

DAV Auxiliary Headquarters News



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Inside this issue:

From the desk of the National Commander	1
National Commander's Testimonial	1
Junior Activities	2
Americanism	2
Hospital	2
We've Always Done It That Way	3
A Profusion of Pillowcases	3
Legislation	4
Community Service	4

From the Desk of National Commander Linda Stake...

November is such a special time of year. Two holidays make it even more special – Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. It is a month to be “thankful” for our many blessings and a great time to honor our veterans and to thank them for our freedom.

I attended two wonderful veterans’ events during the month of November. The first one was November 6. Joseph Didden, an Arkansas PDC and now works in the office of Congressman Rick Crawford, U. S. Representative, called to make sure I was coming to Mountain View. The Stone Bank had its fourth annual Veterans Day Appreciation ceremony. The ceremony began at 10:30 am with live music. The program followed at 11:00 am. Special guests included U.S. Representative Rick Crawford, State Representative John Payton, and staff members representing other congressional offices, governor’s office and DAVA National Commander Linda Stake. Students from one of the Mountain View kindergarten classes sang, the Stone Counted Quilters presented a beautiful quilt to a veteran, and Congressman Rick Crawford presented flags that were flown over the Capitol honoring twelve veterans. A bar-b-q followed. The county showed their appreciation to veterans - and the veterans loved it.

On November 9 – 11, I was in awe at the Veterans Day Activities in Birmingham, Alabama. This was a well-organized, non-stop, three days of activities. Thank you, DAVA State Adjutant Carolyn Harris, DAVA State

Commander Danny Doss and Linda Doss for meeting me at the airport. We appreciate Chad Richmond, who had everything scheduled for us. We knew exactly the time and place for all events. We had dinner that night at Dream Land Bar-b-q. The next day we visited the VA hospital and new Veterans State Home. One night an award banquet was held and was followed the next day by a World Peace luncheon. I was amazed that the head table consisted of 60 guests! There were three rows with 20 seats per row! On Nov. 11 State Alabama State Commander Danny Doss and I rode in the parade. We were driven down the parade route by the “Artillery group” in a red pick-up pulling a trailer with a cannon on it. We sat on a seat in the front of the cannon. The most enjoyable part of the parade for me was waving and speaking to the people and thanking the veterans along the route. Another thing our group attended was a ceremony held in a park at the Raymond Weeks Memorial. He was the veteran who started Veterans Day Parades. You can Google him and read a lot of interesting history on this. (This would be a good “Specialism Americanism Program.”)

Thank you all members who showed your support to veterans in the hospitals, nursing homes and veteran ceremonies on Veterans Day this month. I hope everyone celebrated a wonderful Thanksgiving with family. We have had a lot to be “thankful” for this month. Our men and women of the military appreciate you. And, so do I.

Auxiliary National Commander’s Testimonial

DAV Auxiliary National Commander Linda Stake’s testimonial dinner is scheduled for April 16th at the Marriott Hotel in Little Rock, AR. The room rate is \$109, not including tax, per night. Reservations may be made by contacting the Marriott Hotel, 3 Statehouse Plaza, Little Rock, AR 72543 or by calling (501) 906-4000. Please ensure that you tell the reservations clerk you are attending the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary testimonial dinner. The Testimonial Dinner will be \$65. Checks should be made payable to Charles Stake, 1751 Lakeshore Dr., Heber Springs, AR 72543.

Attendees will be treated to a free riverboat cruise down the Arkansas River on the Mark Twain Riverboat, boarding at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 15th. Dress for the riverboat activities is casual. The riverboat cruise will be followed by a barbeque meal at 7:00 p.m. which is complementary.

Junior Activities by Darlene Spence, National Junior Activities Chairman



Hello and Happy Holidays to All,

The spirit of the season is upon us! Do you feel it? The holidays bring our families and friends closer together and bonding is usually more fun than ever.

Unit Leaders,

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF OUR JUNIORS IN YOUR UNIT'S HOLIDAY GIVING ACTIVITIES?

Although we have activities to support our veterans and their families all year, it is especially important that we involve our juniors during the holidays. Teaching our juniors the fun and joy of giving gifts to others during this time when they are thinking about receiving gifts is a wonderful life lesson. Please send me pictures of junior members helping our veterans and families within the community.

Juniors,

Gifts do not need to be costly, a small act of kindness is sometimes the greatest gift you can give. Helping veterans and their families during the holidays can lift their spirits, bring joy to replace sadness and replace coldness with a warm heart. A smile being worth a thousand words is real when it replaces a veteran's loneliness. This Christmas be committed to delivering love, peace and joy.

