



Michigan Connection January 2024

(To be read on the Auxiliary Floor)

www.vfwauxmi.org

Department of Michigan Auxiliary

#5

Hello Sisters and Brothers,

I hope that you enjoyed the holidays and are looking forward to attending the Mid-Winter Conference at the end of the month in Kalamazoo at the Radisson Hotel.

It's important to me to be upfront with full disclosure to all Auxiliary members concerning the changes that will be occurring at our Department Headquarters Office in Lansing beginning on January 1, 2024.

With our Department Treasurer accepting a full-time position outside of our organization I have had to evaluate how the rest of my year should look going forward. I still believe that a Treasurer belongs in our office. Especially, if they are new to the position, so that they will be able to fully grasp and understand the position.

I was contacted by two Auxiliary members. Neither was interested in traveling to Lansing to learn the position but were willing to help in a pinch. A Department as large as ours needs more than that.

Therefore, since Nicole's letter stated she was willing to assist in any way possible, and she stated she can be in the office 6 days a month and can work remotely on many aspects of the position, I am appointing her as interim Treasurer Pro-Tem until the Council of Administration meets on January 26th, under those parameters I stated above. I am adjusting the office hours to be Monday through Thursday 7:30am – 4:00pm effective January 1, 2024. The Council of Administration will be electing a Treasurer at our January 26th meeting.

I realize that there will be other thought processes going forward beyond my year of leadership but as for me, I would rather have Nicole finish my year in a part time position, than find a new one who is only willing to work from home. Nicole has agreed to stay on for my term of office and she will work at the office and from home up to 24 hours a week.

Respectfully, Sara Manke Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary President.

The Department Mid-Winter Conference will be held at the Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel January 26th-January 28th. Please plan to join us for some valuable training and to honor our Student Voice of Democracy, and Patriot's Pen Essay Winners. Teacher of the Year Award recipients will also be recognized, along with some of the judges.

Audits for the months of October, November, December are to be completed by January 31, 2024.

Upcoming District Meeting Dates:

District 5-	February 4, 2024	CPL Richard W. Menge Post #6756
District 6-	January 6, 2024	Mason VFW Post #7309
District 7-	February 4, 2024	Capt. John J. Kell Post #1355
District 8-	February 3, 2024	Maple Valley VFW Post #2406
District 9-	February 3, 2024	Fred E. Richards VFW Post #3055
District 10-	February 11, 2024	Lawrence W. Smith Post #4139
District 15-	February 11, 2024	Iron River Post #3134

Michigan Connection

February 2024

(To be read on the Auxiliary Floor)

For those of you that attended our Mid-Winter Conference we hope you enjoyed the training and time honoring our District Scholarship Winners in the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Scholarships. Along with the announcement of who the three Teachers of Year were. Many long hours of preparation and execution go into making these programs successful year after year. To you, and all of your Auxiliary members that makes this program possible, we appreciate and thank you.

A heads up for every Auxiliary. Sec. 708 – National Dues as stated in the National Bylaws.

- A. National dues shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) per annum on each member, effective July 1, 2024, Paid by ACH transaction to National Headquarters.**

This is the time your auxiliary should be holding discussions about your Auxiliary yearly dues for your continuous members. Beginning July 1, 2024, your Auxiliary will be forwarding a total of \$17.00 per member to cover the \$10.00 National dues amount and the \$7.00 Department of Michigan dues amount. To fulfill your Auxiliary to do list. Can you keep your current dues at the same amount?

How are you planning to spend Valentine's Day? As a group of Auxiliary members maybe you can make plans to visit shut ins, or hospitalized local Veterans, and pick up their spirits by letting them know that they are not forgotten by giving them a Valentine's card.

Winter is here and mother nature tends to display her wrath through snow, ice, and winds during these months. Remember it is okay to cancel up to two meetings an Auxiliary year based upon extenuating circumstances. Your safety and that of your members should always hold precedence when deciding if the business meeting is a go or not.

District Delegate sheets will be placed in the mail as soon as they are completed based on the Auxiliary membership total as of February 28, 2024.

This Auxiliary calendar year is quickly passing us by. Now is the time to look at your Guide Sheets and see what programs still need to be completed to be considered for a Department or National Award. We understand that most Auxiliary's don't do things to be noticed or awarded. It is still very important to report on the things that we do accomplish when connected to our Auxiliary Programs.

Sara Manke

Sandi Onstwedder

Sara Manke- Department President

Sandi Onstwedder- Department Secretary

**Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Americanism Bulletin**

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook page: Americanism-Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I can't believe the year is almost over, we need to check to make sure all our goals are being met.

First, please report all things you and your auxiliary do for Americanism, like projects held on patriotic holidays. Or, that you or your auxiliary distributed the American flag or Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action flags, this is what I need you to report to me. If you sign into MALTA, or National Organization has a Citation Award available to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates their community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are "more than letters." Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters.

Auxiliaries are to send the form to me, Americanism Chairman, by March 31st.



Roberta Reid, Americanism/Patriotic Instructor Chairman
flagsrreid@gmail.com
6060 North Road
Burtchville, MI 48059
810-656-7725

**Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Americanism Bulletin
February 2024**

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook page: Americanism-Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Happy Valentines Day!

