**LEADERSHIP**

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a vital part of supporting veterans, active military personnel, and their families.

A leader in the ALA must have a deep understanding of the organization’s core mission, values, and goals. Attending mission training and other learning opportunities help us to attain that understanding. We can also do this by actively promoting the ALA mission through our actions and conversations.

Leaders should lead by example. In the ALA, leadership is rooted in service to others. When others see you volunteering to further our mission, it encourages them to do the same.

Effective leaders build and strengthen relationships. This means building trust within our organization and in our communities with clear and open communication. Sometimes it requires listening and using feedback to improve our organization and by showing a commitment to inclusion and growth.

It is important to develop leadership skills in others. A true leader inspires and mentors’ future leaders to carry our mission forward. This can be done by working with members of all ages, providing guidance, answering questions, and encouraging them to take on leadership roles.

Teamwork is important and a leader in the ALA must foster a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among members, encouraging a culture where all members are valued and supported, regardless of their experience level.

Being a positive role model is important. We are all role models to someone and should embody the values of the ALA through our actions and attitudes.

By leading with integrity, fostering collaboration, and empowering others, we can all make a lasting impact on the ALA.

**JUNIOR ACTIVITIES**

Hanging out with the youth in our organization has been exhausting and so rewarding. For some of these kids here I've been watching the grow in our organization over the past few years. We mentor and guide them to become amazing young individuals. Who will empower their friends to fight for what is right. They are our future!

Dept Jr Convention will be held Friday June 13, 2025, at the Newton Christian Conference Center in Newton IA. Conference will begin at 9:00 and Registration at 8:30. Please remind your Jr to wear dress cloths. I know these girls will be tired from their weeklong at camp, but watching these girls step up and lead the youth of our organization is so rewarding. I invite all of you to attend. If you have a Jr that will be graduating, please shoot me a message so I can have certificates made up for them. If your Jr is unable to attend camp but would still love to run for a Dept honorary Jr office, please bring them Friday to the convention.

Dist. Jr Conferences please let me know when those are so I can hopefully attend, as March comes, I will stay closer to home until Lilith decides to make her appearance.

Jr’s have been busy this year. Making poppies, working on patches, volunteering hours to help with Unit/post meals. Doing fundraisers to attend Camp. A few were even able to attend Mission Training for the first time!

Make sure to keep the youth of our organization intrigued so they can become amazing Sr members like us!

I would now like to introduce you to the Dept of Iowa Honorary Jr Auxiliary President Makenzie Banicky.

Now the future of our organization would like to present to you the candle membership.

Friday night we had movie night and bundling crayons and colored pencils. Today, boy have they been busy! Decorating 350 pretzel rods to be distributed after joint session. They have picked 2 projects this money will go to. They have finished bagging pocket flags and are ready to be shipped. But the biggest project we asked for help from all of you. With your amazing donations of time sewing and shopping. These kids have put together 613 busy bags to be given to the VA hospitals we serve. 72 bags were not filled due to not having enough items. Without all of you this could never have been done so thank you all very much!  Thank you to those that have offered to take them to the felicity for us as well. Check in the kids’ bags for their time sheets for volunteer hours from this weekend.

They have also got the opportunity to listen to other members of our organization to find out what they do. I'd like to thank Clif from The Riders, Lenard from the American Legion Foundation, and Doug from the Sons of the American Legion. For enlightening our youth.

**Junior Camp 2025**

**Mid-Winter Conference**

**February 15, 2025**

“Let the Auxiliary Bug Bite You” was the theme Past Department President Sherry McLaughlin had for her theme in 1985-1986. 40 years ago! Her project became a reality when the first Junior Camp was held at the Willowbrook Bible Camp in 1985 in Des Moines. Sherry chose “Ladybugs” as her symbol.

This year we will be honoring Sherry as our 2025 ALA Junior Campers will be known as “Ladybugs”. The Ladybugs will be attending camp from June 8-13. Registration will be from 4 – 5 p.m. on Sunday, the 8th. Please have your “Ladybugs” there and registered during this time frame. Please remember to bring the Parental Waiver form for our records and the medical form for the nurse. We have a very busy week planned for the Ladybugs and I will let our Programs Director Alyssa Sparrgrove will tell you about some of their activities for the week.

I’m excited to share that we have a fun filled week for junior campers this year! On Wednesday, we’ll be doing mini courses with the girls. They’ll include making poppies, ice cream making, learning patriotic songs, and many other cool activities!

In addition, some of our Auxiliary members will be joining us for various programs as well. Junior President McKenzie will discuss her president project and the awesome work she’s accomplished this year. We’ll also have Department Chaplain Karen who will be leading us in a prayer writing workshop. The girls can look forward to us having a yoga workshop along with other exciting and educational programs. Some of the other camp favorites we have planned for the girls include a movie night with popcorn, a flag disposal and lowering ceremony, swimming, kayaking, karaoke, a talent show, and a candlelight ceremony. I can’t wait to see all the fun and learning that awaits us this week!

