

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
2023-2024

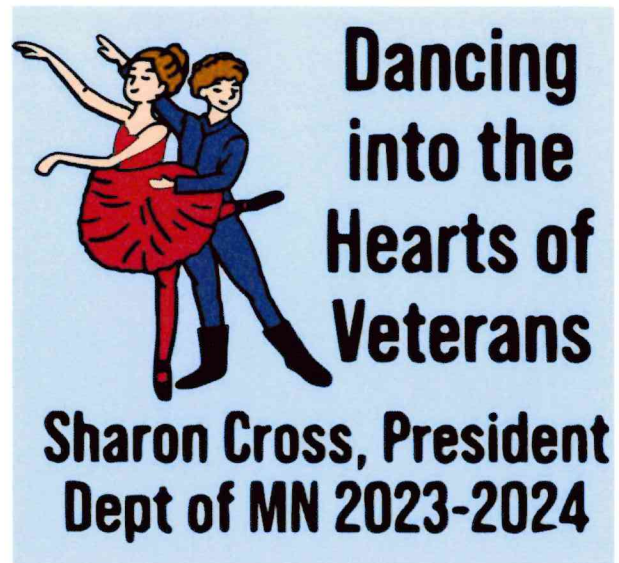
Sharon Cross, Department President

January 2024 Unit Mailing

State Veterans Service Bldg. 20 W 12th St #314,
St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 224-7634 deptoffice@mnala.org

Website: www.mnala.org



Attention All Units!

Get busy dancing with your members and get them to recruit, rejoin and renew members! All Units that reach 100% by January 31, 2024, will receive a 100% ribbon from National. Encourage your members to renew their dues and continue to support the wonderful things our American Legion Auxiliary does. Here it is already 6 months since I was elected as the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota President. My year is half over and time is passing quickly. I have been busy with events around the state as the holidays came and went. January is National Security and Legislation month. It is time to plan for C.E.R.T. training in your communities so everyone is prepared in case of an emergency. It is also time to brush up on our veteran issues coming before the legislature and contact our congressmen repeatedly to get them onboard and support The American Legion Legislative priorities.

I will be busy traveling every weekend in January to as many of the District Mid-Winter Conferences happening around the state that I can. I am attending National American Legion Auxiliary Mission Training that is being held on January 27th so that I am home in Minnesota for our Sweetheart Rally. Visits will include a few of our Units for special events I have been invited to. This will again be a busy month.

The Sweetheart Rally will be February 3rd in Forest Lake, MN at Post 225. It is a luncheon, membership rally and is hosted by the Auxiliary for all The American Legion Family. I hope to see many new faces as we continue the challenge for every member to sign up just one new member. Start the conversation and BE THE ONE to save one.

As we begin 2024 don't let your benefits lapse. If you are not a member in good standing for three consecutive years, then you cannot use benefits like The American Legion Family Hospital Association available to all members and their family or the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

SAVE THE DATE: The Veterans Day On the Hill will take place on April 17, 2024. Contact your legislators now to make your appointments for them to meet you at the Armory that morning before we march on the Capitol. Have them join us for lunch.

Sharon Cross, President Department of Minnesota

Sharon.6thdistrictala@yahoo.com

Martin Luther King Day-January 15, 2024



Martin Luther King Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year. Born in 1929, King's actual birthday is January 15.

King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed three years later on January 20, 1986. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names, or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

As the new year begins, now is the time to start thinking about the end of the year reports. The following are the questions that Units will be asked to answer on the report form.

- Did your Unit participate in Americanism programs at school? _____
- Did your Unit participate in any Flag Education program this year? ____ Total Programs ____
- Did your Unit distribute Flags this year? _____ Total Number _____
- Did your Unit participate in Veterans Day? ____ How? _____
- Did your Unit participate in a Memorial Day program? ____ Total Number of Services ____
- Did your Unit participate in any other Holiday or community events? _____ Total # ____
- What events? _____
- Were you wearing ALA Branding? _____
- Did your Unit participate in our youth programs? _____
- a. National Essay Contest _____
 - b. Girl Scouts _____
 - c. Junior Activities _____

The deadline for returning the Americanism Essay Contest is getting closer. The Unit will choose their winner and will send that submission to me on or before March 25th. Please make sure that the National Cover Sheet is completed and attached to the submitted essay. No late submissions will be accepted.

The Americanism Essay title this year is "What does Freedom mean to me?" 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.

The goal this year is to have an essay submission in every class and to be able to present a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner.

Mary Kuperus
Department Americanism Chairman

With winter upon us, I thought I would share an article that the Eastern Division AEF Chairman shared with the other Department AEF Chairman's

**Being Prepared for Winter Storms
Shared by Sofia Blake
Eastern Division AEF Chairman**

Winter storms can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, sleet, heavy snowfall, ice, and high winds. These storms can cause transportation, heat, power, and communication disruptions. They also can close schools, stores, and workplaces. But, because a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, heavier snowfalls are more likely to occur. We can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home. Take immediate precautions if you hear these words on the news:

Winter Storm WARNING: Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours.

Blizzard WARNING: Sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 miles per hour or greater, plus considerable falling or blowing snow reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile, expected to prevail for three hours or longer.

Other winter storm words to listen for:

WIND CHILL Temperature: How cold people and animals feel when outside. As wind increases, heat is carried away from your body at a faster rate, driving down your body temperature and making you feel much colder. The wind chill temperature is not the actual temperature but rather how wind and cold feel on exposed skin.

Winter Storm OUTLOOK: Winter storm conditions possible in the next two to five days. Stay tuned to local media for updates.

Winter Storm WATCH: Winter storm conditions possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. Review your winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

Winter Weather ADVISORY: Winter weather conditions expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous but not life-threatening if you are cautious.

What Should You Do Before a Winter Storm?

- **Plan to Stay Warm**

Stay warm indoors to prevent frostbite and hypothermia.

Before the winter season begins, make sure you can heat your home safely. Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping.

Consider using an indoor thermometer or thermostat to monitor the temperature inside.

Plan to check on loved ones and neighbors to make sure they are staying warm. This is especially important for older adults and babies.

Drink plenty of warm fluids but avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Avoid travel if you can.

If you must go outside, plan to dress properly. Keep your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and

toes covered in warm, dry clothing. These areas are the first to be at risk for frostbite. Wear layers of loose clothing, a coat, hat, mittens, and water-resistant boots. Use a scarf to cover your face and mouth.

- **Gather Emergency Supplies**

Gather food, water, and medicine before a winter storm. Stores might be closed, and it may be unsafe to travel. Organize supplies into a Go-Kit and a Stay-at-Home Kit.

