



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Convention 2011 ~ 69th Annual

Washington D.C. • August 9 - 13, 2011 • “War After the War”



Above: Robin with sons Sgt. Stephen Barnes (OEF soldier) and Spec. Nathan Barnes (OIF soldier).



Left: Robin Barnes McCarthy at the convention.

New National Officers are elected: President Robin Barnes McCarthy on Discovering Blue Star Mothers

When my older son Stephen swore an oath to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States, he joined the Army, and I became a “blue star mother.” Proud but scared, happy and numb, I began this journey of wanting to support him and his fellow troops. Like you, I was suddenly aware of an entirely new world of military mothers, who now had restrictions on them (“Mom, you can’t send me any mail or packages for six weeks”), while all I wanted to do was just talk to him and find out what he was thinking and feeling.

After attending his basic training/AIT graduation ceremonies, I saw how the Army was doing for him the very thing that I as a single mother would never have been able to do--make a man out of a boy. It wasn’t long before I saw the same new excitement in my second son Nathan’s eyes, and he too had joined the Army. Over the course of year or so, I had driven to Ft Benning

four or five times to watch a son graduate from basic training/AIT and then Airborne school.

Immediately after Stephen received orders to go to Ft Drum (NY) in preparation for his first deployment to Afghanistan, I knew I couldn’t do this alone. I am a veteran of the US Army myself (joined the Army at the end of the Viet Nam war), and I had personally experienced basic training, the gas chamber, PT and all the other entry-level expectations, but deployment? Afghanistan? Risk of losing my son? That was all new to me, overwhelming, until some little angel at the post office (who recognized the military address on a package I was sending to one of the boys) asked me, “Have you heard about the Blue Star Mothers?” What a glorious question that was, and how grateful I am that Miss Gracie brought me into a circle

(continued on Page 2)



Inside this issue:

1. National Elected Officers and Convention highlights
7. National Appointed Officers
8. National Big Dipper Officers
10. Roaring 20’s Fun Night
11. Fallen Heroes August, 2011
12. September Days of Remembrance

Convention Highlights • Wendy J. Hoffman



Wendy Hoffman, National President 2009-2011 & Robin Barnes McCarthy, National President 2011-2012

Planning a convention from nearly 2000 miles away was a challenge but the Convention Committee rose to the occasion to help with the details and logistics. Registered attendees totaled 186 with an additional 31 guests. Through the generosity of the members and represented chapters we were also able to provide banquet tickets and other expenses for 53 wounded warriors to attend as our guests.

(continued on page 2)

New President, continued from page 1

of military mothers like myself who could understand my fear and disbelief, my pride and joy, moms who "sleep with one eye open."

You might think it was a little bit of heaven from the start, but just the opposite was true. At my first meeting, the president got into a hot debate with another mother (who had been the founding president), and people got up and walked out. Both mothers had good reason for what they were saying, but most of the mothers just wanted to pack a care package for their sons and daughters. It was at that moment I decided I was going to stay. I mean, really stay in

this organization, because we had to find a way to listen to both--both ladies had a heart for their military kids and Blue Star Mothers needed their insight.

Since joining in this organization in 2006, I have served as Chaplain for my Chapter, 3rd, 2nd, 1st VP for the Department of Ohio, elected to two terms as President of the Department (and as such, served on the NEB for two-and-a-half years), and now elected to serve as your National President. By day I am a hospice chaplain, and I work exclusively with veterans and their families. So you can see I am totally immersed in this vision,

and our mission "to support our troops and veterans" is at the very heart of who I am.

I pray that we can continue moving forward into the 21st century, that we can always heed the wisdom of our older Mothers (many who have been members for more than 25 years!), and work through our differences with decorum and dignity. Thank you to our Past National Officers, to our Quarter-Century Blue Star Mothers, and to you for your commitment to BSMA. And I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your National President. I will strive to keep before us the fact that we are "Old and Young--BSM STRONG!"

-- Robin

Convention Highlights Cont'd.

On Tuesday evening the well-coordinated desk in the lobby took care of the initial sign in and registration package. Members were directed to the lower lobby where they received their convention bags loaded with valuable resource material from several agencies, including Congress. Members were also given a first peek at the 2011 yearbook (if you have not yet seen it there may still be copies available in the online store.) The vendor room was open during registration and at 7 pm everyone gathered in the Atrium Ballroom on the Mezzanine level for the opening reception.

The hotel had arranged lobby tables on the lower level and theater seating above complete with popcorn and soda for the movie "21 and a Wakeup" that followed the reception. **Chris McIntyre**, producer and director, was our official videographer for convention and will be making a DVD of the event.

Wednesday morning was the official opening of the convention and our first guest was a representative from the Mayor's office to welcome us to DC. The Mayor's office also provided the DC flag and stand that were delivered just moments before the opening ritual but in time to be carried in procession.

