

# MI LEGIONNAIRE

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November 2023

## 3 BIG BILLS GET SIGNED



**Tim Poxson**  
Legislative Chariman

State Commander Brian Mohlman, Adjutant Ron Runyan and Legislative Chair Tim Poxson attended a multiple bill signing in Grand Rapids on Monday, October 23, The bills responded to some of the issues that needed to be corrected with the property tax exemption given to 100% disabled veterans and their spouses. As of this writing, these are part of the issues the American Legion Department of Michigan has been working with the Michigan Senate, House of Representatives, and Governor Whitmer for over four years. The bills deal with the following issues: A surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who, immediately before death, was eligible for the exemption, the exemption shall continue as long as the surviving spouse does not remarry. The exemption applies to any property used and owned as a homestead by the surviving spouse, including homestead property acquired after the decedent's death.

One of the other bills deals with applying for the exemption. The Tax Assessor of each local taxing unit of Government will now be the person who grants or denies claims under this exemption without the tax board of review being involved. The assessor may deny a new or existing claim following an audit. An audit cannot occur on a property more than once every 3 years unless there is a reasonable belief that the property is ineligible for the exemption. The assessor shall notify the individual of the denial of the new or existing claim and the reason for the denial. The denial may be appealed to the residential and small claims division of the tax tribunal within 35 days after the date of the notice. The assessor may deny a claim for exemption for the current year



and the 3 immediately preceding calendar years. Furthermore, a veteran or their spouse will only have to qualify for the exemption once, unless there is some change in the status. We are affectionally calling this the one-and-done part of the bills. A change in status includes the sale of the property and a change in marital status.

Also addressed in the bills is what is called a qualified error, as it applies to veterans with proper VA ratings and disabilities. A qualified error is a delay in the determination by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs that a veteran is permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans' benefits based on VA eligibility. For tax year 2023 only, a qualified error includes those spouses of Veterans who passed away in the year 2023 and who were denied the property tax exemption. They will now be able to appeal that decision of a denial by the board of review of an exemption.

The American Legion Department of Michigan, Commander Mohlman and the Legislative Committee wish to thank those Senators, Representatives, the Governor, and her staff for their work on these issues, working with us and assisting Veterans in the State with these bills. The Legislative Committee and Chair understand that more work must be done on the property tax exemption issues.

November 2023



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## Tentative Program Dates and Deadlines for 2023-2024

### December 2023

*December 1<sup>st</sup>*- Oratorical Registrations deadline

*December 15<sup>th</sup>*- JSSP First round postal match competition target set sales and registration closes.

### January 2024

*January 1<sup>st</sup>*- Baseball registration opens on [baseball.legion.org](http://baseball.legion.org)

*January 8<sup>th</sup>*- Law Officer of the Year submission deadline

*January 8<sup>th</sup>*- Firefighter of the Year submission deadline

*January 21<sup>st</sup>*- District Oratorical Contests deadline

*January 22<sup>nd</sup>*- Brewer/Wilson Scholarship submission deadline.

### February 2024

*February TBD*- JSSP Targets due to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.

*February 4<sup>th</sup>*- Zone Oratorical Contests deadline.

*February TBD*- JSSP Second round postal match competition targets mailed out by CMP.

### March 2024

*March 1<sup>st</sup>*-Eagle Scout of the Year Award submission deadline

*March 2<sup>nd</sup>* -Oratorical State Contest at location the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing

### April 2024

*April TBD*- End of 2nd round postal match competition. Targets due to CMP - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.

*April 1<sup>st</sup>*- Teacher of the Year submission deadline

### May 2024

*May 1<sup>st</sup>*-Boys State Application submission deadline

*May 10<sup>th</sup>*- Student Trooper Application submission deadline

*May 15<sup>th</sup>*- Baseball insurance purchase deadline

*May 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>*- National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI

### June 2024

*June 1<sup>st</sup>*- Final day for Baseball teams to register

*June 23<sup>rd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>*- Student Trooper Program

*June 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>* -Boys State program at GVSU- Allendale

### July 2024

*July 1<sup>st</sup>*-Robert Turner Baseball Scholarship submission deadline

*July 15<sup>th</sup>*- Diamond Baseball Scholarship deadline

*July TBD*- JSSP American Legion National Championship (Individual Tournament)

*July TBD\*\**- Senior Baseball State Tournament

*July TBD\*\**- Junior Baseball State Tournament

(\*\*baseball dates will be established in December 2023)

## A Word About Servant Leadership



**Brian Mohlman**  
Department Commander

I want to start my conversation with you by talking about Servant Leadership. Just what is Servant Leadership, you might ask?

A Servant Leader's primary focus is on fulfilling the needs of those served by displaying high levels of competence, character, and commitment. The Servant Leader works diligently to support and uplift members of their organization through mentorship and training. This Servant Leadership style becomes more valuable as it spreads through your organization, translating to a more outward and civic-minded membership. Only when the membership succeeds does the Servant Leader succeed.

The Servant Leader supports from the bottom up. What does this mean to your post or to The American Legion? We all remember the leadership hierarchy of a military organization. It's basically a pyramid with Leadership at the top, filtering down to the general members at the bottom. It all rolls downhill! The pyramid is inverted with Servant Leadership, with leadership at the bottom and the general membership at the top. The members-your members run your organization, and Leadership provides a base of support to uplift your members and your programs. Your members direct what leadership does in your post, and as a Servant Leader, you serve your members by fulfilling their needs, aspirations, and support.

A Servant Leader leads by example. He or she is the person who leads your events in the direction required for success and can be seen digging trenches in the dirt, setting up and working these events side by side with all your volunteers. The Servant Leader is motivated by the success of every volunteer in your organization. The Servant Leader NEVER takes credit for the work of others but is first in line to accept responsibility for any shortcomings of the group. It's all about you, our valued members and volunteers!

As we approach Veterans Day, we must reach out to all Veterans in our Community by providing them with opportunities, support, and important resources to help meet their needs. Many Posts have outward-focused veteran events scheduled in the coming weeks. These events range from Resource Fairs, visits to VA Hospitals, and Veteran dinners, just to name a few. Whatever the event is that your Post hosts, we focus on fulfilling the needs of those whom we serve. That's Servant Leadership in action!

## You can Renew!

Your renewal is just a Click away. Click on your organization to renew on the national website right now.

**LEGION**  
**AUXILIARY**  
**SAL**

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2nd Vice Commander . . . . . Wayne Blank  
1st Zone . . . . . Robert Kamin  
2nd Zone. . . . . Duane Miller  
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Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . Bob Salamon  
Immediate Past Commander- Marilyn Britten  
Alt. N.E.C . . . . . Brett Holt  
VA and R Director . . . . . Gary Easterling

### DEADLINE DATES

December 2023 is November 3<sup>rd</sup>

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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](mailto: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](mailto:media@michiganlegion.org)  
517-220-2747



## Americanism Program Deadlines



**Wayne Blank**  
2nd Vice Commander

GOD has blessed the American Legion and all its rightful endeavors. We can be proud of our history and the direction we are headed. We follow

the four pillars: 1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, 2. National Security, 3. Americanism, and 4. Children & Youth. The Americanism programs are essential and include Law Officer and Firefighter of the Year, Student Trooper, Junior Shooting Sports and Scouting with the Square Knot award and the Eagle Scout of the Year. These programs foster appreciation and respect for our values as Americans.

Some deadlines for Americanism programs are approaching quickly. December 15th is the deadline for JSSP team registration and target orders. January 8th is the Law Officer and Firefighter of the Year submission deadline. We should all be invested in finding Fire Fighters and Law Officers who go above and beyond and nominate them for these awards.