Remember our Veterans on Valentine's Day with cards, candy, and visits. Thank them for their active-duty service and sacrifice that they gave for each one of us.

The Patriotic holiday for February 2024 is February 19th. It is a day that is set aside to honor Presidents George Washington, and President Abraham Lincoln's Birthday. (Presidents Day) This is always celebrated on the third Monday, of February.

Remember, if you distributed or presented American flags or Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flags, you need to tell me how many, and to who, plus anything you used as a resource, by downloading it off MALTA. For instance, Patriotic Citations or Certificates of Appreciation, that you then distributed to businesses or individuals who showed respect to the American Flag? Did you make a presentation to a citizen or business for flying and displaying the American Flag, or Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Flags daily?

Think outside the normal and appreciate it when you see acts of Americanism being displayed publicly. Remember to share that you belong to the greatest Veterans Organization in the World, and are very proud that they too, respect our customs and traditions. Certificates of Appreciation are available on MALTA for you to fill out and deliver to these individuals or businesses.



Roberta Reid, Americanism/Patriotic Instructor Chairman
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Burtchville, MI 48059
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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY

AUXILIARY OUTREACH BULLETIN

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Auxiliary Outreach-Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: AUXILIARY OUTREACH

Auxiliary Outreach is volunteer work performed by one member, a group of members or an Auxiliary for the benefit of their community or its institutions. Auxiliary Outreach can:

- Be performed by people of any age, skill set or ability level.
- Benefit any group of people such as children, senior citizens, and those with disabilities.
- Benefit animals, the environment, and public spaces.
- Be done in communities of all types and sizes – rural, suburban, and urban, small, or large.

We volunteer to make a difference in our community, but we receive benefits including but not only:

- Helping others
- Learning new skills
- Career advancement
- Increased confidence
- Meeting new people
- Fighting stress and depression
- Developing a stronger sense of purpose
- Personal growth

OUTREACH AND THE VFW AUXILIARY

Auxiliary members and Auxiliaries also participate with other community organizations. It is important that at the beginning of the a motion is made on the floor that when members volunteer their time for a civic program, school program, youth program, etc., they are representing the VFW Auxiliary and should turn in their hours served to be reported for Auxiliary Outreach.

Projects may be done by a member who is representing the Auxiliary, by an Auxiliary alone or with the VFW Post. Collectively, all of our volunteer hours need to be counted to effectively show the importance of the local VFW Auxiliary to the community.

Be visible and show your pride in the VFW Auxiliary by wearing Auxiliary-branded attire when you participate in Auxiliary Outreach. A shirt, jacket or hat with the Auxiliary emblem can start a conversation about the Auxiliary and what we do.

AUXILIARY OUTREACH

February 2024

The End is in Sight!

Here we are in the homestretch; the finish line is just ahead. Time to pour on that last bit of strength and break through the winner's tape.

Deadlines and Awards

Let's review a couple key points as we start rapping up a successful year:

Local Auxiliary Outreach Chairmen: Send your final reports to you Department Chairmen no later than March 31, 2024.

It has been a busy year so far and reading through your Auxiliary Outreach reports, there has been a lot of great effort put forth for Auxiliary Outreach from looking at what is on the reports. Keep up the great work! There is still a lot of time left and opportunities in the months ahead before we end this year so keep going strong. If you have not done something yet, get moving!



Volunteering does not have to labor intensive work but your time is invaluable to these organizations. Vote on the event in your meeting and wear an auxiliary shirt or name tag to let your community know you are there and active!!

If you have questions, call or email me. I am here to help you. Please, turn in your reports and be diligent. I cannot reiterate it enough as to how important this is, so we can further report what you have done and be able to share the ideas and ways to do Auxiliary Outreach. We can learn and inspire each other by sharing.

Loyally yours,

Jared Blum
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734-771-3050
Jblum25@gmail.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY
"BUDDY"® POPPY/NATIONAL HOME BULLETIN
January / February 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Buddy Poppy/National Home Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Happy New Year to all! The Mid-Winter Conference is at the end of the month are you ready. I hope so Did you invite a child to make a "Buddy" Poppy Display in your area. If not, please do.



I know we are in winter, but you can still use this wonderful flower. The "Buddy" Poppy

When you go out to dinner or to the mall, take some with you so you have them when you need them.

I need to know how many you used in any project you are doing how many members helped and miles you traveled.

This Flower brings a smile to all that gets one.

When doing your display remember the theme (Our Veterans the Angels Among us) The "Buddy" Poppy Program provides financial assistance in maintaining Department and National veterans' rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the V.F.W. National Home. How do we use "Buddy" Poppies?

1. What ways can you use them in our other National Programs?
2. Remember, the more we Buy and the more we raise, the more help we provide for our Veterans.
3. When reporting, we want to know what you did with the money not the amount you raised.

This is from the National ambassador "Buddy" Poppy Chair Lisa Jackson. Well said Mam.

