

**The American Legion Auxiliary  
Americanism Program  
Outreach Committee**

“Americanism is a question of principle, of idealism, of character. It is not a matter of birthplace, or creed, or line of descent.”

Theodore Roosevelt

### National Americanism Program 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Virtual Meeting

The Americanism National Committee met with the Department Chairman and guests, which included our National Vice President, Trish Ward, on January 25, 2024. The main topics for this meeting include the Americanism Essay Contest and supporting The American Legion Americanism programs. Divisional breakout sessions discussed the usage of the Star-Spangled Kids Kits, the essay contest, and the Legion Family Americanism programs. During the breakout sessions, the Department Chairman and guest shared successes, information, and ideas on the Auxiliary's Americanism program. The Department Chairman shared ideas and thoughts during the five division breakout sessions.

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### SAVE THE DATE

#### 3rd Quarter Americanism Virtual Meeting

Please join me as I host the 3rd Quarter Virtual National Americanism Meeting on **April 2, 2024**, at 8:00 PM (EST). Our quarterly meetings are for sharing program information and networking. The meeting will open with updates and information on the Americanism Program and Divisional breakout sessions will follow this. To close, we will all join back to the main group.

The Department Chairman will receive the registration link from their Division Chairman during the month of March. If either the Chairman or President will be unable to attend, please have a representative from your department plan to attend.

Sallie Rossman, National Americanism Chairman

### ALA Americanism

#### Share Your Story

**Be sure to “LIKE” us on Facebook.** Help spread the word about your service @ ALA Americanism Program. This is a closed group, so you must request permission to join. You then must answer 4 questions to be approved:

**Year-End Reports-** Narrative report to Division Americanism Chairman by May 15, 2024, plus copy to National Americanism Chairman

**Did you know that National has a blog? The blog features excellent info and photos that can be easily shared. No log-in required!**  
<https://alaforveterans.wordpress.co m/>

Please send information on your Department's Americanism Program events. Throughout the year, please send photos and short blurbs about your members in Americanism action to your Division Chairmen and post on the National Americanism Facebook page.

#### Websites with Americanism

##### Planning Information:

<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/americanism>

1. Promote Star Spangled Kids:  
<https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/How-to-Promote-Star-Spangled-Kids>.

2. Americanism Essay Contest:  
<http://www.legion-aux.org/americanism-essay-contest>

3. To receive notifications on when to display the flag at half-staff:  
<https://www.legion.org/flag/246720/sign-american-union-flag-alerts>

4. The American Legion Action Programs of Americanism:  
<https://www.legion.org/publications/160892/action-programs-americanism>

5. Facebook group, search ALA Americanism

**The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship by:**

1. Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information.
2. Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest
3. Participate in the promotion of The American Legion Americanism programs.

ALAforVeterans.org-  
Americanism Program

**Americanism Essay Contest  
Responses to Frequent Questions**

- **What happens once the Department determines its winners- only one in each class? Department Chairman send the winners (only one per class) to the division chair for consideration against the winners from other departments in the division. The selected winners (1 per class) of each Division will receive a congratulatory letter and an address verification form. Once the address verification form is returned, our Finance Division will process the check and return it to the student at their verified address. No address verification means no check. However, regardless of whether they complete an address verification, all winners will have a donation made to the COWNPS in their name. The winners will receive their address verification forms in June-July, and they MUST (must must) be filled out by either the child or the parent/guardian. We need to make sure we have the correct mailing address and zip code for the winner's home address, or they will not receive the required paperwork therefore will not receive their checks. The forms will not be mailed to the department, unit, or school. Once the address verification forms are completed then the checks are mailed directly to the winner's home address.**
- **Does the title count in the word count? Yes**
- **Are there any issues with Unit Americanism chairs advertising the essay contest on their personal and/or Unit Facebook page with the cover sheet and instructing youth to send their essay directly to the Unit? No issue – the parents can sign where it says teacher signature.**
- **With a line to have a teacher's name and signature, is that mandatory to be filled out? If so, in the case of homeschooled children, the parent would likely be the one signing, so if a student doesn't do it through their school, can a parent sign there instead of the teacher - or leave it blank? The parent can sign in place of a teacher.**
- **The schools are now so dedicated to teaching to state standards that there is no room for extra. How do members get the information to the student? Auxiliary members must think out of the box to reach the students. A flyer for the Americanism Contest can be submitted to the school board offices for approval to be distributed to parents or posted on the schools' websites. This flyer can also be posted on community bulletin boards. We can contact the coaches of the various academic clubs within the schools; the school administration will generally provide the contact information for the clubs' sponsors. If a town has a local newspaper with a what's happening column, a unit could submit an item for the column.**
- **How are winners awarded at the Department competition level? Division chairmen are not allowed to share the results of their division with department chairmen before the official announcement. Department certificates may be distributed in any way that the department leadership decides. National does not offer instructions on how they may do so.**
- **How are students categorized correctly? The word count would correspond with their reading/writing grade level, not their overall grade level. We recognize that the two may vastly differ and will leave it to the teacher's discretion to ensure that the student is correctly categorized.**