Our week concludes on Friday with the Department Junior Convention starting at 9:00 a.m. under the direction of Junior Activities Chairman Rosemary Lancaster. The Juniors will be dismissed after the Junior Convention around noon. Please remember to sign your Junior out with the Camp Director and pick up medications from the Nurse.

This year at Department Convention we again will be having our silent auction of “What’s in the Bag”. Everyone has so much fun with this, we wanted to see what new and creative bags will be brought this year. We are asking the District Presidents to also bring a basket/bag for their District. Ideas are Beauty/Fashion, Entertainment, Health/Wellness, Sports equipment, Gardening, Fun and Games, Camping, College or NFL sports teams, Patriotic and Military branches. The District that attains the highest bid will receive $50.00 towards that District’s President’s Project. This will again be held on Friday, July18 with all entries dropped off by 11:00 that morning. Bidding from 12:00 till 7:00 and pick up and pay after Joint Session. We will be located in the Atrium.

All juniors who attended the National Junior Meeting in Des Moines and attends Junior Camp will receive a beautiful American Legion Auxiliary necklace at the Department Junior Convention from Camp Director Doris Jackson and Asst. Alyssa Sparrgrove. Thank you Junior members for leading the way by attending this informational meeting and camp!

Doris Jackson Alyssa Sparrgrove

Junior Camp Director Asst. Camp Director/Program Director

Mid winter AEF presentation

Good morning

My name is Jackie Westover, and I am this year’s chairman for the Auxiliary Emergency fund or AEF. This is a national grant program awarding up to $3000 to eligible members who received damage to their primary residence, been displaced or evacuated or experienced out of pocket emergency expenses as a result of mother nature or due to another personal hardship.

To be eligible to apply, your membership needs to be up to date and maintained for a minimum of 3 years—2 consecutive years plus the current year. The application needs to be received by the national AEF dept within 6 months of the disaster and documentation will need to al-so be provided. Only 1 grant per grantee will be awarded in a 12-month period. If you have been impacted, the criteria and application is on the National American Legion Auxiliary site. How many in this room lived in a community hit by some type of natural disaster? If you find yourself in need of this information, I have brochures and application forms in the back of the room or visit the national website for ALA for details.

In 2024, Iowa alone was hit with floods, tornados, and derechos. People lost their homes and their personal belongings. On a national basis, hardship swept the country with fires out West, the floods in the east, as well as the damage from a very active hurricane season. The need for donations and support is greater than ever and together we can make a meaningful impact.

In 2024, Iowan ALA members were awarded over a total $11,000. Already in the last 2 months on a national basis over $150,000 in assistance funds has been awarded to ALA members, demonstrating the importance of “members helping members.” All applications for assistance are submitted directly to the ALA national headquarters and reviewed by a committee. Confidentiality and privacy is assured for members seeking assistance.

There is not a deadline to donate to the AEF fund. Join the AEF Facebook group to learn about creative fundraising ideas currently used by ALA units. Keep in mind, 100% of every AEF donation goes towards helping eligible ALA members with qualifying expenses. Here are just a few ides.

Collect loose change. There is a printable label on the national website to fit on a pringles can or water bottle. It can be set up in your post or even at home. Collect your loose change. Every coin helps a fellow member in need. Let’s make a big impact one coin at a time. Individuals can also donate either a one-time donation or on a monthly basis. You can hold silent auctions or bake sales. Designate all or a portion from all of the proceeds to AEF. One unit held the Flamingo fundraising event for members. People could pay to have a Flamingo or similar sign put in someone’s yard and the receiver would pay to get them out. This could be a fun way for a fundraiser. One unit offered childcare services for a fixed rate so the parents could enjoy night out on Valentine’s Day. I would like to hear your stories. Please email your stories about your fundraising ideas. Tell me your stores if your communities were hit by a natural disaster this last year and how you educated your members. Please respect individual confidentiality. My email is on the plan of action.

By donating to AEF, you are helping fellow members in need of temporary assistance. You are giving them Hope. When a disaster strikes, you have the power to make an impactive difference. Together we can help rebuild lives and bring hope where it is needed the most.

Chaplain Mid-Winter Presentation

Serving veterans, active military and their families is a team effort. It takes all of us. The chaplain community is an important part of this team, supporting the incredibly important work of the American Legion Family.

The Changing Face of Veterans and Caregivers is one of the focus areas of this year’s Mission Training. Many in this room know these challenges all too well, caring for loved ones and community members, many of which are veterans.

Over 65 million Americans are caregivers; 1 in 5 members of the U.S. population. To put that in perspective, if this group was average - and we know ALA members are well above average - about 30 of you would be caregivers. I expect the number is actually much higher than that. After all, what could be more honorable than serving those who have served our nation? If you’re willing and able, please stand if you’ve been or currently are a caregiver.

This responsibility can take a toll on the mental and physical health of the caregiver. It is important that caregivers take time to focus on their wellbeing. Peter Rosenberger, author of Hope for the Caregiver: Encouraging Words to Strengthen Your Spirit, offers insights for caregivers to live a calmer, healthier, and more joyful life. He credits God’s presence, strength, and faithfulness as key elements to this approach.

