

# American Legion

PALM SPRINGS Post 519 MINUTES

General Membership Meeting 09/08/26 September 2026

## SPEAKERS

Andrew Stevens, Chaplain, Speaker 1, John Picken, Lee Wilson, James Snow, Gordon Countryman, Allen Lane, Amado Salinas, Tom Ricchio, Kevin Koch, Tony Aguilar, Garth Gilpin, Andrea Kline, Magi Raible, Rusanne Anthony, Beresh

## JOHN PICKEN

Meeting is about to open. All officers will take their stations, sergeant at arms. Please clear the hall entrance and close the doors. Stand at attention. Salute. 2. Uncover for the opening prayer through the pow Mia ceremony.

## Chaplain Crawford

Our Father, who art in heaven, we hallow and praise your name. We praise You for this gathering in which we will unite with other comrades to further our programs in the American Legion. In your holy name, we pray. AMEN amen

## JOHN PICKEN

Sergeant at Arms only, recover.

Resolution 288 adopted at the 67th National Convention, encourages all American regional organizations to implement the empty chair Soma ceremony at all meetings as a continual physical symbol of the pow Mia's and the cause from which we stand, namely, their return or full accounting, the pow Mia empty chair is placed at all official meetings of the American Legion as a physical symbol of the 1000s of American pow Mia is still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty and a full accounting of those missing. Let us dedicate ourselves for this vital endeavor. Sergeant at Arms place the pow Mia flag on the chair you. Would you hand those out for me? Please face the flag and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. . .

## Everyone

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## JOHN PICKEN

Everyone, recover. Please remain standing. Please join me in reciting the preamble of the Constitution of the American Legion slowly and in unison. . .

## Everyone

For God and country, we associate ourselves together, Constitution of the United States of America to maintain law and order, to foster and perpetuate 100% Americanism, to preserve the memories, to inculcate the sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation. Faculties are both classes and mass, to make a right and master might promote on earth, to safeguard and transition to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy, to concentrate and sanctify our conference by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

**JOHN PICKEN**

Be seated. I now declare this meeting of the American Legion Post 519 Department of California, executive committee open for roll call, adjutant. . .

**Allen Lane**

Commander - present.

First Vice Commander Klein - Go army!

Adjutant - present.

Second vice commander, Lee Wilson - HERE.

Third vice commander, Kevin - Go Army.

Finance Officer, Garth - Here.

Chaplain Crawford - here

Service officer - here

Judge Advocate - surgery

Historian, James Snow - here

Sergeant at Arms - here

E board, Two, Ron Webster - here

E board, third year, Rusanne - Go Navy.

E Board first year, Stevens - Here

E Board three Raible - It is Riii/ble.

**Allen Lane**

Understood.

We do have quorum.

**SPEAKERS**

Andrew Stevens, Crawford, Speaker 2, Speaker 5, John Picken, Speaker 1, Lee Wilson, James Snow, Gordon Countryman, Allen Lane, Amado Salinas, Tom Ricchio, Kevin Koch, Tony Aguilar, Garth Gilpin, Andrea Kline, Speaker 4, Speaker 3, Raible, Rusanne Anthony

**John Picken**

I got an announcement. Let's Welcome our new first vice commander, Andrew Klein.

**Gordon Countryman**

All right.

**John Picken**

And our one-year executive board member, Andrew Stevens.

**Tom Ricchio**

All right.

**John Picken**

Okay. Upcoming District 21 meetings, as usual, I read these off. September 20th, right here in Palm Springs. Meeting, our meeting will start at 10 o'clock. The suns will start at 8 o'clock. The Pass Commanders Club is disbanded. Please turn off your phones. . .

**John Picken**

As a reminder, a ritual: When a member is requesting time on the floor, raise your hand and please stand after being recognized by the chair. State name and salute the chair if requested to come to podium and be escorted by the sergeant at arms. Please salute the flag before passing. Sergeant Arms. you have some distinguished guests in the audience.?

**Beresh**

We do. Department of California Finance Officer Rusan Anthony. Council, National Bylaws Committee, Amado leading us.

**John Picken**

Okay, minutes were posted on the website. I need to get a motion to approve the general membership meetings from last meeting. Motion to approve minutes - Gordon Countryman. Second? Sid, Leroy Sidman. Any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Passes. We'll go into officers' reports at this time, starting with adjutant, do you have anything for us, sir?

**Allen Lane**

Nothing to report at this time, sir.

**John Picken**

Second vice is not here. First vice.

**Andrea Kline**

It's my first meeting as first vice, and I did my first renewal, which I'm very excited about. A gentleman right here. He's wearing a Philippines hat, but he is a member of our post. And super thankful to do that. As far as our membership, let's . . .

**John Picken**

hold off to the committee meeting for that part.

**Andrea Kline**

Oh, okay. We're good.

**John Picken**

Thank you. Okay. Are you going to give a report on the national?

**Andrea Kline**

Yes.

**John Picken**

Later on down the line.

**John Picken**

That's fine. Thank you. Third Vice Kevin Koch?

**Kevin Koch**

sir. I would like to recommend that we support a youth soccer group in Cathedral City, the Natives FA. They're expanding. They cover ages very young to here. We go. Anyway, they cover the full age range. They're boys and girls. They're expanding. They're in need of money, and we have so much money for community sport and youth programs-that's one of our pillars-and I'd like to dedicate. We've been floating around different causes each year.

I'd like to support them this year with an amount of \$1,000. So I'd like to make a motion that Natives FA they play at Keats Soccer Park next to James Workman. It's a large group, and they're in financial need for their budget this year. I'd like to support that. That's my recommendation. So yes, I would like to make a motion that we give \$1,000 to that group.

**John Picken**

Do we have a second for the motion?

**Chaplain**

Second.

**John Picken**

Chaplain seconds. Any discussion?

Yes.

**Rusanne Anthony**

I just like to know, Garth. What do we have available?

**Garth Gilpin**

We have \$38,000 in membership.

**John Picken**

Any other discussion? Call for the vote. All in favor of supporting the soccer with \$1,000?

**John Picken**

Please raise your hand. Say aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes.

**Kevin Koch**

I'm not sure the status of our Boy Scouts. They're redoing this region, and I've made myself available to them that we want to support an active group. We'd like. We could even host here, like in the past. Right now, they're so disorganized, and our post kind of timed out age-wise for the folks who were involved, and they haven't done so. I'll keep you posted.

I am investigating different awards for ROTC that we're able to give, and that I did spend a couple \$100 of my own money to get different awards and certificates to see what they look like and the criteria. So I'll keep you posted, sir. Thanks all very much, sir.

**John Picken**

Service officer Lane.

**Allen Lane**

The only thing I have to report is the Auxiliary is working on a Christmas party for the Veterans Village, and I spoke with Danielle, April, and the request they have from us is that they're asking for \$1,000 for gift cards and gifts to give away at the Christmas party, I'd like to make the motion to offer that \$1,000 to the Veterans Village Christmas party. That's it.

**John Picken**

I need a second.

**Andrea Kline**

I second it.

**John Picken**

Any discussion? No discussion.

**Raible**

Do we buy them or how does it work?

**Allen Lane**

The Auxiliary ask for the money, and then I'll go buy the gift cards in \$25 denominations and then give them to her for the party attendees.

I'm hoping to participate. If there are any volunteers that want to come to the party, you know that would be great. I'll send out the information about the party, the little flyer she gave me. But it really gives back to the veterans. There are families that live there with children. You know, they're giving away gifts to the children. They will have food for it. There is going to be about 100 people at the event, and they're excited, and I'm excited just to reach out to Auxiliary and work with them as the general membership of this American Legion, and that's the headline. Thank you.

**John Picken**

We have a second. Any more discussion? All in favor?

**Everyone**

Aye.

**John Picken**

Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes. Chaplain, do you have anything for? Oh, sorry. Back up. Finance officer Gilpin, do you have anything for us?

**Garth Gilpin**

Sir, finance for the post through the month of August has been on the internet website. The bank statements also been posted on the website. Currently, we have \$188,000 in the bank. The bar accounts 15,000. Membership is 37, which is where the money for community events comes from Measure J. We're proceeding with that project now. It's back started actually working. The building has \$53,000. Color Guard has 4300. Baseball has 13,000, and Riders have 5000. Through the first eight months of the year, the canteen lost about \$3,000, basically due to the heat. We had two electric bills over \$5,000 came in. The the only solution I've members have told me is we should look at the back bar in future summers, but that's I say our summers are over with right now. But that's a big bill.

It's just hard to hard to justify if you come in here during the day. Nobody here. So anyway, the donations for the first eight months of the year, taking out Measure J money, we have \$64,000 in donations. The hosts for the first eight months have net income of \$72,000. There's an extra set here. If somebody wants to look at it, take it. It is on the website. Discuss Measure J here?