Wednesday afternoon we boarded busses and were taken to Arlington National Cemetery where our Convention Chair **Susan Naill** had arranged a wonderful and solemn

Memorial Service on hallowed grounds next to the amphitheater. Mothers were able to visit the Tomb of the Unknowns briefly before boarding the busses.

Before leaving the cemetery we were taken up the hill where we walked a short distance to Captain George Maine's grave. Our historian, **Joretta Weaver** passed out Blue Daisies which we placed on the grave of our founder, as our Chaplain **Rev. Lin McGee** led us in prayer.

Thursday morning we met briefly before boarding the busses again for the Capitol where we were divided into two groups for a tour of the Capitol and then bussed to the White House or the Pentagon. Many of those at the White House were met by White House staff and a few got a glimpse of the President as he walked out to board his helicopter.

Thursday afternoon was packed with speakers, all connected to our theme "The War after War". **Megan Egerton**, author of *101 Tips for When They're Back*, opened; we then heard from **Matt Stiner** of *Justice for Vets* who introduced a resolution for the establishment of Veteran's Treatment Courts.

Other speakers were our own **Charilyn Damigo** who spoke of her own experiences as the mother of an incarcerated soldier and the work of the *Family Alliance for Veterans of America*. **Pam Hayes**, founder and President of The Arms Forces spoke of her own experiences recovering and dealing with TBI and the hidden wounds of war.

To lighten things up after the break and to introduce a valuable therapeutic tool, **Claire Trevi**, Laughter Yoga Leader, led us through a series of laughter yoga exercises and literally had us laughing in the aisles.

Erin Rooney of the *Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) Real Warriors Campaign* described the partnership of Blue Star Mothers and the Real Warrior Campaign and introduced us to the resources available for the troops and veterans as well as the military families on the Real Warriors website. We ended the afternoon with an entertaining Mardi Gras moment with the New Orleans second line and a presentation by **Janet Broussard** encouraging the establishment of a true National Auxiliary of the Associate members.

Friday morning we were honored with the presence of Secretary **Eric Shinseki** of Veterans Affairs (VA). I was told by his staff that when he was first given his speech to review he cut out almost all of it and rewrote it himself. What we heard was genuine Shinseki from the heart and a copy of his speech appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Deborah Amdur, LCSW, Chief Consultant, Care Management and Social Work Service who has overall responsibility for five national programs, provided extensive information about the recently launched VA Caregivers Program.

John Campbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Wounded Warrior Care & Transition Policy) introduced us to the National Resource Directory and spoke of the importance of the central registry as an aid to our veterans and families.

Laura Balun, Director, VA Volunteer Services office spoke about the VAVS program and the need for all hospitals and medical centers to have Blue Star Mothers

Convention Highlights (cont'd)

representation.

At lunch **LTG William Troy**, Director of Army Staff (DAS) spoke about a bridge, the link between the military and the mothers and examples of how Blue Star Mothers can work with the military in areas of reintegration along with the importance of our involvement.

At lunch on Friday we were saddened to learn of the death of one of our DC members, a registered attendee who was excitedly working on getting the DC chapter chartered during convention. Our chaplain draped the charter in honor of **Viola Drath** before we began our session of bylaw amendments.

The convention would not be complete without **Fun Night** and with the reinstatement of the **Big Dipper** at the 2010 convention the Big Dipper members were once again in charge of this portion of the convention. They did a fantastic job. From the lower lobby to the mezzanine the hotel was populated by flappers, gangsters and other roaring 20's costumed members. In the atrium ballroom there were card games and other activities as well as a photo op at the Ritz.

Saturday morning National elections were held and the new slate of officers for the 2011-12 term are: **Robin McCarthy** (OH3) – President; **Janet Broussard** (LA1) – First VP; **Lin McGee** (CT1) Second VP; **Teresa Bullock** (CA9) Third VP; **Pattie Kelley** (MN14) Fourth VP; **Charilyn Damigo** (CA4) Recording Secretary; **Julie Roberts** (NM2) Treasurer; and **Anne Parker** (SC7) Financial Secretary. Following elections we enjoyed a video from **Homes for Our Troops** of the surprise wedding at an HFOT key ceremony arranged by VA5.

We excitedly listened to a presentation by **Patrick Guiltari** of the United War Veterans Council regarding involvement and participation of Blue Star Mothers of America in the New York City Veterans' Day Parade as well as advertising and visibility of the mothers.

Throughout the entire convention we were able to hear from the chapter members who came forward with chapter reports. It was wonderful to hear of the many different activities and projects across the country. These chapter reports will be available with the convention minutes when they are posted online.

Following the VIP reception the banquet was attended by 260 members, delegates, guests and wounded warriors. **Homes for Our Troops** did a recap of the past two years and our special guest speakers, HFOT recipients **Matt and Tracy Keil** spoke of the benefits of the HFOT program. Our total raised for the President's Project this past term was over \$32,000 in addition to all the volunteer activity for HFOT.

