



MEMBERSHIP

Christina Petranovich
Department Chairman
christina.petranovich@yahoo.com
715-512-0628

From National: With an average of 10% of members reporting volunteer hours, the American Legion Auxiliary made an impact of over \$834 million in our communities, states, and nation last year. If every member reported his/her hours, that number would be well over \$1 billion.

You could be a part of a family that is making billions of dollars of impact in the lives of our veterans, active-duty military and their families, our children and youth, and our communities!

If you are a spouse, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter, or granddaughter of an honorably discharged veteran since December 7, 1941, let's talk! Honor the service of your veteran by joining the American Legion Auxiliary!

I am proud to be a PUFL (Paid Up For Life) member. If you are not already one, consider becoming a PUFL member, which ensures the American Legion Auxiliary's continued service to its mission into the future. In addition to your commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary, there are other benefits:

- Pay once and never worry about paying for dues again.
- A rate change won't affect you. The PUFL is based on current dues rates.
- The honor of being committed to the Amer-

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Christina Petranovich
Department Chairman
christina.petranovich@yahoo.com
715-512-0628

Diane Burkhalter
Committee Member
burkhalterdl@gmail.com
414-807-0501

Claudia Osero
Committee Member
countonclaudia@gmail.com
715-612-2161

Andrea Stoltz
Membership Program Coordinator
alawi@amlegionauxwi.org
608-745-0124

Membership Totals
- 68.74%
(as of 11/19/2025)

District	Goal %
4	80.85%
11	73.00%
2	72.66%
6	72.45%
3	72.39%
9	70.22%
12	69.56%
8	69.19%
7	65.41%
10	64.99%
1	62.66%
5	59.56%

ican Legion Auxiliary for a lifetime.

- Lifetime subscription to the American Legion Auxiliary magazine.

Visit the Wisconsin department website (www.amlegionauxwi.org) or national website (www.ALAforVeterans.org) for a PUFL application with rate chart.

A PUFL membership is a win-win and keeps us *Mission Drive, Family Focused while we Honor Our Country and Support Our Veterans!*

KEWAUNEE AUXILIARY UNIT: 100 YEARS STRONG



Kewaunee Unit 29 celebrated their 100th Anniversary. Today's members are proud to support veterans and the community just as their charter members did in 1925 and they look forward to providing many more years of service. Pictured (l-r): Carol Kacer, Brenda Pruka, Sharon Pruka, Bekah Brunner, Sally Jadin, Lorelee Decramer, Sandi Stangel, Ann Brunner and Bernice Buchanan.

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES



2025-26 DEPARTMENT HONORARY JUNIOR OFFICERS

Front row (L to R): Secretary Taylor Rue, President Virginia Calteux, Vice President Shine Dickerson. Back row (L to R): Historian Emma McDowell, Chaplain Maddie Drewek, Sergeant-at-Arms Katelyn McDowell, Sergeant-at-Arms Luna Lee.

Dr. Christine Johnsen
Department Chairman
cmj102@aol.com
715-203-2015

Morgan Johnsen, Dept Vice Chairman
Virginia Calteux, Honorary Junior President

Hello! I'm Virginia Calteux and I am the 2025-2026 Department Honorary Junior President. My department project is in support of President Sue's project to raise funds for Camp American Legion. While we were at Camp American Legion for our Spring Junior Conference we discussed raising money for kayaks. My goal is to raise enough funds to purchase four kayaks. How am I going to do that you ask? At the Fall Junior Conference, we voted as a whole to sell Kwik Trip gift cards and personalized Honor Buttons.

We will be selling Kwik Trip gift cards in \$25, \$50, and \$100 denominations. We will earn 5% profit on regular gift cards and 15% profit on grocery-only gift cards. Grocery-only gift cards cannot be used to purchase fuel, tobacco, alcohol, gift cards, lottery/lotto, or stamps. Pre-orders can be placed with credit card payment by scanning the QR code or by mailing a check with the order form on the department website (www.amlegionauxwi.org> Programs > Junior Activities). All orders received by December 21 will be distributed at Midwinter Conference in Green Bay or hand-delivered by January 31. Gift cards will also be available for purchase at Midwinter. Additional orders can be placed until June 15, 2026.

