

**Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.**  
**National Executive Board**  
**Minutes**  
**2012 Convention**  
**Meeting Date: 8/1 – 8/4/2012**

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**Call to Order:**

The 70<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention was called to order on 8/1/12 at 9:00am (EDT) in Cincinnati, OH, President Robin McCarthy presiding and Charilyn Damigo, Recording Secretary.

The Convention began with the opening ceremony from the Rituals Book.

Anita Wagner, Convention Chair, welcomed the delegates with a proclamation from Mark Mallory, Mayor of Cincinnati. He has declared August 1, 2012 as “Blue Star Mothers of America Day” in the city of Cincinnati.

The Convention body was greeted by Tristan Weis, on behalf of Speaker of the House, Hon. John Boehner.

Recognition was given to all Past National Presidents, Past National Officers, Chapter Presidents, Chartering Members. All veterans in attendance were given a special pin in the shape of the State of Ohio. Gold Star parents were honored and pinned, and all “Quarter Century” moms (at least 25 consecutive years of membership) were also honored with rockers for their BSMA pins. Our Lima, Ohio “parachuting” moms were recognized, and OH15 will be re-chartered at the close of Convention.

The Convention meetings were held at The Cincinnati Club, a beautiful historic building, and the Memorial Service was conducted at Piatt Park, the oldest park in Cincinnati. These historic locations reflected the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BSMA and the continued theme of old and young.

**Attendees:**

**NEB Members in attendance:**

President Robin Barnes-McCarthy  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Janet Broussard  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Rev. Lin McGee  
3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Teresa Bullock  
4<sup>th</sup> Vice President Rose Ann Elliott  
Recording Secretary Charilyn Damigo  
Financial Secretary Anne Parker

Treasurer Julie Roberts  
Dept of AZ Pres Rebecca Leatherwood  
Dept of OH Pres Pat Pell  
Dept of OK Pres Mary Herandy  
Dept of MI Pres Kristine Wirgau  
PNP Karen Stevens  
Chaplain Gloria Cervantes

**Excused:**

PNP Susan Naill  
Dept of MN Pres Jean Duane

Prayer -- (Gloria Cervantes)  
Pledge of Allegiance -- (Linda Bayer)  
Blue Star Mothers Preamble -- (Maura Yanosick)

**Approval of Minutes**

- MOTION: Recommendation that the Minutes from the 2011 Convention be accepted. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

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**Day 1 Credentials Officer report**

- 164 voting delegates
- 9 non-voting members
- 8 associates/guests

**Convention Rules**

- The Sgt-at-Arms read the Convention Rules and a written copy was distributed to all delegates. MOTION: To accept the Convention Rules as presented. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

**Convention Appointments**

- The following tellers were recommended by the NEB:
  - Lisa Gwilt (MI99)
  - Sally Botson (OH26)
  - Sharon Skaro (MN1)
  - Linda Kouche (SC7)
  - Laura Sutton (AZ6)
- MOTION: To accept the tellers as recommended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- PNP Joyce Sanford (OH41) was appointed as Judge.
- 3 Spotters were appointed: Ginger Novak (KY8), Christine Boyd (CA22), Lisa Ryan (NY6)
- Timers are Beverly Boike (MI184) and Marianna Sherman (OH32)
- Minutes Review Committee: Chere Pedersen (NV4), Mary Johnson (MN8), Cheree Barrat (TX13)

**President's Report**

- NP Robin Barnes McCarthy gave a lengthy annual report which addressed highlights and concerns throughout the year. She addressed the majority of issues contained in the letter the membership received from the Department of Oklahoma. She is unable to comment on items involved in pending litigation or from Closed Executive Session. The report is attached.
- MOTION: To give a vote of confidence for our National President and the explanations she presented to the letter from the Department of Oklahoma. Amendment (accepted) to include NEB members that were named in the letter. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- MOTION: To suspend the Department of Oklahoma and vacate the offices and officers therein while an investigation is conducted into the following:
  1. Who authorized the mass mailings to the national membership?
  2. Who authorized the release of the funds used to pay for the mailing and where did the money come from?
  3. Who obtained access to all of the addresses of the members, nationwide, some of which were private? And,
  4. Who all was involved in the planning and execution of all the above?Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

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## **DAY 2**

### **Day 2 Credentials Officer report**

- 172 voting delegates
- 11 non-voting members
- 9 associates/guests

### **Officer and Committee Reports**

- Each National Officer and Department presented an annual report (attached at the end of the minutes).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> VP
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> VP
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> VP
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Vp
  - National Recording Secretary
  - National Financial Secretary
  - National Treasurer
- Recommendation made for next year's NP to assign a Compliance Committee to help with the IRS and compliance documents

### **Response from Department of Oklahoma**

Dottie Sills & Sue Stowe, on behalf of the Discipline Committee, have reviewed the top four issues and evidence they were working from. The Department delegates will answer the questions that were put to them and present pertinent information. However, they cannot present information that was from closed sessions or may be in lawsuit).

- An apology was made by DP Mary Herandy for the comments made by OK delegates before lunch break.
- Re: Resignation of Attorney Dean McGrath on June 14.
  - Membership was not notified that we did not have an attorney
  - NEB was not notified immediately
- Re: Insurance
  - An email was sent January 4, 2011 to Anne Parker asking about the insurance.
  - Budgeted item – NEB should have known that payment was due.
- Re: Leadership Qualifications
  - Leadership Handbook details governance, qualifications, responsibilities
    - In 2009 wording was introduced that our Governing Documents would consist of our Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and Code of Conduct. there were no proposed changes in 2010, 2011
    - Leadership Handbook was only given to allow members to understand the roles of the NEB members. They were originally listed in our Bylaws but the parliamentarian suggested that a handbook be written to contain these.
  - NP should have known that she was required to attend specific events
    - Gold Star Mother's events are by invitation only.

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- Leadership handbook is not clear about attending events only in Washington, DC.
  - Reasons for not attending are not required.
  - Breakdown somewhere if the NP did not know that she was required to attend these events.
- Re: Changes to Documents (Budget) etc.
  - Not best choice of language – all OK wanted was clarification
  - Budget approved last year did not include any expenses for 2011 Convention
  - Budget-to-Actual figures do not match approved budget
- Q: Why was letter not sent out without first sending it to Disciplinary Convention?
  - A: Since last fall the DP tried to ask questions without answers and was disciplined when she tried to pursue the matter.
- D & O Insurance
  - Do we currently have insurance or not? How much has been paid at this time for attorney
  - PNP Karen Stevens – explained “2 strikes” issue, company policy does not allow a new policy to be written
  - Attorney wanted
- Also prepared for Convention Body answers to 4 questions put to them by the Convention body yesterday.
- MOTION: to suspend all OK chapters until such time a formal investigation can be completed. Additionally, that clemency be granted to any OK member that comes forth with information that they were NOT in support of the actions taken by the Dept. of OK. Motion failed on vote.
- Question from Convention Body regarding campaigning issues
  - Nominating Committee gave an explanation of campaigning rules.

**Current Litigation Expense**

- The NEB approved a \$5000 retainer to the attorney who is representing NP Robin Barnes McCarthy, pending reimbursement through the D & O Insurance that was in place at the time of the alleged offenses. This is a “revolving” retainer that must be replaced as funds are used. At this time an additional sum of approximately \$2000 has been sent to the attorney.

**Resolution Committee**

- (Christine Boyd, Katherine Venerable, Julie Roberts)
- 2-year process to change the eligibility requirements in our federal charter
- Eligibility now includes any mother (birth mother, foster mother, step mother, grandmother, legal guardian, role of mother); citizen of U.S. living in/out United States. Specific conflicts have been removed.
- Congressional Record, Hon. Scott Tipton, 12/7/11

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**Website Committee**

- (Nancy & Dave Aubel, Charilyn Damigo, Kristine Wirgau, Jennie Knockaert, NP Robin Barnes McCarthy)
- Committee was in the process of reviewing RFP (Request for Proposal) responses when the search was put on hold due to pending litigation and other pressing matters.
- Committee received 9-10 responses, had narrowed search to two providers and was requesting a proposal from MemberClicks (our current provider)
- Recommendation from committee to move forward
- Necessity and cost of purchasing a new domain is currently unknown.
- MOTION: Continue discussion past the 15 minute timeline. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- Recommendation that the old membership data held on bluestarmothers.org should be deleted upon change of website.
- MOTION: Convention body to instruct the 2012/13 NEB to appoint a website committee for the purpose of proceeding with the update of our website and domain purchase, within the constraints of our approved budget. (Friendly amendment – committee to be in place by 9/30/2012 – accepted) Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

**Executive Director Committee**

- (Joyce Mader, Linda Bayer, Debbie Parks, NP Robin Barnes McCarthy)
- BSMA not currently ready financially to support an Executive Director
- Recommendation – Hire an executive assistant to provide daily logistical, administrative support to the NP. This would free up the NP's time to deal with the mission of the organization.
- Exec. Asst. would be able to help with some of the NEB duties such as
  - Correspondence
  - Online Store
  - Calendar
  - Agenda
  - Help with expense reports
  - Liaison for special events
  - Assist in transition between NPs
- Recommendation to have a non-affiliate as a neutral position. First candidate should be hired from the geographic area where the 2012/13 NP currently lives.
- Recommended salary of 15-20 hours per week/\$10-15 per hour. Person would be responsible for their own taxes and insurance (1099). Need attorney/tax advisor opinion on this issue.
- Suggestion to try using a Corresponding Secretary or committees first to help current NEB and then decide if this position would be necessary.
- No decision was made and the committee will take it back to discussion. Would need to secure funding.

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**Investigative Committee**

- NP Robin McCarthy proposed an unbiased method for appointing a committee to investigate the Department of Oklahoma.
  - Anyone interested in serving on the committee should submit their name.
  - Two names will be drawn from each of seven regions in the US (split by populations)
  - The newly elected NP will choose a committee from this pool of names
  - This process will occur prior to the elections tomorrow

**DAY 3**

**Parliamentarian**

- NP Robin McCarthy introduced professional parliamentarian Mel Graveley, a former City Council member from Canton, OH and an Air Force Veteran.
- NP McCarthy presented Mr. Graveley with a veterans pin.

