

Department of Minnesota Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday, October 24, 2020
Breezy Point Conference Center – Breezy Point, MN

Department President Mary Hendrickson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Prayer was offered by Department First Vice President Patti Coleman. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Department Second Vice President Mary Kuperus followed by the Preamble being led by Department Parliamentarian Norma Tramm.

President Mary welcomed everyone to the conference and thanked them for their perseverance in being there even with the Fall Conference being cancelled due to a snowstorm. She also thanked the Nisswa American Legion Family for all their efforts in preparing for us.

We had a very special guest who joined us via Zoom, our National President Nicole Clapp. When we had to cancel the conference, we arranged to have Nicole join us anyway. Nicole thanked our Department for all that we are doing and encouraged us to continue with our efforts even with shutdowns and remote meetings. She said that she would stay with us for the entire meeting unless we went into the late afternoon because her beloved football team was playing!

Present were: Department President Mary Hendrickson, 1st Vice President Patti Coleman, 2nd Vice President Mary Kuperus, Immediate Past Department President Jean Walker, NEC Raleen Tolzmann, 1st District President Wanda Prescher, 2nd District representative Darlene Breamer (in Robin Olson's place), 3rd District President Linda Kelly, 4th District President Sandy Gibson, 5th District President Mary Younkin, 6th District President Roberta Elvecrog, 8th District representative Zandra Davenport (in Sue Korhonen's place), 9th District President Pat Hanson, 10th District President Brandi Christiansen, Department Secretary Marsha Bible, Department Treasurer Jan Lauby and Department Parliamentarian Norma Tramm. There were 3 guests in attendance including 6-week-old Laura Josephson (Brandi Christiansen's daughter).

The Executive Committee members and/or representatives present reported on what ALA activities they had been working on.

1st District Wanda Prescher said they are looking into new ways to support veterans. Members are not meeting due to the restrictions and it has been difficult to find new ways for units to keep in contact.

2nd District representative Darlene Breamer reported that the District President's project was the new Eagle's Healing Nest in Redwood Falls. Their members are also doing all they can to support the residents at the Minnesota Veterans Home Luverne.

3rd District President Linda Kelly reported that they held an outdoor joint district family gathering and played an American trivia game. She said units are trying to be creative on their fundraising and her unit is going to have a Christmas tree lot this year since no one in their town has one. Elysian has been having drive-thru to go meals and they sold 1800 wings in 1 night.

4th District President Sandy Gibson reported that their district has been joining in with the 5th district in holding zoom meetings. They are trying to raise funds for activities for the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis since volunteers are not allowed at this point.

5th District President Mary Younkin reported that they held zoom meetings in September and October.

6th District President Roberta Elvecrog reported that their Executive Committee met, and they are working on a possible Mid-Winter conference.

7th District President Lorraine Wiggen was absent.

8th District representative Zandra Davenport reported that their district met in September and is working on their standing rules. Their units are doing their best to support the veterans at the Minnesota Veterans Home – Silver Bay.

9th District President Pat Hanson reported that one unit had to go service on Memorial Day.

10th District President Brandi Christensen reported that she has been kind of busy since August workshop. She introduced one of our newest members, her daughter Laura, who was born on September 5th. Congratulations Brandi and Dan! She is definitely a keeper. Brandi also wanted to thank all the members of her district who have been diligently making masks for all these months.

2nd Vice President Mary Kuperus reported that she is excited to have 5 Leadership Schools planned despite COVID.

1st Vice President Patti Coleman reported that the Auxiliaries of all the members of the Minnesota Commander's Task Force have been invited to join their ranks. The representative to that group will be the Legislative Chairman, which is her assignment this year. She said that it was exciting to finally have the Auxiliary voice be heard. They have a legislative agenda and are being heard by Governor Walz. She also reported that the Homestead Market Exclusion Bill was passed as part of the bonding bill.

NEC Raleen Tolzmann reported that she has been doing more fishing and is also delivering meals to children who are distance learning.