Go-Kit: at least three days of supplies you can carry with you if you need to go somewhere else to stay warm. Include critical backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.).

Stay-at-Home Kit: at least two weeks of supplies.

Ensure you have enough warm clothing, such as hats, mittens, and blankets, for everyone in your household. You may lose access to drinking water. Set aside at least one gallon of drinking water per person per day.

Consider having emergency supplies in your vehicle, such as a blanket, warm clothing, a first aid kit, and boots. Have a 1-month supply of needed medications and medical supplies. Consider keeping a list of your medications and dosages on a small card to carry with you.

Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe and easy to access (hard copies or securely backed up).

Have a snow shovel and ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.

- **Learn Emergency Skills**

Learn first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Emergency services may be delayed.

Learn how to spot and treat frostbite and hypothermia.

Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-ups.

Be ready to live without power, gas, and water.

Learn how to keep pipes from freezing.

Plan to Stay Connected.

Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.

Plan to monitor local weather and news.

Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.

Have a battery-powered radio to use during a power outage.

Understand the alerts you may receive:

A WATCH means Be Prepared!

A WARNING means Take Action!

Create a support team to help everyone stay safe in a disaster. Plan how you can help each other.

- **Stay Safe**

Use care with space heaters and fireplaces to prevent fires. Keep anything that could catch fire at least 3 feet (1 meter) from the heat!

Avoid using candles because of the fire risk. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning is common during power outages when people use other means to heat and cook. You can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Only use generators, grills, and camp stoves outdoors and away from windows.

Carbon monoxide kills. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak, get to fresh air right away – do not delay. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and home fires, never heat your home with a cooking oven or stove.

- **Act Fast if You See Signs of Frostbite or Hypothermia**

Frostbite is when a part of your body freezes. Your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes often are the first affected. People may experience pain, numbness, and a change of skin color.

What to do for frostbite: Move to a warm place. Warm the affected area gently by soaking in the warmth water (NOT hot) until the skin appears normal and feels warm. Seek emergency medical care.

Hypothermia can kill you. It occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce heat. This causes a dangerously low body temperature. Older adults, babies, children, and people with certain health conditions are more at risk.

Shivering is one of the first signs of hypothermia; other signs include confusion, drowsiness, and slurred speech.

What to do for hypothermia: Seek emergency medical care right away. Move to a warm place. Remove any wet clothing and warm the body slowly.

- **How Can You Stay Safe While Driving?**

Check your vehicle emergency supplies kit and replenish it if necessary.

Bring enough of the following for each person:

- Blankets or sleeping bags.

- Rain gear, extra sets of dry clothing, mittens, socks, and wool hats

- Newspapers for insulation

- Plastic bags for sanitation

- Canned fruit, nuts, and high energy snacks

- Warm broth in a thermos and several bottles of water

Bring your cell phone and make sure the battery is charged.

Plan to travel during daylight and, if possible, take another person with you.

Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive.

Before leaving, check the weather reports for all areas you will be passing through.

- **If You Are Stranded**

Stay in the vehicle and wait for help. Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards (91 meters).

Display a trouble sign to indicate you need help. Hang a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) on the radio antenna and raise the hood after snow stops falling.

Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour. Use the heater while the engine is running. Keep the exhaust pipe cleared of snow, and slightly open a downwind window for ventilation.

Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen.

Do light exercises to keep up circulation. Clap your hands and move your arms and legs occasionally.

If more than one person is in the vehicle, take turns sleeping.

Huddle together for warmth. Wrap yourself in newspapers, maps, and even the removable floor mats to help trap more body heat.

Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

Drink fluids to avoid dehydration, which can make you more susceptible to the ill effects of cold and to heart attacks.

Avoid overexertion. Shoveling snow or pushing a vehicle can cause a heart attack or make others medical conditions worse.

- **Stay Safe**

If you need to go outside, use extreme caution when driving or walking on ice.

Avoid damaged or fallen power lines. They can electrocute you.

Be aware of branches, trees, and ice that may fall.

Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Take frequent breaks and, if possible, work with a partner.

Use ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.

Go to a public library, shopping mall, or warming center if your home becomes too cold.

- **Take Care of Yourself**

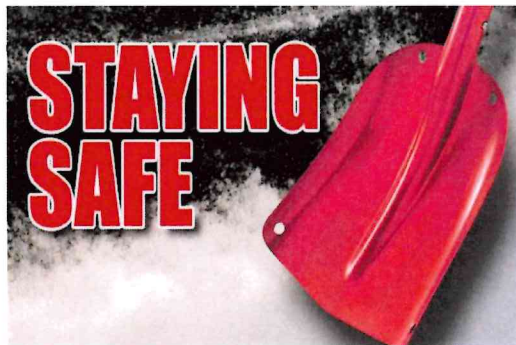
It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.

Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.

You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-800-985-5990.

Once you are physically safe, take time to ensure your family's emotional and financial well-being.

Stay safe – stay warm- and enjoy your winter in Minnesota or wherever your travels take you.



If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Margee Keller, AEF Chairman, 301 Maple St, Crookston MN 56716

Margeekeller@hotmail.com 218.349.4566

**“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, January 15, 2024, is a federal holiday designated by Congress as a National Day of Service. It is a “day on, not a day off.” Yearly, on the third Monday in January, we honor and commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As American Legion Auxiliary members, we are encouraged to use this holiday to promote patriotic community service activities and in building community partnerships. Use this holiday as an opportunity to serve veterans in your community. The following MLK Day of Service information, suggestions, and ideas are taken from the National Community Service Program 2023-2024 and from the Northwestern Division Community Service newsletter:

- Help veterans in their homes with projects like building an accessible ramp, yard work, or repairs.
- Organize or participate in a stand down.
- Host a job fair for veterans at your Legion post, community center, or library.
- Organize a mid-year school supply drive for military children.
- Encourage Juniors to create Hero Packs, in conjunction with Operation Military Kids, to be given to military kids who have a deployed family member.
- Bring at least one new person along as you visit with veterans at VA Medical Centers or state veterans’ homes.
- Encourage members to check with their employers for MLK Day of Service opportunities.
- Use information available on the National website.
- Keep good records of hours and activities for year-end reporting.

Upcoming important dates:

March is American Legion Auxiliary Community Service month

April 27, 2024 American Legion Family Day

Please keep track of hours volunteered, \$ spent, and who was served for all Community Service projects, activities, and events and be sure to report it!

What you do for your Veterans and your communities is important! Thank you for all you do!



