

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
2023-2024**

Sharon Cross, Department President

April 2024 Unit Mailing

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Welcome spring!

It seems like the last few months of winter have felt like March. In April we emphasize our Children and Youth program. What a great way to start our new program year, they are our future. Check the Unit mailing and the Legionnaire for Department Chairman Brandi Christensen's article. She has been doing a great job sharing information with all our Units.

Our program report year is from April 1 – March 31. Are your 2023-2024 Unit reports in the mail to your District Chairmen? Regular mail has definitely been snail mail so if your reports are not already sent in, please get them in soon. Our District Chairmen need your reports so they can get their reports tallied and submitted. Toot your own horns and report what your Unit has been doing this past program year. I hope they are all received by our District Chairmen by the due date of April 15th so that your numbers are included in what the District Chairmen will tally and report to the Department Chairman. There are forms on the Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary's website if you prefer to email. Just be certain your District Chairman uses a computer and printer when sending your report as not everyone does.

If you can attend the National President's Tour at one of the meal-stops please take note that in lieu of gifts National President Lisa is requesting we donate to the American Legion Auxiliary's greatest funding need, the Spirit of Youth Scholarship program. President Lisa is looking forward to meeting with our Auxiliary, Legion, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Rider members. Be sure to include your new members even prospective members to hear National President Lisa's message.

Having enough poppies on hand for our 400 Units in Minnesota continues to be quite a challenge this year. Department Poppy Chairman Marsha Bible has had some poppy making workshops that have been successful with those in attendance learning how our poppies are made. At our last Department Executive Committee meeting, held in March, we voted that for this 2023-2024 year Units may purchase the poppy kit for the same price of \$250 plus shipping. As of March 11th, we were 48,025 poppies short of fulfilling orders. Additionally, some Units have already requested or received the poppy kit and are already making their own. At that time there were 32 kits out to poppy makers. If they all get completed and returned to the Department office, we will still be 16,025 short to fulfill the orders that have been received after January 31, 2024.

On a lighter note, this month is my Testimonial at the Melrose American Legion Post 101. Have you made your reservation? The meal is catered, and it is very important to have an accurate head count. Please be sure to RSVP by April 21, 2024.

Plan ahead and save the date: Department Convention July 11,12, & 13, 2024 at the Willmar Conference Center.

Sharon Cross, President Department of Minnesota



**Dancing
into the
Hearts of
Veterans**

**Sharon Cross, President
Dept of MN 2023-2024**

TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORING

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department Of Minnesota
President
SHARON CROSS**

**April 27, 2024
Melrose American Legion Post 101
265 County Road 173 SE, Melrose, MN**

Social Hour: 5pm

Dinner: 6pm

(Menu: Chicken, Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Carrots, Gravy, Dressing, Cole Slaw, Dessert)

Program Following

Cost: \$30

R.S.V.P. By April 21, 2024

Local Lodgings:

American Lodge and Suites: 1230 Timberline Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 320-352-2800

American Best Value Inn: 322 12 Street, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-7256

Palmer House: 500 Sinclair Lewis Avenue, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-9100

Super 8: 231 County Road 175, Melrose, MN 320-256-4261

Name: _____ Unit _____ Post _____

Number of people: _____

Total amount of check: \$_____

Address check as: (American Legion Auxiliary)

Mail Registration to: American Legion Auxiliary, Dept. President Testimonial, Attn.: Judy Hennen, P.O. Box 152, Melrose, MN 56352

National President Lisa Williamson will be visiting Minnesota!



