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Important Updates

Attention Unit Presidents:

2022 UNIT DATA FORM – FOR DIRECT BILLING also known as the **BLUE FORM** was mailed out to all units February 12th and is also available on the Department Website under the Resource tab - under forms. (Type or Print – Non-legible or incomplete forms will be returned)

YOU MUST RETURN THIS FORM EVEN IF THERE ARE NO CHANGES THIS IS A MANDATORY FORM AND MUST BE RETURNED BY DUE DATE OF MAY 1, 2021.

The dues amount listed on the form will be printed on the upcoming Membership Renewal Notices (2022) that will be mailed, by National Headquarters to all members in September 2021 and then again in January 2022.

Unit Membership Chairs:

Please do not hold onto membership. National Headquarters will be pulling the data for the 2022 membership year the first week of April and will print the unit rosters and membership cards. Please make sure that you reach out to any member on your 2021 roster that has not paid her 2021 membership, perhaps there is a problem, please see what you can do to help.

The role of Unit Membership Chairman is a serious commitment to the unit and our members and should not be taken lightly. Please don't let a potential member that might be applying for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund be turned down because her 2021 membership has not been paid.

Department President's Message.....Linda S. Tome

Dear Members:

Happy New Year! I hope that you were able to "attend" our Virtual Mid-Winter Conference that was held on our Department website! We had 14 members put together some amazing presentations and recorded them on YouTube so they could present to our members virtually! It was quite nice as you could view them at your leisure!! We appreciate all the feedback that was provided – will be great for next year's Mid-Winter Conference if it is

live in Albany – OR – If we need to do another Virtual Conference!! We will be prepared – thanks to you!! (PS If you haven't filled out a survey, please do so!! We LOVE to hear everyone's comments – good and bad!! Definitely helps us to improve!) Many thanks to ALL our presenters, our Department office, our techies and to Amy McEathron for making this all happen! So very much appreciated!! We are committed to you – our members – to try to continue to make things as "normal" as possible – whatever that looks like these days!!

I had the pleasure of installing our new Honorary Junior Department Officers at a live ZOOM meeting during our Mid-Winter Conference! Congratulations to the new 2021-2022 Junior Department Officers (see their names, counties, and districts in the Junior Activities article). Many thanks to MacKenzie McDaniels for a GREAT year as Honorary Jr. Dept. President 2020-2021.

Last year at this time, Commander Mike, Detachment Commander Dennis, and I had just completed our visitations to all 62 counties in this beautiful state of New York! WOW!! Can't believe it's been a year already! Boy, how I miss you all!! And to that . . . I hope that you have been able to watch the monthly videos that I've been posting on Facebook (search for [American Legion Auxiliary Department of New York President](#) (click on this link)). I've been trying to put information out there to keep you updated as to what's going on as well as some things to think about during the month!

By the way . . . now is the time to look at all the National and Department awards that are available to Units and Counties! We don't know yet if we will be having our Department Convention live in Albany . . . but we would LOVE to present ALL the awards that are available to you. By the way, if we don't do our Convention LIVE, we will definitely be doing some sort of Convention with you all to close out the last two years properly and to begin our new administration!! So be sure to stay tuned!

In the meantime – remember that we are STILL CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY'S 100 YEARS!! Celebrating for two years! WOOHOO!! Let's keep recruiting new members and really celebrate our 100th Anniversary by hitting 100% of our membership goals for the Department of New York!!!! LET'S DO THIS!!!

Please stay safe ~ till we meet again. . .
Yours in service ~ not self,
Linda

Membership.....Mary E. Farley, Chairperson

I hope everyone enjoyed our virtual mid-winter conference. It was wonderful seeing you all even if you were in a little box.

Membership is still coming in nicely; we are currently, behind from last year, but we can still do it. We stand at 80.59% and only 7,238 members to go. Let's try and reach 100% and make Madam President Linda proud. As a side note Madam President Linda has promised to shave her head if we reach 100% membership by close of Books.

We have had some award winners. The following awards have been achieved:

Milestone #2 100% by November 1, 2020:

Unit 660	Unit 1244	Unit 63
Unit 1358	Unit 253	

Milestone #3 for Units 1/1/2021 (5-\$75)

Unit 94	Unit 257	Unit 231
Unit 322	Unit 1175	

President Linda's Birthday Party Award- to the County with the highest percentage of membership by Linda's birthday 10/25/2019: (\$100 Award)

Schenectady County 80.70%

Selfie Award- to the District with the highest percentage of goal into the Department office 10 days Prior to Mid-Winter Conference. (\$150 Award)

10th District

We are all working toward our goal, so keep up the good work. Remember we are all responsible for membership. Congratulations to all our winners!

