



## The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Virginia

*Call to Action*

September 2020 e-Newsletter



### *President's Message*

Greetings everyone!

We are off and running this year to keep our promise as we hold our mission and purpose in the forefront of our minds as we move through these unusual times. With the variety of restrictions in place in different areas of the State that govern our gatherings and activities, we are obligated to think out of the box in order to conduct our business and sustain our presence in the areas we serve. If we can shift our thinking so that these restrictions are viewed not as barriers, but more as opportunities to design plans and work our programs in new ways, we may find that we will have some newfound successes.

We had excellent attendance at our virtual Multi-Zone Workshop on September 13 with 101 members joining, representing 40 Units.

I will be holding virtual meetings with District Presidents, Zone Vice Presidents and committee Chairs throughout the year to maintain the best contact possible. Bulletins will be distributed quarterly, with newsletters in-between. Please let me know through your Unit's monthly reports about the great things you are doing so that innovative ideas and highlights can be properly recognized and widely shared.

As previously announced, the Department Fall Conference will be held virtually, planned for Sunday, October 25 at 2:30 p.m. so please save the date. Further details will be provided closer to the time.

And now on a somber note, I ask that you remember the recent and untimely passing of Western Zone Vice President Wilda Clear.

Please also join me in congratulating Roxanne Burns, our new Western Zone Vice President.

For God and Country,

Dawn Thomas

Department of Virginia

President 2020-2021

# *Message regarding the Auxiliary Emergency Fund*

*Attention members!*

## **Be Knowledgeable, Be Aware, Be Generous**

If you have been following the news and weather at all, you are well aware of the hurricanes, floods, and fire disasters impacting areas across the country.

In addition to widespread power outages and evacuations, there are longer term consequences such as loss of property, loss of income, and prolonged displacements to mention only a few.

There are ALA members in all 52 Departments and many have been impacted by these events. This is when the Auxiliary Emergency Fund can help our members. We should be proactive in our efforts to enhance donations with both individual and Unit donations.

Here are some frequently asked questions:

- Why should we contribute outside of Virginia? Why not keep the money here at home?

*Because there is a Legion Family presence in all 52 Departments, and AEF grants are available to qualifying members in any Department.*

- How can I contribute?

*Send a check to the Department Headquarters earmarked AEF. All AEF funds collected in Units and Departments are sent to The ALA National Headquarters. Sending donations through the Department helps to show how Virginia's members are helping other ALA members.*

- Who distributes the money to assist members?

*All AEF funds received by The ALA National Headquarters are distributed by the National AEF Grant Committee according to very specific criteria, including eligibility. There is a specific application process that must be followed.*

*All information is kept confidential within the AEF Grant Committee.*

- How can we be sure the money isn't held up by red-tape?

*AEF payments are made directly to providers of shelter and/or utilities for the grant recipients, and not to any state or local government entity.*

For more detailed information, please refer to the ALA Emergency Fund Brochure available on the National ALA website at [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org) or contact your Department Committee Chair or Vice Chair

Kimberly Marsh, Chair

Delia French, Vice Chair

## *Message from the National Security Committee*

A part of the National Security Program is C.E.R.T. training. C.E.R.T. stands for Community Emergency Response Team. This is a program that educates volunteers within their own communities about disaster preparedness by training them in response skills to a variety of disasters. C.E.R.T. training is a consistent national method of training and organizing that volunteers and professionals alike can use and rely on in the time of any disaster.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus will be on staying well, limiting the spread of germs, and how to use the resources in your surroundings.

- Avoid crowds
  - Stay away from stores at peak hours
  - Wear a mask where recommended
- Use and carry hand sanitizer
  - After 5 uses of hand sanitizer wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid sick people
- If you are sick, stay away from others
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing
  - Sneeze and cough into your elbow whenever possible
- Avoid touching your face
  - Try not to adjust your face mask once it is on
- Keep your immune system high
  - o Get plenty of rest
  - o Drink water
  - o Be active
  - o Eat healthy foods
  - o Manage life stressors
- Make telephone and video appointments with your healthcare providers
- It is important to keep up your health with your regular appointments and medications

If you and your community would like to participate in C.E.R.T. training please go to:

<https://www.ready.gov/cert>

*Healthy communities are stronger communities!*

Submitted by: Ashley Rose Alberts, RN, Vice Chair  
Ruthann Brown, Committee Chair

## *Message from the Community Service Committee*

The Community Service program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary's visibility within our localities through our commitment to community, state, and nation.

