

July 2019

Happy July, Everyone! I hope that you are all enjoying your summer and finding ways to beat the heat.

I admit having a bit of a writer's block about what to focus on in this month's bulletin. In my quest to come up with a topic of interest keeping with my theme to *Focus on the Future*, I have researched ideas used by other nonprofit organizations, spoken to some of our Past Department Presidents, and other Local Auxiliary leaders. What appears below, is my take on that information.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

When our founding members met so many years ago to develop the by-laws and rules that would govern our organization, our Department Auxiliary was a much different group of women. They had just experienced WWII as the wives, widows, sisters, and mothers of those who served and died to protect our freedom. Some of them were themselves veterans. They knew first-hand the sacrifices that had been made. They formed our AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary in honor of those sacrifices and to aid our veterans, their families and communities through what they hoped would be times of peace and prosperity. These were ladies who did not know what the future would hold but wanted "To help unify divergent groups in the overall interest of American democracy." (AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary Manual, *Aims and Purposes*, #3).

Some of our founding leaders, acted as mentors to those who followed. They worked hard to provide us with the building blocks for our AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. They also realized for the organization they built and loved to remain successful they needed to help groom a new generation of equally dedicated women to become our future leaders.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

So, "What does all that have to do with me?", you are probably asking yourself. If you are a current or past leader at any level of the organization, I am asking you to reach out to the newer members and offer to help them learn about our Auxiliary. If you are one of those former leaders who thinks that there is no one capable of taking on the mantle of leadership, think again. Where did you start as an officer? Who helped you become more knowledgeable? Pay it forward and be that person for the next generation of leaders.

And, do not be afraid of change. We all do things a bit differently than did our predecessors. Our successors will be the same. Be supportive of their ideas and get involved in their efforts. Give them the space to spread their wings, try new things, and let the organization make the transformational changes that it needs to move into the future. I am betting you will be pleasantly surprised.

If you are one of those newer members who is willing and motivated to move into leadership positions, reach out to a current or former leader who you trust and ask her to mentor you. Educate yourself by reading our Constitution, By-Laws, Standing Rules and Handbook. Ask for advice. Present those new and bold ideas. If initially they are not supported, try again another day. Do not think you cannot do it, you can! Everyone starts somewhere. Do not be afraid to make mistakes! They happen to us all; learn from them and move on. Jump in with both feet and help make our AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department of Michigan the best in the Country!

Yours in service to Veterans and their Families,

Bert

I will be contacting all Local Auxiliary President's over the next few months to share information and answer questions. If you have a 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.