

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Nebraska
2024-2025



ABC



BOOK



Amanda Washburn
Department President
2024 - 2025

The 2024-2025 edition of the ABC Book has arrived!

The ABC Book will be a little bit different this year. We will be cutting down on the amount of paper and any forms will be sent out in future newsletters or can be downloaded from the website. Contact President Amanda or the Department Office with any questions.

The National Chairs have worked this year to create new Program Engagement Plans (PEP) for all the programs. This information is included in each Program in this ABC Book but can be found on the national website.

Every member can log in to the National website and create their own login for free. Once you are logged in, click on the Committees tab. When the next page opens, click on the Program Engagement Plans under the “How to Get Involved” area.

National website

member.legion-aux.org/Home

All Year End Report forms will be sent out in February. They are due back to Department Headquarters by April 20. I encourage every Unit to fill out these reports to let us know what you are doing!

Amanda Washburn

Department President

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Department President Amanda Washburn
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My name is Amanda Washburn, and I live in Prairie Home, and I am extremely honored to be your Department President this year.

I have been a member of Bickel-Nelson Unit 360 in Cook, Nebraska since the day I was born. My grandma signed me to be a member when I was an hour old, and I have been an active member ever since. I have been a member for 31 years.

I am eligible for membership in The American Legion Auxiliary through the service of both of my grandfathers during World War II. My grandpa, Merle Riensche, served in the European theater and my grandpa, Donald Washburn, served in the ordinance plant near Mead, Nebraska. Both of them were active Nebraska American Legion members.

My parents and grandparents all made sure that I knew the sacrifice that all servicemembers made and made sure we would volunteer whenever we could. I have attended 21 National Conventions and have attended numerous Unit, District, and Department meetings. I was honored to be elected and serve as Department Junior President in 2009 and National Junior President in 2013.

I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2018. I work for the Nebraska American Legion as the Executive Assistant.

In my free time I like to hang out with my friends and help my parents on their farm. I look forward to working with everyone this next year!

Department Vice President Ruth Hietbrink
735 Washington St – Sterling, NE 68443
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My name is Ruth Hietbrink, and I am your Department Vice President for 2024-2025.

I have been a member of the ALA for 51 years, in Sterling, NE Unit 140. My eligibility is through my father, Paul Straube, who was a WWII veteran. Even though he passed several years ago, his passion for our country has kept me engaged in continuing to be an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Currently.

I serve as the President of Sterling Unit 140. I have also held the position of Department Chaplain 2022-2023. Past positions within ALA include Past Legislative Chairperson, Past District 13 President, Past District 13 Vice President, Past District 13 Chaplain, Johnson County President.

Positions outside of the ALA include Past Executive Board of Directors for Energy Solution Center, Washington DC, Past Board member of Home Builders of Lincoln, Past Board member for Friendship Home of Lincoln.

I graduated from Sterling High School and have an A.A.S. in Business and an A.A.S. in Event Planning. I am a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Burr, Nebraska. I retired from Black Hills Energy 2022 where I was employed for 26 years. I now make delicious baked goods with my business, Ruthie's Rolling Pin out of Sterling.

Department Historian Vicki Cyboron
2454 7th Ave – Boelus, NE 68820
Cell: 402-740-5665 Email: vcyboron@aol.com

I am a Paid Up for Life (PUFL) 44-year member of Shipman-Mogensen Unit 201 in Boelus, NE and am eligible for membership in the Auxiliary through the service of her dad. Her membership started as a Junior member.

I am currently serving as Unit President! I am also the current Grand Island VA Medical Center Representative. Past positions that I have served was Department Chaplain and Gold Star Chair member. Plus served as District Six President for two years, two years District Historian, and a two-year term as Howard County President. On the Department Level, I served five years on the Finance Committee and three years as Finance Chair. I served a three-year term as President of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association (NE-APLA).

I graduated from Midland Lutheran College with a degree in Business Administration. I currently work at Pitney Bowes Presort Services as a Collection Specialist for sixteen years.

I am a member of the Custer County DAV Auxiliary Unit. I am the current Unit Junior Vice President and Department of Nebraska DAV Auxiliary Commander (President). I attend Faith Lutheran Church in Nysted.

History Book and Narrative History Contests

Rules for the 2024-25 History Book and Narrative History contests will be published in an upcoming newsletter. Please contact Vicki Cyboron with any questions.

**Department Chaplain Lori Reimers
2011 24th St – Central City, NE 68826
Cell: 402-604-8636 Email: lljunker66@live.com**

My name is Lori Reimers, a proud member of Lester Harder Post 42's Auxiliary in Aurora Nebraska. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 since 2010 and am eligible through my husband who served in the Air National Guards for 26 ½ years.

In my unit I have served as President. I have also been the District 6 Vice President and President.

Prayer Book Contest

Rules for the 2024-25 Prayer Book contest will be published in an upcoming newsletter. Please contact Lori Reimers with any questions.

Department Secretary Roxanne Hiatt
150 NW 40th St Unit B – Lincoln, NE 68528
Office: 402-466-1808 Email: neaux@windstream.net

I am Roxanne Hiatt.

In 1964 I became a Junior member when my mother signed me up. My eligibility is because my Grandfather served our country during WW I. I am a 60-year member of Venango Unit 270.

I learned my organization's values and instruction through my Junior Leader Betty Dudden. I have participated on the Unit, County, District and Department levels. I was Department VA & R Chair for four years before holding the offices of Historian, Vice-President, and Department President for the 2005-2006 year.

I was hired in 2020 as the Department Membership Clerk, which I still hold. After an 18-month opening, I was hired as the Department Secretary and am currently serving our Department in this capacity.

I lived and attended K-12 school in Venango. My husband Harlan and I have two sons, two daughters-in-laws and two Junior Auxiliary member granddaughters. Before our move to Lincoln in 2011, I was employed for 15 years at the Perkins County Veterans' Service Office. We enjoy living next door to our son and granddaughters Sawyer and Charlee.

Department Treasurer Jacki O'Neill
150 NW 40th St Unit B – Lincoln, NE 68528
Office: 402-466-1808 Email: neaux@windstream.net

I have been a member since 1980, eligible under my husband Dan. Dan served in Germany during the Vietnam Era.

I have served as Unit Membership Chair, all District three offices, and the Department Secretary.

I moved from Sioux City to Lincoln in 2007 to serve a half term with Department President Gertrude Johansen.

I then served under Department Presidents Gayla Schmid, Marva Kasl, Carol Ulrich, Charleen Walters, Donna Hatfield, Cheryl Vap, JoAnn Ward, Barbara Skillman, Barbara Washburn, and Debra Albers.

In 2022 I returned to serve a half term with Department Barbara Meyer, followed by Vicki Ozenbaugh.

I am currently serving as the Department of Nebraska's Treasurer.

National Executive Committee Member Vicki Ozenbaugh
515 Road 18 – Ohioa, NE 68416
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I became a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in 1977 through the service of my former husband. I am a Paid Up For Life (PUFL) member of Franklin Unit #193, Ohioa, Nebraska. My "service, not self" over the 47 years has been at all levels and chairs from Unit (Ohioa Franklin Unit #193), County (Fillmore), District (Eleven), Department, and National.

In addition to my commitment to the American Legion Family, I am involved in my community as a member of St. John Lutheran Church (Administrative Secretary and lead the children's youth ministry). I am an EMT and belong to the Chamber of Commerce. Currently I serve as a member of the Fillmore County Foundation Board.

As your elected National Executive Committee (NEC) Member, I am Nebraska's representative of the national governing body of the American Legion Auxiliary with fiduciary, policy, and strategic responsibility for the organization. My term begins at the close of the 2024 National Convention and ends at the adjournment of the 2025 National Convention. The National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules govern me.

The National Executive Committee is comprised of the National President, National Vice President, the five National Division Vice Presidents, National Chaplain, National Historian, and one NEC member from each Department. The National Secretary and

National Treasurer serve with all rights except the right to vote. Nebraska's Past National President Carol VanKirk is a member for life, with all rights except the right to vote.

Nebraska's NEC alternate is President Amanda Washburn. She will serve only in the absence of me at NEC meetings.

Per our CBSR, I will serve as the Distinguished Guest Committee Chair when a national officer pays an official visit to Nebraska. The 2024-2025 National President Trish Ward is scheduled to visit Nebraska during our Department Convention, June 26-29 in Columbus.