Make your plans to meet with President Lisa at one of the following:

Monday, April 29th Dinner at Sauk Center Post 67

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Cost is \$15 Deadline to register April 19th

For Reservations Contact Jessie Hoppe 320-290-8761

Tuesday, April 30th Dinner at Redwood Falls Post 38

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Cost is \$20 Deadline to register April 19th

For Reservations Contact Jennette Mertens 507-828-7656

Wednesday, May 1st Lunch at Adrian Post 32

Social Time @ 11:30 am with Lunch @ 12 pm

Cost is Free Will Donation Deadline to register is April 22nd

For Reservations Contact Diane Strassburg 507-290-0011

Wednesday, May 1st Dinner at Lake Crystal Post 294

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Cost is \$20 Deadline to register April 22nd

For Reservations Contact Barb Spencer 507-726-2155



Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing
Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Emergency Disaster Kit
Submitted by Lynn Masters, AEF Western Division Chairman

Being prepared for an emergency means you have available your own food, water, and necessities to last up to a week on your own.

Basic Emergency Kit

1. Water and non-perishable food to last up to a week. Keep dry goods in waterproof containers and have about a gallon of water a day per person for drinking and personal sanitation.
2. Keep your cell phone charged and if possible, have a spare battery and a portable charger so you can stay in touch
3. Have a battery operated or hand crank radio that receives the NOAA weather radio tone alerts and be sure to bring extra batteries.
4. A flashlight with extra batteries.
5. A first aid kit.
6. A whistle to signal for help.
7. Dust masks to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to cover window and doors if needed to shelter in place.
8. Moist toileses or baby wipes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
9. non-sparking wrench or pliers to turn off the utilities
10. A manual can opener.
11. Local Maps

Other things to have ready and available to grab and go.

1. Prescription medicine and glasses or contact lenses. Also have over the counter medicines for pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids and laxatives, solution for the contact lenses.
2. Infant formula, diapers, baby wipes and diaper rash cream.
3. Pet food and water for your pets. Include sweaters or toys for them too. The amount of food and water depends on your pets. Store food in waterproof container.
4. Important documents: copies of insurance policies, personal identification and bank information for your accounts. Put them in a secure waterproof container.
5. Cash and change to purchase items. Traveler checks will work sometimes too.
6. Emergency reference material: a first aide manual, a survival book and information from www.ready.gov. keep in a waterproof container.
7. Sleeping bags or warm blankets for each person. Extra bedding if you are in a cold climate.
8. At least one full change of clothes per person to include: a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider the area and include extra clothing as needed. (warm jacket, hat and gloves)
9. A fire extinguisher.
10. Matches in a waterproof container.
11. Feminine supplies, personal hygiene items and hand sanitizer. (liquid soap and towels; foldable shovel and trash bags Toilet paper)
12. Mess kits: disposable paper plates, utensils and paper towels. Carry a metal cup or pan to heat water in for food and drinks. And a utility pocketknife.
13. Paper and pencil.
14. Books, games or puzzles or other activities to keep children busy.

This list is on the FEMA website www.ready.gov. There are a few additions that I thought of that would make your emergency easier to get through that were not on the list from FEMA. Keep a full kit ready in your home and put a smaller kit in your vehicle in case you are stranded away from home.

Report of AEF Grants for October 2023 – January 2024

AEF Total Grant Awards – Fiscal 2023-2024 (October 2023 through January 2024) Results

AEF Dollars Awarded: \$71,376.34

Total Members Awarded: 40

Total Awarded Disaster Applications: 11 – Amount: \$20,786.80

Total Awarded Hardship Assistance Applications: 29 – Amount: \$50,589.54

Thank you, National Liaison Dean Sanders and staff, for sharing the dollars awarded to fellow members who faced natural disasters and hard times.

Just a reminder to Districts, Units and members to set aside monies when you do your budgeting for the year. These are dollars that are well spent.

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.

**Note the information for awards are based on the funds received by National by May 31, 2024.

NEEDED

Pictures of the activities for AEF from our Department, Districts and Units that they are doing to promote the AEF program. Send to me at margeekeller@hotmail.com Thank you in advance for doing that. The sooner the better!



AEF Donation Pins

For a personal donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) of \$ 100.00 or more, you will receive this beautiful gold pin.

