American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota 2023-2024

Sharon Cross, Department President March 2024 Unit Mailing

State Veterans Service Bldg. 20 W 12th St #314 St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 224-7634 deptoffice@mnala.org Website: www.mnala.org



Greetings to all my fellow Auxiliary members!

Anyone who has followed our Facebook travels since I last wrote gets to see all the fun we have. If you have not traveled to these events you are missing out on our learning opportunities. So today I would like to share some of that with you. There are so many ideas that we cannot possibly think of everything. As your Department President I traveled to different Mid-Winter Conferences. I hear and see how we can do things differently with the same goal and am inspired by each visit. Being there in person is important and we should have at least one or more representative from every Unit attending, especially in your own District. Thank you to Department 1st Vice President Judy Ackerman for bringing greetings for me when I was unable to attend a few of the Mid-Winters.

Mission Training and what did you miss? The opening topic, the BE THE ONE initiative. Learning that over the last decade military suicides have risen. Active-Duty military suicides increased over the first three months of 2023 and 90% of suicide survivors do not die by suicide later. Be the One to ask the question and Be the One to save a life. To find helpful information visit Be the One on the internet at www.BetheOne.org. And on The American Legion website www.legion.org. If you are a veteran in crisis, resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can call 988 and press 1, Text 838255 or visit the VA Crisis Line website at https://www.veteranscrisisline.net. To hear the National President's special message and to find links to resources visit ALAforVeterans.org the menu option is National Officers.

We also covered Veterans and Active Duty Support, Public Relations, Social Media and Branding, Membership and Youth Programs. All auxiliary members are eligible to attend National Mission Training. There are 5 locations around the nation each year. We do not have to attend in our own Northwest Division. Since the Department of Minnesota Auxiliary Sweetheart Rally was the same day as the Northwest Division Mission Training I wanted to be here at home for the Rally so I chose to attend the Western Division Mission Training in Las Vegas. There were three of us from Minnesota there and more than 140 Senior members in attendance. It was a full day of learning. I am leaving much out from our meeting and leaving it up to the Junior and Senior members that attended our Northwest Division Mission Training to share more with you in their articles. From Program Engagement, tools available and where to report our activities. Do you do something unique in your community? Please share it with us in your annual reports and continue to Dance Into The Hearts Of Veterans.

Sharon Cross, President Department of Minnesota



TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORING

American Legion Auxiliary Department Of Minnesota President SHARON CROSS

April 27, 2024 Melrose American Legion Post 101 265 County Road 173 SE, Melrose, MN

Social Hour: 5pm

Dinner: 6pm

(Menu: Chicken, Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Carrots, Gravy, Dressing, Cole Slaw, Dessert)

Program Following Cost: \$30

R.S.V.P. By April 21, 2024

Local Lodgings:

American Lodge and Suites: 1230 Timberline Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 320-352-2800 American Best Value Inn: 322 12 Street, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-7256 Palmer House: 500 Sinclair Lewis Avenue, Sauk Centre, MN 320-351-9100 Super 8: 231 County Road 175, Melrose, MN 320-256-4261

Name:	Unit	Post
Number of people:	-	
Total amount of check:	\$	

Address check as: (American Legion Auxiliary)

Mail Registration to: American Legion Auxiliary, Dept. President Testimonial, Attn.: Judy Hennen, P.O. Box 152, Melrose, MN 56352

National President Lisa Williamson will be visiting Minnesota!



Make your plans to meet with President Lisa at one of the following:

Monday, April 29th Dinner at Sauk Center Post 67

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Cost is \$15 Deadline to register April 19th

For Reservations Contact Jessie Hoppe 320-290-8761

Tuesday, April 30th Dinner at Redwood Falls Post 38

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Cost is TBD Deadline to register April 19th

For Reservations Contact Jennette Mertens 507-828-7656

Wednesday, May 1st Lunch at Adrian Post 32

Social Time @ 11:30 am with Lunch @ 12 pm

Cost is Free Will Donation Deadline to register is April 22nd

For Reservations Contact Diane Strassburg 507-290-0011

Wednesday, May 1st Dinner at Lake Crystal Post 294

Social Hour @ 5:30 pm with Dinner @ 6:30 pm
Cost is \$20 Deadline to register April 22nd
For Reservations Contact Barb Spencer 507-726-2155



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Below is a "Preparedness Bingo" activity that can be shared with your members.

PREPAREDNESS BINGO!

Stay Informed	Build A Kit	Have A Plan	Get Trained	Stay Connected
Test and Replace Batteries in Smoke/CO2 Alarms	Add Snacks to Your Kit	Designate A Storm Shelter	Learn A New Skill	Get A Solar Charger for Your Phone
Sign Up for Weather Alerts on Your Phone	Add A Light Source with Extra Batteries	Practice A Tornado Drill	Learn CPR or Basic First Aid	Designate An ICE "In Case of Emergency" Contact
Practice Using a Weather Radio	Add Hygiene Supplies	Think Ahead and Prepare for Your Disaster (Free Space)	Learn How to Shut Off Water and Gas Valves in Your Home	Talk With Your Neighbors About Emergency Plans
Learn Weather Terms (Advisory, Watch, Warning)	Add Bottled Water	Practice A Fire Drill at Home	Learn How to Use a Fire Extinguisher	Designate an Out-of-Town Contact
Know the Hazards Common for Your Area	Add Seasonal Item to Kit	Talk with Your Household About Emergency Plans	Teach Someone a Skill You Have	Talk with Your Family and Friends About Emergency Plans



National Award

For a personal donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) of \$ 100.00 or more, you will receive a beautiful gold lapel pin.

If your Unit sends in a donation that includes a personal donation from anyone for \$100.00 or more, the Unit should send in a list with the donations to Department which includes the name(s), the District and Unit number of where the donation was made from. Pins are mailed out at the end of each quarter from National to the Department for anyone who has made a personal donation of \$100.00 or more for distribution at Convention in July

or sooner. Note: I have received a few pins in the mail, but I have no idea who sent in the donation. If it happens to be YOU or YOUR UNIT, please reach out to me. Thank You.