**John Picken**

Sure

**Garth Gilpin**

The contractor finally admitted that they did need workers' compensation insurance. Prevents them from hiring somebody, paying under the table, and if they get hurt, then we get stuck with it. So all the insurers who are who have contracts are now providing workers' compensation and liability insurance.

The plumber has torn apart the kitchen. The city has received permits and the architectural drawings for the permits. The architecture has received back notice from the city that they have received them. They are under consideration. There's a three-day work week this week, so I don't expect a lot of action this week. People will be taking vacations. There won't be anybody at the city that can pass. But hopefully, we can get that. The next step in Measure J is to get the kitchen work done, get it inspected, so they can fill back in the floor where they dug it, dug it up. Then they'll start with the flooring walls. All the equipment is purchased. I'm hopeful for being completely after that by the end of October. Don't hold me to it. Say it's progressing. I like both contractors that are responsible. They know what they're doing. And any questions on finances or Measure J?

**John Picken**

Any questions for Garth on that? Gordon?

**Gordon Countryman**

on their contract with the contractors. If there's an extended time where they don't finish per contract, Do they get penalized?

**Garth Gilpin**

No. there's a summit in the contract. So we switched contractors. I don't know if you knew that. The first contractor who just would not show up? I just missed him. I'm here. I'm there, and he was never here. And so he was the lead of the contract. But as soon as these guys got insurance, they were here the next day. As I received it, I said, "Go ahead and go. And they're here. Take a peek through the gates into the kitchen. You can see all the concrete's totally about a third of the floor is gone in there right now. The big reason is we are adding a dishwasher, which we've never had in 75 years, so it requires quite a bit of an underground piping and all. So, thank you.

**John Picken**

Thank you, Garth. Anybody else have anything before you? Albert.

**Albert Martinez**

As you all know, I am here probably twice a day every day. I get questions all the time of where is the kitchen at, and I don't have the correct answer. I'm sure you do. Since I'm the editor of the newsletter, you can write me an article, and I will certainly put it in there so 250 members can read it and know where we stand on the kitchen.

**Garth Gilpin**

Would you like a summation of what I just said?

**Albert Martinez**

Whatever you have where the kitchen is or when you think it's going to be open, they're asking me. Do you think it's going to be open for Christmas, Thanksgiving? I don't know. Maybe you know.

**Garth Gilpin**

I don't know any more than what I was told. I can write you a letter stating what I just stated. Well, yeah.

**Albert Martinez**

Well, a three-paragraph article would be good, and it would set them at ease, and they can kind of know what is going on with the remodel. Okay. Thank you, sir. No problem at all. Thank you.

**Garth Gilpin**

Anything else?

**John Picken**

Do you have anything else for us? Thank you, Chaplain. Do you have anything for us, sir? No, Thank you. E-board one, Stevens?

**Andrew Stevens**

Nothing to report at this time, other than I'm glad to be here.

**John Picken**

Thank you. E-board two, Anthony?

**Rusanne Anthony**

Nothing, but I do have some comments about the national.

**John Picken**

Eboard two Webster. Nothing? Eboard three Maggie. Say it again for me. Last name.

**Raible**

Rival.

**John Picken**

Rival. I was trying to say ribal. Yeah, the a is silent.

**Allen Lane**

Got it.

**John Picken**

Rival.

**Raible**

Nothing. Nothing to report.

**John Picken**

Thank you. Sergeant at arms, Beresh.

**Beresh**

Nothing to report, Sir.

**John Picken**

Thank you. Moving right along. Lee, how much time do you need? Two minutes. Okay, let me go to James. How much time are you going to go? 20.

**James Snow**

Not that long.

**John Picken**

Sergeant at arms, would you hand out those flyers that Lee's trying to hand out, please?

**John Picken**

Are you ready to go? James, you want to go ahead, historian.

**James Snow**

Thank you. All right, only a few things. Historian stuff. I want to let everybody know if anyone has anything as far as VHS tapes, anything pictures that you want to convert to digital. I have the ability to convert it to digital. Only I'm not saying everything. I don't want all your personal stuff. I just want military stuff. And the reason for that is remember last week. I'm going to talk about that a little bit as far as communications committee stuff. The reason why I want that is because last week I mentioned about adding another page to the website so we can start putting videos. If any of our any of our veterans want to create a story, you know, put on a website so where they can live. It's not going to be like five or 10 minutes. We don't have that much storage space, but we can do like little small two-minute, three-minute pieces of each individual veteran. Whoever wants to do that, and they they'll have their story on our website. They can live on, and so those package those VHS tapes I can convert and add into their story. So like B-roll, kind of something like that. That's the new veteran page. I just talked about that. I'm going to continue on documenting things for the post, like as far as the renovations, and I'll be here the 20th for District 21 meeting, so I'll make sure I'm here to cover that. As far as you know, the history of that happening is going to be history in the future. Other than that, that's all I have as far as the story and stuff.

I got communication stuff, and wait until we get into many stuff. Yeah, let's hold off on the communications. All right. Do you have anything as far as communications? No, we need to have a meeting. We do have it, and I'm going to mention that. So let's see here. Okay, so telethon, and so I've been talking to NBC about that. We're going to do telethon again this year. I mentioned it last week. This week, I would like to try to get names of anyone that wants to volunteer to help with the telethon, like last year. You want to volunteer? Let me know today. I'll get your name and your information. We'll establish a committee like we did last year, and we'll start planning out. And by time it happens, bam, we'll have a successful telethon like we did last year.

**Crawford**

James, how old do you want the volunteers to be the only reason I'm asking is I'm going to ask the high school team to do something, and there are seniors on there, so they're 17 or 18. Can you use those?

**James Snow**

Possibly, but I mean if we need them. But honestly, I'd like to keep it within house. Okay. I mean, is any of them that are? You said how old? 717. Any other latex program? Going in the military? I have no one. I mean, I think that's a discussion we can probably have once we establish a committee.

**Rusanne Anthony**

I think somebody with legible handwriting. That'd be nice.

**Speaker 1**

That wasn't issued last year.

**Rusanne Anthony**

No, I processed the credit card slips, and some were like torture trying to read some of the handwriting.

**James Snow**

So last year was our first telecon, so we've had some growing pains. This year is going to be better, you know. So I mean, last year was still a success, in my opinion. But there are some things that we did learn to take along the way. But I am going to add a volunteer page mentioned Christmas party for the veteran village, so I want to add a volunteer page. So if anyone has any ideas as far as what we need for volunteers for this post, we need a lot of volunteers. There's not a lot of yeah a lot of events that for this post, but so I think we need a volunteer page for people going. I want to volunteer do something for the post. What do they have? All right, bam, come and there we go. Village fest. We got we got to build that, bring it together. Next e-board meeting, I'm going to get pictures of the e-board members that are new, so we're giving you pictures on the website. I'll take care of that. Let's see AI. So it. I don't know if you guys have looked at the website a lot. I know you probably have, but you know the members behind me. Check out the website. I've added some new stuff on there. There's an AI feature on there. I know I don't know people's opinion as far as AI, but the little chat box on the bottom right-hand side. If you get on on the website, if you need to know how do I find my DD 214, just ask me. It'll help you out. How do I increase my disability? Ask a question on the website. It'll possibly help you out, or at least direct you to a resource to kind of get you to that. Until I can finally hone in on the AI part of it to make it work fluently. Let's see. Last thing. Oh, okay. I talked to NBC about for the 11th for the what is it? The September 11th. The observance day for 9/11. I'm waiting on to get answers.

Back on that as far as schedule, we get somebody over here, whether I film it or not. I don't know if we get somebody here for that, and then I'm working on the auxiliary for the Bates crash sale, Toys R Tots. Try to get some NBC footage for Toys for Tots. The past couple days, I'm bringing this up for a reason. Something I've been I've been doing with NBC past couple days, I've been filming at the Air Museum. Where there's a new segment we're doing on the news on Fridays called Flight Fridays, and so we're showcasing the aircraft every single week. So the past couple days, I've been filming for like a month's worth of stuff, and wait till you see Friday. Stuff's pretty cool. The reason I'm bringing this up is because we kind of brainstorm ideas myself and Mark Mester about bringing veterans into the story.

So if we know any veterans that has flown in those aircrafts over there in Vietnam, or I mean, our World War II veterans are pretty much gone home for you know there might be some out there still that's. But anyone that's worked on a plane, crew member, maintenance person, anyone that's flown those aircrafts over there, send them my way because we might want to hear their story and tie them into the story. Another way for our veterans to have their stories last for a while. Other than that, and that's it. That's all I got for now.

**John Picken**

Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

**Tony Aguilar**

Thank you.

**Gordon Countryman**

Question.

**James Snow**

Oh yes.

**Lee Wilson**

Can you take this like old photo like this I have and make it look new again using AI using those tools as possible?

**Tony Aguilar**

Yeah, we have super easy to do everything like that.

**James Snow**

I did have one more thing.

**John Picken**

Please, James?

