



The Auxiliary Spirit



Volume 41

August 2026

Issue 1



American Legion Auxiliary
2026-2027
Department President
Stephanie Handley

Department Theme
Teamwork Makes the Dream Work.



*Presidents Stephanie's
Special Project*
The American Legion Baseball

Colors
Red, White, Blue

Kim,

Congratulations on the fantastic year that you had. It has been a pleasure working with you and to continue to learn from you. Thank you.

I would like to thank everyone for your support and encouragement. I am grateful and somewhat overwhelmed to say the least.

This year's membership theme is "The All-American Team". We will work together as a team to help those units reach home and meet membership goals. There will be more information to come once the membership team gets the line up ready.

I chose the baseball theme because sports were always an important part of my life, especially growing up. Softball was the one I loved most and continued to play into adulthood and that is why I have chosen American Legion Baseball as my special project.

I am really looking forward to this coming year and can't wait to see what it holds.

Aim for the seats!!
Stephanie Handley
Department President
(304) 670-4055
stephaniehandley@msn.com

Department Officers 2026-2027

President-Stephanie Handley
1st Vice President-Peggy Swartz
2nd Vice President-Rebecca Farley
Secretary/Treasurer-Paulette Anderson
Chaplain- Holly Adams
Historian-Andrea Snyder

District Presidents

1st District-Rhonda Best
3rd District-Sandy Harper
4th District-Rebecca Farley
5th District-Lisa Harbour-Adkins
6th District-Peggy Swartz
10th District-Jill Davis

District Vice Presidents

1st District-Susan Brown
3rd District-Kim Mellie
4th District-Katie Simpsons
5th District -Patti Withrow
6th District-Mary Spence
10th District-Pam Gustines

“THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN TEAM”

Department 1st Vice President

I want to thank everyone that voted for me for 1st Vice President.

I am here to help each and every one that I can. I will be doing Units 3, 5 and 10th Districts.

Stephanie, I am anxious to be your 1st Vice President.

I really enjoyed working with Kim Mellie last year thank you for a wonderful year.

So until next time please keep all of us in your prayers.

Peggy Swartz
1st Vice President

Department 2nd Vice President

What an incredible privilege it is to serve as your Department Second Vice President! I am truly honored to be part of this outstanding leadership team, and I cannot wait to see what we accomplish together throughout the coming year.

First and foremost, congratulations to our Department President, Stephanie! I look forward to watching you coach our All-American team to victory as we continue serving our veterans, military, their families, and our communities. Your leadership, vision, and heart for the mission will inspire us all.

To every member of our leadership team and every Auxiliary member across West Virginia, thank you for answering the call to serve. Whether you're recruiting new members, mentoring future leaders, supporting programs, or volunteering behind the scenes, every role matters. Every act of service strengthens our organization and expands our impact.

As your Second Vice President, I am committed to encouraging membership growth by sharing ideas, celebrating successes, and helping every unit tell its story. Membership isn't just about numbers. It's about inviting others to be part of something greater than themselves and ensuring our mission continues for generations to come.

So, teammates, lace up your shoes, bring your enthusiasm, and let's take the field together. This is going to be a stellar year for the home team, and I can't wait to celebrate every victory with you!

Rebecca S. Farley
Department Second Vice President
ALA.RebeccaFarley@gmail.com
304-674-9908

Chaplain

Hello Ladies,

I am deeply honored and sincerely grateful to have been elected as the Department Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of West Virginia.

Thank you to everyone who placed their trust and confidence in me. I accept this responsibility with humility and a commitment to serve our organization with faith, compassion, and dedication.

As Chaplain, I hope to offer encouragement, comfort, and inspiration throughout the year. Whether we gather in celebration, remembrance, or service, may we always be guided by kindness, unity, and a spirit of gratitude.

Thank you again for this incredible honor. I look forward to serving each of you and making this a memorable and rewarding year together.

May God bless each of you, our veterans, our military, their families, and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Thank You and Looking Forward to the Year Ahead

Holly Adams
Chaplain

hollyadams@gmail.com
chaplain@wvaux.org

Membership Chairman

Membership Matters: Moving Forward Together!

As we begin the **2026–2027 administrative year**, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our **Immediate Past Department President, Kim**, for appointing me to serve as **Membership Chairman during the 2025–2026 year**. It was truly a privilege to serve, and I'm excited to continue building on everything we started!

I look forward to working alongside our new **Department President, Stephanie Handley**, as we continue strengthening our membership and moving our Department forward together.

