



American Legion
Auxiliary

The Auxiliary News Hub

Official Publication of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California

Mission Statement

In the spirit of *Service, Not Self*, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

Vision Statement

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

Purposes

In fulfillment of our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary adheres to the following purposes:

- To support and advocate for veterans, military, and their families
- To support the initiatives and programs of The American Legion
- To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship
- To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy
- To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism in government
- To increase our capacity to deliver our mission by providing volunteer opportunities within our communities
- To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through *Service, Not Self*

CELEBRATING WOMEN OF SERVICE



Known as “Amazing Grace,” Hopper joined the Naval Reserves in 1943 during World War II and became a key programmer for the Mark I computer, one of the world’s first large-scale computers. Her contributions didn’t stop there – she was instrumental in developing the COBOL programming language, a foundation for modern computing. She even coined the term “computer bug” after removing a moth from a relay in the Mark I system.

Hopper’s remarkable 43-year naval career saw her rise through the ranks, culminating in her promotion to Rear Admiral at the age of 76 by special presidential appointment. By the time of her passing in 1992, she had received more than 30 honorary doctorates, a naval destroyer was named in her honor, and she was widely celebrated as a mentor, innovator, and leader.

Borrowed From
Cathie MacInnes
Foundation President

Grace Hopper’s contributions continue to inspire and we proudly salute the trailblazing women like her whose strength and dedication have shaped our nation’s history. Honor their legacy by supporting the ALA Foundation in its mission to assist veterans, military families, and those who have dedicated their lives to our country by donating to the ALA Mission Endowment Fund.

When you make a tribute donation in honor of a woman who inspires you, your generosity will help fund programs that make a meaningful difference in the lives of our nation’s heroes.

Together, let’s celebrate the women who have shaped history and continue to serve others. To learn more about how the ALA Foundation is putting your donation to work, visit www.ALAFoundation.org and click “about us.”

2024-2025 Officers

President	Linda Hayes
Vice President	Susan Baker
Secretary	Liz Doidge
Treasurer	Katherine Tellyer
Chaplain	Melanie Taylor
Historian	Erika Hernandez
Parliamentarian	Anita Biggs
Sgt-at-Arms	Sam Marsteller
Asst. Sgt-at-Arms	Krista Young
Finance Chair	Teresa Lugo-Nunez
Finance Sr	Ann Sanchez
Finance Jr	Sharon Moore
NEC	Kathie Martinez
NEC Alt.	Dee Ann Graham
Advisory	Dee Ann Graham
	Kathie Martinez
	Glenda Schultz

2024-2025 Chairmen and Committees

Americanism	Robin Falkenberg
Aux. Emergency Fund	Suzanne Winters
Children and Youth	Tracy Varnell-Fercho
Community Service	Rebecca Glenn
Constitution/Bylaws	Cassandra Brown
Convention Chm.	Linda Fercho
Convention Co-Chair	Terry Oclaray
Conv. Com Chair	Anita Biggs
Credentials	Madeleine Reed
Distinguished Guest	Linda Workman
Editor	Barb Toth
Education	Donna Mattox
Elections	Linda Karnstedt
Girls State Advisor	Nancy Brown-Park
Girls State Chairman	Caroline Miller
Junior Activities	Lucy Hunt
Junior Conf. Director	Martha Romano
Leadership	Diana Livas
Legislative	Glenda Schultz
Membership	Donna Smith
Music	Yve Evans-Hanna
National Security	Linda Lara-Guzman
Past Presidents Parley	DeeAnn Graham
Poppy	Gabriella Ramos
Public Relations	Rosemary Barron
Resolutions	Linda Fercho
UD&R North	Joan Cannon
UD&R South	Kathie Martinez
Veterans Affairs	Susan Baker
Ways & Means Chair	Marcia Monroe
Webmaster	Lyle Workman

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY MARCH 8

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION

Celebrating Women of Service

International Women's Day is March 8. Support the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation by donating to the Celebrating Women of Service campaign in honor of a woman who inspires you. A tribute donation offers you a thoughtful way to celebrate a special person while contributing to the ALA Foundation's mission to positively impact the lives of veterans, military, and their families by funding ALA programs.