Advisory Committee

Chair Barb Meyer

12455 Riverdale Road – Riverdale, NE 68870

Cell: 308-233-0382 Email: meyersheep@aol.com

Committee Members

Vicki Ozenbaugh and Lisa Moore

I am Barbie Meyer and am a 27-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary. My sponsor is my husband, Larry, a Vietnam veteran, Army Retired. We are retired and live on a farm by Riverdale, NE, raising sheep and cattle.

I belong to Miller Unit 351, Miller NE. I have served as Unit President, District 6 President, Department Membership Chairperson, Department Chaplain, Historian, two-year Vice President, and President, 2021-2022. I am currently a PDP and Department National Security chairperson, and chair of the Department Advisory Committee.

My reason for belonging to the ALA is to honor, respect and remember the veterans who sacrificed so much for the freedoms and opportunities given to everyone in our country.

I am a 49-year member of First Presbyterian Church in Kearney, serving three terms as a Deacon and Deacon moderator, usher, liturgist, and Sunday School teacher for 14 years. I retired from 14

years at Cookbooks by Morris Press, a 1969 graduate of Kearney High School, and attended UNK.

**Americanism
Chair Cie Kauth
205 Jackson St – Belden, NE 68717
Cell: 402-369-2266 Email: cie.kauth@gmail.com**

I am Cie Kauth. I live in Belden, Nebraska. I belong to the Brunswick Unit #357. I have been a member of the legion and auxiliary family for 35 years starting as a junior to now as a senior member. I am a member though both of my grandfather's. The one served in the Korean War and the other in the Vietnam War, which I am very proud of to serve our country.

Over the many years I have been a part of the legion and auxiliary family, I have volunteered with different things for our veterans, from our unit's pancake feeds to helping at the Vet's Home in Norfolk. In my early 20's I served a term as Vice President for District 2. I also belong to 8&40, which I'm currently an officer for Departmental #9 Nebraska. I belong to Madison County Salon 410, where I have held a few different offices and chairmanship over the last 15 years. Thanks to all to my legion and auxiliary family.

This year's essay topic is "**What Does America the Beautiful Mean to Me (regarding Veterans and our Military)?**" I would like the units to receive the essays from the schools by February 15 so you can have some extra time to judge them before sending them to me by March 15. I only have one month to judge them before I send them to National by April 15. The cover sheet will be made available at a later date.

member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/americanism

Purpose: The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. *Standing Rules #6, Core National Standing Committees*

- Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of **patriotic**

holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information.

- Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest.
- Participate in the promotion of The American Legion Americanism programs.

Deadlines/Important Dates

- Americanism Essay Contest: Winning essays are due to me by March 15, 2025.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Chair Barb Meyer

12455 Riverdale Road – Riverdale, NE 68870

Cell: 308-233-0382 Email: meyersheep@aol.com

(see bio under Advisory Committee)

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/AEF/Get-Involved-AEF

Purpose: The purpose of the AEF Committee is to raise funds for and promote knowledge about the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. *Standing Rule 6, National Committees – Member/Organizational Support*

- The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is a national grant assistance program that provides temporary emergency assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary up to \$3,000 as the result of an act of nature or other personal crisis
- Members of the American Legion Auxiliary whose dues are current and who have maintained annual membership for three consecutive years (the current year applied and immediate past two years) and have not been awarded an AEF grant (hardship or disaster) in the previous twelve months are eligible to apply for a grant
- Grant funds may be awarded only for past/overdue expenses related to retaining their primary shelter, essential household

utilities and/or a documented loss of income due to medical and/or employment reasons

- AEF funds may be used to provide emergency assistance to eligible Auxiliary members whose primary residence has been devastated by disaster, including flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, fire, or another catastrophic event. Reimbursable expenses with itemized receipts will be considered for only essential emergency expenditures up to three weeks after incident/disaster

ALA Unit Annual Awards

Contributions to the AEF should be submitted to Headquarters by May 31, 2025 to be included for the award for the unit contributing the largest amount (per capita) between June 1 – May 31.

Children & Youth

Chair Julie Schnitzler

6355 N Winchester Ave – Kenesaw, NE 68956

Cell: 308-440-9218 Email: jschnitzler@gips.org

I am Julie Schnitzler from Kenesaw, NE. I served in the United States Army Reserves for 26.5 years and was deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom. I have been an American Legion member for 24 years in Gibbon Post #310 and recently joined American Legion Auxiliary Unit # 52 in Kearney. I am eligible through my late Uncle Jim Armbruster, a Vietnam Veteran. I have four children and 1 granddaughter. I have served in the American Legion in leadership positions at various levels: Local: Sergeant of Arms and Commander; District: Commander & Membership Chair; Department: Publication Chair and Children & Youth committee; National: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. In the Legion Auxiliary, I am currently Chair of Children & Youth.

I am a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lowell. I have served as a Public School educator for 35 years in a variety of roles, including coach, high school English teacher, Alternative School teacher, Gibbon High School Principal, Howard Elementary Principal in Grand Island and am now the Grand Island Public Schools Early Childhood Education Coordinator. I enjoy my family,

quilting, officiating high school volleyball and being an Adjunct Professor for Wayne State College.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Children-and-Youth/Get-Involved-Children-Youth

Purpose: The purpose of the Children & Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans. Standing Rules 6, Core National Standing Committees

- The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.
- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour, or on an extended temporary duty assignment.
- The American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth program strives to support and promote the Children & Youth program of The American Legion.

Deadlines/Important Dates

- April is the Month of the Military Child (#momc)
- April 15: Purple Up! Day for Military Children

There will be a new Department contest held this year for C&Y. This will be to recognize Units who hold a new C&Y event in their community. More information and the contest entry form will be sent out in a future newsletter. Contact Julie for more information.

Community Service
Chair Nancy Niemann
3100 Trudy Ann Cir – Raymond, NE 68428
Cell: 402-417-8792 Email: niemann05@gmail.com

This year I, Nancy K Niemann, will be serving as Community Service Chair. I am a 52-year member of Weston Auxiliary Unit 308 being eligible through my father, Arnold Machacek, who served in the Army during the Korean War. My mother, Rose Machacek, was a Gold Star Sister to her brother, Charles Snitily, who died in World War II. Those two connections are my personal reasons for being an auxiliary member, as well as “to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion.”

I live by Raymond (just north of Lincoln) with my husband, Don, and nearby family of two sons, one daughter, one son-in-law, one daughter-in-law, two granddaughters and one grandson on the way. I work for The City of Lincoln Aging Partners and the Village of Raymond. I look forward to working with all of you and growing with my Legion Family!

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Community-Service/Get-Involved-Community-Service

Purpose: The purpose of the Community Service Committee is to promote the American Legion Auxiliary’s commitment to making our communities better places to live by supporting local service projects. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees Mission Outreach*

- Making our communities better places in which to live is something Auxiliary members strive for each day across this country.
- A major outreach program of the Auxiliary since 1926, Community Service also demonstrates our longstanding commitment to supporting the work of American Legion posts and other organizations by assisting with blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, support for women in shelters, and disaster and emergency preparedness programs.
- Promote American Legion Family Day — April 26

- Find new and creative ways to promote the program
- Participate in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
- Participate in a National Night Out
- Participate in the 9/11 National Day of Service

County Government Day

Chair Pam Biernbaum

86620 866 Ave – Belden, NE 68717

Cell: 402-241-7803 Email: pbiernbaum@hotmail.com

Committee Members

**Tammie Runions, Mary Eickhoff,
Terri Haworth, and Jennifer Nichols**

Purpose: The purpose of The American Legion County Government Day is to provide high school students with the opportunity to learn about how their local government works. Each year in Nebraska, over 5,000 students in more than 60 counties spend County Government Day visiting their local courthouse and learning more about the duties and responsibilities of various county officials. Students also participate in a mock trial. This program enjoys cooperation from school and county officials as well as the U.S. Army National Guard in Nebraska.

History of the Program: Each of the 93 counties in Nebraska has its own governmental organization. In many ways, this organizational structure is similar from one county to another; in other ways, it may be dissimilar depending upon the population size of the county. In any event, the services performed by counties are those designated by legislative enactment and are designed to provide governmental services for all citizens. In the democratic system, governments have been established to carry out assigned functions, and local governments are in a unique position to relate these functions to the needs and wishes of the citizens that they serve. County government in the United States has deep historical roots. When the framers of the Nebraska Constitution established a framework of governance for the state, a system of county organization was created as an integral part of that framework. This organization reflected characteristics of a governmental system that

was developed in English colonies in America, and which was, in many respects, similar to those that had existed in England at the time of colonization.

