

MI LEGIONNAIRE

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michiganlegion.org

April 2024



Wisdom Love Walker, 2024 Department of Michigan Oratorical winner

Michigan American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program Winner Announced

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. The department awards scholarships in the amount of \$2,000; \$1,000 to the top five contestants in the state and national awards scholarships of \$25,000, \$22,500, and \$20,000 to the top three contestants.

Each state winner who competes in the first round of the national contest will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Participants in the second round who do not advance to the national final round will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship. The top three youth orators who have won all previous elimination rounds of the contest will vie for top honors in the national competition in May in Hillsdale on the campus of Hillsdale College.

On March 2nd, the Michigan American Legion held our department contest in Lansing at the Michigan Historical Museum. We had a total of four contestants, representing zones one through four. These students were the remaining contestants out of 48 who registered from across the state. Each contestant delivered a prepared oration as well as an oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic.

The winner of the contest was Wisdom Love Walker a homeschooled junior from Detroit. Wisdom earned a \$2,000 scholarship from Department for her speech titled "What Happens When the Cameras are Turned on and the 4th Amendment Off". Wisdom will now compete at the National level representing Michigan.

The remaining contestants placed as follows:

\$ 1,500 Second Place Scholarship- Janelle Yao from Portage who is a sophomore at Portage Central High School.

\$1,000 Third Place Scholarship- Evelyn Wells from Troy who is a senior at Troy Athens High School.

\$1,000 Forth Place Scholarship- Lillian Molitor, who is a home-schooled junior from Midland.

The Department wishes Wisdom Love Walker the best of luck at National's contest and all her future endeavors. If you want to learn more about the American Legion Oratorical Contest, visit www.michiganlegion.org/oratorical or www.legion.org/oratorical. If you have questions on how to get involved with the department contest you can contact Ashley Zimmer, Programs Coordinator, at 517-220-2754 or email legion@michiganlegion.org.



L-R: Department Commander Brian Mohlman, 2nd place Janelle Yao, 1st place Wisdom Walker, 4th place Lillian Molitor, 3rd place finisher Evelyn Wells, & Oratorical Chairman Charles Boman

Chief Pontiac Post 377 Receive \$300,000 Community Grant

Our American Legion community has been awarded a significant grant of \$ 300,000.00 from the state of Michigan. Post 377, Chief Pontiac in Clarkston received part of the state's \$64,000,000.00 community center and neighborhood initiative. This is the grant Finance Chairman Roger Avie alerted our members of at last year's State Convention. Post 377 started the process as soon as the Convention was over by contacting an experienced grant writer, John Lyman to help with the application. It was a very competitive process with over 1000 applications and \$1 billion dollars in requests. Chief Pontiac was the only American Legion to win the grant, and it's a testament to the positive impact they make for veterans, youth, and the local community. With this grant, they will renovate their facilities, making them more accessible and functional for all. They will also be able to serve as a heating/cooling center during emergencies, providing vital assistance to their community. We are proud of their achievement and look forward to the positive changes this grant will bring.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! STUDENT TROOPER DATES HAVE CHANGED! NOW JUNE 9TH TO THE 14TH!

April 2024



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ONE OF A KIND
LEGION CUSTOM 1911 45 CAL.

Show & Shoot

AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

SMITH & WESSON
M&P 9MM
OR EQUAL VALUE FROM RANGE 517

Michigan's National Commander Candidate Raffle Fundraiser

1st - Legion Custom 1911 and S&W M&P \$3700 Value
 2nd Prize - \$500 Cash
 3rd Prize - \$100 Cash

Tickets \$100 Only 250 will be sold
 Drawing Live on Facebook May 23, 2024 at 11 am

Make Checks Payable to American Legion Department of Michigan
 212 Verlinden Lansing MI 48915

Less than 75 sold Raffle reverts to a 50/50 Participants must be 21 years of age or older. Guns awarded as prizes will be distributed through licensed dealers and only in compliance with federal and state laws and applicable local ordinances. Prize will be forfeited and no substitution provided if a winner is ineligible. Need not be present to win. Raffle Lic. #R72287

Register Now!

JULY 26-28, 2024
PARADISE

HELL TO PARADISE

PTSD AWARENESS RIDE

Presented by: The American Legion Riders

HELL

BIKES AND BATTLE BUDDIES
BATTLES PTSD 1 RIDE AT A TIME

VETERANS WATERFOWL HUNTING GROUP

MISSION SIX SERVICE DOGS

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS
:IG/6
CONFESSENS LAM - 2019/2020

JULY 26-28, 2024

MOTORCYCLES AND MOTOR VEHICLES WELCOME
 \$35 PER RIDER, \$20 PER PASSENGER

THIS WILL BE A 2 DAY PTSD AWARENESS RIDE.
 Come join us in raising awareness and funds for Mission Six Service Dogs, ZeroDuck30, Bikes and Battle Buddies and Wilwin Lodge.

EMAIL: alrhell2paradise@gmail.com
 FACEBOOK: ALR HELL TO PARADISE

More info to Follow

WILWIN LODGE
At Cygnets Cove

Michigan Chaplain Workshop

Note New Location

Hosted by the 5th District

When: Saturday April 27, 2024
 Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm
 Coffee & Donuts will be provided
 Box Lunch will be offered for \$5.00

Where: Michigan National Guard Armory
 1620 E. Saginaw St.
 Lansing, MI. 48912

Topics:

- PTSD
- Family Support
- Veterans Court
- Chaplain 101

Must RSVP for reservations

Must RSVP for lunch

Keynote Speaker: Chaplain Colonel Owens

This Workshop is open to Everyone in the American Legion Family from all Post, Units, and Districts

YOU MUST RSVP to Deb Weatherbee by April 20, 2024, for reservation and lunch confirmation.
 email - deb560@hotmail.com
 Phone - 616-723-2398

Note: This Workshop will not be recorded, and will not be available through Zoom

"Integrating Spiritual Needs From Service Member To Veteran"

Legionnaire Benefits

As a Member of the Legion Family, You Know How Important It Is to Help Protect Those in Need ...

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- Cancer Care
- Accidental Death Protection
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- Dental Insurance
- Long-Term Care
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Cancer Care — Provides important protection and a daily benefit if you are hospitalized due to cancer.*

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On-The-Move Travel Accident — Provides up to \$200,000.00 coverage when fatally injured in a covered accident while traveling, plus \$500.00 per day if a covered accident lands you in the hospital.*

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To Learn More and Enroll, Visit www.TheLIT.com

For Questions Call 1-800-235-6943

*The Accidental Death, Cancer Care, Hospital Help Plan, and On-The-Move Accident Insurance Plans are underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, St. Paul, MN. Plans may not be available in all states. These policies contain limitations and exclusions. Please visit www.TheLIT.com to review plan details.

There's No Time Like the Present!

Brian Mohlman
Department Commander

As we move into the Spring Season, it's time to re-energize our efforts and activities in our communities. There's no better time than right now to double down

on our core mission, Be The One...Be The One to change or save a Veteran or family member's life!

When we look at our activities within our Community, we quite literally change the lives of those whom we serve. Whether it be merely steering a Veteran to the services they need or coming in direct contact with a family member in need by intervening in their crisis, we are fulfilling our mission of changing and saving lives. Be The One to save just one person from taking their own life.

We find ourselves in uncharted waters regarding membership this year. It's been a LONG time since our Department

has reached every Membership goal up to the 90% Target Date. Thanks to YOU for reaching out to the Veterans we serve and for making that little extra effort to make sure no Veteran or their Family Member is forgotten. Your Department Membership & Post Activities Committee set a course for success and has been providing the tools and resources you need to succeed.

Are we there yet?

The answer to that question is a resounding NO! Our year-round activities create excitement; that excitement turns into interest, and that interest turns into action. Give that new member the opportunity to take action alongside you, which will create even more excitement, starting the cycle all over again. Membership, activities, excitement, and action know no season...they're not just something we do at the beginning of the Membership year...but rather year-round...365 days a year. Let's finish this year out strong, exceeding anything we've done in recent years! Be The One to make a difference in your Post and its' community!



Runyan's Ramblings THE NEW POST & SAL CRIME/BOND POLICY

Ron Runyan
Department Adjutant

Per the National and Department By-laws, Post & SAL officers and employees shall be covered by a crime / fiduciary policy that handles American Legion monies.

Over several years, the Department had offered a crime/bonding policy to Posts and SAL Squadrons for \$10 to cover their membership monies. However, this offering is no longer available for the upcoming year or the following years. Since the Department is unable to make this offering, it will be mandatory that a Crime & Fidelity insurance policy is obtained by the Post (which will include the SAL).

WHAT WILL NEED TO BE DONE NOW-Starting this year, there are a few options that can be done to remain compliant. For Posts that do not remain compliant, this could have some adverse effects such as:

- 1) Posts could have their 2025 membership cards delayed from shipping and
- 2) Posts that are not compliant with National and Department Bylaws could be suspended.

OPTIONS FOR COMPLIANCE-All

ways need to send a copy of the Declaration page showing this or the amendment to the policy showing this coverage to the Department

- In many cases, Posts with Lounges may already have a policy that covers them for Crime and Theft.
- Posts can obtain their own crime policy for employees and members that handle money. This can be from a local or online insurance company.
- Department is also making available a policy provided by NFP, a National endorsed company through the CHUBB Insurance company. It has multiple levels of coverage, and each post can choose how much or as little coverage they require to meet their needs.

