

MI LEGIONNAIRE

Vol. XCIV No. 10

michiganlegion.org

April 2026

You're Invited

THE 2026 TESTIMONIAL DINNER

Join Us For A Fun Evening Filled With Laughter,
Entertainment, and Buffet



Commander Avie



President Gramza



Commander Seydell

Date

April 18, 2026

Venue

Livonia Post 32
9318 Newburgh Rd.
Livonia, MI 48150

Time

Social Hour 4 PM
Dinner at 5 PM



DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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DEADLINE DATES

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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.

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Dinner at 5 PM

\$40.00 Tickets Include: Buffet with beef, chicken, mostaccioli, Red skins, vegetables, salad, deserts & one well drink ticket and free fountain soft drinks

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MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE

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1st Zone Scott Nichols
2nd Zone. Fred Youngs

3rd Zone Leo Cowdry
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Immediate PDC. Dan Cooper
Alt. N.E.C Brian Mohlman
VA and R Director Gary Easterling



So Many Travels so Little Time Roger Avie, Department Commander

As we move into April, I would like to reflect on a very active and productive period from late February through early March, filled with meaningful engagements across our great Department of Michigan.

On February 19th, I attended a meeting at Rosedale Park Post 390, where discussions focused on support for Boys State and Girls State, including anticipated donations to these outstanding programs that shape the leaders of tomorrow. It was encouraging to see such a strong commitment to our youth initiatives. I hope other Posts share this mission.

On February 22nd, I traveled to a First District meeting on Evergreen Street in Northwest Detroit. Key discussions centered on membership and the potential consolidation of some posts to ensure continued strength and sustainability across the district. These are important conversations as we work to grow and adapt.

On February 24th, I participated in

the Central Region Commanders meeting via Microsoft Teams, chaired by National Vice Commander Steve Wiseman. Membership progress and strategies to achieve our March goals were key topics, reinforcing the importance of continued focus and teamwork.

The following day, February 25th, I attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Benjamin O. Davis Veterans Village on Connor Street in Detroit. This important development supports housing for veterans. I had the pleasure of meeting MVAA Director Terry Sabo and speaking with the Mayor of Detroit about ongoing efforts to serve those who have served.



Terry Sabo with Commander Avie at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Benjamin O. Davis Veterans Village, ground-breaking



At the Boy Scout Banquet in Grand Rapids with Adjutant Ron Runyan

On March 4th, I traveled to Grand Rapids for the Boy Scouts banquet at the Amway Grand Hotel, where Adjutant Ron Runyan and I hosted a table promoting the Legion's mission and presented challenge coins to newly recognized Eagle Scouts with Gary Tanner.

On March 5th, the Adjutant and I held the monthly statewide Zoom Q&A session with commanders and adjutants. I am pleased to report we reached 90% membership goal by March 15th and are on a strong path toward 95% by mid-April.

I look forward to continued progress in the months ahead to be 100% by June 30th. God bless you, God bless the Legion, and God bless the United States of America.

COMMANDERS PROJECT

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE PURCHASED A COIN AND TO THE POSTS, UNITS, SQUADRONS AND DISTRICTS THAT HAVE ALREADY DONATED. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!



YOUR \$10 DONATION GETS YOU A SPECIAL COMMANDER COIN, WITH 100% OF THE DONATION GOING TO FREEDOM CENTER, SUPPORTING VETERANS IN MICHIGAN.

Runyan's Ramblings: Post Officers Question & Answers ZOOM Meetings every month



Ron Runyan
Dept. Adjutant

Every month, I send out an email to your Post and SAL Commanders and Adjutants inviting them to attend a monthly Zoom meeting with the State Commander and myself.

Many times, many other state leaders and staff are also attending. These "meetings" are meant to help you get up-to-date information and ask anything you need to know about your Post or SAL. I encourage you or one of your post/SAL officers to attend. Your officers can share the Zoom information with you, as the limit is 200 logins, and we typically have about 30 members.

Since it is April, many posts and SALs are starting to hold elections. Please en-

sure that you visit the State website at www.michiganlegion.org/forms, where you can download fillable forms for officers, the audit/insurance form, and the new CPR, which is required. In fact, we will cover the CPR form in detail in the next Zoom meeting on April 2nd at 2:00 pm.

Also contained in this edition of the paper is information on state and national conventions. The Legion Amendments that will be addressed at convention are also listed in this edition and on the website. As you will be selecting your delegates to attend, your post should have a good idea on these amendments and how your post would like to vote on their action.

Lastly, as I mentioned, Post delegates, the forms are being emailed and mailed with the number of delegates possible for

each post. I highly suggest that your post fill out the form with delegates who represent or "possibly" represent the post. If your post lists delegates and no one actually attends, the District can still have voting strength based on your form. If you do not fill it out or mail it back, your Post will not have representation. Furthermore, please ensure that your Post completes the form if members are attending the convention. There is nothing that breaks my heart more at convention than when your members show up, spend their hard-earned money that time to attend, and then tell them the Post did not turn in a form. Have questions about this? Don't hesitate to get in touch with either me or Deanna at HQ.

Membership Report

Jim Austin
1st Vice Commander



Welcome to Spring, my fellow legionnaires. We have two months to reach our goal of 100% membership. Our goal of 90% this month has been reached. This goal was accomplished due to the hard work of this amazing membership team.

However, the department committee is not solely responsible—everybody from the paid employees of headquarters all the way to the membership teams at the post level. We cannot let up now; the final sprint is upon us. April's goal is 95%, and I feel confident we will make it happen. Great membership also carries over to great participation and programs. I'd like to compliment all the hard work the Americanism committee is doing with their programs.

All our elections are coming up. Please think about participating. Every job is important, from a post committee member all the way to a department commander. This whole organization depends on your participation. If anyone is interested in department committees, the form is available on the department webpage. Once you download the form, you can fill it out electronically and send it back, or print it, fill it out, and send it in to the Department. Look at all the programs, find the ones you are passionate about, and please get involved.

I'd like to congratulate all the oratorical winners and thank you to the oratorical committee for making this happen. Keep up the great work, and as always, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me or any of your leadership.

P.S. I have received my Legion passport, and I am enjoying the program.

Americanism Report

Roger Deaton
2nd Vice Commander



We appreciate the Legion Family for embracing the "Passport Program". It has been and continues to be so much fun for our organizations! We have been giving out the 10-post-visited hat pin. More incentives to come in 2026-2027.

Junior Shooting Sports Chairman Mark Downing recently presented the Grand Rapids Junior Shooting Sports team with a new scanner that will aid them in scoring for years to come. This asset was presented on behalf of our great organization.

The American Legion was the first to support Scouting, and our strong support for this organization is helping youth grow across our amazing state. This year, the Michigan Legion has already chartered 14 scouting units—a phenomenal job by our Chairman, Gary Tanner and the Legion family. I encourage everyone to attend the Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner on April 28th at the Packard Proving Grounds in Utica. Three of our great Legion leaders will receive the highest honors from Scouting America. Our very own "Stellar" Department Adjutant, Ron Runyan, will receive the "Outstanding Eagle Scout" award, Gary Tanner will receive the "Silver Beaver Award," and Brighton Post 235 Adjutant Dennis Pate will receive the Silver Wreath - "Bravo Zulu Gentleman."

