

American Legion Auxiliary

February 2021 \$3.75

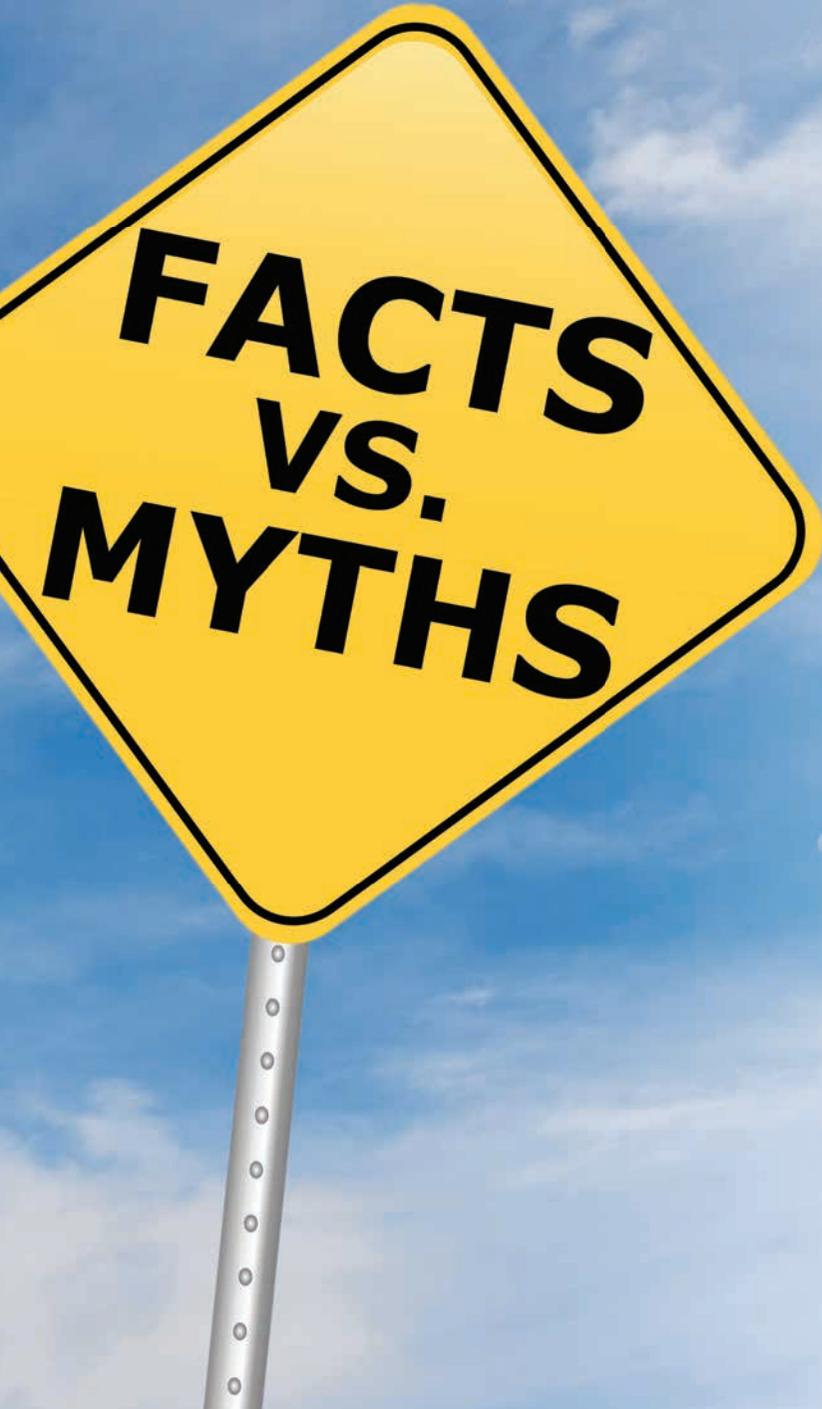
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Reaching
Our Veterans
through the
Arts





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

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

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

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

Auxiliary

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ON THE COVER: Christopher Voyer's digital artwork, *Veteran Plea to God*, was a winning entry in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, held virtually last November. Voyer, who served in both the U.S. Army and Coast Guard, says his motivation for the art piece was "personal, maybe even selfish, but when considering current times, it made sense to execute it, and became bigger than myself." **ABOVE:** A local American Legion Family marches at the January 2020 Saint Paul Winter Carnival in Minnesota (photo: Joe Ferrer). *Auxiliary* magazine is looking for Legion Families that recruit together. See page 58 for details.



MAKING CONNECTIONS: I joined ALA member Terri Luehring (right) on a visit with Terri's father, Korean War veteran Don Hyndman, at the Iowa Veterans Home.

Ninety-year-old U.S. Army Korean War veteran Don Hyndman had just made the tough decision to move into the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown about a month before COVID-19 outbreaks started to sweep across the nation. Next thing he knew, visits to veterans homes, nursing homes, and similar facilities in a lot of areas were stopped. Like many of America's older population going through all of this, Don experienced some isolation.

When visits were able to resume with some safety restrictions in place, I accompanied Don's daughter, American Legion Auxiliary member Terri Luehring, to see Don. With all three of us wearing masks and maintaining some distance, Terri and I spent time with Don outside at the veterans home. He was clearly delighted to see Terri, and he seemed to enjoy spending time with me. Don had seen some of the photos from my travels as ALA national president, and we talked about that. It was a way for him to engage with

the outside world after feeling a bit isolated for so long.

During our visit, I gave Don a national president pin. He wears it on his Korean War veteran hat. The only other pin he keeps on his hat is a small U.S. flag pin.

Spending time with Don was a reminder of the importance of emotional human connections.

Sometimes, we don't have the money or wherewithal to get our veterans, servicemembers, and their families the tangibles they may need or want. But we still can give them something meaningful — even if in-person visits are not possible at the moment. We can give them our time and attention in other ways, showing compassion

**“Remain resilient,
resourceful, and creative
in finding ways to continue
fulfilling our mission
of selfless service...”**

and care while letting them know they will never be forgotten.

Come up with safe, no-contact ways to brighten a veteran's day. Reach out to the management of a veterans home to ask what you or your ALA unit can do for residents.

Need some ideas? Consider starting a pen pal program with the veterans. I bet they would enjoy words of kindness and thoughtfulness from our ALA members. If they can't write you back, that's fine.

Another idea: Arrange for ALA Juniors to make valentines, or handwrite everyday “just because” notes, with heartfelt messages for our veterans.

Also on the topic of making meaningful human connections while physically distancing, please don't forget about our fellow ALA members. Let's all take a moment to make a phone call, have a video chat, or send a personalized email, card, or a brief letter to check in with other Auxiliary members.

Seize any opportunity you have to do this. And remember: This year's ALA Week of Caring & Sharing, a time specifically designated for checking in with every possible unit member — current and former, is April 1-7. Learn more about this special week at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

My fellow Auxiliary members: Remain resilient, resourceful, and creative in finding ways to continue fulfilling our mission of selfless service to veterans, military, and their families despite challenges presented by the pandemic. And please make a little time to check in with other Auxiliary members. The inspiration and support you can offer or receive might be found in the few lines of a card or brief letter, in spoken words from a familiar voice in casual conversation, or in the eyes of a friendly face seen during a video chat.

As ALA members, we pledge to be there for our nation's veterans, military, and their families. We must also be there for each other. It's what the American Legion Auxiliary has done for more than a century. We can't stop, not even in times like these — when what we do matters even more.

Nicole Clapp

Nicole Clapp
National President

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RESOURCES: Each 2021 issue of *Auxiliary* will contain a feature story on membership.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITING, RETENTION TOOLS COMING YOUR WAY

Readers of *Auxiliary* magazine know we include information in every issue about membership. Whether it's a how-to tip sheet on best practices or a story on the people who make our mission and organization proud, we spend a good deal of time making sure you're equipped to know everything about the American Legion Auxiliary.

But there's something we haven't published in a while — a comprehensive guide on ALA membership. Recruiting, retention, engagement, and how your dues help *you* as an individual are topics we plan to cover in detail this year.

Each 2021 issue of your quarterly national magazine will contain a meaty story related to your membership. In this series of features, we'll touch on topics that'll keep your ALA engines running, and we'll sprinkle in another dynamic part of growing our membership: The American Legion Family.

Here's what we have in store for you:

This issue, February:
Membership recruitment — what to say when. You're ready to recruit new members. You're excited about it. You've got your script ready in your head. You say, "Have you heard about the American Legion Auxiliary? We'd love to have you as a member!" Everything could go sour if you get a negative response, but we've got solutions.

May: Membership recruitment — a Family affair. Attracting veterans to The American Legion. Sons to the Sons of The American Legion. When we work together, we increase membership across the board. Do you know a Legionnaire who recruits? Tear out these magazine pages and give them to the Legionnaire for suggestions on attracting American Legion Auxiliary members.

August: Membership retention — Great! You got that person to join the Auxiliary. Now what? For some ALA members, recruiting is the easy part. Membership retention, however, is sometimes the most difficult and important. As the American Legion Auxiliary learned in a nationwide survey a few years ago, former members left the ALA for various reasons. We'll explore the ways current members can keep each other engaged and with a sustained sense of purpose.

November: Membership retention — what's in it for me? Joining the American Legion Auxiliary and serving its mission of course brings about feelings of good — we often touch the hearts of those we serve. But there's also another reason to be part of our fine organization: the benefits ... both personal and professional.

ALA ON THE GO

Auxiliary magazine is fully digital and available for download at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

TOOLS & TIPS IN A CLICK

In addition, you'll find expanded magazine content, valuable unit and department resources, plus downloadable templates, news releases, and other ALA promotional materials available on the ALA website 24/7.

American Legion *Auxiliary*

*A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*
February 2021



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FROM OUR *readers*



Gold Star Mother shares her ALA story



Being a relatively new member to the ALA, I began attending meetings at this unit two years ago.

Although there are several closer and more convenient ALA units near my home, I chose this one: Unit 5, USS Tampa, for several reasons.

The primary reason is the genuine care and concern of the officers and members toward all, not just newer members like me, but to everyone who walks through the facility's doors for a socially distanced live and in-person meeting. At these meetings, there are no strangers. Auxiliary President Rosemary Hamblin and each and every officer would take time to greet and speak with everyone. The monthly unit meetings are like a family gathering without the family drama.

When I first joined, even though Rosemary was standing by her husband's side during his cancer battle, she would email me encouraging personal emails that always came at just the right time and continued to do so.

Before I began attending meetings regularly, I was sitting at a back table at a formal dinner that the Auxiliary hosted for a very special group of ladies, "Mothers of Fallen Military Members," also known as "Gold Star Mothers." I observed as a delicious meal was enjoyed by the 40 Gold Star Mothers, I listened to the mothers talk about their fallen heroes, and I saw them laughing, and at times, crying too. I was touched by the compassion and care that the members of the Auxiliary extended to those moms through special handcrafted gifts, through asking them to talk about their loved ones, and through the members expressing genuine interest in the moms.

I recently learned that the ALA Department of Florida "Gold Star Mothers' Support Award" had been presented to my ALA unit from Department National Security Chairman Rhonda Brailey-Maurer.

I believe my unit was rightly selected as the recipient for this coveted award. They certainly earned it, in part because of what they have done, but mostly because this is who and what they do ... it's just who they are: kind-hearted, thoughtful, and selfless in their service to others.

You see, I was one of the Gold Star Mothers at that wonderful and memorable dinner. The members of this unit truly honor through service.

I wanted to express my gratitude for my ALA unit, but now I do it with a deep sense of loss, as our Unit President Rosemary died unexpectedly Nov. 28. This is my tribute in her memory of her endless grace, kindness, and courage.

—Toni Gross, Florida



ALA ACADEMY REVAMPED!

Have you checked out the new ALA Academy?

What can you do?

- Watch videos from previous ALA Live Courses
- Take the newly revised ALA 101 course
- See the new look and ways to engage with content
- Leave reviews from courses

Stay tuned for more ALA Academy Live courses and self-paced content by going to www.ALAForVeterans.org/ALA-Academy



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JUNIOR members



GOOD DEEDS (top): Juniors and a Sons of The American Legion member display their patches; (opposite): Ohio Unit 304 Juniors raise money for a veteran's home; (bottom): Colorado Junior Tatum Jones receives an ALA Good Deed Award.

DISPLAYING PATCHES WITH PRIDE

The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Patch Program allows ALA Juniors and Sons of The American Legion youth members to earn patches as they serve their communities and veterans, and learn about patriotism, health, fitness, and leadership. These patches can be earned from kindergarten through 12th grade (or 18 years old).

The ALA Patch Program consists of three levels divided up by school grade level. Juniors and SAL members can earn a patch on their own or with a group.

After the Junior or SAL has earned these patches, what do they do with them? *Auxiliary* magazine asked around to get a few ideas of how they are displayed. These patch displays can incite pride in the ALA and encourage youth to continue serving the mission into adulthood.

Sash or vest: This is a popular way to display patches. This gives the youth the opportunity to wear their patches to their meetings or when volunteering. It's a great way to display their progress.

Backpack: Juniors can sew these on to their backpacks and share their

Legion Family membership at school. Char Kiesling says the Department of Wisconsin gives kids a backpack to display their patches.

Tote bag/travel bag: This idea is similar to the backpack. Youth can have a tote bag to carry their Junior or SAL materials in. Or you can have a travel bag, so when they're

display with the patches. "When my granddaughter was a Junior, each year that she earned patches we would put them on cardstock with her name and unit and have the current president sign it, sort of like a certificate, and put it in a frame for her wall," said Shay Grannan-Kuehner of Texas. You can then hang the certificate on the wall or place in a scrapbook.

Shadowbox: In addition to the patches, this can include other ALA items. Consider adding poppies, ALA pins, and any items that spark a memory. These make great gifts for older Juniors as they transition into adult Auxiliary membership.

Pillow or pillowcase: You can use safety pins to attach to a pillow or sew onto a pillowcase. This can be a keepsake that they can cherish into adulthood.

So, keep earning those patches and display with pride!

A reminder: Juniors and Sons can continue to earn patches while social distancing. Be creative and flexible with activities. One Junior who couldn't make a report to her unit took over her grandmother's Facebook page to make a virtual report to her unit.

ALA Patch Program: Did you know?

- There are 34 ALA Junior patches available.
- Sons of The American Legion youth members can participate.
- Americanism, Leadership, and Poppy are the most popular patches.

For additional information about the Patch Program, contact the national Junior Activities Committee at JuniorActivities@ALAforVeterans.org

on a trip, they can display their accomplishments with pride.

Bulletin board: This is good to not only display the patches but other Legion Family items. Sean Deiter of Pennsylvania is buying his son a bulletin board for his patches, along with SAL and American Legion pins.

Certificate: You can create a

was course 1 in the Junior Mentor Training Series. It can be viewed online at www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy. You will need to log in to access the recording.

More webinars soon will be offered for Juniors and Junior Activities program leaders. Follow the Juniors and National Headquarters Facebook pages for

announcements of the new webinars.

Junior members are encouraged to take the ALA Academy ALA Juniors eLearning Course, designed with younger members in mind. Juniors will learn the purpose of the program, how to excel as leaders, tips for speaking to groups, and more. For more on ALA Academy, check out page 23 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALA JUNIOR LEADERS AND JUNIORS THROUGH ALA ACADEMY

Last fall, ALA Academy Live webinars were launched to continue ALA mission outreach education during the pandemic. One of the webinars offered focused on getting started with Juniors. This webinar

HELPING A VETERAN GET A HOME OF HER OWN JUST ONE OF MANY PROJECTS FOR OHIO JUNIORS

ALA Junior members in Garfield Heights, Ohio, stay active helping meet needs in their community. Despite the pandemic, these Juniors did their part to help a homeless female veteran and her two daughters receive a home of their own.

The Juniors of ALA Unit 304 had a goal of \$1,000 to donate to the home restoration. They exceeded their goal by raising over \$3,000. The money was then donated to the nonprofit organization Ride with Valor to help with restoration of the Cleveland home. The organization had received the house from a donor with the purpose of renovating for a veteran.

Once the home was complete, the Juniors attended the dedication ceremony to witness the veteran and her family receive the keys to their new home. At the event, they were able to meet Juniors from Unit 151

in Conneaut, Ohio, who were also in attendance. The Juniors of Unit 151 donated a basket of household goods to the new homeowner.

The donation to the home restoration is just the latest in a long list of projects these Juniors have been involved with.

They help lift the spirits of troops overseas by regularly collecting hygiene items, office supplies, treats, and more to make and send care packages. The Auxiliary, American Legion, and Riders all help by donating items to be included in the packages.

The Juniors help bring comfort to veterans, making comfort pillows for patients at the local VA hospital. To date, they have donated more than 220 pillows. To pay for the supplies to make the pillows, the girls host lasagna dinners at the post. The Juniors also adopt a family in need for Christmas and have raised money for those who need home necessities.

The American Legion Family

takes part in supporting the girls' fundraising efforts. "The Juniors had an American Legion Rider donate a Harley-Davidson motorcycle," said Debbie Shortridge, of ALA Unit 304. "The American Legion Riders then



handled a raffle for this bike for the Juniors." This fundraiser raised a total of \$36,000. The money was shared with the Juniors, Riders, and the Legion.

Other projects include donating masks, socks, gloves, hats, and clothing to the homeless shelter at Wade Park Hospital and paying for burial expenses for a veteran who passed away with no family.

GOOD DEED AWARD RECIPIENT BECOMES ALA JUNIOR MEMBER



Arizona American Legion Auxiliary Unit 62 honored 10-year-old Tatum Jones of Colorado with an ALA Good Deed Award and an Auxiliary Junior membership. Jones was recognized for

raising money to buy supplies for the homeless.

Jones set a goal to raise \$1,000 by her 10th birthday. When she

reached half her goal, her parents matched it with a donation of \$500. She used the funds to make supply kits containing toiletries, snacks, and water. Her parents keep the kits in their car, and when they see someone in need, they give them a bag. "She has a big heart and always wants to help everyone," said Danee Jones, Tatum's mom. "If she sees a homeless person, she always wants to give them food or money."

