numbered rubber ducks paddling down the Bark River along the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk in Delafield. Auxiliary members sold ducks to help raise a generous \$8,460. Sweepers were staged along the river with brooms to free any of the ducks that got hung up on rocks or branches. At the finish line, all the ducks were captured and removed from the river until next year’s race. The top five ducklings received awards and the proceeds were distributed to Veterans causes and the Delafield American Legion Building Fund.

SEPTEMBER 2023 DAILY SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

Day	Prize	Winner	City
1	\$15	Delores Lien	Webster
2	\$15	Bonnie Torbeck	Cecil
3	\$25	Janet Born	Shawano
4	\$15	Sharon Bannach	Cedar Grove
5	\$15	Ann Loss	Scottsdale, AZ
6	\$15	Rochelle Andress	Eleva
7	\$15	Karen LaMere	Belleville
8	\$15	Vicki Anderson	Richland Center
9	\$15	Kathy Wollmer	David City, NE
10	\$25	Margie Bausch	McFarland
11	\$15	Donna Landwehr	Sheboygan
12	\$15	Anne Koppelberger	Kewaskum
13	\$15	Casey Berndt	West Allis
14	\$15	Mary Schaller	West Salem
15	\$15	Mary Hampton	Spring Valley
16	\$15	Ginger Groshek	Stevens Point
17	\$25	Lorraine Boden	Hartford
18	\$500	Vonnie Clemens	Dane
19	\$15	Phyllis Chaffer	Elmhurst, IL
20	\$15	Ann Brunner	Kewaunee
21	\$15	Susan Luoma	Port Wing
22	\$15	Kelly Peterson	Bangor
23	\$15	Diane Omdahl	Green Bay
24	\$25	Jason Badtke	Union Grove
25	\$15	Marilyn Fahrney	Hollandale
26	\$15	Raymona Davis	Hammond
27	\$15	Mary Jane Lapacz	Mountain
28	\$15	Janet Scharnweber	Port Washington
29	\$15	Steve Isensee	Boyd
30	\$15	Brayden Stobb	Reeseville

OCTOBER 2023 DAILY SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

Day	Prize	Winner	City
1	\$25	Lois Rehse	Cibolo, TX
2	\$15	Karen Badtke	Mt Pleasant
3	\$15	Patti Holshouser	Milford, OH
4	\$15	Irene Clausen	Cedarburg
5	\$15	Joann Watkins	Rio
6	\$15	Cheryl Anderson-Hustad	Osceola
7	\$15	Carla Corbin	Onalaska
8	\$25	Vicky Larson	Soldiers Grove
9	\$15	Dale Henning	Janesville
10	\$15	Teri Curtis	Omro
11	\$15	Audra Martine	Holmen
12	\$15	Katherine Rowan	Sparta
13	\$500	Sharlene Kurth	Drummond
14	\$15	Diane MacDonald	Madison
15	\$25	Jean Booth	Downing
16	\$15	Marge Taylor	Holmen
17	\$15	Mary Fairchild	Appleton
18	\$15	Donna Henkel	Sparta
19	\$15	Barb Waite	Eau Claire
20	\$15	Kathryn Peck	Germantown
21	\$15	Arlene Liebenstein	Grafton
22	\$25	Noel Niehausen	Fort Atkinson
23	\$15	Linda Smart	Butternut
24	\$15	Ann Sprain	Sparta
25	\$15	Mary Jane Clemens	Lodi
26	\$15	Faye Crawford	Stoughton
27	\$15	Marjorie Carlson	Mosinee
28	\$15	Maureen Anderson	Lanesboro, MN
29	\$25	Kathy Ziegler	Plymouth
30	\$15	Debora Mussel	Mountain
31	\$15	Karen Ayers	Stoughton



Karl Stuvengen
Department
Commander

★★★★ DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ★★★★★

COMRADESHIP

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never be brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?*

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

*And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup!
And surely, I'll be tmine!
And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

These words were penned by Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1788. Music journalist and author Daniel Ross writes: "The most accurate plain English interpretation of Auld Lang Syne's famous title is 'Old long since', or 'For the sake of old times'."

I think this song has a very personal meaning to Veterans. Our

relationships with those whom also served are special. They are long-lasting and can be picked up right where we left off months, years, even decades later. As the song alludes to, "old friends catching up over a drink, a pint-stoup, if you will, their friendship having been long and occasionally distant."

This is one of the most wonderful aspects of my membership in The American Legion. The opportunity to commiserate with my comrades is precious, and distance and time have no bearing on these friendships. We look forward to renewing our bond with our fellow Veterans, at Legion meetings and other events at every level.

This also demonstrates the effectiveness of Buddy Checks. Veterans may feel a sense of loneliness. They may have friends, but those who never served will never understand the bond that Veterans share. This is why it's so important to make that contact. Nothing will brighten the day of a fellow comrade more than hearing from someone who genuinely cares about how they are doing.

This connection is also a powerful recruiting tool. We can talk programs, community, or Americanism, but it's what we do for our fellow Veterans that is most important. It's that understanding that says "we belong together".

So, as we begin 2024, I urge you to BE THE ONE to keep in contact with all our comrades. Sell this most important benefit of membership in The American Legion by your deeds. Nothing will warm your heart more, than when another Veteran says "Thanks for listening, thanks for caring. It's nice to know I'm not alone."

For *Auld Lang Syne*.



