

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
2023-2024

Sharon Cross, Department President
October Unit Mailing

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Greetings to everyone,

The Fall Conference which was held on October 27th & 28th is a team effort. The American Legion Family came through once again for a very informative and educational Conference. Thank you to all that donated to our Department Children & Youth Chairman Brandi Christensen's project of children's activity bags during the Conference. Thank you to all the Department Chairmen for all their hard work on their power points and trifold presentations on our programs. While I am giving thanks, I also wish to thank all the Districts, Posts and Units for their invitations that I have received. I wish to thank everyone that was so supportive and thank you everyone that participated by attending the Fall Conference. Our Northwestern Division National Vice President Karen Susag spoke on Saturday at the Conference regarding "Be the One." The ALA National Headquarters has several awareness plans for members. These include social media posts, a blog post, magazine story and discussions at upcoming trainings. You can also go to www.ALAforVeterans.org to watch the Be the One webinar in the ALA Academy. How can you Be the One to help?

- Ask veterans in your life how they are doing.
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- Reach out when you think a veteran might be struggling.
- Increase awareness about veteran and military suicide.
- Have a list of resources in your area for veterans who may be struggling.
- Spread the word about the Veterans Crisis Line at 988

The number one issue facing the veteran community is suicide.

As the holidays draw near, may we all remember to live a life of gratitude and being grateful for all that is good in our lives, happy occasions, neighbors, family, and friends. If you encounter a negative situation, how can you turn it into a positive one.

May your Christmas be blessed with creating new memories.

Sharon Cross, President Department of Minnesota

Sharon.6thdistrictala@yahoo.com



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

Talking points on how to use the phrase “Be the One”

We know ALA members are playing a big role in supporting the Be the One mission. However, tying the phrase into a theme is diminishing the power of the words *Be the One*. We understand the tradition of having themes and we are not pointing fingers, punishing anyone, or assigning blame. However, our members may want to step back from using Be the One as a theme. Remember: This serious topic is not just an ALA focus, but an American Legion Family mission.

- Be the One is about suicide prevention and awareness.
- It originated as be the one to save one. It’s estimated that between 17 and 22 veterans or servicemembers take their own lives each day.
- It’s not a catchphrase. It’s not a campaign. The American Legion is now calling it a mission.
- It’s a mission to destigmatize asking for mental health support, provide peer-to-peer support and resources, and educate everyone on how they can Be the One.
- The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion joined The American Legion to promote the Be the One mission. So, ALA members should follow the guidelines from The American Legion. Go to BetheOne.org to learn more.
- The words “Be the One” should not be use as part of a lighthearted theme, to invite someone to a meeting, or to pay their dues. Uses other than suicide prevention/awareness diminish its power.
- Use of “Be the One” should be reserved for topics related to suicide prevention and awareness.
- The No. 1 issue facing the veteran community is suicide.
- The approved logos for Be the One are subject to the same usage rules as The American Legion landmark.
- Think of Be the One as a standalone phrase such as “Just Do It” and “Got Milk”.

How can you Be the One?

- Ask veterans in your life how they are doing.
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- Reach out when you think a veteran might be struggling.
- Increase awareness about the veteran and military suicide epidemic.
- Have a list of resources in your area for veterans who may be struggling.
- Spread the word about the Veterans Crisis Line at 988.

October 31, 2023

By Edgar A. Guest

I'd like to be the sort of friend
that you have been to me;
I'd like to be the help that you've been
always glad to be;
I'd like to mean as much to you
each minute of the day
As you have meant, old friend of mine,
to me along the way.

I'd like to do the big things
and the splendid things for you,
To brush the gray out of your skies
and leave them only blue;
I'd like to say the kindly things
that I so oft have heard,
And feel that I could rouse your soul
the way that mine you've stirred.

I'd like to give back the joy
that you have given me,
Yet that were wishing you a need
I hope will never be;
I'd like to make you feel
as rich as I, who travel on
Undaunted in the darkest hours
with you to lean upon.

