

American Legion Auxiliary

www.ALAforVeterans.org

May 2020 \$3.75



**Wear a Poppy to
Honor Those Who
Have Worn Our
Nation's Uniform**



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

We are the American Legion Auxiliary.

We are called to serve.

We respect our country and the service of those who defend our freedoms.

We are loyal to our United States Constitution and to those who protect it.

We are humbled by the courage of our veterans and their families.

We are alone, yet we stand together.

We are daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. We are family.

We are of every color. We are of every faith.

We are of every age.

We are anyone and everyone.

We are common and extraordinary.

We are citizens.

We live in small towns.

We live in suburbs.

We live in cities.

We work in fields, in factories, warehouses, offices, at home.

We are a community. We help one another.

We love our flag and all that it stands for.

We are many. We are one.

**We are the American Legion Auxiliary. A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.**

We commit ourselves to the ideal: *Service Not Self.*

Auxiliary contents

FEATURES

30 ALA SALUTES SPOUSES OF U.S. SERVICEMEMBERS

We know what it's like to be apart from one another during critical times and everyday moments. Military spouses' numerous sacrifices don't go unnoticed.

36 WORKING TOGETHER AS THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY IN WASHINGTON

Members converge on nation's capital to show support for the people we all serve.

46 THE POWER OF A FLOWER

Kindness flows from the hands of the American Legion Auxiliary's poppy makers.

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

6 BEHIND THE SCENES

7 FROM OUR READERS

8 JUNIOR MEMBERS

10 I AM THE ALA

13 IT'S ALL GOOD

38 IMPACT ALA!

50 BUILDING ALA BRAND LOYALTY

52 ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE

53 ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

54 A WISE PERSON SAID

55 LEGION FAMILY NEWS

56 MISSION MATTERS

57 SOCIAL MEDIA

58 THE LAST WORD



ON THE COVER: Poppies, to American Legion Auxiliary members, are worn just as proudly as ALA emblem pins. The symbolism behind these bright-red flowers reminds us to keep alive the memories of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice (photo: Aaron Meyer/ALANHQ). **ABOVE:** U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Sam Last visits his newborn daughter, Charlie. Returning home from deployment, Last was still in uniform because he went directly from the airport to see Charlie at the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of the Kansas hospital where she was born (photo: Angelica Last).

FROM THE NATIONAL *President*

I looked into the eyes of U.S. Navy veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor, 98-year-old Sterling R. Cale, and his courage and patriotism came shining through. He answered the call of duty in the wake of the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese military's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by helping with rescue and recovery efforts. True to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's well-known proclamation, Dec. 7, 1941, is a date that will forever live in infamy.

But what also lives on are the true stories of valor demonstrated by U.S. servicemembers stationed at Pearl Harbor that day. Mr. Cale's story is one of them. He worked, along with a detail of 10 men, to remove bodies from the burning USS Arizona, according to the National Park Service's website section about the Pearl Harbor National Memorial. Mr. Cale and his work team removed about 107 identifiable bodies and a number of unknowns, the site also stated.

"In two hours' time, I think I only picked up 46 people," Mr. Cale said in a video interview produced by The American Legion in December 2019 (see the interview at Legion.org). You sense that he wished he could've done more. We all know what he did was incredible and heroic. We're thankful for everything he did at Pearl Harbor and throughout his entire military career!

It is believed that Mr. Cale is the last living Pearl Harbor survivor residing in Hawaii. He lives a few miles from where the infamous attacks occurred nearly 80 years ago. Mr. Cale is a life member of Legion Post 17 in Honolulu. Several of his eligible relatives are ALA members.

How did my eyes end up meeting his? I met Mr. Cale during my official visit to Hawaii. I spent time with him, listening to his memories of the Pearl Harbor attack, and thanking him for his service to our nation.

This interaction reinforced what I, and other American Legion



COURAGE UP CLOSE: Visiting with veteran Sterling R. Cale, a Pearl Harbor survivor, during a signing event for his book, *A True American: The Story of a Pearl Harbor Survivor, World War II, Korean and Vietnam War Veteran*, which Mr. Cale narrated to his son, Sterling V. Cale.

Auxiliary and Legion Family members, already know: U.S. veterans and servicemembers are our heroes. It doesn't matter how many, if any, medals they have. It doesn't matter whether they served stateside or abroad, frontlines or supply lines — or anywhere in between or beyond that. Let's not forget about the military families who support their loved ones while they serve in America's armed forces. Those families make sacrifices for our nation as well.

Mr. Cale has the sincere gratitude — from me, the ALA, and the entire Legion Family — for his heroism, military service, sacrifices, and patriotism. He is a great reminder of the people the American Legion Auxiliary and the entire Legion Family have been honoring, helping, advocating for, and supporting for the last 100 years

and counting. As the Auxiliary continues Celebrating a Century of Service during the remainder of this administrative year, let's stay focused on being a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

Our Legion Family pays special tribute to America's fallen servicemembers on Memorial Day. And National Poppy Day® is another opportunity to honor and remember America's fallen servicemembers while also supporting our veterans, military, and their families. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/poppy to learn how you can be part of it. We will keep them in our hearts and thoughts year-round.

Nicole Clapp

Nicole Clapp
National President

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BEHIND THE *scenes*

NOTES FROM NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



REMOTE MEMBER SERVICE: Elizabeth Chiavarini, senior database coordinator, works from home during the COVID-19 mandated closures.

Spring is normally a time of universal positivity with its fresh, warm air bringing flowers and a renewed sense of purpose. But this year, it was different.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic became a crisis that fell upon the world in the early part of 2020. It hit us hard and showed us that being joyful, thankful, or selfless during extreme times was perhaps unmerited.

But in the American Legion Auxiliary, members quickly squashed that kind of thinking.

The social distancing mandates from the Centers for Disease Control and local and federal governments didn't make us lazy or selfish. We isolated ourselves as directed, but we always kept a keen eye on our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families:

Wellness checks were frequent. Members called veterans homes to make sure the senior residents were doing OK. They also checked on each other — especially looking after elderly ALA members — making grocery runs and other necessary to-dos for those who weren't able to pick up and leave so easily.

The crafty sharpened their scissors and skills. To assist those on the intense frontlines, members made face masks for healthcare workers. And, to get a jump ahead, members kept busy by making winter hats, scarves, and blankets for hospitalized veterans for next year. Junior members across the nation worked on homemade cards containing notes of "happy" for veterans.

Don't forget the food. In Delaware, one unit made lots of bagged lunches for veterans and seniors in their area. A local restaurant allowed them to use their front patio for drive-by pickups.

Extra time was devoted to learning. Members took advantage of the moments in isolation by browsing www.ALAforVeterans.org and enrolling in the many enriching ALA Academy courses.

Laptops won over desktops. Working from home became the norm. Department and national headquarters locations adapted to mandated changes by accomplishing task lists remotely. ALA member customer service contained a little "home sweet home" in every occurrence. Even this issue of *Auxiliary* magazine was produced by staff working from basements, kitchen tables, and other makeshift home offices.

You can learn more about how members served the mission during the worldwide pandemic by checking out the stories posted in ALA national media and in the August issue of *Auxiliary*. In trying times when everything seems to have a big question mark over its head, one thing is for certain: ALA members stay the course in our community of volunteers of serving veterans, military, and their families.



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
May 2020



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WHERE DO I GET THAT POPPY PIN?

I wanted to thank you for the *Reflections* page. I am chaplain of our ALA unit and use the monthly scriptures and thoughts for the meetings each month at the beginning and end of our meetings. The ideas expressed are timely and well thought out.

I am able to glean some information from every issue. For example, in the February issue, I learned that we are to identify ourselves as a unit, not a post. News to me — I've always said Post 151. Never too old to learn and be corrected.

A question: On the back outside page of the February issue, there was a poppy pin on a hat. Are these available? They would be a nice addition to our dark blue vests with our ALA logo on them. Let me know and we'll order one for each member. Thank you for a great publication.

— Patricia Makela, Minnesota

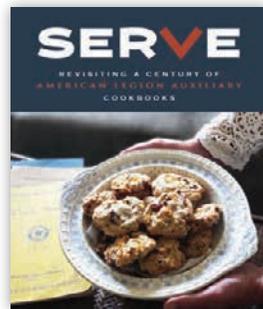
EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you for the kind words! The appropriately branded American Legion Family



poppy pin can be ordered from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org or by calling (888) 453-4466.

COOL COOKBOOK CELEBRATES ALA'S CENTENNIAL

Kudos to American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1879 of Colorado! The cookbook they recently published is fantastic and well beyond words to describe the work and stories that go along with all the recipes. The articles on each war will open your heart up, once again, to ALL who have served this great



country and the sacrifices their families made. Many of the great recipes (which have been well tested) will bring back memories that were forgotten. I love the cookbook and have shared it with many, including my unit members and others. It makes a wonderful gift for anyone, younger or older. Thanks again to the members of Unit 1879.

— Sue Patterson, Past Department President, Department of Colorado

NEW YORK UNIT SERVES ALA MISSION THROUGH MANY WAYS

The Walter T. Conley American Legion Post 1107 is in the beautiful Finger Lakes and wine region of New York State. Our home is in the Village of Union Springs, which, by the way, has twice hosted the Semi-Annual Bass Pro Masters

Fishing Tournament. We take pride in our community outreach and our local support. Outside our doors, one finds a stone memorial of the brave men and women of the Armed Forces who have gone before us. This sense of community and giving resonates through the many fundraisers and financial support initiatives the Auxiliary creates. This is a guiding principle in our organization and our beliefs of who we are.

We have grown in the nature and magnitude of our fundraisers. The Auxiliary serves on the Color Guard, alongside members of Post 1107, at funerals and provides bereavement meals for family members. Our members march in the Memorial Day Parade, and this year, celebrated the 100th year of the ALA with our post Family. We have also prepared and delivered over 100 Thanksgiving meals to those in need.

We truly feel blessed to have generous and devoted members of our Auxiliary and community with us to face the challenges ahead. As Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Dare great things." We are trying, Mr. President.

— Maureen McNamara & Joanne Hilliard, New York

CORRECTION

In our February feature about male spouses of veterans and servicemembers joining the ALA, there was an error in a statistic reported. The corrected statistic is as follows: By 2045, the share of female veterans is expected to double to 18% (source: Pew Research Foundation article, "The changing face of America's veteran population" — Nov. 10, 2017).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM *you*

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

Story and Photo Submissions: Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine for more details.

JUNIOR members



A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MILITARY CHILD TABLE CEREMONY

Although the Military Child Table Ceremony falls under the Auxiliary's Children & Youth program, it's a favorite of our Junior members. Use this script to help your Juniors learn more about the ceremony.

Children & Youth Chair (or Youth #1): We will begin today with a ceremony to honor our military children.

Our United States military members answer the call to service every day as they defend freedom around the world. That service often comes at a great personal sacrifice, not only for the servicemember, but also for their family, their children.

When an Air Force officer was asked what he needed in Iraq, he said, "Please don't send cookies, care packages, or socks. Just help take care of our children." Our country has always supported its military in times of war through community efforts. We have a great capacity to care for the home front. Now is the time for a new victory garden. In this garden, we can tend to the needs of the military child.

Today we would like to present to you the Military Child's Table Setting, inspired by the POW/MIA ceremony to honor the sacrifices and contributions of our military children.

The potted flowering plant symbolizes that they may flower and flourish where planted.

Youth #2 enters carrying potted flowering plant and sets on table.

Children & Youth Chair (or Youth #1): The hand spade recognizes that they may be transplanted to a new location any place in the world at a moment's notice, where they become fully immersed in the culture, make new friends, and acclimate themselves to a new school.

Youth #3 enters carrying hand spade and sets on table.

Children & Youth Chair (or Youth #1): The birthday hat and unlit candles...

Baseball glove and ball...

And ballet slippers represent the fact that sometimes special occasions are missed by one or both parents while serving their country.

Youths #4, 5, 6 enter carrying birthday cake and unlit candles, baseball glove and ball, and ballet slippers and set on table.

Children & Youth Chair (or Youth #1): The family photo depicting a child or children with their uniformed parent represents the foundation of our country's strength...

Youth #7 enters carrying family photo and sets on table.

Children & Youth Chair (or Youth #1): Families united in their commitment to national service and willing to make any sacrifice, both at home and abroad ... to ensure that our flag continues to fly free.

Youth #8 enters carrying U.S. flag and sets on table.

All: Amen.

JUNIOR MEETINGS FOCUS ON FUN, LEARNING

The 2019-2020 national Junior meetings included a variety of activities and positive educational opportunities.

"The importance of the national Junior meetings is to train the next generation of leaders for the Auxiliary," said Kristin Hinshaw, senior program coordinator at American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. "We try to get them to have as much involvement in the actual meeting, not just making crafts and doing fun activities."

The girls made bags for veterans who are in wheelchairs so they can easily store their belongings.

"The artwork was just phenomenal," Hinshaw said.

Other activities during the day included folding small American flags, making poppy chokers and bracelets, and creating thumbprint poppy paintings.

Each national Junior meeting began with installation of the honorary national Junior division vice president. New for 2019-2020, the installation ceremony was conducted by either National President Nicole Clapp or National Vice President Kathy Daudistel.



FORMER JUNIORS NOW SERVING IN U.S. MARINE CORPS



MacKayla McDaniels

MacKayla McDaniels has been about *Service Not Self* since she joined the Auxiliary in 2008.

Eligible through her late grandfather, Paul B. (Mac) McDaniels who served in World War II, she belongs to the Arthur H. Cunningham Unit 440 in Hornell, N.Y.

"My membership was originally a way to honor and serve our veterans, but as I started participating in the Junior program at the unit, county, district, and department levels, I learned that I had a new family that included American Legion and Sons members," she said.

As a Junior, McDaniels held many leadership roles from the unit to the

Juniors also played the ALA Branding Game and discussed several topics from membership to leadership from the aspect of bullying and more. The day ended with the Military Child Table Ceremony.

Guest speakers at each meeting educated attendees about adaptive sports, tying into Clapp's focus on the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families.

Educating our youngest members about the organization is key to their continued success and future leadership.



"I hope they learned something that sparks an interest, they want to learn more, and they want to keep doing this," Hinshaw said.

Registration for the 2020-2021 national Junior meetings will open this summer. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org for more information or to register.

HANDMADE BOOKMARKS LEAD TO FUNDRAISER OPPORTUNITIES



American Legion Auxiliary Junior member Emily Quigg has been drawing for about seven years.

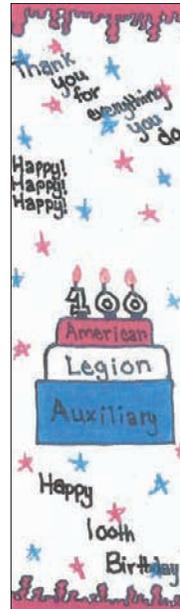
2020 marks the fourth year she has designed bookmarks to distribute as a fundraiser.

"I wanted to do something for my Legion and for the department president's special project," she explained.

After brainstorming fundraising ideas, Quigg liked the idea of bookmarks the most and got to work. Her previous bookmark designs have included the poppy, a female veterans project focus, and Pearl Harbor with the USS Arizona.

Quigg passes out the bookmarks and asks for a donation in return, with a suggested amount of \$1. Each year, she has raised over \$100 with her various bookmarks.

This year's bookmark theme is the ALA's 100th birthday celebration. Quigg has made more than 50 birthday bookmarks so far, and counting. The money raised from



her project will go to the Department of Arizona President Patricia Lugo's special project, the first responders program, sponsored by the 100 Club of Arizona. The club is a nonprofit focused on supporting the men and women who stand behind the badge.

Quigg's bookmark efforts have reached the highest office in the land. She sent a letter and a bookmark to President Donald Trump and received a letter and bookmark from him, featuring Air Force One and Marine One.

Quigg offers guidance for other ALA Junior members who may want to pursue a fundraiser of some kind.

"Do something you like to do and something you think other people would like," she said.

Quigg, 14, is eligible for membership through her grandpa, Glenn Quigg. She has been a member of the Auxiliary for seven years and is a Junior member of Unit 62 in the Department of Arizona.

If you're interested in receiving a bookmark or want to contribute to Quigg's cause, contact her grandmother, Karon, at grannyqbear@cox.net.

district to the department level.

"Being a Junior ALA member allowed me the opportunity to meet and talk with our veterans," she said. "It allowed me to get out of my town and meet other young people like me who wanted to honor and serve our veterans and promote patriotism."

McDaniels knew she wanted to join the military since she was 14 years old. In 2018 at 17 years old, she signed up for the U.S. Marine Corps.

"I knew my love for my country and a desire to serve was my path," she said about her inspiration to join the Marines.

For ALA Juniors who may be interested in joining the military, McDaniels has recommendations.

"Talk to the recruiters of every military branch near you," she said.

"Then talk to the veterans at your [American Legion] post. Find out about their experiences."