Members of Unit 62 learned about Jones raising money for the supply kits after her grandmother, an ALA member, posted her story on Facebook. The unit members decided Jones deserved an ALA Good Deed award. They later discovered she was eligible for ALA membership through her father and

her grandparents but wasn't yet a member.

The unit chose to not only present Jones with a Good Deed Award, but gift her a Junior membership. "We always try to give the award winner a small gift representative of their good deed," said Marge Christianson, ALA Unit 62 member. "So, Tatum got a Junior membership and T-shirt."

Jones lives in Colorado, and the unit learned she would be visiting Arizona. To make this presentation even more special, they gave the award to her at her great-grandfather's 90th birthday party.

Jones continues on a path of *Service Not Self*. She is doing small jobs for more kits and is thinking of other ways she can help.



Know of youth deserving of the ALA Youth Hero or Good Deed awards? Let us know by sharing their story on social media using #ALAYouthHero or #ALAGoodDeed or contact your unit. Nominees should be high-school age or younger. They don't need to be a member of The American Legion Family.

I AM THE ALA

*“Because the Auxiliary became my family,
and it’s your family too.”*

VERNEL WARREN



“Don’t take my picture. I’m just getting myself together. I just lost my husband,” an American Legion Auxiliary member

somberly said to fellow ALA member Vernel Warren, who had been taking photos at a local Auxiliary event. The words shook Warren to her core, and she responded the only way she knew how: with compassion.

“I lost my husband, and thank God for the Auxiliary. Because the Auxiliary became my family, and it’s your family too. You have more than just blood family. You have us,” Warren told the member. After that, the recently widowed woman perked up a bit throughout the day, Warren added.

Warren has always been committed to supporting our nation’s veterans, military, and their families — in this instance, a veteran’s widow — just as she was lifted up by her fellow Auxiliary members and local Legion Family following the death of her husband, U.S. Army veteran Bennie Wesley Warren Jr., in 2010. A Paid Up For Life (PUFL) member of The American Legion, Bennie served in World War II and the Korean War. Vernel Warren is a PUFL member of the American Legion Auxiliary. The couple started their memberships at the same time.

“Suddenly, in December 2005,

my husband announced it would be a good idea to join a veterans service organization. I was speechless. This came after 27 years of icy silence from him when it came to his time in the Army or military-related things in general,” she said.

How did your first interaction with your ALA unit and Legion post go?

The entire post embraced my husband and me at, and ever since, the first event we attended. I thought this was very significant because for the prior 27 years I had been with my husband, he never had a lot of buddies. The [ALA] ladies put me right to work with Auxiliary events. My husband and I really felt welcomed. We felt part of something that helps others.

What makes your ALA membership meaningful to you?

I sum it up in this quote from the Bible: “... There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24; KJV). You see, I was devastated after watching my husband die in the hospital. He had cancer. Right after he died, everything was a big blur. The Auxiliary, Legionnaires, and Sons of The American Legion members carried me through, and do so even to this day.

What are your favorite American Legion Auxiliary events or outreach activities?

There is nothing more overwhelmingly emotional to me than the Department of Georgia’s ALA Christmas Joy Shop at the Georgia War Veterans Home in

Milledgeville. Every moment of it tugs at your heart: the joy of seeing veterans as they pick out gifts to give to their loved ones, and the gratitude you see in their eyes. Then, there are the stand downs to help homeless veterans in many ways. It is a bitter pill to swallow that there are homeless veterans after all they have sacrificed through their service.

Do you think the ALA, as a whole, is a diverse and inclusive organization?

Very much so. I found that out when I attended the joint session of my first department convention. I was struck by the diversity of officers in all ranks and among members. You need ideas and vision to propel an organization. Diverse cultures introduce new and different ways of approaching continuing goals.

Why do you remain an ALA member?

I owe so much to our brave veterans for our freedom. They have given so much. I feel my membership shows them my gratitude.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:
Unit 583 in Eatonton, Ga.

ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
PUFL Legionnaire Bennie Wesley Warren Jr., husband
(U.S. Army veteran)

YEARS IN THE ALA: 14

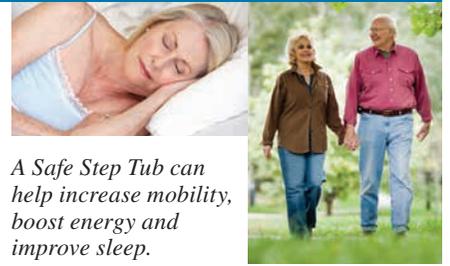
ALA ACTIVITIES:
Chaplain, Unit 583 2006-2010
Historian, Unit 583 2011-Present
Legislative Chairman, District 10 in Georgia, 2016-2017
Legislative Chairman, Department of Georgia, 2019-Present



SHARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STORY!

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

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Our dues matter even more today

We know the pandemic may keep us from our usual in-person mission outreach activities. But in these times of extreme change and adaptation, our membership dues matter most.

They keep our American Legion Auxiliary going strong, and most importantly: that continuity of support our veterans, military, and their families need from us.

We shouldn't back down or take a break because of COVID-19. Instead, let's become even more focused on our mission and those we serve.

Renew your American Legion Auxiliary membership at www.ALAforVeterans.org or call us at (317) 569-4570.

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Your Auxiliary Member Benefits:

There's More In It For You!

The value of being an American Legion Auxiliary member is growing! You bring untold value to the Auxiliary and America's veterans through your service to our mission. To show our appreciation, we bring valuable benefits to you! Your membership brings you access to a wide array of discounts, products, and services.

- Insurance: Accident and Long-Term Care Plans
- Healthcare: Telehealth Services, Hearing, Dental, Vision, and Prescription Discounts
- Home and Moving Services
- Travel: Hotel & Resort Discounts All Around the World
- Discounted Digital Subscription to Military News and More!

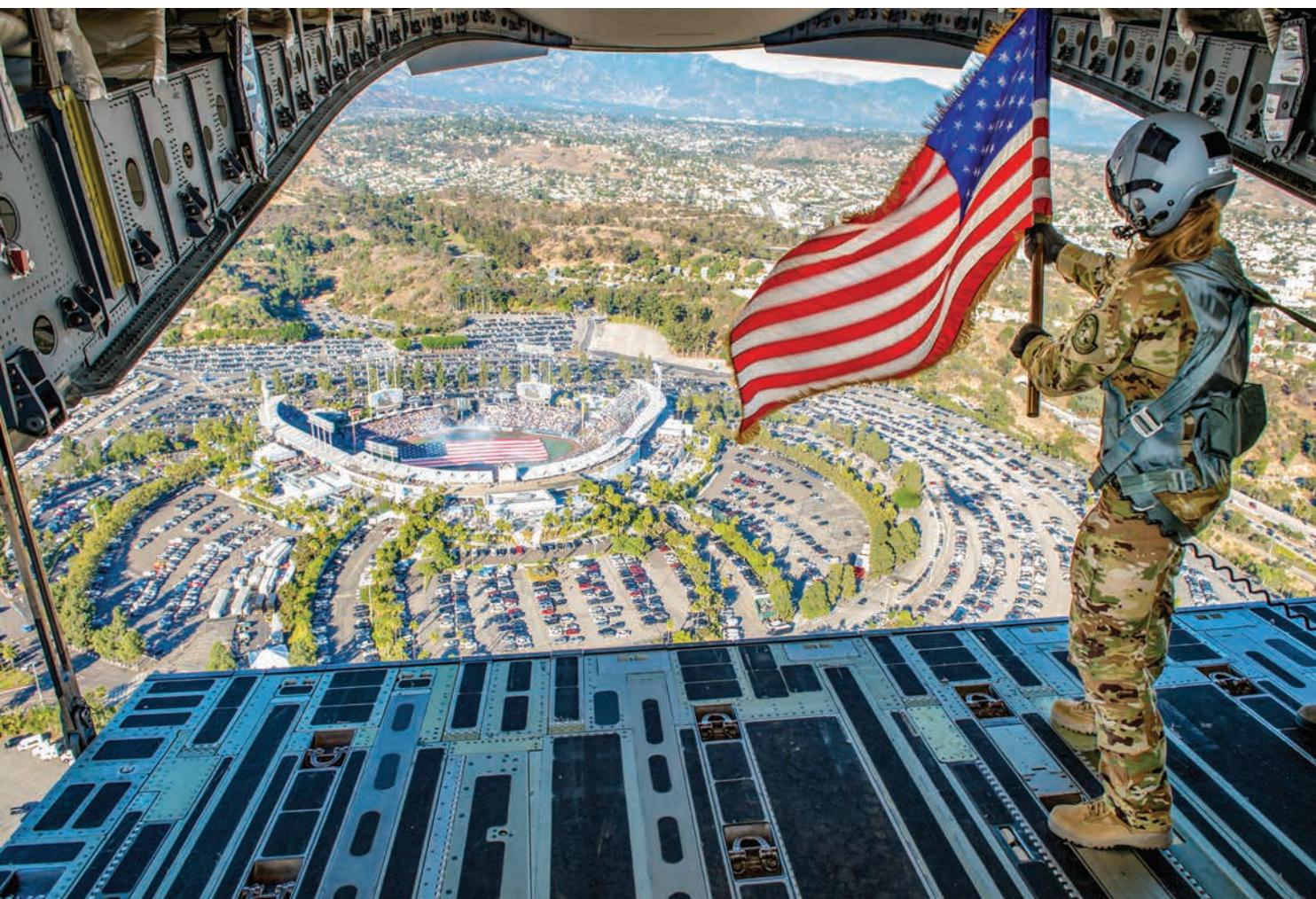
To learn more, visit the Member Portal at www.ALAforVeterans.org and start saving today!



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**“Patriotism is the love of your country.
It’s about what is in your heart...”**

— ALA member Peggys McBean of Unit 259 in Clinton, Md.



Love is definitely in the air when it comes to American Legion Auxiliary members’ devotion to the United States of America and our military. And it doesn’t all center on Valentine’s Day. From the day we join the ALA, it’s a never-ending commitment to doing whatever it takes to help the people we serve. Our veterans, servicemembers, and their families have our hearts every day of the year.

Above: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kori Myers waves the American flag from the back of an aircraft during a 2018 National League Championship Series baseball game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and Milwaukee Brewers in Los Angeles (photo: Kyle Larson, Air Force).



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

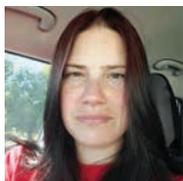
What is your motivation, inspiration, or encouragement on challenging days?



“Helping veterans and other people in our community. Also, spending time with the Unit 10 Auxiliary members.”
— Patricia Padilla-Torres, New Mexico



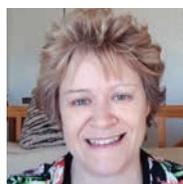
“My motivation is our Christmas Gift Shop at the Dwight David Eisenhower Medical Center in Leavenworth, Kansas — seeing the joy on veterans’ faces as they choose presents for their families.”
— Cherie Thomas, Kansas



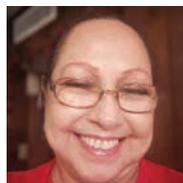
“Knowing I can just take the day and try again tomorrow. A lot of us are so busy putting others first, we forget to have ‘me’ days.”
— Rosemary Lancaster, Iowa



“No matter what the challenges are, our veterans gave so much. What we are going through is nothing compared to that, and we will fight through our challenges to support them. They’re the reason we do what we do.”
— Crystal Cross, Virginia



“My dad, QC Miles, is my motivation and my hope on challenging days. Dad was a WWII pilot. He was kind, compassionate, fair, always listening to both sides, and never judging. He’s the reason I’m an ALA member.”
— Mara Miles Huls, South Dakota



“My motivation is to follow in my grandmother’s footsteps. She was active in the Auxiliary and a Gold Star Mother.”
— Irene Miramontez, Texas



“Taking a deep breath and remembering I am the daughter of a Navy veteran.”
— Debra Tiernan, Vermont

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

Weird Herb Shocks Doctors With Relief of Leg and Feet Pain, Burning, Tingling, Numbness

6 clinical studies show it is effective. Lost but now re-discovered. Thousands of new users report amazing relief from leg and feet problems in just 30 to 90 days – with no side effects. Available in all 50 states without a prescription.

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

Already popular in Europe, this natural herb (*horse chestnut seed extract*) is taking America by storm since it was announced last week.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.

The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Until now, scientists could not combine these herbs into one pill without losing their full potency, but finally, they have succeeded.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give



up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it.”



RE-DISCOVERED LEG AND FEET PROBLEM SOLUTION: In Greece in the 1600s, this herb was originally called “horse herb” because it was fed to horses with ailing legs. It has now been re-discovered and is giving soothing comfort to Americans who have leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbness.

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep – peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk damage to your feet and hands. Don’t let it get dangerously worse.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

UP TO 50% OFF FOR THE NEXT 10 DAYS

This is the official release of Neuroflo in the state. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive up to 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for up to 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL-FREE **1-800-716-1077** and provide the operator with the special discount approval code: **NEF158**.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for up to 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.



MILITARY SPOUSES SAY BEND, DON'T BREAK WHEN LIFE THROWS A CURVEBALL

Let's face it: We seemingly live in whirlwind times with general uncertainty surrounding the life we'll come to know post-pandemic.

An important event you're looking forward to may be cancelled. Your child is doing virtual learning for school while you work a busy full-time job from home. You received notice that your workplace has to reduce hours and staff because of low profits. And perhaps worst of all: A loved one who contracted COVID-19 is now clinging to life.

Becoming resilient and overcoming obstacles can be a quite a challenge in itself. Resiliency is such an important topic that it's a key component of military training. In the U.S. Department of Defense Master Resilience Training Course, servicemembers learn skills that include energy management, emotion awareness and regulation, impulse control, de-catastrophizing, putting it in perspective, problem solving, and more.

Military spouses — those queens and kings of their domains — know resiliency all too well. Their skills were obtained not from a formal

training course, but from years of experience in managing life at home while their servicemember was on deployment. *Auxiliary* magazine interviewed the military spouses at American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters for their advice on how to keep your head above water when it feels like a flood is incoming:

- **Keep going.** Don't pout about the major obstacle in front of you. Dwelling on the negative is unhealthy and unproductive. You've got to move on.

- **Sometimes, you have to put your feelings in a box and come back to them later.** But know that it's completely normal to feel like your world is crumbling down. It's also completely normal to call your doctor and talk about methods of calming anxieties.

- **Make your bed every morning.** At the end of a tough day when you think you've accomplished nothing, at least you conquered something you *do* have complete control over.

- **Look on the bright side.** Always try to find a positive in every negative, no matter how hard that can be. Your world feels like

it's crashing down? Well, hey — the forecast shows a sunny and warm day! The baby is sick and you're grumpy after operating on mere hours of sleep? It means extra snuggles and bonding time with your child.

- **Surround yourself with friends and family.** Isolation is the enemy, so be sure to reach out and talk to others; don't wait for them to reach out to you. You can hang on to the ends of your rope together! And remember that you are never alone. Even when you feel like you are, support is always there. Take advantage of that beefed-up technology and arrange a virtual meeting with those who may not be a quick drive away.

- **Having a plan can make you become more resilient.** Even though things can change, make goals and work on self-skills. An added benefit: Finding a passion keeps you occupied and your mind off stress and anxiety triggers.

- **Memorize *The Serenity Prayer*.** God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

- **You don't have to be everything to everybody.** Take time for you — book a manicure, take a hot bath, or bundle up with a cozy blanket and binge-watch some reality TV. Unwinding equals instant gratification.

- **Volunteer and become involved in your community.** Now is a great time to check in with your American Legion Auxiliary unit (if you haven't already) to see what kinds of mission outreach events or activities are coming up. Help out as your schedule allows.

- **Adjust your expectations.** There is no "perfect" these days. Sometimes, there's just "Ehh ... good enough" and that's totally OK!

- **Take a break from the outside world.** Unplug from the news for a while and lower your ops tempo. It'll help your blood pressure.



In these topsy-turvy times when each day is wildly different, just remember that others are in the same boat — many people are feeling similar stressors and for the same reasons. Condition yourself to take things one day at a time ... and when all else fails, find something to be thankful for, even the smallest thing. Yoga pants!

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- Nancy V.



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BIG LAKE WELCOMES BIG ROCK: Linda Paulson (left) and Karen Blake bring a Freedom Rock to their community in honor of local veterans.

A PROJECT OF PASSION FOR VETERANS IN MINNESOTA

For over 10 years, Karen Blake and Linda Paulson have organized veteran-focused events at their local church in Big Lake, Minn. As members of ALA Unit 147, both women have a strong passion for helping and serving veterans, but they needed a new way to honor them. While on a road trip to Iowa, Blake saw the original Freedom Rock in Menlo, thus sparking a creative idea.

“After discovering the meaning behind the rock’s pictures and why the artist created it, I was deeply touched,” said Blake. “He told stories of people who had fought in various critical situations and became heroes because of their bravery and courage.”

The artist, Ray “Bubba” Sorensen II, repaints a large boulder every year with a different “thank-you” for our nation’s veterans to honor their service. Blake was so inspired by the meaning behind the Freedom Rock, that she continued making trips to Iowa to see more than 70 Freedom Rocks.

“I read every story of every hero he painted and realized how so many had sacrificed for the freedoms I enjoy,” said Blake. “My desire to put a Freedom Rock in Big Lake took hold of me. I wanted something to tell our veterans’ stories and thank them for their service.”

Wanting to make an impact in their community and a difference in veterans’ lives, Blake introduced the idea to Paulson, and the journey began. They had the perfect spot in mind: a newly dedicated Big Lake Veterans Memorial in the center of their small town.

“That would be a really special way to show them that we appreciate everything they do; we thank them for their service. And that’s Bubba’s whole story — that’s why he wants

“We just feel like the community needed something positive to lift us out of all the negative that was happening.”

to do it,” added Blake. “He wants to thank his veterans for what they’ve done and for the freedoms we have today, because they fought and died for those freedoms.”

