

# American Legion **Auxiliary**

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August 2022 \$3.75

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family does'*  
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healing part  
of caring for  
loved ones**





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**THE AMERICAN LEGION – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**DUES RECEIPT (Please Print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Initial Last  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Post # Phone # Email Gender  Male  Female  
 Membership (if former member) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please check war era and branch of service below:  
 Global War on Terror  U.S. Army  
 Gulf War  U.S. Navy  U.S. Air Force  
 Panama  U.S. Marines  
 Lebanon/Grenada  U.S. Space Force  
 Vietnam  U.S. Coast Guard  
 Korea  Merchant Marines (WWII only)  
 WWII  Other Conflicts  
 I certify that I have served federal active duty in the United States Armed Forces since December 7, 1941, and have been honorably discharged or I am still serving.  
 Name of recruiter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signed by applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If you are a new member, send this completed application with annual dues to The American Legion, Attn: Membership, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206 (check [www.legion.org/join](http://www.legion.org/join) for dues amount), or take it to a local post. To locate a post near you, click on "Find a Post" at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Detachment of: \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron No. \_\_\_\_\_ Recruited by: \_\_\_\_\_ Initial Last  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Street Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
 to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Veteran through whom eligibility is established \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) Above is a member in good standing of Post No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 OR (b) Above is a deceased veteran who served honorably from \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Relationship of applicant to veteran \_\_\_\_\_  
 Has applicant previously been a member of the SAL? \_\_\_\_\_  
 I hereby subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion and apply for membership.  
 Transmit \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ annual membership dues.  
 Eligibility certified by \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signed by applicant, (or legal guardian if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mail completed application to Sons of The American Legion department/state headquarters. Annual dues must accompany completed application. Ask local contact for amount due. For current detachment address, go to The American Legion department/state headquarters, or visit [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

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**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 City Call Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unit # and Location (if known) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birth - 17  18 and over

Eligible Through—Name of Veteran (Female Veterans: List Your Own Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
 City State \_\_\_\_\_  
 If Living: \_\_\_\_\_ American Legion Member ID # (Required) \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deceased (If veteran is deceased, contact ALA unit about the necessary military records.)  
**Veteran Served:**  
 WWII (4/8/1917-11/11/1918)  
 Anytime After 12/7/1941 (check all that apply):  
 Global War on Terror  Lebanon/Grenada  Vietnam  Other Conflicts  
 Panama  Korea  
 Gulf War  U.S. Coast Guard  
 Merchant Marines (WWII only)  
**Applicant's Relationship to the Veteran:**  
 Male Spouse  Female Spouse  Mother  
 Sister  Son  Self  
 Grandmother  Granddaughter  Grandfather

**DUES RECEIPT (Please Print)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Recruiter's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recruiter's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



# Auxiliary

contents



## FEATURES

- 24 CAREGIVER STORIES: THE FINAL OF OUR MAGAZINE SERIES**  
Our unsung heroes realize their selfless jobs are also part of their purpose in life.
- 30 GOLD STAR MOTHERS**  
All gave some; some gave all. For American Gold Star Mothers, their children are always the latter.
- 32 HOW HEALING HAPPENED AFTER LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS**  
Learn how these veterans overcame their major obstacles through the arts.

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- |    |                              |    |   |
|----|------------------------------|----|---|
| 4  | NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE | 44 | ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE                      |
| 6  | NHQ AT YOUR SERVICE          | 45 | ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW? |
| 7  | OUR READERS RESPOND          | 46 | LEGION FAMILY IN ACTION                         |
| 8  | JUNIOR MEMBERS               | 48 | WISE PERSON SAID                                |
| 10 | HEART OF THE MISSION         | 49 | MISSION MATTERS                                 |
| 12 | IT'S ALL GOOD                | 50 | WE'RE DIGITAL                                   |
| 37 | IMPACT ALA!                  | 51 | THE LAST WORD                                   |
| 42 | VALUING EVERY VOICE          |    |   |
| 43 | BUILDING ALA BRAND LOYALTY   |    |   |

**ON THE COVER:** Donna Nemeth, an ALA member of the Department of Florida, is a caregiver for her father, Stephen, a World War II veteran and Legionnaire. In the final story of our *Auxiliary* magazine series on caregivers, we learn how caring for a loved one can be difficult work, but it brings joy too (photo: Jacob Langston, freelance photographer). **ABOVE:** Artwork from National Veterans Creative Arts Festival gold medal winner Kathleen McDonald. The mosaic is titled *From the Ashes*.



**RECOGNIZING CAREGIVERS:** Throughout my travels as 2021-2022 American Legion Auxiliary national president, I had the privilege of presenting caregiver appreciation certificates to recognize those who care for others as part of my focus.

Spending the past several months meeting caregivers and hearing their stories has been an incredible and humbling experience. I quickly learned that in a way, we are all caregivers. I am amazed at the resiliency and selflessness exhibited by the caregivers who continually put others and the mission first. You truly make a difference for those you take care of.

I loved hearing stories about caregivers — the triumphs, though trying, have been so inspiring!

I hope the extra emphasis this year through the *Auxiliary* magazine series on caregivers (turn to page 24 in this issue to read the final article in the series), presentations of caregiver appreciation certificates, and our series of webinars through ALA Academy have helped bring the caregiver journey to light. I also hope you have found new ways to show the caregivers in your department extra love and attention.

Please continue taking care of our caregivers. Continue to let them know they are not alone — it is OK to ask for help, and our ALA is here to support in any way they need. We are here and we care!

Be sure to check out [www.ALAforVeterans.org/National-](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/National-)

President for caregiver resources that can help you or someone you know in times of need. Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/magazine](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/magazine) to read stories about caregivers experiencing some of the same challenges as you.

While traveling this year, I loved seeing new and creative ways units worked our programs. That is so important as we adapt to changing times and continue to be a relevant organization in today's world.

Great job for thinking outside the box, challenging yourselves, and bringing The American Legion Family to the forefront of our communities. I think the public has seen firsthand what we do as a Family and what a difference we do make, leading to new members, volunteers, and donors.

Thank you for an incredible term as your national president. I learned a great deal from all of you, personally witnessed our mission at work, and was inspired by many new ideas. The hospitality and kindness of everyone



I met on my visits was wonderful and greatly appreciated. Our members are the best!

I hope you continue to remember your *why* of being part of this organization. Keep working the mission and recruiting, renewing, and retaining new and seasoned members to selflessly serve veterans, military, and their families for years to come. Remember to be kind to each other and embrace the differences we each bring to our organization. We are stronger together!

Although my time in office is soon ending, in just a few short months, we will be honoring all veterans for Veterans Day. Words alone cannot express enough gratitude to all those who have served our country. We appreciate every one of our veterans. Please take time to recognize them for Veterans Day.

This holiday is also a great time to distribute poppies in exchange for donations that go directly to

assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our communities. For all your ALA branded poppy needs, visit American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or (888) 453-4466. Please share your Veterans Day photos on social media to continue showing your communities your commitment to our nation's heroes.

Thank you for everything you do, and thank you for allowing me to serve alongside you as 2021-2022 American Legion Auxiliary national president. I won't forget your kindness, and I hope you continue to do the amazing things you do. I will see you again soon!

*Kathy Daudistel*

Kathy Daudistel  
National President



## WATCH ALA NATIONAL PRESIDENT VIDEO REPORT AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

National President Kathy Daudistel visited ALA departments and units throughout the 2021-2022 administrative year. Daudistel will discuss some of these stories during her national president video report at the 2022 ALA National Convention in Milwaukee. To view the live video, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention) Aug. 31. An on-demand recording also will be available.



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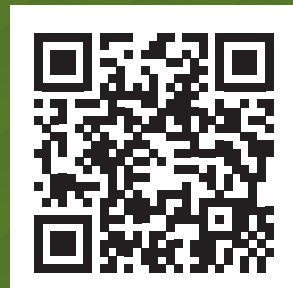


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**EDITING:** A display of printer proofs from the August magazine.

It's weird to say, considering the pandemic was seemingly full of constant terrible news, surprises, and upheavals, but some good things did come out of this timeframe.

We asked our social media followers to share their pandemic gains, and many said it forced them to adapt to different ways in serving our mission. "Forced" may not be the correct word choice here, as most members said adapting wasn't as hard as they thought it would be once they got the hang of things.

(You can read a selection of members' other pandemic answers on page 13 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.)



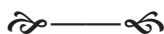
It was probably daunting for some ALA members and units in those early days of lockdown. Even National Headquarters had to make big changes to adjust to a new way of conducting regular meetings, working from the cloud, etc.

But after some practice, smoothing out bumps, and establishing a routine for the

"new ways," a lot of us settled into comfort zones. For example, virtual meetings allowed us to still be active within our units while staying safe from COVID risks.

And now, while the virus numbers (as of magazine press time) aren't as high as they previously were, it's time to re-examine those changes we made early on. Do they still offer your members a chance to be involved but maybe not physically? Hybrid events and meetings are extremely inclusive — keep the virtual component there for people who want it, like new parents, the immunocompromised, etc. — and offer your in-person events for members who desire the socialization factor.

No matter what, it's important to always keep the ALA's mission of serving veterans, military, and their families at the forefront.



New magazine page alert: *Valuing Every Voice* offers members ideas to ensure all voices are heard and all are welcomed in the American Legion Auxiliary. Be sure to check out the August *Auxiliary* topic: "Tips and tricks to promoting inclusion in the ALA" on page 42.



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](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).





*It was all about the poppy and caregivers these past few months, based on the incoming mail for Auxiliary magazine and feedback on our Facebook @ALAforVeterans. Our readers and followers shared their experiences:*

**Poppy distribution for our military and veterans**

On Poppy Day, May 27, two of the youngest Junior members of



the Wilber Louis-Milan American Legion Unit 101 canvassed the community of Wilber to distribute

poppies for donations. They are Brielle McMillan, 5, and Haegen Havel, almost 3, dressed in their special poppy printed dresses, as Kenny Ripa, a local veteran and Legion member, makes a donation. The two girls are great-grandchildren of Wilber unit member Barbara Petracek, who accompanied the girls with member Judy Rehm on Poppy Day.

— Lorine Mares, Nebraska



ALA Community Unit 46, Past Department of California

President Kathie Martinez passing out poppies at the Westfield Mall in Culver City, Calif.

— @Martha Romano

Elmer C. Jertburg Chino American Legion Auxiliary Unit



299. Poppy Chairman and Co-Chairman Lannis Cardova and Erika

Hernandez distributing poppies with Junior Auxiliary members Rebeka Avila and Samarah Hernandez.

— @Palace Queen



Unit 346 Department of New Jersey Junior Ema Alvarado making a

poppy corsage at the department Junior meeting.

— @Doreen Gallagher

**Caregivers remain in our hearts; let's honor them**

Our National President Kathy's focus this year is to recognize members of the American Legion Auxiliary who are caregivers.

Unit 186 Little River would like to recognize one of our members who truly falls into this category and continues to be an active member. Chris McCreary became president of Unit 186 in January 2015 when the president of the unit moved to Florida. She has guided the unit to become the second largest in the department, with a membership of over 400.

In 2016, a devastating blow was thrown to Chris and her husband, Jim, who is a member of SAL Squadron 186. He was diagnosed with a rare neurological disease that left him paralyzed from the chest down and has confined him to bed or a motorized wheelchair. Chris has been by his side as the only caregiver since the tragedy occurred. This has

not stopped her — she has attended all meetings and events of the unit, even if it meant getting up in the wee hours of the night to make sure Jim is cared for. You will never hear Chris complain about anything thrown at her, and she is always willing to help a member or veteran in need. Did we mention she also owns a landscaping business?

— Bette McMorrow, South Carolina

**Proud to show off mission and membership activities**



ALA Unit 597 Carrollton, Texas, helped collect bottled water to donate to our local VA hospital.

— @Misty Haile Jeffcoat



@Candace Wicks, ALA Unit 453 Division 1 Parliamentarian, and members of ALA Unit 838 at the Division

1 Convention at Post 838 in Fort Worth, Texas.

— @Candace Wicks



ALA Unit 41, Phoenix, Ariz., delivered toiletries,

candy, etc., to Packages From Home.

— @Anita Ritter

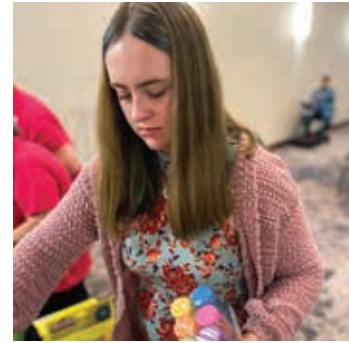
**Correction**

In our May issue, we inadvertently omitted ALA member Marge Christianson as a contributing writer. We regret the error.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM you**

Email: [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org) or send letters to: ALA National Headquarters 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268

Story and Photo Submissions: Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine) for more details.



**PROJECT STUFF SACK:** During various meetings across the country, Juniors from Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Indiana participate in Project Stuff Sack. This was funded by a grant from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation with participating departments given the supplies needed for the project.

## PROJECT STUFF SACK BENEFITS YOUTH, PERFECT FIT FOR ALA JUNIOR MEMBERS

The national ALA Children & Youth Committee's Project Stuff Sack has been a perfect fit for our ALA Juniors, who have jumped right in to help. Funded by a grant from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, participating departments were given 28 ALA-branded sling bags filled with ALA poppy and Halloween coloring books, and sets of crayons. Most departments added their own donations, including stuffed animals, bubbles, cars, and other toys.

"It is rewarding to see many departments fully embracing Project Stuff Sack and getting events scheduled and started," said Trish Ward, national Children & Youth

Committee chair. "A good idea goes a long way, and the simpler the better. How hard is it to get a sack, stuff it with fun items, and distribute it with a smile to children?"

And what a perfect project to get your Juniors involved in! Department of Florida C&Y Chair Charlotte Bass planned all along to have the Juniors help. A call was sent out for additional items for the sacks, and the stuffing was planned for Florida's annual Children & Youth picnic. About a dozen Juniors and young Sons of The American Legion members helped stuff the sacks that were then given to the kids attending the picnic.

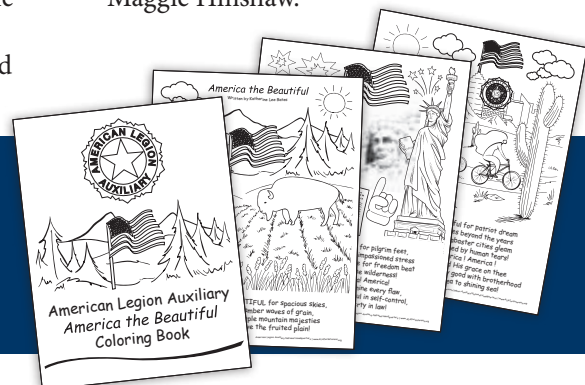
"I loved it, and the kids loved it!" Bass said.

The Department of Indiana planned their Project Stuff Sack event for their annual joint spring conference. At the end of the meeting, tables were brought in to lay out all of the donated items and the Junior members in attendance began helping. They got to work organizing the items and helped figure out the best way to pack the sacks. The Juniors then led the packing line and showed the senior members what needed to be done.

"It's nice to help kids who need that stuff," said ALA Junior Maggie Hinshaw.

## DOWNLOAD NEW COLORING BOOK TODAY

Our *America, The Beautiful* coloring books can be downloaded from the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Printed versions for purchase are also available from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or (888) 453-4466.





## MISSION-FOCUSED JUNIORS STAYING ACTIVE IN SOUTH DAKOTA UNIT

With success completing many activities and projects with just eight regularly active Junior members, South Dakota Unit 240 hopes other units across the country will take note and keep their Juniors involved in ALA programs on a regular basis.

Unit 240 Junior Activities Chair Cindy Knecht teaches at her local high school, which she said does make it easier to have that direct access to Junior-aged girls for recruiting new members and easily being able to answer questions about upcoming projects by current members during the day.