At Cornhusker Boys' State one year, Chief Justice Robert G. Simmons of the Nebraska Supreme Court, a Past Department Commander of the American Legion, was in charge of the elections. He overheard a boy, who had been defeated for state office in the primary election, say in tones of disgust, "I guess all there is left for me to do is run for one of those old county offices." That remark bothered the Chief Justice. He knew that county government was important because it touched the daily lives of the people probably more closely than any other form of government. Yet he knew it was misunderstood, even as the Boys' State proved. He knew that good government and good citizenship had to start at home. Considering all these points, Chief Justice Simmons conceived the idea of providing instruction in government at the county level, as Boys' State and Girls' State gave it at the state level. Cornhusker Boys' and Girls' County Government was the outgrowth of that idea. The years of World War II prevented putting the idea into concrete action. However, when the state conventions of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary were held in the late summer of 1947, Chief Justice Simmons went before both groups to plead for this new idea. He won endorsement from both organizations and was also given financial backing.

To give permanency to the program Cornhusker Boys' and Girls' County Government was officially incorporated under the laws of the State of Nebraska on November 17, 1947. At the outset, the corporation had as its board of directors Chief Justice Simmons; Dr. Archer Burnham, executive secretary of the Nebraska State Education Association; Department Commander Earle P. Barnes and Department Adjutant R. C. Patterson, all of The American Legion, and Department President Helen Magnuson, Mrs. Bess Swett, a former District President, and Mrs. Alma Armstrong, a Past Department President, of the American Legion Auxiliary.

The Nebraska Auxiliary has five members who serve on this committee each year to assist with the County Government Day program. If your county has a program, be sure to contact Eric Martin at the Legion Headquarters to make sure it is recorded.

Education
Chair Cathy Webber
201 18th Ave – Franklin, NE 68939
Cell: 308-470-0689 Email: catwebb1971@gmail.com

I am Cathy Webber and am serving as the Department Chair for Education for my second year. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Franklin Anno Sanger Unit 209 for 20 years. I am a member under my father, Ignatius Flax, who served in WW II.

I am currently Chaplain in my Unit. I also served as Treasurer and Membership Chair in the past. I am County Co-Treasurer for Franklin County. I have been District Chaplain, District Vice President, and District President for District 10. I am also a member of 8/40.

I have a daughter, Jenna (Mark) Miller and 2 grandchildren, Riley, and Haley.

I am employed at the Franklin Housing Authority/Golden Age Village in Franklin overseeing 24 residents. I am a Senior Health Insurance Assistant Program (SHIP) Counselor and keep busy helping people with open enrollment for Medicare every year. I have been doing this since 2006.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Education/Get-Involved-Education

Purpose: The purpose of the Education Committee is to promote quality education for children—especially for military children—and adults. *Standing Rule #6, Mission Outreach Programs*

- Promote quality education for children, especially for military children, and adults
- Encourage schools to invite veterans to speak in their classrooms
- Support and promote the Education Program and scholarship opportunities of The American Legion Family
- Provide scholarships for students who desire a college education

- Support legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities

Deadlines/Important Dates

- November 18-22, 2024 – American Education Week
- April 15, 2025 – Purple Up! Day for Military Children
- May 5-9, 2025 – Teacher Appreciation Week

Finance Committee

Chair Eileen Gentrup

1565 N Road – Beemer, NE 68716

Cell: 402-640-5008 Email: egentrup@hotmail.com

Committee Members

Karen Brink and Donna Hatfield

I am Eileen Gentrup, and I currently belong to West Point Unit #70 and have been an Auxiliary member for 35 years with eligibility through the service of my father, Fred Scarlett, who served in the Army during World War II. Since joining, I've held offices at the Unit, District and State level. I'm thankful for our veterans and am happy to be supportive of them and all of our military forces.

The American Legion Auxiliary constitution states that it's the responsibility of the Finance Committee to ensure that proper internal controls and an adequate budget are in place. The Finance Committee must present timely and accurate reports to keep everyone informed.

I'm looking forward to serving as chair in my third and final year on the finance committee. My background as an accountant should be helpful as the finance committee oversees the Auxiliary finances, budget, investments, and payroll. Assisting with an annual fundraiser, voucher approvals and compliance and audit reviews along with leading finance meetings, attending executive and Girls State committee meetings and submitting payroll are some of the duties of the finance chair.

Karen Brink and Donna Hatfield serve on the finance committee as well and we rely on the invaluable assistance of our Finance Advisor Julie Totten.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Finance/Get-Involved-Finance

Purpose: The purpose of the national Finance Committee is to oversee the development and implementation of general national financial policy subject to approval or ratification by the National Executive Committee, and to provide oversight of budgeted funds in the budget and report any significant variance to the National Executive Committee. *Standing Rules #6, Core National Standing Committees*

- American Legion Auxiliary Department or Unit Finance Committee
- Finance Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- Governing Board Delegated Powers

Deadlines/Important Dates

File Form 990 by the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of the fiscal year.

Girls State

Chair Vicki Ozenbaugh

515 Road 18 – Ohiowa, NE 68416

Cell: 402-759-0411 Email: ala.ozenbaugh@gmail.com

1st Vice Vicki Colson – 2nd Vice Winona Mitchell

Secretary Kathy Mazur

12932 Meadow Ridge Road – Omaha, NE 68138

Cell: 402-659-6689 Email: mazur_kathy@yahoo.com

(see Vicki Ozenbaugh's bio under NEC)

The following quote from John C. Maxwell fits perfectly my acceptance to serve as Cornhusker Girls State Chair.

“Success is due to our stretching to the challenges of life. Failure comes when we shrink from them.”

The Cornhusker Girls State program is offered to girls who have completed their Junior year of high school and will be entering into their Senior year. It takes place the first week of June each year. For 2025 it will be June 1-7.

Girls State is an Auxiliary sponsored program; however, it has its own Constitution and Bylaws. We have our own chairs, advisory, secretary, and treasurer. Units will receive a packet of information and forms that will need to be completed and returned to Department Headquarters by March 1, 2025.

As the year progresses, additional information will be available via Department Newsletters and the Cornhusker Girls State website (<http://www.girlsstate.net/Nebraska/wp/>).

Girls State Advisory Committee

Chair Ashlyn Wilkes

6582 S Steele St – Centennial, CO 80121

Cell: 308-353-6053 Email: ashlynmg@gmail.com

**Committee Members - Renee Van Winkle, Nicole Vance,
Debra Albers, and Sara Mueller**

Junior Activities

Chair Crys Bauermeister

85803 553rd Ave – Pierce, NE 68767

Cell: 402-649-7028 Email: cbauermeister@gmail.com

Hi! I am Crys Bauermeister, a mom of two, Eleanor and Luke, and wife to Josh. I am the school librarian, language arts, and STEAM instructor at Pierce Jr./Sr. High School. I previously taught English, speech, drama, and computer classes. I am in my 25th year as an educator, which includes the yearbook and journalism sponsor, academic team sponsor, and cheerleading coach.

My ALA eligibility membership is through my grandfather, Clark W. Hemphill, a United States Navy veteran who served during World War II.

In addition to my professional life, I have held the positions of the District 2 ALA President, Department Education Chair, Department Junior Activities Chair, and president of my local ALA Unit. Currently I am serving as the Department Junior Activities.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Junior-Member-Activities/Get-Involved-Juniors

Purpose: The purpose of the Junior Activities Committee is to inspire active participation in members aged 17 and under so they become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood. *Standing Rule 6, National Committees – Mission Outreach*

- Inspire active participation in members age 17 and under so they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.
- Build the Junior Activities program one member at a time by giving Junior members a voice and opportunity to participate
- Promote and encourage Junior participation in the ALA's national Junior Member of the Year award
- Promote and encourage Junior participation in the ALA Patch Program to teach them about the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary
- Make Junior meetings fun and informative

Deadlines/Important Dates

- April 15, 2025 – Purple Up! Day for Military Children

Leadership
Chair Tina Nelson
503 N Brown Ave – Clay Center, NE 68933
Cell: 402-469-3367 Email: trnelson81602@gmail.com

I am Tina Nelson, a proud PUFL (Paid Up For Life) Member of the Clay Center (Mills-Schroder) Unit #87 since 2015. I have served as District 10 Vice-President and President, as well as our Unit President. I served as the Americanism Chair for two terms and now serve as the Leadership Chair. I'm eligible through my husband Don's service in the Navy Seabees; but I could have joined sooner if I had been asked as both of my grandfathers served in the Army.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Leadership/Get-Involved-Leadership

Purpose: The purpose of the Leadership Committee is to better equip members to serve in leadership positions with confidence and skill. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Member/Organizational Support*

- Raise awareness of ALA leadership development opportunities
- Promote participation in the ALA Academy
- Enhance knowledge about ALA history, programs, and organization

Legislative
Chair Barb Washburn
455 County Road 7 – Ashland, NE 68003
Cell: 402-521-0016 Email: bwashburn827@gmail.com

I have been a 49-year member of Bickel-Nelson Unit 360 of Cook, Nebraska, through the World War II service of my father, Merle Riensche. At the Unit level, I organized the first Junior group in 1988 and served as Junior Activities chair. I have served as Unit Historian for 24 years and is the Unit Constitution and Bylaws chair.

