



# BADGER LEGIONNAIRE

& WISCONSIN VOL 103 #2 | APRIL 2026



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



## APPLETON TO HOST 107TH DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Join the Legion Family for the 107th Department Convention July 15-19, 2026 at the Hilton Paper Valley, 333 W. College Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911. All Legion Family members are welcome and encouraged to attend. **THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!**

**Wednesday, July 15** is move in and set-up day, with the Membership Committee and Wisconsin American Legion Foundation meeting in the afternoon. Registration will begin at 1:30pm.

**Thursday, July 16** will begin with all Department Committees

■ Please see Page 5 for the Registration Form for the 107th Department Convention, July 15-19 at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton.

meeting throughout the morning, Wisconsin American Legion College Alumni Association meeting in the afternoon followed by the Department Executive Committee meeting at 4pm.

**Friday, July 17** begins with the District Caucuses at 7:30am. At

9:00am the opening ceremonies will officially kick off the 107th Department Convention. The session will include several guest speakers and awards such as our Law & Order, Firefighter, EMT and more. There will be a Blood Drive from 9am-2pm. The evening will have you visiting with the candidates for office at their hospitality rooms and networking with your fellow veterans.

**Saturday, July 18** will begin with voting on the Leadership for 2026/2027. NEW this year is a different voting process! More to come. After voting, join us for an-



other exciting General Session. In addition to many awards and speakers, come meet the youth winners and hear how our programs have impacted their lives. In the evening join the outgoing and incoming leadership for the Past Commander's Club party with an evening of food and refreshing beverages. **NEW DUELING PIANOS** will entertain us with some razzle and dazzle to close out the evening.

**Sunday, July 19** will begin with a Legion Family Memorial Service, followed by the installation of Department Officers. The weekend will conclude with the first Department Executive Committee meeting of the newly elected officers.

For up-to-date information on the convention, including speakers, registration, and housing visit <https://wilegion.org/department-convention>.

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## “Badger Legionnaire” & “Wisconsin”

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## “Badger Legionnaire”

**The American Legion,  
Department of Wisconsin**  
2930 American Legion Drive  
P.O. Box 388 • Portage, WI 53901  
Phone: 608-745-1090  
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Executive Editor  
**Sheri Hicks**

**2025-26 Department Officers**  
Department Commander  
**Nathan Bond**

Department Vice Commanders  
**Larry Larson**  
**Steve Kohnke**  
**Dave Steinert**  
**Rita Rindahl**

Department Adjutant  
**Julie Muhle**

Department Chaplain  
**Virgil Smith**

Historian  
**Morris Sadicario**

Sergeant-at-Arms  
**John Berg**  
**Aimee Korger**

Service Officer - **James Fialkowski**  
NECman - **Robert Shappell**  
Alternate NECman - **Karl Stuvengen**  
Judge Advocate - **David Bretl**

District Commanders  
**1st – Candace Rothering**  
**2nd – Joe Leone**  
**3rd – Dan O'Brien**  
**4th – Andrew Minch**  
**5th – Craig Ellis**  
**6th – Ken Flock**  
**7th – Chet Faith**  
**8th – Penny Peeters**  
**9th – Terry McNulty**  
**10th – Felicia Decker**  
**11th – Gerry Johnson**  
**12th – Joe Roberts**

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

## “Wisconsin”

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

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

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

# SKILLS LEARNED AT BBS SERVED CORDOVA WELL AT WEST POINT

When Jared Cordova attended Badger Boys State in 2019, he admitted he wasn't sure what his future would look like.

“Honestly, I was pretty far behind the curve” when it came to planning after high school, Cordova said.

But it was after a series of electoral losses when Cordova discovered the United States Military Academy.

“I ran for state representative and failed horribly, and then I ran for something else. I can't even remember what it was now, but I got like four votes or something abysmal like that,” Cordova said. “The guy who won said he already had an appointment or invite to tour at West



Point. That was actually my first introduction to West Point.”

After attending Badger Boys State and with some encouragement from his mom, Cordova started the West Point application process. He missed the Summer Leaders Experience, a weeklong immersion camp that offers high schoolers an

opportunity to learn more about West Point, but felt like his experience at Badger Boys State made up the difference.

Cordova said Badger Boys State boosted his application in part due to the exclusivity of the program, comparing it to other programs like National Honors Society. Cordova said anyone with good grades can join NHS or other honors programs, but it takes a combination of good grades and leadership to attend Badger Boys State.

“Attending Boys State shows the people who are looking at your resume that you perform well, you're a good kid, you do the right things,

you have some priorities in life,” Cordova said.

After undergoing the application process — including an interview with then-U.S. Congressman Sean Duffy's office — Cordova found out he had been accepted to West Point.

Cordova said the leadership skills he learned and developed at Badger Boys State transferred to his time as a West Point cadet. After becoming a team leader his sophomore year, he eventually became a company commander by the end of his senior year.

Cordova graduated from West Point in 2024. Now, he is stationed at Fort Rucker where he is training to become a Black Hawk pilot.

## 2026 Winter Sweepstakes Presidents Day Sweepstakes

### SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

PRIZE	DESCRIPTION	NAME/CITY
GRAND	\$10,000 Cash	Donn W./Chetek, WI
2nd	\$5,000 Cash	Patrick S./Wausau, WI
3rd	\$2,500 Cash	Gary E./Rudolph, WI
4th	\$1,000 Cash	Gina P./Colorado Springs, CO
5th	\$500 Cash	Francis T./Belmont, WI
6th	\$500 Cash	Fred C./Lake Worth, FL
7th	\$250 Cash	Kathleen F./Tomah, WI
8th	\$250 Cash	Kenneth P./Malone, WI



## 2026 PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES WINNER FROM CHETEK POST 179

Legionnaire Donn a Paid up for Life member of Chetek American Legion Post 179 was the \$10,000 grand prize winner of the 2026 Presidential Sweepstakes.

Donn was unable to make the trip to Legion Headquarters for the check presentation. Donn shared a photo of himself wearing his cover and holding his bugle. He is the bugler for Post 179 Honor Guard. Despite having a spinal injury and in a wheelchair, he carries out the bugle duties for his Post.

## WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION IS REPRESENTED AT LINCOLN PILGRIMAGE



Pete Ponti and Wisconsin American Legion Commander Nathan Bond along with SAL National Commander Bill Clancy III, National Commander Dan Wiley, National Auxiliary President Pam Ray.



Jefferson County Auxiliary President Sharon Burbach, Post 279 Historian Pete Ponti, District 1 Commander Candace Rothering, Alternate NEC Karl Stuvengen, Department Commander Nathan Bond and SAL Detachment Commander Chris Dannemann.

Pete Ponti, Historian for American Legion Post 279 in Marshall, attended the 2026 Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois. Wisconsin Posts with 100% membership are placed in a drawing to attend the event. Post 279 was drawn and Pete

represented his Post at the Pilgrimage. He and his friend Auxiliary member Sharon Burbach attended this year along with Wisconsin American Legion leadership. Pete had the opportunity to meet National Legion Family leadership.

**“My husband stepped out for some fresh air, then I heard a loud thud ...**



**We were rushed to the hospital where he was diagnosed with broken bones and two spinal obstructions.”**

Fortunately, we had purchased the Legionnaire Emergency Assistance Plus® (EA+) plan for our travels!

We were in London, and after 2 hospitals and 39 days in a rehab facility, Michael was released to travel and EA+ coordinated our

return. They provided a nurse escort to monitor Michael on the trip home, an ambulance to the airport, then to the rehabilitation facility so Michael could continue his recovery.

Thank you, EA+! You gave me the freedom to focus on Michael and the relief of not having to make all the arrangements myself.

– Julie & Michael  
North Carolina



**Don't travel another mile without learning more about how EA+ can help you. Call 1-888-293-4008 today!**

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From Your American Legion Department



Christina Baurichter from Durand, Wisconsin, has been a vocal advocate for Veterans suffering from Spinal Cord Injuries.

## SPINAL CORD INJURIES IMPACT ABOUT 42,000 U.S. VETERANS

By Nate Coward  
Legislative Chair  
American Legion Department of Wisconsin

Recently, I had the privilege to meet with Christina Baurichter from Durand, Wisconsin. Christina is the proud Vice Commander of Post 181, a wounded warrior with a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and a vocal advocate for SCI research. She shared her story and reasons for advocacy with me. I felt obligated to share her experience with all of you.

Christina was serving with the National Guard in Madison, WI, on COVID orders when a tumor was discovered on her C2 vertebra. 24 weeks pregnant, her life was about to change dramatically. The tumor was determined to be service-connected and removed. Christina gave birth, and the child is doing well. However, after giving birth, she was paralyzed. The road to recovery is ongoing, and many challenges are still ahead.

She was brought to the Minneapolis VA, where she worked with professionals to develop a plan for spinal cord rehabilitation. She participated in 2 research studies, which she credits with a lot of her recovery.

With hard work and an abundance of support, she regained her ability to walk, she found her passion, and she found her voice.

Her experience in Minnesota at the Minneapolis VA, [as a resident of Wisconsin,] highlighted many inequities in SCI treatment. Primarily, Minnesota funds SCI research well, and Wisconsin does not.

With her spirited optimism and willful dedication, she now advocates in the halls of our Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, for spinal cord injury (SCI) research.

She proclaims that these research investments offer a potential path to reduce dependence on expensive long-term medication, reduce the cost of long-term care, and provide SCI patients in Wisconsin with a quality of life that is unparalleled right now.

The US Department of Veterans Affairs reports “SCIs are estimated to affect between 249,000 and 363,000 Americans”, and there are roughly 42,000 veterans with an SCI.

If you happen to cross paths with Christina in your Legion duties, make sure to thank her for her advocacy and contact your local state representatives in support of spinal cord injury (SCI) research, grants, and symposia.

## ‘FAMILY FIRST – 26’ IS SLATED FOR JUNE 26-28 WISCONSIN LEGION RIDERS TO CRUISE FOR THREE CAUSES

The Wisconsin Legion Riders are planning a three-day motorcycle ride, the Wisconsin Legion Riders – Cruise for a Cause, ‘Family First – 26’, June 26 -28, 2026. The purpose this year is to raise money for three great programs. The Veterans & Children Foundation, the American Legion Auxiliary - Badger Girls State program & the Sons of the American Legion - Operation A.L.F.

**Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF):** Provides temporary financial assistance and has awarded cash grants to minor children of current active duty or American Legion members. VCF also funds training for Legion’s accredited veteran service officers who are continuously working more than 750,000 benefits claims for disabled veterans and their families, free of charge.

**Auxiliary Badger Girls State Program:** American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State is a program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary. Girls State is not a recreational program it is a government and leadership conference where the entire delegation will create a mythical fifty-first state that functions according to the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

**Operation A.L.F.:** One of the goals of the Sons of The American Legion has always been to support our active-duty military. Over the past few years, they have been privileged

to participate in pre-deployment ceremonies for service members heading to duty in far away places, far from their loved ones by providing their children with comfort puppies to keep them company while mom and dad are away.

**Ways for you to get involved:** Ride with us for one, two or all three days. Donate in person at a stop or by making a check out to “Family First – 26” and mailing it to N172W20593 Westfield Dr, Jackson, WI 53037. Donate online at the QR code below. Share our sponsorship form with people or businesses that you know, become a sponsor yourself, ask your Legion Family (Post/Unit/Squadron) to solicit a donation. Any amount is greatly appreciated. Even if you can’t ride with us, come out and show your support along the way. Greet us at a stop or along our route. Share our event posters and



Facebook posts to increase the audience we reach.

The Legion Riders are promoting this event; however, it is truly a family affair. We will have Department Commander Nathan Bond, Department President Sue Hembrook and Detachment Commander Chris Dannemann riding with us as we travel through the state.

Email questions to: [wialra.c4c@gmail.com](mailto:wialra.c4c@gmail.com).

## McFARLAND POST 534 DONATES TO TOYS FOR TOTS



McFarland Edwards-Foye American Legion Post 534 donated to Toys for Tots.



# CASH PARADISE

## RAFFLE



### “YOUR” Department Annual Raffle

**Supports American Legion Programs, Youth Programs, and Community Projects by the American Legion**

**CASH PRIZES** Drawing at 8pm, July 18, 2026  
at Department Convention in Appleton

1 <sup>st</sup> - \$15,000	4 <sup>th</sup> - \$3,000	7 <sup>th</sup> - \$800
2 <sup>nd</sup> - \$6,000	5 <sup>th</sup> - \$2,000	8 <sup>th</sup> - \$600
3 <sup>rd</sup> - \$4,000	6 <sup>th</sup> - \$1,000	9 <sup>th</sup> - \$400
		10 <sup>th</sup> - \$200

**\$20 per ticket — Need not be present to win**

For Tickets: Contact your local American Legion Post or  
Email [rosanna.bogle@outlook.com](mailto:rosanna.bogle@outlook.com) / [amlegionman@gmail.com](mailto:amlegionman@gmail.com)

# SAVE THE DATE:



The Salute to Veterans Assembly at the 83rd session of Badger Boys State is scheduled Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 6:30pm at the University of Eau Claire - McPhee Olson Center. All Veterans are welcome!



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

## POST 214 SUPPORTS NEW MARINE, MEMBER

Darlington American Legion Post 214 decided to help support any senior student that made the decision to enter Military Service after graduation. This past June, Juan C. Jimenez joined the U.S. Marine Corp. Juan had already left for his Military service, but we were able to contact him and let him know the Post had support funds for him. Juan is at home on leave and we were able to have him come to the Legion Post and present him with a check for \$100 and a Membership to Darlington American Legion Post 214. With his American Legion Membership Juan has become a member of the World's largest Veterans Organization (1.6 million members) and he can go to any American Legion Post around the world and be welcomed in. Pictured are Juan and Darlington Post 214 Commander Dave Gough. The Post thanked Juan for taking this step in joining the Military and Juan's name will be added to the Veterans Memorial in Darlington. At our last meeting Post 214 voted to increase its funding to \$200 for any senior student entering the Military and completing their Basic Training. This will also include a Membership into the American Legion Darlington Post 214. This support for students entering the Military will be announced at Senior Awards Day each year.



