



American Legion Auxiliary
Department of California
District 28

Minutes
Regular Meeting
January 23, 2022

The District 28 meeting was called to order by President Elizabeth Doidge (593) at 9:05 AM on Sunday, January 23, 2022 at the Hollister Post 69 Annex, and via Zoom. Rituals were recited.

On behalf of the District 28 Auxiliary, Distinguished Guest Chair Sophie Grant (69) acknowledged guests, including District 28 Commander Paul Guzman and Past Post 26 Commander David Graham. Department President Dee Ann Graham was introduced and seated at the head table. Sophie also acknowledged Department Secretary Liz Doidge, Department Education Chair Robin Falkenberg, Department Membership Chair Susan Baker, and Department VA&R Hospital Representative for Palo Alto/Menlo Park Connie Raya.

Commander Guzman brought greetings from the District 28 Legion and welcomed the Department President and her husband.

Fourteen officers, seventeen chairmen, and three Unit presidents answered roll call.

On a motion by Robin Falkenberg members voted to dispense with the reading of the November 21, 2021 minutes, MSC. The minutes were approved as distributed to the members.

Secretary Susan Baker (694) thanked the officers, chairmen, and Unit presidents for emailing their respective reports to her in a timely manner.

Treasurer Sherryl Panek (694) gave the Treasurer's report, noting that she wrote a \$600 check to Connie Raya from the D&M fund to purchase gift cards for Palo Alto/Menlo Park VA-Christmas; a \$20 check to the Secretary of State for the raffle filing fee; a \$5 replacement check to Unit 591 for the lost program Award; a \$823.99 reimbursement check to Karol Adams for Project Hero supplies; and a \$350 check to UC Merced to cover spring tuition for Elana Glenny. Sherryl reported District 28 income in the amount of \$387.71 and expenses totaling \$1,193.99, and advised that the \$180 due to the District from the Rally Up basket is forthcoming, and the District Assessment/Per Capita from Units 69, 512, and 121 remain outstanding, and she sent reminders to each of those units on January 18, 2022. The current Chase checkbook balance is \$12,617.94.

Membership Chair Esther LePore (69) reported that shortly after February 1st, National will be mailing delinquency notices to all members who did not renew their dues by January 31st, and Units should now be actively contacting their unpaid members and urging them to renew. She thanked the five units who sent their mid-year Membership reports to her. Esther also acknowledged Monterey Cypress Unit 694 for including a supplemental, and thanked Salinas Unit 31 for sending her copies of their dues transmittals.

Esther then presented the Membership certificates given at the Department Executive Committee Membership Awards Party on January 14th. "Hang Loose" Certificates were earned by Units reaching 35% of Goal by October 31st, including Carmel Unit 512, Seaside Unit 591, Prunedale Unit 593, Cecil M. Anderson Unit 589, Monterey Cypress Unit 694, and the District 28 Auxiliary. Units receiving "Take-Off" Certificates – those Units reaching 75% of Goal by November 11th – included Monterey Peninsula Unit 41 and Carmel Unit 512. Additionally, Monterey Peninsula Unit 41 received a "Perfect 10" Award Certificate for reaching Goal by December 31st.

Poppy Chair Rebecca Glenn (694) reminded members that Department is still looking for Poppy makers, and Districts are asked to consider helping to make poppies for next year. She would like District 28 to be involved in that process. There is no cost to the District as all of the supplies are provided by Department. Rebecca encouraged Units to begin their plans for Poppy Month now, and gave some ideas on how to generate income for the Poppy program.

Chaplain Connie Raya (694) asked Kimberly Stuhler of Monterey Peninsula Unit 41 to update members on President Patti Velten, who was recently hospitalized with COPD and COVID. Kim reported that Patti is doing much better but will remain in ICU for several more days before being moved to a private room at CHOMP. Members also learned that Past D28 Commander, John Tomkinson, is very ill, and calls to him are most welcome. Members wishing to visit John should call beforehand to make sure he is up to it.

Connie reported that since the November District meeting she had sent Get Well (1), Thinking of You (1), and Sympathy cards (2) to Auxiliary members around the State. It was noted that Past Department ALR President Rey Ruiz recently passed away.

President Liz Doidge gave the **Historian** report, noting that National has asked Districts and Units to promote the Member Remember History Project, in which long-time members are asked to highlight their years in the Auxiliary by sharing stories of their time in the organization. Key points include asking about their eligibility and how many generations of their family have been members of the American Legion Family. Make a video and take pictures of the interview.

Districts and Units are also being asked to continue with the Veteran's History Project, which entails interviewing a Veteran and submitting their story to the permanent collection housed in the Library of Congress. This project's mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans, and better understand the realities of war.