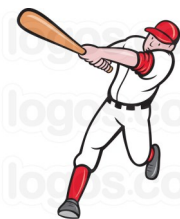
I know the recent system downtime has been frustrating and has created challenges for all of us. Let's turn that frustration into an opportunity to **engage, reconnect, and retain our members**. Reach out, invite someone to an event, check in with a member you haven't seen in a while, and remind them why our mission—and their membership—matters. The system will be back up and running better than before, and we'll be ready to hit the ground running!

Be on the lookout in next month's Spirit for your new membership target percentages and important dates for the year ahead. We're finalizing those details now and can't wait to share them with you!

Here's to another great year of **Team Work Makes the Dream work**.

Laura Clark
Membership Chairman
Call/Text: 304-939-3607
Email: membership@wvaux.org

BATTER UP!!!



Department Headquarters

Mandatory Funds:

(Unit's General Fund)- Bonding (\$5.00), Education (Scholarship), & Girls State Project (any amount the unit can afford or wish to donate);

Unit's Welfare Fund - Veterans' Welfare Fund (any amount the unit can afford or wish to donate), & 10% of Poppy Proceeds. If your unit has a little extra money please consider donating to the Cheer Parties and Gift Shops.

Reminder: If you wish to receive spirit by email, please send me your email to: department@alawvaux.org

If you wish to receive spirit by mail please fill out form included, and send \$20.00 to the address listed.

Member dues are based on a member age on January 1 of the Membership year. (Example—A Junior member that is 17 on January 1, 2027 will be billed as a junior member for 2027 membership year. If she turns 18 after August 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 she will be changed to a Senior member for the 2027 membership year.

When you receive your new roster make note of any changes to your Juniors.

Unit Rosters: the rosters that are in your membership packets were printed from National in **April**. I will send out a new roster for units after July 31st. If you had a transfer or new member **AFTER** April 1st it will not be on your roster you have. Please make out a card for them, and next year they will have a pre-printed card.

Outgoing President Kim Mellie will be selecting the members to participate in the Virtual Meetings for National Convention. Please let her know if you are asked and can't participate.

New Members—STARTING WITH THE 2026-2027 MEMBERSHIP YEAR: when sending in a new application please make sure they are **COMPLETED**. If you are unable to read the new application, I won't be able to read it. Please clarify illegible writing. Applications will be returned if No Signature by either New Member or Post/Unit Officer.

Please use the department email address and phone number for all correspondence, as **my personal email and phone number is no longer used for department.**

ATTENTION UNITS: I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET INTO THE NUMERICAL OBJECTIVES TO UPDATE MEMBERSHIP YET.

OUR DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY: 4,587 MEMBERS AT 98.18%, AS OF JULY 23RD. WE ONLY NEED 85 MEMBERS TO REACH GOAL!!!

I KNOW WE ARE LESS NOW FOR GOAL, BUT DON'T GIVE UP!! SEND IN MEMBERSHIP!

Risk & Compliance

During Department Convention, we asked for input on 2 items and placed a suggestion box out for people to drop their suggestions in.

The questions are

1) Should we split Secretary/Treasurer? If so, should we pay both? Should we lessen the salary since part of the workload would go to the 2nd position.
2) Should we hire instead of elect? Its easier to run a background check then hire, than to elect then run a background check and possibly learn the elected person shouldn't be handling funds.

To clarify, the wording would include something about when this would go into effect, o after Paulette's term or if she resigned or could not longer fulfill the role.

Also, If we hire, we would hire an ALA member.

Suggestions can be emailed or I'll have the suggestion box at Fall Workshop.

Lisa Cadwallader
Risk & Compliance Chair
Lisac.ala71@gmail.com

Department Headquarters

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:30am-3:30pm
Phone 304-398-2070
department@wvvaux.org

Department Address:
1251 Doolin Run Rd.
New Martinsville WV 26155

Department Website:
www.wvvaux.org

Rhododendron Girls State Website
www.wvgirlsstate.org

The American Legion
Department of WV
wvlegion@suddenlinkmail.com

American Legion Auxiliary
National Website
ALAforveterans.org



1st District Vice President

Welcome "The Great All-American Team"!

I want to say "why to go" the 8 units that made goal for 2025/2026. Let's do that again with the other 5 units making goals.

It's has been a few years since First District has been 100% goal. Let's do it President Stephen!!

The first target date is November 11th at 50%, but I am challenging you to make that goal before First District conference on October 25th in Moundsville.

I am here if you need any ideas or help in getting our membership.

Reminder that the district picnic is on July 26th at Benwood Park.

See you there!

Susan Brown

1st District Vice President

1st District President

Hello Fellow Auxiliary Members,

I would like to Thank the American Legion Auxiliary, First District for electing me as your President.

During this year I would love to have conversations with each Unit President as well as visit a few Unit Meetings.

I realize each unit has their own challenges and concerns. I want to ensure you I will be available to assist your unit in any way I can.

