

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

1580 Columbia Turnpike, Bldg. 1, Suite 3
Castleton-on-Hudson, NY 12033

518-463-1162

www.deptny.org



2024 April 2024

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

Here we are in April, three fourths through the administrative year. The Department Leadership team has completed all sixty-two county visits. It has been amazing journey. We were even able to visit the Burlington Legion Post in Canada. You can view all pictures the Department Commanders Aide Chip Rayno took. Go on the Department American Legion site, scroll down to Department photographer photo gallery, and you can view all the places we have visited. If you have any photos, you have taken and would like to share, please email them to my historian Sheila Holman at www.nyalahistorian@gmail.com.

I have been asked many times what's the best place / thing we have done so far? My answer has been we have visited may American Legion Posts and sites, but the best thing is meeting the grassroots members of the American Legion Family.

Our latest membership report shows the Department of NY is in 16th place of the 52 Departments, with 33,410 members paid for 89.3% of our goal. We are still 301 members short of last year's total paid members. There are still thirty-eight units with zero to ten members paid. I am asking all Unit and County membership chairpersons to contact these units and assist them with getting members to submit dues. It is not too late to retain members. These units may also need help filing forms to turn in their charters.

Now is the time to review all department committee awards, including the Department President awards. Take note of the required form including cover page, numbers of words and information needed and deadline dates. Also make sure you submit it to the correct person. Many awards are not presented each year, due to lack of entries.

Reminder following unit elections in May, county elections in June and District elections in July, you need to submit a complete list of officers and committee chairs to the Department Secretary at the Department Headquarters office. Send this list in even if the officers remain unchanged. You must also notify the department of the amount you charge for dues; this is the Blue Form which is due no later than May 1st 2024 to the Department Headquarters office, otherwise the dues notice National sends out will be incorrect.

Reminder the American Legion Homecoming honoring Department Commander, President and Detachment Commander will be held May 17-19, 2024. At Vernon Downs Hotel And Casino.

Dinner will be held on Saturday May 18 at 6 pm. Cost is \$60.00 person .There will be a free band in the casino Friday and Saturday night, Harness racing, and a hospitality room for overnight guests and those attending dinner. Details can be found on the auxiliary website www.deptny.org.

Reminder Department convention will be held in Niagara Falls July 16 -19, 2024. Registration and pre-convention meetings will be on Tuesday, sessions will be held Wednesday and Thursday.

Members may travel home after the session or stay until Friday; Friday post-convention meeting will be held for incoming officers and committee chairs. Details will be mailed to Unit Presidents in Convention Call.



Department Convention.....Marigail Sondel, Convention Chairperson

Hear yea, Hear yea, come one, come all to the annual American Legion Auxiliary Department of NY convention being held in Niagara Falls, NY July 15-19, 2024. The Auxiliary headquarters hotel is Hyatt Place at 310 Rainbow Blvd. Cost of rooms is \$169, INCLUDING parking and breakfast. The committee has been told by past, present and future department officers that both the bed and pillows are great sleep-inducing items. If you are interested, the other hotels where rooms are reserved for this convention are the Holiday Inn (SAL), the Sheraton (Legion) and the Seneca Niagara Resort and Casino (overflow for all hotels). Room reservations should be made online at:niagarafallusa.com/nyslegion, the site is up and running. A tax-exempt form is required.

Registration is scheduled for Tuesday 3-6, at the conference center.

The annual state dinner will be held on Wednesday night at the conference center. There are three choices to pick from a pasta dish, beef, and chicken. Cash bar will open at 6pm, with dinner at 7pm. The cost of the dinner is \$49.00 per person. Dinner forms will be included in the convention call.

Additional information such as times and place for both pre- and post-convention meetings will be announced in the convention call.

During any free time, there are always things to do and see. Of course there is the mighty Falls itself, it is within walking distance of the hotel, viewing can take place from the Niagara Falls State Park, or from atop the Observation tower. Perhaps walking across the bridge to view the Falls from the Canadian side is your choice, this requires either a passport or an enhanced driver's license. If you are feeling really brave get up close, a ride - the Maid of the Mist, or tour the Cave of the Winds. If shopping is more to your liking there is the Factory Outlet Mall that has over 200 stores and you can take the Niagara shuttle for FREE, to and from all hotels. History buffs might enjoy a tour of Old Fort Niagara and perhaps a Niagara wine trail would be enjoyable.

The most important idea is that you come to the convention, to meet new people, get new ideas and acquaint yourself with old friends.



-----Message from the Department Office-----

- **Convention Call** will be emailed to the last known Unit and County President in May and will also be sent in the mail via USPS. If you receive it in error, please pass it along to the unit and/or county president and please share it with your members.

