

American Legion Auxiliary

www.ALAforVeterans.org

February 2022 \$3.75

*Trials and
triumphs*

**What it's
like to be a
caregiver**



ALA member Erika Clough



The ALA Foundation wants to support YOUR unit!

Did you know the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation offers grants to support ALA units, districts, and departments?

These grants can be used for:

- Select appliances, equipment, or furniture for the veterans' home in your community
 - Craft supplies, awards, or promotional materials for your local Veterans Creative Arts Festival
 - Branded tablecloths, pop-up tents, or banners to show your ALA pride at events
- ... and MORE!

Visit www.ALAFoundation.org/grants or call (317) 569-4500 to learn what the ALA Foundation can do for your unit, district, or department.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

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Ensuring Our Mission of Service Endures

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Auxiliary

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ON THE COVER: American Legion Auxiliary member Erika Clough at her home in Maryland. Flip to page 30 in this issue of *Auxiliary* to read about Clough's role as a caregiver, and how she and other caregivers handle the stream of challenges (photo: Matt Roth). **ABOVE:** Mike Dietrich (center left) watches as John Schmidt (center right), places a retired flag into the fire during the Cressona, Pa., American Legion Post 286 Flag Retirement Ceremony hosted by the Friedensburg Fish & Game in Friedensburg, Pa., last November. Looking on in the background are members of the Junior Auxiliary (from left): Kaylin Dietrich, Alexis Dietrich, and Susan Dietrich with Mckenna Schappell. It was the first year the post hosted a flag retirement ceremony, and they plan to have one annually the Saturday after Veterans Day (photo: Jacqueline Dormer/*Republican-Herald* via AP).



HONORING CAREGIVERS: ALA National President Kathy Daudistel (far right) recognizes caregivers at a brunch in Connecticut during her department visit.

Caregiving is a series of small acts of care that alter the course of someone's life.

It truly is an honor to recognize all of the caregivers I meet during my travels across the country. What an inspiration you are! And incredibly strong. You are all so much stronger than you give yourselves credit for.

I hope you realize how appreciated and loved you are. Auxiliary units and departments have taken a little extra time out of meetings and events to say a special thank-you for all that you do, especially those who are caring for members of our military.

I am fortunate to have had several opportunities during my term as national president to recognize caregivers, and I want to draw attention to a few in particular.

At Minnesota's Fall Conference, caregivers were called up to the front to be recognized and honored during the meeting. It truly felt like half the room was participating. Minnesota ALA President Patti Coleman purchased a small token for each, and together, we handed them out. I was able to hug them all as I thanked them. It was such a humbling experience.

In Connecticut, ALA President Sandra Cruz had a caregiver breakfast and honored four caregivers with certificates signed by

both her and me. I presented them, and yes, of course, hugged them all too.

Everywhere I go, I ask the audience to stop, look around, and think about who in the crowd might be a caregiver, and to thank them for what they do.

Check out the caregiver feature story on page 30 in this issue of *Auxiliary* to read about more ALA members who are caregivers and the sacrifices they make. The feature is part one of a series of spotlights

on these unsung heroes, starting with this issue of *Auxiliary*, and continuing through the August 2022 issue.

Resources are also available online for ALA caregivers. Log in to the ALA Academy to view the webinar *Mission Delivery through Caregiver Support*. It's for caregivers and those who support caregivers, and you will learn how to identify caregivers in your community, and quite possibly you may learn that you are a caregiver. You will also learn how to support caregivers, as well as other organizations that operate in the field of caregiver support. You are not alone, and it is OK to ask for help! The Auxiliary is here for you.

Not a caregiver? You can help care for those who care for others with a gift to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Mission Endowment Fund today at www.ALAFoundation.org.

Kathy Daudistel

Kathy Daudistel
National President

Why you should attend our in-person Mission Development Training 201:

- 1) See the newest poppy fashions worn by other participants (and learn how they made them!) so you can spread the word about this symbolic flower to the public.
- 2) Meet some of the ALA national leaders.
- 3) Get your questions answered.
- 4) Connect your Junior to other members her age (separate registration for national Junior meetings).
- 5) Network with other active members like you, whom you can call on for support throughout the year.

Bonus: Feel a sense of pride in our large, diverse organization! Turn to page 36 for more information on Mission Development Training 201 events happening in February, March, and April, and how to sign up.



Check out where ALA National President Kathy Daudistel is visiting as she travels across the country to ALA units for events, meetings, and honoring caregivers. Follow her on Facebook at [@ALANationalPresident](https://www.facebook.com/ALANationalPresident).

ADVERTISEMENT

BETTER THAN BOTOX: Takes 10 Years Off Your Face in Just 10 Minutes

Women are raving about the life-changing effects of this powerful formula.

There's no denying that people — mostly women — are on a mission to discover the best way to eliminate fine lines and wrinkles permanently. The \$14 billion dollars spent on aesthetic procedures in 2016 alone is a clear indication of that fact.

But now science appears to be offering a simpler solution. It's a special delivery technology adapted for skincare that gets superior results.

Known as advanced liposome technology, this powerful distribution system ensures that vital nutrients are delivered exactly where your skin needs them the most, providing your skin with maximum anti-aging benefits.

New Age-Defying 'Dermal Filler' Cream in High Demand

Al Sears, MD, of Palm Beach, Florida, recently released an anti-aging cream that adapts this breakthrough medical technology into the realm of skincare, and he's struggling to keep up with consumer demand.

Dr. Sears is South Florida's leading anti-aging pioneer. He has authored over 500 reports, scientific papers, and books on anti-aging. A frequent lecturer at global anti-aging conferences, Dr. Sears spoke at the WPBF 25 Health & Wellness Festival featuring Dr. Oz, along with special guest, Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people were in attendance as Dr. Sears discussed his latest anti-aging breakthroughs.

This powerful cream,

known as Restore, keeps selling out faster than it's produced — and people are raving about the effect it's having on their skin.

"Within a few minutes of applying the cream, it visibly plumps out the under-eye area and my cheeks as well as those annoying lines that deepen as we age between the nose and lips. It also felt like it was tightening and smoothing my skin at the same time. I definitely feel I look younger whenever I use it," said Amy B., of Montville, New Jersey.

"The lines around my mouth and eyes are filled in and my skin is tightened. I love having younger-looking skin, so I will continue using Restore" raves Cathy C., of Florida.

"Advanced liposome technology ensures that vital nutrients are delivered exactly where your skin needs them the most."

The best part is that this cream has no adverse side effects, doesn't require a doctor's visit or prescription, and is 100% natural.

Powerful Delivery System Ensures Nutrients Penetrate Deep into Your Skin

The dermis is the underlying layer of skin that supplies nourishment and oxygen, and removes waste. In other words, it's responsible for keeping your outer layer of skin healthy. Liposome technology is designed to support and nourish this



Revolutionary new derma-filler cream takes 10 years off your face in just 10 minutes

deeper layer of skin by delivering nutrients directly to it.

"All of Restore's powerful ingredients are encapsulated in a liposome shell — an organic container that carries the beautifying agents deep into the skin cells," explained Dr. Sears.

"Restore's liposome shell is composed of phosphatidylcholine or PC for short. While cell membranes repel water, they absorb PC because they're actually made of it. As a result, Restore is delivered deep into the cell for maximum firming and volume."

When you apply liposome cream to your face, the liposomes in the skin cream work their way inside your skin, fuse with the skin cell membranes and then release their contents directly to the cells. Regular skin creams don't have this capability.

A Formula Designed to Take 10 Years off Your Face in Just 10 Minutes

Once it's penetrated the deeper layer of skin, Restore releases a unique blend of botanicals, vitamins and essential oils that reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, gives skin a

more even tone, and moisturizes the interior layers of your dermal cells, firming and plumping your skin.

Restore's first skin-enhancing agent is Madonna lily leaf stem cell extract. It helps produce an even-toned complexion. In a clinical study reported in the Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology, participants treated with this extract for 28 days showed improvements in skin luminance and tone around the eyes.

Restore is also loaded with vitamin C, which British researchers have found reduces both wrinkles and dryness. "In Restore we use magnesium ascorbyl phosphate, a more stable form of vitamin C that doesn't break down in liquid as does ordinary C," explains Dr. Sears. "That means the antioxidant molecules stay intact within your skin cells where they can prevent damage from dangerous free radicals."

This powerful formula also features guarana seed extract, coenzyme Q10, and avocado oil. Japanese researchers have also found that coenzyme Q10 supports production of the thin membrane that separates layers of your skin, and French studies have

shown that avocado oil improves skin cell metabolism and enhances skin thickness.

Where To Get Restore

Right now the only way to get this powerful age-defying delivery technology is through Dr. Sears.

To get life-changing results like Amy and Cathy, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-675-7421** within the next 48 hours. "We simply don't have enough supply to get Restore shipped directly to stores," said Dr. Sears. "The hotline allows us to ship the product directly to the customer — the one who really wants it."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product, that he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. "Just send back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I'll send you your money back," said Dr. Sears.

The hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number will be shut down to allow them to restock.

Call **1-800-675-7421** to secure your limited supply of Restore. If you were not able to get through last week due to extremely high call volume, please try again! You don't need a prescription, and those who call in the first 24 hours qualify for a significant discount. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code: **AMLR0222** when you call in.

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IT'S YOUR MAGAZINE: *Auxiliary* magazine has changed names and formats over the decades, and always with members' input.

Lots of people associate spring with a metaphorical sense of change — renewing, a refresh, and a general reset of one's self and surroundings. The national ALA magazine has undergone lots of facelifts since it debuted to members in the 1920s. Today, we welcome the latest updates, starting with this issue of *Auxiliary*.

In the November 2021 issue, we presented findings from the most recent *Auxiliary* magazine reader survey. In case you missed it, please refer to pages 6, 46, and 59. If you've already passed along your copy, you can find a digital version at www.ALAForVeterans.org/magazine. Thank you to all who participated via traditional and electronic mail.

Many print and digital publications survey their audiences to help determine topics of interest and ease of read, among other categories, to tailor editorial content

and design that is more engaging, entertaining, and informative. Like them, we strive to balance time-tested material that we know you enjoy with fresh, new topics.

It's important that we supply you with pertinent information geared to you and your membership. After all, *Auxiliary* magazine is about you and the organization you serve. It's in our name ... and, while we have a pretty good idea of what you enjoy reading, never assume we know it all — hence a survey to request your feedback.

You may have heard the phrase "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" and we feel fortunate that for the most part, the survey pointed to what you like about the magazine. But it also enlightened us with some suggestions to make things better. This issue of *Auxiliary* incorporates some of the changes you asked for:

- more but shorter "snippet" articles
- enhanced graphics to capture information at a glance
- new page and section names to better identify topics
- updated, contemporary, and less cluttered designs

These changes and others represent a process that we will continue to roll out during 2022. Consider it a freshening of sorts. We hope you'll feel refreshed after reading! Be sure to let us know what you think. Send us your thoughts at ALAMagazine@ALAForVeterans.org or 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.



American Legion Auxiliary

A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families
February 2022



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





Companion cat helps ALA member's mother

Dear Auxiliary, I am a USMC veteran and a dual member with Post 116 in Fuquay Varina, N.C. I read about the companion cats in the November 2021 magazine issue.

I can't thank you enough for sharing the companion cats story. My mom has dementia and lives at home in a remote area of Maine. She loves cats, but they no longer have them, as my parents are aging. It's tough to help her from North Carolina. But after reading your article, I ordered her the orange tabby cat from Walmart and they delivered it straight to her doorstep!

She is over the top with him/her! She absolutely loves it, and it is all she can talk about! She called me three times in the first week to thank me for it. "The cat" has its own pillow, and it lays on the window ledge of the bay window looking out onto a beautiful, pasture-edged-in woods with turkey and deer.

My mom has been in a worried state for quite a while, but since she has received the cat, she seems much happier and lighter. It has had a great calming effect on her. It has been the best \$120 I have ever spent. I hope sharing this story may help others.

Keep doing the great work you all do. God bless you all.

— Sgt. Kim Kochis (1977-1981),
North Carolina

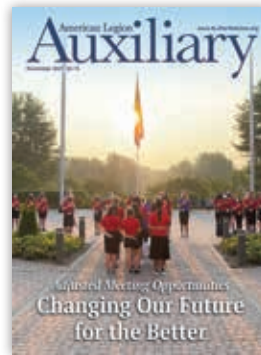
'Sloppy parade rest' on magazine cover?

I was thrilled when I received the new ALA magazine in the mail. But, when I was able to really look at the girls in the picture, I said to myself, "Hmm? What in the world are they trying to do at the flagpole? Salute it, or stand at ease?" Why are 26+/- of the girls in the picture doing a sloppy parade rest with their right hand over their heart? You've got me confused! I will give credit to the other 5+/- girls who were standing correctly while saluting the flag. You don't and can't have it both ways! You either salute the flag respectfully or stand at ease.

If these girls are our "future leaders," whoa be unto us if they cannot even salute the flag respectfully and correctly. It would be in our, the ALA's, best interest to teach and make sure that these future leaders are taught this the first thing before they represent us, the ALA,

and the states they represent in Washington, D.C. I am a daughter of two veterans, teacher of flag etiquette, PUFL, 35-year member, and a past president of Beaver Creek Unit 763 in Ohio, and it saddened and anger me to see this on the front cover of how these poor girls have not been educated in flag etiquette. Isn't this one of our principles: proper respect for our flag?

— Jannice Jacobs, Ohio



Editors' response: We appreciate you taking time out of your day to write us about Auxiliary magazine.

The flag-raising ceremony at ALA Girls Nation is a special, daily event held very early in the morning to reiterate and reaffirm the American Legion Auxiliary's passion for the mission — serving veterans, military, and their families — and the sacred symbolism behind our US flag. The girls attending the flag-raising know it is a solemn occasion and ritual, and that's why, in the photo, they are either looking up at the flag during the Pledge of Allegiance, or they're looking straight ahead as a sign of honor and reverence. We were not put off by the girls' demeanor the day this photo was taken, or their stance at this event. Everyone was respectful and understood why we hold this event regularly.

During times of COVID, as ALA Girls Nation was held in July 2021, social distancing was a must, and that's why everyone was spread out vs. huddled together during the flag-raising ceremony. That is also why we used the "Adjusted Meeting Opportunities" subheadline on the magazine cover. Despite the challenges we were facing related to COVID, we maintained that we would have our flag ceremony as we normally would've — but with adjustments.

At ALA Girls Nation, participants learn more than just leadership skills. Our volunteer members and staff teach them about the American Legion Auxiliary and our importance and relevance in the world in not just educating patriotism, but about our veterans, military, and their families. You can be assured the senators leave our program with a great understanding of flag etiquette that they carry with them for the rest of their lives.

We are grateful for your feedback, and for everything you do to support the Auxiliary's mission and the people we serve.