To All,

Stay committed to serving our Veterans and their families. Be kind to each other and have a joyous, wonderful Holiday!

Americanism by Diane Franz, National Americanism Chairman

Veterans Day has come and gone, but the tributes given on that day should never be far from our actions and minds to honor all that gave some and some that gave all. Remember our veterans during the holiday celebrations who may be alone during this time of year. Did you ever wonder how to honor our serving military and veterans during the holidays in your own home? Decorate a Christmas tree in red, white, and blue. Show your patriotism in your neighborhood. In many communities and cities, there are holiday parades, another great opportunity to show your pride of being an American, having the freedom to celebrate our personal traditions. If you are participating in a parade, instead of handing out candy, why not give a small American Flag? The children love receiving them.

Don't forget to post our Flag on "A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY" as proclaimed by President Franklin Roosevelt. At 7:55 AM, pause to remember all that lost their lives and the families that lost their loved ones. And if you are out during the day and see a World War II veteran (many proudly wear a cap) thank them for their service. You may even see a survivor of that terrible day.

In closing, have a wonderful Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, and New Year!

Hospital by Theresa Grabowski, National Hospital Chairman

The holiday season has crept right up on us. Hopefully all units have started plans for holiday activities at our hospitals and nursing homes. If not, there is still time to plan.

The first thing to do is check with the facility to see if a date is available and if there are restrictions to follow. It would really be a shame to plan something amazing and not have a date to go or an idea that has a restriction.

Here are some ideas that are simple. Decorate a patient's room, decorate a day room for all to share or make favors for the tables or the trays. These are ideas that could involve your Junior members. Check with the facility if there are any that have no family and adopt them for the holidays. In making gift bags for our Veterans, they can always use socks, lap blankets, t-shirts, sweat pants or writing materials.

You also could put on a Holiday skit or sing holiday songs. Have someone dress up as Santa and have junior members be elves or reindeers. Use your imagination.

We've Always Done It That Way

by Frances Costa, National Senior Vice Commander

"It's always been like this"; "We've always done it that way"; "this is the way things are done here."

We've all heard people say these things at one point or another, and truth be told these words can be uttered in some of the meanest, coldest, condescending, and uninviting tones that can be imagined. People may use those phrases to shrug off new ideas or keep fresh blood out of a "country club-like" atmosphere. Our members are not immune to this. Our own ways of thinking are sometimes given over to a mentality of complacent thinking, or maintenance, which squashes the initiative of anyone who tries to challenge, shake up, or evoke change.

When people say, "We've always done it that way," it can be a moment for pause. Always? Really? Always spans back years, not merely a generation or two, but much longer. Always is employed as an all-encompassing word, not an exclusionary one as some seek to use it. Always takes into account a tradition with a rich and deep history of following. Tradition without truth is simply error grown old. Traditions come and go with the passing of generations.

"We've always done it that way." Always? No! For the past 35 or 40 years? Perhaps. Does that make it bad? Not necessarily, but does it mean that we can't create equivalence where there is none to be had?

Pope Francis has told us to be surprised by the "freshness of the Spirit." Spirit does not just mean in a religious sense but the spirit in which we act within our organization or daily lives. A mentality of, "We've always done it that way," certainly leaves no room for freshness. Maybe we are called to look more closely at human traditions that have been created around us, and to examine those insidious notions of "we've always done it that way" approach to life.

I happened to see the following in my Lions magazine (I actually had it since 1997) and I thought I would share it with all of you. Many or all of us may see a point that is reflective of ourselves at one point or another. Not intentionally, but it happens and maybe we can grow our units member participation with a little self-reflection.

Ten Ways to Kill an Organization

1. Don't come to meetings.

2. If you come, come late.

3. If the weather doesn't suit you, don't think of coming.

4. If you attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.

5. Never accept an office as it is easier to criticize than to do things.

6. Nevertheless, feel hurt if you are not appointed to a committee. But if you are, never attend committee meetings.

7. If asked by the committee to give your opinion on some matter, tell them you have nothing to say. After the meeting, tell everyone how things ought to have been done.

8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when members roll up their sleeves and willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, say that the organization is run by a clique. When you do take the time to do something for the organization, expect to be rewarded.

9. Hold back on your dues as long as possible, or don't pay them at all.

10. Don't bother recruiting new members; let someone else do it. This can also apply to getting people out to our events.