Wanda Seidler (320)309-3528 claricekeith2014@gmail.com



Department of Minnesota January 2024 Unit Mailing Education

The new year is here the holiday season is over, I hope everyone had a great time with family & friends.

It is that time of year where we think about "SCHOLARSHIPS"!

Between National & Department along with the Legion there are seven (7) different scholarships to choose from.

The National Scholarships must be submitted online by March 1st, 2024. Go to www.alaforveterans.org, you will find all the forms for these on that website.

Here is the list of ones you need to file at national:

Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior Members

The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship

<https://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships/Non-Traditional-Student-Scholarship>

Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship

You can print forms and rules at www.alaforveterans.org/scholarships/children-of-warriors.com.

The deadline to remember for the Department scholarships is March 15th. The Units need to get them to the Department Chairman on or before this date. Make sure to read all the directions, we would hate to disqualify someone who misses something important.

Department of Minnesota Past Presidents Parley Health Care Scholarship

Will need to be sent to Donna Barbknecht.

Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship

Candidates for this award shall have been a Junior member and held membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the past three (3) consecutive years and be a paid member for the current year (2024). They must continue their membership during the scholarship period. Previous American Legion Auxiliary national scholarship recipients are welcome to apply. Application must be received by the Local American Legion Auxiliary Unit President on or before March 1st, 2024.

Department of Minnesota Scholarship

Awarded to deserving sons or daughters, grandsons or granddaughters of a veteran who need financial assistance. Applicant must resident in the State of Minnesota or a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion or Sons of the American Legion. Applications can be found on <http://www.mnala.org/scholarships>. Application must be received by the Local American Legion Auxiliary Unit President on or before March 1st, 2024.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship

Provides college scholarship money to children of post 9/11 veterans who have died or have a combined VA disability rating of 50% or more. The application period for the 2024 Legacy Scholarship will open on January 1st, 2024. You can find more information at <https://www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy>.



Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Education

Now that Christmas break is over it is time to check with the teachers to see what is needed. Cold season is upon us, do they need more Kleenex, hand sanitizer or Clorox wipes?

Units should track what they are donating using the **Give 10 for Education** form. (form included in Unit mailing)

Submit the completed form with your annual report to your District Education chairman. They will write a District report to be submitted to me. I am excited to report to National all the wonderful things the Department of Minnesota is doing to support our Education program!

Don't forget to download the Box tops for education app, it is very easy to use. Pick your school where you want your donations to go. After you get home just scan your receipt and the app does all the work. There are a ton of products on the website, and it seems like they are adding new products all the time.

Please feel free to contact me at lkies38@comcast.net and I will try and answer your questions, if I don't know the answer, I will find it out and get back to you.

Lorinda Kies
Department Education Chairman



Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Education

Give 10 to Education
Suggested Donation Items and Tracking Sheet

Suggested Item	Quantity	Monetary Value
Books		
Backpack/Book bag		
Loose Paper		
Notebooks		
Folders		
3-Ring Binders		
Pencils		
Pens		
Erasers		
Highlighters		
Crayons		
Colored Pencils		
Markers		
Pencil Box/Pencil Case		
Scissors		
Glue/Glue Sticks		
Ruler		
Calculator		
Craft Supplies		
Kleenex/Paper Towels		
Hand Sanitizer		
Disinfecting Wipes/Baby Wipes		
Mentoring/Reading		
Donation to School		
Donation to Library		
Donation to Scholarship		
Clothing		
Patriotic Item		
Sports Equipment/Games		
Box Tops 4 Education		
Totals:		



Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Gift Shop

The Gift Shops have happened, and all seem to be a great success. Some were in-house and others just did gift cards for the veterans. When all is said and done, we will have served 1426 veterans, 499 spouses/care givers and 110 children, with a total of \$44,686.85 in gifts. It was exciting to be at the Gift Shops and see the veterans enjoy their shopping.

Items were purchased from Kohl's, Walmart, Fleet Fam, Shoe Sensations, Amazon & Russel Stover. Some of the items they could choose from were men's shaving kits, ski gloves, spa baskets, clutch purses, women's and men's wallets, adult and children backpacks, squishmallows, diamond dot kits, candy, men's and women's slipper, men's and women's watches, jewelry, shawls, blankets, hair brush sets, women's hat, neck warmer, glove sets, small games, flannel shirts, men's and women's pajama sets, flannel shirts, military hats and gift cards.

Thank you to all that helped at the gift shops and to all the units that donated.

Bev Grose

Gift Shop Chairman

Gr9561@yahoo.com

Sandy Wersal

Gift Shop Committee Member

sandywersal@gmail.com

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
FAMILY HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
20 W. 12TH STREET, ROOM 300A
ST. PAUL, MN 55155**



November 2023

Dear Post Commanders, Unit Presidents, and Squad Commanders:

I am writing you today to ask when planning your budgets that you include donations to The American Legion Family Hospital Association. We need your continued monetary support to help assist our own members. Each and every year we are receiving more and more applications for medical assistance from within our membership, and thankfully we are able to assist the majority of these requests. This program is one where we can proudly say we are members-assisting-members. Can they count on you?

Eligibility of assistance requires you must be a member of the Department of Minnesota American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion, or a dependent as determined by the IRS. You must be a member in good standing for at least one year. Assistance can be as much as \$4,000.00 annually and is paid directly to the medical facility. Often there are also negotiations decreasing or completely eliminating the billing balances.

The American Legion Family Hospital Association is a 501(c)3 charity and charitable gaming funds may be used when making donations. The Association also receives twenty-five cents per member, per year, from the annual dues of all three organizations. Memorials and personal donations are gratefully accepted and make up a portion of our annual funding drive.

Enclosed you will find additional information with details of the American Legion Family Hospital Association. If you are in need of more information or applications you can contact Department Headquarters or any Board Member. Board Members are also available to speak to your members at Post, Unit or Squadron meetings, please feel free to call upon us.

Our heartfelt thanks to any of you who have contributed in the past and thanks in advance to all of you who will be contributing this year. Your donations are certainly appreciated. Donations should be sent to the American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters, clearly marked "American Legion Family Hospital Association."

On behalf of the many members who gratefully accept your assistance, *thank you!*

Gary Weaver, President

Detach and mail to:

The American Legion, Dept. of Minnesota
20 West 12th Street, Room 300A
St Paul, MN 55155-2000

Post/Unit City & Number: _____ District Number: _____

Amount of Contribution \$ _____

Checks should be made payable to " American Legion Family Hospital Association."

