President
Cynthia Bretz Ventura
1st VP
Amy O’Campo
2nd VP
Stacy Anders
3rd VP
Christine Cromeenes Boyd
4th VP
Lori Thueme
Recording Secretary
Kade Rutherford
Financial Secretary
Carla Brodacki
Treasurer
Brenda Urban Ternullo

Inside this issue
Cover
Pg. 1
National President
Pg. 2
Convention Wrap Up
Pg. 3
Yearbook
Pg. 4
Editor
Pg. 5
Chapters
Pg. 6-10

2016-2017 National Executive Board

From Left to Right
Treasurer~ Brenda Urban Ternulla, Financial Secretary~ Carla Brodacki, Recording Secretary~ Kade Rutherford, President~ Cynthia Bretz Ventura, 1stVP~ Amy O’Campo, 2ndVP~ Stacy Anders, 3rdVP~ Christine Cromeenes Boyd, 4thVP~ Lori Thueme

Left to Right
Financial Secretary~ Theresa Koontz, Past President~ Lori Thueme, President~ Kade Rutherford, Treasurer~ Breva McDonald Treat, Vice President~ Elizabeth Bohannon, Recording Secretary~ Angie Uhnavy (not pictured)
On January 22, 1942 the Flint News Advertiser printed a coupon asking Mothers of servicemen to return the coupon after filling it out. The following February 1st 300 mothers met in the Durant Hotel, in Flint Michigan. Captain George H. Maines, who had conceived the idea for this group, acted as the chair of this first meeting. It was decided that after receiving 1000 responses from the ad to form a permanent organization. On February 6th the organization was reported on Congressional record. Chapters then formed in Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, California, Iowa and Washington. In June of 1960 the organization was chartered by congress. Mothers volunteered throughout the tough times of World War II. They worked in hospitals, train stations, packed care packages for soldiers and were a working part of homeland security during a times of war. The organization decreased in size over the years but has been held together by mothers showing pride in both their children and country. In recent times we have began to grow in strength. Being attacked on our own soil has once again started mothers hanging flags in their windows at home proclaiming pride in the fact that we have children protecting our freedom during at time of war.

This is a story many of us have heard, so for those newer Mothers this year marks a historic moment in the proud history of our organization. Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. turns 75 years old in 2017. A milestone that each and everyone of you are part of. I remember my very first convention, I was like a child viewing all of this for the very first time. Taking it all in and wanting so much to bring in back to my own chapter and sharing and implementing this grand history that we were all apart of. Our rituals and ceremonies, our uniform, white gloves, and yes that hat. Much like our children stood so proud that first day each and every one of us saw them in uniform for the very first time on that parade deck, a day forever etched inside each one us. How very proud we are as Mothers of our children’s service and sacrifice to our country, and so very honored to be given the title of Blue Star Mother, by our child or children. Stand tall, be proud we are part of something so much larger than just ourselves. Together we can continue this legacy and keep this treasured organization growing and show our pride in our traditions, remaining solvent, and keeping transparency in the forefront. Letting the American people of our great country know who we are and what we accomplish together. We are Women, Mothers, there is no greater force on this earth.

Over the next few months I will be forming committees, reaching out to all chapters across the country for your input and assistance. Please volunteer and become more a part of your organization, because your input and talents can only enrich what has been accomplished in this grand sisterhood thus far.

Thank you for your vote of confidence by electing me as your National President to lead us through our 75th year of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., as well as electing your 2016-2017 National Board. We have a board of strong women, each bringing their own special talents and abilities while working for you and the organization we love. I am so very blessed to have a wonderful group of women to work with and hope we accomplish many things together. The past 2 weeks since our National Convention in Dayton, Ohio has been a whirl wind. As we all start to get down to the business of our organization and jump head first into our duties and responsibilities. Though it’s only been 2 weeks, I am learning quickly how to balance life and get my sea legs, so to speak. I am so very proud and honored to be your National President and will work to the best of my ability to represent all of you and the sacrifice and service of our sons and daughters, keeping in my mind always the high standards put forth by our founding Mothers.

On a personal note I would like to thank my husband Bill, this week we celebrate our 31st wedding Anniversary. Though life has not always been the happily ever after, it’s our story and without his encouragement and confidence in my abilities and the freedom he offers me to pursue the things that heal my heart and make my life more fulfilling and for always supporting me to stand my ground. I’m certain each of us has that someone who always has their back, for me it’s Bill and those around me I have the honor to call friends. But mostly for the 3 very beautiful gifts we created together and raised our three sons, Jerry, Billy and Dylan. For without them I wouldn’t have the very best privilege in the world, to be called MOM.

Cyndi Ventura-National President
CONVENTION 2016 WRAP UP

Now that life is back to normal for me – What?? Did I say that? – I wanted to give our members a final wrap up of the 2016 Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. from my perspective.

I would like to start by saying Thank You to PNP Judy Dorsey for giving me the opportunity to serve the org as your convention chair for both of the conventions during her two terms as your NP. Judy and I worked very closely and VERY hard to bring you to Ohio to enjoy the convention experience in our home state, both in her “backyard” in 2015 and in my hometown in 2016. Thank you to all who joined us.

