

# AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

# The Message

North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary  
1801 23rd Ave N, Rm 113, Fargo, ND 58102-1047  
701-253-5992 • [www.ndala.org](http://www.ndala.org) • [facebook.com/NorthDakotaALA](https://facebook.com/NorthDakotaALA)

## December Gift Shops A Success

Thank you to all units and members for your donations to the Department earmarked for Gift Shops at the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon and the VA Medical Center in Fargo.

Residents of Lisbon were treated to a catered dinner on Friday, December 22, 2023, and each received a blanket for Christmas. Patients at the VAMC were given the opportunity to choose a gift for themselves and a family member. After three years of COVID shutdowns, it was a pleasure to be able to sponsor an in-person gift shop again!

The Philanthropy and Youth (PaY) group from Northern Cass High School donated tie-blankets to the VAMC Gift Shop. We also received a wonderful donation

of vintage wrapping paper for the project from Jim, a veteran who attended an early morning appointment at the VA that day. Jim heard about the 'gift shop' and donated several rolls of embossed red and green paper. A great team of ladies assisted veterans in choosing a gift, wrapping them, and preparing them for mailing. Santa is proud of his VAMC elves.

A Creative Arts competition is planned and will be held at the VAMC in Fargo on September 10, 2024. Any veteran enrolled in the Fargo VA system is eligible and encouraged to participate. More information can be found on the VA's website at [www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/](http://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/). Look under the programs link for the Creative Arts competition. The

last competition was held at the Fargo VAMC in 2018, so this is exciting news that it is happening once again.

The 2024 National Creative Arts Festival is being held in Denver, Colorado, in May. The date for the 2025 festival has not yet been announced. Winners from the 2024 competitions will participate in the 2025 festival.

Please be sure to report your Year-End volunteer hours and funds spent in support of our Auxiliary mission to your unit president. In turn, we can report your good deeds to our Northwestern Division and National Headquarters.

Thank you.  
**LaVonne Matthews**  
VA&R Chairman



MaKayla Allmaras (left) and LaVonne Matthews, Department VA&R Chairman, shown with tie-blankets designed, assembled, and donated by the Philanthropy and Youth group from Northern Cass High School.



VAMC Gift Shop Elves (l-r): Jeanine Allmaras; LaVonne Matthews, Department VA&R Chairman; Marge Gourde; Geri Langseth; Virginia Borgen; Faye Majerus, Department VAVS Volunteer Rep for VAMC Fargo; Gloria Covert, Department President; Virginia Kraushaar, Adjutant Gilbert C. Grafton Post 2 Fargo.



Wrapping paper donation - Jim (center) with Department President Gloria Covert (l) and VA & R Chairman LaVonne Matthews (r).

### Upcoming Dates

- Americanism Essay Contest – Due March 15
- Education and Parley Scholarships – Due April 1
- Poppy Poster Contest – Due May 1
- Unit/ Service Member of the Year – Due May 1
- ALA Flickertail Girls State Applications – Due May 15
- ALA Flickertail Girls State Program – June 9-14
- Department Convention in Bismarck – June 21-23

## Gackle Unit 250 Hosts Patriot Time

Mayer-Morlock Auxiliary Unit #250 of Gackle hosted Patriot Time at the Gackle-Streeter school on Thursday, November 9, 2023. Students in pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade participated. There were two breakout stations. The students rotated between the breakout stations spending approximately 20 minutes at each station.

One breakout station was "Flag Etiquette/Veterans Day Holiday." The session started with students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and included discussion of flag etiquette. Jay Posselt, Gackle resident and Navy Seal veteran of the Vietnam War, talked about his time in the military.

Another breakout station was "Cards/Art for Veterans." Students were asked to create cards or other art for veterans. Their artwork was given to veterans attending the Veterans Day program held at the Legion Hall.

Elaine Ackerman, Unit President



Veteran Jay Posselt with students at Gackle-Streeter school.

## Rutland Unit 215 Sponsors Virtual Trick-or-Treat Event

For the seventh year in a row, Bergman-Evenson Unit 215 of Rutland has sponsored a "Trick or Treat" for homeless veterans in October. Until 2020, members of the unit went door-to-door in late October, collecting warm clothing, personal care items, and food donations.

When COVID entered the picture in 2021, our unit decided to do a virtual "Trick-or-Treat" event. The event was well advertised at the beginning of October and drop boxes as well as donation jars were scattered around the community. It was a phenomenal success! Since then, the "Trick or Treat" for homeless veterans has been a virtual event and has covered a wider area. The collected donations are sorted, packed, and delivered to the Gladys Ray Shelter and Veterans Drop-In Center in Fargo. The Center "supports" homeless individuals seeking temporary shelter and operates a drop-in center for homeless veterans seeking rest and other supportive services.

