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AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

DEPARTMENT of
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JANUARY 2025 DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

UNIT PRESIDENTS

It is important that the information in this newsletter is shared with all members. Please share this newsletter at your meetings and inform others that all Newsletters are available on the Nebraska Website (nebraskalegionaux.net). Thank you!!

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe that it is 2025 already! I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I want to thank all of the Units for their work collecting membership and getting it turned in. We are currently sitting in 3rd in the Northwestern Division and 11th nationwide. We are at 72.72% of the goal as of December 27 and I know that we can reach 100% by the end of the year. We have 28 Units that are under the 50% mark, so Membership Chair Loree and I will be contacting you to see if you need any assistance. We know it takes a TEAM to work membership. Don't forget to remind your members that if their dues aren't paid by January 31 that they are delinquent and lose all of their rights as members.

In just a few weeks we will be in Norfolk for the Mid-Year Conference. The Saturday sessions will be filled with education, fun, and teamwork. I hope that many of you will be able to come and join in with the other ALA members. Our Northwestern Division Vice President Debra Albers, who just happens to be from Nebraska, will be our special guest for the meeting! Here is hoping for great weather and even better attendance!

District Conventions will be starting up not too long after Mid-Year and we hope that every Unit will send at least one member to their meeting. This is where you as members get a voice in where your District meetings will be held and what amendments you want to send forward to be voted on at the June Convention. There will be a Department Officer at each of the meetings. If you wish to have a Chairman or an additional officer attend, please be sure to reach out to them directly and invite them. We can't wait to see you all there!

District 1 March 22 – President Amanda	District 2 March 16 – Vice President Ruth
District 3 March 15 – Chaplain Lori	District 4 March 23 – President Amanda
District 5 March 22 – Historian Vicki	District 6 March 8 – President Amanda
District 7 March 15 – Historian Vicki	District 8 February 15 – Historian Vicki
District 9 March 15 – President Amanda	District 10 February 8 – President Amanda
District 11 March 22 – Vice President Ruth	District 12 March 15 – Vice President Ruth
District 13 February 15 – President Amanda	

Before we know it, it will be time to be sending in our Year End Report Forms. We have been busy working on a new/old version of a report form this year. We are going to be using some ideas from the citation of merit reports and then adding space for Units to elaborate on what they have done and what worked well. These will be going out in February to all Units and will be due back to Department by April 20th. We hope that these will be more user friendly, and we might be able to get close to 100% reporting this year! Remember, these reports are important, and they show everyone what we are doing.

Please reach out if your Unit needs anything. We are always here to help you or get you the answers you need. I am looking forward to doing some more traveling in 2025 and hope that your Unit is one of the ones I get to see. I love getting to meet all of the ALA members, attending your meetings and special events, and getting to see our ALA members in action.

Have a great January and see you soon!

“Always Remembering Their Service”

Amanda Washburn – 402-480-1472 (C)

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From the Secretary’s Desk.....Roxanne Hiatt – 402-466-1808

Happy New Year!! It’s 2025!!

Let’s start this year with a clean slate. I admit it. It was I that sent a 10-year-old list of deceased to *The Star* Editor Lorene for the December issue. Thank you for pointing this out, and I resolve not to do this again in 2025. The correct list for 9/6/2024 thru 11/10/2024 will go into the February issue of *The Star* along with the current list.

Membership is getting close to 75% but keep it coming. It is how we support our organization. Oh, and remember – when referring to our organization you are a member of a **UNIT**, not a Post.

A Note on Poppies: At this time, the office has no poppies for order. All current orders will be filled but we are currently down to 3 poppy makers. Only veterans can be paid to make poppies, but anyone can do it voluntarily. Consider this as a community service project for your Unit or individuals. Maybe Juniors? It would be best to use the poppies you have wisely and perhaps use them for more than one year for the time being.

It is Mid-Year time. Conference will be in Norfolk, January 17-19 at Divots Conference Center. Hope to see you there. DEC on Friday and President Amanda has some fun and educational activities planned for Saturday.

The new year is the time to plan for our upcoming youth activities of Girls State, Americanism Essays, Scholarships and more. Pay attention to the deadlines. They are important.

We will soon have Treasurer/Bookkeeper Jacki O'Neill in the office on a more regular daytime basis as her job at the Capitol working for her Senator has come to an end. You all know her and love her, and I will welcome her assistance and company. Welcome home, Jacki!!

Vicki Ozenbaugh coordinates the newsletters and is helpful when asked. She has a lot of Auxiliary "jobs" and juggles them well. Thanks, Vicki.

Headquarters Staff and volunteers have been working on the Cavalcade and it is coming along well. There are some nice things on display. Please stop and see what there is. Our office hours are M-F, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. When calling us at 402-466-1808 and there is no answer, please leave a message. We always do our best to take care of your questions and requests. As always, thank you for your patience.

Mission Training will be in Des Moines on January 25. Hope some of you make it there. I could think of a lot of things to talk about, but please call whenever you have questions. Happy New Year and hope to see you in Norfolk in January 17-19.