I have attended and spoken at two Americanism Banquets in the past month. I wanted to thank the 18th and 16th Districts for hosting these events and pressing the importance of Americanism and our great American Legion family.

Special Thanks to all the volunteers who helped at the Gun and Knife Show at the Novi Expo. Wow, so many Veterans and Veteran family members spoke with us about our great organization and amazing programs. 19 applications for membership came from this event. SAL, Auxiliary and Legion Members from Milford Post 216, Livonia Posts 32, Farmington Hills Post 346, Flint Post 64, Linden Post 119 and Brighton Post 235 all donated time to help.

Boys State applications can be completed online for the first time. The program has moved to Hillsdale College from June 21-27. The Boys State Committee would like to thank the Legion Family for its generous support of the "America 250 Initiative". Anyone can donate \$1776.00 and/or any sum towards the Boys State Program. Make checks payable to: Michigan American Legion Foundation. Please write "Boys State General Fund." We have started the Boys State Alumni Association, which is well on its way and will have a membership drive at Hillsdale College in June. The purpose of the organization is to provide mentorship opportunities, increase Boys State participation, Foster Camaraderie with Alumni and the Legion Family, and develop a revenue stream for Boys State. If you know of a Boys State Alumni, please have them email legion@michiganlegion.org with their contact information. I'm looking forward to seeing the Legion Family out visiting posts and having fun.

Program Dates and Deadlines

April 2026

April 1st- 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 1st- Student Trooper Application submission deadline

May 15th- Baseball insurance purchase deadline

May 15th-17th- National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College

June 2026

June 1st-Boys State Application submission deadline

June 1st- Final day for Baseball teams to register

June 21st- 27th -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 21st- 25th - JSSP American Legion National Championship (Individual Tournament)

July 25-28- Class AA, Senior Baseball State Tournaments in Adrian, MI

July TBD- Class A Baseball State Tournament in TBD

July TBD- Junior Baseball State Tournament in TBD

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Chaplain's Corner

Mike Schlaack, Chaplain

In the Book of Exodus, we read of the deliverance of the people of Israel in Egypt from the curse of the death of the first born (Exodus 12:29). A simple act of faith—spreading the blood of a sacrificed lamb on the doorposts of the

home—caused the angel of death to “pass over” the household, indicating that the occupants were faithful followers of the God of Israel (Exodus 12:7-14). This was the last of the seven plagues called upon Egypt, convincing Pharaoh to finally allow the Israelites to leave captivity after 400 years of enslavement.

People of the Jewish faith have continued to observe the event known as Passover (Pach or Pasach) for over 3,000 years. It is one of the main feasts in the Jewish religious calendar, marked by traditions that help participants remember God's redemption of His faithful people. The traditions are designed to help the Jewish people not only remember their deliverance but to relive the event through the symbolic food eaten at the Seder meal: Unleavened bread (matzah) to symbolize the haste in leaving Egypt; bitter herbs representing the bitterness of slavery; and four cups of wine drank during the Seder meal that represents the four expressions of redemption promised by God (Sanctification, Deliverance, Redemption and Praise).

The deliverance from death is also the focus of the Christian observance of Easter (Pascha in the Eastern Christian tradition). Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross can be viewed as the Passover lamb that was slain, and by His shedding of blood, the faithful believers are delivered from a death far greater than the end of physical life. Jesus' death and Resurrection were necessary so that death could not have power over our lives. “Death is overthrown” (Milk & Honey by St. John of Damascus, 8th century AD), and we are no longer slaves to a death that is caused by the sins of life that separate us from God.

Whether we follow the Jewish or Christian faith, we all need deliverance from the passions that enslave us. What is your plan of escape? Will you place your trust in your own abilities or in God? Take the time this month to reconnect with the traditions of your faith that give deeper, truer meaning to your life.



Legion Legislative Report

Tim Poxson, Legislative Chair

I had the honor of traveling to Washington, D.C. with other Michigan American Legion members. I first want to thank all those who traveled to D.C. representing the American Legion Department of Michigan. The D.C. trip lasted from February 29 until March 4, 2026. Members were

assigned to different Congressional Representatives and Congressional Senators. We were also assigned to different workshops. I attended the VA&R workshops, and while all of them were good, I found the following workshops to be of particular interest. In the morning, Keita Franklin, Co-Director of the Lighthouse Project and the information she supplied about Veteran Suicides and how the government knows when a veteran commits suicide. In the afternoon, I attended five very informative workshops. Another that stood out was Samuel Brown's presentation as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

I was able to present the issue of a much-overdue Veteran Cemetery for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The State has promised them the next cemetery in Michigan for over 20 years. When Holly VA Cemetery was built, they were told that if they backed that cemetery, the State would make sure the next cemetery would go in the U.P. Of course, the U.P. veterans felt betrayed when it was announced that the next Michigan VA state cemetery was planned for Crawford County.

The issue of our U.P. Veterans is that in most cases, they must travel eight (8) hours one way or more to be buried in a VA Cemetery in Michigan. And even if they choose to be buried in another State near the U.P., some must travel more than five (5) hours. Most would agree a veteran or their spouse should not have to travel like that and should be able to be buried in the U.P.

I was able to meet briefly with the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration after the workshop. I explained the issues with no VA Cemetery in the U.P. He told me that the National Cemetery Administration is aware of the issues in Michigan and is watching to see what we do to address them. Before another VA Cemetery can be built in Michigan, the State Legislature must pass legislation supporting it. I have been working hard to get legislation for that reason. I have been working with Reps. Dave Prestin, Greg Markkanen, Karl Bohnak, and Speaker Matt Hall. We also brought this subject up with every Michigan Congressional member during our meetings in Washington, D.C. The American Legion Department of Michigan has this as one of its priorities: working toward a cemetery in the U.P. It has been an uphill battle, but we are getting closer.

Also, while in D.C. I had the chance to meet with Retired Colonel Joe Morris and James Jones Jr. of Arrow International, Veteran and Fraternal relations, to discuss the benefits of Modernizing Charitable Gaming. An issue that is also a priority for the Michigan American Legion. I got some great information and printed material to hand out at hearings to State elected Legislators. Rep. Greg Markkanen has introduced legislation to modernize charitable gaming. A few years ago, a small number of American Legion posts signed up for a pilot program using one of the tools that support Modernizing Charitable Gaming. One of those Posts is averaging a net income of about \$10,000 a month from this system. Bath Post Commander Leo Cowdry, a pilot site, has been very helpful in working with me on this.

In closing, I would say, from my standpoint of view the Washington Conference was a success, and again, my thanks to those who also came to the D.C. conference from Michigan.

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2026 Membership: March 25th Goal = 53,120
Current Total: 48,508 - 91.32%



3rd District Sheila Overholts District Commander

I hope everyone has weathered this brutal winter safely. At long last, it seems Spring is slowly peeking out—bringing with it some much-needed warmer temperatures.

