

Youth Activities Chairman

Department of Washington Department

Bulletin #1

July 2026

Hello all- As I am writing this, I am high up in the Cascade Mountains, at our campsite for five glorious days. I am sitting next to a little bubbling stream, and listening to the bird's chirp, an occasional frog talking in the distant pond and my three rescue dogs loving the peace and quiet of no fireworks. It really clears my head, my soul and rejuvenates me.

I wanted to reintroduce myself to those who might be new and to those who might not know me, my name is Debbie Bowling. I am a proud Navy Veteran, wife of a retired Navy Veteran, a mother of three, one being a Marine. Grandma "Umma" to eight sweet & rowdy grandkids ages 1 to 15 yrs. On July 10th I celebrate the day I meet my Michael 40 years ago in San Diego which we both were stationed on Submarine Tenders. I am an elementary school kitchen manager aka Lunch Lady. I love my job; I work from 6-1:30 each school day. I have all the school holidays off and summers. I am on my fourth term as Auxiliary President for Ward Roney Jr Post 7511 in Monroe, also the Senior Vice President for District One.

This is my second year as Washington State Youth Activities Chairman, and I am honored to have been asked to serve again. I look forward to another amazing program year. Last year brought a significant learning curve, but I met many wonderful people and gained valuable knowledge. Overall, it was a wonderful year. Reading the End of Year Reports and seeing all the activities you shared was truly terrific.

Here are a couple of fun facts about what our auxiliaries did the year. I will give full report at SOI.

- 34 Auxiliaries out of sixty-three filled out the "End of Year Report."
- 40 Youth Groups received "Supporting our Veterans Citations."
- 18 Auxiliaries participated in "Patriotism through Literacy."
- Thirty-four art entries were submitted to state.
- Seventeen auxiliaries host award ceremonies

I have to say the highlight this year, was seeing all the Illustrating Art from our young artists, such amazing artistic skills. Even my judges who helped me were shocked at their still levels.

Speaking of **Illustrating America Art** (Elementary age K-8th)

Important reminder: There are several **CHANGES** this year to the **DUE DATES** for the Illustrating America Contest. The Illustrating America schedule starting for the 2026-2027 year is:

December 15, (2026): Illustrating America Student entries are to the participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging.

January (2027): Optional first place winners in each grade division from each participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary District for judging.

January 15th: Illustrating America first place winners in each grade division from each participating/ sponsoring VFW Auxiliary or optional VFW Auxiliary District are due to the VFW Auxiliary Department for judging. Please pass on this especially essential information to all your auxiliaries. These due dates will come up extremely fast this year.

I will go into more detail of our Youth Activities Program at School of Instruction on August 22nd in Yakima.

Looking forward to seeing you all!

Debbie Bowling

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