2024 - 2025 FORM REQUIREMENTS

Like every year, the Department requires these forms to be turned in to obtain the new year membership cards. Here is the list of required forms, which are mailed to the Post Adjutant and are also available online. Send forms to: member@michiganlegion.org

- 1) Officer Certification Form
- 2) [Post Audit Form](#)
- 3) Insurance Declaration page - Crime/Insurance coverage for officers and/or employees

STATE OFFICERS

State Commander. Brian Mohlman
State Adjutant. Ron Runyan
1st Vice Commander Dan Cooper
2nd Vice Commander Wayne Blank
1st Zone Robert Kamin
2nd Zone. Duane Miller
3rd Zone Jerry Kunzelman
4th Zone Randy Gilbert
5th Zone Ray Carlson
Chaplain. Norm Soli
Finance Officer. John Bradford
Historian Robert Higley Jr.
N.E.C Larry Money
Judge Advocate. Barry Wood
Sergeant-at-Arms Bob Salamon
Immediate Past Commander- Marilyn Britten
Alt. N.E.C Brett Holt
VA and R Director Gary Easterling

DEADLINE DATES

May 2024 is April 12th

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HEADQUARTERS DIRECTORY

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(517) 371-4720 Fax: (517) 689-6100

michiganlegion.org
media@michiganlegion.org

	<i>Extension</i>
LEGION AND SAL MEMBERSHIP	124
member@michiganlegion.org	
LEGION FINANCE	117
finance@michiganlegion.org	
PROGRAMS, BOYS STATE, SCHOLARSHIPS, & BASEBALL	123
legion@michiganlegion.org	
VETERANS SERVICE	112
Tuesday & Friday	
PUBLIC RELATIONS, WEBSITE, NEWSPAPER & SOCIAL MEDIA	116
media@michiganlegion.org	
ADMINISTRATION	113
kim@michiganlegion.org	

If you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use, E-mail it to us at media@michiganlegion.org or mail it to Department, Attn: Jim Showers.

Please keep the photo at least 200 dpi or larger. If you are submitting a hard copy photo, please note photos printed from a home printer cannot be used, nor can photos clipped from newspapers.

We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible.

Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan Legionnaire? Please Contact Jim Showers

media@michiganlegion.org

517-220-2747

MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE

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The Membership Report

Dan Cooper 1st Vice Commander

As we enter the final quarter of the year, membership is at its toughest. We have renewed the easy ones, and now it's time to make that extra push to find the stragglers.

Our recent Text-em-all to non-renewed members has proven it's not that difficult. They just need to be asked.

Please call the non-renewed members at your post and ask them about it. They say cold calling is difficult, but that is not what we're doing. We're calling our brothers and sisters in arms. We're calling to see how they are doing and what we can do for them.

As of this writing, we are in 8th place nationally at 92.49%, which is well ahead of the National goals. We are in first place in the Central Region and second place in Category 3 of the Big 12 competition. We now have 54 posts that have achieved 100% or more and 74 posts that are in the upper 90% and are quickly closing in on 100%.

Minnesota threw down the gauntlet and challenged Michigan to the highest percentage on March 1st. I am PROUD to announce that you picked that gauntlet and soundly beat them with it. I received a call from the Department of Minnesota Membership Director conceding their membership loss to Michigan, and we can plan on her conceding at the convention.

You are doing fantastic this year. We have met all the membership goals so far, and our next goal is 95% on April 10th. Let's not stop now. We Can make 110%.

Chaplains Corner

Has the VA Ever Tried Your Patience?

Norm Soli, Department Chaplain

Years ago, a VA doctor neglected to categorize one of my medications as service-connected. I contacted my VA clinic doctor, who said I had to contact the specialist who had written the prescription. So, I used the VA portal to contact that doctor and got crickets in return.

Then, the invoices kept coming. I returned an invoice with a note explaining the error. In return, I received yet another invoice. So my response was to write a letter. All the while, as I was trying to word the letter, my patience was almost nonexistent. The error was finally corrected, and the invoices were stopped.

I must admit I rushed to the point of anger after my first attempt fell on deaf ears. I should have followed the path found in Proverbs 16:32: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that takes a city."

Fast forward to a few months ago. I thought things were fine after my annual visit with my VA clinic doctor and having that same medication renewed. While they were entering the prescription into the computer, I reminded the doctor to make sure it was classed as service-connected. The medication came and was later followed by an invoice. So I thought, not again! This time, I calmed myself down and took a slow, careful look at the invoice. There was a phone number listed to call if there were any questions. I called and politely explained my issue. Within a few days, I received a phone call telling me the problem was resolved. I even got a second call telling me the medication was reclassified to service-connected.

Colossians 1:10-11 "...increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness..."

Whether it's the VA or some other source of frustration in our lives, it's never a good idea to rush to the nuclear option for a solution. Turning to and relying upon God is always the path to take. In today's world, we tend to want things to happen in an instant. God knows our needs before we even turn to Him for help. But that need may not be met in the timeframe we desire. Here's the bottom line: our lives should be focused on serving God and those in need. As problems come, as they always do, turn them over to the Lord with patience so you're not distracted from serving.

The Americanism Report Americanism Programs Update

Wayne Blank 2nd Vice Commander

Firefighter of the Year is Assistant Chief Michael Defina of the Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department. The Law Officer of the Year is Donovan Ennis, St. Clair Police Department.

We received two nominations for Eagle Scout of the Year. In the next few weeks, Doug Carignan, the Scouting Chair, will review them with a small committee. There are no Square Knot award submissions to report at the time of writing.

In Junior Shooting Sports, the Michigan team winners are Genesee Career Institute HS in the Sporter Category and Kent County Top Gun 4H on the Precision side. The Individual top shooters were Carolyn Lavoy Post 514 in Ida, for Sporters. In Precision top shooter was Braden Michaelak. Neither individual winner will proceed to the 2nd round since they did not meet the minimum score of 530 for Sporter and 570 for Precision to get a 2nd round target set.

The Department still hasn't received any Student Trooper applications for this year's session. Due to an error on MSP's part, there is a major change in dates. The New Program Dates are June 9-14th for 2024. The dates previously publicized had to be changed due to The State police. The committee understands that many schools will still be in session June 9-14, but we are at the mercy of the Michigan State Police. Thanks to Ashley Zimmer at Headquarters for working through the changes, putting out the new information online, and posting it on social media. The application, flyer, and brochure have already been updated.

Other deadlines are;

- May 1st-Boys State Application submission deadline
- May 1- Student Trooper Application submission deadline
- May 15th- Baseball insurance purchase deadline
- May 17th-19th- National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI
- June 1st- Final day for Baseball teams to register

Here is a program from Sault Sainte Marie's Post 3. It is a collaboration of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit #3 and the VFW Post 3676 Auxiliary. "America and Me Day Camp" is for children ages 6 through 12 and is held on Armed Forces Day, the third Saturday in May, from 10 AM to 2 PM. There isn't a registration fee, but each child brings a pair/package of new socks to donate to Veterans in need. The children are divided by age groups and pass through the different stations set up for the activities. Flag folding, marching, patriotic crafts, cards for Veterans, scavenger hunt, trying on donated old uniforms from various military branches, etc. The instructors are volunteers from the post. Last year, the Coast Guard joined in with equipment for the children to explore. Each child receives a t-shirt, a cap that they color, and a goodie bag filled with patriotic items and candy. At graduation, each child receives a certificate of completion.

They gather donations from various businesses and individuals to cover the costs of food and supplies. They promote this event with flyers and registration forms to the grade schools, flyers to local businesses, and social media.

District Meetings

First District

Meetings start at 1 pm.

April 21, 2024

American Legion Post 147
100 W Dunlop Street, Northville, MI 48167

May 19, 2024

Knights of Columbus Post 390
19801 Farmington Road, Livonia, MI 48152

June 16, 2024

American Legion Post 32
9318 Newburgh Road, Livonia, MI 48150

July 21, 2024

American Legion Post 147
100 W Dunlop Street, Northville, MI 48167

Second District

Meetings start at 11 am with the SAL followed by the Riders at Noon with a Lunch VSO starts at 1 pm and Legion meetings are at 2 pm.

May 19, 2024

Jackson- Rose City Post 324
1190 Falahee Rd. Jackson, MI 49203
517.662.3387

Third District

Meetings Officers at 11:30 am, Lunch is at 12pm, and Business at 1:00 pm. Training will take place once the meeting is adjourned.

May 5, 2024 TBD

Fourth District

Service officers training at 11:00 am Dinner at 12:30 pm Meetings at 1:30 pm.

May 5, 2024

Hastings
269-331-0623

Fifth District

Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of every month. Dinner @ 5:30 pm and Meeting @ 7 pm.

May 9, 2024

Post 28

July 11, 2024

LOCATION TBD by Next Commander

Sixth District

Service Officer School at 11:10 am (when scheduled), Lunch at Noon, Meetings at 1 pm

May 19, 2024

Buck-Reasoner Post 238
1785 Cedar Street Holt, Michigan 48842

Seventh District

Lunch at 12:30 with meetings at 2:00

May 19, 2024

Lapeer post #16
1701 W. Genesee

Eighth District

Trainings will start at Noon, Dinner at 1:00pm with Legion and Auxiliary meetings immediately following.

May 19, 2024

Greenville Post 101
1320 W. Washington St. 616-754-5063

Nineth District

Executive meetings are at 11:00am with Lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00pm.

May 11, 2024 Post 69

Whitehall, MI

Tenth District

All meetings will start with lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm.

May 4, 2024

Luzerne, Post 162

Eleventh District

All Meetings Start at 10 am, with Lunch to after.
Locations TBD

Twelfth District

Starting at 10 am, with a lunch and additional hour after lunch if needed.
Locations TBD

Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm.

April 9, 2024* Trenton Post 426

May 14, 2024** Lincoln Park Post 67
313-388-2088

June 11, 2024 Garden City Post 396
313-381-2245

* Service Officer School at 6:30 pm
**Memorial Service & Elections

Eighteenth District

All meetings Meeting for the District Legion and Auxiliary Convene at 2:00 p.m

May 19, 2024 - Chief Pontiac Post 377

*Election of District Officers for 2024
(248) 673-9301

Nineteenth District

Meetings will be held at the Gaylord Bowling Center, 1200 Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735.

Meetings start with training at 10:00 am, Social at 11:00 am, lunch served at noon. The both the Legion and Auxiliary will start at 1:00 pm.



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**AMERICAN
LEGION**
 DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN



AUXILIAIRE



From the Desk of the President

April 2024



Kim Champion
Department President
2023-2024

The Winter conference was great. Lots of information was shared, and I hope everyone took something back to their Districts and Units. It was wonderful to have Carol T. Robinson, National Central Division American Legion Auxiliary Vice President, as our Guest. It was an honor and privilege to have her.

A lot of things are happening this month. Unit reports are due in your district and can be found on the Department American Legion Auxiliary website at www.michalaux.org. If you need a copy mailed to you, please let me know. Lastly, Articles for the Annual Book of Reports are due into the Department by June 1. Please include everything you did for the Veterans, their families, and your community in this article.

Thank you to every one of you for what you do.

