



# BADGER



# LEGIONNAIRE

& WISCONSIN VOL 101 #1 | FEB. 2024



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY | WILEGION.ORG

THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN IS TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.



## 2024 Midwinter Conference

January 18-21, 2024 - La Crosse, WI



The 2024 Midwinter Conference started out with two events that took the Wisconsin American Legion out into the community. There was a 2.2 Mile Be The One Walk and a Freezin for a Reason event at Post 52. Both events raised money for awareness of at-risk Veterans. We were joined for the weekend by National Commander Candidate Dan Wiley of Kansas.

On Friday, committees and commissions met and made decisions that will further the Wisconsin American Legion and support Veterans, their families and their communities. On Saturday Legionnaires came from all over the state to learn about Funeral Honors, Peer Mentorship, Legion Programs, Leadership positions, and

more. Classes were offered more than once to allow attendees to maximize their time and get several classes in throughout the day.

Saturday evening all gathered for the 'Recruit the Next You' Celebration. The evening began with a buffet meal followed by entertainment by LB & The HIGHVOLTS. Organizers even projected the Packer game on the wall in the room.

Thank you to all who attended Midwinter, and the 7th District Volunteers who helped with registration and heavy lifting.

Mark your calendars for the 105th Department Convention July 10-14, 2024 in Appleton, and the 2025 Midwinter January 16-19, 2025 in Appleton.



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2930 American Legion Drive  
Portage, WI 53901

“Badger Legionnaire” & “Wisconsin”

The Badger Legionnaire & Wisconsin are the official publications of the Wisconsin American Legion Family and are published six times annually, by the American Legion, Department of Wisconsin  
 Post Master: Send address changes to Badger Legionnaire and Wisconsin, P.O. Box 388, Portage, WI 53901

“Badger Legionnaire”

**The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin**  
 2930 American Legion Drive  
 P.O. Box 388 • Portage, WI 53901  
 Phone: 608-745-1090  
 Email: badger@wilegion.org

Executive Editor  
**Sheri Hicks**

**2023-24 Department Officers**  
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 3rd – **Jerry Hook**  
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 5th – **Craig Ellis**  
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 9th – **Debbie Thomas**  
 10th – **Rita Rindahl**  
 11th – **Gerry Johnson**  
 12th – **Scott Markle**

Subscribers: To report any upcoming changes of address, please ask your Post Adjutant to fill out a Membership Data Form and forward it to Wisconsin American Legion Headquarters. The change of address form that will be completed by the Post Adjutant should not be confused with the change of address card filled out at the Post Office. Department financial statements are available to Legionnaires in good standing upon written request through their District Commanders.

“Wisconsin”

**American Legion Auxiliary**  
**Department of Wisconsin**  
 2930 American Legion Drive  
 P.O. Box 140 • Portage, WI 53901  
**Bonnie Dorniak, Editor**  
**Maggie Geiger, Department President**  
**Bonnie Dorniak, Exec. Secretary/Treasurer**

To change your address: Notify Unit Secretary  
 Unit Secretary: Notify Department Headquarters on a Member Change Form

The “Wisconsin” deadline for copy is 4 weeks before publication date.

**BADGER BOYS STATE**

**BADGER BOYS STATE: A RECIPE FOR CHANGE**

By **Zachary Dickhut**

Over the years, we at Badger Boys State have taken the time to tell you about the various goings-on within—and because of—our organization. It’s hard to quantify our impact in numbers and words alone. We can, however, offer a bit of a recipe for how we bring about lasting change in the lives of Wisconsin’s brightest young men.

It begins with who is on our staff. A successful blend of former Boys Staters who experienced the program and went on to various career paths, and Legionnaires who served their nation in addition to their life’s work come together to lend their time and skills to a successful program. If any citizen has a question about



any career path, be it law, medicine, industry, business, education, or the military, there is likely a staff member they can talk to.

Another ingredient in our magic is conversation. Right away as citizens arrive, we greet them and make them feel welcome. While many of the young men who arrive have seen local Veterans in parades, school assemblies, and brat fries, this is likely their first opportunity for an

extended conversation with a Veteran aside from a family member. We are always pleased to see how respectful the young men are right off the bat. As the week continues, we reiterate the importance of respect, healthy conversation, and learning from each other.

The next powerful ingredient is teamwork. We show early on that democracy is a team effort. From the introduction games we play at the beginning, to our government simulation, to the sports and recreation in the afternoon—the citizens are always working together for a common cause. It prepares them best for how the world works—sometimes to our frustration. While their lanyards distinguish their fictitious political party, the fact they’re all wearing the same shirt emphasizes that they’re on the same team.

The most important ingredient is learning by doing. Since its beginnings in 1939, Badger Boys State has taught our state’s young men by letting them exercise the lessons they’re learning in a fake simulation of government. Campaigning, making a speech, budgeting both their own (and taxpayer) dollars, are all shaping their understanding of the world. In fact, the best teaching aspect of the simulation is allowing the young men to fail. Take it from me—allowing the young men to fail safely is perhaps the best tool we have in creating lasting life lessons.

As always, we invite all Legionnaires to Eau Claire to join us in changing lives. It is amazing how watching this transformation over one week can fill the heart with hope.

**WALLECA APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 31**

The Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy (WALLECA) application process was made available on January 2, 2024. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2024. The academy is open to current high school juniors and seniors. The application is available on The Wisconsin American Legion website, <https://wilegion.org/walleca>.

This year’s WALLECA will be held from July 29–August 2, 2024 at the State Patrol Academy at Fort McCoy. The curriculum includes Firearms Training, Ethics, Crime Scene Investigation, Physical Readiness Testing, and much more.



The classes are instructed by current and retired law enforcement professionals. Questions regarding WALLECA can be forwarded to Sheri Hicks, Programs Coordinator, at [Sheri@wilegion.org](mailto:Sheri@wilegion.org) or by calling 608-745-1090.



**ORATORICAL CONTEST SLATED FOR MARCH 23 AT RIPON COLLEGE**

The 87th Annual High School Oratorical Regional and Finals Contest is scheduled March 23, 2024 at Ripon College in Todd Wehr Hall. Opening ceremonies begin at 9 a.m. The contests began at the post level, then advancing to the county and the district level. The district winners will participate in the Regional contest on March 23 in the morning. The winners of the regional contests will participate in the Finals contest the same day at 12:45 p.m. The contestants are competing for scholarships. The winner of the Finals contest will represent the state of Wisconsin at the National Oratorical Contest May 17–19, 2024 at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan.

This is a great opportunity for Legion Family members to attend a

great event that features talented high school students who have worked very hard to present their orations. Each contestant will present two orations. The first being a prepared 8- to 10-minute oration about the U.S. Constitution. Their second oration consists of a 3- to 5-minute oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. There are 4 assigned topics, and because they are randomly selected by the Oratorical Chair at each contest, students must be prepared to speak on all of them.

Take a trip to Ripon College on March 23 and support this great American Legion Americanism Program.

If you have questions about the Oratorical contest, please contact Sheri at Legion Headquarters, [sheri@wilegion.org](mailto:sheri@wilegion.org).

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# WELLER WINS JEFFERSON AWARD FOR VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Bob Weller, Past Commander of the Wausau American Legion Post 10, was recently honored at the Jefferson Awards Annual Banquet at the Jefferson Inn on November 16, 2023. He was one of the twelve honorees from the past year who were presented the award by Master of Ceremonies Melissa Langbehn and Justin Loew from News 9 WAOW.

News 9 WAOW and their partner Sparhawk Trucking are the sponsors of the monthly Jefferson Awards and the hosts of the annual event. The Jefferson Award program was created to recognize the volunteers who do extraordinary things in their community without expectation of recognition or reward.

Some of Bob's accomplishments which lead to him being awarded the Jefferson Award include his leadership at the Wausau American Legion Post 10 that played a major role impacting the post and the entire Wausau community.

He expanded the Legion's Veteran meal delivery program. In the past four years volunteers delivered over 5,200 meals to hundreds of Veterans, widows and their families. The meals are prepared by Bunkers restaurant and cookies, candies and pies are donated by area businesses and organizations. Thank you cards were created by young adults from



Bob receiving his award from Melissa at Texas Roadhouse in Weston.

various organizations. The overall satisfaction of the Veteran meal program is echoed in the numerous calls and thank you notes.

Bob was contacted by two area foundations who had seen the work the post had done with their Veteran meal program. These two foundations and others donated funds that enabled the purchase of a vehicle for the post and Honor Guard. A post vehicle was needed to transport rifles, flags, and support items to the funeral homes, churches and cemeteries when performing Military Rites for fallen Veterans. The Post Honor Guard provides an average of 70 Military Rites annually.

Bob initiated the Veterans Avenue Honor Banners that display the Veterans' photos, dates and icons relating to their service connection along Grand Avenue from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. The Veterans and their families are also honored during the Memorial Day ceremonies at Restlawn Cemetery.

Bob has a very creative mind and the ability to work well with businesses, our community and members of the American Legion. His actions will be felt for years to come by Veterans and their families ... his leadership is hard to match ... and the lives he has impacted can never be counted!

*Story and photos courtesy of Mike Heilmann, Post 10 Historian and Public Relations.*

## MONROE COUNTY POSTS COLLABORATE ON FLAGPOLES

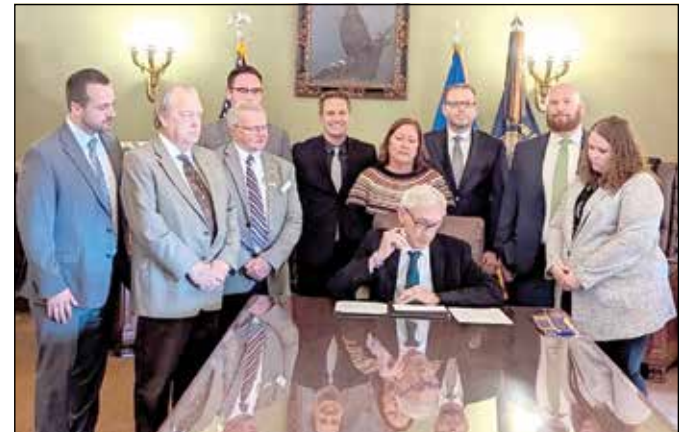
By John Gessner  
Post 100, Sparta

"The goal is to place flagpoles at each cemetery in Monroe County that has a Veteran buried there," said Steve Krueger, Commander of the Monroe County American Legion. At least eight cemeteries have been identified in Monroe County without flagpoles. Several American Legion posts around the country have collaborated on a project to install flagpoles at each of these cemeteries. To honor the Veterans buried there. Why is this so important to project coordinator Steve Krueger? Because they served the flag in life and now the flag serves them after their passing.



Larry Hoeft (Post 467-Ontario), Steve Krueger (Post 100-Sparta), Doug Rogalla (Post 309-Kendall), Jerry Von Haden (Post 508-Wilton), and Bill Degenhardt (Post 438-Norwalk) install the flagpole at the Nowalk Catholic Cemetery. Photo by John Gessner.

The Monroe County American Legion organization will monitor these flags for routine replacement. The first two cemeteries identified for the flagpoles were the Norwalk Village Pioneer Cemetery and the adjoining Catholic Cemetery and the Wanderers Cemetery south of Norwalk.



Governor Evers signs Act 70 with American Legion Legislative Chair Paul Fisk in attendance.

## GOVERNOR EVERS SIGNS WI ACT 70

On December 6, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers signed Act 70 making changes to the statutes relating to membership of the Council on Veterans Programs. Veterans Service Coordinators from the UW System and the WI technical colleges were added to the council. Members of now inactive Veterans organizations were removed from the council.



## GIFT BOXES TO ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS

The Forestville American Legion Post 372 sent out gift boxes to our active duty service members. Local businesses that donated products for the boxes included: Dehydrated cherries from Country Ovens in Forestville, one pound of sausage sticks from Marchant's Meats in Brussels, and cheese packages from Renard's Cheese. Members of Post 372 packed and shipped 31 boxes. Members pictured left to right are:

Arnie Johnsrud, Bill Karas, Hank Gilson, Terry Mc Nulty, Wayne Delwiche, and Bob Neuville. Al Kintopf took the picture. Groups that helped sponsor the project include: Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin and the Door County Dairy Promotion Board, Forestville—Maplewood Lions Club, and Thrivent Financial.

Forestville American Legion Post would like to thank all those who helped sponsor this project.



## Jerry Hook for Department Vice Commander

Legionnaires, I'm seeking your support as a candidate for the high office of Department Vice Commander. I earned my membership in the American Legion serving in the United States Army from 1983 to 1987, Army Reserves while in college at UW-La Crosse, with an eight-month stint of Active Duty at the Military Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, and then after graduation back to active-duty Army from 1993 to 2008.



**Jerry Hook**

I joined the Legion in 2008 because a Post Member asked me to join. I believe in the mission of the American Legion, supporting our Veterans and their

families, youth, our communities, and our great Nation and because of that I became a PUFL Member in 2015. I've held leadership positions from Post to District level.

Over the last two years the 3rd District has heard me talk about how we as members, Posts, Counties and Districts need to be active, relevant, and visible.

We took the uniform off when we separated or retired but we have never stopped serving, I would like to serve with and for you. That is why I am asking for your support in my candidacy for the high office of Department Vice Commander.

## Nathan Bond for Department Vice Commander

Nathan Bond, First District Commander, has declared his candidacy for Department Vice Commander. His goals are to ensure the Legacy of The American Legion, increase Education about the Legion's mission and programs among its members and the people of Wisconsin, improve and increase The Legion's Assistance to all Veterans and their families, and give Post leadership the tools to diligently perform their Duty as local leaders.



**Nathan Bond**

Bond is a 24-year Army Veteran with both enlisted and commissioned service as a combat engineer and in public affairs. Bond retired from the Army in December of 2013 and became a Veterans Service Officer for Walworth County in March of 2014. Nathan and his wife, Julie, live in Williams Bay, Wisconsin where Julie was raised and now owns and operates a lake-front resort. Son, Christopher, is a Cadet with the Governor's Guard of Austin Peay State University of Tennessee, where he is seeking an Army Commission.