Example: Jane Doe Unit 507 3rd District \$100.00

Department Award

For a personal donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) of \$ 50.00 or more, you will receive a Citation and small gift. If your Unit sends in a donation that includes a personal donation from anyone for \$50.00 or more, the Unit should send in a list with the donations to Department which includes the name(s), the District and Unit number of where the donation was made from. The citations will be distributed at the Convention in July.

Thanks to our Minnesota Department of the American Legion Auxiliary, our 10 Districts, our many Units, and all of our precious Unit members, we are off to a great start of supporting our needy members who have endured a Disaster or have a need for assistance. Keep up the good work!

Margee Keller, MN AEF Chairman 301 Maple St, Crookston MN 56716 (margeekeller@hotmail.com) Cell 218.349.4566







Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Children and Youth

Spring is in the air- well hopefully. But Easter is coming up fast (6 weeks). Your unit could plan an Easter Egg Hunt for local kids in your community. It's a great way to get families together and promote the Children and Youth program as well as the American Legion Family. Remember you can always collaborate with another local organization, group, or business to make this possible if you feel like you do not have enough resources.

April is the month of the Military Child. How is your unit promoting that American Legion Family is here for military children and families. I know it can be hard to identify these families, but word of mouth seems to be the best way. Let your communities know we are here for them. Now is an especially great time with a MN National Guard Unit recently deployed. Remember April 15th is Purple Up Day for Military Kids! Purple being a combination of all branches of military services. Show your support for military kids by wearing purple that day!

Annual reporting is right around the corner. I look forward to hearing what your unit did throughout the year to support the Children and Youth Program. I also hope your unit plans to apply for the awards for the Children and Youth Program.

Dept Awards:

Milo Blanich Award: Unit with membership under 200 with the most outstanding children and youth program report nit to exceed 1000 words.

Glen H. Cornfield Cildren and Youth Plaque: unit with membership of 201 and over with the most outstanding Children and Youth Program and report not to exceed 1000 words.

National Award:

Most Outstanding Children and Youth Unit Program Award: A narrative not to exceed 1000 words of how your unit worked the children and youth program.

Brandi Christensen, Department Children and Youth Chairman



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Community Service

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give."

A quote by Winston Churchill

March is designated as American Legion Auxiliary Community Service Month!

Community service has a rich history as part of the American Legion Auxiliary. As early as 1930, when the American Legion Auxiliary was celebrating its 10th year, it began community construction programs to employ the jobless. In 1947 the Community Service Committee proposed youth recreation centers to help solve the problem of juvenile delinquency. That same year it also incorporated the Red Cross blood donor program into Community Service. In 1953 Community Service supported the "Crusade For Freedom", Radio Free Europe, and Radio Free Asia. In 1969 Community Service volunteers donated 15,070 gallons of blood and 2,600 pairs of eyeglasses to Lions International. These are just a few interesting facts found on the American Legion Auxiliary Department of MN website, arrow down on About, and select History. It is fascinating to read the information in the American Legion Auxiliary chronology of events.

Community service events/projects often support and promote other American Legion Auxiliary programs such as Americanism, Children and Youth, Education, National Security, and VA&R. Coordinate efforts for your community service events/projects with other organizations in your community, especially those organizations that support Veterans. Wear your ALA branded clothing, volunteer with a smile...and please remember the importance of recording and reporting what you did as an individual or an ALA unit for Community Service!

Thank you for everything you do for your Veterans and your communities!



Wanda Seidler, Department Community Service Chairman



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Gift Shop

With the great success of our Gift Shops this year, I would like to encourage every Veterans Hospital or Home to do an in-person gift show this next auxiliary year. It is in our constitution and by-laws that we are to have an in-house gift shop unless there is a pandemic. Hopefully the hospitals and homes will be able to find the staff they need so their beds will be full, and we can help even more veterans this next year, plus we will have the three new veteran homes to plan for. So now is the time to start looking for a room to hold your gift shop in and start recruiting volunteers. If we start early and book the room and start planning what we would like to offer them.

Our veterans are worth every minute and cent we put into this gift shops. If you have never volunteered at one, think of doing so. You get back as much or more than you put into it. Sandy and I visited several of the gift shops this past year and were told how happy the hospital representatives were that we took the time to come and help. And always remember to include these hours in your year-end reports.

As always keep up the great work for our veterans.

Bev Grose Gift Shop Chairman

Gr9561@yahoo.com

Sandy Wersal

Gift Shop Committee Member

sandywersal@gmail.com



March 2024 Unit Mailing Minnesota Girls State

Girls State is not much more than 100 days away. We are gearing up for the week. This year's staff is meeting monthly via zoom to learn procedures and how to be a good counselor. Please remember that the most important part of this week is our students. While keeping them safe, they participate in government on the city, county, and state level, listen to individuals from our state's governmental branches, all while making new friends.

I hope that your unit has discussed your participation in this program. If not, please put it in on your March agenda, because your unit's reservation is due by March 31, 2024. Remember, you do NOT need to provide any names at this point. You are only reserving spot(s) for your students. Names go in later. If funding is an issue, consider holding a fundraiser earmarked just for Girls State.

Thanks to the units that have contacted me with questions. I have answered questions, but also have heard that some units are struggling with connecting with their local schools. Our letter to the schools explained the program and how a student is picked. You may ask for help in choosing the right student, but the letter explained that the final decision is yours and not theirs. My advice was to <u>not give up</u> – it is an educational thing between your unit and your school. Set up a date for interviews.

If your post has a Gambling Committee, please consider asking them for a donation for this program. As we all know, costs have gone up over the past couple of years. We kept the registration at \$300, where it has been for many years. Contact me if you need more information regarding a donation or if there is something I need to do. If they need to support a certain part of the week, I can provide several different parts of the week, all with different amounts. Any donation from them would help and be much appreciated.

Thank you to all that support the gift card program, which benefits the program. We have sold gift cards at the past two rallies and will have them at the Appreciation Rally on March 2. Check your supply. Do you have birthdays or anniversaries coming up? I would also like to have them available at our Department Convention in July to start helping next year's committee.

Stay safe and remember that the first day of spring is less than three weeks away or is our winter shifting?

Units: I have been contacted by several units questioning the process for Girls State. We need to receive your reservation for a spot for this great Auxiliary Program by March 31st.