Our unit contacts the Gladys Ray Shelter in September and requests a list of the Center's most needed items. This list is then included in our advertising. Socks are always at the top of the list along with hats and gloves. This year, our unit was able to collect and donate 132 pair of men's socks, 30 pair of women's socks, 13 hats, 5 pair of gloves, 3 heavy-lined hoodies, some personal care items, and \$657.65 in cash donations.

American Legion Bergman-Evenson Post 215 of Rutland is a staunch supporter of the "Trick or Treat" for homeless veterans and generously donates cash for the project.

Bergman-Evenson Unit 215 feels fortunate to have such widespread support for all of our endeavors. We cannot thank all of our donors enough for helping us help our veterans.

Submitted by Unit Members

### 2024 Department Convention

June 21-23 in Bismarck at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center.  
Call 701-660-8063 for reservations. More information will be available at [www.ndala.org/2024-department-convention/](http://www.ndala.org/2024-department-convention/)

## 2024 Spring District Meetings

Tentative and subject to change without notice. Also available at [www.ndala.org/district-meetings/](http://www.ndala.org/district-meetings/)

- District 1 - Monday, March 11 - West Fargo**  
VFW Bar and Grill, 444 Sheyenne St  
5:00 PM – Registration & Social, 6:00 PM – Dinner (\$10) VFW Spaghetti Night, 7:00 PM – Meeting
- District 2 - Tuesday, March 12 - Larimore**  
Willy's Bar, 114 East Main St.  
6:00 PM – Registration and Social, food from bar menu  
7:00 PM – Meeting (ALA to Senior Center)
- District 3 - Friday, March 22 - Rolette**  
Memorial Hall, 503 2nd Ave S  
5:00 PM – Registration & Social, 6:00 PM – Dinner (\$18),  
7:00 PM – Meeting
- District 4 – Saturday, March 23 - Jamestown**  
Jamestown Vets Club, 116 1st St E  
5:00 PM – Registration & Social, 6:00 PM – Meal (\$15)  
7:00 PM – Meeting
- District 5 - Saturday, March 23 - Bismarck**  
Amvets, 2402 Railroad Ave  
12:00 PM (noon) – Registration and Social  
(Attendees welcome to order off the AMVET's menu)  
1:00 PM – Meeting
- District 6 - Friday, April 5 - Kenmare**  
Memorial Hall, 5 3rd Street NE  
5:00 PM – Registration & Social, 6:00 PM – Meal  
7:00 PM – Meeting
- District 7 & 8 - Saturday, April 13 - Richardton**  
Legion Hall, 122 North Ave W  
12:00 PM (MT) – Registration and Social, 1:00 PM (MT) – Meal (\$5)  
2:00 PM (MT) – Meeting
- District 9 - Saturday, April 6 - Ray**  
Ray Auditorium, 215 Main Street  
11:00 AM – Registration & Social, 12:00 PM – Meal (\$10)  
1:00 PM – Meeting
- District 10 - Thursday, March 14 - Ellendale**  
Veterans Club & Event Center, 82 Main St.  
5:00 PM – Registration & Social, 6:00 PM – Meal  
(free will offering)  
7:00 PM – Meeting

## Department President

Greetings Auxiliary Members,  
I want to start off with a huge thank you to the members who donated to the silent auction held at the 2024 Winter Conference and to the bidders who helped raise \$1,500. The auction proceeds were donated to my President's Projects. I appreciate the wonderful support from the American Legion Family.

Thank you to the Washburn Auxiliary unit who were the hosts for Winter Conference. The members who assisted with registration did a wonderful job with their duties and looked very sharp in their red blazers. We were glad to see and visit with 64 registered attendees, but a better turnout for the event was anticipated.

We presented an ALAMIS (American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System) workshop during meetings on Saturday. It was attended by 11 members who said they learned a lot of information that they previously did not know. We also added 3 more members to the full user level. We now have 86 members using ALAMIS from 61 units. 19 members are full users which means they process their dues and update their database at the local unit level. ALAMIS is located on our national website [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org). A member must request permission through the Department Office to become an ALAMIS user. Send your request along with your name, email address, unit number, and the type of access you would like. The Department Office forwards your request to National HQ and you will receive information from National on how to use the program along with a unique user name and password. The reports on ALAMIS are a great resource for units.

