

2023-2024 Book of Reports



Karen St. Hilaire

Department President, Department of New York

The American Legion Family College Debby Herrmann - ALA Chairman

The 2024 session was held on May 31st through June 2nd at SUNY Morrisville. Staff arrived Thursday May 30th to prepare to welcome some 98 students who started to arrive on Friday just before 10:30. Unfortunately, there were 6 that had to cancel for various reasons and 3 that had to leave prior to the completion of the weekend, leaving us with 89 graduating members. Here are a few interesting facts, we had all 10 Districts represented, the district with the most students was the 7th District with 18 attending, and the 6th and 10th tied with 15 each attending, there were 22 Auxiliary members present, with Gretchen Ridley the recipient of the Shelby Sobolowski Memorial Scholarship joining us. We also had 2 new instructors, I was blessed once again to have Janice Gravely, a dual member as my co-instructor. The 2024 session started at 2:00 that afternoon with Orientation for the students, after a short break class began with the group splitting in half attending either the session on the American Legion Riders / Adjutant & Secretary Role or Americanism & Children & Youth after the first session the groups switched. The traditional steak dinner was 5:00/6:00 returning back to Crawford Hall to attend two classes before calling it a night. Each group was handed a Case Study to work on during the weekend.

Saturday morning started @ 7:00 with breakfast at Seneca Hall. The remaining 8 classes started @ 8:00, each class being 50 minutes long. The classes were as follows Membership, Leadership, Constitution & By-Laws, Legislative/Resolutions, Marketing/Public Relations, Duties of Officers, Online Membership Tools, SAL Programs, ALA Programs, Service Officers/VA&R. After the last group class, we all got together again for the last class on Protocol and Mentoring. Dinner was at 6:00 and for those who wanted to attend there was a reception for some R&R at a local Post.

Sunday we were up bright and early again with breakfast. The Legion photographer was unable to join us this year so Tim Van Paten II was able to take pictures of the class, staff, and candid pictures of the final group session where we did a mock meeting (of what not to do) and to review the case studies by each of the 10 groups and I have to say they did a great job. Each year the college staff comes up with the name for each year's students and this year it was CONGENIAL these 89 students were very compatible and came with a common goal which was to learn as much as they could to so they could go back to the home Post or Units to support the members at large. The staff is fantastic, you couldn't ask for a better team. We are always looking for more members to join the team, so if you are interested and have come to the college as a student, please consider joining our racks next year. Graduation certificates were presented to each student by our Legion Commander Tim Collmer, our Department President Karen St. Hilaire and SAL Commander Peter J. DeAngelis Jr. I have to say each student was hungry to learn all that they could in just a short 2 days. Each student participated, asked lots of questions and were very attentive.

We will continue to make changes as need to improve but I can say without question this is an integrated American Legion Family College. For those who are still on the fence I encourage you to come and join us next year, you won't be disappointed.

I would like to personally thank to President Karen St. Hilaire PDP Nancy Babis. PDP Debbie Morris and Janice Gravely for also representing the American Legion Auxiliary as instructors.

Americanism

Judy Wallace, Chairman

The Tenth District, Queens County, Maspeth Unit 783 President, Diana Lichvarik, utilized the Star-Spangled Kids kits by giving a presentation to fourth graders attending Saint Stanislaus Academy in Maspeth. The children were completely engulfed in her presentation because it just so happened they were in the middle of an American history lesson in their Social Studies class. Diana presented the students with comic books, stickers, flags, and pins. She also spoke on the history of the flag as new states were added to the union. The teacher was so impressed with Diana's presentation she asked her to return next year. This was a huge success with the children learning about the American Legion Family programs. Now, the children cannot wait to march in their local Memorial Day Parades.

In the Fifth District, Jefferson & Lewis Counties reported volunteers who came together on Veterans Day and presented over 1,000 Flags to families of active-duty soldiers and veterans. The Department of New York is engaged across the state in Elementary, Junior, and High Schools. Most all counties have unit members who are teachers and/or know of a teacher which provides a definitive way of promoting the Americanism programs. Volunteers are able to provide little pocket flags. As they show the proper way to fold the flag, they explain what each fold means.

The Second District, Kings County chairperson, reported purchasing patriotic books from the American Legion Flag & Emblem catalog. The unit purchased 75 copies of four patriotic comic books and bullying prevention comic books that were donated to the students. Third District, Sullivan County reported that the local Walmart had a flag that was tattered and fell off the pole. After much complaining from the local unit members, it was replaced and is flying high respectfully. The Scouts of America are more involved in disposing of the flags properly by inviting the American Legion Family.

All counties reported attending Memorial and Veterans Day parades and many of the members marched in the parades. Many counties volunteered to prepare and serve meals to veterans for breakfast buffets and lunches. Unit members felt this was their way of giving back to the veteran who served our country honorably.

Sixth District Chenango County started a Flag Project to honor Veterans past and present. Each flag has the veterans' name and branch of service to include war era. Four-Hundred and four flags were flown and honored in the 2023 Veterans Day.

Seventh District Monroe County holds a naturalization ceremony where they present each new citizen an American Flag and copy of the U. S. Constitution.

Many counties gave information of the Essay Contest to their respective School Board members who in turn submitted it to their Elementary, Junior, and High School counselors.

The Fifth District, Jefferson County committee chairperson reached out to the director who oversees Children and Youth programs within the county. The Americanism chairperson made over two hundred folders with copies of the U.S. Constitution, the Americanism Essay, Flag

Etiquette, How to Display it, How to Respect it, and a Small Pocket Flag with directions of how to fold it and what each fold means. The Chairperson inserted her POC information so anyone could request a presentation. This has made huge impact on families who want to ensure their home-schooled children are getting the education they deserve.