I served as District Vice-President, President, Junior Activities chair, and Parliamentarian. I have held many chairmanships at the Department level, including Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Music, National Security, Past Presidents Parley, AEF, Parliamentarian, and eight years as Department Junior Activities Chair. I was Department President in 2015-2016.

At the National level, I served as Nebraska's National Executive Committee member, Northwestern Division Junior Activities Chair, Northwestern Division Poppy Chair, Northwestern Division Community Service Chair, Northwestern Division VA&R Chair, Vice-Chair of the Poppy Committee, National Security Chair, and Juniors Activities Chair. I was very honored to serve as a volunteer during the 2019 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Kalamazoo. I come from an American Legion family and enjoy working our organization's programs.

My husband Doug (who is a dedicated SAL member) and I have been married for 31 years. Daughter Amanda is active in the Department of Nebraska, currently serving as Department President. Son Shaun is an SAL member who keeps busy as a full-time paramedic/firefighter. He and his wife, Katie, added my first grandchild in October 2023.

I want to do a contest for the Unit reporting the most members who are signed up for the Legion GrassRoots Action Center, as reported on their Year-End report. I will give a personal award to that unit (not sure what just yet 😊).

**member.legion-
aux.org/Member/Committees/Legislative/Get-Involved-
Legislative**

Purpose: The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to provide information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. *Standing Rule #5, National Committees – Mission Outreach*

- Utilize The American Legion's Legislative Website at www.legion.org/legislative to obtain information on legislative priorities, call for immediate action, and connect with representatives

Membership
Chair Loree Hendrickson
511 Road 3, Unit 1 – Shickley, NE 68436
Cell: 402-759-6016 Email: loreeh@hotmail.com

Hello Members of the American Legion Auxiliary! I am honored to once again serve as the Department of Nebraska's Membership Chair for the coming year.

Every one of us needs to let our members know they are the ALA's MOST VALUABLE ASSET! So take some time at your next meeting to let your members know they are appreciated. Remind them that their volunteer service not only honors our veterans and our military, but it will also grow your Unit's membership. And if we all sustain our membership, our organization will absolutely be able to continue our history of success for our veterans.

To enhance our members' experience, Trish Ward, the leading candidate for ALA National President in 2024-2025, has announced her theme for the upcoming year as "Leading the Way," using the North Star as her symbol and the elements in nature as building blocks for growth in membership. In the Northwestern Division, our "building block" is Energy. Meanwhile, Nebraska's Department President Amanda Washburn has adopted a theme of "Always Remembering Their Service" (ARTS), and her project is to support the Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

In an attempt to combine Energy with Creativity here in Nebraska, I chose something which nearly all of us support - and one I know our Department President wholeheartedly cheers on - namely Husker Sports. In order for Nebraska Athletics to be successful, our coaches need to recruit. And in order for the American Legion Auxiliary to continue to be successful, our members must recruit. So this year, each District has been assigned a team from the University of Nebraska Athletic Department to cheer on and encourage as we recruit in our own ranks:

- District 1 - Women's Track & Field
- District 2 - Men's Track & Field
- District 3 - Men's Baseball
- District 4- Women's Soccer
- District 5 - Men's Basketball

- District 6 - Men's Gymnastics
- District 7 - Women's Basketball
- District 8 - Women's Rifle
- District 9 - Men's Wrestling
- District 10 - Women's Gymnastics
- District 11 - Women's Volleyball
- District 12 - Women's Bowling
- District 13 - Men's Football

UNIT GOALS

Goals have been adjusted this year in order to make them more realistic and attainable for all. In Nebraska's case, National looked at what our membership total was on the date 30 days prior to the 2023 National Convention, then asked us to increase that number (15,186) by 2% - to 15,490. Nebraska closed out the 2024 membership year on July 31 with 14,040 members.

RENEWAL NOTICES

Transmitting memberships in a timely fashion is important. Once a member has paid his/her dues, their effort not only helps your membership total, but the member expects to be listed on the rolls as paid. All Membership Chairs should be honoring these expectations.

Renewal notices will be mailed to members on September 15, 2024. Any member who was not reported by your Unit to National by the date of August 9 will receive this 1st notice. A 2nd renewal notice will be mailed on February 1, 2025, and will include any member who was not reported by your Unit to National by January 2, 2025.

Finally, the last day to make changes to your roster for the 2026 membership year will be April 1, 2025. So remember to send in the transfer forms for any deceased or transferring members, as well as any members changing their names or addresses.

Thank you, Nebraska members, for allowing me to serve the ALA Department of Nebraska once again as Membership Chair. I look forward to working with all of you to increase our Unit and Department membership.

Music
Chair Louise Wheeler
PO Box 733 – Osceola, NE 68651
Cell: 402-366-1019 Email: oldwheels@windstream.net

National Security
Chair Lisa Moore
318 N Railroad – Wilber, NE 68465
Cell: 402-821-7077 Email: moore1986@hotmail.com

Hi, I'm Lisa Moore a 27-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary. I am eligible for membership through my Grandfather Donald Neumann, a World War Two veteran. My parents are both Vietnam Veterans as well.

I am a PUFL member of Unit 238 Red Cloud, NE. I have held Unit Vice President, and President, as well as Saline County Secretary and District 11 President. I have been Home Service Chair (which is now Service to Veterans), Membership Chair, Public Relations Chair, Girls State Secretary, Girls State Advisory Board, Junior Activities Chair and for 5 and a half years I served as Department Secretary.

I am also a member of 8 and 40 de Nebraska #9, Salon 767. I have served salon chairmanships, and was Departmental Chapeaux, and Pouvoir member.

I have been married to Jim Moore for 38 years and he fully supports all of my activities with the American Legion Auxiliary. I am currently employed with Kawasaki Rail Car in Lincoln, Nebraska

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/National-Security/Get-Involved-National-Security

Purpose: The purpose of the National Security Committee is to promote a strong national defense. *Standing Rule #7, Core National Standing Committees*

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG)
- Raise awareness of POW/MIAs and the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in the search for missing personnel
- Remember to support those families whose servicemembers made the ultimate sacrifice
- Support and enhance American Legion Family and partner initiatives that strive to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of our servicemembers and their families through the Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience (BASE) Program

Department Parliamentarian Bonita Dickinson
1710 19th Ave Lot 42 – Sidney, NE 69162
Cell: 308-249-3787 Email: bbdickin@gmail.com

I am Bonita Dickinson, appointed Parliamentarian for the American Legion Auxiliary - Department of Nebraska for 2024-2025. I became a member of Sidney Unit #17 in 1984 with eligibility through my husband of 55 years, Dale Dickinson, who served 10 years with the Army National Guard, and my father, Woodrow Dotson, an Army Tech Staff Sargent during World War II who served in six different fronts in Europe from 1941-1945.

Presently, I am Sec/Treas of Sidney Unit #17 and have been Unit 17 President, Cheyenne County President, and District 4 President as well as parliamentarian for Unit 17, Cheyenne County, District 4, and Department level for the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. I was also President for Nebraska State Association of Parliamentarians 2012-2014 and was inducted into the Nebraska Parliamentarian Hall of Fame.

I have the privilege to drive the DAV Van, 200 miles roundtrip from Sidney to Cheyenne once a week to take Veterans to the Cheyenne Medical Center for medical care. I am happy to be a contact for Nebraska ALA with the Cheyenne, Wyoming DAV Medical Center.

I am available for any questions you may have regarding parliamentary procedure.

