

THIRD DISTRICT FAMILY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



Third District Legion DEC Meetings

Mar-Tues 3/24 - Verona Legion Post
May-Tues 5/26 - Barneveld Legion Post
June-Tues 6/23 - Fennimore Legion Post

Start at 7pm

Legion and Auxiliary Meetings:

Apr-Sat 4/25 - Spring Conference - Dodgeville High School
Invitation and Lunch Reservation Form Enclosed



Dan O'Brien – 3rd District Commander

We are winding down the month of February very quickly and we are hopefully looking at winter in the rear window. But we all know that each day in March is a roll of the dice as to what kind of day we may get, but it each day in March gets us closer to Spring.

On Saturday February 21st we held our Holiday Party at the Verona Legion Post. A huge thank you to Commander Chad Churchill for hosting the party and to Auxiliary members Shannon Churchill and Jenni Syftestad for getting everything ready and preparing the food. It was nice turnout of Legion Family, but we could always wish for more of the Legion Family to come and enjoy the day.

A thank you to Auxiliary President Suzanne Hembrook and Dept. Commander Nathan Bond for coming to the event and saying a few words. Also present were Legion Members running for higher office. Running for Dept. Commander were Steve Kohnke and Larry Larson. Running for Vice Commander were Jon Edelblute and Candace Rothering and running for National Executive Committeeman Karl Stuvengen. Each was given the opportunity to express the reasons they were running for Higher Office. The Third District wishes them all well and we thank them for being so dedicated to The American Legion.

This should be a busy time of the year for each Post as we look in the Admin. Manual for all the Award Programs the Legion offers. Educator of the Year, Fireman of the Year, Police Officer of the Year, EMT of the Year, and so on. What a good way for the Legion to recognize those in our communities who also volunteer their time. Let's not forget we have our own "Gung Ho" Award that recognizes someone in your Post who is going above and beyond and doing the extra things in your Post.



Shelley Drager 3rd District President

Greetings Fighting 3rd District

We are fresh off of our Holiday Party. It was good comradery, great food, and I mean taste like my mom's food, and the meeting, yep, we had one and of course I forgot a few things. One thing was to thank Verona Post 385 for hosting, and Jenni and Shannon for taking such good care of us all.

We are leaping into March, the freshness of spring, the energy of the longer days, should help our creativity shine. Event planning is upon us, let's shake it up a bit and add something new to a yearly event. Have a joint community event with other organizations. Make sure to include your post, squadron, and riders. Show our family strength. We are looking for our units and post to plan an American Legion Family Day, the last Saturday in April (it can be before or after) But try to plan something to honor our AL family day. Unfortunately the 3rd District has our Spring Conference that Saturday, April 25th, so this year if you're planning an event, you'll have to do it before or after. I've been given some really fun ideas, ice cream social, beautification community project, and an AL family walk to bring awareness to Veterans Suicide Be the One, just to list a few. Good Luck, and let us know what you are doing.

March is also the time of year to tally up our volunteer hours. So, get those hours tallied and turned into you unit president for reporting. Unit 437 uses the event report sheets to assist in remembering everything we've done and who was present. Sometimes unit members forget all the things they volunteered for; the event report sheets are a great help to make sure all



The 250th Anniversary of our Country is approaching fast. Is your Post or County planning an event to celebrate the founding of our Country? What a great opportunity for our Legion Posts to be in front of our communities showing our patriotism.

I just received the Badger Legionnaire in the mail today. I encourage everyone to look at all the positive things our Posts are doing around the State. Celebrating a Post member 100th birthday, Quilts of Valor, Veterans Day Programs, Flags in Parks, Thanksgiving cards to Veterans at the VA, Food Pantry donations, and so many more good things and events listed. We also have the Legion "Impact Statement". Are we using the good things we do to recruit veterans into our Posts and more important, retaining our membership? Take advantage of the good things we all do.