President Doidge also gave the **Americanism** report, advising that Emblem Sales has a postcard that can be mailed to businesses or homes which lets people know when it is time to replace their worn flags, and advised that such flags can be taken to a local American Legion Post for proper disposal. Members were also encouraged to check out the American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program Facebook group for more ideas on how to promote Americanism within the unit or community. Units sponsoring the Americanism Essay Contest were asked to send Liz the winning entries in each Group so that she can, in turn, send them to the Department Americanism Chair on time. Also, flags for the Flying Flags for Heroes Project are still available; members were asked to see Liz after the meeting for additional flags.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) Chair Susan Baker (694) asked all Units to donate to the AEF fund, and her collection companion “Lovely Lulu” circulated through the assembly to collect everyone’s spare change. Total amount collected for AEF National was \$66.60. Susan also shared information on three National AEF awards being offered this year: 1) The Unit Award, given to the Unit contributing the largest amount (per capita) by June 1, 2022; 2) A Department Award, given to the Department making the largest contribution by June 1st; 3) A Department Award, given to the Department contributing the largest amount (per capita) by June 1st.

Children and Youth Chair Sondra Castillo (81) reported that she is working on a project with the Public Affairs Officer for the Naval Support Activity Department in Monterey (NSAD), to provide gifts to military BRATS for the Month of the Military Child. NSAD will be responsible for identifying and signing up eligible children to receive the goodie bags to be provided by District 28. Plans for the event will be finalized at the March D28 meeting. Sondra is also asking Units to once again make ‘thank-you for your service’ cards similar to the ones we created last year, to send to the Air Force BRATS in England. Cards can be delivered to Sondra at the March D28 meeting.

Community Service currently has no chair; no report was given.

Constitution and Bylaws Chair Ruby Kapsalis (591) reminded members that when making changes to the Unit or District Model Bylaws no words should be added to the existing models. Only the blank spaces in the Model Bylaws can be filled in. Any changes that need to be made to the template will be done by Department at Convention.

Distinguished Guests - Sophie Grant (69) had no report.

Education Chair Molly Smith (589) informed members that she received five mid-year reports. Units reported a total of \$88.59 for ‘Give Ten’ items; the Department Education program received \$125. Also, District 28 received Education donations totaling \$195.00.

Girls State Chair Linda Lara-Guzman (81) reported that she continues to attend the monthly Girls State Zoom meetings, and has learned a great deal about the program through her participation. At this time it appears that the event will be held at either UC Davis or Sacramento State University, although no contract has yet been signed. Tentative dates are June 27-July2, 2022. In the event no contract is signed the event will again be virtual. Linda shared information on Girls State delegate changes for 2022-23, which include having only one

delegate per high school. Boys State delegates will also be limited to one per school. More information on this is forthcoming.

Junior Activities Chair Rebecca Glenny (694) informed members that the 2022 Junior Conference will be held in Sanger, CA, April 22-24, and the deadline to register has been extended to March 15th at 5 PM, as to date only one Junior member is registered for the Conference. On a motion by Rebecca Glenny members unanimously approved payment of the registration fee of \$125 for Junior member Hailey Doidge (593) to attend the Conference. MSC. Units were encouraged to purchase Junior Conference tickets in support of this self-funded program, which desperately needs our support. Please see Rebecca for tickets.

Leadership Chair Robin Falkenberg (512) reported she hopes to offer a District 28 Leadership training in the spring. The format will be similar to the DEC program fair. Chairmen will be asked to create a display which highlights their program. Each Chair will then make short presentations on their programs to the whole group. Please contact Robin directly if your unit would like to host this event.

Legislative Chair Kimberly Stuhler (41) updated members on current veteran related legislation, and provided a list of bills affecting veterans, which are supported by the American Legion. Kimberly noted that interested members should contact her for assistance in connecting to legislative websites. Individuals can visit www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Bills to sign up for legislative alerts.

Music Chair Robin Falkenberg (512) reviewed the correct protocol to use when the National Anthem is played and the flag is (or is not) displayed. Members are encouraged to include music in their meetings, even when they are virtual.

National Security Chair Connie Raya (694) reported that several southern California units collaborated on a project to assemble Emergency Disaster Backpacks for distribution to those in need. Additionally, Connie provided handouts on earthquake preparedness entitled "Tips for Preparing Children", "Tips for the Elderly", and "Tips for Pet Owners."

Parliamentarian Robin Falkenberg shared that during DEC she learned a number of units were surrendering their charters because the contentious behavior among members had become so bad that members quit, rather than trying to fix the problems. Robin reminded members that while we do not have to like each other all the time and it is okay to disagree, we cannot allow it to stand in the way of our work. If you don't have something nice to say, best not say it at all. Robin shared an acronym she uses in her classroom – **THINK** – Is it **T**True? Is it **H**Helpful? Is it **I**Inspiring? Is it **N**Necessary? Is it **K**Kind? If the answer to any of these questions is "No", then you need to keep it to yourself. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but it is not okay to hurt or insult others with our words.