Chaplain's Corner

Anita Mennel, ALA Department Chaplain

Time just keeps on rushing by. Already, we are in the 4th month of the year. April is the month of the Military Child. It also includes Purple Up Friday and the "ALF"-day or American Legion Family Day. We have much to be thankful for this month, like every month. What are you doing to celebrate?

Be sure you remember how this month became special to our organization. God's grace! It's more than a saying. Through the Grace of God, we are here. We all have been given a gift. How we share it is up to us. There are so many times we fail to 'seize the moment'. Make it a choice to do what you can to improve on that. Cherish the memories when we do turn an opportunity into a memory. Remember National Commander Seehafer's words, Change lives and Save lives. Be The One to make a difference in someone's life, TODAY and every day. My prayer is that you will all feel God's Grace in your life.

Prayer:

"Somebody loves you more than you know. Somebody goes with you wherever you go. Somebody really and truly cares and lovingly listens to all of your prayers. Don't doubt for a minute that this is not true; For God loves his children and takes care of them, too. All of His treasures are yours to share, if you love Him completely and show Him you care. And if you "walk in His footsteps" and have faith to believe, there's nothing you ask for that you will not receive."-Helen Steiner Rice

Service to Veterans

Julie Becker, VA&R Chairperson

Service to Veterans volunteers are American Legion Auxiliary members who provide service to veterans outside a VAMC (Veterans Administration Medical Center).

Whether organizing a stand down, assembling care packages/tray favors/greeting cards, assisting with a veteran's burial or gravesite upkeep, sewing, cooking, or shopping for active-duty military/veterans and their families, member volunteers are at the heart of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program structure.

Many of our veterans need assistance around their homes. Elderly or limited-mobility veterans may not be able to take care of all their housekeeping requirements and would appreciate some extra help.

Knowing that veterans and current servicemembers do not always ask for help in times of need, your local American Legion Auxiliary is a great place to look for assistance in locating veterans who may need some help at home.

Often, organizations or individuals aware of a veteran's issues will encourage those in need to share their information with the local American Legion Auxiliary unit. In this manner, volunteers can be matched with veterans in need of assistance.

Ways to Help Veterans at Home:

- Basic home tasks or repairs (i.e., painting a room or the exterior of a house, assembling a shelf, programming electronic devices or computers, hanging picture frames).
- Yard work (i.e., snow removal, raking leaves, weeding, mowing the lawn, brush cleanup).
- Build a wheelchair ramp for a veteran who has lost a leg or an elderly veteran who is less mobile.
- Cook a meal for them at their home.
- Do their laundry or house cleaning.
- Drive them to and from appointments.

Now it's your turn!

- Find a veteran. Ask organizations or volunteer groups if they know of anyone you can help.
- Ask friends or family members to help. Two people can help tackle more projects.
- Follow up. After you complete the project, check back with the veteran and see if there is anything else you can do (i.e., if you mow the lawn, see if it needs to be mowed again in a few weeks).
- Share your experience to encourage others to find ways to help veterans.

Remember to keep track of your volunteer hours. You can claim 10 hours a week if you live with the veteran and 5 hours a week if you do not live with the veteran.

Something Happening at your Unit? Submit it to the Michigan Auxiliaire!

Send your articles and Pictures (with Cutline) to : info@michalaux.org

Handling ALA-MIS



*Shannon Werner - Executive Director,
Secretary and Treasurer*

In the last couple of months, we have been experiencing our first round with ALA MIS renewals, rejoins, and new access. Sara and I have handled all the phone calls, emails, and documentation related to this very useful program provided by National. It has been quite a stressful time for both of us, but we are being educated and learning every day. Moving forward, we will provide two reminders prior to the 2025 access year. One in October and another in November.

Some questions and issues we have seen repeatedly. Such as, if you sign up for ALA MIS and you get an email from National, please read it in its entirety. There is almost always a link to click to move forward. You may have to participate in some training (even if you already have), take a quiz (even if you already have), etc.

The only difference between unit write and unit full is being able to process your own membership. If your unit does not have a debit or credit card to process your membership, you do not need unit full access; it is a waste of money to upgrade if you cannot use it.

When representatives change positions and a new person takes over ALA MIS access, send the form to the Department so the change can be made. Don't pay another fee unless it's the end of December. If someone leaves your Unit, report it so their access can be deactivated. The Department is charged for all users listed on the National's database as a current user. Even if the person no longer needs access or uses ALA MIS, if National says they have access, then the Department must pay.

As I mentioned during the 2024 Winter Meeting, adequate training for this program is scant. My suggestion is that units and districts get together and have training opportunities led by members who are most familiar with and experienced with the ALA MIS system. Please try to resolve problems on your own before calling the Department. Please remember that Sara and I are new to this organization, and we need all of the grace you can provide.

In closing, if you haven't already renewed your ALA MIS access and you want to, please get the paperwork into Department as soon as possible. Thank you for your support and continued efforts in assisting our Veterans.

National Security

Dawn Gramza

"The National Security program maintains and promotes a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families." (Diana Sirovina, 2022 National Chairperson)

BLUE STAR SERVICE BANNER

The Blue Star banner was designed and patented in 1917 by a World War 1 Army Capt. Robert L. Queisser of the 5th Ohio Infantry. Queisser had two sons serving on the front line. The banner quickly became the unofficial symbol for the parents with a child in active military service.

Units from the American Legion Auxiliary can assist military families with support, caring hearts, and helping hands whenever and wherever needed. The wear RED "Remember Everyone Deployed" on Fridays is another way to support our deployed military.

Juniors, Hear Us Roar!

Dawn Burton, Juniors Chairperson

Hello members, I send greetings from the Department of Michigan Honorary Junior President Abbie Jones and all her fellow juniors. This year has been a great one, and we are only a little over halfway through. Abbie and I have traveled to a couple of districts to speak about her special project and discuss how vital it is to promote junior membership in your units. I have recently had the distinct pleasure of traveling to one unit and working on building up their juniors. They now have 16 active juniors that they are utilizing in their projects. These juniors are fired up and enjoying the mentoring they receive from their senior membership. I can't wait to see all the great things they accomplish now that they have their feet under them. Every Unit should encourage junior participation. If you don't have juniors, contact the local high schools. Many young people are just waiting to answer the volunteering call, but we must call them!

As you may know, Abbie's platform this year is "May the Force be with our veterans," and her special project is Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs. Abbie chose this organization because her Uncle Johnny was one of the 22 veterans a day we lose to suicide, and she feels if Johnny had a service dog, he would still be alive today. Statistics show veterans who have service dogs have a 0% suicide rate; these dogs save veterans' lives!

I was recently reading a story from the founder of Guardian Angels, and she recounted a story from when her father, a Korean war veteran with PTSD (and other war-related issues), was dying. He had dementia and did not know her or her mother, but his service dog was still by his side. She reached out and nudged and licked his hand; her father responded to his dog by patting her head and saying, "You've been a good dog to me." Shortly thereafter, her father passed away. What a story! In his dying moments, when he knew no one or nothing around him, he knew his dog. That says a lot about how important these dogs are, the bonds created, and the difference they make in the lives of the Veterans. The importance of this project is immeasurable. I implore you to help Abbie raise the funding for the two Michigan veterans currently waiting for dogs.

The Department of Michigan has just over 28,000 members, so if every member paid \$2.00, we would have more than enough funds to cover both dogs. Every Unit and District President has received an email from me. Thank you to the 40 Units, 1 Squadron, 2 Posts, 3 Districts, and several individual members who answered that call; because of each of you and your commitment to this cause, we are well on our way to achieving this goal! I'm still waiting to hear from many Units. If this hasn't come up at one of your Unit or District meetings, please bring it up and vote to donate to this project. Checks can be made out to the ALA Dept of Michigan with Junior Presidents Project or Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs in the memo line. Please mail to ALA Department of Michigan, 212 N Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, MI 48915.

Again, thank every member for what you do for our organization. Your hard work, dedication, and maintaining our motto of "SERVICE, NOT SELF" is why we are as successful as we are. There is quite literally no I in TEAM; this isn't about having the spotlight on you for something you helped with. It's merely about helping. Every morning, I wake up and remember my "why." The reason for my eligibility and I do what I do to honor her sacrifice. I don't do it for the recognition, the accolades, or for the spotlight; I do it to honor my why because, let's face it, without her service, I would not be able to be the proud American Legion Auxiliary member I am. Let's all remember our whys and volunteer to make them proud.

Legislative Update

Mary Anne Yuncker, Legislative Chairperson

American Legion Auxiliary members have been participating in legislative activities in various ways while following the objective to promote and support The American Legion's priorities/agenda. This time of the year is typically the busiest for legislative work at the state level. The State of Michigan meets for approximately 28 weeks, primarily from January to June. Nationally, legislative work is done year-round, with Congress meeting 168 days in 2023.

The American Legion's Legislative Center web page is a valuable information resource. The Dispatch also provides information. The American Legion Auxiliary's Advocacy Guide explains how to be an advocate starting at the grassroots level. If you would like this pamphlet, contact me, and I will get it for you.

The American Legion believes funding-related issues will be the most important in the coming months. The fiscal year 2024 Department of Defense budget proposal has anticipated changes in retirement, healthcare, and other benefits. Curbing the jobless rate of veterans (nearly 250,000 veterans are currently unemployed) and flag protocol are also high on the list.

When soldiers on the front lines were asked what The American Legion could do for them, they replied that their greatest concern was not for themselves, their safety, comfort, or supplies, but rather to take care of their families, their retirement,

and their GI benefits. This is our legislative responsibility as we vigilantly make our position clear to our legislators, reminding them of our priority to ensure veterans the care and benefits they so surely deserve.

The following are policy priorities for the 118th Congress: Protecting the VA and the Department of Defense from funding reductions, continuing the VA home loan project, implementing the Disabled Veterans' tax, and protecting our flag from acts of desecration.

As Congress discusses and decides on these issues, keep your legislators informed of our position. This year, even more is at stake as we look forward to primary and National elections. We have the freedom to vote. We have a voice in who our government officials will be. Let us never take that for granted. We can make a difference. "Every vote counts". The first step is knowing when your elections are being held. Next, know who you are voting for and then how to vote, either in person or by absentee ballot.

Michigan voters now have the right to vote early in every statewide and federal election. Early voting is offered at least nine consecutive days before the election for at least eight hours a day. Absentee voters can also sign up to become permanent mail voters. They will receive an absentee ballot before all future elections, making voting more accessible for all absentee voters. These are all efforts to make voting easier and obtain more voter participation. "Your Vote Matters."

