

Smelter City Seniors

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 3

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY THE ANACONDA LEADER

JULY 2025

IT'S BACK!



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'75

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The Anaconda
Leader

It's back! Taking a look at The Montana's restoration — and the team behind it

JAMES S. ROSIEN
EDITOR

Four years ago, the Anaconda Leader sat down with several of the senior members – literally and figuratively – of the Anaconda Restoration Association (ARA) for an interview on their efforts at bringing back the former Montana Hotel at the corner of Park and Main.

“Let's bring it back,” the slogan on a 2012 banner made by the ARA's predecessors, the Montana Hotel Restoration Committee, eventually would become a rallying call for action, and by 2021 the group had accomplished a major feat in rebuilding the floor of what would become the Tammany Ballroom of the rechristened historic hub at the center of town – The Montana.

To celebrate the occasion, the Leader published our cover story for Volume XII No. 3 of Smelter City Seniors, “Bringing It Back,” but while the floor and some of the work on the exterior had been completed there was still a long way to go before The Montana – or at least The Tammany – was truly back.

But now, with the ballroom fixed up from floor to coffered ceiling (see our story in the Friday, July 25, 2025 Anaconda Leader) and with 16 editions of our quarterly gone by since that first story, for Volume XVI No. 3 of Smelter City Seniors we're taking another look at The Montana's restoration, and the team of mostly (but not all) senior members of the ARA behind it.

See RESTORATION on page 3



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VOLUME XII, NUMBER 3

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY THE ANACONDA LEADER

MAY 2021



Top: Anaconda Restoration Association board members Kayleen Kidwell, left, Robin McKernan, Mike Hammer, Pete Smith, Margie Smith, Ken Maynard (with Marley), Joe Strelnik, Mike Finnegan and Ryan Hessler are pictured inside The Montana in July of 2025. **Above:** Pete and Margie Smith, John Lombardi, Strelnik and Hammer are pictured in the same spot for the May 2021 edition of Smelter City Seniors. What a difference four years makes! Leader photos: James S. Rosien

RESTORATION from Page 2

Any discussion about The Montana has to begin with Margie Smith. The ARA's cheerleader, Smith's never-give-up attitude in the face of a daunting challenge, like restoring a building that had its top half taken off and was left to decay for decades, was a big part of her receiving a Heritage Keeper Award from the Montana Historical Society. "She helps provide us with the inspiration," said Robin McKernan, ARA board member.

Smith, however, emphasized it's a group and community effort.

A big part of that is the funds raised to help provide the necessary matching funding for grant awards, but that's not all.

"The community involvement isn't just donations. We're getting items back," Smith said, referring to a range of items that were original to The Montana but sold off and long thought lost to time.

But, like the building itself, they're coming back. A lot of it is with the help of ARA secretary and "history detective" Kayleen Kidwell, one of the few non-seniors on the board who has made it her mission to recover those items, in particular its many stained-glass windows – one of which is now mounted in its rightful home in the ballroom.

And the ARA hopes that as it all comes back, so too will the people.

"The use of it is the important thing," Smith said. "The original use of The Montana was housing businesses and the people of the community. That's what we're doing. It's for the community."

Mike Hammer, ARA chairman, agreed completely.

"As far as being a community focal point, being physically here and seeing how many people come knocking on our door," said Hammer, "it's important for us to be the hub of the community once more."

Hammer's connection to the building predates his move to Anaconda, as his former sister-in-law, Dr. Jill Bolstad, had previously owned it. He wasn't involved himself at that point, but later as he reached retirement and was looking for a way to contribute, the history buff found it in The Montana – which he

said has been updated for the 21st Century while keeping its historic character.

"We brought it back, with a twist," Hammer said. "A large part of that goes to Ken Maynard."

Maynard, like Hammer a retiree who relocated to Anaconda from back east, heads up the ARA's construction committee, which doesn't just include the construction work itself but also the design elements behind it.

That includes the aforementioned coffered ceiling, whose completion by Dale Harris Construction in early July put the cap on the Tammany Ballroom.