Bond joined The American Legion in 2006 at the behest of a Legionnaire in Junction City, KS while he was stationed at Fort Riley as the 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Officer. "He told me, 'No don't join my post. Join your local post.' So, I found the nearest post to where I

thought we would be retiring at, sent my application and dues to Ingalls-Koeppen Post 102, Walworth and I've been a member ever since." Bond became a PUFL member in 2007 and Julie later became a PUFL Auxiliary member too.

Nathan has held several American Legion positions including: Post Adjutant, Post Commander, Post Membership Chair, County Service Officer, District Vice Commander, District Commander, Department Legislative Com-

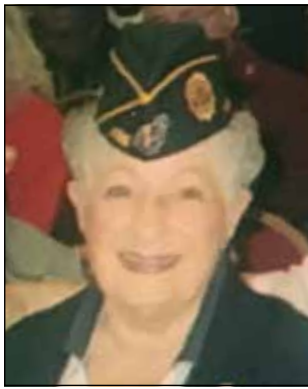
mittee Vice-Chair, and he currently serves on the National Councils for Legislative Affairs, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

With Bond's leadership, Ingalls-Koeppen Post 102 achieved 100% membership every year since 2016, and First District achieved 100% in 2023.

"The most important thing we can do at the Department level is develop usable tools for our Post Officers to conduct The American Legion mission and programs. Equally important for the Department is to tell the story of The American Legion Family to the People of Wisconsin," says Bond. "'Deeds not Words,' is a pretty good motto," Bond continues, "But Deeds and Words, is what it's going to take to keep The American Legion relevant in our communities and to our younger Veterans."

## Nellie P. De Baker for Department Sergeant-at-Arms

Dear Legionnaires: I am running for Department Sergeant-at-Arms for 2024-2025 and look forward for your vote. My past SA activity includes serving National and State Conventions and my district. Other activity includes election as commander of my Post-4 years, County-2 years, District-2 years, Department Vice-1 year and Department Historian-5 years with service on the DEC 8 years. (served as state commander 6 years and have gone through the national chairs and campaigned for national commander in two non-Legion organizations) Active with many AL clubs (WALCAA-PCC-WHA-NADHAL-WALPA-NALPA-PDVC-ORATORICAL) and committees rounded out an extensive background of teamwork, knowledge and communication.



**Nellie P. De Baker**

The greatest joy was carrying on as an active

historian to build upon past historian work with newspaper articles and workshops at State Conventions and Midwinter Conferences. As a graduate of The Wisconsin AL College - completing most of its courses, I served the Alumni Association as their Secretary and Judge Advocate. I must add also that NADHAL, the National Historian Association of Department Historians, kept the state cognizant of carrying on Legion history which I served very actively as their President 3 years, Vice President, Secretary 20+ years, national trainer and national history book judge in Indianapolis for 26 years.

In all the above, the community served a vital part to the American Legion. I look forward to meeting and talking with you at the next State Convention 2024 so we all can ring in the new officers and offer support for them.

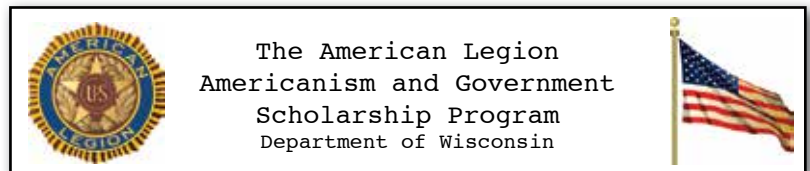
## LARSONS' TOYS FOR TOTS DONATION GIVEN IN MEMORY OF CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN



On Friday, December 1, Tom and Deb Larson pulled up to Legion Headquarters' front door with a trailer full of over 650 toys for Toys for Tots.

Tom & Deb have experienced great loss of children and grandchildren including: Mikey Larson, Angela Larson, Michelle Zarnoth, Brady Alexander and Brent Erickson, and do this in their memory.

Their generosity will make Christmas morning so special for hundreds of children. In the words of Deb, "time to start shopping for next year." May God bless the Larsons this Christmas season.



### Purpose:

To promote "Americanism", love of country, knowledge of government and allegiance to the U.S. flag to our youth. Eligible students are tested on their knowledge of U.S., Wisconsin and Country Governments, the U.S. Constitution and flag etiquette.

### Who Is Eligible?

Any student in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade in any public, private, parochial or home-schooled within the State of Wisconsin may participate. Students may only take the test 1 times per year; however, students may participate all 3 years and be eligible for the scholarships for multiple years.

### What Is It?

The test consists of 50 questions; true/false, multiple choice, matching, and an essay question that must be answered in order to qualify for the scholarships. Students are not allowed to use outside resources for answers while taking this test.

The test is available on-line in March through March 15, 2024. Students Register on-line when taking the test. The test link is found at:

<https://agtesting.departmentapps.org/>

The link is only active during the test window.



Annually, 33 students throughout the State of Wisconsin are awarded scholarships selected by the Americanism Committee of The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin. The following scholarships are awarded:

- 11 students in Grade 10 receive a \$250 scholarship
- 11 students in Grade 11 receive a \$300 scholarship
- 11 students in Grade 12 receive a \$750 scholarship

For more information, contact The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin 608-745-1090 or check out our website at [wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org)

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## SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM IN NEED OF LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS

The Selective Service System (SSS) is a trusted and engaged national defense partner in support of the U.S. National Defense Strategy and our all-volunteer military in the event of a national emergency.

1. Registration rate needs to be improved for 18 - 25-year-old males in Wisconsin. Currently only 76% of Wisconsin's young men are registering. Please remind our male youth to register at <https://www.sss.gov/>.

2. Volunteers are needed to fill the positions of Local Board

Members (LBM) around the Badger State. We especially need LBM in the following counties: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Calumet, Clark, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Green, Green Lake, Iron, Jefferson, Lafayette, Langlade, Lincoln, Marinette, Marquette, Rock, Sawyer, Shawano, Taylor, Vilas, and Washburn. Please help get the word out with your Legion Family and communities.

Individuals who meet the following criteria would qualify as Local Board Members:

- Be a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age.

- Males must have registered with the Selective Service (Men born in March 1957 thru December 1959, and March 1975 thru June 1980 are exempt.).

- Cannot be an active or retired member of the Armed Forces or Reserve/National Guard.

- Conviction of any criminal offense disqualifies a person from being a board member.

*Submitted by Selective Service Director for the State of Wisconsin and Past National Commander Denise Rohan.*



### POST 4 MAKES DONATIONS TO HONOR FLIGHT PROGRAM

Commander Jean of Post 4, Athens, presents two \$1,000 checks to Roxanne Erickson of the Central Wisconsin Never Forgotten Honor Flight. One check is from American Legion Post 4, the other from Athens VFW Post 8527. To date 46 missions have flown from Central WI to DC taking 4399 WWII, Korea and Vietnam Veterans on a trip of a lifetime.



### HUMANA SEEKING CHINA BEACH NURSES TO HELP ON WEBINAR TRAINING

Every year Humana, a health insurance company, hosts multiple webinars and in-person events to train their agents how to work with Veterans. Humana has been working with Veterans for well over a decade and they educate agents regularly to understand the complexities of VA coverage, TFL and ChampVA. Humana feels like Vietnam Veterans deserve a special time where they can share their stories. In the past Humana has had some amazing speakers over the years to speak to agents specifically about the Vietnam Veteran experience.

This year – Humana would love to find a nurse who was in Vietnam, especially a China Beach nurse. Vietnam Veterans Day is March 29, and Humana prefers to host the event on the actual day. The Veteran needs to be willing to speak over Zoom to Humana agents who want to help the cause.

If you meet the criteria and you are interested in participating in this event, please contact Amy Sausen with Humana. Her phone number is 502-313-7927. Her email address is [asausen@humana.com](mailto:asausen@humana.com).

### WAUSAU VETERANS DAY CEREMONY DRAWS VETERAN GROUPS FROM AREA

Wausau area Veteran organizations gathered on Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11, 2023 at Bunkers Restaurant. A ceremony was held inside and the public was invited.

The Emcee was Lt. Colonel Ralph Sliwicki, Army, Retired and Wausau American Legion Post 10 Chaplain Don Hildebrandt provided the opening prayer. The guest speakers

were U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Kevin D. Southworth, Wausau Police Chief Matthew Barnes and Marathon County Veterans Service Officer Jill Geoffroy. Letters and thank you cards were created and provided for the Veterans by the students at John Muir Middle School.

The Color Guard members included the American Legion



### NVC SHREVE VISITS POST 477

On November 3, American Legion National Vice Commander Mark Shreve met with members of Legion Post 477 – St. Nazianz. Vice Commander Shreve highlighted Legion priorities, conducted Buddy Check phone calls to Post members, talked about the importance of sponsoring and mentoring new Legion members and distributed 'Got 1' pins to Post members who recruited at least one Legion member for the 2023 year.

He also spoke at length about 'Be The One.' The mission of the American Legion is to change lives and save lives. We want to destigmatize mental health or seeking mental health support. The goal of the Legion is that not one Veteran commits suicide. In order to do this, we must reach out to Veterans and ask if they are OK, if they need assistance, have the knowledge on who may help, to include calling 988. We have to Be The One to save the life of a Veteran.

Post 477 was very honored to host Vice Commander Shreve and Post leadership was able to highlight their accomplishments for the past year. After lunch with Post members, Vice Commander Shreve was presented with local products; Henning's cheese, Miesfeld's summer sausage, and maple syrup from In the Woods.



Post 10 and Auxiliary, VFW, Man of Honor and AMVETS. The American Legion also provided the Rifle Squad. The Solemn Tolling of the Bell took place at 11:11 am by the VFW to commemorate the first Armistice Day, ending WWII. Echo Taps was performed by Ed Kemery and Dale Osterbrink.



Share "In the Spotlight" stories with the Legion Family by sending them to badger@wilegion.org. Please provide high-Res JPG photos and email text or a word file. If you'd like to submit hardcopy, you may mail them to PO Box 388, Portage, WI 53901 Attn: Sheri



ABOVE: Maj. Eric Van Hout, an administrative officer with the Wisconsin National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, and Command Sergeant Maj. Ryan Johnson, battalion command sergeant major, present a Purple Heart medal to Mike Muthig, the grandson of World War I Veteran Pvt. George C. Arts. LEFT: Pvt. George C. Arts.



## RED ARROW VETERAN AWARDED PURPLE HEART MEDAL POSTHUMOUSLY

Mike Muthig, Wisconsin American Legion Post 60 member, accepted the Purple Heart medal at a ceremony held at the Outagamie Courthouse on November 11 on behalf of his late grandfather, Pvt. George C. Arts.

Pvt. Arts, member of Company I, 127th Infantry Regiment, was wounded August 4, 1918 during the Second Battle of the Marne. The 32nd Division, composed of Wisconsin National Guard and Michigan National Guard Soldiers, had just arrived from the trenches of Alsace, Germany, to be a part of the assault on the heavily fortified town of Fismes. Pvt. Arts was one of thousands of Division Soldiers wounded in the assault by machine gun fire and artillery shells. He suffered a fractured left knee and a bullet wound to his right hip. In August 1920, he was honorably discharged at Ft. Sheridan Illinois with a medical rating of poor.

At that time, the U.S. military did not issue Purple Hearts for battlefield

injuries. Pvt. Arts was authorized to wear the American Expeditionary Force wound chevron to indicate that he was wounded in combat. The Purple Heart was reinstated in 1932. Pvt. Arts continued to suffer from complications of his wounds and died on December 10, 1928 at the age of 35.

Upon finding out about Pvt. Arts' story, Congressman Mike Gallagher became involved and after contacting the U.S. Army Human Resources Command, was able to confirm Arts' eligibility for the Purple Heart medal.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ryan Johnson, the current senior enlisted leader of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, presented the medal to Muthig at the ceremony. Johnson is also a Purple Heart recipient for wounds suffered during his deployment to Iraq in 2004-05.

The Fox Valley Veterans Council also presented Pvt. Arts' family with a replica of his wound chevron.



## POST 410 CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES TOTALING 260 YEARS

Warren Kane American Legion Post 410 in Fredonia recently celebrated milestones of long-serving legion members during their annual awards dinner at Leonard's Silver Creek Inn.

ABOVE LEFT: Post 410 Commander Ronald Lanser (right) honors Kim Steffen for 40 years of continuous service.

ABOVE RIGHT: Post 410 Commander Ronald Lanser (right) honors Michael Berry for 55 years of continuous service.

TOPRIGHT: Post 410 Commander Ronald Lanser (right) honors Harry Michaels for 55 years of continuous service.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Post 410 Commander Ronald Lanser (right) honors Peter Klas for 50 years of continuous service.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Post 410 Commander Ronald Lanser (left) honors Virgil Weinrich, 97, for 60 years of continuous service.



## RIO VETERANS RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE IN VIETNAM

As part of the National Vietnam War Veterans Commemoration Program, on December 5, 2023 at the Rio American Legion Post, two Vietnam War Era Veterans were recognized with thanks for their service and sacrifice.

Shown are Veteran brothers Terry Howe (left) and Tim Howe (center), along with Dale Gajdosik of the Rio American Legion Post 208 who led the event.

A third brother, retired U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Michael Howe (d. 2003), also served in Vietnam during a long Navy career.



## 11TH DISTRICT LEGION RIDERS LAY WREATH

American Legion Riders 11th District presented flags at the Northwoods National Cemetery before the Wreath laying December 16, 2023.



## NORTHWOODS HONOR GUARD PRESENTS COLORS

American Legion Post 7 Commander Bob Smith leads the Northwoods Honor Guard into the Rhinelander Jr. High Veterans Day Celebration. Multiple Veteran groups belong to the honor guard. The American Legion, VFW, AMVETS, NCO club, and DAV are all a part of this celebration. These Veterans belong to all the groups they can.



## FOUR POSTS HOLD COLUMBIA COUNTY FLAG DISPOSAL



On November 15, Adjutant Larry Randall and Chaplain Ed Sigmund from Wisconsin Dells Post 187 brought a load of torn and tattered American flags to Legion Headquarters in Portage for an official flag disposal. Flags are now disposed at the LaVerne Griffin Memorial located behind Legion Headquarters. The event was scheduled and planned by Commander Dean Simonson of Post 47 in Portage. ABOVE LEFT: Four Posts from Columbia County participated in this flag disposal event. ABOVE RIGHT: Columbia County CVOs Tamra Brueggeman and other Columbia County Legion members preparing the flags for disposal.