Are you guilty of any of these? If so, why not do something about it and continue the DAVA's service to veterans and their families that our mission statement encourages us to do.

This covers a large area of why we cannot retain membership which is crucial to growing the DAV Auxiliary. Remember word of mouth is the best public relations tool. We need to put out a positive front to continue to grow. We should all do what we do for and with the DAVA for our veterans and our families. We need to help our Juniors grow into an organization with positive guidance by our leadership.

With the holidays rapidly approaching I wish all you the best the season has to offer, being thankful for who we are and what we do and pray for all of our deployed service men and women and for their families who miss them especially during this time of year. God Bless our service men and women and God bless all of you and this beautiful United States of America.



A PROFUSION OF PILLOWCASES

The photo show hundreds of pillowcases hand sewn during the Community Sew In held to benefit homeless students in Nye County, Nevada. The sew in volunteers also crafted several hundred drawstring bags for students in need. Hosting a monetary donation drive to purchase fabric & a lot of labor, was the DAVA Unit 15 of Nevada.

Share your projects with us!

Linda Stake

National Commander

Patricia Kemper

National Adjutant

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Like and follow the DAV Auxiliary to view and share important news updates through social media.

A congratulations to the Louisiana and Ohio State Departments for meeting membership quota!

On behalf of the DAV Auxiliary have a wonderful Hanukkah, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy New Year!

The DAV Store website is down until Dec. 3 tentatively.

Legislation by Ellen Timmerman, Legislative Chairman

Legislation is where the laws that govern our nation come from.

Our part in this as Auxiliary members is to let our legislators know what bill we support that will be beneficial to Veterans and their families. Contacting your members of congress is one of the easiest ways we can help support our veterans. You don't even have to leave your home to do this.

We have over 140,000 Auxiliary members and according to reports turned in for this past year there were 4,316 federal contacts and 2,517 state contacts. I know some units and states don't do reports but you do the work why not get the credit. If everyone just sent out one letter can you imagine the impact it would have!!

These are three of the letters that the "Commanders Action Network" (CAN) has sent out since the National Convention. They are:

***Bill Introduced to Address Employment Discrimination, H.R. 313;**

***Military Commissary and Exchange Privileges for Disabled Veterans H.R. 1292**

***Oppose any proposed bill, policy or regulation that would restrict veterans' access to VA's Individual Unemployability (IU) benefit**

We need to address these as soon as possible.

I hope someone in your unit is part of the "Commanders Action Network" so you can stay informed. If not please find one member who is willing to sign up and share the information they receive. You can create copies of the letters and bring them to your meetings so those who don't have computers or internet have the opportunity to send out letters to their representatives.

There will be a change in the report this year because there are times we are asked to contact our representatives about action that does not include a current bill.

You do the work you deserve the credit.

**GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO,
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!**

Community Service

by Lynn Prosser, National Community Service Chairman

Get ready for your emotional roller coaster ride!!! Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays are closer than we think!!! While most of us are planning huge turkey/ham dinners with family and friends, we must take time to remember those in our very communities that are less fortunate.

Encourage your Unit members to set aside some of their precious time to volunteer at the local soup kitchens and visit housebound members. Purchase an extra box of Christmas cards and stamps....you may come across someone that could use help in sending a few cards to loved ones!!! Add a few extra dollars in some cards and be prepared to give them out to a homeless or needy person....I promise----YOU will pass them wherever you go!!!

Hey, did you find any extra coats, sweaters, hats or mittens hidden away that could be donated to your local homeless shelter??? While making out your gift list, plan to purchase a few food/gift cards for a needy family...how about a name from an Angel Tree or Toys for Tots collection box!!!

Now is a great time to plan a joint project with your unit and chapter, "Partners Pulling Together." Adopt a needy veteran and his/her family and help with food, utilities, clothing, presents and even decorations.

Make those ("when I have time") phone calls to family, friends and neighbors just to say hello and let them know you care. Take to time to spread love, hope and kindness. The gift of giving of oneself, "priceless"!!!

"WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE DO, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE"....WINSTON CHURCHILL

From my home to yours...may all of your holidays be blessed with lots of love, good health, happiness and safe travels. May God Bless our troops, veterans and America!!!

I asked that all state and unit officers go that extra mile to educate, encourage and help members to begin logging their volunteer hours, miles and monies for annual reports. Annual reports are available on the National Auxiliary website and copies for each member would be a great tool and guide. We are a service organization and your reports can prove that we are "America Strong."