**WE WANT TO
HEAR FROM *you***

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or send letters to: ALA National Headquarters
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Story and Photo Submissions: Visit
www.ALAforVeterans.org/Magazine
for more details.



OHIO JUNIOR EXPERIENCES SIMULATION OF NAVY RECRUIT TRAINING

For some ALA Junior members, their connection to the military runs even deeper than their membership eligibility. This is true for 15-year-old Trinity Piper, a member of Unit 254 in Johnstown, Ohio.

“I’ve always kind of been interested in the military, especially

the Navy,” she said.

Through one of her mom’s friends, Piper found out about the Navy Sea Cadets. She’s been involved with the group for over 10 months.

The Navy Sea Cadets is a maritime-based youth program sponsored by the U.S. Navy and supported by the U.S. Coast Guard. Cadets train on naval bases and other military installations in a variety of military disciplines, always choosing adventure, seeking challenges, and stepping outside of their comfort zones. The mission of the Sea Cadets is to build leaders of character by imbuing in cadets the highest ideals of honor, respect, commitment, and service. The program is for

ages 10 to 18 years old.

“I started attending the Sea Cadets and explored a lot and ranked up throughout the different ranks I’m eligible through,” Piper said.

She has really enjoyed her experience with the Sea Cadets so far.

“There are a lot of cool trainings you can go to, and overall, it’s a great experience,” she said. “I mostly enjoy the friendships you make, the experiences you get and

the adrenaline rush, and trying to complete the coursework and rank up through the program.”

Piper attended a nine-day recruit training at Fort Custer Army base in Michigan.

“At first, it was kind of scary to be away from home that long and that far away with no contact with my mom besides a letter home,” she said. “I got used to it and got close to people in my barracks and knew it wasn’t going to be forever. I was there to enjoy my time and learn as a Sea Cadet.”

With a training of this length, Piper faced a few challenges. Not being able to physically talk to her mom over the phone or see her pets was difficult. The weather in Michigan was also a struggle, along with mosquitoes during that time of year.

Most of the training is a simulation for the most part of actual recruit training for the Navy.

Being part of the program has helped enhance Piper’s leadership capabilities.

“Throughout the program, I’ve been able to help teach the younger kids at my Sea Cadet unit,” she said. “After getting the trust of my officers and being able to prove I am worthy of the leadership roles, I have been appointed to be an assistant squad leader and helping out with the younger kids in my squad.”

To learn more about Navy Sea Cadets, visit www.seacadets.org.

JUNIOR PROJECT FOCUSES ON CAREGIVERS

As we continue the 2021-2022 administrative year, the focus on caregivers has expanded to units across the nation. Caregivers have been honored at events, and youth are being formally recognized for their efforts in caring for those who care for others. The craft/service project at the national Junior meetings follows suit — caregiver survival kits.

Juniors will decorate a bag and fill it with items a caregiver might need but not necessarily think about (below are a few examples that may be in the bags):

- ✓ Pen
- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Moisturizer
- ✓ Lip balm
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Gum/mints
- ✓ Snacks



SIGN UP NOW TO ATTEND A NATIONAL ALA JUNIOR MEETING

Have you heard the great news? The 2022 national Junior meetings are back ... and in person! If your Junior is 8 years of age or older, we want to see them at a national Junior meeting. We're going to meet new friends, participate in a service project for caregivers, and have tons of fun. The meetings are on a Saturday, one in each ALA division. We can't wait to see your Junior there!

Reasons to attend — straight from fellow Junior members: meet new friends; learn about the mission of the ALA and The American Legion Family; sing songs and have fun; do a service project and crafts; and have yummy dessert.

For information and to register for remaining national Junior meetings, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/Meetings/National-Junior-Meetings.



A TON OF FUN: ALA Junior members participate in a variety of activities and educational opportunities during a 2017 national Juniors meeting in Minneapolis.

Upcoming National ALA Junior Meetings:

Orlando, Fla.

Feb. 12
Wyndham Orlando Resort & Conference Center Celebration Area
3011 Maingate Lane,
Kissimmee, FL 34747

Indianapolis, Ind.

Feb. 19
ALA National Headquarters
3450 Founders Road,
Indianapolis, IN 46268

Baltimore, Md.

March 26
BWI Airport Marriott
1743 West Nursery Road,
Linthicum, MD, 21090

Omaha, Neb.

April 2
American Legion Post 1
7811 Davenport St.,
Omaha, NE 68114

DEADLINE APPROACHING TO APPLY FOR ALA YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

These days, paying for a college education is becoming a larger financial burden for students and their families. That is why the American Legion Auxiliary is so committed to helping students pursue their education through scholarships.

Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship

Three \$5,000 scholarships are awarded annually per geographic division, for a total of 15 scholarships. These scholarships are for undergraduate study only at a four-year accredited college or university, and may be used for tuition, books, fees, room, and board.

Candidates for this award shall

be daughters, sons, grandsons, granddaughters, great-granddaughters, great-grandsons of veterans who served in the Armed Forces during eligibility dates for membership in The American Legion: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941.

Scholarship deadline: March 1.

Spirit of Youth Scholarship

The American Legion Auxiliary annually provides one Junior member in each of the five ALA divisions with a \$5,000 scholarship.

Criteria: The applicant must have held ALA membership for the immediate past three years; must hold a membership card for the current year; and must continue to maintain her membership throughout the

four-year scholarship period. Scholarship monies may be used for tuition, books, fees, and other appropriate expenses.

Scholarship deadline: March 1.

Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship

To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the ALA offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students.

Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to a current college student for 2022. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Scholarship deadline: March 1.

To learn more about these ALA scholarships and to apply, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships.

Want to see how American Legion Auxiliary scholarships benefit your education? Check out page 44 in this issue of *Auxiliary* to learn about Skylar, a Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship recipient, and her goals of attending veterinary school.

“It is important to me because being part of the American Legion Auxiliary, although I didn’t serve, I can still honor veterans and be part of a community ...”

KASEY CONDRON



American Legion Auxiliary member Kasey Condron has a connection to history that most of us only read about in books. She is the great-granddaughter

of one of the USS Indianapolis survivors, Robert Lee “Buddy” Griffith, who served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

He was part of the crew’s last mission — to deliver the parts of the atomic bomb to the U.S. Army Air Force base on the island of Tinian in the Pacific Ocean — completely changing the course of the war and of history. Griffith managed to survive after the ship was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine, but that was just the beginning — he spent five days floating in the ocean along with his surviving shipmates, facing exposure, dehydration, saltwater poisoning, shark attacks, hallucinations, and delirium.

Griffith was one of only 316 survivors out of a crew of 1,196.

Condron never had the opportunity to meet her great-grandfather before he passed, but his story stuck with her. Through Griffith’s military service, Condron became eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

She is currently attending the University of North Texas where she is majoring in psychology with a minor in counseling and English.

What does it mean to you to be eligible for ALA membership through your great-grandfather?

It is important to me because being part of the American Legion Auxiliary, although I didn’t serve, I can still honor veterans and be part of a community with my grandparents and everyone in the Legion and community — that’s who I’ve grown up around. It’s almost like having an extended family, which is very special to have that.

Can you talk about the essay you wrote about your great-grandfather being on the USS Indianapolis?

Without his perseverance, I wouldn’t be here today or my mom or my grandfather. It shows you how much strength in World War II you had to have.

An excerpt from the essay reads, “My great-grandfather fought for his life, as well as his country. His service not only gave me the amazing freedoms we have in America, but the opportunity of an amazing life. Without his bravery and resilience, I would not be alive today. I am so grateful for my life and the fact that I get to live it in America, the land of opportunity.”

Do you remember how you felt when you first heard the story of your great-grandfather and the USS Indianapolis?

I remember hearing it as a kid and how difficult it must have been to experience that and the fear of not knowing if you are going to get help. When they were in the water, no one knew if help was coming. It’s just a miracle when the guy flew over

and saw them in the water. I remember seeing the movie (*USS Indianapolis*) with my family. It was a very special thing for me and my father and grandparents — to see that with them, to have that family connection.

Your great-grandfather was the one who welded the metal crate holding the atomic bomb parts and detonator to the deck of the ship. What does it mean to you that he played such a pivotal role in our nation’s history?

Just thinking how big of a part of history he played and how it’s an amazing story shows how when we think about WWII or in history when we are taught, we learn the facts and things that happened. It’s just very different to hear about with the atomic bomb — you’d think it’s only the scientists [who] had worked on it or dealt with it — but it’s also important to look at the personable side of history and look at it through a personal lens to have that connection and that view of history. I think learning about and hearing about it from a personal account makes it feel more real to people.



Robert Lee “Buddy” Griffith

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:
Unit 231 in Pottsboro, Texas

ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:
Robert Lee “Buddy” Griffith,
great-grandfather
(U.S. Navy veteran)

YEARS IN THE ALA: 20



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, military, and their families. Contact us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org or (317) 569-4500.

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THE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT IS HERE

Despite a global pandemic, members and supporters had a very successful year serving veterans, military, and their families all over the country. See how your donations carried out the mission by checking out the Annual Report.

What's inside the 2021 Annual Report?

- Gratitude letters from ALA National President Kathy Daudistel and ALA Foundation Board of Directors President Cathleen MacInnes, thanking donors for their generous gifts and dedication to the organization
- How the American Legion Auxiliary and ALA Foundation make an impact in donations and volunteer service
- Donor recognition
- How ALA members are making a difference in their communities and more!



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

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Your Auxiliary Member Benefits:

There's More In It For You!



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

- Insurance: Auto, Home, Accident and Long-Term Care Plans
- Healthcare: Telehealth Services, Hearing, Dental, Vision, and Prescription Discounts
- Travel: Hotel and Resort Discounts
- Discounted Digital Subscriptions to Military News and More!

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

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“You’ve got to stay strong to be strong in tough times.”

— Tilman J. Fertitta, American businessman



It was a day which will live in infamy and happened nearly a lifetime ago, but we must never forget the sacrifices made by our servicemembers on Dec. 7, 1941, during the attack on Pearl Harbor, and thereafter as World War II progressed. ALA National President Kathy Daudistel participated in several commemorative activities in Hawaii last December, marking the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. See photos at [Facebook.com/ALAnationalpresident](https://www.facebook.com/ALAnationalpresident).

Above: U.S. Navy Divers and National Parks Service members transfer the remains of WWII veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor Harvey Milhorn, to be interred on the USS Arizona. The Dec. 7 ceremony was part of the 80th anniversary of the attacks on Pearl Harbor (photo: U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Christopher Perez).



ALA ACADEMY LIVE

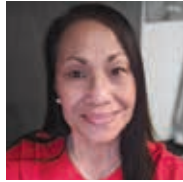
Check out these upcoming ALA Academy Live courses:

- Exploring Month of the Military Caregiver
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Using Social Media to Your Unit's Advantage (Part 2)
- Mission Delivery Basic Training
- Mission Delivery Veteran Service

Watch our social media @ALAforVeterans for the latest updates and registration details.



What do you love most about your ALA membership?



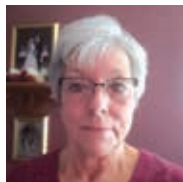
“My membership gives me a great opportunity to work the programs together with my veteran husband who makes me eligible through his service. We serve our veterans together as a family within The American Legion Family.”

— Dayna Beyer, Ohio



“The lifelong friendships I have developed in all of the Legion Family.”

— Jammie Phillips, Arkansas



“Supporting veterans and making so many new friends.”

— Pam Mowrer, Indiana



“The opportunity to be a part of an organization that fosters a mission I believe in.”

— Noemi Burgos, Puerto Rico



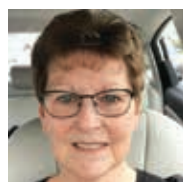
“As a 23-year military wife, my experiences and knowledge allow me to be more productive in working our programs and giving back to our veterans, military, and their families. My membership is to honor American heroes past and present every day. *Service Not Self* is rewarding.”

— Patty Martinez, Kentucky



“I love the networking and the family we become. Not just with ALA — the entire family. Bringing in our youth and watching them grow as they to learn leadership skills and helping others is just another reason why this organization is amazing.”

— Tracy Kinnick, Kansas



“My ALA membership allows me to get to know many of the veterans and their families within my community. It has also given me the opportunity to work for the greater good within our post. I continuously meet and network with other units, sharing our ideas, as well as our resources.”

— Sharon Gray Knauff, Ohio

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



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NO ONE LEFT BEHIND: Dual member Sandy Gessler and Bradenton, Fla., Mayor Gene Brown stand with the urns of two community veterans.

LEGION FAMILY HONORS UNCLAIMED VETERANS WITH JOINT FUNERAL SERVICE

Honoring the sacrifice of those who serve our country is one of the American Legion Auxiliary’s core values. American Legion Family members at Christopher Cobb Memorial Post 312 in Bradenton, Fla., took it upon themselves to bury two unclaimed veterans side-by-side with the military honors they deserved.

“The saying we have — ‘Leave no one behind’ — this is exactly what that means. Even in death, we do not leave our veterans behind ... or this case, on a shelf and unclaimed,” said Sandy Gessler, unit president and dual member of Christopher Cobb Memorial Post 312.

For the last few years, Gessler, a retired U.S. Army veteran and 100% disabled, has been using her spare time to help identify gravestones of veterans in her surrounding community. The inspiration began after she visited a family member’s grave to pay her respects and noticed four veterans didn’t have their proper military headstones.

“That didn’t sit well with me, so I researched their information, worked with The American Legion

and the cemetery, and then we had an honor service for them when their headstones were laid — and I’ve been doing it ever since,” she said.

Gessler has extended her generosity to help identify veterans’ gravestones in cemeteries throughout her county and district. She created a document that contains names and information of all the veterans buried in Manatee County.

Some information that may be included is their branch of military service, military achievements, military awards, or other interesting facts.

Through her research and identifying process, Gessler has made connections with employees and owners of all the local cemeteries and funeral homes. Knowing the impact she has made in the community, Groover Funeral Home called Gessler, asking if she could help identify someone they believed to be a veteran. After months of being unclaimed on a shelf, and through Gessler’s hard work, 87-year-old Korean War veteran Pvt. Albert Hall would finally be laid to rest with military honors at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

“Albert’s story is heartbreaking — he had no immediate family, and he died alone,” said Gessler. “That’s why it’s so important that we have an Auxiliary and we have a post and that we know who in the community are veterans.”

Prior to Hall’s scheduled funeral service, Gessler received a call from another local funeral home, Brown & Sons, about the remains of a possible veteran. She discovered that

the deceased was Vietnam veteran Manny Fluker, another resident of Manatee County. He was a kind and well-known homeless man whom everyone loved.

“These were our veterans,” Gessler said. “It was important to do even if we never met them personally.”

