



February 2024

Department President's Message.....Karen St. Hilaire

I want to start by Thanking Leadership Chairperson Carrie Davenport for organizing another great Mid-Winter Leadership Conference. Thank you also to those the Tech support and presenters who shared their knowledge with everyone who attended. It was great to have our special guest National President Lisa Williamson join us. Make sure you complete your evaluation to assist preparation for future conferences. Thank You to Barbara Corker, Carrie Davenport, Jen Farley, and Frank Peters, who generously made themselves available to honor President Lisa's wish to visit Ground Zero and New York City and even take in a Broadway show. She was extremely Thankful.

Here we are in February, the days are getting warmer, Yay! The Department Leadership Team is heading to the Eighth District for the last of the County Visitations . My predecessors were so right when they said our visits would fly. We have seen so many amazing places in the great State of New York. We met so many members and made new friends. Members have been very receptive to the messages the Department Leaders have shared and have shared stories of events and celebrations that take place in their post homes.

I would like to ask all County and Unit Presidents to review their units paid member status. There are many units who have ZERO or exceptionally low percentage of paid members. Please reach out to these units and ask if they need help reaching out to unpaid members. Just a reminder that any member who does not have a current 2024 card, are delinquent. As such, they may not attend meetings or events at the American Legion post.

Now is the time to start preparing for Department and National awards for all committees. Review each award requirements and deadlines.

The American Legion Family Homecoming Dinner will be held at 6 pm Saturday May 18, 2024, at Vernon Downs Casino. You can find details on housing and dinner reservation on the Department websites. Please consider joining us for a fun-filled night and/or weekend.





Membership.....Kim Quick, Chairperson

Milestone #3 had 33 Counties that reached 75% or more; and 25 Units that reached 100% or better. The Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse award was given to Sasha Spinks-Pignone. The Crossover Island Lighthouse award was given to Wilda Ramos-Morales of Unit 1928.

Our challenge with New Hampshire is the first to reach 85% by March 15, 2024. They are currently ahead of us, but WE CAN DO THIS! Please submit your dues at least once a week – even if it's only 1 paid member. Milestone #4 also falls on March 15 th for Department. Five Units at 100% or higher and one county at 95% or higher will win \$50. Please review the other awards available under Membership. National also has Membership awards. One member has been submitted for Recruit 10. Thank you for your hard work – keep it up.

VA&R/Service to Veterans.....Maureen Morgan, Chairperson

It is February already and we are almost through our year. I can't believe how fast time flies. I want to thank all the VAVS representatives for getting their annual reviews in. Your checks should be coming soon. If you haven't sent in your annual reviews in, please get them in so the VA hospital can get that \$500.00.

Thank you to all the representatives that sent in their gift shop reports and receipts. We are still missing some of the reports. I will be reaching out to them and gently reminding them to get their reports in. February is a short but busy month. Did you know that February 11th – through February 17th is Veteran appreciation week for all the VA clinics and hospitals. The workers thank the Veterans with goodies. So, all those P.S. I Love you bags that the VAVS representatives gave to the VA Hospitals are going to be given out to all our Veterans. That was a great community service project that was done at the midwinter conference Great job Carrie at our midwinter conference.

Everyone should be gearing up for the SAL/AL/ALA Walkathon that starts March 1, 2024. The goal this year is to raise \$65,000. Let's all get out and support the Walkathon. It's a great way to raise money for the many programs that are provided by the American Legion Auxiliary. Some ideas for everyone to help raise money. Do a walk in your community, have dinner event, or do a bingo invite the community to join. There are so many ways to get everyone involved and raise money for a great cause.

"They Marched for Us, Let's Walk for Them"



Children and Youth.....Lora Rowe, Chairperson

It was very enjoyable seeing so many of you at Mid-Winter. And, thank you, thank you, thank you for your many generous donations to the Child Welfare Foundation. I brought the pig hungry, and he was definitely full by the time we left! Keep feeding those little pigs in your counties!!! Your donations help so many of our children and youth in need!

Three Good Deed Award Nominations have been received. These stories were so heartwarming and so very deserving of this nomination. Keep your eyes and ears open for children who are worthy of the Youth Hero and Good Deed Awards.

Remember April is the month of the Military Child. Start now planning an activity and/or event. The American Legion Auxiliary National website provides resources and collaborations under the Children and Youth Committee. They give very helpful ideas. One collaboration that I would like to highlight is MCEC (Military Child Education Coalition). Its mission supports all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle. What wonderful programs it provides!

April 15 is Purple Up Day. Plan a special celebration to show your support for military children and their families. As purple is a combination of the colors of all branches of the military, it was chosen to represent this day to make everyone aware of the many challenges military children are faced with. Show your appreciation for our military children and recognize their service and sacrifices for our country by wearing PURPLE ON APRIL 15!!!!

Report, report, report!!! And please apply for the awards!

I look forward to hearing from you!



NEC.....Marie Mock

As Spring approaches, we need to start thinking about our warmer weather projects and our April reports. It is also time to think about applications for awards. We need to be sure that we report all of our good works to our units, our counties, and the Department so that NY can get the credit we deserve for the wonderful things we do for our veterans and our communities. Too often we say we don't need recognition for doing what is right, but the reports help the Legion to speak to the Congress to get them to provide more resources to further expand our reach. The more we can show that we are working, the more we will be able to do. Let's get the paperwork in to the appropriate chairs so that when I go to my NEC meetings and we all go to convention, we will stand proudly knowing that we are doing our best, not only locally, but also for the greater organization and our nation, and, by reporting and applying for awards, we will have provided the means to go to the next level to help. Keep up the good work.



American Legion Family College .. Debby Herrmann, ALFC Liaison

The 2024 session is almost upon us and I am looking forward to another great session. It was wonderful to see the increased interest in the Legion Family college during Mid-Winter. I had 25 applications at Mid-Winter and every one of them was handed out during the ALFC presentation. It put a huge smile on my face when I actual saw a group of 4 members filling them out right then and there. Our goal is to have another full class of 100 Legion Family members join was May 31, 2024 through June 2, 2024 at SUNY Morrisville.