If you are unable to find a student that wants to attend, we will work with you. We have qualified students that would like to attend, but don't have a unit in their area. This is an opportunity for your unit to offer this great program to these youth. Please support Girls State by sending in one or more reservations to the Department Office by March 31⁵¹. Thanks!!

Linda Kelly Minnesota Girls State Chairman



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Junior Activities

The 2024 Junior Conference is just around the corner. Please get your registrations sent in. You can send them to me but I think it would be best to return them to Department office because they will need a list of who is going to be there. I am looking forward to seeing everyone there. It should be a very productive and fun weekend for juniors new and old and the senior members also.

Let's not forget annual reports are due soon. Please send things about what you have done this year in your units and districts. We would love to see pictures of things that your Juniors have been doing this year to help our units and for our Veterans.

I also want to remind everyone about Junior Fun Weekend which happens in August at Legionville. More information will be out soon.

Let's get out there and recruit new members so we can continue to see new faces each year at our activities.

Sally Strasser, Department Junior Activities Chairman

Hello everyone!

I wanted to give a quick update about what's been happening so far during the year! The planning for the Department Jr Conference is underway so if you are planning to go, please submit your registration as we are trying to get committees divided among attendees. Another reminder to please wear PURPLE on Saturday, April 13th.

I have been active throughout the state and am trying to make it to as many meetings as I can. If you have any meetings that you would like me to attend in April or May, please reach out and I will try to be there.

I have recently visited Carter at BelieVet. The trainers have expressed their love for Carter. He has the best personality and will be ready for a veteran in the next two months. BelieVet is planning to be at my conference to demonstrate some commands and training that they do with the dogs. They will also be able to share more information about their organization. I am planning to present them with a check in September at Carter's graduation from the program; however, my project amount update will be provided to them at the conference.

I have received orders for AIT (Advanced Individual Training) from the Army stating that I will leave on May 30, 2024. This means that unfortunately, I will not be here for the Department Convention this summer.

I will be on active orders at my unit in March, but I will be back on the weekends in order to make it to the Department Appreciation Rally, the Birthday Dinner in Anoka, 2nd District Jr Conference, and the 1st District Jr Conference.

I also want to say Thank You to everyone who has contributed to my project so far this year. Here is a goofy picture of Carter!

Taylor McElroy

ALA Department of Minnesota Honorary Jr President





Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Leadership

"GREAT LEADERS DON'T SET OUT TO BE A LEADER... THEY SET OUT TO MAKE A DIFFRENCE. ITS NEAVER ABOUT THE ROLE- ALWAYS ABOUT THE GOAL."

UNIT MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Each year your unit has a chance to honor a very special unit member. This member is willing to help wherever she/he is needed and volunteers to head up any special project or fund raiser your unit may be having. This unit member is active in the community and may be involved with other organizations. Why not nominate this member for Unit Member of the year?

Requirements:

- 1. Open to senior members who are not currently, nor have ever been, in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than unit president.
- 2. <u>Units:</u> submit a narrative of 1000 words or less to your Department Leadership Chairman Karla Otterness. Please Describe the nominee's accomplishments and activities and include the nominees name and address.
- 3. Submit only one entry per unit. entry is due April 20th as I need to judge them and send the winner to national.
- 4. Selection is based on accomplishments, activities, etc. For the current administrative year.
- 5. Please submit them by mail to Karla Otterness 239 Westgate Drive Winsted MN or email to t.d.news2share@gmail.com

LEADERSHIP GOLDEN RULES



Keep Learning and Developing

"Once you stop learning, you start dying." — Albert Einstein

if you have reached the pinnacle of your career, it does not mean that you know everything and can stop learning. Great leaders incorporate hours of <u>deliberate learning</u> in their daily schedule. There is always room for some improvement, no matter how good the results might be. By staying in the learning mode all the time, you can reach your true potential and inspire your followers. Instead of being a rigid leader, you are better off with a more progressive mindset in order to succeed.

Never stop learning about the ALA.

These are the self-paced academy classes you can take online when signing into the National website.

ALA 101.

ALA Branding and Why It Matters to Me: ALA Communication Methods:

Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill the ALA Fundraising course

How to Deal with Conflict

ALA Leadership: Living Our Motto of Service Not Self:

ALA Juniors E-Learning Course is

ALA Academy Live: The ALA Academy has been expanded to include live virtual webinars. The courses change and are offered a few times to accommodate different schedules and time zones. Watch ALA National Headquarters' social media channels @ALAforVeterans for the most up-to-date course registration information.

Reminder each unit should submit a leadership report. Please send in the department worksheet and a short essay on your units' activities. You should send them to your District chairman. So, they can combine the information from their district. If you would not mind cc me on that report. I really would love to read all of them. If your Unit is applying for the Florence Hamel Plaque please submit the cover letter, worksheet, and essay to the Department Chairman

Your District Chairmen are:

- 1.
- 2. JUDY ACKERMAN <u>JUDYA2002@GMAIL.COM</u>
- 3. KARLA OTTERNESS T.D.NEWS2SHARE@GMAIL.COM
- 4.
- 5. MARY YOUNKIN MARY. YOUNKIN440@GMAIL.COM
- 6. BEV GROSE GR9561@YAHOO.COM
- 7. DONNA BARBKNECHT DONNAPATRICIA@YAHOO.COM
- 8. TAMMY OPLAND <u>TAMARAOPLAND@GMAIL.COM</u>
- 9. CHEYL GROVER <u>JCGROVER@QVTEL.COM</u>
- 10. HELEN STEFFEN HELENSTEFFENP@GMAIL.COM

Department Leadership Chair is

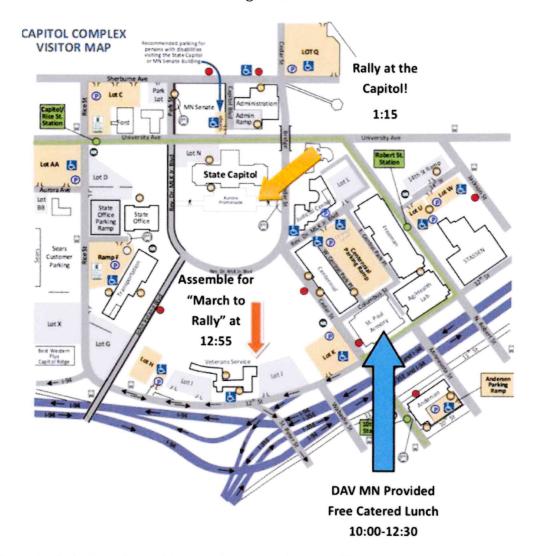
Karla Otterness 239 Westgate Dr Winsted MN 55395 or t.d.news2sgare@gmail.com



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Legislation

PLEASE SHARE DATE OF 2024 VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL

The 2024 Veterans Day on the Hill is April 17, 2024. Doors opening at 10am for coffee with lunch served at 11:30am. The march to the rally will begin at 1pm. New this year there will be a minibus running from the armory to the House and Senate office building from 10-11:30am.