## POST 337 HONORS SERVICE



ABOVE: Post 337 Pulaski presented a 65-year continuous membership certificate to Eugene Mastey (center) on November 29. Eugene was presented with a Quilt of Valor hand made by friends of Post 337. Presenting the blanket are Past Commander Tom Abrahamson (left) and Bob Weed, Membership. BELOW: Post 337 Pulaski presented a certificate of 60 years continuous membership on November 29, 2023 to Donald Birr (center). He also received a 60-year cap pin. Presentation was made by Past Commander Tom Abrahamson (left) and Bob Weed, Membership. Pictures submitted by Bob Weed.

## ALRA 4/5 DISTRICT DONATION TO MHVI



A \$500 donation to the VAVS Department at the Clement J. Zablocki VA for their annual holiday gift giving for Veterans and their families for gifts and or meals etc. Left to right: John Rose, Mike Heller, John W Edelblute IV, Jessica Serdynski and Bradlee Gietzel.



This check was given as part of an annual holiday donation to the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans initiative. The donation assists with food pantry and other needed items for homeless Veterans and Veterans just starting off again after being homeless.

## SANTA VISITS POST 454



Santa made a surprise visit to Legion Post 454 in Mt. Calvary in December and proved that no one is too “young” or too “old” to meet with Santa. As word quickly spread that Santa had arrived at Post 454 members and Auxiliary members assisted in making the visit a memorable experience for all. Santa and his helpers also found time to visit residents at Villa Rosa Assisted Living in Mt. Calvary and residents at St. Francis Home in Fond du Lac.



## POST 169 OPERATION CHRISTMAS



Amery Wisconsin Post 169 recently contributed to Polk County Operation Christmas. Over 200 families depend on Operation Christmas to help them provide gifts for the holidays. Operation Christmas Coordinator Rochelle accepts a check from Post 169 Commander Mark Starsky.

## POST 1 BRINGS HOME THE SANTA TROPHY

The Germantown Area Chamber of Commerce has celebrated its annual Christmas Festival on Saturday, November 11, Veterans Day. This day consists of the 5K Candy Cane Run/Walk, Jingle Bell Dash, Christmas Festival Parade and Christmas in the Park at Firemen’s Park. The Christmas Festival Parade has been going strong since 1981! Each one of the parade entries have a chance at the Santa Trophy for the best entry based on: creativity, usage of the theme – “A Patriotic Christmas”, and bringing the enthusiasm. This year the Germantown Chamber of Commerce is proud to award the Santa Trophy to the Germantown American Legion Post 1 and VFW Post 9202 for their parade participation, enthusiasm and creativity in getting great member engagement in the festivities. The Santa trophy was awarded Wednesday, December 13 at the American Legion’s member meeting. From left: Kristi Bonnell, Commander American Legion Post 1; Lynn Grgich, Germantown Chamber of Commerce; and Leroy Fry, Commander VFW Post 9202.



## POST 7 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Bob Smith, American Legion Post 7 Commander, coordinated the Wreaths Across America ceremony at National Cemetery. Northwoods Honor Guard led by Jerrod Olson, American Legion Post 7, also fellow Legion Post 7 members, along with VFW Post 3143, AMVETS Post 724, DAV 62, NCO Club, and American Legion members from Three Lakes.



## RINGING IN CHRISTMAS



LEFT: The Grinch (a.k.a. Debbie Gabert) is back to abnormally “Good” deeds for the Salvation Army and the community on behalf of the Cedarburg American Legion Post 288. The Post has been ringing the Salvation Army bell for the past 15 years and has raised approximately \$10,000 per winter holiday season for a total of over \$100,000 over the duration of yearly collections. The bell ringers are Post 288 Legion members, Auxiliary, SAL members, and volunteers from the community. RIGHT: Scheduling of the bell ringers was all at the orchestration of 1st Vice, and past Commander, Jim Lee (seen here donning his Grinch cheer while tending bar for the Post’s December Fish Fry).

## POST 316 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Sheldon Post 316 participated in Wreaths Across America on December 16, including the Post 316 Color Guard (above) and Post 316 Jaden Stewart playing Taps (below).



## TREMPEALEAU COUNTY COUNCIL SPEECH CONTEST WINNERS

A home based education student in the Arcadia School District is the winner of the Trempealeau County Council of the American Legion Oratorical Contest.

Zoa Winey won the contest held at the Cabin in the Pines, American Legion Post 324, Osseo, Wisconsin on Wednesday, 13 December. Zoa Winey, a senior, earned the top spot and a \$500 scholarship and will now compete at the District Level against winners of contests in communities between River Falls and the southern part of Trempealeau County. The District Level Oratorical Contest will be held at American Legion Post 121, River Falls, Wisconsin on 6 January, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

Each contestant delivered a prepared oration on any aspect of the U.S. Constitution as well as an oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. Zoa Winey impressed the judges with a speech titled “Peace In Our Time”.

Senior Oriah Anderson from the Whitehall School District earned second and a scholarship worth \$300, and 3rd place winner was Freshman Miranda Najera from the Independence



Left to right – Miranda Najera, Oriah Anderson, Zoa Winey and Brian Lyga, Commander, Trempealeau County Council.

School District, earning a \$200 scholarship.

Since 1938, The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program has encouraged the nation’s high school students to study the U.S. Constitution and to hone their public speaking skills.



## POST 143 MAKES DONATION TO ST. CROIX FALLS SD

St. Croix Post 143 Commander Mark Stencil and Auxiliary President Char Jones presented to Superintendent Mark Draund and Guidance Counselor Mike Williams of St. Croix Falls School a donation of 20 \$50 gift cards to hand out to local families to help with Christmas Dinners. This is a joint effort between the Post, Auxiliary and District 12 Legion Riders to raise the funds to do this.

## POST 534 TOYS FOR TOTS



Post 534 raised funds for Toys for Tots. In December, their total was \$7,485. In 2023, a total of \$10,025 was raised.

## POST 169 CHRISTMAS WITH THE VETS 2023



Members of the Lason-Torgerson Post 169 deliver Christmas gifts to Vets at 5 local nursing homes. Pictured are Jim Adams, Wendell Anderson, Bob Siegert, Dean Elken, Bill Pierce, Doug Gunderson and Larry Kugler. Not pictured are Steve Scheidler and Mark Starsky.

## POST 351 BREAKFAST WITH SANTA 2023



Legion members cooked and served at Marquette County American Legion Council Breakfast with Santa. The event was held at Post 351, Montello, on December 16. Breakfast was free to kids and their accompanying adults.





**James Bond**  
WDVA  
Secretary

★★★★ **WDVA SECRETARY** ★★★★★

Greetings Legionnaires! For this edition of the Badger Legionnaire, I want to do something a little different. Instead of my regular update, I would like to tell you a little about one of our new, hardworking members of the WDVA team: Jeremy Lyon, Administrator of the Division of Veterans Benefits.

Jeremy is an Army Veteran who served as an infantry officer, joining the U.S. Army in 2007 and transitioning to the Wisconsin National Guard in 2010. He led a mechanized infantry platoon in Mosul, Iraq in 2009, and received the Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman Badge for his service. After the deployment, Jeremy moved to Wisconsin to attend law school at the University of Wisconsin and transitioned to traditional M-Day military service. In 2018, after practicing civil litigation for a handful of years, Jeremy accepted a full-time position with the Wisconsin National Guard. He deployed to Ukraine in 2019 with the brigade headquarters of Wisconsin's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and had the privilege of advising and training Ukrainian battalion commanders and staffs for future conflicts.

Jeremy returned from Ukraine in 2020 and immediately had the opportunity to transition into the many domestic operations undertaken by National Guard and other joint forces. The one recurring lesson he talks about learning from Iraq, Ukraine, and domestic operations is that partnership is crucial to succeeding at our mission, whatever that mission is.

I know that Jeremy will bring that same energy and focus on building partnerships to WDVA's mission. Jeremy is heading up the Division of Veterans Benefits, which includes the Bureau of Programs and Services, the Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services, and the Bureau of Health Services. The Division is responsible for providing programs and services to Wisconsin's Veterans and their families and advocating for programs, benefits, and services provided through other agencies.

I am honored to have Jeremy as a part of our WDVA team to continue serving those who have served.

If you or your fellow Legionnaires have questions about accessing their benefits or determining their eligibility, we stand ready to help them. Visit wisvets.com today to learn more.

Thank you for your partnership in serving our Veterans and families!



**POST 268 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA**



The Bruce American Legion, Earl J. Conley Post 268 provided honor guard, prayer and taps for six different Rusk County wreath laying ceremonies, remembering and honoring 654 Veterans.



**MARKLE ATTENDS 2023 NALC**

Scott Markle, 12th District Commander, was selected to attend the National American Legion College (NALC) representing the Department of Wisconsin. The NALC was held at the National American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana from November 11 to November 17, 2023. The days were very busy studying the history of the American Legion, learning how to write resolutions, making recommendations and decisions on various leadership scenarios and so

many other educational opportunities. The most noteworthy benefit, attending the NALC, was making friends and networking with other Legionnaire students from Departments across the country. Pictured at left is 12th District Commander Scott Markle (on left) receiving his graduation diploma from National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer. Commander Markle indicated that it was indeed a great honor to represent the Department of Wisconsin at the 2023 NALC.

**POST 200 LEADS BLACK RIVER FALLS PARADE**



The Color Guard of Miles-Hagen American Legion Post 200 led the Christkindl Parade in Black River Falls on December 2nd. Left to right are: Glen Casper, Dan Wilke, Steve Hansen (Post Commander) and Rebecca Ayers (Post 2nd Vice).

**COLLECTING MACC FUNDS AT CANDY CANE LANE**

The HA Todd Jr., Wisconsin Motors, American Legion Post #537 family, out of Milwaukee, once again, participated in the collection of funds for the MACC Fund at Candy Cane Lane in West Allis, Wisconsin. Candy Cane Lane is a big section of a neighborhood where the residents go above and beyond decorating their homes for the Holidays and people from all around line

up and drive through to see those decorations. Our Post family volunteer to stand at a certain spot in the road to collect funds, hand out candy and dog biscuits, where appropriate. The MACC (Midwest Athletes Against Childhood Cancer) Fund's mission, with your help, is to find a cure for childhood cancer and related blood disorders by providing critical funding for research.



From left, Jim Linneman, Tom Zacharias, Joan Mantilla and Nick Berg.

**POST 253 DEDICATES MEMORIAL**

The Spring Green American Legion Post 253 celebrated the creation and dedication of the Spring Green Veterans Memorial on September 30, 2023. The memorial, located at Veterans Park in Spring Green, honors the Veterans who served in the U.S. armed forces from the area. The memorial consists of 6 granite walls with the names of over 1,300 Veterans engraved on it.



Post 253 Commander Keith Maxwell and Project Manager Tim Bindl pose (above left) with Post 253 Memorial, as seen from various angles.



**ST. NAZIANZ PLAQUE HONORS TWO VIETNAM VETERANS**

On Nov 12, at the St. Nazianz Community Center, formerly St. Gregory High School, a plaque was dedicated honoring John Knorr and Tom Weiss, school alumni killed in action (KIA) while serving with the U.S. Army in Vietnam. The plaque reads, "At one time they walked the halls and sat in our classrooms. They were friends and classmates. Now they are our heroes." John graduated with the class of 1965 and was KIA 5 May 1968. Tom, was in the class of 1967, and he died on Oct. 20, 1970.

Families and classmates of both John and Tom were present along with several members of American Legion Post 477 - St. Nazianz. Navy Veteran and Legion



member, Father Bill Brunner, of St Gregory's parish, blessed the plaques.

The plaque were provided by Sheboygan Elks Lodge 299 whose goal is to honor local military that were lost in the Vietnam War.



## POST 375 HOSTS POLAR PLUNGE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CABIN AT CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

On January 1, 2024, American Legion Post 375 took a Polar Plunge into the Mukwonago River at Indianhead Park, Mukwonago, WI. The event was a fundraiser for the construction of Post 375's new cabin at Camp American Legion. American Legion Post 375 Adjutant Steve Plochocki and Camp American Legion Post 375 Chair Mark Herbst spearheaded this fundraiser, which included media coverage and business participation. Special thanks to Department Commander Karl Stuvengen, District 1 SAL Commander Randy Timms, and Mukwonago EMS for attending the event. Members of Post 375, along with staff and members of the community, bravely jumped into the icy waters and proved their commitment to this cause. The generosity of donors was a true testament to the American spirit of selflessness and appreciation for Veterans. As you may know, Camp American Legion is the only camp of its kind in our great nation. Veterans who stay at camp receive individualized care and attention that no other place offers. The Wisconsin Veterans, and their families are given the opportunity to enjoy crafts, sporting activities (including hunting), recreation, counseling, and respite. Located on Little Lake Tomahawk and Big Carr Lake since 1925, camp staff and volunteers have dedicated their time and talent to provide a safe place for Veterans and their families to relax and heal. Seated on roughly 300 acres of forestry, camp provides calmness and joy, improved mental health, and emotional well-being. Free lodging and meals are also included. Post 375 membership considers it an honor and a privilege to sponsor a cabin at camp. For those seeking volunteerism or financial assistance, please log onto [wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org) for information regarding Camp American Legion. Together, the Wisconsin American Legion Family epitomizes the spirit and purpose we cherish, in giving our Veterans the respect and appreciation they deserve.



## WAUSAU POST 10 PROVIDES VETERAN MEAL DELIVERY

The Wausau American Legion Post 10 has provided over 5,400 "Safe at Home" meals for Veterans in the past four years. On Wednesday, December 20, 2023 25 volunteers helped deliver holiday meals to over 115 Veterans and their families. Many volunteers including those from the Samuels Group, In the Lite Electric and Greenheck helped package the meals with a pie and Christmas cards for delivery. The delicious meals were prepared by Bunkers Restaurant in Wausau and the pies were donated by In the Lite Electric.

The post is always looking to help more Veterans with meal deliveries. Call the post reservation line at 715-298-1606 to be added to the meal delivery list for their next delivery. Call at least one week prior to delivery and leave a name and phone number. Families and caregivers are also encouraged to call for their Veteran. The meals are free for Wausau area Veterans and widows.

Post 10 thanks all of our volunteers, members and non-mem-



bers, who make it possible to provide this Veteran service. The post also appreciates the donations from local businesses and community members which help us provide this valuable service.

