

SMOKE SIGNALS

— THE DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS VFW AUXILIARY NEWSLETTER —

July 2023

2023-2024

1st Edition



**LYNN SMITH
PRESIDENT**

Welcome to the “**BE A WARRIOR**” year. It is my honor to be able to represent the Department of Illinois Auxiliary this year. I can only promise to do my best, and with your help, I know we will have a great year.

Remember we are a team – Together Every Auxiliary Member. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we can do this.

What is a Warrior? A state of mind that allows you to face challenges and adversity with courage, strength, and determination.

Let's start our year by being kind and courteous. Remember, bullying doesn't get you anywhere but to fail. Remember, we are here for our Veterans and their families. The way to do this is to start working on the programs and, just because you get an X on the X-sheet, don't stop working on the programs. Make sure you are meeting all the deadlines.

I'm going to touch on membership. We must always be working on membership to strengthen our voice in Congress. The stronger we are the more we can do for our Veterans and their families.

This year National will have a Member of the Year from each state. This is new to us and an eblast will be sent out with the criteria and a nomination form. I would like to see lots and lots of the forms come in. I want to make our judges work hard.

So, let's start the year on the right foot and put the past behind us. On to a great year!



**LINDA LORENZ
TREASURER**

District and Auxiliary Treasurers:

- Within 30 days after induction into office, provide the President with a copy of the last quarterly audit and your

Membership Status Report. This report is to be submitted by the District/Auxiliary President to the District/Post Commander. (Article VIII, Sec 810)

- If you are a new Treasurer (or if you have never submitted this form previously), you must complete form 8822-B Change of Address or Responsible party to the IRS as soon as possible. You can find this form Under “Treasurer Resources” on MALTA, <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/NewOfficers/TreasurerResources>, or the IRS website www.irs.gov.
- Your 990N or 990 form is due by November 15, 2023. This covers the fiscal year of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Remember if you do not file your appropriate 990 form for three (3) consecutive years, your Auxiliary or District could lose your Federal Tax-Exempt status. If your EIN is suspended or revoked, it is your responsibility to work with the IRS to get it reinstated. I will be reaching out to the Auxiliaries that are currently showing as revoked so that you can begin to work with the IRS as soon as possible. You will find information on MALTA to reinstate your EIN. <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/NewOfficers/TreasurerResources>

- Make all checks payable to: “VFW Auxiliary Department of IL” and make sure the checks are signed by the Auxiliary President and the Auxiliary Treasurer. If the check does not contain both signatures, your checks will be returned for the proper signatures.
- All Department and National Dues can be paid in one check for new and/or continuous members.
 - \$11.00 per annual member – please remember to retain the balance of the dues in your Auxiliary.
 - Life Memberships Fees are based on the age attained by the member by December 31st of the current year.
 - Life membership – fee-based on the age attained by December 31 of the current year. This full amount is sent to the Department Treasurer.

Send the following to the National Secretary-Treasurer and make the checks payable to “VFW Auxiliary”:

National Secretary-Treasurer
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
406 West 34th Street – 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

- National Home Health and Happiness donations
- Cancer Aid and Research Donations
- Names of Delegates for National Convention

If using MALTA, you can:

- Pay Annual dues online and National will debit the \$11.00 per capita For National and Department directly from your checking account.
- Submit your gift for National Home Health and Happiness and Cancer Aid and Research
- Enter the names of your National Delegates

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

TAMMY NAPIER SECRETARY



Thank you, Department President Lynn for the opportunity to serve as Department Secretary for the 2023-2024 “**BE A WARRIOR**” Auxiliary year! It is an honor and privilege to be able to assist you in whatever

way(s) possible to help further the goals of our organization on all levels. Please know I am here for YOU and the Department of Illinois VFW Auxiliary!

The Circle of Excellence for 2023-2024 has begun.

Thank you to all Illinois VFW Auxiliaries for submitting your Installation Reports for 2023-2024. This very important information is now loaded into MALTA. If there are changes to any office, please notify the Department Secretary. Our next goal is to have 100% of all Auxiliaries and Districts bonded. Please, take care of this as soon as possible after July 5, 2023. Again, thank you for working with us to help the Department of Illinois achieve our goals!