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## POST 360 STAYS BUSY AROUND THE HOLIDAYS



Waunakee Post 360 had many events around the holidays. ABOVE LEFT: Members volunteered to assist with the 115th Fighter Wing's Christmas party at Truax Field. ABOVE RIGHT: Post 360 honor guard at Past Commander Ron Byrnes funeral. BELOW LEFT: Past Commander Tom Acker entertaining kids at Post Christmas party. BELOW RIGHT: Post 360 leading Waunakee Holiday parade.



## A TRULY SUPERIOR CHRISTMAS PARTY

Superior Post 435 held a Christmas Party. Fun was had by all!

## SUPERIOR POST 435, BONG VETERAN'S MUSEUM DELIVER DONATIONS TO MN VETERAN'S HOME

On Monday, January 12, Post 435 and the Bong Veteran's Historical Museum traveled to the MN Veteran's Home in Silver Bay to deliver donated items to the Bong Museum for the Veterans. Post 435 also donated a check for \$500 to the home. They also sent a check for \$500 to the WI Veteran's Home in Chippewa Falls. Pictured left to right are Brian Wegerer, resident in the wheel, John Gidley, Executive Direct of the Bong Museum, Milo Dahn, resident, Randy Freeman, Post Waltz, Public Affairs for the Home, and Tristan Akason, Marketing Administrator for the Bong Museum. Randy Freeman is shown giving the check from the post to Randall Walt as Commander Liebaert looks on.



## PROUD GRANDPA AT DEPARTMENT MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

Leonard Gruber, a member of American Legion Squadron 33 in Neenah, volunteered as the Assistant Chaplain for the Sons of the American Legion Meeting at the American Legion Mid-Winter Conference in Green Bay yesterday.

Leonard is pictured with Chris Dannenmann, SAL Detachment Commander.

In the group picture, Leonard is flanked by his proud grandfather, Bob Borszich (Current Chaplain for both Winnebago County and District 6 and Lifetime member

of Post 33) and Squadron 33 Adjutant George Schroeder.

Leonard has been member of Squadron 33 since its inception. He is currently a freshman at St. Mary's Catholic High School in Neenah. He is considering becoming the chaplain for Squadron 33.

The Hawley-Dieckhoff American Legion Family joins Bob Borszich and George Schroeder in expressing their pride and thanks to Leonard, and salutes him for volunteering to be assistant at the conference.



## HYGIENE DRIVE FOR D COMPANY 2 BATTALION 127 INF

American Legion Post 63 and VFW Post 664 of Clintonville worked together to gather donations of hygiene items from the Clintonville community. Tina Wilson, a member of both the American Legion and VFW, worked to get the items prepared for shipment and with the help of

American Legion Post 63 Commander Jim Carmody and VFW Post 664 Commander Brandon Pzanka, delivered the packages to the Post Office to be sent to the deployed unit from Clintonville. The extra items from the drive were then donated to King Veterans Home.

## TREMPEALEAU COUNTY ORATORICAL CONTEST



ABOVE: (L-R) Anna Rose Winey, first-place winner, sponsored by Arcadia Post 17; the hosting Osseo Post 324 Commander Leroy "Buzzy" Thompson; Miranda Najera, second-place winner, sponsored by Independence Post 186; and Department Vice Commander Rita Rindahl. BELOW: (L-R) Judges, Superintendent Lori Whelan and Osseo Fairchild Dean of Students Matthew Korger; and contestants, Miranda Najera, Anna Rose Winey and Judge Lori A. Nelson.



### 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention

Hilton Paper Valley  
333 W. College Avenue  
Appleton, WI 54911  
July 15-19, 2026

This is your registration form only; this is **NOT YOUR DELEGATE FORM**. Delegate Forms are mailed to the Post 30 Days prior to Convention, June 17, 2026 per the Department Constitution and Bylaws. It is advised however, to register prior to this date.

Remember all Legionnaires are encouraged to attend the Department Convention, not just Delegates and Alternates. **Only 1 registration per form**, if you wish to register multiple people at once, you can do that by registering online at [wilegion.org/department-convention](http://wilegion.org/department-convention) (preferred).

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Member ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

AL Post #: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_ SAL Squadron #: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	NUMBER	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Registration Fee		\$30.00	
Registration Fee after July 6, 2026		\$35.00	
Saturday Evening PCC/Legion Family Event: Buffet- 7 PM, ½ Barrell of Beer, Soda, cash bar and Live Entertainment by NEW Dueling Pianos! Doors open at 6:30 PM- Deadline June 30, 2026		\$50.00/person	
		Total Enclosed:	

Make checks payable to The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

OR enter credit card information below

Card Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Return with payment to:  
The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin  
Attn: Convention  
P.O. Box 388, Portage, WI 53901  
Or email to: [events@wilegion.org](mailto:events@wilegion.org)

Scan the QR code to pay online!



## POST 63 DONATION



Clintonville Veterans Memorial Post 63 Commander James Carmody and Adjutant Peter Bodoh presented Pastor Jill Meyer with a \$500.00 check for the Clintonville Food Pantry.



Foreground, from left, VA Ambassador and PDVC Jerry Hook, Department Historian Morris Sadicario, Executive Director Wm Middleton VA Hospital Christine Kleckner, Auxiliary Department President Suzanne Hembrook, and SAL Detachment Commander Christopher Dannenmann. Back row, from left, Volunteer Sheila, Department Vice Commander Steve Kohnke, and Department Chaplain Virgil Smith.

## VISIT TO WILLIAM MIDDLETON VA HOSPITAL

At our periodic meeting on January 21 at the William Middleton VA Hospital in Madison, we met to ensure that the VA Health Center goals remained aligned with those of The American Legion and to identify ways we could improve our mutual support. We learned about the April groundbreaking of the Madison Fisher House for families awaiting medical therapy or diagnoses. The Middleton VA Hospital continued to re-

ceive the Five-Star rating, an impressive accomplishment! In the photo, President Hembrook presented Executive Director Christine Kleckner with eighty \$25 VISA gift cards as the Department President's special gift to the Hospital. This donation is intended for social workers to distribute to veterans in financial need, especially those who may be suffering from food insecurity or need help purchasing gas to get to medical appointments.



Don Hildebrandt, Post 10 Chaplain; Tony Nardi, Post 10 Commander; Dennis Borchardt, Post 10 Adjutant; George Mosher, Post 10 Finance Officer; Paige Trevino, Store Marketer; Joe Campbell, Post 10 2nd Vice Commander; Brian Fox, Post 10, 1st Vice Commander and Adam Daniek, store Managing Partner.

### TEXAS ROADHOUSE DONATES GIFT CARDS FOR VETERANS

The Texas Roadhouse in Rib Mountain presented \$1540 worth of gift cards to the Wausau American Legion Post 10 on February 5, 2026. This was the tenth consecutive year that they have provided Post 10 with gift cards. These cards are made possible through a Texas Roadhouse program including their amazing staff and the generosity of their guests. With this gift card program, the Post is able to expand its assistance to Veterans in need.

Throughout 2025, previous cards have enabled the Post to provide many Veterans and their families with meals. The Post 10 Service Officer oversees the distribution of the cards to those in need. With uncertainty of travel and health concerns, these gift cards and the Texas Roadhouse "Meals to Go" program provide an opportunity for Veterans to call ahead to pick up their meals.

The Post also provides their Honor Guard members with gift cards after they have presided at more than one military funeral rite on the same day.

On behalf of the Post 10 members and all Veterans, we salute you!

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

### 6TH DISTRICT ORATORICAL



The 6th District held their District Oratorical Contest on February 21 at American Legion Post 70 in Oshkosh. Rowen Stellpflug from Oshkosh West High School was the winner. She is pictured here with 6th District Commander Ken Flock.

### POST 431 MARKS LEGION'S 107TH BIRTHDAY

Three Lakes Post 431 celebrated the American Legion's 107th birthday with dinner, awards, live music, and dancing. Post Commander Chris Lamont presented longevity awards to five Auxiliary members whose total combined years of service is 55 years! She also presented longevity awards to 17 American Legion members who have a combined total of 485 years of service to the American Legion!

**TOP RIGHT:** Mark Wood Finance Officer/Adjutant prepared the meal. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** George Brunette bows his head for a prayer led by Chaplain Bill Clough. **BELOW:** Save room for cake!



### LAFAYETTE COUNTY HOSTS ORATORICAL CONTEST

Lafayette County held their Oratorical Scholarship contest on February 18th. Three students participated in the contest. Grant Kuberski representing Argyle Legion Post 251, Eden Marquardt representing Blanchardville Post 142 and Emanuel Bello representing Darlington Post 214. It was a good contest with all the students making their times on both their Prepared oration and their Assigned Topic oration. In the end, Grant went on to win the contest with Emanuel coming in 2nd and Eden coming in 3rd. For their hard work and dedication to the Oratorical Scholarship Program Lafayette County American Legion awarded Grant \$250, Emanuel \$150 and Eden \$100. Grant will move onto the 3rd District Contest to be held at the Bameveld Legion Post on Saturday March 7th. Pictured are Sam Fuller Lafayette County Commander, Grant Kuberski, Emanuel Bello, Eden Marquardt and 3rd District Oratorical Chairman Peter Herman.



### KENOSHA CARES FOR VETS

"Kenosha Cares for Vets", sponsored by the Kenosha American Legion Post 21 family, has partnered with Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services (KAFASI) to provide more services to more people. The mission is to help area Veterans with everyday necessities, advocacy – and more importantly create meaningful connections. The partnership was established to enhance the ability to locate and reach out to Veterans in private homes, nursing/assisted living facilities, and group homes. Information will be disseminated at senior dining events, Kenosha's Heroes Cafes, and delivered via the Meals on Wheels program.

Veterans in need will be offered:

- Conversation and connections (in-person, by phone, or virtually)
- Personal care needs, clothing, books, games, food, etc.
- We'll help Kenosha Veterans navigate programs such as housing, Veteran Services, Social Security, small home repairs, or other benefits.



### A VISIT TO A MEMBER



Algoma Post 236 commander Mike Froelich (l) and honor guard member Rick Delveaux (r) visited Post member, 92 years old Hansy Nell during his recovery in the Algoma rehab February 22.



Soup contest winners pose with plaques (above) while euchre players enjoy a hand (below) during the Post 200 event.



### POST 200 SOUP CONTEST AND EUCHRE TOURNAMENT

Post 200 of Black River Falls held the fourth Annual Soup/Chili contest and Euchre Tournament. After three successful chili contests, it was decided that this time we should try a soup contest. With 12 soup entrants and over 40 Euchre players, it was considered another successful event. For a free-will donation, the public was able to test the soups and vote for their favorite. Plaques were presented to the top three finishers, and a large time was had by all! The card players had an enjoyable afternoon, letting their soups digest while listening to music and downing a cold beverage or two. Another successful Post 200 event is in the books!

### POST 534 FLAG DISPOSAL



McFarland American Legion Post 534 disposed of 550 flags during a recent flag disposal ceremony.



## DEFOREST AMERICAN LEGION POST 348 HOSTS ORATORICAL CONTEST

Four DeForest Area High School students successfully competed in the American Legion's High School Constitution Oratorical Scholarship contest sponsored by Olson-Grinde Post 348 located in DeForest. The competition was held in the South Commons area of the high school on Thursday evening, January 29.

Sarah Lewis, 11th grade, shown above at left, earned the right to represent DeForest moving forward to the Dane County competition, held on Saturday, February 7th. Other

DeForest High School contestants included the second-place finisher Ms. Riley Stewart (9th grade), and Ms. Isabelle Emerson and Mr. Mokaya Mateni in 3rd and 4th place. Each contestant received a cash award and the book on the Constitution.

Lewis delivered a prepared speech titled "Books & the Constitution," and spoke on Article IV, Section 4 after it was selected at random from four topics announced by The American Legion for this year's contest. Article IV Section

4 is often called the "Guarantee Clause" — and is basically a "security and stability" pact between the federal government and the states.

At the Dane County competition Ms. Lewis placed 2nd. Mount Horeb Post 113 Senior Isaac Gundy took first place, and Verona Post 385 Senior Ella Farritor took third. As runner up, Ms. Lewis will be standing by to represent Dane County in the event that Mr. Gundy is unable to compete for any reason at the District 3 competition on March 7.

## ONE LAST HONOR FOR KENOSHA VETS

Kenosha American Legion Post 21 has partnered with Kenosha funeral homes to provide "One Last Honor" for deceased Veterans and retired American flags in our community.

The "One Last Honor" program was designed to patriotically retire American flags surrendered to the Legion by Kenosha residents, while honoring Veterans and flags with one last patriotic act. Families of deceased Veterans may choose to bury a retired flag with the Veteran or include one in the cremation.

We are so grateful for our partners that provide Veterans one last honor and retire flags with dignity. They are:

- Proko Funeral Home
- Piasecki Funeral Home and Cremation Services
- Bruch Funeral Home
- Kenosha Funeral Services

We never forget the sacrifice of our Veterans, and the meaning of the flag. Our freedom is the result of the sacrifice of Veterans, and we are grateful.

## POST 21 CONTRIBUTION TO VETERANS



The Kenosha Paul Herrick American Legion Post 21 Family presented a certificate of appreciation to Gordie Boucher Ford of Kenosha in recognition of their contributions to Veterans. Boucher Ford has been a generous supporter of the American Legion in Kenosha for the past several years and has pledged continuous support going forward. We are so grateful for their partnership and dedication to Veterans and their families. Representing the Kenosha Legion family were Mike Hellquist, Carol Ratliff, Jim Martin and John Argust.

## POST 352 QUILTS ON VETERANS DAY



Eight hand-made quilts were given to local Veterans during the annual 2025 Cassville Veterans Day supper. Veterans receiving the quilts, back row, from left: Jared Kasten, Travis Van Wick and Katie Okey. Front row, from left: Linda Klauer (receiving on behalf of Nicolas Klauer), Steve Kirschbaum (receiving for Don Rhodes), Gary Kirschbaum (receiving for Mike Schmoll), Ron Esser and Mark Blakeman.