- **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. 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 receive a copy of the newsletter via email, please share it with the members in your unit or county. 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.
- National pulled rosters and 2025 membership cards. This means that any changes, new members, rejoins and transfers made after April 1st will not be reflected on the Unit's 2025 membership cards and rosters. This does NOT mean we will stop accepting 2024 dues. We process renewals/new members ALL year; please do not hold onto it until the Fall. If a member's dues were not paid for 2024, 2023 they are now considered expired for 2025 rosters and will not appear on the 2025 roster and will not have a printed membership card. When paying their dues, you will have to give them a handwritten card for 2025.
- The 2025 Unit Data form for renewal notices were mailed to Unit Presidents in early March. It is available as a fillable PDF to download off of our 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 1st, 2024. Please remember that the 2025 dues will be available to pay July 2024. If your current rate is not sufficient, please make sure your unit notifies all members that there will be dues increase proposed for the unit, when the meeting will be held, etc. Please make sure you follow your unit Constitution & Bylaws regarding notice to all members.
- 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 1st, 2024 and your current rate is below the amounts above, the Unit will not receive a portion of the per capita for 2025. Once the rates are locked and they need to be changed, National will charge a processing fee.
- At this time, the current year (2024) dues have to be paid first before back dues. This now includes 2023 dues.
- Please do not send DD214's/active-duty documentation into the office with applications. Once the Post Adjutant/Officer signs the application (**ORIGINAL SIGNATURES – NO PHOTOCOPIES**) 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.** Remember to check which era the veteran served and the relationship of the veteran to the ALA applicant. Please circle the appropriate relationship to the veteran.

- 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.
- Membership chairs – if your unit members move, change any contact information, phone numbers, emails, etc., please send the change to the Department office or if you have unit write or unit full, please make the appropriate changes so the information is updated in a timely manner. This also pertains to unit President, Membership Chair and Unit Treasurer.



Membership.....Kimberly Quick, Chairperson

I am so proud of the Department of NY Membership. You make this Lighthouse Keeper smile from ear to ear. Thank you all so much for all your hard work to Renew, Recruit, and Rejoin. Shine your candles brightly everywhere you go.

Milestone #1 – Five \$100 awards were given for Units reaching 75% or higher by October 13th, 2023. 18 Units were in the drawing. The winning Units were #118 Woodhaven, Queens Co., 10th district; #1282 Merrick, Nassau Co., 10th district; #1618 Saranac, Clinton Co., 4th district; #1758 Manny Bacon, Dutchess Co., 9th district; and #1880 – Leisure Village, Suffolk Co., 10th district.
 Milestone #1 – One \$100 award for County reaching 50% or higher by October 13th, 2023. Lewis County, 5th District, was the only county to reach goal.

Milestone #2 – Five \$100 awards were given for Units reaching 85% or higher by November 11th, 2023. There were 36 Units in this drawing. Winning Units were #265 William Bradford Turner, Nassau Co., 10th district; #521 Osborn-Fitzsimmons, Orange Co., 9th district; #1167 Orange Blossom, Orange Co., 9th district; #1380 - McFadden Bros., Kings, Co., 2nd district; #1928 Gabriel A Rodriguez, Erie Co., 8th District.

Milestone #2 – One \$100 award given for county reaching 60% or higher by November 11th, 2023. 15 counties in the drawing. The winning county was Columbia County, 3rd District.

Milestone #3 – Five \$75 awards to Units reaching 100% or higher by January 12, 2024. 25 Units in the drawing at Mid-Winter. Winning Units were #116 George P. Davis, Kings Co., 2nd District; #252 Minkler Seery, Columbia Co., 3rd District; #1380 McFadden Bros., Kings Co., 2nd District; #1573 Mulligan-Eden, Orange Co., 9th District; and #1718 Carle Place, Nassau Co., 10th District.

Milestone #3 – One \$75 award goes to the county reaching 75% or higher by January 12, 2024. 33 Counties were in this drawing. The winner was Jefferson County.

Milestone #4 – There are 70 Units and 3 Counties in the drawing for the \$50 awards.

New York is in 16th place in the nation with 89.54%. Eastern Division is in 3rd place nationwide, and we are in 6th place in the Division. CONGRATULATIONS to the winners and the Department of NY for their perseverance in Membership.

PLEASE refer to your Plan of Action for the Milestone #5 criteria and other Lighthouse awards, and the national Recruit 10 awards.

I look forward to seeing you in Niagara Falls where we will know the rest of the story....
 THANK YOU AGAIN for your hard work in Membership.



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

It is hard to believe that April is almost done. All VA&R chairs please make sure you look at your POA and pay attention to the deadlines for awards for the Department of New York and



especially those for the National Awards. All awards need to be in the Chairperson's hand by May 1, 2024. Please make sure you follow the directions and get them in on time. We do remarkable things in New York, let us get the recognition that we deserve. Thank you to every County for getting their reports in. I cannot wait to report on all the important things that Units do for our Veteran.

President's Project.....Maureen Morgan

Hope For The Warriors was founded by military families aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejune, NC in 2006 as they witnessed, firsthand, the effects war imparts on service members and their families. Hope for the Warriors has remained grounded in family values as the organization expands both the span of programs offered and the number of wounded, family members, and families of the fallen assisted.