“A lot of these kids, their membership is paid for by a family member, so they don’t really even know they are a member or understand they are a member,” she said of Juniors who are members but not necessarily active. “I’m trying to make it fun and worthwhile.”

At the elementary school, Juniors gave poppy coloring sheets to the younger kids to help explain the significance of the poppy. They took the colored sheets and hung them around town for Memorial Day. They also served the meal for the holiday.

The Juniors also regularly participate in poppy distribution around town, and they place poppies on the graves of American Legion and Auxiliary members.

One successful idea that other units with Juniors could implement is making gift bags for veterans who attend the Veterans Day program that is often held at schools around the country. Knecht shares what the Juniors did last year.

“The Juniors painted keepsake rocks with the American flag on one side and a thank-you and heart on the other side,” Knecht said. “The bags had homemade muffins they made at school, sudoku and crossword puzzles, candies,

microwavable bags of popcorn, and other snack items.”

The school program garnered more interest in joining the Auxiliary from Junior-aged girls because they got to see firsthand what the ALA does and the different ways they could volunteer in the community to help veterans as part of the Auxiliary.

At the Veterans Day supper, Juniors handed more bags out to anyone who didn’t attend the program and also sent the bags to the local nursing home.

“We got a lot of thank-yous for

— we see those people every day.”

Additionally, Junior members made nine knotted fleece blankets for the local nursing home, and they decorated pillowcases for deployed servicemembers. With the many activities the Juniors work on, some end up being a bit more difficult for various reasons, but Juniors continued to push through to complete their projects.

“Physically, the blankets and sitting on the floor [were hard],” she said. “We had a lot of backaches and neckaches after the five hours of doing that.”

Juniors being involved in ALA



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** ALA Junior members of Unit 240 in South Dakota work on projects from blankets to buddy baskets to homemade muffins to painting rocks with inspirational messages.

that,” Knecht recalled of the goodie bags. “I think [Juniors] enjoy the Veterans Day program the most because they get to see firsthand the look on someone’s face when they hand them something they made. I think it touched them a lot more than putting something in a bag and sending it to someone else. When we help our local community and local veterans, it’s a lot more meaningful

programs and activities make a difference for the Auxiliary as a whole.

“Hopefully we are teaching them to honor their elders and to continue to serve when they grow into young adults,” Knecht said about the importance of having Juniors in their unit. “I’m excited to get more Juniors involved so when they go out into the communities, they will continue and honor veterans.”



### UPCOMING NATIONAL JUNIOR MEETINGS

Do you want to stay up to date with 2022-2023 ALA national Junior meeting information? Be sure to follow the American Legion Auxiliary Juniors Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors](http://www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors).

*“If you are starting a new unit, you are already passionate about veterans. Find the hole in services to them and try to help fill that gap.”*

### ELAIN CRONISTER



*American Legion Auxiliary member Elain Cronister of Unit 206 in White House, Tenn., and other ALA members helped start a new unit*

*after the previous one had been closed for four years. Today, the unit is very active in mission outreach activities.*

#### **How long have you been an ALA member?**

I joined when I started the unit as a temporary president during the 2014-2015 year. It all began nine months before starting the unit. I met some veterans who were collecting donations to get a new flagpole at the post. I had a son and daughter-in-law at that time who were serving. They invited me to their meetings, and I went for several months before starting the unit.

#### **Who makes you eligible for ALA membership?**

My husband, Jerry. He was in the Army (field artillery) for 14 years (1977 to 1991). I have several family members who are also veterans and could have qualified through any of them. I have a son currently serving in the active-duty Army.

#### **What was the process like in getting a local unit that had been closed for four years back up and running?**

I just started it as a new unit. I didn't know anything about the previous unit or why it had closed. I wanted to take this mission on as mine and not just a repeat of what was done previously. I spent time on the national website, attended district leadership meetings, and

conventions to learn as much as I could about the Auxiliary.

#### **What are some difficulties you faced while trying to restart the unit?**

I think, for me, it was trying to do all of the paperwork myself and trying to do every program as a unit.

#### **Why was it important to you and your fellow members to bring this unit back to life?**

It was a chance to help the veterans and other people in the community in areas where help seemed to be missing or lacking.

#### **Tell us what it was like when this unit became functioning again. How exciting it must have been!**

It was very busy trying to find members and letting the community know we were back in the area. We joined the Chamber and started a Facebook page to reach out and let everyone know we were here. Additionally, we attended as many community events as possible. It was extremely hard work, but equally rewarding.

#### **Can you share some of the mission outreach activities your unit is involved in?**

Back in 2016, we found out about Patriot Place that was being built for previously homeless veterans. I immediately wanted to get our unit involved, even though it was not in our town. This place has 34 one-bedroom apartments for our veterans. They have programs to help these veterans with any mental, physical, or medical issues.

Every month, we cook a meal for them and deliver it. Before COVID, we met in their common room where we would serve them a meal. After eating, we played bingo and

had conversations with them while playing. We have had cookouts for these veterans.

Also, at Christmas, we have an “adopt a veteran” program which we roll out to the community, and they buy them gifts and donate other necessities such as personal hygiene items, cleaning products, and paper products.

In 2020, for our unit gift to each veteran at Patriot Place, we made them quilts. Other members of the community wanted to help. We ended up with 122 quilts. We used them for Patriot Place, and donated the rest to our local rehabilitation center, battered women's shelter, and some went to the homeless in our area.

After providing the quilts for Patriot Place, we continued to make quilts. We contacted the local fire and police departments to let them know we had quilts for anyone who may need them after a traumatic experience.

We got involved with His Children, a nonprofit that helps children in the foster care program. When new children come in, we give them quilts to go in the bags they give to each child.

#### **What advice would you give to someone who would like to resurrect a unit or start a new one?**

If you are starting a new unit, you are already passionate about veterans. Find the hole in services to them and try to help fill that gap. Most importantly though, get to know your members, their skills, likes, and dislikes. Find out what their passions are and keep in constant communication so no one feels left out between meetings. Become a family. Pick a few of the programs to work on first, and add on as your unit grows.



#### **ARE YOU READY TO START A NEW UNIT?**

Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) to download the *Unit Guide Book*. Chapter 3 discusses the unit and how to organize a new one. You can also visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/About/Units](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/About/Units). If you have further questions, email the ALA National Headquarters Membership Division at [membership@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:membership@ALAforVeterans.org).



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“I came, I saw, I conquered.”

— Julius Caesar



Documenting an American Legion Auxiliary event is an important action for all of us as members. By doing so, we capture the history of our mission outreach activities so future generations can see how we deployed ourselves in a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

*Above: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 683 Juniors in Saxonburg, Pa., during a poppy distribution event.*



## Thinking good thoughts: What's the best thing to come out of the pandemic?



"Greater use of social media and staying connected through Zoom. We didn't disappear but kept on going."  
— Eva Wallace, Washington



"My new commitment to live life to the fullest!"  
— Bonnie Schrieber, Maryland



"The innovative ways members came up with to work our mission. Truly inspiring!"  
— Debra Tiernan, Vermont



"Knowing I could still serve a few veterans by taking them to church or shopping."  
— Elana Gill, California



"Learned that no obstacle is greater than the will and imagination of our ALA Unit 245 when it comes to serving active military, veterans, and their families!"  
— Karen Runk, Wisconsin

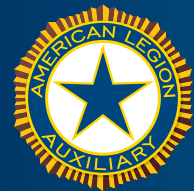


"Rethinking how we do things. Remembering what is important in our lives. Remembering our whys. Coming together again to work our mission in a different, creative way to ensure safety of our members and community. Putting aside differences for the betterment of our organization."  
— Debra Rumery, Maine



"My awesome team rapidly adapted to working from home, stayed on track, became more independent, and took great pride in finding efficiencies for an overall positive professional growth experience."  
— Valerie James, Tennessee

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @ALAForVeterans.  
You could be featured in an upcoming issue of *Auxiliary*.

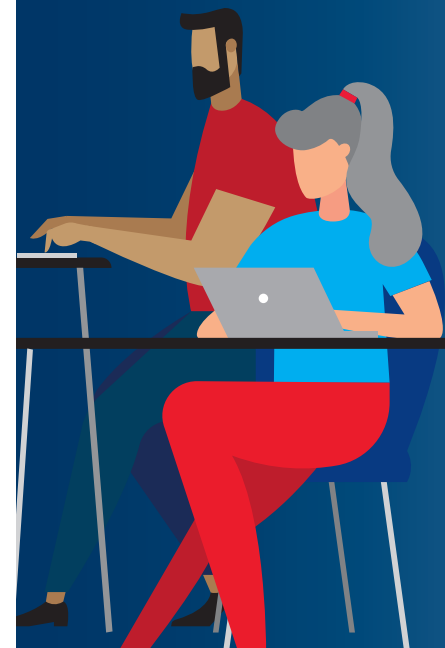


ALA ACADEMY LIVE

## What happened at your department convention?

- Don't miss out on the recording of the Department Convention Prep course as part of the ALA Academy Live webinars.
- Learn how quorum, delegate strength, elections, notice of business, pre- and post-convention checklists, maintaining order during a meeting, and the role of the parliamentarian during a meeting can impact a department convention.

Log in with your member ID today at [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org).





**MAIL CALL:** Sailors sort mail in the hangar bay aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) during a replenishment-at-sea (U.S. Navy photo/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cassandra Alanis).

## GET ALL OF YOUR CARE PACKAGE SHIPPING KNOW-HOW FROM ALA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH SERVICE PROVIDER SHIPTHRIFTY

The American Legion Auxiliary has a long history of organizing care package drives to show support for military servicemembers deployed abroad. These care packages serve as a reminder of home and provide comfort during long deployments away from family.

As many ALA members know, these care package drives can often be time consuming and expensive. The process of organizing volunteers, securing donations, and packing boxes can take unit members weeks, only to lead to hours of filling out customs forms

and standing in line at the local post office. On top of the hours spent successfully completing a troop care package drive, units can often spend thousands of dollars on shipping.

Luckily, the ALA has partnered with a company that is enthusiastic about making the shipping process as hassle-free as possible and shares our passion for helping veterans, military, and their families. Michelle and Rob Williamson launched Shipthriftly after both left corporate careers and heard from a friend about the difficulties of military shipping. Shipthriftly quickly began partnering with organizations such as Blue Star Mothers and Military OneSource, giving back to the community by volunteering time at care package events, and donating a portion of proceeds to help military families.

Shipthriftly began partnering with the ALA in October 2021 and has worked with multiple individuals and units to save time and money. Thanks to Shipthriftly, Department of Minnesota Unit 150 was able to save over \$3,000 on shipping for their troop care package drive by simply changing out boxes. Not only is Shipthriftly saving ALA members money, but also time — Department of Pennsylvania Unit 506 was able to box and label their care packages in only two hours because of Shipthriftly's online customs forms!



Is your unit interested in starting, or improving, a troop care package event? Here are some tips from the experts at Shipthriftly:

1. **Set your timeline:** Keep in mind delivery times around the holidays.
2. **Determine your budget:** Will you ask for donations? Think about product, shipping, and materials.
3. **Find servicemembers:** You must ship to specific individuals, so collect addresses from the community.
4. **Pick your box:** Not all boxes are the same!
5. **Consider restrictions:** There are restrictions on what you can send, and they vary from base to base.
6. **Create and attach labels:** Shipthriftly makes this process easy with their online tools.
7. **Know your dropoff options:** You can drop off packages or schedule a USPS pickup.



Are you wondering what the servicemember in your life may want? These items are always a hit:

- Drink mix packets like water flavorings, cocoa, tea, and apple cider (note — coffee is restricted in some areas).
- Pre-packaged, individual-size healthy snacks like protein bars, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or beef jerky.
- Non-perishable, pre-packaged food and sauces.
- Pre-packaged, individually wrapped candy, cookies, and chips.
- Hygiene items like toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, roll-on deodorant, baby wipes, and feminine hygiene supplies.

The ALA and Shipthriftly have partnered to provide you with tips and tricks to make your event a success. Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/troop-care-packages](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/troop-care-packages) or [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Shipthriftly](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Shipthriftly) to see more care package drive advice.





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**WE HEAR YOU!**

**Member survey results give us more than just statistics**

ALA National Headquarters continues to analyze results from the ALA member survey conducted earlier this year. Your answers are helping staff and volunteer leadership learn what the

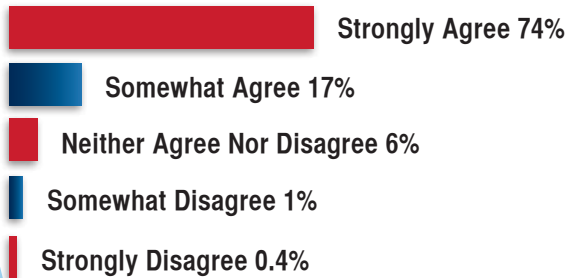
organization can do better at all levels. The 14,400 ALA members who engaged in the survey answered questions about the organization at national and local levels.

National Headquarters plans to continue seeking member feedback

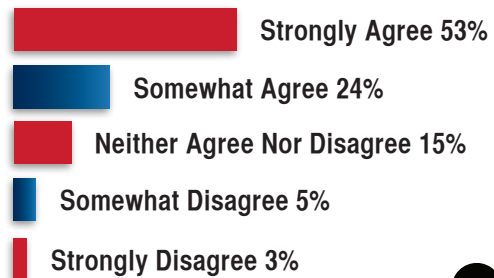
by sending more surveys in the future. It's good to continually request feedback from members, and we definitely want to know what you think!

Here's a brief look at some of the survey responses for questions at the national and unit levels:

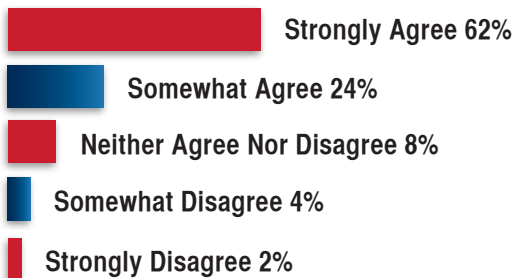
At the national level, the ALA fulfills its mission of honoring the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans, military, and their families.



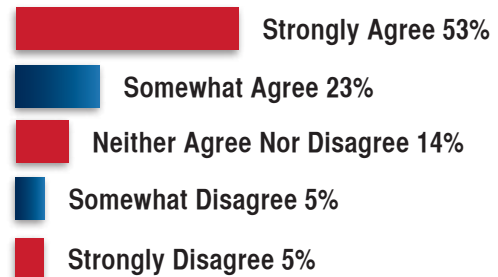
The national level values your service:



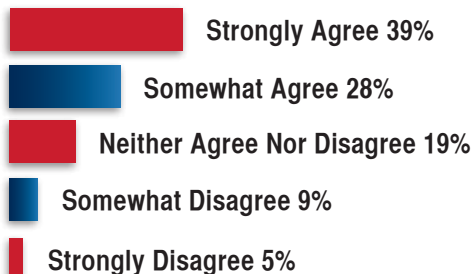
At the unit level, the ALA fulfills its mission of honoring the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans, military, and their families.



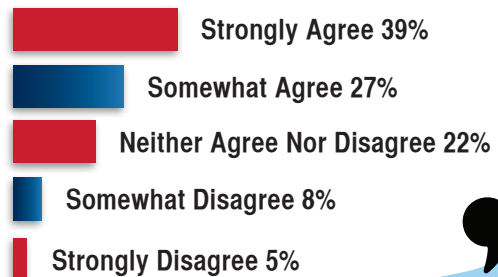
The unit level values your service:



The unit makes ALA service opportunities easy to find:



Hosts engaging unit meetings:



See our digital communications for more information about the member survey.



