

TEXAS VFW AUXILIARY

OUR TWO ¢ENTS

VOL 35 ISSUE 1

July 2024

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



“Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice” “From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans”



Team Texas!!! You...the Brothers and Sisters of this great organization. How many times have you heard the words “teamwork” but felt like you weren’t really a part of a team? And how many times have you heard the words, “we have tried that , but it didn’t work”, or “but we’ve always done it that way”? Sound familiar?

Well, this is the year for real teamwork. The kind of teamwork where every member is important and needed. This is the year for change. The kind of change that includes every member and moves our Department into the 21st century. Every member can be a part of this giant step for Team Texas and I encourage participation, ideas, input and feedback.

Many hours of anticipation and prayer have gone into the preparations for this year. From my theme and logo, to ideas and plans for improvements in our daily office work, we will move forward. We will add equipment, if necessary, increase availability at the office, increase communication and in general, make us a true “Team Texas”. Our VFW has promised to work closely with us this year and we will also put forth every effort in order to work with the VFW.

Many of our “Team Texas” members have worked very hard to plan and be a part of our annual VFW Auxiliary training. Our chairmen have put together outstanding programs and awards. If utilized, our Team can and will show just what the best really is as “Team Texas” takes care of our Veterans and their families. Make plans to attend training, to learn, participate and take home great ideas, enthusiasm and the desire to do our best, taking “Team Texas” all the way to the top!!

Following our annual training, we travel to the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky where we hope to see our chairmen bring home lots of awards representing their hard work for last year. Good Luck to all of you!

As soon as we return from the National Convention, it will be time to start making official visits to the Districts. If a District President has not sent dates of your District Training/District Meeting to schedule your “official” visit, then please send meeting dates to the Department Secretary, Natalie Copeland. We are going to have a fantastic year as we remain “Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice” and continue “From Our Roots To Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans”.

Blessings!

Karen Jeffrey
VFW Auxiliary President

Sr Vice President

Irma Solis

I would like to thank everyone for their support as I was nominated and elected as the Sr. Vice President for the Department of Texas Auxiliary this 2024/2025 year. I am deeply honored to hold this office and I pledge my unwavering allegiance to this great organization and all of my support to Madame President Karen Jeffrey as well as the rest of the line officers.

As the Sr. Vice, it is my duty to carry out any duty that might be needed by Madame President or in her stead. I pledge to help her in any and all endeavors that may come before her. With that being said, has your Auxiliary input your Installation Report in Malta? OR have you sent it to Department for them to input? Deadline is 30 July, but we are shooting for the extra points to have them in by 15 July. If you need help, I am only a phone call or email away. I am here to support you the members. It is my belief that Team Texas is here to work together in a United and Positive manner. I will do my very best to be a team player striving to make Texas the very best.

Loyally,

Irma Solis
VFW Auxiliary Sr Vice



Junior Vice President

Shawn Terry

I am humbled and honored to be representing the Department of Texas Auxiliary as the Department Jr. Vice President for the 2024-2025 year. Thank you all for your continued love and support. Let us always remember our mission for this glorious organization.

Conductor *Laurie Hayes Wiley*

Many thanks to the Membership of the Great State of Texas Auxiliary for all you do within your Districts and Auxiliaries for our Veterans and the Communities. Looking forward to a great year working together.

Guard *Gerald Spradlin*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Membership for electing me as Guard for the Department of Texas 2024-2025. It was my pleasure to travel the State of Texas and visit with each District. I am honored to be your Guard this year. I look forward to serving the Department of Texas on this new level and being one of your Line Officers. I thank you all for your support and faith in me.

Gerald Spradlin
Department of Texas Guard
2024-2025

Secretary *Natalie Copeland*

Greetings! Hope that you are ready for a wonderful year! I am here to serve and assist all members of this great organization. Help me-Help You, by meeting deadlines that are set by National Bylaws, and Department Rules. I am available to help you and your auxiliary to be the best it can be. Always just a phone call, text, or email away. If I am unavailable at the moment will get back with you as soon as possible.

Special thanks to District 28 for all the assistance putting the training and program books together. Without you, we would be way behind!

Program Coordinator

Debbie Daniel

JULY...The start of a brand new Auxiliary year. So many new ideas on our programs along with new people, new program books, and a whole new look at our goals, plans, and attitudes. We are "Team Texas" and we are going to show the rest of the good ole USA just what Texas can really do.

The chairmen have worked hard getting ready for this new year. They are ready, willing and able to share their programs, teach the members and have a great time doing it. Stand by for an amazing training planned this month. We want all members to be enthusiastic about our mission, our goals for our veterans and being a volunteer for this fantastic organization. If we accomplish this, we improve the care of our veterans as well as their families, our youth and our communities.

Let us continue to be "Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice" in our communities as we remain committed "From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans"

CHAPLAIN

Beth West

Congratulations to all newly elected Chaplains!