*Story and photos courtesy of Mike Heilmann, Post 10 Public Relations/Historian.*

## ROSENDALE-BRANDON VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

The theme for this year was "Together We Can!" The reason that we do this each year is that our children are a small part of our population, but are 100% of our future.

Many dignitaries have spoken at our prior ceremonies to include members of Congress, State Senators, members of the State Assembly, past Lt. Governors, and other government and military officials.

A special thank you goes out to the Rosendale-Brandon School District for their outstanding support.

Several community leaders addressed the Rosendale-Brandon Veterans Day ceremony at Brandon Elementary School, including at right from left, Brandon Elementary School Principal Heidi Owens, State Representative Jon Plumer (R-Lodi), Fond du Lac County Executive Officer Sam Kaufman, James Otto American Legion Post 378, Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez, Rosendale-Brand-



on School District Superintendent Wayne Weber, Ripon College ROTC Instructor Captain Paul Klotz, Fond du Lac County Veterans Service Officer David Tellefsen and his dog Belle.



## POST 43 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

On December 16, 2023 the Ripon American Legion Post 43 participated in "Wreaths Across America" at Hillside Cemetery and Garden of the Cross Cemetery in Ripon. The event was coordinated by the John Scott Horner chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution. Following a brief dedication ceremony and the laying of the ceremonial wreaths, representing all branches of the military, members of the post presented the Colors, the 21-gun salute and Taps. Live Balsam Veterans' wreaths were laid (310 in Hillside, 89 in Garden of the Cross) thanking these Veterans that are laid to rest within. This is the third-year that Post 43 has participated in the national program whose mission is to remember the fallen, honor those who served, and teach the next generation the value of freedom.

## TWO RIVERS POST 165 PRESENT ALF DOGS TO FAMILY IN NEED

In mid-December the members of the American Legion Family — Two Rivers Post 165, stepped up to help a service family with Cool City roots. SFC Shane Garner and his wife Kim, live in Tennessee with their three children, Harrison, Harper and Juniper. Kim's Mom and Dad live here. On Dec. 9, a bad tornado hit their neighborhood, while Shane was deployed with his Army Special Forces unit.

The house was undamaged, but power would be out for some time. Kim would have made it work with friends in the area,

but when she learned that one of the kid's school friends lost their life, the family needed support. Kim's mother, Betty, told me this is a military family, so they know what to do. The first thing was to get Kim home. Her Dad is USMC Gunnery Sergeant, Retired, Mark Grams. Mark has been a PUFL (paid up for life) member of Post 165, American Legion, for 28 years.

Our local Legion member, Pam Stephens, USAF Retired, ran into Mark and Kim in a local restaurant, in early December. Pam learned the tragic story,

and how rough it was making the 10-hour drive with her 3 kids, 2 cats and a dog. She immediately thought of Operation ALF, where the Wisconsin SAL donates the ALF dogs to children of service members in times of need. Pam reached out to the SAL Detachment Commander Allen Watry. Pam picked up the ALF dogs, and set up a time with the Grams to present the pups to Kim and the children. The children went back to school bragging about how many people arrived to present them their ALF dogs!



ABOVE: The group posed for a photo at 911 Museum. AT RIGHT: Dean, Jason and Nancy with MOH Recipient David Bellavia.



Virgil Smith  
Department  
Chaplain

★★ DEPARTMENT ★★  
CHAPLAIN

Greetings Legion Family,  
February 3, 2024, marks the 81st anniversary of the sinking of the USAT Dorchester that claimed the lives of 674 people to include the four chaplains that were aboard the ship when it sank. These four chaplains are celebrated and remembered each year by many different organizations and groups to include our own organization. For their bravery and the unselfish acts they took

to save lives, only to lose their own on that dreadful night.

Some of you may be doing your very first Four Chaplains service in 2024, and others of you may have been doing them for years. If you plan on performing a Four Chaplains service in February 2024, please follow the following guidelines.

1. If you plan to place Bibles and or crosses on your display table, only place them in front of Chaplain George Fox, Chaplain Clark Poling and Chaplain John Washington. These are the three Protestant chaplains.

A. Do not place a Bible or cross in front of or behind Rabbi Alexander Goode, he is the sole Jewish Chaplain.

2. Some alternatives for Rabbi Goode would be a six-point star also known as the Star of David, a copy of the Jewish Prayer Book from World War II. Copies can be found on eBay for sale, or a symbol of the collar brass that he would have worn as a Jewish Chaplain, (The tablet of the Ten Commandments with the star of David on top).

Remember it is about respect. The alternative would be to just display the pictures of the four chaplains and the MIA vase with rose and the candles. or any other neutral items that will represent all four chaplains equally. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at [smithvirgil1957@gmail.com](mailto:smithvirgil1957@gmail.com) or text to 608-643-9148.

ST. NAZIANZ TRIO TAKE OLD GLORY HONOR FLIGHT TO NYC

At the end of September, Old Glory Honor Flight flew 59 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans to New York City with the Freedom to Liberty Tour: A Mission of Healing. Among those randomly chosen to participate were American Legion members Dean Koenig and Nancy Schnell Rivera, from Post 477 – St. Nazianz and Jason Nett a member of Post 128 – Stockbridge. This was the first ever mission of its kind which honored Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Veterans.

Their arrival in NYC showed how special this tour was; a water canon salute at the airport, applause by airport employees and passengers as they deplaned, and then a Port Authority Police escort to their hotel.

Despite record rains, “Amazing Grace” played on the bagpipes, an honor guard made up of NYC Firefighters, and a wreath laying by OGHF Ambassadors began their special mission at the 9/11 Memorial. Once inside the 9/11 Museum, they listened to survivors of the collapse of the Twin Towers. Will Jimeno, a retired Port Authority Police Officer was buried beneath the rubble of the collapsed towers for 13 hours. The second speaker, Tim Brown, a NYC Firefighter, ran into the lobby of the Marriott Hotel as the tower collapsed on top of the building,

and somehow, he survived. Will and Tim both endured serious injuries and lost numerous friends and co-workers that day. They spoke about PTSD, survivor’s guilt, and suicide and have dedicated their lives to speaking about their 9/11 experiences to ensure that the day’s events are never forgotten.

On the second day of their tour, the group traveled to the Statue of Liberty and One World Trade Center. That evening, the group had dinner with the only living Medal of Honor recipient from the Iraq War, David Bellavia. David used humor to spread the word of Veterans helping Veterans, selfless service, servant leadership, and the importance of sharing the story of the sacrifice of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

Upon arrival back to Appleton Airport, the Freedom to Liberty Veterans were welcomed home by a large crowd of family and friends, military groups and a live band.

Dean, Jason, and Nancy expressed appreciation to Old Glory Honor Flight for providing the opportunity to take part in this special mission. The Freedom to Liberty Tour provided a sense of purpose to their deployments, the camaraderie and friendships gained invaluable, and the trip itself was life-changing.



HARTLAND ARROWHEAD HS CLASS OF '73 DONATES TO POST 294

The Hartland Arrowhead High School Class of 1973 presented a donation to Flanagan-Dorn Post 294. Accepting the check for \$2,500 is Hartland’s Cmdr. James Olson. The Class of ’73 recognized the post’s community involvement of the last several years. Pictured making the presentation are Rich Landwehr, Peggie Irons, Gerry Olson, and Vickie Daley of the Class of ’73.



Michelle Adams  
Department  
Historian

★★ DEPARTMENT ★★  
HISTORIAN

Department Commander Stuvengen attended District Fall Conferences throughout the state, concluding in October 2023 with Districts 4, 3, 9, 2, 8, and 6, respectively. Commander Stuvengen and I attended the Annual Past Commanders Club meeting and dinner at Appleton Post 38. A testimonial dinner honoring the 40 et 8 was held at the Fort Atkinson American Legion Post 166. On November 10, a Veterans Day ceremony and celebration was held in Verona, WI. Additionally, speeches by Past National Commander Rohan and Dept Commander Stuvengen took place at the Verona Senior Center. A group of Veterans were also awarded Quilts of Valor. The exceptional quilting was outstanding!

November and December were dedicated to VA visits. From Michigan, to Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the VA system is on the cutting edge of patient care. The facilities offer traditional western medicine and are introducing alternative care, such as acupuncture, yoga, and massage. Also noteworthy, they are in the process of opening specialized care facilities for female Veterans. Attention to detail is demonstrated by their focus on building free-standing clinics specifically for females, self-contained in access and with treatment.

Commander Stuvengen, SAL Detachment Commander Allen Watry, the Scarlet Guard, and I had the honor of marching in the 52nd Annual Appleton Christmas Parade. It is the largest nighttime parade in the Midwest, with 80 parade units and 80,000 spectators. Commander Stuvengen attended Post 537’s Annual Awards Dinner on January 7. It was a unique opportunity to observe anniversary awards being given to the Auxiliary, SAL, and Legion. As of this writing, we are beginning the 100th Department of Wisconsin Midwinter Conference. It is sure to be an outstanding event!

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## POST 442 HONORS YEARS OF DONATIONS IN MEATS AND SAUCES



Lee and Debra Faulkavage with their daughter Brittney of Peoples Meat Market in Stevens Point have gone the extra mile with donations of steaks, hamburger, sausage, brats and more to Camp American Legion. They have also donated some of their special sauces to Post 442 in Wisconsin Rapids.

Debra Faulkavage poses with Past Department Chaplain Mathew Harn presenting a Certificate of Excellence.

## ELROY POST 115 AUXILIARY HONORS RON STANEK WITH A QUILT OF VALOR

By John Gessner  
Post 100, Sparta

November 16 marked the day for the Sparrows Nest Veterans Open house. Many have seen signs to the Sparrows Nest and its corresponding Gathering Place, near Fort McCoy, but you may not know of their functions. Both fall under the Acres of Hope Ministry, a non-profit, faith-based community service organization. It was the brainchild of Tom and Reverend Laurie Grabor. Tom is an Army Veteran, and while some of the programs are focused on military Veterans, they also serve the wider community of Monroe County and beyond.

The keynote speaker for the afternoon was Ronald Stanek who spoke on "A Veteran's Journey" on how he relied on his faith in God to get him over the rough spots in his life. Ron served in Vietnam as an ammunition barge tender whose job it was to move ammunition from ships to shore. Imagine the crew scurrying on deck to move the barge out of Da Nang Harbor into safer waters as it was being targeted by enemy rockets.



Life wasn't always smooth for the Stanek family. Two brothers died, one in a house fire and another in a car accident. His sister passed away at a young age. It wasn't easy coping with these tragedies, and Ron admitted some of his personal remedies may not have been the best. Through all of these struggles, Ron kept his faith. It was a testimony on how, even in the darkest times, one can survive. To honor Ron's military service, Mary Fawcett from the Elroy Post 115 Auxiliary Quilts of Valor not only awarded Ron a handmade comfort quilt but wrapped it around his shoulders to signify the warmth of a caring community.

## PATRIOTIC CHRISTMAS IN GERMANTOWN



This year's Germantown Christmas Parade was held on November 12. Post 1 remembers Veterans Day with ceremonies at our Germantown Veterans Memorial at 11 a.m. The village decided to honor Veterans by calling this a Patriotic Christmas Parade which began at 1:30 p.m. Post 1 member, Dale Schuldt, was chosen as the Grand Marshal for the parade.



James Fialkowski  
Department Veterans  
Service Officer

### ★★ VETERANS ★★ SERVICE OFFICER

## WHY SO STOIC?

I just finished attending Midwinter conference. I had several conversations with or about Veterans who refuse to ask for what they deserve. The usual reasons were heard, there are more deserving or needy Veterans than I,

I have good insurance through work, I don't need any benefits, and the litany continues. This stoicism is a habitual problem that requires added consideration.

I have helped far too many Veterans who have waited decades and family members of Veterans who never filed for their benefits. The amount of added care, not to mention the dollars in the home, that went unrealized is staggering to perceive. I have spoken to Veterans about the benefits for which they qualify and received the answer that they are well enough off, leave it to those who are really in need. I often successfully try to convince them to submit for their due benefits. Thus, I am writing this now. To convince those that have not connected with their local Veterans service office to see what they may have due to them or their family. I am also reaching out to those who have benefits in place that may not be aware that those benefits may deserve an increase. As service-connected disabilities get worse over time, the VA may find you rate a higher compensation amount.

Often, to convince a Veteran to get their due benefits it is with their legacy. I mention their obligation to family or the good of their community. I inform them that every benefit now will help their spouse when they leave this world. If the benefit is for a condition that may cause their demise, having the issue accepted as service-connected prior will make things easier for their spouse to get their own benefit. When I run into Veterans that have set themselves up for success that do not have family, I speak of community. I say that I am happy they do not need the money, give it to your favorite charities. At least then you know the money is being used to better the community for which you care.

I would be remiss in not mentioning VA hospital care. I have discussed in the past how good VA healthcare can be. I implore you to apply. Due to the many law changes in the past several years, if you were denied VA healthcare in the past you may now qualify. If you still don't qualify under the basic application, there are other ways to possibly qualify. Your Veterans service office will have further information.

Whether you are being stoic or have another reason for not investigating and applying for your possibly due benefits, I implore you to think of those you leave behind. Whether it is family or your local community, you could be denying them your assistance with their future.

To find your local Veterans service office you can go to their website — <https://wicvso.org/locate-your-cvso/> — or call our office to ask one of our Veterans service representatives at 414-902-5722 to be directed or assisted.



Paul Fisk  
Legislative  
Chair

### ★★★★ LEGISLATIVE CHAIR ★★★★★

The current legislative session is ending soon. They have been busy for the last year. It is easy for us to dwell on what was not accomplished. We supported many pieces of legislation this time. If they all had passed, we would be sitting in a vastly different place, however that is just not realistic. We followed over 70 individual bills so that is really 35 different legislative topics.

It is very satisfying for the Legislative Committee to reflect on what was done. The biennial budget was good for the Veteran community. Many capital projects have been approved for King, Union Grove, and Chippawa Falls. These will improve the quality of life for the residents and make the delivery of services more efficient. A study of the homes and their future was funded. This study is to be completed by the end of calendar year 2024.

The Council on Veterans Programs consists of representatives of approximately thirty Veterans' organi-

zations, including The American Legion. The purpose of the council is to advise the Board of Veteran Affairs on state policies affecting the Veteran community. Act 70 removed those organizations which no longer exist and replaced them with representatives who work with Veterans in post-secondary education.

