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Auxiliary

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ON THE COVER: ALA Girls Nation senators participate in the daily flag-raising ceremony at the William F. Bolger Center in Potomac, Md. The 74th session of ALA Girls Nation was held in person after a year off due to the COVID-19 pandemic (photo: Carrie Davenport). **ABOVE:** The Parade of Flags made a special comeback for the ALA's 100th National Convention in Phoenix (photo: Travis Perkins/ALANHQ).



FRIENDS: I was honored to attend the 2020-2021 Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame induction ceremony with my sister Karen Kaelin Toll. Our friends Richard “Dick” Berger (pictured) and Mike Moses were part of the 2021 class. Congrats to all!

As your 2021-2022 American Legion Auxiliary national president, I will do all I can to help the ALA remain the great organization that it is. Thank you for your faith and trust in me!

I would not be in this position today if it weren't for all the people who took me under their wings and mentored me. I cannot succeed on this journey alone.

I'm looking forward to meeting as many grassroots members as I can during my travels over the next administrative year.

Together, we will have a special focus on caregivers. This emphasis comes from a few personal experiences of mine, which many of you will be able to relate to.

A few years ago, a good friend and Kentucky Past Department Commander, Doug Farley, was diagnosed with service-related ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. Within 18 months, this incredibly intelligent, active, and very independent man progressed from never asking for help to being completely dependent on others for absolutely everything, including breathing.

About a year after my friend passed, I attended my first National Veterans Creative Arts Festival where I met many wonderful veterans and amazing caregivers. While there, the ALA hosted a special workshop for caregivers. The room was filled, but very few in attendance regarded themselves as caregivers. By the

end of the workshop, many realized they *were* caregivers. I started to realize then, that caregivers are everywhere.

Shortly after I arrived back home from NVCAF, my dad had a major health scare and was hospitalized for a week or so. As soon as he was released, my mom was hospitalized. This went on for a few months with both parents until my dad passed away in February 2019.

My mom is very independent, so when my dad was in the hospital, she was able to visit when she wanted. But when Mom was in the hospital, we realized how much she was really doing for Dad.

His eyesight was failing, so he could no longer drive. We would take him to and from the hospital every day, make sure he was eating, and even helped put eye drops in his eyes at night.

We had no idea he depended so much on Mom. She never said anything — she was just doing what she always did.

Like my mom, many people don't identify as a caregiver because they are family members taking care of family. According to a recent Rand Corp. military caregiver research study, there are approximately 5.5 million military and veteran caregivers in the United States. Of the 5.5 million, approximately 1.1 million are caring for veterans and servicemembers

who served after 9/11.

In fact, many of these caregivers are members of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Our mission includes honoring the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families. One way we can honor that sacrifice is to recognize these unsung heroes and help to make sure they have the resources and support they need to take care of their veteran.

Many of our Auxiliary members are already doing this important work, and most without even thinking about it. What better way to carry out our mission than caring for those who care for others?

This year, through the ALA's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program, we plan to recognize a deserving military or veteran non-paid caregiver in every department, and hopefully when I visit your department, I can personally acknowledge them.

To further prioritize caregivers, be on the lookout for announcements for webinars coming this fall. One such webinar is already available online in the ALA Academy, *Mission Delivery through Caregiver Support*. When you have a moment, I highly recommend you watch it. You won't be disappointed.

Our Juniors and Sons of The American Legion members can also get involved with the caregiver focus. As part of the ALA Patch Program, a new caregiver patch is available. Check out the Junior Activities page at www.ALAforVeterans.org for more information on requirements.

I am looking forward to serving with all of you this administrative year as we continue to focus on our veterans, military, and their families, with an extra significance placed on caregivers. Thank you for all you do to support the ALA mission!

Kathy Daudistel

Kathy Daudistel
National President

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BEHIND THE *scenes*

NOTES FROM NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



FEEDBACK: Thank you to those who participated in the *Auxiliary* magazine reader survey.

REFLECTING AND COLLECTING FOR THE FUTURE

Ahh ... sit back and relax as we near the end of yet another year.

Isn't it natural for us to start reflecting on what we did, what we learned, how we felt, and what needs to be changed? Like so many people and organizations do with "top 10" lists and more during this time of year, it can be healthy to think this way.

You recall all of the negative moments and collect them for a "what I won't do next year" list. The positives pop in and make you excited for what you plan on repeating. You take the things you had a hard time accepting and make them into a "what I learned" list. In other words, your eyes are opened to new possibilities and opportunities.

That's exactly what happened to us a few months ago — we received feedback from our readers and members on what they liked about *Auxiliary* magazine, and what we need to change.

First of all, we need a moment for a big hug and thank-you to those who responded to the magazine reader survey. We receive comments about *Auxiliary* on a regular basis and share those messages on the *From Our Readers* page in each issue. Your feedback from the reader survey is relevant and important. Not only do we pay close attention to what you tell us, we utilize that information to return more of what you desire. (Learn more about the survey via page 46 of this issue.)

Communication methods and outlets are constantly evolving, and we do our best to provide you with the most popular options to establish and maintain a dialogue. It's clear from the latest reader survey that some of you enjoy interacting with us via our digital platforms, including social media, eNews, and our website. However, the majority prefer to receive information about the ALA in print — specifically within the pages of *Auxiliary*. At about 30.5 cents per copy to print and distribute, this important member benefit keeps you in the loop about all things ALA.

We're all part of the ALA's community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Let's plan to stay in touch to share our success. Onto 2022!



The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Our members also support the mission of The American Legion in improving the quality of life for our nation's veterans. Proud sponsor of ALA Girls Nation, National Poppy Day® and recognized for advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, the nearly 600,000 ALA members across the country volunteer millions of hours annually and raise millions of dollars in service to veterans, military, and their families. Founded in 1919, the ALA is one of the oldest patriotic membership organizations in the U.S.A. To learn more and to volunteer, join, and donate, visit www.ALAFORVeterans.org.

American Legion *Auxiliary*

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

November 2021



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Executive Director
Kelly Circle

Communications and Marketing Director
Michael Butt

Communications Manager
Aaron Meyer

Managing Editor
Stephanie L. Holloway

Webmaster
Travis Perkins

Communications Specialist – Writer
Sara Fowler

Communications & Marketing Specialist
Jennifer Donovan

Communications Coordinator
Alexa Freeman

Contributing Writers
Sydney DeLong, Zac Felty,
Angie Graham

2021-2022 National Officers

National President Kathy Daudistel
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alamishelp@ALAFORVeterans.org

Contact Us: ALA National Headquarters
3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268
(317) 569-4500 | www.ALAFORVeterans.org
email: ALAMagazine@ALAFORVeterans.org

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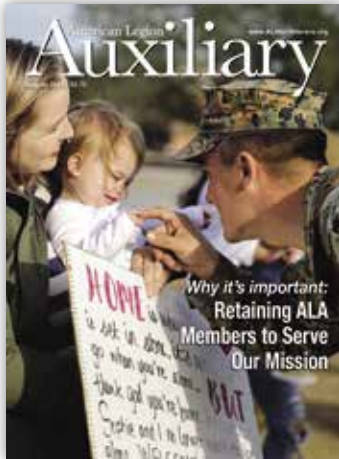
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FROM OUR *readers*



Ernestine Brown

Hello. I'm an Auxiliary member from Unit 82 in Bullhead, S.D. I enjoy the *Auxiliary* magazine I get in the mail. My family is all military. My stepfather is a Korean War veteran.

Member describes how magazine applies toward mission

I joined the ALA last year and am a member of Unit 185, Grantsburg, Wis. I know very little about the history or the organizational structure of the ALA. The February edition of the American Legion *Auxiliary* was the first one I received. I found so much useful information about the Poppy Program that I volunteered to be the chairman of the local unit's Poppy Program. The magazine inspired me to get more involved.

Just yesterday, I received the August issue of the magazine. I sat down to "thumb through" it and ended up reading the whole magazine. I want to order a set of toy soldiers that now includes women. Living in Wisconsin and

being the chairman of the Poppy Program, I want to organize a trip to Lake Geneva, Wis., to see the poppy sculpture. The featured article on membership retainment was awesome. If I can work to implement just two or three of the suggestions, it will be worth it — especially focus more on MISSION and less on meetings. With the National Convention, I plan to use my smartphone to view at least part of it. The *Mission Matters* [story about] "Give 10 to Education" is a new approach to getting school supplies to local schools. Our community already has a program in place to provide school supplies. The Auxiliary can just use the Give 10 to Education and donate to the existing program. Those are just a few of the ideas I took notes on as I read through the magazine.

I'm looking forward to the 2022 article on caregivers. I am a retired RN and have been a caregiver for both my parents, as well as my mother-in-law, at the end of their lives.

The *Auxiliary* magazine is the best magazine I have ever read. I usually just look through a magazine and seldom read more than just the first few paragraphs of an article. The format you use provides so much information in a short, concise way that I can read the whole thing. Thank you. Keep up the good work.

— Terry Giles, Wisconsin

'The truth about planned giving'

In reading my wife's latest *Auxiliary* magazine, I ran across an article — *Facts vs. Myths* — concerning planned giving.

The last myth suggested that a basic will is about \$375. My wife and I are both over 70 and recently realized we needed a will. We went to the legal office of the closest military base we could find and had no trouble getting them to draft us a will, and it cost nothing. The will was over 30 pages long (so you know it was thorough), and again, it was free. No matter how big or small your assets are, this is a must.

— Hugh Wooten, Florida



Kansas unit provides stuffed animals for a good cause

Members of Leslie Krepps Unit 62 in the Department of Kansas — Nancy Evans, Bonnie Axtell, and Brenda Christie — presented 50 stuffed animals to the Salina Police Department for their Bears on Patrol program. Officers carry stuffed animals in their cruisers to give to children involved in traumatic situations.

Correction

In our August issue, Past National President JoAnn Cronin's obituary incorrectly identified her as a mother. The obituary should've read "daughter" instead. We regret the error.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM *you*

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JUNIOR *members*



around the world. She was nominated for an ALA Good Deed Award for her efforts. She also participates in Operation Paperback where she collects books and donates them to her local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility. During COVID, Meckley helped with food drives for military families.

In July, she represented New York at ALA Girls Nation.

Meckley has also participated in The American Legion's Oratorical Contest the last two years and has been a New York state finalist.

"It has taught me so much about public speaking," she said. "The improvements I've made from a few years ago helps me a lot in other things, like with being my school's class president. It has been very rewarding."

In August, she had the opportunity to speak at the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th National Convention in Phoenix.

"No matter if your unit has one Junior member or 50, there will always be opportunities to support the ALA," she said. "Today, I would like to acknowledge all the Juniors across this

great nation who continue to serve our mission through their own volunteer activities."

Meckley offers advice to other Junior members who strive for leadership positions.

"Get involved in as many activities as possible, and go to as many unit meetings as you can," she said.

Meckley is proud to be the first Junior member from her unit and encourages other Juniors to keep getting involved.

"Even though we are Juniors, we still have an impact on the organization," she said. "No matter if you have a lot of Junior members or you are the only one, you can still make a difference."

To nominate a Junior for the ALA Junior Member of the Year Award, unit chairmen must send necessary materials to the national Junior Activities program coordinator via email or postal mail by June 1, 2022. For more information on the requirements for submission, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org. Contact JuniorActivities@ALAforVeterans.org with any additional questions.



JUNIOR MEMBER OF THE YEAR FOCUSES ON GIVING BACK

Surprised and excited were the emotions 17-year-old Junior member Riley Meckley of New York Unit 432 felt when she learned she was the ALA's 2019-2021 national Junior Member of the Year.

"After I got over the excitement, I was really honored," she recalled. "I really believe in the mission of the ALA of promoting patriotism and helping veterans."

Since becoming a Junior member four years ago, Meckley has worked on a few different projects.

She cut coupons for a year and a half totaling \$20,000 for military bases

HONORARY NATIONAL JUNIOR DIVISION VICE PRESIDENTS ELECTED

Congratulations to the 2021-2022 ALA honorary national Junior division vice presidents! These Junior members will be installed at the national Junior meetings in their division, where they will help lead the meeting:

Eastern Division: Riley Meckley (New York)

Northwestern Division: Emily Suess (Minnesota)

Southern Division: Jasmine Harris (Florida)

Western Division: Samantha Hook (Nevada)

(Central Division: No candidates)



ALA PATCH PROGRAM NEWEST PATCH FOCUSES ON CAREGIVERS

With this year's addition of a caregiver patch, there are now 34 total as part of the ALA Patch Program.

Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary, as well as school-aged Sons of The American Legion members who often work alongside Juniors, may earn patches for activities in ALA programs.

"If they are a caregiver themselves, I hope they learn some valuable skills that they can use in their role as a caregiver," said Kristin Hinshaw, senior program coordinator for ALA National Headquarters. "If they are not

OKLAHOMA JUNIORS' PAVER PROJECT HONORS VETERANS

As part of a new pathway in Newkirk, Okla., Unit 165 Junior members Hannah Cross and Brylen Liberton wanted to include a Walk of Warriors to honor all veterans.

"A couple summers ago, my 4-H club interviewed 80 veterans in our community and their stories were really inspiring and made me realize just how much veterans have sacrificed for our freedoms and for this country," Cross said. "I wanted to do something that would have a lasting impact to honor any veteran. That's how I came up with the idea."

The final idea was for each veteran to have their own paver with their first and last name and military branch of service. Some pavers are customized beyond that.

The Juniors went to work advertising the pavers for purchase.

They advertised on Facebook, participated in a radio interview, and went around to different veteran groups like The American Legion, Auxiliary, and Veterans of Foreign Wars to spread the word. Family members and community members purchased the pavers for the veterans.

"We were trying to find people to represent the other little towns in the county, but it ended up being us two," Liberton said.

She added that prior to this

experience, she was nervous to speak in front of other people, but the project helped with that.

"All they wanted to do was support you, they are going to support you, and they are going to love what you are doing, and that's what helped me through the entire time," she said. "I gained confidence in public speaking skills."

For the project, the Juniors had a goal of selling 100 pavers — they received 500 orders.

"Shocked is an understatement," Cross said. "I was blown away. I never imagined that many people would want to buy a paver for veterans. We are so grateful for the support of the community, veterans and their families, and the Auxiliary."

Liberton agreed.

"It made me really happy," she said. "It means a lot to me to help give back to some of the veterans who risked their life for us."

Pavers were purchased for veterans living in the county, as well as for veterans in Kansas because they are located on the state border. Additionally, orders poured in from across the country from Wisconsin, Illinois, the East Coast, and more.

Additional blank pavers were



purchased to add to the walkway in the future.

Two construction companies were kind enough to donate labor toward the project. The first company tore out the concrete and poured the shelf for the pavers, while the second company installed them.

Seeing the project come together was rewarding.

"Just seeing how excited the veterans were," she said. "It's really heartwarming and made all the hard work worth it."

Cross offers advice to other ALA Junior members who may want to pursue a similar project.

"If you want to make a difference in your community, there are lots of supportive people out there," she said. "Use resources you have in your community, like your American Legion Auxiliary. They are there to support you and support veterans."

a caregiver, I hope they can learn how to support their friends who are."

The new patch is geared toward ninth to 12th graders. There are 10 activities, and five must be completed to earn the patch.

Following are some examples of activities for the caregiver patch:

- Prepare a first-aid kit for your home or the home of an elderly



relative. Discuss and inspect its contents with an adult. Evaluate it for completeness.

- If your American Legion post home does not have an AED (automated external defibrillator), prepare a report on why it should have one. Ask the post commander and unit president if you can present your findings at a meeting.
- Write a short essay on how you can support a caregiver or what

support you need if you are a caregiver.

The idea for the new patch evolved from discussions between Hinshaw and ALA National President Kathy Daudistel, whose 2021-2022 focus is on caregivers. Learn more on page 38 of this issue of *Auxiliary*.

Participating in the ALA Patch Program is a terrific way to be involved in learning about the Auxiliary and our Legion Family, volunteering in the community, and serving our country's veterans. To learn more about the caregiver patch and to get started today, visit www.ALAFORVeterans.org.

I AM THE ALA

“My one thing for new members is to talk about how proud you are to be a new member.”

ELAINE KOTLER



PATRIOTIC FAMILY: Elaine Kotler's late father, U.S. Army veteran Alvin Kotler, instilled a sense of patriotism in his daughter that she carries with her today.

Why did you join the American Legion Auxiliary?

I wasn't really aware the ALA existed. My father was a member of The American Legion. He joined a few years ago. My father was disabled, so one of the members would pick him up and take him to the meetings. Last year, my father took ill, and I kept reading about this buddy system. I contacted my father's post and the commander there, Patrick, called my father every Monday. I was already doing things with my dad — taking him to the local elementary school every Veterans Day to talk to the kids there, and I would help him out to make a slideshow, and help him with that sort of thing.

My father then passed away. Patrick and another member of the post came and had this beautiful service in the backyard where my father's ashes were. Really got to know Patrick over the time. At the Veterans Day ceremony in the center of town, I dressed patriotically. Patrick came

up to me at the war memorial in the town's center and said, “I just so love your enthusiasm and patriotism. You really need to contact the unit president to join us.” That was really the first I had heard of [the ALA]. I joined, and I immediately started doing things. I was already doing things and now I can say I'm officially doing them as a member of the Auxiliary.

