



FORT DU ROCHER CHAPTER,
MENDOTA, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

Regent's Message

Dear Daughters,

This is my favorite time of year. I love all things fall: changing leaves, pumpkin spice, cooler temps, and I love the holidays that lead us into a new year.

Thanksgiving has always been very important to my family. We celebrate our Mayflower ancestry by using our ancestral Phelps China and displaying models of the Mayflower and the cradle of Peregrine White. We set out 5 kernels of corn to remind us of the tradition that this was the daily ration during a period of the worst Pilgrim winter. If there is a young girl present, it is her turn to wear the white "Pilgrim" cap that my mother purchased when visiting Plymouth. Growing up with these traditions spurred the curiosity about my ancestors that has led to my involvement in DAR.

As we celebrate the holidays let us give some thought to the lives of our ancestors, feeling gratitude for their sacrifices that make our celebrations in a free nation possible. Wishing you and your loved ones the very best of holidays!

**Beverly Richardson
Regent
Ft. du Rocher**

December 2025



*Merry
& Bright*



REFLECTIONS

Message from our Chaplain



Dear Lord,

There is so much violence and uncertainty going on around the world.

The world needs a lot of help and understanding. There are many shootings, bombings, flooding, killings and natural disasters. We need your help and guidance.

May you guide us in the right direction and help us stay on the right track. Life has it's challenges for all of us in one way or another.

I hope that your holiday plans are coming along. A time to share great memories and traditions with your family. Families always have opportunities to share and make new traditions.

Please look after our military people all over the world and keep them safe.

As we are to be one of the greatest nations in the world we need to step back and do some soul searching.

May we go in peace and understanding, with forgiveness in your name we pray.

Warmly,
Alice Giberson
Chaplain



Take the
Daughters Online
Community with you
wherever you go!

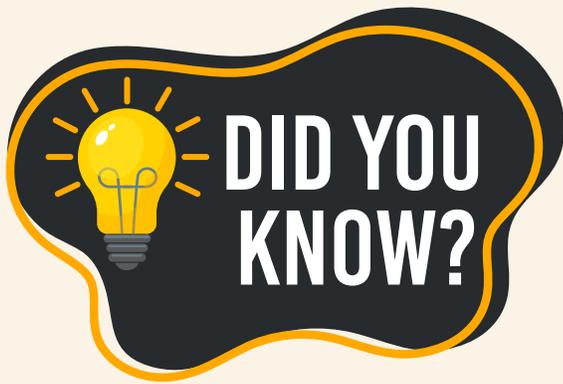
DOC to-go

DAR

DOWNLOAD



October 11, 2025, the DAR National Board of Management considered a proposal regarding digitization of American Spirit and Daughters. The proposal was prepared by staff and the National Chair of the DAR Magazine Committee at the request of the Executive Committee. Upon receiving, reviewing and considering the proposal, the Board voted to cease print, subscriber-only publication of American Spirit and Daughters with the March/April 2026 issues and to introduce a single digital publication in July/August 2026 that will be made available to all Daughters as a member resource at no cost. This new digital publication will be highly interactive and designed to welcome new DAR members and engage all Daughters in the mission of the National Society, as well as feature a user-friendly, enjoyable mobile experience and opportunities for sharing content on social media as a public relations tool.



On December 6th, our chapter will celebrate the holidays at 10 am, at the 1st Presbyterian Church in Mendota. Following a quick business meeting, we will enjoy a pot luck lunch (chicken will be provided). Bring any dish that you would like to share! We will be collecting non-spiral calendars, sign Christmas cards for veterans and enjoy singing Christmas carols. Please join us for some holiday cheer!



National Wreaths Across America Day is just around the corner on December 13, 2025 at 11:00 am (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony) at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. We need your help to make sure every veteran's grave at our local cemetery is honored with a wreath. Thank you for helping us honor every American hero—your support makes a meaningful difference! Follow us on social media: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/16036/Overview/?relatedId=0>



The DAR scholarship Committee will continue to support students who represent the next generation of leaders, community builders and innovative individuals. There will be 10 one- time Scholarship awards of \$25,000 each as part of Honoring America 250! Applicants must attend or plan to attend an accredited college or university in the United States. DAR offers 28 scholarships for: Graduating high school seniors, and college and graduate students in specific areas of study. Scholarship applications are accepted November 1 thru January 31 each year until 11:59 pm (Hawaii Time). Applicants must be citizens of the United States. Applicants must attend or plan to attend an accredited college or university in the United States.

There is now an app to download (DOC) Daughters Online Community. You can download it from the Apple store or Google Play Store. This app can make it easier for you to stay connected on the go. It connects you to your favorite committees, officer and interest group communities. Go to this site for more detailed information.

https://blog.dar.org/2025/11/04/daughters-online-community-doc-app-now-available-download?_zs=CkCsj1&_zl=XTkRA

DAR Scholarship application portal opened November 1, 2025 and will close January 31, 2026

ITEMS OF



On September 26, 2025 our chapter participated in our 2nd annual "Lunch in the Park" in Mendota.

