



The Auxiliary Spirit



Volume 41

September 2026

Issue 2



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

Hello Everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well and I am so excited about the upcoming year. I can't wait to get things started and work with all of you on all our goals.

Our membership numbers to reach goal did not change much, but some units will notice a larger increase than others; this was all based on a 1% increase across all units.

Let's continue the membership momentum this year and continue working on growth in our organization by not only having new members but also keeping our current members.

This year is going to be baseball/softball theme as we work as the "All American Team".

At Fall Workshop I would like everyone to **come dressed in their favorite baseball jersey/gear.**

Fall Workshop is September 12th this year and I would like to continue with the purse auction. I would also like you to **bring a baseball theme centerpiece.**

My homecoming is planned for Saturday, October 17, 2026 at the Chester Volunteer Fire Department.

Congratulations to all the Units that reached or surpassed their goal last year! Keep up the great work and keep that momentum into this year.

All of those heading to Nationals, please be safe and have a great time.

Can't wait to see all of you at Workshop!

For Service, Not Self
Stephanie Handley
Department President
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of West Virginia
(304) 670-4055



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

Hello Everyone

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the workshop next month.

By then our new membership year will have started and I think we will have a great year.

I will be covering District 3,5, and 10: looking forward to meeting all new officers and other new people.

Don't forget to bring a purse with something in it to auction off at workshop.

Well until next month, stay well and hope to see you at the workshop.

Peggy Swartz

Department 1st Vice President

peggyswartz29@gmail.com

Department 2nd Vice President

A new membership year is here, and The Great All American Team is taking the field!

As your 2nd Vice President, I am excited to help get Team

American ready for a year focused on membership, meeting our targets, growing our units, and strengthening our mission.

Our Department goal is 4,753 members, and our first target is already on the scoreboard: 50% by November 11th!

This year, we're going to have a little friendly competition along the way because nothing gets a team fired up quite like seeing who can knock those membership goals right out of the park! But remember, this is about so much more than numbers on a scoreboard. Every member matters. Every renewal keeps experience on our team. Every new member brings fresh energy to the dugout. Every member we engage, mentor, and invite to serve helps us grow our ability to fulfill the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

So grab your glove, step up to the plate, and get ready to RECRUIT, RE-NEW, RETAIN, and ENGAGE!

Let's celebrate every base hit, every home run, and every unit that reaches its goal.

The bases are loaded with opportunity, and Team American is ready to swing!

Let's hit it out of the park, TEAM AMERICAN!

LET'S PLAY BALL!

Rebecca S Farley

Department 2nd Vice President

304-674-9908

ala.RebeccaFarley@gmail.com



Chaplain

Hello Ladies

September is a wonderful time to reflect on the baseball season. Teams have practiced, overcome challenges, celebrated victories, and learned from losses. As members of the American Legion Auxiliary, we are part of an All-American Team whose purpose reaches far beyond the playing field—we serve veterans, military members, their families, and our communities.

Every successful baseball team depends on each player doing their part. Some hit home runs, some make great catches, some encourage teammates from the dugout, and others quietly keep the game moving. In the same way, every Auxiliary member has a unique role. Whether you volunteer at a VA facility, distribute poppies, mentor our Juniors, support military families, or simply offer a smile and prayer, your contribution matters.

September Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for calling each of us to be part of Your team. Bless the American Legion Auxiliary as we continue to serve veterans, active-duty military, their families, and our communities with joyful hearts.

Help us to encourage one another, celebrate each person's gifts, and remember that every act of kindness brings us one step closer to "home." Give us the courage to face life's tough innings, the wisdom to make faithful decisions, and the compassion to care for those who need us most. We especially remember the heroes of September 11 and all who have worn or continue to wear our nation's uniform. Surround them and their families with Your protection, peace, and comfort.

May our lives reflect teamwork, integrity, and service, and may we always strive to be true All-Americans in faith, patriotism, and love.

In Your holy name we pray.

Amen.

God Bless

Holly Adams

Department Chaplin



Membership Chairman

Step Up to the Plate!

This year, we are taking the field as the All-American Team with one powerful membership theme:

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!

As your **Team Scout**, I'll be looking for opportunities to strengthen our roster and help every unit build a winning membership team. Whether you represent the National League or the American League, we all play for the same purpose: serving our veterans, military members, their families, and our communities.

Our officers and district leaders are the coaches, our Past Department Presidents are the Hall of Famers, our Juniors are the Farm League, and every member is a valuable player.

A championship roster requires all of us. Invite someone to join, contact a member who has not renewed, mentor a Junior, and share why the American Legion Auxiliary matters to you. Every conversation can bring another player to our team.

Let's also support **WV American Legion Baseball** and the values it represents: teamwork, leadership, discipline, sportsmanship, and patriotism.

Grab your glove, step up to the plate, and help us make this an All-American season!

One team. One mission. One dream.

Let's play ball!

