The Auxiliary Spirit

The American Legion Family

Volume 41 *October 2026* *Issue 3*



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

Greetings Department of WV,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who attended our recent Membership Workshop. Your time, participation, and dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary are greatly appreciated.

The success of our organization depends upon the commitment of our members and our willingness to work together toward common goals. The ideas shared, discussions held, and enthusiasm demonstrated throughout the workshop are valuable as we continue our efforts to strengthen membership and support the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

As members of our "**All American Team,"** each of us has an important role to play. By working together, supporting one another, and encouraging others to become involved, we can continue to build a strong and vibrant organization for the future. Thank you to everyone in participating in the annual "Betty Rae" purse auction and supporting my project. What a great way to get started.

I know that there are still some issues with ALAMIS and reporting of membership numbers and our numbers look low, but it is just the start of the new membership year. I know you are working hard on membership. Our first goal is November 11th, Veteran's Day. I know we can make the 50% target.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary. Your efforts and service are essential to the continued success of our Department and the communities we serve. I look forward to building upon the momentum of this workshop and to the accomplishments we will achieve together throughout the coming year.

With sincere appreciation for your continued service and dedication.



Stephanie Handley
Department President

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 To, All Members

I am your 1st Base Coach and my District are 3, 5 and 10. If you need any help with anything, just call me or send me an e-mail , and I will be glad to help you anyway that I can. If I do not know the answer I will find it from the secretary or someone that can help me.

I want to thank our past Dept President for a wonderful job she did at workshop.

Looks like we have 12.02%. It looks like you are already working on membership.

If you did not get to attend the workshop You were missed. We had a lot of new members attending this year. We hope to have more next year.

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

Peggy Swartz
1st Vice President

Membership Chairman

Opening the Door to More: Expanded ALA Membership Eligibility

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted expanded membership eligibility for the American Legion Auxiliary, allowing more eligible family members to join and support our mission.

Eligibility now includes grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of eligible American Legion members and qualifying servicemembers. Women eligible for membership in The American Legion in their own right also remain eligible for ALA membership.

This change strengthens our organization by welcoming additional members committed to serving veterans, military personnel, their families, communities, and youth. The revisions may also allow an individual to hold membership in both the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Legion's national judge advocate confirmed that such dual membership does not create a conflict of interest with The American Legion.

These eligibility changes are effective immediately and remember, "TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!"

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

Department 2nd Vice President

Team National, your Third Base Coach is in position, and I'm ready to wave you HOME!

As your Department Second Vice President, I couldn't ask for a better spot on our All-American Team. Why? Because third base is where we get ready to bring 'em home, and that's exactly what it's time to do with membership!

2027 membership is OPEN and ready for processing! Don't leave those renewals stranded on base. Reach out to your members. Make the phone call. Send the text. Invite someone back. Ask someone new to join our mission. Every membership matters, and every member strengthens our team.

Set your sights on your Unit's membership goal and start swinging! Let's build momentum now, cross home plate early, and keep running up the score for our veterans, military, their families, and our communities.

I'll be over here at third base, waving you in and cheering you on!

Come on, Team West Virginia! Bring those memberships HOME, meet those goals, and let's knock 2027 out of the park!

PLAY BALL!

Rebecca Farley
Department 2nd Vice President
ala.rebeccafarley@gmail.com
304-674-9908

BATTER UP!!!

HISTORIAN

What makes a great Historian? Someone who shares all the facts and makes wonderful memories in the process.

As a Historian, you are encouraged to attend as many events as possible. If you are unable to attend an event, remember to ask other members to take photos and share the details with you so you can include them as part of your history.

Please share your Unit and District's photos and events with the Department so your history can be recorded and shared beyond your local community. If you have not joined the Department Facebook group, please do so. The group can be found by searching, "American Legion Auxiliary Department of West Virginia" on Facebook.

I look forward to a successful year and I am happy to assist you.

A little history humor for you to share...

"Where was the Declaration of Independence signed"? At the bottom! ;)

Andrea Snyder
Department Historian
Historian@wvaux.org

Chaplain

Hello Ladies,
Teamwork makes the dream work!

As we step into October, the baseball season may be coming to an end, but the lessons we learn from the game continue throughout the year.

Every successful baseball team knows that one player cannot win the game alone. It takes a pitcher, catcher, infielders, outfielders, coaches, and a whole team working together toward one common goal. The same is true for the American Legion Auxiliary.

Each of us has a position to play. Some may lead, some may serve behind the scenes, some may comfort, some may organize, and others may encourage. No position is more important than another.

When we work together, support one another, and remember why we serve, we become a stronger team.

Our All-American Team is built on more than winning. It is built on service, commitment, compassion, and teamwork. We are teammates serving our veterans, their families, our communities, and our country.

October Prayer
Dear Lord.

"Thank You for bringing us together as members of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Help us to be a team that works together with kindness, patience, and understanding. Give us the strength to encourage one another when the days are difficult and the humility to celebrate each other's successes.

Help us keep our eyes on the goal of serving our veterans, our families, our communities, and our great nation." Amen

God Bless
Holly Adams
Department Chaplain

Department Headquarters Scorekeeper

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 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) <u>This is not for everyone's use.</u>

REMINDER: You can now add new members to your transmittals. Don't send the DD214's to this office. Return them to the new member.

New Membership Applications will be emailed to all units and on the www.wvaux.org website soon.

ATTENTION: On the next target sheet the PUFL's will be added to membership in Units.
Due to the ALAMIS upgrade in July, PUFLs were not processed as they normally are, so they aren't counted in this target sheet.