VA&R / Service to Veterans.....Nancy J. Babis, Chairperson

I loved seeing all the Facebook postings about Valentines for our Veterans. What a great way to remind them they are loved.

15th Annual Walk-a-thon is on April 24, 2021

The Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary of New York, are proud to announce their partnership in the 15th Annual Walk-A-Thon. The "official date of the Walk-A-Thon this year is April 24, 2021. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, this year our "Walk" on the 24th will be "Virtual". So please still plan to do what works best for you to raise funds, and then join the SAL's and the ALA on the "Virtual" Walk as you report your results in real time and watch the tally results for all to see and hear. Watch for details coming later.

Also, a Facebook Group page was created. Just search in Facebook for **Walk-A-Thon NYS** and you will find it. Check the page often as we will be providing valuable information, tools, updates, and even some words of encouragement to make your fund raising a success.

There are a couple of different ways to participate this year.

1. Virtually, which gives us some great opportunities. You can participate anytime! Meet with your Legion family and plan to dedicate a day to celebrate WALK-A-THON. You can record your walk and/or take pictures and submit it to the SAL Walk-a-thon Facebook page. Challenge your bowling / dart/ league or snowmobile club to pledge using the boot logo. Get creative!

2. In person. Please remember to utilize all socially distance appropriate guidelines, keep your distance, wear your masks, have hand sanitizer available for washing of hands. Take pictures, post results so that our communities can see all the hard work and dedication the ALA has for their Veterans.

More information and helpful tools can be found on the Department website (www.deptny.org) under events/walk-a-thon. If your unit/county/District is planning something, please let me know and I will assist in supporting/advertising your event.

Please remember that all donations should be sent to The American Legion Department headquarters at 1304 Park Blvd. Troy, New York 12180 Attn: SAL. Memo on check should indicate "Walk-a-thon" and the check should be made out to: Detachment of New York.

I'll leave you with this Leo Tolstoy quote "Spring is the time of plans and projects" Here's hoping your plans and projects are successful and aimed at assisting our Veterans and their families.

Children and Youth.....Karen St. Hilaire, Chairperson

I want to thank all members who found ways to do Children and Youth activities, while maintaining COVID-19 restrictions. It is time to put your creative minds together again. April is Children and Youth month. How you plan activities and celebrate our youth will depend on regulations where you live.

April 15th is “Purple up day”. This day recognizes and supports our children. It can be as simple as wearing purple that day. Information can be emailed to all school principals, or placed on social media, asking that all students and staff wear purple. Ask your Legion Family members also. Remember to send me photos.

Now is the time to review and begin preparing entries for Department or National Children and Youth awards. Information and requirements can be found under Children and Youth in the plan of action or the department website, www.deptny.org.

100th Anniversary ALA.....Colleen McDaniels, Chairperson

As we continue to celebrate our 100th Anniversary during these trying times, we need to continue to highlight our programs that our Units, Counties, Districts, and Dept. continue to do. I encourage all our members to educate yourselves and be as knowledgeable as possible about those programs. I have highlighted ways to celebrate over the last year, but let me give you refresh and add a few safety twists; hold a virtual party (Facebook, Zoom), do a press release that highlights your member with the most years, do a press release highlighting your oldest member, use social media to highlight your membership and your eligibility, do a press release to highlight an amazing project (and/or publish it on social media), create a time capsule, and don't be afraid to add a tag line to all your press and social media releases stating: The American Legion Auxiliary, proudly serving our Veterans and communities for over a hundred year. That line is something we should proudly add to all our service projects until we hit our next milestone.

Lastly, I urge all our units to look for new members whether Junior or Senior Members. Now is the time to strengthen our membership as we head toward our next 100 years of Service Not Self and value our membership as our most prized possession. So, let's get 100% membership for our 100th Year Celebration!

Americanism.....Terri D. Wallace, Chairperson

The ALA Americanism Program is one of ten Mission Outreach Programs with the goal to promote patriotic education among youth, adults, and communities. In our last two newsletters, we highlighted how to support the ALA Americanism Program in your community and unit through the Americanism Essay Contest, Flag Etiquette and Star-Spangled Kids.