Laura Clark, PFP

membership@wvaux.org

304-939-3607



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.

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. I will no longer accept phone calls on my personal phone, or personal email. (I do have a selection of members I take personal phone calls from) This is not for everyone's use.

Membership Goals are now in the Spirit. Please look at your unit. You can start sending or putting in unit membership for 2027.

REMEMBER: No new member can be added until **September 1, 2026.**

If you send in a new member on a transmittal, I will put them in after I return from national convention on the 8th of September.

Agenda For Department Workshop:

An agenda will be at the Department Membership Workshop for everyone that is attending.

Please fill out the form in this Spirit and email/mail to me if you are attending. This will help me on how many copies of material I will print off.

Target Sheet: the New 2027 target sheet in the Spirit is showing Unit Goals. Membership sent in and online for 2027 will be listed after September 1st.

HISTORIAN

Roles of ALA Unit Members and Unit Historians

Unit Members support the mission by organizing events, participating in Auxiliary programs, preserving and promoting the history of the ALA at the local level, and fostering positive community engagement.

Unit Historians ensure that the story of the unit—its members, projects, and community impact—is accurately recorded by collecting photographs, news clippings, event programs, and personal accounts. The historian's work is more than record-keeping—it is storytelling with purpose. By capturing milestones, traditions, and the dedication of members, the

Unit Historian ensures that "who we are, what we do, and why we matter" is never forgotten.

Unit Historians also support the Department Historian by submitting timely, well-organized annual reports. These reports provide essential details that help compile the broader history of the Auxiliary at the district, department, and national level. This collaboration preserves a proud heritage and strengthens the connection between local units and the larger Auxiliary family.

Together, unit members and historians ensure the Auxiliary's history is documented, shared, and celebrated, supporting the department historian's efforts to maintain a living record of the organization's work and ideals.

Andrea Snyder
Department Historian
Historian@wvaux.org

Department Headquarters

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8:30am-3:30pm

Phone 304-398-2070

department@wvaux.org

Department Address:

1251 Doolin Run Rd.

New Martinsville WV 26155

Department Website:

www.wvaux.org

Rhododendron Girls State Website

www.wvgirlsstate.org

The American Legion

Department of WV

wvlegion@suddenlinkmail.com

American Legion Auxiliary

National Website

ALAforveterans.org

FALL CONFERENCES

October 3rd: 6th District (Auxiliary)
Welch Unit #8

4th District (Joint)
Pt. Pleasant Post #23

October 10th: 10th District (Joint)
Charles Town Post #71

3rd District (Joint)
Bridgeport Post #68
(Aux meeting 11:00)

October 17th: 5th District (Joint)
Barboursville Post #177

October 25th: 1st District (Auxiliary)
Moundsville Unit #3

1st District Vice President

Hello 1st District Units!

If you missed the district picnic you missed a good time with old friends.

Now let's talk about membership. Does your unit have an early bird special for members to pay their dues early with a discount? If not, really think about starting one. It's a great way for the unit to start the 2027 season.

Remember that you need to hold all new members' applications until September 1st. National is not ready for new members until after that date.

Also, it's never too late to collect 2026 dues! I hear that the Department is very close to making goal. Way to work for the 2026 membership!

I'm excited to see the current membership target sheet to see where we are as a district.

Until then – take care.

Susan Brown
First District VP

3rd District Vice President

Let's go National League!

Our District took first place in membership last term. Let's do it again!

Please look for our District Three meeting in the fall.

Please make every effort to attend Fall Workshop.

I do apologize as I will not be in town.

Again, if you need anything feel free to reach out.

Remember to be competitive but kind!

Kim Mellie
District 3 Vice President

4th District Vice President

Every member matters, and every new member makes our Auxiliary stronger!

As we head into a new year, let's get excited about membership. Invite a friend, reach out to a past member, or simply share why being an American Legion Auxiliary member means so much to you.

District 4, let's grow together and show everyone what our Auxiliary is all about!

Katie Simpkins
District 4 Vice President

5th District Vice President

Happy End of Summer!

As the days get shorter and we creep closer to fall, be thinking about Membership! New members lists are going out and our new membership goals will be shared soon, so be working on recruiting!

The annual Membership Workshop and Purse Auction is happening in mid September in Bridgeport. It is always a great time to fellowship with the other Units in the state and have some fun! Bring a purse filled with goodies to auction and lots of money to bid on all others donated.

Start making plans for your remembrance celebrations and parades in November as we honors all Veterans.

May God bless each of you and our troops currently deployed!

Patti Withrow
Pjwithrow1958@gmail.com

10th District Vice President

Greetings to All!

It's almost that time of year where summer is coming to an end and the fall season is just around the corner! What better way to kick membership into high gear with new recruits of all ages.

School is upon some of us, and what a great opportunity to engage with parents and grandparents that have kids and grand-kids. The bus stop, PTA gatherings, girl and boy scout meetings, kids activities or sports functions have a plethora of ways to open up a conversation to talk about our juniors program. And if the parents are not members, then let's get them signed up!