Our District 3 Oratorical Contest was held recently, and all three contestants proudly represented Joseph B. Westnedge Post 36. Miss Brianna Zhang earned the top spot and went on to compete in the 2nd Zone contest, where she claimed first place there as well. Congratulations, Brianna! She has advanced to the Department Oratorical Contest, with hopes of moving on to the National level. I had to have this report completed just before the Department contest, so we hope she did well. We wish her the very best as she continues this impressive journey.

As we approach the election season for Post, District, and Department officers, I encourage all outgoing officers to mentor, guide, and support those stepping into the roles you are leaving. Think back to your own first days—your experience and insight can make all the difference for someone new. Also, the Department has scheduled several Leadership trainings and a Post Officers Training. Just click the "Training" tab on the main menu of the website.

Our final District meeting of the year will be held on May 3rd at Joseph B. Westnedge Post 36, located at 1920 E. Kilgore Rd., Portage, MI 49002. Lunch will be served at 11:00 AM, followed by the membership meeting at 12:00 noon. I hope to see you there.



7th District Robert Montgomery, District Commander

It's that time of year again, folks, the air is getting warmer, the Robins are fighting on the lawn, and our membership goals are at their final push. At the time of writing, our membership is ahead of goal at 91.4%, with 5 posts over 100%: #525 118.75%, #382 104.35%, #566 104.05%, #351 #479 100%. I cannot tell you how proud I am of this district and its efforts to Membership. Our next goal is 95% by April 8th. So let's stay diligent.

Not much grass grows under the feet of #382 Legionnaires. If you are in their area of Memorial Day, Andy Dupuis shared the progress regarding the 2026 Memorial Day activities. Andy is planning parade details to include the Civil Air Patrol Cadets and the St. Clair High School marching band. The High School band plays the National Anthem at the Memorial Day ceremony. Andy Dupuis has been highly involved in recent years with planning and implementation of our successful Memorial Day ceremony presentations. 2nd Vice Todd Bigger is coordinating student activity and involvement as well for this prestigious event. So please come out and support. Any questions, please call the post at 810-329-2871

When I visited Smiths Creek Post #525 to congratulate Sherwood Frazer on the post's membership, they were busy talking about upcoming tractor pulls. This yearly event draws neighbors from all over the area for good old-fashioned family fun.

Exciting news out of North Branch: post #457, Al Castle of the post reached his 60th year as a post member. His milestone is truly an inspiration to everyone, including his brother David, who is not far behind him. Congratulations.

I made the short drive to Harbor Beech post #197, and I was glad I did. I met some amazing post members and enjoyed the sights along the way. The members appear to be committed to the post and making it grow, so stay tuned for more upcoming events.

Our next district meeting will be May 17th, Lapeer Post 16, for our memorial meeting for our departed members.



4th District Rodney Tolbert 4th District Commander

Happy spring, the 4th District. Hope all is well with everyone. I am so proud of the fabulous 4th for all the hard work you are putting in at your post with membership, post dinners, and helping one another in a time of need.

As you all might know, Three Rivers and Union City were hit by tornadoes. The Fourth District will be there for their needs. Please pray for the family who lost loved ones to this tragedy.

The officers and chairpersons of the 4th District want to thank the posts that have hosted district meetings: Lawton, Benton Harbor 105, Otsego, and Paw Paw. Your friendship and hospitality were something to be proud of. Thank you again. I want to thank Steve Kogge for his years of the 4th district Adjutant. Your years of service and dedication will be missed. Thank you for your guidance.

There is more work to do. Let's get that 100% membership, get out and visit other posts, bring your Legion passport, and have it stamped. If you don't know what a Legion passport is, reach out to Vice Commander Roger Deaton or me. I will be more than happy to help you. Please call if you need anything from the district. Please give me a call or contact one of the leadership; follow our Facebook page: [American Legion District 4 Department of Michigan](#).



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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 _____





2026 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM
 The American Legion Department of Michigan
 June 25 – 28, 2026

Contact Brian Mohlman with any questions at 269-579-6458
 or smiconvcorp@gmail.com

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 Name: _____ Group: LEGION AUX SAL
 Name: _____ Group: LEGION AUX SAL

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____ for _____ Registrations

The Only Written

Official Call to the Annual Department Convention American Legion, Department of Michigan June 25 – 28, 2026 Battle Creek, Michigan

Purpose: To receive Department Officers' annual reports, consider Department Constitution and By-Laws amendments, elect Department Officers and conduct any other business brought to the convention. Only the committees and chairpersons listed below are called to officially participate in the Convention.

Registration: Registration fee of \$25 will be charged to all delegates, alternates and guests.

Department Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, June 25th at 6:30 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting Q&A with candidates for Department offices: Follows DEC meeting

Opening Session: Friday, June 26th at 5:00 p.m.

Subsequent Convention Sessions: Saturday, June 27th , 9:00 a.m. & Sunday, June 28th , 10:00 a.m.

CALLED - Permanent Time & Place / Resolutions Assignment and Children & Youth: Thursday June 25th

CALLED: Friday June 26th: ONLY the Standing Committee Chairmen & Sub Committee Chairmen

Convention Committee Meetings: Conducted on Friday June 26th from 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Convention Committees are comprised of one person per district. Each Delegation Chairman will name the members to serve on the Convention Committees and certify that list to the Department Adjutant.

Americanism & Community Service (includes Education & Scholarship, Boys State, Law and Order, Junior Shooting and Scouting)

Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Credentials, Finance, Legislative,

Membership & Post Activities (includes Post Development), National Security & Foreign Relations,

Media & Communications, Rules, Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation (includes Reconnect, Veterans Employment & Education & VAVS/VHVS)

District Caucuses: Friday, June 26th , 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Zone Caucuses: Friday, June 26th , 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

U.P. Party Post 257: All Legion Family welcome: Saturday June 27th 4:00 p.m. till 7:00 p.m.

Joint Memorial Service: Sunday, June 28th , 8:00 a.m.

Elections & Adjournment: Sunday June 28th , 10:00 a.m. (Noon at the latest) *The new 2026-2027 Department Executive Committee and the 2026 National Convention Delegates and Alternates will meet upon Convention adjournment.*

Proposed Amendments to the Department Constitution and Bylaws

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 26-CA-01

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article VII, Section 7:

The Constitution and By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation of a Post, Memorial Home Association, Building Corporation, Zone, District or any other association considered to be part of the Department of Michigan shall not become effective until submitted to and approved by the Department Judge Advocate; an approved copy of which shall be filed in Department Headquarters.

To be Amended by:

Adding between Department Judge Advocate and an approved copy the words "or their designated representative"

So that when amended Department Constitution, Article VII, Section 7, shall read:

Section 7: The Constitution and By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation of a Post, Memorial Home Association, Building Corporation, Zone, District or any other association considered to be part of the Department of Michigan shall not become effective until submitted to and approved by the Department Judge Advocate or their designated representative; an approved copy of which shall be filed in Department Headquarters.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 26-CA-02

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article VII Post Organization, Section 9:

Create a new Section 9 that currently does not exist and place between the current Section 8 and Section 9 and renumber subsequent sections.

To be Amended by:

Adding, Section 9 All Post Officers, Post Executive Committee members, and Post Committee chairpersons shall present for examination by a duly qualified officer of the Post, acceptable evidence of honorable service prior to being installed into office.