Did you know members and units can participate and support The American Legion Americanism Programs? Yes! These Programs include **The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest**, which instills a greater understanding and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students; **American Legion Junior Shooting Sports**, teaching students under 18 years old gun safety and marksmanship while fostering healthy competition. and **American Legion Baseball**, a program that has taught thousands of youths the importance of sportsmanship, good health, and active citizenship. **Despite the pandemic, be sure to include any support and participation in your March Americanism Reports! Thank you for supporting Americanism within our American Legion Family!**

Other community events that could be supported: Honoring Their Service/Support Our Troops Events, Welcome Home Events, Yellow Ribbon Events, Deployment/ Redeployment Ceremonies, and Naturalization Ceremonies. *Remember to Report!*

Don't forget to forward your Unit Americanism Essay Contest winners to me by March 15th! (nualaamericanism@gmail.com) Due to the fact that so many children are being virtually schooled, it has been decided at the National level that this year only, parents may sign the teacher's signature line. Please get the

word to your Unit Americanism Chairman. Reminders from the December Americanism Bulletin: Even though the theme remains the same, **no resubmission of a 2019-2020 Essay will be accepted.** Double-check that you have the updated Essay Cover Sheet, which can be downloaded from the National website: <http://www.alaforveterans.org/americanism-essay-contest>

It is not too early to begin working on your submissions for **Department and National Awards for Americanism.** Check your Plan of Action Supplement or send me an email!

American Legion Family College..... Debby Herrmann, Liaison

The American Legion Family College of New York was to be a 3-day leadership weekend immersion into the American Legion Family programs and structure. But like so many other events due to Covid-19 this too has been cancelled for 2021. The decision was based on the fact that SUNY Morrisville has elected not to have any outside venues for 2021 at the college.

I want to take this time to thank those that have supported the American Family College and for all of their efforts in trying to make the American Legion Family College a reality.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund.....Carol Flaherty, Chairperson

I would like to thank all our Units who in these troubling times have sent in their donations, who have helped our Veterans. I hope that all our auxiliary members are doing their best. I would like to thank Caitlin from our Dept. Office for keeping us abreast of what is going on.

Chaplain..... Susan Britton, Chairperson

Serving as Unit Chaplain offers opportunities to suggest and share variations of prayers and services for many occasions. Many resources exist to provide Unit Chaplains with prayers for your use. The National Chaplain, our very own Mary Anne Casadei, from the Department of New York, offers suggested prayers in each publication of The National Magazine published by our national organization. The page is called "Reflections"...check it out.

The national website also offers a copy of the Chaplains' Prayer Book. This valuable resource contains sections giving the "Responsibilities of a Chaplain", and offers suggested prayers for Invocations, Benedictions, Table Graces, and various holiday prayers. Included are prayers for Special Events including memorial services, installations, gift shop openings, Gold Star Mother gatherings, Junior Graduations, Executive Committee meetings, and the Legion Birthday. In addition, prayers for Ceremonies including funerals, graveside services, POW/MIA and Four Chaplains Day are shown. This Prayer Book can be purchased in a small booklet format or printed out on your computer.

There is also a "Chaplains Manual" available on the national website that contains a lot of information and can also be printed out for free.

Feel free to change and offer different prayers...our members enjoy hearing something different and pertinent to a specific event or moment in time.

GOD BLESS!!

Community Service.....Desiree Smith-McPherson, Chairperson

We are almost ready to reopen. Due to this pandemic, many holidays and family gatherings were cancelled, in addition to getting the vaccine to protect yourselves, veterans, seniors, and youths we still managed to service

our communities. This shows how dedicated and determined you all are.

Looking forward to receiving all your reports. Make sure you have your reports sent out on time with district information on them. We will manage to continue our mission of service throughout this year.

Constitution and Bylaws/Resolutions.....Marie Mock, Chairperson

I hope this newsletter finds you safe and well. I have enjoyed reading the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Standing Rules that you have submitted. I hope the rest of you are looking at your governing documents to make sure that they are up to date and accurate. Up to date and accurate paperwork makes short work of many disputes that can be so detrimental to the unit or county. Please find your papers and check them.

Some common questions that have come up include, "Do we have to have Standing Rules?" The answer is that you are only required to have two Standing Rules. Number one is the amount of the senior dues, and number two is the amount of the junior dues. You should have both even if you do not currently have juniors. If you do not have additional Standing rules, the unit must vote on any actions and expenditures. That is why some units have Standing Rules (that start with number three) for things such as how the unit deals with the death of a member, (Do you send a card or flowers or make a donation and how much?) and how do you deal with sending members to conventions and district meetings? (Do you pay a certain amount or is it dictated by the budget? Do you pay registration? Transportation? Etc.) Other units specify yearly donations or special programs that happen every year. Some units have only the required two and some have fifteen or more. That is up to the individual unit, but, if you have additional Standing Rules, they need to be approved by the Department to make sure that they do not conflict with the Department and National Rules. You cannot have additional rules that are not Department approved and then, ask Department to mediate in your internal disputes.