Now is also a wonderful time with Veterans day coming up in a few months to get an early start for those Poppy posters and Americanism essays.

Don't forget the elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, private schools and those that are home schooled. Let's get our youth involved and proud to be part of this great country and what the United States of America stands for.

Pamela Gustines
District 10 Vice President

6th District Vice President

We're off and running for our second month of 2026-2027 membership dues collection. Hope all units have engaged in a plan for meeting the 2027 membership goal. The membership number for each unit is as follows: Welch Unit # 8 is 43 members, Bluefield Unit #9 is 19 members, Beckley Unit #32 is 11 members, Gary Unit #38 is 87 members, Cowen Unit #62 is 21 members, and Richwood Unit #97 is 25 members. This gives us a total membership for District #6 of 206 members.

Fall is quickly approaching and I hope that we get as many leads for membership as we get in leaves that will fall.

Wishing all of you will be able to enjoy the Autumn season coming quickly upon us. With the change is season I hope the heat wave will cool down.

Please remember to say prayers for our country.

Mary Spence
Vice President
District 6



1st District President

Howdy Fellow American Legion Baseball Family,

I am so excited for this year's Baseball Season. First District will focus on 2 main objectives.

****1st objective:** Liaison between the First District Units and the Department. Picture each player in the field during a ball game. When a ball is hit in the outfield that player on occasion needs to connect with a middleman to accomplish the mission.

First District not only has the District President Rhonda Best and Vice-President Susan Brown we have a District Secretary Treasurer Christy Bland, a District Chaplain Cindy Gadd, an Americanism Chairman Kim Elliott, a Children & Youth Chairman Gloria Lewis, a National Security Chairman Linda Richmond, and a VA&R Chairman Paulette Anderson to assist each unit with any questions/suggestions/help as needed. Please reach out anytime during the year we are here to help you.

****2nd objective:** Creating a Facebook Page for First District. I will be working over the next month to create this FB Page and add First District Members. The plan for this page is for our units to collaborate, share ideas, and help get each unit's events additional Social Media Coverage.

Within this next month I will be reaching out to all Unit Presidents and Unit Secretaries for additional conversations and contact information.

Please expect to see the First District Credentials and Registration forms either in your email or your regular mail soon. If you do not receive yours by September 20th 2026, then let me or District Secretary Christy Bland know.

I hope to see all units have at least 1 representative present at the First District Fall Conference. Let increase our players and play options.

Until next month,
Be Safe and God Bless!!!
Rhonda Best
First District President

3rd District President

Hello Everyone,

One of the goals I have is to work to get more attendance at our District Conference meetings.

Getting information out to all Unit Presidents of District 3 that they can share with their Units of upcoming events happening.

First upcoming Event:

****Members Workshop September 12, 2026 at Hilton Garden Inn in Clarksburg.** This workshop is very informational, not to mention having a lot of fun as well. You will be able to ask questions and get answers to questions, it helps to be able to start putting everything into perspective as to how it all goes together, and the Pillars of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Important date in September is 9-11, I will be excited to see how our Units Remembered and Honored our Fallen Heros.

Second upcoming Event to plan for:
****District 3 Fall conference will be held at Bridgeport Post 68; Unit Presidents will receive information on this to share with their Units of times when events will take place.**

Thank you, Unit 68 Bridgeport, for hosting this event.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

September 1, 2026 we can start entering Membership for 2027.

Sandy Harper
District 3 President
304-694-2067
sandy.harper265@gmail.com

4th District President

A new year. A new administration. New goals. And a fresh opportunity to put our mission into action!

As your District 4 President, I am excited about what is ahead, and I want to personally **challenge our District to achieve 100% unit participation** at our District 4 Meeting in Point Pleasant on **October 3rd**. Imagine having at least one representative from every unit in the room, bringing ideas, energy, and a commitment to strengthening our mission together!

We have a big mission to fulfill, and **we need YOU at the table**.

Our meeting will be action-packed and filled with practical tools, resources, and ideas you can take back to your unit to strengthen your programs and engage your members. We also have some fun things on the horizon, including a **District 4 Member Celebration** and a few surprises that will make you want to be part of what we are building!

Every unit matters. Every member brings something valuable to the table. When we connect, collaborate, and share what is working, our entire District becomes stronger.

So, District 4, consider the challenge officially issued: **Let's fill the room on October 3rd!**

This isn't just another meeting. It is another piece of the legacy we are building together.

One District. Every Unit. One Mission. Let's make it count!

Rebecca S. Farley
District 4 President

ala.RebeccaFarley@gmail.com

5th District President

Hello everyone,

I hope everything is going well. I first want to thank you for reelecting me 5th District President and having faith in me to do this job.