At the final ALA meeting with elections, I said I would be historian. I'm jumping right in there doing projects and helping out with veterans.

What does your ALA membership mean to you?

It is showing that I love my country and I love helping anybody — past, current, future, and their families who served. I think there is little appreciation toward the families and helping with the understanding of that as that is also what the Auxiliary is about: the families. Being in the Auxiliary means to me making other people understand what service to our country means.

In what ways did your father influence you to be patriotic?

He never really talked too much about being a veteran. He didn't really have true war stories; he didn't see combat. He was a patriotic person and always had the flags around the yard. Any window you could see the flag. He always had that patriotism with him and the flags. I'm the same way. I have several flags and a patriotic display up in my yard.

What are some ways you show your patriotism today?

The flag is always flying proud. As a science teacher, both in middle

school and as an adjunct professor at a local community college, I'm trying to have my students also understand. We do a service project every year. I want the kids to understand there is a world outside of us. [Military members] make sacrifices, leave their families. We made cards, thanking for your service. They enjoyed it. We got the feedback from the troops and got back the appreciation. When my father was away, you had to write letters home that could take months to get there.

You are known for an outfit for every occasion. Can you share a little more about that?

This past school year, because the kids were only seeing so much on screen, every day, I put on my outfit and I would take a picture. I made a slideshow, “180 Days with Miss K.” Many were themes. Blue for kindness. The entire month of October I wore pink for breast cancer. The kids got to know me for it. It's kind of my signature thing. I teach college too and did a video of myself and kept changing my outfit. A student can't see me wear the same thing in the course of a year. With more patriotic holidays I'm dressing for, I will need more outfits for it.

Any advice for other members who are new to the ALA?

My one thing for new members is to talk about how proud you are to be a new member.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:
Unit 96 in West Hartford, Conn.

ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
Alvin Kotler, father
(U.S. Army veteran)

YEARS IN THE ALA: Less than a year



SHARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STORY!

Tell us about yourself and how you support the American Legion Auxiliary as a unit member who also loves the ALA's mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. Contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org or (317) 569-4500.

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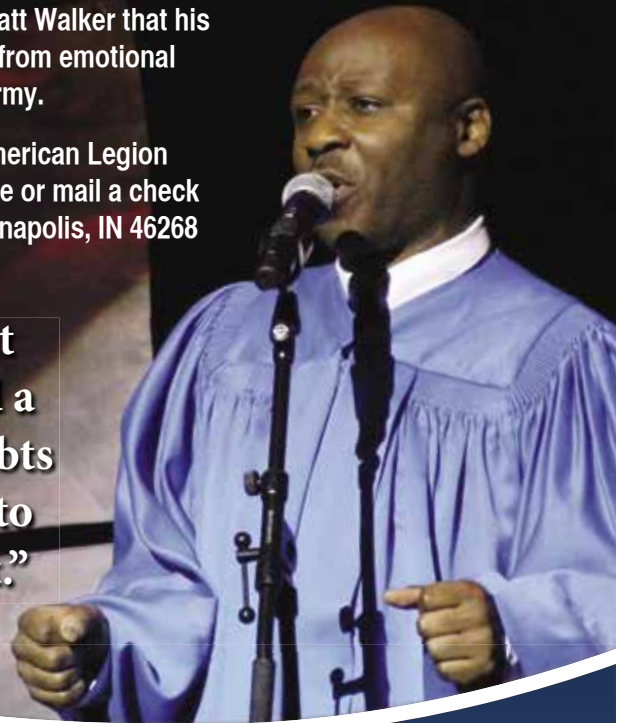
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The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival showed Matt Walker that his talents in songwriting and rapping could help him heal from emotional wounds sustained while serving in the United States Army.

Help veterans like Matt today by making a gift to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation at www.ALAFoundation.org/donate or mail a check payable to ALA Foundation, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 and write VCAF in the subject line.

“I got into music not knowing it would be therapeutic for me and a release of whatever fears and doubts and confusion. I can put it all into a song ... and I can grow from it.”



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
FOUNDATION

Ensuring Our Mission of Service Endures

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To learn more, visit the Member Portal at www.ALAForVeterans.org and start saving today!

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**“If you want to celebrate a happy occasion,
do it by helping those who are in need.”**

— Mohith Agadi, author, entertainment journalist, independent film producer



Happy 102nd birthday to us! We successfully made it through a century of serving veterans, military, and their families and didn't allow anything to stand in our way — not even a global pandemic! ALA units across the country celebrated with cake (lots of cake), recruited volunteers and new members, and generously donated to our many programs. The culmination of this milestone was highlighted at our National Convention in Phoenix with pyrotechnics, a balloon drop (pictured), a historic fashion show, interactive photographs, and, of course, more cake! But our work is never done. Even now, we are preparing for a second century of making a difference for those we serve. It's time to focus on making our impact even stronger. Celebrate your success and the success of the ALA by renewing your membership today!



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IT'S ALL *good* GOOD ADVICE FROM ALA MEMBERS

As we approach the holiday season, what are some fun events/fundraisers your unit hosts?



“New York ALA Unit 912 helps the Legion post with a turkey raffle. We’ve been fortunate to have a great community turnout and bring around \$11,000 in profit to the post home each year to put back into our community.”

— Amber St-John, New York



“Ohio ALA Unit 541 Juniors make no-sew lap blankets to give to veterans in nursing homes, along with hand-colored Christmas cards. We do a breakfast with Santa, a Christmas party, and a paint-and-sip. On Christmas Day, we have food in the canteen.”

—Mindi Rue, Ohio



“Indiana ALA Unit 113 members stuff stockings at Christmas for veterans in nursing homes and deliver each one.”

— Lori Martin, Indiana



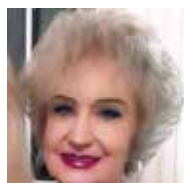
“In early December, we host a silent auction. Many of the items are ideal for holiday gifts.”

— Patti Bjorklund, Minnesota



“In December of 2017 and 2018, I had the privilege of being a part of District 21’s Christmas Caravan at the Birmingham VA. It was very humbling to visit with all the patients and see their eyes light up when you walked into their rooms. Every patient received gifts.”

— Sharon Atkins, Alabama



“Unit 48 hosts a comedy and country music event to collect donations for Christmas gifts for all veterans, residents, and staff of a local nursing home.”

— Margaret Eklund, South Carolina



“Unit 31 is proud to say we have many fundraisers, including a holiday wreath raffle for a wreath donated by one of our members. We also host a kids create-your-own pancake breakfast.”

— Amy Robarge, New York

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DUAL MEMBER: U.S. Air Force veteran Jeffrey K. Crouser of Delaware, a dual member of Post and Unit 3 (pictured here, leading a meeting), was featured in previous ALA national media, and when a video about him and male spouse members aired at National Convention, the crowd cheered several times in support.

DON'T FORGET: MALE SPOUSES OF VETERANS CAN JOIN ALA MEMBERSHIP

It's another way to honor their spouse's military service and show care and appreciation for veterans, military, and their families. It supports The American Legion Family and our collective missions. And, maybe most importantly, it boosts our membership so our strength in numbers helps us to serve even more people.

There are many reasons male spouses of veterans and servicemembers have joined the American Legion Auxiliary after ALA membership eligibility was extended to them two years ago. Those are the same reasons given by many women who became ALA members throughout the organization's 102 years.

Today, the ALA's number of male spouse members is more than 1,000. This year, when you're renewing your 2022 membership dues, consider the hundreds of thousands of other spouses eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary.

ALA membership eligibility was extended to include male spouses of U.S. veterans and servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918; and any time after Dec. 7, 1941.

Other eligibility requirements can be found at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

The change in ALA eligibility regarding male spouses became official when delegates at the Auxiliary's 99th annual National Convention in August 2019 voted to update the ALA's Constitution & Bylaws to state the following: "Eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by The American Legion." The Legion's delegates to its 2019 National Convention voted to change the wording in the ALA's membership criteria — replacing "wife" with "spouse" — in the Legion's Constitution & Bylaws.

Since the expansion of membership eligibility, a common misconception popped up that male Auxiliary members have to be Legionnaires — this is not true. In order for a male spouse to join the ALA, their veteran spouse must be a member of The American Legion, but the eligible member does not have to be. The ALA's membership change extends to male spouses of living or deceased veterans, as long as their military service meets a Legionnaire's eligibility requirements.

HOW YOU CAN WELCOME MALE SPOUSE ALA MEMBERS

Getting male spouses involved in Auxiliary meetings, events, activities, and programs is easy! Treat these men the same as you would other ALA members. Try to be as inclusive as possible to everyone. Following are a few additional suggestions:



Conduct "getting-to-know-you" icebreakers at meetings and events for everybody, especially new members. Avoid singling out men in the group. Include the male spouse Auxiliary members in discussions and planning, and in activities and events. Be open to what they have to say or contribute. They may offer different perspectives, talents, ideas, and resources.



If you know a male spouse member who joined the ALA under the department's "at-large" or "headquarters unit," try to steer them to a local unit, as it will help the unit meet goals and build membership locally. Mention to these folks that they are not obligated to attend meetings, go to events, or volunteer, but if they wanted to do any of those things, joining locally provides them with more opportunities to do so.



The ALA is no longer a "women's organization" or "ladies' Auxiliary." It's time to ditch those outdated phrases when describing your local American Legion Auxiliary to the public.



Consider changing any gender-specific references on the websites and social media accounts representing your ALA unit, district, department, etc. (e.g., if your unit's social media name is American Legion Auxiliary Women's Unit 123, just delete "Women's" in the name).



The same thing goes for ALA-related paperwork, including your governing documents, promotional materials, communication vehicles such as newsletters, and forms. Updated versions of the Auxiliary membership application can be printed from www.ALAforVeterans.org.

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COMPANIONSHIP (from left): Unit 421 member Cindy Boehnlein, Past Post 421 Commander Lynea Mieyal, Unit Secretary Karen Glahn, and VA nurse manager Rick West with a Companion Cat at the Cleveland VA.

COMPANION CATS BRING JOY TO LOVED ONES

Even after a century of service, American Legion Auxiliary members continue their mission to enhance the lives of veterans, the military, and their families. Auxiliary member Cindy Boehnlein of Unit 421 in Fairview Park, Ohio, began a meaningful project to help bring joy to dementia and Alzheimer's disease patients at the Cleveland U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital. Boehnlein and Unit 421 donated Joy for All Companion Pet cats to help improve the lives of these veterans.

Boehnlein is eligible for Auxiliary membership through her father, Korean War Marine veteran Richard Slaby. She initiated the Joy for All project with the thought of him in mind. Before his passing in 2017, Slaby spent many years in the Alzheimer's unit at the VA.

"My father would reach for the

floor looking for his dog, and his dog wasn't there because he was in an Alzheimer's unit," said Boehnlein. "I figured if he had one of these robotic cats, it would have made him happier, and that is why I chose to do this project."

The idea came from a fellow Auxiliary member during a midwinter meeting, and Boehnlein instantly knew she was going to present the project to her unit. With everyone on board, the unit raised \$535, and Post 421 donated \$500 toward the companion cat project to support Department of Ohio National Commander Jean Wilson's 2021-2022 theme to Support Veterans' Mental Health. Originally the money would only be able to purchase nine cats, but with relentless couponing efforts, Boehnlein was able to acquire 12 Joy for All cats. They donated 11 cats to

the Cleveland VA and gifted one to a Unit 421 member with dementia.

"She plays with it and laughs at it — she thinks it's so cool," said Boehnlein. "It's called Joy for All for a reason; it will bring joy to the patients and for the family to see their loved ones interacting."

Joy for All Companion Pet cats look, feel, and sound like the real thing. The lifelike pets have built-in sensor technology that responds to petting and motion with purring and pleasing meows. The two-way interaction helps create a meaningful connection and a lovable experience that can bring fun, joy, and friendship to those who may need companionship.

"When someone has dementia or Alzheimer's, they might think these robotic cats are real cats and it does bring comfort to them," said Boehnlein. "They purr when you pet them, their eyes open and close, they move and lick their paws, and they even roll over — they are pretty awesome!"

The Joy for All Companion Pets were created to bring interaction, play, and fun to the older adult market. After thorough market research, consumer insights, and helpful feedback from aging loved ones and their families, Companion Pets hit the market in 2015. The personal stories and testimonials showed what an impact these cats made to many lives. Following the initial success of the cats, the Joy for All Companion Pet Pup was introduced the next year. The Joy for All brand focuses on improving the quality of life for aging loved ones, their families, and caregivers.

HOPEFUL IDEA FOR ALA MEMBERS

During the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee pre-convention meeting at the American Legion Auxiliary's 2021 National Convention in Phoenix, Patricia Kranzow, ALA member of Cicero Unit 96 in Illinois, presented the idea of giving "open when letters" to veterans and servicemembers.

"Open when letters" are a series of notes gifted to someone to help them at any moment of need.

Each letter is in an envelope with a label explaining when they should be opened — for example, open when you need encouragement, or open when you have something to celebrate. These letters are helpful when distance or separation plays a factor in relationships with loved ones.

"It's an idea I put out there that I'm hoping people will pick up and run with," said Kranzow.

Kranzow suggested that ALA members and Juniors create "open

when" packets for patients at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals. The letters would be a unique and meaningful way to show appreciation for veterans. She also recommended that local VA Voluntary Service hospital representatives can make packets for ALA volunteers at their facility to thank them for their hard work. Another possibility would be to enclose the "open when" packets in care packages for active-duty military.

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RED POPPIES WILL BLOOM AT NEW WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL

Tour the new memorial in person or virtually

A long-awaited memorial to World War I and the 4.7 million Americans who served in the war is now a reality in Washington, D.C. It is the last of the 20th century wars to receive its own memorial in our nation's capital. The U.S. flag was raised above the park on April 16, 2021, signifying its opening to the public.

In 2013, an act of Congress created the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission to create the memorial. They selected architect Joseph Weishaar and sculptor Sabin Howard to enhance the existing park and create the memorial.

Located in Pershing Park, the memorial is named for Gen. John J. Pershing, who commanded American Expeditionary Forces in Europe. The statue of Gen. Pershing remains and has been incorporated into the memorial. The original park was dedicated in 1981. Renovations and construction for the memorial cost \$42 million.

There are several points of interest on the site that will educate visitors while they remember those who fought for our freedom.

A Soldier's Journey

The central element of the memorial is a wall of remembrance that includes the sculpture *A Soldier's Journey*. However, the sculpture is

not complete — it is scheduled to be installed in 2024. Until then, visitors will see a canvas featuring the artwork.

Once complete, it will be 58 feet long and 12 feet tall and will include 38 figures depicting the story of an American father leaving for war and the experiences of battle. Sculptor Sabin Howard wanted this piece to be about the process of being human, not glorifying war. His goal is to show the human emotions in an intimate and accessible way.



Peace Fountain

On the opposite side of *A Soldier's Journey* is the Peace Fountain, where visitors can reflect on the sacrifices and heroic acts made during WWI and the freedoms we now have today. The fountain also includes information about the United States' role in the war.

Belvedere

This is the conceptual center of the memorial. Here, victors can learn about the major campaigns the U.S. was involved in during the war. It also includes plaques providing information about each area of the park. A WWI Victory Medallion is embedded in the ground in the center of the Belvedere.

Red poppies

In late spring/early summer, red poppies will bloom for one to two weeks in landscaped areas of the memorial — symbolizing the red poppies in Flanders Field during WWI.

Red poppies are also incorporated in the memorial as an educational element. Visitors can scan “information poppies” that include QR codes to learn more about WWI history.

HOW TO VISIT

In Person

The memorial is located in Pershing Park across the street from the White House Visitor Center. It sits on Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th Street NW and 15th Street NW. Open 24 hours a day, the park was designed with lighting to enhance your experience in the evening.

Virtually

Two apps are available for download. There is a visitor's guide, and an augmented reality app called The WWI Memorial “Virtual Explorer.” You can learn more about the Virtual Explorer app and its functions at www.Doughboy.org.

You can also watch webinars about the memorial and learn more about WWI history. Free webinars are available at www.Doughboy.org and www.worldwar1centennial.org.

RESOURCES

Virtual Explorer and visitors guide are available in your app store. Search WWI Washington, D.C. www.doughboy.org www.worldwar1centennial.org www.sabinhowardsculpture.studio

From now until Nov. 15, a bugler will perform *Taps*, in memory of the those who served, each day at 5 p.m.

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TOGETHER: Veteran Diane Smith joins fellow residents, Auxiliary volunteers, and staff from the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home for the dedication ceremony of their new outdoor furniture, purchased with the support of a grant from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

OUR MISSION NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT NOV. 30 ON #GIVINGTUESDAY

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were so many unknowns. American Legion Auxiliary units worldwide struggled to find a balance between meeting the increase of unique veteran needs in their communities, while keeping their members and vulnerable residents safe. When new challenges arose at the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home, the ALA Department of Alaska knew exactly where to turn for much needed support — the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. That's why this year, on Nov. 30, when countless nonprofit organizations reach out to their supporters and other like-minded individuals to ask for donations to support their #GivingTuesday campaigns, you can count on the ALA Foundation to put your gift to work where it is needed most.