## DANE COUNTY ORATORICAL



The Dane County Oratorical Contest was held at Mason-Lindsay American Legion Post 385, Verona, WI, on February 8. Our contestants were prepared and eager to speak. Our assigned topic was on Amendment IV, Section 4, which relates to our Union's republican form of government. Our contestants posed with Dane County Council Commander Scott Klasy after the contest. From left: Ella Farritor (Verona Post 385, 3rd place), Isaac Gunby (Mount Horeb Post 113, 1st place), and Sarah Lewis (DeForest Post 348, 2nd place).

## CONTINUING TO SERVE

Seven members from McFarland American Legion Edwards-Foye Post 534 pay tribute to veterans at their funerals. They perform a 3 round volley and rifle salute. Member names and the number of funerals they have attended: Tom Downs 78, Steve Halverson 72, Paul Bartosch 59, Dale Sankey 63, Tom Ueberstzig 71, Stuart Allbaugh 29, Ray Schara 107. Picture is the Members performance at the State Capitol on Veterans Day.



## 3RD DISTRICT HOLIDAY PARTY

The 3rd District held their Holiday party. Many candidates running for department leadership positions were in attendance. Picture from left: John Edelblute running for Dept. Vice Commander, Dan O'Brien-3rd Dist. Commander, Steve Kohnke running for Dept. Commander, Candance Rothering running for Dept. Vice Commander, Dept. Commander Nathan Bond, Karl Stuvengen running for National Executive Committeeman and Larry Larson running for Dept. Commander.



## VALENTINES FOR VETS



The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) asked for Valentines to deliver to Veterans in our state Veterans homes. Grades K-3 at Core Knowledge Charter School in Verona sent in 367 Valentines and letters. Chad Churchill, Verona Post 385 Commander, holds up a framed letter from a student named Olivia thanking the Veterans for their service and telling them that they are loved.



## BLUE STAR BANNER



A Blue Star Banner was presented by Belleville Duppler-Smith Post 460 Commander Richard Hardyman to Paul and Amanda (absent from photo) Nemec. A one-year membership in the American Legion for their son Private First-Class Owen Nemec was also presented. Owen is currently stationed at Fort Irwin, Barstow, CA. At the present time Post 460 has three young men currently serving on active duty in the military from the Belleville area who are members of Post 460. Post 460 invites all active duty military members from the area to become members of our post.

*Photo submitted by Wendall Fenstermann-Adjutant-Post 460.*

## 75 HAPPY YEARS FOR A MARINE



Ray and Marian Etzel celebrate 75 years of marriage in June of 2026. Ray is a Marine Veteran and long-standing member of American Legion Post 382 in Menomonee Falls.



## POST 477 PARTICIPATES IN READ ACROSS AMERICA

Members of American Legion Post and Squadron 477 – St Nazianz participated in Read Across America at the Cleveland Elementary School March 2-5. Legionnaires Bernie Booth, Rebecca Pribyl, and Nancy Rivera and Sons of the American Legion member Al Bruckschen, read books celebrating America's 250th Birthday. The group also gave each student an America 250 flag and then donated most of the books they read to the school's library.

Read Across America is the nation's largest celebration of reading as schools across the



entire country participate. The program promotes literacy, and a love of books and reading for children. It's also a way to bring the entire community together while encouraging adults to spend more time reading to children.



ABOVE LEFT: Rebecca Pribyl with third graders. ABOVE RIGHT: Nancy Rivera with fifth graders. AT LEFT: Al Bruckschen with kindergarteners. BELOW: Bernie Booth reading to third graders.



## THIRD DISTRICT ORATORICAL CONTEST

On March 7, the Third District held their District Oratorical Scholarship Contest. There were two contestants Grant Kuberski who represented Argyle Post 251 and Lafayette County and Isaac Gunby who represent Mount Horeb Post 113 and Dane County. According to the judges it was a close contest with Grant being the winner and Isaac as the Alternate to the State competition being held at Ripon College on Saturday March 28. For their hard work and dedication to the Oratorical Scholarship Contest Grant received a Scholarship for \$450 and Isaac a Scholarship for \$300. Pictured from left are Past National Commander Denise Rohan, Third District Commander Dan O'Brien, 1st place contestant Grant Kuberski, Alternate Isaac Gunby and Third District Oratorical Chairman Peter Herman.

## POST 483 PARTICIPATES IN WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Members of Fohl-Martin Post 483 of Allenton, Wisconsin, pose as they gathered to prepare for the Wreaths Across America event which they led in getting sponsorship and placing wreaths received from Worcester Wreaths in Maine, the source of all Wreaths across America. Wreaths were placed in 18 cemeteries in Washington County with a total of about 950 wreaths placed to honor our deceased local veterans on extremely frigid Saturday, December 13, 2025.



## SAL SQUADRON 33 HOLDS RE-LAUNCH MEETING

Hawley-Dietrich American Legion SAL Squadron 33 held its re-launch meeting on January 10 at the Hawley-Dietrich American Legion Post in Neenah.

SAL Squadron 33 attendees included former commander Jim Hooyman, his son Matthew, Commander Chase Freimark, Adjutant George Schroeder, Jack Van Zeeland and Ben Van Zeeland.

6th District SAL Commander Shawn McCrery provided an overview of SAL activities and how they are directly associated with the American Legion. Future potential activities for the Hawley-Dieckhoff American Legion Squadron 33 were also discussed.

SAL Squadron 33's next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 7th at 9am at the post in Neenah.

### BLACK EARTH: 60 YEARS



Black Earth Post 313 member William Rettenmund was presented with a certificate and pin for 60 years membership in the American Legion. L-R William Rettenmund, Post Commander Gary Ballweg.

### POST 19 APPRECIATION



At a Courtney-Carr-Milner Post 19 meeting on January 8, Ronald J. Schnorenberg was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by Post Commander Mary K. Millikin. Ron is a member of four veterans organizations. His services to Hartford and Washington County are too numerous to mention. Picture and Certificate were provided by Post 19 Second Vice Judy Pierce Thorbahn.

### BADGER STATE PARTICIPANTS



Three Lakes American Legion Post 431 honors 2025 Badger Boys and Girls and their families. Pictured is Raqual Gebele and Post Commander Chris Lamon. Thank you to Melanie Stauffer, Jasmyn Joslin, Raqual Gebele, Sawyer Szews, and Ashton Boehm for representing Three Lakes and our Auxiliary and Legion Post for the past year, and thank you, also to their parents for raising these fine, young adults!



Legion Riders Brad Cramlet, Tom Visintainer and John Argust.



Post 21 Color Guard (L-R): Andrew Sabin, Tim O'Brien, Adrian Duczak, Carol Ratliff, Mike Hellquist.

### POST 21 KICKS OFF ST. PATRICK'S PARADE

Kenosha American Legion Post 21 Color Guard and the 1st District American Legion Riders kicked off the Second Annual Kenosha St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14th. The Kenosha parade grew almost double in size from its' debut in 2025 due to the

overwhelming response and turnout by the community. The festivities begin with dying the Lake Michigan harbor green, a fun run, followed by the parade. Residents flocked to downtown to enjoy great food, drinks and Irish fun.

### CONVERSATION AT ANTIGO POST 3 LEADS TO A CROSSBOW

After a past meeting of Antigo Post 3, Bob Hitz came up to Doug Curler (both members of Post 3) to talk to him after some conversation about Doug's involvement with traditional archery. Bob did ask if Doug could help him acquire a reasonably priced crossbow. Doug stated he would give it a try and see what is available.

Doug placed requests on several of the Antigo area information Facebook sites inquiring if anyone had a crossbow they are willing to sell. To his surprise, three responses were received and after working through each one, an agreement was reached with an individual.

Nick Salm had a cross bow that he only used once and it was sitting in a case with arrows and everything else that a novice needed. A meeting was set up with him and Bob in the Antigo Dixie Cafe parking lot.

The exchange was done and Bob had his new



'toy' because he wanted to get out in the woods and deer hunt. That hopefully will be another story and Nick got a new home for his cross bow.

It never hurts to ask and you never know who is willing to help.

Submitted by Doug Curler.



### OKAUCHEE POST 399 WELCOME NEW SQUADRON OF SONS

Okauchee Magnus Anderson American Legion Post 399 has officially welcomed a new squadron of the Sons of the American Legion.

The Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Wisconsin presented the Charter to Post 399 on February 2, 2026. The Charter had previously been approved by National

Headquarters on June 27, 2025, officially recognizing the formation of Squadron 399.

The new squadron will support the mission of the American Legion and assist Post 399 with programs, events, and community service in support of veterans and their families.



### POST 134: 50 YEARS



Gregory Yahn receives a 50 year award for continuing membership in the American Legion. He is a member of the Boscobel Post 134. In the picture is left to right Membership Chairman Bruce Winters, Member Gregory Yahn, Post Commander Donald Wolc Jr.



### KENOSHA POST 21 COLOR GUARD PARTNERS WITH LOCAL COLLEGES

The American Legion Post 21 Color Guard has partnered with the University of Wisconsin Parkside and Carthage College Athletic Departments to present the colors at school sporting events. The Color Guard represents the Post 21 family with members from the Legion, SAL, and the Auxiliary. Parkside Ranger and Carthage Firebird fans have expressed appreciation for our participation, and the relationships will grow for years to come.

In the past year, the Guard has marched in the Kenosha Civic Veteran's Parade, St. Patrick's Day parade, Oktoberfest, Racine's Salmon-orama, Little League All-Star game, Veteran's Day activities at Kenosha schools, and more.

The Post 21 Family Color Guard looks forward to expanding their presence in the Kenosha community in 2026.



## 70 YEARS AT POST 382



Member Ted Tomkins of American Legion Post 382 Menomonee Falls was honored with a 70 Year membership award.

## POST 165 SERVICE CERTIFICATES



Commander Kurt Carlson, American Legion Post 165 - Two Rivers, presented certificates of recognition to U.S. Army Air Corps Veterans, Howard Havlichek (above) for 30 years of service, and to Richard Mott (below) for 50 years of service.



## POST 324 OSSEO HOSTS FLAG DISPOSAL CEREMONY



Osseo's Carl Nelson Post 324 held a Flag Disposal ceremony on February 20. LEFT: Commander Leroy "Buzzy" Thompson, Jon Steinke (American Flag), Brian Bertram (Chaplain), Lyle Skoyen (Legion Flag), Todd Holmen and Dale Holmen. CENTER: Legion members Randy Julien, Dolly Peterson and our Boy Scouts of Osseo with their Dad. RIGHT: Membership Chair Todd Holmen, Sgt of Arms, Dale Holmen, Roger (Army cap) Boy Scouts of Osseo and our Osseo Auxiliary Unit 324 member in the background.

## POST 143 ST. CROIX DONATIONS



Brian Ternes of Post 143 presents a donation to the Manager of Pathway Foods.



Good things going on at American Legion Post 143 in St. Croix Falls. (L-R) Adjutant Roland Mortenson, Sharon, and Finance Officer Jerry Berger present a donation to the St. Croix Food Shelf.

## POST 171 BIRTHDAY DINNER

Sandy Mannix Unit 171 Auxiliary President and Rickard Oberst, Post 171 Commander, present the birthday cake to the attendees at the Union Grove Bixby-Hanson Post 171 American Legion birthday dinner.



## POST 382 FUNERAL HONORS



Menomonee Falls American Legion Post 382 Funeral Honors performed their duty in January 2026 with the temperature at -12 degrees F. Members are (L-R) Matt Larson, Jeff Paige, Wally Kangas and Dan Flanders.

## 70 YEARS OF SERVICE



Kendall Legion and family celebrated Francis Trepes achieving 70 Continuous Years as a Kendall Legionnaire. Representative Nancy VanderMeer presented an official Wisconsin citation commemorating the occasion. Post 309 Commander Doug Rogalla also presented a Legion certificate and medal. It was especially nice to see Francis' family participate in this special recognition. Presentation was made on January 15 at our monthly membership meeting.

## POST 171 BOWLING FOR VETS



As a result of our annual Bowling for Vets fundraiser, Bixby-Hanson Post 171, Union Grove, WI was able to make the following donations: \$2,200 to the Veterans Out Reach of Wisconsin – Tiny Homes; and \$2,200 to the Wisconsin Veterans Home. Shown in the attached pictures is Post 171 Treasurer Larry Goyke presenting checks



**Julie Muhle**  
Department  
Adjutant

## DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Hello from headquarters!

This article is about all the reports that are coming due. Please watch your mail for them and if someone else checks the mail, make sure to let them know the following reports are coming and there is a short turn-around time to get them back to headquarters.

- **Consolidated Post/Squadron Reports** – Commander Bond has asked that all Posts/Squadron complete them by April 1st. You can complete them online via [myLegion.org](https://myLegion.org), download by going to <https://wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-tools>, complete, save and email the form back or by downloading the form and sending it back in the mail.

- **Post/Squadron Data Reports** – these have been sent to all Posts and Squadrons. If you did not receive yours in the mail, you can go to <https://wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-tools> and print one to mail or email back to headquarters. POSTS! If you have a squadron, it is your responsibility to make sure their reports get returned to headquarters. Deadline for these reports is April 15th or sooner. By not completing this form in a timely manner, your post's information will not be correct on renewal notices or in the post locator tool.

- **Post/Squadron/County/District Officer Reports** – These should be sent to your County Commander, District Commander and especially headquarters as soon as possible after elections. If there are no changes, write that on the form when you send it out. This shows us the form was completed. Not sending in any information makes it appear as though you didn't complete a form.

- **Another form asking about dues** – towards the beginning of April, another form will be sent by National asking if your post is going to be raising its dues. This form needs to be returned by mid-April.

- **Processing membership** – National stops updating records around the beginning of April to start printing membership cards for the upcoming year. Any new person, transfer or changes made after this date will not be reflected on the membership card. These members will also not have a new card for next year but you can print them out if you use [myLegion.org](https://myLegion.org).

Thank you in advance for getting your paperwork submitted!