For our second fundraiser we will be selling personalized Honor Buttons for \$10. The button can include a picture of your veteran, name, dates of service, and a personal message. You can place an order for a personalized Honor Button using the QR code or the same order form as the



Kwik Trip cards. Email Christine Johnsen at cmj102@aol.com to begin personalizing your button. Order by January 10th to receive your button at the Midwinter Conference. Additional buttons with patriotic slogans will also be available for purchase at Midwinter for \$5.

If you would like to contribute to my special project, it would be much appreciated! Thank you for your time!

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Sandy Mack
Department Chaplain/Music Chairman
Smack0555@gmail.com
262-388-9816

Did you know the world has major cultural and religious holidays during both December and January?

- **December (5 or 6)** St. Nicholas – Christians honor the birthday of Saint Nicholas, the inspiration behind Santa Claus.
- **December 8** – Immaculate Conception Day, in which Catholics celebrate the day of Immaculate Conception to honor the Virgin Mary.
- **December 8** – Bodhi Day or Rohatsu, a Buddhist tradition which honors the day in which the Buddha is said to have achieved enlightenment.
- **December 12** – Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe, when Mexicans and Mexican Americans often celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico who symbolizes patriotism and devotion.
- **December 18-26** – Hanukkah, which is an eight-day Jewish holiday. A central part of the Jewish Festival of Lights, which symbolizes how one day's worth of oil miraculously lasted for eight days during a battle.
- **December 21-January 1** – Yule, Wiccans and Neo-Pagans celebrate the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year, which is December 21.
- **December 25** – Christians celebrate Christmas to commemorate the birth of Jesus. This holiday was also adopted as a traditional holiday by people of all faiths. Family traditions may include Christmas music and Christmas cookies.
- **December 26-January 1** – Kwanzaa, which is a week-long holiday to honor African American heritage.
- **January 1** – News Year Day, beginning of a fresh start, reflections, and resolutions, out with the old and in with the new.
- **January 19** – Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a federal holiday honoring the civil rights leader for his life and achievements through service projects and community events that reflect his legacy for promoting racial equality and nonviolent protest.

Let us pray:
Let us ask for peace, understanding, and harmony among all cultures and religions. Let us show compassion to those who are grieving or are lonely. Pray for our military and their families; for unity, asking that people see each other as one family; and that the spirit of the holidays bring love, kindness, and reconciliation to all.

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Amen

Always Remember
“Together We Can Make a
Difference”
God Bless America

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

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

There are several opportunities for members to learn new information at the Midwinter Conference in Green Bay, January 16-17, 2026. Three sessions of particular interest to Auxiliary members are on Saturday, January 17 including: 1) Joint Session on Legion Family Interactions, 2) Public Relations for the Legion Family, and 3) an ALA-specific session regarding annual report writing and general information. Members must register to attend. Note: Any member who pays the registration fee may attend ANY session at the Midwinter Conference, so check out other opportunities on Friday, January 16th as well. For complete details regarding registration, hotel reserva-

tions, and a schedule of activities, please visit: <https://wilegion.org/midwinter>.

Unit Annual Year-End Program Reports may be submitted directly to the appropriate department chairmen via the department website. 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, 2026 and acknowledge their members for all the hard work accomplished throughout the year. Department program chairmen use this information to prepare their annual reports for the national organization and the impact numbers are reported to Congress. Attend the report writing session at Midwinter if you want to learn more.

The national organization will mail the final 2026 dues renewal notices on February 1st to anyone whose dues have not been paid by December 31. 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 (Central Time).

American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State (ALABGS) will be held June 21-26, 2026. The reservation fee of \$500/delegate is due by January 31, 2026. If you are interested in volunteering at ALABGS, please check out the many options to get involved at www.alabgs.org. Thank you to everyone who supports ALABGS!



POPPIES – ORDER NOW!

Reminder: Poppy orders are due by December 15, 2025.