The Ninth District, Westchester County deserves a Shout Out! For revamping the Essay Contest with colorful eye-catching colors. The American Legion has programs that are supported by the American Legion Auxiliary. These programs are reported under Americanism by the respective counties. One such program from the Department of New York was the Oratorical Contest that was held at the Crowne Plaza-Desmond Hotel March 1st and 2nd. The units within the Counties showed support in volunteering their services, which included volunteering to be a judge for the contest, and or a timekeeper. They Provided refreshments for the judges and family members who were in attendance. There were five participants with four females and one male. Each contestant had to memorize five Articles of the Constitution not knowing the title of the article they would be presenting. A total of fourteen thousand and five hundred dollars was given in scholarship money. Grant Gillman of Fifth District, Jefferson County and Hannah Brundage of Eighth District, Orleans County took home Fifth and Fourth Place. Orianna Cotton of Fourth District, Franklin County took third place. Maureen Kennedy of Tenth District, Suffolk County took second place. Nia Gooden of Ninth District, Westchester County took the top prize.

The American Legion, Department of New York Annual 3-Position Air Rifle Competition took place in February. Unit members across the state reported and supported The American Legion Junior Sports Shooting Program by volunteering to be coaches, assistant coaches, and score keepers with the junior shooting programs within their Posts. The competition has been dominated by female shooters for the last couple of years. Within the program, Students learn to be responsible and well-educated citizens. Thank you to the units who submitted for an award. Good Luck!

Auxiliary Emergency Fund Geraldine Klussmann, Chairman

Here we are again, and another year has almost ended. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established to assist eligible members with temporary financial assistance for shelter/utilities. This grant is now \$3,000.00.

Six families were served and 265 volunteer hours. Thank you for helping those in need.

Chaplain Pattie Galley, Chairman

We have 468 units in the Department and 404 units reporting with 393 members reporting on their activities.

The Department of New York has lost 479 Senior Auxiliary Members this Year.

393 units reported 1164 Invocations, 1114 Benedictions, 116 charters draped, and 132 memorial services held for Auxiliary members, Over 159 grave markers were donated for a total of \$1907.72

I sent out 163 condolences cards from the Department. I also received thank-you cards, notes from the families thanking us for thinking of them at their difficult time and appreciating them.

Many counties reported that members prepared Legion Posts, Radio Station, Children Hospital, fundraisers, food pantries, funeral luncheon, mass cards, Hospice funeral and a variety of cards. Visits to the families and the shut in. Total \$38,330.73

We also had Auxiliary members donated to the Chapel of Four Chaplains. Total \$186.00. Also, a County every February reads the article at their meeting too.

Many courtesies were given to Gold Star families including cards, gifts, paying dues, and sending flowers for a Total \$1875.00

Prayers were received for our Department President and President for their Book.

The total of our members volunteering hours were 1616 and total was \$51,388.80

It was a great honor to be Department Chaplain this year. Thank everyone for their encouraging words of wisdom. "Be The One" is a good example of how we take care of each other.

May God grant you always.....A sunbeam to warm you ,A moonbeam to charm You, a sheltering Angel So nothing can harm you. Laughter to cheer you Faithful friends near you And whenever you pray Heaven to hear you

Children & Youth Lora Rowe, Chairman

New York started out strong and continued strong during the year, striving to protect, care for and support children and youth, particularly children of veterans and military families. It was truly a memorable year!

Countless events were held for the betterment of our youth. The year began with Units reporting on having Halloween events, including trunk or treat, and handing out the Have a Safe Halloween coloring book. One unit created a Halloween maze, which over 700 children enjoyed.

One Auxiliary hosted an Armed Forces Day Celebration for youths with a helicopter landing and displays of military equipment. Service men discussed their time in the military with the children. There were various activities, including face painting and bounce houses, and the event concluded with a fireworks display.

Comic books were purchased for cub scouts and discussions took place on flag etiquette. On Flag Day elementary children participated in a program singing patriotic songs and reading poems regarding the American flag. Several units purchased school supplies for both elementary grades K-6 and middle schools, with one unit, in addition to school supplies, purchased backpacks for 120 grade school children.

A Welcome Baby Project was held with the Women's Wellness Center of Northport VA Medical Center. Baskets were prepared for Veterans giving birth as a welcome Home to their babies.

An event was coordinated for 30 young children to help a member who raises miniature ponies. The children brushed, washed, and fed the ponies.

A Veteran holiday card making event supported veterans in VA hospitals with local boy scouts, girl scouts, and youth of Legion family members.

Christmas joy was brought to numerous children. Some Units adopted needy families for Christmas and toys and clothing were provided to these families. Toy donations were made to the Children's Hospitals and donations were made to Toys for Tots. Units held visits with Santa where children received hats, gloves, mittens, toys, and candy. One unit brought many smiles when they gave away eight bicycles. And another unit's juniors collaborated with the senior members to raise money for Secret Soldier Santa. A phenomenal \$8,000 was raised in donations! The Secret Soldier Santa program supports the children of veterans and active military during the holiday season.

The Easter Bunny hopped to several Unit parties. Pictures were taken, Easter baskets were given to the children, and the children made Easter cards for their parents.

One Unit collected aluminum tabs for the Shriners Hospital for Children. The monies received from the recycling of the tabs were used to buy medical and non-medical items. Over 60 pounds of tabs were donated!!