**Day 3 Credentials Officer reports**

- 173 voting delegates
- 11 non-voting members
- 9 associates/guests

**Budget Committee Report**

- (Budget Committee comprised of PNP Karen Stevens /chair/, NT Julie Roberts, NFS Anne Parker, Pat Soler, Peg McClanahan, NP Robin McCarthy)
- NFC makes the following recommendations:
  - \$40K - Capital Projects (\$30K for website, \$10K for new equipment)
  - \$10K - contingency fund
  - \$50K – unrestricted funds to remain in bank balance at all times
- MOTION (from Committee): Convention delegates to approve a donation of 10% of the annual net income (income minus expenses) if the organization is financially stable, and to approve a national organization supporting our veterans (ie, Chaplains fund, Wounded Warrior, Honor Flight). Suggested amendment: based on the most recently reconciled net year-to-date annual income (accepted). Fails on vote.
- MOTION (from Committee): Convention delegates to approve a donation of 10% (based on the most recently reconciled net year-to-date annual income {income minus expenses}) to a national veterans service organization, if the organization is financially stable. Motion passes.
- MOTION: To make a donation of our 10% net income based on our most recently reconciled bank statements in the amount of \$3311 to Honor Flight. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- MOTION (from Committee): To approve the 2012/13 Capital and Operating Budgets as presented. Motion passes.
- Financial Policies
  - Recommended changes:
    - Add 10% donation just approved

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- Remove Sgt-at-Arms for Convention expenses to be covered
- Add Chaplain for Convention expenses to be covered.
- Clarify that chapter financial reviews can be internal reviews
- Selling from private rooms at Convention is prohibited unless a vendor fee has been paid
- MOTION: Current Convention body should ratify the NEB's decision to pay the NFC's travel and lodging expenses for the 2012 Convention. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- MOTION: Change in the previous motion should take place immediately, not at end of Convention. Motion is seconded and passes on vote (2/3 majority)
- MOTION (from Committee): To accept the financial rules as amended. Motion passes.

**Governing Documents**

- Kathryn Venable, Bylaws Chair, presided over the discussion and voting on the following proposed changes:
- Constitution
  - ARTICLE VIII

▪ ~~**Alternative 1 (submitted by East Bay Blue Star Moms Chapter CA101)**~~

~~The NEB shall consist of Elected National Officers, Department Presidents, and **all Past Presidents** the two most recent Past National Presidents. All Past NP's who do not attend at least, four (4) meetings a year, will be permanently removed as NEB members, but will retain their right to vote at National Convention. The NEB shall administer the activities and business of this Corporation in the interim between the National Convention.~~  
WITHDRAWN

▪ **Alternative 2 (submitted by Blue Water 180-Michigan)**

The NEB shall consist of Elected National Officers, Department Presidents, and ~~all Past Presidents.~~ **All Past NP's who do not attend, at the least, four (4) meetings a year, will be permanently removed as NEB members, but the most recent Past President.** All other Past Presidents are to serve as advisers and will retain their right to vote at National Convention. **Past Department/Chapter presidents may continue to serve on their respective boards.** The NEB shall administer the activities and business of this Corporation in the interim between the National Convention.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO   x**

▪ **Alternative 3 (submitted by Cindy Hood, Dept of Oklahoma)**

The NEB shall consist of Elected National Officers, Department Presidents, and all Past Presidents. All Past NP's who do not attend at least, four (4) meetings a year, will be permanently removed as NEB members, but will retain their right to vote at National Convention. The NEB shall administer the activities and business of this Corporation in the interim between the National Convention



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with the exception of unbudgeted major purchases in excess of \$10,000. Major purchase expenditures must be presented to and approved by the membership body.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO x \_\_\_\_\_**

- **Alternative 4 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)** The NEB shall consist of the most recently, ~~duy~~ Elected National Officers and Department Presidents, and ~~all Past Presidents~~ the three (3) most recent Past National Presidents still retaining membership in BSMA. If any of the three (3) most recent Past National Presidents still retaining membership cannot or will not serve on the NEB, her position on the NEB will remain vacant and not be filled. All other Past NP's ~~who do not attend, at the least, four (4) meetings a year, will be permanently removed as NEB members, but~~ will serve in an advisory role only to the NEB but will retain their right to vote at National Convention. The NEB shall administer the activities and business of this Corporation in the interim between ~~the~~ National Conventions.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_**

- MOTION: to ratify the Constitution as amended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

- Bylaws

- ARTICLE I, SECTION 2

- ~~**Alternative 1 (submitted by Blue Water Chapter, Michigan #180) -**~~

~~**Section 2.** The Corporation shall be governed first by the Constitution of the United States of America and then by Title 36 Sections 30501 through 30514 of the United States Code (“Congressional Charter”). It shall also be governed by its Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Conduct and the Affiliation Agreements, for National, Departments, and Chapters between the NEB, Each Department, and Each Chapter. The most current version of *Robert’s Rules of Order* shall be the source of parliamentary procedure to be used at all levels of the Corporation. Disciplinary procedures will be governed and administered by Article XV of the Code of Conduct.~~

~~WITHDRAWN~~

- **Alternative 2 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)**

**Section 2.** The Corporation shall be governed ~~first~~ by the following documents in the order listed: United States Constitution; United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 305 – Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. Sections 30501 through 30514 of the United States Code (“Congressional Charter”). It shall also be governed by its and the following organizational documents - Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Conduct, Affiliation Agreements for National, Departments, and Chapters between the NEB, Each Department, and Each Chapter. The most current version of *Robert’s Rules of Order* shall be the source of parliamentary procedure to be used at all levels of the Corporation. Disciplinary procedures will be governed and administered by Article XV of the Code of Conduct.



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SUBMISSION ACCEPTED:      YES   x        NO     

○ ARTICLE III, Section 1

○ **Alternative 1 (submitted by CA #101 Chapter)**

**Section 1.** A Member is considered to be in good standing whose dues have been paid, who adheres to the Governing Documents, and the Membership Oath, which was signed upon joining the Corporation and has not received any written discipline within the last twelve (12) months from the NEB, their Department ~~or their Chapter~~.

*\*There should be at least one level of higher authority involved in written disciplinary matters. "Chapters" was deleted to ensure that written disciplines are consistent across the body of the organization*

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED:      YES           NO   x  

○ **Alternative 2 (submitted by Bylaws Committee)**

**Section 1.** A Member is considered to be in good standing whose dues have been paid, who adheres to the Governing Documents, and the Membership Oath, which was signed upon joining the Corporation and has not received any written discipline within the last ~~twelve (12)~~ six (6) months from the NEB, their Department or their Chapter.

*This allows for less time for a member to be out of "good standing" if the negative behavior has been altered. Also there are 2 different time frames on a written warning and this will make both the Bylaws and the Code of Conduct have the same amount of time that a written warning is in effect.*

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED:      YES   x        NO     

○ ARTICLE V, Section 3

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Rose Ann Elliot, N4<sup>th</sup>VP)**

Section 3. Chapters formed before 1990 shall not be required to have a minimum number of Members. The last remaining Members shall turn in the Chapter Charter. *Any chapter falling in this category who is accepting new members and/or collecting contributions must comply with all requirements of the organization, including but not limited to National documentation filings required by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. Any chapter falling in this category that is not accepting new members and/or collecting contributions may relinquish their EIN by filing a 990 and marking it termination. A copy of this 990 will be submitted to the National Financial Secretary. At the acceptance of the termination 990 by the IRS, the chapter will no longer be required to file and submit annual reports and financial documents to National. They will still need to complete an Affiliation Agreement annually.*

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED:      YES   x        NO     

○ ARTICLE IX, Section 4

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Cindy Hood, Dept of OK)**

**Section 4.** A nomination committee, appointed by the NP, will receive nominations and qualifications for each position, to be distributed to the membership, no later than thirty (30) days before convention. Nominations may

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also be made from the floor. ~~Nominations may also be made from the floor. Nomination speeches must be no longer than two (2) minutes and be limited to specific qualifications for the nominated office.~~ Opposition speeches will also be allowed but no longer than two (2) minutes and limited to the specific qualifications known concerning the nominee. All nominees will be asked to step outside the election hall during this process but must be attentive to the re-entry request of the Sergeant at Arms.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO x \_\_\_\_\_**

▪ **Alternative 2 (submitted by National Nominating Committee)**  
**Section 4.**

~~A nomination committee, appointed by the NP, will receive nominations and qualifications for each position, to be distributed to the membership, no later than thirty (30) days before convention. Nominations may also be made from the floor. Nomination speeches must be no longer than two (2) minutes and be limited to specific qualifications for the nominated office.~~

A nominating committee, appointed by the National President, will receive nominations and qualifications for each position, to be distributed to the membership no later than 30 days before convention. All nominees will be verified as members in good standing with the National Vice President in charge of membership and the Chairperson of the National Discipline Committee. All nominations will be presented to the National Convention body by the nominating committee.

In the event of no nominations having been received prior to the established deadline set by the nominating committee, nominations may be submitted to the committee at convention up until 24 hours prior to voting. The nominee will then be verified and presented as stated in Article IX, Section 4a.

*\*Committee comments: This alternative as written takes away the right to have nominations from the floor if there are no qualified nominations received by the nominating committee and a well qualified nominee may be overlooked.*

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO x \_\_\_\_\_**

• ARTICLE IX Section 5

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Rio Grande Valley Chapter, NM2)**

**Section 5.** Nominees, except under extreme circumstances (such as temporary illness, accident, family emergency (i.e. preparation of family wedding), child's/family member's yellow ribbon ceremony, being deployed, or returning from deployment, natural disaster, or act of war or terrorism) must be present to accept the nomination. In the case of absence, a letter must be addressed to the NEB or the DEB prior to the Convention citing the office, qualifications for office, acceptance if nominated, and a detailed explanation of absence. Upon receipt of this letter, the candidate will be added to the ballot.

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*\*We believe that these additional circumstances should not be a disqualification from being nominated and/or present at Convention elections and should be allowed to supply a letter to the NEB and the Nominating Committee, outlining such circumstances, if voted by the Governing Body.*

*\*Committee Comments: The Bylaws Committee believes the current wording of “such as” is not limiting as to the type of emergency looked at or accepted.*

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO x \_\_\_\_\_

○ ARTICLE IX Section 7

▪ Alternative 1 (submitted by CA #101 Chapter)

~~Section 7. The NP may represent any state. Vice Presidents must represent different states. No more than two (2) officers for NFS, NT, and NRS may represent one (1) state and must be from different Chapters~~

~~*\*This section was added in 2010 and limits the ability of the Convention Delegates to elect the best qualified person for the position. Because elections are held in the order of the office, starting with the President, nominees for NVP1, NVP2, NVP3 and NVP4 may be disqualified even though they are the best able to meet the needs of the position. Additionally, the Constitution, Article V, Section 2 state that the form of government for the corporation shall always be representative of the membership at large — the current wording of Section 7 does not allow for the representation of the membership at large because it specifically limits who may be nominated. Finally, having multiple Officers from the same state does not in any way represent a concentration of power. Individuals, based on their qualifications are nominated and voted upon; the organization needs the best qualified individuals to be elected into office.*~~

~~*\*Committee Comments: If this amendment is accepted, this will change the numbering of the remaining sections.*~~

~~WITHDRAWN~~

▪ Alternative 2 (submitted by Bylaws Committee)

Section 7. The NP may represent any state. All remaining elected officers ~~Vice Presidents~~ may represent any ~~Departments or Chapters~~. ~~No more than two (2) officers for NFS and NT and NFC may represent one (1) state and must be from different Chapters~~

*\*The Bylaws Committee believes that Section 7 as written is too limiting as to the best qualified candidate for an elected office. This also removes NFC from this section as this is not an election related issue.*

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

○ MOTION: To ratify this amendment immediately. Motion is seconded. Fails on vote (91 ye/63 no).