The Oratorical Speech Contest registration deadline is December 1st. If you haven't been part of this competition in the past, now's the time. Plus, this year, the National competition will be held right here in Hillsdale Michigan. Get involved; there is no excuse!

In the past month, I have searched for new community service initiatives that posts are using to expand their involvement across Michigan. Three programs have surfaced in this search, and the Posts have agreed to share them with the rest of you. Check out our newest MI Legionnaire feature, "in The Spotlight," on Page 17. Every month, we will highlight what a Post is doing to keep active in the community. Hopefully, we will inspire each other.

Please include in your submission the Post name, number and location (a picture of your Post is nice, too). We also want all your Post's activities/events like Parades, Honor Guards, Flag education/presentations, Speaking at community meetings, Veterans Meals, and Open houses. We especially want to hear about your original incentives that may inspire other Posts.

Send your submissions to

[media@michiganlegion.org](mailto:media@michiganlegion.org)  
with "Spotlight" in the subject line.

## Membership Report



**Dan Cooper**  
1st Vice Commander

**Great job,  
Department of  
Michigan!**

As of this article, we have six posts at or above 100% and 128 Posts at over 65%. The next National Membership deadline is 65% on Veterans Day.... we can do it!

Our Department goal has been set at 54,119 this year, but we are in a race to 110%, and we are over halfway there, at 59.5%. District 12 is leading the way at 64.64%. We are going to make this happen!

Historically, we have come out of the gate running, but this year will be different. We have so many awesome Legionnaires working hard and doing great things. Every single Legion Family member is working hard to advertise, talk about and promote The American Legion, our programs, and the reasons everyone should be part of our outstanding organization.

The Department of Minnesota has challenged us to reach the highest membership percentage by March 1, 2024. They have a big early lead, but with your help and dedication, we will have the Minnesota Membership Director present us with a Brown Jug at the Annual Convention.

Let's keep going, have membership rallies and revitalizations, share the ideas that are working in your area, and tell us what you have done and what has been successful. I encourage all of you to challenge your neighboring Posts, Districts, Zones, or even the Department Membership Team!

Let's have some fun! If potential members see or hear about our fun, they may be more eager to join. Also, remember to send all of your Post Activities to [mpa@michiganlegion.org](mailto:mpa@michiganlegion.org).

As your Membership Director, I am here to help! If you need membership training, shoot me an email, and I or a Membership Team member will be there!

You can reach me at [ddc2125@gmail.com](mailto:ddc2125@gmail.com) or call 616-834-1290.

Thank you, Michigan. This is the best place to be!

## RUNYAN'S RAMBLINGS November is for Buddy Checks



**Ron Runyan**  
Department Adjutant

Our organization was founded on 4 pillars: 1) Veterans Rehabilitation and Benefits, 2) Promoting a strong National Security, 3) Promoting Americanism in our lives and Community, and 4) Promoting Youth programs.

November is National Buddy Check month during the week of Veterans Day; however, this does not have to be one or two months of a year. A strong, vibrant American Legion post and its members should always be working Buddy Checks!

The National organization has provided tools, stories and information on how to get a post started or continue a strong program. I encourage you all within the American Legion Family to contact not only veteran members but all veterans. Check out [www.legion.org/buddycheck](http://www.legion.org/buddycheck) or call the state HQ for us to provide this to you at 517-371-4720.

In the first four years after The American Legion launched Buddy Checks as an official program, our members reached over 1 million veterans and provided critical assistance.

Buddy Checks are not membership or fundraising calls; they are simple check-ins with veterans in the community to see how they are doing and to learn how the local post can help. [MyLegion.org](http://MyLegion.org) has contact information for members and former members.

The Department of Veterans Affairs launched its own National Buddy Check Week in 2023 and invites involvement from local American Legion posts.

American Legion posts are also strongly encouraged, by resolution, to make Buddy Check calls during Veterans Week (mid-November) and American Legion Birthday Week (mid-March). Many American Legion posts have assembled Buddy Check teams that make calls monthly or even more frequently. Buddy Check teams are urged to have at their fingertips a list of local resources available if needed. These may be American Legion service officers, Vet Centers, VA healthcare facilities, or others who can help.

Veterans should be reminded of the Veterans Crisis Line in case they know someone who needs urgent assistance or if they need it themselves. [www.legion.org/buddycheck/about](http://www.legion.org/buddycheck/about)



## District Meetings

### First District

Meetings start at 1 pm.

**November 19, 2023**

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

**January 21, 2024**

Knights of Columbus Post 390  
19801 Farmington Road, Livonia, MI . 49152

**February 18, 2024**

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

**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.

**January 14, 2024**

Post 514 Ida  
11601 Lewis Ave. Temperance, MI 48182  
734.854.5910

**March 10, 2024**

Post 550 Onstead  
333 Connor St, Onsted, MI 49265  
517.467.0191

**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.

**November 12, 2023**

Battle Creek Post 298  
228 N 20th St. Battle Creek, MI

**January 7, 2024**

Charlotte Post 42  
1000 W. Lawrence Hwy. Charlotte, MI

**March 3, 2024**

Battle Creek Post 298  
228 N 20th St. Battle Creek, MI

**May 5, 2024 TBD**

### Fourth District

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

**November 5, 2023**

Constantine  
269-5357188

**January 7, 2024**

Dorr  
269-281-2133

**March 3, 2024**

Bangor  
269-301-3549

**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.

**November 9, 2023**

American Legion Post 258

**January 11, 2024**

American Legion Post 179

**March 14, 2024**

American Legion Post 208

**May 9, 2024**

Post 28

**July 11, 2024**

LOCATION TBD by Next Commander's Post

### Sixth District

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

**November 12, 2023**

Bernard A. Bendle Post 294  
3440 Morrish Road Swartz Creek, MI 48473  
810-635-7333

**January 14, 2024**

Devereaux Post 141  
3265 W Grand River Ave., Howell, MI 48855  
517-546-2534

**March 10, 2024**

Pinckney Memorial Post 419  
9807 Whitewood Road Pinckney, MI 48169

**May 19, 2024**

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

### Seventh District

Lunch at 12:30 wilth meetings at 2:00

**January 14, 2024**

lapeer post #16  
1701 W. Genesee  
March 10, 2024

Vassar post #15  
651 State rd; (M-15)

**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.

**November 19, 2023**

Saginaw Post 439  
5190 Weiss St. 989-792-2000

**January 21, 2024**

Owosso Post 57  
201 E. Mason St. 989-723-4046

**March 17, 2024**

Carson City Post 380  
121 N. Mercantile St. 989-584-2455

**May 19, 2024**

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

### Ninth District

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

**December 2, 2023** Post 381

Croton, MI

**March 9, 2024** Post 76

Ludington, MI

**May 11, 2024** Post 69

Whitehall, MI

### Tenth District

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

**November 4, 2023**

St. Helens, Post 416

**January 6, 2024**

Sandford, Post 443

**March 2, 2024**

Morely, Post 554

**May 4, 2024**

Luzerne, Post 162

### Eleventh District

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

Future meetings details TBD

### Twelfth District

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

**December 2, 2023**

Greenwood Post 114

Future meetings details TBD

### Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm.

**November 14, 2023** Flat Rock Post 337

**December 12, 2023** \* Southgate Post 478

**January 9, 2024**\* Stitt Post 232

**February 13, 2024**\* Fort Dearborn 364

**March 12, 2024** Wyandotte 217

**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 Convenc at 2:00 p.m

**TBA**

### 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 Meet and Greet at 11:00 am, lunch served at noon. The both the Legion and Auxiliary will start at 1:00 pm.

