

WISCONSIN

August 2024

American Legion Auxiliary
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The official publication of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary

www.amlegionauxwi.org

2024 ALA-WISCONSIN CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



AT LEFT: President Maggie Geiger, escorted by husband Brian, during opening ceremonies of the 103rd ALA-Wisconsin Department Convention.

ABOVE LEFT: President Maggie Geiger was surrounded by friends and supporters of District 2.

ABOVE RIGHT: President Maggie Geiger recognized the ALA Hospital Representatives and Deputies and thanked everyone who volunteers at a VA medical facility, veterans home, or CBOC.



The American Legion Riders raised over \$57,000 during Stu's Cruise and split the proceeds between The American Legion's Troop & Family Support and the American Legion Auxiliary's Homeless Women Veterans Grant funds. Thank you, Corey Doehrmann and American Legion Riders!



2024-2025 Department Officers (front row): Historian Betty Stone, 2nd VP Christina Petranovich, Sr VP Sue Hembrook, Department President Becky Mueller, 1st VP Amy Luft, Chaplain Donna Jensen; (back row): Sgt-at-Arms Diane Zwiers, Secretary-Treasurer Bonnie Dorniak, NEC Bonnie Jakubczyk, Alternate NEC Maggie Geiger, Sgt-at-Arms Linda Kostka.



2024-2025 District Presidents (front row): 1st District Crystal Shaw, 2nd District Sandy Mack, 3rd District Noreen Schmidt, Department President Becky Mueller, 4th District Kathy Grom, 6th District Diane Steinert; (back row): 7th District Jesse Elmhurst, 8th District Linda Tryczak, 9th District Sue Keyzers, 10th District Mary Townsend; 11th District Theresa Schindler, 12th District Barb McDaniel. Not pictured: 5th District Linda Bartell.

MEMBERSHIP



~ Serving Our Veterans, Military
and Each Other from the Depths
of our Hearts ~

Can you feel the love?
Our new membership year is upon us and
this is the year of growth for the Department

of Wisconsin! Department President Becky's theme of *Serving our Veterans, Military and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts* will be highlighted throughout the membership program. Our department membership goal is 100% and together we can get there!

Membership is a team event and your department membership team is here to assist with all of your membership efforts. But creating a team is not only a department thing; having a team is effective on every level – unit, county and district. Teamwork makes the work easier and more fun!

Speaking of fun...there are some great incentives to help you along the way! Take a look at this year's awards. Note: 2024-2025 Unit Officer form must be submitted and listed officers must be paid to qualify for any awards.

CHECKING OUR PULSE:

Units that reach the membership percentage by the goal date will be placed into a random drawing to win \$100.

- 75% - September 15
- 85% - October 15
- 95% - November 15
- 100% - December 15

THE BEAT GOES ON:

Recruit a NEW or rejoin an EXPIRED member for 2025 and receive a Membership pin.

PULSATION PASS:

Units reaching 100% by December 31 will receive two entries (one entry if 100% by January 31). One lucky winner will win an all-access *Department Convention Pass* which includes:

- Two (2) unit members' paid convention registrations
- Hotel accommodations (one room for two nights)
- Unit recognition from stage at convention



- Two free passes to the Commanders' Party

Memberships can easily be renewed online at *My Auxiliary Member Portal* located on the National website at www.legion-aux.org or call National Headquarters at 317-569-4570. And make sure to "Like" the Department Facebook (Wisconsin ALA Membership Group)...even if we are your one and only friend!

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Amy Luft Chair amyjlufft@gmail.com 414-651-7300	Teresa Steinke Committee Member teresa.steinke_cmx@yahoo.com 715-828-7462
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Diane Zwiers Committee Member dzwiers7280@gmail.com 920-378-1786	Andrea Stoltz Program Coordinator alawi@amlegionauxwi.org 608-745-0124
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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Donna Jensen
Department Chaplain
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414-303-6186

Psalms 118:1
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalms 147:7
Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.

It is by being thankful to God that we can adapt an “Attitude of Gratitude.” When looking at life and some of the challenging situations that happen, it is helpful to look at the good things and be grateful and not only look at the bad or challenging things that cross our path. It can be very difficult to be grateful during the bad times in our lives but this is when it is most beneficial.