American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)

Kathleen Copeland, Chairperson

Mission: "To provide temporary financial assistance to eligible members during times of financial crisis or weather-related emergencies and natural disasters and to promote awareness and knowledge of the program."

The administrative year is ending. This family has been blessed with good health and living conditions while our country is in a weather spasm. The Atlantic coast has had a lot of snow and rain dumped on it. This has caused dangerous conditions and flooding. The Pacific coast has had a deluge of rain, causing homes, rocks, and trees to slide onto roads, making them impassable. Texas is dealing with massive prairie fires where two have died. On February 28, tornadoes hit Marshall and Grand Blanc, Michigan. There is so much devastation and cleanup to be done. Recently, the news reported that those affected by the tornadoes in August 2023 in the seven cities across Michigan can now apply to FEMA for funding and assistance to rebuild and repair and, in some cases, get low-interest loans.

So, let us continue our AEF mission. Fill your Jam Jars with donations. It is a great thing we can do to help our Auxiliary members, who help many others in many ways. We have so many events going on year around the state that the AEF Donation JAM JAR could be set out to collect money. The more money received, the more members we can help.

As per a recent email from the Department of Michigan, donations are coming in slowly, and funds are low. According to National Michigan is very low in monetary donation standings. Let's help our members who may need us, and up to \$3,000.00 can make a difference.

We have raffles, bake sales, breakfasts and dinners that we share with our Posts, and we can have JAM JARS available to help each other. As a marketing tool, I use the ability to apply for up to \$3,000.00 in grant money in an emergency as a point of reference for new members and another reason for those renewing their membership. Remember the town that was burnt down by fire in Hawaii, Lahaina? We can hope for a better year and less needs. Let us build up these funds for the JAMS we will find ourselves in the future. You never know how a little money can help get you through when you get into a JAM. I am glad my donation comes to you at your very needy time.

3rd Dist. Update

Penny Wright, President

In my third year as 3rd District President, I continue to learn and enjoy this elected position every day. I have had the privilege of attending a Girls State Dinner, an Americanism Dinner, a car show, and a few election & installation ceremonies. Our District is doing wonderful things to support the ALA Programs.

We were very honored to have Julie Becker, Department 1st Vice and VA & R Chairperson, visit during our January district meeting. Julie shared

valuable information and education for us all. Our Honorary Junior President, Abbie Jones, and Dawn Burton, Junior Chairperson, were at the same meeting. We had a great time with them both. If you have hosted a 3rd District meeting this year or have one coming up, I thank you. I know a lot of work goes into the luncheon, and it does not go unnoticed!

Have you been thinking about your "why"? Why did you join the ALA? Sometimes, we need to remember our "why" to keep focused on the ALA's mission. Our behavior, good or bad, reflects who we are as

ALA members. When you wear the Auxiliary logo, you are representing not only yourself but many members. Give the ALA the superior image that has been earned and well deserved.

As we eagerly await the arrival of spring, let's use this time to rejuvenate our commitment to the ALA and our Veterans. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the 3rd District members for their outstanding work in membership this year. We are well on our way to reaching our 100% goal – and I have no doubt that we will get there together!

NEC Report

Marcy Jorae , Past Dept. President

As the National Executive Committee member, I bring greetings to all Michigan members from the National organization. The National Executive Committee (NEC) is the governing body of the National organization, just as the Department Executive Committee (DEC) is the governing body of a Department. The voting members of the NEC are the 11 National officers and a representative of each of the Auxiliary's 52 Departments. Each Department has an NEC and an alternate NEC. Each Department has its own rules for electing its representatives to the NEC, but in Michigan, according to the Department Constitution, Article IV – Department Officers, Section 1c, "The retiring Department President shall be declared elected as National Executive Committee member for the year immediately following the term as Department President. If the retiring Department President is unable to serve as National Executive Committee member for the year immediately following the term as Department President, a Past Department President shall be elected to serve the term."; and 1d, "The incoming Department President, shall be declared elected as Alternate National Executive Committee member for the year of the term as Department President."

Members of the NEC Meet in person at a pre-convention Meeting (National Convention) and a post-convention Meeting. The pre-Convention Meeting is to wrap up any business from the year that is concluding. The post-convention Meeting is to ratify Committees and other appointments and inform members (many of whom are new to the position) of any ongoing investigations at the National level. Just as with our Department meetings, the regularly scheduled meetings are open meetings but there are also closed-session meetings to discuss items of a sensitive nature.

Closed-session meetings are highly confidential.

For the 2023-2024 year, I attended an informational "NEC 101" meeting conducted by Chris Dickey, the Registered Parliamentarian retained by the American Legion Auxiliary. This was held at the conclusion of the National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, and immediately preceding the post-convention NEC meeting. This was to prepare members for what to expect during an NEC Meeting. NEC members were reminded that in their position, they represent the interests of the national organization and not the individual Departments from which they come. The newly elected National President, Lisa Williamson, conducted the NEC Meeting after the training. After the regular business was conducted, the NEC went into a closed session.

A special closed-session NEC meeting was held virtually on November 29, 2023. Again, a pre-meeting review and Q&A session on NEC procedures relating to this meeting was conducted by the National staff and Chris Dickey. This was also held virtually. Two NEC meetings were held virtually on February 24 – one in closed session and the other as our Mid-Winter NEC Meeting. Again, a pre-meeting training and Q&A was held virtually a few days before the meetings.

At the general meeting, the National President, National Secretary, and National Treasurer gave their reports for the 2023-2024 year thus far. President Lisa stressed the importance of the "Be the One" initiative, which is a Legion Family Mission. It was noted that the Mission Trainings/ National Junior Meetings held in each Division were very well attended this year, showing an interest in improving and growing our organization.

The Risk and Compliance Committee, along with representatives of the independent auditing firm Blue & Co., LLC, gave a detailed report of the financial position of the National Amer-

ican Legion Auxiliary for the year ending September 30, 2023, and a comparison to the previous year ending September 30, 2022.

The information presented shows that the operations of the national organization are being conducted in a sound business manner, and smart decisions are being made by the administration. The organization is financially healthy as we move forward with the same high level of professionalism, regard, and passion for the programs we currently have and those of the future. This allows the organization to expand on such things as the number of scholarships being given as well as other items. Membership has finally experienced an upswing in numbers after several years of decline.

One of the committees appointed by the National President for their administrative year is the Minutes Approval Committee. This committee is charged with reviewing the minutes of meetings held by the NEC and Convention for accuracy and completion. That review, when approved, is reported as approved to the NEC at the next meeting. The minutes of regular meetings are then posted on the National website for any member to see. They can be found under Meetings/ Proceedings at alaforVeterans.org. Having such a committee eliminates the need for the entire group to hear/read the minutes for approval months after the meeting occurred.

As a personal comment, I found that the training/Q&A sessions held before each meeting were very informative and have helped the meetings run smoothly as questions may be asked beforehand on such things as when a motion will be necessary, how to make the motion, when such discussion is out of order and when a vote will be required. It has been my honor to represent the Department of Michigan as the 2023-2024 National Executive Committee member.

CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR CHAPLAIN WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH, 2024

NOW AT THE MICHIGAN NATIONAL GAURD ARMORY

1620 East Saginaw St. Lansing 48912

Battle Creek VAMC

Chris Reed, Representative

Greetings from the Battle Creek VAMC! Since my last article, many activities have been at the Battle Creek VA! We have been very busy planning events, and I wanted to share them with everyone.

We started with the PGA Golf Outing on May 30, 2023. Many golfers from the area were invited, and Veterans caddied for them! The Auxiliary served burgers and hot dogs to the participants. It was a beautiful day for the event, and we made sure no one went away hungry!

The annual patient carnival was held on September 13. The carnival was at the pavilion area, and we had a beautiful day. We served hot dogs, chips, cookies, candy, and beverages. Other volunteer organizations provided carnival games and prizes for the Veterans. It was so nice seeing the smiling faces, and some of the Veterans from the Community Living Center unit were even able to attend. This is a very popular event for the Veterans, who look forward to it each year.

This led to the very busy month of December. The VA holiday parade was on December 6. This was the third year for the parade, and it keeps getting bigger each year. We served Christmas cookies and hot chocolate to the Veterans and their families, who enjoyed the festivities while watching the parade.

The following week was Christmas Gift Shop, which was held on December 12. Twelve members representing six different Units helped this year. We gave gift bags to 315 Veterans, including the in-house Veterans at the VA and five different Veteran organizations in the community. Thanks to every Auxiliary, Legion, and Sons Unit/Post who donated money to the Battle Creek Christmas Gift Shop. I was honestly overwhelmed with the donations we received, and these monies certainly helped us to purchase all the needed items for the Gift Shop. Your support and generosity are most sincerely appreciated! We hosted a New Year's Day pizza party with pizza, wings, cookies, and beverages while the Veterans also played Bingo for prizes.

February 13 was Salute Week at the VA, with a Bowling Tournament. The VA has its own bowling alley! We brought in a fried chicken dinner for the Veterans. They had a great time enjoying the food and bowling. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners received Canteen books, and we are planning to make this an annual event for the ALA.

Additionally, we hold monthly Bingo. This has been a challenge, as we rely on volunteers to host. Bingo is on the 4th Wednesday of every month, starting at 6:00 p.m. We need 3-4 volunteers for approximately 1-1/2 hours. If your unit is interested in hosting, I will get you information. The Veterans love the event. My contact information is below.

We are always looking for volunteers who want to join the fun. We would love to see some new faces, and so would the Veterans! In addition, we are accepting all donations throughout the year. This money will help us provide support for all the activities. If you're interested, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Todd Greenman, in community & volunteer services, has asked for donations to the VA: Men's tennis shoes – sizes 8, 10, 10-1/2, 12 & 13. Men's boxer briefs are medium in size; men's shower shoes are sizes 9, 10, 12, or larger, and they are playing cards, men's lotion, and postage stamps. Donated items can be delivered directly or shipped to

Battle Creek VAMC
Community and Volunteer Service
(135) – Building 10
5500 Armstrong Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037

Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank my 1st Deputy, Barb Parks, and my 2nd Deputy, Penny Wright, for all of their help and support throughout the year. We couldn't have accomplished all the events without these ladies! I thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve as VA&R Representative for Battle Creek and thank all of you for your help and support over the past several years.