I will work along side our District Vice-President Susan Brown and District Secretary/Treasurer Christy Bland to make the 2026-2027 a wonderful and successful year.

I encourage all units to visit The National American Legion Auxiliary Website: www.alaforveterans.org. Your unit can learn so much by attending virtual trainings, reading their current Constitution & By-Laws, Policies & Procedures, and the current Action Plans with the upcoming focus for the current year.

I would love to see members from the First District Units attend the Department's Workshop on September 12th, 2026 in Bridgeport, WV. My contact information is listed below:

Address- 3000 Christy Lynn Dr.
Apt. 25, Moundsville., WV 26041
Ph: 304-281-8152

Email- rlcbest37@aim.com

Until next month,

Be Safe and God Bless!!!

Rhonda Best

First District President

3rd District Vice President

Hello all!

I just wanted to let you know that I am now District 3 Vice President. I have high hopes for Sandy Harper and I to work together.

We plan on featuring the programs to help you!

If you need anything, please let me know.

Kim Mellie, PDP

3rd District Vice

6th District Vice President

August 1, 2026 starts our new membership building year. Let's hit the road running to jump ahead with our membership collection.

The Annual Department of West Virginia American Legion Auxiliary Convention was held in Huntington on July 9,10, and 11th. Understand all that attended had a terrific time.

Summer is here with its high temperatures. Hope everyone is able to stay cool during this heat wave.

Please remember to say prayers for our country.

Mary Spence

6th District Vice

5th District Vice President

Last week I attended our state convention and celebrated the accomplishments of our Units! We have some remarkable members in this Department and I hope your Unit received the awards they deserved.

As we come to the end of the current ALA year, please remember to contact Veterans and auxiliary members that are ill, show up and help when you can. Give a Poppy in remembrance of our fallen heroes.

Track all your hours working for our Veterans for reporting for 2026-2027.

Let's get this new year started!!!

Patti Withrow

pjwithrow1958@gmail.com

10th District Vice President

Hello District10,

I am honored to be serving as your newly elected Vice President. I'd like to thank all those that have helped and supported me on my ALA journey. Everyone has been so wonderful, and I'm looking forward to working with President Jill Davis and all of our amazing District 10 members. I know that we will continue to do great things for our veterans, communities, and organization.

As part of the membership team, I'd like to focus on meeting and exceeding our goals, and bringing new and creative ideas to our units to show others what being an ALA member is all about. Membership is a vital component to keeping our organization active and alive for future generations.

I look forward to cheering our team on in the coming months and hitting our goals out of the park!

Go Team!

Pamela Gustines

District 10 Vice President

Public Relations

It's hard to believe we're already gearing up for back-to-school season! This is a great time for units to get creative with fundraisers while giving back to your communities. Consider hosting a school supply drive, partnering with a local business for a "round-up" campaign, organizing a bake sale, or collecting backpacks and classroom essentials. Every project—big or small—is an opportunity to share the American Legion Auxiliary's mission and make a lasting impact.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our Department Convention a couple of weeks ago! It was wonderful to see so many members reconnect, celebrate accomplishments, and kick off another year of serving veterans, military, and their families. Next up is National Convention at the end of August, and we wish safe travels to everyone representing the Department of West Virginia.

As your units stay busy this summer, don't forget to capture those moments! I love seeing the amazing work happening across our state, and chances are, others will too. Please send your photos, event highlights, and community outreach stories

to publicrelations@wvaux.org so we can showcase your unit and inspire others with the great things you're doing.

Thank you,

Katie Simpkins

publicrelations@wvaux.org

3rd District President

THANK YOU District 3 for trusting in me to be your District President for 2026-2027.

I am very reachable if you have any questions or anything I can help with, please just reach out.

Congratulations Stephanie Handley on being our Department President for the upcoming year, I am excited to work with you to make our Auxiliary be the BEST it can be.

I would like to have ideas from Units as to what you would like to see at District meetings so that we can get the attendance up. District meetings happen in the Fall and Spring. I will post dates as soon as I find out so that you can make plans to attend. We can work together so that it doesn't feel like just another meeting.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Fall Workshop in September, this workshop is full of information that is very important and useful throughout the year.

Let's keep up the GREAT JOB of working on renewing / recruiting members. **YOU GUYS ROCKED THE MEMBERSHIP GOALS!!!**

My contact information:

Email: sandy.harper265@gmail.com

Phone: 304-694-2067

Thank you

Sandra Harper

District 3 President



4th District President

What an incredible honor it is to serve as your District 4 President. Thank you for placing your trust in me. I am excited for the journey ahead, and I truly believe we are going to make this a year of growth, collaboration, and purpose.