Has your Auxiliary started planning for the "Buddy" Poppy Display contest at Mid-Winter Conference not too late. I need to how many "Buddy" Poppy Used remember the size. And the Theme (Our Veterans the Angels Among Us). The rules are on Buddy Poppy Facebook Page. **Entry Dimensions must be no larger than 16" Wide 16" Deep and 20" High.** Ask a student to make one with the same theme. Use the "Buddy Poppy Flowers in your Post for Decorations and post the pictures on Facebook and report how many you used.

Put a Smile on a Veteran give them a "Buddy" Poppy while you are out in the public. Our Veterans need use to stand up for them and help them in anyway we can, lets lift them up in a way that show them how much we care.

It has been a great year thank you all for all you have done with the "Buddy" Poppy. See you all at the Mid-Winter Conference in January.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY
"BUDDY"® POPPY/NATIONAL HOME BULLETIN
January / February 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Buddy Poppy/National Home Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

The National Home's Mission.

The V.F.W. National Home assist military, Veterans, and their families with children, by creating a foundation of services and resources to achieve their personal and family goals to move forward in a positive, safe, and healthy environment.

Has your Auxiliary purchased a life membership Yet?

Malta has a lot of great information on the "Buddy" Poppy program utilize it.

Promote the V.F.W. National Home Help Line. 1-800-313-4200

Does your community know about the V.F.W. National Home. Put the information on social media. The more people know about the National Home the More people we can help.

Malta has information that will help you the goals and updates you will need.

This the V.F.W. National

We as Auxiliary members
our help.



Home QR code scan this using your phone.

it is our mission to help our Veteran's that need

Attention all Life members to the V.F.W. National Home. If you have not received any email from the National Home about what is going on at the National Home and voting, please call the National Home to update your information so you can vote as a life member you have that right.

All the Homes at the V.F.W. National Home are full great job everyone.

The New store at the National Home is getting started at the Administration Building.

I would like to say, The Auxiliaries are the most important asset to the VFW Organization.

Or mission is so important that we need each other to make it work. We have the best leadership team in place here in Michigan use them.

Patrick Rich "Buddy"® Poppy/VFW National Home Chairman
315 ½ E. Elizabeth St
Eaton Rapids, MI, 48827
Prichfred@prodigy.net
517-525-9300

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
EXTENSION AND REVITALIZATION BULLETIN
January 2024



Healthy Auxiliaries should continue to make use of the Tools on Malta, especially *Building on the Auxiliary Foundation*, and the Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit.

There are National Awards coming soon. Read up on them on your Guide Sheet and on Malta.

Review of the Healthy Auxiliary checklist found on the Chief of Staff Program page:

REMEMBER

Healthy Auxiliaries have things in common:

- They hold a minimum of 10 meetings w/ a quorum per year
- Dues must be current for officers (by 12-31-2023)
- The offices of both President and Treasurer were bonded by 8-31-23
- The 990 report has been filed with the IRS by 11-15-23, and copy to the Department Office.
- They are always working to recruit new members and retain current members.
- There is representation at all District meetings since it is mandatory for EVERY Auxiliary at EVERY District meeting to be represented, per the By-Laws.
- Red Flags are ok. They mean a little attention is needed. Don't be afraid to speak of your worries. That's the only way we can help. Please do not wait until April elections to say anything. We also expect an honest evaluation from the District President on his/her Official Visit.

The following deadlines will be coming up quickly so get prepared:

- The next round of District meetings of the Auxiliary year will begin in February so plan to have representation at those meetings. Remember that it is a By-Law requirement.
- The next audit covering the months of October, November and December 2023 is to be held this month. It is to be approved by the Auxiliary and into the Department Office by the last day of February 2024.

I hope you attend all of the training at the Midwinter conference this month.

Extension and Revitalization Bulletin February 2024

The District meetings start back this month. Every Auxiliary is mandated to have representation at all District Meetings. Failure to accomplish this is a definite Auxiliary **RED FLAG**.

Consider making a gift of dues for a member who might be struggling and did not pay by December 31, 2023. Use your relief Fund or be a dues Angel. Remember that they are no longer **in good standing** and if dues are not submitted by June 30, 2024, they are no longer a member **AT ALL**. They must rejoin and establish their eligibility. All years of membership are lost and they are as a new member (years wise).

These will keep you up to date on what a Healthy Auxiliary does. If you missed any of these, it is not too late to accomplish them

There was much information shared by all of the Department Chairman at the Midwinter Conference. Hopefully you were there.

Elections are around the corner. Remember District Delegates need to be elected, as well as officers, and Department Delegates. Check your By-Laws for appropriate dates for these.

The new 2024 Podium Edition of the By-Laws (Blue Cover) is available. Order one today.

Reach out if your Auxiliary needs a bit of help or just has a question that they need answered. The Healthier we are, the more we can do for the Veterans and Communities.

Let's all work to have every Auxiliary healthy and thriving this next year. Avoid those RED FLAGS as much as possible. If you have concerns, need help, or know of a post without an Auxiliary that would like one, please call my cell listed below.