Membership meeting is September 11-12, 2026 in Bridgeport. I encourage you to attend. We have a lot of fun but it is very informative as well. You will learn about different committees as well as membership. There is also a purse auction to raise money for Stephanie's special project. This workshop is great for new officers and members. I unfortunately am unable to attend but I know it will be a lot of fun.

District meeting is October 17, 2026 at Barboursville Post 177. Registration starts at 9 am and the meeting at 10 am. Please come to learn more what is happening in our awesome district and our department. You will have a chance to get information and ask any questions you might have.

I really encourage you to attend both membership training and district meeting. As always, I am here to help you. If you have any questions, please ask because that is how we learn. I hope to see you soon.

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

10th District President

I hope everyone is starting to get their memberships in for the new year. The sooner you get them in the sooner you will meet your goal.

Don't forget Membership Workshop is coming up September 11-13th. Get your room and your credentials in as soon as possible.

Please beware of what is posted on face book pages, especially your post, unit, district, department, or national. I hope we are all staying positive on our postings, this is important, we all do such a great job as a team helping and working for our veterans. We do not want to ruin the good with one negative remark. Just like a business owner, you can have one hundred positive reviews and one (1) negative, everyone is going to see the negative first.

Keep everything we do, even if you perceive it to be negative, positive. This is important to get new members and be a family. Always, remember the reason you are here!!!! You are here for the veteran. Ask yourself, what have I done for a veteran today, this week, this month? This may help us to stay on track with the reasons we are here.

As far as membership goes, we hope you meet 50% by November 11th. Let us all get to work on our membership. Remember to be KIND and FRIENDLY. There are going to be things that you do not like such as change, but you should always stay positive.

Jill Davis
10th District

6th District President

I want everyone to know that our Fall District will be hosted by Gary Unit 38, the date will be Saturday, October 3, 2026. Will let you know the place and time.

We have had some sickness in our District. Gary Unit 38 if you would like to send a card to Judy Chapman. Her address is PO Box 35, Thorpe, WV 24888.

I think that Marsha Riffe the President has been a little sick. Everyone please stay well. Hope everyone has had a good summer.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the workshop in September.

So until next time let's keep everyone in our prayers.

Thank you
Peggy Swartz,
6th District President

Americanism



September is a great time to get our Americanism in full gear, school is starting up, we can start reaching out to teacher on getting Flag etiquette set up to come in and teach the students, folding pocket flags, learning about the Constitution and soon sharing this year's topic on the Americanism essay contest.

September 12, 2026 is Membership workshop where so many things for the upcoming year is discussed. It is a very informative workshop to attend.

There are many ways to learn of projects for our community, schools, Juniors. If you follow the: American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program on Facebook, it will give you awesome ideas.

As soon as I receive the new information on Americanism for the year 2026-2027, I will make sure to get it out to everyone.

September 17, 2026 is Constitution Day (Citizenship Day), marked under the Star Spangles Kids Kits initiative to promote civic health and knowledge of the U.S. Constitution. You look on the Facebook page I shared to you, they have Fun Fact Fridays: you will see all the information they have been posting about the constitution, this is very helpful to your Units in working with the Teachers at school.

Thank you
Sandra Harper
Department Americanism Chair
304-694-2067

Americanism.wvaux.org

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Knowing a few fire safety grilling tips will help everyone have a safe summer.

***Only use your grill outside and keep it away from siding and deck rails.

***Keep a 3-foot safe zone around your grill and campfire. This will keep kids and pets safe.

***Clean your grill after each use. This will remove grease that can start a fire.

***Place the coals from your grill in a metal can with a lid once they have cooled.

***Open your gas grill before lighting.

***Keep an eye on your grill, fire pit or patio torches. Never leave unattended.

Blessings
Michelle Shambaugh

Constitution & Bylaws

Hello TEAM!

Just an FYI that once the new Presidents get their feet wet, we will be going through all Units Constitution and Bylaws. You may be getting a call or email to say please update.

There is a change that the American Legion is bringing up at National Convention to include non-eligible fathers, grandfathers, and brothers related to eligible member withing 2 degrees of consanguinity. We will keep you posted.

There is also a proposal for C & B that expelled members would not be eligible for membership in a new unit without approval of expelling unit.

Please text or email if you need anything!

Kim Mellie
Constitution Chair
constitution@wvaux.org

Education

This article reviews Barbara Washburn's year-end report as National Education Chair and highlights success stories your Unit can use in its Education Program this coming year.

Every report described that school supplies were collected and donated. Boxes were placed in businesses, backpacks filled with supplies and gift cards presented to teachers. Military families were included. Nearly 500 veterans visited classrooms, shared stories and provided flag etiquette and flag-folding presentations. Students presented Veterans with thank-you cards and goodie bags.

Gift bags with lotions, inspirational notes, cookies, pizza, snacks, and a potato bar are just a few examples of how appreciation was shown during American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Adopt-A-Teacher programs provided wish-list items for classrooms.