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Department Treasurer – Jacki O'Neill – (712) 574-5070 (C)

May you be Blessed in the 2025 year.

The most commonly asked questions to me involve the annual 8822-B form request and what form do we use to get out of paying Nebraska sales tax? (Must pay state taxes.)

The American Legion Auxiliary units are classified as a 501(c)(19) exempt organization. That refers to tax-exempt organizations that specifically benefit veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. That means the work of 501(c)(19) nonprofit organizations must focus solely on making life better for veterans or current members of the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, Navy, Space Force, or Coast Guard. 501(c)(19) exempt organizations **do pay Nebraska sales tax.**

The 501(c)(3) is state tax exempt, namely including churches and schools.

When your unit was formed under The American Legion Post, you were assigned an Employee Identification Number (EIN). Every Unit has one and to stay in good standing you must abide by the annual filing requirements to show that your veterans' organization is operating with good financial practices.

The IRS form used to file is the 990. That explains why I request an updated 8822-B annually. That form verifies the responsible person's name and address. I file approximately 290 Unit's IRS Form 990s annually. That saves your unit from losing their tax-exempt status and from having to file on your own.

➤ Did you know...

Your EIN is also called a Federal Tax Identification Number. It identifies a business entity for tax purposes when filing tax returns or making deposits. It is very important that each individual business with banking and payment responsibilities have its own EIN. Your EIN is your permanent number and needs to be used on your bank accounts. Never use personal ID numbers for Unit banking business.

➤ If you would...

Verify with your bank to be sure that it is your unit's EIN on your account.

Districts and Counties are under the Department's EIN. Therefore, if your district or county has a bank account you need to verify that the account is set up under **47-0090920**. All District and County bank statements need to be filed at Department Headquarters on a monthly basis.

You may contact me anytime at the number listed above with any questions.

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MEMBERSHIP – Loree Hendrickson, Chair – 402-759-6016 (C)

Hello Members of the American Legion Auxiliary! Who's starting to pack their bags for the Mid-Year Conference in Norfolk? And who's wondering whether Mother Nature will be kind to us this year, or if we'll have to fight through another – what was it called? snow squall? Here's hoping the weather will be kinder this year.

In the last newsletter, I talked about "**Membership Moments**," a phrase stolen from Past Department President Lisa Moore. If you missed the article or can't remember what I wrote, here's a recap. A Unit member was helping at an American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Blood Drive, where she struck up a conversation with a woman who had just donated. The donor stated that she had been an ALA member in the past, but had let her membership lapse when she moved away from her community. Without missing a beat, our member said, "Come join us!" And just like that, the Unit gained two new members, as the woman not only rejoined, but also signed her daughter up as a Junior member.

A great story to be sure, but it has now become even more fantastic! This new Senior member is also a 4-H club leader and got her club members involved with Wreaths Across America. She asked her ALA Unit for help in identifying the families of area veterans who might be interested in purchasing wreaths for their loved ones' gravesites. Her husband was so impressed with the assistance she received that he spoke to his father about joining the American Legion, and her husband plans to join the Sons of the American Legion as well. So the two new members have now grown to (or are about to) four new members for our respective American Legion Family. Membership truly is the gift that keeps on giving!

So now, let's check in with our Districts' Husker teams. Of the thirteen teams representing our Districts, eight have begun – and in some cases – ended their seasons. Hopefully,

our Top Two Districts (2 and 3, with 82.53% and 82.01% membership, respectively) will be able to lead their respective teams (**Men's Track & Field and Baseball**) to victory later this year.

- **Men's Basketball** is currently sporting a 10-2 record and just won the Diamond Head Classic Tournament in Hawaii. District 5 is doing just as well with 81.01% – third place!
- **Women's Basketball** is also off to a respectable start with a 10-3 record. District 7 is showing the same spirit with 78.72% – fourth place!
- **Men's Wrestling** has been truly impressive thus far with a 5-0 record, including a 1st place finish at the Navy Classic in Annapolis. District 9 likes that #5 as they are in fifth place with 78.20%.
- **Men's Football** made great strides this year, ending the season with their first Bowl win since 2015. District 13 is at 77.61% and oh so close to cracking Nebraska's Top 5 in membership.
- **Women's Volleyball** struggled against Penn State, but still finished the year in the Final Four at the NCAA Championships. District 11 is at 77.53%.
- **Women's Bowling** has not finished lower than third this year, defeating 69 other teams. District 12 is at 76.25%.
- **Women's Soccer** struggled this season, finishing with a 6-10-1 record. District 4 is currently at 68.30%.
- **Women's Rifle** is currently 8-5, and **District 8** is at 68.13%.

Districts 1, 6 and 10 are in 9th, 10th, and 11th place with 75.02%, 70.22%, and 69.78%, respectively.

Keep it up, Nebraska ALA members. We will make Husker Nation proud in 2025!

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DISTRICT CHALLENGE FOR DEPARTMENT CONVENTION Lisa Moore, Advisory Committee – 402-821-7077 (C)

Mid Year is around the corner, and it is a fast slide to Department Convention. Let's invite the new kids on the block to join us. Reminder: Department Convention isn't just for the "Old Timers." In fact, if you think about it, it is a celebration of everything that was accomplished this year by all our units. What a better way to show off to a newbie, than Department Convention.