So that when amended Department Constitution, Article VII, Section 8, 9 and 10 shall read:

Section 8: Each Post shall have a Commander, an Adjutant and a Finance Officer and such other offices as shall be provided in the Post's Constitution and Bylaws. The Commander, Adjutant and Finance Officer shall be separate individuals and be current members on the Post.

Section 9: All Post Officers, Post Executive Committee members, and Post Committee chairpersons shall present for examination by a duly qualified officer of the Post, acceptable evidence of honorable service to prior to being installed into office.

Section 10: Each Post shall have a headquarters to which all documents and papers may be sent. It shall be the duty of each Post Adjutant to notify the Department Headquarters immediately of any change of address of the Post Headquarters. All notices shall be deemed to have been duly served when mailed to the Post at its last mailing address appearing upon the records of the Department Adjutant.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 26-CA-03

A proposed change to the Department Constitution, Article XI Department Officers, Section 1:

Currently reads:

The elective Department Officers shall be chosen annually at the Department Convention by a roll call vote of the Districts of the Department, with the exception of the Zone Commanders, who shall be chosen at the "Zone" Caucuses by the Districts making up the "Zone" which that individual Zone Commander is to represent. Each Zone Commander so chosen must be and shall remain a member of a Post within their respective Zone or the office shall be declared vacant.

To be Amended by:

Adding, after Districts of the Department the words "unless there is a single candidate in which case the roll call shall be waived and a motion to have the Adjutant cast one unanimous ballot shall be accepted"

So that when amended Department Constitution, Article XI Department Officers, Section 1, shall read:

The elective Department Officers shall be chosen annually at the Department Convention by a roll call vote of the Districts of the Department unless there is a single candidate in which case the roll call shall be waived and a motion to have the Adjutant cast one unanimous ballot shall be accepted, with the exception of the Zone Commanders, who shall be chosen at the "Zone" Caucuses by the Districts making up the "Zone" which that individual Zone Commander is to represent. Each Zone Commander so chosen must be and shall remain a member of a Post within their respective Zone or the office shall be declared vacant.

This amendment is to take effect immediately after approval of the delegates of the convention.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 26-CA-04

A proposed change to the Department Bylaws, Article II Eligibility to Office, Section 2:

Currently reads:

No person shall be eligible for any office in The American Legion, Department of Michigan, or any of the Posts thereof, nor if elected, shall such person continue to hold such office, unless within thirty (30) days after such election such person shall have furnished proper and satisfactory evidence of honorable service, complying with Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution, to the Department Adjutant, in the case of Departmental officers, District Commanders and Alternates, and to the Post Adjutant in the case of Post Officers. Department and Post Commanders shall examine the evidence of eligibility of their respective Adjutants.

To be Amended by:

Removing Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution and replacing it with Article VII, Section 9 of the Constitution.

So that when amended Department Bylaws, Article II Eligibility to Office, Section 2, shall read:

No person shall be eligible for any office in The American Legion, Department of Michigan, or any of the Posts thereof, nor if elected, shall such person continue to hold such office, unless within thirty (30) days after such election such person shall have furnished proper and satisfactory evidence of honorable service, complying with Article VII, Section 9 of the Constitution, to the Department Adjutant, in the case of Departmental officers, District Commanders and Alternates, and to the Post Adjutant in the case of Post Officers. Department and Post Commanders shall examine the evidence of eligibility of their respective Adjutants.

Should Amendment 26-CA-02 fail this amendment is out of order.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 26-CA-05

A proposed change to the Department Bylaws, Article V Department Officers, Section 1:

Currently reads:

Department Commander shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Department and shall be empowered and directed to do such acts as may be necessary and proper to conduct the business of the Department. The Department Commander shall preside at the Annual Convention and at all meetings of the Department Executive Committee and shall issue all necessary orders and may direct the Adjutant or any other Department Officer, when necessary, to proceed to any place on American Legion business. The Department Commander shall appoint all standing committees, subject to approval of the Department Executive Committee, except as otherwise provided. The Department Commander shall represent the Department in all of its relations with 19 Revised 7.12.25 the federal, state and local government and with the people of the State of Michigan. The Department Commander shall see that all provisions of the National Constitution and Bylaws and all policies established under them are duly observed. The Department Commander shall be reimbursed up to the budget allowance for necessary actual travel expenses while in performance of the duties of the office, with any additional funding to be determined by the Finance/ Personnel Committee, subject to the approval of the Department Executive Committee and shall not serve more than one (1) consecutive term.

To be Amended by:

Adding between Department Commander and shall represent the Department "or their designated representative"

So that when amended Department Bylaws, Article V Department Officers, Section 1, shall read:

Department Commander shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Department and shall be empowered and directed to do such acts as may be necessary and proper to conduct the business of the Department. The Department Commander shall preside at the Annual Convention and at all meetings of the Department Executive Committee and shall issue all necessary orders and may direct the Adjutant or any other Department Officer, when necessary, to proceed to any place on American Legion business. The Department Commander shall appoint all standing committees, subject to approval of the Department Executive Committee, except as otherwise provided. The Department Commander or their designated representative shall represent the Department in all of its relations with 19 Revised 7.12.25 the federal, state and local government and with the people of the State of Michigan. The Department Commander shall see that all provisions of the National Constitution and Bylaws and all policies established under them are duly observed. The Department Commander shall be reimbursed up to the budget allowance for necessary actual travel expenses while in performance of the duties of the office, with any additional funding to be determined by the Finance/ Personnel Committee, subject to the approval of the Department Executive Committee and shall not serve more than one (1) consecutive term.



**2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM
 ROOM BLOCK : AUGUST 25 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 3
 LOUISVILLE, KY – GALT HOUSE HOTEL – National HQ Hotel**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Cell Phone _____

Rooms (Quantity): King _____ Queen Double: _____ ADA: _____ Rollaway: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Arrival Time: _____ Departure Date: _____

FLYING / Flight # _____ DRIVING

All Rooms are \$142 per night (Plus 17.66% tax). The first night’s room deposit is required on this form.
 All rooms MUST be made through Adjutant Runyan and the Department block.

Self-Parking \$40/day, Valet Parking \$45/day. Rollaway bed \$25/day, No Suites Available

Last Name	First	Cell #	LEG/AUX/SAL

Notes or Request: _____

Registration fee is \$35.00 for Legion members and guests. **ALA & SAL - send registration fees to ALA & SAL as required for delegates.** Michigan Party: Tickets are \$50 per person, Saturday, 8-29-2026

Enclose check or provide credit card info below:

First room night of \$167.07	x # of rooms	\$ _____
Legion Registration @ \$35 each	x # of badges	\$ _____
Michigan Party @ \$50 each	x # of attendees	\$ _____
National Commander Banquet @ \$75 each	x # of tickets	\$ _____
Total		\$ _____

Michigan Party will be held at Churchill Downs. No transportation provided (6.4 miles from hotel)

Make checks out to: The Department of Michigan American Legion or Cash – Credit Cards taken by calling Ron at 517-220-2748 or Wanda 517-220-2751

**RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED AT DEPARTMENT BY JULY 10, 2026 - ATTN: RON
NO REFUNDS AFTER THIS DATE**



AUXILIAIRE

From the Desk of the President

April 2026



Dawn Gramza
Department President
2025-2026

Spring is in The Air

April is a special month for the American Legion Auxiliary as we celebrate the Month of the Military Child and reaffirm our commitment to supporting the families of those who serve. As members of the Auxiliary, we recognize that while our service members make tremendous sacrifices for our nation, their children experience unique challenges that deserve our attention, support, and appreciation.