Special Note: If our Department sends in a donation that includes \$100.00 or more from one person our Department will maintain a list of members who made the \$ 100.00 personal donations and a pin will be mailed to them or handed out at one our Membership Rallies this year. We have the pins on hand at our Department Office now.

Ways to Donate to the AEF

Donations for the AEF – Auxiliary Emergency Fund- are always needed and appreciated. You can donate on special occasions, monthly or whenever you have funds to make a donation. Members and friends can log in to [Home \(legion-aux.org\)](http://Home.legion-aux.org) and click on donate or give. The site will give you a dropdown box after you click or enter the amount to donate. It says, "select a fund". Using the dropdown box select the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

The following link is the direct link to the donation page: [Donate! \(legion-aux.org\)](http://Donate!.(legion-aux.org))
Using the instructions above donate to the AEF.

A QR Code was established for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. You may use this code for your donations. Place your phone on camera over the code and tap the yellow link to take you to the donation page.



April - If your Post Home has a table place a AEF container with a retro/ record theme with the message "Blowing in the Wind, The Answer, My Friend is Helping Others" donate to the AEF Program.

Happy Spring!

Margee Keller, MN AEF Chairman Cell 218-349-4566 margeekeller@hotmail.com



Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing
Americanism

To the Units who sent in Americanism Essay submissions, THANK YOU! I have received many of them. As of this writing, I have received 28 submissions with eleven days left until the deadline of March 25th. I am hoping to receive a lot more! I will send the department level winners to the Northwestern Division and National Americanism Chairman.

The theme for the Americanism Essay contest is "What does Freedom mean to me?" As an Auxiliary member, what would your essay say? Freedom means, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- 1: the quality or state of being free: such as
- a: the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action
 - b: liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another : **INDEPENDENCE**
 - c: the quality or state of being exempt or released usually from something onerous
 - d: unrestricted use
 - e: **EASE, FACILITY**
 - f: the quality of being frank, open, or outspoken
 - g: improper familiarity
 - h: boldness of conception or execution
- 2: a: a political right
- b: **FRANCHISE, PRIVILEGE**

April is Children & Youth Month. Please remember to Purple Up for Military Kids on April 15th. Let's show our Military Kids that we care and support them as they have parents who are serving our country. Military Kids do not put on the uniform, but they are in the home supporting their parent who does serve!

End of Year reports are on the horizon. Please be sure to send your Unit Report to your District Chairman. They will write one report and send it on to me as the Department Chairman.

Now is the time to start planning for a Flag Disposal Ceremony. Flag Day is June 14th, maybe use this date for your local area to do the ceremony. Start collecting unusable flags now. Promote to your communities that you will be accepting unusable flags to properly dispose of them. Take the time to "thank" your neighbors and businesses for displaying a flag. Send or present them with a card or certificate thanking them for promoting Americanism.

American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State is a week full of Americanism. Has your Unit sent your reservation to send a young woman to this week packed full of learning about our government, becoming a leader, and to learn about Americanism? Now is the time to reserve a spot for this awesome week of learning.

Mary Kuperus,
Department Americanism Chairman
wmkuperus@tds.net

Month Of Military Child!

In this country there are more than 1.6 million military children. April is the month that is dedicated to them. To show them that we see and appreciate their own service and sacrifice.

April 15th is “Purple Up Day!” for Military Kids. It’s a day that we can really show our support by just wearing purple. You can also encourage everyone else in your communities to wear purple on April 15th including city officials, businesses, schools, and other organizations.

Why purple? Purple is a combination of all branches of military. Army-Green, Coast Guard-Blue, Air Force-Blue, Marine-Red, and Navy-Blue.

Remember to also post on your social media about Purple Up day. We live in a “tech age”. This is the fastest way of letting everyone know about how they can support military children by wearing purple.