The application is updated and you can download it using the link on our own website @ deptny.org. Get your application in as soon as possible. It is a first come, first serve policy. The tuition is \$300.00 and there is a session on the app. if you want to order a college shirt be sure to do so and they will be available the weekend of the college.

Please consider joining us in 2024. I ask for those who have attended early on in the development of the Legion Family College to consider coming again as things have changed and continue to change. It is truly a family experience.

American Legion Auxiliary Foundation-Cathleen MacInnes, ALA Foundation Board of Directors President, Terri Wallace, ALA Foundation Board of Directors Treasurer, Carrie Davenport, ALA Foundation Board of Directors Risk Compliance officer

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN YOUR UNIT, COUNTY, AND DISTRICT:

- ☑ Honor women who have inspired you or outstanding women in your Unit by donating to the ALA Foundation in their honor on March 8, as part of the Celebrating Women of Service campaign on International Women's Day,
- ☑ Remember departed members by donating to the ALA Foundation in their memory,
- ☑ Collect funds for the ALA Foundation at your meetings, or
- ☑ Support nearby VA facilities that host Veterans Creative Arts festivals by applying for a grant.

VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL FUND (VCAF): The Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund assists veterans in healing from both their physical and psychological wounds through participation in visual and performing arts. VCAF grants may only be awarded to an ALA tax-exempt entity that is in good standing with both the IRS nonprofit tax guidelines and the ALA compliance standards. Grants can be awarded up to \$2,500 for a project period not to exceed twelve (12) months. Projects that have been funded include:

- ☑ Reusable art supplies- paint brushes, easels, paints;
- ☑ Photographer expenses, marketing, promotional materials, judges for Creative Arts competition; and
- ☑ Award recognition for veteran artists.

Criteria for applying for, receiving, and completing a grant are found online (<https://alafoundation.org/vcaf-grants/>). Check it out, then reach out to your local VAMC to identify their needs. Ten of the 13 VAMCs in New York State do participate in the Veterans Creative Arts Festival – and they can always use more supplies, materials, or awards! Ask for a “wish list,” then fill out the grant application and submit it. Questions about the application, eligible items, or the process can be answered by Dean Sanders, Grants Coordinator at ALA National Headquarters – you can reach him at (317) 569-4532.



Americanism.....Judy Wallace, Chairperson

Can you believe Spring is knocking at our door? Somebody Please open the door! I would like to give a shout out to all of you! Because of YOU we are here! You care and if you care I most surely care! We can be proud of ourselves for continuing our service in teaching Americanism. The children of today are the future of tomorrow! I cannot wait to view those Americanism Essays! Let's not forget the Americanism Essay must reach ME, the Department Chairperson, by March 15, 2024. I just know you all are working very hard in receiving those, Essay's. Please do reach out via text, email and or phone.

In the last reporting period, I received many photos of your events that were taken within your community. Please continue to send your photos so that we may recognize what you have done for the End of the Year Report. I am in turn forwarding any photos you send to the National Americanism Committee Chairperson. This is a great opportunity where we as a department get to be on the big screen for all of National to see! The screen is bigger than you can imagine.

A light bulb just came on and I have great idea. You can order some Pocket Flags from the American Legion Flag & Emblem 2024 catalog, page 17 Item (101.225) 8"x12" for .60 cents each (if you order the smaller flag, it will be difficult to fold properly). Let's have a Watch Party! Bring your laptop or your iPad invite your friends, family, unit members, and junior members. You can share the following YouTube videos for your Watch Party. Type in your web browser "How to Fold the American Flag". This video is very well thought out and very detailed. Another video, "What each fold means when folding an American flag". The name of the video states exactly what it describes. The last Video to check out is "Why is the U.S. flag reversed on Army uniforms?". This last video I learned something I didn't know. The video is a great tool to share with everybody and anybody. The video is simple and easy to follow.

Remember anytime you present or talk about the flag you may report it under Americanism. Every time you say the Pledge of Allegiance it's a report. Example - Please indicate the **Number** of events held by your unit for each category. You would put a **number** instead of a check for each column. Using a check mark is not a number.

5 Flag etiquette program **2** Get out and Vote **8** Americanism Essay Contest
19 Flags donated to the Community

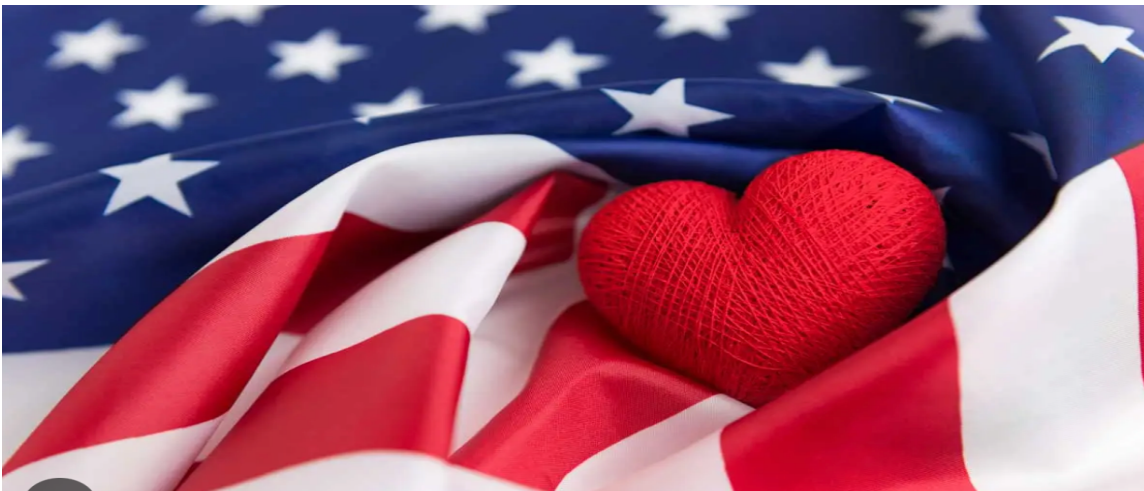
The Narrative Report does not need to be long.