**Past President's Parley
Chair Vicki Ozenbaugh
515 Road 18 – Ohiowa, NE 68416
Cell: 402-759-0411 Email: ala.ozenbaugh@gmail.com**

(see Vicki Ozenbaugh's bio under NEC)

Just what is the Past Presidents Parley (PPP)? Simply put any past president at any level in the ALA is eligible to be a part of a PPP where they can mentor other members. The purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to provide assistance and leadership within the American Legion Auxiliary.

All past Department Presidents are members of the PPP, which meets annually at our Mid-Year Conference. Our duties are to promote comfort for the elderly and disabled Women Veterans and encourage scholarships for student nurses.

Although National does not have a PPP, any Unit, County, District or Department may have one. The eligibility is simple—any Past President at the level served. The Department of Nebraska's PPP is governed by the Department Constitution and Bylaws, Standing Rules. The PPP has their own Preamble.

On the Department level the PPP is responsible for the Women Veterans Fund. Unit contributions support this fund and are for the purpose of gifts for Women Veterans who are residents of the four Nebraska Veterans Homes and the two Nebraska Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. Currently \$25 is allotted to each female Veteran.

The PPP also provides a Healthcare Professional Scholarship from the applicants submitted through the Education Scholarships. The Department Advisory Committee designates the recipient of this scholarship on behalf of the PPP.

A Courtesy Fund is maintained through donations from the Past Department Presidents. It is utilized when a PDP passes away for a memorial, for the Department President, National President, or Northwestern Division Vice President attending the annual luncheon, to provide a gift/card when notified by the Department Secretary of the hospitalization or seriously ill PDP, and for any special projects considered by vote of the members at the Annual meeting.

I will assist any Unit, County, or District that would like to establish a Past Presidents Parley. If your Unit, County, or District already has a PPP, please notify me as I would like to keep a record of them.

**Poppy
Chair Elsa Knight
1805 Ryons St – Lincoln, NE 68502
Cell: 402-762-5056 Email: knightelsa15@gmail.com**

Vice Chair Virginia Nelsen

My name is Elsa Knight, and I am a member of Unit 3 in Lincoln. I have been involved with the American Legion Auxiliary since I was little. My junior membership card arrived in 2004! I am eligible through both my paternal and maternal grandfathers, John Knight and Karl Scheuler.

Besides being this year's Department Poppy Chair, I am also involved in the unit level of ALA, attending monthly unit meetings and being the unit's co-chair of Girls State. I've volunteered at Cornhusker Girls State ever since I've been eligible in 2016. I've been a Junior Counselor, Assistant Director of Education, and Assistant Director of Counselors. I have also assisted with many other facets that are not listed on paper! For the year of 2024-2025, I've also had the privilege of being appointed as National Committee Member of Girls Nation.

As the 2024-2024 Department Poppy Chair I hope to encourage members and Units to use the poppy to promote all the American Legion Auxiliary's programs. Think of the poppy as an additional "brand" of the ALA.

As in the past, we want to work with our communities and schools by:

- Promoting the symbolism of the Poppy and Flanders Fields
- Promoting the Poppy Poster Contest

- Units sponsor contests in local schools. When schools do not conduct activities, other youth groups may participate under direct supervision of the unit.
- Participating in your District's Poppy Centerpiece Contest
 - Entries will be judged at the Department Junior Convention
- Promoting and selecting a Little Miss Poppy (ages 6-12)
 - Selection of Little Miss Poppy is at the discretion of the unit. The department winner will be invited to appear at the ALA National Convention
- Utilizing Poppy donation collection cans

Remember that National Poppy Day is held on the Friday prior to Memorial Day. The date this year is May 23, 2025. If you plan a special event for that day, please report it to me!

The big question is: what do you do with your poppy proceeds? National Headquarters suggest considering using them to support one of the ALA's partners, such as essential aspects of Honor Flights, and food banks coordinated by the Armed Services YMCA. For further information, visit:

<https://www.legion-aux.org/poppy-funds>

[member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Poppy/Get-Involved-Poppy](https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Poppy/Get-Involved-Poppy)

Purpose: The purpose of the Poppy Committee is to educate ALA membership and the public on the significance of the poppy and the program's financial benefit for veterans, military, and their families. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Mission Outreach*

- Promote the Poppy Program and increase revenue
- Educate your community on the meaning and history of the poppy
- Celebrate National Poppy Day®
- Increase the number of poppy makers in your community
- Consider using your poppy funds to support one of the American Legion Auxiliary's partners

Deadlines/Important Dates

Unit Poppy Poster winners are due to me by March 15, 2025

**Public Relations
Chair Meri Hietbrink
4816 Kinsley St – Lincoln, NE 68524
Cell: 402-239-3171 Email: mhietbink6@gmail.com**

I have the honor of being the 2024-2025 Public Relations Committee Chairperson this year. I have been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) since 2000. I belong to Unit #140 in Sterling, Nebraska as my grandfather, Paul Straube, served in World War II. My grandmother Marvene joined the ALA along with her daughters Debra, Ruth, and Velda. She also made sure to start my membership after I was born. My mother, Ruth, is this year's Vice President. With her and my family's guidance I have had amazing support being an active member in my community and work to serve our service members through my ALA unit and current career.

As someone who has a marketing degree, I know first-hand how powerful good public relations can be for a brand. Without news articles, community outreach events, public speeches and so many other items people would have no idea what the ALA is and what we stand for. Each and every member is responsible for promoting our organization in order to continue to see it thrive and grow. We are nothing without our members and it is important that we all work together to ensure that this organization can continue the fight for our service members. I challenge each unit to be active in getting publicity out there about the great things happening in your area. This is the only way we can tell people who we are, what we do and why it matters.

Public Relations Ideas

- Wear ALA branded items (clothing, accessories, etc.) - These can be great conversation starters!
- Maintain a social media account(s) for departments, divisions, and units - Personal or Unit social media can be a powerful tool to share information and increase event turnout. Consistent content posting is needed for this to be useful.
- Build Relations with local media - Publish articles in newspapers or even have your own local newsletter available for members to share.
- Host charitable events, supply drives, card parties, etc. to get members involved and invite the community to participate.

- Give speeches and presentations on relevant topics such as flag etiquette, veterans day presentations, meaning of the poppy, etc.

Many resources such as the Branding Guide and the PR Toolkit are available for you on the national website.

Unit Publicity Book

This book will NOT be submitted to nationals as there is no contest for it; however I will give out awards for the top three Unit submissions at the Department Convention.

Rules for the 2024-25 Publicity Book contest will be published in an upcoming newsletter. Please contact Meri Hietbrink with any questions.

National Public Relations Committee Awards

All submissions must be in to the committee chair by May 1 in order to allow time for review and submission to Nationals.

Unit Award: ALA Mission Focused Social Media Account

- Presented to units with active social media accounts
 - One unit per department
 - Must have a maintained account focused on the mission of the ALA
 - Must conform to ALA Branding Guide
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Document with screenshots/photos of social media postings
 - Social media account URL
- All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 pm EST on June 1.

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program (per division)

- One unit in each division (5) that earns media placements in their community
 - Materials and guidelines:
- Media placements/coverage highlighting ALA mission delivery.
- All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 pm EST on June 1.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Public-Relations/Get-Involved-Public-Relations

Purpose: The purpose of the Public Relations Committee is to establish and maintain a positive public image of the organization by encouraging ALA members to be visible in their communities through branding and informing the public about the mission of the organization. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Member/Organizational Support*

- Spread the word about the American Legion Auxiliary: *A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*
- Encourage ALA members to be visible in their communities through valuable, distinct branding
- Share the latest news from ALA volunteer national leadership and ALA National Headquarters

**The Star Newspaper
Editor Lorene Bartos
7441 San Mateo Lane – Lincoln, NE 68516
Cell: 402-310-3481 Email: lbartos1@unl.edu**

Hi! I'm Lorene Bartos, Editor of *THE STAR*. I am a 67-year member of St. Edward Unit 226. I belong to help support veterans and youth programs and to honor my father and husband, both of whom served our country in the Army.

The ALA Girls State program is incredibly special to me as I attended in 1964 and have been privileged to help with the program since the 70s. I served as Secretary for several years and Chair for 2 years.

THE STAR is the publication of the Nebraska ALA. It is published six times a year in the even months—December/January; February/March; April/May; June/July; August/September; October/November. *THE STAR* is the pull-out centerfold of the

NEBRASKA LEGIONNAIRE. When the paper comes, be sure to pull out *THE STAR*. You will then have all the information handy.