COMMUNICATION-At our Fall Conference we had Dept. Historian Morris Sadicario give those at the conference a short presentation on how to use your Post email list to put out newsletters through a program called MailChimp. Several of Morris's newsletters from Post 501 have been forwarded out to Post Leaderships. MailChimp is not the only source of communication a Post can use. Argyle Post 251 uses Team Reach which works for them. There are all sorts of ways to communicate with your Post members evolving, you just need to find one that will work for your Post. Whether your Post has 200 members or 20 members, we should all know what is going on with our Post activities. How many times have you heard one of your Post members comment "I would have come to help, but I didn't know about the event until it was over". This happens far more than any Post wants to admit. Can this be resolved by better communication? Is the Legion Family (Auxiliary, SAL and Riders) at your Post involved as one or do you all head in different directions? Does the right hand know what the left hand is doing? If we are not working together, then we do not have good **communication**, and we are losing so much by not working together. I would ask that each Post to look at how you communicate with your membership and within the Legion Family at your Post. We are at our best and our strongest when we all work together

Our Spring Conference is being held on Saturday April 25th at Dodgeville High School. We will have a Training session on how to use your cell phone to sign up members. This training is important, because you will not have to have an application form on you to sign up a member. By learning how to use your phone to sign them up right now, it gives you an increased opportunity to get them into your Legion Post. How many veterans have we lost, because we did not have an application form on us and we told them we would get back to them, but never do. We will also get training on how to access



the hours are counted. Reporting is a very important function of the auxiliary. This is how we show the world what we do for our veterans, military families, and communities. This year we should more than double our reporting with our new online reports. This is so fast, and so easy it's truly amazing. Our great team at the department has worked endlessly to get this program up and running. Let's celebrate their hard work by reporting using the online option, no more mailing copies all over, no more money on stamps. Units tally the hours the same; you simply go to the department's website and click on reports and go to town. Please report on all programs even if you didn't work on said program, just fill out and enter "no" and send away and it's all done. We have loads of experienced department members to help with any questions you may have. Change can be scary and I'm not always fond of it, however this change has been needed and wanted for awhile now, so enjoy reporting.

Get ready for Spring with plans to attend our conference this year the location is the Dodgeville High School, April 25th, registration 8am, conference called to order at 9am. Attendance is critical for our ability to do district business, and critical for you to get information updates, this year is an election year, and as always every officer position is available, we have committee chairperson available also, all you need is some passion for the mission and the rest comes easily. We have a challenge for our district, in honor of our countries 250th birthday, we have a 250 challenge to get 250 Auxiliary members to join us in Dodgeville this year. This challenge comes with a Special Basket. Each registered member that picks up their lunch ticket will receive a ticket for the basket. This is in addition to the other basket raffle which you purchase tickets for. We have an incredible speaker offering us another option to healthy living without the continual use of prescription medications, a very interesting author. Raquel Durden is the author of the book Dial Down Holistic Strategies to move from Chaos to Calm. I think we will all be able to take something valuable from her. Hope to see you all there. Registration form will be inside the Informer, join us in another fantastic get together.



The American Legion for information. Everything at our fingertips. Making it easier for all of us.

We will be looking for delegates for the State Convention and for the National Convention. We need Legionnaires to fill positions so please consider being the one to take a position. We are always looking for Legion Members to be on a Standing Committees. A good way to get involved with the Legion on a Committee you have an interest in.

COMMUNICATION-INVOLVEMENT-VISIBILITY-ACCOUNTABILITY-Make it happen at your Post.
May God Bless all of you and all Veterans.



MEMBERSHIP
Nicole Welsh

Greetings Third District family!! We are excited to keep building our visitor numbers for the Everglades National Park!

Our 2026 membership goal is 2,375 members, and we are currently at 2,138 members — that means we have achieved 90.02% of our goal!

We are currently in 3rd place, and we are only 237 members away from reaching 100%!