## WAUNAKEE POST 360 REMEMBERS TWO LONG-SERVING LEGIONNAIRES



Waunakee Post 360 lost two long-time members of the Post. LEFT: Legionnaires salute to Ron (RB) Byrnes who was our Past Commander and 56-year Legion member. RIGHT: Post members salute long-time member Steele Schilling.



**James Fialkowski**  
Department Veterans  
Service Officer

## VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

### YOU ARE NOT ALONE

I wanted to address suicide. I was looking for words to convey how suicide takes a toll on those left behind. I also wanted to give some added information on assistance that is available to those in Wisconsin.

Carlos A. Ruiz, the 20th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, posted this and even though it concentrates on Marines, I feel it translates to all and captures what I want to say.

“Sometimes our pain can feel permanent. Sometimes you may even believe you're a burden to the very people who care about you, but that couldn't be further from the truth. If you are struggling, please know our tribe needs you and we want to help you.

When someone dies by suicide, the pain doesn't end... it's transferred. It's carried by your spouses, friends, and Marines. Your life matters more than you know, and your absence leaves a weight your loved ones will have to bear.

Studies tell us:

- Alcohol is almost always involved when a Marine takes their life. I'd ask you to find something else to focus on that will take your mind in a new direction.
- Firearms are a leading cause of suicide. If the stress feels too heavy, create distance between you and anything that could cause you harm. Please put your firearms in the armory, and secure your medications.
- Children who lose a parent to suicide are almost three times more likely to face that same struggle them-

selves. Please don't pass the pain to your children.

Don't give in. Don't give up.

Strength isn't staying silent.

Strength is staying here with our tribe.

You are all loved and I'd ask you to let us help. Find someone you trust, Dial 988, or Text 838255.”

Powerful words from a great leader.

In addition to the suicide hotline, there are other ways to get help and make connections with those who care and understand. Here are a couple.

The Wisconsin American Legion runs a beautiful place doing great things for veterans and their families you may know called Camp American Legion.

Address: 8529 County Road D, Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539, Phone 715) 277-2510, and website [campamericanlegion.org](http://campamericanlegion.org)

A quote from Louis “This place is a slice of Heaven for those in pain!”

Wisconsin Hero Outdoors works with Veterans and First responders to aid in suicide prevention by utilizing the camaraderie of outdoor activities to address the physical and mental health challenges brought on by the stresses of service.

“Wisconsin Hero Outdoors is a vital resource for veterans and first responders. It is great how their service has their families in mind.” – Kurt W.

Caring organizations and people are around; just reach out.

Do not stay silent.



**James Bond**  
WDVA  
Secretary

## WDVA SECRETARY

Greetings, Legionnaires! As you may know, two of my main priorities as Secretary are advocating for programs that benefit veterans in Wisconsin and maintaining the strong relationships that WDVA has with our partners, such as the American Legion. Together, we are stronger. One of those important benefit programs is our Wisconsin Veterans Homes, located in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove.

Wisconsin has a proud tradition of caring for military veterans and their eligible spouses. During my time as Secretary, I've made it a goal to be a regular visitor to our three homes. I look forward to spending time talking with our members, asking about their time at the home, and seeing if there's anything we can do to make it better. I also look forward to talking with the passionate volunteers who do so much for these veterans. They are a big part of what makes our homes so special.


I would be remiss if I did not mention the overwhelming response to this February's Valentines for Veterans campaign. More than 40,000 Valentine's Day cards were sent in from across the country and as far away as Germany. I visited King and Union Grove to hand-deliver gift bags filled with Valentines made by elementary students, community groups, churches, businesses, and of course, several American Legion posts. The smiles on the residents' faces as they read those cards are something I won't forget. My thanks to all who took the time to create and send such heartfelt appreciation for our veterans.

Another thing that sets our homes apart is the variety of activities we can offer residents. Our dedicated staff go above and beyond to provide our members with a wide variety of opportunities to engage their minds and bodies, including music and entertainment in our halls, Packer game-day gatherings, woodworking projects, trips to local zoos and parks, fishing, boating, classic car shows, and so much more.

Beyond activities, each campus offers a range of amenities that make our members feel truly at home. Our goal is not only to provide excellent health care, but also to create a lively, welcoming community where veterans and their spouses can live with dignity, connection, and purpose.

If you are on social media, I encourage you to follow our homes on Facebook and see what our activities teams and skilled care staff are doing to make each home a warm, welcoming, and caring community for our members. Even better, I invite you to visit one of our Wisconsin Veterans Homes, take a tour, and see firsthand how special they are.

I am grateful for the American Legion's support, volunteerism, and generous donations to our three Wisconsin Veterans Homes. Thank you for all you do for our veterans and their families.



*“Surround yourself with good people and they will lift you up!”*

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

**OUR VISION**  
*Giving Wisconsin Veterans the pathway to quality of life*

**OUR VALUES**  
*Honor and Stewardship*

## CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

### CAMP AMERICAN LEGION — THE POWER OF DONATIONS



**Jim Klement**  
 Camp American Legion Director

Donations—whether money, time, skills, or resources—can create meaningful change not only for Camp American Legion but the impact that we have on veterans and their families.

**1. They Meet Immediate Needs**

Donations such as paper products, canned goods, food products, and cleaners are everyday items that are consumed at Camp. Donations of these items greatly impact the operating costs of camp and allows us to funnel more into the activities that we offer.

**2. They Empower Camp**

Beyond short-term help, donations can fund long-term improvements such as main lodge infrastructure repairs, landscaping, and new buildings. These investments allow Camp American Legion to become more resilient and capable to provide more resources for veterans.

**3. They Inspire Collective Action**

When one person gives, others are often encouraged to do the same. This ripple effect can lead to large movements of generosity that dramatically increase the impact of Camp American Legion. Camp American Legion's Sponsor-A-Vet program is a great example of the collective action. I challenge every post, county and district to sponsor at least one veteran every year.

**4. They Strengthen Social Bonds**

Giving fosters empathy and connection. People feel more connected to others when they contribute to camp. Once veterans have the opportunity to stay at camp, they are more inclined to donate and contribute to our mission.

**5. They Benefit the Donor Too**

Studies in psychology show that acts of generosity can improve mental well-being. Giving can increase happiness, reduce stress, and provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

**6. Small Contributions Add Up**

Even small donations can create big change when many people participate. Every penny, nickel and dime add up and creates opportunity for Camp. Whether a person donates one dollar or 100 dollars, their donations are enhancing the experience of each veteran that stays at camp

**7. They Drive Innovation and Change**

Donations can also fund capital improvements projects throughout camp. The Esselman Cabin (Little Chute Post 258 and Mukwonago Post 375) and Marshfield Post 54 Cabin which allows camp to utilize year-round was a huge change for camp. We will need donations for new concepts and ideas as camp evolves to better serve Wisconsin Veterans.

*Thank You,  
 Jim Klement, Camp Director*

*To learn more about the mission of Camp American Legion or to get involved with answering the call, visit [wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org) or find us on Facebook.*

### DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP



**Jerry Hook**  
 Membership Chair

Thank you to everyone for serving our Veterans. Thank you for working so hard to recruit and retain members in the American Legion, Department of Wisconsin.

As we continue to work on our Membership for 2026 remember that we are providing tools each week to assist Posts. Tools are great, whatever we use it is going to come down to action - asking Veterans to join, calling and visiting our members to ask them to renew their membership. Use the Best

Practices; they have proven successful for Posts across the Department. If you have to modify things to make it fit your Post please do. I see so many great things happening around the entire Department. The Posts that are so successful are serving Service Members / Veterans and their families, hosting relevant events, asking Veterans that they meet to join our great organization. I see Posts recognizing and serving their members. Please continue to reach out, in person or on the phone, to our members who have not renewed. Please continue caring for our Veterans. Thank you for all you are doing to continue our Legacy.

We've started our March Membership Contest.



### 102 YEARS YOUNG



Oconomowoc Post 91 member Jerry Wendt took the bus and Post members Richard Pyka, Sam Korn, John Warren, and Dave Corrie to Mission BBQ in Brookfield to celebrate 102-year-old Korean War Veteran Bob Jacob's birthday. Jerry presented Bob with a certificate to honor his service and long years. LEFT: Sitting in the background from left to right are Bob Jacob and Jerry Wendt, while in front from left to right Richard Pyka, Sam Korhorn, John Warren, and Dave Corrie. RIGHT: Bob Jacob receives a certificate from American Legion Post 91 in appreciation of his service to our country and his long years.

### WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION, INC.



**Denise Rohan**  
 Foundation President

During the month of March, The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors approved Hortonville Post 55 and Mukwonago Post 375 requests to use the Foundation's Fiscal Sponsorship pass through process.

Hortonville will be constructing the **Hortonville American Legion Community Center** and Mukwonago will be building a new **Mukwonago Veterans Memorial**. By using the Foundation's 501(c)(3) status these Posts will be able to solicit donations from businesses that may only be able to give to organization with a 501(c)(3) tax status.

Separate accounts have been established within the Foundation's bookkeeping system to track the funds as they are received. As donations are recorded, donors will be sent the required tax-deduction letter of appreciation, and the Posts will have access to the funds as their building process moves forward. Reports will be supplied as requested or at least quarterly.

We also want to celebrate with Columbia County as they move forward with the construction of Cabin

11 at Camp American Legion. Some of the funds for this project passed through the foundation.

The Foundation is here to accept one-time donations or multiple donations to strengthen The American Legion's impact in communities across Wisconsin.

Several employers offer the option of matching charitable donations, such as Alliant Energy and AMCOR Cares. There are organizations like Thrivent Choice Dollars where you can donate to The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation through their online giving platform. Many local businesses have funds set aside in their budgets to help non-profit organizations; you just need to ask.

If you have a special project where you would like those donations to be used, just indicate on your donation documents. It's also helpful if you email me ([pnedenise@gmail.com](mailto:pnedenise@gmail.com)) to watch for the funds so they get credited to the correct accounts. More information about the pass-through process can be found at <https://wilegion.org/foundation>.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of veterans across the state or right in your own community.

### BINGO! WILTON POST 508 AT TOMAH VA



The Wilton American Legion, Post 508 conducted bingo at the Tomah Veterans Administration for the Veterans in February. Pictured are members of the Post and Auxiliary who participated in bingo. The items on the table were collected by the Post and Auxiliary, which were donated to the Tomah Voluntary Services Department for distribution to the Veterans.

## POST 214 ORATORICAL

On January 28, the Darlington American Legion Post 214 held the American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest at the Post. This year there were two contestants Emanuel Bello and Thea Kammerud. The contestants each gave a prepared 8 to 10 speeches on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution and were asked to speak for 3 to 5 minutes on one of four Amendments that was assigned. Both students knew their subject matter with their prepared speeches, but the assigned Amendment was a little harder. When it was all done, Emanuel won the Oratorical and will move onto the Lafayette County Oratorical that is scheduled to be held at the Darlington Post on Wednesday February 18. Thea will be the alternate if Emanuel is not able to attend the County Contest. For their hard work



(L-R) Past National Vice Commander and Post 214 Commander Dave Gough, Thea Kammerud, Emanuel Bello and 3rd District Commander Dan O'Brien.

and dedication preparing for this contest both students were awarded Scholarship money. For 1st Place Emanuel received \$250 and Thea received \$150. Darlington American Legion Post 214 would like to thank both students for

participating in the Oratorical Scholarship contest and we would also like to thank the three judges for taking the time assist the Post. The judges were Clarey Knellwolf-Schwartz-Rayna O'Brien and Sam Fuller.

## POST 171: NON-PROFIT OF THE YEAR



Union Grove Bixby-Hansen Post 171 has been honored by the Union Grove Chamber of Commerce with their "Non-Profit Organization of the Year Award" for 2025. Past Commander Frank Konieska, current Commander Rickard Oberst, and Auxiliary President Sandy Mannix should all be congratulated for their hard work in achieving this honor.



Curtiss S. Peck  
Department VA&R  
Committee Chair

## VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

### BE PRESENT: LISTEN WITH YOUR EARS AND EYES

The most powerful thing you can do to help someone who is experiencing distressing emotions that could contribute to thoughts of suicide is to be present and listen.

Author David Brooks offers these insights:

"When someone is going through a hard time, you don't need to say something wise;

You just have to be there, with heightened awareness of what they are experiencing at the moment."

Being present means establishing and maintaining rapport with the person. Just be yourself. Let the person know that you care and that they are not alone. You should listen, regardless of whether you think their situation and feelings are significant. Be empathetic and non-judgmental. Empathy lies in your ability to be present with what is going on within the person. Empathy is different from sympathy. Sympathy is feeling sorry for someone. Empathy involves understanding. Remember, you cannot develop empathy if you do not listen.



Dave Wischer  
National and  
Homeland Security  
Committee Chair

## NATIONAL AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Your National Homeland Security Committee would like to remind all posts, counties and districts about the upcoming deadline of May 1 for submitting applications for the Public Safety Awards that will be judged at the Department Spring Meetings in May. The applications can be found on the Department website [wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org). Please note that the new applications for Active Duty personnel also has a May 1 deadline for submission.

While you are on the awards page, please consider submitting an individual for one of the many awards that are offered. There are many in our communities who support veterans and the programs of The American Legion and these awards help recognize them.

### Troop and Family Report

We want to say "Thank you" for those who supported this non-budgeted program. Fundraising at the Midwinter conference was a huge success. The funds will help aid our fellow veterans and their families. Please consider donating a portion of your Poppy proceeds to this vital program.

## DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN



Morris Sadicario  
Department  
Historian

Maybe you and your post are working on a Post or Commander Yearbook. If you are, congratulations! Commanders are delighted to receive a book of their post activities. Plus, this book is the first one to pull off the shelf when you have a potential member in front of you. By now, your yearbook should have a brief post background, namesake information, officers' photos, preambles, and have gotten a good start on the index.

