



MEMBERSHIP

Sue Hembrook
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“The Great Membership Race” has begun. We are in the first segment of our race to be winners in this great race. Team Wisconsin so far is in “First Place” in the Central Division.

Our team is “Poppy up for a Veteran”, and we are in the race. The membership committee consists of: Sue Hembrook, Chair; Becky Mueller, Member; and Amy Luft, Member. We are all here equally to serve you and/or answer any questions or concerns you may have. Our information is listed below and in the Red Book. Please reach out to us as we are eagerly waiting to serve you, our members.

Let’s start racing in earnest! Get out in your communities with your branding. Invite your communities to your events. Have fun, make it interesting, and most of all work together. If it is demonstrated how much fun and excitement we have serving our Veterans, military, their families, and our communities, people will want to join in our service. It is amazing how wearing a branded piece of clothing or emblem can strike up a conversation. Have at your ready a few things to say about the projects your unit

does to serve our veterans.

Also, if you cannot get into your schools, invite your schools to you. Halloween is fast approaching and organize a Trunk or Treat event. It is a positive attraction for parents to have a one stop “safe” place to take their kiddos. Plan some entertainment or event for the kiddos and parents to partake in during the event. Pin the tail on the donkey or bobbing for apples can be done in so many ways. Use your imagination and come up with some unique things to do. Please take pictures and share them with the rest of us. Display a “table” of your activities and accomplishments - spread the word of your accomplishments!

Please let us know how we can assist:

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Becky Mueller
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2024 Membership Totals (as of 9/19/23) - 23.01%

DIST.	GOAL %	MUSHER
4	30.26%	Winkle
3	28.65%	Ranger
9	28.41%	Percy
12	26.97%	Baby Girl
5	26.25%	Little Girl
7	26.09%	Hero
2	24.96%	Sloane
6	22.87%	Denali
1	19.83%	Diamond
10	17.48%	Balto
8	17.24%	Isabella
11	10.01%	D.O.G



POPPY REMINDER!

Poppies can be distributed all year long. Veterans Day is a great time to do a distribution.

2024 Poppy Orders are due by December 15, 2023. Don't delay – order today!

IN MEMORIAM: JUNE M. BENISHEK JULY 5, 1930 - AUGUST 16, 2023

Past Department President June Marie Benishek passed away on August 16, 2023 at age 93. She was born in Dodge County and moved to Hustisford, where she graduated from high school in 1948. June then moved to Milwaukee and attended business college for two years. She worked part-time at Gimbels for 35 years until they closed in 1996.

June married Milton in May of 1955 and they had three boys – Jeffrey, Peter and David. Because she was working, they did a lot of traveling.

June was a member of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary for 57 years. She was Department President in 1972-1973 and was Department Secretary-Treasurer from 1987 to 2000. June was active in Federal Unit 203 and was the Finance Secretary for Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church for 11 years. During the past 15 years she found time to be a caregiver for two friends for two years each. June Benishek will be missed by many. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant.



June M. Benishek



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

Philippians 4:6-7 — 6. *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* 7. *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

PRAYER

Dear Father,

You are the Prince of Peace and the great I Am. You are my helper and my redeemer. We need your help today, for we are weak and frail and tired. Give us the strength to get through just this day and the desire to work as if we are doing it all for your glory. Help those who are carrying especially heavy burdens right now. They need your power and peace that goes beyond our understanding.

We are so grateful that we can come to you and present our requests at any time. Thank you for giving us peace and rest even in the hard times.

In the name of the Prince of Peace, Amen

MUSIC

We all know the first verse of the Star-Spangled Banner, but have you ever heard the rest of the song? The Star-Spangled Banner has four verses. Here are the words to the last verse. Note the bolded phrases.

*O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
 Between their lov'd home and the war's
 desolation!*

*Blest with vict'ry and peace may the
 heav'n rescued land*

*Praise the power that hath made and
 preserv'd us a nation!*

*Then conquer we must, when our cause
 it is just,*

And this be our motto - "In God is our trust,"

*And the star-spangled banner in triumph
 shall wave*

*O'er the land of the free and the home of
 the brave.*

Our motto is for God and Country!

