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AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

DEPARTMENT of NEBRASKA
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JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2024 DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

With 2023 ending and 2024 beginning – there are some things I wished for.....

1. I want to hear about what all the Units and members have accomplished.
2. I want to know what you are aiming for.
3. I want to see you at the 2024 Mid-Year Information Conference.
 - a. There will be program chairs to speak with
 - b. Candidates to be announced
 - c. Lots of fun to be had

January 19 – 21, 2024. Kearney, Nebraska at the Holiday Inn.

The Department Executive Committee will be meeting at 9 am on Friday the 19th. After lunch we will hear from the District 1 and District 6 Presidents and anyone else that doesn't turn in their District report. (Wait until you hear what they did – your District could too.) We will also hear from some of our amazing chairmen.

On Saturday, we have a joint session with The Legion to start our day off. Then you guessed it, some more fantastic chairmen. You will also hear more about my President's projects.

When the session adjourns, the 8 and 40 will meet and after that join The American Legion Family at the Kearney Post for a Chili Cook-Off. There will also be cinnamon rolls and laughter. The Poker Walk will be there too. \$5 a hand, with the opportunity to buy extra cards. Best Poker hand wins. Of course, there will be prizes!!

For those who don't remember: Gnome-body does it alone and Gnome-body does it better than The Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary.

Hope to see you there.

Lisa

**NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS
FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS!!**

Can you believe our Auxiliary year is half over?

We would like to thank all of you for your patience and support of our Department as we transition into the office being fully staffed once again.

There's always a learning curve and a few bumps along the way.

President Lisa has been busy traveling around the state and promoting her projects. Jacki O'Neill, Vicki Ozenbaugh, and Roxanne Hiatt have been busy in the office keeping Units updated through newsletters and Lorene Bartos has been busy working on "The Star." With The American Legion now having a publications person, we should see our regular schedule of issues come back.

As always, read the newsletters when they arrive. They hold the information of what's to be coming soon.

If you would like a Department official to attend your District Convention, President Lisa asks you to please send an invitation to her. She will not be sending Department representation to your District without it.

We are always here to help. Please contact us with any questions or issues that arise.

Keep recording for reporting....and always be "Strong & Faithful – Serving Veterans Always."

Your FRIENDS,
Department Headquarters Staff

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2023-2024 DIRECTORY UPDATES

Page 19 Bonnie Dumler's mailing address is Parkview Haven Nursing Home, 1203 Fourth Street, PO Box 667, Deshler NE 68340

Page 27 Cathy Webbers' email should be catwebb1971@gmail.com

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FROM THE OFFICE

Units, if the Department files your Federal Tax 990-N's, they will be filed at the end of January. If you have not returned the 8822b sent in the September newsletter and you have changes to the Unit's Responsible Party, make the changes and please submit them immediately to:

ALA Department Headquarters
150 NW 40th St - Unit B
Lincoln, NE 68528

Thank you - Jacki

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“BE THE ONE” PROCLAMATION

Our National Officers have made “Be The One” their joint platform for 2023-2024. Across the country Department Adjutants were working on the idea of having their State Governors consider signing a proclamation in support of Be The One. To support our National Officer’s call to end veteran suicide, a proclamation was presented to Governor Pillen by Department Adjutant Dave Salak to make it a year-long proclamation for the entire state of Nebraska.

Word was received that Governor Pillan will support this initiative by signing the proclamation. The signing ceremony will be held at the State Capitol in the Warner Chamber on Monday, January 8 at 9:00 am. Department Commander Percy will have a few minutes to speak following the signing. The American Legion Family is encouraged to attend to show our support of “Be The One.”

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MEMBERSHIP

Loree Hendrickson

Hello again, Members of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA)! Thanks to all of you who have worked these past five months to “stop the slide” and sustain our ALA membership numbers. Your efforts mean that our organization can continue to keep **“Nebraska Strong and Faithful by Serving Veterans Always.”**

As of this writing, all thirteen of Nebraska’s Districts have renewed 50% of their memberships. Ten of our Districts have surpassed 60%, and two of them are past the 70% mark. Of course, the flip side of that is that we are nearly halfway through the year, and we still have a lot of members to recruit and/or renew from last year. Can we do it? Yes, we can!