Please consider making a donation for this very worthy project. All checks must be sent to the department office, 1580 Columbia Turnpike, Bldg.#1, Suite #3, Castleton-on-Hudson, NY 12033. All checks should be made payable to: ALA Department of NY, in the memo line put Department President's Project.

Thank you for your support and hear the grand total at the Department Convention in Niagara Falls.



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

As I write this, we are in the midst of the month of the Military Child. It is so nice to see how many units have stepped up and have events planned to honor and recognize the military children who make daily sacrifices and to all our youth. Also, thank you for your plans for Purple Up! Day on April 15 and those Units who are recognizing Military Brats Day on April 30.

I want to bring awareness that Military Brats Day was created in 2016. It does not matter if you are a child or an adult who grew up as a military brat, April 30 is a day to celebrate Military Brats and their many contributions to the military. The dandelion is a symbol for Military Brats. The reason is dandelions are resilient, hard to stifle, and can root themselves anywhere. They are like Military Brats as they do not have a say where their military parents are stationed, where they are going to live, or the culture. Military Brats are resilient. Their life is tough and so respected.

Please always keep your eyes and ears open for children who are worthy of the Youth Hero and Good Deed Awards.

I cannot stress enough to keep feeding your pigs and keep your donations coming in for the Child Welfare Foundation.

Your reports have been wonderful and so enjoyable to read. You have provided much joy and encouragement in many children's lives.

Please submit for the Department awards!



Americanism.....Judy Wallace, Chairperson

I Recently attended the Oratorical Banquet and Contest that was held on March 1st and 2nd at the Crowne Plaza-Desmond Hotel in Albany, NY. There were five contestants with four females and one male. These young teens are the future leaders of tomorrow. What an impressive job each contestant did reciting an Article of the Constitution from memory. For the first part, the contestants delivered their prepared orations for eight to ten minutes each. For the second part of the contest, I didn't know that the contestants had to memorize five different Articles from the Constitution and be prepared to deliver a three-to-five-minute oration on whichever one was selected the morning of the contest. Before the second part commenced, The American Legion Department Commander, Timothy Collmer, picked an envelope from one of the judges and read it aloud to the crowd and judges. Then, one of the judges notified the first contestant of what the title was, and they had five minutes to prepare. Each contestant thereafter was notified and allowed five minutes to prepare before delivering their oration. Could you do that? I know I Couldn't. I will say the deliberation of who the winner was a very tight race as it took the judges almost two hours to deliver the results. I mean the chairperson looked out to the audience and was overwhelmed with joy by the enormous crowd of American Legion Family supporters. Grant Gillman of Fifth District, Jefferson County and Hannah Brundage of Eighth District, Orleans County took home Fifth and Fourth Place with \$2,000 scholarships, Orianna Cotton of Fourth District, Franklin County took third place with a \$2,500 scholarship, Maureen Kennedy of Tenth District, Suffolk County took second place with a \$4,000 scholarship, and Nia Gooden of Ninth District, Westchester County took first place with a \$6,000 scholarship. Nia will go on to compete in the National Oratorical finals that will be held on May 17-19 at Hillsdale College in Michigan. The State of New York wishes her good luck!

The Annual American Legion Department of New York Junior Shooting Sports Program Three Position Air Rifle Championship competition took place on February 17th and 18th at The American Legion James Harvey Spire Post 787 in Cicero, NY. There was a good support of the American Legion Family and parents. This year there were one hundred and thirty-two registered shooters sponsored from nine American Legion Posts across New York State. Of those registered, sixty-five shooters were able to compete in a four-person team match. The shooters had to shoot in three different positions to include standing, prone and kneeling. The shooters over the last few years have been primarily dominated by females. LeRoy Post of Westchester County Ninth District took third place in medals, Warsaw Post of Wyoming County Eighth District took second place in medals, and Middletown Post of Orange County Ninth District took first place in medals presented.

Keep sending me your pictures as I will be forwarding all pictures to the National Americanism Chairperson Sallie Rosman. When you send your pictures, please state your county and district so you can get the recognition not only at Department Level, but at National Level as well. I really would like to highlight New York State. I know you have a picture or two with the flag in the background or in your hand or maybe the little baby had one in their hand.



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

The 2024 session is almost upon us with only a month and a half away. 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. We currently have approximately 15 slots left opened so there is still time to get your application to the American Legion Department office. We will be accepting them up to May 24, 2024.

The application can be downloaded using the link on our own website @ deptny.org. The tuition is \$300.00 and there is a section on the application if you want to order a college shirt be sure to do so and they will be available at the weekend of the college.

I am pleased to announce that we had 2 applications applying for the Shelby Sobolowski Memorial Scholarship this year. It was very difficult to choose, both essays were great. But unfortunately, there can be only one. This year's recipient of the scholarship is Gretchen Riley from Unit 1610, Albany County 3rd District. After a successful completion of the 3-day session of the Family Collage Gretchen will be reimbursed by The American Legion Auxiliary Department office.

Please consider joining us in 2024. I ask again 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.