Please also remember to submit your nominations for Youth Hero and Good Deed Award. This can be done on the National website. Is there a youth in your community that has done something this past year that has done something incredible that deserves recognition?

Brandi Christensen,
Department Children and Youth Chairman

The Dandelion Flower of the Military Child

**Dandelions put down roots almost anywhere
and it is almost impossible to destroy.**

It is an unpretentious plant, yet good looking.

It is a survivor in a broad range of climates.

Military children bloom everywhere the winds carry them.

They are hardy and upright.

**Their roots are strong, cultivated deeply
in the culture of the Military,
planted swiftly and surely.**

**They're ready to fly in the breezes
that take them to new adventures, new lands, and new friends.**

**Military children are well-rounded,
culturally aware, tolerant, and extremely resilient.**

**They have learned from an early age
that home is where their hearts are.**

That a good friend can be found in every corner of the world.

They learn that to survive means to adapt.

**That the door that closes one chapter of their life
opens to a new and exciting adventure
full of new friends and new experiences.**



Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing
Community Service



“Alone, we can do so little. Together, we can do so much.” Helen Keller

April, National Volunteer Month, a month dedicated to honoring volunteers and encouraging volunteerism in our communities, was made official worldwide in 1990. In the United States, National Volunteer Week began in 1974 and this year is celebrated April 21st-27th. National Volunteer Week/ Month is an opportunity to thank, celebrate and honor your American Legion Family members for their service to our organization and the community. Remember to include volunteers who work with your community service projects/activities but are not eligible for membership in our organization. This also provides an opportunity to highlight and to focus on what projects/activities your unit and post are doing to enhance your community.

American Legion Family Day is April 27, 2024. Posts are encouraged to open their doors to members of their community for the day to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion, Legion Riders, and American Legion Auxiliary. Use this day to bring awareness to The American Legion’s “Be the One” initiative to improve access and reduce the stigma around mental health services. Partner with your American Legion Family in planning and promoting your event. Be sure to make it a family event by providing activities for all age groups, having a variety of informational brochures on hand, & membership applications.

Unit annual reports are due soon! Follow all instructions and due dates provided to your Unit by the Department office! **Thank you** for volunteering!

Wanda Seidler,
Department Community Service Chairman



Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing

It seems like every month the Unit Mailing comes faster and faster, just like our Girls State week is quickly approaching. Our committee is looking forward to this year's event. Our staff is meeting monthly by zoom and are getting ready to make this year the best.

As I write this, reservations are still coming into the office. By the time you read this, the deadline for reservations will have passed. I hope that you mailed your unit's reservations in.

If you were unable to find a student, but would like to donate to the program, please feel free to send a check to the Department office. Sometimes units have qualified students, but do not have the funds. The Department office's goal is to match qualified students with contributing units to make their attendance possible. If we don't have extra students, your donation will be used towards our other expenses. (Don't forget to buy gift cards through www.raiseright.com because your purchases help the program.)

The Girls State has so many aspects – so many opportunities to turn our youth into educated adults that participate in our government's elections. They hear from professionals in the all the branches of our State Government. Not only can their future include their participation in local, state, and Federal voting, but their name may be on the ballot.

As a Counselor last year, I was not only impressed by the program, but more importantly impressed by our students. Most of them stepped up to the plate – to participate – to make new friends - to learn – to grow. This program is such an opportunity and I hope that your unit will agree to participate and find a qualified student to attend. I will be sad to move off the Girls State Committee, but I hope to be involved in one way or another. This program is well worth our efforts.