The uncertainty of exactly what our duties as Chaplain are led me to read Section 816 – Chaplain, Duties of. The By-laws are pretty vague, stating “The Chaplain shall perform such duties in connection with their office as the Ritual may prescribe, or the President may require.” What does that even mean? I went to our friend, Merriam-Webster (the dictionary), for more information. There are four definitions for “chaplain”. Three of the four relate to the clergy. The only definition that can be applicable to the Auxiliary is “a person chosen to conduct religious exercise (as at a meeting of a club or society)”. That makes more sense.

But, being Chaplain means more than following the Ritual, at least in the Department of Texas. We are called upon to pray, provide a shoulder, send well wishes and condolences by mail, and what ever other duties our President asks us to. Please track all of these wonderful things that you do all year. Keep a journal or other log so that the end of year reporting is easier. It’s not the quantity of our cards, emails, and phone calls as much as the quality of their care and concern shown.

“Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder. Help someone's soul heal. Walk out of your house like a shepherd.” — **Rumi**



VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Missi Palmore Chairman

I could not be more honored and excited to be your chairman for this fabYOUlous 2024-2025 year we are about to jump into. Veterans and Family Support is the foundation that our Auxiliary House was built upon. As we all know living in our fine state of Texas, your foundation must always be well nurtured to ensure it stands strong and firm to hold up your house now; and for the years to come.

Finding ways to nurture our foundations (house, mind, body, or soul) can push our limits. And can truly cause frustration| doing the “same old thing| walking away| people shutting down| or loss of your “house”. Our National Ambassador, Evan Smiley, challenges all of us to be innovative thinkers this year. Always be creative and innovative thinkers. Texas is a big ‘ole state sisters and brothers we all know, did you know we have 1,300 soil types listed in our Texas. So, what might work in my neck of the woods for my foundation we could probably bet would be a miss down in the valley. The National President’s theme this year is, **From Our Roots to Our Branches Extending Service to Our Veterans**. Let us nurture those Roots, our Foundation of the VFW Auxiliary House this year.

Each of you can speak the name of the Veteran that brought you to the threshold of our house. They sacrificed to give us the freedoms we have today, and we are **Thankful and Grateful for the Sacrifice**. Daily we must continue to show our respect and gratitude by supporting our Veterans and the Auxiliary programs we hold dear. This is a house of honor, and we must keep it running strong.

For this year our focus for The Veterans and Family Support House is made up of a strong trifecta: Veterans & Military Support Programs, Childcare for Active-Duty Service Members, and National Veterans Service Suicide Prevention. Grab your gloves, check your soil type, open your minds and ears, and let’s get this foundation nurtured to ensure strength for the future. TEXAS you ARE going to do some fabYOUlous things this year and I can’t wait to see & hear them all!



LEGISLATIVE

Michelle Booker Chairman

Karen Kaylor Co-chair

Greetings to all,

I am so excited to be your legislative Chair and to have Karen Kaylor as my co-chair. My goal this year is to keep you informed with legislative laws that pertain to our veterans and their families while having a lot of fun.

Our National legislative chair Statewide project is to **Create an activity and /or event collaborating with the VFW Post connecting members with local law makers.**

It is an election year! What a great opportunity to create a "GET OUT AND VOTE "project" with your VFW. This can also be a way to get involved within your community. Helping those within your community by providing transportation to and from the polls.

Be sure to study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals, (Budget, Health Care, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Education, Employment and Transition Assistance Military Quality Of Life, National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA) they are released annually, so check the VFW website (www.vfw.org) they also can be found on the

Auxiliary website on Malta under Programs, then Legislative tab. for the VFW Action Corps weekly.

Encourage Auxiliary members to sign up by going to <https://voterveice.net/VFW/register> to receive legislative alerts. Take action. Get involved; attend your local town hall meetings. Contact your State legislative representative with issues pertaining to our veterans and their families. Yes, let's get excited and stay motivated when looking out for the welfare of our veterans and their families.

Remember, It's an exciting election year for our country. Let your voices be heard and get out and register to vote. Encourage and motivate family and friends to vote to help legislative laws be passed to ensure our veterans and their families receive the benefits they greatly deserve.



AMERICANISM/PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

Amanda Humphrey/Paula Welling

Good day to The Great State of Texas!! We are going to have a great **"Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice"** Year! I look forward to seeing everyone at State training in Allen, TX. We are going to learn a lot and have a great time with the Team building paint night and the Quarter Auction.

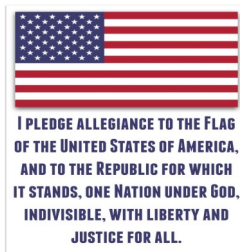
There are many important Patriotic Holidays throughout the year to promote Patriotism, some may be more commonly known than others, yet your lesser-known Patriotic holidays are equally as important. I hope your fourth of July will be a great success I truly look forward to reading those reports.