*Auxiliary Emergency Fund.....Geraldine Klussmann
Chairperson*

Total contributions \$6,808.96 reported. Volunteer hours 264. Units spent \$1,705.006 families were helped. Let's keep up the good work.



*ALA Foundation.....Cathe MacInnes, ALA Foundation Board
President*

Terri Wallace, ALA Foundation Board Treasurer

Carrie Davenport, ALA Foundation Risk & Compliance Committee Liaison

THANK YOU to all members, Units, Counties, and Districts which have donated to the ALA Foundation during this year! We are waiting for the final numbers to come in – who will win the Cathleen MacInnes Award this year?

Not sure how to donate? Simply go to www.alafoundation.org and click on the DONATE icon. Any donations made before May 1st will be included in the Unit totals.

We hope you've all read about the Department of New York American Legion's amazing donation of \$100,000 to the ALA Foundation, earmarked to support the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The donation came from their fund to support those with PTSD and to prevent veteran suicide. This link will take you to the full article in the ALA Blog: <https://www.legion-aux.org/Blog/A-generous-gesture-from-New-York>



Chaplain.....Pattie Galley, Chairperson

Well, this is my last newsletter as Department Chaplain. I would like to take this time to say Thank you for believing in me. Your emails, calls, communications, or words of encouragement were greatly appreciated. Without your wisdom there would be no light.

Please continue with the Death notices from your units, so I can do my part of recording and sending out the condolence cards. I have also been receiving thank you cards back from some of the families. It gives them a great feeling that we recognize their loved ones.

I'm starting to work on the book for the convention and would like all the deceased members to be included in the service. I'm still collecting prayers for Department Karens Book. Keep them coming!!!! Any prayers from an Auxiliary event or one that means a lot to you. Just remember to include your name , county, or unit.

Lastly, please keep our Veterans , active military , their families and the less fortunate in your thought and prayers.'



Community Service..... Vicki Lennox, Chairperson


Now that the weather is getting nicer out, let's get out and help our neighbors, friends, and businesses in the community. Where did everyone go for the eclipse? Help out at your local food pantries and Churches. Continue what you have been doing, but you can do more.

Remember Legion Family Day is coming up fast - Saturday April 27th. What are you doing to include your community? Have open houses, picnics, get together. Let everyone know what we do to help our Veterans and families.

Thank you to all the Counties and Units that have sent in your reports. We did not get 100% reporting, but it was a turn out. Remember to keep track of what you do and your hours from now throughout the summer. Report them for the November reporting period. Have a happy and safe summer!



Constitution and Bylaws/Resolutions..... Deborah Morris, Chairperson

Spring has finally  sprung, well at least we all hope so! Guess what that also means to all of us? Yep, Spring-Cleaning of your Unit, and County Constitution & Bylaws and for some the Standing Rules. So, may I suggest you get your work gloves and sun hats out and start weeding through those nonessential and repetitive Standing Rules that are still in your docs that may be outdated. There are some Unit's with standing rules that I have had the pleasure to review are repeating rules that are already addressed in sections of your Unit and County C&B.

So, for you, I offer these handy dandy Spring-Cleaning tips:

- "Yearly Spring-Cleaning" of your Standing Rules by the 1st of May, reviewing your documents each year with your membership.
- Keep it fresh and precise, do not get bogged down with a lot of extra rules and words. Make them easy to understand, remember that adage "Out with the old and in with the new"?
- Your Standing Rules need to be read, discussed, and prepared at a regular meeting and voted upon at the next regular meeting.
- There should be an announcement to all members of the pending vote of the Standing Rules at the next regular meeting and approved by the members with a 2/3rd vote in the affirmative, signed and dated.
- Copies of your Unit or County Constitution Bylaws and Standing Rules should be distributed to all members, especially in a welcome packet for the new members.

- The more information your members have before them, the more interest and participation you will generate from them. Always let your members feel welcome.
- Please remember your (additional) Standing Rules number will start as line (3)
- Informed members are our future leaders, Be A MENTOR Today.



Education.....Lucille Mozzillo, Chairperson

I would first like to thank everyone that promoted our scholarship program this year and also to the local units and counties that sponsor their own local scholarships. Helping to support the students of today to become the leaders of tomorrow is so very important.

I would like to remind you that Teacher Appreciation Week is coming up May 6-10, 2024. Teachers work hard every day and are often referred to as unsung heroes. It takes someone special to teach our children of today and adjust to all of the social and educational changes being made around them. Please remember to thank teachers during their appreciation week. Some ideas include Gift Cards, coffee, tea, cookies, pastries, teacher supplies or chocolate.

I also want to remind everyone at this time about the awards units and counties can apply for. The Department of New York Education Awards include a Unit Award: A certificate will be presented to a unit Education Chairman reporting the most outstanding overall Education program. 10-75 members 76-150 members 151 + members and the Mary Williams County Award: A certificate will be presented to a County Education Chairman reporting the most outstanding year-round Education program.

There is also a National Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Education Program. All entries must be received by the Department Chairman no later than May 1, 2024.