The National Education Association recommends books to donate and promotes patriotism. Other topics for classrooms included the Poppy Story, Military Child Month and Purple-Up Day. Unit distributed ALA coloring books, Pledge of Allegiance bookmarks and Flag pins. Spaghetti suppers, tailgate suppers, Taco Tuesdays, Flea Markets, and raffles were some of the creative ways units used as fundraisers for their scholarships.

Your Education program can be just as successful!

George Washington said it best:
"Education is the key to unlock
k the door to freedom."

Dianne McClung
lin4dec@aol.com
education@wvvaux.org
304 481-877

Junior Activities

Junior Activities: "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!"

September is a great time for our American Legion Auxiliary Juniors to get back in the game! As we continue our "**All-American Team**" theme, let's remember that every Junior has an important position to play. Just like a baseball team, we need everyone working together, encouraging one another, and doing their part.

The purpose of Junior Activities is to give our young members opportunities to participate, learn, serve, and grow as future leaders of the American Legion Auxiliary. The ALA encourages Juniors to have a voice and take an active role in meaningful activities.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at workshop

God Bless
Holly Adams
Junior activities Chair
juniors@wvvaux.org

Children & Youth

Back-to-school season may be over, but the need for support certainly isn't. As students settle into their classrooms, many teachers and families are already finding that school supplies need to be replenished. Consider reaching out to a local school to ask what items are needed throughout the year. Pencils, notebooks, crayons, tissues, hygiene products, and other everyday essentials can make a meaningful difference.

Another opportunity to serve is through **weekend backpack programs**. These programs provide food for children who may rely on school meals during the week but face food insecurity when they go home for the weekend. Ask your local schools if they have a backpack program and how your Unit can help. You might donate individually packaged, kid-friendly foods, hold a collection drive, provide financial support, or volunteer to help pack backpacks each week.

Our commitment to Children & Youth doesn't end when the first school bell rings. By building relationships with our local schools, we can identify ongoing needs and continue showing up for the children and families in our communities. **Small acts. Full backpacks. Big impact.**

Beth Kilgore
304-654-775
mbk3609@gmail.com
(will be moving to C & Y email by next Spirit article)

Leadership

Leadership is about to take another step forward in the Department of West Virginia!

As we continue to Lead With Purpose, we are building upon what we have learned and getting back to the foundation of strong leadership.

On September 12, we will roll out the next addition to Lead With Purpose at our workshop in Clarksburg. Here's your sneak peek: the basics are back, and we are building a legacy!

Leadership is not simply holding an office or carrying a title. It is how we serve, how we treat people, and what we leave behind for the leaders who follow us.

Continue celebrating your members and every accomplishment, large or small. Recognition creates motivation, and motivation fuels service. Keep the mission at the center of every decision. When conflict, negativity, or drama begins taking our attention away from that mission, have the courage to ask the hard questions: How is this serving our mission? Who are you becoming in this situation? Where do you want to be when it is over?

Sometimes one thoughtful question can change the entire direction of a conversation.

And never underestimate kindness. Lashing out creates turmoil, animosity, and division. Kindness creates space for understanding, growth, and teamwork. Lead the mission. Celebrate the people. Learn the basics. Build the legacy.

Rebecca S. Farley
Department Leadership Chairman
Leadership@wvvaux.org
304-674-9908

Poppy

Greetings Poppy Team!

Summer's almost over, and it's Back To School time! That means it's time to teach our youth all about poppies. When and why they became a symbol, what that symbol means, who makes them, why we pass them out (we DON'T sell them!), what we do with the donations we receive. Poppies are not just important in the spring on the Friday before Memorial Day—we all know that. So, let's get it out there to our schools now.

The American Legion Auxiliary website has some great materials to download to use. For elementary schools, there's a coloring book that tells the poppy story for littles. For the older students, there's a bookmark which includes the poem "In Flanders Fields". Dates for the Poppy Poster contest can be found on the website as well. Fun and crafty things for kids to do with poppies can be found online. One website with some good ideas is <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/203866/poppy-crafts/>. Just remember to use age-appropriate materials like safety scissors, non-toxic glue, etc. Also, combine crafts with short discussions or stories about poppies to add educational value.

Finally, I'd love it if you'd send me pictures and notes of your Back To School Poppy escapades!

Have a wonderful September getting the poppy story out there in the schools. Till next month—

Jane Stepp
Department Poppy Chairman



Music

"Take Me Out To The 🎮 Game"

With that in mind, I am sure everyone knows that song. If you don't, try learning it and maybe we will sing that song at Workshop.

It doesn't matter if you can't carry a tune. Music is a wonderful way to express your feelings.

When you sing, give your whole heart into it, just don't sing the words.