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Bonnie Dorniak
 Executive Secretary/Treasurer
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 www.amlegionauxwi.org

The 2023 American Legion Auxiliary National Convention was held in Charlotte, North Carolina. Wisconsin members received several national awards as listed on page A3. Congratulations to the award winners!

Lisa Williamson of Alaska was elected National President and Wisconsin's own Dan Seehafer was elected National Commander for 2023-2024. Their focus for the year is to work as a Legion Family to promote the 'Be the One' initiative.

BE THE ONE

As Commander Seehafer said in his acceptance speech, "Nothing is more important than our effort to reduce the number of Veterans who die by suicide." Be the One... "to save one Veteran or their spouse from taking his or her own life. Be the One to raise awareness about the issue of Veteran suicide, guide resources to those in need, and eliminate the stigma sometimes associated with mental health counseling – all of which will contribute to reducing the Veteran suicide rate. Above all else, talk about it. Learn what to do when a Veteran needs help. And – above all else – Be the One." If you know someone at risk of suicide, encourage them to dial 9-8-8, the Veteran Suicide Prevention hotline for 24/7 confidential crisis support.

For more ideas on how to support the Be the One initiative, visit <https://www.legion.org/betheone>.



National Headquarters mailed the 2024 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.ALA-forVeterans.org, or over the phone. You can 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 2024 dues!

The 2024 Sweepstakes was mailed to current ALA members at the end of August. This is the only fundraiser that ALA Wisconsin conducts and the proceeds stay in Wisconsin. 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!

CAROL T. ROBINSON ELECTED CDNVP

Carol T. Robinson was elected as CDNVP at the 2023 National Convention. She was born and raised in London, Ohio, and graduated from London High School. During her junior year, she attended ALA Buckeye Girls. She is a 38-year Paid Up For Life (PUFL) member of General Daniel "Chappie" James ALA Unit 776 in Riverside, OH. Her eligibility was earned through her late brother, William A. Hawkins, who served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

Carol T. has one daughter, one granddaughter, one great-granddaughter who are all ALA members, and one great-grandson. She holds a bache-

lor's degree in business management and human development and two Master's Certificates, one in Government Contracting and the other in Project Management. She retired twice – first, from the Defense Logistics Agency after serving for 32-1/2 years, and second, from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services after 15 years.

Carol T. has served in many positions on the unit, district, department and national levels and was National Chaplain in 2021-2022. She has also been a member of numerous other nonprofit and civic organizations.



Carol T. Robinson
 Central Division
 National Vice President

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bob Shappell
 Department Chair
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 262-376-0348 (h) / 414-899-4067 (c)

Public Relations is much more than creating posters and advertising our events to the community. The function of Public Relations is to build and to maintain a positive image of your unit, your post, and the American Legion Family in your community. Your unit's reputation and image should be its greatest assets in gaining both community support and new members. People will respond favorably to what you say

and what you do if you have a good image.

In today's society, we must adopt a fresh approach to telling the stories of our units and our members. We can no longer wait for the media to come calling; instead, we must become our own media. This does not mean buying a newspaper company or TV/Radio station. It does mean using the vast array of communication channels to our advantage.

It means effective and regular internal communications with our members. It means we become visible outside the confines of the Unit/Post home. That visibility translates into a form of communication media and can be a catalyst

to recruiting new members. The way we look, act, and speak in the community creates our reputation and image. The new ALA brand mark is a great way to communicate who we are within our community. It also means smartly using all methods to communicate, from paper and voices, to personal networking, and to various social media and electronic tools.

A good starting point for your unit is to ask several questions. Does your community understand the purposes and goals of your unit? What is the reputation of your unit in the community? How do community members (especially those new to the community) find out

about the unit and its activities? If you cannot answer these questions, how would you go about finding the answers?

Your Public Relations Committee is committed to helping all units answer these questions, and much more. We will gladly visit units or districts to provide snippets of training. We also plan some virtual training. We will share good ideas from units around the Department. We will offer advice on PR activities or actions your unit is considering. We have great programs and great stories – let's make sure our communities understand who we are and what we do.