The flyer has been included again in this newsletter to share and let your posts, units, squadrons, and community members know the importance of making our presence known. Plan to meet your lawmakers!

Let's show a great presence of the American Legion Auxiliary in supporting our Veterans!

Robin Dorf, Department Legislation Chairman

VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL 2024

WHEN: APRIL 17TH, 2024

DAV of MN Presents: Free Veterans and Supporters Lunch

Doors Open@ 10:00AM FOR COFFEE LUNCH@ 11:30AM

(One Block from Capitol at 600 Cedar Street, St. Paul)

Veterans March to the Rally @ 1:00pm

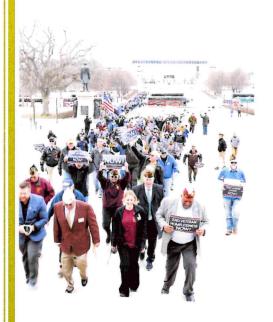
(Short Walk from Armory to State Veterans Service Building 20 West 12th St, St. Paul)

CTF, UVLC, and MACVSO Present: Rally in the Rotunda 1:15-2:00pm



ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT-TRENT@DAVMN.ORG:

NO MEMBERSHIP IN ANY ORGANIZATION REQUIRED. ALL SUPPORTERS ARE WELCOME!



Topics Include:

PASSSING A CLEAN VETERANS OMNIBUS BILL

INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF THE PROP TAX VALUE EXCLUSION

NEW THIS YEAR!!

A MINIBUS RUNNING FROM THE ARMORY TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS 10-1130. MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENTS TO SEE YOUR LAWMAKERS!





Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Membership

I want to thank you all for your hard work! The numbers are rising, and we are succeeding in our mission! I want to remind you to have fun while you are working hard. That is so appealing to new members.

Please reach out to your members who have not renewed last year or this year. We have lost some members through death, but we have also gained new members. We really need to look at those who have not renewed in the last couple of years. Keep that connection going so they know they are valued. All it takes is a simple "How ya doing" phone call.

Remind your units that there may be members that have not renewed because they just do not have the funds to do so at this time. Especially ones that have been longtime members. Does the unit have the funding that they can pay the dues as a onetime help to a member? That member will really appreciate the help.

Are you utilizing social media? It is a great way to stay in touch with members and let them know the great things we are doing for Veterans.

I have received calls about the reinstatement of membership. Hopefully this will help!

Reinstatement Guidelines are as follows:

- Our Auxiliary year runs from Department Convention to Department Convention.
- Dues for 2024 are due and payable for the 2024 membership year following the 2023 Department Convention.
- A member who does not pay their 2023 dues by January 31, 2024, is considered delinquent. Their 2023 membership card is no longer "current" as of January 2024 and shall be suspended from all membership privileges and benefits.
- If that same person does not pay their dues by December 31st of the year of delinquency (2023) they are automatically dropped from the rolls.

When a member has been dropped from the rolls and No dues have been paid for a year or longer, they may reinstate their membership by either of the following methods:

- 1. A person may REJOIN the Auxiliary by completing a NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and paying dues for the current year only. The veteran they are rejoining through must be a member of the American Legion or be deceased.
- 2. If a member's original application is on file with the Unit or Department, they may be reinstated by paying "back dues" for the years of delinquency plus pay dues for the current year, if the Unit so approves (Unit Constitution). They must be reinstated in the manner if the veteran they joined through is not a current member of the American Legion at the time of their request for reinstatement or they have lost their eligibility through divorce from the veteran.

We had a great turnout for the Sweetheart Rally especially with the absence of the leadership who were at Mission Training. We had 8 out of 10 Districts over 70% of their goal!!! We had a great speaker, Kristy Ann Janiko, great location, great food, and a great program. And there was a poppy making class too! Fun was had by all!

Our next rally is just around the bend. Make those calls and bring your memberships to the Appreciation Rally in Montgomery on Saturday March 2! On our map, the destination is Palm Tree Oasis! See you there!

Jenny Nelson, Department Membership Chairman



2024: RECRUIT 10

Members who recruit 10 new junior or senior Auxiliary members for the 2024 membership year.

One entry per recruiter.

Certified <u>forms must be received</u> at ALA National Headquarters by <u>June 5, 2024</u>.

<u>Please send this form to your department headquarters office no later than one week prior to the deadlines.</u>

New	members must be pai	d in A	LAMIS by Ju	(5)	
Please type or print leg	ENTRY/CERT ibly and fill out the form			1	
Recruiter's Name:			Me	ember ID#:	
Recruiter's Department:	Unit #:		Email:		
Recruiter's Street Address:					
Recruiter's City, State & Zip C	ode			TO THE TOTAL PROPERTY OF TOTAL PROPERTY OF THE TOTAL PROPERTY OF T	
Names of <u>New</u> Members	Member <u>ID#</u>		Names of <u>New</u>	Members	Member ID#
1		6.			
2		7.			
3					
4					
5.					
		_			
Certified by Department Secr	retary: DAT	`E:		Units: Se	nd form to your
Department Secretary	р.			departn	nent secretary.
Printed Name:	De	ot:		Der	partments:
Dept Secretary Signature (required):			1	er scan and email to:	
*I certify that all 10 members are new and joined into the 2024 year.				@ALAforVeterans.org	
*I've provided or verified member ID numbers and that the form is			(Subject	,	
filled out legibly and completely.			Or		
	DO NOT SEND INCOMPLETE FORMS or more than 1 form per		Fax: (317) 569-	4502 (Attn: Membership)	
recruiter.			ived at NHQ no later than ght June 5, 2024.		