One of my greatest goals this year is to visit every unit in our district. Unit Presidents, I encourage you to invite me to one of your meetings. I don't simply want to stop by and say hello. I want to bring value. Whether it's leadership development, membership engagement, communication ideas, officer resources, program support, or practical tools to strengthen your unit, I want each visit to leave your members feeling encouraged, empowered, and equipped to continue our mission.

Our Auxiliary is strongest when we learn from one another, share ideas, and celebrate each other's successes. Together, we can build stronger leaders, stronger units, and an even stronger District 4. Please mark your calendars now for our fall District 4 Meeting on Saturday, October 3, in Point Pleasant. I hope every unit will be represented as we come together to exchange ideas, receive updates, and continue building momentum for an outstanding year. Your presence matters, and every member brings something valuable to the table.

I am looking forward to meeting new members, reconnecting with familiar faces, and working alongside each of you. Let's dream bigger, serve with purpose, support one another, and make a lasting impact in our communities.

District 4, I have no doubt that this is going to be an amazing year.

Let's rock District 4!

With gratitude and excitement,

Rebecca S. Farley

District 4 President

American Legion Auxiliary

5th District President

It was wonderful seeing everyone at summer convention.

Congratulations to President Stephanie Handley and all the Department and District Officers on their new positions. I also want to congratulate all the units for reaching 100% and beyond.

Thank you for re-electing me as your District 5 President. I'm excited to work with everyone this year especially the membership team and Patti Withrow, District 5 Vice President. I know we're going to have an awesome year.

I am a member of Huntington Unit 16 where I joined under my husband who is a Vietnam Veteran. My dad is also a Vietnam Veteran. I'm retired after 30 years as a kindergarten paraprofessional where I had been at the same school for 20 years. I love doing genealogy and participating in civil war re-enactments.

Please feel free to contact me. If I don't answer it's because my cell phone service blocks numbers that isn't in my contact list. Please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can. Email or text is the best way to get a hold of me.

Again thank you for having faith in me to do this job.

Lisa Harbour-Adkins
wvbravesfan@gmail.com
304-633-0530



10th District President

Convention is over, what a great time it was. It was wonderful to see everyone there, especially the new ones.

While there, everyone should have received their membership cards. 10th District, I am hoping that you guys are excited to get your members to pay and to send them in as soon as possible. Together, let us make 100 percent this year and be the first to make it. I know each of you have the ability to do this. A good idea is to make a membership game where they have to have their membership paid in order to play.

I want to thank everyone for your vote this year to have another successful year as your president. I am always here to help you. Do not hesitate to contact me. Each question you have helps me learn as well. We are in this organization as a family, we just gather at different places. You are my sister or brother and like my own family, I want to see you succeed!

Mandatory funds, these are important funds that need to be paid. Make sure that you work these funds into your budgets and get them paid on time.

Our district meeting is in October at the Charles Town post, please bring this up at your meetings so when the sheets are mailed to you, you have the names to put on them. Also, do not forget to pay for this event. I know that it is early, however, time does fly.

I hope everyone is working on updating their governing documents as there have been many changes. There may be some changes that you have found that need to be made in your standing rules. Once they are voted on, make sure you send them to department chairman so they can be looked over and be filed. This is the only way they are true and able to use.

The first target date is November 11, for 50%, lets blow everyone out of the ball park and get 52%. I know that each of us can do this. If you need help, I will help you in any way possible. You can email me at pits_mel@yahoo.com or text me via Facebook or cell phone at (540)303-6907.

Pam Gustins is the Vice President of 10th District and I am super excited to work with her and I know she is super excited to work with everyone else.

See you all soon. Stay positive and let's have a great year together as a family!

Jill Davis
10th District
President

Americanism



We are off to a new year, and exciting year.

Please share what your Post Family has done to celebrate 250th Birthday of our Nation.

I have not received key points and Americanism Essay contest information yet, that will come after the New National President, and her team gets sworn in. As soon as I get information, I will be sure to start getting out to everyone.

All the Units did a fantastic job last in your Americanism Pillar, I enjoyed reading and learning about how busy and PROUD the AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY is in showing their true Patriotism.

THANK YOU President Stephanie Handley for trusting in me to be your department chair this year for Americanism. It is truly a rewarding Pillar to share and learn about.

Teaching our Children and Youth about Flag etiquette and alliance. Seeing the pride displayed as Flags were handed out or Placed on the cemeteries. There are so many amazing things that I can share forever. If you were not at Summer convention, and would like to read key points from what our Units accomplished last year, please just reach out and I will be glad to share it with you.

Thank you
Sandra Harper
Department Americanism chair
Americanism.wvvaux.org



Community Service

Thank you, President Kim, for a super year .