In this last newsletter of the 2010-11 year and as we end our fiscal year, I want to offer congratulations to each and every one of you for a job well done. I look forward to the coming years as the BSMA organization continues moving forward and wish Robin and the 2011-12 elected officers a wonderful year.

--Wendy Hoffman, Past National President



2011-2012 National Elected Board





National First Vice President ~ Janet Broussard

I am a native Louisianan and have been a member of the Blue Star Mother's for eight years. I founded the Blue Star Mothers of Louisiana Chapter 1 and served as president for seven years.

I am married to Floyd Broussard. My son is LT Mark St.Romain, Jr.; Mark has been a member of the Louisiana National Guard for 12 years and has completed four Middle East Tours. I am also the step-mother to Nick Broussard. Nick just completed college and is living in New Orleans. Our two greatest joys in life are our precious grandsons Beauregard and Benjamin St.Romain.

I serve as a Commissioner on the USS KIDD and Veterans Memorial and also on the Advisory Boards of the Operation Homefront and the US Army Baton Rouge Grassroots Advisory Board. I work as an EMR Systems Specialist at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge.

I am so very humbled and honored to have been elected as 1st Vice President of the Blue Star Mothers of America. I am looking forward to having a great year serving the Blue Star Mothers of America.

National Second Vice President ~ Rev. Lin McGee

Rev. Lin is married to Rev. David McGee, a Vietnam War veteran who received two Purple Hearts while serving his country as a United States Marine. She is also the daughter of Navy Seabees veteran, James P. Funk, who served in the Pacific Theater during WWII. Her son, CSM James Peter M. Matthews has served with the United States Army for 27 years and is a veteran of OEF and OIF, having completed three deployments. Her son SSGT Daniel W. Matthews has served with the United States Marines for 18 years and is a veteran of OEF and OIF, having completed two deployments.

To honor their service and that of all who have served past and present, Lin founded the first Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. in Connecticut ~ the Connecticut Blue Star Mothers, CT Chapter 1 www.ConnecticutBlueStarMothers.org ~ in early 2006. She works there among the other mothers as President, Pastor, Blue to Gold Officer, BSM VAVS State Rep, Veterans Service Coordinator, Media Manager, Patriot Guard Riders Rep, Patriotic Instructor, and Website Manager.

During our September 2009 – August 2010 National BSMoA year, Lin served our organization as the National Patriotic Instructor. During the 2010-2011 year term she served as our National Chaplain.

Rev. Lin is a pianist, author, counselor, pastor, public speaker, retreat leader, minister of music, and member of the ordained clergy. She is a wife, mother, daughter, and friend. Lin has 16 children (eight boys and eight girls), 33 grand children, and six great grand children.



National Third Vice President ~ Teresa Bullock

I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Teresa Bullock and I was elected to the position of Third Vice President on the National Executive Board of Blue Star Mothers of America. I consider this position an honor and privilege. As some of you know I am a Blue and Gold Star Mother, I hope to assist all of you to continue to provide the love and support that was given to me by my Blue Star Chapter in the darkest moments I have ever had.

Judy has been helping me immensely and while there have been a couple of bumps in the road we are making the transition as painless as possible. She spoke very highly of all of you and I hope to continue the same wonderful service she provided for you.

As I have said many times in the last couple of weeks, if there is any way I can help you or answer any questions for you please don't hesitate to contact me.





National Fourth Vice President ~ Pattie Kelley

Pattie Kelley's only child, Jesse, served in the U.S. Army assigned to an SF Unit. Pattie's father also served in the U.S. Army and while she refers to him and others his age and older as Veterans, Jesse is now in that same category having served his Country with pride and honor.

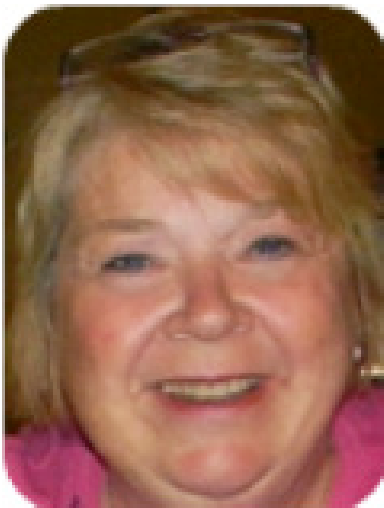
It was during the time Jesse was stationed in South Korea that Pattie was searching online for other military mom's that she found the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., and she has been an active member ever since. On October 15, 2011, the Department of Minnesota will hold their Department Convention, and at that time she will have fulfilled her two terms as their Department President. As N4thVP, Pattie is honored for the opportunity to work with moms to Charter new Chapters which will help in the growth and strength of our Organization. Born and raised in Minnesota, Pattie is in her 31st year working for the City of Saint Paul as Administrative Assistant to one of the Saint Paul City Councilmembers.