Several Units participated in Purple Up! Day with one unit painting rocks with their local girl scouts. The Rocks were placed in front of the Legion Home.

The Youth Hero and Good Deed Award information was shared with schools. A huge thank you to the Units who submitted awards. One unit submitted 14 youths for the Good Deed Award...Woo-hoo!!! What remarkable young people! One Good Deed Award recipient received her award on her birthday!

Generous monetary donations were made to various organizations, including PS I Love You Day, after graduation and after prom parties, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Boys Town, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Ronald McDonald House, Shriners Hospital for Children, and Make a Wish to name just a few.

A pig was provided to each county in New York State, and it was passed throughout the year to raise money for the Child Welfare Foundation. Currently, the Department has received \$2,939.42.

A total of 6,005 children were served. The total hours for youth activities reported was 4,422 for a dollar value of \$140,619. The dollars spent on goods for youth activities, on cash aid to help a needy child, unit expenses and donations to child serve charities totaled \$80,550. From these impressive numbers, you brought a ray of sunshine and made a significant impact on many children's lives.

I thoroughly enjoyed this committee and I found it so heartwarming to learn all that you do to benefit our children and youth.

Community Service Vicki Lennox, Chairman

The Department of New York did a great job this year helping in and with our community.

Some of the things we did with help of Community Volunteers were – helped clean parks and cemeteries, driving neighbors and elderly people to appointments and shopping. Help CPR training, blood drives, volunteer for Honor Flight and participating in Naturalization Ceremony. Raising money and participating in the Polar Bear Plunge, with 1 Unit family (Legion, Sons, Riders, and community) raising over \$25,000.00.

For November reporting there were 4 Districts that had 100%. There was a total of 16 Counties that did not report, but we still had good numbers.

April reporting, we had 5 Districts with 100% reporting – awesome! 13 Counties with no reporting. For the year, our Total numbers are:

ALA Volunteers	7,421
Member Hours	77,228
Community Volunteers	1,969
Value Donations	\$300,174.88
Value of ALA Volunteer hours	\$2,455,851.00

Keep up the good work and remember through our community we could get new members.

****Remember to Report – every hour counts****

Thank You

Constitution and Bylaws/Resolutions Deborah Morris, Chairman

For convenience we will refer to **Constitution & Bylaws as C & B**. As we all know that the C & B are the governing documents of our American Legion Auxiliary. Congratulations to all counties for 100% reporting. As of June 1st 2024, there has been 58 Unit and 12 County C & B that were submitted, reviewed, and signed by this chairman, with quite a few being reviewed. All completions were delivered to the NYALA Dept. HQ for filing. There were 16 submissions of Unit and County Standing Rules, all were reviewed, some had corrections of redundancy, and duplications that were already addressed in the C & B, all corrected marked as satisfactory and signed.

Our C & B are not only a guide but a teaching tool for our future leaders. We should be encouraging our Units to discuss the articles and sections in these documents. All members need to have these docs, may it be an email or in a hard copy form. The C & B and Standing Rules are not just for the Presidents use it's for everyone, please distribute to your members.

The C & B and Standing Rules should be reviewed at least once a year and updated with all changes immediately. All changes must also be voted upon and recorded in the Secretary's minutes as they happen.

I'm sorry to say but, we as leaders are not going to be around forever. We need to step up by involving and encouraging the young & new members, as our replacements. As if they are our children, we want them to succeed more than ourselves.

I love to watch those I mentored soar to new heights,
to see the future of our American Legion Auxiliary inspire others.

Education

Lucille Mozzillo, Chairman

Six counties reported the promotion of Military and their children. Fifty-four counties reported that they promote the various scholarship opportunities that are available to both seniors in high school, graduated former junior members and nontraditional students from the unit to the national level. Twenty counties participate in Give 10 to Education. Eleven counties donate to the Box Tops for Education program. Twenty-eight counties participate in Veterans in the Classroom activities. Twenty-one counties participate in Parents as Reading Partners. One Hundred Eighty-eight scholarships were presented to local graduating seniors.

Veterans in Community Schools programs were presented to schools in individual classrooms and whole school assemblies. Topics included talking about the American Flag, Veterans Day, Memorial Day as well as Veterans talking about their varied experiences in the military.

Several units donated backpacks and school supplies, hygiene items, gift cards, as well as scarves, gloves, and mittens during the winter. Units also helped students by donating funds to help individual families in need, purchase library books; adopt a classroom, and provide backpacks filled with various school supplies, just to name a few. Tabs can also be collected for local schools that are participating in a drive for Shriners Hospital.

Throughout the state, members honored teachers and staff at their local schools during American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week by donating coffee and donuts and purchasing gift cards for the teachers to be able to purchase supplies that may be needed for their classrooms or individual students.

A total of 130 scholarship applications, from 14 counties, were received for the Department of New York Scholarships and a total of 51 applications were received for the National Scholarships. The Department of New York awarded 13 scholarships for a total of \$13,000. The Department of New York also had two winners of a National Scholarship. Members hosted a lasagna cook off fundraiser, as well as a variety of other fundraisers, to raise funds for scholarships and recognized scholarship winners at school assemblies, unit meetings and banquets as well as submitting articles to local newspapers and social media.

Total numbers for this committee include: 350 volunteers, traveling 2341 miles, serving 1692 hours and 2539 people were served and the total value of goods and materials was \$20518.47.

Impact Numbers were:

59 Veterans in Community Schools presentations facilitated.

188 Total Number of Scholarships presented.

\$107,645 Total dollar amount of unit scholarships.

