



Michael Maruszak
3rd District President

Madam Department President Billie, Line Officers and Chairpersons. I have enjoyed being able to serve with you as District President.

To all the Auxiliaries of the 3rd District it has been my honor to serve as your loyal President. To my Line Offices and Chairpersons who I cannot say 'Thank-you' enough for the outstanding jobs you did. I commend you for your dedication and service.

To Chris Garza, my District Commander for continued collegiality that exists between the VFW and the Auxiliary.

I attended the National Convention in July down in Orlando. What a wonderful time this was to see all the members from our Illinois delegation along with friends I've made from other states. I am thankful.

Attending the Council meetings where I gain information and knowledge. Having only two of three meetings it was good to see many be members in attendance. To my Auxiliary Rhine Post #2729 and my President Diane for her continued support and guidance, I am grateful.

Attending President Billie's Downstate Luncheon in Bloomington was a wonderful time. Unfortunately, there was not an Upstate Luncheon due to the Covid-19 restrictions that we put in place. The Committee kept hoping it would end but did not. Billie you and your family are always welcome come to the 3rd District anytime and I will take you to lunch or dinner to make up for this lost wonderful event Honoring you as President.

I attended the National President's two-day Visit. It began with a visit to Danville VA Hospital (Illiana). The next day was split between the David Davis Mansion and McLean Count Museum of History. Then the National President Dinner what a wonderful time it was.

In February, attended the Mid-Winter Conference & CAFÉ in Honolulu. The weather was cooperative, and experience was one not to be forgotten. Side note it also was my dad 91st birthday and they sang Happy Birthday on the flight out. To experience the Love, Care and togetherness showed me what that makes the VFW Auxiliary such a wonderful organization to be part of.

To all Veterans and Auxiliary members, it has been my sincere honor and pleasure to serve as your 3rd District President. God Bless the United States of America, the Land We Love.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Maruszak
3RD District President



Diane Ahrens
5th District President

Department President Billie, Line Officers and Chairmen I am thankful for the opportunity to learn and to serve and it has been a full year, honestly this stay at home this spring has been a chance to rest and catch up...

5th District is so active, looking back I am in awe just trying to outline some of our activities, and it's only a few of the projects/events.

We began our 2019-20 year with our Veterans Baby Shower Alumni Picnic, June 23, and we were honored to have President Billie and Jerriann in attendance, it was raining all around us, however we had a wonderful day plenty of sunshine, and fun.

July 4th, we had the honor of assisting the MWR (Morale, Welfare & Recreation) Department at Great Lakes Naval Base. We helped with registration and taking surveys from attendees at the Annual 4th of July Celebration, Naval Base Great Lakes.

August 10th, I attended the C of A in Bloomington in addition to President Billie's Homecoming.

August 17th our District meeting was held at Lake Villa,

September 15th, Lake Villa Auxiliary hosted a Veterans Baby Shower, which President Billie and Jerriann were able to attend. They did a phenomenal job and our veterans were very blessed.

October 3rd, I attended the National President Peggy Haake's Visit.

October 29 I was able to assist Hines HUD/VASH in picking up furniture for a special stand down, Penske donated the use of the truck and I had the honor of driving and picking up furniture from our District for the event.

November 9 attended the C of A in Macomb along with sharing a presentation for the Hospital Conference.

Nov 16th District meeting at McHenry, President Billie and her Mom were our guest. Auxiliary 2298 Sr Vice Beth Eichinger and members shared about the Post & Auxiliary "Adopting a Unit".

December 1st we hosted Christmas Caroling at Hines VA, The Frozen Robbins have graciously caroled with us for several years, we hosted it very early this year to assist in their schedule, we really kicked off the season was thoroughly enjoyed by our Veterans and staff at Hines.

December 7 & 8 the District prepares for Operation Christmas Cheer at James Lovell FHCC, Lake Villa hosted the packing of the gift boxes then on Sunday we distribute and sing carols. PDP Diana Rudeen joins us in the celebration as our Christmas elf, several of our members dress as Santa & Mrs. Claus, the local ROTC unit comes and assists in distributing the gifts and singing.

January 11, we hosted our District VOD & Patriot Pen Banquet, every year we have an expected snowstorm. Anne & George Simons Coordinated this year's banquet, they learned a lot from Bill & Jan Oerly and did an excellent job.

January 19th. we hosted our Annual Veterans Baby Shower, the Brix, a local banquet facility donated their space for us this year, so we had double the space and our veterans were so thankful!!!