I would like to say thank you President Stephanie for letting me be your committee service chairman.

It was great seeing everyone & meeting so many new people . I'm looking forward to a great year with our American Legion Auxiliary's family.

Remember keep track of our hours we do.

Blessing,
Kelli A Immel
communityservice@wvvaux.org

Constitution & Bylaws

Thank you, President Stephanie, for giving me this appointment.

Please remember to email your reviewed Constitution and Bylaws to our committee to look over. They should be reviewed annually!

Kim Mellie, PDP
Chairman
constitution@wvvaux.org

VA&R

Thank you Department President Stephanie for this appointment.

As we start our new reporting year, please remember helping our American Legion Post does not count as VA&R, unless fundraiser funds are going to something such as operation comfort warriors, or direct assistance to Veterans.

Decorating, cooking, cleaning Post homes is Community Service.

Also hours doing for the VAMC must be turned into the VAMC and you must have taken the orientation and be in the VAMC system.

Caregiver hours are not cutting your own grass. Caregiver hours are tasks such as helping, bath, feed and dress someone who is unable to themselves.

Now, is the time if you have not already started tracking hours, in-kind donations, monetary donations, and number served.

Lisa Cadwallader
va&r@wvvaux.org

Education

Welcome to each 2026-2027 Unit Education Chair!

Soon children will be returning to school. How will you and your Unit support them? Which schools you will be working with? Do you have permission to communicate with school personnel? Introduce yourself and make that connection. What are their needs? How much can your Unit do or do you need to recruit others to help? School supplies are rushing off the shelves, but ordering supplies can be an option. January is another good time to replenish supplies.

Be sure to refer to the ALA National website and the SPIRIT messages. More information is on wvaux.org (media and programs sections) and Facebook Education websites (new ideas, perhaps).

Why not create your own Unit Education Program website? Ask for donations, communicate school activities, tell your story and let people know how your Unit is helping your children and schools.

Don't forget the scholarships available on the National and Department levels. Does your Unit offer a scholarship? Make plans to come to the Department Workshop (watch for information in the SPIRIT). National Teachers Appreciation Week was in May, but that doesn't mean they cannot be honored! REMEMBER-- American Education Week is November 16-20, 2026.

Dianne McClung
lin4dec@aol.com
education@wvaux.org
304 481-8779



Child Well-Being Fund

Thank You Units for a Fantastic Year!
Together We Raised

\$896.67

Lets try to raise that amount even more Next Year!!!



Junior Activities

Hello ladies,

I am honored and excited to serve as the newly appointed American Legion Auxiliary Junior Activities Chair! Thank you, President Stephanie Handley, for this opportunity. I look forward to a wonderful year filled with fun, learning, leadership, and service.

Together, we'll create meaningful opportunities for our junior members to grow, make lasting friendships, and carry on the proud traditions of the American Legion Auxiliary. I can't wait to work with our Juniors, volunteers, and members to make this an exciting and memorable year.

Here's to a fantastic year ahead—let's make a positive difference together!

God Bless,
Holly Adams
Junior Activities Chair
Hollyadams847@gmail.com



Children & Youth

Thank you Kim for a fabulous year as Department President 2025-2026.

Congratulations to President Stephanie ! I hope you have a fantastic year!

I want to thank President Stephanie for asking me to be Children & Youth Chairman for 2026-2027.

I ask that you units start working on your chairmanship now. The Department Program for 2026-2027 will be online in September at our Dept. website. Watch for it

Beth Kilgore
Children & Youth

Leadership

Leadership is not a title. It is a journey of learning, growing, and becoming better equipped to serve our mission. I am excited to continue that journey with each of you!

Congratulations President, Stephanie! I look forward to supporting your leadership as you coach our All-American Team through an incredible year of service and success.

I also want to extend my sincere congratulations to everyone who completed the Lead with Purpose leadership series. Your commitment to personal growth and servant leadership has strengthened not only your own skills but our American Legion Auxiliary as a whole. Thank you for investing in yourself and in our mission.

Now, it's time for the next step! I'm excited to announce that a brand-new leadership series will be launching soon. Think of it as ALA Leadership Boot Camp. Whether you are a brand-new member, an incoming officer, a committee chairman, or a seasoned leader looking for a refresher, this series will cover the fundamentals that help our units thrive. From meeting protocol and parliamentary procedure to the duties of officers and chairmen, reporting, planning successful events, and understanding the "why" behind what we do, this series is designed to build a strong foundation for every member.

And yes, you'll still have the opportunity to earn the coveted leadership pin as you complete the series! So, teammates, let's get ready to learn, grow, and lead together. The season is just beginning, and I can't wait to see what our All-American Team accomplishes. Let's make this our strongest leadership year yet!