Hoping to get the community’s support, Blake and Paulson presented the idea to their city council, The American Legion, Yellow Ribbon, ALA, and other organizations — all were in favor of the Big Lake Freedom Rock project.

“It’s good to get a consensus from your community for ideas,” said Paulson. “We wanted to know what people were thinking, and everyone

was so positive and excited about it.”

Planning was the easy part. Getting and moving the rock was a different story. Luckily, a quarry in Waite Park, Minn., offered to donate the 31-ton rock needed for the mural’s canvas. Continuing the momentum, a local veteran suggested a trucking company that would transport the rock for free. And to top it off, a construction company that had the crane needed for the job donated the more than \$10,000 required to move it to Big Lake.

“We have just been in awe with how things have happened, and we feel we were steered into the right direction,” said Paulson. “We do feel like this really is a God-driven project. He just really wants to have this for the city of Big Lake.”

Blake and Paulson created a Paver Program to help raise funds for the project. Pavers included a veteran’s name, branch of service, and time served for a donation of \$100. After ordering the paver, a certificate is sent and makes for a great keepsake. Blake and Paulson are predicting the money will be raised, and the artist will be painting Big Lake’s rock in 2021. The pavers will surround the rock and offer a unique opportunity for everyone to honor a veteran and leave a permanent legacy.

“We just feel like the community needed something positive to lift us out of all the negative that was happening,” said Paulson. “We see this project as a bright star in the lives of a lot of people in the city of Big Lake, where they have something really positive to look forward to.”

The Big Lake community fully supported the project and even had a parade the day the rock arrived in town. The fire and police departments escorted the rock through town, along with 30 American Legion Riders.

“It’s been a fun journey — it really has! And meeting all the veterans who are excited for this project has been amazing,” said Blake. “It has seriously been one of the best things I have ever done.”

Good works to share? Visit www.ALForVeterans.org/magazine for details.

MOTORCYCLE-RIDING GREAT-GRANDMA HONORS VETERANS

Coming from a large military family, Idaho American Legion Auxiliary Unit 143 member Dale Snipes honors veterans across the country on her Honda Goldwing motorcycle trike. Snipes, an 82-year-old great-grandmother, has over 55,000 miles on her Goldwing from traveling to various military bases and veterans events.

“I had murals put on my bike to honor each of the conflicts, and have driven across the U.S. and back, stopping at various military bases and events along the way to give thanks, and honor the folks there,” said Snipes.

In tribute to her father, Lloyd Clement, who served in World War II, Snipes has a mural on her bike that illustrates the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima. Her late husband,

Walter Snipes, served in Korea, so his mural is of the Russian MiG and the American fighter jet. Snipes has sons-in-law who served in Vietnam — their mural scene is of a soldier standing by an upturned rifle and pair of boots. Her grandson and granddaughter have been deployed to Iraq, and that war scene is of a trooper with a gun in a Hummer.

“It’s a way to say ‘Thank you’ and show that I’m proud of our veterans, and veterans from all wars,” said Snipes.

Across the back of her Goldwing is an American flag with the slogan “Freedom’s Never Free!” and an American eagle is on the front to symbolize and honor our free country. Snipes has a built-in speaker system that she plays patriotic music from, making her a fan favorite at veteran events across the country.

“I’ve ridden to New York, Florida, and all the states in

between. Whenever we are going to be in the area with a military base of any kind, we stop to say hello and thank [the servicemen and women] for what they’re doing,” added Snipes.

The American Legion Auxiliary’s mission is serving our nation’s veterans, military, and their families — the reason Snipes joined our organization. But her patriotic spirit and support for the military encouraged her to expand her horizon and ride with other likeminded people or groups.

“There’s a group called the Patriot Guard, and when a servicemember comes back from overseas, we go to the airport and welcome them home,” said Snipes. “It’s really cool because there will be a lot of us and we all have American flags, and we are lining the airport with them. As soon as the servicemembers come out, we start clapping, and pretty soon everyone in the airport starts clapping. It’s really beautiful.”

Snipes and the Patriot Guard are occasionally asked to go military funerals where they watch quietly over the service and act as protectors or guardians and make sure no one is being disrespectful. Afterward, while the hearse travels to the burial grounds, the Patriot Guard rides their motorcycles behind it in the missing man formation. At the burial site, members respectfully space apart and stand by quietly while the service is performed. The Patriot Guard will only attend funerals if it is requested.



GOLDWING TRAVELING TRIKE: Dale Snipes rides her motorcycle to different states as a way to say “thank you” to veterans and servicemembers.

UNIT THANKS TEACHERS WITH ‘ENCOURAGE-MINT’

American Legion Auxiliary members continue adapting to the way we work the mission in light of the pandemic. Danielle Fluhr, ALA member of Indiana Unit 270, planned to work with her local school corporation to organize the 2020 Give 10 week. But with COVID-19 numbers rising, they were unable to collaborate. Not knowing what else to do, Fluhr got on Pinterest and started looking for creative ideas.

After sharing her ideas with Unit 270 members, everyone insisted on making little “Encourage-mint” packages for local schoolteachers and staff to thank them for their dedication and patience.

“Teachers have been working really hard; they’ve been going through a lot of changes this past year. We just wanted to let them know we were thinking about them,” said Fluhr. “It may have been something small, but we just want them to know we see the hard work they are doing.”

The Encourage-mint bundles consisted of travel tissues, mints, a personal “thank-you” card, and an ALA “Commit-mint” quote showing their appreciation.

To be cautious and keep members safe, Fluhr personally put all 500 packages together for staff and teachers. Other Unit 270 members helped with delivering all of the Encourage-mint bundles.

“I’m glad to be a part of the Auxiliary in Morgan County,” said Fluhr.



HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL MEETING

Zoom, Teams, GoToMeeting — platforms that you may not have been familiar with in 2019 are now common ways for many of us to communicate. In the beginning of the global pandemic, these services were a quick fix for us to communicate while social distancing. But it appears virtual meetings and these platforms — and others — are here to stay.

Many of you have participated in these meetings for an American Legion Auxiliary event, your work, or to connect with family and friends. As a beginner, this technology can be intimidating, and you may feel strange talking to your computer. But there are things you can do to make yourself more comfortable and present your best self.

Preparing for a videoconference

The first step is to plan how and where you are going to participate.

- Find a quiet room. For some of you, we know this can be difficult with kitchens that have been turned into offices and children home from school. But if you can, try to be in a quiet space with little or no distractions.

- Avoid having a window in your background. The light from the window can turn you into a silhouette, making it hard for everyone to see your face.

- Have good lighting. If you can have a window facing you, natural light often works well. If not, a lamp behind your computer can help with lighting. If you plan to do a lot of videoconferencing, consider a ring light, which casts light on your face to reduce shadows.

- What's behind you? Take a look around. What can others see in your background? Is there anything you don't want others to see? The last thing you want to happen is for people to see something embarrassing in your background.

- If you are using a phone instead of a laptop or computer, do you have a tripod or something to lean your phone against? If it's a long meeting, your arms will get tired holding your phone.

Set the scene: Appearance and background

After your area is set up, think about how you will appear to others.

- Dress as if you are attending an in-person meeting ... at least from

the top up. Getting dressed can put you in the right state of mind.

- Position yourself in front of your device. Sit so you are in the center of the screen. Try to be at about eye level with the camera. If your laptop or phone is too low, you may have an unflattering shot. If your device is too low, try propping it up higher.

Be a good participant

There are several things you can do to make a good impression in a virtual meeting. Keep these etiquette tips in mind:

- Mute yourself. If you are not talking, stay muted. This will reduce background interference. Sounds like breathing, typing, the dogs barking — noises from the outside can often be louder than you may realize.

- Use headphones or earbuds to help you hear more clearly and reduce echoes. If you can't use headphones or earbuds, turn your speakers down to avoid feedback when you are unmuted.

- Remember — you're on camera and you don't know when someone is watching you. Try to avoid yawning or making facial expressions you don't want others to see.

- Avoid checking emails or texts. Stay present, and give the meeting host your full attention. Emails and texts can be distracting and cause you to miss out on important information.

- Turn your camera off if you have to get up. We recommend you not leaving your seat during a meeting, but if you need to leave your computer for some reason, turn your camera off so your absence isn't distracting to others.

- Let others in your home know you will be on a videoconference so they don't accidentally appear in your background.

- Have water and tissues nearby. You never know when you may need them.

- And lastly, relax and enjoy connecting with others who you may not be able to see in person.

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KEEP YOUR GOVERNING DOCUMENTS UP TO DATE

How hard was it to find your governing documents when COVID-19 hit? After that initial moment of panic passed and you remembered where they were stored, did you consider what would you do if you couldn't find them?

Everyone in a leadership position in the American Legion Auxiliary received phone calls and emails when a stay-at-home order was put in place. How would operations continue? Who has the authority to make decisions, and how can this happen if we can't meet in person?

Your C&B is just one of the important legal documents that

officers of a nonprofit need to retain, keep updated, and have accessible. Many of you have had a very painful lesson in why this is vitally important. It is the difference between order and chaos. Now is also the time of year when nonprofits begin thinking about completing their IRS 990 forms and looking through their documents.

ALA National Headquarters has been doing some housekeeping of the organization's governance actions, policies, and guides. Making sure we preserve past actions and current actions in the right format and right document is so important as we begin our 101st year of serving veterans, military, and their families.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECORDS RETENTION

An important responsibility of the governance of a nonprofit is documenting the board's activities. Officers have a legal responsibility to preserve records. Yes, it's a legal responsibility.

While taking minutes of meetings can be tedious work, it preserves the record that actions were taken in accordance to the bylaws, in case an action is ever challenged by the membership or in court.

What kind of records have to be retained besides the constitution & bylaws? Articles of incorporation, audits, governance actions like resolutions, the minutes of meetings, bank statements, checks, and membership records, just to name a few. Check your state government website for a schedule of which documents must be maintained permanently (yes, permanently) and when documents can be destroyed. With digital capabilities, permanent storage is easier than ever. Making sure successors have access to those digital files is important too!

ALA MEMBERS ARE EAGER TO SERVE ON NEW COMMITTEES

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters has received a terrific response in the search for members to serve on two special committees — the Inclusion & Diversity Committee and the Code of Ethical Conduct Special Review Committee. More than 200 applications were received during the application period of October to December.

These committees were formed following recommendations from the national Strategic Planning and Constitution & Bylaws committees at the virtual National Executive Committee meeting last August.

The Inclusion & Diversity Committee was created to open up an important dialogue within our membership — a dialogue that is happening with organizations around the world. This committee will work 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 National Code of Ethical Conduct Special Review Committee will review the existing Code of Ethical Conduct, develop

procedures for addressing violations, and recommend any changes to ALA national Constitution & Bylaws.

ALA National President Nicole Clapp and her selection committee developed an objective, qualifications-based rubric for evaluating candidates. Identifying information about the candidates was withheld from the selection committee.

The highest scoring candidates were interviewed via videoconferences. The national president will present her appointments to the NEC for ratification at the Mid-Year NEC Meeting on Feb. 27. These committees are expected to serve until at least the 2021 National Convention.

STRENGTHEN YOUR SKILLS TO SERVE VETERANS, MILITARY, AND THEIR FAMILIES

You may have noticed the new learning opportunities that rolled out last fall for American Legion Auxiliary members. ALA Academy Live is an expanded version of ALA Academy. These virtual webinars, held in real time and in under an hour, are offered at different times to accommodate members' time zones and schedules.

ALA Academy Live webinars started out of necessity when National Headquarters realized that regular in-person training would be hampered by COVID-19 restrictions.

The webinars were so well received by members that ALA Academy Live will be sticking around for 2021. With this new format, National Headquarters will be able to reach more members in delivering this important training.

This year, a hearty lineup of mission-related topics will be covered:

- Volunteering in your community and in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities
- Adaptive sports
- Caregiving
- ALA Junior Patch Program
- Working with Juniors and The American Legion Family
- Junior meetings: in-person and virtual

Several more webinars are being developed. National Headquarters will announce registration for each new session on ALA social media channels (@ALAforVeterans) and in the monthly *ALA eNews*.

If you weren't able to participate in previous webinars, you can watch recordings at www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy. You will need to log in to access the recordings.

Spread the news — help members learn more about serving mission

Help us get more members involved: If you've taken an ALA Academy Live webinar, encourage others to register too. A great way to increase unit activity and knowledge, the webinars are intended for all members. The more members with this information, the better we can serve our mission.

Here are some ideas to encourage members of your unit to sign up for ALA Academy Live:

- Challenge members to take the webinars, and recognize them with a certificate.
- Make it a competition. Those who attend the most webinars can be presented (virtually, of course) with a certificate or another award to acknowledge their work.
- When you see a webinar announced on National Headquarters' social media, share the information with other members and highlight the benefits. Encourage all members to take advantage and sign up.

While you wait for new webinars, take an ALA Academy course

The ALA Academy received an update heading into the new year. It now has a different look and feel and includes some new features. The Academy offers self-paced courses that can be taken day or night. They are available whenever you are, and you don't have to complete them in one sitting. Courses available:

- ALA 101
- ALA Branding and Why It Matters to Me
- ALA Communication Methods
- Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill
- ALA Fundraising
- How to Deal with Conflict
- ALA Leadership: Living Our Motto of *Service Not Self*
- ALA Juniors eLearning Course



ALA ACADEMY LIVE

Looking to Learn about the ALA Junior Program?

You can still register for two more Junior Mentor Training webinars:

- Working with Juniors and The American Legion Family
- ALA Junior Meetings

Start today by going to www.ALAforVeterans.org/ala-academy





Purple Up!

April 15, 2021

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE IN PURPLE UP! DAY TO HONOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Life can seem like a never-ending series of emotional adjustments for children in military families. It can be the challenge of coping with sadness or worry when their servicemember parent leaves the home for deployments.

Or maybe these youngsters are navigating the changes that come from the family frequently relocating due to a parent's service assignments. Typically, a child in a military family can expect to move six to nine times from kindergarten through high school graduation, according to the Military Child Education Coalition. And yet, many military-connected children learn how to adapt and develop resiliency.

In recognition and celebration of these children and their sacrifices, April was designated as Month of the Military Child by U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in 1986. Purple Up! Day — April 15 this year — is part of the month-long celebration. To show support for military children and raise awareness about their sacrifices, people wear purple on this special day. Purple symbolizes a combination of the colors of each branch of the U.S. military: Army green, Navy blue, Air Force blue, Marine red, and Coast Guard blue.

As a major supporter of veterans, the military, and their families for more than a century, the American Legion Auxiliary appreciates and celebrates these children who give up so much as their servicemember parents work to protect and defend America, its people, and its

principles. Many members of the Auxiliary and other parts of The American Legion Family participate in Purple Up! Day.

“Our military kids play such an important role, and a little recognition can go a long way. What a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the Legion Family's commitment to our military and their families,” said Lisa Williamson, chairman of the ALA's national Children & Youth Committee.

The Auxiliary has a long history of turning that commitment into action. In its early days, the ALA worked to secure university, college, and vocational training school scholarships for war orphans. Also, the ALA has helped military children through coordinated efforts with The American Legion. And today, the Auxiliary proudly sponsors the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship.

Auxiliary members are encouraged to participate in Purple Up! Day. Wear purple clothing. Be prepared to share fact-based information about these youth, their challenges, and Purple Up! Day if someone asks why you're wearing purple. And spread the word about the ALA's commitment to military children and families, servicemembers, and veterans.

Here are a couple of other ways to pay tribute to these youth (adapt as needed due to social-distancing and other safety guidelines in place during the COVID-19 pandemic):

• **Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2):** This American Legion Auxiliary honors military children

separated from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour, or on an extended temporary duty assignment. Recognition buttons or stickers with “I'm a Hero 2” can be given to these children.

• **Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony:** Inspired by the POW/MIA remembrance table ceremony, each item placed on the table is powerfully symbolic. Consider including ALA Juniors and younger members of the Sons of The American Legion in this tribute.

Learn more about the Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony, KDH2, and Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Additional ideas on participating in Purple Up! Day, and the Month of the Military Child can be found at MilitaryChild.org/MOMC_Toolkit. Perhaps events can be held virtually.



SAVE THE DATE: An ALA Junior member stands next to a Military Child's Table Setting. You can honor our military children on April 15 with the designated holiday: Purple Up! Day.

Or use social media: Post photos of yourself and others wearing purple. Include a few sentences about Purple Up! Day, military children, and the ALA's commitment to these youth.

“Wouldn't it be great to see social media plastered with Legion Family members wearing purple in their communities or at home, using the hashtag #PurpleUp, in an effort to remember these kiddos?” Williamson said.

God's Pearl of Wisdom

Diamond Pendant

*Mother-of-Pearl Cabochon
Uniquely Engraved with a Cross*

Accented with 9 Genuine Diamonds

Solid Sterling Silver



*The reverse side is
engraved with "He is
with me Always"*



Keep His Wisdom Close to Your Heart ... Always

God's wisdom is a precious gift that sheds light on our lives, every hour of every day. Now you can wear a reminder of that source of your faith with a pendant as lovely to behold as it is meaningful. Introducing the "God's Pearl of Wisdom" Pendant, available exclusively from The Bradford Exchange. Exquisitely designed, this heirloom-quality pendant features a unique infinity style to create a beautiful symbol of God's never-ending love for you. The twisting strand of fine hand-crafted solid sterling silver sparkles with eight genuine diamonds, framing a mother-of-pearl cabochon with a delicately engraved diamond-accented cross in the center. On the reverse is the encouraging message, "He is with me Always." An 18" solid sterling silver chain completes this stylish and inspiring piece of jewelry. Our solid sterling silver is enhanced with a fine layer of rhodium plating for maximum shine and beauty.

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Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

01-29315-001-E24501

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

Take a moment to sit back and think about all the things in your life that you are thankful for. In that moment, did you feel a sense of happiness or peace of mind? Well, the practice of gratitude is a simple and scientifically proven way to increase happiness in our lives.

Robert Emmons, Ph.D., the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude, has been studying the effects of gratitude on physical health, psychological well-being, and relationships with each other. He is a professor of psychology at University of California, Davis, and author of *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*.