With help from the veteran community, the Bradenton American Legion Family decided to conduct side-by-side funeral services for Hall and Fluker at the Sarasota National Cemetery. They held the service at their post home and organized Legion Riders to escort with assistance from the police department. Gessler used local media to spread the word and worked with the two cemeteries to organize details for the service. The whole community rallied behind Gessler and Post 312. Bradenton Mayor Gene Brown, who owns Brown & Sons Funeral Homes, donated two urns appreciating Hall and Fluker’s service.

“I was smiling one minute, and had tears another — all day long,” said Gessler. “It was one of those kinds of funerals where you were happy that they weren’t laid to rest alone and that they were laid to rest honorably.”

NEW YORK UNIT GIFTS WELLNESS BAGS TO COVID-POSITIVE MEMBERS

Many members of The American Legion Family have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in some way. During these unprecedented times, Auxiliary members have adapted to new ways of serving our mission. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 25 in Mohawk, N.Y., began making wellness bags for COVID-positive members.

“The Auxiliary members here at Crowley-Barnum Unit 25 in Mohawk, New York, have donated items to provide free wellness bags to our COVID-positive Legionnaires and Auxiliary members this season,” said Unit 25 member Sandy LeClair. “Every single item inside the wellness bags were donated by an Auxiliary member.”

The project began when LeClair woke up to the idea of making wellness

INDIANA AUXILIARY UNIT HELPS GATHER SUPPLIES FOR AFGHANISTAN REFUGEES

When Afghan evacuees fled the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, thousands were housed temporarily at Camp Atterbury in Indiana with nothing but the clothes on their backs. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 249 is showing their new guests Hoosier hospitality by helping fill the need for clothing, food, hygiene products, and winter items for the Afghan refugees.

“When I first saw the news, I thought that there must be something I could do,” said ALA Unit 249 member Amy Harwell. “Those are the people who helped us — who helped our military while we were overseas.”

Last September, Unit 249 partnered with the Indianapolis Urban League to donate more than 40 boxes of groceries to help Afghan evacuees at Camp Atterbury. Word spread fast about the good work these Auxiliary members were doing, and donations from the community began pouring in.

“I can’t stress enough how

important it is for us to step up to the plate and help the cause, and our community has done just that,” said Harwell. “I think this project shows just how generous people can be.”

Since then, the Auxiliary has received about \$2,000 more to help Afghan families. Harwell uses any money donated to buy much needed necessities like hygiene products and clothing for all ages and sizes — impacting thousands of evacuees’ lives.

Prominent Indiana news stations began reaching out to Harwell for more insight about what she and Unit 249 were doing. One news station even followed Harwell around a store while she shopped for the evacuees.

“I went to the store, and I bought winter clothes, dresses, shirts for men, socks, pants, scarves, headscarves, just about everything,”



SUPPLIES FOR STRENGTH: Prominent Indiana media stations like WTHR-TV highlighted the services provided to Afghan refugees by Unit 249 and member Amy Harwell.

said Harwell. “After the story aired, and other news stations got the word out, I started getting donations every day — I already have another truckload to drop off.”

For Harwell, this gesture of good faith was personal. Having served overseas in the Jamaican Army for five years, she knows firsthand how important it is to have allies on foreign soil. Many of the refugees staying at Camp Atterbury were allies to our troops in Afghanistan, helping them with translation and navigation.

“They served us; now it’s our time to serve them,” said Harwell.



SERVICE FOR OTHERS: New York Unit 25 members (from left) Nancy Cook, Karen Steele, Becky Sommer, Donna Dekanek, Kathy Moynihan, Lisa Polley, Vanessa Graham, and Sandy LeClair pack wellness bags for COVID-positive members.

bags and purchasing pulse oximeters for COVID-positive members. A few hours later, a fellow Auxiliary member called LeClair and asked to borrow her personal pulse oximeter because she was having trouble breathing. This

of maybe asking for donations to make wellness bags for our COVID-positive members and they all loved it,” said LeClair.

Each bag contains a digital thermometer, hand sanitizers,

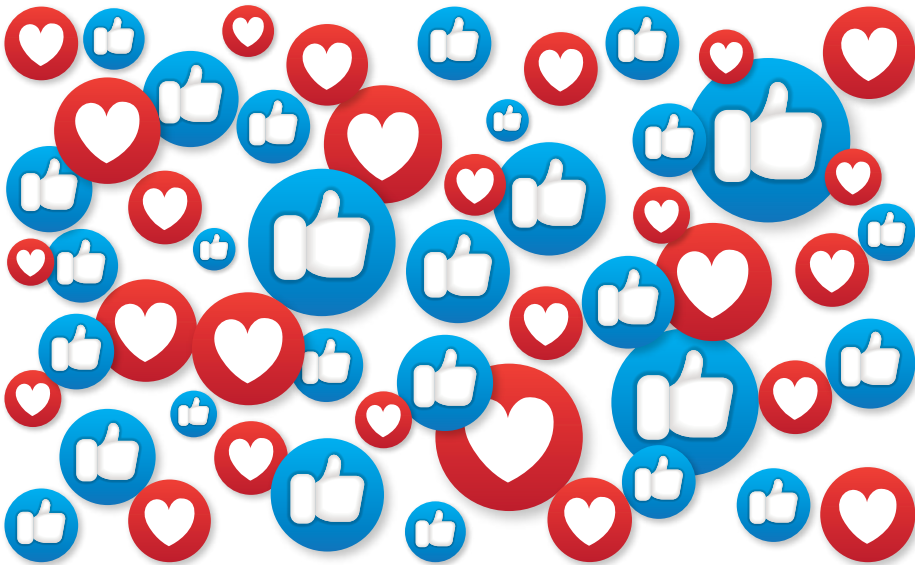
was a sign to LeClair.

“Right away, I texted our unit president and told her — she thought it was a great idea,” said LeClair. “Then we went to our unit meeting and told our members about the pulse oximeters idea and the idea

Chapstick, tissues, cough drops, reusable and disposable masks, disposable gloves, disinfecting wipes, a puzzle book, health information card, soup, Emergen-C vitamin packets, and other items.

The unit also ordered 10 pulse oximeters for members of their Legion Family who have difficulty breathing. After experiencing COVID herself, LeClair emphasizes the importance of pulse oximeters and that monitoring one’s blood oxygen level with a severe case of COVID is vital to ensure timely professional medical treatment.

“The wellness bags are intended to help improve our veterans’ and Auxiliary members’ physical and mental well-being,” said LeClair. “I’m sure that just knowing we are here to support them will help any of their ailments.”



NEW AWARD RECOGNIZES ALA YOUTH CAREGIVERS

What makes a youth caregiver? We've seen it and we know it. A young person who selflessly gives of themselves to aid others who need extra assistance. A young person who serves meals to a neighbor who is recovering from a health crisis. A young person who offers to give comfort and support to a friend or family member with no expectation of payment.

The youth of today are committed to helping, volunteering, and making a difference in the lives of others. Although many do

not seek recognition, we in the American Legion Auxiliary family know that recognizing outstanding character and dedication goes a long way to ensuring and promoting a lifelong desire to serve others.

In support of ALA National President Kathy Daudistel's caregiver focus, we are excited to announce a new recognition award offered through the American Legion Auxiliary's Children & Youth program. Just as our Good Deed Award and Youth Hero Award recognize young people who

perform good deeds and acts of heroism, the ALA Youth Caregiver Award recognizes those who care for others without payment or expectation of reward.

As American Legion Auxiliary members, we know our service extends to assuring our youth who volunteer in service to others deserve our thanks and recognition. Be sure to seek out the young people in your community who qualify for one of our awards, and take action to recognize them today. Your time showcasing their allegiance to the values of service to others affirms your unit's commitment to the elements of the Children & Youth program.

Get on board now and show these amazing young caregivers that the American Legion Auxiliary recognizes their service to others and values their spirit and generosity to help those in need. It's easy, it's free, and it's guaranteed to leave you with a feeling of satisfaction knowing that kids who really make a difference in our country are remembered and valued by our organization.

— Guest column by Trish Ward, ALA National Children & Youth Chair

Download the Program Certificate



It's easy for any ALA unit to participate and support the young caregivers in their community. Log in to the MyAuxiliary member portal at www.ALAforVeterans.org to access the forms on the Children & Youth Committee page.

Once you're there, select "Youth Caregiver Certificate," download it to your computer, enter the name and department in the fillable fields, and print. It's really that simple! Be sure to take pictures of your unit recognizing these extraordinary young people and share on our Children & Youth program Facebook group at www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth.



Want to learn more about the ALA Youth Caregiver Award? Check out the Children & Youth Committee report on page 38 in this issue of *Auxiliary*.

PUFL MEMBERSHIP: GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR THE ALA, AND A WIN-WIN

We've covered this topic many times, but it's so important that we're reviewing it again. A Paid Up For Life (PUFL) membership to the American Legion Auxiliary benefits you and our organization in many ways.

PUFL — or “puffle” as it's commonly pronounced in The American Legion Family — is a membership opportunity that demonstrates your lifelong commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary, allowing us to serve veterans, military, and their families well into the future. Many of our members consider their support of the ALA mission lasting a lifetime, so it makes sense that they also make a long-term financial commitment when paying their dues. They understand that this model allows the Auxiliary to count on a certain amount of revenue, making it possible to continue the mission and related programs. Instead of projecting one-year dues revenue, the ALA can project long-range revenue that makes critical financial planning a bit easier.

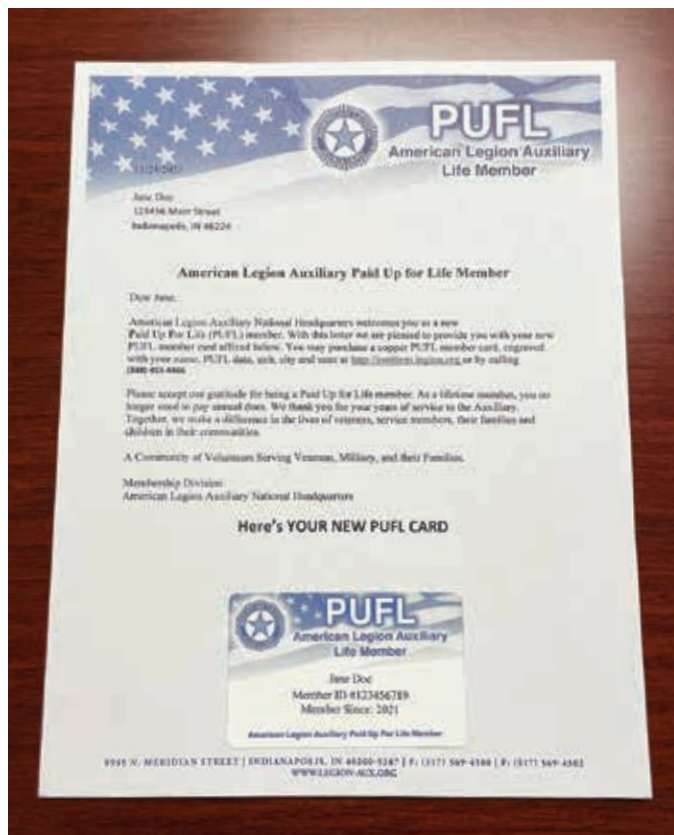
In addition to showing your financial commitment, there are numerous other benefits to being a PUFL member. By paying once, you don't have to be concerned about remembering to renew your dues each year — *one less payment*

to worry about! A rate change in dues will not affect you either, as the PUFL rate is calculated based on current dues rate — *you are never charged additionally!* You can feel a sense of pride by committing your dues to the ALA for a lifetime, and you'll enjoy a lifetime subscription to *Auxiliary* magazine.

But wait: There's more! Consider the honor you can bestow on a fellow member or someone looking to join our organization. A PUFL membership makes a great gift any time of year. Families can get involved by purchasing memberships for multiple generations — think birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, or just because! Recently, a Legionnaire called ALA National Headquarters to purchase a PUFL membership for the unit president at his post in honor of all the hard work she does for our veterans. His goal is to eventually purchase PUFLs for each of the previous unit presidents as well, to thank them

for their service to the post and our veterans. This member understands what Legion Family spirit is truly all about.

A PUFL membership is good for you *and* good for the organization you support. It's a win-win! And don't forget: Dues renewal time is here. What a perfect opportunity to become a PUFL! You can make that happen today by going to www.ALAforVeterans.org/Joining or by calling the ALA National Headquarters Membership Division at (317) 569-4570.



“Time to Renew!”

Putting prominence on a Paid Up For Life membership

- Total American Legion Auxiliary PUFLs: **16,907**
- Male spouse PUFLs: **5**
- Number of new PUFL members for 2021 membership year (Sept. 1, 2020 – today): **496**
- Youngest PUFL: **1½ years old**
- Number of PUFLs over 100 years old: **304**



POPPY PROJECTS FOR ALL AUXILIARY MEMBERS

Connecting the visual image of the poppy with the sacrifice of service made by our veterans has been an important goal of the American Legion Auxiliary. During the month of May, members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies to help raise funds for veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and their families. On the Friday before Memorial Day (this year May 27) — National Poppy Day® — wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.

Start getting ready now for all of the unit events, activities, and fundraisers happening in May. Below, we provide a few projects that can be completed by younger members, older members, and everyone in between.

Poppy button craft

Looking for a simple craft project for members of your unit? This poppy button is a creative way to offer a team-building activity for members while also refreshing them on the significance of the red flower. The buttons can be worn on your shirt, glued to a hat or headband, or worn as a brooch. Consider distributing the poppy buttons for donations on National Poppy Day.

What you need:

- Red felt, approximately 3"x 3" per poppy
- 1" black felt circles, precut with sticky backs
- Small yellow buttons, 15mm
- Small round magnets with adhesive

What to do:

1. Trace poppy design onto red felt, using a poppy template or freehand.

2. Cut out poppy.
3. Remove backing from black felt circle; place circle in middle of poppy.
4. Glue yellow flower button onto black circle.
5. Remove back from magnet; place on back of poppy.

Poppy painting project

This fingerpaint poppy painting project is fun, easy, and suitable for members of all ages. Get a group together to socialize and paint, or paint by yourself in the comfort of your home. This would also be a great way to educate Junior members on the significance of the poppy.

What you need:

- Red, black, green, and yellow paint
- White paper canvas
- Two paintbrushes (one small, one medium)

What to do:

1. Dip thumb or finger in red paint and make a circle with thumbprints (four to five) in shape of a poppy. Let it dry!
2. Dip thumb or finger in black paint and dab in the middle of each flower. Let it dry!
3. With a small paintbrush, paint a yellow dot in the middle of each flower.
4. Clean the small paintbrush. Paint skinny stems on each flower.
5. With a medium paintbrush, paint "X's" at the bottom to make it look like grass.

Poppy pride choker/bracelet

Junior Auxiliary members who have attended national Junior meetings have been making poppy

choker/bracelets — and now you can too. This project is a unique and creative way for ALA members to show their poppy pride.