"We made it usable for the community in keeping with its historic ambiance," Maynard said. "Everything we do gives us opportunities to find new leads to the past."

Speaking of the past, if there's one member of the ARA board who knows the building's past better than anyone else, it's Joe Strelnik who practically grew up at the Montana Hotel. His mom went to the beauty school that used to be downstairs there. His siblings took tap-dancing lessons there. His dad would dress up as Santa Claus for Christmas there. He and his brother would end up bartending there.

"I got my first haircut here," Strelnik said as he and fellow board member Mike Finnegan reminisced, the latter saying "I got a lot of haircuts here."

And looking up at the newly installed ceiling, Strelnik said "it's phenomenal."

"It's spectacular," he said. "Back when we started it was 'Bring it Back,' and we have brought a lot of it back."

"It's so exciting to see what we've accomplished," McKernan said.

"Everyone played their part," Hammer said. That includes board members past and present such as John Lombardi and John Collin, and their predecessors from back in 2012, Joan and the late Bob Morris.

"I'm so proud of them," Smith said of the team before going back to the original point of it all: Bringing it back for the community.

"Come see us," she said.



Top: Ken Maynard discusses one of the finishing touches for the Tammany Ballroom at The Montana after its new coffered ceiling was completed, that being installing the stained-glass window unveiled earlier this year that had been returned to the building. **Middle:** Mike Hammer, left, joins Maynard in cleaning the window's surface under Kayleen Kidwell's watchful eye. Leader photos: James S. Rosien. **Above:** The window sits in its rightful home in the Tammany Ballroom's central archway. Photo courtesy of Kayleen Kidwell.

FUN in the Sun at the Old Works Golf Course



There was plenty of FUN to be had at the Anaconda Community Foundation's FUNdraiser on July 16 at the Old Works Golf Course. **Above left:** Pickleball players gather for a group photo on the Old Works' courts, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis during the course's operating hours. Photo courtesy of Jim Furaus. **Above right:** Gary Carlson takes aim at a bottle on the clubhouse's putting green for a chance to win a bigger bottle. **Right:** Mike Beausoleil lines up for a shot at a bottle as well. Photos courtesy of Tom Curry.





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Fun on the Horizon: Assisted living center looks forward to potential award, annual luau party

KASEY EDGE-FAUR
COPY EDITOR

The staff at New Horizons Assisted Living is competitive about the care they provide. This serves them in terms of winning awards, raising money, and continuing to offer fun and engaging activities for their residents.

Recently, New Horizons Assisted Living participated in a fundraiser for the National Alzheimer's Association, with a goal of \$2,000. To reach this goal, the staff organized bingo nights, yard sales, and finally, a walk-a-thon at Kennedy Common.

According to assistant administrator and activities director Glenna Reynolds, the assisted living center raised



New Horizons resident Pat, left, assistant administrator Glenna Reynolds, Pat's daughter-in-law Mara with her baby granddaughter, administrator Jerly Schultz, residents Sheila and Tom (both seated) and staff members Sandy and Debbie (both standing) and Evelyn (seated) gather at Kennedy Common for a group photo during the National Alzheimer's Association Walk-a-Thon at Kennedy Common in June. Leader photo: James S. Rosien

See HORIZON on page 6

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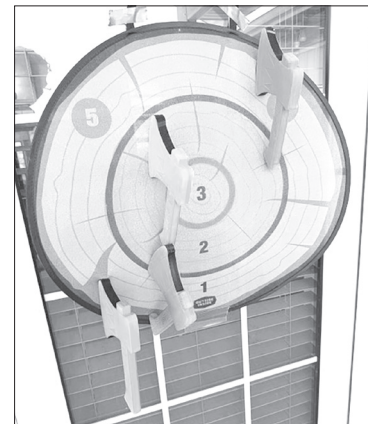
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*New Horizons residents enjoyed some axe-throwing fun for one of their outdoor activities. **Left:** Donna gears up to throw her axe as J.C. looks on. **Middle:** Tom throws his axe while Joan waits for her turn. **Above:** Looks like a pretty good grouping! Photos courtesy of Jerly Schultz.*

HORIZON from Page 5

\$2,970.20 for the Alzheimer's Association.