She also added, for those who choose the military, consider being a dual member of the Auxiliary and the Legion.

"The American Legion Family is about fighting for veterans' rights, and you can count twice in that fight," McDaniels said.



Sabrina Townes

Fellow Marine and former Junior member Sabrina Townes joined the military her freshman year of high school.

"My dad was a Marine, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps," she

said of her inspiration. He served from 1980-1984.

Townes's dad is also the reason she is eligible for ALA membership as a member of Unit 287 in Michigan. Her parents signed her up for the Auxiliary at birth.

"My ALA membership means a lot to me because it means I get to help veterans and their families," she said.

Townes said her time as a Junior member helped equip her with skills she would need in the Marines.

"My experience was wonderful," she said. "The ALA helped me prepare in leadership and with my confidence."

For Juniors interested in the military, Townes's advice is simple — go for it.

"You will meet so many new people and make so many amazing friends!" she said.

I AM THE ALA

“If one way for me to honor and help veterans is to pay some dues, absolutely I’ll do it. I’ll write my checks for them.”

MIKE MONSERUD



With fire and conviction in his voice, American Legion Auxiliary member Mike Monserud speaks about the ALA, the entire Legion Family, and their co-mingled

missions of service to our nation’s veterans, military, and their families. His fervor-filled tone grabs hold of you. Monserud’s message about The American Legion Family of organizations — what we do and our importance — effectively lingers long after he has finished speaking.

He purposefully uses his voice and delivery to staunchly advocate for veterans, servicemembers, and military families — and to inspire and educate as a topic-specific speaker on Legion Family matters.

Monserud, 41, is a male spouse ALA member of Auxiliary Unit 37 in Ames, Iowa. He said he joined the Auxiliary to honor the military service of his wife, U.S. Navy veteran and Legionnaire Jennifer Monserud. Himself a Navy veteran as well, Monserud is also a Legionnaire of Post 37 in Ames, a member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 37, and a Legion Rider of Post 37.

What sparked the fire you have for the Legion Family?

I remember going down to the Legion post with my grandfather [World War II U.S. Army veteran Howard Schlitter], and hearing him say things like, “You’ve got to take care of the veterans. You’ve got to be

there for them and help them out.” None of that really resonated with me until after he was gone. Then, I realized I have to be his voice.

Why is membership in the ALA, Legion, or Sons important?

It’s important, for anyone who’s eligible, to honor a veteran by joining the Legion Family to carry on that legacy of service to others. It’s that way with each part of the Legion Family, and it doesn’t matter which part you belong to. All of us have banded together for the same reason: to help veterans.

What is the most effective approach to membership recruitment?

Let’s recruit for the Legion Family. How can someone say “I only recruit for the Sons” or “I only recruit for the Legion” or “I only recruit for the Auxiliary”? Also, let’s get back to making it more personal instead of more corporate. We need to lead with “What can we do for you?” and not “Please fill out this application.” And, let’s continue doing what we were meant to do: helping veterans. People will see who we are when we show them who we are, and maybe they’ll want to be part of what we do.

How do you explain the reason we have membership dues within the Legion Family?

Your dues money goes to assisting veterans in getting the help they need. With their military service, veterans [metaphorically] gave blank checks to be cashed by

our government as far as their lives were concerned. We may not know them, but we owe them. If one way for me to honor and help veterans is to pay some dues, absolutely I’ll do it. I’ll write my checks for them.

In addition to your Legion Family outreach, what other ways do you serve your local community?

I am a volunteer firefighter/ EMT and a firefighting instructor in Gilbert, Iowa. I know — I seem serious and intense. But I have a fun side. I never found anyone I couldn’t laugh and joke with.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:

Unit 37, Ames, Iowa
ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
His wife Jennifer
(U.S. Navy veteran)

AMERICAN LEGION POST:

Unit 37, Ames, Iowa
ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
His military service
(U.S. Navy)

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION:

Unit 37, Ames, Iowa
ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
His grandfather, Howard Schlitter
(U.S. Army veteran, World War II)

LEGION FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Detachment Commander, Iowa Sons of The American Legion (2019-2020)
- Legion Rider, Post 37 in Ames, Iowa
- National Vice Chairman, Legislative Affairs, Sons of The American Legion (2019-2021)

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.

TEARS FROM A VOLCANO

Uniquely American stone ignites romance

On May 18, 1980, the once-slumbering Mount St. Helens erupted in the Pacific Northwest. It was the most impressive display of nature's power in North America's recorded history. But even more impressive is what emerged from the chaos... a spectacular new creation born of ancient minerals named Helenite. Its lush, vivid color and amazing story instantly captured the attention of jewelry connoisseurs worldwide. You can now have four carats of the world's newest stone for an absolutely unbelievable price.

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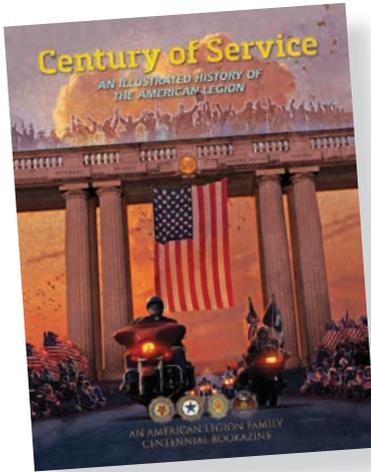


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“The sun shines not on us but in us.”

— John Muir, Author



(Photo: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. David Owsiank)

The month of May is no doubt a very special time for American Legion Auxiliary members. With Military Spouse Appreciation Day, Armed Forces Day, National Poppy Day® and of course, Memorial Day, all happening this month, you could say we're pretty busy honoring our veterans, military, and their families more so than usual. But the momentum doesn't end May 31. Each day is a reminder to be thankful for life, love, and happiness — all while keeping alive the memories of those who gave us our freedoms, and those who continue to serve today.

Above: U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Luis Cruz gets a hug from his wife, Madison, at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, after returning home from a deployment to Qatar in 2019.



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

We're looking for stories to share in the 2020 issues of *Auxiliary* magazine:

HOW YOUR ALA MEMBERSHIP HELPED PROFESSION OR CAREER:

- Have you learned leadership, confidence in public speaking, or other skills as a result of membership in the ALA?

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- Have you benefited from AEF after being faced with a personal crisis?

MAKING MEMBERSHIP MEANINGFUL:

- How do you and your unit make membership meaningful? What tips do you have for other units?

Email us at:
ALAMagazine
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Why is a nationally recognized Poppy Day important to The American Legion Family?



“The poppy is a symbol of remembrance, hope, honor, and sacrifice. We see a poppy and remember those who served. We remember all who sacrificed for our freedom, and their loved ones. We honor all of our veterans with every little red poppy we display and pass out.”

— Lisa Garrett, Indiana



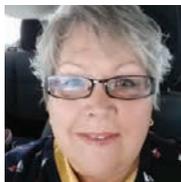
“Every American Legion post Family can now work together to recognize National Poppy Day® in their communities and honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.”

— Jane Bennett, Texas



“A national recognition day helps us educate others; however, as a lifelong member of the Legion Family, every day is ‘poppy day’ to me.”

— Bonnie Burley Crews, Virginia



“The poppy brings us back to Flanders Field, and the reason there is an American Legion in the first place. The Legion and the Auxiliary were founded to bring veterans together and uphold the new patriotism. A poppy attached to a purse or lapel has come to signify a solemn remembrance of that.”

— Carole Jones, New York



“A nationally recognized Poppy Day is important to The American Legion Family because it is a day of remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. It is important to the families, our communities, and future generations that we keep the memories alive of those who gave all.”

— Kim Hobkirk Vincent, Oklahoma



“It's important to recognize our veterans who have fought for our country, and to honor those who fought and died while fighting for our freedom.”

— Sharon Broghammer, South Dakota



“It is an honor to keep the legacy of our veterans alive through a simple poppy. We often underestimate the power of a flower.”

— Joanne Valletta, New York

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6194-0220



Dear Goodwill Gail,

I have read several articles about The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary working together as a family. Our American Legion Auxiliary unit is newly chartered, so we are embarking on new territory.

When I bring up working as a family, the Legion post members seem to struggle with the concept. Our unit wants to work together, but the Legionnaires do not seem interested in working together. Our members are not feeling appreciated. How can we convince the Legion members that we can all better serve our missions in the community if we work together?

Signed, Broken Family

Dear Broken Family,

Glad to hear your unit wants to work with the Legion as a family. Our family of organizations is much stronger when we work together. Everyone has different skills to bring to the table, so units and posts should use those skills to their advantage.

Sometimes the divide between an American Legion post and the Auxiliary unit may be caused by a misconception of how the Legion and ALA operate. We have separate national headquarters, our finances are separate, and the Legion operates the post home, but we are still one.

In fact, your community probably views you as one organization. When referring to any part of the family, people say, for example, "The Legion is down the street." Not the American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion. The public often refers to all of us simply as The

American Legion. Many people don't even realize there is a difference. Even when they see Auxiliary members at an event, they probably refer to them as The American Legion.

What it all comes down to is showing the public that your Legion post, Auxiliary unit, and Sons squadron are unified as one strong group. Potential members and volunteers may be turned away if they don't see members working together as one.

So, how can you work together so the community views you as a cohesive group? Your unit members may have to make an extra effort to make a change. Ask the Legionnaires to be part of the Auxiliary events, and volunteer to help with Legion events. Consider creating an event designed for the entire Legion Family and inviting the post members to be involved in hosting. In making this effort,

you may find there are some members who do want to work as a family. When others see you working together, they may change their ways to make things more harmonious.

It's really important for ALA members to pick what they're good at, and vice versa. You can combine those strengths to make a greater impact in your community. Remember: You are serving veterans, military, and their families. Working in harmony supports the collective missions of The American Legion Family. The people we serve need us. It's important to demonstrate to your community that you can work well together.

When planning an event, don't forget to include your Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders in your family activities. Those members have a lot to offer too!

In the Spirit of *Service Not Self*,
Goodwill Gail



Need some advice on how to approach conflict within the American Legion Auxiliary? Send your questions to pr@ALAforVeterans.org with the subject line "Goodwill Gail." We'll create a pen name for you so that you remain anonymous. Talk soon! Want to see more advice from Goodwill Gail? Visit the ALA blog (ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com) to see the latest Goodwill Gail column plus ALA news, expanded interviews, DIY tips, and more!

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BUILDING A STRONG PARTNERSHIP: North Carolina Unit 82 receives its \$5,000 check from Belk's manager.

COLLABORATING WITH THEIR COMMUNITY

Partnering with local businesses is a great way to spread awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission. A North Carolina unit had the chance to participate in a special event to raise money for the veterans in their community. Shelby, N.C. Unit 82 partnered with Belk Inc. and raised \$5,000 in a single day to benefit veterans.

Belk management was familiar with Unit 82 members through their past participation in the store's semi-annual charity sales. Knowing the good work these ALA members do, Belk contacted Unit 82 President Linda Quinlan to see if their unit wanted to partner with the retail giant on a special event called "Project Hometown," a one-day event where Belk invites a local nonprofit or charity to their store to help sell their merchandise. They promise the nonprofit 10% of sales, up to \$5,000.

"The company has long-supported nonprofits and charitable endeavors benefiting communities," said Quinlan. "Management has a high degree of respect and appreciation for the Shelby unit's dedicated commitment to helping veterans in the community."

The city of Shelby annually hosts The American Legion Baseball World Series. And each year, the event brings thousands of new visitors to Shelby. Local businesses

adjust and embrace the flood of baseball fans visiting from all over the country. Belk saw this as an opportunity to schedule "Project Hometown" during the Legion World Series busy weekend, focusing the event toward out-of-state visitors and baseball fans.

"For our part, they wanted us to publicize this the best we could. So

"This is the largest amount of money raised in a single event..."

our unit members got busy creating and distributing flyers, making phone calls, and encouraging friends and neighbors to shop the big event slated for mid-August," said Quinlan.

In preparation for the big day, a small group of Unit 82 members met several times throughout July and August. The unit placed an ad in the Legion World Series souvenir scorebook sold during the baseball weekend, and they handed out flyers at their small concession booth in the stadium.

The day of the event, there was a rainout at the World Series. With time on their hands, out-of-state fans and athletes shopped at Belk to support Unit 82's project. Belk brought in a DJ and offered lots of snacks and drinks for shoppers to enjoy.

The following day, Quinlan was notified that Unit 82 would be awarded the full \$5,000. Although Belk didn't quite reach its goal of \$50,000 in sales, the manager decided to give the unit the maximum amount anyway.

Unit 82 contributed half of the \$5,000 to North Carolina Department President Julie Smith's 2019-2020 special project. Smith is raising \$20,000 to divide equally among four North Carolina veterans hospitals to assist their PTSD treatment units. Smith's funds will be used for several different PTSD therapy options.

After a careful decision, Unit 82 members decided to use their half of the money for something long lasting and special to the community. They will donate shadow boxes to nursing care facilities where veterans are long-term patients. There are six nursing homes in their county, and about 10 veterans are year-round residents at each. They plan to decorate the shadow boxes with patriotic colors and display photos of the veterans residing in each facility.

"This is the largest amount of money raised in a single event by the local Shelby Unit 82," said Quinlan. "We were thrilled to be selected as a Project Hometown recipient by Belk for doing what we love to do best — honoring and serving veterans!"

MARKETING THE ALA

Marketing and advertising are key factors for growing the American Legion Auxiliary's membership and gaining volunteers. Knowing they needed to expand the ALA's visibility in their community, Virginia Unit 74 purchased a bus advertisement that ran for over a month in the Charlottesville area.

"Our unit decided that a lot of people don't even know we exist. They don't know what the Legion is or what the Auxiliary is, and we were looking for something that would make people say, 'Hey — how can we get on board?'" said Unit 74

Good works to share? Visit www.ALAFORVeterans.org for details.

ALA MEMBERS HELPING YOUTH OVERSEAS

The ALA's mission has always been to enhance the lives of veterans, the military, and their families, but the impact we make doesn't just stop there. Units throughout Wyoming went the extra mile when a Wyoming National Guardsman deployed in Kosovo wanted to make a difference for the children of the poverty-stricken country.

Capt. Eli Varney and 56 other Wyoming soldiers were stationed in Kosovo to provide support to local communities and monitor the border between Kosovo and Serbia, but they helped the country far beyond that.

"After being here for about two months, we started to see that one of the best ways we could make a positive difference here was by working with the youth of Kosovo," said Varney.

In a Memorandum for Record, Varney wrote that his National Guard unit is working with schools in Kosovo that have very limited support, and they are attempting to help them with basic educational needs. He sent the Record to communities throughout Wyoming asking for school supplies, sports equipment, and children's educational toys.

Members from ALA Unit 26 in Powell, Wyo., saw Varney's story in their local newspaper and wanted to

help the Wyoming National Guard create change overseas.

"As a unit, we voted to help gather school supplies and get them sent. The information was shared at the mid-winter conference and it grew from our unit helping, to school supplies being gathered from units throughout the state of Wyoming," said Trudy Zaffarano, family assistance specialist for the Wyoming National Guard and ALA Unit 26 member.

A lot of the schools in Kosovo are one-room buildings with no heat or air conditioning and are located in the middle of nowhere. Varney and his National Guard unit initiated an "adopt-a-school" program to ensure that students of Kosovo receive and use the school supplies.

Wyoming National Guard's adopt-a-school program touches two very important ALA mission outreach committees: Children & Youth and Education. At Wyoming's mid-winter conference, four districts helped create a better education for the children in Kosovo by bringing supplies or postage money for Varney's project.

"He wanted to convey to the people there that "Americans are good guys" and that we care about them and their children," said Zaffarano.

The children not only need basic school supplies such as pens, pencils, paper, colored pencils, etc., but they also request educational toys like wooden shapes, puzzles, games, and even very basic sports equipment like soccer balls and frisbees.

"Watching these kids find



HIGH-FIVES FOR OUR HEROES: Wyoming National Guard members donate supplies to children in Kosovo.

common ground and being willing to work together has been the most impactful," said Varney. "Over here, we work with the Turks, the Danish, Italians, Slovenians, Greeks – so it's more than just Americans helping out. It's a multinational event working together to make Kosovo a better place."

member Ruthann Brown.

After looking at different options, Unit 74 members decided a bus advertisement was their most beneficial and cost-effective way to promote the Auxiliary. Dual member and Unit 74 President Nanette Hartman reached out to the Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) to get more information about placing an ad on one of their buses. A CAT sales representative sent Hartman a media kit that included pricing and printer information.

Hartman's first step was contacting the printer and sending them a rough idea of what they

wanted the banner to look like. Her next task was to get approval from the Department of Virginia to use the ALA's centennial logo and the "In Memoriam" poppy. After being approved, Hartman presented pricing for the different placements on the bus, and the cost of the banner size to match the placements, at a unit meeting.

The unit chose to run two ads on two different buses: one on the driver's side which would travel the business route, and one on the passenger side which would travel the residential areas. The buses rotate on a regular basis, so each bus was seen

all over Charlottesville. They paid less than \$1,100 for the two bus ads to run for one month.