This goes beyond the direct caregivers. How can we support the caregivers? Do they need a respite to recharge? Would they appreciate helping you with medical appointments or housework? Everyone’s situation is unique and just because they don’t ask doesn’t mean that help would not be appreciated.

We’re giving away a copy of Rosenberger’s book. Verlinda, please draw the winner from those that registered at the Programs Fair. The new owner of this book is First Name - Last Name.

For the rest of you, check with your local library to read a copy. If they don’t have it, donate a copy to them. Share it with others and discuss it with your unit members. Most importantly, ask how your unit can support the caregivers in your unit and the community. For example, my home unit Woodward, took my Dad, a WWII vet, back and forth to Dialysis in Des Moines.

I would encourage you to heed the words of Matthew 5:15 “No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house.” Let your light shine!

In closing, I have a request for all of you. I’d like you to contribute prayers, poems, song lyrics, pictures, and artwork to Verlinda’s Book of Prayers. I’d also like to possibly include your submissions in the monthly newsletter called the Chaplain Checkpoint. I’ve already received a poem called “Don’t Quit” from Carol Mooney.

Please remember we can accomplish great things by serving others and showing kindness in all things that we do. God Bless America and our members, veterans, active military and their families.

Karen Ripperger

American Legion Auxiliary

Department of Iowa Chaplain

MARKETING

Great news everybody the marketing committee, which includes each and new members as items for sale as fundraisers, folios jackets, and raffle tickets! Insert flyers for all three this is one way we can involve all members, including those not members of our legion family. They can buy raffle tickets, portfolios, or jackets go to the website to learn how to purchase these or use the QR code For quick and easy purchasing. We need everyone’s support with these projects so thank you for being a member.

Sent from my iPhone

Children and Youth

     Helping, Assisting and Supporting our Youth in the many ways they attribute their time, talents and actions in our community and towards helping Veterans groups is our Main Objective.

Gladbrook American Legion Auxiliary held a "Kids Shopping Day" with support from area churches, organizations and individuals.  Aprox. 175 children shopped for their family with gifts ranging from toys to gift baskets.

The couple girls from the Montezuma area made mini loaves of Friendship bread for the school staff....Much Loved!

      In our Zoom meetings we learned of Unit Jrs. raising monies from a Lemonade Stand to donate to St. Jude’s Children Hospital. Or ones collecting and distributing cold weather apparel and blankets to needy families. and the Youth Group packing bags for their County Weekend Food Program.

      A Heroism Award goes to an 18 yr. old saving the life of a basketball player knowing CPR and the use of an AED.

      Lets Join Hands with the Community Service Program, Americanism Program and the Education Program with all the Scholarships available to our Youth.

      With April right around the corner----lets Not forget it's "Month of the Military Child" and the 15th. is "Purple Up Day".

Plan to have a "Military Childs Table" at your Spring Conferences. i.e. A potted flowering plant , represents children growing and thriving wherever they are.

A Hand Spade--representing the child being moved to new places at short notice.

Birthday Hat and Unlit Candles---representing missed birthdays and holidays.

A Baseball & glove and Ballet Slippers----for the Missed Special Occasions.

Family Photo----Showing the Strength of Country and the Bond between military families.

American Flag----Representing the Commitment of Military Families to National Service.

Thank You for this opportunity to serve and time on the program.

Elaine Brookins

ALA Community Service

**Can you guess?? Is this Community Service or something else?**

1. You sponsor an event which honors First Responders. Is this community service or something else? **Something Else-National Security (Remember, serving anyone in a uniform is National Security)**
2. You organize a food drive for the Homeless in your community. Is this community Service or something else? **Something Else-Community Service.**
3. What about if you collect food items/snacks from the community for the VA facilities and Veterans Homes? **Something Else-his is VA & R**
4. You sponsor a Military Baby Shower. Is this community Service of Something else? **Something else-National Security (serving someone/family in a uniform)**
5. You organize a supply drive of items for a disaster in your community? Is this community service or something else?  **Community Service**
6. You organize a drive to collect funds for a disaster? Is this community service or something else? **Something Else-AEF (because you’re raising funds and not supplies.)**
7. You organize a drive to collect school supplies for children. Is this community service or something else? **Something Else-Children & Youth**
8. You do a flag day program at your elementary school? Is this community Service or something else? **Something Else-Americanism or possibly Education**
9. You host a community holiday party. Is this community service or something else? **Community Service.**
10. You collect and distribute gifts at your local Nursing Home? Is this Community Service or something else? **Community Service**
11. You gather and distribute comfort items to the homeless? Is this community service or something else? **Community Service.**
12. What about if you collect items for the stand-downs? Is this Community Service or something else? **Something else-VA & R**
13. You organize a Christmas shopping day for the community which allows children to come shop for their family. Is this community service or something else? **Probably Children & Youth.**
14. You coordinate and organize a Blood Drive. Is this community Service or something else? **Community Service**
15. You encourage the youth in your community to send cards to your VA facilities? Is this Community Service or something else? **Something Else-VA & R**
16. You help with Wreaths Across America along with other community members? **Something Else-VA&R**

Remember, if it involves collecting & distributing to veterans, it is VA & R. If it is collecting, hosting, distributing to anyone in a uniform, it is National Security. If it involves children, it is Children & Youth.