Speaking of reports your April reports for Gold Star Spouses Day and Purple up Day, your May reports for Loyalty Day, Victory over Europe Day, Military Spouses Appreciation Day, Armed Forces Day, and Memori-

al Day, and for June D-Day, Armed Forces Day, US Army B-Day, Flag Day, Women in the Military Day, and National PTSD Awareness Day can all be reported now!! For August hopefully you're making your plans for Coast Guard B-day, on the 4th, Purple Heart Day on the 7th, and Operation Iraqi Freedom on the 31st.

Please remember to email / turn in your Auxiliary to Post report form every month on the 25th or sooner to your commander and myself. We greatly appreciate all you do for our Veterans and want you and the Great State of Texas to get credit so please report what you do. Always remember we are here to answer any questions you may have.
tx.vfwaux.americanism@gmail.com

#auxiliarypatriotism



HAPPENINGS

July 4—FREEDOM RINGS

July 11–13 Council of Administration Statewide training, Allen TX

July 27-Aug 1 National Convention Louisville KY

August 7—Purple Heart Day

Sept 2—LABOR DAY

Sept 7—12th Annual C.A.F.E—VFW National Home

Sept 11—Patriot Day

Sept 14th—VFW AUXILIARY Birthday

Sept 20th—POW-MIA Day

Sept 29th—Gold Star Family Day

Sept 29th—VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS Birthday

CHIEF OF STAFF/EXTENSION/MENTORING

Patsy Kemp

Hello, my wonderful sisters and brothers. What a great year we are going to have as we work together as a team that is *“Thankful and Grateful for the Sacrifice”*.

I will be writing an article each month that will not only be directed to District Deputy Chief of Staff’s but, to District Presidents and all members. Why? Because every brother and sister should be Mentors, Membership recruiters and Team players, in their auxiliaries. Years ago, our now Past National President, Dee Guillory said, “She believed, People who do the most for an auxiliary’s advancement are often the ones who demand the least recognition”. Working together, we are stronger than the sum of each individual. “From Our Roots to Our Branches”, we have grown stronger and will work to surpass last year and I hope all of our goals for this year.

Mentoring - As we welcome new members, we must teach them – not only what we do, but why we do it. This presents an opportunity for every-one of us to step back and look at our Auxiliaries traditions. Many things have changed over the years providing an opportunity to refresh our knowledge so that we can better share things about our great organization. For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rules and patriotic ceremonies, reference the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws & Ritual.

This year one of our main goals (that includes me) is to **THINK BEFORE WE SPEAK**.

THINK T – Is it True? H – Is it Helpful? I – Is it Important? N – Is it Necessary? K – Is it Kind?

Our auxiliary goal is to have every auxiliary a GREEN LIGHT – or healthy auxiliary. Those that are YELLOW LIGHTS – Need some help or assistance. So, they don’t become RED LIGHTS. RED -LIGHTS May need special help to keep them an auxiliary.

Yes, we would love to organize a dozen New Auxiliaries but, encouraging the retention of existing Auxiliaries and revitalizing weak Auxiliaries is even more important.

REMINDER – ¼ Audit April-May-June due in Department by July 31, 2024.

Treasurers & Presidents MUST be bonded by August 31, 2024.

I am as close as the phone, email or mailbox. No question is a bad question. Until next month, may God be with each one. Now, set your goals, plan activities that will draw in the community, get your smile on and show your enthusiasm.

Mentoring

C=Catch the member when they join.

A= Ask them to participate.

R= Remember what it was like to be new.

E= Engage them in a Program that fits them

Mentoring is needed on all levels and is really easy. With educating our new, reinstated and even the older member in our auxiliary programs, maybe we can help save our auxiliaries from a slow death.

Mentors are defined as: 1. A wise, loyal advisor 2. A teacher or coach. This is what we need to be, to our members. We listen and advise – do not dictate. We teach from the NEW By-Laws not from memory. What we remember may have been changed in the New By-Laws.

Our goal this year is to Mentor and Educate members to be future leaders. We will remember the past as we use technology to push us into a united future. Working for the betterment of our Veterans, families and the VFW Auxiliary.

GREEN LIGHT - Healthy Auxiliaries. They use Member Resources from MALTA – Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit.

YELLOW LIGHT – Help – Caution – Headed to danger – Very important to be honest with Dist. President on her visit. Some signs that will lead to the Red - Light are: Can’t get officers or no officer change; No new members; Can’t get chairmen and/or no reporting of activity; Don’t attend Dist. meetings, State Training or programs.

MEMBERS (NEW OR REJOINED) (need to be mentored)

ALL MEMBERS (need mentoring)

EDUCATE NOW – NOT LATER

MENTOR TEAM (BE A PART OF)

ONE ON ONE

READY (TO HELP)

RED LIGHT – Usually means Suspension. But, with hard work, dedication and assistance, the Auxiliary can become stronger than ever and serve as examples to all.