**James Snow**

I had one more thing. As far as this is just for the board members, for the ones that weren't here last week, I mentioned last week. If there's anything that you need assistance with, if you need something like an AI tool that we can, I can come up with to help you assist with any of your functions or responsibilities as a board member to make your job easier. Let me know. We can brainstorm an idea and maybe figure out something with AI to give you hours back in the day. I don't know. I'm just thinking some ideas to help us with time management and be a more oiled machine. You know what I mean? So that's all I got.

**John Picken**

Thank you, Andrea. You have something?

**Andrea Kline**

If you need help on that, I've done that. I've restored old photos using AI. Please. I'm very proficient in AI.

**Lee Wilson**

We will talk.

**John Picken**

Did I miss anybody on their reports? Oh yeah, Lee. You're up, Lee.

**Gordon Countryman**

All right.

**Lee Wilson**

Good evening, everybody. Lee Wilson Jr. Veterans Day, Wednesday, November 11th. The grade starts at 1 o'clock. I've got Roger and Roadhouse Rebels scheduled to play at \$600. I'd like to make a motion that we could pay Roger the Roadhouse Rebels. It's usually our going rate for top-notch bands like that \$600. So they'll play in our Veterans Day, which is Wednesday, November 11th. Can somebody second that? All right.

**Allen Lane**

I will.

**John Picken**

We have a motion for \$600 to pay the band, seconded. Any discussion, Gordon? We already got a second here. Thank you, though. Any discussion, Riccio?

**Tom Ricchio**

Well, so far we have a loss of \$5,000, and we just spent about seven. Lost \$5,000 with air conditioning. Okay, so we just spent \$1,000 for high school, another \$1,000. Then there's 600 over here. And how are you going to pick up back to 38,000? Now, now we're down.

**John Picken**

We have a motion on the floor.

**Tom Ricchio**

I know that, but. . .

**John Picken**

we're in a discussion of that motion, not of the past monies.

**Tom Ricchio**

I think you're losing money when you just found out you lost money. You're losing more.

**John Picken**

Amado, you have something.

**Amado Salinas**

Point of order.

**John Picken**

Amado, sir?

**Amado Salinas**

We have a motion on the floor of discussion, and that's what it has to be relegated to, sir.

**John Picken**

That's what I tried to say. So we have a motion. We have a second. Discussion on the motion for \$600 for the band. No discussion. All in favor of paying the band \$600? Please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes. Thank you. Oh, go ahead, sir.

**Crawford**

I'm doing the food. Yeah.

**Allen Lane**

You would have to read that on a memo?

**Lee Wilson**

I like the message. Plan B would be Dad's Burgers. He is standing by.

**John Picken**

No, I love Dad's burgers. I don't think he can supply burgers quick enough to do that. So unless he wants to use the big barbecue out back, and we can maybe arrange that if it comes down to that. Chaplain, are you up for the challenge?

**John Picken**

November. I can do the barbecue. I just want to know.

**Lee Wilson**

All right. Oh, sorry.

**John Picken**

So you got your money for the band. We're good there. Yeah.

**Lee Wilson**

All right. Modernism fall preview. I don't know if I walked in. You guys were already discussing it, but we have not done our one open house a year event yet, and I believe that we did it coinciding with the modernism week fall preview. We could have lots and lots and lots of people come in here, buy our booze, nice tours, and stuff like that. That's Saturday. What did I say? Saturday or yeah, Saturday the 17th of October. And we haven't done it yet. Some people like to do it on Veterans Day. I think that's redundant. We always have a ton of people already here on Veterans Day. And Pride Week would be a good alternative, but I think modernism week would be the best way to have an open house and show this place off to 1000s of people are going to be in town. So, food.

**Lee Wilson**

Yeah, that's the thing. Should we, you know, ALR would they do food for people coming in and out because they'll be allowed to buy our drinks and stuff, you know, we don't have the kitchen to have to talk to ALR. That'd be an all-day thing. I don't really think that would work out.

**John Picken**

We wouldn't, yeah.

**Lee Wilson**

But if we had also a Saturday night a band because it's Saturday, I do excuse people to come back like six to 9 o'clock, and just in case I can find a band, I'd like to make a motion. If we do this, I guess. Do I have to make two motions?

**John Picken**

Stand by. Let me just check the calendar real quick for the date that you're looking for. 17th, we're doing Oktoberfest.

**Kevin Koch**

Oktoberfest later.

**John Picken**

Auxiliary Oktoberfest. Trainer room.

**Lee Wilson**

Oh, okay. And they started what? Six.

**Kevin Koch**

Three. At your note saying.

**Lee Wilson**

I didn't catch that.

**John Picken**

Okay, so we'll put that on standby for now. I do want us to do an open house. For those of you who don't know it, the alcohol beverage people allow us one year, once a year license to let everybody come in and check out Allegiant. We still have to purchase a ABC license from them for that day, which costs us 100 and some change.

**Lee Wilson**

About the Sunday afterwards, and that's the last day people might be leaving, but still it might be worth our while.

**John Picken**

Sunday.

**Lee Wilson**

We don't have to have a band or anything for that.

**John Picken**

We just that would be the 18th. 18th.

**Tony Aguilar**

Yes.

**Garth Gilpin**

October 18th. That's a potential. Garth, if we had the open house on Veterans Day, because there's other people from the community coming in, we could classify that as a community outreach and use the \$600 from the membership account rather than from the band or the bar account. So, if we wanted to have Veterans Day as the open day.

**John Picken**

Andrew, you have something.

**Andrew Stevens**

Alternatively, Pride is probably one of the largest weekends of just sheer amount of people here. One Palm Springs. So it would be. I mean, at the very least, it'd be more effective to have like at least one of the days where somebody comes where we invite people over.

**Allen Lane**

I agree. That'd be a great event.

**Lee Wilson**

Central thought, but yeah, the 1 Palm Springs people are already going to be coming in here.

**Tom Ricchio**

Yeah. For when?

**Lee Wilson**

On that Friday. Friday, what? 16. 15 15.

**Raible**

Friday. October or November?

**Lee Wilson**

October. 16 16.

**Kevin Koch**

You got a typo.

**Lee Wilson**

Yeah. See what happens when you do this on your prep period.

**John Picken**

Are we on a request form for that?

**Lee Wilson**

I did put one in for that Saturday, but we can change it to that Sunday and take out the band request. That won't cost us anything. Oh, except the ABC list.

**John Picken**

Okay, so backing up, we had the motion for your money for that.

**Lee Wilson**

I withdraw that.

**John Picken**

So we need to make a motion to withdraw that.

**Garth Gilpin**

Okay,

**John Picken**

and then second.

**Lee Wilson**

I Make a motion to withdraw my band \$600 request for an open house. I thought we could do it on a Saturday, but we can't.

**Kevin Koch**

Second.

**John Picken**

Any discussion? All in favor?

**Everyone**

Aye.

**Lee Wilson**

Moving on. Saturday, then I guess if we can. Karaoke's coming up. October 25th was open. It's a good day, you guys. I'm not into karaoke, but you got to come and check it out. We do it better than anybody else. Tastes Palm Springs Wednesday next week. \$20. It's the Chamber of Commerce that puts this together. It's a great way for us to schmooze with the community. Every vendor is going to be there. All the civic leaders, public leaders, all that kind of stuff. Have our tent there. I think set up like around 3o'clock. Terry Johnson is not here, but he'll oversee that. Anybody else? You got to like buy your tickets online, \$20. Rock the Park series starts December 2. They got a David Bowie tribute, and we always have our tent out there for this thing, and it's great bonnet placement. And you can show up early, do a pre-game here before on the show, do your post game here after the show. But it's a lot of fun. And when it's crowded, sitting by our tent, you know, even over backstage, it's still a pretty good spot when it's really crowded. It can get Halloween party's going to kick butt. That's on Saturday, October 31st. We got a band refills costume contest by the auxiliary. Suns are doing a little out. Joey's doing Octoberfest. I forgot about that. Sunday potluck. We're just going to do this indefinitely, correct?

**John Picken**

Except for the occasional Sunday where we can't do it.

**Lee Wilson**

Definitely. All right.

**John Picken**

It's been a good success.

**Lee Wilson**

All right, and Dad's Burgers every Monday. I guess that coincides with Monday Night Football. I don't know if House Committee spoke about it, but I think we need to do some sort of drink special or something like that. We already got Dad's Burgers, but we do \$1 off all drafts, dollar off all bottles, buy one get one free sort of thing, but how can we get people in here to, you know, watch Monday Night Football and enjoy a burger? I think we need some sort of drink special as an incentive, but I think that was a House committee decision.

**John Picken**

Yes, it was.

**Lee Wilson**

So that's all. That's all I have, dude. Sorry.

**Garth Gilpin**

Gay pride. Parade.