See you at workshop
Paulette Anderson
Music Chairman



Legislative

ACTION ALERT: Please visit The American Legion Grassroots Action Center to urge your Senators to support **H.R. 9237/S. 4744, Take Care of American's Veterans Act**
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Campaigns/138045/Respond>

Passage of this legislation will deliver 62 bipartisan/bicameral bills that TAL has previously supported. In January 2026 the Department of Veterans Affairs testified that they would be finalizing changes to ratings for sleep apnea and tinnitus which would revert billions of dollars back to the Treasury rather than be used for our veterans. Passage of this legislation will prevent the reduction of benefits to veterans as well as preserve these medical issues for future ratings for veterans.

Additionally, this legislation addresses enhancements to the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program, rural access to disability examinations and training improvements, establishment of programs to improve care coordination, telehealth options, and adaptive care for veterans with traumatic brain injuries or blast exposure, as well as notifying veterans of eligibility for care, support caregivers and creating community-based services.

The House passed the bill on June 23, 2026, but the bill must also be passed by the Senate to become law. Please contact your Senators and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Andrea Snyder
Legislative Chair
legislative@wvaux.org

Public Relations

As we head toward the end of summer, National Convention is just around the corner. Safe travels to all representing the Department of West Virginia, and we look forward to hearing about the great things you bring back to your units.

Back-to-school events, county fairs, Labor Day celebrations, veteran appreciations, and membership drives all offer great chances to showcase the American Legion Auxiliary in your communities.

Please keep sending your photos, newspaper articles, social media highlights, and event summaries to publicrelations@wvaux.org

Katie Simpkins
Public Relations Chairman

National Executive Committee

After the recent National Standing Rule change, I've been asked 2 questions.

The 1st: was if National is planning a training for Auxiliary members to determine how to read dd214 and such documents to determine eligibility. The answer is no. If the Veteran a member is joining under is deceased and the Auxiliary officer doesn't know, then go to the post adjutant to determine.

The 2nd was: what if a member is joining under a Veteran that served in the 30's or between the dates on the application. Didn't the Legion open the dates to all veterans? National's explanation: In 2019, The American Legion helped get the LEGION Act passed which declared that the United States has been in a state of war since December 7, 1941. This essentially cut the eligible war eras from 7 down to 2 and opened up the eligibility for membership in both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The American Legion's eligibility criteria states that veterans must have served during "wartime". The time frame from November 11, 1918 to December 7, 1941, is not considered war time.

Lisa Cadwallader
NEC

VA&R

Have you started to see Halloween items appearing in stores? Yes, sounds a bit early, but its a good sign cooler weather isn't far off.

Check to see when your VA and other veteran based shelters are going to start taking blankets, hats, gloves, & coats for homeless veterans. Now is the time to start thinking and planning. Or maybe you have older veterans that you check on, maybe collect warmer sweaters, sweat pants or even food that will help them prepare but the cold sets in.

Don't forget Halloween treats for nursing home Veterans. And track all VAMC donations to turn in when mid-winter comes.

Calendars are showing up in stores, a small one is a great way to track hours, and donations.

Lisa Cadwallader
Var@wvaux.org



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY WV RHODODENDRON GIRLS STATE

Rhododendron Girls State

Please mark your calendars for the 2027 session of Rhododendron Girls State on June 6 - 12, 2027 at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, WV.

If you are interested in assisting during the week, please contact Dr. Rosemary Thomas or Katie Garlick.

I want to apology for listing one of our Girls Nation Senators incorrectly in the August SPIRIT. Our senators are Juliann Harlan (Elkins) and Etta Mae Wheeler (Wheeling), They represented our department very well. We also had Lynda Lancaster-Loyd as a Senior Counselor. You will get more information on their accomplishments at Fall Leadership.

We will have some new volunteers working within the districts this year. These volunteers are willing to work with the local units and the school to get important information to junior girls and their parents about RGS. Please work with these volunteers to make the 2027 RGS a great experience for more Junior girls next year.

If you have questions, please ask them at Fall Leadership. Do not wait until situations become problems to ask. We are here to assist the units, the school, and the girls make our 2027 RGS the best possible.

Ann Buchanan
Girls State Chairman
304-654-9932
AnnBuch@aol.com



District Representatives

1st Dist. — Madi Adams
500 Jefferson St.
Newell WV 26050
681-209-6925

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

4th Dist. — Andrea Snyder
2755 Redmond Ridge Rd.
Gallipolis Ferry WV 25515
304-593-0249

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 July winners!
I have one winner I haven't been able to get ahold of. One winner's phone mailbox is full and I couldn't leave a message. He is listed on the right. If you sold him a winning ticket please get the correct information for me. I need address, city, state.

I will have the **2027 Fundraiser** tickets with me at workshop. If you want certain numbers please let me know so I can have them for you.

Members will pick their own numbers this year, and I will have envelopes for you. You will have to sign your name, Unit #, and how many you took to sell.

Let's try to sell ALL tickets this year. I will also have them at conferences if a unit needs them.