Chris Reed, cell – (269) 420-1488,
email – ckhud@mei.net

Month of the Military Child

Maggie Merchberger, Children and Youth Chairperson

The Defense Department celebrates military children in April. More than 1.6 million military children face many challenges and unique experiences because of their parents' service. While military members serve around the world, we often forget the challenges faced by their children.

To celebrate the Month of the Military Child, MSU Extension is hosting the "Month of the Military Child Virtual Challenge." Michigan 4-H Military Family Program is hosting a virtual challenge for youth across Michigan on April 7-20. Participants in the challenge will have new missions to complete to score points and earn prizes.

The GooseChase app is free to download. Youths will compete by posting text, photos, and videos to answer questions and complete challenges. See where you fall in the rankings daily by checking out the leaderboard and activity feed. The program is open to any youth ages 5-19. Some restrictions apply. To learn more and register for the challenge, please visit <https://events.anr.msu.edu/4HMOMC2024> or contact Kate King at Kingka26@msu.edu. There are prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams, and the first fifty registrations will receive a FREE 4-H Build-a-Boat Activity Kit to use in the challenge. The Michigan 4-H Foundation, the Michigan Army National Guard Child and Youth Programs, and Detroit Arsenal Child and Youth Services support this event.

The American Legion's Motto is "For God and Coun-

try, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security." Our youth are our future, and mentoring them is the key to the future. I encourage Auxiliary Units across Michigan to host an event in April or May to bring awareness to our veterans and active military.

Consider hosting a one-day "America and Me Kids Camp" or challenging your Junior Auxiliaries to host an event around the Month of the Military Child.

This year, the American Legion Auxiliary Unit #3 in Sault Ste. Marie will be hosting its 3rd annual "America and Me Boot Camp," where youth learn flag etiquette, write cards to veterans, and participate in many other patriotic activities. Reach out to other local youth organizations and partner with them to promote the Month of the Military Child. Our youth's active imaginations can be a huge asset and may provide an amazing number of ideas. Forming partnerships with other military organizations or contacting your local school district may help raise awareness in your community.

Why is the dandelion the official flower of the military child? It puts down roots almost anywhere and is nearly impossible to destroy. It's an unpretentious plant, yet good-looking. It's a survivor in a broad range of climates. Military children bloom everywhere the winds carry them. They are hardy and upright. Their roots are strong, cultivated deeply in the military culture, planted swiftly and surely. They're ready to fly in the breezes that take them to new adventures, new lands, and new friends.

7th District

Pam Wagner, President

Greetings from the 7th District. I am pleased to say unit members throughout the 7th District have been busy! It is wonderful to hear how hard our ALA members in District 7 work within their units, supporting their Posts, area veterans, and communities.

I'll touch on a few of their activities. Sandy Justa from Unit 261 in Kimball was awarded the Fire Department Corp Member of the Year for 2023 by the



Kimball Township Fire Department for her volunteerism with them. Several of our units have volunteered at the Chesterfield Home for Veterans, supporting

monthly veteran events.

Unit #4 from Port Huron has donated to Vets Returning Home for their Utility Fund. This fund helps to defray electric and gas bills for our Veterans. They have given approximately \$2,000 in in-kind food donations, including meat and produce.

Unit #16 of Lapeer recently completed an Americanism Project. They purchased 100 pocket flags and took them to Schickler Elementary School in Lapeer for the students to put notes with. Besides putting notes with the



pocket flags, students also made cards to send. The package was then sent to Ft. Hood, Texas (Fort Cavazos), to be distributed to the soldiers there.

Post #16 was honored to host the recent Southeast Michigan Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Service. This is

the 9th year organizers and Co-Chairs Brent Holt and Anita Mennel have held this Memorial service honoring the four heroic men of faith and their final voyage on the Dorchester during WWII.



For a second year in a row, the Lapeer County Young Marines presented the colors for the memorial.

Officers Susan Svacha and Betty Cline of Unit #8 have undertaken a project mentoring new officers. They meet with them to assist the newly elected and those interested in being future officers. Many Units are preparing for Spring events, clean-ups, Easter programs, Memorial programs, and Poppy distribution, supporting ALA programs, and volunteering in their communities. And District #7 is excited that a new unit is being formed!

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families



*American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Michigan
5th District Association*

March 9, 2024

At the regular scheduled meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary, 9th District Association and a regular schedule meeting of the Dale H. Wheeler American Legion Auxiliary Unit 219 members voted to endorse Dawn E. Gilbert for the office of Historian, American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan for the 2024-2025 year.

Dawn is eligible for membership through the service of her husband, Randy A. Gilbert a Cold War Veteran having served in the Army from 1978 to 1990 and is a PUFL member of Dale H. Wheeler, American Legion Post 219 of Fife Lake. Additionally Dawn is eligible through the service of her late father, James J. O'Day, an Army Veteran.

A 21 year member of the Dale H. Wheeler American Legion Auxiliary Unit 219 in Fife Lake Dawn has held office for 19 of those 21 years. Dawn is the current Treasurer for her Unit since 2019 and previously held the office of 1st Vice President, Historian and numerous chairmanships at the unit level.

At the District level Dawn is currently serving as the 9th District Association President for the 2023-2024 year, and has held positions of 1st First President and 2nd Vice President and numerous Chairmanships (Membership, AEF, VA&R).

At the Department Level Dawn has served as Credential Chairman, Lower Northern Area Membership Chair for two years, and served on the Finance Committee.

Dawn is a 10 year partner of Missaukee County Salon 300 and is serving as Secretary/Treasurer for the 8&40 Department of Michigan.

Dawn have been working for 13 years as a Department Assistant for Community Health at Munson Healthcare. She has 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson.

It is with great pleasure with we endorse Dawn for this position. We feel that she is well qualified to serve the America Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan as an Officer. We ask for your consideration and support of our candidate for the Office of Historian of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, for the 2024-2025 year.

Rita Cummer
Rita Cummer, Unit 219 President

Cheryl Peck
Cheryl Peck, Unit 219 Secretary

Linda Gamache-Chick
Linda Gamache-Chick, 1st Vice President
9th District Association, Dept. of Michigan

Sherry McKissen
Sherry McKissen, Secretary
9th District Association, Dept. of Michigan

Linda R. Walthorn
Linda Walthorn
Fifth District President

Debbie Weatherbee
Debbie Weatherbee
Fifth District Chaplain

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary, 5th District Association held October 17, 2023, in Caledonia, MI, Christine Merlington was endorsed for the office of Chaplain, American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, for the year 2024-2025.

Christine is eligible through the service of her late father, Ebron Odell Stanley, who served in the United States Navy during Vietnam and continued his Service for 20 Years. She is also eligible through her son who served in the United States Navy 2003 thru 2017

Christine has been an active American Legion Auxiliary member for 19 years. On the Unit level she served as President for three years. Treasurer for 14 Years and Historian for 1 year. She has held multiple Chairmanships at the Unit level including Girls State Chairman, Poppy, Junior Activities, Children and Youth, Community Service, Public Relations, Legislative, Education, Constitution and Bylaws and Past Presidents Parley.

At the District level, Christine served as Chaplain, 1st and 2nd Vice and was President in 2011-2012 and was President in 2016-2017 also. She served as Public Relations Chairman and Community Service Chairman, Junior Activities, and Children and Youth she has been the Memorial Banquet Secretary for six years and District Secretary for seven years.

At the Department level, Christine has been on the Community Service Committee, Children and Youth Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and has been Junior Activities Chairman, National Security and Public Relations Chairman.

Christine is a 16-year member of Cedar Rock Salon of the 8 et 40, and a Chapeau Passe.

We ask your consideration and support of our candidate for the office of Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, for the year 2024-2025



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

JOHN BEEMAN

Detachment Commander 2023-2024



Hello again, fellow brothers and Legion family. I have been on the go traveling down to the 90th Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois, with Rodney Tolbert, where I had the honor of placing a wreath on Abraham Lincoln's tomb with Auxiliary President Kim Champion. I have attended several Americanism dinners and, unfortunately, a few funerals on behalf of our detachment. The trip to Washington, D.C., was an experience! Pat and I traveled with Rodney and Wendy Tolbert and then met up with Fred and Diane Ruttkofsky. We went to Arlington Cemetery to watch the changing of the guard at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Getting to ask questions to the off-duty guards. These guards are very dedicated, practicing for hours and months at a time. We went to the Vietnam Memorial, where First Lady Pat and I placed a wreath. What a humbling moment that was. From there, we went to the World War II Memorial. Later in the trip, we took a bus tour to see the Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln Memorials. We also saw the Korean War Memorial, which is something that I will never forget. Thank you for the experience of a lifetime.

I'm now back in Michigan working on our communication problem: finding out the department has only 23% of our members' e-mail addresses. We need to send our e-mail addresses to Deanna or Jim. I realize not everyone has an e-mail, but when filling out membership cards, make sure you ask for an e-mail with them.

Our Detachment convention is fast approaching. Please get registered soon. I would like to see more members attending so we can address different issues that we are facing. Do not be afraid to ask questions and give suggestions that will help our detachment. The new commander might ask you to fill a position, or you might be running for a position, which is great, but stop and think, do I have time, or do I have the knowledge or have the time to learn the responsibilities of that position? If you take a position and you have questions, ask. Or if you need help, ask; I do all the time, and yes, I make mistakes. I do not know everything, but I do know someone who does.

Keep working on membership. Get out there and help a veteran. You can make a difference in their lives. You can BE THE ONE! Keep up the good work, and as always, we are stronger when we work together.

ZONE 1 REPORT Greg Price, Commader

I attended our Detachment Winter meeting in Flint and had the opportunity to be at the National American Legion Commander Daniel Seehafer Dinner. I enjoyed his speech, especially when he said he was also a Sons of the American Legion member (being Dual is being Cool). Our meeting was very informative and productive. I am looking forward to our Detachment Convention.

At the 16th District SAL meeting at Wyandotte Post #217, I was honored to present a National Award to Rob Bunton for signing up over 30 New Members. Congratulations again, Rob, for helping these gentlemen show their pride in being "Proud Possessors Of A Priceless Heritage."