"We just wanted people to be informed of what the Auxiliary is, and that we are here. And we aren't just cooking dinners for the post, but that we are trying to reach out to the community," said Hartman. "We just wanted to get the word out there, so people knew our unit is here to help."

A bus advertisement is something any ALA unit can do if they have a bus transit system in their city. Hartman and Brown said it was a beneficial and easy project to complete, and the planning didn't take too long.



HOW THE GRIEVING CAN 'NOURISH THE WOUNDED SPIRIT'

Guest column written by author and ALA member Sue Ritchie

"I want to buy 1,000 copies of your book when you get it reprinted," said the man I was having lunch with in fall 2004. I was astonished with his words. Any writer would be surprised with such an offer laid down in front of them.

I had published a book, *Transformational Bereavement*, and the printing had been scheduled for what turned out to be an unfortunate date on Sept. 11, 2001. Over the intervening three years, I had sold out my book supply but I had no intention of reprinting that subject again.

Too many memories, too much sadness, pain, nightmares, and it had been difficult enough to get out of that emotional space. I did not want to return there.

I did not consider reprinting *Transformational Bereavement* until fall 2017. Now at this juncture, in the late spring, I was ready to go to the printer with a new, revised, and more complete manuscript than the original, and I telephoned the much-noted physician's home to tell him of my new plans. Alas, he had recently passed.

Over the previous years, I had continued researching the subject, speaking with other grief counselors and attending conferences, etc. I had learned much new information regarding varied issues of this experience, such as, the average age that a woman is widowed is 53 years.

One night, 20 some years earlier, I had sat on the foot of our/my bed and had screamed at the walls, "I'm too young to be widowed! I'm only 53 years old! This is not fair! No one is widowed at 53! This is a nightmare! I want it to stop!" Well, it wasn't anything I could wake up from, and the ever-present time wheel moved on. That painful December so far back was gone, and so too was my husband of 22 years.

It may be time to nourish your own spirit and nurture a transformation of the bereavement of yours, no matter how much time has expired.

First category is grief. It is the learning of pitying news. It is where a person feels nothing. It's as though all feeling is absent on any levels of this human existence.

Second category is mourning. This is where the "feeling" returns with a vengeance. There can be pain

in the knees, on the shoulders, in the head, on the fingers, the back, the feet, etc.

At long last, the third category is survival. This is where one had a partner in life. Now the one left behind is still an individual but one without the relationship, with no partner, no helpmate. What are you going to do? At some point, most folks reach this surviving, albeit some later than others. It has been a torment of emotions, but it is over. Kind of. At the surviving position is a point gained, which is good. You can breathe now. You can relax and begin to renew. You can get comfortable for the first time since it all began for you.

But there is a fourth category, and it is called thriving. It is a place where you know you can do this! You can be all you promised yourself you would do if given a chance. Do it now! Grow! Be wise! Be passionate about your own gifts, whatever they may be. You may be very surprised at what you can do, produce, manufacture, or create. It can be a wonderful experience.

I hope you will remember this: 1) As a mourner, anything you want to do, short of any kind of injury to yourself or others, is all perfectly acceptable, no matter what anyone else thinks or says; 2) no matter how much or how little time has passed without your partner, it is still about your own life. So, go for it for you. You are valued, and you are more important than you imagine.

Published author Sue Ritchie has produced over 100 articles for local and national publications. After her husband's unexpected passing, Ritchie published her first book, Transformational Bereavement, which was popular on the national market. The Writer's Digest Creative Writing Contest Winner has also written a story for the Matlock television series. Ritchie is a proud ALA member of Unit 73 in Arizona.

"With her gentle storytelling and wise insights, Sue Ritchie gently explains in *Transformational Bereavement* why our traditions surrounding death don't always help and what a griever can do about it. Her practical tips and ideas are hard won and can only cause comfort. I can honestly say that no book has changed my outlook in adult life ... until this one."

— Steve Nash, executive director, Tucson Osteopathic Medical Foundation

To contact Ritchie, visit transformationalbereavement.com or send her mail at P.O. Box 37031, Tucson, AZ 85740-7031.



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SHOULD YOUR POST HOME GO NONSMOKING?

With concerns about the effects of secondhand smoke, many states have enacted laws requiring public places to be smoke-free. However, in some states, American Legion posts and other private clubs are exempt.

In some communities, Legion posts are perceived by the public as a smoky bar. This perception can overshadow the impact on our collective missions and prevent new members from joining.

In an effort to change this perception and not turn away new members because of a smoke-filled environment, many posts have considered going smoke-free, despite the exemption.

Those opposed fear prohibiting smoking will decrease bar traffic and membership. The argument is that if the change is made, smokers will have no place else to go to smoke and drink, resulting in members leaving.

On the other side of the argument, those for nonsmoking posts say it will attract more members and make the post family-friendly.

Many posts took the leap and went smoke-free or made accommodations for smokers.

Lafayette, Ind., American Legion Post 11 enacted a nonsmoking policy about 10 years ago. At first, a few members got upset and transferred to another post. But members eventually became used to the change. "After the first few months of nonsmoking, most everyone

accepted the fact that smoking was not allowed in the post," said Jimmy Pitts, Post 11 commander. "We even gained some new members who hated cigarette smoke."

The transition has been positive for Post 11. "The reaction now is that everyone loves that the post is smoke-free," said Pitts. "No one is taking the smell of smoke to their homes. The atmosphere is great, and people are not hesitating to come into our post."

Pitts recommends having designated smoking areas in place before initiating the nonsmoking policy. His post built a "smoke shack" — a shed away from the building — with a heater.

Green River, Wyo., American Legion Post 28 decided to have a smoke-free facility when it opened in 2014. Their goal was to make the post family-friendly and attract younger members who may not want to join a post where smoking was allowed.

Post 28 has always had a nonsmoking policy, so they did not have to deal with some of the opposition other posts have to deal with. In fact, all members seem pleased with the policy. "Our members, even our smoking members, are happy about the smoke-free status," said Tammy Harris, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 28 secretary. "Our smoking members go outside to smoke without complaint."

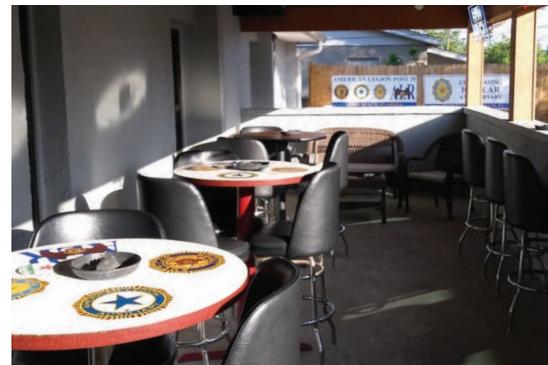
Harris said having a smoke-free environment makes it easier to host events for kids. "It is easier to bring families in, and we try to be a very family-friendly post home."

In Harris's personal opinion, being nonsmoking has helped membership numbers.

Vero Beach, Fla., American Legion Post 39 knew they needed to do something to keep both smokers and non-smokers happy. So, the post decided to create a patio where smokers could feel comfortable and still be part of the post.

Post 39 did not want to go nonsmoking until finding a way to keep smoking members comfortable and included. But it was not an easy feat. Because of legal parameters of the liquor license, they had to make sure the design was compliant. They wanted to make sure smokers could enjoy drinks on the porch, which is why they decided on a design that is fully enclosed.

The porch has been a big hit with smokers and nonsmokers. "Smokers seem to enjoy the patio so much that many of them spend the duration of their visit outside to socialize," said Jennifer Trefelner, Unit 39 president.



"Some nonsmokers would even go out to the patio to spend a little time with their friends who smoke. There were a few members who did not desire the change, but they still come to visit on occasion."

Trefelner said they have seen an increase in membership. They've had almost 200 members join since making the change Dec. 31, 2018.

If your post home is considering going smoke free, common advice from others is to make a plan for the smokers as you make the transition.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Large (14-16) 01-32839-012 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2X (22) 01-32839-015 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 3X (24) 01-32839-016 |

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State _____ Zip _____

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E24501



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY eUNITS GIVE YOU OPTIONS TO STAY INVOLVED IN MISSION

The American Legion Auxiliary has been influencing the lives of veterans, military, and their families for more than a century, while adapting to new leadership, changes to bylaws, and new surges of communication. The ALA has positively adjusted to these new ways of interacting by creating electronic units, otherwise known across the organization as eUnits.

These unique units allow members to support the ALA's mission while also managing their own daily lives. eUnits ease the burden of wanting to make a difference, but not being able to. If ALA members can't attend physical meetings due to health reasons or transportation issues, or if they have small children, joining an eUnit is beneficial because these members don't have to leave their home, and can still have input on planning mission activities.

eUnit origins

eUnits first launched when volunteers from California ALA Girls State became interested in the work of other ALA programs. Some of these volunteers weren't Auxiliary members yet, and they wanted to join a unit as a group.

"Joining one physical unit as a group wasn't possible, given that each woman lived in a different locale," said Lou Thompson, a charter member of California's George Tadlock eUnit 472. "The eUnit concept was developed to meet the needs of this group. Over time,

the concept was adopted in other states to accommodate this solution for distance vs. interest."

How do eUnit members meet?

Meetings are conducted in eUnits much like they are in traditional Auxiliary unit settings. The only difference is the location. eUnits use

THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CURRENTLY HAS 11 eUNITS:

- Little Rock, Ark.
- East Palo Alto, Calif.
- Tallahassee, Fla.
- Keystone Heights, Fla.
- Honolulu, Hawaii
- Indianapolis, Ind.
- Rose Hill, Kan.
- St. Louis, Mo.
- Harrisburg, Pa.
- Clarksville, Va.
- Cassville, Wisc.

technology to conduct meetings online. Members communicate through FaceTime, Zoom, Google Hangouts, email, conference calls, chat rooms, or other e-meeting software. Their meetings are held the same as physical units' meetings, with an orderly agenda format.

eUnit members can reside in any city, state, or country as long as they meet the Auxiliary's membership eligibility requirements and follow the rules and regulations.

What do eUnits do?

According to Thompson, "eUnits accomplish the same goal as physical

units do, and they adapt when necessary."

eUnits can be very flexible when it comes to ALA program activities and projects. Another benefit of these unique units is that mission-oriented projects can be fulfilled individually or as a group. Although eUnit members may be separated geographically, there are many different ways to complete a project as a unit.

"For example, fundraising through a physical spaghetti dinner wouldn't be possible, but a non-event fundraiser would be," said Thompson. "Use the Internet to help find great ideas like tea parties, galas, and more. Send invitations to members and friends asking for a donation *not* to attend the event and save on costs like a new outfit, babysitting, and travel expenses. Search for 'non-event fundraiser.'"

An eUnit project can be as creative as the unit would like, offering a wide range of options. Bea Brunner, also a member of California eUnit 472, suggests donating books to a designated disadvantaged school as a unit, or individually distribute poppies and send the collected contributions to the unit's treasurer. The possibilities are endless.

The membership side of eUnits

Very similar to their physical ALA unit counterparts, eUnits abide by the same rules and regulations, and they have officers, program chairs, financial responsibilities, end-of-year reporting, and supplementals, etc.

eUnit members learn the skills and interests of their members and allow them to utilize those specific skillsets to enhance the eUnit and achieve the ALA mission. For example, a member who is good with numbers can handle donation money. If a member likes to plan events, that person can organize the next mission-oriented project. Everyone has something to bring to the table.

"It is kind of enticing to join an all-electronic unit and be in one of just the few that exist," said Brunner.

Get the technicals — for more information about eUnits, and how to start one, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/start-a-new-unit.

WHAT IS MARKETING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY?

Marketing is everywhere and you may not even realize it. Some of the obvious places are in television ads and billboards. Marketing also includes social media, a display in a library, and public events.

Businesses use marketing to sell a product. It's also important to nonprofit organizations, like the American Legion Auxiliary, in advancing their missions. Some of the same tactics a business uses to convince a consumer to buy a product can be used to motivate someone to volunteer, join, or donate to our organization.

As the ALA enters a new century of service, marketing is an important component of the organization's future. Like other storied membership organizations, we are adopting marketing strategies to attract new members, volunteers, and donors.

ALA National Headquarters has assembled a core marketing team to review current strategies and long-range goals to enhance marketing efforts both internally and externally.

One of the first directives for this team was creating a new descriptor (tagline) to reflect recent changes in Auxiliary membership and to better describe the ALA. You may have noticed the new tagline — A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families — throughout February's *Auxiliary* magazine and in other ALA media.

To build upon the new tagline, an ALA "declaration" was created. Think of the declaration as a story that captivates audiences. Its purpose is to connect people emotionally to our brand. It demonstrates that someone can be part of the mission and help make a difference in the lives of others. It is written to be familiar, inclusive, emotional, stimulating, and engaging. The new declaration is printed inside the front cover

of this issue of *Auxiliary*, and you can watch a video version at www.ALAForVeterans.org. We encourage you to share the declaration video at local events, meetings, and on social media. Consider printing the ALA declaration and posting it on the wall at your American Legion post home, and include it in your newsletters.



Raising awareness about the ALA in your community

Marketing is not limited to the national level. Units and departments can also use marketing to increase their number of volunteers, membership, and donations. There are several creative marketing ideas that are easy to implement.

One of the easiest ways to start is through social media. Use this tool to spread the news about your upcoming events, information, and share mission-related photos, etc. And the best part, it's free! When using social media for marketing, it's also important to be mindful of branding (you can find tips on page 50 in this issue of *Auxiliary*).

Another free or inexpensive way to use marketing is to look for unique and unconventional ways to advertise. Here are a few examples that can draw a lot of attention:

- **Partner with local businesses to place a sign in their storefront.** The sign could promote an upcoming event or be as simple as using the ALA's new tagline. Include a phone number, email, and website address

for inquiries on how to volunteer, join, or donate.

- **Create a window display in an empty storefront.** Do you have a town square with a vacant store? Or an empty store in your local mall? Ask the business owner to create a window display in those stores until a business moves in.

- **Create a display at your local library or historical society.** Examples of what to include in the display are the history of the ALA, our mission, or Veterans Day. Be creative!

- **Organize a public poppy making event.** Set up a booth at a local festival or other local event. Poppy making can attract attention to the booth. When someone approaches the booth, talk about the poppy and the ALA mission. Make sure to have membership information available.

While increasing a focus on marketing, it's still important to reach out to local media. If your unit or department is doing something unique or mission-related in your community, send a press release and invite media to attend. May is a great month to use the poppy for marketing. Take poppies to local television stations and ask them to wear the flowers on air. This gives the on-air personalities an opportunity to talk about why they are wearing poppies and create awareness about the mission of The American Legion Family.



In the August issue of *Auxiliary* magazine, we'll talk about how to use websites and email to strengthen your marketing efforts. Don't miss it!



IDEAS, INSPIRATION, AND MORE ON THE ALA NATIONAL BLOG

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters has utilized its blog since 2016 to share content that both complements and differs from other ALA media — and members and nonmembers have taken notice.

By definition, a blog is a regularly updated website or webpage, typically run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style.

The national ALA blog covers a range of topics from do-it-yourself projects to diversity to guest columns written by members of all levels. The blog is another tool available to help educate yourself about the ALA and is a source of information for recruiting and retaining members. Our stories of impact can be used to motivate, inspire, teach, and more.

Since its inception, the number of monthly views on the blog have increased from 3,600 in November 2016 to a record 35,200 views in June 2019. The site has continued to gain

thousands of views each month.

Patricia Anne Delgado, ALA member from the Department of Florida, is a regular reader.

“It gives helpful information at the unit level,” she said. “I love it! I try to share as much as I can.”

Sharing ideas is a main goal of the blog, with the intent to spread information at all levels of the American Legion Auxiliary.

“I truly believe if more members of our wonderful organization took the time to read the blog, they would learn so much valuable and important information,” she said. “I will continue to read the Auxiliary blog and share the information to all on Facebook. It is a wonderful and helpful tool available for all to use.”

A blog posted earlier this year, *Time to Get Creative Addressing Our Identity*, caught Delgado’s eye, and she shared it on several social media pages she follows. Additionally, at unit meetings, Delgado shares blog

posts she finds helpful.

Breaking down our mission by categories such as poppy, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, and leadership makes it easy to navigate and find specific topics.

“I would recommend to everyone go in and read it,” she said. “It tells who we are.”

The blog has also caught the eye of nonmember Jennie Fitzkee, a preschool teacher who educates children about patriotism in many different ways. She’s kept up with the blog since 2016.

“It gives a broad picture of what you do and includes inside, as well as outside, stories,” she said.

Fitzkee has found several posts useful over the years. One that especially piqued her interest was a post on the history of ALA awards and programs, titled, *How Our Programs Have Changed, Adapted over Our 100-Year History*.