Honor their service today by scanning the QR code, texting WOMAN to 1-844-940-3450, or mailing a check to the ALA Foundation at 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

Scan here to make a gift:

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports the American Legion Auxiliary. All gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible as allowed by the Internal Revenue Code and U.S. Federal Revenue Service. © American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. All rights reserved. 9/2024

To honor the powerful women in our lives, the ALA Foundation is observing its third “Celebrating Women of Service” day in conjunction with International Women’s Day on March 8. We hope you’ll join us by donating in honor of a woman who inspires you the way the ALA community has inspired this celebratory day of giving.

We want to hear your stories of the women who inspire you. Share your story on social media and tag @ALAforVeterans.

International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women, who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities. Show your appreciation for the women who have dedicated themselves to service and volunteerism by contributing to a cause that will leave a lasting impact. Together, let's make March 8 a day to remember the impact of the ALA community. Your support can be given online or by texting WOMAN to 1-844-940-3450.

A MESSAGE FROM DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT LINDA HAYES

When the call for help went out to help our Auxiliary sisters that fell victim to the devastating fires, losing all their belongings, we stepped up. We stepped up to the tune of over \$7,000 for the newly created CA Fire Fund. Not only did we help financially, but we also brought clothing, food, pet food, personal items and other items of necessity to take to the newly created donation center for the Palisades Legion family victims. We did all of this at the DEC held January 17-19! (The Palisades fire began January 7th and was not fully contained until January 31st.)

One sobering thought is knowing that 120 Legion Family members lost everything. Everything! We cannot fully understand exactly how devastating that is, unless we have had it happen personally. But we can be there for them.

Our work, as Auxiliary sisters, is not done. Donations will be needed for a long time. Please do not forget these fire victims. Send in cash donations to the California Disaster Fund and write "CA Fire Fund" on the memo line. Also, now may be the time to go through your closets to see what gently used clothing you can donate to fire victims. Of course, food, personal items, pet foods, and much more are and will be needed for a long time.

The Convention will be here before we know it. It is a wonderful time to do another collection.



“In the Spirit of Service, Not Self”

ARE YOU FROM GIRLS STATE?



Caroline Miller, a dedicated member of Unit 291 Newport Harbor, joined the Auxiliary in 2015 under her husband, Army Vietnam veteran Dennis Miller. Since then, Caroline volunteered with a variety of our programs until she found her true passion....Girls State.

No surprise that Girls State became her niche- Caroline herself was a Girls State delegate in 1970. She recalls the experience as initially intimidating but ultimately inspirational. Drawing from this, she began working alongside the previous Girls State Chair by contacting schools, preparing packets and conducting interviews. In 2022, Caroline stepped into the role of Chairman, conducting and building on the program’s success.

Unit 291 proudly sponsors 19 schools producing, 19 Delegates and 19 Alternates each year. Each school may nominate up to 5 candidates to be interviewed. Last year, Caroline and her team interviewed 68 candidates in person. As someone who has participated in these interviews, I can attest to the remarkable talent and potential of these young ladies. After the Delegates are chosen, there is an orientation tea with the other delegates throughout

District 29, culminating the 5-day weeklong Sacramento GIRLS STATE!!!! Behind the scenes, Caroline works tirelessly to secure funding so that these young women can attend at no cost to themselves. The cost for each girl is \$425.00, not including the bus ride up and back which last year was \$150.00 per girl. Caroline has even volunteered as a City Liaison for the week-long program, often logging over 20,000 steps a day.

In 2024, Caroline was officially appointed as the new Chairman of Girls State succeeding the esteemed Allyn Kau. Last year, California sent 418 Delegates to Girls State; this year, Caroline is ambitiously working toward increasing that number to 450. Her efforts for the year-long program- beginning in September with outreach to schools and concluding in August with a joint Girls State and Boys State dinner at Post 291-are a testament to her leadership and dedication. Caroline truly exemplifies the Auxiliary motto “Service Not Self,” and we are very fortunate to have her leading this vital program.

Submitted by:
 Cynthia Edes,
 Jr. Past President Unit 291
 Mary Beth Martin
 President Unit 291

March Madness: A Slam Dunk for Membership

March Madness, the iconic NCAA basketball tournament, has captivated millions of Americans for decades. But why should sport fans have all the fun? This March, let the American Legion Auxiliary harness the excitement and energy of the tournament to drive membership and engagement. Here's how to turn March Madness into a winning strategy for membership.