Here are some success stories thus far:

- 100% UNITS:
 - 111.11% - Bayard Unit #200, District 4, Morrill County
 - 102.68% - Syracuse Unit #100, District 12, Otoe County
 - 101.96% - Plymouth Unit #243, District 11, Jefferson County
 - 100.00% - Howells Unit #155, District 7, Colfax County

- 90% UNITS:
 - 97.96% - Ohioa Unit #193, District 11, Fillmore County
 - 96.15% - Morse Bluff Unit #340, District 7, Saunders County
 - 95.71% - Spencer Unit #78, District 2, Boyd County
 - 95.45% - Verdigre Unit #259, District 2, Knox County
 - 94.90% - Bloomfield Unit #249, District 2, Knox County
 - 94.74% - Oxford Unit #219, District 9, Furnas County
 - 94.12% - Newman Grove Unit #73, District 2, Madison County
 - 94.03% - Elwood Unit #290, District 9, Gosper County
 - 93.22% - Pleasant Dale Unit #354, District 12, Seward County
 - 92.31% - Neligh Unit #172, District 2, Antelope County
 - 91.89% - Culbertson Unit #133, District 9, Hitchcock County
 - 91.23% - Osmond Unit #326, District 2, Pierce County
 - 90.91% - Shickley Unit #164, District 11, Fillmore County
 - 90.85% - Valparaiso Unit #371, District 7, Saunders County

Which Unit will be the next one to climb to these heights? Which District will be the first to get all its Units past the 50% mark? There are a few Districts that only have one or two Units below this threshold. Come on, Pony Express Riders – let’s reach these goals.

And members, get out there and work those ALA programs! Doing so will increase visibility within our communities and that may recruit some new members for our Units. Please also do whatever you can to renew or rejoin your current and prior members. By working together, we can keep **“Nebraska Strong and Faithful by Serving Veterans Always.”**

Finally, I have been sending out weekly updates via e-mail to the District Presidents. If any of you would like to be added to this e-mail list, please contact me via my e-mail at loreeh@hotmail.com.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION (VA & R)

Beverly Neel

TIPS TO SHARE WITH UNITS & DISTRICTS

Units and Districts are great supporters of our four (4) Nebraska Veterans Homes (Eastern – Bellevue; Norfolk; Central – Kearney; Western – Scottsbluff) and two (2) Nebraska VA Medical Centers (Omaha & Grand Island) plus Lincoln CBOC (Community Based Outpatient Clinic). Thank you ever so much, all is greatly appreciated in service to our Beloved Veterans’ care and wellbeing. We put that extra touch to each of their lives.

1 – **DONATIONS (MONETARY)** are sent into the Department directly for the purpose of recording the donations and how the donors wish the funds to be applied. For example, if you are a Unit a distance from any of these facilities, but you want to provide, you may send a check to the Department and note it is to be used for Bingo on the third Thursday in March. Or you may indicate the funds should be used to have the ladies get their nails

polished. Perhaps, haircuts men and women. Just a wide assortment of avenues the funds may be applied. It is important that the Department and the receiving facility know exactly how your Unit or District wishes the funds to be applied.

The Department will record your wishes and notify the selected facility of your gift; and when the time comes around for its use, the ALA facility rep will voucher the funds from the Department. Your Unit or District are duly credited for the funds.

Please do not send monetary donations to the ALA facility reps. The funds must have a paper trail for auditing purposes. Thank you.

2 – DONATIONS OTHER THAN FUNDS – be sure the items you provide have a value noted to them as you take them to the facility. You get credit for that plus your volunteer hours. It may serve you well to first reach out to the facility to which you plan to bring in items to determine:

- A – do they have a need for the items you plan to bring?
- B – does the facility have a game plan of how they receive the items.
- C – does the facility have need for clothing items; what kind, sizes, gender, etc.
- D – does the facility have need for gently used coats, suits, trousers, dresses, etc. as you do spring cleaning.
- E – it is always best to ask first before showing up and learn that your items are of no use to the facility.

Once again you must place a value on your donation and report your volunteer hours.