However, Crystal Daulton at National Headquarters stating that when you fill out your report on your Activities, it will funnel the activity to the correct program. The most important part is to REPORT.

Several Things to remember:

The California Wildfires are still in need of supplies. See the email blast that came out on how to donate. Money is always welcome so needed items can be purchased. North Carolina is still hurting from the floods and tornados from last fall and are still in need of supplies and money. Considering doating to some of these areas.

Lastly, remember American Legion Family Day which is April 26th, 2025 this year. It is always the last Saturday in April as passed by Resolution by the NEC of the American Legion in October 2022. Open up your Legion posts to your communities. Be as elaborate as you wish or as simple as you want. (Read ideas from American Legion Family Day sheets)

American Legion Family Day

April 26, 2025

 What better way to show Community Service than to invite your community into your Legion Post Home to socialize and to learn about the American Legion and Auxiliary. In October 2022, The American Legion passed a resolution establishing American Legion Family Day to be observed annually on the last Saturday of April. In 2025, April 26th would be that day. Posts are encouraged to open their doors to the community for a day to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion members, Legion Riders and the American Legion Auxiliary. Now is the time to talk to your local American Legion, Sons & Riders to start the planning for this event.

American Legion Family Day in your community can be as elaborate as you want or as simple as you can. You can invite special speakers such as the Mayor, City Officials, Military, or Local Law Enforcement. You can serve a meal and provide some sort of entertainment. You can hold raffles and publicize your event. You can provide games for the kids to participate in.

Bottom line is, you can do as much or as little as you want. If you want to just provide a free-will-offering meal and open the Post home, that is fine. Publicize your event and make it a fundraiser for your Legion or Auxiliary and share a little bit about what the American Legion Family is about. Who knows, you might pick up some new members. The time to start planning this event is now. When you’re done with the event, publicize what you did to encourage further recognition of the American Legion Family.

Please consider doing something in your community to promote American Legion Family Day on April 26, 2025.

**2024-2025 National Community Service Program Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements**

All award submissions must include a narrative (either a PDF or Microsoft Word document) explaining why the department or unit you are nominating should receive the award. You may also upload other supporting documentation that will give the committee a full picture of the important mission work your department or unit has accomplished this year. These files can be photos (JPG, JPEG or TIFs — no larger than 14MB) or PDF documents.

**Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program (per division)**

* National’s deadline: All unit entries must be submitted via [electronic form](https://member.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form) by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.
* Please submit to Wendy Riggle by May 15th.

**Unit Award: Best Promotion of American Legion Family Day (one per division)**

* National’s deadline: All unit entries must be submitted via [electronic form](https://member.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form) by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.
* Please submit to Wendy Riggle by May 15th.

**Department Award: Best Department Community Service Program (per division)**

* National’s deadline: All department entries must be submitted via [electronic form](https://member.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form) by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.
* Even if you do not submit a report for the above 2 awards, please send me a short report on what your Unit does for Community Service so Iowa can “show up” when reporting Community Service.
* Please submit to Wendy Riggle by May 15th.

***Please note – when applicable, unit and department deadlines differ.***

Questions? Contact  **wrigg1\_@hotmail,com**

Submit reports to: **wrigg1\_@hotmail.com** **by MAY 15, 2025!!**

***Remember, every Unit does Community Service. It is what we do!***

***Think of the activities you do in your community and report, report, report!!***

**Legislative Script for Midwinter**

**Good morning, Central Division Vice President Rosemarie Hauck, President Verlinda, members and guests.**

**Me – Hi \_\_\_\_\_, good unit meeting tonight, wasn’t it?**

**ALA Member – Yes, the auxiliary has so much to offer. I just wish I could do something for the Legislative program, but I’m no good at calling my congressmen or writing them letters.**

**Me – What if I told you the American Legion has a very simple way you can use your smart phone to email your congressmen and let them know how you stand on upcoming legislation that impacts our servicemen and veterans?**

**ALA Member – I’d probably have to load another app on my phone, and I already have too many.**

**Me – No app needed.**

**ALA Member – Well then, I’d probably have to log in to the American Legion’s website and have another password to remember.**

**Me – Nope, no login needed, either.**

**ALA Member – but I still don’t know what to write or when to contact my congressmen.**

**Me – the American Legion has that covered, too!**

**ALA Member – but then I’d still need to look up my Congressmen’s emails and add them to my contacts list, right?**

**Me – Nope, the American Legion takes care of that, too!**

**ALA Member – Wow, now you have me curious! What is this amazing tool?**

**Me – Madame President, may I have your permission for Marj and anyone in the audience who wishes to participate to turn on their phones if they need to? Okay then, get out your phone and I’ll show you! Now, open your camera and scan this QR code. Anyone else in the audience, if you haven’t already signed up for Legislative Alerts, please feel free to join in!**