Orders received after that date will incur an additional processing fee and will only be filled if poppies are available. Wisconsin will start accepting poppy orders from other departments after January 1, 2026.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The ALA Staff wish everyone a very joyous and peaceful holiday season.
Please keep our troops and their families in your prayers, especially those separated by deployment.
~ Bonnie D., Linda, Carrie, Andrea, Bonnie J. & Pat ~

The ALA HQ office will be closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.
Poppy Shop operations will resume after the New Year.

WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY STATE BOWLING ASSOCIATION

24th NINE PIN TAP TOURNAMENT (50th ANNUAL TOURNAMENT)

April 11 & 12, 2026

100% Prize Fee Returned
75% Handicap – 200 Scratch

Dale's Weston Lanes
5902 Schofield Avenue
Weston WI 54476

ENTRY CLOSING DATE – Postmarked by MARCH 20, 2026
Mail entries to: Jenni Syftestad
205 Thompson Street, Verona WI 53593-1043



Entry # _____ Date: _____

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 2026 members of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary. When two or more teams are inter-bowling for doubles partners, please be sure to send your entries together. **WALASBA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SUBSTITUTES!**

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

Indicate what Events bowler is entering:

Team: (Will bowl on Sunday)	Team per person = \$31.00	
1. _____	YES	NO
2. _____	YES	NO
3. _____	YES	NO
4. _____	YES	NO

Doubles and Singles: (Will bowl on Saturday)	Doubles = \$31		Singles = \$31	
1. _____	YES	NO	YES	NO
2. _____	YES	NO	YES	NO
1. _____	YES	NO	YES	NO
2. _____	YES	NO	YES	NO

Doubles and Singles will bowl on Saturday (please indicate your desired time) and Teams will bowl on Sunday.

Double/Singles

☐ Saturday, April 11 11am ☐ Saturday, April 11 2pm

Team

☐ Sunday, April 12 9am

All Events (if you want to enter all Events)
\$3.00 Per Person

Bowling	\$13.00
Prize	\$10.00
Expense	\$8.00
Total	\$31.00
Per Person per Event	

Please complete fields (who receives mail)

Captain: _____ Ph: _____

Complete Address: _____
(City/State/Zip)

Email: _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

TEAM _____ DBLS _____ SINGLES _____

ALL EVENTS _____ TOTAL PAID _____

(Revised 7-2025)

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Mary Petrie
Department Chair
920-285-3223
mmrtpetrie@charter.net

“I continue to believe that if children are given the necessary tools to succeed, they will succeed beyond their wildest dreams!”
– David Vitter, Former U.S. Senator

Think back to your childhood. Do you recall your favorite interests and activities? Did someone make a lasting impression? Was there someone you strove to imitate?

Today’s world is totally different, yet love and guidance still work wonders! Our mission vows to protect, care for and support our children and youth, and they are doing amazing things – saving lives and sharing their caring hearts. To date, I’ve received both a Youth Hero and a Good Deed Award notice. Please continue to watch for these happenings as only ALA members can offer submissions. All forms and specifics are accessible under the Children & Youth program on the department website (www.amlegionauxwi.org).

This year’s focuses are A.L.F. and ALA Badger Girls State (ALABGS). Deployments are inevitable, and A.L.F. dogs provide comfort to children in that situation as well as those who are seriously ill.

Our goal is to top last year’s \$4,622 tally to assure availability for upcoming deployments. A.L.F. snuggles help ease separation anxiety and lessen fears associated with illness and hospitalization.

ALABGS is a weeklong conference offered at no cost to girls who have completed their junior year of high school. This patriotic, non-partisan program develops leadership skills, instills pride as American citizens, and stimulates a desire to maintain our democratic form of government. Citizens “learn by doing” as they function on city, county and state levels; conduct business on each level; run for offices in the mythical State of Badger; and participate in election procedures. Unfortunately, due to rising costs, sponsorship fees do not cover all the costs and the program is facing a significant budget shortfall for the 2026 session. Donations are appreciated and may be sent to Department Headquarters noting “ALABGS Donation” on the memo line.

Countless opportunities await to show we care. Step into the classroom: present the flag-folding ceremony or gift patriotic coloring books. Support the Child Well-Being Foundation. Start planning for April’s Month of the Military Child with a Purple Up! Celebration. Remember to track your activities and hours.

