



Department President

Ramona Henson

Soaring Thru Texas



Happy New Year, welcome to 2021! I hope you all had a glorious and safe Christmas and are ready to get back to work. I cannot believe we have reached the halfway point in our VFW Auxiliary year and Mid-Winter is just around the corner at the end of this month. We are so looking forward to seeing you all at that time, as well as the visit from our National President.

In my travels around this great state, I get questions, comments, complaints and compliments. I really appreciate the compliments and am most interested in your comments.

I would like to address one important thing in the Complaint Department. If you want to lodge a complaint against someone in your Department, District or Auxiliary, you need to know that vague insinuations are not the route to go. If you genuinely want something done regarding a problem you feel strongly about, be prepared to be specific with dates, times, etc. Make sure your “I’s are dotted, and your t’s crossed” and make sure you follow the chain of command rather than start with our National organization. National will only send it back to the Department of Texas.

In my District travels in December, I really enjoyed my visit to District 24, had a great meeting. Thank you to District 20, District 3, District 30 for the great visit and kind hospitality, all in one weekend. Unfortunately, our visit to District 10 was cancelled again. Hopefully, it can still get on the schedule sometime in this new year. Remember always, in a world where you can be anything, be kind.

Honor, Courage, Commitment For Our Veterans

Honoring Our Mission To Serve Veterans



Sandi Onstwedder
National President
2020-2021

Sandi Onstwedder of White Cloud, Michigan, was elected National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States Auxiliary for the 2020-2021 Program Year.

A Life Member of Renner-Lobker Auxiliary 3306, she joined on the eligibility of her brother, who served in the U.S. Navy from 1963-1967.

She has served the organization in several capacities including Auxiliary and District President, and as Department (state) President she earned Outstanding President of the Year for her membership group. On the National level she has served as Director for the Voice of

Democracy/Patriot's Pen and Americanism/Patriotic Instructor Programs and Big Ten Chairman for the Veterans & Family Support and Community Service Programs.

Sandi spent 35 years working as a Literacy Skills teacher. She served as Summer Director of VFW Camp Trotter in Michigan for 11 years and six years on the Michigan Freedom Foundation Board of Directors. She is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Military Order of the Cooties, and holds Life membership in both the VFW Camp Trotter and VFW National Home for Children. In her spare time she enjoys exploring the great outdoors.

Sandi and husband Charles' family includes five children, 16 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.



LEGISLATIVE Tammie Mosby – Chairman

I know that the holidays have been like none we have ever experienced. Please be sure that we keep a watchful eye on our veteran's that may be experiencing more than normal depression. This time of year can be rough under normal circumstances but with Covid-19 it is even more stressful.

There is a new mental health bill for transitioning service members. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Joni Ernst (R-IA) introduced VFW-supported S. 4900, the *Daniel J. Harvey Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Service Member Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act*. This important legislation would create a pilot program to incorporate mental health counseling into the Transition Assistance Program. This new training would inform separating service members of the resources available at VA health facilities to help them meet the challenges of transition from military to civilian life. This proposal was generated by a 2019 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow and shows the importance of grass roots advocacy. The VFW thanks Sens. Brown, Blumenthal and Ernst for introducing this important legislation and for their efforts to improve the mental health of veterans.

I am always speaking of bills that the VFW supports, but it is also important to know some of the ones they do not support. H.R. 7469, Modernizing Veterans' Healthcare Eligibility Act is one of these. The VFW cannot support this proposal at this time. While we agree VA's eligibility standards may not be perfect and could be

improved or streamlined, we do not think a complete overhaul of the system is called for at this point. We also do not think a proposed commission is the way to accomplish that goal. Commissions like the one described in this proposal are needed when subject matter experts are required for an issue and an outside commission is established. The VFW feels if changes are needed for eligibility, there is more than enough knowledge and expertise between veterans' stakeholders, Congress and veteran health providers that an expert commission is unnecessary. Additionally, a major issue we have with the proposed goal is it is too vague.

For more information on proposals like these, please go to VFW.org/advocacy and read on the proposed bills now in Congress and see where the VFW stands on them.

I am here to help you in any way I can. If you succeed, I succeed. You can email me at tjpurplerose@yahoo.com or by cell phone at 936-414-5293.