2022-2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION AWARDS

American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin received the following awards or acknowledgements for the 2022-2023 administrative year during the 2023 National Convention:

AMERICANISM

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

Americanism Essay Contest
Class I, Best Essay in Central Division
Ava Teclaw
Sponsored by Thorp Unit 118, District 7

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Best Department Community Service Program
in Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Kay Grosskopf, Department Chairman

LEADERSHIP

Unit Member of the Year
Cathy Wilbur
Sponsored by Appleton Unit 38, District 9

MEMBERSHIP

Department 85% Goal Award
Reaching 85% of the 2023 Dept membership goal by 3/15/2023
Department of Wisconsin
Becky Mueller, Department Chairman

Units that reached 100% of their 2023 membership goal by 11/10/2022

Bayfield Unit 49	Two Rivers Unit 165
Mt. Hope Unit 229	Tigerton Unit 239
Cross Plains Unit 245	Coleman Unit 280
Winter Unit 303	DeForest Unit 348
Birchwood Unit 379	Adell Unit 462
Saint Nazianz Unit 477	Somers Unit 552

New Unit Award – New Unit Chartered by 7/31/2023
Wild Rose Unit 374 (District 8)
Land O' Lakes Unit 464 (District 11)

POPPY

Poppy Poster Contest, Class IV
Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Sela Meeks
Sponsored by Port Washington Unit 82, District 2

VA&R

Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program in Central Division
Port Washington Unit 82, District 2
Diane Burkhalter, Unit President

VAVS MEETINGS PERFECT ATTENDANCE CARD

Pat (Joyce) Flanders, Hospital Representative
Tomah VA Medical Center, Tomah, WI

Sheila Frye, Hospital Representative
Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, Madison, WI

Helene Stein, Hospital Deputy
Tomah VA Medical Center, Tomah, WI

Anna Wender, Associate Hospital Representative
Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, Iron Mountain, MI

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SERVICE AWARD
(for Largest Increase in Active Regularly Scheduled Volunteers & Volunteer Hours)

Bonnie Jakubczyk, Hospital Representative
Zablocki Memorial VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI

Anna Wender, Associate Hospital Representative
Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, Iron Mountain, MI



NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

ABOVE: Bonnie Jakubczyk with PDP Linda Coppock, receiving the Volunteer Recruitment Service Award.

BELOW: 2nd District President Sandy Mack accepting the Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program award on behalf of Van Ells Shanen Unit 82.

TOP RIGHT: 2nd District President Sandy Mack accepting the Outstanding Unit VA&R Program award on behalf of Van Ells Shanen Unit 82.

AT RIGHT: Sela Meeks from Unit 82 in District 2 won the Best Poppy Poster in Central Division for Class IV award.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN 2024-2025 DEPARTMENT PROGRAM INTEREST FORM

Senior Vice President Becky Mueller is considering appointments for the 2024-2025 administrative year (July 2024 to July 2025). If you are interested in a department position, please complete the information below and email it to Becky Mueller at clarencandbecky@aol.com by December 15, 2023.

Name: _____ District #: _____ Unit #: _____ Email: _____

Phone: Cell: _____ Home: _____ Best time to call: _____

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

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

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.

LEGISLATIVE

Linda Coppock
Department Chair
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920-851-5811

I am excited to be your Legislative Chairman this coming year. It will force me to expand my knowledge on legislative issues and the different ways we can advocate for our Veterans, active military and their families. I have some great mentors on the national level and I am excited to share with you everything I learn from them!

Donna Dillard is the National Legislative Chairman and Cathie Goth is our Central Division Legislative Committee Chair. They both will be working with us this year as we strive to promote and advocate for The American Legion's Legislative Agenda. Cathie will be sending out monthly newsletters hoping to keep us up to date with Legislative issues! She asks that we all familiarize ourselves with the www.legion.org/legislative/agenda website and all

the information available there such as The American Legion's Legislative Agenda for the 118th Congress along with the Legislative Handbook and Advocacy Toolkit.

Remember that The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are nonpartisan, without regard to political affiliation. As stated in the Department Red Book:

"The purpose of the Legislative program is to provide information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members in supporting the legislative agenda of The American Legion with elected officials at all levels of government (local, state, national). All programs are greatly dependent upon proper legislation, so the Auxiliary must be well informed.

Every unit should appoint a Legislative Chair and subscribe to The American Legion Dispatch and encourage as many members as possible to subscribe. The Dispatch is published monthly by the National American Legion and is available online at [http://](http://www.legion.org/dispatch)

www.legion.org/dispatch.

