



American Legion Auxiliary

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK, INC



Empire State News

***“Cultivate a New Attitude
Dream, Believe, Succeed”***

October 2011

Department President's Message - - - Ann Geer



Hello to all!

I've just finished the conference tour with the three vice-presidents. Thanks to all of you for everything. It was an enjoyable tour and I hope that each of you found the conferences informative and helpful. There are quite a few changes this year. Please look through the plan of action and take note of them.

1. EGS applications must be received by the Department EGS Registrar by March 15, 2012.
2. Scholarship applications are due to the Department Chairman by March 15, 2012.
3. No more consolidated report form. There is once again a unit and county report in shortened form.
4. There are now 2 reporting dates only. The dates are November 1, and March 1. Any work done following March 1 should be held and reported in November.
5. The newsletter format is shortened. More bulletins will be used.
6. We need your email addresses. If you have email but have not shared it with the Department office, please consider doing so. You will be able to receive all bulletins, newsletters, etc.

There are many changes this year. Change is all around you, do not fear it. In order to grow and retain our membership we must be willing to accept change. Let's turn our membership slide into a membership surge. We can do that by changing our attitude. So "Cultivate a New Attitude." Smile more, welcome everyone into our organization, accept new ideas, embrace change. Throw negativity out the window! We don't need it. Negativity only hinders our success. Develop a positive attitude. Dream, believe and succeed at it!

Please utilize the new reporting forms. Many members have asked for less paper work and reporting. We are trying to accommodate you. Please report. The numbers that you report are shared with the National American Legion and Auxiliary. Those numbers are consolidated with all departments and forwarded to Congress. Numbers give us political lobbying power. Numbers allow us to be strong veteran advocates. Numbers are extremely important.

Cultivate a New Attitude! Dream it, believe it and you will succeed at it! With a new attitude we will stop the membership slide and grow our organization. It will be the best it can possibly be.

Have a great year in the American Legion Auxiliary

President Ann

American Legion Auxiliary College

Department of New York

Sign up now to attend the American Legion Auxiliary College!!

DATE: Friday, May 18th through Sunday, May 20th, 2012

LOCATION: Cazenovia College, Cazenovia, NY

COST: Still only \$200 for the entire weekend!

Applications to attend the college can be found in the Plan of Action or on the Department website. If you are interested in being an Instructor, please complete the application on the Department website asap!
You'll be glad you're a grad!!

Linda Tome, College Dean

MEMBERSHIP - - - - Sally Johnston, Chairman

I trust that by this time the District Vice Presidents for your respective Districts have informed you of the message that was given at your Fall Conferences. The Department of New York membership goal as set by the National organization is 47,719.

Membership is the backbone of the American Legion Auxiliary and without the members we simply cannot support any of our programs. The task is the same. We need more members to keep this organization going. More importantly we need a "new attitude" to believe we can succeed as Department President Ann Geer states.

First we must not be afraid to ask. Still to this day, many of us are reluctant to just ask! Are you willing to try? Begin this year by arming yourself with the 3 part membership form and the colorful application form that lists some information about our organization and the membership benefits. As directed by the National organization, we are "Honoring their Service". Talk to the potential member and explain to them about our organization and why it's so important to volunteer in remembrance of those whom we have been given our eligibility.

Turn that negative attitude to a positive one. Many members have concerns about the upcoming dues increase of \$4.00 effective 2012. Now is the time to plan for the change. Have a fundraiser specifically for the dues increase and incorporate a membership drive at the same time.

As stated during the Fall Conference tour, yes there are many problems with the membership cards. The Department office has been working diligently to help correct these errors – remember to do your part and make the necessary corrections through the Data form. Membership is everyone's job even the corrections.

The information is not new. Membership has always been a struggle, but "WE" can change. We can be convincing that we are very proud and privileged to be a member of the world's largest women's patriotic organization and proud of the Veteran we "Honor with their Service". Your attitude toward others will determine our success or failure. Are you willing to go the extra step and simply ask, "Would you like to join our organization in Service not Self and be a volunteer for our Veterans and their families?"

Our Department Commander, Michael Bowen is offering a special pin, if you recruit 5 new members to the "American Legion Family" – Auxiliary, Legion and Sons of the American Legion. Why not get those "Family members" and apply for the pin. While you are at it apply for the Recruit 3 Renew 3 award.

As your Membership Chairman, "Successful Sally, The Seed Planter", I will do my very best to "plant" new ideas throughout the year as we Dream, Believe and Succeed to reach our 100% membership goal for our Sunflower Head, Department President Ann.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation - - - Diane H. Gerber - Chairman

Now that we are back home from our conventions it is time to get ourselves to "Dream-Believe-Succeed" in all we are going to accomplish this year. Begin with a "New Attitude" that will take us to heights unknown! "Honor their Service" by observing Veterans' Day, November 11th. Contact local civic and community organizations and have joint services of remembrance. Involve all members in your Legion family and visit cemeteries replacing old flags. Arrange a visit to a VA hospital, homeless Veterans shelter and give some time to a Veteran. Include homeless female veterans as they too are suffering. Ask your Post to provide a "Safe Shelter" for a Veteran and his family. Too many have fallen on hard times and they need our help.

