A BEACON FOR VETERANS

2026-2027

National Americanism Committee
Quarter 1 Zoom Report
October 8, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by National Americanism Chair Marcy Jorae. The agenda for the meeting was presented. As this is the Americanism Committee, Marcy asked Southern Division Pearl Gordon to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Marcy introduced National Vice-President Lisa Chaplin, who brought greetings to the attendees on behalf of National President Coral May Grout.

Marcy then introduced the 2026-2027 Americanism Committee:

National Vice-Chairman - Tamara Martin from Minnesota
Central Division Chairman – Tanna Shepherd from Indiana
Eastern Division Chairman – Tina Washington from Delaware
Northwestern Division Chairman – Tracy Trujillo from Colorado
Southern Division Chairman - Pearl Gordon from Arkansas
Western Division Chairman – Mariane Ward from California

Marcy said the purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship as in National *Standing Rule #6, Core National Standing Committees*

Committee Vice-Chairman Tamara Martin gave the Key Program Statements:

- to 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;
- to increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest; and to participate in the promotion of The American Legion Americanism programs. She also gave a list of available resources for members to use to gain further knowledge.

Mission Training dates and locations were announced. Members were encouraged to attend one if possible.

The Americanism Essay Contest title was announced:" How can you be a Beacon of Light for our Veterans?" The deadline for submission at the National level was given and Department Chairs were encouraged to be proactive within their Departments to ensure entries are received in time for judging within the Divisions.

Important dates for Annual Reporting were announced.

Representatives then moved to their respective division Breakout Sessions. Each Division Chair moderated her session to discuss with the attending representatives what is being done in the Departments: Vice-Chairman Tamara Martin moderated the Central Division Chairman as Central Division Tanna Shepherd was excused.

Reports on the activities were as follows:

Central Division: 9 of 9 Departments represented

Kimm Bunch, **Dept of Ohio**: 25th Anniversary of 9-11 worked with S.A.L. from Post 627 Home, held a flag ceremony and flag disposal.

Beth Rossana (fill in for Chair) **Dept of W. Virginia**: wants to double the number of Elementary schools, to pass out more coloring books, workbooks and to educate on the meaning of the 13 folds of the flag.

Heather Elsen**, Dept of Indiana**: flag etiquette, how to fold, fly and dispose of the flag.

Robin Mullen, **Dept of Kansas**: Fall conference already held. Charge for the month: What kind of Americanism moment they have had during the month. Also, using a crossword puzzle with Americanism as the theme.

Rosemary Lancaster, **Dept of Iowa**: get younger members involved, Flag disposal, essay contest participation, flag etiquette.

Tina Funchion, **Dept of Illinois**, President's Theme; Blue Ribbon "Patriotism begins with us. Be role models". Star Spangled Kids Program, Be the One Expo, Tina's unit 'Honor Boat' 40 veterans on a charter boat (all Blue Ribbon styles)

Shanna Jelinek, **Dept of Missouri**: Americanism Essay and Flag etiquette. Program Fair (Committees set-up trifold boards and shared about their committee)

Anita Greca, **Dept of Michigan**: Fall conference will be held November 6-7, but had a virtual school of instruction Sept 19th. Shared ideas for Americanism, one being the 13 folds of the flag and the meaning. Printouts will be available at the Fall Meeting.

Delores Woolf, **Dept of Wisconsin**: At Girls State Session have a flag retirement ceremony and work in classrooms and scout programs. Oratorical contest - send winner and second runner up for more participation.

More ideas and notes:

color pages are available on website, look to 4-H groups, in classrooms try to make contact with government, history and English classrooms for participants.

Eastern Division: 8 of 12 Departments represented

Debra Knickerbocker **(CT)**
Developed a trifold representing components of the program and includes a QR code
Promote a program to identify flags that are tattered/worn and need to be replaced

Lisa Johnson for Paula Caol Alger **(NH)**
Ethical piece at fall conference with Paul Revere messaging and calling out information about the essays
Ensure that all schools and other agencies that support children are provided with the information for the essay

Carol Baldwin **(DE)**
Essay contest is t first priority
Continue visiting Vets for Vets and talking about flag etiquette
Will contact units and provide updates and other information received to assist with program

Alfreda Brooks (Karen Wilson) **(DC)**
Continue participation in Honor Flight for veterans from Oregon to DC - Expand on their outreach to schools at Bolling AFB, charter schools, etc. for essay and other patriotic programs for youth

Audrey Jantzen **(NJ**)
Essay contest - expanded reach
Concentrate on flag etiquette

Joanne Smith (Lisa) (**MA)**
Viewing flag in community and providing letter when flag is in disrepair and how to replace and dispose.