What do you have to be grateful for? Are you thankful for your family? Are you thankful for your health? Are you thankful for a friend? How do you show your gratitude and thanks? It is through actions, words, both?

Give Thanks (With A Grateful Heart)
EPHESIANS 5:19-20 ~ Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord...

It is through gratitude and thanksgiving that we can praise the Lord. Keep your heart open to accept the gifts God sends to us and be grateful.

Music
“Thank you for Being a Friend”
by Andrew Gold
– (sung by James Taylor)

“Thank you for being a friend
Traveled down the road and back again
Your heart is true, you’re a pal and a confidant.”

THANK YOU!!

PDP Maggie Geiger
donated to the ALA
Badger Girls State program
in honor of the
2023-2024
Department Officers
and Program Chairman
for all their hard work
during the past year.

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

Congratulations to Maggie Geiger on a successful year as Department President!
President Maggie Geiger presented twelve Department President’s Awards for Excellence at the 103rd ALA Department Convention in Appleton. Other convention highlights included reports from department program chairs; a tribute to Honored PDP Florence Wasley (2010-2011); recognition of Unit Member of the Year Terry Giles of Grantsburg, Junior Member of the Year Rylee Turowski, ALA Badger Girls State Governor Alexis Wilson, and the ALA’s hospital representatives and deputies; introduction of SAL NVC Terry Harris and Leading Candidate for SAL National

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Commander Joseph Navarrete; a generous donation from the American Legion Riders to the ALA Homeless Women Veterans Grant Fund; special presentations from Dan Buttery of the War Memorial Center and Torre Willadsen of Dogs2DogTags; and an ice cream social. If you weren’t there, you missed a great time!
A special thanks goes out to SuAnn Pangel-Rast of Almond Unit 339 for her expertise in creating the PowerPoint slide show for all the program reports.
Past Department President Maggie’s year concluded with the installation of 2024-2025 Department President Becky Mueller, the 2024-2025 department officers and district presidents.
Newly elected Department President Becky Mueller’s theme for the upcoming year is “Serving our Veterans, Military and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts.” She has two special projects for the year: raising awareness

of Wisconsin’s POWs/MIAs and raising funds for the national Auxiliary Emergency Fund.
Although we are still collecting dues for the 2024 membership year, 2025 membership cards and rosters have been mailed to the units. Any unit that has not received their membership packet should contact Andrea Stoltz at department headquarters immediately.
2025 renewal notices will be mailed by the national organization in mid-September, but you don’t have to wait until then to renew your dues. To expedite processing, you can pay your dues online (www.ALAforVeterans.org) or call the national organization during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 3:30 pm Central Time). Members who pay for multiple people can take care of everyone’s dues with one simple phone call to 317-569-4570! New members for 2025 can be processed after September 1.

MISSION IN ACTION: BARABOO UNIT 26

BARABOO 4TH GRADERS
LEARN ABOUT
THE “RED POPPY”

Mary Spink, Auxiliary member of Unit 26 in Baraboo and a retired school teacher, encouraged unit members to go into the schools to present to 4th graders the significance of the “red poppy” and Memorial Day. Enthusiasm among the members grew and the goal became to make a presentation to all 4th graders, about 250 students, in the Baraboo School District by Memorial Day.
The 4th grade teachers assisted by sending home a letter asking students to write down the name of a Veteran who was no longer living and their branch of service. The unit’s presentation was brief, about one-half hour. They engaged the students by passing around a WWI uniform, helmet, and backpack for a hands-on experience, quizzed the students, and enlightened them on the significance of the red poppy.

To finalize the presentation, students wrote the name of their Veteran and branch of service on a white card and glued a red paper poppy in the center. The “poppies” were collected and used to create posters. The posters were completed by Auxiliary members and taken to the schools to be displayed. Later, the unit moved the posters to downtown Baraboo business windows for display until Memorial Day. On Memorial Day, the posters were displayed at Walnut Hill Cemetery during the Memorial Day Program presented by the military organizations in Baraboo.
This is the second successful year thanks to the Baraboo Schools allowing the unit to make a presentation, members of Unit 26 who provided input to create the presentation, and members who volunteered their time and talents in the classroom! If you would like to start a similar effort in your community, please contact Unit 26 President Kim Shanks at 608-402-0016.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY BADGER GIRLS STATE

Danyelle Thompson
Chair
alabgs.chairman@gmail.com

ALA Badger Girls State celebrated its 79th session this past June, with much success! Approximately 500 delegates from all over the State of Wisconsin joined 63 volunteer counselors at UW-Oshkosh. The delegates spent the week creating the mythical 51st State of Badger, where they ran for office, created political parties, and passed legislation.

