



American Legion Auxiliary
Department of California
District 28

Minutes
Regular Meeting
January 22, 2023

A regular meeting of the District 28 Auxiliary was called to order by President Esther Le Pore (69) at 9:10 AM on Sunday, January 22, 2023 at the Veterans Memorial Building in Hollister, CA. Several members attended via Zoom as well. Rituals were recited.

Eleven officers, fifteen chairmen, seven Past District Presidents and seven Unit presidents answered roll call.

The minutes of the November 20, 2022, meeting were approved as emailed.

There were no **Communications**.

Treasurer Sherryl Panek (694) read her report for the period November-December 2022, noting that all units had now paid their District assessments; the General Fund ledger balance was 8,325.41 and the Welfare Fund ledger balance was \$5,413.11. Income for the period totaled \$1,529.50; expenditures for the period totaled \$644.42. The District 28 checkbook balance on 12/31/22 was \$13,738.54.

Membership Chair Rebecca Glenny (694) was excused from the meeting and Susan Baker read the Membership report. Rebecca advised that the District was in 12th place within the Department and that Units 41 and 512 had already met their membership goals. Units 31, 589, and 591 were over 84% of goal, and Units 593 and 694 were just at 62% of goal. Members were encouraged to think about “why” they joined the Auxiliary and “why” they remain as members. Members were also urged to contact members who have not yet paid for 2023 and let them know how much their membership is valued, and encourage them to remain in our great organization. Percentage Award certificates received at the DEC Membership Payoff Party were distributed to Units 31, 41, 69, 81, 512, and 591.

Poppy Chair Kimberly Stuhler (41) advised that Poppy Day is May 26th and she hoped that Units have started planning appropriate activities and events for this program. Great ideas can be found on numerous social media sites and everyone was encouraged to browse for inspiration.

Chaplain Connie Raya (694) reported that she sent four Get Well cards and five Sympathy cards to members around the State. She asked that we keep our active duty service members and their families in our prayers, and please remember that Auxiliary members come from all faiths and cultures and we should be respectful of the diversity. Connie provided instructions to create a Chaplain’s Prayer Book.



Historian Lisa Casarez (69) shared the bulletin board she made to showcase the events that President Esther attended since the November meeting, including official visits to Units 41 and 694, participation in the Salinas Veterans Day Parade and the Blue Star Moms care packaging event, and Department Executive Committee meeting.

Americanism Chair Liz Doidge (593) thanked those Unit chairs who provided mid-year reports. She noted that Unit 589 members gave out 2,040 flags to viewers at the Salinas Veterans Day Parade. Titles for the 2023-24 Americanism Essay Contest are as follows; **Remember – these are the titles for NEXT year:**

- Group 1 Grades 4-5: Why do we honor the flag?
- Group 2 Grades 6-7: Why is voting important?
- Group 3 Grades 8-9: Who is responsible to keep our country safe?
- Group 4 Grades 10, 11, 12: Is service to our country important?
- Group 5 Special Needs: How should the flag be properly disposed?

Liz reminded Unit Chairs of the deadlines for 2022-23:

- March 6 – Unit chair picks essays up from participating schools
- March 20 – Units forward 1st place winner only in each group to the District Chair for judging
- April 10 – District Chairs forwards winner only in each group to the Department Chair for judging.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chair Deniece Clay (694) attended via Zoom, but due to internet/wifi difficulties her report was shared by Susan Baker. In it, Deniece thanked the Unit Chairs who submitted mid-year reports for AEF, and she asked all Units to continue their work in this program. The AEF collection box was passed among members who donated at total of \$91.30 for the program.

Children and Youth Chair Sondra Castillo (81) reported that many Units held holiday parties for children and youth in their communities – including Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Years. She asked that we now focus on Children and Youth Month, which is April. Sondra is finalizing her Purple Up! T=Shirt Fundraiser and will soon have ordering information available.

Community Service Chair Esther Le Pore (69) noted that she received mid-year reports from four Unit chairmen, and she recapped some of the activities reported. All members are encouraged to participate in events and activities within their communities, and be sure to wear an Auxiliary pin or apparel to promote our organization.

Constitution and Bylaws Chair Ruby Kapsalis (591) had no news for this program.

Education Chair Molly Smith (589) reported that many D28 units have been actively promoting the Education program this year. Several Units focused on Give Ten to Education projects which resulted in school supply donations totaling \$4,540. Molly advised that there was \$1,620.71 in the District 28



Scholarship Fund, and there was also \$365.00 in the PPP Scholarship Fund, thanks to donations received from District Commander Lois Flint and the District 28 American Legion Riders.

Girls State Chair Linda Lara-Guzman (81) gave her report, noting that she had attended two Zoom meetings since our last District meeting. Members were advised that it was not too late for a Unit to add another school if there was a need. Online candidate applications would be available starting February 1, 2023 and the deadline for selecting the Delegate and 1st and 2nd Alternates is March 15, 2023. All fees for Girls State are due April 15th. Registration fee is \$75 and enrollment fee is \$350 (total \$425) and does not include transportation, which will be determined later. Units need to send one transmittal form to the Department Processing Center in Pasadena. Anyone having questions re the Boys State/Girls State co-ed program should be referred to their local Legion Post. Candidates applying for Girls State need to understand that the application is for the Auxiliary program only – not the co-ed program. Units are asked to provide Linda with the names and contact information of their Delegates and Alternates when the selection process has been completed.

Junior Activities Chair Rebecca Glenny (694) was absent and no report was given for this program.