February 14, I attended the Women Veterans Heart Health expo at Lovell FHCC and provided raffles for attendees, I appreciate Irma Sharp's invitation to be part of the event.

February 15, our District meeting held at Antioch, we hosted our annual Memorial service.

In March I was able to fulfill 2 distributions at Hines VA as the Deputy VAVS rep, who knew everything would come to a halt in our lives. I am excited to see that our Hospital funds for Lovell have increased from under \$800 as of April 2019 to over \$3,000 the end of this year.

I am very honored to serve as 5th District President, there are so many things happening that I am so proud of our Auxiliaries, they are hosting dinners for our veterans, providing house warming items for the HUD/VASH at Lovell FHCC and at Hines VA. They are playing bingo at these facilities, in addition to serving veterans at the Elgin Mental Health Center. They are serving our Active Duty troops with care packages and bringing awareness to our communities about ways they can assist. Our communities want to serve they are always so supportive in our efforts!

We had some sad moments, loosing Auxiliary 5915 Carpentersville was rough, their members are resilient and have contributed to so many of the VFW and Auxiliary Programs. They did not cease in serving but have reached out and become part of other Auxiliaries in the District.

A couple of Auxiliaries have hit hurdles and I am glad to say we have been able to install officers and looking forward to the 2020-21 Year and Pray we will thrive and gain wisdom to serve our Veterans even more.

"Semper Fi... We Continue when we want to Quit & Help others along the Way"

Loyally,

Diane Ahrens

5th District President



Diana Rudeen
6th District President

This year started off with getting out all of the information to each Auxiliary at our very first District meeting in July so we could all do the works of this great Organization with assisting our Veterans, their families and communities. In September I held a special School of Instruction at Rockford Post 5149 for two hours before our regular business meeting, Our Department Secretary/Treasurer Linda Lorenz came and did a special Malta Training along with sharing how to complete Audits, and what are the duties of Secretaries, Treasures and Trustees. As District President I held one for Officers, Chairman, and general membership, Throughout the meeting I gave out prizes for answering questions on by-laws and more. It was a great turn out and many new officers joined us for a fabulous day. The neat part was seeing new Officers and Chairman on hand to learn and ask valuable questions to make their year go smoother.

I mentored an Auxiliary this year to help aide them in their duties and to promote harmony in their meetings. As I sit back and reflect, I still firmly believe that mentoring is the key to a successful term of office and it helps members feel more confident in their duties. Members will want to keep coming back and stepping up to take positions if they are made to feel welcome and understand their duties as an Officer and or a Chairman. We are here for our Veterans and not our own personal agendas.

Highlights of my year included attend Gold Star Mother's Day in Loves Park at the Peace Park with our very own special mother Angie White. Another memory that stands out is having our Joint Memorial service at our last District meeting in Rochelle with the VFW in March. As the District Commander and I lit the candle bagpipes played and she also played throughout our service. It was so moving with honoring those that have gone before us that were out mentors, leaders and special friends and family. Thank-you Colonel Draeger for making this possible along with providing fresh flowers and a beautiful wreath made of the same. The Poppy Displays were outstanding this year and the love put into each one of them shined throughout the aisles of displays.

I attended many dinners and special events and want to thank all the Posts and Auxiliaries for inviting me to each and everyone one of them. There are too many to mention yet I will cherish the memories made at each event.

I want to thank my 6th District for their love and support along with my 6th District Commander and the 6th District VFW. To my own Auxiliary 342 of Rockford, you rock and I thank you for adapting to my schedule so we could have our meetings and I could be in attendance.

To Billie our Department VFW Auxiliary President, I thank you for your guidance and support on issues that arose during the year. To the Department Line Officers and Chairman you all are special and loving people that are dedicated to serving Veterans, families, and communities. Thank-you for all of your hard work and commitment this

past year and the years ahead. To our incoming Department President Linda, I pledge to you my love and support for the ensuing year. I am here for you and your TEAM of dedicated Officers and Chairman.

If I learned one thing this year, the Virus outbreak changed the way we live our lives, and many things had to be adjusted due to this. We now have Zoom meetings and are actually talking more to each other through all different types of technology and yes, we did it and have adapted to this change. I am truly Blessed to continue working full-time at my place of employment serving an incredibly special and unique population in person and over the phone by Web-Ex. I pray that it ends soon, and we get back to our everyday lives without masks and being allowed to hug our Veterans, families, and friends that we have been isolated from. Life will never be the same; it will be better because of our strength and perseverance to weather any storm.

God Bless the United States of America and God Bless every one of you.