For contact information and a list of officials go to: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov>. Members of Congress can also be found at www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

Members should write to their legislators when asked to put special emphasis on a subject and send copies of the communication and responses received from legislators to the Department Legislative Chair. Responses help the American Legion Auxiliary national headquarters determine congressional opinion on Veterans' issues.

Also, please join the ALA Legislative Facebook page for the latest updates.

Contact information for:

Donna Dillard
903-870-8770
threedtaxas@gmail.com

Cathie Goth
660-351-1816
cgoth1@charter.net

MISSION IN ACTION: PARDEEVILLE UNIT 215



The American Legion Auxiliary Harry D. Jerred Unit 215 of Pardeeville presented a check to Badger Honor Flight representatives from the Madison hub. Pictured (front row, l-r): Jennifer Larson and Bonnie Felton; (back row): Erin Salmon; Randy Gundlach, Treasurer of Badger Honor Flight; Nancy Borish; Mitzi Manthey; Bonnie Seberg; Bobbie Goodman; Unit President Mary Soderlund; and Dawn Splittgerber, Inventory Director of Badger Honor Flight.

LEADERSHIP

Joyce E. Endres
Department Chair
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"We don't need a title to lead. We just need to care. People would rather follow a leader with a heart than a leader with a title." Craig Groeschel

Who have you mentored today? Remember Senior, Junior, seasoned and new members benefit from kind and sincere mentorship from YOU, a fellow member!

What or who is a mentor? A mentor is a trusted or experienced member who steps forward to help other members, chairmen or leaders. Mentors answer questions and provide guidance, training or advice about the American Legion Auxiliary and its family. Mentors are kind, supportive, helpful and respectful.

'Components of Leadership' shared by the National Leadership Team: organizational knowledge, innovation, vision, honesty, communication, openness, collaboration, integrity, enthusiasm, and commitment.

Communication/Openness/Listen: During the 2023 ALA in the Know Sessions, Leadership breakout sessions were held. We asked various questions and asked each attendee for their input. The following is input from the September 9 session. All other input will be summarized in a document posted to the Department website. Please think about if or how this input may apply to you and your unit. Have FUN working together to encourage excitement and energy between your members and the American Legion Family while serving the ALA mission.

Question 1: *What encouraged or stopped you from taking on an officer position or program chairman/committee role?* **Encouraged:** Encouraged by a Past Department President or another member; Mission keeps me going,

I have a passion for the organization; Believe in supporting our Veterans and family members' service; Find your passion and run with it; Good mentors help; Dual members are a great value; Can't say no; Want to carry on the family legacy; Others see your potential and encourage you to move up; The challenge; A deep thirst for knowledge. **Stopped:** Don't want to move up; I am a follower, not a leader; I enjoy serving as Chaplain; Need time to "fit it in"; Once you're there, you're always there, please mentor and rotate leaders at least every three years; Still learning; Need to sit back and watch to learn more first; Filling big shoes can be intimidating.

Question 2: *What do you wish someone would have told you early on during your leadership journey?* Where to find resources and info about what to do and how to do it; Answers are out there, ask a chairman, officer or department; You don't have to do it alone; Reach out to members to ask for help; Don't tell me it is easy, when it's not; Learn to share information with entire American Legion Family; Not everyone wants to help or share; How to work around obstinate people; Conflict resolution; Realize you don't know everything; Entire Legion Family has similar issues; Be encouraged to try new things to see change and excitement; Listen to members, different views help us all do a better job.

2023-24 ALA Department President Maggie Geiger wrote, "Maybe that's why our ALA emblem is yellow or gold, our members are the threads that make up the star, single threads don't look like much, but woven together they are strong and complement each other to form the beautiful star that members wear proudly!" For God and Country.

VALUE yourself, others do. A smile can turn a person's whole day around.

Please contact me if you would like to schedule a Leadership Workshop in your unit, county or district.

MISSION IN ACTION: SPOONER UNIT 12



Spooner Unit 12 (District 12) participated in the ALA's "Give 10 to Education" school supply drive. They collected 12 backpacks of supplies plus additional construction paper, etc. A big thank you to Education Committee Chair Tiffany Parker! Supplies were delivered to Spooner Middle School.