**Lee Wilson**

That is the eighth Sunday, November 8. I didn't need have this on here. The pride parade. I need a truck and a trailer. If anybody's got one, anybody knows anybody that I've been using for years can't do it anymore. And truck and trailer. If we don't have one, I can hitch a truck to my Hyundai Santa trailer to my Hyundai Santa Cruz, you know, but it can't be a big one like we used to have. Everybody knows, sir.

**Amado Salinas**

one, sir. Last year we were thinking the city of Palm Springs to go ahead and raise the POWMA flag on the WMA day, is anything planned for us to participate with the city to do that?

**Lee Wilson**

I saw your text earlier. I have nothing planned. I think it's that's like five in the morning or something, right? That one.

**Andrea Kline**

It was seven, isn't it? Like seven. Come to this one. Okay.

**John Picken**

ahead.

**Amado Salinas**

Sorry. No, the idea is that now that we've got the city to raise the POWA flag, that we as the post can go and support it on that, and they'll do it on the eighth. But I think a gentle reminder of the city would be good that way. The guys, oh yeah, we've got to do that again.

**John Picken**

Memorial Day and July 4, they were already they phoned it. I went. I drove by and made sure it was up there.

**John Picken**

So good. So yeah. If you would like to spearhead that?

**Amado Salinas**

I'll reach out, sir.

**John Picken**

All right. Thank you.

**Lee Wilson**

Keep me posted. Say we can fly. That's all I have, sir.

**John Picken**

Will somebody else have questions, Andrea?

**Andrea Kline**

What about the Army Navy or Navy Army game? Oh, good idea. Depending on which, where you lean, we had a big crowd last year, which would be a lot of fun.

**Tom Ricchio**

Navy's going to win.

**Andrea Kline**

I had to sneak out the back door last week.

**Lee Wilson**

Sunday?

**Andrea Kline**

No Saturday.

**Speaker 2**

Oh, David. A drink special sort of thing like that would be cool, also. You know, they're gonna drink anyway. Excuse me, sir. December 12. December 12.

**Lee Wilson**

I don't know if you want to do food for that, too. I could contact ALR. Maybe ALR wants to do the food.

**Speaker 2**

Potluck.

**Rusanne Anthony**

Well, no.

**Lee Wilson**

Or were you in potluck that day, anyways?

**Rusanne Anthony**

The post should do the food instead of deferring.

**John Picken**

So the Suns are doing the chili cookoff on that day.

**Lee Wilson**

Oh, really?

**John Picken**

At 11:00 a.m. So, what time is the game usually? Well, we can combine that event. Combine that event, make the Sons have their chili cookoff, and then we can watch the game at noon. All right. Their thing starts at 11:00 a.m. And we're going to probably because of the power, we'll have to do it in the main hall this year, because that stuff's already been set up for all those pop calls.

**Lee Wilson**

All right, that's all I have.

**John Picken**

Halloween. I have a question. I will not be around on that date. Will you be here to coordinate the event, and we're going to set up judges?

**Lee Wilson**

The auxiliary does that. Or how did we do it last year? Like it was applause, right? Yeah, I believe so.

**Andrea Kline**

I'll be here too, so I can. Just let me know.

**John Picken**

Okay. Thank you.

**Lee Wilson**

All right.

**John Picken**

Okay, I guess that's all of the offices' reports. Go into the committee reports, which we've already had a couple. I'll go ahead and do the House committee. We had two events that were approved for the post. One was a bridal shower. The other one was a celebration of life. You know, I already mentioned the District 21 meeting, kitchen redo. We talked about that. We do need our members to stay out of the construction zone. Signs have been posted. Please do not go into the kitchen. Do not open that gate. Do not go through the back door. Friday dinners. Food is being provided still by Riccio's, unless it's a separate event like this coming Friday. We've been staying even with the money, cost breaking even on that.

A lot of people have been giving us cash donations in the little jar that we have there. Been working out fairly well, and the same with the Sunday potlucks. Potlucks have been well attended. People are bringing lots of food.

We've been sending some of the food home with other members and bartenders because we had so much of it. We appreciate that. At the last Sunday, we had a number of sizable donations, so we appreciate that.

**Allen Lane**

Absolutely.

**John Picken**

Okay. The lock on the kitchen door was replaced by Sergeant Arms, so that the contractors have a key, which goes to. Sorry, they have a lockbox on there, and the key is in there. The only other thing we have is the 9/11 dinner coming up. Dinners have been sold out, but the canteen will still be open to our members who don't have tickets. The high tops and the bar will be open, first come first served. We will open up the back bar for the overflow, and then during the ceremony, they can come out and stand up there and watch the ceremony. Chaplain?

**Chaplain Crawford**

Excuse me, Commander. Did you say September 11th?

**John Picken**

I said 9/11.

**Amado Salinas**

Yes. Are you supposed to be barbecuing on that day?

**Crawford**

No.

**John Picken**

No. that's the ALR?

**Crawford**

Okay. What day am I supposed to be?

**John Picken**

Barbecuing on Veterans Day, November 11th.

**Crawford**

That's okay, Veteran's Day.

**John Picken**

Or you can barbecue on a Marine Corps birthday, which is November 10th.

**Crawford**

Okay. Do you want me to?

**John Picken**

All right. Moving right along. Next committee report would be communications. You already did most of that. Did you have anything else you wanted to add? We already talked about finance. Now we have the membership committee. Andrea?

**Andrea Kline**

first report as of September 4, we're doing really well for our membership. Our goal is 755. We're at about 46 percent right now for renewals. We have a total of 345 members, 78 muffles paid up for life, 12 new members for the year, and we've had five transfers for the year. So the other thing, as far as membership is concerned, I would like to make a motion to start a membership committee. I don't know if I need to do a motion, and the membership committee. The vision would be that there's several people that are interested in buddy checks. If we're already outreaching to members for renewals and different things, it makes sense to do. Buddy checks and engage our members. So I'm interested in starting a membership committee, and I'd like to make a motion to do that.

**John Picken**

We have a motion to start our membership committee. Maggie seconds that. Any discussion on the election committee? I do know that Joe is interested in being on that also.

**John Picken**

So, any other discussion, Garth?

**Garth Gilpin**

I think we should give them a budget. We're going to need money for mailers, something like that.

**John Picken**

We did already approve purchasing stamps and envelopes months and months ago under the past first vice. Do you want to reinstate? I mean, it's still there. We're still purchasing.

**Garth Gilpin**

Okay, I just want to be sure they had money.

**Andrea Kline**

Yeah, I have no idea what it is. I have. We just we just go buy them.

**John Picken**

We get stamps and the envelopes. all from Sam's Club to keep the cost down. We buy all stamps you can.

**Tom Ricchio**

How much is that?

**John Picken**

Pardon?

**Tom Ricchio**

How much is that?

**John Picken**

Well, we buy a roll of stamps when we need it. Right now, I believe it's where they went up, so it's probably \$83 per 100. Is that correct? 83. It sticks in my mind. So, okay, we have a motion on the floor. We have a second. All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Wonderful. You are the chair.

**Andrea Kline**

Thank you. I know Joe O'Connell is interested because he's texted me, and I've had other people. So if you're interested in joining, just find me after the meeting, call me, text me, let me know. Thank you.

**John Picken**

We have a new member on top of that.

**Andrea Kline**

Okay. We do have a new member.

**John Picken**

Is Eric Rath in the building? No. No. Okay. Eric Rath has been verified by z2 14. I need a motion to approve Eric as being a member. Tommy, it is. You need to say it.

**John Picken**

You make a motion to approve Eric as a new member.

**Tom Ricchio**

motion to approve.

**John Picken**

Thank you. Any second, Amado, seconds. Any discussion? All in favor of accepting Mr. Rath?

**Raible**

Aye.

**John Picken**

Any opposed? So be it. As soon as I can, I will get his. You and I will get his card together and get it out.

**Andrea Kline**

Okay, sounds good.

**Tom Ricchio**

One question, Commander.

**John Picken**

Go ahead, Tommy.

**Tom Ricchio**

Is there an early bird for the auxiliary paid for 2027?

**John Picken**

The auxiliary?

**Tom Ricchio**

You don't talk to the auxiliary.

**John Picken**

I don't know what they do. Remember, the auxiliary is a separate organization. They use our facilities, but they're a separate organization, and we do not control what they do with their monies, their memberships, or anything like that. They have their own strict rules. I'm sorry.

**Rusanne Anthony**

They have their own tax ID.

**John Picken**

Yep. Did I miss any committees? Okay. Old business. We already talked about the kitchen measure J coming up.

As we mentioned last month, we will be doing a fundraiser in the near future for a Law and Order dinner, which will be in April or May next year. What my counterpart on the west side has done is having a couple of spaghetti or chili dinners for bringing in stuff. They want to raise \$2,000 for each section. West \$2000, here \$2000. I'm hoping we can figure out something in the near future to get something similar going on here to raise money. I am going to donate some money to that fund without worrying about the fundraiser, but we will. Is there any other old business I need to hit, Garth?