Constant Contact is the new mass email platform utilized by the Department Office. We will be using this email more and more to get information out to members in a timely manner. We currently have approximately 300 email addresses. Our old system had about 1800 addresses. Units, we need your help in obtaining the email addresses of members that would like to receive Department information. We would appreciate any assistance from units and members to get this information platform up and running effectively. Submit email addresses, name, unit number, and unit position (if any) to the Department Office

and specifically state it is for Constant Contact.

Department Chairmen need pictures and narratives of events that units have sponsored and organized. This information will be forwarded to our Northwestern Division Chairmen who will publish it in their monthly newsletters. The newsletters can be shared in our monthly mailings as well as through Constant Contact. Remember to send this information to our Department historian, Andrea Neshem, for the President's scrapbook and to the Department Office for publication in "The Message". Visit our Department website at [www.ndala.org](http://www.ndala.org) for chairman contact information.

North Dakota Flickertail Girls State information will be updated the first week of February at [www.ndgirlsstate.org](http://www.ndgirlsstate.org). The registration fee for 2024 has increased to \$325. Units, please contact your schools as soon as you have the information as we do need a number boost this year. Information will also be distributed via a paper unit mailing.

Our National Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson will be visiting North Dakota from July 15-18, 2024. We are currently planning a visit to the International Peace Garden, Annie's House adaptive recreation center, and Mystical Horizons. Sharon White Bear, Past Department President, is working on a mini pow-wow at White Shield. We would like to include Medora but haven't got that worked in yet. If you or your unit would like to assist with this visit, please contact me. Any help would be appreciated.

There are several units that have reached their 100% membership goal. Congratulations on your effort!! A second renewal notice has been sent out to members. All units - please follow up right away and get those members' dues paid.

Units are doing a fine job of helping our veterans, youth, and their communities. Keep up the awesome work you are all doing. I appreciate all that members do for their "why".

Always be kind  
**Gloria Covert**



*Gloria Covert*

## Department President-Elect

Hello North Dakota Auxiliary Members,

I want to reiterate my constant call for 'membership, membership, membership.' We need every Auxiliary member to pay their dues! We in North Dakota are active, involved members of our country and communities! We love our veterans! Remember why you became a member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Our mission is to support our veterans and active-duty military members and their families.

We must never let our Auxiliary members forget how important they are and how critical paying their dues is in our efforts to support our mission of advocating for veterans and their families. North Dakota is known for the number of men and women who have served and continue to serve in the military, for how well we honor our veterans, and for our wonderful generosity on behalf of veterans.

Remember that Congress acts on behalf of our veterans in direct proportion to our membership numbers in the American Legion Family. We just cannot let our veterans down. Bills such as the GI Bill, health bills related to Vietnam and Camp Lejeune, the Choices Bill that allows veterans to go to local doctors when they live 40 miles from a VA care facility, the PACT Bill regarding burn pits, and so much more have all been passed for veterans. These important Congressional actions would not be possible without the help and support of numbers in our organizations, our volunteer hours, and our donation of funds spent on behalf of our veterans.

Remember the 'Be The One' program and its focus on the well-being of our veterans. Watch over your veterans and if you see one in need or going through hard times, reach out to them and assist them in any way you can.

For God and Country.  
**LoAnn Dick**



*LoAnn Dick*

## Department Secretary

Greetings Auxiliary Members.  
Fred and I just returned from the Winter Conference in Bismarck. The weather was extraordinary for this time of year and Shelby did not miss us at all with grandson Owen dog sitting with her. Hopefully, the weather we have experienced for much of January and February continues through the final breakthrough of Spring. I can see Spring from here!

Now it is time to prepare for 2024 Spring District Meetings. As I draft this article, I do not have all the details, but more information is available elsewhere in this publication and online at [www.ndala.org/district-meetings/](http://www.ndala.org/district-meetings/). Mark your calendars and make plans now to attend the 2024 Spring District Meeting being organized in your district.

The North Dakota Flickertail Girls State program will be held on the UND Campus in Grand Forks on June 9-14, 2024. Girls State applications have been updated and are available on the Department Girls State website at [www.ndgirlsstate.org](http://www.ndgirlsstate.org). Units, contact schools in your community

to let students know about the Girls State program. We are looking for 'City Moms' for the Girls State event. Applications for the City Moms positions are also available on the Girls State website and have been sent in a paper unit mailing.

Auxiliary members, remember to report to your Unit President all of your volunteer hours and dollars donated in support of our 'mission' and for your community. Every hour and every dollar counts but only if you report it. All of this information is reported to the ALA National organization and the American Legion for their work with Congress on veterans issues.

