

ALA TODAY

LATEST ALA NHQ NEWS AND UPDATES

WHAT HAS OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT BEEN UP TO? 2023 AMERICAN LEGION WASHINGTON CONFERENCE



On Sunday, Feb. 26, ALA leadership headed to Washington, D.C. to participate in the 2023 American Legion Washington Conference. They were joined by department VA&R chairmen, several PNPs, some NEC members, NDVPs, and NHQ staff.

Monday kicked off with a Camp Lejeune education session and moved on to Legion commission meetings, including VA&R, VE&E, National Security, and Legislative. This year, the commander's Know Before You Go presentation was held on Monday evening, with Commander's Call early Tuesday morning, followed by Capitol Hill appointments. Wednesday, March 1, was the Commander's Testimony before Congress.

National President's February Travel

- New Mexico Department Visit
- 89th Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage
- Arizona Department Visit
- Indianapolis - Convention Planning, NEC Meeting
- American Legion Washington Conference

National President's March Travel

- Virginia Department Visit
- South Carolina Department Visit
- California Department Visit
- Illinois Department Visit
- Washington Department Visit
- Oregon Department Visit



National President at NHQ

Staff received a special treat when National President Vickie Koutz visited the NHQ offices on Thursday and Friday prior to the Mid-Year NEC Meeting. During this visit, President Vickie met with the Communications and Marketing Division to film a short video for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. She then spent Thursday afternoon with members of the Events Team, Executive/Administration Team, Communications, and our producer John Paulsel to review concepts for the 2023 National Convention. Production themes, stage celebrations, and States Dinner were just a few of the exciting topics discussed for convention, which will be held in Charlotte, N.C., later this year.

On Friday, President Vickie met with Deputy Executive Director Tamara Shumate, Executive Administrative Assistant Sommer Prim, and Professional Parliamentarian Chris Dickey to do a script read-through and review parliamentary procedures for the Mid-Year NEC Meeting.

A huge shout-out to the Events Team for making sure the NEC meeting ran smoothly. Executing a virtual board meeting for over 100 people is a huge undertaking and requires registration platforms, tech rehearsals, logistical planning, and on-site support to handle all of the little issues that pop up on the day of the meeting. The Events Team works behind the scenes to set up tech, create meeting visuals, run registration, solve member connection issues, and countless other details you'd never know about because this team makes it look easy.



NEWS FROM NHQ

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

On Feb. 15, the national Finance Committee held a virtual meeting to hear reports from the national president and the committee's liaisons to the national Risk & Compliance Committee and ALA Foundation. The committee heard three special reports: 1) NHQ Membership Division Director Kelly Harrier, who presented an update on membership processing and procedures; 2) Financial Advisor Rick Evans, who shared his Investment Performance Report as of Dec. 31, 2022; and 3) NHQ Development Division Director Carley Schutz, who shared recommendations regarding the AEF Grant Policy and process. Executive Director Sara Riegel shared highlights from management and operations, while NHQ Finance Division Director Gary Ward shared his insights on the quarterly financials. The committee then spent important time focusing on five national policies that were up for committee review and ultimately NEC approval: Auxiliary Emergency Fund Grants Policy, Purchasing Policy, Business Credit Card Policy, Disbursement of Funds Policy, and the Investment Policy Statement.

GRANT FOR CAVALCADE

It has been a longstanding goal to virtually share our historic items with members and the public. Today, NHQ is one giant step closer to making this a reality, thanks to Archivist Cathi Taylor and Development Manager Dean Sanders. Working together, Cathi and Dean secured funding for the Cavalcade of Memories through a National Bank of Indiana grant, which will allow NHQ to purchase professional photography equipment that will enable us to take quality photos and post them to our virtual museum. We'll share more details as we receive the funding, begin photographing items, and work toward the launch of our virtual museum.

AEF UPDATES

The AEF Internal Grant Review Committee took an extensive look at the current AEF policy and how it aligns with how we were awarding grants. The committee determined we needed to further clarify the types of assistance offered and institute some guidelines for applicants. Some notable changes to the AEF policy:

1. Changed "temporary assistance" to "hardship assistance."
2. Number 2 outlines what AEF Hardship Assistance grants will fund and what is not acceptable.
3. Number 3 outlines what AEF Emergency Assistance grants will fund and what is not acceptable.
4. Number 6 clarifies that only one grant will be awarded in a 12-month period, not one of each grant type.
5. The maximum grant award was increased from \$2,400 to \$3,000.

MORE NEWS FROM NHQ

2023 Mid-Year NEC Meeting

On Saturday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. ET, the National Executive Committee met virtually for the mid-year board meeting. The event was an open meeting held via Zoom and consisted of voting members of the board and guests. Via consent agenda, the NEC adopted the updated national appointments list, charter cancellations, and eight updated national policies, all of which had been reviewed by the national Finance Committee.



The board also adopted to pursue a specialty group license plate for the state of Indiana featuring the ALA logo (see concept pic above). The NHQ Development Division has been hard at work securing this opportunity from the Indiana BMV. Proceeds — \$10 for every \$40 license plate purchase — will go to the AEF so we can continue to assist members in need. There are still several steps to accomplish in the process, but if all goes well, we hope to secure the specialty ALA license plate for Indiana residents by the 2024 registration year.