I know we can do this if we put a little effort into it. I am more than willing to help you in any way I can. Contact me or President Karen Jeffrey. We will do anything in our power to help you.

This will be a wonderful year as we show we are “Thankful & Grateful for The Sacrifice”. “From Our Roots to Our Branches” we will extend service to our veterans.

God Bless.



WAYS AND MEANS

Tracie Frink, chairman Lydia



Lydia and I are so excited to be your Department Ways & Means Chairman. You will be receiving all of your Raffle tickets, Lucky Calendars, pins and our special Raffle at OTS. We are doing the Quarter Auction Thursday night at OTS we hope you will all come and have fun. We cannot make this a success without all Auxiliary’s bring a quarter auction item. We will be sending your reminders of when things are due to Department in future OTC.

Thanks, Tracie Frink & Lydia Leal

HISTORIAN/MEDIA RELATIONS

Marissa Anderson

I am excited Madam President Karen has appointed me to be the Texas VFW Auxiliary Historian as well as the Historian / Media Relations Chair. I also want to thank Bernie Adams for her trust and belief in me in this role that she has single-handedly dominated for years.

A picture is worth a thousand words. It's cliché, but it still shows to be true. In the state of Texas, we have 23 Districts, 180 Auxiliaries, and over 22K members. How many words can we speak on behalf of our Veterans? 1 picture from each District - that's over 20,000 words. 1 picture from each Auxiliary - now we're looking at 180,000 words. If half of our Auxiliary members shared a picture on their social media, through their community's news outlets, or through other avenues - we now have over 10 Million words spoken about our organization, our message, and our Veterans. Now is the time to utilize the devices that we all have on hand, and get our word out there. Smartphones, tablets, computers, etc. are within the reach of every Auxiliary Member today.

I am honored to represent our younger generations and looking forward to sharing my ideas towards utilizing social media and other technology. I believe that there is a sweet spot that we as a Department need to find as a group this year between comfort with how we've done things and a push towards utilizing different forms of technology and software to make our lives easier. I will be focused on training and resource creation throughout the year on the different avenues that can be utilized for Media Relations. This is not something that everyone will learn overnight or be able to utilize to its full capacity right away. This will be a learning curve for us as a collective and I am excited to be a driving force on this change.

While a big focus will be on the Media Relations side of this program this year, we cannot forget the importance of the history we gather on our Posts, Veterans, Districts, and Department as a whole. Whether it is through a physical scrapbook/binder or an electronic slideshow or look book, I urge all levels of our membership to keep track of all events and impact that we make this year.



AUXILIARY OUTREACH

Pamela Fintel -Chairman

Ilona Shipley – Co-Chairman

We are so excited to chair the Auxiliary Outreach program this year. This program is a little bit different from our other programs. The Auxiliary Outreach is a tool for forming a partnership with other organizations in our Communities. There are so many organizations and groups that your Auxiliary members can participate in during the Year.

A few examples of Auxiliary Outreach are:

Food Banks, Meals on Wheels,	Food Pantries, Soup Kitchens
Homeless Shelters	Salvation Army
First Responders	Blood Drives
Animal Shelters	Literacy programs (Adult & Children)
Senior Citizen Centers	Market Days/Fairs
Youth Sports	

This is a great way to help our communities, help our Veterans and their families and meet new people and maybe even attract new members to the VFW or the Auxiliary.

Just remember the more people we reach in the communities – the more Veterans we reach. Get your Youth involved since they are on summer break.

Make sure you vote at your monthly meetings for you or your members to assist other organizations in the name of your Auxiliary. Remember when you Volunteer, you must wear a VFW Auxiliary attire such as a badge, shirt, hat, or jacket.

You will report the hours and number of miles and number of workers. **YOU CAN NOT COUNT MONIES SPENT.**

The more people we reach in the Community, the more Veterans we reach. Our mission is to serve and help our Veterans and their Families by working together with our Communities.

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and their Families.



OFFICE INFO

Office Information

Hours: Monday – Thursday
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Phone: 512-834-9190

Asst Secretary/Treasurer

Secretary

Treasurer

Fax: 512-834-0747

Addresses:

Dept. of Texas VFW Auxiliary
PO Box 15285
Austin, Texas 78761

Dept. of Texas VFW Auxiliary
8503 North IH 35
Austin, Texas 78753

Office Staff

Secretary—Natalie Copeland

Treasurer—JoElla Menn

Asst Secretary—Margie Menzel

Asst Treasurer—Shary Tutt



OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

JULY 4TH– 5th—Holiday

July 9—July 15th State Trng

BUDDY® POPPY/NATIONAL HOME

Sally Jarret chairman Sarah Begley Co-chairman

Thank you, Madam President Karen Jeffrey, for giving us the opportunity to be your Buddy® Poppy Chairman. We are so excited and honored to be this year's Buddy® Poppy/VFW National Home Chairman. The Buddy® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW for more than 100 years. As the VFW's official memorial flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that we will not forget their sacrifice. Always remember those Buddy® Poppy drive donations go into your Relief Fund. We can't wait to see everyone's Buddy® Poppy reports, drives, and your displays! Remember, you can attach Buddy® Poppies to school supplies, Christmas stockings, and Easter baskets, etc. Don't forget, attach your Buddy® Poppy pictures on your reports.