Two Units had **five** Watch Party Events where Flag etiquette was presented. Everybody in attendance learned how to fold flags.

Klock-Smith unit **donated nineteen** flags to families with soldiers deployed overseas living in their **community**.

I reminded **two** of my neighbors **to go vote** at the school board and let their voices be heard.

Unit 1788 received **eight** **Americanism Essays** from home schooled children.





Corker & Keaveny's Corner.....Department Office



- * The 2025 Unit Data form (BLUE FORM) for renewal notices will be mailed to Unit President on file by the beginning of March 2024. It will have a detailed example of how to fill out the proper dues and a chart. It will be available as a fillable PDF to download off of the Department website under the membership tab.
- * Make sure you are using the 2025 form only. Please complete the entire form and do not leave anything blank. This form is due back to the Department Office no later than May 1, 2024. If your current rate is not sufficient, please make sure you bring it up at your unit meeting and vote on the increase prior to the deadline of May 1st .
- * The 2025 per capita for Department and National for senior members is \$28; the junior per capita is \$6.25. If you do not submit your form by May 1, 2024 , and your unit votes to raise the dues after the deadline, National will charge a processing fee to change the dues rate, no exceptions.
- * National will be printing the 2025 Membership cards and rosters on April 1, 2024. This means that any changes, new members, rejoins and transfers made after April 1, 2024 will not be reflected on the Unit's 2025 membership cards and rosters.
- * At this time, the current year (2024) dues have to be paid first before back dues. This now includes 2023 dues. We process renewals/new members ALL year; please do not hold onto it until the Fall.
- * Please remember that 2025 renewals will be available to pay in July 2024.
- * Please do not send DD214's/active-duty documentation into the office with applications. Once the Post Adjutant/Officer signs the application and the membership chair (ALA) verifies all supporting documents, return the supporting documents to the member. The office only needs the completed – signed application with the dues and transmittal. Remember – if the veteran is living, he/she must be a current paid member in the American Legion with a nine-digit membership number. Remember to check off which era the veteran served and the relationship of the veteran to the ALA applicant. Please circle the appropriate relationship. PLEASE make sure to get rid of all old applications and use the current applications to avoid mistakes.
- * Applications need to be complete and legible otherwise they will be returned to the unit membership chair. New members address needs to be complete. No abbreviations on city/town. All membership applications must be presented to the unit membership chairman with the proper documentation prior to being submitted to the office for processing.
- * Units with Full User ALAMIS access must send the completed membership applications signed by the Post Adjutant or Post officer to the department office once you enter it. Please include the Unit number and new ID# on the application. Keep a copy for the unit file.
- * All transfers need to be sent to the department office as well as all data forms for deceased members.
- * Membership chairs – if your unit members move, change any contact information, phone numbers, emails, etc., please send the change to the Department office so the information is updated in a timely manner. If your unit has ALAMIS Full or Write this should be done as soon as the member notifies you of their change. This also pertains to unit President, Membership Chair and Unit Treasurer.

(Cont. next page)

It's not a Catchphrase
 It's not a Campaign
 IT IS A MISSION

BE THE ONE

**AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY**

TO **ASK** VETERANS IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.

TO **LISTEN** WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK.

TO **REACH** OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING.



- * Newsletters – E-mail copies of the Newsletter are available to any member wanting a free copy. Please e-mail either one 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 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. 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.
- * All Department issued checks must be deposited within 90 days. Going forward the treasurer will not reissue checks that were not deposited in a timely manner.
- * All checks sent to the office should be made out as follows: American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New York and indicate in the memo line what it is for. Also, please remember to sign the check.
- * All donations should be sent to the department office and not the committee chair. When submitting a donation form please indicate what unit or county it is from.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund.....Geraldine Klussman, Chairperson

ALA member donor recognition:

- * An individual who gives an AEF donation of \$100 or more directly to the ALA National Headquarters within the current fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) will receive an AEF donation pin.
- * AEF pins are distributed quarterly directly to the individual meeting the eligible donation level of \$100 or more.

ALA department and unit annual awards:

- * Unit Award: Awarded to unit contributing the largest amount (per capita) between October 1 – June 1.
- * Department Award: Awarded to department contributing the largest amount between October 1 – June 1
- * Department Award: Awarded to department contributing the largest amount (per capita) between October 1 – June 1

Chaplin.....Pattie Galley, Chairperson

In the month of February, please remember the four chaplains who were on the Dorchester in 1943 when a torpedo struck the ship in 1943.

Also keep in mind, the second Friday in February, the color is purple and P.S. I love you day! It's a registered non-profit organization and it is a goal to end the stigma around mental health.

Kindness goes a LONG WAY!

Yes, I'm starting to receive prayers for president Karen's prayer book. Please keep them coming!!!

Any prayers from your organization are welcome.

Please remember to include Past Dept. Presidents Marion Capasso 1/8/2024, and Juanita Lochner 8/29/2023 in your thoughts and prayers for they have passed away.

I would like to take the time for all the chaplains to thank them for their communications with me. Whether it be emails, phone calls, or text messages it is greatly appreciated! Communication and a listening ear goes a long way. It's an act of kindness!!

I'm asking you to challenge yourself to spread kindness by doing one act of kindness for someone you care about!