National Recording Secretary ~ Charilyn Damigo

Charilyn Damigo became a Blue Star Mother in 2004 when her son Nathan joined the Marine Corps during his senior year of high school. She became actively involved in her local BSMA chapter (South Bay Blue Star Moms - CA4). Nathan served 3 1/2 years, which included 2 deployments in Iraq. One month after his return from his second deployment, on the anniversary weekend of his best friend's KIA date, Nathan was arrested for a crime he committed while having a PTS flashback. He is currently serving a six-year prison sentence. His story is one of those featured in the HBO documentary Wartorn: 1861-2010.

Charilyn has spent the last 4 years advocating for her son and other veterans who have been affected by the justice system. She has been working with other families to establish a non-profit, peer-to-peer family support network. FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America) is an affiliate of WestCare Foundation, already established in 15 states and 2 US Territories to help meet the needs of mental health, suicide prevention, drug addiction, domestic violence and homelessness.

Charilyn's husband is also a Marine veteran and together they have 5 children and 3 grandchildren. She has previously worked in the banking industry, and she has been an educator and school administrator for 24 years.



National Financial Secretary ~ Anne Parker

Anne is the President and founder of Grand Strand Blue Star Mothers of Little River, SC. She is the Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary Post 186, Little River. She is also the State of SC American Legion Chairman of National Security (which covers support of our military and their families) and Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of South Carolina. Anne is the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Lodge 2840, Little River. She is also a member of Operation Welcome Home in Myrtle Beach, an organization that goes to airports, homes, and welcome home parties (as the military person and his family wish) to welcome our men and women home from deployments. Anne also organizes and facilitates each month a joint venture with Barefoot Church and Helping Hand, a food distribution on the first Saturday of each month in Atlantic Beach. This is a no questions asked distribution to over 200 people each month.

Anne and her husband, Gordon, have four children and two grandchildren and reside in Longs. Gordon is an aviation mechanic who works internationally. Anne spent most of her career working as a bookkeeper, office manager, medical transcriptionist or administrative assistant.

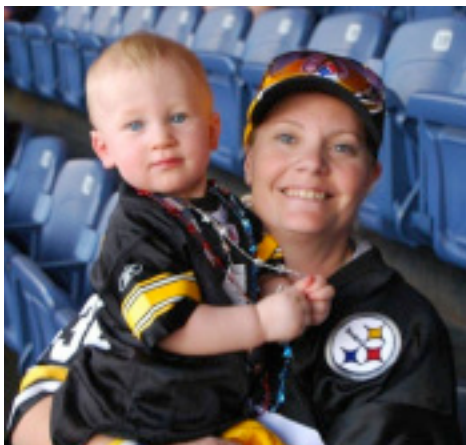
Message From Anne: I look forward to the opportunity to serve Blue Star Mothers as the National Financial Secretary and working with such an amazing group of women. I am always available to answer questions you may have. Please allow at least two weeks to get items from

the online store.

Anne Parker: Proud Blue Star Mother of CPT Leigh Swafford, CPT William Swafford and CPT Andrew Lechanski United States Army.

REMEMBER OUR ONLINE STORE!! Blue Star Mothers official merchandise can be purchased from our national online store by visiting our website:

www.BlueStarMothers.org



National Treasurer ~ Julie Roberts

Julie Roberts, originally from Utah, has been living in New Mexico for 21 years, where she met her second husband, Bryan while out dancing with her father, who loves to Two Step. Her dad and Bryan (both E7's) bonded instantly. In 1991 both of the men in her life (Dad and husband) were off to the great sand box. Little did she know that many years later, she would have three going to the exact same place.

Anthony, her oldest child, is a 1st Lieutenant with the 286th Engineering Company based out of Denton, Texas and is being deployed on September 21, 2011 for a year. He joined the Army eight years ago when he started college at New Mexico State University and graduated in Civil Engineering with a minor in Math and Military Science. He met the love of his life, Megan, and they were married on October 23, 2010.

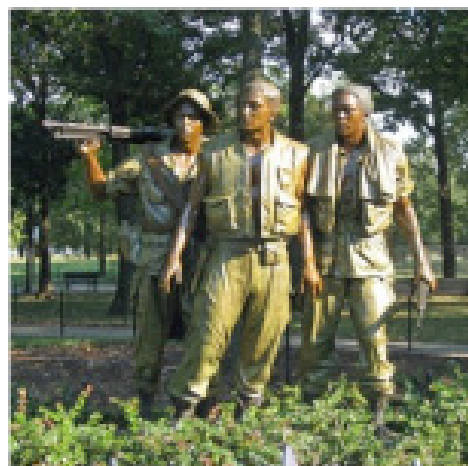
Kira Marie, her second child, is a Staff Sgt in the Air Force and has been full time for five years. She is in the Security Forces, and works out of NORAD in Colorado Springs. She has been deployed to Iraq and is expected to return sometime in 2012. Kira's husband, Chad Waller, is also in the Air Force. He is a Staff Sgt. and is with the TACP

based out of Fort Carson. He is currently deployed since June 6, 2011 and is scheduled back hopefully in December 2011. This is his third Tour. They are the proud parents of William Blain, Julie's first grandson. Julie and Bryan have had the pleasure of watching him quite regularly since he was born due to his mom and dad's work schedules, trainings, and deployments. They plan to watch him when they are both over in the Middle East.

