

Chapter meetings are held January – April and October – December at Saddlebrooke Ranch, normally on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month.



# Catalina Mountains Sentinel

July 2024 issue

## July 2024 Issue

### Page 1

- Chapter luncheon 20 April
- Upcoming luncheons

### Page 2

- President's Message

### Page 3

- Board members and officers
- Other chapter leadership
- MOAA's Legislative Action Center
- 5-star MOAA award

### Page 4

- Legislative update

### Page 5

- Join the chapter
- Mission statement
- Save the date

### Pages 6

- JROTC awards
- Fly the flag dates

### Page 7

- Member in the spotlight

### Page 8

- Consider volunteering

### Page 9

- Are you registered to vote?
- Happy birthday
- Editorial policy

### Page 10

- Jim Click raffle tickets for sale
- How to contact us

## Chapter luncheon 20 April 2024

The luncheon speaker for the chapter's April luncheon was retired Colonel (US Army) Kurt McMillen, who is also the First Vice President of the Chapter. Kurt and his wife Cheryl had the rare opportunity to travel to Uzbekistan for two weeks in May, 2023. Although Kurt has a significant engineering, program management and business development background, his previous knowledge of Central Asia (also known as "The Stans") was essentially non-existent.

Kurt and his wife provide rental housing to two University of Arizona students from Uzbekistan. When the students invited Kurt and Cheryl to visit their country Kurt and Cheryl took advantage of the offer to visit Uzbekistan. Using a great variety of photographs, Kurt provided a wealth of information and insight he learned while touring Uzbekistan, which touched on the history, economic development, political shifts, and especially the culture of Uzbekistan.



Kurt is also on the board of directors for the Senior Village in Saddlebrooke and is the President of the Saddlebrooke Cycle Masters bicycle club. Besides logging significant bicycling miles, Kurt enjoys travelling with his wife and hiking/backpacking, especially into the Grand Canyon.

## Upcoming luncheons

**Join us for the July 20<sup>th</sup> luncheon.** This is purely a social get together mid-way through the summer. I'll speak briefly about our community support actions, but mainly it's a chance to get together for lunch.

**National MOAA and the Catalina Mountains Chapter are nonpartisan.**

## President's message

Hello chapter members.



Since the last newsletter was issued in March, the Chapter has been busy. April was a particularly busy month for us.

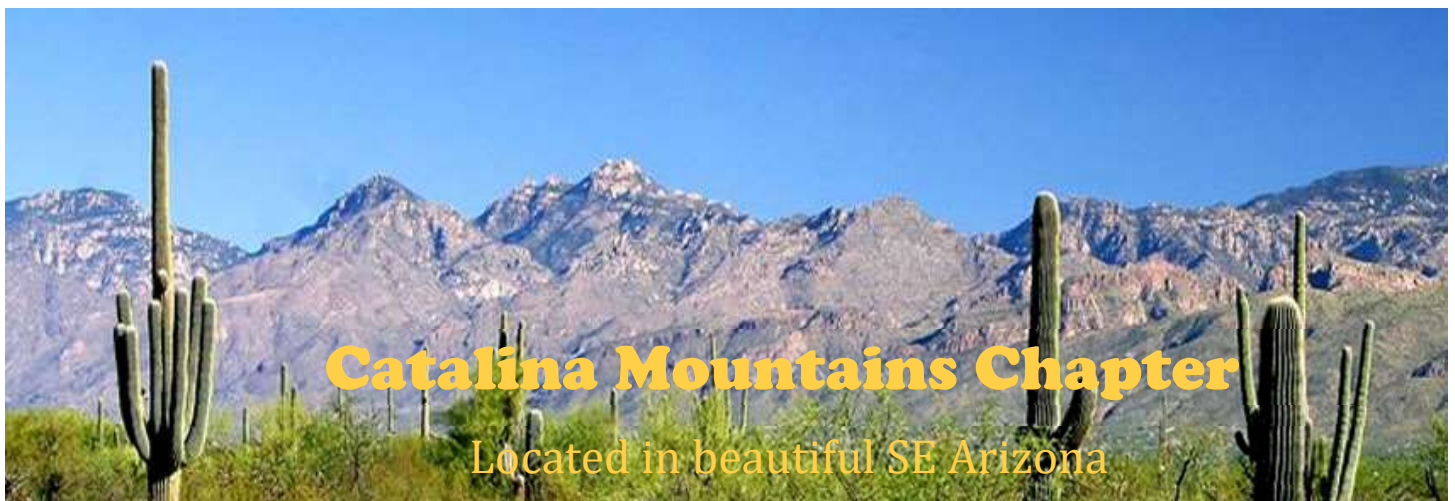
As you saw on page 1 of this newsletter our first Vice President, Kurt McMillen, spoke at our April luncheon meeting, our final chapter luncheon meeting this spring. In mid April we were notified that the chapter, for the second consecutive year, was judged to be a 5-star level of effort chapter by national MOAA, the highest level of effort award by MOAA. Our chapter website was also judged to be a 5-star website, again the highest award for websites presented by MOAA. We did not submit our newsletter, published jointly with the Tucson Chapter of MOAA. The Tucson Chapter submitted the jointly published newsletter for award consideration and was awarded consideration and it was awarded 5-stars, also the highest award for newsletters. Because the newsletter was jointly published last year our chapter's former newsletter, I would conclude, was a 5-star effort.

