

AZ Council of Chapters

Date: 23 January 2011

President: Col Ken Yamanouchi



President's Message

I have been in contact with Ron Perkins in regard to our 20 May 2011 AZCOC meeting which will be hosted by the Arizona Chapter. It will begin at 1000 and end at 1500 hours with a break for lunch. Later that evening, Gary Fredricks, our National Director and Past President, and his wife Marie, plan to host our entire group at their home for dinner, drinks, and good camaraderie. Our regular meeting will feature CAPT Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), MBA, MSN, FACHE, MOAA Deputy Director, Government Relations (Health Affairs). Additionally, COL Joey Strickland, Director of Arizona Department of Veterans Services, will attend and give us his "annual report."

Purpose. The purpose of our Council has to be to help each other strengthen our Chapters through membership growth and insure leadership succession through sharing of information.

Membership. We face declining memberships due to the aging of our members. In 1992, AZCOC had 10 chapters and over 2,000 members with the Tucson Chapter with 617 members. Since then, the Sun City Chapter was incorporated into the Sun City West Chapter which then became the Luke Chapter and the

Colorado River Chapter has folded and our membership has declined to 1,700 plus. There is a great need to stop this decline and grow.

All is not bleak. In addition to many chapters "holding," the Arizona Chapter increased membership from 187 to 228 by recruiting 45 new members by good planning and setting goals according to Ron Perkins. Their "Bring In a Buddy" program helped focus on recruiting.

It is important to set net growth goals (a hard number) after subtracting expected losses. That target number should then be subdivided into various categories: AD, RC, Ret, F, Auxiliary, National (Cover wrap), and Give-Me-10. Ask specific people to take ownership for each category and come up with a plan. By approaching recruitment in this manner, it becomes more realistic and manageable. Finally, we need a plan on how to reduce our losses.

All of the above is contingent upon good programs, welcoming new members, creating a climate conducive to camaraderie, scholarships, support of our troops and community. We must be able to answer the question "Why I should join/renew." Members must feel valued.

Increasing Visibility. Many of our chapters are doing an outstanding job of supporting our troops and communities. Scholarship awards have been increasing and each chapter has come up with unique ways to raise funds. I trust everyone has been reading each other's newsletters for ideas.

Our visibility can be further increased by connecting with our State elected officials. Many chapters have made a concerted effort to connect with our two senators and eight

Presidents Message (con't)

congressmen. It's time to ask individuals at the chapter level to serve as a POC for specific State Senators and Representatives. Please remind them to be on the lookout for potential Copper Shield awards. I know Bob Delker, our past President and current UAV Chairman will be asking for nominations.

Additionally, please consider the establishment of a "speakers bureau" and offer mentoring and speaking engagements to JROTC/ROTC units and various organizations looking for speakers for their Memorial and Veterans Day programs.

Leadership Succession. We have learned that it's not enough to ask people to step up and volunteer for leadership positions. Please use your board to help you identify potential people and come up with a plan on how to approach them. Nothing replaces the President personally asking for help. It's not the Nominating Committee.

Back to the days when we wore a uniform, we were accustomed to receiving and accomplishing our mission. We made sure we understood our mission, what was specific and implied, planned and implemented. Today, it's just as important to articulate our goals, vision, and our plan for success. If we are clear and ask our membership, we will succeed.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve and plan to do so with enthusiasm, dedication and commitment.

Vice President's Message

(Paraphrased by Ken Yamanouchi)

Some of our chapters limit the term of office for President to one year. For the sake of continuity and leadership succession, he suggests chapters reconsider changing their bylaws to be more permissive and allow for a second year should the individual be willing and the members want to reelect the person. To help strengthen

chapter operations, another suggestion worthy of merit included the appointment of a past AZCOC President to serve as a resource person for incoming chapter presidents.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Gene Fenstermacher, Colonel USAF (Ret)

House champions of the military and veterans' communities have wasted no time in reintroducing several MOAA-supported bills in the new 112th session of Congress - including a number offered by new Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairman Joe Wilson (R-SC).

H.R. 115 (Rep. Bob Filner, D-CA) would increase the maximum age for dependent children to be covered by the CHAMPVA program.

H.R. 178 (Rep. Wilson) would repeal the SBP/DIC offset for military survivors.

H.R. 179 (Rep. Wilson) would restore TRICARE eligibility for Guard/Reserve members whose active service earns them early retirement (under current law, they start retired pay early, but must wait until age 60 for TRICARE coverage).

H.R. 181 (Rep. Wilson) would authorize early Guard/Reserve retirement credit for all active service performed since 9/11/01 (under current law, only service after 1/28/08 qualifies).

H.R. 186 (Rep. Wilson) would phase out the VA disability offset for all chapter 61 (disability) retirees, regardless of years of service.

And DoD officials hope to be able to implement the TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) program, formerly termed "TRICARE-26", sometime in late Spring. TYA will extend TRICARE coverage to children of TRICARE-eligible families until age 26. Unofficial reported cost estimates have ranged from \$1,400 to \$2,400 a year per child.

Legislative Affairs (con't)

This expanded coverage will be available to eligible dependents who are unmarried, who have aged out of TRICARE at age 21 (age 23 if in college full-time), and who don't have access to their own employer-sponsored coverage. The initial benefit will be in the form of TRICARE Standard/Extra health coverage on a month-to-month basis. It is anticipated that TRICARE Prime will be offered as a benefit with a separate premium later in 2011.