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION



Membership and Revenue ~ The Association is officially incorporated as The American Legion Family Hospital Association and all members of Minnesota American Legion Posts, American Legion Auxiliary Units, and Sons of The American Legion Squadrons are members of the association. Revenue for carrying on the work of the association consists of money received from Post, Unit, and Squadron dues, donations, and interest from investments.

Eligibility ~ All members of the association and eligible dependents, regardless of their place of residence, are eligible for benefits provided by the association. Criteria for eligibility is established by the Board of Trustee and published in the American Legion Family Hospital Association Operational Manual.

Financial Assistance ~ Financial assistance is available to all eligible members of the association for payment of medical bills incurred for services provided by any duly licensed hospital or medical practitioner provided the need for financial assistance has been determined. *Before applying for aid, veterans should take advantage of the services offered them by the government at Veterans Hospitals. The member's dependents should make all possible use of other available medical assistance programs.*

Exceptions ~ The Association does not pay for transportation to and from the hospital (unless by ambulance), hotel-motel bills for anyone accompanying a patient unless an attendant is deemed necessary and authorized by the association, telephone bills incurred by the patient, personal service, dental work, eye wear, or hearing aids. The association does not give aid in the nature of a loan or pay credit card charges.

Procedure ~ the applicant should:

1. Contact the Service Officer of the local Post or the County Veterans Service Officer in their area to obtain an application blank.
2. Complete the application.
3. Copies of final medical bills must be provided.

Information & Applications ~ To obtain further information contact The American Legion Department Headquarters at 1-651-291-1800, mnlegion.org, The American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters at 651-224-7634 or the Sons of The American Legion Detachment Headquarters at 1-651-291-1800, as well as any County Veterans Service Office.

Board of Trustees

President	Gary Weaver 29 North Elm Street, LaCrescent, MN 55947 507-696-1431, gweaver@acegroup.cc	Secretary	Jenny Nelson 9898 North Shore Trail, Forest Lake, MN 55025 651-269-1199, flipflops55025@gmail.com
Vice President	David Arend, Jr. 22489 Iverson Ln N, Forest Lake, MN 55025 763-568-6620, darend77@outlook.com	Trustee	Tom Fernlund 1927 Clearwater Rd, St. Cloud, MN 56301 320-250-7581, tavfern@gmail.com
Trustee	Theresa Soltis 11 Oakleaf Lane, Circle Pines, MN 55014 320-333-5368, theresasoltis5@gmail.com	Trustee	Rick Cross 10491 Alcott Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378 763-370-7882, rec94990@gmail.com

* The Department Commander, Department President and Detachment Commander are members of the Board.

APPLICATION FOR AID BY MEMBERS AND DEPENDENTS

Name of patient _____ Membership # _____
If a dependent, write "Dependent" here

Address _____
Street / Box No. _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____ Cell Phone _____

If a dependent, give name and relationship of member _____

Post/Unit/Squad No. _____ City _____ How long have you been a member? _____

Have you previously applied to this Association for aid? _____ Do you have Medicare or other hospital insurance? _____

Give the name of your Insurance company _____

Date of birth of patient _____ Marital status _____ Children - Yes _____ No _____

Names and ages of member's children _____

Other Dependents _____

MEMBER'S / APPLICANT'S FINANCIAL STATUS

(If member is deceased, give financial status of person on whom applicant is dependent for support)

Are you employed _____ If not, how long have you been unemployed _____

Occupation _____ Name of your employer _____

Monthly wage _____ Take home pay after withholding and S.S. tax deductions _____

What other members of your family are working? _____ Their total monthly income _____

How much VA pension or compensation do you receive a month? _____

What other source of income do you have? _____ How much a month? _____

List your assets, including cash in checking and savings accounts, investments, real estate, etc. Also list your liabilities including unpaid mortgages, contracts, or other indebtedness, and show monthly repayment schedule.

Assets

Home _____

Car (make & year) _____

Checking _____

Savings _____

IRA _____

Property _____

Other _____

Liabilities

Home or Rent _____

Car or Truck Payment _____

Credit Cards _____

Utilities _____

Child Support _____

Other _____

I hereby authorize the Hospital Association to negotiate my claim on my behalf with my medical provider using the above personal information.

Signed _____ Dated _____



**Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Junior Activities**

Hope all of you enjoyed the Holidays with family and friends. But now it is time to get back to work helping the Veterans and their families.

I have a zoom meeting this month with all the Junior Activities chairmen. Can you please send me photos and some of the things you have been doing around the state so I have something to share with everyone.

Plans are underway for the Department Junior Conference in April in Detroit Lakes. The Call to Conference is in this unit mailing also. Last unit mailing I listed other hotels in the Detroit Lakes area, but they do not have the block of rooms or the discount. I hope many of you are able to come and think about being an officer for 2024-2025.

Let's get out there and recruit new members so we can continue to see new faces each year at our activities.

Sally Strasser
Junior Activities Chairman
Email slstrass@hotmail.com
612 791-9208



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference**

The 61st Annual Junior Conference of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota is hereby called to be held at the Detroit Lakes American Legion Post 810 W Lake Dr Detroit Lakes Mn. 56501 at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 13th for the purpose of:

1. Presentation and judging of awards
2. Reports from the District Honorary Junior Presidents
3. Election of Department Honorary Junior Officers
4. Other business for the good of the Junior Auxiliary

Conference Schedule

All events will be held at the Detroit Lakes American Legion Post 810 W Lake Dr Detroit Lakes Mn., 56501.

Registration	Friday, April 12th 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Saturday, April 13th 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Advisory Committee Meeting (See below for who attends)	Friday, April 12th 7:30 p.m.

Processional Practice a.m. Senior Advisor/Senior	Saturday, April 13th 8:00
Judges Meeting Saturday, April 13th 8:00 a.m. (All Senior members are requested to attend)	
Conference Call to Order	Saturday, April 13th 9:00 a.m.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of the Department Junior Activities Chairman, Honorary Department Junior President, Secretary, First Vice President, Second Vice President, District Junior Presidents, and District Junior Activities Chairmen. Also included are the Department Junior Conference Parliamentarian and Senior Secretary.

Processional - Each district is encouraged to bring their District Colors. Per the Standing Rules, Junior Color bearers should wear navy skirt or navy slacks and white blouses or appropriate attire.

Conference Location

The Department Junior Conference will be held at Detroit Lakes American Legion. The conference is hosted by the 9th District. Housing information for the Junior Conference is attached to this Call to Conference.