Each recruiter will receive a special gift selected by the 2024 National Membership Committee Chairman.

One award per recruiter.



March 2024 Unit Mailing National Security

Salute to Servicemembers Award

Now is the time to start thinking about who YOU are going to nominate for the Salute to Servicemembers Award. The award is open to all active duty enlisted in all seven (7) branches of service regardless of gender. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see all seven branches of service represented on the stage during the 2024 National Convention? The nominating eligibility and requirements are also included in the link below. The deadline for this award is June 1st so let's get started now and let's have tons of nominations this year for this prestigious award.

The link for the Salute to Servicemembers award is:

https://www.legion-aux.org/Salute-to-Servicemembers-Award-Form

Visit the Military.Com website to see the latest military news. What discounts are available for military personnel, military and veteran benefit information, what jobs are available to our military and much more.

Veteran.Com website also offers some of the same articles and has a calendar of special events. (Ctrl/Click on article name to get to the story)

March			
Women's History Month	Month of March		
Navy Reserve Birthday	3-Mar		
Hug a GI Day	4-Mar		
Seabee Birthday	5-Mar		
Daylight Saving Time Begins	10-Mar-24		
K-9 Veterans Day	13-Mar		
American Legion Birthday	15-Mar		
St. Patrick's Day	17-Mar		
Rosie The Riveter Day	21-Mar		
Medal of Honor Day	25-Mar		
National Vietnam War Veterans Day	29-Mar		

<u>AWARDS:</u> Check out the awards in your District, Department and National. Make sure you follow all instructions and especially all deadlines.

Carol Kottom, Department National Security Chairman



National Security Newsletter

February 2024	Northwest Division	Issue #6
Family Readiness Groups		

What is a Family Readiness Group:

Soldier and Family Readiness Groups (SFRG), formerly known as Family Readiness Groups (FRG), is a unit's commander's program, comprised of soldiers, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended), and volunteers belonging to a unit. It forms a network of mutual support and assistance and assists unit commanders in meeting military and personal deployment preparedness and enhances Soldier and Family readiness. The Secretary of the Army recently re-shaped FRGs as a result of feedback from the field to ensure they were meeting the needs of today's Army.

- Army Directive 2019-17 changes the FRG Program name to the SFRG program. The renaming links soldier readiness to the family. The
 new name is inclusive of all unit personnel, including single soldiers and their families, and welcomes them into the support network.
- It directs commanders to focus on the core goals and expectations of SFRGs to act as an extension of unit command. It provides official, accurate command information; connects soldiers and families to the chain of command, provides a support network, and connects SFRG members to on/off post community resources.
- Fundraising flexibility, enabling enhanced opportunities for activities in support of SFRG goals.

Why is this important to the Army?

- Taking care of the soldiers, families, and civilians is an enduring Army priority. SFRGs links soldier readiness to the family. SFRGs
 provide a critical link between commanders and their soldiers and families. They provide official, accurate command information,
 connect soldiers and families to the chain of command, provide a network of support, and connect SFRG members to on/off post
 community resources.
- Invest significantly in housing and barracks.
- Provide robust virtual health capabilities and transition health care delivery to the Defense Health Agency
- Increase access to childcare.
- Promote spouse employment.
- Provide predictable and responsive services during PCS moves.
- Ensure soldiers and families with U.S. Army Alaska and at select installations with unique needs such as Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Irwin,
 California and Fort Polk, Louisiana receive critical Quality of Life needs. The Army has made significant infrastructure improvements at these locations and continues to invest in tailored programs, services and facilities that will helps soldiers and family members thrive.

February Newsletter Carolyn A. Baranowski National Security Committee Eastern Division Chairman

Miss Colorado is Miss America!



Madison Marsh, a 22-year old second lieutenant in the US Air Force, is the first active duty member of the military ever to be crowned as Miss America. She is a graduate of U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.



Prayer for You

I said a prayer for you today

And know God must have heard;

I felt the answer in my heart

Although He spoke not a word.

I didn't ask for wealth or fame,

I knew you wouldn't mind,

I asked Him to send treasures

Of a far more lasting kind.

I asked that He'd be near you

At the start of each new day,

To grant you health and blessings,

And Friends to share your way.

I asked for happiness for you

In all things great and small -

But it was for His loving care I prayed the most of all.

(American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains' Prayer Book)

Reminders

Be The One Day(s): Help bring awareness to the "Be The One" initiative by wearing and promoting "Be The One" on the 1st of each month. See Resolution 13 approved in May of 2023 by The American Legion for more information on "Be The One" Day(s). http://www.betheone.org/

Upcoming Dates:

Valentine's Day February 14

President's Day February 19

Department Committee Chairs

Important Dates:

May 15, 2024

 Year-end reports (Department chairmen reports due via email to division chairmen with a copy to national chairman).

June 1, 2024

- Department and Unit Award Nomination Form Completed and Submitted
- Salute to Service-members Award

Reminder!

Upcoming Quarterly Zoom Meetings for National Security:

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

EASTERN	8:00 PM
CENTRAL	7:00 PM
MOUNTAIN	6:00 PM
PACIFIC	5:00 PM
ALASKAN	4:00 PM
HAWAII-ALEUTIAN	3:00 PM

Registration info will be sent prior to meeting. All Department National Security Chairmen & Department Presidents are invited to attend.

My Contact Information: Need to reach me? Feel free to reach out however you are comfortable!

Bettina Kossow American Legion Auxiliary Northwest Division Chair, National Security Cell Phone: (719) 440-3111

Email: bettinakossow1000@msn.com



POPPY

Marsha Bible – Department Chairman 5602 West Oakes Drive – St. Cloud, MN 56303 (320) 492-8977 marsha.bible@gmail.com

March, 2024

Just a reminder to everyone – it is time to start preparing your Unit Poppy reports and sending them in. Units should send their reports on the forms provided in the January unit mailing. Report forms and all other contest entries need to be submitted to your District Poppy Chairman. Remember to keep a copy of the report for your unit. Reports only go to your District Poppy Chairman – copies do not need to be sent to anyone else.