○ ARTICLE X Section 1a

▪ Alternative 1 (submitted by Julie M. Roberts, National Treasurer, Rio Grande Valley Chapter NM2)

a.) NP must have served as an elected office at least one (1) full year on the NEB, or have served as least one (1) full year as the Department President ~~and must have served on the current NEB.~~

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~~\*This is to ensure that the Department President being nominated has personal knowledge of what transpired during that current year on the NEB, to help make an easier transition into her position.~~

~~\*Committee comments: The Bylaws committee believes that this alternative as written severely limits those eligible to be elected to the office of NP. Currently any past NEB member that served for at least one year is eligible to be elected into the office of NP no matter how long ago they served on the NEB. Also, if Alternative 1 or 2 of Article VIII of the Constitution is approved, this will be in violation of Article IX, Section 10 of the Bylaws allowing non consecutive terms.~~

WITHDRAWN

▪ **Alternative 2 (submitted by Cindy Hood, Dept. of OK)**

Section 1. National Officers must have the following qualifications:

- a.) The new elected NP must have served as an elected officer ~~at least one (1) full year on NEB~~ at least one (1) full year on NEB and attended at least 80% of NEB meetings, or have served ~~as least one (1) full year as the Department President;~~ at least one (1) full year as the Department President and attended at least 80% of NEB meetings;

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_ NO x \_\_\_

- MOTION: To ratify the Bylaws as amended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

- Code of Conduct

- ARTICLE I, Section 1d:

- **Alternative 1 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)**

~~d) To establish eligibility requirements and procedures governing the admission of Members, and to grant or refuse membership according to the law the Corporation's Governing Documents;~~

WITHDRAWN

- ARTICLE I, Section 1g

- **Alternative 1 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)**

g.) To elect its officers, ~~directors,~~ and appoint committee Members in accordance with the Governing Documents ~~and to suspend or remove them in accordance with the procedures outlined in Article XV (Disciplinary Procedure) of the Code of Conduct;~~

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

- ARTICLE 1, Section 1h

- **Alternative 1 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)**

h.) To discipline or expel any Members ~~and or~~ Associate Members in accordance with Article 1, Section 2 of the organization's By Laws ~~the law~~ and with the procedures outlined in Article XV (Disciplinary Procedure) of the Code of Conduct;

SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

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○ ARTICLE 4, Section 1

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Cindy Hood, Dept of OK)**

~~Section 1. The Chapter Financial Secretary shall receive all Membership applications and dues; shall keep record of the Chapter's membership on the Roster Form; and shall deposit all funds received and notify the NT. If the Chapter is part of a Department, the Chapter Financial Secretary must also submit a copy of the Roster Form, a copy of any new membership applications that have not previously been sent to the N1stVP and the applicable portion of the dues to the Department Financial Secretary Membership Chair. If the Chapter is not part of Department, then the above items must be sent to the N1stVP and the applicable portion of the dues to the Department Financial Secretary.~~

Section 1. New member applicants should apply for membership on the National BSMA website when possible.

National will notify the Chapter Membership Chair with copy to the Department Membership Chair if the chapter is in a state with a Department. The Chapter Membership Chair shall maintain copies of the membership receipts for chapter documentation. If Chapter is in a state with a Department, the Department shall do the same.

National will forward the chapter portion of the membership funds to the Chapter or Department/Chapter portion monthly. The Chapter Financial Secretary will deposit funds and notify the Chapter Membership Chair of payment.

If a chapter is in a state with a Department, the Financial Secretary shall deposit the funds and notify the Department Membership Chair for payment request preparation to the chapters. The Chapter portion will be forwarded within 30 days of receipt of the funds from National.

If the Membership application is submitted to the Chapter, the Financial Secretary will receive the funds and deposit them. She will notify the Chapter Membership Chair (if not the same person) to have the new member added to the National BSMA database. Chapter Membership Chair will submit the Chapter Roster Dues Report on the BSMA website with payment to National. If chapter is in a state with a Department, a copy of the Chapter Roster Dues Report confirmation will be forwarded to the Department Membership Chair. National will forward the Department portion to the Department on a monthly basis.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED:      YES\_\_\_      NO\_\_x\_\_**

○ ARTICLE 4, Section 2

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Cindy Hood, Dept of OK)**

~~Section 2. The Department Financial Secretary shall receive the Roster Form from all Chapters, a copy of new Membership Applications and applicable portion of the dues per Member; shall deposit all funds; and shall submit a copy~~

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~~of Roster Forum, a copy of new Membership applications and the applicable National portion of dues to the N1st VP.~~

Section 2. Department Financial Secretary shall receive the funds from National and forward a copy of the payment to the Membership Chair. Chapters submitting a Roster Dues Report to National will copy the Department Membership Chair. Department Membership Chair shall maintain all copies for proper documentation.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_ NO x**

○ ARTICLE VIII, Section 1

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by CA #101 Chapter)**

**Section 1.** If ~~at least three (3)~~ If a majority of the Chartered Chapters within one State wish to form a Department, a meeting should be called to discuss the issue, with a representative present from ~~each of the three (3)~~ the majority of the Chapters. The meeting should be centrally located in the State and should allow for adequate time for the Chapters to discuss forming a Department.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES \_\_\_ NO x**

**Count = 70 Aye, 82 Nay**

○ ARTICLE XV, Section 1A3d

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Blue Water Chapter, Michigan 180)**

d.) Harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, religion, political affiliation, ~~or due to~~ physical disability or for any other reason will not be tolerated

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x NO \_\_\_**

○ ARTICLE XV, Section 1A4b

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Blue Water Chapter, Michigan #180)**

b.) Members are prohibited from making false claims, false representations, or allegations aimed at individuals as members, or regarding our mission or regarding any aspects of the Corporation through any means or method to include but not limited to the utilization of any type of distributed hard copy or electronic copy material, public announcements service or publicly broadcasted means of communication, to include television, radio, email, internet blogs or public electronic message boards.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES x NO \_\_\_**

○ ARTICLE XV, Section 1B2d

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Bylaws Committee)**

d.) Written Warning. This action involves a discussion with the president regarding the rule, policy, behavioral code, Governing Documents, policy or procedures with emphasis on correcting the behavior. During the



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discussion the length of time allowing the member to correct an action or improve on behavior shall be specified. The member should be certain that she understands the reason(s), the warning, for correcting an action or improve behavior and the terms for avoidance of further action. This warning shall be presented in writing and the member will be asked to sign and date the document as indication that she has seen and understands the document. The document shall be signed and dated by the president. If the member refuses to sign the document, “Member refused to sign” with his or her own signature and date. As long as no other disciplinary action has taken place, the written warning will expire at the end of ~~nine (9) months~~ **six (6) months**.

**Comments from Bylaws Committee: This allows for less time for a member to be out of “good standing” if the negative behavior has been altered. Also there are 2 different time frames on a written warning this will make both the Bylaws and the Code of Conduct have the same amount of time that a written warning is in effect.**

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES   x   NO**

○ ARTICLE XV, Section 2

▪ **Alternative 1 (submitted by Robin McCarthy, NP)**

Section 2. The following steps must be taken before a trial can take place:

- ~~a.) A Committee must be established to investigate the validity of the reports of misconduct and determine if charges should be made.~~
- ~~b.) The Committee should be chosen for their integrity and good judgment. Such a Committee can be convened only if a resolution moving to establish the Committee is made, seconded, discussed and voted on by the Chapter, Department, Convention Body, or the NEB. This resolution should include as little detail as is possible to protect the Accused.~~
- ~~c.) The Committee should quietly conduct an investigation and make a sincere effort to get the facts. All information collected is confidential.~~
- ~~d.) The Committee should speak with the Accused to hear her side of the story. If the committee members determine that the reports of misconduct are untrue, they should prepare a report and resolution for clearing the Accused. If they find substantial evidence that the report of misconduct is true, a report on the findings, and prefer charges must be made.~~
- ~~e.) The Committee should then prepare a resolution that sets a date and time for the trial meeting; states the specific charges; requires the Accused to appear to defend the charges; and recommends who should serve on the Trial Committee (which should be different from the investigation committee).~~
- ~~f.) Upon adoption of the resolution, the Recording Secretary immediately sends a letter by registered mail notifying the Accused of the time, date and place of the trial, and a copy of the exact charges. The Recording Secretary should retain a copy of the letter and proof of service to the Accused.~~



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~~g.) It shall be incumbent upon the accused to pay all expenses related to the trial for her and any witnesses who attend on her behalf. She may not seek reimbursement for any of those expenses regardless of the outcome of the trial.~~ Use the “Steps in a Fair Disciplinary Process” in the most current version of Roberts Rules of Order.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES**\_\_\_ **NO**\_\_x\_\_

- MOTION: To ratify the Code of Conduct as amended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- Affiliation Agreement
  - The requirement to have officers initial each page was defeated.
  - 3.2
    - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
National agrees that, to the extent reasonably practical, it shall facilitate and support Department and Chapter activities consistent with the goals and mission of the Corporation.

National shall provide guidance, instruction, and training to all Departments and Chapters with respect to accounting procedures and financial reporting requirements, the management infrastructure of Departments and Chapters, as well as the communications infrastructure of the Corporation. This includes providing Department and Chapter with copies of the Charter and the Governing Documents, the National Convention Minutes, the National Financial Rules, the National Handbook, all guidelines prepared by National regarding any official Corporation programs, and any other written policies adopted by the NEB through the use of modern technology, programs and systems **to include the website and information relating to the necessary tax filing documents (990) filed by January 15, implemented by the I.R.S., each fiscal year.** No single Chapter, Department or individual shall be given preferential treatment. This may require that a Chapter, Department or individual may have to put forth a personal effort to work with a Chapter or fellow Member who has the access to the technology utilized to distribute and disburse information and training materials National shall also provide a free link on the Corporation’s Website to Department and Chapter’s own pages or websites as well as provide free access to the Corporation’s online communication groups. National shall provide Department and Chapter with a quarterly newsletter that will be made available to Department and Chapter online and will also be available in paper form upon request. Finally, National shall also provide Department and Chapter with current contact information of all National Officers and Program Chairs.

As more specifically detailed below, National grants to Department and Chapter a non-exclusive right to use the trademarks, service marks, logotypes, or other symbols of National, as well as copyrighted material owned by National. Fees must be paid to National in accordance with the National Financial Rules.