**ALA Member - Okay, got it**

**Me - That opened up an American Legion website called Grassroots Action Center, right?**

**ALA Member – yes**

**Me - Okay, now scroll down a little to a section called “Sign Up for Alerts” . Enter your email and zip code where it asks and tap the arrow. That opens up a form where you will fill in your information. Name, email, American Legion Relationship and address are required, but signing up to receive text alerts is optional. At the bottom of the form are three boxes, the two already checked must stay checked and the box to Subscribe to Weekly Updates is optional. Make sure you tap Save when you’re done and that’s it, you are signed up!**

**ALA Member – Okay, but now what?**

**Me – Whenever the American Legion would like you to contact your congressmen about upcoming legislation impacting our military and veterans you will receive an email from “Grassroots Coordinator” similar to this example. In it the pending legislation is detailed, and if you support the American Legion’s stand there is a highlighted link to click on that brings you to the Grassroots Action Center website with an email already written to your representatives in Congress. You have the option to edit the email message if you wish, then just tap “Send Message” and you’re done!**

**ALA Member – Wow, that’s really easy, thanks!**

**Me – You’re welcome! Now, audience, I may be preaching to the choir here because many of you may already be signed up, but please either take a card with the QR code on it if you didn’t already get one at the programs fair this morning or, even easier, take a picture of this QR code, take the card or picture back to your districts, counties and units and do what I just did with Marj. Nearly everyone has their cell phone with them at district, county or unit meetings, and there’s really no reason we couldn’t get nearly 100% participation in our Legislative program!**

**President Verlinda, thank you for this opportunity to promote an important aspect of the American Legion Auxiliary’s Legislative program.**

Hello

Thank you, madam president Velinda, Vice president Kim, Executive Director Crystal and all you our members, I can’t believe we are at Mid-Winter already, before you know we will be at Dept Convention here in Des Moines,

1st I would like to say Thank you to Ann Rehbein for letting us know about the USS Bulkeley and that our service members could use supplies onboard and I had 4 units from 2nd District that sent item to them totaling $471.00. Thank you, 2nd District, if any other District did send Items please let me, And **Iowa’s many hands of service does get things done!**

Our National Chairman for National security Michele DeGennaro has had two Zoom meeting with all dept National Security chairman’s we had two so far and I have learned a lot from other Dept for National security, The big one for National Security is that she would love it if we had a service member nominated from every dept, and every branch of service. At the programs fair this morning I had the salute to service members award application, If you did not get one I do have extra with me, Let us show Michelle how proud Iowa is of it service members

That is all I have for you now as I believe my time is up.

Thank you, Madam president Velinda and Vice President Kim executive director Crystal, and my ALA family.

Carol Mooney

2024-2025 National Security Committee person

**Iowa American Legion Auxiliary Girls State**

Good morning- Afternoon!

Central Division Vice President, Rosemarie, Department President Verlinda, Auxiliary Members, and Guests

The Iowa American Legion Auxiliary Girls State 2025 is scheduled to begin in 3 months, 28 days. Are you ready? But the main question is will we be ready? The answer is a resounding YES to myself- young ladies come to Girls State to experience the best week in their lives and I am not going to take that chance away and disappointment. The Girls State board has worked tirelessly- striving to make it happen. Board members- Verlinda Prior, Crystal Wright, Michele Long, Ann Rehbein and myself. I appointed Michele Long assistant director and Jen Crull- Dean of Government with approval from the board. They have taken the challenge, joined forces and are moving forward. Girls State 2025 is in the works for everyone.

 Girls State- June 15- 20th will be held at Drake University. Again- I ask Are you ready? Did you submit your unit’s reservation for the unit’s representative, one or more? Did your unit receive the unit’s personal code so your selectee can register? Has your unit selected the representative? Has she or they registered?

 Let’s discuss one question at a time- the deadline for unit reservations is March 15th, by a recent board approval vote. We hope everything went okay, and everyone reserved the number of spots that was needed, easily. As of today, every unit’s contact person should have received the infamous code that is needed so the tentative attendee can log in to CampWise so they can register.

 Now, the selection question- I realize many of you have already selected but if not, we do have a waiting list of girls who would like to attend, please contact Crystal if interested. When selecting- use the guidelines as set in the Bluebook and please make sure she is both mentally and physically able to attend. The week of Girls State is mentally and physically challenging for the citizen. Each day goes by very quickly as the citizens are busy from first thing in the morning till later in the evening. Also, remind the citizen, your unit’s or posts’ Representative that she cannot arrive late or leave early. If she would do either, a part of the experience is lost, and it cannot be relieved. By stressing these simple points- the girls state board hopes, your unit will not lose anything, and your attendee will have a terrific time while attending. After asking your representative to attend, please keep in contact with her. Citizen registrations are due no later than March 31st, for the purpose of insurance information. All paperwork needs to be read, filled out completed, initialized, signed by parents and submitted before the registration is complete and must be done by the deadline. Again, remember to keep in contact with your selectee- Remind her to check out the Girls State web page for pertinent information. And to apply for the Samsung Scholarship if she is eligible. Details for the scholarship can be found on the American Legion Website, under the Boys State tab or actual Samsung scholarship tab.