Now as the holidays approach it is also a time to volunteer in a Soup kitchen or food pantry. Contact your VA facility and let them know where a pantry or shelter exists. Encourage Auxiliary, SAL and Junior members to arrange a turkey drive in your Community. Many Posts serve meals during the holidays so why not provide a meal for homeless Veterans. Please read the Plan of Action as we have grown in leaps and bounds. Review your planning schedules during your Unit, County and District meetings as VA Gift Shop, National Creative Arts Festival and annual Walk-a-Thon are quickly approaching.

Please remember our first reporting period will be upon us November 15th. Special bulletins and updates on Veterans Affairs will be posted as necessary. Be creative – believe - dream –succeed!!

Children & Youth – - Barbara Corker, Chairman

With the Fall Conference Tour over, it is now time to focus on all the programs that fall under Children & Youth. As you all know, Department President Ann's project is COTA, Children's Organ Transplant Association and we will all be working hard on raising funds for her project. Please report everything that you do, so it can be reported to the National Organization.

All County Presidents received their Child Welfare piggy to be stuffed and plumped up for the pig roast at the Mid-Winter Conference. There will be a prize for the largest cash donation at the conference.

Halloween is a fun time for children. Perhaps your unit can hold a Halloween Party and make it a fun and safe night for all. Don't forget to invite the children of military families and children of veterans. Involve your Junior members and younger Sons of the American Legion.

National Family Week is Thanksgiving week. Adopt a military family and make them a Thanksgiving Basket complete with those delicious baked goods.

All brochures can be ordered through the American Legion, National Headquarters (317)630-1201 or on the website www.legion.org/childrenyouth. Order early so you have them in time.

Please be sure to download the revised copy of the Children & Youth report forms on the Department website.

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\$\$\$ - AUDIT/FINANCE - \$\$\$

Don't forget to acknowledge that your Audit/Finance Committee examined and audited the Treasurer's books. The UNIT AUDIT DATA FORM must be completed and sent to Department Office no later than December 21, 2011.

There seems to be some confusion with remittance of funds.

- ALL funds are sent through the County Treasurer, with the exception of Unit dues and Poppy orders.
- Unit Treasurer please send \$5.50 for Bonding, \$5.00 for Day Fund and 15 cents per membership goal for Coupon Assessment to your County Treasurer. These are due now.
- Past President's dues of \$3.00 each and Department President's Project contributions are funneled through the County Treasurer.
- All other donations should be funneled through the County Treasurer to Department.

County Treasurer's please follow the instructions on the remittance sheets when submitting any funds to the Department Office.

Mary Lou Platt, Finance Chairman

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WARRIORS FAMILY ASSISTANCE - - - Pat Bergin, Chairman

If you have not read the most recent Bulletin for the Warriors Assistance Committee, I would like to let you know that this program now has its own email address: wfaatalany@nycap.rr.com

You will be able to access information and the guidelines for the program. Potential applicants will have the opportunity to have their applications reviewed in a more timely manner.

Since the Department Convention in July, this committee has approved four grants for a total of \$4,584.00. We need Auxiliary members to volunteer to be on local review teams to help our applicants fill out applications and to assess their needs. Many times Posts/Units can offer assistance to the Veterans and Military families. Remember the basic

guidelines are for Veterans honorably or medically discharged within the last five years or for those currently serving on active duty. This also applies to the Reservist or Guardsmen who were Federally deployed within the last five years.

We will be promoting this program as well as reaching out to corporations and charitable organizations for donations with the help of our Department Public Relations Committee. Remember that this program assists Veterans, so you can use POPPY FUNDS to make a contribution.

Thank you to all the members who have assisted in reviews. You are the key to the success of this program. Let us all "cultivate a new attitude" enabling us to "dream, believe and succeed".

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PLEASE NOTE: Corrections -- In the Plan of Action

Change 5th District Membership Support Team to Deborah Kryczkowski. Remove Shelby Sobolowski.
Change 5th District President, Karen St. Hilaire's cell # to 315-416-3038
New address for PDP, Anna Ballard, - 6887 Plaza Dr., Niagara Falls, NY 14304 – Tel# 716-216-4548

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CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS - - - Susan M. Britton, Chairman

Several changes were made this past summer at both the Department and National levels. The following are the results of proposed amendments to our Constitution & Bylaws:

Department Convention C&BYL's Changes:

- 1) Due to the retirement of our current Department Secretary/Treasurer, there was an amendment to create a separate F/T Secretary and a separate P/T Treasurer position replacing the current F/T Secretary/Treasurer position in the Department of New York. This passed and will be effective for the 2012-2013 administration.
- 2) Under the "District Rules" section of the Department C&BYL's-page 20-#10C and #10D-this amendment was divided into two (2) separate amendments—Part I (#10C) to provide for ALL District conference representatives of a Unit or County that pay a registration fee be allowed to vote. This was defeated. Part II (#10D) to include "Past District Presidents" to be a "delegate-at-large" to District conferences with a vote. This passed and will be effective for the 2011-2012 administration.
- 3) An Amendment to allow for the creation of an Empire Girls State Committee composed of three members (subject to the ratification of the Department Executive Committee): 1 for 3 years, 1 for 2 years and 1 for 1 year. This passed and will be effective for the 2012-2013 administration.

National Convention C&BYL's Changes:

- 1) There was a proposed amendment to change the name of "Senior member" to "member". This was defeated.
- 2) There was a proposed amendment to increase the Senior dues by \$5.00 along with a \$.50 increase every three years. This was amended to a \$4.00 increase with NO \$.50 increase every 3 years. This passed.
- 3) There was a proposed amendment to have 4 National President positions-this was determined to be illegal by the National Judge Advocate and was withdrawn by the Department of Arizona who sponsored the proposed amendment.

Resolutions - - - Judy Lanci, Chairman

I would like to update all of our membership on the outcome of resolutions from Department and National conventions for 2011/2012 administration year.

At the Department level we had three resolutions that were referred to our Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Our Past Department President Sue Britton, Chairmen will report the outcome of those amendments .

National had four resolutions that were reviewed and voted on by the body.

The first resolution - Change Junior Activities to clarify a.) that the position is honorary with no formal duties, b.) the age eligibility for honorary Junior officers, and c.) change national meeting requirements, allow virtual meetings, allow meetings within national divisions. This resolution was rejected.

Reasoning - Our junior members needed to meet and grow into our leaders of tomorrow. Taking away the personal interaction and responsibility of our junior members throughout the Departments would impede the ability of our Junior National President and Officers to gain the experience needed for future growth in our organization.

The second resolution - To amend standing rules Section II, Number 6, to define pre-convention committees and to allow the Constitution & Bylaws Pre-Convention meeting to hold a Pre- pre-convention meeting to be held openly and at a time not in conflict with any other; to allow all delegates to ask clarifying questions and to clarify the meaning of the proposals. This resolution was passed for 2012/2013 administrative year.

Reasoning - This gives the opportunity for members to attend this additional Pre-pre-convention meeting and ask any clarifying questions prior to any changes being brought to the Pre-Convention Constitutional & Bylaws meeting floor.

The third resolution- To change the name of the Awareness Assembly held in Washington DC to be called the American Legion Auxiliary Washington DC Conference. This was approved for 2011/2012 administrative year.

Reasoning - The awareness assembly was a confusing name and did not represent the conference properly, also it aligned with the American Legions name for their conference.

The fourth and final resolution - Change of National dues notices to be mailed out between September 1st and 15th and to be effective with the 2012-2013 administrative year. This was approved for 2012/2013 administrative year.

Reasoning - To give units time to contact members and get renewals in as well as transfers completed. It also gives more time to Departments to get members into the system and avoid mailing of dues notices for those who have already paid their dues. This will save substantial money for the organization and provide more accurate information for renewals.



MOTIVATING OUR MEMBERS USING THE GRAPE METHOD

S is for Sitting in the Bar: Do you have members that insist upon sitting at the bar during meetings and then gripping about what happens at the meeting?

O is for Ongoing: you know those ongoing spats between members that never seem to end?

U is for Unruly meetings: and what about those meetings where the President has no control?

R is for Ridiculing: do you have those members that never consider the suggestions of others and find fault with everything?

Now let's turn that grape from sour grapes to refreshing grapes.....

G is for Growth: Is our organization interested in growth? In order for that to be accomplished we need everyone's help.

R is for Recognition: Do we recognize members? People need and appreciate being recognized for their efforts and it needs to be in a timely manner. Recognition or awards that are presented may also serve as a motivating factor for other members' participation.

A is for Achievement: A sense of "team" achievement is important. Even if the member wasn't the "key" person who helped accomplish a task, it's important that everyone feels as if they contributed to its overall success.

P is for Participation: Do we involve everyone in our programs? Motivating our members comes from inner needs, personal interests and often times the attainment of goals or success in a project. By identifying the needs of individual members we can tap in to these needs and supply them an outlet for fulfillment. Make sure that we are open to the contribution of all members regardless of their longevity.

E is for Enjoyment: Volunteering in an organization has to be "fun"---and "Girls just want to have fun!" If being a part of the group isn't fun why stay? Our members' time is valuable and there is a multitude of options open to them---make sure that their best option is the American Legion Auxiliary.