



**AMVETS LADIES' AUXILIARY 75<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
**Greensboro, North Carolina**  
**August 18 – August 21, 2021**  
**Lead Delegate Report**

**NOTE: AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department of Michigan was represented by ten (10) delegates.**

**Business Session - August 18, 2021**

- Session opened at 8:12am by Convention Chair Linda Bonin. National Officers and Past National Presidents were introduced and escorted into meeting room.
- Chaplain Mary Lanphere recited the Invocation, followed by Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance after the pages posted the colors.
- National 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Karin Simmons recited the Code of Ethics followed by National 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Amy Stopyra reciting our Aims and Purposes.
- Roll call was called by Executive Director PNP Carol King and there was no correspondence to share.
- Convention Rules were shared by PNP Heidi Dineen Serpis. President Dee Baggett's request to appoint PNP Marvel Ruppell as her timekeeper was approved.
- The Convention Agenda was approved.
- At this time, a photo of National Scholarship Officer and Department of Michigan PDP Peggy Lu Liss was draped in remembrance. Tuesday evening, the Michigan Delegation was asked to provide the National President with some thoughts about Peggy in writing to the National President for her to share during her remarks. While we sat in a hotel room putting together special Peggy memorial pins, we worked together to provide the requested information which President Baggett read verbatim. President Baggett gave us permission to sell the pins to interested ladies to wear on t-shirt day with all monies raised going to the National Scholarship fund.
- **Our first guest, the Saluting Marine Tim Chambers** was introduced to attendees. Tim is the Marine found saluting motorcyclists at Rolling Thunder in past years and now Rolling to Remember beginning this year. During his presentation, Tim related to us he was stationed at the Pentagon and had just left his office for an off-site meeting moments before the plane hit on 9/11. His office was in the area hit and Tim immediately rushed back to assist with the search for survivors and victims, many of whom were his colleagues. Although he is a spokesperson for and works very closely with National AMVETS, Tim has learned it is Auxiliary who is the true heart of the AMVETS organization. Tim has written and published a children's book about why we salute the flag. The book is called "The Saluting Marine Presents Honor" and is available on Target, Amazon websites. If interested, you can follow Tim on Facebook (FB) at "The Saluting Marine."
- **National Officers' Reports**
  - President Baggett-asked we take the time to check in on our friends. Do not just copy/paste something in FB. Make a phone call. Pandemic depression was and is real. Make sure everyone you know is ok. National is working to update their database. It will take time but expect online membership and service reports in the future. Departments are encouraged to create public FB pages but to closely administer the site and ensure postings adhere to Social Media Policy.

- 1<sup>st</sup> VP Joan Sirek-Reported despite pandemic overall membership increased. From her Committee Meeting: Reminders – 1)Renewals not filed timely (by 12/31) are considered rejoins through the 3 years following the membership end date. 2)The AMVET signature on the membership application signifies Auxiliary eligibility. 3) The following 2020 Membership Awards were presented:
  - Locals – FL 1992 & 2006; OH 22, 51; 431 & 2021 [I missed the explanation of specific awards – apologies].
  - Departments (largest numerical gain) – PA; largest % gain – PA; largest # of renewals – MD; largest % renewals – 30-350 members – NE, 351-700 members – WI, 701-2500 members - MD, 2501+ members FL
  - Department Organizing most new Auxiliaries – WI
- **Guest – National Snappiest Faye Richardson – Green MI** made an impressive, entertaining entrance, and received a very loud round of appreciative “Boos”. Faye discussed the role of Sackettes and encouraged the development of new units. She then introduced National Saddest – Kathy Argyle – who noted the mission of their subordinate organization is to raise money for nursing scholarships. NOTE: AMVETS, Auxiliary and SOA may join Sad Sacks. However, Sackettes must be Auxiliary members.
- **National Officers’ Reports (cont’d)**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Karen Simmons mentioned there were three (3) recommendations from her Committee Meeting and they have been presented to the Constitution and Bylaws (CBL) Committee for consideration. 2020 Child Welfare Award winners are as follows:
    - Outstanding Department Award – winner – NE, runner-up – WI; Outstanding Local Auxiliary work in Child Welfare – winner – OH95, runner-Up – FL1992; Local Auxiliary doing the most Outstanding Work for the John Tracy Clinic – winner FL1992; runner-up – NC13
  - 3d VP Amy Stopyra noted her Committee had two (2) recommendations which been presented to the CBL for consideration. The following Community Service Awards were presented:
    - Department Outstanding Community Service – winner NE, runner-up WI; Local Outstanding Community Service – winner FL1992, runner-up TN101; PAWS with a Cause Founder’s Award – FL (no runner-up); Blood Drive Award – PA85
  - National Treasurer Barbara Guth provided her report. She indicated National Auxiliary applied for and was approved for funds from the first-round funds under the Payroll Protection Act. We then applied for and were approved for loan forgiveness. When additional funds became available, we again applied and were approved for a second loan. Currently we are awaiting word regarding our second application for loan forgiveness. It was also mentioned, the Treasurer’s current computer (provided by National) is eleven (11) years old and may need to be replaced.
  - Scholarship report written by Peggy Liss was presented by appointee PNP Charlene Kee. The Scholarship Committee met and submitted recommendations to the CBL Committee for their consideration. **Unfortunately, fifteen (15) scholarship applications were disqualified for failure to follow application**