Please be sure you read your program books and follow the guidelines set out for our National and State priority goals. This is one of the ways we as auxiliary members have **Honor, Courage, Commitment For Our Veterans** as we are **Honoring Our Mission To Serve Veterans**.



YOUTH ACTIVITIES Mona Benotti - Chairman

Greetings, Sisters & Brothers! A new calendar year is here, and you have your Mid-Year reports behind you. Thank you for those reports. I read every report and made notes of your many successes. Now we enter the second half of the program year and push forward to finish in style. If you haven't already done so, it's time to think about contests and get your plans in place for **Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue** and **Illustrating America**.

Children ages 6 – 16 can participate in **Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue** by singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" using the exact words to the song. Their video entries to the local auxiliary should be received by March 31, 2021. Each auxiliary then conducts the judging and submits one winner to me by April 15, 2021.

Illustrating America has the same deadlines. Entries to the local auxiliary should be received by March 31, 2021. You select the first-place winner in each of the 3 age groups (grades 1-2, 3-5 and 6-8) and send to me by April 15, 2021.

Entry forms and more details about these contests can be found at <https://vfwauxiliary.org/resources/>.

Many of our auxiliaries have embraced our **Patriotism Through Literacy** project and libraries and schools are receiving many books. The suggested book list, divided by age groups, is at <https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Suggested-Book-List.pdf>. You may choose to recognize National President Sandi Onstwedder by giving a book in her honor. I've provided information on this and a label to place in the book(s) you are donating to our District Presidents to share with you.

Our statewide project, **Include the American Flag**, encourages us to do just what it says in every program, project, and opportunity that we have.

Let me thank each of you for the awesome job you are doing, working around obstacles and changing to suit the current reality. Keep going and remember that sometimes we have to think "outside of the box the box came in" to get the job done. If you can't find something you need, contact me so we can find it together: mlbenotti@sbcglobal.net or 817.805.3729. We show **Honor, Courage, Commitment For Our Veterans** as we are **Honoring Our Mission To Serve Veterans**.



CHIEF OF STAFF/EXTENSION
Donna James – Chief of Staff

We have many applications being returned because they are not correctly filled out. The applications need to be completed by individuals and checked by the investigation committee. Investigating Committee must make sure the application is complete before presenting it to the body for consideration. The following fields must be filled out. When checking DD-214's the information will be in it.

- Recruited by
- Auxiliary name and number
- Kind of membership (annual, life)
- State
- Name (correctly spelled and legible)
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Gender
- City, State, ZIP Code
- Phone
- E-Mail
- Post affiliated or non-affiliated
- Relationship
- Veteran (name)
- Post number (if affiliated)

- Name of campaign ribbons or medals
- Foreign service dates
- Location
- Applicant's signature and date
- Signatures of Investigating committee

Signature line following the Obligation (at least two)

Applications must be voted on by membership. If application is found ineligible, they can apply again at any time when proper eligibility is found. The reason needs to be reflected in the minutes.

If the applicant is rejected by vote, they shall not again be proposed for membership in the same Auxiliary for at least one year after rejection. Any monies paid need to be refunded to applicant.

The Auxiliary Treasurer shall prepare a duplicate copy of the original application, writing across it the word (REJECTED) and the date. Sec. 103.

We need to continue to build on our membership. It is a hard year because of the virus, but we need to continue to support our Veterans and Troops by always striving to get stronger.

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MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP
Denise DuBois – Chairman

Happy New Year to each of you and I pray that 2021 will be stronger than ever. I want to congratulate the mentors that have been identified and have guided the leadership to fulfill the goals of not only the local auxiliaries, but their districts and the department. I am proud of you! Our dedication to the organization must continue.

I look forward to seeing you at Mid-Winter and I know that we will be able to share in some fun times as we share our accomplishments together. Please reach out to me if you are interested in the mentoring program.

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and their families and the members of our auxiliaries. See you soon!