For the last several years, the Wisconsin National Guard, primarily the Air Guard, has had a serious issue with sexual misconduct. Speaker Vos appointed a Legislative Study Committee to develop recommendations to remedy the problem. The recommendations of this committee have been adopted and signed into law by the Governor.

State Highway 80 is now the Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Highway. This recognition is long overdue.

While we celebrate these accomplishments, there is still a lot to be done. Several mental health bills await action as do education bills that assist Veteran families. We celebrate each success and redouble our efforts to find common ground on the issues we have not resolved.



Pam Szopinski  
Membership  
Coordinator

### ★★★★ MEMBERSHIP ★★★★★

Anybody ever try to find a member only to discover they transferred? How many times have adjutants or commanders been notified of a transfer? Article VIII, Section 6 of the Department Bylaws addresses membership transfers.

Section 6(a) states "Membership may be transferred from one local post to another upon request, giving reason for transfer, and unearned dues remaining with the post of first membership on forms provided for the purpose." Basically, this describes filling out the Member Data Form. If the member has already paid dues for the membership year to the post they are transferring from, the member remains on the previous post's roster for the remaining membership year.

Section 6(b) states "Any member in good standing in a post moving from the community in which that post is

located shall be entitled to a certificate from their post, stating their membership and duration thereof." This references the Continuous Membership certificate, found on Emblem Sales.

Section 6(c) states "If, within fifteen (15) days after acceptance into membership of a post, any person, who, during the calendar year immediately preceding, was a member of another post, the Post Adjutant shall notify in writing the Post Adjutant of the post to which the person formerly belonged of such acceptance into membership." This is the section that is missing from transfers. If you are using the three-part Member Data Form or filling it out online, one of the parts or a copy of the form needs to be sent to the Adjutant of the member's previous post. This is a courtesy for transparency of the member.

By following the Department Constitution and Bylaws, we can help posts maintain updated records of their members, whether they remain at the post or choose to transfer.



★★ DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT ★★

Julie Muhle  
Department  
Adjutant

Hello! I wanted to wait until after Midwinter to write my article as there is always great things that come from it. This year continued the tradition. Our committee meetings were full of action. The training classes were full of members wanting to learn more. For those in attendance, please take the information you learned and share with your District, County and Post. The word of mouth and personal experiences is what helps to make our event successful and will bring new people to these events. All the suggestions we received were appreciated. It is good to hear what you like as well as how we can improve. The Auxiliary had a wonderful turnout. They were making tie blankets and stuffing socks for Veterans. What inspirational projects! Our Sons of The American Legion held their business meetings and did a class on how to start a squadron. With the SAL growing 20 percent over the past several years, if your post doesn't have one, now is the time to consider it! As always, our heartfelt thanks for everyone who attended the Midwinter event. You help make it successful and we look forward to seeing you at the Department Convention in Appleton on July 10-14!



Paul Fisk  
Foundation  
President

★ AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION ★

GET A BULL'S-EYE  
Support Jr. Shooting Sports

Join the Youth of today by supporting The WI American Legion Jr Shooting Sports program. Participants learn skills in gun safety, leadership, working together and good sportsmanship. The WI American Legion Foundation asks for your help to provide support to continue this program in the years to come. All funds raised will be used for the program as well as provide scholarship monies in the Senior category (15-18 years old).

Tax deductible donations may be sent to:

Wisconsin American Legion Foundation  
P.O. Box 827  
Portage, WI 53901  
Designation: *Shooting Sports*



HELPING A FELLOW AMERICAN LEGIONNAIRE



Four members of the Stockbridge Post of the American Legion came to the aid of a fellow Post Member when his mailbox was destroyed by a driver that veered into the ditch along Highway 151 a bit south of Stockbridge. The four gentlemen (Wayne Steffen, Chuck Ott, Ron Schneider and Darel Schoening) installed the new mailbox, donated by the Stockbridge Post, on Friday, November 24, 2023.

Pictured are Ron Schneider, Chuck Ott, and Darel Schoening. Wayne Steffen is taking the pictures.



LEFT: Nellie De Baker, David Kohn and James Strong attend Huddle for Heroes. RIGHT: Nellie De Baker and former Green Bay Packer Rasul Douglas.

PDVC/PDH NELLIE DE BAKER ATTENDS PACKERS' EVENT, HUDDLE FOR HEROES

PDVC/PDH Nellie De Baker attended the Huddle for Heroes - Military Appreciation at The Turn, Titledown in Green Bay October 31, 2023, a private Green Bay Packers and Veterans one-day Appreciation Event. A Packers Player Q&A session was held, letter-writing to Active-Duty Military Members, Interactive Sports Games led by Packers "Player Captains" and the day ended with a Lambeau Field Stadium Tour.

THREE POST 62 BROTHERS NET QUILTS OF VALOR



On Sunday, November 19, 2023, three brothers Dale, David and Donald Sennhenn were awarded Quilts of Valor by the Dairyland Quilts of Valor out of Orfordville, Wisconsin. The ceremony took place at the American Legion Post 62 of Columbus in front of family and friends.

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION . . .

A CLOSED CAMP IS STILL AN ACTIVE CAMP



Jim Klement  
Camp American  
Legion Director

Just because the main season for Camp American Legion is closed doesn't mean that things stop happening in the great Northwoods. Camp American Legion just completed an ice fishing event with Wisconsin Hero Outdoors. Over 30 fish were caught in a day and ended with a nice fish fry for our Veterans. Also, we have had our first Christmas at Camp with a Gold Star Family.

Looking forward to Spring, we have our maple syrup season coming up quick. We always need some volunteers to help gather the sap, keep the fires going and help with bottling the syrup at the end. This year should be a great year since I can keep the trail open and free of snow with our new tractor! If you are interested in helping, please follow us

on Facebook for when we start tapping. We have to wait for the sap to be flowing and that depends on the weather.

We have also made some significant progress on projects on Camp. Cabin two and Cabin three were demolished this fall and will be ready for the foundation this spring. We are hoping to have the Cabin fully completed by Memorial Day. The crosswalk across County D has been completed and will be in use starting this spring.

Lastly, as we head into this new season, I would like to thank everyone for their support of Camp. The Wisconsin Legion family as a whole has made Camp American Legion a shining star for Wisconsin and a safe haven for our Veterans!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call camp.

Thank you.

Jim Klement, Camp Director  
715-277-2510



"Surround yourself with good people and they will lift you up!"

OUR MISSION

Helping to Heal - those who served, continue to serve, and their families, through Wisconsin's Northwoods Experience

OUR VISION

Giving Wisconsin Veterans the pathway to quality of life

OUR VALUES

Honor and Stewardship

# The Last Bugle



**KEY**  
 WWI-World War I V-Vietnam  
 G/L-Grenada/Lebanon P-Panama  
 GWOT-Global War on Terrorism  
 WWII-World War II K-Korea  
 PG-Persian Gulf

<b>1 Germantown</b>		<b>30 Edgerton</b>	
Michael Peckman	V	Keith Kildow	K
Richard J. Eder	K	<b>33 Neenah</b>	
Daniel F. Otoole	V	Michael J. Dart	G/L
Andrew N. Boneski	K	George R. Schroeder	K
Patrick M. Kitkowski	G/L	<b>36 West Bend</b>	
<b>6 Stevens Point</b>		James Parish	V
Bob Daniels	WWII	Edward E. Weise Jr.	K
Robert J. Kowalski	WWII	Armand P. Miller	V
<b>8 Waukesha</b>		<b>38 Appleton</b>	
Carl J. Scichili	K	Robin A. Long	K
<b>9 Wisconsin Rapids</b>		George Schmitz	WWII
Thomas J. Fogarty	V	Gary L. Brynjulfson	V
<b>10 Wausau</b>		Walter W. Webster Jr.	V
Jerome R. Volkman	V	William R. Faubel	WWII
David D. Allen	V	Armin A. Barth	K
Stuart A. Berg	WWII	<b>41 Kaukauna</b>	
Arthur A. Schilling	K	James McDaniel	K
Terrance Lach		David L. Hash	K
Robert W. Reuter	K	Paul A. Martzahl	V
Fred R. Lehrke	K	Vernon C. Court	K
David Groth	V	<b>44 Wabeno</b>	
Jack Stackner	V	Byron E. Erdman	V
Raymond C. White	V	<b>45 Elkhorn</b>	
Arlyn J. Wilder	K	Leroy Harry	K
<b>11 Green Bay</b>		<b>46 Merrill</b>	
Robert J. Lardinois	K	Marilyn Woodward	
Jon P. Ryan	V	Frank J. Sus Jr.	V
<b>12 Spooner</b>		<b>47 Portage</b>	
Deborah R. Anderson	V	James T. Okeefe	V
<b>13 Richland Center</b>		Ronald W. Eddy	V
Everett Thompson	WWII	Donald E. Ziemke	V
<b>15 Juneau</b>		<b>48 Beloit</b>	
Richard W. Jahnke	WWII	Gerald C. Fields	V
<b>17 Arcadia</b>		<b>50 Hudson</b>	
Kenneth I. Myers	V	John A. Hanson	V
<b>21 Kenosha</b>		<b>52 La Crosse</b>	
Mario Ceschin	WWII	James Blake	V
James Munns	V	James E. Ely	V
<b>26 Baraboo</b>		James D. Fisher	V
Lane L. Laviolette	G/L	Pat Korish	V
James H. Konicki	V	Donald Frank	K
Eugene Denman	V	<b>53 Eau Claire</b>	
Charles Gunderson	K	Gordon E. Larson	WWII
George R. Burgess	V	Lawrence L. Risler	WWII
Juel E. Anderson Jr.	K	Ken Anger	WWII
<b>28 Valders</b>		Dennis Dockry	V
Donald J. Tienor	V	Andy Muenich	V
David Ryan	K	Don Larson	K
Paul C. Gintner	WWII	<b>55 Hortonville</b>	
<b>29 Kewaunee</b>		Carl S. Matsos	WWII
James M. Abrahamson	K	<b>56 Fountain City</b>	
		Gerald Abts	K

<b>58 Hurley</b>		<b>114 Eagle River</b>	
Donald Traczyk	K	Duane Heikkinen	V
<b>59 Stoughton</b>		<b>118 Thorp</b>	
Bill Hye	K	Irving J. Syrczuk	K
David L. Lazenby	K	<b>120 West Allis</b>	
Robert Bennett	K	James H. Canavan	WWII
<b>61 Prescott</b>		Harry J. Karpinski	K
Floyd J. Pedersen	V	Kenneth W. Olejniczak	WWII
<b>63 Clintonville</b>		<b>121 River Falls</b>	
Donald H. Baumgartner	K	Ted J. Wroblewski	V
Gerald W. Pelishek		Russell M. Spence	K
<b>64 Ladysmith</b>		Leland D. Nelson	K
Lowell F. Schmidt	WWII	<b>122 Phillips</b>	
<b>66 Athelstane-Silvercliff</b>		Robert H. Samec	V
John H. Pitzka	K	<b>136 Niagara</b>	
Seraphin C. Dewitt	V	Roland F. Anderson	WWII
<b>67 Lake Mills</b>		James Wagner	V
William R. Hartwig II	K	James H. Hallgren	V
Lorin A. Hofer	K	Carl H. Plonke	K
Wayne Hills	WWII	<b>137 Turtle Lake</b>	
Pamela A. Kane	PG	Ed J. Richmeier	K
<b>69 Mayville</b>		Henry W. Alfieri	V
David W. Benter	V	Harvey L. Becker	V
Ivan C. Elm	V	<b>138 Viroqua</b>	
<b>70 Oshkosh</b>		Rodney Luckasson	V
Eugene F. Yanko	K	<b>141 New Glarus</b>	
Philip Florio Jr.	K	Gerald D. Stein	K
Bruce W. Peters	K	<b>143 St. Croix Falls</b>	
James J. Sitter	V	David L. Lynch	PG
Norbert A. Gray	K	C. David Lundin	
<b>73 Neillsville</b>		<b>146 Beaver Dam</b>	
David W. Meyer	V	Gerald G. Miller	V
<b>75 Fond du Lac</b>		<b>147 Medford</b>	
Kenneth M. Krueger	V	Leroy N. Jensen	K
<b>81 Mauston</b>		Paul Michler Jr.	K
Howard D. Miller	V	Matt Jari	
Richard W. Goth	V	<b>151 Madison</b>	
<b>82 Port Washington</b>		Robert L. Castleberg	K
John L. Staton	V	James B. Beyer	K
<b>83 Sheboygan</b>		<b>153 Pittsville</b>	
Francis C. Peterson	K	Gerold F. Goecks	V
Richard D. Halverson Sr.	V	Joseph L. Fieber	G/L
Jay Hager	V	<b>154 Mondovi</b>	
Arthur J. Lloyd	K	Russell Ulberg	V
Allen Schrimpf	V	<b>158 Maiden Rock</b>	
Ron Verlaere	V	Dwight Caturia	WWII
<b>89 Minocqua</b>		<b>159 Cadott</b>	
Robert A. Schroeder	WWII	John W. Sundlin	V
<b>90 Ashland</b>		Randall M. Holtman	V
Henry R. Driessen	V	<b>161 King</b>	
James A. Lumberg	V	Mark R. Melton	G/L
Glenn O. Swanson	WWII	<b>164 Jefferson</b>	
<b>91 Oconomowoc</b>		Dale K. Cole	V
James W. Huth	K	<b>165 Two Rivers</b>	
Dale E. Horton	V	Robert A. Mueller	V
<b>93 Tomahawk</b>		Jim Miller	V
Everett W. Lange	K	Dale G. Vanlaarhoven	K
James K. Likwarz	K	James Tegelman	V
Robert R. Smith	WWII	Brian E. Powell	V
Nels F. Thommesen	V	<b>166 Fort Atkinson</b>	
Gerald E. Roberts	WWII	Ronald E. Krueger	V
<b>94 Crandon</b>		<b>169 Amery</b>	
Webster J. Bloedorn	K	Thomas J. Rodgers	V
<b>95 Delavan</b>		Richard J. Pelc	V
Richard Carlson	WWII	<b>170 Mineral Point</b>	
<b>96 Webster</b>		Thomas F. Forbes	K
Gene Dopkins	V	<b>175 Loyal</b>	
<b>98 Cumberland</b>		Robert Berglund	K
William J. Chapman	V	<b>177 Gratiot</b>	
<b>100 Sparta</b>		John A. Symons	V
Herbert Severson	K	<b>182 Park Falls</b>	
<b>99 Ashland</b>		John H. Stirmel	V
Bernard W. Waite	V	Ervin H. Engel	WWII
<b>105 Shullsburg</b>		David Rose	V
Donald E. Macnaughton	V	<b>183 Genoa City</b>	
<b>106 Seymour</b>		Michael A. Clawson	V
Richard J. Mullen	V	<b>185 Grantsburg</b>	
Kenneth J. Kerkhoff	V	Luverne F. Anderson	K
Clifford J. Dembroski	V	Gordon A. Lewis	PG
<b>111 Somerset</b>		Virgil F. Sullivan	V
Charles A. Votruba	V		
<b>113 Mount Horeb</b>			
Deane Haag	V		

