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**AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY**

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OCTOBER 2023 DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

From your President. WOW!!! What a roller coaster ride.

Homecoming was amazing. The group that was their shared lots of laughs, catch up with old friends and I hope learned ideas and lessons that they could take back to their units.

I was asked what my President’s Project is and at that time I didn’t know. My project was inspired by a comment made by our Junior Activities Chair, Crys Bauermeister. On February 3, the Northwestern Division Junior Conference will be held at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. I want to flood Lincoln with our faithful Juniors. In keeping with that, my President’s Project is to reimburse each Nebraska Junior their registration fee for attending. So, Units, Parent and Grandparents, let’s get our Juniors there.

I have also found out that the National President, Lisa Williamson will be visiting August 3, 4, and 5th. This is the weekend of Czech Day, so she will be riding in parades, working at an information booth for The American Legion Auxiliary, raising money for her National Project at the BINGO tables, and helping me present the second part of my President’s Project.

The second part of my project is going to be giving gift cards to The Fisher House. If you are not familiar with Fisher House, Veteran’s and their families can stay there for free no matter what member is getting treatment. They have need of cards for food, Target, and Walmart, so that they can get what a family may need.

Now with the President’s visit, I would like to have a banquet on Sunday evening, to welcome her and thank her for visiting, does any Unit want to take on that task? I will also need members to assist with the BINGO shift.

So let’s think ahead and see what we can come up with.

Hope everyone has planned their year and is in full swing with what they are going to do. I will be getting home from the National President’s Homecoming the first part of October and have many weekend activities. Lots of Fall Round-ups and the Eisenhower Pilgrimage.

I can’t wait to share my travels with you all. Make plans to attend the Mid-Winter Conference. I look forward to hearing about what you have going on as well.

Get your scholarships out to your schools, Seniors don’t wait until March to apply.

Remember who we are and what we do!!

In Service,
Lisa D Moore
Department President 2023-2024
October 2023 Newsletter

ABC BOOK 2023 – 2024

This year's ABC Book is completed. Some of you have them in your possession from attending the training in Wilber or District 10 Fall Round Up in Sutton. If you were not at either of those events, Unit Presidents should be receiving them via the USPS.

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MEMBERSHIP – Loree Hendrickson

Hello again, Members of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA)! As noted in my last contribution to this newsletter, as well as in the *ABC Book*, ALA's members are our lifeblood. If we can stop the slide and sustain our membership, our organization will keep **“Nebraska Strong and Faithful by Serving Veterans Always.”**

So how do we do that? **VISIBILITY!** We must show our communities what a strong and thriving organization we represent. And how do we make the ALA and our Units visible? As Department President Lisa Moore has encouraged, **FOCUS on our programs!** If Nebraska's units work the ALA programs, we will be visible. And if we're visible to our fellow citizens, potential members will find us.

What are some examples of program focus?

- Poppy Program – Many people make donations to honor their loved one(s) who have served, but they have no idea that these same loved ones more than likely give them the eligibility to join the American Legion Family – where they can then honor their loved ones' service every day. Consider attaching Member Benefits information sheets and applications to your poppies for distribution. **VISIBILITY** as part of the project itself!
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day – As the date for this remembrance falls on the third Friday in September every year, it inevitably coincides with the “Friday Night Lights” of high school football. In 2022, one unit took the opportunity to invite then-Department President Vicki Ozenbaugh to highlight her fundraising effort on behalf of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base by speaking from the Crow's Nest at halftime. The school is part of a co-operative effort for sports, so this **VISIBILITY** went beyond the local unit!
- Americanism – A few years ago, Osceola Unit #91 won a national-level award for a program under the Star Spangled Kids initiative. Specifically, the Unit had students research veterans in their community and then use that research to paint ceiling tiles at the Legion Club in their respective veterans' honor. Brilliant idea and **VISIBILITY** that continues beyond the timeline of the project!
- Children & Youth – Cody American Legion Family #319 hosted a back-to-school picnic in their community this past August. They offered an incentive to any member, including new members, who paid their dues by the date of the picnic, to get their names placed in a drawing for gift cards to local businesses. Their efforts renewed 23 members and signed up 4 new members with promises from 3 more potential members!! **VISIBILITY** in which the community itself gets involved!