Spirit messages are to be no more than 200 words this year, with the exception of the Department President.
Since postage has gone up to mail Spirits, I have to make sure I don't have more than the price of mailing them.
Articles are due into Department on the <u>17th of each month. Please make sure you go by this date.</u>

I will be attending 6th District, 10th District, 1st District Fall Conferences.

I will be attending the other Districts Spring Conferences in the Spring.

Directory: the Directory will be worked on after this spirit goes out. If you haven't sent in your new officers listing please do so in the next few days.



FALL CONFERENCES

October 3rd: 6th District (Auxiliary)
Gary Unit #38
Welch Post Home
Old Welch Elementary School
1235 Stewart
Welch WV

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

Department Headquarters

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:30am-3:30pm
Phone **304-398-2070**
<u>department@wvaux.org</u>

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

Department Website:
<u>www.wvaux.org</u>

Rhododendron Girls State Website
<u>www.wvgirlsstate.org</u>

The American Legion
Department of WV
<u>wvlegion@suddenlinkmail.com</u>

American Legion Auxiliary
National Website
<u>ALAforveterans.org</u>

National Executive Committee

United in Mission, Stronger in Service

The American Legion Auxiliary's newly approved mission statement clearly expresses who we are, whom we serve, and the impact we strive to make: **"The American Legion Auxiliary honors the sacrifice of those who serve by uniting members to make a meaningful impact for veterans, military and their families, and communities."**

These words place our mission at the heart of everything we do. Whether assisting veterans, supporting military families, mentoring young people, promoting Americanism, or strengthening our communities, every act of service advances our purpose.

Our mission is more than a statement—it is a commitment. It calls us to work together, remain focused on those we serve, and ensure our programs create meaningful, lasting impact. Every member has a role, and every contribution matters.

As we embrace this updated mission statement, let it guide our planning, inspire our service, and remind us why membership matters. United by a common purpose, we can honor the sacrifices of those who serve and strengthen our communities.

Together, we will continue transforming gratitude into action through **Service Not Self**.
Laura Clark, NEC
Call/Text 304-939-3607
<u>ala.lauraclark@gmail.com</u>

1st District Vice President

Hello First District!!

I'm sitting here looking at the first target sheet, and it's not looking good in making the challenge that I made to the units of 50% by the district conference on October 25th. There are only 3 units that have turned in any membership as of September 17th.

Does your unit have an early bird special for dues, pay unit officers dues, and your fifty-year members? How about your members that are in nursing homes or are shut-ins? Those are examples of ways to get some of your membership in.

Let's step up to the plate and hit that single to get bases load, then knock a homerun out of the park.

Until next time
Susan Brown
1st District VP

3rd District Vice President

Hello all!

New membership is up and running. Let's be the homerun hitting District 3!

Way to go Buckhannon, Morgantown, Bridgeport and Braxton! We are off to a wonderful start!

Again, if you have any questions feel free to email me.

District 3 is in second place as District 10 is leading the score!

Let's be positive and accept all new members with open arms! We got this. Step up to the plate and recruit!
Kim Mellie
District 3 Vice

4th District Vice President

Grand Slam Ideas for Auxiliary Membership

Members at our September Department of West Virginia, Workshop knocked it out of the park, sharing "trick play" recruitment and retention strategies themed around America's favorite pastime: baseball. To win the membership pennant, units are stepping up to the plate with creative, community-focused game plans.

First up, **host a sports tournament**—whether it is a youth baseball game or a community softball tournament. Use the event to pitch the American Legion Auxiliary, handing out informational flyers and sharing details about membership requirements with spectators and players alike. For a golf tournament, try a clever trick play: **offer free mulligans** exclusively to Legion and Auxiliary members, giving non-members an immediate reason to sign up on the spot.

Another winning strategy is the classic baseball concession mindset: **if you feed them, they will come.** Hosting a free community barbecue, tailgate, or stadium-style hot dog night creates a relaxed environment to scout for prospective new members.

Finally, remember to **let every member play**. By giving every volunteer a turn at bat and a clear position on the team, we build a stronger lineup dedicated to serving our veterans.

Let me know if you have more "trick play" ideas to share. Teamwork makes the dream work!

Andrea Snyder
District 4 Vice President
ALA.AndreaSnyder@gmail.com

5th District Vice President

It was great to see everyone at the Membership Workshop last week! Fun times and we learned a lot. Big changes to membership eligibility was announced. Please read the changes to eligibility for membership and be aware those changes are already in effect.

As Fall starts next week, it signals it's time for your membership dues to be processed! Reach out to all your members to collect their dues. Continue to reach out to potential new members and get the completed applications into the Department. The first membership goal of 50% occurs on November 11th, Veterans Day.

The next District 5 meeting will be held at the Barboursville Post on October 17th. Registration will begin at 9am and meeting convenes at 10 am. Lunch will follow.

Plans for celebrations and parades in November that honor our Veterans should be in the final stages.
Make sure you to post your Unit's plans on Facebook so the public can attend.

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

Patti Withrow
Pjwithrow1958@gmail.com

6th District Vice President

Hoping everyone is safe and healthy. We are entering the month of Goblins and spooks, you need to be on guard and protect your treats.

We are beginning to enter the month of October and you need to be really thinking of how to increase your membership dues collection.

During the month of October don't be surprised to see the leaves start falling, don't let your dues collection fall behind.

If any Unit needs help or support, don't hesitate to contact me for assistance.

Don't forget about District 6 Fall Conference hosted by Gary Unit#38 on Saturday, October 3rd in Welch at the former **Welch Elementary School 1235 Stewart Street, Welch, WV** our new Post 8 home.

Prayers for all to be safe.
Mary Spence
Vice President
District 6

10th District Vice President

Hello Everyone!