**2024 Membership: October 27<sup>th</sup> Goal = 54,119**  
**Current Total: 34,352-63.47%**



# AUXILIAIRE



*From the Desk of the President*

*November 2023*



**Kim Champion**  
*Department President*  
2023-2024

Happy Fall to everyone. It is time to renew and work on the members who didn't pay their dues the past year. Work on signing up new members. Ask if someone in your community you are talking with is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary and if they are assisting with signing them up. Wear our brand so those in the community know who you are and who you are representing.

Please continue to work on all of our programs. Program Guides are being uploaded on the Michigan American Legion Auxiliary website and should all be uploaded soon. Packets of program guides were given to the District Presidents at the

Fall Conference.

Remember our American Legion Auxiliary Mission. "In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, educating our citizens, mentoring youth, and promoting patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security."

The Vision Statement states, "The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security."

Remember, "Be a Champion for Our Veterans with PTSD," and We are Racing to Win for Our Veterans!

## Updates and Change Almost Always a Good Thing



**Shannon Werner**  
*Executive Director,*  
*Secretary and Treasurer*

We came away from the Fall Conference with so many accomplishments. We have made policy changes and approved the budget for the coming year. It was great to learn about the multiple planned projects and hear more about our President's (Kimberly Champion) special project for the 2023-2024 year. I had a terrific experience, and I look forward to the next.

I celebrated my one-year anniversary as your Executive Director on October 17, which has flown by so quickly. I have completed many action items and achieved most of the goals. As space, staffing, information, and documentation have been analyzed, adjustments and additions have been made. I assure you I am doing everything necessary to make the Auxiliary a robust, active, healthy, and successful Organization so you can continue to do great works with our Veterans, families and communities.

Good news: the National Executive Committee (NEC) approved an increase for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) grants in February. The new grant amount took effect at the beginning of the 2024 fiscal year, October 1. The updated grant award is \$3,000 for ALA members affected by a natural disaster or other crisis who need urgent financial assistance.

The increase from \$2,400 to \$3,000 results from the rising cost of living and inflation. These rising costs impact millions of Americans, making it increasingly difficult for them to attain economic security. In July 2023, consumer prices were 3.2% higher than the year before. This has increased the cost of goods and services, making it more difficult for families to afford their basic needs.

Service Not Self

## Junior Auxiliary

*By Dawn Burton*

Hello members from the amazing Juniors program, this will be a busy and exciting year for the Juniors in the Department of Michigan. Some big goals have been set, and we intend to achieve and surpass them! One goal is to visit every District and discuss the benefits of having active juniors in all our units. We hit the ground running on that goal with a visit to the 18th District, and two other district meeting visits have already been scheduled. Has your District scheduled our visit yet? If not, we would love to hear from you soon!

Honorary Junior President, Abbie Jones, has a goal to raise \$25,000 for her special project, the Guardian Angel Medical Service Dogs. If you were at the Fall Conference, you had a chance to meet Sheldon and his dog Patsy, and hear Sheldon's story. The impact these dogs have on the veterans they are paired with is invaluable, and this organization's support is phenomenal. If you think \$25,000 isn't attainable, especially by a "little kid," you haven't met Abbie. She is a powerhouse of an auxiliary member, even at 12. Her passion for our mission of "Service NOT Self" is one to take a lesson from. She is the first to jump into whatever task is placed before her, and she is also the young lady who will offer projects on her own. By raising \$25,000, we will ensure that the sponsored dog stays in our great state with a Michigan veteran, and the added perk is Abbie will get to name that dog. This goal is MORE THAN POSSIBLE because we currently have over 26,000 members in the Department of Michigan, so if each of those members only donated \$1, we would have enough for that dog. Let's make this goal happen, Michigan members. Let's change the life of one veteran. We CAN do it! Dedicate a bake sale at your Unit to this special project, have a fundraiser dinner, - be creative. If you want or need our help, please reach out. We would be happy to help in any way we can. I am so proud to be the leader of these great junior members this year, and I look forward to seeing everything we do as a TEAM. This group may be young, but they are mighty!!



Julie Becker  
 Department of Michigan  
 American Legion Auxiliary President  
 2024-2025

At a regular scheduled District meeting of the UPAA Michigan, held on October 14th, 2023 Julie Becker was endorsed for the high office of President for the Department of Michigan American Legion Auxiliary, 2024-2025

Julie's eligibility is through her Husband Robert A Becker, 2nd force recon, USMC, Her father Korean War Veteran, Army, maternal Grandfather WW II Veteran, Army, and her paternal Grandfather WW I Veteran, Army.

During the covid pandemic, Julie went back to college, and obtained degrees in EMT1 as well as EMT2. She is now state and Nationally certified. Julie has joined her town fire department which is a volunteer fire department and has been promoted to Lieutenant.

Julie Has a degree in business management and hospitality. She was a corporate trainer for Buffalo Wild Wings from 1996 until 2010 when she retired. Prior to 1996, she worked for her family restaurant. She also was the Vice President for the U.P. Championship Rodeo for 3 years. Julie is very active in her community as well.

She has 3 children, a daughter and 2 sons who are all part of the legion family. She also has 2 granddaughters and a grandson. Since Julie joined Reino Unit 21, Stambaugh, she has been a chairman for Americanism, Poppy, JRs, Community Service, VA&R National Security, Children and Youth, Constitution and By-Laws, Leadership, Public Relations, Past President Parley. She has held the offices of Sgt. at Arms and Chaplain At the district level she has been chairman for the following committees, JRs, Public Relations, Americanism, Membership, Leadership and Constitution and By-Laws, and UPAA Member of the year. She has held the District offices of Chaplain, and Second Vice President. At the Department level Julie has been UPAA area representative for Membership, 100th Anniversary Committee, Leadership Chairman for 2 years and VA&R Chairperson last year and currently She has held the office of Department of Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Historian 2019-2021, Chaplain 2021 2022, Second Vice President 2022-2023, and currently serves as First Vice President. Julie is dedicated to the American Legion Auxiliary, but first and foremost our Veterans and their families.

UPAA President

Bonnie Taylor Vazeiticz



UPAA Secretary/ Treasurer  
 Sue Verville



## 18th District Report

*Telitha Pankowski, Unit 377 President*

Unit 377 is busy and very excited about our New Year! Our fundraisers so far this year have been great. We salute our members and our post for all their help and our community for supporting our efforts.

Unit 377 does the Bingo kitchen every week. It's been a great success in funding projects for our Veterans and our community. Our fundraisers this year include a Fall Frolic, Mum Sales, and Banner Sales. These were all a success.

We will be hosting a Trunk or Treat open to the community. This will be a great chance to meet, greet and recruit new members on October 29, 3 – 5 p.m.

Our VA&R Chairperson will be leading the charge in collecting donations for the Chesterfield Home, 1st Annual Christmas Shop, and we will be shopping for items for their gift shop.

The next big event will be our Wild Game Dinner. Unit 377 will donate all proceeds to the Department Commander's Special Project, The Fisher House Michigan.

We believe in helping our veterans and their families and supporting our community. We are grateful to our Legionnaires and our SAL for all their support.