**requirements.** Of those qualifying applications submitted for consideration, the following winners were announced: **2019-2020:** Scholarship Award Emily Ostrowski (WI), Sophia Blessing (OH), Claire Pate (FL), Chad Gerrie (MD), Katelyn Kennedy (ND), Grace Sayles (MI); College Support Scholarship – Gabriella Gormas (PA), Zaiden Mitchell (MI), Margaret Harris (TN). **2020-2021:** Career Start (\$500) – Grace Sayles (MI), Cheyenne Stoflet (WI); Scholarship Award (\$1000) - Claire Pate (FL), Hailee Wetzel (MD); Scholarship Award (\$750) – Kelci Miller (MD), Grace Sayles (MI). Local and Department Scholarship Awards are as follows: Local – winner OH95 (no runner-up); Department – winner FL, runner-up TN.

- PNP Charlene Kee discussed her Training Chair presentation entitled “Service You Can Use.”
- Sergeant -at-Arms Deb Gass indicated where to find her report and had no additional information to share.
  - At this point, President Baggett indicated names and personal identifying information has been removed from the National Auxiliary website due to ongoing, serious security problems and hacking issues. Beginning immediately, this information will be only published in the National Lines.
- Chaplain Mary Lanphere noted where to find her report.
- Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis shared several reminders: Be aware of and follow the National Social Media Policy; instruct members to ALWAYS contact Department first – if Department requires assistance they will contact National; Roberts’ Rules 2020 Edition includes updated information relating to electronic meetings. Several issues were discussed at the CBL Committee meeting. [Constitutional and By-Law changes are attached at the end of this report.]

**NOTE: Changes to the commonly donated items of cellphone chargers and/or USB cords will now be evaluated at \$5 each.**

- VAVS Representative Marie Rorrio reminded us that certification forms may be found on-line. Several scholarship award winners were announced (none from MI) but I missed names due to chatter. The \$20,000 Scholarship winner was from PA.
- Hospital Officer Cindy Rice told us the service reports received showed terrific effort despite COVID. Cindy also reminded us that when information, tickets, etc are shared, please do so. St. Jude donated a guitar signed by various country singers to Cindy as a fundraising project. Unfortunately, tickets were distributed but not widely shared. While \$2752 was raised from sales, if more tickets had been distributed it could have gone higher. Guitar winner: Dennis Durant ME. We were also reminded of the lack of applicants for our various awards. When you are making an online donation to St. Jude, go to [www.St.Jude.org/AMVETS](http://www.St.Jude.org/AMVETS) and your donation will be credited towards our organization. The following Hospital Award winners were announced: Most Outstanding Work by Department: winner NE, runner up WI; Local Auxiliary doing Most Outstanding Work: winner FL1992, runner up TN101.
- **Guest – Humanitarian Award recipient Dee Elledge** from Iowa was introduced to attendees. She discussed the project she began to support veterans and their families. Her efforts have grown from a couple of hundred attendees to thousands.
- **Immediate Past National President Barbara Valley** announced daily raffle prize winners (two (2) were drawn for Tuesday and Wednesday with winners from NY and TN each receiving \$889! The Department which sold the most

tickets for 2019/2020 MD received \$100 for their efforts.