Lastly, remember to keep our veterans, and active military in your thoughts and prayers



Community Service.....Vickie Lennox, Chairperson

I know you all have been doing things to help in your Community over the past few months, especially during the Holidays. Like helping your neighbors, family and friends with different things. Like shopping, driving to appointments, shoveling snow or just spending time with them. Helping in your Church and Posts. Remember everything you do can be reported, every hour counts. Spring is just around the corner let's help clean up around your neighborhood and cemeteries. Pick up trash and plant flowers.

Don't forget that Legion Family Day is coming up, Saturday April 27, 2024. What are some of the things that your Auxiliary and Post families are planning on doing to promote this day. Maybe a picnic at your Post and invite the community. Let us know.

We had a good reporting turnout for November but not 100%, let's change that for April. It doesn't take a lot of time to fill out the report form and mail. I look forward to all your reports and seeing what everyone has been doing!

Constitution & Bylaws.....Deborah Morris, Chairperson

Just a reminder to all Units, it's almost that time of the year. Our Department Secretary Barbara will once again, be sending out to the Unit Presidents the **"2025 Unit Data Form - For Direct Billing."** On this form is where your Unit writes in the dues for the 2025 membership year, that will be printed on the 2025 renewal notices from National. Even if there are no changes to your dues you still need to fill out the form and sent back to Dept. Any questions on the form, please contact Dept. Membership Chair Kim Quick at nyalamembership@gmail.com

But the reason why I bring this up is if your Unit members do vote to reduce or increase the Unit dues, the new change needs to reflect in your C & B. So, to continue your Unit will only need to fill out one C & B form, not the whole C & B document. This dues change form can found on the dept. website @ deptny.org , under programs and then to Constitution & Bylaws scroll down to #3) "Standing Rules #1 & #2 ONLY" (per Capita change) form and it's fillable. I can email to you the form if needed to save you time, just contact me at nyalaconstitution@gmail.com. I want to make this as effortless as possible for your Unit. All you need to do is fill out the form sign and email it back to me. I will review the form, sign it, and return to you and also forward to the Department office to be filed with your Unit C & B.

Any more questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I would like to continue to thank the Counties and Units for the awesome work on your C & B. Remember to share your C & B documents with your grassroots members include your Juniors. A great way for them to learn and understand the mission and purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary and to encourage future leaders.



Education.....Lucille Mozzillo, Chairperson

At this time, I am beginning to receive scholarship entries from the various counties throughout New York State. I am enjoying looking through the entries and it gives me a lot of hope for our future. There are several intelligent, kind, helpful and compassionate youth in our communities. I have my committee set up to read over the applications we plan to receive. Thank you for helping to get the word out to your individual communities and thank you for supporting your local youth with numerous local scholarships.

Please remember our next reporting date which is April 10th. I look forward to learning about how our ALA Education programs are being promoted within your communities. I also encourage you to brag about your success this year and apply for the Department and National Education Awards! The deadline for submitting is May 1st.

Some important dates to remember, March 1, 2024 National Scholarship Applications are due online and Department Scholarships are due to the local units; March 10, 2024 scholarship entries are received by the County Chairman; March 15, 2024 scholarship entries received by myself, Department Chairman; April 15, 2024 Purple Up! Day for Military Children; May 6-10, 2024, Teacher Appreciation Week



Empire Girls State.....Terri Wallace, Chairmen,
Claire Herrman -Moran 1st Vice & Kaylee Mathews 2nd Vice/Registrar

It's February, and time to check the ALA EGS timeline and deadlines!

Remember, your interviews and selection of your citizen(s) and alternate(s) should be made by March 1st! Don't forget that many schools have a winter break in February and you will need to factor that into your interview timeline. Units should have all fees and selections to the County ALA EGS Chairman by March 15th and the County ALA EGS Chairman should have all fees and transmittals to our ALA EGS Registrar, Kaylee, by March 31st!

Remember, additional copies of the mailed materials can also be downloaded from the ALA EGS website: empiregirlsstate.org under the ALA Resources Tab. Password: GirlsState

Please select Alternate Candidates! Even though your quota may have been reduced in 2024, it does not mean that you shouldn't select Alternates! So many of our Alternates move up to Citizens before ALA EGS begins! So if you have more High Schools in your County or more Units in your County than slots, select candidates from each Unit and/or High School (including Christian Schools, private schools and home-schooled students). Make your decision on who is a Citizen and who is an Alternate from your qualified students. Remember.....Alternates most often become Citizens. Orientation Information will be sent to the email addresses the candidates (Citizens and Alternates) provide in their application in early May.

Are you, or someone you know, interested in joining the 2024 ALA EGS Team? Email: empiregirlsstate@gmail.com, Call: 716-413-2604, or Complete your online application: <https://alaempiregirlsstate.wufoo.com/forms/2024-ala-egs-staff-application/> We are still looking to fill a few slots for staff members to attend this years session. Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of a week you will never forget!!!

Congratulations to Kim Quick on receiving a PUFL membership! Her ticket was drawn at our Chance to Win drawing at the Mid-Winter Conference. Thank you to everyone that took a "chance to win" and for your support of our ALA Empire Girls State Program.

Please see the flyer included in the newsletter for our next chance to win a Department Convention 2024 package! All proceeds benefit the 2024 ALA EGS Program. Don't forget about our 2024 ALA EGS Amazon WishList! A great way for individuals, Units, Counties, and Districts to help offset some of our programming needs. Our link: <https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/Z4MTXBKCEV9> or search for: ALA EGS 2024 Wish List

Lastly, we want to take a moment to highlight our 2024 ALA EGS Booster Ads and Supporters. These forms were included in our Fall Mailing, are available on our website or link is included below. Please share!

We encourage you to support the ALA Empire Girls State program by placing an ad in the State of the State Welcome Presentation. Citizens, parents, and members view this at the State of the State session and citizens would be thrilled to see an ad from you congratulating them on their accomplishments at ALA Empire Girls State! Please feel free to make copies of the form (Click link here: <https://rb.gy/fq4v0j>) and give to other American Legion Auxiliary members, Post members, Sons and Riders, friends, local businesses as well as the parents and grandparents of your ALA Empire Girls State citizens! Thank You!