PURPLE UP! DAY – APRIL 15

A day to wear purple in honor of military children and to raise awareness about their strength and resilience. Purple symbolizes all the branches of the military and represents how military kids grow and thrive no matter where life plants them. These young heroes often face relocations, new schools, and long separations from their loved ones when parents are deployed. Purple Up! It is our opportunity to show them that their courage goes unnoticed.

How Units Can Celebrate in April.

Wear purple on April 15 and kick off local events recog-

nizing the Month of the Military Child.

Highlight military children's experiences in your local newsletter, social media, or meetings to raise awareness of their unique contributions and sacrifices.

Partner with local schools & community groups to host a Purple Up event or support military families in your area.

Encourage community awareness by asking the Post or city marquees to display messages about the Month of the Military Child and Purple Up! Day.

April is also the month of renewal, and renewal is exactly what membership is about. Renew, recruit, and retain. A simple phone call, a handwritten note, or a friendly reminder can make all the difference. Many members simply need a personal connection to feel valued and encouraged to continue their service.

Members stay where they feel welcomed and needed. Encourage participation in meetings, committees, and service projects. Recognize accomplishments. Celebrate milestones. When members feel appreciated, they remain committed.

How can we get more Juniors to participate in the ALA?

Sue Verville, Chairman, and Shelia Maxwell, Committee Member

We need to encourage our Juniors to participate at the Unit Level, their District Level, and hopefully to become Honorary Junior Officers. Please consider the following strategies:

Help them be active in our meeting, support our programs, and help them feel involved and valued for their participation. Involving them in our "Legion Family" meetings and activities provides them with opportunities to share experience and wisdom with other members.

Promote the Junior Activities Programs by promoting meetings, events, and activities that interest and inspire them. Build a Junior's Activities Program by giving our Juniors a voice and an opportunity to participate.

Use the Junior Activities Handbook. The ALA Junior Activities Handbook has details for organizing and directing a program for Junior members, as well as information on eligibility, ceremonies for initiations, installations, graduations, contests, meetings, and programs. You can download it from the ALA website or purchase it from American Legion Emblem Sales.

The Junior Patch Program. Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary, as well as school-aged Sons of the American Legion members who often collaborate with Juniors, may earn patches for activities in ALA programs, such as Poppy, Leadership, Americanism, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, and more. Participating in the Patch Program is a terrific way to learn about the Auxiliary and our "Legion Family," volunteer in the community, and serve our country's veterans.

Highlight the benefits of being a Junior Member. Promote the available scholarships—Spirit of Youth Scholarship, Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship, and James H Parke Scholarship.

Creating a positive environment where the juniors feel comfortable expressing their ideas and are willing to participate in activities. It will help them feel connected and motivated to continue their involvement. A mentor can provide guidance and enthusiasm to foster a positive relationship. They can provide advice and wisdom.

The key to retaining our Junior members is the way they connect with other members. Engaging our Junior members in helping with our mission-based activities fosters them to develop the skills and values for future leadership roles within our organization.

Before this year ends, Shelia and I would really like to organize a Junior Rally for any Junior members who are interested. It would be only for the day, not an overnigher. We can not do this without the interest. Those Units that have Junior members who would be interested can contact Shelia at this email address (smaxwell2403@gmail.com), Sue (sverville11@hotmail.com), or the Department (Shannon@michalaux.org).

We all need to work together to get the Juniors interested in becoming Honorary Junior Officers again. This is not an issue for just a few members but for all of us. We need to keep our younger members involved so they will continue as senior members. I look forward to hearing from any Unit with Junior members so we can start to plan a Junior Rally.

The Battle Creek VA!

Chris Reed, VA&R Representative

I think we're all ready for this winter to be over and move on to some warmer weather! Our Auxiliary has been busy with lots of fun activities, making it a great year for the Veterans.

Recently, we hosted the annual bowling tournament with a meal in honor of the National Salute to Veterans Week. This was our 3rd year of hosting this event, and it's always a lot of fun!

Other activities we have lined up for the year include the PGA Golf Outing in May, the Summer Concert at the Pavilion in July, the Patient Carnival in September, and we'll wind down the year with Winter Wonderland and Christmas Gift Shop in December. Dates for all of these events are to be determined.

We held the 2025 Christmas Gift Shop on December 10. Fourteen members representing five Units helped this year. We provided gift bags for a total of 322 Veterans. This included the in-house Veterans at the VA, as well as six additional Veteran organizations in the community. I want to thank all Auxiliary Units, Legion Posts, and Son Squadrons, who donated money for the Battle Creek Christmas Gift Shop. I was overwhelmed by the donations we received. They helped us purchase all the items needed for the Gift Shop. Your continued support and generosity are most sincerely appreciated!

In addition to these events, there is one monthly event: Bingo. Many Units have stepped up to help sponsor the monthly bingo, and I believe they all enjoyed it. We can always use volunteers from our surrounding Districts to help. Bingo is on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. and lasts about 1-1/2 hours. It doesn't require many people, just 3-4 volunteers. If your Unit is interested in hosting, I can guarantee a very heartwarming experience that the Veterans love. My contact information is below if you are interested.

As you can see, many events take place at the Battle Creek VA. We are always looking for volunteers who would like to join in the fun. If you have any questions regarding these opportunities, please don't hesitate to contact me at email: ckhud@mei.net or cell: 269-420-1488. We would love to see some new faces, and so would the Veterans!

In addition, we are accepting monetary donations

throughout the year. These funds help us support all of the activities I have listed in this report. Your support is always appreciated. Donations should be made out to the ALA Department of Michigan and mailed directly to 212 N. Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, Michigan 48915. Please be sure to indicate "Battle Creek VA".

After checking with the Community & Volunteer Services staff, we could use the following items donated: Men's tennis shoes – all sizes, Men's colored t-shirts (no white) – sizes XL, 2X and 3X, Men's gloves, Men's coats – 2X, 3X and 4X only, Men's 3-in-1 body wash. Items can be taken directly or shipped to Battle Creek VAMC, Community and Volunteer Service (135) Bldg 10, 5500 Armstrong Road, Battle Creek, Michigan 49037.

On August 12, Barb Parks, Penny Wright, Jackie Skinner, and I attended the annual Battle Creek VA Medical Center Volunteer Luncheon, where we received the Community Service Award! It was an exciting time for our Auxiliary.

Unfortunately, Barb Parks passed away on January 2. She was the past representative for the VA and also a Past District President. She was such a devoted lady to our Veterans and will be terribly missed.