Linda Kelly
Minnesota Girls State Chairman

“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is
SUCCESS.” President Gerald Ford

Leadership Workshop April 12th

In this class we will talk about Leadership, Compliance, Legislation, Reporting, and learn the art of making Poppies. Please join us for good food, prizes, and lots of fun. You can rsvp to Karla at 320-420-8163 or t.d.news2share@gmail.com if you are attending. The class will start at 9:30 am and run through 3pm. The cost is \$5.00. to cover prizes. And a free will lunch. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



LEADERSHIP GOLDEN RULES

Overcome Obstacles with Determination

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” A good leader is aware of this fact, which is why they are the embodiment of unflinching determination. Followers look up to their leaders, and if they find leaders struggling to cope up with difficult circumstances due to lack of leadership skills, it can demoralize their spirits. On the contrary, if the leader shows resolve and never gives up, it will breathe new life and energy into followers.

UNIT MEMBER OF THE YEAR

We all have that “one Person” who is always ready to help. Would she qualify for the unit member of the year? Requirements:

1. Open to senior members who are not currently nor have ever been in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than unit president.
2. Units follow the directions and deadlines of your department. Submit a narrative of 1000 word or less to your department leadership chairman Karla Otterness. Describe the nominee’s accomplishments and activities and include the nominee’s name and address.
3. Submit only one entry per unit, entry is due April 20th as I need to judge them and send the winner to national. Please submit them by mail to Karla Otterness 239 Westgate Drive Winsted MN or email to t.d.news2share@gmail.com

Karla Otterness,
Department Leadership Chairman
t.d.news2share@gmail.com



American Legion Auxiliary
Department Of Minnesota

Leadership, Reporting and Poppies Oh My!

April 13th, 2024

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

American Legion Post 212

900 1st St E, Park Rapids, MN 56470

\$5.00 registration Pay at the door.

Lunch will be a free will offering.

Presented by
Bev Grose 6th District Leadership
Karla Otterness Department Leadership Chair

Guest presenters

Lynn Spilman
Roberta Elvecrog
Plus, a surprise presenter.

Please RSVP by April 6th - So we can plan lunch accordantly.
To Karla Otterness t.d.news2share@gmail.com or 320-420-8163

The 64th American Legion Annual Washington Conference was held in February. This conference provides an opportunity to meet with lawmakers regarding the American Legion legislative priorities.



The Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary had three members attend the conference. I asked each to write a summary of their experience at the conference to share with our members.

Norma Tramm, National Poppy Committee Chairman

The first session that was available concerned “Be The One”. The mission of our three national leaders. It was a training on steps to prevent suicide by the Columbia Lighthouse Project. Some of the misconceptions they shared: Most people who think about suicide die by suicide; If you remove access to one lethal method of suicide, someone at risk to suicide will replace it with another; Suicide is NOT impulsive; Talking about suicide will lead to and encourage suicide; and the majority of veterans/service members who die

by suicide have a mental illness. The questions to help determine the risk factors will be shared.

I also attended the Legislative session on Monday morning. The American Legion Legislative Agenda for the 118th Congress, 2nd Session was reviewed at length. The VET-TEC Authorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 1669) has passed in the house, but still needs to pass the senate. I also attend the national Commanders Call and the National Commanders Rally/Know before you go. These sessions gave information on visiting with our elected officials.

My reason for attending was to support The Minnesota American Legion members as we encourage our Representatives to support the legislative agenda of TAL. My representative is Tom Emmer, and I was scheduled along with Mike Maxa, Lloyd Ricker and Mary Kuperus to meet with his assistant Luke Sandlin. We shared all the information and look forward to positive results.

The Minnesota American Legion welcomed us as we participated together. Their kindness was much appreciated as we work together for the mission of The American Legion Family.

Jean Walker, National Executive Committee

On Sunday I attended a training by the Columbia Lighthouse Project on steps to prevent suicide, they gave us information on questions to ask and they did some role playing so we could see how it works.

I attended the Legislative session on Monday morning. The American Legion Legislative Agenda for the 118th Congress, 2nd Session was reviewed at length. On Monday afternoon I met with Senator Amy Klobuchar with Kristy Janigo, Mike Maxa, Department Commander Paul Hassing and Bill Barbknecht and we went over several of the bills we are asking congress to get passed to help our Veterans and their families. I also attend the National Commanders Call where our Senator Amy Klobuchar was presented,

by The American Legion, the Distinguished Public Service Award for being champion of Legion legislation, efforts to improve national security and improving military quality of life.