Stephanie Krueger
10165 Fairview
Taylor, MI 48180
313-585-5066
stepherthevfer@aol.com

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary

BULLETIN

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org



National Theme: Banding Together for our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans, The Angels Among Us

It is a new year and change is upon us all. We all know change is hard, but we all seem to figure out ways to continue to work for our veterans. With all that is taking place, it is important to document what and how it was done. When members look back at this time in 10, 20 or 50 years (or more) in the future, they will have an idea of how we, as an organization, adapted and met the needs of our veterans and their families during the different years.

Connect with members:

- Prepare a monthly or quarterly newsletter or e-newsletter for your members. Give them ideas of how to help with Programs. Explain to them what is going on in your Auxiliary and in your community.
- Maintain an Auxiliary/Post Facebook page to share information. Post pictures of things that have happened at your Auxiliary and show everyone all the good that your Auxiliary is doing.
- Recognize member anniversaries, birthdays, and volunteer work. On Facebook, lots of time you can see who has birthdays, anniversaries, and who is doing what as members. It is a great opportunity to share their post or make a post wishing them Happy Birthday or Happy Anniversary for example.

Don't Forget to use MALTA Resources

- Use the VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide.
- Use a fillable press/media release form for activities/events.
- Video's on how to start Facebook and websites.
- Samples of Speeches

Did your Auxiliary **DO** or does your Auxiliary **HAVE PLANS TO DO** any of the following:

- Educate youth about the Pledge of Allegiance (in-person or through video conferencing)?
- Host a "Buddy"® Poppy Drive?
- Partner with another organization to better your community?
- Drop off items for hospitalized veterans at VA and non-VA medical facilities?
- Contact members of Congress regarding veterans' issues?
- Host food drives or donate food to a local food bank/food pantry?
- Donate gift cards so service members overseas can purchase items of their choice?
- Send Valentine cards to soldiers overseas or hospitalized veterans?
- Donate books to your local library, school, or literacy organization?

The last set of Bullet points we know members and Auxiliaries are doing, plan to do and have done, along with many other things not listed. It's so important for members to take photos and keep a record of the projects they work on at home or at an auxiliary activities/event.

The who, what, when where and why of an event is so important to the story – and history – of the VFW Auxiliary. Take pictures (and write down who is in them), keep newspaper articles or print out online news articles about what is going on in your community, your state, our country, and the world.

Don't forget to post on social media the wonderful things you are doing in the name of the organization.

Are you capturing your Auxiliary's history? If not, it is time to start.

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary BULLETIN

February 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES



To send all the pictures of your Tree ceremonies that you have already done or the ones that you plan to take to Nicole Koutz. It is best that you email them her at turtlelee@hotmail.com please let her know what Auxiliary the pictures are from and names if you have them. You can also text them at 989-620-6425. The Department President really would like a Book of all the different ceremonies of everyone planting their trees.

REPORTING

I know some think it is hard to report for Historian, but it really isn't!! Remember you can report that you post on Facebook, that you do Newsletters, that you use MALTA resources, that you are working on a scrap book, and that you are taking pictures. Many of you have not reported under Historian yet, and just know it's not to late, you have at least 2 quarters left if you we not able to report in the first two.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding video interview with a VFW Auxiliary legacy (longtime active) member.
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that submits a 3–5-minute video interview with a legacy Auxiliary member. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form and video interview to their Department Historian and Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Questions for an interview

- Hi, can you please tell everyone your name?
- What Auxiliary do you belong to?
- How long have you been a member?
- Have you been active the whole time?
- What kind of changes have you noticed over the years? (Please be honest in your answers) no one is going to judge; we want honest answers for this interview.
- What change didn't you like?
- What change did you really like?
- Going forward what would you like to happen for the Auxiliary?
- Our time is up, I can't thank you enough for you taking the time to join me today and giving us your insight on this organization.

Nicole Koutz
Historian/Media Relations
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Lansing MI 48880
989-620-6425 / turtlelee@hotmail.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY HOSPITAL BULLETIN January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Hospital Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. Don't forget the Star Raffle at Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. We need gift card donations. Denomination of \$5 to \$25. You can mail them to me or drop them off at the booth. The booth will be open Friday 8:00-4:00 (closed for lunch 12:00-1:00) and Saturday 8:00-12:30. The Star Raffle made \$1655 at Fall Conference. Thank you for donating or purchasing stars. Stop by the booth and sign a Valentine's Day card for a Veteran. Or just stop by and say hi. I want to thank my booth partner, Darlene Burcicki. I couldn't work the booth without her.

NON-TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS

- January 1 National Spaghetti Day
- January 15 National Hat Day
- January 26 National Peanut Brittle Day
- January 30 National Croissant Day

Don't forget these Non-Traditional Holidays can be found at www.calendarr.com/united-states/observance-2024/. These days are creative ways to celebrate with our Veterans in Hospitals or Homes.

REPORTING

3rd quarter reporting ends January 31. Don't forget to submit those reports. The reports I have been getting have been wonderful. All the wonderful work you have been doing at the hospitals and homes are amazing. Thank you for volunteering. I know the patients look forward to seeing visitors who aren't medical personnel. Let's put a smile on their faces and make their time at the facility as enjoyable as possible. If you donate or volunteer at a VA baby shower, please make sure you report. This can be split with Veterans' and Family Support. Divide money, your time and miles between the two chairmanships.