Non-clothing items such as word puzzles, decks of cards, writing tablets, greeting cards, postage stamps, etc., are welcome and you need to place a value on them.

If your Unit or District make clothing covers, phone caddies, lap robes, etc., list the value and hours it took to make the items.

All donations have taken some time to put together and your hours are reported as well.

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EDUCATION
Cathy Webber

Just a reminder to all unit scholarship chairs that Department ALA scholarships are due on March 1, 2024, to the unit presidents and are due to Department by March 15, 2024. It is important that the applications are not completed in third person, so beware of that when reviewing the applications. The application forms can be found on our Nebraska website, as well as being included in the October Newsletter.

The **Department Scholarships** available for 2024 are:

1. **Nebraska ALA Memorial Scholarship:** ***Remember, there has been a change in the Department Scholarship. The following four scholarships have been combined to create the new *Nebraska ALA Memorial Scholarship*. There no longer

is the Avery Elaine Keriakedes Memorial Scholarship, Roberta Marie Stretch Memorial Scholarship, Ruby Lorraine Paul Scholarship and Ruby Paul Campaign Fund Scholarship. This was approved and adopted at the 2023 Department Convention. *Preference will be given to a former Nebraska Girls State or Boys State Citizen who is seeking to teach middle school or junior high school social studies.*

2. **Career & Technical Education Scholarship**
3. **Healthcare Professional Scholarship**

The ***National Scholarships*** applications are available online. Please follow the instructions online. They are due on March 15, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

1. **Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship**

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Scholarsips/Children-of-Warriors>

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship to support the children of our warriors. These scholarships are awarded to 15 students annually who excel in academics and volunteer in their communities.

2. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship**

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Scholarships/Spirit-of-Youth>

The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is an umbrella that supports three separate scholarship opportunities for participants in American Legion Auxiliary programs. One is for American Legion Auxiliary Junior member, another for the Honorary National Junior Division Vice Presidents, and one is for participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program.

3. **Non-Traditional Student Scholarship**

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Scholarships/Children-of-Warriors>

Getting a job or staying competitive in today's workplace involves showing employers you have the skills and experience to get the job done. In many cases, returning to college is a must. This scholarship helps people who are part of the Legion Family pursue a college degree later in life or allow them to pick up where they left off when their studies were interrupted. If this is you, this scholarship could be for you.

4. **Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship**

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Scholarships/Junior-Member-Loyalty>

American Legion Auxiliary Junior Members are the future of our organization. To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the American Legion Auxiliary offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to current college students. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the ALA. This scholarship is a grant not a loan.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

Vicki Ozenbaugh

Are you a knitter or crocheter? Then you can do something to help our homeless veterans. Perhaps some of you are doing this. This is something that has been around for some time, but maybe we have forgotten about it. What am I talking about?

Making plastic sleeping mats for homeless veterans!

This project not only helps our veterans but benefits the environment. By “recycling” all those plastic bags you get from almost every store and knitting/crocheting them in to sleeping mats, you are keeping the bags out of landfills PLUS providing a softer place to sleep for the homeless.

My research shows that each 6-foot-by-2 1/2 – foot mat is made from 600 to 700 recycled plastic bags and takes about 50 hours to make. The end result is a lightweight, waterproof mat. Interested in learning how? Follow these steps:

1. Be a collector – collect clean plastic bags. They need to be in decent shape and not full of holes.
2. Be a folder – return the bags to their original shape.
3. Be a cutter – cut off the bags’ handles, as well as an inch from the bottom of the bags. Then cut the bags into 2 1/2 -inch loops.
4. Be a “plarn” maker – link the loops to form plarn (plastic yarn) and roll them into balls like you would with a ball of yarn.
5. Crochet OR knit the rows.

CROCHET the mat into a 6-foot by 3-foot mat using a single crochet with a size P or Q hook.

- Make a chain 36 inches long, which is about 66 chains. Make the loops loose with a little space between each one.
- Make an extra loop at the end to use as your turning point.
- Start at the third loop to make your second row.
- Continue until the mat is six feet long.
- Crochet from front to back to that is does not pucker up.
- Crochet two rows of a single crochet to form a tie that is 80 inches long. Connect the tie to the mat so the mat can be rolled up and carried like a sleeping bag.

