



*The American Legion Auxiliary
Department of New York, Inc.*

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

Oh my goodness!! This is my last Newsletter!! Holy smokes!! This second year really went fast!!

I am so very excited that we will be holding our Centennial Convention LIVE on July 14th and 15th in Albany at the Marriott! Unfortunately, we will be celebrating our 100 Years with 100 Members in attendance this year! I apologize in advance, but the attendance will need to be limited to:

- Department Executive Committee Members (Department President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, ten (10) District Presidents, and Junior Past Department President, Department Secretary, all (22) Past Department Presidents), Department Committee Chairmen and Committee members, ten (10) District Vice Presidents, Candidates for Department Officer and County Presidents or her/his/their duly elected alternates and the Stenographer for the session.

I know . . . this may not include you; however, with just the members indicated above we will be a little over 100 if all attend! We will continue to follow all protocols as required by NYS and the hotel. We may be going a little overboard with the safety protocols we are putting in place; however, we would rather be safe now than sorry later! I'm very excited that we will also be doing a LIVE Stream from our Convention so those of you who do not feel comfortable attending or who are not able to attend can still be with us!! You should also know that if things happen to change between now and July in NYS, we will cancel the LIVE Convention and go to a ZOOM Convention.

We are doing something else a little different this year . . . prior to Convention, the candidates for Department Offices will pre-record a 3-minute video for members to view. Woohoo!! So, in addition to the endorsement letters in the Convention Call, you will have a chance to see and hear your candidates! It's someone else's turn to do a video (LOL!!)

Just a reminder that County Presidents or their duly elected delegate must be present at the Convention for the County's full delegate voting strength to be cast.

The Convention will surely have a different look and feel . . . but I think that it will be exciting, different, and hopefully full of awards being handed out! I'm sure there will be "blips" here and there . . . so hang in there with

us as we work through all this excitement!! More information will be forthcoming, so be sure to read all that comes from the Department Office, keep checking the Department website for new info (www.deptny.org) and of course watch our Facebook pages!!

In closing, I just want to say thank you so very much for a GREAT two (2) years!! I'm so excited for the incoming officers and wish them all the best!! Even though it has been a bit of a roller coaster ride this past year. I would like to thank each and every one of you for all that you have done through this pandemic year and for continuing to stay focused on our mission of supporting the American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad and to advocate for veterans, our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security. DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK – YOU ARE THE BEST – AND I THANK YOU ALL!! Please stay safe ~ till we meet again. . . (at Convention or on Zoom)

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

I hope all our members are enjoying the beautiful Spring days. It was a long cold winter that I am glad is over.

Membership is still coming in nicely; as of April 14th, we are at 91.35%, only 3,227 from our Department Goal, and we are in 6th place in the nation. Members are getting out there again to serve our veterans and grow our membership! Just a reminder, we are only a month away from the National Armed Forces Day award! Any Department 95% or higher will receive \$250 to further the ALA mission! I am confident we can do it.

Keep in touch with our members, have a weekly phone chain, or maybe you could have a Zoom meeting.

We have had some award winners. The following awards have been achieved:
Milestone #5 the Unit with 100% by April 1, 2021 (5 -\$25 Drawings)

03	Ulster	1026	Woodstock
09	Westchester	1038	Valhalla
06	Chenango	0876	Sherburne
09	Dutchess	1302	Poughkeepsie
06	Tompkins	0221	Ithaca

Milestone #5 the County with 100% by April 1, 2021 (1 - \$25 Drawing)

Greene County

Congratulations to all our winners!

We are all working toward our goal so keep up the good work. Remember we are all responsible for membership. Stay safe, stay strong, stay healthy.

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

Wow! So many exciting things happening for our Veterans and their families. First and foremost, protecting our Veterans from the disabling effects of Covid by offering Covid vaccinations to all Veterans, spouses, and caregivers. Priority will be given to Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare. Please encourage your Veterans to contact their local VA if they or spouse/caregiver have not been vaccinated.

