

**POST-NEC MEETING  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
PITTSBURGH PA 8/22/2023**

The meeting was called to order by Nat'l. Pres. Karin Simmons. Then basic procedures were followed: invocation, presentation of Colors, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, etc.

PNP Kathy Berning was elected to the Finance Committee.

The Humanitarian Award recipient for the coming year is Chris Kroeze. He was a runner up on the Voice and spends his time and talents entertaining our troops all over the world. He was submitted for this award by the Dept. of Iowa.

The new Officers for 2023/24 presented their program for the coming year:

- National President Amy Stopyra (Pennsylvania) whose project this year is the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA). Her theme is "Foster Connections".

The mission of the NFPA is to be a voice for foster and adoptive parents through networking, education and advocacy. As Foster parents, Amy and her family create connections with children placed with them and make sure they create a connection with their families while helping the children to get back home.

I am sure we will hear more about how we can help support the NFPA during the coming year.

- National First Vice President Cindy Rice (Ohio) is looking forward to working with the Department and local 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Presidents to increase and retain memberships.

Cindy's theme is "Unite Through Membership, Stay for the Journey". She will be offering suggestions on increasing membership in AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary – and retaining those membership.

- National Second Vice President Mary Lanphere (New York). Mary's theme is "Impact the Future of a Child". She will be sending suggestions on projects and looks forward to sharing ideas.

The National Child Welfare project is John Tracy Center for hearing impaired children. Mary also reminded us to have our event approved by your Auxiliary and to keep records of donations, hours, etc. for service reports.

- National Third Vice President Laura Bugaj (New York) has the theme "Anything is Pawsible" and the National Community Service program is Paws With A Cause. Laura would like to see Auxiliaries work together with each other and with the AMVETS and Sons of AMVETS.

Laura has lived with Multiple Sclerosis for 5 years, so she understands the importance of maintaining personal independence and autonomy. PAWS makes this possible for many through custom-trained assistance dogs.

- National Americanism Officer Debra Gass (Indiana) is using the theme “United We Stand – Divided We Fall” and will use it to inspire unity and collaboration.

The National program for Americanism is Freedoms Foundation. Her goal is to motivate Departments and Local Auxiliaries to dedicate their efforts promoting the programs Freedoms Foundation has to offer.

- National Scholarship Officer Allison Aldrich (Michigan) is using the theme “Knowledge is Power – and we are here to Empower You”. Her project is Education is the key to success and she is hoping for donations so we can empower all to further their education with one of our scholarships.

Allison is asking Department Scholarship Officers to get creative and begin planning events to benefit the scholarship fund.

- National Hospital Officer Donna Tolland (Maryland) will be mental health awareness and “Stopping the Stigma”. More and more research is being done to help us understand the full impact of mental health, physically, emotionally and mentally.

The National program for Hospital is St Jude’s Childrens Hospital. Donna plans to provide various ideas to get out, get active and help raise monies.

- National Sgt-at-Arms Mary McKinnon (Pennsylvania) has the theme “Stand for our Flag”.

- National Chaplain Laurie Shea (Illinois) has selected the theme “Let your faith guide you in the right direction.” She reminds Chaplains to help their Auxiliary members get through hard times and let them know you are there for them. Send condolence cards, thinking of you cards, etc.

President Elect appointments are:

Convention Chairman Debbie Dant - Illinois

Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis - Maine

Jr. AMVET Coordinator Denise Speigle - Ohio

Honors & Awards Chairman Leslie Wunderle - Alaska

History/Scrapbook Chairman Paulette Joy - Alaska

President’s Scrapbook Janet Buterbaugh - Pennsylvania

Training Chairman Linda McGriff - Texas

VAVS Representative Marie Rorrio – Maine

After the retirement of Colors and the benediction, the Post NEC meeting was adjourned and I headed for home.

I would like to add a personal note. Except for a slight illness on Wednesday and an embarrassing fall on Thursday (No – I did not get hurt), I really enjoyed this convention. The hotel was nice. The staff members were helpful. The view of Pittsburgh from our hotel window was awesome.

The convention was well run (except there were a few glitches during the election of Officers). In case you were wondering, I also liked Dallas Texas, St Louis Missouri, Louisville Kentucky and Greensboro North Carolina.

Next year (2024) the National Convention is in Illinois, and the following year (2025) in Missouri.

Submitted by  
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