***ALA Empire Girls State.....Terri D. Wallace Chairperson
.....Members Claire Herrman and Haylee Mathews***

It is April and time to check in on the timeline again! County Chairman: make sure your Citizen and Alternate Transmittals were mailed or emailed to Kaylee. Make sure for every citizen listed on the transmittal, a check was sent for the number of citizens x \$420.00 each. We do not want a county to lose their slots because the ALA EGS Chairman did not turn in paperwork or send the funds. Contact Kaylee if you know of a hold-up. Communication is the key.

We are very excited about this 83rd Session of ALA Empire Girls State. We are finalizing some staff this week but are happy to be fully staffed. We would still like to have **one or two more counselors** in case anyone's plans should change unexpectedly. If you could be free June 28th - July 6th, we would love to have you apply on our website: empiregirlsstate.org. Click on Join Our Team! We have instituted a pre-session training schedule using zoom. Staff meet once a month from March to June via zoom to conduct training sessions leading up to our Friday evening and all-day Saturday in person staff training.

Claire and Kaylee are busy processing applications and following up with unit and county ALA Girls State Chairmen and families regarding missing information. **Extra T-shirt order forms** and payment are to be sent to Terri by **June 1st**. Over the next few weeks Terri and Claire will be contacting counties on the waitlist regarding the availability of spots as the roster slots are finalized.

Now is a good time for your Unit and County to consider supporting the ALA EGS program as a Booster Supporter, with a Booster Ad or by purchasing an item from our Amazon Wish List (search wish list: **ALA EGS 2024 Wish List**). All these funds help offset the expenses of the program. Also promote with parents and grandparents or your Units and Counties the **Survival Kit** program. Survival Kit orders are due to Claire by **June 15th**. All of the links and information are in our **2024 Fundraising Newsletter** we sent out in March. <https://www.smore.com/n/syr1h>.

Are you attending Department Convention in July in Niagara Falls? Would you like a **chance to win a Department Convention package** (2 nights in convention hotel, 2 tickets to the ALA States Dinner, and convention registration fee)? Check out the link in our Fundraising Newsletter (<https://www.smore.com/n/syr1h>) or visit our website: empiregirlsstate.org and click on Donate for all the details. Ticket sales close on May 1st @ 9 am. Drawing for package is at 12 noon.

We will be conducting **Virtual ALA EGS Orientations in May and June**. All information will be emailed directly to citizens, alternates, their parents, and chairmen the first week in May. Unit and county chairmen are welcome to attend as well.

As a reminder, **citizens arrive on Sunday, June 30th and depart on Saturday, July 6th**. Please ensure that any citizens departing by bus have contact information for the bus chaperone and know their pickup time. The **State of the State ceremony will be held on July 5th at 8:00pm** at the SERC Field house on the Brockport campus. We would like to invite you to attend.

We would like to thank President Karen for her abundant support, recruiting, and guidance during this time of preparation.



*Finance Committee/Audit.....Mary Anne Casadie, Chairperson
.....Members Patricia Hennessy and Marie Mock*

We are at the end of this administrative year. I hope it has been a successful one for your Units, and County. Before your next administrative year starts there are some things you need to make sure of.

Get Your Ducks In A Row

- * Make sure all your paperwork is in order and done.
- * Receipted bills are paid and filed.
- * Books are audited, and everything has been found to be in order.
- * All fundraising events for the year have been closed and fundraising information filed for future reference.
- * Make sure your Form 990N is filed.

Measurements of Success for this Administrative Year

Budget oversight completed with deviation explanations reviewed with staff.

Fiscal year end budget-to-actual report provides information to develop assessment of control by staff and committee.

Absence of any significant negative findings on external auditor's annual management letter.

Things to Remember

- * Audits are vital to the success of your Unit or County
- * It is essential that the Form -990N is filed
- * Make sure your bills are paid and that receipts are filed.

* Audit, Audit, Audit before books are closed and turned over to the next administration.



Historian.....Sheila Holman, Chairperson

Well, the year is almost coming to an end, where has the time gone? I have been very pleased with all of the reports that I have already received. For April reporting.

I still get asked when visiting with different units, The history of our unit so Important? Who is ever going to look at it even though these are valid questions, I remind them that the history of each unit, county, District, or department is so important. It shows that the ALA is here in the past in the

present, and in the future to help our active military, veterans, their families, and our community. Placing articles of what a unit may have done or a department in a book or posting the name of the officers and pictures of all the activities that are held in each post is a history like no other. think of your history book that you all learned into school can you imagine if there was no documentation of the Civil War, or the battle of the bulge, or World War III, or Korea, or Vietnam or World War I. What a shame it would be for no one to know how America started. That's how I look at our units. It may sit on his shelf, but there may be one or two or 10 or 20 new members or even juniors looking for something to report on in their history class that will look at those books and look at the documents that are written. The history of the ALA is so interesting and important to the future of our organization.