Walk-a-thon 2021 – Will have already taken place by the time you receive this newsletter. HOWEVER! It's not to late to make a donation. Please send any donations to The Detachment of NY Sons of the American Legion 1304 Park Blvd. Troy, NY 12180 with "walk-a-thon" in the memo line. Thank you! Our Veterans will surely benefit from your generosity.

AWARDS: Deadline is May 1st! At the Department level there is the **Department President's award** for the Unit with the best program serving our Veterans. Entry must include at least two programs outlined under the VA& R committee. **Juanita Lochner award** – the Junior group reporting the most outstanding service benefitting our hospitalized veterans. **Diane Gerber award** – to a Junior or Senior member who reports the best overall program aiding and assisting a Veteran, the **Linda Tome award** to the Unit submits the largest single donation to Stop Soldiers Suicide. There is also an award from Department for the **best Unit** report and the **best County** report on a year-round program. For National awards please see the Plan of Action.

I look forward to receiving your final year-end report May 1, 2021. Please make sure you are reporting on the 2020-2021 form!

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

Spring has finally arrived. I hope your units were able to plan activities for Children and Youth in your community. As the weather, gets warmer it will be easier to do socially distanced activities outside.

This pandemic has increased feelings of isolation and loneliness in our children. They cannot visit family or play with friends. Many schools are virtual. This not only limits socialization but in some families, they may be subject to increased abuse. They have little or no contact with teachers who would notice the signs of mental or emotional distress. Acts thoughts of suicide have not only increased but are affecting younger children.

So how can we help? Contact your school to collaborate with programs to boost children's self-esteem. Some schools have a designated safe area where students can go as an indication they are in need of emotional support.

Buddy benches are an example. The primary goal of a Buddy Bench is to help children avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation. Recess may provide socialization with peers, but for the child who is left out of the group, feelings of isolation escalate. Sitting on this bench indicates they want and need someone to talk to. Sometimes a simple conversation, a friendly voice, can make a world of difference.

Whatever activities you can provide would help. Don't forget to report these activities. I know some Posts were closed and Units have not held meetings. But whatever you can do will be greatly appreciated.

One last reminder, award deadlines are rapidly approaching. Review available awards in plan of action or department website. What a great way to celebrate all you do.

Happy Spring! Enjoy the sunshine but stay safe.

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

As I sit and reflect on our Centennial Celebrations that have been carried out and those that are still on hold due to the COVID Pandemic, I am very proud of the efforts that have been shared. I know there are some that have cancelled their plans or need some other ideas.

As I have been collecting reports, I have been impressed with the outside the box thinking like putting holiday candy in baggies with cards that have the ALA emblem and the phrase Proudly Serving Our Veterans, Military and Community for over 100 years! or the baggies with our beautiful red poppy or the American flag with the same cards.

As numbers of cases start to decline and people are vaccinated, I urge those that have pending activities to look for ways to carry out their celebrations or maybe change to a smaller celebration that is more publicized than attended for safety. I know it is easy to say we are still in the middle of a pandemic and do nothing, but we all

belong to an amazing organization. An organization that stands up for Veterans, active-duty military, and our communities. So, celebrate and share your passion for our great organization even more.

As I said last year, remember that the U.S. flag has been a part of the ALA for over 100 years and will continue to be for the next 100. There are so many events to promote the American flag, and all could be incorporated into your ALA 100th anniversary celebration, along with our beautiful red poppy. As we head toward warmer weather, National Poppy Day, Memorial Day, and Flag Day, let's light up America at our posts by displaying our poppies and flags. Don't forget to decorate your home, participate in parades, and distribute poppies and flags. Let's keep our flower and the American flag in front of everyone and continue to do what we do: Support the American Legion Family. Although our celebration of our 100th Anniversary is winding down with our conventions we need to continue the goals of the Centennial Strategic Plan, celebrate our programs, and the 5 major goals.