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VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT

Shawn Terry – Team

With horns blowing, shakers shaking and whirligigs making whatever noise that is, I say HAPPY NEW YEAR. It's time to look 2021 in the face and say, "We got this!" I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mid-Winter Convention will be held in Corpus Christi (my birthplace) from January 20-23, 2021. Be sure to check out the schedule of events and times. There will be some very good information being covered over the course of the Round-Up. I am betting there will be some fun also.

The Toys 4 Tots project was a huge success. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to see the great pictures on Facebook and read the fantastic reports. There is absolutely no doubt that the children of this state are loved by our auxiliaries, posts and communities!!

Now is the time to look at your Mid-Year Reports and see what else needs to be done to have that Year-End Report completely checked off by April. Going back and looking at the Program Development Book is a great way to refresh one's memory about the programs that the Veterans & Family Support Program has in it.

Please continue to keep our active service men and women and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

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MEMBERSHIP Barbara Koehn -Team Leader

Cheers to a new year and we have another chance to work on our membership. Membership is an ongoing program that should be shared by all members of your Auxiliaries every day of the year. This is our time!!!! Past and future generations are depending on you. Any accomplishments or achievements you might enjoy were only possible because of others who had toiled before you. Sisters and Brothers, you walk on a path cleared by others, so it is your responsibility to clear the path for others. You can be a path-maker or a path-blocker. It is all about caring and lifting up others so we can serve our veterans. We will band together in Sisterhood and Brotherhood to see that our Veterans and their families have the best

support and respect they deserve to live the best life they are entitled to.

Being part of this organization has been an immense blessing for me. I am so proud of the VFW Auxiliary Department of Texas, its Districts, and its Auxiliaries. Texas now stands at 93.40% and even though we are 3rd in the Southern Conference, I feel we have a good chance of creeping up to first during the second half of the New Year. 62 Auxiliaries have already obtained 100% or more. Special recognition goes to District 28 to be the first and only District to reach 100% so far. Many Districts are close behind. Congratulations District 28 for this great accomplishment!!! Congratulations, also go to Auxiliary #4403 (Port Lavaca- District 24) for obtaining 130.56% in membership and leading the way for our Texas Auxiliaries. Congratulations #4403 for a job well done!!!!

I am looking forward to seeing all of the District Presidents and their Membership chairmen and all of the Auxiliary Presidents and their Membership chairmen at the "Spirit of Freedom Membership Celebration" at Mid-Winter recognizing all those whose Districts achieve 95% and those Auxiliaries who achieve 100% by December 15. We will also have a transmittal walk at Mid-Winter so bring all your membership applications with your checks so we can boost our membership numbers.

Happy New Year. Always remember, be thankful for each new day, be grateful for family and friends and most of all, be blessed. The best is yet to come.

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AMERICANISM/PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR Irma Solis - Chairman

Happy New Year to all our Brothers and Sisters of the VFW Auxiliary. Even though this year started in the middle of our pandemic, everyone has been hard at work and thinking "outside the box". This is so clearly visible with the reports that have come my way. In this month of January 2021, we have Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Have a project where students can write down what it means to them about the "I have a dream" speech. I can hardly wait to see how those reports reflect the thinking of our students, young and teens. It would be a perfect way to "shine the light" on their outlook of history and future.

You can educate on flag etiquette. That is very important because people always like refresher classes. Of utmost importance is the remembrance of the sacrifices that our veterans made for us by fighting for what is right for the freedom of our country. By promoting our efforts and increasing participation in our communities, we educate our citizens on the values and beliefs of what our country stands for. Let us remember that this year is halfway done; but it is not over. This month is the beginning of a new year but let us look at it as the beginning of “our auxiliary year”. I so hope that everyone got their Christmas Wish, especially the one of “good health” for all the people on earth.

Here’s to seeing everyone at Mid-Winter in the beautiful and sunny Corpus Christi!!

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HOSPITAL

**Patricia Kessler – Team Chair
Merriam Kubena – Team Co-Chair**

Wow! Here we are halfway through the year. Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and will have a Happy New Year.

I received some checks in the mail for the hospital pledge; this was to be sent to Department, I will forward to Department. Please don’t send any checks to me they all go to Department.

Valentines for Veterans

We are now in January, so we need to get to work on Valentines. You can get the youth involved. This is a National project so please prepare and get ‘er done.