Paulette Anderson
Christy Bland

July Ways and Means Winners

Name	#'s	City	State	Date	\$\$\$
Brian Hamric	054	Moundsville	WV	7/1/26	25.00
Quinn Corbin	978	Romney	WV	7/2/26	25.00
Connie Thayer	509	Moundsville	WV	7/3/26	25.00
Nora Condon	412	Kearneysville	WV	7/4/26	25.00
Brandi Hines	765	Paw Paw	WV	7/6/26	25.00
Bryon Crites	369	Moorefield	WV	7/7/26	25.00
	070			7/8/26	
Jeff Fraley	334	Moorefield	WV	7/9/26	25.00
Ralph Richardson	397	New Martinsville	WV	7/10/26	25.00
Diane Shoemaker	896	Old Fields	WV	7/11/26	25.00
Aleesha Karmazin	634	Canonsburg	PA	7/13/26	25.00
Beth Rossana	911	Morgantown	WV	7/14/26	25.00
Mike Immel	112	Martinsburg	WV	7/15/26	200.00
Dale Withrow	537	St. Albans	WV	7/16/26	25.00
Cecelia Gritz	572	Wheeling	WV	7/17/26	25.00
Alan Robinson	707			7/18/26	25.00
Donna Aker	442	Fredericksburg	VA	7/20/26	25.00
Luke Griffith	335	Vienna	WV	7/21/26	25.00
Sandy Koontz	358	St. Clairsville	OH	7/22/26	25.00
	481			7/23/26	
Dewayne Fowler	704	Pagetown	WV	7/24/26	25.00
Kim Mongold	443	Rio	WV	7/27/26	25.00
Donnie Coby	736	Moorefield	WV	7/28/26	25.00
Gail Harper	176	Dunbar	WV	7/29/26	25.00
Elaine Davis	094	Keyser	WV	7/30/26	25.00
Patricia Shoop	652	Augusta	WV	7/31/26	25.00



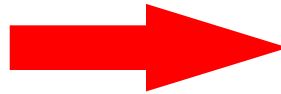
“THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN TEAM”

Department Goal: 4,753 members Members to Date:
Unit #200 Goal 149 members To Date:
1st Target November 11th 50.00%

3rd Base Coach Rebecca

1st Base Coach Peggy

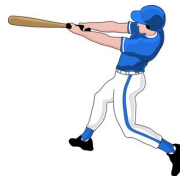
District 1			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Wheeling #1	32		
Moundsville #3	260		
McMechen #5	12		
Weirton #10	72		
Cameron #18	119		
New Martinsville #28	109		
Wellsburg #34	22		
Follansbee #45	57		
Pine Grove #81	60		
Paden City #86	79		
Wheeling #89	10		
Newell #114	20		
Chester #121	122		
TOTALS	974		



**National League
Goal—2521
To Date—**



**Team Scout-
Membership
Chairman**



District 3			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Buckhannon #7	46		
Clarksburg #13	40		
Elkins #29	99		
Shinnston #31	260		
Braxton County #33	28		
Bridgeport #68	102		
Belington #96	11		
Pickens #122	18		
Morgantown #174	150		
TOTALS	754		

District 5			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Huntington #16	131		
Logan #19	15		
Charleston #20	26		
St. Albans #73	31		
Ceredo-Kenova #93	199		
Hamlin #111	39		
Milton #139	66		
Barboursville #177	154		
TOTALS	661		

District 4			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Parkersburg #15	380		
Spencer #21	21		
Pt. Pleasant #23	238		
Tyler County #48	36		
Sistersville #67	41		
New Haven #140	109		
Williamstown #159	78		
TOTALS	903		

District 6			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Welch #8	43		
Bluefield #9	19		
Beckley #32	11		
Gary #38	87		
Cowen #62	21		
Richwood #97	25		
TOTALS	206		



**American League
Goal—2,083
To Date**

District 10			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Martinsburg #14	68		
Piedmont #52	20		
Berkeley Springs #60	199		
Charles Town #63	33		
Moorefield #64	87		
Charles Town #71	132		
Petersburg #78	64		
Romney #91	135		
Paw Paw #128	33		
Kirby #134	28		
Ridgeley #136	65		
Capon Bridge #137	213		
Keyser #152	29		
TOTALS	1106		

September 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

R.E.D. FRIDAYS Until They All Come Home		1 <i>Office Closed National Convention</i>	2 <i>VJ Day 1945</i>	3 <i>Home Off</i>	4	5
6	7 	8	9 <i>Cheer Party Checks ready for Workshop</i>	10 <i>Fall Workshop</i>	11 	12
13	14	15 <i>Target Sheet Out</i>	16	17 <i>Articles Due</i>	18  	19
20	21	22 <i>Spirit Out</i>	23	24	25	26
27 	28	29	30	Program of Month <i>Junior Activities</i> <i>Music</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 ALL AMERICAN TEAM

NATIONAL LEAGUE:

Districts 1, 4 & 6

AMERICAN LEAGUE:

Districts 3, 5 & 10

PRESIDENT: MANAGER

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: TEAM SCOUT

FIRST VICE: FIRST BASE COACH

SECOND VICE: THIRD BASE COACH

SECRETARY/ TREASURER: SCOREKEEPER

HISTORIAN: LEAGUE REPORTER

CHAPLIN: ANGEL IN THE OUTFIELD

PARLIMENTARIAN: HEAD UMPIRE

PAST DEPARTMENT PRESIDENTS: HALL OF FAMERS

JUNIORS: FARM LEAGUE (TRIPLE A)

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS: HITTING COACHES

DISTRICT VICE PRESIDENTS: BATTING COACHES

MEMBERS: PLAYERS

DEPARTMENT THEME: TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!!