I'm wishing at this Christmas time
that I could but repay
A portion of the gladness
that you've strewn along the way;
And could I have one wish this year,
this only would it be:
I'd like to be the sort of friend
that you have been to me.





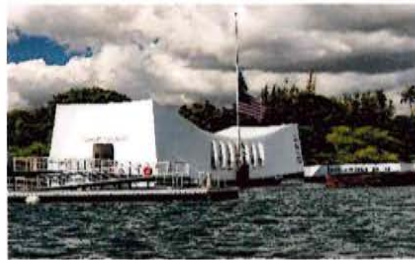
Americanism

The Americanism Essay title this year is “What does Freedom mean to you?” Has your Unit contacted your local schools, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Homeschool Co-ops, and other youth organizations to ask youth in grades 3-12 and Students with Special Needs classrooms to participate in the contest? Please be sure to include the Cover Sheet that is needed when submitting the essays when you meet with the students.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – December 7th

Each year on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Survivors, veterans, and visitors from all over the world come together to honor and remember the 2,403 service members and civilians who were killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A further 1,178 people were injured in the attack, which permanently sank two U.S. Navy battleships (the USS *Arizona* and the USS *Utah*) and destroyed 188 aircraft.

On Aug. 23, 1994, the United States Congress designated Dec. 7 as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Every year, remembrance events are held at the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, culminating in a commemoration ceremony on Dec. 7.



Bill of Rights Day – December 15th

The national celebration of the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, which spell out our rights as Americans. It guarantees civil rights and liberties such as freedom of speech, press, and religion. It sets rules for due process of law and reserves all powers not delegated to the federal government to the people or the states. The original joint resolution proposing the Bill of Rights is on permanent display at the National Archives in Washington, DC.



Please remember to submit stories and pictures of your Americanism programs. Submit your reports as they happen!

Mary Kuperus, Department Americanism Chairman

wmkuperus@tds.net

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

With Gratitude from the AEF Committee - **Auxiliary Emergency Fund**

The AEF committee would like to start by saying a HUGE THANK YOU to all who participated in our Annual AEF Silent Auction at the Fall Conference. The Silent Auction was remarkably successful due to our American Legion Family. The success was because of the material and monetary donations from the Legionnaire's, Auxiliary members, SAL members and Riders. We could not have done it without you. The volunteers were phenomenal and working together made a difference. Drum roll..... We raised a Grand Total of **\$7,438.52**. Way to go! We are off to a great start.



Good News!

- This year the AEF grant has been increased from \$2,400 to \$3,000.
 - The National Executive Committee (NEC) approved an increase for the Auxiliary. Emergency Fund (AEF) grants. This grant fund is for ALA members who have been affected by a natural disaster or other crisis and need urgent financial assistance. Must be a member for at least three consecutive years, with current year paid. This increase to \$3,000 Is a result of the rising cost of living and inflation.
 - The updated applications can be found on the ALA website: <https://member.legion-aux.org>, under the forms section. Once filled out the form can be sent either by email or direct mail to National. Outdated applications will no longer be accepted.
- For a personal donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) of \$100.00 or more, you will receive a beautiful gold pin. Pins are mailed out at the end of each quarter. If a department sends in a donation that includes \$100.00 or more from one person, the Department should send in a list of members who made the \$ 100.00 donations, and a pin will be mailed to the Department office for distribution.

AWARDS for AEF

Unit Award: Unit Contributing the Largest Amount (per capita)
Award based on donations received from June 1 – May 31.

Department Award: Department Award: Largest Contribution
Award based on donations received from June 1 – May 31.

Department Award: Department Contributing the Largest Amount (per capita)
Award based on donations received from June 1 – May 31.

Margee Keller, Department AEF Chairman

301 Maple St, Crookston MN 56716 ● Cell 218-349-4566 ● margeekeller@email.com



Children and Youth

With the winter months creeping up please think about doing a food drive or a hat and mitten drive. Children and youth in your communities could really use this.