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*"Wow, I didn't realize what I was missing!"* — Tina R., Atlanta

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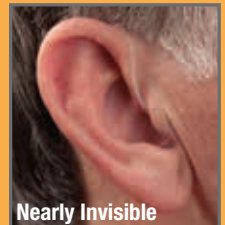
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**REMEMBERING THE FALLEN:** Texas Auxiliary units and Legion Family members come together to honor World War I veterans by placing wreaths and American flags at a historic veterans cemetery.

### TEXAS DISTRICT HOLDS ANNUAL VETERANS MEMORIAL SERVICE

For almost 100 years, American Legion Auxiliary members of Texas District 22 have honored veterans by hosting an annual memorial service at a local Houston cemetery known as Soldiers Rest.

In 1923, an influenza outbreak took over Camp Logan in Houston — a camp housed by soldiers and veterans from all over the country. Sadly, the outbreak caused many deaths, and there was a need for a

burial ground for soldiers who had no families to say goodbye in person due to financial difficulties.

As history would have it, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 52 saw the need and met the challenge to provide a final resting place for these fallen heroes. Led by 19-year-old Bernice Hale, the Auxiliary was able to raise enough money to purchase 42 grave spaces at Forest Park Cemetery, also known as Soldiers Rest.

“This young lady started her own campaign with bake sales and dances

and card parties — she started raising money to buy plots at the cemetery for the fallen because there were many soldiers who could not be sent home because their families didn't have the money to send them,” said American Legion Auxiliary Unit 52 member Linda Navarro.

Each year, members of the American Legion Auxiliary and Legion Family gather at Soldiers Rest to commemorate the fallen soldiers and decorate their graves. They memorialize not only the veterans who were buried there, but also the women of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 52 who saw the need and helped fulfill their promise to serve veterans, military, and their families.

“Even if these people died because of influenza, they were our soldiers and they were there for a purpose, and we should remember them,” said Navarro. “If they were put at the cemetery, then they didn't have family near, so someone should remember them. Everybody's life matters.”

Since 1923, units in Texas District 22 have hosted this historic ceremonial service annually close to Memorial

### LEGION FAMILY HONORS VETERANS WITH UNIQUE POPPY FIELD AT POST HOME

American Legion Auxiliary members and Legion Family members of Post 211 in Avon Lake, Ohio, created their very own poppy field outside the post home to honor fallen heroes during the month of May.

“The poppy project was suggested by our post commander, Mike Schrull, at our April Auxiliary meeting, after he was in Alabama visiting a relative and saw ceramic poppies,” said ALA Unit 211 member Pam Harwood. “He was so inspired that he brought the idea back to our Auxiliary — we all agreed that it was an exciting, new project, and we were enthused to get started.”

After posting on social media to see if anyone would be interested in making ceramic poppies for the poppy field, a local art teacher responded that she would love for

her students to do this project. Immediately, Avon High School students, Avon High School Art Club members, and National Art Honor Society members began making poppies. The students made around 140 ceramic poppies.

“Our project wouldn't have been possible without the students,” said Harwood. “The students knew they were making the poppies for Post 211 and that they were being used to honor deceased veterans.”

The original plan for Unit 211 was to receive donations for handmade ceramic poppies made by students for \$20 each, then to have a dedication ceremony and place them in a poppy field outside of the Post 211 home until Memorial Day. After Memorial Day, donors were able to pick up their ceramic poppy or Unit 211 shipped them with an additional shipping fee.

To purchase a ceramic poppy, Legion Family members needed to fill out an application form that included the amount of the donation, the donor's name, the donor's address, phone number, and email, and who they wanted to memorialize.

The poppy field was named the “Ian Poppy Field” after Unit



**PROMOTING THE POPPY:** Ohio American Legion Auxiliary Unit 211 gathers around the poppy field at their post home.



Day. All members of District 22 and District 8 are invited to attend the ceremony. Local Legionnaires and Legion Family members are encouraged to come and help honor the veterans at Soldiers Rest.

“The event becomes more memorable and more important by all of our units working together to put it together,” said Navarro. “Just in the time I’ve been involved, I’ve seen how it has evolved from just a handful of people to actually having them do the honor guard, the taps, and the 21-gun salute.”

The memorial service includes an Honor Guard, an address from a guest speaker, the naming of each veteran buried at Soldiers Rest, the presentation of Honor Wreaths for each branch of our military, the laying of poppy wreaths from the attending Auxiliary units, and the placement of American flags above each headstone to commemorate the fallen heroes. They also incorporate the national anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer during the ceremony.

211 President Wendy Walker’s late husband, Ian. The rods that supported the poppies were made and donated by a Gold Star Father who donated a poppy in the field to honor his daughter’s memory.

All donors and Legion Family members of Post 211 were invited to attend the dedication ceremony. Art students from Avon High School and the art teacher also attended. The dedication for the Ian Poppy Field began with an overview about what the poppy means, followed by prayer. Walker gave a plaque to the teacher, and Unit 211 gave the students a gift certificate for a pizza party at their school. Harwood spoke about the significance and symbolism of the poppy, followed by the reading of *In Flanders Fields*. Students, Auxiliary members, Legionnaires, and Legion Riders worked together to place the ceramic poppies in the Ian Poppy Field.

## RESOLUTIONS AND CUSTOMS ... OH MY!

That’s quite a word salad! Let’s try to decipher the meaning of these terms and explain what your hardworking National Executive Committee will be tackling at pre-convention NEC this year.

In recent years, the ALA has updated its governance practices, moving away from using resolutions (whereas, whereas, therefore) to a more understandable three-column format for amending its governing documents. In the early days of our organization, rules were created by resolution of the National Convention or the NEC and captured in a document called the “Code” which later became “Policies and Procedures.” Over time, some of these resolutions were adopted into bylaws or standing rules, and some just became obsolete practices but were never rescinded by the body that adopted them.

So, in 2012, a group of volunteers — who we’re pretty sure are eligible for sainthood — worked with our professional registered parliamentarian to examine the Policies and Procedures book. They identified a number of resolutions still in practice and adopted them into the ALA’s governing documents — the constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. The entire book itself was voted to be preserved for historical purposes, but obsolete and no longer to be used. What happened to the rest of the resolutions in that book? Well, they were quietly gathering dust until 2020 when National Headquarters staff cleaned them off and dove into

the “Resolutions Project.”

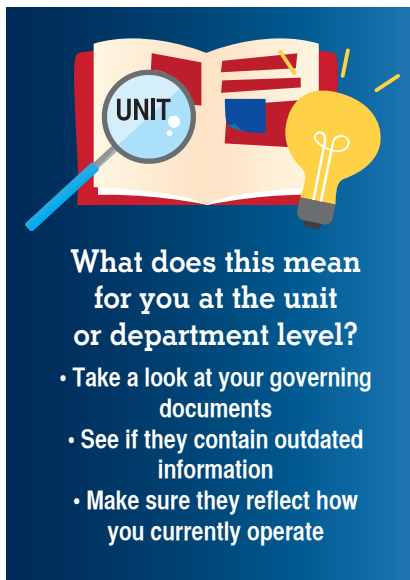
Working with both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 national Constitution & Bylaws Committee chairs, as well as the program liaisons at NHQ, staff have painstakingly examined over 400 resolutions — oh, yes, 400 resolutions — from the organization’s inception to about 2019 when the ALA updated its governance practice. The questions to answer: “Is this a current practice?” and “Is it already reflected in our governing documents, and if not, should it be?”

A large number were truly obsolete and no longer reflected

how the organization operates and fulfills its mission. A manageable number of resolutions were flagged by all reviewers as current practices. This is where the word “customs” comes into play. So, yes, they are currently followed practices of the organization,

but until they are *adopted into the governing documents (either the constitution, bylaws, or standing rules) they are considered customs.*

A good example is a 1923 resolution that members’ contact information was not to be “circularized” outside of legitimate unit business. Translate that into today’s language, and it means the privacy of members’ information must be protected. Until it’s adopted into the rules, it’s just a custom. That rule, and many others, will be distributed in advance to the NEC for action at their pre-convention meeting.





## THE ALA FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF CHARITABLE GOOD

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation began serving veterans, military, and their families in 2007 and has never looked back. Though the ALA Foundation's impact has grown exponentially since its inception, there is more to be done.

One thing is certain: The ALA Foundation has served our nation's heroes diligently for the past 15 years, and with YOUR help, it will continue to do so for the next 15 ... and beyond.

### The early years

Since the beginning, the ALA Foundation has worked to create new and innovative ways of serving our nation's heroes. It started by supporting existing ALA programs and activities, like the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and ALA Girls Nation. Nearly half a million dollars has gone to such programs — making it possible for more veterans and young women to experience life-changing art therapy, and empowering leadership opportunities.

When the needs of ALA

members across the country grew, the ALA Foundation created grants to help units, departments, and other ALA entities serve veterans in new and different ways.

### ALA FOUNDATION STATS

- \$754,074.91 granted to American Legion Auxiliary entities for veteran projects, local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, branded materials, and more
- 200 grants given to support veterans, military, and their families
- 44 states impacted by ALA Foundation grants
- \$494,773.90 given to support American Legion Auxiliary programs

Subgrants began serving ALA entities in 2012 by allowing the transfer of restricted gifts from corporations and foundations from the ALA Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to other ALA entities. These grants ensure that no money to support a local

program is left on the table. Through subgrants, the ALA Foundation has supported 68 programs, including Junior camps, Quilts of Valor, Purple Up! activities, and multiple ALA Girls State programs across the country.

The Veteran Projects Fund grant was established in 2014 to support veterans with the resources and opportunities they deserve. These grants have helped disabled veterans in Maine enjoy a day at the beach in an all-terrain wheelchair, have taken veterans to job interviews and doctor appointments in a new minivan for the Home of the Brave in Delaware, provided music therapy equipment for veterans to express themselves in St. Louis, and so much more.

Veterans Creative Arts Festival grants have encouraged healing through artist expression at 32 festivals since 2014. These grants provide art supplies, veteran recognition rewards, and marketing efforts for local festivals and art therapy programs that feed into the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Most recently, the ALA



Foundation recognized the need for increasing awareness of the ALA across the country, so in 2018, the Mission in Action grant was created. These grants have given 39 ALA units and departments lasting branded materials like pop-up tents, banners, and even trailers to help fulfill mission delivery, while keeping the Auxiliary's name front and center.

The ALA Foundation has granted more than \$750,000 to ALA entities, making an impact at every level of the ALA. YOU can keep the spirit of the ALA Foundation alive by continuing the great work of supporting veterans, military, and their families in your hometown. Apply for a grant today at [www.ALAFoundation.org/grants](http://www.ALAFoundation.org/grants).

### **The next 15 years and beyond**

The ALA Foundation plans to grow its support of veterans, military, and their families in the next 15 years in three major ways.

First, the ALA Foundation wants to increase the financial support it gives to the ALA on an annual basis, to allow more to be served by the incredible national programs like ALA Girls Nation, support of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and any needs that emerge. The ALA Foundation also wants to increase its service to ALA units, districts, and departments by awarding more grants, with the goal of supporting every department on a regular basis. Finally, the

ALA Foundation wants to increase its scope of service by focusing on creating and maintaining a diverse and talented board of directors who will undoubtedly reach a more representative group of veterans in need.

None of the ALA Foundation's successes would have been possible without its generous donors. To ensure the ALA Foundation exists to help the changing needs of veterans for generations to come, we need YOUR help:

### ***Give a one-time or monthly gift***

By making a gift, either just for today, or on a monthly basis, you are showing your dedication to the continuation of this mission. Regular gifts to the ALA Foundation keep current Auxiliary programs and services alive and well, making sure veterans of today are taken care of.

### ***Leave a legacy***

You can create your legacy of service today by adding a gift to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation into your estate plans. This gift will make you a member of our Legacy Society, a group of people dedicated to the promise of *Service Not Self*, who have chosen to make a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. As a part of the Legacy Society, your impact will live on to serve generations to come, without impacting your financial needs of today.

# **JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY TODAY!**

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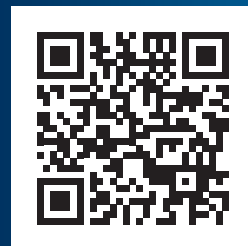
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## PERSEVERING FOR ALA MISSION THROUGH A TIME OF CONTINUED HEALTH RESTRICTIONS

American Legion Auxiliary members have had to adapt to new ways of serving our mission due to health restrictions the past couple of years. The Department of Washington and Auxiliary units in surrounding towns near American Lake Washington were able to continue their longstanding Christmas Gift Shop tradition for veterans by creatively adjusting their original plans.

For the last 80 years, American Lake Unit 187 has partnered with the American Lake Veteran Affairs Medical Center and long-term care facility to provide Christmas gifts to veterans' families from the American Lake Gift Shop. Gifts in the shop are donations from American Legion Family members and Legion Family supporters from all over the state.

"The Gift Shop project is fulfilling the Auxiliary's mission of caring for the families of veterans," said Washington Department Secretary Catherine Olson. "If a veteran cannot get out and shop for themselves, it gives us an opportunity to assist them with getting the Christmas season complete for their family."

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health restrictions at the VA, the American Lake Gift Shop was closed in 2020. Knowing they needed to do something special the following year, Olson and the Auxiliary unit made a "Christmas Catalogue" for veterans living at the VA.

"We decided that these poor men and women at the long-term care facility hadn't had Christmas for a year, and we felt bad for them," said Olson. "So, in 2021 we said we got to do this and take care of the veterans and the veterans' families too."

American Lake Christmas

Catalogues were for inpatients at the American Lake VA to look through and pick out presents for their families since they couldn't leave due to health restrictions. Each patient was allowed to choose two gifts per family member. They made six catalogues with 22 pages of presents in each book. All pages were laminated for sanitary purposes.

"I was thinking we needed to keep it as sanitary as possible, so if all the pages were covered in a lamination or a plastic, then we could just keep wiping them down, and we didn't need to worry about passing any kind of viral infection, common cold, or whatever, to any of the people inside the facility," said Olson.

The unit began preparing the Christmas Catalogue books in early 2021. They started by taking photos of each merchandise piece and then placing them on background paper. The sheets were laminated and put into each binder so the pages could be sanitized in between patient rooms. Veterans at the American Lake Veterans Affairs facility were flipping through the pages of the Christmas Catalogue by the end of October — having plenty of time to get the veterans to select their gifts. After the gifts were selected, units from surrounding areas joined together to get the presents organized, wrapped, and shipped to families.

"Junior members help a lot, we have Sons of The American Legion come in and help, and we have our Legionnaires do the brown wrapping and get packages ready to be delivered to the post office when we are completely finished — so it's an entire Legion Family project," said Olson.

## AUXILIARY WORD SCRAMBLE

Terms associated with summer:

1. BECHA  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. SWURENOLF  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. ROMEWATENL  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. CIE ECRAM  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. EABABLLS  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. PCIICN  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. NVCTIOAA  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. HTAE  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. BOIGATN  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. POLO  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. NMGISWIM  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. SCESNTDAAL  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. NGIDGNARE  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. NSHFIGI  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answers are found on page 50.



## JOKES

What do you call a factory that makes OK products?  
A satisfactory.

Why do seagulls fly over the ocean?  
Because if they flew over the bay, we'd call them bagels.

What did the ocean say to the beach?  
Nothing. It just waved.

Why don't eggs tell jokes?  
They'd crack each other up.

Is your Auxiliary unit preparing for Christmas? Read about the many different ways members fulfill our mission during the holiday season — specifically with a drive-thru "Santa Land" that Michigan Unit 219 completed — on the ALA blog at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog).



## TAKING PROPER CARE OF MEMENTOS TIPS ON PRESERVING YOUR OLD AUDIO-VISUAL ITEMS

When asked about the importance of preserving audio-visual (A/V) items, Cathi Taylor, archivist at ALA National Headquarters, says these materials go beyond the written word. “Being able to watch and hear President Franklin Roosevelt tell the country the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself — or Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 — is far better than just reading the words,” said Taylor. “These materials are like time travelers.”