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES**\_\_x\_\_ **NO**\_\_\_\_\_

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- 4.8
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
The parties agree that upon dissolution of Department, its assets, after settlement of all Department liabilities, shall be transferred to National; and the final and necessary tax paperwork (990) is filed with the I.R.S., closing out the Department.  
**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**
  
- 5.5
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by National Finance Committee)**  
Chapter agrees to prepare and file all required registration statements and filings with the appropriate State Agency in the state in which Chapter is located that are necessary to maintain its status as an affiliated organization under National's IRC group tax-exemption. For some states this is a yearly submission and must be completed as outlined by the Attorney General's Office or other State Agency. In accordance with the Chapter's status as in the IRC tax-exempt organization, it may not participate in or contribute to any political campaign nor may it engage in any activities that either support or oppose a candidate for public office. [NOTE: SOME CHAPTERS WILL BE GRAND-FATHERED IN AND THIS PROVISION WILL BE REVISED ACCORDINGLY IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS.]  
**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**
  
- 5.7
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
Chapter shall submit with an annual renewal of this Agreement, Corporation Annual Report and Financial Reports to National by January 15th of each year, receipt from the I.R.S., indicating that the chapter has filed the necessary 990 form(s), and/or a copy of the tax extension filed. These reports shall contain any changes in Officers, as well as information about upcoming programs, including at least the date and location of such programs.  
**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**
  
- 5.8
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
Chapter agrees to pay the required Chaplains Emergency Fund Obligation ~~annually by the deadline set forth by the NEB,~~ by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.  
**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**
  
- 5.9
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
The parties agree that upon dissolution of the Chapter, its assets, after settlement of all Chapter liabilities, shall be transferred to Department, if such an entity exists. If such an entity does not exist, then all Chapter assets shall be

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transferred to National. **The Chapter must file their final 990 with the I.R.S., closing out the chapter.**

**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**

- 9.5
  - **Alternative 1 (submitted by the National Finance Committee)**  
**Disbandment.** The procedures for disbanding a Department or Chapter that are contained in the National Bylaws must be followed if Department or Chapter wishes to disband. **The Department or Chapter must file with the I.R.S., a final 990 form, before they are approved to disband.**  
**SUBMISSION ACCEPTED: YES  NO**
- The words “if applicable” were added to the signature page to any signature spaces that are not required officers.
- The signature page only is to be emailed to the Compliance Chair at an email address to be determined at a later date.
- MOTION: To ratify the Affiliation Agreement as amended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
- MOTION: to ratify the Governing Documents as amended. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.

## **DAY 4**

### **Day 4 Credentials Officer report**

- 187 voting delegates
- 10 non-voting members
- 9 associates/guests

**Announcement :** \$2293 raised at silent auction, \$561 raised at centerpiece live auction.)

### **Election Rules**

- NP Robin McCarthy read the election rules from Bylaws Article IX
- Prior to the elections a pool of candidates was established to be used by the new NP from which to select an investigative committee for the Dept. of OK matter. (New NP will select three or more to be on committee. No one from 2011-2012 board to be on committee.
- New NEB will need to appointment members to grievance and discipline committees.)
  - Sarah Young (CA21)
  - Robin Countryman-Valk (CA99)
  - Gwen Jensen (NV3)
  - Judye Sinclair-Leczal (NM1)
  - Cheree Barrett (TX13)
  - Ginger Novak (KY8)
  - Jeanne Ullmer (MN7)

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- Cyndi Ventura (NY6)
- Pat Wilson-Perkins (CT4)
- Teresa Sumners (VA4)
- Sandy Tips (OH1)
- Melissa Farmer (MI184)

### **Elections**

- Qualifications for each office were read by the Bylaws Chair prior to each vote.
- Delegate count 166)
- Election Results were as follows:
  - National President
    - **Pat Soler (CA21)** – 92 votes
    - Judy Dorsey (OH2) – 74 votes
  - First Vice President
    - **Judy Dorsey (OH2)** – 142 votes
- MOTION: to do a vote by affirmation (*via voche*) if there is only one nominee on the ballot for a position, for this Convention only. Motion is seconded and passes on vote.
  - Second Vice President
    - **Cyndi Ventura (NY6)** *via voche*
  - Third Vice President
    - **Teresa Bullock (CA9)** *via voche*
  - Fourth Vice President
    - position left vacant, to be filled by NEB appointment
  - (Recommendation by parliamentarian to proceed with elections and leave office vacant per by-laws.
  - Not recommended by parliamentarian – complete convention with elected officers and NEB could nominate person's who by our standards are now ineligible (state issues) to fill the vacancies.
  - National Recording Secretary
    - **Charilyn Damigo (CA4)** – 128 votes
    - Sarah Young (CA12) – 35 votes
  - National Financial Secretary
    - **Katherine Venerable (CA9)** *via voche*
  - National Treasurer
    - **Anne Parker (SC7)** *via voche*

### **Big Dipper**

- Paulette Gloden announced the names of the Big Dipper scholarship recipients (listed below).
  - 2 veterans at 50% of total fund available
    - Patrick Butler \$1500
    - Nathan Damigo \$1500
  - 1 Blue Star Mother at 30% of total funds available
    - Belinda Fengler Jolly \$900
  - Students outstanding

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- Gregory Fleming Wax \$190
- Dalila Reeder \$190
- Ashley V. SmithKey \$190
- Anna Jaskowiak \$190
- Tiffany Rachelle Cogan \$190
- Lindsey Rettke \$190
- Matthew Hynd \$190
- Tonya M. Scherer \$190
- Anders Miller \$190
- Dominic Miller \$190
- Four students at honorable mention
  - Nataliya Murphy \$50
  - Katherine Roberts \$50
  - Kyle Boehm \$50
  - Tammy L Phillips \$50
- The newly elected officers were also introduced. They will be sworn in at a ceremony immediately following the Convention.
  - President – Paulette Gloden
  - Vice President – Michelle Passwaters
  - Recording Secretary – Sarah Young
  - Treasurer – Ann Cordero
  - Financial Secretary – Robin Johnson
  - Sgt.-at-Arms – Pat Wilson-Perkins
  - Chaplain – Lin McGee
  - Patriotic Instructor – Vicki Roe
  - Historian – Laura De Roo

### **Announcements**

- The NEB has voted to suspend the Department of Arizona pending an investigation into the procedures followed when founding the department.
- If any chapter financial officers are willing to serve on an investigative committee, please sign up on the chart board at the back of the room.

### **OH15**

- The delegates at the Convention who were originally members of OH15 were presented with a new charter. Charter was presented by NP Robin McCarthy and DP Pat Pell. They will retain their original name (Lima True Blue), but the charter will show both the original chartering date and the current date of re-instatement.

### **Yearbook Costs**

- NP Robin McCarthy explained that the 4 Rockwell prints (Four Freedoms) used in the yearbook were used with appropriate copyright approval. \$400 was approved by NEB and the rest was received as a donation from the National Chaplain.

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- The National Chaplain also made a donation towards the cost of the Rockers for the Quarter Century Moms pins and for the Chaplains Fund.

**Good of the Order**

- Anita Wagner noted that she enjoyed being the Convention Chair and it meant a lot to her to see us all come together.

**Closing Ceremony**

**Adjournment - The Convention was adjourned by NP Pat Soler at 1:32pm (EDT).**

**Officer Reports for 2011-12 are attached.**

**Minutes Reviewed by Committee:**

Charilyn Damigo (NRS)

Mary Johnson (MN8)

Cheree Barrett (TX13)

Cheré Pedersen (NV4)

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## 2011-2012 NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is the 70<sup>th</sup> year of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. What should have been a year of celebration and excitement has been marked with division and debate. Because I am in the middle of a defamation lawsuit brought against me by a Past National Officer, I will have to be very careful about how I report to this Convention my actions from 2011 to the present. Also, this report will be characteristically longer than usual, as we have to respond to the letter, which the Department of Oklahoma sent in July to all the members of Blue Star Mothers of America.

Rather than answer that letter with another letter to the entire membership (at great cost to BSMA), I bring this report of my actions to this Convention, starting with August 2011, leading to the present. I will do what I can to answer the charges in that letter, and where there is reference to either the litigation or some other matter that could become litigious, I will have to avoid answering those questions. There has also been some concern over matters discussed during Closed Executive Sessions by the NEB, which are designed to protect the privacy of confidential information. (Several of those matters appeared in the aforementioned letter.) However, if something occurred in Closed Executive Session, I will not be able to disclose that information.

Remember, the decisions that are made at this Convention could make or break us.

[A reminder was issued, that no authorization for taping during this convention has been given.]

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2011-2012

### AUGUST

- I came to the 2011 National Convention in Washington, DC, with no intention of running for national office. I was asked to consider allowing my name to be nominated for NP, which I agreed to.
- Immediately after being elected NP, members began sharing with me their concerns about their emails being read by previous officers. When a National Officer announced to the Convention Body that I had asked her to be our webmaster—no committee chairs or appointments had been made yet—I decided *against* correcting the statement in order to avoid embarrassing that Officer. But I was concerned about this action, given the report of emails being read.
- After my election as NP, my husband Mike brought clothes for me to wear to the banquet that evening, since we were staying off-site; he was asked by several BSMs to join us at the dinner, since I had just been elected NP. When we went downstairs to see if there was a ticket he could buy, an unidentified Blue Star Mother overheard our question and gave Mike her dinner ticket, because she could not stay.
- After the post-Convention NEB meeting (when all officers are supposed to exchange information, transfer inventory, and begin transitioning to their new roles), I was left with NFS Anne Parker to clean up the mess in that room. Anne identified what was to be shipped back to her address, and we boxed up everything else, and I packed my car to transport it all back to Ohio. At home, I laid out every item and meticulously inventoried what was there. I did not



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receive anything else from the former PNP until November, when a single Sterilite container of old files was shipped to my home address.

- Due to concerns about online security, I did remove all advanced security clearances from the website immediately after returning from Convention. Within a few days, a new “group” appeared in our software, which I had not authorized, and new “aliases” were created within the software—again, no clearances were in place to authorize this action.
- Every action I took on the website was questioned (sometimes within minutes of the action being taken), from changing security access for various NEB members to moving “suspended” members to the “active” file (when their suspensions expired). My actions were within the realm of my responsibility as NP, as far as I could determine, and they were the normal activities of passing the baton of leadership to a new Board or NP.
- I was given no instruction from my predecessor regarding access to old emails, folders, etc. on the president@bluestarmothers.org email address, even though later in the year I was admonished to use that “alias” for all Blue Star Mother official business (for the sake of document retention). [Note: Since the fall of 2009, I was uncomfortable using the GoTo Meeting conference calling, because it appeared that documents on my personal laptop had been accessed during a NEB meeting that year.]
- The transition from a former board to a new board is always difficult, but it appeared early on that we were dealing with two NEBs – an “old” NEB and a “new” NEB—and the work we needed to do was difficult, given this deep divide.
- I have been accused of being “rich” and paying for items for NEB members in order to win their favor. Actually, I realized early in the term that I would not be able to do the business of the organization with my current job (which would not allow me to work part-time), so I quit that job and later took a part-time position, to have more time to do the business I was elected to do. This was a financial hardship for a while, but I could not fulfill my responsibilities without taking this step. Throughout the year, my husband and I did whatever we could to save the organization money, and the NP travel expense budget reflects this action.