On Tuesday morning I attended the National Commanders Rally/Know before you go rally. They talked about The American Legion Legislative Agenda and the bills we would like our legislators to get passed through Congress. Tuesday afternoon I met with Senator Tina Smith's assistant with Peggy Moon, Carl Moon and Mike Maxa and then we went to the House of Representatives and met with 7th District Representative Michelle Fischbach's assistant with Mike Maxa and Lloyd Ricker.

Mary Kuperus, Junior Activities Committee Northwestern Division Chairman

As a first-time attendee, I didn't really know how the few days we were in Washinton DC would go. I am so glad I went! Just being in our Nation's Capital is inspiring to me. Knowing that our democracy is being played out in that huge city. Walking through the halls of the Cannon Building, Longworth Building, and Rayburn Building with our American Flag and State flags lining the halls. Very impressive to me.

Our first meeting was with the Department of Minnesota delegation. Kristy Janigo, TAL Department Legislative Chair, reviewed the 2024 Legislative Agenda. The meeting schedule and assignments were reviewed to make sure all appointments had attendees to visit with our Senators and Representatives. We were only able to meet with their staff as the House was on recess.

I sat in on the Legislative Commission Meeting. They encouraged members to sign up for the Legislative Reports Alerts and to take action as much as you can. The 4 Corners VA Joint Committee staff were in attendance to review what they work on as legislative issues/concerns for our veterans and military. Some of the issues are Women Veterans, Education, Home loans, Homelessness, Guard/Reserve Parity, PACT Act, Electronic Health Records, Mental Health Care, Long Term Care, Travel Pay (bring back paper submissions), and Health Records Modernization. Another panelist went over "Best Practices" for when we would meet with our Senators and Representatives. Two statements stood out for me. Don't ask for something the member doesn't align with their beliefs and if the House had already passed the resolution not to take the time to discuss that item. Very interesting meeting.

I also sat in on the VA&R Committee Meeting. The VA now has 133 Veteran Law Judges. This is the best and most diverse group in a long time, 57% are women and 24% are veterans. The VA is working on having Veteran Cemeteries within 75 miles of a veteran. We were also informed that a veteran may pre apply for death benefits eligibility. The most important statement that I remember is to separate the gun from the ammo to help prevent the opportunity to die from suicide. They also suggested putting a picture of family members with the gun to help deter the impulse. Again, another interesting meeting.

I was assigned to meet with the staff for Rep. Brad Finstad from Congressional District 1. We met with Dylan Rosnick. Other members with me were Ray Kane, Janet Lorenzo, and Norma Tramm. Another great meeting sharing the American Legion Legislative agenda plus the importance of them for Minnesota veterans and military. I attended the Commander's Call and the Commander's "Know Before You Go" Rally. I had an awesome time and learned so much!

The May newsletter I will share information from the 2024 Veterans Day on the Hill.

Robin Dorf
Legislation Chairman



Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing
Membership

How is your membership doing? We need every member to be a recruiter. When we are seen involved in our communities working our programs, our membership grows. One key to a successful membership promotion is the amount of interest and buzz we can generate. The more people who see what we offer as an organization, the greater number of new members we will attract and retain. Your best outfit is your smile. Wear it proudly and with goodwill in your heart. Share all the positive things that you love about our organization!

Now that we have gone to the Appreciation Rally on the Island of Palm Tree Oasis, we need to get more creative on the next part of our journey as we approach Volcano Island where we can really blow up our membership goals! We sure had a great turn out! Keep in mind that the memberships turned in at the rallies do count toward the rally count. Of course, we want you to continue to mail them to department and not hold them, but we acknowledge that you are working hard the week of a rally and we want you to get credit for your work!