KNIT the mat using size 19 knitting needles.

- Knit approximately 50 stitches until it reaches about 2 1/2 feet wide.
- Keep knitting until it reaches six feet long.
- Cast off and you are done!

Disclaimer—I am not a crocheter and it has been a long time since I knitted. But I could be a collector, folder, cutter, or plarn maker! This information was borrowed from a National Security Blog on our National website. I am only trying to provide you with ideas to promote National Security. Remember to keep track of your time and any expenses to include with your year-end reporting!

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LEGISLATIVE
Vicky Thompson

Nebraska’s Veterans Legislative Day is February 2, 2024, beginning promptly at 8:00 a.m. We will meet in the Rotunda area. Plan to arrive a little early to register. Any Auxiliary member is welcome to attend. The more representation we have to support our Veterans helps to urge our legislators to pass bills in favor of our Veterans.

Here is what has been happening on the National level as Congress works to keep advocating for our military and their families, veterans, and for our national security.

- The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FOR 2024 after months of negotiation has passed.
- The Wounded Warrior Access Act was passed by the House and Senate.

Others that are still being considered:

- Pay Our Troops Act (HR 5641)
- Keep Our Boarder Agents Paid Act (S 2999)
- The Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023 (HR 542)
- HOME Act of 2023 (HR 3848)
- COPE Act (HR 3518)
- VA suicide prevention grants

You can sign up for the action alerts from the Grass Roots Action Center to keep up on all legislative activity. Visit www.legion.org/legislative/agenda and click on Grassroots Action Center from the list on the left. Or you can go directly to the Grassroots Action Center site at www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home. By signing up for the action alerts you will receive the National Legislative Division Weekly newsletter.

The 2024 Washington Conference will be February 24-28 in Washington DC.

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2024 DISTRICT CONVENTION SCHEDULE

DISTRICT	DATE	**REGISTRATION	PLACE
1	Sat., Mar. 23	9:00 am MTZ	Gordon
2	Sun., Mar. 17	1:00 pm	Creighton
3	Sat., Mar. 9	9:00 am	Lyons
4	Sat., Apr. 6	10:00 am MTZ	Gering
5	Sat., Mar. 9	10:00 am	North Platte
6	Sun., Mar. 3	9:00 am	Doniphan
7	Sat., Mar. 16	10:00 am	Columbus
8	Sat., Feb. 10	9:00 am	Valley
9	Sat., Mar. 16	9:00 am	Elwood
10	Sat., Feb. 10	10:00 am	Nelson
11	Sat., Mar. 23	10:00 am	Wilber
12	Sat., Mar. 9	9:00 am	Weeping Water
13	Sat., Feb. 17	9:30 am	Auburn

2025 UNIT DUES DATA FORM

It is time to set your dues for the 2025 membership year. Enclosed is the Unit Dues Data Form that must be completed and returned to Headquarters by **MARCH 1, 2024**. All Units must return this form even if you do not change your dues. Complete it and return it!

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CHILI COOK OFF FUNDRAISER AT MID-YEAR

The Districts have been challenged to a chili cook off at this year's Mid-Year Conference. Contact your District President if your Unit/Legion/SAL would like to "be the one" to enter the chili for your District. There will be two categories—regular and spicy.

The event will be held on Friday, January 19, at the Kearney Legion Post (1223 Central Avenue) from 6 – 8 pm. Everyone can be a judge! Simply purchase ten tickets for \$20, sample ten different chilis, and cast your "ticket" vote. The chili with the most tickets will be declared the grand champion with bragging rights and a prize!

There will be cinnamon rolls for sale, as well.

All proceeds will go to the ALA General Fund.

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DISTRICT FAMILY CHILI COOK OFF/ POKER WALK



Friday, January 19, 2024
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Kearney American Legion Post
1223 Central Ave



Select winning District Chili:

10 tickets for \$20

Cinnamon Rolls \$2/each

District's chili will be sold:

Small container - \$4

Large container - \$8

Proceeds to support ALA General Fundraiser

Districts register by Friday,
January 12, 2024
Call or text for details
Kimberly Gurley: 1-402-366-6118
Vicki Ozenbaugh: 1-402-759-0411

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