Any Legion Family member may submit articles and pictures for inclusion in the paper. Guidelines to follow:

- Any member may submit an article or pictures for *THE STAR*.
- Articles are due to the editor by the 10th of the month prior to publication date
- All levels are encouraged to submit (Unit, County, and District).
- Original pictures only!! (Copies of pictures in a newspaper cannot be used.)
- Get permission to publish the pictures from those in the pictures.
- Adhere to patient/resident privacy for those in any facility.

Any questions? Contact me at 402-310-3481.

Let's share what is happening in our American Legion Family!

**Service to Veterans
Chair Maria Atterberry
704 Rochelle St – Elwood, NE 68937
Cell: 308-325-2863 Email: m_atterberry@hotmail.com**

I am Maria Atterberry from Elwood, NE. I joined American Legion Auxiliary Unit # 290, twenty years ago. I am eligible through my late husband. He was a Vietnam Era veteran stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. We were married 32 years and had four daughters. I have eleven grandchildren, six step grandchildren and two great granddaughters. I am currently President of our Auxiliary unit. I was District 9 President and now the Secretary/Treasurer for our District. I am also the Service to Veterans Chair.

I am a member of St. Ann church in Lexington. I am President of the Elwood Public Library, and I am Secretary of the Plum Creek Garden Club in Elwood. Volunteerism is important to me, and I share that attitude with family, friends, and the community.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/VAR/Get-Involved-VAR

- Support veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors in your local community
- Look for ways in your community to ensure the ever-changing demographics of veterans and their families are supported
- Look for Community Veteran Engagement Boards in your area (CVEBs) and provide support in the form of information, donations, or volunteers to the events in your area.
- Become the catalyst to find needs and encourage members to help veterans in their community.
- Promote volunteer opportunities in veteran-centric activities in community settings.
- Utilize websites, newsletters, and other media to promote your events and gain community support.
- Report your ALA Service to Veterans hours to your unit VA&R chair.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Chair Beverly A. Neel

57576 847th Road – Wayne, NE 68787

Cell: 402-369-0152 Email: bbneel1912@gmail.com

I am Beverly A. Neel, the VA&R Chair for a second term. I am eligible for the American Legion Auxiliary through the service of my husband, Robert G. "Bud" Neel; my grandfather, James Owen Gallop; my father, John James Gallop; my brother, Warren Mihael Gallop; and my son, John Grayson Neel. I have been a member of the ALA since October 1981. I have been an ALA member in Cameron, MO, Dakot City, NE, and currently belong to Roy Reed Unit 252 in Winside. I am a PUFL member.

I have held many positions at Unit, District, Department, and National levels including National Executive Committee member and National Leadership Vice Chair; Department President, Vice President, Historian, Chaplain, AEF, PPP, Legislative, Public

Relations, Americanism, Membership Chair (twice), Leadership Chair, Norfolk Veterans Home Chair; and District President (twice).

I am active in my local community where I am a member of the Wayne Eagles Auxiliary 3573. I was the Secretary and Chair of the Wayne County Republican Party and the Chapter Secretary for the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in Wayne and Dixon County.

I have worked at Dale Electronics in Norfolk, the FBI in Washington DC and Kansas City, MO, Farmers Mutual Insurance Company of Nebraska, and retired from the State of NE Unicameral Legislature as an Administrative Assistant. During that time I, also, was a stay-at-home mom.

MONETARY DONATIONS TO FACILITIES

Units, Districts, and Members - When you are preparing to make a monetary donation to any of our CVA Medical Centers in Nebraska or Nebraska Veterans Homes, please remember to send your donations to the Department Office using the enclosed Department of Nebraska & National Veteran Projects donation sheet (green). The donations will be recorded to the appropriate facility; thereafter, the funds will be available to the facility upon the facility presenting a voucher to the VA & R Chair. We are trying to maintain an accurate money trail from your Unit/District/Members to the event/project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

SPECIAL SCHEDULED DATES

Each year the ALA Department of Nebraska has scheduled events for which your Units, Districts, and/or Members donate the funding; namely, Veterans Dollar Day (November), Gifts for yanks (December) (both at the Nebraska Veterans Homes and VA Medical Centers), and Gift Shops (December at the Nebraska VA Medical Centers). It is great to see new faces attend, and it will warm your heart to see how our beloved Veterans appreciate our gift of money and especially our time and listening ear. Be sure to wear the brand and arrive at least one-half an hour before the events begin. The ALA appointees at the facilities should verify through their respective facility if there are any restrictions and share them with the Department Office and VA & R Chair. The Nebraska American Legion Family VA & R Schedule of Events is on the website.

member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/VAR/Get-Involved-VAR

- Support the therapeutic rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.
- Support veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors.
- Volunteer at local VA facilities, including state VA facilities in your area.
- Collaborate with organizations that support veterans and their families, such as Wreaths Across America, Honor Flight Inc., and the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network.
- Look in your community for opportunities to support veterans, their caregivers, their families, and their survivors.
- Support The American Legion's Be the One mission.

Outside Partnerships

- **Wreaths Across America**
- **Honor Flight Inc**
- **Military and Veteran Caregiver Network**
- **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival**
- **Center for Development and Community Engagement**

Central Nebraska Veterans Home

Chair Kathy Fisher

3007 W 22nd St – Kearney, NE 68845

Cell: 30-627-4454 Email: kmloskill1@charter.net

Vice Chair Judy Kouba

Greetings from Central Nebraska Veterans Home. I am Kathy Fisher, and I am the Chair of the facility.

The members had a fishing tournament last month with three members being Master Anglers. It was rather windy, but they still had an enjoyable time. They always enjoy playing bingo. We have MerryMaker concerts which you see lots of toes tapping and clapping with the music.

Activities that groups can sponsor and assist with are Bingo parties, Ice Cream Socials, Pie Socials. You can contact Alicia Muller, Assistant Activities Director, if interested.

They can use Gift Cards (Walmart, Amazon, etc.). The home has bird feeders outside each home. They need bird seed or donations for them to purchase seed. If interested in volunteering at CNVH, please call Jessica Modlin (308-865-3421) for details.

Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home
Chair Donna Smith
15103 S 84th St – Papillion, NE 68046
Cell: 402-250-3309 Email: ddjssmith@msn.com

Vice Chair Vacant

Hello members of the American Legion Auxiliary. My name is Donna Smith and have been recently appointed the Auxiliary VAVS chair at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home. I am a 31-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and currently a member at Valparaiso Unit 371. I gained my eligibility through my father's service in the Merchant Marines during WW II and service in the Army during the Korean War. Also through my brother's service in the Air Force from 1975-1990, including Desert Storm.

I have been volunteering at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home and former Thomas Fitzgerald Veterans Home in Omaha for over 40 years and have served as VAVS co-chairman at ENVH for the past 2 years.

Now for the most important part of this message, what's happening at ENVH! We have a new volunteer coordinator in Katie Mahar-Flock, hired a few months back. Katie is young and energetic, ready to assist you and get you involved at ENVH. Her contact information is: email Katherine.mahar.flock@nebraska.gov or phone 402-595-2180. Sarah Ryan continues as the Activities Director at ENVH and is great to work with. She can provide you with wants and needs at ENVH. Her email is Sarah.ryan@nebraska.gov and phone 402-591-4862.

The exciting news is the new addition is nearly complete with the contractor making a few minor repairs and members will start moving into this new neighborhood in the near future. Once occupancy takes place there will be some remodeling in the existing building. Once all of this is complete ENVH will be able to increase their occupancy number, serving more veterans with much needed services.

If you have never taken the opportunity to volunteer at ENVH, you should consider it. You will find volunteering a very rewarding experience. ENVH has activities during the days, nights, and on the weekends--all of which volunteers are needed. The members are very appreciative of those visits and enjoy just seeing and talking with someone different than those they see on a day-to-day basis.

My primary goal this year is to get more members of The American Legion Family actively involved in volunteering at our Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home. This could be in any of our current activities or by starting a new one. Come put a smile on one of our Veterans face! I am here to help you get involved and serve. Feel free to contact me, and I will work with you to make your volunteer experience memorable and exciting!