We served hamburgers, hotdogs, brats, and pork chop sandwiches. All lunches included chips, a sweet treat, and a drink for only \$8.00. We had beautiful weather and a nice time being together. \$302.00 was earned this year. Chairs Carolyn Schultz, Donna Jungnickel, and Janet Koch are appreciative of all those who baked, bought supplies, and/or helped with serving. A special thank you to Dave Jungnickel, Bob Schultz, and Bill Bratney who once again were excellent grillers! The grill was borrowed from the Mendota Chamber of Commerce. These daughters assisted in setting up and serving the meals: Ruth Meinhardt, Joni Bratney, Regent Beverly Richardson, Susan Florschuetz, Donna Jungnickel, Carolyn Schultz, and Janet Koch.



For our DAR Day of Service project, members met at the LaSalle County Veteran's Home, where we prepared fall "goody bags" for the 79 residents. The bags contained chocolate, snack cakes and crackers, fall decorations and a little Uncle Sam statue.

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Ft. du Rocher chapter had a memorial service at the November meeting. Each member lit a candle and said a little about their patriots. Diane McCully shared a poem she wrote about her patriot.

Eli Hull

*Young Eli yearned for glory,
In the war he'd write his story.*

*He followed his brother to war,
He didn't know what was in store.*

*He was too young, soon they learned
So to the stables he was turned.*

*Later he served under George
That great winter at Valley Forge.*

*Finally, with Captain Potter he fought,
And to his descendants patriotism taught.*

Please send your patriots stories if you have not yet sent them to Diane McCully.

They are going into the Chapter Memory Book for 250. She wants to complete the book.



Leading the memorial service for the chapter's Patriots is our chaplain, Alice Giberson.



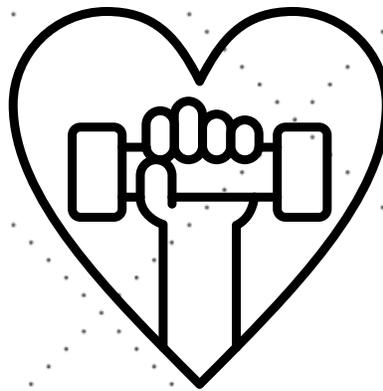
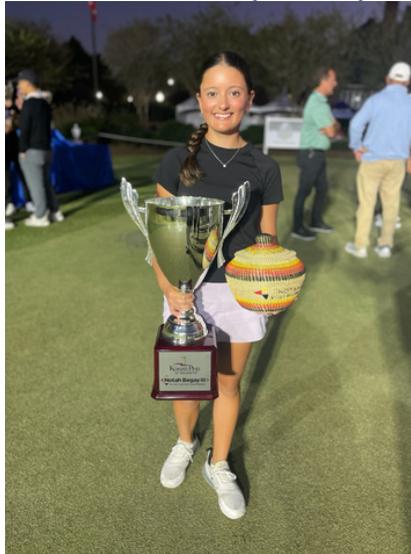
The District II Fall meeting was held Saturday, Oct. 25 at the Mendota Civic Center.

The program led by Nancy Gillfillan, was about Sacagawea.

Top row: Lonnie Schafer, Sharon Presse, Ruth Meinhardt, Alice Giberson. Bottom Row: Betty Baumann, Janet Koch, Donna Jungnickel, Carolyn Schultz, and Margaret Carr.

Family Matters

Nora Shelor, great granddaughter of Linda Sigmon Byrd won a three day tournament in LA. The tournament was formed in honor of a young Native American Indian girl. Nora is part Choctaw on her maternal side and was the first with Indian heritage to win!



Kasha Bonnell's son & Audre Sautter's grandson, Beau Bonnell, received his white coat & pin in Physical Therapy class of 2026, Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this past September.



Audre Sautter and Kasha Bonnell traveled for 2 weeks in September to Italy. Pictured here in Sienna, the two travelled with Kasha's husband, Brad and his mother Lynne Bonnell. They ventured from Florence, Tuscany, the Amalfi coast and then on to Rome.

Bountiful Board

Christmas Casseroles



Crock Pot Cheesy Potatoes

Beverly Richardson

2 lb package frozen hash browns
2- 10 oz cans cheddar cheese soup
1- 13 oz can of evaporated milk
1 can French fried onions
Salt and pepper to taste
Combine all ingredients in a greased crock pot, reserving a quarter to half cup of onions.

Cook on low 8-9 hours, high 3 hours

Add onions on top before serving



Baked Potato Casserole

Sharon Presse

8 cooked, peeled and diced or sliced potatoes
1 lb. American cheese, diced
1 c. mayonnaise
½ c. chopped onions
Salt and pepper to taste
½ lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
¼ c. sliced, stuffed green olives
Combine all ingredients except the bacon and olives and pour into a lightly buttered large casserole dish or a 9 x 13-inch pan. Top with bacon and olives. Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 hour. Serve hot. This may be made early in the day or a day ahead. Bake just before you need it. Serves about 12.