Illinois ... let’s work together so Department President Lynn can be inducted into the Circle of Excellence at the 2024 National Convention!

Illinois VFW Auxiliary Council of Administration and Hospital Conference: August 25-27, 2023

The second Council of Administration meeting for the 2023-2024 term will be held at 9:00 a.m. Saturday, August 26, 2023, at the Sheraton Lisle Naperville Hotel, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532. The Hospital Conference will be held in conjunction with the Council meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, August 25, 2023. The conference will be held at the hotel. Lodging will be available at the Sheraton Lisle Naperville Hotel, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. Reservations can be made on the vfwil.org website by clicking on “News” and then “Events” or by calling the hotel directly at (630) 577-6006. The room rate is \$114 plus tax. The cut-off date for reserving your room online is August 11, 2023.

11th Annual Celebrating America's Freedom Event (CAFÉ): September 18, 2023

The 11th annual Celebrating America's Freedom Event will be held at the Golden Spike National Historical Park in Promontory, Utah on Monday, September 18, 2023. For those wishing to attend the event, please register on MALTA (vfwauxiliary.org). The cost of registration is \$ 30.00 per person. The fee includes round-trip transportation from the Hyatt Regency Salt Lake City hotel and admission to the park. Registrations must be received by August 18, 2023. Those received after that date will not be accepted. No refunds will be given. Please note that you may attend this event on your own, but round-trip transportation and admission will not be provided unless you have registered.

Illinois Day at the VFW National Home: Saturday, September 23, 2023

If arriving on Friday, hotel reservations can be made at: Comfort Inn - 1302 Packard Highway, Charlotte (517/543-7307); Holiday Inn - 500 Meijer Street, Charlotte (517/541-5000); or America's Best Value Inn - 828 E. Shepard Street, Charlotte (517/543-8288).

Auxiliary Presidents and Secretaries: *There is important information in each SMOKE SIGNALS issue. Besides the important program information from our Department Chairmen, the message from your Department President should be read at your Auxiliary meeting and highlights from the Secretary's and Treasurer's articles.*

SUSAN ROLANDO REPORTS COORDINATOR



We are off and running in our reporting for the 2023-2024 **"BE A WARRIOR"** year. As a reminder, each Auxiliary is to report all volunteer information to its individual Post by using

the form **Auxiliary to Post Community Service Form**. Coordinate with your Post on when and how often they will need this information. As you complete this form, please be sure to send me a copy as well. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. As always, Report, Report, Report!!

BILLIE GUTHALS VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT



In my first bulletin for Department President Lynn Smith's year, I would like to encourage all Auxiliaries to find opportunities to work with their Comrades at their VFW Posts and find

ways to provide aid to our military and their families. Our National President Carla's theme of *Banding Together for our Veterans* calls for us to unite with others and make our contributions even more beneficial. As an Auxiliary member, you can be a knowledgeable and helpful resource when hearing of Veterans or their families in need.

One connection you can make is with your VFW Post's Veterans Service Officer (VSO). Find out who that person is for your area and set aside time to have a conversation with them. Let them educate you on the types of questions and concerns they hear from Veterans. Is there a way that you can assist? Once you know issues that are being faced, you or other members may have solutions that can help solve problems.



To develop an ongoing relationship with your VSO, invite them to an Auxiliary meeting to discuss their experiences and open a line of communication. Assign an Auxiliary member that can serve as a liaison with the Service Officer for the coming year.

Think about the types of services Auxiliary members may be able to offer such as transportation assistance, occasional childcare, and a meal for a family when there's a need. The list can be added to depending on the skills and abilities of your members.

Partnering with the VFW Service Officer can also create a stronger bond with your Post. It's another chance to work together for the benefit of our Veterans and their families.

Do you have ways you have utilized your Veterans Service Officer and aided a Veteran or their family? Tell me your success stories so that we can all look for more ways to give Veterans the support they have earned.



