

Thank you to all of you for providing me the honor of serving as your 2025-26 ND American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) President. I am incredibly grateful and thankful to all of you for paving the way for me since the ALA organization began in 1919!

Now, 49 years after I began my membership with the ALA, I am here to help make 2025-26 the best year possible for all of you, auxiliary members, our military, veterans, and their families.

We are over 6,000 members strong in ND. We have a lot to celebrate! But we also have a lot to do to continue to support our military, veterans, and families. Thank you to all of you for your selfless contributions and for serving and keeping your membership with the ALA.

I ask for your support and positive attitude as we all work – humbly, paying it forward, as the ND ALA team, supporting each other and continuing to be inspired by our mission to serve our military, veterans, and their families.

I finished my first month into my term, and I have already had great experiences. I was able to attend some events alongside Mike Weyrauch, our Department Commander – the International Music Camp, the National Commanders visit, and the North Dakota State Fair in Minot. Commander Weyrauch's theme is "We are one" and his goal is to work closely with the ALA.

My theme is: "To serve and protect, you answered the call; Salute to our veterans, we honor you all."

My projects for the year are the Honor Flight Network for Eastern/Western North Dakota and the NDSU Bison Strides Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies Program for veterans and their families.

My President's pins, which will raise funds for my two president projects are available for purchase for \$5.00 each until sold out. Additional donations for my projects are welcomed and can be sent to the Department office.

During my presidency, I want these words to reflect my upcoming year- positive, encouraging, supportive, genuine, uplifting, personalized, impactful, and fun! I am working on ways to incorporate promoting the ALA through supporting our programs, activities, events, and all the ways we support our mission in positive, proactive ways.

I want to motivate and encourage you in various ways. A couple of plans in the works are the following: Any individuals who sign up 10 new members by June 1st will be put in for a drawing for an award. Also, any units who receive 100% membership by June 1st will be put in a drawing for an award. Lastly, each district that receives 100% membership by June 1 will also be put in a drawing for an award. Drawings will take place at next year's annual convention.

Not only do I want us to motivate each other, I want us to take care of each other and work as a team. I am looking at forming a "Care and Concern" committee and am looking for a few people who would be willing to be on this committee. I am also looking for a few people to be on other committees, including a Communication Committee, a Strategic Planning committee, and a Resolutions Committee. Please reach out to me at 701.740.7144 or president@ndala.org if you have interest in helping or letting me know what you would like to see in this upcoming year. I am just getting started on my year and look forward to being proactive, innovative, and creative in how we promote the current and future of the ALA.

For anyone waiting for more direction, we will be bringing back information to share with you at the upcoming district meetings as well as for program chairs, officers and all of you in the near future.

You will notice we are becoming more "visible" through Facebook, Constant Contact, and other means. The ALA team wants to hear from you! Please let us know what is happening in your communities, districts, and across the state that you can share on social media. Please share a few short sentences or an article, along with pictures. Let us get out there and market ourselves and promote our programs. We

have so much to be proud of! And when we see what else is going on around us, it is motivating and encouraging and reminds us why we are part of this organization.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve you as your Department President. I am immensely proud to be a part of the American Legion Family and will proudly make the upcoming 2025-26 year the best possible!

Candace Berg