POPPY

Kay Grosskopf
Department Chair
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The poppy is the ALA symbol of sacrifice and remembrance. We remember the soldiers who sacrificed everything so we can live our lives free today. Anytime you wear a poppy, it's an opportunity to start a conversation. We need to educate those who are not aware of what the poppy stands for.

First, we need poppy makers. Encourage Veterans to make poppies. Veterans who work through the ALA Poppy Shop at Zablocki get paid for the poppies they make. Everything is provided in a kit that they assemble. Auxiliary members can also purchase poppy kits from Emblem Sales and make poppies but they can't be identified as Veteran-made. We need poppies to distribute! If you need poppies, get your order in by December 15, 2023. Due to a postage increase, if you can arrange to pick up poppies

at Midwinter Conference, it would be very helpful.

Sponsor a Poppy Poster contest. There are seven classes from second grade to 12th grade including a level for special needs. There are criteria that must be followed or the poster may be removed from competition. Poppy Posters are due to this Department Chair by March 15, 2024.

There is also a Best Overall Unit Poppy Program. A typewritten narrative is due by April 1, 2024 and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Next is the Best Poppy Usage contest. If you use your poppies for other than distribution, document how they are being used and submit a report.

The Poppy Revenue award is based on the unit's income revenue in relation to the membership numbers. Make sure you send in the Unit Poppy Profit Report on time.

The Little Miss Poppy nominations are due by March 15 but don't wait! She should be keeping a scrapbook of her activities.

It's a ways off, but make plans for National Poppy Day May 24, 2024 (always the Friday before Memorial Day). Have your city or village official sign a Poppy Proclamation.

For all of the above, document your activity and take pictures! There are more details in the Program Engagement Plan (formerly Program Action Plan) available on the department website (www.amlegionaux-wi.org), along with other resources to promote the Poppy program. The national website for poppy information is <https://legion-aux.org/poppy>. Make sure you get your award applications in on time and follow the guidelines. And always wear ALA identification – be it clothing or the badge. Let people know who we are and what we stand for.

We need each unit that distributes poppies to send in their report. Nothing is nicer than getting recognized at the Division and National levels for all the time and energy we spend helping our veterans.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Bonnie Jakubczyk
Department Chair
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Veterans Day is a holiday dedicated to American Veterans of all wars, and will occur on Saturday, November 11. In 1918, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, was declared between the Allied nations and Germany in World War I, then known as “the Great War.” The following year in many countries it was observed as Armistice Day. 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.

While we should thank 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 a Veterans Day ceremony, parade, or other event 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, there are simple things you can do to make them feel appreciated – offer to help a Veteran with household chores or yardwork. Sometimes Veterans just need someone who

will spend time and listen to them.

Beyond in-person events and volunteer activities, try giving back to Veterans through kind words and artistic projects. Educate our youth about the importance of Veterans Day. Search for craft ideas online for Veterans Day. Make crafts 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 come from the heart and should brighten their day.

Veterans Day should not be the only day we celebrate Veterans, rather, it should be a jumping-off point for us to continue to **fight and advocate** for these folks at home. Be the One – listen and thank our Veterans this Veterans Day.

Mary K. Petrie
Department Historian
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The year, 1919... America was recovering from WWI, a nickel purchased a loaf of bread, a first-class stamp rose to three cents, the first Wisconsin NFL team – the Green Bay Packers was founded, women won the right to vote, new inventions produced pop-up toasters and short wave radios, The American Legion was formed, and the Women’s Auxiliary to The American Legion was born.

Stepping into the present ... America is still dealing with war and conflicts, prices have soared, the Packers are NFL champs, voters are bombarded with political choices, technology soars beyond imagination, but The American Legion Family remains dedicated to the men and women who served and continue to serve For God and Country.

History is defined as the study of change over time, and the American Legion Auxiliary is steeped in rich history. Not long ago, we celebrated a century of service, which undeniably describes the ALA mission and Service Not Self ideal. The seeds were planted by determined women long ago, ever growing to meet changing needs. Times change, but the men and women of The American Legion Family remain unwavering in their commitment to serve those who served.