ALABGS's mission is to prepare the next generation of women to be engaged citizens. We focused on public service, running for office, participating in local government, and how to engage in civil dialogue with people you don't agree with. We also concentrated on flag etiquette, service to Veterans, and embracing patriotism. We were also very excited to have ALA National President Lisa Williamson join us on Thursday for our Inaugural Ceremony, where we were also joined by Governor Evers, Justice Jill Karofsky, and State Treas-



urer John Leiber.

I want to thank all the Legion Family sponsors that were able to send delegates. Without the delegates and the support of the Legion Family, this program would not be possible. I would also like to thank all the

volunteer counselors. Our program runs almost 100% on volunteers, so without those willing to give up a few days or an entire week, it would be very difficult to provide the best experience we can. We look forward to what we can accomplish in 2025!



ALABGS: BATTLE OF THE QUILT



Claudia Osero and members of 11th District made an ALA Badger Girls State quilt from old ALABGS shirts that was auctioned off during the ALA Wisconsin Department Convention. Chairman Danyelle Thompson was in a heated bidding war but lost to ALABGS Head Nurse Christine Johnsen. However, in a generous act of Service Not Self, Christine gave the quilt to Danyelle! Proceeds benefitted the ALABGS program.

THANK YOU: DOGS2DOGTAGS

Thank you to everyone who supported my special project, Dogs2DogTags. Through your generous donations, ALA-Wisconsin contributed almost \$72,000!!! Thank you ~ PDP Maggie Geiger

CHILDREN & YOUTH GOOD DEED AWARD

(Article and photo courtesy of Berlin Journal Newspapers)

Presley Putzke, a student at All Saints Regional Catholic School in Berlin, recently received an American Legion Auxiliary Good Deed Award.

In October 2023, an accident made it difficult for a staff member to be in the lunchroom every day to clean. Seeing a need for help, Presley became the self-appointed cleanup crew – sweeping, mopping, wiping down tables and putting up chairs – all without being asked. He regularly skipped recess outside so the lunchroom would be clean for everyone the next day. "I didn't really think a lot about helping out. I just did it because it was the right thing to do and I was happy to help," he said.

A small article in the church bulletin led members of Berlin's American Legion Auxiliary to nominate Presley for a Good Deed Award. Presley was presented the award in June during the opening Berlin Farmers & Artists Market where he was once again volunteering his time



working in the market's food booth.

Congratulations, Presley, for being an example we can all look up to. Our future is in good hands!

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Christine Johnsen
Department Chairman
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715-203-2015

Morgan Johnsen
Department Vice Chairman

Juniors are the FUTURE of the American Legion Auxiliary and NOW is the time to inspire all Juniors to actively participate in ALA activities. With an aging membership and dwindling number of brand-new members, it is imperative that all Juniors know they are a valued part of the American Legion Family. As units begin planning activities for the 2024-25 administrative year, please make every effort to include these very

important Junior members in community projects, whenever possible.

Regardless of where they live, all Juniors can learn about the mission of the ALA through the Junior patch program. Did you know that there is a new purple patch level for Juniors aged 3 to kindergarten? Let's engage our youngest members now, so they will be motivated to continue their ALA membership as adults.

To kick off an exciting new year of Junior activities, please SAVE THE DATE for the Department of Wisconsin Junior Fall Conference on Saturday, October 12, 2024, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. It will be held at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, N2665 County Rd QQ, King, WI 54946. In the spirit of *Serving*

Veterans, the Military, and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts, we will have several exciting activities that will be fun for all ages! The tentative schedule will include a business meeting (including election of Honorary Department Junior Officers), lunch, and an interactive event with residents of the King Veterans Home. Watch the department website for more information and a registration form (www.amlegionauxwi.org > Programs > Junior Activities).