What you need:

- Red felt, approximately 2"x 2" per poppy
- 1/2" black felt circles, pre-cut with sticky backs
- Small adhesive rhinestone gems, 5mm
- 3/4 – 7/8" black ribbon (velvet works well)
- Small adhesive-backed hook and loop fastener dots
- Glue gun and glue sticks

What to do:

1. Trace poppy design onto red felt, using poppy template or freehand.
2. Cut out poppy.
3. Remove backing from black felt circle; place circle in middle of poppy.
4. Remove rhinestone gem and place in center of black circle.
5. Cut ribbon to 1" longer than needed for choker or bracelet.
6. Remove a set of hook and loop fastener dots. Place one on each end of ribbon so they align.
7. Use glue gun to adhere poppy to ribbon.

Poppy drive-thru

Host a convenient drive-thru to distribute poppies and honor veterans on National Poppy Day. This is a great project to involve everyone! Have the event at your post home and put cones in a drive-thru formation. You can promote the Auxiliary and Legion Family with signs at the entrance of the post or along the drive-thru path. Before the event, organize a group poppy-making event for the whole Family to join. Ask Junior members to write appreciative notes to veterans, or just facts about the poppy to better inform the public. Put the poppies and notes in a plastic baggie to distribute throughout the drive-thru event. Get creative and have fun with it!

What you need:

- Poppies
- Personal notes or poppy notes
- Plastic Ziploc-style baggies
- ALA branded items (posters, clothing, signs)

MORE ALA ACADEMY LIVE COURSES AVAILABLE FOR YOU!

The American Legion Auxiliary offers new learning opportunities through ALA Academy Live courses — a user-friendly online training platform that provides tools to members to help grow the Auxiliary’s mission of serving veterans, military, and their families, and the organization as a team.

Did you miss one of the several webinars added in late 2021? Watch the recordings of these courses by logging in with your member ID at www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy.

Using Social Media to Your Unit’s Advantage (Part 1)

ALA National Headquarters staff provides you with guidance on the best ways to promote your unit activities — whether they’re mission outreach or not — as well as other helpful information.

Part 1 of this two-part series

covers the basics. Here’s a snapshot view of what viewers can learn in this webinar recording:

- Helpful tips and tricks on using social media to promote your ALA unit’s events and activities, both internally (to fellow members) and externally (to nonmembers).
- Collaborating with your fellow unit members to keep your social media account active and engaging with followers.

Mastering Military Shipping with Shiphthrifty

Shiphthrifty, the American Legion Auxiliary’s newest member benefits provider, shares our passion for veterans, military, and their families. Cofounders Rob and Michelle Williamson learned the ins and outs of military shipping and created tools built to make shipping easier and the process simpler for our military heroes.

Snapshot view of what participants can learn in this webinar:

- Meet your newest ALA member

benefits provider — Shiphthrifty — and how they can help you with all of your shipping needs.

- Learn the ease of shipping with Shiphthrifty, focused specifically on military care packages.

Mission Delivery through Caregiver Support

With November being Family Caregivers Month, ALA Academy Live offered this course to honor and celebrate the dedication and sacrifice of caregivers everywhere.

Snapshot view of what participants can learn in this webinar:

- Identify caregivers in your community, as well as learn to self-identify
- How to incorporate caregiver-centric ideas and activities into your unit’s volunteering “menu”

Upcoming courses in 2022:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Social Media Part 2
- Exploring Month of the Military Caregiver

WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH LEARNING

Visit the ALA Academy at www.ALAforVeterans.org so you can learn more about serving our mission.

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Answers can be found on page 49.



JOKES

Q: Can February march?

A: No, but April may.

Want to hear a potassium joke? K.

Dad: Can I see your report card, son?

Son: I don’t have it.

Dad: Why?

Son: I gave it to my friend.

He wanted to scare his parents.

Q: What starts with E, ends with E, and has only 1 letter in it?

A: Envelope.

A lot of people cry when they cut an onion. The trick is not to form an emotional bond.

Source: LaughFactory.com



NOW IT'S TIME FOR 'FUN WITH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS!'

True or false: To comply with national governing document changes, departments/units may automatically write changes into their bylaws without a vote of the department convention/unit membership.

That's a tricky one! Did you say "True"? *Unless* you have a clause in your governing documents that allows you to do so, departments/units *still have to vote* to change their governing documents to align with the national C&B. Why? As independent affiliates (ALA

Standing Rule X, Departments, 1), departments and units adopt and operate by their own bylaws, including how the bylaws are amended. For example, when The American Legion changed the Auxiliary's eligibility criteria from "wives" to "spouses," the ALA still had to vote to adopt that change and amend the article on membership in its constitution.

So, although the National Convention body adopts changes to the national C&B, the department's DEC or unit officers cannot just

rewrite their governing documents and hand them out. Whoever voted on the document to begin with is the only body that can vote to amend it — unless, as stated earlier — there is a specific provision in the department/unit bylaws that allows for automatic changes. And just because a department adopts such an automatic provision does not mean that a unit has to do so. A unit may just love voting and want to vote on every change!

When does that change go into effect? When the National Convention delegates vote and pass an amendment to national bylaws, it goes into effect when it is passed, unless the amendment specified another timeframe. Yes, the bylaws change still has to be adopted by the department/unit, but the department/unit still has to comply with the *effect* of the change of the national bylaws.

So, in summary, and generally speaking, departments and units still have to vote to adopt national changes, but the changes go into effect whether the departments and units adopt them or not. This has been "Fun with Constitution & Bylaws!" We recommend not driving or operating heavy machinery when playing this game.

Updated ALA National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules!

An updated spiral-bound ALA National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (item No. 355.202) can now be ordered from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales online at www.Emblem.Legion.org or toll-free at 888-453-4466. It continues to be available as a free download from www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Among the updates are changes to the national committee structure that were adopted at the 2019 ALA National Convention that did not go into effect until the conclusion of the next National Convention, which did not take place until 2021 (thank you, COVID). Demonstrating our commitment to transparency in governance, ALA national organization policies are now included in the ALA National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules. As regularly reviewed and adopted rules by the National Executive Committee, these policies are rightly considered standing rules.



National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules

September 2021
UPDATE

Revision Adopted 2013
Initially Adopted 1921



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



SHOWCASING HEART: Ronald Cogan shows his carving, *Memories of Hawaii*, at the 2017 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Buffalo, N.Y.

ALA SUPPORT OF NVCAF CONTINUES DURING TRANSITION YEAR National Festival scheduled for April

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is all about the therapeutic healing power of the arts. The event brings together creative veterans throughout the country who made it to the national level after competing at local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

Changes to competition, Festival dates

The NVCAF showcases the role therapeutic arts has in rehabilitation of our nation's veterans. The competition was hosted at the local level from January to March and the national Festival in October for many years.

Moving forward, the local competition phase of the program will take place June to September each year. The national judging will occur in October and November, with results of the competition announced in December. The national Festival event will follow in the springtime.

For this Festival year, the 2021 gold medal winning veterans are invited to the 41st NVCAF in St. Petersburg, Fla., in April.

Extending the competition phase will allow more veterans the opportunity to participate in a local creative arts competition. It will also offer increased flexibility for local VA facilities to best meet the needs of their community and optimize the veteran experience. The change will allow veterans to participate through showcases of artwork, writing, and performances.

How the ALA supports these veterans

In 2004, a memorandum of understanding between the VA and American Legion Auxiliary was signed, with the Auxiliary officially becoming the co-presenter of NVCAF — significantly increasing awareness of the program among ALA members and throughout communities across the country.

With local competitions held nationwide, the ALA currently plays a large role in helping those succeed. Members have been big supporters of local showcases through

volunteering — serving refreshments during the shows, helping with the setup, judging, escorting veterans from the medical center to and from the events, and through monetary donations.

As co-presenters, and with members involved at both the local and national levels, these events truly demonstrate what the ALA is — a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

You can get involved at the local level

If your VA facility does not currently host a local Veterans Creative Arts Festival, contact a VA staff member who instructs creative arts and recreational therapy (such as creative arts therapists, recreational and occupational therapists, craft care specialists, and other health care professionals who use the arts in treatment).

An additional staff member who could be approached with your ideas is the voluntary services coordinator. Each veteran who participates will need to have a designated VA staff member contact.

For more detailed information on getting involved, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

How to Donate to NVCAF



In addition to volunteer hours to help with the local and national

Festivals, donation dollars play a crucial role in the success of these events.

To donate to the Veterans Creative Arts Festival, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate and select "ALA Foundation Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund."

Focus on the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival has been part of the ALA's mission for decades, and will be even more of an emphasis soon. Stay tuned to www.ALAforVeterans.org and our socials @ALAforVeterans for updates on how you can get involved at a local Festival, the national event, or donate.



THE FOUR CHAPLAINS: SAVING OTHERS WITH A SELFLESS ACT

Imagine — a sinking ship and not enough life jackets. Would you give up your life jacket to save another?

On a cold night in the North Atlantic on Feb. 3, 1943, not only did one man give up his life jacket, but three others joined him. This story may sound familiar to you: The Four Chaplains — Father John P. Washington, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, the Rev. George L. Fox, and the Rev. Clark V. Poling — were on a sinking USAT Dorchester.

The Army transport was part of a convoy of three ships en route to an American base in Greenland. Before the ships could reach their destination, an officer on a German submarine noticed the convoy.

Orders were given to fire, and the Dorchester was hit by a torpedo.

After the hit, the four chaplains attempted to bring calm to the chaos. They began by handing out life jackets, only to realize there were not enough. The men each removed their jackets to save four others.

As the ship was sinking, the four chaplains were seen standing on ship's stern, arms locked as they prayed and sang hymns. Not only was it a sign of bravery, but the chaplains put aside their different faiths and prayed as one.

On that night, only 230 of the 902 on board survived. The ship was carrying servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers.

The four chaplains were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart posthumously. They could not be awarded the Medal of Honor because they didn't meet the requirements. As a result, a posthumous special medal of heroism was awarded in 1961 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Four Chaplains' Medal was given and will never be given again.

The American Legion Family remembers these men and their sacrifices in an interfaith program each February. Four Chaplains Day is Feb. 3, and many post homes will host a ceremony on Four Chaplains Sunday, which is the first Sunday in February.

Chapel of the Four Chaplains

Dr. Daniel A. Poling, father of Lt. Clark Poling, decided there needed to be a shrine in memory of the four chaplains and their sacrifice. He imagined it as a place where all faiths could worship God.

This shrine became a reality in Philadelphia in the late 1940s. President Harry S. Truman dedicated the chapel in 1951.

The Chapel is no longer in its original location. In 2001, it moved to a third location, now at the site of a 1942 World War II Navy Chapel in Philadelphia.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains serves as a place to tell their story and encourage selfless acts and interfaith cooperation.

The Four Chaplains Day program can be found in the American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains' Prayer book in the MyAuxiliary section of www.ALAforVeterans.org.



Did you know?

ALA Past National Chaplain the Rev. Isadore Fox was the wife of Lt. George Fox. She served as the American Legion Auxiliary national chaplain in 1970-1971. Isadore also served the Department of Vermont as a chaplain for many years and as department president in 1960-1961. She wrote a book, *The Immortal Chaplain*, about her husband's life. Isadore was an ALA member for more than 30 years and continued to serve until her passing in 1982.

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS



Lt. George Fox, Methodist minister

Lt. Fox served as a medical corps assistant in World War I.

Following the war, he was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and French Croix de Guerre. Fox returned home to Vermont and became a public accountant, married, and had two children. He later became a minister in Gilman, Vt. He was a member of Walter G. Moore American Legion Post 41 — now named Moore-Fox — and returned to active duty in 1942.



Lt. Alexander Goode, Jewish rabbi

Lt. Goode was from Brooklyn, N.Y. He followed in his father's footsteps and became

a rabbi and then earned a medical degree. He was married with four children. He applied to serve as a Navy chaplain in 1941 but was not accepted. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he applied as an Army chaplain and was accepted.



Lt. Clark Poling, Dutch Reformed minister

Lt. Poling was from Poughkeepsie, N.Y. He served as a pastor of First Reformed Church in

Schenectady, N.Y. He was married and had two children, the second of which was born two months after the sinking of the Dorchester. His father served as a chaplain in World War I and decided to serve again after the United States entered World War II.



Lt. John Washington, Roman Catholic priest

Lt. Washington was born in Newark, N.J., to Irish immigrants. He was ordained as a priest in

1935. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was appointed as an Army chaplain.

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR VETERANS: Members of ALA Ohio Unit 256 and the Loveland Eagles Auxiliary combine resources to host a cornhole challenge fundraiser event.

FINDING THE FUNDS TO TAKE YOUR MILITARY AND VETERAN SUPPORT PROJECTS FURTHER

Getting your American Legion Auxiliary unit the resources it needs to support veterans and make a real impact in your community can be easier than you think. But you don't have to take it from us — take it from Margaret Eklund and Margie Hominy — two unit members just like you, who have grown their programs through a variety of innovative fundraisers.

Lean into the talents of your volunteers

Margaret Eklund, a member of ALA South Carolina Unit 48, worked with the talents in her unit to raise

funds for veterans with a variety show.

Eklund said the show came together pretty naturally. She had a friend who was a Dolly Parton impersonator, and many of her fellow unit members had a knack for comedy.

“All you really have to do is have the talent, and get enough interest to make it all happen,” Eklund said.

After combining those two acts with a local country music band, Eklund and her unit realized they would be able to put on a decent show — so they got to work. After

sourcing the props, setting up The American Legion post hall, and spreading the word, they were ready to take center stage.

“Everybody really enjoyed it,” Eklund said, “and due to everything that has happened with COVID-19, I think it was perfect for everyone to have a laugh.”

Due to demand, they hosted the show twice — taking donations of any amount at the door both nights. With those donations, they were able to fully fund their project to give Christmas gifts to veterans at their local nursing home.



Use your fundraising skills to serve veterans in a new way

Do you already have a knack for fundraising? The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is looking for talented and passionate leaders to serve a three-year term on our board of directors. This group is committed to growing the support the ALA Foundation gives to veterans, military, and their families by spreading the word about grant programs, raising funds to continue the mission, and being good leaders and stewards of resources.

More information and the application can be found online at www.ALAFoundation.org/board-application. Applications are due April 1.



Apply for an ALA Foundation grant to bring in additional income for your mission projects

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation offers four types of grants to ALA units to help it reach its full potential:

1. **Veteran Projects Fund grant:** supports a new need for local veterans/military
2. **Veterans Creative Arts Festival grant:** supports supplies needed for local Veterans Creative Arts Festival events
3. **Mission in Action grant:** supports branded items to promote the ALA in your community
4. **Subgrant:** passes on donations from corporations or foundations to your unit projects

Learn more and apply at www.ALAFoundation.org/grants.



ALA ACADEMY LIVE

Miss out on an ALA Academy Live course?

