**American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 291**
**215 15th Street, Newport Beach, CA 92663**
**GENERAL MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**
**Date: March 18, 2026 Time: 6:00pm**

- **CALL TO ORDER – Silence your cell phones**
- **Posting of the Colors**
- **Placement of POW/MIA Cover**—Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain
- **Chaplain's Prayer**–Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain
- **Pledge of Allegiance** - Janz Simmons, Sgt-at-Arms
- **Music**– Mary Ann Leonard, Music Chair – Song selection is Star Spangled Banner
- **Preamble of the Constitution of the ALA** – see Projector screen
- **Roll Call of Officers** – Leslie Dinkel, Secretary

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | President<br>Cynthia Minucci Neal | P | Chaplain<br>Mary Ann Leonard | E | Executive Committee & Parliamentarian<br>Peggy Bengry |
| P | 1st Vice President<br>Bobbi Renaghan | P | Historian<br>Mary Beth Martin | E | Executive Committee<br>Janet du Monceau de Bergendal |
| P | 2nd Vice President<br>Bonnie Robertson | P | Sergeant at Arms<br>Stacy Eickhoff | P | Executive Committee<br>Janice Flanaghan |
| E | Secretary<br>Leslie Dinkel | P | Asst. Sergeant at Arms<br>Becky Cooper | E | Executive Committee<br>Dana Johnston |
| E | Treasurer<br>Laura Farr | P | Jr. Past President<br>Mary Beth Martin | P | Executive Committee<br>Jan Woolford |

P=Present E=Excused A=Absent Quorum = 9

- **Officer Substitutions:** Veronica Andler-Lopez for Leslie Dinkel
- **Special Guests**
  - Caroline Miller, Girls State – introduction of the 2026 Girls State delegates going to the University of California at Riverside for the 2026 Girls State event. Our unit is sending 27 delegates.
  - Maureen O'Brian Sullivan-Saco, National Western Division Leadership Chair – Visited our Unit to introduce herself running for the National 2027-2028 1st Vice President.
- **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes for the General Monthly Membership Meeting held on February 18, 2026. A motion was made to dispense the reading of the minutes. Motion was made, 2nd and carried. The minutes were approved as written.
- **This month Dimes for Times** – Community Service for Community Services

## REPORTS

- **President, Cynthia Minucci Neal**
  - Gave an update on our Secretary, Leslie Dinkel, and wishing her a speedy recovery. Introduced Veronica Andler-Lopez and thanked her for stepping in as Secretary.
  - QR code – The QR code will be up on the screen and have Note: We were unable to use the code for the meeting.
  - SignUpGenius password remains the same. Any questions or need assistance contact info@ala291 for further help.
- **1st Vice President / Membership, Dana Johnston**
  - Current membership as of 03/18/2026 is: Seniors 1,805 and Juniors 33 totals 1,838. Looking at opening membership April/May.
- **2nd Vice President / Fundraising, Bonnie Robertson**
  - Thanked everyone for attending the Palm Royale Party held on March 7th. Also thanked the Events Committee for all their hard work on a successful fundraiser.

- May 17th – Quartermania - Register to attend and pay on SignUpGenius or can sign up and pay by credit card at the Front Office.
- August 22nd - Mad Hatter Tea Party thinking of having a fashion show of bridesmaid dresses and crazy hats.
- October 22nd - Holiday Boutique will include Halloween through Christmas.
- December 5th – A vote was taken of the membership on either having a white elephant exchange or a Christmas Tea Party. A hand vote was taken and the membership voted on having a Christmas Tea Party..

- Secretary, Leslie Dinkel – No Report
- Treasurer, Laura Farr – No Report
- Chaplain, Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
- **Historian, Mary Beth Martin**
  - Timekeeping - Spoke to the members about the national average hourly costs of volunteer hours has a price point valued at $34.95 per hour Nationally and California is $40.14 per hour.
  - Historian - Creating Unit 291 Historical book to take to convention this year. Asked the members to send photos and a brief description of who is in the photo and what event. Send to pastpresident@ala291.com
  - Historian - Announced will not be running as Historian for next year.
  - Past President Parley – Nominates the upcoming Member of the Year. Asking for members to recommend a member they feel should be nominated represents Member of the Year. Send the name of the member and a couple of lines as to why you feel they have stepped and up this year. Send recommendation before April 7th to pastpresident@ala291.com.
  - Miscellaneous – Received additional covers from the SONS for membership card and parking access card. See after meeting to receive a cover.
- Parliamentarian, Peggy Bengry – No Report
- Executive Committee – Bobbi Renaghan, Jan Woolford, Janice Flanagan, Dana Johnston, & Peggy Bengry – No Report
- Junior Past President, Mary Beth Martin – No Report

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

- **Americanism, Diane Torrence** – No Report
  - The Chair introduced Diane to the membership as the new Americanism chair.
- Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Jan Woolford – No Report
- Chair Covers, Janz Simmons – No Report
- Children & Youth, Myra Alvermann – No Report
- **Community Donations, Christine Beilby – Read by Veronica Andler-Lopez**
  - The Executive Board has approved the following motion(s) to move forward to the General Monthly meeting for membership approval
    - **Name of Charity: Patriots & Paws** **Suggested Donation $1,000**

      Patriots & Paws Gold Tournament Date: March 2026

      RATIONAL: In 2025, Patriots & Paws celebrated their 15th year and have helped over 20,000 Veterans, Active Duty and Reservists, providing them a very conservative value of $22.5 million of home goods and furnishing. They reduce psychological and financial stress to our Veterans as they transition into civilian life from Active Duty Reservists as they are returning from deployment, by providing basic home furnishings and necessities at no cost, resulting in hope and dignity. Because of your participation in this special golf event,

you allow the ability to continue our mission and help even more Veterans.