Another question that comes up is "How often do we need to have our Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules approved?" You must have them approved any time that you change them. Some units are still operating under Standing Rules that say dues are \$3. Since you send \$20 to Department for each senior member, you are probably collecting more than that. A member would be justified in using your Standing Rules to say that he/she should not pay more than \$3, and the unit should pick up the rest. You do not want to be in that position when it is so easy to avoid. Many units have not updated their documents to show the eligibility of male spouses of female veterans. Although unlikely in most units, this leaves the unit open to legal discrimination charges. Again, easily remedied by downloading the new C&B forms from the website and submitting them.

Some people have said that they have had terrible stress trying to update their Constitution and Bylaws. It should not take more than a few minutes if you use the form provided. It is a fill in the blank form. The quorum needs to be discussed if the size of your unit or the number of people who attend meetings has changed. Make sure the number is high enough that a tiny number of people can't make major changes and that it is low enough that you will be able to hold legitimate meetings on a regular basis. The only stress usually comes from the Standing Rules. That is something that you may run into dispute about because they are personal to the unit. Do not duplicate what is already in the C&B. Do not make so many rules that you forget what you have done. If in doubt, have the unit vote on the situation each time it comes up. The Standing Rules should be a convenience rather than a source of divisiveness.

Do not look at this process as a chore but, rather, a chance to become more aware of what your unit/county believes and practices. For God and Country, Marie Mock, chm.

Education.....Cynthia Babb, Chairperson

This is a reminder that all scholarship entries are to be to the unit president or education chairman no later than March 1, 2021. Once determined by units and counties, all scholarship entries are due to this Department Chairman by March 15, 2021. Remember my new mailing address is: 2000 Curry Road, Unit 17; Schenectady, NY 12303

During this pandemic, education has become a challenging topic. Teachers have learned to teach remotely. Family members have learned to assist in teaching students on days that they do not physically attend school. Part of the American Legion Auxiliary's work that falls under education is combatting literacy. If adults cannot read it is difficult for them to be an additional teacher to students. Please continue to help decrease the literacy crisis facing the United States. One more thing while we are discussing education, did you see that beginning with 2020 persons who do not itemize on their personal income taxes are now allowed to deduct up to \$300 of charitable contributions? In 2021, why don't you donate to this organization's education program. Remember if you don't itemize on your income taxes, you may still deduct up to \$300 donated to non-profits.

Thanks for all you do to assist and promote the American Legion Auxiliary.

*ALA Empire Girls State.....Jennifer Farley, Chairperson
..... Members Wendy Prívitera, Kris Dżiduch*

Greetings American Legion Auxiliary Members!

We are quickly approaching our 2021 virtual ALA Empire Girls State session and we couldn't be more excited! We have been working hard to support each of the counties and units as they work through their selection process.

We have had a few questions about what citizens should expect this year. While the ALA EGS team is still in the process of working on and developing this year's session, we wanted to share what we are considering for this year's program.

Special Notes about the 2021 Empire Girls State Program!

- ★ Dates: **June 27, 2021 - July 3, 2021** (Sunday- Saturday)
- ★ The program will have both synchronous and asynchronous components with up to 4 hours of live interaction daily (9am-1pm) and possibly some evening sessions
- Live Interactive sessions may include:
 - General sessions where information about Americanism, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the political process will be shared. We hope to also have guest speakers
 - County level sessions with counselors to work on elections and voting
 - Committee sessions with counselors to work on bill writing
- ★ Citizens will be able to run for county elections, and state elections
- ★ Possible time outside the 4 hours for county/committee work
- ★ **Samsung Scholarship:** Encourage your citizens to apply! This is a great opportunity and we do not want anyone to miss out! <https://www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung>
- ★ There will be an ALA Girls Nation session this year as well.

ALA Empire Girls State 2021 is looking for volunteers for our virtual program this year! Are you an EGS alumnae? Are you a former staffer? Are you neither of those but interested and want to hear more? Apply ASAP (by April 30) at empiregirlsstate.org (Join Our Team tab)

Thank you for your continued support and for all that you do at a Unit, County, and District Level! EACH OF YOU is why this program can be a success each and every year!

The ALA EGS leadership team is committed to give this year's citizens an ALA EGS session to remember, just like any other year.

We thank you for your patience and your commitment to this wonderful program!

*Finance Committee/Audit..... Cathleen MacInnes, Chairperson
.....Linda Moseman and Violet Brosart Members*

We have just passed the midway point in our administrative year – time to do a quick financial “checkup” for your Unit!

Have you paid out all your budgeted items – such as donations, assessments to your County and/or District, scholarships to your local school – and planned for payment of upcoming items such as ALA Empire Girls State tuition?