### Taking the first step

The most important part of a preservation effort is often taking the first step, says the American Library Association. They advise to not let the pursuit of perfection be an obstacle to getting started. They even suggest that a simple first step like moving items out of the attic or basement to a climate-controlled part of the home — a bedroom closet — can have a significant impact.

### Why you shouldn't store A/V items in the attic, basement, or garage

The Library of Congress says these spaces are unsuitable for safely storing collections because of poor temperature and relative humidity control. These areas have higher risks of leaks and floods.

“Even though basements are dark and cool, they do tend to hold humidity, and attics are notorious for getting hot,” adds Taylor. “Both places are not known for regulated temperatures and humidity. Damp

environments speed up tapes and film to disintegrate.”

Taylor also recommends to not store items on the floor, where they might be subject to water damage or bugs or other creatures.

Even if you have your items stored in polyethylene or polypropylene bags or bins to protect against water damage, these storage containers do not offer protection against the deteriorating effects of environmental extremes found in basements, attics, and garages. In addition, the Library of Congress says the combination of a plastic storage container in an area of high humidity increases mold risk.

### So, where should I store my home collection?

Taylor advises that all of these items should be stored in dark rooms, such as a closet or an unused room. She recommends stable, low temperatures, low humidity, and protection from flooding, sunlight, UV light, and air pollutants. The ideal temperature is between 55 and 70 degrees, and that humidity should be in the range of 30 to 50 percent. The Library of Congress also advises items to be kept at a distance from radiators and vents, as well as from sources of vibration.

### Proper handling and storage

In general, the Library of Congress recommends:

- Handling A/V items
- Wash and thoroughly dry hands



before handling A/V materials.

- Store and handle materials in a clean environment.
- Keep food and drink away.
- Do not touch playing surface(s).
- Keep playback equipment clean and well maintained.
- Allow materials from cool storage to acclimate to room temperature before playing back.

### Storing A/V items

- Store all formats upright: discs and reels on edge; cassettes on long edge; cylinders standing on end.
- Ensure shelving is sturdy enough to support the heft and weight concentration of these materials (e.g., grooved discs average 35+ pounds per shelf-foot; all formats concentrate weight on the centerline of a shelf, which can cause some shelving to collapse).
- Store 10” reels in boxes with supports for the hub so that the entire weight of the reel is not on the reel edge.
- Store played tapes without rewinding; rewind just before playing.

## THINK ABOUT DIGITIZATION



Playback machines and other technology can become obsolete. Therefore, the Library of Congress says the preservation of personal A/V collections should also include conversion and maintenance to a current/digital format. They point out that an Internet keyword search can reveal a range of providers that can digitize/reformat home A/V collections. Look for a provider that specializes in archival or preservation transfer of the specific original format, and avoid providers that outsource the reformatting work overseas.

**CAREGIVERS: PART THREE OF A THREE-PART SERIES**

*This year, Auxiliary magazine is publishing articles about caregivers. This feature wraps up the series profiling ALA members who spend countless hours caring for their loved ones. To read the February and May magazine caregiver articles featuring trials and triumphs, struggles and successes of ALA members, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/magazine](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/magazine).*

# Taking care of family

**Caregivers show grace and gratitude through ups and downs**





Many American Legion Auxiliary members have been, are, or will become caregivers. They can sometimes be forgotten in that role as a caregiver — as well as forget about themselves. It is hard to give if there is nothing left to give. It can be hard, selfless work but caring for a loved one can bring such joy too. Here are just a few of those stories.

**CYNTHIA ADAMS-MCGRATH**  
**Department of Maryland, Unit 91**  
**64 years old**  
**Caregiver for son, David**

From a young age, Cynthia Adams-McGrath took care of her younger siblings while her parents worked, ultimately preparing her for a life of what was to come.

At 26 years old and only six and a half months pregnant, she was rushed from her hospital in Cambridge, Mass., via helicopter to Fairfax, Va., where hospital staff were better equipped to handle a baby born prematurely. David came into the world at 2 pounds, 7.5 ounces in 1983.

“As you can well imagine, that was a shock,” she said.

When David came home from the hospital, he weighed only 5 pounds. He was so small, he had to wear a Cabbage Patch Kids doll outfit because there weren’t infant clothes that size.

As a baby, Adams-McGrath noticed David wasn’t hitting developmental milestones as the months passed. At 18 months old, he was evaluated by several professionals, including a neurologist, psychologist, and orthopedist. He then received a formal diagnosis of cerebral palsy (CP).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CP is a group of disorders that affects a person’s ability to move and maintain balance and posture. Additionally, many also have related conditions such as intellectual disability, seizures, problems with vision, hearing, or speech, changes in the spine, or joint problems. CP is caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain that affects a person’s ability to control his or her muscles.

Adams-McGrath knew nothing about CP and went to her local library to learn more.

“I had my hands full to deal with what I was dealing with,” she recalled. “I had very few

friends. At that point, I was not one to reach out. I was shy.”

Learning more, she found it affected people differently.

“It can be as slight as a limp and as fully involved physically as David is,” she said. “He uses an electric wheelchair. He cannot do anything for himself but operate his wheelchair. I am a complete caregiver for everything else.”

David also has spastic quadriplegia, which affects both arms and legs and often the torso and face.

To provide Adams-McGrath assistance, a paid caregiver comes in to help five days a week for two hours. He has been with David for 19 years.

“David hasn’t had the experiences of a man who is almost 38 years old,” she said. “But he is wildly witty, intelligent. He is very amazing.”

David hears his mom’s comments, laughs, and adds his two cents about himself: “I’m a wonderful guy to be around and I’m not bad-looking either.”

Every day in the life of caregiving is different, but there are some basic tasks Adams-McGrath regularly completes. There is an intercom in David’s room to let his mom know when he’s awake. She helps with several tasks throughout the day that many people take for granted being able to do on their own — getting him dressed, cooking, feeding him, changing the TV channel, and helping him with the bathroom.



**MOTHERLY LOVE:** Cynthia Adams-McGrath and her son, David, sing karaoke while her husband, Kenny, holds David’s microphone; David when he was born wearing Cabbage Patch Doll clothes; the three are ready for a family outing to Lowe’s; David and Cynthia attend the funeral of his previous caregiver; feeding David spaghetti, his favorite meal.



**A DAUGHTER'S LOVE:** Donna Nemeth with her father, Stephen, at an elementary school for the "Great American Teach In" where he answered the kids' questions about the war; Stephen with Donna's mother; on the right in Naples, Italy, with a friend from their ship; showing his World War II medals; his ID from the U.S. Coast Guard when he joined, but he never served since they had no ships going overseas at the time; Donna putting together his nebulizer.

"She's a good cook, good parent, and good at everything," David said about Adams-McGrath. "She cooks the best spaghetti."

Although Adams-McGrath certainly enjoys time with her son, like many others who are caregivers, it can be mentally and emotionally draining.

"I feel like I'm a positive person," she said. "Some days are frustrating, and I wish things were different. I feel fortunate I can talk to David, and he can understand. This is not about him; I am just frustrated. Some days I do wish he was different, but I know that God gave him to me the way he is and he's a blessing. I wouldn't be human if I didn't feel sad occasionally. Every parent has dreams for their child, and this isn't how it would be. But we were chosen by God for each other."

Her son has ultimately helped her in some dark times of her life.

"David saved me," she said with thick emotion. "I had depression when I was in my mid-30s. I didn't think I could come out of it. David gave me purpose. I had to take care of him even though I didn't feel like taking care of myself. Something inside of me said that taking care of him will get me through what I was feeling."

Like most caregivers, those who care for children with special needs usually take care of themselves last.

"They put the needs of their children ahead of their own," Adams-McGrath said. "Then they realize they have to maybe have extensive dental work done as they have dental health on the back burner. Or they

haven't been to their primary care physician in years. It isn't that they don't care for themselves; it is so overwhelming to care for their children. Surgeries, meds, doctor appointments, as well as day-to-day care. If they have other children who are non-disabled, it can be so overwhelming. It took me about 20 years to realize I needed to take care of myself physically, emotionally, and mentally. It was a slow process, and I received professional counseling to help me."

Although caring for David is Adams-McGrath's No. 1 priority, having been a caregiver for a couple decades now, she eventually understood the importance respite time has in her life so she can continue being the best caregiver she can to her son.

For time to herself, she works on her book, often walking to a nearby river to write, and participates in an exercise class twice a week, among other activities.

"Caregivers have to care for themselves, or they burn out," she said. "I can't afford to burn out."

For those who are caregivers or may be someday, Adams-McGrath offers advice.

"Take time for yourself and be gentle with yourself because you are doing the best you can," she said. "Be the best advocate you know how to be. Find the support where you can get it. Sometimes, I feel swallowed up in caregiving. I feel like I'm drowning. Every once in a while, I feel like I can't breathe. When I get to that point, I do what I need to do for myself. It took me a while to realize I had to care for myself. It's not easy, but it's worth it."

## **DONNA NEMETH**

**Department of Florida, Unit 10**

**58 years old**

**Caregiver for father, Stephen**

"I always knew I would be his caregiver," Donna Nemeth said about her father, Stephen, a World War II veteran and member of The American Legion. "My mother died when I was 16. I cared for her too. She had cancer."

Nemeth never wanted to send Stephen to a nursing home, so she knew from the beginning that she would be taking care of him.

Stephen continued to drive up until 92 years old and was still living on his own. Nemeth helped with banking, grocery shopping, and various other tasks. For the last five years, Stephen has been living with Nemeth, who



made a few changes at her house to help him — she re-did her bathrooms and sold her truck to get a car that would be easier for him to get in and out of.

Both had to transition to sharing a home together again.

“Personality wise, sometimes we clash,” Nemeth said, laughing. “I like to go out. When I go out, he gets worried and asks what time I’ll be back and says, ‘You will always be my daughter.’”

In addition to her caregiving duties, Nemeth still works full-time with a hybrid schedule. On her in-office days, her Auxiliary unit president comes in and sits with Stephen during the day. Nemeth places a cooler next to him with food and water so he can easily grab it throughout the day, as his mobility is limited.

“It’s very difficult for me to watch my father slowly going downhill and not being able to do anything about it, to the point where he can’t get out of bed without assistance,” she said with a heavy voice. “I don’t get as good of a night’s sleep — he calls out to help him go to the bathroom. Emotionally, it’s draining on me. It feels like I have two full-time jobs.”

Nemeth gets respite time here and there when her siblings take over duties.

“It’s huge,” she said about that time away to clean her house, not worry, and do things for herself. “It makes a big difference. It takes about two days for my body to readjust.”

COVID of course made it more difficult to get help after she and others who could help her tested positive, which left Nemeth without a break for an extended period.

“I had it for three days and my dad didn’t get it,” she recalled. “I felt angry — someone had to give me a break here. I took it out on him since he was the closest one here. There needs to be more options out there for how to give respite.”

For others who may want to help caregivers in their ALA unit, Nemeth suggests simply visiting with the person getting cared for. Additionally, from her experience, a big piece of advice she has for caregivers is to have documents in place while the loved one is still in a good mindset — have a living will, do not resuscitate order (if applicable), and other important documents needed for end of life. For instance, Stephen said he wants to be cremated and buried at sea — he loved his time in the U.S. Navy. Also, knowing if your loved

one wants to go into assisted living, wants to be at home, wants to stay with family, etc., is important.

Also, being that advocate for your loved one at doctor appointments is crucial as a caregiver.

“You have to be very attuned to the person and their health,” she said. “You have to be the patient advocate. They can’t always speak for themselves or understand the lingo.”

## AMY KNIFFIN

Department of New York, Unit 942

53 years old

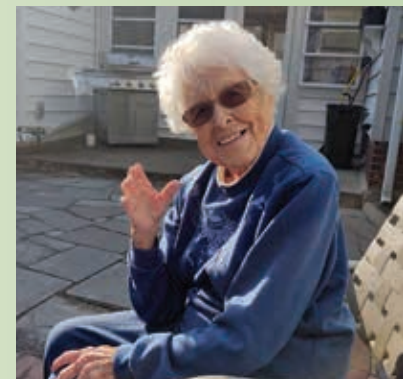
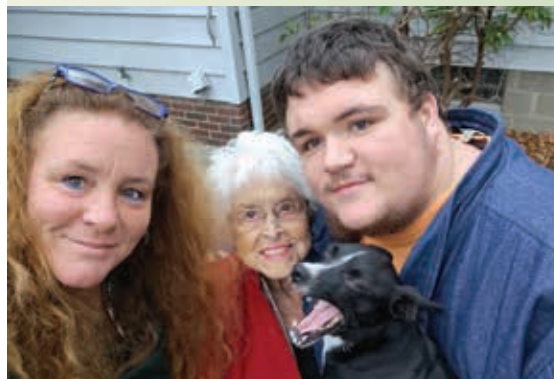
Caregiver for 100-year-old grandmother, Dorlisca (“Deede”)

“Take care of yourself because you can’t give if there’s nothing to give,” Kniffin said.

American Legion Auxiliary member and caregiver Amy Kniffin lost her Navy veteran father in February 2020. Although she helped her dad with her grandmother while he was sick, for the next two years, she became the sole caregiver for her 100-year-old grandmother, Dorlisca.

“I never thought I would be here,” Kniffin said. “I thought it would be my dad.”

Her father and grandma were living in Kniffin’s childhood home and she and her son, Dalton, moved in to care for Dorlisca.



**LOVE OF FAMILY:** Dorlisca Kniffin with her great-grandson, Dalton, at his high school graduation along with his proud mother, Amy; as her caregiver, Amy drives her grandmother around; Dorlisca enjoys time outdoors on the patio at home; the family spends a lot of time together; celebrating Dorlisca’s milestone birthday with a giant sign in the yard.

“It was a little crazy mowing the lawn,” she laughed. “It brought back memories of high school. I find mowing the lawn very therapeutic. I put in my earbuds and ride around and sing.”

She still owns her home in town and has to mow the yard there, as well as continue doing any other routine home care.

Kniffin has been a single mom for a long time, so taking on the caregiver role for her grandma made sense.

“It just fit that I would move in,” she said. “I didn’t think I would be here this long, but it’s just what family does. She’s comfortable, safe, and clean.”

Caregiving is Kniffin’s full-time job. Prior to that, she focused on getting her son through high school and worked part-time as a substitute teacher and home health aide. She primarily does the personal care of her grandma while her sister takes care of the bills.

The home has an attached in-law apartment, so Dorlisca still has her own space.

When Kniffin first moved in, there were no locks on the doors — Dorlisca would go out at night. Kniffin made some changes to the house, including cameras, doorbells to alert movement, covered the thermostat and the garbage disposal, unplugged the stove, and added hand grips to the toilet.

“I did everything to make it safe,” she said. “And to make her life easier so she could be more independent as long as she could.”

Kniffin checks in on Dorlisca throughout the day, helping prepare meals and clean.

“In the summer, we sit outside for hours or go for walks down the driveway,” Kniffin said. “We have a nice breezeway between the house and apartment that we sit in. We talk about the past a lot. She has lots of stories. She’s seen horse and buggies, automobiles, and the Great Depression.”

Being a caregiver is tough with it often being a nearly 24/7 job.

“As a caregiver, you don’t get a weekend off or a day off,” she said with exhaustion, thinking about the last time she had one. “Once in a while, my son will help so I can get out at night. I’ve been looking for a little mental health counseling, and there doesn’t seem to be a lot available.”

Kniffin found a couple of support groups through the Alzheimer’s Association, but she’s looking for more of that one-on-one support.

“Most everyone in support groups is taking care of spouses or parents — no one is taking care of a grandmother — they don’t understand my situation,” she said. “Also, the other thing I found in support groups, is a lot of them are in Stage 1 [dementia]. My grandma is in Stage 6. Nobody wants to hear about what’s coming.”

There are seven stages of dementia, and it can vary for how long a person is in each stage.

“It’s a horrible disease,” Kniffin said sadly. “She’s not my grandmother like she was. It changes you.”