**Garth Gilpin**

Last year we sponsored the group 29 to PSP during Christmas break. We donated \$2,500. I'd like to make a motion that we support that group again this year with a \$2,500 donation. It supplies bus rides from 29 base up north of here to the airport, back and forth for people who have leave. It's a great way to support the base, and I would like to make that motion.

**John Picken**

Motion for how much?

**Garth Gilpin**

\$2,500.

**John Picken**

We have a motion for \$2,500 to support the Transportation of our military from 29 Palms. Andrew seconds it. Any discussion?

**Speaker 1**

I have a question? Are they using vans, busses? Busses. Is there a way of putting? Is there a way of putting one of our magnetic signs on the side of a bus to get a little stuff out there.

**Lee Wilson**

that's a good idea.

**John Picken**

So we have a motion. Any other discussion? \$2,500 going to come out of community, I would assume. \$2,500 out of community. All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes.

Okay, new business. I have first thing here is: Would our delegates who went to national convention give us a synopsis of the happening there?

**Tony Aguilar**

Chairman, I add something into old business.

**John Picken**

Old business, sir.

**Raible**

Kitchen.

**Tony Aguilar**

I've been talking to Garth for a couple weeks about the progress on the kitchen. At the same time, I've been talking to an old friend, someone all of us know and we love greatly, who was our chef for many, many years. Juan, Chef Juan, he is ready, willing, able to come back and work the kitchen seven days a week, not three days, and a menu that I provide to you, Garth, that's amazing at great prices. So I would like to make a motion that we bring him back when the kitchen is ready. I will work with Garth on a contract that is acceptable to the board, keeping in mind that the president, the people, people who previously in the kitchen were here, paid nothing for a year and a half, and were open in three days. So, I'd like to make that motion.

**John Picken**

This motion is not valid at this meeting, as I told you before. That goes to the House Committee and then the Executive Board. We talked about this a number of meetings ago.

**Tony Aguilar**

I'm making that motion to the membership. That's appropriate. It's not appropriate.

**John Picken**

It goes to the executive board. It goes to the executive.

**Tony Aguilar**

You're wrong. You're wrong, but I'll go on record. Thank you.

**John Picken**

We'll take it under advisement. It goes to the executive committee after the House committee. The general membership does not vote on bringing an individual in here to employ.

**Tony Aguilar**

The House committee is present. Excuse me. The House committee is present.

**John Picken**

We have a House committee meeting. We can talk about it then. Please send Garth an email with all your stuff, and we'll handle it at the House committee. We've talked about this before, Tony. You tried to do this three months ago. . .

**Tony Aguilar**

and I made that request in writing. I never done anything in writing. Apparently, we're not looking. Okay, I'll send it again to you, Garth. Thank you.

**John Picken**

Going back to our new business, delegates. Which one would you like to go first?

**Rusanne Anthony**

Mine's going to be quick. There's going to be. . .

**John Picken**

Okay, great.

**Rusanne Anthony**

I just have a little simple notes. So, Andrea and I traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, and we attended the national convention, and it was quite an eye opener because there were 6000 attendees from across the nation. You really get a sense of what the American region is all about, and you see a lot of things in play. I went to two finance commission meetings, and what I walked away from that was they weren't very transparent at all. They talked about emblem sales, which is uniform sales. There, in the first day, there was 250,000 in uniform sales, which is pretty amazing. I mean, it was wiped out because I went back there the next day, and there was very little. There was a lot of auxiliary stuff still hanging on the rack, but really nothing for American Legion.

**Allen Lane**

That's great.

**Rusanne Anthony**

There, as far as income is concerned, there was a shortfall in membership income. There was only of the overall budget. There was only 42% of membership revenue at national levels. So across the nation, their revenue was only at 42% which should have been way higher. But what sustained nationals finance was a 7.9% return on investments, and that kept us steady. And according to the treasurer, who was a CPA, our heads above water. But I went up to him after the finance meeting, and I asked him for a balance sheet, which he didn't have, and I said I'd really like to see what retained earnings are, which is a number is if it's negative that means we've been operating far too long at a loss, and if it's a positive that means we've been operating at a profit.

He kind of went up his nose and say you can get that at the finance office. Well, I never found the finance office, so I can never see overall what retained earnings are. If the American Legion National is healthy after all, they did report that there was 3.1 million surplus, but there was the shortfall in membership income. Like I said, only four to 2% accounted for that. Employee wages was at 625,000. Emblem sales; those are when you go online and you order shirts from National. You order this stuff here.

There's a lot of problems with orders, and if you ever see a delay in that, it's because we have a contract with Pitney Bowes, and the service from Pitney Bowes is just really, really bad. So you might wait a while to get your stuff. So they want to do, and there's very few staff members. They actually let two employees go, so there's less people to process the orders. Their downtown office is in disrepair, which is kind of like here in California. Our office in Los Angeles, where the state is in disrepair too. The Sanger office in disrepair. It's kind of seems like a chronic problem throughout the American Legion. So that's basically it. I thought it was really interesting. I was really impressed with the amount of people there, the enthusiasm for the American Legion, the process for getting in a new national commander, I was really disappointed with because he was already elected before we even went there. So our delegate vote is basically a waste of time. So it's predetermined before convention who the next national commander will be, and it's some old boy from college.

### **Gordon Countryman**

But how does that work?

### **Andrea Kline**

They have an election committee that starts several years prior to, and they vet this candidate and they put the candidate into different roles, basically to fail. And if they don't fail, then they advance in the year that they're selected for as the national commander.

### **Allen Lane**

Doesn't sound crooked at all. He's probably going to be a great leader. Sounds like a good old boy system. Yeah. Wow.

### **Rusanne Anthony**

It is. I mean, he was a much older man than I would have preferred. Wow. But the year after that, the man that is in line, his name is Matt Schuman. He looks like he's in his 40s, which I think is what the American Legion needs is much younger people like Andrew here and like Allen. You know, it's that's our future and James. You know, any much younger members. So it looks like we're going to get that next year. But that's kind of what I walked away from any entry. Yeah, the one thing I would add is Matt Schuman. Is that's my yeah.

### **Andrea Kline**

So for my report, just to tag on to what Rusanne was saying, Matt Schuman, who's in line for two years, he's the young gentleman. He's from Arizona. He's coming to California at the end of November, and he's doing a visit at Palisades, and he wants to come here. So he's working with David Brambola on the coordination. I believe it's like the 28th and the 29th ish, because he gets two visits to California. So it's not locked in stone, but he did pull myself and David Brenla and other people aside and say that he wants to come to Palm Springs too. So hopefully, cross fingers that we would get in here.

### **John Picken**

That'll be the weekend after Thanksgiving.

### **Andrea Kline**

Yeah.

**Allen Lane**

Is there anything we need to do to prep for that?

**Andrea Kline**

I don't know. I'd have to defer to other people that have done this before.

**Amado Salinas**

Sir, yes, yeah. It has been decided to go ahead and see by having Palm Springs. I thought it would be great in line with his motion. The challenge is, of course. They need to raise funds. That's this is the reason they make trips. So one of the discussion was to have a big dinner for him that that provides him some exposure to all the veterans in the Coachella Valley. So the post 519 would then be relegated to go ahead and a point select and develop where, and I said, well, we have a short window. We're looking about at the end of November for all of us to go ahead and do that. The plus side is for our posts in our city is a really good recognition because California in three years or four years, is now slated to have a national commander. So that is what we've been working on behind the scenes.

**Rusanne Anthony**

I kind of got the feeling that California was the bastard child of the convention. We were kind of put in the back.

**Amado Salinas**

Well, they go with it.

**Rusanne Anthony**

no. It was just kind of the tone.

**Amado Salinas**

Actually, what they do is they go by 100% membership participation. So those that are closer to that East Coast, they sign up 100% Well, then they get to the front, same with their membership, so California didn't quite make the membership level, so therefore it's on the back. So this would be a big plus for us. This is actually a gift that Mr. Schuman would be providing to California to help us. So I think it's something we should take serious and really do a good presentation for him, and roll out the carpet.

**John Picken**

How many people could we expect for a dinner here for him? That's the question. I mean, we're going to have to figure. We're not even sure if our kitchen's going to be ready yet.

**Amado Salinas**

Right. That this is this is the thing. I said, well, our kitchen is nothing, so we have to find another location that we do that. I did talk to Ponce Air Museum. They're going to see what they can do as far as the date is difficult. We'd have to look for another location, but we would be drawing from San Diego, you know, Temecula. We the idea is we'd be drawing from all these people, more people that we can house, yeah, the better. It defers our costs, provides them a good amount.

**John Picken**

When you say house, you mean for the dinner.

**John Picken**

Oh, that's like people.

**Gordon Countryman**

Yeah.

**Rusanne Anthony**

Town hall. He does want to come here for a town hall, and I think that'd be a great.