## ALA Girls State

*Beryl Robbins, Chairperson*

We are now accepting applications for our 2024 ALA Girls State session, scheduled for June 23 – June 29, 2024, on the beautiful campus of Michigan State University. The cost to sponsor a student for our 83rd session of ALA Girls State is \$425. Every ALA Unit in Michigan is encouraged to sponsor at least one female student who will complete her junior year of high school in May or June of 2024, which would provide funding for 246 students!

There are ALA Units and AL Posts that have been very successful in obtaining monetary community support by contacting local businesses such as stores, law firms, doctor's offices, Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary clubs, women's organizations, and even funeral homes for donations towards sponsoring students from your area. Your ALA Girls State committee is available to assist you in contacting high schools and recruiting students from your area.

The sponsor reservation form is available at [www.michalaux.org](http://www.michalaux.org); click ALA Girls State. Please include this form with your sponsorship check so we know who to contact if necessary. Checks must be written to ALA, Department of Michigan. We are working on a user-friendly version of the delegate application that will be added to the website so that students interested in attending our program can access and complete online.

The ALA Girls State committee will review those applications and contact members of the Legion Family in the students' area to secure a sponsor. Students selected to attend ALA Girls State must register and pay a \$25 registration fee online. Send your requests, questions, and comments to Rysta Brown and Beryl Robbins at [alami-girlsstate@gmail.com](mailto:alami-girlsstate@gmail.com).

**Something Happening at your Unit?**  
**Submit it to the Michigan Auxiliaire!**  
 Send your articles and Pictures (with Cutline) to : [info@michalaux.org](mailto:info@michalaux.org)

## UPAA District

*Bonnie Taylor, President*

As many of you may know, the UPAA District encompasses the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan, with 31 units at present. We are very proud to say that we reached 103.82% of our membership goal for 2022-2023.

This past year was a little rough for us as we lost two of our very dear members and District Officers. President Kathy Stams moved out of state to be near her family, and we were saddened by the passing of our Secretary/Treasurer and long-time Auxiliary member, Jan Hafeman. We do miss both of them dearly. However, we rallied the troops and forged ahead as both of them would want and expect us "Yoopers" to do. With that being said, I would like to name just a few Units that have reported doing the following things:

From one end of the peninsula to the other, Units honored our Veterans throughout the year with special Memorial Day services, parades and placing flags on Veteran's graves. Menominee Unit #146 and Marquette Unit #44 held a National Vietnam Veteran's Day celebration program. Golf scramble fundraisers were held at each end of the UP this year. Little Lake Unit #349 is hosting The Wounded Warrior Relief Fund, and Unit #3 Sault Ste. Marie is hosting their first Honoring our Veteran's Golf Scramble. A couple of our units prepared Christmas gift baskets for Veterans at various assisted living, long-term care facilities and Veteran shut-ins. Poppies were abounding across the UP this past year with units staging events

and with the help of various businesses/banks and credit unions allowing us to accept donations.

Children and youth activities were at an all-time high this past year with collecting hats and mittens on Christmas trees and donating them to children and adults in need to keep them warm throughout our UP winter, assisting our posts with children's Christmas parties, partnering with American Legion Riders for a toy run, and also partnering with the VFW Auxiliary to host an "America and Me" day camp for youth 6-12 with patriotic activities and instruction. Various units donated to Legion Baseball and other children's services, as well as our Veteran Facilities in Iron Mountain (Oscar Johnson) and Marquette (JD Jacobetti). For the first time, red, white and blue cords were given to graduating seniors already enlisted in the armed services to be worn with their cap and gown at graduation. Also, all first responders, police, fire, hospital etc., were remembered with a special ceremony and breakfast on 9/11/22.

The UPAA was honored to host the Department Convention this past July, and we are definitely looking forward to doing so again in 2024. We are also looking forward to the 2023/2024 year and all the events that we will be able to report in the spring.

We wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season and a very prosperous New Year. Take Care, and God Bless.

## Membership

*ShyLynn Jones, Chairperson*

The Fall Conference was so much fun, and I learned so much from the other schools of instruction. As of today, October 10, 2023, we have 17 Pooper Scooper Upper Units (Goose Egg Units). Suppose your unit has voted you in as an officer; your dues must be paid for the current year. I will not call out the units by names or Districts in case my information is incorrect. But please check and make sure your dues have been sent in.

This year, 2023-2024, we are horse racing to "BE A CHAMPION FOR OUR VETERANS WITH PTSD."

We are Racing to Win for Our Veterans. Awards this year are the Eclipse Awards for those who make their goal by the first membership date, 75% by 12/07/2023, Belmont Stakes those who make goal by the second membership date, 85% by 03/15/2024, Preakness Sakes those who make goal by the third membership date, 95% by 05/24/2024, Kentuck Derby Trophy those who make goal by 4th membership date, 100% by 07/04/2024.

We are increasing the Units' goals to be one more member than what your membership was from last year. But don't stop at that one member. Did you know there is a Recruiter 10 award? Ask your friends if they are eligible. Talk to your co-workers. Sign them up and always carry an application with you; just a few suggestions. Let's be Number 1 in membership. Let's Be The One to help our veterans.

## Finance Report

*Deanna Cortright, Finance Chairperson*

By now, everyone should be well into the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year. The Fall Conference just finished, and your department left with a balanced budget.

Budgets aren't that difficult to do, but some things are very important to remember: At NO time should there be a negative balance reflected in your budget. If you estimate that your income will be \$100,000 for the year, you cannot show more expenses. It doesn't matter if there are exactly the same expenses as income, leaving a zero balance, or if you are showing fewer expenses with a balance left at the end of the year. It absolutely cannot go \$1.00 over.

Your income should always consist of expected dues to be received, and quite often, that will be your only income. Donations are nice but cannot be pre-determined. They are just bonus amounts. If your Units or Districts have other

items that you always do and you have an amount that you can anticipate coming in, they can be used. If you use them, don't forget to count the items needed for them as expenses.

Remember that the budget is just an estimate of what will occur during the year, not an exact set of numbers.

There should always be more than one individual listed on any bank accounts held for the Unit. At no time should one individual be the only person that has control. Many things can happen, and you don't want the Unit to lose access to their funds. Also, the President or any other member should not at any point open an account that the membership has not voted on. Always remember that the funds are the property of the full Unit and must be treated as such.

If there is ever anything I can do to help, please reach out to me. I am always available to help.



## Community Service

Carol Burke

Sharing our accomplishments with each other and our communities.

Celebrated on the fourth Saturday of every April, American Legion Family Day is an opportunity for every Post to open its door to its community. The two-fold purpose of this day is to celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and American Legion Auxiliary. As well as bring awareness to the organization's "Be the One" initiative to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. When the public is informed of our programs and initiatives, we will grow our membership. Start planning with your Post Legion Family to cel-

ebtrate Family Day on April 27, 2024.

In addition to the five Department Community Service awards this reporting year, the unit that submits a narrative detailing the most creative community service project will receive a \$50 gift card for Flag and Emblem Sales. Tracking and reporting your hours for unit and individual community service is important but no longer required to be considered for an award. The Community Service plan of action is on our Department website, [www.michalaux.org](http://www.michalaux.org) and the rules should be reviewed prior to submission.

Please share your activity with

us, the Michigan Community Service Committee, by

joining the Facebook Group: Michigan ALA Makes a Difference.

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/798962478143427/?paipv=0&eav=AfYpmQdz--MPxpGOV-iUuUzbIG65V3ZPIsGfvvrECqGd-v1\\_29KqwNKQQiuFAVKfuA0L0&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/798962478143427/?paipv=0&eav=AfYpmQdz--MPxpGOV-iUuUzbIG65V3ZPIsGfvvrECqGd-v1_29KqwNKQQiuFAVKfuA0L0&_rdr)

Place a post with or without a photo.