National Scholarship Awards Entries Forwarded from New York 2024 to National for Judging

Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship

Mackenzie McDaniels Steuben County 7th District

Spirit of Youth Scholarship

Cristina Caputi Nassau County 10th District

Non-Traditional Student Scholarship

Nicole Filkins Jefferson County 5th District

Children Of Warriors Scholarship

Katelyn Reed St Lawrence County 4th District

Department of New York 2024 Scholarship Winners

Department Scholarship

Sophia Green Nassau County 10th District

Department District Scholarships

Alyson Star McCarta Greene County 3rd District

Erica N Delarm Franklin County 4th District

Trevor T Young Oneida County 5th District

Victoria Verspoor Delaware County 6th District

Tera Milazzo Monroe County 7th District

Austin Lewis Main Chautauqua County 8th District

Reghan Swift Dutchess County 9th District

Anastasia Moraitakis Nassau County 10th District

Raymond T Wellington, Jr Memorial Scholarship

Julie Bichler Allegany County 8th District

Past Presidents Parley Student Scholarship

Terralyn McLaughlin Oneida County 5th District

Helen Klimek Student Scholarship

Emma Serdy Otsego County 6th District

Mary Ann K Murtha Memorial Scholarship

Libby Benner Livingston County 7th District

**ALA Empire Girls State
Terri Wallace / Chairman
Claire Herrman-Moran / 1st Vice Chairman
Steph Fallon/ 2nd Vice Chairman/Registrar**

The 83rd ALA Empire Girls State session took place June 30th - July 6th, 2024 at SUNY Brockport. 290 citizens from all 10 Districts joined together to create the 51st state.

June 28th - June 30th - Our amazing volunteer staff came together for training, set up and teamwork. Thank you to the Avon ALA Unit 294 for a delicious meal for our staff on Friday evening. Thank you to our ALA member who stepped up with staff transportation.

June 30th – Arrival of citizens with beautiful weather. Thank you to all our local volunteers who helped with registration and transportation. County meetings began and Parli Pro workshops featuring ice cream sandwiches and popsicles followed.

July 1st – POW/MIA Ceremony. Guest speaker was Stephanie Gleason - a Gold Star Mother - who shared her personal story. Political instructors spoke about bill writing and platforms. Committee meetings with election of chairman and vice chairman, Party caucus- election of Party leaders.

July 2nd – Guest Speaker - Jen Premo, Superintendent of Carthage CSD. Americanism program - Pocket Flag project – Flag Retirement Ceremony – Committee meetings, County meetings and nominees to run for Girls Nation selected. Band and Chorus rehearsals, Party Caucus, and selection of party nomination for State office.

July 3rd – RALLY DAY – Guest Speaker: Heidi MacPhearson, SUNY Brockport President, and ALA Girls State Alumni. Americanism: Poppy making project. County court, Parade and Rally, Town Hall Debate, State Elections.

July 4th– RED, WHITE, and BLUE Day! - Guest Speaker: video from NY Senator Kristen Gillibrand to our ALA EGS 2024 citizens! Americanism: Blue Star Banners handed out recognizing 34 citizens who had one or more currently serving active-duty family members, along with a presentation to a Gold Star spouse. Legislative Session Day – 12 Bills heard total. 8 passed both the Senate and Assembly. Service, Sweets, and Social Networking event. All of our citizens and staff gathered in the Student Union Ballroom for a “Hope for the Warriors” video presentation and ALA Department President Karen shared how she chose her project. All citizens then visited tables where they made fleece blankets, made, and signed cards for “Hope for the Warriors” veterans – visited tables staffed by Brockport admissions team, ROTC, made different projects and of course, enjoyed sweet treats! It was a great networking time.

July 5th – Guest Speaker: Marjorie Byrnes, NY Assemblywoman. Americanism: Americanism Trivia. Presentation to ALA Department President Karen. Appellate Court, Gubernatorial appointments announced, and Bills signed into law. STATE of the STATE – Citizens transformed from Girls State uniforms into beautiful suits, dresses, and gowns. The governor was presented with an American Flag that was used during 2024 ALA Empire Girls State and gave a State of the State address to citizens and guests. Families showed up in droves to see the meaningful ceremony and congratulate their daughters on a job well done.

July 6th – Packing up – Checking out – Home! Now to catch up on some sleep...and lots of paperwork!

Individual Citizen Activity Reports our County ALA EGS Chairman will be distributed, but we would like to announce the following positions for everyone to congratulate:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Citizen</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Citizen</u>	<u>County</u>
2024 Governor	Taylor Vogt	Orange	Chief Justice Court of Appeals	Aqdas Shahnoory	New York
Lt. Governor	Tina Jiang	Westchester	Secretary of State	Emilin George	Nassau
State Comptroller	Katelyn Hamel	Suffolk	Majority Leader	Kate Karp	Suffolk

Attorney General	Meghan Lazzarini	Nassau	Minority Leader	Roisin Pfaff	Nassau
-------------------------	------------------	--------	------------------------	--------------	--------

Girls Nation Senators:

Simone Oustatcher	Nassau County	and	Ellie Keenholts	Rensselaer County
-------------------	---------------	-----	-----------------	-------------------

Samsung Scholarship Recipient:

Makalya Miller	Wayne
----------------	-------

Finance Committee
MaryAnne Casadei, Chairman
Patricia Hennessy, Marie Mock, Members

The role of the finance committee of The American Legion Auxiliary Department of New York is that of fiscal conscience of Department Executive Committee. (DEC) The finance Committee is comprised of three (3) Members. The chairman and two (2) members. The primary role of this Committee is to develop the annual budget and to review the Department's financial reports. We also recommend financial policies that protect the organization's assets, ensure financial health and growth of the organization through proper resource expenditures, and clearly communicates the organization's financial condition to the DEC.