Emmons has conducted many studies encouraging people to keep a "gratitude journal" where they regularly document things they are grateful for. He found that easy practices such as keeping a daily gratitude journal or keeping a gratitude jar will increase greater

joy, love, peace, and optimism into our lives. We are able to improve our physical and mental health, as well as social interactions, by contributing gratitude in our daily lives.

Gratitude allows us to be thankful in the moment by magnifying positive emotions while blocking toxic and negative emotions. Start by asking yourself what you are grateful for, then write it down in a journal and continue to add to it.

Try dropping a daily note in a gratitude jar — you could make it a game with your family, and at the end of the year, read the notes as reminders of what you were most thankful for. Put a jar in your American Legion post home and have everyone write a note about what they are grateful for when they walk in. On your next Auxiliary anniversary, read back on the positives of that year.

There are endless ways to contribute gratitude in your life, but the benefits are all the same. The more

you look for the good and positives in any situation, the better off you'll be. Add to the jar whenever you want — once a day, twice a week, or whenever you're feeling particularly appreciative.

Get your gratitude jar started

What it is: Exactly what it sounds like: an empty jar you can decorate and fill with slips of paper containing notes on what you're thankful for.

When to use: Drop a note whenever you're feeling like nothing good is going on in your life. Or write a note when you are extremely appreciative for all the blessings you have — and refer to them on a rainy day.

How it works: Find an empty jar around your home, cut up strips of paper, write about things you're grateful for, and watch your jar fill up!

What to write: Remember to write whatever you want; it doesn't matter how "important" or not you may think it is. Pretty much anything goes! Some gratitude examples: daily wins, special milestones, happy memories, chocolate cake, Netflix, spending a Sunday napping, visiting family, etc.

WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH SPRING

Old Man Winter will be evicted soon for warmer weather and a sense of newness.

L Y G S C D G H A G N X E N
I N S E C T S L F X H O B O
R X D N K F L C O Y Z L A I
R F R T Y E A R G M O R L T
D I O K R N K Q E O W I U A
M C A G R E W O M N W A L C
Y U I H D S W S S C E M Q A
V E D Q S A W E D O C W S V
S H C G H E H F R L I O A A
M Z J T S S R O I O F D J L
O G W S O S B F B R A I N V
L K V L Z N A V I S Z D K O
S Y A A U C Y R H T M R A W
B G V N G J M J G O H M H I

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| ALLERGIES | THAW | RAIN | LAWNMOWER |
| COLORS | BIRDS | VACATION | RENEWAL |
| GRASS | FRESH AIR | BLOOMS | WARMTH |
| MUD | INSECTS | GALOSHES | |

Answers can be found on page 57.

   **JOKES**   

Did you see the cereal box and the fruit punch?
Now that's what I call a food fight.

Life is like a Rubik's cube:
easy to mess up, hard to solve.

Some people wake up feeling like a million bucks.

Me?

I wake up feeling more like "insufficient funds."

I hate it when my wife says, "Are you listening to me?!"
Such a random way to start a conversation.

Skeleton 1: This isn't your best work.

Skeleton 2: I know. My heart isn't in it.

Source: www.ajokeaday.com

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The same ones they recommend to their patients!

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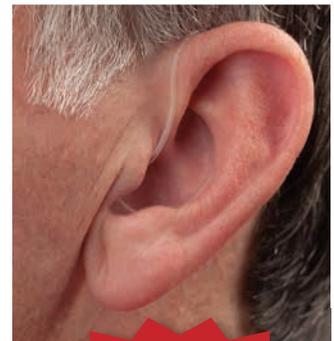
Doctors love MDHearingAids® for the same reasons patients do. These FDA-registered, medical-grade hearing aids have the same high-tech features found in more expensive hearing aids at a fraction of the cost.

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

"I have had five pairs of expensive hearing aids and MDHearingAids are just as good," adds retired neurosurgeon Dr. Brian L.

Doctors Are Tired of Watching Their Patients Waste Money on Over-Priced Clinic Hearing Aids
 MDHearingAids are the best value on the market, says Dr. Clarke:

Nearly invisible!



SAVE 90% COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL HEARING AIDS

NEVER CHANGE A BATTERY AGAIN



Charging Case

"I'm a physician, and I know how much people spend on health care. This product is just as effective (if not more) than traditional overly-priced hearing aids. I will be recommending them to my hearing-impaired patients."

CRISP, CLEAR SOUND

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GIVING BACK DURING COVID-19

How you can support the ALA during the pandemic

Not a single person has been spared from the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Some have lost jobs while others are working shift after shift to care for the sick, just hoping to get a moment long enough to have dinner with family. And yet some are home 24/7 parenting and homeschooling their children or grandchildren as schools navigate virtual learning and childcare is drastically reduced.

Any natural reaction to reach out and support a neighbor, family member, or friend is complicated as social distancing is encouraged and mandates are placed.

Through all of the changes that have impacted every aspect of our lives, no one has told our military to stop defending our country or that our veterans' physical and psychological wounds would need to be put on pause until after the pandemic is over.

The American Legion Auxiliary's mission is vital and must continue to thrive during these unprecedented times. Our veterans, military, and their families are counting on us to find creative solutions to continue to serve. Because if not you, then who?

Giving doesn't cost a penny with AmazonSmile

We all fall on hard times, making some methods of donating just seem unfeasible. But we know veterans still need our support. Luckily, during those periods of hardship, you can give to our nation's heroes with your everyday purchases on AmazonSmile.

By simply going to smile.amazon.com instead of Amazon.com, ALA members and supporters have donated nearly \$19,000 to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, at no added cost. That money, donated through the purchases of just 3,455 people,

has helped serve hundreds of veterans, military, and their families. Imagine how many heroes could be supported if everyone who values the ALA's mission took the time to sign up with AmazonSmile.

All you have to do is sign on through a special AmazonSmile link, www.ALAforVeterans.org/AmazonSmile, and your Amazon purchases will generate a 0.5 percent donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation whenever you shop.

Stock up on toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and antibacterial wipes while supporting the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

Consistency is key to making sure veterans get support they need

Large, one-time donations make a huge impact for our nation's heroes — but they aren't possible for every donor. If you're looking to make a major difference for veterans, military, and their families and one that fits your budget, consider starting a monthly gift.

For as little as \$10 a month, you can change a life for a member in need, give a deserving student the chance to follow their dream, help a veteran regain their dignity, and inspire artistic expression

in servicemembers. The process is simple — just go to www.ALAforVeterans.org/Monthly-Gifts and make a donation. The money will then be deducted from your account on a monthly basis. There has never been an easier way to give!

Make a plan now; give later to ensure mission endures for future generations

Another unique way to support the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to join our Legacy Society, a group of dedicated donors who have thoughtfully included a charitable gift in their estate plans. So far, 29 generous supporters have either left or committed to leave a gift in their will to the ALA or ALA Foundation.

Planned giving is a great way to establish your legacy of donations to the organization you love while still providing for your current financial needs. No matter the size of any individual donation, collectively, every planned gift adds up to helping ensure the Auxiliary is here for generations to come. You don't need a large estate to give and make a lasting impact.

You can learn more about the process of planned giving at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Planned-Giving or by calling (317) 569-4500.

Shop. Donate. Smile!

Support ALA Foundation when you shop on Amazon



- 1) Go to www.ALAforVeterans.org/AmazonSmile and log in.
- 2) Once logged in, you'll see a search box under spotlighted charities. Type and search for American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.
- 3) From the search generated list, select the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, and you'll receive a confirmation.
- 4) Be sure to create a bookmark for smile.amazon.com to use for all future purchases. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

HOW ALA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS HAS DIVERSIFIED REVENUE DURING PANDEMIC

Grants keep mission moving safely amid pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, the American Legion Auxiliary's mission has been twofold — continue its steadfast support of veterans, military, and their families while ensuring the safety of our members and staff. The need has grown significantly, and the ALA has been able to meet it, awarding \$155,500 in scholarships to deserving military children and ALA Junior members, and nearly \$236,000 in Auxiliary Emergency Fund grants to ALA members in need. Though there is more work to be done, three grants have made it possible to continue the mission despite hardship.

First, the ALA received a grant for \$75,000 from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. This is the second year they have awarded the ALA a grant to support scholarships for ALA members and military children.

Enbridge, a natural gas distribution company, granted the ALA \$12,000 in support of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund because they know the hard times so many have faced this year.

Finally, the United Way of Central Indiana granted \$2,549.77 to help protect the ALA National Headquarters staff during this time of COVID-19 uncertainty. With this grant, the staff were able to purchase the personal protective equipment necessary to ensure safety without sacrificing the Auxiliary's mission as the main priority.

Without the generosity of these grants, more veterans, military, and their families would've been left without the resources they need. But there are still more heroes to serve. Learn more about how you can contribute at www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate.

www.ALAforVeterans.org



HOW FAR WILL YOUR GIFT GO?

In one year, here's what being a monthly donor can do:

\$10 A MONTH
can provide art kits for veterans in the Veterans Creative Arts Festival.



H E L P

\$25 A MONTH
can provide help to a member in need through the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

\$50 A MONTH
can provide new bed linens for 50 veterans at a homeless shelter.



\$100 A MONTH
can provide 12 planter beds to help veterans learn gardening skills.

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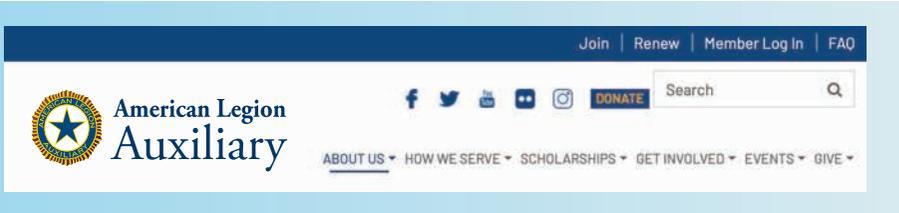
American Legion Auxiliary Foundation poised to serve more veterans, military, and their families because of #GivingTuesday

Thank you to all who gave to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation on #GivingTuesday! On Dec. 1, dedicated supporters donated over \$56,000, and 100 percent of these donations will go directly to veterans, military, and their families through grants and mission outreach.

Because of #GivingTuesday, hundreds of veterans will gather to display their artistic talents at

Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, helping them heal from physical and emotional wounds acquired during their military service. Thousands of young women will be empowered to use their voices for the greater good through ALA Girls State and Girls Nation. And U.S. servicemembers across the world will be provided with the resources they need to build better lives. None of this would be possible without your support.

Visit www.ALAFoundation.org to learn more about the impact you made.



REFRESHED NATIONAL WEBSITE FEATURES ROBUST CONTENT, PLUS INTUITIVE PORTAL JUST FOR ALA MEMBERS

Refreshing your wardrobe or home décor every now and then can be a great thing. The same is true for websites.

The American Legion Auxiliary's national website was recently refreshed and is still stocked with the same content. Even the URL is the same: www.ALAforVeterans.org. Our site continues to illustrate how ALA members help and honor veterans, military, and their families; promote patriotism; mentor youth; and encourage good citizenship.

"Getting a website refresh is like changing your outfit — you're still the same person underneath. Our site looks sharp and modern, and it has the same information

that was available there before," said Stephanie Abisi, director of

Operations Management at ALA National Headquarters. Abisi spearheaded the website refresh effort, working alongside ALA National Headquarters' Webmaster Travis Perkins.

The refreshed site continues to offer important information and resources for Auxiliary members at any stage of their ALA experience, whether they are senior or Junior

members, Abisi said.

Need the Unit Guide Book? Membership application forms? Information about starting a Troop Care Package Program? You'll still find all of that, and more, on the national site.

"The site is designed so that someone unfamiliar with the American Legion Auxiliary can look at it and easily see what we do and what we're all about," Abisi added.

MyAuxiliary member portal

"Website content was developed with ALA members in mind, and the MyAuxiliary portal on our refreshed site is a go-to location for members-only content — forms, national committee information

and documents, policies and procedures, training information, how-to resources, and downloadable recruitment tools," Perkins said.

MyAuxiliary also offers members the option of paying dues online and updating their name, mailing address, or phone number at any time. To access this portal, members must have an account. Any member who already had a login for

www.ALAforVeterans.org can use that same login for the portal on the refreshed site. Any member who does not already have an account will have to create one. Only current members can establish MyAuxiliary portal accounts. Former members, and those who let their membership lapse, cannot access this portal or their member profile until they've reinstated their ALA membership.

If you are having difficulties connecting to the national website, the problem could be your internet browser. Try updating your browser or download a different one.

Using MyAuxiliary, members can now ...

Access the following information about themselves:

- The unit they belong to
- Member ID number
- Join date
- Their membership category, such as Paid Up For Life (PUFL), State Life Member, Honorary Life Member
- When their membership expires
- Whether they are due for renewal
- Their prior years' dues paid
- Their donation history

Take the following actions that were not previously possible:

- Pay dues for the current year and the previous year
- Print a current year membership card
- Print membership cards from previous years
- Update contact information
- Add additional addresses
- Opt out of national and department (state) publications and mailings

REFRESHED SITE SHOWCASES ALA BLOGS

In addition to an eye-catching, fresh look, the website features American Legion Auxiliary blogs. These brief online articles are great sources for ALA-related information, ideas, and inspiration that can help Auxiliary members fulfill our mission of service to veterans, military, and their families.

The blogs are mostly written by ALA National Headquarters staff. Occasionally, there are guest blogs by Auxiliary members, veterans, military spouses, and others who are closely tied to the ALA mission. Topics focus on issues, events, and matters of interest to the ALA, The American Legion Family, and those we serve. Some blogs highlight the successes, at different levels of the ALA and the entire Legion Family, in fulfilling our mission.

Take time to check out our refreshed national website. And don't forget to access your MyAuxiliary member portal account.

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA

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in One
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Pictured: Italian Leather chair chestnut color. Chestnut color also available in Duralux™ fabric



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back pressure relief, to prevent back and muscle pain. The overstuffed, oversized biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. **It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.**

White glove delivery included in shipping charge. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You get your choice of Genuine Italian leather, stain and water repellent custom-manufactured DuraLux™ with the classic leather look or plush MicroLux™ microfiber in a variety of colors to fit any decor. **New Chestnut color only available in Genuine Italian Leather and long lasting DuraLux™. Call now!**

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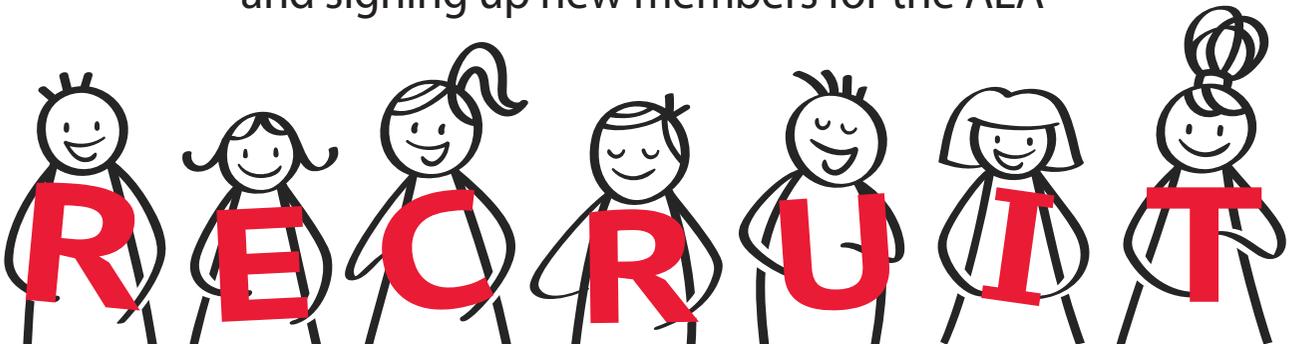


MEMBERSHIP: PART ONE OF A FOUR-PART SERIES

This year, Auxiliary magazine is publishing articles with useful information about gaining and retaining members within the American Legion Auxiliary, and other parts of our American Legion Family. This article is about recruitment. Topics such as membership retention and encouraging former members to rejoin will be explored in future articles.

Membership Recruitment Made Easier

Consider these helpful tips for finding, talking to, and signing up new members for the ALA



Growing the American Legion Auxiliary's membership is not just a hope; it's a necessity. Like a car needs fuel, the ALA needs members so it can keep going. For 101 years, we've worked hard as an expansive community of volunteers serving veterans, the military, and their families. The ALA has honored and helped the people we serve through a plethora of Auxiliary programs and outreach. None of that would be possible without members who volunteer their time and efforts to put into motion our mission of service.

Unfortunately, our community of member volunteers is getting smaller and smaller. Over the last several years, the ALA has seen steady slides in membership numbers. One of the biggest reasons for the slide is the existence of numerous other veterans support organizations with missions and functions like those of the ALA. Another major consideration: Potential members have less leisure time, and more options on how to spend it, than ever before.

Fortunately, something can be done about the membership slide. Proactively recruiting for new members — without the hard-sell that generally turns people off — would help a lot. Most of that starts at the ALA's grassroots level, with current members who are essentially ambassadors of our organization. Whether you set out to recruit someone or a recruitment opportunity arises out of happenstance, you should have some idea beforehand of what to say or do in those instances.

While it's difficult to prepare for every situation and

outcome, *Auxiliary* magazine is offering some helpful tips for effective recruiting. Pass these along to your fellow ALA members, too! Recruitment is not just one person's responsibility.

There's no need to eliminate existing recruitment techniques, especially if they have worked previously. Build on those with additional approaches and strategies for finding, attracting, and signing up new members.

Get Ready to Recruit

Go into this recruitment effort with a positive attitude. Don't instantly assume you will get turned down.

For casual recruiting (as in, you are not at a recruiting event), aim some of your efforts toward people you know, or individuals who are already displaying U.S. patriotism and/or an appreciation for veterans, servicemembers, and military families. Those people are more likely to be open to what you have to say and able to see an alignment between their passion and the ALA mission.