Part of that is the emotional and mental aspect that dementia can bring with it.

“You have to keep your cool because she says a lot of things that aren’t very nice,” Kniffin said. “I love my grandmother, but I don’t like her sometimes because of the awful things she says. I say, “Uh-huh” a lot. Don’t react — that makes things worse.”

Needing a little time to herself to be with her son and do other things, long-term care insurance pays for someone to come in once a day for three hours. Sometimes that respite period is spent grocery

shopping or picking up medications. Other times, she gets to go to her trap shooting league, see friends, or just be away from the house for a bit.

As those who care for others have experienced, taking time for yourself is extremely valuable.

“If you get a minute and can take a shower and refresh yourself or change your clothes or sit outside, do it,” she said. “The person you are taking care of will be fine without you for a little while. Reach out to friends and family. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.”

*Dorlisca G. Kniffin was placed in hospice care just before this Auxiliary magazine interview was conducted. She passed away a few days later. ALA National Headquarters sends its sympathies to her family and friends. A special thank-you to Amy Kniffin for sharing her story as a caregiver with us, even while Dorlisca was approaching end of life. We are deeply sorry for the family’s loss. ★*

*By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer*

**“David saved me,” she said with thick emotion. “I had depression when I was in my mid-30s. I didn’t think I could come out of it. David gave me purpose. I had to take care of him even though I didn’t feel like taking care of myself. Something inside of me said that taking care of him will get me through what I was feeling.”**

## What you can do to help caregivers

- Familiarize yourself with resources such as American Legion service officers
- Sign up as a volunteer with VA’s Compassionate Contact Corps or the Volunteer in Home

- Visitors Program ([www.volunteer.va.gov](http://www.volunteer.va.gov))
- Report hours spent as a caregiver to a family member. For more information, contact [VA&R@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:VA&R@ALAforVeterans.org)





# New ALA Coloring Book: *America The Beautiful*

Purchase at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or by calling (888) 453-4466, or download free at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/coloring-books](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/coloring-books)



Halloween and Poppy Coloring Books are also available.

## Want to be a States Dinner winner?

Are you looking for an opportunity to support veterans, military, and their families you know and love while shopping for unique items, experiences, and services you won't find anywhere else?

Join us for our second annual silent auction fundraiser benefiting the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. All items will be on display during States Dinner.

Auction closes Aug. 31 at 9 p.m. CT.

**LANDS' END**  
BUSINESS

**ANAKEESTA**

**R. RIVETER**  
AMERICAN ★ HANDMADE

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Use your smartphone camera and scan this code!

Bidding starts  
Aug. 29th!

(or go to [www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/ALA-32459](http://www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/ALA-32459))



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY  
**FOUNDATION**

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# 'Behind every fallen is a family'

## American Gold Star Mothers focus on service after loss

All gave some; some gave all. For American Gold Star Mothers, their children are always the latter.

"My heart is shattered, and my life is destroyed," said Sheila Mitchell-Murphy, American Gold Star Mother and American Legion Auxiliary member. "I struggle daily with wanting to live, but I know I must push through to continue telling the world about my son and to also bring awareness to Gold Star Mothers and families."

American Gold Star Mothers are women whose son or daughter became missing in action, died while on active duty, or died as a result of such service. The organization was incorporated in 1929. A mission-compatible organization to the American Legion Auxiliary, these women are also eligible for ALA membership.

Mitchell-Murphy can still remember the day her 17-year-old son, Etienne, brought home a consent form for enlistment.

"I pleaded with him to please not enlist, but I knew that he was adamant about doing it and if I didn't sign it, he would just do it once he turned 18," she recalled. "So, with a heavy heart, I signed it. The smile on his face told me I had done the right thing. I had to support him, even though I had reservations."

At 22 years old, Etienne accomplished his goal of being a U.S. Army Ranger. He was deployed to Syria. Five days later, he was in a fatal vehicle rollover in 2017. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

"The life I once knew became a distant memory that I would never know again," Mitchell-Murphy said. "I still can't talk about him in the past tense."

Her Post 233 American Legion Family in Georgia have been so gracious to her and her husband in honoring their son.

"Thank you for allowing me to be a part of an organization that truly cares about us," she said. "It means the world to me."

Since 2011, the president of the United States has annually declared a day as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day. Mitchell-Murphy and others would like to take that one step further, creating a federal holiday. If passed, the Gold Star Families Day Act would create an annual federal holiday on the last Monday in September to honor the families of those who lost their lives in the armed forces.

Federal holidays like Memorial Day and Veterans Day are common knowledge, but many people do not know about Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day. If it would become a federal holiday, it would help get the word out about who Gold Star Mothers are, Mitchell-Murphy said.

"We truly are the true casualties of war," she said about Gold Star families. "People need to know that. Parents need to be loved on and recognized and have that day to recognize them."

Like Mitchell-Murphy, 2021-2022 American Gold Star Mothers National President and American Legion Auxiliary member Jo Maitland lives every day knowing her son,



**FOREVER MY SON:** U.S. Army Ranger Spc. Etienne Jules Murphy was honored to serve his country. In 2017, he was in a fatal vehicle rollover while deployed in Syria. His mother, Sheila Mitchell-Murphy, is a proud Gold Star Mother and ALA member.





**ALWAYS REMEMBER:** Spc. Richard Buckingham Hubbell III, who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country; his gravestone proudly marked as a U.S. veteran with a flag; Hubbell's mother, Jo Maitland, 2021-2022 American Gold Star Mothers national president and American Legion Auxiliary member.

Spc. Richard Buckingham Hubbell III, made the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

"He was funny," she said. "He liked his job. He was loved by his comrades. He was respected by his superiors." He died Dec. 3, 2002, at 22 years old.

"Behind every fallen is a family," Maitland said. "Every name on a wall, on a memorial — every name that is listed everywhere — has a mom and family. All the freedoms we hold dear are because of those who signed on the dotted line."

The American Legion Family, as part of its founding values, is here for support in any way needed.

"The idea of bringing Gold Star Mothers into the posts and into the Auxiliaries and into the Riders and Sons is a win-win situation," Maitland said. "What we want, we can never have — we want our family member back. The only way we can work through that is through service, in my opinion. Service is what the Legion and the Auxiliary do successfully."

That service focus of the Family truly makes a difference for moms who are now facing a life they never wanted without their son or daughter.

"When it comes to service work, that would be the last thing on their minds in the beginning stages of grief," Maitland said. "The American Legion Auxiliary and Legion help because you have a purpose that is so aligned with ours that we go out and we serve, and we get through our grief. If it weren't for the American Legion Auxiliary in my beginning stages which had a memorial service for

my son, and with people there who helped me and put me to work, my grief journey would have been a lot different."

Being an Auxiliary member first, Maitland credits the ALA as playing an important role in her other organization.

"If I didn't have the knowledge of how the Auxiliary worked, I would not have been as capable as national president [of American Gold Star Mothers]," she said. "There are wonderful leaders in the Auxiliary."

There are approximately 1,100 moms who are part of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. The organization was named after the Gold Star Banner that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran. Service flags with a Blue Star are for each living member in the service.

In recent years, applications for membership in American Gold Star Mothers have been primarily from mothers whose son or daughter died by suicide, related to their military service. No matter the reason why a mother is joining the organization under the eligibility criteria, other members are there to help honor and recognize that family member's service to their country.

"I miss him more than I could ever explain in a million years," Mitchell-Murphy said about her son. "This is the worst thing a parent could ever go through. I have decided that until I do take my last breath, I must do my best to make sure he is never forgotten."

To learn more about American Gold Star Mothers Inc., visit [www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com). ★

*By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer*

***Mothers and family members who have suffered from loss are recognized annually on Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, which falls on the last Sunday in September. This year, it will be Sept. 25.***

# Creative Arts Help Veterans Heal from Life-Changing Events



Imagine waking up after six months from being in a coma, even pronounced dead at one point, with no recollection that you are a talented piano player and singer.

About two years later, you are performing live on stage at the 2022 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) in St. Petersburg, Fla.

This is what happened to Jackie Williams, one of this year's NVCAF veteran participants.

Each veteran who attends the NVCAF has their own story to share, their own baggage they bring with them. For many, this is displayed in their craft, whether it's visual arts, writing, or performing arts.

Co-presented by the American Legion Auxiliary and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, this year's Festival was once again in person after having an at-home event in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With medical protocols in place, returning veterans loved seeing each other again and new attendees were quickly made to feel at home. The event brings together creative veterans throughout the country who made it to the national level after competing at local VA facilities. More than 3,600 entries were submitted to the local competitions, with over 2,000 entries judged at the national level in 150 categories of visual art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music.

This year and moving forward, the local competition phase of the program will take place June to September each year. The national judging will occur in October and November, with results of the competition announced in December. The national Festival event will follow in the springtime. Extending the competition phase will allow more veterans the opportunity to participate in a local creative arts competition.

The American Legion Auxiliary first became involved in 2000. At the local and national level, the Auxiliary's support

in volunteer hours and monetary donations both aid in enhancing all aspects of the event.

*Auxiliary* magazine talked to a few veterans to learn more about how being involved in this event at the local and national level has helped them through life-changing events.



**Jackie Williams, Performer**  
**U.S. Army**  
**VA facility: Connecticut**

Williams still can't believe how far he has come in the last two years.

He has attended the Festival about six times over the course of 20 years. In early 2020, his mother was in the hospital and his dad wasn't feeling well. After driving from Connecticut to New Jersey to get his dad into a hospital, Williams started feeling sick.

"I got transported back to Connecticut, and that evening, I fell asleep and never woke up for about six months," he

recalled of his coma due to COVID. "I had no idea where I was. When I woke up, they were in the process of taking me to the morgue; I had already died. So, when I died, I guess someone saw me opening my eyes. Then I went back into a coma for another two weeks and then I eventually woke up all together."

This was just the beginning. Williams lost much of his memory. For example, he recognized the faces of his 13 children but didn't know all the context and stories he had previously known. Williams also found out that while he was in a coma, he had lost his mother, father, other relatives, and several members of his church.

In addition to the memory loss, he had to learn to walk, talk, and breathe on his own again.

When he got home, he saw a keyboard in the living room, thinking that one of the kids must play it. His wife, Karen, told him that he was the one who plays.

## 41st NVCAF

- 134 gold-medal winning veterans and eight therapeutic arts scholarship recipients were invited to attend the Festival this year from 62 VA facilities.
- 142 veterans were invited to attend the event:
  - 107 male veterans
  - 35 female veterans
  - 61% are first-time attendees



“I had no memory and didn’t even have a desire to play,” Williams said. “I guess it had a lot to do with the fact that I didn’t know the role music had in my own life.”

Karen kept insisting that he play the piano every day.

For a few weeks, he hit the keyboard, but nothing came. Then he started hearing chords. It came to him one chord at a time. Eventually, the muscle memory came back. Williams had initially taught himself in the first place to play while he was in the military. When he realized he could play again, you couldn’t get him to stop.

“Music has been an important part of me, and it still is,” he said. “I have PTSD from the military. Now that I have my music back, I’ve been practicing only for my own healing. I really need it now more than ever.”

The song he performed for this year’s Festival was *What the World Needs Now*.

“I chose that song because when I was on the ventilator, I went through a series of nightmares and it was the worst nightmare of my life,” he said. “I can’t forget it. I needed to find a song that was going to be embraced by everybody, whether they believe in God or not, and that was the song that spoke to me. We have to be better in how we love people.”

Music has truly kept him going during his difficult journey.

“It’s not going to be easy,” he said. “I’ve got some challenges, but it’s game on. I got this second chance — this second opportunity at life.”



**Rogelio Cervantes, Creative Writing**  
U.S. Air Force  
VA facility: Texas

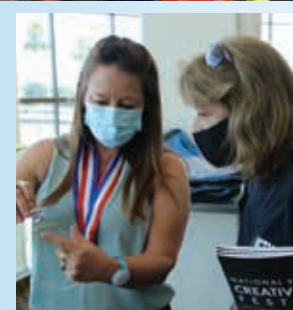
In a dimly lit room with a reading light shining over his words, veteran Rogelio Cervantes pauses while reading his creative writing story to his fellow NVCAF veterans, visibly emotional with each word he speaks. Holding back tears, those watching can see how personal this piece is.

While his pause in reading continues, his wife graciously joins him at the podium to finish reading his story to a captive audience who is eager to hear how it ends. She finishes for him, and applause erupts, with many in the room knowing how hard it is to share such personal feelings with others. Cervantes is surrounded by those who understand as he returns to his seat to listen to the next writer’s story.

“Sometimes I have to stop reading it because I think about my sons a lot,” Cervantes said. “Like many veterans, ultimately when you have issues, your family are the ones who see us in the way we really are.”

Cervantes was encouraged by VA counseling services to submit his writing for the local Festival.

“I’ve been very, very hesitant to do it and very hesitant to show people that side of me,” Cervantes said. “I’m thankful for the VA for helping me to take that step. I don’t think by myself, I would have taken that step.”



**HEALING POWER OF THE ARTS** (opposite page): veteran Chris Herren performs his magic and pantomime routine; Robbie Arp readies himself for rehearsal in the dressing room; James Curry wows the crowd with his opening number; (this page): AB/DC rehearse for the big performance; Peter Mohan performs *Tulsa Train*; Janet Martin sings her heart out during the stage show; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs staff work with veterans on various art pieces they created during the art workshops held throughout the week; American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Daudistel talks with veteran artist Dennis Linn during the sponsor engagement luncheon; veteran artist Julia Landecker explains to an art show exhibit attendee how she created her glasswork pendants.



# Some of the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition Gold Medal Art Entries



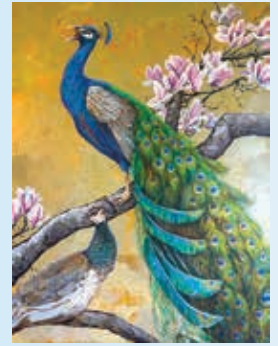
**Leather Kit**  
"Grow Your Own Art"  
Linda Morgan



**Model Building Kit**  
"WRAP 6x6 Cougar"  
Jon Hoffman



**Therapeutic Arts Scholarship**  
"At Anchor"  
Scott Suits



**Acrylic Painting**  
"Peacocks and Magnolias"  
Annie Margarita



**Craft Coloring Kit**  
"Velvet Mandala"  
Curtis Sannerud



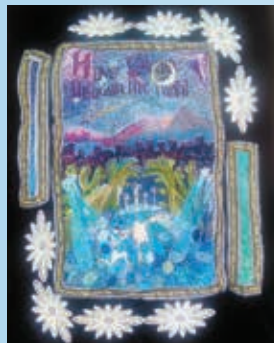
**Colored Drawing**  
"Tomato Bowl"  
William Gura



**Leather Carving/Tooling**  
"From Sea to Shining Sea"  
Annie Margarita



**Stained or Painted Ceramics**  
"American Indian Nation #2"  
Gerald Lapole



**Original Design in Needlework**  
"Have Grace Through the Night"  
Bettina Roth



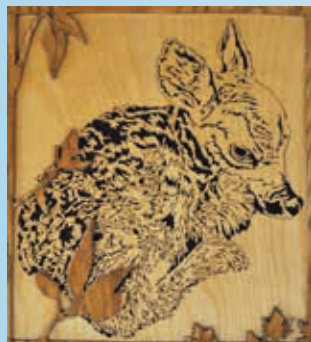
**Monochromatic Drawing**  
"Sacrifice"  
Brian Small



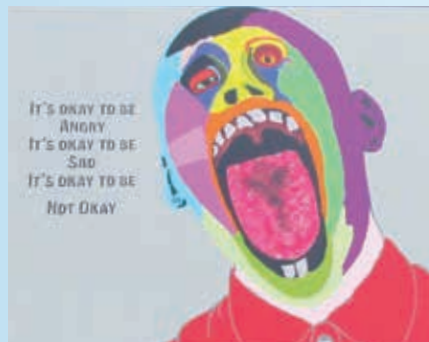
**Watercolor**  
"The Jeweler"  
Dennis Linn