I am inspired to keep every history document that I have for my Unit and my District, after receiving an email from Kathi Taylor, who holds the National position as our historian archivist. Kathi is responsible to preserve all the original materials, videos, books in officers at the national organization. She is now in the process of recording all the officers from national president. Write down to sergeant of arms for the last 100 years. it has been amazing to read so far, the list of national presidents, and what offices they held before they became president. She has also included their date of birth, their date of death if they had a spouse and they were eligible to become an AA member. When this be wonderful if all our units could take on a project like this, we could include senior and junior members to research each of your units. It is definitely something to think about and maybe implement in the next year.

It has been an honor to serve as the department historian, Thank you all for your cooperation and your ideas. I am looking forward to presenting story books at the department convention. God bless America and God bless all of you.



Junior Activities.....Julianne Barton, Chairperson

I am happy to say that I have been receiving Junior reports every day!!! Some of them are simply amazing. The things that our Juniors are accomplishing make me beam with pride. Many Juniors are promoting Americanism by participating in Senior programs. They are super helpful when it comes to assisting in Senior projects. They work at Post home functions and with Veterans regularly. Their service to Veterans adds up to several hundred hours, and those are only the ones that have been reported. Sadly, there are still reports that are sent in that report Junior activity but there is no explanation about what that activity was. The Juniors are doing SOMETHING because it was reported, just go one step further and tell me what they did. Everyone wants to hear about it.

I know that reporting has been put on pause until the Fall. That doesn't mean what is being done gets forgotten. Start a list now to help keep track of all the activities the Juniors participate in between now and the November report. We have several Holiday ceremonies that Juniors can be included in, and the Juniors are great at getting donations for poppies. The list idea will

work for all the committees, not just the Juniors. We all know it is hard to remember everything we need to report with all the “good stuff running around in our heads!”

It is time for Installations!!!! Be sure to include your Juniors in the ceremonies (even if you only have one or two active Juniors), They can be installed right alongside their Senior counterparts. It will make them feel special and help them believe they are an important part of this organization. BECAUSE THEY ARE!!! Once you have installed them, bring them to Senior meetings, if they don't have Junior meetings. Explain reporting and have them help prepare the reports. Let them shadow a Senior member so they can “learn the ropes.” Give them a committee and make them an intricate part of your Unit or County.

Please take the time to review the awards in the Plan of Action. Read the directions and follow them carefully. No entries should be disqualified for not meeting the necessary criteria. Give me lots of entries to choose from!!!

I cannot tell you how much I enjoy working with the Juniors. They have an amazing energy that is contagious. They are willing to help with all the crazy ideas and projects that Seniors dream up, I have loved reading all the amazing things the Juniors are doing all across the Department of New York and have had the privilege of sharing their accomplishments with you. Please continue to encourage and support the Juniors and their programs.

THEY ARE TRULY THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



Leadership.....Carrie Davenport, Chairperson

In a world where titles often overshadow the essence of one's role, it's crucial to remember that leadership is not just a position or a title—it's a behavior, a series of actions that collectively define the impact one has on their team and organization. This article delves into ten quotes that drive into the heart of leadership, drawing from timeless wisdom that not only inspires but also provides practical guidance for anyone aspiring to lead effectively. Leadership is about much more than guiding a team or an organization; it's about empowering others, embracing challenges, and fostering a culture of collective achievement. It's a daily practice of influencing, adapting, and lifting others up. Leadership is not confined to the boardroom or the corner office; it's an active, ongoing process that happens at every level of an organization. It's about how you, regardless of your title, choose to make a difference every day.

In line with the goals of Happy, which focuses on connecting people, leadership also involves building bridges between diverse individuals and teams. It's about understanding and valuing the unique contributions of each team member, fostering an environment where everyone feels heard and respected. This approach not only enhances team cohesion but also drives innovation and creativity. Leaders in this context act as facilitators of connection, using empathy and emotional intelligence to understand the needs and motivations of their team members. They recognize the power of genuine relationships in creating a thriving workplace. By encouraging open communication and collaboration, leaders can create a sense of belonging and community within their teams.

Moreover, leaders who prioritize connection understand the importance of feedback and recognition. They celebrate the successes of their team and provide constructive feedback to guide growth and development. This not only boosts morale but also helps individuals feel valued and connected to the larger goals of the organization. In essence, leadership in the context of Happy's goals is about creating a culture where people can connect, grow, and succeed together. It's about being a catalyst for positive change, inspiring others to reach their full potential, and fostering an environment where collaboration and connection are the cornerstones of success. This approach to leadership not only benefits individuals and teams but also contributes to the overall health and productivity of the organization.