1. Host a “bring a friend” meeting

Encourage members to bring someone. This could even be a recurring event so that new members are continually bringing new friends! Maybe make this meeting a "bring a dish to pass" by members -- too formal? How about dessert & coffee??

2. Reach out to former members

Some people might be ready to come back – maybe there were issues before; let them know that there is new leadership!

3. Encourage members to share your newsletter

Especially if they're featured in it! Don't have a newsletter? Start one! Best way to get the word out of what events are coming up and the outcome of recent events!

4. Invite members' families to events

Spouses, siblings, parents, and (grown-up) children are all potential members (depending on how the member was eligible for membership).

5. Help members develop an “elevator speech” about their membership

Why are they members? What's the biggest benefit of membership? Can they explain the purpose of the ALA? What was a recent event that they participated in?

6. Ask your members for recruitment ideas

They may have an idea you haven't thought of before or know about opportunities within their own social networks.

7. Offer ALA business cards to your members

It's an easy way for them to point people to your Unit/Council/County/District and share more easily with their network. Put a line for the member to put their name so that they get the credit for referring someone new!

8. Offer an alternate meeting time to attract people with different schedules

Is your meeting time leaving out a whole group of people, like those with 9-5 jobs or early bed-times? Switch up your offerings to attract more people.

9. Volunteer as a group

You'll get to do good as well as meeting other volunteers! And be sure to brand yourself with the ALA logo!!

10. Coach members on creating a welcoming experience

Getting potential new members to attend meetings is only half the battle! Remind current members to greet newcomers and avoid ALA jargon when there are visitors.

11. Ask members to list their membership in their professional bios

It gets the ALA name in front of more people, builds the ALA's prestige, and reminds members to talk about it. Sometimes it's a good conversation starter at an interview!



Submitted by:
Donna L. Smith
Department Membership Chair



ALA Service Through the VA Center for Development and Community Engagement

A large part of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program is the work done in the VA Center for Development and Community Engagement (CDCE), formerly known as VAVS. The American Legion Auxiliary maintains a cadre of volunteers at VA Medical Centers and Community Based Outpatient Clinics, and CalVet Homes throughout California. Under the direction of VA Voluntary Service Directors our trained Auxiliary volunteers provide activities and recreational opportunities to the patients.

Interested in Volunteering?

We are always looking for Auxiliary members to serve as volunteers for the VA Center for Development and Community Engagement (CDCE) at VA healthcare facilities. We currently have openings for Representatives or Deputies at the following sites:

Fresno VA Hospital – 3 Deputy Vacancies
 Villages at Cabrillo Community Based Outpatient Clinic – 1 Deputy Vacancy
 Los Angeles VA Medical Center – 2 Deputy Vacancies
 Sepulveda Community Based Outpatient Clinic & Nursing Home – 1 Deputy Vacancy
 Santa Barbara Ambulatory Care Center – 1 Representative Vacancy
 San Francisco VA Medical Center – 1 Representative, 3 Deputy Vacancies
 Redding CalVet Home – 1 Representative Vacancy
 Yountville CalVet Home – 1 Representative, 1 Poppy Production Manager Vacancy

The VAVS 101 Presentation is on the National ALA website at <https://alaforveterans.org>. To view the file, log in, scroll down and click to open National Committees/Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation/Key Resources/VAVS 101 Presentation. VAVS 101 contains information on how to start the VAVS volunteer process and what is needed in order to serve. If after reviewing the presentation you would like more information on filling a vacancy in your area, please contact VAR Chair Susan Baker via email at var@calegionaux.org, and she will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

A WORD FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Taxes: We would like everyone to be able to be current with all tax filings. We are coming up on our fiscal year end, June 30, 2025.

1. Make sure all prior tax filings are completed and a copy sent to Liz to have on file.
2. Make sure you are looking toward your audit of your treasurer's book and statements. A copy of your audit is also needed to be sent to Department Secretary Liz.
3. Please do not hold onto checks issued by the Department. Please cash as soon as possible.
4. All members who are entitled to travel reimbursement or for chairman or District President reimbursement please send copies (found in the Dept. website under 'forms') to Kathy Tellyer, Treasurer

Submitted by Dr Theresa Nunez

PUBLIC RELATIONS

This New Season brings great opportunities to connect with our local communities through a plethora of different outreach type events. The importance of a friendly and complete event flyer, aids in this effort. Sometimes the first impression a community member may have with the American Legion Auxiliary is through posts seen on social media, including fliers for upcoming events. Here's are a few tips to help make that event flyer stand out in a positive and professional manner.