Jerly Schultz, the administrator at New Horizons, said there were from 30 to 40 people at the walk-a-thon alone, and just the walk raised around \$700.

Although Reynolds and Schultz, New Horizons' administrator, are proud of how much money they raised, Reynolds said that next year New Horizons will probably direct their attention to solely bingo nights, to take place once a month, starting in January and going until June.

"It's fun to do it," Schultz said, referencing the walk-a-thon and the other

events that went into the Alzheimer's awareness fundraiser. "But it's hard work."

One thing Reynolds and Schultz are looking forward to is the Montana Health Care Association Conference, where New Horizons has won an award for the last two years.

In 2024, New Horizons won the "Enrichment of Life Award Innovative Program in Customer Service" for its "Illuminating the Past" program, and in 2023, New Horizons was awarded the "Enrichment of Life Award for Innovative Program in Customer Service" for

its "Digital Connections" program.

"We're very competitive," Reynolds said. "On the way home from the conference, we're already planning what we're going to do next year."

The New Horizons staff also organizes some events where the residents themselves can compete, such as its axe throwing activity, in which residents throw foam axes at a hanging bullseye, or balloon volleyball, or cornhole.

New Horizons residents also participate in pamper days where they get foot massages and face masks, card games, Yahtzee and

painting.

Reynolds and Schultz are currently gearing up for New Horizons' annual luau party. This year will be the assisted living center's fourth one organizing it.

"It's a new tradition," Reynolds said. "It's our way to get together with our residents' families." She added that the luau is not as fundraiser, but rather an opportunity for residents to come together and be with family, explaining the luaus include food and raffles.

Schultz said they also install a pretend picture booth so attendees can get pictures of themselves in Hawaii.

Reynolds said the idea

originated from the fact that Montana residents can't go to the beach or swim in the ocean, so why not host a party where you can pretend?

"It's fun," Schultz said. "It's really fun."

Reynolds also said New Horizons will be doing a Smeltermen's day activity where the staff will hand out paper bags with chocolate silver dollars inside, which many New Horizons residents remember happening to them when they were children during Smeltermen's day.

"It really made an impact," Schultz said of the residents' memories.

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Class of 1975: Unity grows between AHS and ACHS

J. RAY HAFEEY
HISTORY LIVES ON

Editor's note: This article is running in conjunction with the Anaconda High School Class of 1975's 50-year reunion, which is taking place this weekend (July 25-26, 2025).

Last year, I reviewed the significant merger of Anaconda High and Anaconda Central during the 1973-74 school year.

Although separate school loyalties were part of the initial transition/merger, the second year went very smoothly due to the desire to make the most of the situation and the determination of a unified student body, quality faculty/administration and staff.

During the second year of the merger, the new Anaconda High School appeared more solidified. The previous rivalries between Anaconda's public and private

schools melted into a new unity. The new "Double-A" status presented a challenge which was met with a unique and stronger school spirit. The '75 "Copperhead Crayons" yearbook said it all. The recognition and symbolism of crayons with different colors were not only non-toxic but were a sign of a new era and a colorful year. While the Class of '75 was not known for getting floats done with expediency, they always got the job done and were very proud of how well their floats and Junior Prom turned out. They really connected during 1974-75 and had a great time.

Even the two iconic "A" and "C" hills on the south side of Anaconda would have a new symbolic identity. Now you could read from left to right or right to left and recognize the letters would always have two options. For example, from left to right, "C" - "A" could be either read Central of Anaconda or Copperheads of Anaconda. For some of us that read from right to left, "A" - "C" it could

read Anaconda Copperheads or Anaconda Central. The common identity would then and now always have a common scenery - "Anaconda." The schools were one.