Were your fund-raising efforts as successful as you’d hoped and budgeted? If not, you might consider these options, in which every member of your Unit can participate:

- Hold a “bakeless” bake sale – Ask each member to donate the funds they would have spent to make a baked item (but there’s no baking, no sitting at a table waiting for folks to buy, and no leftovers!).
- “Pound the Pandemic” – Have your members gained (or lost) weight during the pandemic while they’re quarantined at home and coping? Ask each member to donate 25¢ for each pound gained or lost while they’ve been waiting out the pandemic.

You can make the requests by a personal letter to each member. If you enclose a self-addressed envelope with your request, you’ll find donations arrive more quickly.

Were your expenses much lower than budgeted? With no travel to Fall or Mid-Winter Conferences, and ALA EGS tuition reduced by 90%, you might find that you have “extra” funds available. Great! Consider making additional contributions:

- To your Unit Chaplain, to provide funds to purchase and mail “thinking of you – just checking in” cards to every member of your Unit.
- To your local food pantry.
- To a local group working with veterans in need.
- To Stop Soldier Suicide (the Department Office is accepting these donations until mid-June, 30 days before Department Convention); or
- To the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, to support veteran projects, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and Girls Nation (donations may be mailed directly to the Foundation at 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268).

Be sure to report your donations under the appropriate committee(s).

You’re well on your way to ensuring the future of your Unit, its projects, and overall goals!

As always, if we may help in any way, please don’t hesitate to reach out to one or all of us!

Historian.....Barbara Neddo, Chairperson

The American Heritage Dictionary I have, defines “HISTORY” as a narrative of events of the past. Our unit Guidebook tells us to collect, Chronicle and preserve our American Legion Auxiliary through photo's, documents, personal mementos, and other artifacts.

So, with all of this in mind and the COVID 19 virus, we must first follow guidelines to stay healthy and safe. Gathering history can be a good experience. Talking with older members and writing down (or recording) the information they give about your Unit, Counties and Districts. Also look through old scrapbooks and newspaper articles. Try to get as much information as possible and put it in chronological order, possibly in a new scrapbook.

At the Department of NY office there is a room where you can view the past. There is a Cavalcade of Memories display for everyone to enjoy. However, until we can all gather safely, the office is not open to visitors.

We all realize many Units, Counties and Districts are not having meetings at this difficult time. We need to stay

strong and get through this together. If anyone has pictures from last year's Visitation Dinners, could you please forward copies to me.

Junior Activities.....Diane Butler, Chairperson

Mid-winter conference looked differently this year as Junior members attended virtually on January 23rd. Junior President MacKenzie McDaniels encouraged participation in a fundraiser she introduced. Usually, the Juniors raise money at mid-winter for the National and Department Presidents projects. This year MacKenzie introduced the concept **Sprinkle Kindness** as a fundraiser, hopefully Junior members have decided to participate so money may be raised for Stop. Soldier. Suicide.

Junior members also held their 2021 Election of Officers with President Linda installing them. President Linda is hoping to personally present 2020 Honorary Junior President MacKenzie with her outgoing gift at Department Convention. I would like to thank MacKenzie for her service as Honorary Department Junior President this past year. Her year was a difficult one with the COVID-19 pandemic. We wish MacKenzie well with her future endeavors.

Congratulations to the 2021 Honorary Department Junior Officers:

- Honorary Jr. Dept. President Riley Meckley from Suffolk County, 10th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Vice President: Katharine Caputi from Nassau County, 10th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Secretary: Kaylynn Hancock from Steuben County, 7th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Treasurer: Samantha Palmadessa from Nassau County, 10th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Chaplain: Madison Robinson from Oneida County, 5th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Historian: McKenna Donlon from Steuben County, 7th District
- Honorary Jr. Dept. Sgt. At Arms: Kalynn Stern from Niagara County, 8th District

Congratulations to all the Junior members on their selection of slate of Officers or the upcoming year. I know you will represent the Juniors and the American Legion Auxiliary well.

Course 3 of the Junior Mentor Training for Adult Series will be held on Thursday February 25th at 7:00 pm or on March 2nd at 9:00 pm. In this webinar, you will learn how to:

- * Expand the role of ALA Juniors within The American Legion Family and impart a sense of the Legion Family mission
- * Engage Legion Family members with your ALA Juniors.
- * Engage ALA Juniors in the Legion Family activities that make them feel valuable and useful. You may register for this course by following this link: <https://cvent.me/gReWwV?RefId=Facebook>. This course is part three of the Junior Mentor Training Series. Parts One and Two can be viewed in the MyAuxiliary portal at www.ALForVeterans.org under ALA Academy.

Please remember to submit your Unit Junior Activities quarterly report to your County Chairman by March 1st with the activities your Juniors have participated in.