- Pick a font style and size that is easy to read. Add graphics, pictures or art that can be shared and are not copyrighted. Whatever is chosen for the flyer, should relate to the actual event and the ALA Mission. Once a flyer is shared publicly, it will often be shared over and over.
- Be concise and complete, with all the event information before releasing the flyer publicly. List the entire event name, any partnership or in cooperation with, location, duration time, admission costs (or other costs such as parking), where to purchase tickets, general event details, target age range if

applicable, any deadline dates, where the proceeds will go and follow up unit contact information (website, social media page).

- Is this a public event? If yes, list that information on the event flyer. Sometimes people may stay away from group functions, thinking they are not open to the general community.
- Once circulated, the event flyer may be picked up by a local news agency. Keep that in mind when creating the flyer.
- Remember that we are one team working together to promote the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary!

*Submitted By: Anne Marie Fuller
Past ALA National Committee Member
ALA District 2 Public Relations Chair*



Our own Madame President, Auxiliary District 28, Linda Lara Guzman was in attendance for the Washington A.L. DC Conference. Read below to read how it went!

It feels so good to be home in Cali. I am so grateful to the American Legion Auxiliary for allowing me the opportunity to attend the American Legion DC conference. I was so out of my comfort zone, but everyone was wonderful. It was an Honor representing Department of California. I had no idea what I was in for, but it was an amazing 2 days in Washington DC.

I was so stressed knowing I would be going to speak to our local Representatives or their assistants. My nerves were calmed by J.I. Romano, Harley Santos from Lompoc and Scott from Pacific Palisades who took me under their wing. We also had past National Auxiliary President Nancy Brown-Park with us in the morning.

A big thank you to Martha Romano who took pictures. Every hallway we went to there were Legionnaires meeting with their local Representatives. I felt pride knowing I belonged to the American Legion Family. This experience reinforces why I joined the Auxiliary.

Submitted by
Rosemary Barron
Public Relations, Dept of CA

ALA Dept of CA Helping Fire Victims

American Legion Post 299 Family, Chino, (Elmer C. Jertberg) collected items for people affected by the Eaton and Pacific Palisades Fires. Collections were accepted January 11th and 12th and sorting of donations was done on the 12th. Members and on January 13th volunteers loaded up a 26 ft U-Haul Truck and a few volunteer's cars and trucks and delivered the donated items to American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood. Also, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 299 Chino member Jessica Munoz delivered items to over 10 families/friends of our members. At first it was just Jessica and her husband collecting and sorting items but on Sunday many members of Post 299 and people from local churches and the community stayed to help collect and sort the many donations that poured in. Jessica's husband, Henry Arreygue, Post 299 Commander Micheal Huizar and his wife, Sheena, helped all day Sunday. On Monday, January 13th, 2025 Matt Dingham, Denise MacDonald, Armando Esquivel, Julie Munoz and Cherry (Amanda Purcell) helped deliver items to the American Legion Hollywood Post 43. Many other members of the Post 299 Family helped sort and load all the overwhelming amount of donations. Thank you to ALL that helped.



ALA Dept of CA Helping Fire Victims—cont'd



It started out as a canned food drive to support the National Security and Children and Youth ALA Programs. But when the Eaton and Pacific Palisades fires broke out, focus quickly turned to helping the victims. A call was put out to all ALA Units and everyone answered in a big way. Units and Districts brought their donations to DEC in Palmdale. These amazing men helped load the donations and delivered them to the fire victims. Thank you to everyone that donated.



Auxiliary District 28, Linda Lara Guzman's Visit To Washington, DC for the Washington A.L. DC Conference

Our first meeting of the day was led by Derck Blumke, the Grunt Style Foundation's Veteran Impact Fellow. His focus is on over-prescribing of medications to veterans and harm reduction. He stated all medications have some kind of side effects including suicide. 70 percent are treated at the VA.

The suggested actions to end the Prescribed Suicide Crisis:

- Retrain all VA prescribers and mental health clinicians
- Signatory informed consent
- Reform VA de-prescribing guidelines – implement Maudsley De-Prescribing guidelines
- Establish Red Alert Pharmacy system
- Differential Diagnosis – Identify Cause
- Publicly release all VA collected data on Veteran Suicides and



The problem is suicide rates continue to increase despite increased spending and access to VA and Non-VA mental health. There is a documentary called Medicating Normal. Everyone was encouraged to watch it.