Try not to be nervous. The best way to keep the jitters at bay is to know the topic you are speaking about. As an ALA member, you know the most important things about the organization: who we are, what we do, how we impact the lives of others, and what your ALA membership means to you. Another idea: Initially, focus your recruitment efforts on someone you know — a relative or friend — who might be eligible. That could help you build confidence and curb your nervousness, while offering someone the opportunity to

Most of that [recruitment] starts at the ALA's grassroots level, with current members who are essentially ambassadors of our organization.

serve veterans, military, and their families alongside the ALA and the Legion Family.

Smile! At the start of the conversation, a sincere smile can help set the tone for a positive experience and put the other person at ease.

Recognize that coercing or guilt-tripping people to join is counterproductive. You may get a signup in the short term. But that person may leave the organization later if he or she joined without really wanting to do so initially.

Be ready to share a couple meaningful stats, such as impact numbers. National ALA impact numbers, along with local ones, can be helpful. Who wouldn't want to be part of an organization whose members, nationwide and beyond, gave 6.2 million hours of volunteer time in 2020 for the benefit of veterans, military, their families, area youth and local communities?

If you aren't good with stats and figures, share a brief story that illustrates the difference our organization makes. For example, consider this true account: "Our unit provided food and utilities for a veteran's family in need. The outpouring of relief and gratitude from his wife and family let me know what a difference our unit is making."

Impress, But Don't Overwhelm

Whatever you say about the American Legion Auxiliary and your ALA experience, keep it simple and short. There are many layers, details, intricacies, and traditions involved in the 101-year-old Auxiliary. But too much information can be overwhelming.

Listen as much, or maybe more, than you speak. You may learn about the person's passion for helping others. Then, you can briefly explain how that passion is in alignment with the work of the ALA. Or you may learn about that person's pride in the military service of a relative. Then, you can mention that you share that same pride about your veteran or servicemember relative. You can explain how ALA membership is a way to honor that service.

Have membership applications and brochures — for the ALA, The American Legion, and the Sons of The American Legion — readily available. Recruit for the Legion Family (more on this in the May issue of Auxiliary). Keeping applications and brochures in your car is a good option. Encourage the person to complete the application at that time, or you can make an appointment to meet and assist with the application. Also, let a potential member know they can join immediately online via www.ALAforVeterans.org.

You never know when a recruitment opportunity can arise. Have some of your American Legion Auxiliary business cards with you to give to prospective members. An ALA stationery template, which can be formatted into a business card by a printer or graphics professional, can be downloaded at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Personal follow-up is extremely important. A potential member needs to know you are excited about them joining the Auxiliary and/or the Legion Family. Let them know you value them and what they have to offer. Let them know they will be more than a number when they become an American Legion Auxiliary member.

Make a Statement about the ALA — Start a Conversation

When recruiting, it's a good idea to have a few positive points about the ALA and our mission crafted into a prepared statement that is sincere, truthful, and concise. You can say it during one-on-one conversations or at recruitment events. Adjust the statement as you see fit, adapting for the specific situation, conversation, or information communicated to you by the potential member.

To help you prepare your statement and talk about the ALA in your community, ask yourself the following questions first:

- Why are you a member?
- What initially prompted you to join the organization?
- What keeps you renewing your membership?
- Who do you honor with your membership?
- What projects have you done that you found fulfilling?
- How do you spread your enthusiasm for our mission to people you meet in the community?



Additional Tips

- **Keep the message brief and stay on point.**
- **Practice to make sure you are not stumbling during delivery. You can do this alone, in front of a mirror, so you can see what facial expressions you are naturally forming so you are aware of the impression you could be making.**
- **Have ALA materials related to what you are talking about. And memorize the www.ALAforVeterans.org website address so you share it with potential members, encouraging them to explore the ALA on their own.**

Make Your ALA Statement

- First, ask a question to gauge your audience's knowledge of the Auxiliary, and customize your message accordingly.
- Then give your statement, which should take less than 30 seconds to deliver.
- Speak from your heart. It shouldn't sound like memorized words void of meaning or emotion.

Then listen to the other person(s). Have a discussion.

- By the end of the conversation, your audience should know what the Auxiliary is about, as well as how they can become a member, contribute in any way, or learn more about ALA.



Less Tell, More Show

In addition to talking about the American Legion Auxiliary and the great things our members do for others, show it. Invite potential members to an ALA activity or event — not necessarily a meeting — so they can see our mission in motion. Show them how we help, honor, and advocate for veterans, servicemembers, and their families; mentor youth; and promote patriotism. Pick an activity or event that correlates to the interests of potential members.

- Before you conclude your discussion, invite the person to an ALA mission-based event, volunteer opportunity, or unit meeting. Some people put more stock in what they see than what you say.

- Be prepared to engage further with the potential member if more information is requested after you've piqued their interest. Have additional facts in mind and be ready to discuss them. For example, share how much volunteer time the ALA dedicated to serving veterans, military, and their families last year. Find information like that in the Auxiliary's annual impact report. You can also mention comparable figures from your ALA unit or department to show the Auxiliary's local impact.

How to Respond to Negative Comments when Recruiting

Just about everyone can recall a conversation in which words failed us when a suitable comeback was needed. That can be especially true during membership recruitment attempts. Below are some of the more frequent statements/concerns voiced by a potential ALA member being recruited — and what you can say in response. While this is not a script to be followed verbatim, nor is it an all-inclusive list, the sample responses below should offer you a few ideas on how to address some of the typical negative issues that can pop up when recruiting.

Negative comment: *I joined a unit, and the members gossiped too much/were jerks/were too cliquy.*

Sample response: I'm sorry to hear that your first experience with the American Legion Auxiliary was not a good one, and I hope it won't be your last experience. I hope you will give us the opportunity to show you what

we're about and why we're here. I know there is a unit out there that is a good fit for you. If possible, I would love to help you find that unit. I would be happy to introduce you to members of other units and see if you feel comfortable working with them on our mission.

I don't know the exact situation in that unit. But I feel for you. We want you to be comfortable, to feel welcomed and valued, because we want you to be part of our mission in service.

Negative comment: *I don't know if I'm eligible.*

Sample response: Are you or a family member a veteran or currently serving? If so, unless the service was between 1918 and

1941, you're most likely eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. Maybe there are others in your family who are, too. I would be happy to work with you to figure out if you and others in your family are eligible. There is strength in numbers. Also, service to others is a great experience for family members to share while honoring a loved one who was in the military. **[If the interest is there, follow up by asking for the DD-214 of the person or relative whose military service may fit our membership criteria.]**

Negative comment: *I have young kids and can't regularly attend meetings.*

Sample response: There are different ways to participate, even if you can't attend every meeting.

[If you have a true and relatable story about how ALA members with young children have found ways to contribute to Auxiliary activities and attend meetings, briefly share that. For example, here's a real story shared by an ALA member:

"You know, I had young kids at one time. Then, I was a member who could basically contribute from home. If there was a dinner being held, I could contribute desserts. If the unit was doing something on the weekend, I would try to volunteer for a couple of hours. If there was a letter-writing activity to be done or cards to be sent, those are things I could do from home and still be with my kids."

Our unit does have a Juniors program for eligible girls under the age of 18.

Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, many of us at ALA were using Zoom, GoToMeeting, and other virtual meeting apps. Maybe that can be an option for you. We can find a unit which offers that option. And maybe you can sign on and participate for an hour or so. Most unit meetings don't last longer than that, and meetings don't occur daily.

Or you might want to join an eUnit. That would allow you to participate in our mission of service without leaving your home. You'd still have input on planning mission activities.

We also have plenty of family-friendly events, and we welcome volunteers who aren't members. Maybe there'll be times when you can bring your children, other relatives, or friends along with you to some events.

[NOTE: If the person you are recruiting is an active-duty servicemember who cannot attend meetings in any way, you can explain that we can look for other ways to include them.]

Negative comment: I'm a veteran, and so is my husband. He was welcomed in the post, but I wasn't.

Sample response: First, thank you for your service! I'm sorry to hear that you weren't welcomed. If you join the American Legion Auxiliary, we will work with you and help you work with The American Legion, too. We want you to feel welcomed within all parts of the Legion Family. We can see if you are also eligible to join the Legion, if you'd like. By the way, your husband may be eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary based on your military service. We can look at that, too. What a great way for you both to honor each other's military service!

Negative comment: I can't join now, but I'd like to someday.

Sample response: I wish I could encourage you to join now, but I understand if circumstances don't allow it. Here is my contact information. If you change your mind or just want to talk, I'm here." [At this point, you've left a good impression on this person by not being aggressive and letting them know you care about them. This can also lead to you learning what obstacles exist for the potential member and how you can help them.]

Negative comment: I'm too old to join.

Sample response: I don't know how old you are, but I can tell you that we have people well into their 80s and 90s working with us toward our mission — serving any way they can. In fact, that's another beautiful thing about the American Legion Auxiliary: We are inclusive. People of various ages, races, religions, backgrounds and from all walks of life make up our membership. We are united by the belief in the ALA's mission of service to our military

heroes. How about coming to one of our meetings or functions and talking to our members? You can see how they each found ways to contribute to our cause and you can learn more about our mission of service.

Negative comment: I'm a guy, and men can't join the ALA.

Sample response: If your spouse is a veteran, you are probably eligible to join the ALA, based on your spouse's service dates. I can help you figure that out. If you are eligible, we would be happy to have you join us in our mission of selfless service to other veterans, military, and their families.

Negative comment: I'm not interested.

Sample response: Once a potential member makes it clear — using words, social cues, or body language — that she or he is not interested in joining or receiving any further information from you, stop recruiting and give that person some space. Don't take it as a personal rejection. If that person has a change of mind and wants to learn more, they'll find you. Plus, you can re-direct your time and effort toward someone who is open right now to what you have to say.



Simple, Indirect Ways to Recruit

- Recruiting can be as easy as placing an informational door hanger on a vehicle with military or veterans plates or putting one on a doorknob of a house flying the American flag. Auxiliary door hangers can be downloaded at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Member/Resources/Door-Hanger-Templates (login required).

- Finished reading your copy of *Auxiliary* magazine? If you don't want to

keep it, get permission to leave your magazine at a place where people may have time to read — like a local VA clinic, doctor's office, or the waiting room of a car repair shop. Our quarterly national ALA magazine is a great way for people to learn what we do and pique their interest. You can strike out your mailing address and cover it with a sticker listing contact information, even a website address, for your ALA unit and post home.

- When possible, include the American Legion Auxiliary's name and emblem anywhere you can for ALA programs, activities, and outreach — or mission-based efforts done in partnership with other likeminded organizations. It would be ideal to also include a website address, phone number, or street address of your ALA unit or post home so people can learn more about the Auxiliary and the Legion Family. If your unit doesn't have a website, feel free to include ALA national's website address: www.ALAforVeterans.org. Also, if the local media is writing about your unit or post home, ask if the contact information can be included in the article.

When Gatherings Are Less Socially Restricted Ways to Bring Potential Members to You

• Invite the public to serve with you in a way that follows COVID-19 public health guidelines in your community. If you are hosting an ALA mission-oriented service project, offer people from area businesses and your community the opportunity to participate. This could spark interest.

• Volunteer to have a table at an event geared toward veterans (resource or job fairs, for example). Many people don't join the Auxiliary or other parts of The American Legion Family because they have never been asked. Share with them the one-page ALA impact sheet available at www.ALAforVeterans.org and updated Auxiliary brochures, as well as similar items for the Legion and Sons of The American Legion. Please be sure your literature no longer refers to the ALA as a women's organization. If you need the most up-to-date brochures, contact your department ALA office.

• Places of worship are great locations to find potential members. Start with immediate circles within your place of worship.

And, when the following can be done safely, adhering to public health guidelines in your community:

• Host a post home open house specifically for military families so they can learn more about the ALA.

• Have senior members of the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion, along with Legionnaires, host events for students and promote all the educational programs the Legion Family has to offer (ALA Girls State, ALA Girls Nation, American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation).

• Host themed gatherings specific to interests

(crafting, cooking, resume building, art, etc.) for the entire community. If possible, hold these events at your post home. Conduct post home tours if you have a Cavalcade of Memories history museum or some unit, post, or squadron keepsakes you'd like to show and briefly discuss.

Membership Eligibility Documents

The most common document used to prove eligibility in The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion is a DD-214 — or a military service discharge paper from the U.S. Department of Defense. But some veterans don't have those records. And many of these official papers may have been destroyed by the fire at the archives center in St. Louis decades ago.

Fortunately, there are additional documents, other than the DD-214, that can prove eligibility:

- Official military orders
- Official military service citations/awards
- Letters related to the veteran's military service on official government letterhead
- A certificate from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis
- Data from the back of older discharges

Make sure you know what the American Legion Auxiliary organization accepts as proof of membership eligibility. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/Join for a full list of requirements.

Cast a Wider Net for Potential ALA and Legion Family Members

More than 4 million veterans — previously ineligible for membership in The American Legion — can now join, thanks to the passage of the LEGION Act just over two years ago. The LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service) declares that the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941. This declaration opens membership eligibility within The American Legion to those who served during the Cold War and other conflicts, and their eligible family members.

• Think of the large number of family members of those veterans who are eligible for American Legion Auxiliary membership. That includes male spouses of those veterans. Auxiliary membership eligibility has been extended to include male spouses of U.S. veterans and servicemembers who have served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918; and any time after Dec. 7, 1941. Other eligibility

**Be gentle
and welcoming with
your inquiries. Briefly talk
with them about the
ALA: what we do
and why we matter.**

Helpful tips for obtaining veterans' military records

- **The National Personnel Records Center:** archives.gov/veterans
- **The County Clerk and Recorder's Office where the veteran resided when he/she registered upon return from service.**
- **The funeral home may have kept a copy if military honors were provided.**
- **Monument company if a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs headstone or marker was ordered.**
- **If the veteran had utilized a VA Home Loan, there may be a copy of the DD-214 with the title documentation.**
- **Veterans who signed up for the VA's eBenefits may be able to obtain a printable copy:** ebenefits.va.gov



requirements can be found at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- Check back with those who may have been interested in joining in the past but couldn't. It's important to let all veterans and their families in your community know they are now eligible.

- Consider posting reminders in newsletters and discussing during unit meetings. Current members should be prepared to explain the LEGION Act when recruiting because it can be confusing to veterans who weren't eligible before but are now.

Potential Members May already be in Your Post Home

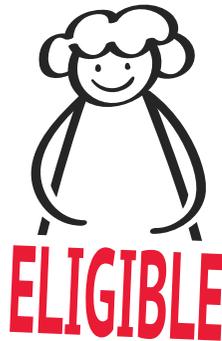
For American Legion Auxiliary units seeking additional members, often-overlooked recruitment opportunities may already be located in their post homes.

- Think of all the nonmembers who conduct events or meet regularly at your post throughout the year. Might some of those women, girls, and spouses of veterans and servicemembers be eligible to join ALA? You'll never know until you ask. But be gentle

and welcoming with your inquiries. Briefly talk with them about the ALA: what we do and why we matter.

- As ALA Juniors approach age 18, speak with them about staying in the Auxiliary as an adult member. Be careful not to pressure them or apply a guilt trip. Though you may not mean it that way, sometimes that can be the perception when aggressive recruiting appears overly aggressive. ★

— By Landa Bagley, Staff Writer



Membership Eligibility Criteria

When engaging with potential members, make sure you know the criteria for membership to the different organizations within the Legion Family. Below are web addresses where you can learn the details. **REMEMBER: Spouses — women and men — can join the Auxiliary. And the LEGION Act expands the military service criteria for membership. That means more people might be eligible to join the Legion Family! But people won't know this unless you tell them. Familiarize yourself with eligibility criteria.**

- American Legion Auxiliary: www.ALAforVeterans.org/about/eligibility
- The American Legion: Legion.org/membership/faq
- Sons of The American Legion: Legion.org/sons/membershipfaq

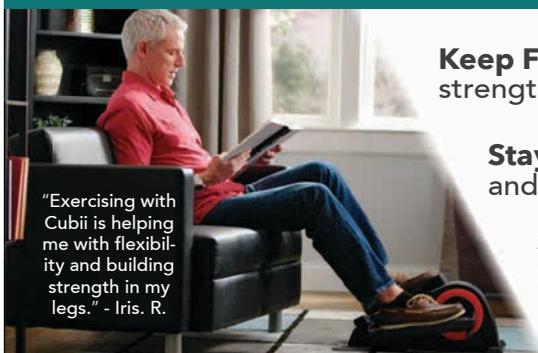
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Veterans Showcase Heart Through Art ... from Home

The year 2020 marked the 40th anniversary of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) and the ALA's 20th anniversary as a co-presenter with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

NVCAF is all about the therapeutic healing power of the arts. The event brings together creative veterans throughout the country who made it to the national level after competing at local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities — but this year looked a bit different. Due to concerns for public health related to COVID-19, veteran artists participated in the 2020 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival from the comfort of their own homes during the week of Nov. 30.

“This Festival year certainly taught us a lesson on flexibility and opened our eyes to new possibilities,” said Amy L. Kimbler, director, National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival. “It tested our creativity and the resources available to us, and we stepped outside of the box to present a virtual experience for the 2020 competition gold medal winning veterans. The virtual event provided various creative art workshops for veterans to experience.”

Through their varied works of art, male and female veterans of all military branches find healing, acceptance, and camaraderie as part of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Even during challenging times, over 3,700 veterans from 120 VA medical facilities nationwide entered the 2020 art, music, drama, dance, and creative writing competitions. Of those, 175 gold medal-winning veterans were invited to participate in the national level. The historical week, titled NVCAF at Home, consisted of virtual workshop opportunities, educational sessions, and forever friendships.

During the Festival, select events were open to the public through a variety of web-based platforms, allowing

everyone worldwide to see the veterans' talent and creativity. The Opening/Festival Show Video, Artist Showcase, Writer Showcase, Performer Showcase, and Closing Video were all available to watch on the Veteran Affairs Adaptive Sports Facebook page and website. The Closing Video had over 24,400 Facebook views — record-breaking statistics.