Michael McCann	V	Lee F. Jost	WWII
Gilbert E. Savstrom	V	<b>294 Hartland</b>	
<b>189 Watertown</b>		Thomas S. Omalley	
Victor A. Miller	V	<b>295 Bloomer</b>	
David H. Riedemann	V	Lowell E. Webb	V
Karl L. Kayzar	K	Dean Witt	K
Douglas Rosenow	V	John Clark	K
Ken Rosinski	V	Roger Anderson	K
Ralph E. Grady	K	<b>300 Gillett</b>	
Walter F. Arends	V	Thomas G. Lang	K
Michael F. Coughlin	V	<b>302 Oconto Falls</b>	
Wendell A. Wilson	K	Ervin R. Peiterson	V
Walt Voegeli	V	<b>303 Winter</b>	
<b>192 Franklin</b>		Paul Thorbjornsen	K
Edward G. Kaupla	K	Duane Marten	V
<b>196 Delafield</b>		<b>306 Green Lake</b>	
John W. Hansen	V	Aloysius P. Hermes	V
<b>197 Brodhead</b>		<b>308 Gays Mills</b>	
Gene A. Pinnow	K	Tommy G. Proffitt	V
<b>200 Black River Falls</b>		<b>319 Casco</b>	
Charles S. Cavanaugh	K	Ronald D. Worachek	V
<b>201 Tomah</b>		<b>324 Osseo</b>	
Arthur D. Knutson	K	Robert T. Bridgford	K
Charles W. Pollard	K	<b>332 Black Creek</b>	
Richard R. Sommerfeldt	K	Steven A. Hauser	V
William C. McNeal	V	<b>333 Sun Prairie</b>	
Paul Janusheske	V	Bruce C. Elliott	K
Michael S. Ebersold	V	<b>335 Avoca</b>	
<b>206 Wonewoc</b>		William D. Bahr	V
Stephen E. Pagel	V	<b>336 Onalaska</b>	
<b>207 Elmwood</b>		Charles E. Hoff	V
Stephen C. Griess	G/L	Lloyd R. Holthaus	K
<b>209 Orfordville</b>		Lawrence J. Gile	V
Roger M. Cummins	PG	Allen E. McCallson	K
<b>224 Alma</b>		Robert G. Frechette	V
Bruce B. Denk	V	<b>337 Pulaski</b>	
Alton R. Herold	K	Wyland Baron	K
<b>225 Shell Lake</b>		Francis H. Ullmer	V
Merlin R. Jacobs	V	<b>340 Berlin</b>	
Miles E. Miller	K	Sigmund S. Chikowski	K
<b>226 Manawa</b>		<b>342 Lena</b>	
David D. Kuehl	V	Clement A. Harley	WWII
<b>227 Spring Valley</b>		<b>343 Hancock</b>	
William H. Olson	V	Robert A. Barnes	WWII
<b>233 Waterloo</b>		<b>347 Lomira</b>	
Hans Dunneisen	K	Ken Kremer	V
<b>243 Plymouth</b>		<b>348 DeForest</b>	
William C. Klemme	K	William H. Scholz	K
Kenneth F. Wickland	K	<b>350 Reedsburg</b>	
<b>245 Cross Plains</b>		Jack W. Williams	WWII
James R. Tetzlaff	V	<b>355 Grafton</b>	
Herbert Niebuhr	WWII	Martin D. Wegner	K
<b>251 Argyle</b>		<b>356 Muskego</b>	
Lawrence J. Weiskircher	V	Daniel Lepak	K
<b>258 Little Chute</b>		Robert C. Seiy	V
Donald P. Evers	K	<b>358 Unity</b>	
<b>260 Deerfield</b>		Paul G. Miller	K
Glenn V. Duckert	V	<b>360 Waunakee</b>	
<b>262 Luxemburg</b>		Richard A. Heiser	V
Miles E. Hauke	V	<b>372 Forestville</b>	
<b>263 New London</b>		Stephen B. McNeil	V
Charles Coenen	V	Charles R. Gulley	K
Allen A. Wegener	V	<b>375 Mukwonago</b>	
John G. Knudsen	V	Gordon F. Smyczek	K
Thomas K. Mathewson	K	<b>377 Elcho</b>	
Keith R. Weber	V	Colin Handeyside	V
Terry McPeak	V	Richard P. Schuh II	G/L
<b>272 Butternut</b>		<b>378 Brandon-Fairwater</b>	
Ray Wallner	WWII	Elisabeth S. Beuthin	V
<b>279 Marshall</b>		<b>379 Birchwood</b>	
Lowell E. Thoms	V	Norman L. Yakes	V
<b>283 Suring</b>		<b>384 Kewaskum</b>	
John Reindl	V	Thomas E. Fabitz	V
<b>284 Holmen</b>		<b>385 Verona</b>	
Larry Waters	V	Norman W. Blucher	V
<b>286 Oostburg</b>		<b>388 Milwaukee</b>	
Calvin Walvort	K	Lawrence N. Mudrock	K
<b>288 Cedarburg</b>		<b>398 Plain</b>	
Jerrold M. Skopek	V	Tommy G. Fargen	V
Don Bartolone	V	David Meixelsperger	V

<b>402 Washington Island</b>		Paul J. Lehmkuhl	K
James A. Esperson	K	<b>481 Madison</b>	
<b>405 Dousman</b>		Rodrick B. Anderson	V
Francis R. Cimbalknik	V	<b>483 Allenton</b>	
Bert H. Williams	V	James A. Boswell	V
<b>406 Milwaukee</b>		<b>485 Rudolph</b>	
Donald J. Cook	WWII	Glenn C. Swetz	K
<b>410 Fredonia</b>		<b>486 Jackson</b>	
Thomas H. Armstrong	K	Richard Kinderman	K
<b>412 Belgium</b>		John V. Unz III	V
Patrick L. Lee	K	<b>487 Cable</b>	
<b>415 Milwaukee</b>		Gerald W. Jarvis	V
Gordon Glatzel	V	Robert F. White	V
<b>416 Greendale</b>		James R. Zavoral	
Ervin R. Barutha	WWII	<b>491 Cazenovia</b>	
Lawrence A. Acker	K	William Mick	K
Linda L. Gehring	P	<b>497 Keshena</b>	
Luther W. Graef	K	Louis Washinawatok Jr.	K
<b>417 French Isle (La Crosse)</b>		<b>499 Gordon</b>	
Donald F. Johnson	K	Richard Gucinski	K
<b>420 Hustisford</b>		<b>501 Madison</b>	
Daniel D. Kuehl	V	Dale W. Lawton	V
<b>423 Neshkoro</b>		James Schuhart	K
Gilbert Crane	V	<b>506 Iron River</b>	
<b>433 Barneveld</b>		Eugene H. Hanson	K
Chad A. Sturdevant	PG	<b>508 Wilton</b>	
<b>434 Oak Creek</b>		Roger J. O'Gara	V
John W. Bates	WWII	Dennis D. Burken	V
Gerald F. Skowronski	K	<b>509 Rosholt</b>	
Bill E. Ford	K	Raymond M. Nelson	K
Wilburn M. Redden	V	<b>511 Ridgeland</b>	
Manuel J. Garcia	V	Terence L. Smith	V
David M. Johnson	V	<b>517 Dorchester</b>	
Gervase Rose	V	Donald O. Koerner	K
Kenneth Borkowitz	V	<b>518 Green Bay</b>	
Donald W. Harling Sr.	K	Mark Makela	K
Dwayne Prymek	V	<b>519 Stetsonville</b>	
Victor T. Ruka	K	John Greiner	K
<b>435 Superior</b>		John L. Walkowicz	V
Douglas D. Pearson	V	<b>520 Vesper</b>	
<b>436 Wrightstown</b>		Jerome B. Wirtz	K
Melvin Bastian	WWII	<b>522 Hubertus</b>	
Jerry E. Kussow	V	Frank G. Clines	WWII
<b>438 Norwalk</b>		<b>526 Hazel Green</b>	
Albin P. Schreiber	V	Stanley P. Thor	K
<b>439 Melrose</b>		<b>533 Bancroft</b>	
De Wayne F. Aasen	K	Kenneth A. Mykisen	V
Glen W. Hardie	K	<b>534 McFarland</b>	
<b>440 Clinton</b>		Thomas R. Welch	V
Edwin F. Peterson	K	Denny N. Blackmore	V
<b>446 Steuben</b>		Joseph P. Baumann	V
Ronald R. Post	V	David W. Borgen	V
<b>449 Brookfield</b>		<b>537 Milwaukee</b>	
Charles J. Haase	K	Edward A. Menard	K
Frank Orlich	V	William D. Rolli	V
Richard Deuel	K	Larry G. Brewer	V
John A. Bauernschmidt	V	John G. Tsopelas	K
<b>450 Darien</b>		Robert A. Soderland	V
Larry W. Reddy	V	William R. Murphy	K
<b>451 Boulder Junction</b>		<b>547 Lublin</b>	
William Gabert	WWII	Stanley Leszewski	G/L
<b>454 Mt. Calvary</b>		<b>550 Brackett</b>	
John Hilt	V	Cecil A. Berlin	K
<b>457 Mequon-Thiensville</b>		Lawrence H. Marten	V
Elmer C. Prenzlow	PG	William L. Germann	WWII
<b>460 Belleville</b>		<b>552 Somers</b>	
Elmer L. Freitag	WWII	Richard E. Gregory	K
Donald Fahey	K	<b>2930 Portage</b>	
<b>469 Marathon</b>		Thomas J. Horton	K
Miranda J. Koeppl	PG	Eric Lawson	P
Dale Heise	V	Jeffrey Schaefer	G/L
<b>470 Saukville</b>		Robert F. Sterle	K
Peter G. Holk	K	William L. Munns	K
Harold J. Olson	V	Kenneth Warzon	K
<b>480 Presque Isle</b>		Roger Knudtson	
Charles M. Rayala Jr.	K	James J. Lane	K
Chet Dumask	WWII	Terry Schultz	V
<b>487 Cable</b>		Donald A. Bahr	V
Roger A. Martin	K	Cedric Grilli	K
Gilbert Boeker	K	Robert J. Wittmann	K
Larry Pearson	K		
Ronald E. Althoff	K		



## In Memoriam



**Janiece M. Fischer**  
August 4, 1930 - November 13, 2023

## JANIECE M. FISCHER

Past Department President Janiece M. Fischer died peacefully in her sleep surrounded by loving family on November 13, 2023 at the age of 93.

She met Donald Hendrick at Stevens Point Teachers College in 1948. They married in 1952, pursued careers in teaching, and had five children together (John, Kevin, Mary, Ann, and Lois). Don passed away unexpectedly in 1986. Janiece retired in 1991 after 35 years in the classroom. In 1994, Janiece met Bill Fischer. They married and spent 23 happy years together until Bill passed away in 2017.

Janiece lived life to the fullest – completing her master’s degree in education, being actively involved in the Methodist Church in Tomahawk, serving on boards and committees for Central Wisconsin Educators, CESA and WEAC, and traveling to Russia, Africa, Alaska and all over the United States.

Janiece joined Bronstead-Searl Unit 93 in Tomahawk in 1974. Her eligibility was through the service of her husband Donald who served in the Army during WWII, and her father, Emmett Colvin, who served in WWI. Her husband, Bill, served in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII.

She held many positions at the unit, district and department levels and served as Department President in 1998-1999. Her theme for the year was *Soar Like an Eagle, Be a “Fischer” for Veterans*. For her Testimonial Dinner, she referenced Isaiah 40:31, “They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.” Janiece Fischer’s memory lives on as she soars heavenward.

## 2024 MIDWINTER RECAP

The American Legion Auxiliary had a great time at the 2024 Midwinter Conference! We had a few guest speakers: VA&R Chairman Bonnie Jakubczyk discussed needs at the VA facilities and how the Auxiliary can help; Adjutant Julie Muhle gave an inspirational speech; President Geiger, Commander Stuvengen, Commander Watry, and Legion Riders Director Doehrmann brought greetings; and Candidate for National Commander Dan Wiley briefly addressed the Auxiliary.

Dan Wiley was extremely impressed by the strong Auxiliary presence and the volume of materials donated for the service projects. He

asked how we got such a good response and President Maggie told him, “We simply asked.”

Wisconsin members generously donated fabric to make approximately 125-150 tie blankets, personal hygiene products that filled hundreds of socks of love, a table full of warm winter clothing, and Valentine’s Day cards for the WDVA. It was estimated that \$25,000-\$35,000 of items were donated for the Auxiliary service projects. Everything was taken to distribute to the VA hospitals and Veterans homes, centers for homeless Veterans, Veteran housing and recovery programs, or to needy Veterans in members’ own communities.

The ALA session was a tremendous success.

Members had FUN (including several Junior members!). We showed that the ALA is a Veterans SERVICE Organization and demonstrated our mission through ACTION.

On a side note, 7th District President Christina Petranovich and PDP Diane Weggen braved the harsh weather by camping in a box one night and raised over \$1,000 to support *Freezin’ for a Reason*, with proceeds benefitting The American Legion’s Troop & Family Support Fund. Many ALA members also donated pies to a Pie Auction fundraiser.

Thank you to everyone who participated at Midwinter!



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**Betty Stone**  
 Department Chaplain  
 bjstone626@hotmail.com

*Psalm 3:3-4 — “You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill.”*

### PRAYER

Dear God, holy and mighty one. You are worthy of all praise, all honor. Your steadfast love amazes me each day. When I hear others around me say I am not good enough, whisper your truth in their heart and give me strength.