Registration Fee

The registration fee for the Department Junior Conference is \$15.00 per person and should be paid when you arrive at the Detroit Lakes American Legion and check in for the Conference. To prepay please send your check along with your registration form. Checks should be made payable to Ninth District American Legion Auxiliary.



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference**

Delegates

Each organized group shall be represented by two delegates with two votes at the Department Junior Conference, plus one additional delegate for each fifteen members or major fraction thereof. (Standing Rules) Delegate strength is determined 30 days prior to Department Junior Conference.

Junior Membership	Number of Delegates
1-7	2 delegates
8-22	3 delegates
23-37	4 delegates
38-52	5 delegates
53-67	6 delegates
68-82	7 delegates
83-97	8 delegates
98-120	9 delegates

Only Junior Members will be allowed to speak on the Conference floor. Please remember that Senior members are advisors only and this is the Juniors Conference. Juniors will be seated by District with one advisor per District. If space allows one advisor per Unit may also sit with the Juniors. The District Junior Activities Chairman will be the Senior Advisor for her District if she is present.

Eligibility to hold office (Standing Rules)

1. No officer shall succeed herself in the same office.
2. Any Junior officer must be classified as a junior member the year she holds office.

Endorsements

Endorsements for Department Honorary Junior Officers shall be sent to the Department Office as soon as possible. The Department Office will send them to the District Junior Activities Chairmen, District Honorary Junior Presidents, Department Honorary Junior President, and the Department Junior Activities Chairmen prior to the Department Junior Conference (Standing Rules).

Endorsements should state the candidate's name, age, district, offices held in the Unit and District and years of membership.

Send endorsements to: American Legion Auxiliary
State Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th Street- Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155
Or email to deptoffice@mnala.org



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference**

Friday Evening Activities

On Friday evening, April 12th, a fun evening is planned for the Juniors beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Detroit Lakes American Legion. The 9th District is busy planning so that the Juniors can make new friends, rekindle friendships they already have, and have lots of fun together. Food and beverages will be provided for Friday evening and is included in the registration fee. Food will be served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This will be a fun time for everyone. Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. and the Advisory Committee's meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Department Honorary Junior President's Project

Department Honorary Junior President Taylor's and the Juniors of Minnesota's project this year is raising funds for the Believet project which trains service dogs for our Veterans.

Completed forms needed:

Please complete the enclosed forms and return them as noted on each form. It is important that attendees register (both Junior and Senior members) including their names, addresses, phone numbers and email address.

1. Pre-registration form (in duplicate) so that our Department Honorary Junior President can make tentative committee appointments prior to the Conference. Due date is Friday, March 15, 2024.
2. A Media Release Consent Form must be completed for each Junior member and signed by their parent or guardian.
3. The registration form for the local committee indicating the number attending from your Unit is also attached. This helps the local committee to plan supplies for activities and food that is needed. Deadline for registration is Friday, March 15, 2024.
4. The registration fee for the conference is \$15.00 per person and will need to be prepaid or at the conference when you arrive. Checks should be made payable to 9th District American Legion Auxiliary.

Any questions regarding the Department Junior Conference please contact me at (612) 791-9208 or at slstrass@hotmail.com

**Sally Strasser
Department Junior Activities Chairman**

Poppy Contests

It is the responsibility of the District Junior Activities Chairman to see that all District entries are brought to the Department Conference.



There is no limit to the number of entries per Unit for the contests



Only one entry per Junior per contest



All entries must include a large or small, or a combination of the Poppies.



All white tags must be removed from the Poppies



All entries must be at the Department Junior Conference by 9:00am on Saturday, April 13, 2024, for judging.

All entries must have a sealed envelope attached with the contest name and class number on the envelope.

Inside of the envelope must have the Juniors name, Unit number, location, and District number on a card inside

Classes for each contest

Class I	Ages 6 years and under
Class II	Ages 7 - 12 years
Class III	Ages 13 - 18 years

Awards

1st Place	\$10 cash award for each class
2nd Place	\$5 cash award for each class

Poppy Centerpiece Contes

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy centerpiece using Honorary Department Junior President Taylor's theme "A companion for our comrades." Her symbol is a camouflaged paw print.

Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere Contest

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy corsage or boutonniere using Honorary Department Junior President Taylor's theme "A companion for our comrades." Her symbol is a camouflaged paw print.

Poppy Memorial Day Wreath

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy Memorial Day Wreath with the poppy as the focus of the wreath.



Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference

MEDIA RELEASE CONSENT FORM

- 1. I, the undersigned, hereby authorize American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota to photograph me, take motion pictures of me, take video footage of me and/or make electronic sound recordings of me (herein referred to as photographic or electronic reproductions) as well as use my name and likeness;
2. I authorize the use of any such photographic or electronic reproductions and my name and likeness for any purpose, including, but not limited to, educational and other public media as may be deemed appropriate by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota. I understand that I may be identifiable from such photographic or electronic reproductions for non-profit public purposes.
3. I understand that I will not be compensated financially for such uses.

Print Name
Title
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone
Email Address

PARENTAL CONSENT

I certify that I am the parent and/or guardian of the individual above, a minor under the age of eighteen years. I hereby agree to assume legal responsibility for his/her authorization referred to in this General Media Release.

Signature of Applicant's Parent/Guardian
Date
Address of Parent/Guardian (if different)
Cell Phone Number
City, State, Zip Code
Email Address



Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference

Please complete this form so that the local committee can make their plans and have an accurate count of people to expect for food and activities.

Friday Evening Activities -April 12, 2024

of Junior members _____

of Senior members/guests _____

Saturday Noon Lunch at the Conference -April 13 2024

of Junior members _____

of Senior members/guests _____

Please list any special dietary needs or allergies for Junior and/or Senior members:

Unit# _____ Unit Location _____ District# _____

Motel where group is staying _____

CONFERENCE RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2024

Mail Reservations to:

Sally Strasser
Department Junior Activities Chairman
381 Grafton Ave N
Oakdale Mn 55128



Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2024
Department Junior Conference

**HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS
2024 DEPARTMENT JUNIOR CONFERENCE**

American Inn Lodge and Suites

777 E Hwy 10
Detroit Lakes, Mn. 56501
Phone number is. (218)847-8795

Pool, Continental Breakfast, Double Queen Rooms

Friday April 12th 2024
Block of 29 rooms – Code is ALA JR Conference

Price is \$139.00 plus tax

Cut off date for reservations is March 12th 2024.



Department of Minnesota January 2024 Unit Mailing Legislation

January is Legislation Month!