Thank you for caring, sharing, and setting the ALA positive example! We

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Linda Tryczak
Department Chairman
tryczak.l@gmail.com
715-848-2686

My name is Linda Tryczak and I am the Department Community Service Chairman. My main focus will be on the American Legion Family Day being held on April 26, 2026.

If your unit does activities pertaining to Community Service, for example, blood drives, parades, working at a homeless shelter, and so on, please email me a description of the event and any action pictures. Pictures must be in digital form (JPG).

AT RIGHT: The Marathon Fun Days included patriotic face painting and tattoos, thanks to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 469 Junior leader and members providing a delightful experience – “It’s Cool to be Patriotic.”

BELOW: District 12 Milltown Unit 254 held a trunk or treat event in October. They handed out 240 candy bags, 80 cups of hot chocolate and free cookies.



Join us for a weekend of bowling, delicious food and beverages and great company.

More information contact
Tournament Director
Jenni Syftestad at
syftes@chorus.net

Dale's Weston Lanes
5902 Schofield Avenue
Weston WI 54476

Doubles & Singles are scheduled to bowl on
Saturday, April 11 at 11 am and 2 pm
Teams will bowl on Sunday, April 12 at 9:00 am

Closing entry date - March 20, 2026

Hosted by Wausau Auxiliary Unit 10

INDIVIDUAL AWARD NOMINATIONS

Do you know someone who deserves special recognition?
Consider one of these opportunities:

Mentor of the Year:

- Due to Past Presidents Parley (PPP) Chair Diane Weggen by May 15, 2026.
- Recognizes a member who takes personal interest in the future leaders of this organization, supports the American Legion Family, has a history of being involved at multiple levels of the organization, and leads by example.
- See the PPP program for details.

Salute to Servicemember:

- Due to NHQ by June 1, 2026 (online application).
- Recognizes an enlisted servicemember currently serving in the US Armed Forces. One servicemember from each branch of service will be recognized and invited to attend the 2026 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The nominating form, along with all supporting documentation, must be submitted online by June 1, 2026, 5:00 pm EDT.
- See the national website (www.ALforVeterans.org) for details.

UNIT 423 SUPPORTS AMERICA'S YOUTH



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 243 in Plymouth donated a Little Free Library at the west corner of Stayer Junior Park. This was a great partnership with the City of Plymouth supplying children’s books to support the Auxiliary’s Americanism and Children & Youth programs.

HAMMOND UNIT 432: QUILTS OF VALOR



American Legion Auxiliary members of Deneen-McCabe Unit 432 presented 20 Quilts of Valor to veterans residing at the Care Center in Hammond, Wisconsin. Pictured: Becky Mikala, Judy Jones and Jennifer Hawkins. The Auxiliary is thankful for the veterans’ service!



September 2025 Daily Sweepstakes				
1	\$15	Christine Turner	Hebron, KY	
2	\$15	Amanda Friell	Onalaska	
3	\$15	Eva Moreno	Appleton	
4	\$15	Janet Elfering	Humbird	
5	\$15	Ruth Komarek	Tomahawk	
6	\$15	Odessa Gaugert	Johnson Creek	
7	\$25	Nate Gordon	Waunakee	
8	\$15	Susan Fagan	Necedah	
9	\$15	Mary Hampton	Spring Valley	
10	\$15	Geraldine Wessel	De Pere	
11	\$15	Sarah Sheehan	McFarland	
12	\$15	Catherine Olsen	New London	
13	\$15	Judith Severson	Menomonie	
14	\$25	Donald Cwikla	Withee	
15	\$15	Deb Braun	Manitowoc	
16	\$15	Sandy Gramz	Menomonee Falls	
17	\$15	Stephie Amundson	Oshkosh	
18	\$500	Penny Bastian	Janesville	
19	\$15	Edith Rohrbeck	Sheboygan Falls	
20	\$15	Wendy Coulter	West Bend	
21	\$25	Dan Anderson	Muscoda	
22	\$15	Terry Bruce	Stevens Point	
23	\$15	Roxi & Monte Maier	Sauk City	
24	\$15	Sandra Poehlman	Spring Green	
25	\$15	Juliet Will	Marshfield	
26	\$15	Mary Steinmueller	Nashotah	
27	\$15	Sandy Berger	Oakfield	
28	\$25	Kathy Doebert	Plymouth	
29	\$15	Mary Ann Gosda	Madison	
30	\$15	Darlene Sarauer	Chippewa Falls	