Remember, every program event our units host is an opportunity to gain a new member. So **“Be The One”** to recruit or rejoin a Member in your community. Together, we can keep **“Nebraska Strong and Faithful by Serving Veterans Always.”**

PLEASE REPLACE THE AEF PAGE FROM YOUR ABC BOOK WITH THIS ONE

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND (AEF)-ELIZABETH PAES, CHAIR

Members Helping Members
402-677-0268 elizapaes@hotmail.com

The purpose of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible Auxiliary members during times of financial crisis or weather-related emergencies and natural disasters.

Eligible members may be awarded up to \$3,000. AEF funds may be used to provide emergency assistance to eligible Auxiliary members who have been devastated by disaster, including flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, fire or another catastrophe. These members will be considered for essential emergency expenditures up to three weeks after the incident or disaster. Grant funds may also be awarded to eligible members only for past/overdue expenses related to retaining their primary and/or loss of income due to medical and/or employment reasons.

Have you noticed the word ELIGIBLE is present in all these grants? To apply for these grants, you must have paid your current dues and the immediate past two years' dues. This is why it is important to keep your dues current and the Membership Chairman of your unit send in dues promptly. Have you paid your 2024 dues?

The job of each Auxiliary member is to promote awareness and knowledge and to support the AEF program. There is no budget line for the AEF program. All monies available for this program come from our donations. It is that extra \$5.00, \$10.00 or \$20.00 that comes from our pockets. This is truly "Members helping Members." An individual who gives an AEF donation of \$100 or more directly to the ALA National Headquarters within the fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) will receive an AEF donation pin. Pins are sent out quarterly.

Why not have some fun at your monthly unit meetings? Try a split the pot raffle. At every meeting each member can donate a dollar and if their name is drawn, they win half the pot, and the AEF fund receives the other half. How about donating \$1.00 for every member in your Unit?

National Awards Available: Unit contributing the largest amount (per capita) between 10/1-6/1, 2023/2024. Department contributing the largest amount between 10/1-6/1, 2023/2024 and Department contributing the largest amount (per capita) between 10/1-6/1, 2023/2024. For all fillable forms to apply for a grant and for many creative ideas go to your member portal at legion-aux.org/aef. Also, ask to join the AEF Facebook page. There you will find what others are doing to help.

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Changes, Changes and Changes. This happens to be a good change. Beginning in October grants for both the Disaster relief and the Temporary Assistance are changing from \$2,400 to \$3,000.

Please remember the only source of funding for AEF is our donations to the fund. Our members and Units must contribute to continue to help each other. Find positive ways in your Unit to donate the AEF Fund. Thank you.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT DAY – Lorene Bartos, Chair

County Government Day is sponsored by The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. In most counties, it is held in the fall. The County Commanders and County Presidents coordinate to plan this event. Auxiliary units assist with the event, some assist with lunch and attend the day visiting offices with the students.

A letter has gone out to County Commanders from Assistant Adjutant Eric Martin with detailed information on planning the event. County Presidents should contact your commander if you have not been asked to assist.

Several counties have been able to secure funds to help with the day from the County Commissioners. It is certainly worth the ask.

Many counties have an essay contest also. You should be in contact with your schools now. Sometimes a little extra encouragement from the unit will help in school participation.

Now is the time to communicate and plan this educational event. Don't forget to keep track of expenses and hours so you can report them at the end of the year.

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NATIONAL SECURITY – Vicki Ozenbaugh, Chair

Just what can you do for National Security? Here are a few ideas!

- Present a Blue Star Banner. Make it a BIG deal. Perhaps add it to your Veterans Day Program. Publicize it. Let your community know why we recognize our Blue Star Families.
- November is National Veterans and Military Families Month as well as the month we give thanks (Thanksgiving). "An estimated 24 percent of our nation's active-duty service members and their families are food insecure" (Military Families and Food Security: A Call to Action). Hold a food drive for your local military families or to donate to Offutt Airforce Base or Lincoln Air National Guard.
- Think ahead to Christmas and pack Christmas Stockings with goodies for our soldiers.
- Sponsor a Stop the Bleed class for your community or ALA Family. Visit www.stopthebleed.org or call 312-202-5790 for information.