I hope that units have planned a Christmas party, breakfast, or event for kids in their communities. And if you haven't there is still time to plan. You can always do one in January!

Child Welfare Foundation

This was established in 1954 for the betterment of children. It helps with the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of children with research programs and activities. Grants are given only to nonprofit tax-exempt organizations and are not for day-to-day operations.

National has set out a challenge! For a contribution of \$1 from every member.
Or \$1 a member from every unit.

Please be on the lookout in your communities for extraordinary youth. You could have a youth in your community that could be a great candidate for the Good Deed Award and the Youth Hero Award. The Good Deed Award is awarded to a Youth that demonstrates a leadership role. The Youth Hero Award is awarded to a youth that demonstrates an act of valor. These submissions are done on the National website.

Brandi Christensen, Department Children and Youth Chairman
brandichristensen21@gmail.com



Children and Youth

A special **THANK YOU** to all the members and units that donated Activity Bags and extra items during Fall Conference. Nearly 400 bags and additional items were donated.





Community Service

A review of the Fall Conference Community Service PowerPoint if you were unable to attend.

Who do we serve? Veterans, Active-Duty Military and their families, senior citizens, children and youth, families, everyone in our communities being inclusive to all.

What can we do? Meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Social needs such as phone calls, visits, and cards. Other needs such as home and lawn care. Aesthetic needs such as beautification of community parks. Partner with other community organizations, especially those that support Veterans. Promote other ALA programs. Wear ALA branding and smile!

When do we do this? Everyday is a great day for Community Service! The 2023-2024 National Community Service Program Engagement Plan highlights the following specific days- 9/11 National Day of Service, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, and American Legion Family Day April 27th, 2024 (the last Saturday in April).

Where do we serve? Our communities, each with unique opportunities and challenges.

Why do we serve? To fulfill our purpose as stated in The ALA Dept of MN Member Handbook Community Service Purpose Statement.

Need more information? Using your username and password log into the National website (alaforveterans.org), select Committees, under the heading How to Get Involved select Program Engagement Plans, select Community Service.

Please share your Community Service activities/projects/events with me, so I can share your ideas and your Unit number in this monthly newsletter. Remember to make a copy and send the information to your District Community Service Chairman. There will be a random drawing of those Units that submit, and the District Community Service Chairman with the largest percentage of their Units submitting will also win a prize. During our October Zoom meeting, the National Community Service Chairman reminded us to encourage Units to think of reporting early, so it doesn't all get left for April. Thank you, Lake Crystal Unit #294 for sharing the information, news articles, and photos detailing your successful Extravaganza fundraiser which included a bake sale and silent auction.

****This holiday season remember your Veterans, Active-Duty Military and their families, your senior citizens, children and youth, families, and all those in your community whose holidays might not shine as bright due to financial or other difficulties! I encourage each of you to do 5 random acts of kindness during this month of December! Prayers for safe and happy holidays!**

*Wanda Seidler, Department Community
Service Chairman*

221 Lakeview Dr. Spicer, MN 56288 ● claricekeith2014@gmail.com ●
(320)309-3528





Gift Shop

Some have done their Gift Shops and others are still to be done. As we wrap up another year, I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Gift Shop's for our veterans. Each one of you had a hand in making them a success, without all our volunteers we would not be able to do this program that means so much to our veterans in these homes and hospitals.

I think this program is an excellent example of our Auxiliary Mission statement, it says we are to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifices of those who service by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families. The generosity of donations shows how much we care for our veterans and their families, not only to this program but each and every auxiliary program.

Bev Grose
Department Gift Shop
Chairman
Gr9561@yahoo.com

Sandy Wersal
Department Gift Shop
Committee Member
sandywersal@gmail.com





Happy Fall:

I know this is the December unit mailing, but as I write this, the temperature is supposed to be over 50 degrees today – my kind of November weather. I would be happy to have snow on Christmas Eve and then warm up, but I'm a dreamer.

