



American Legion Auxiliary Department of Colorado

Monthly News Letter

October 2018



Message from President Laurie Kuntz

It is time that we all emerge as leaders and put our mission for veterans and our organization first. At National Convention, the American Legion Judge Advocate, Kevin Bartlett, said that we belong to an organization with rules. There are times that people may disagree with the rules but they must still be followed. Our rules are the ALA Department of Colorado Constitution and By-Laws. We make a commitment when we become an ALA member to follow our rules and publicly support them.

How do we handle a member or members who are breaking the rules? The unit must discipline its members, the department cannot. The Department can be consulted and offer advice. The department cannot discipline a unit for the actions of a member.

One way to reestablish civility in this department is to start to refocus on our mission. We can have disagreements without hateful words. This is an amazing organization formed to serve our veterans, children and youth, and communities. Let us foster good will and find the best in others.

My Dad raised me to believe that people have good days and bad days. We also learned to turn the other cheek. Think before you speak. "Is this for the greater good of the organization?" Think before you email. "Is this for the greater good of the organization? Am I honoring the veteran that I joined this organization to honor?" Let us all work together and focus on our mission.

Thank you for your PASSION!!



Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
1700 North Wheeling Street, Aurora CO 80045

VA Christmas Gift Shop

Special Message from Theresa Brandt, VA&R Chairman:

- ◆ The American Legion Auxiliary Annual VA Gift Shop is scheduled for Sunday December 16th, 2018 starting at 1:00pm to 3:00pm.
- ◆ We need members to come and visit with our hospitalized veterans and also distribute coupons to them for the canteen.

This is a wonderful time to show our support and our love for these veterans! We will meet by the coffee shop near the north parking lot. A map will be sent out the first week in December to clarify our meeting place.

Because this is so important, I am asking you to contact me directly if you are planning on attending. Visit the [Service to Veterans \(VA&R\) web page](#) and use the contact form to send me an email, or you can get my email address that was included in the blast from Department.

Please send in your Gift Shop donations by October 30th

What a difference we could make in the lives of these hospitalized veterans.

Veterans in need! We can help.



Service to Veterans - VA&R
Theresa Brandt, Chairman 2018-19

On Saturday September 15, 2018 the All Patients Day was held in Pueblo. This was part of the planned stops for the National President Kathy Dungan. I am sure it was a great success. I was unable to attend as I was filling in for Laurie at a Fall Conference in Yampa, Co while she was hosting the National President.

On Sunday September 16, 2018 the Colorado's Women Veteran Summit was held at Post 38 in Colorado Springs. This was a VA&R workshop with an emphasize on women veterans. I was unable to attend, but I heard that it was a huge success. Carol Donsbach, VHA ECHCS Women Veteran Coordinator, Stacy Vowels, VBA Women's Women's Veteran Coordinator, Victoria Scafuto, VHA ECHCS Homeless Supervisor, and Jessica LaBudda, VHA Vet Center, Outreach Program Supervisor talked about what they are doing now to help women veterans.

Deborah Kenny, UCCS Associate Professor/Community Partners and Panel Members talked about what the needs are and how we can help.

Kim Hoge VHA ECHCS Regional Manager talked about Opportunities for Success, How to Achieve and Exceed, and gave an Action Plan Presentation.

At the close of the meeting the American Legion Auxiliary National President, Kathy Dungan, gave some closing remarks.

LAYING THE BRICKS FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR WOMEN VETERANS.

On Friday October 12, 2018 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora, CO a celebration will be held for the participants and winners of the national phase of the 2018 National Veterans Creative Arts competition. If you can, go and support our creative veterans.

It is that time of year to get your donations in for the various VA hospitals and Veteran Community Living Centers so those donations can be presented to them in December.

Since World War I, the women of the American Legion Auxiliary have taken an active role in the care and rehabilitation of veterans. These early efforts, however, were largely uncoordinated and not integrated into a formal healthcare plan or program. It wasn't until 1930 that care and rehabilitation for veterans were integrated under a unified Veterans Affairs program similar to what we know today.

Committee Highlights



President Elect 2018-2019
Tracy Trujillo

Hello, Ladies!