“I didn’t realize ALA Girls State began as a program to counteract similar programs with the youth in Nazi Germany,” Fitzkee said.

With a strong heart for patriotism, she said it’s important to have blog posts dedicated to such topics.

“I think readers need to hear about how patriotism is being taught, or how it is shown and expressed by people,” Fitzkee said. “When we share in patriotism, we become one.”

The variety of content available on the ALA blog serves a wide audience — volunteers, members, and donors. There truly is something for everyone!

Be sure to follow the blog at www.ALForVeterans.wordpress.com. Happy reading!

AUXILIARY SUDOKU

Insert the missing numbers one to nine exactly once in every row, column, and 3x3 square. The three Sudoku games below are in order of beginner, newspaper style, and hard. Answers are found on page 57.

9		1 5	6		
	8 2				5
4 5 7				3	
3			4 6	2	
5	4		6 7 1	9	
9 8		5		3 7	
4 7		6 5 8			
		1 9 4			6
		9	7 3 5		4

	8		5		
3	7	1	2		
		6	7 8 4		
	2 3		9		
	3		2 1 4 5 8		
	8	9	7		2
	2 3 7 8		5		
			3 8		
			9 3 1		

3 5	4				
1		5 3	2		
6 9	8			7	
5 8	2 9				
					4
	1	7		2 5	
8			7	9 1	
		5 6			

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E-Mail (Optional) _____

01-19624-001-E24501



HOLD THE CASH — DONATING CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS A SWIPE

Put yourself in this situation: You're asking for donations in exchange for poppies in your hometown grocery store parking lot. How many times do you hear the classic "Sorry — I don't have any cash"? Think about it, and ask yourself how this could be affecting the amount of payments and donations you collect.

We're becoming more of a cashless society, becoming dependent on swiping our credit and debit cards. In turn, that makes it much more difficult for people to make a payment or donate when only cash is accepted. It may not be that people don't want to donate; they simply may not have the means to make it happen.

ALA MEMBER, VOLUNTEER LEAVES BEHIND CHARITABLE BEQUEST



An active member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 143 in New Cumberland, Pa., Barbara K. Smith left behind a legacy of being very friendly, kind, and caring.

So, why is it necessary to make an adjustment in your fundraising?

When you're able to accept credit or debit cards, you can offer an alternative when they tell you they don't have any cash, giving you a better chance at collecting a donation.

Alternative ways to accept money

While cash likely won't go away anytime soon, many businesses and organizations are already using alternative forms when it comes to exchanging money on the spot, including the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters.

For example, each year at National Convention, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation hosts a #GivingTuesday booth, soliciting donations that are used toward making a difference in the health and quality of life of our military heroes. Of course, we happily accept cash and checks, but we can easily accept credit and debit cards through a system known as Square, a mobile payment company that offers an inexpensive alternative for processing credit and debit card payments. Funds are securely accepted using Android and Apple smartphones and tablets. After the transaction is made, a small fee is deducted, and the money is then safely deposited directly into the bank account of the receiver. These devices are also commonly used at flea markets, food trucks, craft fairs, etc.

"It is seen widely amongst nonprofit organizations to have different methods available, and that is evident as each organization is reaching out and providing multiple ways to give," said Sara Riegel, ALA National Headquarters' director of finance.

After Smith passed away in May 2019 at age 67, she supported several charities with bequests, including a generous gift to the American Legion Auxiliary of more than \$24,000.

"She was one who would never miss a meeting and always volunteered to help," said ALA Unit 143 President Heather Swartz. "She was loved by all and is truly missed."

Indiana ALA Unit 500 utilizes an alternative method to cash. Like Square, the unit has been using PayPal for several years to collect payments and donations while out and about. Unit Treasurer Melanie Findley said she can accept a payment or donation via credit or debit card anywhere and everywhere. For a minimal fee, funds are securely accepted using a wireless payment device. Findley said three people within the unit can accept payments and donations via PayPal.

"It's really made a difference," said Findley. "It's just tapping into payments or donations that you might not have received, whether they didn't have cash or checks. They usually have their credit card with them."

Security behind modern payment/fundraising methods

Along with the simplicity, using one of these alternative methods provides another added benefit. Unfortunately, situations such as theft and loss happen. For example, a member may go to a community event(s) on behalf of their unit or Legion Family, taking money for a fundraiser, then brings the can of cash home, accidentally forgetting about it for a week.

When you donate via credit and debit card, your payment goes from point A to point B, easing the concern of cash being passed through multiple sets of hands.

As you make plans to hold future fundraisers and events, consider implementing and encouraging the use of these payment methods. It could make all the difference when it comes to receiving that extra donation.

If you're interested in leaving a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/Planned-Giving/ for more information and where you can download the *ALA Planned Giving Guide* to help guide you through the planned giving process and answer any questions you may have along the way.

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Above: A senior chief petty officer assigned to the USS Boxer walks down a pier with his family during a 2019 homecoming gathering at Naval Base San Diego (photo: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Justin Whitley, U.S. Navy).

American Legion Auxiliary salutes spouses of U.S. servicemembers

Military wife Angelica Last was facing a major medical emergency during her 34th week of pregnancy. She developed severe pre-eclampsia, a condition that can lead to serious complications for mother and baby. Doctors deemed it necessary to induce labor then.

Angelica's husband Sam, a U.S. Army soldier, was by her side — well, as much as he could be, given that he was on deployment in Kuwait at the time. He was present by video chat on a cell phone placed near his wife in the delivery room, with permission from hospital officials.

Though Angelica had to be resuscitated twice while in the delivery room, mother and baby survived. Their newborn daughter Charlie spent 14 days in the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Today, she is a healthy 3-year-old girl. Other than starting to speak later than most children, she hasn't had any medical issues stemming from her induced early delivery, Angelica said.

As she talked about her husband being in another country at the time of the medical emergency during her pregnancy with Charlie, not once did Angelica complain about her servicemember spouse not being there in-person immediately. Rather, she expressed appreciation for the technology that made it possible for her and Sam to be connected during the ordeal, gratitude that he was able to come home as soon as he could, and an understanding and respect for Sam's military duty.

Because of this serious medical emergency, Sam was allowed to return home briefly. He wasn't able to reach the family's Kansas home until three days after Charlie was born. Modern-day technology paid off for the Last family once more. As he traveled, Sam was able to use the hospital's "Angel Eyes," a password-protected computer app which allows for online viewing of a baby

in NICU by authorized individuals.

Being apart from one another during critical times or everyday moments is one of the numerous sacrifices made by military spouses — the married servicemember who's away serving in America's armed forces, and the spouse who takes care of things on the home front. Servicemembers make significant sacrifices in their roles as protectors and defenders of our nation. And so do their military spouses.

When married servicemembers are away, their spouses are usually shouldering the responsibilities of managing a household, and caring for their children, alone for long periods of time. Sometimes, there are no relatives or close friends nearby to help. But even with assistance plus a solid support system of family, friends, and religious faith, military spouses are often giving up some shared experiences with their husbands or wives serving in the military. That can mean missing out on holidays, family triumphs, or the everyday moments between life's highs and lows.

"I just try to go each day in a positive way. I try to make my kids into the best people they can be, make sure my husband isn't late for work [when he's stateside], and that he has his ID on him. You know what I mean? It's the simple things. I don't really think about the overall sacrifices," Angelica said.

The American Legion Auxiliary is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. As such, the ALA acknowledges and appreciates military spouses who give up so much in support of the servicemembers and their duties as part of the U.S. armed forces. *Auxiliary* magazine features three military spouses and their stories.

ANGELICA LAST
Spouse: Sam Last, U.S. Army
Seale, Ala.

In addition to the serious medical complications involved in their

second daughter's birth, Angelica faced several other hardships while Sam was deployed. She had post-partum depression after the birth of their third child, Daryl, and an Autism diagnosis for their second child, Genevieve. Toss in the everyday juggle of managing a household with four children, each under the age of 10.

Then, there's the Last's added challenge of building a strong marriage without the benefit of a long courtship. The couple met online, got acquainted at a distance, and married 28 days after their first in-person date. Sam deployed about five months after they got married. The couple will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary this fall.

When he's away for military duties, Sam keeps in contact with Angelica as often as possible by using a variety of communication formats. He was present for the births of Daryl and Genevieve. He was present by video chat for the births of their first child Andrew and fourth child Charlie.

Through the years, Angelica and Sam have discovered methods for staying connected and building on their relationship, especially during long periods apart. For example, the couple would occasionally plan to do the same fitness workout simultaneously while on a video call together. Or, they might watch a show or movie on Netflix either at the same time — or watch at different times, and plan time for a video call to discuss the show or movie.

Managing the emotions and expectations of four young children while their father is away is a top priority for the couple.

"I don't try to make a big deal about it," Angelica said. "I don't want to make it about, 'Oh, Dad's not here for Thanksgiving,' for example. Instead, we make it about the positive. So it's more like, 'We're going to call Daddy while we're decorating the Christmas

tree.' When we celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, we juggle them around to different times of the year when Sam is home. We just do things differently."

Somewhere in between taking care of their children and their home, and doing her part to nurture the couple's marriage, Angelica finds a little time for herself. She has hobbies, such as quilting and scrapbooking. She also enjoys reading the Bible and doing fitness workouts. In addition, she built her online health and fitness coaching business during her last two pregnancies. Her business has been operating successfully for seven years.

While all of this may seem daunting to someone not in a military family, Angelica said she doesn't feel as if she is doing anything special.

"I appreciate it when people see the sacrifices that come with being a military spouse. But when I take a step back and look at it, I guess I don't see it as a sacrifice. It's my husband. It's his job. I'm very proud of what he does and his sacrifices and commitment. At the end of the day, he's a dad with four kids and he's a husband. We're on this

journey together. We're trying to take it one day at a time," Angelica said.

So far, the Last family's journey includes four deployments, four duty stations, plus multiple trainings away from home for prolonged periods of time. The family has moved 12 times in 9-1/2 years.

They're not done with their journey yet. With 10 years of service already under his belt, Sam intends to make the military his career.

**JOHNBRIAN ROBLES
(Serves in the U.S. Air Force)
Spouse: Lana Bonotan,
U.S. Air Force
 Surprise, Ariz.**

The sacrifices and challenges of a military spouse are double for Johnbrian Robles and his wife, Lana Bonotan. Both of them are servicemembers, making both of them military spouses. Johnbrian and Lana serve in the Air Force. The couple have five children. So far, these married servicemembers have not been deployed simultaneously — or away from home for overlapping, prolonged periods of time — as part of their military duties.

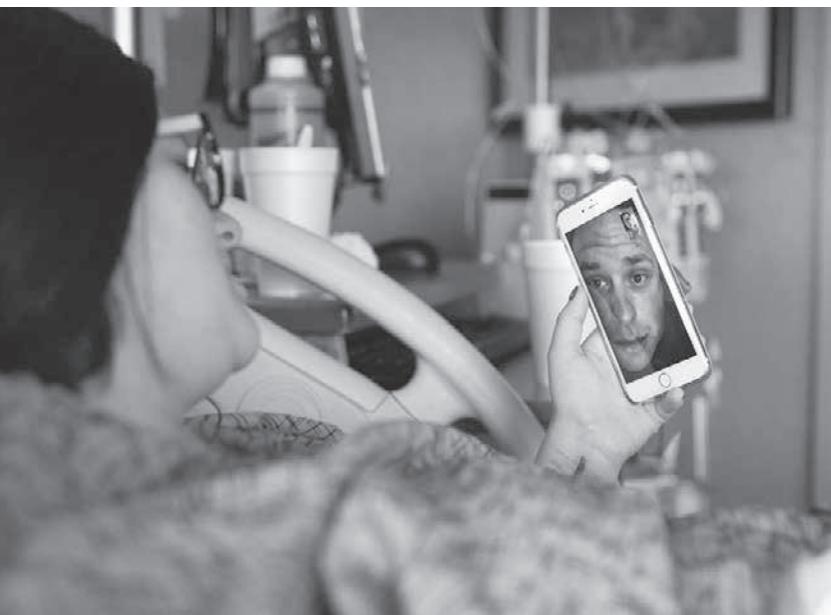
Still, there are sacrifices. For

example, Johnbrian missed the birth of his first son and wasn't able to get home until two weeks afterward.

"Yes, it was hard," Johnbrian said about missing the birth. "It's an accepted consequence of our chosen lifestyle. I was present when my second son was born. But I had to leave when he was about 4 months old for deployment. My wife was again alone with a newborn. I knew the household was very stressful, as any household could be with a single parent managing five children, especially with one being a newborn — and the requirements of a newborn. There was a lot of guilt with me for not being there. I wanted to fulfill the Air Force's mission, but I also have my obligations as a father.

"The good thing is, we did have family members in California, within a fairly short distance [prior to relocating to Arizona] who did help us," Johnbrian continued. "They were there as a support base. My wife is a very strong-willed woman. She pretty much just took it in stride. She basically said, 'This is what the situation is. This is what it calls for. Let's do it. It's going to be hard, but let's do it,'" Johnbrian added.

Having a strong and resourceful military spouse can be a big support



TOGETHER AND APART (left to right): While deployed overseas, servicemember Sam Last connects by video phone chat with his pregnant wife Angelica while she is in a hospital delivery room; Sam and Angelica Last and their children. (Photos Submitted)

to the servicemember who's away from home and needs to focus on military tasks at hand, Johnbrian explained.

"It provides a piece of mind. I know for a fact, that if — knock on wood — something does happen to me, my wife can carry on. And the kids will be cared for, with no ill-effects whatsoever," he continued. "It's just the way she is. Any hard situations we've come across, we've never shied away from. We've met them head on, found a resolution, and kept pressing on. In that aspect, we are like-minded. I just relate to what I do in the military and what we do in our missions. I carry that over to our household: a routine, a schedule, what needs to be done, what's a priority, what's not a priority. I know my wife does the same thing."

The couple have been able to take advantage of modern technology such as video calls by using laptops or tablets. But Johnbrian also recalls some of his deployments when the only communications he had with Lana and children were sporadic emails. Johnbrian also remembers when telephone calls on "morale phones" were the major ways to communicate with loved ones back home. Morale phones were a military base's collection of corded phones for servicemembers to use for personal calls.

Even with today's technology of real-time visual and audio communications, Johnbrian said he misses his wife immensely when they are far apart for long periods of time.

"I try to hide it, by virtue of being me and my personality. I'm pretty sure my wife sees through it, even though I try to put on a stoic appearance. But I miss my wife immensely. Just waking up in the morning without her. Seeing something as simple as how her side of the dresser is pretty much empty — it's tough," he said.

Johnbrian and Lana met years



RETURNING HOME: Servicemember Lana Bonotan is welcomed by her husband, Johnbrian Robles, and their children. (Photo Submitted)

ago when he was stationed at Travis Air Force Base and she had joined a Reserve unit there.

"Once we began our relationship and knew we wanted to progress with it, we had a conversation. We're both very deployable. We're both very motivated to deploy. And, if we are told to do so, we're not ones to shy away from it. We planned for something as simple as me going to a training course for a week or two, to the opposite end of the spectrum for something a little bit more serious — for example, if there is a casualty in this family. And how we'd have to manage the household as a single parent," Johnbrian said. "I don't believe anyone is ever completely prepared for everything that comes up, especially when a spouse is deployed. But it gave us a pretty good foundation on how to go about carrying on."

Lana and Johnbrian, both of whom intend to make the military their careers, each have veterans in their backgrounds.

Johnbrian, a naturalized U.S. citizen who immigrated from the Philippines, said his grandfather fought in World War II with American armed forces to free the Philippines from Japanese control. Johnbrian had always held the United States in high regard. He joined the U.S. Air Force in 2000.

Lana's father is a U.S. Navy veteran who served in the Vietnam War and the Korean War. He retired from the Navy after just over 20 years of service.

As of press time, Lana was on temporary duty at a stateside Air Force base. We hope to interview her for our blog series featuring a few other military spouses. Look for that series in late May 2020 at ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com.

BARBARA TICHOTA **Spouse: Ralph Tichota, U.S.** **Army Veteran** **Clearwater, Neb.**

The lives of Ralph and Barbara Tichota changed drastically in one week in January 1969 when they received three pieces of news. Ralph got a teaching job. The couple found out they were expecting their first child. And Ralph was drafted into the Army. The 24-year-old college graduate, husband, and father-to-be turned down the teaching job and left Nebraska for Fort Ord, an Army base in California, in February 1969. He was sent to Vietnam in October of that same year.

"I was a little selfish in the beginning. I didn't want him to go. I was a bit scared," said Barbara, who was 22 years old, pregnant, and about to share her husband with the Army during wartime. "But Ralph

and I were both taught to respect authority and respect America. So, we handled the situation the best we could.”