Hospital February 2024

The Star Raffle was a success again. I will post the total made on the Star Raffle on the Hospital Facebook page. Thank you for all the donations. I enjoy seeing all the members stop at the Hospital booth.

Non-Traditional Holidays

- February 1 National Freedom Day
- February 9 National Pizza Day
- February 22 National Chili Day
- February 25 National Pancake Day

February 11-17 is National Salute to Veteran Patients. The purpose of the holiday is to pay tribute to the Veterans who receive care at any Veterans' Affairs medical facility. This is a good week to celebrate this holiday with Valentines' Day. Honor the Veterans with store-bought valentines or homemade. At an auxiliary meeting, host a card making party after your meeting. An alternative is to bring store bought cards and have the members at your meeting sign a card. This is a great way to get youth involved also. Contact a local school and maybe an art teacher would make this a class project. Take the cards to a VA hospital or home.

Don't forget to report. I try to approve reports at least once a week. I look forward to reading the amazing work the members are doing for our Veterans.

Together in Service,

DeeAnn Miller
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Garden City, MI 48135
Phone: 313-570-4525
auxmihospital@yahoo.com

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary

Legislative Bulletin

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Legislative – Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans – the Angels Among Us

Hello Michigan

It is **2024!!!**

You know what this means?

It is a presidential election year!



It is leap year!



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It is the Olympics! – summer events.

Remember – as representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary we are to remain non-political towards any political party or candidate. What we should be focusing upon is the credentials of the candidates and how supportive this individual has been or will be towards the armed forces and our veterans.



Senator Stabenow announced last year that she will NOT be seeking re-election. This means a big change for Michigan's influence in Washington DC. I hear that ten individuals are vying for nomination as the GOP candidate. Not sure how many from the Democratic party want the job. Choose wisely who will be the next senator from Michigan.

Our focus must
needed care
duty armed



remain on those bills before Congress that will help veterans receive their and financial supports and those bills that will improve the lives of our active forces.

When reporting, remember to tell me what action members whom did the member contact, about what issue, did you ask support the issue?



took –write, call, email – to the congressperson to

Working a political campaign, working election polls and voting are NOT legislative activities and should NOT be reported as such – these are patriotic actions and fall more closely under Americanism.

Loyally

Aileen Adragna, Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative Chair 2023-2024

10 Cardinal Hill, Orion, MI 48359

Email: aileenadragn@yahoo.com

**Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Legislative Bulletin
January 2024**

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Legislative – Michigan

National Them: Banding Together for Our Veterans
Department Theme: Our Veterans – the Angels Among Us

February 2024

Let us review. Legislative work is winning friends and influencing others to issues concerning our military, our veterans, and their families. How do we do this? By getting to know who are the people in Lansing and Washington DC. The people who pass bills (action for the government to do) based on their beliefs and influences made by individuals, organizations, companies, lobbyists. Are you sitting back and just trying to get by in life? Or do you believe that the government should be held accountable for some of the poorer decisions made in the past that have proven harmful to veterans? Like defoliants spread in southeast Asia. Like contaminated water basins in Camp Lejeune and Hickam Airbase.

Did you go to the national website “MALTA” and download the legislative material and distribute copies to the community?



Did you report the “total” number of members who get Action Corps? Not just new members, but everyone?



Did you work on the priority goals by bringing the information to your federal representative and ask for their support on these concerns?

Did you invite your state representative/state senator to your Americanism programs or scholarship banquet? Did you report who you invited and if that individual attended?

How many letters did you/your members write to Senators Stabenow and Peters? How many letters did you/your members write to your Congressperson?



Loyally
Aileen Adragna
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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY

MEMBERSHIP BULLETIN

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Membership Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!! First off, I hope everyone had safe and happy holidays with whatever you did.

At this time of year our thoughts are often about renewal and rejuvenation of mind, body and spirit. I want to see us rejuvenated with lots of effort and energy to reach our next goal or even better surpass it.

We are in a new calendar year but not a new business year. We still have time to achieve the next level for our department and that is to be 98% by March 31st. I know this "Incredible Dept of Michigan" can and should be able to reach this goal or heck let's just make it 100% by then and we can breathe easy.

You have sent out reminders by now and probably a couple of times so now you must try to maybe do phone calls or Facebook messages. Don't be intrusive by trying to find out if there is a reason for that member not paying their dues. See if there is a way the auxiliary can help. Members who did not pay by December are not considered a "member in good standing". Dues must be paid to have any type of benefits like attending meetings and Cancer grants. If a member does not pay up by June 30, 2024, then they would have to refill out paperwork to REJOIN and go through the voting and initiation process all over.

Please do not announce on your auxiliary floor who hasn't paid though because that could be very embarrassing to that individual. Treasures should make a list and handle it discreetly. If one auxiliary member wants to help a particular person then that person could ask the treasure if that one is paid and go from there. Just be kind and respectful because we don't know what the members particular financial issues might be and that is the last thing, we want to do is alienate that member on top of dues issues.