Italian Strata

Sharon Presse

1 lb. Italian sausage
1 med. onion, chopped
12 oz. Texas Toast (found in the frozen case)
2 (4 oz.) cans sliced mushrooms, well-drained
1/3 c. diced green bell peppers
1/3 c. diced red bell peppers
½ c. broccoli florets
1 pkg. frozen, chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained
6 lg. eggs, beaten
½ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. black pepper
2 tsp. Italian seasoning
4 c. milk
8 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese
4 oz. shredded cheddar cheese

Brown the sausage, breaking up the large clumps. Add onions and cook until both are cooked. Cut the Texas Toast to fit into a greased 9 x 13-inch pan. Cover the bread with sausage/onion mix. Sprinkle over the top the next 5 ingredients. In a large bowl, combine the next 5 ingredients and pour this egg mixture over the ingredients in the pan. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for about 1 hour. Sprinkle the cheeses on top and bake for an additional 15 minutes. If assembled the night before, cover with foil and refrigerate. The following morning, remove the dish from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before baking. The baking time might be longer. This dish is ideally suited for busy times like the holidays when it helps to have as much done before time.

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Christmas Casseroles

Tater Tot Stuffing Donna Jungnickel

- 1 (28-oz.) bag frozen tater tots**
- Cooking spray**
- 8 oz. Italian sausage, casings removed**
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, divided**
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 2 celery ribs, thinly sliced**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided**
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh sage**
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh thyme, plus more for topping (optional)**
- 2 large eggs, room temperature**
- 1 & 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock**

Directions:

- a. **Arrange a rack in center of oven; preheat to 425°. Spread tater tots in a single layer on an unlined baking sheet.**
- b. **Bake tots until golden and very crunchy, 25-35 minutes (tots should be crunchier than you would want them to be if you were cooking them to eat immediately). Transfer to a wire rack and let cool to room temperature.**
- c. **Reduce oven temperature to 375°. Grease a 13" x 9" baking dish with cooking spray.**
- d. **In a large skillet over medium heat, cook sausage, stirring to break up into bite-sized pieces, until cooked through, 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer sausage to a small plate, leaving as much fat as possible in skillet.**
- e. **In same skillet over medium heat, melt 4 Tbsp. butter. Add onion and celery; season with 1/2 tsp. salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 7 minutes. Add sage and thyme and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes more. Add remaining 4 Tbsp. butter and stir until melted, then remove from heat and let cool slightly.**
- f. **In a bowl, whisk eggs and broth; season with remaining 1/2 tsp. salt. Add tater tots, sausage, and onion mixture (including the just-melted butter) and toss briefly to combine. (Don't overmix, or tots will begin to fall apart!)**
- g. **Pour tots mixture into prepared dish, arranging the prettiest whole tots on top if desired; cover with foil.**
- h. **Bake stuffing for 20 minutes, then uncover and continue to bake until crisp on the top and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 160°, 10 to 15 minutes more. If using, top with fresh thyme before serving.**



Book Nook

The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride

“We all need—we all deserve—this vibrant, love-affirming novel that bounds over any difference that claims to separate us.” —Ron Charles, The Washington Post

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Moshe integrated his theater and where Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store. When the state came looking for a deaf boy to institutionalize him, it was Chona and Nate Timblin, the Black janitor at Moshe’s theater and the unofficial leader of the Black community on Chicken Hill, who worked together to keep the boy safe.

As these characters’ stories overlap and deepen, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive. When the truth is finally revealed about what happened on Chicken Hill and the part the town’s white establishment played in it, McBride shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us.



Mark Your Calendar

Fort Du Rocher DAR Plans, 2026

January 2026 No meeting

February 14, 2026 LaSalle Public Library
Program: Zoom Author K.M. Waldvogel
“Spies, Soldiers, Couriers, & Saboteurs”

March 14, 2026 St. John’s Lutheran Church
Program: Good Citizen Essay Winners Brunch

April 11, 2026 Zion United Methodist Church
Program: “History of Woodworking”

April 23-26, 2026 State Conference

May 2, 2026 Zion United Methodist Church
Program: Laurie Perry “America 250”

May 7, 2026 National day of Prayer

May 29, 2026—June 1 Illinois State Conference,
Doubletree Hotel, Bloomington

June 24-28, 2026 135rd NSDAR Continental Congress
Washington, DC



The deadline for the Spring 2026 newsletter is February 15th.
Please submit your information and pictures electronically to:
Donna Jungnickel at jungnickeld@gmail.com
Kasha Bonnell at kathleenbonnell@gmail.com