October 2025 Daily Sweepstakes				
1	\$15	Diane Steinert	Oshkosh	
2	\$15	Ember Rickaby	Wausau	
3	\$15	Joseph Miller	Waupaca	
4	\$15	Kay Van Epps	Ridgeway	
5	\$25	Shirley Hansen	Oconomowoc	
6	\$15	Vicki Schultz	Alma	
7	\$15	Rachel Munz	Poynette	
8	\$15	Yvonne Gordon	Exeland	
9	\$15	Cheryl Hanks-Sinecki	St Peters, MO	
10	\$15	John Spears	Lake Mills, IA	
11	\$15	Shirley Walter	Algoma	
12	\$25	Kay Bernasek	Rosendale	
13	\$500	Norah Strasburg	Minocqua	
14	\$15	Betty Dietzman	Ridgeway	
15	\$15	Rose Schroeder	Lake Mills	
16	\$15	Dawn Justman	Watertown	
17	\$15	Leone Seaman	Berlin	
18	\$15	Kelly Laux	Kenosha	
19	\$25	Pauline Schoemann	Watertown	
20	\$15	Angie Hopfensperger	Neenah	
21	\$15	Mabel Billington	Mayville	
22	\$15	Eileen Wolf	West Allis	
23	\$15	Stephanie Wegner	Grafton	
24	\$15	Luella Hodgson	Mazomanie	
25	\$15	Karen Krause	Mena, AR	
26	\$25	Ione DeSmith	Glenwood City	
27	\$15	Joan Raschka	Stevens Point	
28	\$15	George Christiansen	Onalaska	
29	\$15	Julie Michel	Mount Pleasant	
30	\$15	Karen Blashka	Manitowoc	
31	\$15	Chris Skidmore	Cedarburg	

SOCKS FOR HEROES

Bonnie Dorniak;
Julie Muhle;
Illustrious Com-
mandress Jac-
queline Wilson
of Salaam Court
No. 36; and Dep-
uty for the Oasis
of Madison,
Bernadette Cole,
proud Veteran
and Chairperson
for their Veterans
Connection.



The Daughters of the Imperial Court, which is an auxiliary of The Shriners, donated 1,500 pairs of men’s diabetic socks to ALA-Wisconsin for distribution to veterans. Socks have been provided to the VA hospitals and Veterans Homes in Wisconsin and Michigan and Camp American Legion. Veterans should contact Bonnie Dorniak at deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org if they need men’s large diabetic socks and are able to pick them up at department headquarters in Portage or at the Midwinter Conference. Unfortunately, due to the cost of postage, we are unable to mail socks upon request.

UNIT 262 SUPPORTS EDUCATION



American Legion
Auxiliary Unit 262
in Luxemburg do-
nates snacks to the
Luxemburg-Casco
primary and inter-
mediate schools.
Pictured: Marsha
Bellin, Jan Moureau,
Sherry Veeseer, and
Fran Stahl.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

Donations are still needed to support this year’s Christmas Gift Shop.

There is no cost to the Veterans in long-term care facilities who select gifts for their family members.

Please mail checks payable to “ALA-Wisconsin” to
ALA-Wisconsin, P.O. Box 140, Portage WI 53901-0140.

Note “Christmas Gift Shop” in the memo field.



2026-2027
DEPARTMENT PROGRAM INTEREST FORM

Senior Vice President Amy Luft is considering appointments for the 2026-2027 administrative year (July 2026 to July 2027). If you would like to be considered, complete the information below and email to amyluft@gmail.com or mail to: Amy Luft, 1955 Comanche Ct., Grafton, WI 53024 by March 1, 2026. A fillable form is also available on the department website under Programs > HQ-General Info for your convenience.