**Crocheting/Knitting**  
"Wounded Warrior"  
Lesley A. Mose



**Scroll Saw/Fretwork**  
"Nap Time"  
Charles Spooneybarger



**Digital Art**  
"PTSD"  
Joseph R. Hilson Jr.



**Fabric Art Kit**  
"Jean's Garden"  
Catherine D'Angelo





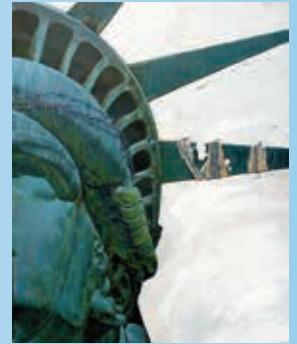
**Figurine Painting Kit**  
"Tylos Rubio, Knight Errant"  
Justin G. Blodgett



**Therapeutic Arts Scholarship**  
"A Moment of Peace"  
Jacquelyn Davis



**Pyrography**  
"Soldier at Grave"  
Bonita Owen



**Military Combat Experience**  
"Healing Democracy"  
George Zebot



**Sculpture**  
"Spending Time with Grandparents"  
Dale Holbrook



**Latch Hook Kit**  
"Cool Mountain Mist"  
Frederick L. Simpson



**Pastels**  
"3rd Eye"  
Kelly O'Gara



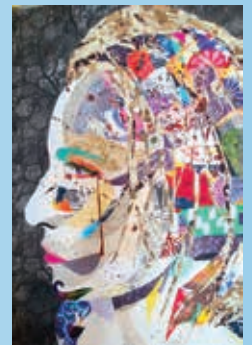
**Wood Building Kit**  
"Time to Fish"  
Russell Westfahl



**Jewelry**  
"Secret Garden"  
Michelle Robison



**Suncatcher**  
"Sleepy Eyes"  
Leander Starr



**Collage**  
"Memories Still Remain"  
Maja Kraft



**Printmaking**  
"Quarantined"  
Caroline Annandale



**Glazed Ceramics**  
"Spring in the Jungle"  
Nadine Lewis



**Woodworking**  
"No. 2 Celestial Compass"  
Jim Anderson



**Paint by Number Kit**  
"American Pride"  
Martin Clark

The story he submitted for NVCAF is *Never Wake Up a Sleeping Dragon*. It is about a child who is going to bed but finds a dragon asleep in his bed, so he's faced with the dilemma about where he's going to sleep and whether he should wake the dragon or not. As the story progresses, the dragon is his father.

"I wrote the story from what it was like for my children growing up with me — when normally a child can jump on their dad's bed in the morning, wake up Dad on a Saturday morning, and watch cartoons and eat cereal — my kids couldn't do that," he recalled with heavy emotion. "A lot of veterans' kids can't do that. It's a story for children who have a parent or brother or sister who has PTSD."

He didn't tell his kids why they couldn't wake him up normally until they were older.

"It's a very tender-hearted, emotional story for me because it's not easy for a child to not understand why they couldn't wake up their dad," he said. "They could wake up their mom and say, 'I'm hungry' or whatever, but they could not wake up their father. It can be very confusing for a child."

Cervantes said his writing helps with his PTSD. When writing, he tries to block off at least two hours a day, whether it's for a project he's currently working on, or an idea created from scratch.

He said he plans to submit another story for NVCAF in the future. Cervantes likes to focus on subjects that aren't often as widely written about, like a child who has a parent with PTSD or a disabled veteran father.

For Cervantes, the power of the written word has been a life-changing tool in communicating with others and working through his PTSD.

"[Writing] does help me cope more than anything," he said.



**David Smith, Performer**  
**U.S. Army**  
**VA facility: New York**

When David Smith is on the dance floor, all he cares about is his next movement. As he moves across the stage, he completely forgets that he has had prostate cancer for over 20 years.

"When I'm dancing, we have a saying — 'There's no cancer on the dance floor,'" he says, smiling, reflecting on

the distraction that dance has brought to his life.

Smith was drafted in 1971 and went to Vietnam. That experience also exposed him to Agent Orange, an herbicide mixture used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. At 47, he had open heart surgery, and five years later, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He is 100% disabled from his exposure.

In 2007, he took a transatlantic cruise and they had rumba lessons on board. For six days, he took lessons, and when he returned, he participated in adult community education and met his future dance partner, Tara. Over the years, he kept taking lessons. In 2014, they competed.

"I won newcomer and I was hooked," he said.

In 2017, a member of his dance group volunteered at NVCAF when the Festival came to Buffalo, N.Y. Smith said he had no idea the event existed. He later won gold for the 2020 NVCAF at Home, as well as the 2022 Festival.

"I can look at every guy and every woman here and say, 'I know exactly what you've been through — you don't have to tell me,'" he said. "Very few people in the world know what it's like to serve your country and then to have injuries. They are here creating their thing — their artwork, writing poems, singing songs, playing instruments, dancing."

Smith offers advice to other veterans who may be interested in entering the competition at the local level.

"The encouragement is that whether you get chosen for the national level or not, you are still participating in your own individual veteran community," Smith said. "If there is anyone in the world who can understand what you are going through, it's a fellow vet. Why wouldn't you want to be around that encouragement, unless you're at the point where you need clinical help, but this can actually be very therapeutic."

Smith plans to enter another dance for next year's competition.

"If I get picked again, it would be an honor because I am dancing right to the end," he said. "I want them to bury me with my dance shoes on and I have a dance tux."

*Want to hear from more of this year's NVCAF veterans? Visit the ALA blog at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog) and search "NVCAF 2022." ★*

*By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer*

## 2021 NVCAF COMPETITION

### National Competition:

- 118 VA medical facilities participated in the 2021 National Veterans Creative Arts Competition
- Veterans competing at the national level of competition: 1,430
- Entries received at the national level of the competition: 2,050

### VA Facility Competitions:

- Veteran participation: 1,956
- Number of entries submitted: 3,613
- First-time participants: 868 (44%)
- Returning participants: 1088 (56%)
- Male veterans: 1,324 (68%)
- Female veterans: 632 (32%)

Since 2017, more than 20% of participants in VA facility competitions have been female veterans.





## NOW IS THE TIME FOR AN INCREASE IN ALA MEMBERSHIP DUES

Belief in the American Legion Auxiliary's mission is at the heart of why people belong to our organization. We have influenced the lives of veterans, military, and their families for over a century.

In 2017, the trend of diminishing members causing a financial burden to the organization was identified, and a dues increase was proposed to supplement our declining revenue. An *insufficient* dues increase was approved, and now, as predicted, the organization is facing mounting deficits that necessitate immediate action.

The national Finance Committee, along with National Headquarters staff, conduct a thorough review of all expenditures each year. For 2022, cuts in spending under 12 of the expense activities were proposed. Overall, the expense budget for 2022 was less than the expense budget for 2021, even though activities, travel, and programs were returning to levels closer to pre-pandemic times. Every year, tough decisions are required by the national Finance Committee as it deals with growing deficits and an ever-changing landscape.

A dues increase to \$18 national dues per senior member is being proposed for ratification at the National Convention in Milwaukee this August. As a reminder, membership dues are made up of three portions — national, department (state), and unit. Incremental increases of \$1 in fiscal year 2026, FY28, and FY30 are included in the proposal. This sustainable dues structure will ensure financial stability through decade's end.

The national portion of dues are currently \$12 per senior member; however, our annual cost per member in 2020 was \$13.51, and \$14.67 in 2021. This shows costs are higher than our annual dues. In all actuality, the divide between cost per member and member dues is greater as operations in the last two years were reduced due to the pandemic crisis.

Relying on reserves to fund operations is fiscally irresponsible. Not-for-profit organizations are held

to a high standard that demands peak performance in mission delivery. Without fulfilling this expectation, the organization risks becoming irrelevant to current societal needs. Investment income from interest and dividends is being utilized to support our current operations. The reserve funds should not be used to cover operating costs. External auditors have repeatedly cautioned against this, as it is an irresponsible business practice, but more, it depletes the lifeline needed to ensure the ALA's future for decades to come.

History has shown that veteran needs peak several decades after their war service, and we must be strong and viable to meet those needs. Excellence in mission delivery and relevance in an increasingly competitive marketplace are dependent on the ability to continually improve ALA national programs. In doing this, established programs become tailored to fulfilling the increasing challenges facing our military, veterans, and their families.

The ALA is the conduit between those in need and the resources available. The national organization not only provides direct services but also acts as a go-between working to connect those in need with all resources available, even when those resources are provided by another institution like the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It is this function, this ability to serve as a connector between the military/veteran community and the marketplace of resources, which allows us to remain relevant for future generations.

### **The National Organization is responsible for the development and funding of multiple mission-related events and activities which require development, staffing, and funding:**

- National Convention and related events
- ALA Girls Nation: a premier program supporting young, intelligent women to grow to become active professionals

- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival: brings hope to our veterans while growing awareness of the ALA
- National Junior member meetings
- Department leadership training seminars
- Volunteer participation in national events

### **How does the National Organization benefit us individually?**

- Governance support for units, counties, divisions, and departments
- Compliance review and support with IRS statutes, rules, and regulations, along with state regulations and legal interests
- Publishes and distributes the informational *Auxiliary* magazine
- Member benefit programs with discounts and services used by individuals every day
- Qualifies members to seek emergency grant assistance for a temporary monetary crisis or natural disaster
- Provides membership applications, brochures, membership cards, and renewal notices at no cost
- PDF versions of guides and booklets are available for free on the national website
- Developed and provides access to a variety of free virtual training options via the ALA Academy
- 48 ALA Academy Live sessions have been offered

Our membership dues are our annual investment in sustaining the ALA. The National Organization serves every member, not just by providing the corporate structure of our existence, but also by protecting our reputation and making sure resources are available to support our members and their units coast to coast and across the seas. For less than 5 cents per day each year, we can all ensure the American Legion Auxiliary mission continues to serve those who need us most.

*By Sharon Conatser, National Finance Committee Chair; and Marybeth Revoir, National Treasurer*

## MEMBERSHIP: HAVING FUN WHILE BUILDING MEMBERSHIP

 [www.Facebook.com/ALAMembership](http://www.Facebook.com/ALAMembership)

The year started with our focus on having fun while getting back to our mission. As we worked hard to increase our membership, we kept fun at the forefront. Working together and having fun while engaging prospective members proved to be just what we needed to get the membership on the rise. And rise it did! Week after week, units and departments nationwide were reaching higher numbers than in years past. This year, it was you who made that difference! So thank you for all your hard work and dedication to our great Auxiliary!

Now for additional exciting news, National Headquarters is offering the option for units to pay dues in ALAMIS upon their department approval! Units will pay both the department and national portion of

dues for members. The department dues will then be remitted back to departments on the same schedule as online and by phone dues. All transfer requests of current members, expired members, or former members will still need to be processed by the department.

This level of ALAMIS access will be known as Unit Full. There will be requirements to have Unit Full access; units must pay membership dues using a VISA or Mastercard credit or debit card. In addition, all Unit Full users must attend a 30-minute virtual training session. Departments can start sending in Unit Full access requests now. Please be sure to use the brand new electronic ALAMIS User Request Form available under the Department ALAMIS info in ALAMIS.

I truly believe “it takes a village,” and I know the value every member brings to our organization. I understand it takes each and every one of our members to help fulfill our mission of enhancing the lives of veterans, military, and their families. A big thank-you to all the units and departments that participated in the ALAMIS pilot program, and a big thank-you to YOU! #TogetherWeServe

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.” — Phil Jackson



**Michele DeGennaro** is a 19-year member of Hudson, Unit 335 in the Department of Florida.



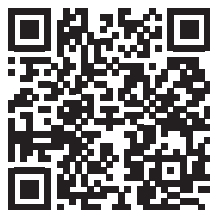
## School is Back in Session!

As students return to the classroom, many military families will begin to feel the burden of ever-rising college costs. American Legion Auxiliary scholarships help students follow their dreams – while lessening the financial impact on themselves or their families.

You can change the life of a deserving student by starting a monthly gift in support of ALA scholarships. You can become a Hero Giving Hope to those in need.

Use your smartphone camera and scan this code to donate!

(or go to [donate.legion-aux.org/Scholarships](http://donate.legion-aux.org/Scholarships))





# LEADERSHIP: ALA ACADEMY COURSES OFFER A VARIETY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

 [www.Facebook.com/ALALeadership](http://www.Facebook.com/ALALeadership)

“Real leadership is leaders recognizing that they serve the people that they lead,” — Pete Hoekstra

The *Senior Auxiliary Basics Course* is a history of the ALA from its beginning in 1920 to the present day. It will give you a better understanding of the ALA and how the organization functions. If you have taken the course in the past, feel free to take it again as an information refresher.

We would hope in your daily life that you are using your leadership skills by building up your friends, family, and neighbors, always trying to find the good in people ... and never trying to find ways to get in a little dig or a snide remark to bring them down. Always strive to make people feel better for having known you.

Have you taken the ALA Academy courses? If not, today would be a great day to start and improve your leadership knowledge. There is a world of information in the Academy courses, from *ALA 101*,

which teaches the basic information concerning the ALA, to the vast variety of titles.

*ALA Branding and Why it Matters to Me* is another great course and helps members understand the need to be branded while in public. The people you can influence while volunteering in the community may turn out to be the newest members of your unit. When you walk out your door, stop, look in the mirror, and check your appearance. You always want to look your best when you are representing the ALA. Wear a branded shirt or just the simple magnet emblem. This lets the community know you belong to one of the world's largest patriotic service organizations.

*Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill* is another great course the ALA Academy offers. We not only need to have an ALA culture of goodwill, but hopefully it will help us learn to use the information in our everyday life and have a life of goodwill every day.

We deal with conflict in our

daily lives. The course *How to Deal with Conflict* gives you tips on how to handle conflict in and out of the Auxiliary.

The ALA Academy offers free, self-paced courses you can take from any device. These are designed for you to take whenever you have time with no need to pre-register. The Academy's live webinars are also free but are offered live and you will need to register in advance.

The Academy also has a course specifically designed for Junior members. The *ALA Juniors E-Learning Course* will help our younger members understand the organization on the unit, department, and national levels.

In the Academy course *ALA Leadership: Living Our Motto of Service Not Self*, this line jumped out at me: “Understand that leadership is not a title; it is the action of helping others be mission-focused.”



**Brenda Collins** is a 22-year PUF member of the ALA. She belongs to James F. Daniel Jr. Unit 3 in Greenville, S.C.

## FINANCE: STAYING DEDICATED TO OUR MISSION

Your national Finance Committee continues to meet in accordance with our bylaws. Be assured that your Finance Committee has been and will continue to do our due diligence in protecting our finances. Each month, this committee is given a complete accounting of our finances from our director of Finance and our national treasurer.

One responsibility is to develop the annual budget, which is monitored closely throughout the fiscal year. We also must ensure the funds are available to carry out the programs and mission set forth by the program chairs and our national president.

ALA Mission Trainings and national Junior meetings are

programs the Finance Committee supports and looks forward to in the future. Training is what strengthens our future and brings the most up-to-date information to our members. Remember to share with other unit members the information you learn at these trainings.

Your Finance Committee stands ready to support what is best for our membership in continuing to build leaders and friendships. Whether it is face-to-face training or virtual training, we understand the need for all kinds of training opportunities and will be looking to support them this year and in the future. Watch National Headquarters' social media @ALAFORVeterans and your email

for learning opportunities that will be available to you.

We have learned that our financial reports can be understood if we take the time to ask questions and take the time to learn and make decisions that are best for our organization.

Your Finance Committee stands ready and willing to serve our leadership, as well as our membership. Please don't miss the article about the proposed dues increase in this issue of the magazine.



**Sharon Conatser** is a 68-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Urbana Unit 71, in Illinois, and a Past National President.