Encourage life membership. Some auxiliaries I know hold a drawing once a year for either a discount or to pay one life membership for someone. Set up the rules and put them in your Standing rules. Like a member must attend at least 8 meetings a year or 6 meetings and volunteer/make something(funeral lunch/bake sale) and your name gets placed in the hat and one is drawn.

You could do that or something similar for Camp Trotter and National home memberships. Talk to your members and see what works for the majority who attend meetings.

Wendi Hall
Membership Chairman
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MEMBERSHIP BULLETIN

February 2024

It's the month of "LOVE". Michigan shows lots of love for our Veterans in so many ways. The way members go into our VA centers and hospitals and play games and do activities with resident Veterans. We tend to do a lot during the "Winter holidays" but what about springtime? It might be a little cold out and our members and Veterans are not wanting to get out in this unpredictable Michigan weather sometimes so it can get lonely in these last few months of winter so why not plan a Veterans Valentines dance or luncheon. Offer to carpool these members to your post home, set up fun decorations and music or games.

At least maybe do some "Valentines for Veterans". Do up some cards at your next meeting and address them or drop a note on the card and send them out even if it is after the actual Valentines Day. Showing "love" for our Veterans should never be tied to a certain day or time of year.

How are you doing with any new members you got this year? have you asked them to participate in anything yet? Remember to get them to give them guidance on our organization and any particulars of your own auxiliary but then you need to let them "settle in". Don't browbeat them the second meeting in to take an office and three chairmanships. They need to feel wanted and not pressured. If we pressure ANY member we could lose them, and we need to continue to grow and strengthen our Auxiliaries.

Keep sending in reports and checking the guide sheet for anything you might not have gone over with members. There are only a couple more reporting months left but we must all keep pushing forward and continue to reconnect with members we have, retain members, and recruit new members for the future of this organization. If your Auxiliary reaches 98% by March 31st you help the department, but you are also in line for a \$25.00 to your specific Auxiliary and if you are 100% by June 30th then another \$25.00 will be heading your way. Don't forget the lights, Camera, Action pin for recruiting five new members, they are cool! Good Luck to you all and keep up the "INCREDIBLE work".

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP BULLETIN January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Mentoring for Leadership Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

We are more than halfway through the current leadership year, so it is time to get down to the nitty gritty of Mentoring for Leadership.

This program is exactly what you think it is. Mentoring every member and hoping by educating fellow members, they will feel comfortable stepping up into, and embracing leadership roles in the future. I have been trying to encourage every Auxiliary to select one or more members to fill the position of mentor.

What is our purpose for appointing a mentor or multiple mentors?

The simple answer is, so assure that every member sitting in a meeting has the same knowledge and ability to join in discussions and actions of the Auxiliary. To allow each member to value what skills and knowledge they can bring to assist the Auxiliary in functioning to its' best potential.

The mentor should visit our national website. Click on Mentoring for Leadership. Then, read the bullet points for a better understanding of the program. Next, login to MALTA. Click on the Main Menu, then scroll down until you reach Mentoring for Leadership. There you will have access to a PowerPoint video by the National Ambassador, forms for Awards, and multiple resources.

My goal as your Department chairman has been to encourage you to Educate your members on National Mentoring for Leadership Awards. To encourage you to visit the national website to see what resources are available, then when the opportunity arises to recognize them for being the mentor.

We are an organization of do gooders. Thankfully so. When we focus on having all members aware of our objectives and clear goals, we become quite amazing together.

Respectfully yours,
Sandi Onstwedder' Mentoring for Leadership Chairman

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP BULLETIN
February 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Mentoring for Leadership Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Today is the day that you can make a difference in your auxiliary when you focus on making all members aware of our organizational traditions, rituals, and bylaws.

Sounds easy, doesn't it? The truth is it can be hard. A mentor must have the right personality and temperament. They should be patient and understanding. We all know the old saying, "Rome wasn't built in day?" Nor should we expect a new Auxiliary member to be right on target, and knowledgeable of our ways the moment they join.

When we all practice mentoring type behaviors within our Auxiliary meetings, the stronger our Auxiliary can potentially become. The way new members learn is mostly through the leadership practices of those conducting the monthly business meetings. Officers set the tone for the successful outcome of the Auxiliary. Whether it is demonstrated by positive enthusiasm, careful thought-out previous procedures, or a willingness to proceed differently than has always been done.

Auxiliary officers are encouraged to support the mentors of their choice. Allowing mentors to quietly speak to new members as the meeting is being conducted. By engaging in mentoring activities as a whole Auxiliary, you will soon notice how much stronger individual voices grow and aide in the success of the business being transacted.

Being a **successful mentor** is not a one and done appointment that you think of occasionally. It is the continuous efforts of one, or many, to achieve the best outcome for your individual Auxiliary! I believe, if you believe, this can and will be your Auxiliary's best asset.

Respectfully,

Sandi Onstwedder Osandi25@hotmail.com
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**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY
SCHOLARSHIPS BULLETIN**

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Scholarships Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Happy New Year!

