

**VFW AUXILIARY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS**

**PRESIDENT LINDA'S NOTES**



**"AUXILIARY**  
**BEARING"**



"Making Life Bearable for Our Veterans"

Sisters and brothers welcome to the second edition of Auxiliary Bearings. During this unusual time of meeting restrictions due to the Corona Virus (COVID 19) pandemic, our Chairman are working hard to think of ways to promote our programs. Please take the time to read and share the contents of this newsletter at your District and Auxiliary meetings. A lot of thought and preparation goes into each article so that all members have current information regarding upcoming events and important deadlines that are approaching.

I want to encourage you to check your e-mails daily for information regarding invitations to log into planned zoom meetings that will involve trainings to help us grow as an organization.

I also want to thank everyone who attended the August Council of Administration rather it was in person or by ZOOM. Please let us know if you have not received your Raffle Tickets or Pins so we can get them to you. If you have received them, please send the money to either Linda Lorenz or Carol Shutts and specify where the money is coming from. If you need more to sell please let us know that as well, we will get them to you.

**SEPTEMBER EDITION**

**NEWSLETTER #2**

Our next Council of Administration will be held on Saturday October 24, 2020 in Lincoln IL which will also include the Hospital Conference on Saturday after the council meeting and my Homecoming celebration. Final details will be forthcoming so please continue to watch your e-mails.

Please continue to work our programs and report all activities that you are involved in that support our Veterans, their families and you communities.

Be Kind, Be Encouraging, Stay Safe,  
Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

“MAKING LIFE BEARABLE FOR OUR  
VETERANS”

**CHIEF OF STAFF/EXTENSION- DIANA  
RUDEEN**

I hope that all of you are staying safe and healthy. I know we are in a pandemic and many of you have quarantined to keep from contacting the virus. I want to thank everyone who took the time and got creative to hold their nominations, elections and installations. We have almost a dozen Auxiliaries that are working under suspensions in order to remain as an Auxiliary or sadly disband. I want to thank all the committee members that are diligently working to save these Auxiliaries and/or are helping transfer them to other existing Auxiliaries. Remember, we need all of our members and do not want to lose them. For those Auxiliaries that are taking in transfers, please welcome them with open arms and make them feel a part of the family. Ask them to help with functions and when it is safe have a welcome party, so they feel at home.

The brighter side is we have four possible new Auxiliaries in different regions of the State of Illinois. I am here to assist with instituting new Auxiliaries and will be available for any questions and help that you may require. I know we can accomplish this goal if we work as a team and share what we are all about which is taking care of our Veterans, their families and the communities. We need to bring smiles when we meet with new members and have the available forms and information on instituting new Auxiliaries on hand. Remember, a first impression can be a lasting impression.

District Presidents, when you are going on your visits to Auxiliaries be prepared to arrive early with a smile to greet the members and introduce yourself when they enter the meeting room as some may not know who you are. Have your by-laws, Roberts Rule of Order, Program Books from Department and National and any other information you receive that may be pertinent to share with the members. Please make sure you go over the assist visit form with the President before you both sign it and place the Auxiliary seal on it, Make sure you sign all Secretary and Treasurer's books, audits and the check book. Remember, we are not auditing the books we are just checking to make sure everything is signed and in order. We also need to ask all the questions on the form and see the bond and 990 form in person and not just check off the boxes because you are told yes that they have them completed. The Bond is due by the end of August and the 990 is due mid-November and both are required and detrimental to the Auxiliaries to stay in place and not be in

jeopardy of being placed on suspension or being disbanded.

August 31. (Sec. 814) This form can be found MALTA.

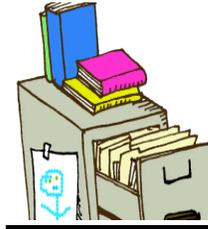
The success of this year will be made possible with getting to the core of the problems in Auxiliaries right away. Our main goal is to come up with viable solutions without the focus remaining on the problems. This can be accomplished with simply actively listening to the members and hearing where the real problems lie and then formulating a plan to resolve the problem. First and foremost, we need to compliment the members on what is going well and recognize any achievements they have attained; every member needs to feel that their involvement is necessary to the success of their Auxiliary. Please communicate what is going on with the Auxiliary and do not make promises or take sides at any time. Remember, the Department President makes the ruling on all By-Law calls.