Lord, be with those who feel inadequate and doubt, as they care for others. Give them your love and assurance that they are your child and you love them very much. Thank you for being our creator and Father. In your most precious name, Amen.

### MUSIC

Here is an idea to put music into your meetings.

Invite one of your Juniors to come to the meeting with a musical number to do at the meeting. It can be singing, dancing or playing an instrument. Maybe two or three could have a group number. Be creative and have fun!

## GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

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

The Auxiliary session at The American Legion Midwinter Conference was quite the success! Department leaders from The American Legion, SAL, and Legion Riders and future candidate for National Commander Dan Wiley of Kansas brought greetings. Department chairmen briefly shared information about a few Auxiliary programs. However, the highlight of the day was the service projects for our Veterans.

Approximately 60 Auxiliary members of all ages had a great time making tie blankets, creating Valentine’s Day cards, filling Socks of Love with personal hygiene products and collecting winter weather items for homeless Veterans. Members took the completed items to distribute to the various VA hospitals, Veterans’ homes, centers for homeless Veterans, or to Veterans in their own communities. Since there wasn’t enough time to finish all of the blankets, some members took the remaining fabric to do service projects with their units or districts later on.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**March 1:** Scholarship application deadline.

**March 15:** Entry deadline for the ALA State Bowling Tournament in Medford on April 6-7 and April 13-14. Questions? Contact Jenni Syftestad at [syftes@chorus.net](mailto:syftes@chorus.net).

**April 1:** ALA Badger Girls State registration deadline for delegates and alternates.

**July 11-14:** Department Convention at the Hilton Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton.

**August 24-29:** National Convention in New Orleans. Anyone interested in attending should contact their District President and ask to be nominated as a Department Alternate. Names of nominees must be submitted to department no later than July 1 for election at Department Convention.

Dan Wiley was so impressed with the number of volunteers and items donated, he asked how we garnered so much support as he would like to encourage Kansas to do something similar for their homeless Veterans. As President Maggie told him, “We simply asked! Our members are very generous.” Thank you, everyone who participated!

The national organization mailed final dues renewal notices on February 1. If you received a notice but think your dues were paid, please

verify with your Unit Membership Chairman that your payment was transmitted to department headquarters. Members may reinstate their membership by mailing a check to their unit or department headquarters or pay by credit card to the national organization (317-569-4570 or [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org)).

Unit presidents are reminded to submit Unit Year-End Reports by April 15. Members should be proud of all they accomplished and report it!

### CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICE

Candidates for department office must email their announcement (300-350 words) with a head/shoulder photo to [deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org](mailto:deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org) by Monday, March 18, 2024 for publication in the *Wisconsin*.

### SCHOLARSHIPS DUE MARCH 1, 2024

The American Legion Auxiliary offers more than \$25,000 in scholarships at the state and national levels. Applications and rules are posted on the department website.

Encourage eligible students to apply – applications are due by March 1!

Questions? Please contact Diane Weggen at [dsweggen@gmail.com](mailto:dsweggen@gmail.com) or 715-644-2668.

### NEW DONATION FORM!

The Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form was updated January 1, 2024.

Fairchild Hall at Union Grove is a Veteran housing and recovery center contracted by Lutheran Social Services. Since it is not managed by Union Grove Veterans Home, donations designated to Union Grove cannot be used to support Fairchild Hall. There is a new separate line item for Fairchild Hall.

Please use the new form posted on the department website for any donations submitted in the future.

**Sue Hembrook**  
 Department Chairman  
 genesuehem@wi.rr.com  
 262-945-9791

Our “Poppy Up” puppies are getting tired. Hopefully, Santa was good to them and they got a chance to rest up during the holidays. Now we have to refresh them and urge them on. The membership team is here to help you in any way that we can so please call on us. We want to energize our pups but cannot do it without you, we need your support. Membership is not your membership chairman or District President’s responsibility. However, it is all of our responsibilities to help “mush” our pups to victory.

Some interesting facts so that we all know that membership is in fact growing. Nationally we have 1,200 more new members registering in 2023 than we did in 2022. That is the biggest increase nationwide in many years. In our Department, we had 424 new members sign up to date, 372 of which are seniors and 52 juniors. How awesome is that! District 3 deserves a shout-out – they have recruited the highest number of new members, with District 2 and District 1 close behind. Let us all follow their lead and demonstrate to everyone how awesome we are. It all starts by promoting what we do and why we do it. Get the word out about yourselves, let us spread the word. Remember that we are here to support our Veterans, military and their families. We also have a big impact on how we support our communities. Get the word out!

Fewer units are ordering new member packets and brochures. The brochures especially are an essential item to have when our communities come to our events. They outline “Who we Are, What We Do, and Why We Do It.” Please order these and use them – their information is priceless. Also, the new member packets are very informative for new members as they answer many questions and also include opportunities and benefits available to them. We all need to use these very important tools.

Please remember that what you do matters! From the member who cuts coupons for military families to those that are out there promoting our mission. It takes all of us to make this great organization thrive. Our puppies on the “Poppy Up” Team thrive on your support. We have to all reenergize ourselves to go out there and promote this great organization. The best way to do that is by example of how well we do things by working together with the entire Legion Family and by having fun doing it.

Remember the membership team of Sue, Becky and Amy need you and your support!

## MEMBERSHIP

### 2024 Membership Totals (as of 1/24/24) – 74.91%

DIST.	GOAL %	MUSHER
5	83.13%	Little Girl
12	82.53%	Baby Girl
6	79.03%	Denali
3	78.33%	Ranger
9	76.65%	Percy
2	76.65%	Sloane
4	76.00%	Winkle
8	75.89%	Isabella
7	75.66%	Hero
10	74.21%	Balto
1	73.54%	Diamond
11	67.35%	D.O.G.



## POPPIES

**Thank you to everyone who submitted poppy orders by December 15. Poppies are sold out but current orders will be filled in the order received.**

**New orders will not be accepted until August 2024.**



## AMERICANISM

**Diane Burkhalter**  
**Department Chairman**  
**burkhalterdl@gmail.com**  
**262-284-6873 / 414-807-0501**

What a wonderful and exciting way we get to put the words of our Preamble into action...“to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism.” Now that the rush of the holidays has passed, this is a great time to involve your community’s children and youth in the Americanism Essay Contest.

We all recognize that our schools have heavy demands on their time, therefore, being excited about this writing opportunity and sharing the relevance to the numerous standards at the various grade levels when meeting with the teachers and administrators can be very helpful in gaining their schools’ participation. Also helpful is the rubric developed by the Americanism committee. This type of tool has been utilized by schools for decades and is very familiar to both students and teachers K-12 when evaluating student work on the various standards across the content areas.

When meeting with educators to introduce this contest, please share both the submission form and the rubric. This will be helpful for teachers and the writers as they compose their written responses. The committee also felt the rubric would be a useful aid for the units when evaluating the submissions. Please remember

that there are a variety of ways we can reach our children and youth – clubs, youth groups, libraries, neighbors, etc. If you have any questions or if I can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

There are other ways we can put the words of our Preamble into action. The American Legion Auxiliary has offered a plethora of ideas in the “Star-Spangled Kids” and this year we have been given materials provided by the American Legion’s Child Welfare Foundation to help us in providing fun and exciting events that promote patriotism and educate our youth about our Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the freedoms unique to our country. Work together with your Legion Families to create family events utilizing these materials. These events can be planned for any time throughout the year; however, April is The American Legion’s Children and Youth Month. Be creative in the various activities you provide and the sky’s the limit – have scavenger hunts that focus on facts about our Constitution, history, etc.; provide patriotic arts and crafts; have patriotic trivia games. The list is endless.

A wonderful way for us to interact with our high school youth is the oratorical competition. Check when your District competition is scheduled. If you missed that, the State date is March 23 in Ripon. You will be amazed not only by the knowledge these students share, but their composure during their presentations.

## LEADERSHIP

**Joyce Endres**  
**Department Chairman**  
**ljendres@charter.net**  
**608-772-1763**  
**Committee: Teresa Isensee and Linda Coppock**

*“What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”* Jane Goodall

**UNIT MEMBER OF THE YEAR** recognizes members serving at the unit level who exemplify the values and ideals of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).

Do you have a unit member that stands out? One who makes a significant impact on the accomplishments of the unit, consistently exemplifies ALA values and ideas, regularly participates or volunteers with enthusiasm, steps up to serve on a unit committee, keeps a positive attitude, is a team player, welcomes new/returning members, or shares their excitement about the ALA and unit activities?

Consider nominating a unit member as the 2024 Unit Member of the Year (UMOTY). The UMOTY application is posted on the department website ([www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org)), under Programs, Leadership. The Wisconsin UMOTY is recognized annually at the ALA department and national conventions.

### Requirements:

1. Open to senior members in good standing who are not in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than unit president.
2. Accomplishments and activities must be achieved during the 2023-2024 ALA year.
3. Units must submit a WI UMOTY application to Joyce Endres, Dept Leadership

Chairman, [ljendres@charter.net](mailto:ljendres@charter.net) by April 15 (*do not send application to national*).

**POSITIVE IMPACT:** To make decisions, we need to listen to stakeholders. **Who are ALA stakeholders?** Stakeholders are people we impact as a member of the ALA and its family. The ALA Preamble to the Constitution and our mission statement help identify ALA stakeholders, including: ALA members; The American Legion, Sons, and Riders; Veterans, military and their families; citizens (including your community); and youth. Remember, you the member and your unit are the foundation of the ALA.

As a leader or a member, listen more and ask questions about interests/passion to interact with your stakeholders. Reach out often. Breathe in their wisdom and insights. Based on input received, assess the input with unit members, leaders and program chairman to consider what to add, eliminate, improve or update to unit meetings, programs or events to better meet current stakeholder needs. Plan next steps to determine what, when and how to implement proposed changes.

**VOLUNTEER SMARTER, NOT HARDER.** When you recruit a new member, ask them why they joined and how they want to be involved. Consider completing an ‘Event After Action Report’ to define what went well and what needs improvement to help decide if you hold this event again. Provide honest input with potential solutions to ensure the impact you make creates a positive impact, engages members and creates excitement so all may enjoy the ALA experience.

*“Be the leader you wish you had.”* Simon Sinek. Thank you for all you do for God and Country.

## EDUCATION

**Diane Weggen**  
**Department Chairman**  
**dsweggen@gmail.com**  
**715-644-2668**

There are many American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion scholarships available. Community service hours may be required.

- Children of Warriors National President’s Scholarship (15 @ \$5,000)
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship (5 @ \$5,000 and 47 @ \$1,000) \*
- Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship (10 @ \$2,500)
- Non-Traditional Student Scholarship (5 @ \$2,000) \*\*
- The James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship (Veteran Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS) Student Volunteer; the dollar amount and number given varies)
- Samsung American Legion Scholarship (for ALA Badger Girls & Badger Boys participants)
- Wisconsin ALA scholarships (check list and eligibility at [amlegionauxwi.org](http://amlegionauxwi.org))
- Local ALA Unit scholarships

\* The **Spirit of Youth** scholarship fund has separate scholarship opportunities: Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior members, Junior Members of the Year, and participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program. “To reward our Junior ALA members who are actively participating in the ALA’s mission, the Junior Member of the Year (JMOY) program has expanded to

- One overall national JMOY will win a \$5,000 scholarship, as well as a trip to the ALA’s National Convention.
- Four division JMOY winners will receive

a \$1,000 scholarship.

- Juniors must be at least in eighth grade or eighth grade equivalent and may win only once.”

\*\*The **Non-Traditional Student** scholarship eligibility has expanded to include ALA, TAL, and SAL members who are non-traditional students; Veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces and were honorably discharged; and spouses of active-duty servicemembers or Veterans who were honorably discharged. Applicants may be pursuing training in a certified, trade, professional, or technical program, or a two-year or four-year degree program. Non-Traditional Student is defined as a student who is one semester or more out of school.

The Spirit of Youth and Non-Traditional scholarship applications are both online. Applications will be submitted to ALA National Headquarters then routed to the appropriate department (state) for the first round of judging. **Applications must be submitted no later than 10:59 pm on March 1, 2024, unless otherwise indicated.**

**Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary Scholarships:** Eligibility requirements as stated in the eligibility section apply to all scholarships. Please read applications carefully. For more information on these scholarships or to apply, visit [www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org) (click on Programs, then Education). There is a list of scholarships with eligibility requirements students can apply for plus **M. Louise Wilson Educational Loan Fund** information. This fund provides interest-free loans to assist female ALA members in need of financial assistance to further their education goals. Please take the opportunity to donate to this fund.

## CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

**Diana Sirovina**  
**Department Chairman**  
**dsirovina@icloud.com**  
**414-881-9581**

Christmas celebrations traditionally include giving gifts to family members and friends. But for our Veterans in long-term care facilities, this is something that likely does not happen. A good number of Veterans in long-term care facilities are not able to go out shopping and many times lack the resources to purchase gifts. This is why our Christmas Gift Shop program is so important. Through the generous support of our members all over the state, Christmas Gift Shop is able to provide the means for these Veterans to give a gift to their loved ones.

For us, Christmas Gift Shop is an annual event that we look forward to with great enthusiasm. We know that no matter how much time and effort goes into the program, the amount of joy that it brings to our Veterans and their families is well worth it. As we moved through the process of scheduling dates for taking orders, selecting just the right gifts to offer, placing orders and receiving the items, and ultimately wrapping them for shipment, our volunteers are always mindful of the impact this program has for these very special Veterans.

Each year we receive letters and notes from family members expressing their thanks not

only for the gifts they receive, but to our organization for making this program available to their Veteran in the care facility. Many tell us the gifts were very unexpected, others say receiving the gifts bring back wonderful memories of times when their families were all together for the holiday.

This year our Christmas Gift Shop program, once again, was very successful. As we visited with the Veterans when we helped them select their gifts, we could tell by the smiles on their faces that this program meant so much to them. Some shared stories about their loved ones, while others were just happy to have someone visit with them for a little while. Without a doubt, the program made a difference for these Veterans and their families.

As we conclude the Christmas Gift Shop program for the year, it is important that we acknowledge the tremendous financial support the program receives from our units. Without that generosity, the program and its impact would not be possible. Even though we only work on this program for a short time each year, units are encouraged to continue their support of this important program whenever they have funds available. Your donations are vital to ensuring that this great program will always be available to our Veterans in long-term care facilities and their families.