Allen Watry
SAL Detachment
Commander

★★★★ SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER ★★★★★

Hello Wisconsin American Legion Family!! Fall Conferences are now officially completed. The last two months have been very busy, but also very rewarding for myself. It was a pleasure and honor to be able to interact with so many different Post/Squadrons/Units over the last 2 months. Thank you to everyone for the awesome hospitality and discussions.

Two weekends ago, while playing sheepshead with some of my friends, I was asked why I was doing all this traveling and why was "this Legion thing" is so important to me. This provided me the opportunity to talk about my "2 Whys".

My first "Why" is my father, the late Charles Watry. He was part of the Air Force's 4130 Strategic Wing at Bergstrom, TX supporting the B52s and their mission of being a nuclear deterrent. I always admired how his passion for our Country would come out when he talked about BUFF and his Service memories. It was that pride and passion which drew him to be an active Legion member. It was also that pride and passion that

caused me to become a member of the Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders.

My second "Why" is my Great Uncle Fr. James Ernster who is a WWII Army Veteran. His story is a very powerful one, escaping death twice during his service. In the second near death incident, he was hit by shrapnel at the Battle of the Bulge. Fortunately, the prayer book/container he kept in his breast pocket deflected the shrapnel and saved his life. It was at that point he vowed to become a priest if he survived the war, which he did. You can find his story by doing a google search of "Fr James Ernster" to read more about his life and experiences.

So, my request, as we all enter this holiday season, is for everyone to find some time to think about "Your Why". Why is the Legion Family important to you? And how might you take that "Why" and turn it into action during the Holiday Season? A time which can be very stressful and painful for many of our Veterans, active military, and their families.

Happy Holidays, and for God and Country,
Commander Watry



Corey Doehrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

★★★★ LEGION RIDERS ★★★★★

As I write this article, the riding season for most Wisconsin Legion Riders is rapidly ending. Our bikes will be put in storage to protect them from the harsh Wisconsin winter. Then for a lot of us, just like you, the focus will shift to the holiday season. We will be planning to spend time with families and enjoy all that this wonderful season brings. However, some of the Veterans in our communities and even in our local posts don't have the same outlook on the holidays. For a variety of reasons, this time of year can be especially tough for them. What are YOU doing at the local level to reach these Veterans and ensure they feel the support they need during this time of year. Most posts and some Legion Rider districts have just completed buddy checks, which is a great program to reconnect with members who we don't see on a regular basis and make sure all is well. If you identified someone during buddy checks that makes you concerned, don't wait until six months or another year has passed before reaching out to them again. Making another call during this

cold winter holiday season could be just the light to brighten their day. Invite them to a Holiday Dinner at your post or any other function you have going on. Offer to pick them up if getting around is challenging for them during the winter months. The camaraderie is one of the things that is so great in the American Legion Family and by looking out for each other we can ensure others know how much we care about them and want to ensure they stay safe. Remember the phone number 988 is available to those who are in crisis. It is answered 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

During Midwinter, I along with other Legion Family members will be participating in Freezin' for a Reason to raise money for Veterans in crisis. Please support me in this endeavor. Check donations made out to the 'American Legion Foundation' can be mailed to N172W20593 Westfield Dr, Jackson, WI 53037 or electronic donations can be sent via Venmo @ Stephenie-Doehrmann.

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. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Maggie Geiger
Department
President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Christmas Gift Shop program provides gifts to family members of hospitalized Veterans at no cost to the Veteran. The Gift Shop Supervisor develops a catalog of items for the Veterans to choose from and volunteers wrap, box, label and ship the orders to the family members. We visited with Veterans at the Wisconsin Veterans Home-Union Grove and had the honor of helping them choose gifts for their families. The Veterans at the facility were astonished that they were able to select items and many times asked how much they owed. We just told them this is a way the ALA is able to give back to those who gave of themselves so we enjoy our freedom today.

During our visit, I met Kathrine "Kioko" Anderson. Kioko was 12 years old when she and her brother were sitting on a hill that overlooked the naval ships moored at Pearl Harbor. The date was December 7, 1941. They watched as Pearl Harbor was being bombed. She said she and her brother didn't think much of what was going on because maneuvers had been happening during the previous weeks. Kioko said all of a sudden, she realized something was very wrong so she and her brother ran back home. As they were running, a Japanese plane was above them. The pilot tilted its wings back and forth, which is a form of saying "we are here." From that moment Kioko was determined to join the military.

Kioko wanted to become a Marine, and that she did. Knowing that her height might be an issue, she teased up her hair and passed the height restriction! Kioko, was the first woman to enter the military from the state of Hawaii. Basic training was held in San Diego and a film crew followed her around during basic training. The family has been trying to get their hands on the film. I asked her to let me know if they do so we can have a look. I asked Kioko if her family was sent to any of the Japanese camps known as "relocation camps." Only her state-side family members were sent to the camps.

Because of your generosity, 70 Veterans at Union Grove will have presents for their loved ones. There are other Veterans facilities that will be visited and Veterans will be able to shop for their families for Christmas as well – more Veterans to visit and many more stories to be told!

It is through your continued membership in the ALA, personal donations, and precious time working the ALA programs that makes this all possible.

Thank you for *Enhancing the lives of our Veterans, Military and their families One Day at a Time.*

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and many blessings in 2024.



SAVE THE DATE
LEGION FAMILY TESTIMONIAL

MAY | 18TH | 2024

LASURE'S BANQUET & CATERING
3125 S. WASHBURN ST, OSHKOSH, WI 54904