These are just a few ideas. Check the ABC Book for more information and ideas.

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PHONE CADDY UPDATE

Included in this October Newsletter is an updated pattern for the phone caddies requested by some of our Veteran Homes. The new pattern directions say to make "ties" so the veteran/home staff can tie/adhere (Velcro) the caddy close to the walker or wheelchair frame. The first pattern had longer ties and the phone caddies were hitting the wheelchair wheels as the veteran moved. So the pattern was adapted. Remember that your local nursing homes might have a need for these phone caddies—make it a Community Service project!

UPDATED - Phone Caddy with Enclosed Outside Edges

People that use mobility assistance may want to be “hands-free” and organized as they move with their walker and/or wheelchair. The need for having a place to put one’s cell phone when using a walker and/or wheelchair led to the creation of “phone caddy” patterns.

Before beginning the construction of a “personal phone caddy,” consider the physical ability of the hands, and the needs/likes/dislikes of the person you are making the phone caddy for.

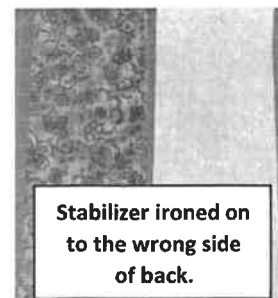
Materials listed below are suggestions and may not be all that are available for the construction of a “phone caddy.”

- **Supplies** - sewing machine (a walking foot is helpful on thicker fabrics), serger, iron, and basic sewing supplies, thread to match/coordinate with the fabrics selected.
- **Fabrics and Materials** used in making the “caddy” should be washable if the caddy is soiled or contaminated with substances. The fabric should be durable such as cotton, recycled jeans, decorator fabric, nylon, polyester etc. Fabrics can be selected from a quilting “stash.”
- Fabric designs and motifs should be selected according to the recipient likes/dislikes if made for a particular person. Patriotic fabrics are used in the example below. Two coordinating patriotic fabrics have been selected for each caddy for this pattern. It may best NOT to choose fabric with words or images for the BACK fabric, which will be turned up on the front side to create the phone pocket. Words/images would be better on the “front” piece.
- **Stabilizer Fabrics** are used internally to provide structure and padding to prevent scratching the phone. Stabilizers can be machine-basted to the outside edges of fabric or be fused with heat to hold it in place during the construction. Stabilizers such as fusible fleece, heavier fusible interfacing, quilt batting, light-weight foam (ex. Pellon-Flex Foam 1 Sided Fusible Stabilizer as used in purse making) etc. If the stabilizer is fusible, it will have a “scratchy” or “shiny” side where the adhesive is placed. To prevent frustration, avoid touching the adhesive with a hot iron, or the iron will need to be cleaned before proceeding. Sturdy denim fabrics do not need a stabilizer.
- **Hanger** – Facility staff would like phone caddies that adhere to the walker or wheelchair frame tightly using hook & loop tape (Velcro) or four individual cords that can be tied (like tying shoes) so the caddy will not rub against the wheelchair wheels.
- **Measuring and Cutting Directions:** Measure the cell phone width and length for personalized sized caddy. Using the measurements, add 1½” to the width and up to 14” for the length for both fabric pieces and stabilizer. The length will be trimmed later. If a pen/pencil would be inserted beside the phone inside the caddy, increase the width accordingly. Cut two coordinating fabrics and a piece of stabilizer the same size as the fabric. For this example, a 4½” X 14” was cut (not enough room for pen to be inserted.)

Construction Directions: Lay out the stabilizer on the “wrong” side of the BACK fabric pieces. Adhere the stabilizer by ironing in place, basting the edges or pinning well.

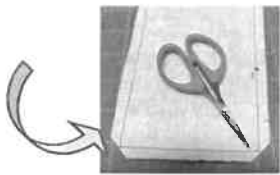


Facility staff would like phone caddies that are held tightly to the walker or wheelchair frame with hook & loop tape (Velcro), or individual cords tied tightly to the wheelchair frame to avoid the caddy from rubbing against the wheelchair wheels.