“We had lots of friends, and our family supported us and everything. It was hard. And we were kind of scared. Both of us. He didn’t say that, but I’m sure he was frightened at times — the fear of the unknown. He kind of kept that inside. He probably talks about it more now than he did at the time. We didn’t dwell on it; We knew these things had to be. That’s the way it was,” she added. “I just thought it was my duty, for God and my country, to support Ralph because I loved him so much. I had to support him and believe that what he does there would be for the good of America.”

While her husband was doing basic training at Fort Ord, Barbara moved to the Monterrey, Calif., area to be closer to him. Barbara said she met several other women in the same situation as her. To this day, she maintains contact with a couple of them.

Ralph was present for the birth of the couple’s first child, Amy, on Sept. 18, 1969. But he had to leave about two weeks after her birth to go to Vietnam. Their second child, Chasda, was born after Ralph completed his two-year obligation in the military.

While he was away in Vietnam, Barbara and baby Amy lived with Ralph’s parents at their home in Norfolk, Neb. Barbara worked part-time as a legal secretary at a law firm.

“We all got through it together. We all got really close. Ralph wouldn’t have wanted it any other way. He would not have wanted me living alone. Still, it was hard sometimes. I was a new mother,” Barbara said.

Even with the help of relatives, the support of friends, and strength she drew from her religious faith, the first-time mother said it wasn’t easy being apart from her husband,



FAMILY UNITED: Military spouse Barbara Tichota and her husband, U.S. Army Vietnam veteran Ralph Tichota pose with their two adult daughters. (Photo Submitted)

and knowing he was in a war zone.

“I think the biggest thing is that nothing was normal. You don’t fit in. Wherever you go, you felt like a fifth wheel because you felt like you didn’t fit in. Wherever you go, you see couples and families together,” Barbara said.

“It was a time of uncertainty. And we didn’t have all of this communication we have today. I got lots of letters. I wrote Ralph every day. We also sent audiotapes to each other. He was good about writing me, and he said how important it was to receive mail there; it was a big morale booster. But when he would write to me and briefly mention going on ambush and patrols, I didn’t like reading that,” Barbara continued.

The couple were able to briefly reunite, meeting in Hawaii for several days when Ralph had “R&R” (rest and recuperation) time. They had a great week together. Then, it was time to say goodbye again. They were back to relying on letters and audiotapes they sent one another via standard U.S. Postal Service mail.

Ralph completed his 12-month tour of duty in Vietnam and returned home permanently to Nebraska in October 1970. He farmed for a year and then got a job teaching, and coaching various sports teams, at a local high school.

Barbara said her husband didn’t

talk much, after he returned home, about what he saw and experienced in Vietnam.

“I think he buried it. He’s the kind of person who keeps it inside. After he quit teaching and after he wasn’t around so many people, he and I talked about it some more. My support role as a military spouse, it didn’t stop when he came home from Vietnam or when he officially became a veteran. In that sense, I feel like I will always be a military spouse,” she said.

“My husband’s military service interrupted our life together, but it made us grow and become who we are — as a couple, and as individuals. We are stronger after having gone through it. I sure am more sympathetic to those who are going through it now than some people probably are,” Barbara added.

Ralph joined The American Legion in 1981. He is a Legionnaire at Post 267 in Clearwater, Neb. Barbara has been an American Legion Auxiliary member of Unit 267 in Clearwater since 1983.

“I like the idea of showing, especially to young people, how important it is that our veterans, military, and their families be recognized for what they’ve done and given up to serve our country. The ALA helps me do that.” ★

By Landa Bagley, Staff Writer

Ways You Can Help Local Military Spouses and Their Families

If there are military families in your community, reach out to them. Don't wait until the spouse's servicemember is deployed or otherwise away for duty. If possible, work at building a bond and network of support before the military spouses need it. Here are a few simple suggestions to get started:

- Introduce yourself to them.
- Ask if they need anything. Don't just ask once and leave it. Trade cell numbers so you can be persistent without nagging.
- Share coupon books and social media accounts or groups for local activities in the area.

And if a military family is new to your area:

- Show up at the new neighbors' house with local information and home-baked goods.
- Share lists of quality service providers ranging from medical to home repair

services to even things like salons, barbershops, and restaurants.

- Offer to help dispose of moving boxes.
- Bring coffee, snacks, and other pick-me-ups to help make unpacking go quicker.

Getting to know a military family in advance will probably make it easier to approach the spouse at home and offer assistance when the servicemember is away.

Ask questions such as, "Do you need any help?" or "How can I make things easier for you?" If the response is that no help is needed, let the military spouse know he or she can contact you if assistance is needed later. After all, things do come up unexpectedly — usually when help is needed the most.

These tips were provided by ALA National Headquarters' military spouses Chrystal Daulton, Amanda Ginter, Marti Drake, Angie Graham, and Stephanie Holloway.

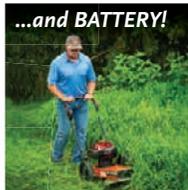
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A Family Affair

Influence, respect in nation's capital

A few hundred American Legion and Sons of The American Legion caps, along with American Legion Auxiliary shirts adorned with poppies, took over the streets of the capital for our annual Washington, D.C. Conference in March. The American Legion Family continues to be a powerful force together.

Throughout the week, members jointly participated in the conference — attending meetings, visiting lawmakers on the Hill, and sitting side by side during American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford’s testimony. It truly was a Family affair.

Auxiliary members, Legionnaires, and Sons participated in several commission meetings as part of the conference. Diligently taking notes, ALA members learned more about National Security, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Veterans Employment & Education, and Legislative.

“The information given by the

speakers in Monday’s meetings were so informative,” said Tina Hurst, Mississippi ALA legislative chair. “It really brought the items in the legislative agenda to life for me. I am a numbers person, so hearing statistics that support the decisions made by the Legion really helped make the cause stand out. Also, having this information before making our visits on Tuesday helped us emphasize why the Legion supports the agenda they chose.”

Legion Legislative Priorities

United together, the Legion Family learned the priorities of The American Legion legislative agenda. The priorities most discussed on the Hill:

- Toxic exposure and burn pits: Millions of veterans have been deployed in the Global War on Terror, and a disturbingly high percentage of them have been exposed to airborne toxic hazards during their service as a result of burn pits. The American

Legion, for decades, has fought for service-connected disability benefits for adverse health conditions linked to toxic exposures in service and will continue to do so for this generation.

- Health care for women veterans: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs must continue to develop and expand health care services for the fast-growing population of female veterans, a large percentage of whom do not enroll for VA health care for a number of reasons.

- Support VA’s suicide-prevention efforts: An estimated 20 veterans die by suicide every day. Most were not receiving care or support through VA that may have saved them. The American Legion supports expanding and promoting mental health treatment for veterans and urges Congress to provide VA necessary funds to hire mental health professionals and proper staffing for its Integrative Health and Wellness Program.

- Pay the Coast Guard: On a daily basis, U.S. Coast Guard personnel carry

out missions that are vital to national security. The Coast Guard, however, is the only military branch forced to work without pay during a government shutdown. This is unacceptable. The repeated and all too common threat of government shutdown brings severe hardships on our Coast Guard members and their families. No member of the U.S. military service should ever live in fear of not being paid. The American Legion supports bills and provisions that will ensure the Coast Guard is paid during government shutdowns.

Other legislative priorities: protect the American flag, reaffirm commitment to our allies, fully fund a superior national defense, implement and oversee recent laws, protect the GI Bill, help end veteran homelessness, and support for Gold Star families.

To learn more about the legislative priorities, visit www.Legion.org.

“It was an honor and privilege to address The American Legion Family to reinforce the commitment of the American Legion Auxiliary to the legislative agenda for the 116th Congress,” said ALA National President Nicole Clapp. “Several of the priorities directly relate to the ALA administrative area of emphasis focusing on the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families.”

Strength in Numbers

With knowledge of the priorities, Legion Family members headed to the Hill, equipped with plenty of information to share with lawmakers.

Rhode Island has a strong relationship with its representatives and senators, said Karen Panzarella, legislative chair for the department. The delegation started off the day with Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D) and Jack Reed (D) before visiting their representatives.

As with each state, they educated their lawmakers on the legislative agenda and how they can help make a difference.

Family members worked together during their visits, from navigating the buildings to taking turns talking, passionately explaining why these legislative priorities matter to The American Legion Family and working hard to encourage their lawmakers

to feel the same.

Clapp joined the Iowa delegation in visiting with Sen. Chuck Grassley (R) and Sen. Joni Ernst (R).

“I appreciated sitting down with both Iowa senators to discuss the legislative priorities that affect our mission delivery across the country and around the globe,” Clapp said.

Commander’s Testimony

The final day of a unified presence in our capital saw the Family supporting Oxford in his testimony to a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs.

“Implementation, oversight, improvement,” Oxford said. “That triad is the prevailing theme in The American Legion’s legislative priority list for the second session of the 116th Congress.”

Several questions were asked after the report, creating a continuous dialogue between the Legion and the committee members.

“To be able to attend the testimony was the highlight of my trip,” Hurst said. “The enthusiasm with which Commander Oxford spoke shows the commitment the Legion has in taking care of our veterans.”

Overall, the conference was very successful and is an important

annual event for the Family to focus on, Clapp said.

“I embraced the chance to learn from national speakers and experts on an array of legislative priorities that we would not be able to without this conference,” Clapp said. “Our members echoed the incredible opportunity to partake in the abundance of educational sessions the D.C. Conferences offers.”

Looking Ahead

Taking what they learned back to their respective departments, members of The American Legion Family left further educated on working with and influencing lawmakers to implement the Legion’s legislative priorities.

“I learned so much in such a short time,” Hurst said. “Bringing the Family together to hear the information that decisions are based on gave me more insight into the issues being faced by veterans.”

While the physical presence of a few hundred American Legion and Sons caps along with Auxiliary poppies are no longer visible on the streets around the U.S. Capitol, the influence and respect remains as lawmakers take what they learned from Legion Family visits and work together to improve the lives of our country’s veterans, military, and their families. ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer



FAMILY MATTERS (opposite page, top left clockwise): ALA National President Nicole Clapp addresses Legion Family at the commander’s call; Legion National Chaplain Edward L. Harris Jr. with his wife, Vandella Harris; Legion Family is represented during Kentucky’s Hill visit; Alaska members meet with Sen. Dan Sullivan (R); Auxiliary members chat during a break between commission meetings; Family members of Rhode Island with Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D) after their meeting. Above: The Kentucky delegation meets with aides of Sen. Mitch McConnell (R); photos: Ben Mikesell/TAL and ALANHQ.

IMPACT ALA!

FREE EDUCATIONAL COURSES LEAD TO BRIGHTER AUXILIARY FUTURE



Since May 2017, eight ALA Academy courses have provided opportunities for ongoing training through self-paced learning, peer sharing, and peer mentoring.

The educational opportunities these courses provide are a deeper level of understanding about the organization. Members who don't take these courses will miss out on advanced options to grow and learn as a member, as a volunteer, and as a donor, thus affecting the impact on those we serve.

The free, professionally developed online training program is designed for both new and seasoned ALA members. For new members, ALA Academy gives participants a chance to learn even more about the organization at their own pace; for seasoned members, the courses are a good refresher.

With online training available to all members who have access to the internet, ALA Academy offers:

1. Multiple delivery methods to help encourage self-paced learning, sharing, and mentoring.

2. Opportunities for ongoing training and discussions – much of the ALA Academy curriculum will encourage activities to continue learning after the actual instructional event.

3. Virtual online learning to allow those who may not be able to travel to a classroom or unit meeting to still participate and learn.

4. Consistent training materials–

everyone will get the same information and opportunities to ensure consistent messaging and training delivery.

Here is a closer look at the eight ALA Academy courses, with the three newest listed first:

Junior Course:

Designed specifically for Junior members, this module revised the

previous Junior Leadership Course from a PowerPoint to a digital format.

Goals of this course:

- Defines the ALA's purpose for the Junior member
- Ways Juniors can excel as leaders
- Tips for speaking to groups
- What happens at ALA meetings?
- ALA officer roles and their job duties
- The 10 principles of the ALA preamble

"I hope Juniors take away the goals, plus a desire to continue their membership in the ALA when they turn 18," said Kristin Hinshaw, National Headquarters senior program coordinator.

Fundraising Overview: takes members through the four different ALA Foundation grants (Veteran Projects Fund, Sub Grants, Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and Mission in Action) and how to apply. It also covers how to host a fundraiser, including best practices.

Course learning objectives:

- Identifies the four different grants awarded by the ALAF and how to apply for them
- Lists tips and ideas for effective and successful fundraising
- Discusses your success story with donors and the public
- Outlines the steps and actions to take when planning a fundraiser
- Offers ideas on how to effectively market your fundraiser

"From this course, I hope members learn the steps of planning and

hosting a fundraiser from start to finish and that the ALA Foundation has grants to offer and enhance their fundraising efforts," said Madison Maves, Development Division director at National Headquarters.

How to Deal with Conflict: covers defining conflict, the difference between conflict and complaint, what causes conflict, and strategies to resolve conflict. It's designed as an interactive course, engaging the user through questions and scenarios.

Course learning objectives:

- Why conflict can be good
- Strategies for handling conflict proactively
- Strategies for handling conflict positively
- A better understanding of your own style of handling conflict

ALA 101: designed to be an introductory course to ALA Academy, focusing on who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Communication Methods 201: an introduction to how the ALA uses e-communication. It also provides basic how-to information about using social media.

ALA Leadership: Living Our Motto of Service Not Self: reviews what it means to be a leader and that leadership is not only a title — it is helping others to stay mission-focused and leading by our guiding principles.

Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill: this thought-provoking course was designed to help ALA members better understand how our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors impact ALA membership and the ALA's ability to serve our mission.

ALA Branding and Why it Matters to Me: takes a closer look at key topics, such as what branding means, defining brand loyalty, how consistency leads to brand loyalty, and why branding is important to the ALA's future.

To get started on your first ALA Academy course or to take another, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

ALA GIRLS STATE: A GREAT RECRUITING TOOL IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

Did you know there are multiple opportunities to recruit membership with your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program? If you've attended any sessions of your ALA Girls State program, you've realized the excitement and pride in our country that citizens gain during this week. The memories and friendships made will last a lifetime. Many are willing to give back to the organization that gave them such a great opportunity while attending American Legion Auxiliary Girls State.

What can your unit do after ALA Girls State? Sponsor a float in your local parades with a sign for your

ALA Girls State citizen. Ask them to help at one of your ALA events such as bingo, chili suppers, or fish fries. Ask them to speak during your local Veterans Day celebrations. Ask them to talk to junior girls in next year's high school classes about their wonderful experiences at ALA Girls State.

A great recruiting tool is to find out if your citizen applied for The American Legion Samsung Scholarship by asking your program chairperson. If she applied, she is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. Ask her to speak at your next meeting about her ALA Girls State experiences. During

the meeting, tell her about the organization and ask if she would like to join. You may even find out her parents are eligible to join the organization.

Stay in touch with your ALA Girls State citizens even if they are not eligible for membership now. Someday, they may become a veteran through their own service, or through another family member, and they may want to "pay back" the ALA by joining your unit or post then.



Wendy Riggle is a 56-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Unit 177 in Mount Auburn, Iowa.

AUDIT: AREAS OF RISK MANAGEMENT WORTH CONSIDERING

Many recognize the importance of Audit Committees to our organization. Members selected to serve should have appropriate backgrounds with respect to governance and management policy and procedures. To be effective, they should have familiarity of our organization, its structure, and its mission, while providing new perspectives and fresh insights.

Audit Committee responsibilities vary; however, most assume an independent oversight and advisory role in relation to internal control over financial reporting, audit, risk management, and accounting.

A few areas dealing with risk management worth considering:

Departments and/or units should have a retention and destruction policy, helping to eliminate accidental or innocent destruction of records. The policy should include guidelines for handling electronic files and voicemails and should contain backup procedures, archiving of documents, and a schedule for confirmation of system reliability.

Although departments should regularly shred or otherwise dispose unnecessary and outdated documents and files, care must be taken to maintain appropriate records concerning financial information, contracts, real estate and other major transactions, employment files, and fundraising accountability, according to guidelines established by your department and as governed by your respective state.

Disasters can strike anytime and come in a variety of forms — from tornadoes, earthquakes, or winter storms, to water main breaks or other miscellaneous building damage, to minor incidents such as power outages and technical issues — each can paralyze operations if not adequately prepared. A detailed Disaster Response and Recovery Plan will aid in providing direction for continuing operations under adverse conditions and reduce risk to our organization.

The American Legion Auxiliary's reputation is our greatest asset. Whether a member has a dual

interest or the appearance of one, a conflict of interest can occur and can be terribly damaging to our organization.

It is very important that all members disclose any potential conflicts of interest. If you suspect another member has crossed the line by promoting their own financial interest, you should take responsibility and reveal your concerns immediately.

And if you, personally, believe you may have a conflict of interest, you should recuse yourself from the relevant discussion and participation in any subsequent votes on the issue.

As we look toward our next century of service, we must continue to actively monitor the health and well-being of our organization and conscientiously review internal controls, helping to reduce potential risks to our organization.