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

Number your top three (3) preferred programs/positions with 1 being your top choice, 2 your second choice and 3 your third choice.

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

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.

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

The 97th Annual George Washington Luncheon



Presidents Day
Monday, February 16, 2026
Meyers Family Restaurant
4260 S 76th Street, Greenfield, WI

Social Hour: 11:00 AM
Opening Ceremonies: 11:45 AM
Lunch: Noon
Cost is \$35.00 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 6, 2026
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 \$35.00 = _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MCCU
SEND TO: Laura Calteux, 7012 W Squire Ave, Greenfield, WI 53220
Reservation deadline: FEBRUARY 6, 2026 —NO WALK-INS!!



Nathan Bond
*Department
Commander*

Our American Legion Family boasts a rich legacy of impactful programs that bolster our communities, Wisconsin, and our nation. While not every initiative has succeeded, those efforts were not failures, nor were the leaders who championed them. As a young soldier, the phrase I dreaded most was, “We’ve always done it this way.” Hearing this was frustrating, especially when the familiar methods no longer served their purpose. It was particularly exasperating when no one could explain why things were done a certain way, especially when I knew of other methods that worked remarkably well. This phrase suggested to me that crucial lessons from the past had been lost, and the knowledge gleaned from previous experiences had vanished with

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

LEGACY FORWARD: EMPOWERED BY OUR PAST,
NOT CONSTRAINED BY OUR PAST

those who once held it. Traditionally, there have been valid reasons why an organization operates as it does and why certain paths were not pursued. My challenge to the leaders within our organization is to uncover these reasons. What makes our programs and activities successful? Why did certain initiatives falter in the past? Is it worthwhile to revisit these initiatives, applying lessons learned to achieve success this time? Does our traditional approach still fulfill the needs of our members, potential recruits, and our communities? In other words, what worked and what didn’t work and why? While human nature remains constant, circumstances evolve. Technologies advance, cultures shift, preferences change, and commu-

nity needs fluctuate. How does The American Legion Family remain relevant in the face of such change? Our legacy empowers us. It not only shows us that certain programs have succeeded but also reveals why they were effective. Similarly, it highlights why some efforts did not succeed, providing us with invaluable insights. Thus, my challenge stands: understand why “we’ve always done it this way,” and leverage the lessons of the past to propel our legacy forward. By doing so, we ensure that our organization remains vibrant and responsive to the ever-changing landscape, continuing to make a positive impact on our communities, Wisconsin, and our Nation. Together, let us honor our legacy by adapting and innovating, ensuring that we meet the evolving needs of those we serve.



Sue Hembrook
*Department
President*

PRESIDENT’S
MESSAGE

It is unbelievable to imagine that Veterans Day has come and gone and the holidays are upon us. Hopefully everyone got to honor our veterans and enjoyed all the festivities along with that. I was honored to attend an event sponsored by our State Governor Tony Evers in appreciation of the many organizations that support veterans. It was a rewarding day being able to show the gratitude of our Department to many of our veterans. The holidays are fast approaching and there are many ways to show our appreciation to those who served and are serving. Due to the unfortunate shut down of the government many of our military are struggling to make ends meet. Hopefully as you read this article the situation has been resolved.

The holidays are a good time to remember those veterans who are alone and our military families that have faced financial difficulties lately. In both cases your unit can find someone that needs some holiday cheer and support. Adopt a veteran and share a holiday meal or present them with a gift basket of holiday goodies. Help a military family provide gifts for their families.

Recently, I was asked to help with our very own Christmas Gift Shop program. It was so inspiring to see the response of these veterans knowing that they will be able to present gifts to their families. Words cannot describe their gratitude as we helped them pick out gifts. It is with these simple gestures that we as Auxiliary members truly have an impact. Please reach out to the veterans and military in your communities and spread our gratitude for their sacrifices to keep us safe.

Midwinter is fast upon us also, and will be held January 15-18 at the Oneida Casino Hotel in Green Bay, WI. Your very own department officers will be bringing you “Reporting Made Easy.” There will also be joint sessions on Public Relations and several other topics that are still being worked on. Visit wilegion.org/midwinter for details. This conference is for the entire Legion Family and hopefully we see a grand turnout. This is always a time not only to attend informative sessions, but to rekindle friendships and gain new ones. It is always so productive to interact as a family both on an educational and social basis.