The Girls State Committee is working on the 2024 session – using many “tried and true“ practices and maybe, adding a few new things. Last year's citizens running for State Offices created “commercials” that were run on TVs in the hallways. They were very creative, but it really limited the number of citizens involved. The years before, posters were hung in the hallways. We are going back to showing off their creativity with posters, giving many more citizens the opportunity to join in. Bethel College is also allowing them to make chalk signs on the sidewalks – giving them more options and getting them outside (weather permitting). This may sound very minimal, but the committee works hard to make this learning experience a memorable week for our attendees.

At our Fall Conference I mentioned that we will send our District Presidents a copy of the forms sent to our schools, asking them to put them in their District Newsletter if they have one. This should get them out to all units. These won't go out until after the first of the year. It may be January, but it may be later. We will get it out as soon as they are ready.

Another reminder: Don't forget the SCRIP program. Now is the time to buy those gift cards that go under your Christmas tree this holiday. Your recipients can use them for those things on their “wish list” and will benefit Girls State, too. If your grandchildren are like my grandson, he loves gift cards, so he has an excuse to go shopping. Don't forget the paper boy, mail man, your pastor, the neighbor that shovels your walk, and anyone else you want to remember this year. Of course, don't forget to buy gift cards for those stores that YOU shop at every week. Your weekly purchases are helping Girls State. Details on ordering gift cards online were in my article in the November unit mailing.

I wish each and every one of you a Blessed Christmas. I wish you and your units a productive 2024 and look forward to seeing many of you in the New Year.

Linda Kelly, Department Girls State Chairman
lkkauxiliary@gmail.com

American Legion Auxiliary
JUNIORS

Christmas is coming very soon. If your Auxiliary units are doing anything for the holiday for the Veterans and their families please encourage your Juniors to participate. I know some units are doing bake sales, craft shows and holiday parties. Please send me pictures of the activities that the juniors are participating in as they happen and post them on the Facebook page.

There are many patches the girls can earn. I have received requests for patches that have been earned already this year. I hope that all our juniors are working on age-appropriate patches.

The Junior Conference will be April 12 and 13th 2024 in the 9th District in Detroit Lakes. We have a block of 29 rooms set up at the American Inn Lodge and Suites

777 E. Hwy 10

Detroit Lakes Mn 56501

Phone number 218-847-8795

Pool, continental breakfast, double queen rooms

Friday April 12th, 2024.

code is ALA JR Conference

Price is \$139.00 plus tax

Cutoff date is March 12th, 2024

Here is a list of other hotels in the area, but these do not have a block of rooms reserved:

Holiday Inn

1155 Hwy 10 E

Detroit Lakes Mn 56501

218-847-2121

Country Inn and Suites

1330 E Hwy 10

Detroit Lakes Mn 56501

218-847-2000

Quality Inn and Suites

615 Hwy 10

Detroit Lakes Mn 56501

218-847-4483

Don't forget recruitment is an ongoing process. Let us continue to recruit, mentor and be kind to new members.

The Northwestern Division Junior Meeting is Feb.3, 2024 in Lincoln Nebraska. Please encourage your Junior members to attend. Please register as soon as you can, girls ages 8 to 17 may attend.

Have a great holiday season and don't forget to send me reports and pictures of what your units and juniors have been doing.

Sally Strasser, Department Junior Activities Chairman

slstrass@hotmail.com

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Legislation



The Minnesota Commanders Task Force is busy finalizing the 2024 legislative priorities. Once approved I will have available in the unit mailing for you to review and distribute.

In this unit mailing you will find the flyer for the 2024 Veterans Day on the Hill hosted by the Minnesota DAV. Save the date for Wednesday, April 10, 2024. Door will open at 10am with lunch served at 11:30am. The march to the rally will begin at 1pm. New this year there will be a minibus running from the armory to the House and Senate office building. Plan to meet your lawmakers! Please share this flyer with your unit and communities.

Do you need to find your legislators? To find your US Senator go to www.senate.gov or US Representative go to www.house.gov.

For Minnesota legislature information go to www.leg.mn.gov. Here you can find your representatives and do bill and status searches.