Every member matters. Please remember that any member who has not renewed at this time is not in current active standing. We encourage each Unit to reach out personally to members who have not yet renewed. A simple phone call, message, or friendly reminder can make all the difference.

Let's also continue to grow our "Park"! Keep your eyes and ears open for potential new members and visitors who may be eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. We are always eager to welcome new individuals into our Auxiliary family and share in our mission of service.

Together, we can protect, preserve, and grow our Everglades — one member at a time.

If you have any questions or need assistance with membership, please reach out:

Nicole Welsh

District 3 First Vice and Membership Chair

 608-225-9325

 nicolewelsh1026@gmail.com



ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND



The American Legion Family

Third District 2026 Spring Conference

Invitation and Lunch Reservations

Dodgeville High School / 912 W Chapel Street / Dodgeville

Saturday, April 25, 2026

American Legion Conference Registration Fee \$5.00 / American Legion Auxiliary Registration Fee \$5.00

Pay registration fee day of conference

Conference registration 8am – 8:45am / Call to Order at 9am

Free will donation Breakfast items will be available

LUNCH MENU:

Roast beef, BBQ pork sandwiches, cowboy potatoes, coleslaw, dessert, water and soda.

Cost \$20.00 per person – Lunch reservation deadline: **SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2026**

Detach and mail

Lunch Reservations and money are **due April 3, 2026.**

Send lunch reservation check made payable to: The American Legion Iowa County Council.

And mail to: Joe Salava - 216 Cretney - Ridgeway WI 53584

Post/Unit Number _____ Post/Unit Name _____

Number of Lunch Reservations _____ @ \$20.00 - \$ _____

(Do not include registration fee with lunch reservations)

List American Legion Auxiliary Name (s):

List Legionnaire Name (s):

Pick up your lunch tickets the day of the conference at the registration table.

ACTIVITIES AROUND THE DISTRICT

Darlington Post Competition

On Wednesday January 28th the Darlington American Legion Post 214 held the American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest at the Post.

This year there were two contestants Emanuel Bello and Thea Kammerud. The contestants each gave a prepared 8 to 10 speeches on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution and were asked to speak for 3 to 5 minutes on one of four Amendments that was assigned. Both students knew their subject matter with their prepared speeches, but the assigned Amendment was a little harder. When it was all done, Emanuel won the Oratorical and will move onto the Lafayette County Oratorical that is scheduled to be held at the Darlington Post on Wednesday February 18th. Thea will be the alternate if Emanuel is not able to attend the County Contest. For their hard work and dedication preparing for this contest both students were awarded Scholarship money.

For 1st Place Emanuel received \$250 and Thea received \$150. Darlington American Legion Post 214 would like to thank both students for participating in the Oratorical Scholarship contest and we would also like to thank the three judges for taking the time to assist the Post.

The judges were Clarey Knellwolf-Schwartz, Rayna O'Brien and Sam Fuller. Pictured from left are, Past National Vice Commander and Post 214 Commander Dave Gough, Thea Kammerud, Emanuel Bello and 3rd District Commander Dan O'Brien



Dane County Competition



On Saturday February 7th Dane County Oratorical Contest at the Verona Post 385..

Three contestants participated: Isaac Gunby from Mt. Horeb, Ella Farritor from Verona and Sarah Lewis from DeForest. Each had to give an 8-10 minute speech on a subject of their choice regarding the U.S. Constitution in front of an audience and panel of judges.

Once each contestant had completed their prepared speech, they had to give a 3-5 minute speech about an Article of the U.S. Constitution that was randomly selected.

Issac Gunby received \$300 for first place, Lewis took home \$200 for second place and Farritor won \$100 for third place. Issac will move on to compete at the American Legion's Third District Oratorical Contest to be held at the Barneveld American Legion at 11 a.m. on March 7.

Lafayette County Competition

On Wednesday February 18th Lafayette County held its Oratorical Scholarship contest.