Rebecca S. Farley
Department Leadership Chair
Leadership@wvaux.org

Poppy

Greetings Poppy Pushers!

I'm Jane Stepp, your new Chairman of the Department Poppy Committee.

If you've been paying attention, you know Shirley Davis is a very tough act to follow. In my mind, she's the Poppy Queen.

Thus far, the extent of my poppy experience is distribution of poppies and creation of an original poppy painting, the prints of which I sold and donated to my Unit's Poppy Fund. I'm open to ideas for fun things we can do with poppies to raise money.

In the meantime, here's a quick little guide to what can and can't be done with Poppy Funds

CAN be used for:

- Items of necessity for homeless veterans or hospitalized service members
- Grocery or gas cards for veterans in need
- Poppy kits or supplies for poppy distribution
- Honor flight guardian fees
- ASYMC

Poppy Funds CANNOT be used for:

- Investments, including certificates of deposit
- Deceased veterans or families of deceased veterans
- ALA Girls State or ALA Girls Nation fees
- Commercial property improvement, including Legion post homes
- Items or improvements that will also be used by non-veterans

From the Auxiliary Magazine
Jane Stepp
Poppy Chairman



Legislative

Thank you, President Stephanie, for entrusting me with the role of Legislative Chair.

In my first month, I plan to focus on better familiarizing myself with current legislative priorities impacting our veterans, service members, and their families.

There are currently 7 campaigns on the American Legion's Grass Roots Action Center, and I plan to familiarize our members with each in future editions of the Spirit. I will be encouraging informed advocacy and participation.

I plan to promote letter-writing campaigns and increase awareness of upcoming bills.

I look forward to working together to ensure our voices are heard in support of those who have served. Feel free to peruse the campaigns at any time via this URL: <https://www.legion-aux.org/grassroots-action-center>

Looking forward...

Andrea Snyder
Legislative Chair
Legislative@wvaux.org



National Executive Committee

Congratulations to Laura on becoming NEC for the 2026-2028 term. My term will end with my last article after National Convention as National Convention is when my term ends.

During a recent NEC call, the NEC approved standing Rule XI Section 6. Membership may be established by certification from the post adjutant or other post officer or from the unit secretary or other unit officer. Eligibility through the service of a living veteran may be established by presentation of a current The American Legion card. Membership eligibility through the service of a deceased veteran may be established by presentation of the deceased veteran's proof of military service. Joining online requires an affidavit of eligibility; the Unit may request a copy of the veteran's proof of military service.

What this means, the Unit Secretary or other Unit officer can now verify eligibility. When the veteran is alive, the veterans membership card is proof. When the veteran is deceased an honorable discharge record show eligibility as before.

Lisa Cadwallader
NEC 2024-2026

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Thank you President Stephanie for appointing me as AEF Chair for the upcoming year.

I look forward to working with any unit or member that may need assistance this year.

Please follow these tips for keeping cool during extreme heat.

1. Try to stay out of the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. If you have to go out in the heat, stay in the shade.
 2. Have cold drinks available. Stay hydrated with water.
 3. Eat hydrating foods like fruits and vegetables that contain high percentages of water.
 4. Check on your elderly neighbors and friends. Make sure they are staying hydrated and as cool as possible.
 5. Take a cool shower, splash water on the skin, or keep a damp cloth for hydration when needed.
 6. Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothing and a hat to cover the face, neck and ears.
- If I can be of assistance to you or your Unit in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Blessings,
Melanie Shambaugh
AEF Chairman
aef@wvaux.org
304-261-1518



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY WV RODODENDRON GIRLS STATE

Rhododendron Girls State

Congratulations to Zoe Zervos, (Moundsville) for being elected as the 2026-2027 Girls state Governor!!

As our new year starts keep in contact with your 2026 Session of Rhododendron Girls State participants. They can be a great asset to getting junior girls for 2027. Our recruitment is a full time job and information needs to be sent out year round. Please contact your school personnel no later than late September. Let them know who you are and that you will be sending information throughout the year. Use other contacts to distribute information as well. Sports groups and churches are good places to distribute information to get interested girls.

I will let you know how our Girls Nation Senators did in September. They are **Juliann Harlan (Elkins) and Amari Knight (Morgantown).**

Expect great changes in Rhododendron Girls State for 2027. I will have more information at the Leadership Workshop in September.

If you have questions about your girls tat attended in 2026, contact Laura Clark, Registrar.