Don't forget to utilize the American Legion Grassroots Action Center. Here you can sign up for alerts, find legislation, and find elected officials.

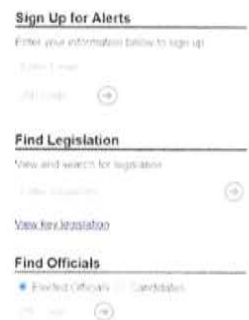
If you have a meeting with congress, make sure to utilize the Congressional Contact Report Form. This is used to share with National Headquarter to show our engagement with members of Congress, their staff, and when advocating for our veterans.

Go to www.voterveice.net/AmericanLegion/home.

Grassroots Action Center



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



Robin Dorf, Department Legislation Chairman
robindorf@yahoo.com

VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL 2024

**WHEN:
APRIL 10TH, 2024**

**DAV of MN Presents:
Free Veterans and Supporters Lunch**

**Doors Open @ 10:00AM FOR COFFEE
LUNCH @ 11:30AM**

(One Block from Capitol at 600 Cedar Street, St. Paul)

Veterans March to the Rally @ 1:00pm

(Short Walk from Armory to State Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th St, St. Paul)

**CTF, UVLC, and MACVSO Present:
Rally in the Rotunda 1:15-2:00pm**



**ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT-
TRENT@DAVMN.ORG:**

**NO MEMBERSHIP IN
ANY ORGANIZATION
REQUIRED.
ALL SUPPORTERS ARE
WELCOME!**



Topics Include:

PASSING A CLEAN
VETERANS OMNIBUS
BILL

INCREASING THE
AMOUNT OF THE PROP
TAX VALUE EXCLUSION

NEW THIS YEAR!!

A MINIBUS RUNNING
FROM THE ARMORY TO
THE HOUSE AND
SENATE OFFICE
BUILDINGS 10-1130.

MAKE YOUR
APPOINTMENTS TO SEE
YOUR LAWMAKERS!





Cruising the Seas for Members

Hello Everyone!!

What an exciting month this has been! In a very short time, we brought in a whole lot of members!

I want to congratulate 7th District Unit 278 in Brandon for being the 1st Unit to make goal this year!! Way to go!

1st place right now is 6th District with 60.9%

2nd place is 8th District with 57.30%

3rd place is 7th District at 56.11%

At this point we are at 54.86 % (National) and climbing every day. Let's not lose our momentum! The cruising trip is still in the early stages of fun!

There are 16 Units that are still on the goose egg. Let's keep working on those numbers and aim for zero units. Let the competition continue!!

Our goal is 2970. Membership is still coming in, but we are 1,050 behind this time from last year ... We are less than halfway to our goal... we can do this!

Everywhere we go, there are potential members. Strike up conversations while you are waiting in line at the store, set up tables at grocery stores and libraries. Make phone calls to members that have not paid their dues or have been absent. Offer to pay dues for members that are in need. Send out missing you postcards. Members are our investment to our organization.

The next membership rally will be the Pearl Harbor Rally in Paynesville on December 9. Our Department goal is 75%. Invite new or potential members to the rallies as they are fun!

Keep in mind that we all have the same goal and that is to get all the members we can! Keep up the great work!! Thank you to each member for working membership. You are valued as a member and make a difference!

*Jenny Nelson, Department
Membership Chairman*
Flipflops55025@gmail.com



"Your cruise ship looked a lot bigger in your ad."

"Cruising the Sea for Members!"