Watching four high school contestants compete in our State Oratorical Contest in Lansing was inspiring. There were representatives from four of our five Zones. They were terrific, sharing their pride and knowledge of the US Constitution. The 1st Zone contestant was Wisdom Walker. 2nd Zone contestant was Janelle Yao. 3rd Zone Contestant was Evelyn Wells. 4th Zone contestant was Lillian Molitor. They all did exceptionally well in their presentations while competing for Department-level scholarship awards. Wisdom Walker came in 1st place and now has the opportunity to compete in the National Oratorical Contest. Congratulations to everyone!

American Legion Riders celebrated their 30th Anniversary with laughter... stories... and camaraderie. The sold-out event consisted of riders and friends from many chapters in and out of state attending. Department Adjutant Ron Runyan and Detachment Commander John Beeman had fun with six founding members and everyone else holding hands and singing "God Bless the USA." They shared the history of the Riders and how 19 Legion Family members from Post #396 in Garden City became the Founding Members in 1993. Over 110,000 Legion Riders currently meet in over 2,000 chapters across America and in three foreign countries. The riders continue to touch the lives of so many Veterans and the communities in which they live. Stay safe, Riders!

5TH ZONE SAL DONATES TO THE VIETNAM MOVING WALL

The 5th Zone Sons of the American Legion presented a check for \$6,500.00 dollars to the Moving Wall located in White Pine, Michigan. State SAL Commander John Beeman attended to present the Check to John Devitt, Aaron, and Lisa Gray, Chairman of the Moving Wall. The money raised was from PDC Victor Fisher as his Commander's Special Project.

The Moving Wall has toured the country for 32 years with half-size replicas of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Two Moving Walls now travel the states, spending almost a week at each site. Any organization or group of individuals that want The Moving Wall can visit the wall website at themovingwall.org for more information.



John Beeman, John Devitt, Aaron Gray

SAL SUMMER CONVENTION JUNE 7TH, 8TH & 9TH REGISTRATION NOW OPEN! SEE PAGE 14

[\(CLICK HERE HTTPS://SONS.MICHIGANLEGION.ORG/SAL-CONVENTION-2024/\)](https://sons.michiganlegion.org/sal-convention-2024/)

PAST DETACHMENT COMMANDER ROBERT MELVIN STACEY REMEMBERED



Robert Melvin Stacey, 93, of Dexter, MI, passed away at his daughter's home on Wednesday while under the care of hospice. Bob was born to Edwin and Mona Belle Stacey on September 10, 1930. He graduated from Dexter High School in 1949 and married Joyce Gregory at St. Andrews U.C.C. in June 1951.

Bob was a lifelong resident of Dexter and an owner of Stacey's Trucking and Excavating for many years. He was a volunteer Dexter Firefighter, a lifelong member of the Moose, a past State Commander, and a past Squadron Commander of the American Legion Post 0557.

He was an avid golfer and bowler who loved to travel to Las Vegas. Bob was preceded in death by his wife, Joyce Stacey. He is survived by his three children, Pamela Munson (John) of Ann Arbor, Sherie Stacey of Ann Arbor, and Timothy Stacey of Dexter, his three grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, his brothers, Edwin Stacey and Karl Weber of Florida, many nieces, nephews and lifelong friends.

ZONE 2 UPDATE



Todd VanDam
Commander Zone 2

There have been a lot of great activities going on around the Zone over the last month. I have stayed close to home and have been helping my Squadron and Post. It's the season for Fish Fries and Post 208 in Kentwood, which has one of the best! 208's fish fry began decades ago and, along the way, was perfected by one of our own Vietnam-era Veterans, Al. When Al came home from Vietnam, he joined the Grand Rapids Fire Department, where he spent more than 30 years. During that time, he joined the American Legion and became more than just a member. He is well known for everything he does, especially in the kitchen. From his secret breeding recipe to his secret coleslaw recipe, there is always a line waiting to partake and enjoy. Al has been under the weather for a few months. Our Chaplain has been bringing him some amazing fish dinners and spending time with him while he recovers. The quality that Al has taught all of us to deliver in everything we do has been a huge help to the success of the American Legion 208 family. I say to Al, thank you for serving our country, our community, and our organization. I hope this story finds you inspiration as you serve. It should be our duty to serve those who serve us. Be the one to inspire!



Mike Holley, SAL Boys State Chairman

The American Legion Boys State program is a civic program where a young man learns by doing. Michigan's program has been held for over 80 years and is still an excellent one to attend. The program is held at Grand Valley University Allendale campus. The program runs June 23rd-29th. The program costs \$ 400.00 plus a \$25.00 nonrefundable fee. It is open to any high school junior with one year left. We would also like home-schooled students to attend. You can find all the information online at <https://michiganboysstate.org/>.

The application deadline is May 1st, 2024. Even though it is an American Legion program, anybody can sponsor a young man to attend Businesses, Civic Groups, Moms, Dads, and Grandparents. If you know of an interested young man, please send him to attend.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION WYANDOTTE SQUADRON #217 SUPPORTS VICTORY GYM

On Saturday, February 24, The Sons of the American Legion Squadron #217 made a generous \$500 donation to Victory Gym at their Sonz of a Beast event in Wyandotte.

Victory Gym is a Veterans Health Club dedicated to conquering PTSD through physical fitness, support, and camaraderie. They are dedicated to enriching veteran, active duty, and first responder lives. Membership to the gym is free to all active military, veterans, and first responders. Additionally, on-site every Wednesday at 7 pm, a peer-led PTSD meeting is held. Attendance is limited to veterans and first responders, and everything is confidential.

Thanks to the SAL, their donation will help Victory Gym continue its commitment to veterans and first responders. The gym is all volunteer run, all equipment has been donated, and every penny goes toward furthering their mission.



L to R: Phil Smalley, senior vice commander; Gary Clinton, president; Ronald Vilag, finance officer; and Dan Williams, treasurer

**2024 SAL Membership: March 22nd Goal = 23,819
Current Total: 22,980 -90.79%**

FROM LINCOLN TO WASHINGTON D.C. THE DETACHMENT OF MICHIGAN MAKES THE ROUNDS



First Lady Pat Beeman with Detachment Commander John Beeman at the Vietnam Wall



Detachment Commander John Beeman and Department President Kim Champion, rubbing the nose of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois



First Ladies Diane Ruttkofsky, Wendy Tolbert and Pat Beeman at the WWII Memorial in Washington DC



VA&R Chairman Fred Ruttkofsky, Legislative Chairman Rodney Tolbert and Detachment Commander John Beeman at the WWII Memorial



VA&R Chairman Fred Ruttkofsky, Detachment Commander John Beeman, Legislative Chairman Rodney Tolbert, National SAL Commander Don "Jr" Hall, in Washington D.C.



2024 CONVENTION REGISTRATION JUNE 7TH, 8TH & 9TH OKEMOS, MI

Host Hotel

Best Western

2209 University Park Drive
Okemos, MI 48864
(517)349-8700

Hotel Registration Open

March 11th - May 24th

2 Queen Standard & King \$96.00

All rooms are equipped with 50 inch tv's,
keurig coffee machines, microwaves,
and a mini fridge.

Free Continental Breakfast.

Other Options

Comfort Inn
2187 University Park Drive
Okemos, MI 48864
(517)347-6690

Saturdays lunch will be prepared by

40et8 Voiture 946
2949 S. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48911

Registration Contact Information - \$15 ea

Name: _____ Post #: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

NAME	DELEGATE	S	L	A	R	LUNCH
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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ALL MEETING ATTENDEES MUST REGISTER

Convention T-Shirt Pre-Order - (S-XL) \$20 ea, (2XL-5XL) \$25 ea

(T-shirts will be available at the convention but quantities will be limited, so if you would like one, please pre-order)

S x _____ M x _____ L x _____ XL x _____ 2XL x _____ 3XL x _____ 4XL x _____ 5XL x _____

(T-Shirt order deadline is May 1st, 2024)

REGISTRATION \$15 x _____ = \$ _____ LUNCH \$12 x _____ = \$ _____

CONVENTION T-SHIRT _____ x _____ = \$ _____ TOTAL \$ _____ C# _____

Make checks payable to : Legion Convention Corporation

Remit to:

Marilyn Britten
1928 Danbury W
Okemos, MI 48864
7dog59@comcast.net

REGISTRATION DEADLINE

MAY 24, 2024

The Future of the American Legion

David Dutcher, Post 4 Historian

The future of the American Legion is in the young and capable hands of sons like Dominick Zucchero. At eight years old, Dominick is the youngest member of the Harry Ollrich American Legion Post 4 in Mt. Clemens. He is a member of the S.A.L of The American Legion and a Cub Scout. Dominick is highly active for his age, volunteering and ready to help wherever he is needed. He does this excitedly, happily, and with ultimate respect and reverence to the U.S. flag, Veterans, and all Post members. Ernie Owenby, the oldest member of Post 4, is pleased to be "passing the torch" to the youngest generation of legionnaires.



Youngest member Dominick Zucchero and oldest member Ernie Owenby of Harry Ollrich American Legion Post 4 in Mt. Clemens



Zone 2 Report

Duane Miller Greetings, Zone 2 members. I hope all that attended the Winter Meeting in Flint learned something new and had a meaningful meeting. If you didn't attend, please consider attending one in the future, even if only Saturday.

As usual, membership is something we all have to work on throughout the year. As of March 1st, District 3 is 91.49 %, 4th District 88.81%, and 5th District 91.11%. As a department, we are at 92.1599. The next target date is April 10th, and it is 95%. We have been meeting these target dates this year with great success. I know it gets harder after the first of the year, but thinking positively, and keep succeeding at the goals.

We still have 225 members out there that we can pull into our local posts. Of the members in 225, 648 are PUFL, with a total in 225 is 4744. Some may remember when there was over 10,000 in 225. That said, we have all been working on moving those members into our local posts and benefiting from the reduction in the 225. Thanks everyone for that work.

I request that the 3 Districts in the 2nd Zone think about planning their meetings on different days of the month, not only for the Zone Commander but for all other State Staff to be able to visit all the Districts of the state for any training requested or just for visiting to answer questions of your membership. I know all posts in the state have many great events during the year, and I'd like to be able to attend if I knew about them. Maybe the District could collect these events, let the Zone Commanders know and then publish them in their reports.

The next time we will all be together is at the Convention in the Soo. I look forward to seeing all that attend. The dates are the 11th - 14th of July.