 After the attendee’s registration has been finished, the sponsoring unit or post will receive notification of the completed registration and an invoice for payment. Said payment is to be made to CampWise, directly.

 My part of this process of getting ready- The daily schedule has been worked on. Speakers have been asked and booked. Field Trip to the capitol has been arranged as well as the transportation. Service Projects have been thought about, discussed and supplies have been ordered. This year as a part of the service project, the girl state board is requesting the attendees each bring a personal care item to be given to the stand downs. Each attendee will receive a note stating the request with guidelines for their contribution to be brought to Girl State. The manual has begun to be updated and ready for print.

 Along with previously mentioned items, former staff have been contacted to reapply. These volunteers do not get any monetary payment for their time and expertise. They each volunteer because of the burning desire they all carry in their hearts to help young women achieve. Would any former staff please stand for recognition? This program continues to survive because of these volunteers and the ones before them who over the years have cared so much about the future leaders of tomorrow.

 Speaking of needs- Along with staff- A nurse is a constant need. As I stated last July- having more than one nurse was a true asset to the program, and the sanity of the nurses as well as the administration. Please ask around, this need is great and what an experience for someone. We are also looking for a pianist, if you are interested, please reach out to me to discuss details. If you are considering being on the staff- apply. Apply on the Auxiliary website under Girls State- To continue with other needs of course, help sponsor a seat on the chartered bus for the field trip, gift cards to Hy-Vee, Walmart, Walgrens, or Sams are graciously accepted as well as cash to help secure the success of Girls State. The board hopes to be able to give each city mayor a personal gavel to remember their week by. If you have some extra change- we will take that, too. Last year we had a special guest presentation- hands on Self- defense, where the citizens learned a few simple techniques. I personally would like to have him again this year but that does cost DOLLARS. Please send monetary donations to the Department office, earmarked Girls State so it can be recorded successfully. However, mail the gift cards to me so I can record them, then I will send them to the Department Office.

 The Iowa American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Closing ceremony 2025 will be June 20th with the flag lowering commencing tentatively at 5:15 PM and inauguration to begin at 5:30 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend these functions. Join us for an evening of beauty, speeches, music and tears.

 This Saturday evening, (TONITE) the infamous silent auction will commence in the pool area with a twist. Along with white elephant items to place bids on, plans are to have themed baskets and homemade food items for sale to be given to the person with the highest bid. With so many great options offered at the auction, I hope you have all brought your checkbook, cash or we will even take plastic. Girls State cashiers aim to please. So please come, look and bid.

The Girls State Board and staff are excited to share this week with the young women of Iowa- Some of the week will be the same- some of the activities will have changes- but we hope the experience for all the girl state citizens will be an experience to remember that soon will not be forgotten. The attendance will continue to increase.

I ask again- Are you ready? We are just about ready; with just a few things left to complete- we have the date, the place, some speakers, so we are almost ready- all we need now are the finishing touches and Girls State attendees. That is your part- please don’t fall short now- assist your selectee on the registration process. Today we Learn- so Tomorrow we Lead, Girls State motto for citizens and us to follow.

I personally thank you for your continuing support and I Thank you for your attentiveness. It truly does take Many Hands working together for the common cause and making the Girls State program excel.

Submitted by: Bev Copple,

**Americanism Article/Mid-Winter – Mary Andersen, Department of Iowa Chair**

If you are reading this article electronically, links are provided for your convenience. Continue to go to our Americanism Facebook Page for monthly updates (if not more often!). You cannot share directly from that page, as it is a private group, but you can copy the material to your device and share multiple places. (And please do!)

Our Essay contest is nearing completion! Please wrap up your local contests, select a winner and forward your winners to me BEFORE April 1st. (No Fooling!) I must have a Department Winner selected and forwarded to our Division Chair shortly after that, and we DEFINITELY want our winners to go on to the National level! Your help in sending me timely submissions will allow that process to be a smooth one. Thank you in advance! Here is the link to the information: <https://www.legion-aux.org/americanism-essay-contest>

Here are a few of the guidelines as posted on the National Website/Americanism National Chairman’s blog post:
**Class             Grade Level             Word Requirement**
I                       3rd and 4th                  150 – 250
II                      5th and 6th                  250 – 300
III                     7th and 8th                  350 – 400
IV                    9th and 10th                450 – 500
V                     11th and 12th              450 – 500
VI                    Students with special needs – word count should correspond with student’s grade level.
The decision of the judges shall be final. Use the essay checklist and make sure you complete the 2025 essay cover sheet. The name and signature of the teacher may be signed by the parent for home school students and by a unit if the essay was a project for the Juniors.