- 1. Leadership: A Service, Not a Position of Power:** "Leadership isn't about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge." - Simon Sinek
This perspective shifts the focus from authority to responsibility, emphasizing the leader's role in nurturing and supporting their team. True leadership is about service, not power.
- 2. Building Teams of Excellence:** "The best leaders are those most interested in surrounding themselves with people better than they are." - John C. Maxwell
This quote highlights the importance of team composition. Effective leaders are not threatened by talent; instead, they thrive on it, understanding that a team's collective strength is greater than the sum of its individual parts.
- 3. Empowering Creativity and Ownership:** "Don't tell people how to do things; tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results." - George S. Patton
This advice speaks to the power of autonomy. By setting clear objectives and allowing individuals the freedom to achieve them in their own way, leaders foster innovation and ownership.
- 4. Cultivating Future Leaders:** "The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers." - Ralph Nader
Nader's quote is a reminder of a leader's role in mentorship and development. The true legacy of a leader is found in the growth and success of those they guide.
- 5. Leading Through Adversity:** "The true test of leadership is how well you function in a crisis." - Brian Tracy
Crisis leadership tests resilience, adaptability, and decision-making, revealing a leader's true capabilities.
- 6. Subtle Leadership:** "A leader is best when people barely know he exists... they will say: we did it ourselves." - Lao Tzu
Ancient wisdom emphasizes the leader's role in facilitating success without seeking the spotlight. It's about making the team, not the leader, the hero.
- 7. Standing Strong in Challenges:** "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." - Martin Luther King, Jr.
MLK reminds us that courage and integrity in difficult times define a leader's true strength.
- 8. Creating the Future:** "The best way to predict your future is to create it." - Peter Drucker
A call to proactive leadership. Leaders don't just react to change; they drive it, shaping the future through vision and action.
- 9. Influence Over Authority:** "The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority." - Ken Blanchard
A fantastic quote and maxim that highlights the shift in modern leadership. Today's leaders succeed through persuasion and inspiration, not through command and control.
- 10. Resilience in Adversity:** "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." - Nelson Mandela
Encapsulates the essence of resilient leadership. It's about learning from failures and persisting despite setbacks.

So, remember, there are many definitions of leadership and only consider one when judging those around you who are serving in leadership roles says more about your character than their style of leadership.

Don't forget to visit the department website to explore the awards that fall under the leadership program!



Legislative.....MaryAnn Calbo, Chairperson

Bills and resolutions are referred to committees which debate the bill before sending it on to the whole chamber, the House, the Senate and signed by the President.

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

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

The Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act exemplifies Sen. Elizabeth Dole’s passion for supporting veterans and their caregivers by expanding access to home and community-based care programs for veterans, increasing support for non-institutional care, assessing VA’s caregiver and long-term care programs and more. Caregivers help veterans maintain their independence and stay in their own homes in their own communities for as long as possible as they age.

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

To protect consumers from price gouging of residential rental and sale prices.

2.The Cope Act (H.R. 3581)

Specifically, the bill authorizes the VA to award grants to implement, coordinate and enhance mental health counseling, treatment, and support for family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program. Additionally, the Government Accountability Office must report on the provision of mental health support to caregivers of veterans. The bill also requires the VA to annually survey the security at VA facilities.

3.The second FY24 (Fiscal Year 2024), appropriations package passed by the House last week was a win for the American people. One of the most significant provisions was the hire of 22,000 border patrol agents to secure our nation's southern border. That’s in-line with what would be provided in H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act, which the House passed last May. With border crossings at record highs, our border patrol is understaffed and overwhelmed. They need help and we need relief.

It is critical for the Senate to pass these bills.

Thank you to all members who have contributed to support the Legislative program in contacting our elected officials to pass these critical bills in support of our Veterans families, communities, and our nation. After all, our elected officials do the bidding of the American Citizens, not their own agenda. Let our voices continue to be heard loud and clear.



National Executive Committeeperson.....Marie Mock

Spring has sprung, and we are gearing up for the end of the year activities. Are you planning for elections, conventions, and summer activities? This is a good time to talk about what has gone well this year and what needs to be done differently. New York, as a whole, has done very well. We have worked hard and helped many of our veterans and our communities. I have been proud to represent you at the National level because our Department office and our leadership have adhered to the rules and worked tirelessly to achieve the best possible outcomes. I’m looking forward to hearing about your successes at Convention in Niagara Falls. I hope you have submitted award applications and will win many accolades that are well deserved. Keep up the good work and be sure to send in your reports.



National Security.....Janet Elston, Chairperson

The 2023-2024 Auxiliary year is about to wind down, but we continue to work diligently for the National Security program promoting a strong national defense by supporting our servicemembers and their families.

Preparedness, crime prevention, donations to USO. Purchasing U.S. Savings Bonds, assisting victims of natural disasters and awareness of our POW/MIA issues is all part of this program.

The ALA has a special fondness for spouses of military servicemembers and supports the Military Spouse eMentor Program which is an online community where spouses can receive career guidance, advise, support and inspiration.

POW/MIA or missing man table, there are various table settings, but all reflect a solemn remembrance of those who have never returned.

Thank you for working together with the American Legion Family and your community to support our servicemembers and their families.



Parliamentarian.....

Spring has sprung, and we are looking forward to the warm weather activities that we enjoy as Auxiliary members. As parliamentarians, we hope that we have guided our units, counties, and districts to successful meetings, and they are now able to move forward with minimal guidance from us. With permission from your President, presenting brief programs demonstrating proper parliamentary procedure can be a good idea. Remember to keep them short, informative, and interesting. You can find information on the National website, by a Google search, or by referring to Roberts Rules. A quick game often catches members' attention better than a lecture. Use your imagination.