Field of Flags for deceased Vets on Memorial Day and for living Vets on Veterans Day
Promote Flag folding program and meaning of folds

Northwestern Division: 5 of 7 Departments represented

Department of Colorado (Chris): Promote American Legion Americanism Program, Promote Americanism essays – Chris teaches so he will try to get his class to participate - American Legion Family of Post #209 supports the Naturalization Ceremonies. The American Legion Family donates small American flags and Constitution books to welcome the new citizens. Boys and Girls State are given mini-Constitution books.

Department of South Dakota (Shawn): Participates in parades for homecomings - Participates in Fall Festival – Gave away Americanism swag - Participates in Fun Fact Facts – Blue Ribbon Americanism Series

Department of Nebraska (Adeline): Participated in the retirement of 3200 flags (see Facebook post) - Promotes respect and etiquette for the American flag -Encourages Units to reach out to the lower-level classes to instill pride in being an American and instill respect for the flag

Department of Wyoming (Donna): Working on the Oratorical contest – Has begun recruiting for Girls State - Distributed the information regarding the Americanism essays to District Presidents. District Presidents to send to their Units -Sponsored 2 cemeteries for the Wreaths Across America program. Goal is to have all veterans' graves adorned with a wreath - Developed Americanism kits to be given to school children

Department of Minnesota (Barbara): Encouraged units to participate in Star Spangled Kids to promote flag etiquette - Challenged units to do one historical event this year - Participated in Constitution Day – Ben Franklin even made an appearance!

Discussed:

Ways to get into schools

Americanism comic books, Americanism coloring pages as resources/tools

Inviting veterans to speak to classroom (get History or Civic teachers involved)

Reach out to JROTC to promote essays, scholarships, Girls and Boys State programs

Involvement in the Color Guard

Reach out to the schools located on military bases, school children of reservists or national guardsmen

Southern Division: 12 of 14 Depar5tments represented

Florida – Pass out certificates of appreciation to say, "Thank You" to local businesses who fly the American Flag

Georgia – signs and passes out Christmas Cards to the VA for their upcoming Gift Shop, they currently have a classroom of children at a local school signing and coloring cards

Kentucky – Each year they prepare a Veteran's meal for local Veterans, and high school students, members of the JAG, come over to serve the Veterans. They sit and chat with the Veterans as well. She dresses as Betsy Ross, and hands out flags.

Louisiana – is focusing on getting the Americanism Essay information into the schools

Mississippi – has set out flag collection boxes to collect retired flags and dispose of them properly. In addition, they hand out 200 American flags at Girls State each year on rally night**.**

North Carolina – Works with parents at the schools to reinforce Americanism, and good citizenship and encourage them to share with their children.

Oklahoma – is focusing on flag etiquette, folding, and the meaning of each fold

Puerto Rico – is demonstrating flag folding, and the meaning of each fold, they are having difficulties getting into the schools to distribute the Essay Contest information

South Carolina – call was dropped during the breakout session, but she called me today to share her report. She used to be a volunteer at her children's school and still has several connections**.** Therefore, she has no problem getting into the schools to share the Essay Contest information.

Tennessee – they purchase Patriotic books to add to their Unit's library which they take to the VA hospital to read to the Veterans.

Texas – collaborated with another Veterans organization where they rang a bell for 60 seconds on Constitution Day (September 17th) at 3:00 pm, and then they read the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America. They honor the principals during "Education week" in which they take treats to school for them. This allows them access into the school so they can easily share the Essay Contest information. In addition,

they include Homeschoolers, and Private schools when distributing the Essay Contest. They are looking forward to October 28th to celebrate Lady Liberty's birthday.

Virginia – they are focusing on the Essay Contest, flag folding, and the 911 Freedom flag

Western Division 10 of 10 Departments represented

Department of Washington will be focusing on Star Spangled Kids, the constitution and national essay contest.

Department of Oregon wants to engage students in the national essay contest and coloring to inspire patriotism.

Department of Utah, 20-year participant in Americanism has set a goal of receiving 500 essays from her state.

Department of Arizona, new Auxiliary member and Chairman, plans to reach members through her newsletter " the attic"

Department of Alaska has plans for an oratorical contest and baseball.

Department of California will be promoting Americanism essays throughout the state

Department of New Mexico intends to expand the essay contest although it's hard getting into schools

Department of Hawaii wants to restart Americanism, the oratorical contest and promote Get Out to Vote

Department of Idaho will be focusing on the essay contest and children & youth

Department of Nevada will be focusing on flag history and flag folding, seven essay winners will receive a $1 000 scholarship

When the breakout sessions concluded, everyone returned to the entire group session. Division Chairs gave their reports from the Breakout Session, highlighting what was shared within their Division session.

Members were allowed to ask questions and make comments.

Marcy Jorae reminded members that the next Quarterly meeting will be held Thursday, January 7, 2027, at 7pm Eastern time. She then adjourned the meeting.