Women Veterans Health Care

Don’t forget the fastest growing group within the veteran population. Learn about the resources and health care services available and help them receive the benefits and services they deserve.

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Support

We need new volunteers all the time to help our Veterans. Even in this strange time our Veterans need help. Please recruit.

Special Project

Wow our special project is doing great. Like I said in an early article, keep your pillows to distribute locally. Make a report, take pictures, count how many pillows and where

you took them. I would like that before Mid-Winter. I want to give a complete report at Mid-Winter.

Reports

Let’s do better this next half on reporting. Some districts and auxiliaries are great but there is a lot more in the State of Texas that needs to report.

Thanks

I want to thank everyone for helping our veterans. I also want to thank everyone for all the calls, cards and most of all prayers. My doctor said he feels certain he got all the cancer I sure hope so, THANKS AGAIN!

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SCHOLARSHIP Norita Jackson – Chair

Happy 2021! Brothers and Sisters of the Auxiliary!

A hearty and robust “thank you” for your support and participation with your posts in publicizing and securing the applicants for the “Voice of Democracy” Voice/Essay and “Patriots Pen” essay contests. I can tell from the reports I’ve received that you all provided mammoth assistance in assuring that this program was a success. I’m sure we’ll be receiving good news shortly.

As we continue on, we are in the push for getting the word out closer to home. Our spouses, sons and daughters are our target recipients for the “**Continuing Education Scholarship**” available. This scholarship is available to any member in good standing who has been a member for at least a year and has a financial need in furthering their education. It is also open to that member's spouse, son or daughter who is 18 years of age or older. The applicant must answer all questions on the application, as well as submit 300 words or less essay describing their commitment to their goals and how the scholarship will help them in reaching their goals.

Even though the application process began in July 2020, the absolute deadline for all applications to be received at VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters is **February 15, 2021**. Please visit the website at: vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships for the brochure which outlines in detail the requirements and has the application. This scholarship offers a \$1,000 award.

Mail Application to:

Director of Programs
VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
406 W. 34TH Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, Mo. 64111

National Announcement of Winners: May 1

Let's not forget our budding artists in grades 9-12 as the VFW Auxiliary's **"Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest"** has an upcoming deadline of **March 31, 2021**. 1st Place Winner from each Auxiliary will be sent to Department for judging:

- District Judging: (Optional date) District winners must meet the Department deadline for judging
- Department Judging: Department Youth Chairman for judging by April 15
- The winning Department Entry will be sent to National for judging by May 5

Please visit the website for brochures, applications, and requirement details of this worthwhile opportunity for our youth. Look for more details regarding this scholarship in upcoming issues of "Our Two Cents". In the meantime, please continue to build on, publicize, and donate to the **Statewide Project** of "Funding the Artists of Tomorrow" through donating to the Artist Escrow Fund.

Happy New Year and continued blessings as we work through this time. Thank you for serving this organization with **Honor, Courage, Commitment For Our Veterans** as we **Honor Our Mission To Serve Veterans**.



AUXILIARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH **Susie Carter - Chairman**

According to our Mid-Year reports we have been working hard for our Veterans, Brothers and Sisters and community but let's see if we can't work a little harder the rest of the year to volunteer in our communities. When we participate in Auxiliary Community Outreach, we become better citizens of the communities in which we live. Volunteering outside our own organization is considered Auxiliary Community Outreach if the project was approved and recorded in the meeting minutes prior to the project.

Examples include participation in walks that benefit other organizations (e.g., Race for the Cure, Walk to End Alzheimer's, Light the Night Walk, Walk MS, Heart Walk, etc.) working with EMTs to host CPR training, hosting a blood drive, working with parks and recreation departments to plant trees, adopt-a-park initiatives and

develop community art installations, handing out food at soup kitchens and delivering food for Meals on Wheels.

I know that we as members of this organization are doing much more of this type volunteering and just not reporting it. It only takes a few minutes to write it up so please flood my mailbox with reports this last half. Stay Safe! And all my love and respect to each of you for what you are doing for our great Organization, Veterans, Brothers and Sisters and Community.

REPORT! REPORT! REPORT! REPORT! REPORT!

