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Hello to ALL,

I hope the summer has been fun for you. I'd like to introduce myself to you, Kathi Karnowski of Unit #43 La Grande. I am newly elected at Convention to work as Vice President or as I call it, Membership. I have worked with the District 6 units the past 3 years and now I want to work with all of you. With your help we can get units productive and working together, if they are not now.

At Department we will be working with units in trouble to see how we can nudge them towards being active and most importantly, having meetings and following The Constitution & By-Laws. By meetings we mean, at least once a year-preferably a few more, but there is no set schedule for your unit, you do what works best for your unit. Units must have a minimum of 10 members to keep their charter and must show they are doing something. We urge you to work with your District President to get the ball rolling. We all have a job to do and if we all do it, it is so much easier on everyone else. When I say we are here to help you, we are but you must be willing to roll up your sleeves and do the work on your end. We can give you tools, advice and physical help but you know your members and local area the best, so start working on how to get members to meetings and recruiting new members to help you and move forward.

Each unit and its members are unique and there is no mold for success. You create success by involving as many members as you can and getting new members with fresh ideas and skills, yes "ideas and skills". If your unit is not active it may be that members are aging out, working, not getting along or have just lost that spark they had in the beginning. Every day we should be recruiting by wearing ALA logos, whether on a shirt, jacket, hat, patch or pin. People will ask why you are wearing that and when you tell them, I hope it is with enthusiasm for all we do to help Veterans, Military and their families! We are not just here for Veterans but for our members as well. We are an ALA family along with The American Legion, SON'S & Riders. We are here to help each other and check on a member you haven't seen in a while. This is easier with a small unit as you personally know each other and get reports from other members on how they are doing. Larger units need to form a committee or just get a couple members involved with the membership chairman, to phone members or send a card out to ask how they are doing and invite them to a meeting or event you are doing. Make sure to send a card or call when a member has had surgery, a loved one has passed away, birthday, new baby or grandbaby and so on. We all care about another member; we just need to show them we care.

So, let's talk about a few things with processing membership, which people who have done membership already know, to make your job a little easier and the person at department (Cindy

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Hillyard) who sends it on. Only members who process membership know how much time it takes and some of the problems that can come up. Until membership has been sent to Department and processed, the member is not considered paid by National. So, please do not hold on to membership.

Last year you noticed National sent a membership card to those that renewed online and then units were to send their card as well. That has CHANGED this year, National will send a card and the unit does not need to unless they want to.

Paid Up For Life Members (PUFL'S) are not to be on the transmittal but you can note it on your sheet. National will issue a credit to department on October 30th so units will then get their credits in November, be patient.

American Legion Auxiliary Information Management System or ALAMIS is access to your unit on the National website, which 2 people from a unit can apply for at \$10 each. Access is from January 1st to December 31st. If you pay now it will be for 2019 and you will have to pay again January 1, 2020 for the next calendar year. Starting in October you can pay for 2020 and have the rest of 2019 included.

All new applications need to be entirely filled out with the applicants' signature and a post adjutant or officer signing off after proof of eligibility. Original application must be sent in. A DD 214 is preferable but there are other ways to show proof. The writing needs to be legible so we all can get their information right. Your unit membership person needs to keep a copy of the application, proof of eligibility, numbered transmittal, check written and deposit. If your unit does not have a dedicated membership book, you need one. I don't know how many times I have gone back in the records to find a phone number, address or other information. Always keep a copy of your old Unit Roster for several purposes.

The Unit Data form is used for any change in a member's name, address or phone number. It also can be used for a member who has passed away, (Deceased Member Report). You can also transfer a member from another unit into yours. Make sure a transfer form is signed by the member transferring as well as a unit officer before sending in to department,

When filling out the unit transmittal you may not think your information at the top is needed but it is by Cindy, who goes through them. If she has a question your info is in front of her and she doesn't have to look you up. When listing the renewals and new members, be sure to list them alphabetically with last name first, then their first name. Membership numbers are needed and put NEW if they are joining, they'll get a number after National has processed them. ALAMIS will assign their number when they are added, can't say enough about ALAMIS!

If your unit is not active or having issues, contact department and ask for help. You all receive the ALA Magazine and this August issue has some really good information for all of us. Goodwill Gail talked about a small unit with 5 or 6 active members, mostly related, and the one member felt left out. We must be inclusive and make every member feel welcome, yes it will be hard for some to do, but can't we try? Before we laugh or ignore someone's suggestion, think about it and consider if it might be helpful. How do you feel when someone won't listen

to you? Not very good. There isn't one unit that totally agrees on everything and has no personality conflicts, but we can try and work together. Some units that are fighting and wanting to push the other group out, won't be a unit much longer. We all have to decide if we want to BE a unit and help our Veterans or, are we there just for our own benefit. I know why I am here, do you? The times have changed for organizations like ours and WE have to be able to change with them. Hang on for a bumpy ride and we will get through anything put before us. We at Department want to hear from you and tell us what tools you need to get going again. Please join us in committing to re-energizing our Units, Districts and Department. With you, it is possible to do more!

Respectfully,

Kathi Karnowski
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