## HIGHLIGHTING THE ALA DEDICATION AMONG NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS STAFF



Demonstrating *Service Not Self*, ALA National Headquarters staff are committed to the Auxiliary's mission of serving veterans, military, and their families. Compared to our nearly 600,000 Auxiliary members, we have a small but mighty Membership Division here at NHQ. They are just a call away if you need any membership assistance! In this issue of *Auxiliary*, we highlight military spouse, ALA member, and membership coordinator Marti Drake.

### **How long have you worked at American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters?**

Almost four years.

### **What is your job title and job description at ALA NHQ?**

Membership coordinator — I work closely with department secretaries to open and close new charters. I work with unit members as well, helping them with any issues that pop up and taking membership payments over the phone. I also work closely with the national Membership Committee chair with membership awards and weekly reports.

### **What does a normal workday look like for you?**

I reply to emails from departments and unit members looking for assistance mostly with ALAMIS (our national membership database system) or the website. I

help new users learn to use ALAMIS.

### **On average, how many phone calls do you receive in a day?**

During our busy season, we take two phone calls every minute, taking payments over the phone. During our slow periods, we do a lot of data cleanup in the system databases, which is always a good

thing to do.

### **What influenced you to apply for your position at NHQ?**

I used to be the department secretary for Indiana, so I was actually taking a break from work when National reached out to me needing temporary help during their busy season with dues payments, and that led to them asking me to apply for a full-time position that had opened up in the Membership Division.

### **While applying, did the ALA's mission resonate with you in any way?**

Absolutely. Not only am I the wife of a retired veteran, I'm also the daughter and now the mother of a veteran. My dad served in the U.S. Air Force, and my son is currently serving in the Indiana National Guard. My brothers both served as well, so the love of military runs deep in our family.

### **How do you help Auxiliary members at all levels of the organization?**

We talk to unit members daily in the Membership Division, whether it's answering questions about their unit or taking their payments. I work with the departments with the charters, setting up ALAMIS users, dues reversals, transfers, as well as all membership awards. I help out our national Membership Committee chair with the

Department Leadership National Conference and weekly reporting of how our departments are doing as well.

### **How has the Membership Division grown since you've been at NHQ?**

One of the things the COVID-19 pandemic taught us was that we had to become versatile in how we did things. The Membership Division was no different. I think we all worked hard as a team and did a lot of brainstorming. We came up with a lot of great ideas to streamline processes by making more things accessible online than ever before, and to make them more cost effective for the members, departments, and national.

### **Who made you eligible for ALA membership?**

I am a member of eUnit 438 in Indianapolis. My eligibility is through my husband, Bruce, who retired from the U.S. Army after 24 years of service.

### **How has the ALA shaped your life, personally and professionally?**

Personally, I have made some lifelong friends through some of the amazing volunteers I've worked with over the past several years. I've been able to work with some of our country's heroes firsthand and listen to their stories, and there is nothing better than that. One of my favorite things I'm involved in is our American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program in Indiana, where I serve on the board for ALA Hoosier Girls State. Watching these young women and how well-spoken and how inspiring they are at such a young age gives me hope for our future. Professionally, I get to work with a wonderful group of people who care about our members and our veterans. The great thing about working in the Membership Division is how much we get to interact with our members and departments all the time.



Provided by Carol T. Robinson, National Chaplain 2021-2022 | [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains)

## AUGUST

Everyone Can't be in Your Front Row

Author: Unknown

Life is a theater, so invite your audiences carefully. Not everyone is holy enough and healthy enough to have a front row seat in our lives. There are some people in your life who need to be loved from a distance.

It's amazing what you can accomplish when you let go, or at least minimize your time with draining, negative, incompatible, not-going-anywhere relationships, friendships, fellowships, and family! Everyone can't be in your front row.

Observe the relationships around you. Pay attention to: Which ones lift, and which ones lean? Which ones encourage, and which ones discourage? Which ones are on a path of growth uphill, and which ones are just going downhill?

When you leave certain people, do you feel better or feel worse? Which ones always have drama or don't really understand, know, and appreciate you and the gift that lies within you? Everyone can't be in your front row.

The more you seek God and the things of God, the more you seek quality, the more you seek not just the hand of God but the face of God, the more you seek things honorable, the more you seek growth, peace of mind, love and truth around you, the easier it will become for you to decide who gets to sit in the front row and who should be moved to the balcony of your life.

Everyone can't be in your front row.

You cannot change the people around you — but you can change the people you are around! Ask God for wisdom and discernment and choose wisely the people who sit in the front row of your life.

Remember that front row seats are for special and deserving people and those who sit in your front row should be chosen carefully.

Everyone can't be in your front row.

## SEPTEMBER

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight.”

— Proverbs 3:5-6

It is not uncommon to hear people say, “Life is a journey,” and indeed it is. But what is important for all of us to do, is determine and embrace our own personal journey. Having said that, I ask you, what is your journey?

One of the best things about your journey is that it is yours and yours alone. Your journey does not have to mirror anyone else's. That brings a tremendous amount of freedom in living “your” journey.

You might be asking: How do I know what my journey is? Know this: It does not have to be complicated. The only impossible journey is the one you never begin.

Your journey is not exclusively what you do for a living. That can be a part of it or not. It is a matter of waking up each morning and making the decision to embrace the day in the best possible way; it is your attitude. It is your level of kindness to yourself and others. It is your gratitude for all your blessings, and morning prayer. It is doing what gives you the greatest pleasure, without hurting or burdening anyone else.

Maybe your journey is to travel or volunteer for a specific cause. Perhaps a handwritten letter or card, to friends or family members. Not because it is expected, but because it gives you joy. Maybe visiting botanical gardens to smell the roses or hike your favorite nature trail. What about knitting? Maybe it is knitting scarves for the homeless. With that, you are doing something you love and helping someone in need. Enjoy your journey!

## OCTOBER

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.” — Psalms 37:23

We need to learn to thank the Lord for closed doors just as much as we do for open doors. The reason God closes doors is because He has not prepared anything over there for us.

If He did not close the wrong door, we would never find our way to the right door. Even when we do not realize it, God directs our paths through the closing and opening of doors. When one door closes, it forces us to change our course. Another door closes: It forces us to change our course yet again.

Then finally, we find the open door and walk right into our blessing. But instead of praising God for the closed door (which kept us out of trouble), we get upset because we “judge by the appearances.” And in our own arrogance, or ignorance, we insist we know what is right.

We have a very present help in a time of need who is always standing guard. Because He walks ahead of us, He can see trouble down the road, and He sets up roadblocks and detours accordingly. But through our lack of wisdom, we try to tear down the roadblocks or push aside the detour signs. Then the minute we get into trouble, we start crying, “Lord, how could this happen to me?”

We must realize that the closed door was a blessing. Did not He say, “No good thing will He withhold from them that love Him”?

I am so grateful for the many times God has closed doors to me ... just to open them in the most unexpected places.



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



## TIPS AND TRICKS TO PROMOTING INCLUSION IN THE ALA

“Treat everyone the way you would want to be treated.” It’s a phrase we’ve no doubt heard many times throughout the years as part of “The Golden Rule,” and it still rings true today. Common courtesy and kindness are practices that just can’t go wrong. And at its core, it is that very hospitality which defines inclusion. After all, everyone wants to feel as if they are welcomed, accepted, and wanted.

That’s why inclusion matters — because when we lean into inclusive practices, we are really working toward infusing our American Legion Auxiliary units, districts, zones, departments, and divisions with active members who can bring a wealth of ideas to help us in our mission of service. In the ALA, we talk about ways to recruit, retain, and

rejoin members so that we can ensure our mission of service to our veterans continues. And today’s veterans, military, their families, and our communities are made up of so many different individuals with so many needs. By bringing as many active participants as possible and different ideas to the table, we are ensuring we are better equipped to serve and meet them.

This sentiment is certainly true when we look at how to be inclusive of individuals with special abilities or needs. Disability *awareness* is crucial, but *true inclusion* moves beyond accepting their presence to supporting their active participation in our programs. So, what are some key features of inclusion that we can use as tips and tricks to support individuals of ALL abilities to participate in every aspect of our Legion Family from meetings to leadership roles?

### **Create intentional interactions.**

It’s really important that we not only give a wave or a smile, but that we *actively* and *intentionally* take the time to engage with individuals, especially those who might have special abilities. By spending time getting to know our members, we make them feel welcomed and supported, AND we get the chance to identify their passions and skills that can be utilized in our service work! Maybe they are really proficient with technology and would be a great fit to support efforts related to website buildouts and public relations/marketing efforts! Perhaps they are super organized and would make a great fit as secretary! Intentional interactions pave the way for powerful participation.

### **Provide individualized supports.**

Have you ever been in a meeting and

not been able to hear the speaker clearly because they just wouldn’t use the microphone? Imagine being a person who is deaf or hard of hearing! It wouldn’t be very welcoming to come to meetings, but never know what’s going on or being said. You could try offering reserved seating up front for members who need to be closer, or even provide written copies of remarks ahead of time so that members could read and follow along as reports are given. What a great way to ensure all members can participate!

### **Don’t forget your sociology.**

Always remember that at the heart of inclusion is the desire for a sense of belonging! Sometimes, individuals with special abilities get left out unintentionally. We fear saying the wrong thing, or we simply don’t know how to approach ... or worse, we assume that because they have special needs, they won’t be able to complete the duties and responsibilities of some of our roles and positions within the organization. Here’s the tip: Never presume; instead, seek to understand and support. Maybe with some extra directions ahead of time or pre-written prayers, that once-shy individual shines bright as your chaplain. When we seek to expand opportunities for everyone, relying on understanding, instead of limiting based on our perceptions, we get far greater outcomes!

*Claire Gallagher (Moore), M.A., CDP, BCBA, LBA, is an American Legion Auxiliary member from Virginia. She currently is secretary of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.*

## ABOUT THE DEI COMMITTEE

The ALA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee was created to open up an important dialogue within our membership — a dialogue that is happening with organizations around the world. This committee works to figure out where we are and where we want to be, develop inclusion and diversity goals and strategies, involve members in discussions on inclusion and diversity, and expand leadership opportunities for all.

The DEI Committee, along with the Code of Ethical Conduct Committee, was formed following recommendations from the national Strategic Planning and Constitution & Bylaws committees at the National Executive Committee meeting in August 2019. More than 200 Auxiliary members nationwide applied to serve on the special committees.





event rather than using the same materials every time, you'll have a much better chance of standing out from the crowd.

The American Legion Auxiliary national website offers many items available for download from the MyAuxiliary member portal. To view materials, log in and look for items under the resources tab. Here you will find customizable flyers, poster templates, program brochures, membership applications, youth coloring books, and more.

**Limit the clutter — you don't have to bring everything but the kitchen sink**

The experts at Displayit.com also recommend you keep your tabletop clear of anything that might distract attendees from your display, and trim any handouts you may have down to the most important items. Just because you have a 6-foot or 8-foot table in your exhibit, it doesn't mean you have to cover it with a bunch of flyers and brochures.

Natalie Woodbridge, general manager, Events and Marketing at Auckland Business Chamber, wrote in an article on LinkedIn that your table should be maximized by arranging your display at multiple levels. She recommends that any larger pieces you're displaying should go at the rear with shorter items in front of them. This means that items like flyers and the small pieces that might be giveaway items will go in the forefront so people may easily pick up and take the brochure.

**STAND OUT IN THE CROWD DURING ALA OUTREACH EVENTS**

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is the third Friday in September, and Veterans Day is Nov. 11. Our ALA units often attend or even host events related to these two special dates. Having a tabletop display at these types of community events can be a great way to build awareness for American Legion Auxiliary programs and services while also reaching potential members. Here are some tips for getting the most out of a tabletop display.

**Make a first impression**

As the old saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. While it may seem obvious that anyone representing the organization should wear ALA branded clothing, it's also important that your display is properly branded with the ALA logo and official colors.

In a posting on their website, trade show experts at Displayit.com recommend using a customized printed table cover. They write that many presenters simply use a standard, unprinted table cover that's provided by show organizers. Often, these covers are worn or may clash with the colors of the display, so Displayit.com recommends customized printed table covers featuring one- or two-color logos in your official colors.

They also point out that since tabletop displays are smaller in size, people walking by your table or booth can often become overwhelmed when presented with a display filled with lots of text or

bullet points. To remedy this, they suggest you think of your tabletop display as more of a billboard, rather than a brochure. Be sure to have the organization logo and tagline in a large, readable font so it's viewable from a distance. For proper ALA logo usage guidelines and colors, please consult the ALA Branding Guide found in the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

**Have printed materials relevant to the event you are attending**

Bob Watson from Skyline Entourage, a trade show exhibit design and logistic services company, wrote in a blog article on their company website that it can be tempting to just make one generic tabletop display to take to each event, but he suggests that since most events will have a specific focus, it's best to redo your promotional materials accordingly. He goes on to suggest that if you alter your display to fit in the context of that specific



**HELPFUL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DISPLAY**

- You only have 3 seconds to engage passersby with your display.
- Hanging banners is a great way to grab attention from a distance. Use easy to read fonts and two different typefaces.
- Swag speaks volumes: Have good giveaways, and even consider a drawing.
- Show off all of the valuable work your unit does to support the ALA's mission.



**FROM ALAGS/ALAGN TO A POLITICAL AND BROADCASTING CAREER**

Kristen Soltis Anderson attended ALA Florida Girls State and ALA Girls Nation in 2001. Anderson is a political commentator, speaker, pollster, and author of *The Selfie Vote: Where Millennials Are Leading America (And How Republicans Can Keep Up)*. Anderson is the host of SiriusXM’s *The Trendline with Kristen Soltis Anderson* on their nonpartisan POTUS politics channel. She also is founding partner of Echelon Insights, an opinion research and analytics firm. You may have seen Anderson on talk shows such as *The View* or have read one of her articles in *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*.

Anderson received her bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Florida and her master’s degree in government from

Johns Hopkins University.

**Did you have an interest in politics before attending ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation?**

I did! I had been a member of my high school’s debate team and part of student government. This was part of why I decided to run for governor at ALA Girls State. Participating in ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation made the things I

had learned and practices in those activities feel more real and showed me how those skills could be applied.

**What impact did attending ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation have on your college and career path?**

From visiting Washington, D.C., for ALA Girls Nation, I knew I wanted to move back to D.C. at some point in my life. I moved here after college and have built a life here!

At ALA Girls State, I made a lot of friends who I would continue to get to know when we all arrived at the University of Florida for our

freshman year. Having that ALA Girls State network was so great when arriving at a large university.

**What is your favorite memory of attending ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation?**

At ALA Girls State, getting to meet then-Gov. Jeb Bush was a true highlight. I’ve remained a big fan of his ever since. Later, at ALA Girls Nation, we got to meet his brother, President George W. Bush, and when the Florida delegation took a photo with him, he made a joke about how our governor was a good guy.

At ALA Girls Nation, my favorite memory was visiting the monuments. I especially remember the Korean War memorial on which the phrase “Freedom Is Not Free” is carved into granite. A powerful but much needed reminder in any era.

**What advice would you give to girls attending ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation?**

Stay in touch with the women you meet! This is easier nowadays with social media, but truly the network of friends you will make means wherever you go for college or land in life, you will likely have someone you know who has this shared experience.

**Anything else you would like to add?**

I remain so grateful to the American Legion Auxiliary Florida Unit 286, especially Fran Ridgley, for supporting me on my ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation journey!



We want to hear from alumnae of all ages! How has ALA Girls State or ALA Girls Nation impacted your life? Tell us your story. Email us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).

ALA Girls Nation held its 75th session in July. Visit @ALAGirlsNation on Facebook and Instagram to see pictures! Then watch for a feature on ALA Girls Nation in the November issue of *Auxiliary* magazine.