## **SEPTEMBER**

- At the beginning of the 9/8/11 NEB meeting, I announced that we would need to end the meeting by 11 p.m., because my daughter-in-law was in labor and I wanted to attend the birth of my granddaughter. Three hours later when I tried to adjourn the meeting, a motion was made about an item not on the agenda. I tabled the motion and ended the call over the objections of a couple of board members. Later, this matter did not re-surface, and I forgot about it.
- While attending the Stephen Siller Foundation Run in NYC on 9/24 (with the full endorsement of the NEB), it was brought to my attention that there was no one going to the White House to represent BSMA for Gold Star Mothers’ Day. I had no knowledge of such an event, since I had not received any invitation from the White House. For Gold Star Mothers’ Day (9/25) I had authorized the National Chaplain to send a condolence card to the 1100 names of Gold Star Mothers on our spreadsheet. But I knew nothing of any invitation to Washington DC. If I was expected to go to DC, this item should have been brought to the attention of the NEB *before* 9/24, while we still had time to have BSMA representation in Washington, DC, not on the day before the Gold Star Mothers event. Later it was pointed out that there were more names than

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the 1100 on our list, but again, this was not made known in time for the Gold Star Mothers' Day mailing.

- At the 2011 National Convention, Blue Star Mothers had been invited to participate in a Veterans Day Parade in NYC on 11/11/11. Since I had believed that this would be a large gathering of Blue Star Mothers, I made plans to attend the Parade. It was on 11/11/11 (called "Vietnam Veterans Day" in some areas of the country) and I am a Vietnam-era veteran. I asked 1VP Janet Broussard to represent BSMA at the Veterans Day ceremony in Washington DC (per our Leadership Handbook). When later events caused BSMA not to endorse the NYC parade, I did not change the plans for the 1VP to go to DC, since her flight was already scheduled. I meant no disrespect to BSMA or the tradition of the National President laying a wreath at Arlington. My decision to go to NYC was based on my belief that I would be participating in an event with the potential for many Blue Star Mothers to be present, and my presence was best served there.
- At the Sep NEB meeting, Rose Ann Elliott was appointed *pro tem* 4VP, after resignation of Pattie Kelley (MN).

## **OCTOBER**

- Even though the timing of the Department of Oklahoma Convention conflicted with my own Department Convention (Ohio), I decided to attend the Convention in Oklahoma the first weekend in October. My husband and I drove the 800 miles there. Although many mothers in Oklahoma were kind and friendly, I did not feel welcome at the convention and sat in the back row on the first day, barely being introduced as NP. On Sunday, I arrived early and asked the Department President if I could bring a few announcements (from the most recent National Convention). I also presented the Dept President with a personal gift, as well as presenting small gifts to the members in attendance. One of the items of business was an emotional issue that brought a lot of heated debate. After the motion was discussed, the vote failed, and the Dept Officer who brought the matter to the Convention continued to make her opinion known to everyone there. After listening to this (and because the vote had failed), I quietly reminded her that the vote was over. She continued. The Department President said nothing, and I saw this as a moot point, so again I reminded her that the *vote had failed*. She continued to make the point of the original motion, and this time, I called her name and told her to sit down, that the vote had failed. I was acting as a National Officer at a Department Convention, correcting behavior that was excessive. I was also disappointed that this Department did not hold an Annual Memorial, especially since they had sustained many casualties the year before; I even offered to assist, but was told they would get back to it later. I stayed after the Convention to install the new officers, take pictures, and drove all night back to Ohio.
- On 10/11 I shared my vision for a commemorative yearbook with the 2VP and her chairperson for the yearbook committee. I gave them a detailed outline of what I saw as fitting for our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BSMA. This was not well received, because it did not follow the format of former yearbooks, but I wanted to incorporate our theme, "Old and Young, BSM STRONG!" and as many chapters as possible, capture the troop pictures, honor the fallen, and put the members of the NEB later in the book. I had no idea that this would cause such a problem for the committee charged with working on the yearbook.

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- A complaint against an OK DEB member was brought to my attention, and I referred it to the Discipline Committee. The mother who made the complaint did not feel it had been addressed at either the chapter or department levels.
- I cancelled the scheduled 10/13 NEB meeting, due to a work conflict. It was alleged later that I had changed the NEB meeting to *keep someone off the call*. This was not true; my reason was due to a required meeting at my new job.
- I attended the Department of Michigan Convention. I felt warmly received there, and I brought greetings from the National Convention, participated in their Annual Memorial Service, and advised them on possible candidates for office (when they hit a snag). Again, I stayed long enough to install their new officers, took pictures, and drove back to Ohio.
- On the 10/17 NEB meeting, the NEB voted to withdraw its support of the NYC Parade, if we could not reach a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organizer by 10/19 at 5 p.m. The NEB did, however, recognize that individual chapters would still be attending the parade at their own risk.
- During the 10/17 NEB meeting, in closed executive session, the NEB authorized the NP to investigate reported security breaches of our website.
- On 10/18 I began to contact our software provider with questions about the website's security and backdoor access to our database. Their response: they outsource their email to a third-party vendor and could not trace the source of any email—either its origination or author. I notified our attorney (Dean McGrath) to report the issue concerning our emails, the website, and possible compromises to our security.
- In late October, I learned that several of our Quarter-Century Moms (from three different chapters in Ohio) were awaiting word from the NEB about the NYC Veterans Day Parade. Two had attended the National Convention and had informed other QCMs in Ohio about the event. They were still planning to go to NYC, even though the NEB had subsequently decided *not* to endorse the parade, and they wondered when they would receive word from the parade organizer about the date/location of their pick-up (in Ohio). I informed my husband of this situation, and together we decided that we would rent a 12-passenger van and *drive* these QCMs to NYC.

## **NOVEMBER**

- On 11/9 we picked up seven QCMs in Columbus, and drove to Somerset, PA, where we spent the night. On the morning of 11/10 we drove the rest of the way to NYC to attend the Veterans Day Parade. On 11/11/11 nine members of the Ohio delegation—along with Blue Star Mothers from NY, PA and VA—went to Gracie Mansion for breakfast, boarded a bus to the parade site, then attended the Veterans Day Parade. This was the *first time* any of these Blue Star Mothers from Ohio had visited NYC, and if you added up all the years of membership in Blue Star Mothers in that van, we covered 243 years. My husband Mike and I personally paid for the rental of the van.
- Mike and I attended the formal Marine Corps Ball at the Union League with PNP (and Marine mom) Joyce Sanford and Gold-Star Mother (and Marine mom) Cyndi Ventura and her husband Bill.
- That same weekend, 1VP Janet Broussard represented BSMA in Washington, DC, with DC Rep Kerri Kerce, Natl Patriotic Instructor Linda Bayer, Natl Historian Maura Yanosick, and

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Natl Chaplain Gloria Cervantes. They brought back beautiful pictures of the event, and tales of their time at the White House and at Arlington National Cemetery.

- On 11/15 I discovered—on the old laptop passed on to me by my NP predecessor—five documents from 2009, which had been created by me, but which I had *never* authorized to be shared by anyone else. This discovery buttressed my belief that my hard drive had been compromised (presumably during a GoTo Meeting with the NEB) in 2009.
- I spoke with our corporate attorney, Dean McGrath, about the website and the documents on the NP computer. He had looked into a firm that could do a forensic investigation of the website security breach, but the cost would be somewhere between \$7K -\$10K and might still lead to a legal investigation (if it appeared that a crime had been committed). We also discussed contacting the police directly about a possible crime against BSMA, Inc. (This would mean that the costs of any investigation would not be incurred by our own organization and would allow for an outside investigation.) We talked about the risks to BSMA if there were indeed security breaches on the website, and he asked me to call an emergency meeting of the NEB to address this matter.
- On 11/19 I attended the Department of Minnesota Convention, where they elected a full slate of officers for the year. (Earlier they had experienced difficulty electing a Dept Pres, so their Department needed to complete this task to be in compliance with our governing documents.) I stayed long enough to install their new Officers, eat a carry-in lunch, and then I began the 800-mile drive back to Ohio. I also picked up the materials from outgoing 4VP (Pattie Kelley) to bring them back to pro tem 4VP Rose Ann Elliott.
- Later on 11/19 (while driving home in a snowstorm), in closed executive session (emergency meeting, counsel could not attend meeting), the NEB voted a discretionary suspension of a BSM, pending the investigation into the possible website security breach. On the advice of counsel, the website was shut down (lasted about two weeks).
- Since this NEB decision (discretionary suspension of a BSM who was a Chapter President) occurred just prior to Thanksgiving, I made a courtesy call to the chapter's 1VP (who would be affected by the NEB decision), after mailing her a copy of the suspension letter [standard procedure in these matters]. We had a brief conversation on Wednesday night before Thanksgiving.
- I drove to Columbus to meet with 4<sup>th</sup> VP (pro-tem) Rose Ann Elliott to review the paperwork that I'd brought back from Minnesota. Together we found several missing checks and paperwork for chapters waiting to be chartered. We worked to get those chapters chartered *immediately*, since some had submitted their paperwork months before.
- I appointed Susan Calhoon (OK) as the VAVS representative. Submitted appropriate paperwork to VA and put the correct VA information on our website.
- Following the authorization in our Financial Rules, at the 11/29 NEB meeting, I called for a mid-year NEB meeting in January, to be able to meet together personally. We had experienced a number of changes in the NEB, several new NEB members had never met each other, and I had envisioned brainstorming sessions, time to work through matters such as disciplines and grievances, and to work out website issues. Three-hour cross- country conference calls did not give us enough time to accomplish all of our work! I had attempted to absorb the cost personally (through a timeshare we have in Florida), but that attempt did not work out as

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planned; however, all costs were kept to a minimum. We ate meals in the timeshare, and rented a 7-passenger van for transportation.

- I called the police to report possible crimes against BSMA (breach of security on our website).

## **DECEMBER**

- (In early December or late November) I received an email from a Congressman inviting me to attend the signing of the new Bill updating BSMA Congressional Charter (broadening the definition of “Blue Star Mother”). The Finance Committee approved this travel, should the POTUS invite NP (on short notice). When I learned that another former Past National Officer was also planning to attend the Bill-signing, it was necessary for me to call the Congressman’s office to explain that that member was not eligible to attend. Later the POTUS signed the Bill without audience, but the Congressman invited me to stop by his office to pick up a signed copy of the Bill the next time I was in Washington DC.
- Rose Ann Elliott’s position as 4<sup>th</sup> VP was ratified by a unanimous decision.

## **JANUARY**

- On 1/4/2012 my (personal) email was hacked, and I lost all of my personal emails and the files I had set up since becoming NP. Though I was able to recreate some of my files, many were never restored. I still did not access my email from the Blue Star Mothers website, since I believed security was at risk there.
- On or around 1/7/2012 I received a CD in the mail from a different Past National Officer with documents and information about questionable financial practices, which I felt had to be reviewed by our CPA. I forwarded the information to our CPA who was nearing the end of our audit. We had to file an extension to the IRS for filing our taxes, due to this additional information, and it delayed the completion of our audit. This delay also became a factor when the deadline approached for filing paperwork to renew our Combined Federal Campaign. At that time, no monies had been received in our treasury from the CFC, so the renewal was pre-empted by our need to bring full disclosure to the CPA for the audit.
- Mid-Year NEB Meeting
  - The NEB was able to accomplish much more in a face-to-face meeting than on the three-hour, late night teleconferences. We started at 10 a.m. Saturday and finished our work at 1:30 a.m. the next morning. Costs were kept to a minimum by preparing our own meals & renting a van to do all airport travel.
  - All NEB members were brought up to date on any issues that had been discussed in closed executive session (previous policy was to exclude anyone who had not participated in previous meetings). This was done to promote unity/trust.
  - Grievance & Discipline Chairs were also invited to the mid-year NEB meeting. Discipline Committee Chair was working through a chapter issue in AZ, so she could not attend. Grievance Committee Chair was able to attend, but she’d shared a ride with MI Dept Pres. The Michigan DEB reimbursed MI Dep Pres for her mileage and lodging. The Grievance Chair paid for her room.
  - The Grievance Committee Chair presented a report that was reviewed by NEB, with the mindset of working toward restoration of members whenever possible.