The 2018-2019 Auxiliary year will be one filled with PASSION! My question to every member is: what Auxiliary mission/project/event are you passionate about? Is it VA&R? Is it Girls State? Or, is it something your Unit does in your community? Is it your work with your Legionnaires? What EXCITES you about the American Legion Auxiliary? Whatever you are passionate about TELL prospect members. PASSION is contagious!

As the Fall Conferences begin, show us your PASSION! Tell us what you are passionate about and share with us your success stories. Our success depends on your PASSION! I am looking forward to the Fall Conference and learning about your PASSION!



Department Secretary
Rhonda Larkowski

I'm so excited! When I pulled my online report for September 12th through the 25th it showed that **48** of you have renewed online!

Please spread the word on how easy it is to renew online. It's easier for all of us here too. If you're the membership chairman of a unit where members have paid these last two weeks you'll be getting a credit memo from me soon.

Read more about renewing online in Evelyn's message about Membership further down in the Newsletter.



Membership Committee

Pat Steranka, Representative for Districts 11 & 12

Remember Thomas The Tank Engine when he was pulling the entire circus train up the mountain and said "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can", well, that is where we are at this time. "We think we can" get to the goals that we set for membership. Those goals are on the weekly membership spreadsheet. Note the total that was at the end of 2017-2018 and the new goal for 2018-2019. We can top that mountain with "I knew I could, I knew I could, I knew I could" if only we remember our mission as stated in our Preamble. All the little day to day squabbles and issues that come up are just that, something to get beyond and forget about. Our mission is as stated in the Preamble and that is our real goal.

Membership is the base upon which our organization runs. Without membership, we can do nothing, but with a spirit of cooperation with all the organizations within our family, we can do great things. When outsiders see the great things we do, they will want to be a part of it, so spread the word.

Note, also, on the weekly spreadsheet that there is a competition going on. Our membership team will provide a gift certificate to Units recruiting 10 new members by December 31. If the Unit recruits 20 new members, we will come to your Unit and fix you a meal and If the spirit really moves your Unit and you recruit 50 new members, the Department Officers will come to your unit and fix your unit a meal. How great is that. The challenge is on and we are looking forward to coming to your Unit. On January 1st, the contest begins again, so you have two opportunities to win. We are also searching for the Top Recruiter of the Year and the Top Recruiting Unit of the Year and there will be an award for that.

Another new item on the spreadsheet is that you now have a membership committee person to help you with your membership. That is listed with each of the districts. Use that person. The membership team has committed to coming to their assigned units and helping you in any way you feel would improve your membership status, so use them.

While you are recruiting new members, don't forget to call your members who have not renewed and encourage them to rejoin. Another great idea to let your members know that you care that they are members is to send out the sheet with all the benefits of our organization and maybe even include it in a birthday card or a "thinking of you card" if the member didn't tell their birthday Thank your members It doesn't take long to jot down a thank you for their great work on a special project. Everyone wants to get thanked occasionally and recognized for doing a good job.

Think positive. This is going to be a great year.



Permanent Membership

Roberta Morrow, Chairman 2018-19

As you know, National raised their dues and so it is affecting the amount of money in reserve for the paying of the permanent member's dues. With just less than 500 members it costs the Department over \$5500. After this year there will only be enough money to pay for around three years.

We know that every year we are losing some of our members to death but we have a couple permanent members who are still juniors. Please check that all your permanent members are still alive by calling them or sending them a card or note. When the money runs out the Department will have to cover the dues for these members.

Please help out by donating any amount of money, even a dollar for every member would pay for a year's dues. But what if National raises their dues again, we need to think of the future of our organization.

Please plan a fund raiser and donate the profit to the Department and earmark it for permanent membership, skip that extra lunch out or not have the extra beer tonight.



Memership

Evelyn Espinola, Chairman 2018-19

Welcome to our new Unit 82 in Elizabeth, Colorado and New in Delta, Colorado. If there's anything we can do just asked we're here to help. The following information is from National, I hope that this will help.

Message from National on membership.

Did you renew your membership online? Here are some helpful tips on receiving your signed card from your unit. After paying online, you will receive a receipt and membership card attachment that you can print via email. To expedite receiving your signed membership card, you can take the printed card and receipt to your unit to show that you have renewed. The unit membership chairman will give you your signed card that is provided to the unit from ALA National Headquarters.