“One of the biggest positives of the 2020 Festival was that we could share its impact more than we would have if it would have been the normal face-to-face event,” said Chrystal Daulton, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program manager at National Headquarters. “It helped increase awareness about the event, including the local competitions, and gave much needed exposure for the event, in extension to the VA's Adaptive Sports Program as a whole.”

Despite the unprecedented circumstances, the VA and American Legion Auxiliary were able to host a successful, historical, life-changing virtual Festival.

NVCAF creates unforgettable impact in veterans' lives

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival truly is a life-changing experience — and has been for the last 40 years. The 2020 event was like a light in many months of darkness and allowed veterans from across the country to communicate and interact with each other, just in a virtual form.



Mary Jean Houlahan, Performer
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

“I felt like myself again, for the first time in months. I didn't feel pain. I didn't feel constricted. I just danced. For me, that was such a relief, such a welcome realization that it's all going to be OK. Dancing is the one thing that continues to save me,” Houlahan said.



Houlahan used to dance daily at her local dance studio, but due to social-distancing restrictions and other COVID-19 precautions, the studio shut down — and dancing alone in isolation wasn't the same.

"I was all alone, so not to have my dancing was very, very difficult. Yes, I could watch a video on the internet, but I wasn't connected to anyone — that's why I looked forward to the Festival," she said.

During a virtual event, Veterans Creative Arts performer Victoria McCoy saw fellow Marine Mary Jean and insisted that she danced. That is exactly what NVCAF is all about: helping veterans find a safe place to express themselves through creative arts.

"When I started to dance, I was right back in Michigan again. We were on stage, we were together, and for that short half a minute, I felt like myself again for the first time in months," Houlahan said.

Both performers and dancers, McCoy and Houlahan connected again in another virtual session and are even thinking about putting something together for next year's Festival.

"Who would have thought? Not only two female Marines, but two gold medal winners, and we are both Marine Corps League members," McCoy said. "It was cosmic from the start."



**Victoria McCoy, Performer
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran**

"Years ago, I was introduced to the Creative Arts Festival by my therapist because I had suicidal thoughts, and I was an inpatient at the VA."

For the last 40 years, NVCAF has helped shape the lives of creative veterans across the country. Victoria McCoy was introduced to the Festival as an inpatient at a VA hospital. During her stay, her therapist realized she was a performer and asked if she knew that they had a music therapy group — she didn't. Next thing she knew, McCoy's doctor was taking her to music therapy.

"That opened the door to me being able to express myself and heal my mind from the negative thoughts," said McCoy. "I have not had a suicidal thought in 15 years, which was when I was introduced to the Festival."

McCoy had always loved music, singing, dancing, and performing, but her mental health closed her off from the rest of the world. Since she had been a performer in the past, creative arts helped her start to express herself musically. The annual competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through art therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements from our nation's veterans.

"I can't explain enough that the Festival literally saved my life," McCoy said. "Because there I was, with suicidal thoughts and wanting to end completely, then two days later I found out about the Festival and never looked back."



**Mike McCann, Performer
U.S. Army Veteran**

Mike McCann has participated in almost every National Veterans Creative Arts Festival since 2004 in the drama and creative writing categories. That first Festival changed his life and career forever.

"It was life-changing. It inspired me to reach out and try to do something professionally. So this Festival changed my entire life — it led me to a professional career in acting, which I never really thought of before," McCann said. "The Festival kicked off a tribute of my life, which led me to dabble into professional acting."

Since then, McCann has been in music videos for

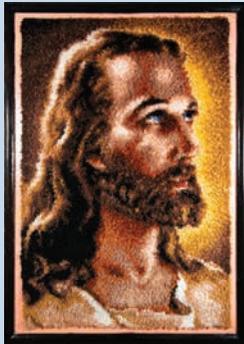


NVCAF AT HOME (top left): Veterans participate in a virtual Comedy Crash Course Workshop where they learned how to uncover humor in personal experiences; veterans virtually attend an acting workshop; the NVCAF Opening Act was a prerecorded video available online; (above): U.S. Air Force veteran Kevin Vanslyke performs during the #NVCAFatHome Performers Showcase; Dr. Zvi (Steven) Pearlstein wins a gold medal in the instrumental solo rock/blues category; Groovy Cleaning Service performs; veteran James Nickel participates in the Bob Ross Workshop.

Some of the 2020 National Veterans Creative Arts Competition Gold Medal Art Entries



Mosaic Kit
"Love"
Terri Eanes



Latch Hook Kit
"The Way, The Truth, and The Life"
Monica Avant



Glasswork
"Heaven's Green Corn"
Frances Smith



Suncatcher or Sand Art Kit
"Perfect View of Summer
in Bloom"
Curtis Sannerud



Acrylic Painting
"Battle"
Stanislaw Slanda



Mixed Media
"Beloved Altar of Notre Dame"
Dennis Linn



Paint by Number Kit
"Unicorn Garden"
Henry Aruffo



Crocheting/Knitting
"Jesus Wept"
Frances Smith



Leather Carving/Tooling
"Nouveau Steampunk"
Sean Connolly



Scroll Saw/Fretwork
"Chess Set"
John Barbazon



Pastels
"Wedding Ceremony"
Willie Weaver-Bey



Metalwork
"Lucky"
Carmen Rodolph



Jewelry (Not Beads)
"Phoenix"
Michael Bauer



Watercolor
"Hide and Seek"
Pedro A. Rodriguez



Fabric Art Kit
"American Eagle"
Catherine D'Angelo



Needlework Kit
"Sophia"
Steven Ceretti



Craft Coloring Kit
"Stained Glass"
Janet Drake



Oil Painting
"Respect"
Charles Burt



Mosaic Kit
"Love"
Terri Eanes



Leather Kit
"Her Bag"
Carl Crawford



Stained or Painted Ceramics
"Patriotic Gladiator"
Nadine Lewis



Model Building Kit
"A6 Intruder-Indy"
Jon Hoffman



Woodworking
"Armillary Sphere"
Jim Anderson



Glazed Ceramics
"Mental Wellness Images"
Nadine Lewis



Leather Stamping
"Leisure Times Purse"
John Wickstrom



Beadwork
"Beaded Hummingbird"
Catherine Huston



Wood Building Kit
"Granddaughter's First Wagon"
Robert Dockins



Original Design in Needlework
"She-Bear"
Valerie Lovelace



Monochromatic Drawing
"Louis Armstrong"
Dennis O'Connor

artists Jennifer Hudson, Adam Levine, and Matchbox 20. McCann has also taken his talents to television; he's been on the Oxygen Channel, *Shark Tank*, *1,000 Ways to Die*, *The Ellen Show*, as well as some national commercials.

"I feel it is an honor to be selected to be part of this Festival because I'm representing the soldiers, the people of the military," McCann said. "I'm performing to honor those who did not come home."



**Julián Morales, Creative Writer
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran**

Julián Morales wrote a short script many years ago about his friend from the Marine Corps who had passed away. He submitted the play for the 2020 NVCAF as a way to honor his friend while also doing something true to himself. The Festival allows veterans to express themselves and heal through so many varied artistic categories.

"We are all very likeminded in a way; we've all fought in

different wars, but the result is the same — we have stories to tell, whether it's through photography, writing, dance, or theater, and when we get together, great things happen," Morales said.

Morales' main focus during the National Veterans Creative Art Festival was healing. He didn't expect anything to get published, nor did he get competitive. He just wanted to focus on the therapeutic benefits of the week with his creative writing or dance performances.

"I wish I would have found out about the Festival a lot sooner. Maybe I would have been a lot better off with my PTSD if I had," Morales said. "Before I submitted last year, I couldn't do it, but then there was this push or fire inside me that was like, 'You got to do something to put out these flames because you're gonna burn up.'"

Read more about the American Legion Auxiliary's support of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival by heading over to www.ALAforVeterans.org. ★

By Alexa Freeman, Staff Writer

A closer look at NVCAF at Home

Even though the 2020 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival was a virtual, at-home event, veteran artists across the country still took part in the event to commemorate their hard work. They persevered through virtual technology issues and embraced this new way of meeting.

"I loved being able to see folks from last year, which was almost like you'd been released from confinement to see your friends again," said performer Mary Jean Houlahan. "It was so exciting to see them and to see new people and welcome them in a situation that wasn't normal for them either. The thrill of being there was being with other veterans."

The at-home decision was made to protect the health, safety, and well-being of veterans, caregivers, families, sponsors, and staff at local and national levels. Making the best of the situation, the change still provided veterans an opportunity to continue to be artistically engaged and recognized for their creative accomplishments, despite not actually being together.

"I thought the week was great! Definitely not the same as going to an actual Festival and meeting other veterans and caregivers face to face, but times are changing, and I learned to adapt. It was different, but it was great at the same time," said NVCAF gold medalist veteran Julián Morales.

The 2020 NVCAF was the first of its kind. And although no one was together physically, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary were able to incorporate interactive virtual workshops and educational sessions to continue the connection the Festival brings.

"The fact that VA staff and ALA staff picked up this challenge and made this happen is just remarkable," said Army Veteran Mike McCann. "I think we can learn from this Festival."



A week before the Festival, VA team leaders and the Auxiliary national team met with the creative veterans to offer an opportunity to meet each other in a small group session. Veterans who weren't able to attend the pre-meeting to familiarize themselves with the new technology were provided with an online platform test as a way to get comfortable with the virtual platform.

"The virtual Festival was well done. We had our obstacles and our bumps, but I think that had a lot to do with the fact that it was our first time," added Marine Corps Veteran Victoria McCoy.

The virtual week included a wide variety of workshops and educational sessions for veterans to participate in. As a way to become inspired and connect with veterans across the country, a national VA art workshop was offered. A comedy workshop was full of laughs, and the veterans were taught how to find the funny in everyday life. Other workshops offered were Releasing Tension through Cuban Dance, writing workshops, and songwriting workshops.

"I thought it was a very good educational opportunity for people with any kind of interest in other artist categories," said McCann.

Here's a big virtual round of applause and standing ovation to all winning artists for their participation!

IMPACT ALA!

DON'T MISS OUT — ARE YOU CONNECTED THROUGH ALA MEDIA?

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters wants to make sure every member is informed and updated. No matter the form of communication you prefer, our goal is to make it convenient for you. Our multiple platforms provide useful information to ALA members, as well as the public.

Auxiliary magazine

Our main communication tool with the largest reach is in your hands — *Auxiliary* magazine. This quarterly publication, mailed to 615,000 addresses, features ALA members and units doing great work, highlights national ALA events, includes tips and tools to help you serve veterans, military, and their families, and offers several other ALA-focused articles. Save copies of your magazines and look back when you need tips on membership, fundraising, service projects, etc., or visit the archived issues at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

In between each magazine are digital platforms to keep you connected on an even more timely basis. Following ALA media online allows you to find out about virtual meeting and learning registrations as soon as they are announced, giving you plenty of time to save the date and sign up before spaces are full. These types of announcements are also easy to share with others through email or on your own social media accounts.

ALA eNews

This newsletter is published on the second Wednesday of each month and delivered by email. ALA

eNews includes new information you need to know about the ALA, dates and registration links for ALA Academy Live webinars, resources available, valuable member benefits, and much more. If you're not already subscribing to ALA *eNews*, go to the about us tab on www.ALAforVeterans.org, and under our communications go to ALA *eNews*. Click on any issue of *eNews*, and find the "join our email list" at the top of the page.

ALA blog

The ALA blog is where you can find quick and easy reads. The blog contains original content like announcements and guest blogs, as well as stories that complement what you've read in *Auxiliary* magazine. Some things you can find on the blog include stories on inspiring members, ideas for working American Legion Auxiliary programs, and much more.

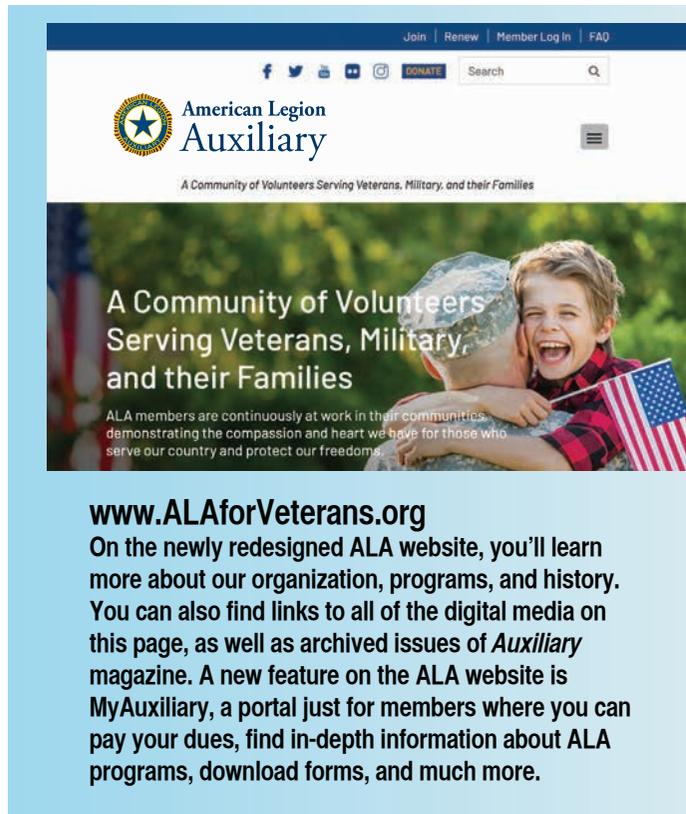
Social media

A great place to keep up daily on what's happening with the Auxiliary, following us social media is how you'll discover what's new on the blog, be among the first to know about webinars and meetings, and learn about everything new to the ALA. We have active social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. To

connect, search for @ALAforVeterans.

We also have Facebook and Instagram accounts for our Junior Activities program (@ALAJuniors) and ALA Girls Nation (@ALAGirlsNation), as well as Facebook pages for the ALA national president (@ALANationalPresident) and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (@NVCAF).

Another useful place for ALA-related information is our many Facebook groups. Each ALA national committee has a group. These forums are great resources to learn more about a particular ALA program, ask questions, and interact with other members, including national committee chairmen. You can find these groups by visiting National Headquarters' Facebook page (@ALAforVeterans).



What's happening in your local ALA?

Your American Legion Auxiliary unit probably has a regular communication resource like a unit newsletter. Are you subscribed? Be sure to check with your unit secretary to see if you're on the mailing list. Most ALA departments also have ways to connect with you, whether it's through a newsletter or social media — or both! Do a quick search on social today to see who you can follow next for the latest information.

LEGISLATIVE: HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative



The 117th Congress is here, and there are new faces. Do your elected officials know you and your affiliation with the American Legion Auxiliary? It is important that our voices are heard in assisting veterans and their families. As a constituent, your voice matters to your elected officials. You can connect in several ways — through letters, emails, legislative alerts, or personal contact.

If you are unsure how to proceed in connecting, here are some steps

to building relationships with legislators:

- Subscribe to your legislators' newsletters, or visit their websites frequently to keep informed on their activities and positions.

- As legislative issues arise, contact your legislators to share The American Legion Family's point of view. It is the responsibility of ALA advocates to represent the

position of The American Legion.

- Send thank-you notes to compliment legislators on a job well done, a vote we supported, or on committee appointments received.

- Share a copy of The American Legion Legislative Agenda.

- Find more suggestions at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

The health of our veterans is important. Did you know that Senate Bill 785 (Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act

of 2019) was signed into law by President Trump on Oct. 17, 2020? We do make a difference advocating for veterans issues.

The American Legion is supporting "Buddy Check Week." This bill would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a week as Buddy Check Week for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes. There are many bills with similar concepts, but The American Legion does not always support every bill that involves veterans. Bills are checked to make sure they are in the veteran's best interest. It is your obligation to make sure you are advocating for legislation supported by the Legion. You can find more information at www.Legion.org/legislative.



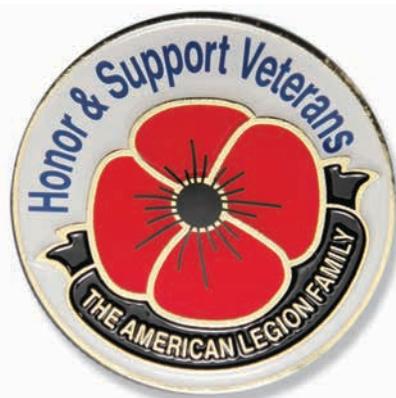
Norma Tramm is a member of ALA Unit 455 Cold Spring MN. She has been a member of the Auxiliary since she was 4 years old.

POPPY: THINK OF ALTERNATE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PROGRAM

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy

COVID-19 has severely impacted the efforts of nonprofits in many ways, and no more so than the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program. The loss of monetary support from the face-to-face distribution of poppies may have limited how you continue to help our veterans, military, and their families, especially now when the need has increased while funds are shrinking.

It is important that units find innovative and new approaches to offset the loss until we can once again meet in person. Many are turning to virtual programs, but a few may not have experience with this type of platform. There are many websites and blogs that offer help with advice and other materials



to assist nonprofits with developing a successful plan to raise funds. One blog to consider is *Peer-to-Peer Fundraising* (www.causevox.com) that focuses on core supporters and engages prospective donors who are advocates of our mission. Online campaigns such as #GivingTuesday

have been successful in raising funds for nonprofits. Besides traditional media outlets, social media, such as Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter, are other ways to solicit donations. Why not assign this task to a member who may be proficient in these types of interactive marketing platforms?

National Poppy Day® this year is May 28, 2021. Now is the time to start thinking about how your unit will share the message of the poppy — whether virtually or in person — and how important it is to remember those who have sacrificed their lives.



Beth McGinn is a 19-year member of the Department of Delaware, Oak Orchard Riverdale Unit 28, in Millsboro.

AMERICANISM: TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH IN WORKING OUR PROGRAM

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAAmericanism



What does your 2020-2021 Americanism program look like this year with COVID-19 restrictions set in place? Some things remain the same with only minor adjustments, like wearing face masks and social distancing. Flag etiquette can be taught, proper flag disposals can be held, and celebrating patriotic holidays are things that can still be done. A great way to keep the community engaged is by giving

certificates to those who properly fly the flag. Document their Americanism and patriotism with photos to use in your local post/unit newsletters, or submit to local newspapers.