YOU HONORED US WITH YOUR SERVICE.
Now let us honor you.

Join us for a complimentary meal and pre-planning seminar to learn about VA burial benefits available. For more information, contact Anthony.Lauri@DignityMemorial.com or 586-775-2424.

We're proud to partner with the Department of Michigan American Legion.

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MEMORIAL

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DignityMichigan.com

WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS AMERICAN LEGION NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3 • 7:05PM

THE WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR AMERICAN LEGION NIGHT AT LMCU BALLPARK ON JULY 3RD, 2024! A PORTION OF ALL TICKETS PURCHASED THROUGH THIS ORDER FORM OR USING THE QR CODE BELOW GOES DIRECTLY TO WILWIN LODGE!

GAME INFORMATION:
GATES OPEN: 5:45PM FIRST PITCH: 7:05PM
WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS VS. GREAT LAKES LOONS
LMCU BALLPARK
4500 WEST RIVER DR. NE, COMSTOCK PARK, MI 49321

WILWIN LODGE
AT CYGNET COVE

AMERICAN LEGION

QUESTIONS? IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ACCESSIBLE SEATING NEEDS, PLEASE CONTACT EMILY WITH THE WHITECAPS AT 616-726-7048 OR EMILYM@WHITECAPSBASEBALL.COM

WHITECAPSBASEBALL.COM • LMCU BALLPARK IS CASHLESS

ORDER TICKETS: MAIL OR EMAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM TO EMILY OR ORDER TICKETS THROUGH THE QR CODE BELOW!

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____
EMAIL: _____
PHONE: _____ *POST #: _____
NUMBER OF TICKETS: _____ X \$16.00
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: _____



SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA TO ORDER ONLINE!

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO WHITECAPS BASEBALL

CARD#: _____
EXP: ____ / ____ CVV: _____

WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS
ATTN: EMILY MILNE
P.O. BOX 428
COMSTOCK PARK, MI 49321

TICKETS WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU OR AVAILABLE FOR PICKUP AT WILL CALL ON THE DAY OF THE GAME. *You do NOT need to be a Legion member to order tickets. Friends and family are welcome!

Prepared and confident

Choose the **medical alert service** that has saved more lives than any other

There's a Lifeline medical alert solution for you. Lifeline offers a range of choices to help you maintain your independence. Whether you need the go-anywhere protection of GoSafe® or the peace of mind offered by HomeSafe, Lifeline has you covered.

Special offer for Legionnaires
Save up to \$70 with free activation and free shipping
1-855-495-4356
www.thelit.com/lifeline-medical-alert-services

PHILIPS Lifeline

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Legislative Report

Tim Poxson
Legislative Chairman

Before I get into the work, the Legislative Committee has been doing. I want to remind everyone that we are heading headlong into the election cycle. I will list some things you and your post cannot do during the election cycle. The American Legion is nonpolitical and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office.

1. You cannot wear any American Legion gear at political functions or in photos with anyone running for a political office. This includes your cover.

2. You cannot post political signs in or on your post property.

3. You can have candidates coming to your post to give speeches if you remove all Legion-identifying flags wall coverings and no one wears American Legion gear. If your post has one side come into the post, you should make every attempt to have the other side come in too. Your post still cannot endorse any candidate, or promote any candidate in writing.

The Legislative Committee has been busy with the priorities already in place. Some of our priorities have already been enacted into law and others are awaiting Committee hearings in the House or Senate. The committee presented four resolutions to the DEC at the Winter Meeting in Flint.

24-2 Claims Filed by Accredited Service Officers for Veterans in Michigan. This resolution calls for only those who are accredited by the VA to be able to assist or file claims for Veterans in Michigan other than the Veterans themselves. It also asks for legislation to make it illegal to assist a veteran by those not accredited by the VA.

24-10 Objecting to HB 5227 or similar Legislation that would outlaw mechanical amusement devices that are currently legal. This would outlaw devices like "Nudgemasters." The Resolution requests the Michigan Legislature to enact laws to ensure these types of devices are written into law as being legal.

24-11 Support the expansion of Charity Gaming HB 5085 or Similar Legislation. This seeks to expand the use of certain pull tab machines that are currently in use at a small number of posts on a trial basis. This is not the current paper pull tabs that many posts already have. The machines are more mechanical and provide all the documentation necessary for the Charitable Gaming Commission reports. The return to the trail post has been much higher than most of the paper pull tab machines now. No post will be required to give up the paper pull-tab machines they now have, and they may have both as the bill is written now.

24-12 Support Funding to Reimburse Local Units of Government. Currently, local units of government are not reimbursed for their loss of tax revenue from giving qualified Veterans an exemption for paying property tax. The Michigan Constitution requires local units of Government to be reimbursed for loss of revenue from State mandated programs enacted after 1963. The Property Tax Exemption was enacted in 1973 without giving local units of government back their lost tax based on the exemption. This needs corrected before a local unit of Government or its association sues the state on this issue. This resolution pointed out two potential sources of funding and while we are sure there are other opportunities for the State to find the money, they have been reluctant to do so as of this date.

Hello Riders!

Jim "Big Daddy" Austin

Welcome Spring! It is a time of renewal, which is exactly what this article is about. This is my last letter as your Department Director of the Legion Riders. I am hopefully moving on to a new position. My time as your Rider Liaison, Rider Committee Chairman, and Department ALR Director will come to an end at the Convention in July.

I am now declaring my intention to run for Department 2nd Vice Commander. I hope you will all support me as you have in the past. Your confidence, trust, and support have helped me and the riders move forward. As the founding Department, rest assured that your Legion Riders are in great hands and have a great future ahead of us.

The leadership is still in place: Debbie (Hugs) Abraham (Auxiliary) and Mike (Ponytail) Globke (SAL) are crazy committed to ensuring the future of our Rider Program. The new Department ALR Director has been involved with the Riders for years and was fundamental in establishing the Rider Committee as we know it today.

We will not let the Legion Riders fail! Not to mention all the great District ALR Liaisons we have in place now and in the past. This is not a one-man show, and it never was. Great things come from great teams. I was just a face. My team is really what made it all work. Thank you to the team!!

So, in closing, I hope to see you all on the road. My commitment to the Legion Riders has not or will ever fade. You are all the best there is!

The Only Written

Official Call to the 106th Annual Department Convention
American Legion, Department of Michigan

July 11-14, 2024

Kewadin Casino & Resort
Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

Purpose: To receive Department Officers' annual reports, consider Department Constitution and By-Laws amendments, elect Department Officers and conduct any other business brought to the convention. Only the committees and chairpersons listed below are called to officially participate in the Convention.

Registration: Registration fee of \$15 will be charged to all delegates, alternates and guests.

Department Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, July 11th at 7:00 p.m.

Opening Session: Friday, July 12th at 5:00 p.m.

Subsequent Convention Sessions: Saturday, July 13th, 9:00 a.m. & Sunday, July 14th, 10:00 a.m.

CALLED - Standing Committee: Thursday, July 11th Permanent Time & Place / Resolutions Assignment, Americanism, Children & Youth

CALLED: ALL Standing Committee Chairmen – Note this is for Chairmen Person Only

Convention Committee Meetings: Conducted on Friday July 12th from 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Convention Committees are comprised of one person per district. Each Delegation Chairman will name the members to serve on the Convention Committees and certify that list to the Department Adjutant.

Americanism & Community Service (includes Education & Scholarship, Boys State, Law and Order, Junior Shooting and Scouting) – Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Credentials, Veterans Employment & Education, Finance, Legislative, Membership, National Security & Foreign Relations, Post Development, Media & Communications, Reconnect, Rules, Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation and VAVS/VHVS

District Caucuses: Friday, July 12th, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Zone Caucuses: Friday, July 12th, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Joint Memorial Service: Sunday, July 14th, 8:00 a.m.

Elections & Adjournment: Sunday July 14th, 10:00 a.m. (Noon at the latest) *The new 2024-2025 Department Executive Committee and the 2024 National Convention Delegates and Alternates will meet upon Convention adjournment.*

Register for the Summer Convention in Sault Saint Marie July 11-14

See the Official Call ABOVE And Register now at <https://michiganlegion.org/convention-24/>



**MICHIGAN BOYS STATE,
JUNE 23-29, 2024
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**

"The Week That Shapes a Lifetime"

Our Purpose - ...to transmit to posterity (the next generation) the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy. (Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion).

Our Goal - Each Post Sending One Boy, One Girl, to America's Premier National Civics Leadership Program.

Target - High School Juniors

Recruitment for America's premier national civics leadership program begins now. We are asking all Posts throughout Michigan to make a concentrated effort to reach out to their local high schools and make contact with the senior social studies teacher or counselor to begin the conversation about why the American Legion Boys State and Auxiliary Girls State programs benefit their students.

Resources: michiganboysstate.org
michalaux.org/girls-state

Here To Assist:

Garrett Veihl / eggman1483@gmail.com / 1-616-502-8190

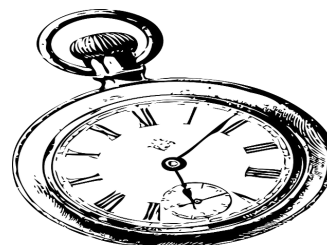
Mark Brejcha / mbrejcha@brps.org / 1-231-527-5441

Ashley Zimmer / legion@michiganlegion.org

STEP BACK IN TIME

SPRING OUTING

FREE EVENT FOR ALL SCOUTS



Free
Camping
Sites
Provided

Water Available
Generators ok
NO PETS ALLOWED

Your troop provides all your own camping gear and food!
Camping and activities are FREE

May 17-19, 2024

Old time skills, activities, prizes and more...

Flint Knapping Fire Skills Blacksmithing
Fur Trapping Glass Blowing Trade Blanket

Register at www.wilwinlodge.com/scouting

Registration closes May 11th

Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove
3383 W Hawley Rd, Custer MI
231-757-0140 231-742-6614

Wilwinscoutmaster1193@gmail.com



WILWIN LODGE
At Cygnet Cove

Duane Miller
Director of the Board

Time goes by quickly, and it is time to plan your stay and enter your reservations into the wilwinlodge.com website. Reservations opened on February 1st at noon. As of this article, we have received 135 reservation requests to visit. We appreciate all the interest, and most of the requests were filled, with some date adjustments. Our facility is gaining more and more interest from both in and out-of-state Veterans. Remember, when planning your stay, the eligibility is for the Veteran, spouse, and household dependent children.