Catch the recently added recordings in the ALA Academy:

- Using Social Media to Your Unit's Advantage (Part 1)
- Mastering Military Shipping with Shipthriftly
- VAVS Department Orientation
- Mission Delivery through Caregiver Support

Log in with your member ID today at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



“We just have a heart for the veterans, especially because there are some of them who no one ever comes to visit, and they just light up when they see the gifts,” Eklund said.

ALA unit members have so many diverse talents, and tapping into them could be the answer to the need for more resources toward your mission.

Join forces with other community groups

Margie Hominy, member of ALA Ohio Unit 256, worked with another local charity, The Fraternal Order of Eagles Auxiliary, to host a cornhole fundraiser.

Instead of competing for donations with other charities in her community, Hominy found that it could be beneficial to come together to raise funds. She knew one easy way to get people invested was through a bit of friendly competition, so the two organizations decided to challenge one another in a cornhole tournament.

“We have a large property, so we were able to have about 14 games going on at a time, and we had about 25 teams from each charity participate,” Hominy said.

To make it fair, pairs were assigned randomly within the ALA and Eagles groups, respectively. After four or five rounds of play, they crowned the winner. But it was truly the ALA's mission that won that day.

In addition to funds raised with entry fees, Hominy made the most of the time by working to secure basket donations from community businesses. With the help of the Eagles Auxiliary, they were able to secure 40 baskets full of goodies, which attendees could purchase

tickets for a chance to win.

Having other activities and serving food made the event more appealing to the families of those who would be participating in the main event.

“We also made sure to advertise it,” Hominy said. “We got help from local businesses to spread the word, and we made sure to put it on Facebook.”

At the end of the day, the fundraiser netted over \$6,800, while at the same time bringing the community together. Though sometimes other organizations can seem like competition, working together and combining resources can be a way to reach new interested members and supporters.



There are so many fundraising ideas on the internet. But many times, as Eklund and Hominy have discovered, the best events are the ones that fit naturally into your volunteer base and community.

Learn from other fundraising success stories

Need more ideas for unit fundraisers? Hear straight from other local-level fundraisers and unit members just like you by taking the ALA Academy course *Unit Fundraising: Moving the Mission Forward by Engaging your Community*. Log in with your member ID at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

We want to hear your story! Share your unit fundraising successes at Development@ALAforVeterans.org.

ALA
Member Survey
**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

All American Legion Auxiliary members are invited to share their opinions with National Headquarters through a member survey.

Have you taken it yet? This is your chance to have your voice heard! Your feedback will help us improve the organization not only at the national level, but at the unit/local level as well.



Why survey Auxiliary members?

The goal of this survey is to establish a baseline of who our members are and how they feel about the organization. The last member survey was conducted in 2014-2015, so it's time to update the information.

"The more we know about our current membership, the more we can help attract new volunteers and members and better meet the needs of current members," said ALA National Headquarters' Executive Director Kelly Circle. "We need you — the members — to tell us what you love and what you don't love. We hear from some individuals on certain occasions, but the survey will give us a better picture of the members overall."

Surveying members is not unique to the ALA. Organizations have used surveys for years to learn more about their members/customers and improve their experience. Many organizations do large member surveys every three to five years to evaluate progress on initiatives, member demographics, etc.

How will the information be used?

"First things first, we will not be looking at individual data. Yes, the survey will ask for your member number, but that is to verify you are a member," said Circle.

The results will show overall trends with membership. For example, are we meeting the needs of our members? If not, how can we better meet those needs?

This survey is not just for national purposes. The data collected will be shared with departments and units. Together, improvements can be made at all levels.

The information will help tailor programs and training offered, improve member benefits, re-examine recruiting plans, design a marketing strategy, and develop diversity, equity, and inclusion training and awareness programs. National Headquarters also hopes to get a better understanding of why people join, stay, and leave the ALA. In learning this, National can look for ways to reduce the membership decline. It will allow the organization to learn what works and what doesn't.

National Headquarters plans to continue to conduct surveys in the future. Members can expect smaller surveys in between large surveys as a way to gauge progress.

How many members are taking the survey?

That is up to members! We want to hear from as many members as possible!

The 2014-2015 survey went only to members who had an email address on file at that time. It was about 65,000 members. This time, the goal is to far exceed that number by giving all 600,000-plus members the opportunity to participate. "Please take the survey! If you are friends with a member who might not have internet access, you can help them fill it out," said Circle.

What will I be asked to share?

The survey questions are uncomplicated and should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Here are some sample questions:

- Do you feel the ALA fulfills its mission of honoring the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing lives of veterans, military, and their families?
- How likely are you to recommend an ALA membership to a friend or family member?
- How would you rate your overall experience with the American Legion Auxiliary?

I want to participate — how do I take the survey?

We've made it easy for you. Some of you already received an email with a survey link. You can use that link, or simply scan the QR code below with your smartphone to be taken to the survey. You will need your ALA member ID number to complete the survey. Your number is used only to verify that you are a member and taking the survey only once. All responses will remain confidential and are untraceable.

Hurry: The survey is open through the end of February, so don't delay in making your voice heard!

Why you should take the ALA member survey:

- Have your voice heard
- Help us all improve the member experience
- Help us find ways to reduce the membership decline

Your feedback will be used to:

- Design member events/trainings
- Improve member benefits
- Develop diversity, equity, and inclusion training and awareness programs

**Use your smartphone
camera and scan this code
to begin the survey:
(or go to www.ALAforVeterans.org/survey)**





FAMILY FIRST: ALA member Erika Clough (right) is a caregiver for her aunt, Elisabeth. Clough is one of many ALA members who have taken on that role for loved ones (photo: Matt Roth).

'I don't regret a minute of it'

**ALA members reflect on what it's like
to care for others**



CAREGIVERS: PART ONE OF A THREE-PART SERIES

This year, Auxiliary magazine is publishing articles about caregivers. In the February, May, and August issues, we'll profile members who are caregivers, each with different backgrounds and the challenges they face.

“It takes you down dark roads,” American Legion Auxiliary member Erika Clough said about caregiving. “I told my husband one time, ‘I have gone down this path so deep, I want you to take the gun out of the safe. I’m telling you: Hide it from me. I can’t do this.’ He took the gun out and hid it.”

Depression. Anger. Loneliness. Anxiety. Sadness.

The list of emotions can go on and on, and just a few that caregivers, like Clough, often deal with on a regular basis. There are moments when caring for another can be a beautiful thing, and others when it is heart wrenching. It can feel like you are alone — like you are the only person who knows what it feels like and no one else understands how much of you has been lost in caring for another person.

But you aren’t alone!

Many American Legion Auxiliary members are caregivers. A priority on these unsung heroes ties in with our mission, as well as the national focus for the 2021-2022 administrative year.

Several Auxiliary members reached out to ALA National Headquarters to share what it’s really like to be a caregiver. Here are some of their stories.

ERIKA CLOUGH

Department of Maryland, Unit 70

67 years old

Caregiver for her aunt, Elisabeth

Clough and her sister were raised by their aunt and uncle since about the third grade. Her aunt is originally from Germany.

“We bounced around with my mom, and our aunt and uncle said it wasn’t a stable home,” Clough recalled. “We said we wanted to live with our aunt and uncle. [My aunt] is like my mom to me.”

About eight years ago, their uncle passed away and Clough began to keep an extra eye on her aunt, Elisabeth. For the first five years, she did very well on her own. But then Clough began noticing bruises on Elisabeth’s arms and head and wondered how she was getting them. Elisabeth said she was running into things, but Clough knew her aunt’s house was always kept immaculate, so that didn’t make sense.

She mentioned it to Elisabeth’s doctor, who suggested she might be falling. While walking, she was tending to lean to the left. Her doctor said she should no longer live by herself.

Initially, Clough’s sister had suggested a nursing home would be a good fit.



ROLE OF A CAREGIVER (top left, clockwise): Erika Clough’s aunt and uncle, Elisabeth and Albert Bradley, and their wedding photo in Germany. Clough cares for Elisabeth, with hired caregiver Catherine Hooper of Comfort Keepers by her side. Hooper helps Clough Monday to Friday, four hours a day, so she can have a rest from caregiving. From left, Nick Nazare (Clough’s brother-in-law), Evelyn Nazare (Clough’s sister), Elisabeth, Clough, and her husband, Dennis. Elisabeth is currently on hospice in Erika’s home with constant care.

“She saved me as a child,” Clough said of her aunt. “I couldn’t do that to her. I feel obligated to care for her.”

About three years ago, Clough and her husband moved Elisabeth into their home.

“The first four months, it was beautiful, wonderful,” Clough recalled. “I could keep my eye on her, and I didn’t see anything wrong.”

Then, Elisabeth had a stroke. Clough started to wonder if she had been having strokes previously. After, she continued to have more strokes, along with seizures.

Then the pandemic hit, plus incidents with her aunt escalated.

“We found her one day in front of the front door, all

bloodied up,” Clough said. “She was trying to catch the bus or the train. We had to put motion detectors in our home so we would know if she was on the move in the middle of the night.”

Caregiving took a mental toll on Clough, especially that first year.

Realizing she couldn’t do it all as a caregiver 24/7, Clough needed to ask for help so she could take breaks too — and that’s when a hired caregiver came in to help Monday to Friday, four hours a day.

“[During that time], I run to the store, or I sit in the living room and not have to worry about her,” Clough said.

It is that precious time she gets to herself.

She has also joined a Facebook group of other caregivers.

“I found out quickly I’m not the only one,” she said. “Other people are struggling. Reading between the lines of Alzheimer’s and dementia Facebook groups, [the stories] sound so familiar — ‘I hate my life, but I love my mother/father.’”

She reads about others’ problems in the group and offers advice. Some

advice she has shared included getting motion sensors, putting an alarm in your bedroom as the caregiver, and alarms on all doors, just to name a few.

Elisabeth is currently on hospice. Some days, it seems she isn’t going to make it, Clough said, and then she peaks back to normal. Other days, Elisabeth sleeps for 20 hours.

“It’s an up and down anxiety,” Clough said. “Every morning, I walk in and turn on the light and I’m not sure what I will find. I’m the one who checks on her the most. I am afraid I will find her dead in that bed.”

Clough is often in her aunt’s room now that she is bedridden, holding her hand and singing to her.

“She says, ‘You sound like you’re underwater,’” Clough

Caregiver Resources

- www.facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR — ALA Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Facebook group (a great forum for caregivers to share ideas, challenges, and other helpful information)
- www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving (federal government agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — includes information on elder caregiving)
- www.caregiving.org (National Alliance for Caregiving — national nonprofit agency dedicated to policy issues and tracking legislation dealing with family caregiving issues)

Be sure to check out your May issue of *Auxiliary* magazine for more caregiver resources.

laughed. “She smiles when I sing.”

For others who may someday be caregivers, Clough offers advice.

“My biggest advice, which I failed to do the first year, was take care of yourself,” she said. “You are so busy worrying about them and their needs that you tend to forget about you. Took me a year to figure that out. I started to fall apart and cry and go into that dark and deep place and I needed to get some help. I’m not superwoman.”

Caregiving is no easy feat, but Clough said keeping her aunt close so she can have family around her every day was worth it.

“When the end comes and I find her that morning, I will tell myself I have done everything I could possibly do,” Clough said. “I have no regrets. I’m going to be OK.”

PATRICIA GUSTIN

Department of Pennsylvania, Unit 998

67 years old

Cared for her mother, Catherine, and still cares for her mentally ill sister, Kathy

About eight years ago, ALA member Patricia Gustin and others noticed that Gustin’s mother, Catherine, was having trouble getting around.

“It was very strange to us because she was one of those fearlessly independent women,” Gustin recalls of her mother, who was 88 years old at the time. “She had trouble getting out of her chair and getting around in general. She went from a cane to a walker to eventually she couldn’t walk and became bedridden.”

At about 91 years old, Catherine started to develop the onset of dementia. At this time, Gustin began to take over financials for her mother. The dementia continued to progress, and that’s when the family needed extra help and brought in a full-time caregiver. Gustin still helped with grocery shopping and medications.

At first, some family members were in denial about the dementia. And not all lived in-state to truly see the disease’s progression on Catherine.

“It was hard for all of us because our mother went from this vibrant, self-sufficient, and independent woman to someone who really needed help,” Gustin said. “It turns your world upside down. You go

from your same habits and routine to having to change everything around.”

In addition to caregiving for her mother, Gustin also has an older sister, Kathy, who is mentally ill, who Gustin also helps care for.

“The group that gets forgotten is the elderly — the group that gets forgotten even more is caregivers,” Gustin said. “If you’ve never been in a situation like this, you won’t understand the effect it has, not only on the caregiver, but the whole family in general. Our mother sacrificed so much for us, and it was our turn to sacrifice for her.”

Still working a full-time job while taking care of both Catherine and Kathy proved to be exhausting.

Gustin said that over time, she had to learn to be patient. There were days when she had to leave work and go over to her mother’s house for various reasons. Sometimes, the two would call Gustin a handful of times while she was at work. Luckily, she had a boss who really understood. Gustin ended up retiring a year earlier than planned.

“I couldn’t keep it up,” she said. “I was always sick or had terrible migraine headaches.”

Gustin and her siblings wanted to keep Catherine in her home, but financially, it was rather difficult once they reached the point of needing around-the-clock care. They found a service they liked and were able to afford.



OVER THE YEARS (top left, clockwise): Patricia Gustin’s mother, Catherine, in her mid-20s; Catherine with family members celebrating a birthday. Family gatherings were always very important to her family as both a way to celebrate her special day and to thank her for all she has done for her children; Gustin with Catherine; and Catherine with her other daughter, Kathy (right) and family members.

It takes a lot to be a caregiver, many sides of which people don't always think about. It is a journey like no other, Gustin said.

"Caregiving can be rewarding in part, but you can't believe how difficult it is for a caregiver — physically, mentally, and emotionally," Gustin said. "You are not feeling grounded like you once did."

One aspect of caregiving that many face is burnout, which often takes a toll on a person's overall health.

"It will definitely happen," Gustin said of burnout. "It's so important that you take care of you. Sometimes, you just have to say "no" or get someone else to help you. You can't do it all."

Gustin added it's important to include an hour for yourself here and there.

Because she was single and retired, a lot of the responsibility ended up on her.

"I was at it every day and dealing with the difficulties of dementia — it's heartbreaking," she said. "And dealing with a mentally ill sister who needs special care too. Sometimes she has her days when she can be completely uncooperative. It's part of her illness."

Others around Gustin noticed she was not her usual self.

"I had a co-worker say, 'You don't laugh and goof off and say silly stuff like you used to — you're just in your workspace or go out for a break and that's it,'" Gustin said.

One day she broke down so hard at her desk, a co-worker got her boss, and Gustin sat in her office and just cried.

"I didn't have much left," she recalled. "One of my faults was not pushing more for help. Get the help you need. Try to stay very mindful of yourself. You are going to crash out and not going to be good for others."