Wisconsin yearbooks to be judged for competition are due at Portage HQ by June 5th. Department Historian Morris will judge these with the assistance of members of the Wisconsin Historians Association as needed. Digital and physical yearbooks are judged on separate tracks. A post could even submit the same yearbook digitally and in print. This year's winning yearbooks will be sent to National HQ as the Department of Wisconsin's entries for the **Showcase** displayed at the National Convention in Lexington, KY. All physical submissions will be returned. Winning digital yearbooks are showcased on the National History Contest and Showcase webpages. [legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net](http://legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net).

Yearbooks to be submitted for the non-judged Historians Showcase are due at Portage HQ by June 12th. All physical submissions will be returned.

Refer to the 2026 Historian's Guide authored by Past National Historian Jennifer Laux for yearbook and history guidelines. A copy can be found at this URL: <https://talwha.org/2026-historians-guide/>

Best of luck to all participants!

A QR code for the 2026 Historian's Guide is provided.



Nathan Coward  
Chairman

## LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN

On February 17, 2026, the VA announced an Interim Final Rule on how disability is rated. This avoided the common practice of seeking public, private, and congressional input. The final rule considers the impact of medication during the disability rating process, something that contradicts more than a decade of case law.

Veterans who use medications to manage symptoms where significant improvement is noted may receive lower ratings compared to before this rule change.

In the wake of this Interim Final Rule, American Legion National Commander (and retired District Court Judge from Kansas), Dan K. Wiley, stated, "Veterans should not be penalized for complying with treatment. Even if such treatment shows improvement in symptoms, the underlying disability does not disappear. Functional management is not a total cure. The American Legion respectfully disagrees with VA's justification of good cause, which didn't provide the veteran community an opportunity to be heard before the rule took effect."

VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore stated, "As a former Army Nurse, it seems this rule change could have unforeseen and harmful downstream effects for veterans," and encouraged dialogue with Secretary Collins and his team in the interest of the veterans they serve.

DAV National Commander Coleman Nee said, "DAV is extremely disappointed and alarmed by VA's decision to issue an Interim Final Rule today that could potentially reduce disability compensation for millions of disabled veterans."

The alarm bells went off in every VSO in the country, and there were formal statements from MOAA, PVA, and many others.

VA Secretary Collins posted on X, "This is fake news." "The rule simply formalizes VA's longstanding practice -since 1958- of determining disability ratings based on Veterans' service-related disabilities and any medications they are taking to treat those disabilities."

However, backlash continued from veterans and advocates. On February 19th, the VA suspended enforcement of the Interim Final Rule. This, in effect, left the rule in place but did not remove or rescind the policy.

On February 27, just seven days after the Interim Final Rule was published, more than 20,000 comments had been submitted to the VA advocating against the rule. Secretary Collins rescinded the Interim Final Rule, stating, "VA always takes veterans' concerns seriously and recognizes that many commenters construed the interim final rule as something that could result in adverse consequences."

This situation could have ended catastrophically for millions of US Veterans. Our advocacy works; hold your representatives accountable.

# The Last Bugle



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

- 3 Antigo**  
John H. Gregg K  
John L. Barnett P
- 4 Athens**  
Robert C. Gauerke V  
Gene A. Miller V
- 7 Rhinelander**  
Paul E. Berscheit G/L
- 9 Wisconsin Rapids**  
Raymond T. Hancock K
- 10 Wausau**  
Roger F. Pickering K  
Jared R. Green V  
Daniel H. McKenna K  
Donald Schewe V  
Ervin W. Krahn K
- 11 Green Bay**  
Gerald A. Willems  
Mary Aylward-Bolduc
- 12 Spooner**  
Lynn Tripp V  
Bill Whitelaw V
- 13 Richland Center**  
Bernard A. Couey WWII
- 15 Juneau**  
Daniel W. Klossner V
- 19 Hartford**  
Ronald H. Krentz V  
Robert A. Scheper V
- 21 Kenosha**  
Richard F. Braatz V  
Raymond W. McCloskey
- 33 Neenah**  
Robert C. Johnson K
- 35 Evansville**  
C. Dean Arnold
- 36 West Bend**  
Thomas A. Treptow V  
Russell D. Jaqua K  
James F. Mikkelson Sr. K  
Herbert F. Wolf V  
Richard A. Miller Jr. V
- 38 Appleton**  
John C. Bax P
- 39 Marinette**  
William Lorenz  
40 Bangor  
Alvin C. Oesterle
- 42 Platteville**  
Nick Johansen K
- 44 Wabeno**  
Mathew Lasecki K  
45 Elkhorn  
Eleanor Montano K
- 48 Beloit**  
William I. Chryst K  
Daniel Hammell V  
Vickie Shelabarger V
- 51 West Salem**  
Richard R. Wehrenberg K
- 52 La Crosse**  
John A. Bast V  
Roy F. Modahl K  
Robert J. Stange V  
Warren J. Hoff V  
James A. Petersen V
- 53 Eau Claire**  
Jeffrey Becker V
- 54 Marshfield**  
John Weigman V  
Dennis J. Beyer V
- 56 Fountain City**  
John A. Reiter
- 59 Stoughton**  
Richard E. Feran

- 60 Kimberly**  
Joseph L. Bach V
- 67 Lake Mills**  
Al Worden K  
Bruce Overdahl  
68 Prairie du Chien  
Lowell Ahrens V
- 69 Mayville**  
Norbert F. Weinberger K
- 71 Milwaukee**  
Douglas P. Abbott V
- 72 Sturgeon Bay**  
George E. Emmerich WWII
- 75 Fond du Lac**  
Dirk Vanpelt K  
Robert N. Gahagan V  
Richard Baumhardt V  
Arnold J. Roloff V
- 77 Chippewa Falls**  
Clyde H. Erickson V  
Harold J. Radke V
- 79 Burlington**  
David W. Maher K  
Frank S. Bogyos  
Gilbert A. Kaebisch Jr. V  
John E. Dornacher G/L
- 80 New Richmond**  
Alex G. Schroeder K
- 81 Mauston**  
Randy J. Mullenberg PG  
George E. Pierce WWII  
Albert C. Demaske K
- 82 Port Washington**  
James Blumenberg K  
Nathan L. Cannon V
- 84 Monroe**  
Joe Simonette K  
Ronald L. Norris Sr. V
- 85 Muscoda**  
Gail B. Surrem V
- 87 Rice Lake**  
Patrick J. Becker V  
James Doorn V  
Lee H. Johnson K
- 89 Minocqua**  
Robert D. Moen K  
Joseph R. Tennessen V  
Raymond J. Simmonds K  
Dale E. Davidson V
- 90 Ashland**  
George E. Setzke K  
Mick P. Truchon V
- 91 Oconomowoc**  
Francis J. Szymorski V
- 93 Tomahawk**  
Gerald Vallier V  
Willard M. Jones K  
Berry K. Scheu V  
John Weigman V
- 100 Sparta**  
Gale J. Ley V  
Douglas D. Schroeder K  
Monty D. Olson V  
Robert E. Sutton V
- 102 Walworth**  
Keith N. Jensen V
- 103 Galesville**  
Franklin J. Fratzke V  
Austin Scace GWOT
- 104 Hazel Green**  
Albert E. Johnson  
Leland P. Weber V
- 106 Seymour**  
Gordon Grosnick V  
James Baumgart V
- 108 Clear Lake**  
Phillip E. Rogers
- 109 Lancaster**  
Myron Reuter K
- 111 Somerset**  
Robert Larson V
- 113 Mount Horeb**  
Wilbert J. Hefty K
- 115 Elroy**  
Harold E. Rondestvedt K  
Leland W. Vieth V  
Steven M. Grillley V  
George Gore K
- 117 Shawano**  
Henry L. Berner K  
Mathias Katch V
- 142 Blanchardville**  
Roland Trumble K
- 146 Beaver Dam**  
Eugene M. Kenitzer K  
Joseph H. Garczyński Sr. V
- 147 Medford**  
James N. Dougherty K  
Thomas Seidl V
- 148 Bloomington**  
Allan Martin WWII
- 155 Westby**  
Paul O. Stenslien K  
Alan Willis V
- 161 King**  
Harvey Goglin K  
Roger C. Zeihen K  
Thomas G. Vaughan V  
Theodore L. Larsen V
- 164 Jefferson**  
Edward Dettmers V
- 165 Two Rivers**  
Wayne C. Dent K  
Wilmer Siebert V  
Jay Fessler P
- 170 Mineral Point**  
Daniel M. Gibbons V
- 171 Union Grove**  
Daniel J. Seitz V
- 173 Whitewater**  
Phillip W. Valentine V
- 180 Milwaukee**  
Robert R. Rydlewicz WWII
- 181 Durand**  
Galen C. Radle K  
Joe Berger K  
Roger M. Hillestad PG  
Lester W. Komro K

- Jack W. Komro K
- 182 Park Falls**  
Michael K. Moller V
- 188 East Troy**  
Robert F. Billiat V
- 199 Reedsville**  
Lawrence G. Vanderwegen V
- 202 Chaseburg**  
Allen S. Twine V
- 209 Orfordville**  
Duane C. Tippelt V
- 211 Florence**  
Edwin Kelley
- 212 Barron**  
John H. Kirk K  
Rodney S. Davis V
- 214 Darlington**  
Russell L. Swanson V
- 216 Lodi**  
Terry Hillestad V
- 217 Bonduel**  
Earl H. Maki V
- 220 Soldiers Grove**  
Larry H. Christopherson V
- 221 Osceola**  
Steven T. Anderson  
GWOT
- 224 Alma**  
Curtis R. Peterson Sr. P
- 233 Waterloo**  
Albert Schaller WWII
- 234 Omro**  
James H. Grover V
- 242 La Valle**  
Terry L. Towne V
- 243 Plymouth**  
Jim R. Riesenbergh V  
James F. Zielke V  
Robert H. Janssen
- 250 Adams**  
Joseph Havlik
- 258 Little Chute**  
Sylvester Vanden Hogen K
- 259 Prairie Farm**  
Clifford J. Harland V
- 260 Deerfield**  
Daniel A. Zeimet
- 268 Bruce**  
Ernest Simpson V  
Dale A. Daggett K
- 280 Pound**  
Rodney G. Kust V  
August E. Shevy V
- 284 Holmen**  
Raymond C. Lord V
- 286 Oostburg**  
Calvin J. Jensema K
- 288 Cedarburg**  
Charles A. Bowser V  
Jim Ruppel V
- 294 Hartland**  
Melvin H. Briggs PG
- 310 Racine**  
Charles Wahl K

- 320 Humbird**  
Jerry D. Parker V
- 333 Sun Prairie**  
Philip Mathison V
- 336 Onalaska**  
Richard L. Carrell V  
Richard J. Eggen V  
Robert Schleifer V  
Larry A. Lindesmith V
- 337 Pulaski**  
Chester L. Kozlowski WWII
- 339 Almond**  
Kenneth J. Boelter K  
Douglas J. Belt V
- 340 Berlin**  
Paul Unangst K
- 347 Lomira**  
Ronald C. Geidel V
- 348 DeForest**  
Richard J. Hankins V
- 350 Reedsburg**  
Thomas G. Seamonson V  
Phillip Bailey V
- 351 Montello**  
Paul E. Weldon V  
Robert D. Vent V
- 352 Cassville**  
Steve W. Barnett V
- 353 Cornell**  
Ernest G. Hetke V  
Marion Andruszkiewicz K
- 355 Grafton**  
Wayne H. Herder
- 360 Waunakee**  
Robert E. Forbess WWII  
Steele Schilling V
- 364 Winneconne**  
Roger K. Wolf V  
Lawrence C. Krueger K
- 368 Hixton**  
Ray J. Thompson K
- 370 Wild Rose**  
John F. Bronk V
- 372 Forestville**  
Louis M. Declark K  
Henry J. Gilson V
- 375 Mukwonago**  
William A. Burch V  
Jeff M. Antczak V
- 376 Fall Creek**  
Gerald L. Hartwich V
- Alvin R. Erdman K
- 379 Birchwood**  
Raymond A. VanAcker K
- 382 Menomonee Falls**  
William J. Metsa K  
James R. Horvat K
- 385 Verona**  
Paul B. Wieland V
- 387 Plymouth**  
Richard Binversie V  
Peter J. Warner V
- 391 Fremont**  
James M. Boyson V
- 393 Edgar**  
Ronald G. Hahn V
- 395 Kingston**  
Robert W. Burdick V  
Lee Engel V
- 402 Washington Island**  
Glen G. Goodlet K  
Edward J. Regnier V
- 412 Belgium**  
Gerald G. Hubing K
- 413 Crivitz**  
Jerome E. Swanson V
- 420 Juneau**  
Bruce J. Nekich V
- 425 Exeland**  
Jon E. Martin V
- 426 Muskego**  
Lawrence W. Lee V
- 436 Wrightstown**  
Robert J. Riesterer III V
- 445 Cashton**  
Orval L. Hilden K
- 449 Brookfield**  
Kurt C. Peters V  
Ronald H. Merkel Sr. V
- 454 Fond du Lac**  
Ralph L. Birschbach K  
Michael L. Gavin V
- 459 Eleva**  
James A. Anderson V
- 460 Belleville**  
Jerald C. Remy K
- 469 Marathon**  
Kenneth Lang V
- 470 Saukville**  
Vern Forman V
- 473 Potosi**  
Richard C. Erickson V
- 477 Saint Nazianz**

- Nicholas J. Birkle V  
Richard Young  
**478 Saint Cloud**  
Dan Dreifuert V  
Jerome R. Schaefer V  
**480 Presque Isle**  
James R. Hannemann V
- 481 Waunakee**  
David J. Rennhack V  
Donald K. Mickelson  
John Kavanough V
- 483 Allenton**  
Robert J. Breitkreutz III V  
Donald R. Scoles V
- 485 Wisconsin Rapids**  
Ronald Peters V
- 486 Jackson**  
Darold Hoelz WWII  
Michael F. Riebe V
- 489 Milwaukee**  
Wayne F. Whittow K
- 496 Sherwood**  
Thomas Vanlieshout V
- 499 Gordon**  
Douglas D. Macdonald V
- 501 Madison**  
Dale D. Muehlenkamp V
- 508 Wilton**  
James C. Carta WWII
- 533 Bancroft**  
Carl Cummings K  
James D. King K
- 534 McFarland**  
Michael R. Larson V  
John S. Ong WWII
- 537 Milwaukee**  
Alfred T. Dubois K  
Gary D. Roux V  
Otto Radke V  
Robert J. Bird V  
William A. Schoenleber V
- 541 Northfield**  
David A. Tweed V  
Walter L. Duerkop Jr. V
- 2930 Portage**  
Ronald Hansen K  
James R. Ulberg  
Charles W. Hamilton Jr.  
Albert L. Berkes K  
Rodney Muller K  
Ken Rabideau



## County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin

EVERY COUNTY AND TRIBE IN WISCONSIN STANDS READY TO SERVE ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AT NO COST TO YOU.