Autumn has arrived! It was nice seeing everyone at the ALA Fall Workshop and coming together to do what we do everyday and setting our goals for the new year.

With new beginnings comes a new ALA Mission and Vision. New membership applications with official membership eligibility provisions are on the ALA National website.

We know that ALAMIS has been "on the fritz," however, that doesn't mean we stop recruiting for our team! Our membership target is 50% by Veteran's Day. And since it's that spooky time of year, what better way to scare us up some new members in October. Treat bags with membership information and applications can be passed out during trick/trunk or treating for those that are wearing anything USA or military related. Be on the lookout for potential applicants at the next fall festival or Halloween party. Get creative and look for fun ways to find and recruit new members and engage current members to get involved. It's all about teamwork!
Go Team America!
Pamela Gustines
District 10 Vice President.

1st District President

Hello Fellow Teammates,

The First District Fall Conference is right around the corner. Christy Bland, First District Secretary, has sent out the registration and credential forms to each unit. If your unit has not received the forms, then contact Christy or me. The completed credential forms are due back by 10/12/26 to Christy Bland. The completed registration forms are due back by 10/12/26 to Susan Brown, Unit 3 President. If you have any questions/concerns, then contact me at 304-281-8152. I hope to see everyone soon. We are sure to have an awesome day!!

Rounding around the bases and need some assistance with our programs, events, and/or general items let me know. I am here to help you slide into home. I am still in the process of getting a First District Facebook Page up and running. Be sure to keep an eye out for it

Until next month,
Be Safe and God Bless!!!
Rhonda Best
American Legion Auxiliary
Dept. of WV
First District President



3rd District President

It was great seeing everyone at Membership Workshop, I never fail to learn when I attend the workshop. President Stephanie did an AMAZING JOB!

I look forward to seeing everyone at District 3 Fall Conference, October 10,2026. Spread the word and lets get attendance back up at our Conferences. Registration forms will be emailed out to Unit Presidents or by mail, you may pay at the door, please just let Bethany or myself know how many will be attending from your Unit on that day at Post 68, Thank you Bethany Lister, President of Unit 68 and the Auxiliary members for hosting this year's Fall meeting.

I have emailed flyers out to the Unit Presidents, if you did not receive one Please let me know and I can email it to you, or by mail.

Please pay attention to the times on the Flyer that the events will happen.

I am always available if I can be of any help to any Units or Members, please just reach out.

Work on your Membership , wear your Auxiliary attire, pins when out running errands or at Events (this will help with recognition of the American Legion Auxiliary), carry membership forms with you at all times.

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

4th District President

District 4, are you ready? I hope you're making plans to join us for our Fall District Meeting on October 3rd in Point Pleasant!

I have one BIG goal: every unit represented. Imagine what we can accomplish when every unit in District 4 has a voice in the room!

We're switching things up this year. Yes, we'll take care of business, but we're also adding interaction, leadership development, connection, and a few surprises along the way. My goal is for you to leave with something you can take home and use to strengthen your unit.

District meetings should be more than reports. They should be a place where we share ideas, learn from one another, celebrate successes, tackle challenges together, and remember that no unit has to do this work alone.

We have some exciting things planned to connect our units and help each other reach our goals. But to build a stronger District 4, we need YOU on the team. So grab a fellow member and come join us October 3rd.

Every unit. Every voice. One District 4.

Let's rise together, strengthen our mission, and PLAY BALL!



Rebecca Farley
District 4 President
ala.rebeccafarley@gmail.com
304-674-9908

5th District President

I'm sorry that I missed seeing everyone at the Membership Training. I know that everyone learned a lot while having fun.

Remember your goal but don't let membership be about the numbers. Ask your members why they joined and let that be your focus. I know everyone is waiting on the new membership guidelines but remember this is about helping our veterans and educating our children. Find creative ways of holding membership drives. Wearing red on Friday or even just an auxiliary shirt is a way to start up conversations that could lead to getting new members.

I know everyone in 5th district is working hard. Huntington #16 is in the lead followed by St. Albans #73, Milton #139, and Barboursville #177.

If you haven't sent me a copy of your officer list please do. I like to email everyone with information I feel that is important to everyone's unit.

Keep up the hard work that you are doing for our veterans. If I can be any assistance, please feel free to email me or call.

Please remember District meeting October 17 at Barboursville #177. Please bring a written report on everything your unit is doing.

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

6th District President

Hello Everyone

We just had our workshop which was held in Bridgeport. We had a great turnout, and we had a lot of new faces. Sorry if you could not attend. We had a lot of new information.

Sixth District fall conference will be hosted by Gary Unit 38. It will be held at Welch Unit 8 address, which is 1235 Stewart Street, Welch. it is the old school building on Stewart Street in Welch.

The cost of the meal is $10.00 and $1.00 for registration fee you will pay at the door when you register.

Hope to see a lot of members at this meeting so please mark your calendar for October 3rd to attend our meeting.

Hope everyone if working on membership so you can meet the target date.

Until next time God Bless everyone and keep everyone in our prayers.

Thanks
Peggy Swartz
6th District President

10th District President

District 10 you are doing well with membership. Don't hold them. If you are doing them online, please let Paulette know how many you have processed, as she is unable to run reports at this time. I believe many units have been putting these in through the system and due to the glitch at this time, we know our numbers are not 100 percent.

We are the American League team and we are doing better than the National League. We are at 12.02% where they are standing at 05.71%. Keep it up.

Don't forget our conference on October 10th at Charles Town Unit 71. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and our meeting will start at 10 a.m., please be sure the registration and credentials are sent in to the respected person/unit. Do Not forget your check for those registered. I hope to see you there! We will be drawing the meat raffle ticket pulled that day as well.

Workshop was so much fun!! Thank you Stephanie for such an up beat meeting and keeping it moving right along. Not only was it fun, but very informative. If you were not able to make this, there will be a refresher at the conference.

Jill Davis
10th District President

Americanism



It was great seeing everyone at Membership workshop.

Americanism Essay Contest information was passed out; this year's topic is **"How can you be a beacon of light for our Veterans?"**

Please have the essays turned into me by **March 29, 2027**. They are due to National Central Division chair by April 15, 2027.

Please let me know if you need it to be emailed to you, or mailed, I will be glad too. I will also have copies at District 3 Fall Conference

Key Activities:
**Youth Education: Teaching children and young adults about the Pledge of Allegiance, flag etiquette, and the history of veterans and military service.
**Adult engagement: Encouraging informed voting, civic participation, and personal reflection on patriotism.
**Community Involvement: Recognizing local businesses that display the U.S. flag, sponsoring patriotic events, participating in flag retirement ceremonies.
Members also support American Legion Baseball/Softball (President Stephanies special project this year)

Purpose & Goals:
**Emphasizes responsible citizenship, patriotism, respect for the flag. By promoting these values, the ALA aims to ensure the security of America through an informed and engaged citizenry willing to uphold democratic principles even at personal sacrifice.

Thank you, please reach out if you have any questions.
Sandra Harper
Department Americanism Chair
304-694-2067
americanism@wvaux.org



Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Unplugging chargers after use is a small step today that can prevent a big disaster tomorrow.

Leaving chargers plugged in can cause a faulty or damaged charger to overheat and cause short circuits.

Chargers left plugged in continues to draw power and waste energy. Overheating can ignite nearby objects such as bedding, curtains, paper or other nearby items and cause a fire.

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

Constitution & Bylaws

Hello all,

With all of the changes to membership, please take a look at your constitution, by laws, and standing rules! Make sure you have a process in place to accept membership! If you have any questions, feel free to email!

Please send me a copy of your Constitution and Bylaws, so we can keep a digital file! It will make life easier for the leaders to come! Teamwork makes the dream work!

Have a wonderful September!
PDP Kim Mellie
constitution@wvaux.org

Community Service

It was a great weekend seeing everyone for fall boards. A special thank you to President Stephanie for her leadership and her team.

With fall festivals upon us, I know we will be out in the community showing our American Legion Auxiliary pride. Remember to wear one or more of name tag, our branding symbols, and always have a new application for our great family.

Make sure we thank our Veterans for our freedom.

Blessing,
Kelli A Immel
(304)-283-5092

Children & Youth

We've just returned from the leadership workshop. What a wealth of information about Our membership. **Congratulations** Stephanie and Laura conducting a most informative and fun weekend! If you were not there, please get in touch with someone from your unit that was there and find out all the good things that were presented.

I am so proud of the generosity of this organization. $1600 was raised at the purse auction for Stephanie's special project, **West Virginia American Legion Baseball**.

As fall approaches we must think about the children's parties over the next few months. I hope you're planning a Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas party for the kids in your community.

Do not forget the military children. They did not ask to be put in this situation and with all of the holidays coming up we need a special emphasis on them. Let me know what you're doing and send pictures of the event. Remember national likes to see action pictures and not everyone group together for a picture.

Let me know if you need any help or have any questions, I will be happy to answer them.

Yours in service not itself.
Beth Kilgore
Chairman

Junior Activities

Hello Future Leaders/Juniors,

October is here, and our All-American Team is still in the game!

As Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary, each one of us has an important position to play. Just like a baseball team, we may have different jobs, but we all work together toward the same goal — serving our veterans, military families, and our communities.

A successful team doesn't happen because of one player. It happens because everyone shows up, works together, encourages one another, and gives their best. Our Juniors are an important part of the American Legion Auxiliary family and are helping build the future of our organization.

**Juniors October Activity Idea: Veterans Appreciation Cards: start creating special fall or patriotic cards for a veteran. Include a simple message of thanks for their service.

Take Care and God Bless

Holly Adams
Department Junior Activities

Leadership

West Virginia, we have so much to celebrate!

Our Department earned the Merit Medallion for Department Excellence, while Unit 174 received the prestigious National President's Award for Excellence, one of only five units nationwide!

Our Legislative Program was named Best Department Program.

Congratulations to Chairman Elaine Sampson for her leadership!

And our units brought home an incredible nine national recognitions. Unit 23 earned Most Outstanding honors in Community Service, Junior Activities, Legislative, and Public Relations. Unit 14 earned Most Outstanding honors in Leadership and National Security, plus recognition for its ALA mission-focused social media account. Unit 174 earned Most Outstanding honors in Americanism. Three units. Nine recognitions. One remarkable Department. Well done PDP Kim Mellie!

These awards represent far more than certificates. They represent members serving veterans, military families, and communities while carrying our mission forward.

Leadership means celebrating the people who make that possible.

At your next meeting, look to your left and your right. Tell those members something you appreciate about what they bring to our mission. Recognize their contribution. Encourage their next step. Lend them your confidence.

West Virginia, I am celebrating YOU. Now, go celebrate each other!

Rebecca Farley
Leadership Chair
leadership@wvaux.org
304-674-9908

Education

After attending the National Convention in Louisville, I can say that Education will be a major focus this year.

Our newly elected National President, Dr. Coral May Grout of Massachusetts, has a strong background in education, holding a master's degree and has served over 50 years in roles ranging from English teacher to superintendent. In her acceptance speech, she shared that the Give 10 to Education Program will be one of her priorities. She is asking Units to include this program in their plans and to increase their efforts threefold. Units that do so will receive special recognition.

I will send each Unit copies of the plans as soon as available. In the meantime, review what your Unit accomplished for Education during the last year and plan to do even more. Consider what will work best for your children/schools. Be sure to distribute the scholarship applications as they become available and plan regular follow-ups with teachers and counselors.

Some fun facts about Coral: has collected flags since age 6; been playing golf for 50+ years; loves tacos and mac and cheese; lives in her family home which is 101 years old and her family has lived there for 80 years.

Dianne McClung
lin4dee@aol.com
education@wvaux.org



Child Well-Being Fund

Can you help me out? It has been a while since I've been fed and would like to know, who I can contact to get the ball rolling again.

I like loose change or even bills if you are so inclined. I am hungry and getting smaller. Please help me get back to my fat self.

Service not self
Beth Kilgore
Chairman



Poppy

Hi Poppy Team!

If any of you have emailed me some great poppy stuff, I apologize for the lack of response. I have been unable to get into my email, but that will definitely be remedied by next month's newsletter.

Hope everyone had a great September. Leaves changing color, football games, pumpkin spice everything . . . Now we're into Fall, poppies are a long way off, right? No way! It's always poppy time!

Let's talk about the history of the poppy with the American Legion. It's a pretty good story. At the end of World War I, the American Legion Auxiliary adopted the poppy as a symbol of freedom and the blood sacrificed by troops in wartimes. Here's how it came about. In 1915 Canadian physician Lt. Col. John McCrae wrote the poem "In Flanders Fields" after presiding over the funeral of his fellow soldier and friend who died in the Second Battle of Ypres. It referred to the poppies as a symbol of resilience, springing up in the churned-up earth of newly dug soldier's graves over parts of Belgium and France. It's a very touching poem; I've included it at the end of this report. Shortly after the poem was written, it was published in a Ladies' Home Journal and was seen by a teacher from Georgia by the name of Moina Michaels (Mo-ee-na) while attending the annual YMCA Overseas Conference. The last stanza hit her to the core. In response to that verse, she quickly penned a poem "We Shall Keep the Faith" on the back of an envelope. (I'll include her poem in next month's Spirit Newsletter.) Excited, Moina vowed to buy and always wear poppies in remembrance of "In Flanders Fields" and showed both poems to gentlemen also at the conference and pitched her idea of wearing poppies in honor of the lives lost in the war. They were caught up in the idea and gave her $10 and asked for poppies to wear right then. (That was a lot of money back then.) She took the money and rushed to Wanamaker's department store to buy 25 silk poppies to distribute at the conference. Moina returned to Georgia sporting a poppy on her collar in 1919, and folks began to call her "The Poppy Lady". Working with disabled veterans, she arranged for them to assemble poppies for the American Legion Auxiliary in 1921. In 1924, the ALA Poppy Program became a national program and continues to the present day.

See you next month!
Jane Stepp
Poppy Chairman



Legislative

American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) members can help veterans from a legislative standpoint by supporting the prioritized policy agenda and resolutions established by The American Legion.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

****Grassroots Advocacy:** Contact elected officials in local congressional districts and Washington, D.C., via phone calls, emails, or in-person visits to voice support for key bills.

****Action Alerts**: Use the Grassroots Action Center to track pending federal measures, review legislative priority sheets, and send coordinated messages to lawmakers.

Link: ***https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home***

****Arousing Public Sentiment**: Educate locally and raise public awareness to build backing for specific veteran, military family, and national security policies.

****Focus Priorities**: Promote legislative goals concerning VA healthcare funding, suicide prevention programs, benefits protection like TDIU (Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability), and quality-of-life improvements for servicemembers.

Now, for a little humor before you read on…

Why did the politician introduce a **bill to give veterans free coffee?**

To ensure they have strong **grounds for defense!**



Andrea Snyder
Legislative Chair
Legislative@wvaux.org

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie In
Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In
Flanders fields.

Written By: *Lt. Col. John McCrae*

Public Relations

October provides an excellent opportunity for American Legion Auxiliary units throughout West Virginia to strengthen their visibility within their communities. Fall programs, membership activities, patriotic events, and preparations for Veterans Day offer valuable opportunities to promote the mission and service of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Effective public relations begins before an event takes place. Units are encouraged to provide local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations with timely information that clearly answers the questions: who, what, when, where, and why. Event information should also be posted on your unit's Facebook page to help increase awareness, attendance, and community involvement.

Following an event, continue telling your unit's story by sharing quality photographs and a brief description of the activity and its impact. Post these highlights on your Facebook page and submit them to local media whenever appropriate. Be sure to identify your unit and explain how the activity supports our veterans, military families, youth, and communities.

October is also an ideal time to begin publicizing Veterans Day activities. Through consistent, accurate, and professional communication, we can increase awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary and proudly showcase the outstanding work being accomplished across West Virginia.

Tiffany Orlando
Public Relations Chairman
tiffanyannorlando@gmail.com

VA&R

Hope everyone is gearing up for fall and District Conferences!

September provided lots of opportunities for our programs with PTSP awareness, Gold Star Family recognition Day, POW/MIA recognition Day, and the 25th Anniversary of 9/11.

As we move towards fall and holidays, we start to plan for treat bags, and craft items, for Veteran's at the VA or in local nursing homes. We help with stand downs and donate blankets, warm outside clothing for homeless and food for the food banks and let's not forget doing for the gift shops.

This year I ask in addition to all those wonderful things we do for our Veteran's and their families, we also keep an open eye. You ask what I may mean? Lots of us enjoy the fall color and holidays that follow. However, the holiday's can be a lonely time for some. Some don't have family and friends to celebrate with. For those battling PTSD, or depression, this time of the year can lead to heavier thoughts of suicide. So please keep an eye open for the signs. If your not sure of the signs google free suicide prevention training. Several will pop up and explain the signs and how to get help.

Lisa Cadwallader
VA&R Chair
VAR@WVAUX.ORG





AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
WV RHODODENDRON
GIRLS STATE

Rhododendron Girls State

Rhododendron Girls State
Our leaders for 2027 RGS:
Director Dr. Rosemary Thomas
Assisted Director Katie Garlick
Registrar Laura Clark
Secretary Lynda Lancaster-Lloyd
Treasurer Paulette Anderson
Finance Officer Irene Weber

Board of Incorporators:
President Irene Weber
Secretary Dr, Rosemary Thomas
Members: Nancy Farley
Ann Buchanan
Lynda Landcaster-Lloyd

I am attending the National Girls State/ Nation Leadership Meeting in Indianapolis on September 18-20.2026 and hope to gain new insight into the 2027 program.

I was unable to attend the Fall Workshop, but I understand that it was great.

We have to work on RGS all year, not just in the spring. Information is needed by our local schools, our board offices, and our communities each month. The more we reach out we will make contact with individuals that can help us later. If you have questions, ask them now. We are available to assist at any time.

Ann Buchanan
Girls State Chairman





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 **August** winners! We had NO $200.00 winner this month.

The 2027 Dept. Fundraiser tickets were at workshop. If your unit wasn't there I will have at the conferences I attend this fall.

If you would like them mailed to you, please send me an email and let me know how many you want. I will put them in an envelope to mail.

REMEMBER: **All tickets MUST be completely filled out: Full Name, Full Address, City, St., Zip code, and Phone # Seller must have a name and Unit #. If not completed I will either contact the unit or send back to have the ticket filled out. I received too many this year incomplete.**
I still have Alan Robinson's check to send once I receive the mailing address.

This year there will be a $25.00 to the District that sells the most 2027 tickets, and the Unit that sells the most 2027 tickets. So Let's Sell Tickets!!

Paulette Anderson
Christy Bland



August Ways and Means Winners

Name	#'s	City	State	Date	$$$
	658			8/1/26	
Dianne McClung	962	Mineral Wells	WV	8/3/26	25.00
Bryant Barrow	118	Hawesville	KY	8/4/26	25.00
Rebecca Farley	189	Leon	WV	8/5/26	25.00
Shannon Harshbarger	246	Huntington	WV	8/6/26	25.00
Chad Ross	373	Graysville	PA	8/7/26	25.00
Lila Benyo	470	McMechen	WV	8/8/26	25.00
	084			8/10/26	
Tola Walker	842	Princeton	WV	8/11/26	25.00
Cindy Simms	436	Cameron	WV	8/12/26	25.00
Nora Condon	570	Kearneysville	WV	8/13/26	25.00
Doughlas Tusing	206	Capon Bridge	WV	8/14/26	25.00
Robin Kimble	711	Moorefield	WV	8/15/26	**25.00**
Aftyn Wilson	802	St. Albans	WV	8/17/26	25.00
Michelle Powell	128	Wheeling	WV	8/18/26	25.00
	056			8/19/26	
Dennis Davis	593	Capon Bridge	WV	8/20/26	25.00
Billie Jo High	534	Old Fields	WV	8/21/26	25.00
ALA Unit #3	635	Moundsville	WV	8/22/26	25.00
Linda Shoemaker	989	Front Royal	VA	8/24/26	25.00
Roy Hovermale	957	Berkeley Springs	WV	8/25/26	25.00
Megan Kirk	835	Huntington	WV	8/26/26	25.00
	665			8/27/26	
Bonnie Wilcox	000	Romney	WV	8/28/26	25.00
Nancy Burkhart	274	Shanks	WV	8/29/26	25.00
	059			8/30/26	

"THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN TEAM"

Department Goal: 4,753 members Members to Date: 442 09.30%
Unit #200 Goal 149 members To Date: 11
1st Target November 11th 50.00%
Updated September 15th

3rd Base Coach Rebecca ***1st Base Coach Peggy***

District 1			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Wheeling #1	32		
Moundsville #3	260	49	18.85%
McMechen #5	12		
Weirton #10	72		
Cameron #18	119		
New Martinsville #28	109	31	28.44%
Wellsburg #34	22		
Follansbee #45	57		
Pine Grove #81	60		
Paden City #86	79	17	21.52%
Wheeling #89	10		
Newell #114	20		
Chester #121	122		
TOTALS	974	97	09.96%

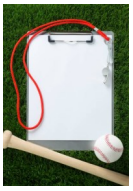
District 4			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Parkersburg #15	380	18	04.74%
Spencer #21	21		
Pt. Pleasant #23	238	9	03.78%
Tyler County #48	36		
Sistersville #67	41		
New Haven #140	109		
Williamstown #159	78		
TOTALS	903	27	02.99%

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	4	16.00%
TOTALS	206	4	01.94%

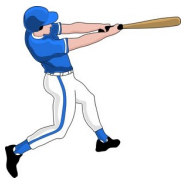


National League

Goal—2083
To Date—128
06.15%



Team Scout-Membership Chairman



American League

Goal—2521
To Date—303
12.02%

District 3			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Buckhannon #7	46	20	43.48%
Clarksburg #13	40		
Elkins #29	99		
Shinnston #31	260		
Braxton County #33	28	7	25%
Bridgeport #68	102	20	19.61%
Belington #96	11		
Pickens #122	18		
Morgantown #174	150	47	31.33%
TOTALS	754	94	12.47%

District 5			
Unit	2027 Goal	202	% of Goal
Huntington #16	131	26	**19.85%**
Logan #19	15		
Charleston #20	26		
St. Albans #73	31	14	45.16%
Ceredo-Kenova #93	199		
Hamlin #111	39		
Milton #139	66	1	01.52%
Barboursville #177	154	1	00.65%
TOTALS	661	42	06.35%

District 10			
Unit	2027 Goal	2027	% of Goal
Martinsburg #14	68	21	30.88%
Piedmont #52	20		
Berkeley Springs #60	199		
Charles Town #63	33		
Moorefield #64	87	35	40.22%
Charles Town #71	132	17	12.88%
Petersburg #78	64		
Romney #91	135		
Paw Paw #128	33	1	03.03%
Kirby #134	28	8	21.43%
Ridgeley #136	65		
Capon Bridge #137	213	85	39.9**1%**
Keyser #152	29		
TOTALS	1106	167	15.10%

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 *6th District Conf. Gary #38 at Welch* *4th District Joint Conf at Post #23*
4	5	6	7	8	9 *Cheer Party Checks Out*	10 *10th District Joint Conf. Post #71* *3rd District Joint Conf. Bridgeport #68*
11	12 	13 	14	15 *Target Sheet Out*	16	17 *5th Dist. Joint Conf. Post #177* *President Stephanie's Homecoming*
18	19 *Articles Due For Spirit*	20	21 *Spirit Out*	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 

Program of Month
Junior Activities
Music

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

ALA Mission and Vision Statements

ALA Mission

(What we do every day.)

Proposed:

The American Legion Auxiliary honors the sacrifice of those who serve by uniting members to make a meaningful impact for veterans, military and their families, and communities.

Current:

In the spirit of Service Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security.

ALA Vision

(The legacy we'll leave.)

Proposed:

To be a connected, compassionate force — a community where veterans, servicemembers, and their families belong and thrive through service that supports veterans, military and their families, and the next generation.

Current:

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community, providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace, and security.

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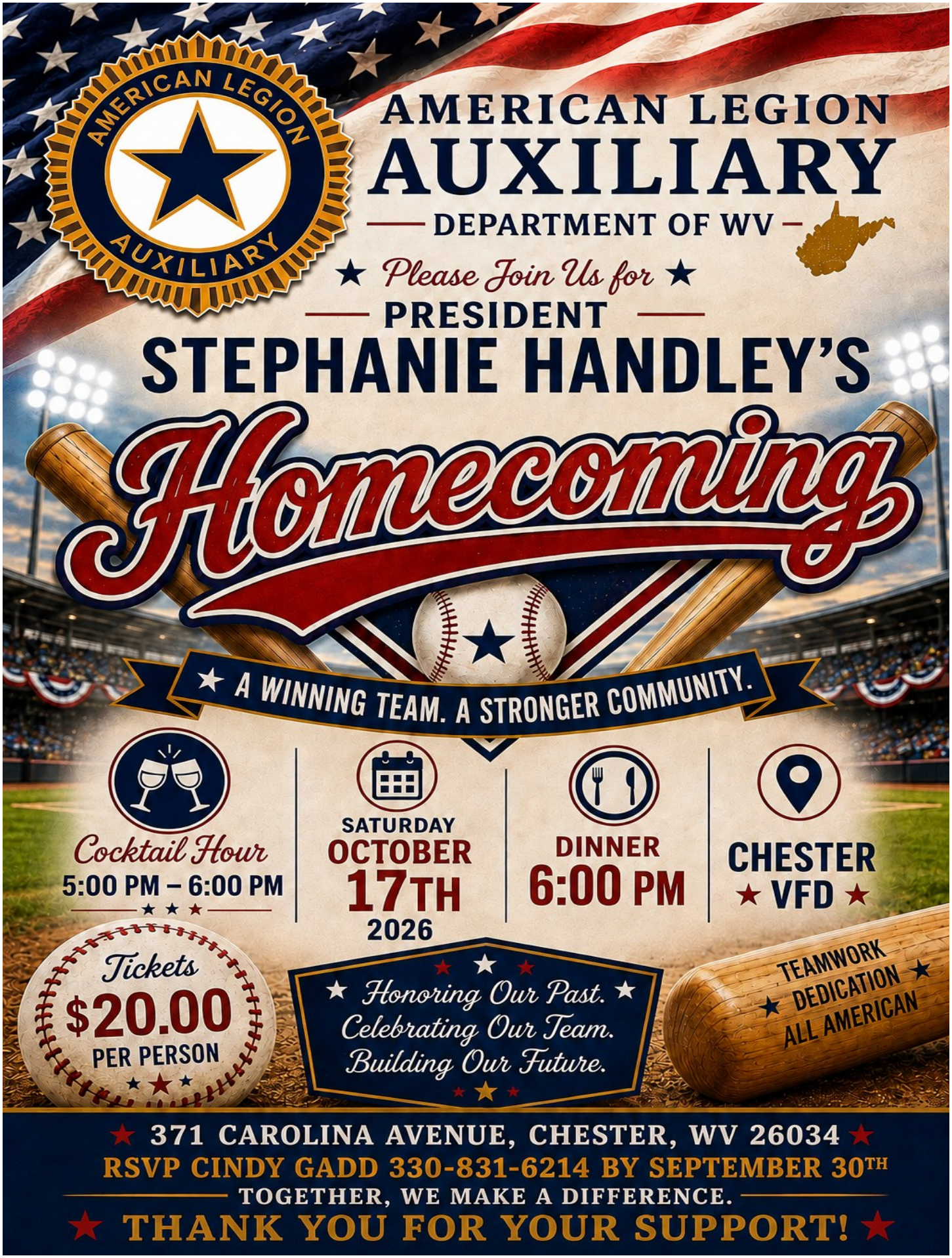
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF WV
Please Join Us for
PRESIDENT
STEPHANIE HANDLEY'S
Homecoming
A WINNING TEAM. A STRONGER COMMUNITY.
Cocktail Hour
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
SATURDAY
OCTOBER
17TH
2026
DINNER
6:00 PM
CHESTER
VFD
Tickets
$20.00
PER PERSON
Honoring Our Past.
Celebrating Our Team.
Building Our Future.
TEAMWORK
DEDICATION
ALL AMERICAN
371 CAROLINA AVENUE, CHESTER, WV 26034
RSVP CINDY GADD 330-831-6214 BY SEPTEMBER 30TH
TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

You're Invited

TO THE

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

4TH DISTRICT Fall Conference

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



HOSTED BY

MASON COUNTY UNIT 23

at the Miles S Epling American Legion
100 2nd Street
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

Teamwork
Service
Leadership
Community

OCTOBER 3, 2026

9 AM – 1 PM

$15

REGISTRATION

LUNCH INCLUDED

ALL AMERICAN TEAM

Different Positions
Same Mission
A Stronger Tomorrow

SERVICE ★ HONOR ★ UNITY ★ FOR A STRONGER TOMORROW

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.wvaux.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:_____

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
2026 Cover Sheet

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes. One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a $50 check, and a $50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

Essay Title:
"How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?"

Essay Classes:

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement*
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student's grade level

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.

Essay Checklist:

- ☐ Class competing in _____
- ☐ Sponsoring ALA unit _____
- ☐ Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word requirement for class
- ☐ Completed essay cover sheet as first page of essay
- ☐ Word count of essay_____
- ☐ Due date for student to return to ALA unit _____

To be completed by the student and parent/guardian:
** **Please write legibly in ink.***

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Student or Parent/Guardian Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): _____

_____

Student or Parent/Guardian Email Address: _____

Student or Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name and Signature: _____

School Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School City/State: _____

Auxiliary Use Only (Must be completed for entry to be considered.)

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: _____

Signature of Unit Americanism Chair: _____

Unit Winner Due to Department on: _____ Department: _____

Signature of Department Chair: _____

Department Winners Due to National Americanism Division Chair by April 15, 2027

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
Contest Rules

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III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student's grade level

1. The Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet must be filled out **legibly** and **completely**. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
2. Student or Parent/Guardian contact information is required in order to notify winners.
3. Departments (states) will determine the deadline for the local unit contests.
4. Essays are due from the state department chairs to the Americanism Division chairs by April 15.
5. Essays received after the contest deadline will not be accepted.
6. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of an essay, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and writing published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
7. The essay shall be the work of only one individual.
8. Use of AI in writing essays is not allowed. Essays will be checked for use of AI. Any essay determined to be 30% or more AI written will be disqualified.
9. Essays will be scored using the following rubric:

Word Count	Essay does not comply with applicable word count = 0 Essay complies with applicable word count = 5	5
Cover Sheet	Cover sheet is incomplete = 0 Cover sheet is fully complete = 5	5
Topic/Theme	Essay does not address topic = 1 Essay thoroughly addresses topic = 25	25
Content - Original thought	Essay does not display original thoughts = 1 Essay displays original thoughts = 25	25
Grammar	Essay is not written well grammatically and contains many spelling errors = 1 Essay has no grammatical or spelling errors = 10	10
Clarity/Coherence	Essay is not easily understood = 1 Essay is clearly stated and easily understood = 10	10
Organization	Essay is not organized = 1 Essay is organized = 10	10
Correct Word Usage	Essay does not use correct word choices = 1 Essay uses correct word choices = 10	10
	TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE	100

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

2027: RECRUIT/REJOIN 10

Members who recruit and/or rejoin 10 junior or senior Auxiliary members for the 2027 membership year. Rejoins must not have paid membership dues since 2023 or earlier.

One entry per recruiter.

Certified forms must be received at ALA National Headquarters by June 7, 2027.
Please send this form to your department headquarters office no later than one week prior to the deadlines.

New members must be paid in ALAMIS by June 1, 2027.

ENTRY/CERTIFICATION FORM

Please type or print legibly and fill out the form completely. Incomplete forms may not be processed.

Recruiter's Name: _____ Member ID#: _____

Recruiter's Department: _____ Unit #: _____ Email: _____

Recruiter's Address: _____

_____

Names of *New/Rejoined* Members	Member ID#	Names of *New/Rejoined* Members	Member ID#
1. _____		6. _____	
2. _____		7. _____	
3. _____		8. _____	
4. _____		9. _____	
5. _____		10. _____	

Certified by Department Secretary: DATE: _____

Department Secretary
Printed Name: _____ Dept: _____

Dept Secretary Signature *(required)*: _____

***I certify that all 10 members are new or rejoined into the 2027 year.**
***I've provided or verified member ID numbers and that the form is filled out legibly and completely.**

DO NOT SEND INCOMPLETE FORMS or more than 1 form per recruiter.

Units: Send form to your department secretary.

Departments:

Please either scan and email to:
membership@ALAforVeterans.org
(Subject line: Recruit 10/ Member Name & ID)

Or

Fax: (317) 569-4502 (Attn: Membership)

***Must be received at NHQ no later than midnight June 7, 2027.**

Each recruiter will receive a special gift selected by the 2027 National Membership Committee Chairman.
One award per recruiter.