The Juniors Program Engagement Plan for 2024-25 will be available on the Department website in September. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions (or ideas!) about Junior activities. It's going to be a GREAT year!

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS RECAP

Sue Keyzers
Department Chairman

Being the Distinguished Guests Chairman for the Department of Wisconsin has been a wonderful experience. Our first outing was with Central Division National Vice President Carol Robinson. We were able to be a part of Diva Day at Zablocki VA where Carol spent time with the women Veterans and learned about their concerns. Then we treated Carol to a traditional Wisconsin fish fry at Post 434. We finished with a District 4 meeting where Carol spent time with the members and made tray favors.

Our second tour was with National President Lisa Williamson. We started at the Poppy Shop at the War Memorial Center in Milwaukee where we received a tour from Sean Clark, the Program Director. Lisa was very impressed by the design and the new MIA/POW display. After the tour, Sue Hembrook told us about the ALA Poppy Shop and poppy makers. The next day we started our trip to Camp American Legion. We stopped at Lambeau Field/Titletown District to take a quick look around. Lisa is a Harley rider, so we went to Doc's Harley-Davidson and Timeline Saloon BBQ where we had lunch and looked at the old and new motorcycles. We arrived at Camp American Legion just in time for a quick tour of the facilities and then ate supper with the women Veterans staying there. Over the next day and a half, National President Lisa talked to the women Veterans about *Be The One*. Many of the women there approached Lisa with questions. We were able to get a pontoon boat ride that ended up as a rescue mission as the engine in the boat ahead of us died and we had to pull it halfway across the lake back to Camp. That night the Camp had a barbeque with burgers, brats and all the fixings. We even had smores. Lisa again had time to talk to the lady Veterans. The next morning, we headed to UW-Oshkosh for ALA Badger Girls State. We got there just in time for a lunch of state fair food, including cream puffs. Lisa spoke briefly to the girls about how they could be part of *Be The One*.

And now it is on to Department Convention. Florence Wasley was Department President in 2010/2011 and was the Honored Guest during the recognition program on Friday, July 12 at 3:00 pm. We escorted her and other distinguished guests throughout convention.

I would truly like to thank President Maggie for asking me to be the Distinguished Guests Chairman for 2023-2024. It was an amazing experience.

CHILDREN & YOUTH HERO AWARD

An eighth-grader is being hailed as a hero after grabbing hold of the wheel of his school bus after the driver lost consciousness. His heroics earned him an American Legion Auxiliary Youth Hero Award, presented by PDP Diana Sirovina.

Acie Holland III understood something wasn't right when the driver began to appear dizzy. Soon after, her head dropped, but the bus continued to accelerate past a turn on the route. "She turned the corner and there's another street that we usually turn on. She pressed the gas and went past the corner, and I looked up," Holland said. Coming to the front, he found the driver unresponsive and the bus veering into oncoming traffic.

In what he later described as a fight or flight situation, Holland moved the driver aside, took the wheel and safely



parked the bus on the side of the road, calling 911 after it had come to a halt and telling each student to call their parents.

The driver had suffered a medical emergency. At first, Holland's father, Acie Holland II, wasn't sure if his son was telling the truth, but when it did eventually become clear, Holland Sr. said he wasn't surprised. "He's always been a person where he's real quick on his feet. That's one of my things that I know he's capable of, not on the school bus, but just in general, being able to help someone in need. I am proud of what he did," said Holland Sr.

Mr. Holland II owns a garage, and Holland III says it's around the shop that he had grown accustomed to the functions of automobiles enough to feel confident grabbing the wheel of that bus. The school said that Holland's leadership and compassion is something they witness daily, but the incident in April took it to the 'next level.'

EDUCATION / M. LOUISE WILSON EDUCATIONAL LOANS

Diane Weggen
Department Chair
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715-644-2668

It's "Back to School" time already, or at least time for units and members to be planning the Education program for the year. The purpose of the ALA Education Program is to promote quality education for children, especially military children, and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs, scholarship promotion, support of education beyond high school and the M. Louise Wilson Educational Loan Fund which provides interest-free loans to assist female members of the ALA pursuing higher education.