And there is a lot of information in this newsletter of interest to share.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE TO DATE OF 2024 VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL

There has been a change of date for the 2024 Veterans Day on the Hill. Due to a scheduling conflict with the Minnesota Legislature and their new break schedule it has been moved to April 17, 2024. Please share this new flyer with your unit and communities.

Schedule will remain the same with doors opening at 10am for coffee 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 from 10-11:30am. Plan to meet your lawmakers!

2024 Minnesota American Legion Legislative Priorities

You will find in this unit mailing the 2024 Minnesota American Legion Legislative Priorities. Below are the included priorities and you can see the brochure for more information on each.

Priorities include:

- Pass the Veterans and Military Omnibus Bill
- Charitable Gambling: Provide meaningful tax relief and reinstate bonus games and free plays.
- Fix a property tax exemption for Gold Star spouses and do not charge vehicle registration.
- Provide 100% property tax relief for posts of veteran's service organizations.
- Amend a law to help our CVSOs receive important documents.
- Waive license fees on hunting, trapping, and fishing for all veterans.
- Allocate proceeds from military/veteran license plates to the Support Our Troops License Plate Grant Fund
- Administrative: Update the personal needs allowance at Minnesota Veterans Homes

Please share this brochure with your members.

Do you keep track throughout the year to be ready for Annual Reports?

With the changes to the annual reports, I wanted to relay to you what will be asked on the annual reports this year for Legislation.

- ✓ Did unit members visit the American Legion's Legislative website to keep current on legislative priorities?
- ✓ Did members of your unit subscribe to the American Legion's legislative action alerts?
- ✓ Did members of your unit download and review the American Legion Auxiliary Advocacy Guide
- ✓ Did your unit host a meet the candidate night in your community?
- ✓ Did members of your unit attend the 2024 Veterans Day on the Hill?
- ✓ Did members of your unit contact representatives this year?
- ✓ Did your unit do an event or educate members in January for Legislation month?

Robin Dorf, Legislation Chairman

VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL 2024

**WHEN:
APRIL 17TH, 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!





MINNESOTA AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2024

Approved by the Department Executive Committee on Oct. 26, 2023

Pass the Veterans and Military Omnibus Bill

The 2023 session produced the second Veterans & Military Omnibus Bill, and this action to separate our legislation has become a Minnesota precedent. Let's not step backward. It ought to be a regular expectation, like an agriculture bill, tax bill or transportation bill.

Charitable gambling: Provide meaningful tax relief and reinstate bonus games and free plays

- Provide meaningful tax relief. Last session, lawmakers granted tax relief bringing the top-tier from 36 percent to 33.5 percent, a slim reduction. Charities want that level to be 25 percent but would accept 30. The corporate income tax rate in Minnesota is 9.8 percent. Why are charities being taxed so harshly in comparison? The funds charities raise largely go back into their local economies and the good causes they donate to provide a valuable safety net for the disadvantaged.

- Broaden the tax structure. Right now, once an organization reaches \$157,000 in combined net receipts for their fiscal year, they already are at the top tier for monthly taxes. ACM and other organizations want to modernize the tier structure for the current economy. This, too, would provide some measure of tax relief. The other tiers presently are 25 percent for over \$122,500 accumulated, 17 percent for over \$87,500 accumulated and 8 percent for starting





off.

- Reinstate bonus games and free plays. Bonus games and free plays do not mimic slot machines in any way, and courts have ruled on this. What determines slot machines are variable prize structures, jackpots and unlimited bets — not bonus games or free plays. Besides, what's the difference between awarding a free play on a \$5 game or a \$5

prize? Nothing. The tribes only asked for removal of the open-all feature last session. Inserting additional language was a punitive action by some anti-charity lawmakers.

- Push back the enactment date by one year. This e-tab industry took 10 years to build, and the Legislature asked the gaming industry to revamp it in one year. That's not possible. What if by January 2025 there have only been four games approved? What if there are 25 games approved but they are all dull? Either way, gaming revenue crashes. There remains a lot to figure out in the next year. Move enactment to January 2026.

Fix a property-tax exemption for Gold Star spouses and do not charge for vehicle registration

The present law, MS 273.13, Subd. 34(d), says the surviving spouse must file within two years of the death and must live in the home at the time of the death. The statute cites the DD-1300 Report of Casualty or the DD-2064 Report of Death as indicators.

This property tax exemption law discriminates against active-duty spouses and would help only Minnesota National Guard or Reserve spouses. Clearly, active-duty spouses highly likely live on or near out-of-state bases when their spouses die in service to the country. When they return to Minnesota, they find they do not qualify for the Gold Star property-tax exemption.

This is not in the spirit of our state's support for veterans and their families.

We also would favor changing the law to allow the spouses to remarry and





retain the benefit.

Many states do not charge vehicle registration fees for Gold Star spouses (based on the DD-1300 or DD-2064). Minnesota should follow suit.

These people have made deep sacrifices on behalf of our federal, state and local governments, and this would be the least our state could do to thank them.

Modernize the Homestead Market Value Exclusion

Currently, there are two levels of property tax exclusions. The first one is a maximum exemption of \$150,000 for veterans rated by the VA 70 to 100 percent disabled. The second level of exclusion is for 100 percent permanent total and disabled veterans at \$300,000.

We need to accommodate more veterans to be eligible for this benefit. Provide an exclusion for veterans rated 50 to 100 percent disabled at \$200,000 off their property tax values, and provide market value exclusion of \$400,000 for 100 percent-rated veterans.

Also, it should provide an inflationary-based increase. We support the removal of the equal or lesser value language for surviving spouses.

Provide 100% property tax relief for posts of veteran service organizations

Many 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations received property tax exemptions after qualifying through their county assessor and going through a three-year assessment review.

We desire Minnesota to give 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(19) organizations access to the same nonprofit property tax exemptions provided to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. This would halt an unfair treatment and reduce the disturbing trend of posts going under.

In that spirit, we desire congressionally chartered veterans organizations — because they have a federal requirement of reporting their volunteer and charitable efforts directly to Congress annually — to pay zero property taxes. There are a handful of states that provide this same benefit as a recognition of the good veteran service organizations do for their communities, and Minnesota needs to be among them.

As a side benefit, a zero-tax measure would clear up much of the confusion city and county assessors statewide have regarding veteran posts and tax laws.

Amend a law to help our CVSOs receive important documents

Alter Statute 197.63 to include county veteran service officers in the list of entities of which "vital records" documents can be issued without a charge. This would save all kinds of "acting on behalf of" confusion at county recorder offices. Waive license fees on

hunting, trapping and fishing for all veterans

We favor the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources waiving fees for veterans who are Minnesota residents on hunting, trapping and fishing licenses.