- **Wednesday** session ended following some logistical announcements. Attendees were encouraged to attend the Joint Opening Ceremony and Joint Memorial Service.
- **Joint Opening** featured Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough who discussed several topics including hardships faced by our veterans and ongoing efforts to improve the service provided to them and the goal of ending veteran homelessness. A video-taped message from a representative from Taiwan discussing the close relationship they have with AMVETS, and the collaborative efforts made to help all veterans. AMVETS National Leadership also spoke. Riders President Tom McNamara mentioned Rolling to Remember 2022, the world's largest motorcycle event, which will be held again on Memorial Day, May 30<sup>th</sup>. It is not just for motorcyclists, it's an event for everyone. Volunteers are needed to help with staging, selling t-shirts and merchandise, and many other aspects associated with the ride. President Baggett thanked our veterans for our Freedoms. Commander Brown shared how hard everyone had worked together as a Family during Rolling to Remember. She also noted our long partnership with Humana and thanked them for their \$10,000 donation to the HEAL Program, a helpline established to troubleshoot and report issues in order to provide timely assistance to veterans and their families as they attempt to find appropriate **healthcare** solutions.
- The **Joint Memorial** was beautifully presented by the AMVETS, Auxiliary, and SOA National Chaplains. Mary Lanphere presented a wonderful memorial tribute to Peggy Lu Liss. Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Rosemary Perdue and I were both asked by President Baggett and honored to participate in the Memorial Service.

#### **Business Session #2 – August 19, 2021**

- Session was called to order and our Chaplain Mary Lanphere recited the opening prayer. Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass led us all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Executive Director Carol King took the roll call of officers, following which she relayed a slight mix-up at registration which resulted in some pre-registered attendees not receiving her convention book. Pre-registered attendees who did not receive a book were advised to share contact information with Carol who will resolve the problem for them.
- **National Officers' Reports (cont'd.)**
  - Americanism Officer Denise Rodzen reminded us all that Auxiliary participation in furthering the issues critical to veterans, especially women veterans, is essential. Also, the Americanism Contest packet is posted on the National website. Before moving onto presenting awards, Denise reminded us of the importance of following instructions or risking disqualification. Award: Department with most outstanding work in Americanism: winner NE, runner-up WI; Local Auxiliary with most outstanding work in Americanism: winner FL1992, runner-up OH95; Individual with most outstanding work in Americanism: Winner Cynthia Carter TN, runner-up Mary Connelly (sp?) FL. The Freedoms Foundation Weekend will be held October 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>.

**NOTE: Americanism Contest winners were not announced. Presumably, they will be posted on the National AMVETS website as has been the practice in the past.**

- NEC Council Chair Joanne Whynot-Butler (MA) discussed service projects and importance of correct

completion of application forms in order to qualify for National awards. The new Council Chair will be Barbara Montagne (AK).

- Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis presented the second reading of by-law changes **It was moved and seconded to approve new Article XV: Electronic Meetings** (see attached). **Carried.**
  - Executive Director Carol King presented her report and restated rationale for removing officer-identifying information from the National Website. Reminder: Share any officer or other information changes via email to Carol. IRS is 3 to 4 months behind in processing 990's. If you have an after-work question, send an email to Headquarters. You will receive a response during work hours. Also, remember to send any information to Headquarters in copy-ready condition.
  - National Snappiest Faye Richardson-Green presented her report and announced a special raffle.
  - NEC Reports were shared and are available in the Convention Book on-line. They begin on page 123.
    - MI NEC Faye Richardson-Green reported a donation of \$500 from Michigan's Department Officers to the National Scholarship Program in memory of our dear friend and National Scholarship Officer, Peggy Lu Liss. And, due to the generosity of Convention attendees, the Michigan delegation was able to donate another \$164 to the National Scholarship Program from the sale of the "Live a Great Story" pins made in Peggy's memory. Thank you, everyone!
  - Treasurer Barbara Guth distributed copies of the National income/operating expense report. We were asked to review. Voting to be held after discussion and any questions are answered.
- Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis **read the by-law proposal from NC to adopt a uniform change to read "AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary recognizes the official uniform as an A-line black dress, an A-line black skirt or tailored black slacks." Moved and seconded. After much discussion on the topic, the proposed by-law change failed to pass by standing vote count (did not receive a 2/3 majority vote).** NOTE: A by-law change proposal on this same topic may not be brought up again until 2031.
- **Immediate Past National President Barbara Valley** announced today's daily raffle prize winner from OH who received \$1,174!
  - Scrapbook Judging Chair PNP Evelyn McElvin indicated that, of the five (5) scrapbooks submitted for judging, three (3) were disqualified due to minute issues. She reminded everyone to **read the rules and follow them exactly.**
- **Guest – PNC Bill Kilgore** who is President of the National Service Foundation shared with us that our request for a grant was again approved but for a reduced amount due to pandemic-related issues.
- **PNP Kathy Berning**, representing the Board of Trustees, announced that Andrew Lumish, "The Good Cemetaryian" will receive the 2022 Humanitarian Award for the work he does cleaning veterans' headstones and sharing their histories. If you're interested, you can learn more about Andrew and his efforts by going to [www.thegoodcemetaryian.org](http://www.thegoodcemetaryian.org) or ask to join the group and follow them on Facebook at The Good Cemetaryian.