Norfolk Veterans Home
Chair LaRee Kubes
205 W 10th St – Madison, NE 68748
Cell: 402-841-6813 Email: lareekubes@yahoo.com

Vice Chair Rose Ann Kohl

Hello, my name is LaRee Kubes, I am a PUFL member of Norfolk Unit #16, also a member of Post #16 Legion Riders. My eligibility due to my three brothers who served in and during Vietnam. My husband Les and I have five children and 14 grandchildren, of who are all American Legion Family Members of Norfolk Post #16. I am President of Norfolk Unit #16, Vice President of District #2, and Dept. ALA Norfolk Veterans Home Chair. Also currently serving as Vice President of our Senior Center. I have always been involved in volunteering, when growing up and continuing this practice to this day. I am retired, I enjoy doing a lot of Volunteering at Norfolk Veterans Home.

We are very fortunate to have an outstanding group of Auxiliary members from all Districts (especially #2, #3, and #7) along with all American Legion Family members from all Districts that continue to enrich our NVH Veterans and their families' lives. We, also, have a fantastic group of volunteers that assist with various activities to enable Veterans and their families to enjoy attending.

My goal for this year is to further enhance our Veterans and their families lives by creating more activities and working together more as the American Legion Family volunteers to come up with new ideas and ways to get this accomplished. It has been awesome to see the smiles, laughter, and creativity that everyone has brought to our residents in the variety of ways, whether by music, conversation, activity, games, or just by visiting. I hope to see this continue, after all, we are their extended family. We are always looking for more volunteers and ideas. Please feel free to contact me if I can help in any way.

Our current needs are patterns for recliner arm storage covers, with pockets to help prevent falls; continued need for clothing protectors; and sponsors for newspapers for six pods. We are so glad to be supporting the continuation of a traditional favorite week that was lost during COVID.

**Western Nebraska Veterans Home
Chair Cecil Doshier
1960 Kings Road – Gering, NE 69341
Cell: 308-631-7093 Email: cddoshier@charter.net**

Vice Chair Marilyn Schutt

I am Cecil Doshier, the representative of Western Nebraska Veterans Home (WNVH) in Scottsbluff for the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. I was born and raised in Gering and have made it my home for the last 50+ years. I taught school for 38 years and am now retired. I am President of Gering Unit 36 and District 4 Secretary.

**Grand Island VA Medical Center
Representative Vicki Cyboron
2454 7th Ave – Boelus, NE 68820
Cell: 402-740-5665 Email: vcyboron@aol.com**

Deputy Nancy Griffiths

(see Vicki Cyboron's bio under Department Historian)

The Grand Island VA Medical Center (GI VAMC) average censuses of veterans the past year has been 55 veterans. It is always a pleasure working with the staff at the GI VAMC as they are very helpful to us and appreciate all we do and provide for the veterans and staff.

Recent needs lists are reading glasses higher than 2.5, USB C phone cables and plug ins. Any toiletry items except dental items as they get them through the VA. Items like shower gel, soap, razors, shaving cream are a few items that they use.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the functions we have hosted. When providing items, please remember to write down your contact information (the address, phone number and contact name and who [what part of the Post Family].) This is a very important step so the VA knows who they can contact and send a thank you to your Unit or other part of your Post Family.

Please reach out if you have any questions or suggestions of events. Looking forward to seeing all the donations Nebraska American Legion Family donates at the Grand Island VA Medical Center.

**Omaha VA Medical Center
Representative Paula Pillen
6001 N 147th St – Omaha, NE 68116
Cell: 402-630-6583 Email: ppillen2@gmail.com**

Deputy Vacant

My eligibility in the American Legion Auxiliary is a result of my grandfather Henry Pillen (WWI), father Eugene Pillen (WWII-Philippines/Japan Occupation Forces) and my spouse Russell G.

Quimby is a graduate of West Point Military Academy (Vietnam Era), who also was Army Reserves-Railway MOS. My personal background is Communications and Healthcare Administration.

After joining the Auxiliary in 2018, I was quickly integrated during my first year as Unit 362-Elkhorn Vice President and rotated in as Douglas County Chaplain. The next year I became Unit President and have had continuous service in that office to present day. That year I also became VP of ALA Douglas County.

My third year included a position as District 8 VP (often replacing the President for her two years at meetings), and President of Douglas County for 1 year. I served as District 8 President during two years of COVID.

Having helped Rose Sheehy as a VA volunteer before her passing from COVID, I then picked up the remainder of her year's duties and became the VA Rep the following year. It is my Unit's rotation turn with Douglas County and I am currently Vice President. The District 8 Facebook page for The Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders promotions was started under my Facebook account, with the intention of mutually supporting our American Legion Family area's activities. Some are willing to share on this public page, others are not; yet we have 108 followers.

VA & R - Omaha Medical Center Representative -- Contests
The VA Omaha Medical Center Recreation Therapy Program and the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary co-sponsor the "Veterans Creative Arts Contest" at the Omaha Medical Center. Your gifts to this program locally support materials needed for the winner's reception. Criteria for applicants may be found at:

<https://department.va.gov/veteran-sports/national-veterans-creative-arts-festival/>

Please promote this area event. This program is the 2025 project of ALA Department President Amanda Washburn.

The ALA Department of Nebraska also supports caregivers of Nebraska's national-level winning veterans. Grants can pay \$250 for each caregiver's attendance at the National Festival, which will next be held on May 11 – 18, 2025, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Papillion Community Living Center
Representative Elizabeth Paes
501 E Gold Road Apt 3E – Papillion, NE 68046
Cell: 402-677-0268 Email: elizapes@hotmail.com**

The Papillion Community Living Center is part of the Omaha VA Medical Center. Contact Elizabeth Paes for more information or for donation or volunteering opportunities.

**District 1 President Vicki Kotschwar
90 Mann Road – Chadron, NE 69337
Cell: 308-430-3121 Email: kotsch@bbcwb.net**

Vice President Jean Vackiner

**Fall Round-up – October 6 at 1 pm MST, Cody Post 319
Convention – March 22 at 9 am MST, Crawford Post 138**

I have been in the Auxiliary about 25 years. My father was in the Army and my husband is an Air Force Veteran. We have 3 three grown children and 4 grandchildren. Both of us are retired teachers and have lived out in the Panhandle for the past 50+ years. I have been President and Vice-President of our unit, #12 and Deputy Rep. for VA Hot Springs.

I am on our Honor Flight Board here and am using that important program as my project. Connie Frandson was a big influence for me when she was President here and encouraged me to become more involved. I'm only sorry I didn't get started earlier in my life, but I intend to stay active and support it and our Veterans as long as I can. At this time, I'm not aware of any contests in our District, if that is what you are looking for. Thank you for all your hard work and enthusiasm for the Auxiliary.

District 2 President Corrine Janovec
PO Box 661 – Plainview, NE 68769
Cell: 402-201-4562 Email: cjanovec2@gmail.com

Vice President LaRee Kubes

Fall Round-up – October 6 at 1 pm, Chambers Post 320
Convention – March 16 at 1 pm, Creighton Community Center

I have been a life-long Plainview Auxiliary Unit 148 Auxiliary member and currently the treasurer. Born and raised in Plainview and graduated with a Registered Nurse diploma from St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Omaha.

I enlisted in the US Army Nurse Corp in 1971. Basic training was in Ft. Sam Houston, TX. I served at Ft. Bragg, NC and Ft. Riley, KS. I was honorably discharged in 1973. I am a member of Plainview Post 148 and serve as the adjutant.

I have worked at Plainview General Hospital, Lundberg Memorial Hospital in Creighton, Plainview Manor, Norfolk Regional Center, and was manager of Plainview Community Housing. I purchased a building in Plainview and opened "Serendipity" as a coffee shop and is now a small café.

I am a member of the United Methodist Church, Mt Vernon Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, and serve on the Plainview City Council.

I have served as Commander of Pierce County American Legion. I was elected to serve as District 2 ALA President in 2024.

My family includes my husband David (52 years); my oldest daughter Jamie (husband Paul) and granddaughter Lauren; and my youngest daughter Joni (husband Jon) and granddaughters Sydney and Sophia. My siblings are Lana Lea Swearingen, Kevin Jenkins, and Denise Cox.

District 3 President Laura Novak
1006 Dakota St – Emerson, NE 68733
Cell: 402-369-0019 Email: Inovakala@outlook.com

Vice President Theresa Beed

Fall Round-up – no event
Convention – March 15 at 8:30 am, Hartington VFW Post

My name is Laura Novak (some still think of me as Laura Neel). I currently reside in Emerson, NE but I am PUFL through Roy Reed Unit 252 Winside, NE, where I hold the office of President.

I currently am the Dispatch Supervisor for Thurston County Sheriff's Office and Interim Manager at Pony Express—Emerson. My life is very busy between these two jobs.