The VFW National Home is available to military veteran families needing assistance to make a fresh start. Resident families can accomplish significant life goals by participating in the 1-4 year program. Which in time they are provided with housing, education, daycare, recreation, and assigned case managers at no cost. The VFW National Home does NOT receive any federal funding. It is operated solely by donations from caring people like us and our organization. For more information, please visit vfnationalhome.org/help or call our Helpline at 800-313-4200

SCHOLARSHIP *Ronnie Mote*

An exciting year of 2024-2025 lies ahead of us, so let's proclaim "Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice" and "From Our Roots To Our Branches, Extending Service to our Veterans" throughout a productive and record setting year! As Scholarships Chairman, a very **easy** way to show my thankfulness and gratefulness, as well as extending as much service to our Veterans as possible, is by educating and promoting the Texas Scholarships Program to our audience of Veterans, Auxiliary Members, Future Veterans and Future Auxiliary Members. The more educated this audience, the greater reach our roots and branches will attain, and the more thankful and grateful we will truly be.

Let's start by focusing on promotion, Promotion, PROMOTION!!! Helping promote the Scholarships Program spreads awareness to the communities we serve and are a part of. Our National Scholarships Ambassador, Dina Hudson, wants me to "Get The Word Out!", and this year I will do just that in several exciting ways. Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms, will be used extensively, followed by the more traditional approaches. On a Top Ten Reasons Listed by our VFW Auxiliary Department of Texas President Karen Jeffrey for each Auxiliary having a Facebook page, No. 9 was "**Further, Faster, Farther...** We need to **further** refine our outreach tools to **faster** attract attention to our organization, so we can extend our reach **farther** throughout our state, the nation and all around the world." One of the most **efficient** ways to accomplish this task is with Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). I know social media can be intimidating and overwhelming, but we're going to take a simple approach and make it fun and **easy** for everyone. Social Media provides an **effective** method for encouraging student participation, giving recognition to award recipients, bringing awareness to our communities and encouraging donations to help increase our scholarship funds. All this information will be shared via posts to the new TX VFW AUX SCHOLARSHIPS Facebook and Instagram pages. Make sure your Auxiliary FOLLOWS these new pages to receive updates on everything that relates to the Scholarships Program. As we educate our audience throughout the year, social media serve as an **easy, Efficient and EFFECTIVE** tool!

We will also be utilizing hashtags and QR codes. Please use **#txvfwauxscholarships** on ALL social media posts! And if you see a QR code, simply open your phone camera and scan it. Valuable information will pop up!

Next, our focus shifts to **DEADLINES!** Our first deadline arrives at midnight on October 31, 2024, for the two VFW contests we promote; the first being the Patriots Pen Patriotic Written Essay Competition, open to students in grades 6-8. The Patriots Pen theme this year is "My Voice in America's Democracy". The second is the Voice of Democracy Patriotic Audio Essay Competition, open to students in grades 9-12. "Is America Today Our Forefather's Vision" will serve as the 2024-2025 VOD theme. Details and applications for all scholarships and contests can be obtained by following our TX VFW AUX SCHOLARSHIPS pages. You can also visit vfwauxiliary.org and click on Scholarships & Contests, or go to MALTA-Member Resources-Scholarships. Our other three scholarship & contest opportunities will be highlighted in future TX VFW AUX SCHOLARSHIPS social media posts, as well as in future Our Two Cents issues.

Let's all work together to make 2024-2025 a fun, record setting year for the Scholarships Program, as well as for all our other programs!

**Student Participation * Recipient Recognition *
Community Awareness * Increasing the Fund**



YOUTH

Joe Akers

Welcome a NEW and EXCITING year! I'm Rodeo and I work with your Youth Chairman, Ole' Joe! Really, I'm the brains of the outfit since I'm his Service Dog. Ole' Joe is a high school history teacher. Together we live in Orange, Texas which isn't too far from Louisiana! People over in Louisiana say we all talk funny over here in Texas but I think they talk really funny... But we're all friends! Anyway, Ole' Joe and Me, We love going on adventures that we read about. What is really fun is that Ole Joe is blind and so we can do some pretty crazy stuff because he never worries about looking down and he loves to tell jokes. But don't let him fool you because his "Dad" jokes are really bad. He even has a shirt that says he keeps all of his jokes in a "Dad-a-Base" and the base is guarded by Marines!