In April four chapter members presented MOAA JROTC awards at four high schools north of here at Casa Grande High School, Vista Grande High School, Poston Butte High School in San Tan Valley, and Coolidge High School in Coolidge.

Since the publication of the March newsletter we have added three members to the chapter: Brian O'Connor, an Army veteran; Randy Long, also an Army veteran; and Evan Chanik, a Navy retiree. Welcome aboard new members!

In mid April the Chapter was notified that it will receive a grant for \$1,600.00 from the MOAA Foundation to purchase laptops for two or three Esperanza En Escalante residents who hope to transition out from temporary Esperanza En Escalante accommodations into their own apartment. We received a similar larger grant from the MOAA Foundation last year and were able to purchase and give out four laptops to four Esperanza En Escalante residents last August. At least one of those residents was able to get a job using his new laptop.

I'll be at the July luncheon with Jim Click raffle tickets to sell. I hope to see you there! In the meantime, try to stay cool – it's been very hot lately, even for here in southern Arizona.



#### 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Charles F. Vaughan, CAPT, USN, retired**  
*Chairman*

**Bill Nagy, COL, USAR, retired**  
*Member*

**Rett Benedict, COL, USAF, retired**  
*Member*

#### 2024 CHAPTER OFFICERS

**Charles F. Vaughan, CAPT, USN, retired**  
*President*

**Kurt McMillen, COL, USA, retired**  
*First Vice President*

**Bruce Huffman, COL, USA, retired**  
*Second Vice President*

**Bill Myers, LT, CEC, USN, former**  
*Secretary*

**George Bone, LTC, USA, retired**  
*Treasurer*

## MOAA's Legislative Action Center

National MOAA's Legislative Action Center makes it very easy for you to contact your national legislators on legislation that MOAA is advocating for passage. As noted by national MOAA, "your efforts are critical to our success protecting and expanding the earned pay and benefits for the uniformed services and veteran communities".

The purpose of the Legislative Action Center is to get legislation, beneficial to members of the uniformed services, veterans and their dependents, passed into law. MOAA members use the Legislative Action Center to write to their legislators to encourage passage of specific legislation. The Legislative Action Center makes writing to your legislators simple—in fact, very simple—as the letters are written for you, they are addressed to your legislators (based on your mailing address), so all you have to do is select the recipients, edit the letter if you want to, and click submit. Easy-peasy! If you haven't tried it yet, please do.

MOAA's Legislative Action Center is located at <https://moaa.quorum.us/>

#### ADDITIONAL CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

**Bill Nagy, COL, USAR, retired**  
*Programs Chari*

**Carol Smith**  
*Surviving Spouse Liaison*

**Don Timian, LTC, USA, retired**  
*Membership Chair*

**Jeff Peckron, Capt, USMC, retired**  
*Legislative Liaison*

**Ritt Schiano, CAPT, USN, retired**  
*Chaplain and JROTC coordinator*

**Jeff Peckron, Capt, USMC, retired**  
*Audio/Visual Support*

The Chapter received a 5 star Level of Excellence award for 2023 (our second 5-star award), shown below. MOAA chapters were graded as 3, 4, or 5 stars based on the performance of each chapter with 5 stars being the highest level of excellence. Thanks to all chapter members for making this happen!



## Legislative update by Tom Waddell, AZ Council of Chapters

The MOAA mission is to protect the benefits earned by all uniformed service members. National MOAA priorities for this year are passing the Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344), restoring full BAH (H.R. 2537/S. 1823) and protecting TRICARE for Life.

The Richard Star Act continues to receive opposition from members who are concerned about the costs associated with the passage of the act. MOAA believes that cost should not be a factor when it comes to military members who have been injured in the line of duty while serving this great nation.