SO...I have a challenge for every District.

The District that increases attendance at Department Convention by the highest percentage will receive a prize that I have picked out. (Come to Mid-year and you will see said prize.) Your District may gift it or raffle it or whatever the District President deems fit.

So gather up the "Old Timers" and the "Newbies" and let's fill Department Convention!!

SERVICE TO VETERANS – Maria Atterberry, Chair – 308-325-2863 (C)

Dear Members,

I have been humbled by your response to assignments for Centerpieces and Tray Favors. I have enjoyed talking to all of you knowing we all have the same heartfelt love for our Veterans. I am asking those that haven't volunteered for an assignment to please give me a call.

As of this report, both Grand Island VAMC and Norfolk Veterans Home are completed! Great job! What we still need:

Central NE Veterans Home (Kearney) – 215 Tray Favors - August, September, October, and December 2025

Eastern NE Veterans Home (Bellevue) – 24 Centerpieces - June, August, and November 2025

Western NE Veterans Home (Scottsbluff) – 13 Centerpieces - March, September and December 2025

Western NE Veterans Home (Scottsbluff) – 90 Tray Favors – August, September, and December 2025

Omaha VA Medical Center – 75 Tray Favors – June, August, September, November 2025

Let's get these assignments filled! District #9 let's challenge the other Districts! Let's go!

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COMMUNITY SERVICE – Nancy Neimann – 402-417-8792 (C)

COMMUNITY

- S** Sincerity is obvious to others
- E** Enthusiasm is contagious
- R** Ready to try new ideas of others
- V** Visible NOT invisible to others
- I** Inform others of plans
- C** Care about one another
- E** Encourage participation

Community service is just that! So many of our activities can be reported in multiple programs but just pick one. One guideline would be if it doesn't really fit anywhere else, it is reportable as Community Service. Did you participate in a food drive, coat drive or help with a community holiday event? Make sure to write down the details as soon as possible so you are ready to go when reports are due. That will make reporting a breeze and ensure you don't miss something! And always, always, always TAKE PICTURES!

On January 20, 2025, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday will mark the 30th anniversary as a National Day of Service. It doesn't matter how big or small, anything is a service worth performing. Coop with other community groups such as churches, schools and scout troops. We cannot always tell the impact our help can have on someone in need. Be free to think outside the box!

Need an idea? Ask other community members. Often people have ideas but not the ability or are overwhelmed at the thought. However, if we can all pull together a great service can result! Join the Facebook group "ALA Community Service."

Any questions? Please ask!!

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AMERICANISM – Cie Kauth, Chair – 402-369-2266 (C)

Hello to all my Auxiliary family.

Hoping everybody is having a good year. Just a reminder of our dates to get the essays in by February 15th to the units and to me by March 15th so I can judge them. Also, I'm hoping that you guys have the essay cover sheet. It must be submitted with your winning essays. You can find it on the Nebraska website.

The units are going and teaching our young students on good flag etiquette and how patriotism is important to the men and women who fought for our freedom. Some examples for flag etiquette is the difference between a pocket flag to a small flag with the meanings for them. Also, how to fold the flag in the proper way while saying what the folds mean. They are folding the flag at funerals.

It is surprising how some of our young students don't realize these things and hope that we are teaching and being taught about these things for our flag and our troops.

(P.S. from **NW Division Americanism Chair Vicki Ozenbaugh**—Please check our website for four Flag Etiquette informational sheets. Also, there was a Pledge of Allegiance promotional challenge for December 28. Even though the challenge is over, you can still do this and post pictures on the American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program Facebook page (as well as our Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary page).

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GIRLS STATE – Vicki Ozenbaugh, Chair – 402-759-0411 (C)

Happy New Year! 2025 is officially here! And that means Girls State will be here before we know it.

I want to let you know that there is a plan to email 219 schools in the early part of January. This email is just a "heads up" to the administration (either principal or guidance

counselor) that the official letter about Girls State would be arriving. It is still each Unit's responsibility to contact the schools for the names of prospective citizens.

GS Secretary Kathy Mazur has been working hard to put together the packet of information that all Units will be receiving soon. Follow the guidelines provided and remember your Unit makes the final decision on who to sponsor—not the school!

Kaylee Minnick, the Cornhusker Girls State website manager, has updated the website with what information we have so far for 2025. It will be updated as more becomes available. The website is cornhuskergirlsstate.com.

If you have any questions, you can contact Kathy Mazur (402-659-6689) or myself (402-759-0411).

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HAPPENING AT MID-YEAR

The Benson Sons of the American Legion is having a Root Beer Float Fundraiser! Take time to enjoy a root beer float and support the Benson's Sons of the American Legion.



Free Will Donation!

Root Beer Float *Fundraiser*



**Mid-Year Conference
Saturday, January 18, 2025
Norfolk Lodge & Suites
(breakfast area)
5:00-6:00PM and
8:00-9:00PM**