So let me tell you about this year. Our National Ambassador is a nice lady named Dominique Garcia and she lives in New Mexico. Now the only things I know about New Mexico is hot air balloons, aliens landed their UFO's there and an old western legend about a "Robin Hood" kind of gunslinger that Ole' Joe says was named Billy the Kid! So anyways, Ms. Garcia has it that she wants y'all to do lots of reading to and from our Veterans! Now I don't know about you but reading...it better come with some pretty funny voices from the story's characters. By the way since Ole Joe don't read books all that well he has his computer read them and I like to change the computer's voices to make them funnier! Drives Joe crazy but I do it anyway! Now you may be asking yourself; Can I read just any book? Well, no not exactly. The books you are to read should be something about 'Merica! For me, I like hearing about famous people in American history, like George Washington, Andrew Jackson or my guy Teddy Roosevelt! These guys did some pretty cool stuff for our country. But maybe presidents are not your Jam. No need to worry because there are lots of fellas you can read about. Maybe you're an awesome Texan and someone like Davy Crockett is your thing. Or maybe you want to hang out with Sacajawea who hung out with her boys Louis & Clark. Or perhaps you're into hide and seek and so then you'd enjoy reading about Harriet Tubman – you know folks called her *Moses* right? Bottom line is that

reading can be cool if you're willing to put yourself into the story. But as Ole' Joe likes to challenge me in reading I want to challenge you with reading! So think about doing this next time you read... Next time you read a story, get a shoe box, I bet your Mom might have one hiding somewhere and find some things that remind you of the story you just read. Put those things that you have found in the box. Make sure the lid fits securely on the box. I know it is easier said than done but I have faith in you... You got this! Then label the box with title of the book, author, and the date you finished reading the book. At the end of the year take a picture of yourself with all of your boxes and a list of the books you read along with the dates you read them and send it to me! Afterwards, keep all of the boxes of the books you read and let's see who can get the most books read by April 30th, 2025. And whoever in the whole state of Texas gets the most read book boxes, I'll treat you to a steak dinner with DES-SERT! Man, I love steak YUM!

Next let's talk gardens, but not just any kind of garden. I'm talking VICTORY GARDENS! What's a Victory Garden you're asking? (I know you are...) Ole' Joe tells me about way back in the early 1940's, almost 100 years ago, during World War II people grew vegetable gardens of all kinds to have fresh vegetables for their dinner. I know, I know, vegetables...*na-huh!* But try this one on for size, if you grow some vegetables on your patio, balcony or backyard, then your Mom & Dad will have to eat them too! Ha-Ha Mom & Dad have to eat their vegetables too... Trust me - Gardening is fun and you can watch it grow too. Every day you can check on it, make sure it's watered and all and see how many vegetables you get from each plant. I like to sing to my plants but Ole' Joe says I just howl at them until they give up the veggies. I don't care, he has to eat them! So, start now and let's see who can grow the most veggies! Bet ya'll win because I have paws for digging!

Looking forward to a great year! Let's talk again next month! Hear Ya soon as Joe likes to say!

Cheerfully,
Rodeo & Ole' Joe



RECREATIONAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

Joe Akers

It's Summer 2024 and we are excited to begin another Auxiliary Administration! I am Joseph Akers – the Recreational Events Coordinator Program! YES, this is a brand-new program that has been created within our Department Auxiliary.

So, what is the Recreational Events Program? Although this may sound somewhat self-explanatory, this program encompasses not only taking care of our Veterans with building comradery and addressing issues regarding mental health through positive team-building events but also incorporate the families of our Veterans - "US". Our Program Mission is simply to not only show our support for our Vets but moreover to build stronger families and communities through Comradery! The Recreational Events Program will do this through organizing events for our Veterans and their families through using an extensive network of cooperative venues to include but not limited to sports, concerts, tours and various other mediums to provide events for all Vets and their family members may attend and enjoy.

Do note the catch phrase being used over and over again is "Vets and their family members". I invite you to take a moment to think about this phrase for a couple minutes in order to let it resonate in your heart. In recent past years our organization – on both sides of the Hall – have strived to build our membership which for a time was in decline. The Recreational Events Program is a means to promote membership and therefore we are challenged to reach out to ALL "Veterans and their Family Members" (see what I did there...) to show by example that our organization, the VFW Auxiliary, is an organization that not just supports our nation's combat veterans but we also support their families!

I'm excited to announce some upcoming sporting events in August & September that will kick our year off and running to an exhilarating start full of fun and momentum! Come join our Cajun friends next door on August 25th at Caesar's Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana as we enjoy watching the New Orleans Saints take on the Tennessee Titans for a Pre-NFL season game! Discount tickets are available for as low as \$15 per ticket! And if Pre-Season game is not your thing and you prefer a regular season game then our good friends in Louisiana have invited us for their season opener on Sunday September 8th to watch the Saints take on the Panthers at the Superdome. These discount tickets are on sale for as low as \$65 per ticket. For you MLB baseball fans, this September we will be holding our 4th Annual games with the Astros and Rangers as they both take on the Angels at Globe Life Field (Arlington) and Minute Maid Park (Houston) respectfully. "FREE" tickets are available for September 5th Rangers v. Angels and September 20th Astros v. Angels games. For more information on getting tickets please find me at one of the tables during training or give me a call/text at (254) 633-7460 for faster response. So break out your favorite team jersey and "lucky" socks and let's have a phenomenal year!