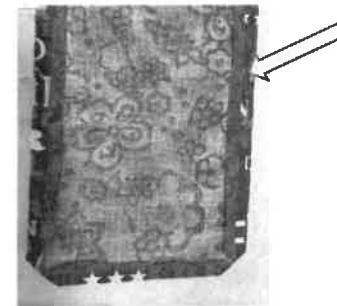
Stabilizer ironed on to the wrong side of back.

Lay the top fabric on top of the back fabric with “right/pretty” sides together. Pin generously in place. Beginning at the top right side, sew the pieces together with a 3/8” seam allowance. Sew down the right side, across the bottom and up the left side. Back stitch at both the beginning and end of sewing. Leave the top edge unsewn at this time.



Carefully cut off the bottom corners so the fabrics will turn inside out and make sharper corners.

Press the seam allowance toward the center of the phone caddy as in the image to the left. Press seam allowances on both the front and back so when the caddy is turned right-side out, the edges will be sharp.



Turn the phone caddy inside-out so the right/pretty sides are on the outside. Use a tool such as a “point turner” or knitting needle to push the corners square, without poking a hole in the corners. Once the seam allowances are pushed out and are even, press well.

Flip the bottom edge up to the top/front side to create the pocket. Determine where you want the top edge of the caddy to be when finished. The image to the right shows where the front is turned up 5”.



Pin carefully in place or tack the front to the back by basting stitches. Insert the phone and measure the backside fabric to the top. If it is to be trimmed, do so now, making sure there is an additional amount of fabric so you can turn it in to make seam allowances. Trim off the excess at the top. Turn the top side seam allowances inside 3/8” – 1/2”, making sure the corners are square and as flat as can be.



Cut 4 strips of cord (or bias tape) at least 8” long each so the caddy can be tied to the walker like tying shoes. Slip two hanger cords down inside the top edge on both sides. Stitch across the cording several times to secure it in place and seal the top edge of the caddy. This example uses parachute cording purchased at a craft store. Once the cords are securely attached, melt, and seal the remaining cord tails with a flame to prevent fraying.

Phyllis Schoenholz, American Legion Auxiliary Unit #193
 Reviewed by Adrienne Capek, ALA Unit #240
 Betty Remter, ALA Unit #193
 If pattern changes should be made, email to phyllisschoenholz@gmail.com

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION (VA & R)

Beverly A Neel, Chair

402 39 0152 bbneel1912@gmail.com

Greetings from one of the great pillars of The American Legion Family – VA & R. We are working with a full force of Veterans Home Chairs and VA Medical Center Representatives and Associate Representative. Awaiting to see if we will have Vice Chairs and Deputies. Your VA & R members have been busy reporting the activity at their respective facility of assignment. Thank you Unit Members for being there in support of our beloved Veterans.

This past administrative year on the National level, the ALA signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) for two well known programs; namely, Honor Flight and Wreaths Across America. Both programs are in need of Be volunteers for planning, implementing, supporting financially, and promoting their intended purposes to our communities. We can do that. Your respective District President has received more information from this Chair. Please ensure you share with your Unit Members.

This is a new avenue of journey for this Chair, and I must say the ladies I am working with have given me a lot of their patience as I circle the learning curve. There is always something new to learn. Thank you facility chairs and representatives. You have given me great support and in time I hope my efforts in turn benefit your work.

We are upon the Veterans Dollar Day and Gifts for Yanks events at our facilities. Unit members if you have time and can make at least one event this year, you will see “What we do,” “Who we are” and “Why we matter” in action. The appreciation you receive from our beloved Veterans through a smile, a tear, a handshake or simply a nod of the head, they love when we can share with them and put our attention to them alone. I believe if we could, we would do it every day. That is a big challenge, but any effort from each of us is greatly welcomed. Gift Shops at the VAMCs may or may not need volunteers; check with Representative Paula Pillen at Omaha and Vicki Cyboron at Grand Island and Karol Lockmon at Hot Springs, SD. You can find their contact information in the Department Directory and each Unit should have received its own copy.

As our traditional holidays roll around, please take time to send cards to “Any Veteran” at your closest facility. Your Junior members could do this project in the next couple months. Provide them the support and encouragement.

Blessings to all!

Veterans – Our Soul & Hearts Inspiration

October 2023