National President Vickie Koutz reported that as of the week of Feb. 20, membership was over 5,000 members ahead of where we were this time last year. 600 of our unit members have completed training and are now able to pay membership dues through ALAMIS with their unit full access.

The board was treated to a report from external auditors from Blue & Co. and adopted the ALA and ALA Foundation consolidated audit report for the FY22 year. The board also heard reports from National Treasurer Marybeth Revoir, National Secretary Dr. Coral May Grout, National Finance Committee Chairman Sharon Conatser, and National Risk & Compliance Committee Chairman Carol Westergren.



In other governance news, we recently said goodbye to NHQ's Governance Specialist, Angie Graham. Her veteran husband has been faced with several service-related illnesses requiring around-the-clock care, coordination of countless appointments with specialists and several hospital stays. Watching one NHQ's military spouses take on these challenges was a painful yet important reminder of why we do what we do at the ALA. Angie continues to be an active member and valued friend to the NHQ staff.

Beware of unofficial Facebook accounts

ALA National Headquarters has seen an increase in pages and groups that are not affiliated with National Headquarters or ALA departments, divisions, or units. Help us solve this problem by following *official* Auxiliary groups and pages.

You may ask: What's the harm in following a page or group started by an ALA member where everyone can post and comment? While these groups were likely created without malicious intent, they can lead to incorrect information being pushed to a widespread audience. We've also found that these pages often have only one admin and with no oversight to make sure what you're reading is authentic or released by National.

These pages look real and often are sharing content from the official National Headquarters page. We do encourage members, units, departments, and divisions to share our content, but that they do so on a page that identifies them correctly.

For example, we discovered a Facebook group labeled "American Legion Auxiliary" that appeared to be a National-operated account when it indeed was not. When ALA members in leadership positions are following these unofficial accounts, the list of followers gives the accounts credibility as though National is managing them. Look for warning signs — if the account has only one admin and it's not a member in a leadership or staff position, can you trust it? In most cases, there are good intentions, but the best intentions can have negative effects.

Please help us by unfollowing these unofficial Facebook accounts. Unsure which accounts are official and managed by National? Here is a list of our official pages and groups:

Groups:

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAAmericanism

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANatlSec

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAMembership

www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAEducation

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPublicRelations

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALeadership

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACommunityService

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAHistorians

www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACHaplains

Pages:

www.Facebook.com/ALAforVeterans

www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors

www.Facebook.com/ALAGirlsNation

Is it real? Can it be trusted?

Is that ALA group you joined,
or the page you follow,
really affiliated with
the American Legion Auxiliary?

Be careful you aren't being misled with
incorrect information.



Questions? Contact NHQ's Jennifer Donovan at JDonovan@ALAforVeterans.org.

March

Significant days and observances for the United States Armed Forces



March 3: **Navy Reserve Birthday**

March 13: **K-9 Veterans Day**

March 25: **Medal of Honor Day**

March 29: **Vietnam Veterans Day**

SIGNIFICANT MILITARY MONTHS IN 2023

April: Month of the Military Child

May: Military Appreciation Month

May: Month of the Military Caregiver

November: Military Family Month, Warrior Care Month

ALA DATES TO REMEMBER

The American Legion's
104th birthday: March 15

ALA Department Leadership
National Conference: May 6-9

National Convention:
Aug. 25-31

NHQ STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Staff breakfast provided by directors

The Friday preceding the Mid-Year NEC Meeting included a delicious breakfast for NHQ staff hosted by the directors.

Everyone chowed down on donuts from two different places, bagels and cream cheese, giant sweet and savory pastries, biscuits and gravy, Chik-Fil-A breakfast minis, fruit, and juice. Carbs can be a love language, right?



Nice to meet you!

Let's all welcome new Events Coordinator Colleen Bartel! She comes to us with a background in events for a large corporation. Welcome to the team, Colleen!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Happy anniversary to Archivist Cathi Taylor, who celebrated 12 years with NHQ, and Development Manager Dean Sanders, who celebrated 1 year with us!

Let's all wish a happy birthday to:

Director of Finance Gary Ward: Feb. 5

Accounting Coordinator Carmela Garcia: Feb. 7

Director of Communications and Marketing Stephanie Holloway: Feb. 9

Development Coordinator Maggie Smith: Feb. 16

Database Administrator Elizabeth Chiavarini: Feb. 21



Gary Ward



Maggie Smith



Carmela Garcia



Elizabeth Chiavarini



Stephanie Holloway



Colleen Bartel



Cathi Taylor: 12 years



Deans Sanders: 1 year



Bryana Mills

If you like what you see, say "thank you" to Bre! Praise for the design and layout of the *ALA Today* newsletter goes to new employee Bryana Mills! While she's actually been with NHQ for almost a year, she was officially hired in January 2023. She has been a great addition to the Administration Team, serving as lead on special projects like the IT Audit, *ALA Today* design, Formstack training, and so much more.

Keep in Touch!