Contest entries including entries for the Vanlandingham Poppy Plaque and the Poppy Poster Contest, should first be sent to your District Poppy Chairman for judging.

This year, the National Little Miss Poppy contest is submitted online directly to National. It would be greatly appreciated if units who have a Little Miss Poppy send me their name, unit number, age and a picture. They will be recognized by our Department.

Don't forget to order your poppies now if you haven't done so already. We are experiencing a severe shortage of poppies this year and need to know how many poppies our department will need. Poppies can be ordered through the Department office.

Below is the report from the National Poppy Committee.

The American Legion Poppy

What do you think of when you hear the word "poppy"? To me it brings back memories of my grandfather that served during WWII. He always had a little red flower on his hat, it was a poppy. Back then I had no idea what it meant. Some people still do not know what it represents, that is why it is so important for us to get out in the public and distribute the poppy.

It is more than just a poppy that you see on Memorial Day. It is so much more, and we can do much more with our beloved poppy.

Back in the day, as we like to say, you could find poppy corsages when you had dignitaries attend meetings. In Pennsylvania I have heard stories where they would somehow roll them to look like roses or rose buds. In today's world we have our poppy pins and poppy patch that can be seen on so many of our members.

In some states, our veterans make our poppy for a small stipend, in others our members make them, however they are made, what happens to them next?

Let us get creative; the possibilities are endless. Traditionally we have seen hats, corsages, wreaths, crosses but what else can be done with this little red flower? Have you tried asking your members to be creative and turn it into a contest.











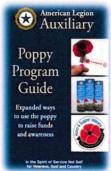
As I was chatting with a friend early one Saturday morning I asked for her ideas, I was amazed! We all remember Covid 19 and being stuck in the house, her Unit had planned a poppy walk and they thought they would need to cancel it. Let us think outside the box is what her unit came up with and they turned it into a SUCCESSFUL Virtual Poppy Walk! So that got us thinking, everyone is on social media and states like Pennsylvania are very large, why not do more virtually? Have a contest, where they can post their creative ideas or do a Virtual Wall of members wearing their Poppies! We all love to get on our social media to see what our friends and family are doing!

A junior member promoted the American Legion Auxiliary and the poppy in an empty storefront at the local mall. Along with the POW/MIA Table and The Military Childs Table there was information on the poppy and in one window she had a statue of a service man kneeling with a cross in a field of poppies, yes, our beloved poppy that we hand out, hundreds of them strewn across the floor around this service man. The older generation loved it, and people would flock to the mall as word spread. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Whether you use our poppy or make a poppy with felt, yarn or any other material, you are getting the word out about the poppy. Think outside the box, get creative and post your creations on the National Poppy Facebook page:

American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program

A great resource is The Poppy Program Guide. You can purchase this from Emblem Sales, or it can be downloaded from the National Website.



POPPY MAKING CLASS

The American Legion Auxiliary needs your help! EVERYONE is invited to learn the art of Poppy making

Sunday, March 10, 3035

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Melrose American Legion Post #101 265 County Road 173 SE Melrose, MN 56352

Hosted by
Melrose American Legion Auxiliary Unit #101
and the American Legion Auxiliary Dept. of Minnesota



Please bring a sharp pair of scissors with you.

We are experiencing a shortage of poppies for distribution during Poppy Days across the state of Minnesota. Individuals, Posts, Veterans and any members of the American Legion Family can make poppies to be distributed by Auxiliary Units for Memorial Day and throughout the year. All donations for the Poppy program are used for Veterans and their families. If you are interested in learning more please join us on March 10th.



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Public Relations

I was just reading the Public Relations Insider, a newsletter from the Northwest Division Chairman of the Public Relations Committee. The article was about press releases and why they matter. I thought that I would share some of the information with you because I don't think everyone sees that publication.

A quote from the article "Press Releases are very important, they provide the who, what, when, where and why." They would also help in getting the word out about your unit and the great things you do. Did you know that the ALA provides many press release templates that could make your job easier? The toolkit on https://www.alaforveterans.org is a great starting point. Check out the templates, there are templates for holidays such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and National Poppy Day. You can customize them for your unit.

One important note is that the templates on the National ALA website are having a makeover so before you write your press release, keep checking on the website to see if the new templates have been released.

Always make sure and include a line or two in your press release describing the ALA in the closing of your press release. Also don't forget about "Veterans on the Hill Day" which is April 17, 2024. We need as many members as possible to show up at the Capital to make a point.

Sharon Hammon Department of Minnesota, Public Relations Chairman



Department of Minnesota March 2024 Unit Mailing Treasurer

What is ALAMIS?

American

Legion

Auxiliary

Management

Information





Over the last month I've learned there are units out there that are not even aware this wonderful tool exists. ALAMIS is a web-based membership management system that allows you to pay your membership dues without having to send a transmittal and check to the department. It also gives you the ability to run reports for your unit like up-to-date membership rosters, unpaid dues list, and online payment reports. believe the use of ALAMIS is an essential tool for the units to efficiently manage not only their membership but also your dues payments. Too many times we at the department see a payment come in for a member that has already paid their dues online or the unit paid the dues twice. This causes a credit to the unit's account. And an unnecessary decrease in the unit funding because they sent in an extra \$30. This happens more times than you would think. The use of ALAMIS by the units could potentially eliminate this issue. There are 3 levels of access to ALAMIS. They are as follows: Unit Full Accessthis gives you the most access. You can enter new members, edit existing members, run reports, etc. The cost is \$20 per user per year. Unit Write Access-this gives you midlevel access. You cannot pay dues with this access. You can edit member addresses, make profile changes, and run reports. The cost is \$15 per user per year. Unit View Onlythis is the lowest level access. You cannot make any entries or changes. You can only view your member information and run reports. The cost is \$10 per user per year. Please email me at shannon@mnala.org or you can call me at the department office 651-224-7634 if you have questions. We could consider scheduling a demo. That way you can see what ALAMIS has to offer. If a demo interests you at all, email me so that I can work on getting it set up.



Incomplete Applications Accuracy is Key

Incomplete applications, i.e. unmarked Veteran Served and the Anytime After section, unmarked living or deceased, Applicant's Relationship to the Veteran unsigned by applicant or the post adjutant/officers. Anytime there is a delay is processing membership dues the member cannot take advantage of the many wonderful benefits the American Legion Family has to offer.