Ann Buchanan
RGS Chairman
AnnBuch@aol.com
304-654-9933



District Representatives

1st Dist. —

3rd Dist. — Mary Jo Thomas
279 Rock Lake Road
Fairmont WV 26554
202-365-7510

4th Dist. — Patsy Greiner
708-45th Street
Vienna WV 26105
304-483-8296

5th Dist.— Laura Clark
4023 Piedmont Rd.
Huntington WV 25704
304-939-3607

6th Dist. — Peggy Swartz
P O Box 124
Gary WV 24836
304-448-2394

10th Dist.— Debbie Fox
874 Longview Drive
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411
304-258-5804

Ways and Means

Congratulations to the June winners!
There were 22 \$25.00 winners and one \$200.00 winner for June.

Here is the Ways and Means Report from Jan-June 2026:

Tickets sold: 966=\$19320.00

Donations: \$10.00

\$100.00 winner: 1=\$100

\$200.00 winners: 6=\$1,200

\$25.00 winners: 140=\$3,500

Total paid out Jan-June=\$5,665.00

Checkbook balance June 30: \$13,549.80

Left in check book: \$7,050.00

Paid out to Department:\$6,499.80

25% to General Fund-\$1,624.95

75% to Welfare Fund-\$4,874.85

Unit Sold Most Tickets;

Member Sold Most Tickets:

Each will receive \$25.00 each from me.

We still have tickets out for 2026 to sell. Please send them in asap, if you sell them, or aren't able to sell anymore. I have 17 left in office to sell.

The winning tickets in January 2026 are now voided if they haven't been cashed. Please inform them if you know who they were.

Paulette Anderson

Christy Bland

June Ways and Means Winners

Name	#'s	City	State	Date	\$\$\$
	958			6/1/26	
	731			6/2/26	
Bernadette Van Clave	290	Hillsville	PA	6/3/26	25.00
Jeff Yost	449	Point Marion	PA	6/4/26	25.00
Theresa Lupton	761	Augusta	WV	6/5/26	25.00
Gail Shaffer	997	Bluefield	VA	6/6/26	25.00
Sue Paulin	965	Charles Town	WV	6/8/26	25.00
Rick Hines	575	Stephen City	VA	6/9/26	25.00
Harry Johnson	247	Charles Town	WV	6/10/26	25.00
Shauna Walker	682	Bellaire	OH	6/11/26	25.00
Ruth Loar	484	Rio	WV	6/12/26	25.00
Kandise Berkel	313	Romney	WV	6/13/26	25.00
Beth Burton Spiek	644	Phoenix	AZ	6/15/26	25.00
David Barnes	074	Paw Paw	WV	6/16/26	25.00
Mary Spence	766	Welch	WV	6/17/26	200.00
ALA Unit #14	501	Martinsburg	WV	6/18/26	25.00
	105			6/19/26	
Linda Riggleman	958	Augusta	WV	6/20/26	25.00
Carla McBride	632	Shanks	WV	6/22/26	25.00
Eli Coffinberger	640	Yellow Springs	WV	6/23/26	25.00
Jenna Griffith	992	Vienna	WV	6/24/26	25.00
Jan Williams	132	Welch	WV	6/25/26	25.00
Gary Cogle	275	Harpers Ferry	WV	6/26/26	25.00
Addison Wilson	192	St. Albans	WV	6/27/26	25.00
Tom Rowell	930	42 Crystal Ave	WV	6/29/26	25.00
Paula Hogbin	899	Maysville	WV	6/30/26	25.00



ATTENTION UNITS:

**NATIONAL IS AWARE OF ISSUES UPDATING THE UNIT NUMERICAL
OBJECTIVES AND ARE WORKING ON IT TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE**

**THE TARGET SHEET IS LEFT OUT OF THIS MONTH'S SPIRIT
TO AVOID ANY CONFUSION**

**ONCE THE ISSUE IS RESOLVED
I WILL SEND A TARGET SHEET OUT
TO ALL MEMBERSHIP TEAM AND UNITS**

August 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<i>Program of Month</i> <i>National Convention</i> <i>Leadership</i>				R.E.D. FRIDAYS Until They All Come Home		1
2	3	4  <i>Happy Birthday</i>	5	6	7 	8
9	10 <i>Cheer Party Checks Out</i>	11	12 <i>Office Closed</i>	13	14	15 <i>Office Open</i> <i>Final Target Sheet Out</i>
16	17 <i>Spirit Articles Due</i>	18	19	20	21 <i>Spirit Out</i>	22
23	24	25	26	27 <i>Office Closed</i> <i>Leave for National Convention</i>	28	29
30 	31		<i>Office Closed</i> <i>Labor Day</i> <i>September 7th</i>	<i>Office Reopens</i> <i>September 8th</i> 		

Call To Department Fall Meetings

September 11-12, 2026

Hilton Garden Inn Clarksburg WV

This is a notice to all concerned about the Finance Committee Meeting and the Department Fall Executive Board Meeting. The purpose of these meetings are to set up the administrative year for our Department for 2022-2023.