With so many causes to choose from, it can be a challenge to decide

which organization deserves your hard-earned money. But one thing is for sure: As a volunteer, supporter, or member of the American Legion Auxiliary, there are so many reasons why contributing to the ALA Foundation this #GivingTuesday should be at the top of your list!

The ALA Foundation has awarded over \$1 million to veteran projects, creative arts therapy programs, and youth leadership initiatives.

Most importantly, 100% (that's right — every penny!) of your donation to the ALA Foundation on #GivingTuesday will go to mission-centered programs across the nation. On top of that, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has a proven track record of helping veterans, military, and their families. Since its inception in 2007, the ALA Foundation has awarded

over \$1 million to veteran projects, creative arts therapy programs, and youth leadership initiatives. It has helped veterans in need in 42 states, and awarded grants to nearly 170 ALA units, districts, and departments.

Because of #GivingTuesday 2020, the ALA Foundation was able to support the Alaskan Veterans and Pioneer Home with a Veteran Projects Fund grant of \$2,558 to purchase outdoor furniture sets. Not only will this donation provide a better quality of life for the veteran residents for years to come, but it also allowed residents to visit with their families at a safe distance during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Especially during COVID, it helped because when you are down and you can't go anywhere, being able to get outside and have comfortable furniture to sit in feels like a break from the lockdown,” said Diane Smith, a U.S. Navy veteran and resident at the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home. “It was one of the only options people had for getting out and not feeling confined.”

Though the ALA Foundation has already accomplished so much in such a short span of time, there is always more work to be done ... and more veterans to support. That's why half of your donation on #GivingTuesday will get to work immediately through our Veteran Projects Fund grants, and the other half will be given to our Mission Endowment Fund, to support generations of veterans to come.

All of us at the ALA Foundation know that so many of you have put in the time and dedication to make sure our nation's heroes are given the resources and opportunities they deserve, so why not make sure your personal legacy of *Service Not Self* will continue? That's exactly what a gift to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation on #GivingTuesday can do Nov. 30.



You can give online today at donate.legion-aux.org/GivingTuesday or mail your donation to the ALA Foundation at 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 and write #GivingTuesday in the subject line.

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"MDHearingAids are better than expensive clinic hearing aids, which cost thousands more," says retired physician Dr. Robert A.

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Doctors Are Tired of Watching Their Patients Waste Money on Over-Priced Clinic Hearing Aids

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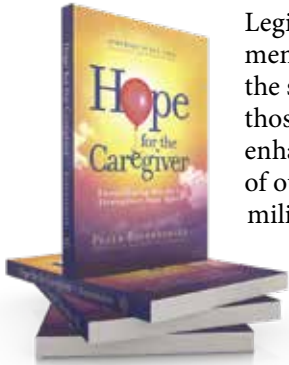
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BOOK PROVIDES HOPE FOR CAREGIVERS



American Legion Auxiliary members honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. Many Auxiliary members are

caregivers to loved ones, and being a caregiver takes a different type of sacrifice. The efforts of military caregivers help those they care for live better-quality lives. But the toll on their own well-being can be high. Where does the caregiver turn when they need encouragement of their own?

Hope for the Caregiver: Encouraging Words to Strengthen Your Spirit written by Peter Rosenberger shares relatable experiences from his 30-plus years as a caregiver. Through his decades of experience, Rosenberger's wisdom provides proven practical tips on how caregivers can live a calmer, healthier, and even more joyful life. He reminds his readers and fellow caregivers of God's presence, strength, and faithfulness in every circumstance.

"People in caregiving situations tend to wholly focus on their loved one, but the caregiver needs to remain healthy too," said American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Daudistel, whose emphasis is on caregivers during the 2021-2022 ALA administrative year. "The ALA wants caregivers to know that help is out there!"

Hope for the Caregiver offers strength and encouragement through carefully crafted devotions, short articles, and tips on supporting caregivers' own well-being in the 224-page book. Rosenberger knows the caregiver's journey intimately and is authentic and understanding in his writing.

His knowledge and wisdom forms from his caregiving journey to his wife Gracie, who has endured over 80 operations, treatment by more than 100 doctors, the amputation of both legs, and \$11 million in medical bills. All of these circumstances resulted in Rosenberger's expertise as a caregiver and has made him a devoted champion for the family caregiver. His experience provided him with an understanding of health care issues and a deeper compassion for others.

Hope for the Caregiver targets America's 65 million family caregivers and has the goal of helping and influencing these hidden heroes to better their lives. With his decades of experience, Rosenberger offers clear, proven strategies and tools to guide caregivers toward a healthier lifestyle in every aspect of their lives. The book provides invaluable resources to counselors, clergy, medical practitioners, employers, and businesses faced with addressing the needs of the caregiver.

Rosenberger is also a prominent speaker, podcaster, and radio host. His weekly radio show, *Hope for the Caregiver*, addresses life's caregiving challenges with sincerity, empathy, and even comedy. His show is heard on more than 180 stations, and on SiriusXM's Family Talk Channel. All of his radio shows are produced into podcasts that are free for listeners. You can listen to *Hope for a Caregiver* every Sunday on the Hope for a Caregiver Facebook page @HopeForTheCaregiver or you can livestream it from the *Hope for a Caregiver* website at hopeforthecaregiver.com. Rosenberger's book is available on Amazon.

AUXILIARY'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

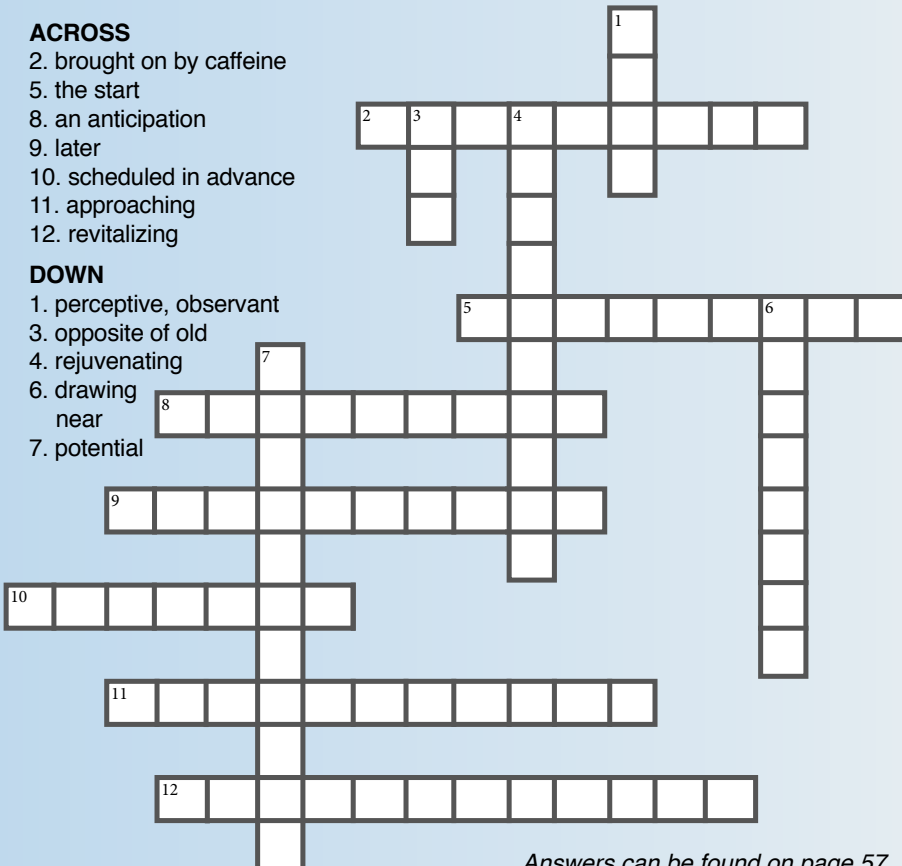
Words associated with future.

ACROSS

2. brought on by caffeine
5. the start
8. an anticipation
9. later
10. scheduled in advance
11. approaching
12. revitalizing

DOWN

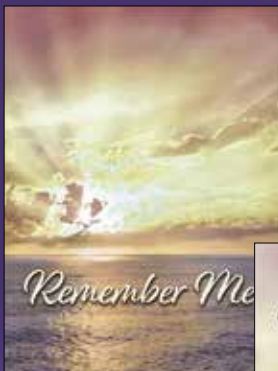
1. perceptive, observant
3. opposite of old
4. rejuvenating
6. drawing near
7. potential



Answers can be found on page 57.

Unforgettable Beauty

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White Topaz at Center

Dozen Genuine Diamonds

Solid Sterling Silver with Rich
18K Gold-plated Accents

“Remember Me”
White Topaz & Diamond Ring

Until We Meet Again... Let Your Heart Be Full of the Love That We Shared

Our loved ones fill our hearts with joy and make our lives so much richer. Although they are deeply missed, there is comfort in knowing that they watch over us, wishing for us to greet tomorrow with love and hope. Now, let their spirit live on as you continue on your journey, and celebrate all the cherished memories that you shared together with a beautiful new jewelry design—the “Remember Me” White Topaz & Diamond Ring, available only from The Bradford Exchange.

Love and Inspiration Sparkle in a Meaningful Design

Finely hand-crafted of solid sterling silver enhanced with a fine layer of rhodium plating for maximum shine and beauty, with rich 18K gold-plated accents, this beautiful ring features a generously sized teardrop-shaped genuine white topaz center stone of over 1 carat, embraced by a dozen genuine diamonds in a pavé setting. Plus, the meaningful sentiment “Until We Meet Again” is engraved inside the band, in a sparkling memorial to a loved one who has passed.

Available for a Limited Time... Order Today!

This meaningful ring arrives in a custom presentation case complete with a touching poem card and Certificate of Authenticity. It's available in women's whole and half sizes from 5-12 for just \$119.99*, payable in 4 easy installments of \$30.00, and backed by our unconditional 120-day guarantee. To reserve yours, send no money now; just mail the Priority Reservation today!

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YES. Please reserve the “Remember Me” White Topaz & Diamond Ring as described in this announcement. Ring size _____ (if known)

To ensure a proper fit, a ring sizer will be sent to you after your order has been accepted.

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Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-Mail (Optional) _____

01-31842-001-E24501



The Truth about Planned Giving



It's not as difficult as you think!

Lots of rumors circulate around planned giving, when, in reality, leaving a legacy gift can be easy. Check out the truth behind these misnomers that might be holding you back from making a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the ALA Foundation:

MYTH: It's only for the wealthy.

FACT: You don't need to be wealthy to have a will or indicate a charitable bequest. No matter the size of any individual donation, collectively, every gift adds up to help ensure the Auxiliary is here for the generations to come.

MYTH: I must have a will in order to donate.

FACT: There are various ways to donate without a will, including your retirement plan or life insurance policy.

MYTH: It costs way too much money to make a will.

FACT: The average cost for a basic will is \$375 and ensures your assets are distributed according to your wishes.

Start your planned gift by visiting www.ALForVeterans.org/Planned-Giving or calling (317) 569-4500.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS ADVICE

IS YOUR LEADERSHIP BOARD READY FOR BUSINESS?

The excitement of having in-person department and national conventions is subsiding. As a newly elected officer, it is time to get down to unit, district, and department business. Have you spent a little time getting to know each other? Is your leadership ready for business?

Read your unit/department constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. The members of your executive committee or board — typically your officers, but check your bylaws — have legal responsibilities: the duty of care, duty of obedience, and duty of loyalty. You now must transition from thinking “This is how I *feel* I should act” about a situation to “What action is legally expected from my position?” Well-written governing documents should provide leadership with the guidance they need. So, the very first thing you should do is find and read your unit or department constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. Bring a copy with you to every board meeting. Yes, every board meeting. That document should be dog eared and coffee stained by the end of the year!

Come prepared. Come to meetings prepared to conduct business. Review documents distributed in advance, and be ready to ask questions about items you don't understand. For example, if your unit/department has a pattern of adopting a deficit budget, you may want to take a closer look at your spending habits. Throw out your rubber stamp, and sharpen your pencil. It's your responsibility to care for the financial well-being



FASCINATING: Tennessee members read the “biggest ever” national Constitution & Bylaws booklet at Nashville National Cemetery.

of your organization to continue its mission of serving veterans, military, and their families.

Executive session. While transparency in governance is highly encouraged, there are occasions when confidential matters such as discipline or trial must be addressed by executive session. Robert's Rules define executive session as “any meeting of a deliberative assembly, or a portion of a meeting, at which the proceedings are secret.” A motion for executive session can be adopted by a majority vote. Who can stay? Regardless of membership in the organization, only members of the deliberative body — those who are entitled to vote — remain for executive session. For example, if your department executive committee (its board) normally invites department chairmen to meetings but without a vote, the chairmen would be asked to step out during an executive session. The board may invite guests such as a parliamentarian to remain if it chooses, or it can invite a guest such as an auditor to step in for a portion of the session.

Confidentiality of these proceedings is paramount unless

the board votes to lift the secrecy or extend limited knowledge to necessary participants in the process. Knowing the inevitable curiosity of members, prepare your board in advance for how to handle inquiries. Have a statement prepared and rehearsed, such as “I'm bound by confidentiality to not disclose the contents of the executive session.”

Who keeps the minutes of the session? If your unit/department secretary is not a member of your board, someone will have to be designated to record the minutes and distribute them confidentially to only those who were present. Store the minutes in a locked cabinet, with an attorney, or maybe a safety deposit box at a bank. Use caution when keeping a digital copy.

Now is the time to take a good look at your governing documents. They should be specific to your unit or department; do not cut and paste from the national Constitution & Bylaws! Investing in a review of your documents by a professional registered parliamentarian is surprisingly affordable and well worth it. Find a parliamentarian close to you at www.Parliamentarians.org/prp-search.

NEWLY UPDATED: Visit the MyAuxiliary section of www.ALAforVeterans.org to download a newly revised copy of the *ALA National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules*.



MEMBERSHIP: PART FOUR OF A FOUR-PART SERIES

This year, Auxiliary magazine is publishing articles with useful information about recruiting and engaging members within the American Legion Auxiliary, and other parts of our American Legion Family. This article is about the many varied benefits your ALA membership provides.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS (top and bottom left): Janie Bennett holds the Texas Unit 19 ALA Member Notebook that all members have so they can follow along, participate, and learn how to grow as a leader in this organization; (other photos): Department of Kansas member Kristen Hensley participates in a variety of activities as an active member of her unit, thanks to her increased confidence as an ALA member.

Variety of benefits keeps ALA members renewing year after year

Joining the American Legion Auxiliary and serving its mission of course brings about feelings of *good* — we often touch the hearts of those we serve.

But there's also another reason to be part of our fine organization:
the benefits, both personal and professional.

Auxiliary magazine takes a closer look at a few members who have utilized a variety of skills that have benefited them in their ALA membership.

MEMBER BENEFIT: INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Kristen Hensley

Department of Kansas Unit 156
46 years old

"I've never felt like I belonged anywhere, a perpetual outsider. Joining the Auxiliary, I have been empowered and taken out of my comfort zone, allowing me to increase confidence in myself, discovering strengths I never thought I had, while working on weaker areas in a safe and encouraging environment. Change comes from growth."

A member since 2017, Hensley's eligibility for membership comes through her husband, Doug, although she also has several family members with ties to the military. Doug saw The American Legion Riders and was inspired to go to the post and sign up. He encouraged Hensley to join as well.

"I have a quirky personality and I've always felt like an outsider everywhere I've gone," she said. "Not that anyone did anything; I just felt out of step. I think for women particularly, that is a common feeling."

Her husband convinced her to join the Auxiliary.

At first, she had fun participating in activities and meeting different people, including department and district-level members. About a month and a half into membership, her unit needed a secretary. She volunteered to fill the role.

After, the outgoing district president convinced Hensley to become the district chaplain.

"It was people pouring knowledge into me and encouraging me to step outside my comfort zone," she said, about agreeing to fill different roles. "In doing that, it gave me confidence. I've never had that in anything I've done. It made it clear that everyone is different and to embrace each other for these differences because

with those differences comes different strengths."

Hensley added that being part of the ALA has given her strength she didn't know she had.

In addition to gaining leadership experience, her ALA membership has also helped her with public speaking.

"If you don't think you can speak in front of people, there's nothing like a debate over an issue that you have to vote for and have to get up and speak to voice your opinion and how quickly you get over your fear of public speaking," she said. "I don't think people realize it helps them become more articulate and it's a confidence builder."

To help Hensley with growing her confidence, public speaking

"We do a lot as a unit and organization together, and it's an honor to say we did this for our veterans who fought for us, who signed their name knowing they might not come home."

abilities, and more, she has taken advice from those mentoring her as she continues to get further involved in the ALA. She talks at least weekly with her district president and has also been encouraged by past presidents at district meetings, as well as Past Department Presidents.