Past Presidents Parley Chair Molly Smith (589) advised that the District 28 Parley has donated \$322 to the Department Nursing Scholarship Fund, and the District has developed a PPP Scholarship for nursing students this year, with \$180 in funding generated by holding a "Rally Up" basket drawing.

Public Relations Chair Esther Le Pore (69) advised that she received three mid-year reports and one 'no activity' report for Public Relations. Members were informed that the Unit packets contained the January Department Public Relations Bulletin and guidelines for HUB newsletter submissions, as well as information on HUB columnists and subscription forms for The Auxiliary magazine.

VA&R Chair Karol Adams (31) was absent and no report was given.

VA&R Hospital Representative/Deputy Connie Raya (694) shared with members the Wish List for the Spinal Cord Ward, received from Huy Diep at the Palo Alto VA Health Care System. Units or individuals wishing to make donations to the Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, or the Spinal Cord Injury & Disorders Unit General Recreation Fund should make their checks payable to: **VA Palo Alto GPF 2276**. Wish lists were placed in Unit packets. Connie shared with members her report on the Palo Alto/Menlo Park holiday donations made by District 28 units, noting that 1,594 holiday items with a estimated value of \$9,843.00 were donated to these facilities by our units. Add to that number the total of other items donated - 532, with an estimated value of \$1,707.88 brings the total of District 28 donations to 2,126 items, with a estimated value of \$11,550.88. Connie also provided information on the VA Palo Alto Compassionate Contact Corps program, noting that several members of the D28 Auxiliary have been donating their time. Volunteers provide veterans in need with weekly telephone and/or video contact, companionship and conversation.

Michelle Soares (694) advised that the Monterey County Fair board of directors have decided to focus on local veterans, and she has been working with the Fair board to create a new service project. More specific information is forthcoming. A Welcome Basket Wish List provided by the Veterans Transition Center (VTC) was shared in Unit packets.

President Liz Doidge (593) reported that she made the decision to place Unit 121 on probation. The Unit President does not return Liz's phone calls, texts, or emails; Liz still has the Unit's membership cards, and she had been told that the Unit is planning to surrender their Charter. Additionally, Liz advised that she will take daughter, Hailey, to Las Vegas later in the month to participate in the National Mission Training there.

The meeting was recessed at 11:00 AM, and reconvened at 11:25 AM.

Unit Reports were received from 41, 69, 81, 512, 589, 591, 593, and 694.

Unfinished Business

- District 28 Education Fundraiser – Education Chair Molly Smith advised that because of her recently diagnosed cancer and forthcoming treatment course she will not be able to chair the Education fundraiser scheduled for February 19th. Only four tickets were sold to date. After much discussion members unanimously agreed to cancel the event. (MSC) This fundraiser will be replaced with a "Rally Up" basket, and all monies raised will go to the District 28 Scholarship Fund. Details to follow.
- Units 591 and 593 were asked again to please contact Liz to schedule an official visit.
- Raffle Filing CT-NRP-1 – Form filed and accepted by the Secretary of State.

- Poppy Orders – The Department Treasurer will now invoice a Unit \$25 if no Poppy order has been received.
- See’s Candy Fundraiser – Liz is unable to schedule this event until February. This will be an Easter fundraiser.
- Palo Alto VA Easter – On a motion by Connie Raya members approved a \$300 expenditure from the District D&M Fund to purchase gift cards from Costco, Burger King, and McDonalds to give to Spinal Cord Ward patients for Easter. MSC.

New Business

- **Blue Star Moms** – Linda Lara-Guzman advised that the group is collecting care package donations for their next mailing, which is just around the corner. Units are asked to donate to the project if at all possible. The wish list of acceptable items was included in the Unit packets. The group hopes to fill 100 boxes for deployed troops around the globe.
- **Monterey County Veterans Stand Down** – Robin Falkenberg reported that this year’s event is in the planning stages and is tentatively scheduled for June 17-19, 2022 at the Monterey Fairgrounds. Hopefully COVID will not be an issue. Robin noted that men’s clothing is needed – sizes L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, and 5XL. Anyone wishing to donate should contact Robin directly for more information, or to coordinate a delivery to her clothing trailer.

Department President Dee Ann Graham –

- Advised that National will be discussing a 2023 dues increase at the August Convention, so units should also be looking at increasing unit dues, as well.
- Members are urged to take the online leadership courses offered by National as there is much valuable information to be shared about the Auxiliary.
- Hours for the caregivers of veterans at home can now be reported under VA&R.
- By 2023 Girls and Boys State delegates will be limited to one boy and one girl per high school.
- Thanked District 28 members for the great meeting and excellent reporting, and advised that we are doing wonderful work for our veterans and communities.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Baker, Secretary
ALA District 28

NOTE: Next District 28 meeting will be **Saturday, March 19, 2022 @ 9:00 AM**, Prunedale Post 593 Senior Center.