History shows the road traveled, and as the journey continues, another chapter

is added. We are living history. Our story has been reported and recorded for future generations, showing the who, what, when, where and why of the organization. It is up to us to steadfastly do the same.

Whether you are an elected historian or have graciously stepped forward to write the history, encourage and remind members to provide information. While writing intimidates some, a few bullet points, a paragraph, or a jotted note on a napkin works just fine, and it doesn’t matter how small or large the project or event. It is all important!

Consider dusting off an old history or reviewing past minutes. Take a moment during a meeting to step back in time. It’s fun to reminisce, remember old friends, and relive special times ... and who knows, maybe there’s a project or event to retry!

History is much more than names and dates and could be compared to the domino effect. Tip that first domino and the rest follow suit – a chain reaction. Share pride in achievements with potential members, which will renew current membership enthusiasm, and inspire achieving goals, while strengthening and developing future leaders.

Check the next Unit Mailing and website. There’s more in store!

While Enhancing the Lives of our Veterans, Military and their Families, One Day at a Time, remember to record and report, as together we write this chapter of Wisconsin ALA history!

VA&R — HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS

Pat Smith
Department Chair
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A CRY FOR HELP

“I just don’t know what to do or where to turn anymore. It seems like if something is going to go wrong or happen to someone, I’m the one who gets pegged. After next week, I will have only one part-time job as the company is down-sizing. How will I pay the rent or any of the other bills? I have a doctor’s appointment in two days and I think he wants to do surgery. It is just too much. I need a break.”

This is not an uncommon set of circumstances, but there is hope and help available. The most immediate help comes in the form of the many programs available at the VA. These programs are available to all Veterans, but women Veterans have not used those programs as readily as male Veterans. The reasons are many but a major one is the issue of pride. Once the female Veteran makes a commitment to the help being offered by the VA, time becomes the enemy. The Veteran may become accepted into a program, but there is a time lapse between that acceptance and the authorization of payment.

Now ALA-Wisconsin’s Home-

less Women Veterans Grant Fund can help. We may not fix all of the problems, but we can help with some of the more urgent issues. Within a couple days of receiving an application, the committee will make a decision and inform the applicant or Veteran’s sponsor of the decision. If positive, a check is sent to a third party and the applicant can breathe a little easier. We matter in that crucial time crunch. The ALA’s Homeless Women Veterans Grant Fund is the candle of hope in those desperate times. You can support this program by mailing a check to department headquarters, noting “Homeless Women Veterans” in the memo field.

VA&R — DIRECTOR OF HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

Sue Hembrook
Department Chair
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262-945-9791

Kudos to all for your support of our Veterans in the VA Hospitals and Veterans Homes. Our volunteers, for the most part, are able to serve the Veterans in these facilities in person once again. However, they cannot fully perform their duties without your assistance. They distribute essential and nonessential items to our Veterans through your monetary and in-kind donations. The Hospital Wish

Lists are published in the October Unit Mailing. Please use these lists for collecting or purchasing needed items for these facilities. Each facility is unique and has different needs. If your Unit, Post or Squadron comes up with an idea to collect items, please contact the ALA Hospital Representative from that facility to be sure they can still use that item, especially as it gets later in our year. You all are so very generous but the storage spaces available are very limited, and when these lists are published you flood our facilities with these items. Thank you!

Please know that all of your dona-

tions, whether monetary or in-kind, are truly appreciated by our Veterans. Our Hospital Representatives and Deputies are so very grateful for your support as they then have needed items to be enjoyed by the residents of our facilities. Please know that even though some of these items may be small, they do bring a ray of sunshine to the residents.

Thank you for your support and assistance!! If you have any questions, you can contact myself or the Reps or Deps of a specific facility. All information for each facility is listed in the ALA Department of Wisconsin Red Book.

Diana Sirovina
Department Chair
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Time has flown by again and it is time for Christmas Gift Shop season again! We are excited that we can bring this great program to our Veterans in some of the long-term care facilities once again.

For those who are not familiar with Christmas Gift Shop, this program began a long time ago. It allows Veterans in long-term care facilities to select gifts to send to their loved ones at Christmas time at no cost to them. The program has changed a lot over the years, but there is one thing that will never change – our commitment to caring for our Veterans and their families!