Take care of yourself and others. May God Bless you and God Bless America.

**Marcy Schmidt**



*Marcy Schmidt*

## Department Treasurer

Winter Conference is behind us, and spring is around the corner! It is always wonderful to see friends at this annual event. It was a fun and productive weekend. We learned that our governing documents are a bit unclear, and there were some great discussions on how to clean them up. A committee was formed

to review the Department's Constitution and Bylaws and clarify the Department Standing Rules. This committee will make recommendations that will be presented for a vote at the Department Convention in June. It is important that as many members attend our 2024 Department Convention as possible to vote on what language should be in our governing documents. Department Convention is always fun - and the State Legion Band keeps us all going!

I am happy to report that Unit Contributions for veteran's programs had a 26% increase this year! It is always gratifying to send these checks out to programs that help our veterans in so many ways. Thank you units and unit members for sharing your time, energy, and treasure to benefit veterans and their families.

Winter Conference attendees heard me speak of my resignation at the end of the fiscal year (June 2024). My husband, Todd, and I are retiring this year and will be relocating to our home state of Nebraska in the fall. I have enjoyed my position with the Department of North Dakota and have met so many people that I might not have had the opportunity to meet if not for this position. I learned so much about the organization and the programs we support. We had two members who were endorsed for the Department Treasurer position at the Winter Conference, and I am confident that either candidate will serve our Department well. This is another reason to attend the 2024 Department Convention - to vote for and meet your Department Officers for the upcoming year!

One last thing, if you are a Unit Treasurer - be sure to complete your Annual Report and 990-N to ensure your EIN (employer identification number) is compliant as a non-profit organization! It takes about 10 minutes and \$10.00 to complete. If you did not receive an email from me though the Department Office with instructions, please let me know! I can be reached at [treasurer@ndala.org](mailto:treasurer@ndala.org) or by phone. I will certainly email that information to you or snail mail it if that is what needs to happen.

Enjoy your spring! I hope your units all have some fun events coming up this spring! See you all in Bismarck in June!

Blessings,  
**Sonnie Otto**



*Sonnie Otto*

## Department Chaplain

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is "the joy of the Lord is my strength" Nehemiah 8:10. Growing up, we sang Sunday school songs of that verse. It has remained a favorite because in times of questioning, difficulty, or even depression, this verse comes back to me.

Wondering how joy could be my strength, I looked up the meaning of the word 'joy' in a Hebrew dictionary and it actually means rejoicing. With an 'ing' ending, it is a verb, so it is something we need to do. I love listening to Christian radio and can rejoice in the Lord with so many beautiful songs.

The biblical story around Nehemiah 8:10 is Ezra, the priest, found the book of the law (which had been lost) and he gathered the people together, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. Ezra and the priests read from the Book of the Law of God with clear meaning so the people could understand what was being read. The people were so joyful that they wept when they heard the words. Ezra told the people this day was holy to the Lord and not to be grieved for the 'joy of the Lord is your strength.'

Can you imagine losing God's law? And besides losing it, they forgot it. It had been long forgotten and broken by the people so that they wept and grieved. Besides learning they had broken God's law, they remembered

their many sins of the past and their tears were mingled with a thankfulness that they were God's people and now had a strong desire to worship Him. Ezra reminded them that they are to be thankful and glad, and that the purest form of worship is the worship of God with great joy! Therefore, the joy of the Lord is your strength.

What can we take away from this verse? It gives us a sense of acceptance with God and also gives us rest for our spirits, but we must also grieve and ask forgiveness of our sins. We will have a stronger and more intimate relationship with God which can take away any fear that lies before us or any anxiety that lies within us.

The upcoming Easter season is a perfect time to draw closer to God realizing that He wants to have a closer relationship with all of us. That is why He sent His Son, Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. By accepting that sacrifice of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can have great joy - and the joy of the Lord will be our strength!

**Rose Laning**



*Rose Laning*

## District 1



Happy New Year to our American Legion Family members across the state of North Dakota. It is impossible to imagine that we are already into our second month of 2024. This is a crucial reminder that we have some work ahead to make it the best year ever.

When things feel insurmountable, take a deep breath and think for a moment, "If you can't fly, then run; If you can't run, then walk; If you can't walk, then crawl; but whatever you have to do keep moving forward." A quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. Try to relate this to your work within your unit. Remember if you are working on something that you really care about, you do not have to push or be pushed.

My hope is that District 1 members will think back on why they became an Auxiliary member in the very beginning. Let us hope that vision never fades. Part of our mission is to provide to our youth both educational and leadership opportunities. These opportunities uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism for our country. Also, our mission is to support the lives of our veterans, the military, and their families both at home and abroad.