After lunch we heard from Service to Small Business Administration. The speakers were:

- Donnell E. Johns Sr., Command Sergeant Major U.S. Army Retired, Founder of Veterans Growing America.
- Hyacinth Tucker, Army Veteran, and owner of The Laundry Basket LLC
- Michael D. Thornton, Sr. Chief Operating Officer and co-owner of Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC

All three recommended the Small Business Association. Go to the people who know the programs out there to get started. They also recommended:

- Boots to Business Reboot
- Pathway to Business Military Spouse
- Find a community of entrepreneurs
- Make sure you get your credit right
- Have some thick skin, resilience
- Look at skills sets you already have
- Don't do it for the money – you must be passionate about it
- Network – don't try to do it alone.

I met with National Executive Committee Members Jere Romano, Harley Santos, Scott Wagenseller, and some of the other Legionnaires from California to map out our plan for our walk on the Hill on Tuesday. I am so grateful to the California Legionnaires for their expertise and their kindness in including me in their visits as well as going to my visit. I also had the privilege of having Past National Auxiliary President Nancy Brown-Park walk the hill with us.

I went to the Longworth House Building to meet with Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren from District 18 that is from Monterey County. She was not available, and I dropped off a pamphlet along with my business card. I have never received an email to let me know she received it.

We then went to the Rayburn Building and visited with the assistant to Dereck T. Tran, the assistant to Julia Brownley, and the assistant to J. Luis Correa.

This trip was an amazing experience, and I am so grateful for the opportunity. I knew our Legion Family was huge but didn't realize how large and powerful we are. This trip gave me a new respect for our Legionnaires. I learned how important it is to network with other Legion Family members.

Submitted By:
Glenda Schultz, Dept of CA Legislative Chairman
Linda Lara Guzman, District 28 President



DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT LINDA HAYES' VISIT TO DISTRICT 28



Department President, Linda Hayes and Paige, Marcy N Velado, visited District 28 in the Monterey Peninsula the month of January. It started on a Thursday night, Burger Night held at Post 694, in Marina, CA. Friday was a long day with tours of the Fisher House in Palo Alto, Paws for Purple, Menlo Park, and the VA, Menlo Park (HVRP). Madame President even found time to tour the Monterey Bay Aquarium organized by Jon and Susan Baker, what a treat! Saturday we all visited the Veteran's Transition Center (VTC) in Marina, CA. So much going on there for the veterans and their families. We also visited VA Medical Center, Palo Alto and VA Medical Center, Menlo Park. Lunch followed at Black Bear Diner, lots of laughs were had by all. The tours were meaningful being that they are the locations of Madame President's special project fundraisers.

Sunday, January 26th was the last day of the visit. District 28 held their membership meeting. Good news was shared regarding the LA fires, over \$7,000 was raised during DEC mid-year. Madame President, Linda Lara Guzman organized a wonderful meeting with gifts, speeches and a scrumptious luncheon. A barbecue hosted by the Legionnaires of Post 81, Gonzales, CA. A potluck meal hosted by the District 28 Units. Decorations DIYed by 2nd Vice, Rosemary Barron. The Blue Star Mom's gifted us their time by serving lunch.





Save the Date

March

Program Focus:
Community Service

- 3 *Navy Reserve Birthday*
- 5 *Seabee Birthday*
- 29 *Vietnam Veteran's Day*

April

Program Focus: Children & Youth

- 1 *Gold Star Spouses Day*
- 11 *Units End of Year Reports Due to Districts*
- 14 *Air Force Reserve Day*
- 15 *Purple Up Day*
- 23 *Army Reserve Birthday*



Note from the Gazette:

The Auxiliary News Hub is the official publication of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of California. The success of the Hub depends on your submissions. Any member can make a submission. So please submit your articles, funny stories, pictures, etc. **Submissions are to be in a Word Document and pictures are to be submitted as a jpeg file.**

Editor reserves the right to edit any submissions. Please keep articles short as space may be limited.

Deadline for the May / June issue is April 17, 2025.

Email articles, photos and positive suggestions to:

Editor Barb Toth
editor@calegionaux.org
babstothaux@yahoo.com

The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.

— Carl Jung —