Gustin added that if you are feeling emotionally and mentally exhausted as the caregiver, get professional help. Being able to talk to someone who can help with your issues and help you understand your role is beneficial.

"You find yourself so swept up in the caregiver role, you end up having no life of your own," she said. "Don't let that happen to you."

Gustin cautions to pay attention to warning signals for yourself for when you may need a break — having stomach distress every time you eat, regular headaches, can hardly look at your own mail, forget about paying a

bill — overall, just not functioning properly, and more.

Throughout her time as a caregiver, Gustin had moments of getting upset, complaining, crying, and fits of anxiety and depression. She has since learned ways to help with those negative effects that can sometimes go along with caregiving. Journaling her thoughts has really helped.

"Get it out of your system," she said. "Put it on paper. You feel better. You can also get ideas for what you can do better for yourself."

She also enjoys making floral arrangements and is doing that again.

As Gustin reflects on her time as a caregiver for her mother, and now her sister, she points out to other caregivers that they're not alone. You feel that way sometimes, but you are not alone, she said.

"I don't regret a minute of it," she said. "It helped my mother, who helped me so much throughout my life. It was a small price to pay."

Gustin's mother passed away in October 2019. She was 95 years old.

NOREEN NICKERSON-CRUZ **Department of Arizona, Unit 62** **64 years old**

Cares for her mother, Audrey

"I love that this is our [national ALA focus] this year," Noreen Nickerson-Cruz said. "People don't really think about caregivers and how much they do."

While getting her master's degree in social work at Arizona State University, Nickerson-Cruz participated in a support group with the Alzheimer's Association, leading to the interest in her thesis — *The Self-Reported Benefits of Support Group Participation for Caregivers of Patients with Alzheimer's and Dementia*.

"I already knew people who had cared for those with Alzheimer's and dementia and had seen how much these people had been helped when discussing their problems with the people in the group," she said.

Seeing these groups in action brought to light to Nickerson-Cruz the challenges caregivers face — some of which can be addressed before becoming a caregiver.

"Roles are going to change," she said. "What are the things in the family that the person who has been affected by whatever has happened, like dementia? What are their

Online Learning Opportunity Just for Caregivers

A free American Legion Auxiliary-produced webinar, *Mission Delivery through Caregiver Support*, is available online through the ALA Academy at www.ALAforVeterans.org/ALA-Academy. In this 30-minute course, participants learn more about caregivers as we explore 2021-2022 ALA National President Kathy Daudistel's focus on caring for those who care for others. Log in with your member ID and watch it today!

main functions? Have they always been the ones to pay the bills, always doing the driving? They won't be able to do that anymore. So, while they are still capable, teach the other person how to do that.”

This is something she saw most often in the group — one person did everything, and the other person was unprepared and had no idea what needed to be done.

After her husband passed away, Nickerson-Cruz wanted to move. A house came up for sale next to her mother's, who didn't need help at the time, but she knew it might come up someday. Nickerson-Cruz was there less than a year when Audrey had a severe stroke.

She transitioned from teaching others how to handle the various complications of caregiving to being a caregiver herself for her 95-year-old mother.

Caregiving has been difficult to say the least.

“The main concern is all the safety issues,” she said. “That's why I have cameras set up in her house, so if she slips or something, I can check on her and make sure she is OK.”

At night, Nickerson-Cruz's great niece sleeps at Audrey's house. It's nice to have someone there if something would happen, she added. It helps her to worry a little less.

“For a while, I just had to move in with her,” she said. “I was so worried about what was happening at night. I'm back at [my] home again.”

One difficulty she faces as a caregiver is isolation. As Auxiliary members who may not be caregivers yet, Nickerson-Cruz suggests making a phone tree to divvy up who calls which caregiver on which day, so they are checked on multiple times throughout the week to help battle isolation.

“Let them know you are thinking of them,” she said. “It would be wonderful if someone could stop in and visit — even just 10 to 15 minutes gives them someone to talk to.”

Having experience with support groups and now being a caregiver herself, Nickerson-Cruz offers advice.

“The one thing is, in any way possible, plan ahead,” she said. “Especially make sure people have medical power of attorney before a person diagnosed with dementia is no longer valid [in making decisions]. Not only have them in place, have a long discussion about what their wishes are.”

Additionally, for those caregivers who may be older,



LOVE OF FAMILY (top left, clockwise): Caregiver Noreen Nickerson-Cruz's mother, Audrey, when she was in high school; Nickerson-Cruz, Audrey, and Nickerson-Cruz's daughter, Audrey, named after her grandmother; Nickerson-Cruz and Audrey; Nickerson-Cruz's sisters, Audrey, Nickerson-Cruz's brother, Nickerson-Cruz, and her daughter; Nickerson-Cruz with Audrey, Nickerson-Cruz's son, and his daughter; Audrey with her great-granddaughter, Lola.

Nickerson-Cruz encourages ALA members to help them by getting something in place through the Auxiliary or through a local church where someone is available to take the caregiver to get groceries, go to doctor's appointments, and more.

“Don't be passive — be proactive and try to help those at home who can't leave because they are caring for someone else,” she said. “Don't say, ‘What can I do?’ Say, ‘This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to drop off groceries on Wednesday,’ for example. Be direct.” ★

By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer

Are You A Caregiver?

The people who take care of us — Mom, Dad, grandparents, siblings, spouses, and visiting nurses — they get us where we need to be, they make sure we receive our medicine, and they always know how to make us feel loved. Caregivers do so much, yet oftentimes, these heroes don't realize it. Are you currently serving in a caregiver role? We'd love to talk to you! Email us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.



ALA STRATEGIC PLAN FURTHERS FUTURE SUCCESS

Developing an effective strategic plan is important in all organizations and businesses to prioritize objectives and reach long-term goals. It articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how to know if the plan is successful. Implementing a more mission-centric strategic plan will help the American Legion Auxiliary’s longstanding mission of serving veterans, military, and their families long into the future.

Following completion of the ALA’s previous 5-Year Centennial Strategic Plan, National Headquarters staff and volunteers planned the current

strategic plan that launched in October 2020. It features five main goals to help set the Auxiliary’s priorities over the next five years:

- 1) Cultivate a variety of mission engagement opportunities.
- 2) Enhance organizational effectiveness of all levels: national, department, unit.
- 3) Recruit and retain members through mission engagement.
- 4) Ensure financial stewardship of resources to maximize mission delivery.
- 5) Enhance and foster the family relationship with The American Legion.

After these goals were adopted,

staff revised mission delivery and outcomes in their daily work to ensure alignment with the new goals. National Headquarters division directors established strategies and tactics that describe what each division will focus on to contribute to the success of the adopted goals. Strategy metrics were also included in division plans and are used as evaluation steps to measure progress toward achieving the strategies.

The current strategic plan will allow us to have multiple accomplishments in all areas. During year one of the plans, National Headquarters saw progress in each of the goals. Here are just a few of the accomplishments:

- Launched a refreshed ALA national website, enabling more visibility and awareness.
- On #GivingTuesday in 2020, the ALA Foundation raised \$56,000 from 595 donations. This surpasses 2019’s total by more than \$11,000 and 100 donors. In 2021, the ALA Foundation raised \$60,000 — exceeding their goal yet again.
- ALA Academy Live webinars, designed to enhance mission delivery, reached more unit-level members in year one with 48 courses offered, 4,487 registered for a course, and 2,703 took a live course.

MISSION TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

As the new year begins, so do new opportunities. The American Legion Auxiliary is offering a special training experience through Mission Development Training 201. These mission-focused training opportunities will help members overcome common hurdles in mission delivery — in hopes to improve the member engagement experience and expanding membership.

During this one-day training, learn how to:

- Identify and engage volunteers — members and non-members
- Determine the needs in your community
- Solve roadblocks
- Construct specific volunteer menu opportunities in your community

Registration is open for Mission Development Training 201 and national ALA Junior meetings! The events will be held at the same time and locations throughout early 2022. For more information and to register, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/meetings/mission-training.



Mark your calendars! Remaining Mission Development Training 201 sessions:

- Orlando, Fla. – Feb. 12
- Indianapolis, Ind. – Feb. 19
- Baltimore, Md. – March 26
- Omaha, Neb. - April 2

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR MEMBERS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund, established in 1969, was created with a bequest from the estate of Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisc. At a National Executive Committee meeting in Minneapolis later that year, a resolution was passed, establishing the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee (AEF), the first program created exclusively for members of the American Legion Auxiliary with its purpose to provide temporary financial assistance to members with consecutive membership of five years or more. Aid would be based on an application for assistance.

In 1981, the program was expanded to include a fund to help members who needed to support themselves due to unexpected life-changing circumstances, such as death or illness of a spouse, divorce, or desertion. Today, short-term assistance can be provided to help

our members acquire marketable job skills through schooling or job training when all sources of financial aid are exhausted. The grants do not exceed \$2,400, and you now need three years of ALA paid membership — current and two past years. The 2021-2022 AEF Committee started receiving notices from National Headquarters in September 2021 through December 2021 that the AEF has helped an estimated 31 members with \$33,915 in Disaster Grants and \$6,977 with Temporary Grants. Our administrative year is not over.

You cannot turn on the news or read the newspaper without seeing states plagued with natural or manmade disasters, as well as individuals who are having hard times due to these disasters or family situations in peril and needing temporary assistance.

It is important for our “members helping members” to continue

donations to AEF. That is how we help and serve through our donations. They count! To continue providing grants, fundraising is essential. This can be an individual, unit, district, or department donation. Please consider hosting a fundraiser or making a personal donation. Remember: Someday, you may need assistance.

The National AEF Committee thanks all of the departments and members for their donations. Please continue to share if you have used one of the AEF grants, and share that AEF is out there to help our members. I want to personally thank those departments, units, and members for their generous donations and being dedicated to helping our members in this great organization.



Pamela Bates is a 45-year Auxiliary member of Unit 526 in Ohio.

AMERICANISM: HOW TO PROMOTE PATRIOTISM TO CHILDREN

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAAmericanism

Americanism promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship. This does not just happen. Our children need to experience Americanism throughout their lives. Our members are diligent about distributing patriotic coloring book pages in the primary grades. In collaboration with the Education Committee chairmen, veterans and servicemembers go into the classrooms and talk about what their service means to defending the ideals of the Constitution. “Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution” are shared in schools and the community. Members

are taking pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution into the schools and encouraging participation in The American Legion Oratorical Contest. These are all ways to promote “Star Spangled Kids.” The Americanism program includes Star Spangled Kids. I want to thank all of the units that entered for a chance to obtain Americanism items to distribute in their community.

Although not all units are able to enter the classroom, they find ways to promote Americanism in schools. Have you considered taking small flags to share with kindergarten students when they learn the Pledge of Allegiance?

There are wonderful comic books found in The American Legion Flag & Emblem catalog. *Light of Liberty*, *Our Country’s Flag*, and *Pledge of Allegiance* books are great ways to share patriotism with elementary school children. Encourage patriotic songs, including the *Star-Spangled Banner*. Not all students know the words to it. How do you teach proper flag etiquette? A great resource is the Flag Etiquette book found on the Emblem Sales website at emblem.legion.org.



Norma Tramm is a member of ALA Unit 455 in Cold Spring, Minn.

CHILDREN & YOUTH: RECOGNIZING YOUTH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth

Former First Lady Rosalyn Carter said, “There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.” Empowering and educating our youth on this important life responsibility is one way the American Legion Auxiliary remains relative and aligned to the needs of those we serve and our youth program initiatives.

Recognizing kids who go above and beyond is a great way to support positive behaviors and recognize those who display values that reflect kindness and compassion. The American Legion Auxiliary’s new Youth Caregiver Award joins the established Youth Hero Award and Good Deed Award as an opportunity to individually recognize young people who provide care to others without

expectation of payment. This triad of awards enables every unit to participate in recognition activities with just a click.

The Youth Caregiver Award certificate can be downloaded from www.ALForVeterans.org, updated, and presented to young people who have demonstrated the components of caregiving to others. Do you have a grandchild who helps a physically challenged friend get around? Or a young neighbor who plays checkers with his elderly grandfather instead of playing with his friends? Recognize their kindness with a Youth Caregiver Award.

You’ll be supporting the American Legion Auxiliary’s Children & Youth program, helping your unit stay active and engaged, and giving young people the confidence and encouragement they need to succeed in a competitive world.

We know that when young

people are given positive feedback and rewarded for a job well done, it becomes natural for them to continue their efforts to work hard and demonstrate skills in service to others. Even the slightest positive recognition can drive morale, enthusiasm, and motivation to accomplish goals and aspire to achieve. The American Legion Auxiliary makes it so easy to positively impact children who demonstrate care, compassion, and service to others. All that’s missing is you. Play a role in helping worthy kids get the recognition they deserve and your unit remaining active and engaged. It’s a win for all — your unit, your kids, and those we serve.



Trish Ward is a 23-year member of John P. Hand Unit 250 in Louisburg, Kan.

LEGISLATIVE: SUPPORTING THE LEGION’S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative

The purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Committee is to support the public policy positions of The American Legion. These positions are clearly written and available at www.legion.org/legislative for download and include legislative point papers, priority sheets, and congressional testimonies.

Grassroots members should familiarize themselves with all of the information available from The American Legion in order to communicate effectively with legislators. Sign up for Action Alerts at the link located in the Legislative Action Center. Alerts provide key message points that

can be shared with legislators and are especially important when legislation is pending.

At the Legion Action Center, you can also sign up for a semi-weekly newsletter that provides information on legislative issues and news concerning The American Legion’s legislative initiatives. All of this information is valuable and convenient for all members to use and will make for a more knowledgeable conversation when meeting with legislators at the local, state, and national levels.

Encourage all members to keep informed and up to date on issues of interest to the Legion

by reading *The American Legion Magazine*, *The Dispatch*, *The Legislative Handbook*, and other official publications of the Legion Family. A wealth of information is located at legion.org/legislative that will assist in advocating for veterans and their families.

“Never question the power of one! Throughout history, it has been the actions of only one person who has inspired the movement of change.” — Steve Maraboli



Beth McGinn is a 20-year member of Oak Orchard-Riverdale Unit 28 in Delaware.

NATIONAL SECURITY: ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN MILITARY FAMILIES

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANatISec

When we think about our National Security program, one of the first things that come to mind is supporting our military and their families. So often, we hear stories of families who are separated by deployments and spouses left behind to care for home and family. Our members are always there to help make these times less stressful for these families, but our military families still face other challenges. One that has come to light recently is problems with food insecurities.

When families are unable to consistently afford or access adequate meals, they face a problem known as food insecurity. Many military families are facing this challenge by skipping meals and making difficult choices between buying food or other essential items when times are particularly tough. According to a recently published report, well over 100,000

servicemembers and their families may be facing food insecurities.

