American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 291
215 15th Street, Newport Beach, CA 92663
Date: July 15, 2026 Time: approximately 6:02 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

- **CALL TO ORDER** - President Cynthia Minucci Neal called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02p.m
- **Officer Substitutions** - None recorded.
- **The colors were posted**
- **Placement of POW/MIA Cover and Chaplain's Prayer** - Led by Karren Schaeffer, Chaplain.
- **Pledge of Allegiance and ALA Preamble** - The pledge and preamble were recited.
- **Roll Call of Officers** - Read by Veronica Andler-Lopez, Secretary.

P	President Cynthia Minucci Neal	P	Chaplain Karren Schaeffer	P	Parliamentarian & Executive Committee Peggy Bengry
P	1st Vice President Bobbi Renaghan	P	Historian Sue Lindsey	P	Executive Committee Janet du Monceau de Bergendal
P	2nd Vice President Bonnie Robertson	P	Sergeant at Arms Stacy Eickhoff	P	Executive Committee Janice Flanaghan
P	Secretary Veronica Andler-Lopez		Asst. Sergeant at Arms Open	P	Executive Committee Dana Johnston
P	Treasurer Jan Kennedy	P	Jr. Past President Mary Beth Martin	P	Executive Committee Jan Woolford

P=Present E=Excused A=Absent Quorum = 15

- **Special Guests** - District 29 President Cindy Edes ~~Eades~~ and past Unit 291 presidents Mary Beth Martin, Mary Carolan Caroline, Kendall Madison ~~Madser~~ and Peggy Bengry ~~Bengray~~ were recognized.
- **Initiation of New Members** - Dana Johnston presented Joan Burt, Ramona Garrett, Kelly Martow, Jennifer Lucasi Fulati, Sally Peterbeck, Elizabeth Brogo, Cheryl Hoyn, Molly Setmeyer, Joanna Palmquist, and Carolyn Todd. Dana moved to accept the candidates; Stacy Eickhoff seconded. The motion carried by voice vote, and the candidates completed the membership pledge.
- **Approval of Previous Minutes** - A motion to waive the reading was approved by voice vote. No corrections were offered, and the previous General Membership Meeting minutes were approved.
- **Dimes for Times** - The July collection was designated for Girls State.

OFFICER REPORTS

- **President, Cynthia Minucci Neal** - Introduced the consolidated QR-code process for meeting sign-in and volunteer-hour reporting. Members were asked to finish any January-June 2026 entries and use the monthly July form; questions may be directed to volunteerhours@ala291.com.
- **1st Vice President / Membership, Bobbi Renaghan** - Reported 1,893 senior members and 36 junior members, for a total membership of 1,929.
- **2nd Vice President / Fundraising, Bonnie Robertson** - Announced the October 4 Mad Hatter Tea Party (11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.), October 22 Holiday Boutique (4:00-7:00 p.m.), November 2 Sock Hop raffle-envelope stuffing (10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.), December 8 White Elephant Party (6:00-9:00 p.m.), and March 6 Sock Hop Gala. Guests may attend the tea party.
- **Secretary, Veronica Andler-Lopez** - Reported July correspondence, including scholarship and appreciation letters from Isabella Mello, the Costa Mesa Senior Center quilters, Selena Busby, Sacramento Military Family Outreach, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, and Ronald McDonald House Orange County.
- **Treasurer, Jan Kennedy** - Reported that the prior-year financial report was complete and ready for the CPA. Her first reconciled monthly report will be presented at the next meeting.
- **Chaplain / National Security, Karren Schaeffer** - Asked members to provide written notice of illnesses, surgeries, births, milestone birthdays, and losses so appropriate outreach can be made. Printed contact information will be available at the next meeting; the chaplain email was being repaired.
- **Historian, Sue Lindsey** - Will provide monthly history updates and requested event photos for the annual report and the ALA Unit 291 Facebook page. Materials may be sent to historian@ala291.com.

- **Jr. Past President, Mary Beth Martin** - Presented President Cynthia Minucci Neal with the completed presidential history book, which earned first place at the Department convention.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- **Community Donations, Kara Demostene** - Presented three donation motions on behalf of the Donations Committee/ Executive Board.

  Motion 1: Donate $1,000 to Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing to support therapeutic fly-fishing programs for active-duty military personnel and veterans. M/S/C

  Motion 2: Donate $1,000 to Cell Dogs for service-dog training benefiting veterans and first responders with PTSD. M/S/C

  Motion 3: Donate $600 to Patriots and Paws so eight veterans could attend the third annual Veterans Comedy Show and Dinner on July 18, 2026. M/S/C
- **Community Service / Project Bearable, Bonnie Pollack** - Reported 186 bears delivered in July and 658 bears delivered over six months. Strong Families requested 150 bears for August, November, and December. The next work session is August 24 in the Fireside Room, with approximately 300 bears to complete.
- **National Security, Karren Schaeffer** - Announced the American Red Cross blood drive for Monday, October 12, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to approximately 3:45 p.m. The prior drive had 50 donors; sign-up information and a QR code will be available at the next meeting.
- **Poppy, Bobbi Renaghan** - Reported on the year's Poppy fundraising and announced that the campaign will continue next year with a $50,000 goal.
- **Public Relations, Heidi Sargeant** - Reported the Unit's $1,000 sponsorship of the September Tunnels to Towers 5K and encouraged members to walk, volunteer, or donate. Wreaths Across America information will be reposted, with outreach planned for October and November before the mid-November wreath deadline.
- **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Marilyn Anania** - Reported ongoing support for veteran students, housing programs, U.S. Vets Orange County and Long Beach, the Long Beach VA, Fisher House, women-veteran programs, and related community partners.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Off-site Storage** - Janet du Monceau de Bergendal reported that an off-site storage agreement had been signed on July 10, 2026, allowing supplies and event materials to be moved from the Post storage area.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Vacancy** - Stacy Eickhoff reported that the Executive Board accepted the resignation of the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms and that the Standing Rules would be reviewed to improve the vacancy procedure.
- **Nominations** - Elizabeth Acosta, Karen Bartolik, and Mary Ann Leonard were nominated and accepted nomination for Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms. With no further nominations, nominations were closed.
- **Election** - Voting will be held Wednesday, August 19, 2026, from 4:00-6:00 p.m., before the General Membership Meeting. Members must present a current membership card to receive a ballot.
- **Troop Shipping** - Members discussed resuming larger troop shipments and possible support for Camp Pendleton families. Smaller shipments have continued when destination contacts and installation access are available.
- **Member Name Badges,** Cynthia Minucci Neal stated that - New members may obtain ordering instructions from the Secretary. Online orders may require four to six weeks or longer during National Convention operations.
- **Back-to-School Drive** - A request was made to post the drive flyer on the ALA Unit 291 Facebook page. The President will follow up with the responsible chair.
- **NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING** - August 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room; election voting will be open from 4:00-6:00 p.m.
- **Closing Prayer and POW/MIA Ceremony** - The Chaplain offered the closing prayer and retired the POW/MIA chair cover. The colors remained in place.

ADJOURNMENT - President Cynthia Minucci Neal declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Veronica Andler-Lopez, Secretary
Minutes presented for approval at the August 19, 2026 General Membership Meeting.