I am happy to report that the finances of the Department of New York are fiscally sound. The 2023 – 2024 Finance Committee has met several times with the Department officers to discuss our investments, savings, and obligations. We have met with our investment advisor and made a few recommendations and are safe in saying we are comfortable with our investments.

We have worked with our advisor to come up with an investment policy that is comfortable but allows growth and expansion.

Most of Units have met their mandatory obligations with only a few hold outs and our Department Secretary is working hard on getting those few.

A great deal of time was spent on budget preparation, explanation of line items and what goes where on our budget and expenditures.

The Finance Committee ensures our Department is meeting non-profit benchmarks and government mandates. Any new information we received was passed on to our members. There have been several office improvements and technical updates.

This was banner year for our Calendar Program with many thanks to our Department Secretary and our District Presidents.

Our Department Treasurer Tara has been very helpful assisting us with everything she has been asked. We are very lucky to have a Department Staff that is dedicated to our Organization and to our Members.

The Finance Committee has worked together as a cohesive team with the best interest of our Organization as our main objective.

My thanks to Department President Karen St. Hillaire for this appointment, Department Secretary Barbara Corker, Department Treasurer Tara, and Committee Members Pat Hennessey, and Marie Mock for all their support and input at our Finance Meetings

Historian Sheila Holman, Chairman

Historian Development has grown in New York with leaps and bounds. The Units seem excited to keep the History of their units alive for future generations.

As Department Historian Chairman I was able to visit and connect with many of our members. We learned together the importance of the History of our units. I was able to show them examples of how our history should be kept. I was so proud of the enthusiasm shown by all.

Some of the units during reporting time both in the Fall and Spring sent me not just reports but picture book on what they had recorded. Some of them stated they wanted to start recording Past officers. They want to place these recordings on a hard drive to keep up with the age of media. Other units reported they started Facebook Pages to keep their members informed over social media. I also encouraged units to start a Web Site that could be used for all their members that are computer savvy.

So many of our units reported helping our Veterans with grocery shopping, rides to medical appointments, participating in Veteran Ceremonies. We have one unit reporting on how they visit the VA Medical Center and Bring Halloween, Christmas and Easter candy and small bathing items for the Veterans to enjoy. I also had one unit who put on a Christmas Event for the whole community. They had community volunteers help them decorate the hall at their Legion with their Auxiliary members. That asked for Participation from the Toys for Tots, so that every child left with a Christmas Gift. It was a huge effort from this unit and the community. We have another unit that has a member that was involved in raising funds to help with the building of a Veterans women's house that will include the Women's Veterans Children. They will call this the Foreverly House only the second one to be built in the country and the First in New York State.

It is with Great Pride that I state that the Department of New York History of their units is being recorded and saved for future Generations. Thank you, President Karen, for the opportunity to work on this committee.

Junior Activities Julianne C Barton, Chairman

The Junior members of New York never fail to impress. They have volunteered thousands of hours this year working on American Legion Auxilliary programs. Their accomplishments are even more

astounding when it is reported that there are only about half of the 62 Counties in New York with active Junior members. The Juniors bring new ideas and renewed enthusiasm for so many of the Auxiliary programs. It is so uplifting to read all the amazing and exciting things the Junior members are doing to preserve and promote the principles and ideals of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Juniors are always assisting at their Post homes with a variety of functions-Memorial Day celebrations, Veterans' Day celebrations, Installation ceremonies, Chicken BBQs, Pearl Harbor events, Bingo and Legion Family dances are just a few of the many different kind of activities that they reported. Reports showed Junior members serve our Veterans in many different ways also. They help with Christmas shopping and gift wrapping; They collected toiletries and blankets and distributed them to the Veterans in local residential facilities. They made Christmas and Valentine cards and distributed them to the hospitalized Veterans.

Junior members are participating more in the activities of the Senior members. They are attending Unit and County meetings. Senior members are mentoring them and teaching them about the various committees. Juniors are being allowed to assist with committee reports and to shadow Senior members. All agree it is a fantastic way for the Junior members to become knowledgeable, successful Senior members.

At the Yearly meeting, held in Albany during the Mid-winter conference, the election of officers for the 2024-2025 Administrative year took place. The newly elected officers were installed by National President Lisa Williamson. The Junior members were thrilled to meet the National President. Pocket flags, poppy paintings and valentines were made, and flag etiquette was discussed. A few patches were earned this year.

The total of materials and goods was \$41,355 and the Juniors volunteered 4,454 hours which is valued at \$141,623 for a grand total of \$182,978!!! The Junior members of the Department of New York are truly amazing, and we should be VERY, VERY, proud of them.

Congratulations to all the Juniors and the Junior Advisors on a job well done! Keep up the GREAT work. The Junior members of today are the Senior members of tomorrow.

Thank you for the honor of being the Chairman of Junior Activities Committee. It was AWESOME!!

Leadership Carrie Davenport, Chairman

The Department of New York has been extremely busy working on the leadership program throughout our great state. The Department of New York has a District and County structure, and many counties reported hosting countywide leadership workshops throughout the year. These leadership chairmen have supported members by bringing in guest speakers, holding award writing workshops, hosting legion family workshops, and through their involvement in promoting the ALA programs.

