

*Berg-Hemker-Olson American Legion Post 51*

# NEWSLETTER



## Commander's Corner

**Ben VanHorn, Post Commander Post 51**

Hello everyone -

It is with a heavy heart that I begin this month's updates. On January 7<sup>th</sup> we lost a beloved Legionnaire, Al Johnson. Al was not only a dedicated member of Post 51, but an incredible mentor and friend to me. He was a pillar of support and volunteerism within our community.

A Celebration of Life for Al will be held at the Post on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am until 2:00pm, with Military Honors to be presented at 1:00pm.

As requested by Al's loved ones, we invite you to share your memories of Al. Any fond memories, funny stories, or kind words of remembrance you wish to share should be written and dropped off at the Legion prior to the scheduled Celebration of Life so they can be shared with the group.

We hope to see you at this month and next month's events - and as always we are happy to have any new faces to volunteer or visit. Check out the last couple pages of the newsletter for some important events coming up.

## President's Corner

**Brooke Parr, ALA President Unit 51**

Hello all,

I hope you have stayed warm this winter. January sure made itself known!

There is still time to renew or sign up for a new membership! We are still accepting renewals and applications. You can renew by check or credit card in person or through the mail, [click here to renew online](#), or call National Headquarters at (317) 569-4570. Please have your member ID ready, give your membership number, and tell them you're with Unit 51 in West Salem, WI. Please reach out to me or Nikki Vidal if you have any questions or concerns.

Have you heard?

**Veteran Benefits Update** Several important developments came out over the past two months that strengthen support for U.S. military veterans and their families. The VA announced new improvements to survivor services, including expanded assistance and faster claims processing. Veterans and military retirees also received updated 2026 cost of living increases, raising disability compensation, housing allowances, and military pay. In addition, new laws passed in late December enhanced protections for student veterans, expanded foreclosure relief options, and improved transition resources for service members leaving active duty. These changes aim to make benefits more accessible and provide greater financial stability for veterans nationwide. It is important that veterans who have issues because of military service visit their local Veteran's Service Officer. They should think about it more like a workman's comp claim. The more veterans that ask for help through the VA lets Congress know more money is needed for the VA system. Membership in the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of the American Legion—whether or not members are actively involved—strengthens our collective voice and helps National Headquarters advocate for increased support and benefits for veterans.

Upcoming events:

- **First Responders Chili Supper** – February 1st Join us for a warm bowl at the 1st Responders Chili Supper on Sunday, February 1 st . Be sure to stop by and get a bowl. Freewill donations are appreciated; suggested donation is \$8.
- **Loaded Baked Potato Bar** – February 9th Hosted by the Pillars Committee from 5:30–7:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person with a variety of toppings available. Proceeds benefit the Pillars Fund.
- **All You Can Eat Breakfast** – February 8th Skip the dishes and enjoy breakfast with us. Adults: \$14; Children 10 and under: \$7.00.
- **Bloodies & Bingo** – February 21st 8:00 a.m.–Noon. All proceeds benefit the Quilts of Honor Program. Starting at 7:00 pm, West Salem Cares will host a steak dinner. Tickets are available at the Legion every Friday.
- **Legion Softball 3rd Annual Designer Purse Bingo** – March 29th Mark your calendars! Doors open at 1:30 p.m. and bingo begins at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are now available.

Can't wait to see you all at the Legion! Stay well and take care of each other.

## Building Commission

**Phil Parr**

Check back next month for more updates and events to support the Building Commission. In the mean time we hope you will join us for one of our many events in support of all Post 51's efforts.

# SAL

**James Jacobson, SAL Commander Squadron 51**

Hello All and Happy February

There will be no history lesson this month as my schedule didn't permit me enough time to do any proper research.

Thanks to everyone who worked events this past month.

Our Old Fashioned Fish Fry will be Friday, the 27th. Prep will be Thursday the 26th at 6:30.

The Pillars Committee will be hosting a Loaded Baked Potato Bar on Monday, February 9th from 5:30-7:30pm. The Committee will meet after. Anyone interested in attending, stop down. Contact Steve Craig with any questions.

Our membership meeting will be at 7 PM on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. We're always looking for new members, so if you're the male descendant of a Legionnaire or the male descendant of a veteran who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from the service, you're eligible. Anyone interested please contact myself or Dan Hass, or stop down at the Post to get signed up.

Happy Valentine's Day and Single's Awareness Day.

West Salem  
American Legion  
**Build your own  
Loaded Baked Potato Bar**  
Monday, February 9, 2026  
5:30 – 7:30 (or until gone)  
**\$10 per person**

Kids under 10, \$1 per year



All funds benefit the Pillars Fund

148 Leonard St, West Salem, WI



**Bloody's &**

**Bingo**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST 8:00AM



**FEBRUARY 21ST**

— WEST SALEM CARES —

# **STEAK DINNER**

**10 OZ RIBEYE**  
BAKED POTATO  
VEGGIES  
SALAD  
AND ONE FREE DRINK INCLUDED

**EARLY BIRD \$35**  
**FEB 1<sup>ST</sup> \$40**

A photograph of a cooked steak, likely a ribeye, resting on a rustic wooden cutting board. The steak is garnished with fresh rosemary sprigs. To the right of the steak is a small, round, grey ceramic bowl containing a reddish-orange sauce or seasoning. The background is dark and textured.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 51 SOFTBALL FUNDRAISER

# **3rd Annual Designer Purse Bingo**

**March 29, 2026**

**1:30 pm Doors  
open**

**3 pm Bingo  
begins**

BERG HEMKER OLSON AMERICAN  
LEGION POST 51  
148 S LEONARD ST, WEST SALEM, WI

The background of the poster features a light pink color with faint, stylized illustrations of various designer handbags and purses in different shapes and colors, including a white one, a brown one, and a leopard print one.

# February 2026 Post 51 Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1 <sup>st</sup> Responders Chili Supper	2 Bingo 6:30pm	3	4 Executive Board Meeting 6:30pm	5	6	7
8 Auxiliary Breakfast 8:00-11:00am	9 Baked Potato Bar 5:30 - 7:30pm Pillar Committee Meeting After	10 Auxiliary Meeting 6:30pm	11 Legion Meeting 6:30pm	12 WS Business Association Dinner	13 Fish & Shrimp 5:30pm	14
15 Al Johnson Celebration of Life 10:00am	16	17 SAL Meeting 7:00pm	18 Building Commission Meeting 6:30pm	19 40-8 Meeting 6:30pm	20	21 Bingo & Bloodies 8:00am-Noon  WS Cares Steak Dinner 5pm
22	23	24	25 Membership Committee 6:00pm Investment Club 7:00pm	26	27 Old Fashioned Fish Fry 5:30pm	28 Private Baby Shower