**Gordon Countryman**

Yeah, sure.

**Amado Salinas**

Congressman Ruiz would go, but we also have to ask Congressman Calvert to at least that they're invited. Jeff Menendez, Assemblyman, has already said yes on that. We're looking at Mr. Takano also and his staff. So everybody would like to make see it happen. We just need to make the commitment so I can say yes. We'll host the. Pardon?

**Tom Ricchio**

How much does that cost?

**Amado Salinas**

Again, we are looking into the costs since we don't have our own location here, and this is why I'm asking as a favor for different locations. I understand we have funds. At the same time, we're trying to draw funds to go ahead and provide as a donation to him, the future commander. So that's the idea of the breakfast. The Palisades, it's 99, but they only hold so much, you know. So if we can find places that can do 300 or 400 dinners, great. That's what we should be looking at. That's why the Air Museum. . .

**Raible**

It's perfect.

**Amado Salinas**

They cater. They can provide the side. It's a plus for them, a plus for us. A history of veterans. So it's a good location. But this is where the executive board would have to go ahead and look at, and we as the members need to say and approve on that. But we're not by ourselves. Again, I'm trying to remember. We have San Diego, we have L.A. We've got a lot of people that are going to come in.

**Rusanne Anthony**

Yeah, District 22 and District 21, I'm sure would be coming in with money to finance something like this. It wouldn't come out of 519's pocket. It would be two districts pulling in resources besides the Department of California.

**John Picken**

I think that. Thank you, Amado. Sir, I think that district department would be the one we should hit for the money on that.

**Amado Salinas**

No, not going to happen. My apologies. Okay, so because this is a future national commander, department has to stay neutral out of it. So membership is department membership is trying. Some from department membership and so forth, but that's an internal battle over there. We need to know yes or no if we can move it forward. Let's move it forward. I would say definitely District 22, District 21. . .

**Andrea Kline**

District 25. You've got Joshua Tree. You've got that's true.

**Amado Salinas**

That's two districts that we need to go ahead and approach on, but the decision has to be made quickly so we can let them know that yes, we can go ahead and share some money from the department.

**Amado Salinas**

I understand we have the money, and that's good because as any venue you have, you must at least have a venue commitment. The idea is to make sure that we supplement it, so it's not pulling out of our own.

**Rusanne Anthony**

I think we need to send a message that we can do it. Yeah, yeah.

**John Picken**

Maybe somebody can contact the hotel, see if they have a conference room, dinner area.

**Amado Salinas**

Those to offer rates for those that come down and stay over.

**John Picken**

Well, I'm saying like that we do at the conventions, we could have a dinner at the hotel versus museum.

**Amado Salinas**

There is a few hotels that have the size they can host, but they're much more costly than the air museum.

**Rusanne Anthony**

What about Agua Caliente?

**Gordon Countryman**

Yes, we're talking.

**Amado Salinas**

Jeff Gruby. My apologies.

**John Picken**

That's okay.

**Amado Salinas**

Jeff Gruby just took over as a new chairman, so we're waiting for Jeff and his everybody's getting back. They're usually scattered about. They usually get back in into September, early October to start business again. But like you said, the idea is that we need to say yes to it and then work it out afterwards.

**Rusanne Anthony**

Well, anyway, it's on our radar.

**John Picken**

Gordon,

**Gordon Countryman**

it might be a good idea to also approach the Palm Springs Convention Center because they surely have a station.

**John Picken**

This might be a little cost prohibitive, though. Yes. . .

**Tom Ricchio**

More?

**Andrea Kline**

So I'm going to continue on. Thank you. And so I attended the VA and R resolutions that were presented. VA and R is everything to do with your benefits and healthcare. So everything going on around compensation, getting qualified for your benefits, and then all things healthcare related. There were there were three notable resolutions that I want to mention. There was one on mental health, and the mental health one is basically building a center of excellence for innovation in Washington D.C. that looks at other treatments besides the traditional treatments for mental health, for example, what Dr. Sundar is doing, psychedelics, and so that resolution passed, and so that passed at the national level. And what happens with that is that turns into going towards legislation, and then the other one that was notable that California put forward is addressing the cancers that have come forward as part of the toxic exposures. I'm not talking about your normal screenings for you know colon cancer, breast cancer. I'm talking about those conditions that are that are prominent for those who have toxic exposures, and so the VA developing screening criteria to address people that are getting those cancers. Then the last one was The Take Care of Americans Veterans Act.

This is very controversial, and this was Rusanne talked about. You know we were stepchildren because California opposed this. The national department, the National American Legion, supported it. Dan Wiley supported it. California opposed it. Texas opposed it, and so it came to a head at the convention. It came to a head from California that we had some outspoken individuals who really, you know, had conversations with our national commander, and so the resolutions that were put forth. California put a resolution forward to say that with this this legislation, which would take benefits away, the hearing tinnitus and also sleep apnea take those benefits away for the future and fund this act. And so California put forward a resolution to say, but we've already had these resolutions in place for the national that say you can't fund it by taking away benefits. There were four resolutions, and California brought that forward. It was a good conversation. National responded. They had basically kind of an attorney give out or you know read their response. They put it on. They basically said it's not.

Denied, but it's being put on hold for further study because California raised this issue where now you're putting forward legislation, but we already have stuff in place that says you can't do that, and so and then Texas basically opposed this the 108 section that was taking the benefits away, and Texas and California were not the same. Okay, what California said was you can't do this because you have rules in place, and Texas said we oppose the 108 passed the Major Star Act, and so those were the notable things. One other notable piece of that was a resolution was talking about the auxiliary membership criteria. So it did pass, and they were they basically said that siblings. So siblings were never able to be part of the auxiliary. So if my if my sister wanted to join the auxiliary, now she can, and so that was passed by the amendment bylaw committee, and so that is coming down. That resolution did pass. Now, as far as the nitty gritty of all the details of that, I didn't sit in on that committee. I just sat in on the report out about it. So, so that's all I have, Commander.

**John Picken**

Thank you, Andrea.

**Andrea Kline**

Any questions?

**John Picken**

Amado?

**Amado Salinas**

sir. Is there a resolution regarding hosting the Matt Schuman?

**Andrea Kline**

Is there a motion to? There's not, but I'll make a motion. I'll make a motion to host Matt Schuman. John, did you have?

**John Picken**

I was thinking it would be better to have it. We can have a motion, but we need to maybe have a committee to lead the charge on finding a place, getting food, you know, getting District 22, District 25 involved, and then whoever else might, you know, maybe external sponsors might want to get involved in this. So I think a committee similar to our communications committee might be called for.

**Andrea Kline**

there's two pieces. One would be to make the motion to say yes to Matt, okay, and then the other one would be to organize a committee to actually do it.

**Amado Salinas**

Because you have to have something first.

**John Picken**

I understand that, but I think it needs to be a provisional because we can't pull it off. We have that motion that's going to be out there, and we're going to be stuck being rocking a hard place. But your call. Are you in?

**Andrea Kline**

I'm going to make a motion that we that we that we approve host Matt Schuman here in Palm Springs.

**John Picken**

We have a motion. Second. Amado had his hand up first. Second. Amado seconds it. Any other discussion? Any further discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Motion. Are you holding? No. I haven't said this. Oh yes. Tony's on the new business, Tony?

**Tony Aguilar**

No. Okay. I have. . .

**John Picken**

Hold on. Hold on. Hold on.

**Andrea Kline**

like to make another motion that we organize a committee to address bringing Matt Schuman here and hosting him. I would like to make that motion that we have a committee of qualified people to investigate and to solve this issue of how do we host, where do we host, how much money. So I'd like to I'd like to make a motion for that.

**John Picken**

Motion by Andrea, second by Tommy Riccio. Amado, you had something?

**Amado Salinas**

Oh, right.

**John Picken**

Okay, thank you. Any discussion on that?

**Tom Ricchio**

We buy, we get the money, sir. We get the money by bargaining for tickets and buying the people.

**John Picken**

I believe that will be the one option we can look at. That's going to be up to the committee when they get formed, which we have to approve. Any other discussion? All in favor of forming a committee to bring Matt Schuman to Palm Springs? Aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? We need volunteers for that committee, we have Andrea, we have Rusanne, we have Amado, we have Tom Riccio. Anybody else? That's the committee as it stands right now, subject to adding or subtracting people as they decide to volunteer.

**Tom Ricchio**

And we start right away from all.

**John Picken**

That will be up to the chair, and I'm going to say that do you mind being the chair on that committee also, Andrea?

**Andrea Kline**

Sure.

**John Picken**

Or Rusanne, one of you two.

**Speaker 1**

You're it. You're it.

**John Picken**

Rank as privileges. So you have your committee.

**Andrea Kline**

I don't know. I didn't get everybody's name.

**John Picken**

Yourself, Rusanne, Amado, and Tom Riccio.

**Andrea Kline**

Okay.