### **Maintaining Current Auxiliaries**

The national organization requires only five (5) things of a VFW Auxiliary:

1. Auxiliaries should have at least ten (10) business meetings per year. (Sec. 210) Five (5) members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. (Sec 212)
2. Dues should be paid on at least ten (10) members on or before February 1 of the current year. (Sec. 207)
3. Quarterly audits by Trustees must be submitted. (Sec. 814)
4. Officers elected and installed and reported to National Headquarters no later than June 30. This generates the bond application via email. (Sec. 804A & 806A)
5. The offices of President and Treasurer MUST be bonded by

### **TREASURER – LINDA LORENZ**



When your Auxiliary submits a membership application here is a check list to ensure the application is complete and can be processed:

- Auxiliary Number and City the Auxiliary is located
- Type of Membership – Annual – Life – Rejoin
  - o If a rejoin, include prior membership number of known and Prior Auxiliary number
- Name, address, city, state and zip code are legible
- Date of Birth is required
- Male/Female checked – We cannot always determine by the name
- Phone number and email if available
- Post Affiliated: Relationship to the Veteran, Veteran's Name and the Veteran's VFW Membership ID
  - Non Affiliated: This is used when the Veteran is not a CURRENT member of the VFW Post to which the Auxiliary is affiliated
    - o Relationship to the Veterans
    - o Veteran's Name
    - o Name of the Campaign Ribbon(s) or Medal(s)
  - Review VFW Eligibility Guide in the Article I, Section 101 of the Bylaws

- o Date of Service
- o Location
- Signature of Investigating Committee
- o Committee should ensure that all information is on the application and the Individual qualifies for membership
- Per section 102 of the National Bylaws
- o Indicate if the applicant was accepted
- o Meeting Date
- o Obligation Date (if applicable)
- Applicant must sign the Obligation on the bottom of the application
- Include your Auxiliary Check for the Annual or Life Membership Fee payable to the Department of Illinois VFW Auxiliary

OR

- For Life Membership Only the new member can pay by Credit Card or ACH

**Linda Lorenz**  
**140 W Ann Street**  
**Somonauk, IL 60552**  
**P: 630-921-8851**  
**F: 708-235-1090**  
**E: [vfwauxiltreas@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxiltreas@gmail.com)**

- o Credit Card – complete all fields and show the correct Life Membership

Fee

- o ACH – A copy of the Voided Check must be attached and the correct Life Membership Fee shown

**SECRETARY – PATTI McLEOD**



We will highlight some duties of the Secretary in each newsletter let's talk about your Secretary's Book first!

The Secretary shall keep in books or files:

- o The current "Podium Edition Bylaws and Ritual"
- o A record of all the minutes of each meeting of the auxiliary
  - The manner in which the minutes of the Auxiliary meetings are read, printed and/or distributed shall be at the discretion of the Auxiliary by vote of the membership
  - It is permissible to secure typed or computer generated minutes in the permanent book
  - Or insert in a three ring binder or clip folder
  - Each minute page shall be numbered consecutively and provide a space for the Trustees to initial at audit.
  - The Treasurer's report and the audit reports must be incorporated in the minutes.
  - Corrections shall be made in the margins.

We will discuss some other duties in the upcoming newsletters.

*When contacting the secretary please use the [vfwauxilsec@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxilsec@gmail.com) address. I know some of you are using my personal email address and its getting confusing trying to handle both!*



## PRESIDENTS PINS – CAROL SHUTTS



"Making Life Bearable for Our Veterans"

We are off to a running start with the President's Pin **MAKING LIFE BEARABLE FOR VETERANS**. I handed out over 1100 pins at the C of A making us a little over half way there which includes pins already given out. I still need District 11 and 14 to report to me on how many they have received so I can get an exact count.

Remember to explain what these pins are for, President Linda's Special Project "Wheels for Veterans". We wear the pin so the veterans can ride.

Do you know of any veteran's in the nursing home? Wouldn't it be a great idea to give them one! Give one to your Commander. Let me know what your Auxiliary does with the pins, so we can help other Auxiliaries.

Make your checks out to "Dept. of Illinois Auxiliary" and earmark it President's Pin and mail it to Carol Shutts-7822 Warrior Hill Road, Virginia, IL 62691.

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in their money for the pins.

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR – DAN HANSEN

I want to extend HUGE congratulations to those who have reported early and for

continuing with promoting Our Programs through COVID-19 challenges. My appreciation to all you chairmen for carrying our works courageously.

December is quickly approaching. We are currently at 25% reported across the Program List. Like a BEAR I will be checking the X-Sheet and Donation List TWICE to find out who's been hibernating or not!!! My Cubs (the Department Chairmen) are working around the State making sure we are in the "Circle of Excellence." Hope everyone is working on being inducted into the "Circle of Excellence."

Here's how you make it to Pooh Bear's Nice List, not get a phone call, and be of Excellence:

- Your Auxiliary needs to be 100% reported on the X-Sheet and Donation List by DECEMBER 31, 2020
- Check the X-Sheet and Donation List TWICE!!! Make sure you have an X! If you reported and don't have the X call the Chairman and/or let them know
- DEADLINE is DECEMBER 31, 2020

So, you and all my Cubs may have a peaceful, Happy Holiday and Merry Christmas!

## VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT – JANET KAYS



Many words of advice have been given out to graduates at the end of a school year and the beginning of a new life for them. I think some of these statements can also apply to members of this organization as they try to maneuver through this year of constant challenges, changes and unknowns. I am going to borrow a few of these key words for our members to consider. Commitment-be 100% committed to whatever you decide to do. Responsibility-it is up to you to advocate and speak out for our veterans. Honor-be careful with your words and actions. Don't ever let there be a question about your morals and values.

Resilience-if something doesn't work, try again. Handle adversity with a new plan.

Passion-go into each day with enthusiasm. Love what you are doing for this organization and you will reap many rewards.

Here's what you need to work on. Chairman read your program-include the reporting sheet and the awards. This will help you understand what is expected of your auxiliary. Use your imagination and the ideas of your members. This will not be an easy year to execute major projects, but its okay to start small. Extra planning will be required to ensure that you are following safety guidelines of your area. But do not let that stop you from working for your veterans. Begin by focusing on three very important parts of this program.

1. First, educate yourself and your community about the daily tragedy of 20 Veterans committing suicide every day. Host a suicide awareness campaign in

Your area. September is Suicide Prevention Awareness month, so the time is right to plan a program. If you need to present your program to the public through media sources rather than a live program, you can make that work. Submit an article to your local or area newspaper, TV or radio stations, and utilize social media. Ask other service organizations to present submitted suicide awareness information to their members also. Don't forget to prepare and present a program for your auxiliary. Know the Five Signs wallet size cards can be requested by calling the VFW at 816-756-3390. Check out the VFW Wellness Campaign for resources.

2. Second, commit to raising money to combat food insecurity among our Nation's military. Make a donation to the VFW National headquarters earmarked for Unmet Needs-hunger. Support Stars, Stripes, and Support to help combat food insecurity in our military families. Contribute to troop support through MAPS (military assistance program): Adopt a Unit, Sports Clips Help a Hero Scholarships, care packages, 1 Student Veteran, and Unmet Needs are all part of MAPS.

3. Third, educate your community about veteran's needs and programs that offer assistance. Use all of the local media sources and encourage other organizations to work with the VFW Auxiliary. Operation Uplink (the service which provided free calls home for deployed military) is no longer a VFW program. The Website solutions program is replacing it, according to National Ambassador LaQuetta McCartor. I don't have much information yet, but will try to keep you informed on

any other updates. Set a good example for community members and other members of your auxiliary. The organization needs you to give it your best effort-as a leader, organizer, chairman, or laborer. All members are important and we need all of you to help “get it done” for our Veterans.



### **SCHOLARSHIP – CHRIS BREYNE**



School may not be in session, but it's time to start planning for, and promoting, our scholarship contests once again! Summer provides time for students to complete essays, speeches and start thinking about art projects when their schedules are less hectic and they have more time to focus. We look forward to all of the amazing entries! For more information:

[www.vfwauxiliaryil.org/scholarship-2/](http://www.vfwauxiliaryil.org/scholarship-2/)

Some schools are going back but some are not. If they do hand out scholarship information to students, I believe that it will get lost. There is so much going home about how the schools are going to protect our children. We need to work within our organization and hand out and get the word out about our programs. Ask Auxiliary members who may have family members, neighbors or anyone who think their student would like to receive some money?

District Presidents please contact your Scholarship Chairman in your district and have them get all information to their Districts! I would like to know they are in each District so Envision I can contact them to help out in anyway.

Patriots Pen topic “What Is Patriotism To Me?” Due October 31<sup>st</sup> to the VFW

VOD “Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?” Due October 31<sup>st</sup> to the VFW

We need to work on these two right now because the deadline is coming up soon!

Let's work together as a team and get these Scholarships out to everyone!

### **YOUTH ACTIVITIES – PAULA DEDOCKER**



This year has certainly gotten off to an interesting start! I hope this edition of the Bearing finds everyone safe and healthy, making your way through some difficult times.

With schools facing unknown futures regarding class time, it's time for us to put on our collective creative hats and find new ways to reach out to our youth.

I've heard from one Auxiliary an idea to host a break from remote learning day, sponsoring a patriotic craft day. Their hope is the arts and crafts that the kids create can one day be distributed to a VA Hospital or Home.

Or maybe a night out for the kids and their folks. How about a “Getting Excited

For The Red, White, and Blue” singing contest?

Also keep in mind any local ordinances regarding social distancing, mask wearing, etc., when preparing for your events. This is a crucial time for adherence.

If you have any questions regarding this year’s program, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Above all, stay safe everyone!

**BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME – DANIELLE KRULL**



As I spoke about our Buddy Poppy program at the C of A. it saddened me that we are so restricted and limited to our fundraising. We need to think “outside the drive” and come up with new and creative ways to raise money for our relief funds.

Think to your specific community and the places that are allowed to be open under the current conditions, donation boxes with locks are very affordable and might be a good idea to place at a partnered store or restaurant within your community. Get those community businesses that are open to do a contest with these boxes; whoever has the most donations out of the few businesses you choose gets a plaque or other incentive from your Auxiliary as the winner.

Get your Auxiliary Members that are social distancing at home and needing

something to do some supplies and make “poppy” themed items; like mason jar vases, necklaces (like Billie’s Lei), door wreaths, or anything else you can “sell” for a donation. Place a Buddy Poppy in a snack size zip lock bag with the Buddy Poppy Story cards (Template found on the website) and include where they can donate to your relief fund (i.e., your auxiliary address and who checks can be made out to), attach Buddy Poppy stickers you can purchase from the VFW store \$5.00/per 100, and place in carry out bags if you are doing carry out meals or give to Auxiliary member to hand out to people. These are a few options for you. Check out the VFW Store for a lot of great resources, I know money might be tight, but even if you cannot buy from the store something might “spark” an idea that you can do on you own without spending money. They have koozies, bookmarks, coloring books, shirts, tote bag, scarf, pins, earrings, and so much more. If money isn’t super tight and your auxiliary can afford this, take \$60.00 and buy these different things through the store and as your posts open again or as you are doing carryout food, have a raffle and all proceeds or all monies go into your relief fund.

Due to restrictions Illinois Day has been cancelled for in person visits; however look out for a Virtual Day option for this event! Ways to help during this is an additional donation outside of your Department donation to the National Home’s General Fund as this is where the greatest need is right now with the uncertainty of money needing to be spent. Buy a Life Membership; Already a Life Member? Gift someone in your Auxiliary a Life Membership. Life

Memberships help the home with funding and help gain additional monies out there for Non-Profits; also gives you the ability to vote on bylaw changes and vote for new Trustees for the National Home. Use AMAZON Smile, a program that donates as you shop, set the VFW National Home as your beneficiary for your purchases! You can also find a few fundraising ideas here:

<https://www.vfwnationalhome.org/ideas>

As you do these new and exciting things to help with outreach and fundraising for these programs, please make sure to send these ideas to me while reporting. Happy Brainstorming and I cannot wait to hear new ideas!!

### **HOSPITAL – LAURA KNACKSTEDT**

Congratulations Maggie Davis on being named Division 9 Hospital Volunteer of the year. Your commitment to our Veterans is amazing. This is a well-deserved award and I am very happy for you. Maggie is our VAVS representative at Manteno.

This continues to be a difficult time for both our volunteers and our Veterans. The facilities are still not allowing visitors. The healthcare workers are doing an outstanding job keeping our Veterans safe and doing their best to fill in for our volunteers. If you are able or willing, please reach out to the facility in your area. Become a phone buddy and keep in touch with our Veterans both inside the facilities and that are living on their own. They need us now more than ever.

I had the privilege of going to Jefferson Barracks to deliver a donation from our Department. The donation is being used to help with the costs of the new

bowling alley they are making inside the new recreation area building. The previous recreation building received considerable water damage and had to be replaced. Thank you to the Auxiliaries that donated to make this project possible.



One of the things we are trying to bring more attention to this year is our women veterans' health. Many of the facilities are providing more and more programs to help our women veterans. Please make a point to inform yourself of these projects and get the word out to our veterans. You can educate yourself on these programs by going to the Department or National website under Hospital. There are several links that will give you information.

Remember to report, report, report.

Thank you for all you do to support our Veterans. Together I know that we can continue "Making Life Bearable for Our Veterans".

### **HINES VA HOSPITAL – MERCIE WOOLFOLK/DIANE AHRENS**



As you have probably heard that Women make up approximately 10% of

our Veteran population and the VA system is working diligently to serve the needs of women veterans. One of these needs is maternity care, which the VA doesn't directly serve however they work with the veterans and insure they receive the maternity care they need and keep in contact through the pregnancy. In July, I received a letter that the Hines VA wanted to host a drive thru baby shower September 19, 2020 for their women veterans that are expecting in the near future. I accepted the challenge and have begun a fund raising effort that will enable us to purchase the Evenflo Car seat stroller system and a Pack N Play for each of the veteran moms.

Being a drive thru shower we will deliver the items on a truck and the veterans will be given a coupon by the Women's clinic that authorizes them to receive these items

Anyone that would like to participate may send a check to Linda Lorenz, Illinois VFW Auxiliary Treasurer, 140 W Ann St Somonauk, IL 60552 note in the memo for the September Baby shower at Hines VA.