**CHILDREN OF WARRIORS NATIONAL PRESIDENTS’ SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ALWAYS KNEW SHE WANTED TO PURSUE A CAREER IN MEDICINE**

Taylor Thomas, 19, recipient of a 2021 ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship, always dreamed of entering the field of medicine. She is a graduate of Goodrich High School in Michigan, where she was a standout volleyball player. Thomas’ mother and father are veterans and met while serving in the United States Marine Corps.

By eighth grade, Thomas’ interest in medicine continued to grow, and she knew that pursuing a career in the field was in her future. Additionally, she was a major fan of the television show *Grey’s Anatomy*, which further sparked her interest in medicine. And then there is her great-uncle, a neurosurgeon, whose conversations about the medical field helped her make a decision by her senior year to pursue a degree as a physician assistant.

Becoming a physician assistant involves a tremendous amount of education. It requires a four-year undergraduate degree and two

additional years to earn the physician assistant’s degree. The tuition expense to achieve such a degree is approximately \$200,000. Finally, the decision time had come. Thomas selected nearby Wayne State University in Detroit to pursue her undergraduate and master’s degrees.

Knowing the investment required to achieve this degree, Thomas and her family took the initiative to search and apply for scholarships to help offset her educational expenses. With her

parents being military veterans, Thomas applied for the American Legion Auxiliary Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship, with the required letters

of support being provided by her high school teachers. In 2021, Thomas, along with 14 other students, were announced as the scholarship recipients being awarded \$5,000 each to help with future educational expenses.

To further offset her tuition expenses, Wayne State University

also awarded her scholarships.

Thomas and her family were thankful and elated to receive this important scholarship from the ALA.

“I feel truly fortunate to be awarded this scholarship among the many applicants,” Thomas said. “The generous funding of this scholarship is especially meaningful to me, considering the additional years of schooling needed for my chosen career.”

In addition to achieving her master’s degree, she is striving to

finish school with minimal debt or even be debt-free with the help of scholarships and working her way through school. Being awarded an ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship certainly provides her with a great start toward accomplishing this goal.

The scholarship will help Thomas to lower the cost of her education and reduce the number of student loans necessary to receive her master’s degree. Otherwise, it would be necessary for her to take out additional student loans and increase the number of work hours to pay for her education.

“I want to express my sincere gratitude to the donors who contributed to this scholarship fund and to the American Legion Auxiliary for making it available to students,” Thomas said. “I am profoundly grateful to the ALA for their commitment to the children of military families and for supporting their educational needs to pursue the careers of their dreams.”

Today, beginning her sophomore year, Thomas focuses on her studies to pursue a degree benefiting the future health of countless others with less worries about the educational debt she will incur. You too can help children of veterans like Thomas and many others pursue higher education and the career of their dreams by donating to ALA scholarships at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate).

**“I am profoundly grateful to the ALA for their commitment to the children of military families and for supporting their educational needs to pursue the careers of their dreams.”**



**MEDICAL EDUCATION DEBT FOR THE CLASS OF 2021**

- Premedical education (median) debt: \$27,000
- Medical education (median) debt: \$200,000
- 83% of all graduates have \$100,000 or more in debt

Source: AAMC 2021 Graduation Questionnaire data



**TOOLS TO PROMOTE THE CHALLENGE:** To help celebrate and promote the 100 Miles for Hope challenge, visit [www.legion.org/100miles/tools](http://www.legion.org/100miles/tools).

## 100 MILES FOR HOPE

**It's not too late — take part now!**

The American Legion is nearing the final turn for the third annual 100 Miles for Hope. The wellness program raises funds to assist disabled veterans and alleviate financial distress for military families. The event concludes Sept. 5, but there are still ways you can participate, support veterans and servicemembers, and improve your own fitness and wellness.

- Sign up: Register and get started walking, cycling, running, hiking, or covering 100 miles any way you choose. (Going on the Legacy Run? Riding a motorcycle counts too!) The \$30 registration fee goes directly to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

- Donate: Support your department with a donation. There is a department challenge pitting similar-sized departments against one another. The department in each category that raises the most funds for the V&CF earns a plaque from the national commander.

- Share your journey: Already logging your miles? Share your 100 miles journey on social media (use hashtag #100MilesforHope and/or submit a story to [Legiontown.org](http://Legiontown.org)).

To register, donate, or learn more about the 100 Miles for Hope campaign, please visit [www.Legion.org/100miles](http://www.Legion.org/100miles).

### **ALA member's idea creates a Legion Family event to raise funds for veterans**

An American Legion Auxiliary



member of Unit 355 in Grafton, Wis., created a walk that has raised more than \$60,000 for veteran assistance efforts.

Amy Luft's route for her daily runs includes Post 355 in Grafton and Post 288 in Cedarburg. On one of her runs, she had an idea to have the Legion Families of those posts collaborate for Sweat4Vets, a 2.5-mile walk between the posts.

That idea became a reality in 2016. This year, the post-to-post walk was held on Armed Forces Day and the funds went to suicide prevention outreach efforts at the Clement J. Zablocki Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Milwaukee. Each year, the funds go to a different nonprofit or agency that assists veterans in Wisconsin. Past recipients include the Department of Wisconsin's Camp American Legion, Stars and Stripes Honor Flights, Healing Patriots, and Patriot K9s of Wisconsin.

"To be able to bring awareness and support to a cause that so badly needs it right now, coming off this devastating pandemic ... to enlighten people and support a cause that very needed right now, I can't tell you how great it is to get back doing things right now," Luft said.



## HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY!

Celebratory greetings go to the Sons of The American Legion, which was founded in 1932 to honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires. Our Legion Family thanks all SAL members for their commitment to the mission.



### **DO YOU ENJOY PODCASTS? LISTEN TO TANGO ALPHA LIMA**

This podcast discusses issues important to veterans, servicemembers, and those who support them. All episodes are available in both audio and video formats. You can download episodes on iTunes, Stitcher, or other major podcast-hosting sites. You can also view it on the Legion's YouTube channel.



## AN ANNUAL TRADITION LEADING UP TO NATIONAL CONVENTION

The American Legion Legacy Run will be held Aug. 21-25.

The 1,200-mile ride will begin at the USS Alabama Memorial Park in Mobile, Ala., and end at American Legion Post 434 in Oak Creek, Wis. Riders will travel through Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois.

Medal of Honor recipient Gary Wetzel, a Legion Rider from Post 434, will await the ride on its final stop and be part of the closing ceremonies.

To learn more, visit [www.Legion.org/Riders/LegacyRun](http://www.Legion.org/Riders/LegacyRun).

## BE THE ONE

To ASK veterans in your life how they are doing.

To LISTEN when a veteran needs to talk.

To REACH out when a veteran is struggling.

### TAKING ON THE ISSUE OF VETERAN SUICIDE

The American Legion has launched the Be The One campaign in an effort to reduce the number of veteran suicides and end the stigma surrounding mental health.

This campaign encourages you to Be The One:

- To ask veterans in your life how they are doing.
- To listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- To reach out when a veteran is struggling.

If you are a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, please call the Veterans Crisis Line — 1-800-273-8255, press 1.

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1. Yu J, et al (2016) Topical oxygen therapy results in complete wound healing in diabetic foot ulcers. *Wound Repair and Regeneration*. 24:1066-1072  
2. Lee A. (2021) Continuous topical oxygen therapy – Improving healing in the diabetic foot. Poster presentation DFCon

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*Matt Roth is an award-winning photojournalist with experience in both newspapers and magazines. He lives in the Baltimore area and specializes in portraits, conceptual photography, reportage, documentary, advertising, and creativity. He's done work for The American Legion Family, including the cover of the February 2022 Auxiliary magazine.*



**What is your background?**

My degree is in sociology from the University of Georgia, and I definitely don't have a mind for academia. So, I was going through a bit of a "What am I gonna do with my life" crisis. And I took the intro to photojournalism course. I was invited to take the other two courses, and I had the weirdest calm when I thought about being a photographer for a living. I just felt like I wouldn't fail at it. I've been a photographer for 20 years.

**What are some tips for taking a good photograph?**

- Gear isn't *that* important. Don't get me wrong; it totally helps and it can be fun to use. I have very nice equipment. But most of my family photos are on my iPhone.

- Clean up your backgrounds. Messy photographs can be hard to look at. Just open a magazine and check out the print advertisements. The backgrounds are under control. You know what you're supposed to look at.

- Wait. You see a cool setting? Wait for something cool to happen in it. We pros do a lot of waiting. Even while we shoot, we still wait. We wait for the light to be right. We wait until we've figured out how to make our

subjects relax enough to show their real smile — not their smile-for-the-camera-smile.

- Give yourself limitations. I'll sometimes go into an assignment with only one prime lens — sometimes it's a lens I rarely use — just to see what I can get.

- Get critiques, and give critiques. Feedback can be hard to hear sometimes, especially from the wrong person. Find folks who want to help. Chances are, they'll tell you what they think works and what doesn't in your photos. I find that giving critiques, talking about someone else's photographs to them in a kind and thoughtful way, is the best way to really understand what makes a better picture.

- Avoid digital zoom. If you can, just move closer.

**What is the best way to take a group photo?**

I think tableaux are the ULTIMATE group photo. A tableau is a narrative picture with several subjects helping tell that narrative. Ever see a *Where's Waldo?* You have to look for Waldo in a sea of other people doing other things. Waldo is surrounded by tiny narratives. That's an extreme version of a tableau, but I hope you get the idea.

**What is the best way to hold a camera?**

Tuck your elbows into your torso, and, when you're holding your camera, cup your left hand UNDER the lens. I see so many people putting their left hand on top of their lens, which does nothing to support your camera.

**Of all your photos, which is your favorite?**

There are a lot of photos I've made that I love. But one sticks out. It's the photo that went along with *Howard Magazine's* Best Vet of Howard County award. It's a ludicrous picture that borders on schlock. What makes it work is the vet's connection and interaction with the dog. That's the emotional glue that elevates this silly role reversal theme to, what I think, and most people also seem to think, is a really great picture.



*Matt Roth (the human)*

There's an emphasis in the photo world for young photographers to develop their "eye." It's a photographer's distinctive style, and this photo became my guide stone for the most distinct style I show in my portfolio.

*Read more from our interview with photographer Matt Roth on the ALA blog.*



## OHIO VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS WORK TOGETHER TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS

Henry Ford is quoted as saying, “Coming together is the beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.” Members of the Copley, Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7971, American Legion Frank Bender Post 473, and ALA Unit 473 are a living embodiment to that quote through the many projects they work and fund jointly for the veterans and their families in their local communities.

In 2011, Legion Post 473 and VFW Post 7971 entered into an

agreement to share the use and provide ongoing management of a property in Copley. Through the agreement, the joint relationship is titled “the Copley Veterans Post” and is home to separate meetings and functions of both posts, including the Auxiliary.

The groups came together to help homeless veterans in the Akron area and collaborated to help the Valor Home, a local organization that assists homeless male veterans, and the Liberty House, which does the same for homeless female veterans.

The groups jointly purchased small backpacks, also known as ditty bags, that were filled with personal

items for the veterans. For men, the ditty bags were filled with socks and toiletries,

and for women, the bags contained a scarf and feminine toiletries. Logos for each of the organizations were imprinted on the bags, along with the name Copley Veterans Post.

This project is one of many the Copley VFW, American Legion, and ALA work and fund together, including social events for veterans and their families.



## WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE

The Copley Veterans Post is a great example of how working with other veterans service and community organizations can build awareness for all organizations involved and provide more resources to help veterans and their families in local communities. Here are some ideas for events you might be able to plan with like-minded groups in your community:

- Plan a sendoff and/or welcome home event.
- Plan a stand down.
- Coordinate a Veterans Creative Arts Festival with your local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility.
- Facilitate theme-related events such as a back-to-school bash, Easter egg hunt, or a holiday-themed party (with gifts) for military and underprivileged children at the post or local community center.
- Hold a 5K Freedom Walk with proceeds going to a veterans-related cause.
- Hold a Community Covenant event, POW/MIA awareness event, 9/11 remembrance event, or Blue Star Banner Salute.
- Hold other mission-focused events that are open to the community.



## POSSIBLE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In addition to working with other veterans service organizations like the VFW, there are many local community organizations that might be a good partner for your American Legion and ALA events and projects:

- Local high school National Honor Societies and JROTC
- Local college students: community engagement/service office and/or Student Veterans of America group
- Local churches
- Family Readiness Groups
- U.S. Navy Seabees
- ALA Girls State alumnae
- American Legion Baseball teams
- Boy and Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Brownies
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America-affiliated Military Youth Centers on military installations
- Any partnering organizations already with a connection to your unit
- Individuals interested in volunteering with the Auxiliary
- YMCA

For more information on how to plan an event with another community organization, be sure to visit [www.ALAFORVeterans.org](http://www.ALAFORVeterans.org) and search for “How to Partner with Organizations for Community Outreach.”

    Visit our social media at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media)

## CONNECT DIGITALLY



In between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine, you can follow the latest news from American Legion Auxiliary National

Headquarters digitally. Follow the ALA blog, social media, *ALA eNews*, and website.

## READING ON THE GO



The ALA blog features quick reads you can catch anywhere, and it covers a wide variety of topics. Popular blogs in recent months have included the caregiver series that complements the caregiver series in *Auxiliary* magazine.

## WHAT'S COMING UP ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### ALA NATIONAL CONVENTION:



- August 26-Sept. 1
- The 2022

ALA National Convention will be in Milwaukee.

- You can follow along on our social media @ALAforVeterans and our livestream at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention).
- If you are attending, take pictures

and post on social media! Use the hashtags #AmericanLegionAuxiliary and #AuxCon22

### ALA LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:



- Fall 2022
- Follow our social media to be the first

to learn about new ALA Academy Live webinars and the dates for nationwide Mission Training events.

### VETERANS DAY:



- Nov. 11
- We will remember the brave men and women who served to protect our freedoms.



## MYAUXILIARY SIDE OF WWW.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG

- Pay dues online
- Get member resources such as forms and guides
- Program information for ALA national committees
- Access the ALA Red Book
- Learn about member benefits
- And much more

## AUXILIARY SUMMER SHIRTS!



**Men's  
Aqua-Dry  
Polo**  
(307.727X)



**Ladies  
Glory  
T-shirt**  
(307.360D)



**Ladies  
Rhinestone Flag  
T-shirt**  
(307.308X)

\* Proceeds support American Legion Family programs

**American Legion Emblem Sales**

**1-888-453-4466**

**Emblem.Legion.org**

AUX MG 0822

### Auxiliary

### Word Scramble answers from page 22:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. BEACH      | 8. HEAT        |
| 2. SUNFLOWER  | 9. BOATING     |
| 3. WATERMELON | 10. POOL       |
| 4. ICE CREAM  | 11. SWIMMING   |
| 5. BASEBALL   | 12. SANDCASTLE |
| 6. PICNIC     | 13. GARDENING  |
| 7. VACATION   | 14. FISHING    |



## “The one thing I need to leave behind is good memories.”

— Michael Landon, actor



Preserving history is something we do often: many times, without even realizing it. We take photos with our phones, we document our lives via social media, and we record videos during the most memorable moments. Then we go back into our files to relive those events, or even to nudge our brains for the feelings these things inspired. In a future issue of *Auxiliary* magazine, we'll take a deep dive into how you can help protect your archives ... and those precious memories. Tell us: Has your ALA unit, district, or department — or you as an individual member — embarked on any historical collection projects? Contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).




# American Legion Auxiliary

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters  
3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268

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

# Auxiliary members need your help!



Disaster can strike at any time. Whether it's a hurricane, housefire, the loss of a job, or an unexpected medical emergency, the results are devastating. That is why whenever Auxiliary members need assistance, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund is ready to help.

Unfortunately, this reliable support comes at a price. The AEF needs YOUR help so

that it can continue meeting the needs of ALA members in crisis. Please, donate now to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund by visiting [www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate) or by mailing a check (write AEF in the memo line) payable to:

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3450 Founders Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46268