## THANK YOU!

To the wonderful members  
in the Department of Wisconsin,

Thank you for your most generous donations to the ALA Foundation. As the Mission Endowment grows, the ALA can continue to support Veterans, and promote education and good citizenship. Veterans Creative Arts gives Veterans the opportunity to display and continue to develop their artistic talents, and to make connections with other Veterans. Thank you for your support.

*Diane Duscheck  
Vice President ALA Foundation*

## WANTED:

**ALA Department  
Finance Committee Member**

Department Bylaws allow any American Legion Auxiliary member with appropriate experience to serve on the Department Finance Committee. **Candidates need to have experience in accounting, finance, budgeting, auditing or other relevant background to be considered.**

Candidates should submit a resume to [deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org](mailto:deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org) by **April 12, 2024**.

Upon receipt of all resumes, candidates will be contacted by the Department Senior Vice President for a telephone interview. The successful candidate will be appointed to serve a 3-year term (July 2024-July 2027).



## HELP WANTED!

**ALA Badger Girls State Counselors,  
Staff and Nurses are still needed!**  
Friday, June 14 – Friday, June 21  
UW-Oshkosh Campus

You can volunteer the whole week  
or just a couple days.

Please review the opportunities  
available and submit an application  
([www.ALABGS.org](http://www.ALABGS.org) >  
About ALABGS >  
ALABGS Volunteer Info)

or contact ALABGS Chairman  
Danyelle Thompson  
for more information  
at [alabgs.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:alabgs.chairman@gmail.com)

## IRON MOUNTAIN VA: OFFICIAL VISIT



The Wisconsin American Legion Family leaders visited the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Facility in Iron Mountain, Michigan to meet with Director John Shealey to discuss the current status of the facility and plans for improvement.

VA facilities rely on volunteers to fulfill many of the in-patient and out-patient needs, relieving some of the workload from hospital staff. Iron Mountain Associate Representative Ann Wender and Associate Deputy Barb Van Bostel, members of ALA Unit 66 of Athelstane/Silvercliff, represent ALA-Wisconsin.

Pictured (l-r): Iron Mountain Director of Volunteer Services Katie Maxon, Barb Van Bostel, Ann Wender, President Maggie Geiger, and VA&R Chairman Bonnie Jakubczyk.

### December 2023 Daily Sweepstakes Winners

1	\$15	Richard Manthey	Pardeeville
2	\$15	Linda Ogarek	Plainfield IL
3	\$25	Joanne Rhode	Oconto
4	\$15	Janan Halvorsen	Wisconsin Dells
5	\$15	Sheila Heiser	Rib Lake
6	\$15	Marilyn Finke	Mayville
7	\$15	Luanne Yanko	Rib Lake
8	\$15	Kathleen Decker	Waupun
9	\$15	Karen Klunck	Sheboygan
10	\$25	Joann Ratajczyk	Pound
11	\$15	Mary Lavin	Medford
12	\$15	Mary Hampton	Spring Valley
13	\$500	Jo Volla	Cambridge
14	\$15	Heather Koth	Wisconsin Rapids
15	\$15	Jane Bates	Gordonville TX
16	\$15	Ginger Groshek	Stevens Point
17	\$25	Jerri Prem	Plain
18	\$15	Kathy Rudser	West Salem
19	\$15	Rosemary Weiland	Port Washington
20	\$15	Gretchen Last	Juneau
21	\$15	Cash Stewart	Arlington
22	\$15	Charleen Barutha	Kewaskum
23	\$15	Cheryl La Rose	Eau Claire
24	\$25	Carol Lee	Thorp
25	\$15	Jean Young	Oconto
26	\$15	Gary Krueger	Waterloo
27	\$15	Lois Trad	Greenleaf
28	\$15	Yvonne Friday	Weyauwega
29	\$15	Peter Nagel	West Allis
30	\$15	Arlene Platts	Kenosha
31	\$25	Bill Rice	Waupun

### November 2023 Daily Sweepstakes Winners

1	\$15	Sharon Nachtwey	Black Creek
2	\$15	Dawn Tubbesing	Prescott
3	\$15	Harold Berberich	Onalaska
4	\$15	Rachel Larson	Webster
5	\$25	Judy Hacker	Chilton
6	\$15	Sharon Getzie	Baldwin
7	\$15	Sandra Waters	Butler
8	\$15	Ivy Yttri	Fort Mill SC
9	\$15	Carol Graveen	Minocqua
10	\$500	Judy Crooks	Monticello
11	\$15	Christine Wilczek	Lublin
12	\$25	Shawna Henseler	Brillion
13	\$15	Joyce Hayes	Green Lake
14	\$15	Ciara Doremus	Oxford
15	\$15	Carol Leiterman	Green Bay
16	\$15	Shirley Stachowiak	Franklin
17	\$15	Penny Ciszewski	Oconomowoc
18	\$15	Sharen Hammes	Bangor
19	\$25	Junalee Hogenson	Glenwood City
20	\$15	Amanda Szalewski	Wausau
21	\$15	Ann Chipman	Neenah
22	\$15	Dorothy Greening	Menasha
23	\$15	Mary Samuelson	Hudson
24	\$15	Sarah Titus	Mequon
25	\$15	Patti Mareo	Milwaukee
26	\$25	Kathy Doyle	Belmont
27	\$15	Beverly Rose	Oshkosh
28	\$15	Ione DeSmith	Glenwood City
29	\$15	Jada Grimsled	Viroqua
30	\$15	Mary Seibel	Wild Rose

## HONORING VETERANS IN JUNEAU COUNTY



Members of Earl Gulligan Unit 133 from Camp Douglas sponsored a Wreaths Across America project. Fundraisers and donations from area businesses and individuals made the project possible. The Camp Douglas Legion Family worked with many volunteers to place approximately 380 wreaths on Veterans' graves in Camp Douglas, St. James Catholic Church, Hustler, Trinity Lutheran Church, and Fountain Lutheran Church cemeteries.

## HONORING VETERANS WITH QUILTS

**AT RIGHT:** The Giving Bees, a homemakers' group in the Seymour/Black Creek area, have supported many projects of ALA Unit 106 in Seymour over the decades with their handicraft skills. Some Auxiliary members also belong to the Giving Bees. Patriotic quilts and pillows were presented to local women Veterans. Veterans (back row): Marcie Jefferson, Sharon Dunville, Ann Smith, Elaine Fitzpatrick, April Hauser, Barbara Rettman. Unable to attend: Joan Lontkowski and Linda Krause. The Giving Bees (front row): Kathy Schroeder, Lois Schwitzer, Linda Biese. Not Pictured: Lois Dahlke.

**BELOW:** Judy Jones, President of Deneen-McCabe Unit 432 in Hammond, presented a Quilt of Valor made by members of the Auxiliary Unit to WWII Veteran Duane Johnson.





**Karl Stuvengen**  
Department  
Commander

★★★★ DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ★★★★★

Over the last couple of months, your Department leadership has been visiting the USDVA Medical Centers and WDVA Veterans Homes in Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota. In my opinion, things are going well within the system serving our Veterans. While the VA overall still struggles with meeting some of its missions, the hospitals and clinics in our area are still some of the best the system has to offer. I can report that all USDVA facilities are continuing to expand and fine-tune healthcare to women Veterans. All facilities are expanding community outreach, and working to engage with other providers in their areas to ensure availability of services that our Veterans need, regardless of what those services are or who provides them.

The WDVA Veterans Homes in Chippewa Falls, King and Union Grove are all remarkable facilities, striving to provide the best living environment for Wisconsin Veterans. These facilities offer a wide variety of services and amenities to their residents. All have improved independent living arrangements, to offer a much more home-like atmosphere for Veterans who don't require higher levels of care.

There are a couple of areas of concern we need to address with our elected representatives. Administrators related the effects of financial constraints that prevent them from recruiting and maintaining the very best providers. Another is

the limits on spending that do not require extra bureaucratic processes. Bidding and higher-level approval are stuck in the 1990s and the costs of goods and services have risen dramatically in the last few years. This makes it difficult to keep projects on schedule, adding months to the completion timeline. While everyone understands the need for financial oversight, the processes providing that oversight need to keep up with reality and not add unnecessary burdens that directly affect the services that can be offered to our Veterans. I ask that you explore these issues and urge our legislators to do the right thing for Wisconsin's Veterans.

There is one more topic I'd like to address. This is a situation where Veterans can not only help the VA, but also help themselves. There is still a persistent problem with Veterans not enrolling in the VA system. In comparing the estimated total Veteran population to the number of Veterans enrolled, only about one third of that population have signed up with the system. In Wisconsin, of the estimated 317,000 Veterans, only about 104,000 have registered. Whether a Veteran now needs VA healthcare or not is irrelevant. This lack of enrollment will eventually lead to Congress reducing funding to the VA, based on the perceived lack of need. The day will come where almost all Veterans will need something from the VA, and if we don't let our representatives know we are out here, those services will not be available in the future. If you haven't registered, contact our Department Service Office or your County Veterans Service Officer for help.



**Maggie Geiger**  
Department  
President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During the months of November and December I was invited to visit eight VA facilities in Wisconsin, Iron Mountain, and Minneapolis with Commander Karl. To walk through the facilities was amazing. I had only visited Zablocki Memorial VA in Milwaukee. It was wonderful to see that our Veterans are being treated respectfully by those around them and the latest medical treatments available at all the facilities. Nursing home and memory care units to those in need are just a few services to help make their lives better.

Our ALA units throughout the state supply so many items to make the lives of those at each facility better! Meeting the ALA representatives and deputies at each facility, listening to them talk about units and its members, always reaching out to make sure Veterans at each facility have what they need, whether it is a blanket, teddy bears, heart pillows, tray favors, articles of clothing, hygiene products or any number of items, brought tears to my eyes. I felt so proud of all of you. I wish all of you would have the opportunity to see what is possible when we stay mission focused – it is mission in action!

Sitting down and visiting with each facility's director, asking them what they need to improve services, and how the Legion Family can assist was very informative. Several of the facilities are in the process of building or renovating their buildings to have clinics, mammograms and other services specifically for women Veterans. Women Veterans are the fastest growing group of Veterans using the VA system.

One overriding concern at the facilities is the lack of Veterans enrolling in the VA Health Care System. The concern is what congress will do if Veteran enrollments continue to decline. Does a lack of enrollment equate to a reduction in funding to our VA facilities?

There are qualification requirements that your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) can explain and possibly help you through. Contact your CVSO at 1-844-WIS-CVSO (844-947-2876) or <https://wicvso.org/locate-your-cvso/>. You may also call Wisconsin American Legion Service Officer James Fialkowski at 414-902-5722, or go to <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/> to learn how to apply.

Even if you applied in the past and were not eligible, please consider contacting your CVSO. Circumstances and qualifications may have changed – it's only a phone call and a few minutes of your time!



**Allen Watry**  
SAL Detachment  
Commander

★★★★ SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER ★★★★★

Hello Wisconsin Legion Family, As I am writing this article I am also preparing for our yearly Midwinter Conference. Midwinter is not only a great opportunity for Training and Celebration, it is also the halfway mark for our business year. So this feels like a great time to reflect on the last six months and provide a couple reminders for the next six months.

With respect to Membership, the Detachment is doing very well. As of January 11:

- The Detachment of Wisconsin is ranked fourth in the Nation at 86.7% of our 2024 Membership Goal (3,814 paid members with a goal of 4,398)
- We have 557 more paid members for 2024 than we did at this same time last year for 2023.
- Of the 3,814 paid members for 2024
  - 376 are new members
  - 3,438 are renewals

But we still have some work to do. At this time 11 of our 122 Squadrons are under 20%. Please make sure Memberships are submitting memberships as they are received. And go get those renewals and new members!

As you may recall, the theme for the year is "Connected to Be the One". This focuses on:

- Being connected and working together as a Legion Family
- Being connected to and making a positive impact in our communities.

Over the last six months many people have shared all they are doing to live out this theme. Please keep up all the great work! Continue to work as a Legion Family promoting and living out our Four Pillars in our Communities. We are making a difference in our communities, especially for our Veterans, Active Military, and Youth.

Looking ahead to the next six months:

- Keep working on Memberships through Buddy Checks and being involved in your Communities.
- Start to plan your Spring Elections. Once completed, please submit a Squadron Information Form. This ensures the Detachment has the latest/greatest contact information for your Squadron.
- Start to prepare your Yearly Consolidated Report Form. The 2023-2024 Form has been uploaded to the Detachment website. It is never too early to start to collect the data for this document, which is due May 31, 2024.

Thank you for all you are doing. Keep up the great work; let's have another successful six months!

For God and Country.



**Corey Doehrmann**  
State Director  
American Legion  
Riders Association

★★★★ LEGION RIDERS ★★★★★

If you didn't attend the 2024 American Legion Midwinter, you missed out on some great training and camaraderie. I encourage you to plan on attending next year in January. Also, at Midwinter there were many committee meetings. The Legion Riders are a program that falls under the Americanism Committee, and I reported on our activity from May to October of 2023. Our impact

to the four pillars is as follows: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation 3,738 volunteer hours and \$30,233 in donations, National Security 215 volunteer hours and \$9,814 in donations, Americanism 3,795 volunteer hours and \$1,175 in donations, Children and Youth 100 volunteer hours and \$3,500 in donations. This makes for a grand total of 7,848 volunteer hours and \$44,722 in donations. I'll put some context on that by stating that we only had half the districts reporting their work. We have over 700

members across 203 posts in all 12 districts. If you are reading this and you're a Legion Rider, please ensure you are reporting your volunteer work to your district leadership.

The Legion Rider year is just getting started as most districts are in the middle of planning their activities for the year. Now is the time to get involved with them or get them involved with your activity. The planning for the WI Legion Riders - Cruise for a Cause, 'Stu's Cruise-24' is progressing. We will be sending out a mailing to host posts in the next week, this will give them more information for planning and keep the lines of communication open. Plan is to have the website up around March 1 with registration soon after.

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](mailto:alrawi.director@gmail.com). Our next meeting after this publication will be May 4 at Post 54 in Marshfield, WI.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**LEGION FAMILY TESTIMONIAL**



**MAY | 18<sup>TH</sup> | 2024**

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