JANET KAYS AMERICANISM

As I began to work on this article during the first week of June, many movies on TV commemorated the anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 1944. The Battle of Normandy was

fought on the beaches of France with The Allied Forces achieving victory, but with 4,415 Allied soldiers dying; 2,502 were U.S. servicemen. It was considered an important step in the defeat of Germany because it weakened their position in France and established a stronghold to advance into that part of Europe. The tremendous effort of cooperation with as many as 13 countries was unprecedented and changed the course of WWII. It also renews my respect and appreciation for those who have served, not just in this war, but all of the foreign wars before and after WWII. Those who have served (and their families) have

truly made many sacrifices.

Patriotism is being proud of our country's virtues and eager to correct its deficiencies- working to see that our country is righteous as well as strong. It creates a feeling of responsibility. Congressman Patrick McHenry (N.C.) said "Patriotism inspires us. It unites us. It fills our hearts with pride and optimism." Serving our Veterans is a patriotic calling. Simple acts of patriotism occur every day. They might not make the headlines, but they help strengthen our communities and nation. The things that you and your Auxiliary do to promote patriotism may be quiet and simple, but they are important to our communities and our Veterans.

Set some goals for your program this year. First, promote patriotism by celebrating some (or all) of our patriotic holidays. These celebrations can easily involve the whole family and they can serve as the perfect way to support Veterans and their people. Second, champion flag etiquette and education: in the schools and the community. Third, encourage the use of these words to strengthen their impact on your audience; Prisoner of War, Missing in Action, and Killed in Action. Host a special program, share their stories, meet their families, and participate in any ceremonies around the state honoring POW/MIAs. Fourth, strengthen your Auxiliaries by encouraging respect between members and helping them understand the traditions and rituals of the organization. Make your Post and Auxiliary a safe haven for our Veterans and their supporters. Your MALTA resources can help.

For those of you that were not able to attend our Department Convention, I would like to share some things that stood out to me.

1. There is a wealth of available knowledge in our line officers, appointed officers, District Presidents and Past Presidents, and members who attended this year's convention. Don't be backward about asking for help!
2. We have many very talented and hardworking members who are doing a stand-up job of representing our Auxiliary.

- Members who do not attend convention are missing out on education, shared information, socializing, and comradery. Finally, we are loud, we are proud, we have fun, and we love our Veterans.

After you have celebrated the patriotic holidays, (check the program or MALTA for more information on the days), presented your flag information, and participated in any ceremonies honoring Veterans past and present; be sure to report that information on the X sheet to receive credit for your hard work. The work you do does not go unnoticed.

Try to think of Auxiliary Outreach as that “EXTRA” program, **time** you give to your community and other organizations like food banks, the Cancer Society, Red Cross, your First Responders, etc.

Please read the Auxiliary Outreach program for detailed information on what can or cannot be counted for the program.

As always, I am here to help you and answer any questions you may have; please just give me a call or send me a text or email and I will do my best to assist you!



CHERYL MILLER
AUXILIARY
OUTREACH

Greetings Illinois Warriors!

Are you sending up smoke signals to the other organizations in your community telling them you are ready to help with their projects?

We need to get out there while wearing some kind of Auxiliary attire and show others that we are willing and able!

I really want to emphasize in this bulletin that if any project you are working on can be reported in any other program, you should not report it under Auxiliary Outreach. So many reports I've received have been something that is done for the benefit of Veterans or the Post. Please remember that you need to report that under Veterans and Family Support. The same goes for Americanism, Youth Activities, and any of the other programs.

Outreach is only for **time** spent helping other organizations (no donations) like a senior center or nursing home, but please don't only do something for the Veterans who are there, it would have to be for all residents.



SARAH HIGGINBOTHAM
BUDDY POPPY /
VFW NATIONAL HOME



V F W
NATIONAL HOME



I am so excited to be your “Buddy” Poppy & VFW National Home chairman again this year! We had a great Department Convention in June and built up a lot of enthusiasm to start the new year off strong. Your Auxiliaries were very busy last year in both of these programs, and I hope to see even more involvement this year.

“Buddy”® Poppy

Thank you to those Auxiliaries that constructed a Poppy Display and brought it to Department Convention. My favorite part of Convention is going to look at all the Poppy Displays. Our children, Jereme and Rylee, attended Convention this year and they were both blown away by what you all managed to do with those tiny little flowers. Good luck to those entries that advanced to National Convention!