"They are always there, just a phone call away," she said. "If I have a question, they will drop everything just to answer that question, and they don't make me feel stupid. They know I want to learn."

Those who mentor Hensley are always reminding her they are there to help. Having good mentors is a motivating factor to continue membership in the ALA.

Hensley offers advice to potential members who may join and how the ALA can help them in the ways it has helped her, especially with confidence.

"As you build your confidence, if you have a wacky idea for a fundraiser or event, say it," she said. "Like everybody says, if we constantly do things the way we've done it, we will never grow."

Hensley also offers advice for new members who aren't yet involved and how to get outside their comfort zone, like she did.

"Anytime someone asks for help for something, volunteer — put yourself out there," she said. "You aren't going to grow, and confidence won't grow until you step out. You will have plenty of support."

That confidence has blossomed, leading Hensley to talk to more members, making more friends — friends who have become like family.

"Even outside Legion and Auxiliary stuff, we have become close," she said. "We are working for the betterment of veterans and communities. The bonds you make with people here are stronger than anywhere else you make them."

Hensley said she has found her place with the ALA.

"This is where I'm meant to be."

MEMBER BENEFIT: VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Tina Haggerty

Department of Pennsylvania
Unit 357
45 years old

"Membership in the Auxiliary has helped in my personal life by giving me something to volunteer for. The community is always looking for volunteers, but it is pretty awesome to say you volunteer for an organization such as the American Legion Auxiliary because seeing what the veterans gave up for us, by giving back, makes you feel so proud."

Haggerty joined the ALA in 2015, eligible through her father and husband. The couple owns a plumbing business and did some work on the local post. The American Legion commander at the time encouraged Haggerty

to join the ALA — she did, and her husband transferred his membership from the state post to the local post.

“My theory is if the veteran can give up their life for us, what can we do for them?” she said about what made her want to become a member.

After joining the Auxiliary, Haggerty started attending meetings and then became unit secretary, unit president, and then district president.

“I didn’t realize how big the ALA is and to be part of that is an honor,” she said. “I get to help veterans in the biggest organization.”

Prior to joining the Auxiliary, she was having trouble finding something to volunteer for that she truly cared about.

“I didn’t know where my niche was,” she recalled. “I kind of got thrown into it and I love it. I don’t mind giving up my time, money. We actually have a wonderful Legion Family.”

The volunteer opportunities available have kept Haggerty renewing her membership year after year.

“It’s a great feeling of accomplishment to say ‘We did this,’” she said. “We do a lot as a unit and organization together, and it’s an honor to say we did this for our veterans who fought for us, who signed their name knowing they might not come home.”

One activity Haggerty enjoys volunteering for with her unit is working with Juniors.

“I love showing the Juniors what we do and what we can do,” she said.

The biggest event Haggerty volunteers for with her unit is designer bag bingo, which raises \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually.

Haggerty offers advice for other members who may want to volunteer more.

“If they aren’t doing something, ask,” she said. “If they aren’t doing something they are interested

in, come up with it. Bring your interests to the meeting. Sometimes when you have an idea, you might not know how to do that, but the more you work together as a group, the stronger you are.”

Haggerty said she is happy she found her niche with something she loves to do.

“This is not a job; this is from the bottom of my heart,” she said. “I have a lot of fun with [the Auxiliary]. I love working with veterans. If not for them, who knows where we would be today?”

MEMBER BENEFIT: CONFIDENCE GAINED IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

Rosemary Lancaster
Department of Iowa Unit 34
36 years old

“In my personal life, [Auxiliary membership] has helped me with speaking in front of crowds. I used to have such high anxiety

“It is definitely a life skill [public speaking] that is needed across the board, no matter where you work or what you do.”

that I would stammer through all my speaking. Now it’s so much smoother. I still have a way to go, but much better! It’s also shown me more about giving.”

Lancaster has been an ALA member since she was 1 year old. She has several family members in the military. She was fairly active as a Junior member, and then on again/off again active during her 20s. For the last eight years or so, she has been fairly active.

A major benefit of her ALA membership has given Lancaster confidence to speak in front of crowds.

“If you get me in front of 20 kids under the age of 15, I can talk and laugh and jump up and down, but the same amount of adults gives me some anxiety,” she said. “As I

kept going and introducing myself to more people, I realized some of these people I’ve known since I was a Junior. Getting to know more members made it easier to speak in front of them because it’s groups of people I know.”

In 2019, she was installed as Iowa’s 5th District president.

“I did have to talk in some groups,” she recalled. “I was excited and nervous at the same time.”

During that time, the department president was her mentor, helping guide her and give her confidence in her public speaking skills. She has since been asked to serve on the Department of Iowa Membership Committee.

“I did more speaking at our department convention,” she said. “It was a lot easier than what I would have done like five years ago.”

It means a lot to Lancaster that the Auxiliary has played a part in helping with this life skill.

“It is definitely a life skill that is needed across the board, no matter where you work or what you do,” she said. “It means more than any words anyone could say, to be honest. As a Junior being shy, I wouldn’t have pictured me being here when I was 16, and now I’m here.”

Now being on the other side with more confidence in her public speaking, Lancaster offers advice to other members who may have anxiety about public speaking.

“It is not as scary as your mind sets it out to be,” she said. “Take deep breaths, and look above everybody’s heads. I don’t look at anybody unless I know them.”

MEMBER BENEFIT: CONFIDENCE GAINED IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND MENTORSHIP

Janie Bennett
Department of Texas Unit 19
63 years old

“Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary and working to fulfill our mission has increased my

confidence in public speaking and encouraged me to become a leader. I have made so many friends who have become mentors, and, in turn, have been blessed to mentor other members, all while striving to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.”

Bennett joined the Auxiliary nine years ago under her father, a Korean War veteran. She grew up in Midland, Texas, but lived in Colorado after that for 30 years. Her father was having heart problems, and every time she and her sister came to town to visit, he would take them to The American Legion post. A few of the Auxiliary officers were trying to get Bennett and her sister to join, but they were

living in Colorado and felt they couldn't help from afar. But, dues always help the mission, no matter a member's location, so they joined the Texas Auxiliary Unit 19.

When her father's condition began to worsen, Bennett temporarily relocated to Texas prior to his passing.

“Everybody was so supportive of us,” she recalled. “I couldn't have gotten through it without the family.”

After, Bennett was asked to be unit secretary, which she did for a year before being asked to be unit president.

She made the move to live permanently in Texas after that.

“I needed something I could

do, not so much for myself, but for other people,” she said. “I got back way more than I gained.”

As president, Bennett created a member notebook to aid in running meetings — Robert's Rules of Order, unit calendar, when reports are due, and more. Everyone gets a copy of the notebook to follow along with during meetings. The idea came about from a personal experience when Bennett and her sister had attended a meeting at a different ALA unit and had no idea what was going on — hence the “back to basics” notebook.

“The ideas we've come up with have helped my confidence,” she said. ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer



WANT TO CHECK OUT THE THREE OTHER PARTS OF THIS MEMBERSHIP SERIES?

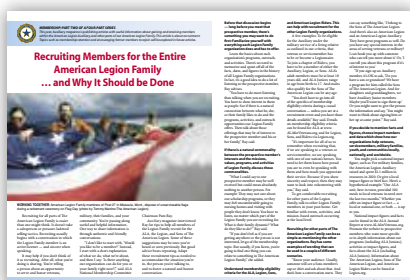
Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/magazine to view the full stories.



Part 1: Recruitment – What to Say When

February 2021 *Auxiliary* magazine

You're ready to recruit new members. You're excited about it. You've got your script ready in your head. You say, “Have you heard about the American Legion Auxiliary? We'd love to have you as a member!” Everything could go sour if you get a negative response, but we've got solutions.



Part 2: Recruitment – A Family Affair

May 2021 *Auxiliary* magazine

Attracting veterans to The American Legion. Sons to the Sons of The American Legion. When we work together, we increase membership across the board. Do you know a Legionnaire who recruits? Share the magazine pages with the Legionnaire for suggestions on attracting American Legion Auxiliary members.



Part 3: Retention – Great! You got that person to join the Auxiliary. Now what?

August 2021 *Auxiliary* magazine

For some members of the American Legion Auxiliary, recruiting is the easy part. Membership retention, however, is sometimes the most difficult and important. As the American Legion Auxiliary learned in a nationwide survey a few years ago, former members left the ALA for various reasons. We'll explore the ways current members can keep each other engaged and with a sustained sense of purpose.



PLENTY OF OPTIONS: Department of Pennsylvania member Tina Haggerty said the volunteer opportunities available to her through the ALA have kept her renewing her membership year after year. She loves working with ALA Juniors and helping her unit with designer bag bingo, its largest fundraiser of the year, which raises \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually.

ADDITIONAL MEMBER BENEFITS

In addition to the personal and professional benefits that come with an American Legion Auxiliary membership, members also receive benefits from the partnerships the organization maintains with various companies.

Amwins Group has several benefits:

Medicare Concierge Program
1-844-363-1726

Baby Boomers are aging into retirement at a rate of more than 10,000 per day. Amwins' Voluntary Medicare Concierge program helps retirees navigate Medicare. This program includes medical and prescription drug insurance for Medicare-eligible members, along with a private Medicare Exchange and access to Medicare Supplement, Medicare Part D, and Medicare Advantage plans.

Accident Insurance
1-844-363-1726

Guarantee issue plan that pays the holder when they have an accident. Three different plans to fit your budget.

Auto, homeowners, and pet insurance
1-888-398-8924

Offering members special savings on quality auto, home, and pet insurance from Liberty Mutual. With benefits such as multi-policy discount, personal property replacement, and 24-hour claims assistance, you'll worry less and save more. Homeowners insurance covers structures and your belongings while Liberty's customized pet insurance features multiple policy options spanning accidents, illnesses, and wellness programs.

Dental insurance
1-888-219-8057

Offered via dentalinsurance.com, this benefit includes a variety of dental plans, features, and services that

BENEFITS THAT KICK IN AFTER YOU'VE JOINED THE ALA

In addition to company/vendor benefits, there are also internal Auxiliary benefits for members:

- The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF): a national grant assistance program that provides temporary emergency assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary up to \$2,400 as the result of an act of nature or other personal crisis. AEF requires three consecutive years of membership to be eligible for assistance.
- Subscription to *Auxiliary* magazine: Quarterly publication sent directly to your home filled with ideas for helping our veterans, military, and their families.
- MyAuxiliary member portal: Located on the national website, this area allows you to pay dues online, print a membership card, and access to committee pages, resource and marketing guides, and more.
- ALA Academy: provides tools to members to help grow the Auxiliary's mission, and the organization as a team. Academy courses are designed to help members learn online and at no cost to them.

cover all dental needs – from simple checkups to root canals and braces. Individual coverages feature the broadest selection of options and the highest quality customer service. Family coverage keeps you and your loved ones on track with affordable dental coverage.

Vision Plans 1-888-219-8057

Offering VSP standard and premium plans featuring the lowest out-of-pocket costs, the most comprehensive eye exam and the nation's largest network of doctors. Our affordable plans for members of the American Legion Auxiliary are offered through top-rated carriers and most plans provide discounts on eye exams, lens fittings, and routine eyeglass exams. Ameritas Vision Plans are also available to members.

Long Term Care Insurance 1-800-616-8759

Protect yourself from paying large nursing home bills. LTCR offers members special discounts, multiple carriers, wider underwriting, and service for life.

Guaranteed Acceptance Senior Term Life Insurance 1-844-363-1726

The American Legion Auxiliary guaranteed acceptance senior term life insurance plan, underwritten by the Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company, covers you for up to \$25,000 in benefits — without having to take a medical exam or answer questions about your health. Upon your death, money goes straight to your family or whoever you choose as your beneficiary. They and they alone decide how to use it: to pay off a debt, settle funeral or cremation costs, buy groceries, pay the electric bill, or simply bank it for a future expense.

Hearing Plans 1-800-286-6149

Exclusive savings on a wide range of digital hearing aids and services. Free annual hearing screenings, no

enrollment fees, lifetime office service, and financing available.

ALA member benefits available from various other companies:

BlueStar SeniorTech 1-800-300-1724

Health care services and technology tailored to help seniors live better lives as they age.

Careington Discounts 1-800-290-0523

Starting at just \$14.95 per month, you can enjoy discounts on dental, telehealth, and vision benefits.

ScriptSave Prescriptions Savings Program 1-800-407-8156

Prescription savings for your entire household on brand name and generic drugs at thousands of participating pharmacies worldwide.

GlicRx 1-877-783-6772

A free prescription card to use and save up to 85% off — accepted at more than 35,000 pharmacies nationwide.

Stars and Stripes 1-202-886-0007

Receive 50% off an annual digital subscription to independent news and information to the U.S. military

community, including active-duty servicemembers, veterans, U.S. Department of Defense civilians, contractors, and their families.

Wyndham Hotel Group 1-877-670-7088

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PERSONAL GAINS: Rosemary Lancaster of the Department of Iowa speaks confidently in front of Juniors and senior ALA members during meetings. She credits her membership for helping develop this skill; ALA member Kristen Hensley's unit participates in a parade with an ALA float.



ALA National Convention commemorates milestone anniversary

Celebrate good times, come on! And celebrate we did. Fireworks, streamer cannons, and a balloon drop all contributed to the excitement of the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th National Convention.

"We've all been through a lot, but that hasn't stopped you from fulfilling the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary," said 2019-2021 ALA National President Nicole Clapp. "And for that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

The convention kicked off with a flag parade of department colors in honor of the momentous year. After, Voices of Service, a singing quartet of veterans and active-duty military members, gave an emotional performance. Retired Master Sgt. Caleb Green, retired Staff Sgt. Ron Henry, Sgt. Maj. Christal Rheams, and retired Sgt. 1st Class Jason Hanna sang patriotic songs, tugging at the heartstrings of attendees, reiterating why we do what we do. The room was electric with people clapping, singing, and moving to the beat.

The 2021 convention in Phoenix focused on Celebrating a Century of Service to our veterans, military, and their families. It was our largest gathering of members, guests, and distinguished speakers.

The weeklong ALA National Convention is held annually in cities across America at the same time and place as the conventions of The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports, conducting other ALA business — and most of all — having fun while celebrating our accomplishments from the administrative year.

One noteworthy accomplishment from the last two years — we now have over 1,000 male ALA members in our ranks!

At the previously held convention in 2019, The American Legion voted to replace the word "wife" with "spouse" in the organization's constitution and bylaws section regarding the ALA's membership eligibility, opening up the doors for ALA membership to spouses of

our female veterans.

"There are many reasons why our male ALA members chose to join us," Clapp said from the stage in Phoenix. "Honoring their spouse's military service, showing care and appreciation for veterans, military, and their families, and being part of something positive that's bigger than oneself."

After the 2020 National Convention was cancelled due to COVID-19, ALA members were beyond excited to see each other in person again after two long years apart. While social distancing in the Phoenix Convention Center, members still felt a sense of togetherness. The 2019-2021 administrative year culminated at this event and gave members a sense of rejuvenation going into the coming year.

A special focus showcased

Emphasizing the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families was the focus of Clapp's presidency. Throughout convention, stories that were shared shined a light on our military and veterans who have had to adapt to prosthetics or sensory aids and/or who are coping with traumatic brain injury.

According to the National Institute of Health, half of all the combat wounds received during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operating Enduring Freedom were bone and muscle injuries. Additionally, in the last 20 years, the number of veterans with prosthetics, sensory aids, and other equipment has risen by more than 70%, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

One of the Auxiliary's partners in this endeavor since 2019 was Dawna Callahan, founder of All in Sport Consulting LLC, who discussed the importance of the ALA working with the organization. Over the last two years, units and departments learned ways to partner with local organizations to help with adaptive sports programs.

"We are gratefully indebted to military veterans for creating and building the adaptive sports movement that we know of today," she said.

About 15% of the global population has a physical or

Missed the 2021 ALA National Convention?

Catch up by watching archived videos of the general session livestream, plus national officer elections and installation, by visiting www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention. Want to attend the ALA's largest national event? The next National Convention will be our 101st, held in Milwaukee in late August 2022. Start making your plans now!

intellectual, visible, or invisible disability, she added.

In keeping with the national president's focus, the Verardo family was recognized as the 2021 ALA Public Spirit Award recipient. The annual award recognizes outstanding individuals and organizations for contributions that positively impact communities through service to our veterans, military, and their families. Sarah Verardo is a military wife, mother, and caregiver to her husband, Mike, who was wounded in action. She wrote a children's book, *Hero at Home*, which teaches about viewing our wounded veterans with an open mind and open heart while showing compassion and gratitude for their service.

Review of the week

In true 100th anniversary celebration, the ALA Showcase of Fashion honored previous Past National Presidents who helped make the Auxiliary what it is today. The American Legion Auxiliary's supermodels — aka our PNPs — were dressed up in different eras of clothing from the ages of the ALA.

A biography was read about the PNPs featured in the show, including their background, presidential focus, ideals for the Auxiliary, and what was going on in the world at that time. A few of the PNPs from significant anniversary years were interviewed on stage — role playing, even using an accent in some cases — which brought fun reactions from the audience.