I want to thank Penny Wright for her help and support throughout the year. I appreciate the opportunity to continue serving as the VA&R Representative for Battle Creek and thank all of you for your help and support over the past several years.



At the Volunteer Luncheon L-R - Jennifer Picketts, Brian Pegouske, Chief Community and Volunteer Services, Chris Reed, ALA, Natasha Watson, Acting Medical Center Director, Jackie Skinner, ALA, Penny Wright, ALA, and Joe Devyak. With Barb Parks in front.

Chaplains Corner

Dawn Gilbert, Chaplain

Dear Auxiliary Members: As we welcome the month of April, we also enter an important season of reflection, reporting, and remembrance within our organization. Thank you for all you continue to do in service to our veterans, their families, and our communities. April is the month for annual district reports, and this serves as a gentle reminder to submit your reports to your chair by April 15th. These reports should reflect what your unit accomplished last year, and every program, project, prayer, or act of support matters. It is my sincere hope to receive a complete set of reports from every District President so our spiritual and service accomplishments can be accurately represented at the state level.

I am also gathering prayers for Madam President's Prayer Book. If your unit or district has something meaningful to contribute, please send it in so it may be included in this special collection. As we prepare for our Memorial Service

this June, please ensure that the names of all members who have passed this year are submitted through the online report form, so they are added to the memory garden. Accurate and complete submissions help us ensure every departed member is honored and remembered with dignity in the Memory Garden.

April brings both the promise of spring and the responsibility of remembrance. Thank you for your continued dedication to honoring the past while serving with compassion and purpose. May we move through this month with grace, gratitude, and a spirit of unity.

BE THE ONE

Poppies

Christine Merlington, Chairman



By now, most of you will have turned in your poppy posters and creations to your District Chairperson. We are looking forward to judging lots of poppy items.

As we approach National Poppy Days in May, beginning on Friday the 22nd, remember you can visit ALAFForVeterans.org to download templates for this event. These templates include poppy can wraps and posters to display where you are accepting donations. You can print poppy bookmarks on cardstock and hand them out to the people donating. And when you are finished with your event, remember that there are thank-you certificates and Poppy Day Proclamations you can give to the businesses that allow you to use their locations.

Remember, there is still time to order from the Auxiliary Department of Michigan at www.michalaux.org. Just go to the website, click on forms, scroll down quite a ways, and you will find the order form to print and submit with your check to Department.

Don't forget to send me your photos so we can keep submitting them to the National Poppy Facebook site. Let us show everyone what Michigan can do. There have been some wonderful photos from Michigan this year. You are doing awesome.

Always remember what the poppies stand for and why we do this every year. Keep those memories in your heart and continue to honor them.

A Few Reminders

Anita Mennel, Legislative Program Chair

While we are at the end of our "reporting year", our work is not done. I trust you have been contacting your representatives in both Michigan and Washington, D.C., with specific information about The American Legion Legislative Priorities: <https://www.michiganlegion.org/TAL-MI/>. Every year, the National Organization works hard to compile a list of priorities that will affect our Servicepeople and our Veterans. The new list is available for the 119th Congress, 2nd Session. This is easily found at: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative>.

If you were at the Winter meeting and training in February, you may remember the discussion about ALA members' social media use and its content. I include it here as it needs to get out to all our members.

Reminder that our Organization must maintain a non-partisan image.

While we are currently living in a highly polarized political climate, that has nothing to do with the imperativeness of maintaining our non-partisanship. As a 510(c)19 non-profit organization, we are required to remain non-partisan to maintain our tax-exempt non-profit status.

Additionally, supporting or opposing specific policies, legislation, or political issues is always okay. We cannot support/show preference for political parties or elected officials/candidates over others. To keep it simple, I always say "Policies are Good. People/parties are bad." I understand that certain policies/issues can be very polarizing; however, it is not considered partisan to support one way or the other if political parties are not included in the conversation.

Please be mindful of what you post on social media, especially if your profile is linked to the Organization at any level. As individuals research an organization, they will also look at the individuals involved and the organization's leaders to get a 'feel' for the culture and beliefs. Posting, sharing, commenting, or referencing political parties or political leanings, while tied to the organization, could create the impression that our organization supports a particular political party. When in doubt, ask first or share through an instant message to friends/family individually.

When exercising your Constitutional First Amendment Right to speak out and protest, members must abstain from wearing branded apparel, such as hats, caps, vests, or shirts. Wearing branded apparel gives the appearance of the Organization choosing a political party, belief, etc., putting the organization's Tax-exempt status at risk. Thank you for working on our mission and keeping our focus.

Something Happening at your Unit?

Submit it to the Michigan Auxiliaire!

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

Education

Connie Kovacs, Chair

The school year is not over. This is the most critical time of the year for teachers. They are looking at the students' education more closely to ensure they are ready for the next chapter in their lives. Whether it's finishing the current school year to advance to the next grade level, or maybe finishing their senior year of high school and preparing for college or moving into the workforce. The students are also feeling the stress of the last 8 to 12 weeks.

So, I have a question for you. Have you asked a teacher lately how you can help?

Keep in mind these important dates :

Purple Up Day is April 15; the holiday was selected during the Month of the Military Child. It is an opportunity to honor military children from all branches of the military. Military children across the country play a significant role in their schools, youth organizations, and communities. www.purpleupusa.org.

Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 4-8, so please send cards to your local school's teachers. Donate resources that teachers or underserved children may need at <https://nationaltoday.com/teacher-appreciation-day>.

December 2, 2025

At the regular scheduled meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary, 9th District Association and a regular schedule meeting of the Dale H. Wheeler American Legion Auxiliary Unit 219 members voted to endorse Dawn E. Gilbert for the office of Second Vice President, American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan for the 2026-2027 year.

Dawn is eligible for membership through the service of her husband, Randy A. Gilbert a Cold War Veteran having served in the Army from 1978 to 1990 and is a PUFL member of Dale H. Wheeler, American Legion Post 219 of Fife Lake. Additionally Dawn is eligible through the service of her late father, James J. O'Day, an Army Veteran.

A 23 year member of the Dale H. Wheeler American Legion Auxiliary Unit 219 in Fife Lake Dawn has held office for 20 of those 23 years. Dawn was Treasurer for her Unit from 2019 till 2024 and previously held the office of 1st Vice President, Historian and numerous chairmanships at the unit level.

At the District level Dawn has served as the 9th District Association President for the 2023-2024 year, and has held positions of 1st First President and 2nd Vice President and numerous Chairmanships (Membership, AEF, VA&R).

At the Department Level Dawn is currently serving as Chaplain and has served as Historian, Credential Chairman, Lower Northern Area Membership Chair for two years, and served on the Finance Committee.

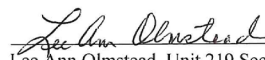
Dawn is a 12 year partner of Missaukee County Salon 300, serving as secretary/Treasurer. Dawn had served as Secretary/Treasurer from 2015 to 2024 for the 8&40 Department of Michigan.

Dawn have been working for 15 years as a Department Assistant for Community Health at Munson Healthcare. She has 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson.

