

AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary 75th National Convention
August 14 – 21, 2021 Greensboro, North Carolina
Dolores “Dee” Baggett, National President “Always Remember”

National convention was a welcome event for many attendees. At the usual pre-convention meetings, Auxiliary sisters were seen hugging each other, bumping elbows, giving “air fives” and/or giving air kisses as they happily saw folks they missed. I attended the following meetings:

National Sacks/Sackettes Sunday, August 15

- Joint Opening & Memorial Service
- Business meetings and elections
 - 2021-22 National Saddest: Cathy Argyle
 - 2021-22 National Snappiest: Faye Richardson-Green

Pre-convention Committees Tuesday, August 17

- *History & Scrapbook* – (Monday, August 16) judged entries. I wish Michigan Auxiliaries would enter!
- *Hospital & VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services)* – recommended changes to donated cell phones (\$100), cell phone chargers (\$5), pill bottles (\$0.50) and masks (\$5+1 hour each) be sent to the convention floor for voting
- *Americanism/SOS* – chairperson clarified Americanism is an AMVETS program that they should “own.” Discussion content focused on Freedom’s Foundation weekend (October 7-10, 2021) and the various projects various auxiliaries reported: (examples: Wreaths Across America, Honor Flights, care boxes to active-duty personnel, driving vets to appointments, Vets visiting as classroom “grandparents”)
- *Constitution & Bylaws* – several recommendations from states and pre-convention committees including requested uniform changes, guidelines for electronic meetings (video & telephone) presented later on the convention floor.

National Auxiliary Training Tuesday, Aug 17

- Theme: “Service You Can Trust”
- Overviewed both AMVETS and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary service programs. Emphasized the importance of supporting, promoting and becoming familiar with the content on the department and national AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Service Foundation websites. Knowing what’s there could be helpful to recruitment efforts.

- Keep membership forms handy.
- Be open to ideas and activities that could attract younger members. Keep meetings short and on track. Assign new members tasks as soon as possible to increase engagement.
- Distributed a “Service Program Reference Sheet” and a “Request for Volunteer Assistance” form

Council of NEC Women Tuesday, August 17

- Opened at 4:05pm by NEC president, Joann Whynot-Butler with prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the roll call of officers and members (20 members in attendance)
- Whynot-Butler stated the purpose of the Council is for consultation, exchange of ideas, and suggesting/presenting of recommendations or resolutions
- No recommendations or resolutions presented, suggested or discussed
- Discussion centered on whether hours, money or miles can be claimed for projects benefiting AMVETS/Auxiliary/SOA/Riders. Response was NO.
- New NEC president for 2021-22 elected – Barbara Montagne, NEC Alaska
- Received 2022 Committee Appointment Recommendations Sheet for any local Auxiliary member who plans to attend convention in 2022 and wants to serve on a committee
- Meeting adjourned 4:35pm (Michigan attendees: Faye Richardson-Green. Pat Michalski, Dept Pres Cel Rose Solak)

Post-Convention NEC Saturday, August 21

- Called to order by outgoing President Dee Baggett at 11am
- Invocation, presentation of colors and Pledge of Allegiance were done by the outgoing officers
- Roll call by National Executive Director, PNP Carol King (all 19 officers & committee chairpersons from 2020-2021 plus 5 non-officer PNPs and 22 NEC women present)
- Treasurer PNP Barbara Guth presented the 2022 National Convention budget (New Orleans, LA). PNP Barbara Guth moved the income total \$25,545 be approved. PNP Kathy Berning 2nd the motion. Motion carried. PNP Barbara Guth then moved the expense total \$25,545 be approved. PNP Barbara Valley 2nd the motion. Motion carried.
- A member of the National Executive Committee needed to be elected to the Finance Committee. PNP Linda McGriff nominated PNP Leslie Wunderle to the committee. She was subsequently elected.

- Outgoing President Dee Baggett announced that the National Auxiliary Silver Helmet Humanitarian Award recipient for 2022 will be “The Good Cemeterian” Andrew Lumish who started a movement that became The Good Cemeterian Historical Preservation Project. It’s mission is “to restore and honor the past through inspiration and education.” He and his volunteers restore headstones while researching the lives of the people named and ensuring they are not forgotten, especially those that served in the military.
- Recently elected officers presented their themes and projects:
 - 1st VP Karin Simmons (AZ) – “Membership: Watch Us Grow”
 - 2nd VP Amy Stopyra (PA) – “Children – Our Eyes and Ears of Today” (John Tracy Clinic)
 - 3rd VP Cindy Rice (OH) – “Be The Difference” (PAWS With A Cause)
 - Americanism Officer Mary Lanphere (NY) – “Honor and Respect” (Freedoms Foundation – replace windows project)
 - Scholarship Officer Laurie Shea (IL) – “Knowledge is Power: A scholarship helps bring it through”
 - Hospital Officer Laura Bugaj (NY) – “Band Together for Hospital” (St Jude Hospital and increasing our presence at VA Medical Centers)
 - Chaplain Alice Delzer (ND) – “Serving God & Those Who Served”
 - Sergeant-At-Arms Debra Gass (IN) – “Respect on the Convention Floor” (increase awareness and emphasis on our National Flag)
- PNP & outgoing Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis moved to accept officer programs and themes. Motion carried.
- Newly elected President Joan Sirek presented her 2021-2022 theme, project and appointments:
 - Theme – “Honor Our Heroes” (includes the military, veterans and 1st responders)
 - Project – Freedoms Foundation – replacing 82 windows in MacArthur Hall at \$1000/window. Will also have pins available at \$5ea as well as promote the Auxiliary weekend October 7-10, 2021.
 - Appointments:
 - Finance Committee – Ginny Rominger
 - 2023 Convention Chair – TBA

- Parliamentarian – PNP Marvell Ruppel
 - Junior AMVETS Coordinator – Fran McGurk
 - Honors & Awards Chairman – Faye Richardson-Green
 - History/Scrapbook Chairman – Paula Cummings
 - President’s Scrapbook – Charlene Wagner
 - Training Chairman – PNP Heidi Dineen-Serpis
 - VAVS Rep (2yr term) – Marie Rorrio
- PNP Heidi Dineen-Serpis moved to accept the president’s theme, project and appointments. PNP Barbara Guth 2nd. Motion carried.
 - Colors retired, benediction given and meeting adjourned by the outgoing officers Sgt-at-Arms Deb Gass, Chaplain Mary Lanphere and President Dee Baggett.

Submitted by PDP & NEC Woman Faye Richardson-Green

August 31, 2021