The music and outfits were reminiscent of the times. Accessories were added, including handbags, hats, feather pieces, and even one PNP distributing donuts in her role.

Clapp was first on stage as the ALA's first National President Edith Hobart, even wearing glasses similar to Hobart's style in the 1920s. Over a dozen PNPs participated in the event. The show ended with an interview with Clapp as the 100th ALA national president.

Returning this year, breakout sessions were offered, with three different choices for attendees.

Think You Know the ALA? — In this game of friendly trivia competition, two sessions took place simultaneously, with attendees competing in their own room and the same questions asked in both rooms. Prizes from BlueStar Senior Tech were given to the top winners.

Paint-by-Instruction with Purpose: Poppies — Conducted by the Arizona-based HEAL HER Art organization, which provides fun, stress-releasing painting sessions for women veterans, ALA attendees enjoyed painting and taking home their art in this breakout, whether a novice or expert artist.

Education Session: Rehabilitative Sports — Throughout her life and professional career, Dawna Callahan has consistently been a trailblazer for people and athletes with disabilities. She led this breakout session on rehabilitative sports with attendees who learned more about paralympic sports. She also highlighted some veterans who participated in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

In other news, National Convention delegates passed a handful of amendments during general session throughout the week:

Establish, by name, the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee. The national organization has had this committee for quite some time, so it was recommended we establish it in the bylaws by name, as is customary practice in nonprofit organizations.

Add the executive director position in the bylaws. The NEC voted on adding the executive director's responsibilities to the Standing Rules, so this was the companion amendment to establish the position in the bylaws, similar to how the Executive Committee needed to be established by name in the bylaws. Establishing an executive director's position in the bylaws is a customary practice in nonprofit organizations.

Add the executive director authorization to sign checks. As a result of the separation of the governance and management responsibilities of the national secretary position, the executive director, in addition to the national secretary, needs to be authorized in the bylaws to sign checks, thus aligning the ALA's governing documents with the finance policies already passed by the NEC.



CELEBRATION (from top, clockwise): Voices of Service perform at the convention opening; 2019-2021 ALA National President Nicole Clapp with National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford; some Unit Member of the Year recipients; two Salute to Servicewomen Award winners, U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Jennifer L. Bell and Coast Guard Capt. Mary Ellen J. Durley.

Amend Audit Committee purpose in Standing

Rules. The Audit Committee charter rescinded during the 2019 National Convention contained information regarding committee specifics and responsibilities. Now that the charter is gone, we needed to make sure we captured those specific committee responsibilities in our governing documents. The Standing Rules contain responsibilities of our other committees, so it was appropriate to add the Audit Committee information.

Change the name of the Audit Committee to

Risk and Compliance Committee. The national Audit Committee, on the advice of the ALA's external auditor, voted to recommend changing the name of the committee to Risk and Compliance Committee. The proposal to change the name of the committee eliminates confusion and better aligns with the actual duties and responsibilities of the committee.

During general session, reports were given from the various national program committees, highlighting what ALA members of all levels of the organization accomplished nationwide during our unprecedented two-year administrative time period. Hearing the stories of hope, adaptation, and joy moved audience members to be thankful for how we were able to still serve our mission during the pandemic and to look forward to the next year.

"As I reflect on the past 24 months, I choose to focus on our collective resiliency, dedication, and 'Get 'er done' attitude to persevere no matter the obstacles," Clapp said. "Our troops step up to the call every day to protect our freedoms, and we did likewise."

She added a thank-you for all that cake from coast to coast to celebrate our 100th birthday.

As part of convention closing, Clapp took members back to 1969 in Missouri. A time capsule contained a letter inside written by Past National President Estella Hanell to be opened by the 100th national president. Unfortunately, after many attempts, the letter could not be retrieved. But Clapp shared a letter from her as the 100th national president to be opened by the ALA's 150th national president.

"If you become weary, disillusioned, and challenged, you have something to help you rise above that," an excerpt of the letter read. "I humbly offer you my generation's examples of resilience, resolve, resourcefulness, and dedication to the Auxiliary's selfless mission. Stand on our broad shoulders."

Clapp closed out the convention with a celebratory hurrah featuring a balloon drop, firework graphics on the large screens adjacent to the stage, audience members waving their handheld clappers, and national officers dancing on stage to upbeat music. The long-awaited 100th birthday celebration of the American Legion Auxiliary did not disappoint.

Onto another year

During the installation of national officers, the previously elected officer transfers a pin and ribbon to the incoming officer, a traditional, physical sign of one ALA

year ending and another beginning.

Kentucky resident Kathy Daudistel was elected the ALA's 2021-2022 national president. Daudistel's focus as the ALA's highest volunteer leader is on caregivers, especially military caregivers. Read more about Daudistel on page 38 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.

Other national officers elected to serve during the 2021-2022 administrative year: Vickie Koutz, vice president; Denise Delaney-Wrolen, Central Division national vice president; Marie J. Pytka, Eastern Division national vice president; Dee Dee Buckley, Northwestern Division national vice president; Gabriele Barnett, Southern Division national vice president; Toni Gimpel, Western Division national vice president; Dr. Coral May Grout, national secretary; Marybeth Revoir, national treasurer; Carol T. Robinson, national chaplain; and Carol G. Campbell, national historian. Learn more about the national officers at www.ALAforVeterans.org/about/national-leadership.

National ALA awards presented

In addition to the American Legion Auxiliary's Public Spirit Award presented to the Verardo family, other awards were given at National Convention.

Unit Member of the Year recipients were recognized, showcasing those who exemplify the values and ideals of the Auxiliary and whose accomplishments impact the program work in their units. The 2021 recipients:

Alabama: Dawn Price; Alaska: Darlene Sheldon; Arizona: Megan-Jonasson-Pfaff; Arkansas: Karla Mikulewicz; Colorado: Ranya Kelly; Connecticut: Barbara Pintarich; Delaware: Judy Travis; Florida: Miralee "Cookie" Agan; Georgia: Eve Williams; Hawaii: Jane Robinson; Idaho: Naomi Ames; Illinois: Patricia DeVore; Indiana: Jackie Hinkle; Iowa: Angela Blazek; Kansas: Laah Tucker; Kentucky: Jean Rehtin; Louisiana: Nicole Matherne; Maine: Janet Cropley; Maryland: Carolyn Burgee; Massachusetts: Maureen MacDonald; Michigan: Phylliss Timm; Minnesota: Sharon Brandt; Mississippi: Charmain Woods; Montana: Bobbie Whelan; Nebraska: Jennifer K. Stutte; Nevada: Janet Snyder; New Hampshire: Julie Connors; New Jersey: Arlene Garris; New Mexico: Maureen Propst; New York: Kelly Scott; North Carolina: Shirley E. Standridge; North Dakota: Cathy Logosz; Ohio: Danielle Correll; Oklahoma: Kimberly McInnis; Oregon: Barb Pawlik; Pennsylvania: Esther Wagner; Rhode Island: Linda Krogg; South Carolina: Linda R. Coleman; South Dakota: Patricia Girard; Tennessee: Carrie Hunsaker; Texas: Rita Robertson; Utah: Ninzel Rasmuson; Vermont: Emily Stockwell; Virginia: Terri Riggsbee; Washington: Terri Campbell; West Virginia: Christy Bland; and Wisconsin: Karen Knudsvig.

(Not all departments submitted names to ALA National Headquarters to be considered for this award.)

The ALA's Salute to Servicewomen Award honors women from the six branches of military service who are actively serving our country: Col. Heather W. Blackwell (U.S. Air Force); Capt. Mary Ellen J. Durley (U.S. Coast Guard); 1st Sgt. Jennifer L. Bell (U.S. Army); Capt. Danielle Stewart (U.S. Space Force); Petty Officer Second

Class Shelby L. Schroeder (U.S. Navy); and Lance Cpl. MacKayla E. McDaniels (U.S. Marine Corps). Read more about the recipients on the ALA blog at www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog.

Ten National President's Awards for Excellence based on ALA committee/program achievements were presented to Unit 1879, Colorado; Unit 107, Wisconsin; Unit 28, Michigan; Unit 214, Ohio; Unit 62, Arizona; Unit 289, Illinois; Unit 230, Indiana; Unit 26, Idaho; Unit 172, Florida; and Unit 70, Montana.

Fundraising efforts successful

New this year, a silent auction was part of National Convention. All bidding took place online, so those who couldn't attend in person could still participate. Items could be viewed online, as well as in person during States Dinner at convention.

Over \$7,000 was raised. All items were donated. Thanks to our sponsor, Lands' End Business, all proceeds go directly to support the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation's Mission Endowment Fund.

"We had really fun packages ranging from Black Rifle Coffee to a hot air balloon ride over the desert to an all-access pass to ALA National Headquarters and artwork created by National Veterans Creative Arts Festival artists," said Madison Maves, ALA NHQ Development Division director. "We learned a lot and look forward to presenting

new packages and ideas to our members in the future."

A crowd favorite, the #GivingTuesday booth returned to convention this year. #GivingTuesday is a day dedicated to making individual and corporate donations to worthy causes such as the ALA Foundation. The globally recognized period of special emphasis on giving falls on Nov. 30 this year.

At this year's National Convention, the #GivingTuesday booth raised more support than ever before, said Sydney DeLong, development coordinator at ALA National Headquarters.

"With the help of our sponsor, Amwins, and a matching gift of \$2,500 from USAA, donors generously gave over \$35,000, which will be used to help veterans in need for years to come," she said. "Additionally, hundreds of veterans were honored on our Wall of Heroes, which donors covered with stars displaying the names of their beloved servicemembers."

Looking ahead

As the celebration of our centennial birthday drew to a close, members felt a sense of renewed spirit going into our second century of service. Much has been accomplished in the last two years of *Service Not Self*. We look forward to more mission moments during the 2021-2022 administrative year. ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer



FESTIVITIES (top to bottom, from left): National Poppy Committee Chairman Beth McGinn presents ALA National President Nicole Clapp with a display of poppies; Mary Jo Berning and Mary Andersen lead an Auxiliary sing-along; poppy painting breakout session attendees show their work; Clapp with Good Deed Award winner Jordye Quigg; PNPs modeling at the ALA Showcase of Fashion; California delegates; Colorado Unit 1879 celebrates a National President's Award for Excellence win; some of 2021-2022 National President Kathy Daudistel's grandchildren lead the Pledge of Allegiance at installation; trivia breakout session winners; Youth Hero Award winner Diego Garcia is recognized; Clapp with her parents; Daudistel receives the national president pin from Clapp.

Introducing 2021-2022

ALA National President Kathy Daudistel



Kind and passionate. Approachable. Good listener. These are a few of the characteristics used to describe American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Daudistel.

A calm, laid-back personality, Daudistel has a positive energy about her when she steps into a room. Talking to her, you wouldn't know she holds the highest volunteer leadership position in the ALA. She's down to earth and projects a vibe of being a local member like the rest of us — passionate about the work at the grassroots level for our veterans, military, and their families.

Being in a leadership role at the level of national president gives Daudistel an opportunity and advantage to help even more people.

"It's a different role where I can share my experiences and show other people that you don't have to be a Ph.D. college person; you can be just a normal, average person from a normal, average unit and you can be somebody," she said. "It's just really cool that you have the opportunity. Anyone can do what I do. I'm not a special person. I was not trained for this. I did not grow up thinking, 'I want to be the national president.' I'm just a normal person."

Daudistel had a humble upbringing in the small city of Bellevue, Ky., and she has carried that demeanor throughout her adult life.

Talking with *Auxiliary* magazine, Daudistel opened up about her personal life and presidential focus for the American Legion Auxiliary's 2021-2022 administrative year.

Getting personal

In Bellevue, Daudistel grew up involved in a local veterans organization called the Bellevue Veterans Club, which was started by two World War II veterans who wanted somewhere to meet. It turned into a place for the community, with baseball, tee-ball, softball, horseshoes, volleyball, and more. Daudistel coached volleyball for years and ran the volleyball league. They had over 500 kids participate in the various activities each year.

Additionally, she has been a Girl Scouts leader, president for two years of Fellow Life Management Institute, president of Bellevue Veterans Auxiliary,

member of Fraternal Order of Eagles, Kentucky Colonel, and American Legion Riders Chapter 203, and volunteer for the Special Olympics in northern Kentucky. She ran the celebrity golf outing tied to that for a couple of years.

"I was always volunteering for stuff and recruiting my family," she said.

Although Daudistel enjoys volunteering and helping others, her family has always been the most important part of her life.

She was a single mother and raised two daughters on her own.

"I worked for everything," she recalled. "I went to college while I was still raising my two daughters. I had a full-time job."

Daudistel received her bachelor of science degree in information technology from Northern Kentucky University. After, she worked for a Fortune 500 company for over 30 years. She started as a file clerk and ended as an information technology team member.

Both of her daughters are married, and each have two children. Beth lives in Seattle and is a marine biologist, and Stephanie is a licensed clinician at a children's hospital in Cincinnati. The whole family attended Daudistel's installation as national president in Phoenix.

Daudistel first heard about the ALA 25 years ago. She learned about the Auxiliary through a group of friends from softball and liked the mission they were helping to move forward. Today, she's still an ALA member because of that same mission and the number of opportunities available, from the unit to the national level.

"On Fridays, we would play softball and then we would hang out afterward and watch the guys play," she recalled. "One day, the girls were leaving early and weren't going to hang out, and I wanted to know why. They belonged to an organization that got a letter from a local orphanage that they needed some money to help fix up bikes for the kids.

"We know they are there, and we really want to bring awareness to the caregivers and connect them to resources."

This organization and the group of girls wanted to do one better and went and bought brand new bikes for the kids at the orphanage. So, I'm like, 'What organization is that?' They told me about the American Legion Auxiliary. I'd never heard of it. They told me how I could be a member, and I thought, 'I need to be part of this. What you guys are doing is awesome.'"

Daudistel found out she was eligible through her father, William Kaelin Jr., a United States Army veteran who served during the Korean War era. He joined The American Legion the next day, and then her whole family became members.

Daudistel has a history of military service in her family. In addition to her father, she had an uncle who went to Vietnam through the Navy, as well as some other uncles who were in the armed forces.

"We were always patriotic growing up," she said. "My dad always was."

She recalled when her uncle went to Vietnam. He was the fun-loving great uncle who would do crazy things, like drive his Volkswagen bug convertible up the floodwall of their home or stuff peas in his nose.

He served seven tours in Vietnam.

"We were very, very lucky he came home, but he didn't really," she said. "He was never that guy again. He left part of himself over there. That's when I realized the sacrifices that were being made."

Seeing what military members go through firsthand, Daudistel went to her first ALA meeting and got involved

right away to make a difference for veterans, military, and their families. She was appointed historian and the rest is, well, history.

"I think it's the opportunities," she said about continuing her membership with the organization. "There are opportunities for everybody — you don't have to be an officer; you don't have to be a leader. But there is always something. The Auxiliary offers something for everybody."

As an Auxiliary member, Daudistel has had the chance to shake hands with three U.S. presidents, meet and listen to an Iraqi woman talk about how much freedom means to her, and meet a Holocaust survivor.

She's also had the opportunity to hold several leadership roles at all levels of the ALA. At the national level, she has held the office of vice president and chairmanships with Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Poppy, National Security, Americanism, Membership, and Leadership.

When she first joined the Auxiliary, whenever she traveled anywhere, she and her family would always stop at American Legion posts along the way. It was always a learning experience to see how people work the programs differently. Through these experiences, Daudistel was able to bring ideas back to her home unit.

Two of her favorite ALA activities are volunteering at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF). As a volunteer, Daudistel and others would go to the facility once a month and play bingo. They would also take veterans on



THROUGH THE YEARS (clockwise, from left): ALA National President Kathy Daudistel's uncle Mark Reilman, U.S. Navy; Daudistel's dad, William Kaelin Jr., U.S. Army; her two daughters, sons-in-laws, and some of her grandchildren; with a good friend, Alica Buser; her parents, Nancy and William; Daudistel with her father; early years as an ALA member; an older photo of Daudistel's family.

outings to the local racetrack, casino, and to the post for lunch and bingo.

But Daudistel's "very favorite activity in the whole world is NVCAF"

"The veterans and the caregivers you meet there are just incredible," she said. "You listen to their stories and hear the odds that they've overcome and how they got there. It's heartwarming and it brings home everything that we do and why we do what we do."

Right behind NVCAF, Daudistel's next favorite activity is National Convention.

"You do meet a lot of veterans and a lot of people," she said. "Every year, you get excited about convention because you are going to go back and talk to these people and see them again and you are going to meet new people. The American Legion Family is an incredible opportunity to meet new people."

Focusing on caregivers

It took a few different personal experiences combined to help Daudistel realize an emphasis on caregivers was the direction she wanted to take for the 2021-2022 ALA administrative year.

From the comments made during a caregiver breakout session at the 2019 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, Daudistel truly began to realize how much caregivers go through. Hearing the personal stories of struggle was an eye-opening experience.

After that, her parents were in and out of the hospital with major health issues.

"While my dad was in the hospital, my mom was fine," Daudistel said. "She was very self-reliant, could get herself to the hospital, get home, and take care of herself. But when Mom was in the hospital, I was the primary point person for my dad."