Which brings me back to work. We need to step up participation in District 1. Attendance at our District Meetings has been dismal and this shows a lack of interest, desire, and effort on the part of Auxiliary members. Never give up. Unit 210 of Galesburg struggled for several years to the point where I did not know if we would survive as a unit. Fortunately, we were blessed with several new members who have proven to be energetic, ambitious, and filled with ideas as well as the willingness to implement these ideas.

I am so proud of these members as they chose to donate \$500 to each of the 3 local food pantries, another \$500 to the ND/MN Veterans Honor Flight program, \$500 to the gift shop programs for veterans at VA Medical Center in Fargo and residents at the North Dakota Veterans Home at Lisbon. This truly has been rewarding for us as a unit because we were never able to do this in the past.

I extend an invitation to anyone to visit one of our meetings to witness the enthusiasm. We meet the second Tuesday of each month April through December at 7:00 PM in the Galesburg Memorial Hall. You can find us stuffing pillows for veterans, planning our next fundraiser, working a Poppy Day project, or volunteering at a Memorial Day Program.

Wayne and I just returned to Arizona after attending the 2024 Winter Conference in Bismarck. We were a bit surprised that the weather seemed almost spring-like. Mark your calendars as a reminder to attend the 2024 District 1 Spring Meeting at the West Fargo VFW. More details and information can be found in another section of this publication.

**Virginia Satrom**  
District 1 President

## District 3



Hello District 3 Auxiliary Members.

2024 Winter Conference in Bismarck was a great event this year and the weather was almost like spring.

I would love to see more District 3 members attend Department Conferences and Conventions and especially our Spring and Fall District Meetings. Get a group of members together and plan to attend the 2024 Spring District Meeting. You will meet Department Officers who are always happy to answer questions and share information important to units members and veterans. We would love to have you be a part of these important meetings. We need your input to make our District stronger.

Spring is just around the corner and that means our 2024 District 3 Spring Meeting is close by. All District 3 American Legion Family members are welcome to attend. Mark your calendar and plan to come out and meet old and new friends. We will be meeting on March 22 at the Memorial Hall in Rolette. Look for more information elsewhere in this publication.

Proudly serving you as President of District 3,  
**Cheryl Gustafson**

## District 5



What a pleasant Winter Conference this year with exceptionally warm temperatures! We learned that our National Auxiliary President, Lisa Williamson, will be traveling to North Dakota July 15-18, so watch for more details to come regarding her visit.

Department leaders gave updates on many of the programs. Sonnie Otto, Department Treasurer, reminded us of the importance of reports that need to be filed with the state and IRS (990-N) to maintain our unit non-profit status. She also announced that she is moving out of state and will be resigning in June 2024. There will be an election at the June Convention as two candidates were endorsed already at the Winter Conference.

In the education report, it was stated that there are multiple scholarships available from both the American Legion and Auxiliary. There are three (3) national scholarships that are only available with applications submitted online and a fourth national scholarship is available through the local Auxiliary units, all of which are due **March 1, 2024**. The Department of North Dakota Education scholarship and nursing scholarship applications are due **April 1, 2024**. Attendees of Girls State may apply for the Samsung scholarship on the first day of Girls State, so applicants need to have researched and put together required documents before going to Girls State.

The Children and Youth Program promotes the Youth Hero and Good Deed awards. Gloria Covert, Department President, informed us that National is promoting working with the American Legion on programs such as the Oratorical Contest.

The Leadership Chair brought up the Unit Member of the Year Award, due **May 1, 2024**, for which the nominee cannot have held a position higher than Unit President. She would like one nominee from each District. She also mentioned the ALA Academy courses and suggested involving junior members who may be able to help with technology and fundraisers.

The Constitution & Legislative Chair mentioned that she is following pending bills in the Senate and active bills in the North Dakota Legislature; and is collaborating with a committee to review the ALA Department Constitution for improvements. The VA & R Chair talked about Wreaths Across America, Fargo VA Medical Center and Lisbon gift shops, as well as the re-activation of the Creative Arts Festival in Fargo (September 10, 2024). Americanism reported the Essay Contest is due March 15 and must have the cover sheet attached. We were encouraged to support the Legion baseball program and the Oratorical Contest in the future.

The Membership Chairman reported nine (9) units have achieved 100 percent of their membership goal. Girls State is tentatively set for June 9-14, 2024, as the committee is working with UND at Grand Forks.