The topic for the essay again is “What does America the Beautiful mean to me (regarding veterans and our military)”? I would highly recommend taking a look at the lyrics of the patriotic song “America the Beautiful” for inspiration, if students are hitting a writer’s block. Last quarter, I mentioned the 3rd verse (“O beautiful, for heroes proved in liberating strife, Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life”). This time, I suggest the next verse: “O beautiful, for patriot’s dream, that sees beyond the years…” I know that my own hope is that the dream of the patriots who began the revolution hundreds of years ago will continue on in the dreams of my grandchildren’s grandchildren…. our future patriots.

Our other focus is Star Spangled Kids, which are activities in conjunction with local schools and youth groups. President’s Day is a great day to get into your schools (if they are in session) to talk to our students about our flag or other topics of Americanism and promote our Americanism essay contest. You could lead a virtual tour of the Presidential monuments in Washington, D.C. – a short video example (6 minutes) is in this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTZQ9bta31w> and there are several more available with a search on YouTube. You can also present Citizenship Awards to local students who have demonstrated the ideals of the U.S. Constitution. Since Veteran’s Day and Constitution Day have already passed, you can distribute patriotic coloring books for children in the lower grades, or visit school on March 17 (the “half Birthday” of Constitution Day) and talk about “How Lucky are we” (a link to St. Patrick’s Day as well as the half Birthday of our Constitution) that we have the U.S. Constitution! Coming up in April, you could also visit schools on Patriot’s Day, April 15 (again, if they are in session), to promote the programs of American Legion Baseball, introduce your Boys and Girls State citizens for the summer, and continue flag and Constitution education.

Remember to report all of your activities and turn those in to me by April 30. I look forward to hearing what you have done this year! Your winning essay entries and year-end reports can be emailed to me at: andersma9678@gmail.com for quickest delivery. If you want to mail via USPS, you can find my mailing address in the ALA blue book.

God bless America!

Mary Andersen, Department Chair

**Department of Iowa**

**ALA Historian**

**Mid-Winter Report**

**February-2025**

Helen Hildebrand

It is my duty as your elected Department Historian, to record events across our great state. Therefore, I need your help, so my report compiled for this year shows all the things we have done during this year.

What better way to report this is to record and report activities of our American Legion Auxiliary and include the entire American Legion Family.

Let me know when you have done things like:

* Celebrating the members in your unit, and their families
* Document when someone did a great deed or reached a milestone with your unit.
* Think about who your mentors are, and document how they helped you or your unit grow.
* Do a report on a special veteran in your life and submit this as you are recording the history that veteran might not share with someone else, and will be lost forever is not written down.
* Document when you bring attention to your organization, be it with newsletter articles, window displays in your community, or a float in a local parade where you bring awareness to others on the American Legion Auxiliary.
* Incorporate Verlinda’s theme, symbol, colors, and songs into your projects, and report on it as well.

Write an article about these things, as this is all history in the making. Send these to me, (my info is listed in the blue book) as they can become part of my report of the ALA Member History report, that will be documented and included in Verlinda’s books.

Remember to send in a year-end report by April 30th. This should include all that you have done within your unit and community to show support and honoring The American Legion Family and our veterans.

If you have taken pictures, please forward. You can do it electronically. Just remember to document the important information about the picture of who is in it, what you are doing, why you were doing, along with where it happened.

As a special request from our National President, during our recent Historian Zoom meeting, President Trish told us how she started taking pictures of the unit charter as she visited the units during her travels, and noting which National Auxiliary President signed the charter. She has put out the challenge to Department Historians to help collect and submit pictures of unit charter, as she is worried that she might end up missing a charter signed by one of the National Auxiliary President’s.

President Trish loves history and would love to put together a booklet where she has a picture of a charter signed by each of our National Auxiliary Presidents. So please help me fulfill her wishes by taking a picture and submitting it to me electronically. I will forward them to our National Historian to compile the collection and we can see what becomes of this collection at this year’s National Convention.

Trish knows she might not make it to all Departments, but with our help she will have one from our department and you never know which charter picture will fulfill the missing piece of her puzzle.

**Public Relations -Alida Kolthoff- Mid-Winter 2025**

Public Relations... the professional maintenance of a favorable public image by an organization.

Public Relations is the responsibility of all members of the American Legion Auxiliary, at all levels. Often, we talk of Public Relations in terms of news articles and social media. It is absolutely that...but also more.

Public Relations is the relationship you as a unit member and your overall unit has with the community that you serve within. It is how you dress, how you brand, your flyers, your activities and your demeaner.

How you dress and how you brand. Every event has a ‘dress code’ a level of acceptable/expected dress. As you are preparing for your event remember that you are a representative of the American Legion Auxiliary. Are you wearing something with the brand? Do your clothes look nice, no stains, rips, or offensive graphics or language? If you are in a more professional attire are you wearing your pins, your name tag? I recently saw from the American Legion Auxiliary Southern Division a quick guide on how to wear your pins, it is helpful in knowing how to place your pins and how many to wear. You are a representative of this organization, and you should present yourself as such.