SPECIAL PROJECT: WV AMERICAN LEAGION BASEBALL



PURSE AUCTION



MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP

BENEFITS

“WEST VIRGINIA AMERICAN LEGION



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

PRESIDENT STEPHANIE HANDLEY
HOMECOMING INFORMATION

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH
CHESTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
371 CAROLINA AVENUE

COCKTAIL HOUR 5:00-6:00 PM
DINNER 6:00 PM

FLYER WILL BE AT WORKSHOP

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



Ho KEITH BROWN DEPARTMENT COMMANDER HOMECOMING DINNER

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2026

SOCIAL HOUR: 4:00 PM

BUFFET DINNER: 5:00 PM

MENU: SLICED SIRLOIN, LEMON AND ROSEMARIE CHICKEN

SIDES: TRI-COLOR POTATOES, ZUCCHINI AND

GREEN BEANS AND DESERT

\$15.00 PER GUEST (includes 1 drink ticket)

SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL

83 14TH STREET

WHEELING, WV

RSVP by October 12, 2026

Email: hk2506@comcast.net

Cell: 304-780-2890

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: _____

REGISTRATION/PERMISSION FORM

Please complete the form entirely. Duplicate as needed. Incomplete forms will not be processed.

NO FORMS ACCEPTED VIA FACSIMILE.

Name of Junior _____

Preferred Name on Nametag _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Unit Name & Number _____

Name of Hotel Junior is Staying _____

List any Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions _____

Date of Birth _____

As a junior member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of West Virginia, I am aware of my responsibility in attending the Junior Annual Workshop. I agree to conduct myself in a manner that will positively reflect on my unit, Department, my family and me. I further agree to abide by the rules established by the Junior Meeting. I understand the failure to abide by rules set forth for the Annual Junior Workshop will result in removal from all sessions and activities.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Chaperone During the Junior Annual Workshop:

Note: Emergency contact person should accompany participating junior member to Registration to provide a telephone and location of contact in case of emergency during the actual time of the meetings.

Chaperone Emergency Contact Number _____

CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

This certifies that we (I) or guardian (s) of _____

In Unit _____, in event of our (my) child participates in the American Legion Auxiliary Annual Junior Workshop held in Clarksburg West Virginia at Hilton Garden Inn, hereby consent and grant permission, should the necessity of medical care arise, to the furnishing of medical treatment and hospital service as ordered or recommended by a qualified physician, including the administration officers, agents, instructor, and employees from any and all claims, demands, damages, suits, actions, or causes of actions an anesthetic, laboratory procedures, medical or surgical treatments, X-ray examination or other hospital services.

We understand the Unit named above has sole responsibility for registration, housing, food, chaperoning, and emergencies of any nature. We further understand that each junior member attending the Annual Junior Workshop must be chaperoned by someone 21 years old or older.

The chaperone should accompany the junior to registration to provide information on location and telephone number where she can be reached in case of an emergency.

WAIVER OF CLAIM

This further certifies that we (I) the undersigned in consideration of the benefits to be deprived by our child, in the event that she is a participate of the American Legion Auxiliary Annual Junior Workshop held in Clarksburg WV, Sept. 12, 2026, (inclusive), do hereby release and discharge the American Legion Auxiliary, its officers, agents, instructor, and employees from any and all claims demands, damages, suits, actions, or causes of actions which we (I), may, can, or shall have by reason of any illness, injury, or accident incurred or suffered by said child while traveling to attendance at or participation in the American Auxiliary Annual Junior Workshop held in Clarksburg West Virginia, Sept.12, 2026 from the time of her departure from home until return thereto.

INSURANCE INFORMATION (to be completed only if parent (s) carry a group medical insurance plan)

Name of parent (s) Group Medical Insurance Carrier _____

Policy/ certificate Number _____

Parent to Whom Policy was Issued _____

Employer to Who Policy was Issued _____

Printed Name of Mother or Guardian _____

Signature of Mother or Guardian _____

Signature of Father or Guardian _____

I, the Legal Guardian _____

Give permission for my daughter _____

American Legion Auxiliary Junior member to be photographed for the use by the Department of West Virginia American Legion Auxiliary Junior Auxiliary. ETC. face book, newspaper, (Local and National, newsletters, and any website for the Auxiliary.

Parents OR Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Unit: _____