### Business Session #3 – August 20, 2021

- The session was called to order at 8:31. Chaplain Mary Lanphere read the opening prayer and Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Executive Director Carol King took the roll call of officers.
- **Guest – the White Clover Princess** (name inaudible due to chatter) was introduced to attendees. She thanked everyone for the support.
- **Guest – National Riders President Tom McNamara** was introduced by President Baggett who shared they had both cancelled their Testimonials so instead were having a “Thank God It’s Over” party on September 5<sup>th</sup> at FL Post 1992. President McNamara thanked Auxiliary and especially President Baggett for their support of the Riders.
  - **Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis** clarified via Roberts’ Rules why we had a standing versus ballot vote on the proposed uniform color change.
- **Guest – SOA National Commander Richard Thibodeau** thanked President Baggett and the ladies for their support.
- **Guest – AMVETS National Commander Jan Brown** again stated the need for volunteers from across the AMVETS Family to help with Rolling to Remember 2022. It is truly an AMVETS Family event. Whether or not you ride a motorcycle please consider volunteering.
- **Guest – John Tracy Center Representative** (name inaudible due to chatter) via video due to pandemic restrictions. Highlighted our 46-year partnership with JTC and the difference made by donations from our AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary.
- **Guest – St. Jude’s Hospital Representative** (name inaudible due to chatter) via video as she was unable to attend in person. She indicated that 80% of the hospital’s operating costs are raised through donations, allowing them to offer services to children at no expense to families. Through research sponsored through St. Jude’s, the childhood cancer survival rate has grown from 20% to where it currently sits at 80%. But it is still not good enough. The goal has always been and will remain that no child will die of cancer. Donations from Auxiliary to their hospital are greatly appreciated.
- **Madam President** announced receipt of donations of \$500 and \$300 from AMVETS and Commander Brown (and PNC JP Brown), respectively towards her Freedoms Foundation project.
- **Guests – PAWS CEO Michelle Suchovsky and Representative Carrie Simmons** who brought with them two (2) four-legged PAWS representatives whose names I missed due to chatter. Michelle discussed the Auxiliary partnership with PAWS. National Auxiliary 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Amy Stopyra presented Michelle with a check of \$30,562 from our nationwide fundraising efforts.
- **Guest – Freedoms Foundation Representative Jason Rey** (sp?) discussed the partnership with Auxiliary which began in 1954. Jason indicated that the Foundation’s current campaign is focused on expanding communications and marketing their programs. They are also working on fundraising to help with sorely overdue building

renovations. From a combination of nationwide donations for Freedoms Foundation in general and those earmarked for the President's Project, Americanism Officer presented Jason with a check in the amount of \$23,672.