These past couple years, our Veterans in long-term care facilities spent many long and lonely hours with no visits from family or friends. They were over-joyed when they heard that the ALA Christmas Gift Shop would be available to them again this year. It allows them to feel connected to their loved ones and gives them something positive to focus on.

The 2023 version of Christmas Gift Shop will continue our long-standing tradition of providing gifts as we have in the past. But bringing Christmas Gift Shop to

our Veterans does take time and preparation. Many hours are spent browsing Amazon.com for gifts that can be selected for loved ones of all ages. Once our selection of available gifts is complete, items are photographed, and a “catalog” created for the Veteran to view and select their gifts. Veterans make their selections and items are ordered, sorted, and readied for our annual wrapping day. A group of dedicated Legion Family members gather to wrap the gifts and pack them for shipping. A trip to the Post Office completes this phase of the project.

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.

The cost of gifts, wrapping and shipping are all totally covered by your generous donations. Our Christmas Gift Shop program may only last a couple months each year, but your unit can make it a year-round project by sending in your donations, earmarked for Christmas Gift Shop, whenever you have funds available. Thank you for supporting this great program!

VA&R — SERVICE TO VETERANS

Linda Kostka
Department Chairman
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Service to Veterans means making a difference in the lives of Veterans, their families, their caregivers and the communities where they live. Thank you to all the volunteers in the VA facilities helping

Veterans on a regular schedule.

But not everyone can provide direct service to Veterans in a VA facility due to time or location. The Service to Veterans program focuses on direct service to any Veteran not in a VA medical center and who is not related to the member providing the service.

We have other opportunities to help Veterans by visiting with them

or helping a caregiver with their responsibilities. You could take them shopping, bring them a meal, or even just sometimes pay for their meal in a restaurant. There are many programs you can volunteer in that honor Veterans or provide items for them like Quilts of Valor. Don’t forget to share your volunteer hours with your Auxiliary unit so they can be documented and consolidated at higher levels.

HISTORY



Karl Stuvengen
Department
Commander

★ DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ★

**Leadership and Mentorship:
Who's watching?**

One of the basic tenets of leadership and mentorship is to take care of your actions, because you never know who is looking to you as an example of how to act.

In Harry Chapin's hit song, *Cat's in the Hat*, the father discovers much too late that while there were planes to catch and bills to pay, his son was watching and learning from the priorities and actions of the father. The father's final realization that *my boy was just like me* is a stark reminder to all of us that we only have a limited amount of time to teach and mentor those who follow us. They will learn, one way or another and if we fail to give good mentorship, we may not like the outcome.

A mistake sometimes made by leaders is that we get so wrapped up in our own duties, that we forget that the most important part of our job is to train those that come after us. The old adage "Don't forget where you came from" should

remind Legionnaires that even though we may have moved on to higher office or our title now includes the word "Past", we still bear a great responsibility to that next generation of leaders to show them how to be successful.

We can all agree that the most important part of The American Legion is the Post. Without strong and vibrant Posts, there is nothing for higher level officers to support, and our organization as we know it, does not exist. While we may no longer be "in charge" at the Post, those that are look to past officers for guidance and help. There is no better resource for a new Post officer than those who have held that office before them. But as we learn in Chapin's song, it is our actions and deeds that will most affect that guidance. So, ask yourself questions like: "Is my Post 100+% in membership?" "Are all Post reports and documents being properly filed?" "Are our programs being carried out in the most effective manner?" "Am I doing all I can to make my Post as active and successful as it was when I was an officer?"

Remember, you didn't do it by yourself, and they can't either. So, lead from the front, always mentor, and RECRUIT THE NEXT YOU!



Allen Watry
SAL Detachment
Commander

★ SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER ★

Has it already been two months since my last article? Time is flying!! And the Wisconsin Sons of the American Legion have been very busy. I have had a busy two months traveling around to meet squadrons and participating in all the great activities you are doing. Keep up the great work!! You are amazing!!

One trip I want to highlight is National Convention. The Detachment of Wisconsin was well represented with 11 Delegates in attendance. We were presented with several awards including Detachment All Time High Membership, the Most New Squadrons for 2022-2023 (10 new squadrons), and Best Squadron History Book (Squadron 375). Also, three Wisconsin generated Resolutions were passed over the weekend. And I will never forget all the

energy around Dan Seehafer becoming the Legion National Commander. What a great Convention for Wisconsin.