Please post all your activities, even if they will ultimately be reported for a program other than Community Service. Sharing both your personal and Auxiliary activities serves as a benefit for all of us. It inspires all of us to fulfill our Auxiliary's mission.

## 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 Chairman.

The Blue Star banner was designed and patented in 1917 by 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.

Wearing RED on Fridays is another way to support our deployed military: "Remember Everyone Deployed."

## Constitution and Bylaws

Sharon Schulte, Chairperson

The Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are necessary to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of your Unit operations. In Michigan, each Unit is required to accept the Uniform Unit Constitution and Uniform Unit Bylaws. The most current version can be found on the Department website ([www.michalaux.org](http://www.michalaux.org)). All Units should have a copy readily available at all Unit meetings for reference should the need arise. Please take some time at a Unit meeting to review the contents of these documents. These fundamental rules of our organization state how our membership agrees to govern itself and guarantee we are not in conflict with the requirements of the Department or National organizations.

Your Unit Standing Rules delineate how your Unit will be administered. When and where will your Unit meetings be held; when and how will elections be held? What are your annual dues, and do you have a separate initiation fee? Detailed information about your financial structure. These are a few of the items to include.

These documents supply continuity to Unit operations. They help organize Unit activities and provide a resource when questions arise and clarification is needed. They allow every member to know what is expected and keep them on the same page.

Because of the importance of these documents, they need to be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. Keeping your governing documents up to date and making them available to all members are key to a healthy organization that functions as a team to support our veterans, military and their families. If there are no changes, send the "No Change" to the Chairperson for the file. The form can be found on the website in the Constitution and Bylaws Guide. When your Unit does vote to revise its Standing Rules, before they can take effect, please send three copies, correctly signed, to the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairperson for review and approval.

Contact me with any questions or assistance if needed.

## Blessings

Anita Mennel, Department Chaplain

*So amid the conflict, whether great or small,  
Do not be discouraged; God is over all.  
Count your many blessings; angels will attend,  
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.  
Count your blessings; Name them one by one.  
Count your blessings; See what God hath done.  
Count your blessings; Name them one by one.  
Count your many blessings; See what God hath done.*

-Written by Johnson Oatman Jr

During this harvest time of year, we all should look to count our blessings. Even though you might not believe some things are a blessing, we are all blessed. Some say, 'more than I deserve.' Take time during this Thanksgiving to ponder the many blessings in your life, and then go and "BAB" ~ Be a Blessing to others.





Thanks to the Convention Committee for a fun Fall Conference.



National Leading Candidate James "Jim" A, LaCoursiere Jr.



SAL National Commander Donald "JR" Hall



SAL Finance Officer "Big" Earl Ruttkofsky and Commander John Beeman donate \$10,000 to the Fisher House.



Ford Motor Company Post 173 first to achieve 100% Membership.



Showing off a special gift from Department President Kim Champion

More Pictures at <https://michiganlegion.org/fall-conference-gallery/>







Stephan Rose from the Fisher House of Michigan.



The First Parking Boot award goes to Randy Gilbert



Historian Bob Higley presenting PDC Marilyn Britten with her Yearbook



\$50,000 from The Department to Fisher House. We are closing in to making the new Detroit location a reality.



Immediate Past President Marcy Jorae unveils the total from her special project



Robert Gillette, District 16 receiving the Albert Thiel Award



Frank Roche Post 253 receiving the Carlton L. Seaman Award



The Michigan Legion Foundation presented a check for \$50,000 to the Fisher House.





# Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

## JOHN BEEMAN *Detachment Commander 2023-2024*



Hello Legion Family! It is time again to give you an update on my thoughts. I had the honor to go to a couple of memorials recently. One was at Ft. Custer, and the other was in Mt.

Pleasant before the fall conference in Muskegon. At the fall conference, I met the Sons of the Legion National Commander, Donald Jr Hall. A very nice man and is very knowledgeable and definitely deserves the position. I also met the American Legion's leading candidate for

National Commander, James "Jim" A. Lacoursiere Jr. another pleasant and smart man. Both Guest attending the DEC3 meeting on Saturday and talked about their missions.

I was supposed to go to Wakefield for the signing of a new squadron charter. Unfortunately, I was sick and could not attend. PDC2 Zack Pendell went in my place and met up with 5th zone commander Dennis Larson, UP Chairman John Pickard and dual member Gary Lane. From what I am hearing, everything went great. Thank you, guys, for stepping up!

Don't forget Veterans Day is coming up on November 11th, so remember

to thank a vet. Attend their ceremonies to show them we care! If it were not for them, we would not be here. Do not forget my slogan is Standing Up For Veterans.

Now, for some new business, please start sending your membership renewals in. Please do not sit on them. We all have target dates to meet. If anyone wants to invite me to your event, please text or email Clive or myself. Do not email the department as they are busy enough. Clive's email is [saladj@sons.michiganlegion.org](mailto:saladj@sons.michiganlegion.org). My email is [jcbeeman31@yahoo.com](mailto:jcbeeman31@yahoo.com). Until we meet again keep up the good work.

For God and Country



# Buffalo Wild Wings

**FULL PAGE**  
**\$100**

**HALF PAGE**

**\$60**

**AMERICAN LEGION**  
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

WINTER PROGRAM AD PRICES

1/4 page \$35

1/2 Page \$60

Full Page \$100

2 Full pages side by side \$150

Ad production available at additional cost  
Contact Department Headquarters for details

**517-220-2747**



**Emmet Brown**

For

**Department Science Officer**

**2018-2019**

Welcome to Ypsilanti and the Department Winter Conference. Let this be a conference to remember. Enjoy yourselves and take the time to discover something new this weekend that will be useful at your home post. Take advantage of the many committee meetings to see what



**\$30**

**QUARTER PAGE**



# Chaplains Corner- "A Vision for the Forgotten"



**Norman Soli**  
Department Chaplain

Over the years, I've made visits to several assisted living facilities. Most of them will have residents that are veterans. Some of these veterans rarely receive any visitors. I'm in no way faulting the facilities or the families of the veterans. There are operational considerations for assisted living facilities that limit the time they can devote to each resident. Some veterans may not have any family members left.

We have a vision to guide our response to this situation found in the American Legion Post Officers Guide, "Every American Legion member must

focus on service to the veteran, to their families and the communities as their number one priority. Legion officers at every level must lead the way in reinforcing this vision." Also, Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish..."

Notice that the Post Officers Guide says, "Every American Legion member must focus on service to the veteran..." Most of these forgotten veterans would be extremely grateful if they were to receive a visit from an American Legion member. You don't have to be a chaplain or service officer to listen to fellow veterans recount their experiences from active duty. Sometimes, just watching a television program together can help reduce their loneliness.

So here's the vision. See yourself

or you and another Legionnaire call on an assisted living facility. Explain that you're from the American Legion and ask if they would let their veteran residents know that the American Legion would like to visit them. This covers any privacy issues if the veteran agrees to receive you as a visitor. You probably won't be able to speak to anyone on the initial visit, as the facility will need time to communicate this offer to their resident veterans.

Some of us have more time to devote to these forgotten veterans than others. But you won't be sorry for being generous with your time when visiting your fellow veterans. Proverbs 11:25 "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR



## NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INCENTIVE

According to the National organization, starting this fall or close to the end of the year, members will be able to Renew their dues membership for multiple years. You can continue to renew for only one year, but there is going to be an option to renew your dues for up to three years at once.