I've seen quite a few Facebook posts of Auxiliaries that conducted Poppy Drives for Memorial Day. Have you reported that to me yet? If not, please do

it soon so you don't forget. I would love to receive a report from each Auxiliary at least once a month.

Is your Auxiliary conducting a membership booth at a county fair, festival, community event, etc.? Make sure to have poppies available at the booth along with brochures about the "Buddy"® Poppy to distribute to anyone visiting your booth.

Don't forget to post on your social media pages and tag me in the posts!

VFW National Home



Proposed new playground

Wow, Illinois you have really stepped up and sent in many donations for the VFW National Home Playground Project! We still have more money to raise in a short amount of time to hit our goal. Please get those donations to Linda Lorenz as soon as possible. We hope to have the full amount collected by Illinois Day on September 24, 2023. All Auxiliaries and Districts that send in a donation earmarked for the VFW National Home Health and Education Playground Project by September 15, 2023, will receive a citation.

When conducting a fundraiser for the VFW National Home whether it be for a general donation or the Playground Project, I recommend ordering promotional materials to hand out and/or display at the fundraiser. This helps us spread awareness about the National Home while raising funds. You can visit www.vfwnationalhome.org/promotional to order those items free of charge. Order them today so you have them on hand for your next event!!

As we start the new year, I encourage every Auxiliary to make their yearly donations early. This includes your Health and Happiness donation. Also, go through your membership roster to see who is a

Life Member of the VFW National Home. Then contact those that are not members to tell them about the National Home and encourage them to become Life Members. Every membership helps raise funds for the VFW National Home.



JO LYNN ALTVATTER

EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION

HEALTHY AUXILIARY

It's time to start preparing to be a Healthy Auxiliary and that's easy to do.

- Election and Installation of Officers and Installation Report done in MALTA or forwarded to the Department Secretary
- Bond Paid – MALTA is open; if you need a hard copy of the application, ask someone for help. All Auxiliaries should have approved **STANDING RULES** even if the only item is for the Treasurer to pay the Bond. Think of this as a cost of doing business and pay your bill.
- Your last Quarterly Audit (April thru June) along with your membership status should be given to your Post Commander
- Pay your District Dues
- Do your Audits on a timely basis and forward them to the Department Treasurer
- Review and work on our Programs (Department/National) and **REPORT** the work you have done
- Pay dues on a minimum of ten members
- Hold a minimum of ten business meetings a year

Remember to check MALTA for more information on the Extension and Revitalization Program, it's under Member Resources.

The requirements are easy. All Auxiliaries should work towards being **HEALTHY!**



**MARY SPINDLER
HISTORIAN**

As Department Historian, I am looking forward to working with all our members and receiving your promotions for the program. President

Lynn is counting on **all of you** to capture those special moments and share them. At the end of the year, Lynn will receive a memory book—and I am hoping that EVERY Auxiliary makes a concentrated effort to share photos and events.



The two most important duties of the Historian are reporting in the program at all levels of the Auxiliary (ideally by December 31st) and being diligent in capturing and preserving memories.

Every Auxiliary and District should appoint one person to be responsible for sharing photos and promoting the program. This includes posting photos on social media, newspapers, newsletters, or any other creative way to share. **DON'T FORGET THE 5 W's – Who? What? When? Where? Why?**



Although any member can participate in the program, it is ideal to assign one person who will report the hours, dollars, etc. associated with your projects. **This is a must!**



Auxiliaries should review the awards at the **beginning of the year!** Some changes have been made to the Historian Program.