**John Picken**

Is there anybody else who wants to be on that? The Schuman Committee. Thank you. Okay, going into more new business.

We have the upcoming event on Friday night, 9/11. Dinner is sold out, like I said earlier. The Suns of Hawaiian Lua is on October 3rd, as Lee Wilson said. We also have post Halloween on Saturday, October 31st. On Saturday, October 31st, we have the Pride Parade on November 8th, and we need convertibles for VIPs if anybody has convertibles. We also have our Veterans Day parade on November. Same thing. We need convertibles if anybody has a convertible. Lee Wilson, question for you: Do they allow people to sit in the back of pickup trucks during that parade? Yes. Okay. So if we don't have convertibles, maybe we can use a couple pickups.

**Gordon Countryman**

I have convertibles.

**John Picken**

Okay. We have one convertible. Yay!

**Garth Gilpin**

I have one. I'll call the gentleman guard.

**John Picken**

Okay. Amado:

**Amado Salinas**

The dealership in Indio has already said yes to providing two or three vehicles. Who's taking point on that?

**John Picken**

You are. You are.

**Amado Salinas**

I'll give you his name. All right, and you can contact him.

**Lee Wilson**

We'll need a couple people to go.

**John Picken**

Yes, I'll help you leave with that if we need to because we'll have to get it the day before.

**John Picken**

park them here in the parking lot.

**Lee Wilson**

Yeah, give me that as possible.

**Tony Aguilar**

I'll give the name of someone a Cadillac. Great. For years.

**John Picken**

Awesome. Okay.

**Speaker 1**

Please.

**John Picken**

That's all the new business I have, Tony? You have some new business, sir?

**Tony Aguilar**

I have a letter I would like to read before I do that. I have a couple of comments. I've been a member of this boat for 40 years, been commander of the Legion three times, the BAWP three times, and I served my country for 22 years of active duty. I am proud that I've got a real good record of leadership. I'm a unifier, not a divider. We had an event here where I hosted the chief of police.

**Amado Salinas**

Point of order. Is this new business?

**Tony Aguilar**

This is new business. Excuse me. Let me finish repeating.

**Amado Salinas**

All right, sir.

**John Picken**

Well, Tony, I know where you're going on this, and again, what you're bringing up went to the executive committee. The executive committee did what they did. so I'm just letting you know that if you have a problem with what happened, you go to the executive committee.

**Tony Aguilar**

I have the right to bring this up in front of the membership. Okay, okay, I want to do that. Please let me proceed. Okay?

**Amado Salinas**

Point of order.

**Amado Salinas**

Tony. If it's not new business, this is business for the American Legion. This is if it is something for the good of the Legion, it should be in that section. Okay. Right now we're in new business, so this is out of order.

**Tony Aguilar**

No, it's not out of order. Excuse me. Anyway, had the chief of police, his wife, the deputy chief, the incoming chief, and their wives in for a brief meeting here at table number eight on Friday the 31st, they were in uniform and specifically asked that be a very limited meeting because they were on duty. They did not drink, they did not eat, they're just here for that short period of time. They came in. I have witnesses, by the way. Albert Martinez, Ron Webster, and Mark Vitoy were there.

Mr. Picken had to inject himself into the meeting by going to the mic and announcing these VIPs were in the room, thereby made it an official meeting, which was embarrassing to me and to my guests. As a result, I get this ridiculous letter, which I want to read in a minute, which is baseless and also full of lies. I resent the fact that,, I mean, I've been here for 40 years. I've seen commanders come and go. I don't know why, but I've had nothing but problems with Picken for the last year.

**John Picken**

Tony, talk respectfully to your neighbor there, please. Otherwise. Tommy, no. Tony's got the floor right now.

**Tony Aguilar**

I'm sorry, I'm low on oxygen. I'm not in great health, so let me make this real quick. Okay, I would like to read this letter and ask that it be voted on by the board and by the membership to cancel it. It is baseless and not justified. Please read this. I can't. I can't stand. So, thank you.

**Amado Salinas**

Amado Salinas is reading this document for Mr. Tony Aguilar, a standing member in good standing with the Post 519, dated September 1st, to the Palm Springs American Legion Post 519 board members.

I'm forwarding the attached outrageous letter of reprimand issued based on vindictive, baseless, and outright lies by John Picken. I note that the letter is signed by the judge advocate Thomas Co. Francesco and the adjutant Allen Lane. Neither have personal knowledge of the events of the day because they were not present. They have been provided misinformation and lies by John Picken.

Background on Friday, July 31st, I reserved the table for eight at the Legion. My invited guests were all in uniform. Personal friends who I've known for years, guests included retiring Chief of Police Andy Mills, his wife Kathy, and incoming Chief of Police Lyle Sturgeon and his wife Brooke. Incoming Deputy Chief of Police is Michael Torres and his wife Susan, and my good friend, former mayor and city councilman Jeff Bernstein.

I'm well known and respected in Palm Springs for the years. I've been actively involved in the city politics, and I have raised hundreds of 1000s of dollars city for city charities through my popular Greater Palm Springs City Celebrity golf classic, which I founded and administered from 1944 until I retired it and myself in 2023. Over the years, I have also raised 1000s of dollars for Post 519.

My city of Palm Springs honored me with a star of the Palm Springs Walk of Stars on November 12, 2015, for my many contributions to Palm Springs, Coachella Valley, California, and the U.S. a none of my work had to do with my rank or military service.

I invited Chief Mills and the group so we could honor him and present him with a plaque for his outstanding service to Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. The plaque was signed by me and paid for by me. This was a meeting that lasted about one and a half hours. It did not include dinner. Strictly a private meeting. Shortly after the group arrived, all in uniform, Picken announced on the post microphone that he was hosting the police chief and other officers and former mayor of city member Jeffrey, he invited himself to the event. No one was amused. I have no respect for Picken and his continued abuse of authority as chairman. It is time for the board to have him resign, based on the facts which I have provided.

Avoid the outrageous attempt by Picken to smear my respective presentation, both in my community and in the military.

Thank you, a member of good standing, Post 519, 39 years. A member of the Legion for 52 years, and we have supporting letters from individuals that I'll present. Sergeant at Arms to submit to the executive board. You're ready to talk to the chair.

**John Picken**

Okay, moving along. Is there other, Gordon?

**Gordon Countryman**

It's my understanding, as post commander, it's your responsibility to introduce those guests. Also, it's also my opinion that this was arranged without approval of the housing committee or the executive committee. It's just a personal affair that should have went through both committees.

**John Picken**

You don't find any disagreement with me on that one, Gordon. You don't find any disagreement with me on that.

**Gordon Countryman**

Thank you. Was it done correctly for regulations and the bylaws? NO.

**Rusanne Anthony**

The thing that bothered me about this was you brought local dignitaries to this post, and you had this event for them under the auspices of the American Legion. We are the American Legion, and you excluded us. And that's what I take an exception to.

**Speaker 1**

Agreed. Thank you.

**John Picken**

Anybody else have any comments, Chaplain Command?

**Crawford**

I completely agree, and I have an issue with it simply because Andy Mills did a lot of stuff for us. Okay, he came up with the money for my baseball program, and when you show up here and like we are the post and we are welcoming you, that's cool, but don't make it just you. Everybody else had something involved in this. I would have liked to say thank you. There's nothing wrong with me saying thank you, and there's nothing wrong with you saying thank you, except when you come here and assume that we don't want to be involved, and it makes us look bad because he assumes that we don't care about him. That's not fair. That's not fair.

**Raible**

I worry about also setting a precedent that you know any member can just go ahead and do something like this. There is a procedure. It is not a good thing.

**John Picken**

Andrew?

**Andrew Stevens**

in this, it was mentioned about it being a private meeting. This isn't a private meeting hall. It's not a community center that anybody can use whenever they want. There's a process. There's procedures. So you know this wouldn't be acceptable if I mean, right now we're talking about the chief of police. What if it's a group that is counter to the American community? Do we also allow support of that? Just asking, because all one of our members, we can't allow that without proper procedure.

**Tony Aguilar**

Thank you. So you're telling me that one more.

**John Picken**

Is there anybody else? Yes, Allen.

**Allen Lane**

I'd like to say that this is NOT a personal attack. It was the way it was done. My name is on the bottom because I am the adjutant, the secretary of the board. It's not a personal attack, and this letter is just pointing out discrepancies. A request should have been placed for your get together, private or not. And I agree with everyone here, you heard many members speak, not just John, and that's all I have to say.

**Amado Salinas**

Sir, of course, I was not privy to any of this, but at the same time, per Robert's rules and per the American Legion, a letter of reprimand cannot be issued without proper procedure through our American Legion administrative hearings manual. I do recommend that possibly a letter suggesting that he not do it. Just make note of that.

**Allen Lane**

Understood.