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--NEB worked through multiple issues involving IRS notices, EIN revocations, and compliance issues for many chapters. Much of this was new material for us.

--NEB approved formation of a web committee to begin the RFP process to accept bids for a new website.

--NEB recognized that the \$25/chapter fee for Service Flags was a *restricted fund*, and as such should not be part of the compliance. This was voted on by the 2011 Convention, but the matter would be brought back to the 2012 Convention.

--I disclosed to the NEB the reason(s) why I had chosen to go to NYC in November for the Parade and not go to Washington, DC (as was the tradition for the NP). A vote was made to reimburse me for the cost of the van rental.

--The only negative thing that occurred was a report by two different NEB members that one NEB member had made a vulgar comment about another Member. I spoke to the offender privately, issued a verbal warning (again, privately), and reported the incident to the Discipline chair after returning home.

--Weekend was shortened, due to several work conflicts of NEB members.

- The D&O (Directors & Officers) insurance premium came due sometime in January, but no one on the NEB received the invoice at that time. We discovered later that the invoice was mailed to the home of a Past National Officer, who did not forward this important piece of paperwork to the NEB in a timely fashion.

## **FEBRUARY**

- In early February I drove to MN to meet with PDP Pattie Kelley. During the Mid-Year NEB meeting, the NEB had made certain decisions about Blue Star Mothers in Minnesota, and shortly after that meeting, PDP Kelley had issued her resignation from BSMA. I was concerned that her decision to leave BSMA might have been related to the NEB decision (regarding the Minnesota Moms—which occurred in closed executive session) and I wanted to speak with her face-to-face. At the time we met, PDP Kelley asked me several direct questions (many of which were later included in the OK Ltr), which I answered. PDP Kelley asked outright questions in a respectful manner and I answered every question. (Contrast this to the methods used later by other officers and the Department of OK, which were all accusatory in nature).
- I drove to MI to meet with MI1 (Jack Pitcher chapter) and met with the chapter president and two other members. This was to honor their being our flagship chapter (our first BSMA chapter), since this was our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BSMA. I discovered that their chapter was seriously considering closing, and in an effort to help them save their chapter, I asked them to try to join us at our National Convention, so we could recognize them (and possibly say “good-bye” if they chose to close the chapter). I paid for lunch. This trip was pre-approved by the NEB.
- I attended an event in Philadelphia at the Union League (by invitation of PA9), which the NEB had pre-approved.
- February 29, I received notice that our VAVS Rep (Susan Calhoon) was resigning and we would not have representation at the VAVS Conference in SC in March.

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## **MARCH**

- I called the VA to change our VA Rep, and spoke with an official there, who said, “You guys have a hacker on your website.” When I questioned what that meant, I was told that the VA would go to our website and one day see Susan Calhoon’s name as our VAVS Rep (correct), and the next day some other name would be in the same place. The VA had decided to list our VAVS Rep on *their* website, rather than to rely on ours (since they believed a hacker was involved), in order to get our VA reps certified appropriately. When I informed them that our VAVS Rep had changed, they recommended that I name *myself* VAVS Rep for the time being, and name deputies afterward. They also enrolled BSMA for the VAVS conference in March.
- March NEB meeting, I asked the NEB if the organization would be better served if I stepped down. There was still a strong line of division on the Board, and it was clear that there was an impasse between me and one or two of the NEB members. I truly wanted what was good for the Organization. The NEB gave me a vote of confidence, after I left the call.
- I attended the VAVS Conference later that month.

## **APRIL**

- I met with our attorney in Washington DC to discuss BSMA business. This trip was at my own expense.
- I stopped by Congressman Scott Tipton’s office to pick up the recently signed Bill (signed in December 2011, with a new definition of “Mother” now added to our Congressional Charter).
- I traveled to Arizona to install the new Department of Arizona. The Finance Committee approved this trip, because travel to Departments was in our governing documents as part of the NP’s responsibilities, and there had not been a prior NEB meeting (to authorize the travel) before the new Department was organized.
- The April NEB meeting occurred the day after the new department was organized. The NEB agreed that the trip to Arizona was authorized under necessary NP travel.
- We did not return to one thorny issue from the March NEB meeting, because I was a guest in a private residence, and the NEB was just meeting the new Department President in Arizona.
- Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the NEB authorized the assistance of Anita Wagner, Convention Chair, in selling the *commemorative* pins for the National Convention. This type of assistance was first approved at the 2006 National Convention, and Anita agreed to mail all checks (daily if necessary) to the National Financial Secretary, Anne Parker, for deposit. Anita shipped the orders to those who ordered pins/patches. This effort alone raised more than \$2500 and paid for all the expenses of printing the convention paperwork, and it was fully accountable to the NEB.
- I attended the North/South Conference in Ohio (Apr 28), bringing greetings from the NEB. Also pinned PNP Joyce Sanford, whose PNP pin had been replaced.
- I received an email from an Oklahoma mother who reported to me that something was going viral in Oklahoma, and that there was an “emergency” meeting called by the Department officers, which was mandatory for all Chapter Presidents to attend. I was unable to determine what had happened at that April 29 meeting, until after letters were mailed to NEB members (early May).



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**MAY**

- It became known to us in early May that the Department of OK had met in closed executive session on April 29 to authorize the mailing of certified letters to myself and all the NEB members, accusing me of 21 wrong-doings. Many of these “accusations” were the same questions that PDP Pattie Kelley had asked me in February, when I’d met with her face to face. [Did your husband pay for his ticket to the banquet at the Convention? Were you videotaping the sessions at Convention? etc.] When the Department of Oklahoma President refused to discuss the agenda of the closed executive session with the NEB, I recused myself from the meeting to allow the NEB a chance to discuss how best to handle this situation (since the topic of discussion in that OK emergency meeting had been ME). The letter (addressed to me but mailed certified mail to all the members of the NEB) had come from the Past Department President of Oklahoma, and she demanded that I give an answer—in 10 days—to the 21 accusations against me. The NEB gave me another vote of confidence, with instructions not to respond to the letter. The NEB felt that the letter was disrespectful in its manner and could/should have been sent through proper channels (confidentially through the established Discipline Committee). They sent the letter to the Discipline Committee, who asked me to answer *each one of the accusations* individually; this I did, responding to the Discipline Committee’s questions.
- After reviewing the matter, the Discipline Committee exonerated me; but they asked me to clarify 2-3 issues. They ruled that I had not made it clear to the Members at large what were the different roles of the Discipline Committee and the Grievance Committee, respectively. They also ruled that the matter of the *commemorative* logo was confusing, that some believed I had authorized a change in our BSMA logo.
- I printed an article entitled “Did You Know?” on the President’s Page of our website to clarify the difference in the two committees. Basically, the difference (as I implemented these two committees) was: Discipline handled those items regarding *current* members, while Grievance handled those items regarding Blue Star Mothers whose membership was either *suspended* or *terminated*. It seems that some in our organization believed that I had become NP just to overturn the decisions of the previous NEB—this was not the case. When an issue came to me, I simply forwarded it to the appropriate committee, because I believed *it was not the role of the National President to get involved in the thorny issues on the chapter or department level*. If an issue was referred to a committee, and they came back with a recommendation, the decision on how to handle the matter then went to the NEB for NEB approval, not mine. I seriously believed that this was/is best practice for our organization. Somehow, however, I believe that some members misunderstood the current practice, and distrusted me for it. I don’t know how I could have done it any better—this clarification was widely known among NEB members and others—but when the Discipline Committee instructed me to clarify this, I did just that.
- I also clarified that the *commemorative* logo was just that, a commemorative logo, and it did not replace the Blue Star Mothers official logo. It would be used on Convention materials, and as a fitting memorial to our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The NEB had approved this—not me—but I made this point known in the subsequent issues of the “Convention Chatter” that was being emailed to all members.

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- I had no idea that the Department of Oklahoma had decided that if I either *did not respond* to the letter from the PDP, or if my *answer was not satisfactory*, they had already planned a second step—to send such a letter to all the members of BSMA in the country.
- In mid-May the NEB was asked about our D&O insurance by 2VP.
- On May 23, NFS Anne Parker received in her official BSMA P.O. Box four checks (>\$2000) from several of the Combined Federal Campaign offices. These checks had been forwarded from the same personal address of the Past National Officer who had received our D&O Insurance premium (in January). These CFC checks were originally dated in March and April 2012.
- On May 24, three more checks from the Combined Federal Campaign (>\$1000) were forwarded to the P.O. Box of the NFS. Also, on this date, the cancellation notice for the D&O insurance was forwarded to the NFS at the P.O. Box, the official address of BSMA. This was the FIRST I knew of our insurance policy being due, overdue or cancelled. (This premium apparently was due sometime in January, notices were mailed to the address of that Past National Officer—but not forwarded to the NFS—until after the insurance policy was **cancelled.**)
- On May 24 I stopped by the Post Office in Dayton OH to submit a change of address, so no other official BSMA mail would be sent to the address of that Past National Officer.
- While attending Memorial Day activities a few days later in Washington, DC, I was served with paperwork for a personal defamation of character lawsuit (\$100,000). [This lawsuit was filed in Mesa County, CO on April 12, 2012, two weeks after our D&O insurance policy was cancelled.] I did not share this information with those attending these official celebrations with me.
- Just before the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day, the VFW escort told me he was disappointed that Blue Star Mothers had declined (on official Blue Star Mothers letterhead) to attend an event at the White House. My mouth was dry—I felt faint—but I informed the escort that I had not received any invitation from the White House, and I had not written anything on official Blue Star Mothers letterhead to either the White House or the VFW, declining any such invitation. I did not discuss this matter with any of the Blue Star Mothers there that day, although there were witnesses to what the escort had said to me.

## **JUNE**

- Our *pro bono* attorney (Dean McGrath) was unable to represent me, since he was the Corporation's attorney and the defamation lawsuit against me was personal.
- I looked for an attorney in Colorado to represent me in the defamation lawsuit. Although I tried to find a *pro bono* (free) attorney, I was only able to find an attorney at reduced rate (half-price). He also had a good record for representing defamation cases.
- I brought this matter to the NEB for their consideration. The NEB approved payment to the attorney (\$5000 revolving retainer) that I'd located, since all the accusations in the lawsuit happened in the performance of my duties as NP. [NOTE: Our Congressional Charter requires us to indemnify officers in the performance of their duties.]