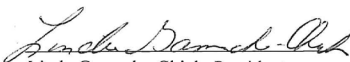
It is with great pleasure with we endorse Dawn for this position, having already served as Historian. We ask for your consideration and support of our candidate for the Office of Second Vice President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, for the 2026-2027 year.



Amy Everett, Unit 219 President



Lee Ann Olmstead, Unit 219 Secretary



Linda Gamache-Chick, President
9th District Association, Dept. of Michigan



Sherry McKissen, Secretary
9th District Association, Dept. of Michigan



Shannon Werner
Executive Director,
Secretary-Treasurer

Attention to Detail is Important

You are all aware of the membership challenges that go on within our organization, both formal and informal. It might make you recruit more members, give you the motivation to get your membership renewals in faster, give you a reason to join and learn how to process membership on Nationals ALA MIS, hold a membership rally, etc.

In my role, given the information I see daily, I suggest that Units make sure the written transmittals are accurate, complete, and error-free. Since January 2026, our office has returned over 70 transmittals due to missing information, missing signatures, missing paperwork, incomplete paperwork, duplicative member payments, calculation errors, checks for the wrong amount, missing eligibility information, etc. Those transmittals equate to 1,174 members that did not get renewed, rejoined, joined or processed.

Some transmittals are sent back multiple times for correction. If we get to the point where a transmittal has been returned three times, I contact the District Pres-

ident and the Unit President to request help to step in and assist in a resolution. Last week, there was a Unit that was getting the same transmittal back for the fourth time. The unit was at 82% of their membership goal; however, if the transmittal we were sending back again had been filled out correctly, they would have been at 98.7% of their goal. It makes a big difference, especially in smaller units.

There are many actions you can take to make sure your transmittals are received and input immediately. There is a Paperwork 101 training course on our website at www.michalaux.org that replaces any instructions or training you may have received before January 2025. Create a system or process to check and finalize your transmittals before sending them in. Ask someone in your Unit or District to review your transmittals for accuracy before you send them to Department. Find a mentor who has a history of successfully processing membership. Get a subscription to National's ALA MIS (American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System) to update your process-it's faster and will cut down on the number of mistakes that occur when processing transmittals.



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

CLIVE R.A. SEYDELL

Detachment Commander 2025-2026



As we move further into spring, I have had the opportunity to attend several events that highlight the strength of the Legion Family and the work we do in our communities. On February 14, I attended the 16th District Americanism Dinner. It was an excellent reminder of the importance of the Legion's Americanism programs and of our continued efforts to promote patriotism, citizenship, and respect for our nation's values. It was a pleasure to join Legion Family members in recognizing the impact these programs have on our youth and communities.

A few weeks later, I traveled to Washington, D.C. with PDC and Legislative Chair Todd VanDam, VA&R Chair Russ Bayliss, PDC Rodney Tolbert, and guests. We visited locations including the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. These historic institutions serve as a powerful reminder of the principles upon which our nation was founded. One of the most meaningful parts of the trip took place on Sunday when we participated in the Sons of the American Legion National Wreath-Laying Ceremony. SAL representatives from across the country laid wreaths at the World War I Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and the Iwo Jima Marine Corps Memorial. I had the honor of laying the Detachment of Michigan wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. That moment held special meaning for me personally, as my father served during the Vietnam War. Being able to represent the Sons of

the American Legion - Detachment of Michigan in honoring those who served and sacrificed was truly humbling.

In addition to the events in Washington, D.C., our travels also allowed us to visit several American Legion Posts along the way. Connecting with members of the Legion Family from other communities is always a reminder of the strength and unity of our organization. While traveling, we also stopped at the National Museum of the United States Army, which highlights the history and service of American soldiers across generations. It was one of several memorable stops made along the coast during our travels.

As we move forward, I encourage all Squadrons across Michigan to remain focused on membership and renewals. Every member plays an important role in supporting the programs of the SAL and the Legion Family. Reaching out to members who have not yet renewed and welcoming new members into our organization helps ensure that we can continue our mission of supporting veterans, strengthening our communities, and promoting Americanism.

I would also encourage members to consider attending the Department Testimonial Dinner on April 18. The testimonial is a great opportunity for members of the Legion Family from across the state to come together in fellowship.

I look forward to visiting more Squadrons across Michigan in the coming months and continuing to work together to strengthen the Sons of the American Legion throughout our great state.

Thank you for everything you do in your communities to support our veterans, our youth, and our nation.



CHAPLAINS REPORT David Seydell, Detachment Chaplain

Hello, my brothers from the SAL, happy spring. I hope you are all well. God bless you all. The summer convention will be here soon. I asked that you all turn in your squadron chaplain's report before June 1, 2026.

Please send your reports to salchaplain@sons.michiganlegion.org or mail them to me: David Seydell, 4033 Garland Dr., Jackson, MI 49201



FROM THE 4TH ZONE John Brown, Commander

Now that spring has arrived, I hope warmer weather has come along with it. Squadron Commanders, please reach out to those who have not paid their 2025-26 dues. Hopefully, everyone has paid and received their 2026 membership card. I hope all squadrons have increased in membership.

Squadron elections are soon taking place. Hopefully, some of our younger members wish to increase activity in their squadron. We all have busy lives with work and family, but it would be great if you could spare some of your time to promote your squadron and the legion programs.

This year's Detachment Convention will be held in Houghton Lake on June 5th - 7th at the Lakeside Resort and Conference Center. If any members in the 4th Zone wish to attend, you can reach out to the Lakeside Resort by calling (989) 422-4000. Backup accommodations are available at the American Inn and Suites in Houghton Lake; their phone number is (989) 422-7829.

I hope to see all of the SAL members from the 9th, 10th, and 19th Districts. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. May God watch over and protect all active service members.

FLAG DONATION

American Legion Post 31 and Squadron 31 of Chelsea bought a 20'X30' American flag for the Chelsea Community Fair. The flag was presented to Chelsea Fair Board member Brian Carden at the regular monthly meeting held on March 5th. The flag will be displayed at the main arena during the Chelsea Fair.



L to R: Squadron Commander John Beeman, Chelsea Fair Board member Brian Carden, and Legion Commander Keith Burba.

Michigan Chaplain Workshop

Hosted by the 5th District

When: Saturday April 25, 2026

Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm
Coffee & Donuts will be provided
Box Lunch will be offered for \$5.00

Where: Cole-Briggs American Legion Post 48
731 North Clinton Street
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

Topics:

- End of Life Burial Benefits
- Navigating & Processing Veteran Benefits
- Anger Management
- Chaplain 101

Keynote Speaker: Chaplain Dave Hansen, USCG

This Workshop is open to Everyone in the American Legion Family from all Post, Units, and Districts

YOU MUST RSVP to Deb Weatherbee by April 15, 2026 for reservation and lunch confirmation.
email - deb560@hotmail.com
Phone - 616-723-2398

Note: This Workshop will not be recorded, and will not be available through Zoom

"Integrating Spiritual Needs From Service Member To Veteran"



MUST RSVP for lunch



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DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
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THE AMERICAN LEGION MICHIGAN BOYS STATE

"A Week That Shapes a Lifetime"

FACEBOOK - A PROVEN FORCE MULTIPLIER

Facebook has given our Boys State Program a dramatic "boost" in marketing volume and audience reach.