Because of all the things she was helping her dad with, it was at that point that Daudistel realized her mother was actually a caregiver.

"She would never admit it," she said. "We never really

knew how much she was doing for my dad. Today, even if you told her she was a caregiver at the time, she would say she wasn't."

The realization set in that probably more people than she was aware of are caregivers.

"No one on the outside knew, and maybe they needed more support," she said about caregivers.

A third experience also led Daudistel toward this focus. A friend was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, also called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, and no veterans home would take a person with ALS. He ended up going into a home the VA paid for, but it was a home with strangers.

"I just couldn't imagine that," she said. "If that was my dad, we would have all rallied around to do what we could to take care of him. I just felt horrible there wasn't anything I could do."

Daudistel said all three things were motivating factors in choosing caregivers as her ALA presidential focus.

"I wanted to do something we already do," she said. "We are already caregivers. This is something the Auxiliary can work on forever."

Her goal is to bring awareness to caregivers' struggles, and to let them know there are resources available.

Daudistel hopes to recognize caregivers in every ALA department during her visits.

"We know they are there, and we really want to bring awareness to the caregivers and connect them to resources," she said.

As she begins fulfilling her role as national president, Daudistel

has a few additional goals in mind for the upcoming administrative year.

"I just hope as I travel, that people do realize they can do what I'm doing," she said. "I hope more people step up in leadership roles — not with the expectation you need to be a leader, but that you can do it. I hope we shed more light on caregivers and how the person next to you could be one." ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer

Interesting facts about 2021-2022 National President Kathy Daudistel

1) I love riding my motorcycle. I have a Harley Dyna Glide. I was a charter member for my post's American Legion Riders chapter. My sister rides with me a lot.

2) It was planned before COVID, but two of my friends were going to get married in Ireland, so I'm now an ordained minister. I married them at their house on their deck. It was so cool! It was such an honor to marry them. After that, a friend called me that a friend of a friend's reverend backed out because of COVID and asked if I would be interested in doing the ceremony. I got into this to marry people I know, but I marry strangers too!

3) I love outdoor sports of any kind. I love boating; I love water. I like being outside.

4) I love animals. When I was younger, I would bring home every stray, hurt animal in the neighborhood. We lived in this addition, so that was awkward at times. A squirrel, a bird, dogs — followed me everywhere. I wanted to be a veterinarian. Still to this day, I love animals. I see homeless animals and want to scoop them all up and take them home. When I was younger, I also wanted to live on a farm so I could have a million animals. And I'd leave notes around the house for my parents around Christmastime how I needed a horse. I love horses. I got a stuffed horse, but it's not the same. I had a room full of stuffed anything. They thought that would appease me. I'm just a huge animal lover.



Celebrating Veteran Caregivers

Supporters of the American Legion Auxiliary are dedicated to serving our veterans and military — but what about those who care for them day after day, challenge after challenge?

It takes incomparable dedication and sacrifice to stand beside and bear witness to some of the biggest obstacles a person can face. Veteran caregivers do just that — all while providing their loved ones with the steadfast support they need to make it through each day.

That's why ALA National President Kathy Daudistel made it her mission to celebrate the heroes behind the curtain — veteran caregivers. You can help care for those who care for others with a gift to the ALA Foundation's Mission Endowment Fund today.

Donate online at www.ALAFoundation.org/donate, or by mailing a check to the ALA Foundation, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 and write Mission Endowment Fund in the subject line.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

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ALA Girls Nation Leadership Lessons for Life

The return to Washington, D.C., after a year off due to COVID-19 included some changes to ALA Girls Nation. However, just like the previous 73 years of ALA Girls Nation sessions, the senators left our capital with leadership lessons that will remain with them for life, more confidence in their abilities, appreciation for veterans, and lifelong friendships.

New venue makes impact outside of program

The biggest change for 2021 — a new venue. ALA Girls Nation's former home, the 4-H Center, closed during the pandemic and never reopened its doors. The William F. Bolger Center in Potomac, Md., welcomed the American Legion Auxiliary and its premiere program with open arms. With the ALA choosing this venue, some furloughed employees of the Bolger Center were able to return to work. Hosting this event in person was a plus for both organizations.

Opportunities in media, service

The ALA Girls Nation senators elected Annabelle Hill of Tennessee as their president and Lia Stokes of North Carolina as the 2021 ALA Girls Nation vice president.

After their election, Hill and Stokes, along with The American Legion Boys Nation president and vice president, were interview guests on *The Jim Bohannon Show*. The program airs on more than 500 radio stations

nationwide. Bohannon, a Missouri Boys State alumnus, asked the four about their experience and their future plans. This was the first time ALA Girls Nation was represented on the show.

The following day, a trip to Mount Vernon included a special honor for Hill and Stokes. The traditional press conference was held at President George Washington's mansion. The pair stood on the porch overlooking the Potomac River, while the other senators gathered on the lawn for the press conference.

The visit to Mount Vernon also included an honor for 2019-2021 ALA National President Nicole Clapp and 2019-2021 ALA National Vice President Kathy Daudistel. They were able to lay a wreath at Washington's tomb.

Leadership and life lessons learned

Senate is an important part of ALA Girls Nation, but the experience is so much more. As ALA Girls Nation senators learn the fundamentals of the federal government, they also learn valuable leadership and life lessons.

ALA Girls Nation brings young women together from many different backgrounds and perspectives, allowing them to learn how to listen to each and work together.

"I would say that one of the coolest things for me has been seeing the perspective of so many different girls from so many different states and backgrounds. That was



something that really amazed me,” Hill said. “Coming in, even just with presumptions of what other people might believe, and seeing those stereotypes brought down was really amazing. Seeing the girls work together and put differences aside for the purpose of getting things done was really cool.”

Shreya Krishnan of Colorado agreed.

“We learned how to work together, to persuade, and build consensus. We learned how to disagree respectfully and with grace,” said Krishnan. “These are important life skills to have and the many valuable lessons that ALA Girls Nation taught me.”

The experience can also change viewpoints on how the federal government operates.

“My entire perspective of how we create legislation and why we do was completely altered,” said Counts Shanks of Arkansas. “Following my participation at ALA Girls Nation, my perspective of legislative failure has shifted from being primarily partisan motivated to people motivated because I know that execution of policy can be challenging, and our elected officials first and foremost want policy that is best for their constituents.”

Nurturing confidence skills

The ALA Girls Nation program makes it possible for attendees to believe in themselves.

ON THE SCENE (top left): A patriotic ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery; (top right): the U.S. Air Force Memorial; four senators were chosen to place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; senators place poppies on the wreath during a poppy ceremony; posing on the Potomac River at George Washington’s Mount Vernon; working on legislation; touring D.C. monuments.

“I think the biggest thing that I can take out of this is confidence. I came into this a confident person, but I had doubts about myself, especially public speaking,” Stokes said. “No one is here trying to put you down. It made me understand that I’m better than I think I am. And that’s going to be able to carry me into the future.”

Shanks also experienced a change in her confidence level.

“ALA Girls Nation was the first time in my life when I was surrounded by my peers, and I did not feel self-conscious of my skills, whether it was my communication skills, intelligence, or work ethic, because I was surrounded by 93 teenage girls who were all equally talented and driven,” she said. “I was

pushed to do better and be better, and the girls around me expected me to push them in the same way. I flourished in this environment and was granted an ignited hope in the future of our country.”

Overcoming COVID-19 obstacles

The 2021 ALA Girls Nation senators came to the program after experiencing a time in our world that decades of previous ALA Girls Nation senators had never experienced — a global pandemic.

The pandemic affected them personally and their experiences with ALA Girls State, as many of the programs remained virtual for 2021. Despite programs being online, the senators were still grateful for the opportunity and even



EVENT HAPPENINGS (left to right): The ALA Girls Nation president and vice president hold a press conference at Mount Vernon; the sergeant-at-arms carries flags into Senate; party rallies; a flag ceremony; exploring the National Mall; swearing-in of Supreme Court Justices; Lincoln Memorial; party rallies; press corps at Mount Vernon; PR staff on the National Mall; National Museum of the American Indian; Senate session; preparing for party rallies; World War II Memorial; Senate session; Air Force Memorial; U.S. Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska speaks with the senators.

more grateful they could interact in person at ALA Girls Nation.

Hill was grateful to be in person for ALA Girls Nation but thought the virtual ALA Girls State programs opened the door for some girls to take advantage of a program that did not require travel, that some may have had to turn down the opportunity due to the pandemic.

“It really adjusted our opportunities,” Hill said. “It brought things to a new perspective and allowed girls who potentially hadn’t had the chance to shine in the past have that opportunity. It’s just really cool programs like this could be so accessible — being able to see the multifaceted nature of certain solutions and situations with the COVID pandemic and what that brought to our world. Just seeing so many girls online was really just a really cool thing.”

Honoring military and veterans

A visit to Arlington National Cemetery was a moving experience that taught senators about sacrifices that provide them with the freedoms they have today. The traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier had an added significance this year: Poppies used in the wreath were created by women veterans and active-duty servicewomen from across the country.

The senators also participated in a patriotic ceremony.

“My memorable moment of the trip was singing *America the Beautiful* at Arlington National Cemetery. I come from the city of Colorado Springs where Katharine Lee Bates wrote this song while going up Pikes Peak — America’s Mountain,” Krishnan said. “It was a humbling experience to pay my respects to the great men and women who sacrificed their lives to protect democracy and freedom of this great nation.”

The service project this year was for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. As the senators arrived on Saturday, they wrote messages of thanks and words of inspiration on sling packs filled with items for participants at the Games. The service project tied into Clapp’s focus of adaptive sports. Later in the week, senators learned more about adaptive sports in a panel of para-athletes led by Dawna Callahan, owner of All In Sport Consulting LLC.

The senators were asked by ALA Girls Nation National Chairman Wendy Riggle to continue their community service when they return home. Each senator was presented with two copies of the book *Hero at Home* by Sarah Verardo. The book teaches children to look at wounded heroes with understanding and compassion. Senators were asked to donate one copy to a

local school, library, or other children’s activity area, and read it to children. The other copy is theirs to keep, but they are asked to read it to other groups of kids.

Continuing a path of service

Some senators have renewed or newfound goals to serve our country either through the military or public service.

Stokes hopes to attend a military academy. She has already taken steps to pursue her goal. In 2020, she was named The American Legion Junior ROTC Cadet of the Year.

“I really want to serve my nation. I have come to understand it more and understand the foundation of it.”

Krishnan has a new interest in politics.

“Attending ALA Girls Nation definitely made me interested in having a public service career. The program taught me to apply my natural leadership skills to learning how to become an elected official in my future. It taught me how to be an effective leader by teaching

me how to collaborate effectively with other senators, how to adapt well in unpredictable situations, how to build a consensus, and disagree respectfully. These skills are necessary to have a good public service career.”

A ‘once-in-a-lifetime experience’

Every year, senators refer to the program as a “once-in-a-lifetime experience.” Many go on to encourage others to attend an ALA Girls State program.

“I had no idea what to expect going into ALA Girls Nation, especially during the pandemic, but any expectation I could have held would have been exceeded,” said Shanks.

“Throughout my participation, I became sharply aware of the fact that the ALA uses this program to change our future for the better and

helps cultivate young leaders now, encouraging them to continue their initiative and service for a lifetime.

“ALA Girls Nation changed my life’s perspective and granted me some of the most incredible lifelong relationships, and for that, I am forever grateful for the ALA’s impact on me and so many other young women,” she continued. “I wish that it was possible for each and every girl who desired to attend ALA Girls Nation to participate because this experience is one that shapes you, teaches you, and connects you for a lifetime, and it does it all in seven short days.”

Learn more about ALA Girls Nation

Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org and social media @ALAGirlsNation to learn more about ALA Girls Nation.

★ By Jennifer Donovan, Staff Writer

What is your favorite memory or activity?
“The senate sessions and touring the National Mall!”
“Reflections and Mount Vernon!”
“Debating in senate.”
“All of it, but especially Mount Vernon!”
“Mount Vernon and the party rally.”

IMPACT ALA!



AUXILIARY READER SURVEY GATHERS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Auxiliary is a membership magazine, meaning it's all about you! It highlights what ALA members are doing to support the Auxiliary's mission of serving veterans, military, and their families. Every few years, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters conducts a reader survey to learn more about our *Auxiliary* magazine audience, which articles are most read, overall satisfaction with the magazine, and more. Based on feedback from each reader survey, we are better able to tailor *Auxiliary* magazine toward what you, the readers, want to learn about and implement within your own units and departments to help fulfill the ALA's mission.

With assistance from Readex Research, a nationally recognized independent research company, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters randomly

surveyed ALA members via postal mail and email to request their feedback on the quarterly *Auxiliary*. The data was collected from May 7 to June 15, 2021, with 703 total usable responses. Findings:

Reading and sharing copies.

The findings concluded that *Auxiliary* magazine has an engaged

audience and is effective at promoting action. The typical ALA member has read or looked through each issue of the magazine, with the average member spending around 40 minutes going through it. A third of ALA members share their copies of *Auxiliary* with others, which helps extend the publication's reach. Filled with inspiring stories and helpful information, around half of our members have taken action in the last 12 months as a result of reading *Auxiliary* magazine.

Pleased and content with what's inside. Overall, ALA members tend to be quite satisfied with *Auxiliary* magazine. Of those surveyed, over half agreed with the statements that the magazine has a timely fashion, is interesting to read, and is their most important source of information about issues related to the ALA and how to support veterans. Most of those who did not agree were neutral, and very few disagreed.

What you want to see. ALA members are interested in seeing a variety of topics covered in future issues of *Auxiliary*. Many members are interested in what the Auxiliary is doing to serve veterans, military, and families. Other topics of interest to the majority included women veterans, motivational/inspirational

topics, and personal development/health/self-improvement.

The 34-question survey also incorporated an open-ended section to include suggestions on what could be different or better about *Auxiliary* magazine that would help improve its value to members. Some common themes were suggestions for topic coverage, information on local news/events/opportunities, and positive feedback for the publication.

Print is still the preferred. A copy of *Auxiliary* magazine is mailed to all ALA members each quarter, and a digital version of the magazine is available on the national website. All past issues of *Auxiliary* are also accessible on the national website at www.ALForVeterans.org under the "About Us" tab. According to the survey, the print magazine is preferred by most members.

Reasons for joining the ALA. The survey proved that the American Legion Auxiliary is successful at both retaining members as well as attracting new ones. For over 100 years, Auxiliary members have joined the ALA for a variety of reasons. The most common reported reasons for joining were to honor veterans, military, and their families, and/or to honor a relative who served in the military. The social aspect of membership was also a factor — many ALA members joined for the opportunity to socialize, to make new friends, for support, or to become a leader. A majority of ALA members have held membership for over 20 years.

Member feedback is extremely appreciated in any capacity, and is being compiled and considered on a constant basis as National Headquarters plans content for future magazine issues and other national ALA media. We want to know your thoughts as an *Auxiliary* magazine reader — contact us at alamagazine@ALForVeterans.org.



For further results of the 2021 Reader Survey, please see the inside back cover of this magazine issue.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: HELPING PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACommunityService

What does community service look like in your neighborhood? Look around: What are the needs in your community? Do you know if people are aware of available programs and resources that need volunteers within the community? These are questions you may need to research a little for answers. Our goal, since 1926, has been to make our communities a better place for everyone to live. With all of the natural disasters occurring in our communities, helping to develop a disaster, emergency, or evacuation plan, setting up first aid or CPR training, or helping with a blood drive are just a few of the ways to engage your community.

Every local area is different and may have unique needs with programs and resources available but need help to administer them. This is a great way to raise awareness of the community in support of our mission. A good place to start

is with your community leaders. Contact your local officials to see what is coming up that might be a possible volunteer opportunity, and then spread the word that they need help. Make sure to wear your ALA branded clothing when volunteering at a community event.

Do you have that one local unit member volunteer who goes above and beyond to help those in need? Are they the first to respond to spearhead a committee for the betterment of the community? Maybe they volunteer to take care of neighborhood members who aren't veterans but have mobility issues. They check on them to see what their needs are, prepare a meal for them, shop for them, or just spend time visiting with someone at risk. Let's recognize them for their efforts within the community.

New for the 2021–2022-year, National President Kathy Daudistel's focus is "Caring for Those Who

Care for Others," and we are going to recognize that special volunteer member with a Community Service Caregiver Award. Units may wish to award certificates to several unit members in their communities who are outstanding volunteers; however, you may submit only one nomination per unit to the department Community Service chairman. Departments are encouraged to recognize the member nominations sent to them. It would be awesome to have one nomination from every unit sent to the department Community Service chairman.

The department Community Service chairman will select one department winner and email it to the national Community Service division chairman by June 1, 2022.



Denise Conrad is a 27-year PUFL member. She belongs to Freedom Unit 183 in Pemberville, Ohio.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: IMPORTANCE OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPublicrelations

Public relations is important to units for several reasons. Spreading the word about what we do, who we are, and why we matter increases awareness, membership, volunteers, and donations. As you plan your year, you need to have a strategy for your internal and external audiences.