Mid-Winter Conference will soon be upon us. Are you attending to help celebrate all of the students as well as the Teachers of the Year? If you have not purchased your banquet tickets or reserved your hotel rooms get-it-done as soon as possible. The Banquet ticket information is available on the Department website.

We have a lot of exciting things planned for the students this year and I can't wait to spend time with them. We have been collecting some snacks, drinks and other small things for a gift bag for their rooms and I know they are going to be excited to get them.

I know there was some confusion on the uploading of information, this is a learning curve for all of us. I am sorry for any issues it caused the chairman. It is frustrating for me as well with new things. Mike Martin and Jan Passmore are gems and taking care of it this year.

Remember that the Continuing Education Scholarships applications are due next month. Please promote these in your auxiliary. Many adult members have gone back to school and could use the scholarship money.

The Patriotic Art entries both 2D and 3D, are due March 31, 2024. Have you made your donation to the escrow funds? This is an auxiliary program, and we need to continue our support for our creative students.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Don't forget to get your reporting done!!

Stay Warm!

Denise Arnold
Dept of MI Scholarship Chairman
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**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY
SCHOLARSHIPS BULLETIN**

February 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Scholarships Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Happy Valentines!

Wow the Mid-Winter Conference was a blast! I hope all of you that attended had a great time. I know the kids did. The winners are looking forward to the National level of the competition. I sure wish I could be part of that. Congratulations to all the District winners and to our Teachers of the Year.

Please make sure your Continuing Education applications have been submitted by February 15, 2023.

This month should be your push at the schools, youth groups, etc. to find those artists within your community to participate in, and then enter the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest. You can also hold an event to help promote the program and raise money for your local or district awards as well as making your auxiliary donations to Patriotic Escrow Fund.

When submitting your art, please make sure you have read the application and rules completely. Also, make sure you are using the correct form, there is one for the 2D and one for the 3D submission.

Please review the guide sheets as the year end is quickly approaching. Then make plans to complete any incomplete tasks as well as report everything you have completed.

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT BULLETIN

January 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Veterans & Family Support-Michigan

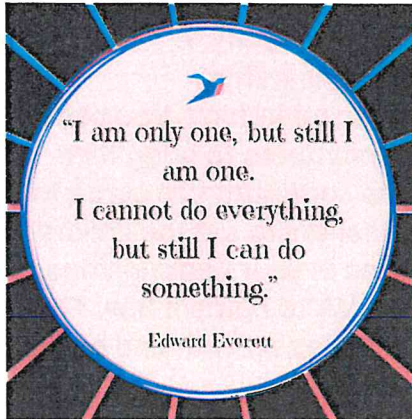
UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us



Happy New Year! Hard to believe it is already 2024! I hope you all had an inspiring holiday season. The end of 2023 provided us with abundant opportunities to serve and I am confident you were all able to participate in something. As of late, I have heard some murmurs about how some Auxiliaries just do not have the help to accomplish tasks like they want to. Please don't be discouraged! Even if there is only one person that is able to "get things done" you are still one and you are doing something! This is something to celebrate! Keep doing what you are doing; take one task at a time and enjoy the service opportunity.

As I have said, January is here and that means that our program reporting year is fastly approaching its end. As of this writing, I have not received a sound report from approximately 39 Auxiliaries! There are a few that have reported only under "other", which have been great opportunities for assisting veterans and their families, but what really counts is reporting under one of the achievements you see listed below. This list can also be found on your Guide Sheet at www.vfwauxmi.org under "Programs". I want to encourage all Auxiliaries to be reported at least once under one of these listed achievements this month. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me!

Achievements	Completed	Reported
Auxiliary utilized the Veterans & Family Support material/resources available in MALTA Member Resources		
Auxiliary promoted, participated, hosted/co-hosted with your VFW Post activities for any of these programs: Disaster Relief, Military Assistance (MAP), National Veterans Service (NVS), Unmet Needs, Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness		
Auxiliary provided direct aid to veterans, service members, and/or their families (i.e., meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.)		
How many Veterans, service members and or their families did your auxiliary help.		
Did your Auxiliary provide monetary donations and / or value donations and good/services provided to veterans, service members and /or their families.		

The Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 25-27 at the Radisson in Kalamazoo. If you cannot make it the entire event, I encourage you to come to the Program Chairman Year-End Wrap Up training that will be held Saturday, January 27, from 9:00 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.. I anticipate seeing many of you there!

February 2024

"The best way to honor those you care about is through acts of kindness"



February offers us the opportunity to reach out to our communities and encourage them to show acts of kindness to our Veterans! How may you ask? One way your Auxiliary can increase awareness and support for our Veterans, service members and their families is by hosting a community wide 'Valentine's for Veterans'. This is not a new concept but it is one we can do to be intentional in creating awareness. This is an opportunity to partner with other programs, like Hospital, Membership, Historian/Media Relations and Scholarships. You can host a drop off time for community members to bring their

homemade Valentine's to your post home, host an opportunity for the community to come to your Post home to create Valentine's or even partner with your local school to get the children involved in creating cards. You can then deliver Valentine's to Veterans in your communities, send them to active duty service members, or give some to your local VA to name a few. The possibilities here are endless. I can't wait to see what your Auxiliary comes up with and be sure to share on our program Facebook page.