Julie's youngest son Alac, has graduated from high school and has decided to join the Army National Guard. He feels that he has always served his country by helping out his brother, sister and brother-in-law and now has a chance to do it for himself. He is an associate member with Albuquerque Chapter NM2.

Julie joined the Blue Star Mothers just before Kira's deployment in 2007. She started out in the chapter level as the membership mom, and then quickly moved up to 1st VP, and then Chapter President for 2 years. She currently serves on the NEB as the Treasurer and served as the 1st VP for 2010-2011. Julie has served two years as the National Bylaws and Resolutions Chairwoman. She has also served on the following committees: Finance, Convention, Shadow Run, and Executive Director.

Her day time job (and some nights) is as a paralegal with The Rodey Law Firm and she has been in this occupation for the past 18 years. When she is not busy being a Nana or working with the Blue Star Mothers, her newest passion is scuba diving. She is also a die hard Steelers Fan!



www.ServiceFlags.com

Please remember Service Flags for any of your military and veteran purchases. They have a wonderful selection of items. Also, they are kind enough to assist us with our Gold Star Banners, absorbing much of the cost themselves.

For a discount, use password: BSM

~ Greetings From Your 2011-2012 BSMoA Appointed Officers ~

National Chaplain ~ Gloria Cervantes

Gloria is from California and is a member of the South Bay Blue Star Moms, CA 4. Please notify Gloria if you have a Gold Star Mother in your chapter, if a member of your Chapter is ill or passes away; if there is any other Blue Star Mother's need she can help you care for. You may reach Gloria at:

chaplain@bluestarmothers.org



National Patriotic Instructor ~ Linda Bayer

Linda Bayer and her husband Gary have been married for 31 years. They reside in San Jose, CA, the heart of Silicon Valley. She has worked in the dental field as Office Manager for the past 24 years. They have two sons and one daughter. Ryan and Jared both joined the Air Force after 9/11. Ryan has served stateside at Mt. Home and Luke AFB and is now a Veteran. His twin, Jared, has served seven years and was stationed at Dover AFB, DE. Jared has deployed twice to Iraq, Balad 2005, Tallil 2007 and once to Al Udeid in 2009. Currently he is a reservist stationed at Travis AFB, CA. Their daughter Stephanie has a passion for singing and dance and currently teaches at a local dance studio. The family loves hockey and can be seen wearing black and teal in support of the San Jose Sharks.

Linda is a member of the South Bay Blue Star Moms CA #4 and has served on the Executive Board since joining the chapter in 2006. Their chapter was chartered in 2004 and has grown to over 100 members. Linda is a Past President of her chapter and credits her sons for introducing her to the Blue Star Mothers. She says that the wonderful friendships she has made with her Blue Star Mom sisters would not have been possible had her sons not decided to serve their country. Linda is looking forward to the honor of serving as Patriotic Instructor for the 2010-2011 term and the opportunity to get to know more of our mothers.

National Historian ~ Maura McGowan Yanosick

Maura lives in Massachusetts and is a member of Eastern MA Chapter 2. Maura serves as the Communications Coordinator at Homes For Our Troops. She is also a Board member for both Operation Military Kids and the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund.



National Sergeant-at-Arms ~ Judy Sinclair-Lecz

I am honored to be your Sergeant-at-Arms for the next year under the leadership of National President Robin McCarthy. I have been a firefighter/paramedic for the past 37 years and I think I am about ready to retire! I have three sons of whom I am very proud.

Michael Leczel is an Aeronautical Engineer working for a defense contractor out of Buckley Air Force Base in Denver. He is married to my wonderful daughter-in-law, Peggy, and they live in Larkspur, CO. They have two children, Michael, currently serving in the US Navy aboard the USS Denver, based out of Sasbo, Japan; and Candace, a senior at Wyoming State University.

Russell Sinclair is Lead Test Engineer for the Marine Corp Command and Control group. He entered the USMC in 1987 and retired after 20 years in 2007. He lives in Stafford, VA. He has three children: Nikolas (14 years old), Ethan (12 years old), and Kaelee (nine years old).

Anthony Sinclair is with the Texas Department of Justice in the Belton County Sheriff's Office. He served in the US Army 2004 to 2009. He lives in Killeen, TX. He has two children, Anthony II

(nine years old), and Danni (six years old).

My grandchildren are my greatest achievement! They are all different in temperament and personality and the reason that I get up in the morning.

I am looking forward to the coming year with the Blue Star Mothers. I have been elected as President of NM Chapter #1 with the installation to be on September 6th. I am anticipating another great year with the Chapter and with the new National Board I feel that great ideas are out there among us all and this year will see many of those ideas become projects that will strengthen our organization.