Two major Department initiatives this year are our revised Mid-Winter Leadership Conference and expanding our monthly leadership workshops. Last year we revised our Mid-Winter conference and this year we tweaked the format again to include a SAVE Training led by trainers from the VA Hospital. This workshop was held Friday evening and consisted of about 75 people getting trained in how to better support the mental health of the veterans and our members. Saturday morning, we kicked off the day with breakfast and a keynote presentation from National

President Lisa. We then had 3 programming tracks with 4 workshops during each session for a total of 16 workshops that covered a variety of topics. The goal of the event was to highlight the talents, skills, and knowledge of everyday members as presenters so that members could see themselves as leaders within the organization. Leading up to the conference, we had several presentation workshops. We covered the basics of presenting, talked about the structures of easy to make the workshops interactive, and provided feedback to presenters as they prepared for the conference. Growing these skills in our members was important to ensure that the workshops contained accurate information, were engaging, and that the slides were. The day culminated in an optional community service event where attendees could help assemble 250 PS, I love you packs that were distributed to the VA homes throughout the state. Ps I love you day is celebrated the second Tuesday in February. The goal of the day is to spread love and suicide awareness and was founded by one of our ALA Girls State/Girls Nation Alumnae.

In addition to the Mid-Winter leadership conference we have had Zoom training throughout the year on how to host local leadership workshops, how to support members grow within the organization, using ALAMIS, a PNP panel (that the dept won at the ALA Foundation Raffle at the National Convention) and how to prepare for giving a statewide workshop.

Overall, it has been a very busy year in the ALA Department of New York, filled with learning, love, and leadership.

Legislative Mary Ann Calbo, Chairman

It was my honor to serve as legislative Chairman for the Department of New York. Attending unit meetings, was a platform for me to speak of the importance of getting to know our elected officials and candidates running for office. With continuing education of the Legislative agenda, we continue to enforce that EVERY voice matters and every vote counts. My goal was to empower each and every one to not just vote for anyone, but to know who our candidates are, their priorities and if they align with our values.

Numerous phone calls, letters, emails, and personal visits were made to Local, State and National elected officials. They received responses from Senator Chuck Schumer, Senator Kirstin Gillibrand, Congressmen Mark WaSal, Brendon Williams and Mark Molinaro and Representatives Claudia Tenney, Paul Tonko, Elise Stefanik, and former President Donald Trump . Our actions set the tone for the passage of our laws, when we demand that our elected officials speak on our behalf.

Our New York members were busy holding Post family functions and Post events where elected officials attended. Subscriptions were made for the Dispatch, the Auxilliary Legislative e-newsletter, the American Legion e-newsletters and www.capwiz.com/legion. What great resources it is to have our members stay current and informed.

I am also happy to report "Meet the Candidate" and town Hall Meetings were attended by many of our members. In attending these functions, important information is shared with our members, it allows a platform to have their questions answered. Let's ensure that they know who WE are, the largest Veterans advocacy non-profit organization in the country. Let's all incorporate this practice to improve our visibility and mission.

With continued education on Legislative issues and concerns by our American Legion Family, we will certainly continue to advocate for our Veterans, their families, caregivers, our communities

and instill patriotism in our great country. Let our elected officials and candidates understand that they work for us, their constituents! We will continue to promote "Get out the VOTE," because Every vote matters!

For this reporting period, 889 volunteer hours and \$29,447.00 were spent by units to promote the legislative program. I am so proud of all of the hard work they do so selflessly. It has been my pleasure working with the National Legislative team.

Membership

Kimberly Quick, Chairman

Membership in New York has not been the easiest thing to do this year. The population of the state is declining, reducing the number of potential members.

We are lacking in renewals. I asked the chairs to find out why. For some, it was the dues increase. The members found the dues increased too much all at once. Another big hit to our membership is not being able to join the great-granddaughters. We received so many complaints about this, I had to write a newsletter about why this happened and explained it was not a decision by the Auxiliary to change the eligibility. The members in the ages of 18-21 are the hardest to renew. They either go off to college (and Mom/Grandma) stop paying their dues, or they ask themselves "why should I pay dues for something I cannot use." Lastly, when the older members pass away, and they were the one paying dues for multiple members. The family does not always stay in the Auxiliary. They never enjoyed being involved in the Auxiliary in the same way that Mom or Grandma did. Therefore, we lose them. Small rural communities are having trouble recruiting due to lack of potential members. Especially if there is not a Post home building to go to.

To renew members early in September 2023, some Units raffled off baskets. Renew in September, you received three tickets free, October you got two tickets free, and November was one ticket. These raffles became fundraisers because people bought more tickets. The winners were drawn right before Thanksgiving. Another raffle was to get your 2025 dues paid using the same type of "free tickets" as the basket raffles. "Early Bird Perks" included a free dinner at the Post when you paid your dues at the door. Units found a way to pay for the dues of members in nursing homes, the homebound, or those who reached a certain age or number of years of membership. Certificates of Continuous Years of Membership showed our members that we do care for and appreciate them even if we do not say it enough.

On the bright side, we have Units giving tours of their Post homes to new members making them feel welcome. The VA&R, Girls State, scholarship, and flag etiquette programs are where we have found the newest members. "Recruits" find out we are not just a social club and enjoy helping in activities that are meaningful to a veteran or their family.

One Unit reported that they begin their meeting night to teach the new members what to expect at the meeting and explain what is happening. This makes new attendees feel at ease and they are not afraid to come back.

Emails, newsletters, social media, and phone calls are all being used to reach out to those members who have not yet paid. Membership drives at community events are also popular. We encouraged members to pay online, and the Units to enroll in ALAMIS. Reports are they found it was easier than they thought.