Every class has its own uniqueness that creates memories with leadership that involve academics and activities. The 1975 "Copperhead Crayon" yearbook was special. The administration was led by Superintendent Michael O'Leary, Principal Elmer Carosone, Vice-Principal Joe Wolpert, with 49 faculty and 17 board/staff members that provided a solid foundation. Interestingly, the yearbook focused on classes that only included sophomores, juniors and seniors. Freshmen attended the Annex, which was the former Anaconda Central building (now Fred Moodry School). The graduating senior class numbered 244. After 50 years, the yearbook picture of the senior class officers needs to be corrected with

See CLASS on page 9

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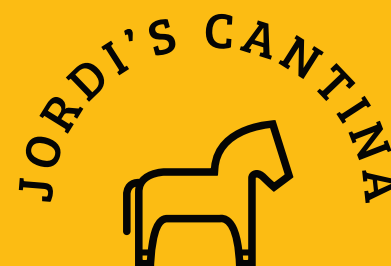
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Drum Majorette Gloria Enloe, **top left**, and Homecoming Queen Marilyn Bennett, **top right**, are pictured in the AHS Class of 1975 yearbook.

CLASS from Page 7

Andy Haffey as President, Vice-President Tim Ohman, Secretary Joanne Oreskovich and Treasurer Rhonda DeHart. The Student Body President was Gene Marcille and Vice-President was Tony Laslovich. The Yearbook Editor was Larry Sladich and Marilyn Bennett was layout editor and photographer. The Copperglow Editor was Scott Holmlund.

Some of the highlights in sports and activities covered on the color full Class of '75 yearbook involve the following:

- Kim Hurley was a state champion in swimming.
- The Head Band Majorette was Gloria Enloe.
- The Drill Team always danced to "Long Cool Woman."
- The Snow Fest Queen was Leslie McGreevy.
- Homecoming Queen was Marilyn Bennett.
- Larry Sladich replicated Tony

Orlando by lip-synching "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" at the Senior Reception.

- Powder Puff King was Tom McGreevy.
- Copper Cadettes co-captains - Lourtes Garcia and Rhonda DeHart.

CLASS concludes on page 10



Above left: Larry Sladich replicating Tony Orlando at the Senior Reception is pictured in the yearbook. **Above right:** Senior class vice president Tim Ohman, president Andy Haffey and secretary Joanne Oreskovich are pictured in the yearbook. (Not pictured: treasurer Rhonda DeHart.) **Lower left:** The 1975 AHS Yearbook's front cover is pictured. Yearbook photos courtesy of J. Ray Haffey.





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CLASS from Page 9

- The Senior-Faculty game score was Seniors 47 - Faculty 43.
- Divisional basketball tournament - Copperheads crushed the Butte Bulldogs 82-54.

Sometimes it is difficult to recognize all of the highlights of a given class. There were many clubs, activities and sport events that were significant during the 1974-75 school year. All of the 244 senior students played a part during that historic year. I know one thing: being an observer and part of the

faculty during that school year was very special and the Class of '75 showed unity and class. They connected and were having a good time with a new school spirit. It was a year to remember!

Author's note: Teaching Government and U. S. History to an awesome student body along with starting a new Gymnastic program with a senior state standout Maureen Wallace was pleasure. Thanks for the memories!



Members of the Anaconda High School Class of 1975 are pictured at their 40-year reunion. Their 50-year reunion is happening this weekend. Courtesy photo.

Smelter City Seniors

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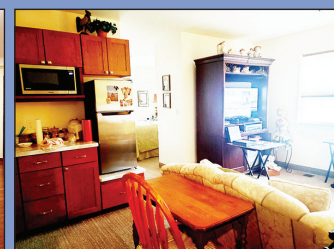
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Senior Spotlight: Voices of the Pintlers



Jane Bing-Craig, left, and Garry Costle perform a duet at the Voices of the Pintlers spring concert. The Voices of the Pintlers, Anaconda's adult ed choir, will be back in the fall – keep an eye out for the announcement of when it will start meeting for choir practice. Leader photo: James S. Rosien

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Metcalf Senior Citizens Center gets a new director – and waves farewell to its bus driver

KASEY EDGE-FAUR
COPY EDITOR

Just as the new director of the Metcalf Senior Citizens Center – also known as the Smelter City Senior Center – is getting her bearings, its bus driver is waving farewell, although only in the sense that he will no longer be a paid employee.