It is amazing all that we can accomplish as a Family!



Christopher Dannenmann
*SAL Detachment
Commander*

What a great time to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion in Wisconsin! As we look forward to celebrating our 250th birthday as a Nation we will also be celebrating 97 years as an organization across this great country and our 58th state convention. Our membership is growing. We have passed well beyond 400,000 nationally, and we are poised to surpass 5,000 state members. Lots of charter applications in process, others holding formation meetings and so many Posts interested in starting a squadron.

Our ALF Dog program is growing stronger with each event, and we stand poised and ready to support our service members and their families whenever we are asked. Let’s remember to remind our members, supporters and volunteers that it is only through donations that programs like the ALF Dogs and the Child Wellbeing Fund can continue

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

“We are forever indebted to those who have given their lives that we might be free.”
— Ronald Reagan

to positively impact these families. In association with the ALF Dog Program, over \$100K in Kimberly-Clark products have been donated this year and they have just passed \$1 Million in donations in their relationship with TAL Family. A very special thanks to all of TAL Family members who have brought our partnership with Kimberly-Clark to the wonderful success that it is today. Looking forward, we need your ideas, programs, event strategies and organizational ideas to keep this momentum. The best ideas come from our membership- like Squadron 454 in Mt. Calvary that has put together a program about the American Flag which has been well received by over 2,000 5th grade students and their teachers. Bring your ideas to our Midwinter Conference in Green Bay and share in the fellowship. Our honored guest will be none other than SAL National Vice-Commander Frank Meraz, Jr. from Stockton, CA. As part of our family, I hope you will be able to be there to enjoy recognition for being part of our successes. So grateful that you are part of the American Legion Family for offering your time, talents and resources to make a difference. Thank you. Blessings and best wishes to you and yours for a safe and fruitful Holiday Season.



Corey Doehrmann
*State Director
American Legion
Riders Association*

The American Legion Riders Association (ALRA) of Wisconsin had our quarterly membership meeting on Saturday November 1st at Wisconsin American Legion Headquarters in Portage. We had special guest Past National Commander Denise Rohan join us to speak about the Veterans & Children Foundation. This was important since this is one of the focuses for our state ride in 2026, see below. Membership in the ALRA of WI stands at 764. To join the ALRA of WI you must meet three requirements: be a member of the American Legion Family in Wisconsin, have a motorcycle endorsement on your driver’s license, own a motorcycle of at least 500cc. Spouses meet the motorcycle endorsement and ownership requirements through their spouse. The WI Legion Riders-Cruise for a Cause, ‘Family First-26’ is a three-day motorcycle fundraising ride that will be held on June 28-30, 2026. It will start in Kenosha and end in Medford. The ride has three focuses: **Veterans & Children**

Foundation (VCF): Provides temporary financial assistance grants to eligible veterans and funds the training for The American Legion organization’s accredited veteran service officers. **Operation A.L.F.:** Sons of The American Legion support our active-duty military by participating in pre-deployment ceremonies and providing their children with comfort puppies to keep them company while mom or dad is away. **WI Auxiliary Badger Girls State:** Girls State is not a recreational program it is a government and leadership conference where the entire delegation will create a mythical fifty-first state that functions according to the laws of the State of Wisconsin. More information will be coming out about how Legion posts, Auxiliary units and Sons squadrons can get involved. Like most of the Legion Family, many Legion Rider districts will be planning get togethers over the holiday season to spend social time to stay in touch. Planning for next year’s events will start in earnest in January-February so that by the time the riding season starts all the preparations are complete. If you have a community parade or event that you would like the Legion Riders to support,

please reach out to me or visit <https://wilegion.org/riders/> to find the right contact for your area. If you have any questions about the ALRA of WI don’t hesitate to contact me: Corey Doehrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at alrawi.director@gmail.com. Our next meeting will be February 7 at Kasierski-Kozlowski American Legion Post 366 in Princeton, WI.

Veterans Crisis Line

DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