The ALA Education Program encourages units and members to participate and get involved in the following components which demonstrate the **relevance** of educating community youth and citizens throughout the state:

- ALA's Give 10 to Education
- American Education Week, November 18 – 22, 2024
- Month of the Military Child, April 2025
- Purple Up! Day, April 15, 2025
- Teachers Appreciation Week, May 5 – 9, 2025
- Veterans in Community Schools
- The American Legion Family scholarships at the national, department, and local levels
- Legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities

For a wide variety of what can be done to

participate in any or all of these components, go to the department and national websites (www.amlegionauxwi.org and www.ALAforVeterans.org) or read the Unit Mailings which are published every other month.

Download scholarship applications when they are available and distribute them to incoming high school seniors. This will allow time for applicants to familiarize themselves with the eligibility requirements and prepare their applications for submission by March 1, 2025.

Application forms and requirements will be posted on the department website. Click on *Programs* then *Education*.

The M. LOUISE WILSON EDUCATIONAL LOAN FUND was established in 1925 to promote the ALA mission and is funded through donations. ALA members who require financial support in order to further their education can apply for interest-free loans by contacting this chairman. Applicants may attend a technical, two or four-year college/university. If approved, the applicant can borrow up to \$800 per year for five years. One year from the date of the first loan, the applicant can request an additional \$800 by sending a copy of college grades and maintaining membership in the American Legion Auxiliary. If approved, the applicant may continue to borrow annually until the amount reaches \$4,000 or they are no longer a full-time student.

This program has been successful due to The American Legion Family members providing donations and ALA applicants honoring their responsibility to repay the loan.

BE THE ONE

Article submitted by
Carol Szudrowitz
2nd District Ozaukee County President

Following The American Legion's 2023-2024 theme of BE THE ONE, the ALA Ozaukee County Council in Cedarburg presented a program on suicide prevention on Legion Family Day. Suicide has impacted so many... Veterans, adults of all ages, teens, and even children. Second District President Sandy Mack invited not only the 2nd District American Legion Family but also the public. This has become a high priority in communities, schools, and families. As National Commander Dan Seehafer says, "It's Personal."

Curtiss Peck, a member of the American Association of Suicidology, presented a R.A.C.E. Suicide Prevention Program at Cedarburg Post 288. It was attended by members of the Cedarburg community, Ozaukee County Units, and 2nd District Auxiliary members. The program was very well received.

R. A. C. E. stands for:

- **R**ecognizing signs of distress
- **A**sking the person about what they are thinking or feeling without judgement
- **C**aring for person while actively listening
- **E**scorting the person for help based on needs

The R.A.C.E. suicide prevention model



has been used by the U.S. Marine Corps. If interested, please contact Curtiss as he presents the R.A.C.E. training on Zoom (three consecutive Tuesdays). Sign up at <http://www.racesuicideprevention.us>. If interested in a free group in-person program, again please contact Curtiss at the same website.

Curtiss Peck is an Air Force Veteran who belongs to the Harley-Davidson American Legion Riders. His background includes a BA in social welfare and justice with graduate studies (PhD) in Industrial & Organizational Psychology. He is the former Executive Director of Fisher House Wisconsin.

Department of Wisconsin 2024 State Convention Citations

President's Award for Excellence – Maggie Geiger, Department President

12 – Awarded to Mukwonago Unit 375, District 1; Eunice Seering of Unit 69, District 2; Crawford County, District 3; Oak Creek Unit 434, District 4; St. Nazianz Unit 477, District 6; Northfield Unit 541, District 7; Wonewoc Unit 206, District 7; Marathon Unit 469, District 8; Abrams Unit 523, District 9; River Falls Unit 121, District 10; Land O' Lakes Unit 464, District 11; Webster Unit 96, District 12.

Americanism – Diane Burkhalter, Department Chairman

4 – Certificates of Recognition - Awarded to Green Lake Unit 306, District 6; King Unit 161, District 8; New London Unit 263, District 8; and Mercer Unit 424, District 11.

Community Service – Sandy Mack, Department Chairman

3 – Certificates of Participation – Awarded to Cambria Unit 401, District 2; River Falls Unit 121, District 10; Richland Center Unit 13, District 3.

Education – Diane Weggen, Department Chairman

7 – Certificates of Recognition – Awarded to Spooner Unit 12, District 12; Pewaukee Unit 71, District 1; Sparta Unit 100, District 7; Alma Unit 224, District 10; Rome Unit 65, District 7; Gordon Unit 499, District 12; Grafton Unit 355, District 2.