Parliamentarian Norma Tramm reminded everyone that November 14th is "Read Your Constitution and By-Laws" Day. She encouraged everyone to read their Constitution and Standing Rules. She reminded the Executive Committee members that she is here to help and welcomes any questions. Just email her and leave a phone number and she will contact you.

Past Department President Jean Walker reported that she has been busy helping with distance learning for her grandchildren.

President Mary reported that although most events had been cancelled, she still had the opportunity to bring greetings at the 1st Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley and attend the Legionville Board meeting that afternoon. She has had very few invitations due to COVID. Mary also thanked everyone for their part in working on her membership goal of 30,000 by close of books July 31, 2020. We came very close at 29,920 members. However, we did make that number a month later September 30, 2020 with 30,005 members.

President Mary called for the approval of minutes from the August 15, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting.

A motion was made by Sandy Gibson, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2020 meeting.

President Mary asked Department Secretary to report on the status of the PPP Loan Forgiveness. Secretary Marsha Bible reported that after discussion with our bank, the forms for forgiveness have not been released. When those forms are available, they will be sent to us and we can complete the request.

President Mary noted that there have been many questions concerning the status of our NEC and Alternate NEC Elections since we did not hold a Department Convention in July 2020. Parliamentarian Norma Tramm read the standing rule and reported that both the NEC and the Alternate NEC will be up for election at the July 2022 Department Convention.

New Business:

President Mary called upon Secretary Marsha Bible to give an office update.

- Marsha reported that Unit 1982, our holding unit, is currently charging annual dues of \$25.00. Current dues of national and department combined are \$24.00. There are currently 151 members paid in that unit out of the goal of 193 members. The average unit dues in our department is currently \$28.00. The Department office sends cards to all paid members of unit 1872 which includes a thank you letter and a benefits letter. The \$1.00 doesn't cover the cost of the envelope, postage, and time to send these out. A motion was made by Jean Walker, seconded, and carried to charge \$28.00 dues effective with the 2022 membership year. After discussion, the motion was amended by Patti Coleman, seconded, and carried to instead charge \$30.00 for dues effective with the 2022 membership year.
- Marsha reported that the Auxiliary is the recipient of a V4V grant in the amount of \$7,500 for the Gift Shop Program. We are also assisting V4V with a grant that they are giving to the Minneapolis VA Health Care Center for the purchase of \$10,000 worth of gift cards. The Auxiliary will purchase the gift cards for the VA through our Scrip program. The proceeds from the Scrip purchases will go to the Girls State fund.
- Marsha reported that Unit Guides are currently being finalized and will be sent to the printer as soon as they are done.
- Marsha reported that the department has had difficulty in transitioning our credit card account that we hold with Wells Fargo over to her name. She requested permission to apply for a credit card for South Metro Federal Credit Union (our current bank). A motion was made by Roberta Elvecrog, seconded, and carried to allow that transferring credit cards be pursued.
- Marsha reported that the department currently does not have the equipment to provide Zoom capabilities at hybrid meetings. We would need additional computer(s) and several cameras, etc. She would like permission to pursue applying to the ALA Foundation for a grant to purchase Zoom equipment. National President Nicole Clapp provided some insight into the grant process and said that she wasn't sure if this type of request was covered or not, but we would have to provide 20% of the cost for all grants. A motion was made by Brandi Christensen, seconded, and carried that permission be given to pursue a grant.
- Marsha reported that our computer person, Bart from SmartBart Inc. has asked to retire because he works nights and sleeps days. We have had several issues and cannot continue to operate on having computer down time because of the timing of service calls. Marsha received 2 bids from companies that we might consider. One offers us an annual package that is quite comprehensive and requires a 36-month agreement with a monthly fee. The other company is

the one The American Legion uses and charges by incident. A motion was made by Linda Kelly, seconded, and carried to allow Marsha to pursue a replacement for SmartBart at her discretion.