Department President Gloria Covert reported that any unit can apply for Unit Foundation grants up to \$2,500, collect email addresses for the Constant Contact email system, and utilize ALAMIS (American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System) which provides many reports and access for membership updates.

Spring District meetings are coming up. District 5 will be Saturday, March 23, 2024, at the Amvets in Bismarck at noon. Please continue keeping track of volunteer hours/expenses for reporting to the District President by April 15. **SPRING IS COMING!**

**Peggy Moran**  
District 5 President

## District 7



Hello District 7 Auxiliary Members.

I hope you all got over the cold weather and no one fell on the ice. By the time you read this article, the 2024 Winter Conference will be a distant memory. We learned more about each of the Auxiliary's sponsored programs and how units are supporting our veterans.

Some units seem to be struggling with their membership and we learned several ways to help us increase the collection of member dues. If your member has a phone number or email, reach out to them and ask if you can assist them in any way. Let your units and members know that their membership matters. Send a card as a reminder and when you do receive their dues, send them in right away. Do not hold dues.

Unit Presidents, the Year-End Impact Reports are due by April 15, 2024. Report on your unit member's volunteer hours and funds spent in support of our mission. The forms are on colored paper and were mailed to units in December so they should be easy to find. The forms are also online at [www.ndala.org/reporting/](http://www.ndala.org/reporting/). When the unit report is complete, send it to me and I will compile all District 7 units into one report. I would like to see 100% reporting from District 7 units.

Spring meetings are being planned now and will be coming up soon. Mark your calendars and make plans to attend. Bring your questions and concerns so we can answer them.

Although I have one more year to serve as your District President, I would like for someone to step up and take the reins to lead District 7 into the future. I will not accept this job again. Being a District President is an experience you will love. It is fun to meet members from around the District and state. You will learn so much and you will receive a lot of support from the Department Officers and other District Presidents.

Thank you, District 7 Auxiliary members and Department Officers for the assistance and support I have received from you. You are all special and serve our veterans well.

God Bless you and our veterans.

**Lualice Stockert**  
District 7 President

## Leadership

The 'Unit Member of the Year' award recognizes members of our units who exemplify the value and ideals of the American Legion Auxiliary. Those members work hard to support their units, improve the unit's programs, and have a positive impact on our communities.

Look for that special member in your unit that exemplifies those ideals and has not held an office higher than Unit President. Then, nominate them for the 'Unit Member of the Year' award.

The nomination forms can be found at [www.ndala.org/leadership/](http://www.ndala.org/leadership/). Wouldn't it be great if we received a nomination from every District in our state?

'Unit Member of the Year' nominations are due to me no later than May 1, 2024.

Have you heard about the ALA Academy? This is an incredible educational opportunity for you to learn about the Auxiliary and what we do. There are 8 main courses and many other live courses available to help mentor our newest members. I personally have completed 4 of them and I was amazed at the history of our program and the amazing individuals that made it all happen. This is a great opportunity for our Junior members to learn about the Auxiliary as well. They are the future of our program. There are even some E-courses designed specifically with our juniors in mind. You can enroll in any of the self-paced courses at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy). I encourage everyone to try them. You will not be disappointed!

Lastly, how can you get our Junior members involved in your units? In a recent Zoom leadership meeting, we discussed the importance of mentoring our Junior members and involving them in our monthly meetings, fundraising events, preparing meals, and assisting in planning events and activities. Your juniors will amaze you with their use of technology and social media. Ask them to help with public relations and advertising your events. Juniors are our future, get them involved now. Get a few juniors excited to join our organization and they will reach out to others to help grow our membership.

Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) to learn what others are doing to involve their juniors and to familiarize yourself about programs designed for them.

**Heidi Wakefield**  
Leadership Chairman

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**  
FROM **SCHEELS**

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**PARKER CENTER**

**COFFEE SHOP**

21 FIRST AVENUE S.E., MINOT, ND

(701) 852-0561

OPEN 7:30 AM - 2:00 PM

**2024 Year-End Reporting Deadlines**

Forms and information available online at [www.ndala.org/reporting/](http://www.ndala.org/reporting/)

## In Memoriam

**District 1**  
Betty J. Terry, Hillsboro

**District 2**  
Barbara Lundby, Larimore  
Lois D Peterson, Larimore  
Marian Onstad, SLM, Park River  
Mildred Hagen, SLM, Park River

**District 3**  
Phebe H Ratzlaff, Langdon  
Betty M Nelson, Langdon  
Marlyce Geir, Milton  
Carol Goodman, Milton  
Debra E Johnson, York