Loyally,

Diana M. Rudeen

The Scenic 6th District President



Vicky Roach
7th District President

Started July with a trip to the National Convention in Orlando, Florida. Thank you, Diane Hawk we sure have some fun adventures together. What time does our flight leave? I wonder if those two eligible gentlemen ever got signed up in Nevada.

August C of A we were busy making sure Billie and Brad had a great homecoming. All the work was worth it.

Thank you to Jerriann Byrd and Diane Hawk with their help getting the Rantoul Auxiliary off to a good start this year.

September was the Midstate Luncheon. We made the trip to the National Home for Children Illinois Day with some of my post and auxiliary members. That was very exciting.

October was the National Presidents visit Peggie Haake was a lot of fun. I attended the Big 10 conference in Omaha, Nebraska, Thank you Diane Hawk. October was also the time I chose for my school of instruction held in Rantoul, a couple of new auxiliary members were able to attend, but the weather was terrible.

December, I attended Illinois Veterans Home in Manteno's 7th District's Christmas Party. Again, I thank Diane Hawk my driver.

I have attended all the C of A's and I was honored to be able to give awards to a couple of the students at the Voice of Democracy Dinner in February.

Thank you,
7th District Auxiliaries
Billie and Linda for your wonderful leadership and help.
And to the Department line officers and the other District Presidents

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicky Roach
7th District President



Janet Kays

10th District President

July/August 2019: The year started out in a normal manner with an interesting and informative National Convention in Orlando. After returning home from convention I began my inspections of the Auxiliaries in the District. I was proud of every auxiliary for their interest in creating projects that would help our veterans and promote interest in the community about our

objectives as an organization. Inspections went well.

September/November: The auxiliaries continued to work for our veterans and they and I worked at getting everything reported on the x sheets.

December/February 2019: Two of my favorite events of the year occurred in this time period; our District and Department held their VOD/Patriots Pen events. I am always so proud of my organization for promoting this incredible scholarship program that allows so many students across the nation to express their ideas about patriotism. Our District winner from Lincoln was an excellent example of a good speech writer and presenter, and placed 6th at the Department level.

March/May 2020: The pandemic arrives in Illinois and life is no longer the same. The auxiliaries whose meetings fell after the middle of the month could not meet in person during March. Some meetings were skipped; some began meeting by Zoom. Our District convention was held on May 3, via Zoom. We were all happy to see each other and the meeting went quite well, but all agreed it was not quite the same as meeting in person. We are not only growing by being able to teleconference, we are realizing how important it is to have the person to person connection with each member. We missed being together for real!

June 2020: We are all looking forward to the day when we can again meet in person. Even though we did not accomplish everything that we set out to do this year, we did what we could.

Thank you to each and every member of The VFW Auxiliary, and especially to President Billie for her continuing support throughout the year. There are so many people in this organization that make it what it is; a group that is dedicated to helping veterans and military and to spreading patriotism throughout our country. I am so proud to be a member during the good times and bad. God Bless the VFW Auxiliary.

Loyally,

Janet Kays

10th District President

**PHOTO
UNAVAILABLE**

Valerie Turnbow
11th District President

To Department President Billie, the Line Officers and Chairmen, thanks for doing a great job.

To my District Secretary/Treasurer Mellisa Taylor and Marilyn Ashinhurst for having everything organized for meetings. I would also like to Thank my Senior Vice Debbie Robison for being my travel companion and for helping me mentor some of the Auxiliary Posts.

To My District Commander Scott Swinford, thank you for keeping the Auxiliary informed and it was a pleasure working with you.

In July I attended the National Convention in Orlando, was happy to meet so many Illinois delegations and friends from other states. It was a great learning experience for me.

I attended all of the Council Meetings and District Meetings. Also, with my Auxiliary, we went to Danville and gave out shoeboxes with personal items.

Billie's Downstate Luncheon was held in Anna. I was privileged to make decorations for the tables.

I attended the National Presidents Visit. Had a wonderful time.

To our Veterans and Auxiliary members, it has been a pleasure to be your #11 District President.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Turnbow
11th District President



Laura Knackstedt
12th District President

I have enjoyed serving our District as President for the past five years. It is time for me to step down and a new President to take up this position. I have thoroughly enjoyed visiting all the Auxiliaries in our District and meeting many new people. I have learned a lot about our rituals and bylaws and appreciate all the guidance I have received. I truly will miss visiting with my brothers and sisters as I have done in the past. The hard work and compassion they put forth for our Veterans is amazing. As I would visit each Auxiliary, I would learn of a new project or an old project that was given new life due to new members bringing in their ideas. I am pleased to see that we didn't stay with "it's always been done that way". New ideas and adjustments to past accomplishments is what will keep our organization growing.