We advocate for the Legislature to approve the result of this proposal, as it would likely increase net license revenue for the DNR by encouraging their family members to purchase licenses and would give veterans the health benefits that come from being outdoors.



Allocate proceeds from military/veteran license plates to the Support Our Troops License Plate Grant Fund

Proceeds from sales of the Support Our Troops license plates go into a grant fund managed by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

However, proceeds from all the other kinds of license plates that recognize past military service, military decorations, veterans organizations or veteran status — there are about 40 total — go into the state's general fund.

Veterans tell The American Legion they would rather have money from any military/veteran-themed license plates directed to the SOT Plate Grant Fund. They often decline to purchase those plates because the funds aren't directed toward veterans or made available to veteran service organizations through the grant process.

Approve 7 new license plates

- Jewish War Veterans. There are license plates for other congressionally chartered veterans organizations, but, strangely, not one for the JWV. It's time to fix this oversight.
- Military retirees. Minnesota ought to offer license plates denoting career retirees of any of the 6 service branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force.

Administrative: Update the personal needs allowance at Minnesota Veterans Homes

No new law is needed for this matter, but The American Legion is working with the MDVA to increase the personal needs allowance for veterans in the Minnesota Veterans Homes.

Presently, in a worst-case scenario, veterans are allowed to keep \$90 a month, and that has not changed in 30 years. For the sake of dignity, it's time to increase their allowance to reflect increases in the cost of living.

Hello!

This year sure has flown by at a fast pace! I want to thank everyone for working hard to get those members! We still have a long way to go!

Our Next membership rally will be our Sweetheart Rally at the Forest Lake American Legion on February 3, 2024. Bring your traveling Caribbean clothing and count on a good time to be together with our Legion Family.

Here is the Eventbrite link for the Sweetheart Rally for more information and to purchase tickets!

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/minnesota-american-legion-family-sweetheart-rally-2024-tickets-749563744337?aff=oddtcreator&utm_source=eventbrite&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=post_publish&utm_content=shortLinkNewEmail



I want to share a guest blog that can also be found on the Auxiliary National Website. Enjoy!

Guest blog post by Karen Toll, 2023-2024 ALA National Membership Committee Chair

Let me ask you this...

Why did you join the American Legion Auxiliary? Was it to honor a veteran? To pay back your community? Or to socialize with friends who are members?

Whatever your reason, let us review your benefits to ALA membership:

- Auxiliary members who have maintained annual ALA membership for three consecutive years are eligible for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, AEF, which could grant you up to \$3,000 in the event of a disaster or financial setback.
- There are many discounts available on retail and insurance products.
- Networking with some of the greatest folks ever!
- Gratification when working at an event or fundraiser with the Auxiliary.
- The ability to help veterans in need, right in your own community.
- The opportunity to help military families.
- The possibility of scholarships for your family and friends.
- A membership card that gives you the opportunity to visit different American Legion posts as you travel.
- And my favorite reason: FRIENDSHIPS!

Still unsure about renewing?

Maybe you need a reminder of what the American Legion Auxiliary REALLY does!

I will share a few of my favorite programs:



Department of Minnesota January 2024 Unit Mailing Membership

- Junior Activities: American Legion Auxiliary Juniors are ages birth until their 18th birthday. ALA senior members teach Junior members to be outstanding citizens. We teach them the importance of giving back to their community and our legacy of *Service Not Self*. Senior members feel rewarded working with Juniors. We can all learn from each other at any age.
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Have you ever assisted veterans at the local VA hospital? The veterans are some of the nicest people. If you get them telling their war stories, they are amazing. They are sharing history with you! You cannot leave the VA without an extra pep in your step! And how about the Veterans Creative Arts Festival at both the local and national levels? That is some amazing work!
- National Security: How much pride do you have when you help fill boxes to send to the troops? Do they correspond with you once they have received the boxes? I love it when they send photos! I cannot imagine being out of the country, away from loved ones for an extended period. We have been told over and over that they have so much appreciation for the packages — partially because of the contents — but mostly because we are showing our military that we care about them!

Do you help your unit assist the family of an active-duty service member? We clip coupons. We babysit. Have you seen the success of a baby shower for pregnant military/spouses?

- Poppy: Who doesn't love the little red flower, as well as the powerful meaning behind it? Many members love to socialize while making poppies or collecting donations for them. When one of our unit members passes away, we show our gratitude for the deceased member with the poppy service at their funeral. The family of the deceased always love the ceremony.

The American Legion Auxiliary is a lot of work. But it is fun work!

We fundraise in many different ways: We have bingo, bake sales, craft shows, turkey raffles, etc. That is hard work, but donating to your community, a servicemember, a veteran, a program, or a scholarship fund is one of the most rewarding things not only for the recipient, but for all of us as well!

We offer many opportunities for positive interactions. We have unit meetings, district/county meetings, department meetings, Mission Trainings, and National Convention. Can you imagine missing out on the friendships you can make at these meetings? I honestly cannot! I have so many more friends throughout the United States and beyond because of my membership in The American Legion Family.

Are you ready to renew your membership? You don't have to do everything the ALA offers. Find the one program that interests you most and start asking questions. Ask to be on the committee to gain more knowledge. It will be fun and rewarding. Once you are more involved, you will gain a sense of belonging, which is followed by a greater sense of pride in both the organization and yourself.

That's a WIN-WIN!

Even though we do not have snow yet, think of this image of one person trying to pull in the whole ship for members! Remember, it takes all of us to expand our Legion Family!!

I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Jenny Nelson, Membership Chairman Department of Minnesota



Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Poppy

Let's make Poppy Events a success in your community!

The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower donate to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Poppy Days have become a familiar tradition in almost every American community. The American Legion Auxiliary members know when they are asked. What is our most recognized symbol of the sacrifices of our military? The answer is POPPY! As we move through our Christmas and New Year holiday celebrations using poppies on our gifts, decorations and crafts, FEBRUARY is the perfect month to continuously keep our poppy in the public eye. With Freedom Day, Valentines Day and Presidents Day, February provides great opportunities to proudly wear a poppy every day.