History – Mary Petrie, Department Historian

1 – Best Overall (District) Certificate of Merit – awarded to District 7, Vickie Dux, Historian.
1 – Best Overall (Unit) Certificate of Merit – awarded to Thorp Unit 118, Alyssa Fraser, Historian.
1 – Runner Up (Unit) Certificate of Merit – awarded to River Falls Unit 121, Kate Koosmann, Historian.
3 – Certificates of Participation – awarded to Watertown 189, Sue Christian; Historian; Chilton Unit 125, Patricia Katalinik, Historian; Fremont Unit 391, Jennifer Schilling, Historian.

Leadership – Joyce Endres, Department Chairman

1 – Unit Member of the Year – awarded to Terry Giles of Grantsburg Unit 185, District 12.
6 – Unit Member of the Year Nominees - awarded to Eunice Seering of Mayville Unit 69, District 2; Vickie Dux of Neillsville Unit 73, District 7; JoAnn DeWart of Delavan Unit 95, District 1; Linda Maurer-Garbe of Wautoma Unit 317, District 8; Shirley Kubiak of Waunakee Unit 360, District 3; Mary Davitz of Caledonia Unit 494, District 1.
13 – Certificates of Recognition – Cross Plains Unit 245, District 3; Caledonia Unit 494, District 1; St. Nazianz Unit 477, District 6; District 1; District 2 / Columbia County; Dane County Council; Waukesha County; Belgium Unit 412, Port Washington Unit 82, Fredonia Unit 410, Grafton Unit 355, Cedarburg Unit 288, District 2.

Junior Activities – Laura Calteux and Char Kiesling, Department Co-Chairmen

1 – Junior Member of the Year – awarded to Rylee Turowski, Grafton Unit 355, District 2
1 – Junior Unit of the Year – awarded to Pewaukee Unit 71, District 1

Legislative – Linda Coppock, Department Chairman

1 – Best Overall Unit Report – awarded to New London Unit 263, District 8.
6 – Certificates of Participation – awarded to Pewaukee Unit 71, District 1; Okauchee Unit 399, District 1; Port Washington Unit 82, District 2; Beaver Dam Unit 146, District 2; Theresa Unit 270, District 2; Neenah Unit 33, District 6.

Membership – Sue Hembrook, Department Chairman

30 – Over 100% Certificates & Ribbons – awarded to Kenosha Unit 21, Edgerton Unit 30, Hartland Unit 294, Mukwonago Unit 375, Clinton Unit 440 of District 1; Rio Unit 208, Poynette 271 of District 2; Stoughton Unit 59, Mt. Hope Unit 229, Argyle Unit 251, DeForest Unit 248, McFarland Unit 534 of District 3; Milwaukee Unit 448 of District 5; St. Nazianz Unit 477 of District 6; Rome Unit 65, Holmen Unit 284 of District 7; Tigerton Unit 239, Wild Rose Unit 370 of District 8; Hortonville Unit 55 of District 9; River Falls Unit 121, Independence Unit 186, Osseo Unit 324, Cornell Unit 353, Eleva Unit 459, Brackett Unit 550 of District 10; Fifield Unit 532, Lublin Unit 547 of District 11; Spooner Unit 12, Hayward Unit 218, Birchwood Unit 379 of District 12.

National Security – Karen Runk, Department Chairman

4 – Certificates of Recognition – awarded to Omro Unit 234, District 6; Grafton Unit 355, District 2; Waunakee Unit 360, District 3; Okauchee Unit 399, District 1.

Poppy – Kay Grosskopf, Department Chairman

1 – Best Overall (Unit) Poppy Program – awarded to New London Unit 263, District 8, Audrey Stuczynski (chrm)
8 – Poppy Poster Awards – awarded to Zara Eichelt (Class I), sponsored by Thorp Unit 118, District 7; Easton Knorr (Class II), sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512, District 9; Tenlee Van Straten (Class III), sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512, District 9; tie between Kiann Rabuck (Class IV), sponsored by Thorp Unit 118, District 7 & Angelina Ellefson (Class IV) sponsored by Port Washington Unit 82, District 2; Frankie Hoffeller (Class V), sponsored by Athelstane-Silver Cliff Unit 66, District 9; Dawson Dietrich (Class VI), sponsored by Thorp Unit 118, District 7; Natalie Myers (Class VII), sponsored by Fond du Lac Unit 75, District 6.