To my husband, Robert Wagner, Jr, I say thank you. Those two words don’t seem to convey the love and gratitude I have for him for affording me the opportunity to serve you for two years. He worked behind the scenes, watching our grandkids, making trips, shopping, making donations, transporting all things BSM to and from each convention and much, much more. He is my rock.

I would not have been able to be your convention chair this year without the support and understanding of my fellow BSM sisters, especially those in my chapter and the Dept. of OH. My daughter was deployed for 7 months and while she was in Qatar, her two children lived with my husband and me. They came with me to meetings, strategy sessions, mid-year workshops etc. Because so many have been in my shoes, the sisterhood and comradery made my life much simpler. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Thank you to ALL who pitched in during convention week to “Git “Er Done”. There wasn’t a single task that needed to be accomplished that I didn’t have members asking me “What can I do?” From the NEB members, to friends I meet once a year at convention, to new friends that I just met this year. This herculean task cannot be done by one person, and you all deserve a big pat on the back!

There would be a few people who I would be remiss in not thanking by name. Thank You to Paula Lombardo. Again in 2016, Paula answered my plea to be in charge of the President’s Reception. She planned, shopped, set up and cleaned up. She again made her famous Artillery Punch. We all owe her a great big THANK YOU!!

Along with Paula, we all need to thank Pat Pell, Sally Botson and Kim Kinzel. They worked all afternoon, slicing, mixing, decorating and doing more things than I can count in putting Paula’s plans into action. Their contribution to the President’s Reception was enjoyed by all. Thank you ladies!

For the past two years I have worked very closely with Anne Parker in her role as Finance Chair in order to make sure that our dollars for convention were spent wisely and with fiscal responsibility. This year as 1VP Protem, she was also in charge of delegate validation along with our Financial Secretary Carla Brodacki. Anne was in charge of the Silent Auctions at both the 2015 and 2016 convention. She has it down to an art, making sure that we all have fun along with raising funds to offset convention expenses. To top it all off, Anne was my roommate for both years, so she REALLY had to put up with my idiosyncrasies. I can’t thank her enough.

In closing, I would like to thank all those whose names I didn’t mention, but who worked in any and all capacities, making this experience as your convention chair one that I will never forget. I look forward to being able to pass along the knowledge I have gained to my counterpart for the upcoming 2017 Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. national convention. I am excited to be joining you all as we celebrate our Diamond Anniversary.

Anita Wagner
Create Your Free Personalized Yearbook Pages For Blue Star Mothers of America

1. Add Photos
Add your favorite photos from your phone, computer or Facebook account, and have them printed in your copy of the yearbook.

2. Add Memories
Answer questions about your year and capture your very best moments. You can even include a photo to go along with them.

3. Send Bling
Send your friends Bling. Clever, full-color badges that contain expressions of friendship and humor.

4. Sign Books
Make your friends smile by sending them a digital signature that includes a personal photograph.

5. Personalize Your Yearbook
Add all of your memories to your two free personal pages that will be printed in your unique copy of the yearbook. Need more room? You can add more pages!

To Purchase & Customize Your Yearbook:
*Must be a parent or student 13 years or older.

1. Go to www.TreeRing.com/validate
2. Enter your school’s passcode: 101416260317183

Yearbook Price: $19.40

Need help? Contact www.treering.com/help

TreeRing
The deadline for all submissions is the 15th of each month. Late submissions will appear in a future newsletter.

Submission for chapters articles to be no more than 1 page.

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2vp@bluestarmothers.us

Stacy Anders
National 2VP
Our Chapter continues to be active within our community. In May, our Chapter joined forces with the Virginia Veteran & Family Support/Virginia Department of Veterans Services & we now provide Homeless Veterans who are placed in Homes our “Homeless to Home Basket”, which contains items they may need for the first couple of weeks in their new home. May 16-21 Radley Chevrolet & local radio station Thunder 104.5 with Crystal Blue & Jeremy Grey from BlueandGrey in the Mornings rallied together for collections for our summer care packages for donations. Operation Radley Cares involved filling a new Chevy Colorado Truck Bed of donations. The Truck was in the showroom for 2 weeks, our community dropped them off & filled the truck bed, and on a Saturday Crystal & Jeremy broadcasted live while we were present to personally take the donations. May 21st found our Chapter very busy with multiple things on our Agenda. We had an information booth at the Military Appreciation Day in our Spotsylvania Towne Center, then Teresa & Teri went to Richmond, VA. to enjoy an Ice Cream Social with Mr. Harry who Teresa was Guardian for on his recent Honor Flight to DC, then Teri, Sharon & Gayle attended the VFW Fundraiser dinner to support repairs needed on the building. May 25 Chapter Members participated in “Flags In” at the Oak Hill Cemetery with our local VFW. On May 26 Teri attended the Breakfast Kickoff of the Stafford County Armed Forces Memorial. Our Chapter is honored to be a Sponsor of the Memorial & several members have purchased bricks In Honor or In Memory of their sons and daughters or other family or friends. We spent the month of May actively collecting for our June 18 community packaging event & shopping. May 28-30 Teresa S. led the way for our BSM National President & other Officers during the ceremonies in DC & Arlington National Cemetery. May 28 our Chapter tied yellow ribbons throughout the trees in the medium strip at Central Park & downtown on the lampposts. May 29-30, Chapter Member & Veteran Rhonda K. participated in the Ruck to Remember: 60 to 60 carrying our Chapter Flag. Rhonda continued on from Harpers Ferry, West Va. to DC, to Arlington National Cemetery, even though she trip on pebbles & dislocated her hip. Rhonda popped it back in & wouldn't give up. She truly is our Chapter Hero.
We sent 2 members to our National Convention in Dayton Ohio. Cindy King and Nancee Teresi met up with old friend and made new friends. We came home with new ideas to share with our chapter.
On July 18, the Greene County Region Blue Star Mothers celebrated their first Anniversary. The group has accomplished many things during their first year. Seen in photo are the members present who celebrated the occasion with a delicious cake & beverage.