We all know that the cost of housing has skyrocketed over the last few years. This has shifted a huge financial burden to our active-duty members as they seek housing at their duty stations. The restoration of full BAH is essential for members to meet rising housing costs nationwide.

Protecting TRICARE for Life has no required legislation; however, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) continues to make recommendations for cost reductions by suggesting increases for beneficiaries to include enrollment fees and increased co-pays. MOAA's goal is to remind Congress to keep their promise made to all TRICARE beneficiaries that TRICARE for Life is an earned benefit.

I'm asking you to immediately go to the Legislative Action Center and send letters to our Senators and Representatives using the links in center. You may want to personalize the opening paragraph with an explanation of your service and that you are an active voter.

Here are the links you will need for the Action Center:

Richard Star Act: <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/43784/>

BAH Restoration: <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/46553/>

Protect TRICARE for Life: <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/56719/> (this link asks you to provide your own narrative on how important TRICARE for Life is to you personally. Provide a short personal narrative.)

In Arizona, hope dims for the passing of SB1413: Income Tax; Subtraction; Uniformed Services (providing active duty pay parity to all uniformed service members) this session. The Senate has recommended a "strike all" amendment to HB 2135 which changes the original language in HB2135 to that of SB1413. HB2135 is currently stalled in the House Ways and Means committee, the House Rules Committee and the House Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee. The Republican members of the house are opposed to any bill that would result in the reduction of tax revenue.

The plan is to develop an action plan to get the bill reintroduced in the next session. Stay tuned for the new plan.

## Join the Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA

If you are not a member already, consider joining the Catalina Mountains Chapter. Why should you join our chapter? You should join so you can help us make a difference in the life of some veterans and uniformed personnel. How can you make a difference? Through your gifts of time and money. Chapter members donated their time this year to do some exterior painting at Esperanza En Escalante and two chapter members placed wreaths at the Wreaths Across America event in December. If you can make a financial donation, chapter members sponsored a one-week camp for children of Esperanza En Escalante residents and contributed funds to purchase four laptop computers for Esperanza En Escalante residents.

To join the chapter, you must be eligible to join national MOAA. If you have any questions about joining the chapter contact our membership chair, Don Timian, at [dontimian@hotmail.com](mailto:dontimian@hotmail.com) or by phone at 571-216-3679.

Chapter dues at \$30 per calendar year.

You can find a membership application at [https://www.catalinamountainsmoaa.org/CM\\_join.html](https://www.catalinamountainsmoaa.org/CM_join.html)

## Catalina Mountains mission statement

The Chapter's mission is clearly spelled out in the by-laws of the Catalina Mountains Chapter, in Section 1.2 as follows:

"The Chapter is organized, and shall be administered and operated, exclusively for the following purposes, with the meaning of Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code: to promote the purposes and objectives of the national Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); foster fraternal relations among active duty, former, and retired officers of the uniformed services and their reserve or national guard components; protect the rights and interests of active duty, former, retired, and reserve and national guard component personnel of the uniformed services and their dependents and survivors; provide useful services for members and their dependents and survivors; and serve the community and the nation."



**SAVE THE DATE** – our first holiday party is being planned for Saturday, 21 December 2024 in place of our regular monthly luncheon. More details to follow – but plan to join us on Saturday afternoon, December 21, 2024!

## JROTC awards – by Chuck Vaughan, president

In April myself and three other chapter members had the privilege of presenting Junior ROTC (JROTC) awards at four high schools north of here at Casa Grande High School, Vista Grande High School, Poston Butte High School in San Tan Valley, and Coolidge High School in Coolidge. The four chapter members making the presentations were CJ Hindman, Bruce Huffman, Cash Striplin and myself. Cash Striplin is shown below with the three JROTC recipients at Poston Butte High School.

This is the first year Catalina Mountains Chapter members participated in JROTC award presentations. The four schools listed above were previously served by the Superstition Mountain Chapter of MOAA but members there (Superstition Mountain) were no longer able to support those four schools. Many thanks to Ritt Schiano for coordinating the transfer of these schools to our chapter and for coordinating the presentation of the awards with chapter presenters.

The three awards presented were a MOAA medal/ribbon with certificate, presented to the cadet who demonstrates leadership traits. A second award, a MOAA challenge coin, was presented to the cadet who had demonstrated he or she has learned the king of self-discipline, self-confidence, and skills needed to help him or her successfully meet the challenges of adulthood and serve their country and community. A third award, a \$100 beill, was presented to the cadet who, by their performance, character and bearing, upholds the values of U. S. military personnel.