Building brand loyalty, strengthen our Dept, Districts, Counties, and Units, develop leadership at all levels, create an internal culture of goodwill, and enhance membership strength, all to strengthen our organization as we continue supporting the ALA mission – supporting our veterans, military, and their families – truly living our promise of Service Not Self. Here is to our next 100 years!

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 three 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, along with supporting The American Legion Americanism programs like The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest, Junior Shooting Sports and American Legion Baseball. *Be sure to include your support and participation in your May Americanism Reports if it wasn't included in the last reporting period! Thank you for supporting Americanism within our American Legion Family!*

Our judges enjoyed reading your Unit submissions for the **Americanism Essay Contest**. We were pleased to forward an essay for five of the six classes to the National Division level. Overall participation was low from the Units due to COVID. Start to look ahead on how your Unit can get involved in this wonderful Americanism Essay Contest in 2021-2022.

Your submissions for **Department and National Awards for Americanism for the two-year period 2019-2021 are due May 1st!** See 2020-2021 Plan of Action Supplement for Awards available to Units and Counties. (Check out this link for the Americanism Award Newsletter with links to all of the forms: <https://www.smores.com/0dy23>). There are four Department Awards (Department President's Award, Marie C. Mock Award, Joan Caccamo Award, and the Patricia M. Hennessy Award), and two National Awards (Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program and Most Outstanding Department Americanism Program). The Americanism Essay Eastern Division Essay winners will be announced at the Department Convention.

Reminder that Units report to their County Chairman and the County Chairman should **compile the Unit Reports into one County Report** to be forwarded to the Department Chairman. I receive many Americanism Reports with check marks and blank fields or from Units directly. We are looking for numbers and totals that assist us in completing our year-end Impact Reports. Thank you for all your narratives of wonderful activities at your Units and Counties!

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

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

Chaplain.....Susan Britton, Chairperson

Covid restrictions are lightening somewhat in various locations at this point. As we return to gathering in small groups, we need to keep in mind that some of our members may have been greatly impacted by this pandemic.

As Unit/County Chaplains, you have a responsibility to reach out to those members who you might not have heard from recently. A phone call, a visit from outside the door, or a personal note could touch the lives of those who are suffering now. Take the time to reach out and put a smile on a member's face. It takes just a moment but can mean so much to those who have had little in-person contact with anyone, even family members.

You will feel so good about having taken the time to touch the life of a struggling member. Many times, it is difficult to determine "who" is struggling. Gradually, we will return to our normal activities and gatherings. Until then stay safe. Everyone needs to return to things as they see fit for themselves and their own personal health situations...don't push any unit members into in-person activities.

The Good Lord will watch over us and help us heal from this difficult time.... ALL in good time. GOD BLESS!
Susan M. Britton Department Chaplain

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

Happy Spring to you all and thank you for the outstanding reports I've received. I know we have had some conflicted days due to this pandemic. However, many of you have been out there doing great work throughout it all. The American Legion Auxiliary supporting our Veterans and communities keeping hope alive. Now we are almost to the end of this year. Continue the great work that you all are doing, as we slowly come out of quarantine and are able to service many more, let us continue to show kindness & respect. Stay Safe!

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

Spring has sprung, and we are looking forward to our Department Convention. I will be presenting two resolutions for your consideration. Please be sure to read them carefully when you get your Convention call as you will need to discuss them in preparation for having your representative cast your vote at Convention. I think they give us some flexibility that is necessary as we face the uncertainties of a world where a pandemic such as we are facing can turn things upside down in a heartbeat.

At the unit level, some of our units are adjusting to Zoom or hybrid or in person meetings. Whatever format you are using, be sure to include as many of your members as possible. Our units work best when everyone feels important and listened to. Call members that you have not heard from to make sure that they feel valued and included. The best governing documents are useless if they do not have the support of the governed. The Department cannot make people follow the rules. We can only encourage and offer support. We are a grass roots organization, and only, as such, will we be successful. Individuals are the source of power and action so be sure to listen to what they are saying.