As we are staying home, staying safe, and social distancing you may be asking how can I have a positive impact in my community?

The answer is simple - anything you do for your community will have a positive impact!

How can we support our communities?

- Make a Difference Day is October 30, 2020. This is a great day to start any project!
- When you are out walking take a bag with you and pick up trash as you go.
- Donate food to your local food bank. With many people out of work due to COVID-19 a few extra cans of food can go a long way.
- Don't want to leave the house? Then pick up that phone and reach out to members of the Auxiliary that you have not seen in a while, call your neighbors to check in. With so many of us staying home it can really brighten someone's day to hear a kind voice just calling to check in!

Let the community know what we do and why we matter. We are here to help and to make a difference in our communities. No matter what project you choose, we will be making a difference.

Auxiliary members are very ingenious, and I look forward to seeing what you come up with!

Be sure to take pictures of your adventures!

Sarah Markel, Chair

Lenora Bell, Vice-Chair

## *Message from the Department Chaplain*

How many of us planned on a year like this? Not me, for one. I have, however felt God's presence in the bad and the good. Prayers have been lifted for everyone. As you have pondered what God has in store for all of us, were there verses you found that you meditated on; words of inspiration that you found uplifting; moments of contemplation on the entertainment and sustenance in nature that made you smile and any other words and moments that made you feel at peace? I suspect there were different of these items and moments for each of us.

Would you kindly share what those were and are by sending them to me to put in the President's prayer book? Matthew 18:20 says "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 28:20 continues with "and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The prayer book is one way of us gathering in His name.

Another way is gathering together at our meetings always keeping in mind that what we do is for God and Country and the things we do are our Service and not to glorify ourselves. We share with others in many ways. Call on me as you want!

Dale Mitchell, Department Chaplain

## *Message from the Junior Activities Committee*

Hello Auxiliary Family!

We have had quite a start to our year; first and foremost: A congratulations to, and introduction of our Department Honorary Junior Officers:

**Honorary Junior President: Amber Elizabeth Askelson**  
**Honorary Junior Vice President: Hailey Askelson**  
**Honorary Junior Secretary: Grace Fontaine**  
**Honorary Junior Chaplain: Ana Hickory**  
**Honorary Junior Assistant Chaplain: Annabelle Hopper**  
**Acting Honorary Junior Historian: Laura Ridgeway**

We are looking forward to meeting via zoom in the near future to elect Laura officially - thank you for stepping up and volunteering your time!

As we focus this year on celebrating the centennial with 100 acts of service, I am thrilled to report we have had 2 reports of service already! Jr Auxiliary President, Kaylee Bergeron (unit 32) has been busy making "Lettuce Taco Bout How Awesome" the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program is and let us provide you with a free "taco"!! Asking that you consider making a donation for our wonderful poppy program! These amazing Tacos come with a poppy and a eyeglass repair kit.

Also, at the joint session of Post and Unit 215, The Juniors and the Sons came together to perform "God Bless the USA" and present the Missing Man Table. Both of these stories, and all of the upcoming service projects will be featured on the Virginia Juniors Facebook page - check them out, like, and share with your friends to show off the amazing work you all are doing! And don't forget, so many service projects overlap with our Patch Program!

The Patch Program is a great way to contribute while we are all social distancing! As most are getting back to school this month, let's earn that education patch! Don't forget to snap some pictures! We look forward to seeing the amazing things you all will accomplish this year!

Kathleen Lilly, Chair

Abby Forsyth, Vice Chair

## ***Have you renewed your Membership for 2021?***

**If you already have, thank you!**

**If you haven't yet renewed, you can easily do that  
through one of these options:**

- **Renew on-line using the National Headquarters website**
  - **Go to [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org)**
  - **Log in to your account. If you don't already have one, set up an account by selecting "Sign up" on the homepage. Be sure to have your prior membership card available - you will need your membership number. Then you will receive further instructions.**
  - **Once you have your account, the "Pay Dues" button will appear next to your name.**
- **You can also call the National Headquarters at (317) 569-4500 and renew by phone.**
- **Renew by mail or through your Unit membership Chair.**

***There's always time to renew. Do it today...don't delay!***

**The ALA Department of Virginia Office is now open.**

**In-person visits to the Department Headquarters require that an appointment be made with the Department Secretary, Yvonne Burgess. She can be reached via email at [auxva1805@gmail.com](mailto:auxva1805@gmail.com) or the Department office phone number.**

**Please note that masks are required to enter the building.**

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