It is the time of year that we start thinking about end of year awards. There are several awards that Auxiliary members may submit for. Such awards are: Poppy poster contest, winners are chosen by grade level. Rules for poppy submissions are in the annual plan of action. Department President's Junior Award, The Mary Lou Platt Award; Junior member of the year, Unit award for most outstanding Junior Activities Program, Department Award for Best Department Junior Activities Program, and National Award for Best Media Coverage of Activity or Project, submission for these awards is due May 1. Please see the Annual Plan of Action for details.

Please submit pictures of the work your Juniors are doing for our Veterans, Community, as well as Children and Youth. I would also like newspaper article clippings highlighting the wonderful work our Juniors do! Juniors are our future, and they are doing great work that I would love to showcase.

Leadership.....Amy McEathron, Chairperson

Good Day my Fellow Leaders of the Department of New York.

I am so excited we are surviving this crazy winter and tough times with COVID.

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to view the Mid-Winter 2021 conference on our Department of New York website. www.deptny.org This is a password protected link, MW2021 Please DO NOT share this on social media, it is for American Legion Auxiliary members only. You can view the zoom call from January 23rd and the 16 presentations. Click on the 2021 virtual midwinter and scroll down to the topics. Currently we had over 521 members view the Mid-Winter link. I would love to see over 1000 views by the end of the month. There is no better way to attend mid-winter then from the comfort of your own home.

****Please make sure you complete the survey at the end and please email it to me at nyalaleadership@gmail.com or drop it in the mail 26001 Crowner Road, Carthage NY 13619. This information is important to share with future administration.

I want to thank again all the presenters for our virtual mid-winter and the time it took to put all this together. It is not easy to video tape yourself and I know how hard it was. Everyone did a fabulous job, and the information is very informative. THANK YOU

I am always here to assist you with any questions you may have and remember we are ALL leaders. So, share your leadership within your unit, county, and district.

Stay well, wear your mask and I thank you for all you do.

Legislative.....Maureen Morgan, Chairperson

With everything that happened in January with the riots and Congress wanting to impeach President Trump, the news was to wrap up in what was going on that the news media didn't talk about different laws that passed.

The most important law that passed was the Care Giver Program which the National American Legion has been pushing for. This program is available to all family members who take care of the Veterans in their family. The VA will pay the family member a monthly income to be the care giver of the Veteran. If you have any questions regarding this bill call your local Veteran Service Office, they have all the paperwork and information to be able to apply. The VSO will know what to do to help you.

At this time Hill Day for the Department of New York will be virtual, I will be registering online to meet with our representatives for New York. The Washington Conference is going to be online too. I will be meeting with the representatives and talking about the bills that National is pushing for Congress to pass. If you go to www.nylegion.net and click on Legislative Action you will see some the important resolutions that the American Legion is supporting. We need more help with TBIs (Traumatic Brain Injury), PTSD and suicide among our Veterans. If you want to see all the bills, please go to www.legion.org/legislative/agenda.

This is another important Resolution that National is supporting. As a Female Veteran I'm lucky to have private insurance. I don't go to the VA because I have not been pleased with how I have been treated when trying to register for the VA. I do have my card, but I am very hesitated to go or pick a primary Dr.

Improve Health Care for Women Veterans

VA has an obligation to develop and expand health-care services for women, the fastest-growing demographic in the veteran community. A high percentage of women veterans who are not enrolled in VA health care say lack of gender-specific services and lack of awareness about VA benefits are primary reasons. The American Legion

urges Congress to diligently oversee implementation of recently passed VA pilot programs, research initiatives, and policy revisions to address this.

Additionally, The American Legion encourages expansion of newborn care and gender-specific services at VA. Resolution No. 37, 2016

National Executive Committeeperson..... Deborah Morris

National Security.....Peggy M. Martin, Chairperson

As the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to affect us after almost a year, Auxiliary members are working at helping our active military and their families where and when we can. A question that has been out there and been answered by Sandy Seacat, National Security Chairperson for National, IS National Security vs VA & R. If a person is active military, assisting them falls under National Security. If that said person is retired, they then change over and fall under VA &R.

I am going to share some information that we can all do while we are still on a semi-lockdown to help with our mission. We can support the emotional needs of our families with phone calls to check on them and sending them cards to let them know we are there if they are in need. Sending packages to our service members is greatly appreciated by the men and woman who are supporting our Country and sacrificing time with their loved ones. Clipping coupons and sending to our bases overseas is another way that doesn't cost much and assists our military overseas and helps pass our time of boredom during this time. Keep track of your volunteer hours and any money spent and report to your unit, so we can use this for all reports where our numbers of volunteer hours, miles, and number of those assisted count Stay safe and well.