THE APPLICATION MUST BE COMPLETE IN ORDER TO PROCESS IT. IF IT IS NOT COMPLETE IT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU VIA USPS AND THAT WILL DELAY THE APPLICANT'S MEMBERSHIP.





Unit Request for ALAMIS - 2024

Member Name		
Email Address		ē
Phone Number		
Member ID Number		
Unit Number		
District Number		
No thanks, our unit alro	eady has ALAMIS. We just need the connection to change to the perso	n noted
Are you replacing some	eone? If so, who?	

Your ALAMIS connection fee for 2024 is \$10.00.

This fee is based on the calendar year and not the Auxiliary fiscal year.

(January 1 – December 31)

New Rates Go into Effect January 1, 2024

Unit Full Access (i.e. can pay dues) - \$20.00 per user
Unit write access (address and profile changes only) - \$15.00 per user
Unit view only - \$10.00 per user

UNITS CAN HAVE UP TO 2 USERS

District view only - \$10.00 Once again, these prices go into effect January 2024.

Please return this form a with payment made out to ALA Department of MN

Mailing Address

American Legion Auxiliary-Department of Minnesota

American Legion Auxiliary-Department of Minnesota 20 – 12th St. W. Room 314 St. Paul, MN 55155 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation – Judy Ackerman, Chairman

Please see the enclosed Newsletter from the NW Division chairman. I thought there were some good ideas for our units to utilize for our VA hospitals and homes.

Keep our Veterans in mind for the upcoming holidays, send them a cute card, place mats, napkin rings, etc... for St. Patrick's Day, Easter, and Memorial Day. Anything you do for our Veterans makes them smile.

Annual reports are coming up and we need your numbers. Please fill out the forms with the much-needed information. Our numbers added up with the other departments across the Nation will definitely make an impact on Congress.

Please reach out to me if you need anything.



Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Northwestern Division 2023 – 2024

Awareness can be defined as the knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience. For the 2023 – 2024 American Legion Auxiliary administrative year, the national focus is to increase **awareness** about the veterans and military suicide epidemic by embracing The American Legion's Be the One initiative – be the one to save one.

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary has excellent resources for the American Legion family members to increase individual awareness of the suicide epidemic plaguing our active military and veterans.

Be the One (alaforveterans.org) VA S.A.V.E. Training One-Pager

During the month of February, I urge our members to show their love to veterans and active military in their communities by reaching out via phone calls, personal visits, social media platforms, and of course, Valentines! A simple card can make a day better – especially those who are alone, in need, and might be struggling mentally, physically, emotionally, and psychologically.

Be the One!

The Departments in the Northwestern Division is spreading the love by spotlighting the plight of veterans in need through their outreach in their communities by participating outreach to homeless veterans, those living in care facilities, providing funding for the necessities, and highlighting the healing power of the arts by sponsoring a Creative Arts program.

News from NW Departments:

From the Department of Wyoming:

Sock Campaign – Unfortunately, due to weather conditions, Wyoming's sock campaign was postponed for two veteran homes until their June Convention.

Stand Downs - Members of the Department of South Dakota participated in Stand Downs at physical locations and to extend the outreach to homeless veterans by a mobile Stand Down.

From the Department of South Dakota:

South Dakota held a Stand Down for South Dakotan veterans and a Stand Down for women veterans.

The juniors of the Department of South Dakota participated in Christmas cards for veterans and are working on Valentine Day cards.

Tidbits for South Dakota:

South Dakota has three national cemeteries, Fort Meade Cemetery at Sturgis, Hot Springs VA Cemetery, and Sturgis National Cemetery. In addition, South Dakota is home to a state veterans cemetery.

Fort Meade, in 1887, became a fort to protect settlers in the northern black hills and became the home of many calvary and infantry units, including the 7th US Calvary after the Battle of Little Big Horn. Today, this facility is a surgical and long-term care hospital, and the grounds are utilized for training for the National Guard and is the home of the National Guard Officer training.

In 1889, South Dakota established a state veterans' home. This facility was originally referred to as Old Soldiers Home, later became the state veterans' home, and currently is referred after Medal of Honor recipient, Micheal J. Fitzmaurice.

During 1907, the Battle Mountain Sanitorium was established for short term care of Civil War veterans with long and respiratory conditions. Focus on this facility became the Department of South Dakota first Department President Project and one of the ALA National Vice President's projects. In 1921, South Dakota members raised \$22,000 for the veterans calling the Battle Mountain Sanitorium home.

From the Department of North Dakota:

Severe weather did not deter members from the Department of North Dakota from showing Christmas love! Members from this Department participated in the Fargo Medical Center Christmas Gift Shop.

North Dakota will be hosting a local Creative Art Festival in Fargo on September 10, 2024.

From the Department of Minnesota:

Minnesota has five veteran nursing homes and three new veteran homes that are just starting to add residents. The Department of Minnesota membership will be extending a warm welcome and extending love to those who are calling the new veteran's facilities home.

Showing love to the children! The Children & Youth Chair proposed the idea to the members to provide activity bags for the children of veterans and families visiting the veteran hospitals. So far, they have given over 450 bags.

From the Department of Nebraska:

Department of Nebraska members raised \$23,000 for Gifts for Yanks that was disbursed among the veteran homes, hospitals, living centers and other veteran facilities!

Veteran Dollar Days held around Veterans Day gives \$10 to the 550 veterans of Nebraska into each veteran account for items needed at their facilities.

The Department of Nebraska will be sending five gold star medalists to the 2024 National Creative Arts Festival to be held in Denver CO – May 11-18. To support their veterans' journey to Colorado, the membership of Nebraska raised funds to give \$250 to each chaperon or caregiver of the participants for the NVCAF.

From the Department of Colorado:

Colorado proposed a challenge to all units to match a \$1,000 corporate donation and that challenge was reached and exceeded and they raised \$6,480 that was distributed to all veteran community living centers, and veteran hospitals for their Christmas Gift Shops.

In 2024 the VA Western Colorado Health Care facility will have a 75th anniversary and will have celebrations and events throughout the year.

Valentines for Veterans! Unit #2 provided 200 plus Valentines cards for the Valentines for Veterans program.