Pricing:

Full Slide \$50 Eighth Slide \$10

Half Slide \$30 Benefactor (one-line listing) \$5

Quarter Slide \$20 Supporter (scrolling name only) \$1

Donations/Payments may be made online from our website using the Donations tab on our website: <https://empiregirlsstate.org>





CHANCE TO WIN

**PROCEEDS TO:
ALA EMPIRE
GIRLS STATE**

**2
NIGHTS**

2024 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION HOTEL

Niagara Falls, NY for ALA, TAL or SAL

2 TICKETS TO ALA STATE DINNER

Honoring Department President, Karen St. Hilaire

**WED
17TH**

**REG
FEE**

2024 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION ALA, TAL or SAL REGISTRATION FEE

**1 CHANCE \$10
2 CHANCES \$15
3 CHANCES \$25**

may be used for
yourself or
gifted to
someone else
within 30 days

**DRAWING
MAY 1,
2024**

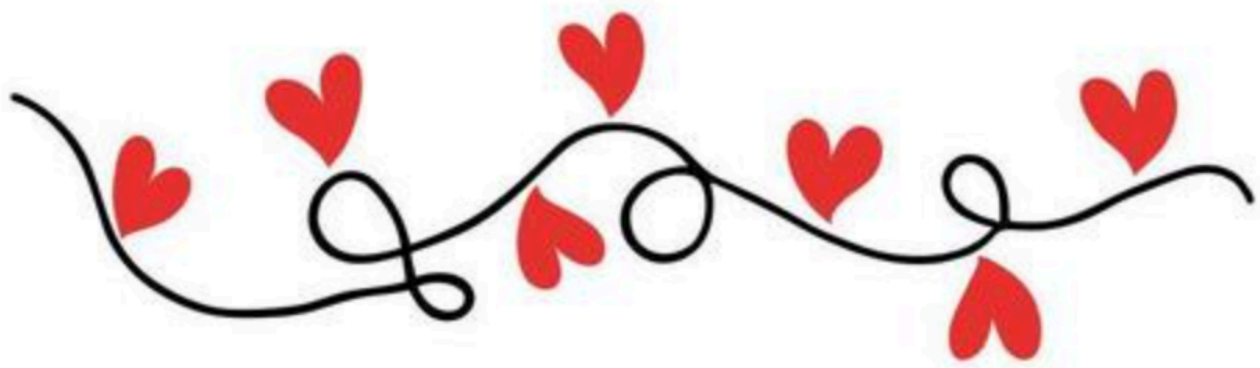


**FOR TICKETS
VISIT:**

**[HTTPS://EMPIREGIRLSSTATE.ORG](https://empiregirlsstate.org)
CLICK ON DONATE FOR TICKETS AND RECEIPT**



QUESTIONS OR LOOKING FOR OTHER WAYS TO ACCESS TICKETS:
EMAIL: EMPIREGIRLSSTATE@GMAIL.COM OR CALL/TEXT: 716-413-2604



Finance..... Mary Anne Casadei, Chairperson. Members Patricia Hennessy & Marie Mock

Hello Members! We have talked about budgets and audits so now we need to talk about just some of your plans for the future. We have some busy times coming up and I have always found it better to be one or two steps ahead then to be one or two steps behind.

Set up a meeting with your Finance Committee Members, President and Treasurer. This meeting is to discuss strategic plan goals, make a development plan, long-range budget planning issues, and budget planning. This will give you a firm idea on where you stand in meeting your budget goals and responsibilities. If you start early, you will ensure that you have time to gather all information needed and any questions you have will be answered.

Look for new ways to create your budget for 2024-2025. Have you met the goals that were set? Where did you fall short? What problems arose that hindered your Unit in achieving your goals. Try to be creative, try new things and be supportive of new ideas. This will give you an opportunity to see what fundraising events were successful and what ones were not.

The Treasurer can help you review your income from membership, fundraisers, donations received and events. The treasurer can also help with money that was paid out such as mandatory obligations, EGS, VA&R, your Christmas Programs, and any donations you have made. Review your annual operating expenses, such as bank fees, conferences, conventions, visitation expenses, postage and printing. Compare your total estimated revenues versus your estimated total expenses. Determine what areas need further consideration such as fundraising, donations, attendance at convention or conferences.

By doing this, you should have a clear picture of the areas you need to work on. Maybe the 50/50 held at the Craft Fair needs to be dropped so that that more time can be sent on the basket raffle. Or maybe you will need to come up with a new and creative idea for a fundraiser at the family Picnic.

This should help in creating your budget. If you have all the information gathered prior to your budget meeting you will be able to spend time on absorbing the information and putting it into creating your annual budget.

Go head try it! Early planning makes for easier budget preparation.



Historian..... Sheila Holman, Chairperson

Why is the History of The American Legion Auxiliary So Important?

Let's imagine that no one had written down anything about when the American Legion was founded after World War I, in Paris, France. In history at this time, they were called the American Expeditionary Force. It has been recorded that two months later in St. Louis they officially adopted the name the American Legion this all happened in 1919.

Women wanted to become officially affiliated with the Legion so on November 10, 1919 members officially created the American Legion Women's Auxiliary. In September 1920 the Legion sanctioned our auxiliary. Then on September 20, 1920 the auxiliary omitted the word women thus becoming the American Legion Auxiliary we know now. The mangle of the auxiliary was to help the veterans and their families and it is still our goal today.

American Legion Auxiliary has over million members. We have come a long way. We have impacted service members, veterans and their families and our community with over 2 billion Volunteer Hours. we have distributed scholarships, ALA girls state programs, we raise and spend millions of dollars to benefit children and we distribute poppies every May for everyone to remember our servicemen that gave the supreme sacrifice. We also spend millions on community service projects we fight for our veterans rights, including the G.I. Bill and US Department of Veterans Affairs benefits we fight to end homelessness among veterans, and we are all under the motto "Be The One" to prevent veterans suicide.