Parliamentarian.....Patricia Hennessy, Chairperson

Although the many specific rules of parliamentary practice are too broad to examine in a single article, some general rules apply to businesses, governmental bodies, and voluntary societies alike. For example, no action is valid which violates national law, state law, or the adopted parliamentary practices of a business or organization. Some other general rules are as follows:

- ▶ **Quorum.** A quorum is the minimum number of members or shareholders who must be present at a meeting to legally transact business. This number is usually set by an organization's rules or bylaws. Any business transacted in the absence of a quorum is invalid.
- ▶ **Notice.** Members are entitled to notice of all meetings. Certain important actions require that additional notice be given to all members that the particular topic will be discussed. For example, to discipline or expel an officer requires advance notice. The lack of appropriate previous notice makes such actions invalid. Proper notice must also be given for meetings of shareholders and boards of directors, and the lack of such notice can invalidate the entire meeting and all votes.
- ▶ **Vote.** Official bodies, such as corporations, make decisions by voting. However, the vote required on a specific matter depends on the action to be taken. For example, some motions require a majority vote, and some require a two-third's vote. An improper vote makes any action ineffectual and can lead to lawsuits.

Past Presidents' Parley.....Kimberly Quick, Chairperson

I know this pandemic has been "cramping our style", but I cannot wait to read your March 10th reports. Also, award season is right around the corner. Start reviewing the information for awards.

National Chairperson, Carlene Ashworth, contacted Departments that women serving in the Space Force are

eligible for the *Salute to Servicewomen* award. She is also looking for former Department recipients of the *Unit Member of the Year* award to hear their story of what that recognition meant to them and if it made a difference in their personal or Auxiliary life. Contact me for more information at nyalapastpresidents@gmail.com or (518)948-5244.

Poppy.....Sophie Liberatore, Chairperson

Auxiliary members, please continue to send in your Poppy orders. The totals are much lower thus far this year. We understand, with the COVID-19 situation, not many opportunities have been available to display the poppies. With businesses closed or on limited hours, we can only do so much.

Some units have continued to host Poppy making days, keeping their social distance. I have had plans to attend some units to assist in making poppies. However, due to COVID-19 cases at some Posts, these have been rescheduled.

Please share any suggestions you may have for distributing your poppies. This can be passed on to all the Counties.

Reports are due on March first. If you can reach out to the Units in your County, please ask that they send their reports to the County by the last week in February. These should be to the County Chairs by the first. That gives them time to forward them to the Department Chairs. Let's all try for 100% reporting.

Some suggestions to spread the poppies would be to send cards to Veterans and enclose a poppy, possibly include the story of the poppy. St. Patrick's Day is approaching, remember our Veterans in the Veterans Homes and Hospitals. Send poppies to local officials asking for donations. This has worked for some Units. Other suggestions are welcome!

Stay safe, wear your masks, (double them up!) follow social distancing and be kind to one another!

Public Relations..... Carrie Davenport, Chairperson

2020-2021 has introduced new words and phrases into our daily conversations: coronavirus, COVID-19, social distancing, shelter-in-place. The escalation of COVID-19 cases from a relatively small number of cases in China to a global pandemic has transformed every industry and all aspects of our lives with including the work we do as a non-profit organization.

What should you do about your marketing and public relations initiatives? With headlines about the coronavirus dominating the news, it's challenging to determine what your unit/county/district level organizations should do to break through the news cycle to shed light on the great work you are doing to support veterans.

1. Think critically about how to tell your story.

The coronavirus pandemic has led to heightened fears, and with stock markets in freefall, travel at a standstill, an overburdened healthcare system and grocery stores struggling to cope with consumers rushing to stock up on home items, there's been plenty of news for reporters to cover. During this time, it's important to be mindful in how you tell your story—and evaluate whether this is the right time to be telling it at all. Before you hit "send" on any marketing emails or articles to local newspapers that reference COVID-19, think about whether you could be seen to be profiting from a catastrophe. Err on the side of caution. If you're not sure if you're capitalizing on someone else's misfortune, you probably are.

2. Know the news cycle.

That's not to say that all stories are invalid during this time. As daily lives are uprooted, media coverage has changed from writing about the outbreak itself to what this means for virtually every facet of life. The news cycle

tends to follow a pattern of covering the news itself (“breaking news”) on day one, with ensuing days exploring the issue and its ramifications. In the case of the coronavirus, there have been follow-on stories about the consequences of Facebook inadvertently blocking links with important coronavirus information, the rise of online shopping/delivery and the potential mental health consequences of people staying at home. If your news doesn’t fit in the first wave of coverage, you might be able to place your solution with a follow-up piece.