Your Flyers and promotional materials. Did you know the American Legion Family has a brand guide that includes fonts and colors to use in promotional materials. Yes it is your traditional red and dark blue but it specific shades of those colors. This promotes continuity across Units, and the greater organization. The Branding guide is available on the National website and covers all branches of the family.

Your Activities and Demeanor. Your activities and actions should show the American Legion Auxiliary in a positive light. It should showcase the wonderful programs and be positive promotion of the organization. When the community and it’s people have positive interactions with your unit and it’s members they are more willing to give, to join, and to come back to future events.

DID YOU KNOW...On the Department of Iowa Facebook page a new and (hopefully) interesting tidbit of information is shared each Monday and Thursday Morning. Some have been more general knowledge that you can share with members and nonmembers...coming up will be some committee and historical information (which i am super excited about) that you can share with your members. If you have an interesting tidbit of information about a committee, program, or historical fact please share it with me and you may just see it on an upcoming DID YOU KNOW.

I would love to hear from you about all the great things your unit, county, and district are doing. You can snail mail me or email your articles or tag me in the comments of your social media post.

**Department Finance Committee**

We are dedicated to continuing the programs of the Iowa American Legion Auxiliary. Many cost saving measures are being considered. But we need your help.

First, we have nearly $2700 in unpaid obligations. If your Unit has not paid current obligations, please submit as soon as possible. The Gold Club was established to support special projects and help with the operation of the Department. Have you paid your Glod Club Dues? Want to join?

Several things being considered are going digital with the quarterly newsletter. We already have a digital version that emails out twice a month. Would you be in favor of stopping the Communique that appears in the Iowa Legionnaire? We asked in the last issue about a gift certificate offered. We had 14 responses!!!! That is a .0001 response rate. Have you read the paper?

We have not purchased a new vehicle for several years even though the policies require we trade every three years. We are now on year 6. We need to consider what is next. With the COVID outbreak, miles were not added at the usual rate. The van is in great shape so we will keep on trucking!

Your Finance Committee is committed to keeping our organization stable. We try to save wherever we can. That said, we are preparing a budget based on our income from Member’s dues. Your dues are divided into three categories. Of the dues collected in your Unit, the National organization receives $18, the Department receives $10, and your Unit receives the remainder that your Unit collects. Budgets are based on projected membership. If your Unit does not reach your Unit Goal, it affects the budget of the Unit, the Department and the National organization. Bottom Line, we are membership based. No members, no income to continue our programs and to help our Veterans, our active-duty service members, and their families.

Please reach out to renew or recruit members to help cost saving measures. The alternative is to see another dues increase in the near future. Are you ready?

Mid winter AEF presentation

EDUCATION MID-WINTER CONFERENCE 2025

Donna Flewelling, Chairman

Math is a huge part of education. We use it every day of our lives. No matter what occupation you have, you use math. Do you have a favorite number? Is there a number you embrace, are superstitious about, or just signifies something special in your life? I have chosen the number 3 today to be my special number. We all know the stories of the 3 little pigs, the 3 bears, and the 3 Billy goats gruff. How do we know about these stories? Did you read them in school, or did someone read them to you as a child? The number 3 is associated with a lot of religious beliefs. It is also a number of times: past, present, future or birth, life, and death. Another measure of time is months. The 3 month is March which is when the National Scholarship applications are due, but in 3 months from now is May and most schools will be ending their education year and seniors will be graduating! These seniors may have plans to further their education which will include a hefty price tag in most cases. They may need help doing the math to see how they can finance the price on the price tag. For some, the new way of math did not include how to pay for something like this. This is where the auxiliary can reach out and offer a hand by getting the word out about our merit awards. At the Department level there are 4 options available by filling out only 1 application form! What a great deal, one and done! Along with the application there are 3 letters of recommendation required, an essay, and a transcript which can be used for all the merit awards on the application form. These must reach me by June 1 and the winners will be announced at the Department Convention in July. The applicant must be a resident of the State of Iowa, a direct or adopted descendant of a veteran, and will be attending an accredited school within the State of Iowa. Remember a deadline is a deadline.

Give 10 to education is also a great program that all units can lend a hand to your local school. Contact your school before you do a collection of items to make sure they can use the items that you collect in groups of ten. Keep track of these items and don't forget to report them! I would love to hear from you about this and any activity that your unit did for American Education Week in November. April 15 is Purple up day for the Military Children so also include this activity in your report. Along with these important dates to remember is Teacher Appreciation Week May 5-9. The teachers provide many hands in our youth's education so reward them in appreciation. If your local units provide scholarships or merit awards, be sure to get this information to your school counselor. Don't forget about the National scholarship’s deadline for March ls\ another very important deadline is a deadline. They must be submitted electronically and can be found on the National Website www.legion-aux.org under the scholarship tab. Be sure to reach out and help your student through these processes with Iowa's many hands of service. Hmmmm this reminds me of a song by Diana Ross" Reach out and touch somebody's hand, make this world a better place if we can. "