To get started, think about events, meetings, and activities you want the public and your members to know about.

Next, plan your methods of communication — social media, newsletters, press releases, and community events. The more ways you communicate, the more people you will reach. Social

media is a useful tool for public relations. To post regularly, create a content calendar and decide who will manage it. This will keep followers engaged and is a great way to make sure everyone is informed about your upcoming events and the good work you are doing.

Make your unit visible at community events. Ask if your unit can set up a booth. Members can be on hand with membership applications and information about ALA programs. Don't forget to always wear ALA branded clothing at community events and when volunteering!

Continue using your unit

newsletter to spread the word. If you don't have a unit newsletter, set one up. You can even put your newsletter on social media.

And don't forget about local media. Send press releases about the good work members are doing and upcoming events. You can find templates in the MyAuxiliary member portal at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Public Relations Committee.

Remember to have fun, and think outside the box.



Joyce "Jaye" Brown is a 20-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Federal Unit 19 in Baltimore, Md.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION: CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR

One key emphasis for the American Legion Auxiliary's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program is to support our veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors, which fits directly in line with National President Kathy Daudistel's focus of "Caring for Those Who Care for Others."

In the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and again today as we see numbers rising with variants, the ability to access U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities and support our veterans and their families has been sorely limited.

In response, VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) created a new avenue for veterans, caregivers, and volunteers alike — Compassionate Contact Corps (CCC). To combat loneliness and isolation during the pandemic, veterans and caregivers are provided telesupport through the award-winning CCC program.

This is where our ALA members can help ... as a CCC volunteer! CCC is a social prescribing program, where you can provide much needed support by making periodic phone or video calls to the veteran. According to Prince Taylor, deputy director for VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement, "Our amazing partners in the ALA already understand the unique challenges our veterans and caregivers face. We know the demand is going to be there. Having volunteers trained and ready to help us support some of our most vulnerable veterans, from a virtual platform, is a godsend."

It's a win-win-win proposition. The veteran receives that social interaction with someone outside their home. The caregiver obtains a brief respite to attend to their own needs. And the volunteer helps on a very personal level.

CCC volunteers must be adults, attend an orientation, successfully pass a background check, and complete non-medical training on confidentiality, privacy, empathy, compassion, and active listening. Veterans and volunteers are typically matched based on mutual interests.

It's very flexible as well — the calls can be made as they best fit the veteran, caregiver, and volunteer's schedules, usually once or twice a week for 15-60 minutes. As well, it can be done anywhere and has no geographic limitations.

ALA members interested in becoming CCC volunteers can find additional information at their local VA, or at www.volunteer.va.gov.



Lisa Williamson is a 32-year Auxiliary member of C. Russell Huber Unit 57 in Fairbanks, Alaska.

EDUCATION: IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAEducation

The Auxiliary's Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship is one important way the American Legion Auxiliary serves our country's veterans and their families.

Fifteen \$5,000 scholarships are awarded annually (three per ALA division).

This year, the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship application will be an online form that allows the student to fill out the application and upload required files, along with their written essay, and letters of recommendation all online. Once completed, the scholarship application is electronically sent

to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, where it will be forwarded directly to the departments for judging. This will make the application process easier for the student and reduce the number of misplaced paper applications.

To be eligible for consideration for the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship, a student must be a senior in high school and a daughter, son, grandson, granddaughter, great-granddaughter, or great-grandson of a veteran who served in the United States Armed Forces during the time periods of April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918; and any time

after December 7, 1941.

This scholarship is for undergraduate study only at a four-year accredited college or university, and may be used for tuition, books, fees, room, and board. Membership in The American Legion Family is not required for this scholarship.

When applying for an American Legion Auxiliary scholarship, go to www.ALAFORVeterans.org/scholarships to make sure you have the most current application.



Melanie Taylor is a 30-year member. She belongs to William Russell Ledford Unit 293 in Cloverdale, Calif.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S BRIEFINGS NOW ONLINE



Want the latest internal news on national ALA happenings? Check out the weekly briefings from National Headquarters' Executive Director Kelly Circle, J.D., Ph.D., in the MyAuxiliary member portal. The announcements were expanded to improve communication and engagement among all members — not just those serving in leadership positions.

“The briefings will help our unit members stay informed of what is happening at the national level so we can all work together toward the same goals,” said Circle.

The briefings highlight what is

happening in the ALA each week with valuable information, helpful tools, and informative updates. Circle includes links to stories, blogs, and articles in her briefings, so members receive the information at the click of a button.

“It's so all members have an opportunity to hear what's going on, to know what's going on at National Headquarters, and to know what we are doing to work on their behalf,” said Circle. “A direct communication is always better.”

In an easy-to-read format, Circle keeps the briefings positive and upbeat with updates about National Headquarters, meetings and activities, and accomplishments we've achieved as an organization. She also features American Legion

Family updates, like promoting the *Boys State* documentary and American Legion racing drivers Tony Kanaan and Jimmie Johnson.

“This is a way to keep members engaged, and it's also a chance for new members to learn more about the organization and get involved,” said Circle.

Archived issues of the weekly briefings start with the January 2021 edition. Past briefings may contain historical information based on the date that it was posted and do not necessarily reflect the current official policy or position of American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters.

Log in at www.ALForVeterans.org today with your member ID and take a look.

SAVE THE DATE FOR ALA MISSION TRAININGS AND JUNIOR MEETINGS

Learning is something that never ends. No matter our age, there is always something new we can learn or teach others. As an organization, it is important for American Legion Auxiliary members to share knowledge with each other to help continue the ALA's longstanding mission of serving veterans, military, and their families.

Mission Training helps members better understand our mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. The goal is to reduce obstacles that would prevent members from getting started. These trainings are for any enthused, new, or newly active member who wants a deeper understanding of how to use tools the Auxiliary provides in mission

delivery. Training helps members overcome common hurdles in mission delivery. The underlying belief in this training is that improving the member engagement experience will also drive membership. Mission Training is for active members looking to welcome and engage other ALA members and supporters in our mission.

Across the country, Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary are building their leadership skills as they carry out our mission. When these young and talented members come together at ALA national Junior meetings, some takeaways include new ideas, crafts, songs, and mission-related service projects.

Juniors must have celebrated their 8th birthday to participate in a national Junior meeting.

Please note that 2022 Mission Trainings and national Junior meetings will be held at the same time and cities throughout the winter and spring. All events are held on Saturdays.

Save the date:

- Jan. 29, 2022: Las Vegas, Nev.
- Feb. 12, 2022: Orlando, Fla.
- Feb. 19, 2022: Indianapolis, Ind.
- March 26, 2022: Baltimore, Md., or Harrisburg, Pa., area
- April 2, 2022: Omaha, Neb.

Get the most updated information about these events via our social media channels @ [ALForVeterans](https://www.ALForVeterans.org).



What's happening in your American Legion Auxiliary unit? Tell us about it at ALAMagazine@ALForVeterans.org.

IMPACT ALA! REFLECTIONS

Provided by Carol T. Robinson, National Chaplain 2021-2022 | www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains

NOVEMBER

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

— PSALM 100:4 (NIV)

Thanksgiving Is

By Author Unknown

Thanksgiving is a time of gratitude to God, our Creator and Provider, whose guidance and care go before us and whose love is with us forever.

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the changes, to remember that we, too, grow and change from one season of life to another.

Thanksgiving is a time of changing seasons when leaves turn golden in Autumn's wake, and apples are crisp in the first chill breezes of fall.

Let us remember the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

As we see the beauty of Autumn, let us acknowledge the many blessings which are ours, let us think of our families and friends, and let us give thanks in our hearts.

“Dear God, we pause to give You thanks for the many blessings You have bestowed upon us.

As we prepare for our Thanksgiving family celebration, let us be mindful of the less fortunate. Let us reach out and touch someone and help us to share with others in a way that is pleasing to You. Let us celebrate this day and use it according to Your plan.

God, guide us to be more understanding, thoughtful, compassionate, and caring for our neighbors.

God, we pray for peace among all people worldwide, strengthen our nation, and guide our world leaders. Protect our servicemen and women, keep them safe and return them home to their families soon.

We ask for your continued blessing and give us a willing heart and a grateful heart.

All this we ask in your name. Amen.”

DECEMBER

“It was You who set all the boundaries of the earth; You made both summer and winter.”

— PSALM 74:17 (NIV)

Pause for a minute and look around. Look at God's creation. The tiniest snowflake or the colors in the sky. Does it make you pause and thank God for all he has done? This is one of my favorite poems for winter that gives God the glory.

Winter's Snow-Spun Tapestry

By Elisabeth Weaver Winstead

Jack Frost made an ice-swirled visit
In the stillness of the night;
He used his magic paintbrush
And covered the earth in gleaming
white.

Brown Leaves lie silver-spindled,
Willow boughs pearl-tipped in
gray,

Fenceposts wear marshmallow
hats,

Tallgrass in diamond crystals lay.

Short bushes show coats of white
ermine,

Ice-flecked mittens some display,
God's golden beams of the sun-

swept sky

Illumine the dazzling, snow-
jeweled day.

We treasure each memorable
Winter scene

And view in delight God's snow-
sculptured sod.

Snow tapestries sparkle with
sequins aglow,

Emblazoned by the glorious
handiwork of God.

“Precious Father, thank You for allowing us to benefit from the beauty of all that Your hand has created. Thank You for the seasons and the rains that keep our earth reproducing. When we look at the night sky and see the work of Your fingers, the moon, and the stars you set in place. We will praise You until our last breath! May all our thoughts be pleasing to You, for we rejoice in You. Amen.”

JANUARY

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

— PROVERBS 3: 5-6 (NKJV)

We must wholly rely upon God's promise, wisdom, power, and love to help us in every circumstance. We should trust the Lord with all our hearts because human understanding is tainted by sin, limited wisdom, impulsive assumptions, and faulty emotions. God, on the other hand, sees and understands all. He is the One we can lean on and trust. Every decision we make matters to God; from the words we speak, the food we eat, where and how we live, our every movement.

When you acknowledge Him through prayer, reading the bible, or just having a talk with Him, it's pleasing to Him. Yes, He already knows what's on your mind, in your heart, your fears, and tribulations, but when you talk with Him and thank Him, He will direct your path. What a wonderful thing to trust in God with all your heart and to have Him direct your paths!

The way won't always be easy, but if we trust Him, we are able to rest in His will for us and let Him direct our paths. (Source: Gotquestions.org)

“Hello God, how grateful I am for your tenderness toward me. Even when my problems are my own doing, you see me in distress; you rescue me. You restored me and directed my path. I come to You with Thanksgiving in my heart and ask for Your direction in this new year. God, this year, I would like a passion and deep desire to accomplish every good work You have planned for me. All this I ask in Your name. Amen.”



Carol T. Robinson is a 35-year PUFL member. She belongs to Unit 776 in Riverside, Ohio.

Building ALA brand loyalty

OPTIONS AVAILABLE WHEN PURCHASING YOUR ALA BRANDED ITEMS



Branding ourselves in public as the American Legion Auxiliary is important for getting our name out to communities so people know who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Branded clothing, jewelry, bags, and more with the ALA emblem can also help recruit potential members.

Where to buy branded materials

A division of The American Legion National Headquarters, American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales gives financial support to American Legion Family programs that enhance the quality of life for America's veterans, military, and their families. Purchases through here help support the Family.

With items geared toward all parts of the Family — Legion, ALA, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders — there is plenty to find for everyone.

The three most popular ALA-branded items are the three-quarters sleeve blouse, clear rhinestone T-shirt, and allegiance polo.

"We are developing new items year-round," said Kevin Carothers,

marketing manager for Emblem Sales. "I encourage members to check the 'new items' section of the Emblem Sales website."

Most new items come directly from member suggestions, he added. Those ideas can be emailed to emblem@legion.org.

"Every purchase of Auxiliary-branded merchandise gives financial support to both American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary programs and activities that help America's veterans and military families in need, as well as educational and citizenship programs for America's youth," Carothers said.

To view items at Emblem Sales, visit www.emblem.legion.org or call 1-888-453-4466 for customer service assistance.

Another place to shop for ALA-branded apparel and products is Lands' End Business. Members can shop here for high-quality clothing and merchandise that can be branded with the ALA emblem by shopping in a custom storefront. Discount promotions are also offered through Lands' End Business.

"We hear a lot of feedback about wanting more branded attire and products, as well as additional Junior member and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation branded products, so ALA Executive Director Kelly Circle really took that to heart," said Madison Maves, National

Headquarters' Development Division director. "We were able to connect with Lands' End Business and felt like they were a great fit for our brand."

Having this option as well gives members variety, with hundreds of styles and colors to choose from.

"If there are Lands' End products on the main site that aren't on our ALA site, absolutely call and ask them," Maves said. "Same goes for kids' clothing — just give them a call, and their customer service will be happy to help. They have been a really great partner, and we look forward to seeing lots of branding opportunities for our members."

To start shopping today, visit www.business.landsend.com/store/ala or call 1-800-920-1471.

Avoid buying branded items from these places

Online shoppers need to know that products they see displaying the ALA emblem and other American Legion Family brands on e-commerce sites like Amazon.com and Wish.com are almost always illegally marketed.

These products are typically counterfeits, often made in foreign countries, and they violate U.S. copyright and trademark laws. When people buy these unauthorized American Legion Auxiliary products, the resources needed for the ALA to assist veterans, military, and their families are lost.

So, what can you do? The main thing is to buy branded items only from Emblem Sales and Lands' End Business, not these other unauthorized e-commerce sites. And spread the word to your fellow members!

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE OF THINGS: EMBLEM APPROVAL PROCESS

Use of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem is controlled by the national organization but first should be submitted to the department secretary. The emblem usage request form is available at www.ALAforVeterans.org and requires the following information:

1) Requesting person's email address and unit/department

2) Manufacturer/printer's name and email address

3) The product name, exact number being ordered, and intended use

4) A mockup of what the product with the emblem will look like

The department secretary will forward the request to ALA National Headquarters. Additional quantities require a new request form.

The letter authorizing use of the emblem by the national secretary must be issued to the manufacturer and will

be sent directly to the manufacturer. Copies of the authorization letter will be sent to the department secretary and the person making the request if that information has been provided.

Any other use of the name "American Legion Auxiliary" or the emblem is subject to the approval of ALA National Headquarters. These restrictions apply equally to the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE



KATHY ISAACSON: FROM AN ALA VOLUNTEER GIRLS STATE ATTENDEE TO CO-DIRECTOR



Tennessee's Kathy Isaacson is the co-director of ALA Volunteer Girls State and a 1982 alumna of the program.

She attended Indiana University on an Army ROTC scholarship and graduated in 1988 with a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Isaacson spent 12 years on active duty and was deployed twice — in 1990 to the Gulf War and to Bosnia in 1996. She served as a platoon leader and company commander, along with stints as a battalion staff officer.

She left the service in 2000 at the rank of major. Following her military career, she earned a master's degree in history and worked for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

How did attending ALA Volunteer Girls State prepare you for your future?

ALA Volunteer Girls State was the first place where the notion that I could be anything, do anything was truly tangible. It was the first place where I met women who were

doing all kinds of things. I didn't leave ALA Girls State ready to join the military, but I left knowing it was possible.

What stands out to you most about your ALA Girls State experience?

That answer is twofold. First, I didn't come from a family with a military tradition. ALA Volunteer Girls State gave me a renewed sense of patriotism and newfound appreciation for veterans. That foundation runs through the ALA Girls State experience, and I felt it clearly in 1982 — so much so that when I was looking at colleges, the idea of an ROTC scholarship was on my radar.

Second, I learned to pick myself up. I came to ALA Girls State from a small high school in west Tennessee. Like most delegates, I was a standout in high school. At ALA Girls State, I was with lots of other girls with that same experience — leaders in their schools, good students. I ran in the first election, and I was ready to make that acceptance speech. I was a bit surprised when I didn't win. I was feeling a little overwhelmed and a bit sorry for myself when a counselor asked me a key question: "OK, so what will you do tomorrow? What's next?" I learned quickly that it's not the defeat that defines us; rather, it's what we do next that matters.

Do you think your experience as an attendee differs from those today?

I don't think we need to work hard to convince young women that they can do anything. They have grown up with that notion. What we do need to remind them is that strong women support each other. Competition is healthy, but we don't need to tear others down to get ahead. When women work together, we can accomplish great things.

What is your favorite thing about the ALA Girls State program?

My favorite thing is to watch the transformation over the week, to compare the young women I see in the opening assembly to those young women I see at the closing assembly. They are strong and confident. They have made lifelong friends. They have joined a network of alumnae connected by a bond that will always be with them.

What do you like best about being involved in the program?

I am honored to be on the leadership team of ALA Volunteer Girls State. I loved working directly with delegates when I served as a counselor. Now, I love training counselors and guiding the program. It humbles me every day to be a part of such a fine staff.

What advice do you have for youth as they plan their future?

Take advantage of every new adventure. No matter the path you choose, be curious and try new things. Now is the time. Look for a path that feeds your head and your heart. And along the way, stay active and involved in your community and your country. Make selfless service a part of your plan.