**MOTION:** The Executive Board moves to donate $1,000 to Patriots & Paws in order for four veterans to participate in the annual golf tournament on June 9th. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

- **Charity: Sons of the American Legion** **Suggested Donation: $1,600**

Fairways of Honor 2026 Golf Tournament March 2026

SONS 291 mission is to empower veterans through coming together and engaging in the simplest of activities. In becoming a sponsor of the SONS Annual Fairways of Honor Golf Tournament, you will be helping a veteran! You will be assisting them to adjust to their lives back home so they will become successful in their own mission. This fun filled weekend to simply bring veterans together and help raise funds so that we may be able to assist them during crucial moments in their lives.

MOTION: The Executive Board moves to donate $1,600 to SONS of the American Legion for the Fairways of Honor 2026 Golf Tournament March 2026 in order for a foursome of veterans to participate in the tournament and to sponsor the 9th hole. Motion was made, 2nd, and motion carried.

- **Community Service, Heidi Sargeant given by committee members Kelly & Julie** Pulino
  - Kelly & Julie Committee members have been busy spreading the word in the community.
    - March 21st - March Ruck has available volunteer positions. Volunteer positions will be out as soon as we receive the information that is available. Suggested attire is branded Auxiliary tee shirts
  - **Bonnie Pollack, Project Bearable**
    - February project bearable meeting had 39 members show up at the meeting and completed at home to cut, sew, stuff and hand sew closed with labels. Delivered in February to St Judes Cancer Center for Valentines Day.
- Constitution & Bylaws, Janet du Monceau de Bergendal – No Report
- **Education, Barbara Melum**
  - Working with Newport – Mesa Foundation for the teacher grants and awards dinner will be on April 29th.
  - Memorial Day Poppy posters will be due on April 30th.
- Girls State, Caroline Miller – No Report
- Juniors, Stacy Eickhoff – No Report
- Leadership, Dana Johnston – No Report
- Legislative, Pia Thompson – No Report
- Music, Mary Ann Leonard – No Report
  - The song will be *Star Spangled Banner*
- National Security – Karren Schaeffer – No Report
- Past President Parley, Mary Beth Martin – Report was given
- **Poppies – Bobbi Renaghan**
  - Thanked all that came out to the Poppy Envelope Stuffing. The money raised from the Poppies sent out all goes to VA & R.
- **Public Relations, Heidi Sergeant** – given by committee members Kelli Walden & Julie Pulino
  - March Ruck – Kelly & Julie went out in the community to the local stores asking for support by placing flyer in window. Businesses were very supportive. Newport Beach mayor will be at the Post.

- A big thanks to Heidi for a superior job with Public Relations. Has ABC News, and KTLA news coverage. Also has Stu News and Orange County Register coverage.

➢ Submitted an article to the ALA magazine regarding the Paralyzed Veterans of CA regarding the Super Bowl party several members went to watch the game, serve pizza, waters, snacks and candy during the game. Received special thank you for sharing the day with the patients.

❖ **Salute to Service, Julie Sanborn**

➢ May 18th Salute to Service – Spoke about Salute to Service Volunteering options.

❖ **Troop Shipping, Maureen Madigan**

➢ Introduced Maureen to the members.

➢ First Troop Shipping - Stuffed 40 boxes to ship out and came back a couple of days later and packed 20 more boxes.

❖ Time Keeper, Mary Beth Martin – No Report

❖ **VA & R, Marilyn Anania**

➢ Updated on the VA& R (Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation) spoke about the

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

❖ **Old Business**

➢ **Stacy Eickhoff, Nominating Committee Chair - Spoke about the process of the nominating / election committee. The elections will be on May 20, 2026 from 2pm – 6pm prior to the General Membership Meeting.**

❖ **The 2026 / 2027 Election Slate**

**President:** Cynthia Minucci Neal

**1st Vice:** Bobbi Renaghan

**2nd Vice:** Bonnie Robertson

**Secretary:** Open

**Treasurer:** Open

**Chaplain:** Karen Schaeffer

**Historian:** Sue Lindsay

**Sgt-at-Arms:** Stacy Eickhoff

**A/Sgt-at-Arms:** Becky Cooper

**Executive Committee:**

Dana Johnston

Jan Woolford

Janice Flanagan

Peggy Bengry

Janet du Monceau de Bergendal

**Nominating Committee**

Stacy Eickhoff, Chair
Bibbi Renaghan
Becky Cooper
Vera Rowe
Kim Philhart

**Election Committee**

Stacy Eickhoff, Chair
Bobbi Reneghan
Becky Cooper
Vera Rowe - Teller
Sheila Tubbs - Teller
Kim Philhart- Teller

❖ **New Business**

**NEXT GENERAL MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING** – The next meeting is Wednesday April 15, 2026, in the Main Hall at 6:00pm.

**NEXT DISTRICT MEETING** – The next District meeting will be on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 10:00am located at Unit 281.

❖ **Removal of POW/MIA Chair cover / Closing Prayer – Mary Ann Leonard, Chaplain**

**ADJOURNMENT – Time: 7:36pm**