Why is this important? Yes, National is raising their dues! Your Post may be raising dues, too! So, if you ACT NOW, you can renew your dues at the current rate up to three (3) years. Members who have already renewed their dues can add up to two more years on top of the current year.

**INTERESTED IN A PUF?**  
**Paid Up For Life-**  
**800-433-3318**



The American Legion Department of Michigan  
Annual Winter Meeting  
February 8 -11, 2024

### 2024 WINTER MEETING REGISTRATION FORM



Hotel reservations are your responsibility and may be made with our host hotel:

**BW Premier Collection**  
**Gateway Hotel & Convention Center**  
5353 Gateway Centre Blvd  
Flint, MI 48507 - (810) 232-5300

A block of rooms will be available at the *Gateway Hotel* and the *Courtyard by Marriott* until **January 11, 2024**. Mention reservation code **ALP294** to secure our special room rate of **\$118.00** + 11% hotel tax. Here is the booking link: [https://www.bestwestern.com/en\\_US/book/hotel-rooms.23187.html?groupid=1L6WH6U4](https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.23187.html?groupid=1L6WH6U4).

Contact Tim Hill with any questions at 810-444-8644 or [timothy\\_w\\_hill@yahoo.com](mailto:timothy_w_hill@yahoo.com).

Registration fee is \$15.00 per person.

Make your check payable to:  
**Genesee County Convention Corp.**  
or simply to: **GCCC**

Mail to: **Tim Hernandez, 719 E Chelsea Cir. Davison MI 48423-1204**

The American Legion requires that each person attending must register with the corporation and be issued an official badge to be allowed to attend any meeting, session or event.

Hosted by the Genesee County Convention Corporation

#### 2024 Winter Meeting Registrant Information

Please print legibly or fill out the form online and print it out.

	LEGION	AUX	SAL	ALR
NAME: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADDRESS: _____				
CITY/ST/ZIP: _____				
ADDITIONAL REGISTERING NAMES:				
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\$15.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ (number of people registering) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please enclose)

Are your hotel reservations confirmed with the Gateway Hotel (810-232-5300)? Yes  No

If not, then the Courtyard Marriott (810-232-3500)? Yes  No

Best Western Plus (810-233-9000)? Yes  No  Hyatt Place (810-424-9000)? Yes  No

Other accommodations? \_\_\_\_\_ or I am commuting daily: Yes  No

Please provide the following contact information for registration confirmation:

Cell Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_



Duane Miller,  
Director of The Board

# WILWIN LODGE

At Cygnet Cove

Another season has now passed, and I want to thank all the Veterans who visited and stayed at this facility for relaxation and reconnecting with family. I also want to thank all the Legion Family, Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Legion Riders, for everything you have done for us here at Wilwin Lodge. Your volunteering and donations are much appreciated in keeping everything operational. We could not do all this without groups and individuals stepping up and giving of themselves. Thanks again.

The Department allowed me time to present to the membership that attended the Fall Meeting in Muskegon a short briefing about Wilwin and procedures on how Veterans can come for a stay. Many questions came up, and very positive interest in what the American Legion of Michigan has to offer any Veteran that does come for a visit. Thanks to the Department for this chance to present and inform all present.

If you haven't heard, we are constructing a small Chapel on the property for those who want to practice their faith while here on the property. It is being built

in a timber frame style, and we thank all that donated to get started with this build. Any others wanting to donate to this project would be greatly appreciated. We are looking to get a relatively small antique pulpit to put inside. We plan to have this completed by the beginning of the next season for use.

This project has been in the planning stages for many years, and now it's time to bring this to completion. We will be taking applications for the 2024 year starting on 1 February at noon. This way, everyone will have the same chance to get your requested timeframe. Remember, check-in is at 3 p.m., and checkout is at 10 a.m. Please honor this timeframe so we can get the cabins ready for when you arrive. Request your applications are for the Veteran and immediate household family only. We accept service dogs that are trained and that perform a specific task for the Veterans' needs only. Otherwise, no pets please. Also, if possible, I request that all applications be completed online at [wilwinlodge.com](http://wilwinlodge.com). If you do not have a computer/tablet or internet, please call us, and I will help you input your application.

## HELL TO PARADISE UPDATE

As fall has arrived, so has the holiday season. During November, we are told to give thanks. For some of us, that is easier said than done. We are to celebrate when we have lost loved ones. We, as veterans, are trained to be strong. We do not show weakness, so we hold it in. Why? Do we think we are not strong if we release it? When I was thinking about this ride, these are the reasons why I wanted it to happen so badly. There is a stigma on those who show the emotions of sorrow, sadness, and loneliness as weak. I say NO WAY. With the American Legion saying, "Be The One," I say, "We Are The Ones." We, as a veteran community, can lift those that are down. As we give thanks this month, I challenge each of you. Make a phone call, send a text, write a letter. Tell someone they are worth it. Give that person a reason to be thankful. My heart is filled with thankfulness for the support that this ride is receiving. This ride is so much more than what is seen on the surface. We have over 1200 followers on Facebook. That is 1200 persons that are there to help. Please, my brothers and sisters, look out for one another. Lift each other up. Find that reason to be thankful. One day, with each of us reaching out a helping hand, I hope we can break the stigma. Be thankful for each day, each breath and each other

Forever Grateful  
Your Brother in Arms  
Scott "Hawk" Igo



"The transition from military to civilian life was a complete change. My time at CSU has largely given me the tools I have needed to succeed professionally."

— Joshua McGinnis, Master of Public Administration

### Transition Successfully Into Civilian Life

Columbia Southern University's dedicated military support staff is comprised of current and former military members who understand the unique needs of these students and their families. Our military support team is here to help with:

- » Tuition Rates Below DoD Cap
- » Textbooks Provided At No Cost
- » Courses Offered Completely Online
- » GI Bill\* Transferability
- » Military Training Credits
- » Career Services Available



[ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Mil](http://ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Mil)  
877.347.6050

Orange Beach, Ala. | Gainful employment information available at: [ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Disclosure](http://ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Disclosure).

\*GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill). \*\*Paid ad. No federal endorsement of advertisement(s) intended. Any reference to U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) personnel, products or services does not constitute or imply endorsement by the DoD.



## Answers from the Judge

**Barry Wood**  
Department Judge Advocate  
Department of Michigan



We often do not become familiar with a rule or policy until we have a need. Then, because of that need, we call our District or Zone Commander because we do not know if a rule or policy exists. Then, the Zone or District Commander provides the Department Judge Advocate's phone number because the Commander doesn't know the procedure exists. The Judge Advocate needs to inform the person that there is a policy and the information is on the Department's website.

["PROCEDURE FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OFFICERS TO RECEIVE A RULING FROM THE DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE"](#)

Why is this procedure important? 1) It provides that person seeking information, or a judgment, the opportunity to clearly define what they seek. 2) It allows intermediary judge advocates to provide needed information, resulting in a faster answer. 3) It provides the opportunity for the Judge Advocate to have all the information and not just one version of the "facts." 4) It allows the Judge Advocate to get right to

the point of answering the question(s) to all sides and not waste time providing unnecessary information.

These are my request to you. 1) Please use your Post and District Judge Advocates. 2) Please ensure all information (this means all sides) is included, as this will move the process along. 3) Ask the specific questions to which you are seeking information. Those will be the questions answered. 4) Type your request. Some penmanship is impossible to read, and if you send the request through email, you'll have a record. 5) Know whether you are seeking information or appealing a decision made at the local level. 6) Judge Advocates at all levels read the constitution and bylaws of your post, district, and Department. Know them so you can readily find the information. Read the DEC Manual. You are not on the DEC, but there is important information in the manual that will help you, the post commander, and the district commander. 7) Zone and District Commanders, you are DEC members, read the manual. Also, follow the procedures. Do not just give a Legion Family member my phone number for me to tell them the procedure. The member will wonder why they were sent to the Department only to be told there is a bit more work to do before the request comes to me.