Let's take a moment, Imagine! If none of this had ever been documented in our history. What would the next generation ever learn about this great organization? Please take a moment think of the history every unit, county, district and state are performing. Let's make sure we record everything and leave something behind for others to see. We make a huge Difference. Please record Just a reminder that your final committee reports are due at the beginning of April. Let's make department of New York 100% and reporting our history.



Junior Activities.....Julianne Barton, Chairperson

HAPPY NEW YEAR & PALENTINE'S DAY!!!!

We start this New Year out by holding the annual Department meeting in Albany, on January 19 and 20, 2024. It was held at the same time as the Midwinter Conference. There were 11 Juniors in attendance. Six were returning, and 5 were new to the yearly meeting. I would like to welcome Serena, Jordin, Keira, Ailie, and Rilie!!! It was also great to see Jay, Isabella, Faithanne, Kalynn, Brielle, and Peyton!!! I was blessed to have a great group of Juniors to work with and I would like to thank the Senior members who are mentoring them.

On Friday night, we had an informal meeting. The Juniors worked on a project that coincided with the P.S. I love you project that the Senior members were doing. The Juniors made over 200 pocket flags to be distributed to the Veterans in the VA hospitals around New York State. In addition, the Juniors painted poppy pictures to commemorate their meeting. One of the pictures was presented to President Karen so she would have a memento from Midwinter 2024. The Juniors also practiced the POW/MIA ceremony that they were scheduled to perform on Saturday morning.

Saturday morning, the Juniors honored the POW/MIAs' by doing the ceremony with the dignity and respect that it deserves. They truly are a great representation of what we want this future of this organization to look like!!! After they had finished, they went to their meeting room, to conduct their business. Prior to opening the meeting, discussion was held regarding the different offices that would be filled during elections.

President Faithanne opened their meeting at 9am and followed proper protocol throughout. Three Juniors had attended Mission Training in Rhode Island and they spoke about what happened there. Under new business, the Officers for 2024-2025 were elected:

President – Isabelle Shanno, 3rd District
Vice President – Keira Blackmer, 5th District
Secretary/Treasurer – Peyton Burdick, 5th District
Chaplain – Faithanne Nashton, 5th District
Historian – Ailie Hagerty, 5th District
Sgt At Arms – Rilie Hagerty, 5th District

National President Lisa Williams and Department President Karen St Hilaire joined the Junior meeting for the installation of the new Junior Officers. President Lisa installed them. It was so exciting to see the National President install our New York State Junior Officers!!!!

Americanism Chairman Judy Wallace was also a special guest at the Junior meeting. She did a wonderful presentation on flag etiquette, and it was very informative. The Juniors truly enjoyed the presentation and they love it when a Senior member shares their knowledge.

The Juniors finished up their meeting by making approximately 50 Valentine pieces of ART. They made valentines for the Veterans that are in the Syracuse VA. They picked that hospital because it is the one that is in Department Karen's hometown.

The 2024 Junior meeting was a HUGE success!!!! My hope is that everyone sees that this meeting is a great opportunity for Juniors around the Department to get together, make friends, and become a strong group of future LEADERS of this great organization.





Leadership.....Carrie Davenport, Chairperson

Can you believe that the 2024 ALA Mid-Winter Conference was over a month ago? There was a lot of great fun had, friendships formed, information shared, and resources gathered. To continue the information sharing please head on over to the ALA New York Department website and visit the events section to access materials under the midwinter tab to access the slideshows and resources shared! A special shout out to the ladies that volunteered at our first ever ALANY Mid-Winter community service project! We assembled 250 P.S. I Love You packs that were distributed to the VA homes throughout the state! A super Special shout out to the VAVS reps who were our delivery fairies!

To keep your leadership momentum going check out the trainings available on the national website. Sign in and explore ALA Academy, keep an eye out for live training announcements shared on Facebook. Stay tune to our ALA New York Facebook page for updates and details regarding our late-night leadership and leadership over lunch workshop series! Details coming soon!

It is never too early to start working on your awards! All of the awards under the leadership program are due by May 1st! If you visit the programs tab of the ALA New York Department website where you can download the plan of action leadership section. In this download you will find all the details you need to submit a winning award entry!

I'll end with the reminder that being a leader in this amazing organization is not defined by the titles you hold, but instead is defined by the impact you make. Sometimes being a leader is knowing when to push the envelope of what's always been done, other times its knowing when to sit back and let others assume the role you have always had so that someone different can take a stab at the job. Leadership is supporting old traditions and new ideas and finding a balance within it all. Be the leader that is inclusive, not the leader that is divisive.

Please never lose sight that each and everyone of you have leadership skills that the organization needs to help it continue to grow and prosper for many years to come.



National Webinars



Compliance Matters

Being compliant: It may not be the most exciting topic, but it is the most important when it comes to IRS filing. As entities of a nonprofit organization, American Legion Auxiliary units need to make sure they're following the appropriate laws to maintain their nonprofit status. It's important to stay on top of the latest laws and maintain records.

What you will learn:

- Tax-exempt status: How to keep it
- Your tax obligations
- Best practices to be compliant
- Understanding 501(c)(19)
- Keeping records
- Resources available



[Register](#) now for the Compliance Matters webinar on March 7 at 12:30 p.m. ET.





National Webinars

Month of the Military Child

Military children face many challenges as a result of their parents' service. The month of April is dedicated to military children. This 45-minute webinar will help you identify ways to celebrate military kids in your community.

What you will learn:

- Ways to celebrate and honor military kids
- How to continue honoring military children throughout the year
- How to share the message with your community



[Register](#) now for the Month of the Military Child webinar on March 15 at noon ET.



