

1st Vice President – Membership Bulletin

January 2019

Bertha (Bert) Lema

Nancy has processed all Dues Remittance forms for renewals/life member hospital donation fees that she received as of January 14th. Anything that Nancy has forwarded to me has been duly recorded on our Department 1st Vice President local rosters. You have each received a packet from me with your rosters as they appeared on December 31st, explanation letter, and notices of 2019 dues increases. Corrected membership totals will be shared at the upcoming Spring SEC meetings and will be posted in future newsletters and/or bulletins, as well as elsewhere.

While working with Nancy to process your membership applications and renewals, a few issues that I believe worthy of discussion in this bulletin so that they can benefit other auxiliaries who encounter similar problems in the future. I will not include local auxiliary identifying information because none of our locals are exempt from them:

- Some of our locals are still not in good standing because hospital fees for each life member have not yet been received by Department. Additionally, our VAVS representatives rely on this money so they receive timely allocations to cover activities and programs for our hospitalized veterans. So that all our locals remain in good standing and VAVS have an appropriate allocation for their projects, it is highly recommended that each local send one check to cover \$3 for every life member early on during the membership renewal process. No Dues Remittance form is required. For example, if you have 50 life members, send a \$150 check to Department with an explanatory note as to what it covers. Collect the \$3 hospital donations from your life members to cover your upfront payments.
- If you have questions about how to process membership or any other topic related to your duties as 1st Vice President contact your District or Department 1st Vice President for help. That's our job. Do not wait until the deadline for submitting renewals is looming or you receive a phone call from one of us or a packet of information in the mail telling you that there's a problem. Do not be afraid to reach out for assistance. It is a lot easier for us to help you resolve problems if we're not working at the 11th hour.
- When Nancy says that there's a specific deadline and that there are "no exceptions", trust me – she means it! She also has deadlines to meet for her paperwork to National to ensure that Michigan is compliant. If you are mailing something to her that is any time during that week before her no exceptions deadline, pay the extra postage and send it by priority mail. You will save yourself a lot of phone calls, headaches, and local members complaining about having to shell out more money because you missed a deadline.
- Any member who tries to renew now is too late. That former member may reapply for membership, submit verification of eligibility, and pay the increased fees that went into effect January 2019. Please check the information sheet included in that recent mailing that you received from me.

- Ask your Local Auxiliary President to share the monthly newsletter with you. Also, anyone with access to a computer should be able to access our Michigan AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary website where you can find bulletins, updated monthly, that provide advice, information, and insight into all our programs. Please note that the updated version of our website will be up and running very soon. Be sure to check I out.

Michigan has a very long list of MALs which I recently cleared and am going to share with our 1st Vice Presidents. Our goal is to encourage some of these women to transfer from MAL status to a local auxiliary. After discussing my findings with Nancy, we also believe that many of the long-time members who failed to respond to repeat mailings or perhaps formerly belonged to an auxiliary which lost its charter may now be deceased. I will include a cover letter regarding what I would like the local auxiliaries to do with the list.

However, I would also like you to pay attention to any name which I have circled and written a possible date of death. Nancy and I believe that many of the members recorded as Michigan MALs are deceased. If you recognize any of these names and can confirm that they are deceased, please let me know.

Before sending a note to Nancy indicating that you have no contact with a life member and having asked that she transfer a member to MAL status, use a little bit of online research to see if you can find out what happened to this woman. Check with other long-time members to see if they are in contact with her. As a last-ditch effort, try clearing the name using the following website: <http://www.obitsarchive.com/obituaries/usa/michigan>. Fill in as much information as possible but if something is unknown, leave it blank. Select the last known city of residence from the list indicated and hit search. You can also simply type in a person's name and birthdate or age, city and state or residence in whatever search engine you use. If that member is now deceased, you should be easily able to obtain that information from either of these sources. Rather than keep paying those hospital fees every year for someone you can no longer hear from or have been able find, take the time to do the research. If you need help, let me know.

Our Michigan AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary very much appreciates the good work that you are doing for veterans, military families, children and our communities. You should all be very proud of those projects and how those good deeds reflect on your local auxiliary. Thank you all so very much!

In Service to Veterans and their Families.

Bert

You are always encouraged to contact me to share information and/or ask any membership-related questions. If you are holding a local membership project or event, let me know. Your ideas could benefit others! If you have a membership topic that you would like me to discuss, pass it along! I can be reached by email at lema81@wowway.com or by phone at 586.214.1019.