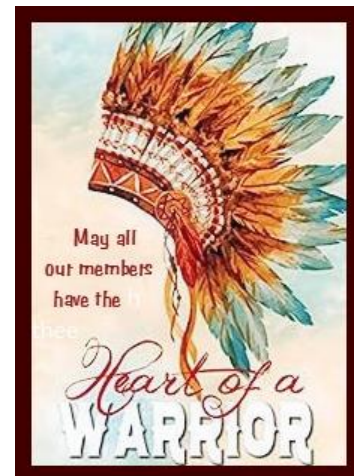


National Historian **Diana Morris** has a new project for Auxiliary Historians, which is to complete a 3-5 minute **video interview** with a legacy member—someone who has been around

for a long time and has served in multiple capacities. The details are outlined on the entry form, which can be found on **MALTA**, or the

Department website under the Historian Program. Here are some sample questions:

- ✚ Ask why they joined.
- ✚ Ask about their favorite memorable moments.
- ✚ Place emphasis on bringing the past to life.
- ✚ **Note:** *If your Auxiliary has no legacy members, you can also interview a **District or Department** member. You might also want to ask them how being a volunteer has affected their lives. All interviews should be sent to me.*
- ✓ **Remember:** There are **three Department awards** in addition to the National award. **You can't win if you don't enter!!!**



**DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS VFW AUXILIARY
COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING**

Saturday, August 26, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.



Sheraton Lisle Naperville Hotel
3000 Warrenville Road
Lisle, IL 60532

Reservations: vfwil.org website
or
call (630) 577-6006

Reservation Deadline: August 11, 2023

All members are welcome to attend!



LAURA KNACKSTEDT HOSPITAL

We are beginning a new year with some members taking on new positions within the Auxiliary. This is a great opportunity to mentor and assist these members in their new responsibilities. The

hospital program is important to all of our Veterans in one way or another. It could be that we can educate them on programs within the VA facilities that are available to them. It could be that we provide items that they need. It could be that we just provide support to them when they most need it. Donations to our VA facilities and the hospital pledge help make this happen. The hospital pledge donations are used solely to support our VAVS reps, associate reps, and deputies. These reps spend countless hours and miles picking up items that our VA facilities need. Please consider this when making your donations.

The VA facilities are beginning are starting to open back up to volunteers and guests. Start planning now on what your Auxiliary can do to provide parties, bingo, or other games, or activities to bring joy to our Veterans. I am sure that they have missed the interaction with volunteers and Auxiliary members. Check the calendar. See what quirky holiday is coming up. We don't need to just do something on the main holidays. Bringing joy to our Veterans is a 365 day a year priority.

Now is also a good time to discuss the honor escort program at a facility near you. Speak to your local facility on the importance of giving our Veterans the final tribute they deserve for their service to our country.

Check with a VA facility near you to see what they are doing for our women Veterans. The number of women Veterans continues to grow every year. The VA facilities have been working to provide more and more programs for these Veterans. Let's see what we can do to help.

I am looking forward to a great year and I know that our Auxiliaries are too. Remember to report, report, report!!! Let's **"BE A WARRIOR"** for our Veterans.

MARION VA MEDICAL CENTER



The doors are FINALLY opening for visitors and volunteers in the CLC! After almost 3 years volunteers will be able to play bingo with the patients! The "slow, soft opening" will start on June 19 with a few requirements, one requirement is masks, when around the patients. I will take a small inconvenience to be able to physically see our Veterans! Currently, they are limiting the bingo games and cookouts to 2 per month. These guidelines are subject to change, and we need to be flexible.

We, I, Karen Robinson and Marcia English (Deputies for the Marion VA), continued to bring items to the CLC (Community Living Center). We, with the help of all Auxiliaries that donated to the hospital fund, have been providing all the cookout items for the staff to cook for the patients. They really like the cookouts! We also have been delivering birthday celebration cupcakes each month. We also restocked the food pantry in January and again in March. They know the VFW Auxiliary can be counted on when needed.

The money donated to the hospital fund also purchased flowers for the Veterans to dress up the courtyard. Gardening helps the Veterans receive "sunshine" therapy and create a beautiful space for everyone to enjoy! Some of our Veterans were gardeners and enjoy passing on their knowledge! The courtyard flowers bring smiles to the patients as well as the employees!