On the other side of the coin, Defense Secretary Robert Gates is pushing a proposal to increase fees for some active duty and retiree under age 65 beneficiaries of the military's TRICARE health insurance system. An area of concern is that some of those "under age 65" beneficiaries are employed full-time while receiving their full pensions, and often forgo their employers' health plan to remain with TRICARE. DoD has been unsuccessful in pushing for TRICARE fee increases for several years in a row. But Gates has said there is reason to believe that attitudes on Capitol Hill might be changing. MOAA and Military Coalition members will be watching this one very carefully.

Auxiliary News

We need to remind our members that a spouse of a Life Member automatically becomes an Auxiliary member when she is widowed, and if not a Life Member, she also will be transferred to the Auxiliary for the rest of her husband's membership, and should continue on her own. We are beginning to be a large part of any Chapter Membership, and can play a bigger part in Chapter Activities, including leadership. We have so many years of experience to call upon and we need to stay involved with the Military family of MOAA in order to keep up with current legislation affecting us. We are told to keep active socially and mentally to improve our lives.

The Cell Phones for Soldiers project that AMAC is sponsoring nationally is a great way

to involve the spouses as well in reaching out to families and neighbors. This will give MOAA more exposure in neighborhoods by contacting phone stores with the collection of old cell phones, and reconnecting with neighbors and families. Spouses should be encouraged to participate in Aux activities, for some of them may make the transition to widowhood with the help of the support group of Auxiliary members. If each Chapter appoints an Auxiliary Liaison, we will continue to send information directly to them, provide support on a National level, listen to their suggestions, and encourage them to engage all their women members in group activities.

Pat Shecter, Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee

Employer Support for Guard and Reserve (ESGR) update

Since 9-11, the Total Force, service members (Active, Guard and Reserve), civilian employees, contractors, volunteers, employers and families, have all played a tremendous role in fighting terrorism and keeping our country secure.

The readiness of the National Guard and the Reserve components (RC) is at an all-time high and the Total Force can take great pride in that achievement. At the same time, we are now seeing unprecedented levels of service member unemployment and under-employment.

Eventually, this trend in unemployment could have negative impacts on force readiness. The relationship between civilian employers and their employees or potential employees that also serve in the Guard and Reserve is extremely important. It is central to the retention and recruiting missions of the Guard and Reserve. Department of Defense (DoD) recognized the importance of employers and in 1972, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) was established to focus on gaining and maintaining this critical relationship between employers and service members.

ESGR (con't)

Today, in this time of economic uncertainty and high unemployment, ESGR is once again being called upon by DoD. ESGR's 4700 Volunteers are being asked to expand their mission set and engage in activities that will enhance service members' and their families' opportunities in the civilian workplace.

Arizona Committee ESGR will plan for and execute activities that enhance the employment opportunities for service members and their families, especially focusing on those completing active duty tours and our Wounded Warriors.

By LTC Darren Venters, USAF Ret

Chapter Personal Affairs Officers

Chapter Personal Affairs officers should stay proactive with their members.

They should write articles for their Chapter newsletter periodically with information that is relevant and current. MOAA Nationals updates often have important info to share with members. The PA officer can sign up for national MOAA e-news from "News exchange, "legislative" and "Chapters call to Action". With these e-news the PA officer can filter information and have it available or published for their members.

The Personal Affairs officer should keep an updated roster, call individuals they know to be ill and offer assistance. They should also have available at all meetings Resource phone numbers for their area to offer members who need questions answered (that the PA officer doesn't know).

The PA Officer should bring at a minimum the following booklets (obtained from Nation MOAA benefits department) to each meeting.

- a) Personal Affairs workbooks.
- b) Survivors Checklist
- c) Help your survivor now
- d) Turning the corner (surviving the loss of a loved one).

The PA Officer should also hold an annual Personal Affairs workshop (held at a monthly meeting). They can either bring in a speaker regarding benefits or do it themselves. They should also have all the booklets and info available. (I have a personal affairs page on our website that has all the booklets and resource numbers available to our members. Other Chapter PA Officers are welcome to download this information since most of the resource numbers and such are national). Included in this talk should be Military benefits, VA benefits and Social Security benefits.

The PA Officer should always send out a survivor package which contains the booklet Survivors checklist, Turning the corner, TAPS along with resource phone numbers and a condolence letter to all survivors when a member passes away.

The PA Officer should also have a reference library at home to use as guides to help answer questions and use as resource for helping with survivors and even just members questions. This reference material can be found in MOAA's Policy and Procedures manual under appendix J.

By Maj Steven Abel, USAF Ret

Council Membership Dues Reminder

This is a friendly reminder regarding individual Chapter dues for membership into the AZ Council of Chapters (COC) MOAA. If your Chapter has already submitted your dues for 2011, I thank you and please disregard this reminder.

At the October AZCOC meeting on October 19th 2010 in Green Valley, and in accordance with AZCOC by-laws (article VI section 1,2,3), the individual Chapter membership dues to the AZCOC was increased to \$ 1.00/regular member and \$.50/auxiliary members.

Dues Reminder (con't)

This increase is effective beginning with your 2011 membership dues.

The new dues requirements are based on your membership roster as of 12/31/2010 and are payable on or before March 31st of the following calendar year and are considered delinquent by April 1st of that year.

The new address to forward your membership dues is as follows:

AZ Council of Chapters MOAA
C/O Maj Steven Abel
2653 E. Barclay Ct.
Green Valley, AZ 85614-6261

Please make checks payable to: **AZ Council of Chapters MOAA**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these changes please feel free to contact me.

Steven Abel, Maj USAF, Ret
AZ COC MOAA Treasurer
stevenabel8@msn.com

520-648-2172

NOTE: No attempt has been made to edit or editorialize the various submissions to this newsletter.