- **National Officers' Reports (cont'd.)**

- Treasurer Barbara Guth presented the proposed budget for a second reading. **Each section of the budget for 2021-2022 received a passing vote.**
- 2021 Convention Chair Linda Bonin shared the Credentials Report and thanked attendees for their patience.
- Honors and Awards Chair PNP Evelyn McElvin kicked off the programs by mentioning the goal is to rewrite some award instructions to reduce confusion for future applicants. [NOTE: Although Michigan did not receive any Department or Local-level winner or runner-up awards, many certificates were received. These were distributed to those delegates present to return to their Auxiliaries. Others received will be distributed at Fall Conference. However, Michigan (along with other Departments) did receive a very nice Freedoms Foundation plaque and certificate in gratitude for our donation towards their programs.]
- National 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Karin Simmons reported a check in the amount of \$20,211.86 representing nationwide donations will be sent to the John Tracy Center. Karin also challenged Departments to strive towards doubling that amount for 2022.
- Executive Director Carol King announced the winners of two (2) special raffles which resulted in a total amount raised of \$770 with \$385 going towards the President's project and \$385 going to the Training Committee.
- **PNP Marvell Ruppel announced** the Freedoms Foundation Seminar for the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Americanism Contest winners for 2021 has been cancelled by AMVETS. Freedoms Foundation did not cancel this program. Discussion is underway to determine whether or not it is feasible to host the 2020, 2021, and 2022 winners at next year's program.
- **Immediate PNP Barb Valley** announced today's raffle winner from Indiana won \$1365!
- After it was proposed, attendees passed a motion to cancel the afternoon's scheduled General Caucus.

#### **Business Session #4 – August 21, 2021**

- Session was called to order at 9:00. Chaplain Mary Lanphere recited the opening prayer. Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass led us all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Executive Director Carol King took the roll call of officers.
- It was shared that the National SOA has approved the change of their annual event to "Legislative Action Week (LAW)". The former name for this event, "Storm the Hill" was deemed no longer appropriate due to the circumstances associated with January 6, 2021.
  - Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis presented the following:

- **Motion which was seconded to change the name of “Storm the Hill” to “Legislative Action Week (LAW) as noted above anywhere it appears in Auxiliary manual. Carried.**
  - **Motion which was seconded to approve the Election Rules as read. Carried.**
- President Baggett made the following announcements regarding Auxiliary Awards presented during the previous night’s banquet: **Auxiliary of the Year – Washington 1; Department of the Year – Ohio; Member of the Year – Kathy Connelly (sp?) of Mount Dora Florida Auxiliary 1992.**
- **Guest – Junior AMVETS President Abigail Lewis** noted the Junior AMVET of the Year Award went to Sabrina Bullock from AMVETS National Headquarters; Juniors Silver Helmet Winner – Bob V (?) of PA. The winner of the Juniors 50/50 winner is Kathy Argyle. Abigail also introduced incoming officers., including President Joseph Stopyra or PA.
  - Juniors Coordinator Fran McGurk noted the importance of getting children involved in the Juniors program and encouraged more chapters be started.
- Convention Chair Linda Bonin presented the Final Credentials report. After Department delegations reported changes, the final report of voting strength showed 210 total delegates, with 105 as the majority and 140 as the 2/3 vote.
- Treasurer Barbara Guth explained there were questions as to why the donations listed in the Convention Book differ from the amounts written at Convention. This difference occurs due to publishing deadlines as well as IRS reporting deadlines. Barbara also reminded everyone to please cash any checks received as soon as possible.
- President Baggett opened elections with all of the following incoming officers for 2021 – 2022 elected by affirmation:
  - President Joan Sirek of Wisconsin
  - First Vice President Karin Simmons of Alaska
  - Second Vice President Amy Stopyra of Pennsylvania
  - Third Vice President Cindy Rice of Ohio
  - Treasurer Barbara Guth of Kentucky
  - Americanism Officer Mary Lanphere of New York
  - Scholarship Officer Laurie Shea of Illinois
  - Scholarship Officer Laura Bugaj New York
  - Chaplain Alice Delzer North Dakota
  - Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass Indiana

Congratulations to all newly elected officers.

- Auxiliary Member of the Year Kathy Connelly (sp?) generously donated her cash award to President Baggett's project.
- It was announced that the Post-Convention NEC would begin at 11am, with Joint Installation occurring at 2pm.
- Attendees were asked to send sympathy cards to Shelby Rhodes, past NEC from PA, who's daughter Robin passed away recent: 4820 Old Harrisburg Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325-7589.
- **Immediate PNP Barb Valley** announced today's raffle winner from Washington won \$1533!
- Sergeant-at-Arms Deb Gass and pages retired the colors. Chaplain Mary Lanphere recited the closing prayer.