Each year, we promote our Americanism Essay Contest. The topic is always chosen

by the national president based on her focus for her year. In these unprecedented times, this is the first instance that a topic will be the same for two years in a row. Although there are some who think this is difficult to promote, we take a positive approach.

In just one year, think of all the ways the pandemic has changed how we serve our veterans, military, and their families. We might have taken

a veteran to the store for groceries. Now we take their order over the phone or through a closed door and leave the groceries at their door. We may have babysat children to give a military mom or dad a break. Now we use FaceTime and engage the children in a craft or game.

So you see, even though our essay topic remains the same — *How can we address the health and well-being of our veterans, our military, and their families?* — there is no reason to resubmit an essay from last year because times have changed. Some projects may be repeated this year, but I am looking forward to seeing all the creative ways in which the pandemic has changed how our youth serves veterans and military families.



Denise Conrad is a 28-year PUFL member of ALA Freedom Unit 183 in Pemberville, Ohio.

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND: OVER FIVE DECADES OF HELPING MEMBERS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund

Established in 1969, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund was created with a bequest from the estate of Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisc. Five decades later, the AEF is still helping fellow Auxiliary members get back on their feet. One of the reasons to belong to the American Legion Auxiliary is the AEF program benefit -- we help our own members in their greatest time of need. The AEF provides temporary financial assistance to eligible members during times of financial crisis or weather-related emergencies and natural disasters.

2020 set many records for those disasters. More than 1,200 tornadoes hit the United States, leaving destruction in numerous states. It was one of the deadliest hurricane seasons in 170 years.

Hurricanes caused \$46.9 billion in damages. Wildfires burned in several states, with 45 million people remaining under some sort of warning or advisory. COVID-19 caused financial havoc to America, with millions of cases reported and nearly 300,000 deaths in the United States.

American Legion Auxiliary members continue to be affected by hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, tragedies, illnesses, and financial loss. The AEF grants have made a difference and a huge impact in the lives of our members. At the close of fiscal year 2020, we received \$195,860 in donations, and we provided grants totaling \$230,673 across 31 departments. It helps to know that AEF grants have been there for our members.

Please report your AEF activities, and continue to have fundraisers for donations. We want our members to continue sharing their stories about how the AEF program affected their lives.

I want to personally let you all know that I am thankful for your dedication to the AEF program: those who hold fundraisers, those who make donations to the program, those who help our members, and those who process the applications and grants. Thank you to The American Legion Family who have helped provide assistance to other departments.



Vickie Thrower-Mills is a 38-year member of Buford D. Byrom Unit 176 in Huntsville, Ala.

CHILDREN & YOUTH: ALA YOUTH HERO, GOOD DEED AWARDS HELP ‘CELEBRATE A CENTURY OF SERVICE’

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth

As we Celebrate A Century of Service, the American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth national committee has been concentrating on Youth Hero Awards and Good Deed Awards.

What is the difference?

■ **Youth Hero Award:** Youth should demonstrate a physical act of valor.

■ **Good Deed Award:** Youth should demonstrate a leadership role, and a specific deed should be present.

There are many youngsters eligible for either of these awards as we listen to the nightly news, read our local newspapers, surf the internet, or scroll through social media. And we think, “Wow! That kid should be recognized!”

But then what? How can you submit a youth for the ALA award? And then how can you locate the

child? His parents?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ALA National Headquarters has created a fillable Youth Hero/Good Deed nomination form. It can be found on the Children & Youth program page using the member login at www.ALAFORVeterans.org as well as the ALA Children & Youth Facebook group. There is no need to print and sign it; all can be done digitally! The only “catch” is you must save it to your computer first — don’t fill it in directly from the website.

In many cases, it can be difficult to locate the deserving youth. Use your local resources! It may be that you saw it in a newspaper article or local newscast; reach out to the reporter and ask for contact information of the parent. At the very least, ask them to pass along your contact information so that you can touch base.

If that doesn’t work, try contacting the school. School administrators often agree that the child needs to be recognized, and they may help put you in contact with parents.

And don’t forget to use your own ALA members. Share the story with them; they may already know Mom or Dad!

You might know the child’s family members yourself! Could they be members of The American Legion Family?

In celebration of the Auxiliary’s 100th anniversary, a goal to present 100 of each award was set. We have far surpassed that goal for the Good Deed Awards, but we’re still on the lookout for the Youth Hero Awards to attain our goal.



Lisa Williamson is a 31-year member of C. Russell Huber Unit 57 in Fairbanks, Alaska.

NATIONAL SECURITY: CONTINUING TO SERVE OUR MILITARY, THEIR FAMILIES

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANatISec



As we continue to celebrate our centennial, and with the COVID-19 pandemic, American Legion Auxiliary members have adapted to changes and found new ways to serve our military and their families while working the ALA’s mission.

The pandemic has not stopped units from recognizing their units Gold Star Mothers and families, and

remembering their Blue Star Mothers with Certificates of Honor and beautiful flowers.

Collecting socks and cookies for care packages and collecting trick-or-treat candy to send in Halloween-decorated boxes to overseas troops were just some ways ALA units remembered our military men and women.

Don’t forget the same can be done anytime throughout the year, not just holidays. After all, everyone loves a little candy or homemade cookies.

Work with your American Legion Veteran Service Officer — he/she can help you with military families who may be in need of gift cards for food, gas, or other necessities.

Members could also work with the USO.

The ALA National Security Facebook group is an excellent resource for members to share information and ideas on what they have accomplished. If you are not already of member of this group, I encourage you to join. It’s easy — just request to join and fully answer the three questions when prompted.

As American Legion Auxiliary members, we will continue to find special ways to support our active, reserve and transitioning military servicemembers and their families during the pandemic.

Thank you for your dedication to our organization and our military.



Melanie Taylor is a 30-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to William Russell Ledford Unit 293 in California.

IMPACT ALA! WHAT'S NEW AT NHQ

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANTS TO SUPPORT ALA MISSION

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board of Directors, at their virtual fall meeting, voted to award two Mission in Action grants totaling more than \$4,000. These grants are to be used to help members brand their programs so that the ALA is recognizable in the community for all of their good works.

■ The Department of Vermont was awarded \$2,942. The grant will be used to purchase and brand a cargo trailer to transport gifts to local veterans as part of the department's existing program.

■ Illinois Unit 96 was awarded \$1,096 to purchase branded table runners, canopy tents, reusable car decals, and banners to be used at unit events as they serve their community. The ALA Foundation has reached

an incredible milestone after the awarding of these grants — the Foundation has now awarded over half a million dollars to ALA entities across the country since the first grant back in 2012.

These grants have supported countless veterans in need at VA facilities and veterans' homes, contributed to the success of 27 local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, and helped more efficiently brand our mission projects to increase community awareness.

For more on these grants and how to apply, go to www.ALAFoundation.org/grants.

Are you interested in serving on the ALA Foundation Board of Directors?

Do you have a desire to give

back to the American Legion Auxiliary? The ALA Foundation Board of Directors is now accepting applications.

Interested candidates should be passionate about serving veterans, military, and their families. They should also have experience in board leadership and fundraising.

Each board member has a responsibility to encourage and solicit donations, personally thank our donors, and review and evaluate grant applications.

The majority of meetings will be held virtually. Members will be given materials for review prior to meetings, allowing tasks to move more efficiently.

For more information and to apply, visit www.ALAFoundation.org. The deadline to apply is April 1.



THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT IS HERE

Despite everything 2020 threw our way, we still had a very successful year serving military, veterans, and their families all over the country. You can learn more about how we specifically lived out our mission by checking out our Annual Report!

What's inside the 2020 Annual Report?

- Gratitude letters from ALA National President Nicole Clapp and ALA Foundation Board of Directors President Doris Hammeke, thanking donors for their generous gifts despite the challenges of living in a worldwide pandemic
- How the American Legion Auxiliary and ALA Foundation make an impact in donations and volunteer service
- Donor recognition
- How ALA adult and Junior members are making a difference in their communities and more!



Download today at
www.ALAForVeterans.org/About/Annual-Reports

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Provided by *Mary Anne Casadei, National Chaplain 2020-2021* | www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains

FEBRUARY

“At once I was in the Spirit, and therefore before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there has an appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled in the throne.”

— Revelation 4:2-3

Can you imagine what it was like for people to see the first color television? After years of only black and white — to see vibrant colors on television must have been amazing. Can you imagine watching your favorite TV shows in black and white? My grandson has trouble accepting the concept of black and white TV. Color makes shows interesting and lively. Black and white is a completely different experience.

If color makes that big of a difference in our entertainment, just think of what our world would be without color. You would not be able to see the rosy cheeks of a child at play, no vibrant blue of the ocean, no deep pink of a watermelon, no emerald green forests, and no bright orange of the fall leaves. We would miss the wondrous beauty of a male peacock, and a colorful rainbow after the rain. Praise God for all the wonderful colors in our world. Just think: If He can create a world of color and beauty, what can He do in our lives?

We need to place our trust in God. He has given us a wonderful world to live in. He has given us His love. Our problems are nothing compared to what He has done for us, or what He will do for us. Have faith in God. He wants what is best for us. He has given us the ability to see colors, to love, and to be happy and content. There is nothing he won't do for us.

“Dear God, I have faith in You. You have chosen me to be Your child. I know You want what is best for me. Continue to be my guide. My life is full of color and love because of You. To You is given the glory. You answer my prayers. Amen.”

MARCH

“But you are the same, and Your years will have no end.”

— Psalm 102:27

Have you ever heard “The only thing constant is change.”? We are constantly changing. We change physically. Add a few pounds here; take a few off there. Every year, we add a few more wrinkles. We change emotionally. Think of the mood changes of a teenager: Those are tough times. We all have highs and lows. The weather changes daily. If you live in central New York, you are liable to experience winter, spring, summer, and fall all in one day! And don't mention technology — every day, it is something new! Who even understands all that lingo?

Change in our world is constant.

But we have a surety in someone constant. Our God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He will never break His promise to us. He is the same through the end of time. Hebrews 1:10 says, “In the beginning, Lord, You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain: They will wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment, they will be changed. But you will remain the same; your years will never end.”

We will never be forgotten by God; He will never let you down. He is the one constant we can depend upon. He is our constant companion. He is with us through thick and thin. No matter what the circumstances are, we are never alone. He will carry our burdens. He will give us peace and comfort. What a glorious feeling knowing we are never alone and God will always be with us.

“Dear God, circumstances change, but You never do. I thank You for always being constant in my life. I can face all adversity with You by my side. You are my strength, You take away my sorrow, and You give me peace. Amen.”

APRIL

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

— Ephesians 4:32-32

When someone hurts us, we feel a multitude of emotions, anger, bitterness, resentment, and revenge. Forgiveness is the last thought you have. We waste so much time on these emotions. Some people hold grudges for years. We choose to be angry. We choose to be bitter. We choose to be resentful. Well, my friends, we can also choose to forgive.

Forgiveness is the undeserved gift. It is also a gift to you. Being angry and resentful has a negative effect on you. You become snarky, short-tempered and just plain mean. When you decide to forgive, you receive emotional and spiritual blessing. You get rid of that black cloud hanging over you, making everything dark and gloomy. Unforgiveness weighs us down. When we forgive, we have higher self-esteem, better relationships, and better health. Forgiveness may be hard, but it is liberating. With your forgiveness, you are free from all anxiety associated with your anger. You are relieved of your burden.

We can offer the gift of forgiveness to others. Colossians 3 says, “Bear with one another and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Verse 13: “Are you staggering under a burden of bitterness? Throw it off. Be released. Usher in gratitude for the ability to be forgiven and to forgive. Let your soul rejoice in the freedom forgiveness brings.”

“Dear God, as You forgive me, I will forgive others. Help me to follow Your example. Amen.”



Mary Anne Casadei is a PUFL member of Henry P. Smith Unit 24 in Rome, N.Y.

Building ALA brand loyalty



(Photo: Kellen M. Quigley)

FIND MORE WAYS TO BOOST THE PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Wearing apparel emblazoned with the American Legion Auxiliary's name and emblem is a great way to raise awareness of the ALA brand in your community — or to get people curious enough to ask about our organization. Most ALA members have mastered this traditional marketing technique.

ALA members can build on that success and find additional ways to get our name, emblem, and website address in front of the public. Don't toss out your ALA branded shirts, jackets, hats, and accessories. Wearing or carrying these in public, especially at community-wide ALA events and activities, is still an effective marketing technique. But it is time

to do other things too, taking our marketing to the next level to boost brand awareness in the communities we serve.

Let's face it: There are other veterans support organizations out there. We must introduce, and in some cases, re-introduce, the ALA to the public. We need to show who we are, what we do, and what makes us different from other veteran auxiliary groups. In many cases, that starts with the public knowing and understanding the Auxiliary's brand.

As it is aptly stated in the ALA Branding Guide: "Our brand is our identity. It's our reputation, our promise. It's how the public recognizes us. It defines who we are — a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families."

ALA member Sue Williams of Unit 535 in Salamanca, N.Y., explained why the extra effort is needed to get the Auxiliary's brand out in the community.

"If people don't see what we do and how much we do, we won't get any of the backing — volunteers, donations, and new members — we need to help our veterans. We should try to get our names out in front of the public any way we can," Williams said.

Unit 535 employed a simple and smart way to get ALA's brand out there while honoring veterans. In working with a local government agency and other community volunteers outside of the ALA, the unit embarked on a "Hometown Heroes" banner project. Each of the hundreds of banners have the ALA's emblem beneath a photo of the veteran being honored, along with the person's military branch of service, and other basic info and patriotic decor. The banners are

displayed on the community's utility poles, along streets with lots of traffic, from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. This directly links the ALA with one of our mission-driven efforts to honor and support those we serve.

Paying tribute to veterans in this way is fantastic. And from a branding perspective, think of how many people will see the ALA logo for several continuous months. Consciously or subconsciously, a positive association between the Auxiliary and honoring veterans will be made in the minds of many who see the banners.

Another plus of making the ALA more visible to the community: Seeing our emblem often might eventually prompt some people to seek more information about the Auxiliary. Others might decide to join the ALA.

That was the case with Unit 535's "Adopt a Platoon" project. Williams said the project received coverage in local and regional newspapers.

"One lady contacted us and said, after reading about our Adopt a Platoon project, she decided she wanted to be part of the American Legion Auxiliary. She joined our unit and has been a member here for the last three years," Williams added.

Be creative! Come up with additional ways to build ALA brand awareness in your community. Be sure to consult the ALA Branding Guide, an easy-to-follow publication offering important information on topics such as branding styles, key promotional phrases for the Auxiliary, and proper use of the ALA emblem. Plus, there are guidelines and best practices on photography, websites, social media, and more.

Download a copy of the Branding Guide today by visiting www.ALAforVeterans.org.

**"Our brand is our identity. It's our reputation, our promise. It's how the public recognizes us."
— ALA Branding Guide**



Share how your community has an American Legion Auxiliary brand presence!
Email us at ALAmagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

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ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE & ALA GIRLS NATION



NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH: Princeton University students Emma Watts (left) and Preeti Chemiti and Eric Lin (not pictured) teamed up to create the *Mind Matters* guidebook.

ALA GIRLS STATE, GIRLS NATION ALUMNA HELPING STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

COVID-19 has been part of our lives for over a year now. We have all faced new challenges with the global pandemic, but for many students, this time has been difficult on their mental health as their school routines, extracurricular events, and social lives are disrupted.

Preeti Chemiti, a 2018 ALA North Dakota Girls State/ALA Girls Nation alumna and Princeton University student, is doing her part to help students and teachers navigate mental health concerns during the pandemic. Chemiti, along with two fellow students, created *Mind Matters*, a free and comprehensive mental health guidebook for students, teachers, and administrators in the midst of COVID-19.

Why did you decide to create the *Mind Matters* guidebook?

The inspiration behind creating this guidebook was twofold:

first, as a college student myself, I saw firsthand how many of my peers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there seemed to be a lack of a national narrative emphasizing the importance of mental health or access to resources in these unprecedented times. Thus, the purpose of *Mind Matters*

was to address these public health disparities and highlight student perspectives through our work.

As a recipient of the John C. Bogle Fellowship in Civic Service from Princeton University, I was also able to make *Mind Matters* a completely free resource for any students and academic professionals in need. Overall, *Mind Matters* contains over 80 pages of comprehensive research and resources for students, teachers, and administrators alike.

I also personally conducted over 150 interviews with students in each state across the nation in order to provide a comprehensive overview of how this pandemic is directly affecting high school and college students. To date, over 3,600 copies of our book have been adapted by high schools, colleges, and universities around the world, including institutions like Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins.

What kind of feedback have you received?

We have received several positive testimonials from those who have downloaded the guidebook. Specifically, many school administrators have expressed their gratitude for having a resource that focuses heavily on student perspectives, which is one

of the attributes that makes *Mind Matters* unique in its field. For more information on the guidebook, visit www.mindmattersbook.org.

Has attending ALA Girls State helped you in college?

Attending ALA Girls State has certainly supported my ambitions in college. Through my experience at ALA Girls State, I not only gained the confidence to advocate for positions I believed in, but I also learned firsthand how to represent myself and other institutions with poise.

Did ALA Girls State increase your interest in politics or being civically involved?

Yes! One of the unique components of ALA Girls State is that it emphasizes our civic responsibilities in an interactive and hands-on manner. Although many people hold the misconception that it is not necessary to become politically or civically involved, emboldening the perspectives of our youth and modeling various forms of participation at ALA Girls State highlighted how governmental processes work and affect constituents like me.

Would you recommend other girls to attend ALA Girls State?

Yes, I would highly recommend ALA Girls State! Through the generous sponsorship of the American Legion Auxiliary, I was able to attend ALA Girls State at no personal expense, and I am still in contact with many of the girls I met through the program.

What is your favorite memory of ALA Girls State?