- Marsha reported that we have a new large copier as of October 8th. Our lease was scheduled to be up in March. Marsha asked for costs involved in a buy-out or to have a new lease. We would be responsible for all repairs and supplies which are currently included in our service agreement. The new machines came out in September. Coordinated Business gave us a proposal that would basically replace the machine with a few upgrades and a cost that is approximately \$200 less per month. We had a meeting with The American Legion, VFW and VFW Auxiliary and they have all agreed to be a part of sharing in this lease.

President Mary called upon Treasurer Jan Lauby to give the Investment and Finance Report. Jan distributed a report which showed the current balances, membership comparisons between 2020 and 2021, comparison of new versus deceased members, a recap of the progression of on-line dues payments in the last 6 years and a comparison of donations between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

President Mary reported that both the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee were previously scheduled to meet if Fall Conference hadn't been cancelled. They have not met as of this date. The Audit began in early September and will hopefully be complete soon. Chairman Suzette Maluchnik will provide a report when that is complete.

President Mary reported that as of 10/16/2020 that \$3,082.50 had been donated to her President's Project. Donations to the Honorary Department Junior President's Project was \$575.00.

President Mary then called for a review by district of Unit possibilities and charter concerns.

- District 1 – Byron is an issue currently. Their membership chairman is 94 and in a nursing facility. No one has stepped forward to assist.
- District 2 - There is a possibility of a new unit at Elmore.
- District 3 - Waconia is looking to expand. They are hoping to get some of the St. Bonafacius members to transfer. Watertown has only 5 members.
- District 4 - Lester Tjernland is being held together by Virginia Whaley who is 98 years old.
- District 5 - None currently
- District 6 – Pillager has notified that they want to disband. St. Cloud has very few members and will eventually disband once their PUFL long time members have died.
- District 7 - Alexandria is experiencing difficulties.
- District 8 - There are 3 units being carried by the district for processing of membership. They have no officers. They are Mountain Iron #220, Orr #480 and Biwabik #160.
- District 9 - Strandquist and Warroad are issues. Greenbush wanted to turn their charter in, but President Jan and her crew met with them and they have a lot to offer their community. They will try to regroup and continue.
- District 10 - Robbinsdale and New Brighton – Robbinsdale has no officers. Brandi is working with New Brighton.

Secretary Marsha reported that there was an incorrect unit number submitted to national on the charter cancellations and Unit #582 Revere (2nd District) should have been cancelled. Instead Unit #382 Hawley (9th District) was cancelled. We got national to re-instate Hawley, but the charter cancellation of Revere won't take place until the February, 2020 NEC meeting.

President Mary reminded the District Presidents that them and their district membership teams should be making every attempt to work with the Units with problems. Department Membership Chairman, Sharon Thiemecke, is also available to assist when called. Everyone was reminded that if a Unit wishes to turn in their charter, they need to follow the policy that was approved at the August DEC meeting. If Units do wish to turn in their charter, all members should be assisted in transferring to another Unit or at the very least to the Department holding Unit #1982.

President Mary expressed concern about the Auxiliary Emergency Fund items that many members had prepared to bring to Fall Conference. Since Fall Conference was cancelled, she asked for ideas on how we can encourage units to turn those Silent Auction items into cash donations to the programs. There was the suggestion to have the grab bags available at a future rally. There were ideas of having an on-line auction as well. President Mary asked the districts to put the plea out to their members to try whatever works for their units to continue donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

President Mary called upon Raleen Tolzmann, NEC, to give her report of the previous NEC meeting. Raleen reported that the NEC participates in at least 4 meetings per year and told about their job description. She noted that every member of the NEC is required to sign a Confidentiality statement and that is only good for one level of the organization. All leadership should sign one for each level of participation that they are involved with. As of the February meeting last year, there were 8,089 units. There are currently now only 7,972 units. That is a loss of 117 Units in one years' time.