**The Auxiliary has many tools that aid members in learning about our programs.**

**\*ALA Academy**

[www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-Academy/](http://www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-Academy/)

- Self-paced courses that you can take any from any device. These are designed for you take whenever you have time with no need to pre-register.
- Live virtual webinars are now also offered. These courses are free but are offered live and you will need to register in advance.

**The American Legion Americanism programs the Auxiliary assists in promoting:**

- AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL
- AMERICAN LEGION AND SCOUTING
- YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM
- AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS
- THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: "A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST"

Americanism Newsletter

National Americanism Program 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Virtual Meeting  
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**Northwestern Division**

✦ *Americanism Essay Contest:* A question on determining the grade level for students with special needs that Members are competing in. The department chairman asked that a line item be added asking what grade level. **National's response** to this question is that the Auxiliary, by law, cannot request that confidential information on students per the *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)*, a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

✦ *Supporting Legion's Americanism programs.* Minnesota members help with judging and directing at the district level and help where asked at the finals. Colorado members help with the finals by helping plan the day, assignments, recruiting, and whatever else members need us to do.

✦ *Star Spangled Kids Kits.* In Colorado, a Unit took some of the items during school visits and provided the Americanism items as prizes for questions answered by the students. Another Unit set up a booth at community events where the children played a game for prizes, and members talked to parents about the American Legion signing up eight new members. South Dakota will give each district a packet with a letter explaining the packets. North Dakota will give packets for each unit in attendance at their Mid-winter. Wyoming distributed packets at their Fall Conference.

**Southern Division:**

✦ *Americanism Essay Contest:* One Chairman suggested members contact the libraries and book space to get the information out. There was a suggestion to go to the Boys and Girls Clubs. Another chairman noted their Americanism Chairman was invited to Girls State to speak about the program.

✦ *Americanism Program:* In one Department, 3 Units have sponsored going away parties with the local National Guard Armories and distributed over 1,000 American flags. Another Chairman reported on a project Members are working on with the elementary schools. Students paint patriotic pictures on smooth rocks and drop them in local areas in the town, such as grocery stores, restaurants, parks, and sidewalks (any place Members feel comfortable going) for a community service scavenger hunt. The unit gave first, second, and third prizes to the kids who found the most painted rocks. This Chairman is going to get us photos of this activity. Also, she stated the kids made flags out of buttons by gluing them onto a piece of paper. (These would be good projects for your Junior Members.)

✦ *Star Spangled Kids Kit:* A Chairman took the Star-Spangled Kit Members received from the National and divided it up between the 15 Districts for the District Presidents to distribute to the Units and give leftover supplies to the Girl's State Chair for her program.

✦ *Reporting:* A Department has made a Google Photo Album to share with the Southern Division Chair of photos units that have posted to Facebook about things members have done.

**Western Division**

✦ Chairman Sheri from Oregon shared that she works with local libraries to teach flag etiquette. Members are also doing patriotic rock painting with the children. She also shared that she is working with a superintendent of schools to gain access to schools to share our programs, especially our Americanism Essay. Sheri built five complete Star-Spangled Kids Kits and distributed them.

✦ Chairman April from Alaska shared that she is working hard to spread the word regarding the Americanism essay contest. She attended an MLK service and shared with all in attendance. She is also partnering with her Jr Activities chair to increase participation. April also works with JROTC to spread Americanism.