~ Greetings From Your 2011-2012 Big Dipper Officers ~

Big Dipper President ~ Paulette Gloden

Paulette lives in Michigan and is a member of Blue Water Chapter, MI180. She had a wonderful surprise when her son arrived unexpectedly during the Big Dipper fun night at Convention!!!



Big Dipper First Vice President ~ Pat Wilson-Perkins

I was born in New York, I'm the youngest of three daughters and the mother of three sons. As a young girl we moved constantly, and we weren't in the military. I believe my mother had gypsy blood in her.

I've been married to my college boy friend for 37+ years. We met when he was a fraternity pledge at Phi Kappa Theta and I was a sister at Phi Mu. (He had lost his pledge pin to one of the other sisters and he asked me to help him get it back. The rest as they say is history.)

Our oldest son, Dave, Jr. is 36. He is a major in the Army, Individual Ready Reserves. Dave's a corporate attorney in New York City. Our younger sons are twins -- Tom and Jim-- and they are 27. Tom lives in Queens, NY and plays in two bands that make money and also works at a health food store/deli. Jim is a Captain currently stationed at Ft. Bragg while he goes through the Special Forces' Q-Course. He was a Combat Engineer for five years stationed in Germany before changing

to Special Forces.

In 2008, Dave and his wife, Ann, were deployed to Afghanistan and Jim was deployed to Iraq. Ann had already been deployed to Kosovo and Iraq previously. After returning from Afghanistan, Ann decided that she didn't want to be married any longer. I founded our local chapter of Northern Fairfield County - Blue Star Mothers in December 2008 to find other mothers who would understand what I was going through and so that I could support other mothers as their children deployed. At our first meeting there were 15 mothers interested in forming a chapter.

Big Dipper Recording Secretary ~ Dr. Sarah Young

An internationally recognized print and broadcast journalist, seminar speaker, disabled advocate and therapist, Dr. Young is familiar to San Diegans and followers worldwide. Her first love, however, is empowerment education and advocacy. "Dr. Sarah" has performed on television and radio since she was seven years old, but San Diegans know her best as the host of "The Mind, Body and Spirit Show" on KCEO Radio, AM 1000.



Big Dipper Financial Secretary ~ Robin Johnson

Robin Johnson has been elected to serve as the Big Dipper Financial Secretary for the year 2011-2012

Big Dipper Treasurer ~ Dawn Jones

Dawn Jones has been elected to serve as the Big Dipper Financial Secretary for the year 2011-2012



Big Dipper Sergeant-at-Arms ~ Ann Cordero

I have lived in California my whole life, from the oceans to the mountains. I have been a member of Blue Star Mothers for three years and helped start the Feather River Blue Star Moms CA1 earlier this year, of which I am currently the president. My husband of 27 years, Tony, and I have a son, Anthony, in the Army in the artillery (he likes shooting big guns!). He is married to a wonderful girl, Valerie, and they have our only grandchild, another Anthony. We also have a high school age daughter, Ciera, who is very much into horses and animals.

I have personally felt the support network we have with Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. In turn, I have been given opportunities to give back that support to other mothers when they were in need of a shoulder to cry on or just someone to talk to. It feels good to know we make a difference in the lives of military families. I joined Big Dipper to support furthering education for blue star moms and military families. I challenge every chapter to hold just one fundraiser this year for Big Dipper.

Big Dipper Chaplain ~ Rev. Lin McGee

Hello, I wanted to thank everyone for such a special year in 2010-2011. Laura really got the Big Dipper moving again and we were able to accomplish many special things. Thank you Laura!!!

10 scholarships were given to our children so that they will now be able to further their education! And that is what it is all about – won't you join us in this important endeavor? We would love to have you join the Big Dipper!!! Check the National website for 'how'!

We hope you enjoyed Fun Night at Convention! Our theme was the Roaring 20s and we tried to bring authenticity from the times while finding fun things to bring your way! The costumes were wonderful and I think everyone had a great time!

There were special CDs that Pat made with music from the time – and we had special coins, bracelets, and other memorabilia to celebrate and remember the evening. If you were not able to go to convention, get in touch with one of the Big Dipper officers and we will let you know how to receive them. Remember, all donations go for scholarships for the coming year!