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- Also, the NEB refused payment of \$3500/mo requested by our pro bono attorney (Dean McGrath) for seven months' representation in future lawsuits. At this point, McGrath issued his written resignation to BSMA. I reported this to the NEB.
- Website committee gave the NEB a report of the RFPs (Request for Proposals), which had been received. The committee had chosen the top two candidates from the respondents, as well as requesting a bid from our current provider, MemberClicks. Further plans for the website were put on hold due to uncertainty of funds (due to the pending lawsuit).
- The NEB also discussed dealing with other grievances/disciplines, given the precarious position we were in without D&O insurance. The consensus was that it would be best not to complete those matters until insurance was secured.

## **JULY**

- At the July 11 NEB meeting, though the agenda was filled with matters regarding the transition process, we were unable to address any of the normal transition items due to concerns stemming from the letter sent by the Department of Oklahoma (to presumably all the Members of BSMA). **Of utmost concern was access to the BSMA database (personal addresses) and the amount of money involved in mailing the letter.** The NEB gave Oklahoma three days to answer for their actions.
- After their July 14 meeting, the Department of Oklahoma sent a subsequent notice to the NEB demanding that all the Officers of the NEB resign their positions immediately (except for the 2VP and a PNP). The NEB decided to complete their terms, and I personally began the task of answering the 12-page 45-count letter that was mailed to the membership, knowing that most members would dismiss it as punitive and vindictive. However, others would no doubt wonder, why would a department go to such lengths if at least some of the issues were not true? It has been a daunting task, to answer the letter without being defensive, knowing that the bulk of the letter was manufactured or contrived. Furthermore, in order to prevent problems in the litigation, there was much that I could not say in answering these accusations (presented boldly to the reader as "Facts"). And the fact that many of the issues were under "closed executive session" of the NEB prevented me from fully answering every detail.
- This has been a distraction from our Convention and our BSMA mission, but I have been forced to enter into this response, even though most of the accusations were already addressed and false charges disproved.

## **SUMMARY AND FURTHER ANSWERS**

After completing a detailed overview of the year's activities, NP McCarthy and other NEB members addressed the following concerns, which had risen as a result of the letter mailed by the Department of Oklahoma, that were not addressed in the Annual Report of the National President. [NOTE: some items in the letter were not addressed because of the threat of litigation or because they occurred in closed executive session of the NEB.]

- Some of the expenses from the Washington DC Convention (which had to be pre-paid) were entered incorrectly in the budget carried over from last year, so that two sets of convention

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expenses were included in one fiscal year. This was corrected *immediately* when this matter was brought to the NEB's attention. We are currently have more than \$140K in our budget. [Addressed by NFC Karen Stevens]

- Robin McCarthy was eligible for office of National President because she had served two terms as President of the Department of Ohio, and had served on the NEB during the time of her department work. She was present on numerous NEB calls during those two terms, and the meetings she missed were excused due to her son's post-war condition. Bigger issue – why didn't anyone call or check on her to make sure she was all right? And why was this just *now* escalated (10 months into her term as NP)?
- The OH Annual Reports (2009, 2010) apparently were archived under the personal profile of the NP (who was OH Dept Pres from 2008-2010). Again, this error could have been corrected earlier if someone had simply pointed it out. [Addressed by Dept of OH 1VP Kris Dervin]
- During the elections of 2011, Robin McCarthy asked that the qualifications of a financial office be read, which our Governing Documents require. (This was not done to embarrass any candidate, but to best meet our fiduciary responsibilities.) After the requirements for the office were read, one of the candidates withdrew her name, as she was ineligible for the office to which she had been nominated.
- At the 2011 National Convention, after being elected NP for the next year (and before being installed), McCarthy obtained permission from the Chair to pin a guest with an "Honored Veteran" pin. (The guest was a Vietnam veteran who stated he had never been so honored.) In an effort to spare the guest any embarrassment, the NP-elect corrected a situation (on the guest's face) *prior to photos being taken*. No embarrassment was intended. Several members later expressed gratitude that the NP-elect had done this so discreetly.
- During the 2011 Convention, a motion was passed to set up chapter profiles on the website. Unfortunately, that motion also designated *who* would be doing the profiles, and that was not necessarily under the authority of the Convention Body to decide. During the year, website security issues took precedence over establishing the chapter profiles; however, this is part of the RFP process for the new website design.
- At the 2011 National Convention, McCarthy brought a replacement double-eagle ring for a mother who had ordered the wrong size. She did not bring any other double-eagle rings to sell (as she had done in the past), therefore she is not responsible for a vendor fee. Several Blue Star Mothers did ask her for an order form, which she later emailed them.
- When McCarthy was President of the Department of Ohio, she worked with a local jeweler designing a double-eagle ring bearing the service flag to sell as a fundraiser for the department. She personally paid the jeweler's fees to cast the design, and she worked closely with him to perfect the ring (it was patterned after a 1917 WWI ring). She gave **100% of the profits** of the sale of the rings to the Department of Ohio, during the term of her presidency, bringing in several thousand dollars to the department treasury. After her term as department president had ended, the jeweler asked her to be the sole distributor of these rings. She has never marketed the rings, although they are a popular item for Blue Star Mothers. All necessary permission from the Institute of Heraldry and Service Flags rests with the jeweler, not his distributor. [Pat Pell, Dept of Ohio Pres, addressed this.]

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- At the 2011 National Convention, the ticket for the dinner for McCarthy’s husband Mike was donated to him by a Blue Star Mother (so there was no “record” of his payment). This BSM refused McCarthy’s offer to pay for the dinner ticket.
- At the 2011 Convention, McCarthy had videotaped part of the opening ceremony. When she (and others) were reminded by the Chair that there was no videotaping allowed, McCarthy immediately deleted the short video she had recorded. She was *never* told to “cease and desist.”
- At the Post-Convention NEB meeting (Aug 2011), NP McCarthy encouraged the free exchange of information between old and new NEB members. There was *no* instruction not to contact another NEB member; in fact, the very opposite is true. As NP, Robin McCarthy opened the lines of free communication between all NEB members (a practice that was not allowed the year before when all NEB members were required to sign a “gag order” prohibiting such exchange).
- NP McCarthy authorized the design and mailing of condolence cards for Gold Star Mothers’ Day (Sep 25) through National Chaplain Gloria Cervantes. It was later discovered that the full list of names of Gold Star Mothers was not forwarded by the previous officer, so not every Gold Star Mother received a card from BSMA in 2011. Steps have been taken to correct this situation for the current year.
- There was confusion about the implementation of a Grievance Committee. At the 2011 Convention, there was a proposed change to the By-Laws to have a standing Grievance Committee. The author later withdrew her proposal, after discussion with legal counsel, because of its language, which seemed to give the Committee final say in all grievances. [That decision belongs to the NEB, not a Committee, and the author of this ByLaw proposal wisely withdrew her motion.] Some in attendance misunderstood this to mean there should be *no Grievance Committee* at all. This is an error. BSMA has had a Grievance Committee through the past several National Executive Boards (including NEBS under Hoffman, Rolfe, and Stevens), and it is a best practice to determine who is on the Committee *before* any grievances are registered.
- The Grievance Committee of 2011-2012 dealt with several cases last year. The NEB acted on the recommendations of this Committee—not to *overturn* former NEB decisions—but to work on a case by case basis toward *restoration* of former members, whenever possible. The Grievance Committee dealt with issues stemming from Blue Star Mothers whose membership was either *suspended* or *terminated*. By contrast, if any Blue Star Mother who was a current member was having a problem, that matter was forwarded to the Discipline Committee for assistance.
- Only one termination of membership was issued by the NEB this year, and only a few written warnings/suspensions were issued. The NP received one complaint involving a Department Officer, which she sent to Discipline Committee to handle.
- The NEB was handling, to the best of its ability, the probability of security breaches on the website. The NEB is given the responsibility of governing the organization between Conventions and it rules according to what they believe is best for the organization. Upon the advice of our pro bono counsel, the website was taken down for two weeks. The NEB believes that the security of the website continues to be first priority, and this issue is being addressed (budget reflects this priority).



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- This year’s budget has a capital fund, which would allow the NEB to take the steps necessary to secure our website and improve its functionality. A full RFP process has been followed to accept bids on a new website. The website committee currently has selected the top two vendors, whose bids are being considered by the current NEB.
- McCarthy denies the accusation of elder abuse. Without being given details of the charge she can only speculate that this allegation is the result of the verbal warning given to a former Officer during the mid-year NEB meeting.
- IVP Janet Broussard categorically denies the allegation of campaigning in 2011. The email used in the accusation letter was used out of context and without permission of either the Gold Star Mother who received it, or the sender. PNP Karen Stevens reminded the Convention Body that the rule only applies to campaigning during the Convention. NP McCarthy was asked to allow her name to be put on the ballot (during 2011), and she agreed; she did no campaigning for the position.
- After conferring with our legal counsel, the NEB approved a *commemorative* logo to be used during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Blue Star Mothers (for Convention use, pins, patches, items to be sold as fundraisers). This logo was never intended to replace the *official* logo of BSMA; and further, the NEB discussed reviving the logo on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 80<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup>, etc.
- It was a challenge to work with an Officer (or two) who distrusted everything the NP did or said. This was reflected in both the work on the yearbook and the newsletter throughout the year, without deference to the wishes of the NP.
- The appointment of an “assistant” to the National Financial Secretary was first approved at the 2006 Convention. This year, Convention Chair Anita Wagner assisted the NFS with the pre-convention sale of 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary pins and patches. This action was approved by the NEB, after being brought as a recommendation from the Finance Committee. Wagner gave a daily accounting of orders received, filled the orders, and forwarded all checks to the NFS. No cash transactions were ever taken. The marketing of the commemorative pins and patches provided the funding for all of the Convention paperwork (ByLaws, etc.).
- PNP Joyce Fulford was not eligible, per the Governing Documents, to serve on the NEB, although she had attended two separate NEB meetings (with full voting rights). She was informed *privately* (on a PNP-only conference call) about her ineligibility, and also encouraged to write a letter to the NEB if she felt this was an incorrect reading of the Governing Documents. Furthermore, NP McCarthy also sent her a *letter* via USPS with the names and addresses of all the current NEB members, should she want to register her question. She was given the opportunity to ask for a review of her situation but did not do so.
- Timely posting of minutes occurred on most months within a day or two of approval by the NEB. One set of minutes (from early Fall) was not posted because it contained information from a closed executive session. When an amended copy *was* approved, it was promptly posted on the website. Minutes from May could not be posted until they were approved at the next meeting, which was held July 1. The minutes were posted July 3. [Addressed by NRS Charilyn Damigo]

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- At the conclusion of her address to the Convention body, NP McCarthy also made personal remarks about the last statement in the OK letter, which quoted comments she had sent the NEB in January 2011. She believes it was an egregious misuse of false information.

*NP Robin Barnes McCarthy*



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**2011-2012 NATIONAL IVP REPORT**

Attended Veteran's Day in Washington, helped lay a wreath at the Unknown Soldier's Tomb and attended breakfast at the White House on behalf of the National President.

Input all applications received from our Financial Secretary into the database as received.