Your local Veteran Advocates, serving you since 1935





## MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations to the 85 units in Wisconsin that are at or above 100% in membership! Keep hiking and biking those trails, rowing those canoes, checking out the wildlife and shining your lights brightly through your National Parks as you increase your membership!

Wisconsin membership exceeded national's goal of 85% by March 31st, currently boasting 87.38% as of March 18, 2026! We hit the 85% mark on February 25! But let's not stop the momentum! How awesome would it be to get President Sue to 100% by convention?!? That's 2,001 more members. It is doable!

Here's how: with 339 units in Wisconsin, each district needs 167 members, or each county only needs 28 members, or each unit only needs six more members. See, if you break it down into small bites, it can be done. You can take it one step further and break it down by weeks. There are roughly 14 weeks before convention, with 167 members per district needed, that would be 12 members per district per week, or each county would need one member per week from now until convention. Breaking it down even further, it's 1/2 member per week per unit or about one every two weeks. See, very doable!

And what is the easiest way to get that new member? Just ask!

### DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP TEAM

**Christina Petranovich**  
Department Chairman  
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715-512-0628

**Diane Burkhalter**  
Committee Member  
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414-807-0501

**Claudia Osero**  
Committee Member  
countonclaudia@gmail.com  
715-612-2161

**Andrea Stoltz**  
Membership Program Coordinator  
alawi@amlegionauxwi.org  
608-745-0124

**Membership Totals**  
- 87.38%  
(as of 3/18/2026)

District	Goal %
4	94.68%
11	93.36%
3	90.86%
6	89.87%
2	89.55%
9	89.21%
7	87.45%
12	86.69%
1	85.95%
10	85.49%
8	85.02%
5	72.06%

### MENTOR OF THE YEAR: DUE 5/15/2026

Mentor of the Year nominations are due to PPP Chairman Diane Weggen by May 15, 2026.

Visit [www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org) > Programs > Past Presidents Parley for details or contact Diane Weggen at [dsweggen@gmail.com](mailto:dsweggen@gmail.com) for more information.

## PDP SIROVINA TO BE CONVENTION'S HONORED GUEST

Past Department President Diana Sirovina will be the honored guest at the 2026 Department Convention on July 17-18 at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton, Wisconsin. Diana is a 38-year ALA member currently of Unit 171 in Union Grove, Racine County, District 1. She served as Department President from 2012-2013.

■ Please see Page A3 for the Convention Schedule, the Official Call for the Convention, and for a story about a fundraising event at the Convention.

Diana's eligibility for membership is through the service of her late father, Ronald Kaun, who served in the Army during the Korean War. She has her own American Legion Family:

- Husband Bob Sirovina, Past SAL Detachment Commander
- Daughter April Kollmorgen, currently serving the ALA as Central Division National Security Chairman
- Son-in-law Kris Kollmorgen US Navy retired, 22 years in submarine service, a Legionnaire
- Granddaughter Addison, Junior member since birth in 2011

Since 2017, Diana has worked for von Briesen & Roper S.C., currently in the Law Library. She spent three years at the Wisconsin



DIANA SIROVINA PDP

Supreme Court Law Library and has extensive management experience.

American Legion Auxiliary experience and leadership were gained by Diana's many chairmanships and offices at the district, department and national levels. District 4 reached 100% membership both years of Diana's 2005 - 2006 district presidency.

On the department level, Diana currently serves as Chairman of Constitution & Bylaws,

Office Policy and Christmas Gift Shop Manager. Other department committees include Public Relations, Fall Forum, State Convention, Children & Youth, Leadership, ALA In The Know, Legislative, Standing Rules, Office Policy, Past Presidents Parley, and Finance.

National appointments include NEC, Alternate NEC, Central Division Leadership & C&B Chairman, and member on Juniors, ALA Girls Nation, Membership, Public Relations and Poppy Committees. Diana served as chairman for the 2010 National Convention in Milwaukee and national chairmanships for Leadership (2 years), National Security, Constitution & Bylaws, Community Service, Poppy and Americanism. She also served as a Mission Training presenter.

Diana's presidential theme was 'Working Together...for Veterans and Our Organization.' Her special project was Wisconsin's Homeless Women Veterans Grant Fund. She encouraged Auxiliary units to "take every opportunity to join with your Post and SAL to work together for our veterans, our active-duty military, their families and our special project—homeless women veterans." Diana ended her year as Department President as the recipient of National President Peggy Thomas' Award for Excellence.

Diana will be honored during the 2026 Department Convention. Please plan to join in celebrating her years of service.

## 'SUPPORT THE TROOPS'

Members of the Fohl-Martin Legion Family 483 in Allenton sponsored a "Support the Troops" event in November 2025 collecting wonderful items donated by the caring communities of Allenton, Slinger, and the surrounding area. The caring, support, and generous number of snacks, toiletries, reading and activity items were terrific. Financial donations paid postage to ship packages out. Over 970 items and nearly \$700 were collected to "Support the Troops." Deployed troops enjoyed receiving the presents and holiday joy.



Unit 483 member Donna Kauper presenting the check and donated items to event co-chairs, LeAnn Boudwine and Sue Melichar.

## CORRECTION

### EDITOR'S CORRECTION: POPPY MAKING WORKSHOP

Correction: We mistakenly identified the poppy maker in the Poppy Making Workshop article that ran on Page A5 of the February issue. Pictured: Brenda Tryba, trainer from Post 179, and Post Commander Craig Johnson of Brookfield Post 296. We apologize for the oversight.



## THANK YOU

To our American Legion Family... Words cannot express the sincere thank you for your prayers, visits, cards, and kind words before and at Tom's passing. The walk-through at the visitation truly touched our hearts! We will never forget the love and support shown during this difficult time. Tom loved the Legion Family and was honored to be a part of it. God's Blessings and thank you!  
*The Tom Petrie Family - Mary, Matthew, Rebecca & Mark*

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**Sandy Mack**

**Department Chaplain/Music Chairman**  
Smack0555@gmail.com  
262-388-9816

As the fires are burning far away, the world feels unsettled, we stop and take in a moment that reaches beyond debate, breaking news and all the noise.

**Let us lift our troops in prayer:**

Every uniform is worn by a real person, and every assignment is carried out by a living soul.

All deployments leave loved ones behind, counting the days until their loved ones come home safely.

These men and women are serving in places many of us will never go, facing realities many of us will never fully grasp. They bear duty, discipline, bravery, and at times, they bear silent worry no one else can see.

The sight of a service member lowering their head in prayer speaks to something powerful and deeply human.

In the middle of turmoil, faith still endures.

In the midst, hope still burns.

Even where fear is present, God's presence can still be felt.

We pray that they are given courage when every second matters, they are covered with protection when danger closes in.

We pray that their minds stay clear, their bodies stay strong, and their hearts stay steady when weariness presses hard.

*Let us pray for the families who wait, the mothers lying awake through the night, the husbands and wives watching their phones for any sign of news and the children holding onto memories, longing for the embrace of someone they love:*



May God watch over each and every unit, every road they travel, every post, and every mission they are given.

May He quiet their hearts and guard each life in harm's way.

May He carry them through and bring them safely home.

When the world feels unsteady, prayer is not frailty.

It is faith moving.

It is hope refusing to die.

So today we pause a moment.

*We pray.*

*May bravery lead them.*

*May God surround them with His protection.*

"Together We Can Make a Difference"

## GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

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

The 2026 ALA Department Convention is scheduled for July 17-18, 2026, at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton. The PPP Business meeting will be held virtually prior to convention. The opening procession will start at 8:30 am on Friday, July 17. Installation will be on Saturday, July 18 at 3:00 pm. Past Department President Diana Sirovina will be our special guest with a tribute in her honor presented during convention. Department's governing documents will be reviewed and updated, officers will be elected and installed, and units will be recognized for all their hard work with membership this year. Please visit

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

**Mary Petrie**  
**Department Chairman**  
mmrtpetrie@charter.net

Some things are simply unpredictable...life throws its curves and Mother Nature often wavers on the season, but a sure constant is the American Legion Auxiliary Mission. The Children & Youth program is one of the four pillars The American Legion was built on. For over a century, units have remained focused on finding ways to support our youth. After all, children are our future and encouraging them to succeed clears the path to do so.

The Sons of the American Legion's snugly A.L.F. is popular and comforting to youngsters facing a loved one's deployment or dealing with a serious illness. Sponsoring delegates to a weeklong government session at ALA Badger Girls State gifts first-hand knowledge and leadership skills while promoting teamwork and lifelong friendships. Scholarships guide students on their educational journey. Monetary and in-kind donations ease bumps in the road for those needing a helping hand. Funding youngsters to a camp like Hometown Heroes creates an extraordinary experience they will long remember.

It's all about our kids! April celebrates the Month of the Military Child and April 15th's Purple Up! Day, both of which show support for military children, raising awareness of the sacrifices they make as their parents and siblings defend America. Wearing purple further emphasizes and symbolizes that color - a combination of the those worn by the branches of our military: Army green, Navy blue, Air Force blue, Marine red, and Coast Guard blue.

The Youth Hero Award honors those under age 18 who have demonstrated a physical act of valor, while the Good Deed Award recognizes those who donate time and/or money for a worthy community cause. Keep in mind that these awards are available year-long, so be on the lookout for possible recipients. Visit the Wisconsin website for award nomination forms. ([www.amlegionauxwi.org](http://www.amlegionauxwi.org))

A thank you is a small reward for what has been accomplished, but knowing the ALA has made a difference and continuing to do so will impact these precious lives. That is priceless!

the website for more convention details as they are finalized and plan to attend in July.

The 2026 National Convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky with ALA convention sessions from August 31-September 2, 2026. Anyone interested in attending should ask to be nominated as an Alternate by their District President prior to June 1. Nominees for Alternate will receive a convention packet from department as soon as information is available, usually in mid-June. Details will also be posted on the website at that time. Members who would like to attend as guests, should notify Bonnie Dorniak ([deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org](mailto:deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org)) to request a convention packet.

In October 2025, the ALA Foundation Board of Directors approved an increase to the minimum subgrant amount that the Foundation will process, raising the threshold to \$2,500. This

change took effect immediately following the board's action. As a result, the ALA Foundation is no longer able to process subgrant requests for donations under \$2,500. Any donation intended to be received and distributed through the Foundation as a subgrant must meet or exceed this minimum amount.

Fortunately, the Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc. will be happy to help Wisconsin ALA units receive donations for Auxiliary programs through corporate grants, foundations, or employer match programs! Visit their website ([wilegion.org/foundation](http://wilegion.org/foundation)) and submit a One-Time Donation Form if you wish to take advantage of this opportunity. Units should also notify Adjutant Julie Muhle ([Julie.muhle@wilegion.org](mailto:Julie.muhle@wilegion.org)) about the potential donation and donors should ensure their payment clearly indicates where it is designated so the funds are processed properly.



## COMMUNITY SERVICE: MARATHON UNIT 469

Members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 469 of Marathon generously contributed by donating, shopping, preparing, and packing bag lunches for the Marathon County Meal Train. The Meal Train provides lunches to vulnerable citizens in the community, including those without homes, those with disabilities, the elderly, and struggling families.

# 2026 ALA Department Convention Hilton Paper Valley, Appleton

## 2026 OFFICIAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

(Current as of 03/04/2026, Subject to Change)

The following meetings will be held via Zoom prior to Convention.

Dates/Times to be determined.

Past Presidents Parley Annual Meeting

Election Instructions Meeting (for Judges of Elections, Credentials Chair, Department Tellers, District Presidents and District Pages)

### Thursday, July 16, 2026

10:00 am – 11:00 am	Registration Setup
11:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration
11:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Fundraiser Raffle
2:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Headquarters Office – Open
6:00 pm	Past Department Presidents Dinner (by invitation only)

### Friday, July 17, 2026

7:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration
7:00 am – 5:00 pm	Headquarters Office – Open
7:30 am – 8:15 am	Flag Rehearsal
8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Fundraiser Raffle
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Processional Line-Up
8:30 am	Processional
8:45 am – 5:00 pm	ALA Convention General Session (w/lunch break)

### Saturday, July 18, 2026

7:00 am – 8:00 am	Registration
7:00 am – 11:00 am	Headquarters Office – Open
8:00 am – 11:00 am	Fundraiser Raffle
8:00 am – 2:30 pm	ALA Convention General Session (w/lunch break) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am-VOTING (Convention doors will be closed during voting)</li> <li>• Convention reconvenes immediately following voting</li> <li>• Judges of Election/Credentials Chairman/Dept Tellers-count ballots</li> </ul>
	Flag Recessional
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Photo Session for 2026-2027 Department Officers & District Presidents
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Installation of 2026-2027 Department Officers/District Presidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjournment of 2026 Convention</li> </ul>
4:30 pm – 4:55 pm	Post-Convention DEC Meeting
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Church Services
6:30 pm	Joint Memorial Service Practice
7:00 pm – 11:00 pm	Past Commanders Club Party w/Entertainment – <b>Everyone invited to attend!</b> (Advance ticket purchase required – see registration form for details)

### Sunday, July 19, 2026

8:00 am	Wisconsin American Legion Family Memorial Service
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Orientation for 2026-2027 District Presidents & District Membership Chairmen

## OFFICIAL CALL

### Friday-Saturday, July 17-18

**Official Call:** The 2026 American Legion Auxiliary Department Convention will be called into session at the Hilton Paper Valley, 333 W College Avenue, in Appleton at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, July 17, 2026.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the department convention is to elect 2026-2027 department officers, a candidate for 2027-2028 Central Division National Vice President, and delegates and alternates for the 2026 national convention; amend the department's governing documents as needed; receive reports of the department officers and chairmen; recognize outstanding unit achievements; and transact business as may be brought before the convention body.