**John Picken**

Give me the letter. Where'd my glasses go? Okay. So, the Executive Board of the American Legion Post 519 is issuing this letter to express our profound disappointment regarding your actions surrounding the recent events held at Legion Hall. The police chief has been a tremendous asset to our legion and ALL our members.

We were looking forward to acknowledging the retiring chief's actions with gratitude. You took over and made the event about you. This does not follow the principles of the American Legion. As a longtime member of this post, you are fully aware of the established procedures and well-known channels that must be followed when organizing events at our facility.

Your decision to disregard those procedures by setting up an event and giving out an award from you, not the American Legion, demonstrated a lack of respect for the leadership, the organization, and the members who have worked diligently to uphold the standards and reputation of the American Legion post 519.

Equally troubling was your decision to dominate the presentation of the awards to the chief of police. What should have been a dignified recognition reflecting the collective appreciation from our post instead became an event overshadowed by your actions. The manner in which this was handled reflected poorly on the legion and created unnecessary embarrassment to our organization.

The executive board and the House committee shared a unanimous sense of disappointment. Your conduct did not represent the values of teamwork, mutual respect, and adherence to established leadership that our members expect from one another, particularly from someone who has been a member for many years and knows the proper process.

Specific paperwork, such as the facility request forms, calendar availability, and any awards being handed out, must be obtained or approved directly through the American Legion Post 519. The board expects that all future events and activities involving the post will be coordinated through the proper channels and with the approval of the House Committee and the Executive Board.

We trust that you understand the seriousness of this matter and that no similar incidences will occur again. Any repeat misconduct may result in more formal disciplinary proceedings. This was signed by the Judge Advocate and the Adjutant on behalf of the executive board and the House Committee, American Legion Post 519.

**Amado Salinas**

Sir, based on the letter that was sent by the executive board and the House committee, I did not see any formal reprimand, which was referenced in the letter provided by Mr. Aguilar. Just to make note of that, there is no formal reprimand, but he was in fact notified.

**John Picken**

Thank you. And let me make a caveat to this. I presented what happened with other witnesses and what he said to somebody else in a text. I told the House committee what happened. They brought it up to the executive committee. I had nothing to do with it. Okay, the executive committee made a decision as to what would happen. I, if I remember correctly, was opposed to any sort of suspension or anything like that. Just a letter. Period. We all do it. It happens. That's the end of that. Yes, Tony. Is there anybody else before Tony has his final say. Tony, okay. . .

**Tony Aguilar**

I'm going to say I'm very disappointed in all of you because you're forgetting the number one situation. They requested that it not be a formal meeting. That means they did not want to be recognized by the post. These are friends of mine. I've known them for years. And you . . .

**John Picken**

Then you might have done it at your home IF you did not want to be recognized by the post.

**Tony Aguilar**

I could have. You're right. I probably should have done it elsewhere. And I'll keep that in mind because this was a big mistake on my part, to bring them here. They didn't want that. They had to leave. That's why they're in uniform. They were on duty. You people do not seem to understand that you're imposing something on other people that you want, you don't have that right.

**John Picken**

You're noted for the record, Tony. Thank you very much. Okay, moving right along for the good American Legion. Magi, you have something else, or . . .

**Amado Salinas**

sir, are you still on new business? I just don't.

**Allen Lane**

I think that wraps it up.

**John Picken**

If you have no business, please bring it forward.

**Amado Salinas**

So I was contacted. So we are approved for a luncheon on November 14 for the national commander. Right. Good job. Good job.

**John Picken**

November 4. November 4. Yeah. I thought we were doing 28th,

**Amado Salinas**

November 14. I just . . .

**John Picken**

We can't do November 14,

**Amado Salinas**

so that's why I brought it up right away. So it's a luncheon, November 14. Yeah, I was still 28th. Yes, I just got. Saturday.

**John Picken**

Yeah, we have an ALR district or area five meeting here that day.

**Amado Salinas**

Right, which is good.

**Rusanne Anthony**

Area five.

**John Picken**

Area five ALR. Okay, Does anyone have any thing more? Okay. Does anyone have anything for the good of the Legion? Question?

**Amado Salinas**

My apologies, Amado Salinas, District 21, Area Five, Post 509. On in conjunction with another group, we are asking individuals, there's a \$99 dinner for the to raise funds for the Marine Ball that's going to happen in Temecula. So \$99, what happens is you'll buy your dinner ticket, you attend the dinner to raise the funds, and that Lane Dollar also provides the dinner for a Marine that could not otherwise afford it, and it includes bus transportation and hotel for that Marine to attend the Marine Ball, 251st Marine Ball. So those of us, I'll give it to whoever our communications.

**John Picken**

Communications is James. If I may, because the flyer showed our Riverside County Sheriff, who is running for office, it became a controversial post. So I took it off. I'm just letting you know. I have people calling me, going, "Is this a campaign or is this whatever? And it doesn't say anything in the flyer. I read it, but it became such a controversy. I had to remove it. So I still love the idea.

**Amado Salinas**

Idea maybe just shouting out that for support, those that wish to support it by a ticket, and then the marine gets to go to dinner for the marine ball, and they've got nice big busses that go from 29 Palms and wherever to house these marines. So that's the only word on that.

**John Picken**

If I may, we can put that flyer on our website. If we have anybody complain about it? We'll have to discuss it further. I appreciate that. I'm not a fan of that sheriff, but it is the way it is. So, thank you. Appreciate that. So, get with James and give him the flyer, if you would. Anything else for the Good American Legion? Great.

**Andrew Stevens**

Just something for those who are who have a rating of 50% You can apply with the state of California to get national or state park access, so you get a free lifetime pass. So you you're exempt from any park fees, excluding cabins.

**Allen Lane**

Great. I just wanted to note that if anybody is interested in fostering an animal, Palm Springs Animal Shelter is looking for fosters. They provide quite a bit. You know, I believe food, shots, everything. There's very little that comes out of your pocket. I just wanted to mention, if you know anybody, reach out to me or Palm Springs Animal Shelter directly. Thank you.

**John Picken**

And while Allen's standing up here in front of what's left of our general membership, yeah, absolutely. Allen was at the Veterans Village two weeks ago now.

**Allen Lane**

Yes.

**John Picken**

With basically a little setup area. There was a number of different people there. Allen contacted 26 veterans at that veterans expo. And several others throughout the year. A lot of good outreach, and I just want to acknowledge him.

**Allen Lane**

The veterans' really needs our help. There are a lot of people who are down, and there are many veterans in the valley that are requesting our help. I reach out to them and help when I can. But I am thankful for all of you. It's a group effort here. Thank you.

**John Picken**

My last thing for the good of the American Legion. We already talked about Christmas at Veterans Village. I do believe Santa Claus will be at that Veterans Village Christmas sponsored by the auxiliary, and now seeing we're giving money. And I don't know who Santa Claus is going to be, but ho ho ho!

**Kevin Koch**

That's you.

**Amado Salinas**

You're losing weight, and now you want to be Santa?

**John Picken**

I play just on a side note before, I've played Santa for 30 years at the city of Redondo Beach. Wow. Private parties. We had a sleigh that went through town. Did the Christmas tree lighting every year for the city of Redondo Beach and a number of other stuff. So I got a little experience.

**Allen Lane**

We got the perfect Santa.

**John Picken**

Okay, nothing else for the good of the American Legion. Anything else? Closing ceremony then. Yes, Amado, stand by.

**Amado Salinas**

So NASSAU has launched a new interim program, and the way it works for high school students is they have to be 16 years of age, they have to be a U.S. citizen, they have to have at least a 2.9 GPA rate, and they must be in a college class, whether it's online or not. But this is an internship program for NASSAU that they can participate on that, and of course during the summer they get an internship assignment working for NASA.

**Speaker 2**

NASSAU. Yeah, NASA. NASA.

**Amado Salinas**

NASA. Space. Space.

**John Picken**

Space. You sound like you say NASSAU. I was like, going to go to NASA. But he said citizenships required. We don't have that.

**Amado Salinas**

citizenship required?

**Amado Salinas**

And the school districts that you know pass on to the entire Coachella Valley. It's the first time this happening. We're also having and introducing NASA curriculum for the school to look at, so the kids can go ahead and start taking certification classes.

**John Picken**

I love that program. That's my personal opinion. Okay, please uncover chaplain to offer a closing prayer.

**Crawford**

Thank you, God, for allowing us to work for our comrades, thank you for protecting our comrades in the Middle East. Thank you for blessing us all. We're all blessed.

**Everyone**

Amen. Amen.

**John Picken**

Sergeant at Arms, please recover the POWMIA flag.

Till we meet again, let us remember our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state, and nation be ever a main object of the American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization, and ourselves. That nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, and democracy. Please remove the POW.

Everybody, please recover. Please face our nation's flag. Present.

I now declare this meeting of the American Legion Post 519 Department of California General Membership Meeting adjourned. Thank you. . .

Minutes by Allen Lane  
Adjutant Post 519  
Sept 8 2026