## A Very Special Reunion 20 Years in the Making

12th District Commander Tim Walters had a special connection to the Keynote Speaker at our Summer Convention. He shares how it felt to meet Jessica Lynch for the first time since helping locate her when she was a POW in Iraq during the first Gulf War.

A little over 20 years ago, I worked in Washington, D.C., for the National Imagery and Mapping Agency. On the morning of March 23rd, 2003, during the 2nd Gulf War, the office received word that an American Unit was ambushed. There were KIAs and possible POWs. With my partner, I began the process of locating the area and searching for any signs of our military personnel. For the next ten days, we worked 18-plus hours a day in a windowless room, digging for every scrap of intelligence and starting to put together a complete view of the area to plan for the recovery and rescue of our personnel.

We had assembled our information on the soldiers killed in the ambush and the location of PFC Jessica Lynch. On April 1st, we learned of the rescue of Jessica and other servicemembers. The focus turned to the rest of the POWs. However, they were released as the Iraqi defenses fell apart and the war ended.

During my active duty time searching for POWs/MIAs from World War II through the 1st Gulf War I intelligence on 7 cases from Vietnam, I helped return the remains to their families, providing closure. I never met any of those families or the POWs rescued during the 2nd Gulf War until this past July. At the Department of Michigan American Legion Summer Convention this year, an ex-

traordinary speaker, Jessica Lynch, gave a motivational and emotional speech.

As I sat and listened to Jessica talk of her ordeal with my eyes closed, the memories of those 2 weeks in March 2003 came flooding back. Knowing I had helped bring this young woman back to her family, my emotions were getting out of hand, and I almost couldn't sit and finish listening to her.

After she finished and the room gave her a massive standing ovation, I quietly slipped out the door and waited for a moment to let Jessica know what I knew about that time. My sister Crystal, who had sat next to me through the entire presentation, went back into the room, found Jessica, and told her about me and briefly what I had done. Jessica asked if she could meet me and thank me.

It took me about 15 minutes to tell her my side of what we did to find, recover and rescue her and her fellow soldiers. She said my story filled in many things that she had always wondered about but never knew. I nearly broke down several times as I told her how much it meant to me to finally meet someone from a case I had worked on and that she was one of the lucky ones who came back alive. If I never check another thing off my lifetime bucket list, that will be fine with me.

I told Jessica that the real Heroes were those Special Operations sol-



diers who flew into enemy territory and brought her and her fellow soldiers back home, that I had just a small part, but it was one of the single best things I had ever done in my 23+ years in the military and over 18+ years as a government contractor.

For a short 5 foot 3 inch woman, she gave one of the strongest hugs I have ever received in my life.

Thank you for your time Jessica.

Written by:  
Tim Walters, 12th District Commander

# 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: Wedbesday 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  
Laingsburg, 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 8:30-4:30

AL Post 443  
2080 N. Meridian Rd  
Sanford, MI 48657  
Hours: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 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: 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 benifits at  
[www.mivabenifits.org](http://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.



# 6th District Report



**Roger Deaton**  
6th District Commander

I am proud to report the 6th district is "Relevant & Vibrant" in our communities. We have achieved renewal percentage of 60.17% as of 10/14/23, and we are well on our way to the 65% goal by 11/15/23, and Deveraux Post 141 Howell has 48 new members.

The District Advisory Committee has been busy visiting posts and trying to attend the monthly membership meetings. Over 40 visits since September to 18 of our 27 posts. These are great synergy events for our district officers and the posts as we learn what's important to the local posts and where they may need some advice and assistance.

# 3rd Zone Report



**Jerry Kunzelman**  
3rd Zone Commander

Starting days with cooler and rainy weather, it is truly fall.

3rd Zone is currently in 2nd place regarding memberships, this is with the help of 6th, 7th, 8th, and 18th districts. Keep up the great work. Regarding memberships, with the average age of the Legion members being in the early 70's, we have to rethink how to get our younger veterans to join our ranks. We will have to come up with some programs that interest both the younger veterans and their families. If you know of a post that has numerous programs for veterans and their families, get in contact with them to find out what they are doing to get the younger Veterans to join their post. Their ideas may not work at your post, but they could spark an idea that will.

The 3rd Zone oratorical is scheduled for Feb 3rd, 2024, with a place to be determined. The district Competitions for 6th, 7th, and 18th are yet to be determined. The 8th district oratorical competition will be in Saint Johns on Jan 13th, 2024. I am wishing good luck to all applicants. Also, keep in mind the numerous other scholarships available, and their registration dates are fast approaching. Additional information is available on the Legion website.

With Veterans Day and the holidays approaching, please take time to check in on your fellow veterans and members.

Zone 3 and District 6 will host Officers training on January 20th at Bernard A. Bendle Post 294 Swartz Creek. Topics include Membership, Post officers training, and financial document filings. All Zone and Post members are welcome to attend - "Highly encouraged." Lunch will be provided at 11:00 am, and training will start at 10:00 am with a break for lunch and then resume at 1:00 pm.

Hot on our "radar" is our youth program and legion awards deadlines. This year, the 6th district will hold our Oratorical Contest at Deveraux Post 141 Howell on January 14th at 10:00 am, and we are honored to host the Zone 3 Oratorical contest at Bernard A Bendle Post 231 in Swartz Creek on February 3rd. Note: December 1st is the Oratorical Registration deadline. The Law Officer and Firefighter of the Year submissions are due January 8th.

Post highlights: Buck-Reasoner Post 238 Holt donated 300 suits to the VA National home and held a 5k, which raised \$

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3,300.00 for WILWIN Lodge. Spirit Center Post 235 Brighton Veterans Day Parade November 11th, assemble at St. George's church at 10:30 am and march to the Mill Pond—ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park Mill Pond, Brighton.

I will be at post 119 Linden for Veterans Day events for their Free Dinner and community event at 6:00 pm on Friday, November 10th, at the Mason Hall in Downtown Linden. The American Legion 6th District and the Flint Firebirds OHL Hockey team are hosting Military Appreciation Day on November 4th at 7:00 Veterans and Active Duty will receive a free ticket to the game. Please arrive early at the Dort Financial Arena in Flint. The Firebirds will be wearing one-of-a-kind Military Hockey Jerseys to be auctioned off after the game, and this year's proceeds go to "Fold of Honor". I am encouraging all Veterans and their families to attend this family fun event.

# 5th Zone Report



**Ray Carlson**  
5th Zone Commander

This summer was eventful as I had the opportunity to interview 15 4H young people, ages 8 to 18, at the Marquette County Fair. They all had either animals or static displays or both at the fair. I hadn't had the opportunity to do this before. I must say to all of you reading this: if your Post is looking to get involved with children and young adults, please look into helping out a 4H club near you. 4H teaches such wholesome values to these youngsters. I was so impressed with all the ones I had the pleasure of meeting and the adult leaders involved. Your Post can't go wrong in assisting 4H!

Also, this summer, I filled in for Commander Mohlman in representing the Department of American Legion at

the ceremony for the U P Veteran of the Year at the U P Fair in Escanaba. Marquette Post 44 member Jim Provost was the very worthy recipient of this honor.