Legislative.....Mary Ann Calbo, Chairperson

Last session three very critical bills have passed the House of representatives

The Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023 (HR 542)

The Home Act of 2023 (H.R. 3848)

The Cope Act (H.R. 3581)

It is critical for the senate to pass this Legion-backed legislation which is indispensable support of our Veterans and their families. The second session of the 118th Congress has commenced. There are at least 24 bills with Legion support that have passed one chamber. Of the bills that have passed the House, 2 provide support for caregivers, 4 strengthen education and employment benefits, 2 focus on disability compensation and benefits, 1 ensuring that veterans have equal access to the second amendment, and 1 improving housing allowances and aid for homeless veterans.

The Veterans Mental Health and Addiction Therapy Quality of Care Act S. 3546 Aims to target the mental health services at the Veterans Affairs (VA) and outside providers to ensure the utmost top quality of assessment and care. The Legion has joined with Veterans of Foreign Wars, Operation Recovery and No one Left Behind with Honor in sending a letter to Senate Majority Leader and Minority leaders that reads in part:

“it has been two years since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the evacuation of 80,000 Afghans to the United States; however , the lives of our wartime allies are still in peril. supporting the 150,000 allies still abroad is vital. Broad bipartisanship political support as well as national polling showing 90% support among Americans fulfilling our promise to our Afghan allies in providing legal residency to our allies, (after they are fully vetted) is a moral and national security imperative. Congress has failed over the past two years to pass necessary legislation”.

American Legion family members are encouraged to contact their senators to call for the Afghan adjustment legislation in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024.

If you have not yet, please sign on to the “Grass Roots Center”, please do so. Reach out to your representatives in passage of these essential quality of life issues for our veterans, families and our brave allies remain in peril. If you have done so; remember, your voice is essential in the passage of the identified legislation. Thank you for your continued support.





Have you heard; Past Department Nancy Babis is hosting a TV Show?

Tune in on the 3rd Tuesday of every month on Spectrum Channel 1301 to see "Western New York Veterans" hosted by our own Nancy Babis. You can also watch past episodes On Demand.

Decembers show featured Past Department Commander Dave Riley

Congratulations Nancy!!

National Security.....Janet Elston, Chairperson

Carolyn A. Baranowski, Our Eastern Division National Security Chairman has had several questions from chairmen in the Eastern Division regarding Blue Star Banners.

Blue Star Banner can have one star or up to five and each blue star represents a loved one serving in the military during time of war. A home with a Blue Star means that family is a Blue Star Family.

This Carolyn response of who is eligible.

"What is a Blue Star Family eligibility?

Blue Star Service Flag is the official banner authorized by the Department of Defense for display by families who have members serving in the United States Armed Forces during any period of war or armed hostilities the Nation may be engaged in for the duration of such hostilities. Immediate family members are permitted to hang the Blue Star Banner prominently in support of their loved ones. Those people include: Spouses, Parents, Children, Siblings, Stepparents, Stepchildren, Step-siblings, half-siblings, Adopted parent, Adopted children and adopted siblings of a United States service member. "

You can order the Blue Star Banner from National Emblem Sales. Please keep track of how many you have given out and report it on your National Security report in April.

Keep sending packages and cards to our troops.

Don't forget to report!!!!!!



<https://emblem.legion.org/searchprods.asp>



Parliamentarian.....Ann Geer

Parliamentary procedure first came to America in the seventeenth century when Virginia's House of Burgesses was founded in 1619. Other colonies founded governing assemblies based on their experiences in the old European countries from which they came. Of course, it has evolved over the last 400 years, but legislative bodies and organizations use it still to ensure that sessions and meetings run in an efficient and effective manner.

It is important to adhere to the precepts of Parliamentary procedure with Roberts Rules of Order being the accepted reference. Efficiently run meetings will keep members feeling included and satisfied that everyone's concerns and ideas are important. Whether you are in a leadership role or a member at large it is in the best interest of your organization to understand the basic principles.

Janice Strand is a Professional Registered Parliamentarian and a member of the National Association of Parliamentarian. She has written many articles on parliamentary procedure. In her literature she lists 10 reasons that we should utilize the procedure. It protects the rights of each member and ensures that majority and minority issues are heard.

1. **Helps an organization achieve its purpose.** Business conducted in meetings focuses on purposes stated in the bylaws.
2. **Provides equal treatment for all.** Each member has the right to speak; rules determine how many times, and for how long one can speak.
3. **Expedites business and saves time.** Attendees are not allowed to introduce dilatory issues; the skilled presiding officer keeps the meeting moving.
4. **Maintains order.** Rules allow the skilled presiding officer to guide the meeting in an orderly manner. Members, knowing parliamentary rules, help keep order.
5. **Protects the right of the majority to decide.** Business brought before the assembly with motions or resolutions is adopted by a majority or a two-thirds vote.
6. **Protects the right of the minority to be heard.** Debate can be conducted in a way that each side of an issue has equal time to be heard. Minority reports are heard on some votes.
7. **Protects the rights of members.** Members have the right to make motions or introduce resolutions, to debate, and to vote.
8. **Protects the rights of absentees.** Minutes of the meeting inform absentees of the proceedings. Previous notice is needed for introduction of some types of motions.
9. **Helps members understand the universal rules that are useful in any organization.** Meetings of large numbers of members require more formality; meetings of small groups or committees may be conducted with less formality.
10. **Makes for meetings that members want to attend.** When there is order and business is accomplished within a reasonable time limit, members gladly attend and participate.

Janice Strand, Professional Registered Parliamentarian



Poppy/Poppy Poster.....Laura Booth, Chairperson

Happy February!!!!

Hope everyone is keeping warm. Thank you to everyone who ordered Poppies!!

Our poppy makers did a great job making the large amounts of poppies that were ordered. I'm looking forward to start seeing poppy posters for the contest. Please refer to the Plan of Action for the current changes in the rules County Poppy chairs, April reporting is just around the corner, please remember to list the amount raised by the cans separately from any other donations. I'm looking forward to see all the hard work your units are doing. Unit reports are due to County by April 1st , and County to me by April 10th .

