



**American Legion Auxiliary National Convention NEC Report
Susie Bozella, National Executive Committeewoman
Department of Colorado
Minneapolis, Minnesota
September 5, 2018**



The 98th National ALA Convention has just ended. It was, instructive, fun, and inspiring! First, I want to congratulate our own Past Department President, Evelyn Espinola, for serving as the National ALA Chaplain this year. What a wonderful achievement! Evelyn dedicated herself to writing prayers for our organization, making a prayer book for the National president, organizing a monthly conference call, and arranging for the



making of a quilt where each department Chaplain made a square. The quilt was given to the National President, Diane Duscheck. Evelyn, thanks for your dedication.

From August 25th through August 30th, 2018, delegates of the Colorado American Legion Auxiliary participated in the 98th ALA National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. However, it was The American Legion's 100th convention! Delegates, alternates and guests to the national conventions of the Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and The American Legion spent the week in various national commission meetings, committee meetings and their respective conventions where decisions were made on resolutions, leadership election, and other important matters.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Convention began with pre-convention Committee meetings on Saturday. The ten Colorado Auxiliary delegates covered the 24 pre-convention meetings. All delegates were asked to then attend the Constitution & Bylaws meeting and the Northwest Division caucus in the late afternoon. These committee meetings cover any awards given and consider all resolutions which may have been assigned to them. The convention committee chairs are then scheduled to make a report to the national convention body, which is the governing body of the American Legion Auxiliary. The resolutions are voted on by the convention delegation; those that are approved become American Legion Auxiliary policy. This is how our organization operates and thanks to all the Colorado Auxiliary members who attended the convention as delegates, alternates and guests. Also, on Saturday we all attended the Northwest Division Caucus. There we got a membership award for being the Department closest to 100% membership in our Division! Good job, everyone. And, I was proud to announce that Rhonda Larkowski will be our nominee for the Northwest Division Vice President for the years 2019-2020. Congratulations! There are many other events that take place at our national convention which include pre and post-convention NEC meetings, a Memorial service on Sunday morning, a parade of the Departments on Sunday afternoon, various receptions and lunches during the week, the National Commander and National Auxiliary President Banquets and other hospitalities.

On Sunday, after the Memorial service, some of us were able to attend the Sons of the American Legion installation of new officers. Pete Sierminski, from Squadron 32 in Longmont, was elected as a National Vice Commander, Midwestern Region. Congratulations Pete! We know you will continue to serve our veterans, country, and children and youth.



Now, back to the parade. This year, unfortunately, the outdoor parade was moved indoors due to the prediction of a severe



storm. So we paraded

around the convention center! Next, the ALA National Convention was officially opened on Monday morning and we heard from many Committee Chairmen who highlighted achievements from the year. On Monday afternoon, as is our custom at the national conventions, the Four Corner states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah held their annual Four Corners party on Monday afternoon which was attended by more than 1,500 delegates from all American

Legion Family Departments. However, many of our Auxiliary delegates attended training instead on

Monday afternoon. I personally attended two trainings: ALA Foundation training, and Servant Leadership Workshop. Both presentations were helpful. At the NEC training we were again reminded that each NEC is a member of the governing board of the ALA which is the same as being a corporate

director and are accountable for the safekeeping, wellbeing, and actions of the corporation. As such, I will continue to strive to be a responsible NEC for the Department of Colorado.



On Tuesday, we attended the Woman of the Year Luncheon honoring Liz Mackey who has served as the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Director since 2000. Liz truly exemplifies the values and ideals of the

American Legion Auxiliary. Also, on Tuesday was the Salute to Servicewoman Award where five women were recognized for outstanding service in each military branch.

On Wednesday, the convention delegation elected Kathy Dungan from the Department of Mississippi as the American Legion Auxiliary National President for 2018-2019. See the National ALA website for more information. www.alaforveterans.org Also, Laurie Kuntz was installed as the Department of Colorado President. Congratulations Laurie!

President Laurie Kuntz



Later on Wednesday, the National Membership Chairman, Donna Ray, recognized members of Broomfield Colorado Unit 58 and Edgewater Unit 17 for helping to pay the ALA dues for hurricane-stricken Puerto-Rico and U.S. Virgin Island units. By paying the dues of their "sister" ALA members, they made sure that these members were current and eligible to apply for Auxiliary Emergency Fund grants. Thank you for helping those in need!



Pilar Bottoms, Pat Steranka, Tooty Newborn, Laurie Kuntz, Kathy Barger, Evelyn Espinola, Ann Ritacco, Jackie Bowen, Adrianna Huggins, Rhonda Larkowski, Susie Bozella



Rhonda, Ann, and Bettina Kossow

Colorado delegates

The NEC, National Executive Committee, met pre and post-convention.

- At the Pre-Convention meeting the NEC approved the cancellation of 114 units across the country and approved 17 new charters and 9 reinstated charters. We now have 8,351 ALA units. In Colorado we lost Unit 183, Jesse Yaich and Unit 201, Calhan.
- The NEC approved a resolution to posthumously recognize Dr. Hielscher, a trailblazing ALA founder.
- The NEC passed a motion to adopt a standard procedure to adjust pay ranges annually for the ALA HQ staff.
- The NEC did not approve a motion to change the mid-year conference back to Washington D.C. and thus it will remain in Indianapolis.
- The NEC adopted the ALA Foundation FY19 budget as presented.
- The NEC adopted the ALA FY19 national budget as presented.

The new American Legion Judge Advocate, Kevin Bartlett, spoke to the NEC. He basically said:

- ❖ Only a unit can remove a member. Must be done with due process.
- ❖ The DEC can remove a member from her elected office or chairmanship, but cannot take her membership. Again, this must be done with due process.

Post NEC Meeting, Thursday, August 30, 2018.

- The NEC passed a resolution to support the U.S. VETS project “Women Vets on Point” by encouraging departments and units to learn and assist in improving mental health issues affecting women veterans.
- The NEC passed a resolution with amendment that changes the make-up of the National Executive Committee to the National President, National Vice President, National Secretary and National Treasurer, (both have voice but no vote), five Division Vice Presidents, and two NEC’s (appointed by the President.)

- The NEC approved the National President appointments plus elected members and officers of the ALA Foundation board of Directors.



IMPORTANT NEWS:

At the States dinner on Wednesday, the Auxiliary was shocked when our National Secretary, Dubbie Buckler, announced her retirement in two weeks. This was really unexpected news for most of us there. I have known Dubbie for 10 years and have grown to respect and admire her. She will be greatly missed by this organization for her expertise, command of our governing documents, and her dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary. I wish her the very best in the future.

As the National Executive Committeewoman for Colorado, I am honored to serve our organization. It was an educational experience where we all learned a lot, met many people, and walked miles in the huge convention center. Also, we were provided with training, heard inspirational speakers, and participated in the election of our ALA national officers.

Thank you all again for your dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary and your commitment to veterans, children, and our communities! I am so proud of the Auxiliary members in Colorado at every level and I do appreciate each member's efforts. Congratulations to the entire Colorado Legion Family delegation for a great convention. And let us all keep working for God, country, and our veterans.

*Susie Bozella
American Legion Auxiliary
National Executive Committeewoman
Department of Colorado
2017-2019*

*Tina Cooper (left in red)
was not in last photo*