Are you an alumna of ALA Girls State? Let us know what you are doing now and how the program impacted your life. Contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



PASSION FOR MUSIC: Grace Williamson and her father, David, a U.S. Air Force veteran.

CHILDREN OF WARRIORS NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT WITH A LARGE FAMILY AND A BIG PASSION PURSUES A CAREER IN MUSIC

Grace Williamson, 19, a freshman at Colorado Christian University, has an interesting background to say the least. She is one of 10 siblings (the third oldest) and the daughter of a now-retired 20-year U.S. Air Force pilot. Because of her father's military service, Williamson and her siblings have been all over the world, moving to a new place every few years. Leaving your old life behind to start a new one might sound stressful, but Williamson points out that having nine other siblings to share the experience with can help with the transition.

"I like it. You never get bored or lonely with it. It definitely keeps things really interesting. Car trips are fun," she said.

Being an older sibling can be a full-time job, but Williamson still finds the time to pursue her personal hobbies and career goals. With a passion for music and sound, Williamson plays the guitar and ukulele, and even volunteers with local churches to help run their worship services and musical productions.

This passion has become so strong that Williamson will be studying music production and audio engineering in college to make it her

career. Whether she is on the radio, running a podcast, or working in her local church, the possibilities of what Williamson might do with her education are truly endless.

Receiving the American Legion Auxiliary Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship has only helped to make Williamson's dream become more of a reality. Of course, it helps financially and prevents Williamson from having to take on a second job, but it also instilled her with some confidence and validation, which she was able to acquire as she received the proper letters of recommendation needed to

apply for the scholarship.

"I shouldn't overestimate myself, but I can't underestimate myself either," Williamson said. "I went to some of the adults and elders in the community. Just talking to them and having them help me and uplift me and be willing to write letters for me, that was encouraging for me and I think that was a really rewarding part of the experience."

Receiving the national ALA scholarship not only meant a great deal to Williamson, but to her family as well. Being a military family has its own set of amazing experiences, but it also comes with sacrifice. Williamson points out that it makes these types of scholarships mean even more.

"[My parents] were really proud of me," she said. "I think it's nice to have things like this for families like us. It's not something we take for granted."

Now, Williamson can go on to study music production and audio engineering with confidence in herself and her abilities, a proud military family behind her, and the knowledge that she can succeed in anything she sets out to do.

You can help children of veterans like Grace Williamson pursue a higher education by donating to ALA scholarships at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate. Just as Williamson said, it's not something these students take for granted!

Tips on Paying for College:

Off-Campus Housing is Often Cheaper



College	Cheaper To Live Off-Campus By*
Purdue University	69%
University of New Mexico	56%
Brigham Young University	52%
University of Texas, Austin	37%
University of Florida	31%
University of Pennsylvania	18%
Emory University	13%

*Based on a two-bedroom apartment with two tenants.
Source Trulia.com

Wise PEOPLE SAID

In early 2017, artists Wendy MacNaughton and Julia Rothman launched a website, *Women Who Draw*, in an effort to increase the visibility of female illustrators. On the site, emphasis is focused on female illustrators of color, LGBTQ+, and other minority groups of female illustrators. The first day, they received 1,200 requests to be part of the website.

Women Who Draw is an open directory of female* professional illustrators, artists, and cartoonists. When looking for an artist, there are a handful of filters that can be

used for searching more specifically, including race/ethnicity, location, orientation, and religion.

Since its launch, *Women Who Draw* has become the place to go to discover new talented illustrators from all over the world. It features over 2,700 (and counting) professional artists, tools to help users curate their own stables of artists, interviews with industry pros, monthly member collaborations, and a resources page for artists and the people who hire them.

Social media channels and live

events enable members to connect with each other. *Women Who Draw* members have been discovered and hired by publications like *The New York Times*, TED, *The Globe*, and *Bust Magazine*, among others. More than just a website, *Women Who Draw* has become a community of support and professional and political action.

To view the directory of female artists, visit www.womenwhodraw.com.

**Women Who Draw* is trans-inclusive and includes women, trans, and gender non-conforming illustrators.

WOMEN WHO DRAW: WENDY MacNAUGHTON AND JULIA ROTHMAN

Can you describe the kind of artwork you like to create?

Wendy: I am an illustrator, graphic journalist, and educator. I draw stories using drawings done mostly from life, combined with the words of the people I meet. I also illustrate books, magazines, and created and host a drawing show for kids.



POWER OF ART (above): *Still Life* by Daryn Ray; (at right) illustrator artists Wendy MacNaughton (right) and Julia Rothman.

Julia: I am an illustrator, pattern designer, and author. My illustrated column, *Scratch*, is featured biweekly in the Sunday *New York Times*. I've authored, coauthored, and illustrated 12 books.

Tell us how the idea for *Women Who Draw* came about.

Julia: We were inspired to create *Women Who Draw* after noticing certain publications were dominated by male artists. In one magazine that often featured illustrated covers, we noticed in the past 55 editions, only four of those covers were illustrated by women, despite the arts field within education often being dominated by women. Instead of talking about the problem, we set out to solve it with *Women Who Draw*.

What is the importance to you of creating this directory of women artists?

Wendy: To increase visibility and get jobs for illustrators and artists who are traditionally marginalized. And it works. When people can find new talent, they hire new talent. We just made it easier for people to look beyond their bias and broaden their network. So many women have gotten jobs from this — we hear from illustrators all the time the impact *Women Who Draw* has had on their careers, or how often an



art director uses WWD to find new talent.

The American Legion Auxiliary has many members who are artists. Do you have any advice for them on getting published and/or being part of *Women Who Draw*?

Wendy: We have so many submissions, we had to press pause on accepting new members, but we hope to open back up in the future. If people are interested in getting their work out there, share it online like on places like Instagram, send it as postcards, participate in shows — do everything you can to get it out there. Collaborate with other artists and writers and get your stuff out there together — double the eyeballs. And don't stop. A lot of success is grit. Just keep going.



NEW VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP: The American Legion Family leaders for 2021-2022 are (from left) ALA National President Kathy Daudistel, American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard, and Sons of The American Legion Commander Michael Fox (photo by Ben Mikesell/The American Legion).

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY'S 2021-2022 ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR IS IN FULL SWING WITH THREE NEW NATIONAL LEADERS AT THE HELM

Elected during the August 2021 National Conventions of each organization in Phoenix were American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard of Texas, American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Daudistel of Kentucky, and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Michael Fox of California.

Dillard is a Paid Up For Life member of American Legion Post 265 in Lake Kowa, Texas, and has been a member of The American Legion since 1969. Following high school graduation, he joined the U.S. Navy and served in Vietnam. After an honorable discharge as a radarman second class petty officer from the Navy Reserve, he attended Grayson County Junior College and East Texas State University.

Dillard has served several positions at the local and national levels. In 2007, he was elected Department of Texas commander, and in 2013 was elected national vice commander. His theme as national commander is "No Veteran Left Behind." His Commander's Project will be the Legion's Veterans &

Children Foundation with a goal of raising \$2 million.

Daudistel is a 25-year member of the ALA and is eligible for membership through her father, William Kaelin Jr., a United States Army veteran who served during the Korean War era. She has held numerous leadership positions in the organization at all levels. Her presidential focus is on caregivers. (Read more about Daudistel on pages 38-40 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.)

Fox has been a member of the Sons of The American Legion since birth. He belongs to Haggin Grant Squadron 521 in Rio Linda, Calif., and has held several leadership positions, and held his first elected position at Squadron 521 as sergeant-at-arms at age 6. Fox's motto for his term is "Leadership through action, not through position." His project is Flying Flags for Heroes. The project's goal is to place 1 million flags to honor veterans at local cemeteries.

This year marked The American Legion's 102nd, the ALA's 100th, and the Sons' 49th National Conventions. In keeping with tradition, all three conventions were held in the same week in the same city.

REMEMBERING PNC DOMINIC D. DIFRANCESCO

American Legion Past National Commander Dominic D. DiFrancesco passed away Sept. 6 at age 88 after a long illness.

DiFrancesco served as national commander from 1991 to 1992. He was a Korean War Navy veteran and 67-year member of American Legion Post 594 in Middletown, Pa.

During his term, DiFrancesco raised awareness about veteran homelessness and treatment of PTSD. He also addressed the need for a full accounting of American prisoners of war and those missing in action.

TOOLS, RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATORS

If you are involved with promoting The American Legion Family at the local, district, or department level, The American Legion Media Alliance (TALMA) has the resources, tools, and materials you need.

TALMA is open to all members of the American Legion Family and is highly recommended for those handling communications, public relations, and similar duties. For a \$15 annual fee, members receive:

- A press credential with lanyard.
- Free entry into the annual contest.
- Access to monthly virtual training sessions.
- The ability to join the private Facebook group.
- And, of course, resources and tools.

For more information and to join, visit www.legion.org/talma.



Tune in to the The American Legion's podcast, Tango Alpha Lima. The podcast is available each Tuesday by 9 a.m. ET. Find it on YouTube or anywhere you get your podcasts.



Christmas Gift Shops from around the country:

Nebraska

“I think [Christmas Gift Shops] really raise the visibility of how our organization is there for our veterans, especially in times of need,” said Barbara Washburn, Department of Nebraska.

She has been helping for about 10 years in various roles at the annual gift shop at the Omaha VA. Washburn’s mother was active with the gift shops prior to her passing, and now Washburn instills that

love in her unit. Meeting veterans and getting to talk to them and hear their story are all heartwarming benefits from being part of this.

“I encourage people to go once because once you go, you are hooked,” Washburn said. “Helping veterans pick a gift when they don’t think they are going to be able to afford one is serving veterans.”

To get in the spirit, Washburn and other ALA members wear Christmas sweaters, Santa hats, reindeer antler headbands, and refuel throughout the day with Christmas cookies.

Connecticut

Ruth Morgan has been part of the Connecticut Christmas Gift Shops program in some way for the last 30 years and the director for seven years. At this shop, one room is for wrapping presents, and the other two are set up like a store with different sections — clothes, jewelry, toys, and more.

Morgan said seeing veterans excited to be able to give their family gifts brings back to volunteers why we do what we do.

“Veterans come and say, ‘I can’t do anything for Christmas; thank you for doing this,’” she said. “We are

helping these veterans have a wonderful holiday.”

Morgan encourages ALA members to get involved with this project.

“It will be so rewarding to help a veteran,” she said. “It will tug at your heartstrings.”

Minnesota

Norma Tramm helped with Christmas Gift Shops prior to becoming department president when it became her focus for the year, and she has continued to give back to this cause for about 25 years. The Department of Minnesota serves four VA facilities and six veterans homes.

“We shop with them and help them pick out the gifts,” she said. “When they sign the gift tag, it’s from the veteran. That’s the best part for me. It’s more fun to give things rather than get them. We have the opportunity to give back to our veterans so they can feel good about Christmas.”

Tramm said it’s important for the ALA to be involved with the gift shops, whether members can physically be there to help or not — monetary donations are always needed.

“I think Christmas is a special time of year,” she said. “It is a giving time, and I think the American Legion Auxiliary *Service Not Self* being a giving organization — this is what we do all year long.”

Thinking of starting an ALA Christmas Gift Shop?

First things first: Check to see if one already exists in your area.

If there isn’t one, Washburn suggests starting with voluntary services in the veterans facility you’d like to work with. They will have to be on board to provide the space to set up and the information on the veterans to be served. Morgan agrees that reaching out to the facility first to gauge interest will be beneficial in a future partnership.

Tramm’s advice for departments is to start with just one place — one veterans home or one VA facility and grow the shops from there.

BRINGING JOY: For the better part of the ALA’s century of service, Christmas Gift Shops have been a familiar sight during the holidays. Pictured in 1947 are members at the Bay Pines Hospital in Florida with a veteran who served in the Women’s Army Corps.

ALA CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOPS BRING THE HOLIDAYS TO VETERANS

To help spread holiday cheer, American Legion Auxiliary units and departments are once again gearing up for the annual Christmas Gift Shop season.

A decades-old tradition in the ALA, these holiday stores typically are set up at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health care facilities and state veterans homes to give veterans a chance to get holiday gifts — for free — to give to family members.

Gift items can include clothing, small electronics, slow cookers, games for adults and children, basketballs, volleyballs, and more. Once gifts are at the facility, the store is typically set up for one to four days. Presents are also gift-wrapped for the veterans.

Those who can visit the shop choose gifts for their family members. For veterans who can’t physically make it from their floor, the ALA brings the shopping to them so they can still participate and pick presents.

Here’s a closer look at a few ALA

To get involved, reach out to your department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee.

American Legion Auxiliary social media

Visit our social media at www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media    

74TH ALA GIRLS NATION

A memorable experience in Washington, D.C.



 @Karisma.Virk

Thank you so much @ALAGirlsNation for giving me the opportunity to return to this outstanding program as a Junior counselor! I could not be more thankful to have had the opportunity to meet such an amazing group of young women that will forever have a special place in my heart!

 @Lilliz_

I cannot begin to express what this program means to me. Thank you for providing all of us with this opportunity. I started my first day overwhelmed by the most accomplished group of young women and a little nervous. I am leaving this program renewed with a sense of boldness, much humility, and immense hope for the future.



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Dad and me at the 100th Celebration of the American Legion Auxiliary in Phoenix.

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AUX MG 1121

Auxiliary Crossword answers from page 24:

ACROSS

2. energetic
5. beginning
8. foresight
9. subsequent
10. planned
11. forthcoming
12. invigorating

DOWN

1. keen
3. new
4. refreshing
6. imminent
7. prospective

Keep up with the latest news between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine.

Follow us on social media @ALAforVeterans.

THE LAST *word*

“Just scream! You vent, and the body just feels good after a good old yell.”

— Carol Burnett, Actor/Comedian



It's a group of women you don't want to be part of, but you're glad they're around when you need them most. Maybe you've seen their gold star pins and wondered what they represented. These are Gold Star Mothers, women whose son or daughter became missing in action, died while on active duty, or died as a result of such service. A mission-compatible organization to the American Legion Auxiliary, these women are also eligible for ALA membership. Are you a Gold Star Mother, or do you know someone who is? Please contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org. We want to honor you by sharing your story.

Above: Gold Star Mothers listen as U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley (not pictured) offers remarks during the 80th Gold Star Mother's Day commemorative ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Sept. 25, 2016 (photo: Rachel Larue/U.S. Army).



2021 *Auxiliary* Magazine Reader Survey Results

Thank you to our readers for making *Auxiliary* magazine a top read among national ALA media!



31%

pass their copy of *Auxiliary* to others

66%

gave a positive assessment of *Auxiliary*

63%

joined the ALA to honor a relative who served

20.9

average membership years in ALA

38

minutes the average reader spends

16%

got involved or volunteered after reading *Auxiliary*

4%

gave *Auxiliary* a low rating

86%

read most, some, or all of *Auxiliary*

19%

spend more than 1 hour reading *Auxiliary*

24%

discuss or share an article after reading *Auxiliary*

59%

topic of interest on what ALA is doing to serve veterans, military, and families

55%

rated *Auxiliary* excellent or above average

16%

have been a member for 1 to 4 years

For more information, see article on page 46.



American Legion Auxiliary

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters
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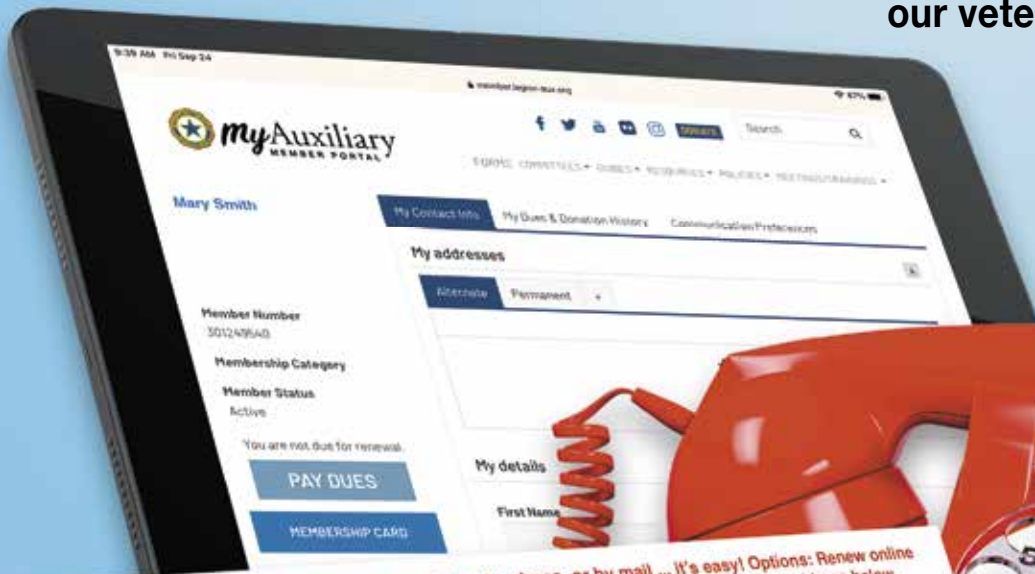
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