In August we received a dire needs list for the veterans receiving care at Hines, they were in need of shampoo, body wash, nail clippers, toothpaste, toothbrushes, denture cream & cleanser, undershirts and more. Due to the Pandemic we had not been able to replenish the toiletries since the beginning of March. Mercie had ordered and stocked our supplies at the beginning of the year and they were there in the hospital but out of reach for those who needed them. Mercie and I were excited to be able to go the

hospital and fill the carts with the items that were "dire needed" and take them to the Voluntary Services. Thanks to our Auxiliaries support we were able to provide over \$3,000 in much needed items.

*Volunteers are always on our list of necessities. It is always a rewarding time, and our veterans appreciate it so very much.*

### **MANTENO VETERANS HOME – MAGGIE DAVIS/SANDY COLEMAN**

Although we cannot get into the home Sandy and I have been very busy! We take many items to the home, security comes out and takes the items, they are then taken inside where they are cleaned, and set aside for 24 hours before being distributed to the veterans. It's a crazy system, but what needs to be done in this virus environment.

Manteno now has a location incased in plastic dividers which the Veteran can go in and their family can stay on the outside of it and talk with their Veteran. It is a solution to the visitation problem and they are making it work.

We have had a couple of parades where the Fire Department, Police Department, businesses and local residents and organizations went around the buildings honking horns and ringing bells. The vehicles were decorated and the Veterans came out on the porches and enjoyed it from a distance. Everyone loves a parade!

We have not forgotten our Veterans; we just have found another way of taking care of them.

We are hoping that someday soon it will be over and we can get back in the facility to talk with and enjoy our Veterans as we did before.

## **LEGISLATIVE – MERCIE WOOLFOLK**

Our 2020 Nation’s General Election Day is less than 65 days away. What Law enacted November 3rd as the official Election Day in America?



**“ACTS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,**

*Passed at the second session, which was begun and held at the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia, on Monday, the 2nd day of December, 1844, and ended the 3rd day of March, 1845. Then, on January 23, 1845, the Election Day was fixed to be held in each State on the Tuesday next after the first Monday in the month of November. The process involved both the President of the United States, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.”*

**Who was President at this time? Submit your answer in your Online Legislative report or an email. I will give an update in my Legislative report at the November Department of Illinois Council of Administration meeting.**

## **OUR RIGHT TO VOTE**

It is a responsibility of all citizens as well as an honor and privilege to vote.

Encourage none registered voters to take advantage of Illinois’s online voter registration on or before Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. To register to vote in Illinois you must: Go to [vote.org](http://vote.org) website and stroll down to Illinois for more information.

- Be a citizen of the United States.

- Be a resident of Illinois and of your election precinct at least 30 days before the next election.
- Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election.
- Cannot be serving a sentence of confinement in any penal institution as a result of conviction of any crime.
- Not claim the right to vote anywhere else.



Exercise the following action points among your Auxiliary members and others.

1. Create many “I Vote in Honor of a United States Veteran” stickers, have family members, co-workers, friends and Auxiliary members sign them and return them to your post for display. What a prideful thing to do! It can be a mini fundraiser.
2. Help veterans to vote early in person or by mail.
3. Provide veterans with transportation in order to vote.
4. Take advantage of veteran friendly candidates.
5. Encourage others to go to the polls.

## **National Emergency Student Vote Act**

**Students in Illinois will be returning to colleges and universities soon. My grandson, Royal III is a registered voter and will be among the students returning to his university as sophomore by the end of August 2020. Will there be an avenue for him and all college/university students to vote? Thankfully, our Congressman of Illinois District 8, Raja Krishnamoorth, along with Senator Dick Durbin (Illinois), and other Senators introduced the National Emergency Student Vote Act.**

The purposes of this legislation are to:

1. Help college students vote in the 2020 election despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to many students not physically being on campus this fall.
2. Update the Higher Education Act to require colleges to provide students, regardless of whether or not they're residing on campus with voting information and help ensure that voting-eligible college students across the country have the information they need to exercise their right to vote in November.

## **VFW 2020 PRIORITY GOALS**



Even though it's an Election Year, our veteran's well-being are constantly our main focus. Below are one of the six VFW 2020 Priority Goals and several supporting legislations put forth by the House of Representatives or Senate. The VFW strongly supports them. Let's also as VFW Auxiliary members do the same. Visit [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) or [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) websites for more information.