**Representation:** Representation in the department convention shall be by unit in accordance with the provisions of the department constitution. Units whose district dues have not been paid shall have no representation. Delegates to department convention shall be unit members duly elected for that purpose.

**Registration:** All attendees to the 2026 Department Convention must submit a registration form and \$30 per person to The American Legion by July 6, 2026. Registrations after July 6th will be \$35.

**Voting:** All delegates must be registered by 8:00 am on Saturday, July 18th and seated within their District for voting at 9:00 am. Business will resume as soon as voting is completed.

**Housing Blocks:** All reservations at the Hilton Paper Valley must be made directly with the hotel using this QR Code:



The Reservation Link for discounted rooms at the Hilton Paper Valley of \$119/night (plus tax) will be active from April 1, 2026 to June 18, 2026.

Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis until the room block is sold out or the link expires, whichever comes first. Members are encouraged to make room reservations as soon as possible.

**Deceased Members:** Names of deceased members that are sent to Department Headquarters by May 1, 2026 on a Member Data Form will appear in the Joint Memorial Service Program.

**Installation:** Installation of 2026-2027 Department Officers and District Presidents will be on Saturday, July 18th at 3:00 pm.

Please visit the department website ([www.almlegionauxwi.org](http://www.almlegionauxwi.org)) for convention details.

## CONVENTION FUNDRAISER

Margaret Larson  
Fundraising Chair  
[maggiedoit@hotmail.com](mailto:maggiedoit@hotmail.com)  
715-410-7936

**“Honor Our Country,  
Support Our Veterans”**

At this year's Department Convention, we will have raffle baskets to raise funds for President Sue's special project, Wisconsin Camp American Legion. We are asking units, districts and members to donate a raffle basket. Please include a card with listed items and title of the donating unit, district, or member(s). Please wrap the baskets in cellophane. I ask that no perishable items or plants be donated. We will offer different baskets each day, so please email me to let me know which day you will be dropping your basket off at convention. [maggiedoit@hotmail.com](mailto:maggiedoit@hotmail.com). Please contact me if you have any questions.

## LEGISLATIVE

Becky Mueller  
Department Chair  
[clareanceandbecky@aol.com](mailto:clareanceandbecky@aol.com)  
920-464-0320

Are you continuing to advocate for our Veterans, Military, and communities? As we watch the evening news, it is even more imperative that we let our voices be heard. In a world full of turmoil, we need to be clear about the priorities that we expect our leaders to set.

April 7 is the General Spring Election for Wisconsin. This is a non-partisan ballot including Supreme Court Justice, Circuit Court Judges, County Supervisors, and School Board Members. This fall will be the Fall Primary and General Election for partisan races, including Governor and Representatives on many levels. Be informed and ready to cast your ballot. All races directly impact our lives.

Grassroots are active. Our department family remains near the top in the number of contacts made through the Action Center. Keep up this important work! The American Legion Legislative Committee keeps us informed by bringing pertinent information to us.

Remember our Wisconsin 250 Challenge and send in your contacts made to your District Legislative Chairman, District President, or myself. Second and Sixth District are fiercely competitive in this contest with 10th District catching up. This is a contest we all win because it shows our strength as advocates for what we believe in.

Time for our reports! Even no activity is a report – but we all should be voting, staying informed of issues, and making a difference. IF you have pictures of attendance at meetings with elected officials, working at a polling place, peacefully protesting, or in other ways making your voice heard, please email them to me. NOT Facebook! I would like to use them in my report.

Remember we are NON-PARTISAN as an organization – do NOT wear your branded attire when attending political rallies or other partisan party events. We do NOT endorse parties or candidates. This also applies to posts on social media. We must maintain a good working relationship with elected officials no matter their party affiliation. That is what makes us so effective in our efforts to advocate for veterans, military, and our communities. Thank you.

### 2026 American Legion Auxiliary Wisconsin Sweepstakes

**50 PRIZES  
TOTALING  
\$15,000**

6 prizes at \$500 each  
8 prizes at \$400 each  
16 prizes at \$300 each  
20 prizes at \$200 each



Return by  
May 1, 2026

Please consider a donation of \$5.00 each, six (6) for \$20.00 or twelve (12) for \$40.00. Drawing to be held at ALA Department Headquarters • 2930 American Legion Dr., Portage, WI 53901. Draw date May 12, 2026 at 11am. See reverse side for mailing instructions. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. DONATION DOES NOT IMPROVE YOUR ODDS OF WINNING.

## THANK YOU

to those who have already supported  
the ALA Spring Sweepstakes  
promoted in the February issue.  
The deadline to enter is **May 1, 2026.**  
Enter your tickets today!

## Amy Luft for Department President

Amy Luft announces her candidacy for the position of Department President. Amy is endorsed for this position by the Rose-Harms Unit 355 in Grafton and the Ozaukee County Council.

As a Paid-Up-For-Life 19-year member, Amy's membership honors her late father Robert Akright, a WWII Army veteran. Amy's passion for the American Legion Auxiliary has blessed her with many opportunities. She has served in several different officer positions including President of her Unit, County and 2nd District. Amy has also held many different positions at the department level, currently serving as the Senior Vice President. Her past department chairmanships have included Leadership, National Security, Public Relations and Membership team. In addition, she co-chaired the ALA In The Know and served on the Strategic Planning Committee. At the national level, Amy had the honor of serving as the National Convention Chairman for the 2022 National Convention in Milwaukee. Her previous national chairmanships have included Central Division Leadership Chair and National Legislative Vice Chair. She currently serves as the National Community Service Vice Chair.

Amy has attended several national Mission Training classes and continues to complete ALA Academy courses on a regular basis. She is also a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College. As a member of Stars & Stripes Honor Flight since 2009, Amy served in many capacities including Vice President and continues to serve as an ambassador for the program. To date she has participated in 58 honor flights. Amy is also a member of the VFW Auxiliary Unit 5373 of Ozaukee County and is a state board member of the Selective Service. She volunteers with Interfaith Caregivers, Meals-On-Wheels and has served as a Village Trustee for the Village of Grafton since 2020. Amy has a degree in Business Management and spent over 22 years in sales and marketing in the senior healthcare industry. Currently, Amy works in the nonprofit sector at a local food pantry. Amy and her husband Todd have two daughters and two grandsons who belong to the American Legion Family. Amy's goal is to promote the initiatives and programs of The American Legion Family while supporting and advocating for veterans, military and their families.



**Amy Luft**

## Christina Petranovich for Department Sr. Vice President

Christina Petranovich announces her candidacy for Department Senior Vice President and is a 23 year Paid Up-For-Life member. She is endorsed by Unit 118, Clark County ALA, and District 7.

She served as chaplain, secretary, and President of Unit 118 in Thorp. She was District 7 President for almost two terms. She is currently the Department First Vice President and the Department Membership Chairman. She has been a district chairman of several programs, including Poppy, Juniors, National Security, and Public Relations.

Christina has attended several department and national conventions and mission trainings. She is very involved in her community and church. Her daughters, once very active Junior members, convinced her to join and take an active role 23 years ago. Her desire is to see every unit in Wisconsin get involved and have Junior members, and to tap into their enthusiasm and love for Veterans and this wonderful organization.

Christina is eligible for membership through her father who served in the U.S. Army; her oldest son, a former Marine who is currently stationed at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan as a seaman in the U.S. Coast Guard; two brothers who served

in the USMC and Navy; one sister who was in the USMC; and her middle son who was a soldier with the U.S. Army National Guard.

Christina is a Postmaster in Thorp and has worked for the USPS for the past 33 years, currently working as a Wisconsin District Lead for the Route, Count and Inspection Team. She has been married to her husband, Wayne, for 35 years and they have six children, one stepdaughter, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandsons. Her youngest daughter is getting married this May.

Christina has a passion for God and Country and feels strongly about advocating for our military, our youth and our Veterans. Thank you for your consideration and support.



**Christina Petranovich**

## Christine Johnsen for Department 2nd Vice President

Dr. Christine Johnsen enthusiastically announces her candidacy for ALA Department of Wisconsin Second Vice President. She is a 24-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, eligible through the service of her husband, Cliff, a 12-year veteran of the Air Force, and her stepson, Clifford, who served as a Navy corpsman for 8 years. Christine and Cliff have a blended family of three daughters, three sons, and two grandsons.

Previously a member in District 8, Christine is currently an active member of the e-unit, Mumm-Welsh Unit 352, Cassville, in District 3. She has held multiple leadership positions in her units, District 8, and Department, including Department Sergeant at Arms, Education Chairman, Public Relations committee member, and currently Department Historian and Junior Activities Chairman. Having enjoyed the tremendous experience of being an ALABGS citizen herself, Christine has returned to serve ALA Badger Girls State as a nurse since 2016, and as Lead Nurse since 2022.

Christine recognizes the importance of remaining active and well-informed in all aspects of the American Legion Family. She has participated in numerous ALA In The Know conferences, National Mission Trainings, and Girls State/Girls Nation Leadership Conference in the past. She is enrolled in the Wisconsin American Legion College program, with plans to

complete the three-course series by May 2026.

Professionally, Christine is a nurse practitioner and currently sees patients with complex needs in their home setting, statewide. She is also self-employed as a consultant in healthcare technology and has provided advisory services to over eighty healthcare organizations across the United States. Dr. Johnsen continues to be an educator, speaker, mentor, and leader in the healthcare industry and a staunch advocate for healthcare access for veterans, seniors, and underserved populations.

Christine believes it is a privilege to serve our veterans, military, their families, and the community, and would be deeply honored to continue her service to the American Legion Auxiliary as your Second Vice President. Christine humbly thanks you for your consideration and support.



**Christine Johnsen**

## Betty Stone for Department 1st Vice President

Betty Stone is announcing her candidacy for the position of Department First Vice President. She has been an American Legion Auxiliary member for the last 49 years and held the following offices in the ALA:

- Unit: President, Vice President, Treasurer, which includes Membership Chairman, and Badger Girls State Chairman.
- County: President
- District: 2nd Vice President, and VA&R Chairman, 1st Vice President and Membership Chairman, and President five times for two years each.
- Department: Scholarship Chairman, Chaplain, Historian, Second Vice President and on the Department Membership Committee.

Outside of the ALA, Betty has been in church work since age 16, teaching Sunday School, Youth Groups, Bible Studies, and planning events. She is currently the facilitator for a prayer group that meets once a week. She is also in charge of the yearly Ladies Encounter at her church and in church camp where she has taught classes for the youth, cooked in camp, and is a financial supporter. Betty also takes part in community activities, is a Sheldon Village Board Trustee, and has been volunteering at the local Elementary School as a Forester Grandma three days a week.

The ALA preamble states: for God and Country we associate ourselves together. . . . Our mission is to serve others not self through the many programs and activities we support and participate in throughout the year. We serve veterans and also the community.

Reading the history of our Unit and District is a motivating factor to continue to serve our veterans and community with enthusiasm. Thank you for considering Betty's candidacy for First Vice President.



**Betty Stone**

## Sandy Mack for Department Historian

Sandy Mack is announcing her candidacy for the position of Department Historian. She is a 15-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 288 in Cedarburg and joined in honor of her father Paul Golabiewski who served in WWII in the Marine Corps.

Sandy graduated from MPTC with a degree as an Accounting Assistant. She then changed the direction of her career and has dedicated over 31 years of service to two agents of Am/Fam. Sandy holds an Insurance License with the Department of Wisconsin Office of Commissioner to provide life, health, property and casualty insurance to Wisconsin residents. She holds a Certificate of Appointment from the Selective Service System and appointed to the position of Local Board Member of the State of Wisconsin.

Sandy has held the unit positions of President, Secretary and served on the Executive Board. On the county level, she served as President, 1st Vice, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. At the district level, she served as President, 1st Vice/Membership Chair, and Leadership Chair. On the department level, she has served as Community Service Chair, PR Chair and ALA/TK Vice-chair and currently holds the position of Department Chaplain. She has attended district conferences, department conventions, national conventions, ALA In The Knows and other training/leadership

meetings.

Sandy's long-term goal is to continue working as long as possible and serving the mission of "service not self." It is not what she has achieved, it is where her heart is, taking one day at a time assisting veterans, our military (at home and abroad), and their families. Sandy has been endorsed by her unit and will be asking for endorsement at both the county and district levels at the Spring County Council meeting and the 2nd District Spring Conference, which are both held in April.

Sandy and her husband Howie will be celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary in April. They have two daughters and six grandchildren.

Sandy would be honored to serve as the Department of Wisconsin Historian for 2026-2027.



**Sandy Mack**

## Donna Jensen for Department Chaplain

Donna Jensen is announcing her candidacy for the office of Department Chaplain. She is a 20 year Paid-Up-For-Life member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Her eligibility is through her late brother, an Air Force veteran and her husband Past Department Commander Wayne Jensen, who served during the Vietnam era in the Navy as well as the Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force Reserves.

Donna's involvement with the American Legion Auxiliary includes holding offices at the unit, district, county and department levels, including serving as Department Chaplain two times. She is currently Unit President, 4th District Chaplain and Americanism Chairman, and Milwaukee County President. She has volunteered at American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State for the past five years and plans to continue.

Her department Auxiliary experience, in addition to serving as Chaplain, includes serving as Chairman and on committees including Fundraising, Children & Youth, Leadership, and Auxiliary Emergency Fund. She has also attended Auxiliary National Mission Training.

Donna has been attending Auxiliary Department Conventions for many years and has also attended National Conventions for the past 27 years. She volunteered at the three National Conventions held in Milwaukee in 2000, 2010 and 2022 and was honored to serve as

a driver for the American Legion Auxiliary National President two times as well as the American Legion National Adjutant.