## Fly the flag dates

### July

Thursday, 4 July – Independence Day

Saturday, 27 July – Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

### August

Thursday, 1 August – Air Force Day

Sunday, 4 August – Coast Guard Day

Wednesday, 7 August – Purple Heart Day

Monday, 12 August – VJ Day

### September

Monday, 2 September – Labor Day

Wednesday, 11 September – Patriot Day

Tuesday, 17 September – Constitution Day

Friday, 20 September – POW/MIA Recognition Day

Sunday, 29 September – Gold Star Mother's Day

**Legislative Liaison.** We have a new legislative liaison to replace Char Godec. Thank you, Jeff Peckron, for volunteering to take over this important function. Legislative advocacy, on the state and national level, is an important mission of MOAA. Watch for legislative emails from Jeff!

## Member in the spotlight - by Kurt McMillen

When our Catalina Mountains Chapter (CMC) publishes the Sentinel newsletter, we enjoy highlighting the accomplishments of our CMC members. All of our members have a diverse military background, civilian background, and they are typically very involved in the local community. We think you will appreciate our members' contributions both within CMC and beyond our chapter.

This "spotlight" shines on our own COL Charlene ("Char") Godec. Char joined CMC in 2021 and was quickly selected as the Special Events Coordinator. Shortly thereafter she became the chapter Legislative Liaison. Unfortunately for our chapter, Char recently moved back to Washington state with her husband Larry to be closer to family. She has, though, already become a member of the local Kitsap Chapter in Silverdale, WA which is great for MOAA. We believe that highlighting Char this month is a well-deserved goodbye due to all of the significant contributions she has made to CMC over the past few years.

Char's service to our country started in 1984 when she received a direct commission as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. She was assigned to the 6251<sup>st</sup> U.S. Army Hospital (USAH) in Tucson, Arizona and Fort Huachuca, Arizona as an Operating Room Nurse. During this assignment she developed an innovative training program for USAR enlisted operating room personnel that allowed them to directly assist with scheduled surgeries during weekend training in the operating rooms at Fort Huachuca. From that assignment, Char rose through numerous positions of increased responsibility at the 6251<sup>st</sup>.

Char was then assigned to the 5251<sup>st</sup> USAH, FT Snelling, MN in September 1990 as a Operating Rooms Staff Nurse. She was mobilized in support of Operation Desert Storm in January 1991 and assigned to Brook Army Medical Center, FT Sam Houston, TX. In February 1991, Char volunteered for four months of duty at FT Huachuca, AZ to support critical staffing needs in the Operating Rooms at the MEDDAC (Medical Department Activity). In addition, she was assigned as the Infection Control Practitioner for the Hospital and Clinics.

In September 1993, Char became a member of the 114th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) and quickly became involved in senior leadership activities in support of the hospital mission. Her significant assignments culminated with her assignment as Nursing Services Chief through August 1999. As Nursing Services Chief, Char was instrumental in developing working relationships with the unit's active duty counterpart at FT Campbell, KY. She established training contracts with two Level One Trauma Centers in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN area to ensure hands-on training for patient care in trauma situations for all officer and enlisted nursing personnel.

Following her tenure at the 114th CSH, Char was assigned to the IRR (Independent Ready Reserve). While a member of the IRR, she was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and she was selected for numerous critical IMA (Individual Mobilization Augmentee) assignments. Her significant IMA assignments culminated in selection as the Deputy Commander for Nursing at Ireland Army Community Hospital in 2003 (through 2006).

Char was then mobilized in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) from March 2004 to March 2005. As the Senior Case Man-

ager for Great Plains Regional Medical Command at FT Sam Houston, TX she acted as the Commanding General's consultant on Case Management activities for a sixteen-state region (managing care for over 5000 National Guard and Reserve soldiers injured or ill during mobilization in support of GWOT).

Char was promoted to Colonel in October 2005. In February 2006 she was selected to fill the IMA position as Deputy Chief, Army Nurse Corps.

As a result of her illustrious military career, Char was inducted into the Order of Military Medical Merit in 2006. She retired from military duty in 2008.