Important notice to units! It is important the unit membership chairman provide the signed membership card to the member as soon as proof of renewal is provided. Payment for the renewed member may not yet be received by the unit from their department; however, it is important that the chairman provide the signed membership card as soon as possible as a goodwill gesture to the member. Many times, the unit does not want to accept the paper email, and this is not fair to the member who paid her dues. Units with ALAMIS access have the ability to pull a "Unit Dues Paid Online" report at any time to see which members in their unit have renewed either online or over the phone.

Please do not hang onto membership, turn them in right away. Doesn't matter if it's only one or two turn them in as soon as possible.

The next information is from Regina Whipple, Past National Membership Northwestern Division.

Maybe we need to go back to the basics. Work together with your American Legion post. Ask them for a list of their membership. Once you get that list, form a committee and go through the list and ask these basic questions:

1. Does this Legionnaire have a wife, daughter, granddaughter, mother, or sister?
2. Are there female Legionnaires that might be interested in also being involved with the Auxiliary?

Imagine if each Legionnaire had just one of his or her female relatives join the Auxiliary....we'd double our membership in a short time! Every time I read the obituaries and see that a person was a veteran, I wonder if they and their wives, sisters, daughters, or mothers knew about our great Legion Family.

Just as important as finding new members is improving their experience so we can keep them. They may be bursting with new ideas or different ways to do things. Listen to them. Too often a new member is told, "that is not how we do it here" or "we tried that and it didn't work." Statements such as these will turn an enthusiastic and *valuable* new member away. After being a member for a year in my unit, my name was mentioned as a potential candidate for unit president, but some said, "oh, she is too new!" There are no rules or restrictions about how long a person has to be a member to serve in *any* position (even national level positions). Willingness and enthusiasm, along with some basic organizational skills, is all that is required for most unit leadership roles. I did become unit president my first year and shook things up a bit...and eventually went on to district, department, and national levels of our organization. Let's welcome and invite fresh new faces and ideas and be open to *everyone* that wants to be a part of our organization in whatever capacity they are capable of or interested in.

Those were very wise words, and very helpful.

Many of us have done exactly as Regina, we became a member and by our first year we were President and on our way through the chairs, myself included. It doesn't matter if someone is not eligible but they want to help, don't turn them away invite them to help because those friends just may know someone that is eligible and they can send them your way.

ALA membership has been declining according to National it's down 13% in the past 5. It's a volunteer competition out there with other organizations, this is why it is so important we show those potential members and our new members **Why We Matter**. We need everyone's help in maintaining and building our organization up. Remember Your Why, and Ignite that Passion You have for Our Organization. Maybe you have ideas that other Units can use, if so please share.

Let's Ignite Membership!

PR Committee - Social Media

Are you a chairman and not sure what you need for your web page. The [Chairman's Web form](#) will help. Click [here](#) to download the form or you can find it on the [Committees and Chairmen](#) page. Also available on the [Committees and Chairmen](#) is a [How To Guide](#) for chairmen - all the basics to use your web page and submit articles for the newsletter.

Email Preferences

Thanks to everyone who has updated their email preferences. We had over 100 members read our August newsletter and our hope is to increase that each month. Please share with your unit members how they can either sign up for our newsletter or read it online.

You now have several ways to add and/or update your email preferences:

- ♦ At the bottom of this email you can click on "update your preferences" which will open a form with whatever we currently have on file for you. Update and save.
- ♦ At the bottom of this email click "unsubscribe" and that will remove you from our email list.
- ♦ Visit our [What's New](#) web page where we have added a link to this email list. You can also find the link on our [Publications](#) page.
- ♦ Visit Facebook. In the left hand side of the page are a list of tabs. At the bottom is "Email Preference Form"

Don't want anymore email, go to our [Publications](#) page where you can read the current and any past newsletter.

We want to put you in control of what you receive from us!

Tech Corner

Have a question about your computer, a piece of software, your Facebook page or how to build your own web page for your unit or district. Trying to figure out how to fill in that online form or you just need some help building a document. Now you have a place to ask that question - check out our [Technology page](#).



Veteran Passionate

This newsletter is also available on Twitter and our Facebook page.