Have successfully moved all members/associates out of the following chapters that have either been disbanded or revoked, other chapters and/or archived their profiles per their request: CT2, FL1, FL5, IN168, LA4, MS1, NC11, NC14 AND NC7

Continue to work with chapters that have not elected all 5 needed positions to keep in compliance with the governing documents.

Continue to mail out membership cards to chapters.

Continue to update Chapter Officers Roster Spreadsheet.

Change all the Applicants that have applied online expiration dates to 2013 and work with all the chapters on getting their members that are renewing via chapter level, expiration dates changed to 2013.

As roster reports are received, I move all the expiration dates for all members that are on the roster dues submitted by each chapter and forward the roster reports to the department membership chair for them to change the expiration date according to the chapters that fall under those department.

Maintain the delegate count for convention.

*Janet Broussard*

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**2011-2012 NATIONAL 2VP REPORT**

As National Second Vice President for the 2011-2012 BSMoA year, I attended the 2011 post-convention NEB meeting; 18 called NEB meetings during the year; and the 2012 post-convention meeting. I was excused from two NEB meetings during the year and did not receive the 'where/when' information for the 2012 pre-convention NEB meeting until it was too late to attend.

As National Second Vice President I formed a Yearbook Committee in September of 2012 to work on the National Yearbook, to be available for sale at the 2012 convention. Our committee met a total of nine times as a committee and numerous times in smaller groups to address various sections of the project and/or things that were taking place. Our organization utilizes the Entourage Yearbook Company for this project. NP Robin McCarthy presented the theme and very distinct 'page by page' ideas that she wanted for the yearbook to me, the Yearbook Committee, and the National Elected Board and is now completing the project herself.

As National Second Vice President I produced a monthly newsletter for August, September, October, November and December of 2011 and January, February, March, April, May, and June of 2012. In March of 2012 I formed a Newsletter Committee to help address the problem I was having in getting the newsletter sent out to the membership and uploaded to the national website in a timely manner. The problems have been resolved, as NP McCarthy is now creating a secondary monthly newsletter which is reaching our membership through emails and the website.

As National Second Vice President I attended the 2012 Memorial Day services at Arlington National Cemetery and participated in the laying of the wreath ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. I also attended the Memorial Day Weekend services and wreath laying ceremonies at the Navy Memorial / Naval Heritage Center that Saturday and The Women In Military Service For America that Monday.

I was in attendance from July 30 through August 5 at the 2012 Annual BSMoA National Convention which was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. At convention I took part in our Annual Memorial Service which honors our heroes who have given their lives for our nation and our freedoms during the past year.

The two items that I passed on to the incoming 2012-2013 National Second Vice President, Cynthia Ventura, were the N2VP Traveling Hat and the Publisher 2010 Office Program software.

*Rev. Lin McGee*

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**2011-2012 NATIONAL 3VP REPORT**

The Department of Defense reported a total of 402 casualties from August 1, 2011 thru August 2, 2012.

There were a total of 395 families presented with a Gold Star Banner.

Events Attended:

February – Attended the Annual Gold Star Parents Tribute in San Francisco, CA. Hosted by the East Bay California Chapter 101 and the Marine's Memorial Club. The guest speaker Marine Lt. General John Kelly who along with his wife Karen are Gold Star Parents of Marine Lt. Robert Kelly who was killed on his 3d combat tour. Lt. General Kelly's speech was emotional and inspiring – not a dry eye in the house when he finished.

May – Attended the CA30 Mother's Day Event where 200 Blue and Gold Star Mothers were honored with cakes from Tasteful Cakes in Corona, CA. Guest speakers included GSM Stacey Holley. Stacy and her husband John Holley are responsible for the Holly Provision which provides that our fallen heroes are returned home from Dover to their loved ones in a Chartered Jet and not in the cargo hold of a commercial Jet. They also have written a book, "Medals, Flags and Memories" that describes their journey after their son Army Specialist Matthew Holley was killed in Iraq. The Holley family attended my son's memorial on March 30, 2007 and presented my Gold Star banner to me.

Throughout the year I attended the funerals of 6 active duty, and 10 veterans in the Southern California area at the Riverside National Cemetery.

*Teresa Bullock*

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**2011-2012 NATIONAL 4<sup>th</sup> VP REPORT**

I became the 4<sup>th</sup> VP Pro-Tem September 2011. I was ratified as 4<sup>th</sup> VP in December 2011. I have issued the following charters:

- Department of Arizona
- AZ6 – Yavapai County
- CA31 – Coastal Chapter
- CA36 – Alameda, Piedmont, Oakland
- IN12 – BSM of Clinton County, IN
- MN18 – Soaring Eagles
- NY10 – Hudson Valley, NY
- OK21 – Cherokee Capitol
- OR2 – BSM of Willmette County

The following are new pending chapters in the process of obtaining their documents to become chartered:

- MO3, NY11, OH15, OK22, VA6, WA5

I have been working with moms from many other areas who are still looking for their five required members so that they can submit a request to charter. They are from:  
Central AL; Helendale CA; Oroville CA; Space Coast Chapter FL; Ft. Benning GA; Newnan GA; Chicago IL; Far North Lake County IL; Rockford IL; Indianapolis IN; North Manchester IN; Porter County IN; Topeka KS; Lexington KY; Cumberland MD; Eureka MO; Boulder MT; Roswell NM; Harrison OH; Erie PA; Moscow PA; Western PA; Cape Cod; El Paso TX; Gun Barrel City TX; Lufkin TX; Easter WA; Electic WA; Baraboo WI; Charleston WV

I also assisted with the yearly compliance, sending the reminder letters and then following up with chapters, updating the compliance listing. With this brought to the forefront the fact that it had been three years since the IRS instituted the need to file a 990 in some form no matter what our income is. Many chapters had not filed and had their EIN and non-profit status revoked by the federal government. I researched each and every chapter and contacted the IRS Advocate to determine what was necessary to reinstate these chapters. I have helped those chapters interested in reinstatement with the filing of Form 1023. It was necessary to encourage the chapters to take care of this ASAP since the fee to file is \$100 but will be \$800 in December 2012. Compliance is one item that is not addressed or assigned to a NEB member.

Several chartering problems that I found were that there is no clear answer as to where and how many chapters can be in a geographical area. The geographic area also stipulates who the state registrations go through and also banking procedures.

Now that we have been able to finalize and update chapters for their EIN compliance we need to begin working on the State Registrations to assure that our chapters have registered with their states.

*Rose Ann Elliott*

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## **2011-2012 NATIONAL RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT**

I became a Blue Star Mother in 2004 when my middle son joined the Marine Corps, but because I was married to a Marine veteran, I didn't think I needed a "support group." I figured that if I had questions I would just ask him. That attitude quickly changed in 2005 when my son lost 3 of his best friends on his first deployment to Iraq, and I joined South Bay Blue Star Moms – CA4 at the next meeting. My Blue Star Sisters have been a continued source of strength and support as we have worked through various PTS and incarceration issues. The San Diego moms I met at my first convention welcomed me into their homes, loaned me a car, provided meals, etc., and I was able to stay with an Oklahoma mom during one of my most recent trips to see my son.

I was honored to be elected to the National Executive Board last year. There was a little bit of a learning curve for me as there always is in a new position, and I apologize to those of you who had to send your Affiliation Agreements twice, or remind me that I had already sent an acknowledgement. The process was complicated even further when I could not access any of my "sent" emails, so I am truly looking forward to starting the year with a better system in place to support your chapters.

I have made some recommendations to the NEB for "Best Practices" as they apply to the Recording Secretary, and these are things that I tried to implement throughout the year:

- Make your notes as clear and concise as possible. You are recording the main ideas of the meeting, not the individual comments.
- Make a read-only template that you can re-use for continuity of the minutes. They are easier to read & search if they are in the same general format all year.
- Don't take it personally if someone points out errors. (Laugh at your own mistakes!)
- Listen to the discussion; take hand-written notes if necessary for you to keep up. However, transcribe them as soon as possible after the meeting so you can remember what was said. After typing them, I have found that I do a better job of catching errors if I let them sit for a day or two before re-reading them.
- Convert to pdf format before sending for review; you may wish to include a watermark that shows clearly that this is a draft.

NEB Minutes have been posted to the website within a day or two of approval at the next NEB meeting, with the exception of once last fall when I found an error in the minutes that would have revealed personal information about one of our members. They were posted to the website after a revision was approved at the next meeting.

In addition to my duties as NRS, the highlights of my year as a NEB member included the following activities:

- Installation of a new chapter (CA36) and its officers
- Establishing and monitoring the new official BSMA, Inc. Facebook page
- Assisting chapters, especially those in California and Nevada, with compliance issues

*Charifyn Damigo*

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**2011-2012 NATIONAL RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Starting Balance for September 01, 2011 with QuickBooks: \$133,404.85

Ending Balance for July 31, 2012 with QuickBooks: \$118,613.59

Attended the Siller Foundation 911 NY Run, as the Shadow Run Chairperson for the previous term;

Prepared all Reimbursement Forms submitted and approved by 3 or more members of the Finance Committee;

Continued to work with chapters that had issues pertaining to membership dues not received from national and vice versa;

Moved applicants into the membership group for the month of January that were not moved by either the Chapter Membership Chair and/or the Department Membership Chair;

Filed out a Grant application with Verizon Wireless for new computers for the NEB;

Working with 4<sup>th</sup> VP on complying letters/emails to go to the chapters that are not in compliant with the Governing Documents;

Compared the Profit and Loss Report for September 1, 2010 to February 26, 2011 and September 1, 2011 to February 26, 2012. Gross Profit for 2012 is **-\$12,217.53** and Net Income for 2012 is **-\$14,415.50;**

Prepared and finalized 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly membership dues checks for Chapters and Departments;

Currently preparing 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly membership dues now;

Assisted in the preparation of the Veterans Day events in DC;

Assisted in the preparation of the Memorial Day events in DC;

Assisted in the Liability insurance issue;

Booked Flights for NEB and approved committee members for Convention.

*Julie Roberts*

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**2011-2012 NATIONAL FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve for two terms as your National Financial Secretary. I must confess in 2010 I had no idea how many hours of my life would be devoted to this 24 month project. I am a bookkeeper by trade and education but this was far different from ordinary bookkeeping. I want to thank Pat Soler for her two years in the job and the excellent manual she prepared for me that I will pass along to my successor.

Our organization has grown immensely in Pat's and my terms and the number of online store orders has also grown. The use of credit cards, debit cards and electronic checks has also increased and these are all very positive things. I have filled over \$48,000 worth of orders to our members. I have talked to many of you over the course of two years because I quickly learned that talking could solve problems quicker than a lot of emails. I answered more emails than I could ever count and through it all, I have served to the best of my ability.

Little did I know that the business my husband and I started in 2010 right before I accepted this position would grow by leaps and bounds and that 3 a.m. working on BSMA business would be the norm, not the exception. However, I want to state I accepted this position to make a difference and I feel I have.

In closing, if you are ever in the Myrtle Beach area, give me a call. The greatest take-off from the position is the friendships of so many wonderful, caring mothers.

*Anne Parker*