Since Christmas will be here before we know it, we are asking that all Auxiliaries in the state donate an ornament that represents them. Our Post, Heyde-

Pillow Post 1301 in Marion has a tank on the property. We will be getting a small tank, along with a description of our tank and the history of how we acquired it. Another idea would be to research the name of your Post. If you have pictures of the namesakes, they can be included also. Be creative! I know we have VERY creative members in the VFW Auxiliary! We would like the entire state to be represented on the tree. I received 3 large tubs of cards from a closing card store. I would like to send your Auxiliary some of the cards for you to sign and mail back to me. We will take them to the CLC and the hospital and give them to the Veterans. I will send you a return envelope with postage, all you will need to do is write a message to the Veteran or sign your Auxiliary name, number, and where you are from. We want them to know that the VFW Auxiliary is everywhere and thinking of them! My address is Lori Crites at 9534 Herrin Rd, Johnston City, IL 62951.

We are looking forward to having a GREAT year and doing whatever we can to make the lives of our Veterans and their families better!

Please join us!

**DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS VFW
AUXILIARY
HOSPITAL CONFERENCE**

**Friday, August 25, 2023
3:00 PM**

**Sheraton Lisle Naperville Hotel
3000 Warrenville Road
Lisle, IL 60532**

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND!





JANET LONG LEGISLATIVE

Whether you are a previous or new Legislative chairman, welcome to a new year. Our Department President has asked us to **“BE A WARRIOR”** for our Veterans. To be a Warrior is to be an

advocate. To be an advocate is to educate the people about our Legislative Priority Goals. Those Goals are grouped under six areas of concern:

- Budget
- Health Care
- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
- Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance
- Military Quality of Life
- National Security, Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA

We don't wait to hear how legislation will affect Veterans, service members, and their families; we help shape it from the beginning. We actively lobby Congress and the administration on current Veterans' issues and needs. We keep ourselves informed on current issues by subscribing to “VFW Action Corps Weekly”, also Veterans Voices. You can sign up for “VFW Action Corps Weekly” in MALTA under Member Resources, Legislative, this program has a lot of information on:

- Auxiliary Legislative Tools and Resources
- Legislative Websites
- VFW Legislative Resources

Another website for information is [VFW.org](https://www.vfw.org), then click on Advocacy. This will bring up information on:

- Legislative priorities
- National Security and Foreign Affairs
- Women Veterans
- Grassroots Efforts
- VA Health Care Watch

I am looking forward to attending the National Convention and bringing back much more information to pass on to you.

The more we know – the more we can help our Veterans.

MEMBERSHIP



**RHONDA
BORKGREN**



**PAULA
DEDONCKER**

And we're off to follow the Yellow Brick Road to be 100% in MEMBERSHIP! We all need to **“BE A WARRIOR”** and get our membership to 100% as fast as possible. We suggest we discuss membership at our first Auxiliary meeting in July. With National requesting a raise in the National dues, we need to get as many life memberships as possible. Our Auxiliaries can do special promotions to help members pay for life memberships. Allow them to make monthly payments, or even have drawings for free life memberships. Every time dues are raised it becomes harder to get those annual members who don't attend meetings to pay dues. Please brainstorm at your meeting and come up with ways to get members switched over to life memberships. I have included an application to include with your due's renewal letter. It gives the amount a life membership cost. If you are an Auxiliary that seems to have the same officers every year and they are still annual members, maybe it would be a good time to vote to buy a life membership for your president, secretary, and treasurer. Part of the Circle of Excellence is having their dues paid by Dec. 31st or they must be removed from the office. It would help your Auxiliary in two ways!

The 2023-2024 membership team has turned the box inside out this year. Membership awards are going to be totally different. We will be putting all Auxiliaries who hit goals into a drawing. ONE Auxiliary will be drawn out of all who qualify. The Auxiliary that is drawn will get to spin the wheel for major dollars. The first deadline for the first COA in August is August 15th. All Auxiliaries and Districts that are 85% by August 15th will go into a drawing and one lucky Auxiliary and one District will get to spin the wheel for Big Money. With the amount of money, we are giving away, you can use that money to help get your members transferred to life or just use it for great Veteran projects! In the past, we gave away various dollar amounts and many Auxiliaries never cashed those checks. It always bothered me. Our wheel for Auxiliaries has dollar amounts from \$200. To \$750.00. We will raise or leave the dollar amounts the same, according to how much has been won! The faster you get to qualifying percentages, the more chances you have to win! Example: If you are 101% at our August meeting, you will get your Auxiliary in the drawing 4 times! If you are 100% in August you will get 3 chances, 95% 2 chances! Let's get those dues collected and get lots of chances to win big money! Remember, you must have at least one paid new or annual member to qualify.