Public Relations – Bob Shappell, Department Chairman

1 – Certificate of Recognition – awarded to Mary Petrie of Watertown Unit 189, District 2.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation – Bonnie Jakubczyk, Department Chairman

6 – Best Overall (Unit) Report – awarded to Port Washington Unit 82, District 2.

MISSION IN ACTION: PLYMOUTH UNIT 243

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 243 of Plymouth invested in the future of Plymouth High School students in need of free clothing, shoes, coats, school supplies and other items to aid in the students' success. Students can "shop" the Panther 'Fits Sharing & Career Closet for personal needs and proper attire for job interviews. A donation of \$250 was presented by Unit President Linda Johnson to Grace Wascher.



MISSION IN ACTION: JACKSON UNIT 486



Two Junior members helped sell raffle tickets for S/SGT. Henry F. Gumm Unit 486 in Jackson at their annual picnic. Pictured: Brookelynn and Kherington Bodden with Mary Rogge.



Kherington Bodden also distributed poppies with two of her friends.

UNIT 243 IN PLYMOUTH MARKS MEMORIAL DAY



ALA Unit 243 in Plymouth celebrated Memorial Day by serving breakfast to the Honor Guard before traveling to the local cemeteries to honor deceased Veterans. This was followed by a parade and brat fry at the Post, which was a success despite the drizzly day. Eleven Auxiliary members served approximately 150 people through dine-in and takeout orders. The unit also made efforts to recruit new members and had raffle baskets and sold baked goods. They will donate the funds raised to support Veterans and local community causes.



Jim Johnson
Department
Commander

Legionnaires,
I am truly humbled by the level of support I have received from the Wisconsin American Legion Family, thank you!
The 2023-2024 Leadership team from Wisconsin Posts, Counties, Districts, and Department has provided a healthy membership that we can continue to grow. I extend my sincere appreciation to PDC Stuvengen for his mentorship and leadership this past year.
Legionnaires are doing great things throughout Wisconsin being visible, relevant and promoting The American Legion's values and principles. Our viability requires us to excel at every level, to be accountable to ourselves, to

work together, and give strength to the pride of The American Legion.
We must continue to be engaged with Be the One. The American Legion will continue to change lives and save lives. Through our personal commitment to our mission, we will make sure that we are Legion Strong!
Strength is increased when we get outside of our posts to engage with the community, this provides visibility to our mission. Veterans need to see us to want to join us! Once they fully engage with The American Legion, they will find friends and feel at home in our Family!
Let them see your passion and pride in being a Legionnaire!
You have selected strong experienced leaders to serve as your 2024-2025 Department

Vice Commanders: Nathan Bond, Jerry Hook, Phil Green, and Debbie Thomas. This team will help to make Wisconsin Legion Strong! None of us can succeed without all of us working together towards a common goal.
Our programs, ceremonies, and service to the community give us relevance, visibility, and help drive membership.
Our Legion Strength is increased through the Commitment and Service of the Legion Family, our Sons, our Riders, and our Auxiliary.
Together as a family we are Legion Strong!
Jim Johnson
Commander
P.S. Please take time today to give a buddy check.

★★★ DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ★★★



Becky Mueller
2024-2025
Department
President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Thank you to all for a great beginning to my term of office. I look forward to working with the American Legion Family to further our mission and vision.

My theme this year is "Serving our Veterans, Military and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts." What I envision for us this year is that we tap into the love we hold in the very depths of our hearts and release it for action towards those who mean the most to us. Our organization is built on the desire to serve, protect, and advocate for our Veterans of military service, those currently serving in the military, their family members, and their communities. We are all family members. Our services should include each other.

I have two projects I want us to focus on. First, I want us to bring awareness to the 1,800 MIA/POWs that are still missing from our state. The UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project is working to find and identify missing U.S. military personnel in conjunction with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. The names of the missing are available. I would like us to reach out to those family members still waiting for closure, loving them, caring for them, from the depths of our hearts.
Secondly, I would like to challenge each member of The American Legion Family, especially the Auxiliary, to donate to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. My goal is to raise \$1 per member.
I look forward to visiting with you and your units, posts, and squadrons as you invite me. A form is available on the department website for your use. I want to know what you are accomplishing and achieving so I can celebrate with you.