If you are planning to revise your documents, please try to get them in before the change of leadership so you do not find yourself waiting for approval while the new administration gets underway. We hope to have a smooth transition, but there is no need to test that by adding the stress of changing your ruling papers at the same time that you and the Department are changing your leaders. Since everyone votes on the rules, there should be no problem changing leaders but getting them approved early may make things smoother in the long run.

I want to remind you also that the Department cannot arbitrate on Standing Rules that have not been submitted for approval. Some units and counties have asked for intervention where the Department has no record of the rules being approved. If you want the Department to help settle disputes, we must have proof that you followed the proper procedure so that we know that the rules were in line with the Department and National Constitutions

and Bylaws. Standing Rules, other than number one and two which address dues are not required but do take away the annoyance of voting on every single repetitive action. If you have additional Standing Rules, they do need to be approved by the Department.

Enjoy your end of the year activities and be safe and be well.

Education.....Cynthia Babb, Chairperson

Do you know that the week of May 3-7 is Teacher Appreciation Week? Teachers are some of our unsung heroes during this COVID-19 pandemic. They are teaching remotely and teaching in the classroom, adjusting to the schedule set by the school district and these schedules have often been changing throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Please remember to thank teachers during their appreciation week.

I want to take this opportunity to remind all auxiliary members that each year the Department offers a scholarship for each of the 10 districts for a senior graduating from high school. As long as the student meets the requirements of the scholarship the student is eligible to apply. Due to COVID-19, I have been the Department Education Chairman for 2 years. Each year there was more than one district that had no student apply for this scholarship which means it went unawarded. Each year there were also districts that had only one applicant and as long as the applicant met the requirements, the applicant was awarded the scholarship. Members, you must have junior members or family members or high school seniors that you know that would qualify for these scholarships. Education is expensive. Do not let these scholarships go unawarded in the future. Keep the future Department Education Chairman busy. Help seniors apply for this scholarship in the future.

It has been an honor to serve the Department of NY in this capacity for these two years.

*ALA Empire Girls State.....Jennifer Farley, Chairperson
.....Members Wendy Privitera, Kris Dziduch*

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.

There will be virtual ALA Empire Girls State Orientations held in May and early June. Dates will be announced soon. Keep an eye out for a bulletin!

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*

This month, our focus is on audits. Books for both Units and Counties should be audited no less often than once a year. Some Unit Bylaws specify more frequent audits – if yours does, follow the timeline set by your Bylaws.

How to begin? What do you need?

- The Audit Committee – typically appointed by the President, unless your Bylaws specify a different method, and generally an odd number of individuals (usually 3)
- A copy of the budget
- A copy of the minutes for all meetings since the previous audit date
- The Treasurer's books
- The checkbook(s)
- Bank statements for all accounts – checking, savings, CDs, or other investments

The Audit Committee should meet with the Treasurer to confirm the following:

- Poppy funds and General funds are recorded separately, with the income and expenses for each fund properly accounted for.
- Income has been received as expected from all budgeted sources. You should note significant discrepancies, both over and under the budgeted amounts.
- All mandatory fees and budgeted expenses have been paid as budgeted. Again, you want to note significant discrepancies, both over and under the budgeted amounts.
- Funds have been spent as specified in any motions for expenditure of funds.
- Bank statements have been reconciled and accurately reflect the activity and balance(s) in the checkbook(s) and other bank/investment statements.

The Audit Committee should report to the Unit. If there are no issues, your report may simply state that the books have been audited and found to be in order.

If you have questions about the audit or the processes, please don't hesitate to contact any one of us on the Finance/Audit Committee – we are here to help!

Historian.....Barbara Neddo, Chairperson

Thank you, President Linda, for letting me be the Department Historian in this unprecedented year. All of us made it through a time like no other.

Preserving our History should be a goal of every Auxiliary member. All of us attend parade's, dinners, conventions, conferences, and unit, county, & district meetings. Therefore, we can take pictures, keep a program and/or write down the events where you are present. Most of us have cell phones with the capability of taking pictures, videos, and voice recordings. So please let's all participate in our History and this important committee.