Some servicemembers face challenges because of limited income, particularly among lower-ranking active-duty military, especially if they are supporting a family. Since servicemembers aren't necessarily able to choose where they are stationed, the high cost of living causes their income to be stretched thin. The recent surge of inflation is also affecting not just grocery bills, but other everyday expenses as well.

Many of these families have other high financial commitments that reduce their cash reserves for the month. The frequent moves that come with military life, along with the high cost of childcare, make it difficult for military spouses to find steady work. All of these contribute to the problem of food insecurities.

So, what can we as Auxiliary

members do to help with this very serious problem since it is not something that many people are comfortable discussing? Most importantly, we can help raise awareness of the problem by discussing it with our members.

If you are near a military base, you can organize food drives for local food pantries that help military families. Units can host breakfasts, luncheons, or dinners and invite military families in the area to be guests. We can host military baby showers and children's parties at local posts to help these families. We can deliver food baskets for holidays.

We can do what we do best, and that is to step up and help those in need!



Diana Sirovina is a 34-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Bixby-Hansen Unit 171 in Union Grove, Wisc.

POPPY: NOW IS THE TIME TO PLAN YOUR NATIONAL POPPY DAY® ACTIVITIES

 www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy

Since World War I, the red poppy has acknowledged our respect and gratitude as we honor our veterans and military personnel who served, are still serving, and those who gave their all for our country in all wars. The red poppy reminds Americans that their freedoms were gained and protected through great sacrifices of our nation's uniform.

National Poppy Day®, the Friday before Memorial Day, is the initiative of The American Legion Family, which includes the American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders. The United States Congress established this day to commemorate the sacrifices of our military.

Now is the time to start planning your promotion of National Poppy Day by utilizing The American Legion Family National Poppy Day Toolkit at www.legion.org/poppyday. Contact government officials in advance to ensure their availability at community events to present poppy proclamations.

Reaching our youth, whether in schools, churches, or youth organizations, allows the Auxiliary to instill into our young citizens the understanding of respect, honor, and gratitude for our veterans and active-duty personnel who gave of themselves for the rights and privileges of every citizen.

Involving community partners is vital to the success of National Poppy Day, as they provide the

spaces for promoting the poppy and supporting this Auxiliary program. Units should utilize public relations and social media to connect community members with information leading up to National Poppy Day events. The poppy and action photos of the Auxiliary working its mission will enhance the public's interest in the events.

As you promote and observe National Poppy Day (May 27 this year), wear and share your poppy with pride and reverence, representing the Auxiliary as a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.



Sallie Rossman is a 17-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Virginia Memorial Unit 325 in Danville, Va.

ANNUAL DONOR REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE

When you donate to the various ALA and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation funds, you help improve the lives of veterans, military, and their families. Whether you give to honor a loved one, because you have served, or simply because you believe in the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary — your donation matters.

In the Auxiliary's Annual Donor Report — now available online — we recognize the donors who help fulfill our mission and the impact their donations have made across the country. The 2021 American Legion Auxiliary annual report also highlights our organization's major milestones of the year and features inspiring stories about what ALA

members have accomplished at local levels. You'll read about how you can leave your legacy and contribute to the future of the American Legion Auxiliary and the mission we serve.

During the 2020-2021 year, your contributions lifted the financial burden from members in need by providing nearly \$134,000 in Auxiliary Emergency Fund grants, gave hope and opportunity to young, deserving students through \$155,500 in scholarships, and made a major impact on the lives of countless veterans, military, and their families.

Additional ALA annual reports



are available online. These include the Commemorative Centennial Report, the Annual Report, and department presidents report. Read them all by going to www.ALAforVeterans.org/about/annual-reports.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' DEVELOPMENT TEAM RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIPS

The Association of Fundraising Professionals Indiana Chapter (AFP-IC) has been Indiana's leading fundraising professional organization for nearly 40 years. Working on behalf of important nonprofit causes in communities throughout Indiana, the AFP-IC takes pride in developing and growing fundraising professionals with membership opportunities and networking events. The association offers scholarships each year to some of its members to attend the annual AFP International Conference.

"All members of the Development

Division are members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, as a way to continuously grow as fundraisers to provide the best possible service to our donors and to the veterans our organization supports," said Sydney DeLong, an ALA National Headquarters development coordinator.

Both of our Development Division coordinators, Sydney DeLong and Zac Felty, applied for and received the Association of Fundraising Professionals Indiana Chapter's International Conference Scholarship to cover

registration, travel, lodging, and food for the AFP ICON training. The three-day event will be hosted in Las Vegas in May. DeLong and Felty were scheduled to attend the AFP training, so when they saw the scholarship opportunity, they applied in hopes of offsetting costs.

The AFP International Conference will have more than 100 educational sessions to choose from, various networking events, and will host thousands of fundraisers from around the world. Participants will hear from hundreds of fundraising experts who will share their best practices and important tips.

ALA AWARDED TWO CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION GRANTS

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation has awarded the American Legion Auxiliary two grants to help support the ALA's mission. Below is a description of the two grants:

1) The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters was awarded \$45,500 for their project, "American Legion Auxiliary National Youth

Programs Scholarships."

The grant will provide academic scholarships in the following areas: American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program, the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship, the Spirit of Youth Scholarship, the Honorary National Junior Division Vice President Scholarship, and the Junior Member

Loyalty Scholarship.

2) American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters was also awarded \$3,390 for their project, "American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth Project."

The grant will instill American Legion Family values in youth while teaching them about the poppy program and being safe.

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

FEBRUARY

As we mature, our idea of love changes. As young children, we had that child-parent dependent love. And, of course, the love for our first toy and animal. Then in our teens, we had puppy love and read teen love novels, looking for a prince. Finally, we found our soulmate or significant other as we grew. "Wedding Bells in the air."

As we grow and mature, we realize love takes on a different meaning in our lives due to experiencing broken relationships, divorce, or the death of a loved one. Our concept of love changes.

Love is not always a happy feeling; it is sharing and having a good relationship with one another.

The best explanation is found in the book of Romans 12: 9-16 (NIV):

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need.

Practice hospitality.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

Prayer of Love:

God, thank you for loving and blessing us every day.

Please grant us with Your knowledge and wisdom that we may actively reach out and share love with one another.

We love You and need you today and every day.

Amen.

MARCH

The following reading is from 365promise.com, written by Barry Adams:

"Though the mountains vanish, my unending love will never leave you.

"I like how the New International Version Bible translates Isaiah 54:10.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (NIV)

"Nothing will ever shake the unending, eternal love God has for you. The mountains will vanish away, and the hills will be removed before His heart for you changes. No matter what you are going through in your life, His love for you is constant. And that is because God can only love at one intensity, and that is with ALL His heart!

"There may be upturns and downturns in the economy. But no matter what happens in your life, the unending love of God will never leave you. My prayer today is that the relentless, endless, intense love of your heavenly Father will sweep over your heart so that you can echo the words that the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:38-39 (NIV).

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Prayer:

Dear God, Creator of all. We thank you for all the blessings bestowed upon us. Uncertainty these days brings fear and anxiety into our lives. Lord, we need You! Please fill us with the knowledge of Your will. Help us to live as You want and do what pleases You. We ask for Your grace and unfailing love. Amen.

APRIL

Spring is one of my favorite seasons. Everything that appeared to be dead or sleeping comes alive again! The birds sing praise, butterflies and bees are busy gliding through the air, and ground animals scamper. To see the trees sprout green leaves again and the colorful flowers bloom — oh, how wonderful it is to watch God's handiwork.

In the Bible, spring symbolizes a time of renewal and new beginnings. It's time to renew our faith in God, read his Word, and rejoice. "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom." — Isaiah 35: 1 (NIV) Like the crocus.

Spring is a time for growth, meaning God wants us to prosper, reflect on where we are, and where we are going. Are we growing in our spiritual lives? "That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers." — Psalm 1:3 (NIV)

As we see the ground and plants come to life and flourish, it is a reminder that God can and will restore us. Hosea 6: 3 (NIV) says, "Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV) says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Prayer: God of all creation, we thank You for the beauty and truth of everything You created. Guide us as we travel this earthly journey and do Your will to bring all our brothers and sisters closer to You. Amen.



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



INDIANA SIGN PROJECT EASY WAY TO SPREAD ALA MESSAGE

A little thinking outside the box helped one American Legion Auxiliary unit educate their community about the importance of our organization.

Unit 18 in Bloomington, Ind., wanted to apply for a Mission in Action grant through the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

“We were trying to think of

different ways we could still brand ourselves, get the word out that we support veterans, and even appeal for membership,” said unit member Jenny Tracy.

That’s when she had the idea of doing something very simple — a yard sign. The unit purchased 40 signs to start.

Those with signs were tasked to find somewhere around town to place the signs and either take a selfie with the sign or just the sign itself and share on social media.

“It’s making a visible effort people can see and continues the mission of supporting veterans and what we are doing,” she said. “And it just reminds the everyday American that veterans exist in our community.”

The signs can also be used to encourage membership growth.

The project has been rewarding

for members of the unit.

“We are making a concentrated effort to brand ourselves, and people are getting excited about something new,” Tracy said.

Want to create your own branded sign project?

Follow these steps:

- ✓ Fill out the ALA emblem approval form at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- ✓ Once your emblem request is approved, connect with a sign company.
- ✓ Create a design yourself, or have a company help design what you are trying to convey.
- ✓ Get a quote. Make sure you have enough money to do the project.
- ✓ Order the signs.
- ✓ Put the signs out in your community and share photos on social media.

ALA FOUNDATION GRANT HELPS DISTRICT WITH VISIBILITY IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Advertising who we are, what we do, and why we matter can be made easier with a Mission in Action grant from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

ALA Kansas District 5 understands the importance of branding and applied for and subsequently was awarded one of these grants. The monies were used to purchase a pop-up tent, two table covers, a double-sided banner, and four sets of car magnets.

The district had its first event using the ALA branded items at the Wichita Flea Market.

“We got a comment from one of the members who didn’t know where we would be located and when she came in, she knew where we were

because [the booth] stood out,” said Tracy Kinnick, District 5 president.

The goal of having these branded items was to make sure units within the district knew they were available to them for use.

“We definitely want to grow and expand, and I feel like to do that, we need to brand ourselves out in public and tell people who we are and what we do, and tell them about our motto of *Service Not Self*,” Kinnick said. “[The items] look so nice, and the emblems on the items are so big. I feel like when we start using these items more, people will start recognizing the emblem more.”

Ultimately, it was a worthwhile project.



BETTER BRANDED: ALA Kansas District 5 members use branded items at a public event to help spread the word about the Auxiliary.

“I think one thing that was rewarding was the excitement among our district having these branded items,” Kinnick said.

Kinnick offers simple advice to other units, districts, or departments that may be thinking of applying for an ALA Foundation Mission in Action grant.

“The best advice is don’t hesitate — do it,” she said. “It opens up possibilities.”

To learn more about an American Legion Auxiliary Mission in Action grant, or to apply for one, visit www.ALAFoundation.org/grants.

A LOVE FOR JOURNALISM SPARKED BY ALA GIRLS STATE

Grace Carman remembers summer 2019 fondly. It was her last “normal” summer before the COVID-19 pandemic. But that’s not the only reason that summer will be an everlasting memory. She attended ALA Buckeye Girls State and credits the program for helping her discover her career path.

While learning about government, Carman took advantage of an opportunity to experience covering politics as a journalist. Her fellow citizens elected her as their city’s reporter. She photographed events, wrote articles, and interviewed fellow citizens and state lawmakers. Because of this experience, she decided to pursue degrees in public relations and advertising at Ball State University.

Did attending ALA Girls State help your college career?

Attending ALA Buckeye Girls State drastically helped my college career. I even applied to Ball State University using articles I had written for the Withrow City newspaper at ALA Girls State.

Before attending ALA Girls State, I was uncertain about my career path or if I would be able to make a difference in our government without being a politician. My time in the program

assured me that I could make a difference while still being a dedicated professional outside of politics. My time as city reporter instilled a passion for journalism and brand representation that was unmatched — leading me to choose my two majors in advertising and public relations, both of which I am beyond passionate about.

Do you think this experience will help you in your future career?

I know for a fact that this experience will help me in my future career. It goes way beyond simple résumé building. My experience at ALA Girls State truly prepared me in all aspects of what it means to be a professional. ALA Girls State has prepared me for a future career that is well-rounded and thoughtful, and already I have made many connections through networking with potential employers who also attended ALA Girls State. They recognize the beneficial impact the program has on young women in the professional world.

What is your favorite memory from your experience?

Giving my speech when I ran for city reporter. Knowing not a single girl in my city, I was scared and excited to give my speech and convince them to elect me to represent them in our city’s media. The encouragement that these complete strangers gave me was



enough to truly push me to give an amazing speech and enjoy the process of running for the position. Without their support, I would have missed so many opportunities and experiences that made me who I am today.



Did you know?

ALA Girls Nation will host its 75th session in July. We want to hear from alumnae of all ages! Tell us your ALA Girls Nation story, how it impacted your life, and what you are doing today. Email us at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

It’s time to apply for ALA Girls State!

Do you know a high school junior who would be a great candidate for an ALA Girls State program? Encourage her to apply! Attending ALA Girls State can lead to scholarship opportunities, it looks impressive on a college application, and it gives attendees the chance to meet other students from their state. For more information, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org or contact your local American Legion Auxiliary unit.





SMALL-TOWN RESIDENT WITH BIG GOALS RECEIVES CHILDREN OF WARRIORS NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP

Skylar is currently a freshman at the University of Arkansas at Monticello studying animal science, as well as having the honor of being an ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship recipient. While she might be a small-town resident from Arkansas, the 18-year-old has big goals and has made an amazing impact on veterans, military, and their families in her part of the country. With a strong desire to help others, she takes every opportunity she can to volunteer in her community, and she has received no shortage of these opportunities through the American Legion Auxiliary.

She was first exposed to the ALA through her father (a U.S. Army veteran), grandmother, mother, and stepmother. She agreed to give Auxiliary membership a try, and found that she really liked it and all of the chances to serve that it brought her. Even though Skylar comes from a small town and knows everyone there, she acknowledges that when engaging in a service project, it brings everyone closer together, no matter how close they already are.

"I like doing the community service part of it. I enjoy helping others because it makes me happier to help somebody else — just to see the looks on their faces," she said.

Not only does Skylar enjoy

helping people, but she enjoys working with animals as well. This led to her making the decision to attend veterinary school after college. She has owned many pets throughout her life and has a special love for animals. To her, becoming a veterinarian is just another opportunity to help others. She knows that by helping animals in need, she will also be helping the owners who care for them.

Having her eyes on veterinary

school made the ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship mean all the more to her in a financial sense. The scholarship has a huge impact on those who are trying to attend college, especially if they don't already have the funds needed to pay for it. However, it also meant a great deal because it seemed like all of her hard work and community service had paid off. Her school took the opportunity to announce to the entire student body that she had received the ALA scholarship. At that moment, Skylar's jaw hit the floor in elated shock.