I am very privileged to serve as Big Dipper Chaplain again this year. If there is anything at all that I can help you with at any time, please just let me know. Our home door, phone, and computer inboxes are open to you at any time. Peace, Lin



Big Dipper National would like to announce the recipients of this year's Josephine Colenda Fund for Educational Assistance. They are:

Suzanne Bronson CO 4	Patrick Graves KY 6
Melissa Cotterman OH 1	Megan Miller MI 180
Lauren Cust CT 4	Lindsey Rettke MI 180
Ray De Angelo IN 8	Toya Scherer MI 179
Kathy Duncan KY 6	Gregory Wax CT 4

**Please Remember to Pray
for the Families, Loved
Ones, and Chapters of
Our Sisters Who Have
Recently Passed Away.
We will miss each of
them dearly.**



Eva Morrison



Viola Drath



Audrey Perry



Angela Harper

The Big Dipper Organization was adopted November 7, 1951, in Milwaukee, WI. The name is derived from the Big Dipper Constellation. The emblem is a flat-bottom dipper with a long handle, used on all stationery and worn as a guard pin, attached to the pin of the parent organization. The Big Dipper serves to provide funds for educational assistance awards given annually and to sponsor a "Fun Night" at the convention. Any member of the parent organization, Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., in good standing, may apply to be a member of the Big Dipper. Annual membership fee is \$5.00. Sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of Blue Star Mothers of America, veterans and active duty personnel as well as Blue Star Mothers of America are eligible to apply for educational financial assistance.

Assistance can be received up to four times. Educational Assistance Applications must be sent to Department Big Dipper president or National Big Dipper President within 20 days of the respective Convention.



National Big Dipper *Auxiliary*

ROARING 20'S

Fun Night

Thank you for helping us raise money for our children's scholarships! And it was a FUN Night!



Food, Games, Prizes,
Period Photos,
Costume Judging,
Music and Dancing,
Silent Auction,