✦ Chairman Eva from Washington built 3 Star Spangled Kids kits and then had a contest. Interested Units had to give specific ideas for usage for the kit to be in the running for one of the three kits.

✦ Cindy from California put together 30 Star Spangled Kids kits, one for each district in CA.

✦ We discussed targeting JROTC programs and superintendents to get into schools as a group.

**Eastern Division**

✦ Delaware: Several units in Delaware are folding flags and sending them to soldiers overseas with notes of thanks. Members have handed out America the Beautiful coloring books to lower grades at local schools.

✦ Connecticut: Americanism article in the monthly newsletters. The Department is running a contest where Units take pictures of American flags and send them to the Department Chairman. During the Mid-Winter conference, selection the winner will be selected.

✦ New Hampshire: Members have used the Star-Spangled Kids kit in their schools. A member taught proper flag folding in a local high school with the assistance of a Veteran.

✦ New York: Members have been very busy, and the essay contests are going well. Members did a presentation about the National Anthem at their District meetings. The Chairman discusses Americanism in the Department's quarterly newsletter. A member is teaching Flag etiquette to the Juniors, which was very well received. She is going to talk about Americanism next week.

✦ Pennsylvania: Members have been fielding questions from Units about the essay contest. Members put information in their newsletter. They obtained a Naturalization kit for immigrants with some excellent information members use for the Americanism program.

✦ Rhode Island: Members took flags to the local schools for presentations.

✦ Vermont: The Essay contest information has been sent to schools.

**Central Division**

✦ Working with the American Legion: Iowa moved the Department Final Oratorical to the Sunday of their Mid-Winter conference, with excellent results.

✦ Star Spangled Kids Kits: Kits were dispersed to each district for the Americanism Chairman or District President. Display boards at the winter conference, with ideas from units on how they used kits. Monthly newsletter articles written by the Chairman are shared with Juniors, and one unit reported sharing it with their American Legion Family. One Chairman will present at their upcoming program fair with Star Spangled Kid Kits and then turn over any remaining kits to Juniors.

✦ Discussion and suggestions for reporting. Communications included reminders of tracking for ease of reporting. An excellent suggestion was to utilize social media by following each District's Facebook page and jotting down highlights. Also, pulling pictures from posted events and contacting Districts and Units for actual images for the year-end report.

Americanism Newsletter

Example of Possible Essay Judging Sheet  
Courtesy of Department of WA

American Legion Auxiliary  
AMERICANISM ESSAY JUDGING SHEET

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_ Grades: \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ Words: \_\_\_\_\_  
"What Does Freedom Mean to Me?"

Please judge each category 1 to 10 – the highest being 10, then total score

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

School's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Essays must be handwritten or typed with 1" Margin. Please check anything missing.

Cover sheet: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Competing in: \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsoring ALA Unit Name & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School's name: \_\_\_\_\_ School's City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Printed name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Word Count of Essay \_\_\_\_\_ (Include the Title in Word Count)

Completed Cover Sheet \_\_\_\_\_

Grammar \_\_\_\_\_

Spelling \_\_\_\_\_

Content \_\_\_\_\_

Followed directions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

Judge's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Notes:



### Red, White, & Blue Tic Tac Toe Rock Art

Rock art is extremely popular—why not combine it with a fun game, such as Tic Tac Toe? This would be a great party game for a barbecue!

#### Supplies

- 10 rocks
- Paint (red, white, and blue)
- Burlap

#### Instructions:

Gather 10 rocks of approximately equal size. Paint five of them with a red and white design, and paint five of them with a blue and white design. Use a piece of burlap as the game board (draw the board with red pen).

<https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/Patriotic-Crafts>



### Red, White, & Blue Wood Block Firecrackers

These wooden blocks look like huge, patriotic fireworks—each one with a squiggly "fuse" on top.

#### Supplies

- 3 scrap pieces of 2x4s in different lengths
- Paint (red, white, and blue)
- Bendable wire
- Twine
- Wood stars from the dollar store

#### Instructions:

Begin by painting each of your 2x4s a different color. When the blue one is dry, paint stars on it. Use a glue gun to attach the wood stars on the front and the wire "fuses" on top. Wrap twine around the middle.

<https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/Patriotic-Crafts>