Donna and Wayne have been married for 55 years and have two daughters and two granddaughters who are all members of the Legion Family. She has belonged to St Bernadette Catholic Church for over 50 years and has sung in the choir for over 30 years. Her professional career included working for Northwestern Mutual and Travelers Insurance Companies for combined over 35 years and she retired from Travelers 15 years ago. Her faith, family and desire to serve veterans are all very important to her.

Donna has the support of her family, endorsements from her unit and county, and will seek endorsement from the district at spring conference. She is grateful and humbled and asks for your support for the opportunity to serve as Department Chaplain.



Donna Jensen

## Joanie Dickerson for Central Division National Vice President

In the spirit of service, not self, Joanie Dickerson offers herself as a candidate for Central Division National Vice President. She is a 67-year Paid-Up-For-Life member of the American Legion Auxiliary and is eligible for membership as the result of her own service, that of her late husband, her grandfather, father, and brothers.

She is an active member of Liscum Brothers Unit and Post 482 of Bagley, serving as Unit Treasurer and Post Finance Officer and was instrumental in the recent chartering of the Post's Sons of the American Legion squadron. Joanie has held numerous chairmanships for the district and department, currently serving as the Executive Director of ALA Badger Girls State, and is a member of the finance and leadership committees.

An active member of St. Mary Parish, she assists where needed and retired as a middle school educator in their school after 22 years. Joanie continues to serve on the local level as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary where she coordinates public education activities for members of the boating public and verifies navigational aids on the Mississippi River. A long-time supporter of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, she is a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow, the Boy Scout Honor Society, is a religious award counselor and committee

member for Troop 88.

Joanie's husband Dee, sons, daughter, grandsons, and granddaughters are all members of the Legion Family. She has the support of her family, her unit, county, and district. If elected, Joanie will commit to sharing her talents and skills to work on the national level and strive to support members across the Central Division as they work to accomplish our mission. She will encourage all members to share their knowledge, skills, talents, and dedication with each other and the people we serve as we continue our commitment of service for those who sacrifice for our freedoms.

It is with a humble heart filled with gratitude for this opportunity, and prayers for your support, that Joanie Dickerson offers herself as a candidate for Central Division National Vice President for the 2027-2028 administrative year.



Joanie Dickerson

## Maggie Geiger for Central Division National Vice President

Maggie Geiger wishes to announce her candidacy for the position of the American Legion Auxiliary Central Division National Vice President.

Maggie is a 21-year member of Peter Wollner Unit 288 of the American Legion Auxiliary in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. Her eligibility is through the service of her father, Herbert "Buck" Masters, a WWII Army Veteran. Maggie has been an active member on the unit, county, district, and department levels, serving as Department President 2023-2024. She has served the Department of Wisconsin on numerous committees, in chairmanships, and officer positions.

While Maggie was president of Unit 288, they were honored to receive the National Presidents' Award of Excellence 2013-2014.

Currently, she serves as Ozaukee County President, 2nd District First Vice President, Poppy and Legislative Chairs, Department Standing Rules Chair, Distinguished Guests Chair, and serves on the National Executive Committee.

Maggie has also attended National Mission Training sessions and is a graduate of the Legion College. She has been a presenter at Midwinter sessions and ALA In The Know. In addition, she served on the Department Strategic Planning committee. Maggie understands the importance of keeping members informed,

which is vital not only at the departmental level but also at the national level.

Maggie and her husband Brian have been married for 50 years, and they have two children and four grandchildren, who are all members of the American Legion Family.

Serving on the National Executive Committee, working alongside other departments has given her a strong insight into the needs of members within the organization. Maggie would be honored to be selected as the candidate for Central Division National Vice President and represent Wisconsin through a strong sense of commitment and dedication.

As an American Legion Auxiliary member, Maggie proudly volunteers and supports The American Legion and the entire American Legion Family. We are the strongest when we serve together!



Maggie Geiger

## FEBRUARY SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

1	\$25	Lahni Palmer	Walworth
2	\$15	Karen Pursell	Lodi
3	\$15	Susan Meyer	Kewaskum
4	\$15	Darlene Meyers	Howards Grove
5	\$15	Ann Marty	Blanchardville
6	\$15	Cynthia Faller	Plymouth
7	\$15	Maureen Greuel	New Holstein
8	\$25	Susan Worlund	Marshfield
9	\$15	Dawn Dunlap	Milwaukee
10	\$15	Bonnie Mengel	Horicon
11	\$15	Lillian Brewer	Las Cruces NM
12	\$15	Christine Bowen	Watertown
13	\$15	Sherri Gysbers	Fond du Lac
14	\$15	Yvonne Lee	Birchwood
15	\$25	Jean Sennhenn	Columbus
16	\$500	Heidi Fischer	Hatly
17	\$15	John Neumann	Wild Rose
18	\$15	Sheree Chadoir	Neenah
19	\$15	Catherine Sieckman	Platteville
20	\$15	Julie Plautz	Greenwood
21	\$15	Donna Bennett	Mayville
22	\$25	Ursula Recore	Whitelaw
23	\$15	Monica Gifford	South Milwaukee
24	\$15	Jacky Gertschen	Marathon
25	\$15	Connie Peterson	Woodman
26	\$15	Nancy Dammen	Argyle
27	\$15	Laura Van Swol	Hartford
28	\$15	Ruth Much	Tigerton

## JANUARY SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

1	\$500	Victoria Boerst	Mayville
2	\$15	Delores Guzman	Plover
3	\$15	Terry Manke	Cumberland
4	\$25	Judy Riedel	Pittsville
5	\$15	Celeste Leider	Waupaca
6	\$15	Cynthia Heindl	Delavan
7	\$15	Gloria Shire	Milwaukee
8	\$15	Linda Flanagan	Argyle
9	\$15	Randy & Linda Johnson	Plymouth
10	\$15	Rose Christian	Watertown
11	\$25	Jim Bartelt	Marshfield
12	\$15	Christine Krueger	Marshfield
13	\$15	Nancy Plier	Jackson
14	\$15	Nancy Beggs-Willoughby	Stevens Point
15	\$15	John Neumann	Wild Rose
16	\$15	Dolores Wilson	Janesville
17	\$15	Mary King	Plover
18	\$25	Rose Christian	Watertown
19	\$15	Shirley Golonka	Oconto
20	\$15	Kim Luell	Beaver Dam
21	\$15	Sharen Hammes	Bangor
22	\$15	Carol Esteves	Oak Creek
23	\$15	Annamarie Johnson	Wisconsin Rapids
24	\$15	Nancy Boos	Fort Atkinson
25	\$25	Karen Blashka	Manitowoc
26	\$15	Lena Tainter	Gays Mills
27	\$15	Dennis White	Fort Atkinson
28	\$15	Betty Dietzman	Ridgeway
29	\$15	Sue Raab	Auburndale
30	\$15	Mary Sevedge	Milwaukee
31	\$15	Denise Pelzel	Maiden Rock



**Nathan Bond**  
Department  
Commander

## DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

# LEGACY FORWARD: PERFORMING OUR DUTY TO COMMUNITY, STATE AND NATION

I have had the privilege of traveling Wisconsin these past few months, visiting Legion Families in every corner of our state. Everywhere I go, I see Legionnaires, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders fulfilling our duty to Community, State, and Nation through strong, visible programs that truly make a difference.

Our Americanism programs are especially impressive. Wisconsin Legion Baseball remains one of the strongest programs in the nation, and our Softball program is quickly gaining strength and recognition. Americanism and Government Testing is underway, and reports indicate participation remains high. Badger Boys State sponsorships are still coming in, with more young men registered than at this time last year—please keep those sponsorships coming. The Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy is gearing up once again, and I expect another outstanding class. Our support of Scouting remains steadfast, and many counties have already conducted successful Youth Government Day events. We also received high praise from one of our Youth Shooting Sports participants, Holly Elsinger of Slinger High School, in her “Athlete of the Week” spotlight—thank you, Holly, for representing us so well.

Our National and Homeland Security programs are also thriving. Troop and Family Support grants are being managed wisely, helping numerous veterans get through periods of economic hardship thanks to your generosity. Our Blood Donor Program is working diligently to ensure the blood supply is adequate for daily needs and emergencies.

Post honor guards are performing military funeral honors and flag ceremonies across the state nearly every day, and we are close to being fully up to date with TACOM on ceremonial weapons and displays.

Local Legion Families are working hard to support children and youth, both within the military community and across Wisconsin. Our American Legion Riders are dedicating much of the funds raised during their “Cruise for a Cause” to the Veterans & Children Foundation. I have also seen clothing drives, food collections, and school supply efforts in many posts and communities.

Closest to my heart is our work in Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. Camp American Legion, our VA hospitals, and WDVA veterans homes are receiving meaningful support from members who give generously of their time, talent, and treasure.

My encouragement to all of you is to keep up the great work—and to remember there are many ways to perform our duty. Your contributions to like-minded organizations are commendable. My request is this: whenever you conduct fundraising, please make sure our own American Legion programs are included. Baseball, hospital volunteers, the Oratorical Contest, dignified burial for unclaimed veterans’ remains, scholarships, the Children’s Wellbeing Foundation, and many other state and national programs depend on us.

To learn more and to find easy ways to support these efforts, please visit: [www.wilegion.org/make-a-difference-1](http://www.wilegion.org/make-a-difference-1).



**Sue Hembrook**  
Department  
President

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Hopefully, we are edging our way past the gripes of winter and spring is near. Midwinter Conference was a huge success with the largest attendance since 2020. The joint Family session was very well attended and those in attendance commented favorably on its content. The Legion Family is a powerhouse! So much can be accomplished by working together to promote our programs. Working, and yes even “playing” together, will accomplish so very much to support our military and their families, our veterans and even our communities. The camaraderie at Midwinter Conference proved that we are a united force. We may all operate in slightly different modes, but our focus is united.

Currently our military and their families may need our support. Communicate with your respective Senators and Representatives to ensure our military are being supported during these unsettling times. The way to do this is to sign up for the Grass Roots communications. This can be accessed on the Legislative Program page of the department website. The Coast Guard especially needs our support as their operations fall under the direction of Homeland Security. Their pay is issued by that agency and is separate from the other military branches. Please, if you have a Coast Guard station in your community, reach out to them to see how you can support the members and their families. This branch of service is essential to our national security.

Spring conferences are starting to happen and that is a great time to attend to business, but more importantly to interact with your fellow members. Please try and attend the spring conference in your district. If you can, attend a spring conference in a neighboring district to find out what they are planning, too. Sharing is what we should be doing, for by sharing with one another we can get fresh ideas that may even lead to joint projects. Most importantly, you can get to know other members. We have a large department and getting to know one another will help us to better support our programs.

Also, it is annual report time!! Hopefully you will all embrace our new reporting system. It is designed to make the reporting process easier and to ensure that your reports are received by department and the respective chairmen in a timely manner. Report, Report, Report!! It is important and please do not forget to send those pictures!



**Christopher Dannenmann**  
SAL Detachment  
Commander

## SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

“Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.”

– Thomas Jefferson

Congratulations to you all for your doing these past six months. Not only have we chartered seven new squadrons, but we also have as many as nine new squadrons in the pipeline-ready for charter submission to the Department and then on to National for their approval. This is an unprecedented achievement! Special thanks to all of the Post, District, Detachment, Blue cappers and dual members for making it happen.

National Commander Bill Clancy had a great time seeing firsthand our Detachment membership in action with Operation Comfort Warrior. Whether called OCF, Freez’n for a Reason or something else,

Commander Clancy is determined to make this a national priority. So, well done everyone.

Our ALF Dogs were put into service this winter. They stand ready whenever and wherever they are called upon to comfort the loved ones of our service members, protecting freedom.

Now that winter is almost over (they just issued a blizzard warning), let’s not forget about the food pantries and blood banks that run low at this time of the year. It’s also time to reconnect with your fellow members. The District Conferences are coming up, and your input is needed. The Spring DEC at Headquarters in Portage also gives leadership the opportunity to hear from you.

Let’s all keep track of the difference we are making here and across our Great Nation. Report all of your Squadron activities on your CSR’s. Please send them into Detachment by June 1st so Congress can see what the Sons of The American Legion do to strengthen the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

Where there is a need, there is a Son.



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

## LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

Fellow Wisconsin American Legion Family members I am looking forward to summer, are you? Does your post/unit/squadron have some big plans for this year? The 7XX plus member of the Wisconsin American Legion Riders are no different. We are looking forward to getting our bikes out for some rides both supporting Legion programs and just to socialize as fellow Legion Riders.

There are several Legion Riders from Wisconsin who will be participating in Sojourn 250 which will escort the U.S. flag from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C. July 4th when our nation celebrates its 250th birthday. This is no ordinary flag. The flag our Riders are entrusted to bring to the nation’s capital will have traveled the world – 26 countries in all – flying over the graves and memorials of U.S. heroes buried in cemeteries under the American Battle Monuments Commission’s care. The final leg of that international tour begins at the national headquarters of the National Flag Foundation in Pittsburgh. (<https://nationalflagfoundation.org/sojourn-250/>)

If you are receiving this publication and enjoy riding a motorcycle or

trike, we’d love to have you join us. You must be a current member or eligible member of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of the American Legion. Additionally, be a registered owner (member or spouse) of a motorcycle of at least 500 cc and lastly, hold a current motorcycle endorsement (member or spouse).

Our mission is to participate in parades and other ceremonies that are in keeping with the aims and purposes of The American Legion. Promote motorcycle safety and provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interests while promoting and supporting the programs of The American Legion. We are not a motorcycle club. We are a group of American Legion Family Members who ride for a cause. We have local causes within each district and at the state level we support larger programs. (<https://www.alrawis.org/>)

The Wisconsin Legion Riders – Cruise for a Cause, ‘Family First – 26’ is coming up in June. See article in this publication for more info and registration link.

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don’t hesitate to contact me: Corey Doehrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at [alrawi.director@gmail.com](mailto:alrawi.director@gmail.com). Our next meeting after this publication will be at 1PM on May 9th at Legion Post 175 in Loyal, WI.

# Veterans Crisis Line



# DIAL 988

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