Make Poppy Events a success in your community:

- Wear the ALA poppy proudly. That bright, red flower on your label is a visual, tangible, and steadfast example of respect.
- Help distribute poppies and tell everyone why. Place donation cans at work, and in local businesses.
- Include a poppy on Valentine cards and gifts for Inpatient and Outpatient Veterans in a Medical facility.
- Including poppies in flower arrangements, crafts and gifts, makes Valentines Day a happy celebration of Love with a Poppy.
- Share on Facebook what you are doing and how. Make sure to use our hashtags #PoppyDay and #LegionFamily. Media is your friend; make good use of radio, TV, newspaper, and every electronic avenue available. You can find ideas, supplies, support, and tools at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Poppy Program and poppydayusa.org.
- For more information on how to use poppy funds, refer to the POPPY PROGRAM GUIDE, Which is available through the American Legion Auxiliary Flag & Emblem Sales or online at ALAforveterans.org.

The distribution of this bright-red memorial flower to the public is a big component of the ALA's Poppy Program, one of our oldest and most widely recognized programs. The poppy symbolizes the sacrifice made by our veterans, servicemembers, and their families. However, many people do not know how the funds received from poppy distributions may be used or where the money can go.

Poppy funds are used to support **THREE Major** national mission outreach activities. The **FIRST** mission outreach activity is the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, which the Auxiliary has proudly co-presented for over 20 years. The **SECOND** mission outreach activity is to support aspects of the Honor Flight mission. The **THIRD** mission outreach activity is to support our servicemembers nationwide.

In the past only poppies made by veterans could be distributed by American Legion Auxiliary members. Now several new options are available to allow for creative use of the poppy as a symbol. Check out National Headquarters Pinterest page at www.pinterest.com/alaforveterans with how to instructions on felt poppies, crocheted poppies, and a recipe for poppy cookies. These ideas provide our members with many opportunities to tell the poppy story and raise funds for our veterans, military, and their families. National approval is not required for wearing homemade poppies, only poppies with an "In Memoriam" tag are officially branded. When homemade poppies and various poppy images are used the poppy should be RED since it symbolizes the blood sacrifice for our freedom; however previous rules governing the number of petals, colors or leaves no longer apply. (Listed below are some tips on making **February events** a success in your community).

For more detail poppy information, including resources on the American Legion Auxiliary's program visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR POPPIES: TIPS for making the February event a success in your community.

1. DISTRIBUTE THE POPPY SYMBOL IN NON-TRADITIONAL WAYS.

We are no longer limited to using crepe paper poppies, and poppy labels no longer have to include the calendar year. For many years, the Illinois American Legion has used a fabric poppy manufactured by a veteran-owned business. Although a different design and feel from the traditional red crepe paper poppy, the fabric flower is attractive, meets The American Legion's specifications, and is easy to assemble. ALA members also can distribute the poppy symbol in non-traditional displays such as poppy buttons, jewelry, T-shirts, crafts (like the ornament pictured here), or cookies.



2. WHAT SUPPLIED DO I NEED FOR NATIONAL POPPY DAY?

While National Poppy Day is still a few months away, now is a great time to prepare? If units wish to distribute the traditional crepe paper poppies, they will need to procure an adequate supply of poppies, either from veteran poppy makers within their department or from the American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales (www.emblem.legion.org), which is available for purchase in bundles of 25. To collect donations, ALA-branded cans are also available through Emblem Sales. Or make your own via www.ALAforVeterans.org/programs/poppy.



3. USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT YOUR EVENTS

A key factor to hosting a successful National Poppy Day is making the public aware of your events and activities. Here's an easy way to communicate the poppy message for everybody -social media. With the simple click of a button, you can share your National Poppy Day plans with all your followers! You can also request to join the national ALA Poppy Program Facebook group at www.Facebook.com/groups/ALApoppy. There, you and other American Legion Auxiliary members can share ideas, projects, and information about our Poppy Program!





4. I'VE RAISED THE MONEY....NOW HOW CAN THE FUNDS BE USED?

It's up to each American Legion Auxiliary unit as to where they want their Poppy Funds used, as long as the unit follows the Poppy Fund criteria, which you can view in the *ALA Poppy Program Guide* at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Programs/Poppy (member login required). ALA units may also send their poppy money to their department headquarters earmarked for a state Veterans Creative Arts Festival, or units may send their poppy money to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters earmarked for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and just this year you can support Honor Flight in your area. For additional information on the Honor Flight, you can visit www.honorflight.org.

Resources:

www.legion-aux.org/poppy

www.legion-aux.org/poppy-funds

www.legion-aux.org/Poppy-Day-Banner-Templates

www.legion-aux.org/Poppy-Day-Poster-Templates

www.legion-aux.org/Poppy-Day-Media-Templates

emblem.legion.org/Poppy-Shop/products/1330/

emblem.legion.org/Poppy-Coloring-Book/productinfo/355.301/

www.honorflight.org



Wear or display your poppy with honor and pride every day to bring greater awareness to this symbolic flower, remember our fallen and support the living heroes.

Marsha Bible

Department Poppy Chairman

5602 West Oakes Drive

St. Cloud, MN 56303

(320) 492-8977

Marsha.bible@gmail.com



**Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Public Relations**

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas.

Taylor McElroy (The Department Honorary Jr President) and I are doing videos, (one per month) on what the Auxiliary is about and the Four Founding Pillars. Please check them out on Face-Book and You-Tube. They are on the First District Face-Book page and that has about 1250 followers. If you like the videos, please click the like icon, and share the video.

My Unit 161 of LeRoy recently bought blue shirts from Emblem Sales with the Branding Logo on them, and we love them. So, check them out. People can see what organization we belong to without coming up close to read the emblem on the shirt.

Sharon Hammon

Department of Minnesota, Public Relations Chairman



Department of Minnesota
January 2024 Unit Mailing
Risk and Compliance

Risk Aversion is about avoiding risk. If you ignore the risks, you may have loss of investment moneys, misuse of moneys, and theft of moneys.

Review your expenses and incomes at each of your unit meetings and remember to do an audit at the end of each fiscal year. Your audit committee should be made up of 3-4 people who can be professionals or non-member volunteers. You should have the bank statements, all the receipts and bills, and the checkbook with you to look at when doing the audit. When the audit is done, make sure there is a person appointed to file your 990. A copy of the filed 990 should be made and kept with the financial paperwork. Filing date of the 990 should also be given to the Secretary so that a notation can be made in the minutes.

Some units have their Post file their 990's which is fine, except don't forget to audit your accounts before you give the Post the go ahead to file for you.

Filing keeps units tax-exempt and eligible for grants and donations. Remember that when determining the value of donations if the donor has received something of value back for the donation, that received value needs to be deducted from the total donation received.

Units have up to five months to file their 990 after their fiscal year but I suggest that you do it as soon as possible so that you don't forget to file it.

Roberta Elvecrog
Risk and Compliance Chair
218-549-3614
relvecrog@frontiernet.net