I also worked the American Legion booth at the U P Fair with U P Membership Director Jan Lepinski that day. Met and talked with many veterans and American Legion members across the U.P.

A U.P.-wide Leadership Training session will be for all American Legion members (not just Post Officers). There will be a wide variety of topics discussed, and any and all questions will be answered. Elizabeth Cuddington, Department Leadership Development Subcommittee Chair, is the main presenter. All attending won't be disappointed as Elizabeth is a competent and entertaining trainer. Please watch the Legionnaire for details to register for this event. This will be at Little Lake Post #349 on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. There will be a lunch. I hope to see many of you there!

**WE ARE PROUD TO PARTNER ONCE AGAIN WITH THE  
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN AMERICAN LEGION**

**WATCH FOR OUR VETERANS BURIAL BENEFITS BRIEFINGS IN YOUR  
AREA WHERE WE EXPLAIN YOUR BENEFITS AND ENJOY A NICE  
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CONTACT TONY LAURI FOR INFORMATION  
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# 11<sup>th</sup> District Report



**Tom Chernetski**  
11<sup>th</sup> District Commander

Greetings! Everyone in the 11th District has been bustling to take advantage of our short but beautiful summer weather. We've all been busy with fundraisers, picnics, parties, reunions, conventions, conferences and meetings. Like me, I'm sure you are ready to take full advantage of the tranquility and serenity of a slow-moving, snow-covered winter.

The District fall meeting was held on Saturday, October 14th, at Post 71 in Gladstone. The main topics of interest were the various programs the Legion offers, Membership and District bylaws. Zone Commander Ray Carlson attended and discussed zone-wide Leadership training.

Here are some of the good things happening within our District: Mackinac Island, Post 299 was the first Post in our District to reach 100% of its 2024 goal! Menominee, Post 146 partnered with the Menominee Suicide Prevention network on September 17th to host the annual "Embrace Life Walk." This annual walk brings in over 500 people and raises well over 25K. The money is used for Suicide Prevention Awareness and education in area schools, clubs, and businesses. Hermansville Post 340, Norway Post 145 and Iron Mountain Post 50 celebrated Leif Erikson Viking Days in Norway, MI, on October 7th including a Viking breakfast, Viking encampment & battle, parade, music, food & craft vendors. Hulbert Post 393 was in dire need of a new roof. Through imaginative and creative fundraising, in a few short months, they are almost halfway to their goal of \$50,000! If you'd like to discuss how they are raising so much money in such a small town, you can email their Commander at [albertsonpa@gmail.com](mailto:albertsonpa@gmail.com). The Upper Peninsula Association of American Legion Posts (UPAALP) has officially disbanded. 11th and 12th District are in constant communication and are working diligently to ensure the Posts within the U.P. continue to operate in harmony and solidarity with each other, the Auxiliary, and the Sons of the American Legion. In the future, we hope to align meeting times/places with the rest of the Legion family.



L-R Dennis Lynch Post 145, Dan Trulock & Steve Pancheri Post 50, and Grace Murray Post 340

I encourage you to attend the district meetings. It is a great opportunity to liaise with other Posts - compare different scenarios, and possibly find solutions to your Post's obstacles. You would be surprised to learn that almost every Post in the U.P. has or will eventually face the same problems. The meetings are a great place to ask questions, get answers, make suggestions and find out what is happening within our department "from the horse's mouth."

The alternate Commander, Mark Madia, and I have divided the District into North and South. Commander Madia has been busy visiting and assisting the Posts in the northern section of our District, and I've been assisting those in the south. Whether you are in the North or South, if there is ever ANYTHING that you or your Post needs, please give one of us a call/text/email. [tom.chernetski@gmail.com](mailto:tom.chernetski@gmail.com) (906) 792-8598 or [memaيدا@hotmail.com](mailto:memaيدا@hotmail.com) (616) 298 9956.

# POST 149 In the Spotlight

## Amel Schwartz American Legion Post 149

Our Post has been running several very successful projects Over the past year. Open Mic nights feature a wide range of local musicians every other month. People going to the event enjoy music; they sing along and dance. Donations and 50-50 raffles bring in money to the Post.

Every other month, Post 149 holds a Pancake Breakfast. We average over 100 Per event. September 2023, the Post broke a record for the number of people enjoying breakfasts. People come and have breakfast and spend time talking with family and friends. The breakfast brings in funds that help pay the bills. Both of these events have become a mainstay for the Post. We started right after COVID, and they have been growing. The next Pancake Breakfast will be November 12, from 8:30 am until noon. The next Open Mic is December 18 at 7 pm.

Post 149 also runs a very active Americanism program that includes a scholarship, teacher of the year, Firefighter of the year, and Law Enforcement Officer of the year.

Post 149 is also very active in the community, participating in the Hollydays and Dickens Festival. The Joint Legion and VFW Honor Guard handles funerals and other events throughout the community.

In the Spotlight is a new Feature of the Michigan Legionnaire. If you would like your Post featured send a rundown of what makes your Post strong and I will put the word out across the State! Send to:

[media@michiganlegion.org](mailto:media@michiganlegion.org)

**WILWIN LODGE**  
At Cygnet Cove

WILWIN LODGE WAS RECOGNIZED  
AS ONE OF THE BEST CHARITIES  
FOR VETERANS BY SMILEHUB



# Around the State...

**American Legion Post 57** members donated \$1,000 to Voices of Children. The money was raised through Post 57's annual Steve Phillips Memorial golf outing.



L to R: Kevin Lenkart, Louann Fowler, Scott Redman, Angel Lanning, Gary Duehring, Dave Mogg, Rachel Siemen

Snack foods that the **Livonia American Legion Post 32 Riders** donated to the VA Outpatient Clinic in Canton.



**Post 159 in Mackinaw City** completed major upgrades to their post inside and out!



Ribbon-cutting at Post 159. Village President Lauren Brown and Post Commander Tom Chastain do the honors



## Clean Up Crew



Members and friends of American Legion Post 57 in Owosso collected 33 trash bags from a section of M71 between Lytle Road and Hibbard Road as part of the State's Adopt-A-Highway program.

**Chief Pontiac Unit 377** At Burger and Bike Night



L-R Donna VanKuren, Kandi Carpenter, Denise Stovall, Brenda Wright, Ellen Jackson 18th District President, Jackie Ellsworth, Telitha Pankowski, Chris Robertson

## Hulbert Post 393

was in dire need of a new roof.



Post Adjutant Tammy DeWitt with the Fund-raiser Thermometer

After just a few short months they are almost half-way to their goal of \$50,000! Email Commander Paul Albertson [albertsonpa@gmail.com](mailto:albertsonpa@gmail.com) if you want to know how they raised so much so fast.

**Mackinac Island, Post 299** was the first post in our District to reach 100% of their 2024 goal!



(l - r) District Alt Commander Mark Maida and Post 299 Commander Paul Wandrie.

**Buck-Reasoner Post 238 in Holt** Donates \$3,300 from there 9/11 Heros Run to Wilwin Lodge. The entire Legion Family made it possible.



**Menominee, Post 146** partnered with the Menominee Suicide Prevention Network on September 17th to host the annual "Embrace Life Walk."



## It's Getting Closer!

Department Commander, Brian Mohlman, and Detachment Commander, John Beeman, attended the Detroit Fisher House site Dedication at Woodward and Bethune in Detroit on October 17th. Commander Mohlman's Special Project is getting construction of the project funded. Every donation to his special project over \$20 will be rewarded with his challenge coin. Click here to donate.