Don't forget to apply for Department awards. Details are in the Plan of Action. History books are due to me by May 1, 2021.

Junior Activities.....Diane Butler, Chairperson

Thank you, Junior members, for ALL you have done for our Veterans, active Military, and our community during this pandemic. It has been a long year. With the state beginning to open up, we still need to be vigilant and safe.

Remember, Junior Activities awards are coming due, it's time to submit your award entries. There have been some terrific activities taking place during the pandemic, help your Junior members shine! National Junior Member of the Year nominations are due June 1, 2021. Email awards cover sheet and nominations to JuniorActivities@ALAforVeterans.org. Nominees must have been Junior at the start of the 2019-2020 administrative year.

Also, don't forget to take advantage of the patch program, just a reminder that young SAL members can also take advantage of the American Legion Auxiliary patch program.

Please remember May 28th is National Poppy Day, everyone is encouraged to wear a Poppy to honor those who have worn our Nation's uniform. Memorial Day is May 31st, Junior members are encouraged to participate in Post Memorial Day ceremonies and assist with placing flags on Veteran graves. Volunteering at a cemetery for Memorial Day is a great way to teach our youth about national and local history, community service and patriotism. It can also be an opportunity to fulfill service hours, but more importantly, it's a chance to impart a sense of respect for those who have died for our freedoms.

God Bless our Military, Veterans, and our American Legion Family.

Leadership.....Amy McEathron, Chairperson

Welcome to spring, so nice to be outside and get fresh air. I wanted to share the success of how our virtual mid-winter went. As of the end of March, we had 853 visits to our password protected mid-winter conference. My goal was to hit 1000 viewings, so please share with your members. This is still available on the department website for your viewing. There is a lot of information and videos to view and with virtual trainings on voting, which is needed now in your units and counties. **REMEMBER:** fill out the surveys, this information is shared with the next administration to take into consideration.

REPORTING: I know we had 853 visits to the website for mid-winter, however, when reporting came in for March, I have 73 seniors and 9 juniors attended mid-winter, so as you can see, the numbers don't match. SO, please don't forget to report all the amazing things you are doing. These numbers are very important to give to National when turned in. I want to congratulate the 1st and 9th district for 100% reporting for leadership.

I want to thank you for being amazing leaders under my committee the past two years, and remember I am always here to help with any questions.

In closing "Leadership is about vision and responsibility, not power" Stay Well and thank you for all you do for service not self.

Legislative.....Maureen Morgan, Chairperson

The Washington Conference was all on zoom. The Legion Family accomplished a lot during COVID 19. Several resolutions passed and the Legion Family is working together on new resolutions that we want Congress to put through. Our leaders need to realize that the Veterans are important. The National Commander's address is on You-Tube and the National website www.legion.org/national if you were not able to see it on March 4, 2021.

Read the Dispatch when it comes in, look at the Auxiliary Legislative e-newsletter or the American Legion e-newsletter and www.capwiz.com/legion to see what is going on. Also please remember the Buddy check system. Check on those who can't get out or are home alone.

National Executive Committee person..... Deborah Morris

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

With our first year of COVID-19 behind us, and our Country opening up slowly, our auxiliaries should be making progress at assisting our Military and their families. At our latest DEC meeting, less than half of the 62 Counties in NY reported “no activity “. We are moving forward slowly. We are promoting a strong National Defense by supporting our service members and their families. Continue to donate blood through the American Red Cross. Military spouses are still being supported by the ALA EMentor Program. This online community helps those spouses to receive support, guidance, advice, and inspiration from others who have been there. Thank you for all you do to support and encourage our Military and their families as we come out of the other side of this pandemic.

Parliamentarian.....Patricia Hennessy, Chairperson

As this administrative year comes to a close, please remember the following important items when scheduling your unit and county elections:

Quorum. A quorum is the minimum number of unit members who must be present at a meeting to legally transact business and on the county level it is the minimum number of units present. This number is set by your unit or county Constitution & Bylaws. Any business transacted in the absence of a quorum is invalid.