"I was very surprised and very thrilled," she said. "It was a confidence boost. When you put in hard work, you will receive something in return for it."

Skylar truly embodies the ideal of *Service Not Self*, and the ALA is proud to assist her in her collegiate journey, as a thank-you for all of her hard work and volunteer service toward veterans, military, and their families.

The Cost of a Graduate Degree

Did you know that many ALA scholarship recipients go on to pursue graduate degrees?

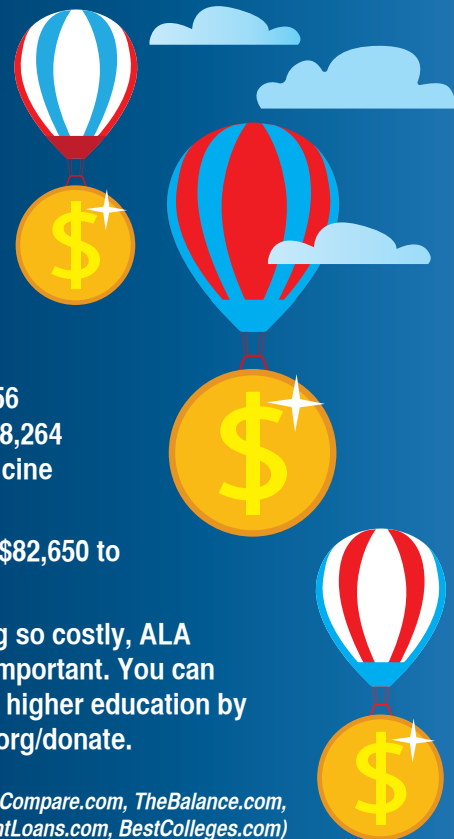
First-year averages:

- Public medical school = \$37,556
- Public in-state law school = \$28,264
- Public in-state veterinary medicine school = \$12,526

Additionally, an MBA ranges from \$82,650 to \$97,010 for the entire program.

With these graduate degrees being so costly, ALA scholarships become even more important. You can help children of veterans pursue a higher education by donating at www.ALAforVeterans.org/donate.

(Sources: CollegeTuitionCompare.com, TheBalance.com, CollegeAveStudentLoans.com, BestColleges.com)



Ashley Rosales is a U.S. Army veteran, married to a current servicemember...and happens to have 682,000 followers on Instagram. She is a content creator, with makeup videos and other lifestyle material.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I am 34 years old and from Cincinnati, Ohio. I currently live in El Paso, Texas, where my husband is stationed at Fort Bliss. I was in the Army as a mechanic for over three years before being medically discharged due to an injury to my foot. I've been married for almost nine years and have two beautiful children. I'm a beauty influencer and have been for six years.

How would you describe the content you share on Instagram?

I share mainly beauty content. My goal is to inspire others to not be afraid to try something new and to know that everyone is unique.

You have over 680,000 followers on Instagram. How did you get this far in terms of your huge following?

I've been an influencer for over six years now. I started posting makeup videos back in 2015 and was consistent in bringing lots of content and not just a lot, but the best content I could create.

You are also an Army veteran, and we thank you for your service! Is there anything you'd like to share about your time in the military?

Thank you. Being a veteran is one of the most honorable things I could be. The Army changed me for the better. I learned so much about self-discipline, what it was like to really be on the same team as everyone around you, and knowing the person standing next to you is your brother/sister for life. I was a 91B (wheeled vehicle mechanic) and wasn't afraid to get down and dirty turning wrenches. However, I was always into makeup. It was and still is a way for me to express myself. I've always been "girly," but being

a mechanic in the military was something I really enjoyed doing. I planned on making the Army a career, doing the full 20 years. So, when I was injured, then medically discharged, it was very hard for me to accept. I loved the military; it was my duty. It almost felt like my calling at that time in my life. It shaped me and made me the woman I am today.

What is it like being a military spouse and mom?

Honestly, it's a lot. Working full time, being a mom, and a military spouse, I definitely have my plate full. But I wouldn't have it any other way. My husband re-enlisted twice and is now a staff sergeant. So, he does have his plate full too, but we make a great team! We both served together when we were stationed in Fort Riley, which is how we met. So, I think having served alongside my husband, I feel like I have more of an understanding of the sacrifices we make. It doesn't make it any easier, but I do understand it more.

Was there anything you learned during your time in the service to apply to your much-different-from-the-military career today?

Where do I even begin? I feel like the military shaped me into the strong woman I am. It taught me so much — so many things I didn't even know I was capable of. Mentally, physically, everything. I grew up so fast once I joined, and I learned what it meant to work as a team with my battle buddies next to me. I learned discipline, how to shoot a rifle, how to push my body physically so far I didn't even know I could. It was the greatest three years of my life and I wish every day I would go back and relive those few years. It was the most honorable thing I've ever done. I'm sure you



can see how passionate I am about it!

We have many military spouses who are members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Being a military spouse can be more difficult on a career with moving multiple times and deployments. You have grown quite a successful career on your own! Any tips you can share?

Thank you! Yes, absolutely and I know how difficult moving your entire life can be. My advice is to do what you love. And if you love it enough, don't give up.

What advice do you have for military spouses who are just starting out?

Talk to your soldier. Listen to them and be as understanding as you can. It's not an easy life for any military family. Make friends with other military spouses. It's nice to have someone to talk to who's going through the same thing you are.



The third season of the podcast kicked off in early January with a special series dedicated to veteran suicide prevention and awareness.

January brought to a close the hosting duties of Mark Seavey as he turned his attention full-time to his national judge advocate responsibilities. The podcast team is looking for guest hosts. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else to be a guest host, please visit the Tango Alpha Lima website and fill out the form. An editor will review submissions and follow up with potential next steps.

All of the Tango Alpha Lima podcasts are available by going

HOSTS ON PARADE: Tango Alpha Lima podcast hosts join the Department of New York and Department of New Jersey at the 2021 Veterans Day parade along Fifth Avenue in New York (photos: Holly K. Soria/The American Legion).

TANGO ALPHA LIMA CELEBRATES 100TH PODCAST, INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM AWARD

The American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast recently published its 100th episode, five days after receiving an award for innovation in media.

Tango Alpha Lima won the Innovative Communication Program Award from the Indiana Society of Association Executives in December. The award recognizes “any improved or innovative tactic your association has used to communicate to its membership.”

Specifically, Tango Alpha Lima was awarded for the ambitious 20-20-20 series, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Sept.

11 attacks. The series featured 20 guests, sharing their inspiring, memorable, and often unique stories related to 9/11.

In the 100th episode, the co-hosts discuss memorable moments and guests from the first 99 shows:

- Some of the guests from the special 9/11 series.
- An unscripted moment that was as “shocking” as it was “painful.”
- A surprise walkout by co-host Ashley Gorbulja-Maldonado.
- A special two-part series in summer 2020 amid U.S. civil unrest.



to Legion.org/TangoAlphaLima. You can also download them on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, or other major podcast-hosting sites. The video versions are published on the Legion’s YouTube channel.

TIME TO APPLY FOR ANNUAL TALMA CONTEST

Are you a member of The American Legion Media Alliance (TALMA)? If so, TALMA is now accepting entries for their annual contest. Submissions are due by April 15.

If you aren’t a member, you

are invited to join. TALMA is an important resource for all Auxiliary members involved in public relations and/or communications at the post, district, or department level.

TALMA members receive monthly virtual training, media credentials, primary access to

resources from national, a private Facebook group, free entry into the annual contest, and more. Membership is only \$15 per year.

Whether you are joining for the first time or renewing, the application page is the same. Visit www.legion.org/talma/join to sign up.



The Washington Conference will be virtual again this year. Legion Family members are encouraged to make appointments with their legislators in their home offices. Follow www.Legion.org for updates.

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR LEGION POSTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

American Legion posts across the country were affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, The American Legion is offering grants to help with the financial strain.

Posts can apply for a Mission Blue Post Assistance grant. The program provides \$1,000 grants to help posts pay current or past due rent, mortgage, utilities, and insurance.

To apply, the post must be in good standing with their respective department. Find out if your post is eligible and apply at www.Legion.org. Applications are due by July 1.

The funds are provided through The American Legion National Emergency Fund (NEF).



Now Available: ALA Poppy and Halloween Coloring Books

Purchase at emblem.legion.org
or by calling (888) 453-4466, or download
free at www.ALForVeterans.org/coloring-books



Can You Help Us Help Our Members?

As a member or supporter of the American Legion Auxiliary, are you a business owner? Are you employed by a company looking for new customers and wanting to make a difference in the lives of our veterans, military, and their families?

ALA event sponsorship benefits:

- Company mention on ALA website, event brochures, and ALA social media sites
- Podium time at events
- Networking opportunities at events
- Company logo advertised at events
- Handouts and company giveaways for event attendees

For more information about sponsoring an ALA event or program, please visit www.ALForVeterans.org/sponsorship-opportunities or email development@ALForVeterans.org.



www.ALForVeterans.org

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CARD PROJECT HELPS DEPLOYED SERVICEMEMBERS

In 2005, Michigan ALA Unit 106 member and veteran Charly Lindquist-Mathews started Cards for Soldiers to support her husband while he was deployed. During that time, she had surgery, so while she was recovering, she began making cards to send overseas. She also put together care packages.

“We just continued, and whenever the military units went over there, we supported them,” she said. “It kind of snowballed from there over the years.”

Most of the handmade cards sent are for members of the military to send back to their loved ones for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, etc. Those involved in the project also make and sign cards for the troops themselves such as thank-yous, holidays, and encouragement.

There are over 8,000 card makers across the U.S. and in a handful of other countries, such

as Guam, Panama, Great Britain, and Germany, who are involved, including other ALA units. It is a continuous project throughout the year. Cards are typically sent

Advantages of This Project

- 1) Although not direct interaction with troops, it's still very impactful.
- 2) It could be a volunteer activity for elderly who want to help but can't get out easily, younger members, or members who want to volunteer but don't have the time to go to meetings.
- 3) It can be an American Legion Family project.

ahead of the holiday to make sure they reach troops with enough time for them to mail back to their loved ones. For example, cards for Valentine's Day and Independence

Day are usually mailed in November.

It has taken Lindquist-Mathews about four years to build a database, working with USOs, the Red Cross, and other organizations to send boxes of cards to various locations worldwide.

It's important for Lindquist-Mathews and her unit to be involved in a project like this, she said.

“They see all the rewards of what we are doing, and we get a lot of thank-you cards back,” she said. “Every time I get a thank-you card back, I put it on Facebook so everyone can see.”

Although hugely successful, the project hasn't been without difficulties.

“Getting enough postage to keep sending the cards [is difficult],” Lindquist-Mathews said. “It's all donations.”

One way to help cover the cost of postage has been through people who include Cards for Soldiers in their will.

“Someone had left \$2,500 in their mutual fund for postage,” she recalled.

It costs \$200 to \$1,000 to ship boxes each time. It takes about two to five days to get all the boxes ready for each delivery.

The American Legion Family gets involved through providing the group space to work in the Legion post, as well as postage money. Additionally, Junior members and other volunteers from the community are involved in the project.

Basic Criteria for Handmade Cards

- * No glitter for overseas cards
- * Cards should not be too bulky
- * Cards need to have their own envelope. Any size up to 5x7 inches
- * Leave cards blank on the inside (don't sign these; sentiments appropriate to the subject of the card are OK)
- * Crafty additions are OK (buttons, rhinestones, etc.), but the card still needs to fit through a postage meter
- * Dark cards must be lined with white on the inside
- * General-occasion cards are always welcome, including birthday, miss you, thank you, etc.

- * Try to set your thinking to six months before a holiday

Signed Cards

- * Make sure your signed cards are left unsealed and in the envelope. You can bundle them in quantities of 25.
- * Each bundle should be labeled with the signed cards you are sending (i.e., Christmas, thank you, get well, Veterans Day).

For more details on card requirements, packing your boxes, and where to send cards, visit www.Facebook.com/greetingcardsforsoldiers and check out the pinned post for detailed instructions.

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



In between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine, you can follow the latest news from American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters digitally. Follow the ALA blog, social media, *ALA eNews*, and website. Here's a look at what's coming soon:



NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL: APRIL

- Learn more about the veterans participating and the Festival



ALA ACADEMY LIVE: FREE LEARNING FOR MEMBERS

- Be among the first to learn about new webinars and registration. Details on page 21.



MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD: APRIL

- Learn how you can show your support for military children
- Purple Up! Day is April 15 — wear purple to show your support for military children



NATIONAL POPPY DAY®: FRIDAY BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY

- Leading up to National Poppy Day (May 27 this year), we will share exciting information on how you can make your National Poppy Day activities successful
- Be sure to follow our blog and social media for content you can share

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ON FILE?

Contact us at membership@ALAforVeterans.org

Why should you have an email on file?

- Get *eNews* delivered to your inbox
- Find about survey opportunities, special events, and more

HOW TO FIND US ONLINE

- ALA website: www.ALAforVeterans.org
- ALA blog: www.ALAforVeterans.org/blog
- Social media: @ALAforVeterans

WWW.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG

- Pay dues online
- Learn more about ALA programs
- Access the blog and past issues of *Auxiliary* magazine
- Download guides, marketing materials, and more
- Watch recorded versions of ALA Academy Live and take self-paced ALA Academy courses
- And much more

Auxiliary Word Search answers from page 21:

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

STAY WARM!

Polar Fleece Top (307.505X) **V-neck Cardigan Sweater** (307.510X) **Zip-up Hoodie** (307.508X)

* Proceeds support American Legion Family programs

American Legion Emblem Sales
 1-888-453-4466
 Emblem.Legion.org

AUX MG 0222

**“What I like to do is try to make a difference
with the work I do.”**

— David Bowie, singer-songwriter



You see American Legion Auxiliary honor guards and color guards at the beginning of sports games, carrying the colors (flags) to represent the service of our Armed Forces, and more solemnly, when a veteran is laid to rest. While these ceremonies are typically conducted by veterans, some of our Auxiliary members proudly answer the call of duty too. Are you part of an ALA honor/color guard? Tell us about it at ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org.

Above: Members of ALA Jackie Robinson Unit 252 Color Guard at US Vets in Inglewood, Calif., on Veterans Day last year (from left): Renee Alexander, Anita Biggs, Sharon Moore, Cheryl Jefferson, Shirley Jones, and Donna Grayson. Not pictured: Jawana McFadden.



The Truth about Planned Giving



It's not as difficult as you think!

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

MYTH: It's only for the wealthy.

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

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

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

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

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

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



American Legion Auxiliary

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



**Haven't taken the member survey yet?
Please do so today – your feedback
about the ALA is important to us!
Check out the story on pages 28-29
for details.**