Those new members count too! Just remember to keep them you must not only invite them to join, but you must also include them and invest in their membership! Membership is probably the most important program we have. Without our membership, we wouldn't exist. The reason we ask you to get new members for everyone we lose is that if we don't replace lost members, we will get smaller and smaller until no one is left to help our Veterans. Work together with your Post. Help them sign Veterans and ask them for a roster to ask their families to join us. We are much stronger when we work together.

I can't wait for our August Council meeting to see who wins the Membership award. If your Auxiliary has a member there, they can spin the wheel, otherwise, the District President will spin for you, if your Auxiliary is drawn.



BARB HOWARD **MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP**

Let's **"BE A WARRIOR"** for President Lynn and the 2023-24 year of reporting. Remember, anyone can be a mentor. Having the right tools will help you to be a good mentor.

- M – MALTA has a lot of resources to help you mentor
- E – Educate yourself and others on the bylaws and where to find them
- N – Never use negativity while mentoring
- T – Take time with new members to help them understand our goals
- O – Offer to show members how to navigate MALTA
- R – Report, report, report.

We cannot possibly know what you are doing if you do not report. We can also get ideas on how to be better mentors from your reports. I am looking forward to hearing from you and the many ways you mentor.





LAURIE SPARWASSER SCHOLARSHIPS

This program has **FOUR** parts: Continuing Education Scholarship, Young American Creative Patriotic Art 2-D Scholarship and 3-D Scholarship, Voice of Democracy, and Patriot's Pen.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

This contest is due to National by February 15, 2024. **THIS SCHOLARSHIP IS ONLY FOR AUXILIARY MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN A CONTINUOUS MEMBER FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR BY THE TIME OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION, THEIR SPOUSE, OR CHILD.** Please **DO NOT** give these applications to the schools. A 300-word essay is required with the application. So, please give these out as soon as possible. The Continuing Education Scholarship is based on need and there is one winner chosen in each of the four conferences.

*****NEW THIS YEAR*****

Applicants must be 21 years of age by February 15, 2024, to apply.

The new applications are not yet available. I will have it put on the Scholarships webpage on the Department of Illinois VFW Auxiliary website when it becomes available.

YOUNG AMERICAN CREATIVE PATRIOTIC ART

This contest is due to your Auxiliary by March 31, 2024. The winners from your Auxiliaries need to be in my hands by April 15, 2024. **THERE IS NOW A 2-D ART SCHOLARSHIP AND A 3-D ART SCHOLARSHIP.** These scholarships are for students in grades 9-12. Please see my Department Scholarship Program for details. All Auxiliaries may send a 1st place 2-D **and** 3-D art entry to Department for judging.

National now has 19 National Scholarships for the 2-D contest and three National Scholarships for the 3-D contest.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN

These two scholarships are the first ones due during our Auxiliary year. They are VFW Post Scholarships, but Auxiliaries are encouraged to help their Posts with contests. I know a lot of Auxiliaries do all the work, but for those that do not, please help out as much as possible or give as much help as your Post accepts.

The 2023-2024 Voice of Democracy theme is: **"What are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?"**

The 2023-2024 Patriot's Penn theme is: **"How Are You Inspired by America?"**

The applications for this year are on my webpage for you to print.

Entries are due to your Post by midnight on October 31, 2023.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND YOUNG AMERICAN CREATIVE PATRIOTIC ART FUNDS

There is a National Continuing Education Scholarship Fund, a Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund, and a 3-Dimensional Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest Scholarship Fund. Donations to these funds increase the number and amount of awards National can give out. Donations can be made on MALTA.

There is also a Department of Illinois Patriotic Art Escrow Fund. This fund helps our Department's awards for both the 2-D and 3-D Scholarships. A donation of \$10.00 or more to this fund by December 31, 2023, will get you five points toward your Department of Illinois VFW Auxiliary Circle of Excellence.