Jeri Greenwell is a 53-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Mundt-Allen Unit 81 in Bethel, Maine.

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES: KEEP JUNIORS ACTIVE, ENGAGED THIS SUMMER

Warm weather can be a great opportunity to keep your Juniors active and engaged during the summer to reinforce *Service Not Self*. Planning early can put your unit on a path to a fun-filled summer with your Juniors. Here are some steps to help you plan.

Let's start by looking at the calendar. The dates to circle are Memorial Day, Flag Day, your department convention dates, Independence Day, and Labor Day. Other dates to consider depend on your community. Is there a county fair, an annual event in the community, or at the post? What about a date in August to consider a back-to-school event? Don't freak out and think you have to do something on all of these dates —

just make yourself aware. Now let's do some brainstorming.

Next, look at the obvious dates like Memorial Day or Independence Day — could the Juniors serve veterans at a parade or post event with water, snacks, or make special cards for veterans who will attend those events, thanking them for their service? Could the Juniors play an active role in one of those events?

Is there an opportunity to help clean a park or area in the community together? What if they took a couple days and ran a lemonade stand to raise money for a cause?

Lastly, don't forget about the patches Juniors can earn. What about organizing a day or two in the summer to help Juniors earn those

patches? This could be done at the department convention, at your post, or at a community center. It could be an opportunity to advertise the event to the community to attract potential members or bring awareness to your unit. Tell each Junior to bring a friend, whether the friend belongs to the unit or not. Everyone needs to learn about Americanism.

The summer is filled with possibilities for our Juniors. Think, plan, and coordinate ahead of time to make this summer the best it can be for your Junior Activities program.



Suzanne Knapp is a 52-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Michigan Unit 4 in Mount Clemens.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS: KEEP YOUR DOCUMENTS UP TO DATE

The rules in our governing documents protect us. They provide a reference for questions, inquiries, and best practices when members

In a significant legislative victory for The American Legion, the LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service) was signed into law on July 30, 2019, declaring the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941. The eligibility clause in the American Legion Auxiliary's Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules has been updated to reflect this fact.

All definitive dates for eligibility are now defined in the footnote aligned to Article III of the Constitution. In support of this action, the Preamble has been revised to reflect "all wars" from "great wars."

Every American Legion Auxiliary unit, district, county, and department should adopt this language and assure their governing documents reflect the change in eligibility requirements.

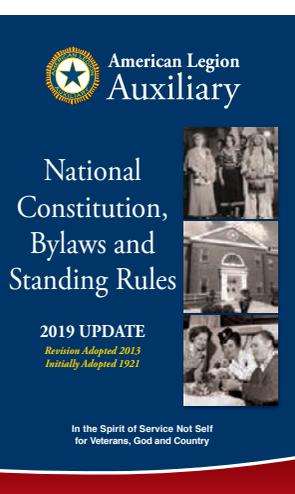
A small change in language reveals a monumental change in concept.

The American Legion has additionally changed the eligibility language from "wives" to "spouses." A spouse is defined as a husband or wife. If their eligibility requirements are met, men are now eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. Whether you perceive it or not, everything is constantly changing.

As Heraclitus said, "Change is the only constant in life." As American Legion Auxiliary members, embracing these fundamental changes will enable our members to better acclimate to a changing global environment while remaining relevant and empowered on behalf of those we serve.



Trish Ward is a 21-year member of John P. Hand Unit 250 of Louisburg, Kan.



are needing a resource for supporting our American Legion Auxiliary mission.

Are your documents current and up to date? Many changes have been implemented in response to critical revisions adopted by The American Legion. Now is the time to prepare and assure you are positioned to implement all necessary updates.



Candidate: National President
KATHY DAUIDSTEL
 Department of Kentucky:
 Latonia Unit 203
Eligibility: Through father,

William Kaelin Jr., Korean War Era U.S. Army veteran.

Offices Held: Served in several unit, district, and department level positions. National: National vice president; national committee chair: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Poppy, National Security, Americanism, Membership, and Leadership.



Candidate: National Vice President
VICKIE KOUTZ
 Department of Indiana:
 Boonville Unit 200
Eligibility: Through

husband, James E. Koutz, U.S. Army Vietnam veteran (in country)

Offices Held: Served in several unit, district, and department level positions. National: NEC; national committee chair: Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Poppy, Legislative, ALA Girls State chair/ALA Girls Nation director, National Security, Membership, Constitution & Bylaws, Education, Children & Youth, and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; national committee vice chair: Leadership, Community Service, and Junior Activities.

American Legion Auxiliary members elect five national division vice presidents, one from each ALA division.



Candidate: Central Division National Vice President
DENISE DELANEY-WROLEN
 Department of Indiana:
 Gary Unit 279

Eligibility: Through father, George Evans Jr., World War II U.S. Navy veteran, served in the Pacific.



Candidate: Eastern Division National Vice President
MARIE J. PYTKA
 Department of
 Rhode Island: Fierlit/
 Korzen Unit 79

Eligibility: Through husband, Eugene R. Pytka, U.S. Navy veteran, Vietnam era.



Candidate: Northwestern Division National Vice President
DEE DEE BUCKLEY
 Department of
 Minnesota: Ben Krueger
 Unit 49/Pequot Lakes

Eligibility: Through father, Loren V. Lien, WWII U.S. Navy veteran, and son Matthew Karvonen, U.S. Navy veteran of Kosovo campaign.



Candidate: Southern Division National Vice President
GABRIELE BARNETT
 Department of Georgia:
 Unit 192, Evans

Eligibility: Through late husband, Sgt. 1st. Class (Ret.) Maurice "Mo" Barnett, a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran.



Candidate: Western Division National Vice President
TONI GIMPEL
 Department of Idaho:
 Bonneville Unit 56 —

Idaho Falls
Eligibility: Through husband, Arthur L. Gimpel, U.S. Air Force (Ret.) Vietnam; father, Thomas Keith Bowcutt, WWII, U.S. Navy; and son, Keith M. Gimpel, U.S. Air Force post-Gulf War.

The national historian completes a historical record of the administrative year in which she serves, maintains, and updates the historical records of the American Legion Auxiliary.



Candidate: National Historian
CAROL G. CAMPBELL
 Department of Virginia:
 Unit 10
Eligibility: Through father,
 James F. Gallagher Sr., U.S. Army, WWII.

American Legion Auxiliary chaplains express our founding principle of service to God and country and celebrate diversity among people and faiths. They also provide spiritual and emotional guidance, sending dignity and respect to the occasion.



Candidate: National Chaplain
MARY CAUTHEN
 Department of Louisiana:
 Unit 3
Eligibility: Through

husband Gerhard Cauthen, U.S. Army, Cold War.

WHEN ARE ALA NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED?

These national officer positions serve one-year terms and are elected at National Convention each year. These officers will serve until adjournment of the following National Convention.

In addition to these candidates, any member in good standing may be nominated for any of these national offices from the floor at National Convention. ALA national division vice presidents are elected in their respective division caucus during National Convention.

Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org to read more about the candidates for 2020-2021 office.

Information presented on this page was provided by the candidates.



DID YOU KNOW?

The American Legion Auxiliary national vice president hasn't always been part of the ALA's roster of national officers. It wasn't until 1971 when the vice president was first elected. Duties of the NVP: to be the presiding officer at a meeting of the organization in the absence of the national president and to assume such other duties as assigned by the national president.

IMPACT ALA!

WHAT'S NEW AT NHQ

NEC APPROVES SEVERAL RESOLUTIONS AT ITS MID-YEAR MEETING

The National Executive Committee approved several resolutions at its mid-year meeting, along with holding a special centennial celebration.

A major item the board discussed was the composition of the Executive Committee to the Board of Directors. Currently, it's comprised of the national president, national vice president, national secretary, national treasurer, and national finance committee chair. The proposed composition is national president, national vice president, national secretary, national treasurer, five national division vice presidents, and two NEC persons who will be appointed annually by the national president.

This topic's discussion led to the board calling for an executive session with the board ultimately approving the resolution.

Another item the board voted on was the establishment of an executive director position at National Headquarters as well as that position's responsibilities.

Although the national secretary

position has customarily been responsible for both management and government oversight functions, assigning management responsibilities for National Headquarters to an executive director will allow the national secretary to focus on the governance responsibilities stated in the Constitution & Bylaws as an officer of the organization.



In other news from the NEC's mid-year meeting, members voted to:

- Amend the preface of the Standing Rules: technical cleanup recommended by Chris Dickey, national parliamentarian.
- Change the "Code of Ethics" name in the Standing Rules to "Code of Ethical Conduct."
- Audit Committee charter: technical cleanup pursuant to the

National Audit Committee Charter rescinded at the 2019 National Convention.

Additionally, the national treasurer and director of finance positions were split with Sara Riegel remaining as director of finance on the operations side. Marybeth Revoir was appointed to be national treasurer on the governance side.

The centennial shadowbox (pictured, at center) was revealed in a surprise unveiling ceremony featuring National President Nicole Clapp and 100th Anniversary Committee Chair Linda Newsome. The video was shared on the ALA National Headquarters Facebook page.

The shadowbox was first created for the ALA's 75th anniversary and has been added to in order to showcase our last 25 years, including our centennial.

In addition to the big takeaways listed above, a verbatim of the NEC meeting proceedings will be posted on the national website at www.ALAforVeterans.org in summer 2020. Follow national ALA media regarding National Convention in August for other resolutions which will be voted on.

YELLOW RIBBON EVENTS HELP SPREAD THE AUXILIARY MISSION

For almost a year, the national American Legion Auxiliary has been attending a handful of Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) events to get the ALA's name out to military families and also using it as another method of membership outreach.

The YRRP is a U.S. Department of Defense effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

According to the Yellow Ribbon website, through these events,

servicemembers and loved ones connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Reintegration during post-deployment is a critical time for members of the National Guard and Reserve, as they often live far from military installations and other members of their units. The YRRP was established in 2008.

Recently, the American Legion Auxiliary has made it a priority to attend these events to provide information on who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

"The role of the American Legion Auxiliary at these events

is recruitment and educating servicemembers and families on the services we provide," said Tyra Nelson, ALA National Headquarters' Washington, D.C. site director.

So far, the Auxiliary has been involved at six Yellow Ribbon events.

"The Yellow Ribbon program gives us another platform to talk about the wonderful services we have for servicemembers and their family members," Nelson said. "I believe, given the opportunity to talk more about membership, it will help to increase our numbers."

Provided by Mary Anne Casadei, National Chaplain 2019-2020 | www.Facebook.com/groups/alachaplains

MAY

“You are the same and your years will have no end. Our children will live in safety, and under your protection their descendants will be secure.” Psalm 102 27:28

It has been said, “The only constant is change” (Greek philosopher Heraclitus). We start to change from the minute we are born. We change physically, emotionally, spiritually. We change our minds, sometimes minute to minute. We change the way we think about circumstances all the time. Our relationships change. Our lives are always shifting and changing. Change in our world is constant. But those who believe have an abiding faith that our God never changes. It is a sure thing!

We have been promised that our God is a constant God. God never changes, and His word never changes. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, forever and forever. He never changes His word.

“In the beginning, Lord, You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment, they will be changed. But You remain the same, and Your years will never end.” Hebrews 1:10-12

Knowing this, think how this impacts your life. We are able to continue our life with confidence and a surety that God will always be with us. “As a father is kind to his children, so the Lord is kind to those who honor him.” Psalm 10:13

God has been good to us. “Dear God, I praise You. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Thank You for healing my soul. You bless me with your mercy. Give me the strength to honor You. Amen.”

JUNE

“May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us.” Psalm 90:16-17

Think about what kind of life you would have if you never had to work. Think of how you could indulge yourself — lazing around all day, napping, playing on your phone, watching old movies, bingeing on your favorite TV series. Netflix, Netflix, Netflix. You would never have to pay a bill, sit in a meeting, punch a time clock or set an alarm clock. Wow, this sounds great. Or does it? For a few days, it would be like a vacation. You could relax and enjoy a slow-paced life. But after a few days, maybe a few weeks, it would start to be tedious. It would become boring.

God wants us to have a purpose in life. He wants us to be productive. He wants us to have goals. God tasked Adam with naming all the animals. Genesis 2 says the Garden of Eden had “trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food” [V.9] God told Adam to “work it and take care of it” [V.15].

If you look in the Bible, you will see many types of occupations: shepherds, carpenters, tax collectors, musicians, bakers, tentmakers, fathers, and mothers. Whether you are CEO for a big company, stay-at-home parent with your children, volunteer with veterans, or teach or work at your church, each and every job is a gift from God. Trust that God is aware of your situation. He knows! “Trust in God at all times, my people. Tell Him all your troubles. He is our refuge.” Psalm 62:8

“Dear God, thank you for giving me a purpose in life. I trust in You. You have blessed me. I will give You praise and honor. Amen.”

JULY

“Come to me all who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Ahh ... it is Friday afternoon. You just finished a grueling, exhausting week. Now is your time to relax and rest up for the next grueling week. Wait — you have to throw a birthday party for your child/grandchild with 12 first-graders jacked up on sugar. You have to do the shopping, laundry, and let's not forget the housework! It's hot and humid outside and you haven't even started. How is that relaxation working out for you?

How would you choose to relax? What helps you to let go of the stress and fatigue? For me, it is to relax with a good book. My friend does yoga. Maybe you like to be outside with nature, maybe you like to cook, or maybe you crochet. How does taking a long, hot bath sound? Maybe you like to go out to dinner and a movie. My husband enjoys a good comedy. Laughter is said to be the best medicine.

Whatever it is, we look forward to our favorite way to relax. Now think what your life would be without these gifts. You could never take a bath, read a book, or go out to dinner. No more movies! No more spending time outside with nature. God gives us different ways to relax for our enjoyment and entertainment. Relaxing contributes to our overall well-being. Through relaxing, we have an opportunity to experience God in our life. Accept the gift of relaxation from our God. Embrace it.

“Most giving God, thank You for the gift of relaxation. Teach me to embrace it. Amen.”



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

ALA! CENTENNIAL MOMENTS



THE AUXILIARY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Helping others is not a chore among members of the American Legion Auxiliary; it's a tradition that dates back more than a

century. The ALA carries out selfless acts with the goal of contributing to the enhancement of communities throughout the United States. That's an example of "good citizenship," which the ALA wholeheartedly encourages.

One of those ALA community service activities involved the 1992 Jimmy Carter Work Project, in which former U.S. President Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter led a Habitat for Humanity work group in the construction of quality, affordable houses in various locations for deserving families in need of homes.

During the June 14-20, 1992, Jimmy Carter Work Project, the goal was to build 10 to 15 single family homes in Washington, D.C., and start 10 living units in a Baltimore neighborhood. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored the work project's

All-Woman House, which was "blitz built" in about a week, in Washington, D.C., by an all-female volunteer crew. That crew included ALA members and the future homeowner, whose "sweat equity" was an eligibility requirement for ownership.

The ALA raised more than \$50,000 for construction of the home. And ALA members from numerous departments nationwide contributed money and time to other Habitat for Humanity homes.

The project attracted national media coverage from *McCall's* magazine and the *Good Morning America* TV show.

Since 1992, the ALA national level has transitioned to community service projects that specifically support our mission and those we serve — veterans, military, and their families — and has encouraged Auxiliary units and departments to do the same.

100: ALA History Facts Did you know?



The emblems of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are incorporated, side-by-side, in the images of the ornate stained glass window donated to the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. by the ALA in the 1980s.



National President Adalin Macauley (1926-1927) is credited for organization of our Poppy Program in the early 1920s. In 1927, Macauley (pictured with bouquet) attended the Paris, France, National Convention, along with Gen. John J. Pershing (on Macauley's right) and National Commander Howard Savage (on Macauley's left).



The American Legion Auxiliary supported South Korean projects such as electrification following the Korean War. In 1959, National President Ce Gunn (1958-1959) visited a Korean children's orphanage.



In 1970, the ALA contributed \$34,777 to purchase cement, roofing, lumber, and tile for the construction of Nicaraguan schools. The communities provided the land and labor for the building.

ALA MEMBERS' MAJOR MILESTONES



As the American Legion Auxiliary continues its centennial celebrations, ALA members are

reaching major milestones of their own every day. Occasionally during the remainder of this ALA administrative year, Auxiliary magazine will showcase a few of our current members who either have reached an age of 100 years or older, or who have had an ALA membership anniversary of 75 or more continuous years. Let's celebrate!

American Legion Auxiliary member Kathleen "Kay" Gessner has a lengthy list of lifetime achievements and accolades. To name a few: She served as mayor of Florida, Ohio, for 20 years. She was named Henry County, Ohio's "Woman of the Year" in 1973. And, at age 92, Gessner wrote *Tiptoe Softly*, a 203-page memoir about her life during the Great Depression while growing up in Henry County.

To that list, the 97-year-old Gessner would add the fact that she has been an ALA member since her infancy. Her mother, Eva Farison, signed her up under the service of her father, World War I U.S. Army veteran William Earl Farison.