In the past 30 days, we have seen an increase of over 57% in views from non-followers. The interactions (Likes, Shares, and Click-throughs) increased by a huge 590%. That has also led to a significant uptick in our website page views, from less than 20 a day to over 70 a day, and more people are staying on our pages. The most interesting is that 90% of the most recent traffic to our website comes from our Facebook page.



Mark Brejcha
Boys State Director

We have aimed to share our story with various audiences who follow the program: Legion Family, Boys State Alumni, parents and especially candidates who are curious about our program. With the new Boys State initiatives this year, including relocation to Hillsdale College, our partnership with the Bill of Rights Institute, and the formation of an Alumni Association, Facebook helps us tell our story and reach our multifaceted audience. Please visit our website and follow us on Facebook as we approach the 100-day countdown to our session from June 21-27.

2026 SAL Membership: March 26th Goal = 29,227
Current Total: 25,898 -88.61%



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 benifits 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

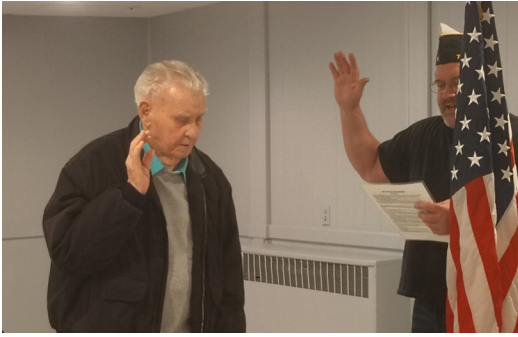
Phil Babcock.....	Charlevoix, Petoskey, Kalkaska, Manistee Ludington, Big Rapids, Lake City
Patty Breas.....	Hastings, Caledonia, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Wyoming, Holland
Brian Brooks	Ann Arbor
Josh Clark.....	Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, Coldwater
Kieshan Counts.....	Bay City, Saginaw, Vassar
Gary Easterling	Detroit
Stephanie Fisher.....	Onaway, Rogers City
Shay Grady.....	Rapid River, Ishpeming Little Lake, Marquette, Gwin
Valerie Johnson	Farwell, Ionia, Lansing, Battle Creek Bath, Grand Ledge, Eaton Rapids, Jackson, Laingsburg, Corunna
Courtney Mills.....	Ravenna, Muskegon, Grand Haven
Lisa Misenko.....	Troy, Oxford, Rochester, Detroit
VSO TBD.....	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

District Meetings

First District TBD Thurs of every month meal @ 5:30 pm & meeting @ 7 pm.	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 May 17, 2026 Blissfield Post 325	Third District Lunch is at 11 am, and Meeting at Noon. May 3rd 2026 at Post 36, Kalamazoo	Fourth District Meetings begin at 1:00 pm. May 17 2026 Diamond Island Post 335	Fifth District Meetings are on the 2nd	Sixth District Service Officer School at 11:10 am (when scheduled), Lunch at Noon, Meetings at 1 pm May 17, 2026 Holt Post 238	Seventh District Lunch at 12:30 with meetings at 2:00 pm May 17, 2026 Lapeer June 2026 State Summer Convention	Eighth District	Ninth District Executive meetings are at 11:00am with Lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm May 9, 2026 Post 221 Frankfort	Tenth District All meetings will start with lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm. May 7, 2026 Post 404, 1267 M-61 Harrison MI 48625	Eleventh District	Twelfth District Coffee and Doughnuts at 9, meeting at 10 am, with a lunch and additional hour after lunch if needed. April 18, 2026 Post 291, Hubbell 53088 Bootjack Rd, Lake Linden, MI 49945	Sixteenth District All meetings start at 7:30 pm 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 & Elec-	Eighteenth District All meetings Meeting for the District Legion and Auxiliary Convene at 2:00 pm. 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 12:30 pm. All meetings will be held at: The Landing Zone Gaylord Bowling Center 1200 Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735. May 9, 2026
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Around the State...

Long Time Veteran, First Time Member



Leonard "Larry" Gaubatz, a WWII Marine Corps veteran, was sworn in by Post Cdr Tom Lossing at the American Legion Post 16 in Lapeer. Larry had never joined a veteran organization until now. He will be 100 years young on April 15.

Finding New Members at the Gun and Knife Show



SAL, Auxiliary and Legion Members from Posts in Milford, Livonia, Farmington Hills, Flint, Linden and Brighton all donated time to help and collected 19 Applications for new Legion Family Members.

Lobbying for our Veterans



Scott Nichols meeting with Annica Burmester & Josh Buckingham aids to Congressmen Thanedar and Dingell. Seeking support for Investing in Women Veterans and the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act.



Legislative Chairman Tim Poxson with Congressman Tom Barrett during the Washington Winter Conference

Detroit Ribbon Cutting

Commander Avie (far right) at the February 25th Ribbon Cutting at the Benjamin O. Davis Veterans Village in Detroit. A new and vital veterans housing project.



The February 25th Ribbon Cutting at the Benjamin O. Davis Veterans Village in Detroit

Medal of Honor

Post 106 is proud to announce that its member CSM (ret) Terry P. Richardson, former Camp Graying Post Command Sergeant Major, was awarded the United States Congressional Medal of Honor on March 2, for actions in Vietnam.



USA HOCKEY'S Salute to Service Honoring The American Legion Department of Michigan

Annie Callahan hosted the American Legion, USA Hockey Arena, Team USA, ONE Stop Veteran Resources, and Folds of Honor Motor City for a Veteran Appreciation night in Plymouth—what a great time, and what an honor to see our Michigan Veterans honored and supported.



1st District Commander Karl Burnett Drops the Puck



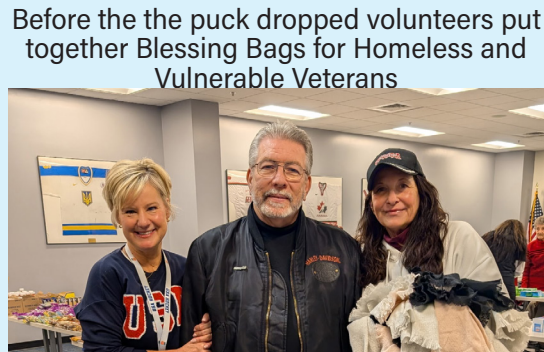
L-R Karl Burnett, Gary Easterling, Congressman Debbie Dingell, Brett Holt & Roger Deaton



Enjoying the Game, First Lady and Commander Judy and Roger Avie with 2nd Vice Commander Roger Deaton and wife Janene



WWII Veteran Ray Hiatt helps pack the Blessing Bags



Before the the puck dropped volunteers put together Blessing Bags for Homeless and Vulnerable Veterans

L-R USA Hockey's Denise Ronayne, Karl Burnett, District 1 Commander and Annie Callahan, Executive Director of MI Torchbearer



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PASSPORT
TO THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

American Legion Family Leadership Training

Registration is required to reserve a spot. Lunch Provided. Free to attend!

Information:



michiganlegion.org/training-2



9:00AM - 4:00 PM

Lunch Provided

Please register to ensure an accurate meal count.