HOSPITAL

Glenda Hunt



A Big Texas Greeting to All our Auxiliary Sisters and Brothers in this Great State!

We are honored that Madam Auxiliary Department President Karen Jeffery has asked us to continue the Hospital /VAVS Program 2024-2025 and myself as your chairman. We know our Auxiliaries will continue their outstanding service to our Texas veterans. Our hospital program remains the same with veteran health care as the center.

Special project is to **Interact with and provide happiness to Veteran patients.** How can we help our Veterans to be happier? Simply ask them! How can I help and what do you need? Make a plan to meet their need! Be creative! Execute your plan! Serve with what you have! The smallest action that is done with compassion, honor and respect result in the biggest smiles from our veterans! Make sure you have approval of the VA or other medical facilities. Remembering that as volunteers we are guests at these facilities. Our veterans are always appreciative of any special card, snack bag, or anything we do for them. They know we care and support them.

A Smile is always returned with a Smile ☺

Summer is the time to get the youth involved with being a volunteer. The strongest and most important lesson we can teach them is one of service to our Veterans and honoring their service to our nation. Have a recruitment event. We can sponsor youth and other others who have an interest in volunteering. Volunteers are always needed. Contact your VA facility, nursing homes, hospitals and retirement homes to see what opportunities are available.

Start the Conversation is a black ring worn on the index finger as a symbol of respect and support. When asked about the ring, it is an opportunity to educate others on the issues that service members face, and the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health; and to open a conversation on a topic that otherwise tends to be avoided or ignored. Purchase one at Ways and Means to show your support. Various styles and sizes are available. Cost is 5.00 each. Proceeds will benefit Operation Daily Battle.

Let our smiles shine as we serve with caring hearts and helping hands.

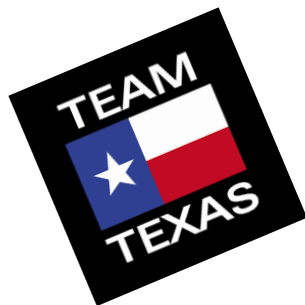
JOINT SPECIAL PROJECT *Cindy Robertson*

VFW AUXILIARY
\$75 + \$75 = \$150 “Team Texas” Always Gives 150%

DUE DATE: December 10, 2024

2024-2025 – A Year to Remember!

“Team Texas” commemorates the VFW National Home’s 100 Years (1925-2025)! The 100th Anniversary Celebration, January 7, 2025, will take place at the VFW National Home Tribute Park. Our mission is our promise: to honor our nation’s Veterans and active-duty military by providing help and hope for their children and families. VFW National Home provides a caring and supportive community where America’s bravest and their families can rebuild their lives.



DISTRICT MEETINGS

- July 20—Dist 16 SOI Santa Fe
- July 20—Dist 19 SOI
- August 3— Dist 20 SOI Post 2059
- August 3—Dist 16 Pearland
- August 3—Dist 8 SOI Burkburnett
- August 3—Dist 29 Post 2148
- August 4—Dist 1 SOI Post 8558
- August 10—Dist 24 SOI Post 3972
- August 10—Dist 5 Post 8315
- August 10—Dist 6 SOI Beeville
- August 10—Dist 9 SOI Post 2024
- August 10—Dist 17 SOI Post 12213
- August 10—Dist 4 SOI Post 912
- August 10—Dist 2 SOI Orange
- August 10—Dist 25 SOI Post 4372
- August 10—Dist 3 SOI Post 7843
- August 11 — Dist 28 SOI Post 8587
- August 11— Dist 18 SOI Post 2410
- August 17—Dist 17 SOI Pittsburg
- August 18—Dist 1 mtg Allen
- August 18 - Dist 13 SOI Kerrville
- August 20—Dist 14 SOI Belton

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE FOR ADVERTISING SPECIAL EVENTS.

We would like to hear from you! Do you have suggestions for the Our 2 ¢ents, Let us know what you like or do not like.

Email to:

Secretary@texasvfwaux.org

Have a big event you want the Department to know about? Send it to us and we will get it in. Remember, these are put together a month in advance. Deadline for input is the 10th day of the previous Month.

MEMBERSHIP

Gerald Spradlin, Chairman Cyndy Yancey Co-Chair

Hello, Everyone! We are very excited to be your Membership chairs! We will be challenging you all year to think about your recruiting and work on your membership. It will be a great year for Texas Auxiliary Membership because we are all going to work together to make it that way!