**BARB SWEGER**
YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Welcome Back to Youth Activities!

Our National Ambassador Joyce Caldwell of Oklahoma has chosen Patriotism Thru Literacy as her

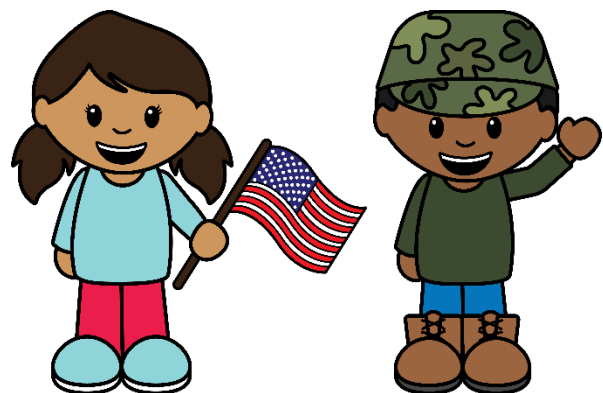
focus this year! Her thoughts are that focusing our attention on the youth beginning at an early age is important for them to appreciate both our history and the sacrifices that our Veterans made to keep our freedoms. If you as an Auxiliary reach out to the youth when they are young, we will help mold the leaders, soldiers, teachers, doctors, even our future Auxiliary members of tomorrow. Education is the key to helping the youth become who they are destined to be.

You can help this by promoting patriotism through reading! Starting with our PreK, Kindergartners, first-, and second-grade students, the love of reading can become instilled in them. Reading books on how important our Flag is, how our country became the United States of America, who the founding fathers were and their role in our country is priceless. I remember loving it when as a student at my grade school we would visit our local library! I loved the smell of the library and enjoyed learning new things there. There are many ways to participate in this project ~ Volunteer to read historical fiction to youth at the local library or a local school (after you get permission to appear); Donate a historical fiction book to the local school library, community library, or shelters; Host a read-a-thon and give out prizes for the number of books read ~ prizes could be a book for them to read, pencils, coloring books, stickers, etc. You should be able to find a list of examples of books to donate/read after the National Convention under Malta/Member Resources/Youth Activities. There is a suggested list of books for 2022-2023 on Malta at the moment.

Did you know that International Youth Day will be Saturday, August 12, 2023 – perhaps your Auxiliary can plan something to mark this day? The USA along with several other countries celebrates this day to raise awareness of the potential our youth have for bringing peace and change to the world. The first Youth Day was held in Austria in 1991. It was officially endorsed by the United Nations in 1999 with the 1st observation being in 2000. If your community has a Youth Day event, plan to participate or host your own event. Here are some examples: A group of youths in Texas helped to clean and decorate a school; New York City youth participated in 2008 in a chess tournament, roundtable discussion, and an international fashion show. The August celebration is perfect for our students in America since many may still be on summer vacation. Let me know if you plan to attend/have an event for International Youth Day!

You will see a word search puzzle for Youth Activities. I will be adding some sort of word puzzle to each bulletin for the year. If you find all the words and return the sheets to me with your info on the bottom, I will enter your name in a drawing to be held at the 2024 convention. Each sheet I receive will be an entry, but there is only 1 entry per bulletin.

Looking forward to a great new year for the Department of IL Youth Activities Program!



July Bulletin

Youth Activities

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

Illustrating

Auxiliaries

Patriotism

Blue

Contests

Districts

Illinois

Red

Literacy

Singing

Veterans

Act

Excited

Random

America

Get

White

Youth

Name: _____

Auxiliary #: _____

District #: _____



COTTAGE HILLS AUXILIARY #7678



Members distributing "Buddy"® Poppies and collecting donations for their relief fund.

KANKAKEE AUXILIARY #2857



This booth was set up for Poppy Day at the Kankakee Farmer's Market.

**Would YOUR Auxiliary
like to be featured in
"WARRIORS AT WORK"?**

Send your photos along with a brief description of the event or activity to the appropriate Department Program Chairman.

You may see yourself in the next edition of the Department newsletter!