There have been many ups and downs but through it all one thing stays constant. We do whatever it takes to support and give aid to the ones that gave of themselves to give us the freedoms we have today.

Everyone knows me as the crybaby who has difficulty making it through a meeting without at least one tear. Just so you all know as I am writing this final piece to the members of my District, there are tears flowing. Tears of joy and sadness. Joy that I have had the privilege to serve as your President and sadness that I will probably not see you all as often as I would like. It is time for me to have break, but I will always be there if you have a question or need assistance with anything. Don't be surprised to see me pop in for a visit. You all know I won't be able to stay away.

Loyally,

Laura Knackstedt
12th District President



Laurie Lesperance
14TH District President

I am very proud of the auxiliaries of the 14th, they do great work.

With having the large District, life can get crazy. I always enjoyed attending the auxiliary meetings, seeing everyone and hearing of the donations and support for our veterans. That is the rewarding part of this position.

The year didn't quite end the way we planned. We were unable to host our Freedom Festival and give out the Color and Poster awards.

We were able to have our District Memorial Service in March. A very solemn last tribute to our members. I am grateful that could be held.

With the aid of new technology, our District convention, election, and installation of officers was held.

I have learned a lot from very supportive members. Thank you all again for making me feel welcome

Loyally,

Laurie Lesperance
District 14



Lynn Smith
15th District President

To Department President Billie, the Line Officers and Chairmen, it has been my pleasure to serve with you.

To my 15th District, it has been an honor to serve as your District President for the last five years. To my District Officers and Chairmen, thanks for doing a great job. To my District Secretary/Treasurer Jo Lynn for having everything organized and traveling with me.

To my District Commander Gary Fravel, thanks for being easy to work with and keeping the Auxiliary informed.

In July I attended the National Convention in Orlando and was happy to see the Illinois delegation and friends from other states.

In October I attended the Big Ten Conference in Omaha and had a great time doing the membership skit.

I attended all the Council meetings and my District meetings. Also, with my Auxiliary, went to Anna Veterans Home to play bingo with our Veterans.

Billie's Downstate Luncheon was held in Anna. After the luncheon we took Billie and Jerriann along with Marvie and Rhonda to Metropolis to see Superman. It was a rainy day but as we arrived in Metropolis it had stopped, and we were able to take pictures.

I attended the National President's Visit, had a chance to visit Danville VA Hospital and the David Davis Mansion.

To our Veterans and Auxiliary members, it has been my pleasure to be your 15th District President.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynn Smith

15th District President



Danielle Krull
16th District President

As I look back on this past year as District 16 President in my second term, I am happy and proud of all the additional work I was able to accomplish having been in this role the year before.

My 2019-2020 year was so fulfilling, meeting some new Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters all over the state and creating so many new friendships. Our district was all about building stronger foundations and despite the way the year has ended, I could not have asked for better team of Auxiliary members to help me with all our goals. We played many games of BINGO at Manteno, read many VOD and Patriots Pen entries, awarded our youth with money for scholarships and school, and we learned about flexibility and adapting in the face of an epidemic to continue to serve our Veterans.

My favorite day every year is having the opportunity to visit the VFW National Home for Children, I am constantly blown away with the operation of the program and the beautiful community they have created with the assistance of our support. Being able to share this with my own children is always incredible experience and who can pass up free ice cream... 😊 I am honored to be one of the first visitors to the NEW VFW National Home Museum this year and to see the homes that our state sponsors to create a safe environment for two families.

My family and I attended Wreaths Across America in December. This is always my favorite event around Christmas, to Remember and Honor our Veterans and their spouses who have gone before us, I was blessed to be a part of laying approximately 25,000 wreaths at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

February is always an uplifting month in Springfield honoring the brilliant patriotic youth in our state. To be involved in this event year after year is gratifying, witnessing these youth grow within our communities as ambassadors of patriotism is something we should all be proud to support. At this Council of Administration, I was able to share my story, one that was particularly important for all of us to hear, to give us a new perspective on the people we help and support. Not just our Veterans, but their families are just as significant. Thank you, Paula, for encouraging me and supporting me through this hard testimony to share.

I just wish then we knew this would be the last time for this year we would all have been together as I would have taken more time to enjoy every single person a little more.