Department quarterly newsletters are written and distributed in September, November, February, and April. We send out weekly emails with all the standings so Units can see how they are doing. The same weekly standings are posted on our department website. As of May 29, 2024, we were in 20th place with 34,587 members paid: 92.44% of our 37,415 goal.

I have attended 3 of the 4 national quarterly Zoom meetings and found them informative and fun. It is important to be able to share ideas of how to work the membership program. We also have a bit of fun getting to know each other also.

We are continuing to strive toward the 102% award due July 27, 2024.

Awards For Units

Milestone #1 for Units 75% by October 13, 2023 (5-\$100)

1. Unit 1282 2. Unit 1618 3. Unit 17584. Unit 118 5. Unit 1880

Milestone#2 for Units 85 % by November 11, 2023 (5-\$100)

1. Unit 265 2. Unit 521 3. Unit 1167 4. Unit 1380 5. Unit 1928

Milestone #3 for Units 100% by January 12, 2024 (5-\$75)

1. Unit 116 2. Unit 252 3. Unit 1380 4. Unit 1573 5. Unit 1718

Milestone#4 for Units 100% by March 15, 2023 (5-\$50)

1. Unit 1573 2. Unit 255 3. Unit 31 4. Unit 333 5. Unit 876

Milestone #5 for Units 100% by April 12, 2023 (5-\$25)

1. Unit 1380 2. Unit 457 3. Unit 633 4. Unit 1195 5. Unit 255

Awards For Counties

Milestone # 1 50% by October 13, 2023 (1) \$100 Drawing- Lewis County

Milestone # 2 60% by November 11, 2023 (1) \$100 Drawing- Columbia County

Milestone # 3 75% by January 12, 2024 (1) \$75 Drawing- Jefferson County

Milestone # 4 95% by March 15, 2024 (1) \$50 Drawing – Orleans County

Milestone # 5 100 % by April 12, 2024 (1) \$25 Drawing- Orleans County

National Security Janet Elston, Chairman

The Department of New York encompasses 62 Counties and Auxiliary members supported the National Security Program in many different ways. National Security entails many facets to its program.

Members participated in The American Legion Blood Donor Program, attended POW/MIA ceremonies, and presented Blue/Gold Star banners at various events. Service members were honored during welcome-home parties giving gift cards and sharing dinners with the Legion Family. Unit members volunteered many hours shopping, packing, and mailing care packages to active-duty service members containing toiletries, knitted scarves, socks, fleece blankets, medical supplies, and baked goods.

Due diligence was given to females servicemembers sending care packages filled with items specific to females. Many various types of fundraisers were held to raise funds to support the

needs of our active-duty service members and their families. Unit members worked in harmony, put their heads together and came up with unique ways to raise funds. Sock hops penny sales, cake, and plant sales as well as bingos were organized. Units reported many volunteer hours by dedicated members who cut and mailed manufacturer's coupons to active servicemembers. 62 Volunteers spent 1087 hours clipping coupons for a value of \$188,821.50.

A call to Service ceremony honoring high school students who were entering military service upon graduation from high school was coordinated by Unit members. Units organized emergency preparedness classes from qualified instructors for American Legion Family members on the use of defibrillators. Citizens were given instructions on how to respond to natural disasters. Military families who relocated were assisted by mentoring them about their new community, giving information on employment in the area, assisting in job fairs, providing resources within the community, and making them feel welcomed. At Christmas time, military family children were surprised with Christmas parties and gifts.

Many members subscribe to The Legion's Legislative Alert to keep up to date on the issues affecting national defense and our active duty servicemembers. Members volunteered 3080 hours, \$65,715.24 was spent serving 3,300 military.

All the information provided within this report reflects all the great work and dedication of the Department of New York American Legion Auxiliary members.

Parliamentarian Mary Lou Platt, Chairman

Parliamentarian is not a reporting committee, however members reached out with various questions, concerns, and requests, such as:

"I don't know what to do because I can't read and learn all of the Robert's Rules of Procedure book so how can I be my Unit's Parliamentarian?" We reviewed basic procedures and avenues of information. Members are not expected to know everything that is printed in Robert's Rules of Order but, by becoming familiar with the basics, meetings run smoother and more effectively. "What is the Parliamentarian's role?" A Parliamentarian is a consultant who advises on matters of parliamentary procedure. We discussed various aspects of the position including the fact that the Parliamentarian must always remain neutral and not allow personal feelings to interfere.

Other avenues covered included following parliamentary procedure, motions, election of officers, voting, how to handle vacant positions and how mentoring, communicating, leaving personal feelings out of meetings and conflicts effect our meetings and our purpose, Some of the requests were for simple procedural information, some were difficult. Robert's Rules of Order and the Constitution & Bylaws were reviewed for proper guidance.

Thank you to the Units who reported following parliamentary procedure and to those who reached out to us with questions and requests. Remember no question is a dumb question, we're always learning.

I would like to take this opportunity of personal privilege to thank Ann Geer for her wisdom and knowledge of Parliamentary Procedure and for the smooth transition of Chairmanship in the middle of the Administrative year.

Madam President Karen, Ann, and I both thank you for your confidence in appointing us to this position.

**Poppy-Poppy Poster
Laura Booth, Chairman**

Wow, what a year it has been.! The commitment from our members has been nothing short of outstanding.

American Legion Post and Auxiliary Units have ordered 187,575 poppies this year. 4581 volunteer hours, valued at \$146,044. So far 65,559 poppies and poppy items have been distributed.

Monies raised from the poppies have been used for many different programs. ALA units have sent funds to be used for Honor Flights. This year many counties have funded Homeless Vets and shelters. VA hospitals are #1 in poppy donations. Scholarships were also given to military children.