Leadership Chair Robin Falkenberg (512) reminded members that a culture of good will is essential if the Auxiliary is to survive and being respectful and treating each other with dignity must be practiced daily. Robin advised that she is looking to hold a mini workshop sometime in March that will focus on supplemental report writing. Details are forthcoming.

Legislative Chair Kimberly Stuhler (41) provided members with a list of veteran related legislation currently in Congress, and she encouraged all to write their Congressional legislators to urge their passage: **HR 2916** – VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2021; **HR 5073** – REACH for Veterans Act; **HR 256** – To repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002; **HR 239** – Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act; HR 7946 Veteran Service Recognition Act of 2022; **HR 3730** – To amend Title 38, United States Code to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs an Advisory Committee on United States Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States, and for other purposes; **HR 3967** – Honoring our PACT Act of 2021; SB 1863 – Guaranteeing Healthcare Access to Personnel Who Served Act; **HR 1836** – Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021; **HR 4112** – To amend Title 4, United States Code to reflect contemporary customs and practices with respect to the flag, and for other purposes. Members were again encouraged to register online for legislative action alerts at www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Bills.

Music Chair Angela Prak (69) was absent and no report was given.

National Security Chair Linda Lara-Guzman (81) shared with members some of the ways to participate in National Security, including wearing red (Remember Everyone Deployed) on Fridays, conducting a POW/MIA Ceremony at their Post, presenting Blue Star and/or Gold Star banners, donating to food



pantries that serve veterans, contributing goods or monies to the Monterey County Blue Star Moms for their Military Care Package events, and by donating blood.

Parliamentarian Michelle Soares (694) had nothing to report.

Past Presidents Parley Chair Molly Smith (589) advised that several Units are promoting the PPP Scholarship through the counseling offices at local high schools, colleges and CSUMB. The next District 28 PPP meeting will be Sunday, April 2, 2023, Post 694 at 1:30 PM. All Past District and Unit Presidents and outgoing Unit Presidents are invited to attend.

Public Relations Chair Angela Matas-Gay (69) advised that the latest PR bulletin from Department Chair Donna Smith was in Unit packets. The Public Relations Facebook page focuses on the great work done by ALA members, and everyone is encouraged to share their stories and photos there. Go to www.facebook.com/groups/ALApublicrelations.

Resolutions Chair Ruby Kapsalis (591) had nothing to report for Resolutions.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Chair Robin Falkenberg (512) asked that member continue to document their time, hours, dollars, and donations, and report the information in the VA&R end-of-year Unit report. Units holding events or fundraisers for VA&R are asked to send Robin photos so she can forward them to the Department Historian for inclusion in the 2023 History Book. Robin advised that a new non-profit-Monterey County Veterans Standdown group has been formed and she will be providing more information about it at the March District 28 meeting.

VA Hospital Representative Connie Raya (694) advised that National Western Division Vice President Eva Wallace was a guest at the Department Executive Committee VA&R Reps and Deps meeting. Connie reported that eight D28 Units provided Christmas gifts for the Palo Alto VA Spinal Cord Ward, and Unit 589 donated gifts to the Defenders Lodge. Menlo Park VA CLC Building 360 also received holiday gifts from Unit 31 (monetary) and Unit 593 (Coupon Books). Total value of the 1,822 items donated to these facilities was \$6,626.07. Units were provided with the current VA Donation Valuation list (no change since 2020-2021) and the Patients Needs List for the Palo Alto VA. Connie made a \$50 donation to the District VA&R program, \$50 to the District 28 D&M Fund, and a \$20 donation to the District Education program.

President Esther Le Pore (69) reported that since the November meeting she had her official visit with Unit 694, organized a "Clothes for Cash" event to raise funds for Girls State, and attended DEC in Orange County and surrendered the Charter for Unit 121. Esther acknowledged the District 28 members who have Department chairmanships or serve as a Department officer and commented on their professionalism. Esther also encouraged all members to participate in the D28 Education Fundraiser.



American Legion Riders District 28 Members Lee Ann Gilman and Linda Schroeder gave a brief presentation on the **District 28 ALR Suicide Awareness Run** to be held on Saturday, February 25th, 2023 at Post 593. In addition to the Run, there will be a barbecue lunch (\$20 donation), gift baskets and 50/50 raffle, and dancing. All D28 Auxiliary members were invited to attend, and if possible to provide gift baskets for the event.

Unit Reports were heard from representatives of 31, 41, 69, 81, 512, 589, 591, 593, and 694.

Unfinished Business:

- Education Chair Molly Smith provided an update on the Scholarship Fundraiser scheduled for February 18th at Post 694. She asked Units to donate gift baskets and desserts and advised that anyone needing tickets should contact her.
- Madame President Esther advised that her official visit with Unit 589 has been scheduled and the date for her visit with Unit 31 is to be announced.
- Members again discussed plans for the Department President's official visit, scheduled for Sunday, March 26, 2023, 9:00 AM, Post 694. Details will be emailed to members as plans become finalized.

New Business:

- Discussion was held on a possible District 28 donation for the 2023 Visalia Convention Swag Bags. Units were asked to speak with their members re the possibility of making Unit donations since the Units elect their delegates – not the District. District members will revisit this matter at the March meeting.
- Molly Smith (589) advised that Selena Miranda has been undergoing rigorous chemo and radiation therapy for a very rare form of cancer and she is doing better. Molly would like the District to do a fundraiser to help cover the cost of Selena's medical bills as Selena does not have medical insurance. Molly will research possible fundraising ideas and report back.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

The next District 28 meeting will be held on Sunday, March 26, 2023, 9 AM, Post 694.

Susan Baker, Secretary
ALA District 28