### **Education, Employment and Transition Assistance**

- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services throughout their lifetime.
  - Timely and improved transition assistance, including access to programs after they leave military service.
  - High-quality and sustainable education benefits.
  - Strong employment and training programs.
  - Small business development opportunities.
  - Civilian credentials or academic credit for military training.
- Hiring preferences in the civil service and with large government contractors.
  - National veteran's treatment court advocates.
  - Education and training in new and expanding career fields.
  - Affordable housing and wraparound services to avoid homelessness. Improved character of discharge review and appeals procedures.
  - **H.R. 7111, *Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020*** - to help put unemployed and underemployed veterans back to work. This newly proposed rapid retraining program would be like a combination of the expired Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and the newly introduced Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program. Additionally, this proposal includes the Off-Base Transition Training program and the community grants program from the *Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2019*, which the VFW has supported since its inception in 2018.
  - **H.R. 3582, To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the scope of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, and for other purposes.** An expansion of the scope of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.
  - **H.R. 6082, *Forgotten Vietnam Veterans Act*** - Which would change the statutory definition of Vietnam veteran to include those who served in the Republic of Vietnam beginning on November

1, 1955. This legislation would properly recognize all veterans who served in Vietnam and would ensure they receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

- **H.R. 2435, *Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act*** - Which would create a task force to identify opportunities, barriers, and develop recommendations to use outdoor recreational therapy for veterans.
- **H.R. 2435, *Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act*** - Which would create a task force to identify opportunities, barriers, and develop recommendations to use outdoor recreational therapy for veterans.
- **H.R. 4281, *Access to Contraception Expansion for Veterans Act*** - Which would require VA to dispense a full-year supply of contraceptive pills, transdermal patches, and vaginal rings to veterans enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
- **H.R. 6141, *Protecting Moms Who Served Act*** - Which would improve VA's maternity care coordination and create a report on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among women veterans.

## **VFW ACTION CORPS WEEKLY**

This weekly e-newsletter is free and comes every Friday to your In Box. It contains actions our VFW Washington, D.C. office personnel have taken and what's happening on Capitol Hill regards our veterans, military personnel and their families. It is also an opportunity for

our members to advocate on their behalf regarding items of concern.



Any member with an iPhone, iPad, smartphone,

tablet, or desktop can go online and sign up as follows.

Visit [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and click on "Advocacy" from the horizontal list at the top of the page, then on either Legislative Priorities, or Grassroots Efforts. On these pages, at the top right side, you will find a blue graphic box asking to sign you up for Action Corps.

**The VFW Action Corps Weekly reported that an important Legislation became law and others in progress.**

**1. Adaptive Housing Bill Becomes Law: This week ending August 15th, the president signed into law VFW-supported [H.R. 3504](#), the *Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019*. The new law will provide enhancements to VA's Specially Adapted Housing program by increasing the number of grants awarded, raising the dollar amount of the individual grants, and expanding the number of times qualified veterans can use a housing grant. This change will help certain severely disabled veterans purchase adaptive homes or upgrade existing homes to meet their specific needs for daily living activities. The VFW and its Auxiliary applaud the passage of this important bill which will greatly benefit veterans.**

**2. Senate Passes Veteran Mental Health Legislation: On Wednesday, August 5th, the Senate passed VFW-supported S. 785, the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of***

2019, which would support VA as it continues to make improvements to veterans' mental health care.

**3. Legislation Introduced to Include DBQs on VA Website: On Wednesday, August 5th, Senators. Jon Tester (D-MT) and Mike Rounds (R-SD) introduced VFW-supported S. 4412, to improve the ability of veterans to access and submit disability benefit questionnaire forms.**

Ahead of us is important work as we are "Making Life Bearable for our Veterans." Remember: register to vote, know your candidates, and vote. Also keep advocating for our veterans rights, understand the VFW 2020 Priority Goals and sign up for VFW Action Corps Weekly. Most importantly, please be sure to report your Auxiliary Legislative activities. Thank you and God bless America.

**MEMBERSHIP – TERRY ADAMS/JOHN WATTERS**



Membership is what drives our programs. Are you tired of doing all the work? Does it seem like the same people do the same things every year? Are you getting new results?

Let us see if we ask/ invite just one person each our Auxiliaries would double. Yes double, meaning new

people, new ideas, new results. Do not be afraid, for everyone Veteran there is about twelve new members just waiting to be asked/ invited to join. No, they don't come knocking on our door asking to come in. We need to invite them and show them the importance of who we are. What we do for our Veterans and our communities. We are not just a local bar with some old guys sitting around. We are "Honoring the Dead by helping the living" We are American Pride; we are the Red White and Blue.

We are nothing without our membership. So please invite someone to join, many hands make lite the work.

Get them active let them tell you their strong suits and get them involved. Together you will both have a sense of accomplishment.

Invest time so they feel wanted and needed and satisfied. None of us will be here forever invest now in the future of our Auxiliary.

In times of trouble often we must lend a hand. Do not lose a member because they have fallen on hard times, we are an organization that is a family and this family has their backs. Adopt that member; it will pay off in the long run.