"We grew up to be patriots. So something like being part of the ALA was just part of life," Gessner said, explaining that her sister, Betty Farison, had been a lifelong American Legion Auxiliary member before passing away at age 90 in 2011.

Though Gessner went through a lot in her lifetime, with a few of the more challenging times occurring in her childhood, her patriotism didn't wane. She was 7 years old when the stock market crashed. Though she was not old enough to completely understand what was happening, she felt the consequences of the crash, as did so many others. Gessner was 14 years old when her family's house burned. Through it all, she maintained gratitude for her blessings and an appreciation for our country and her community.

Instead of focusing on the bad times, Gessner remembers an important lesson her father taught her that possibly shaped her way of thinking for the rest of her life. Her father took Gessner and her siblings to the bread lines and soup kitchens "so we would know that as poor as we were, we were lucky," she said.

When financial struggles hit any family, spending cuts are often made. The Auxiliary memberships of her mother, Eva, and her sister Betty were continued. With great pride, Gessner recalls taking over the responsibility of paying her Auxiliary dues once she turned 16 years old.

As an adult, her favorite part of being an ALA member has been attending Auxiliary meetings, and her favorite ALA event is local ice cream social fundraisers.

The patriot in Gessner is still as strong as ever. She has one main message for members of the ALA and other parts of The American Legion Family: "Stress patriotism as much as you can. Try to get it back into the schools."



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Kindness Flows from the Hands of ALA's Poppy Makers

The power of a flower to drive human emotion can be strong. A red rose on special occasions can make your sweetheart swoon. And a red poppy, on any day, can make a patriot feel reverence and appreciation for fallen military heroes. The power comes from the meanings attached to these flowers.

Most Americans know the red poppy as a solemn symbol of sacrifice made by U.S. servicemembers killed in the line of duty. The iconic flower is worn in tribute to those fallen heroes and in support of veterans, military, and their families. People in other countries wear red poppies in remembrance of their nation's fallen servicemembers as well.

Since 1921, the red poppy has been the official flower of the American Legion Auxiliary — a community of volunteers serving veterans, military and their families. For decades, the ALA has carried out its Poppy Program aimed at helping those we serve. Members of the ALA, others within The American Legion Family, and nonmembers voluntarily distribute millions of ALA red crepe paper poppies — most of which are handmade — nationwide in exchange for donations. All of the money collected is used to directly support veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and their families.

The ALA's poppy distribution days occur year-round, with more emphasis on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and National Poppy Day® — the Friday before Memorial Day. In the 2018-2019 administrative year, \$3.6 million was raised from the 3.1 million poppies distributed.

Who makes the ALA's red crepe paper poppies? Nowadays, anyone can make them by coordinating with an ALA unit or department, which provides poppy makers with assembly kits. The kits are sold through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales (emblem.legion.org). Not too long ago, only military veterans were allowed to make these flowers, often as a form of physical and emotional rehabilitation — and they were paid for their work. Veterans are still paid for poppy making.

Based on personal life experiences of each poppy maker, creating these delicate flowers can take on additional meaning. For some people, it evokes strong emotion plus other intangibles, such as healing, appreciation, and purposefulness. Or, the task can conjure up concepts anchored in selflessness, such as “being part of something greater than oneself” and “paying forward a good deed.”

While it is important to make a lot of red poppies to solicit donations to help veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and their families, constantly dwelling solely on poppy production statistics is fruitless for a flower that has the power of honoring, healing, and helping.

'This helps veterans. This helps their families.'

Albert Ciccone remembers how poppy making calmed his father, Louis, a U.S. Air Force veteran with bipolar depression and diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Ciccone recalls being a small child visiting his father who was hospitalized in a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility.

“The repetitive nature of the poppy making calmed him; it made him feel connected to his military brothers, and it was something I could be involved in as a small child. He taught me how to count [using the poppies]; I'd give 10 to every veteran in the room. I'd run around handing out those flowers,” Ciccone said.

“I have that feeling of camaraderie when I make poppies now with my fellow veterans, our American Legion post, and Sons of The American Legion squadron,” said Ciccone, also an Air Force veteran. Ciccone makes the red crepe paper flowers for the ALA. He is a charter member and the post commander of American Legion Post 201 at the Idaho State Correctional Center, in Boise. He is also a charter member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 201 at the center.



POPPY MAKERS AT WORK (from left, clockwise): U.S. Air Force veteran Gary Proctor at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown, Iowa; ALA member Ellen Nathan, of Unit 912 in Washington City, Utah; several members of American Legion Post 201, with a member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 201, at the Idaho State Correctional Center in Boise.

Of the 35 Legionnaires and 25 squadron members there, 23 of them make poppies. After getting approval from the center's warden, Jay Christensen, for this activity in November 2019, these Legion Family members have been allowed to meet for the purpose of poppy making twice a week for four hours at a time. In three months, the men produced 10,000 flowers.

"We have a quality control, where we go through them all and make sure the labels are on right. We want to make sure the quality is good. It's our calling card, with respect to the Legion Family organizations," Ciccone explained. "It's a symbol of our veterans' long history within war service, and I'm a little emotional talking about it. It's honoring those who came before us."

Poppy making is a task that the men of this post and squadron take great pride in, he said.

"This is something greater, something important. This helps veterans. This helps their families. We do it to serve others. We are not selfish in our pursuits. It's about service," Ciccone continued. "It's immense that [the Auxiliary's Poppy Program] has that sort of impact nationally, and our little post is somehow tied into this grand program. We're honored to be part of it. It's humbling to be included in that conversation, that message, and this organization's outreach."

Expressing our Patriotism

Ryan Harrell, commander of Squadron 201 at the Idaho State Correctional Center, is also a poppy maker.

"The labels we put on every single one of those flowers say 'American Legion Family,' and you know, families take care of each other. They support each other. They sacrifice for each other. Our country's veterans have made, and our servicemembers continue to make, that sacrifice. Now, it's our turn to do something for them," Harrell said.

As for the poppy making done by members of Post 201 and Squadron 201, Harrell said, "We don't do it for the recognition or anything else. We do it because it's the right thing to do. The people who the program supports are important to us. We're patriotic. We found ways to express that."

Harrell's maternal grandfather Bobby Max Ellison and his paternal grandfather Harold Harrell were U.S. Army veterans. He considers his grandfathers, and other veterans and servicemembers, to be heroes.

"We, as a post and a squadron, want to show our support and appreciation to all of these men and women. We want them to know they're in our hearts and minds, that they're not alone. Even in places they don't expect, they have support."

Charles "Abe" Abrahamson, adjutant for the Legion's Department of Idaho, works closely with Post and Squadron 201.

"The American Legion's Department of Idaho has a really good partnership with the Idaho Department of Corrections in helping the veterans inside IDOC facilities achieve the Legion's goals, such as continued devotion to our fellow servicemembers and veterans no matter where they are. Allowing Legionnaires and Sons members at Post and Squadron 201 to make poppies for the ALA is one example of this," Abrahamson said.

Poppy making is just one form of goodwill outreach accomplished by members, and dual members, of Post and Squadron 201. Among their other efforts is cleaning the toys for children who come to the correctional center for visitations, and refurbishing old or damaged bicycles which are later given to children in the community.

Proud to Make these Flowers

U.S. Air Force veteran Gary Proctor has been making poppies for the ALA since he moved into the Iowa Veterans Home in 1997.

"I'm 80 years old and I'm still going, making these poppies. I'll keep going until my hands won't let me," Proctor said enthusiastically. "I could probably make them in my sleep after doing it for so many years. I wake up sometimes and I realize I just dreamt about making poppies!"

His emotion over the red poppy is almost palpable. And it's clear that Proctor puts his all into every flower he produces. These days, he mostly makes the large, long-stemmed red poppies.

"It takes a lot of time and a lot of patience to make them. It's a little pay, but it's not there to make money. It's there as therapy, to help us out. It's been a big help for me. That's one thing: You've gotta keep yourself busy around here. That's

why I got a job, and I make poppies. You'll go crazy just sitting around and looking at the four walls in here," said Proctor, mentioning his part-time job delivering supplies to staff at the veterans home where he lives.

Proctor's poppy production averages at about 2,000 per month. The task fits into his schedule. An early riser most days, Proctor said he usually makes poppies in the morning, in his room, before starting his delivery job. Then, he makes more poppies in the afternoon and maybe some more in the evenings.

"It keeps me busy. I've got a TV in my room. So I sit there, watch a program, and make poppies," he explained.

Proctor said he enjoys making the flowers for the ALA because he sees all that area Auxiliary members do for residents of the Iowa Veterans Home.

"They support us here with donations to the veterans home. Then, they buy things, like medical equipment and everything. And they come down and play bingo with us," he said. "Yeah, I'm kind of proud to make these flowers for the American Legion Auxiliary because I know they help people all over who are like me."

"I'll tell them what we use them for. I'll tell them what it's about. I'll talk about the American Legion Auxiliary and how we are the best kept secret out there."



Sharing the ALA Tie to the Poppy

Like Proctor, poppy making is part of ALA member Ellen Nathan's personal routine on most days. For her, the task is scheduled after her late morning/midday gym workout. She's usually watching Dr. Oz or Judge Judy on TV while she assembles the flowers for a few hours.

And if she knows she'll be spending a lot of time in a waiting area such as a car repair shop, doctor's office, or on an airplane, Nathan will bring her poppy making materials with her. Often, other people take notice. Those who are familiar with the red poppy's widely accepted meaning thank her for making the flowers.

"For the most part, people will sit there and discuss poppies with me. I'll tell them what we use them for. I'll tell them what it's about. I'll talk about the American Legion Auxiliary and how we are the best kept secret out there," added Nathan, a member of ALA Unit 912 in Washington City, Utah. She serves as Poppy Committee chair for Unit 912 and the Department of Utah.

"What moves me about the poppy is what we do with the money we collect when we distribute the flowers," she continued. "It's that sense of self-worth and value that comes from making those poppies, which then help us make a difference in the lives of our veterans."

Her production goal is to make 50 red poppies daily, and sometimes she exceeds that. Nathan estimates that she assembles 10,000 flowers annually.

Given that level of production, it's hard to believe there was a time when she didn't know how to make the ALA's red poppies. One day during her term as president of the ALA Department of Utah years ago, Nathan decided to ask a fellow Auxiliary member how to do it.

"The first time I tried it on my own, at home, it was a little rough in the beginning. But eventually, I caught on as to how to do it. I absolutely love making poppies! I like things where I can see the end of the road, and where I can work on something and see the benefit of having done it. Making poppies is one of those things," Nathan explained.

Nathan's been an ALA poppy maker for the past seven years. She doesn't foresee herself giving up the task.

Ciccione, Harrell, Proctor, and Nathan are ALA poppy makers with four different perspectives. But they each understand the power of the iconic flower and its important role in the American Legion Auxiliary's longstanding mission of serving veterans, military, and their families. ★

By Landa Bagley, Staff Writer

POSITIVELY POPPIES (top to bottom): ALA Department of Indiana members Judy Morris and Cherril Threite make poppies; U.S. Air Force veteran Gary Proctor stands near a paper U.S. flag; Proctor makes a long-stemmed red poppy; (bottom two photos): Legionnaires and a Sons of The American Legion member of Post and Squadron 201, at the Idaho State Correctional Center.

Building ALA brand loyalty



YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING IMPACTS PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Social media is everywhere and an important part of life for millions around the world. It's a great tool for both recruitment and retention of ALA members. Many people first turn to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to check out a person, place, business, or organization.

Using social media correctly can have a positive (or negative) impact on the American Legion Auxiliary's brand to the public.

Properly naming your social media accounts, providing current contact information, an updated "about me" section, and regularly posting/updating photos can all go a long way in branding your unit/district/department to the public, which includes potential volunteers, members, and donors.

Naming your account

Just imagine someone learns about your unit through a community event or by word of mouth. They want to learn more, so naturally, they turn to the internet. Maybe you don't have a website, but they are positive you will be on social media. They begin to search but can't find you.

Maybe it's because your unit's social media account name is listed

as "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 123" or "American Legion Auxiliary Unit." There could be several pages just like this. People aren't going to take the time to do a deep-dive search to find you if it proves to be a challenge.

The better way to label your unit on social media: "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1919, Greenwood, IN" or "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 109, Two Harbors, MN."

Key parts of your name to have on social media include your unit number, city, and state. There are multiple units with the same unit number across the country, so including city and state can set you apart and ensures the public is able to reach out to the right unit.

And with the change to ALA membership eligibility that now includes male spouses, be sure not to label your page as "American Legion Ladies Auxiliary" or "Women's Auxiliary." Be inclusive to the men in our ranks and their meaningful membership!

Contact information

The interested community member finally found your Facebook page — bravo! They are eager to reach out to get more information on volunteer opportunities with your

unit, so they send an email to the one listed under contact information, and immediately, the email bounces back. They try the phone number listed — the person says they are no longer part of that unit. Dead ends. This, of course, is upsetting because they just want to help veterans, military, and their families, but the unit can't take the time to make sure its contact information is up to date.

Update 'about me' section

Make sure this part of your social media account contains current information. People need to get a quick idea of who the Auxiliary is. Not sure what to write? Feel free to use parts or all of what National Headquarters uses:

American Legion Auxiliary members have dedicated themselves for a century to meeting the needs of our nation's veterans, military, and their families both here and abroad. They volunteer millions of hours yearly, with a value of nearly \$1 billion. Auxiliary volunteers across the country also step up to honor veterans and military through annual scholarships and with ALA Girls State programs, teaching high school juniors to be leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism.

To learn more about the Auxiliary's mission or to volunteer, join, or donate, visit www.ALForVeterans.org.

Regular posting/updated photos

Simply having a Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram account is one thing. It's quite another to actively use it. You don't want someone to come to your page and see the last post is from two months ago. Keep the page updated with fresh content.

You don't have to post every single day, but try to share information regularly about what your unit/district/department is doing in your community to serve veterans, military, and their families.



BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU POST

A Facebook page for your unit and a personal social media page are very different. Try to be extra mindful of what you post on your unit/district/department pages, especially with elections coming up. Be sure you don't go one-sided when using this account. The ALA was created a century ago as a nonpartisan organization, and we will remain one. Don't change that intent by posting political statements!

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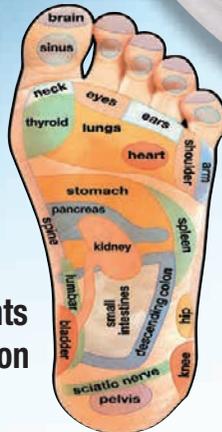
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ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE & ALA GIRLS NATION



STRONGER TOGETHER: Participants visiting U.S. Capitol Hill during 2017 ALA Girls Nation and Legion Boys Nation.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL

ALA Girls State and American Legion Boys State programs are separate, but some states have found that working together helps them reach common goals. Utilizing each other's strengths, sharing resources, combining marketing, and doing joint fundraisers are some of the things these programs are doing together to strengthen themselves.

Massachusetts ALA Girls State and Boys State decided to work together for a number of reasons. "We were able to join efforts and begin our fundraising together, and we were able to combine our resources and use staff from both programs to help educate the citizens of both ALA Girls State and Boys State," said Andrea

Kimball, assistant director of ALA Massachusetts Girls State. "We are also able to utilize staff on both sides for help in some areas that our staff may not be as strong."

Massachusetts holds both sessions on the same campus during the same week, allowing them to share lectures and general education sessions. The citizens are together for general education classes, mini courses, guest

speakers, and meals.

Kimball said the toughest part of working together is explaining to each new group that even though they have joined forces in many aspects, they are two separate programs that do run differently. She says every year they constantly answer questions such as, "Why are they doing that while we aren't?" or "Why do we have to do this? The others don't."

Some programs may hope working together will save money. This is not the case for Massachusetts. Kimball said at this point, they have not been able to reduce costs.

ALA Missouri Girls State and American Legion Boys State have also found ways to work together. These programs are held at the same university on different weeks.

Missouri discovered using the same campus makes it easier to work with the mutual contacts. Also, the room setups for the two programs are the same, making it easier on the campus staff by not needing to change room setups.

The relationship between these two programs began when ALA Missouri Girls State switched to the electronic voting system Boys State was using. That project acted as a catalyst, opening up conversations about what each program was doing well. The two groups began sharing ideas on how to help each other grow and strengthen the programs.

ALA Sunflower Girls State and Kansas Boys State are working together to increase recruitment and fundraising.

The Kansas programs still operate separately on different campuses; however, the directors of both programs realized they could support each other. It began by each comparing recruitment efforts and realizing they could help each other in those efforts. They also hold joint fundraisers and last year applied for a grant together.

Kimball has advice for other programs wanting to work together. "Take small steps first. While it is amazing how far we have come to bring the programs together, it didn't happen overnight. It took many years and a lot of planning to get to where we are today. And we didn't do it all at once. We eased ourselves into it to make sure that what we were implementing was successful."