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,762	98	2,375	63.13%	2596	221
Two	71	3,890	124	2,375	61.05%	2537	162
Three	46	3,882	22	2,356	60.69%	2533	177
Four	7	579	20	308	53.20%	342	34
Five	7	522	0	200	38.31%	332	132
Six	61	5,031	75	3,320	65.99%	3400	80
Seven	53	2,955	37	1,866	63.15%	1848	-18
Eight	19	1,185	18	730	61.60%	813	83
Nine	46	3,348	130	2,042	60.99%	2210	168
Ten	42	3,812	75	2,267	59.47%	2280	13
1982 Dept	1	404	6	224	55.45%	191	-33
District Totals:	400	29,370	605	18,063	61.50%	19082	1,019
Group 1 (Even)	200	14,497	312	9,000	62.08%	9,372	372
<i>Robin Dorf</i>							
Group 2 (Odd)	199	14,469	287	8,839	61.09%	9,519	680
<i>Judy Ackerman</i>							



RANKINGS

1st	65.99%	District #6	2nd	63.15%	District #7	3rd	63.13%	District #1	4th	61.60%	District #8	5th	61.05%	District #2	6th	60.99%	District #9	7th	60.69%	District #3	8th	59.47%	District #10	9th	53.20%	District #4	10th	38.31%	District #5
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

In the past articles we have talked about “branding the Auxiliary”. This month we are going to look a little deeper into that.



The brand mark is to be used in all marketing communications, advertising, business cards, letterheads, credentials and for events such as signs, backdrops and ect. It was designed to help get the next generation of Auxiliary members’ attention. Which includes social media because we know that young people live on their phones and I-pads and that is how they will see our info.



The emblem should be used on uniform caps, reports and resolutions, history books, legal affairs, uniform hats, flags and internal manuals and guides. The word mark (emblem) should always be used in embroidery work such as apparel with the proper permission from the National Headquarters.

This information for that can be found at: legion.org/emblem/download or in the current American Legion Post Officers Guide.

Sharon Hammon, Department Public Relations Chairman
1stadjutant@gmail.com



Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Kudos to the Department of Minnesota's members that stepped up to help out our Children and Youth Chairman, Brandi Christensen, for the activity bags and items to pack into bags for the children of our veterans at the VA Medical Centers and the area CBOCs. Members donated more than 400 bags for this great project. AWESOME Job MN ALA!

The VA&R program has different ways to recognize our Veterans.

The American Legion Auxiliary has teamed up with a few fabulous organizations.

1. Wreaths Across America. Don't forget to mark your calendars for **Wreath Across America** on *Saturday, December 16!* A beautiful way for the American Legion family and community partners to come together to remember the fallen, honor those who have served, and teach the next generation the value of freedom. It's not too late for a Unit or member to sponsor a wreath(s) or to volunteer to lay the wreaths! Please go to the website to order wreaths or volunteer to help lay the wreaths. Wreaths Across America.org.
2. Check into the Honor Flight Network – Honoring American Veterans. Minnesota is served by three areas for Honor Flights – Twin Cities, Duluth and Fargo. Please check their website for ways to assist; donations, chaperones, welcoming committees and etc. www.honorflight.org
3. This organization helps with blood donations, care-giver support groups, military family and veteran support groups. Check and see where your services could be helpful. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/military-families/services-for-veterans/military-veteran-caregiver-network.html>

The holidays are right around the corner. Now is a perfect time to volunteer at VA facilities around MN. Go caroling, donate holiday goodies (check with the facility for any restrictions), volunteer for the VA holiday gift shops, or maybe volunteer to help decorate the local VA facility. The greatest present is your PRESENCE! It can mean the world to a veteran if you just go sit and visit with them. Contact your local VA Chief of Voluntary Services or Volunteer Coordinator at the facility to coordinate donations and/or volunteering.

Please keep track of the projects that your members and units are doing. Annual Report time is fast approaching. Please help our veterans in any way that you can.

Happy Holidays to all.

Judy Ackerman, Department VA&R Chairman
Judy2002@gmail.com



The end of the year brings no greater joy than the opportunity to express how grateful we are for our American Legion Auxiliary Unit members. We hope this year's season fills you up with the things that mean most to you and energizes you for a happy and healthy new year.

**Happy Holidays
from the
Department Staff**

Christa Farrant *Jacelyn Yaris* *Shannon Brown* *Cathy Radil*

The Department office will be closed for the Holidays:
Christmas - December 25th & 26th
New Year - January 1st & 2nd