Together we are "Making Life Bearable for our Veterans"



## MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP – MICHAEL MARUSZAK



Take a moment and consider your first Auxiliary or District meeting, how about a Department or National Convention. What were you feeling? How did it make you feel? These events can sometimes overwhelm you in many ways. The Mentoring for Leadership programs help everyone from the newest member, to our well-cultured members. At the August Council of Administration due to time constraints, I went through my report quickly and apologized. Now let's talk about Mentoring & Leadership.

The Mentoring for Leadership Program is two years old already and what an impact it has made from local Auxiliaries, Districts, Departments as well as National. This program was created to give every member the opportunity to get involved, be motivated, and become a leader. My National Mentoring for Leadership Program Ambassador is Erin Mezek who wants this program to flourish and continue the wonderful accomplishment achieved in its premier year. Erin is asking all Department Chairpersons to ask our membership to remember two important acronyms

### **CARE:**

**C - Catch** the best time to make a lasting impression is when a member first joins. Make them feel at home and comfortable. Let them know they made a wonderful decision by joining the VFW Auxiliary. Let them know they are part of one of the best Auxiliaries that you know of.

**A - Ask** them to participate. They might be shy or say they cannot do it. Explain the different Programs the Auxiliary has and how they benefit our Veterans and their families. Let them know what Programs you participated in or are actively involved with. Doing this gives our members assurance that they have someone to go to ask questions or get help.

**R - Remember** what it felt like to be new. Walking into an Auxiliary meeting for the first time can be overwhelming since you might not know anyone or just a few of the members present. There is also that awkwardness sitting there and wondering - what are they thinking about or what is all that whispering. This can be discouraging for a new member. It is every member's responsibility to make your new member welcome

**E - Engage**, engage goes together with Ask. Engage your members in a program that fits them. By asking them to participate this engages that member already. For instance, say that member has children and enjoys seeing them having fun and being creative, they might fit with the Youth Activities or VFW National Home for Children, Voice of Democracy, and Patriot's Pen. Our Auxiliaries are so blessed to have so many wonderful programs which each member can engage themselves in.

As a member of the VFW Auxiliary our responsibility is to always make our members feel welcomed. If we do not use CARE this member might only come to their initial meeting. The same holds true for our cultured members who feel left out or defeated. We need all our members to attend every meeting not when there is something special taking place. No member should ever feel unwelcome; you are our Sister or Brother in the VFW Auxiliary.

The next acronym sounds hard because we all know what a ROCK is. This ROCK has a softer meaning.

**R – Reliable** – always being able to be counted on when needed

**O – Outgoing** – taking yourself to the limits and goals you set for yourself

**C - Consistent Communicator** – always communicating the information to the right people at the right time.

**K – Knowledgeable** – know what is happening in the Auxiliary. Always have the most current information to make informed choices or decisions.

These are the two acronyms embody the qualities of a Mentor and a Leader is. As a Mentor you are here to guide, direct, and provide answers to questions of the member you are mentoring. As a Mentor remember; the Member may not always know to what to ask. Mentoring for Leadership is all about, coming together to build on the foundation for the continued success of an organization. We can continue to build upon our strong foundation by mentoring, teaching, and sharing knowledge of Auxiliary traditions with all members. This organization had - and has - many great leaders and mentors. By Honoring our Mission to Serve Veterans and helping our Brothers and Sisters be more familiar with our traditions, we enable the VFW Auxiliary to become a stronger organization that will last for generations to come.

Leadership is using your gathered knowledge about this Organization to inspire our membership be energized when talking with others. A good Leader will also talk about the Programs that our Auxiliary has. A Mentor and Leader will utilize the “Building on the VFW

Auxiliary Foundation” to make our Members successful leaders.

Keep in mind that Mentoring for Leadership and Chief of Staff Extension Programs utilize many of the same resources. Make sure that you are reporting your wonderful talents under the correct Program.

*District Chairmen can you send me your Auxiliary’s contact information.*

What you are reporting- On the Auxiliaries National Website under resources you will find additional information on ‘Mentoring for Leadership’ like

[\*Mentoring at the VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future\*](#)

[\*Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundations\*](#)

A giant thank-you to those Districts that have already submitted their Reports.

## **AMERICANISM – CINDY WATTERS**



Hello Everyone! I know it is becoming repetitive about thinking outside of the box and being creative in your programs this year. I would like to hear all of your ideas, send me an email with the subject line **IDEA**.

There are 5 areas of focus in the Americanism program this year, here is my contribution as to how you can be completed in each area.