The senior center's new director, Leigha Bates, started on June 30 and has worked in a variety of roles around Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, all dedicated to serving people.

Bates – who's lived in the area since 2005 – started as a Head Start teacher, then started working at a helpline for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault as part of Safe Space, and then, through her volunteer position with the Anaconda Coalition for Tolerance

Education, she heard there was an opening for a director at the senior center and applied.

Although Bates has never worked with the seniors before, she said she's loved the experience so far, and she's hoping that over time, more people will utilize the senior center's services.

"Everyone has been so welcoming and warm and excited," Bates said.

Bates is very passionate about creating more activities for clients to participate in, citing research she's read about doctors actually prescribing activities to seniors because it's been proven to strengthen neural pathways.

"I want to become a social hub for senior citizens from the time we unlock to the time we close," Bates said, adding that she's working on

See METCALF on page 14



Leigha Bates, left, is the new director of the Metcalf Senior Citizens Center, where Bernd Bergmann is the center's bus driver, although that will be wrapping up for him soon as his final day will be Aug. 8. Leader photo: Kasey Edge-Faur



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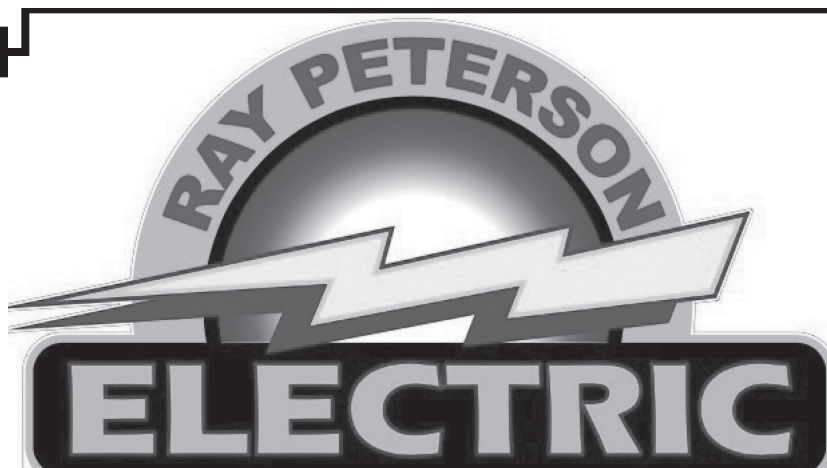
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Top left: The Metcalf Center bus is all decked out for Anaconda's July 4 Parade. **Top right:** Senior center patrons smile as they get ready to ride the bus in the parade. Photos courtesy of Bernd Bergmann. **Above:** A closeup of the Metcalf Center bus in the parade. Leader photo: James S. Rosien

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METCALF from Page 12

getting grant funding to help make that dream a reality.

Although there are some other things Bates would like to improve on, such as creating a website, one thing Bates said she'd like to keep the same is how the employees operate.

"My job is just to support them and get more funds," Bates said. "There's a great community between the people that work here and the clients."

One such employee is Bernd Bergmann, the senior center's bus driver. Although Bergmann just joined the senior center's staff in January, he's grown attached to the seniors who ride his bus.

He volunteered his time on the Fourth of July to drive interested seniors in the parade, which was his idea.

Because of financial constraints and the fact he lives in Butte, Bergmann has taken a position as

a driver at a senior living center there.

That doesn't mean he'll forget his riders in the Smelter City though. Far from it, in fact.

For one thing, he also volunteered to take seniors to Art in Washoe Park that took place this past weekend on his own dime. And he's planning to drive seniors in the parade on Smeltermen's Day as well.

He said that he told his new

employers he would need those two days off, and his employers agreed.

Bergmann, a self-proclaimed "tech nerd," will also be teaching a class that instructs seniors on how to use their smart phones twice a month.

He's also been granted permission to be involved in the hiring process of his successor and help train them.

His last day will be Aug. 8.