Have you been reaching out to your list of members who have not renewed? How are your goals going? Is it a stretch or are you close? Do not be discouraged! When we look at the numbers, it is easy to slow down. But the good news is, we can all call at least 2 members and check in with them! I have attached a couple of scripts that may help you. Never give up!

Are you offering a discount on dues at your fundraiser events? My unit did this at our Craft sale and we got a member. Best \$5 our unit ever spent! Did you know that your dues do not help your Post or Unit financially, but it's renewing your membership and your commitment to helping other Veterans that make you a valued member!

An important part of keeping members is to compliment and thank them for their part. Sometimes this makes the difference whether they stay a member or not. Not all members like meetings but are willing to do so many other things to be part of the team. They are an important part of our organization and we need them the same as we need the ones that go to the meetings.

What happens when a Junior member becomes a Senior member? When she turns 18 years old by December 31, 2024, she must pay Senior dues for 2025. The American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System (ALAMIS) will automatically change a Junior to a Senior on the members 18th birthday.

Congratulations to 8th District for a fine job being in first place at 85.40%. 6th District is close at 80.44% and 1st District is at 79.90%. Thank you for working hard! We can do this!!

Jenny Nelson
Department Membership Chairman



**Department of Minnesota
April 2024 Unit Mailing
Past Presidents Parley**

How is everyone doing with the challenge, to start five new Past Presidents Parley's this year? I have not received any calls from Unit Presidents stating a new Parley had been started.

I did in fact receive a yearend report, from one Unit that stated "Did not participate" I am thinking REALLY?

Every Unit has a President I would hope. I doubt that it is the same person from the original Unit, so there must be more than one. Those presidents are eligible to organize a Past President Parley. This as my husband says about the American Legion, "not everyone can belong" you must have raised your hand and repeated an oath to serve this country or had a family member that did. The Past President Parley is the same. You must have been a President to belong or organize a parley. Parleys serve as mentors for the Unit members. They meet to discuss matters of the Unit and direct or encourage those in the Unit. Many Parleys meet on holidays, have gift exchanges, lunches, and all around a great time. Some conduct fund raisers for their Units general funds, some provide scholarships. I have received two scholarships for the Dept Past President Healthcare Scholarship. Although the timeline has expired for this year's scholarship, there is always next year.

***Donna Barbknecht,
Department Past Presidents Parley Chairman***

Unit reporting time is here. I know all of your units have been doing great things for our veterans. Please ensure that you fill out your reports and brag about what you have done this year for our veterans. I want to be able to sing your praises for the wonderful things that are being done. Such as, bingo parties, sewing for our veterans, helping with transportation, shopping, cleaning, anything that you did. Let's let everyone know what fantastic things are being done in Minnesota.

VA&R



We will be trying something **BORROWED AND FUN** for the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) and the Gift Shop programs. The plan is to have a SILENT AUCTION with the proceeds going to the VA&R and Gift Shop budget. As you are aware, 3 new Veterans' Homes were added this last year, so we need to find ways to stretch the budget.

Please bring items to donate such as theme baskets, patriotic items, quilts, pictures, jewelry items, jams, jellies, pickles, baked goods, etc. The list goes on and on. Clean off your shelves, clean out your cabinets, etc. Bring your items to the Department Convention and help out the VA&R and Gift Shop. Bring your items Wednesday night/Thursday morning of convention. The Silent Auction will end on Friday afternoon at 4.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Judy Ackerman

E-mail: judya2002@gmail.com

Cell Phone: 507-848-0145 Home Phone: 507-238-2071

*Judy Ackerman,
Department 1st Vice President and
VA&R Chairman*



Department of Minnesota Dates to Remember and General Updates

April 5 – Gold Star Spouses Day

April 12-13 – Junior Department Conference

April 15 – Annual Reports Due to District Chairman

April 17 – Veterans Day On The Hill

April 21-27 – Volunteer Recognition Week

April 27 – Testimonial Department President – Melrose American Legion

April 29-May 1 – National President's Tour

May 11 – Testimonial 9th District President Becky Olson Moorhead American Legion 12:00pm