Larry Roketa and "Char" Godec, Veterans Day dinner, November 2023

Parallel to her military career, Char achieved a distinguished civilian career. Her most significant civilian positions included:

- Clinical/Business Development Advisor for Acquirable Health Technologies, LLC, St. Louis, MO
- Chief Nurse Executive for St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, Spokane, WA
- Director of Perioperative and Sterile Processing Services, and Manager of Surgical

Services for Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, WA

- Chief Nursing Officer, and Surgical Services Nurse Manager for Bonner General Hospital, Sandpoint, ID
- Director of Surgical and Anesthesia Services for St. Luke's Hospital, Duluth, MN
- Director of Digestive Disease Services and Physician Practices for Saint Mary's/Duluth Clinic, Duluth, MN
- Manager of Surgical Services / Outpatient Services for University Medical Center-Mesabi, Hibbing, MN

On a personal level, both Char and Larry were born and raised in Chisholm, MN on the Mesabi Iron Range. Both of Char's parents were first generation Americans, and all her grandparents emigrated from Slovenia in the late 1800s/early 1900s.

Char, we will miss your bright smile, warm nature and valuable contributions to CMC. Whenever you are again in SaddleBrooke, please drop by for a visit!

## Consider volunteering

National MOAA's motto is Never Stop Serving®. Consider serving with the Catalina Mountains Chapter. The Chapter is currently looking for volunteers to serve as the Fund-Raising Chair, the Public Relations Chair, and a special events coordinator. Contact president Chuck Vaughan at [chuck.vaughan@com-cast.net](mailto:chuck.vaughan@com-cast.net) or by calling or texting 505-553-4364 if interested in volunteering in any capacity.

## Are you registered to vote? – by Chuck Vaughan, chapter president

I am sure you know that we have a general election and primary election scheduled this year. The primary election is scheduled for Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup> with the general election occurring on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. By the time you read this it will be too late to register to vote in the primary election, but if you have not registered to vote in the general election you still have time. The last day to register for the November 5<sup>th</sup> general election is Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. Exercise your right to vote – if you haven't registered yet, do so today!

For Arizona residents there are three ways to register to vote. You can register online if you have an Arizona Driver License and/or an Arizona non-operating I.D. card issued by the Motor Vehicle Division. Use the Service Arizona website to register: the website is located at <https://servicearizona.com/VoterRegistration/selectLanguage>.

You can register to vote by mail. Per the Secretary of State's website you can either print off a form online or request that a registration form be mailed to you from your County Recorder. After completing the voter registration form, mail it to your County Recorder's office. Use this site to your County Recorder's office. <https://azsos.gov/elections/about-elections/county-election-officials-contact-information>

Lastly, you can visit your County Recorder's office and fill out a registration form in person.

## Happy Birthday!

The following chapter members had a birthday in June:

Leonard Alcantara	Rett Benedict	Alan Berg	Cecil Burnside
Todd Hawkinson	Jim Keller	Bruce Kelly	Doug May
Marlon Ruiz	Jerry Sharp		

The following chapter members have a birthday in July:

Delores Fantin	CJ Hindman	Kurt McMillen	Don Timian
----------------	------------	---------------	------------

The following chapter members have a birthday in August:

Bill Blissett	David Bull	Andrew Fairchild	Leneille Hudgins
Phil Osterli			

**Editorial Policy.** This MOAA newsletter, published periodically throughout the year, is solely for the benefit of members of the Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors or editor and do not necessarily reflect those of the national MOAA organization nor any official government policies or agencies.

Charles F. Vaughan, Editor, Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA

## Jim Click raffle tickets for sale – by Chuck Vaughan, chapter president

The chapter has Jim Click raffle tickets for sale again this year. The grand prize is a new 2024 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 4xe plug-in hybrid (shown below). Second prize is two round-trip, first class airline tickets to anywhere in the world. Third prize is \$5,000 cash. Tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100. See president Chuck Vaughan to purchase your tickets. Winner need not be present to win. Tickets will be on sale now through our November luncheon.



## How to contact us

To contact the President, email Chuck Vaughan at [chuck.vaughan@comcast.net](mailto:chuck.vaughan@comcast.net) or call him at 505-553-4364.

For membership questions, email Don Timian at [dontimian@hotmail.com](mailto:dontimian@hotmail.com) or call him at 571-216-3679.

For luncheon speaker suggestions, email Bill Nagy at [wjnagy@yahoo.com](mailto:wjnagy@yahoo.com) or call him at 520-355-5064.

For Surviving Spouse information contact Carol Smith at [carol.chisari.smith@gmail.com](mailto:carol.chisari.smith@gmail.com) or call her at 915-549-6917.

**Donations are being accepted to sponsor a one-week fall camp for children at Esperanza En Escalante.** Last year the chapter donated \$2,050.00 to send children to camp for one week. Donations can be made on-line or by check to the treasurer – contact George Bone, our treasurer, at [gbone39@gmail.com](mailto:gbone39@gmail.com) or by phone at 520-314-3595..