Invite New Members • Include Current Members • Invest in the Future of the Organization

Together we can do this. Invite new members to your events so they can see what you do in your Auxiliary. Make sure all your current members are included and asked to join in, even the ones who haven't been active for a while. Find out why and make sure they know they are wanted and needed if they can come. If they can't come, make sure you keep them updated on upcoming projects and events so if they can plug in, they will. Remember, those members laid the base for your membership and have family members who might be interested and qualified to join our organization. Invest your time in your future! Have a plan for contacting current members, reaching out to former members, having recruiting events, picking a mentor for new members, and make it easy for members to renew their dues (teach them to do it on MALTA!).

Are you ready to "Get Your Ask in Gear?" It's time!! Start working on your membership tree. Make two columns: Column A is family you **know** qualify for the Auxiliary; Column B is family that **may** qualify, then ask one to join. If everyone recruits **Just One** new member Department of Texas will reach 102% and all your Auxiliaries will, too. We challenge you to achieve this goal with us. Each member who recruits one new member will receive a pin. Let's see how many we can give out! We want to have to keep ordering them!

Things to think about:

1. Revisit why you are a member, who you are, and what you stand for.
2. Invite new members to participate.
3. Use tools like the Fact Sheet from National, business cards with your contact information, MALTA Member Resources, new QR code (National Program Book on MALTA).
4. Follow up with the people you talk to about the organization.

Let's make Department of Texas the biggest and the best Department of the VFW Auxiliary and have a great year!



SUNSHINE

Linda Henry

What an honor it is to be the Sunshine Chairman this year. I love sending cards and look forward to being able to send Birthday, Christmas, thinking of you and other cards throughout the year. Remember that there is a difference in my chair and the Dept. Chaplain. Our State chaplain will continue to send Get Well and Sympathy cards. My contact info is

listed in the program book should you want to let me know when a card is needed. Always "Thankful & Grateful For The Sacrifice" "From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans,"



NURSING SCHOLARSHIP

Renee Clark Chairman

Hello Sisters and Brothers

By the time you read this State Convention will have ended, the introduction of the 2023-2024 Scholarship Winners has taken place; auxiliaries participating in Honor the Nurses have been recognized; and the new program year is ready to kick off. Soon we will have State Training and then your District Presidents will soon host the training sessions and I am in hopes will share many ideas with you.

My name is Renee Clark and I am your 2024-2025 Nursing Scholarship and "Honor the Nurses" Program Chairman. Being that I do most of the leg (computer/contact/letters) work for you on the scholarship portion..... this should be an easy program to do and report on. I had the honor of chairing this same program back in 2015-2016 and just loved and learn so much that year. I cannot wait for us to get started on this year.

I will contact all the schools that offer nursing programs, in the State of Texas, regarding the scholarship. My goal is to have email letters sent out by early September. I will notify you via Our Two Cents once I have emailed the letters. If you have colleges in your area that offer Nursing Programs, please follow-up with them as well to ensure they are aware of our scholarship program, and have received the information and are promoting it. Print out the information from the program book and take it with you just in case. If you know any nursing students that are on track to graduate in the Fall of 2025 or the Spring of 2026 make a special effort

to get them the information as well. Your local newspaper is also a good way to get the word out.

Secondly (and your primary goal) is to HONOR OUR NURSES! As we are THANKFUL AND GRATEFUL FOR the SACRIFICE of our Veterans...we are also thankful and grateful for our care-givers, doctors, nurses, and anyone else that assists our Veterans. Let us show our nurses that they are appreciated, providing them with little gestures of kindness. Take goodie bags to the emergency room, order a pizza delivered to the night shift, offer to babysit, or host an event for them. There are so many ways you can show them how much you appreciate them.

***Having gone back to full-time teaching I am not be able to answer your phone calls promptly, but am quick to respond to emails. If you do call, please leave a detailed message.*

For quicker response you may reach me at email address

ReneeSClark@msn.com.

Remember SAVE yourselves some money – EMAIL me your service reports. Please put "NURSING PROGRAM" on the subject line of ALL email correspondence.

Until next time, let us all remain

"Thankful & Grateful For The Sacrifice" " From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans"



TEXAS STAR OF EXCELLENCE AWARD –AUXILIARY/DISTRICT

Laurie Hayes-Wiley Chairman

Mister/Madam President, congratulations on being elected as Auxiliary President for the 2024-2025 Auxiliary year. This is an honor, knowing that your Auxiliary/Districts trusted you with this position. I know that each of you will take it seriously and do your very best so the Department of Texas can achieve the Circle of Excellence goals. As you should know, as Auxiliary/District President you are a leader and a mentor to the members in your Auxiliary/District. This should not be taken lightly, and it has responsibilities and goals that you need to do your best to achieve! District Presidents you are a representative for your District members to the entire Department. Work as a TEAM toward the goals for each program, complete as many of the listed tasks as possible and make the necessary donations. Being a President is one of accountability, responsibility, and integrity. Above all, have pride in serving our veterans, youth and community! I am here for you 24/7, please do not hesitate to call, email or text.



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