3. Understand that resources are strained.

For many publications across the globe, media resources have been overwhelmed covering COVID-19. This has meant that in some cases, reporter beats have shifted. For example, sports journalists are now being moved to general news desks to cover COVID-19 now that few major sporting events or tournaments are being held. Think about whether your story has a trade angle to it. Industry publications are still prioritizing the pandemic angle, but are still very much covering their beats more than general news sites and dailies. For example, is there a veteran negatively impacted by COVID-19? Did you help them get on their feet after being negatively impacted? Framing this work within the context of the pandemic might help your feel good story break into the news cycle.

It’s also important to remember that media relations is not synonymous with public relations. Media coverage is only one tactic from a wide array of initiatives that are part of a solid public relations plan for your ALA Unit/County/District.

4. Focus on the fundamentals.

If you’re pushing back on announcing or unveiling any major campaign or initiative, that doesn’t mean that you have to be entirely dormant. In this current climate, does your communication still stack up? If not, then consider surveying your members to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Have you always had to scramble for content to post on your blog or social media channels? Now is a great time to create the content that can be pushed out at a steady cadence – whether that’s now or at a later date.

5. Look to the long-term.

Finally, remember that our organization is here for the long-haul. Building the ALA’s visibility and reputation requires dedication and perseverance so that it can remain prominent part of your local community. History has shown that some of the most prominent organizations have started and flourished during tough times. If history continues to be our guide, we’ll see more innovations emerge this year – so consider how your unit can be a part of these changes and embrace how your role in the community might change or evolve based on the needs of your community.

Now might be as good of a time as any to reflect on where you have been as an ALA Unit/County/District, consider what your role currently is, and make a plan as we continue to focus on the future of the great organization.

Warrior Family Assistance.....Ann Greaney, Chairperson

It’s finally 2021 and we are at the half-way point of this administrative year! The WFA Committee had three grant requests from veterans in need of assistance to consider recently. These requests were reviewed by the local review panels and Department WFA Committee. The three grants were approved for a total of \$2580.47. Thank you to the review panel members for their thorough interviews. And thank you to Vice-Presidents Nancy and Karen for their assistance. As a reminder to review panels, it is required that a copy of the veteran’s DD214 be included with the application and that all bills are the most recent documents. Please be sure to stay in contact with veterans and active-duty service members and their families to let them know about the WFA Program and that we are here to help. Continue to publicize the program in VA clinics, hospitals, Posts, and the Community.

To maintain and support the WFA, Units and Counties can send donations directly to the Department Office. Poppy funds can be used to contribute. Currently deployed military and their families and those honorably discharged within the last ten years are eligible for WFA assistance up to \$1200. The National Guard and Reservists who have been federally deployed within the past 10 years are also eligible.

Three types of grants are available: Maintenance, Medical and Opportunity for Employment. Applications and brochures are available by contacting me: nyalawfa@gmail.com.

The March reporting period is fast approaching, let us know what you are doing to support the WFA Program. We have this wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families. Let us continue in Service, Not Self in support of our Veterans.

Message from the Department Office.....Barbara and Caitlin

- **Membership updates** - As a reminder, membership totals are updated each week by the Department Office on Wednesday. If you need up-to-date membership totals, you can email the office or call the Department office for up-to-date numbers for your unit and/or county meeting.
- **Please do not send DD214's into the office with applications.** Once the Post Adjutant/Officer signs the application, return the supporting documents to the member. The office only needs the completed – signed application with the dues and transmittal.
- **Members** – if you move, change any contact information, phone numbers, emails, etc., please send the change to the Department office so your information is updated in a timely manner. This also pertains to unit President, Membership Chair and Unit Treasurer

Please DO NOT hold membership, send it in promptly so it can be processed in a timely manner.

- **Newsletters** – E-mail copies of the Newsletter are available to any member wanting a free copy. Please e-mail anyone of us at the office with a valid email and we will get you on the list. The Newsletter is emailed to all Unit/County Presidents, Unit/County Membership Chairmen and Unit/County Treasurers if we have your email address. If you do not have email and someone in the unit/county would like to receive it on your behalf, please let us know so we can add them to the list. Also, County Committee Chairmen receive the newsletter via email. If you do not have anyone in the unit and/or county with an email to receive the email newsletter for you, please contact the Department Secretary for a copy.
- Mailed copies of the Newsletters are available at the cost of \$15.00 per year.

The Department office is here to help you and we are only a phone call or email away.

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**American Legion Auxiliary
101 Years of Service Not Self**



BE SAFE, WEAR YOUR MASK, WASH YOUR HANDS AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING SO WE CAN BE TOGETHER AGAIN!