**District 4**  
Linda Kust, SLM, Jamestown

**District 5**  
Shirley A. Heil, Ashley  
Alvina Piatz, Napoleon  
Verella J Hansen, SLM, Napoleon  
Patricia A Wahl, SLM, Turtle Lake

**District 6**  
Donna R Lausch, SLM, Minot  
June Springsted, Lignite  
Jeanette Bonsness, Columbus

**District 7**  
Betty Dohn, SLM, New Salem  
Fay M. Peterson, Almont

**District 8**  
Rita Frank, Beach  
Eleanor Bohn, Beach  
Mary L Combs, Beach

Norita Roll, Mott  
Marie Makaruk, Belfield  
Edith M. Wolf, Belfield  
Genevieve Fisher, SLM, Scranton

**District 9**  
Jean Halverson, Wildrose  
Verena Knox, Tioga  
Lila Lalim, Tioga  
Bernice N. Nicholson, Tioga

**District 10**  
Kathryn Rosendahl, Lamoure  
Faye Murie, Edgeley  
Beatrice Foertsch, HLM, Wyndmere

**Department Unit #500**  
Lucille Nygaard, Bismarck

*We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information.*  
Key: HLM - Honorary Unit Member; SLM - State Life Member; VIM - Life Member/PUFL

## Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

I am honored to be your representative from the Department of North Dakota on the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Committee of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Fargo. Recently, I attended our quarterly meeting and will highlight some of the programs and developments that are being planned and/or considered for roll out in the near future.

**Veteran Transportation Service** or the VTS program has begun its soft opening in Fargo and is providing transportation for veterans. At this time, the vehicle on loan from the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is not equipped for special mode transportation, but the Fargo VA has secured two vehicles from Texas that are properly equipped for wheelchair-bound patients. Once confirmation comes that the vehicles are en route, the VA will begin hiring additional drivers. More vehicles and drivers will be added over time as the program continues to grow.

**Beneficiary Travel** update reported that the goal for beneficiary travel is to process all travel claims within ten days. Currently, staffing is down 70% which has significantly impacted the speed in which claims are processed. To combat this, the Fargo VA has partnered with the Veteran Travel Program Office nationally for assistance.

**Parking Ramp Update:** The parking ramp proposed for the VAMC campus is still in the design phase with intent to award the construction contract in the future. The ramp will add an additional (net) one hundred parking spaces and allow for further infrastructure improvements in the future.

**Mental Health Outpatient Clinic:** The new building, slated for construction in Fiscal Year 2024 will offer easily accessible mental health care for outpatient veterans as well as add approximately 17,000 square feet of space at the facility. Initial bids exceeded the estimated costs. Additional efforts are needed to bring bids down to an acceptable level before the project can move forward.

**Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC):** The Fargo VAMC is in the process of building new facilities in Fergus Falls, MN, and Grand Forks, ND. Both facilities are in the design process; the Fergus Falls facility will be three times larger than the current facility, and the Grand Forks clinic will be double the size of the original. Currently, efforts are underway to identify and acquire all medical

equipment needs for these two sites and to assure everything needed is in place before these two sites 'go live' in early calendar year 2025.

**Fisher House Updates:** The construction of a Fisher House will provide veterans' family members who must travel long distances a place to stay while their veteran undergoes medical procedures at the VAMC Fargo. The Fisher House project is still currently in the land acquisition phase. After discussion with local homeowners and community members, it has been decided that our initial proposed site will not be pursued further. Other well-suited sites are being explored at this time.

**Guest Speaker:** Katie Hanson, Clinical Pharmacist, presented information on the VA's new pharmacogenomics program. Pharmacogenomics is the study of how genes affect a person's response to medications. Working in conjunction with Sanford Health, the VA is offering free pharmacogenomic testing for veterans.

**The Veterans Creative Arts Competition** is returning this year. The Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a national program that aims to recognize veterans and their creative accomplishments as well as educate and demonstrate to the community the therapeutic benefits of art therapy. The program, co-sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, will be held on Tuesday, September 10th, 2024, in the VA's 3rd floor auditorium. A flyer containing links, due dates, and additional information is available on the Auxiliary Department website ([www.ndala.org/var/](http://www.ndala.org/var/)). Eligible veterans must be enrolled in care with the Fargo VA Health Care System and may compete in any of fifty categories including painting, metal work, poetry, woodworking, and music. More information will be available in March.

**VAVS Patient Casino Night:** The VAVS Committee will be hosting a patient casino night on March 18, 2024, at 6:30 pm in the VA's CLC recreation room. There are still slots remaining for service organizations and their members to participate and bring extra joy to our hospitalized veterans.