FROM ALA GIRLS STATE AND ALA GIRLS NATION TO MAKING A MARK IN POLITICS



Nebraska Sen. Julie Slama attended ALA Cornhusker Girls State and ALA Girls Nation in 2013.

A few years later, she became a Nebraska state senator at age 22, becoming the youngest female senator in state's history. Even more remarkable, in her first legislative session, she passed three of the four bills she introduced.

Slama, who graduated from Yale University, is pursuing her law degree

while serving in the state Senate. Her accomplishments are recognized nationally: She was named to Forbes magazine's 30 under 30 list for Law & Policy 2020.

How have your experiences at ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation helped you in your career? ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation reinforced my interest in politics and making a positive impact on my community, state, and nation. It also instilled within me a deep appreciation for those who have served our country in the armed forces, along with those who have answered the call to serve their

country through government leadership. Debate from both programs also prepared me well for floor debate in the Nebraska Legislature.

Why should girls attend ALA Girls State? Girls should attend ALA Girls State for the in-depth exposure to the mechanics of government, leadership development, and lifelong friendships.

Is there anything else you would like to add? Without the support of these programs, I would not be serving in the Nebraska Legislature. These two programs are life-changing for young women. It's a privilege to be counted among the alumnae of ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation.

ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

SCHOLARSHIPS HELP STEER SISTERS DOWN CAREER PATHS

Sisters Sydney and Tymber Long joined the American Legion Auxiliary together in 2014 — a testament to the bond they formed during their father's multiple deployments over 23 years of service in the National Guard.

"My sister, mom, and I got super close when my dad got deployed," Tymber explained. "He missed a lot of the milestones growing up, which was tough, but now my sister and I are inseparable. You get closer to your siblings and learn to lean on one another."

Though their father's absences presented challenges, they also made the sisters stronger, more patriotic individuals. They are extremely proud and thankful for the sacrifices their father made.

"My dad's service obviously had a big impact on my life, so any way I can help a veteran and get involved in my own community, I want to do it," Sydney said.

Both joined the Auxiliary because it gave them an outlet to show their gratitude to those who have sacrificed so much for our country.

"I've been involved with a variety of different volunteer efforts for veterans," Sydney said, "and this group is second to none when it comes to serving and giving back to those who have served us."

Sydney and Tymber both participated in the ALA Girls State program in Nebraska, which had a profound impact on them.

"We learned a lot about state government, getting involved, and speaking up. We learned about being advocates for your opinions

and what it really takes to keep the United States free," Tymber said.

Shortly after ALA Girls State and while thinking about college, Tymber and Sydney applied for the national ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship.

Both were successful — each becoming one of just 15 students across the nation to receive the scholarship, Tymber in 2015 and Sydney in 2017.

Tymber went on to receive an undergraduate degree from Bentley University in managerial economics and law. She finished her MBA at the University of Nebraska and started in an accelerated law school program. Her goal is to work in compliance and contract law for a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs clinic, veterans service organization, or university.

Without scholarships, many students would not have the opportunity to pursue a secondary education.

"There is a disconnect between the cost of college and what a student could reasonably afford," Tymber said. "Scholarships like this bridge that gap and alleviate some of that burden."

In addition to giving students the chance to pursue college, scholarships can be what allows a student an opportunity to further enrich their college experience.



MILITARY FAMILIES (top, clockwise): the Longs — Amy, Tymber, Sydney, and Mark; Tymber, with Mark, celebrates receiving her undergraduate degree; Sydney cheers for the University of Nebraska football team.

"This scholarship gave me the opportunity to study abroad — something that would never have been possible without outside help," Sydney said.

Sydney is currently a junior at the University of Nebraska pursuing an undergraduate degree in hospitality, tourism, and marketing. She is also a member of a sales club at the college of business and belongs to the Husker Cheer Squad.

Both Tymber and Sydney were touched by the generosity of the American Legion Auxiliary.

"To be awarded the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship meant that there are people out there who have military families and children in their hearts," Tymber said. "I am honored to be a recipient of such support and generosity, and I look forward to my chance to pay it forward someday."

"It really has changed my life," Sydney added. "I would not be able to go to college without scholarships."



You can support talented and passionate students like Tymber and Sydney by donating to national ALA scholarship funds: www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate. Wanted! If you are a past recipient of an ALA national scholarship, contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

A wise PERSON SAID



After designing an award given to the President of the United States, Nebraska sculptor and American Legion Auxiliary member Sondra Jonson now

has three sculptures in one of the most important buildings in America: the White House.

Not many artists can say their work has been seen by the

Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, but Jonson can. A nonprofit organization reached out to her to create an award for the president that delivers the organization's mission, while also creating a remarkable work of art.

During her 31 years as a professional sculptor, Jonson has installed over 100 large sculptures for clients throughout America and in Europe.

Jonson, eligible for ALA membership through her father, Dr. George T. Wohl, a U.S. Army captain in World War II, is a member of Nebraska Unit 199 and has a deep passion for the military and the Auxiliary's mission. After her father's honorable discharge from the Army, he continued to support the military community by volunteering his weekends at local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals, and that set an example for Jonson.

SONDRA JONSON

Describe your ALA experience.

One day, one of my neighbors, an Auxiliary member, knocked on my door. She said, "Well, we found out you're eligible to be in the Auxiliary. Would you like to be?" And I was like, "Yes, I would love to be!"

I was so excited to just be a part of what these women do. Most of them are widows, or wives of WWII or Korean War veterans. And you know that sense of honor, service, and sacrifice? That is just who they are, and it's just such a pleasure to be a part of it.

How has the Auxiliary impacted your life?

The ALA has definitely enriched my life — just being a part of something that is so big and so positive. There is nothing negative about the Auxiliary, nothing partisan. The ALA is totally just our country and our people. Everybody has a son, a daughter, a father, or someone who is a part of the U.S. military, so the Auxiliary is all of us.

How did you become a professional sculptor?

My parents loved art and took [me and my siblings] to art museums before we could even walk, so I fell in love with art really early. My dream was to be an artist. I just never envisioned myself as a sculptor because I didn't think I had what it takes. I didn't think I had the talent.

After college, where I majored in art, someone advised me to talk to a master sculptor named EvAngelos Frudakis. He had just started his own art school in Philadelphia [where I lived] so I went to talk to him.

I wanted to do portraits of people, and he told me I should sculpt the human figure because I would understand it better for my paintings and drawings. So, that is how I started sculpting. And I thought, Hey — I like this — and I can do this.

What has been your most meaningful sculpture?

With every large sculpture, I create smaller replicas. And we had a few additional small bronze sculptures of the Fallen Soldier sculpture called *Going Home*. It's basically an angelic figure taking a fallen soldier to heaven with the American flag kind of flowing underneath.

So, we had a few additional small bronze sculptures of the Fallen Soldier, and I decided to enter it into a contest in Sioux Falls, North Dakota. The sculpture was on display outdoors, and there was a couple celebrating their wedding anniversary who came out to look at it. They loved the sculpture, but they thought it was kind of eerie, yet they were still drawn to it. Well, the couple found out their oldest son was killed in action that day, while they were looking at the sculpture.

The couple ended up displaying the Fallen Soldier sculpture at their

son's funeral. And the town got together and said they would like to have this as a monument, and that's how I was able to do the monument of my small sculpture *Going Home*.

It's not a big money-making career, but I get to do something that really touches people, and that's a blessing.

How has being an ALA member influenced your sculpting career?

My work is very classic, so in that classic tradition, the same values and ideals in the Auxiliary were sort of just a part of my sculpting: respect for the military, respect for the country, respect for tradition.

It just reinforces that it's such a privilege to create art for the veterans, for the military, and to communicate to the rest of the community the heroic importance of the military and their families. That is such an important message, and I get to be a part of it, so I want to do the very best I can. They've given so much to us, and so many have given up so much for us.





WORKING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

The National Headquarters of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary have been meeting regularly to increase brand awareness and loyalty, membership, and find activities where the Family can work together. Some of the ideas are long-range goals that will be implemented over time. Others are starting right away.

Advertising

One big development is joint advertising. At the end of 2019, electronic billboards promoting The American Legion Family appeared in New York City's Times Square. The ads were displayed during Thanksgiving week and between Christmas and New Year's Day, which are high-traffic times in that area. Currently, billboards for several locations across the country are in the works and will feature actual members of The American Legion Family. So be on the lookout!

Sharing stories

Legionnaires will see more stories about the American Legion Auxiliary in *Legion* magazine, including an upcoming article about the ALA's centennial celebration. *Auxiliary* magazine will also continue to include stories about The American Legion.

ALA Branding Game

The ALA Branding Game is being revised to not only feature the Auxiliary, but the entire Legion Family. The game includes a senior member edition and one for Juniors/young Sons of The American Legion. Both levels teach branding, how it applies to The American Legion Family, and why branding is important.

Helping members with disaster relief

The American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion have programs to aid members who are the victims of a disaster. Sometimes a family in need includes members of both organizations, so those families can apply to each

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organization for a grant. In an effort to bring awareness to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and The American Legion National Emergency Fund, information for both programs can be found on The American Legion website and the American Legion Auxiliary website.

Membership

Membership teams are working together to help American Legion posts that do not have an Auxiliary unit. Currently, about 4,600 Legion posts are without an ALA unit. To encourage new ALA units, "how to" information is being disseminated

to departments.

Both teams are also working together on Buddy Checks. These activities have helped Legion members across the country, and can be a project for Auxiliary units to get on board with too. Buddy Checks can be done as a Legion Family in post homes.

New Family website

A new URL has been created: www.TheAmericanLegionFamily.org takes users to a landing page with links for all brands under The American Legion Family. The site helps potential members have a better understanding of our brands.

Visit one of The American Legion's newsletters
These electronic publications contain useful information for the entire Legion Family. Many ALA members may be aware of the *Online Update* and *Commander's Message*, but several more newsletters are available. One that may be of interest to ALA members is *Training in The American Legion*, which focuses on best practices, creative thinking, and ideas that demonstrate the importance of The American Legion. To subscribe, go to www.legion.org/newsletters.

SUPPORTING ALA'S MISSION WITH A LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP

How being Paid Up For Life supports our community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families

The reasons for making the commitment to becoming a Paid Up For Life (PUFL) member of the American Legion Auxiliary may vary for each person. But there's one thing every PUFL has in common — their membership ensures the Auxiliary can continue to serve the mission into the future.

Pronounced “puffle” in informal ALA terms, PUFL members are important to the longevity of the organization. By having PUFL memberships, the Auxiliary can count on a certain amount of

revenue, making possible the continuation of mission and related programs. Instead of projecting a one-year commitment in dues, the ALA can project long-range revenue.

A PUFL membership demonstrates a lifelong commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary and veterans, military, and their families. “As a fairly new member back in 2000, I became impressed with the American Legion Auxiliary mission. It aligned with my passion to serve our veterans, children, and community,” said Cherril Threth of Indiana. “It was worth every penny.”

For Kat Kessler of Illinois, her PUFL membership demonstrates her appreciation for veterans. “I am a PUFL and proud of it. When I decided to make the commitment to join the ALA, it was for life. Veterans gave their lives for this great country and our freedom, and the least I could do was commit to serve them for the remainder of mine.”

In addition to showing a commitment to the ALA and the mission, there are several other benefits to becoming a PUFL member:

- Pay once and never be concerned about your dues again. You won't have to worry about forgetting to renew your membership.
- A rate change in dues won't affect you. The PUFL rate is calculated based on the current dues rate.
- The honor of being committed to the American Legion Auxiliary for a lifetime!
- Lifetime subscription to *Auxiliary* magazine.

Consider gifting a PUFL membership

Do you know someone who would be honored to receive a PUFL membership as a gift? This is how several current PUFLs received their membership, including ALA National President Nicole Clapp. “I was fortunate to receive PUFL membership as a gift from my Unit 127 in Gladbrook, Iowa, before I took it upon myself to fulfill a commitment I had planned to do. It is an honor to support and give back to the organization in which I was raised. I am very proud of my 45 years of membership, of which four years and hopefully many decades to come are as a PUFL.”



Paid Up For Life: National President Nicole Clapp with her PUFL membership card.

For Noelle Bonjour of South Dakota, a PUFL membership was a gift that demonstrated her family's commitment to the ALA. “When PUFLs first became available, Grandma paid for Mom's. Years later, my mom, in turn, paid for mine. I have no kids of my own, but I do hope to someday pass on the tradition and pay the PUFL membership for someone else.”

To make your commitment in becoming a PUFL member, go to www.ALAforVeterans.org/Joining.

Why did you become a PUFL?



“I knew I would never want to not belong, so I figured this was the easiest way to keep from ever forgetting to renew.”

— Loretta Shellman



“To honor those who sacrificed everything for our freedom.”

— Deborah Guenter



“I am a PUFL, as I wanted to show a lifelong commitment to the organization.”

— Darlene Johnson



“My grandma made herself, my mom, and me PUFL members around the time I was department Junior president. It was a way to honor us, knowing we would continue to be active in years to come.”

— Darla Davidson

American Legion Auxiliary social media

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



A SPECIAL UNVEILING AT ALA HEADQUARTERS!

To honor our members, our legacy, and the important people we serve, we had something very special created! A shadow box originally curated for the Auxiliary's 75th anniversary was enhanced to commemorate our 100th anniversary. Inside are mementos showing the ALA's history timeline and our significant mission moments of serving veterans, military, and their families. The next time you're in Indianapolis, stop by National Headquarters and take a look!



f @ALAforVeterans

National President Nicole Clapp and 100th Anniversary Committee Chair Linda Newsome unveil the centennial shadowbox in a video.

OUR 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS CONTINUE!

f @Claudia Goodin

Unit 5 from the Department of Missouri celebrated the centennial by participating in a chili cookoff!



Keep up with the latest news between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine. Follow us on social media @ALAforVeterans.

Join our growing list of followers on social media:
 Facebook: 23,313
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 Instagram: 1,817

2	9	3	4	1	5	7	6	8
7	1	8	2	3	6	4	9	5
6	4	5	7	8	9	2	3	1
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9	1	5	2	6	3	7	8	4
6	5	2	3	4	8	9	7	1
7	3	9	6	2	1	4	5	8
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1	2	3	7	8	6	5	4	9
5	9	6	1	3	4	8	2	7
8	7	4	5	9	2	3	1	6

Auxiliary's Sudoku answers from page 26:

3	5	2	4	6	7	1	8	9
1	7	8	5	3	9	2	4	6
6	9	4	8	2	1	5	7	3
5	8	3	2	9	4	7	6	1
2	6	7	1	5	3	8	9	4
4	1	9	7	8	6	3	2	5
7	3	1	9	4	2	6	5	8
8	4	6	3	7	5	9	1	2
9	2	5	6	1	8	4	3	7

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AUX MG 0520

Share your centennial celebrations on Facebook by using #ALA100Celebration. Your photos may appear on the @ALAforVeterans Facebook page!

THE LAST *word*

“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt, Former First Lady of the United States



(Photo: Isaac Hale/The Daily Herald via AP)

Resilience. It's a word often used when describing members of The American Legion Family. Following a major weather-related event, for example, an American flag surrounded by a debris-filled scene always appears hours later — and someone from the Legion Family probably put it there. We come together in times of duress, stress, and need, always in the name of helping others. Through spring this year, the COVID-19 crisis was no exception. Despite its strict bans, our Legion Family grew stronger, and our collective missions of serving veterans, military, and their families never wavered.

Above: In this Feb. 19 photo, Keith Hall, of Lehi, Utah, commander of American Legion Post 49 in American Fork, hugs Olive O'Mara after she posed for a portrait at River Meadows Senior Living in Alpine, Utah. O'Mara was born Feb. 21, 1920.



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

Number of people hosted
at ALA National Headquarters
for leadership planning meetings, event
training, and committee connections:

659

(Numbers compiled from early 2018 to today.)

ALA followers on social media
@alaforveterans

Facebook: 23,401

Twitter: 2,599

Instagram: 1,825

101

The American Legion's 101st
birthday was celebrated
March 15. Local post homes
and American Legion

Auxiliary units will also celebrate their charter
birthdays throughout the year.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund Grant
Applications Since Sept. 1, 2019:

95 Grants Requested

80 Grants Approved

= \$110,260.87

Number of Disaster Relief Grants:

25 Grants Requested

19 Grants Approved

= \$33,202.89

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at www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate



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

Remember, honor, and support our nation's heroes on National Poppy Day® May 22, 2020

The American Legion Auxiliary adopted the red poppy as its official remembrance flower in the early 1920s, following World War I.

On National Poppy Day®, the Friday before Memorial Day,

The American Legion Family will distribute poppies in remembrance, honor, and support of our U.S. veterans, military, and their families.

Donations collected on National Poppy Day® will be used to directly assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our communities.

Learn how you can participate, including how to make poppies:
www.ALAforVeterans.org/poppy