Remembering Our Nation's Fallen Heroes • August 2011

Sgt. William B. Gross Paniagua, 28, Daly City, CA

Pfc. Brice M. Scott, 22, Columbus, GA

Staff Sgt. Leon H. Lucas Jr., 32, Wilson, NC

Staff Sgt. Patrick R. Dolphin, 29, Moscow, PA

Sgt. Dennis E. Kancler, 26, Brecksville, OH

Sgt. Christopher M. Wrinkle, 29, Dallastown, PA

Staff Sgt. Kirk A. Owen, 37, Sapulpa, OK

Spc. Barun Rai, 24, Silver Spring, MD

Pfc. Cody G. Baker, 19, Holton, KS

Pfc. Gil I. Morales Del Valle, 21, Jacksonville, FL

Capt. Waid C. Ramsey, 41, Red Bay, AL

Sgt. Anthony Del Mar Peterson, 24, Chelsea, OK

Sgt. Daniel D. Gurr, 21, Vernal, UT

Spc. Jinsu Lee, 34, Chatsworth, CA

Spc. Mark J. Downer, 23, Warner Robins, GA

Sgt. Daniel J. Patron, 26, Canton, OH

Sgt. Adan Gonzales Jr., 28, Bakersfield, CA

Sgt. Joshua J. Robinson, 29, Omaha, NE

Sgt. Alessandro L. Plutino, 28, Pitman, NJ

Lt. Cmdr. (SEAL) Jonas B. Kelsall, 32, Shreveport, LA

MCPO (SEAL) Louis J. Langlais, 44, Santa Barbara, CA

SCPO (SEAL) Thomas A. Ratzlaff, 34, Green Forest, AK

SCPO (EXW/FPJ) Kraig M. Vickers, 36, Kokomo, HI

CPO (SEAL) Brian R. Bill, 31, Stamford, CT

CPO (SEAL) John W. Faas, 31, Minneapolis, MN

CPO (SEAL) Kevin A. Houston, 35, West Hyannisport, MA

CPO (SEAL) Matthew D. Mason, 37, Kansas City, MO

CPO (SEAL) Stephen M. Mills, 35, Fort Worth, TX

CPO (EXW/FPJ/DV) Nicholas H. Null, 30, Washington, WV

CPO (SEAL) Robert J. Reeves, 32, Shreveport, LA

CPO (SEAL) Heath M. Robinson, 34, Detroit, MI

PO1 (SEAL) Darrik C. Benson, 28, Angwin, CA

PO1 (SEAL/PJ) Christopher G. Campbell, 36, Jacksonville, NC

PO1 (EXW/FPJ) Jared W. Day, 28, Taylorsville, UT

PO1 (EXW) John Douangdara, 26, South Sioux City, NE

PO1 (EXW) Michael J. Strange, 25, Philadelphia, PA

PO1 (SEAL/SW) Jon T. Tumilson, 35, Rockford, IA

PO1 (SEAL) Aaron C. Vaughn, 30, Stuart, FL

PO1 (SEAL) Jason R. Workman, 32, Blanding, UT

PO1 (SEAL) Jesse D. Pitman, 27, Ukiah, CA

PO2 (SEAL) Nicholas P. Spehar, 24, Saint Paul, MN

CWO David R. Carter, 47, Centennial, CO

CWO Bryan J. Nichols, 31, Hays, KS

Staff Sgt. Patrick D. Hamburger, 30, Lincoln, NE

Sgt. Alexander J. Bennett, 24, Tacoma, WA

Spc. Spencer C. Duncan, 21, Olathe, KS

Tech. Sgt. John W. Brown, 33, Tallahassee, FL

Staff Sgt. Andrew W. Harvell, 26, Long Beach, CA

Tech. Sgt. Daniel L. Zerbe, 28, York, PA

Cpl. Nicholas S. Ott, 23, Manchester, NJ

HN Riley Gallinger-Long, 19, Cornelius, OR

Sgt. Edward J. Frank II, 26, Yonkers, NY

Sgt. Jameel T. Freeman, 26, Baltimore, MD

Spc. Patrick L. Lay II, 21, Fletcher, NC

Spc. Jordan M. Morris, 23, Stillwater, OK

Pfc. Rueben J. Lopez, 27, Williams, CA

2nd Lt. Joe L. Cunningham, 27, Kingston, OK

Master Sgt. Charles L. Price III, 40, Milam, TX

Sgt. Matthew A. Harmon, 29, Bagley, MN

Cpl. Joseph A. VanDreumel, 32, Grand Rapids, MI

1st Lt. Damon T. Leehan, 30, Edmond, OK

Spc. Dennis G. Jensen, 21, Vermillion, SD

Spc. Joshua M. Seals, 21, Porter, OK

Lance Cpl. Travis M. Nelson, 19, Pace, FL

Pfc. Douglas L. Cordo, 20, Kingston, NY

1st Lt. Timothy J. Steele, 25, Duxbury, MA

Sgt. Andrew R. Tobin, 24, Jacksonville, IL

Pfc. Brandon S. Mullins, 21, Owensboro, KY

Pfc. Jesse W. Dietrich, 20, Venus, TX

Spc. Michael C. Roberts, 23, Watauga, TX

Spc. Douglas J. Green, 23, Sterling, VA

Pfc. Alberto L. Obod Jr., 26, Orlando, FL

Sgt. Devin J. Daniels, 22, Kuna, ID

Sgt. Colby L. Richmond, 28, Providence, NC

Spc. Kevin R. Shumaker

Gold Star Mother's Day

Proclamation by the President of the United States

"Whereas the preamble to Public Resolution 123, 74th Congress, approved June 23, 1936 (40 Stat. 1895), recites: Whereas the service rendered the United States by the American mother is the greatest source of the Country's strength and inspiration; and "Whereas we honor ourselves and the mothers of America when we revere and give emphasis to the home as the fountainhead of the State; and

"Whereas the American mother is doing so much for the home and for the moral and spiritual uplift of the people of the United States and hence so much for good government and humanity; and

"Whereas the American Gold Star Mothers suffered the supreme sacrifice of motherhood in the loss of their sons and daughters in World Wars"

and Whereas the said Public Resolution 12 provides:

"That the President of the United States is hereby authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the Government officials to display the United States flag on all Government buildings, and the people of the United States to display the flag and to hold appropriate meetings in their homes, churches, or other suitable places, on the last Sunday in September, as public expression of the love, sorrow and reverence of the people of the United States for the American Gold Star Mothers."

"Sec. 2. That the last Sunday in September shall hereafter be designated and known as "Gold Star Mother's Day," and it shall be the duty of the President to request its observance as provided for in this resolution."

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, George Vaughn Seibold, 23, volunteered, requesting assignment in aviation. Deployed to England, he was assigned to the British Royal Flying Corps. With his squadron, he left for combat duty in France. He corresponded with his family regularly.

The mail from George stopped. His mother Grace continued to visit hospitalized veterans in the Washington area, clinging to the hope that her son might have been injured and returned to the United States without any identification.

The Seibolds also received a confirmation of George's death on November 4th. George's body was never identified.

Grace organized a group consisting solely of these special mothers, with the purpose of not only comforting each other, but giving loving care to hospitalized veterans confined in government hospitals far from home.

The organization was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran.

On May 28, 1918, President Wilson approved a suggestion made by the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defenses that American women should wear a black band on the left arm with a gilt star on the band for each member of the family who has given his life for the nation.

"The Service Flag displayed from homes, have a deep Blue Star for each living member in the service and a Gold Star for each member who has died."

Thus, the Gold Star and the term Gold Star Mother, were accepted; they have continued to be used in reference to all American military engagements since that time.

September Holidays and Days of Remembrance

- September 05, 2011 -- Labor Day (Federal Holiday - First Monday in September)
- September 06, 1620 -- The Pilgrims sail from Plymouth, England, on the Mayflower to settle in North America.
- September 11, 2011 -- Grandparents Day
- September 11, 1990 -- President George H. W. Bush gives televised speech, threatening to use force in removing Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait. (Gulf War)
- September 11, 2001 -- Attack on America
- September 11, 2011 -- Patriot Day
- September 13, 1814 -- Francis Scott Key is inspired to write The Star-Spangled Banner.
- September 16, 1919 -- American Legion incorporated by an act of Congress
- September 16, 2011 -- National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- September 18 -- United States Air Force Birthday
- September 21, 2011 -- International Day of Peace.
- September 22, 1863 President Lincoln makes his Emancipation Proclamation speech.
- September 23, 2011 -- Native American Day
- September 25, 2011 -- Gold Star Mothers Sunday