Notice. Members are entitled to notice of all meetings and elections. Certain important actions require that additional notice be given to all members that a 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. Units, Counties, Districts and Department 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

In August 2019, at our last National Convention in Indianapolis, 2 changes were made to the awards under the PPP Committee. Starting with 2021-2022 administrative year, the Unit Member of the Year award will be under the Leadership Committee, and the Salute to Servicewomen awards will be under the National Security Committee. The National organization will no longer have a Past Presidents Parley Committee. Please continue to look for new leaders and continue to mentor our current members. As Past Presidents our job doesn't end; it just changes a little bit.

Thank you all for your service to our organization.

Poppy.....Sophie Liberatore, Chairperson

We are hoping April and May will be much better months for getting the Poppies distributed in the Communities. Many, I know, have been able to set up displays in businesses that have reopened.

The Poppy Poster Contest deadline has been extended until May 15th. This will give me time to judge and send

the winners to the Eastern Division Poppy Chairman. I do need the original posters sent to me so I can forward them to the Eastern Division for judging on the National level, so please get those in the mail as soon as possible.

If any Unit or County is still in need of Poppies, please contact Department office. We still have poppies available.

Just another reminder, May reports will be due soon. PLEASE get the reports into the Counties by May 1st so that they can get them to the Department Chairs by May 15th.

We are always looking to reach 100 % reporting! Fly your flags, wear your Auxiliary pins, shirts, and jackets, wear your poppy proudly. Donate blood (and report under National Security) to help others. Let us all do our part. Report, report, report!

Public Relations..... Carrie Davenport, Chairperson

Refreshing your Online Presence

Navigating your unit through the pandemic has created many difficult obstacles for all of us. It has also afforded us the opportunity to take a look at our online presence and work to develop content for our social media accounts or to redesign our website.

Have you visited the National American Legion Auxiliary website?

The website used to be www.alaforveterans.org. If you enter that into your browser it will redirect you to a new national website that has a new look and a new rebranded focus! If you haven't explored the website visit <https://www.legion-aux.org/>. Use it as inspiration to consider taking a look at your social media.

Here are a few things to consider when refreshing your use of web-based platforms to promote the work of the auxiliary that will help freshen up your media presence.

Do more than just promote your events.

Consider sharing the success of a program using pictures will draw people in and make the event come to life. It will also inspire people to get involved in future events within the organization.

Spotlight the members themselves.

Our members have more dedication, energy, and heart than most people in the community. They are also usually involved in more than just the auxiliary. Giving them a moment to shine like a "Sunday spotlight" or "Woman Wednesday" by highlighting their role in your organization, their contributions to your community, and their professional networks will increase your momentum on social media/website by encouraging others from those parts of their life to interact with your content.

Be predictable.

Map out a plan for content. Pick a day each week you know you will post new content. Maybe you do a Sunday spotlight, Tuesday tips, and Friday fun post. Generate content that can support the members through Tuesday tips and find ways for members to interact in a social setting on Fridays. If you do this weekly, members will begin to check the website in a predictable manner seeking out the new content and then when something posts on an off day it will peak their interest.

Utilize your junior members.

These ladies are living their best lives on social media. Let them help you but be careful not to relinquish control to all of them as they are still learning about boundaries on social media. There are endless trends that come and go on social media and your juniors can help you ride the wave of enthusiasm with it. Don't be afraid to learn the newest tic tok dance and post it on your social media. You don't know who might watch it and get a chuckle about it and think- this looks like a group of people who might have fun.

I encourage you to explore the fresh new national website and let it inspire you to talk with your members with ways you might refresh your unit's digital footprint! Consider these tips and strategies as a way to improve your presence and attract new members while keeping your current members engaged!