My favorite memory was being selected to represent North Dakota at ALA Girls Nation. It was the culmination of a week filled with memorable experiences and lifelong friendships, so being able to continue my journey with the American Legion Auxiliary was an incredibly significant experience. I was honored that my peers selected me, and I still recall how excited I was to meet inspiring young women from across the country.

ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



SERVICE SPIRIT: Anna Roberge (wearing graduate cap) with her family (from left): brother, Nathaniel; father, Benjamin; mother, Jennie; and sisters Abie and Elizabeth.

STUDENT WITH A PASSION FOR SERVICE RECEIVES ALA NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP

Anna Roberge, 18, a student at University of New Hampshire studying psychology, received the American Legion Auxiliary's Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship. Roberge has a passion for service and plans to spend her career helping others. With a grandfather who served in the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II, and a grandmother who's an active member in the American Legion Auxiliary, it's not hard to see where Roberge learned her *Service Not Self* spirit.

In high school, Roberge was as selfless as she is now. She participated in acts of service ranging from teaching at her church youth group, assistant coaching junior sports teams, serving at veterans' dinners, and even dressing up as an elf for children around Christmas time. But these examples are merely a

small portion of the different ways Roberge has helped those in need.

Roberge has a special passion for helping children. She dedicated her entire senior capstone project to reducing the stigma around mental illness in children. As a part of this,

"It's just such a nice feeling knowing that you can change people's lives and views about themselves."

she created a support group for children at her local church and saw heartwarming results.

"After the support group, I saw what a difference it made. Even to this day when they see me, [the kids] run up to me and give me a big hug," Roberge said. "It's just such a nice feeling knowing that you can

change people's lives and views about themselves."

Receiving the ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship meant a great deal to Roberge and her family. It served as a source of validation, as well as relieving the financial pressure that comes with college.

"It meant a lot financially, but also emotionally," Roberge said. It kind of validated all the of hard work and volunteering I had done. It was a very happy moment."

The scholarship has helped with the expenses of college to the point that Roberge is now eyeing a Ph.D. in psychology so she can better equip herself to go into the world and help those in need.

Roberge has ideas on where she intends to spend her career but no concrete plan just yet. Rest assured, each possibility helps someone in desperate need.

"I have a couple of paths I am looking to go in the future," she said. "One of them is working in a children's hospital helping them through those psychological issues, or just a clinical psychologist for children in need, or working in the prison system to help the people within the prison."

No matter what path Roberge chooses, she will be helping many people in need, just as the American Legion Auxiliary's members have done for more than a century.

If you wish to help students like Anna Roberge, please donate at www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate. You are not only positively impacting the lives of these students, but the lives of the countless people they will help throughout their careers.

American Legion Auxiliary National Scholarships

The American Legion Auxiliary offers thousands of dollars in scholarships at the national level: the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship; Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior members of the ALA; Non-Traditional Student Scholarship; Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship; and others! Learn more about eligibility and other scholarship opportunities at www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships. Applications are due to the unit level on March 1. Additional scholarships are offered in each ALA department and through many community ALA units and Legion posts. Please contact your local American Legion Auxiliary unit for more information.



Wise PERSON SAID



(Photo: C.B. Hanif)

At 88 years old, Edith C. Bush has lived through decades when the daily chances of her, or other Black Americans, encountering some form of discrimination was as certain as the sun rising each day. America's long gone legalized racial segregation, which

bolstered the evil doctrine of white supremacy, was in place for much of Bush's life.

The resulting overt and covert oppression of Black Americans was the norm in those days. Add to that race-based inequities, harassment, death threats, and unwarranted violence — sometimes lethal — aimed at many Black Americans.

Bush could have cloaked her heart in a shroud of hatred aimed at all white people. But she never did. Bush could have stopped loving America when it seemed like America did not love her back. But she never did.

Instead, Bush chose a path of harmony and unity among all

people, in all parts of life. Bush continues to love America, plus its principles of freedom, democracy, and equality. And she cares deeply for those who protect and defend the United States and its interest.

Bush does all of this as an enthusiastic member of the American Legion Auxiliary, a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. She is a member of Unit 199 in West Palm Beach, Fla.

A retired elementary school teacher, Bush joined the Auxiliary in 1999. Her ALA membership eligibility is based on the military service of her brother, U.S. Navy veteran Alvin Edward Coleman.

EDITH C. BUSH

Why are you enthusiastic about being an Auxiliary member?

I'm excited to be part of ALA because we are associated with organizations that can provide help for military people and their families. We work on making sure our veterans are taken care of, whether it's picking up their medication when they can't, making sure they have food, or whatever. We must help them because they did something for all of us: They served our country.

How can ALA members help others during the pandemic when we're told to socially distance?

If you can't visit nursing homes or places like that, ask around to see who knows someone who could use some cheering up. Reach out to them with a phone call or video chat. Talk to them or read them

a poem or scripture. Sing them a song. Play some music. If you know you have some interests in common, use that commonality to bring cheer. These days, I know we can all use some cheering up. Especially our veterans.

The ALA unit you belong to had only Black Auxiliary members until about 20 years ago when a white woman who met ALA eligibility criteria joined. She is still a member there. How have things been going?

She feels so comfortable being with us. We feel comfortable with her. We value her. It's like what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: Judge a person not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

What's the biggest life lesson you've learned so far?

My life lesson is my life's motto: With the help of God, I want to do

all I can for as many people as I can, for as long as I can. I got that motto from a convention or something like that. I liked it so much that I adopted it as my mantra.

What is the best advice given to you?

The best advice I've ever received is from the motto of Bethune-Cookman University, my alma mater: "Enter to learn and depart to serve." By serving others and making them happy, you can become happy yourself.

On a personal level, what have you gotten out of being an American Legion Auxiliary member?

I'm a three "F" person: faith, family, and friends. The ALA is where I get my feeling of faith, my relationship where we are almost like a family — and we've got these beautiful friendships among us.



Membership eligibility explained! Women *and* men, visit www.ALForVeterans.org/join to learn more about how you can join the American Legion Auxiliary's community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.



THE AMERICAN LEGION HEADS TO THE RACETRACK

If you watch IndyCar, look for a familiar emblem on the track. The American Legion and Chip Ganassi Racing have a multi-year agreement for the Legion to sponsor the No. 48 car driven by Jimmie Johnson and Tony Kanaan. Johnson will drive the street and road courses, and Kanaan will drive the ovals.

The American Legion will be featured prominently on the No. 48 Honda during every 2021 and 2022 NTT IndyCar Series. The Legion will be the primary paint scheme for two races, one being “The Greatest Spectacle in Racing” — the Indianapolis 500 — on Memorial Day weekend. Kanaan, the 2013 Indianapolis 500 winner, will drive the car for his 20th race on the famous oval.

“This is truly a win-win for all involved,” said James W. “Bill” Oxford, national commander of

The American Legion. “Teaming up with Chip Ganassi Racing allows The American Legion to showcase how it strengthens America every day through its programs, advocacy, and support of veterans and their families. We’re looking forward to bringing that message and our mission to race fans across the country.”

Johnson made a \$10,000 donation to The American Legion when the announcement was made. “Our family knows firsthand how

important it is to recognize our veterans,” said Johnson, whose grandfathers and brother-in-law served in the military. “It’s exciting to be partnering with The American Legion to be able to show our appreciation to veterans and to continue to raise public awareness and support for this special organization.”

The project was conceived by American Legion National Headquarters’ Chief Marketing Officer Dean Kessel.



BUDDY CHECK BILL WOULD ESTABLISH A NATIONAL WEEK

The American Legion is supporting a bipartisan effort to pass the Buddy Check Bill, aimed at combatting veteran suicide by connecting veterans to the care they need. The bill is modeled after the Legion’s “Buddy Check National Week of Calling.”

The bill will require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as “Buddy Check Week.” Under the bill, educational opportunities, materials, and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks will be provided. Also, the VA is encouraged to have extra resources available that week for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle a potential increase in calls.

Since launching its Buddy Check

Week a few years ago, the effort has increased. The Legion encourages Legionnaires to conduct veteran outreach as part of their daily routine, allowing them to connect veterans with resources throughout the year. Some veterans may not ask for help without someone reaching out to them. This gives them the opportunity to ask for what they need.

You can help get this bill passed — urge your congressional representatives to co-sponsor and support National Buddy Check legislation (S.4657/H.R.2898). The bill was introduced in the House in 2019 and the Senate in 2020.

2021 NATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST SLATED TO BE IN-PERSON

The American Legion plans to host the 2021 National Oratorical Contest live and in-person. The

contest is slated for April 9 in Indianapolis. This is subject to change if conditions from the COVID-19 pandemic worsen.

More than 50 high school students from across the country will deliver a speech on the U.S. Constitution and compete for college scholarships. The overall national contest winner gets a \$25,000 scholarship, second place is awarded a \$22,500 scholarship, and the third-place finisher receives a \$20,000 scholarship.

The purpose of the program, which started in 1938, is to develop appreciation and knowledge for the U.S. Constitution.

The Legion plans to put COVID-19 safety protocol in place. Some things included in the plan: use a larger venue to accommodate social distancing; limit the number of spectators in attendance; social distance competitors.



greet each other with a handshake or hug one another like in past ALA meetings, but Chaplin suggests using new ways to connect with each other. The Department of Virginia uses email marketing service Constant Contact and other platforms to promote virtual happenings.

“We use Constant Contact, which goes to everyone who has

an email address on file through their membership,” said Chaplin. “We also asked unit presidents and secretaries to ask their unit members if they haven’t provided an email address yet, to please do so because they’re missing important information.”

Since the pandemic lockdowns and social distancing restrictions, the Department of Virginia has had several successful virtual events and meetings. A very helpful tip Chaplin suggests is to record your event or

meeting and allow it to be accessible to fellow Auxiliary members afterward. Recordings should be

available so anyone who wasn’t able to attend the meeting can have access to information shared.

“To promote events, we also use the department website and the department Facebook page,” added Chaplin.

Social media is probably the best and most cost-effective way to promote a virtual event. Start by creating an online presence if you haven’t already done so, and connect with members in these convenient virtual ways. Take advantage of social media and all the free features offered.

MARKETING YOUR VIRTUAL AUXILIARY MEETINGS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual events, activities, and meetings have become somewhat normal in our everyday lives. American Legion Auxiliary units nationwide have had to adapt to this virtual way, and although it may be challenging at times, we are all in this together!

Lisa Chaplin, Department of Virginia Auxiliary member, has participated in several successful virtual conferences, meetings, events, and even helped organize the Department of Virginia’s annual convention in a virtual 2020 meeting style. Chaplin insisted that despite pandemic circumstances, their department must be present and do something for their annual convention.

“First thing we did, and the best thing we did, was our annual convention in July,” said Chaplin. “When we knew the convention was going to be canceled for a live, in-person event, I said, ‘We need to do this virtually. I don’t know what The American Legion is doing or what the SAL is doing, but we have to do something.’”

Unfortunately, members can’t

Social media is probably the best and most cost-effective way to promote a virtual event.

HELPFUL TIPS ON PROMOTING YOUR VIRTUAL EVENTS:



Unit newsletters:

Does your ALA unit have a newsletter? An internal unit newsletter, whether it’s a digital or print format, is a great way to inform members on what’s happening in your local American Legion Auxiliary. This regular source of communication can act as a central document that includes important information, upcoming events, and access to your unit’s social media platforms.



Social media stories:

Most social media platforms have a feature that gives you the opportunity to use “stories” to tease upcoming events, link directly to event information, and update members on all things Auxiliary. Stories are also a nice way to interact with each other, see what friends are doing during quarantine, get ideas from, and so much more.

Use the “Event” feature on Facebook: This option allows interested followers to see information about the event being hosted, including what, when, and where. It also lets people RSVP and be reminded of the event automatically by the platform. Bonus feature — you can interact with potential attendees and increase exposure!



Instagram countdowns:

Instagram offers several creative features that engage audiences, such as the ability to create countdowns for upcoming events or announcements. It also lets your followers see what you’re up to or keep up with what your fellow ALA members are doing.



Call your members:

Be sure to call your fellow ALA members to check in on them. 2020 was a rough year, and a phone call from a friend could really make someone’s day! Try using or setting up a virtual meeting with Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or FaceTime. You’ll like talking to a familiar face.

American Legion Auxiliary social media

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



Facebook

@Susan Schofield-Fratino

The American Legion Family from Post 214 in Willoughby, Ohio, delivered over \$1,800 worth of food to the VA clinic and the McKinley Center.



Facebook

@Starr Purnell

Juniors from ALA Unit 296 in Queenstown, MD, packed 195 care packages to send to troops.

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ALA Volunteer Girls State alumnae and friends participated in #alavgsweekofservice to send cards of appreciation to Tennessee veterans receiving care at VA hospitals. Cards were collected from all ages.

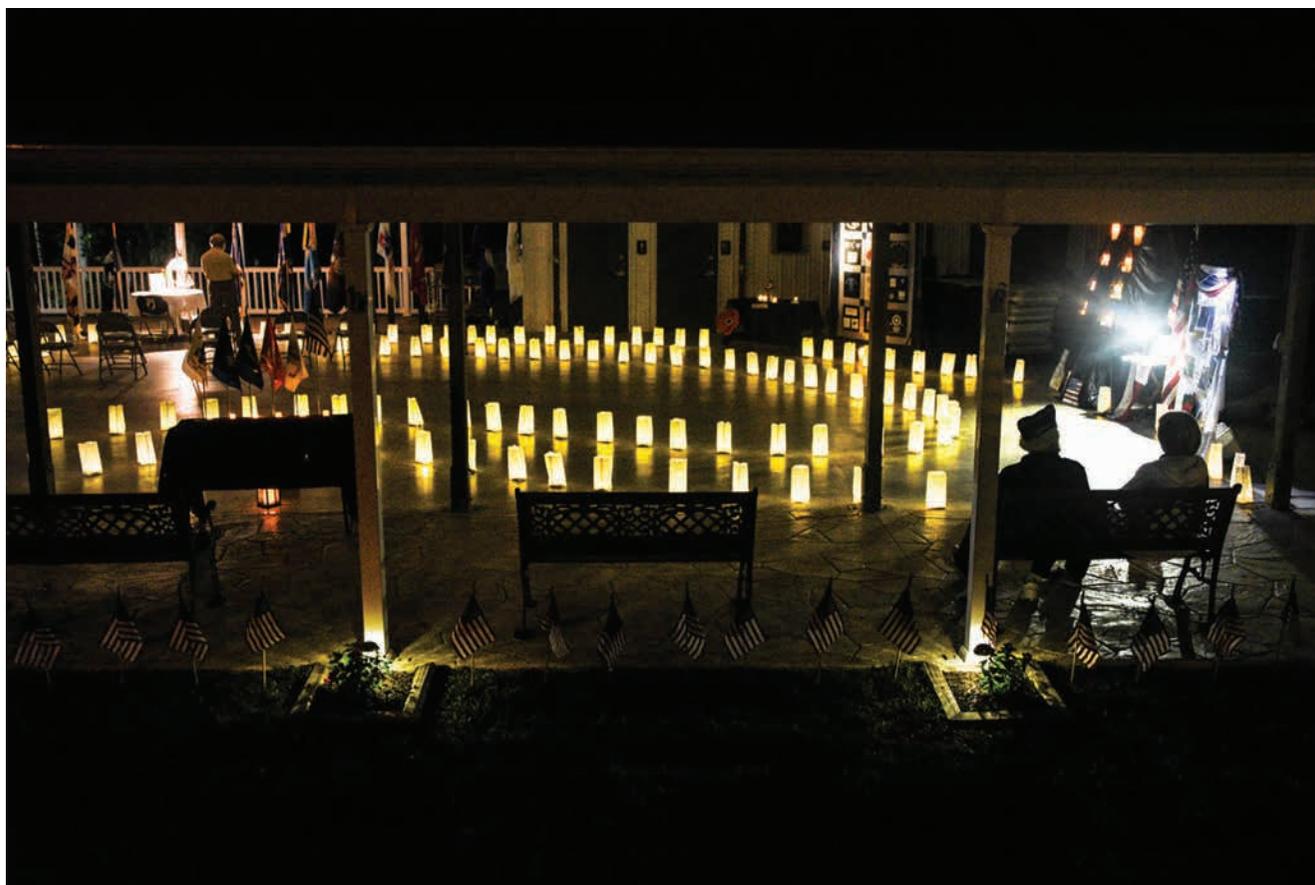
Auxiliary Word Search answers from page 26:

L	Y	G	S	C	D	G	H	A	G	N	X	E	N
I	N	S	E	C	T	S	L	F	X	H	O	B	O
R	X	D	N	K	F	L	C	O	Y	Z	L	A	I
R	F	R	T	Y	E	A	R	G	M	O	R	L	T
D	I	O	K	R	N	K	Q	E	O	W	I	U	A
M	C	A	G	R	E	W	O	M	N	W	A	L	C
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Spread the word about the work your unit is doing. Share pictures on social media and tag us @ALForVeterans and use #AmericanLegionAuxiliary.

**“There is something special
when creative people get together.”**

— Joy Mangano, American entrepreneur



When The American Legion Family works together in support of our collective missions of serving veterans, military, and their families in their communities, much is accomplished. Strength in numbers — that’s how we view it. But there’s an added benefit in membership. Recruiting becomes a Family affair, adding more to that strength. Do you know a Legionnaire or Sons of The American Legion member who recruits for the ALA? Or maybe you’re a top recruiter for the Legion, Sons, or Riders in your post home? Tell us about it! Contact *Auxiliary* at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org or 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

Above: Members of The American Legion Post 200 Family in Maryland take in the group’s impressive luminary memorials to National POW/MIA Recognition Day, as well as 9/11, which included a Pentagon, Twin Towers, and Flight 93 display (photo: Joe Giordano/The American Legion).



American Legion Auxiliary

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Have you seen the new features for members in the MyAuxiliary section of the redesigned website?

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Access the following information about themselves:

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- When their membership expires
 - Whether they are due for renewal
 - Their prior years' dues paid
 - Their donation history
- Take the following actions that were not previously possible:
- Pay dues for the current year and the previous year

- Print a current year membership card
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