September 11, 2026—Friday Meeting Room 1 (Rhododendron Room)

1:00 pm—Finance Meeting—**The three members of the Department Finance Committee**

Department President—ex-officio member without vote

Department Secretary/Treasurer—ex-officio without vote

Purpose of this meeting is setting up budget for this administrative year to be ratified by the Department Executive Committee.

4:00 pm—Membership Committee—**Department President, Department Membership Chairman Department Vice Presidents, District Vice Presidents**

5:00 pm—Rhododendron Girls State, Inc. Executive Board Meeting—5 Board of Incorporators, Department President, 6 District Representatives, Girls State Finance Officer, Treasurer, Secretary, Registrar, Director and Assistant Director

September 12, 2026—Saturday Meeting Room 1 (Rhododendron Room)

4:00 pm—American Legion Auxiliary, Department of West Virginia, Inc. Executive Board Meeting

According to Department Constitution: Article VII, Executive Committee: Section 1: Department Executive Committee which shall be composed of the Department President, Department First Vice President, Department Second Vice President, Department Secretary/Treasurer, Department Chaplain, Department Historian, National Executive Committee woman, the eight District Presidents, all Past Department Presidents, and Chairmen of all Standing Committees (Americanism, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Children & Youth, Community Service, Constitution & Bylaws, Education, Finance, Girls State, Junior Activities, Leadership, Legislative, Membership, National Security, Past President's Parley, Poppy, Public Relations, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. (Bylaws, Article IV, Committees, Section 2).

Section 2: All members of standing committees, **exclusive of the chairmen**, may attend Executive Committee meetings **with the privilege of discussion with no vote.**

Section 3: Any member in good standing may attend the Executive Committee Meeting **with the privilege of discussion but without vote.**

September 12, 2026—Saturday Workshop Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

Registration—8:00 am to 9:00 am (\$15.00) each **Session:** 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

Purpose of this session is for instruction to Units/members/Officers and to announce the membership program for 2026-2027 year. There will be some different items for all to enjoy. **ALL AUXILIARY MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THIS WORKSHOP.** Good tool for learning if you want to help with leadership in your Unit, in your District and on Department level.

Travel Allowances: Travel allowances will be paid by Department to **all Department Officers, District Presidents, Department Finance Chairman, and Department Parliamentarian** that attend Department Executive Board Meeting. They will be allowed one day per diem (\$60) plus (if eligible) mileage as per Standing Rule #1. If not spending the night will receive \$20.00 plus (if eligible) mileage. (as per Department Budget)

District Vice Presidents that attend the Membership Workshop. They will be allowed one day per diem (\$60) plus (if eligible) and mileage. If not spending the night, will receive \$20 plus mileage. (as per Department Budget)

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2026
HILTON GARDEN INN
CLARKSBURG WV

This is the booking link for Available Rooms - [Hilton Garden Inn Clarksburg/Bridgeport](#)

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/?ctyhocn=CKBGIGI&arrivalDate=2026-09-10&departureDate=2026-09-13&groupCode=WVAMLE&room1NumAdults=1&cid=OM%2CWW%2CHILTONLINK%2CEN%2CDirectLink>

You can copy and paste in your browser.

Remember to change your dates of arriving and leaving on the reservation form.

If you need to call the number is 304-326-9200 and stay on the line, **(Do Not Press 1)**

We are listed under: **WV American Legion**

for rooms.

DEADLINE: August 31, 2026

Any questions or problems getting a room please contact Department Headquarters.

The SPIRIT is emailed to all **Unit Contacts** and any **Unit Officers or member** with an email address, and has asked for the Spirit to be emailed to them.

All Department Officers, Department Chairmen, District Presidents/Vice Presidents, Past Department Presidents with email addresses. Spirits are posted monthly on the website: www.wvvaux.org Unit Presidents **with no email contact** will receive a free copy by mail.

Subscription will Cost \$20.00

2027 Year

Runs August through July Each Year

MAIL TO:

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of West Virginia
1251 Doolin Run Rd.
New Martinsville WV 26155**

NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS OR PO BOX: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

PRE REGISTRATION FOR FALL WORKSHOP

PLEASE LIST MEMBERS OF YOUR UNIT WHO WILL BE ATTENDING

YOU WILL PAY AT THE DOOR--\$15.00 A PERSON

UNIT NAME & NUMBER: _____

NAMES OF MEMBERS ATTENDING:

MAIL TO: DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

1251 DOOLIN RUN RD.

NEW MARTINSVILLE WV 26155

NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 8, 2026