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All about the American Legion Auxiliary

KASEY EDGE-FAUR
COPY EDITOR

What is the American Legion Auxiliary?

According to Maureen Watt, a longtime member of the organization, the Auxiliary's purpose is to assist the American Legion with anything it needs.

And for the most part, the biggest way the Auxiliary does this in Anaconda is by hosting bingo nights every Thursday at the American Legion Hall.

To be in the American Legion Auxiliary, one must be a spouse, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter or granddaughter of a veteran who served in the global War on Terror, the Gulf War, Panama, Lebanon/Grenada, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, World War II or other conflicts. The membership application for the American Legion Auxiliary



Anaconda American Legion Post No. 21 Auxiliary members Audrey Parrow, left, Sue Dickerson, Maureen Parrow, Marge Tucker and Maureen Watt stand outside Discover Anaconda's Red Tour Bus as grand marshals in Anaconda's 2025 Fourth of July Parade. (Not pictured: Carol Prescar). Photo courtesy of Maureen Watt.

See AUXILIARY on page 16

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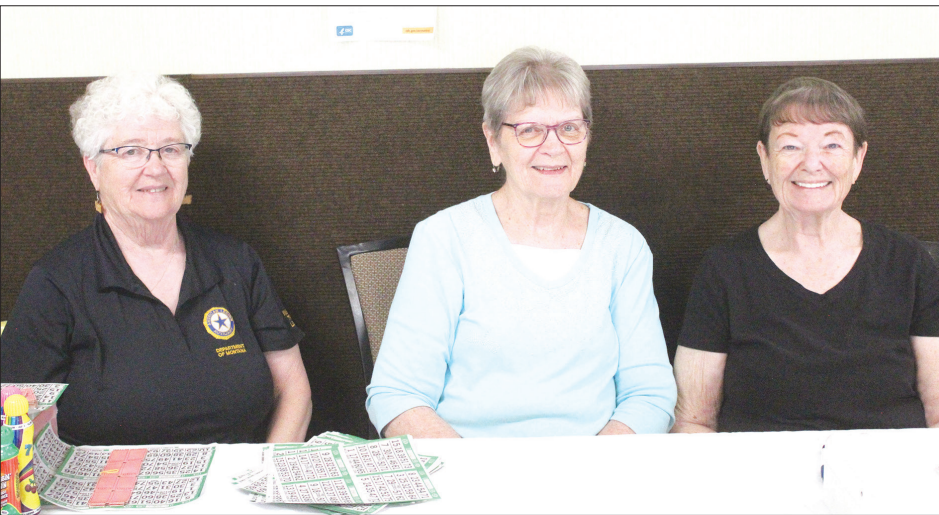
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Anaconda American Legion Post No. 21 Auxiliary members Maureen Watt, left, Maureen Parrow and Marge Tucker get ready to call bingo numbers at a recent bingo night at the Legion Hall. Leader photo: Kasey Edge-Faur

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also lists 'self' as one of the possible relationships to a veteran to check off.

In addition to bingo nights, the Auxiliary also organizes the American Legion's pancake breakfast fundraisers, sponsors students to go to American Legion Girls' State and American Legion Boys' State, which are "immersive, week-long civic leadership programs that teach high school students about government, democracy, and the importance of civic engagement," according to the American Legion Montana website. "These programs empower young leaders through hands-on learning, public service simulations, and leadership development activities," the website states.

This year, a few members of the American Legion Auxiliary also rode in Anaconda's Fourth of July parade.

The American Legion Auxiliary members who were in the parade this year were Watt, Marge Tucker, Sue Dickerson,

Carol Prescar, Audrey Parrow and Maureen Parrow.

Watt, the Parrows and Tucker are also the members that make up the "core group" that helps to host the bingo nights, Watt said.

Watt said the Anaconda American Legion Auxiliary has 26 members, but only eight to 10 of them are local.

The American Legion Auxiliary's mission is to support the American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad, according to the American Legion Auxiliary for the Department of Montana website.

"For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security," the website states.

For more information, visit <https://www.montanaauxiliary.com>.

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