Let's make this reporting period 100 %. As always, feel free to email me if you have any questions.

Public Relations.....Sue Williams, Chairperson

Have you realized how the months have clicked off? We are in the final months of the Program year! Are you prepared to apply for Awards? Do you know the deadline dates? Act Now!

The Department Officers are currently on their visitation of the 8th District, and the final leg of their tour across New York. This brings to my mind the Newspaper Articles for their many Visitations and tours of Points of Interest they have made. Why am I dwelling on Visitations, you ask? Because the Chairman for Public Relations on every level should be creating a Book of Articles that you will present to your President at the end of their year. Such as: the Unit Public Relations Chairman should be collecting all of the articles published about the Unit, and present that book to the Unit President.

The County Public Relations Chairman should be collecting all of the articles regarding County and Unit for a book that is presented to the County President at the end of their year. ... you get the picture. This is why you are asked to include TWO copies with your report to the Public Relations Department Chairman when you submit your reports. One of the copies you send me will be included in the book which I present to Madam Karen at the end of her year. In years to come, Karen can sit and look back at all that she was involved with during her year as Department President. Our next Reporting period is April 1st !! Please set aside the Articles and Newspaper clippings to send with your report!!

Warriors Family Assistance.....Marie SantaCroce, Chairperson

Do you know, or have you heard of, a Veteran challenged with meeting day to day or extraordinary expenses ??

The American Legion Auxiliary Warrior Family Assistance Program is here to help.

Since the summer, we have been able to reach out to three Veteran families and lend support at one of their most difficult times.

If you have any questions about this program or if you need an application, please contact me.

My email address is: nyalawfa@gmail.com My phone number is: 718-938-5952

Please be sure to read and follow the application instructions carefully to help us facilitate a speedy response.

I would like to thank all the WFA Unit/ County Chairmen and their committees, as well as our Department WFA Committee Members Maureen and Lora, our Department President Karen, Department Secretary Barbara and Department Treasurer Tara for all they do to make this program possible.





Sons of the American Legion / American Legion Auxiliary Annual Walkathon in Support of Our Veterans 2024

As we prepare to launch the 2024 Annual “They Fought for Us, We Walk For Them “ Walkathon in partnership with the Sons of the American Legion, we are reaching out to every County, Unit and Member of the American Legion Auxiliary to help raise funds for our 13 VA Hospitals and 5 NYS Veterans’ Nursing Homes.

The Annual Walkathon was the vision of Past Detachment Commander Tom Kirk, and to him we are grateful. After a few years, interest seemed to wane.

In 2015-16, during County Visitations, Detachment Commander Joe Santa Croce took the opportunity to reintroduce the importance of this program. We know that not everyone can actually do a Walk, but raising money for this worthwhile cause is still attainable.

For example, here in Kings County, our home, we were unable to organize an actual “Walk.” Undeterred, Joe did a letter writing campaign to garner support from our Legion Family together with our own family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors for this amazing initiative. Joe passed away in 2019, but the passion he put into the Walkathon, and service to our Veterans, lives on. As Joe had done, I reached out, and over the past 3 years, Kings County has donated over \$23,000 to the Walkathon, \$8,620 in 2023 alone.

Please consider letter writing, holding a brunch or dinner, anything to help make the 2024 “They Fought For Us, We Walk For Them” Walkathon a success once again.

“They Marched for Us, Let’s Walk for Them”



Walk-A-Thon NYS



A program operated in partnership for 17 years by the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary

Date: Kickoff March 1st, 2024

GOAL: \$65,000

PROCEEDS: Awarded equally to support the following:

SAL: NYS VA Medical Center Homeless Programs & NYS Veterans Homes

- Homeless Veterans are sometimes found living in wooded areas, in cars, under bridges. Some locations, such as abandoned buildings, can pose physical dangers for outreach staff and volunteers. Assisting homeless veterans to find suitable, permanent housing and the support services necessary to help them remain self-sufficient is a number one priority of the VA.
- There are 4 NYS Veteran Homes operated by the NYS Department of Health and 1 operated by the State University of New York. They are skilled Nursing Homes that provide quality care to all eligible veterans and their eligible dependents in need of skilled nursing care and rehabilitative services.

ALA: Hope For The Warriors:

- Hope For The Warriors has advocated restoring a foundation of Stability, Strength, and Community for military families since 2006 by building on:
 - Stability
 - Financial Wellness
 - Career & Education
 - Strength
 - Physical Wellness
 - Emotional Wellness
 - Community
 - Connection & Belonging
 - Social Support

If there is a Walk-A-Thon in your Post, County or District we encourage you to join. If not, start one. Use the Poster and Boots to cutout to promote the cause and recognize your supporters.

Attendance at an actual walk is not mandatory. Check with your Walk organizers for forms and instructions, the Auxiliary (www.deptny.org) or ([sons www.sonsdny.org](http://sons.www.sonsdny.org)) websites.

If you do not want to start or join a walk, you may still contribute by holding your own event. A dinner or other fundraiser at your Home Post, or by mailing a check, payable to the Detachment of New York, with Walk-A-Thon in the memo line to: 1304 Park Blvd, Troy, NY 12180

All Donations must be submitted by June 12, 2024.

Detachment and Department Points of Contact for the Walk-A-Thon NYS:

Chris Cerullo, NY Walk-A-Thon Chairman (Crcerullo@aol.com)

James Coates, NY SAL VA&R Chairman (coajam1@gmail.com)

Karen St. Hilarie, ALA President (nyalapresident@gmail.com)

Marie Santa Croce, ALA Walk A Thon Chairperson (re507@aol.com)

Barbara Corker, Dept. of NY ALA Secretary / Director of Operations

(Nyalasecretary@gmail.com)