This is also the time when we must be careful to pay attention to proper procedure. By this time of year, we may have slid into lazy habits that are detrimental to the success of our meetings. We should continue to use proper forms such as standing to address the group and framing our motions properly instead of just throwing ideas out without formal structure. It is easy to slide into habits that, as they grow worse over time, undermine our effectiveness. As parliamentarians, you are the gatekeepers to success. Take your job seriously.



*Poppy.....Laura Booth,
Chairperson*

Poppy Season is here!!!!
Many units are planning events to promote our beautiful poppy.
National Poppy Day is May 24, 2024.
Please login to the member portal on the National website www.alaforveterans.org to find many ideas and tool kit.
Units and Counties have you judged your poppy poster? The deadline for me to receive them is May 1st. There will be no exceptions.
Please make sure all rules are followed according to the National website and must have attached to the back of each poster the National coversheet (which can be found on that website) www.alaforveterans.org.
Posters will be disqualified if the coversheet is not attached to the back of each poster.
Each poster will be judged according to their category and forward to National for judging.
I am looking forward to seeing those amazing posters. If anyone has any questions, please contact me. Happy Poppy Day & Memorial Day to all Have a safe Spring and Summer.



Public Relations.....Suzanne Williams, Chairperson

It's hard to believe how fast this Program year has gone, and we still hear things mentioned about how Units are just now becoming active again post-Covid. My own Club for the first time since 2019 held its Annual Legion Birthday Dinner and Awards Program this past March. How is this Interesting to you? Yes, it should be, because Press Release(s) need to be sent to your local newspaper prior to the Event and well as following the dinner. You will get more participation, even from your own members, when they see the events in the newspaper, hear them on radio, and being flashed across Facebook. Pictures speak 1,000 words!

Advertising prior to an event is just as important as reporting the occasion afterwards. How many of your Counties were able to send Press Releases to your local papers regarding Department Visitation? Did you know that the National website for the Auxiliary already has preprinted information you can use for a Press Release?

I write this article as I'm also paging through hundreds of pages of Reports received for the period ending April 1st. Thank you to everyone who took the time to make copies of your articles and pictures to submit. This has been an awesome year for getting the word out about what our Units are doing!

I will be applying for Department and National Public Relations Awards – but this year Every Member is eligible to submit an Award Application. You will find the criteria and dates on the National American Legion Auxiliary website under Public Relations. If you have questions, you should contact your Department Chairman for clarification.

Thank you for making this such an enjoyable and rewarding Committee! See you in Niagara Falls for Department Convention in July!



Walk-a-thon.....Maire SantaCroce, Co-Chairperson

SAL/ALA Annual Walkathon in Support of Our Veterans 2024 The 2024 Annual “They Fought For Us, We Walk For Them” Walkathon is in full swing. 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, 4 VA Nursing Homes, and our Department President’s Project “Hope for Warriors.” The Annual Walkathon was the vision of Past Detachment Commander, Tom Kirk, and to him we are grateful. Unfortunately, after a few years, interest seemed to wane. In 2015-16, during County Visitations, Detachment Commander, Joe SantaCroce took the opportunity to reintroduce the mission and importance of this program. If you have planned a Walk, wonderful. However, we know that not everyone can actually do a Walk, but raising money for this worthwhile cause is still attainable. Early on, in my home county of Kings, 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, a BBQ or dinner, donation “BOOTS” posted in your Legion Hall, anything to help make the 2024 “They Fought For Us, We Walk For Them” Walkathon a success once again.



Warrior Family Assistance.....Maire SantaCroce, Chairperson

The Warrior's Family Assistance program is unique to the Department of New York American Legion Auxiliary.

Our mission is to assist our veterans and active servicemembers with maintaining basic needs such as meeting costs for shelter (mortgages, rent), food, utilities, medical expenses, childcare for working parents, insurance premiums as well as needed home repair.

A veteran applying need not be a member of the American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary, but must apply through a unit, county, or district Auxiliary committee.

See instructions included with the application by contacting Marie SantaCroce, WFA Chairperson (nyalawfa@gmail.com).

Once the application is submitted, and upon the completion of the local review, the grant eligibility is finalized by a panel of three (3) auxiliary members composed of the Department WFA Chairman and the 2nd and 3rd Department Vice Presidents.

Today I can report that seven () grants have been awarded thus far, with an 8th application recently requested.

Once again, I would like to thank President Karen for allowing me to chair this most important committee. It truly is a program that is there for our veterans when they need us the most.

A special thank you to Vice Presidents Maureen Morgan and Lora Rowe, you epitomize the strength in teamwork and exude compassion in your thorough and prompt responses to every request.

And thank you to you, our unit, county, and district members, without you identifying and reaching out to our veterans we would not be able to do the work we do. Please continue to share the WFA program throughout your Legion family and with your community.



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

104 Years of Service Not Self



**AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY**