

MI LEGIONNAIRE

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November 2025

**Thankful for All
Who Served**



 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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Learning, Laughter, and Legion Pride on the Road

Roger Avie Department Commander

Another busy schedule filled the latter part of September and the first days of October, and what a rewarding time it's been. The Fall Meeting in Battle Creek at the Doubletree Hotel was a great success, bringing together Legion Family members from all corners of Michigan. The leadership training received high marks—4.5 out of a possible 5—for both the quality of instruction and the wealth of new information. The newly introduced discussion circles were especially well-received, providing everyone with an opportunity to share ideas and best practices.

The meetings I attended were well-prepared and lively, with plenty of good conversation and fellowship. It was great to see so many first-timers, along with many old friends. And yes—Tony the Tiger himself made a surprise appearance at the DEC meeting, answering “here” when Adjutant Runyon called the roll! It was a lighthearted moment that brought a smile to everyone in the room. A special thank-you goes out to the sixty individuals who purchased Challenge Coins in support of my special project, the Freedom Center. A \$600 check has been given to Adjutant Runyon for deposit to that account—thank you all for helping us serve traveling veterans and their families.

I also had the pleasure of visiting the American Legion Auxiliary, where I was issued a new hat and badge designating me as their “spy.” (It’s a secret, you know.) I wish them a successful year ahead and thanked them for their dedication to the Legion’s mission. I also attended the Sons of the American Legion meeting to show my continued support for their important role in our Legion Family. Later in the week, I joined the GNUTS event, helping raise significant funds for their cause. I was honored to host the leading candidate for National Commander, Jay Bowen, in my Parlor

Suite, where we raised a large sum to support his campaign travels across the country.

After the fall meeting, I met with the Commanders Group at Lansing headquarters and then with the Veterans Coalition to discuss our teaming agreement. The next day, I joined the Central Region Commanders Meeting via Zoom with National Vice Commander Steve Weisemann.

The first week of October brought a memorial for long-time, valued employee Trip Cantwell, whose loss will be felt by many. Then it was on to Indianapolis for the National Fall Adjutant and Commanders Meeting, a full schedule from morning to night. I came away with new friends, valuable insights, and renewed pride in how the Legion functions nationwide.

Michigan is doing well on membership, but we’re still 651 members short compared to last year—let’s keep working together to close that gap. We just completed a very successful U.P. Fall Tour, and I look forward to sharing those stories next time. Until then—stay safe, God bless the Legion, God bless the USA, and God bless all of you.

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Ron Runyan
Dept. Adjutant

Runyan's Ramblings: Knowing the Four Pillars

Upon being asked, “Why do you join our great organization?” I typically answer that I believe in and stand up for our four pillars. Then, upon seeing the quizzical faces of the members or potential members, I explain what the four pillars are and why we should all know about them. I ask you, as Legion members, to also know our four pillars. Remind yourself that your dues go towards making the four pillars strong and our organization vital in our communities, state and nation! An easy way to remember the four pillars is N.A.V.Y. See the underlined section below and descriptions of each pillar.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

The foremost pillar of American Legion service, learn the ways in which the organization is dedicated to compassionate care, timely delivery of benefits, career development and other areas of advocacy for those who have served in uniform.

National Security

Outlined here is The American Legion's position on a strong, well-equipped and effectively deployed U.S. military, including a decent quality of life for those now in uniform and retirees of the Armed Forces.

Americanism

This pillar of American Legion service is marked by respect for the nation that those in the military swore to defend with their lives, from proper treatment of the U.S. flag to voter education and youth programs that make life-changing differences.

Children & **Y**outh

The American Legion's long-held position that “every child deserves a square deal” is explained here, to include such programs and efforts as the Child Welfare Foundation, the Family Support Network, Temporary Financial Assistance and other initiatives that aim to help children and youth follow their dreams, no matter their circumstances.

The above pillars are shared directly from our national organization's website: <https://register.legion.org/alei>.

I also highly encourage ALL LEGION MEMBERS to sign up for “ALEI,” which is the American Legion Extension Institute. Here you will learn all about the What, Where and Why details of how the organization was formed and why we do what we do.

Lastly, Happy Veterans Day to all my fellow brothers and sisters! May you all have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.



DEADLINE DATES

December 2025 Deadline is November 14th

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Editor: Jim Showers

The American Legion Dept. of Michigan
212 N. Verlinden, Lansing, MI 48915
(517) 371-4720 Fax: (517) 689-6100

michiganlegion.org

media@michiganlegion.org

STATE ADJUTANT

EXT. 114 adj@michiganlegion.org

LEGION AND SAL MEMBERSHIP

EXT. 124 member@michiganlegion.org

LEGION FINANCE

EXT. 117 finance@michiganlegion.org

PROGRAMS, BOYS STATE, SCHOLARSHIPS,
& BASEBALL

EXT. 123 legion@michiganlegion.org

VETERANS SERVICE

EXT. 112 Tuesday & Friday

WEBSITE, PR, NEWSPAPER & SOCIAL MEDIA

Ext. 116 media@michiganlegion.org

If you have a photo you would like to submit
for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or
website use, E-mail it to us at
media@michiganlegion.org or mail it to
Department, Attn: Jim Showers.

Please keep the photo at JPG. Do not submit
a hard copy photo, Also photos printed
from a home printer cannot be used, nor
can photos clipped from newspapers.

We look for photos showing Legion caps in
action whenever possible.

Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan
Legionnaire?

Please Contact Jim Showers

media@michiganlegion.org

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— Joshua McGinnis, Master of Public Administration

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STATE OFFICERS

State Commander. Roger Avie
State Adjutant. Ron Runyan
1st Vice Commander Jim Austin
2nd Vice Commander Roger Deaton
1st Zone Scott Nichols
2nd Zone. Fred Youngs

3rd Zone Leo Cowdry
4th Zone Mike Pergande
5th Zone Mike Trickey
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Historian Robert Higley Jr.

N.E.C. Brett Holt
Judge Advocate. Brett Holt
Sergeant-at-Arms Duane Miller
Immediate PDC. Dan Cooper
Alt. N.E.C. Brian Mohlman
VA and R Director Gary Easterling

Membership Report



Jim Austin
1st Vice Commander

GOOD JOB, EVERYBODY! We have met our October Membership goals, a great victory for all of us. Our next goal is 65% by the middle of November, literally on Veterans' Day. Remember, the American Legion and all things inherent are based on Membership. Having more members involved in our organization gives us the leverage to accomplish significant tasks and improve our organization.

Membership is the core of everything great about the American Legion. How can we "Be The One" if we don't continue bringing together new voices with unique perspectives to help our fellow vets? The only way we can Learn what we don't know is to get new ideas into our organization.

Keep up the great work you have been doing. If you ever feel discouraged or down, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of your fellow members or leadership at any level. I promise I am in the trenches with you, and I am ready to pitch in whenever and wherever you need help.

The new incentive programs have been posted here michiganlegion.org/information-is-unavailable/. You should have received notification from your District and Zone leaders regarding this new information. Some things have changed, including monetary rewards for awesome participation. Remember, additional post-activity awards are still available for your involvement.

I look forward to seeing the Membership goals continue to be accomplished. If you have any questions about Membership or anything Legion-based, as always, feel free to contact me directly or any of your District and Zone Commanders. We are here to help.

Tools that are available to improve our membership strategies and approaches:

<https://michiganlegion.org/membership/>

<https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/dispatch/2023/august/eight-tips-to-membership-recruiting-retention-success>

2025 - 2026 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF	SEPTEMBER 10, 2025	50%
FALL MEETINGS	OCTOBER 15, 2025	55%
VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 13, 2025	65%
PEARL HARBOR DAY	DECEMBER 10, 2025	75%
MID-WINTER	JANUARY 14, 2026	80%
PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEBRUARY 11, 2026	85%
LEGION BIRTHDAY	MARCH 11, 2026	90%
CHILDREN & YOUTH	APRIL 8, 2026	95%
ARMED FORCES DAY	MAY 13, 2026	100%
DELEGATE STRENGTH	30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION	

Americanism Report



Roger Deaton
2nd Vice Commander

I am an elected member of the Americanism Commission at the National Level, serving as a council member, and have attended briefings of the meetings listed below on Americanism.

The commission is home to numerous programs that provide and foster healthy, wholesome and educational opportunities for young people, including: American Legion Baseball, Boys Nation and Boys State, The National High School Oratorical Competition, Junior Law Cadet, American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund (for children of servicemembers who have died on active duty since September 11, 2001), Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship, The Samsung American Legion Scholarship, The "Need a Lift?" college financial aid guide, Flag education, School Medal Awards.

Recently, I sent an email to our Zone and District Commanders to assist with developing talking points for their visits to our posts and District meetings. As we enter the holiday season, I want to stress the importance of "Buddy Checks". I do them at my post, and we should all look to those who may be having a tough time and reach out for a little encouragement.

Upcoming Program Deadlines for 2025-2026:

- December 5, 2025, Oratorical Registration Deadline
- January 1, 2026, Baseball Registration opens on baseball.legion.org
- January 5, 2026, "Brewer/Wilson Scholarship Deadline
- January 9, 2026, Law Officer of the Year submissions
- January 9, 2026, Firefighter of the Year submissions
- January 25, 2026, District Oratorical Contest Deadline

I want to thank all who attended the National Fall Meetings at our headquarters in Indianapolis, IN. Visit Posts and grow our Americanism Programs.

2026 Membership: October 24th Goal = 53,120
Current Total: 32,505 - 61.19%



TOPICS OF CONCERN

Brett Holt, Judge Advocate

Happy Veterans Day and Thanksgiving to all the Michigan American Legion family!

This article is a **do-not-do** list. Please pay attention to the list. It will help you know where to go and what to do, and reduce frustration for everyone.

1. The Post Lounge/Bar belongs to the post as a fundraiser. The Liquor license is issued to the post, not the district or department. The district and department cannot and will not intervene in bar business. If you have accounting issues, contact an accountant; if you have legal issues, contact an attorney. If someone is acting in an improper manner, have them leave. If the conduct rises to the level of a civil or criminal issue, contact the authorities.

2. Suppose you have been suspended by the post from the lounge or bar, that is an internal issue. Check your post Bylaws and Bar rules to determine if there is an appeal process. Again, the district and department will not intervene in bar issues.

3. If someone is suspended from the bar, it means exactly that: the bar. A bar suspension does not equate to a post suspension. The member still has all the rights of a member, including attending meetings and events.

4. If the member's conduct rises to the point of the post wanting to take additional action, then file a formal complaint using the Trial Procedures of the Department of Michigan and allow the member the due process they deserve.

5. If a civil or criminal complaint has been filed against the member, the post should not take any additional punitive action against the member until the civil or criminal action is complete.

6. If the officers of the post are concerned about the safety of members while criminal or civil charges are pending, then they should use the legal system to file for a restraining order. Again, you cannot prevent a member from attending meetings and events without due process. A restraining order is a legal order that overrides the rule.

7. If you have questions about procedures of any sort,

contact your Post Commander, Adjutant or Judge Advocate. If they cannot assist, then contact your District Commander, Adjutant or Judge Advocate. If they cannot assist or if they are part of the issue, then you may contact Department. If you contact me before going through the other steps, I will refer you back to them.

8. Do not contact the National Office. They will simply refer the issue back to the department. Department, in turn, will refer the issue back to the district.

9. Check your Constitution and Bylaws or Post Standing Rules before contacting any higher authority. I do not have a copy of every post Constitution and Bylaws on hand and cannot tell you what yours directs your post to do.

10. If you make changes to your Constitution and Bylaws, follow the requirements of your current Constitution and Bylaws. The new Constitution and Bylaws, as well as a copy of the minutes showing the post-vote on the changes, must be sent to Department. They are not valid or in effect until the Department Judge Advocate has approved them.

On another note, the NEC at the National Fall Meetings received a Legal Opinion on whether or not Sons of the American Legion are members of the post. The National Judge is of the opinion that the SAL are not members of the post as they are a program and are not afforded all of the privileges of veteran members. The opinion is based on IRS requirements. Each Department will have to determine the relationship between the organization, the IRS, the State Liquor Control Commission and possibly other entities.

This opinion pertains solely to the IRS and the distinction between taxable and non-taxable income. The Judge's Opinion states that SAL members must either be signed in as guests or a separate account must be kept when making sales to SAL members, as income from sales to SAL members would be considered taxable.

Please remember this is an opinion and not a ruling. Nonetheless, your post must decide how to proceed until the Department can get further clarification for you. I will have additional information on this issue in the next Michigan Legionnaire.



From Membership to Mentorship

Dan Cooper, Past Department Commander

I want to focus on what may be the most critical part of our long-term strategies to ensure the future of the

American Legion: building a culture of mentorship.

While recruitment brings in new members and training gives them the tools to succeed, Mentorship keeps them engaged, motivated, and growing. Mentorship bridges the gap between potential and performance, between participation and leadership.

It is not a formal program or a one-time event; it's an ongoing commitment to guide, support, and invest in one another.

Every member in the American Legion has the capacity to mentor. Whether it's

helping a new member understand our customs, encouraging someone to take on a leadership role, or simply listening and offering perspective, these small acts can have a lasting impact.

Mentorship is not about having all the answers; it's about being present, being patient, and being invested in someone else's development.

Importantly, Mentorship benefits both parties. It helps newer members gain confidence and understanding, while seasoned members remain engaged and purposeful. It strengthens our relationships, reinforces our values and deepens our sense of belonging.

Let's not overlook the opportunity this creates for leadership succession. When we mentor with intention, we prepare fu-

ture leaders who are not only willing to serve but also ready to do so with competence and confidence. We cannot afford to wait until positions are vacant to begin this process.

I challenge each of you to identify one member in your Post or district to mentor over the next year. Share your experience. Ask questions. Invite participation.....Be a coach, not a commander.

If every leader in our Department commits to this simple practice, we will not only improve our retention, but we will also create a vibrant, forward-looking organization where every member sees a future for themselves in The American Legion. This is how we move from surviving to thriving.



AUXILIAIRE

From the Desk of the President

November 2025



Dawn Gramza
Department President
2025-2026

Supporting Adaptive Sports for Veterans

Welcome to November! A time to celebrate our Veterans and to be thankful for the people and things in our lives. First, let me express my gratitude to the chairpersons who gave presentations at the fall conference. What a fantastic job they did of instructing the members and officers in attendance. Thank you to the crew who decorated the room with "Mission Possible." Those secret agents did a fabulous job. I hope you have all gone back to your Units and Districts to teach and mentor the membership. We will succeed because of YOU.

My Special Project. Did you know that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care system treats over 94,000 Veterans with at least one amputation? Between 2009 and 2019, there was a 34% increase in Veterans with amputations. Most of the amputees who served before the Global War on Terror have amputations due to medical conditions. For GWOT Veterans, a large proportion has resulted from combat operations.

Losing a limb or more can have a devastating effect on the body and mind. Or losing the ability to walk again, confined to a wheelchair, can create a life of isolation and depression.

My special project focuses on supporting the area of

"Adaptive Sports for Veterans." The VA and nonprofits look for ways to assist Veterans with amputations, blindness, or other physical disabilities, so that they can participate in sports, such as downhill skiing, golf, ice hockey, cycling, or a variety of different activities.

Will you help me raise awareness and support for this endeavor? If you haven't heard of adaptive sports, the department has created a webpage at www.michalaux.org/sp to tell you more about it. I do not have a particular organization in mind yet. However, all proceeds raised will go to helping an organization or Veterans who need help so they can participate. The goal is to show as many Veterans as we can that they can participate.

If you would like to donate to my special project, checks can be made out to American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, with 'President's Special Project' in the memo. Send the check to the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan, 212 North Verlinden Ave, Suite B, Lansing, MI 48915.

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and their families. You are truly amazing. I am humbled and grateful to be your Department President.

JUNIORS ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Sue Verville, Chairman, Sheila Maxwell, Committee Member

This year, we are making a concerted effort to revitalize our Junior Program. We need to know if there are any Juniors interested in running for Honorary Junior Officers for 2026-2027. If we have enough interest, we might be able to plan to have a Junior Convention in the spring.

At the unit level, honorary Junior officers traditionally include president, vice president, chaplain, historian, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. The designation of Honorary Junior officers depends on the organizational structure of the unit. Honorary Junior offices are purely honorary, courtesy positions without any formal duties or assignments. If you have enough Juniors, plan an election of honorary Junior officers. You do not have to fill every office. It is helpful if you explain that holding office is a responsibility rather than a chance to be "in charge." Leaders help set directions, get things going, encourage members to work together, invite new people to be involved, and help the group celebrate its accom-

plishments. The basic roles you need to start are a president, a secretary, and a chaplain at your Unit level. Open the meeting in normal fashion. Thank the girls for coming. Hold your election for the honorary Junior Officers. Once elected, assist the new Junior President in running the remainder of the election. Even if you have only two candidates, hold the meeting. It is important to let them know they are wanted, and you are glad they came. The senior counterpart for each Junior officer could read the charge to the Junior and pledge their support. Once the meeting is complete, have special refreshments to congratulate the new officers. You could ask some of the senior members to provide them. It is a great way to get the Juniors to attend the meeting and to get the seniors involved. Be sure you have set the time, location, and date of your next meeting.

If you have difficulty getting girls to attend meetings, be flexible. Youth are remarkably busy now. Be willing to hold your meeting on a different night or at a different time. Running into trou-

ble planning projects for the girls? Ask them if they have any ideas for a community project. A dinner fundraiser for a friend or family member, cleaning a park or playground, providing school supplies for those less fortunate, or providing necessities for veterans in hospitals. The possibilities are endless. If the girls are helping, they are happy and engaged. Do not give up. It may take several meetings to get more girls involved. Be persistent; any action at all is progress.

Our Department President, Dawn Gramza, would like all the Juniors in our state to make or sign "Thank You Cards for our Veterans." This can be done at any Unit with Juniors. You can bring them to the Fall Conference, mail them to the Department, or to either Sheila or me. This is something that all our Juniors can do, no matter what their age is. Americanism should be a major focus for Juniors and helps teach patriotism, citizenship, and loyalty to American ideals and principles.

I want to thank Sheila for all her help at the Fall Conference, and all the members who helped with some ideas on what we can do to help get our Honorary Junior Officers back.

What is community service?

Kim Frazier, Community Service Chairman

Community service is helping veterans and active-duty service members, their families, and the communities they live in, to make their lives better. Whether you help by babysitting, driving them to their appointments, doing yardwork, cleaning their homes or just being there for them when they need you. Those are only a few of the many things that fall under community service. Everyone does community service on a regular basis. Most just do not realize that they are doing it. It can be as simple as opening a door for someone or checking on your neighbor when you have not seen them in a while.

Many things that fall under community service can also fall under another program of the Auxiliary. Please be sure that when it comes to reporting what you have done you only report them in one and not both or multiple places on the annual reports.

The American Legion Auxiliary has set aside special days of service which are:

9-11 National Day of Service and Remembrance (observed annually on September 11)

Make a Difference Day (observed on the fourth Saturday of October)

Veterans Day (observed annually on November 11)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service (observed on the third Monday of January)

National Volunteer Week (usually the third week in April)

There are some others that you will find listed in my guide.

Guides for the 2025-2026 Year are available online at www.michalaux.org. There are also several helpful suggestions on the National Auxiliary website www.alaforveterans.org under community service.

Being a Treasurer

Deanna Cortright, Finance Chair

As your Unit's Treasurer, you are responsible for so many important items during the year. You are responsible for keeping accurate records of all income and expenditures. You must also follow any specific guidelines outlined in your governing documents regarding allowable expenses. Most expenditures require the permission of your Unit, but some could be automatically authorized in your Standing Rules or Bylaws. Some Units have specific donations that they give every year, and those could be authorized. If not

specifically listed, no expenditure should be made without prior Unit approval. Occasionally, emergency expenditures might arise. If that should happen and it cannot wait until the next membership meeting, a meeting of the Executive Committee can be called, or, in some cases, an email vote by the Executive Committee may be conducted.

You are also responsible for the Internal Revenue 990 form, which lets them know that you are in compliance with all of the rules and regulations of the IRS. As a non-profit organization, you must complete this form. If it isn't completed, your Unit is subject to loss of your non-profit

status. It is a very simple form if done timely. You can use the 990 postcard, and it takes less than 15 minutes once you have logged into the system. Many of our Units have lost their non-profit status because they have failed to process this form. If you are unsure how to process this form or are no longer listed as a non-profit, please reach out, and I can verify the information for you.

Always remember that the funds you are entrusted with belong of your entire membership. They have placed their trust in you that you will handle it with care. As always, if I can be of assistance, please let me know.

Historian Article

Darlene Jones, Department Historian

Why is our history so important, as Dara Oliver, National Historian for 2024-2025, said, "History is not the Past, but the of what's going on and kept for the future". By now, you should already be compiling what your Unit or District Senior /Juniors are doing. The scrapbook is a picture history. Remember, you must name all the people in the pictures. When working on your written history, it is just that: a written history of what your unit and district are doing. This is not just about the President and events attended, but the history of all members in your Unit/District/or Department.

District and Unit Presidents, please send me an email with a little narrative of special events held by your unit or in your district so they can be added to the Department History book. This will be included in the Department of Michigan's History Book for Madame President Dawn Gramza.

Remembering Our Past. Embracing our Future

Linda Gamache-Chick, 9th District President

Hello from the 9th District. As we navigate our way through this year 2025-2026, we remember our auxiliary family that have paved the way for us. With all their hard work and dedication, we look forward to meeting and embracing new family and friends in the future.

We take the lessons we have learned and apply them to move forward and be successful. Life is a journey, not a race. There is no end game here. We will keep expanding and growing. The world we live in today demands that we keep growing hence, we'll be left behind. We cannot and will not fail our veterans.

If we stumble, we'll get up and continue our quest. There is no other option for ALA. We are all dedicated and determined to make a future that the past can be proud of. Moving forward this year, membership renewals and new members are coming in at a surprising rate of speed. This country, being at odds, needs our organization more now than ever.

Making our American Legion Auxiliary District 9 stronger and more dedicated to help all veterans and their families. The 9th District has 15 units, with each and every one of them working the mission and doing great things in their communities. Our world is more on edge and shaky than it has been in a long time, but ALA will continue to help and support the veterans of this great United States of America. We thank them for their service and promise to return that favor in supporting them in whatever way we can. They need us as much as we need them.

The new guides for the history scrapbook and the history narrative have been updated and are on the website. Please, when putting together your history, follow the guides. If you have questions, please contact me so I can help you.

I am very excited to get your emails with what your units/districts are doing this year to help our veterans and communities all over Michigan. This year's theme is Mission Possible, and this mission is possible to get history books and scrapbooks from every Unit and District.

Questions: Do you know who the First Department President was? Do you know when the Department of Michigan American Legion Auxiliary was formed? How many National Presidents are from Michigan? Do you know which Past Department President had Noah's Ark as part of her membership?

Without history, no one would know. How have we impacted our veterans, the community, and our youth, our future can only be judged by our past.

Best Practices that Make It Possible to Complete Our Mission



Shannon Werner
Executive Director,
Secretary-Treasurer

There are certain activities and actions that you can take as members to make sure we have a Mission Possible at Headquarters. We all want to work smarter-not harder. Following are the situations we see most often:

Please only send one check per transmittal-this ensures proper accounting and record keeping. There is no reason to send your complete roster every time you turn in a transmittal, please use the transmittal list provided in your membership packets. You can

also print this form (and many others) from our website (www.michalaux.org), or you can place a supply order and we will happily send you some.

If you are paying for multiple dues years (and amounts) please separate the differing dues years and provide them on separate transmittals. Each transmittal should have its own year and its own check. This will eliminate errors in the payment of correct dues years to National as well as the information input to our accounting system.

Do not send copies of DD214's or any other personal information related to prospective members. We do not require multiple copies of any paperwork. When you have a member that is transferring, we do not need a copy of their card. When we lose a member, we do not need a copy of their membership card. When you send documentation and/or information to headquar-

ters, make sure it is clearly marked and noted as to the intention. I.e: transmittals, donations, ALAMIS access, supplies, etc.

In case you didn't know, National creates the membership cards and pulls your roster for unit membership packets in April each year. If a member has not renewed by April, they will not appear on your roster or have a membership card printed and provided by National. Do your best to get your membership paid prior to April 1 every year. Members can print their own card from the www.alaforveterans.org website after they create an account. You can also order membership cards from National or send in a supply order form with your check and we can mail you blank cards (blank except for the year).

When you need contact information for our Leadership representatives or Program Chairman, go to our website at www.michalaux.org. Each Chairman has a program guide that contains the information you require. If you have questions regarding ALAMIS you can email alamishelp@alaforveterans.org. Don't forget the ALAMIS renewal period is approaching quickly-November 1 to January 6.

If you haven't seen it already, take the time to watch the Paperwork 101 Training located on our website, it has all the information you need to be a successful membership chair. The direction(s) given in the training replaces all instructions and guidance you may have received in the past.

Parliamentary Procedure and Parliamentarians: Keeping Our Mission on Track

Suzanne Knapp, Parliamentarian

Every decision we make, whether it's about funding a program, planning an event, or electing board members should reflect our mission and values. That's why parliamentary procedure is so important. It helps us make decisions fairly, efficiently, and with respect for all voices. And when things get complicated, parliamentarians help guide the way.

What Is Parliamentary Procedure and why do we use it? Parliamentary procedure is a set of established rules used to run meetings in an orderly and democratic way. You may have heard of Robert's Rules of Order, it is the most commonly used rulebook for nonprofits like ours.

Using parliamentary procedure ensures that every member has the right to speak and be heard, the majority makes decisions, but the minority's rights are protected; meetings stay focused and productive, and voting and motions are handled clearly and correctly. In short, it's about respect for the process, for each other, and for the mission we serve.

Who Are Parliamentarians and What Do They Do? A parliamentarian is someone trained in the rules of order. Their job is to support our leadership and members by advising the board chair or committee leader during meetings, helping write or revise bylaws and policies, training members to participate more effectively, assisting with votes, elections, and amendments, ensuring we follow both our internal rules and legal requirements.

Some parliamentarians are certified professionals, while others may volunteer their expertise in organizations like ours

where service and stewardship matter. Our members know the value of discipline, teamwork, and respect. Parliamentary procedure builds on those same principles. It promotes unity by giving everyone a fair voice, maintains focus, even when conversations get emotional or complex, it protects trust ensuring decisions are made transparently and correctly, and it upholds integrity, so that our mission always comes first.

Whether we're deciding how to honor fallen comrades, supporting a veteran in crisis, or funding a new program, structure and fairness matter.

Common Misunderstandings Cleared Up

How often have we heard "It's too complicated." The basics are easy to learn and we can train you! Think of it as a mission briefing for your meeting. "We're too small for this." Even a three-person committee benefits from having clear rules. "The parliamentarian runs the meeting." The chair runs the meeting, the parliamentarian is there to quietly support and guide, not to take over.

Veterans understand what it means to serve with honor and discipline. Bringing that same spirit into our organizational meetings helps us be more effective, respectful, and mission-focused. Whether you're a board member, volunteer, or staff leader, learning and using parliamentary procedure ensures our nonprofit runs with integrity—and stays true to the veterans we serve.

When in doubt, don't guess—ask a parliamentarian.

**Something Happening at your Unit?
Submit it to the Michigan Auxiliaire!**

Send your articles and Pictures (with Cutline) to : info@michalaux.org

Chaplain's Corner

Dawn Gilbert, Department Chaplain

November is the month of reflections and a season of gratitude and remembrance. As we enter the month of November, we are reminded of the deep significance this time holds for our American Legion Family. It is a season when chaplains play a vital role in nurturing the spirit of our members and honoring those who have served.

Veterans Day is when we honor service and sacrifice. November 11th is a sacred day for our organization. As chaplains, we are called to lead with reverence as we honor the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces. Whether through prayer, memorial services, or quiet moments of reflection, let us ensure that our veterans feel seen, valued, and appreciated.

Consider organizing a Veterans Day prayer service or participating in local ceremonies. Reach out to members who are veterans with a personal note or phone call. Small gestures can carry great meaning.

Thanksgiving reminders to cultivate a spirit of gratitude. Thanksgiving offers us a beautiful opportunity to reflect on the blessings in our lives and the strength of our community. As chaplains, we can encourage our members to embrace gratitude—not just for what we have, but for who we have.

You might share a Thanksgiving devotional at your November meeting or invite members to contribute prayers of thanks to your unit's prayer book. Gratitude is a powerful spiritual practice that can uplift hearts and strengthen bonds.

Don't forget to support those who grieve. While November is a time of celebration for many, it can also be a season of sorrow for those who are grieving. The holidays often magnify feelings of loss. Be mindful of members who may be struggling and offer gentle support. A phone call, a card, or a quiet prayer can make a difference. Remember the stages of grief are not linear, and your presence as a chaplain can be a source of comfort and healing.

November Encouragement

Be present: Attend meetings, check in with members, and offer prayers that speak to the season.

Be prepared: Keep your prayer book updated with seasonal reflections and devotionals.

Be proactive: Coordinate with leadership to ensure spiritual needs are met during events and services.

Be compassionate: Reach out to those who are ill, grieving, or alone.

In closing, November reminds us of the power of remembrance and the beauty of gratitude. As chaplains, we are entrusted with the sacred task of nurturing the soul of our Auxiliary. Let us carry out our duties with authenticity, compassion, and joy—knowing that our service brings light to others.

UPAA District

Bonnie Taylor, District President

This year our Auxiliary President, Dawn Gramza's special project is Adaptive Sports. Adaptive Sports, commonly known as Paralympic Sports or Disability Sports, have been modified to allow individuals with disabilities, such as veterans, to participate in sports activities. The range of sport activities can be from traditional wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis to more specialized sports like goalball (a specifically designed sport for individuals who are blind or visually impaired).

The origin of adaptive sports can be traced back to the aftermath of World War II, when large numbers of soldiers returned home with disabilities. Rehabilitation programs were developed to help these individuals regain their physical and mental strength, which often included sports and physical activities. As a result, the first adaptive sport organizations were formed.

As adaptive sports has evolved so have the types of equipment used by these athletes. Wheelchairs have been used for centuries, but it wasn't until the 1950's when they were designed of lighter weight materials and specialized brakes allowing the athletes to participate in a wider range of sports. There have been other innovations such as prosthetic devices and equipment like goalball and blind soccer for those who are visually impaired. There is also volleyball, sitting rugby, adaptive sailing, kayaking, sledge hockey, para-alpine skiing basketball and martial arts.

How can we help? Organize events such as a charity run, auction, bake sales, direct donations of funds, contribute equipment (wheelchairs, bikes, or special gear) to local organizations, or have an equipment drive to collect gently used or new sports equipment for veterans.

In conclusion, adaptive sports play a crucial role in the lives of veterans in Michigan, offering opportunities for physical activity, social engagement, and personal development. As the state continues to support these initiatives, the impact on veterans' health and well-being will undoubtedly grow, proving that sports can be a powerful tool for healing and reintegration. By participating in or supporting adaptive sports programs, we can help our veterans thrive in both body and spirit.

Mission Possible: Member Retention

Carla Pohl, Southern Area Membership Representative

to be. By now I am sure your membership renewal efforts are in full swing, and well on the way to completing our second mission of reaching 75% by November 11, 2025. As we all know getting those last few member renewals is a struggle.

Here are a few ways that may help in retaining your members and easing that struggle. Have a program not a campaign, retention is a year-around priority and needs to be planned. Have a retention committee with goals. When you send out renewal notices include a return envelope or even a postage paid envelope if your Unit has the funds. Send the renewal notice in the form of an invitation: "President (name) requests the honor of another year as your partner in advancing our organization."

Be sure to acknowledge renewals just like new members, with a note of thanks from the President and Membership Chairman. This could be mailed with the membership card. Give discounts or prizes for early renewals. Encourage members to participate in your Unit activities. Example-my unit pays the next years dues for a member who participates/volunteers for 7 of our unit events. Give out lapel pins and certificates for continuous year membership starting at 5 year increments. Have interesting meetings, not too long, laugh some, sing a song. Have a door prize drawing at each meeting, have an ugly Christmas sweater contest.

Get members involved at SOME level "Involved" members do not drop out. Utilize the National website for additional ideas, renewal templates and much more.

I would like to thank President Dawn for giving me the chance to be a part of the Department of Michigan membership team. It has been a great experience so far and I am sure it will continue

We're Your ALA Girls State Committee & We're Here to Help!

Beryl Robbins, Chairman

Your ALA Girls State Committee had a busy September. All of our forms have been updated and they are ready to be added to our ALA Girls State webpage at: <https://michalaux.org/girls-state/>. We had committee members at Fall Conference in Battle Creek, and at the Leadership Conference in Indianapolis. Another committee member attended a Grand Haven School Board meeting and presented our Samsung Scholarship recipient, McKenna Twa, with a certificate. The school board also presented her with a Certificate of Excellence.

Now is the time to contact your schools to recruit female students who will complete their junior year of high school in 2026. If you are unable to visit a school in person, Beryl can assist you by providing contact information for school principals and superintendents all over the state of Michigan. When a student applies to our program, they will be supplying the name and contact information of their guidance counselor. We are hoping that this will help our sponsors develop a lasting relationship with high school counselors in their hometowns.

We have committee members located in the 5th, 7th, 10th, 16th, and 18th Districts that are available to assist you by attending one of your ALA District and/or Unit meetings to talk about our program and answer your questions. Their contact information is located on the front page of our sponsorship guide.

We recommend following these 5 easy steps for a successful year:

- Step 1: Submit a Pledge Form so we know who to forward the delegate applications to.
- Step 2: Secure funding, share the pledge form with businesses & organizations to help out.
- Step 3: Find students to sponsor, or make a selection from the applications we provide.
- Step 4: Confirm your student is able to attend before sending in your Reservation Form!
- Step 5: Consider hosting an Orientation in your District and invite a committee member.

Why should ALA Girls State matter to you? Did you know that if a student you sponsor indicates on her ALA Girls State application that she is a descendent of a Veteran, she is not only eligible to apply for our Samsung Scholarship, she is also eligible to join your American Legion Auxiliary Unit? Expand your membership numbers by inviting your ALA Girls State delegates and their family members to fill out a membership application. Our communities need our youth to continue our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families.

In closing, our program is an amazing week of learning, focused on responsible citizenship and leadership. It provides participants with firsthand experience and insight into how their state government and judicial system works. As a reminder, ALA Girls State is scheduled for June 14-20, 2026 on the campus of Michigan State University. The cost to sponsor a student is \$425, and the student will be required to pay a \$25 registration fee. Since our dates may differ from Boys State this year, we are prepared to make the necessary plans to bus our Upper Peninsula students to MSU.



ALAGS Committee Member, Rebecca Hopp, with McKenna Twa, Michigan's Samsung Scholarship winner



American Legion Auxiliary

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY EXPLAINED

RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN:



- **MOTHER**
- **DAUGHTER**
- **SISTER**
- **GRANDMOTHER**
- **GRANDDAUGHTER**
- **SELF — FEMALE VETERANS WHO HAVE SERVED**
- **MALE or FEMALE SPOUSE**

ELIGIBILITY PERIODS: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941

TWO PATHS FOR ALA ELIGIBILITY

PATH ONE

The potential member is related to a living veteran by one of the relationships stated above and the veteran is living AND a current member of The American Legion.



If the potential member is a female veteran, she only needs to have served during the eligible time periods to be eligible for ALA membership.

PATH TWO

The potential member is related to a deceased veteran who served during the eligible time periods and was honorably discharged.



The deceased veteran did not have to be a member of The American Legion in order for the potential member to join the ALA.

For more information, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org





Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

CLIVE R.A. SEYDELL

Detachment Commander 2025-2026



Since our last issue, I've had the privilege of seeing the strength of our Sons of The American Legion family through fellowship, teamwork, and service across Michigan.

In September, I attended the Parking Lot Party at Wyandotte Post 217, which drew a fantastic turnout and showcased the energy and camaraderie of our Legion Family. Shortly after, President Dawn, Commander's Lady Stephanie, First Dude, my son Clive, and Stephanie's two kids joined me at the Mt. Clemens Post 4 Membership Picnic. It was a wonderful afternoon of family, fellowship, and fun, a reminder of how important those personal connections are to the work we do.

We also came together for the Fall Conference, where productive discussions and collaboration highlighted the progress, our Detachment continues to make. I want to thank everyone who participated and shared their ideas — your engagement is what keeps our organization strong and moving forward.

Work also continues on my Commander's Special Project, the construction of a Fishing-Only, Dock at Wilwin at Cygnet Cove. To help make this vision a reality, we've launched the Commander's Project Raffle, featuring an incredible lineup of prizes generously donated by supporters from across Michigan. (Please reference photo for details)

Every ticket sold directly supports the Wilwin dock project, a lasting place of peace, recreation, and purpose for veterans, youth, and volunteers.

Looking ahead, planning is already underway for a Game Dinner this spring, featuring bucket raffles, live and silent auctions, and even more great prizes from our partners across Michigan's outdoor and sporting community. More details will be shared soon, and I hope to see many of you there.

By the time you read this, I should be on the road for the Upper Peninsula Fall Tour, traveling alongside many great members of our American Legion Family and National Commander Bill Clancy. These visits across the UP remind me just how strong our bonds are and how much we can accomplish together.

As we move into the winter season, I encourage every member to continue to recruit, renew, and reconnect within your squadrons and communities. Together, we honor our past, serve our veterans, and inspire the next generation of leaders within the Sons of The American Legion.



HOMELESS VETERAN'S Rodney Tolbert, Chairman

As your chairman of homeless veterans, I need your help. Winter and chilly weather is coming to the state of Michigan, and our homeless veterans are vulnerable to the elements of mother nature, I am in need

of gently used and new coats, winter hats, gloves, sweater, or any type of warm clothing. We get to sleep in comfort and warm because of the veterans. It is time for us to help them. So please go to your squadron and your post and ask for these items. We can also use blankets.

Another item that we could use is McDonald's gift card. Show our veterans can get a nice warm meal or a hot cup of coffee in winter's day. Put a barrel out at your post to put items in for our homeless veterans with a note telling what we need and pack them full. Then, give me a call and I will come pick them up. And distribute them where they need to go. Other items we could always use a brand-new socks, underwear and hygiene products for men and women. We could also use also backpacks. Please help the men and women who served our great nation to keep this country free. Reach out anytime to me if you have any questions or want to help with homeless veterans. Thank you. For God and Country.



HISTORY

Kirk Maves

In September month I attended the Fall Conference meeting in Battle Creek, Michigan. I was honored to present Past Commander Todd VanDam with his National award winning scrapbook. Also, I asked the Zone Commanders for pictures on there monthly journeys. If anybody has pictures to do with the Detachment send them to me at kirkmaves92@gmail.com.



4TH ZONE

John Brown, Commander

We had our Fall Conference at the end of September, we talked a lot on how to increase our SAL membership by reaching out to those who are eligible to join, we stressed the good that we do, in the support of the Legion program, and in helping our communities. We also spoke on working together as a family to accomplish our goals, for this is what makes the whole Legion Family united.

November is the month in which Veterans Day is celebrated. To all the SAL family in the 4th Zone, please remember to thank or hold an event to celebrate their day, November 11. I'd like to extend a very happy Thanksgiving to all our SAL members and their families. Remember all members can submit an article or photos for our Legion paper.

If anyone needs assistance, please reach out to me. May GOD watch over and protect all of our active service members.



AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN DETACHMENT COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT WILWIN FISHING DOCK

Net Profits Sportfishing Charter

Winner's choice of Walleye or Salmon Charter - 6 hour trip for 4 in 2026

Detroit Red Wings Suite Experience For 2 at Little Ceasars Arena

Red Wings vs. Boston Bruins, March 21, 2026

Thayer Lake Cottages Getaway

2-night stay in a beautiful 2-bedroom, 1 bath lakefront cottage

Huskie Muskie Charters - Half-Day Trip for 4 during the 2026 season.

Kalamazoo Wings Prize Pack - Camo hat, "Fearless Fighter" shirt, 4-ticket game voucher, 50th Anniversary knit hat, dog leash, commemorative pin, & Jarrett #11 banner

Drawing: February 2, 2026 • 4:00 PM

at Department Headquarters • 212 N Verlinden Ave. • Lansing, MI

Tickets: \$20 each or 3 for \$50

Need not be present to win • Five winners will be drawn.

First name drawn chooses any prize from the list. Second name drawn chooses next, and so on until all prizes are claimed. License #C32775

SQUADRON 34 TECUMSEH, WIN NATIONAL SCRAPBOOK AWARD



Group picture of Squadron 34 Tecumseh with 2 State Awards, for Americanism and for the best scrapbook.



Todd VanDam with 2 awards from National for our Detachment



Commander Seydell receiving his Commander certificate from the National Convention



Commander Van Dam with 2 ribbons for 100 percent and all-time high membership. Received at National convention in Tampa

Commander VanDam & Historian Kirk Maves. The Detachment of Michigan and Squadron 34 from Underwood-Orr Won Scrapbooks of the year.



2026 SAL Membership: October 24th Goal = 29,197
Current Total: 6,656-22.80%

District Meetings

First District

TBD

Second District

Meetings start at 11 am with the SAL followed by Riders at Noon with a Lunch VSO training at 1 pm and Legion at 2 pm

January 11, 2026

Ida Post 514

March 8, 2026

Milan Post 268

May 17, 2026

Blissfield Post 325

Third District

Lunch is at 11 am, and Meeting at Noon.

November 9th 2025

at Post 55, Albion

January 11th 2026

at Post 465, Climax

March 8th 2026

at Post 54, Battle Creek

May 3rd 2026

at Post 36, Kalamazoo

Fourth District

Meetings begin at 1:00 pm.

November 2, 2025

Benton Harbor Post 105

January 11, 2026

Otesego Post 84

March 8, 2026

Paw Paw Post 68

May 17 2026

Diamond Island Post 335

Fifth District

Meetings are on the 2nd Thurs of every month meal @ 5:30 pm & meeting @ 7 pm.

November 13th 2025

at post 0047

January 8th 2026

at post 258

March 12th 2026

at post 305

May 7th 2026

at post 28

July 9th 2026

Location TBD by the next commander's post

Sixth District

Service Officer School at 11:10 am (when scheduled), Lunch at Noon, Meetings at 1 pm

November 9, 2025

Stockbridge Post 510

January 18, 2026

Howell Post 141

March 15, 2026

Swartz Creek Post 294

May 17, 2026

Holt Post 238

Seventh District

Lunch at 12:30 with meetings at 2:00 pm

January 11, 2026

Lapeer Post 16

March 16, 2026

Port Huron Post 8

May 17, 2026 TBD

June 2026

State Summer Convention

Eighth District

Trainings will start at Noon, Dinner at 1:00pm with Legion and Auxiliary meetings immediately following

November 16, 2025

Belding Post 203

121 S. Broas Street

Belding, Michigan 48809

Phone: (616) 794-2841

January 18, 2026

Owosso Post 57

201 E. Mason Street

Owosso, Michigan 48867

Phone: 989 723-4046

March 15, 2026

Saginaw Post 439

5190 Weiss Street

Saginaw, Michigan

48603

Phone: (989) 792-2000

May 3, 2026

Portland Post 129

1324 E. Bridge Street

Portland, Michigan 48875

Phone: (517) 647-4980

Ninth District

Executive meetings are at 11:00am with Lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm

December 6, 2025

Post 9 Muskegon

Tenth District

All meetings will start with lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm.

November 1, 2025

Morley Post 554

2560 Northland Dr.

Morley Mi, 49336

Eleventh District

All Meetings Start at 10 am, with Lunch to after.

TBD

Twelfth District

Coffee and Doughnuts at 9, meeting at 10 am, with a lunch and additional hour after lunch if needed.

TBD

Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm

November 11th, 2025

Allen Park Post 67

Phone: 313-388-2088

December 9th, 2025 *

Southgate Post 478

January 13th, 2026

Stitt Post 232

February 10th, 2026 *

Fort Dearborn Post 364

March 10th, 2026

Wyandotte Post 217

April 14th, 2025 *

Trenton Post 426

May 12th, 2025 **

Lincoln Park Post 67

Phone: 313-388-2088

June 10th, 2025

Garden City 396

Phone: 313-381-2245

*** Service Officer School at 6:30 pm**

****Memorial Service & Elections**

Eighteenth District

All meetings Meeting for the District Legion and Auxiliary Convene at 2:00 pm

January 25, 2026

Post 108, 130 E. Draher Rd

Oxford, MI

Phone: 248-628-9081

February 22, 2026

Post 143, 95 Church St.

Auburn Hills, MI

Phone: 248-852-4880

March 22, 2026

Post 253, 1505 N. Main St.

St.

Royal Oak, MI 48067

Phone: 248-546-0490

May 17, 2026

Holt Post 143, 95 Church St.

Auburn Hills, MI

Phone: 248-852-4880

Nineteenth District

Training at 10:00 am, Social Meet and Greet at 11:00 am, lunch served at noon. The both the Legion and Auxiliary will start at 1:00 pm

All meetings will be held at:

The Landing Zone Gaylord Bowling Center 1200 Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735.

December 6, 2025

March 14, 2026

May 9, 2026



19th District

Patrick McGinn, Commander

Fall in Northern Michigan and District 19 paints the landscape in vibrant gold, orange, and red hues, transforming hills and lakeshores into a breathtaking spectacle.

The shorter days and cooler nights trigger the spectacular color change. In District 19, visitors can experience the magic through scenic drives on routes like the Tunnel of Trees, or by exploring State Parks and trails like Wilderness State Park, culminating in a quintessential Michigan autumn adventure. It is a popular destination for various American Legion Riders groups.

The American Legion posts in District 19 are eagerly participating in community activities. For example, Post 201 from Atlanta has been active with their Honor Guard in pre-game ceremonies for the high school football games. Additionally, in September, Post 317 in Onaway sponsored the "Barb Watson Memorial Ride." Post 122 in Wolverine participated in the Posen Potato Festival Parade. Post 194 (Petoskey) sponsored an American Legion Riders Fun Ride. Post 95 (Cheboygan), Post 122 (Wolverine) participated in the Cheboygan County Veteran Appreciation Event, and Post 227 (East Jordan) held a membership dinner in honor of the Post membership. Post 228 in Boyne City sponsored "Take a Vet Fishing".

All the Posts in the district are preparing in a variety of ways for Veterans Day.

Post 95 in Cheboygan is getting busy, putting up over 200 Veteran banners throughout the City of Cheboygan. The banners will be displayed on the light poles in downtown Cheboygan in honor of local veterans. Afterwards, the banners will be taken down and then displayed in both Cheboygan City Hall and Cheboygan County offices over the winter and re-installed before Memorial Day 2026.

Post 227 in East Jordan is preparing for Veterans' Day events that include an early morning flag-raising ceremony at the elementary school with the Local Boy Scout Troop, followed by a Veterans' Honor ceremony at the Middle/High School auditorium.

BE THE ONE

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

Tentative Program Dates and Deadlines

2025-2026

December 2025

December 5th- Oratorical Registrations deadline
December TBD- JSSP First round postal match competition target set sales and registration closes.

January 2026

January 1st- Baseball registration opens on baseball.legion.org
January 5th- Brewer/Wilson Scholarship submission deadline.
January 9th- Law Officer of the Year submission deadline
January 9th- Firefighter of the Year submission deadline
January 25th- District Oratorical Contests deadline

February 2026

February TBD- JSSP Targets due to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.
February 22nd- Zone Oratorical Contests deadline.
February TBD- JSSP Second round postal match competition targets mailed out by CMP.

March 2026

March 1st-Eagle Scout of the Year Award submission deadline
March 6th- Teacher of the Year Nominations deadline
March 28th-Oratorical State Contest at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing.

April 2026

April TBD- End of 2nd round postal match competition. Targets due to CMP - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.
April 3rd- Skilled Trades Scholarship Application deadline

May 2026

May TBD-Boys State Application submission deadline
May 1st- Student Trooper Application submission deadline
May 15th- Baseball insurance purchase deadline
May 15th-17th- National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI

June 2026

June 1st- Final day for Baseball teams to register
June TBD -Boys State program at TBD

July 2026

July 1st-Robert Turner Baseball Scholarship submission deadline
July 15th- Diamond Baseball Scholarship deadline
July 19th-24th- Student Trooper Program
July TBD- JSSP American Legion National Championship(Individual Tournament)
July TBD- Class AA, Class A Senior Baseball State Tournaments in TBD.
July TBD- Junior Baseball State Tournament in TBD (Class A Senior Baseball Tournament Date/location TBD in December 2025)



2nd District

William McMurray, Commander

What a Fall Conference we just had! Classes ran from wake-up to dusk, with a lot of information to share. Now to get down to work. I have already learned not to delay getting our meetings running, but I have a great Officer corps, and we will handle what is necessary. It is nice to have bragging rights, and District 2 has a big one. Our very own District Service Officer Samantha Barnes-Meyers was awarded the Service Officer of the Year, on top of being a firebrand P.S.O. at Underwood Orr Post 0034, Tecumseh. Congratulations, Samantha. You are a highly valued officer. Another program that I find of great value is Visitation and Pinning run by our District Chaplain, Norman Soli. This is a multifaceted, multilevel effort that recognizes and rewards any Veteran's service, as well as provides a personal approach to care and comfort for older Veterans in retirement centers and care homes. He does a Legion-sponsored award as well as a D.O.D-sponsored Vietnam 50th Year Memorial Pinning. Be aware that the Department Of Defense is ending the Vietnam War 50th Year Memorial Pin award on Veterans Day 2025. See if you can spread the word, round up as many as possible, and host a blowout Ceremony. It is beneficial for the Posts, the American Legion, and American Veterans.

I intend to emphasize the training of replacement adjutants so that they can complete their forms more efficiently, making it easier for both the next year's crew and themselves. I ran on the platform that I wanted to keep District 2 vital and meaningful, so let's get to work. We will live or die on membership, but I'd make a trade on numbers for interested, energetic younger Veterans. After all, I am trying to take us into the next generation while serving the Vets we have. Last year, Scott Nichols and the team worked on getting a Post started. I'd like to stay on that and bring it to fruition. I see an exciting future for my District with a bunch of hard-working Post Officers. I think greatness could happen.

Time Is Getting Short!

Jim Wallace, Law and Order Chairperson

Time Is Getting Short!

The calendar seems to move faster every year, and January 9, 2026, will be here before we know it. That date marks the deadline for submitting "Law Officer of the Year" and "Firefighter of the Year" nominations to Legion Headquarters.

We know the holiday season is a busy time for everyone, but this is one of the most meaningful ways we can show appreciation to the men and women who serve and protect our communities. Our police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel (with firefighter certification) stand ready at a moment's notice when we need them most. Let's take a few moments out of our schedules to recognize their dedication and sacrifice. Submitting a nomination ensures that these heroes receive the honor they truly deserve.

In addition to recognizing today's protectors, our committee is also dedicated to shaping tomorrow's. The Youth Law Cadet Law Enforcement Program (Student Trooper) offers an incredible opportunity for high school students, male and female, grades 10 through 12, to experience hands-on law enforcement training alongside the Michigan State Police.

Applications for this program are due May 1, 2026, with training taking place July 19-24, 2026, at the Michigan State Police Training Academy in Lansing. We encourage Legion Family members to connect with local schools, youth groups, churches, scouting organizations, and community events to spread the word.

Application and nomination forms for all programs can be found online at www.michiganlegion.org/programs. Our first responders and future leaders represent the very best of public service. Let's do our part to honor those who protect us today and inspire those who will protect us tomorrow.



Chaplains Corner

Mike Schlaack, Dept. Chaplain

"Don't shoot the messenger!" I am sure we have heard that phrase before, and maybe even used it a few times ourselves. No one likes to be the bearer of bad news just as much as no one wants to hear it, but sometimes it is necessary to warn others of an impending event that could affect their lives. While the message may not be pleasant to hear, it may be worth heeding, and eliminating the messenger will not change the outcome.

Recent events have drawn our attention to the impact the spoken word has on those who do not agree with the message being delivered. Rather than agreeing to disagree in a thoughtful, peaceful manner, some find it necessary to resort to violence, directing their hatred of the message to the messenger himself. And while there has been an uptick in this sort of reaction in public discourse, we should remember that it is nothing new. People have been "shooting the messenger" since the beginning of recorded time.

Back in the 6th century B.C., a prophet named Jeremiah told of the impending capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Jeremiah's message to the king was to surrender to the attackers to save the city and the lives of its inhabitants. The officers of the army defending Jerusalem asked the king to put Jeremiah to death, since his message of capitulation was causing morale problems amongst the soldiers. To silence the messenger, Jeremiah was placed in a muddy well (Jeremiah 28:1-6). However, the truth could not be changed by silencing the messenger, and Jerusalem did fall to the Babylonians; the city was destroyed, and its inhabitants were carried off into captivity (52).

Even earlier, in the 8th century B.C. the Prophet Jonah was directed by God to preach to the inhabitants of the great city of Nineveh, foretelling its destruction because of their sinful ways (Jonah 1:1). After a perilous journey (and three days in the belly of a huge fish), Jonah arrived in Nineveh and preached the message as directed by God. Hearing of the impending destruction of the city and its inhabitants due to their wickedness could not have been a pleasant message for the king and the city's inhabitants to hear. But this time, instead of silencing the messenger, the king of Nineveh heard the words of God, ordered everyone to repent in "sackcloth and ashes" (3:7), and as a result, the city and its inhabitants were saved by obeying God as proclaimed by Jonah (3:10).

Sometimes, for our own good, we need to hear the uncomfortable messages being broadcast in our public spaces, and silencing the messenger will never change the importance or the results, and may, in fact, amplify the words. Open, public debate is one of our cornerstone freedoms as Americans, and so is our right to accept or reject the message as well as the messenger respectfully and peacefully. Each of us must do our part to help restore civility in public discourse.

"A Week That Shapes a Lifetime"



Mark Brejcha Hillsdale here we come! Boys State has Boys State Director relocated its 2026 session to the beautiful campus of Hillsdale College, taking place from June 21 to 27. We're excited about our new beginnings and would like to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to the staff at Grand Valley State University for hosting us over the past eight seasons.

Last year, we assembled the best support team we've had in years. This year, we are looking for these positions to join us for "A Week That Shapes a Lifetime."

Civics Educators
City Counselors
Tech / Podcast Experts
Administrative

Some of these positions are paid, so if you or someone you know is interested in one of these opportunities or in volunteering, please get in touch with me at 231-527-5441.

There is a lot of information on our website <https://michigan-boysstate.org/>

Visit us also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Boys-State-Michigan/100092741514430/>

And if you would like to take a Hillsdale Campus Video Tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrq8hrCh0tY>

2026 Dues Direct Program

The Dues Direct program frees your post officers from the renewal receipt and fulfillment process, which can be time-consuming. The membership records are usually updated much faster, which also reduces the number of renewal notices that need to be mailed. The processing cost is currently only \$0.83 per renewal, which includes the cost of postage. As you know, postage is already up to 76 cents per stamp. This is a no-brainer for a large post! In fact, over 5000 post-225 members' dues are processed in this manner.

Briefly, when renewal notices are mailed to your Post members, the return reply is sent directly to National Headquarters for processing. Members also have the option of renewing online through a special website. National processes the renewal payment, updates the membership record, and forwards the member their new membership card, which also includes our Department's contact information.

If you would like more information, contact Adjutant Runyan at adj@michiganlegion.org

Open Enrolment Going On NOW!

We're inspired by the community of veterans still serving in America

For over 50 years, the Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been delivering peace of mind and financial support for veterans, their families, and the Departments of The American Legion.



Click here to view your member benefits!

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Communication

Steve 'Radar' Caudill, Chairman

I'm proud to report that we accomplished a great deal of business at this year's Fall Conference in Battle Creek. While I won't dive into everything the Media & Communications Committee reviewed, I do want to spotlight one item that benefits the entire Department.

With the approval of the Department Executive Committee, we are releasing the new Department Website and Social Media Guidelines, a resource designed to help our Districts, Posts, Squadrons, and ALR Chapters maintain a unified, respectful, and mission-driven online presence. These guidelines will enhance our representation of the Legion Family across Michigan and ensure that our digital platforms accurately reflect the honor, service, and tradition we stand for.

What's Inside the Guidelines?

- Clear standards for using the American Legion emblem and brand mark
- Best practices for content creation, moderation, and engagement
- Legal reminders about copyright, privacy, and defamation
- Do's and Don'ts for maintaining active, respectful platforms

Tips for promoting events, programs, and membership

Whether you're posting a photo from a community ride, updating a calendar, or sharing a patriotic milestone, these guidelines ensure your message reflects the honor and tradition of the American Legion.

Why It Matters

Our digital presence is often the first impression we make. These guidelines help every part of our Legion Family—from Posts to Squadrons to Riders—represent our mission with clarity and pride.

The American Legion Membership Application

(Name)	(Date of Birth)
---------------	------------------------

(Mailing Address)	(Phone Number)
--------------------------	-----------------------

(City)	(State)	(Zip)	(Post #)
---------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------

(E-mail)	☐ Male ☐ Female
-----------------	---

(Gender)	(Dues)
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☐ I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty since December 7, 1941 and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.

Please check appropriate service era and branch of service below

☐ Global War on Terror	☐ U.S. Army
☐ Gulf War	☐ U.S. Navy
☐ Panama	☐ U.S. Air Force
☐ Lebanon/Grenada	☐ U.S. Marines
☐ Vietnam	☐ U.S. Space Force
☐ Korea	☐ U.S. Coast Guard
☐ WWII	☐ Merchant Marines (WWII only)
☐ Other Conflicts	



Signature of applicant	Date
-------------------------------	-------------



HELP WANTED!

COMMANDER AVIE NEEDS YOU! TO HELP WITH THE

USA250 Challenge

The Chairman has been selected, but We need Volunteers to assist in getting the information and process out to the Posts on how and what the USA250 Challenge is about.

Email commander@michiganlegion.org with your contact information if you can donate some time to this important project. Thank You!

Boys State Positions Available

Civics Educators

City Counselors

Tech / Podcast Experts

Administrative

With our move to Hillsdale College this year we need to fill many staff and volunteer positions. All positions provide free room and board, some are compensated with a small stipend.

All Participants must complete a background check and abuse awareness training

YOU HONORED US WITH YOUR SERVICE.

Now let us honor you.



Join us for a complimentary meal and pre-planning seminar to learn about VA burial benefits available. For more information, contact Anthony.Lauri@DignityMemorial.com or 586-775-2424.

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Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Gary Easterling
Director

Our staff is dedicated to providing the very best veterans' advocacy to Michigan Veterans and their families. They can assist with Claims Preparation, Presentation and appeal counsel in Veterans' benefits services. Let us assist you and your dependents in getting the benefits that you have earned by your service to your country.

Gary Easterling, Director

Cell (313) 549-8557

geasterling@michiganlegion.org

Office Phone (313) 964-6640

Fax (313) 964-5697

Call for a Service officer in your area:

833.648.3826 Option 1

e-mail - al.vbadet@va.gov

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Check out all your benefits at

www.mivabenefits.org

DON'T FACE THE VA ALONE!

Find an American Legion Veteran Service Officer near you. Use an Accredited Veteran Service Officer. Find a Service Officer near you at <https://www.mivabenefits.org/find-service-officer/> OR Call **833.648.3826** Option 1 and they will guide you to an accredited veteran service officer who will help you.

Service Officer

Office Locations

Phil Babcock.....	Charlevoix, Petoskey, Kalkaska, Manistee Ludington, Big Rapids, Lake City
Patty Breas.....	Hastings, Caledonia, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Wyoming, Holland
Brian Brooks	Ann Arbor
Josh Clark.....	Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, Coldwater
Kieshan Counts.....	Bay City, Saginaw, Vassar
Gary Easterling	Detroit
Stephanie Fisher.....	Onaway, Rogers City
Shay Grady.....	Rapid River, Ishpeming Little Lake, Marquette, Gwin
Thomas Kaiser.....	Battle Creek, Bath, Grand Ledge, Leslie Eaton Rapids, Jackson, Laingsburg, Corunna
Rebecca Lewis.....	Farwell, Ionia, Lansing
Courtney Mills.....	Ravenna, Muskegon, Grand Haven
Lisa Misenko.....	Troy, Oxford, Rochester, Detroit
Chad Parenteau.....	Detroit, Swartz Creek
Matthew Schantz.....	Garden City, Southgate, Detroit
Justin Schave.....	Detroit
Tommy Simpkins.....	Saginaw
Stacy Thill.....	Escanaba, Manistique
Rick Wiles.....	Sault Ste. Marie, St. Ignace, Gaylord
Kimberly Napoleon.....	Saginaw

Investing in Michigan's Youth: Encourage Students to Apply for 2026 Legion Scholarships

Larry Money, Education and Scholarship Committee Chairman

As Legionnaires, one of the most meaningful ways we can continue our mission of "For God and Country" is by supporting the next generation through education and opportunity. The American Legion, Department of Michigan, is once again offering several scholarship and youth programs for the 2025-2026 year and we need your help spreading the word.

Members are encouraged to reach out to local high schools, youth organizations, and community programs to share these opportunities. Whether it's a student with a passion for public speaking, a young person pursuing higher education, or someone learning a skilled trade, the Legion has a program designed to help them achieve their goals.

The Oratorical Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest," gives high school students the chance to strengthen their leadership and public speaking skills while deepening their understanding of the U.S. Constitution. The Department contest will take place Saturday, March 28, 2026, at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing, with scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000. The department winner will advance to the national contest, where prizes reach up to \$25,000. Registration closes December 5, 2025.

Two additional scholarships honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families. The William D. & Jewell Brewer Scholarship (\$500) and the Guy M. Wilson Scholarship (\$1,000)

are awarded based on academic performance, leadership, and financial need. Both are open to Michigan residents who are direct descendants of an honorably discharged veteran or active-duty service member. Applications must be received by January 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.. Students may apply for one or both, but only one award will be granted per recipient.

Finally, the Skilled Trades Scholarship provides two \$1,000 two-year awards for Michigan residents aged 17-21 who are pursuing a trade or technical career in fields such as construction, automotive, energy, or advanced manufacturing. This scholarship helps cover expenses like tools, tuition, and safety gear ensuring that students pursuing hands-on careers have the resources they need to succeed. Applications are due by April 3, 2026.

Every year, these programs make a lasting difference in the lives of Michigan students and your outreach can help us reach even more of them. Please take a moment to share these opportunities with local schools, counselors, and families. Together, we can inspire young citizens to pursue their goals, serve their communities, and carry forward the values we uphold as members of The American Legion. For more information or printable applications, visit www.michiganlegion.org/programs or contact the Department Programs Coordinator at legion@michiganlegion.org or (517) 220-2754.



JSSP

Mark Downing, Chair

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your Sub-Committee Chairman for the Department of



Michigan American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program! Thank you, Commander Aive and Department 2nd Vice Commander Deaton, for this opportunity.

My goals for 2025-2026 are as follows: to create awareness of JSSP among all MI American Legion Posts and increase the number of JSSP clubs.

The official 2025-2026 American Legion Junior Shooting Sports match program has the following key deadlines for the first two rounds of postal competition:

- Registration and target sales open: September 1, 2025
- Target sales and registration close: December 15, 2025
- Targets due to Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP): Feb 2 (must be postmarked by this date)
- Second round targets mailed by CMP: Feb 16, 2026
- Second round targets due to CMP: April 1 (must be postmarked by this date)

National Championship: The National Championship for individual competitors will take place from July 21-25, 2026.

I truly appreciate all of the hospitality I have received during my visits to your posts and your interest in starting a JSSP. I can be reached at legioncommander413@gmail.com or cell phone: (947)247-0147.



Legislative Report

Tim Poxson, Legislative Chair

At Fall Conference the Legislative Committee voted to award the top users of our Department of Michigan, Priorities Legislators' notification system. These cash prizes are available to any member of the Department of Michigan Legion family, except for members of the Legislative Committee and paid staff.

Follow this link <https://youtu.be/f5bQKWZVgel> for how to email your representatives in support of our Legislative priorities. Every time you send another email, it will count towards your total. The three Legion Family members with the most emails sent through that method will be awarded: \$250 for first place, \$150 for second place, and the person with the third most emails sent will receive \$100. These awards will be presented at next year's Summer Convention, and you do not have to be present to win.

We are having a lot of success getting Representatives and Senators to sponsor our priorities by introducing legislation. We need your support to make them into law by using the Legislators' Priorities notification system. Thank you in advance for your support of the system that will advance Veterans' issues and benefits, and you may make money doing so. Feel free to contact me at Legislative@MichiganLegion.org if you have any issues with the Legislators' Priorities notification system.

RULES: Any member of the American Legion Family is eligible, paid Staff of the American Legion and members of the Legislative Committee are not eligible.

Determination: Cash prizes will be awarded based on the most contact letters sent to State Elected Representatives or Federal elected Congressional members by June 1, 2026, as recorded through our website "Legislative Priorities."

Presentation: Prizes will be presented at the Michigan American Legion Summer Convention in 2026; you need not be present to win.

The final award of money will be at the sole discretion of the Department's Legislative Committee and its Chair, based solely on the recorded usage of the Representative contact letters. Awards will be \$250.00 for the most entries, \$150.00 for the second most, and \$100.00 for the third most. In the event of a tie, a random method will be used to determine the award recipients. Other awards may be available as donations permit.

David Montgomery Receives Michigan's Eagle Scout Challenge Coin

Gary Tanner has been involved in Scouting for decades. From the Explorer Program in his youth, to now serving as the Scouting chairman. He is a Scoutmaster and has two sons who are Eagle Scouts and volunteers for the Michigan Crossroads Council in various capacities.

When the Council chose to honor Eagle Scout and Detroit Lions running back David

Montgomery with its North Star Award at its On My Honor Gala, Tanner wanted to make sure the NFL standout also got some recognition from The American Legion.

On Oct. 7, Tanner presented Montgomery with the Department of Michigan Eagle Scout Challenge Coin. He said he learned that Montgomery was a Scout when the player flashed the Scouting sign after scoring a touchdown.

The Department of Michigan is a presenting sponsor of the gala and presents a Scouting Challenge Coin to each year's Eagle Scouts. The North Star Award is presented to a person for their service to Scouting. Montgomery earned his Eagle Scout in 2014 and became a Scouting Ambassador a year ago.

"At one of his games he was walking into the stadium rocking his merit badge sash," said Tanner, a member of American Legion Post 364 in Fort Dearborn. "I thought that was really cool because a lot of kids - even though the program's great - they still get teased by their friends a lot: 'Oh, you're wearing a Scouting uniform, blah, blah, blah.' Montgomery (wearing the sash) makes it OK for them to rock theirs.

"When I heard they were going to do this North Star Award ... I said, 'I would really like to do just a quick (presentation) and make sure David Montgomery had one of our coins. And that not

only does the Scouting program recognize what a great guy he is, but all of the veterans in the Department of Michigan and the Legion Family recognize him as that outstanding role model."

Tanner got a chance to talk with Montgomery during the coin presentation. "I told him, 'I really appreciate how much you make us proud on the field, but also through the life choice you made off the field and for being such a great ambassador and role model for our youth, and especially our Scouts,'" Tanner said its nice to see someone as gifted as Montgomery achieve Eagle Scout continue to embrace Scouting.



Lion's Running Back and Eagle Scout David Montgomery receiving The Michigan American Legion Eagle Scout Challenge Coin from Scouting Chairman Gary Tanner at the "On My Honor" Gala



Around the State...

September 11th Remembered

Members of Lowell American Legion and VFW came together to honor those lost on 9-11-2001



L-R Herman Wesstrate post 152, Sr Vice Commander, Bob Seif, VFW post 8303, Al Smith Post 152, John Kuk VFW, and David Maltman, Adjutant post 152

Central Michigan Veterans Fund Annual Golf Outing



raising funds for Veterans going to CMU or Mid Michigan College

294 Volunteer Hours



This Certificate is for The American Legion Department of Michigan, in Support of the Michigan Veteran Home, Chesterfield. Thank You, Joe McClellan, for 294 Volunteer Hours at the Volunteer Recognition Dinner.

Celebrating 101 Years!

Members of Post 3 celebrate the 101st birthday of Frank Wojar, a distinguished WWII veteran residing at Brookdale Assisted Living in Northville. The atmosphere was

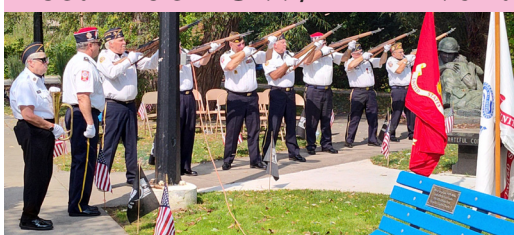


101 years old and still going strong!

filled with joy and camaraderie as we presented Frank with a heartfelt birthday card and an American Legion Honor certificate. Additionally, Frank received a U.S. Army pin to commemorate his service as a tank crew member during WWII. The Post 32 Honor Guard performed a 13-flag fold ceremony and fired a 21-gun salute.



Post 110's POW/MIA Event



Mt. Pleasant's Island Park September 20th

Vets helping Vets

Post 238 built a ramp for a vet. Aiding his mobility to get to appointments.



L-R: John Brauer , Carol Bachman Jeff Dymond, Mike GRANT, Bill Jordon. Special Thanks to Roger Marsh, SAL(Not Pictured)



In September, Gary DeMars (Post 32 Service Officer), Len Roman (Post 32 Adjutant), and Linda Roman (Post 32 Auxiliary President) represented American Legion Post 32 at a veterans' panel discussion and expo held at the Westland, Michigan, Library. The event was organized by the Veteran Resource Network of Southeast Michigan (VRNSM), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and providing services to military veterans and their families.

**AMERICAN
LEGION**

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN



OFFICIAL VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA'S GAME

HONOR THE RIVALRY BY CHEERING ON YOUR TEAM!

The historic Army-Navy Game is one of the greatest rivalries in sports—and this year, we're giving our members a chance to experience it in person!

To honor the rivalry and strengthen our organization, we're launching a **Membership Incentive Challenge** that rewards those who help grow and sustain our membership. Here's how you can get in the game:

WE HAVE 16 TICKETS TO AWARD FOR THE ARMY-NAVY GAME.

8 WINNERS WILL EACH RECEIVE 2 TICKETS!



The top 3 recruiters from October 1–November 11 will each receive 2 tickets.

Minimum qualification: recruit at least 3 new members.

The top department in each of our 5 regions (based on November's target date) will each earn 2 tickets to use within their department.

**WINNERS WILL BE OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17.
ONE PURPOSE. ONE TEAM. ONE LEGION.**