I do need to touch on a couple of business related items before I close. First, Squadrons please continue to process 2024 Memberships. We are currently ranked 4th in the Nation for Membership (% of goal for 2023/2024) so we are off to a strong start. Hopefully everyone's goal is to be at or above 100% before the end of the year. Second, do not forget to update the Detachment with any changes to your Squadron Leadership, Dues, or other Squadron Information. And finally, do not hesitate to reach out to the Detachment Officers. We love to visit and participate in all the great activities Squadrons are doing. And we are here to help and support the squadrons of Wisconsin.

Until next time, for God and Country,

Allen Watry
Detachment Commander



Maggie Geiger
Department
President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"911, What's your emergency?" is a phrase we all understand and hope we never have to use. Right now, across our nation there is an epidemic that is happening that many of us have been or will be touched by, at some point in our lives.

We've all heard the statistics that there are approximately 20 Veterans that die by suicide every day, but those numbers do not include the family members or friends that cannot cope with the loss and take their own lives as well.

Those of us who have been touched with the loss of a loved one continually say to ourselves, what did I miss, I should have called more, I should have been there more ... it's the should of, and why didn't I, that remain with you.

Be The One Initiative, gives all of us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Veterans, military, their families, and our own ALA members.

Get involved – this is another way to work the ALA mission. Call members of the TAL family that you haven't seen lately. When people are not themselves, make a point to talk with them. Perhaps the person needs to see a friendly face, a smile, someone to listen to them, or just a simple hug, can make a difference in someone's life.

The PTSD Coach app was designed for Veterans experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. You do not have to be in treatment for PTSD to use the app, but it is not a replacement for therapy. Remember, if you need to speak to someone, dial 988 and press 1 to be connected to someone who will listen and help.

The PTSD Family Coach app is for family members of people with PTSD. Both apps are free and available; <https://mobile.va.gov> or at the App store. It is time to remove the stigma associated with asking for or seeking help.

Both National Commander Dan Seehafer and National President Lisa Williamson have joined together to bring awareness to the American Legion family by embracing "Be The One" as their focus for the 2023-2024 year.

Let all of us bring awareness to our TAL families and communities, and "BE THE ONE"!



Corey Doehrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

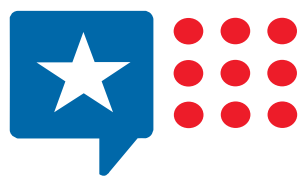
★ LEGION RIDERS ★

This past weekend was the Wisconsin Legion Riders 'Fall Ride to Camp American Legion'. This tradition was started many years ago by Ken 'Rhino' and Ann Rynes. The purpose is simple, to raise donations for Camp. This same weekend in September is the Tomahawk Fall Color Ride, which is a motorcycle rally in the northern part of the state. It is a natural draw for those of us rolling on two (or three) wheels. Why not combine with the Color Ride a reason for Legion Riders to come to camp when many are already in the Northwoods for the weekend. Two key things to remember from our purpose are: 'We are a group of American Legion Family Members who ride for a cause.' and 'To provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interests.'

On Saturday, September 16, Legion Riders from almost all 12 districts across the state gathered at a gas station in Tomahawk, WI. Forty bikes made the trek from that gas station to Camp, if you've never seen that number of bikes rolling up the road it definitely draws attention. Saturday was no different, we didn't even get out of the parking lot and another motorcyclist walked over to ask us what was going on. Once at Camp we had lunch and then started the check presentations. All total at this writing over \$21,800 was donated for replacing one of the pontoons. Many Legion Riders also made it a long weekend and stayed at Camp. They enjoyed the peace and camaraderie that is the secret power of Camp. Campfires were one of the highlights of the day and whether too much wood was thrown on or if things got a little silly, laughs were prominent! There was sadness also, when on Friday we found out about the passing of Ann Rynes, the Matriarch of the event we were there to support. A few weeks from now we will ride another mission, a mission of Honor, to escort Ann to her final resting place. Godspeed Ann, your weary body is now at rest, and we have the watch. 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.



Ann Rynes



Veterans Crisis Line

DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

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