We had three students participate in the contest. Grant Kuberski representing Argyle Legion Post 251, Eden Marquardt representing Blanchardville Post 142 and Emanuel Bello representing Darlington Post 214. It was a good contest with all the students making their times on both their Prepared Speech and their Assigned Topic. In the end Grant went on to win the contest with Emanuel coming in 2nd and Eden coming in 3rd.

For their hard work and dedication to the Oratorical Scholarship Program Lafayette County American Legion awarded Grant \$250, Emanuel \$150 and Eden \$100.

Grant will move onto the 3rd District Competition to held at the Barneveld Legion Post on Saturday March 7th.

Pictured are Sam Fuller Lafayette County Commander, Grant Kuberski, Emanuel Bello, Eden Marquardt and 3rd District Oratorical Chairman Peter Herman.



THIRD DISTRICT HOLIDAY PARTY SHOTS



John Edelblute running for Dept. Vice Commander, Dan O'Brien-3rd Dist. Commander, Steve Kohnke running for Dept. Commander, Candance Rothering running for Dept. Vice Commander, Dept. Commander Nathan Bond, Karl Stubengen running for National Executive Committeeman and Larry Larson running for Dept. Commander.



BEAT THE CABIN FEVER DANCE 12

James P & Michael Sullivan
American-Legion Post #383 Auxiliary
in Lone Rock for VetsRoll.org*

**ADMISSION:
FREE**

**SAT., MARCH 7, 2026
11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Lone Rock (WI) Community Hall**

**Entertainment: Eight (8) hours of fun!!
11:00 am - 12:00 pm: Bingo
Lunch Served from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
4:00 - 7:00 pm: Crossfire Band**

Fundraisers:

**Live Auction at 1pm - 3pm
Raffles • 11am - 3pm
Meat paddles • 11 am - ?**

*Dance proceeds will go to raise funds for
sending more WWII to Vietnam Era Veterans
to Washington, DC on May 17-20, 2026!!*

**For more info contact:
Lisa Bowen at 608-929-4690**

**Food...Pop...
Ice Cold Beer!!**



* VetsRoll, Inc (dba VetsRoll.org) is a WI non-profit corporation and an IRS 501(C)(3) public charity dedicated to providing safe ground transportation for our Veteran war heroes to see their memorials in Washington, DC!! Your donations may be 100% tax deductible (consult your financial advisor for more information).

Up Coming Events:

- March 1 – 4 Washington, DC Conference
 - <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/meetings/washington-conference>
- March 7 District Oratorical Contest Location Barneveld
- March 13 Post 360 Fish Fry (4:30-7:30)
- March 14 Post 501 Madison Corn Beef & Cabbage (3:00 – 6:00)
- March 17 Post 385 Verona Corn Beef & Cabbage (4:30 – 6:30)
- March 21 Post 385 Verona Euchre Tournament
- March 22 Post 501 Breakfast at East Side Club Madison (8:00-Noon)
- March 22 Post 84 Monroe Bingo (1PM)
- March 24 DEC at Verona Legion Post
- March 28 Department Oratorical Ripon
- March 29 National Vietnam Veteran’s Day
- March 31 County “Of the Year” Nominations due to District
- April 4 Squadron 501 Pancake & Sausage (8:00 – 11:00)
- April 8 Post 385 Smoked Pork Chops (4:30 – 6:30)
- April 10 Post 360 Fish Fry (4:30-7:30)
- April 11 Legion Family Testimonial
- April 25 District Spring Conference at the Dodgeville High School
- April 26 Post 84 Monroe Bingo (1PM)
- May 3-7 National Spring Meetings
- May 8-9 Spring Department Meetings
- May 13 Post 385 Beef Tips (4:30 – 6:30)
- May 25 Memorial Day
- May 26 DEC at the Barneveld Legion Post
- June 23 DEC at the Fennimore Legion Post
- July 4 America is 250 Years Old
- July 16 – 19 State Convention Appleton