President Mary recognized that we had several special awards that were to be presented at both our department and national conventions. She presented them to the District Presidents who were entrusted with making sure they were given to the recipients.

Department President Award of Excellence Winners [Each recipient received a beautiful poppy mug]

Program	Unit #	Location	District	Winner
Americanism	415	Barnum	8	Shirley Goodwin
Children & Youth	330	Hayfield	1	Barb Oakland
Community Service	261	Kimball	6	Cindy May
Constitution & SR	330	Hayfield	1	JoAnn Buck
Education	311	Elysian	3	Patty Whitehurst
History – Senior	264	Glenville	1	Sandy Fredrickson
Junior Activities	29	Morris	7	Pam Gades
Leadership	202	Hackensack	6	Shirley Frederick
Legislation	216	Princeton	10	Sondra Erickson
Memorial	311	Elysian	3	Barb Kluender
National Security	343	Norwood/ Young America	3	LaVonne Kroells
Past Presidents Parley	303	Fridley	10	Kathy Bourdeaux
Poppy	102	Anoka	10	
Public Relations	202	Hackensack	6	Nancy Albrecht
VA&R	57	Chaska	3	Barbara Van Eyll
Service to Veterans	311	Elysian	3	Tamara Thayer

2019-2020 National Awards

Program	Winner
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	Children First Gift Club Caretaker Award for 2019-2020 to Pequot Lakes Unit #49
Certificate of Achievement	ALA Department of Minnesota (for contributing the largest donation to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund
Certificate	Morgan Weisbrich – Karlstad Unit #445 (Dist 9) Americanism Essay Contest – 1 st Place – NW Division – Class I - Grades 3-4
Certificate	Addie Athman – Pierz Unit #341 (Dist 6) 1 st Place – NW Division – Class II - Grades 2-3
Certificate	Alexia Jones – Osseo Unit #172 (Dist 10) 1 st Place – NW Division – Class I - Grades 4-5
Certificate	Janet Benson – Waite Park #428 (Dist 6) Volunteer Recruitment and Service Award – St Cloud VA Healthcare System Largest increase in active regularly scheduled volunteers & Volunteer hours

President Mary asked the members if they had reviewed the Employee Handbook and if they had any modifications that they recommended.

Secretary Marsha Bible noted that as of January 1, 2021, the state of Minnesota will add Vision Benefits to the Health and Dental Insurance. A motion was made by Brandi Christensen, seconded, and carried to add Vision Insurance to the page to be noted as follows:

Vision insurance is obtained through the State of Minnesota. The employer pays the full cost of the individual premium for all full-time employees. Dependent/spouse coverage is available through the same plan; the employee pays the additional cost. Enrollment is available upon employment and has a thirty (30) day waiting period. It becomes effective the first of the month following the thirty (30) day waiting period. Open enrollment occurs every other year unless changed by the State of Minnesota.

A motion was made by Patti Coleman, seconded, and carried to add a page entitled Unemployment. It would read as follows:

Contact your state Unemployment Insurance Agency for eligibility requirements and benefits information.

A motion was made by Patti Coleman, seconded, and carried that we make a change to the section entitled Parking & Mileage Reimbursement, second paragraph. It will now read:

The mileage rate paid to Auxiliary employees when on official business is equal to the IRS posted rate, with the Department Secretary to check twice a year to check the current posted rate and make changes as the IRS makes changes. (On official business was added)

President Mary asked if there was any other business and there was none. She also called on National President Nicole Clapp to bring any final remarks. Nicole noted that she had already tagged our DEC meeting on her Facebook page and that we should check it out. She thanked us for the invitation to participate virtually even though we couldn't do so with her in person.

Secretary Marsha reported that Jean Walker gave her Karen Thygeson's Past Department President pin to be used for the next Department President from the 9th District. It will be in safe keeping at the Department office.

President Mary thanked everyone in attendance for changing their plans a second time and attending the DEC in person.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Marsha Bible
Department Secretary