The group's next meeting will be Wednesday, August 17 at the Athens American Legion Hall. New members are always welcome to join.
We had such a great time at our Blue Star Mothers National Convention this year. Four of our Moms were able to attend Convention in Dayton Ohio.

Our convention is a special time for all our Moms from across the country to get together and share their experiences. This year we created and donated a basket of items from Ray Downey Race donated by Kathy Downey Ugalde.

The winner of our basket was Majorie Bryan from True Blue Chapter 15, Lima Ohio. Marjorie is our eldest Blue Star Mother and has been attending conventions now for twenty years. She was so happy after winning the basket and speaking with members of our chapter about Chief Downey she has decided that she will be donating the items to a new fire house being built in her home town. We know those fire fighters will appreciate having memories of a true hero in their house. We would also like to thank Marjorie for all her years of service as a Blue Star Mother and for sharing a very special time with us at this years Convention.
BSM partners with the Red Cross to become Family Reassurance callers

In January 2016 the Rochester Blue Star Mothers began a collaborative partnership with the Western and Central NY Region of the American Red Cross to reach out to new military families identified through the Red Cross’ Services to Armed Forces (SAF) program at the two area Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS). The two area MEPS are in Buffalo and Syracuse. Most military moms are well acquainted with MEPS, it may be where your son and/or daughter first started the process to join the military, by taking their ASVAB test, or their military physical was there or you saw them take their enlistment oath. At some point while at

A number of Rochester Blue Star Mothers (BSM) signed up to be Red Cross Service to Armed Forces volunteers (completed an application, orientation, and background check) and become American Red Cross Services to Armed Forces Reassurance Callers. Yep, that’s a mouthful but whom better to make the initial call to a new military family on behalf of the Red Cross but a Blue Star Mother who has experienced all those same emotions when their son (s) and/or daughter(s) joined the military. As a Family Reassurance Caller the Blue Star Mothers makes sure the family received the Red Cross Welcome Packet and reinforces the importance of know the Red Cross SAF Emergency Communication toll-free number, 1-877-272-7337, just in case an emergency message has to be sent to the service member related to a serious family illness, death, birth or emergency situation. We also share with families that there are Blue Star Mother chapters located in the western and central area of NY and help put them in touch with their local chapter. Several BSM have been able to walk families through calling the Emergency Communication number as a situation has occurred that needs to be communicated to their service member.

Our president, Angie Uhnavy and the Western & Central NY Services to Armed Forces, Director, Judy Pollman travelled to Buffalo to share the program with the BSM chapter there and they are excited to become callers and help support the new military families in their area. Our moto “Leave no mother behind” and this is just another way we can support military moms in our area.

ROCHESTER BLUE STAR MOTHERS ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTION

Four Rochester Blue Star Mother Delegates; Mary Anne Zani, Veramae Rudd-Young, Pat Witt, and Angie Uhnavy attended the 74th National Blue Star Mother convention in Dayton, OH August 2-6th. We were proud to announce to our Rochester NY8 Chapter that our Angie Uhnavy, our chapter president was elected Recording Secretary for the National Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. Big Dipper Auxiliary committee.

August 1, Monthly Social Gathering at local café

Our NY8 membership is increasing! We had new moms and associates join our NY8 for our monthly Monday evening social gathering at a local café. Our social get-togethers are an informal time to share, talk and support each other while partnering with the Future Strong Stars. We meet at local Panera Breads throughout the Rochester area at 7 pm on the 1st Monday of each month.

August 3, Pound the Ground for Vets

Nancy Lopez BSM NY8 mother and her grandson Elijah showed their support by running in the recent Veterans Outreach Center’s (VOC) Pound the Ground for Vets, an annual fundraiser for the center’s many services provided to area Veterans and their families. The August 3rd event marks the 8th year the VOC has invited the community to participate in a 10K, 5K and Walk through Mendon Ponds Park.