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

Warriors Family Assistance is a grass roots effort of the American Legion Auxiliary. It gives us an opportunity to open our hearts and make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Auxiliary members believe in this program and continue to actively publicize the program by distributing brochures in their communities, Posts and VA clinics. With the generosity of these grants, our veterans, military, and their families can receive the resources they need in a timely manner. The challenges of the pandemic continue to disrupt our lives and the Auxiliary is always present to reach out to our veterans and ask if help is needed.

As you begin nominations and elections within your Units and Counties, please remember to include the position of Chairman for the Warriors Family Assistance Committee. The success of this program begins at the Unit and County level.

As a reminder, WFA grants are available to currently deployed military and their families and those honorably discharged within the last ten years. National Guard and Reservists who have been federally deployed within the past ten years are also eligible. A non-payable grant of up to \$1200 is available for Maintenance, Medical or Employment requests. A review panel of three members at the County or District level is required to interview the applicant.

As we are winding down this 2020-2021 administrative year, discuss making a donation with your Unit so that a fund balance will be carried forward and used for future grants. This program assists our veterans; therefore, your Poppy funds can be used to make donations. Your Unit can be eligible for the Linda Moseman Award for the largest single donation to the WFA program by May 1st. Category 1: Units with membership of 10-99 Members; Category 2: Units with membership of 100 plus members. I am thankful for your support of the WFA program. You are the key to its success.

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

- **The 2021 Department Convention Call** will be mailed out the week of May 1, 2021. Please read it carefully and follow the directions and deadlines.
- Important reminder: Close of Books will be Monday, June 14, 2021, therefore, all membership dues for 2021 must be received no later than Thursday, June 10th in order to be processed and counted towards your goal. **Please DO NOT hold membership**, send it in promptly so it can be processed in a timely manner.
- Each District President has a Zoom account for the use of scheduling District, County or Unit meetings. All you have to do is contact your respective District President and she can set up the meeting for you.
- The District President will also be setting up the District Caucuses prior to Department Convention via a Zoom meeting. Please contact your District President for details. Spring Conferences are also being set up via Zoom and a few are in person. Please contact your District President for the dates.
- **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). 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.

As of April 19, 2021 there are still 203 units that did not send back their “Blue Form”. 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.

- Currently, Units are **NOT** able to pay their Unit (multiple members) dues online like the American Legion and SAL’s. Individual members can log onto their account on my Auxiliary member portal and pay their due online to National. If a family has more than one person to pay, they can call National HQ at (317) 569-4500 and do so. Once a member has paid their dues, they can now log onto their member portal—print off their membership card, update their information, as well as all the resources that are available to members.
- **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
- **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.
American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New York, Inc.
1580 Columbia Turnpike, Bldg. #1, Suite 3
Castleton-On-Hudson, NY 12033**

**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!



April, 2021

Members of the Legion Family:

Several months ago, during the early stages of the pandemic, Team New York reached out to everyone appealing for support of Jim Troiola in his quest to become our American Legion National Commander. While nearly 2,000 donation appeal letters were mailed, the percent response was far less than anticipated making the funds raised fall far short of our required levels. For those that were able to already contribute, we extend our since thanks for your generosity.

In many respects, the results are not completely out of line since many posts, units, squadrons and rider organizations suspended their meetings in keeping with national Covid-19 guidelines. Absent meetings with a quorum present, approval of donations was prevented.

The year-long dim light at the end of the tunnel is now beginning to brighten and meetings are once again beginning to take form. Many of the earlier requests that were sent have likely since gotten lost or misplaced so we are now renewing our request for financial donations to assist Jim in his campaign to become Commander.

We once again are extending our appeal to the Legion Family to consider a donation to the Team New York Campaign Fund. Your contribution will assist Jim as he visits American Legion Departments throughout the country and provides hospitality at National Executive Committee functions in Indianapolis. Contributions can be made to "Team New York Campaign Fund" and mailed to 1304 Park Blvd., Troy, NY 12180.

Your consideration and contributions will be gratefully appreciated.

Yours for the good of the Legion,

Mike Byrnes

MickeByrnes
Fund Raising Chairman