**Carol Wolf**  
Department VAVS Committee Representative



## Education

*Update to the Department Education article in the December issue of The Message* - since that article appeared in the December issue, I have learned that three (3) National Scholarships are available online **ONLY** and are due to be submitted no later than **March 1, 2024**.



- Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship
- Non-Traditional Student Scholarship

Applications are to be submitted online and no unit review is needed. The National organization will email the completed online application to each Department for review and submission to the appropriate Division Education Chairman.

Units are encouraged to work with local schools and home-schooled students to let them know how to apply for these scholarships. Visit the following website at [www.ALAVeterans.org/scholarships](http://www.ALAVeterans.org/scholarships) for more information.

The fourth National scholarship, the **Junior Auxiliary Member Loyalty Scholarship**, is also due March 1, 2024, to the local American Legion Auxiliary Unit. Refer to the above mentioned website for requirements and forms. The Unit forwards the certified unit entry to the Department Education Chairman (me) by March 15, 2024. The selected Department application will be forwarded to the Northwestern Division Chairman by April 1, 2024, for further judging.

As was stated in a previous article, the Department of North Dakota's Education Program Scholarship application is now available online at [www.ndala.org/education/](http://www.ndala.org/education/) and due to me no later than **April 1, 2024**.

Past Presidents Parley nursing scholarship applications are due to the Past Presidents Parley Chairman by **April 1, 2024**.

Feel free to contact me at [education@ndala.org](mailto:education@ndala.org) or by telephone at 701-462-3919. I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Happy Spring!  
**Peggy Moran**  
Education Chairman

## Membership

Hello to all North Dakota District Presidents, Unit Presidents, and Unit Membership Chairmen.



I trust that your efforts to round up all our members' dues in our "North Dakota Great Buffalo Roundup for Membership" are progressing well! North Dakota is far behind most of the 50 states and we really want to turn that around. We want all the other states to look at North Dakota and want to measure up to us. At this point in time, we are only at 66% of goal and we have a lot of hard work to do. We are in 38<sup>th</sup> place in the National Membership, and 7<sup>th</sup>, or last place, in the Northwestern Division! So, let us get to work! Let us enlist the help of every member to make sure that all members are renewed! Let us work to make sure that every unit achieves 100% renewal! How exciting it will be to know that your unit reaches 100% for 2024! Once that has been accomplished, then we can look for new members. Once every member is renewed, the pressure is off and we can concentrate on our fun unit activities! Remember that if a member has not paid their dues by December 31<sup>st</sup>, their membership has expired. They are no longer members in good standing. Do not allow them to simply fall away from your unit! Go bring them in! Let them know they are important to our success as advocates for our veterans and our youth! We do what we do for our veterans to honor their service to our county, our community, and for us.

Make your plan of action:

Presidents: call 10 members to ask for their renewal. Let them know how important they are and that our veterans are counting on them.

Never hold dues! Send them to the Department Office in a timely manner. Remember, when a member pays their dues, they think they are renewed as of that time. Do not let them down!

Let us all be the ones that push North Dakota to 100%! National HQ has set our February goal at 80% by February 15th. We can do it!

Attend meetings with other unit members. It was so nice to see so many of you at the recent 2024 Winter Conference in Bismarck. It is true, getting together with other unit members who are experiencing some of the same things we are helps us, encourages us, fires us up! We want our units to be vibrant and active. Units that our members want to be part of, want to work with, want to belong to. I encourage all of you to make it so.

Let us make Department President Gloria proud. Let us have the most wonderful and successful "Great Buffalo Roundup" that North Dakota has ever seen.

Working with you for our veterans,  
**LoAnn Dick**  
Membership Co-Chairman

## Girls State Program

American Legion Auxiliary Flickertail Girls State will be held June 9-14, 2024, on the University of North Dakota campus in Grand Forks. Information has been sent to all ND units and schools. Registration is \$325 and is due by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Visit [NDGirlsState.org](http://NDGirlsState.org) or call Director Amanda Dinger at 701-314-2460 for more information and applications.



Past Department Presidents at 2024 Winter Conference – back (l-r): Judy Twete 2001-02 (NW Division National Vice President 2015-16), Marlys Aubol 2013-14, Jeannie Román 2018-19, Marlene Boyer 2015-16 (NW Division National Vice President 2022-23), Tammy Ryberg 2004-05. front (l-r) Sandra Petermann 2022-23, Charlotte Lassonde 2007-08, Beverly Wolff 2002-03 and 2020-21, Lualice Stockert 1995-96, Diane Kraemer 2016-17.