The final countdown has begun! As of February 2, there are only 100 days until the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival – Denver! The Department of Colorado members are excited to welcome the 159 invited Gold Medalist to Colorado.

Please mark your calendars for National Salute to Veteran Patient Week:

National Salute to Veteran Patients - VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement

The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

- pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans.
- increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center.
- encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, the more than 9 million Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliary, and nursing homes. During the National Salute, VA invites individuals, Veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities, and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities at the VA medical centers. The activities and events include special ward visits and valentine distributions; photo opportunities; school essay contests; special recreation activities and Veteran recognition programs.

The week also provides an opportunity for the community to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within the medical center.

Sending blessings during this beautiful (but short!) month,

Tracy Trujillo NW VA&R Chair



American Legion Auxiliary

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

Donated Items (Revised 9/2020)

Your donated items, whether they are homemade, purchased or collected, need to be recorded. The previous Guideline has been updated and included herein. Remember this is just a Guideline. Your Unit must keep accurate records of in-kind donations and include it on your Annual Reports. If you know the actual cost of items, please use your numbers rather than this guideline.

GUIDELINES FOR VALUE OF DONATED ITEMS TO OUR FACILITIES/VETERANS

Bed Throws	\$75.00
Calendars	\$1.00 or cost
Clothing New	Cost
Comfort Boxes (unfilled – plastic)	\$ 5.00
Comfort Boxes Items	Cost
Coloring Books – Adult	Cost
Coloring Markers – adult	Cost
Deck of Cards – new	Cost
Deck of Cards – used	\$.50
Facemasks	\$10.00
Greeting Cards (home made from used)	\$1.50
Greeting Cards (new)	Cost
Heart Pillows	\$50.00
Laundry Bags	Up to \$50.00
Neck Pillows	Up to \$50.00
Oxygen Tube Cover	\$10.00
Port Pillow	\$7.00
Puzzle Books	\$1.00 - \$5.00
Quilts for Veterans Homes & Hospitals	\$200.00-\$250.00 (depending on pattern)
Tablets - writing	\$2.00
Terry Coverup (Formerly bibs)	\$30.00
Tote Bags	\$20.00
Urine Bag Cover No facility uses this Patten	\$15.00-\$20.00 (waterproof fabric is required)
Walker Bags	\$35.00
Wheelchair Bags	\$35.00
Wound Vac Covers	\$15-\$20

Please check with the hospital or home to see how each individual facility will accept clothing before taking it there.

Contact facility before donating any item to find out their specific needs!



Department of Minnesota Dates to Remember and General Updates

March - Women's History Month & Community Service Month

March 1 – "Be the One Day"

March 2 - ALA Department of Minnesota DEC Meeting Montgomery Post #79 11am

March 2 – Appreciation Rally Montgomery Post #79 4:00pm

March 10 – Daylight Savings Starts

March 10 - Poppy Making Class - Melrose American Legion - 1pm

March 15 - Unit Due Forms due to the Department Office

March 29 – Good Friday (office closed)

March 31 - Easter

March 31 – Girls State Reservations due to Department Office

April 1 – "Be the One Day"

April 12-13 – Junior Department Conference

April 15 – Annual Reports Due to District Chairman

April 17 – Veterans Day On The Hill

April 27 – Testimonial Department President – Melrose American Legion

April 29-May 1 – National President's Tour

June 1 – 2024-2025 Unit Officers List Due to Department Office

American Legion Family Day

American Legion Family Day is Saturday, April 27. On this date, American Legion posts throughout the nation will open their doors to their members and the members of their local communities with the intent of celebrating all great deeds and works of The American Legion Family with the intent to educate, recruit, recognize, and to give back to those members who continually support the gift of giving. The day will also place special emphasis and awareness on the Legion's "Be The One" program.

The Friday before Memorial Day is National Poppy Day - May 24th

It's never too early to start planning! ALA National Headquarters is already preparing! We'd love to hear from you and make your unit/post home a part of our ALA media coverage. Send us an <u>email</u> and tell us about any of the following:

- What are your plans for National Poppy Day?
- How have you used poppy funds to help veterans, military, and their families?
- Share a success story about how poppy funds helped someone in your community.

HOLD THE DATE

Department Convention July 11-13, Willmar, MN Look for more information coming in the April Unit Mailing

Department of Minnesota Webpage - www.mnala.org

I have been working hard to keep the webpage up to date with current information. If you have any suggestions of what you would like to see added, please, let me know. I am hoping the webpage can become a tool for our members when looking for information about our programs and general information about the department. ~Christie



LIMIT #

LINUT LOCATION

American Legion Auxiliary

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

2024 - 2025 UNIT OFFICERS LIST

The Department is in the process of compiling the 2024 - 2025 Unit mailing list. We need the information noted below from your Unit for the 2024 - 2025 Auxiliary year. You can also find this form in a fillable format on our Department website mnala.org. <u>Please type or print</u> each person's information and make sure you have the <u>current/complete</u> address for each. One copy is to be sent to the Department Office and one copy to your District President (or your District President-elect) <u>no later than June 1st 2024</u> This needs to be sent as soon as your Unit has held Election of Officers. This 2024 - 2025 form is required of all units even if the same officers are re-elected. Mail to the address below or email to <u>deptoffice@mnala.org</u>. If mailing address is a PO Box, please include street address as well. We do not always use USPS for mailing. Thank You!

ONIT #		DISTRICT #
President:	Name Member	ID#
	Address	
	City, State, Zip CodePho	ne ()
	e-mail	
Secretary:	Name Member	ID#
	Address	
	City, State, Zip Code Pho	ne ()
	e-mail	
Treasurer:	Name Member	ID#
	Address	
	City, State, Zip CodePho	ne ()
	e-mail	
Membership C	Chairman:	
	Name Member	D#
	Address	
	City, State, Zip CodePho	ne ()
	e-mail	
Dues Remit to	(if Different from Membership Chairman):	
This 2024 - 202	25 form is required of all units even if the same officers are re-elected. 20	24 Membership cards will only
be sent to Unit	ts who have submitted this form.	
***Unit mailing	g is to be <u>sent</u> to:	
	Unit Mailing Preference: Mail or Email	_