I thank God for all of you being part of my family and life. I thank God for your faith and patriotism. I thank God for your heart for service. Now let's roll up our sleeves and get to work in Service to our Veterans, Military and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts.



Allen Watry
SAL Detachment
Commander

Greetings Wisconsin Legion Family,
What a great 12 months for the Wisconsin Sons of The American Legion. Through the 57 CSRs turned in, the Wisconsin SAL reported \$32,000 in donations and 73,000 Volunteer Hours for an Economic Impact of over \$2.7 million. This is a 46% Increase from the previous year. Great Job!! We are providing a much-needed positive impact in our Communities, State, and Nation!
We also had a very successful membership year, achieving Triple Nickel Status. Membership grew over 9% (goal of a 5% increase) to

over almost 4,700 members, we added 5 new Squadrons (goal of 5), and our renewal rate was 91.5% (goal of 85%). This is not an easy task and took a lot of effort. Thank you for all your efforts to achieve Triple Nickel Status. So what is in store for membership for 2024-2025? Can we keep the momentum and growth going? Can we hit 5,000 in 2025?
One way we can help keep increasing our membership is by being visible and relevant in our communities. We do this by living out our Preamble and executing programs/activities focused on the 4 Pillars of the American Legion. Demonstrating to our communities, through our actions, what it means to have an Americanism Spirit. Teaching and helping the Youth in our communities, who

are our future. Contacting our government representatives to tell them they need to be aligned with the focuses and priorities of the American Legion. And last, but not least, supporting our Veterans, Active Military, and their Families.
This is our mission; this is the Mission of the entire Legion Family. Thank you to the entire Legion Family for your efforts in 2023-2024. We are making a difference; our country needs us to be successful. I look forward to working with the entire Legion Family to make 2024-2025 even more successful than 2023-2024. Please keep up the great work!!
For God and Country,
Allen Watry

★★★ SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER ★★★



Corey Doebrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

Unfortunately, good Wisconsin riding weather is rapidly coming to an end for the year. In just over a month the Legion Riders will have our annual Fall Ride to Camp bringing donations from across the state to support the mission of Camp American Legion. Riders will enjoy the camaraderie that is a significant part of why many people join the American Legion Family. If you are a Legion Rider and have not been to the Fall Color Ride in Tomahawk nor the Fall Ride to Camp, I would strongly encourage you to join in this year and see

what it is all about. You can stay at Camp American Legion all week if you'd like. If that does not fit into your schedule, join us on Saturday, September 14, at the gas station (1727 E Somo Ave, Tomahawk, WI) as we ride into Camp American Legion as a group. We depart at 11:00 am with lunch at noon with donations to follow.
I hear often about the fundraising capability of the American Legion Riders. This distinction is very well deserved as I know Legion Riders across Wisconsin and the Nation for that matter do raise a significant amount of money for American Legion programs. I've had a lot of time to consider this over the last few years. I believe that the Legion Riders are so adept at raising funds because the Riders

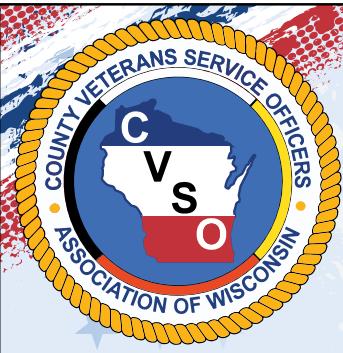
organization is made of members from the Legion, Auxiliary & SAL I would support this by pointing out the many American Legion posts that are doing very well: they also have very vibrant and family-oriented relationships among their Legion Family. Working together for the common goal of supporting veterans and their families. If you can improve the relationship among your post's family, I think you will really reap the benefits.
If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don't hesitate to contact me: Corey Doebrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at alrawi.director@gmail.com. Our next meeting after the publication of this will be November 2 at Weiske-Farrell Post 351 in Montello, WI.

★★★ LEGION RIDERS ★★★

Veterans Crisis Line



DIAL 988
then **PRESS 1**



County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin

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