Thank you to District 16, without all of your help and guidance this year we wouldn't have been so successful helping our youth and veterans. Thank you, to Department President Billie I was honored to have been on your council your leadership throughout the year was treasured. Thank you to ALL of you who have answered a question, late night email, text, etc.; this was a tremendous help (ahem, Ruth and Donna 😊). To my

travel buddy Cathy, without you I would have had awfully long, boring car rides and no pictures, thank you for your incredible friendship! Lastly, my husband and my girls your patience and understand means the world to me and I am so lucky to have all of you.

Thank you.

Danielle Krull

16th District President



Norma Janney
17th District President

To Department President Billie, the Line Officers and Chairmen. Thank you for all you have helped me and 17th District with. Every year is a learning experience.

To my 17th District. You are great. Thank you for all you do for me, by listening and doing, for the District, volunteering for Program Chairman, and attending District meetings, for the Department by making your donations and reporting for the X sheet.

To Sean Conner, my District Commander, thank you for helping me and the Auxiliaries of the 17th District. Starting joint meeting, the Veterans trip to the Steak House and starting the Tuscola Auxiliary.

Special Thank you to Janet Snow for all your work on the organization of Tuscola Auxiliary.

I attended all Council meetings and District meetings. President Billie's downstate luncheon at Anna with my sisters, Jenny and Debbie for the last time.

To our Veterans and Auxiliary members, thank you for a job well done

Respectfully Submitted,

Norma Janney
17th District President



Barbara Howard
18th District President

To Department President Billie Guthals, my 18th District members and the entire membership of the state, I have enjoyed serving you as the 18th District President. I am looking forward to serving you in the 2020-2021 year.

In July I attended an auxiliary organizational meeting at the Frankfort VFW to help Patti McLeod explain the requirements to join the VFW Auxiliary. I was impressed with the 9 attendees.

In August I attended the C of A in Bloomington and later that evening attended the Homecoming for President Billie and Commander Brad. It was a fun time. August 14th, I attended a meeting in Downers Grove with Past Department President, Mercie Woolfolk and Chaplain Marvie Wisniewski to help the auxiliary get their books and elect officers. We accomplished a lot that night and saved an auxiliary. The 18th District Picnic was held at Stone City VFW and we had the honor of having our Department Billie and her mother in attendance. I know she had a great time answering the trivia questions from the DJ and winning several instant lottery tickets.

September I was invited to the New Lenox VFW Picnic and had a great time as always. I attended Illinois Day at the VFW National Home with Linda Lorenz. This is always fun.

November, I attended the Craft Show at the Lockport VFW put on by their Auxiliary.

December, I received an invite to the New Lenox VFW and Auxiliary Christmas Party where I got to see my mentor whom I hadn't seen in months due to her being in the nursing home for rehab.

February was the C of A meeting in the morning and the Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Banquet. I was so proud when the state winner was from Sandwich HS and is also from my District. The end of February was a disaster. On the 26th I fell and broke my arm and tore a muscle in my leg, so I was a stay at home before everyone else.

March became the new normal for all of us. We could not have the Upstate Luncheon to honor our Department President. We tried to reschedule but of course that did not happen.

It was, as always, a pleasure to serve my district as their president and will continue to serve our organization in any capacity as needed.

God bless our veterans

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Howard
18th District President



William Hollis
19th District President

As a new incoming District President this year it was a new and exciting challenge. Even though this year started off really well and it's coming to a crazy close with the COVID-19 Pandemic. I can proudly say that the loud, proud, noisy 19th was professionally represented this year in the Council of Administration for the Department of Illinois.

I had a great year working with the other District Presidents and the Department Officers. I attended the Mid and Down State Luncheon's and if the Upstate Luncheon would not have had to be canceled, I would have been there too. I oversaw getting the "Love Gift" for President Billie. I also, attended National President Peggy Haake's official visit to the Department of Illinois dinner. The 19th District was the only Auxiliary in the Department of Illinois that was 100% reported in all categories of the x sheet. We also, met our three membership goals and we are currently 97.95% and working to get the 32 members we need to be 100% by June 30, 2020.

This year was a great year within the 19th District because I worked closely with our District VFW Officers too. Our Family Freedom Fest was one of the best in several years and both the VFW and Auxiliary raised nice amount of money for our programs. We held a fundraiser at Portillo's back in October to also raise money. There was an increase in attendance at our District Meetings and we averaged about 35 attendees with 12 out of the 13 Auxiliaries represented. I hope to build on these successes for next year.

Loyally,

William Hollis
19th District President