✓ - **POW/MIA** Recognition: September 18<sup>th</sup> is POW/MIA Recognition Day; show a picture of your table and missing man chair with the explanation of each item. Even if you don't get to this until after the 18<sup>th</sup>, post it on social media anyways as a tribute to those that have not yet been brought home. **Report.**

✓ **Flag Education**: We all know that the schools are only going to be open for a short time before they close or they are already mostly remote learning. Post the bear picture with the rules and ask the parents to print out the bear, have their child color it, and then either scan back to you or mail original to you. It is fine with me to have a digital copy and not the original. Coloring, Poster and Essay Contest . **Report.**  
BONUS – attach a copy of the Pledge of Allegiance written out with a short explanation of flag etiquette, such as standing with no hat, etc. **Report.**

✓ **Patriotism**: Use Facebook to remind people of a special patriotic holiday. **Report.**

✓ **Promoting Patriotism**: Ask businesses to post a picture of their business promoting “America”, focusing on the American Flag. If the flag looks tattered, maybe you could arrange a trade, old for new. This is free advertisement for the business. Maybe make a contest and award the winner with a nice certificate. Bonus: Team up with your Buddy Poppy chairman and send the businesses the request for a FB picture and enclose a Buddy Poppy signage asking for a donation, by doing this, you, my friend, have a 2 for 1. **Report.**

✓ **Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award**: Remember our educators that promote and teach civic responsibility, Flag etiquette and patriotism to enter

their name for the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award. **Report.**

## **AUXILIARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH** **– SAMANTHA SCHMIDGALL**



Hello again! So, what have you been up to? Did I hear you say Volunteering? I thought so!

The Auxiliary Community Outreach program is just for us! It is what we do, we volunteer! There are so many ways to volunteer and every one of all skill levels, income levels, age levels, etc. can do it!

The Auxiliary Community Outreach program is new albeit it does sound like programs of old! The difference? Well, we want to know how much time and how many members volunteered in your program. We really don't need to know the costs, just the members and time. So many of you are reading this thinking, What! We can't just donate some money? Short answer is no, remember it is about the number of volunteers and the time spent volunteering, not how much you spent. Please donate to all those in need for sure, we're not saying don't donate, just for reporting purposes it can't be reported here. Oh, and don't forget to wear that great new shirt you just got from the Auxiliary when volunteering! It shows who we are and can strike up great new partnerships with other organizations in our community. (If you don't own an auxiliary shirt, the Department has great new President's

shirts to purchase! Money from the proceeds of the shirts go to the Department President's special project and well are just pretty good shirts to show-off the Auxiliary in!) It really is about being seen in the community as an auxiliary member doing great work.

So, you've been volunteering? Great, I love to hear that!

Will you take a few moments and report it? There are so many advantages for reporting and all



lead to benefitting our Veterans! Did you take time out of your busy schedule and take food to shut-ins? Did you go shopping? Especially now since so many folks don't want to leave home due to the Corona Virus. It is also back-to-school time, whatever that means these days, either way maybe you could take donations of school supplies to your local school or have a drive at the post and then pass them out to the community? Are you still sewing masks? You know, I haven't received one report of anyone sewing masks! I have seen your face book posts—I know you are out there doing it!

Before I forget, be sure to get approval from the auxiliary through a motion and approval before you start taking credit for your good works! It just covers you and the auxiliary, so you all know what's going on. Oh, and don't forget the good works must be for the community and not benefit the VFW Post or the Auxiliary...it should be true volunteering outside the auxiliary functions.

You all have been great to chat with and I appreciate all of the good things you

are doing for our community and Veterans. If you have any questions, please just give me a call... I'll even put my phone number here for you 618-790-4295. I should warn you, I work full time, so if I can't answer, please leave a message! Of course, I have email: [lavfwsamee@gmail.com](mailto:lavfwsamee@gmail.com) and I will even text (be sure to give me your name though, I get confused easily! Please be safe until we can chat again! ~

### HISTORIAN/MEDIA RELATION – MARY: VOLUNTEER

Living th  as certainly been a challenge, but we must remain focused on preserving and sharing the work of the VFW Auxiliary. As an organization, we have proven to be resilient in finding innovative ways to cope with the situation in which we find ourselves. Things are still getting done, although in a different manner. I urge Historians at all levels to document and share the experience through the written word, and to be diligent and creative in leaving a pictorial history for future generations. This can be done by sharing stories and photos on social media, sending newsletters, or publishing articles about who we are and what we do. Save them in a scrapbook (or digitally) so the history is preserved, and present your work to the President at the end of the year. I would love to receive your photos and articles—and will give credit on the x-sheet to all Auxiliaries that share them.

### **NEW WAY TO SHARE PHOTOS OR MEDIA TO DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN:**

We've made it easier than ever to send your photos or media to the Department Chairman. When submitting your online reports, scroll down on the form and you will find a tab called "Upload Images or PDF File." Just save the image on your