We want to announce some items that we have planned for the 2024 year. The year's first event was a January Scouting Winter Camp held last weekend. We had 30 scouts and 18 leaders, and all had a great time. Coming up May 17 - 19 is the Step Back in Time Scouting Event. There is a flier on how to participate on the Wilwin website. This event includes Flint Napping, Fire Skills, Blacksmith demo and hands-on, Glass Blowing, Fur Trapping, Old time skills, and at all Scouting events, a Flag Burning Ceremony. As always, all scouting events are free.

Our Open House/fundraiser will be on June 29th this year. We will have live music, food, apparel, and different types of auction items to bid on. We hope June will be more available to guests that haven't been able to come in the past. If you have anything you would like to donate for the auctions, let me know. Love to see you here.

On Wednesday, July 3rd, the West Michigan Whitecaps hosts American Legion Night. If you purchase your tickets on the special form, located on our website, or by contacting emilym@whitecapsbaseball.com, a portion of the ticket price will go directly to Wilwin. During the game, there will be a 50/50 drawing. Reminder: the stadium is cashless. You do not need to be a Legion member to purchase tickets.

Hopefully, all have heard of the Hell to Paradise Ride scheduled for July 26 - 28. It is a PTSD awareness Ride presented by the American Legion Riders. This is open to everyone, motorcycles and motor vehicles. This event will raise awareness and funds for Mission Six Service Dogs, ZeroDuck30, Bikes and Battle Buddies, and Wilwin Lodge.

I would like for everyone to enjoy any of these events and have a good time doing so. Check out our website, wilwinlodge.com, and a Facebook page for updates. And if you have questions, you're welcome to call 231.757.0140.

2024 Membership: March 22nd Goal = 54,119
Current Total: 50,943-94.13%

Veteran Service Office Locations

Patrick V. McNamara Federal Building

477 Michigan Ave. Rm 1231
Detroit, MI 48226
Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
Phone: 833.648.3826 ext. 1

AL Post #257
7475 B Drive North
Battlecreek, MI 49014
Hours: Thursday 8am-4pm

AL Post 558
400 E. Ludington Dr.
Farwell, MI 48622
Hours: Tuesday 8am-4pm

AL Post 412
5480 Clark Rd
Bath, MI 48808
Hours: 3rd Wed 8am-4pm

AL Post 301, 10584 N. Main St.
Rapid River, MI 49878
Hours: Wednesday 8am-4pm

AL Post #194
455 Bay St.
Petoskey, MI 49770
Hours: Tuesday 8am-4pm

AL Post 491
422 Woodworth St.
Leslie, MI 49251
Hours: 2nd Tue 6pm-10pm

AL Post 44, 700 W. Bluff St.
Marquette, MI 49855
Hours: M, Tu, F 8am-4pm

Delta County Veterans Office
2840 College Ave, Ste 2,
Escanaba, MI 49854
Hours: Wednesdays 8a-4pm

AL Post 76 318, N. James St.
Ludington, MI 49431
Hours: 1st & 3rd Wed 8:30am-4:30pm

AL Post #245
3564 S. Reserve Rd.
Prudenville, MI 48651
Hours: Tuesday 8am-4pm

AL Post 248
1240 W. Grand River
Lainburg, MI 48848
Hours: 1st Wed 8am-4pm

AL Post 28
700 S. Harbor Dr
Grand Haven, MI 49417
Hours: Mon 9am-2pm

AL Post 305
9548 Cherry Valley Ave SE,
Caledonia, MI 49316
Hours: 2nd & 4th Fri 8:30-4:30

AL Post 443
2080 N. Meridian Rd
Sanford, MI 48657
Hours: 2nd & 4th Thurs 8-4

AL Post 396
6860 Middlebelt Rd,
Garden City, MI 48135
Hours: Friday 8am-4pm

AL Post 297
3590 Conklin St,
Ravenna, MI 49451
Hours: Wednesday 9am-2pm

Ann Arbor VAMC
2215 Fuller Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Hours: M-F 7am-3pm

Charlevoix County OVA
301 State Street
Charlevoix, MI 49720
Hours: 2nd & 4th Wed
8:30am-4:30pm

County Office, 400 River St.
Manistee, MI 49660
Hours: 2nd 4th Thurs 8:30-4:30

Department Headquarters
212 N. Verlinden
Lansing, MI 48915
Hours: Daily 8am-4:30pm

Jackson County OVA
1715 Lansing Ave. Rm 252
Jackson, MI 49202
Hours: T,2&4W,F 8am-4pm

Kalkaska County OVA
890 Isl. Lake Rd. NW, Rm 8
Kalkaska, MI 49646
Hours: 1st & 3rd Thurs 8:30-4:30

Mackinac County OVA
100 S. Marley St.
St. Ignace, MI 49781
Hours: Tue & Fri 8am-4pm

Mecosta County Office
14330 Northland Dr.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Hours: Fri 8:30am-4:30pm

Michigan Works Bldg
401 North Lake St., Suite
700
Cadillac, MI 49601
Hours: Mon 8:30am-4:30pm

Otsego County OVA
225 W. Main St, Room
104
Gaylord, MI 49735
Hours: Wed, Thur 8am-4pm

Presque Isle County
Veterans
151 E. Huron, 3rd flr.
Rogers City, MI 49779
Hours: M,W,Th 9am-4pm

Saginaw VAMC, 1500
Weiss st
Saginaw, MI 48602
Hours: M,T, W- 8am-4pm

Schoolcraft County OVA
300 Walnut St. #206B
Manistique, MI 49854
Hours: Tue & Wed 8am-4pm

Sault Ste. Marie CBOC
509 Osborn Blvd, Ste
306
Sault Ste. Marie, MI
49783
Hours: Monday 8am-4pm

Wyoming CBOC
5838 Metro Way SW
Wyoming, MI 49519
Hours: Tues 9-2, Th 8-4

Downriver Community
Conference Building
15100 Northline Road
Southgate, MI 48195
Hours: T,W,Th 8am-4pm

Grand Rapids Vet Center 2050
Breton Rd SE Grand Rapids,
MI 49546
Hours: Tuesday 8am-4pm
Phone: 616.268.8073

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Gary Easterling Director



Our staff is dedicated to providing the very best veterans' advocacy to Michigan Veterans and their families. They can assist with Claims Preparation, Presentation and appeal counsel in Veterans' benefits services. Let us assist you and your dependents in getting the benefits that you have earned by your service to your country.

Gary Easterling, Director
geasterling@michiganlegion.org
Cell (313) 549-8557

Tripp Cantwell, Assistant Director
Office Phone (313) 964-6640
Fax (313) 964-5697

Call for a Service officer in your area:

833.648.3826 Option 1

e-mail - al.vbadet@va.gov
[like us on Facebook @Michigan-
VAR](#)

Service Officers

Shay Grady
Daryl Kinder
Elizebeth Cuddington
Stephanie Fisher
Thomas Kaiser
Rebecca Lewis
Rick Wiles
Patty Breas
Phillip Babcock
Tommy Simpkins
Stacy Thill
Courtney Thurber
Lisa Misenko

Check out all your benefits at
www.mivabenifits.org

VFW Post 5670, 54 N. Mitchell
Rd, Gwinn, MI 49841
Hours: Thursday 8am-4pm

Radcliff Center, 1751 Radcliff St,
Garden City, MI 48135
Hours: Monday 8am-4pm

DON'T FACE THE VA ALONE!

Find an American Legion Veteran Service Officer near you. Use an Accredited Veteran Service Officer. Here are where American Legion Department Service Officers are. If one is not near you call 833.648.3826 Option 1 and they will guide you to an accredited veteran service officer who will help you.

Around the State...

Happy Birthday Riders!



Post #396 in Garden City celebrated the 30th anniversary of the American Legion Riders. The sold-out event consisted of Riders and friends from chapters across America. Six founding mem-

bers and hundreds of other past and current Riders celebrated the landmark event.



Post 294 introduces a very special American, Delphine Tedeski Klaput

Delphine, who will be 100 years old this November, is active with the American Rosie the Riveter Association. The members of Post 294 are proud of Delphine, and thank and honor her as one of the original "Rosies" who helped achieve Victory in WWII.



L-R; Tim Hill, Delphine Tedeski Klaput and Department Commander Brian Mohlman, at the Winter Meeting in Flint

Trip to Washington DC

A delegation from the Michigan American Legion traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with our national representatives and their staff members one-on-one. The Michigan Legionnaires



Michigan Legion Department of Michigan's delegation in Washington DC to meet with Lawmakers

were there to make a personal connection with the Lawmakers who will be voting on the bills that our organization has determined to be one of our Legislative Priorities. The five-day trip was coordinated with our national organization and other departments to advocate for the veterans we represent.



L-R Scott Ridder, Scott Nichols, Sam Cummings, Derek Blumke inside the House office building

Post 46 Coffee Hour & Pinning

Post 46 recently started hosting a monthly coffee hour at Story Point Senior Living in Saline. They currently have close to three dozen vet-



Department Chaplain Norm Soli at the Pinning Ceremony



Bruce Lowry and Bob Biggs pinned 3 Navy and 3 Army Vets at March Ceremony

eran residents. Department Chaplain Norman Soli came to the March coffee hour to perform a pinning ceremony for the Vietnam Era veteran residents. Each resident veteran also received a Post 46 challenge coin and was very grateful and enjoyed the ceremony.

Post 554 Legion Family Donates \$8,745 to the Morley Stanwood Ball Association Little League



Pioneer photo/Cathie Crew

Members of the American Legion Post 554, Auxiliary and SAL present a donation check to Morley Stanwood Little League representatives Amy Prescott-Ambler (center, left), Emily Bongard (center, right)

72 Continuous Years in The American Legion

Ken Jacobson has 72 continuous years in The American Legion. He has been a member of Post 24 in Waterford. He is 96 years young and volunteers to help out at the Post and Memorial Day parades when he can.



Ken Jacobson and his wife Dorothy with their children at Post 24 for his 72 years of service celebration

Commander Mohlman with Big Rapids Post 98, Legionnaire's at Navy Reserve Ball



L to R Walt Polskoy, Commander Mohlman, Jake Reichert, Adrianna Craft, and Mark Brejcha

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