"Honor, Courage, Commitment For Our Veterans"
"Honoring Our Mission To Serve Veterans"



NATIONAL HOME/BUDDY POPPY **Tanya Jackson – Team Lead**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Let me say first, thank you for getting your Mid-Year Reports in on time. Those really do make our lives easier; and if you think we don't read them, we do. This is the way that we make sure that we have all of what we need to report back to the VFW.

Did you send your reports for **UNRESTRICTED FUNDS** to the National Home? If not please take a moment and do that. Did your auxiliary do a doll for judging? Well, there needs to be a report done for her as well. I am so looking forward to seeing those dolls at the end of the month.

Now, to make sure that everyone is aware of what is going on with these dolls. We will judge the District winners at Mid-Winter, that winner will not be announced until State Convention in June. All district dolls will be donated to National Home. I will make sure that they get there and I will be putting an address in February *Our Two Cents* on where to mail yours if you want to donate it as well.

We will have a National Home Life Member board going at Mid-Winter. There will be squares sold at \$5 each and each board will have one winner. The balance of these boards will go to National Home Unrestricted Funds.

Let's please continue to have a great year. Keep thinking outside the box for fundraising. Do something wild and report it to me so that I know. Remember that we are **"HONORING OUR MISSION TO SERVE VETERANS"** with **"HONOR, COURAGE, AND COMMITMENT"**!



**President Luncheon
Mid-Winter
January 22, 2021**

Send Reservation to: VFW AUXILIARY
Department of Texas
PO Box 15285
Austin, TX 78761

Deadline: January 6, 2021

Meal will be: Grilled Flank Steak, Red Wine Mushroom Sauce
Chef's Choice Seasonal Starch & Vegetable, Fresh Rolls, Butter or
There is an Option—Greek Pasta Salad, Flaky Tuna Salad & Grilled Chicken Salad
Fresh Rolls, Butter

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL DEPARTMENT AT 512-834-9190

ENCLOSE CHECK FOR \$ 35.00 PER LUNCHEON TICKET

ONLY 275 TICKETS AVAILABLE

PLEASE MAKE CHECK TO: VFW AUXILIARY, DEPT OF TEXAS – EARMARKED LUNCHEON

Number of Grilled Flank Steak _____ Number of Bayfront Trio Salad _____

Names: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



2020-2021 Mid-Winter Round-Up

Tentative Agenda

Wednesday – January 20, 2021

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Registration – Omni Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas
VFW Auxiliary Ways and Means
6:00 PM Wednesday Night Dinner with National Dist. Council Member, Donna James
(DUTCH TREAT) All are welcome!

Thursday – January 21, 2021

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Registration and Booths
9:30 AM – 11:00 AM Council of Administration Meeting – Nueces Ballroom
Representative Donna James Council Member (Ramona's Black Shirt)
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM Past Department Presidents' Luncheon
1:00 PM – 4:30 PM Training begins - Program Coordinator Andrea King - Nueces Ballroom
6:00 PM Invitation Only Event

Friday – January 22, 2021

TBD Arrival of National President – Sandra Onstwedder
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Registration and Booths
8:00 AM – 8:45 AM Joint Memorial Service – **Uniform With Jacket**
Dept. President, Dept. Chaplain, District Presidents
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Joint Opening Session
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Presidents Luncheon – Nueces Ballroom - **Purchased Tickets Required**
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Presentation of Past Dept Presidents
Presentation of District Presidents
Programs: Program Coordinator Andrea King - Drawings
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Spirit of Freedom Membership Celebration – **INVITATION ONLY** – Nueces Room

Saturday – January 23, 2021

8:00 AM – 10:00 PM Registration and Booths
8:00 AM – 8:30 AM POW/MIA Ceremony – Nueces Ballroom
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM Completion of Programs
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM Lunch
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Completion of Programs/Raffles
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM Remarks National President
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM Shuttle Service to USS Lexington
6:00 PM – Close Voice of Democracy Banquet **Purchased Tickets Required**

Sunday – January 24, 2021 – Safe Travels



SHAWN TERRY
Candidate for Department of Texas
VFW Auxiliary Guard

2021 – 2022
Life member of VFWA 7835
Endorsed by District 21