This year I received different ideas from around the state. One county set up a poppy table at their local hockey games. At Roberson Museum "Home for the Holidays" Poppy Tree event ran for the month of December. Poppy book markers, stickers and of course poppies were distributed. Some units also made poppy ornaments to be placed on the tree.

Proclamations were given to some units.

A new idea was creating poppy donation slips with a website and QR code. Poppies were distributed at local stores and at mass.

This year I received 31 poppy posters for this year's contest. What an excellent job all the kids did. All 7 categories were forwarded to the Eastern Division Chair for judging for a national award. The rest of the posters will be on display at the Dept Convention in Niagara Falls.

Like I originally stated, "Wow what a wonderful year." To say the least this has been a continuous learning experience for me.

**Public Relations,
Suzanne Williams, Chairman**

The Public Relations Program has been promoted by Quarterly Newsletters distributed by the Department Office to all 10 New York District Presidents, all 62 New York County Presidents, and anyone who submitted their email address to receive the Newsletters.

Newsletter articles describing the importance of Public Relations on every level, Unit, County, and District was discussed. Information was shared about how to and why to assemble Public Relations Scrap Books with articles and pictures, and how to submit. Pictures were used in the scrap books that were submitted for Awards, to show that Auxiliary Members wore shirts indicating their commitment to the ALA and their Unit, so that people who attended the events would know who they are and what they stand for.

The Chairman saw a marked increase in Social Media from the November reporting period to the April reporting period, indicating that more Units and Counties are realizing the importance of advertising and how easy it can be to Post and Share Events. There was also a marked increase in printed articles and newspaper clippings – perhaps because of the number of events held

during the winter months. The Quarterly Zoom meetings taught me much about the different manners to reach our members. Just because this Committee does not appear on the Impact Report does not mean that Public Relations does not make an Impact in your individual Communities. Get the Word Out!

Your Chairman created a Department-Wide Public Relations scrap book to be presented to Madam Department President. Thank you to the one County who submitted a scrap book for award consideration, and to the one Unit who also submitted a scrap book of their public relations!

Thank you, Madam Karen, for the pleasure of Chairing the Committee for Public Relations, I have learned much and will carry that knowledge with me into the future!

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Maureen Morgan, Chairman

This is the book of report for the Department of New York VA&R. It has been an amazing year with so many units, counties and districts doing amazing things for our Veterans, there was 99.9% of the Counties reported this year.

Units and Counties reported that they held bingos, baby showers, dinners, shows, sponsoring veterans for honor flights, taking veterans to Dr. appointments, shopping, cleaning houses for veterans, or just visiting with the veterans in or out of the hospitals. Auxiliary members attended funerals, helped with Memorial Day Services, Veterans' Day Services, or anything else that was needed. The volunteers that worked at the VA Hospitals were amazing. They held Arts Festivals, Galas, had ice cream parties, dinners, poppy day where they taught the veterans how poppies are made. The total that the counties reported are as follows:

Activities/projects carried out by the Counties:

Total hours members volunteered:	325,262.95
Total number of veterans served:	9,284
Total number of miles driven	
In providing ALA Services:	22,897.6
Number of new VAVS Volunteers:	19
Total dollars spent:	\$98,631.62
Value of in-kind donations:	\$11,025.47
Total hours members volunteered by \$31.80 =	\$10,343,361.00

Service to Our Veterans Outside of VA Facilities:

Total hours members volunteered:	17,135
Total hours of veterans served:	6,821
Value of in-Kind donations:	\$49,740.61
Total dollars spent:	\$53,895.83
Total number of miles driven	
In providing ALA services:	30,242.50
Total hours members volunteered by \$31.80 =	\$551,921.80

Warrior Family Assistance Marie SantaCroce, Chairman

As of June 1, 2024, twelve Veterans and their families have been awarded the maximum WFA Grant of \$1,200 each. Those grants have assisted with home and car repairs, as well as medical expenses and assistance with utility bills and rent/mortgage payments.

Please remember our older Veterans who can no longer do home repairs they were once able to do themselves and must now reach out to local handymen or contractors to do needed work. The WFA Program is here to help them too!

Some exciting news to report.....at our April Executive Committee Meeting it was passed to increase the maximum WFA Grant to \$1,500 beginning the 2024-2025 Auxiliary year. We will be sharing more details about this wonderfully helpful resource in the upcoming Auxiliary year.

I would like to thank President Karen for entrusting me with this amazing committee. Thank you to Secretary Barbara, Treasurer Tara and Kaitlyn for their patience, guidance, and support as we assisted our Veterans when they found themselves dealing with unexpected and/or difficult circumstances.

Thank you to all throughout our State who recognized a deserving Veteran, and to the local WFA Committees for all their efforts in helping with the application process.

A BIG "Thank You" to my Teammates, Maureen Morgan, and Lora Rowe, for your enthusiasm and commitment to making every grant happen.

Department President's Project

This is my book of reports for the President's Project Hope for the Warriors. It is hard to believe that we are at the end of another year. The Units, Counties, and Districts have stepped up to support the President's Project.

American Legion Auxiliary of New York should be proud of what we have accomplished for the President's Project and all the Warriors and families that will be helped with the donations that have been presented and sent into the Department Office.

Hope for Warriors is about restoring a foundation of stability, strength, and community for Military Families since 2006. With the donations received from the Department of New York, the Foundation will be able to help many families with their needs. The total money received as of April's DEC meeting was \$40,343.00. The grand total will be given at the Department Convention in Niagara Falls this July.