



The “Big Dipper” Organization

The Big Dipper is an auxiliary of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., that came into being in Milwaukee, Wisconsin November 7 at the 1951 National Convention. **The objectives of the organization are threefold: 1) honoring outstanding members of the Blue Star Mothers, 2) sponsoring a “Fun Night” at conventions and 3) providing educational assistance. In the beginning membership was very exclusive.** To be a member of Big Dipper a Blue Star Mother (BSMA) had to be an active member of her local chapter for at least one year, preferably an officer. The local Chapter had to nominate potential candidates, then vote, indicating their chapter’s choice for membership. It was a great honor to be chosen as a member of Big Dipper.

Today all BSMA’s in good standing are encouraged to become a member of Big Dipper. **Membership is easily accomplished.** You submit your name, address, application form (found on the National Website) and \$10.00 in dues through your BSMA Chapter’s Financial Secretary to your State’s Big Dipper Financial Secretary. One half of the dues stay with the State’s Big Dipper. The other half of the dues goes to National Big Dipper. If there is no State Big Dipper, then all the dues go to National Big Dipper Financial Secretary, Carolyn Silberman.

The second objective is to sponsor a Fun Night which is held, traditionally on Friday evening of Convention for both the National and Department. This event is held at the request or permission of the Big Dipper President and the President of the parent organization. This is a time to promote harmony, goodwill, cooperation and fellowship, not just among Big Dipper members, but among all BSMA. This event is also a way to garner more **money for the educational assistance fund**, which comes from the **dues of Big Dipper members and any possible donations.**

Each event has a theme. At the 2007 National Convention it was “Heroes of WWII”, in 2008 it was “Pajama Party”, and at the Michigan Department Convention in 2009, it was a “Costume Party”. Among the many activities held on Fun Night the last few years has been a silent auction. Chapters and individuals are encouraged to collect items and donate them to be sold. The bidding goes on throughout the evening during the other activities and then about 30 minutes before the evening ends, the bidding is closed and the winners are announced.

The last objective is to provide educational assistance to a child(ren) and grandchild(ren) of a veteran or BSMA member; a veteran, active duty personnel, a BSMA member or the spouse of a veteran or active duty personnel are eligible to apply for educational financial assistance.

The educational assistance fund was **dedicated to the memory of Josephine Calenda of PA 22** at the National BSMA Convention held in Lansing, Michigan in 1989. Josephine, after many years of active service in BSMA, died that year while holding the office of National Big Dipper President.