May 24 - National Poppy Day

May 27 – Memorial Day

June 1 – 2024-2025 Unit Officers List Due to Department Office

June 9-15 – American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota Girls State

July 10-13 – Department Convention, Willmar

April 5 – Gold Star Spouses Day

History of Gold Star Spouses Day

The term “Gold Star” for family members of military personnel has origins that can be traced back to the early 1900s during WWI. When a family sent a son, husband or father off to war, they would display a blue star in the window to represent each person from the family who was serving in the military. If a military family member’s life was lost, that blue star in the window was exchanged for a gold star. Thus, the terms including Gold Star Mother, Gold Star Wife, Gold Star Family and other related phrases, were put into use.

The Gold Star Wives of America organization was founded in 1945 when four young widows met in New York City. Not long after, Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady, joined the group and it grew from there. Since 1973, the tradition exists that when a military member dies, a military officer presents their next-of-kin with a Gold Star pin during the funeral.

Starting out with the name Gold Star Wives Day in 2010, this event was officially recognized that year by the United States Senate and was originally celebrated in December. Later, to become more inclusive of wives and husbands of military members who have lost their lives in service, the name was changed to Gold Star Spouses Day and the date was moved to the current one in early April.

American Legion Family Day

American Legion Family Day is Saturday, April 27. On this date, American Legion posts throughout the nation will open their doors to their members and the members of their local communities with the intent of celebrating all great deeds and works of The American Legion Family with the intent to educate, recruit, recognize, and to give back to those members who continually support the gift of giving. The day will also place special emphasis and awareness on the Legion’s “**Be The One**” program.



Department Convention, Willmar, July 10-13, 2024

DEC Meeting July 10
Caucasus, Program Meetings and General Sessions July 11-13
(More details about the agenda and meeting schedules to come.)

Hotel Options:

When making your reservation, please ask for The American Legion Block.

- Best Western Plus 320-235-6060
Holiday Inn Express 320-231-2601
Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300
AmericInn: 320-365-1995

** All hotel room rates subject to applicable state and local taxes in effect at time of check in.

OFFICIAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$15.00, until June 26, for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form. Make your check payable to "AMERICAN LEGION POST 167". OR register and pay by Eventbrite at mnlegion.org/events/calendar. If you write a check, please mail this form with your check to: Carrie Werner, 36898 Co Hwy 6, Redwood Falls, MN 56238. Registration will be \$25.00 after June 26 and at the door.

Registration form fields: Legion, District#, Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Delegate, Alternate, Guest, Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary)

If additional pre-registrations accompany this request, this pre-registration form should be photocopied for each person. The \$15.00 registration fee must be enclosed for each person.

Please do not use this registration blank for more than one person.



Motto....Rekindle, Renew & Remember

*Rekindle our Passion
Renew our Memberships and
Remember who we joined to Honor!!*

Symbol....Phoenix

Presidents Project: Montevideo VA Veteran Home Arts Program

*Testimonial Dinner Honoring our District 7 American Legion Auxiliary
President
Hope Wilson*

May 11th, 2024

*Spicer American Legion Post 545
155 Lake Ave North, Spicer, MN 56288*

*Menu: Broasted Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Corn, Coleslaw, Dinner Roll, Coffee, and Desert
\$20.00 per person*

*Social Hour 6pm.
Dinner 7pm with program to follow.*

Kindly reply by April 30th, 2024 with payment. (If writing a check please write it out to Jennifer Hurst and in the memo, please write Hopes Testimonial) mailed to:

*Jennifer Hurst
1220 10th St, Clarkfield, MN 56223*

Name(s) of Persons Attending: _____

Phone #: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____