If you haven't had the time to look at the National Awards for Auxiliaries, they are as follows:

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members, and their families.

- Citations to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members, and their families.
- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four (4) Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members, and their families.

2. Most outstanding activity and/or event to increase awareness of military suicide and mental health.

- Citations to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, service members, and their families.
- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the (4) Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event to increase awareness of military suicide and mental health.

These awards are also Department Awards. You must submit the form found at www.vfwauxmi.org under Veterans and Family Support to me by March 31, 2024! Please do not wait until the last minute. These can take some thought and time. You all have done such great work this year and I hope to receive many of these award forms!

Dates to Remember:

Feb 3- Four Chaplains Day
Feb 4 - USO Birthday

Feb 14- Valentine's Day
Feb 19- Coast Guard Birthday

Feb 11-17- National Salute to Veteran Patients

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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY YOUTH ACTIVITIES BULLETIN JANUARY 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Youth Activities Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us



WOW! A New Year! Mickey & Minnie are dancing into the new year "Illustrating America" AND are ready to "Get Excited for the Red, White & Blue"! HOW ABOUT YOU!

I'm sure by now you have contacted art teachers, choir directors, club leaders, and everyone who has anything to do with art and singing! These two competitions have the same deadlines MARCH 31, 2024, so think of them as a famous pair like Mickey & Minnie! Promote them together as a way to Sing out about America, while Illustrating America in Art. Make sure you go to the Michigan website www.vfwauxmi.org where you can find the entry form, info sheets and judges score sheets for both contests. Don't forget the Illustrating America Art Release Form. Everything you need to promote these contests is on the Website, press releases for both to announce the contest and to report who the winners are.

Mid-Winter Conference is coming up January 25-28, 2024 at the Raddison Hotel in Downtown Kalamazoo and we will need items for the Silver Dollar Table. Remember the money earned at the table is donated to Camp Trotter for the General Fund. Please bring your donations to the table in the room where all the tables are set up for programs. The donations will be numbered and when you unwrap a "silver dollar" with the number of a donation on the table you win & so does Camp Trotter when you buy "silver dollars". When making donations remember, please make it something you would like to get. Don't forget to report "How Much" you donated and what you spent at the Silver Dollar Table.

Have you participated in the Patriotism Through Literacy Program yet? Make sure you share what you do on the Facebook Page and then remember to report it to me. If you donated books to a classroom, library, or students did you remember to put one of the "In Honor of Carla Martinez Book Labels" you can find the pattern for the label on the Michigan Website in it. This is an important program that helps to make sure students learn about the past of America and how it relates to America today.

Auxiliary members working and volunteering with youth presents a positive Patriotic role model and encouragement to our youth, who are our future. Let's show we are "Banding Together for Our Veterans" because "Our Veterans are the Angels Among Us"



Evelyn Avery, Youth Activities Chairman 269-423-8129 (h) 269-491-0642 (c)
44936 C.R. 352 Decatur, MI 49045 email: averycow@yahoo.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY YOUTH ACTIVITIES BULLETIN FEBRUARY 2024

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Youth Activities Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us



Valentine's Day! Great time to make cards for Veterans. Join the Hospital program and have youth groups contribute cards to a VA Hospital near you. A great way for students to learn about Veterans and say thank-you to them for giving service to America. Make sure the group that makes the cards receive a "Support the Troops" Citation. You can print those from the website www.vfwauxmi.org as well as R.A.P. cards to give to young people for showing their patriotism.

It is important that you remember to collect information to fill out the National Award form for educating the community about Patriotism Through Literacy and utilizing the Random Act of Patriotism cards (R.A.P.). This is due to me by March 31, 2024. Sending in this form will earn your Auxiliary a Citation and may even earn your auxiliary \$25.00 and a citation if your project is chosen as the best in our Big Ten Conference. My dream is to have 100% participation in this project!



Even though Camp is closed this time of year, don't forget Camp Trotter. What about giving a Life Membership to Camp Trotter to someone in your family. Your auxiliary could have a drawing to award a Life membership to someone in your auxiliary who paid their dues on time as an incentive. Donations are important to support our Youth Programs. Have you made donations yet for the things on the Guide Sheet? How Much? Patriotism Through Literacy Program (did you donate books to a Youth Program? – count that as a donation). Donation to Camp Trotter?

Make sure you review all those Department Awards you can earn – and make sure you let me know what you did, you may be chosen as the "Best Overall" and make \$10.00 for your Auxiliary – it may not sound like much, but it could mean a new book for a young reader!

Make sure you post articles on Facebook and in the local newspaper on what your Auxiliary is doing to support the community youth. Sharing on Facebook will give other Auxiliaries a new idea! **LET'S ALL S.W.A.P. IDEAS!** Being a role model and encouraging our youth can make all the difference in a young life. We need to "Band Together for Our Veterans" because "Our Veterans are the Angels Among Us"



Evelyn Avery, Youth Activities Chairman
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