I am married and have three daughters, Kiely, KayLynn and Brianna. I also have four rescue dogs that all truly believe they are children as well.

I am energetic about keeping this organization going and teaching those younger members what we are all about. I have always advocated for this as we all know, if the younger ones do not step up the history is gone.

District 4 President Teri Poley
PO Box 531 – Sidney, NE 69162
Cell: 308-249-4027 Email: tpoley55@gmail.com

Vice President Dorothy Hall

Fall Round-up – October 26 at 1 pm MST, Huett Nebraska Building
Convention – March 23 at 10 am MST, Morrill Post 10

My name is Terri Poley from Sidney, Nebraska. I joined the American Legion Auxiliary Unit #17, eighteen years ago. I am eligible through my father, Clarence Mashek who was a World War II Army veteran. I have three brothers who served in the Navy during the Vietnam era, another brother who served in the Navy a

little later. My fifth brother did his service at home by joining the state patrol and working his way up to US Marshal. I have a son who followed in his grandfather's footsteps and joined the Army.

I am a widow. I have three sons, a stepson, and a stepdaughter, thirteen grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. I am currently our District Four president and vice president and membership chair for Unit #17. In our local Does, I am secretary for our drove and for our district. My local TOPs group I am president. I also volunteer at the polls for elections. I am still working. I have instilled in my youngest son that it is important to volunteer to help the community to grow and survive.

District 5 President Eva Crawford
PO Box 188 – Mullen, NE 69152
Cell: 308-546-7379 Email: jectruck5556@gmail.com

Vice President Merle Konken

Fall Round-up – October 12 at 1 pm, Stapleton Post 324
Convention – March 22 at 10 am, Lincoln County Fairgrounds

I am Eva Wiese Crawford from Mullen Unit #109. I am eligible for the American Legion Auxiliary through my dad. He was in World War II.

I have been a member since 1983. I am currently the president of our Mullen ALA unit, and I am going to serve as our District #5 President this year. I am proud of the many things our Unit does during the year for our Veterans and community.

District 6 President Justina Birkel
PO Box 64 – North Loup, NE 68823
Cell: 402-389-0537 Email: jbirkel.ala@gmail.com

Vice President Barb Dorsey

Fall Round-up – October 13 at 9 am, Saint Paul Post 119
Convention – March 8 at 9 am, Grand Island Post 53

I am Justina Birkel, and I am serving my second year as District 6 President. I became a Junior member at the age of 5 in 1985 with the Springview Unit #98. I was a Junior member for 13 years. Then in 2006 I rejoined as a Senior member in the Springview Unit #98 and was a member there until I transferred to North Loup Unit #285 in 2017. I have been a Senior member for 18 years. I am currently the Unit President for the North Loup Unit.

I am eligible through my grandfather Harley Jack Snyder. He served in the Korean War. My grandfather and my grandmother Edith Snyder were both very active in the Legion and ALA in Springview. I live in North Loup with my husband Heath and 10-year-old son Walker. Heath and Walker are also Sons of the American Legion members. Walker keeps us busy with football, wrestling, and baseball. We have a place north of Ainsworth that we like to get away from and enjoy the quiet. I have been the office manager at Jeffres Sand and Gravel Inc in Burwell for 9 years.

The District 6 Vice-President is Barbara Dorsey. District 6 consists of 36 units in Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Merrick, Nance, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler counties.

District 7 President Nancy Patras
810 6th St – Columbus, NE 68601
Cell: 402-276-3371 Email: patrasdn@frontiernet.net

Vice President Mari Melcher

Fall Round-up – October 13 at 2 pm, David City Senior Center
Convention – March 15 at 10 am, Columbus Post 84

I am Nancy Patras, and I am serving my first year as the District 7 President. I have been an ALA member at Unit 84 for a short time, joining in 2020. I joined under my husband who served as a Navy Seabee. The Unit at my husband's post was not very active. I wanted to change that. So here I am President of Unit 84. I was District 7 Vice President and now the District 7 President.

District 8 President Lindsay Brown
20 S 41st St #111 – Council Bluffs, IA 51501
Cell: 402-5778-9222 Email: lbrown0825@gmail.com

Vice President Vacant

Fall Round-up – October 13 at 1 pm, Blair Post 154
Convention – February 15 at 10 am, Herman Post 274

My name is Lindsay (Mazur) Brown. I grew up in Millard and graduated from Gretna High School, where I was on the softball team. After High school I went to Metro Community College in Elkhorn, Nebraska, where I studied Photography and Business.

I have been a member of the Gretna Legion Auxiliary Unit 216 for 40 years. I am eligible through my grandfather, Leonard Koch, who served in WW II.

I served as our Unit President for five years and District 8 Vice President for two years. I am currently serving my second year as the District 8 President.

District 9 President Lana Bennett
706 Ontario Ave – Elwood, NE 68937
Cell: 308-3252-0766 Email: lanaben1976@yahoo.com

Vice President Kathy Beck

Fall Round-up – no event
Convention – March 15 at 9 am, Red Willow County
Fairgrounds

District 10 President Deanna Tuttle
480 S Porter St – Nelson, NE 68961
Cell: 402-621-0038 Email: deannatuttle@msn.com

Vice President Vacant

Fall Round-up – September 28 at 10 am, Holstein Fire Hall
Convention – February 8 at 10 am, Campbell Post 169

District 11 President Cindy Lukan
2626 N 49th St Apt 414 – Lincoln, NE 68504
Cell: 402-713-1121
Email: cindyl_dist11pres2023@hotmail.com

Vice President Marla Furrow

Fall Round-up – October 12 at 2 pm, Fairbury Post 24
Convention – March 22 at 10 am, Fairbury Post 24

Hello! I am Cindy Summers Lukan. This is my second year serving as District 11 President. District 11 consists of six counties – Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, Thayer, and York. There are 35 Units in the District.

I am a 55+ year member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Alexandria. I became a Junior Member at age 9. My membership is through my father, Sam Summers, who served in the Navy during WW II. I am #7 of 9 children born to Sam and Ruth. Five of my

brothers served in the military in different branches. My large family consists of my siblings, 20+ nieces/nephews, 28+ next generation and 4 of the next generation. We just keep growing!!

I am currently President In the Alexandria Unit and have served as secretary and vice-president. I am a past-president for Thayer County. I have served as District 11 Parliamentarian. At one time I was a member of the Lincoln Unit and served as membership chair.

My theme is “Military Families Matter.” My symbol is Pedro the Penguin. My project for the year is to distribute to schools in District 11, the Ready 2 Help card game from FEMA and the Prepare with Pedro information packets with coloring book and activity book from Red Cross.

My other interests are Parliamentary Procedure. I am a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, State and Lincoln unit. I am currently serving as vice-president at the State Level and secretary at the Unit level. Another interest is music. I love listening to “good” music. I played the piano in high school and the organ at church. I am trying to get back into playing again. My household is not only myself – but three cats – Sunday, Topaz, Bubba.

I believe in God, Country, and Community.

District 12 President Lois Johnson
711 South 20 Road – Unadilla, NE 68454
Cell: 402-209-5011 Email: ljreddish@hotmail.com

Vice President Erma Naber

Fall Round-up – October 19, time TBA, Syracuse Post 100
Convention – March 15 at 8 am, Lincoln Post 1919

I am Lois Johnson and will be serving as District 12 President, which is comprised of four counties—Cass, Lancaster, Otoe, and Seward. There are 21 Units in District 12. This is my second year as District 12 President.

I became an American Legion Auxiliary member of Unit 100, Syracuse, Nebraska in 2008. I am a member through my late

husband Ronald L. Johnson, a Korean War Army Veteran. Other family members that I am proud to say served our country are my deceased first husband Gerald Emerson, USAF, Vietnam; my brother-in-law Gene Eggert, USAF, Korea; my cousin Robert Shipps, US Army, Iraq; two uncles in World War II—Orville Reddish, US Navy, and Irvin Reddish (D-Day Invasion); Adelbert Reddish, Army, Civil War.

In Unit 100 I am currently serving as Vice President, Membership Chair/Treasurer.

My theme will be the same as Department President Amanda Washburn's—Always Remembering Their Service.

District 13 President Michele Tegtmeier
310 Otoe St – Burchard, NE 68323
Cell: 402-223-8874 Email: mtegtmeier@windstream.net

Vice President Bobbi Albers

Fall Round-up – October 12 at 1 pm, Humboldt
Convention – February 15 at 9:30 am, Tecumseh Post 2

